

Finding Light in the Darkness

Finding Light in the Darkness is a twenty-lesson course with detailed teaching on important topics in the Christian faith. It is a Scripture rich study covering several foundational truths important for successful Christian living. The lessons are well laid out with full documentation. Printable PDF and MP3 audio files for each lesson are also available for free download at www.life4square.com.

The audio and printed lessons are designed to be used together; however, either can be used alone. Feel free to pass these along to others who may be interested in growing in the Lord.



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Introduction
Finding Light in the Darkness, Session 1
Slide Notations – Cere Muscarella

Caveat #1 Recognize that this is an experiment in trying to communicate experience! The Jews had scholarship (information). The world needed the Word (incarnation). “He became flesh and dwelt among us!” Must realize can only go so far w/words then it’s between you & the Holy Spirit!

Caveat #2 Some may be more ready than others... Get it, see it, receive it quicker... But intimacy w/God is something He wants w/everybody! Don’t stop... ever! “KNOCK, SEEK, ASK...” If you can see one other person w/a living, vital, relationship w/God (even if only in the Word) – pursue it because our Dad is no respecter of persons!

Caveat #3 Since we have not been down this road before... we will give you the best lead we can... But everything from format to weekly subject material is subject to change! Weeks will be combined with practical things to do and spiritual experience!

Preamble... Originally thought I was coming to create a sense of hunger in you for the Word! “Shortcut to hunger for God is in seeing what He offers that you don’t have!” Can’t wait long enough for you to starve to feel hunger pains... Feed you oats, keep you full enough to not feel hunger pangs... But once introduced to balanced, tasty, energizing foods... will have a hunger without waiting for pangs!

Preamble... Originally thought I was coming to share first two basic disciplines of disciples! Word and prayer! Tools, pathways, of intimacy... Word: read it, write it, study it, listen to it, sing it, talk about it... Prayer: aware of language... “w/a chair...”

Preamble... Last week, flicking thru the channels... Saw my pastor, Jack Hayford... Older study... recognized discipleship series... Heard something/took me back 35 yrs... Reminded me of the key to my own success at intimacy with the Lord!

A willingness to accept everything God said because I knew Him to be my Savior!

I knew I was rescued, I knew I was His, I knew He was good... and I presumed that whatever He had to say was “yes” for me!

What He says... (said to me): Dec 9th: “You need a Savior...” **YES!** December 31st: “You need the Holy Spirit...” **YES!** January 17th: “You need to be baptized in water...” **YES!** Wrong responses: What’s it all about? How does it work? Why? How will...? Right response: Do Christians get baptized? *Ok then... Whatever the Word says about, for, believers is “Yes!”*

Intimacy... Begins with trust! “Not going to hurt!” Must deal with your definition of G.O.D., and if He is, then follow Him! Thrives in time committed! “Know you more and more and more!” Expands with understanding! “This is my God and what He does!” *Keeps you safe from heresy!*

Preamble... The key to deepening spiritual life experience...

“Having made us accepted in the Beloved, ransomed thru His blood; forgiven of our sins by the richness of His grace which abounds toward us in all wisdom and mental acuity... I pray that the God of our Savior Jesus Christ may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation for the epignosis: full discernment of – Him...”

The Word of God is more than mere information about Him... it is meant to incarnate and reveal Him!

Psalm 119.130 The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple!
Light reveals what has been hidden! Mind illuminated, simple Psalmist, awakes to a new world!

3 things to better understanding of passage/promise!

1. Vs 98-100 (key to v130) “by Your commandments I have been made wiser than my crafty enemies who are always present... I have more understanding of life than my secular teachers... I understand more than men of age... all because Your words are ever with me, they are my meditation and I keep them!

Vs 98-100 “I have vital strategies for the daily battles of life, higher and broader learning than special branches of education and accelerated life skills... all because Your words are in my heart, they are on my mind and I walk their way!

2. Second look. “The plowing of Your word releases light and the release gives understanding to the simple!” Agricultural term; “plowing” solid ground

3. Psalm 119 written by someone exercised by life, in love with God, engaged in a love affair with His words, experienced in His ways... declaring that a like-experience can be had by all people of like mind!
Take that truth, add the new covenant we have in Christ that opens the way directly, add in the presence of the Holy Spirit and you have...A real opportunity to know God, intimately!

So... with “willingness...” We open the Word of God... Filled with expectancy that His sheep hear His voice... Knowing that if we have (cleaned) ears to hear, we will hear... And when we hear His voice, especially correctively, we respond, w/o hesitation!

Open to the Holy Spirit for meanings, impressions, reminders, corrections, directions, composites, applications!

Remember that the Jews had the laws and no power and the early church had no Bible but plenty of Holy Spirit application and power!

So... with “willingness...” Time to open the Word for the 1st time! *New desire, new approach, new day!* Get an easy reader, start from the “in the beginning” and end with the “don’t mess with the words of this book!” Get a Bible you will write in... Recommend wide margin bibles...

So... with “willingness...” Time to set aside concentrated time to read the Word of God/1st time! May require a plan/cost a vacation. But want to recommend reading the Word “at-one-sitting!” Take highlighters, paper & pens, journal!

So... with “willingness...” Time to turn off the tunes and replace it with the spoken Word!
The more saturation/the more satisfaction

How much do you want to know God?

How much do you want to know yourself?

How much do you want to know what you don’t know...?

So that you can find light in the midst of your darkness!

Do you want to know...

Moses lost the promised land for his personal frustration over people?
Elijah was fired because he didn't count God as equal to his circumstances?
Elisha's confidence came from staring into an open heaven?
Jonah came close to death by self rule?
Do you want to know...
Job almost killed himself with fear?
Joseph made it to "the end" even when he didn't know he was on the way?
David was still called the friend of God even though he failed miserably?
Solomon hid his greatest treasure in the Word of God?

And do you know where to find them?

Do you want to know...

Peace that goes beyond understanding?
Forgiveness that frees you?
Purity that allows you to draw near?
Prosperity that makes you fearless?
Courage that makes you a hero?
Character that makes you trustworthy?

Do you know where to find them?

Do you want to know and be able to declare with clarity and accuracy...

"I am dead w/Christ but still living; but it's no longer "me" but Jesus living in me, and the life I now have I live in the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me!" **Gal 2.20**

The end of this is a clear connection w/God and the illumination that lights up the darkness!

Finding Light in Darkness – Session 2

Why Trust the Bible

By Sonny Bowman

Basis for a Biblical Worldview

The Role of faith

Bible claims about itself

Bible Authority

Bible validated by Jesus

Evidence supporting the Bible

Worldview

Your worldview determines your attitudes, beliefs, values, opinions, and actions. Your way of viewing the world is your basis for decision making. As Christians, we would expect to have a biblical worldview—including belief that the Bible is the accurate Word of God and it must be followed.

The Role of Faith

- Never have 100% of the evidence
- God designed it that way
- Since a level of faith is required, need to briefly look at what faith is and what it is not

Some things were purposefully left out of the Bible. God purposely built in a requirement for some degree of faith

Faith is not:

- A blind or unreasonable leap without supporting evidence
- Wishful Thinking or “hope so”
- Denial of what exists or a current situation
- A feeling

Faith is not a “hope so” or wishful thinking – “I hope to get a raise.”
Hope is good, but it is not faith.

Faith is not denial of what exists or a current situation. Do not deny the situation, but deny its right to defy the name of Jesus.

Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a blind man to Him, and begged Him to touch him. So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything. And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking." Then He put *His* hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. *Mark 8:22-25*

Faith is not a feeling – feelings will go up and down while faith remains steady

For indeed, when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside *were* conflicts, inside *were* fears.
2 Corinthians 7:5

Faith is:

- Choosing to believe what God says

"Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." *Joshua 24:14-15*

- Trusting God more than your own abilities or judgments

Faith is trusting God more than your own abilities or judgments. Like sitting on a chair. Trust it to hold you. If the chair fails, you will end up on the floor. If you have a plan B, it is not faith.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. *Proverbs 3:5-6*

- Evidence of things not seen

Faith is evidence of things not seen. It is not knowing without any questions or issues.

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. *Hebrews 11:1*

- Faith is believing what is currently unseen, but well supported.
- There is a difference between opinion, faith, and knowing

We often want to *know* when God wants us to have *faith*.

What the Bible Claims About Itself

1. History in the making

- Record of the history of creation and mankind. Includes record of God's interaction with man.
- "In the beginning..." Gen 1.1, John 1.1

2. Keys to successful living

You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time.” — Deuteronomy 4:40

3. Love letters from God

God’s explanation of His nature and character—His acts and ways. An invitation to know the Creator of all things.

For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. — Hosea 6:6

See how very much our Father loves us.... — 1 John 3:1 (NLT)

4. Coming attractions

God’s revelation of future events – see Ezekiel, the Book of Revelation, Matthew 24, and others

5. Through the looking glass

Insights and instructions about the spirit realm. A world connected to, but different from the world we interact with each day using our five senses.

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. — Ephesians 6:10-13

Bible Authority

The Bible claims to be the Word of God. That carries an inherent authority. If there is a God and He inspired the Bible, that gives the Bible a huge weight of authority in any matter it addresses. Over 2,000 instances in OT alone where it uses phrases such as “God said....” (*Many Infallible Proofs*, by Henry Morris, pg 156-157)

knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit. — 2 Peter 1:20-21

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 Timothy 3:16-17

Bible Accepted by Jesus

Jesus accepted as factual even the most controversial statements in the Hebrew Bible.

- Creation of Adam and Eve — Matthew 19:4-6
- Noah's ark and the great Flood. — Matthew 24:37-39, Luke 17:26-30
- Israelites fed with manna for 40 years in the wilderness — John 6.49
- The story of Jonah, the big fish, and repentance of Nineveh. — Matthew 12:40-41

Jesus Believed the Bible

- We do not believe the Bible is God's Word because it has no mistakes.
- The main reason we believe it is because Jesus believe it and taught His disciples to believe it.
- If you have made Jesus your Lord and Saviour, it is inconsistent to take a stand that opposes His!
- Still, there is good evidence for believing the Bible as we will see later.

Jesus Quoted the Bible

Jesus quoted the Hebrew Bible on matters of authority

But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" — Matthew 4:4

You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,' 'Honor your father and your mother.' " — Luke 18:20

Jesus' Actions Validated

Jesus quoted from the Bible to validate His actions and life.

Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. — Luke 24:25-27

You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. — John 5:39

Jesus Elevated New Testament

Jesus elevated New Testament writings to the same level of God inspiration as the Old Testament.

And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ... But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the

Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you. — John 14:16-17, 26

Jesus Conquered Death

Finally, Jesus conquered death to prove that He knew what He was talking about.

But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. — Matthew 12:39-40

Questions & Answers

Many skeptics only hear the questions and believe that there are no valid answers. Fortunately, Christian thinkers have been answering these questions ever since Paul's time. There are good answers to many of the questions if you will take the time to read up on them.

How We Got the NT

- Canon

--“The word canon comes from the root word reed (English word cane, Hebrew form ganah, and Greek form kanon). The reed was used as a measuring rod, and came to mean ‘standard.’ As applied to Scripture, canon means ‘an officially accepted list of books.’ (Earle, HWGOB, 32)” *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Josh McDowell, p 21

- Collection of authorized books, not an authorized list of books.
- No one person or group imposed list
- Recognized by the Church over time

--“The recognition of the canonical status of the several books of the New Testament was the result of a long and gradual process, in the course of which certain writings, regarded as authoritative, were separated from a much larger body of early Christian literature.” *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, p 1

- Formalization needed as competing views wrote their own works

--“All in all, the role played by Gnostics in the development of the canon was chiefly that of provoking a reaction among members of the Great Church so as to ascertain still more clearly which books and epistles conveyed the true teaching of the Gospel.” *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, p 90

Tests for Canoncity

- Orthodoxy – Rule of faith
 - Agrees with basic Christianity recognized by the Church (2 Thes 2:15, Gal 1:6-9)

- Apostolicity
 - By or connected to early apostles
- Consensus
 - Continuous use and acceptance by Church at large
- Not Inspiration!
 - Inspiration not unique to canonical books

Taken from *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, p 251-4

“Thus, the Fathers do not hesitate to refer to non-Scriptural documents as ‘inspired’, a circumstance showing that they did not consider inspiration to be a unique characteristic of canonical writings.” *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, p 256

Paul wrote other letters that were not included in the Bible, and they surely were inspired by God. Cere’s Sunday messages hopefully are inspired by God. But that doesn’t mean they should be included in the Bible!

Many Books Failed the Test

- *Acts of Paul* – A.D. 170
 - Preached to, saved, & baptized a lion
- *Acts of Peter* – A.D. 150-200
 - Women urged to leave husbands
 - Re-crippled daughter
- *Gospel of Thomas* – Gnostic, A.D. 140
 - Women need to become men

[Acts of Paul] “... containing a detailed account of Paul’s encounter with a lion in the amphitheatre at Ephesus. ... some time earlier in the wilds of the countryside Paul had preached to that very lion and, on its profession of faith, had baptized the beast.” *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, pp 175-6

[Acts of Peter] “... how Simon Magus comes to Rome and embarrasses believers with his apparent miracles, and how Peter travels to Rome and, with the assistance of a speaking dog, overcome the magician”

“The same [Gnostic] sectarian influence can be seen in Peter’s preaching against matrimony, and his prevailing upon wives to leave their husbands.”

“... describes Peter’s miraculous treatment of his paralytic daughter. At the behest of the crowds, Peter causes his crippled daughter to rise up and walk, but after the crowds had given praise to God for this, he commands his daughter to lie down again, saying to her, ‘return to your infirmity, for this is profitable for you and for me’. The crowd laments this turn of circumstances, whereupon Peter explains that when his daughter was born a vision from God disclosed that she ‘will do harm to many souls if her body remains healthy’ (i.e. sexually active). And therefore Peter accepts as God’s will his daughter’s infirmity.” *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, p 178-9

[Gospel of Thomas] “Simon Peter said to them: Let Mary go away from us, because women are not worthy of life.

Jesus said: Lo, I shall lead her in order to make her a male, so that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself male will enter into the kingdom of Heaven.” *Gospel of Thomas*, Logion 114 as quoted in *The Canon of the New Testament*, by Bruce M. Metzger, p 86

Not Everything Included

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. — Jn 20:30-31

But there is enough to do the job!

Ultimately...

- We trust God Who...
 - Created ALL things (Col 1:16-18)
 - Overcame death (Rom 1:4)
 - And is Truth (John 14:6, 1 John 5:6)
- To insure we have a true and accurate representation of His Word to us
- That said, there is good evidence to support our faith!

CSI: Bible

While I don't endorse the television series centered on crime scene investigation, there are some things that we can learn from such shows that deal with legal evidence. Some of the guidelines they use can also serve us as we investigate the claims of the Bible.

Evidence Guidelines:

1. Be fully persuaded an explanation exists
Don't assume explanation doesn't exist just because you haven't found it yet.
2. Wear gloves – don't contaminate the evidence
Bias and assumptions can contaminate the evidence. Remember--others often have bias & assumptions, too.
3. Evaluate all evidence in context
Context includes the surrounding objects, orientation of shell casing, blood splatter, etc. It includes over Bible verses, chapters, and books when talking about the Bible.
4. Accept witnesses unless proven to lie
Don't assume every witness is covering something up.

5. If seems confusing or contradictory, collect more information — often an important key to truth!

Often, seemingly contradictory evidence leads to important insights. It's often the puzzling or seemingly contradictory evidence that leads to important evidence. Bible questions are often cleared up with further research.

6. Keep open mind until have enough evidence

Don't stop short. Some claimed the Israelites crossed the Reed Sea rather than the Red Sea, and is only ankle deep. That would mean that God drowned the Egyptian army in ankle-deep water.

7. Will never find all the evidence, but usually enough for reasonable judgment

Some specific issues may never be fully resolved. But should be able to come to an overall conclusion.

These guidelines are similar for all evidence research.

Be fully persuaded that an adequate explanation exists, even though you have not yet

Good Questions—Good Answers

Most questions raised about the Bible and Christianity are reasonable and deserve reasonable answers. Most skeptics have only heard the questions and believed that there are no valid answers. But we have great answers to their questions. Fortunately, Christian thinkers have been answering these questions ever since Paul's time, and we can draw on their knowledge to help us find the answers we need. (Taken from *When Skeptics Ask*, p. 11).

While we won't be able to adequately cover the abundance of good answers to skeptics questions, I hope to at least help you see that good answers are available to anyone who will take a little time to read up on them.

Typical Allegations

Many allegations are made against the trustworthiness of the Bible, for example:

“The Bible has been changed deliberately or accidentally”

“We don't have an accurate record of what was originally written. Therefore, it cannot be trusted.”

“The Bible is full of contradictions”

“The Bible cannot be inspired by God because of all the contradictions.”
Generally, only a few if any alleged contradictions are given.

“The Bible is full of errors”

“The Bible cannot be inspired by God because it is full in inaccuracies in areas of history, geography, archeology, and science.”

“The Bible is only myths and moral stories”

Myths and moral stories do not require a submission to authority! If the Bible is God’s Word to man, then an appropriate response from man is expected!

Full of Changes?

Science of Textual Criticism

- Can determine the original text
- 5,500 manuscript copies/portions of NT
- 18,000 more manuscript translations
- Nothing remotely compares
- If all manuscripts lost, still rebuild from quotes in early writings
- Similarly, text of Old Testament also validated

The original biblical text as originally written is inspired by God and without error. However, we no longer have those actual, original documents—just copies. Some of those copies have relatively minor differences between them. Is it possible to accurately determine what the original documents actually said?

This question has been fully addressed by the science of textual criticism. This is a literary science that determines the text of original manuscripts using established principles. It applies to all ancient writings, including the Bible. (A **manuscript** is a **hand-written document** as opposed to a printed document.)

Nothing remotely comparable to this abundance of manuscripts exists for any other ancient writing. This abundance permits us to **trace the origin of variant readings** and **accurately determine the original text** as written by the authors. Many of the variations are simply spelling differences, word order, and similar changes.

Even if all the manuscripts from the New Testament had been lost, we could reconstruct the entire New Testament from quotes in the writings of early Christians. This provides further evidence of the original text of the New Testament.

The original text of the Old Testament has also been clearly established by similar means.

CSI Rule #7 – **Not have all** the evidence, but **enough** to make judgment

Full of Changes?

According to Sir Frederic Kenyon, one of the foremost experts on ancient manuscripts...

“The interval between the dates of original composition (of the New Testament) and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubt that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed. Both the authenticity and the general integrity of the books of the New Testament may be regarded as finally established.”

quoted in *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, © 1999, p. 35

Full of Contradictions?

- What is a contradiction?
- Statements can differ without contradicting
- Example: Angels at the tomb of Jesus
 - Matthew & Mark mention one angel
 - Luke & John mention two angels

What constitutes a contradiction? Has to be something that is **impossible**. For example, for the Bible to say that Jesus was crucified and died in Jerusalem and then in another place say that He died a natural death in Bethlehem would be a contradiction.

Two statements may differ from one another without being a contradiction. For example: Elton may tell Randy that he saw me talking with Cere. Then he may tell Judy that he saw me talking with Cere and Ann. That is not a contradiction. Detail of Ann could be left out because not important to the conversation with Randy. It is **dangerous to argue from silence!**

In most cases, people claim the Bible is full of contradictions without giving examples of the alleged contradictions. When they do list some “contradictions,” they are **typically areas of difference** rather than actual contradictions. For example, they may point out differences in the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus. Matthew and Mark mention one angel at the tomb while Luke and John mention two angels. Matthew and Mark say that one angel spoke, but they do not say that there was only one angel at the tomb. This is not a valid contradiction.

If two witness in a court of law say **exactly the same thing**, their testimony becomes suspect. It appears that they have conspired ahead to say the same thing to cover up something. However, when two witnesses appear to contradict, then additional information demonstrates that their testimony is complimentary rather than contradictory, it becomes very strong evidence to the events in question.

Alleged Contradiction

Some apparent contradictions are due difficulties encountered in translation of the Bible. A classical allegation of contradiction is Acts 9:7 and 22:9 in the KJV when Saul (Paul) was approaching Damascus and Jesus appeared to him.

And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. — Acts 9:7 (KJV)

And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me. — Acts 22:9 (KJV)

The first says that those with Paul heard a voice without seeing the speaker. The second passage says they did not hear the voice of the one speaking. Looks like a contradiction! However, a knowledge of Greek solves the problem. The construction of the verb “to hear” in the first account indicates that certain sounds are reaching the ear without indication of whether or not the person understands what he hears. The second construction of the verb describes a hearing with understanding. So they heard a sound, but did not understand what being said. Rather than a contradiction, the passages clarify our

understanding of what happened. The Amplified Bible expands the passage to include the additional information from the Greek verb.

Now the men who were with me saw the light, but they did not hear [the sound of the uttered words of] the voice of the One Who was speaking to me — so that they could understand it. — Acts 22.9 (Amplified Bible)

When you find what seems to be a contradiction, research to see if a valid explanation is available.

CSI Rule #5 – Collect more information.

Full of Errors?

- Errors in Geography?
- Errors in History?
- Errors in Archaeology?
- Errors in Prophecy?
- Errors in Science

People often claim that the Bible is “full of errors,” but they seldom specify what errors there are. The Bible does claim to be a book of history and God’s word to man. Therefore, it is readily evaluated in the areas where it speaks about history and where it contains predictive prophecy. While the Bible does not claim to be a book of geography, archeology, or science, it does contain some information related to each of those disciplines.

CSI Rule # 3 – evaluate all evidence in context

Geographical Accuracy

- Luke is precise
“In all, Luke names thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities and nine islands without an error.”
- “Thus, thanks to the many archaeological finds, most of the ancient cities mentioned in the Book of Acts have been identified. The journeys of Paul can now be accurately traced as a result of these finds.”

Both quotes from *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, by Josh McDowell, 1999, pg 64

The 67th “Book” of the Bible

- Book of maps
- Detailed maps in many Bibles showing actual places mentioned.
- Vacationing in the Holy Land
- Compare *Book of Mormon*. No maps in any BOM showing actual places mentioned.

You can vacation in the Holy Land because the countries, cities, rivers, mountains, and lakes described in the Bible really existed. We tend to take the Bible's geographical accuracy for granted.

Many Bibles include maps of places related to Bible events. Compare the *Book of Mormon* that does not contain maps of *Book of Mormon* times because nothing really fits the existing geography.

Historical Accuracy

Many people, places and events once thought mythical have been confirmed, including...

- Hittites (and their vast empire)
- King Sargon of Assyria
- Belshazzar, ruler of Babylon
- Sodom and Gomorrah

In 19th Century, all these were considered errors in the Bible! Have since found evidence consistent with the Bible for all of them.

Hittites, Sargon, and Belshazzar discussed in *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, p. 93

Critics once believed the Bible wrong about the Hittites since they were totally unknown to historians. Now we know of their existence from a Hittite library in Turkey.

Sodom and Gomorrah mentioned in some of the 15,000 tablets uncovered recently at Tell Mardikh, now known to be the site of Ebla. (*Answers to Tough Questions*, p. 34)

Gives us confidence that biblical **difficulties not yet explained** do have an explanation. We **need not assume that there is a mistake** in the Bible.

(from *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, p. 47)

Luke's Historical Accuracy:

- Lysanias, Tetrarch of Abilene, ruled in A.D. 27
 - Historians used to claim Lysanias died in 36 B.C. and that Luke was wrong. Later discovered that a second Lysanias ruled precisely when Luke said. (NEDV, 64)
- Accurately used unusual titles for authorities
 - Praetors, Politarchs, Proconsuls
- Per A.N. Sherwin-White, Roman Historian
For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming... Any attempt to reject its basic historicity must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted. (NEDV, 64)

NEDV = *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, by Josh McDowell, 1999.

Archaeological Accuracy:

As a matter of fact, however, it may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted [argued against] a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or in exact detail historical statements in the Bible. And, by the same token, proper evaluation of Biblical descriptions has often led to amazing discoveries. (Dr. Nelson Glueck)

From: *Many Infallible Proofs*, by Henry M. Morris, Ph.D., 1974, pg 49.

Dr. Nelson Glueck is widely recognized as the dean of Palestinian archaeologists, president of the Hebrew Union College and the Jewish Institute of Religion. *MIF*, pg 47

Four Anchors Abandoned

... we were being driven across the Sea of Adria, ... they measured again and found it was only 90 feet deep. At this rate they were afraid we would soon be driven against the rocks along the shore, so they threw out four anchors from the back of the ship When morning dawned, ... wondered if they could get to shore by running the ship aground. So they cut off the anchors and left them in the sea. — Ac 27:27-41

Four Anchors Found

The precision of these numbers enabled researchers to recover three of these anchors, with the fourth recovered in the form of modern diving weights, into which the anchor had been melted. Archaeological findings like these affirm the integrity of the Bible.

(notes for Acts 27:27-32 on page 2016 of *Discover God Study Bible*, NLT, 2007)

Archaeological Accuracy:

Coins of the United States



The American Numismatic Society
Brasher's Doubloon
(1787)



New York State Cent
(1787)



Indian Head Cent
(1882)



Booker T. Washington
Commemorative Half Dollar (1946)

Coins of Other Countries



Macedonian Tetradrachm
(336 to 323 B.C.)



Roman Coin
(A.D. 54 to 68)



Judean Shekel
(A.D. 66 to 70)



The American Numismatic Society
Persian Dinar
(A.D. 303 to 309)

From *The World Book Encyclopedia* (1977 edition, volume 4, pg 614) showing a Jewish shekel along with other rare coins from the United States and other countries. The shekel is mentioned throughout the Old Testament. Macedonia, Rome, and Persia are also mentioned in the Bible. Many other biblical coins have also been found.

Comparison: None of the coins mentioned in the *Book of Mormon* have ever been found. There is no secular evidence of their existence.

Score One for the Bible

***Fresh clues support the story of Joshua at the walls of Jericho* by Michael D. Lemonick**

... Except for the disputed dating, Kenyon's discoveries at Jericho were largely consistent with the Bible story. For one thing, she found that the city's walls had fallen in a way suggestive of sudden collapse. Many scholars think the destruction was caused by an earthquake, which could also account for a temporary damming of the Jordan River described in the Bible. Moreover, Kenyon found bushels of grain on the site. That is consistent with the Bible's assertions that Jericho was conquered quickly. ... Says Wood: "It looks to me as though the biblical stories are correct."

(Time, March 5, 1990, p. 59)

Even *Time* magazine includes records of archaeological support for the Bible.

Later research by archaeologist Bryant Wood determined a different date than British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon. Wood's date coincides with the Bible record.

A thick layer of soot at the site, which according to radioactive carbon-14 dating was laid down about 1400 B.C., supports the biblical idea that the city was burned, not simply conquered. Finally, Egyptian amulets found in Jericho graves can be dated to around 1400 B.C. as well. Says Wood: "It looks to me as though the biblical stories are correct." Other experts find little fault with Wood's archaeology, but they are more skeptical about his linking of the evidence with biblical events. [additional quote from the article in *Time*, by Michael D. Lemonick, March 5, 1990, p. 59]

The search for proof of the Bible in stones

by David Briggs, Associated Press.

From the Northern Hills of Israel to the desert of Yemen, a string of recent archaeological discoveries have provided the first hard evidence for a number of Biblical figures and events, many of which had been widely dismissed as myths and moral tales.

Individually, the discoveries are important. Together, they are shaking the field of biblical archaeology and buttressing words believers have taken on faith.

(The Brazosport Facts, Sunday, December 15, 1996, p 12D)

Archaeology is a friend to Bible-believing Christians.

Prophetic Accuracy

Jesus fulfilled Prophecies

- At least 61 major prophecies
- when He would come

- to whom born
- how born
- where born
- Odds of fulfilling 8 prophecies
 - 1 chance in one hundred million billion
- Odds of fulfilling 48 prophecies
 - 1 chance in a trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion

The Bible predicted **when** Jesus would be born about **500 years** before His birth. "When you interpret Daniel 9:24-26, it foretells that the Messiah would appear a certain length of time after King Artaxerxes I issued a decree for the Jewish people to go from Persia to rebuild the walls in Jerusalem," [Louis] Lapidus replied. ... "That puts the anticipated appearance of the Messiah at the exact moment in history when Jesus showed up," he said. "Certainly that's nothing he could have prearranged." (*The Case for Christ*, p. 249)

Bible predicts **where** Jesus would be born about **700 years** before (Micah 5:2, written between 704 and 696 B.C.)

Odds from *The Case for Christ*, pp. 246-247.

Fulfilling only 8 Prophecy odds:

That number of silver dollars that would cover the state of Texas to a depth of two feet. If you marked one silver dollar among them, then asked a blind-folded man to wander the whole state and bend down to pick up the one marked coin on his first try, that would be the odds of fulfilling only eight prophecies.

Cyrus Allows Temple Rebuild

- Who says of Cyrus, 'He is My shepherd, And he shall perform all My pleasure, Saying to Jerusalem, "You shall be built," And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid.'" — Isaiah 44:28
- Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: All the kingdoms of the earth the Lord God of heaven has given me. And He has commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who is among you of all His people? May the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up! — 2 Chronicles 36:22-23

Book of Isaiah written about 700-690 B.C. Cyrus prophecy fulfilled in about 538 B.C. (at least 152 years later).

Scientific Accuracy

- Bible is not a science book
- Often uses poetry, allegory, parables, and figurative literary devices
Your teeth are like a flock of sheep which have come up from the washing.... (Song of Solomon 6:6)
- Apply CSI rule 3 – evidence in context
- When it speaks of science, the Bible is accurate

Good thing the Bible is not a science book! We would have to revise it every few years like our high school and college textbooks.

No one would claim that the Bible teaches that someone had wooly teeth... Weathermen talk about the sun rising at a certain time. But no one claims they teach that the sun revolves around the earth.

Shape and Location of Earth

- Earth is round
 - It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. Isaiah 40:22 (NKJV)
 - When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,.... Proverbs 8:27 (NKJV)
- Earth is suspended in space
 - He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing. Job 26:7 (NKJV)

Earth is round!

It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. Isaiah 40:22 (NKJV)

When He prepared the heavens, I was there, When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,.... Proverbs 8:27 (NKJV)

Earth is suspended in space

He stretches out the north over empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing. Job 26:7 (NKJV)



Imagine the view of earth from space – a pretty nice circle!

Job was possibly written over 3500 years ago. Of course, every book in the OT was written at least 2400 years ago.

Stars and Universe

- Stars cannot be numbered
 - As the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I multiply the descendants of David My servant and the Levites who minister to Me.” Jeremiah 33:22 (NKJV)
- Universe cannot be measured
 - Thus says the LORD: “If heaven above can be measured, And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel For all that they have done, says the LORD. Jeremiah 31:37 (NKJV)



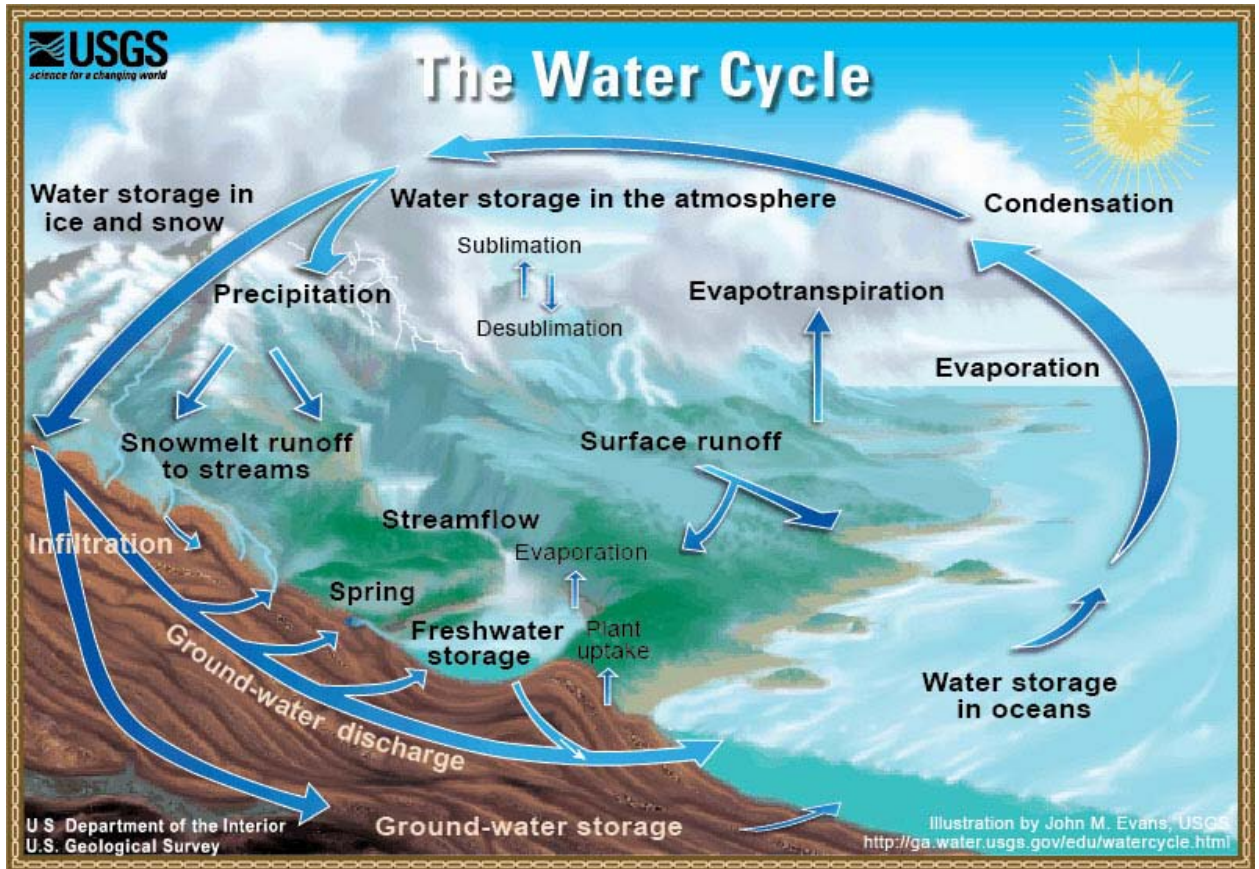
According to NASA...

Deep in the heart of Andromeda... Short exposure on bright central region of M31 reveals faint dust lanes threading an aggregation [group] of innumerable stars, one seemingly indistinguishable from the other. (Official U.S. Naval Observatory photograph)

[<http://history.nasa.gov/EP-177/ch4-7.html> (January, 2010)]

The Water Cycle

- Water evaporates and returns as rain
- He who builds His layers in the sky, And has founded His strata in the earth; Who calls for the waters of the sea, And pours them out on the face of the earth—The LORD is His name. Amos 9:6
- All the rivers run into the sea, Yet the sea is not full; To the place from which the rivers come, There they return again. Ecclesiastes 1:7



From US Geological Survey <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/watercycle.html>

Path for the Thunderbolt

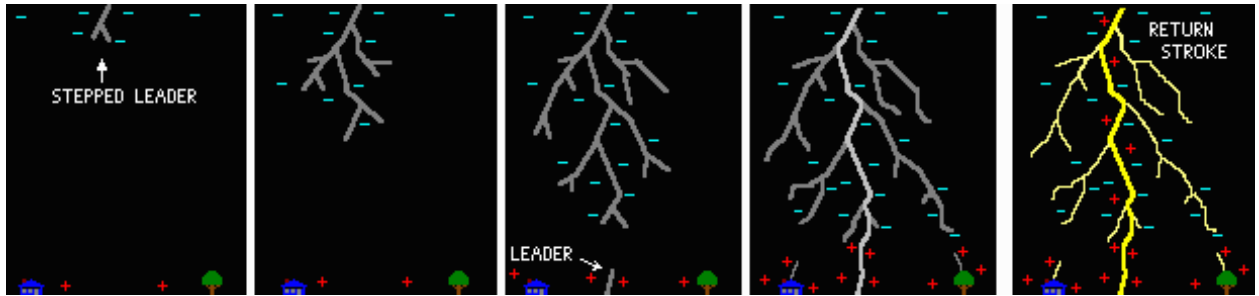
- When He made a law for the rain, And a path for the thunderbolt, Job 28:26

Step Leader

A lightning bolt happens in a series of stages. First, a faint *step leader* emerges from the base of the cloud. It moves toward the ground in steps of 50 meters or so, pausing very briefly between steps. Often it branches as it goes down, which is why so many lightning bolts "fork". When the step leader nears the ground, it attracts "streamers" of positive charge from the ground. When it finally connects with one of these streamers, a brilliant *return stroke* occurs as the charge drains out of the ionized channel left by the step leader. The charge nearest the ground goes first, causing the return stroke to propagate upward. Often this is followed by another relatively faint cloud-to-ground *dart leader*, which is rapidly followed by another return stroke. This process can take place up to 40 times, which is why many lightning bolts are seen to flicker.

(*Lightning!* By Mark McEuen, www.owl.net.rice.edu/~geol108/mceuen/lightning/)

He even provided a crude sequence drawing of what the processed looks like. (next page)



Doesn't Evolution Disprove?

- Theory of Evolution contradicts the Bible
- However, Evolution is not a proven scientific fact like we've been told

Evolution and the Bible are not compatible. People have tried to reconcile them, but that is not necessary or desirable.

Evolution Violates Laws of Science

- 1st Law of Thermodynamics
 - Law of Energy Conservation
 - Energy can be converted from one form into another, but not created or destroyed
- 2nd Law of Thermodynamics
 - Law of Energy Decay
 - Every system left to its own devices tends to move from order to disorder
- Law of Biogenesis
 - Life only comes from pre-existing life
 - No spontaneous generation

Evolutionary Fantasies

Not only has paleontology failed to come up with the fossil “missing links” which Darwin anticipated, but hypothetical reconstructions of major evolutionary developments—such as that linking birds to reptiles—are beginning to look more like fantasies than serious conjectures.

(*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Dr. Michael Denton, inside jacket cover)

Contaminated evidence! Remember CSI Rule #2!

No Evolution of DNA!

The genetic code ... is now known to be a unique and invariant system of rules which is identical in every cell on earth. ... the genetic code is not led up to gradually through a sequence of transitional forms.

... The capacity of DNA to store information vastly exceeds that of any other known system....

(*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Dr. Michael Denton, pp. 108-109, 334)

"...[DNA] is so efficient that all the information needed to specify an organism as complex as man weighs less than a few thousand millionths of a gram." Denton, p. 334)

Information: Evidence of intelligence. SETI project (search for intelligent life in the universe).

Intelligent Design

- Many scientist are being compelled by the evidence to switch from the theory of Evolution to the theory of Intelligent Design.
- Example: Complexity of single life cell
- Acceptance is growing rapidly
- Not Christian or biblical, but does not exclude the possibility of creation as described in the Bible.

"By irreducibly complex I mean a single system composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning. An irreducibly complex system cannot be produced directly (that is, by continuously improving the initial function, which continues to work by the same mechanism) by slight, successive modifications of a precursor system, because any precursor to an irreducibly complex system that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional." Michael Behe, Associate Professor of Biochemistry at Lehigh University, 1996

Darwin said, "if it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down." (*Origin of Species*, 6th ed. (1988), p. 154)

Evolution → Intelligent Design → Christianity (Move them toward Christianity)

Outside the Realm of Science

- Evolution and Creation theories are both outside the realm of science in its real sense.
- No one there to observe it happening (other than God).
- Cannot reproduce it.
- Therefore, must theorize based on observable evidence.
- Both require an element of faith

No Witnesses!

By its very nature, evolution cannot be substantiated in the way that is usual in science by experiment and direct observation. Neither Darwin nor any subsequent biologist has ever witnessed the evolution of one new species as it actually occurs.

(*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Dr. Michael Denton, p. 55)

Scientific Method?

The concept of the continuity of nature [evolution] has existed in the mind of man, *never* in the facts of nature. In a very real sense, therefore, advocacy of the doctrine of continuity has always necessitated a retreat from pure empiricism [experimentation], and contrary to what is widely assumed by evolutionary biologists today, it has always been the anti-evolutionists, not the evolutionists, in the scientific community who have stuck rigidly to the facts and adhered to a more strictly empirical approach.

(*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Dr. Michael Denton, emphasis in original, pp. 353-354)

Empirical: Pertaining to, or founded upon, experiment or experience; depending upon the observation of phenomena; versed in experiments

Per Michael Denton (quoting T.S. Kuhn): "...a scientific theory is declared invalid only if an alternative candidate is available to take its place." ... The lack of any scientifically acceptable competitor leaves evolutionary biology in a state of crisis.... [*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, p. 356-7]

In his book, Dr. Michael Denton demonstrates that evolution is impossible using just about every approach possible. Dr. Denton is still an evolutionist because he does not have what he considers an acceptable replacement for evolution. That is the "crisis" in his book.

Evolution's Influence

The influence of evolutionary theory on fields far removed from biology is one of the most spectacular examples in history of how a highly speculative idea for which there is no really hard scientific evidence can come to fashion the thinking of a whole society and dominate the outlook of an age.

(*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Dr. Michael Denton, p. 358)

This is an incredible acknowledgment from an evolutionist!

The Evolutionary Myth

Ultimately the Darwinian theory of evolution is no more nor less than the great cosmogenic myth of the twentieth century.

The truth is that despite the prestige of evolutionary theory and the tremendous intellectual effort directed towards reducing living systems to the confines of Darwinian thought, nature refuses to be imprisoned. In the final analysis we still know very little about how new forms of life arise. The "mystery of mysteries" – the origin of new beings on earth – is still as enigmatic as when Darwin set sail on the *Beagle*.

[*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, Michael Denton, pp. 358-9]

We Can Trust the Bible!

"There is a good and sufficient answer in Scripture itself to refute every charge that has ever been leveled against it. But this is only to be expected from the kind of book the Bible asserts itself to be, the inscripturation of the infallible, inerrant Word of the Living God."

Dr. Gleason Archer, from *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*

Dr. Archer taught for over thirty years at the graduate seminary level in the field of biblical criticism. He had learned over 30 languages, most of them languages of Old Testament times in the Middle Eastern world. (*The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, p. 45)

Conclusion

Most alleged problems disappear upon closer examination or as more information is discovered. Some issues may remain unresolved. Even though the majority of evidence strongly supports the Bible's claims, there will always be room for faith.

This is true even in our legal system—there is always a point of faith where a judgment is made. That is why we have judges and juries—to evaluate the evidence and make the best decision. If the evidence was the last word, there would be no need for judges or juries. We would simply collect the evidence and assign the appropriate punishment based on the crime. But evidence, even in the legal world, is never 100% complete.

If a specific issue is troubling you, please research it in the following books or in other reputable sources. If you cannot resolve an issue continue to keep an open mind as you continue to look for more information (CSI Rules # 1, 5, & 6). But don't assume there are not adequate answers if you are not willing to spend the time necessary to properly research the evidence.

Evidence Resources

There are many scholars who have extensively investigated the Bible evidence. Some started out believing that the Bible could not be trusted (Josh McDowell, Lee Strobel), but changed their minds after reviewing the evidence. Following are some resources that I have found useful. There are also many other good ones available.

McDowell, Josh, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999 (ISBN: 0-7852-4219-8)

Morris, Henry M. Ph.D., *Many Infallible Proofs*, El Cajon, CA: Master Books, 1974 (ISBN: 0-89051-005-9)

McDowell, Josh and Don Stewart, *Answers to Tough Questions*, Wheaton, IL: Living Books, 1980 (ISBN: 0-8423-0021-X)

Strobel, Lee, *The Case for Faith*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000 (ISBN: 0-310-23469-7)

Strobel, Lee, *The Case for Christ*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998 (ISBN: 0-310-222655-4)

Geisler, Norman L., and Ronald M. Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask*, Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1990 (ISBN: 0-89693-766-6)

Bruce, F.F., *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977 (ISBN: 978-0-8028-2219-2)

Metzger, Bruce M., *The Canon of the New Testament, Its Origin, Development, and Significance*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987 (ISBN: 0-19-826954-4)

Denton, Michael, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, Bethesda, MD: Adler & Adler, 1985 (ISBN: 0-917561-05-8)

Illustra Media, *Unlocking the Mystery of Life*, DVD, 2002

Coldwater Media, LLC, *Icons of Evolution*, DVD, 2002

Morris, Henry & Gary Parker, *What is Creation Science?*, El Cajon, CA, Master Books, 1982 (ISBN: 0-89051-081-4)

Finding Light in Darkness – Session 3

How to Find Stuff in the Bible

By Sonny Bowman

What Do You Want to Find, and Why?

Think about it for a minute. In our western culture, we often think that getting an answer to solve a problem is the purpose of learning. However, in God's view, the purpose of learning is to fundamentally change the learner, instilling wisdom and understanding while developing godly character.

Wisdom *is* the principal thing; *Therefore* get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding. — Pr 4:7

This is the reason that Jesus sometimes answered questions with a question (Matthew 19:16-17). It's also why Jesus sometimes responded in ways that did not seem to address the statement or question asked (John 3:2-3).

Wisdom (the ability to judge and act according to God's ways) ...

- Is the most valuable of assets (Pr 4:7, 8:35)
- Is available to anyone, but the price is high (Pr 2:1-6, 8:12,17, 9:4-6)
- Originates in God, not self (Pr 1:7, 2:6, 3:5-6)
- Comes by attention to instruction (Pr 4:13, 8:33,

(from the *New Spirit Filled Life Bible*, p 803)

We must get beyond simply reacting to life's problems, trying to just survive one day to the next. In that mode, we tend to just look for quick answers to solve immediate problems. We cannot afford to relate to God and His Word that way!

We must take a proactive and intensive approach to knowing God and His Word, letting that transform our entire being.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. — Ro 12:1-2

What Do You Know Now?

- Draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper to form two columns
- On the left side, number the lines from 1 to 10.
- Write the name of the section or book of the Bible where you would begin when looking for the following passages?

Pre-Questions

1. When King David danced before the Lord while bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem
2. Jesus' teaching about the good Samaritan
3. The Ten Commandments
4. When the early Church began preaching to the Gentiles (non-Jews)
5. God's promise to bless Abraham
6. Teachings about wisdom (in general)
7. Instructions from the apostles on living a Christian life
8. The description of the final judgment of sinners
9. The story of the prophet Jonah being swallowed by a big fish
10. The story of the crucifixion of Jesus

Composition of the Bible

- Bible from Greek *biblia* meaning *books*
- 66 Books (OT 39, NT 27)
- More than 40 different human authors
- Written over 1,500 year period
- Composed on 3 different continents
- Written in 3 different languages
- Yet a unified message!

The Bible was written over a period of about 1,500 years by more than forty different human authors from a variety of backgrounds. (Joshua a military general, Daniel a prime minister, Peter a fisherman, Paul a religious leader, and Nehemiah a cupbearer.)

The biblical writings were composed on three different continents (Africa, Asia, and Europe), and in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek).

It is not just a collection of books. Though it speaks on many controversial subjects, there is a unified message and completed purpose throughout that reveals the hand of God in the writing and compilation of these works. From beginning to end, there is one unfolding story of God's plan of salvation for mankind through Jesus Christ.

In comparison, try to take ten people from your local area having similar backgrounds and speaking the same language. Separate them and ask them to write on only one controversial subject such as the meaning of life. When they finish, compare what they have written. Do they agree with each other? Of course not. Yet the Bible is internally consistent even though it speaks on many controversial subjects.

It can be helpful to understand the breakdown and arrangement of the various books of the Bible. This is especially helpful when you are searching for information in it. For example, if you want to find a verse about something that Jesus said, you would start with the four Gospels that record the life and teachings of Jesus.

Organization of the Bible

- Old Testament (39 books)
- New Testament (27 books)

Old Testament Organization

- The Law (5 books, Pentateuch, Torah)
 - ♦ Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- History (12 books, Former Prophets)
 - ♦ Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther
- Poetry (5 books, Wisdom)
 - ♦ Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon
- Major Prophets (5 books, longer)
 - ♦ Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel
- Minor Prophets (12 books, shorter)
 - ♦ Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

The Law: Also called: Torah, Pentateuch, Five Books of Moses

—Almost entirely written by Moses. Covers history from the creation through the time of Moses and the establishment of the nation of Israel. Includes the revelation of God to man along with the laws of God. It lays the foundation of God’s purposes, plans, and love for all of creation.

History: Also called: Former Prophets

—Documents the rise and fall of the nation of Israel. Covers the time when the Israelites enter the promise land (Canaan), through the divided kingdom (Judah and Israel) and to the return of the Israelites from Babylonian captivity.

Poetry: Also called: Wisdom

—instructive songs, poetry, and wisdom. Also deals with the problem of suffering. Much of it (except Job) was written by David and Solomon.

Major Prophets: [longer works]

—The prophets called the people back to the Lord while challenging ungodly beliefs and practices. They also announced God’s judgment when the people refused to repent. The “major” prophets are so designated because of the large physical size of their writings.

Minor Prophets: [shorter works]

—The prophets mainly called the people back to the Lord while challenging ungodly beliefs and practices. They also announced God’s judgment when the people refused to repent. The “minor” prophets are so designated because of the smaller physical size of their writings.

Between the Testaments

- About 400 years
- Rome conquered Israel and surrounding area

—There was a period of about 400 years from the time the last Old Testament book was completed until the birth of Jesus Christ. During this time, the Roman Empire conquered the nation of Israel setting the stage for the coming of the promised Messiah.

New Testament Organization

- Gospels (4 books, Synoptic plus John)
 - ♦ Matthew – to Jews, Jesus is Messiah, emphasized what Jesus taught

- ♦ **Mark – to Romans/Gentiles. Emphasized what Jesus did**
- ♦ **Luke –to Greeks. Accurate record of historical events.**
- ♦ **John – emphasized deity of Jesus.**
- **Acts (1 book)**
 - ♦ **Acts – history of the early Church**
- **Epistles (21 books, letters)**
 - ♦ **Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2, Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude**
- **Revelation (1 book, Apocalypse)**
 - ♦ **Revelation**

Gospels

—Four different accounts of the birth, life, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Each is written from a different perspective to provide a more complete picture when taken together.

Matthew – primarily written to the **Hebrews** (Jews) to demonstrate that Jesus is the **prophesied Messiah**. Matthew emphasized Jesus’ Jewish roots and what He taught.

Mark – Written by John Mark. primarily written for **Roman** (gentile, non-Jewish) **readers who appreciated government and power**. Mark emphasizes more of what Jesus did than what He said. It is an action-packed Gospel and often the first one translated into a new language.

Luke – primarily written for the **Greeks** who **appreciated culture, philosophy, wisdom, reason, beauty, and education**. Luke was especially careful to accurately record the historical events associated with Jesus.

John – John emphasized the **deity of Jesus**—that He is God in human form. More attention is given to the things Jesus said than what He did.

Acts: (History of the Early Church)

—Covers the activities of the Apostles and early Christians as the Church begins to take shape. It documents the spread of Christianity in Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, and to the end of the earth. It includes the life and work of Paul.

Epistles: (Letters to the Church and Christians)

—provide explanation and instruction for Christian living. Most were written by Paul (**Pauline Epistles**: Romans through Philemon). The traditional view is that **Hebrews** was also written by Paul, possibly in Hebrew, then translated into Greek by one of his aides. There are many who believe that Paul did not write Hebrews.

Pastoral Epistles: 1 & 2 Timothy plus Titus – instructions useful for church pastors

Revelation: Also called: Apocalypse (“destruction” or “revelation”)

—written by the Apostle John recording a vision in which Jesus revealed to him information about things to come. It includes details about the final days of the earth and universe, the judgment of sin, and eternity.

The Apocrypha

• **Group of 14 writings included in the Old Testament in the Septuagint and the Vulgate (also Roman Catholic versions)**

• **Not considered inspired by the Jews or Protestants**

• **Never quoted by Jesus or writers of the New Testament**

• **Should not be used in Bible study**

Also used of early writings not included in the New Testament

—The Apocrypha includes extra writings that are included in the Roman Catholic version of the Bible. They are not in the Hebrew version of the Old Testament, **nor were they ever quoted by Jesus and the writers of the New Testament.** They should not be considered as inspired Scripture.

Apocrypha from Greek words that mean *obscure* or *to hide away*.

According to Merriam-Webster (www.merriam-webster.com), apocrypha means...

Etymology: Medieval Latin, from Late Latin, neuter plural of *apocryphus* secret, not canonical, from Greek *apokryphos* obscure, from *apokryptein* to hide away, from *apo-* + *kryptein* to hide — more at crypt

Date: 14th century

1 : writings or statements of dubious authenticity

2 *capitalized a* : books included in the Septuagint and Vulgate but excluded from the Jewish and Protestant canons of the Old Testament ... **b** : early Christian writings not included in the New Testament

Bible Survey: Post Questions

- 1. When King David danced before the Lord while bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem**
History: 2 Samuel 6:12-15
- 2. Jesus' teaching about the good Samaritan**
Gospels: Luke 10:30-36
- 3. The Ten Commandments**
The Law: Exodus 20:1-17 & Deuteronomy 5:6-21
- 4. When the early Church began preaching to the Gentiles (non-Jews)**
Acts: Acts 10:24-48
- 5. God's promise to bless Abraham**
The Law: Genesis 15-17
- 6. Teachings about wisdom**
Poetry: Proverbs 1-4 (and others)
- 7. Instructions from the apostles on living a Christian life**
The Epistles: various
- 8. The description of the final judgment of sinners**
Apocalypse: Revelation 20:11-15
- 9. The story of the prophet Jonah being swallowed by a big fish**
Minor Prophets: Jonah 1:17
- 10. The story of the crucifixion of Jesus**
The Gospels: Matthew 27:31-56, Mark 15:20-41, Luke 23:26-49, and John 19:16-37

Bible Covers

- Paper
- Hard Back (good value/cost)
- Vinyl
- Bonded Leather (deteriorates)
- Genuine Bonded Leather (deteriorates)
- Genuine Leather (most durable cover)
- Leather Lined (most expensive)

- **Zippered Cover (protects any)**

Bonded leather is a similar process to making particle board or pressed wood like that used in cheaper furniture. Wood particles mixed with glue and shaped into boards. In time, it begins to come apart. Using the term “genuine bonded leather” is similar to saying “genuine wooden particle board”.

Common Bible Translations

- **CSB – Christian Standard Bible (2004)**
- **NLTse – *New Living Translation* (1996/2007)**
- **NKJV – *New King James Version* (1982)**
- **NIV – *New International Version* (1984)**
- **NASB – *New American Standard Bible* (1977)**
- **KJV or AV – *King James Version* (1611)**

Appears that Jesus and disciples read and quoted from a translation – the Septuagint – a Greek version of the Hebrew/Aramaic Bible (our Old Testament)

Bible Paraphrases (“Free” Translation)

- ***The Message* (1995)**
- ***Today’s English Version* (Good News Bible)**
- ***The Living Bible***

Specialty Bibles

- ***Amplified Bible* (1965)**
- **Parallel Bible (various)**
- ***One Year Bible***
- **Interlinear Greek New Testament**
- **Harmony of the Gospels**
- **Topical Bible (not true Bible)**

Examples of Study Bibles

- ***New Spirit Filled Life Bible* (NKJV)**
- ***The NIV Study Bible* (NIV)**
- ***Thompson Chain Reference* (NKJV, NIV, NASB, & KJV)**
- ***Ryrie Study Bible* (NASB, NIV, KJV)**
- ***The NASB New Inductive Study Bible***
Discover God Study Bible (NLT)
- **And others...**

There are other good study Bibles available with special themes or purposes. Notes reflect the philosophies and beliefs of the editors and contributors.

New Spirit Filled Life Bible – Charismatic, Past Foursquare President, Jack Hayford, was general editor

Discover God Study Bible – Calvinist leanings

Bibles Not Recommended (My personal opinion!)

- **New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**
 - ♦ Promotes Apocrypha
- **Dake Annotated Reference Bible**
 - ♦ Primarily a single person's comments
- **Scofield Study Bible**
 - ♦ Primarily a single person's comments
- **MacArthur Study Bible**
 - ♦ Primarily a single person's comments
- **TNIV & NIRV**
 - ♦ Politically correct, gender neutralized

TNIV – Today's New International Version

NIRV – The New International Reader's Version for children

What Makes a Study Bible?

- **Concordance**
- **Cross References**
- **Topical Reference**
- **Maps**
- **Tables and Charts**
- **Commentaries and Notes**

Highlighting Tips

- **Liquid highlighters bleed**
- **Soft, dry markers designed for Bibles**
- **Art pencils (good variety, inexpensive)**
- **Map colors (generally too hard)**

Possible Highlighting Colors

- **Brown – Jesus and God**
- **Red – Messiah (OT) & Salvation (NT)**
- **Purple – Identification with Christ**
- **Yellow – Holy Spirit**
- **Blue – Christian Living & General Info**
- **Orange – Blessings & Promises**
- **Green – End Times & Future**

Thumb Tabs

- Cut-in Tabs
- Add-on Tabs
- Advantages
 - ♦ Find books quicker
- Disadvantages
 - ♦ Interfere with page turning
 - ♦ Tend to deteriorate with time
 - ♦ Can damage pages

Concordances

- Inside study Bibles
- Strong's Exhaustive Concordance (KJV)*
- Cruden's Complete Concordance*
- Others

Will be specific to a particular translation, often the KJV

Concordance Exercise

- Find: where Jesus tells Peter to feed His sheep.
 - ♦ What section do you expect to begin with?
 - ♦ What word looked up? feed, sheep, Peter, Jesus
- Find: to live is Christ to die is gain
 - ♦ What section do you expect?
 - ♦ What word looked up? die, gain, live, Christ
- Find: love one another
 - ♦ What section do you expect?
 - ♦ What word looked up? Love, another, one

Expect to find in Gospels since Jesus is talking with Peter

Some words will provide a smaller list to review.

If remember surrounding words, can also search for them: lamb

John 21:15-17

#2 Epistles

Phil 1:21

#3 (harder) Gospels or Epistles

search "another" NKJV (1): John 13:34

Search "love" NKJV (5): John 13:35, John 15:12, Rom 13:8, (1 John 4:7), 1 John 4:12

With computer (NKJV) — found 13 verses

John 13:34, John 15:12, John 15:17, Romans 13:8, 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 1 Peter 1:22, 1 John 3:11, 1 John 3:23, 1 John 4:7, 1 John 4:11, 1 John 4:12, John 5

Cross References

- **Two Types**
 - ♦ Cross Reference
 - ♦ Chain Reference (*Thompson's...*)
- Useful for finding related verses.
- Helps determine what else the Bible says about material in the passage

Topical Bibles

- *Nave's Topical Bible*
- *The New Compact Topical Bible*
- Inside Bibles (e.g. Thompson Chain)

Audio Bibles

- **Go Bible & My-iBible**
 - ♦ MP3 player with Bible pre-loaded
 - ♦ NIV, NKJV, KJV, Spanish available
 - ♦ Selectable by verse
 - ♦ As low as \$50
- **Faith Comes by Hearing**
 - ♦ Free download (MP3)
 - ♦ Load into your own MP3 player
 - ♦ Many versions and languages
 - ♦ www.faithcomesbyhearing.com
- CD sets

Great for listening to the Bible.

Will hear things that you miss in reading.

Generally will listen to more than will read at a single sitting.

Can listen in the car, exercising, or doing other things.

Electronic Bibles

- **Computer Bibles**
 - ♦ eBible
 - ♦ QuickVerse
 - ♦ Others
- **Free Computer Bible with KJV**
 - ♦ www.e-sword.net/
 - ♦ Can buy other translations
- **Be sure it has your favorite translation!**
 - ♦ KJV, NKJV, NLT, and others in most
 - ♦ NIV often requires additional cost

Cheaper than buying all the books and Bibles in hard copies.

Much easier to find stuff than with a hard copy.

Look for discontinued editions. Often get them fairly inexpensively

Generally, get the Basic edition – it contains most books needed

Can pay and unlock other books if needed, but cheaper to buy premium set if very many need to be unlocked.

Be sure that it includes your translation of choice in the unlocked set.

Phone & PDA Bibles

- **Olive Tree (free reader & many free Bibles)**

- **Hendricksons Bundle (\$30)**

- ♦ Strong's Concordance
- ♦ Nave's Topical Bible
- ♦ Expository Dictionary of Bible Words
- ♦ Torrey's New Topical Textbook
- ♦ Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary
- ♦ Gray's Commentary
- ♦ Smith's Bible Dictionary
- ♦ International Standard Bible Encyclopedia
- ♦ Edershiem's 4-volume History of OT
- ♦ Young's Literal Translation, maps, etc.

- **Also by eBible & QuickVerse**

Available for iPhone, Blackberry, Android, Windows Mobile, and Palm

Also programs by others such as QuickVerse, eBible, etc.

When buy NKJV, NIV, NLT, and other translations, have to pay a royalty fee.

Mine has...

twelve Bible translations including NKJV, NLT, KJV, Amplified, and one in Greek

Hendricksons Bundle

Online Bible Resources

- **Olive Tree – search & lots of features**

- ♦ www.olivetree.com/bible/

- **Crosswalk – search several versions and tools**

- ♦ <http://biblestudy.crosswalk.com/>

- **Bible Gateway – search several versions**

- ♦ www.BibleGateway.com

- **ebible.com (not same as eBible program)**

- ♦ www.ebible.com

Cheapest route if have internet already

Caution: Can find teachings on Internet to support almost anything!

Electronic Search Tips

- For electronic Bibles & Internet searches...
 - ♦ Life Foursquare Church (62,700)
- AND = all words, any order
 - ♦ Life AND Foursquare AND Church (378,000)
- Phrase = all words, precise order
 - ♦ “Life Foursquare Church” (7,460)
- Not = eliminate parts
 - ♦ “Life Foursquare Church” –angleton (42,600)
- Plus = add parts
 - ♦ “Life Foursquare Church” +angleton (1,150)

Parenthesis show found pages when the indicated search string was entered into Google (2010).

Phrase search (with quote marks) is often the most helpful

Commentaries and Notes

- Section headings and bottom of pages
- Often helpful, especially in explaining the historical setting and related traditions
- May contain references to other related verses
- Not infallible – use sparingly!

Section headings are not part of the inspired Scripture. They are commentaries that summarize the section immediately following.

Chapters and verses were not in the originals, added later to help locate passages. In the OT, verses were added fairly early, but chapters not until 13th century. Added to NT in 16th century by Robert Stephens while on horseback from Paris to Lyons.

Additional Helps

•Dictionaries (Lexicons)

- ♦ English
- ♦ Bible
- ♦ Greek
- ♦ Hebrew

•Bible Encyclopedias

Vine’s Greek definitions

Caution: Some opinions expressed in Vine’s do not agree with Scripture.

Internal in the New Spirit Filled Life Bible (selected)

Homework

- Use a concordance to find...
 - ♦ Saved through faith... it is the gift of God
 - ♦ Don't lean on your own understanding
- Use a cross reference to find the...
 - ♦ OT prophecy about Bethlehem in Matt 2:6
 - ♦ Stoning of Paul mentioned in 2 Cor 11:25
- Use a concordance, topical Bible, Bible dictionary, or Bible encyclopedia to find...
 - ♦ At least two passages about the Trinity

Answers next week...

Finding Light in Darkness – Session 4

Understanding Stuff You Find in the Bible

By Sonny Bowman

Concordance Exercise (from Session 3)

- **Find: where Jesus tells Peter to feed His sheep.**
 - ♦ **What section do you expect to begin with?**
 - ♦ **What word looked up? feed, sheep, Peter, Jesus**
- **Find: to live is Christ, to die is gain**
 - ♦ **What section do you expect?**
 - ♦ **What word looked up? die, gain, live, Christ**
- **Find: love one another**
 - ♦ **What section do you expect?**
 - ♦ **What word looked up? Love, another, one**

#1 - Expect to find in Gospels since Jesus is talking with Peter. Some words will provide a smaller list to review. If remember surrounding words, can also search for them: lamb.

John 21:15-17

#2 - Expect to find in the Epistles.

Phil 1:21

#3 - (this one's harder) Expect to find in Gospels or Epistles

search "another" NKJV (1): John 13.34

Homework Review

- **Use a concordance to find...**
 - ♦ **There's freedom where the Spirit of Lord is**
 - ♦ **Don't lean on your own understanding**
- **Use a chain reference to find the...**
 - ♦ **OT prophecy about Bethlehem in Matt. 2:6**
 - ♦ **Stoning of Paul's mentioned in 2 Cor. 11:25**
- **Use a concordance, topical Bible, Bible dictionary, or Bible encyclopedia to find...**
 - ♦ **At least two passages about the Trinity**

Concordance: Ephesians 2:8 & Proverbs 3:5

Chain Reference: Micah 5:2 (Bethlehem) & Acts 14:19

Trinity: Matt 28:19, 2 Cor 13:14, Isa 48:16, 1 Cor 12:3-6, Matt 3:16-17, others

Single Most Serious Problem

- "It ain't the parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand." (*Mark Twain / 1835-1910 / in The "Wit and Wisdom, of Mark Twain of Alex Ayres / 1987*)
- **Not a lack of understanding, but obedience.**
 - ♦ **Do all things without complaining and disputing, — Philippians 2:14**

CAUTION: Mark Twain apparently did not believe in God or the Bible, but his quote is insightful.

How many of us consistently obey Philippians 2:14?

Two Tasks

- **Exegesis**
 - ♦ **Find out what the original text meant**
- **Hermeneutics**
 - ♦ **Determine how that meaning applies today**

Hermeneutics in classical sense covers both tasks: exegesis and application. We will use it in a narrower sense of determining application only.

What the text meant in the past is an essential key to determining what it means to us today (application).

Common sense is an important tool.

God gave the Bible for all to read and understand, not just the smart people. God speaks for all to hear!

... And the common people heard Him gladly. — Mk 12:37

Exegesis

- **Do not have to be an expert.**
- **Key to good exegesis...**
 - ♦ **Begin with prayer**
 - ♦ **Learn to read the text carefully**
 - ♦ **Learn to ask the right questions of the text.**

Exegesis is the careful, systematic study of the Scripture to discover the original, intended meaning. What was the original intent of the words of the Bible.

Holy Spirit inspired the writers and will open your understanding.

1 Corinthians 2:10-12 — But God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

The Right Questions

- **Context**
 - ♦ **Historical**
 - **What is the time and culture of author and readers?**
 - **What is the geographical, cultural, & political setting?**
 - **What is the occasion and purpose of the book (internal)?**
 - ♦ **Literary**
 - **What's the point?**
 - **What is the author saying and why does he or she say it right here?**
- **Content**
 - ♦ **Questions of meaning**
 - **What do the words mean?**

Historical: Occasion and purpose of the book is the more important question of historical context. Answer usually found in the book itself. May need to consult outside sources (Bible notes, dictionary, encyclopedia, and commentary) for answers to the second two historical question areas. Many study Bibles have a good summary of information at the beginning of each book.

Literary:

Content: Words only have meaning in sentences. For the most part, Bible sentences only have meaning in relation to preceding and succeeding sentences.

Historical Context

- **Most study Bibles have useful information at beginning of each book**
 - ♦ **Author**
 - ♦ **Date written**
 - ♦ **Theme**
 - ♦ **Key words**
 - ♦ **Background (history)**
 - ♦ **Occasion and purpose**
 - ♦ **Characteristics**
 - ♦ **Content**
 - ♦ **Outline**
 - ♦ **Etc.**
- **Also available in commentaries, Bible encyclopedias and other resources**

Look at beginning of **Book of Galatians** in a good study Bible for an example of typical information available. Remember: These are men's opinions, and do not carry the same weight as the actual, inspired Word of God.

Literary Context

- **Verses before and after**
 - ♦ **20/20 Rule**
- **Chapter or section**

- Entire Book
- Other related verses
- Bible as a whole

20/20 Rule (20/20 vision): to see a verse clearly in context, you need to read 20 verses before it and 20 verses after it.

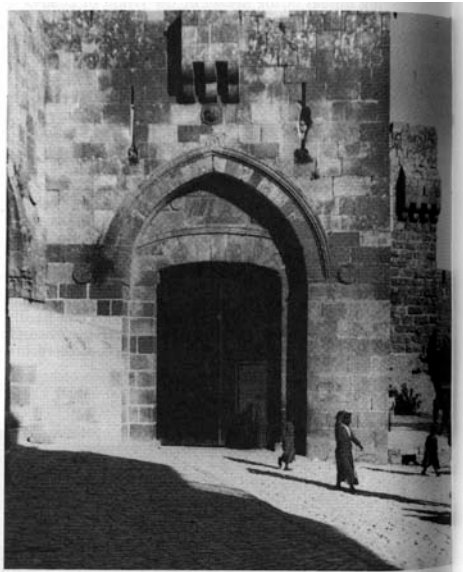
Other Related Verses: Find using cross references, topical Bibles, and commentaries.

Example: Eye of the Needle

- Mark 10:25
 - ♦ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

What is the eye of a needle?

It's a Small Gate



- The Jaffa Gate in the wall of Jerusalem, showing the “Needle’s Eye.” Small doors such as this were common features of the gates of ancient cities; humans could pass through easily, but large animals, such as camels, had to be unloaded and kneel to get through, even then with difficulty.

© MPS ,*The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, 1967, Zondervan, p. 578

Some Bible experts have said that “the eye of a needle” refers to a small gate in Jerusalem call the “Needle’s Eye” through which a camel could get through with difficulty only by unloading its cargo and kneeling.

It's Not a Small Gate

- It is often said that there was a gate in Jerusalem known as the “Needle’s Eye,” which camels could go through only by kneeling, and with great difficulty. The point of this “interpretation” is that a camel could in fact go through the “Needle’s Eye.” The trouble with this “exegesis,” however, is that it is simply not true. There never was such a gate in Jerusalem at any time in its history. The earliest known “evidence” for that idea is found in the eleventh century (!), in a commentary by a Greek churchman named Theophylact....

How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth, Gordon D. Fee & Douglas Stuart, 1982, Zondervan, p. 22

Other Bible experts say the “eye of a needle” is not a small gate. (Note: This is the same publisher as for the book that said it was a small gate.)

Only the Bible can be trusted as the inspired Word of God. Authorities and experts can and will be wrong sometimes. How can we know which is right?

Eye of the Needle

- **Mark 10:25**
 - ♦ **It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” Did Jesus mean a small gate?**
- **What is the immediate context?**
 - ♦ **Mark 10:23-27**
- **What does it say?**
 - ♦ **Read through twice**
 - ♦ **Summarize main points**
- **What does it mean?**
 - ♦ **What is the main point Jesus is making?**
 - ♦ **Vs. 24 – extremely difficult for those who trust in riches to be saved**
- **What clue do we have in verses 26-27?**
 - ♦ **Disciples and Jesus understood it as impossible!**

Check the Context:

Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, “How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!” And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, “Children, **how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God!** It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” And they were **greatly astonished**, saying among themselves, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said, “With men it is **impossible**, but not with God; for with God all things are possible.” — Mark 10:23-27

Clue:

In vs. 26, the disciples were **greatly astonished**.

In Mark 10:27, Jesus described it as something impossible. Jesus used the illustration to **illustrate an absurdity**. That is not the case with the gate theory.

(compare: Blind guides, who strain out a **gnat and swallow a camel!** — **Matthew 23:24**)

The idea of applying “the needle’s eye” to small gates seems to be a modern one; there is no ancient trace of it. The Lord’s object in the statement is to express human impossibility and there is no need to endeavor to soften the difficulty by taking the needle to mean anything more than the ordinary instrument. Mackie points out (*Hastings Bib. Dic.*) that “an attempt is sometimes made to explain the words as a reference to the small door, a little over 2 feet square, in the large heavy gate of a walled city. This mars the figure without materially altering the meaning, and receives no justification from the language and traditions of Palestine.”

Vine, W. E., Unger, M. F., & White, W. (1996). *Vine's complete expository dictionary of Old and New Testament words* (Vol. 2, Page 429). Nashville: T. Nelson.

Non-Biblical “Scriptures”

- **God helps them that help themselves**
 - ♦ from Poor Richard’s Almanac (Ben Franklin)
- **Cleanliness is next to godliness**
 - ♦ An old Hebrew proverb. Used by John Wesley
- **Money is the root of all evil.**
 - ♦ Misquote: Love of money... 1 Timothy 6:10

Watch Out for... PRIDE!

Must be careful not to be critical of experts or anyone who maybe has not seen some things that you have.

Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other. For who makes you differ *from another*? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive *it*, why do you boast as if you had not received *it*? — 1 Corinthians 4:6-7

Good Translations

- **Important to use a good translation**
- **Best to use more than one good translation for study**

Often best to concentrate on one translation for reading and memorizing.

Translation Types

- **Literal (may be printed by verses) keeps as close as possible to exact words & phrases**
 - ♦ NASB (New American Standard Bible)
 - ♦ KJV (King James Version, or AV – Authorized Version)
 - ♦ NKJV (New King James Version)
- **Dynamic Equivalent (printed by paragraphs) words, idioms, etc., into precise equivalents**
 - ♦ HCSB (Christian Standard Bible)
 - ♦ NIV (New International Version)
 - ♦ NLT (New Living Translation)
- **Free (paragraphs, may not have verse numbers) attempts to translate ideas into new language**
 - ♦ The Living Bible
 - ♦ The Message

Literal: Also called “Word-for-Word”

Keep as close as possible to the exact words and phrasing in the original language, yet still make sense in the new language. Keeps the historical distance intact at all points (e.g., use shekel instead of converting to modern equivalent). (May be printed in paragraphs in electronic versions.)

Dynamic Equivalent: Also called “Thought-for-Thought”

Attempts to translate words, idioms, and grammatical constructions of the original language into precise equivalents in the new language. Keeps historical distance on all historical and most factual matter, but “updates” matters of language, grammar, and style.

Free: Also called “Paraphrase”

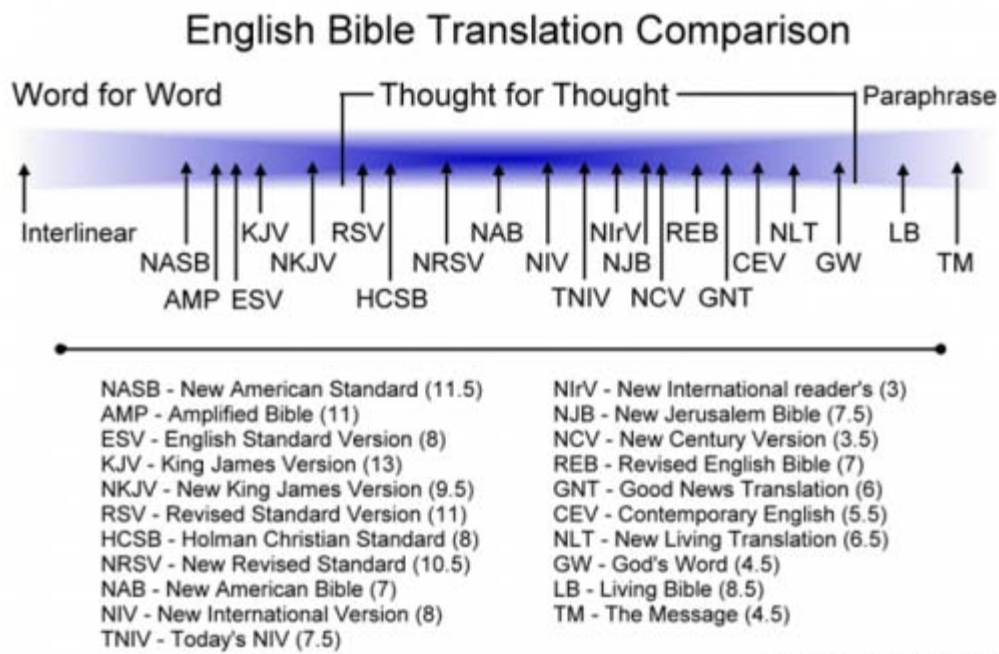
Attempts to translate the ideas from one language to another with less concern about using the exact words of the original. It attempts to eliminate as much of the historical distance as possible.

Translators are not always consistent, but one of these theories will govern the translator’s basic approach to their task.

For studying, recommend one from Literal and one from Dynamic Equivalent categories. There are others besides these (see next slide).

A general idea of the translation type can be obtained by looking at the way a Bible prints the verses. If each verse begins a new line, it is probably a literal (word for word) translation. If the text is printed with some verse numbers in the middle of a paragraph format, it is probably a Dynamic Equivalent (thought for thought) translation. If there are no verse numbers listed in the text paragraphs, it is probably a free (paraphrase) translation.

Relative Translation Positions



(c) 2007 Brent MacDonald, LTM

Order: Left to Right – Literal (Word for Word) to Dynamic (Thought for Thought) to Free (Paraphrase)...

Taken from <http://defendingcontending.com/2009/08/31/bible-translation-comparison-chart/>

Philippians 2:1-4

- **KJV** – If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.
- **NKJV** – Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.
- **NIV** – If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.
- **NLT** – Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and sympathetic? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one heart and purpose.
- **TM** – If you’ve gotten anything at all out of following Christ, if his love has made any difference in your life, if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you, if you have a heart, if you care—then do me a favor: Agree with each other, love each other, be deep-spirited friends.

Translation Tidbit

- **John 18:4-6** — ..., “Whom are you seeking?” They answered Him, “Jesus of Nazareth.” Jesus said to them, “I am *He*.” And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, “I am *He*,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

We often use italics to emphasize words. However, in many Bible translations, italics are used to indicate words that have been added by the translators to help make some passages easier to understand.

It is interesting to read the passage without the italicized words sometimes.

“I AM” is the name God used for Himself!

Exodus 3:14 — And God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’ ”

Biblical Communication Types

- ♦ **Narrative history** (stories of historical events)
- ♦ **Genealogies** (list of ancestral descent)
- ♦ **Chronicles** (chronological record of events)
- ♦ **Laws** of all kinds
- ♦ **Poetry** of all kinds

- ♦ **Proverbs (short, profound sayings)**
- ♦ **Prophetic oracles (Words of God via prophets)**
- ♦ **Riddles**
- ♦ **Drama**
- ♦ **Biographical sketches (individual's life overview)**
- ♦ **Parables (short allegorical story showing truth)**
- ♦ **Letters**
- ♦ **Sermons**
- ♦ **Apocalypses (divine revelation)**

There are many types of communication in the Bible... Important to recognize the type of communication for proper understanding of what it says and means.

Allegory: A representation of an abstract or spiritual meaning through concrete or material forms. A symbolic narrative.

Hebrew poetry form is different from modern poetry.

Approximately one-third of the Old Testament is written in poetry. This includes entire books (except for short prose sections), such as Job, Psalms, Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, and Lamentations. Large portions of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Minor Prophets are also poetic in form and content. Many scholars consider the Book of Job to be not only the greatest poem in the Old Testament but also one of the greatest poems in all literature.

Poetic elements such as assonance, alliteration, and rhyme - so common to poetry as we know it today - occur rarely in Hebrew poetry; these are not essential ingredients of Old Testament poetry. Instead, the essential formal characteristic of Hebrew poetry is parallelism. This is a construction in which the content of one line is repeated, contrasted, or advanced by the content of the next - a type of sense rhythm characterized by thought arrangement rather than by word arrangement or rhyme.

Very little poetry is found in the New Testament, except poetry quoted from the Old Testament or hymns which were included in the worship services of the early church.

(Above quote from: www.angelfire.com/sc3/we_dig_montana/Poetry.html)

Type Influences Interpretation

- **The type of literature used for communication in the book or passage affects the way it should be interpreted and understood.**
- **Poetry should be evaluated differently than Epistles**
- **Your teeth are like a flock of sheep which have come up from the washing.... — Song of Solomon 6:6**

Epistles

- **Epistles were written to address specific situations or occasions.**
- **Must be careful to distinguish principles that apply universally from instances that apply only to their immediate situation.**

Types of Laws

- **Moral Laws**
 - ♦ Always valid in all circumstances
 - Shall not murder
 - Shall not commit adultery
 - Shall not steal
 - Love your neighbor as yourself
- **Ceremonial Laws**
 - ♦ Apply only to specified occasions or circumstances
 - Feast of Tabernacles
 - Animal sacrifices

Moral Laws: Exodus 20:1-7 & Matt 22:35-40

Ceremonial Laws: Feast of Tabernacles or Ingathering (booths) kept for 7 days in the Fall where the Israelites constructed temporary shelters to live in for seven days to remind them of their nomadic travels between leaving Egypt and entering the land of promise.

Animal sacrifices – done away by sacrifice of Jesus. Hebrews 10:1-10, 18

The Three “Whats”

- **What does it say?**
 - ♦ Observation (exegesis)
 - ♦ Consider words used, circumstances involved, and context to determine what is being said.
- **What did it mean?**
 - ♦ Interpretation (exegesis)
 - ♦ Broaden the context, consider the motivation and the reactions to determine what was meant.
- **So what?**
 - ♦ Application (hermeneutics)
 - ♦ Evaluate how the message of the passage can and should affect daily decisions and life.

This is similar to the **Inductive Bible Study** technique described in *The New Inductive Study Bible*, © 2000 by Precept Ministries International. Compiled by K. Arthur

Says vs. Meant

- **Difference between what a verse says and what it meant.**
 - ♦ Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.” And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “It is because we have taken no bread.” — Matthew 16:5-7
- **Job of exegesis to find out what it says and what it meant.**

Jesus warned disciples against *leaven* of Pharisees, but did not mean the *yeast* that is used to make bread. Disciples tried to understand what Jesus meant by considering the context. However, they considered only the immediate context where they forgot to take bread.

Observation: What to Ask

- Ask the standard observation questions
 - ♦ Who
 - ♦ What
 - ♦ When
 - ♦ Where
 - ♦ Why
 - ♦ How
- 5 W's and an H

These questions help with observations. As you practice asking them of passages, they help you develop your ability to observe what is being said and meant.

Typical “Who” Questions

- Who
 - ♦ Who is speaking?
 - ♦ Who is this about?
 - ♦ To whom is it addressed?
 - ♦ Who are the main characters?
- In Matthew 16:5-7
 - ♦ Now when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said to them, “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.” And they reasoned among themselves, saying, “It is because we have taken no bread.”

Speaking: Jesus & disciples

About: Pharisees & Sadducees

To whom: Disciples & disciples to each other

Characters: Jesus, disciples, Pharisees, & Sadducees

Typical “What” Questions

- What
 - ♦ What is happening?
 - ♦ What was said?
 - ♦ What was done?
 - ♦ What led to the situation?
- In Matthew 16:5-7

Happening: Traveling by boat, arrived at shore

Said: Beware of leaven... We have no bread...

Done: Jesus warned disciples, Disciples tried to figure out what He meant

Lead to: encounter with Pharisees & Sadducees, traveling by boat, forgot to take bread/food

Typical “When” Questions

- **When**
 - ♦ **When did this occur (time, season, event)?**
 - ♦ **When will something take place?**
 - ♦ **When will it end?**

When: after arriving by boat on other side of lake (16:4-5)

future – watch out for Pharisees & Sadducees leaven

“Where” Questions

- **Helpful to find more information**
 - ♦ **Broaden the range – Matthew 15:32 to 16:13**
 - ♦ **Parallel passages – Mark 8:1-27**
- **We learn...**
 - ♦ **Miraculously fed 4,000 near Sea of Galilee**
 - ♦ **Got in boat, crossed Sea of Galilee**
 - ♦ **Came to Dalmanutha/Magdala (western shore)**
 - ♦ **Pharisees disputed and asked for sign**
 - ♦ **Got back in boat, crossed Sea of Galilee (to northeast shore)**
 - ♦ **Forgot to take bread with them**
 - ♦ **Jesus warns about leaven of Pharisees**
 - ♦ **Healed a blind man in Bethsaida**
 - ♦ **Went on to Caesarea Philippi**

Need to broaden the range to answer the “where” questions. Since this is in the Gospels, may find a parallel account.

Map is also helpful. Bethsaida was near the Sea of Galilee on the northeast side. Caesarea Philippi is about 25 miles north of Bethsaida.

Typical “Where” Questions

- **Where**
 - ♦ **Where did this take place?**
 - ♦ **Where was it said?**
 - ♦ **Where did they come from?**
 - ♦ **Where are they going?**
- **In Matthew 16:5-7**

Take place: Northeast shore of Sea of Galilee near Bethsaida

Where Said: between place where boat arrived and Bethsaida

Came from: Dalmanutha/Magdala on western shore of Sea of Galilee

Going to: Bethsaida, then Caesarea Philippi

Typical “Why” Questions

- **Why**
 - ♦ **Why was it done?**
 - ♦ **Why was it said?**
 - ♦ **Why did it happen? (or will happen)**
 - ♦ **Why the people involved?**
 - ♦ **Why at this time?**
- **In Matthew 16:5-7**

Why the disciples: Jesus training them for the Kingdom work

Why this time: Just had encounter with Pharisees and Sadducees’ deceptive tactics

Typical “How” Questions

- **How**
 - ♦ **How was it said or done?**
 - ♦ **How did the people react?**
 - ♦ **How many were affected?**
 - ♦ **How far did it go?**
 - ♦ **How will it happen or how often?**
- **In Matthew 16:5-7**

How said: seriously, warning

React: confused, tried to figure it out

How many: Not listed, but at least the 12 who followed Jesus

How far: long enough for the disciples to go aside and discuss among themselves

Context

- **Context includes...**
 - ♦ **Surrounding verses**
 - ♦ **The book it is in**
 - **Chapter notes for book background & purpose**
 - **Type of book (poetry, history, etc.)**
 - ♦ **Related verses elsewhere**
 - ♦ **The entire Bible**
- **Context is critical**
 - ♦ **“There is no God” Psalm 14:1**
 - ♦ **“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God’”**

You cannot properly understand what a verse means without considering its context. Often, getting the context is as simple as reading a few verses before and after the particular verse. As you spend time regularly reading the Bible, you also develop a growing understanding of the overall biblical context.

This is similar to putting a 10,000 piece puzzle together. At first it can be confusing, but as you get more and more pieces in place, it gets increasingly easier to see how new pieces fit in.

Recommend at least one chapter a day from OT and NT. May be helpful to read OT first time through in paraphrase or New Living Translation.

Bible needs to become your best friend—very familiar with it.

Jesus Uses Context

- **But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, “O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you have brought no bread? Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—but to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees. — Matthew 16:8-12**

Reminds them about two different times when He multiplied the bread to feed the multitudes with bread left over. Points out that He is not concerned by a lack of bread and wants to know why they are hung up on it.

The immediate, worldly condition (took no bread with them) was blinding them to the meaning of what Jesus was saying. Once they saw the bigger context, they understood that the “leaven” Jesus spoke of meant the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

What Did It Mean?

- **Interpret literally whenever possible.**
- **Symbols**
- **Figures of Speech**
- **Parables**

Leaven is obviously not intended literally in this passage. It is used figuratively of the doctrine of the Pharisees

Symbols

- **A picture or an object that stands for or represents another thing.**
 - ♦ **Leaven represents doctrine (Matthew 16:6)**
 - ♦ **Seven candlesticks represent seven churches (Rev 1:20)**
- **An item used as a symbol can symbolize different things.**
 - ♦ **Water symbolizes the Word of God (Eph 5:26)**

- ♦ Water symbolizes the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39)
- In a given passage only a single parallel is intended.
 - ♦ Water symbolizes the Holy Spirit in John 7:37-39, not the Word of God

Figures of Speech

- **Metaphor**
 - ♦ An implied comparison between two things that are different. Words of comparison (like, as, so is,...) are not used.
 - ♦ John 6:48 “I am the bread of life.”
- **Simile**
 - ♦ An expressed comparison of two different things or ideas that uses the words *like*, *as*, *as...so is*, and/or *such as*.
 - ♦ Rev. 1:14b “His eyes were like a flame of fire.”
- **Hyperbole**
 - ♦ A deliberate exaggeration for effect or emphasis.
 - ♦ Ps 119:20 “My soul is crushed with longing”
- **Personification**
 - ♦ An object is given characteristics or attributes that belong to people.
 - ♦ Isa 55.12 – trees clap hands, mountains sing
- **Irony**
 - ♦ A statement which says the opposite of what is meant. Irony is used for emphasis and effect.
 - ♦ 1 Cor 4:8 – already filled, become rich, become kings without us...
 - ♦ Try it first as a true statement. Then try it as figurative irony. Accept which one makes best sense and fits the context.

Corinthians were not really already filled, had not already become rich, nor had they become kings.

You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!
— 1 Corinthians 4:8

Parables

- A story (not usually factual) that is true to life and teaches a moral lesson or truth.
- Must consider the context to understand it
- Determine the main point communicated
- Avoid conclusions not intended by the original context

Parable: The Rich Fool

♦ Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: “The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?’ So he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be

merry.” ’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ “So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” — Luke 12:16-21

What is it NOT saying? This parable is not saying...

It is wrong to prosper from your investments

It is wrong to put money in a retirement plan

It is wrong to build bigger

God will kill you if you prosper

Context: Luke 12:13-34

What issues does it address? It is addressing...

the issues of covetousness and materialism

Worry or fear about your needs being met

Seeking God and His Kingdom is more important than building your own kingdom.

Conclusion: verse 21. It is a serious mistake to invest in this life only.

Hermeneutics

- **To ask questions about the Bible’s meaning in the “here and now”**
 - ♦ Application
- **Must begin with good exegesis**
 - ♦ **What a passage means to us now must begin with what it meant at the time and occasion which it was spoken or written.**

Hermeneutics: the science of interpretation, esp. of the Scriptures. (to) make clear, interpret. In the classical sense, hermeneutics includes exegesis and application. Here, we are using it in a narrower sense of determining the application only.

Bring My Cloak

- **Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments. — 2 Timothy 4:13**
- **Who?**
 - ♦ Paul, Timothy, & Carpus
- **What?**
 - ♦ Cloak, books, & parchments
- **Why?**
 - ♦ It’s getting cold soon. “Do your utmost to come before winter.” — 2 Timothy 4:21
- **Application?**
 - ♦ None for us today – only to Timothy

Who: Paul and Timothy

Why: Paul needed his cloak and documents that he stored with Carpus at Troas. See v 21 where Paul is urging Timothy to come before winter when he will need the cloak due to cold weather.

Application: Does not have an application for today. We are not being commanded to bring Paul's cloak and documents to him.

We naturally are involved in exegesis and hermeneutics in regularly using common sense to determine what passages apply to us today and which only applied in the setting in which they were given.

So What?

- **Application**
 - ♦ **What different should it make to me?**
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17**
 - ♦ **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.**
- **Scripture is given for a purpose.**
- **Doctrine**
 - ♦ **What the Word of God says about a particular subject. It is always true.**
- **Reproof**
 - ♦ **Exposes areas in your thinking and behavior that do not align with God's Word. Repent.**
- **Correction**
 - ♦ **Adjust your thinking and behavior to align with God's Word.**
- **Training in Righteousness**
 - ♦ **The Bible is also a handbook for living.**
Scripture has a purpose – to be applied to our lives

Summary

- **Begin with prayer**
- **Identify immediate context**
- **Read through twice**
- **What does it say?**
- **Identify larger context**
 - ♦ **The section, the book, the entire Bible**
- **Locate related verses**
 - ♦ **Cross references, topical Bible, etc.**
- **What did it mean to speaker/hearers?**
- **What principles apply today?**
- **What changes do I need to make?**

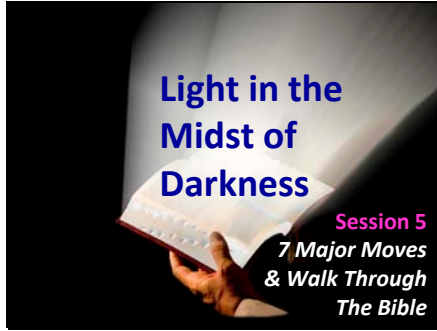
Be Like the Bereans

- **Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.**

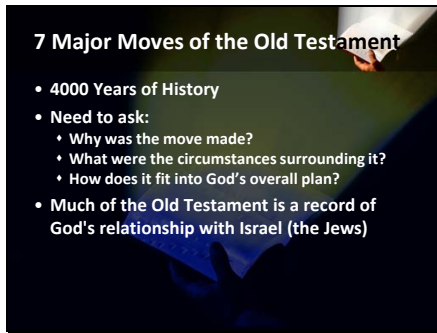
When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so. Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. — Acts 17:10-12

Be always ready to adjust your beliefs to match the Bible rather than adjust the Bible to match your beliefs!

Slide 1



Slide 2



Slide 3



Slide 4

- Eden
- Tigris
- Euphrates
- Babylon
- Haran
- Jordan River
- Sea of Galilee
- Dead Sea
- Red Sea
- Mount Sinai
- Moab

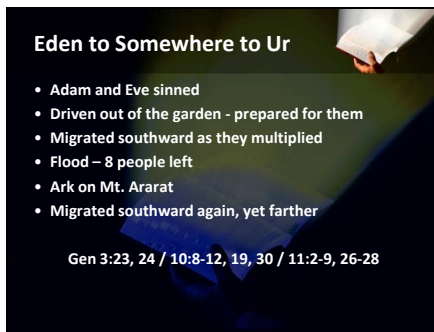


Slide 5

Eden to Somewhere to Ur

- Adam and Eve sinned
- Driven out of the garden - prepared for them
- Migrated southward as they multiplied
- Flood – 8 people left
- Ark on Mt. Ararat
- Migrated southward again, yet farther

Gen 3:23, 24 / 10:8-12, 19, 30 / 11:2-9, 26-28

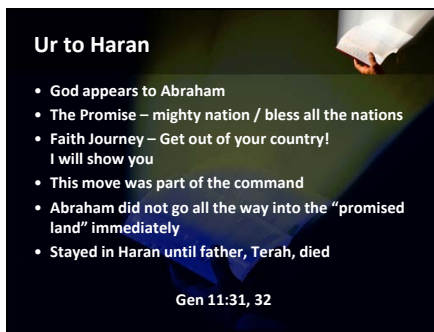


Slide 6

Ur to Haran

- God appears to Abraham
- The Promise – mighty nation / bless all the nations
- Faith Journey – Get out of your country!
I will show you
- This move was part of the command
- Abraham did not go all the way into the “promised land” immediately
- Stayed in Haran until father, Terah, died

Gen 11:31, 32



Slide 7

Haran to Israel

- God renewed the commission
- Abraham was on the move again
- God began to grow the "nation"
- 25 years since promise – Isaac born

Gen 12:1-9

Slide 8

Israel to Egypt

- Began when Joseph was sold by his brothers
- An act of God with long range consequences
- Joseph was blessed – Pharaoh's dream interpreted
- 7 years of plenty / 7 years of drought
- Storehouses were opened – Joseph's family came
- Forgiveness & the "God Filter"
- Joseph had entire family brought to Egypt
- 400 Years were spent in Egypt

Gen 37:1-36 / 41:14 - 47:12

Slide 9

Egypt to Israel

- For a time Joseph's family was treated royally
- There arose a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph
- Drastic changes – Egypt in fear of growing "nation"
- Oppression & Suppression of Israel
- Fervent prayer for deliverance
- God's answer: Moses
- Signs and Miracles
- 40 years to complete the journey

Ex 1:1 – 14:31 / Ex / Num / Deut / Josh 1:1 – 4:24

Slide 10



Israel to Babylon

- 1000 years after the return to Israel
- Nebuchadnezzar
- Remained in exile 70 years

2 Kngs 24:1 – 25:21 / 2 Chron 36:5-21

Slide 11

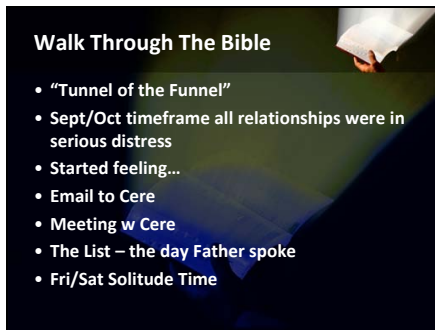


Babylon to Israel

- Before Judah taken captive, prophets warned them to repent & return to God or be taken captive
- Prophets also told after 70 years restoration
- As 70 yrs neared end, Babylon overthrown by Persians
- Cyrus, king of Persians, released Israel
- Returned to Jerusalem "right on time"

2 Chron 36:22-23 / Ezra 1:1 – 2:70

Slide 12



Walk Through The Bible

- "Tunnel of the Funnel"
- Sept/Oct timeframe all relationships were in serious distress
- Started feeling...
- Email to Cere
- Meeting w Cere
- The List – the day Father spoke
- Fri/Sat Solitude Time

Slide 13

Walk Through The Bible

- **Finally realized:**
 - It's not enough to know the Word and teach the Word, it must become infused with who we are to influence how we think which influences how we act
 - I really have nothing good in me – apart from Him; I am really messed up
 - I was living like the fig tree that Jesus cursed – leaves on the outside, but no fruit upon closer examination

Slide 14

Walk Through The Bible

- When we interact with the Word, we are interacting w/ Him
- This is not the only way, it's what I did to pursue, diligently seek/make Him my quest
- Things to bring: Bible, Computer (PC Study Bible/Biblesoft), topical Scripture books, study Bibles, iPod Worship Music & The Word on mp3, journal

Slide 15

How To Use A Strong's Concordance

- **Step 1** Open up your concordance. It is made up of three sections:
 1. Main Concordance
 2. Hebrew and Aramaic Dictionary - Old Testament
 3. Greek Dictionary - New Testament
- **Step 2** Select a word from your bible.
- **Step 3** Look that word up in the main concordance. You will find all the biblical references of that word in the bible.

Slide 16

How To Use A Strong's Concordance

- Step 4 Select a biblical reference and read the number to the right of the reference. Each context line has three segments: The text of the Scripture in which the reference word appears; the reference to the book, chapter and verse where it may be found; and a reference number to the Hebrew and Greek dictionaries at the back of the concordance. This is the number you need for the dictionaries.

Slide 17

How To Use A Strong's Concordance

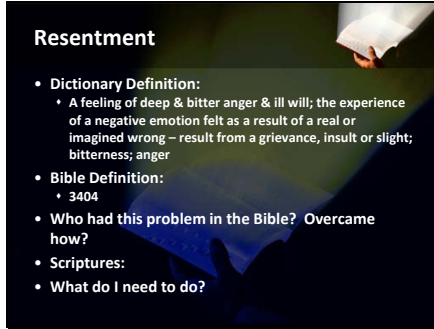
- Step 5 If the reference is: from the OT go to the Hebrew dictionary; is in *Italic* it's from the NT go to the Greek dictionary; there's no number, the word may have been supplied by the translators.
- Step 6 Look up the number and you will get:
 1. the original Hebrew or Greek word
 2. an explanation of that word
 3. other words the original Hebrew or Greek word has been translated into.
- Step 7 Lastly enjoy your bible studies.

Slide 18

How To Use A Vine's Exp Dictionary

- Many English words may not accurately describe meaning the author intended
- Explains KJV meaning of original with the added dimension of context of original
- Not really keyed to the KJV; it is keyed to the English Version - KJV meaning in parenthesis (AV)
- There are Three Main Sections:
 1. OT Section
 2. NT Section
 3. Topical Index

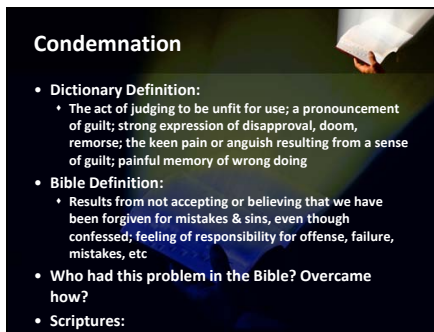
Slide 19



Resentment

- **Dictionary Definition:**
 - A feeling of deep & bitter anger & ill will; the experience of a negative emotion felt as a result of a real or imagined wrong – result from a grievance, insult or slight; bitterness; anger
- **Bible Definition:**
 - 3404
- **Who had this problem in the Bible? Overcame how?**
- **Scriptures:**
- **What do I need to do?**

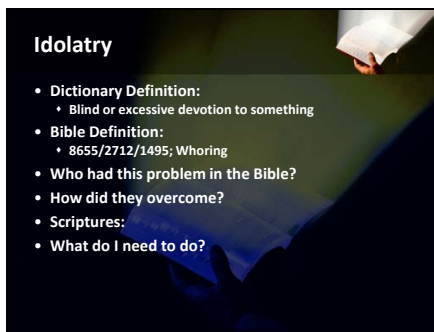
Slide 20



Condemnation

- **Dictionary Definition:**
 - The act of judging to be unfit for use; a pronouncement of guilt; strong expression of disapproval, doom, remorse; the keen pain or anguish resulting from a sense of guilt; painful memory of wrong doing
- **Bible Definition:**
 - Results from not accepting or believing that we have been forgiven for mistakes & sins, even though confessed; feeling of responsibility for offense, failure, mistakes, etc
- **Who had this problem in the Bible? Overcame how?**
- **Scriptures:**

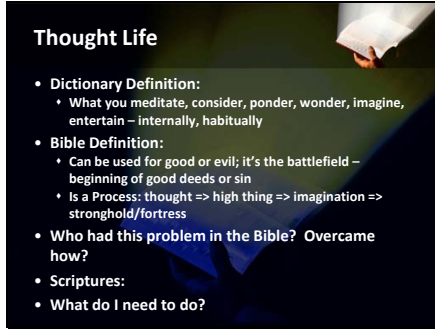
Slide 21



Idolatry

- **Dictionary Definition:**
 - Blind or excessive devotion to something
- **Bible Definition:**
 - 8655/2712/1495; Whoring
- **Who had this problem in the Bible?**
- **How did they overcome?**
- **Scriptures:**
- **What do I need to do?**

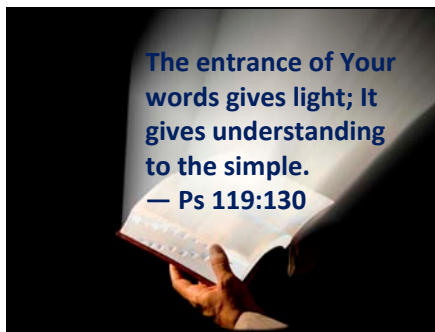
Slide 22

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Thought Life

- **Dictionary Definition:**
 - What you meditate, consider, ponder, wonder, imagine, entertain – internally, habitually
- **Bible Definition:**
 - Can be used for good or evil; it's the battlefield – beginning of good deeds or sin
 - Is a Process: thought => high thing => imagination => stronghold/fortress
- **Who had this problem in the Bible? Overcame how?**
- **Scriptures:**
- **What do I need to do?**

Slide 23

A slide with a dark background and a glowing light source at the top left. The text is white and centered over an image of an open book.

The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.
— Ps 119:130

The Word – Interacting w/us!
Finding Light in the Darkness, Session 6
Slide Notations – Cere Muscarella

Remember... this is an experiment in trying to communicate experience! The Jews had scholarship (information) The world needs the Word (incarnation) Must realize can only go so far w/words then it's between you & the Holy Spirit! Some may be more ready than others but intimacy is for everyone!

Remember... traveling a new road together and don't have everything in perfected order! Keys to intimacy are the Word... Context for communication... Prayer-full conversation... Heart-bowed interaction/respect/ humility... Willingness to obey... Resistance hinders relationship!

Our response to whatever the Word says about us, to us, for us, not for us, is "Yes!"

Wrong response: Tell me more, what's it all about, how does it work, why do You want me to do that?

Intimacy thrives in love, trust, time spent and firsthand experience!

So... with "willingness..." We open the Word of God... Filled with expectancy that His sheep hear His voice... Knowing that if we have (cleaned) ears to hear, we will hear... And when we hear His voice, especially correctively, we respond, w/o hesitation! Open to the Holy Spirit for meanings, impressions, reminders, corrections, directions, composites, applications!

Remember that the Jews had the laws and no power and the early church had no Bible but plenty of Holy Spirit application and power! Modern Church filled with legalists and flakes and the world is dying for people who intimately know God... Who incarnate His substance and spirit, His justice and mercy, His correction and grace!

Opening words... Most time spent in Bible schools spent waiting for significant moments! Lots of down time and sifting for nuggets. Wonder why we go to "cemetery." But we leave w/certificate of graduation! Makes everyone feel better...

We're doing what we can to cram it all together/intense sessions/get you ahead!

Opening words... We try to utilize the best learning process! No shortcut for getting word inside but we can condense the process! Bring pens/paper/Bibles/nimble fingers! Want you to write your own notes even though use PPT and provide syllabi later, online... Want to engage as many of your senses as possible to increase learning!

Opening words... As we open the Word together, force yourself to see it w/fresh eyes... and commit to spend the time to read on...! The Word exists to give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation for the epignosis: full discernment of – Him..." **E1.17** And outside of Him, with and in us, there is nothing but darkness! **R7**

Opening words... *If the Word of God is just a composition of stories, we are the most to be pitied for reading it... there are better sources of entertainment... but the Word of God is a record of His interaction with real people like us whose life experience has risen or fallen relative to their intimate relationship with Him!*

1Cor10.1ff "I desire that you would not be ignorant that our forefathers experienced the life we now live and that the majority of them displeased God being overthrown in their aloneness! They were examples for us that we shouldn't lust after the same things and fall away from God... Their lives were recorded for our counseling, upon whom the end of times has come!"

Paul, penning that somewhere during the 60's, was referring to the Old Testament and our response should be... YES!

The Old Testament! Sounds old... dry... old and dry... "Tried it and never got past the flood!" Let's go back and meet some very interesting people... Real people are an attraction to us all! Real people of the Bible all real characters. That have things to share w/us on our journey thru!

Characters of the Bible!

Adam and Eve! Have to know them! Our parents! The guys who put us on this pathway! **Adam:** a man; ruddy; red earth! **G2.7** And God formed: yatsar; squeezed man of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living... Hunk, chunk, clod ever since!

Adam was created by the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit! He was not primitive man, but perfect man! Pre-spotted, unwrinkled!

Along came Eve! 2.18 "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a counterpart!" **v22** "And God made: banah; built and crafted a woman from the rib He had taken from Adam and brought her to the man! And Adam said 'WOW! WOW! WOW! Can't believe you came from my bone and flesh – but I'm calling you Isha because you were taken from Ish!"

And perfectly squeezed man and perfectly built woman were made one flesh and given the commands... to bear fruit... to multiply and replenish the earth... To rule over it and all that was on it... To eat freely from the plant life; except from one tree!

One magnificent God, two perfectly created people, one idyllic landscape... and if these two couldn't make it... no one could have!

Lessons from Adam & Eve... *Firsthand knowledge of God's word is absolutely necessary...*

"did God say?" is more than a question of comprehension/it's a challenge to clear communication! **2.17** Adam was commanded by God... **2.22** Eve was created... **3.1** Eve questioned... who conveyed? She responds, "we may eat..." **1T2.14** Adam was not deceived, but the woman was brought into the sin by deception! **2C11.3 cp R5.12-21**

It's not the bait but the reaching that is so terminal to our walk of faith! The tree/fruit was benign! Not a poison apple, peach, peyote... It was the reach that pierced Eve... "The tree of knowledge of good and evil" is about "steer clear – and you have knowledge of good – obedience!" "Reach for it – now you know evil – setting aside of God's word!"

You can never select a relationship w/a person over a personal relationship w/God! **3.6** she saw the tree that it was good for food and pleasant to the eyes and took the fruit and ate it and she offered it and he did eat! He saw the girl, that she was good and pleasant to the eyes and willfully sinned! And then they heard His voice... and hid!

When you sin, don't try to pass the buck, there's plenty of pay for all! **3.11** Have you eaten from the tree I commanded you not to eat from? **Adam:** The woman you gave me did me in! \$\$17-19 work, work, work and work! **Eve:** The serpent you put there got me! \$\$16 submission and child pain! **Serpent:** \$\$14,15 pounding head-ache pain!

When we sin, only blood clears the way! **v21** "for Adam and his wife the Lord made a coat of skins... and clothed them! First blood sacrifice, foretelling of the day when another would die for us all! When we cave into temptations of lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, pride of life... Sin that requires His blood sacrifice! We never sin lightly!

Cain, Abel and Seth... C: A “whatever” approach to the things you offer to God can cause you pain!
C: People who look right can become insanely jealous of those who do right! **A:** You can die for doing right!
C: You may not be your brother’s keeper but you are on your Father’s radar! **S:** For every one you beat down, God will raise up another one!

Noah and Sons... Noah (and Enoch*) “walked w/God!” How He got the inside scoop on boats... in a flood prone age! Intimacy w/God pays! Had 3 boys @500! Japeth, Shem, Ham! God overshadowed the whole earth/them. We are all related! Prejudice based on color, race, LAME!

Japeth: oldest son, Gauls, Britons, Germanics, Russians, Medes, Iberians, Greeks, Romans, Indo-Europeans... **Shem:** middle son, Persians, Assyrians, Chaldeans (Abe), Armenians, Syrians...
Ham: Ethiopians, Babylonians, Libyans, Phoenicians, Canaanites, Egyptians...

Lessons from Noah and Sons... Noah: “the father’s sins complicates the lives of the children!” **Ham:** “don’t partake of other men’s sins and don’t rush to tell their faults...” A little Ham in all of us!
Noah: It’s important to be near to God in times when men are “eating, drinking and making merry!”

Abraham and Sarah... Ab: husband to Sarah father of Isaac and Ishmael, father of our faith... The lead follower, promised:

I will make you a great nation! I will bless you! I will make your name great! You will be a blessing! I will bless them that bless you! I will curse them who curse you! In you, all will be blessed!

Lessons from Abraham and Sarah... *Can look great on paper/be lousy in practice!* Walked away from everything... **12.1** *Fearful of men* (Sarah’s beauty) **v10-20** *Sarah, beautiful to the eye, goes along w/Ab’s sin!* Uh-uh! Even when we are off track... *God still on track to the fulfillment of His word!* **13.2** Ab first tither! **14.20** and promise restated! *Don’t be afraid, I am your shield and great reward!* **15.1**

“When you’re feeling down and willing to settle for much less because of what you have done, what you have said, where you have landed – remember God is still good for His word... don’t help Him!”

Even though God restated the promise 3x, Abraham still felt the need to “help” (We can be really slow to get it!) Okay, Sarah, I’ll sleep with Hagar! 16.1-4 Abraham’s compromise gave him a late life thrill... But his failure brought devastating results: the “wildness” of the Arab nations! V12 4th restatement 17.1,2 finally brings “Abram” into submission and God, convinced, changes his name. v5 Isaac is finally born!

(Last failure under pressure from Sarah **21**) *Won’t step up for step child!* **v9-21**

Final act: He offers his son as a living sacrifice! **22** “*God will provide Himself a lamb!*” **v8** Finally brought to his end/ death to the vision... but he believed God... *and God became his Jireh!* **v14**

Isaac to Moses
Finding Light in the Darkness, Session 7
Slide Notations – Cere Muscarella

Last week... Made it to Chapter 22... of Genesis! Left off with Abraham and Sarah! If there is anything we can learn from Abraham, father of our faith, it is this...

“When you feel like all hope of being what God wanted for you is gone – it’s His Word, not your performance – that He is working towards! Just keep moving ahead and please don’t try to help Him fulfill it!”

Last week... Stopped there... misreading the time... Had a very good last minute question! “If Genesis is the story of the beginning... Adam and Eve had Cain and Abel... And Cain married his wife/she conceived! Where did she come from?”

Adam and Eve! Cain married his sister! Before he slew Abel...(?) Common/necessary until Moses gave Israel the law...

The question brought up an important subject... *Must remember that the Bible is not the complete history of modern man! It is the incomplete history of man; followed from Adam to Jesus to last man! It is the history relevant to bringing man to understand our helplessness from the beginning, of our need for God, and to reveal God’s way of salvation to mankind!*

Left off... Isaac is finally born/25 yrs A.P.! **21.1ff** You would think blessing/be enough! Last failure under pressure from Sarah **v9** Won’t step up for step child! **v11** He offers Isaac as a living sacrifice! **22** “God will provide Himself a lamb!” **v8** Final death to the vision... but he believed God... and God became his Jireh! **v14**

Isaac... Isaac accompanies dad up the mountain to offer a sacrifice to the Lord! **22.1** “Dad? We have the fire and the wood but where is the lamb?” **v7** “And Abraham built an altar, laid out the wood, bound his son, and knife in hand raised it to slay him...” **v9-10**

Isaac... Not only did Abraham need to know that Isaac was not the grounds of his confidence that God would do what He said... But Isaac needed to be willing that his dad should bypass him for the sake of the kingdom! *Everyone needs to acknowledge that whatever God asks for, we should do, knowing Him – who knows best!*

Jacob... The usurper! The one who takes the place of another! Doesn’t have to be negative! Didn’t trust the word of God! Gained/pushed his destiny by trickery! Took what wasn’t his and paid and paid!

Final showdown... **32.24** midnight hour... wrestles w/God... comic smackdown! Change your name to one who prevailed! I have seen God and was preserved!

Lessons from the Patriarchs... Abraham: “don’t know where you’re going but know who you have trusted...” **Isaac:** “don’t always understand what God is up to but don’t try to straighten it out!”

Jacob/Israel: “don’t always see the promise progressing but don’t try to speed it up!”

Joseph! Important enough character in the Bible to take up 14 chapters of Genesis! Has a dramatic story to share... Has some very important life lessons to pass on to us! Let’s rehearse his story...

Joseph’s Story...

Joseph teaches us... Wherever you are in life God is already at work for His purposes! “We are His workmanship...” **E2.10** “All things...” **R8.28** “He who began a good work...” **P1.6** “fearfully/wonderfully made...” **P139** Whatever you think it looks like, should be, don’t try and engineer your future! “I know the plans...” “I’ll follow where...” Never judge your life before it’s time! “To our Master we stand or fall...” **R14.4**

Big Lesson: No matter what your past, it is recoverable, and its recovery brings freedom!

Joseph teaches us... People: parents, X’s, kids ,friends, enemies, teachers, leaders, pastors... **Events:** births, graduations, marriage, loss of loved ones, financial blessings-disasters, achievements, crises... **Circumstances:** seasons of life, storms, career changes, ministry assignments...

Nothing is too hard for God, nothing is wasted and... Not everything is as it seems!

[Karate Kid Video Clip]

If you can see God at work in your past, bringing you this far, then there can be nothing but hope that He will continue His work in your future! Thank you Joseph!

Moses... Jesus tells us he was the penman on the Pentateuch; the first five books of the O.T.; the Law! **Lk 24.44 (27)** Moses: “taken out of the water!” Don’t tell the evolutionists! His life is so big split into three parts! Years in the world! Broke with the world! Given over to God’s calling!

Three parts... 40 yrs in the palace of Pharaoh! **Ex 2** Birth to murder; where he learned he was **somebody!** 40 yrs in Midian! **Ex 3** Desert of Midian where he learned he was **nobody!** 40 yrs as deliverer of Israel! **Ch 5 – Dt 34** Exodus to his own exit; where he learned God was **everything!**

Moses... Called by God, on the backside of the desert...

“you see in the calling how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but that God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise... that no flesh should glory in His presence” **1C1.26-29**

Caught by God w/burning bush! Curiosity... voice of God... high adventure!

Moses... The excuses begin... “Who am I, that I should go?” **3.11** A: Certainly, I will be with you! **v12** “What will I say when they ask your name? A: I AM has sent me to you! **v14** “They will not believe me...” **4.1** A: The signs I will give thru you... **2-9** “I cannot speak...” **4.10** A: Who has made men’s mouths? **v11-12**

When Moses refuses God’s company and the promise of His inspiration... When Moses instructs God with “send the one whom thou shouldst send” – wait for it – the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses!

Moses... In a face-off w/Pharaoh... 5.1 – 12.51 Water turned blood, frogs, lice, flies, cattle die, boils, hail, locust, darkness... and finally the death of the firstborn of Egypt. The Passover Lamb: “When I see the blood I will pass-over you!” **With his back against the Sea 14** “Fear not and see the salvation of God!” Sea open for Israel/closed for Egyptians! **With the answer for when life gets bitter! 15.23ff** Tree makes it sweet! **With meat at night and manna for the ungrateful** (for 40 years!); **16.4-36 With the answer for when life gets dry! 17.1-7** “Taps” the Rock! **With the answer for when the battles commence! 17.8-16** Hands up/w help! **With the answer for when life overloads! 18** delegation! **With the proof that we cannot make it without a Savior! 20-24** Law/ordinances... given to prove:

None, not one, is righteous... all fall short... they are all gone out of the way... they have not known the way of peace... there is no fear of God in them...the law speaks to those who are under the law that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may be guilty before God...

therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in His sight... for by the law is the knowledge of sin! **R3.10-20**

Moses, Asides... *Let God be God!* N12 Miriam and Aaron challenge Moses authority. You aren't so much/God speaks to us too! "Moses was meek..." God steps in to fight his battle! "Why weren't you afraid to speak against My servant Moses?" **v8** "The anger kindled and He left!" **v9** Miriam left behind with leprosy! **v10** Aaron cried out to Moses **v11,12** Moses cried out to God...heal her! **v13** God says no...no healing for seven days! **v14**

Sometimes God is willing to dance, sometimes He's not... don't let your compassion overrun His completion!

Moses, Asides... *Take your own Godly advice!* N20.1-13 On the last march to promise/40 yrs! Same people/still murmuring/nothing new! Moses has had too much! Takes matters into his own hands/uses personal pronoun in place of God... Sets aside God word... Speaks his own words, strikes Rock, twice!

And never enters into the promised land!

Joshua to Saul
Finding Light in the Darkness, Session 8
Slide Notations – Cere Muscarella

Last week... Made it thru Joseph “Not everything in life is as it seems” (Genesis)...

Never give up, never give in, keep your eyes on God... No matter what your past, it is fully redeemable!
No matter what has happened in the past it is only a small part of your life/future! A good/evil that God can use for good, for you and those you love!

Joseph lessons! *People:* parents, X’s, kids ,friends, enemies, teachers, leaders, pastors... *Events:* births, graduations, marriage, loss of loved ones, financial blessings-disasters, achievements, crises... *Circumstances:* seasons of life, storms, career changes, ministry assignments... ***Can’t stop the plans of God, can’t keep us from our destination, unless we let them!***

Interpreting Exercise... for people, circumstances, and events...

IC: Integrity check? Convictions/actions =? Hit by lusts, temptations, conflicts... Hold values, make moves, follow thru?

NP: Negative prep. Failed IC! Not again! Challenges to character, grass is greener temptation. Find yourself face down, pained... but alert!

FC: faith challenge. Crossroads of life. Take hi-way, God’s way? Word say? Choose?

LC: life crisis? Intense situations/pressure/sickness. Who do we run to/depend on, first?

DC: Divine contact? Help/guidance. God sends someone into life crucial moment

LB: Leader backlash. Mentor failure/pain. Who are you following? Who controls?

DR: destiny rev. moving forward/new day. Do you keep listening, or run?

I: Isolation? Sickness, termination, straits. Out of the flow, set aside, immobilized... What do you do... something? Or?

God is working all things together for good for those whose hearts are maturing toward Him!

Last week... Made it thru Joseph “Not everything in life is as it seems” (Genesis)... To Moses (Exodus) with a touch on Numbers to finish out the Pentateuch (first five books of the Law)! (Remember, we are doing “Characters Study” not events/circumstances) Ended with Moses not entering into the land because of his sin... Felt the sobriety, fear, some confusion!

If Joseph taught us about God’s grace thru all things Moses tells us of God’s judgment for some sins and some sinners!

Numbers 20 “Take the rod and gather the people, and speak to the rock before their eyes and it will give water and you will bring them to the water flowing from the rock and give them and their animals to drink!”

This has happened before, 39 yrs earlier!

That time, w/o reprimand, God told Moses to take his rod and strike the rock and it would bring water...

“And Moses took the rod, as God commanded and he said to them (uh oh... not part of the command!) Hear now you rebels, must we fetch water for you from this rock (not part of the script; like to see that)? And Moses lifted up his hand and smote the rock twice with the rod and water came out abundantly!”

If this is so wrong, why did water flow? Because God ultimately cares about needs/people! Gives ministry gifts for the needs/people!

Here’s the explanation of why leaders can be so lame, ignorant, even bad and good things still flow from them, despite them! It’s also the reason so many uninitiated believers continue to let leaders abuse them because they attribute the good things to the wrong persona!

“And the Lord spoke to Moses & Aaron, because you believed Me not (My words weren’t enough), to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you will not bring them in to the land I have given them!” (cp Deut 18)

Moses didn't doubt God was going to give them water... that's not the belief issue! The signal here something has gone really wrong is the severity of the punishment...119 yrs/79 walking w/God/shut down!

Moses... “Still crazy after all these years...” The presumption/pride/self promotion leading to outright rebellion, self-insertion, and misrepresentation of God... Moses was so completely carried away in his frustration and anger that he didn't even take a breath slandering God's nature... He publicly dishonored the Master whom it was his special privilege to glorify!

All sin is the same to God... but all sinners are not!

All leaders need to know... To whom much is given... **Lk12.48** Leaders carry “greater judgment...” **Js3.1** *People will always be people... and if that frustrates you take it to Him!* The sheep belong to Him... you can't kick them, eat them or kill them! Limited to what you can do for God by what God says...! **D18** The Lord is very jealous for His name!

Lest you fear for Moses... He got to see the promised land... Although you must remember that he was so soon in paradise that Canaan (on broken planet earth) could not compare... This place is not our home! Busted sphere become a junkyard of busted stuff! Ministry continued on Mt... w/Elijah... And his testimony of faithfulness was preserved forever in Hebrews!

Joshua... Name: Jehovah is salvation! Joshua was a protégé of Moses! Joshua in the battle w/Amalek (Aaron/Hur) **17.14** hinted as successor/chosen by God. **N27.18** appointed as successor by God! **Josh1**

His commission from God. *“The past is over/time to get up/go on...”* “I have gone before you... I have a lot to give you... I will make sure you win... Only be strong and of good courage... to keep My words, to not turn away, to prosper!”

Classic Joshua... When Joshua was at Jericho he lifted his eyes and saw a man with a sword in his hand and met him asking, ‘Are you for us or against us?’ The man answered ‘No.’ But I am here as a captain of the army of God! And Joshua fell on his face! “What do you want me to do?” **5.13-15**

Tough guy meets The Guy! Have to be strong in only the right places!

Jesus showed up(Christophany) after Joshua and the people showed they were strong and of courage to keep His words... and next 4 chapters records the string of victories!

Famous last words...

And Joshua gathered all Israel and rehearsed for them all that God had done and said, “Fear the Lord and serve Him in sincerity and truth and put away the gods your fathers served. If it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve... but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord! And then, at 110, he died! **24.1-29**

Quick Study... Rahab! The harlot in the line of Jesus! **Mt1.5 J2** Life changed when she decided to side w/God, hiding the two spies. She had a great grasp of God's sovereignty: “I know God has given you the land...” **2.9** Willing to lay down her life for family! **13** Scarlet thread/token of her salvation! **18**

It's not how you start, or what you've done; but who you have faith in and how you finish that's important!

Quick Study... Gideon! God wants to deliver rebellious Israel from the Midianites! **Judges 6** I'm not worthy! I'm poor. I'm the least. “Go I will be with you. You will not die!” Night of the battle, Gideon's fleece! Wet the fleece and leave the ground dry. Wet the ground and leave the fleece dry. Now how many guys? How many? The original 300! And they won!

Many called, few chosen! Ok. No credit! Who needs faith if you have equal strength, adequate talent, competitive plan? If we are not hopelessly outnumbered, outmaneuvered and overwhelmed it's not even a fair contest when God is on our side!

Quick Study... Ruth! *Love your mother in law!* Orpah; turned back to her people and her gods because the way was too hard! Ruth; “where you go I will go, where you stay I will stay, your people will be my people and your God will be my God, and where you die I will die and be buried!” ***When outsiders turn to God with their whole heart... blessing is ahead!*** Ruth marries Boaz, they beget Obed, who begets David... Ruth is in the line of Jesus!

The Book of “Eli!” (1Samuel – Focusing on the lessons from Eli) Eli, High Priest/Judge of Israel **1Samuel** Eli finds Hannah praying in the temple, moving her lips in prayer **v13** Accuses her of being drunk **v14** Agonizing over her barrenness... **v15** “The Lord grant your request...” **v17** He does and she gives her son, Samuel **v28** “And he ministered unto the Lord before Eli the priest...” **2.11** Now the sons of Eli were there **1.3** And they were sons of Belial... they knew not the Lord **2.12** and their sins were very great **2.17** They not only took their portion of the sacrifice... they took some of the portion left for the people... **v13-16** People hated coming to offer to the Lord because of them **v17** And committed sexual sins w/women dedicated to temple service! **v22** Now when Eli was very old **v22** he approached his sons **v23** But they wouldn’t listen to him! ***He could have removed them from service, he could have judged them... false and mistaken kindness(?)***

And God approached him: “Because you honored your sons above Me – and shared with them the fatness of your privileged calling... and lightly esteemed Me... I will cut off your house from serving... And in one day Hophni and Phineas will die and I will give My house to another!”

Lessons from “Eli!” You can be engaged in ministry/miss it! You must make your kids – sure! Ministry and family must combine! God does not take kindly to personal gain built on abuse! Never be a coward when it comes to right-raising your kids! If we fail, He provides for Himself a replacement minister!

Quick Study... Saul! “Asked for!” (Samuel, of Eli fame, was prophet, judge and priest!) but Israel wanted to be like other nations... Give us a king! **1Sam 8.5, 19** Not a wrong thing; time of judges ending... Wrong reason; like all the nations, he will judge us and fight our battles for us! Wrong person; the Lord anointed him to be king, but waiting for the one after His own heart (David)!

Saul, profile: 1S10.8 cp 13.12 Presumptuous, impatient, self ruled! Couldn’t wait for God! Rejected as king! Nice start! **13.13,14 15.3 vs. 13,14** Disobedient, lying, greedy **15.17** no longer small in his own sight; conceited and blame shifting. To obey is better than sacrifice and listening than offerings! Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry!

Too late he realized and confessed... “I have sinned; behold I have played the fool and erred exceedingly!”

Saul to David
Finding Light in the Darkness, Session 9
Slide Notations – Cere Muscarella

Author's note: Has someone ever entrusted you with something precious, only to come to the realization that you had temporarily misplaced or lost it? That's how I felt while downloading this message to you Wednesday night, March 10th. If you were there, you heard me say, a few times, that something had gone wrong. As I progressed thru the message, I became aware that the slides we were seeing were from an "older version." I had spent another four hours with the Lord Wednesday morning clarifying the thoughts He had given me late the night before, the older version. At that stage of a very draining day I was still capable of *framing* the things He was sharing with me, but early the next morning I sat listening to the *fullness* of His words and *filled-in* the slides for that night's presentation. I had been entrusted with His precious Word and, as the night progressed, I realized they were gone.

Some may be tempted to say, 'well maybe that was the version the Lord wanted us to hear.' It's a kind thought but too fatalistic. The Lord wanted you to hear the clarified version of a topic so very important to our spiritual health, and for my failure, I am so sorry. In the aftermath of the experience I know the Lord wants you to know these things: 1. At best, we are still living on the side where we see things through a 'glass darkly.' Though I loaded my presentation into the computer for Wednesday night's teaching I didn't 'see' that something was wrong. And I didn't 'hear' His voice regarding it either... He would have simply been saying, 'Cere, that's the wrong version!' I was far too caught up in the events of the day, of the entire week, and though I yearned to make His truth evident to you... I was blind and deaf at the moment critical to catching the error (Great lessons to be learned there!). I do not fear that He was able to make His truth abound in you, but I didn't deliver the *clarity* He had entrusted to me. 2. Though I have a deep desire to be able to say with Paul, 'follow me (into an intimate walk) as I follow Christ,' my greatest desire is that you would far exceed the experience I have with the Lord... and I have added notes to these correct presentation notes for the sake of clarity.

Last week... Made it thru Saul (**1Samuel**)... "head and shoulders above the rest!" **9.2** Small in his own eyes **9.21** *Am I not a Benjamite of the smallest tribe and my family the least?* The Spirit of the Lord will come on you and make you new! **10.2** And God gave him a new heart! **v9**

God equips those He calls... But doesn't override their will! You can have the calling and all the giftings and not do what is right and necessary!

11 Saul has a trouncing victory over Ammonites! **12** And the people are renewed by the Lord **13** He picks a fight w/Philistines; rashly operates in the office of the Priest... Now the kingdom is taken and God will give it to a man after his own heart! **v14** **14** Jonathan saves his dad but almost dies... and yet Saul remained at war all the days of his life!

15 Saul commanded by God to take the Amalekites! "I remember what Amalek did to Israel, now go and smite them and utterly destroy all that they have, everything!" **v2,3** "Saul smote them but kept the king alive, the best of the sheep, oxen and lambs and all that was good. What was vile and garbage they destroyed." **v7-9** I am sorry I set Saul up to be king for he is turned back from following Me! **v11**

Read: I'm turning the corner on Saul for he is turned back from following Me! v11

15.13 "Hey Samuel, see I have done what the Lord commanded me!" **v14** "then what is this bleating of the sheep I hear?" **v15** "the people did it!" **v17,18** "when you were small in your own sight I anointed you king... and sent you on a journey, why didn't you obey Me? You flew to the spoils and did evil..." **v20** "I obeyed... but the people didn't..." **v23** "You are rejected from being king..."

**Too late he realized and confessed... "I have sinned; I feared the people and obeyed them!"
From that moment he was living on borrowed time... the root had been cut... and he had been replaced!**

Quick Study... Jonathan! Jonathan's life is a bridge between two men: his dad, Saul, the King... his friend, David, God's anointed! Jonathan is natural successor/throne! David has been appointed by God/sees it! Saul challenges Jonathan's love for David and God asking, "Don't you know it's your throne he will be taking?" (Not entirely true! Thrones and dominion's belong to God!)

Jon chooses God's plan over family ties! He chooses to be a "Godly-second" over a "selfish-first!" Personifies Christ/and all His virtues!

David!

His story is so big that it covers **1Sam 16-31, 2Samuel, 1K 1&2, 1Chron 11-29** David is the original "man after God's own heart..." **1S13.14 A13.22** "who will fulfill all My will!" A little shepherd boy on the backside of the world... least of his family... **1S16** Anointed to be King... **v13** Anointed to kill giants... **17.32ff**

"Don't let anyone's heart fall into fear... I killed a lion... then a bear... all in preparation to kill this giant!"

Didn't say: "I survived a bear attack, to almost die in the jaws of a lion... this giant will be the end of me!"

Why don't we see that everything we face is conquerable... and everything we conquer pushes us forward!

David's is the blood line of the covenant of the promised Messiah! **2S7.4-16 R1.3** "Preeminence, a place, a throne, a rule!" Abrahamic covenant: "place, people, prosperity, prominence, provision, protection, purpose!"

With incredible history and intimacy we find David... like us... vulnerable sin!

2S11.1 David stays behind when he should be engaged in the battle! *Why are we always looking for rest when the battle is still raging?* One self-indulgence leads to another...

V2-5 His adultery! No guard on his eyes; sin entered in! Little brain overriding slightly bigger brain!

2S11.6-13 David cooks up deception! Bathsheba is pregnant; bring your husband home to sleep w/you – never know! No DNA testing/but what about genes? Looks him in the face as Commander and friend... go home for some R&R and sex! Thanks but my integrity prohibits it! Keeps him another day/gets him drunk! Still doesn't take advantage offer!

2S11.14-17 David plans a murder! Put him out front and draw back so he dies in battle! **V22-25** and he felt nothing! **V26,27** David marries Bathsheba and she bares him a son... **12.1** Enter Nathan and the Lamb Stealer! Thou art the man! **v7** And what you have done secretly you will endure openly... and the child will die... in your place! **V9-14**

David has broken half 10 commandments; False god, shall not kill, not commit adultery, shall not steal, shall not covet thy neighbors house, wife, goods... and dozens of other lesser known's... all in one sin! *If any man had done too much, too late, to not be forgiven, to not be useful... David would be him!* But he stands as the friend of God! (Where do you stand?)

How is it possible? "Have mercy on me; blot out my sins; I acknowledge my sin; against you alone have I sinned; I was shaped in sin; You desire truth in the inward parts; purge me, wash me and I will be whiter than snow; create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me; cast me not away from

your presence and don't take your Spirit away from me; restore to me the joy of my salvation; a broken spirit and contrite heart You will not despise..." **Ps51**

Complete and total revelation of sin, penitence for what is done, and repentance!

13.1 David's heart-break, Amnon! *Cooks up a plot* his father would be proud (and part) of and rapes his sister Tamar! And after he had her he hated her... **15-18**

13.23 David's heart-attack, Absalom! Two yrs later Absalom *conceives a plot* and kills his brother Amnon, then flees! Absalom gone 3 yrs/brot home/separated. Absalom begins acting out/no response *Absalom plots* against David... sleeps w/David's wives... and then dies... leaves David behind mourning!

David Lessons... Sin may be sweet for a moment, but it goes sour/death dealing soon afterward! **Pr5.3-23 6.24-35 7.5-27** Be sure, sin will find you out! **N32.23** Sin transmits to next generation! Sin, not judged, spawns... God always receives the penitent, repentant sinner... He loves us!

David Lessons... "If you do well, won't you be accepted? And if you don't do well, sin is waiting at the door." **Gen 4.7** "Be abstinent and awake because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour." **1P5.8** Must stay dressed in the armor of God to be able to stand against the wiles of the devil! **E6**

David's Big Lesson! "The Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David and it was very sick. And David begged God for the child with fasting and prostrated prayer and would not be consoled by anyone. After seven days the child died and the servants feared to tell David fearing his reaction to the news... but David heard their whispering and asked, 'Is the child dead?' And they said, 'he is.' Then David got up, washed and anointed himself, changed his clothes and went to the house of God and worshipped; then went home and ate. The servants asked, 'what is this? What are you doing? You fasted and wept while the child was alive and now when the child is dead you rise up and eat?' David said, 'while the child was alive I fasted and wept knowing it was possible that God would answer my prayer for his healing... but now he is dead... so why fast and pray? I will be going to him now, he will not be coming here to me.' **2S12.15-23**

David on life/death! 'as long as there is life there is hope that God is going to answer prayers for healing...' as long as it is a case/healing! And he prayed like life depended on him! Many Bible cases, healing came! 'But once death came...' David would not crossover into God's dominion...

Not destiny but foreknowledge...Not the means but the moment!

[Special slide insert: On the dark side, where we see through a glass darkly, there is all manner of sickness and disease... and where we see it, we are to pray fervently, with all kinds of prayer, because all sickness and disease is an enemy of the Cross!

[But if a person dies... they have crossed over the Sovereignty line reserved for God and them alone! They enter into life transformed, set free, knowing all things, in God's presence, with full rewards where there is no more darkness, sickness, pain, suffering or sin... and when we see that, we should rejoice and be glad for them – even though we miss them and mourn and shed our tears...

***But we do not sorrow as those who have no hope of being restored again unto them! 1Th4.13
And we do not allow death to have any victory over us! 1C15.54,55***

[That does not mean we do not pray for people because it "would be better for people to be absent from the body and be present with the Lord" – sickness and disease is our enemy! But if we are

praying and the person does die... they have met with the Lord *on an appointed time* and that is beyond our scope... so we trust the Lord and move on again!

The questions beg for answers:

What do you believe, not hope, is true about life and death?

How much do you love your loved one? Enough to see them there or have them near?

In case we missed it... It's not a matter of whether or not there is life after death our perspective is: **There was life before death!**

Enoch, taken up by God! Moses, Elijah taken by supernatural means, *returned from a place, alive!* Stephen looked up *saw Jesus standing next to God!* Jesus dying on the Cross, descending into the bowels of the earth *to talk to captives – living beings, every one!*

Whether we truly believe it or not, life after death, is really there, and we who believe are all on our way there!

If you were certain... There was a place called Disney World how would you feel if your loved ones went there without you? ...That your loved one could move from a nursing home to a mansion but would have to move out of state to have it would you let them go? ...Your loved one would have a better life, more love and training than you were capable of giving, w/opportunities to know the greatest of the world... How would you respond/absence?

Whether we truly believe it or not, life after death, is really there!

Can't miss David's counsel... While he was alive I prayed like crazy for my desire to be done... Now that he's dead, I acquiesce to God's will been-done! They will not return here...(Who would willingly do that?) But I will go to them, and I am going to make such an entrance!

We can stop living with fear/misery and start living with joy/jealousy!

Why is it so important? People/believer's who are uncertain of life after death cling to life here! "Want to live a real long time... more than a hundred years! I don't want to die!" Want to experience all this life has to offer! Become fearful/agitated at the thought or the talk of death! **Give the enemy "fear" to use against them/to destroy quality of life/faith! And they sorrow inordinately when others die...**

Why is it so important? People who 'lose' loved ones... Often tormented to breaking point!

(Misnomer: not lost! Know where they are in all cases: Saved, with God; Not saved, separated from God! Sad, until you come to the place of God's justice and righteousness. IF A PERSON DIES UNSAVED IT IS NOT FOR THE LOACK OF GOD'S APPROACH TO THEM WITH HIS GRACE!)

Recent news carried stories of parents lost children/predators/accidents, etc. Statistics tell us most of those marriages will not survive... Many of the surviving children will be neglected, and some lost, as unconsolated parents grieve/commune w/dead... All because the tormentor has not been silenced with truth/faith!

Lean toward the Principle... and practice it on the terminally sick, elderly... "Lord, I don't want to see them suffer anymore... I release them into your care!"

But truly tested when it comes to young people, babies, or the unborn!

[Special Author's Note: If we apply David's theology to the issue of miscarried and aborted children, it frees us to focus on the real issues of fallen society that we must face with the full force and weight of the kingdom of God! With most activity and activists focused on death, instead of the ones who are

alive, we never engage the full power of the revolution that can come to the living from the Word of God!]

What we really believe about death determines how well we live life! If we listen to David we will pray like crazy when people are suffering sickness (all sickness is a challenge to the Cross!) and if they die we will be free (because death is a sovereignty issue God doesn't share with us!) to live and accomplish His good purposes!

Finding Light in the Darkness

Session 10: Thinking Skills Sifting Out the Bad Information

We often approach the Bible like an encyclopedia, dictionary, or do-it-yourself book. Those books provide answers and solve problems. That's what some people want from the Bible—questions answered and problems solved.

While the Bible does include the solution to our separation from God and it does answer many questions, its major goal is to change us. Encyclopedias, dictionaries, or do-it-yourself books are not designed to fundamentally change the readers.

Too often, we look to the Bible to change our circumstances. God desires the Bible to change us!

Have you noticed how Jesus often did not give direct answers to questions? The Bible is written to teach us how to think more than it is what to think.

God's goal is to change the way we think so that we are changed. The things we do will naturally change, followed by changes in our circumstances. We often want to change our circumstances without being changed ourselves. We got it backwards.

Romans 12:1-2 — And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will know what God wants you to do, and you will know how good and pleasing and perfect his will really is. (NLT)

How Would You Answer?

- **Should I pay my tithes or my bills?**
- **If I give tithes, will God prosper me so I can pay my bills?**

Establishing a Thought Process Baseline

Write a very short summary of the major point you would make in answering the following questions.

Note: Don't spend a lot of time on this. Just put down some of your first thoughts. No one else will look at the answers. It will be used for future comparison by you.

[Note: These questions are actual questions. They provide a good example for application of the various skills discussed in this session. While the discussion may challenge your thinking on this issue, the goal is to learn thinking skills.]

The Information Age

- **Information *quantity* rapidly increasing**
- **Information *quality* rapidly decreasing**

- **Cultural tastes affect information**
- **Remember: received information has been selected, filtered, slanted, changed, and sometimes fabricated**
- **What left out is often more important than what is included**

Good thinking skills are **more important now than ever before**. The amount of readily available information is rapidly increasing. Unfortunately, the quality of much of the information is decreasing. Since there are **now so many creators of information**, it is important to understand that many of them are not careful to validate their facts and conclusions. Also, some have **ulterior motives**. The responsibility now rests with us to be sure that the information we are accepting and passing on is valid.

As a commodity item, information is also affected by the tastes and desires of its consumers. This is evident in our **news coverage, television programming**, and other media presentations. Today's cultural priorities in America include **selfishness and entertainment**. Therefore, the distributed information is often **about "me" and it's fun**. We must always be aware that the information we receive has been selected, filtered, slanted, changed, and sometimes fabricated. What is left out is often more important than what is included. **To ignore thinking skill development is an invitation for deception and control.**

Examples: Urban legends, hoaxes, email chain letters, etc.

Email Hoaxes

In just 4 days from today all U. S. cell phone numbers will be released to telemarketing companies and you will begin to receive sales calls. You will be charged for these calls! Even if you do not answer, the telemarketer will end up in your voice mail and you will be charged for all of the minutes the incoming (usually recorded) message takes to complete. You will then also be charged when you call your voice mail to retrieve your messages.

This is an actual email hoax that has been frequently circulated. It is a hoax!

See www.snopes.com/politics/business/cell411.asp for more information on this particular hoax. You can check www.snopes.com and other places for information about possible hoaxes and urban legends. Note: We do not endorse all the snopes.com material. They are not necessarily always accurate or unbiased. so use with discretion.

Be careful what emails you forward. If you choose to forward an email, delete all previous email addresses from the body and use the BCC (blind carbon copy) feature to hide the email addresses of those you send it to. That way, no one can harvest and sell the emails.

Warning: Avoid Deception!

- **And now beware! ... false teachers, like vicious wolves will come in among you after I leave.... Even some of you will distort the truth.... Watch out!
— Acts 20:28-31 (NLT)**

- ... but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. Keep away from every kind of evil.
— 1 Thes. 5:21-22

Most important part is to know the truth really well! But we are also warned to watch out for deception. Following are some skills that we can develop to help us actively expose and counter lies.

Thinking Skills

- **Test all things; hold fast what is good. — 1 Thessalonians 5:21**
- **Think rather than just react**
- **Thinking skills help identify core issues when...**
 - ♦ Studying the Bible
 - ♦ Helping people
 - ♦ Troubleshooting problems
- **Thinking skills can be learned and improved**

Good thinkers develop habits of analysis, taking the time to think about claims and issues rather than just reacting to them. We must learn to consistently examine information carefully to insure that we accurately discern the good so that we can hold on to it while discarding lies.

Like any other skills, thinking skills can be learned and improved. When understood and practiced regularly, thinking techniques help virtually anyone improve their ability to identify the core issues in any question or problem, eliminate extraneous issues, then make an intelligent decision. These skills will also help you in your Bible studies to insure that you use valid techniques for the conclusion that you reach and live by.

When studying, researching, and answering questions (or helping others with questions or problems), it is very important that you **develop thinking skills that efficiently get to the core issues**. You need to be able to identify and side step any issues that hide or lead away from the core issues. You also need to take time to think and ponder issues. This lesson covers some thinking techniques and identifies some typical problems to avoid. This is not an exhaustive study!

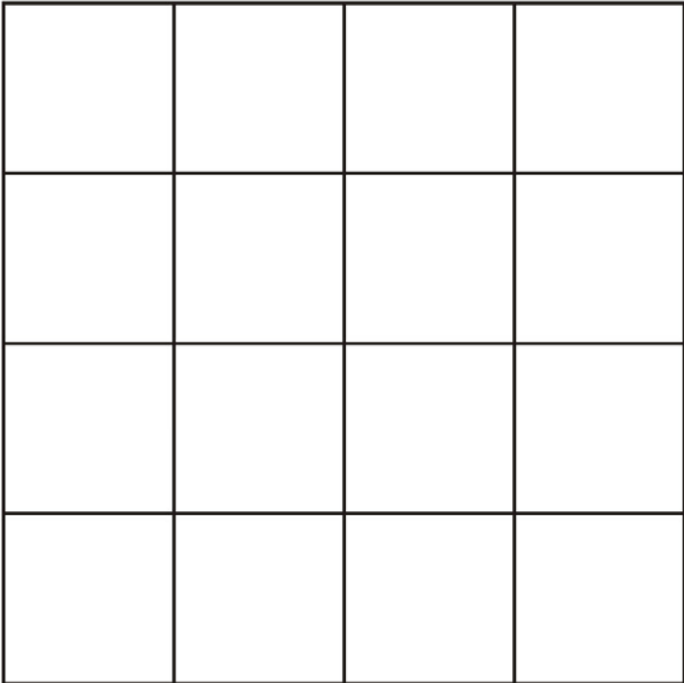
Connect the Dots

Draw a box of nine dots as shown below. Connect all the dots with only four straight lines. The pencil must not leave the paper until all dots are connected. Solution is given at the end of the notes.



How Many Squares?

How many squares are there in the box below? The solution is given at the end of the notes.



Think Outside the Box

- **Think differently**
- **Don't stop at first possible answer**
- **Step back, change perspective**
- **Don't limit yourself to the readily obvious**
- **Watch out for assumptions**

Thinking outside the box simply means to think about problems and issues differently than other people or **differently than you normally do**.

Don't stop with the first answer to a question, the first analysis of a situation, or the first solution to a problem. Ask if there are other possible ways of seeing the problem or other possible solutions.

Step back, look at it from different angles.

Don't limit yourself. Watch out for comfortable or regular patterns or approaches. Take a little time to consider the issue rather than just fire off the first idea that comes along.

Assumptions will “fill in the gaps”, sometimes incorrectly, causing you to miss important information.

Peace Outside the Box

- **Example: What does the Bible say about peace?**
 - ♦ **Many people focus on spiritual or inner peace. There is also...**
 - ♦ **Social Peace**
 - ♦ **Quietness, stillness**
 - ♦ **Calm (weather, water)**
 - ♦ **Reconciliation**
- **Don't limit yourself to the readily obvious or first thing that comes along**

When researching peace in the Bible, people often focus only on spiritual or inner peace. However, the Bible also has much to say about social peace. There are many types of peace: freedom from strife; freedom from war; public quiet, order & security; quietness; calm (weather, water); stillness; reconciliation (to make peace with someone); etc.

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, whose thoughts are fixed on you! — Isaiah 26:3 (NLT)

Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which one may edify another. — Romans 14:19 (NKJV)

When a man's ways please the Lord, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. — Proverbs 16:7 (NKJV)

Sand Bags. Sand bags are sometimes filled with sand and used to line rivers and streets that are in danger of flooding. The Japanese were having trouble locating enough sand to fill the bags. How do you think they solved this problem?

They let go of the assumption that only sand can fill a sand bag and devised a bag that could be filled with water. The water bags worked just as effectively as the sand bags, there was plenty of cheap fill material, and when empty, the bags stored easily. (Illustration from: *Eating Problems for Breakfast* , pg 53.)

Think Ahead

- **Like a fire drill**
- **Anticipate possible issues and consequences before they occur**
- **Determine ahead the best response**
- **Consider long-term or broad-reaching consequences of actions and choices**
- **Make any adjustments that are prudent**

Consider possible issues and situations ahead of time. Determine ahead how you should respond and follow through when it occurs. Much like a fire drill where you think about and practice proper responses to an emergency so you know what to do if a real emergency occurs.

Often, in the heat of the moment, it is hard to calmly think through the various issues and consequences. Take time to **identify possible future situations** and how you can **anticipate and prepare** for them.

Example: A company I worked for taught that all accidents are preventable—think ahead. Soon after, when tightening a bolt with a wrench, I paused a moment to consider what would happen if the wrench slipped. Determined that it would smash my finger, so repositioned my hand. Wrench did slip, but there was no injury.

Anticipate consequences of choices and actions. Ask yourself what long-term or broad reaching effects will result if the choices or actions under consideration are implemented. Realize that many effects may not be readily obvious.

Also like a turn or fork in the road. If come upon one unexpectedly, must either stop and look at a map (or call someone), or blindly choose one and hope you don't end up lost. When you prepare ahead, you know exactly what to do when you come to the turn or fork in the road.

Don't Stop Short

- **Don't jump to conclusions**
- **Don't stop at the first conclusion**
- **Follow a scenario out to its possible end result**

Don't jump to conclusions. When addressing a problem or a question, don't stop at the first answer that pops up. Write down the various possible answers that come to mind, and continue collecting data until you have enough to make a reasonable decision.

Most people do not follow lines of reasoning out to their probable end result.

Many people stop as soon as they arrive at the conclusion they want.

Crossing the Reed Sea

- **Some claim that the Israelites crossed the Reed Sea, not the Red Sea**
- **The Reed Sea was only ankle deep, so this was not really a miracle**
- **You can spend all day in fruitless arguing with these “experts”**
- **Or, simple point out that if that’s true, God drowned the Egyptian army in ankle deep water!**

Example: Israelites crossed the Reed Sea, not the Red Sea. The Reed Sea was only ankle deep where they crossed, so it was not a miracle. However, if that is true, then God drowned the Egyptian army in ankle-deep water. That may be an even greater miracle that the Israelites crossing the Red Sea. (God said they crossed on dry land and the water was a wall on either side. If it was ankle deep, after the first few hundred people, sheep, and wagons crossed on the soggy soil, it would have become a mud hole that would have been very difficult to cross.)

These people stopped at a conclusion that seemed to be what they wanted – to discredit a miracle.

Rabbit Trails

- **Weave back & forth over themselves to confuse pursuing animals**
- **Applies when jumping from subject to subject (or task to task), never lingering long enough to resolve anything**
- **Scatters attention and causes focus to be lost — rabbit escapes**
- **Your own mind can tend to run rabbit trails if don’t keep it focused**

Rabbit trails are paths that rabbits take that weave back and forth over themselves in an effort to confuse a pursuing dog. With people, this most often is evidenced by someone who refuses to stay focused on the topic or discussion at hand. They try to talk about almost everything they can think of and **nothing gets resolved**.

Rabbit trails help the rabbit escape.

Rabbit trails can be interesting and exciting, but typically they **don’t really go anywhere**. You must learn to identify the core issue and **relentlessly drag the focus** of the discussion or research back when it begins wandering off. You must have a **clear idea of where you are heading**.

Even **your own mind** can tend to run rabbit trails instead of focusing on the problem at hand. **Stay on target!** Firmly and repeatedly bring the discussion or research back on track.

Whose Wife Will She Be?

- **Then Jesus was approached by some Sadducees—religious leaders who say there is no resurrection from the dead. They posed this question: “Teacher, Moses gave us a law that if a man dies, leaving a wife without children, his brother should marry the widow and have a child who will carry on the brother’s name. Well, suppose there were seven brothers. The oldest one married and then died without children. So the second brother married the widow, but he**

also died without children. Then the third brother married her. This continued with all seven of them, and still there were no children. Last of all, the woman also died. So tell us, whose wife will she be in the resurrection? For all seven were married to her.” — Mark 12:18-23

Think about this for a minute. Temporarily forgetting Jesus’ answer in the Bible, how would you answer this question? What is the main point?

We tend to answer the question the way it is asked. However, that is often not the real issue.

Jesus’ Answer

- **Jesus replied, “Your mistake is that you don’t know the Scriptures, and you don’t know the power of God. For when the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage. In this respect they will be like the angels in heaven. “But now, as to whether the dead will be raised—haven’t you ever read about this in the writings of Moses, in the story of the burning bush? Long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, God said to Moses, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’ So he is the God of the living, not the dead. You have made a serious error.” — Mark 12:24-27**

Notice how Jesus **identified the real issue** (resurrection) and **brought that issue into focus**.

Handling Rabbit Trails

- **Maintain a clear focus on your goal**
- **Relentlessly bring the discussion back on topic**
- ***Shoot the rabbit!* Gently point out the tendency to go down rabbit trails and insist that the discussion stay focused**
- **Stay on target!**

Red Herrings

- **Dragged across the trail of the fox to throw pursuing hounds off the trail allowing the fox to escape**
- **A “juicy” topic thrown into a discussion to side track you when getting too close to a sensitive issue**
- **Leads away from the real core issue**

In the sport of fox hunting a red herring (a smoked herring having a reddish color) would sometimes be dragged across the trail of the fox to throw the pursuing hounds off the sent. (To prolong the hunt or test the dogs’ ability to follow the scent.)

In a similar way, people sometimes bring up an irrelevant topic in order to divert attention away from the original issue—especially if you are getting too close to something sensitive.

The red herring is typically an issue that is sure to cause discussion or argument, but often over an area that can be discussed extensively without resolving the real issue. The main goal is to lead the discussion or research away from the core issue.

Example: JW's often bring up the "Trinity" when they get to feeling threatened or confused by a Christian's questions.

Red herrings allow the fox to escape.

Woman at the Well

- **"Go and get your husband," Jesus told her. "I don't have a husband," the woman replied. Jesus said, "You're right! You don't have a husband— for you have had five husbands, and you aren't even married to the man you're living with now. You certainly spoke the truth!" "Sir," the woman said, "you must be a prophet. So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?"**
— John 4:16-20

We often do the same thing as this woman when she shifted the conversation away from an uncomfortable area.

Jesus' Response

- **Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."**
— John 4:21-24

When Jesus got too close to her personal sins, the woman at the well used a red herring (controversy about where people should worship). However, in this case Jesus followed the new trail because it better served His goal. Need to always be aware of your goals.

Jesus had bigger fish to fry! It's not that her sin was unimportant, but she primarily needed salvation. Once saved, her life should naturally be brought into conformity to God's will.

Handling Red Herrings

- **Maintain a clear focus of your purpose**
- **Avoid taking the bait with the introduction of a new subject— unless it better serves your purpose (as for Jesus with woman at the well)**
- **Stay on target!**

Watch out for juicy bait thrown out to divert you from the important issues. Don't get sucked into discussing pet issues—or even important issues—that don't contribute to the current goal.

You must maintain a clear idea of where you are heading. Stay on target! Firmly and repeatedly bring the discussion or research back on track.

Hidden Assumptions

- A “fact or statement that is taken for granted, but not stated in an argument
- May be valid or invalid
- May be left out because considered obvious
- May be omitted to lead to an invalid conclusion
- Important to identify hidden assumptions: especially wrong ones

Not Enough Food

- That evening the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the villages and buy food for themselves.” But Jesus said, “That isn’t necessary—you feed them.” “But we have only five loaves of bread and two fish!” they answered.
— Matthew 14:15-17

What are the hidden assumptions in this passage? Write down some of the ones you think.

What Hidden Assumptions?

- Crowd could not have sufficient food without going to the villages
- Disciples had no responsibility to feed the people
- Jesus did not understand the situation
- Disciples could not obey Jesus’ command because they did not have adequate resources

Common Example

- My wife doesn't satisfy me sexually, so I have been sleeping around.
 - ♦ Wife's job is to satisfy husband's sexual needs & fulfill his fantasies
 - ♦ Husband's sexual needs are more important than wife's emotional and physical well being
 - ♦ If wife doesn't perform to expectations, it is acceptable to find fulfillment elsewhere
 - ♦ Husband has no obligation to adjust his sexual expectations to meet his wife's needs
 - ♦ Adultery is okay under some circumstances
 - ♦ God grades on a curve. He doesn't really mean what He says in the Bible.

Hidden Assumptions Exercise

- Circle the letter of the correct hidden assumption in each of the questions in the *Hidden Assumptions Exercise* located on the last page of these notes.

[This exercise is taken from an online article of College of San Mateo, www.smccd.net. Note: This exercise seems to have an agenda. We do not endorse the source or conclusions. Answers, listed in *reverse* order for *after* you do the exercise are: *abcabcbbab*.]

Note: Hidden assumptions can be correct or wrong.

TV Commercials

- Carefully watch the following commercial for discussion...

Aleve[®] Commercial

- According to this commercial, what is the best medicine for arthritis relief?
- Did not say “best”, said “none better”
- Implies Aleve as good as prescription
- Had trouble with steps before, can fully squat with ease after taking Aleve
- Younger, more active clothes after taking Aleve, enjoying life
- —watch the commercial again —

Pain Medication Claims

- Motrin[®]
“Nothing works faster or stronger on muscle pain—not even Advil[®]* or Aleve[®].”
- Advil[®]
“Nothing Works BETTER!”
- Aleve[®]
Has dropped their “nothing better” claim on their web site

From their websites in 2010. Aleve commercial is from a few years back. Used as an example of things implied.

Wrong Implications

- When information is designed to lead you to an invalid conclusion
- Watch what is NOT being said just as much as what IS being said
- Watch for messages implied in images

There are “none better” than this brand of pain reliever. Implies that it is the best—but does not mean it is the best. They all may be exactly the same and “none better” is a true statement. If it was the best, they would have said that it was the best.

Watch what is not being said as much as what is being said. Often, what is not being said can provide valuable information.

You may have seen something similar to this in television commercials. “Chevy trucks have more power than Ford or Toyota.” What about Dodge and Nissan? They cannot say that their product is the best when it isn’t. But they will say things to imply that it is the best, and you will subconsciously register in your mind that it is the best. It can be a fun and useful exercise to listen to commercials and try to identify the hidden assumptions and wrong implications.

Example: Before and After photos. No makeup and not happy in *before*. Full makeup, dressed well, and very happy in *after*. Marketing knows what they are doing!

Man Born Blind

- **As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. “Rabbi,” his disciples asked him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?” “It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,” Jesus answered. “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him.**
— John 9:1-3

Disciples wrongly implied that someone sinned to cause the blindness.

Wrong Implications

- **That serious physical handicaps are always caused by someone’s sin**
- **This man was born blind because he or his parents sinned**
- **Both reveal an error in the beliefs of the disciples—which Jesus corrected**

The disciples appear to have believed that major physical defects were the result of sin (only). Specifically, they question whether this man was born blind because of his own sin or the sin of his parents. They seem to be a little puzzled that it could have been his own sin since he was born blind (before he had a chance to sin).

One wrong implication in this passage is that this man was born blind because of active sin. Another wrong implication is that serious physical handicaps are always caused by someone’s sin. Both reveal an error in the beliefs of the disciples—which Jesus corrected.

Handling Wrong Implications

- **Identify the conclusion to which the speaker/writer wants you to arrive**
- **Watch out for missing information and implied (but not stated) conclusions**
- **Practice careful listening and thinking**
- **Expose incorrect conclusions**

An advertisement is always designed to sell you a product or idea. Never forget that!

Bias & One-Sided Information

- **Bias happens when you have only one viewpoint of a situation**
- **Results in incomplete information**
- **Often occurs when someone is offended**

Bias happens when you only have one viewpoint of a situation or incomplete information. When describing a situation, people often only provide the information that **supports the conclusion they have already reached**. Consciously or subconsciously, they want you to come to the same conclusion about the source of the problem and the appropriate course of action.

Bible Warnings on Bias

- **Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish.**
— Proverbs 18:13
- **The first to speak in court sounds right— until the cross-examination begins. —**
Proverbs 18:17 (NIV)

Handling Bias

- **Refuse to make judgments from just one side of the matter. Collect information from the “other” side.**
- **Recognize that people will consciously or subconsciously desire you to come to the same conclusion that they have**
- **Watch for omissions or shading of information**
- **Prefer talking with both “sides” together**
- **If a person offended, instruct them to go to the offender to resolve the issue (Matt 18:15-17)**
- **If a person knows someone is offended with him, instruct him to go to the one offended to resolve the issue (Matt 5:23-24)**
- **When studying the Bible, don’t just look for verses that support your expected outcome.**
- **Collect all the relevant verses, then let the Bible teach you what you should think about the issue.**

It helps to determine what goal or conclusion is being promoted or desired by the person. Then watch out for omissions or shading of information. In some cases, people are actively pursuing hidden agendas. For example, a person may seem to be helpful in pointing out where a co-

worker is not doing things the way he should. Later you find that person desires to get the co-worker's job.

When talking with people, don't make a judgment based on only one person's view of the situation. Ideally, you should get both people together to work out their differences. If you can only talk with one of the parties, then focus on what that person should do Scripturally—not on what the other (missing) person should do.

Often, when someone is offended, he or she complains to someone else rather than following the Bible instructions to go to the offender and work out their differences.

“If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the fault. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If that person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. If the church decides you are right, but the other person won't accept it, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector. — Mt 18:15-17

The listener then forms an opinion or judgment against the offender from biased (one-sided) information. The Bible is clear that this is foolish and violates Scriptural instruction.

In such cases, the listener should refuse to come to conclusions on biased information. Rather, he should encourage the offended person to communicate directly with the offender as the Bible instructs. Once that has been tried without success, then the two parties should discuss the situation with a godly mediator in an effort to resolve the issues with both perspectives on the issues.

If a person knows that someone is offended with him, then he should go to the offended person to resolve the issues.

“So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there beside the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God. — Mt 5:23-24

How Answer Now?

- **Should I pay my tithes or my bills?**
- **If I give tithes, will God prosper me so I can pay my bills?**
- **Should identify and address the various issues**
 - ♦ **Red Herrings?**
 - ♦ **Hidden Assumptions?**
 - ♦ **Wrong Implications?**

Now look back at your summarized answers to the two questions at the beginning of this lesson. Have you changed the way you would answer? Thinking skills can help you get to the core issues and to minister to people more effectively.

What Red Herrings?

- **Should I pay my bills?**
 - ♦ **Avoid issue of obedience to God by focusing on bills**
- **Will God prosper me...”**
 - ♦ **Focus on blessing as a condition for tithing**
 - ♦ **Looking at tithing as an investment rather than obedience**

Tithing is a matter of obedience and participation in the expansion of the Kingdom. It should not be based on capability, convenience, or anticipated receipt of blessings.

What Hidden Assumptions?

- **If tithe, cannot pay bills. No other options**
- **All the bills are for things absolutely essential**
- **No other expenses can be cut**
- **No way to increase income**
- **Want to do right, just can't**
- **Things cannot change, locked into their circumstances**
- **God & church are unreasonable to expect them to survive and tithe**

God is not obligated to pay for self-centered spending. He promises to meet your needs, not your wants.

People typically want a lot more than they need and need a lot less than they think.

What Wrong Implications?

- **Okay not to tithe if not enough money**
- **Will force me to be a bad person if tithe because cannot pay bills**
- **If tell me to tithe, saying it's okay to not pay bills — shift blame to you!**
- **If tell me to pay bills, saying it's okay to not tithe — shift blame to you!**
- **If God won't help pay my bills, why tithe?**
- **Spend what I want and God will pay bills as long as I tithe**
- **God is okay with me buying the things I have bills for**
- **God is more interested in my financial well-being, happiness, and comfort than with my obedience and character**

People love to shift responsibility from themselves to others.

Important to avoid this tendency for people to shift responsibility to you for their life decisions when counseling them. Follow Jesus' example. Don't give people answers—help them find answers!

Questions You Could Ask

- What does the Bible say about tithes?
- Why do you have more bills than you can pay?
- Is it possible that you may be spending more than God wants you to spend on things He is not interested in you having?
- Have you made a list of *everything* that costs money each month to see what is not essential?
- Do you think it is wise to cut off God's long-term blessings to meet an immediate need?

Learn to take a **long view** of things. Address the immediate situation and begin the process to correct the core problems so you can both tithe and pay your bills. Don't eat your seed. **Don't sell out tomorrow to obtain a temporary convenience or pleasure today.** Diligence is required.

Sharpen Your Thinking Skills

- Are there other possibilities
 - ♦ Thinking outside the box
- Am I jumping to conclusions?
 - ♦ Follow a scenario out to its end result
- Staying focused on a clear goal?
 - ♦ Avoid rabbit trails
 - ♦ Shun red herrings
- What are the hidden assumptions?
 - ♦ Valid or invalid
- What are the wrong implications?
 - ♦ Implied conclusions that are invalid
- Is the information biased?
 - ♦ Getting all sides of the story

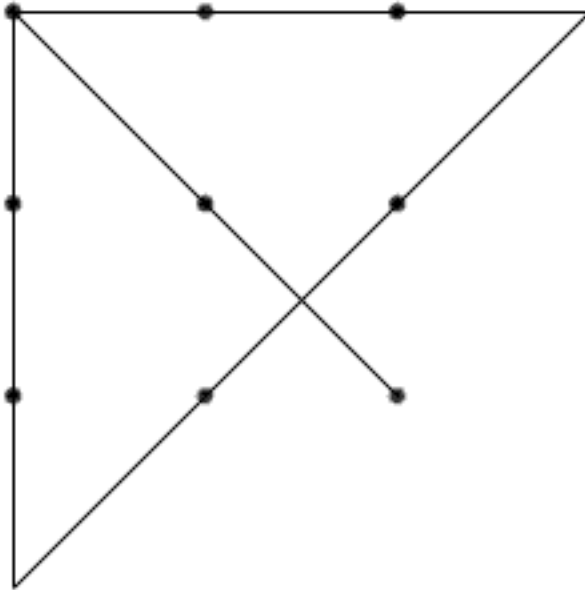
Homework

- "I know a godly pastor who prayed for tongues and did not receive. If God would give tongues to anyone, He would give to this man, so tongues must not be for today."
 - ♦ What are the red herrings?
 - ♦ What are the hidden assumptions?
 - ♦ What are the wrong implications?

[Write down your best answers before looking on the following pages.]

Connect the Dots Solution

Must think **outside the box** to make this work. No one said that the lines cannot go outside the box. But most people don't think about the lines extending beyond the normal borders of the box.



How Many Squares?

Answer: There are 30 squares in the figure. Broaden your perspective to include less obvious information. Keep looking until you find all 30.

Homework Answers

Following are some of the possible answers.

- **Red Herrings:**

- ♦ Asked for tongues, but Scripture says to ask for the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).
- ♦ States that the pastor is godly. Throws a factor into the situation that you cannot easily evaluate and therefore cannot counter.

- **Hidden Assumptions:**

- ♦ Failure of a godly person to receive means it is for no one.
- ♦ The pastor is in no way responsible for the failure to receive tongues.
- ♦ Experience validates or invalidates Scripture.
- ♦ All the relevant facts are known.
- ♦ It doesn't matter what Scriptures you show me.

- **Wrong Implications:**

- ♦ Tongues is a reward for being godly.
- ♦ People should ask for and seek tongues (rather than the Holy Spirit). (The gifts are distributed as the Spirit wills — 1 Cor. 12:4-11.)
- ♦ Tongues have passed away.
- ♦ Experience trumps Scripture when it comes to determining God's will.

The Bible Must be the evidence for determining God's will, not our experience.

Hidden Assumption Exercise

(The following exercise is from an online article of College of San Mateo, <http://www.smccd.net>.)

What is the hidden assumption behind these arguments? Circle one answer for each.

1. You should be able to laugh aloud whenever you want to, wherever you are, because it's good for your mind and body.
 - a. Laughter helps you relax.
 - b. You should be able to do anything that is good for your mind and body whenever you want to, wherever you are.
 - c. You are laughing and can't stop.
2. Tom would never hurt anyone's feelings because he's very sensitive himself.
 - a. Sensitive people never hurt anyone's feelings.
 - b. Tom is very easily hurt.
 - c. Tom has been accused of hurting someone's feelings.
3. Cats don't lay eggs because they're mammals.
 - a. Cats have viviparous young.
 - b. Mammals don't lay eggs.
 - c. Cats are mammals.
4. The accused killer had been brought up as a devout Christian, so the community was very surprised when he turned out to be a violent psychopath.
 - a. The accused killer was a violent psychopath.
 - b. People brought up as Christians can't be psychopaths.
 - c. The accused had committed a violent crime.
5. Because he played and sang Irish music so beautifully, Torvald astonished his fans when he revealed that he was actually Norwegian.
 - a. Norwegians are bad musicians.
 - b. Torvald had kept his identity secret.
 - c. Only the Irish can play Irish music.
6. John is an attorney, so all he cares about is money.
 - a. John is like all attorneys.
 - b. Attorneys only care about money.
 - c. If he wasn't an attorney, he wouldn't care about money.
7. Rock music is definitely a part of today's society, so it must be basically a good thing.
 - a. Anything that is part of today's society is basically a good thing.
 - b. Rock music must be part of today's society.
 - c. Rock music must be a good thing.
8. The animal rights activist who beat up the butcher shouldn't go to prison because he is really sincere about what he's doing.
 - a. The animal rights activist was sincere about beating up the butcher.
 - b. Animal rights activism is not a crime.
 - c. People who are sincere about their "crimes" should be excused from punishment.
9. Schools can't stop Sikh students from wearing small swords in their turbans, despite the "No Weapons" policy, because it's part of Sikh religion to do so.
 - a. Turbans are religious artifacts for Sikhs.
 - b. Schools can't stop students from doing things that their religion tells them to do.
 - c. Schools should not have a "No Weapons" policy.
10. "Cow-Abunga" yogurts must be good for you since they're made with 100% natural and organic ingredients!
 - a. Anything natural and organic is good for you.
 - b. "Cow-Abunga" yogurts are made with 100% natural and organic ingredients.
 - c. Yogurts are good for you.

Finding Light in the Darkness
Session 11: Love (Focus in New Testament)

What is Love?

What are some sayings you've heard about Love?

- i.e. Love makes the world go round
- Love is blind

We hear so much about it, yet see so little of it in action

Our culture says being loved is more important than loving, and that being loved depends on being attractive

Name the things you "love": _____

You have it, want it, or lost it

People fall in and out of it

Love can turn to hate, then switch to passion in a marital squabble

Are there different kinds of Love? Different levels of Love? Different words for Love?

How does it work?

What does it do? What does it look like?

Is Love a process or a state of being?

Write your own definition of love: _____

What was the dominate culture during the days of Jesus and His followers?

Four Greek Words

1. Eros
2. Storge
3. Phileo/Philanthropia
4. Agapao/Agape

1. Eros

- Secular Greek term, not in NT
- Human Love
- Romantic Love (according to studies, the main reason why people get married)
- Fiery passion
- Sexual Love
- Getting something for yourself
- Kindled by the attractiveness of another – excitement, pleasure, satisfaction
- Poses as love for another but is actually love for oneself
- "I love you because you make me..."
- It's based on a characteristic (beauty, intelligence, talent), take away the characteristic – "love" dies
- Primarily looks for what it can get
- May give a little, but the motive is to get something back
- Has the accompanying attitude of a compulsion to possess the object
- If it fails to get what it wants it turns to: resentment, bitterness or hatred

- Over ½ of American Men and Women say that not being in love is grounds for divorce
- It's a mixture of anger, sexual urge, joy & jealousy consummated in ecstasy
- How do most people choose a life partner? chemistry
- Strangely, in the Bible teaching about Christian love, eros is not mentioned in the NT Greek. Maybe it is because the Greeks in Corinth viewed eros as the ultimate religious expression. They thought the highest spiritual experience was the most powerful form of ecstasy. And, what could be more intense than sexual climax?
- That is why there existed in Corinth the temple to Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty. At one time, this fertility cult employed about one thousand priestess prostitutes available to provide the ultimate "religious experience." Paul referred to this problem in 1 Corinthians 6:15-20.

2. Storge

- Not used in the NT
- Natural Love
- Family Love – binds families, races, nations, etc
- Inevitable, automatic
- Affection for someone
- Positive side: bonding factor "through thick or thin" / Negative: bigotry, racism – rejecting those not "like us" or "of us"

3. Phileo

- Relates to the human personality...the Soul – mind, will, emotions
- Emotional warmth
- Tender affection toward a friend or family member
- Involves closeness & bonding
- Companionship or brotherly love
- Mutual sharing – 50/50 – give and take
- i.e. Peter talking with Jesus (John 21:15,16)
- There is some eros in philia. We choose friends because of the pleasure we derive from being with them. There are personal qualities in them that we appreciate, intellectual and cultural interests that we share, and mutual self-expression that we find satisfying. We derive something enjoyable from the relationship, but we are also willing to give our fair share. This giving is not free from selfish motivation, but the selfishness is largely obscured by a sense of togetherness. Philia is a higher level of love than eros in that "our" happiness is involved rather than merely "my" happiness.
- Eros is blind. It closes its eyes to faults, laughs off shortcomings, and rationalizes potential problems. Philia, on the other hand, honestly faces all these things and decides whether they are overshadowed by contrasting strengths.
- It's loves "half way" mark
- Can't take the strain
- A couple can make it on this kind of love as long as each one does his part and the circumstances of life remain fairly steady. If one partner fails to contribute his

share, however, or if unusual stress is introduced (financial crisis, serious illness, in-law tensions, sexual problems, child-rearing problems, etc.), the friendship suffers

- It finally becomes selfish and demanding, and comradeship turns to conflict

4. Agape

- Rarely used outside the NT, the concept was in the Greek and Roman culture, but the actual word – agape – was not
- To highly value
- Unconditionally have at heart the genuine welfare and best interests of the object loved
- Rational commitment
- Motivation to maintain a relationship even in the face of problems
- It directs kindness, respect and loyalty toward the object loved
- It delights in giving
- Desires only the good of the one loved
- Keeps on loving even when its object is unresponsive, unkind, unlovable, or completely unworthy
- It doesn't give fifty percent and expect fifty percent in return. It gives one hundred percent and expects nothing in return!
- It's not human!! Agape is given by God alone, because He Himself is agape (1 John 4:8)
- Romans 8:35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Bible Search:

- God's love toward us
 - a. John 3:16
 - b. Romans 5:5,8
- Jesus' self-sacrificial love
 - a. John 15:12, 13
 - b. Ephesians 5:1,2
- Our misdirected love towards things
 - a. 1 John 2:15-17
- Our love towards others
 - a. John 13:35
- Our relationship with God
 - a. 1 John 5:1-3
- Our relationship with Jesus
 - a. John 15:14
- Characteristics of Agape
 - a. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Characteristics of Agape 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

1. Suffereth long
2. Kind
3. Envieth not
4. Vaunteth not
5. Not puffed up
6. Not unseemly
7. Seeketh not her own
8. Not easily provoked
9. Thinketh no evil
10. Rejoiceth not in iniquity
11. Rejoiceth in truth
12. Beareth all things
13. Believeth all things
14. Hopeth all things
15. Endureth all things
16. Never faileth

The Growth Cycle of Love

Eros => Phileo => Agape / Think of the Baby => Child => Teen => Adult

Maturing love involves growing from a state of receiving much and giving little toward a state of cheerfully giving everything and demanding nothing in return.

In a marriage relationship, the dominant fire of eros gradually gives ground to the mature phileo of affection. Phileo becomes the cement that bonds and holds families together over the long haul.

There is an actual shift in the balance of bodily hormones during this transition. In popular usage, we call this shift the end of the honeymoon period. The chemicals of eros dominate the emotional areas of our brain, and overrule the critical thinking areas. After those chemicals subside, the thinking regions make a come back, and we may wonder what we ever saw in the other person!

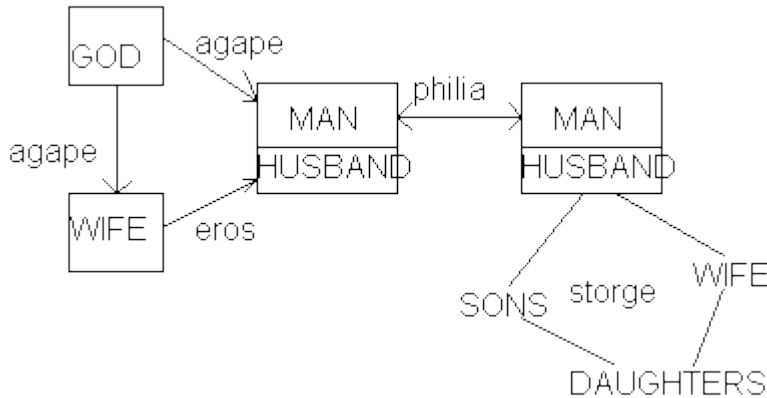
Do you have an intimacy of spirit and soul, as well as body with your mate? We should concentrate (before marriage) on the establishment of communion of spirit and soul first, then body as the crowning glory of a growing relationship (in marriage).

Do you have an intimacy of spirit, soul & body with Father? Luke 10:27

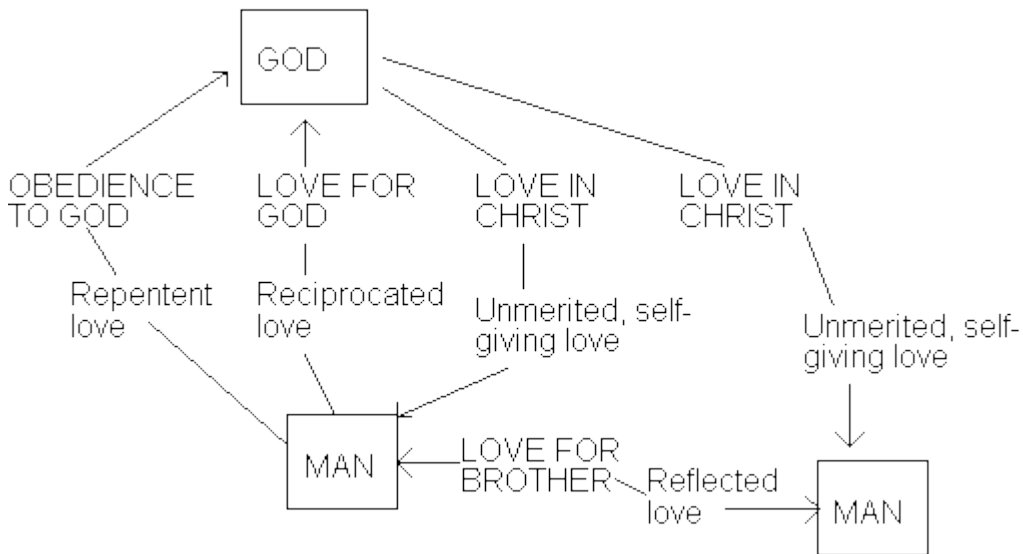
Jesus displayed this Christian love toward Lazarus, as observed, "Lord, behold, he whom You love (phileo) is sick" (John 11:3). In addition, John also wrote of this relationship, "Now Jesus loved (agape) Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" John 11:5).

John also reveals that God displays friendship love (phileo) toward us, and believers toward Jesus (John 16:27).

The Love Covenant God Created:



Love Shared Between Different People:



Love Contrasted:

Phileo	Agape
Natural	Learned
Emotional	Volitional (conscious choice)
Discriminatory (prejudice; biased)	Non-Discriminatory
Conditional	Unconditional
Delight (gives you joy)	Esteem (regard with respect)
Liking	Prizing
Because of	In Spite of
Fails	Never Fails

Practical Applications

- Christian love is important. It forms the relationship foundation between us, God, and other believers – and all people (1 Thessalonians 3:12).
- All kinds of love are vital and important in a healthy marriage relationship.
Phileo can be thought of as love from the soul, and **agape** from the spirit. Agape should be the foundation in a marriage. But, sex is important also, **eros**, which is from the body. Successful love in a marriage incorporates all three.
- Marriage should not be based on eros alone, because when the eros slows down with time and age, you might get bored, and think you have fallen out of love.
- Don't confuse eros and phileo with true Christian love: agape. Falling out of eros is not falling out of love.
- Love can grow if cultivated, it's not automatic.
- We must be wary of "platonic" relationships with the opposite sex. The heartfelt intimacy of phileo can quickly turn to the raging passion of eros.
- Agape love is the sign of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life (Galatians 5:22).
- Both agape and phileo should characterize the relationships among Christians (Romans 12:9, 10).
- How can we possibly love this way? (1 John 4:19) God's love for us generates love in our own hearts. Is your heart filled with bitterness, resentment, or hard feelings? God loves you, just as you are, in spite of your sinful, selfish attitudes and acts. God loves you! Contemplate His love, enjoy His love, revel in His love, drink deeply of His love, thank Him for His love. (Galatians 5:22 / 6:7 / Luke 6:38)
- You can't give what you don't have. Loving others comes out of the overflow of loving Him & being loved by Him.

BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Describe how Christian love (agape) is to work out in your life (Mark 12:29-31).
2. In what manner did God display His Christian love (agape) toward us (Romans 5:8)?
3. What is a source of hope to Christians (Romans 5:5)?
4. List and explain five ways you can express Christian love (agape) in your most important relationships (1 Corinthians 13:4-8).
5. How important is Christian love (agape) in your relationships with others (1 Corinthians 13:13)? Explain.
6. Explain the difference between eros, agape, and phileo.
7. What should be our relationship to the world (1 John 2:15-17; John 3:16; Matthew 5:24). How can you reconcile these verses? Agape is used in all three.
8. Describe two ways how husbands can relate Christian love (agape) to their wives (Ephesians 5:25)?
9. Describe two ways wives can express love (phileo) to their husbands (Titus 2:4).
10. What stood out the most to you in this Bible study? Explain.

*John 15:9-11 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

*John 17:26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

*Romans 13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

*Galatians 5:6 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything, but faith working through love.

LOVE (NOUN AND VERB)

A. Verbs.

1. agapao NT:25 and the corresponding noun agape (B, No. 1 below) present "the characteristic word of Christianity, and since the Spirit of revelation has used it to express ideas previously unknown, inquiry into its use, whether in Greek literature or in the Septuagint, throws but little light upon its distinctive meaning in the NT. Cf, however, Lev 19:18; Deut 6:5.

"Agape and agapao are used in the NT (a) to describe the attitude of God toward His Son, John 17:26; the human race, generally, John 3:16; Rom 5:8, and to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ particularly John 14:21; (b) to convey His will to His children concerning their attitude one toward another, John 13:34-35, and toward all men, 1 Thess 3:12; 1 Cor 16:14; 2 Peter 1:7; (c) to express the essential nature of God, 1 John 4:8.

"Love can be known only from the actions it prompts. God's love is seen in the gift of His Son, 1 John 4:9,10. But obviously this is not the love of complacency, or affection, that is, it was not drawn out by any excellency in its objects, Rom 5:8. It was an exercise of the divine will in deliberate choice, made without assignable cause save that which lies in the nature of God Himself, Cf. Deut 7:7,8.

"Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Cor 5:14; Eph 2:4; 3:19; 5:2; Christian love is the fruit of His Spirit in the Christian, Gal 5:22.

"Christian love has God for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to His commandments, John 14:15,21,23; 15:10; 1 John 2:5; 5:3; 2 John 6. Selfwill, that is, self-pleasing, is the negation of love to God.

"Christian love, whether exercised toward the brethren, or toward men generally, is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all, Rom 15:2, and works no ill to any, 13:8,9,10; love seeks opportunity to do good to 'all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith,' Gal 6:10. See further 1 Cor 13 and Col 3:12-14."

From Notes on Thessalonians, by Hogg and Vine, p. 105.

In respect of agapao as used of God, it expresses the deep and constant "love" and interest of a perfect Being towards entirely unworthy objects, producing and fostering a

reverential "love" in them towards the Giver, and a practical "love" towards those who are partakers of the same, and a desire to help others to seek the Giver. See BELOVED. 2. phileo NT:5368 is to be distinguished from agapao in this, that phileo more nearly represents "tender affection." The two words are used for the "love" of the Father for the Son, John 3:35 (No. 1), and 5:20 (No. 2); for the believer, 14:21 (No. 1) and 16:27 (No. 2); both, of Christ's "love" for a certain disciple, 13:23 (No. 1), and 20:2 (No. 2). Yet the distinction between the two verbs remains, and they are never used indiscriminately in the same passage; if each is used with reference to the same objects, as just mentioned, each word retains its distinctive and essential character.

Phileo is never used in a command to men to "love" God; it is, however, used as a warning in 1 Cor 16:22; agapao is used instead, e. g., Matt 22:37; Luke 10:27; Rom 8:28; 1 Cor 8:3; 1 Peter 1:8; 1 John 4:21. The distinction between the two verbs finds a conspicuous instance in the narrative of John 21:15-17. The context itself indicates that agapao in the first two questions suggests the "love" that values and esteems (cf. Rev 12:11). It is an unselfish "love," ready to serve. The use of phileo in Peter's answers and the Lord's third question, conveys the thought of cherishing the Object above all else, of manifesting an affection characterized by constancy, from the motive of the highest veneration. See also Trench, Syn., Sec. xii.

Again, to "love" (phileo) life, from an undue desire to preserve it, forgetful of the real object of living, meets with the Lord's reproof, John 12:25. On the contrary, to "love" life (agapao) as used in 1 Peter 3:10, is to consult the true interests of living. Here the word phileo would be quite inappropriate.

Note: In Mark 12:38, KJV, thelo, "to wish," is translated "love" (RV, "desire").

B. Nouns.

1. agape NT:26, the significance of which has been pointed out in connection with A, No. 1, is always rendered "love" in the RV where the KJV has "charity," a rendering nowhere used in the RV; in Rom 14:15, where the KJV has "charitably," the RV, adhering to the translation of the noun, has "in love."

Note: In the two statements in 1 John 4:8 and 16, "God is love," both are used to enjoin the exercise of "love" on the part of believers. While the former introduces a declaration of the mode in which God's love has been manifested vv. 9,10, the second introduces a statement of the identification of believers with God in character, and the issue at the Judgment Seat hereafter v. 17, an identification represented ideally in the sentence "as He is, so are we in this world."

2. philanthropia NT:5363 denotes, lit., "love for man" (phileo and anthropos, "man"); hence, "kindness," Acts 28:2, in Titus 3:4, "(His) love toward man." Cf. the adverb philanthropos, "humanely, kindly," Acts 27:3.

Note: For philarguria, "love of money," 1 Tim 6:10, see MONEY (love of). For philadelphia, see BROTHER, Note (1).

(from Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

Worksheet: **Love** (Focus in New Testament)

Name the things you “love”: _____

Write your own definition of love: _____

Four Greek Words

1. **Eros**

Strong’s Number: _____

Meaning: _____

2. **Storge**

Strong’s Number: _____

Meaning: _____

3. **Phileo/Philanthropia**

Strong’s Number: _____

Strong’s: _____

Vine’s: _____

4. **Agapao/Agape**

Strong’s Number: _____

Strong’s: _____

Vine’s: _____

Bible Search:

- _____
 - a. John 3:16
 - b. Romans 5:5,8

- _____
a. John 15:12, 13
b. Ephesians 5:1,2
- _____
a. 1 John 2:15-17
- _____
a. John 13:35
- _____
a. 1 John 5:1-3
- _____
a. John 15:14
- _____
a. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Characteristics of Agape 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

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List The Growth Cycle of Love

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2. _____
3. _____

David to Elijah
Finding Light in the Darkness, Session 12
Slide Notations – Cere Muscarella

Left off... David Lessons... Sin may be sweet for a moment but it becomes death-dealing soon afterward! Sin is sure to find us out! Our hidden sins transmit to next Generations. Un-judged sin, spawns! God always accepts the penitent and repentant sinner! ***Life, not death, should bring us to our knees!***

David Lessons... 2S12 ‘as long as there is life there is hope that God is going to answer prayers for healing...’ (as long as it is a case/healing). And we pray like life depends on us! ‘once death came...’ David would not crossover into God’s dominion... Got up, cleaned up, dressed up, filled up!

The questions beg for answers: What do you believe, not hope, is true about life and death? Because if it’s there, in all the glory we have imagined it to have, then why do we sorrow like we do? How much do you love your loved one? Enough to see them there or have them near?

In case we missed it... Before there was a question of life after death, there was life before death! Enoch, taken up by God, to a real place! Moses, Elijah taken by supernatural means, returned from a place, alive! Stephen looked up saw Jesus standing next to God, in a real place! Jesus dying on the Cross, descending into the bowels of the earth to talk to captives – living beings, every one!

Can’t miss David's counsel... While he was alive I prayed like crazy for my desire to be done... Now that he’s dead, I acquiesce to God’s will been-done! The child will not return here... But I will go to him, and I am going to make such an entrance! We can stop living with fear/misery and start living with joy/jealousy! ***What we really believe about death determines how well we live life on our way there!***

The Shimei Principle... 2S16.5ff “And when King David passed by, Shimei came, cursing and throwing stones at David and his servants. Abishai said, ‘why should this dead dog curse my lord? Let me go and cut off his head!’ David said, ‘let him alone and let him curse for the Lord has bidden him!’ Many are the afflictions of the righteous but the Lord delivers them out of them all! **Ps34.19**

Lessons... Some people need to sound off for their relief and we can take it... You don’t have to respond to every adversary... Nor do you need someone else to... Some people are in our lives to remind us we aren’t all that... Learn the lessons of persecution and let God deal w/prosecutors! (Solomon!)

Solomon... the Wise! Could ask for anything, asked for wisdom to rule, and it pleased the Lord! **1K3.5-15** Famous judgment of the remaining child between two harlots... **v16-28** Builds the temple of God! **5-6** Sins against God: **11.1** “loved many strange women,” power, fortune turned his heart, neglected the Word of God!

Five things Kings cannot do... Multiply horses to himself! **1K10.26** Nor cause the people to turn back to Egypt to get more horses! **v28-29** Neither multiply wives to himself! **11.3** Neither greatly multiply gold and silver to himself **10.14,23,27** Neglect the reading and writing of the ‘ancient’ Word! **D17.14-20**

Lessons... All great Bible characters were flawed! Money, power, sex, drunkenness, stuff don't bring happiness! (Vanity!) The whole duty of man is to fear God and keep His commandments, because He will bring every good work into judgment along with every secret good or evil thing! **E12.13,14**

Mini-profile... Jehoshaphat 2Chr17 "strengthened himself against Israel (own brothers) and placed forces in the fenced cities and garrisons... and the Lord was with Him because he walked in the first ways of David... the Lord established him and he had riches and honor..."

Shortcut to wealth? Run after God! Run after God? Can cost you your brothers! Ahab was a worldly/compromised child of promise! Coddled/ungodly wife!

Every husband and wife needs to understand how vital your "joined-ad-venture" is! Success in life rises and falls on our relationship with God and each other!

Elijah... "My God is Jehovah!" Love him! He is the atomic bomb of the OT! Walks into the court of the one "who did evil above all that were before him (Ahab!)" **1K16.30...** He explodes on the scene during Israel's low spot and pronounces God's judgment in the form of a drought **17.1**

Proves that God's people can be in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation and... Experience the miraculous power of God! "it will be that you will drink from the stream and ravens will bring you bread and flesh every evening!" **17.3-6** "After a while the brook dried up and God sent him to a widow in Zarephath!" **7-16** Against reason, Elijah instructs the woman to make him their last meal, and she eats from a barrel of meal and a cruse of oil that kept producing for a year!

How important is it that we are intimate with God and are obedient to His word?

The flow of miraculous power! **17-23** "And the woman's son became sick and died... and the widow said, 'why did you come? Why did you spare me? To torment me for my sin and slay my son?'" Elijah took the dead boy to his room, laid him on the bed, laid over him 3x, prayed, and the child's soul came back into him! "**Now I know you are a man of God!**" **24**

Lessons stacking up already! We may live in stormy times but we don't have to be in the storm! Societal darkness does not affect the ability of God to shine! Knowing God, His nature, what He can do is vital to a prophetic experience! People know that people representing God should do miraculous things! And they need constant convincing! And that's just one chapter!

Elijah... again... 18 "Go and show yourself to Ahab!" Confrontation coming on! **v17** "When Ahab saw Elijah he said, 'Are you the one who has troubled Israel?' **v18-20** "not me, but you Ahab... you have forsaken the Word of God and followed an idol god... now gather up your priests... it's crunch time!" "How long will you be stuck between two options?" –good question!

Elijah gives them first choice... Gives them head-start... Takes a great shot! "Maybe your god is busy talking, out shopping, on a trip, or is sleeping and needs to be awakened..." **v27** Waits patiently all day/then rev's up! **30** Rebuilds the altar, soaks offering/wood, prays a 63 word prayer, stands back **31-37** Fire falls, revival begins, slays 850 false prophets, prays, proclaims the rain... **38-45** Outruns the chariots home! **46**

And you think you've had a busy day?

Lesson stack! Forsaking God for idols will always bring Him on the scene! God will confront us thru our brothers if we will not confront ourselves! Brothers being confronted aren't always happy to see you and may even blame you for their problems! Need to quit getting stuck between our options in life! IF

He is God... drop the rest... and follow Him! Sin is a creeper... slips in high moments! He has begun his great fall and didn't even know it...

Elijah... three-peat... Ahab tells Jezebel all that Elijah had done... **19.1** And Jezebel threatened to kill Elijah **v2** And he ran for his life! **v3** New prayer: "Oh God, life stinks, I've had enough, take away my life!" **v4** Prophet who just killed 850 men of various sizes, running from one old lady? Prophet who had everyone on his side? Prophet who raised boy from the dead? ***Prophet weakened by sin... roaring lioness!***

In the wilderness, God sends an angel... who feeds Elijah angel food cake, twice... good for forty days... comes to the Mount of God! **v5-8** God speaks: "What are you doing here?" *The revelation of sin:* "I have been very jealous for You... and the children of Israel have forsaken Your word, thrown down Your altars and slain Your prophets with the sword..." (DUH! All past tense issues. The very reason why he was sent!)... "and I, even I only am left and they seek my life, to take it..." **v10 (pride – 18.22)**
Pride goes before a fall. Look what my hand has done! God chooses the humble so that there's no boasting! No flesh can glory in His presence! Sin will always find you out. God reads the thoughts and intents of a person's heart. Anything hidden, revealed. Committed to perfecting.

God says, "Go stand before Me on the mount... **v11** God passes by and a wind broke the rocks but the Lord was not in the wind! After the wind, an earthquake and the Lord was not in the quake... After the quake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire... then a small voice... "What are you doing here Elijah?" "I, even I only am left and they seek my life, to take it..." **v14 (fear – 10)**

"Go. Return to Damascus and when you get there anoint the new king of Syria, the new king of Israel, and Elisha your replacement!"

"And BTW I have 7,000 in Israel who have not bowed to Baal..."

Presuming to know God's resources... presuming to be God's resources... can get you in a world of hurt!

Lesson stack! Forsaking God for idols will always bring Him on the scene! Elijah's was fear! God will confront us if we will not confront ourselves! 3x instructed! We can't always see our problems, but if God is repeating Himself, LISTEN! Sin is a creeper... slips in high moments! Kill it or you could find yourself a castaway after you have preached to others! **1C9.27**

Final lessons... One of the greatest prophets in Bible history was an unknown... Least of us greater than him! **Lk7.28** Can succeed w/o a pedigree! **1K17** Can start out great and end bad! **1K19** Even after we are done, we can still do great things for God! (mercy!) **2K1/2** calls fire 2x/divides Jordan/appears at the transfiguration/and again at the end.

Let's go out in a blaze of glory and leave a double legacy behind! 2K2.9-15

Elijah to Jeremiah
Finding Light in the Darkness, Session 13
Slide Notations – Cere Muscarella

Left off... Elijah! One of the greatest prophets in Bible history, was an unknown... Least of us greater than him! **Lk7.28** Can succeed w/o a pedigree! **1K17** Can start out great and end bad! **1K19** Even after we are done, we can still do great things for God! (mercy!) **2K1/2** calls fire 2x/divides

Jordan/transfig/end. Let's go out in a blaze of glory and leave a double legacy behind! **2K2.9-15**

And it proves that God has room enough for anyone in His kingdom who is willing to speak out in His name!

Elisha... Elijah's name meant "My God is Jehovah!" Elisha's name means "God is salvation!" Elijah: Law! Elisha: Grace! Elijah checking out, asks Elisha what he wants: "A double portion/spirit!" It's a hard thing you want – but if you are watching when I go it will be so. **2K2.9** And Elisha was faithfully watching as Elijah taken up/fully rewarded!

Elisha actually did twice as many miracles as Elijah, including raising a man from the dead when his body touched Eli's dead bones!

Elisha Notables... Widow's oil! **2K4.1-6** Your servant is dead... The debtors are coming for my two boys... What do you have in your house? Nothing but a pot of oil! Go get all the vessels you can, shut the door and begin pouring out of your pot! When she filled every pot/oil stopped! Go sell the oil and pay your debts!

Elisha Notables... Naaman: Syrian captain w/leprosy! **2K5** Comes to Elisha for healing... Sends out Gehazi, w/prescription... "Go wash in the Jordan seven times!" Naaman left angry: wanted personal audience, dignity, miracle-worker action! If asked to do a hard thing you would have done it... why not easy thing? **We're looking for a dog and pony show or some part to play... when all God wants is simple obedience!** Naaman obeyed reluctantly, and his flesh was restored to that of a child... and he became a very grateful convert!

Mini-profile... Gehazi: Elisha's know-better servant! Naaman wanted to pay for his miracle! Elisha refused, but Gehazi wondered what could it hurt to take a little... Ran after Naaman, "Elisha has a need!" "Where have you been Gehazi?" No where... "Didn't you know I would know? You went for his money, now Naaman's leprosy will be yours!"

What can it hurt trying to cash in on the glory of God?

Elisha Notables... "Surrounded by the King of Syria, Elisha's servant cries out, 'What will we do?' Elisha answered, "fear not for there are more with us than with them!" And when he prayed the servants eyes were opened and he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire surrounding Elisha! **2K6.8-18 Good lesson for all young servants! Rest of his story... 2Kings 13**

Hezekiah... Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, wicked king of Judah... and godly mother Abijah... Daughter of Zachariah: God is renowned! As wicked as Ahaz was, his mother was good! She counteracted all the evil influence! Hezzie, began his reign cleansing the temple; pulling down the places of idol worship; preparing for the Passover.

Hezekiah, man of prayer, besieged by Sennacherib, takes it to the Lord! **18-19 Is 37.14-20** simple prayer! **Is 37.33-38** complex, complete answer! 185,000 soldiers died/later, king!

Hezekiah became very sick, enough to die... “Set your house in order!” **20** Takes it to the Lord, weeping for more! Isaiah: in 3 days you will be healed and I will give you 15 more years!

15 years... Compromised his kingdom and brings horrible judgment down on his kingdom! Fathered his heir... Manasseh... Who was noted as the meanest and most sinful of the kings... *A granted request for what he thought was best and bro't leanness to his soul!*

Lessons... Good mothers (or dads)/grandparents can counteract a lot of evil! When God places us in authority, do good – host revival, tear down idols! Anytime anything happens, take it to God! Be a person of prayer! Pride can defeat you anywhere along your way! Know what you're asking for!

Mini-profile: Ezra was a descendant of Aaron **7.1-5** and a teacher of the Word **v6** He was a dedicated believer **v10** Ezra was about: worship, the Word of God, reading and teaching the Word, the power of prayer, separation from the world, using the wisdom of God in everyday life!

Nehemiah... Tribe of Judah, born in captivity, but grew up w/abiding faith in God! *‘A man w/the counsel of God alone in his mind and heart. A reserved and resolute man. A man to take command of other men. A man in no haste or hurry. A man who will not start until the cost has been counted and will not stop until the work is finished!’ – Whyte*

Nehemiah served as the cupbearer to King Artaxerses! **1.11/2.1** Heard about the condition of Jerusalem wept, fasted, prayed/3 months **1.1/2.1** *“If you love you will pray, if you pray in love you will stay until answered.”* Took his life in his hands by appearing before the king with his burden! **2.2** Prayed before, prayed thru, prayed after!

Nehemiah, Tells the king his burden **2.3** King asks what he wants to do **2.4** Prays before speaking **v4-5** Gets permission, w/time condition **v5-6** Asks for protection and provision **v7-8** Picks up his first enemies! **v10** Surveys the problems! **v11-16** Organizes the men! **2.17-3.32** Does the impossible! **6.15**

Nehemiah Notable... From the beginning, Nehemiah is on Sanballat and Tobiah's radar! **2.10** Just kept escalating; accusations of disloyalty **2.19** to mockery (feeble Jews, weak wall – a fox climbing up will break it down) **4.1-3** to anger **v7-8** And treachery! **6.1,2** “Let us meet together and talk, but they meant to do mischief”

“I am doing a great work and I cannot away, why should I interrupt what I am doing to come down to talk to you?”

In all our lives, a million things will come to take us off our work... and nothing is worth it! Nothing! And when you come to this point of recognition... you will be able to say to God: “so the work was finished!” 6.15

Nehemiah Notable... The work is finished and the people are gathered for the first meeting... **8.1ff** People are eager for Bible instruction... Discontent with social condition... Ezra read the word for 4 hours... People cried: stirred, awakened, hi-line! Nehemiah/Ezra call out: Not a time for weeping but a day of reconciliation – go and share with underprivileged – food and joy; because they understood! **v12**

Lessons... (recurring theme) Don't have to start well to end well! (Captivity!) Just need a heart for God, alone! God and us makes a majority! Ask and receive if God is for you! Will pick up enemies doing God's will! Live unshaken, unafraid, on track! Peo need His people/deliver His word!

Esther... was an orphan, adopted by Mordecai – a kinsman! **2.5-7** Vashti's replacement/Queen! **2.17** Plot to kill all Jews hatched by Haman/ they obeyed God's Word/not bow! **3.** Mordecai hears about the plan **4.** Approaches Esther to intervene **4.13-14** *If you don't help, God will find someone else but maybe it's for this very reason that you have come to the kingdom at this time!* **7.14**

Lessons... Esther had to make a decision to play it safe or risk for her people! Courage against enemy Courage w/i own house. Esther didn't forget who she was even though she had been exalted! Esther did great things because she was available to the God of great things!

Isaiah... The Prince of the Prophets! He was a city guy – lived and ministered in Jerusalem, 50 yrs! Grew up in days of great prosperity! Watched Israel/Judah plunge into sin! Though aristocratic, he dressed like one of the old prophets, calling people to repentance!

Isaiah Opening vision: like animals who don't know their masters **1.3**, nation heavy w/sin, the seed of evil doers and corrupters, alienated from God **v4**, un-correctable, head-sick, heart-faint **v5**, totally unsound, wounds and bruises and putrefying sores **v6**, desolate country, overthrown and devoured by strangers **v7** – only a remnant left! **v8**

Isaiah In the midst of the corruption and calamities, the calling of the prophet! **6.1** "I saw the Lord, high and lifted up!" "Woe is me, for I am undone; a man of unclean lips..." **v5** "With the coal from the altar on your mouth your sin is taken away..." **v6,7** "Now who will I send? Send me!" **v8** Go, tell, until... and, tenth! **v9-13**

Lessons... God is always looking for someone to speak for Him in every generation! And there are people willing to respond to Him from every walk of life! In the presence of a holy God, we see ourselves for who we are, needy to be cleansed! You can be called and equipped, but only a few will respond! Go – until!

Jeremiah... Isaiah was the city born Prince of Prophets... Jere was born into the ministry; son/priest! **1.1** "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you and sanctified you and ordained you to be a prophet to the nations!" **v5** "don't tell Me the reasons you can't do this, I will send you and you will say what I say, My words will be in your mouth!" **v8,9**

Jeremiah "I have set you over nations & kingdoms to root up, pull down, destroy and throw down, to build and plant...! **1.10** Thanks Lord, great calling/message! "Be strong, get up, speak out what I say don't be dismayed at their looks or I will confound you before them!" **v17** Stern warning for sympathetic man! Over/over had to call on God/strength!

Jeremiah Is the weeping prophet! Author of Lamentations!" He loved his nations and words of judgment cut deep into him... **9.1** Wanted to quit but the word was in his heart as fire shut up in his bones! **20.7-9** Distress growing, sorrow deepening, wished he had never been born! **v14-18** Delivered the restoration messages, but all promises on the other side of obedience!

Lessons God has a plan for everyone He knows... We have to be faithful even if we can't be successful! We should expect resistance and criticism from the world around us! We must take comfort knowing God is always faithful and just! We must be identifiable by His character! Huh?

"Jesus asked, 'whom do men say that I am?' And they said, 'some say you are John the Baptist, some Elijah, others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets!'"

They were assessing Him on His likeness to those who spoke/lived for God! Actually they were of His spirit/ilk!

Could that be said of us...

Jeremiah to Job
Finding Light in the Darkness, Session 14
Slide Notations – Cere Muscarella

Left off... Jeremiah! The weeping prophet! Fully identified with the people he was called to serve! No pleasure in the words of judgment given to speak against the nation/sin! Brought him to the point of wishing he had never been born **20.14-18**

Though you get to deliver messages for restoration, no one ever said speaking for God was an easy thing!

You will have to guard yourself against mere sympathy and constantly need to call on God for more and more strength in your empathy! Jer1.10-17

Ezekiel Notable... “Through tribulation is rest!” Ezekiel was happily married... “And the word of the Lord came and said, ‘I will take away the desire of your eyes but I don’t want you to mourn, nor weep, not even silent tears... Do not cry, and no mourning for the dead.’” “I told them what the Lord said in the morning and that night my wife died!”

You thought you had a tough job!

Ezekiel Notable... “In the morning I did as I was told, I put on my hat and shoes and went out, no sighing, no funeral meal...” “And the people said, ‘will you please tell us what this means for us?’” “(Because of your extreme sinfulness) You are going to fall and I will not mourn for you, says the Lord!”

We must always remember we serve the God who does not change! The rules of engagement have changed since Jesus... But the notion that our Dad speaks like a half witted old grandfather is completely ludicrous!

Daniel! “God is my judge!” One of four notable Jewish kids brought into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar! Daniel: Belteshazzar, Hananiah: Shadrach, Mishael: Meshach, Azariah: Abednego. Neb took best/brightest prisoners, renamed/enculturate them food/education... “*Wanted men who loved like Hebrews and thought like Babylonians!*”

Daniel Notables... “Refused the kings food and drink...” For their God-choice “God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams!” **1.17** “In all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king inquired of them he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers in his realm! **1.20** *Just proves vegetarians are smarter than meat eaters! LOL! JK!*

Lesson: Obedient children have the edge on everyone else!

Daniel Notables... “The God who reveals secrets!” **2.1-49** King wants his dream interpreted, but he couldn’t remember the dream! **v5** “No man can tell you what you dreamed! “No king has ever asked such a thing! “Wait!” there is one man, a praying man, with praying friends, and a God who reveals secrets! *Daniel reveals the dream and the king makes him the second greatest in his kingdom!* **v48**

Lessons... “what is impossible with men is not impossible with God!” **Mt 19.26 Mk 10.27 Lk 1.37, 18.27** Just because it hasn’t been done before doesn’t mean it’s not about to happen! It’s important to be a person of prayer and have friends who do! Include spiritual people in spiritual things! Great things are in store for people of great faith and don’t forget your friends!

Daniel Notables... “The furnace of fire...” **3.** You would think Nebo would get it! Makes an idol for himself, commands everyone to bow down/trumpet call. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego – uh, uh! Heats the furnace seven times normal... Kills the servants throwing them in. “Why are there four walking around in there?” ‘Come out here boys!’

Lessons... Just because we demonstrate the kingdom one day doesn’t mean the same people are going to get it the next! They can be pretty scary looking when they feel challenged! Jesus is still there to meet us when we are forced to walk thru the fire! Shameless, risky faith, saves the day! Promotion comes from the Lord right in the midst of a secular kingdom!

Daniel Notables... “Nebo’s Nightmare!” **4.1-37** Dreams of a great tree, cut down to a stump... man turning beast for 7 years... Daniel’s slips into a waking coma... this spells doom... for us all! Spoke up anyway... 1 yr later king dethroned, lives like an animal in the fields... 7 yrs looks up and sanity restored! **“Now I praise and extol the King of Heaven whose works are truth!” v37**

Lessons... Just because we demonstrate the kingdom one day and they forget it the next doesn’t mean they won’t get it someday! As a servant to God and man you just have to speak the truth, no matter how hard, regardless of personal risk!

Daniel Notables... “New King... Belshazzar!” **5.1-30** Grandson of Nebuchadnezzar... doesn’t know God... cycle starts all over again! Hosts a drunken feast/using temple implements for the fest! “Hand, writing, on the wall” **v5**, king's festive face changed/terror **v6**, starts crying like a little girl **v7**, offers reward for whoever can interpret – can’t **v8,9**, hears about old guy named Daniel **v13**. “Weighed/found wanting” – dead! **v30**

Lessons... Really important to effectively pass the testimony of God down/2 generations! Kid died because he was not “humbled in his heart” though he knew the history! Retirement is not an option! Once again, Daniel exalted in new generation to third highest, for obedience! Not over yet!

Daniel Notables... “Another New King... Darius!” **6.1-28** Darius was 62 yrs old when he began! Made Daniel ruler of rulers/120 princes! About to name him 2nd/all realm! **v3** Jealous, other presidents and princes conspire/erect another idol/decreed! **v4-9** Daniel ignores the decree and gets cast into the lions den w/word! **v16** God delivered Daniel from the lions! **v20-23** King threw all the rest in! **v24** God exalted by Darius and new decree! **v26**

Lessons... (Old guys are smarter than young ones? Although they can be easier to confuse!!!) People may make plans against you, but the Lord is the protector of all who have faith! May go thru furnace/into lions/but coming out purified/without scratches/exalted! Stay in faith/God gets the glory!

Daniel Notables... “Touched by an angel!” **10** “3rd yr of Cyrus” Daniel fasting 21 days... Daniel’s fast: “no sweet bread, meat or wine...” (partial fast) **v2,3** Goes into open vision while surrounded by friends who saw/heard nothing but were shaken w/presence of God! **v7** Strength gone/prostrate/ touched/lifted on all fours! **v8-10** From 1st day set yourself/I was coming, but hindered/Michael helped me...

Lessons... Truly spiritual encounters will drain your natural strength! People fall out in the immediate presence of God! You can be experiencing the greatest moment with God and no one else is going to get it! We don’t have to wait for answers to prayer on hindered delivery lines now!

End of the Major Prophets... but can’t leave first four sections of OT w/o dealing with Job... Job!

Job: Because the style is so unique there is a struggle to place it on a timeline! Some think it predates Moses because there is no inference to the Law... Some think after the Babylonian exile of Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezra... Others think, because of references from **Ezekiel 14.14ff**, and echo's from **Ps 107.42** **Isaiah 14.5, 51.9**, and **Jeremiah 20.14** that it sits between Samuel/David and Isaiah!

Job! One of the most misunderstood books/ characters of the OT! The Patience of Job! **Jam 5.11** The Suffering of Righteous Job! "The Lord gives and the Lord takes away!" Being tested like Job! The Blessings of Job!

Job! In the introduction we read... "There was a man in the land of Uz that was perfect and upright and one that feared God and turned from evil!" **v1** Perfect; tam: not wanting, (nothing to do with sinlessness). Upright: yashar: straight. Feared God: pious/reverent. Departing/turning away from evil! Great guy who loved God/blessed by God!

Job! Satan, coming from journey to earth stands before God... **v6,7** "have you considered Job, none like him, perfect, upright, reverences Me, turns from offers of evil?" **v8** "He doesn't love you for no reason. You have protected and blessed him... but touch his stuff and he will curse you!" **9-11** "All the stuff in your hand – but you cannot touch him physically!" **v12**

Job! A day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking at the elder sons place... (Where was dad? Why?) Sabeans fell on them and took it all away! The fire of God is fallen from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants... The Chaldeans came and took the camels and slew the servants... Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking and a great wind came and the house caved in and they are all dead...

Job stood and rent his mantle, shaved his head, fell down and worshipped and said, "I came in with nothing and I will leave with nothing... the Lord gave and the Lord has taken away blessed be the name of the Lord!" And in all this Job sinned not by charging God foolishly!

1st Lessons... This is not a righteous man under attack for no reason, at the whim of God, as a test... God tests no man! God knows all men – to the core! Knows that none are righteous, not one! Must remove the suspicion that things are going to come out of the dark, from God, no matter how well you are doing!

The Lord did give him his stuff, He gives us the power to get wealth... But He didn't take it away... Sabeans, a massive lightning storm, Chaldeans, hurricane force winds did! Stuff was nothing, kids were something, moves to mourn mode... Shivah...

The Bible records Job's words accurately, but it does not confirm his accuracy of the events taking place! "Blessed be the name of the Lord???"

Job! There was a day... Satan appeared before the Lord... and the Lord asked, 'Have you considered my servant Job? That he holds fast even though I moved My protective covering w/o cause? God was not tempted by Satan to a throw-down with Job in the balance... He cannot be tempted with evil!

Jam1.13 Just proves what a jerk the devil is! Why didn't he know God doesn't do anything w/o purpose? **FALLEN! DARKENED! DUMB!**

Please... when you read scripture that doesn't make sense, don't push by it!

Job! "Skin for Skin" and he will curse you... And wife said, Why retain your hold, curse God and die..." "You speak as a fool (devil's fool!) Do we only expect to receive good at His hand and not evil?"

Every good and every perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights! **Jam 1.17** “After 7 days Job opened his mouth and cursed his day!” (One week hardly calls for accolades of “patience!”)

“Why didn’t I die at birth? I long for death more than treasure... my sighing is constant my roaring is as loud as the waters... for the thing I greatly feared has come upon me!”

Job... A good man of his day... but no issue of bushwhacking/righteous w/suffering... Wasn’t so righteous! Hidden to the eyes of men are the failures and flaws of fear/anxiety/pride... God committed to perfecting us, controlled purification, to the day of our redemption- Engages the blind garbage manager! **Is 54.16** Have you considered? Seen thru hedge?

Job... Did suffer, but wasn’t so patient! Wife giggling him, mimicking devil... “Why not curse God and die?” 7 days after it became physical/failure!

Out of abundance of heart mouth began betraying: ‘Wish I had never been born!’ Begins indicting God/arguing w/friends 36 chapters...

Job... Spoke out of his pain/suffering... until God got tired of listening! “Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge?” **38.1ff** Speaks out of humility... “I have spoken what I did not understand... I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes!” **42.3ff**

“And the Lord delivered Job and gave him twice as much as before – He blessed him at the end more than at beginning!” 42.10

Asides... NT believers are righteous, no testing required, and, this kind of assault is no longer a threat! Because the devil no longer has this access to accuse us (forgiven!)! “And Jesus said, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven **Lk10.18** – and he has come down to the earth w/great wrath because he knows he has but a short time **R12.12** – but I have given you power... and nothing will in any way hurt you! **Lk18.19**

Job to Paul
Finding Light in the Darkness, Session 15
Slide Notations – Cere Muscarella

Left off... Job! Unique Book! Placed within the “poetics!” Really misunderstood book! “*Patience*” book? Little more than 7 days! “*Righteous suffering?*” Not righteous @all! No redemption from the law that was given to prove that we weren’t... He was a good man of his day: straight, reverent, turned away from evil...

Job... stands for... *Things we fear come upon us, from Satanic side...* Reason we live by “faith in the Son!” *The need for rightly ordered friendships!* Didn’t delve into it but Job’s comforters, were miserable! Incredible ability we have to justify ourselves and speak ridiculously about things we have no understanding in! *Our need to read and strain the Word of God!* His case was truly stated by him, but not necessarily true! Not patient, not righteous, assault came as direct result of his faithlessness, God was not taking away his loved ones, and he wasn’t accurate about what was happening! *The frailty of man...* Despairing of life, even wishing for death, when we say we know Him and that we believe His word! Lack of knowledge that everything happens with reason! Spiritual math! *The protection... of God! The patience... of God... The grace, mercy and blessing of God... The blessedness of our new covenant with God!* No longer waiting for the destroyer to come get us for our sins... Have the Holy Spirit to convict us! “Take out our own garbage...” No need for garbage man (**Is 54**) to enter our domain! No longer have to make a case before God... He is completely on our side!

Minor Prophets...

Hosea! “Go and marry a prostitute!” Hey! Welcome to the ministry! “All flowers, rainbows and sunny skies!” Demonstrate for them what I see in them! “My people are always going astray, seeking counsel from wrong sources, perishing for lack of knowledge.... Only way back... **BREAK UP YOUR SHALLOW GROUND** and walk in the ways of the Lord!

Joel: You are surrounded by pestilence, stripped of everything... Wake up from the stupor, get dressed, get praying and **TURN** with all your heart and I will restore you!

Amos: Shepherd/Farmer to God’s people: “For your great privilege there is great responsibility/great judgment!” People to Shepherd: “It’s enough, too much, don’t ever speak here again, and you better run!” **7.10-13**

Obadiah: to Edom/Esau: “Your national pride and ability has deceived you and it won’t save you!” “your allies won’t save you!” “your wisdom won’t save you!” “Nothing will save you from your treatment of My sons and daughters...”

Jonah: Overboard Prophet of God! Picked up after Elisha’s death... Focus on disobedient servant and the “whale” story... prepared fish! “The word of the Lord came the 2nd time!” Encouraging truth! Foretelling the redemption of Gentiles! “Like it or not, God loves all the people, and it is smart to love them too!”

Micah: “He has shown you what He requires of us...” **6.8** To do justly: Holy in our feelings, emotions, service, practices, morality... **LIFE AND PROFESSION MARRIED!** To love mercy: forgiveness and compassion, reception and extension! To walk humbly: fixed on His purpose, rejoicing in His presence, valuing Him as priceless!

Nahum: God is jealous for His people and vengeful of their enemies... Slow to anger: never reactionary, always measured! But great in power: His true fury is not survivable!

Habakkuk: How long will it be before the answers come? **v2** Why do we see sin/violence growing everywhere we look w/o rescue? **v3** The law seems powerless to stop the unrighteous surrounding us! **v4** *Yet I will stand my watch 2.1 I make a deliberate decision to follow the God who is all powerful, all caring, but whose ways are not our ways!*

Zephaniah: A word to those who tempt God by saying, “He’s not interested in these earthly things – He won’t do anything about it...” **v12** To people living in luxury, not believing, trusting or thanking the Lord, who are self centered and materialistic... I will judge you and carry it all away... Only way to escape is to repent... “Be people of pure lips, servants of God, free from condemnation, humble... it will only be a remnant, but be...”

Haggai: a word for people who have lapsed into complacency and self focus! “Look around, take an inventory, you work hard and it yields little, you eat but you’re never full, you drink but remain thirsty, you clothe yourselves but you are never warm, you earn and your money goes into a bag full of holes!” **v5,6** “Look around, take an inventory, you look for much and your production comes to little, you bring stuff home and I blow on it. Why? Because you are only taking care of your own stuff and not My stuff!” **v7-9** Must care for the things I care about and when you do I will be with you! **v12-14**

Zechariah: with a word for people who think the work is too much! “Your work will be finished... not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord... Who are you O great hindering mountain? Before My people you will become a plain and the final touches will be accompanied by shoutings of “Grace! Grace!”

Malachi: the guy with the word for the self guiding... “You refuse Me honor, you offer Me what is little or polluted, you call My ways worthless, you say they are wearisome, and you twist the truth... from the beginning you and your fathers have turned aside and tried doing My things your own ways, look what you did with the basic, the tithes... and you are cursed for it!” **1-3** “Then those who feared the Lord spoke out to one another and the Lord heard it and hearkened to it! If you will hear Me and fear My name again, the Sun of Righteousness will rise up with healing in his wings and you will grow up like a precious calf, and you will tread down your enemies... just remember My words!” **4**

And with that... we have finished the Old Testament!

Gospel Guns! Matthew: even IRS agents can be used by God... but we must be prepared for great changes in our lives! **Mark:** the freaked out kid who proves that restoration and second chances come to those who give the Lord time! **Dr. Luke:** a man of letters, and writer of Luke/Acts, who never mentioned himself! **John:** the man of former temper turned friend and apostle of Jesus! Ambitious and chastened! **Mt20.21** Beloved friend! **J13.23** Inner circle! **Mt 17.1, 26.37** First missionary team! **Acts 3.1-11** Writer of Gospel/Epistles/Revelation!

John the Baptist: God sends in the pioneers, rough and rugged, and they plow the way for Jesus! A man with convictions can capture the attention of a nation! No matter what the end position, power and grace: “I must decrease so He can increase!”

Mary: God can use young people to further His kingdom! The people have to be submissive to His will, whether they get it or not! We must let the Lord pave the way for us! She magnified the Lord in it all!

Lazarus, Mary and Martha: Proves that no matter how dead you are, Jesus can raise you up! Life comes into us by the spoken Word of God! Believing that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life is the key to your miracles! As busy as life may get, we must choose the best and take time to be with Him!

Judas: The devil will try to influence you no matter where you are in the role call! He will always use a divided heart desire to gain entrance! It's possible to be blind in God's presence, see His works and not get it! (He was called the son of perdition, child of damnation/hell! [**cp E2.2,3 5.6,7 Col 3.6,7**]). Betrays Jesus for... (?) **Mt 26** Gives him up w/false love... **v48** Realizes he has been deceived! **27.3** He repents and kills himself! **v5** (pre-crucifixion!) And goes to the dark-side of hell (hades v. Abraham's bosom)! **Lk16.22** While checking in, Jesus dies... **Mt 27.50** And descends into the lower parts of the earth **E4.9 (cp A2.31** Jesus not left there: hades) To preach to spirits in prison... **1P3.19,20** "Good news! Price has been paid... led captivity out as His captives..." **E4.8** Having blotted out the handwriting of offences against them, nailing it to His cross, and spoiling the principalities and powers and making a public show of their defeat! **Col 2.14,15** And where is Judas? Pre-blood-bought- salvation, all-men-dead-in-sins Judas? **Can't wait to hear Judas' love story!**

Not a universal salvation doctrine! This is the true flow of love toward every person who was dead in sins without any recourse... meeting the One God sent to earth for the salvation of men's souls... and... it applies to every pre-Cross human being regardless of infraction or the way they were used in history... for our sake!

Thomas: Had to see it to believe it! Such bravado! All gone in the face of the real deal! Many, "won't believe Him til I see... (?)" May die w/o believing, all defiance gone! Real faith is believing without seeing! Good news: Doubting Thomas used mightily in "Persian Church" (Iran) and "Church of the East" (India – where buried) – Proving once again...

Peter: What a mix! Bending reed to Rock! Peter was from Capernaum, on Galilee, married, partners with brother Andrew, James and John... Andrew heard John Baptist declare Jesus as the Lamb of God and he went and got Peter! He was always the first named of the Apostles, part of the inner circle, had the great revelation... "You are the Son!" Almost in the same breath, he takes Jesus aside to correct Him about His coming sacrifice and suffering! "Get behind me Satan, for you do not understand the things of God!"

(Peter never got rid of the Simon in him, but thankfully, Simon was never able to extinguish Peter!)

Peter walked on water and Simon sank! Peter was at the Transfiguration, Simon wanted to build houses! Peter went into the Garden to pray, Simon came out running! Simon went back to fish, Peter became the fisher of men's souls! Simon had been broken by fear, Peter emerged as the fearless Evangelist!

The Deacons! "Find seven of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom!" **A6.3** Apostles/Pastors needed help! **Stephen:** 1st selected/"did great wonders among the people"/enemies could not defeat his wisdom/1st martyr! **6.8-7.59** Proves life after death! "Saw Jesus..." **7.55** Minister in death! "Saul/Paul!" **8.1, 9.1-8 Phillip:** signed up w/Stephen-helper! Stephen dies/church finally on mission! **A1** On his way to Samaria to preach Christ **8.5** Listened to him as miracles flowed! **v6-8** Such a profound affect/Peter/John come! Phillip on the move again! **v26** Preaches to Ethiopian eunuch/baptizes/transported to Azotus! 30miles! **v39,40**

Paul... the guy who got it all! Jew/cream of the Pharisee crop/ covered in the dust of Gamaliel!

Appears at Stephen's stoning! **8.1** Paul charged up/heads up Christian persecution! On the way, struck down on the road, surrounded by light... "Why are you persecuting Me?" Only by complete surrender did he live: "Who are you Lord? What do you want me to do?" "Go into the city and wait... and he did... three days!" And God sent Ananias: "God sent me so you could receive your sight and receive the Holy Ghost... and he began preaching Christ there in the synagogue!" **9.17-22** He goes right to the Source for his download of scripture (3yrs)... Why he is enabled to pen most of NT! Meets with the guys in Jerusalem... and off on 1st of 3 High adventure tours! He preaches to known world: rich & poor, weak & powerful... then and now...

Paul... Was the best of the best but he had nothing compared to being chosen and fulfilled (filled-full)! He had been devoutly religious but now he was intimately connected! Can start out bad, self-deceived, but yielding to the Holy Spirit can give you a finish beyond dreams!

Paul could never have guessed his ending but he was willing to leave everything else behind to get it!

Without... Guys like Ananias, Barnabas, Silas... there are no Paul's! Without... Guys like Timothy, Titus, Philemon... there is no progeny! Without... Guys and gals like us... the story dies... and our stories need to be told... to all who will listen... until the day we die!

Finding Light in the Darkness

Session 16: Major Doctrines, part 1 Introduction, Scripture, God, & Jesus Slide Notes

Once Burned, Twice Cautious

- Counterfeit \$20? \$100?
- Recognize one?
- Learn the real!

If ever cheated by someone giving you a counterfeit \$20, probably spend a little time to be sure you know what the real looks like!

Bank tellers are trained to spot counterfeits by studying ONLY the real. Let's spend time learning what the real looks like so not deceived by one of the many counterfeits out there.

Doctrine! A Dirty Word?

•Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you. — 1 Ti 4:13-16

Doctrine: “something that is taught”, “a principle or position or the body of principles in a branch of knowledge or system of belief.”

Why Learn Doctrine?

- So won't create a false God – idol
- To keep us on track as disciples
- To provide foundation for understanding Scripture
- To help others know God

When we build an image of God in our mind that is wrong, we end up serving and worshiping a false god, an idol.

Lies are designed to divert us from the path of following God. When we believe and follow a lie, we walk in a direction that is in opposition to God's will. Doctrine helps us evaluate the things we hear and think to be sure that they line up with the basic foundational truths of Scripture.

When reading the Bible, Scripture must be interpreted in the context of all of Scripture. Doctrinal studies help us get a handle on the basic issues of Christianity so we can test our interpretation of

Scripture. If it violates the foundational teachings, then it cannot be a correct interpretation and further research is required.

Example: Poles along roads in Idaho/Colorado. Seemed strange on a summer day driving along when first saw them. Didn't seem to be much use for them. However, they become essential when it snows on some of those mountain roads. The poles show the edge of the road so you would know where you can drive safely.

Which Doctrines?

- **Scripture – Bibliology**
- **God – Theology**
- **Jesus – Christology**
- **Man – Anthropology**
- **Sin – Hamartiology**
- **Salvation – Soteriology**
- **Holy Spirit – Pneumatology**
- **Healing –**
- **The Church – Ecclesiology**
- **Spirit Realm – Angelology, etc.**
- **Last Things – Eschatology**

Theology in the broader sense is the study of religious faith, practice, and experience; but it especially applies to the study of God and His relation to the world.

Finding Light in the Darkness

- **Entire LiD course is built on the value and authority of the Bible**
- **If missed earlier sessions, go get them!**
- **Additional info on www.life4square.com**
 - ♦ **Building Blocks of Life Course**
 - ♦ **Finding Light in Darkness Course**
 - ♦ **Resources tab**
 - Bible Verses**
 - Studies/Courses**
 - White Papers**
 - End Times**
 - Message Notes and Audio**

Scripture

What About Scripture?

Since the Bible is the source of most of our knowledge about God, Jesus, and Christianity, it is critical that we know whether or not we can trust it

Lies About Scripture

- Written by men (not inspired by God)
- Full of errors & contradictions
- Can't trust it
- Subject to interpretation
- Just myths and moral stories
- Just a book of "thou shall nots"

Will not list all of the lies associated with each Christian doctrine. There are just way too many of them. Will list some major ones, but focus will be on God's truth about the issues. Be aware of the lies, but study the truth!

Covered in LiD #2 & #3

- What the Bible claims about itself
- Jesus believed and quoted the Bible
- How we got the Bible
- Not full of changes and contradictions
- The Bible can be trusted
 - ♦ It is accurate geographically, historically, archeologically, prophetically, and scientifically
- Organization of the Bible
- How to find stuff in the Bible

LiD = *Finding Light in the Darkness* series, the one we are in now.

God's Word for Us

- God inspired people to write specific things
- Men wrote under inspiration of Holy Spirit
- Not like a secretary taking dictation

Divine Inspiration

- All is God's Word – intended by Him to be included

- **But not all is God's truth**
 - ♦ "There is no god." – Ps 14:1
- **Must consider context to distinguish**
 - ♦ Eternal truth from God
 - ♦ Record of historical events
 - ♦ Record of words or opinions of men

The fool has said in his heart, "*There is no God.*" — *Ps 14:1*

Must consider context. See LiD #3 *How to Understand Stuff in the Bible* for help.

Inerrancy

- **In the original autographs the Bible contains no mistakes. It was exactly what God wanted.**
- **Textual Criticism helps us know precisely what was written in original**
 - ♦ Scribes were fanatically careful in copying
 - ♦ Not full of errors as many claim
 - ♦ The few questionable areas that remain affect no major doctrine
- **Translations (Jesus probably used Septuagint)**

"In the original autographs..." *Foundations of Pentecostal Theology*, Duffield and Van Cleave, pg 15.

See LiD #2 – Why Trust the Bible

Authority

- **As Creator and God, He has ultimate authority**
- **The Bible, as His Word, carries His authority**
- **"knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." — 2 Pe 1:20-21**

Purpose – Why Given

- **God revealing Himself, His ways, His will, His plans/purposes, and His love to man**
- **"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 Ti 3:16-17**

God Revealed

- **So we can know God (have relationship with)**
 - ♦ **And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding,**

that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. — 1 Jn 5:20

•So we can have life

- ♦ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. — Jn 20:31

•So we will be transformed

- ♦ And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. — Ro 12:2

The Word of God is Eternal

•“The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.”
— Is 40:8

•“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.”
— Mk 13:31

Summary – The Bible...

- Is God’s Word to Us
- Is inspired by God without error
- Carries God’s authority
- Reveals God and His ways to us
- Is eternal

For More Information

- BB #1 – The Authority of the Word
- LiD #1 – Introduction – The Word of God
- LiD #2 – Why Trust the Bible
- LiD #3 – How to Understand Stuff in the Bible
- www.life4square.com

BB = *Building Blocks of Life*

LiD = *Finding Light in the Darkness*

God

Why Study God?

- Everything God says and does flows from who He is!
- If your view of God is wrong, then everything else is messed up!

So won't create/serve a false God. So know God intimately. So know God's ways. So know how to live.

Lies About God

- Doesn't exist
- Jesus and Holy Spirit are not God
- There are many gods
- We are gods
- Like Santa Claus or grandfather
- Wouldn't send anyone to hell
- Father of everyone
- His purpose is to make us happy
- Out to get us
- Impossible to please
- Spoil sport, against fun
- Can't or won't stop evil
- Capricious
- Vindictive
- Uninvolved

Santa Claus—jolly giver of gifts with little required in return

Grandfather—no discipline, fun loving

“... we have one Father—God.” Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, You are of *your* father the devil,” — Jn 8:41-44

capricious — apt to change suddenly; freakish; whimsical; changeable

“Just don't know what God will do.” – Because we don't know God, not because He is capricious.

vindictive— Disposed to revenge; prompted or characterized by revenge; revengeful

I Like God...Made Him Myself!

- We tend to imagine God as someone we want Him to be

- Grandpa; Sugar Daddy; so loving He won't say "no;" gives gifts like Santa Claus
- Too nice to punish anyone or send to hell
- Mean, will get my enemies
- Unconcerned about how I live, has more important things to do

Wrong God is an Idol

- When we envision any God who is not the God of the Bible, we are serving an idol
- “For My people are foolish, They have not known Me. They are silly children, And they have no understanding. They are wise to do evil, But to do good they have no knowledge.” — Je 4:22
- Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame. — 1 Co 15:34

Idol – a false God

Must know the One, True God as He has revealed Himself to us in the Scripture, not as people have imagined Him to be. (See lies earlier)

We Are Fortunate

- God is worthy of worship for who He is
- Would still be worthy of worship and right to demand it as God and Creator, even if He were not so good
- Fortunately for us, He is good

“I wouldn't serve a God like that!” So, will you only serve a God who acts the way you think best? Do you really know what's best? We think we do, but we don't. Our perspective is limited and cloudy. Our knowledge is woefully limited. Yet we dare to sit in judgment of God to determine if He is worthy of worship? We really are silly children!

Two Things Need to Know...

- There is a God
- You are not Him

Sounds funny, we laugh. But in truth, our greatest struggle in life is the one that determines who will be Lord/God in our lives. It is an on-going battle. I turn all over to God, then turn around and find that I have seated myself back on the throne of my life. The major work in a Christian's growth is learning to truly let God be God in your life.

God Insists: Only One God!

- I am the Lord, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me. ... That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting That there is none besides Me. I

am the Lord, and there is no other; — Is 45:5-6

**•Also: Isa 46:6-9, 45:21-23, 44:6-8,24,
Deu 32:39**

•God is adamant about this point!

Sounds like God is making an important point! You don't like God the way He is? Sorry, He's your only real choice—the only real deal!

Three Persons

•Trinity is not a Bible word, concept is there

•Not three gods

•Not one God and one Person

•Bible teaches...

- ♦ **There is one God – previous slide**
- ♦ **Father is God – Phil 2:11, Gal 1:1, Eph 5:20**
- ♦ **Jesus is God – next section**
- ♦ **Holy Spirit is God – later section**

Trinity: Compare H₂O, three states, but all water. Compare egg: yolk, white, and shell. Compare human: spirit, soul, body. etc. All these ideas are helpful, but none fit perfectly.

When someone tries to go beyond the basics about God as described in the Bible, they start getting into trouble. No illustration can adequately express the Trinity. Don't try to explain what God has not explained.

The Nature of God

•All knowing: omniscient – Ps 147:5, Heb 4:13

•All powerful: omnipotent – Lk 1:37, Rev 19:6

**•Present everywhere: omnipresent –
Ps 139:7-10, Jer 23:24**

•Holy/Pure – 1 Pet 1:15-16, Ps 92:15, 99:9

•Eternal – Ps 90:2, 92:8, Mic 5:2

•Unchanging: Immutable – Mal 3:6, Heb 13:8

•True – Jn 17:3, 14:6, Rev 3:7,14

“Everything God says and does flows from who He is!” (earlier slide) That includes His nature (what is inherently true about Him) and His character (His ways, how He thinks, why He does what He does).

“Can God make a rock that is too big for Him to pick up?” No! There are several things that God cannot do: lie, sin, change, be unfaithful, violate His nature (deny Himself), etc. The things that God cannot do are just as important and beneficial as the things He can do.

The Character of God

- Righteous – Ps 97:2, Jer 9:24, Rom 9:14
- Just – Rom 2:11, Ps 7:11, Ps 89:14
- Faithful – 1 Thes 5:24, Deu 7:8-9, 2 Tim 2:13
- Good – Ps 52:1, 145:9, Mat 19:17
- Loving, Caring – Jn 3:16, 1 Jn 4:7-19, Rom 5:8
- Patient – Ps 103:8-10, 2 Pet 3:9,15
- Forgiving – Col 2:13-14, Isa 43:25-26
- Others

God – defines good and evil

We are called to be like Him. How can we do that if we don't know Him?

Worship God Only!

•“You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image ... you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. ... “
— Ex 20:3-5

•Then Jesus said to him, “...‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’ ” — Mt 4:10

The Work of God

- Creator – Rev 4:11, Heb 3:4, Is 44:24
- Lord – Neh 9:6, Ps 118:27, Deu 10:17
- Reveal Himself – 1 Sam 2:27, Ps 103:7, Amos 3:7
- Savior – Isa 43:11, 60:16, Hos 13:4
- Redeem Man – Deu 15:15, Isa 48:7, 54:5, Lk 1:68
- Punish Evil – Isa 13:11, 26:21, Rom 1:18-19

Summary - God

- Everything God says and does flows from who He is
- A false image of God is an idol
- There is only one God
- Yet Father, Son, and Spirit are God
- God's nature & character define right & good
- Worship God only
- God works among mankind

- God loves man, desires relationship

For More Information

- BB #7 – Worship that Moves Father’s Heart
- www.life4square.com

Christ

Lies About Jesus Christ

- Not God
- Never claimed to be God
- A created being
- Less than God (God’s son)
- Just a good teacher (man)
- Was not resurrected

What About Christ?

- What/Who is Christ?
 - ♦ A title rather than a name
 - ♦ The Messiah – Jn 4:25-26
 - ♦ Promised Savior – Ps 132:11, Act 13:23
 - ♦ Creator – Col 1:16-17, Eph 3:9, Jn 1:1-4
 - ♦ God – Jn 1:1-4, Col 2:9-10
- Jesus is the Christ
 - ♦ Jesus is His name, not a title
 - ♦ Jesus is the promised Messiah

Jesus is God

- Eternal, Not Created
 - ♦ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. — John 1:1-4
- God and Savior
 - ♦ looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, — Titus 2:13

Titles Shared with God

- God – Isa 44:6 / Jn 1:1, Tit 2:13
- I AM – Ex 3:13-15 / Jn 8:56-59, 18:5-6
- Savior – Isa 43:3,11 / Lk 2:11, Tit 1:4, 2:13
- Creator – Gen 1:1, Rev 4:11 / Col 1:16-17, Jn 1:3
- First & Last – Isa 44:6 / Rev 1:17-18 , 2:8
- Alpha & Omega – Rev 1:8 / Rev 22:13, 16
- Unchanging – Mal 3:6 / Heb 13:8
- King of Kings – 1 Tim 6:15-16 / Rev 17:14
- Lord of Lords – Deu 10:17 / Rev 19:16

Jesus Claimed to be God

- Equal with God – Jn 5:18
- Took God’s Name: I AM – Jn 8:56-59, Ex 3:14-15
- Acknowledge self as Christ – Mk 14:61-64, Jn 4:25-26
- Acknowledge self as Son of God – Lk 22:70-71
- Acknowledge Glory of God was His – Jn 17:5

Jesus Worshipped

- By Angels - Heb 1:6
- By Men – Mat 14:33, 28:17
- He is worthy – Rev 5:5-14
- He accepted worship – Jn 9:38-39
- We are expected to worship Him – Jn 5:23
- Only God to be worshipped (earlier)

“Son of God” is God

- Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, “Truly You are the Son of God.” — Mt 14:33
- Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. — Jn 5:18
- but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. — Jn 20:31

Jesus Took on a Body

- ...Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be

equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. — Philipians 2:5-11

Jesus' Work

- Glorifies the Father – Jn 14:13, 17:4-5
- Became a servant – Phil 2:5-11
- Love motivated to die in our place – 1 Cor 15:3, Jn 3:16
- Reconciles us to God – Col 1:20, 1 Tim 2:5
- Head of the Church, His Body – Col 1:18
- Baptizes w/ Holy Spirit – Mk 1:8, Mat 3:11
- Never leave or forsake us – Hb 13:5, Mt 28:20
- Our Brother, joint heirs – Mat 12:50, Gal 3:29
- Only way for salvation – Jn 14:6, Act 4:12

Jesus' Resurrection

- Was Prophesied – Jn 20:9, Act 13:34-37
- Our debt was paid – 1 Cor 15:3-4
- Proof of His claims – Rom 1:4
- Witnessed by many – Mat 28:5-7, Act 1:3, 1 Cor 15:4-8
- Essential – 1 Cor 15:12-17

Jesus' Return

- He will come back – Act 1:9-11
- For deliverance and judgment – 2 Thes 1:6-8
- Together for eternity – 1 Thes 4:16-17
- More later in this series

Summary – Jesus the Christ

- Christ is His title, Jesus is His Name
- Jesus is God
- Same titles apply to Jesus & God
- Jesus claimed to be God

- Jesus was worshipped, and He accepted it
- The “Son of God” is God
- Jesus took on a body and died the death we deserved to reconcile us to God
- Jesus was resurrected
- Jesus is coming back

For More Information

- BB #2 – The Lordship of Jesus Christ
- “End Times: Putting the Pieces in Place”
- www.life4square.com

Finding Light in the Darkness

Session 17: Major Doctrines, part 2
Introduction, Trinity, Jesus, & Holy Spirit
Slide Notes

I Don't Know...

- Trinity is a difficult concept. How can God be one, yet three?
- How can Jesus be God?

Why Study God Anyway?

- Everything God says and does flows from who He is!
- If your view of God is wrong, then everything else is messed up!

Basic Trinity Verses

- Baptize in the Name – Mat 28:19
- Same Spirit, same Lord, same God –
1 Cor 12:4-6
- We access Father by Spirit through Jesus – Eph 2:18
- Jesus sends Spirit who proceeds from Father and testifies of Jesus – Jn 15:26
- Spirit will glorify Jesus, all things that the Father has belong to Jesus – Jn 16:13-15
- Benediction – 2 Cor 13:14

Mt 28:19 - 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,

1 Co 12:4-6 - There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

Eph 2:18 - For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Jn 15:26 - "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.

Jn 16:13-15 - 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. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

2 Co 13:14 - The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. Amen.

Not Just a NT Idea

- **Man made in “Our image” – Gen 1:26**
 - ♦ **God – *Elohim* is plural (2,606 occurrences)**
- **Spirit at work in Creation - Gen 1:1-2**
- **Father gives Son of Man dominion, glory, and kingdom – Dan 7:13-14, Jn 13.31**
- **Jesus sent by Father and Spirit – Isa 48:16**
- **Child is born, called Mighty God – Isa 9:6**
 - ♦ **Read every Christmas, but don't think!**

Ge 1:26 - Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

430 אֱלֹהִים *elohiym* /el·o·heem/] n m p. Plural of 433; TWOT 93c; GK 466; 2606 occurrences;

Ge 1:1-2 - In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Da 7:13-14 - “I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed.

“Son of Man” used by Jesus of Himself about 80 times.

Is 48:16 - “Come near to Me, hear this: I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; From the time that it was, I *was* there. And now the Lord God and His Spirit Have sent Me.”

Is 9:6 — For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Whose Temple Are You?

- **1 Corinthians 3:16-17 — Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?**
- **1 Corinthians 6:19 — ... your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?**
- **2 Corinthians 13:5 — ... Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?**

You are God's Temple!

But What About...

- **Jesus prayed to the Father?**
 - ♦ Prayer is conversation
 - ♦ God is a social Being - Father, Son, and Spirit
 - ♦ Father, Son, and Spirit communicate with each other
 - ♦ Not strange that Jesus prayed to (communicated with) the Father
- **Jesus said Father was greater than He?**

God Became Flesh

- **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.**
— Jn 1:1-4
- **And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.** — Jn 1:14

Jesus Took a Lower Position

- **You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross.**
— **Philippians 2:5-8 (NLT)**

Jesus submitted self to the Father voluntarily in order to fulfill the requirement for paying our debt and setting us free.

Took the position of a servant (remember, washed their feet).

This understanding clears up a lot of questions which seem to indicate that Jesus is less than God. During the time Jesus dwelt in flesh on the earth, He took a subservient role to fulfill all righteousness (Mat 3:13-15). As part of the process, Jesus willingly submitted and became obedient to the Father and the Law.

Father is Greater than Me...

- **You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming *back* to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for **My Father is greater than I.** — Jn 14:28**

Greater positionally, not by nature.

Greater Than...

- **For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” — John 6:38-40**
- **For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him.
— John 13:15-16**

Jesus said that after washing the disciples' feet. A servant is no less human than the master. The difference is one of position, not of nature.

Jesus Learned Obedience

- **though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, — Heb 5:8-9**
- **Obedience – A new experience for God**
- **But necessary to purchase our salvation**

Jesus submitted self to fulfill what Adam and we failed to do. He could not be a perfect sacrifice unless He was without sin. Jesus had to submit Himself to the Law of God and *learn* obedience in order to become a righteous substitute for us. Jesus had to learn obedience because as God from all eternity, He had never before been in a subservient position. “Perfected” refers to His completion of the task to live a sinless life, then give that life as a sacrifice to pay our debt.

Who Do They Say I Am?

- **... He asked His disciples, saying, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” So they said, “Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. — Mt 16:13-17**

We need to say what God says about Jesus, not what others have said.

The Doubter Got It!

- **John 20:28-29 — And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed *are* those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

- **Not OMG!**
- **Not Blasphemy!**
- **Blessed if believe it!**

John 20:24-27 — Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, “We have seen the Lord.” So he said to them, “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.” And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, “Peace to you!” Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”

OMG – Oh my God! or Oh my gosh! - basically, this is cussing.

Jesus would have reacted differently if Thomas was either cursing or blaspheming.

Holy Spirit

Lies About Holy Spirit

- **Not God**
- **Not active today**
- **God’s force**
- **An “it”**
- **Feminine side of God**
- **Takes control of you**

We will focus on what the Bible has to say about the Holy Spirit rather than answering the various lies about Him. You recognize the lies by being thoroughly familiar with the true.

Holy Spirit Long Ago

- **Existed from eternity**
 - ♦ **how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, ... — Heb 9:14**
- **Participated in Creation**
 - ♦ **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. — Ge 1:1-2**

Holy Spirit is God

- **Now the Lord is the Spirit; — 2 Co 3:17**
- **Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?
— 1 Co 3:16**
- **But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”
— Ac 5:3-9**

Holy Spirit in the OT

- **At Creation – Gen 1:1-2**
- **Inspired Scripture – 2 Pet 1:20-21**
- **Empowered leaders – 1 Sam 10:10, Judg 14:6, 2 Chr 24:20**

2 Chronicles 24:20 — Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, “Thus says God: ‘Why do you transgress the commandments of the Lord, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the Lord, He also has forsaken you.’ ”

Holy Spirit Lives in Believers

- **Promised in OT – Ez 36:26-27**
- **Lives in Believers – Jn 14:16-17**
- **Temple of God – 1 Cor 3:16-17, 1 Cor 6:19**
- **If don’t have, don’t belong to God – Rom 8:9**

Ezekiel 36:26-27 — I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.

John 14:16-17 — And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 — Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.

1 Corinthians 6:19 — Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who* is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

Romans 8:9 — But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Holy Spirit at Work Today

- **Convicts people of sin – Jn 16:7-8**
- **Draws men to Jesus – Jn 15:26, Rev 22:17**
- **Baptizes into Body of Christ – 1 Cor 12:13**
- **Teaches us truth – Jn 16:13-15, 14:26**
- **Helps us pray – Rom 8:26-27**
- **Equips for God’s work – Lk 4:18-19, Mt 10:18-20, Acts 1:8, 4:31**
- **Speaks to the Church – Acts 13:2-4**

1 Corinthians 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.

John 16:13-15 — 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. He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He will take of Mine and declare it to you.

Romans 8:26-27 — Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Acts 13:2-4 — As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away. So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

Fruit of the Spirit

- **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those *who are Christ’s* have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.**
— **Galatians 5:22-25**

The presence of Holy Spirit living in us is expected to change us. The fruit of the Spirit in a Believer’s life is evidence of God’s salvation and work in his or her life. Like fruit, it is a growth process.

Gifts of the Spirit – 1 Co 12:4-11

- **There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through**

the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

Gifts of the Spirit

- **Word of Wisdom**
- **Word of Knowledge**
- **Faith**
- **Gifts of Healings**
- **Working of Miracles**
- **Prophecy**
- **Discerning of Spirits**
- **Different Kinds of Tongues**
- **Interpretation of Tongues**

These are public gifts, to be used in interactions among and between people.

Spiritual Gifts Given...

- **As the Spirit desires**
- **To individuals**
- **For the benefit of all**
- **After receiving the “Gift of the Holy Spirit”**

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 (above)

Hebrews 2:4 — God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

- **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**
- **And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, ..., because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. — Acts 10:45**

This is different from the gifts of the Holy Spirit. What is this Gift of the Holy Spirit?

Promised Long Ago

- **Joel 2:28-29** — “And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on *My* menservants and on *My* maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

Baptism with Holy Spirit

- **Matthew 3:11** — I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
- **Acts 1:5** — for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

John the Baptist, talking about Jesus in Matthew 3:11. Jesus speaking in Acts 1:5.

Day of Pentecost – Acts 2:1-8

- **When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?**

Non-Jews Receive

- **While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *have?*” – Acts 10:44-47**

Received After Salvation

- **... sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. — Acts 8:14-17**

- When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, —Acts 19:5-6

People got saved in Samaria, so Peter and John were sent by the church in Jerusalem. Baptism in Holy Spirit is a separate event from salvation.

Benefits

- Power / Be Witnesses – Act 1:8, Lk 4:18-19
- Help praying – Rom 8:26-27
- Words to say – Mat 10:18-20
- Boldness to speak – Act 4:31
- Power to cast out demons – Mat 12:28

Tongues and Baptism with HS

- Day of Pentecost
 - ♦ for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” — Acts 1:5
 - ♦ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. — Acts 2:4
- New Believers in Ephesus
 - ♦ And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. — Acts 19:6
- Cornelius & Gentiles
 - ♦ ... the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. ... the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. — Acts 10:44-46

Filled with Spirit

Tongues (Prayer Language)...

- ♦ You are speaking to God – 1 Cor 14:2
- ♦ Spiritually builds you up – 1 Cor 14:4
- ♦ Desired for all to experience – 1 Cor 14:5
- ♦ Pray in tongues & w/ understanding – 1 Cor 14:14-15
- ♦ Spirit prays on our behalf – Rom 8:26-27
- ♦ Expected for believers – Mk 16:17
- ♦ Do not forbid – 1 Cor 14:39

Not talking about the public Gift of Tongues and Gift of Interpretation mentioned earlier. “Do not forbid” could apply to the public gift of tongues or the individual’s prayer language.

Holy Spirit - Summary

- **Holy Spirit is God**
- **He is active in the world today**
- **He lives in all believers**
- **He fills believers**
- **He gives gifts to equip believers for ministry**

For More Information

- **BB #3 – The Person, Work, and Ministry of the Holy Spirit**
- **BB #4 – Misconceptions About Tongues**
- **The Alpha Course**
- **www.life4square.com**

BB = *Building Blocks of Life*, available at www.life4square.com

Finding Light in the Darkness

Session 18: Major Doctrines, part 3

Man, Sin, and Salvation

Slide Notes, Sonny Bowman

Man

Lies About Man

- Man evolved
- Man is god
- Man is good
- Society and environment cause of man's bad actions
- It's all about me

Elton Trueblood: "The greatest unhappiness... comes from focusing attention on ourselves"

Creation of Man

- Created by God – Gen 1:26-27, Mat 19:4-6
- From earth and breath of God – Gen 2:7
- Perfect, all was good – Gen 1:31
- Not good to be alone, woman – Gen 2:18-24
- Enjoyed relationship with God – Gen 2:16-17, 2:19, 2:22, 3:8-9
- Dominion over earth – Gen 1:26-28
- Job, tend the Garden of Eden – Gen 2:15

Not good because never had been aloneness before. A perfect man and woman in a perfect world

Genesis 1:26-27 — Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground." So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. (NLT)

Matthew 19:4-6 — "Haven't you read the Scriptures?" Jesus replied. "They record that from the beginning 'God made them male and female.' And he said, 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together." (NLT)

Genesis 2:7 — Then the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person. (NLT)

Genesis 1:31 — Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good!.... (NLT)

Genesis 2:18-24 — Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.” So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the Lord God took out one of the man’s ribs and closed up the opening. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man. “At last!” the man exclaimed. “This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called ‘woman,’ because she was taken from ‘man.’ ” This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. (NLT)

Genesis 2:16-17 — But the Lord God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden— except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.” (NLT)

Genesis 2:19 — So the Lord God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. (NLT)

Genesis 2:22 — Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man. (NLT)

Genesis 3:8-9 — When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees. Then the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” (NLT)

Genesis 2:15 — The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. (NLT)

Jesus and Creation

- **Jesus was there – Jn 1:1-4, 14**
- **Referenced creation as the foundation of marriage – Mat 19:4-6**

Jesus should know. He is God, and He was there!

John 1:1-4 — In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him. The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. (NLT)

John 1:14 — So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son. (NLT)

Matthew 19:4-6 — “Haven’t you read the Scriptures?” Jesus replied. “They record that from the beginning ‘God made them male and female.’ And he said, ‘This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.’ Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together.” (NLT)

But What About Evolution?

- **Not a fact, not even a good theory**
- **Many scientist switching to Intelligent Design**
- **A philosophical position, not observable science**

- **Real science states life only comes from life**
 - ♦ **No spontaneous generation**
 - ♦ **Yet required for evolution to happen**
- **Clip: Richard Dawkins from Expelled movie**

Macro evolution – the belief that all living creatures today came from a single living cell through a process of increasing complexity guided by natural selection.

Many scientist switching to a theory of Intelligent Design since it explains the evidence better.

Biggest problem is getting life started!

Recommend: *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* by Dr. Michael Denton, an evolutionist.

Video clip from movie *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* by Ben Stiller

Anyone heard of Richard Dawkins, one of today’s prominent atheists and evolutionists?

No one knows how life got started, because the laws of science say you cannot get life from non-life.

Dawkins willing to accept that an alien life form may be out in the universe somewhere and created us. But not willing to accept a god out there somewhere who created us. Any intelligent designer except for God. That’s a philosophical belief system, not science.

Male and female had to evolved together to reproduce.

Takes more faith to believe evolution than creation.

God is Not Hidden!

- **For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. — Romans 1:20 (NLT)**

Circular Reasoning

- **Man was either created or he evolved**
- **People start w/ assumption there is no God**
- **If there is no God, only evolution is possible**
- **Since man exists, he had to have evolved**
- **Therefore...**
- **Evolution is a proven fact!**
- **Since evolution is a fact, there is no God**

No God for whatever reason they have, don’t like him, etc.

Evolution now used in schools, colleges, museums, and TV, etc., to prove that there is no God. Extremely hostile to Christianity!

Pardon me. This is circular reasoning and invalid. You cannot use an assumption to prove the assumption! Of course, they also think that atheism is a fact.

I appreciate Michael Denton's candor on this in his book, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*.

If I found that the Bible was a myth and Jesus didn't rise from the dead, I still would not believe in evolution. It is just not good science!

Nature of Man

- **Eternal Being**
- **Designed for love relationship with God – Mat 22:36-40, 1 Jn 4:19-20, Gal 4:6-7**
- **Free Will – 2 Cor 8:3, Lev 22:29**
- **Three-parts**
 - ♦ **Spirit – inner, eternal man - pneuma**
 - ♦ **Soul – thoughts, emotions, feelings - psuche**
 - ♦ **Body – outer, physical, touchable – soma**

Your body is like a space suit. It is the earth suit that permits your spirit and soul to function on this earth.

Will talk about salvation of each part: spirit, soul, and body later in the section.

Love is valuable only when freely given. There must be a real opportunity to not love for true sharing of love relationship. Therefore, God gave man a free will to choose and a choice to obey or rebel.

Matthew 22:36-40 — “Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?” Jesus replied, “ ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.” (NLT)

1 John 4:19-20 — We love each other because he loved us first. If someone says, “I love God,” but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we cannot see? (NLT)

Galatians 4:6-7 — And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, “Abba, Father.” Now you are no longer a slave but God's own child. And since you are his child, God has made you his heir. (NLT)

2 Corinthians 8:3 — For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. (NLT)

Leviticus 22:29 — And when you offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord, offer *it* of your own free will. (NKJV)

Fall of Man – Genesis 3

- **Only one thing forbidden in Eden**
- **Satan lied “You will not die!”**

- **Man believed Satan's truth claim**
- **Man rebelled against God – “sin”**
- **Sin brought death: spirit, soul & body**
 - ♦ **Spiritual death instantly**
 - ♦ **Mental decay over time**
 - ♦ **Physical death over time**
- **Death infected all of creation**
- **Satan became god of this world – 2 Cor 4:4**

Fall – from perfection and dominion. Many things man could do, only one he could not. Needed to have a choice if he was to have true free will. With the fall of man, sin damaged God's creation and it was no longer good.

Satan hijacked dominion of this world that previously had belonged to man.

2 Corinthians 4:4 — Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God. (NLT)

The Fall Did Not Surprise God

- **Free will requires real possibility of bad choice – Deut 30:19-20, Josh 24:15**
- **True love requires freedom to not love**
- **God had redemption plan ready from the very beginning**
 - ♦ **... of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. — Revelation 13:8 (NKJV)**

Though God knew man would choose poorly, still had to give him the opportunity, or there could be no real love relationship between man and God.

Love is valuable only when given freely.

Deuteronomy 30:19-20 — “Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! You can make this choice by loving the Lord your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him. This is the key to your life....” (NLT)

Joshua 24:15 — But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.” (NLT)

God Provided a Savior

- **For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but he has now revealed him to you in these last days. — 1 Peter 1:18-20 (NLT)**

- **But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. — Galatians 4:4 (NLT)**

Jesus' redemption was not "plan B" for God! There was only ever one plan!

Summary of Man

- **Created by God in "Our image"**
- **All creation was originally good**
- **Man did not evolve**
- **Man is an eternal being with free will**
- **Three parts: spirit, soul, and body**
- **Man sinned, bringing death into creation**
- **God provided a Savior to bring life**

Sin

Lies About Sin

- **There is no such thing as sin**
- **Sin is outdated concept**
- **Sin is no big deal**
- **It only affects me**
- **I can control it**
- **My sin is too bad to be forgiven**

The word "sin" has been removed (along with other significant words) from the *Oxford Junior Dictionary* designed for children. The following is from an article at www.dailymail.co.uk ...

'Nowadays, the environment has changed. We are also much more multicultural. People don't go to Church as often as before. Our understanding of religion is within multiculturalism, which is why some words such as "Pentecost" or "Whitsun" would have been in 20 years ago but not now.'

The volume is aimed at seven-to-nine-year-olds.

Words removed from the Oxford Junior Dictionary:

NATURE: Bluebell, budgerigar, cygnet, dandelion, gerbil, goldfish, guinea pig, kingfisher, magpie, marzipan, minnow, newt, piglet, primrose, starling, willow, wren.

CHRISTIANITY: Carol, cracker, holly, ivy, mistletoe, abbey, altar, bishop, chapel, christen, disciple, monk, nun, pew, saint, sin

HISTORY: Coronation, duchess, duke, emperor, empire, monarch, decade

Words added:

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Blog, broadband, MP3 player, voicemail, attachment, database, chatroom, analogue, incisor, square number, trapezium, food chain

SOCIETY: Celebrity, tolerant, vandalism, negotiate, interdependent, drought, biodegradable, bilingual

POLITICS: Citizenship, EU, euro, committee, democratic

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1092668/Is-sin-Christian-words-deleted-Oxford-dictionary.html>

What is Sin

- **Breaking God's law – 1 Jn 3:4,**
- **Violating God's nature or character – 1 Jn 5:17, Jam 4:17**
- **Choosing your way over God's**

Man's sin caused the fall of man and corruption of God's good creation.

1 John 3:4 — Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God. (NLT)

1 John 5:17 — All wicked actions are sin, but not every sin leads to death. (NLT)

James 4:17 — Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it. (NLT)

Consequences of Sin

- **Brings death – Rom 6:23**
 - ♦ **Spiritual death – Eph 2:1, 5**
 - ♦ **Mental depravity – 2 Tim 3:8**
 - ♦ **Physical decay – Gen 3:19**
- **Damages relationship with God – Isa 59:2-3, Ps 66:18-19**
- **Hardens us – Heb 3:13**
- **Enslaves us – Pr 5:22, Rom 6:16, 20**

Makes you unavailable to God.

Romans 6:23 — For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. (NLT)

Ephesians 2:1 — Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. (NLT)

Ephesians 2:5 — that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) (NLT)

2 Timothy 3:8 — These teachers oppose the truth just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses. They have depraved minds and a counterfeit faith. (NLT)

Genesis 3:19 — By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat until you return to the ground from which you were made. For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return.” (NLT)

Isaiah 59:2-3 — It’s your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore. Your hands are the hands of murderers, and your fingers are filthy with sin. Your lips are full of lies, and your mouth spews corruption. (NLT)

Psalms 66:18-19 — If I had not confessed the sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But God did listen! He paid attention to my prayer. (NLT)

Hebrews 3:13 — You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. (NLT)

Proverbs 5:22 — An evil man is held captive by his own sins; they are ropes that catch and hold him. (NLT)

Romans 6:16 — Don’t you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. (NLT)

Romans 6:20 — When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do right. (NLT)

Salvation

Lies About Salvation

- **Man does not need salvation**
- **Salvation comes by being good**
- **Salvation comes by religion**
- **You lose salvation when you sin**
- **I’ve crossed the line and can’t be saved**
- **There are many paths to God**

Spirit, Soul and Body

- **Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. — 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (NLT)**
 - ♦ **Spirit – inner, eternal man - pneuma**
 - ♦ **Soul – thoughts, emotions, feelings - psuche**
 - ♦ **Body – outer, physical, touchable – soma**

Remember? Man was created as a three-part being.

The Fall Affected Each Part

- **Spirit died – Gen 2:17, Eph 2:1, 1 Cor 15:22**

- **Mind was darkened – Rom 1:21, Eph 4:18**
- **Body decays – 2 Cor 4:16, 2 Cor 5:4**
- **Each part was affected by the Fall**
- **Each part is saved in Jesus**

Genesis 2:17 — but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” (NKJV)

Ephesians 2:1 — And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, (NKJV)

1 Corinthians 15:22 — For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. (NKJV)

Romans 1:21 — Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn’t worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. (NLT)

Ephesians 4:18 — Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. (NLT)

2 Corinthians 4:16 — That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. (NLT)

2 Corinthians 5:4 — While we live in these earthly bodies, we groan and sigh, but it’s not that we want to die and get rid of these bodies that clothe us. Rather, we want to put on our new bodies so that these dying bodies will be swallowed up by life. (NLT)

The Initial Step of Salvation

- **If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” — Romans 10:9-10, 13 (NLT)**

Salvation of Your Spirit

- **Replaced at faith – John 5:25, Eze 11:19, 36:26-27**
- **Born again – Jn 3:3-8**
- **Spiritually alive - Rom 8:10, Eph 2:1**
- **A new creation – 2 Cor 5:17**
- **Perfect forever – Heb 10:14**
- **Righteous – Rom 8:10, 10:10**

John 5:25 — “And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it’s here now, when the dead will hear my voice—the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live. (NLT)

Ezekiel 11:19 — And I will give them singleness of heart and put a new spirit within them. . . ., (NLT)

Ezekiel 36:26-27 — And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you.
(NLT)

John 3:3-8 — Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.” ... Jesus replied, “I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life. So don’t be surprised when I say, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can’t tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can’t explain how people are born of the Spirit.” (NLT)

Romans 8:10 — And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. (NKJV)

Ephesians 2:1,5 — And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, - even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), (NKJV)

2 Corinthians 5:17 — This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (NLT)

Hebrews 10:14 — For by that one offering he forever made perfect those who are being made holy. (NLT)

Romans 10:10 — For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. (NLT)

Salvation of Your Body

- **Though you are saved, your body is still dying**
 - ♦ Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. —
2 Corinthians 4:16 (NLT)
- **Body receives life at the resurrection when Jesus returns – 1 Cor 15:35, 42-44, 48-54, 1 Thes 4:13-17, Phil 3:20-21**
- **Until then, present body as a living sacrifice, using it to serve Jesus –
Rom 12:1, 1 Cor 6:20, 9:27, Rom 6:12, 1 Thes 4:3-8**

Keep your body, your earth suit, in good shape so it serves you well as you serve the Lord.

1 Corinthians 15:35, 42-44 — But someone may ask, “How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?” — It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies. (NLT)

1 Corinthians 15:48-54 — For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory. (NLT)

1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 — ..., we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died ... when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. We tell

you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. (NLT)

1 Corinthians 6:20 — for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. (NLT)

Romans 6:12 — Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. (NKJV)

Salvation of Your Soul

- **A lifelong process – Jam 1:21**
- **Transformed through Word of God and godly choices – 1 Pet 1:9, 22, Rom 12:2**
- **Goal: To know God and His ways**
 - ♦ **Think like God thinks**
 - ♦ **See like God sees**
 - ♦ **Love like God loves**
 - ♦ **Value what God values**
 - ♦ **Act like God acts**
- **When Jesus returns, will be completed – 1 Cor 13.12**

James 1:21 — So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. (NLT)

1 Peter 1:9, 22 — The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls. – You were cleansed from your sins when you obeyed the truth, so now you must show sincere love to each other as brothers and sisters. Love each other deeply with all your heart. (NLT)

Romans 12:2 — Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. (NLT)

1 Corinthians 13:12 — Now we see things imperfectly as in a cloudy mirror, but then we will see everything with perfect clarity. All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God now knows me completely. (NLT)

The Big Vote! When born again, you spirit will always choose to follow God. Your body usually chooses what feels good, is easy, or pleasant—in most cases it chooses to not follow God.

Your soul casts the deciding vote. If unrenewed, your soul tends to vote with your body. As you renew your mind to the things of God, you soul will more often vote with your spirit to follow God. The key to godly living is renewing your mind/soul.

The Heart

- **Believe from the heart – Rom 10:9-10**

- **Where you really believe**
- **Mind contains lots of truth claims.**
 - ♦ **Some you know are false (advertising)**
 - ♦ **Some you think are true, but are false**
 - ♦ **Some are true, but you don't really believe it**
- **Moving truth to your heart**
 - ♦ **Work of the Holy Spirit – Jn 16:13-14, 1 Cor 2:10-12**
 - ♦ **Faith, by Word/Truth of God – Rom 10:17, Jn 17:17**
 - ♦ **Meditating – Ps 119:11, Pr 4:20-22, 1 Tim 4:12-16**

The “haunting question” from The Truth Project: “Do you really believe that what you believe is really real?”

Romans 10:9-10 — If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. (NLT)

John 16:13-14 — When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. (NLT)

1 Corinthians 2:10-12 — But it was to us that God revealed these things by his Spirit. For his Spirit searches out everything and shows us God's deep secrets. And we have received God's Spirit (not the world's spirit), so we can know the wonderful things God has freely given us. (NLT)

Romans 10:17 — So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (NKJV)

John 17:17 — Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. (NKJV)

Psalm 119:11 — I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you. (NLT)

Proverbs 4:20-22 — My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart; For they *are* life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh. (NKJV)

1 Timothy 4:12-16 — Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you. (NKJV)

God Looks at the Heart

- **The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” — 1 Samuel 16:7 (NLT)**
- **God sees that people are dead when they look alive to us**

- **God sees born again people righteous even when they don't look so good to us**

Identification with Christ

- **At salvation, our spirit is joined with Jesus**
 - ♦ **But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. — 1 Corinthians 6:17 (NKJV)**
- **His history becomes yours and yours became His**
 - ♦ **Jesus bore our sins on cross – 1 Pet 2:24, Isa 53:11, 2 Cor 5:21**
 - ♦ **We have His righteousness – 2 Cor 5:21, 1 Cor 1:30-31**

1 Peter 2:24 — He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed. (NLT)

Isaiah 53:11 — When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins. (NLT)

2 Corinthians 5:21 — For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. (NLT)

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 — God has united you with Christ Jesus. For our benefit God made him to be wisdom itself. Christ made us right with God; he made us pure and holy, and he freed us from sin.” (NLT)

In Christ You Are...

- **Crucified – Gal 2:20, Rom 6:5-7**
- **Dead – 2 Cor 5:14, Col 3:3**
- **Buried – Rom 6:3-13, Col 2:9-13**
- **Raised – Eph 2:5-6, Rom 6:3-13, Col 2:9-13**
- **Made Alive – Col 2:9-13, Eph 2:5-6**
- **Seated in Heavenly Places – Eph 2:5-6**

Enlightening to pay attention to Scripture when it speaks about us, “in Christ,” “with Christ,” “in Whom,” etc.

Galatians 2:20 — My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. (NLT)

Romans 6:5-7 — Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. (NLT)

Colossians 2:9-13 — For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority. When you came to Christ, you were “circumcised,” but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature. For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. You were dead because of your sins and

because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. (NLT)

Ephesians 2:5-6 — that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. (NLT)

Righteous in Christ by Faith

- **Believe and accept God's offer – Rom 10:9-10**
- **Cannot add to it by being or doing good – Gal 3:1-3**
- **From death to life – Jn 5:24, Rom 6:13**
- **From dark to light – Acts 26:18, Col 1:13**
- **New spirit – Eze 11:19, 36:26, 2 Cor 5:17**

Romans 10:9-10 — If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved. (NLT)

Galatians 3:1-3 — Oh, foolish Galatians! Who has cast an evil spell on you? For the meaning of Jesus Christ's death was made as clear to you as if you had seen a picture of his death on the cross. Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obeying the law of Moses? Of course not! You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ. How foolish can you be? After starting your Christian lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? (NLT)

John 5:24 — "I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life. (NLT)

Romans 6:13 — Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. (NLT)

Acts 26:18 — to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God's people, who are set apart by faith in me.' (NLT)

Colossians 1:13 — For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, (NLT)

Ezekiel 11:19 — And I will give them singleness of heart and put a new spirit within them. I will take away their stony, stubborn heart and give them a tender, responsive heart, (NLT)

Ezekiel 36:26 — And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. (NLT)

2 Corinthians 5:17 — Therefore, if anyone *is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.* (NKJV)

Salvation Needed

- **Man guilty of sin – Rom 3:23**
- **Wages of sin is death – Rom 6:23**
- **Man is spiritually dead – Eph 2:1, 5**
- **Man cannot deliver himself – Rom 3:20, 5:6, Gal 2:16**

Penalty is severe, cut off for eternity

Romans 3:23 — For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. (NLT)

Romans 6:23 — For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. (NLT)

Ephesians 2:1, 5 — Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. — that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) (NLT)

Romans 3:20 — For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. (NLT)

Romans 5:6 — When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. (NLT)

Galatians 2:16 — Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law.” (NLT)

Not by Man's Efforts

- **Good works can't fix it**
 - ♦ **Break one, a lawbreaker – Jam 2:10**
 - ♦ **Not by works – Rom 3:20,28, Eph 2:8-9**
- **Religious rites can't fix it – Heb 10:1-4**

James 2:10 — For the person who keeps all of the laws except one is as guilty as a person who has broken all of God's laws. (NLT)

Romans 3:20, 28 — For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. — So we are made right with God through faith and not by obeying the law. (NLT)

Ephesians 2:8-9 — God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. (NLT)

Hebrews 10:1-4 — The old system under the law of Moses was only a shadow, a dim preview of the good things to come, not the good things themselves. The sacrifices under that system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time,

and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared. But instead, those sacrifices actually reminded them of their sins year after year. For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (NLT)

Why Jesus is the Only Way

- Debt must be paid – justice
- Good works can't solve the problem
- Religious rites can't solve the problem
- Only sinless Jesus could be a sufficient substitute
- He's the only way that works!
 - ♦ Jesus didn't come to make bad people good
 - ♦ He came to make dead people alive

Salvation Like Marriage

- Married the instant pronounced
- Still married when don't feel like it
- Still married when you argue or hurt one another
 - ♦ Don't have to get remarried
 - ♦ But need to confess & repent to reestablish the relationship
- Still married if commit adultery.
 - ♦ Spouse has option to get divorce, but not automatic if sin against spouse

It's all about relationship

Death of Believers

- Absent from body, present w/ Lord – 2 Cor 5:6-8
- Live with Jesus forever – 1 Thes 5:10
- Dying is even better than living – Phil 1:21-24
- Not all die, some transformed at resurrection, all victorious over death – 1 Cor 15:51-54
- In Jesus, victory over sin & death – 1 Cor 15:57

2 Corinthians 5:6-8 — So we are always confident, even though we know that as long as we live in these bodies we are not at home with the Lord. For we live by believing and not by seeing. Yes, we are fully confident, and we would rather be away from these earthly bodies, for then we will be at home with the Lord. (NLT)

This verse the fallacy of teachings about “soul sleep” where the spirit/soul of a person is in a non-aware, sleep-like state between physical death and resurrection of the body.

1 Thessalonians 5:10 — Christ died for us so that, whether we are dead or alive when he returns, we can live with him forever. (NLT)

Philippians 1:21-24 — For to me, living means living for Christ, and dying is even better. But if I live, I can do more fruitful work for Christ. So I really don't know which is better. I'm torn between two desires: I long to go and be with Christ, which would be far better for me. But for your sakes, it is better that I continue to live. (NLT)

1 Corinthians 15:51-54 — But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: "Death is swallowed up in victory. (NLT)

1 Corinthians 15:57 — But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. (NLT)

Death of Children?

- **Sin not imputed where no law**
 - ♦ (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. — Romans 5:13 (NKJV)
- **When law came, sin revived and I died**
 - ♦ For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. — Romans 7:8-9 (NKJV)
- **Jesus welcomed children**
 - ♦ But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to those who are like these children." — Matthew 19:14 (NLT)

Impute = to credit to a person or a cause

Summary of Salvation

- **Salvation is for your spirit, soul, & body**
- **Salvation manifests differently for each part**
- **Believers are in union with Jesus**
 - ♦ Crucified, dead, and buried
 - ♦ Raised, made alive
 - ♦ Debt paid, fully righteous
- **Salvation not by good works or religion**
- **Jesus is the only way that works**
- **Believers have victory over sin & death**

For More Information

- **BB #5 – Right with God**
- **BB #6 – Spirit, Soul, and Body**

- **BB #8 – Forgiven to Forgive**
- ***Head Braking Grace* (CDs in Life Sources)**
- ***The Truth Project* course (Focus on the Family)**
- ***Unlocking the Mystery of Life* (DVD)**
- ***Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, Michael Denton**
- **www.life4square.com**

BB = *Building Blocks of Life* (available on www.life4square.com)

Finding Light in the Darkness

Session 19: Major Doctrines, part 4
The Church and Healing
Slide Notes, Sonny Bowman

The Church

Lies About the Church

- A building
- A particular denomination or group
- Man's invention
- Only interested in money
- You don't need to go to church

The Church is...

- **Greek: ekklesia – “an assembly of people”**
 - ♦ Derived from ek and kaleo meaning “the ones called out”
- **Assembly of believers who belong to Jesus**
 - ♦ For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.”
— Matthew 18:20 (NLT)
- **The Body of Christ**
 - ♦ Jesus is the Head – Eph 5:23, 1:22-23
 - ♦ Like your human body – 1 Cor 12:12-27, Eph 4:15-16, Col 1:24
- **Not the building**

Ephesians 5:23 — For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. (NLT)

Ephesians 1:22-23 — God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself. (NLT)

1 Corinthians 12:12-27 — The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit. Yes, the body has many different parts, not just one part. If the foot says, “I am not a part of the body because I am not a hand,” that does not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear says, “I am not part of the body because I am not an eye,” would that make it any less a part of the body? If the whole body were an eye, how would you hear? Or if your whole body were an ear, how would you smell anything? But our bodies have many parts, and God has put each part just where he wants it. How strange a body would be if it had only one part! Yes, there are many parts, but only one body. The eye can never say to the hand, “I don't

need you.” The head can’t say to the feet, “I don’t need you.” In fact, some parts of the body that seem weakest and least important are actually the most necessary. And the parts we regard as less honorable are those we clothe with the greatest care. So we carefully protect those parts that should not be seen, while the more honorable parts do not require this special care. So God has put the body together such that extra honor and care are given to those parts that have less dignity. This makes for harmony among the members, so that all the members care for each other. If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ’s body, and each of you is a part of it. (NLT)

Ephesians 4:15-16 — Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love. (NLT)

Colossians 1:24 — I am glad when I suffer for you in my body, for I am participating in the sufferings of Christ that continue for his body, the church. (NLT)

God Loves It

- **He purchased the Church with His own blood – Acts 20:28**
- **Christ loved the church enough to die for it – Eph 5:22-32**
- **Jesus’ Bride with upcoming wedding – Rev 19:7-9, 21:2, 9**

God highly values His Church. He paid a high price for it. It is not ours, He bought it. It is wise to be careful how you talk about His Church!

Acts 20:28 — “So guard yourselves and God’s people. Feed and shepherd God’s flock—his church, purchased with his own blood—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as elders. (NLT)

Ephesians 5:22-32 — For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything. For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God’s word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. And we are members of his body. As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.” This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one. (NLT)

Revelation 19:7-9 — Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honor to him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself. She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear.” For the fine linen represents the good deeds of God’s holy people. And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.” And he added, “These are true words that come from God.” (NLT)

Revelation 21:2 — And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. (NLT)

Revelation 21:9 — Then one of the seven angels who held the seven bowls containing the seven last plagues came and said to me, “Come with me! I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.” (NLT)

We Need One Another

- **Church is the committed community of believers working, loving, and worshipping together in unity – Heb 10:24-25, 1 Jn 1:7**
- **Edifying one another – Rom 14:19, Heb 3:13**
- **It’s all about relationship – Mat 22:37-40**

The parts work together and are needed in a body

Hebrews 10:24-25 — Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. (NLT)

1 John 1:7 — But if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. (NLT)

Romans 14:19 — So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up. (NLT)

Hebrews 3:13 — You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. (NLT)

Matthew 22:37-40 — Jesus replied, “ ‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.” (NLT)

One measure of Christian maturity is the quality of our relationships. Why is this important? We cannot accomplish God’s will without each other.

Community requires commitment. Many people today value freedom from commitment way too much. We need community, relationship, corporate worship, accountability (naturally flowing out of relationship where you know one another), support, etc. Cannot get this from TV, radio, or book ministries. We are called brothers and sisters. Busy-ness is an enemy of relationship.

Purpose of the Church

- **Declare the glory of God – Eph 3:10-11**
- **Evangelism: reaching out to the lost – Act 14:3-4**
- **Fellowship: encourage and build up one another – Act 15:3-4,**
- **Teach, equip, correct, discipline – 1 Cor 4:17**
- **Prepare believers for ministry – Eph 4:11-12**
- **Restoration and helps – 1 Tim 5:16**

Ephesians 3:10-11 — God’s purpose in all this was to use the church to display his wisdom in its rich variety to all the unseen rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was his eternal plan, which he carried out through Christ Jesus our Lord. (NLT)

Acts 14:3-4 — But the apostles stayed there a long time, preaching boldly about the grace of the Lord. And the Lord proved their message was true by giving them power to do miraculous signs and wonders. But the people of the town were divided in their opinion about them. Some sided with the Jews, and some with the apostles. (NLT)

Acts 15:3-4 — The church sent the delegates to Jerusalem, and they stopped along the way in Phoenicia and Samaria to visit the believers. They told them—much to everyone’s joy—that the Gentiles, too, were being converted. When they arrived in Jerusalem, Barnabas and Paul were welcomed by the whole church, including the apostles and elders. They reported everything God had done through them. (NLT)

1 Corinthians 4:17 — That’s why I have sent Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of how I follow Christ Jesus, just as I teach in all the churches wherever I go. (NLT)

Ephesians 4:11-12 — Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. (NLT)

1 Timothy 5:16 — If a woman who is a believer has relatives who are widows, she must take care of them and not put the responsibility on the church. Then the church can care for the widows who are truly alone. (NLT)

How People Spot the Church?

- **A steeple or cross on top?**
- **What did Jesus say?**
 - ♦ ... **By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**
— John 13:34-35 (NKJV)
- **What does “love one another” look like?**

Remember? It’s not the building!

Can’t love one another in isolation. Requires being together, working together, serving each other, forgiving each other, correcting one another, working things out, truly loving one another—unity!

Unity – Expected of Us

- **Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other’s faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. — Ephesians 4:2-3 (NLT)**
- **We are called to belong, not just believe**
- **Fellowship, where growth happens**
- **Isolation so won’t have to change/grow**

1 Thessalonians 5:13-15 — Show them great respect and wholehearted love because of their work. And live peacefully with each other. Brothers and sisters, we urge you to warn those who are lazy. Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone. See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people. (NLT)

Matthew 5:23-24 — “So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God. (NLT)

1 Thessalonians 5:13 — Show them great respect and wholehearted love because of their work. And live peacefully with each other. (NLT)

Titus 3:1-2 — Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone. (NLT)

1 Peter 5:5-7 — In the same way, you younger men must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, serve each other in humility, for “God opposes the proud but favors the humble.” So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor. Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you. (NLT)

Offenses in the Church

- **“If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won’t accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector. — Matthew 18:15-17 (NLT)**

God is in the business of restoring relationships. First between you and Him. Then between you and others. We avoid having to change/mature by avoiding letting people really know us. People tend to withdraw from Christian friends when they choose to not deal with sin in their lives. We think that our friends will become suspicious that something is not right, so we begin to separate ourselves. Isolation is an important element in choosing to follow sin.

Strife and Conflict

- **Again I say, don’t get involved in foolish, ignorant arguments that only start fights. A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but must be kind to everyone, be able to teach, and be patient with difficult people. Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Perhaps God will change those people’s hearts, and they will learn the truth. Then they will come to their senses and escape from the devil’s trap. For they have been held captive by him to do whatever he wants. — 2 Timothy 2:23-26 (NLT)**
- **For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. — James 3:16 (NLT)**

No gossip, backbiting, competition, envy, etc. Many conflicts are rooted in unmet needs or expectations where we look to people or groups to meet our needs instead of the Lord.

Proverbs 13:10 — Pride leads to conflict; those who take advice are wise. (NLT)

James 4:1-5 — What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. What do you think the Scriptures mean when they say that the spirit God has placed within us is filled with envy? (NLT)

1 Corinthians 11:17-19 — But in the following instructions, I cannot praise you. For it sounds as if more harm than good is done when you meet together. First, I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, and to some extent I believe it. But, of course, there must be divisions among you so that you who have God's approval will be recognized! (NLT)

Immorality in Church 1 Cor 5:1-13

- **I can hardly believe the report about the sexual immorality going on among you ... but you should be mourning in sorrow and shame. And you should remove this man from your fellowship. You must call a meeting of the church. I will be present with you in spirit, and so will the power of our Lord Jesus. Then you must throw this man out and hand him over to Satan so that his sinful nature will be destroyed and he himself will be saved on the day the Lord returns. Your boasting about this is terrible. Don't you realize that this sin is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old "yeast" by removing this wicked person from among you. I meant that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a believer yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or is a drunkard, or cheats people. Don't even eat with such people. It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your responsibility to judge those inside the church who are sinning. God will judge those on the outside; but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you." — 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 (NLT)**

Why are we covering this? This has been a big problem in the local churches, and some people are confused about why we handle things the way we do.

Which Day?

- **.... In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. You should each be fully convinced that whichever day you choose is acceptable. Those who worship the Lord on a special day do it to honor him. — Romans 14:1-8 (NLT)**

- **So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. — Colossians 2:16-17 (NLT)**

Jewish Sabbath was on Saturday, technically from Friday at sundown to Saturday at Sunday. Early Christians met together on Sundays, the Lord's day, since that was the day of Jesus' resurrection. Jewish Christians would often go to the synagogue on the Sabbath, then to meetings of the Church on Sunday. As the Gentiles began to follow the Lord, they only met on Sundays. The exact day of the week is not critical, but it is important to keep one day of rest a week.

Acts 20:7 — On the first day of the week, we gathered with the local believers to share in the Lord's Supper. Paul was preaching to them, and since he was leaving the next day, he kept talking until midnight. (NLT)

Revelation 1:10 — It was the Lord's Day, and I was worshiping in the Spirit. Suddenly, I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet blast. (NLT)

Church Summary

- **Is the assembly of believers**
- **Is loved by God**
- **Is the Body & Bride of Christ**
- **Unity, love, & fellowship required**
- **Primary Purpose here: reach the lost**
- **We need each other**

For More Information

- **BB #12 – The Things We Do: Water Baptism, Communion, and the Laying on of Hands**
- **BB #13 – Being a Follower of Jesus**
- **www.life4square.com**

BB = *Building Blocks of Life*, available at www.life4square.com

Healing

Lies About Healing

- **Healing is not for today**
- **Must live right to be healed**

- God may heal him, but not me
- Healing is a sign of God’s approval
- Only certain people can pray for others to be healed
- If healing true, everyone would be healed
- God puts sickness on people to teach them

Some Causes of Sickness

- Our Sin
 - ♦ But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, “Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you.” — John 5:14 (NLT)
- Broken world
 - ♦ ..., “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?” “It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,” Jesus answered. — John 9:1-3 (NLT)
- Demonic Influences
 - ♦ This dear woman, a daughter of Abraham, has been held in bondage by Satan for eighteen years. ...” — Luke 13:10-16 (NLT)
 - ♦ ... Jesus of Nazareth ..., who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil — Acts 10:38 (NKJV)

Sickness and death came into God’s good creation with the sin of Adam and Eve. While sickness is ultimately the result of sin, specific sickness is not necessarily caused by some specific sin committed by an individual—though it may be in some cases. Sickness and disease is an intruder into God’s good creation. We need to see it as an enemy of God and of us.

God Is a Healing God

- “.... And I will take sickness away from the midst of you. — Exodus 23:25 (NKJV)
- ...; for I am the Lord who heals you.” — Exodus 15:26 (NLT)
- He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. — John 5:19 (NLT)
- And whatever their sickness or disease, or if they were demon possessed or epileptic or paralyzed—he healed them all. — Matthew 4:24 (NLT)

Exodus 23:25 — “So you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you. (NKJV)

Exodus 15:26 — He said, “If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you.” (NLT)

John 5:19 — So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. (NLT)

Jesus healed people physically.

Healing in the Atonement

- ... he healed all the sick. This fulfilled the word of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah, who said, “He took our sicknesses and removed our diseases.” — Matthew 8:16-17 (NLT)
- Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; ..., And by His stripes we are healed. — Isaiah 53:4-5 (NKJV)
- Surely our diseases he did bear, and our pains he carried; ... and with his stripes we were healed. — Isaiah 53:4-5 (JPS 1917)

Includes spiritual healing, healing our relationship with God. But is not limited to that.

Scripture applies “He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses” to physical healing. This is positionally true in Christ. May take some work to become experientially true.

JPS1917 – *The Hebrew Bible in English* by Jewish Publication Society, 1917

1 Peter 2:24 — who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness— by whose stripes you were healed. (NKJV)

Save the Sick?

- And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.
- — James 5:15 (NKJV)
- For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, — Ephesians 2:8 (NKJV)

Same Greek word “sozo” used for save/saved in these two verses.

Sozo - Save

- 4982 ἐκσώζω, σώζω [sozo /sode•zo/] v. ... 110 occurrences; AV translates as “save” 93 times, “make whole” nine times, “heal” three times, “be whole” twice, and translated miscellaneous three times. 1 to save, keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction. 1A one (from injury or peril). 1A1 to save a suffering one (from perishing), i.e. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health. 1B1 to preserve one who is in danger of destruction, to save or rescue. 1B to save in the technical biblical sense. 1B1 negatively. 1B1A to deliver from the penalties of the Messianic judgment. 1B1B to save from the evils which obstruct the reception of the Messianic deliverance.

Definition of “save” includes physical healing

4982 ἐκσώζω, σώζω [sozo /sode•zo/] v. From a primary sos (contraction for obsolete saoz, “safe”); TDNT 7:965; TDNTA 1132; GK 1751 and 5392; 110 occurrences;

Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible : Showing every word of the text of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

Healing is for Us

- **Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. — James 5:14-16 (NLT)**
- **He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. — Psalm 103:3 (NLT)**

People don't seem to question God's ability to heal. But many question His willingness to heal. Jesus taught us to pray, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mat 6:10) This means God's will is not automatically being done on earth. That's why we are told to pray. There is no sickness or disease in heaven.

2 Peter 3:9 — The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. (NKJV)

God's will is for all people to be saved, yet not all people will be.

What Did Jesus Heal?

- **.... And he healed every kind of disease and illness. ... he healed them all. — Matthew 4:23-24 (NLT) (also Matthew 9:35)**
- **But the crowds ... followed him. He welcomed them and taught them about the Kingdom of God, and he healed those who were sick. — Luke 9:11 (NLT)**
- **A man with leprosy came "If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean," ..., Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!". — Mark 1:40-41 (NLT)**

Every kind of sickness and disease.

Who Did Jesus Heal?

- **.... No matter what their diseases were, the touch of his hand healed every one. — Luke 4:40 (NLT)**
- **Crowds came from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed. — Acts 5:16 (NLT)**

All who came to Him. It wasn't just a sign to prove who He was. That would only require a few healings. Jesus never refused to heal anyone.

Why Did Jesus Heal?

- **In response to faith**
 - ♦ Faith of others – Mt 8:5-13, Jn 4:46-53,
- **Mk 2:1-12, Mat 15:21-28, others**
 - ♦ Faith of requestor – Mk 5:25-34, Mat 9:27-31, 8:2-4, Lk 17:11-19, others
- **Compassion for the hurting (6 instances)**
 - ♦ Mat 9:35-36, 14:14, 20:34, Mk 1:41, 5:19, Lk 7:13
- **Other reasons**

Compassion: God loves and cares for us. He desires to set people free from sickness and disease.

Disciples Healed People

- **One day Jesus called together his twelve disciples and gave them power and authority to cast out all demons and to heal all diseases. Then he sent them out to tell everyone about the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. — Luke 9:1-2 (NLT) (also Mat 10:1-8)**
- **Peter and John In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!” Then Peter took the lame man by the right hand and helped him up. And as he did, the man’s feet and ankles were instantly healed and strengthened. He jumped up, stood on his feet, and began to walk! Then, walking, leaping, and praising God, he went into the Temple with them. — Acts 3:1-8 (NLT)**
- **As it happened, Publius’s father was ill with fever and dysentery. Paul went in and prayed for him, and laying his hands on him, he healed him. Then all the other sick people on the island came and were healed. — Acts 28:8-9 (NLT)**
- **Crowds came from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed. — Acts 5:16 (NLT)**

Matthew 10:1-8 — Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority to cast out evil spirits and to heal every kind of disease and illness. Here are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (also called Peter), then Andrew (Peter’s brother), James (son of Zebedee), John (James’s brother), Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew (the tax collector), James (son of Alphaeus), Thaddaeus, Simon (the zealot), Judas Iscariot (who later betrayed him). Jesus sent out the twelve apostles with these instructions: “Don’t go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, but only to the people of Israel—God’s lost sheep. Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received! (NLT)

We Heal People

- **Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received! — Matthew 10:8 (NLT)**
- **Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.” — Matthew 28:19-20**

(NLT)

- **“I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, — John 14:12 (NLT)**
- **These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They will be able to place their hands on the sick, and they will be healed.” — Mark 16:17-18 (NLT)**

Early disciples were commanded by Jesus to teach others to do the things that He told them to do. We, too, are disciples. It is not our own power, but we are to heal by the authority given to us by Jesus.

Hindrance to Healing

- **Then they scoffed, “He’s just a carpenter,” They were deeply offended and refused to believe in him.” And because of their unbelief, he couldn’t do any miracles among them except to place his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their unbelief. — Mark 6:3-6 (NLT)**

Even Jesus could not heal those who were offend by His claims (to be God, etc.) and refuse to believe.

Matthew 13:57-58 — And they were deeply offended and refused to believe in him. Then Jesus told them, “A prophet is honored everywhere except in his own hometown and among his own family.” And so he did only a few miracles there because of their unbelief. (NLT)

Other areas of hindances:

Our Unbelief – People often believe that God can heal, but not that He wants to heal.

Spiritual Opposition – demonic realm wants to limit our freedom in Christ and to keep us from reaching others with the truth. They harass and oppose believers. But they have been defeated by Jesus. More on this next week.

Pray Again?

- **Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. Then, spitting on the man’s eyes, he laid his hands on him and asked, “Can you see anything now?” The man looked around. “Yes,” he said, “I see people, but I can’t see them very clearly. They look like trees walking around.” Then Jesus placed his hands on the man’s eyes again, and his eyes were opened. His sight was completely restored, and he could see everything clearly. — Mark 8:23-25 (NLT)**

When Jesus ministered healing, it usually occurred immediately. In one recorded instance, the full healing did not occur immediate. So keep praying for healing as needed!

Endurance Needed

- **Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: — Hebrews 10:35-36 (NKJV)**

How long do you wait? God wants us to trust, not set limits.

What about setbacks or returning symptoms after healing? Don't assume that you weren't healed if symptoms return. How can they "return" if they weren't "gone" at least for a while? Pray again, continue standing in faith.

Methods for Healing

- **Pray for yourself – Jam 5:13**
- **Pray for one another – Jam 5:16**
- **Call for Elders, anoint w/oil – Jam 5:14-16**
- **Laying on hands – Mk 16:17, Luk 4:40**
- **Unusual miracles –**
 - ♦ **Paul, handkerchiefs or aprons – Act 19:11-12**
 - ♦ **Peter, shadow – Acts 5:15-16**
- **Spiritual Gifts of Healing – 1 Cor 12:9, 28**

James 5:13-16 — Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. (NKJV)

Acts 5:15-16 — As a result of the apostles' work, sick people were brought out into the streets on beds and mats so that Peter's shadow might fall across some of them as he went by. Crowds came from the villages around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those possessed by evil spirits, and they were all healed. (NLT)

Acts 19:11-12 — God gave Paul the power to perform unusual miracles. When handkerchiefs or aprons that had merely touched his skin were placed on sick people, they were healed of their diseases, and evil spirits were expelled. (NLT)

Healing Summary

- **Sickness is an enemy**
- **God is a Healing God**
- **Healing is included in the Atonement**
- **Jesus healed people**
- **Disciples (past & present) healed**

- **Endurance Needed**

We tend to take some cases where healing did not seem to take place, then we discount almost all healing. Why is that? We have help – demonic lies.

Why not take a few cases where healing has happened? If it is possible in even one case, then it is possible again. So let's pursue and find out how to see healing happen more often.

God is more concerned about your character than your comfort. He does not put sickness and disease on people to teach them things or to develop character. Yet He will use your circumstances and situations to develop character in you. Often, it seems we want to be healed because it is an inconvenience to us living our life and doing our own thing.

James 4:2-3 — Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. (NLT)

Many times, it is not the divine healing that makes people weird. It is the ways that people try to force faith and force God to heal them. The focus is not seeking God, but pursuing healing.

Matthew 4:5-7 — Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.'" Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the Lord your God.'" (NLT)

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing comes by the Word of God (Rom 10:17). It is a matter of really believing what God says.

For More Information

- **BB #9 – Faith that Pleases God**
- **BB #10 – Healing for Life**
- **BB #14 – Prayer**
- **www.life4square.com**

BB = *Building Blocks of Life*, available at www.life4square.com

Finding Light in the Darkness

Session 20: Major Doctrines, part 5
Spirit Realm and Last Things
Slide Notes, Sonny Bowman

Spirit Realm

Lies About the Spirit Realm

- No spirit realm
- Demons cause all problems, we're powerless
- Satan is equal counterpart to God
- Devil will leave me alone if I leave him alone
- We become angels when we die
- Angels are here to do our bidding
- You can talk with dead people's spirits
- Christians can be demon possessed

A demon cannot possess or own what God has purchased and owns – 1 Cor 6:19-20

Source & Nature of Angels

- Created spirit beings – Rom 8:38-39, Ps 104:4, Heb 1:13-14
- Messengers of God to accomplish His will – Heb 1:13-14, Ps 103:20
- Worship God – Rev 7:11
- Protect those who fear the Lord – Ps 34:7

Some angels have sinned.

Satan & Demons

- Satan originally a high ranking angel – Ez 28:14-16
- Rebelled, wanted to be like God – Isa 14:12-15
- Other angels followed him – Rev 12:7-9
- Demons are fallen angels who will be judged – 2 Pet 2:4, Jude 6, 1 Cor 6:3
- They lie & deceive – 2 Cor 11:13-15, Jn 8:44
- Satan tempted man – Gen 3:1-3
- Now god of this world – 2 Cor 4:4, Jn 14:30, 16:11

- **His goal: to kill, steal & destroy – Jn 10:10**
- **Defeated by Jesus – Heb 2:14-15**
- **Knows he only has a short time left – Rev 12:12**
- **Will suffer eternally in Lake of Fire – Rev 20:10**

Satan tempted man with the same temptation that caused his own fall, the desire to be like God (Isa 14:14, Gen 3:5).

Word Satan means “adversary” or one who opposes (see 2 Thes 2:3-4, Rev 12:10).

Satan and demons seem to prefer either of two extremes: to be totally ignored or studied with great interest – to believe they are involved with nothing or with everything.

Satan, the Devil

- **“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! ... For you have said in your heart: ‘I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.’ Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit. — Isaiah 14:12-15 (NKJV)**

“Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God: “You *were* the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone *was* your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes Was prepared for you on the day you were created. “You *were* the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You *were* perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. “By the abundance of your trading You became filled with violence within, And you sinned; Therefore I cast you as a profane thing Out of the mountain of God; And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the fiery stones. “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, That they might gaze at you. “You defiled your sanctuaries By the multitude of your iniquities, By the iniquity of your trading; Therefore I brought fire from your midst; It devoured you, And I turned you to ashes upon the earth In the sight of all who saw you. All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you; You have become a horror, And *shall be* no more forever.” ’ ’ — Ezekiel 28:12-19 (NKJV)

Guidance from Spirit World

- **‘And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people. — Leviticus 20:6 (NKJV)**
- **.... And do not let your people practice fortune-telling, or use sorcery, or interpret omens, or engage in witchcraft, or cast spells, or function as mediums**

or psychics, or call forth the spirits of the dead. Anyone who does these things is detestable to the Lord. — Deuteronomy 18:10-12 (NLT)

Christians must pray to God only and seek counsel only from Him and His Word. God may use angels to accomplish His will, but we are not to pursue communication with angels (or spirits) in any form. If you encounter a true angel of God, he will always speak in agreement with God's Word and lead you to worship God alone.

I, John, am the one who heard and saw all these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me. But he said, "No, don't worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers the prophets, as well as all who obey what is written in this book. Worship only God!" — Revelation 22:8-9 (NLT)

Fortune telling includes astrology, horoscope, palm reading, crystal balls, etc. Other practices forbidden include Ouija boards, séances, tarot cards, spirit guides, numerology, black magic, white magic, Wicca, witchcraft, spells, etc. Basically, anything that offers guidance other than from the Lord and His Word.

And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? *Should* they seek the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them. — Isaiah 8:19-20 (NKJV)

Demonic spirits are deceivers—the original con artists. They can appear to be angels of light and truth, or even your dead relative. They've been around a long time and have seen and heard a lot from their spiritual vantage point. They will use that information to lure people into dangerous and forbidden activities.

Spiritual Warfare

- **There is an unseen war in the spirit realm**
 - ♦ **Then he said, "Don't be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer. But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels, came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia. — Daniel 10:12-13 (NLT)**

We are called to work to enforce the defeat of evil spiritual forces. Most often, this is done by exposing their lies and error with the Truth from God. But there is also a spiritual aspect which we need to participate in an appropriate manner.

There is spiritual opposition that we need to overcome.

We Have Victory in Jesus

- **But you belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory over those people, because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world. — 1 John 4:4 (NLT)**
- **... If God is for us, who can ever be against us? — Romans 8:31 (NLT)**

- **... When the enemy comes in like a flood, The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against him. — Isaiah 59:19 (NKJV)**

This is the most important place to begin with spiritual warfare. It is *only* because of God in us that enables to successfully fight against an otherwise stronger and wiser foe.

Jesus has won the victory, but we need to work to set the captives free. Clean up operations.

Well Equipped - Ephesians 6:10-18

- **A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places. Therefore, put on every piece of God's armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm.**
- **Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God's righteousness. For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere. — Ephesians 6:10-18 (NLT)**

It is easy to lose sight of where the real battle is taking place.

Notice that the armor is basically defensive. The sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is the offensive part of the armor (Heb 4:12). Prayer is another offensive tool in the battle.

Mighty Weapons

- **For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, — 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NKJV)**

God's truth, His Word. If you don't know God, how can you fight?

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. — Ephesians 4:14-15 (NLT)

Fight of Faith

- **For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory**

through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God. — 1 John 5:4-5 (NLT)

- **Fight the good fight for the true faith.**
— 1 Timothy 6:12 (NLT)
- **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.** — Romans 12:21 (NKJV)

Balance Important

- **Look, I have given you authority over all the power of the enemy, and you can walk among snakes and scorpions and crush them. Nothing will injure you. But don't rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven.** — Luke 10:19-20 (NLT)
- **So humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.** — James 4:7 (NLT)

It is easy to become overly focused on demonic forces. A proper balance is that of following and serving the Lord while dealing with spiritual opposition only as needed.

We don't need demon-buster specialists in the Kingdom of God. We are all equipped to deal with opposing forces as a normal course of business in living out our Christian walk by faith.

Don't Be Neutralized

- **Anger & strife** – Gal 5:15, Eph 4:31
- **Bitterness** – Eph 4:31, Jam 3:14-16
- **Unforgiveness** – Mat 18:32-35
- **Believe lies** – 1 Tim 4:1-2, 2 Cor 10:5
- **Ignorance** – 2 Cor 2:11
- **Compromise** – Eph 4:27
- **Sin & self will** – Jam 3:14-16

You are righteous in Jesus and do not earn position or authority by being good. However, allowing sin or compromises of any kind diminishes your ability to effectively stand against the enemy.

Practical Application

- **Questions to ask**
 - ♦ **Ask the Lord by the Holy Spirit for revelation**
 - ♦ **Disobeyed God on something?**
 - ♦ **Not forgiving what God forgave?**
 - ♦ **Bitterness or strife?**
 - ♦ **An area of self will or rule?**
- **Then deal with spiritual opposition if remains**

- **Not getting good, but eliminating obstacles**
 - ♦ **nor give place to the devil. — Ephesians 4:27 (NKJV)**

Often, we are our own worst enemies. We seek to ignore God's ways and wonder why we are having troubles. It is easy to blame the devil when it is really us.

However, once you go to the Lord, ask for insight, and take appropriate action, if the assault is still present, then address it spiritually as an attack from the enemy.

Spiritual Realm Summary

- **Angels are created beings who worship and work for God**
- **Satan and demons actively oppose the work of God seeking to kill, steal, & destroy**
- **We are called and equipped to effectively engage in the battle bringing deliverance to many**
- **It is a fight of faith in which we pursue God and truth while standing against evil and compromise**

Last Things

Lies About End Times

- **This world will go on forever**
- **There is no hell or eternal punishment**
- **Christians will be taken out before the Great Tribulation**
- **Only really good Christians go in the "Rapture"**

What would it be worth to know the future?

Changing fuel pump in Idaho outside with -5 degree temperature.

Would buy Microsoft or Google stock early on.

What if a powerful man showed up who could heal the sick, call fire down from heaven, and do many miracles? What if he claimed that he was god and that you should worship him? Would you think the God of the Bible had fallen off His throne? Would you begin to wonder if what you have believed is really the truth? If someone like this is a deceiver, it would be good to know it ahead, wouldn't it? Well, the Bible tells us that a very convincing counterfeit will show up on the scene sometime in the near future. We are told how to spot the counterfeit and what to do.

Why Study End Times?

- **Wrong expectations cause problems**
 - ♦ **Jews Missed Jesus**
- **Know everything under control**
- **Show when we arrive**
 - ♦ **Sign Posts**

Jesus Will Come Back

- **When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. — John 14:3 (NLT)**
- **... “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!”
— Acts 1:11 (NLT)**
- **Look! He comes with the clouds of heaven. And everyone will see him— even those who pierced him. And all the nations of the world will mourn for him. Yes! Amen! — Revelation 1:7 (NLT)**

Before Jesus Returns

- **... let us clarify some things about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and how we will be gathered to meet him. Don't be so easily shaken or alarmed by those who say that the day of the Lord has already begun. For that day will not come until there is a great rebellion against God and the man of lawlessness is revealed—the one who brings destruction. He will exalt himself and defy everything that people call god and every object of worship. He will even sit in the temple of God, claiming that he himself is God.
— 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4 (NLT)**

This is called the Abomination of Desolation in Matthew 24:15. It is also referenced in several places in the book of Daniel.

Abomination of Desolation

- **“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place” For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. — Matthew 24:15-25 (NKJV)**

The Abomination of Desolation (2 Thes 2:1-4, Mat 24:15, Daniel 9:27, 11:31, 12:11) is an important event signaling the beginning of the Great Tribulation. While there is not enough

information to predict exactly what will happen, there is enough to form a “sign post” that should be identifiable when it occurs. The important points are included in Daniel.

And forces shall be mustered by him, and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices*, and place *there* the abomination of desolation. Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out *great exploits*. And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet *for many* days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by intrigue. And *some* of those of understanding shall fall, to refine them, purify *them*, and make *them* white, *until* the time of the end; because *it is* still for the appointed time. “Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. He shall regard neither the God of his fathers nor the desire of women, nor regard any god; for he shall exalt himself above *them all*. — Daniel 11:31-37 (NKJV)

Which is Right?

- **Pre-Trib**
- **Post-Trib**
- **Mid-Trib**
- **Pre-Wrath**

Which of three would you prefer to be true? The Bible teaches the Pre-Wrath Rapture of the Church.

Many current teachings about end times are inaccurate because they have made a faulty assumption that “pre-trib” is correct. The “Left Behind” series by Tim LaHaye is interesting, but based on a major wrong assumption about end times. Hal Lindsay’s material (“Late, Great Planet Earth”) is also based on a wrong assumption.

Major Source of Confusion – Great Tribulation vs. Wrath of God

This is probably the most frequent cause of error and confusion when people are studying end times in the Bible. If don’t understand the difference between the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God, you cannot understand end times!

So what is the difference...?

Great Tribulation or Wrath?

- **Two Different Events!**
 - ♦ **Tribulation: persecution, Beast, 666, idol worship**
 - ♦ **Wrath: seven plagues, witnesses (protected)**
- **Two Different Sources!**
 - ♦ **Tribulation: from Satan**

- ♦ Wrath of God: from God
- Two Different Purposes!
 - ♦ Tribulation: deceive and destroy all people
 - ♦ Wrath: judgment against Beast & his followers
- Two Different Times!
 - ♦ Tribulation: at beginning of end times
 - ♦ Wrath: after the Great Tribulation

GT Before Signs in Heavens

- **“Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. — Matthew 24:29-30 (NKJV)**

Wrath After Signs in Heavens

- **I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” — Revelation 6:12-17 (NKJV)**

Since the Great Tribulation occurs just prior to the signs in the heavens and the Wrath of God is poured out right after the signs in the heavens, the Wrath of God must occur after the Great Tribulation.

So, when does Jesus come back to get us?

When Does Jesus Come?

- **For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. — Matthew 24:27-31 (NKJV)**

The Bible is extremely clear. Jesus comes to get us (the resurrection of the dead, Rapture) immediately after the Great Tribulation, but before the outpouring of God's Wrath (judgment).

Elect = chosen ones, believers (that's us ☺, 1 Pet 1:2, Col 3:11-12). Compare a "bride elect"

The Bible does not teach a secret return of Jesus.

Wrath of God

- **Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. — Revelation 15:1 (NKJV)**

The Wrath of God takes the form of seven plagues that are poured out in judgment upon the Antichrist and other enemies of God. More information on these plagues is found in chapters 8-11 and 16 of the Book of Revelation. The plagues are not part of the Great Tribulation!

Believers Here or Not?

- **Here for the Great Tribulation**
 - ♦ "Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. — Matthew 24:9 (NKJV)
 - ♦ "Immediately after the tribulation of those days Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. — Matthew 24:29-31 (NKJV)
- **Not suffer God's Wrath**
 - ♦ For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, — 1 Thessalonians 5:9 (NKJV)

You may hear someone say that Christians won't be here during the Great Tribulation because the Bible says we are not appointed to wrath. A person will only say that if they don't understand the difference between the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God.

After the Wrath

- **... an angel ... laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ... Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. — Revelation 20:1-4 (NKJV)**

After the Wrath of God, Satan will be bound for 1,000 years. Jesus and His people will reign over the unbelievers who survived the plagues of the Wrath of God (see Rev 20:8-9).

Satan Set Free, Cast into LOF

- **Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone — Revelation 20:7-10 (NKJV)**

White Throne Judgment

- **Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, ... I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire. — Revelation 20:11-15 (NKJV)**

The dead are those who are spiritually dead. To God, there are only two kinds of people.

The spiritually alive are those who belong to Him with their sin debt paid by faith in Jesus.

The spiritually dead are those who are cut off from God by their sin debt for which they have refused Jesus' salvation and lordship.

New Heavens, Earth, etc.

- **Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,.... God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” — Revelation 21:1-4 (NKJV)**

Your Invitation

- **The Spirit and the bride say, “Come.” Let anyone who hears this say, “Come.” Let anyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who desires drink freely from the water of life. — Revelation 22:17 (NLT)**
- **... that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. — For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” — Romans 10:9, 13 (NKJV)**

Jesus will come back for ONLY those who belong to Him!

Be Strong and Watch Out

- **Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. —**

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Ephesians 6:10 (NKJV)

- **Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning— lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch!” — Mark 13:35-37 (NKJV)**

End Times Summary

- **Now... Time of relative peace**
- **Abomination of Desolation**
- **Great Tribulation – demonic persecution**
- **Signs in sun, moon, & stars**
- **Return of Jesus & gathering of saints**
 - **Not a partial or secret Rapture**
- **Wrath of God – judgment from God**
- **Millennium – 1,000 year reign**
- **White Throne Judgment – of spiritually dead**
- **New Jerusalem – our new home**
- **Eternity – forever with God**

Watch for important signs...

Abomination of Desolation signals beginning of Great Tribulation

Signs in sun, moon & stars signal return of Jesus and beginning of the Wrath of God

So what happens when a person dies?

What Happens When You Die?

- **Depends on who you belong to...**
 - ♦ **Instantly go to be with the Lord if a believer – 2 Cor 5:4-6, Lk 23:43**
 - ♦ **Instantly go to a place of torment awaiting judgment if not a believer – Lk 16:22-23, 28**
- **Not soul sleep (unconscious state)**
 - ♦ **Jesus didn't believe it – Lk 16:19-31, 23:42-43**
 - ♦ **Paul didn't believe it – 2 Cor 5:6-8**

People will live somewhere for eternity. Individuals have not existed for eternity. Each person has a beginning at the point of conception, but will live eternally somewhere after that point.

Soul sleep is a teaching that your consciousness ceases at the moment of death and does not return until the resurrection of your body at the return of Jesus (if you are a believer). This is based largely on several verses that refer to physical death as “sleep” (See John 11:11-14).

However, Jesus did not believe in soul sleep as demonstrated in the story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). Also, Jesus promised one thief crucified with Him that he would be

with Him in paradise the day he died (Luke 23:42-43). Also, Paul did not believe in soul sleep since he expected to be with the Lord as soon as he left his body in death (2 Cor 5:6-8).

Judgment of Christians

- **Not White Throne Judgment**
 - ♦ “I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life. — John 5:24 (NLT)
- **Judgment Seat of Christ – your service**
 - ♦ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. — 2 Corinthians 5:10 (NKJV)
 - ♦ But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.” So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. — Romans 14:10-12 (NKJV)

All will live eternally, but not all will have eternal life. Eternal life from God’s perspective is to be alive spiritually, connected to Him.

Life Work Tested by Fire

- For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. — 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 (NKJV)

Judgment of Non-Christians

- And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment, — Hebrews 9:27 (NLT)
- And I saw a great white throne and the one sitting on it. I saw the dead, both great and small, standing before God’s throne. And the books were opened, including the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to what they had done, as recorded in the books. And all were judged according to their deeds. Then death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire. This lake of fire is the second death. And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire. — Revelation 20:11-15 (NLT)

The “dead” who are being judged at the Great White Throne Judgment are those who are spiritually dead, those cut off from God.

Those who are alive in Christ have already passed from death to life (Jn 5:24) and will have already been raised to reign as kings and priests with Christ long before the Great White Throne Judgment (see Rev 1:5-6, 20:4-6).

Eternal Punishment

- **And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire. — Revelation 20:15 (NLT)**
- **... Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons. -- And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life.” — Matthew 25:41, 46 (NLT)**
- **..., “Anyone who worships the beast and his statue or who accepts his mark on the forehead or on the hand must drink the wine of God’s anger. And they will be tormented with fire and burning sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. The smoke of their torment will rise forever and ever, and they will have no relief day or night,” — Revelation 14:9-11 (NLT)**

We don't like the idea of eternal suffering. Unfortunately, those who refuse Jesus' payment for their sins will have to pay the price themselves. God has done everything possible to save everyone short of overriding each person's free will. Each one who is cast into the lake of fire will be without excuse (Rom 1:18-21).

Other verses concerning eternal punishment...

Then the devil, who had deceived them, was thrown into the fiery lake of burning sulfur, joining the beast and the false prophet. There they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. — Revelation 20:10 (NLT)

That is the way it will be at the end of the world. The angels will come and separate the wicked people from the righteous, throwing the wicked into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. — Matthew 13:49-50 (NLT)

Resurrection of Our Bodies

- **... when Jesus returns, God will bring back with him the believers who have died. We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living when the Lord returns will not meet him ahead of those who have died. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever. — 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 (NLT)**

Notice that the verse says, “God will bring back with [Jesus] the believers who have died” when Jesus returns. That means we were with Jesus after we died. We are returning to earth with Him for the resurrection of our bodies and the gathering of the believers who have not yet died. This is often called the “Rapture.”

New Body? (1 Cor 15:35-58)

- **But someone may ask, “How will the dead be raised? What kind of bodies will they have?” What a foolish question! There are also bodies in the heavens and bodies on the earth. The sun has one kind of glory, while the moon and stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each other in their glory. It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead.**
- **Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies.**
- **.... What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever. But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever.**
- **And we who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory. — 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 (NLT)**

For More Information

- **End Times - Putting the Pieces in Place**
- **BB #15 – End Times Overview**
- **www.life4square.com**

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