

The Harvest of an Evangelistic Church



By
Billy Lambert

I. THE MISSION

- LESSON ONE – “STARTING WITH THE GREAT COMMISSION”
- LESSON TWO – “RESTORATION OF FIRST CENTURY EVANGELISM IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY CHURCH”
- LESSON THREE – “A REVIVAL OF SOUL WINNING”

LESSON ONE

STARTING WITH THE GREAT COMMISSION

In 1980, I was asked to teach a class on "The Preacher and His Work", at Alabama Christian College (now Faulkner University). It was a delightful experience teaching those young, eager, enthusiastic preachers. Near the end of the semester, Dr. W.B. West, who then was head of the Bible department, asked if I would agree to teach a class the next semester. I asked what class he wanted me to teach. He replied by telling me he would like for me to teach "missions". Thinking there might be a textbook or syllabus he would like for the students to have, I further asked him, "Brother West, where would you like for me to begin?" In his usual kind and gentle way, he replied, "Brother Lambert, you might begin with the great commission."

Judging from the lack of results and growth over the last decade, it is time for the Lord's church in America to "begin with the great commission". It is said that a famous painter had in his possessions some beautiful, precious jewels. After painting for a long period of time he would lose his perception of colors. He would then take out those precious jewels and by looking at them his perception of colors was restored. Our perception of the task and mission of Christ's church can be refocused by looking again at the great commission.

In giving the commission according to Matthew's gospel, Jesus said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt. 28:18-20). Observe the four "alls" mentioned by our Lord in this commission: (1) "all power", or authority; (2) "all nations"; (3) "all things"; (4) "always". (See also Mk. 16:15 and Lk. 24:45-47).

What is there about this commission that makes it so great?

THE PLANNING BEHIND IT

Salvation through Christ was no accident. It was according to the carefully executed purpose and plan of God. When Christ died upon the cross it was according to God's plan (Acts 2:22-24). His death was in God's eternal purpose (Eph. 3:8-11). This simply means that there never was a time when God did not have the redemptive work of Christ in mind. It was actually planned

before the world was made (I Pet. 1:17-21; Rev. 13:8; Eph. 1:3-6). One reason this is a "great commission" is because of all the planning of God behind it.

THE AUTHORITY BEHIND IT

Jesus stated that He had "all power" or authority (Mt. 28:18). In the United States there are three branches of authority (1) Congress has legislative authority; (2) the President has executive authority and (3) the Supreme Court has judicial authority.

Jesus has ALL AUTHORITY. He has legislative authority since He is our lawgiver (Heb. 9:15-17; 8:6-13; Jas. 1:25; Gal. 6:2). Christ has executive authority as King of kings as Lord of lords (Isa. 9:6-7; I Tim. 6:15-16). Furthermore, Christ has judicial authority as our judge (Jn. 12:48; Jn. 5:27; Rev. 20:11-15; Acts 17:31; Mt. 25:31-33; II Tim. 4:1).

When Christ commanded, "teach all nations" He had all the authority of heaven behind it. This mandate of Christ is not to be taken lightly (Heb. 12:25).

THE SCOPE OF IT

The gospel message is not limited to a select group of people. It is not an American gospel. It is for the whole world. It is to be preached to "all nations" (Mt. 28:19; Lk. 24:47). It is to be carried to "every creature" (Mk. 16:15). It is to extend to the "uttermost part" (Acts 1:8).

Until the gospel has gone to every creature in every nation the task of world evangelism remains undone (Acts 10:34, 35; Tit. 2:11; Jn. 3:16; I Jn. 2:1-2; 4:14; Eph. 2:13; Acts 2:39-40). It can, however, be done (Col. 1:23).

THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE COMMISSION

One of Satan's most effective weapons in hindering the cause of Christ is discouragement. Many who once were on fire are now cold as an iceberg. They became so discouraged they ceased working to win men to Christ (Gal. 5:7; 6:9; Lk. 9:62).

One factor that tends to encourage is the constant, continual, companionship of the Christ. He said, "I am with you always" (Mt. 28:20). We are not alone in this great work (Heb. 13:5-6). There are times when the weak hands and feeble knees need encouragement (Job 4:3-4) and Christ is there to give it.

THE END RESULT

When the great commission is carried out by faithful Christians the end result is the salvation of sinners (Mk. 16:15-16). Those who obey the gospel "shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16). Those who disobey the gospel will be lost (II Thess. 1:7-9). One person has suggested that one reason for the lack of evangelistic fervor is the fact that Christians are not fully convinced that men will be lost without the gospel. Factually and truthfully, the only reason Jesus died is because there is a literal hell (Lk. 19:10). Yes, this commission is great because its end result is that men, women, boys and girls might go to heaven.

IMPOSSIBILITIES OF THE COMMISSION

It is impossible to obey the great commission without believing on Christ (Mk. 16:15). One cannot obey this commission without repenting of sin (Lk. 24:47). Neither is it possible to obey this order of Christ without submitting to baptism for the remission of sins. It is impossible to obey the great commission without being a soul winner.

While a student at Alabama Christian College I attended a World Mission Forum on the campus of Oklahoma Christian College. There were missionaries from all over the world speaking on the great need of a world-view of evangelism. It was a life changing experience for me. One of the missionaries made a statement that has been with me all these years. He said, "Prove, if you can, that God was not speaking to you when he said 'Go, preach the gospel'".

LESSON TWO

RESTORATION OF FIRST CENTURY EVANGELISM IN THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY CHURCH

The distinctive plea of churches of Christ all over the world is to “go back to the Bible and speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent” (I Pet. 4:11). This is a great plea and should constantly be presented. We will never out-grow the need for going “Back to the Bible”.

We should always strive to do Bible things in Bible ways. Our eternal salvation depends on our going “Back to the Bible” (Isa. 8:20; I Cor. 4:6).

To go “Back to the Bible” means (1) that we have accepted the Bible as an all-sufficient guide (II Tim. 3:16-17); (2) that we accept the Bible as the sure foundation of our faith (Rom. 10:17); (3) that we hold it to be the basis for unity (Eph. 4:4-6); (4) that we recognize the need to handle it properly (II Tim. 2:15); (5) that we come to speak the language of heaven (I Pet. 4:11); (6) that we understand wherein men err religiously (Mt. 22:29); (7) that we do where the Bible says do (Mt. 7:21).

There is no area wherein the church is in greater need of going “back to the Bible” than in evangelism. A denominational preacher named Bailey E. Smith wrote a book called REAL EVANGELISM, in which he exposed the subtle substitutes for evangelism. He points out what they had been doing in his denomination in the place of what he calls, “Real Evangelism”.

SUBSTITUTES FOR EVANGELISM

Over the last few years the Lord’s church has substituted many things in the place of the fulfillment of the great commission. Many of these things are good. Others of these substitutions may not be so good. There is nothing biblically incorrect with many of them. (1) We have workshops and seminars on almost every subject you can imagine (except evangelism). (2) We have, over the last several years, put a lot of emphasis on youth. The young people need help – but what about the great commission? (3) Many churches have been swapping members and calling it growth. That is not evangelism! That is not growth! (4) In some cases we have promoted personalities. When such is done the church is no larger and the Lord is not glorified. (5) Too often we have split hairs over things that do not matter. Most church problems are over things that do not matter; things in the realm of opinion. As long as Satan can get us nit picking over the trivia he knows the world will go unevangelized.

The fact is this: someone must at sometime confront the sinner with the gospel. We can do a hundred good things in the name of the Lord and the world would still be lost unless someone carries out of the great commission.

TWO KINDS OF EVANGELISM

There are two kinds (or methods) of evangelism mentioned in the Bible. (1) There is mass evangelism, which corresponds to pulpit preaching and radio and TV preaching. (2) There is personal evangelism where a Christian tells another about the good news of Christ. We read of these two kinds of evangelism in Acts 5:42: (1) "Daily in the temple" – that is mass evangelism; (2) "In every house" – that is personal evangelism.

THE FIRST CENTURY CHURCH AND EVANGELISM

The early church did not do its job of evangelism by building buildings and asking people to come and be taught. They used both mass and personal evangelism to reach the lost of their day.

The story of the early church is a great success story (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 8:4; 19:10). They were determined to carry the gospel to the lost men and women of their time and they did it (Col. 1:23).

THE NEED FOR PERSONAL EVANGELISM TODAY

There is a great need for personal evangelism in the 21st century church. This is, in fact, the most critical need of modern man. The answer to the problems that confront us in this decade is not political, it is not military power, and it is not scientific technology. Man's greatest need is spiritual in nature. Men need to know about Jesus! Somebody needs to tell them about Him! (Acts 16:9; 8:35).

We imitate the early church when we engage in personal evangelism and they got their strategy from Jesus. Consider the time Jesus took to teach just one precious soul (Jn. 3:1-13 – Nicodemus; Jn. 4:1-26 – Woman at the well; Lk. 19:1-10 – Zacchaeus; Lk. 7:36-50 – Woman who anointed His feet). The early church didn't teach a zone defense. They went one on one. (See Acts 8:26-40; 9:1-9; 10:1-48; 16:14-15; 25-34). If you want to fill empty drink bottles, you can do it in one of two ways. You can spray water over them and some water will get in some of them. If you want each bottle filled, you must pick them up one at the time and fill them. That is personal work!

Each Christian has a personal responsibility to seek and save the lost. It is awesome to consider our responsibility. The question is asked by Cain, "Am I my

brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9). There is a sense in which we are our brother's keeper. Of course it would have been better had Cain been his brother's brother. We need to shoulder the responsibility of carrying the gospel to our friends, relatives, neighbors and associates (I Cor. 9:16). I read recently that 87% of the world's population have heard of, seen, or drunk Coca-Cola whereas 68% of the world's population have heard of the name of Jesus. How will we explain that at the judgement? If we as Christians do not teach the gospel, who will? There is the story about what may have happened when Jesus finished His work on earth and returned to heaven. While walking with Gabriel, Gabriel asked, "Master, you died for the whole world did you not?" Jesus answers, "Yes. You suffered much". Again the answer is "Yes". "Do the people on earth know about it?" Jesus replies, "No, only a few in Palestine know it". Gabriel then continues his query, "What plan do you have for telling the world that you died for them?" Jesus says, "I asked Peter, James, John and the other followers to make it their business to tell others who will tell others who will tell others until all have heard". Gabriel then poses this question, "Yes, but suppose they do not tell it, what other plan do you have?" Jesus quickly and quietly says, "I have no other plan. I'm counting on them".

WHAT IS PERSONAL EVANGELISM?

Someone has said that personal evangelism is: (1) living for Christ (Phil. 1:21); (2) speaking for Christ, (The death, burial and resurrection must be taught, they cannot be lived.); (3) putting emphasis on the individual. Our Lord sees us as individuals (Gal. 2:20). In turn we need to put more emphasis on teaching a soul about Jesus (Pro. 11:30; Dan. 12:3).

"Lead me to some soul today
O teach me Lord just what to say
Friends of mine are lost in sin and
Cannot find their way."

LESSON THREE

A REVIVAL OF SOUL WINNING

The winning of souls is the main concern of heaven (Lk. 19:10; 15:10). This is also to be main concern and business of a Christian (Mk. 16:15; Mt. 4:19). The winning of souls is eternal business (Dan. 12:3).

The one hundred twenty-six Psalm is a Psalm of revival. It must refer to the captivity in Babylon. The writer recalls the happy time when the remnant, under Nehemiah and Ezra, were returned by the Babylonian ruler to build the walls of the city and restore the temple. The heathens were impressed by what God had done for them.

There are captivities worse than being carried into Babylon. Our world is in the bondage of sin (I Jn. 5:10; Rom. 3:10, 23). Many have become spiritually cold and the Bible has become a dull book. As we view the moral as well as the spiritual scene of modern society, we feel the parching drought of worldliness as it invades every segment and facet of our world.

In the Psalm under consideration, the writer prays for a great revival (Psa. 126:4). He possibly has in mind the Nile River rising in Lake Tana in Ethiopia and then flowing down through the hills to the broad plains of Egypt where it watered the lowland. He may have had in mind the Euphrates and Tigris rivers that sweep southeastward into the Persian Gulf. These streams bring fertility and life to the land. We need to pray for a revival of soul winning in the Lord's church as "the streams in the South".

Effective evangelism is a matter of sowing and reaping. This is the emphasis in verse six of the one hundred twenty-sixth Psalm.

THE "GO" IN SOUL WINNING

"He that goeth forth", is the one who wins souls. The reason we do not win souls is because we do not "go" (Lk. 15:4; 14:21; Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; Acts 8:29). It is true that we may "go" and not be successful in seeing those we teach obey the truth. However, no one can obey the truth unless someone first "goes" (Rom. 10:13-15).

Who is the best soul winner? It is not necessarily the person with the highest moral standards. One could have impeccable moral standards and still not be a winner of souls. The best soul winner is not necessarily the best Bible student. Many know the Bible inside and out but have never led a soul to Jesus.

The one with the most talent is not necessarily the best soul winner. Some of the best soul winners often are untalented in many ways. People do not win souls because they are educated or because of a magnetic personality.

Those who win souls are those who "go". Old Jim volunteered to fight for the South during the Civil war. He was untrained in the art of soldiering, but they sent him out into battle nonetheless armed with his squirrel gun. At nightfall, the very first day of Jim's enlistment, he was missing. The men sat around the fire bemoaning Jim's fate. "Poor old Jim", one soldier wailed, "the first battle he was in and he was either captured or killed". About this time they heard a noise in the woods and they raised their weapons and were ready to fire. Much to their surprise, old Jim came walking into camp and in front of him were several enemy soldiers he had captured with his squirrel gun. "Jim, Jim, where did you get them", the soldiers inquired. They couldn't imagine where Jim got all these captives. "Where did I get them? Why, the woods are full of them."

Our world is full of sinners and the one who wins them to Jesus is the one who goes to where they are.

THE BROKEN HEART IN SOUL WINNING

A broken heart will send us forth into the harvest field. The Psalmist wrote, "He that goeth forth, and WEEPETH". Have you ever felt the compassion Jesus felt? (Mt. 9:36-38; 23:37). It is amazing how few tears are shed when we have so much for which to weep (Jer. 9:1; Acts 20:31).

The soul winner needs a broken, compassionate heart. The cold, callous sinner may answer arguments but there is not answer for tears.

When David was a fugitive, fleeing from King Saul, he hid in a cold, damp cave. He felt so abandoned and alone. He wrote of this and said, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul" (Psa. 142:4).

What does it mean to care? Caring involves: (1) a deep conviction as to the existence of soul (Gen. 2:7; II Cor. 4:16-18); (2) a deep conviction as to the value of the soul (Mt. 16:26); (3) a deep conviction as to the danger to which the soul of man is exposed (Mt. 10:28).

How shameful it will be for many church members to hear the plaintive cry of lost sinners at the judgement, "No man cared for my soul". There is nothing to take the place of tears (Isa. 38:5).

THE WORD OF GOD IN SOUL WINNING

As we go forth, weeping we are to bear precious seed. The seed of the kingdom is the Word of God (Lk. 8:11). We cannot win men by gimmicks and human wisdom.

We must have heavenly help in teaching men about Christ (II Tim. 3:14-17; Heb. 4:12; Jer. 23:29; II Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:17).

In attempting to win a soul to Christ, place your dependence upon the Word of God (I Pet. 1:23; I Cor. 4:15; Rom. 1:16).

THE CERTAINTY OF RESULTS

"Doubtless" means without any question or doubt. You will not win every one you approach. The parable of the soils shows this to be the case (Lk. 8:11-15). All will not be saved (Mt. 7:13-14).

We do have the assurance that those who go will "doubtless" come back from the fields of service with sheaves in their hands. There are so many people with good, honest and receptive hearts that we can teach and lead to the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29).

THE JOY OF WINNING A SOUL

Those who go forth, teaching the Word, watering it with their tears will be able to rejoice when men are led from darkness to light (Acts 26:12-18).

There is no joy like that of a soul winner (Lk. 15:1-32). There was joy when the sheep was found. There was rejoicing when the lost coin was found. There was rejoicing when the son came back home. When Jesus went to the cross he had in mind the reaping (Heb. 12:2).

The soul winner must take the long look. There is a time when he will be paid back one hundred fold for all his tears and self-denials (Dan. 12:3).

II. THE MESSAGE

- LESSON FOUR – “KNOW YOUR BIBLE”
- LESSON FIVE – “THE PATRIARCHAL AGE”
- LESSON SIX – “THE MOSAICAL AGE”
- LESSON SEVEN – “THE CHRISTIAN AGE”
- LESSON EIGHT – “THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH”
- LESSON NINE – “BLESSINGS FOUND IN CHRIST”
- LESSON TEN – “FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS”

LESSON FOUR

KNOW YOUR BIBLE

To be effective in reaching and teaching men for Christ one must have a working knowledge of the Bible (Acts 17:11). We as Christians, must be ready and prepared to share our knowledge of the scriptures with others (I Pet. 3:15).

WHY STUDY THE BIBLE?

The word Bible comes from the Greek word "biblos" which means "book". There are many reasons for studying the Bible.

The need for studying the Bible should be impressed upon those we attempt to teach. Unless one sees the need for knowing the Bible, our efforts will be fruitless. (1) We should study the Bible because it is the inspired Word of God (II Tim. 3:16-17). (2) We should study the Bible because it contains all the light and revelation that the world has ever had (Psa. 119:105; II Pet. 1:3). (3) We study the Bible to come to know God. All we know about the nature, character and attributes of God are revealed to us in the Bible. (4) We should study the Bible because we shall be judged in light of its teaching (Jn. 12:48).

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Some questions to ask as guidelines in studying the Bible are: (1) Who is speaking? (2) To whom is the author speaking? (3) What is the context? (4) When was it written? (5) What is the character or style of writing? (6) What was the author's purpose in writing?

We are not to study the Bible for the purpose of proving a theory. Nor should it be studied with prejudice.

We should study the Bible with an open mind (Mt. 13:15). One should realize his inability to intelligently discuss all the teaching of the Bible. Someone once said, "Till the swallows shall drink the ocean dry, the truth of God will never be exhausted". We will never know all there is to know about God's Book. We should not make the mistake of putting tradition, cultural trends or so-called modern revelations on a par with the Bible.

TWO MAIN DIVISIONS

We need to know that the Bible is divided into two main divisions. There is the Old Testament consisting of 39 books and there is the New Testament consisting of 27 books.

The Old Testament is composed of books of law, history, poetry and prophecy which point forward to Christ (Lk. 24:44). The New Testament points back to Christ. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John tell about the life of Christ. The book of Acts, which is a history of the New Testament church, answers the question, "What must I do to be saved?" There are 21 letters or epistles, 13 or 14 by Paul, 1 by James, 2 by Peter, 3 by John and 1 by Jude. The book of Revelation is a book of prophecy that reveals the trials and triumphs of the Lord's people.

JESUS AND THE OLD TESTAMENT

There have been those who have questioned the truthfulness of the Old Testament. It should be noted that Jesus endorsed the Old Testament as being true. He endorsed the story of creation (Mt. 19:4). Some have belittled the account of creation in Genesis, chapters one and two, but Jesus says it is true. Christ endorsed the story of the flood (Mt. 24:37-39). He even endorsed the story of Jonah being swallowed by a whale as a true story. He endorsed the story of Lot's wife (Lk. 17:32). He put his stamp of approval upon the story of Naaman's cleansing from leprosy (Lk. 4:27). He even gave credibility to the story of the brazen serpent (Jn. 3:14-16).

One cannot believe the New Testament without believing the Old Testament (Rom. 15:4; II Tim. 3:14-17). To reject one is to reject the other.

Jesus actually endorsed the New Testament before it was even written (Jn. 16:13).

JESUS AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

That portion of Bible known as the New Testament was given when Jesus died upon the cross (Heb. 9:15-17). This is his last will and testament. It did not go into effect until His death. This helps to explain the penitent thief upon the cross. The thief lived and died before the last will and testament of Christ was given.

The Old Testament served its purpose in bringing men to Christ (Gal. 3:19, 24-25). The Old Testament law was abolished at the cross (Col. 2:14). Jesus came to give a new law. This was a matter of prophecy (Jer. 31:31-33). This prophecy of Jeremiah was later quoted by the Hebrew writer (Heb. 8:6-13). Many find their duty in the Old Testament as well as the New Testament but those living in the Christian era are subject to the law of Christ not the law given by Moses (Jn. 1:17; Rom. 7:1-4).

The New Testament was ratified by the blood of Christ (Mt. 26:28). All blessings of salvation enjoyed today are upon the terms laid out in the New Testament or gospel of Christ (Rom. 1:16).

THREE AGES OF HISTORY

The Bible is divided into three basic ages of history. First, there is what is called the Patriarchal Age. This is the period of Bible history when God spoke to the people through the heads of families. The father served in a priestly role, offering sacrifice on behalf of his family. An example of this is found in the book of Job (Job 1:1-5). The Patriarchal Age began with the creation and lasted until the giving of the law upon Mt. Sinai. Likely, for the Gentiles, this age lasted until the death of Christ.

The Mosaic Age began with the giving to the Ten Commandments and lasted until the cross of Christ.

The third age or Christian Age began with the death of Christ and will last until the end of time.

COMMANDS OF THE BIBLE

It is important for one to know that portion of the Bible to which he is amenable. During the Patriarchal Age God commanded Noah to build an ark. During the Mosaic Age the Jews were told to build the Tabernacle. Men are not now building arks nor erecting tabernacles because the commands to be obeyed today are found in the gospel of Christ (Mt. 7:21).

LESSON FIVE

THE PATRIARCHAL AGE

The Patriarchal Age lasted for some 2500 years, from the time of Adam until the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai.

THE BEGINNING

This part of the Bible begins with the beginning. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3). Everything that God made was good (Gen. 1:10, 12, 18, 21). From the dust of the ground God created man in his own image (Gen. 1:26, 27; 2:7). The woman was made from a rib taken from the side of Adam (Gen. 2:21-24). Man and woman were to multiply and replenish the earth (Gen. 1:28). The first pair was placed in the Garden of Eden and was forbidden to eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden (Gen. 3:1-3). The woman was beguiled by the serpent and ate of the fruit, gave it to her husband and he ate of it (Gen. 3:4-6). As a result of their disobedience sin entered into the world (Gen. 3:7; Rom. 5:12).

It was in the early morning of time that God promised a way to defeat Satan through the seed of woman (Gen. 3:15). There is no doubt that this was an early promise of Jesus who was to come into the world, through the seed of woman without the agency of man (Gal. 4:4-5). He was to become the redeemer of the whole human race (1 Jn. 4:14).

SONS OF ADAM AND EVE

Because of their disobedience Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24). Prior to being driven out they were told of their future (Gen. 3:16-19). The woman would bear children in pain, would be subject to her husband and he would eat bread by the sweat of his brow.

Three sons were born to Adam and Eve whose names were Cain, Abel, and Seth (Gen. 4:1-2, 25). Cain killed his brother Abel (Gen. 4:3-8) and became a vagabond upon earth (Gen. 4:16).

The generations of Adam through his son Seth are: Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalael, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah (Gen. 5).

NOAH AND THE FLOOD

It was during Noah's lifetime that God saw the wickedness of man and was grieved by what He saw (Gen. 6:1-6). As a result of man's wickedness, God determined to destroy man (Gen. 6:7). Noah found grace or favor in God's sight (Gen. 6:8) and was commanded to build an ark (Gen. 6:14). God gave Noah instructions for building the ark (Gen. 6:14-16). Noah carried out these details without wavering (Gen. 6:22). Hence, he and his family were saved in the ark from the destruction of the world (Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:20).

Noah had three sons whose names were Ham (Gen. 10:6-20), Japeth (Gen. 10:2-5), and Shem (Gen. 10:21-31). The earth was populated through these three sons (Gen. 9:19). It was through the lineage of Shem, Noah's son, that Abram (later known as Abraham) came into the world (Gen. 11:10-32).

PROMISE GIVEN TO ABRAHAM

God called Abraham to leave his father's house and promised to bless all nations through his seed (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18). The fulfillment of this promise was found in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16). It was through Abraham's son, Isaac, that the seed promise was perpetuated (Gen. 22:1-18; Heb. 11:17-19). Isaac had two sons whose names were Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:19-28). Later, in the book of Matthew, we learn that Jesus Christ was of the lineage of Abraham and his descendents (Mt. 1:1-17).

JACOB'S SONS

Jacob had twelve sons whose names were Rueben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Dan, Benjamin, and Joseph (Gen. 29:32-35; 30:1-24; 35:16-18, 22-26). God changed Jacob's name to Israel (Gen. 32:28; 35:10). Thus, these twelve sons and their descendents were known as the children of Israel.

JOSEPH SOLD INTO SLAVERY

Because of envy, Joseph's brothers sold him to the Midianites (Gen. 37:23-28; Acts 7:9), who in turn sold him into Egypt to Potiphar (Gen. 37:36). Joseph was made a steward over Potiphar's house (Gen. 39:1-6). It was during this time that Potiphar's wife made advances to Joseph (Gen. 39:7-13). She lied about the matter and as a result Joseph was cast into prison (Gen. 39:20).

Through the providence of God Joseph was delivered from prison and was made a governor over the land (Gen. 41:37-45). Joseph made preparations for the famine he had predicted (Gen. 41:46-57). When Jacob learned there was corn in Egypt he sent his sons there to get food for their families (Gen. 42:1-2).

Eventually Joseph revealed himself to his brothers (Gen. 46:1-4) and told them God had sent him before them to save their lives (Gen. 45:7). They were then told that they would dwell in the land of Goshen (Gen. 45:10).

Jacob, his sons and their descendants lived in Egypt in the land of Goshen for many, many years. Joseph eventually died being 110 years of age (Gen. 50:26).

ENSLAVEMENT OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

After Joseph's death, there arose a king who knew not Joseph (Ex. 1:8) and he enslaved the children of Israel (Ex. 1:9-14).

God heard the cries of His people in bondage and raised up Moses to lead them out of Egypt (Ex. 3:7-10). Finally, Moses and Aaron appeared before the Pharaoh and asked that the people be released (Ex. 5:1). Because of the hardness of his heart, Pharaoh refused to let the people to go (Ex. 5:2). It was then that God caused the plagues to come upon Egypt.

The ten plagues were: (1) River turned to blood (Ex. 7:17); (2) Frogs (Ex. 8:2); (3) Lice (Ex. 8:16); (4) Flies (Ex. 8:21); (5) Murrain (Ex. 9:3); (6) Boils (Ex. 9:9); (7) Hail (Ex. 9:18); (8) Locusts (Ex. 10:4); (9) Darkness (Ex. 10:21); (10) Death of the firstborn (Ex. 11:5). The children of Israel were spared the final plague by putting the blood of a lamb without blemish (Ex. 12:3-5) on the two side posts and on the upper doorpost of their houses (Ex. 12:13-14).

After the death of the firstborn, Pharaoh let the people go (Ex. 12:31, 37, 40). They encamped at the Red Sea and Pharaoh sent his army in pursuit to bring them back, but they perished in the midst of the sea (Ex. 14:26-31). Israel camped at Mt. Sinai where they would receive the law containing the Ten Commandments.

LESSON SIX

THE MOSAICAL AGE

The Mosaical age of Bible history began with the giving of the law upon Mt. Sinai and lasted some 1500 years until the death of Christ upon the cross.

JOURNEY TO PROMISE LAND

After the children of Israel crossed the Red Sea, putting the Egyptian bondage behind them, they began their journey to the land of promise (Ex. 16:1-6). They began to murmur against Moses and Aaron because of their hunger. God then fed them with quail and manna (Ex. 16:11-26).

MT. SINAI AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Three months after leaving Egypt the children of Israel came to Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19:1) and camped before the Mount (Ex. 19:2).

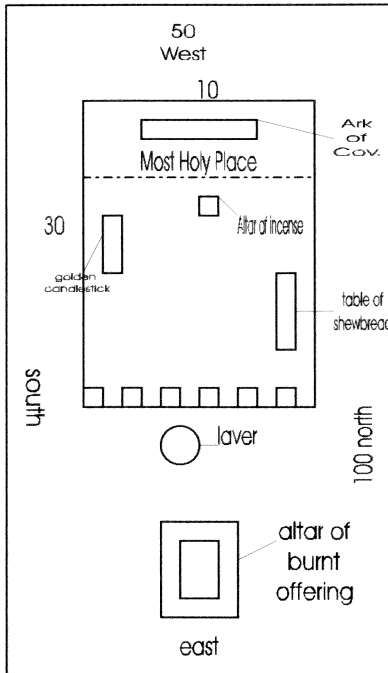
It was upon Sinai that God gave Moses the Ten Commandments which was the first written law man had ever received (Ex. 20:1-17).

The Ten Commandments are: (1) "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. 20:3); (2) "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" (Ex. 20:4); (3) "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" (Ex. 20:7); (4) "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Ex. 20:8); (5) "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Ex. 20:12); (6) "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13); (7) "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14); (8) "Thou shalt not steal" (Ex. 20:15); (9) "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Ex. 20:16); (10) "Thou shalt not covet" (Ex. 20:17).

THE TABERNACLE

The Lord spoke to Moses and gave instructions for the building of the tabernacle which would be a sanctuary where the presence of God would dwell with the people (Ex. 25:8). God even gave Moses the pattern for its construction (Ex. 25:9; Heb. 8:5; Ex. 26:1-37; 27:1-21). The people gave willingly for the building of the tabernacle (Ex. 35:4-29). When it was built, the glory of God filled it (Ex. 40:17-34).

Tabernacle



1. In the area directly in front of the tabernacle was found the altar of burnt offering and the brazen laver.
2. The tabernacle divided into two sections called the holy place and the most holy place.
3. A curtain or veil separated the two compartments.
4. In the holy place was found the golden candlesticks, table of shewbread, and the altar of incense.
5. The Ark of the Covenant was in the most holy place and it contained the table of stone upon which the Ten Commandments were written, Aaron's rod that budded, and a pot of manna.

SPIES SENT INTO CANAAN

When the children of Israel came to Paran, spies were sent over into the land of Canaan (Num. 13:1-20). Ten of the twelve spies gave an evil report and because the people believed this report they murmured and complained (Num. 13:21-33; 14:1-5). Because they did not believe God's promise that the land was theirs, the people wandered for forty years in the wilderness (Heb. 3:13-19).

THE PEOPLE ASK FOR A KING

The children of Israel finally entered the land of promise under the leadership of Joshua. For 450 years, judges ruled them. It was during the time of Samuel that the people requested a king like the nations around them (1 Kgs. 8:5). The first three kings of Israel were Saul, David, and Solomon who each reigned forty years. This period of 120 years is known as the united kingdom.

With the death of King Solomon there was a division in the kingdom under Rehoboam and Jeroboam.

CHRIST PROPHESED

There were prophets during this time who prophesied about the coming of Christ, His birth (Isa. 7:14), death (Isa. 53:1-12) and resurrection (Psa. 16:10).

Christ was born, lived and died during the Mosaical age of Bible history.

LAW ENDED AT THE CROSS

When Jesus died upon the cross, there was an end to the law given by Moses to the children of Israel and the law of Christ (the gospel) was enforced (Jer. 31:31-33; Heb. 8:1-13); Col. 2:14; Gal. 3:24, 25; 5:1-4; II Cor. 3:1-14).

There is an interesting contrast between these two testaments.

<u>Old Testament</u>	<u>New Testament</u>
1. Called old (II Cor. 3:14)	1. Called new (II Cor. 3:6)
2. Called first (Heb. 10:9)	2. Called second (Heb. 10:9)
3. Was faulty (Heb. 8:7)	3. Is perfect (Jas. 1:25)
4. Was glorious (II Cor. 3:7)	4. More glorious (II Cor. 3:9 11)
5. Given to Jews (Deut. 5:1-15)	5. Given to all (Mt. 28:18-20)
6. Levitical priesthood (Heb. 7:1-28)	6. Christians are priests (Heb. 7:1-28; Rev. 1:5, 6)
7. Animal sacrifices (Heb. 8; 9:18-22; 10:1-4)	7. Christ the sacrifice (Heb. 9:12-14)
8. Sins remembered (Heb. 9; 10:1-4)	8. Sins not remembered (Heb. 8:7-12)

We are not under both testaments (Rom. 7:1-4). We are under the New Testament.

1. We are ministers of the New Testament (II Cor. 3:6).
2. We are under the law of Christ (I Cor. 9:21).
3. We are to hear Christ not Moses (Mt. 17:50).
4. Christ's testament became operative after His death (Heb. 9:15-17).

Today men live in the Christian age of Bible history, are subject to

Jesus' law (Jn. 1:17), and those who submit themselves to His law constitute His body which is called the church (Eph. 5:22, 23).

LESSON SEVEN

THE CHRISTIAN AGE

The Christian age of Bible history was ushered in with the death of Christ and will last until the end of time when Jesus will render up the kingdom to God (I Cor. 15:24).

THE CHRISTIAN AGE FORETOLD

Hundreds of years before Christ came into the world and died upon Calvary's cross, the prophets predicted the coming of the church age. It was predicted in the book of Daniel that God's kingdom would be established during the days of the fourth great world empire. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream (Dan. 2:3) and it was Daniel who interpreted it for the king (Dan. 2:31-44). The image in the dream represented four great world kingdoms: (1) Babylon (Dan. 2:38); (2) the Medo-Persian Kingdom (Dan. 2:39); (3) the Grecian Kingdom (Dan. 2:39); (4) the Roman Kingdom (Dan. 2:40). It was during the days of this fourth kingdom (the Roman Empire) that the God of heaven would set up a kingdom which should stand forever (Dan. 2:44). It was during the days of the Roman Kingdom (the fourth kingdom in Nebuchadnezzar's dream) that John the baptist began to preach, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt. 3:1-2).

Another prophet who foretold the coming church age or Christian age was Isaiah. He predicted that the Lord's house would be established in the top of the mountains and that His law would go forth from the city of Jerusalem (Isa. 2:2-3). This prophecy was fulfilled when Peter preached the first recorded gospel sermon under the world-wide commission in the city of Jerusalem as is recorded in the second chapter of the book of Acts.

THE CHURCH PROMISED

When Christ came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, He made the announcement, "I will build my church" (Mt. 16:13-19). He promised Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 16:19). The church or kingdom was promised to come in the future. Notice that Jesus said, "I will build", future tense. Further observe that Christ promised to build His church, "I will build MY church", (Emphasis mine BL). This shows that Jesus owns the church. Jesus also spoke of "church" as of one, not "churches" as of many. He promised to build one church and it would be His.

The church or kingdom was to come with power (Mk. 9:1). Some of those present with Jesus would not die until they had seen the kingdom come with power. Either the kingdom has come with power or else we have some men running around who are almost two thousand years old.

The power that would accompany the kingdom was to come in Jerusalem (Lk. 24:49). The power was to come when the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1:8). The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection from the dead (Acts 2:1-4). It was on the day of Pentecost, in the city of Jerusalem, that the church of the New Testament had its beginning.

THE CHURCH BUILT

On the day of Pentecost Peter preached a powerful sermon about the life, death and resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:22-24). He quoted David to prove the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:25-28). David's prophecy is found in Psalms, chapter sixteen verses eight through eleven. Peter pointed out that David "seeing this before spoke of the resurrection of Christ" (Acts 2:31).

Next, Peter assured the crowd listening to him that the one they had crucified was the long awaited Messiah (Acts 2:36). When the people learned that they had crucified the Son of God they asked, "What shall we do" (Acts 2:37)? This was tantamount to asking "What must we do to be saved"?

The answer the apostle Peter gave them was "repent and be baptized" (Acts 2:38). The purpose for their repenting and being baptized was "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). To put it in the form of a mathematical equation- repentance plus baptism equals remission of sins. This means that in order to obtain remission of sins one must repent and be baptized. Without exception, in every case of conversion found in the New Testament the people were always baptized for the remission of their sins.

A CHART OR SURVEY OF BIBLE CONVERSIONS					
Who They Were And What They Did To Be Saved- A Safe Guide For You					
THEY	HEARD	BELIEVED	REPENTED	CONFESSED	WERE BAPTIZED
Jews at Pentecost	Acts 2:37	Acts 2:44	Acts 2:38		Acts 2:41
The Ethiopian Eunuch		Acts 8:37		Acts 8:37	Acts 8:38
Samaritans	Acts 8:6	Acts 8:12			Acts 8:12
Saul of Tarsus		Gal. 2:16			Acts 9:18; Acts 22:6-16
Cornelius	Acts 10:34	Acts 15:7	Acts 11:18		Acts 10:48

Lydia	Heard				Acts 16:14-15
Philippian Jailor		Acts 16:31	Implied Acts 16:33		Acts 16:33
The Bible teaches that baptism is for the remission of sins. Every person whose conversion is recorded in the New Testament was baptized. Why do so many tell us that baptism has nothing to do with conversion?					

THREE THOUSAND BAPTIZED

After learning what they must do in order to be saved, there were some three thousand souls who were baptized (Acts 2:41). Today when men and women gladly receive the Word they will be baptized for the remission of their sins.

SAVED ADDED TO THE CHURCH

After these three thousand were baptized, of what church were they a member? We are told that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). The Lord himself added all of those who were being saved to the church. The same thing that saved their souls gave them membership in the church. It was "such as should be saved" that were added to the church.

WHICH CHURCH?

If the Lord added the saved to the church (Acts 2:47), to which church did He add them? Remember that Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Mt. 16:18). Is it not logical then that the church to which the saved were added was the church Jesus promised to build, that is, the church of Christ? Today in the Christian age when men and women become New Testament Christians as they did on the day of Pentecost, the Lord adds them to His body which is called the church (I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22, 23).

Long before there was any division in the religious world, Jesus prayed for the unity of His followers (Jn. 17:20, 21). The apostle Paul wrote about this unity (Eph. 4:3-6).

Churches of Christ throughout the world are seeking to restore in the twenty first century, the first century church. Going back to the Bible, and following its teaching without addition or subtraction do this (Rev. 22:18,19).

LESSON EIGHT

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

All who study the New Testament will agree that there is a church described in the Word of God. There are many great institutions and organizations on earth today. None can compare with the church of the Bible.

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

It is Christ who makes the church important. He bought it (Acts 20:28). He built it (Mt. 16:18). He sanctified it (Eph. 5:26). He cleansed it (Eph. 5:26).

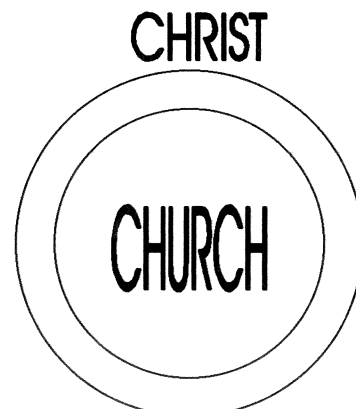
WHY THE CHURCH IS OF CHRIST

1. It's builder- CHRIST- Mt. 16:18
2. It's head- CHRIST- Eph. 1:22,23
3. It's savior- CHRIST- Eph. 5:23
4. It's foundation- CHRIST- I Cor. 3:11
5. It's purchaser- CHRIST- Acts 20:28
6. It's reconciler- CHRIST- Eph. 2:16
7. It's high priest- CHRIST- Heb. 4:15
8. It's lawgiver- CHRIST- Heb. 9:15-17
9. It's prophet- CHRIST- Heb. 1:1,2
10. It's king- CHRIST- Lk. 1:32,33

He loved it (Eph. 5:25). He cherished it (Eph. 5:29). He nourished it (Eph. 5:29). He saved it (Acts 2:47). He ruled it (I Tim. 6:15). He married it (Rom. 7:4).

The church is not significant without Christ. It is Christ who makes it important. There is not a passage in the New Testament that minimizes the role of the church. Christ is the savior (Mt. 1:21; Lk. 19:10; I Tim. 2:5, 6) and it is the church or His body that He saves (Eph. 5:23).

The church is the "fullness" of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23). For the purpose of illustration, let a large circle represent Christ and an inner circle represent the church. For the inner circle to be the fullness of the outer circle, it would have to be the same in circumference as the outer circle. One cannot get into God and stay out of Christ. Neither can one get into Christ and stay out of the church, for the church is the "fullness" of Christ. To be in Christ is to be in the church.



IDENTIFYING THE CHURCH

Imagine that you have been asked to locate a certain automobile in the church parking lot. It would be insufficient to tell you that the particular car you are to locate has four wheels and four doors. Many would fit that description. However, if you were told the make, model, color, and tag number you would be able to find the desired car without any difficulty. You would have been given enough characteristics of the car that locating it would be very simple.

With so much confusion in the religious-world, how does one know when they have found the church of the New Testament? Would it not be in the same way in which you could find the car? If given enough identifying marks, one could tell when he had found the church for which Christ died.

MARKS OF IDENTIFICATION

The organizational structure is one characteristic of the New Testament church. It is composed of saints (all of the members of the church), elders or bishops who oversee the church and deacons who work under the oversight of the elders (Phil. 1:1). In each local church there is a plurality of elders who have the responsibility of watching for the souls of the flock of God (Tit. 1:5; I Pet. 5:1-3; Acts 20:28; I Tim. 3:1-7). The deacons are helpers of the elders in carrying out the work of the church (I Tim. 3:8-13).

The name of the church is another identifying mark. Collectively the church was called, "church of God" (I Cor. 1:2; Acts 20:28); "Body of Christ" (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:23); "churches of Christ" (Mt. 16:18; Rom. 16:16); and the "Bride of Christ" (Rom. 7:4; Rev. 21:9).

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

FOUNDER CHRIST

Mt. 16:18

WHERE JERUSALEM

Isa. 2:3 Acts 2:5, 47

WHEN AD 33

Acts 2:

HEAD CHRIST

Eph. 1:22

➤ Organization – Phil. 1:1

➤ Name – Eph. 3:15

➤ Name – Eph. 3:15

➤ CREED

➤ RULE OF FAITH AND PRACTICE
WORD OF GOD

➤ Worship

➤ Mission

➤ Warning

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Elders – Tit. 1:5, I Pet. 5:1-3, Acts 20:28, I Tim. 3:1-7. * Deacons – Acts 6:1-6, I Tim. 3:8-13. * Members – Acts 2:41-47, Col. 1:13, I Cor. 1:2.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Church of God – I Cor. 1:2, Acts 20:28 * The Body of Christ – Col. 1:18, Eph. 1:23 * Churches of Christ – Mt. 16:18, Rom. 16:16 * Bride of Christ – Rom. 7:4, Rev. 21:2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Disciples – Jn. 15:8, Acts 11:26 * Saints – Rom. 1:7, I Cor. 1:2, Phil. 1:1 * Brethren – Lk. 8:21, Gal. 6:1 * Children – Gal. 3:26, I Jn. 2:1 * Christians – Acts 11:26, 26:28, I Pet. 4:16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Jesus Christ – Mt. 16:16-18, 10:32;33, Acts 8:37
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * All Power – Mt. 28:18-20, Rom. 1:6, Heb. 4:12 * Church Government – II Tim. 3:16-17, II Pet. 1:3 * Seed of Kingdom – Mt. 13:5, Lk. 8:11 * Sword of the Spirit – Eph. 6:17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Sing – Col. 5:16, I Cor. 11:25 *Pray – I Thess. 5:47 * Teach – Acts 20:7 *Communion – Acts 20:7 * Contribution – I Cor. 14:4-2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Save Souls – Eph. 3:10, Jn. 6:45, I Tim. 4:16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Gal. 1:6-8, Mt. 15:9, Mt. 15:13, II Cor. 11:5, Rev. 22:18-19, II Jn. 3

It is conceivable that a group of people might wear one of these Bible designations and still not be the New Testament church because it fails to meet the other identifying marks.

The individual members of the New Testament church were called "Disciples" (Jn. 15:8; Acts 11:26); "Saints" (Rom. 1:7; I Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:1) "Brethren" (Gal. 6:1); "Children" (Gal. 3:26; I Jn. 2:1); and "Christians" (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16).

Another mark identifying the church of the New Testament is its creed. The word comes from the Latin word "credos" which means, "I believe". That which is to be believed is that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Mk. 16:16; Rom. 10:9-10; Mt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:35-37; Mt. 16:16-18).

The rule of faith and practice of the New Testament church is the Word of God. It is God's power to save (Mt. 28:18-20; Rom. 1:16; Heb. 4:12). It contains all we need to know about how to live the Christian life (II Pet. 1:3; II Tim. 3:16-17). The word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Lk. 8:11). It is further described as the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17).

Another distinctive feature of the New Testament church is its worship. New Testament worship is to be in "spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). For one to worship scripturally, one must worship with the proper attitude ("In spirit") and in the right manner ("in truth"). God's Word is truth (Jn. 17:17), hence to worship in truth is to worship in accordance with God's Word. The worship of the New Testament church consisted of (1) singing (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19); (2) Praying (I Thess. 5:17); (3) teaching or preaching (Acts 20:7); (4) the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7); and (5) giving as one has prospered (I Cor. 16:1-2).

The mission of the church is another distinguishing feature. The mission of the church is to save souls (Mk. 16:15; I Tim. 4:16; Jn. 6:45).

LESSON NINE

BLESSINGS FOUND IN CHRIST

The one question that should be of concern to all is "How does one obtain forgiveness of sin"? In fact, how does one go from being unsaved to being saved?

SAVED – IN CHRIST

To appreciate what it means to be saved, study the blessings to be found "in Christ". All spiritual blessings are to be found "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). One becomes a new creature "in Christ" (II Cor. 5:17). There is no condemnation "in Christ" (Rom. 8:1). Salvation is "in Jesus Christ" (II Tim. 2:10). Eternal life is "Christ" (I Jn. 5:11). It is "in Christ" that redemption is found (Eph. 1:7). It follows that if a man is "in Christ" that he is saved – he has the forgiveness of sin.

UNSAVED – OUT OF CHRIST

Why are men unsaved? Why is there a need to be found "in Christ"? The answer is summed up in one word – SIN. The word sin means to miss the mark. We miss the mark by committing sins of omission (Jas. 4:17) or sins of commission (I Jn. 3:4). All men everywhere are sinners (Rom. 3:10, 23). The end result of sin is eternal death (Rom. 6:23).

WHAT GOD HAS DONE

Because of man's lost or unsaved state, God gave His Son that all men might be saved (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8). It is through God's grace (His unmerited favor) that we are saved (Tit. 2:11). By giving Christ as a sin substitute (II Cor. 5:21), God was doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

WHAT GOD WOULD HAVE US DO

Since we have learned that to be "in Christ" is to be saved, that sin is the reason we are unsaved and that God gave His Son to save us, it is important for us to know what God wants us to do in order to be saved (Acts 2:37; 9:6; 16:30).

First, we are to believe on Christ as being God's Son (Jn. 8:24). Unless we believe on Him we cannot be saved. Are we saved by faith alone? James answers this question by declaring, "Ye see then how that by works a man is

justified, and not by faith only" (Jas. 2:24). While faith is essential to salvation, more is required if one is to be saved.

We are also commanded to repent or turn from our sins if we would be saved (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30; 3:19).

Next, Christ is to be confessed as God's Son (Mt. 10:32, 33; Rom. 10:9, 10). The man from Ethiopia confessed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:37). So should we, if we would be saved.

The Bible also teaches the importance of baptism. There are at least three ideas that men have about baptism: (1) that baptism is sprinkling not for salvation; (2) that baptism is a burial in water not for salvation; (3) that baptism is a burial in water and is essential to one's salvation. The Bible teaches the third concept.

Jesus taught, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk. 16:16). According to this passage those who would be saved must believe and be baptized. On the day of Pentecost, Peter told those present to "repent and be baptized and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16). The apostle Peter wrote, "baptism doth also save us" (I Pet. 3:21). In summary, we see that one is to be baptized to be saved, have sins remitted and to have sins washed away.

WHAT ABOUT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST?

It might be suggested by someone that men are saved by Jesus' blood. This is true. It is not a question if men are saved by Jesus' blood. The question to ask is "When does His blood save us"?

To answer the question of when we are saved by Jesus' blood, ask two questions: (1) What washes away sin? To answer this question we read, "Unto him who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Rev. 1:5). It is the blood of Christ that washes away sin. (2) When does the blood wash away sin? Ananias told Saul of Tarsus, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Jesus' blood washes away sin when one is baptized.

It should be further noted that it is the blood that remits sin (Mt. 26:28). Sin is remitted by the blood when one repents and is baptized (Acts 2:38).

A purged conscience comes through the blood of the Lamb (Heb. 9:14). When does the blood purge or cleanse the conscience? It is when one is baptized (I Pet. 3:21).

From the foregoing we learn that in order to have sin washed away, have sin remitted, to have a purged conscience one must be baptized.

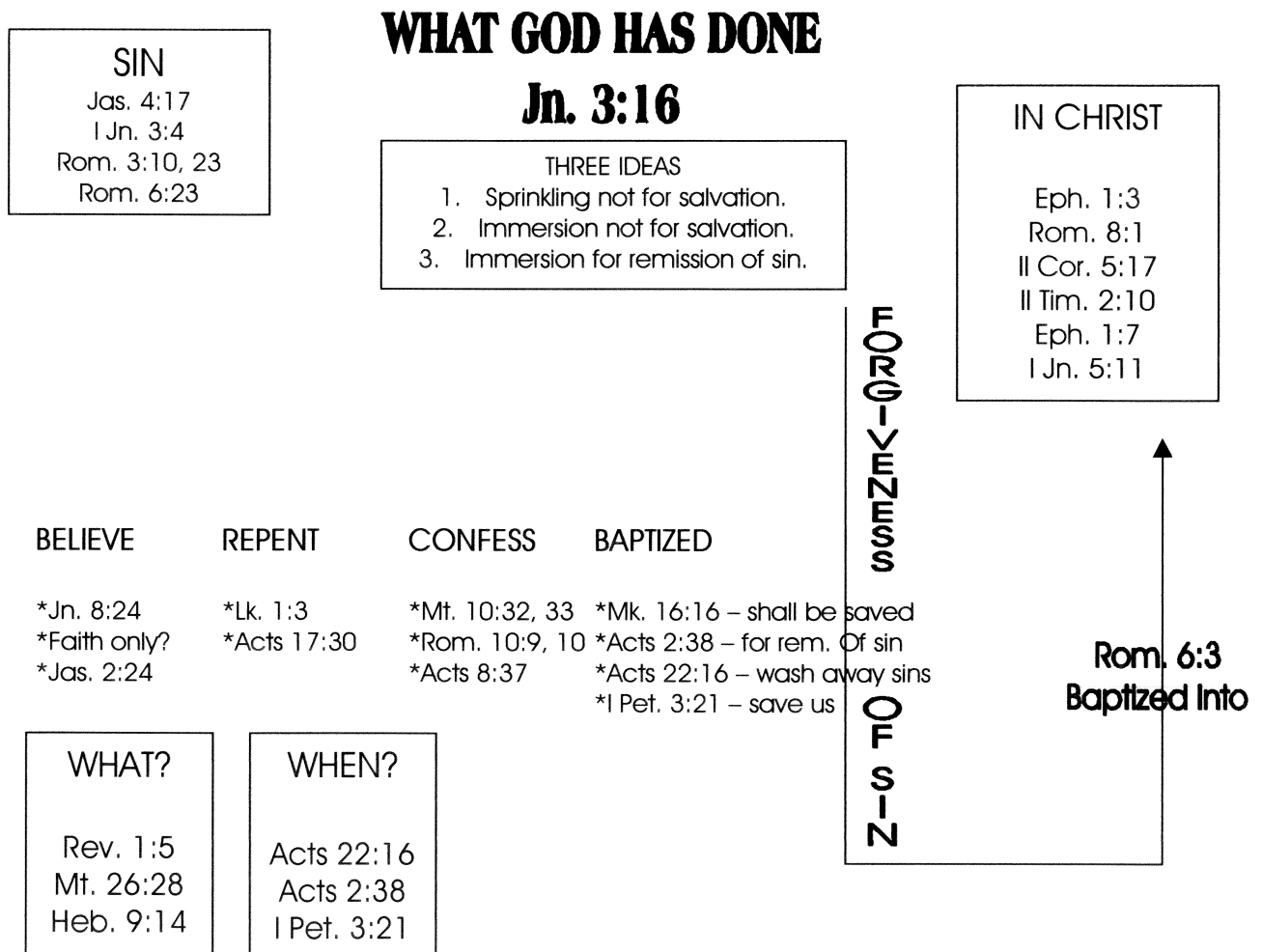
GETTING INTO CHRIST

We have seen the blessings we have in Christ, why we need to be saved, and what God has done for our salvation and what we must do.

If all blessings are in Christ, what must be done to get into Christ? This is answered by the apostle Paul, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death" (Rom. 6:3). This passage teaches that baptism puts one into Christ where all spiritual blessings are found. We are baptized into his death. He shed His blood in dying, hence it is in baptism that we, by faith, come in contact with His blood.

It is in baptism that one not only gets into Christ, but also puts on Christ (Gal. 3:27).

Baptism also puts one into the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13).



LESSON TEN

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In teaching men the truth, often there are questions that arise. It should be observed that God has not revealed some things (Deut. 29:29). In that case, there would not be an answer one could give from the Bible.

There are some questions that deserve a Bible answer. In this lesson we shall look at some brief answers to frequently asked questions.

DO YOU BELIEVE THE OLD TESTAMENT?

Since emphasis is placed upon the New Testament as being Christ's last will and testament, it is often assumed that there is no profit in studying the Old Testament.

It is true that the Old Testament is not for our observance. It ended at the cross (Col. 2:14-16; Mt. 5:17). There is, however, benefit in studying the Old Testament (Rom. 15:4; II Tim. 3:14-17).

The Old Testament is the inspired Word of God (II Pet. 1:20) and its truths and principles are applicable to men today (I Cor. 10:11). We can learn from examples in the Old Testament.

WHY DOES THE CHURCH OF CHRIST HAVE THE LORD'S SUPPER EVERY SUNDAY?

Jesus instituted the Lord's supper at the last Passover feast (Mt. 26:26-29). Later the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians concerning their observance of the Lord's supper (I Cor. 11:23-30).

When Paul came to Troas he stayed until the first day of the week when the disciples partook of the supper of the Lord (Acts 20:7). This was done upon "the first day of the week". This was done in remembrance of Jesus (Lk. 22:19). It was the practice of early Christians to assemble every Lord's day to observe the Lord's supper. Are we not to do the same?

WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO BE BAPTIZED?

Baptism is a command of the Lord (Mt. 28:19-20). Baptism puts one into Christ (Gal. 3:27; Rom. 6:3). Baptism is for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

Baptism is essential in obeying the gospel. The gospel consists of facts concerning Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-4). We are saved by the gospel (I Cor. 15:1-2). It is when we obey a likeness of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection that we are saved by the gospel. We die to sin (Rom. 6:2), are buried with him in baptism (Rom. 6:3) and are then raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). We are then made free from sin (Rom. 6:17-18).

WHY DO YOU NOT HAVE MECHANICAL MUSIC IN YOUR WORSHIP?

Scriptural worship is to be in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:20-24). Every passage in the New Testament that mentions music designates singing (Mt. 26:30; Mk. 14:26; Acts 16:25; Rom. 15:9; Heb. 2:12; Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19; Jas. 5:13; I Cor. 14:15).

We do not have the right to add to nor subtract from the Lord's teaching (Rev. 22:18-19).

WILL ONLY THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST GO TO HEAVEN?

We must be careful that we do not become judges of men. There is only one judge (Acts 17:31).

It should, however, be pointed out that only those who obey the Lord will go to heaven (Mt. 7:21). All people who are serious about God and His word can be in agreement on this point (Rev. 22:14). Therefore, it is important for one to learn, through a study of God's Word, what God requires.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO FALL FROM GRACE?

A very popular teaching in the religious world is that once you are saved, you are always saved. Is this Bible teaching?

First, men are saved by the grace of God (Tit. 2:11; Eph. 2:8-9). When the plan of salvation is obeyed, the sinner is saved by grace (Rom. 6:1-14).

Second, once saved it is possible to fall from grace (Gal. 5:4). Paul warned of the danger of falling (I Cor. 10:12). Why warn about a possible danger unless there is the possibility of falling into that danger? Why warn about falling unless one can fall?

Simon obeyed the gospel by believing and being baptized (Acts 8:13; Mk. 16:15-16). Afterward he fell by trying to buy the gift of the Holy Ghost with money (Acts 8:18-24).

WHEN YOU SIN AS A CHRISTIAN, DO YOU NEED TO BE RE-BAPTIZED?

When a child of God sins, as in the case of Simon (Acts 8:18-24), repentance and prayer are essential to forgiveness (Acts 8:22). This is God's second law of pardon to the erring Christian.

As long as the Christian lives faithfully, walking in the light, the blood of Jesus cleanses from sin (I Jn. 1:7). Once a person is baptized scripturally he need never be baptized again.

When we sin, we should be willing to confess our sins and ask for God's forgiveness (I Jn. 1:9; Jas. 5:16).

IS IT NECESSARY TO ATTEND ALL SERVICES OF THE CHURCH?

When God's people assemble we should be there because the Lord is there (Mt. 18:20). Worship is not optional for the child of God (Jn. 4:23-24).

Is there a service that a Christian would not want to attend? If one person has the right to neglect the services, why would not all have the same right?

We should not be negligent in regards to the assemblies of the saints (Heb. 10:25).

IS HELL A REALITY?

Hell is a real place from which God would save all men. Jesus taught that hell is real (Mt. 5:29, 30; 25:41). Peter taught that it is real (II Pet. 2:4). John, the apostle of love, taught its reality (Rev. 20:15). Paul taught that hell is real (II Thess. 1:9).

God does not want a single person to be lost (I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9). For this reason He gave His Son (Jn. 3:14-17).

III. THE MOTIVATION

- LESSON ELEVEN – “THE HARVEST OF AN EVANGELISTIC CHURCH”
- LESSON TWELVE – “ESSENTIALS IN EVANGELISM”
- LESSON THIRTEEN – “HOW TO BECOME A SOUL WINNING CHURCH”

LESSON ELEVEN

THE HARVEST OF AN EVANGELISTIC CHURCH

Some of the most challenging words Jesus ever uttered is, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (Jn. 4:35).

An unalterable law of God is that men reap as they have sown (Gal. 6:7, 8). If you sow to the wind you reap a whirlwind. If you sow to the flesh you reap corruption. If you sow to the spirit you reap life everlasting.

This principle is true regarding the work of the New Testament church. Church growth is a matter of sowing and reaping (Acts 6:7). The harvest produced is directly correlated to the amount of seed sown.

The early disciples were evangelistic and there was a great harvest. Our present study will deal with the harvest of an evangelistic church.

THE HARVEST OF KNOWLEDGE

We cannot teach what we do not know. To evangelize we must be fully equipped with a working knowledge of the word (I Pet. 3:15; Rom. 10:1, 2). We are to grow in our knowledge (II Pet. 3:18). Some are short on Bible knowledge like the two men who were bosom friends. Much to the amazement of one, the other became a Sunday school teacher. "I be you don't even know the Lord's Prayer," he fumed. "Everybody knows that," the other replied, "It's, 'Now I lay me down to sleep I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take.'" "You win," said the other man admiringly. "I didn't know you knew so much about the Bible."

The lack of study renders one incapable of teaching others (Heb. 5:12-14). Spiritual giants in the kingdom are those, whose lives are saturated with the Word of God. Patrick Henry, near death said, "Here is a Book, the Bible, worth more than all others that were every printed; yet it is my misfortune never to have found time to read it."

We must study not only to be able to teach others but also that we may be acceptable with God (II Tim. 2:15; I Tim. 4:13-16).

THE HARVEST OF COMPASSION

Christianity is a religion of feelings. It is not to be a cold, heartless religion. Our hearts are to be moved with love for others (Mt. 22:39). Thomas Carlyle married a talented young woman. She loved music and good literature, but her husband was cold and sometimes harsh in his attitude towards her. He thought only of his literary work and had no time for gentleness and tender words, which a woman's heart craves. Finally her health failed. During her illness her maid comforted her. The girl only came into the room and rubbed her cheek against her mistress's; but it strangely soothed her. "And sometimes," added Mrs. Carlyle, "I could tell her cheek was wet, and her tears meant so much to me."

Christianity is religion of compassion and tears. It is strange that there are so few tears shed when there is so much for which we should weep. God's greatest men have had hearts of compassion. Jeremiah is called the "weeping prophet" (Jer. 9:1). Paul shed tears because of the lost state of men (Rom. 9:1-3; 10:1; Acts 20:31).

Cold, callused, dry-eyed church members will never touch the heart of the sinner with the word. As we sow the seed, we water it with our tears (Psa. 126:6). Men may try to answer our arguments but there is no answer for tears.

THE HARVEST OF UNITY

Some things are good but are not pleasant. Some things are pleasant but are not good. It is both good and pleasant for brethren to be united (Ps. 133:1). God's people are to be united (Amos 3:3; Jn. 17:20, 21; 1 Cor. 1:10).

Early saints were united (Acts 2:44; 2:46; 4:32; Phil. 2:1-4). They were united in their commitment to evangelize the world. When they were scattered by persecution they maintained this unity of purpose (Acts 8:4).

When a church is united in purpose, all the demons of hell could not deter their goal. Division tore the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 3:1-3). You read of all their troubles but never do you read of their soul winning.

One man said, "Before I die I want to worship with a church that knows how to get along". Soul-winning churches, as a rule, are united churches.

THE HARVEST OF LIBERALITY

Liberality is a prominent subject in the Bible (Prov. 11:25; 3:9, 10; Lk. 6:38; Rom. 12:8).

To be evangelistic, we must be liberal with our time. Each week has 168 hours. What would happen if we started giving the Lord just 10% of our time? It takes time to visit and invite. It is time well spent. Years ago a couple visited the church in Dearborn Michigan. They had no intention of going back. Someone took the time to go see them. They came back and now are workers in the church.

When we are evangelistic we are also liberal with our money (Phil. 4:15-19). Philippi was a good church that was evangelistic and it reaped the harvest of liberality. They were told, "God shall supply all your need."

THE HARVEST OF ZEAL

The early disciples turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). In spite of dungeon, fire and sword they went everywhere preaching the Word. Call it zeal, faith, drive, enthusiasm – call it what you will – we must have it.

There is no such thing as a lukewarm, soul winning church. A church filled with a zeal for salvation of lost soul kills the germs that breed lukewarmness.

THE HARVEST OF GROWTH

Several passages of scripture point out the fact that the church is designed to grow (Mt. 13:31, 32; Eph. 4:16; Mk. 16:15).

Twenty first century Christians are produced by sowing the first century seed. The seed is the Word of God (Lk. 8:11). The power to convert is in the seed (Lk. 8:15). It follows that the more seed that is sown, the greater the harvest will be.

Man's responsibility is to sow the seed. The song is often sung, "Are you sowing the seed of the kingdom brother..." We sow the seed. God gives the increase (I Cor. 3:6, 7).

We often hear it said that we need to make the church grow. Men don't make the church grow. That is God's business. Man's business is to sow the seed. God will do His part if we will do our part. To grow we need to sow more seed.

LESSON TWELVE

ESSENTIALS IN EVANGELISM

Have you ever been so excited about something that you could not keep it to yourself? You had to tell someone about it. Your relationship with Christ should be like that. You are so thrilled about being saved that you cannot keep quiet about it. That is what evangelism is all about. It is sharing the love and forgiveness found in Christ (Jn. 1:41, 42).

This is not optional like frills on a car. This is a divine necessity (Mk. 16:15; I Cor. 9:16).

Think now about those you know: friends, relatives, neighbors, business associates and the like who need to know Jesus – how will you reach them?

There are six things suggested by the apostle Paul, which are essential if we reach men for Christ. He wrote, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds; that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:2-6).

CONSECRATION

The first word in verse two is "continue". It means "be devoted". Successful evangelism requires consecration on the part of God's children.

A wealthy man felt that he did not have the ability to speak to men about their souls. He would hire a horse drawn carriage and go to hear a certain preacher. He would tell the driver, "I have paid you. I want you to go in and listen...while I stay here and watch your horse."

How much do we want men to be saved? Enough to give money? It is deplorable that missionaries have to beg for support to go to some mission point. Do we want men to be saved enough that we will give our time? You do not find time. You make time. We make the time to do what we want to do. Do you want men to be saved enough that you are willing to give yourself? Give yourself away!

Consecration is the burning desire to keep on keeping on when others give up. "Continue" (Job. 1:5; Acts 2:42) to seek and save the lost.

CONNECTION

One thing in which we ought to continue is prayer (Col. 4:2). Before you talk to people about God, make sure you talk to God about people. In Acts 2:42 the church is constant in prayer and in Acts 2:47 souls are being saved.

In the book of Acts prayer and conversion go together (Acts 1:14; 4:31; 6:6, 7; 9:11; 10:6, 30-31; 13:2, 3; 16:25, 33).

Most failures in evangelism are prayer failures. Connection with God is essential.

COMMUNICATION

Paul wanted the brethren to pray for him that a "door of utterance" might be opened in order that he might make manifest the mystery of Christ. On translation renders this "a door for the word" (NASV) in order that he might "make it clear" (NASV).

We need to teach clearly. The world does not understand some of the language we use. There are words like justification, sanctification, gospel and the like. Terms like these mean nothing to a great many folk. We need to say things so men can understand (II Cor. 3:12).

The gospel message is not complicated and can be understood (Isa. 35:8; Jn. 8:22).

ANTICIPATION

Next, Paul tells the brethren to "walk in wisdom...redeeming the time" (Col. 4:5). We are to buy back the time. Each time God opens a door to do good and teach men about Jesus, walk through it (I Cor. 16:8, 9). It takes wisdom to utilize doors of opportunity. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins is a case in point (Mt. 25:1-13).

We need to be sensitive toward doors of opportunity, toward "them that are without" ("outsiders" NASV).

Some doors are closed. Some are closed because of oppressive governments. They will not allow gospel preachers in their countries. This is

changing with every passing day. Some are closed because of hard hearts and prejudice (Mt. 13:15). Others are closed because of indifference (Mt. 7:6). Still others are closed because of a lack of love and tact on the part of some Christians (Eph. 4:15).

We need to pray that doors of utterance will be opened to us. We need to anticipate doors of opportunity and be prepared to enter them. That open door may be next door or across the street. It may be at the office or school.

CONSIDERATION

"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt..." (Col. 4:6). To speak with grace means to speak kindly (Prov. 31:26). We need to speak with a pleasantness that makes our talk attractive.

Cute remarks cut lines of communication. They drive the lost away. Such remarks as "If you can't see that you'll get in the back door" or "Do you know that you are going to hell" have no place in the vocabulary of a person who is endeavoring to win someone to Christ.

We do not have the right to speak in an unkind way to others. Season your speech with salt. Make it tasty.

INFORMATION

Paul said that we should "know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6). When we talk to men about their souls, there should be content in what we say. Don't say, "Let me ask my preacher" or "My preacher said". Be prepared to say, "Here is what the Word of God teaches."

We need to be able to answer men's questions with the Bible (I Pet. 3:15). When men ask, "What must I do to be saved?" be able to give a Bible answer. There are three things men must know in order to be saved. They must know they are lost (Rom. 3:23). They must know Jesus died to save them (Jn. 3:14-17). They must know what they must do in order to be saved (Mk. 16:16).

When men ask about the church of the New Testament, be able to give an answer. Be able to tell them it was blood bought (Acts 20:28; I Cor. 6:19, 20; Rev. 1:7; Heb. 9:22; Mt. 26:28). Be able to tell them Christ is its foundation (Isa. 28:16; Eph. 2:20; I Pet. 2:6; I Cor. 3:11). Be prepared to show that Christ is its head (Eph. 1:22, 23). Be able to tell them it has perfect and everlasting laws (Jas. 1:25; Mt. 24:35; Jn. 10:35). Be able to tell them that it will last longer than time (Dan. 2:44; Mt. 16:18, 19).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As we march for the Master, let us follow his divine directions. Then and only then are we assured of victory.