

Bancroft Mission Sunday School Lessons

“Basic Foundations of
Christianity”

Introduction to "Basic Foundations of Christianity."

These lessons are not an exhaustive study of the Foundations. Hopefully, we will continue to study more of these at a later date.

Please read these lessons, ask questions, and give input.

Sunday School is not designed to be a monologue but a dialogue; all adding what the Holy Spirit is revealing to them. Together, we can come to Truth.

The Bible

Lessons 1, 2, and 3

Introduction:

All of our beliefs, both for this life and the next, are based on the Holy Bible.

The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian Church in this and every age. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God's written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master. Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority.

We offer this Statement in a spirit, not of contention, but of humility and love, which we purpose by God's grace to maintain in any future dialogue arising out of what we have said. We gladly acknowledge that many who deny the inerrancy of Scripture do not display the consequences of this denial in the rest of their belief and behavior, and we are conscious that we who confess this doctrine often deny it in life by failing to bring our thoughts and deeds, our traditions and habits, into true subjection to the divine Word.

A SHORT STATEMENT

1. God, who is Himself Truth and speaks truth only, has inspired Holy Scripture in order thereby to reveal Himself to lost mankind through Jesus Christ as Creator and Lord, Redeemer and Judge. Holy Scripture is God's witness to Himself.
2. Holy Scripture, being God's own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches: it is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it affirms, obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God's pledge, in all that it promises.
3. The Holy Spirit, Scripture's divine Author, both authenticates it to us by His inward witness and opens our minds to understand its meaning.
4. Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives.

5. The authority of Scripture is inescapably impaired if this total divine inerrancy is in any way limited or disregarded or made relative to a view of truth contrary to the Bible's own; and such lapses bring serious loss to both the individual and the Church.

6. THE BIBLE IS THE OLDEST BOOK WHOSE AUTHOR IS STILL ALIVE TODAY!

ARTICLES OF AFFIRMATION AND DENIAL

Article I We affirm that the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God.

We deny that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human source.

Article II We affirm that the Scriptures are the supreme written norm by which God binds the conscience, and that the authority of the Church is subordinate to that of Scripture.

We deny that Church creeds, councils, or declarations have authority greater than or equal to the authority of the Bible.

Article III We affirm that the written Word in its entirety is revelation given by God.

We deny that the Bible is merely a witness to revelation, or only becomes revelation in encounter, or depends on the responses of men for its validity.

Article IV We affirm that Scripture in its entirety is inerrant, being free from all falsehood, fraud, or deceit.

We deny that Biblical infallibility and inerrancy are limited to spiritual, religious, or redemptive themes, exclusive of assertions in the fields of history and science. We further deny that scientific hypotheses about earth history may properly be used to overturn the teaching of Scripture on creation and the flood.

Infallibility, Inerrancy, and Interpretation

Infallible signifies the quality of neither misleading nor being misled and so safeguards in categorical terms the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe, and reliable rule and guide in all matters.

Similarly, inerrant signifies the quality of being free from all falsehood or mistake and so safeguards the truth that Holy Scripture is entirely true and trustworthy in all its assertions.

We affirm that authorized Scripture should always be interpreted on the basis that it is infallible and inerrant. However, in determining what the God-taught writer is asserting in each passage, we must pay the most careful attention to its claims and character as a human production. In inspiration, God utilized the culture and conventions of his penman's milieu, a milieu that God controls in His sovereign providence; it is misinterpretation to imagine otherwise.

THE INSPIRATION AND INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE

We believe that the Bible is God's word. The Bible, including both the Old and New Testaments, is a divine revelation, the original autographs of which were verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Revelation is God's self-disclosure. It is God making Himself known to men. God has revealed himself in a limited way in creation. But the Bible is a form of special revelation. The Bible is "special" revelation in the sense that it goes beyond what may be known about God through nature. It is divine in origin, since in the Bible God makes known things which otherwise could never be known.

The Bible is unique because it is God's revelation recorded in human language. According to 2 Timothy 3:16-17 the words of Scripture are "God breathed" or inspired. This implies that God is the source or origin of what is recorded in Scripture. God, through the Holy Spirit, used human authors to write what He revealed in the Bible. They were not mere copyists or transcribers. The Holy Spirit guided and controlled the writers of Scripture, who used their own vocabularies and styles but wrote only what the Holy Spirit intended. This is true only of the original manuscripts, not the copies or translations. Although the original manuscripts have been lost to us, God has preserved the biblical text to a remarkable degree.

The Bible is verbally inspired. This means that the words of the Bible, not just the ideas, were inspired. What is more, this is true of not just some, but all the words of the Bible. As a result, the Bible is free from error in what it says. Bancroft Mission believes strongly in the factual, verbal, historical inerrancy of the Bible. That is, the Bible, in its original documents, is free from error in what it says about geography, history and science as well as in what it says about God. Its authority extends to all matters about which the Bible speaks. It is the supreme source of our knowledge of God and of the salvation provided through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is our indispensable resource for daily living.

Even though the Bible is God's revelation, it must still be interpreted. Interpretation has to do with our reception and understanding of that which God revealed and recorded. Revelation is a divine act. Interpretation is a human responsibility. Divine inspiration guarantees the truthfulness of God's word but not the accuracy of our interpretation. The Bible is infallible in all it affirms to be true and therefore absolutely reliable. We, however, may be fallible in our interpretation of the Bible.

The Bible consists of 66 books with two distinct sections: The Old Testament and the New Testament. The two sections are arranged this way to highlight the birth of Jesus, with the Old Testament sharing the emerging prophecies of the Messiah. It was written by about 40 different authors over a period of about 1500 years.

I. What the Bible says about the Bible

A. Definition of "Bible."

1. A book regarded as authoritative in a particular sphere.
2. The sacred scriptures of Christians comprising the Old Testament and the New Testament.
3. Practically speaking, the Bible's a collection of individual books combined together to make a whole. Instead of being compiled in chronological order, the books are categorized into literary sections such as the law, history, poetry, and prophecy.

B. 2nd Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

C. Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

II. What the Bible says about God.

[Isaiah 40:28](#), “Have you not known? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.”

[Jeremiah 10:10](#), “But the Lord is the true God; he is the living God and the everlasting King...”

[Isaiah 44:6](#), “Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god.”

[Jeremiah 51:15](#), “It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.”

[Jeremiah 10:12](#), “It is he who made the earth by his power, who established the world by his wisdom, and by his understanding stretched out the heavens.”

[Zephaniah 3:17](#) ESV “The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.”

[Psalm 147:5](#) ESV “Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure.”

[Romans 1:20](#) ESV “For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”

[Isaiah 41:10](#) ESV “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

[James 1:17](#) ESV “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.”

[Isaiah 57:15](#) ESV “For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: “I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.”

[1 John 4:16](#) ESV “So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

[John 4:24](#) ESV “God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

[Jeremiah 9:24](#) ESV “But let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.”

[Acts 17:24-26](#) ESV “The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. And he made from one man every

nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place,”

[Deuteronomy 7:9](#) ESV “Know therefore that the Lord your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,”

III. What the Bible says about Jesus.

[John 14:6](#) ESV “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

[1 Timothy 2:5](#) ESV “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,”

[John 3:16](#) ESV ““For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

[John 1:1](#) ESV ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.’

[John 1:14](#) ESV “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

[Acts 4:11-12](#) ESV “This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, who has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

[Hebrews 13:8](#) ESV “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

[John 8:58](#) ESV “Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.”

[Isaiah 53:5](#) ESV “But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.”

[John 8:12](#) ESV “Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

[Colossians 2:9](#) ESV “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,”

[Philippians 2:8-11](#) ESV “And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

[John 8:24](#) ESV “I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.”

[Micah 5:2](#) ESV “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

[Isaiah 9:6](#) ESV “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

IV. What the Bible says about the Holy Spirit.

[John 14:15-17](#) ESV ““If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”

[John 14:26](#) ESV “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 that I have said to you.”

[John 15:26](#) ESV “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.”

[Romans 8:26](#) ESV “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”

[1 Corinthians 6:19](#) ESV “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,”

[Isaiah 11:2](#) ESV “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.”

[Acts 1:8](#) ESV “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

[Luke 11:13](#) ESV “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

[2 Corinthians 3:17](#) ESV “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

[John 16:12-15](#) ESV ““I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

[Romans 15:13](#) ESV “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.”

[Romans 8:9](#) ESV “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

[Romans 5:5](#) ESV “And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

[1 Corinthians 2:9-14](#) ESV “But, as it is written, “What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him”—these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows a person’s thoughts except the spirit of that person, which is in him? So also no one comprehends the thoughts 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 understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”

[Ephesians 1:13](#) ESV “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,”

[Ephesians 4:30](#) ESV “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

[Genesis 1:2](#) ESV “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”

[Matthew 28:19](#) ESV “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”

Born Again

Lesson 4

Introduction:

The present societal system has used “Born Again” to mean several things. Some are when athletes experience surgery to lengthen their careers; when actors reemerge after a long absence; or even when people “turn over a new leaf.”

The Bible, God’s written Word and ultimate authority, has much to say about being Born Again. In this lesson we will examine:

1. Why people must be Born Again.
 2. How a person is Born Again.
 3. The experience of being Born Again.
- I. Why people must be Born Again (we will cease capitalizing born again).
- A. Romans 5:12, Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.“
 1. When God created man, He created him upright. That is, Adam and God had perfect fellowship.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 7:29, “Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes.”
 - b. “Upright” in this verse means righteous or innocent.
 2. God gave Adam a commandment and told him if he disobeyed “he would surely die.” 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.”
 - a. Death here means spiritual death.
 - b. If Adam chose to disobey, he would die spiritually or be separated from God.
 - c. Adam chose to disobey God and follow his own path. Genesis 3:1-6, “
 - B. Because the entire human race, every descendent of Adam, is born spiritually dead, we **MUST** be born again.
 1. John 3:7, “
 2. 1st Peter 1:23, “
- II. How we are born again.
- A. Being born again is a miracle and work that only the Holy Spirit can perform—John 3:4-8, “

- B. Many have adopted the world's "earned based" system. After all, we earn grades in school, we earn money by working, we earn points in athletic events, etc.
- C. The Kingdom of God has a different system.
 - 1. Ephesians 2:8&9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."
 - 2. Romans 10:9&10, "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 with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
- D. We are born again when we, by faith, receive the finished work of Jesus on the cross; not his philosophy, teaching, or holiness—when we receive Him as Savior.
 - 1. John 1:12&13, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."
 - 2. Acts 8:26-37, "Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot." So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?" And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The place in the Scripture which he read was this: "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth." So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

III. The Experience of being born again.

- A. When a person is born again, also referred to as "born from above", a miracle takes place. God caused your spirit to become a brand-new being.
 - 1. 2nd 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."

a. The literal Greek, the language Paul wrote in 2nd Corinthians (and all of his writings) states that we have become a new species of being that never existed.

b. In other words, when a person receives Jesus as Savior, he is born again—a brand-new person.

B. When you and I were born we inherited sin from Adam. This caused us to be dead spiritually. We could have no fellowship with the creator of the universe.

1. We are now, as believers and receivers of Jesus's finished work of Jesus on the cross, alive spiritually.

2. Ephesians 2:1-5, "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)"

The Journey (Part 1)

Lesson 5

Introduction:

After we are born again, we begin a life-long journey that will be complete in heaven. It is important that we understand that eternal life began the very instant we received Jesus as Savior. Ultimately, we will be in the complete presence of Jesus. Until that time we have an earthly journey.

There are many great experiences we have in our journey with the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised in John 16:7, "“Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.” For the next few lessons, we will study this marvelous journey.

I. Water Baptism.

Introduction: As we begin this fantastic journey with our Lord, it is important that we get started correctly. As we examine the scripture, the teaching and examples show us we need to be water baptized. The following is from Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words:

to baptize," primarily a frequentative form of *bapto*, "to dip," was used among the Greeks to signify the dyeing of a garment, or the drawing of water by dipping a vessel into another, etc. Plutarchus uses it of the drawing of wine by dipping the cup into the bowl (*Alexis*, 67) and Plato, metaphorically, of being overwhelmed with questions (*Euthydemus*, 277 D).

It is used in the NT in Luke 11:38 of washing oneself (as in 2nd Kings 5:14, "dipped himself," Sept.); see also Isaiah 21:4, "lawlessness overwhelms me." In the early chapters of the four Gospels and in Acts 1:5; 11:16; 19:4, it is used of the rite performed by John the Baptist who called upon the people to repent that they might receive remission of sins. Those who obeyed came "confessing their sins," thus acknowledging their unfitness to be in the Messiah's coming Kingdom. Distinct from this is the "baptism" enjoined by Christ, Matthew 28:19 a "baptism" to be undergone by believers, thus witnessing to their identification with Him in death, burial and resurrection, e.g., Acts 19:5; Romans 6:3&4; 1st Corinthians 1:13-17, 12:13; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12. The phrase in Matthew 28:18, "baptizing them into the Name" (RV; cp. Acts 8:16, RV), would indicate that the "baptized" person was closely bound to, or became the property of, the one into whose name he was "baptized."

In Acts 22:16 it is used in the Middle Voice, in the command given to Saul of Tarsus, "arise and be baptized," the significance of the Middle Voice form being "get thyself baptized." The experience of those who were in the ark at the time of the Flood was a figure or type of the facts of spiritual death, burial, and resurrection, Christian "baptism" being an *antitupon*, "a corresponding type," a "like figure," 1st Peter 3:21. Likewise the nation of Israel was figuratively baptized when made to pass through the Red Sea under the cloud, 1st Corinthians 10:2.

A. Teaching and example of Jesus.

1. Jesus' example.

a. Matthew 3:13-17, "Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. 14 And John *tried to* prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" 15 But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. 16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

b. When Jesus comes to John, John hesitates to baptize him. John's is a baptism of repentance, and Jesus has nothing for which he needs to repent. Why then does Jesus insist on being baptized? By choosing to be baptized, Jesus fulfills all righteousness – preparing himself to be a perfect sacrifice for us.

c. Jesus is fulfilling his role as the obedient Son of God by practicing the required righteousness of submitting to God's will to live in the world wholeheartedly devoted to God.

d. Jesus' baptism connected the humanity of Jesus with the rest of humanity. Though He was without sin, He took on the form of a man and identified with human experiences. This even included His experience of being baptized, a practice He would later command of all His followers.

e. The baptism of Jesus provided the first explicit mention in the New Testament involving all three members of the Triune God. Matthew 3:16&17 says, "And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'" Jesus, the Spirit, and the voice of God the Father all appear at one time, revealing the uniqueness of each Person of the Trinity while affirming their essential unity.

2. Jesus' teaching.

a. Matthew 28:18&19, "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"

b. Mark 16:15&16, “And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

3. A question that is asked over and over, “Does a person have to be baptized to be saved?”

a. The “short” answer is no. The thief on the cross was not baptized. Salvation is “by grace through faith.”

b. However, water baptism identifying with Jesus’s death, burial, and resurrection. We go down into the water (death and burial), then we are raised up out of the water (resurrection).

- 1st Peter 3:21, “There is also an antitype (something that is represented by a symbol) which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,”
- We are baptized **because** our sins are remitted, not to cause them to be remitted.

B. New Testament examples.

1. Acts 8:26-39, “Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, “Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is desert. 27 So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.” 30 So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” 31 And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 The place in the Scripture which he read was this: “He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. 33 In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.” 34 So the eunuch answered Philip and said, “I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?” 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” 37 Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” 38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. 39 Now when they came up out of

the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”

2. Acts 9:17&18, “And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” 19 Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.”

3. Acts 16:31-33, “So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized.”

The Journey (Part 2)

Lesson 6

II. God's ultimate intention.

Introduction:

When God created Adam and placed him in the garden, they enjoyed great fellowship. Although God was always in charge, they enjoyed great fellowship. They talked together, walked together, and were friends. When Adam rebelled, that all changed. Adam could no longer enjoy the fellowship and relationship that he and the Father once enjoyed. Adam was banned from the place of fellowship.

Genesis 3:23&24, "therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life."

When God redeemed man by the death of Jesus on the cross, He brought mankind back to the place of His original intention, Relationship through Fellowship.

| | | | |
|------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| <u>Adam and Father God in fellowship</u> | Adam's | God's redemption | <u>Continuing the journey</u> |
| | fall | THE CROSS | |
| | through | | |
| | rebellion | | |

A. Genesis 3:8, "And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden."

The New American Commentary offers this:

The anthropomorphic description of God "walking" (*mithallek*) in the garden suggests the enjoyment of fellowship between him and our first parents. The adverbial phrase "in the cool of the day" (NIV, NASB, NJB) or "the breezy time of the day" (NJPS, NAB) translates the Hebrew phrase "wind [rûah] of the day." *The NRSV's rendering makes the time more explicit, "at the time of the evening breeze" (also REB). "*

1. Can we imagine what it was like for Adam to enjoy this fellowship with the Creator of the world?
2. Adam had a set time of great fellowship; talking, walking, LISTENING, and experiencing the Father.

B. Adam had only one requirement: Genesis 2:15-17, "Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 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."

1. Basically, God's instruction to Adam was to choose between God's rule or his own rule. We know what happened—Adam chose SELF.

2. Genesis 3:1-7 NLT, “The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the woman, “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?” 2 “Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,” the woman replied. 3 “It’s only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, ‘You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.’” 4 “You won’t die!” the serpent replied to the woman. 5 “God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil.” 6 The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. 7 At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.”

3. When Adam, who was responsible for his and Eve’s actions, chose to rebel against God, he “died.”

- a. He did not die physically at that time, he died spiritually.
- b. He lost the joyous fellowship and relationship with Father God.

THE STORY DOES NOT END THERE

C. John 3:16, ““For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

1. Paul, the Apostle, taught us in the letter to the church in Rome that all mankind had inherited separation from Father through Adam: Romans 5:12-14, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”

THE GREAT NEWS

2. Colossians 1:19-23, “For it pleased the father that in him should all fulness dwell; 20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. 21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight: 23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard...”

a. Verse 23 is NOT saying if we keep all the rules or follow all of the precepts; he is telling us our reconciliation is based on faith in God’s provision of His Son, Jesus, as the reconciler.

b. When Jesus died on the cross, He bore the sin of

mankind; 2nd Corinthians 5:21 NLT, "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."

c. Objectively, Christ died for all. Subjectively, reconciliation is ours when we receive Jesus as Savior; John 1:12&13, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

3. Luke 19:10, ""for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

a. We are NOT "thats", we are "those."

b. "That" which was lost was fellowship through relationship with Father. Jesus reconciled us to the Father and now we can have fellowship with Him.

c. THE TRUTH IS, WE HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE LIFE BETTER THAN ADAM. ADAM HAD TO WAIT ON THE FATHER FOR THE "COOL OF THE DAY." WE HAVE FATHER, IN THE FORM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, LIVING INSIDE OF US AT ALL TIMES. HALLELUJAH!

The Journey (Part 3)

Lesson 7

III. Sanctification.

Introduction: Sanctification is an oft misunderstood teaching. We *are* sanctified in the sense that we are set apart (the Greek meaning of sanctified), but we are also *being* sanctified.

This lesson will deal with both.

A. We *are* sanctified.

1. The Greek for “sanctified” is “hagios.” *Thayers Greek English Dictionary of New Testament Words* gives this interpretation: “to make holy” (from *hagios*, “holy”), signifies to set apart for God, to sanctify, to make a person or thing the opposite of *koinos*, “common.”

2. Acts 20:32, ““So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”

3. God has created man with three parts: Body, Soul, and Spirit.

a. When we are born again, our Spirit (the essence of who we are) was born again.

b. Many struggle thinking, “If I am born again, why do I continue to have these “anti-Godlike” thoughts and feelings?”

- Our Soul (our mind, will, and emotions) is being saved (more about that in section B.)
- When we receive Jesus as Savior we are as clean spiritually as possible, **as clean as Jesus**. Hebrews 2:11 ESV, “For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,”

4. 1st Corinthians 1:2, “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:”

B. Now we come to *being* sanctified.

1. Hebrews 10:14, “For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.”

2. In the first dot above we mentioned the soul is being sanctified.

3. The definition of sanctified in Hebrews 10:14 is to purify internally by renewing of the soul.

Illustration:

If I asked John to please get me a drink of water and John got the water and handed it to me someone might ask, “Where did John go?” The response would be, “John went to get a drink of water.” If I asked John to please get me a drink of water and John was in the process of getting the water someone might ask, “Where did John go?” The response would be, “John went to get a drink of water.” The same question and the same response. The difference is in the first instance John had finished the act of getting the water while in the second instance John was in the process of getting the water. This is the difference between “are” sanctified and “being” sanctified. Both are a work of the Holy Spirit, but one is completed by faith in Jesus, the other is done by our putting into the “hands” of the Holy Spirit tools with which to work. It’s like asking someone to do a certain job but not providing the tools to do the job. We will see this in the remainder of this lesson.

4. The purpose of “being” sanctified is to experience more fellowship with the Father as well as to carry out His mission on earth.

5. Paul said in 2nd Corinthians 3:16-18 NLT, “But whenever someone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.”

a. Verse 18, “...all of us who have had that veil removed...”—this is the single act of the Holy Spirit sanctifying.

b. Verse 18, “...the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image.”—this is the continuing work of the Holy Spirit: changing our nature into the nature of Jesus. The more our nature becomes the nature of Jesus, the more we can fellowship with the Father.

6. Paul said about himself in his letter to the Philippian church, “10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I *do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 3:10-14).

a. In verse 10 Paul states his goal, “that I may know Him...” To “know” is the same understanding of having an intimate relationship. It is used when Adam “knew” his wife Eve and she became with child; intimacy.

b. In verse 12 Paul says, “...that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.” Jesus apprehended Paul for a reason. Not to take him to heaven someday but that Paul might enter into a divine fellowship/relationship encounter with Father God.

c. In verse 13 Paul shares with us, and for us, his priority, "...but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead"

7. In the book of Romans Paul tells us our part in the transformation/sanctification of our soul (mind, will, and emotions). Romans 12:2, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..."

a. The NLT says it this way, "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."

b. Romans 12:1&2 Message Bible, "So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you."

c. Romans 12:2 Mirror Bible, "Do not allow current religious tradition to mold you into its pattern of reasoning. Like an inspired artist, give attention to the detail of God's desire to find expression in you. Become acquainted with perfection. To accommodate yourself to the delight and good pleasure of him will transform your thoughts afresh from within."

8. All of the versions and paraphrases in number 7, a-c speaks of examining something so as to allow change to happen in our inner being—the soul.

a. We examine/study the Word of God finding Jesus. As we behold the nature of Jesus (not JUST memorizing scripture, although this is important) this gives the Holy Spirit tools to work His transforming power.

b. This is why attendance at gatherings is SO important. Hebrews 13:17, "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they **watch out for your souls**, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you."

c. This is why Sunday School is SO important. 2nd Timothy 2:15, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

d. This is why positive relationships are SO important. 1st Corinthians 15:33 NIV, "Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."

The Journey (Part 4)

Lesson 8

IV. The Kingdom of God.

Introduction:

This lesson will involve more than one lesson.

Always remember, the Kingdom of God is the Dominion of the King.

It is a future event but also a present reality. It is past, present, and future.

Our lessons will be concerning the Present Reality of the Kingdom of God.

A. The Kingdom of God manifest today in three forms: Family, Civil Government, and Church. All three have precepts but they are different. The Family carries the Heart of God; Civil Government carries the Sword; the Church has the Spirit of God.

1. Family and Kingdom Precepts.

a. Ephesians 5:22-33, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

b. Ephesians 5:22&23 states that the husband is the head.

- This does not mean he is the supreme ruler.
- There is a Divine alignment as seen in 1st Corinthians 11:3, "But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God."
- We know that the Father and Son are equal. However, there is a Divine alignment.
 - John 17:11, ""Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father,

keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.”

- John 5:18&19, “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. 19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.”

c. The husband is the spiritual leader of the family.

- In God’s Kingdom, the husband is responsible for the family’s spiritual life.
- Genesis 3:6-19, “So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings. 8 And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, “Where *are* you?” 10 So he said, “I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.” 11 And He said, “Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?” 12 Then the man said, “The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” 13 And the LORD God said to the woman, “What *is* this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” 14 So the LORD God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, You *are* cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.” 16 To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire *shall be* for your husband, And he shall rule over you.” 17 Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “Cursed *is* the ground for your sake; In toil

you shall eat *of* it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you *are*, And to dust you shall return.”

- Notice in verse 9, God called Adam; Adam was responsible for his family.
- The whole family was punished but God held Adam responsible.
- Whatever the husband allows in his life will affect the entire family.

As of 2021, There are 3,970,238,390 or 3.97 billion males in the world, representing 50.42% of the world population. We don't know how many husbands there are in the world but out of almost 4 billion males, you, husband, are the only one that has authority to lead the home spiritually. Also, **you are anointed and equipped for this task. In the power of the Holy Spirit, you can do this.**

- d. There is a divine principle in the Word of God; two heads are a freak, and no head is dead.
- This is one of the problems with same sex marriage. If there are two husbands, who is the head? If there are two wives, who is the head? The answer is no one. This leaves the family without a spiritual leader or covering.
 - From the book *Kingdom Man* by Tony Evans, “The problem is legalizing gay marriages is not entirely a problem of homosexuality. The primary problem is the redefinition of the family away from its divine design. In redefining the family, Satan is attempting to set up a rival kingdom that undermines God’s purpose for the home. In warping the view of manhood, Satan is doing the same thing he tried to do when sought to have all of the baby boys killed when Jesus was born. By getting rid of the men when they were boys, he attempted to kill the future. Men, our role is critical, and Satan’s primary goal is to keep us from performing it according to God’s Kingdom principles.”
- e. Women, you are not left out of the anointing of God. You have a God-given, Divine role.

The population of females in the world is estimated at 3,904,727,342 or 3,905 million or 3.905 billion, representing 49.58% of the world population. There is no one that can do what you do in the family.

- Proverbs 14:1 Amplified Bible, “The wise woman builds her house [on a foundation of godly precepts, and her household thrives], But the foolish one [who lacks spiritual insight] tears it down with her own hands [by ignoring godly principles].”
- Godly principles for the woman of God are numerous in the Word of God. We will look at a few.
 - Titus 2:3-5, “the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things—4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.” “Obedient to their husbands” means to walk in their proper place. As discussed previously, there is an alignment that places men and women in Divine order with God.
 - 2nd Timothy 1:5, “when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.” Timothy was a young pastor and needed some encouragement. Paul wrote to him to stir up the faith that was implanted into him by his MOTHER and GRANDMOTHER. One of the roles of women is to impart to their children faith and trust in God.
 - 1st Timothy 5:14, “Therefore I desire that *the* younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully.” Although Paul is addressing widows in this scripture, the principle is the same for all wives; “manage the house.” To manage the home is to discipline (Proverbs 29:15, “The rod and rebuke give wisdom, But a child left to himself brings shame to his MOTHER.”) impart Divine wisdom, helps in the business of the home (Proverbs 31:16, “She considers a field and buys it; From her profits she plants a vineyard.”) looks after the needy (Proverbs 31:20, “She extends her hand to the poor, Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.”), takes care of herself (Proverbs 31:22, “She

makes tapestry for herself; Her clothing *is* fine linen and purple.”). NOTICE VERSE 10, “WHO CAN FIND A VIRTUOUS WIFE? FOR HER WORTH IS FAR ABOVE RUBIES”

**BEING A WIFE/WOMAN/MOTHER IS A FULL TIME JOB.
YOU ARE ANOINTED AND APPOINTED TO ACCOMPLISH
THIS MONUMENTAL TASK**

The Journey (Part 4)

Lesson 9

IV. The Kingdom of God.

Introduction:

This lesson will involve more than one lesson.

Always remember, the Kingdom of God is the Dominion of the King.

It is a future event but also a present reality. It is past, present, and future.

Our lessons will be concerning the Present Reality of the Kingdom of God.

A. The Kingdom of God manifests today in three forms: Family, Civil Government, and Church. All three have precepts but they are different.

1. Family and Kingdom Precepts. —see Lesson 8
2. Civil Government and Kingdom Precepts.

Introduction:

In the United States of America, we have three branches of government: Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. While this is a Sunday school class and not a Civics class, we will discuss briefly these three branches.

The [Constitution of the United States](#) divides the federal government into three branches to make sure no individual or group will have too much power:

Legislative—Makes laws (Congress, comprised of the House of Representatives and Senate)

Executive—Carries out laws (president, vice president, Cabinet, most federal agencies)

Judicial—Evaluates laws (Supreme Court and other courts)

Each branch of government can change the acts of the other branches:

The president can veto legislation created by Congress and nominates heads of federal agencies.

Congress confirms or rejects the president's nominees and can remove the president from office in exceptional circumstances.

The Justices of the Supreme Court, who can overturn unconstitutional laws, are nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate.

This ability of each branch to respond to the actions of the other branches is called the system of checks and balances.

The executive branch carries out and enforces laws. It includes the president, vice president, the Cabinet, executive departments, independent agencies, and other boards, commissions, and

committees. American citizens have the right to vote for the president and vice president through free, confidential ballots.

The legislative branch includes Congress (the Senate and House of Representatives) and special agencies and offices that provide support services to Congress. American citizens have the right to vote for Senators and Representatives through free, confidential ballots.

The third branch of government is the Judicial branch. The Judiciary is made up of courts -- Supreme, Circuit, the magistrate (local) and municipal (city) courts. The Judicial branch interprets the laws. The state judges are elected by the citizens rather than being appointed.

a. As stated in the introduction, the Civil Government carries the Sword.

b. Romans 13:1-7, "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. 2 For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 3 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 4 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 5 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. 6 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 7 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 8 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor."

c. God has entrusted authority to them in order that they might be "God's servant for your good" (Rom 13:3). They are supposed to use their power to establish and to enforce moral order in our world by rewarding good behavior and punishing bad behavior.

- When a person violates the laws of civil government and sins against God, (Stealing, murder, etc.) they can come to God in repentance and God will forgive them. The church also forgives.
- However, they still owe a debt to society and must pay that debt. **This is the Sword spoken of in Romans 13:4.**

d. We must remember that God has entrusted *all* authority to Jesus, who has been exalted as Lord of all, and we must therefore submit to the Lord Jesus as our highest authority, for he demands our undivided loyalty and obedience (Rom 1:4-6; cf. Matt 28:18; Acts 2:36; 10:36).

e. Simply stated, we must discern if and when obeying our governing authorities would require us to disobey the Lord Jesus, and in such situations, we must obey the Lord Jesus rather than governing authorities and be prepared to endure the consequences. The Bible abounds with stories of God's people exercising such judgment, including the famous story of Daniel enduring the lions' den because he prayed to the Lord God of Israel in violation of the king's edict that prayers be offered only to the king (Daniel 6).

f. There is much discussion concerning the Christian's role in civil government. Proverbs 19:2 says, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; But when a wicked man rules, the people groan."

g. As referred to in the introduction, the civil government creates and enforces the laws by which we must abide. We should pray that all branches of civil government be occupied by Christians. Maybe the Holy Spirit will speak to some of us to run for a governmental office.

3. The Church and Kingdom Precepts.

Introduction

The Church is God's plan. The church is first mentioned in Matthew 16:18, "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My **church**, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

The word "church" is the Greek word *ecclesia*. Pronounced Ek lay see a.

From *ek*, "out of," and *klesis*, "a calling" (*kaleo*, "to call"), was used among the Greeks of a body of citizens "gathered" to discuss the affairs of State, Acts 19:39. In the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament) it is used to designate the "gathering" of Israel, summoned for any definite purpose, or a "gathering" regarded as representative of the whole nation. In Acts 7:38 it is used of Israel; in Acts 19:32,41, of a riotous mob. It has two applications to companies of Christians:

To the whole company of the redeemed throughout the present era, the company of which Christ said, "I will build My Church," and which is further described as "the Church which is His Body," Ephesians 1:22, 5:23.

In the singular, to a company consisting of professed believers, e.g., Acts 20:28, 1st Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:13, 1st Thessalonians 1:1, etc., and in the plural, with reference to churches in a district.

An etymology (study of the origin of words) of the English word "church" shows us it is a Dutch and German derivative--Dutch *kerk* and German *Kirche*, based on medieval Greek *kurikon*, from Greek *kuriako* 'Lord's', from *kurios* 'master or lord'. When the word was originally used it referred to "the Lords". **This demonstrates to us that the Church is the Lords; we belong to the Lord—HALLELUJAH!**

Jesus was clearly calling out a people to Himself. This people would bring in the Kingdom (rule) of God into every sphere of life. Not to "sanctify sinners" but to bring people into the saving knowledge of Jesus; His finished work on the cross, His resurrection life, and His Holy Spirit empowered people for mission.

a. Becoming part of the church.

- John 3:1-8, "There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." 3 Jesus answered and said to

him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” 4 Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” 5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ 8 “The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

- Ephesians 2:4-10, “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in *His* kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”
- **When a person receives Jesus as his personal savior he is born again and becomes part of His church.**

b. When God raised Jesus from the dead, He validated the truth of the substitutionary death of Jesus. Acts 17:31, “because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

- The greatest event in history, the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, is recorded in the Gospels. Luke 24:1-7, “Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. 5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 “He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee,

7 “saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’”

- The truth of the Resurrection was the message of the first apostles (Acts 4:33, “And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all.”) and is still our message today (Romans 10:9, “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.”).
- The resurrection of Jesus not only validated the crucifixion, but the resurrection also gives us Life, Authority, and Hope.
 - LIFE
 - Romans 6:5&6, “For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness of His resurrection*, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.
 - We not only have “life” in the next life, we have “life” the moment we are born again.
 - 2nd 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.”
 - AUTHORITY
 - Ephesians 1:20&21, “which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.” WITH Ephesians 2:5&6, “even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,”
 - When we receive Jesus as our Savior, God did a miracle—He raised us spiritually to sit with Jesus far above ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER AND

MIGHT AND DOMINION, AND EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED.

- This means we have delegated authority over all forces that would come against us; just as Jesus had.
- HOPE
 - As believers, we not only have hope for now, we have hope for the next life. This hope is not a maybe, but a promise.
 - 1st Corinthians 6:14, “And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.”
 - 1st Peter 1:3, “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”
 - We also have hope for our loved ones who have passed on that trusted in Jesus, 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18, “But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

The Journey (Part 5)

Lesson 10

B.

The Mission of the Church

Introduction:

As believers, we are part of the Universal church. The Universal church is made up Local churches one of which is Bancroft Church of God Mission. An easy way to understand this is by using the example of our human bodies.

We have one body, but it is made up of many parts: arms, legs, eyes, ears, heart, lungs, etc. None of these parts individually are the body. All of the parts together make up the body.

There is one church, but this church is made up of many local churches.

The scriptures give us the vision and purpose of Jesus' church-the universal church. How each local church fulfills that mission is by being led by the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 1:1 the writer, Luke, says, "The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach," Notice he says "began." This tells us that Jesus began the ministry of teaching and doing and we, the church, are to continue teaching and doing.

This lesson will examine the vision of the universal church: Evangelize, Disciple, Train, and Release.

1. Evangelize.

a. Many churches have the concept that evangelization is when they have special meetings, an evangelist preaches, and the members invite people to attend these meetings. This will work but evangelizing is much greater and more effective when the saints of God realize that we are called and anointed to share our faith within our spheres.

b. Acts 8:1-4 gives us a beautiful picture of evangelism, "Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. 3 As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison. 4 Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word."

- Verse 2 says the persecuted believers were scattered abroad EXCEPT THE APOSTLES.

- Verse 4 says, "... those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word."

c. The word Evangelism means "good news" or "glad tidings." It is translated Gospel. Therefore, evangelism is the Gospel.

d. We will discuss the ministry of the evangelist in future lessons.

e. Let us pray, "Father, help us to be sensitive to your Holy Spirit and give us boldness to share the Good News of Jesus; the death, burial, and resurrection. In Jesus' name, Amen."

2. Disciple.

a. Matthew 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,"

b. This ministry is given to the entire church, not just the leaders.

c. Never confuse "training" with "discipling." Training pertains to function while discipling refers to character.

d. Please go to Lesson 7, B—"being sanctified."

- "Being Sanctified" is the process of being changed into the character of Jesus.
- All believers have the anointing to disciple other believers.
- WE ARE NOT CHANGING PEOPLE INTO BAPTIST, CHURCH OF GOD MISSION, METHODIST, PENTECOSTAL, ETC. WE ARE INSTRUMENTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT PROVIDING FOR HIM TOOLS TO USE TO CHANGE PEOPLE INTO THE IMAGE/CHARACTER OF JESUS. —2nd Corinthians 3:18&19 Amplified Bible, "Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty [emancipation from bondage, true freedom]. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, *continually* seeing as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are *progressively* being transformed into His image from [one degree of] glory to [even more] glory, which comes from the Lord, [who is] the Spirit."
- As we meet with folks and present the true "glory of the Lord", the Holy Spirit begins to change them into the character of Jesus—that is discipling.

3. Train.

a. Every believer is called to a specific function.

b. We are not all called to be Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, or Teachers.

c. We ALL are called and anointed to function.

d. Many, or even most, of these functions do not happen on the grounds of the meeting place of the local church.

e. When Paul wrote to the Romans, he taught them seven functional gifts; we all have at least one of these.

- Romans 12:3-8, “For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if **prophecy**, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; 7 or **ministry**, let us use it in our ministering; he who **teaches**, in teaching; 8 he who **exhorts**, in exhortation; he who **gives**, with liberality; he who **leads**, with diligence; he who **shows mercy**, with cheerfulness.”
 - Prophecy—those who see things and situations only in “black and white”, there are no gray areas for one who has this functional or motivation. This is different from the Prophet in Ephesians 4:11; we will discuss this in future lessons.
 - Ministry—while every believer is called to serve, these folks think about places to serve at all times. They are motivated to serve.
 - Teaching—these believers see the details in situations. Some folks see an automobile accident and tell others they saw a wreck. These people see a white car, with a female driver, with red hair, wearing a green blouse, etc. They see the details in scripture while others see generally.
 - Exhorting—these are the cheerleaders in the Body of Christ. They are telling others, “you can make it, you are a winner, don’t give up”, and so on. They are the one’s sending cards of encouragement to others. Do you know someone like that? Are you this way? You are valuable.
 - Giving—the scripture plainly teaches that we are all to contribute financially. Again, we will discuss this in future lessons. However, a person

motivated to give, the function of giving, constantly looks for ways to help people or ministries, or churches by giving funds. They go beyond the 10%.

- Leading—we have all heard the expression, “whole lotta chiefs and just a few Indians.” People who are called to lead also have the ability to organize and utilize the gifts of the people around them. They can get more accomplished in an hour than most can get done in a day. They recognize the abilities of others and put them to work thereby accomplishing great tasks.
- Shower of Mercy—have you ever known people who wanted to take in every stray puppy? How about people who allow others to cry on their shoulder? These people are often over-looked or taken for granted. But these are believers who will listen without judgement or feeling like they have to have all of the answers.

f. Training is recognizing all believers are called, anointed, and appointed and bringing, or providing, resources into their lives to develop the God given gifts and talents.

4. Release.

a. God has given every human two great needs; Peace and Productivity.

- Peace comes through a relationship with Jesus.
- Productivity comes through functioning in the Body of Christ.

b. All believers need to be encouraged to allow the Holy Spirit to do His work through them.

c. Likewise, we need to allow others to utilize their gifts and talents.

d. Many, if not most, of us fail many times as we are learning to flow with the Holy Spirit.

e. If, or when, you fail, get back up and try again. Proverbs 24:16 NLT, “The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again...”

f. Remember, it takes a while to develop spiritually, physically, and functionally.

The Journey (Part 6)

Lesson 12

C. The Mission of the Church (Part 2)

Introduction:

Jesus has uniquely designed His church to produce maximum results.

As we, individual believers, “function in our unction”, the church will go forward in the power of the Holy Spirit.

1st Corinthians 12:12-25, “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another.”

Ephesians 4:11-16, And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

1. Notice in these two scriptures references the Divine order.
 - a. Ephesian reference.
 - God gave the five ministry gifts to the church.

- Apostles—These “gifts” are primarily concerned with the government of the church. They establish local churches.
 - Ephesians 2:20, “having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,”
 - The Apostles build the foundation, but Jesus is the Chief Cornerstone.
 - There will never be twelve apostles like the ones Jesus called to follow him.
 - The Bible names at least 24 apostles.
 - Apostles today focus on the foundation, government, and establishment of local churches.
- Prophets—These gifts are primarily concerned with Divine order in local churches.
 - Prophets in today’s church are not like prophets in the old covenant.
 - Prophets today will be used to confirm ministers and send them out to minister. Acts 13:1, “Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.”
 - Notice in 2nd Peter 2:1, “But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. These false prophets and teachers bring in

false teachings. Prophets today, along with teachers, are concerned with Truth being established.

- Evangelist.
 - As we examine Ephesians 4:12, “for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,” we see these gifts are used to train believers to “do the work of the ministry.”
 - The evangelist doesn’t just hold meetings; they train believers to share the Good News—the Gospel.
- Pastor.
 - The pastor is the Shepherd.
 - The word “pastor” means shepherd.
 - They are concerned with the care of the sheep.
 - They make sure the sheep are fed spiritually by determining what is taught to them.
 - Isaiah 40:11, “He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.”
 - The pastor will lay down his life for the sheep and is not a “hireling.” John 10:11-13, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 “But a hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 “The hireling flees

because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.” Jesus was talking about Himself here but He is the example for all shepherds/pastors.

- Teachers.
 - Teachers bring the Word of God “line upon line, precept upon precept.”
 - Isaiah 28:13, But the word of the LORD was to them, “Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little,” That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught. “
 - Notice, “That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught. “
 - Teachers groans inwardly when the truth is not properly shared—they are concerned with the details.
- These five ministry gifts, sometimes referred to as “five-fold” ministry work together to equip and mature the saints (Ephesians 4:12&13).
- Their desire is for every believer to grow up spiritually and be productive in the Kingdom of God.

2. In both the 1st Corinthian and Ephesian reference, the saints are equipped, anointed, and called to be productive.

- a. All believers are valuable though they do not all have the same function.
- b. Just as all body parts are valuable to the natural body.

Don't ever believe the lie that says because you don't sing, preach, prophesy, etc. that you are not valuable. Everyone is valuable and

everyone has an important part in the Kingdom of God. Most of the saints will not be visible in the gatherings but all are necessary to each other.

3. Acts 1:4-8, “And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; 5 “for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” 7 And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

a. Jesus has a great task for the church. He told them they would need to be controlled by the Holy Spirit to fulfill this task—Verse 5.

b. The congregation had questions concerning the Kingdom; they were still waiting for the overthrow of the Roman government.

c. Jesus told them not to be concerned with that but to focus on the “power of the Holy Spirit to continue His “doing and teaching” (Acts 1:1).

d. Many today focus on being “filled with Spirit”, “baptized with Spirit”, a second work of the Spirit, etc. Here’s our focus—**It’s not how much of the Holy Spirit we have, it’s how much the Holy Spirit has of us.**

e. It is the everyday believer that will carry out the purpose of God: “witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” Let’s look at two viewpoints of these areas of mission.

- Geographical view: Jerusalem is the immediate area—our local area of vision (Bancroft) Judea is the wider area (State of West Virginia), Samaria is even wider (United States of America), and the end of the earth (the entire world). This is speaking to the Universal church, not just the local church. The areas that are mentioned here are examples.
- People group view: Jerusalem means city of peace—these folks have no peace of God. Judea has to do with praise and joy—these folks have not joy or rejoicing in their lives; they are overcome with cares. Samaria are the outcasts—those who feel rejected or feel they don’t fit in. End of the earth people are those who have no vision or purpose. Jesus has anointed and equipped the church—you and me—to bring the Good News, the Gospel to these folks that will reverse their current attitude.

The Journey (Part 7)

Lesson 13

D. The Local Church

Introduction:

When the church has Divine order; everyone in their proper place, it will be the most powerful organism in the world. An organism is a living body. We often hear the church referred to as organic: a living, functional entity.

We have discussed the “five-fold” ministry and the role of the Saints.

In this lesson we will examine government of the church and also look further into the function of the saints with other believers, and the financing of the local church.

1. Elders.

a. The Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers are concerned with the equipping of the saints (as discussed in lesson 12).

b. Elders in the church are first mentioned in Acts 11:27-30, “And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. 29 Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. 30 This they also did and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.”

c. The local elders focus on the safety and care of the sheep. Later, deacons were added which we will discuss in this lesson. Acts 20:17, **28-30**, “17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church...28-30, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”

- Elders here include the five-fold ministry (“feed the church of God”).
- Elders and the five-fold ministry are “overseers”.
- Elders protect the sheep, “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”

d. All of the five-fold ministers are elders, but not all of the elders are five-fold ministers. Example: All females are human, but not all humans are female.

e. 1st Peter 5:1-4, “The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: 2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”

- Elders are “overseers”.
- Elders are servants “nor as being lords over...”.
- Elders are “examples to the flock”.
- Elders will receive a reward for faithful service “you will receive the crown of glory”.

f. Elders anoint with oil and pray in faith over the sick. James 5: 14-16, “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. 15 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. 16 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.”

2. Deacons.

a. Deacons are first mentioned in Acts 6: 1-7, “Now in those days, when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. 2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is

not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 “Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; 4 “but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, 6 whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. 7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

b. Deacons are extremely important in the local church. Notice verse 7, “Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”

c. Deacons focus on the business and personal care of the saints. Verses 1- “...widows were neglected in the daily distribution. 2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, “It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 “Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business;”

3. Saint to saint ministry.

a. Restoring. Galatians 6: 1&2, “Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

b. Submitting to each other. Ephesians 5:21, “submitting to one another in the fear of God.”

4. Financing the local church.

a. Just like our homes, the local church has financial obligations.

b. The local church has utility bills that must be paid and ministry that must be supported.

c. Tithing.

- Many churches teach that the members should give at least 10% of their income to the local church. They base this on Malachi 3: 8-12, “Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. 9 You are cursed with a curse, For you have robbed Me, Even this whole nation. 10 Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, That there may be food in My house, And try Me now in this,” Says the LORD of hosts, “If I will not open for you the windows of

heaven And pour out for you such blessing
 That there will not be room enough to receive it. 11 "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground, Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field," Says the LORD of hosts; 12 And all nations will call you blessed, For you will be a delightful land," Says the LORD of hosts."

- Another scripture often referred to is found in Matthew 23:23, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone."
- Proverbs 3:9 is the best practice for giving, "Honor the LORD with your possessions, And with the firstfruits of all your increase;"
 - We honor the Lord with the "firstfruits" of our income.
 - Each time we receive "increase" we need to come before the Lord and seek Him for the amount of the "increase" we are to give.

d. There are numerous scriptures that teach the believer is to give of their finances.

e. Just as any other organization, the local church requires finances to function.

Lesson 14

The Next Life

Introduction:

We invest a lot of time to our earthly “journey.” However, the scripture promises us that there is a life after this life.

The Bible teaches plainly that there is a Heaven and a Hell and both of these will be eternal.

Always remember, salvation comes by “grace through faith”; good works can’t save us, and bad works can’t lose us. We are saved by “believing in our heart and confessing with our mouth that Jesus raised from the dead.

As long as we maintain our faith in Jesus, we have eternal life. Hebrews 3:6 says, “but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end.” Notice the Holy Spirit does not say “if we do all the right things”, or “if we don’t do the bad things.” No, we hold our faith in Jesus.

In 1884 Edward Mote wrote a beautiful song entitled “*Solid Rock*.” Some of the lyrics say, “*My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand: all other ground is sinking sand; all other ground is sinking sand.*”

I. Hell.

Introduction:

Hell is a subject, a doctrine, which is not taught very much in today's church. Jesus didn't focus very much on hell either. There are about 1900 verses in the four Gospels where Jesus is speaking. In about 60 of those verses Jesus speaks directly or references hell (3%). In 192 of these verses Jesus refers to heaven or the kingdom of heaven (10%). So, if we follow Jesus' example, we will teach 3% of the time on hell, 10% of the time on heaven, and the rest on daily living.

- A. Hell, hell, and hell.
1. As we know, the New Testament was written in the Greek language.
 2. There are three Greek words in the Bible that have translated as hell: Hades, Gehenna, and Tartarus.
 - a. Hell/Hades.
 - Luke 16: 22-26, "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' 25 "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. 26 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'
 - The KJV translates hades as hell in verse 23, the NKJV correctly translates it as hades.
 - Hades means "intermediate Godless state."
 - Hades is torment but not as bad as the final state of unbelievers.
 - Revelation 20:14 says, "Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."
 - Question: How can hell be cast into hell?
 - At the final judgment, those who have been in hades (tormented as we saw in Luke 16:23) will be cast into the final place of the unbeliever—HELL (Greek-Gehenna).
 - Example: A person commits a crime and appears before a judge. The judge finds him guilty but has not placed the final sentence on him. He is kept in a local jail to await the final sentence. At some point he will appear before the judge again. Not to determine his guilt but to receive the final sentence. Hades is like the local jail; he is guilty and is put behind bars, but he will

be sentenced later. Hell, the final place, is like the prison the guilty one will be held—Gehenna.

b. Hell/Gehenna.

- Gehenna is the final doom of the unbeliever.
- Gehenna/Hell is forever. Revelation 20:10, “The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.
- Although the passage in Luke 16 refers to the “local jail”, it is apparent that the rich remembered his life on earth. Part of the torment of hell is the remembering the opportunities to receive Jesus but were refused.

c. Hell/Tartarus.

- 2nd Peter 2:4, “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment;”
- Satan/Lucifer was at one time an angel of God.
 - Isaiah 14:12-14, ““How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! 13 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; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.”
 - Ezekiel 28:13-16, “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. 14 “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. 15 You *were* perfect in your ways from the day you were created, Till iniquity was found in you. 16 “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.”

- Satan was not always the Devil. At one time he was an angel. However, as we see in the afore-mentioned scriptures above, he rebelled against God. At that time, he led a rebellion with a third of the angels following him.
 - Revelation 12:7-9, “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer. 9 So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”
 - Revelation 12:4, “His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her Child as soon as it was born.”
 - (Stars here represent angels.
 - When Lucifer, the archangel, rebelled he drew a third of the angels with him.
 - Some of these angels had sex with women producing giants/monstrosities. Genesis 6:4, “There were giants on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came into the daughters of men and they bore *children* to them. Those *were* the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.”
 - Jude 1:6, “And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;”
 - Hell/Tartarus is the place where the fallen angels, who had sex with women (Genesis 6:4) and produced a monstrosity, are kept until the final judgement.

II. Heaven.

A. I have not validated this but there are probably more songs written about heaven than any other subject.

B. Heaven has been described in many passages in the Bible.

C. There are many misconceptions of heaven; here are two:

1. When we die, we become angels. No, angels will always be angels and humans will always be humans.

2. Angels rejoice when someone is saved. No, Luke 15:10 says, “In **the** same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in **the presence of the angels of God** over one sinner who repents.”

D. The Bible speaks of three heavens; the atmosphere above us, the galaxies and outer space, and the place where God dwells. **We will focus this portion of the lesson of the third; the dwelling place of God.**

1. Paul said in 2nd Corinthians 12:2, “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one was caught up to the **third heaven**.”

2. When Stephen was being stoned to death, he saw into the dwelling place of God. Acts 7:54-56, “When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, “Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!”

3. What is heaven like:

a. It is a place where the Glory, the very presence, of God exists.

b. It is a place where we see the true character of our Lord Jesus.

4. All born again people whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life will be in heaven. Revelation 21:7, “But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s **Book of Life**.”

5. Our saved loved ones are there.

a. Psalm 73:24, “You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward **receive me to glory**.” (Putnam County vernacular says, “He will fetch us to Glory”).

b. Genesis 25:8, “Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of *years*, and was gathered to his **people**.”

c. Hebrews 12:1, “Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a **cloud of witnesses**, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,”

6. We will have glorified bodies.

a. 1st Corinthians 15:50-57, “**NOW** this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." 55 "O Death, where is your sting? O Hell where is your victory?" 56 The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Most of us have watched loved ones leave this world in pain and sickness. We have this promise; their pain has ended. I am reminded of our dear friend and saint Lois Bailey who, on her death bed, with just a few minutes to live, told all those standing there, "In a few minutes I'm going to see Jesus, I'm going to see Ro (her husband), and Rusty (her son) and I'm going to see Danny (her brother)." Dear saint of God, many of you are experiencing pain and sickness right now. Be assured of this, there will be no pain or sickness, or parting in heaven.

Beloved saint of the Most High God, when we die our spirit and soul go to the very presence of God. Someday Jesus will return and with a shout He will say "come up" and our glorified bodies will rise out of the grave (no matter if they are ashes, in the ground, buried at sea, etc.) and join our soul and spirit to EVER BE WITH THE LORD.

b. 1st Thessalonians 4:13-18, "But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore **comfort one another with these words.**"

ARE YOU TRUSTING IN JESUS FOR SALVATION? HAVE YOU RECEIVED HIM AS YOUR SAVIOR? WHY NOT NOW?