

BASIC FOUNDATIONS AND MORE

Matt 7:24-27

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.



CONTENTS

Lesson one: **Sin**-pages 3-5

Lesson two: **Repentance**-pages 6-10

Lesson three: **Faith toward God**-pages 11-19

Lesson four: **Salvation**-pages 20-29

Lesson five: **Water Baptism**-pages 30-34

Lesson six: **Baptism of the Spirit**-pages 35-43

Lesson seven: **Tithing**-pages 44-53

Lesson eight: **Laying on of Hands**-pages 54-55

Lesson nine: **Resurrection of the Dead**-pages 56-60

Lesson ten: **Hell and the Lake of Fire** (Eternal judgment)-pages 61-65

Lesson eleven: **Church Life-God's Plan**-pages 66-84

Note: All definitions are taken from a variety of dictionaries and reference works.

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New Beginnings

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SIN

We must first look at sin in order to understand why there is a need for salvation. There are many different ideas about sin, its effects, and what is acceptable to the Lord. The only way to truly understand God's thoughts concerning this is to see what His book, the Bible, has to say about it.

The following portions of scripture are not necessarily brought out in the fullness of context and should be thoroughly reviewed by the reader. My desire is to validate the particular point while yet providing the reference for further study.

1. Adam sinned in the book of Genesis.

In **Gen. 3:1-24**, Eve partakes of the forbidden fruit because she was deceived by the serpent and then she gives some to her husband Adam who partakes of it willingly.

2. This sin did not affect only Adam and Eve, it was passed down to all their generations, including us.

Rom 5:12-19

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

15 But not free gift is not like the offence . For if through the offence of one many be dead,...

16 ...for the judgment was by one to condemnation...

17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one...

18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation;

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners...

- Through this one man's sin, we have all been 'infected' with sin and it's penalty which is death.

1 Cor 15:20-22

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

[21] For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

[22] For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

- All of us die because of Adam's sin.

Rom 6:23

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

- Because of sin, the penalty that we pay is death.

3. The Bible says that all are sinners and fall short of the glory of God.

Rom 3:23-24

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; [24] Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

Rom 3:9-12

What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; [10] As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: [11] There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. [12] They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

- All fall short and all need the same help to overcome sin.

4. This sin nature that is in man cannot be overcome by our own efforts.

Rom 8:5-8

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. [6] For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. [7] Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. [8] So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

- The natural man's mind cannot submit to the law of God for it is hostile because of the sin that dwells in the natural man. The natural man is any man who does not have a relationship with the Lord.

Rom 7:14-25

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. [15] For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. [16] If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. [17] Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. [18] For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. [19] For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. [20] Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. [21] I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. [22] For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: [23] But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. [24] O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? [25] I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

- When we are dominated by sin, we can see what would be the right way to go, but sin will not allow us to accomplish it. There is nothing that we can do by our own efforts to change this.

5. Many people strive to accomplish acceptance with God by their own efforts.

Prov 14:12

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

- We may think that we can do things our own way, but it will only lead us to death. Sin as the controlling factor in the natural man will dominate him. Remember, the natural man's mind is hostile to the law of God.

Jer 10:23

O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.

- We cannot direct our own way, that is why the Lord made a provision for us through his son, Jesus Christ.

SUMMARY

1. Through Adam, all mankind have become sinners.
2. As sinners, the penalty that we have to pay is death.
3. All of us are sinners in God's eyes.
4. The natural man (man without the relationship the Lord prescribes) cannot walk with God since his mind is hostile to God's way.
5. Our own efforts will only lead us to death, even if we think it is a good way.
6. God has provided a way out of this sin through his son, Jesus Christ.

Repentance from dead works

In order to understand how to be free from sin, we must look at some other biblical truths that are considered the primary or beginning truths of Christ.

Hebrews 6:1-3

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, [2] Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. [3] And this will we do, if God permit.

Definitions:

Principles: elementary and preliminary, point of origin

Doctrine: teaching

Laying: putting down with the implication of permanence

Foundation: supporting base for a structure

- This scripture is speaking about the beginning truths that are to be permanently placed in our hearts as a support base for our Christian walk. We must have these in place in order to continue to build our understanding of the deeper truths of God.

1. What is repentance from dead works?

Repentance is a change of mind, a change of direction. In the sense of this scripture, it is speaking about is a change of mind by turning from our own efforts and turning to God's way. If you are turning from one thing, you must be turning toward something else. We will see that the scriptures will add more to this basic definition as we continue. The next part of the verse speaks of faith toward God, which is what we are to turn to. We will look at that aspect as well in a separate lesson, but understand that they are closely related and will be overlapping in our studies of each.

2. What are dead works?

Dead works are the activities that we as humans do in an attempt to be right with God. They are works that before God produce nothing as far as righteousness is concerned.

3. The truth causes us to see our condition or position in life along with hope of how to change.

a). We have looked at sin and how all men have sinned. We have seen that man cannot deal with sin on his own.

b). God gave the law to the children of Israel for the purpose of leading them to Christ. Galatians 3:21-25

Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. [22] But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

[23] But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. [24] Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. [25] But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

- The law was to lead them to faith by showing them that sin was exceedingly sinful and that they needed more in their lives.

Romans 3:19-20

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. [20] Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

- The law magnified their sin.

Romans 7:5

For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.

- In our natural state, the law became the lever that sin used to produce death in us.
- God wanted man to really see the state he was in so that the hope he would bring forth would cause them to turn from their own ways and turn to his way.
- As you look through scripture you will see that God set up the tabernacle, the priests, and the offerings that needed to be offered up for cleansing. These were but shadows or types of the true way that he would deal with sin. This enabled the children of Israel to have a relationship to the Lord, but it was to lead to the better way.

Hebrews 10:1-3

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. [2] For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. [3] But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

4. God did not leave man hanging without an answer to the problem of sin.

John 1:29

The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

- John, as well as the other prophets, spoke of the coming redeemer. Here is Jesus, the lamb who will take away the sin of the world.

Romans 3:21-24

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; [22] Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: [23]

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; [24] Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

- There would be redemption of our sins through the lamb of God, Jesus.

- This righteousness comes through faith, not by doing the works of the law.
- God has always dealt with faith. Noah became heir of the righteousness which is by faith, Abraham is called the father of faith, and in Habakkuk 2:4 he says that the just shall live by faith.
- Faith in Christ is what the law was to lead them to.

Romans 9:30-33

What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. [31] But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. [32] Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; [33] As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

- The Jews failed to recognize what Jesus was doing. They wanted to continue to do their own works to attain righteousness, rather than believing on Jesus.

Galatians 3:10-13

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. [11] But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. [12] And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. [13] Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

- No man could keep the law, the law is not based on faith but on their ability to do the deeds.

Romans 10:3

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

- So God gave the Jews the answer to righteousness, that it would be through faith, and they rejected God's way and went about to establish their own righteousness.
- This is what is meant by dead works. Works that will accomplish nothing because God has a different path set up that will meet all the demands of justice, will allow him to remain holy without violating his own truths and standards, will reconcile man to him in a holy relationship, and so much more!

5. He has the answer for us.

Hebrews 9:13-15

For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: [14] How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? [15] And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive

the promise of eternal inheritance.

- Christ's sacrifice will cleanse or purify our consciences from thinking and doing dead works, works that are an attempt at our own righteousness. The realization of what Christ has accomplished will enable our hearts and minds to cease from our own ways and walk in his.

6. Repentance comes after the truth strikes home.

2 Tim. 2:24-26

And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, [25] In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; [26] And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

- When we hear and acknowledge the truth, our hearts should turn to a repentant state.

2 Cor. 7:8-11

For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. [9] Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance:

for

ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. [10] For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. [11] For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.

- Sorrow is a part of repentance but not the whole of it. Godly sorrow brings a change of mind that brings a change in the course of the individual's life.

Matthew 21:28-32

But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. [29] He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. [30] And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. [31] Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. [32] For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

- Repentance is not a matter of what a person says he will do, it is what he does.

Psalm 119:59-60

I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. [60] I made haste, and

delayed not to keep thy commandments.

- I thought and I turned.
- God has given us his way, his burden is light, we can walk free from sin, but we cannot accomplish it in our own deeds.

Faith Toward God

In our lesson on repentance from dead works, we touched upon faith as the plan of God rather than by the works of the law. We will go a bit deeper regarding faith.

1. Abraham, the father of faith.

Abraham is regarded as the 'father' of faith. In fact, most people will look to Gen. 15:6 where Abraham believes in the Lord and it is counted unto him as righteousness as the beginning point of his faith in God. It started several years earlier than that.

Acts 7:2-4

And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, [3] And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. [4] Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

- Charran is the same as Haran in the next set of verses.

Genesis 12:1-3

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: [2] And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: [3] And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Galatians 3:8-9

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. [9] So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

- Abraham was 70 yrs. old when he left Ur of the Chaldees. This was when God spoke to him about blessing him and that all the families of the earth would be blessed in him. Galatians states that this particular promise was the gospel in a nutshell, that faith would be the way.
- Abraham had faith at this point because he believed God and left Ur of the Chaldees.

Genesis 15:5-6

And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. [6] And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

- This word came to Abraham anywhere from 10-16 yrs. after God told him to leave Ur of Chaldee. We know that Abraham believed God before this, but this is the point in time where it is stated that it is counted to him for righteousness.
- The word 'believed in' is pretty interesting. The primary meaning is that of providing stability and confidence, like a baby would find in the arms of a parent. Isn't this a

wonderful description of what trusting confidence is? That is the confidence that Abraham had. The New Testament has a similar truth in Mark 10:15 "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." Children have a simplicity about them, especially a simplicity in their beliefs.

- I lean with the commentators who believe that Abraham's faith or belief was in the Lord primarily and in the promises secondarily. If you believe the one who promises, you will believe what they say.
- The main premise from here in the first book of the Old Testament is a truth that rings true all the way through the scriptures- faith is counted for righteousness.

Habakkuk 2:4

Gal. 3:11

Heb. 10:38

- The just shall live by faith.

2. The gospel reveals the answer.

Romans 1:16-17

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. [17] For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

- In the gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed by faith to faith. This 'righteousness of God' is not only talking about an attribute of God. It is speaking about what Christ has done through his birth, life of obedience, death, and resurrection. It is speaking about the righteousness that God has given to us through grace. It speaks of atonement, reconciliation, forgiveness, power of sin being broken, mercy, regeneration, and all that has been made available to us because of Christ. The gospel of Christ reveals the 'righteousness of God' in what we have through Christ, as well as showing how God is righteous in his dealings with man.
- Being revealed from faith to faith is interpreted many ways. The word from means from out of, out from, forth from, from.
- What this says to me is that the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel as springing from faith as it's source (or simply that it is a righteousness based on faith) and it is revealed to faith. Until this time, the Jews felt that their salvation was in keeping the law. The gospel shows that the law was meant to be a school-master to lead them to faith in Christ (**Gal. 3:24**). God's righteousness has been based on faith from the beginning.
- As you continue in Romans, as well as many other parts of the scriptures, you will see that the law and the prophets gave witness to the righteousness of God apart from the law (**Rom. 3:20-22**). The righteousness of God is based on faith.
- You will also see that you can only receive it by faith. In **Rom. 10:16-17**, you will see that many heard but did not believe and therefore did not receive the

- righteousness of God. In **Rom. 9:30-10:13** we see that the Jews did not find the righteousness of God because they did not seek it by faith.
- **Heb.11:6** says that without faith, it is impossible to please God.
- The last part of this verse (Rom. 1:17) bears out to me the explanation that I have given, in that, 'the just shall live by faith'. This verse was used by Paul to verify his statement that the righteousness of God has its source in faith and is revealed to faith. As we hear that truth and realize that we do not have to earn our way into heaven, our belief in that gospel is faith and we receive the righteousness of God through Christ.

3. How do we get faith?

Romans 1:18-20,25

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; [19] Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. [20] For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

- God has revealed himself to man, including his eternal power and Godhead. Man has chosen to turn the truth of God into a lie.
- Ps. 19:1-6 speaks of the principle of creation showing forth knowledge.
- Heb. 11:6 says that without faith you cannot please God. He that comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those that seek him.
- One place to begin to believe in God is by looking at the creation with an open heart. You can begin to see the invisible things of God and have your heart start turning towards him. This viewing of creation can help you begin to believe that he is and get you to begin crying out to him and then he can really begin to reveal himself and his ways to you.
- This is for those who feel that they cannot even believe that there is a God but yet are searching for some answers to life. This is a beginning point to learning how to believe God.

Romans 10:17

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- The verses prior to this one were talking about the gospel being preached. In Rom. 10:8-13 it says that we preach the word of faith-that if we confess with our mouth and believe in our hearts that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. It is a word of faith because there are no works attached to it. Those who 'hear' the word of faith, will respond in faith.
- Do you want faith described in a simpler way? Read this next verse.

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must

believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

- Do you believe that he is? Do you believe that he will reward you as you earnestly seek him? That is what it takes to please him. This is faith.

Heb 6:12-7:1

12 That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

13 For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself,

14 Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

16 For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

17 Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

20 Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

- God wants us to follow those who through faith and patience receive the promises.
- He then begins to show how he added his oath to the promise.
- It says that he was willing (being minded) to more abundantly show how unchangeable his counsel (promise or purpose) is by confirming it with an oath.
- Now we have two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, that are given to us as a strong (mighty, powerful) consolation (encouragement, call to one's side, exhortation, urging to pursue a course of conduct) to seize the hope set before us.
- A hope is set before us, how do we grab ahold of or seize hope?
- This needs to be thought over carefully. God gives us two solid, unchangeable, absolute reasons why we can trust him and these should be a strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. When Abraham 'believed' God, it was stability and confidence, as a baby would find in the arms of a parent. Isn't this what the Father is trying to produce in us (by two unchangeable things) so that we would lay hold of (grasp, seize) the hope set before us.
- Other scriptures will show that hope comes first, then faith to grab hold of it. In this case, God gives extra reasons for us to be encouraged or urged to pursue seizing the hope set before us.
- As you will see, hope and faith go hand in hand.

Col 1:3-6

3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for

you,

4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

- They heard of the hope and they had faith in Christ.
- Hope and faith go hand in hand. If there is no hope set before us, there is no need for faith. Faith is the realization of hope (as we will see shortly).

Rom 4:18-22

18 Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb:

20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

22 And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

- Against natural hope (there wasn't much because his natural body was considered dead by him) he believed in the spiritual hope that the Lord gave.
- Verse 19 says he was not weak in faith. Believing in hope is faith.
- Hope was given to him by the Lord and he believed it.
- He was completely, fully persuaded or convinced (to be absolutely sure, complete certainty) that he was able to perform what was promised (stability and confidence, as a baby would find in the arms of a parent).
- Faith is believing God and what he says.

Heb 3:6

6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Heb 3:14

14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

Heb 3:19

19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Heb 4:1-2

1 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it

2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

- As you read the full context of this chapter, it will help you to get a better grasp on the

truth shown here. We need to hold on to the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. Why? Because the gospel was preached unto them and they did not mix it with faith. The implication here is that the beginning of our confidence is speaking about faith.

- We hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.
- Again, hope first and then faith in it.

Col 1:23

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, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

- There is the hope of the gospel, by continuing in the faith you will not be moved away from it.
- In order to have faith, we must see the hope that God offers. This would be true for healing, salvation, restoration of relationships, family relationships, daily living, etc. What does God say about these areas? We know that in 1 Cor. 2:9-16 the Spirit of God will reveal the things of God to us and that he has given us the mind of Christ. That means that through the scriptures and by the Spirit he will set things before me, he will give me hope, and I will have to choose to believe him or not, choose to respond the way he desires or not.
- Without faith, things hoped for would have no reality.

4. How do we know we have faith?

Hebrews 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- Let's look at some of the ways these words are defined before we put the verse in a way where we can understand it, but yet not deviate from the scriptural principles.

Substance:

- a) a setting under (support)
- b) the "reality" of the things hoped for which have a transcendent quality
- c) that which underlies the apparent, hence, reality, essence, substance
- d) basis, foundation; reality
- e) a strong claim can be made for realization
- f) that which is the basis of something, hence, assurance guarantee, confidence (with the obj. sense).
- g) in faith things hoped for become realized, or things hoped for take on reality.
- h) a standing under, support
- i) It here may signify a title-deed, as giving a guarantee, or reality.

Evidence:

- a) objective that denotes "demonstration" rather than "conviction.
- b) the proof of things one cannot see.
- c) faith means to be sure about things unseen (in contrast to confidence in the temporal).
- d) a proof, that by which a thing is proved or tested.

- e) that by which invisible things are proved (and we are convinced of their reality).
 - f) proof or persuasion.
 - g) thus faith is confidence in what is hoped for, since it is the divinely given conviction of things unseen.
 - h) a proof of the things we cannot see or evidence that what we cannot see really exists.
 - i) faith means to be sure about things unseen (in contrast to confidence in the temporal).
- This verse is not a definition of faith. It is a verse that shows how faith functions with hope. It also helps us to discern if we have faith in a given situation.

After searching the scriptures and the different definitions, I put together what I believe this verse is saying:

Faith is the realization that I hold the title-deed to the thing I hope for in my heart, a divinely given conviction of things that are unseen.

- Read the rest of Hebrews 11 and you will see this truth brought out in the examples that are listed there.
- Abraham had to have some type of divinely given conviction to cause him to leave his homeland and then not even really know where he would be led.
- Noah heard what God said and believed him. By faith (divine conviction of unseen things) moved with fear and prepared the ark.

In my own life, one particular example stands out clearly as an illustration of how we can know when we have faith. In Bible College, during one of the classes, the Lord spoke to my heart and said "Have you ever thought about going to start a new work with Kirk (who happened to be teaching that class)? In my mind I said no, you are going to send me to start a work somewhere. About two weeks later, the same scenario was repeated. Afterward I started thinking about how God spoke to Pharaoh in his dreams and that Joseph told him that since God had spoken twice, the thing was established by God (Gen. 41:14-32). I decided that I would pray and fast to have God give me a clear answer. I needed to know if I was to go with Kirk or not. If I was not to go with him and I did, then I would be out of the will of God and whatever work he did have for me to do would be undone until he got someone else prepared to fill it. It was a big deal for me. After fasting many days, I went to a mid-week service at the church and during the worship time there was a prophecy to the whole church. As the prophecy was being delivered, my heart was leaping for joy, bells and whistles were going off because he brought forth a divinely given conviction to me on what I should do out of that prophecy. By the way, it was to go with Kirk as the Lord first suggested to me.

What I am saying is this, God gives us some type of hope or direction like "have you ever thought about going to start a new work with Kirk?" I did not have faith to grab ahold of that word. It was as I sought him that he gave me the title-deed, the conviction, the total assurance that this was what he wanted me to do through that word of prophecy. That assurance has been the thing that has kept me in times of affliction, uncertainty, and

disappointment. Knowing that I am where I am supposed to be is priceless in the spiritual battle we are waging.

- You will know that you know.
- The next section will help by eliminating things that men call walking by faith.

5. What faith is not.

- Faith is not mental acknowledgement. We are told to read the scriptures, become familiar with God, his works, his Son, his ways, etc. If we are doing this faithfully, we will begin to get a picture of God in our hearts. We will even get faith in many areas because faith comes by 'hearing' the Word of God with an open heart. We will also have a mental recognition of certain aspects of God, but not necessarily the faith to act upon it.
- We may know that the Lord heals, that he healed all that came to him, and that he only healed some that he went to. We mentally acknowledge the truth of healing and because we are desiring to be used by him we sometimes say, "I don't know if God will heal or not, but I am going to step out in faith and see what he does." This is not faith, it is hope, it is desire, it is presumption, it is many things, but it is not stepping out in faith. Faith is having the conviction of God telling you "go lay your hands on them and see what I will do." When he is giving you a title-deed of what you are hoping for, that thing will be accomplished whatever it may be.
- For many people, faith is stepping out, hoping God comes through. Is it any wonder that people are double-minded and do not receive anything from the Lord (Jas. 1:6-8)? They are always wondering am I doing the right thing, should I have done something else, maybe I'll look like a fool if God doesn't come through. Faith is having the title-deed in your heart.
- When I got saved, I didn't cry for joy like the lady next to me, I wasn't sure naturally that anything had happened until I stood up from the altar and the Holy Spirit said "you will never be the same again". Then I knew that I had it. It wasn't through responding as others did, it was by the divine conviction of the unseen things.
- Faith is not stepping out on a limb with a hope that it holds. Faith is the Lord telling you or convicting you or somehow expressing to you that you should go ahead and step out because there is nothing to fear. When you know that you know, you will not struggle with doubts, fears, or insecurities.

The primary meaning of belief (faith) is that of providing stability and confidence, like a baby would find in the arms of a parent. If you have that, why in the world would you be worried?

6. Faith toward God.

Hebrews 2:3-4

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; [4] God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

- God has given us tremendous hope of overcoming our sins and actually becoming

sons of God, members of his family, having eternal life, an inheritance in heaven, and so much more that is offered through salvation in his Son, Jesus Christ.

- As you hear the hope of the gospel, the divine conviction of the reality of these things will cause you to make a choice in either believing him, or in rejecting it.
- The thing in our hearts that says this is true, can be received by responding as God desires. It will usually be something like this: When we hear the truth of the gospel, there is a recognition of our sinfulness and how we fall short of God's ways, then a desire to change direction in our life (repentance), and we believe and accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord.
- When we believe and respond to God's salvation, we are responding in faith.

SALVATION

The answer that the Lord gives us to the sin problem is salvation through Jesus Christ.

There are different terms used in the Christian world today that are referring to this salvation: being born again, being saved, salvation, born of the Spirit, etc. Usually, when these terms are being used, they are speaking about the work that Christ did in order to set us free from sin and make us acceptable to the Father.

1. All of us begin our life with a birth. Jesus referred to this as being ‘born of water’.

John 3:1-8

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: [2] The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. [3] Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. [4] Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? [5] Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into 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] Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. [8] The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

- Verse six clarifies that the being born of water is our fleshly birth and that there is also a spiritual birth.

2. The lesson on sin shows us that there is no hope at all for this natural man because of the sin factor.

3. Jesus was the only man born into this world without sin.

Matthew 1:18-23

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. [19] Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. [20] But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. [21] And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. [22] Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, [23] Behold, a virgin shall be with

- child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.
- Jesus was not born of the human male seed (which could only reproduce after it's own kind-which is sinful). The Holy Spirit came upon Mary and Jesus was born sinless.

4. There are several reasons why Jesus, creator of the universe, would take the form of a man.

1 Tim. 3:16

- And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.
- Did he have to be manifest in the flesh? The following verses will show that the answer is yes.

John 1:14

- And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.
- The preceding verses (Jn. 1:1,10) show that the creator was stepping down into the world of the fallen creation.

Galatians 4:4-5

- But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, [5] To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.
- Jesus came in the flesh so that he could redeem those who were under the law from the curse of the law, by becoming a curse for them (Gal. 3:13). That curse was upon all who were of the works of the law. Whoever did not continue doing all things written in the law were cursed. Since no one could keep it, Jesus became a curse for all the Jews that were under the law. Without Christ, all who were under the law would have to face the curse of the law.

Ephes. 2:13-18

- But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. [14] For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; [15] Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; [16] And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: [17] And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. [18] For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.
- Jesus came in the flesh, and in his flesh abolished the hostility between Jews and Gentiles. Now the Gentiles who were far off are able to enter into the presence of God by the Spirit.

- Under the first covenant, the Jews were the ones who had the promises of God. In reality, they were under the curse because they could not keep it. The Gentiles were without God, without the covenant, and without hope. Jesus tore down the thing which the Jews could not keep and that the Gentiles were no part of. By doing so, he enabled all of us to enter into a relationship with him by his grace through faith.

1 Cor. 15:21

For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

- In order for that resurrection of the dead to take place, there had to be a man that could be raised from the dead. Jesus is the only one who could meet the qualifications, as you will see in the rest of this lesson. He was the first-fruits from the dead.

Hebrews 2:14-15

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; [15] And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

- He himself became like us so that he could, through death in his body of flesh, destroy the devil. This point becomes clearer as you see the rest of the scriptures and principles found in this study.
- He had to be flesh and blood in order to die.
- Leviticus 17:11 "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." By becoming flesh and blood, he could provide that which makes atonement for the soul.
- Without a resurrection his death would have been meaningless. That will be covered under the resurrection section.

Philip. 2:7-8

But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: [8] And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Hebrews 10:5-10

Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: [6] In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. [7] Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. [8] Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; [9] Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. [10] By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

- He took upon himself a human body in which he displayed obedience.

- In the context of the book of Hebrews, we see that the animal sacrifices were good for the cleansing of the flesh, but not being able to cleanse the consciences of the people. From the beginning, God had planned for his son to come and be that sacrifice (Rev. 13:8).
- 1 Sam. 15:22 "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." Jesus came in the flesh to obey his father, to do his will, even unto death. That obedience to death, becoming the atoning sacrifice for sin, was a once and for all sacrifice for us. He did what no animal sacrifice or any other human being could do!
- Jesus took away the first covenant with its sacrifices and established the second which has atonement for sin, cleansing of conscience, laws written in our hearts and minds, the Spirit living in us, and a boldness to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

Romans 8:3

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

- The Law could not pardon or change the heart of individuals. As a standard of righteousness, it could point out our shortcomings, but could not fix them. In 2 Cor. 3:7 the law is called the ministration of death and in 2 Cor. 3:9 the law is called the ministration of condemnation. (The law in itself is good and righteous. It was sin dwelling in us, rebelling against the law that caused it to condemn us).
- Jesus came in the flesh (without sin) for the very purpose of judging sin in the flesh. **1 Peter 2:24** "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." He himself took our sins upon himself and bore them on the cross.

Col. 1:20-22

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 unproveable in his sight:

- He made peace with us and the Father by his blood, we are now reconciled to God. It is through the death that he faced in his flesh. There are other places in scripture that closely relate his blood and his death (Rom. 5:8-11, Heb. 9:14-15).

Hebrews 4:15

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 2:16-18

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. [17] Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. [18] For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

- He took upon himself a physical body like ours so that he could be a high priest who understands what we are facing, make reconciliation for us, and be able to bring aid to those who are tempted.
- He took on him the seed of Abraham because the promise given to Abraham in Gen. 22:18 said that ‘in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.’ In Gal. 3:16-17, that seed is described as Christ. Jesus came in the flesh, in the lineage of Abraham, in order that the promise given to Abraham might be fulfilled.

Hebrews 10:20

By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

- It is a freshly made and living, not lifeless, way which he has caused to go into effect for us through the veil. That way is through his flesh. Just read back in verses 1-19 of this same chapter to see the context (verses 7-10 are especially clear about it being his body, his flesh).

5. Jesus died for our sins.

Isaiah 53:12

Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- Hebrew definitions for bare: to lift, bear up, carry, take, to remove
- John 1:29 The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

2 Cor. 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

- God made him who knew no sin to be sin for us. It is evident that Jesus was holy and pure, yet our sins were placed upon him.
- This O.T. example shows what Christ did for us: **Leviticus 16:21-22** And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: [22] And the goat shall **bear** upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness. (This word bear is the same as in Isa. 53:12.) Jesus, the sinless one, took our sins and bore them.
- Our sins were borne by him. His righteousness was imputed to us.

1 Peter 2:24

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

- We are now considered dead to sins.

Hebrews 9:26-28

- For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. [27] And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: [28] So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.
- Jesus is the one who put away (abolition, disannulling, put away, rejection) sin by the sacrifice of himself, he became our sin-offering. He was also the sin-bearer, the one who took upon himself our sins.

Isaiah 53:1-5,10,12

Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? [2] For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. [3] He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows (*pain, suffering, sorrow*), and acquainted with grief (*sickness; whether physical or spiritual*): and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. [4] Surely he hath borne (*taken away*) our griefs (*sickness; whether physical or spiritual*), and carried our sorrows (*pain; physical or mental*): yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. [5] But he was wounded (*to pierce or bore*) for our transgressions (*revolt against the standard*), he was bruised (*to be crushed, to be contrite, to be broken*) for our iniquities (*to deviate from the standard or to twist the standard*): the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

10 Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise (*to be crushed, to be contrite, to be broken*) him; he hath put him to grief (*made him sick in the sense of mental anguish, but, could also apply in the physical sense, i.e. he has wounded him*): when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare (*taken away*) the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

- Italicized definitions in parentheses emphasized by me.
- He has taken away our sickness.
- In verse 12, it is the same word 'taken away' regarding our sins.

1 John 3:5

- And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.
- He was manifested (making known or visible what has been hidden or unknown) in the flesh. 1 Jn. 4:2-3 states that every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the

flesh is of God. The context of that portion of scripture is talking about the Son being made known (manifest) in the flesh for the purpose of taking away our sins.

6. His resurrection is a big part of the whole plan.

1 Cor. 15:3-4

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; [4] And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

- This is a vital part of the gospel message.

1 Cor. 15:17

And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

- If Christ was not raised from the dead, our faith is empty and we are still held captive by sin.

Romans 4:25

Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

- Jesus bore our offences on the cross, but his resurrection from the dead shows that the sacrifice of his life was acceptable to the Father and that he has overcome sin and its end result which is death.

Romans 1:4

And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

- Rom. 8:11 shows that it was the Spirit of the Lord that raised Jesus up from the dead. 1 Pet. 3:18 says that he was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. Eph. 1: 19-20 talks about the working of his mighty power which he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead.
- It was with power that he was declared or defined as the Son of God. The resurrection showed that!

1 Cor. 15:20-21

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. [21] For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

- He is the firstfruits. If the firstfruit is holy the lump is holy. If resurrection comes by him, it is made available for those who are his and are in him.

1 Peter 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

- The resurrection has begotten us unto a living hope, one that reaches into the veil of the heavenly holiest of holies (Heb. 6:17-20).

7. How do we receive this salvation?**Romans 10:8-11**

But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; [9] That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. [10] For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. [11] For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

- The previous two lessons dealt with repentance and faith. Turn from your own ways after hearing the good news, believe the word of God, see that salvation comes from believing that Jesus came in the flesh, bore our sins on the cross, and rose again from the dead.

8. He gave us his Spirit.**Romans 8:15-17**

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. [16] The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: [17] And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

- When we believe as shown in Rom. 10, he gives us his Holy Spirit to dwell in our hearts. The Holy Spirit lets us know that we are children of God!

Ephes. 1:13-14

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, [14] Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

- His Holy Spirit is the down payment. It is to show us that God will accomplish all that he has promised. The Holy Spirit is a source of comfort, encouragement, and strength to us. He is much more as well and really a topic by himself.

9. When we believe on Jesus and are saved, what happens in our lives?**2 Cor. 5:17-19**

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. [18] And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

- Things change in our hearts! Jesus has died in our place so that we may now live a life that is pleasing to him.

Col. 1:13-14

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the

kingdom of his dear Son: [14] In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

- When we come to Christ, we are delivered, set free, from the kingdom of darkness and we become part of his kingdom. He has paid the ransom price for our freedom.

Col. 2:13

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- We are totally forgiven by Christ!

Hebrews 10:19-22

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, [20] By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; [21] And having an high priest over the house of God; [22] Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

- We can now come into the Most Holy Place, into the very presence of God. He takes away our guilty conscience and gives us confidence to enter before our Father.

1 Cor. 2:8-13

Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. [9] But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. [10] But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. [11] For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. [12] Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. [13] Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

- His Holy Spirit will now show us things that we could not see or understand before, even the deep things of God.

SUMMARY

1. Salvation from sin comes only through Christ. In John 14:6 Jesus says, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me.'
2. Jesus had to come in a fleshly body in order to be able to redeem us. As you saw in the scripture verses above, there are many reasons why he had to come in the flesh.

3. In his death on the cross, he bore our sins. He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
4. He was raised from the dead. This showed that though he had borne our sin for us and tasted death, death could not keep him under its control. He defeated death!
5. His being raised from the dead also showed that the Father accepted his sacrifice for us. He tasted death for us so that we can now live with him and for him.
6. We receive this salvation by faith. By believing the truth of the gospel, repenting (we discussed this in the last two lessons) from our own ways, and then yielding our lives to him and his ways.
7. When we come to Christ, many things happen:
 - a) We become a new creation, everything is made new.
 - b) We are delivered from darkness into the kingdom of Christ.
 - c) He totally forgives us and delivers us from sin.
 - d) Our guilty conscience is cleansed.
 - e) We now have confidence to enter into the very presence of God.
 - f) He gives us his Spirit, who in turn will reveal the deep truths of God to us.
8. There is so much more that he does for us beside the truths covered here. Your personal reading and study, future lessons, and sermons that you hear will continue to unfold the wonderful grace of God that we find in his son, Jesus Christ.

Water Baptism

There are many disagreements in the church today regarding water baptism. I have read through many of these, as well as searching out the scriptures. The following lesson is the simplified view of what I see the scriptures telling us. These are not all of the scriptures regarding baptism and they are not meant to be an apologetic type of teaching. It is meant to reduce a truth with great spiritual implications back to a place where we can understand it.

1. What is water baptism?

The definition of the word baptize from several references: *to dip in or under, to dye, to immerse, the drawing of water by dipping a vessel into another.*

Webster's dictionary for the definition of immersion: *baptism by complete submersion of the person in water.*

- This is what we believe water baptism is. As we continue this study, you will begin to see a clearer picture of this truth.

John 3:23

because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

- They went to this place because there was much water.

Acts 8:36-39

And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. [39] And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

- Both of them went down into the water, they came up out of the water.
- If it were not complete submersion, you could get by with a lot less water.
- You must be a believer in order to be baptized scripturally. Being born again is the first step, just as the eunuch believed first and was baptized right after.

2. Is it important?

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. [19] Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: [20] Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

- The disciples were given a charge, teach all nations to observe all that I have commanded you.
- Baptism is a command. In Acts 10:48, Peter commanded that they be baptized.

3. Should I wait until I have greater understanding before I do it? NO!

Acts 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized:

Acts 8:12-13 But when they believed,... they were baptized, both men and women.

Acts 8:34-36 See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?

Acts 9:18-19 and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

Acts 10:47-48 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? [48] And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

Acts 16:14-15 that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. [15] And when she was baptized, and her household

Acts 16:31-33 And he took them the same hour of the night,...and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

Acts 19:3-6 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. [4] Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. [5] When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. [6] And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

- Notice that in all these examples, the people responded right away, the jailor and his family even getting baptized in the middle of the night!

4. Isn't baptism just a public display of your inward commitment to Christ? NO!

a). If that is all that it is, then who was there to really view the jailor's commitment in the middle of the night? He wasn't making a declaration to the church.

b). Let's look at **Rom. 6:3-12**

- Our old man (old nature) was crucified with Christ on the cross.
- When we are baptized into Christ, we are baptized into his death.
- Buried with him by baptism into death.
- United together in the likeness of his death.
- As Christ was raised up from the dead, so we shall be in the likeness of His resurrection and walk in newness of life.
- If dead with Christ, we shall also live with him.
- He lives unto God, consider yourselves dead to sin and alive unto God.
- These are truths that become applicable into our lives. We are to reckon or consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. This means that something actually happens in our hearts and lives because of our obedience to him.
- Baptism by immersion also fits the type of the burial shown in this passage.
- This definitely affects us in how we live our lives today.

c). **Col 2:11-12 AMP**

11 In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision not made with hands, but in a [spiritual] circumcision [performed by] Christ by stripping off the body of the flesh (the whole corrupt, carnal nature with its passions and lusts).

12 [Thus you were circumcised when] you were buried with Him in [your] baptism, in which you were also raised with Him [to a new life] through [your] faith in the working of God [as displayed] when He raised Him up from the dead.

Col 3:1-4,8-11 AMP

1 IF THEN you have been raised with Christ [to a new life, thus sharing His resurrection from the dead], aim at and seek the [rich, eternal treasures] that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. [Ps 110:1.]

2 And set your minds and keep them set on what is above (the higher things), not on the things that are on the earth.

3 For [as far as this world is concerned] you have died, and your [new, real] life is hidden with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, Who is our life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in [the splendor of His] glory.

8 But now put away and rid yourselves [completely] of all these things: anger, rage, bad feeling toward others, curses and slander, and foulmouthed abuse and shameful utterances from your lips!

9 Do not lie to one another, for you have stripped off the old (unregenerate) self with its evil practices,

10 And have clothed yourselves with the new [spiritual self], which is [ever in the process of being] renewed and remolded into [fuller and more perfect knowledge upon] knowledge after the image (the likeness) of Him Who created it. [Gen 1:26.]

11 [In this new creation all distinctions vanish.] There is no room for and there can be neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, [nor difference between nations whether alien] barbarians or Scythians [who are the most savage of all], nor slave or free man; but Christ is all and in all [everything and everywhere, to all men, without distinction of person].

- There is a spiritual circumcision that takes place, stripping off the body of the flesh.
- This circumcision takes place in water baptism.
- Buried in baptism and raised to a new life.
- This is *through our faith in the working of God* as displayed or made evident when He raised Jesus from the dead. Remember Rom. 6 says we are raised with him and consider ourselves dead to sin.
- Chapter 3 begins to talk about what we should do since we are raised with him. This raising with Him is related to what happened in baptism. See how it affects how we live? Baptism is more than an outward display, there are life-changing truths that come into our lives through faith in the work God has done.
- Verse 11 is also mentioned in some other areas of scripture that we will be looking at as well.

d). Galatians 3:25-28

But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. [26] For ye

are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. [27] For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. [28] There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

- If you are baptized into Christ, you have clothed yourselves with Christ. Is this just a colorful saying or have we really put on Christ?
- There is no Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male or female, but we are one in Him.

e). 1 Cor 12:13 AMP

13 For by [means of the personal agency of] one [Holy] Spirit we were all, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, baptized [and by baptism united together] into one body, and all made to drink of one [Holy] Spirit.

- It is a work of the Spirit.
- We are baptized into one body.
- Whether Jew or Gentile, slave or free.

f). 1 Peter 3:21-4:2 AMP

21 And baptism, which is a figure [of their deliverance], does now also save you [from inward questionings and fears], not by the removing of outward body filth [bathing], but by [providing you with] the answer of a good and clear conscience (inward cleanness and peace) before God [because you are demonstrating what you believe to be yours] through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

22[And He] has now entered into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with [all] angels and authorities and powers made subservient to Him.

4:1 SO, SINCE Christ suffered in the flesh for us, for you, arm yourselves with the same thought and purpose [patiently to suffer rather than fail to please God]. For whoever has suffered in the flesh [having the mind of Christ] is done with [intentional] sin [has stopped pleasing himself and the world, and pleases God], 2 So that he can no longer spend the rest of his natural life living by [his] human appetites and desires, but [he lives] for what God wills.

- Jesus was resurrected. In water baptism, we are united in the likeness of his resurrection, we are putting on Christ, and by arming ourselves with the same mind that he had, we will no longer live our lives according to the lusts of men.
- We have a good and clear conscience before God for we are living as Christ, to the will of God.

g). In baptism, we are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

- Father is a title, not a name. Son is a title, not a name. Holy Ghost is a title, not a name.

Father-Lord: Isa. 42:8; Exod. 15:3

Son-Jesus: Luke 1:31; Luke 2:21

Holy Ghost-Christ: Col. 1:27 "Christos" anointed, Acts 10:38 and 1 John 2:20,27 Jesus

became the anointed when he received the anointing.

- The triune name of our triune God was given to Jesus.
- All power was given to him. Matt. 28:18
- All the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him. Col. 2:9
- It was essential that the fulness of the name of the Godhead be his.
- The fulness of the name of God was not given until Peter revealed it at Pentecost. Because Jesus must first have died, been resurrected, and ascended to his place with the Father.

Acts 2:32-36

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. [33] Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. [34] For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, [35] Until I make thy foes thy footstool. [36] Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

- We then are baptized into Christ and receive the family name.
- Also, in Exod. 20:24, it says that wherever he records his name, he will come and bless.

SUMMARY OF THIS SECTION

1. We are buried by baptism into death and united together in the likeness of his death.
2. There is a circumcision that takes place in water baptism. It is done by the Lord.
3. We are raised in the likeness of his resurrection and walk in newness of life.
4. We are baptized into Christ.
5. We are baptized into one body.
6. All who are baptized into Christ have clothed themselves with Christ.
7. We walk in this newness of life through faith in the working of God in raising up Christ.
8. Baptism causes us to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive unto God. We can walk in a good conscience before God because we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection.
9. We take on the family name.
10. You will find that as you grow in Christ, your comprehension of these truths will also be increased. Review them periodically so that they stay fresh in your heart and that they can bring greater understanding of God's work in your life, and also that they remain fresh in your heart in order for you to be able to share with others.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

1. When did it happen in the scriptures?

Acts 2:1-21

- When the day of Pentecost arrived, it was the first time in scripture that we see people being baptized in the Holy Spirit. It happens several times in scripture after this and also is available to all believers, including those in this present age, as we shall see throughout the rest of this lesson.
- It is not called the baptism of the Holy Spirit in this portion of scripture, but we see Peter in Acts 11 saying that the gentiles had the Holy Spirit fall on them as on them (the Jews) at the beginning. Then he remembers the word "...but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost." (Acts 11:15-17).
- What happened to the disciples in Acts 2 was the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

2. It was foretold in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament.

Joel 2:28-32

- The prophet Joel mentions it.

Acts 2:16-21

- Peter plainly declares that "this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."

3. Do we have any scriptural examples of people receiving the baptism of the Spirit?

- Yes, there are five examples listed in the New Testament. We will look at all five of them and then do a comparison of the five.

Example one:

Acts 2:1-21

Example four:

Acts 8:12-24

Example two:

Acts 10:44-48

Example five:

Acts 9:10-19

Example three:

Acts 19:1-7

4. The common thread is that they spoke with tongues.

Example one: Acts 2:1-21

- They were filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke with other tongues.

Example two: Acts 10:44-48

- The Holy Ghost fell on those who heard the word and they spoke with tongues. There is no mention here of anyone understanding it or interpreting it.

Example three: Acts 19:1-7

- These disciples were not Christians yet. They were followers of John and had

received his baptism and were looking for him who was to come. When Paul clarifies that John was pointing to believing on Jesus, they were baptized in the name of Jesus. Then Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

- It is clear from these three examples that as people received the baptism of the Spirit that they spoke with tongues.
- Speaking in tongues is the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- There is no other scriptural evidence.

5. What does speaking in tongues mean?

In examples one, two, and three you will see that in each one of these the people spoke in tongues. What we have to look at first is what does it mean to speak in tongues?

A) What are new tongues?

Mark 16:17 KJV

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

The word new:

- Various dictionaries have it translated as a new kind, unheard of, new in nature, or not known before.
- Speaking in a language that you did not learn is definitely uncommon and unheard of.

B) What are other tongues?

Acts 2:4,16,33 KJV

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

- In v. 16, 33 it is still speaking concerning the Pentecost experience. “***This***” (what they heard and saw) “***is that***” which Joel spoke of. He has shed forth this which you now ***see and hear***. The people saw the disciples who up to this time were hiding in an upper room come out with tremendous boldness and they heard them speaking with other tongues.

1 Cor 14:21 KJV

21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

The word 'other' as used in the two references above:

- One that is not of the same nature, it is different from their normal language.
- In Acts 2, it really does not change my convictions whether they were speaking totally unknown tongues and the people were miraculously hearing them or if they were speaking languages that they had never learned but others could understand them. The reason that I believe this way is because in Acts 10:46 they heard them speak

with tongues but it doesn't mention that anyone understood it, and then in Acts 11:15-17 as Peter is recounting what took place he says that the same thing happened to the Gentiles as had happened to them at the beginning. They spoke as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance.

1 Cor 14:21 KJV

21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

- People speaking a foreign language. This particular verse is taken from Isa. 28:11-12. It is speaking about a foreign nation coming to take them over, but they still would not hear or get the message.

Summary of section five

1. It is a language that was not learned by the individuals. It was given by the Holy Spirit.
2. In some cases, those who hear it may understand it. Acts 2:4; Acts 10:46; and Acts 11:15-17 are speaking of the baptism of the Spirit and in one case others understood and in the other cases they did not.
3. As you look at 1 Cor. 14, you will see that those tongues were not understood by those around them. We will look closer at that later in section 11.
4. In Mark 16 it says that those who believe will speak in new tongues. We will look at this in more detail later in section 11.

6. What about the other two examples? They didn't speak in tongues.

Example four: Acts 8:12-24

- Simon the sorcerer became a believer, he followed Philip and he was blown away (that's what the KJV word wondered means) by the miracles and signs that were done. Now a little while later the apostles came down and laid hands on the people and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw what was done, he offered money so that he too could do this. What we have to ask ourselves is, what in the world did Simon see that impressed him so much? He did not ask for the ability to do the miracles and signs. If you have ever seen anyone get saved, there is not necessarily any outward sign that would cause you to desire to be able to see that accomplished with others. I believe that he saw the same sign that was in the other three examples and was so impressed that these people could speak in a new language that he desired to be able to do this as well.

Example five: Acts 9:10-19

- Ananias tells Paul that he will receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost. There is no mention of tongues here, but in 1 Cor. 14:18, Paul tells the Corinthians who were all abusing the gift of tongues that he speaks in tongues more than all of them. This is just brought in to show that Paul also spoke in tongues and from the precedent we have seen from the other scriptures, I believe that it came about when he was baptized or filled with the Spirit.

7. What about the rules in 1 Cor. 14 for the use of tongues in the church?

1 Cor. 14 was written to help the Corinthians to get into a proper balance.

- Paul's main emphasis is that all the gifts are to be used in such a way that all are edified. (1 Cor. 14:12)
- Tongues with interpretation is the same as prophecy. (1 Cor. 14:5)
- Tongues without interpretation means that we are like two barbarians who cannot communicate. (1 Cor. 14:11)
- He that speaks in a tongue should pray that he can interpret. (1 Cor. 14:13)
- In the congregation there should be two, at the most three tongues, each having an interpretation. (1 Cor. 14:27)
- If there is no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church. (1 Cor. 14:28)
- Note that these rules are for congregational usage.

8. Do any of the five examples of the baptism of the Holy Spirit violate these rules?

The answer is yes!

Example one: (Acts 1:13-15) Acts 2:1-13

- There were about 120 disciples.
- There is no number mentioned in Acts 2, but the assumption I make from scripture is that the 120 are mentioned and then it says they were all with one accord in one place. I make the assumption that there were 120 or so that were speaking in other languages.
- With 120 people speaking, there were multiple languages being spoken.
- In verse 13, some thought that they were drunk because of the bedlam taking place. It didn't seem to fit in the order that was proposed later on in 1 Cor. 14.
- This example is not the clearest because people were understanding what was said, yet there was enough going on that some just thought it was a bunch of drunks. It did not edify all.

Example two: Acts 10:44-48

- Cornelius had called his friends and relatives over to hear the message. No number is given but we can conclude that there was at least a small group of people. (Acts 10:24)
- They all spoke in tongues, not just two or at the most three.
- There was no interpretation.
- No one said it was inappropriate or out of order.

Example three: Acts 19:1-7

- Twelve men spoke in tongues and prophesied.
- There is no mention made of interpretation.

Example four: Acts 8:12-24

- Since it is unclear as to what Simon saw (I personally am convinced that the manifestation that he beheld was the saints speaking in tongues when the Holy Spirit came upon them), I leave it up to you to see from the weight of scripture what might

have taken place.

- My conviction from scripture is that I believe that there were many people speaking in tongues with no interpreter.

9. How do we reconcile the fact that the rules in 1 Cor. 14 do not always apply?

- My personal conviction from the scriptures is that there is a difference between tongues as the evidence of receiving the baptism of the Spirit and the gift of tongues used in the congregational setting.

<u>Sign</u>	<u>Gift</u>
Mk. 16:17	1 Cor. 12:1,10
Acts 2:4, 11-17, 33	1 Cor. 14:26-28
Acts 19:6	1 Cor. 14:5

- In the five instances that we have depicting the baptism of the Holy Spirit, three clearly have speaking in tongues as the evidence (especially Acts 10:46 ...**for** they heard them speak with tongues, the word 'for'= in view of the fact, because of) and the fourth one has some physical manifestation that causes Simon to desire the ability to impart the same to others, and the fifth example is Paul who later in his writings says that he speaks in tongues even more than the people abusing the gift. We must look at the biblical examples to draw our data.
- Acts 2:38-39 the promise is to them, their children, all afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. If you are called of the Lord, then this is available for you as well. The sign is received by all who are baptized in the Holy Spirit.
- Tongues, as a gift of the Holy Spirit, given for use in the gathering of the saints is different and is to be regulated by the rules in 1 Cor. 14:26-28. Also in 1 Cor. 12, we see that the Holy Spirit distributes the gifts to each man as He wills.

10. Some other factors to consider about the difference between sign and gift.

A. The giver of the particular gift.

- Jesus is the one who gives the promise of the Spirit. In Acts 2:33, it says that *Jesus received* from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost and *has shed forth this* which they *saw and heard*. Jesus is the one who is the giver in this verse and also in the following: **Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5 KJV (these all say pretty much the same)** Matt. 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:
- As people received the baptism of the Spirit from Jesus, they spoke with tongues. (We will have a section that discusses the purpose of these tongues in the believer's life.)
- The giver of the gifts in 1 Cor. 12 is the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 12:11 NIV All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.
- There is a difference in which member of the trinity is giving:
 - A) Jesus gives us the baptism of the Spirit, to any believer, with the sign of speaking

in tongues.

B) The Holy Spirit is the one giving the gifts to whomever he wills, with tongues that is to be used in the congregational setting.

B. The difference in the types of the Old Testament.

There are many things in the O.T. that were types and shadows of the reality of what God was doing. Types and shadows are not a primary source of establishing doctrine (I say this because of the number of foolish doctrines that have been established out of almost nothing but a shadow, without having any N.T. clarification), but they are a very valid part of it. As you read Hebrews and other portions of scripture, you will see how many types and shadows in the O.T. have been made clear.

A) Passover: Passover was an O.T. experience that was really a shadow of a N.T. truth. This is seen in 1 Cor. 5:7 where Christ is called our Passover. Passover represents our salvation in the lamb of God.

B) Pentecost: Pentecost was a feast that followed fifty days after the Passover. It was a separate feast and represented the feast of harvest or first-fruits. In Acts 1:4-8 Jesus tells them that the baptism of the Holy Spirit will empower them to be witnesses unto him in all the world. In 1 Cor. 2:1-4, Paul says that his preaching was in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, not excellency of speech or of wisdom.

- New birth, Water Baptism, and Baptism of the Holy Spirit are all separate teachings, but yet they are all part of the salvation plan (one plan).
- How much more do we need this empowering still today?

C. The things that happened to the disciples themselves in the scriptures.

A) John 20:21-23 Jesus appeared to them and breathed on them, saying receive ye the Holy Spirit. Did Jesus ever do something that was just a play on words? If he said receive ye the Holy Spirit, then did they receive the Holy Spirit right then? I believe that they did and that is similar to our salvation and us being born of the Spirit.

B) Lk. 24:49 This is right before he is taken up into heaven and he tells the disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they are clothed with power from on high. These are men and women who have already received the Holy Spirit and what they are to wait for in Jerusalem is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

- If Jesus felt that it was that important for the early disciples, and that the gift of the Holy Ghost (see context in Acts 2:1-39 for he was speaking of the baptism of the Holy Spirit) was for as many as the Lord our God shall call, then should we be settling for less than what he has designated for us?

11. What would be the purpose of these tongues that you get as a sign of the baptism of the Spirit?

1 Cor. 14:2,4,14,15,16-17

- You speak to God, in the spirit speaking mysteries.
- You edify or build yourself up.
- Your spirit prays.

- You can also sing in the spirit.
- When you pray in tongues, you are giving thanks to God.

Jude 20

- You build up yourself on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit. This is the same principle as in 1 Cor. 14:4
- So we can see that there are benefits to the Lord and also for our personal lives by praying and singing in tongues. 1 Cor. 14:14-15 show us how we can keep a balance. Even though I am blessing God, my understanding is unfruitful, so I will pray in the Spirit and I will pray with my understanding.
- A key fact to remember is that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is given to empower us as witnesses, the tongues just happens to come along with it. Too many people are making a mistake of glorifying or setting their importance on the wrong area. Tongues is wonderful to use to edify yourself, to build up your faith, but the reason is to be edified so that you go out and influence the world around you as a representative of Christ! I like to tell people that when I buy a pair of shoes for walking in, the tongue comes automatically with the shoe but I don't spend all my time admiring the tongue, I put on the shoe to use and that's what we need to do with the baptism of the Spirit.

12. Tongues in the congregation.

1 Cor. 12-14 discusses these issues and rules of behavior. We already have some of those listed in section 7 of this lesson.

- Everybody who gets baptized in the Holy Spirit will speak in tongues (Mk. 16:17).
- Not everybody who speaks in tongues will be used by the Holy Spirit to speak in tongues in the congregation (1 Cor. 12:11, 28-30).
- I personally was baptized in the Spirit for awhile, speaking in tongues in my own prayer life before God happened to use me in a congregational setting. It took the Spirit of God moving in my heart to convince me to speak out since I was afraid that I would be doing it out of my own heart and my own prayer language. The proving factor for me was that someone immediately gave the interpretation. He definitely lets you know if you are to be used in a congregational setting.
- Many people will try to use the often misunderstood portion in 1 Cor. 14:21-25 to show that it does no good in the church. If you took this portion out of the context and read above and below it, you would see that Paul is still speaking on the theme of edifying. These misunderstood portions of scripture have to fit in the context and therefore do not say that we should not speak in tongues in the church.
- Tongues are to be used in the congregation (1 Cor. 14:37-40, these are the commandments of the Lord, and do not forbid to speak with tongues).

13. How do we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

John 3:1-6, 1 Cor. 2:9-16

- In these verses we see that you cannot even see the kingdom of God unless you are born again. The spiritual things cannot be received by the natural man, the man

without a relationship with Christ. Being born again is the first step to have in your life in order to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit in your life will enable you to know the things that are freely given to you by God.

Rom. 10:14-17

- These verses are dealing with salvation, but the principle is also true with the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as well as other truths. The principle that I am talking about is that we have to have the message shared with us, we have to have ears to hear it, and when we have heard it we will be able to have faith in it because faith comes by hearing the word.
- Hearing is the key. This means more than just hearing it with our ears, this means hearing it in our heart and responding to it. In Matt. 13:13-17 we see this truth clearly. If these people would have heard, they would have been converted and healed. As it was, they heard, but they did not understand. We must hear the truth in order for it to do its work in our lives.
- Many times there have been other teachings that have influenced us. It is up to us to seek and search out the scriptures, even the ones that seem to fly in the face of what we believe and see how they are all integrated. The word of God is a united book, the answers come as we seek him with all our heart and desire to know the truth, regardless of our past traditions.

Luke 11:9-13

- Once we have come to a place of ‘hearing’ the word of truth, we are convinced that this is what the word of God says, then all we have to do is ask.
- There are people who say that you shouldn’t ask God for this because the devil may give you a false language and how do you know that you are getting it from God? This portion of scripture lets me know that if I ask him for something that he himself has promised, that I am convinced of through the scriptures, then he will not give me something phony. God is big enough to do all that he has promised and I can rest in Him! The people who run into the weird things are the ones who open themselves up to experiences without searching the scriptures, the ones who will act upon someone’s word or experience without true confirmation from the scriptures.

Acts 8:15-17, Acts 19:6

- You can receive it by prayer and laying on of hands

Acts 10:44

- You can receive it while you are ‘hearing’ the truth!

Summary of section 13

1. You must first be a believer, you must be born again.
2. You will need to have the truth preached or proclaimed to you.
3. You will need to have an open heart to hear the truth. The church of Berea received the word with all readiness of mind and then searched the scriptures to see if they

lined up with the word of God or not (Acts 17:11).

4. Once you are convinced of the truth of it, you might receive it like they did in Acts 10, you might get someone to pray with you, or you can ask the Father yourself.
5. Everyone who has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit will speak in tongues.
6. The testimonies of others can help you understand it as well, as long as you understand that there are a myriad of experiences, and not all will edify or line up with the Word. God is not calling us to duplicate someone else's experience, but rather to respond to his truth and experience it for ourselves, having our own experience with him.
7. You are not seeking to get tongues. You are seeking the empowerment of the Holy Spirit in order to be an effective and powerful witness. Tongues is basically the evidence as well as a means for personal edification in the Lord.

Summary of this whole lesson.

1. Believers get saved and have the Holy Spirit. John 3:1-3; 20:21-23
2. You must be saved in order to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 2:9-16
3. When you get baptized in the Spirit, you will speak in tongues- Mark 16:17 and the scriptural examples of receiving. This does not necessarily mean that you will be used in the gift of tongues mentioned in 1 Cor. 12.
4. The main focus of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is being empowered to be a witness for Christ. Tongues comes with it to confirm and to help you remain edified. Jude 20, 1 Cor. 14:4, Acts 1:5-8.
5. Tongues is also a gift that the Holy Spirit gives individuals to speak in the congregation along with the interpretation. 1 Cor. 12:10, 1 Cor. 14:28.
6. My personal conviction is that believing in Christ, getting water baptized, getting baptized in the Holy Ghost and possibly some other areas are not separate, non-integrated issues that we separately choose to do or not do. I believe that Jesus gave us a salvation package so great and so wonderful that it has everything that we need for life and godliness in this present evil world. These are part and parcel of the salvation he gave and we need to look at these things carefully and allow the word of God to renew our minds, break down paradigms, and allow us to see and believe anything and everything that he has given us to become like him.

TITHING

A). Tithing before the Law.

Genesis 14:18-24

And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. [19] And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: [20] And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave **him tithes of all.** [21] And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. [22] And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, [23] That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: [24] Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

Hebrews 7:1-9

For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; [2] **To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all;** first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; [3] Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. [4] Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham **gave the tenth of the spoils.** [5] And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: [6] But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. [7] And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. [8] And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. [9] And as I may so say, **Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.**

- Abraham gave one tenth of the spoil to Melchisedec.
- The men had eaten a certain portion.
- The men with Abraham were given a portion of the spoils.
- Levi (representing the Law) also paid tithes to Melchisedec.
- This tithes was given willingly, in honor, respect, and relationally (lesser blessing the greater).
- Should we, as Abraham did, pay tithes to the new priest after the order of Melchisedec, Jesus?

Genesis 28:20-22

And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, [21] So that I come again

to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: [22] And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me **I will surely give the tenth unto thee.**

- He says that he will **surely** give a tenth unto the Lord.
- The tithe is **always from the increase.**

B). The tithe belongs to the Lord!

Malachi 3:8-10

Will a man rob God? **Yet ye have robbed me.** But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. [9] Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, **even this whole nation.** [10] Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

- By not paying their tithes, **Israel was robbing God** (not just the Levites who received it).
- It was the whole nation that was messing up.

Leviticus 27:30-33

And **all the tithe** of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, **is the Lord's:** it is holy unto the Lord. [31] And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof. [32] And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord. [33] He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.

- The tithe belonged to the Lord, it was holy to him. This is why the verse in Malachi says that they were robbing God by not giving it, even though it was the Levites that actually received it.
- If a man redeemed his tithe, he was to pay one-fifth more or 20% above the value of the tithe!

C). God gave the tithe to the Levites as their inheritance, they were not given land (except cities to dwell in and some pasture land around the city for their flocks).

Numbers 18:20-24

And the Lord spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have **no inheritance** in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. [21] And, behold, I have given the **children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance**, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. [22] Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die. [23] But the Levites

shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel **they have no inheritance.** [24] But **the tithes of the children of Israel**, which they offer as an heave offering unto the Lord, **I have given to the Levites to inherit:** therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. [25] And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, [26] Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for **your inheritance**, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord, even a **tenth part of the tithe.** [27] And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fulness of the winepress. [28] Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the Lord of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the Lord's heave offering to Aaron the priest. [29] Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the Lord, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it. [30] Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, **then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshingfloor, and as the increase of the winepress.** [31] And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it is your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation. [32] And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it: neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die.

- All the tenth in Israel was to be the inheritance of the Levites.
- The Levites were also to offer up one-tenth of what they received, it would be reckoned to them as the increase that the other Israelites had received.
- It was their reward for their service in the tabernacle.

2 Chron. 31:4-6

Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to **give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord.**

[5] And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the **tithe of all things** brought they in abundantly. [6] And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the Lord their God, and laid them by heaps.

- Hezekiah knew that the Levites needed their portion, otherwise they would have to do something else to support themselves and their families as is seen in Neh.13:10.
- Reading the rest of this chapter will show that they then had plenty to eat and they set up a storage and distribution arrangement so that all of the Levites and priests would be taken care of.

Neh. 10:35-38

And to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year

by year, unto the house of the Lord: [36] Also the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God: [37] And that **we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites**, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage. [38] And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the **Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes** unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house.

- The various offerings and tithes were to be brought, again it is their inheritance.
- The Levites paid a tithe on the tithe that they received.

Neh. 12:44

And at that time were some appointed over the chambers for the treasures, for the offerings, for the firstfruits, and for the **tithes**, to gather into them out of the fields of the cities **the portions of the law for the priests and Levites**: for **Judah rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites** that waited.

- They had some appointed to gather the portions of the priests and Levites.
- Judah was glad to do this for the ones who served them in the temple.

Neh. 13:10-14

And I perceived that the **portions of the Levites had not been given them**: for the Levites and the singers, that did the work, **were fled every one to his field**. [11] Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place. [12] Then brought all Judah **the tithe** of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries. [13] And I made treasurers over the treasuries, Shelemiah the priest, and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah: and next to them was Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah: for they were counted faithful, and their office was to distribute unto their brethren. [14] Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.

- The people had not given their tithes and offerings and the ministers had left to go work in the fields to support themselves. The ministry was forsaken.
- Nehemiah got this straightened out and the tithes came in again.

D). There was a second and possibly a third tithe.

Three sources quoted:

Easton's 1897 Bible Dictionary

Every Jew was required by the Levitical law to pay three tithes of his property (1) one tithe for the Levites; (2) one for the use of the temple and the great feasts; and (3) one for the poor of the land.

Wycliffe Bible Encyclopedia

In the Pentateuch, legislation as to tithes was as follows:

1. Lev.27:30-33 One-tenth of all produce (crops, fruit, oil, wine) and of all animals was to be devoted to the Lord. The tithe of the produce of the land could be redeemed if one-fifth of its value was added. The animal tithe was not redeemable. The increase of the herd was counted, and every tenth animal was reckoned holy to the Lord. This was in keeping with the pre-Sinaitic instruction to Israel that the firstlings of the flock belong to the Lord (Ex.13:12-13). Any attempt to replace a good with a bad was punishable by the forfeit of both (Lev.27:32-33). "Whatsoever passeth under the rod" was assigned to the Levites, to do with as they pleased, since they had received no land (cf. Num.18:21-32). Out of this tithe, the Levites paid a tithe or heave offering to the priests. This had to be brought to the temple in Jerusalem. Neh.10:38 suggests that there was supervision of this division of tithes.

2. Deut.12:5-6,11,18 (cf. Amos 4:4). The festival tithe was one-tenth of the nine-tenths that remained. It had to be set apart and taken to Jerusalem. There it was eaten as a sacred meal by the offerer and his household, together with "the Levite within his gates." If the distance was prohibitive, the tithes could be sold and the money used for purchase of food or animals for offerings in Jerusalem (cf. Deut.14:22-27).

3. Deut.26:12-15; 14:28-29. The triennial or charity tithe given during the third year was for the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

Opinions differ regarding this third tithe. According to Josephus it was actually a third tithe offered every third year, in which priests and Levites were obliged to participate. Others state that every third year the second, or festival tithe, was given to the poor at home instead of being taken to Jerusalem.

Payment of tithes was not forced; it was a matter of conscience before the Lord. The people were to perform these ordinances with all their heart and soul (Deut.26:16). Every third year a solemn declaration was to be made on the last day of the Passover: "I have done according to all that thou hast commanded me" (Deut.26:14).

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Holy Bible abridged by Ralph Earle

Deut. 14:22 *Thou shalt truly tithe.* Meaning the second tithe, which themselves were to eat, v.23, for there was a first tithe that was given to the Levites, out of which they paid a tenth part to the priests, Num.18:24-28; Neh.10:37-38. Then of that which remained, the owners separated a second tithe, which they ate before the Lord the first and second year; and in the third year it was given to the Levites and to the poor, Deut.14:28-29. In the fourth and fifth years it was eaten again by the owners, and in the sixth year was given to the poor. The seventh year was a Sabbath to the land, and then all things were common, Exod.23:10-11.

E). Verses about the second and third tithe.

The second tithe:

Deut. 12:5-7

But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come: [6] And thither ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks: [7] And there ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee.

Deut. 12:17-18

Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand: [18] But thou must eat them before the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto.

- This tithe was to be eaten in the place of the Lord's choosing.
- Others of the household and the Levites partook.
- This would have been a tithe on the remaining nine-tenths of their increase.

Deut. 14:22-27

Thou shalt truly **tithe all the increase** of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. [23] And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the **tithe** of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always. [24] And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the Lord thy God hath blessed thee: [25] Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose: [26] And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household, [27] And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.

- This is still the second tithe.
- It could be converted into cash and then spent to purchase the items to eat when arriving at the place the Lord had chosen.
- The family, the servants of the household, and the Levites were partakers.

The third tithe.

Deut. 14:28-29

At the **end of three years** thou shalt bring forth **all the tithe** of thine increase the same

year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: [29] And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

- This tithe took place every third year.
- This took place within the gates, at home, not at the tabernacle.
- This tithe was shared with the stranger, fatherless, widow, and the Levites.

Deut. 26:12-14

When thou hast made an end of tithing **all the tithes** of thine increase the **third year**, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; [13] Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them: [14] I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me.

- This took place every third year.
- This took place at home.
- Shared with stranger, fatherless, widow, and Levites.

F). New Testament scriptures regarding tithing.

Matthew 23:23

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

Luke 11:42

But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

- Jesus did not stop them from tithing.
- Jesus reprovved them for forgetting about some serious concerns of scripture.
- Jesus summarized by saying they should do the things that they had been ignoring and to continue to do the other (which was tithing).

Luke 18:12

I fast twice in the week, I give **tithes** of all that I possess.

- As you read the context, you will see that the Pharisee was trying to establish his own

righteousness by his acts and behavior.

- Tithing will not establish your righteousness!
- Because people abuse a truth does not make the truth any different, the distortion is on their part.

1 Cor. 9:11-14

If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? [12] If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. [13] Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? [14] Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.

- Paul tells the Corinthians that others are using their authority (power) to be partakers of their material goods. Paul says that he, and those with him, have an even greater right to be partakers, but he has purposed not to do so. (Notice the word authority, exousia)
- Paul uses the example of those who wait on the altar as being partakers of the altar (look in the O.T. for examples of the offerings and tithes that went to the priests and Levites).
- The last verse says *Even so, the Lord has ordained* (command, order, give instructions, arrange) *that those who preach the gospel should live of the gospel*. He is using the O.T. analogy and saying even so has the Lord commanded or arranged now.
- This shows me that there is validity to the truth of tithing.
- One more thing to consider when pondering if tithing is still a valid practice. As you see in Matt. 5:21-48 the new covenant can actually be deeper than the first covenant, it is not just about your outward actions but the thoughts and intents of the heart. In the book of Hebrews we find that we don't face a burning mountain but we are come unto Mount Zion, the city of the living God. Everything in the New Testament becomes more in focus and more intense, so would it surprise you that we probably should be giving even more than they did in the O.T.? Consider the fact that we are now slaves of Jesus Christ, we are dead with him (dead people don't have rights!), and all that we have belongs to him. I personally believe that we should be giving more than they did in the O.T. since we have his laws in our hearts and we have his Spirit residing in us.

NOTE: This lesson covers every place where the word tithe is used in the scripture. In order to save space, I covered the main portion of scripture in each selection. You may find the word tithe, tithing, or tithes in the scriptures, but you will find that they are in the verses surrounding the ones I covered. (I did not use Amos 4:4) You should read the complete context when studying these notes.

SUMMARY OF TITHING

1. **It was done before the Law** (even among the Babylonians, Persians, Egyptians, and Chinese in ancient times to their rulers and for religious gifts according to history).
2. **It was one-tenth of their increase.**
3. **Under the Law it became the provision for the Levites**, it was their inheritance and reward for service.
4. **Even the Levites offered tithes of their tithes.**
5. **The tithe was the Lord's and he considered it holy.**
6. **The festival tithe and the tithe in the third year were after the first one-tenth.**
7. **The Law did not establish or start the practice of tithing, the Law specified where it was to be directed and who was to receive it.**
8. **The fulfilment of the Law does not do away with the truth of tithing because it did not establish it.**
9. **Jesus never rescinded it.**
10. **We now have a high priest after the order of Melchisedec**, is he any less worthy of being honored with the tithe of our increase than the scripture passage shows in Genesis? Can we do less than Abram did?
11. We have no difficulty in recognizing the fact that the gospel of grace was actually established in the O. T. before the Law (when God told Abraham in Gen. 22:18 "In your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."). Why is it difficult to believe that tithing, established before the law, regulated through the law, did not end with the law?
12. Paul said that he had authority to be a partaker of their material goods. That authority was ordained by God in the N.T.
13. For those who are convinced about giving but unconvinced about tithing: **TITHE** In the New Testament the words tithe and tithing appear only eight times (Matt 23:23; Luke 11:42; 18:12; Heb 7:5-6,8-9). All of these passages refer to Old Testament usage and to current Jewish practice. Nowhere does the New Testament expressly command Christians to tithe. However, as believers we are to be generous in sharing our material possessions with the poor and for the support of Christian ministry. Christ Himself is our model in giving. Giving is to be voluntary, willing, cheerful, and given in the light of our accountability to God. ***Giving should be systematic and by no means limited to a tithe of our incomes. We recognize that all we have is from God. We are called to be faithful stewards of all our possessions*** (Rom 14:12; 1 Cor 9:3-14; 16:1-3; 2 Cor 8:1-9:15). (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright (c)1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers) (***emphasis mine***). The position stated here is not my conviction, but if you are to believe in only giving, then this would be the way to go.

My personal conviction from the scriptures is that tithing is still valid today, it supports the ministry, it **honors God**, and that it **springs from a relationship with the Father** and not just because I'm told it should be done. Tithing has never been a bondage to me, even in the worst financial crisis that I have faced. May your hearts be challenged to search these scriptures and see if these truths are valid, and if valid, recognize how to honor God with your increase.

SOME PRACTICAL EXAMPLES TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND:

1. If you earn \$100.00 gross, you would give \$10.00 for a tithe. The tithe is paid from the gross, not from the net. In the Old Testament, they gave God the best.
2. Let's say you purchase a car for \$3,000.00, keep it for awhile without putting any money into it other than upkeep. You sell the car for \$2,500.00, you do not pay tithe on that because it is not an increase.
3. Same circumstances as the previous example except that you sell the vehicle for \$4,000.00. The increase is \$1,000.00 so the tithe would be \$100.00.
4. If you purchased a car for \$1,000.00 and you put \$1,000.00 worth of parts on it and then sold it for \$2,000.00, you would not pay any tithe. There was no increase.
5. If you have money in a savings account, CD, or some other type of account that pays interest, what do you pay your tithe on? Only the increase. If your money increased by \$400.00 this year and it was all interest, then you would tithe on the \$400.00 only. Remember, you do not have to keep tithing on the whole amount you have in savings each year, only on the increase.

The Laying on of Hands

In Heb. 6:1-3, the laying on of hands is considered one of the basic or elementary doctrines of Christ. These doctrines are also called foundational truths. It is very important for us to have these established in our hearts and lives.

There is more to this doctrine than a personal touch, there is something that is actually done, accomplished, or imparted by the laying on of hands.

1. What are the Old Testament examples?

a) For blessing

Gen. 48:9-20 Israel blessed Ephraim and Manasseh.

b) Imparting the sinner's sin unto the animal.

Lev. 1:4; 3:2,8,13; 4:4, 13-15

2 Chron. 29:23-24

c) Children of Israel placed the Levites in service.

Num. 8:9-20

d) Imparting the spirit of wisdom and giving a charge.

Num. 27:18-23 Joshua given a charge and honor

Deut. 34:9 Joshua full of the spirit of wisdom

2. What are the New Testament examples?

a) For blessing

Mark 10:13-16 Jesus blessed the children

b) For ordination

Acts 6:1-6 Deacons established in the church

Acts 13:1-3 they were prophets and teachers (Acts 14:14 called apostles)

c) Healing

Mark 6:5 Jesus laid his hands on a few sick folk and healed them

Luke 4:40 They brought sick with divers diseases, he laid on hands and healed

Luke 13:11-13 spirit of infirmity 18 yrs., he laid hands on her

Acts 28:8 Paul laid hands on Publius' father and healed him

Mark 16:18 These signs shall follow those that believe

d) For receiving the Baptism of the Spirit

Acts 8:17-19 apostles prayed for those in Samaria, they received the Holy Ghost

Acts 9:17 Ananias laid hands on Paul, received sight and filled with Holy Ghost

Acts 19:6 Paul at Ephesus finds twelve, laid hands on them, they received

e) Imparting gifts

1 Tim. 4:14 laying on of the hands of the presbytery

2 Tim. 1:6 Stir up the gift that is in you by the laying on of my hands

f) We are warned not to lay hands on someone too quickly.

1 Tim. 5:22 This could have reference to someone being restored and recognized in ministry again after discipline has been fulfilled. It could also refer to not being hasty to ordain someone and thereby being able to avoid having to discipline them. The principle works for either truth.

The laying on of hands works wonderful things. Let us learn to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's voice and walk in obedience when he tells us to lay hands on someone.

I have seen the sick healed with laying on of hands, I have felt the charge of God in my heart when I was ordained, and I have been blessed by people laying their hands on me and praying. May we as the body of Christ continue to impart all that he desires to one another and also to the people around us.

Resurrection of the Dead

This is a foundational truth that we should be aware of. We must have an understanding of God's purposes and what we are to look forward to.

1. The children of Israel were looking for it.

Acts 23:6

But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

- Paul says to the chief priests and council that the reason he is before them is because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead.

Acts 24:14-15

But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets: [15] And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

- Paul is recounting to Felix about the Jews reason for taking him captive.

Acts 26:6-8

And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: [7] Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. [8] Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

- Paul answers to Festus and King Agrippa. We see a little different wording in this account and the hope of the resurrection is now called the hope of the promise made to the fathers, the promise that they hope to come to.

2. So what is Paul talking about? What is the promise to the fathers?

Acts 13:22-23,30-39

And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

23 Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

30 But God raised him from the dead:

31 And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day

have I begotten thee.

34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.

35 Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

36 For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

38 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Acts 2:29-32

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. [30] Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; [31] He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. [32] This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

- Isaiah 11:1,10 speak of the rod out of the stem of Jesse being an ensign to the people.
- Psalm 132:11 and Psalm 89:34-37 speak of David's seed being on the throne, his seed enduring forever. Jesus was that seed of David, that rod out of the stem of Jesse.
- God fulfilled the promise made unto the fathers in that he raised up Jesus again.
- The second Psalm affirms this, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."

Rev 1:5

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Romans 1:4

And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

Hebrews 1:5-6

For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

[6] And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

- Israel was looking for the resurrection but they missed seeing it in Jesus.
- Not only was Jesus resurrected, but he himself said that he is the resurrection- John 11:25-26.

3. Jesus was the firstfruits or firstborn from the dead.

1 Cor. 15:12-20

But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

Rev. 1:5

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Col. 1:18

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

4. Jesus overcame death and gave us hope in him, that we too will live.

Rom 8:23-25

And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?

25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.

1 Thess 4:14-17

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

Heb 9:15

15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

Eph 1:13-14

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

- He has given us hope and given us an earnest of our inheritance, which is the Holy Spirit of promise, until the redemption of our body.

5. What about our resurrected bodies?

1 Cor. 15:35-58 Our new bodies will not be like our current bodies, our old ones are natural, our new ones spiritual

1 John 3:2

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is

Luke 24:36-43 Jesus ate and drank and they touched him in his resurrected body.

- In 1 Cor. 15:35-58 and Philippians 3:20-21 we see the following descriptions:

OUR PRESENT BODY

1. Flesh and blood
2. Natural-life is in the blood
Lev. 17:11
3. Earthy-from the first Adam
4. Dishonor, vile, low estate
5. Weak-tired, infirm
6. Corruptible-sickness, decay
7. Mortal

OUR RESURRECTED BODY

1. Flesh and bone. Luke 24:39
2. Spiritual-our life is in the spirit
Rom. 8:11
3. Heavenly-from the last Adam
4. Glorious-dignity, honor
5. Power-never weary
6. Incorruptible-eternal health
7. Immortal

6. There are two resurrections.

Dan 12:2

2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

John 5:28-29

28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

- There is a resurrection of the righteous.
- There is a resurrection of the unrighteous.

1. The first resurrection takes place at the end of the great tribulation period. This is the resurrection of the righteous and takes place when Jesus returns.

1 Thes. 4:13-18

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. [14] For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. [15] For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (precede-emphasis mine) them which are asleep. [16] For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: [17] Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. [18] Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Cor. 15:51-56

Behold, I shew 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 trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall 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 shall have put on incorruption, and this

mortal shall have 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 thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? [56] The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

The dead in Christ rise first, then the living believers, "shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord." All the hosts of the redeemed then return to the earth to rule and reign with Christ a thousand years. This first resurrection takes place at the beginning of the millenium-the 1,000 years of rest.

Rev. 20:4-6

2. The second resurrection which is of the unrighteous dead takes place at the end of the millenium, one thousand years after the first resurrection.

Rev. 20:5-10

At the same time that Satan is released from the bottomless pit, these hordes of unrighteous dead are resurrected from the dead and again live on the earth. They are not taken up first as the righteous were, but are earth-bound. They are again deceived by Satan and will try to destroy God's people. However, God intervenes and stops them. Everyone then stands before God's judgment throne and is judged from the books of God. The unrighteous ones (those not found in the Book of Life) are cast into the lake of fire.

Hell and the Lake of Fire

Although this subject is not edifying, every Bible student should have some understanding of its truths.

There are many questions in people's minds concerning hell. Is it a real place? Do all unsaved people go there? Will it continue to exist forever? Will people who are consigned there be tormented forever or will they be annihilated?

The only way to understand this subject is to make a progressive study through the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

Five names are used in the Bible to describe the place we commonly call "hell." Each one of them adds its truth so that, when we have completed a study of all of them, we have a deeper and more profound understanding of God's attitude toward the unrighteous dead.

1. "**Sheol**" is the Hebrew word of broad meaning which is translated as "hell," "grave," and "pit" in the King James Version. Most Bible scholars consider it to mean "the unseen state" or "the place of the dead." The various usages of "sheol" in the Old Testament make it a word of uncertain meaning. It is necessary to examine the context in order to determine the meaning. No scholar can explain the word in detail; all are compelled to accept "sheol" as a word which means "the world of the dead," that is, the hidden world, the unseen world. **It does not mean "the lake of fire." It does not mean "the pit" or "the grave." It simply denotes the place of "departed spirits" or those who have "departed this life."** Thus, we find that God begins his instruction on the wicked's abode by using a word of uncertain meaning.
 - a. **When translated "hell":** Deuteronomy 32:22; 2 Samuel 22:6; Job 11:8; 26:6; Psalms 9:17; 16:10; 18:5; 55:15; 86:13; 116:3; 139:8; Proverbs 5:5; 7:27; 9:18; 15:11, 24; 23:14; 27:20; Isaiah 5:14; 14:9, 15; 28:15; 57:9; Ezekiel 31:16, 17; 32:21, 27; Amos 9:2; Habakkuk 2:5.
 - b. **When translated "grave":** Genesis 37:35; 42:38; 44:29, 31; 1 Samuel 2:6; 1 Kings 2:6, 9; Job 7:9; 14:13; 17:13; 21:13; 24:19; Psalms 6:5; 30:3; 31:17; 49:14-15; 88:3; 89:48; 141:7; Proverbs 1:12; 30:16; Ecclesiastes 9:10; Song of Solomon 8:6; Isaiah 14:11; 38:10, 18; Ezekiel 31:15; Hosea 13:14.
 - c. **When translated "pit":** Numbers 16:30; Job 17:16.

2. "**Hades**" is the Greek word of the New Testament which is allied most closely in thought to the "sheol" of the Old Testament. Once again, the Bible scholars cannot give us an absolute definition of the word in the original language. Harper's Analytical Greek Lexicon calls it "the invisible abode or mansion of the dead." Thayer's Greek-English

Lexion refers to it as "the common receptacle of disembodied spirits." This word of uncertain definition appears 11 times in the New Testament. "Hades," however, is not quite as difficult as "sheol" because in one of the 11 references we have the description by Jesus of a man who was consigned to that place! Thus, although the original language is somewhat unclear, we find that the Bible itself is beginning to supply us with contextual information which causes the meaning of "hell" to be clarified.

a. **When translated "hell":** Matthew 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; 16:23; Acts 2:27, 31; Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13-14

b. **When translated "grave":** 1 Corinthians 15:55

3. "**Gehenna**" is the Greek word which Jesus particularly used in describing the abode of the wicked dead. The word itself is of Hebrew origin, from "valley" and "Hinnom." The valley of the son of Hinnom was the valley on the southeast of Jerusalem which was used as a garbage dump. Its reference in scripture is used for the place of unending punishment. It received this name from the cries of the little children who were thrown into the fiery arms of Moloch, an idol having the form of a bull. The Jews so abhorred the place after these horrible sacrifices had been abolished by King Josiah (2 Kings 23:10) that they cast into it not only all manner of refuse, but even the dead bodies of animals and of unburied criminals who had been executed. And since fires always were needed to consume the dead bodies, that the air might not become tainted by their putrefaction, it came to pass that the place was called "heena tou puros" ("Gehenna of the fire.")--Thayer's Greek Lexicon, Page 111.

Here are the 12 references (11 spoken by Jesus): Matthew 5:22, 29, 30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43, 45, 47; Luke 12:5; James 3:6.

4. "**Tartarus**" appears only once in the Bible: 2 Peter 2:4. To the Greek mind this name conveyed the thought of the "abode of the wicked dead, where they suffer punishment for their evil deeds." Strong's Greek dictionary defines the word as meaning "the deepest abyss of Hades." Generally, Tartarus was to the Greek what Gehenna was to the Jews.

5. "**The lake of fire (and brimstone)**" is the fifth expression used by God's word in describing the place of unrighteous dead. It only appears in the last book of the Bible. At last we have a clear picture of the final abode of the unrighteous! That which was dim in the shadows of the Old Testament now is revealed clearly in the light of Revelation's great throne of judgment.

The references: Revelation 14:10; 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ABODE OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS DEAD

1. **A place of fire:** The New Testament uses 18 graphic "fire" expressions:

Matthew 5:22--hell fire

Matthew 13:42--furnace of fire

Matthew 18:8--everlasting fire

Mark 9:43--fire that never shall be quenched

Mark 9:44--fire is not quenched

Mark 9:49--salted with fire

Jude 23--out of the fire

Revelation 14:10--fire and brimstone

Revelation 19:20--lake of fire burning with brimstone

Revelation 20:10--lake of fire and brimstone

Revelation 20:15--lake of fire

2. **A place of torment:** Jesus used the most extreme human reactions that he knew in portraying the torment of the unrighteous after life:

Matthew 13:42--wailing and gnashing of teeth

Matthew 26:24--it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Luke 13:27--weeping and gnashing of teeth

Luke 16:23--in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments

Luke 16:25--but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented

Luke 16:28--lest they also come into this place of torment

Revelation 14:10--and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone

Revelation 14:11--and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever

Revelation 20:10--and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever

3. **A place that always will continue without ceasing:** "absolute endlessness." Note

that in Mark 9 beginning with Verse 43, Jesus emphasizes five times that the fire of Gehenna never be extinguished!

Since certain cults have challenged the above meaning of "everlasting," let us note the 11 ways that "everlasting" is used descriptively in the Bible:

- a. God himself--Romans 16:26
- b. divinely imparted life--Matthew 19:29; Luke 18:30; John 3:16, 36; 4:14; 5:24; 6:27, 40, 47; 12:50; Acts 13:46; Romans 6:22; Galatians 6:8; 1 Timothy 1:16.
- c. punishment--Matthew 25:46
- d. tabernacles or dwelling places--Luke 16:9
- e. destruction--2 Thessalonians 1:9
- f. comfort or consolation--2 Thessalonians 2:16
- g. The might and power of the Lord--1 Timothy 6:16
- h. The blood covenant--Hebrews 13:20
- i. The kingdom--2 Peter 1f:11
- j. Fire--Matthew 18:8; 25:41
- k. The gospel--Revelation 14:6

Note: "For ever and ever" is used to describe the duration of:

a. Attributes of God:

- (1) Glory--Galatians 1:5; 2 Timothy 4:18
- (2) Honor--1 Timothy 1:17
- (3) Throne--Hebrews 1:8
- (4) Praise, Glory and Dominion--1 Peter 4:11
- (5) Existence--Revelation 4:9-10
- (6) Reign--Revelation 11:15; 22:5

b. Torment of:

- (1) Beast's followers--Revelation 14:11
- (2) Babylon--Revelation 19:3

- (3) Devil, Beast and False Prophet--Revelation 20:10

- (4) Unsaved--Revelation 20:12-15

It may be concluded logically that as long as God's people exist in the blessing and presence of the Almighty, just that long will the devil and his followers exist in a state of torment and judgment.

These notes are taken from the 'Bible Foundations' book of the Charismatic Bible College of Anchorage.

Introduction to Church Life-God's Plan

1. Christ is the central focus of what God is doing. He is the head of the body.

Ephes. 1:10

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Ephes. 1:20-23

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own 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 world, but also in that which is to come: [22] And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, [23] Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Col. 1:18

And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

- Jesus is the head of the church. He is the head of the body of believers that make up this universal church.

2. When we are saved, we become individual members of his body.

Romans 12:4-5

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: 5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

1 Cor. 10:16-17

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For we *being* many are one bread, *and* one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.

1 Cor. 12: 12-20

For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also *is* Christ. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *were* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *were* the smelling? 18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. 19 And if they were all one member, where *were* the body? 20 But now *are they* many members, yet but one body.

1 Cor. 12:22-25

Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: 23 And those *members* of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely *parts* have more abundant comeliness. 24 For our comely *parts* have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that *part* which lacked: 25 That there should be no schism in the body; but *that* the members should have the same care one for another.

1 Cor. 12:27

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.

Ephes. 1 :22-23

And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Ephes. 4:4

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

Col. 3: 15

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

- Just as our natural bodies are made up of different functioning members, so the body of Christ has many members who make up the whole. Each one has different giftings, functions, and purpose, but yet makes one body.

3. The Lord desires to build up each member of his body.

Ephes. 4:16

From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Col. 2:19

And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

Ephes. 2:21-22

In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: 22 In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit

- Dependent on Christ, the whole body is put together by Christ in such a way that each member contributes to the working of the whole.
- If each member is not working to its effectual measure, the whole body will suffer for it.
- When each member does do its function, the whole body will increase and build itself up in love.

4. This building up is done by the Holy Spirit working through us.

John 16:13

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

John 14:26

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

1 Cor. 2:10-13

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. [11] For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. [12] Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. [13] Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

1 John 2:20

But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

1 John 2:27

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

- As the Holy Spirit imparts truths and understanding to you individually, you will then in turn be able to encourage and strengthen those around you.
- It is not by our own abilities that we are effectual in ministry, but it is by using the graces and giftings that the Holy Spirit has given to each of us. It is Him working in and through our lives.

5. The Lord also set up a structure to build up the body of Christ, using men in local churches.

Ephes. 4:11-12

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; [12] For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Titus 1:5

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:

Acts 14:23

And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

Acts 20:17,28-31

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

28 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. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

Philip. 1: 1

Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

- God set up a structure to instruct, guard, guide, feed, and care for His flock.
- A church without the proper leadership is lacking something. Paul told Titus to complete that which was lacking by ordaining elders.
- In the church, there are the five-fold ministries of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher. Each church will also have elders and deacons. Not every church will have all of the five-fold ministries, but there will usually be at least one of the fivefold along with other elders and deacons.

6. These men have a function in the church.

The function that these men have is to shepherd, preside over, lead, rule, and oversee.

Hebrews 13:7

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

- **Thayer's Definition of the word rule:**
 - I) to lead
 - la) to go before
 - Ib) to be a leader
 - I b I) to rule, command
 - I b2) to have authority over
 - Ib3) a prince, of regal power, governor, viceroy, chief, leading as respects influence, controlling in counsel, overseers or leaders of the churches I
 - b4) used of any kind of leader, chief, commander
 - I b5) the leader in speech, chief, spokesman
- God has placed those in the church that are to lead and rule.

1 Thes. 5:12

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are **over** you in the Lord, and admonish you;

- **Thayer's Definition of the word over:**
 - I) to set or place before
 - I a) to set over
 - I b) to be over, to superintend, preside over I c) to be a protector or guardian
 - Ic) to give aid
 - I d) to care for, give attention to
- God has the church structured in such a way that some men are set over others.

Romans 12:8

- Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.
- Those that do rule, are to do it with diligence or earnestness.

1 Tim. 5:17

- Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.
- This is speaking about making sure that those who are laboring in ruling the church be well taken care of financially.

Acts 20:28

- 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.
- **Thayer's Definition of an overseer:**
 - 1) an overseer
 - 1 a) a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian or superintendent
 - 1 b) the superintendent, elder, or overseer of a Christian church
 - God has charged some to watch over his flock. Without the sheep voluntarily yielding to the authority of the shepherds, the shepherds could not accomplish the work that God desires to have done. This is why it is so important to understand the principle of Biblical submission (this topic is discussed in this lesson).

Hebrews 13:17

- Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.
- Be fully persuaded in those that have the rule over you. By being persuaded in their life-style, their faith, their care, their adherence to the Word of God, it is then easy to submit yourself under their leadership. The principle of submission will be discussed in detail in another section.
 - There are other principles for leadership in the scriptures, some of which will be seen in the scriptures of the shepherd and sheep relationships discussed in the next section.

1 Peter 5:2-3

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; [3] Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

1 Peter 5:2-3 NAS

Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under

compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

- Leaders are to exercise oversight with a willing heart.
- Leaders are to feed the flock.
- They have those who are allotted to their charge (the responsibility of those sheep that are placed under their care-the local church)
- Not domineering over the sheep, but being an example.

7. How do you become a part or member of a local church?

Although there is a universal church made up of all believers, there are local churches in the different communities. In scripture, you will see Paul and others writing to individual churches and their pastors. It is in the local church that we find ourselves operating and functioning with our gifts and graces. The local church is where we find accountability, responsibility, and most of the work of Christ for our lives taking place. Just as there are many families all around us and we find ourselves as members of a particular family, so there are many churches but we find ourselves as members of one particular one. The local church is where our primary relationships are.

In the scriptures we do not see membership as we see it in some of the churches of today. There was not necessarily a sign up sheet and certain classes to attend, but rather it was based on several Biblical principles:

- a) relationship
- b) submission
- c) commitment

a) Relationship

Mark 6:34

And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

- Jesus felt compassion because they were like sheep without a shepherd. To be in that type of circumstance was not a good thing. His shepherds should feel the same way.
- There is a relationship of a caring shepherd to the flock of God.

John 10:1-5

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. [2] But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. [3] To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. [4] And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. [5] And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

John 10:11-12

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

John 10:14

I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine.

- Jesus himself came as the good shepherd. He sets the example of what shepherds should be like. Look at the principles that show relationship: a) he called them by name b) he led them c) he gave his life for them d) he knew his sheep and his sheep knew him.
- Jesus set the example of what shepherds should be like. In your search for a church that you can be a part of, these are some of the qualities that you should search for.

Jeremiah 3:15

And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.

Jeremiah 23:4

And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord.

- God's shepherds will feed the flock in such a way that they will be edified and not lacking.
- Your knowledge and understanding of the Lord should be growing on a steady basis with a godly shepherd feeding you.

Ezekiel 34:11-16

For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. [12] As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. [13] And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. [14] I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. [15] I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. [16] I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

- As you read the surrounding context, you will see that the shepherds were not doing what the Lord wanted. He then shows what he will do as the shepherd of his flock. These principles apply to the shepherds that he sets up over his flock. As you can see, it is a very close and personal dealing with the sheep of the flock. There is a love and care that is involved.
- The shepherd knows his sheep, his sheep know him.

- The sheep have learned to trust the shepherd and they listen to his voice.
- There are many things taking place in this relationship: feeding, strengthening, pursuing, healing, caring, etc. There must be a relationship established or this could not occur.
- In Ezek.34:9-10, God tells the shepherds that were not taking care of the flock and were just making sure that their own souls were taken care of that he will remove them and deliver the flock out of their mouths. There is comfort in this for the sheep, knowing that God will deal with the shepherd who is not pursuing His heart!

1 Thes. 5:12-13

And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; [13] And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

- You should know who is over you. It is relationship based! The following verse helps to see some things that you should look for in a shepherd.

Hebrews 13:7,17

Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

[17] Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

- You should consider the lifestyle of the leadership of a church and how they are walking in a faith relationship with Christ. The word obey in verse 17 means to be persuaded. It is difficult if not impossible to follow someone if you are not convinced that they are heading in the right direction with the will of the Father as their primary goal.
- They should not only preach the accurate word of God, they should be an example to others of how to live it.
- Watching for your soul would involve many principles that are in family relationships: loving, encouraging, affirming, reproofing, and bringing discipline.

1 Peter 5:1-3 NAS

2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.

- The oversight is to be a willing one, according to the will of God.
- The leadership style is not domineering, but one of example. See 1 Tim. 4:12-16 for more along this line.

Summary of Relationship

1. Jesus felt that sheep need a shepherd. It is a relationship that he established and throughout the scriptures you will see various illustrations of it.
2. In this sheep and shepherd relationship, there is a knowing of one another. The sheep get to the place where they know their shepherd's voice. They hear and acknowledge what the shepherd is saying to them and they follow him.
3. Jesus sets the standard of what a shepherd should be like and what he should be doing.
4. As you see the lifestyle of your shepherd you will either gain confidence as you see him follow the Lord or you will see that you cannot follow his example and need to find some other shepherd that you can relate to.
5. Once you are persuaded that this is a godly shepherd who is feeding you with knowledge and understanding, and watching over your soul as one who has to give account, it says that the sheep should submit to the shepherd.
6. Relationship is a key to becoming a member, a functioning member, of a local church.
7. God has established certain authorities in this biblical relationship. We must find out the biblical responsibilities of all involved and we must apply God's truth in fulfilling our roles.
8. There are principles directly implied in some of the verses discussed that show that a shepherd has responsibility over certain sheep, and that those sheep are also to recognize that they have a shepherd.
9. God has parameters or boundaries in the scriptures that keep both the sheep and the shepherd from stepping out of a Biblical role into one that leads to a dictatorial church or one that is solely democratic and run by the sheep.

b). Submission

Submission is a term that is not really understood in the U.S.A. We are a people who have been taught that we have the right to do things the way that we want to and nobody can make us do anything we don't want to. Submission is not being told to do something you don't want to do, submission is when you personally, of your own free will, yield yourself under the shepherding care of another because you are persuaded that they are caring for your soul and because it is a scriptural principle. Here are some definitions of the word submit:

1. Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words: SUBMIT- hupeiko NT:5226, "to retire, withdraw" (hupo, under, eiko, "to yield"), hence, "to yield, submit," is used metaphorically in Heb 13:17, of "submitting" to spiritual guides in the churches.

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2. An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon

place or arrange under,

to post under, to subject, -Pass. to be obedient,

3. A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament

put in subjection, subject, subordinate; passive be subject, submit to, obey, be under the authority of; take a subordinate place (I Cor 14:34)

4. Thayer's Definition:

- 1) to arrange under, to subordinate
- 2) to subject, put in subjection
- 3) to subject one's self, obey
- 4) to submit to one's control
- 5) to yield to one's admonition or advice
- 6) to obey, be subject

5. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

from Greek 5259 (hupo) and Greek 5021 (tasso); to *subordinate*; reflexive to *obey* :- be under obedience (obedient), put under, subdue unto, (be, make) subject (to, unto), be (put) in subjection (to, under), submit self unto.

Scriptures using this Greek word:

Luke 2:51

And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was **subject** unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

- Jesus was subordinate or under obedience to his parents.

Romans 8:7

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not **subject** to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

- The natural mind (man without Christ) cannot be subordinate to God!

Romans 10:3

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not **submitted** themselves unto the righteousness of God.

- By not understanding God's righteousness, the Israelites did what they felt would establish them with God and did not yield themselves to God's way. Our own way is not always the correct way.

Romans 13:1

Let every soul be **subject** unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

- God has ordained civil authorities as well as church authorities.

Titus 3:1

Put them in mind to be **subject** to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,

- There is a yielding to the civil authorities that God has established.

1 Peter 2:13

Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

- Do you have a hard time obeying the laws of this land because you think that they are ridiculous? This principle still applies today.

1 Cor. 16:16

That ye **submit** yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with *us*, and laboureth.

- Give regard, respect, and honorable esteem to those who are serving others.

Ephes. 5:21-22

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, **submit** yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

- Where would marriage be without submission taking place? It would be a house divided with each one struggling for the leadership position.

1 Peter 5:5

Likewise, ye younger, **submit** yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be **subject** one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

- We are to submit to one another and the humility helps us to do so.

1 Peter 2:18

Servants, *be subject* to *your* masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

- This verse in Peter goes contrary to the thinking we have here in the U.S.A. We have been taught to fight for our rights and that we don't have to take anything off of anybody!

Summary of Submission

1. The definition of submission is to yield, to place or arrange under, put in subjection, subordinate, be under the authority of.
2. What we are speaking about is the principle of yielding ourselves under the authority of someone else. We are the ones who yield! It is not up to the pastor to try to make us do something.
3. From the examples above, you can see that submission is applicable in many areas: the home, the government, our bosses at work (even the nasty ones), the church, spouses, with each other, as well as unto the Lord.
4. If you are a part of a local church but feel that you cannot submit to the leadership and their care for you (which biblically includes loving you, encouraging you, edifying you, and even correcting, reprovng, admonishing, and rebuking you), are you really a part of that local church or not? Thankfully my natural body obeys me when I tell my members to do something, especially if my life depends on it. It would be weird for my hand to let loose if my brain was telling it to hang tight or else I would fall off of a cliff. Rather than attending a church that you cannot submit to, find one that you can submit to and be a functioning part there. If you remain in a church that you cannot submit to, you will be a member that the body cannot depend upon, never knowing if you will be a hand that holds tight or one that lets loose in time of need. Ultimately, you will be the one who becomes frustrated, feels left out, becomes offended easily, and cannot seem to find their place in the body of Christ.
5. No one can force you to submit. It is an act of your will as you see the characteristics

we discussed in the relationship section applied in the leadership of the church.

c). Commitment

The word commitment is not found in the New Testament being used in the sense that this lesson is describing it. Nonetheless, the principles are found in the scriptures and through these we will see what commitment to the local church is.

Commitment is the sense of being obligated. The synonyms for obligated are: duty, responsibility, and liability. The commitment that is covered in this lesson deals with the general sense of all three of these words concerning our relationship with the local church.

Definition of duty:

The action required by one's position or occupation.

Definition of responsibility:

Moral, legal, or mental accountability.

Definition of liability:

Implies a possibility or probability of incurring something because of position, nature, or particular situation.

- All three of these definitions express a similar pattern to me. These show me that because of who we are in Christ, there is something that is expected or required of us. It is because of who and what Christ has made us that we have a responsibility to the local church as well as to the Lord himself.
- To clarify, just look at Hebrews 13: 17 "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." John 10: 14 "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine." These two scriptures speak of commitment because of the intrinsic principles found in them. These principles are: a) We are now his sheep (our position) b) Jesus sets up shepherds over the flock that answer to him (God's plan or situation that he has placed us in) c) The sheep are to know the shepherd and the shepherd the flock (a responsibility that we have) d) The sheep are to be persuaded in their hearts (through biblical standards, not because of outward things that we would evaluate with our carnal thinking) that the shepherd God has placed in authority is someone that they can yield themselves under (the action required). These scriptures show that, by who we are in Christ, we now have certain responsibilities in this relationship that He has structured!
- Just read the scriptures in the relationship section and see the intrinsic commitment that is involved!

How is this commitment expressed?

1. Being fully persuaded of the leadership and submitting yourself under their care (it helps to verbalize this to the shepherd also).
2. Hearing the voice of the shepherd (we are always to certify that it is biblical).
3. Using your gifts and abilities to build up the members of the body.

4. With our time and energy.
5. With our financial support.

Let's take a closer look at each of these five points:

1. Being persuaded of the leadership.

a) Since all of us are to know those who rule over us and yield ourselves under their care and ministry, where do you stand at this time? Are you new to the church and are still 'feeling things out'? That is perfectly acceptable and something that you should do. You should also talk to the leadership about any questions that you have and are concerned about to see what type of scriptural basis there is for the area in question. At some point though, you will have to determine if you can submit to the leadership and be sure that they are watching over your soul with the heart that God describes for a shepherd.

b) Have you been here for a while and like the feeding but do not want to submit because you have been hurt by a shepherd in the past (it does happen)? You should talk to the shepherd in charge and discuss your situation with him and hear what he has to say and evaluate your Biblical response accordingly. If this is not the church for you, we encourage you to find another godly, bible based church in which you can yield yourself.

c) Do you feel that you are a member of this church but are not convinced that the leadership is watching for your soul and you hold back from being involved? This is another area that should be discussed with the shepherd that God has placed over the flock. It is only when we face the issues head on, by bringing things out into the open, that we can find the answers we need in order to find our place in the body of Christ.

d) All of us need to come to a point of commitment to the shepherd of the church we attend.

2. Hearing the voice of the shepherd.

a) Jesus as the great shepherd said that the sheep hear his voice, and a stranger they will not follow. Since he himself established men that are to shepherd his flock, are we willing to hear their voice? This implies a commitment to the shepherd's leading and feeding. If we are not committed to hearing his voice and responding to it, what good does it do us in the long run?

3. Using your gifts and abilities to build up the members of the body.

a) God has given each of us certain gifts and abilities that are meant to strengthen the local church. These gifts may sometimes stretch out in a broader sense to the universal church of Christ, but that is a subject that can be touched on at a later time. The following verse is not taken fully in context and yet there is a principle in it that is applicable to this point: I Cor 4:7 [NLT] "What makes you better than anyone else? What do you have that God hasn't given you? And if all you have is from God, why boast as though you have accomplished something on your own?" Our gifts and abilities are given to us by God, they are not for personal glory or for our own personal use, they are meant to be used to build up those who are around

- us. Do you have gifts and abilities that you are holding back? Do you know the reason why you are holding them back? Is your reasoning for doing so Biblically based or personal reasoning? Have you discussed it with your shepherd?
- b)** Have you been involved in activities and now feel that you are 'burned out' with ministering your gift and have decided to just sit back for a while? Perhaps you should discuss this with the shepherd and find out how you can use your gifts and still maintain a balance in your life.
- c)** Each member of the body is of great importance to the Lord. Each member has specific functions that they do. I am glad that my thumb is dedicated to ministering to the rest of my body. Though the thumb is a small member its usefulness to the body is tremendous. Each of us needs to recognize that we are connected to other members of Christ's body and that each of us do supply and strengthen the other members.
- d)** Let us all commit our gifts and abilities to building up the body of Christ. None of us is complete in himself and we need for the others to impart to us as well as us imparting to them.
- e)** Matthew 10:8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. He has freely given to us in many areas and we should freely give to others.
- We need to realize that God has given us whatever we have in order that his kingdom and his church should be built up. He knows what he is doing when he places us in a particular flock.

4. We should be committed to the local church with our time and energy.

- a)** As in any area of relationship, the amount of time and effort we put into it will be a determining factor in the strength of that relationship. All good relationships require time and energy.
- b)** I Cor. 13:3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Giving of ourselves should be motivated by love!
- c)** Philip. 2:30 "Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me." Epaphroditus was close to death in the work of Christ trying to supply what the Philippians did not. His time and energy were definitely given to the work of Christ. His work was with Paul in a traveling ministry while most of ours is in the local church.
- d)** I Cor. 16:15-16 "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephan as, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) [16] That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth." Paul gave them high praise because they were addicted to the ministry of the saints. It means that they arranged their lives, put them in order, made it a priority to give themselves to ministering to the saints.

5. We should be committed to the local church with our financial support.

For many people, the topic of giving finances to the church is a touchy topic. This has probably come about because of abuses that have taken place in the Christian world. Some of the abuses that have taken place have been through ignorance of Biblical principles, but others have taken place because of greed and sin. In spite of what others have done, we must look to see what the scriptures say about finances in order to fulfill God's desires. God is not quiet about finances in the scriptures. We will look at the following areas:

- a) It is God who gives us wealth. It is given to us for His purposes.
- b) What does he expect of us?
- c) It reflects what is taking place in our hearts.

a) It is God who gives us wealth. It is given to us for His purposes.

1 Chron 29:12-19 NLT

Riches and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. Power and might are in your hand, and it is at your discretion that people are made great and given strength. 13 "O our God, we thank you and praise your glorious name! 14 But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? Everything we have has come from you, and we give you only what you have already given us! 15 We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a shadow, gone so soon without a trace. 16 "O LORD our God, even these materials that we have gathered to build a Temple to honor your holy name come from you! It all belongs to you! 17 I know, my God, that you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find integrity there. You know I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously. 18 "O LORD, the God of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, make your people always want to obey you. See to it that their love for you never changes.

- They were only able to give so freely because God had blessed and prospered them.
- See how David acknowledges that they were only giving back what was God's in the first place. How different this is from the concept the world has about money!

1 Cor. 16:2

Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

- Paul recognized that it was God who did the prospering.

Deut.8:17-18

And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth. But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.

- God gave them power to get wealth, it is not our own ability that does it.

1 Samuel 2:7-8

The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. [8] He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to

set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.

Psalm 113:7

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;

Psalm 75:6-7

For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. 7 But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.

Hosea 2:8

For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.

- In the context of Hosea 2, God had given the increase, but the children of Israel had used those things in their worship of other gods. The Lord said he was going to take away those things that he had given because they had abused them.
- We would do well to consider that it is the Lord who gives us what we have, that we have been bought with a price and are no longer our own, and that we are stewards of the things he places in our care.
- If God gives it, shouldn't we find out from Him about how it should be used?

b) What does God expect of us?

In the scriptures we see that there are tithes and offerings. The word tithe means the tenth part. Tithes are ten percent of your gross increase. Offerings are above and beyond the ten percent given as a tithe.

Tithes: Tithes were used for supporting the Priests and Levites in the Old Testament. Tithing actually was started before the Law was given and the specific instructions about the distribution of the tithes to the ministers of the altar. A lesson on tithing is available in this foundations book. But for now, here are a few scriptures to show what the Lord thinks about it:

Leviticus 27:30

And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord.

- All of the tithe is His, it is holy to Him.

Malachi 3:8-10

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. [9] Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. [10] Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

- By not giving their tithes and offerings, the Israelites were actually robbing God. That shows that God does consider the tithe His.
- The tithe is God's means of provision for the ministry of His church.
- Does the Lord have any say in what we do with our finances? If you tithe, does God have any say in how you spend the other 90%?

- There were multiple offerings in the Old Testament times such as peace offering, trespass offering, free-will offering, etc. The offering that we are discussing is something that we give above and beyond our tithe. There are scriptural principles that will help us to do this wisely as well as asking the Lord to tell you what amount he wants you to give.
- These are vital for the life of the church (building cost, utilities, outreach, ministry, pastor, etc.) and it is serious to the Lord if we take what he says is his.
- God does expect us to give tithes and offerings.
- If we are not persuaded in the current leadership, to the point that we won't give our tithe because we don't trust the leadership, then we have issues that need to be resolved by communicating with the leadership of the church.

c) It reflects what is taking place in our hearts.

Matthew 6:19-24

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: [20] But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: [21] For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. [22] The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. [23] But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness! [24] No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Luke 12:32-34

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. [33] Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. [34] For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Col. 3:2

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

- Since this is not a complete teaching on finances, you should be made aware that the scripture in Luke 12 does not mean that you have to sell everything you have and live as a pauper. The principle implied is that if you trust in your riches more than in the Lord and his ways, you will find yourself setting your heart on earthly treasures. God's desire is that we have our treasures in heaven. One of the ways that we do that is by being liberal in our giving. If we consider that it is His in the first place, it is a lot easier to do! You can tell where a person's heart is by where he spends his money.

1 Tim. 6:17-19

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; [18] That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; [19] Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation

- against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.
- The rich should not trust in their riches, but as in Matt. 6 and Luke 12, they should set their affections on things above. They should be liberal in their giving.

2 Cor 9:5-11 NIV

So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given. 6 Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. 7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 9 As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever." 10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. 11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

- Sowing generously will cause us to reap generously. This is not a principle of give ten dollars and you will get one hundred back. Some of the reaping is in the harvest of righteousness. He does say that he will supply and increase your store of seed sown and he is the only one who can truly cause us to increase.
- We should be committed to giving liberally, not only in the local church, but also to those around us. As we give freely to the local church, to those in the local church, and to those around us, then there is truly an abundance of thanksgiving rising up to the Father.

Summary of Commitment

1. Because of the structure that the Lord has established for the church, there is an inherent commitment in place. He has placed sheep in a fold with a shepherd. The dynamics involved in that relationship require commitment.
2. The difficulty that we have with commitment is that too often we have too many commitments in our lives. Finding the priorities in our lives according to scriptural principles should be something that all of us do. Without setting priorities according to God's purpose, we will set priorities according to the needs of the urgent and priorities according to our own reasoning (which is faulty without the word of God).
3. This principle of commitment does not take away from the commitments to family, work, etc. It is just as necessary as the other ones and should dove-tail into our life's purpose as a simple and natural principle.
4. If you should be struggling with any of the areas discussed in this section of commitment, please talk to your shepherd about it in order to get your individual needs met.

HOW DO YOU ENTER INTO CHURCH LIFE?

Relationship, Submission, and Commitment!

Through applying these principles you will find yourself not only growing in your own spiritual life, but you will experience the pleasure of helping to build and change the lives of others in the kingdom of God.

There are probably some scriptures or principles that you may feel that I should have used or may have fit better. That may very well be true. My desire was to search out from scripture enough material to give people a solid foundation to build upon. Hopefully, each one who goes through this lesson will continue adding principles in their hearts and minds and come up with an even clearer way of expressing these and other truths so that the kingdom of God may continue increasing.