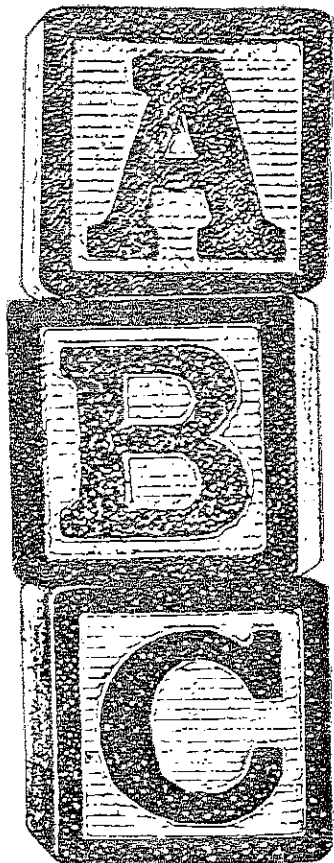


Basic Bible Doctrines

(A Study Of
First Principles)



Rob Harbison

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God

INTRO: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). That simple opening verse carries profound truths about God. It tells us of His:

- 1) Existence. That God **is** needs no more proof than witnessing His works (Romans 1:19-20).
- 2) Eternity. If He was "in the beginning", and was the power which brought the creation into existence, then He had to exist before it.
- 3) Power. He "created" (brought into being that which never before existed) He spoke and it happened.
- 4) Work. The scope of His work is in this world -- "the heaven and the earth" -- not just in heavenly, spiritual realms.
- 5) Providence. What He created, He created full and complete, to supply the needs of His creation.

He is the one "with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13, KJV). He is the Father of man and the one to whom we must give account (Hebrews 12:9).

He is unlike any other being we know (Psalm 113:5-6; Micah 7:18; Job 34:10-30). Who is even comparable to God? We must stand agape when we look at this wonderful Spirit.

I. DOES GOD EXIST?

A. Important Question. We are fools if we **do not** serve such a being who **does** exist. Likewise, we are fools if we **do** serve such a being who **does not** exist!!

B. Evidences For God's Existence.

1. Cause And Effect. Every effect must have an adequate cause. The universe and everything within it is an effect... The moral nature of man is an effect... a universal belief in Deity is an effect. Each of these examples must have a sufficiently capable cause to bring them into being. That cause is God!!
"Every house is built by someone" (Hebrews 3:4). Every watch is the work of a watchmaker, every baby is the product of two parents, the creation in existence demands a Creator. That creator is God (Hebrews 11:3; Genesis 1:1).
2. Design. The universe is like a finely tuned machine. Although chance and randomness do exist, they are exceptions (and even they are recognized as laws). Nature has such intricate balances and interdependencies between animals, plants, and environment in an ecosystem, that asking us to believe these things evolved and gradually developed over a long period of time, is about as logical as asking us to believe a man can jump across a wide ditch a foot at a time!!
The universe in existence speaks for itself regarding a designer (Romans 1:20; Psalm 19:1-2; 139:13-14). Rather than disproving a Creator, science and its advances continue to gather more evidence which support the hand of a master planner and architect of this universe.

C. God Exists. And it is within the Bible that He tells us about Himself (1 Corinthians 2:6-13; Isaiah 55:8-9).

II. CHARACTERISTICS AND QUALITIES OF GOD

- A. Eternal. Since **all** things were created or brought into existence by God, it follows that God preceded all things -- that He already **was** in existence!! (Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-3; Psalm 33:6-9).
God did not ever **begin** -- this world began, time began, and man began, but God is and always "is". Before creation there was "everlasting". The entirety of the history of creation will be just a wrinkle in eternity, and after the destruction of what is material there will be "everlasting". God inhabits all of that eternity (Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 57:15; 1 Timothy 1:17). God is ever present, hence He speaks of Himself as "I am" (Exodus 3:14).
- B. Incomprehensible. Some men scoff because they cannot envision a God like Jehovah, other men stand in awe. God is beyond man's finite conception. Our understanding has human limits. God is bound by no such limits, therefore incomprehensible to us (Romans 11:33; Isaiah 55:8-9).
Man's only chance to understand God's mind is to have it revealed to him (1 Corinthians 2:9-11)
- C. Immutable. God is unchangeable (James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8). That is our hope and assurance in regard to His word. If God said or decreed something, that is His guarantee that it will happen (cf. Hebrews 6:17-19).
- D. Omnipotent. He is all powerful (Nahum 1:2-6; Psalm 29). Even the winds and sea obey Him... the clouds and rain do His bidding. He is not therefore, a dreaded dictator or slave owner. Power does not corrupt Him!!
God can do what man cannot (Matthew 19:26).
- E. Omniscient. God knows all (Psalm 139:1-6). We cannot keep secrets from Him -- He knows us better than we know ourselves!! (Hebrews 4:12-13). There is nothing outside the scope of His knowledge or His ability to know (Acts 15:18).
- F. Omnipresent. You cannot escape from God (Psalm 139:7-12). That is either disturbing or comforting, depending on your life. If our lives are evil, that truth distresses and intimidates us. But if they are righteous, we feel comfort and security.

III. MORAL ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

- A. Holiness. God is a being of sinless perfection, absolute purity (Psalm 145:17). He cannot deny that nature. He is free from any defilement and His nature is the absolute standard for our lives (1 Peter 1:14-16). That is why sin separates us from Him.
- B. Justice. We can all count on God to be fair and deal justly with all men (Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 89:14). With Him there is no partiality or favoritism. He deals equitably and fairly with everyone. We expect that of God, but actually that is the reason we are all doomed by sin (Romans 6:23).
- C. Mercy. God offers salvation to men who do not deserve it (Psalm 136:1-9, 23-26). The mercy of God desires and makes it possible for **all** men to be forgiven (1 Timothy 2:3-6; 1 John 2:1-2). Jesus is the solution to

the dilemma between God's justice and mercy. Justice demands punishment for sin and mercy desires to overlook the guilt of sin. Jesus redeemed us from sin so that God could be faithful to both aspects of His moral nature (Romans 3:23-26).

- D. Love. God is love (1 John 4:8). God loved us so much that He created and supplied this earth for us. He showers blessings upon us and the epitome of His love for man is seen in the giving of His Son to die for us (John 3:16).
- E. Grace. To say "God is good" is an understatement (Psalm 107:8). The greatest manifestation of His grace is in our salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9).

IV. THE GODHEAD

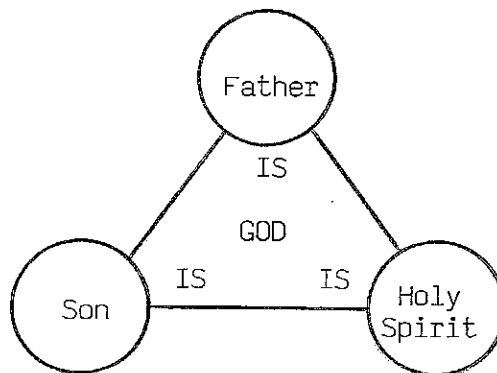
A. What Is It? The word "Godhead" appears three times in the Bible (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9). When the Bible describes "God" or the "Godhead", it is telling us about another world, a completely different realm beyond what we can see, taste, and touch. Therefore, it is bound to be difficult to understand!!

1. Definitions

- a. God (theos) - an appellative or name of Deity
- b. Deity, Godhead (theotes) -- "the state of being God" (Thayer, p.288) (Colossians 2:9)
- c. Divinity, Godhead (theiotes) -- "Divine nature" (Thayer, p.285) (Romans 1:20)
- d. Godhead -- "The possession of the essence of Deity in an absolute sense" (Wuest)
- e. Term "God" describes the state of being God or one who possesses Divine nature. Any Being in this state, possessing the characteristics of one who is Divine is referred to as "God".

2. Each being in the Godhead (The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) possess all the qualities demanded of Deity. Therefore each is referred to as **being** God.

- a. God the Father (Ephesians 4:6; John 20:17)
- b. God the Son (John 1:1-3,14; Hebrews 1:8)
- c. God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4)



B. Plurality Of Godhead. The Bible has always taught a plurality of beings on one Godhead.

1. Genesis 1:1. "God" is Hebrew word "elohim". This word is plural in its form and is used more than any other Hebrew word to describe God (1969 times).
2. Genesis 1:26. God was **not** speaking to His angels. He was speaking to someone who possessed the same nature as His!! The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were each part of the creation process (Genesis 1:2; 2:7; John 1:1).
3. Deuteronomy 6:4. The word here translated "one" is the Hebrew word "echad" which means a **collective** or **unified** one.
4. When we pray, no prayer is uttered without the knowledge and working of each member of the Godhead, thus illustrating their complete spiritual unity.

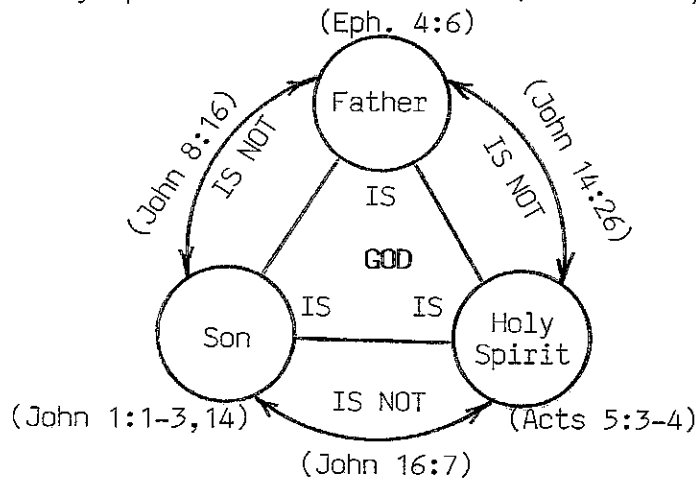
We pray **to** God (Matthew 6:6,9), **through** Christ (John 14:13; 1 John 2:1) and **with aid** of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26).

C. Distinctness Of Each Individual. Advocates of the "oneness doctrine" claim that there is only one being, but we just sometimes see three different sides of Him. That is absurd (Matthew 3:16-17; 26:39).

It is foolish to think that Jesus promised to pray to Himself (John 17) to send Himself down to them after He left (John 14:16).

Each member of the Godhead is distinct even though they possess the same qualities, characteristics, and attributes of Deity.

1. The Father is not the Son (John 8:16-18; 1 Corinthians 11:3)
2. The Son is not the Holy Spirit (John 16:7; Acts 10:38)
3. The Holy Spirit is not the Father (John 14:26; 15:26)



D. How Can Three Be One? Such a concept is too difficult to fully understand, but is illustrated by the united **one** of husband and wife (Matthew 19:5-6), members of the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-27), and all believers (John 17:20-21). These **cannot** be one "person", but like the Trinity are united in will, purpose and intellect.

CONCLUSION: Truly our God is worthy of all praise and adoration we can give!!

"Who is like the Lord our God, who dwells on high, who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth" (Psalm 113:5-6).

The Nature Of Man

INTRO: Read Psalm 8:3-9; 139:14-16

Man is a unique and special creature. He is the crowning work of God's creation but also the most shameful and embarrassing. Yet God and His Son love us in spite of ourselves (Hebrews 2:11; 11:16).

Man's nature is what separates him from the animals and sets him apart above all the rest of creation, possessing the dominion and rule over everything created in the world (Psalm 8:6-8; Genesis 1:26-28).

I. MAN WAS CREATED BY GOD

A. Created Not Evolved. Man is here -- this is a fact. Man is here either as the product of God's creation or as a product of organic evolution.

1. Evolution Is A Theory. A "theory" is "a belief not yet tested in practice" or a "hypothesis" or "something **assumed** as a starting point for scientific investigation".

Today science is interpreted in light of evolutionary theory. But to use evolution as a foundation for scientific interpretation, evolution must **first** be a proven fact!! No one **honestly** admits that it is!!

a. Evolution Is Not Supported By Science. The theory requires either "spontaneous generation" or "perpetual motion", neither of which has been proven. It also denies the scientifically proven law of "Biogenesis" (like begets like).

b. Evolution Is Not Supported By Paleontology. The fossil records **begin** with highly complex, sophisticated life forms rather than graduating from simple to complex.

Not **one** actual missing link between **any** kinds of animals or man has been found!!

c. Evolution Is Not Supported By Chance. In calculations to determine the mathematical odds of the universe coming into existence and developing along lines of evolutionary theory in the 4.5 billion years allotted, Dr. Marcel Schutzenberger, professor of mathematics at the University of Paris, reported that the computer jammed (see Introduction to Christian Evidences, Ferrell Jenkins, p.30).

Even if these odds were 1 out of 1,000,000,000 (which isn't enough to scratch the surface of the number alluded to) then the odds that man was created are 999,999,999 out of 1,000,000,000. Where do you want to put your money?

2. God Created Man. He brought man into existence from nothing. He created man in His own image (Genesis 1:26-27). He formed man's body from the dust of the ground, then breathed life into him (Genesis 2:7). He formed man's mate (woman) from man's side (Genesis 2:18, 21-23).

God is the source of life for mankind (Acts 17:24-28). To deny His creative hand is foolish (Isaiah 29:15-16).

B. Created In God's Image (Genesis 1:26-27). Thus man is special... not because of anything man has done... but because of the nature God gave him. The ability to dominate, tame, and harness the characteristics and laws of this world for his benefit is a result of being in God's image.

Man has, dramatically at present, shown his intellect and ability to bend even the heavens to his own purpose.

Man lost many things through the first sin -- his sinless state (Romans 5:12-14, his moral uprightness (Ecclesiastes 7:29), communion with God by suffering spiritual death (separation) (Genesis 2:17), the ground was cursed (Genesis 3:17-19), etc. But man retains that dominion and his image of God.

1. The Form Of God. In what way are we in God's image? Does He look like us with a face, hands, feet, body, etc.? Or is there more to man than what we see?
 - a. God Is A Spirit (John 4:24). Spirits do not have flesh and bones (Luke 24:39; Job 10:4). When physical characteristics are attributed to Him, they are used figuratively to illustrate His work or will (cf. Job 10:8; Isaiah 1:15; Psalm 33:6).
He is the father of **spirits** (Hebrews 12:7-9; Zechariah 12:1). God created all things yet disciplines only mankind. Children possess the nature of their Father (in any realm).
 - b. God Is Invisible (Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17). He does not dwell in physical temples or localities (Acts 17:24-29). We are His "offspring" and likewise there is a part of us that is invisible.
 - c. Jesus Formerly Existed In The Form Of God (Philippians 2:5-8). When He came into the world, He took the form of a man (John 1:14; Hebrews 2:17; 5:7). Spiritual nature and physical nature are different. Man has both.

C. Created With A Dual Nature (2 Corinthians 4:16). This twofold nature is comprised of our fleshly, physical bodies (outward man) and our spirits (inward man).

1. Physical Body. It was formed of the dust (Genesis 2:7 ['yatsar' -- "to form, to fashion as a potter" (Gesenius, pp.138,361)]). It is the shell in which our spirit lives. It is subject to decay.
2. Spirit. It was created by God (Genesis 1:27 ['bara' -- "to create, to produce"]). God made it out of nothing). It is renewed daily.

This dual nature, and the characteristics and qualities of each part is seen in other passages which emphasize where our efforts should be directed.

1. Matthew 10:28. Kill the body, but not the soul.
2. Matthew 26:41. Flesh is weak but spirit is willing.
3. 1 Corinthians 5:5. Destruction of flesh that spirit might be saved.
4. 2 Corinthians 5:1-4. Earthly house, house from heaven.
5. 2 Corinthians 5:6-8. While home in the body we are absent from the Lord, but desire to be absent from body and at home with the Lord.
6. 2 Corinthians 12:3. Whether in the body or out of the body.
7. Philippians 1:22-25. Abide in the flesh or depart to be with Christ.
8. 2 Peter 1:13-14. This tabernacle, earthly house put off.
9. Ecclesiastes 12:7. Dust returns to the ground, spirit returns to God who gave it.

Death is the parting of these two natures (James 2:26)... when our Godward nature returns to God and our earthward nature returns to the earth (Ecclesiastes 12:7; cf. Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59f; 1 Kings 17:21-22). At death one is not changed into spirit but our spirit "sheds its skin".

- D. Created To Live Eternally (Luke 20:27-38). The Bible makes a clear distinction between the individual -- the real being -- and the place (body) where the real being lives or dwells.

When Abraham was living God said "I am the God of Abraham" (Genesis 24:12). When Abraham was dead, God said "I am the God of Abraham" (Genesis 26:24; 28:13). When Abraham was living, God was the God of the spirit that resided in that fleshly body... when Abraham died, God was still the God of that spirit which was **then** released from that fleshly body!!

It is that spirit which exists eternally... God is **still** "the God of Abraham" (Luke 20:37-38; Acts 3:13).

1. Death Is Necessary To Usher Us Into Eternal Life (2 Corinthians 5:1). The individual is one thing and the body in which the individual dwells in this life is another. The body of this life is mortal, but the real being is immortal (2 Peter 1:13-14).

We are created to exist eternally. We had a beginning but will have no end. We will live eternally either enjoying our reward or suffering our punishment (Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

II. MAN WAS CREATED AS A FREE MORAL AGENT

- A. Man Is A Rational Being. He has the ability to think (Proverbs 23:7), reason (Isaiah 1:18), perceive (Mark 4:12), understand (Psalm 49:3), plan (Proverbs 16:9), will (Philippians 2:13), determine (1 Corinthians 2:2), test (2 Corinthians 13:5) and hope (Acts 24:15).

These are attributes of the human mind which separate us from the brute beasts (cf. 2 Peter 2:12; Psalm 32:9). And it is this particular quality to which God addresses Himself through His written revelation.

- B. Man Has A Choice. Without a choice God could never receive love from men -- He would receive what man had been **programmed** to do. Man has the capacity to be properly concerned about what is right and wrong -- to be concerned about God's will. God wants man to show his love by choosing to obey (Joshua 24:15; Deuteronomy 30:19).
- C. Man Has A Conscience. Animals have no conscience distinguishing between right and wrong and influencing them to do one or the other. A man's conscience is his warning signal. Since he does have a choice, God has given him a conscience to keep his choices in line with what he knows is right. The choice still remains in the power of each man, but he must live with his conscience. It either commends or condemns him in everything he does (Romans 2:14-15; 1 Peter 3:16; cf. Acts 24:25; John 8:9 NKJV).
- D. Man Is Accountable. Having moral nature and rationality, man is accountable to God for his actions and choices (Matthew 12:36; Romans 14:12). We must all appear before the judgment bar of God to give account of our lives (2 Corinthians 5:10).
- E. The Battle Within. Because of our dual nature, there is a battle raging within us, between the flesh and spirit, for the control of our lives (Galatians 5:16-25). Each choice we make is a victory for one side or the other.

When one becomes a child of God he buries the old man of sin and is

raised a new creature (Romans 6:3-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 4:17-24).

CONCLUSION: The Bible presents man as a composite being. Man is related to two worlds. He lives in this world and yet has a definite relationship to the spiritual world, even living in it **now** (Ephesians 1:3; 2:6). He lives in the present but must be concerned with the future... He lives in this world but must be concerned with the next world (2 Corinthians 4:16; Colossians 3:1-2).

Man's body was formed from the dust and will return to it. During that short interlude between birth and death, he experiences life. Because of his moral nature he is accountable to God for the way he lives that life.

How much of himself must man give to God? (Mark 12:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:23)

Sin

INTRO: Some people scare easily. The thought or picture of some ugly, inhuman beast frightens them. The movie industry makes millions each year frightening people.

All of us are afraid of some things -- spiders, snakes, the dark, sudden noises, thunder and lightning, etc. We literally tremble as we experience these things, yet there is a monster roaming today which is more terrible than anything else in the world. It should be **feared** above all other things, but instead is the **most popular** activity in the world. The practice of sin began and caught on a long time ago and has continued down through the ages to be the most popular thing in the world.

Yet sin is a gruesome and hideous monster because of what it causes us to do, and the consequences it brings upon us. Sin should frighten us. It brought death, destruction and misery into the world (Romans 5:12).

I. THE NATURE OF SIN DEFINED

- A. Transgression Of Law (1 John 3:4; Romans 4:15). Whether it be overt and willing or secret and unwitting, transgression of the law is sin. It may even be committed by conscientious people (Paul -- Acts 23:1; 26:9; 1 Timothy 1:12-15).
- B. All Unrighteousness (1 John 5:17; cf. Psalm 119:172). Unrighteousness is "a deed or deeds violating law and justice" (W.E. Vine). All sin is ultimately against God.
- C. Missing The Mark (Romans 3:23). Either by falling short or overshooting the target, sin is missing what God wants us to be.
- D. Impure Thoughts (Matthew 5:28; Mark 7:14-23). We can sin and yet never commit the activity itself. Following through with the sin in our hearts is as wrong as doing it in the body.
- E. Omitting Known Duty (James 4:17; Luke 12:47; Matthew 25:41-46). Christianity is not only "not doing" certain sinful things, but more importantly is a life of "doing something". We may not be guilty of doing things that are **wrong** but if we are not guilty of doing things that are **right** then we are condemned too!!
- F. Whatever Is Not Of Faith (Romans 14:23). We should never pressure anyone to do something he thinks is wrong, even though it is not inherently wrong (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:1-13).

II. THE ORIGIN OF SIN

- A. Among Angels (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6). The first recorded appearance of sin was among the angels. They had the power of choice (as man does) and chose to transgress God's law. They were cast down.
- B. Among Men (Genesis 3). Satan lied to Eve (John 8:44; 1 Timothy 2:14). Believing him, she ate of the tree and gave to Adam also. Their eyes were opened and they saw they were naked. God punished man for his sin (Genesis 3:14-19).

Speculation concerning man's situation had they not sinned is useless. Man sinned. Every generation following has committed its own sins. Sin is here and we must deal with it.

III. THE SCOPE OF SIN

A. Universal (Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8,10). None can boast of sinlessness. There will never be a time when the subject of sin and its remedy will not need to be preached (Romans 3:10-18).

Only Jesus lived above it. That is why He is our example for life (1 Peter 2:22).

B. Inherited Depravity? Does man inherit sin from Adam or is each man guilty of sin by his own choice? The doctrine of Original Sin is the foundation doctrine of the system of Calvinism and all who have been influenced by his teaching.

It is a theory of hereditary, total depravity which teaches that a man is a sinner at birth, having inherited the guilt of Adam's sin and as a consequence is in possession of the sinful, Adamic nature. Is that what the Bible teaches?

1. Ezekiel 28:15
2. Ezekiel 18:20. Man is individually responsible for himself.
3. Ecclesiastes 7:29
4. Matthew 18:3-4. Should we become like morally depraved little urchins?
5. James 1:14-15. Man has a choice and is accountable for his choice. Jesus attributed perverseness of hearts to the fact that men "would not" (Matthew 23:37; John 5:40; Romans 1:20ff) not that they "could not".
6. Romans 7:8-11. Paul was alive before he died. Before he was dead spiritually, he was alive spiritually. This could only mean that he did not inherit sin but became a sinner when he transgressed the Law.

What about those passages which are used to support the doctrine of Inherited Depravity?

1. 1 Corinthians 15:22. This does not teach that we all die **spiritually** in Adam, but the reference is to the resurrection of the body. Therefore, Paul is saying that we all suffer **physical** death as a consequence of Adam's sin.
2. Psalm 51:5. It is obvious here that the sin was on the part of his mother, for the sin was there when he was **conceived** (before he had an actual existence on earth).

IV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

A. General Consequences. What has sin left behind in its footprints (Galatians 6:7)?

1. Pain In Child-bearing (Genesis 3:16). Sin has cost women much.
2. Hard Luck And Toil (Genesis 3:17-19). Sin has cost men much. God had provided man with the Garden of Eden. But because of sin, the abundance and ease of obtaining those provisions was severely curbed.
3. Physical Death (1 Corinthians 15:21-22). Death has brought more pain and suffering to the hearts of people than any other single thing. Sin ushered death into the world (1 Corinthians 15:56).

4. Alienation From God (Genesis 3:8,23-24). Man was cast out of the Garden and away from God's fellowship. Satan tried to convince Eve that her sinful action would make her more like God (Genesis 3:4-5). In truth, she became separated from God, unable to reconcile herself to Him by her own actions.
- B. Personal Consequences. What sin will do for you personally.
1. Enslaves Us (John 8:32-36; Romans 6:16). It is like a ball and chain which holds us prisoner. It deceives and enslaves us (2 Peter 2:19). We think we are free to function within our own set of morals when really we are deceived because we are bound and chained by sin.
 2. Separates Us From God (Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 John 1:5-6). Because of God's purity and sin's defilement, man and God cannot have fellowship where there is sin between.
 3. Brings Condemnation (Romans 5:16; 6:23), God had no reason to ever condemn or punish man until sin came. Sin brings to the world the fear of judgment, anxiety of God's penetrating eye which watches our lives and deeds, and the knowledge of the punishment to be inflicted on all who are guilty of sin (Galatians 5:19-21).
 4. Works Spiritual Death (James 1:14-15; Ephesians 2:1-3). Sin has made us spiritual zombies -- dead while we yet live. It curses us, bringing on our souls decay, rot, and putrefication. Sin eats away at our souls like scavengers on a carcass and makes them fit for nothing but the spiritual garbage heap.
 5. Bars Us From Heaven (John 8:21,24; Matthew 7:21-23). Heaven is a place for the redeemed children of God who live righteously. There will be no bargaining it, no entrance for those who have lived unrighteously (Revelation 21:27; 22:14-15).
Sin will condemn us to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46; 2 Thesalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 10:26-29).

V. THE REMEDY FOR SIN

- A. Gloomy Picture Of Sin. The picture sin paints is an utterly gloomy one. There seems to be no bright spot... That was the curse of the Law of Moses... There was no bright spot until Christ came (Hebrews 9:22; 10:1-4).
- B. Hope For Full Pardon (Hebrews 8:12). The "good news" of the gospel is that one man died for the sins of many and has made the cleansing power of His blood available for all who will take advantage of it (Hebrews 9:11-14; Acts 3:19; 4:12).

The blood of Christ is the remedy for the dreaded plague of sin (1 John 1:7). For this purpose He came (Matthew 1:21; John 1:29). It was to this end that He died (Titus 2:11-14). The "Great Physician" has the cure for the cancerous disease of sin... the purity and cleansing of His own blood.

CONCLUSION: How should we view sin? With the same horror and repugnance as God. Sin is so terrible that God was willing to sacrifice His own Son to take away the sins of the world (2 Corinthians 5:21). God is as outraged by our sins as we are by the atrocities man has committed -- from murdering innocent unborn children to the grizzly mauling of one human being at the hand of another. Sin is terrible and can only be cured by the blood of Christ.

The Blood Of Christ

INTRO: "For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fulness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth, or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Colossians 1:19-20).

The foundations of other world religions are certain men along with their **lives** and teachings -- the foundation of Christianity is Jesus' **death** and shed **blood!!** Many are repulsed by what they call that "bloody religion" of Christ. The Christian glories in it, knowing the powerful effects of Jesus' blood on the sins of mankind.

Sin and death were linked together from the beginning (Genesis 2:17). Sin brings on death and requires death for payment (Romans 5:12; 6:23). Jesus' blood was shed to conquer death and pay that price for us (Hebrews 2:14-15; Titus 2:14).

Blood has always held an important place in God's scheme of things (Genesis 4:4; Hebrews 9:6-8). Why blood?

I. THE LIFE IS IN THE BLOOD

A. The Life Is In The Blood (Leviticus 17:11; Genesis 9:4; Deuteronomy 12:23). Because of sin, life must be forfeited (Ezekiel 18:20; Romans 6:23). The **blood** is actually the basis of the physical life. The "soul" is the life principle or life force in the body (distinct from the spirit, because animals have a 'soul' [Ecclesiastes 3:19-21]). Man's life principle is primarily carried in the blood -- spill it out and life is poured out!!

No amount of money, time, or good works could satisfy the price of sin -- man must give up his most valuable possession, his life!! Blood must be shed!!

II. BLOOD SACRIFICES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A. Blood Offered For The Covering Of Sins (Atonement)

1. Under Patriarchal Dispensation (Genesis 4:4)
2. Under Mosaic Law. An animal was offered for sin (Leviticus 16:11, 16; Numbers 15:27-28).
 - a. Daily sacrifices (Exodus 29:38-42; Numbers 28-29). These included Sabbath offerings, monthly offerings, and offerings at special feasts.
 - b. Yearly sacrifice (Leviticus 16). The Day of Atonement when remembrance was made for all the sins committed during the past year (cf. Hebrews 10:1-3).

Under Moses' law, animal's lives were a substitute for man's. But even though rivers of blood flow from the throats of slain animals, these could never fully cover sin!! Even man's own blood is insufficient!!

B. Old Testament Sacrifices Were Typical. Blood sacrifices under the Old Covenant foreshadowed the need for Christ's atoning blood. They were symbolic of what Christ's blood would do (Hebrews 8:4-5; 9:6-9). But that was as far as they went. They were powerless to remove sin (Hebrews 10:1-4).

- C. Without The Shedding Of Blood There Is No Remission (Hebrews 9:22). No blood, no salvation!! The blood of animals is insufficient (Hebrews 10:4). Shedding our own blood for our sins leaves us justly (and deservedly) dead and punished (Romans 5:12; 6:16,21,23).

Therefore it was necessary for Christ's blood to be shed to make this atonement (Hebrews 9:6-28)!!

1. The first covenant was dedicated with the blood of animals (Hebrews 9:18-22). Christ dedicated this one by His blood (Hebrews 9:15-18, 22-23).
2. The high priest entered the most holy place once a year (Hebrews 9:25). Christ has gone into heaven to mediate between man and God (Hebrews 9:23-24; 10:19-22).

III. WHAT THE BLOOD OF CHRIST DOES FOR US

- A. Propitiation (1 John 2:2; Romans 3:24-26). Christ was set forth to be a propitiation (atoning sacrifice, covering) for our sins. The same word is translated "mercy-seat" (Hebrews 9:5).

The mercy seat above the ark of the covenant covered the Law and commandments within the ark, commandments which were daily being broken. Blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat to atone for the violations of the Law and cover them so that God would hide their sins from His eyes (figuratively).

The covering provided by Christ's blood is long and broad enough to cover the sins of the whole world. He who covers his own sins will come to nought (Proverbs 28:13). No man-made covering can hide a single sin from God's eye (Hebrews 4:13). Only Christ's blood!!

- B. Redemption (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19). When we were captivated and captured by sin, sin held us for ransom. It said "He is mine and he owes me his life" (Romans 6:23). Jesus bought us back with His own blood.

Redemption is "a releasing effected by payment of ransom; redemption, deliverance, liberation procured by the payment of a ransom" (Thayer). Jesus purchased our freedom from all iniquity (Titus 2:14; Colossians 1:14; 1 Corinthians 6:20). He bought the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28; Revelation 5:9-10).

- C. Justifies (Romans 5:9; 3:23-26). Justification is God's act of pronouncing a man righteous in spite of the man's guilt of sin... acquitting a man and treating him as innocent. It does not release him from his guilt, but from the punishment and consequence of his guilt.

God declares sinners to be righteous before His eyes on certain conditions laid down by Him. Ideally the complete fulfillment of God's Law would provide a basis for justification in His sight (Romans 2:13). But since no one has ever done that (except Christ), no one can be justified on this ground -- it must be by Christ's blood (Galatians 2:16; 3:10-11; 5:4; Romans 3:23-26).

- D. Sanctifies (Hebrews 13:12; 10:10; 1 Peter 1:2). Disciples of Christ are taken out of the world and separated unto God. Sanctification is that "set apart" relationship with God and our sole title to that position is Christ's death (cf. Ephesians 5:25-26).

When he is sanctified (set aside for the special service of laboring for God) then he is suitable for the Master's use (2 Timothy 2:21).

- E. Cleanses (1 John 1:7). "The thought is not of the forgiveness of sin only, but of the removal of sin. The sin is done away, and the purifying action is exerted continuously" (B.F. Westcott; The Epistle of St. John, p.21).
The very stain and defilement of sin is purged and cleansed. Rather than staining us, the blood of Christ cleanses us, washing away every bit of the filth contaminating our souls (Revelation 1:5).
- F. Brought Near (Ephesians 2:13). Sin estranges us from God, separating us from His favor (Isaiah 59:2). Sin is an uncleanness which makes us unfit for God's presence, and is also a transgression or rebellion which drives the soul far away from Him.
Christ's blood restores that closeness. Sin leads us away from God and Jesus' blood brings us back!!
- G. Peace (Colossians 1:20; Ephesians 2:15). This is not a peace made with God, but a God-made peace. The long struggle between the sin of man and the righteousness of God has come to an end at the cross -- as far as the redeemed are concerned.
The enmity is absolved and the gap between God and man is bridged. Reconciliation to God is offered to an estranged world through Christ (2 Corinthians 5:18-20).
- H. Access To God (Hebrews 10:17-22). Liberty to come with boldness to God in the Holiest place **ourselves** is the greatest of our earthly privileges. That was closed to man until Jesus' blood was shed.
Now we can daily do what the high priest could only do once a year for the people -- and we can do it individually ourselves (Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 4:16)!!

IV. WHERE WE CONTACT THE BLOOD

- A. By Faith We Avail Ourselves Of The Blood (Romans 3:23-26). We have Christ's blood applied to us on account of our faith. Since faith is more than just some mental assent or acknowledgement of Jesus, there is also some action involved to plunge ourselves into the fountain of His blood.
- B. Through Baptism We Contact The Blood (Romans 6:3-4; Colossians 2:12). Jesus' blood was shed in His death, and it is through baptism that we contact His death, and the healing in His blood (Matthew 26:28; Romans 6:3-4).
His blood was shed for the remission of our sins (Matthew 26:28) and baptism is also for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38).
Then His blood continues to cleanse us as we "walk in the light" and confess our sins (1 John 1:7,9).

CONCLUSION: The most gruesome and terrible sight the world has ever known transforms into the most beautiful event of human history. Rather than being a tragedy, the death of Christ is the most sublime thought with which we can concern ourselves.

Salvation

INTRO: "For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26)
That is a staggering thought!! Man has no more important possession than his eternal soul, and no more important task in life than saving it from hell and preparing it to live with God.

As serious as this is, man is unable to effect and secure his own salvation (Jeremiah 10:23). Jesus is the key to man's salvation (John 14:6). He is man's only hope for salvation (Acts 4:12; cf. Acts 2:40).

A humble, frightened jailor from Philippi echoes for us the greatest question pertaining to mankind "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30)

I. MAN'S NEED OF SALVATION

A. Man's Plight. We can never understand or appreciate the urgent need for salvation until we realize that every man and woman is lost in sin (Romans 3:10-18,23). Man's condition in sin is truly deplorable.

Sinners are:

1. Dead In Their Sins (Ephesians 2:1-3). Spiritual zombies, walking corpses. Death is the wages of transgression (Romans 6:23).
2. Alienated From God (Ephesians 2:11-12; Colossians 1:21). Sin standing between us and God separates us from Him as a deep and wide chasm (Isaiah 59:1-2).
3. Slaves Of Sin (John 8:34; 2 Peter 2:9). Sin has dominion and control over us (Romans 6:12-14,16).
4. Ignorant And Futile Minded (Ephesians 4:17-19). Without God, all their pursuits are vanity and their ignorance in God's light produces in them all kinds of darkness.
5. Destined For Destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Not only those who are the perverted, degenerate, scums-of-the-earth, but all people who remain apart from God for **any** reason.

II. GOD'S ETERNAL PLAN

A. God's Plan (1 Peter 1:18-20; Ephesians 1:4-5). God always knew that given a choice, man would sin -- but the only way man could love was to be given a choice. Thus, before man ever set foot upon the yet un-created earth, God devised a plan (Ephesians 3:10-11).

Glimpses of that salvation were shown and promised in the Old Testament (1 Peter 1:10-12; Genesis 3:15; 12:3; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Zechariah 13:1).

B. The Foundation Of God's Plan (Romans 5:18-19; Acts 4:12). Jesus was God's solution to the dilemma of God's righteousness and man's sin. "In the cross God shows Himself to the universe as the sinner's friend and uncompromising and eternal enemy of sin" (J.M. Pendleton).

C. The Revelation Of God's Plan (1 Corinthians 2:6-13; Ephesians 3:9-12). Although God's existence, power, and divinity can be known through His creation, man could search all his life and never learn how to gain salvation if not for God's word.

III. FROM WHAT ARE WE SAVED?

- A. Guilt And Condemnation Of Sin (Romans 8:1-4). Every conscientious, accountable soul knows the agony of guilt on his conscience and the fearful expectation of punishment. In Christ though, our conscience is cleansed as the guilt of sin is taken away (Hebrews 10:22; 1 Peter 3:21).
- B. A Lost Condition (Luke 19:10; Matthew 10:6). Apart from Christ we are lost sheep... we are children who have gone astray and left the haven of our Father's house (Luke 15:4-7,11-32).
- C. The Wrath Of God (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9). God's wrath is poured out upon the "sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6; Romans 1:18). God wants to punish no one, but His anger against sin is devastating (Hebrews 10:31; 12:29).
- D. Eternal Punishment For Sin (Matthew 25:46; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). The consequences of fleeting, passing sins are eternal. Christ came to give us eternal life (Romans 6:23).
- E. The Fear Of Death (Hebrews 2:14-15). Before Christ came, life was to end in certain doom. But by His resurrection Christ assures us that we can be raised with Him to live forever (Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23).
- F. Satan's Power In Our Lives (Acts 26:18; 1 John 3:8). Salvation releases us from the power of sin in our lives -- sin having been our master. No longer does sin **reign** in the body, even though one sometimes gives in to sin (Romans 6:12). The flesh (old man of sin) is crucified and one is raised to spiritual life (Romans 6:4-7; Galatians 5:16-18, 24). Satan no longer has the **control** even though he sometimes **wins** the battles!!
- G. The Present Evil World (Galatians 1:4; 2 Peter 1:4). Living in the world and rubbing elbows with sin has a corrupting influence on us -- dirt rubs off!! Salvation moves us to a higher spiritual plane, sets our sights on higher goals and helps us live above the world (Colossians 3:1-4). Salvation gives us the motivation to be different (1 Peter 4:1-6).

IV. THE ELEMENTS OF SALVATION

- A. God's Grace (Ephesians 2:5,8-9). God freely chose to give us that which we could never earn, deserve, or repay. Salvation is the free gift of God (Romans 5:15-18).
- B. Christ's Blood (Titus 3:4-7; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Timothy 2:3-6). Jesus had to die on the cross to purchase our redemption and salvation. His substitutionary death made it possible for us to be saved from the just punishment of our sins.
- C. Man's Faith And Obedience (Romans 3:21-4:25). Actually, God has never had but one way to save sinners. It has always been by grace through faith. That is Paul's argument here.

Jews subject to the Law of Moses, Gentiles who did not know that Law, faithful patriarchs who lived before the Law, and those saved by God in Christ were **all** saved by grace through faith. That brought works in evidence of their faith. Saving faith is a working, active, obedient faith (Galatians 5:6; Romans 1:5; James 2:24).

1. What Must I Do To Be Saved? Many people came to Jesus and His servants seeking the answer to that great question. What were they told?
 - a. Luke 10:25-28. Love the Lord and his neighbor with every ounce of his being... So must we!!
 - b. Mark 10:17-22. Give up that which stood between him and God... So must we!!
 - c. Acts 2:37-38. Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins... So must we!!
 - d. Acts 10:33. They wanted to know **all** God had commanded them to do. Peter told them to believe in Jesus (10:43) and be baptized (10:48)... So must we!!
 - e. Acts 16:30-34. They were told to believe in Jesus and the same hour of the night were baptized... So must we be!!
 - f. Acts 22:10. Saul was told to find Ananias who would tell him what to do. Ananias told him to be baptized and wash away his sins (Acts 22:16)... So must we!!

V. CHARACTERISTICS OF SALVATION

- A. Salvation Is Available To All Men Through Christ (Titus 2:11; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). It is hard to believe that God could offer salvation to the vilest of men --to homosexuals, prostitutes, drug dealers, murderers, criminals, and gangsters. But why is that so hard to believe? **No one** deserves salvation to begin with!! Why not offer it to all? Especially to the sickest and most diseased (Matthew 9:12-13)?
- B. God Uses Human Agents In Saving Men (Romans 10:13-17; 1 Corinthians 4:9; 2 Corinthians 4:7). Salvation does not come by some overpowering of the Spirit which enlightens and convicts men. It comes as men hear and are taught of God (John 6:44-45), and thus convicted of their sins come to God.
- C. Salvation Is A Present Experience (1 John 5:12-13). We don't have to wait until we are dead and judged to know if we have salvation -- we may enjoy it now (Acts 8:39; John 4:13-14; 6:54-56; 17:1-3).
- D. Salvation May Be Forfeited (Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 10:35-39). By unfaithfulness we might give up the salvation we have.

CONCLUSION: Salvation is the most important possession a man needs when he leaves this world!! Few will be saved though, so we must expend every human effort to be numbered with the few (Luke 13:23-30).

God wants to save all -- not because He feels obligated to... not because He feels guilty if He doesn't... He saves us because he loves us and wants to save us (John 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:9). We must not neglect that great salvation (Hebrews 2:3).

The Church

INTRO: How important is the church? is it just an unnecessary religious frill? Would we be better off without the church and let everyone go about serving God in their own way? With so many different kinds of churches dotting every map would we be better without them **all** and the confusion they bring?

Religious division (denominationalism) is wrong (1 Corinthians 1:10). But Jesus died for His church (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25). He built His church on the foundation of His deity (Matthew 16:18). The church is the fulfillment of a well thought out, eternally purposed, and meticulously executed plan designed by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:9-11). The church brings glory to God (Ephesians 3:21), not those who stand against her, oppose her and scorn her.

The church is part of God's eternal plan. It's very existence testifies to God's wisdom in redeeming man from sin, because the church is that body of the redeemed (the called out).

I. WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

A. Misconceptions Of The Church. These are common misunderstandings about the church. And they are sufficient to completely confuse and mislead us.

1. The Church Is Not The Building. The church is the "temple of God" in which He dwells (Ephesians 2:21-22), but God does not dwell in "temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24). Therefore, the **building** we are assembled in **is not** the church, the **people** who assemble within it **are** the church.
2. The Church Is Not An Organization Or Institution. A college is an institution. A college exists without the students... it serves the students, but is an entity without them. It is greater than the people who make it up.
On the other hand, the church does **not** exist apart from the people... **it is the people!!** Without people, the college could still exist but without people the church cannot!! Students **go to** college, they are not the college themselves. Whereas Christians **are** the church... they do not just go to church (Acts 2:41,47).

Jesus died for people, not an institution (1 Timothy 1:15).

3. The Church Is Not A Religious Denomination. The word "denomination" means "a part of the whole". The Lord's church **cannot** be a denomination because it is not part of anything -- it is the whole!! The Lord's church is made up of all the saved (Acts 2:47; Hebrews 12:23).

When we think of the world "church" we think of a "religious organization". Therefore, people associate the word "church" with any group of religious people that meet together. When Jesus first used the word, it had no religious significance. It merely had reference to a "called out group" and He adapted the word to speak of **His** "called out group" (Colossians 1:13).

The Lord's church is on a much higher spiritual plane than the denominations. Religious denominations are merely religious people looking for God, whereas the Lord's church is comprised of everyone who has found Him!

- B. Meaning Of The Term "Church". Confusion stems from our loose use of the word. When the Bible uses the word it refers to **saved** people. When we use the word it refers to **religious** people of different faiths, different religious societies and organizations.
1. EKKLESIA (Greek -- EK "out of"; KLESIS "a calling"). Originally it was used to describe a group of people who had been called together for some purpose.
 - a. Used of any body of people called out from their homes or businesses
 - 1) To discuss affairs of state (Acts 19:39)
 - 2) A riotous mob (Acts 19:32,41)
 - b. Used of Israel (Acts 7:38). Means "assembly"
 - c. used of the synagogue of the Jews (Matthew 18:15-17)
 - d. Used by the Lord in reference to His group of redeemed people (Matthew 16:18)
 2. If the church is the "called out" then they must have been "called out" of something (1 Peter 2:9-10; Colossians 1:12-13). Therefore, one who is not part of the church (has not been "called out") remains in darkness (Acts 26:18).
Does that make the church important? Does that make it obvious why there can only be **one** church (Ephesians 4:4; 1:22-23; Matthew 16:18)?
- C. How Is The Term "Church" Used?
1. Universal Church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 5:25). This is a collection of every saved person in the world. The church universal is not a sum total of all local churches of Christ, but a sum total of all saved people. There is a vast difference!! Not understanding that has led the "brotherhood" on paths it never should have trod.
Every person is accountable unto God individually, not by the group with which he is associated (Revelation 3:1-5; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 8:7-13). Local denominational churches are tied together nationally and worldwide through conventions, headquarters, councils, synods, etc. But the Lord's church could not tie together all the local churches even if it wanted to!!
 2. Local Church (1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Romans 16:4-5). The local church is the collectivity of saved individuals in a particular location who have banded together to praise and glorify God and accomplish His work.
The church is a **relationship** we share with one another because of the relationship each one shares with God. These are independent groups of Christians.
- D. The Church Is Saved People. Christ's church is people -- not an organization, not an institution, not a building -- but real, live, reborn and committed to God people!!
1. 1 Corinthians 1:2
 2. Acts 2:47
 3. Acts 8:1,3
 4. Acts 11:22, 26
 5. Acts 12:5
 6. Acts 14:27-28. All these passages emphasize the church as being people.

II. THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

A. Its Establishment. The Bible prophesied of the coming of the kingdom. Notice the following predictions.

1. Daniel 2:44. During the Roman empire
2. Isaiah 2:2-4. The word would go forth from Jerusalem and all nations would flow into it
3. Joel 2:28-32. Outpouring of the Holy Spirit and whoever called on the name of the Lord would be saved
4. Mark 9:1. The kingdom would come in their lifetime and be accompanied by great power
5. Luke 24:49. Jesus would send the Holy Spirit to comfort and empower His apostles. They were to wait in Jerusalem
6. Acts 1:8. This power would come when the Holy Spirit came upon them, thus signaling the entrance of God's kingdom.

The church was established on the Day of Pentecost and recorded in Acts 2 (note 2:1-4, 16-21). For the first time the church was spoken of as being in existence (Acts 2:47). The rest of the Book of Acts tells of the spread of the church throughout all the world.

B. Its Name. The church is identified in the Bible by various names. These are descriptions more than formal names, but each of them express the Lord's ownership.

1. Church of God (1 Corinthians 1:2)
2. Kingdom of God (Romans 14:17; Matthew 16:18-19)
3. House Of God (1 Timothy 3:15)
4. Church of Christ (Romans 16:16).

Its members are called by various names which bring glory to Christ, rather than man-made names (Christians - Acts 11:26; Saints - 1 Corinthians 1:2; Disciples of Christ - Acts 9:1).

C. Its Importance. The relationship Christ shares with His church emphasizes the importance with which Jesus views the church.

1. Christ is head and church is body (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; Romans 12:5)
2. Christ is shepherd and church is flock (John 10:11-16; Acts 20:28)
3. Christ is husband and church is bride (Ephesians 5:22-33; John 3:25-29)
4. Christ is king and church is His kingdom (1 Timothy 6:13-15; Matthew 16:18-19; Colossians 1:13)
5. Christ is foundation and church is God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:9, 11, 16-17; Ephesians 2:19-22)
6. Christ is fulness of God and church is fulness of Christ (Colossians 2:9-10; Ephesians 1:22-23)

D. Its Organization. In the universal sense, there is no form of government involved. In the local sense, though, each church is a complete organization within itself. Each church is independent, equal and self-governing (Philippians 1:1).

1. Elders (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17). These men are appointed to oversee the work of local congregations. They see to it that the church follows Christ's authority. They make no laws.

Each church is to have its own eldership (Acts 14:23). Each eldership oversees only its own work (1 Peter 5:1-2).

2. Deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13). These are special servants of the church who perform various functions and tasks necessary to the well-being of the church (Acts 6:1-6).
 3. Preachers (Ephesians 4:11). These have no authority except the authority inherent in the word they proclaim (Titus 2:15). He is not the "pastor" or the ruler of the church.
 4. Members (Philippians 1:1). These are the brethren who supply their part for the working of the body (Ephesians 4:16).
- E. Its Work. The work of the church is completely spiritual in its nature. It has no concern with politics, movements, recreation, entertainment, etc. Its work is threefold.
1. Evangelism. Preaching the gospel to the lost (1 Timothy 3:15). One of the ways the church accomplishes that is by supporting gospel preachers (2 Corinthians 11:8; Philippians 4:15-16)
 2. Edification. Teaching, strengthening and building up Christians (Ephesians 4:11-12,16). Teaching converts people to the Lord but it also grounds and establishes brethren in the faith (Ephesians 4:11-14; Matthew 28:18-20).
 3. Benevolence. Helping needy saints (Acts 4:34-35; Romans 15:25-26). The church's work in benevolence is limited -- to saints only. The church cannot take care of the needs of the world, therefore Christ never burdened it with that task.

CONCLUSION: The church is a glorious body of people, heirs of eternal life. Recognize the importance of the church. See how much Christ loved it and then love and uphold it that much yourself!!

Worship

INTRO: One of the greatest things about Christianity is its simplicity. Nothing elaborate... just simple faith and obedience. But like Namaan, such simplicity does not appeal to many people. They seek for the great, the glorious and spectacular (cf. 2 Kings 5:11-14).

This simplicity and humility has been a stumbling-block to men because it brings glory **only** to God (1 Corinthians 1:18-31). And so it is with the worship God has prescribed for us to offer Him!

One of our biggest challenges is to **really** be able to worship **every** time we come together using such simple, spiritual acts of worship.

I. WORSHIP

- A. What Is Worship? Basically, worship is homage, reverence, adoration, and praise shown toward someone or something.
1. Proskuneo (59 times, NT) "to kiss the hand (toward) one, in token of reverence..." (Thayer)
 2. Sebomai (10 times, NT) "to reverence, hold in awe"
 3. Latreuo (21 times, NT, 98 times, OT) "to perform sacred services, to offer gifts, to worship God in observance of rites instituted for His worship".
 4. "Worship". The English word comes from Old Anglo-Saxon words "worth" and "ship". It means that we honor that which we believe to be worth most or superior to ourselves.
- B. Worship Is The Expression Of An Adoring Heart. Most likely you have known a young man who "worships the ground" on which his love walks. We understand that to mean he adores, loves, honors, and holds in esteem that one who touches his heart.
- Worship to God is not to be a lifeless, spiritless, ritualistic motion but the outpouring and expression of a deep feeling of love and honor for God (Hebrews 13:15; Psalm 95:6-7; 96:7-9).
- C. Worship Is A Spiritual Exercise. Our spirits offering worship to the Great Spirit, the Father of our spirits (John 4:23-24; Hebrews 12:9). Men are taking a step backward when they offer impressive **physical** worship to God -- choirs, \$40,000 pipe organs, incense burning, dimmed lights, instrumental accompaniment, etc.
- Jesus explained that worship would no longer consist of being in the right physical location with the right physical rituals, but the true worshippers would be those who worship, not with the physical copies, but with the spiritual reality and substance. A spiritual worship which would appeal to a spiritual being -- God (John 4:19-24; cf. Hebrews 10:1).
- Since worship is on a spiritual plane, it can be offered amid any physical surroundings.
1. In a temple (Acts 2:46; 3:1)
 2. In a prison (Acts 16:25)
 3. In an upper room (Matthew 26:26-30; Acts 20:7-9)
 4. On a seashore (Acts 21:5)
 5. In a house (Philemon 2; Romans 16:5; 1 Corinthians 16:19)
 6. In catacombs and caves
 7. In a room of an old house, renovated and set aside for that purpose.

II. ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP

A. What Is Acceptable Worship? Mere ritualistic worship is not enough to please God. God is not entertained when we go through all our motions of worship.

Not all worship is acceptable to God. When He witnesses some worship offered to Him, He identifies it as "vain worship" (Matthew 15:8-9). Other worship He identifies as worship in "ignorance" (John 4:22; Acts 17:22-23). Still others He speaks of as "will-worship" (Colossians 2:23) or self-imposed religion. It has no benefit.

What makes worship acceptable? What determines God's response to it?

1. Proper Object (Matthew 4:10). Worship is restricted to God alone. The veneration of any other object (idol, self, attitude, possessions, etc.) renders our worship vain, idolatrous and adulterous.
2. Proper Spirit And Heart (Matthew 15:8). To honor God with the mouth and without the heart is no honor at all.
3. In Truth (John 4:24; 17:17). Worshipping According to God's will. From very early, God has given man instructions for worshipping Him. The proper expressions of worship are important because it matters to God (cf. Genesis 4:3-5; Leviticus 10:1-7; Exodus 20:22-26).
4. Proper Living (Isaiah 1:10-18). Worship offered to God which is not preceded by right living is a mockery to God.

Worship must be governed by Divine authority, according to His commands and the revelation of His will (1 Corinthians 2:9-13; 1 John 3:4). And we must remember the purpose and spirit of each act of worship (Psalm 111:1; 86:12).

III. WORSHIPPING GOD IN THE CHURCH

A. The Day Of Worship. Although worship can be offered to God at any time, the first day of the week has a special religious significance to the church. It is part of the new covenant and has a significance all its own, apart from the Sabbath day which was done away at the cross (Colossians 1:14-17).

What is the significance of the "first day of the week"?

1. The Resurrection Of Christ (Mark 16:9; Matthew 28:1-6)
2. The Events On The Day Of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit empowered the apostles (Acts 2:1-4), thus ushering in the kingdom of God among men (cf. Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). The gospel began to be preached (Acts 2:22-36). Salvation by the blood of Christ came on that day (Acts 2:21,38). The church was established (Acts 2:38-41,47).
3. The Assembling Of The Saints. Early Christians assembled regularly for worship and fellowship on the first day of the week (cf. Hebrews 10:25).
 - a. Observed Lord's Supper when together (1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Acts 20:7)
 - b. Collection for the saints taken while together (1 Corinthians 16:2)

B. Singing. God has commanded us to sing. This is one way God has authorized of offering worship to Him (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). The great debate rages, not over whether God wants us to sing, but whether He will allow the playing of instruments of music in accompaniment. God wants His praises sung and not played because an instrument cannot utter

anything from its heart!! God did not command singing for its aesthetic value, but because it is a **spiritual** exercise... an outpouring of a man's heart (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

Why did God choose singing?

1. Everyone Can Do It. Not everyone can play a musical instrument. Singing is a personal expression and that may be the most important reason of all (Hebrews 2:12; 13:15). Thus everyone can praise God!
2. Singing Is A Powerful Motivator. It lightens the depressed spirit and refreshes the heart (Acts 16:25).
3. Singing Is A Wonderful Teaching Medium. Words alone, at times are empty, but words in a song sometimes strike the right chords in the heart (Colossians 3:16)
4. Singing Is An Effective Outlet For Thanksgiving : It is the perfect way of pouring out a heart full of thanks (James 5:13; Ephesians 5: 19-20).
5. Singing Edifies Brethren. When we may not know the right words to say, songs can (Colossians 3:16; Matthew 26:30).

"I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being" (Psalm 104:33).

- C. Prayer. God has commanded prayer and men striving to attain spiritual heights recognize the necessity of prayer. Prayer is to be offered to God (Matthew 6:9), through Christ (John 14:13-14). Jesus is our Advocate with the Father, our High Priest who bears our requests to God's throne (1 John 2:2; Hebrews 4:15-16). We don't offer "vain repetitions" (Matthew 6:7) like some magical incantation which brings about response simply because of the words we spoke. God wants us to approach Him with "holy hands" uplifted (1 Timothy 2:1,8).

What is prayer for?

1. Prayer Is Our Connection With The Spiritual World. It transcends all the limitations of earth, space, and time and transports us to the spiritual realm where we draw near to God (Hebrews 4:15-16; 10:19-22).
2. Prayer Stalls Heaven. When we pray, that world listens attentively to ours (Revelation 8:1-4).
3. Prayer Is Powerful. Prayer is our access to unlimited power (James 5:16)
4. Prayer Is A Baring Of Our Souls And Needs To God. It is the humble request of those who recognize their total dependence on God (Philippians 4:6-7; Luke 18:10-14).
5. Prayer Is Our Access To Wisdom. Since God has all wisdom, we need to request such from Him for ourselves (James 1:5-8).

- D. The Lord's Supper. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on His betrayal night (Matthew 26:17,26-29). That was also the instruction given to Paul to relate to Christians (1 Corinthians 11:23-34). It was celebrated regularly, weekly by the New Testament church (Acts 20:7).

What is its meaning for us?

1. Memorial (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25). Humans tend to be forgetful. This supper helps us center our hearts and thoughts on Calvary.
2. Proclamation (1 Corinthians 11:26). We tell the world that He died and was raised and we anxiously await His return.

3. Anticipation (1 Corinthians 11:26). It shows the hope we have, that we don't serve a dead, but a living Savior, who is going to return for us.
 4. Introspection (1 Corinthians 11:28). We must look into the deepest recesses of our souls and look at the quality of our lives.
 5. Communion (1 Corinthians 10:16-17). It is a communion with Christ (10:16) and a communion with brethren (10:17).
- E. Giving. God commanded us to give of our means regularly. It is to be an individual matter among Christians (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). The church is not to enter some business enterprise to make money, but have its needs supplied by its members. God has given us no particular formula for giving, but He has set up principles to control that giving.
1. Regularly (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). Not a sporadic thing, but an organized system for giving and gathering.
 2. Individually (1 Corinthians 16:2). "Each one of you". It is the duty of all Christians who have physical means of income.
 3. Systematically (1 Corinthians 16:2). "Lay by in store". Systematic giving on each first day provides funds to meet needs as they arise.
 4. Proportionately (1 Corinthians 16:2). "As he may prosper". Although one person gives more dollar-wise, he may be giving much less proportionate to what he makes.
 5. Liberally (Romans 12:8). That is liberality of heart and of sacrificial offering (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:1-5,8).
 6. Purposefully (2 Corinthians 9:7). "Purposed in his heart". Not seeing how the money is running this week, or seeing how much is left, but planning that as sure as you plan your house payment, car payment, etc.
 7. Voluntarily (2 Corinthians 9:7). "Not grudgingly or of necessity". The offering we begrudge God is no good.
 8. Cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7). "God loveth a cheerful giver". The man who is delighted to give back to his source of blessings is blessed even more.
 9. Confidently (2 Corinthians 9:10). We can give abundantly and have confidence that our blessings will be multiplied for giving (cf. Matthew 6:33).

CONCLUSION: "We worship our work, work at our play, and play at our worship". This condition causes worship to become a charade and eventually to be abandoned entirely.

Worship is an important activity for the benefit of God, our brethren, and ourselves.

Keeping Unspotted From The World

INTRO: Worldliness is one of the greatest problems in the Lord's church today. As more sinful activities gain general acceptance in the world, they also begin to infiltrate the Lord's church and find first tolerance and then acceptance among God's people.

Many have quit preaching on worldliness (either assuming people **know** that certain activities are wrong or for fear of others). Many other pulpits have actually begun to defend such things as the Bible specifically condemns (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this... to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

I. UNDERSTANDING WORLDLINESS

A. Definition Of Worldliness. "Worldly affairs; the aggregate of things earthly; the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments, riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ" (Thayer, p.357) (cf. Galatians 6:14; i John 2:16).

B. Character Of Worldliness.

1. Worldliness is immorality and the things of a baser nature which men engage in --fornication, adultery, pornography, drinking, drugs, filthy language, etc. These are things which gratify the carnal side of man. They are "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21).
2. Worldliness is an overemphasis of things of this world. It is the sin of being too concerned about material possessions and one's standing in the world. Christians are to have a different view than they once had (Colossians 3:1-4; 1 Peter 4:1-3).
3. Worldliness may be **respectable**, yet still be worldliness. Some things are worldliness that are morally right within themselves -- work, pleasures, recreation, entertainment, television. These enter the class of worldliness when they occupy more of our interest and time than serving God (Matthew 6:33; Ephesians 5:16).
4. Worldliness is deceiving. It promises much but gives little. There is some pleasure in sin (Hebrews 11:25) but it can never give us the "good life" (cf. John 10:10).

II. OUR PROPER RELATIONSHIP TO THE WORLD

A. The Christian Must Not Love The World (1 John 2:15-17). The spiritual and fleshly realms are in opposition, they are warring for our souls (Galatians 5:16-17,24). We cannot love both, we cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24).

There are two places on which we can set our affections -- on this world or heaven. We must make the right choice (Colossians 3:2). We are to use the things of this world to help us get to heaven.

B. The Christian Must Not Be Friendly With This World (James 4:4). We cannot compromise with evil, nor walk arm in arm with the world. Since the world and God are in opposition we are literally choosing sides.

Many want to embrace both so they won't be out of place with either, but we cannot do that with two paths traveling in opposite directions.

This does not mean that we cannot have friends who are not Christians but that we must not share an intimate acquaintance with evil.

- C. The Christian Must Not Conform To The World (Romans 12:1-2). Conforming to the world is being like the world or acting in harmony with it. We must be different. If no one can tell the difference then something must be wrong.

While insecure, we want to fit in and be accepted. But we cannot be at the expense of our holy calling. We have been called out of darkness and into light (1 Peter 2:9-10). We must remain different if we are to shine as lights to the rest of the world which is in darkness (Philippians 2:15; 1 Peter 4:1-4).

Many excuses are given for going along with the world, but none is acceptable for a Christian.

1. "Everybody is doing it"
2. "Just doing what feels good"
3. "It doesn't hurt anyone"
4. "It's really not that bad"

- D. The Christian Must Be Free From The Cares Of This World (Matthew 13:22). That does not mean we do not care about anything, but must not allow those cares and concerns to take over.

There is great danger in materialism. We must be careful not to covet after, nor trust in riches, but put God first (1 Timothy 6:10,17). We all should work hard for a living, but in the midst of providing for **this** life we must not lose **real** life (Matthew 16:26). Our home is in heaven (Philippians 3:20-21).

- E. The Christian Must Live Godly In The World (Titus 2:11-12). Godly living amidst worldliness has never been easy, but others have done it and so can we. There is a "great cloud of witnesses" which attest to man's ability by faith to live godly in the world (Hebrews 12:1; 11:1-40).

Noah, Moses, Abraham, and Joseph are must a few examples of people who remained godly during difficult times.

We must live in the world but not be of the world. It is OK for the ship to be in water, but you cannot let water into the ship. No matter how wicked the world becomes we must remain godly. With God's help we can!!

III. IDENTIFYING WORLDLINESS

- A. Identifying Worldliness. Worldliness is a problem. Some worldliness is respectable and that creates more of a problem. Besides that, worldliness is not a **specific** sin you commit which can be governed by a "Thou shalt" or "Thou shalt not". Rather it is that which influences you more toward this world than the heavenly world.

Worldliness can be difficult to recognize because it comes in so many different shapes, sizes, and colors. But God gives us certain principles to apply to the situations of life to distinguish godliness from worldliness.

1. Does It Destroy Your Identity As A Christian By Causing You To Be Regarded As "Of The World" (Romans 12:1-2)? A line of distinction must be drawn so everyone knows exactly where we stand.

What attracted people to Jesus? He was different. He didn't win them by infiltrating their group and **being like them** but by infiltrating their group and **not being like them!!**

2. Is The Practice Questionable In Your Own Mind And Therefore An Offense To Your Own Conscience (Romans 14:23)? Are there certain people you would never do this activity around? Are you **sure** that you should do it, or do you have **any** doubts?

Your conscience does not **bind** you, it **protects** you. Therefore it is sin to inhibit its working.

3. Does It Have A Weakening Influence On Others And Will It Become A Stumbling-Block To Them (Romans 14:13)? Our influence is serious and cannot be ignored. We influence others whether we realize it or not, and are accountable for it (Matthew 18:6-7).

Don't be involved in activities which a brother would be influenced to join even though **he** thinks they are wrong. We are our "brother's keeper".

4. Is It Destructive To Your Body (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)? We are apt to say things like "It's my body and I will do with it what I want" or "I'm not hurting anyone but myself".

Dishonest men hide behind the facts with rhetoric, excuses and rationalizations, but it is still true that smoking, alcohol, steroids, drugs, gluttony, dipping, and chewing and other things are destructive to the body.

5. Does It Conflict With Your Duty As A Christian (2 Timothy 2:4)? Must you compromise your convictions or moral principles? There are some commitments men must make which are greater than their commitment to God -- such would conflict with our duties to God (fraternities, masonic orders, Ku Klux Klan, or business promotions)

Can we still "seek **first** the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33) with this activity?

6. Does It Cultivate An Inordinate Fleshly Appetite (Romans 13:14)? Does it bring about lustful, fleshly desires? Does it cause you to want things you shouldn't have? We must bring our bodies in subjection to our minds (1 Corinthians 9:27).

When we read pornography, books with explicit sex, or certain movies, do they bring to the surface baser instincts and desires?

7. Does It Bring You Under A Weakening Influence And Association (1 Corinthians 15:33)? Does it invite and even encourage temptation? Does it bring you into a compromising position? We must make sure the activity does not influence us for evil (1 Thessalonians 5:21-22).

8. Does It Bring You Under An Unequal Yoke? (2 Corinthians 6:14-18)? Are you always in the unenviable position of having to consistently pull yourself both ways? Will this thing bind you to things inconsistent with Christianity or not (Hebrews 12:1)?

CONCLUSION: With worldliness and godliness traveling two different directions we need to know where we stand and make a choice (Joshua 24:15).

We must not compromise with worldliness but rather reprove it (Ephesians 5:11).

Satan

INTRO: Picture this. A diabolical looking figure, almost human, but with razor-like claws and hooves at the end of hairy, goat-like legs. Notice the horns on his head and his pointed tail. Focus on yellow blood-shot eyes, dark and piercing. See his stained, blackened and spiked teeth and smell his stale breath like the stench of death. Note his sinister grin and listen to the echo of his bone-chilling laughs. Picture this eerie silhouette against the backdrop of red hot flames. Can you see that image in your mind? Well, that is **not** what the devil looks like!!

That picture accents Satan's evil but is not an accurate representation of his appearance when he tempts us. We would turn from such a sinister figure without a moment's hesitation and flee in fear. Satan appears to us in the things we deem beautiful and alluring. Therefore his deceit and trickery make him a malicious and despicable demon.

Satan is a vicious, blood-thirsty being (1 Peter 5:8) who will stop at nothing to cause us to be lost (2 Corinthians 2:10-11).

I. WHO IS SATAN?

A. The Names Of Satan. The great enemy of God is most frequently referred to as:

1. The Devil (Matthew 4:1; 33 times)
2. Satan (Matthew 12:26; 36 times)
3. The Great Dragon (Revelation 12:9)
4. The Adversary (1 Peter 5:8)
5. Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24)
6. Belial (2 Corinthians 6:15)
7. An Enemy (Matthew 13:28)
8. The Evil One (Matthew 13:19)
9. The God of This World (2 Corinthians 4:4)
10. The Ruler of This World (John 12:31)
11. The Prince of The Power of The Air (Ephesians 2:2)
12. The Tempter (Matthew 4:3)

He is not just evil personified, but a real spirit being. The devil may be said to be "A created but superhuman, personal, evil, world-power, represented in Scripture as the adversary of both God and man" (L.M.Sweet, ISBE, Vol. IV, p.2693).

B. The Origin Of Satan. The Bible gives us no detailed account of Satan's origin, but certain reasonable conclusions may be drawn from Bible statements.

1. Satan Is Not Divine. Therefore he is not eternal, nor a fallen member of the Godhead. It is clear that he is not Divine because Deity is omnipotent (Nahum 1:2-8; Matthew 19:26), yet Satan's power is limited.
 - a. His power to afflict was limited (Job 1:12; 2:6)
 - b. His authority over the world kingdoms was "delivered" to him (Luke 4:6)
 - c. He had to "ask" for the apostles to test their faith (Luke 22:31)
 - d. He can "snatch" no one from God's hand (John 10:28)
 - e. He flees when resisted (James 4:7)

Moreover, Scripture affirms that He that is in us (God) is **greater** than he that is in the world (Satan) (1 John 4:4).

2. Satan Is A Created Being (Colossians 1:16). He was likely an angelic being who was given charge over all the kingdoms of the world (Luke 4:6; John 12:31). Through pride (cf. 1 Timothy 3:6) he evidently fell away from God, leaving his habitation and leading others with him in rebellion (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4,9), usurping that rule for himself (1 John 5:19) and upsetting the balance God had established for the world (cf. Romans 8:19-24).

Satan was created good, but with the same free moral agency as man, he chose to rebel against God (1 John 3:8) and to influence men to follow him rather than God (1 John 3:4,10-12; 5:19).
 3. Satan Is Destined For Destruction. God has prepared a place for him and all those who give their allegiance to him (Matthew 25:41,46; Revelation 20:11-15).
 4. Statements Not Pertaining To Satan
 - a. "Lucifer" (Isaiah 14:12). This word (literally meaning "Day Star") has reference to King of Babylon (14:4ff), not Satan.
 - b. "War In Heaven" (Revelation 12:7-9). A spiritual battle in heaven is depicted between Michael the archangel and Satan, with Satan being cast down to earth. This is not a description of what occurred before the world began, but is a symbolic affirmation that Satan cannot touch Christ nor His people who are in the sanctity of heaven and God's presence. Satan's only influence can be on people living in the world.
- C. The Domain Of Satan.
1. Ruler Of This World (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11). Satan has a tremendous amount of authority in this world. His kingdom consists of everything opposite to and opposed to Christ's kingdom (Colossians 1:13).

Satan is the ruling force in the men and kingdoms of this realm because they have chosen him over Christ. Satan has usurped authority from God and taken control of the kingdoms of the world as they follow **his** strategies of war, murders, rape and torture. These live by his principles of greed, might makes right, hatred, dishonesty and deceit.

Even though Christ has "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18), the nations do not subject themselves to Him, they have defected to the enemy general (Ephesians 2:1-2). Satan offered Jesus all the nations of the world if Jesus would fall and worship him because Satan had control over them (Luke 4:5-6)!!
 2. God Of This Age (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 6:12). "This age" often refers to the prevailing thought and moral inclinations of a particular era. Satan has a hand in shaping the morals (or lack of morals) in a particular age.

Satan spearheads the "moral revolutions" and "new morality" of each new generation (which is actually the old immorality). He is crafty enough to be flexible and continually influence the people of every age.

Satan is also active in the religious world and thought of the day. He loves religion. It is his "trump card" for blinding our

eyes to the truth. If Satan can confuse people with religion then he has defeated them (2 Corinthians 4:3-4).

D. The Character Of Satan.

1. He Is Crafty And Deceitful (Genesis 3:1-6; Revelation 12:9). His subtlety and craftiness was first exhibited in the Garden of Eden when he deceived Eve and convinced her to disobey God.
He fights unfairly, employing trickery and using snares and traps to destroy us (1 Timothy 3:7; Ephesians 6:11). We are his prey and he does not care how he destroys us as long as he does (2 Thessalonians 2:9-10; 2 Corinthians 11:14).
2. He Is A Liar And Murderer (John 8:44). He offers us much satisfaction and fulfillment to serve him but delivers none of the things he promises. He introduced sin and death into the world and wants to murder us eternally too.
3. He Accuses Us Before God (Revelation 12:10). He challenges God to let him prove how unfaithful we are (cf. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-6; Luke 22:31; Zechariah 3:1). He tempts us to sin against God and then comes to God with accusations of our unfaithfulness.

II. THE WORK OF SATAN

- A. Satan's Mission. Satan's mission and goal is very simple -- destroy all of mankind in hell with himself. God has designated him with the name "Destroyer" (Abaddon - Hebrew, Apollyon - Greek) (Revelation 9:11). He is a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8).

He attempted the ruin of humanity by his temptation of Christ (Matthew 4:1-11) and then by requesting the souls of the apostles (Luke 22:31; John 13:2).

- B. Satan's Devices And Power. Satan has dominated the world and its thoughts like no other character (1 John 5:19)! It is dangerous to ignore his devices and essential to learn what God wants us to know about him. If we are ignorant of his power and devices, he has already gained an advantage (2 Corinthians 2:11).

Satan overthrows and devours through his war against the power of God's word.

1. He takes the word out of people's hearts (Luke 8:12). How often have good prospects for conversion rejected the word?
2. He takes away God's word and supplies his own (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:3-4). How often have people rejected truth then accept something a preacher tells them?
3. Blinds men so the gospel cannot be seen nor understood (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). It is not that a person does not have the capacity to learn, but he has allowed his heart to become too clouded.
4. He uses the power of lying wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12). Satan has no power to perform a bonafide miracle. That separates his power from God's. Yet Satan has power to perform deceptive works.
5. He uses his ministers to infiltrate and work inside the church to lead astray the weak and ignorant (2 Peter 2:1-2; Jude 4).

His teachers look like God's teachers (2 Corinthians 11:13-15; Acts: 20:29-30). Therefore we must not follow teachers but God's word.

- C. Weapons Of Our Warfare. The fight is on with this mighty warrior. God readies us for the battle and provides the armor we **must** have to defend ourselves (Ephesians 6:10-18).
1. His Strength (6:11-12). This is not some small-time rebel army we are up against. Satan and his forces have destroyed more people than all the armies of the history of the world combined. His thousands of years of fighting experience make him a terrible foe.
 2. Our Armor (6:13-18). We cannot assemble a self-made coat of armor from bits and pieces of determination, grit, resolve, intelligence, and moral goodness. We must cloth ourselves with God's protection.
Note that this armor all protects the front but not the rear. God offers us protection when we face Satan and do battle, but gives none when we turn around in cowardice and run.

CONCLUSION: Satan is to be feared (1 Peter 5:8) but if we will resist him, he will flee from us (James 4:7).

We must never **under**estimate Satan's power and likewise we must never **over**estimate him. God can grant us victories over the king of hell and all his forces (Romans 16:20; 1 John 5:4; 1 Corinthians 10:13).

Remember too the complete and ultimate fulfillment of the promise to man is soon to be realized (Genesis 3:15; 1 John 3:8; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:10).

Death And The Resurrection

INTRO: Death is an ominous and frightening thought to most people. All have tasted life and few want to give it up. Man has an inborn longing to live forever. He yearns for continual existence and exerts all his strength to maintain it. He has an inborn longing to live forever (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

Men throughout all of history have yearned to live forever and defeat man's great nemesis -- death.

1. Egyptians. "Belief in an afterlife was a leading feature of Egyptian religion at all periods... the body was an abode for the soul, hence the efforts to preserve it (mummification) and the use of statues to preserve a likeness even if the body perished... the tomb was his eternal house, to be appropriately furnished..." (ZPEB, Vol. II, pp. 254-255).
2. Ponce De Leon. Searched for the legendary Fountain Of Youth and discovered what is now called Florida.
3. Cybernetics. This is the modern science of preserving human life in a frozen, dormant stage, then thawing it out years later.

Death will certainly strike down all of us (Hebrews 9:27). The human spirit needs the hope of immortality to keep it going. Jesus has released us from the fear of death (Hebrews 2:15). His resurrection is a pledge of ours (1 Corinthians 15:20-23).

I. WHAT IS DEATH?

A. What Is Death?

1. Death is the separation of the soul from the body (James 2:26). When this occurs the body returns to the ground and the spirit returns to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7; cf. Genesis 3:19; Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59).
2. Death is not complete annihilation or ceasing to exist. Although death separates us from the things and happenings of this world (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6) man continues to exist apart from the body.
 - a. Matthew 22:23-32. The Old Testament Scriptures clearly implied life after death. God is not a God of corpses and dust!
 - b. Matthew 17:1-8. Moses and Elijah were **alive** after they had **died**. They were not visions.
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:10. The soul of man is not dependent on the body for existence.
 - d. 2 Corinthians 5:1-8. The soul is eternal whether housed in this decaying body or clothed with an incorruptible body.

- B. Man Is Mortal. He is subject to death. Because of sin, the sentence of death has been passed on to all men (Romans 5:12). The body is under bondage to corruption so that when it separates from the spirit, it returns to dust (Romans 8:18-23). The body is destined for corruption, but not the spirit which is incorruptible (2 Corinthians 4:16).

Man longs for immortality. His "inner man" is being groomed for immortality.

II. WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

- A. The Rich Man And Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31). Jesus gives us a description of a realm which no man has ever witnessed and then been allowed to

return and describe it for us. Here is a glimpse of life after death in the realm of Hades.

Many claim this account is merely a parable and not a description of an actual place or realm. Notice how inconsistent this story is with the form of other parables.

1. It is associated with real characters. Whereas parables depict imaginary people (cf. Luke 7:41-48 ["certain creditor"]; Matthew 18:23-35 ["certain king"]; Luke 12:16-21 ["certain rich man"]).
2. Parables use commonplace, everyday occurrences to teach spiritual lessons. So even if the rich man and Lazarus are not real characters, Jesus' portrayal of Hades was still accurate.
3. Parables teach a higher spiritual lesson. What is the spiritual lesson if it is not about life after death?

B. Hades. Hades is a Greek transliteration of a word translated "hell" in the KJV. Confusion comes because it's a distinctly different place than the eternal fire after judgment.

1. Definition Of Hades.

- a. "The region of departed spirits..." (Vine)
- b. "Properly unseen, i.e. 'Hades' or the place (state) of departed souls" (Strong)
- c. "The common receptacle of disembodied spirits" (Thayer)
- d. "The abode of all disembodied spirits till the resurrection" (Alford)
- e. "The place of the departed dead" (Wuest)
- f. "The unseen world... the land of the departed, that is death" (Robertson)
- g. "It is the place to which all who depart this life descend without reference to their moral character" (Vincent)

2. Two Divisions Within Hades. In Hades, there is consciousness, remembrance, and sensation of pain or comfort, grief or joy.

- a. Paradise (Abraham's Bosom). Where there is comfort and peace in the presence of the faithful who have died
 - 1) Luke 16:22,25
 - 2) Luke 22:42-43,46
 - 3) Acts 2:27 -- It was this part of Hades to which Jesus, the thief, and Lazarus descended.
- b. Torments (Tartarus). Where there is pain and misery, torment, flames and unquenchable thirst
 - 1) Luke 16:23-24
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:4,9. God reserves the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment.
 - 3) 1 Peter 3:18-20. The souls who once lived and were preached to in Noah's day are now shut up in prison.
 - 4) Jude 6
 - 5) Ezekiel 32:17-32. These nations are consigned to the Pit -- the land of the dead (32:23). This is the doom of Pharaoh, Egypt, Assyria, Elam, Meshech, Tubal, Edom, Princes of the North, Sidon
- c. Great Gulf. Is fixed between these two abodes in Hades separating forever those in each place from the others (Luke 16:26).

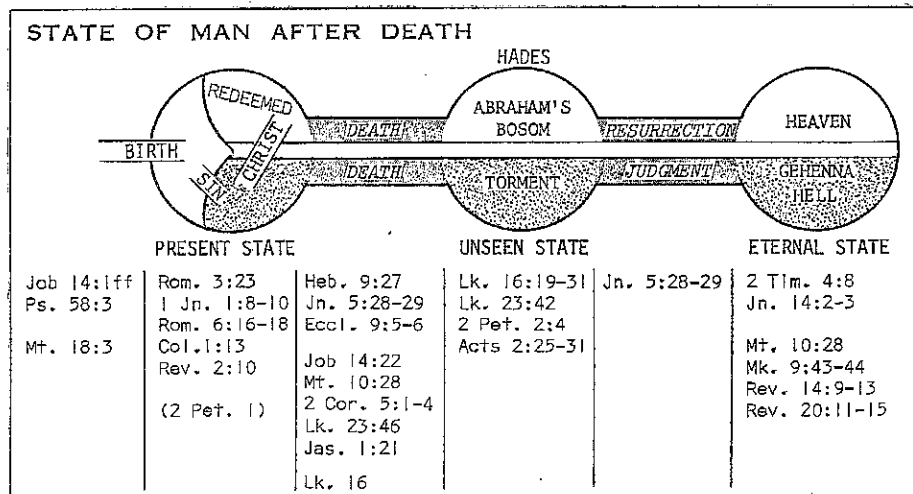
Remember that God is describing spiritual things using physical terms, describing the state of the dead and the sealing of our

eternal fate at death (Hebrews 9:27). Hades is the waiting place for the final judgment.

3. Hades Is A Temporary Realm. God created it to house the wicked and rebellious angels, and those men, women, and children whose life on earth would end before the final resurrection and judgment of men. Once its purpose is outlived, God will dispense of it (Revelation 20:14). It has housed the souls of dead men awaiting their reward or punishment until God's purpose on earth is fulfilled.

The temporary nature of Hades is also seen in that it does not carry the **full** reward nor **full** force of punishment.

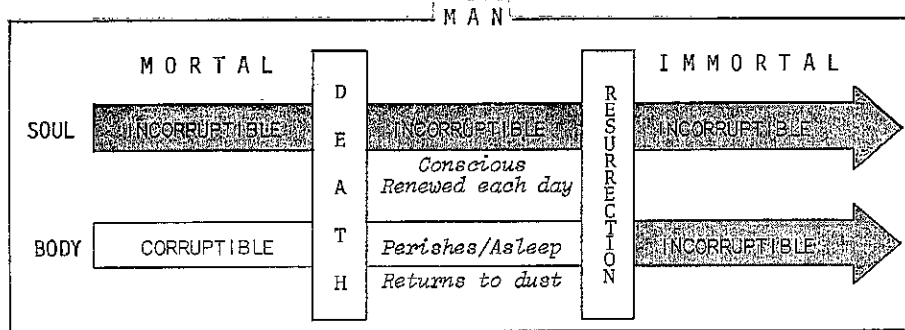
- a. Paradise is a place of comfort in God's presence, yet it is not man's inheritance and heavenly home.
- 1) John 13:33. Jesus was going to a place they could not go. Yet they would soon be going to Hades.
 - 2) John 14:3. Jesus was going to heaven to prepare a place, yet unprepared for them. Then He would return for them and bring them to Himself in Heaven (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17).
- b. Torments is a place of punishment, pain and agony, where the ungodly and unrighteous are kept in ward until the day God has appointed to judge the world in righteousness through His Son.
- 1) 2 Peter 2:4. Angels awaiting judgment.
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:9. The unjust and ungodly suffer this punishment awaiting the day of judgment.
 - 3) 1 Peter 3:19. The spirits now in prison are those before the flood who now await their eternal sentence.



III. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

- A. The Resurrection Of The Dead (John 5:28-29). There will be a general resurrection of all the dead when Jesus returns (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Acts 24:15). Souls will be reunited with their old bodies, but they will be new bodies in that they will be incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:37-38,42-44).
- B. The Great Change Of The Living (1 Corinthians 15:49-57). Those who are still alive when the dead are raised will be changed and will don a different body suited for eternity. Why must such a change occur?

1. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (15:50). Physical, earthly beings cannot exist in a spiritual realm with a spiritual God (John 4:24).
2. Corruption cannot inherit incorruption (15:50). Our flesh is tainted with the filth of sin (Colossians 2:11; Jude 8) and our bodies are decaying (2 Corinthians 4:16).
3. Mortal must put on immortality (15:53). This body is frail and fragile, subject to deterioration and decay. In eternity we need an enduring body (2 Corinthians 5:4).
4. To share Christ's glory (Philippians 3:20-21).



C. The Future Nature. We do not know what we will be like (1 John 3:2). But we will be fashioned anew so our bodies conform to Christ's glory (Philippians 3:20-21).

Our spirits are already in His nature (Genesis 1:26-27). He will just complete that which is lacking. This is our motivation to hope and live godly (1 John 3:3).

CONCLUSION: Jesus has the power over death and Hades (Revelation 1:18). He affirmed it by His own resurrection from the dead. His resurrection is our hope because it is the assurance of ours (1 Corinthians 15:20-23,57).

Since we all must die, and since we all will continue to live, we must prepare to meet God now!!

Then Comes The End

INTRO: Jesus' advent into the world almost 2000 years ago was man's greatest blessing. It was the single bright spot in a dark history of sin, despair and hopelessness. He only lived in this world for a little over 33 years... far too short of a time! His departure would have been the saddest occasion in the history of man except for one thing -- He is coming back (John 14:1-3)!!

"Then comes the end..." (1 Corinthians 15:24). God's purpose for this world will be completed and it will be destroyed (2 Peter 3:10-12). Christ will return and the world will be judged (Acts 17:30-31). Then we will all be dispersed to our eternal dwellings (Matthew 25:31-46; esp. v.46).

The Lord's return has been a playground for men's imaginations to run wild. The Bible tells us much about it, but leaves us gasping for more. What does the Bible actually say about the Lord's final coming?

I. THE RETURN OF CHRIST

A. His Coming Is Certain (Hebrews 9:27-28). Two thousand years has in no way detracted from His promise. God has not forgotten... actually He is demonstrating the extent of His patience and mercy (2 Peter 3:6-9).

1. Jesus Promised It (John 14:1-3)
2. Angels Renewed That Promise (Acts 1:9-11)
3. Proof Of His Return In The Resurrection (Acts 17:31). We are not asked to believe blindly, but are furnished proof of Christ's power over death by His own resurrection (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:20-24).

B. His Coming Will Be Unexpected (1 Thessalonians 5:2-3; 2 Peter 3:10). Jesus will return with no advance warning and no signs to usher it in. Many have speculated when He will return.

1. Some Have Set Dates. But this has always proven false
 - a. William Miller (Adventist) -- 1843, 1844
 - b. Charles T. Russell (Jehovah's Witness) -- 1874, 1914
 - c. J.F. Rutherford (Jehovah's Witness) -- 1925
2. Some Advocate A Modified Date-Setting. They admit the exact time of His coming is unknown, but claim it is imminent and will come in this generation. They claim we are witnessing the "signs of the times" (Matthew 24:6-7, 32-33). The establishment of Israel as a state in May 1948 has further escalated the claim that we are in that generation which will see Him appear.

Unfortunately, that passage has been misapplied. Jesus was talking about the destruction of Jerusalem and Mosaic dispensation ending (Matthew 24:1-8, 14 [cf. Colossians 1:23], 34). Jesus clearly explained the events He was discussing -- He **did** return to mete out vengeance on Jerusalem (Matthew 23:34-39).

C. The Manner Of His Coming. Will everyone know? Will only the elect know? How will Jesus come?

1. Visible (Revelation 1:7)
2. Audible (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; cf. 2 Peter 3:10)
3. On The Clouds (Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Revelation 1:7).
4. With The Angels (Matthew 25:31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7). These will be the reapers and separators of the souls of men (cf. Matthew 13:40-42).

5. In Flaming Fire (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). It will be a fearful experience for those who do not eagerly await His coming.

With the trumpet, the shout of the archangel, and the roar of the heavens accompanying the Lord's return on the clouds with the angels in flaming fire, will be a day the likes of which the world has never seen nor will see again!!

- D. What Conditions Will He Find? What will the earth that He once left be like when He returns?
 1. Unbelief (2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; 1 Timothy 4:1-3)
 2. Pride And Mockery (2 Peter 3:3-7; Jude 18)
 3. Indifference (Matthew 25:1-46). Indifference to the coming Saviour, to our responsibilities, and to the needs of our fellowmen.
 4. Faithful Disciples Awaiting Him (Hebrews 9:28; Philippians 3:20-21; Titus 2:13). There will be open arms who love His appearing waiting to be united with Him (2 Timothy 4:6-8).
- E. Why Is He Coming? What will He accomplish with His coming? What will He do?
 1. Raise Men To Everlasting Life (John 5:28-29; 6:38-39). When God created man, He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, then gave him access to the Tree of Life to live forever. Man threw that away when he sinned and Satan gained the power of death over man (cf. Hebrews 2:14-15; Romans 5:12).

When Jesus comes, death will be swallowed up (consumed) in victory (1 Corinthians 15:51-57). Even the living will be changed to be incorruptible (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).
 2. Be Glorified In His Saints (2 Thessalonians 1:10). They will be His glorious trophy -- attesting to His power to save men from sin and death, men who had been doomed to destruction with no way of escape. He will share His glory with them (Philippians 3:20-21).
 3. Gather Us Together With Him (2 Thessalonians 2:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:17). That will be the greatest assembly of the church there has ever been.
 4. Destroy The World And Death (1 Corinthians 15:25-26; 2 Peter 2:10-13). Even the very elements of the universe will be burned and destroyed. Everything we have ever seen will be destroyed, and thus our hope lies in a new heaven and earth He is preparing.
 5. Deliver Kingdom To The Father (1 Corinthians 15:24-26). Then it will be God's to rule. We will be presented to God as His faithful kingdom... a kingdom of priests, His own holy nation.
 6. Judge The World In Righteousness (Acts 17:31). No one will escape this judgment (Romans 14:10-12). It will be the final day of reckoning, the day in which **all** men **must** bow to His glory (Romans 14:10-12).
- F. What He Will Not Do.
 1. He Will Not Establish A Kingdom. He has already done that (Hebrews 12:28; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9). He is not coming to set up a millennial kingdom.

Eighty-four preachers in Jesus' day said the kingdom was "at hand" then (Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Luke 10:9). If it wasn't then they

were wrong!! Jesus established His kingdom on Pentecost (Acts 2:33, 36) and continues to reign over it until the end when He delivers it up to God, rather than setting it up initially (1 Corinthians 15:24).

2. He Will Not Teach, Warn Or Invite (Matthew 25:1-13). He did that the first time (Luke 19:10; John 3:16-17) and continues to knock and invite us to come to Him (Revelation 3:20). He will not give us a second chance then... He is giving us a second chance now!!
3. He Will Not Offer Another Sacrifice (Hebrews 9:28; 7:27). If we refuse His sacrifice, He will bring us no other.

II. THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

A. Certainty (Hebrews 9:27). As surely as we die and Jesus died for our sins, we will be judged. That certainty does not have to frighten us (1 John 4:17), but if we are not living as we should then it ought to (Acts 24:25).

B. The Defendants (2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10-12). No one will be overlooked, all will be judged. Each person will stand individually, none will be with us to plead our case. No one else will answer for our actions. On that day we are the only person responsible for our actions.

All who are in the tombs shall come forth (John 5:28-29). No one will get lost in the shuffle (Revelation 20:13). Judgment will be experienced by the righteous and unrighteous (1 Peter 4:17-18).

C. The Judge (Acts 17:31; 2 Timothy 4:1). God has given Him the authority to judge because He is God's son (John 5:22) and also the son of man (John 5:27). Thus, He is eminently qualified to judge, having experienced both humanity and divinity.

His character is pure -- He cannot be bribed, He is not a "hanging judge" nor is He a "bleeding heart". He judges with absolute fairness and equity.

The standard He will use to judge is the Bible (John 12:48).

D. The Witnesses And Evidence.

1. Witnesses.

- a. Ourselves (Romans 14:12). We must give witness of ourselves and plead our own case (Matthew 7:21-23).
- b. Christ (Matthew 10:32). He will bear witness to God of us and our faithfulness.

2. Evidence. The basis of our judgment will consist in a close examination of the evidence.

- a. Thoughts (1 Corinthians 4:5; cf. Hebrews 4:13). Thoughts are basic to a man's motivation and action (Proverbs 23:7). The purity of these thoughts is on trial (Ecclesiastes 12:14).
- b. Words (Matthew 12:36-37). They will be judged because they are the channels through which the thoughts of the heart are expressed.
- c. Actions (Romans 2:1-10). Actions are based on attitude and heart motivations. Judgment is based on them because actions show either submission or rebellion to God's will.

d. Lack Of Action (James 4:17; Hebrews 2:3). Failing to do what we should do will cause us to be lost.

- E. The Verdict. There will be no suspended sentence, no parole, no time off for good behavior, no lighter sentence than the immoral reprobate.
1. Reward For The Righteous (Matthew 25:34; Galatians 6:9; John 14:1-3)
 2. Punishment For The Wicked (Matthew 25:41,46). Punishment is reserved for sinners (Revelation 21:8), for those who lived selfish lives (Matthew 25:41-46), for those who neglected salvation (Hebrews 2:1-3) and for those who never knew God (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

After the verdict is given, there will be no appeal. Who could you appeal to? There is no higher judge than Christ (Matthew 7:21-23).

CONCLUSION: In view of what we know is coming, what kind of lives ought we to be living (2 Peter 3:11)?

To the faithful, the return of the Lord is comforting. It means that our lives of faithfulness will be rewarded. But only the faithful can be comforted. Those who have not turned their lives over completely to God can only grieve and mourn.

The clouds represent a pledge and promise that the Lord will return and take us home. Home is where we should be looking (Philippians 3:20-21).

Always live in readiness for the Lord's coming because we don't know when it will be.

Heaven And Hell

INTRO: God created man's soul to endure forever. It can live unceasing with God in His presence or away from God. Man's life on earth is the period when He chooses where that eternal dwelling will be. Man will continue to exist in either heaven or hell.

Heaven has a very alluring quality to men who are subject to pain and death. It is the ultimate place of good, the consummation of everything that is grand and glorious. One of man's strongest yearnings is to go home and be with God (Philippians 1:21-23; 3:20-21). Man was meant to live eternally, in fellowship with God from the beginning (Genesis 3).

Hell is **worse** than the most terrible place you can picture in your mind. It is a place devoid of any trace of goodness or kindness, a place where nothing but evil, gloom and despair exist.

Most religious people believe in heaven but not hell. Yet there cannot be one without the other!!

Remember that Bible descriptions of these places are in comparison with things we have seen or experienced and therefore can understand. God is depicting **spiritual** things with **physical** terms. Since we are creatures equipped with five basic senses -- taste, touch, smell, hearing, and sight -- anything we could not otherwise understand must be described in **comparison** to that which we have experienced.

I. HEAVEN

A. What Awaits The Soul In Heaven?

1. Eternal Life (Romans 6:23; Mark 10:29-30). Life ends on earth. That brings distress and despair. Heaven offers us the blessings of life in its fulness throughout eternity.

How long is eternity? Someone has suggested that if you tied a piece of string between the earth and moon... and an ant carried a piece of sand from the earth and deposited it on the moon... then returned and did the same thing over and over until it had moved the entire earth... the amount of time that feat took would not even begin the first day of eternity!!

Eternity belongs to God and He wants to share it with us!

2. A Better Enduring Substance (Hebrews 10:34). No matter what goods, treasures, and homes the world can provide, heaven offers us brighter and better ones. And heaven's treasures last, unlike the world's which are fragile and fleeting (Matthew 6:19-20; 2 Peter 3:10).
3. A Prepared Place For Prepared People (Hebrews 11:16; John 14:1-3). God is having it custom-built for the enjoyment, pleasure and reward of His people. And God's people only get the best!!
4. Joint-Heirs With Christ (Romans 8:16-18). Our children are our heirs because they are a part of us. God too, sees Himself in us. What He has He wants us to share in... to be heirs of His unsearchable riches in glory because we are His children (1 John 3:1-2).
5. Incorruptible Inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-4; James 5:1-3). One that will not erode away or dissolve, that cannot be destroyed like those of this world. No catastrophe or evil person can ever take it away.

6. Crown Of Life (1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 4:6-8). The crown is the sign of a champion, of the victor in the race we have run and the battle we have won.
- B. Description Of Heaven. Remember the nature of the descriptions. Heaven is the most wonderful place which can be conceived.
1. Holy City (2 Peter 3:13). It is a city consecrated and set apart from evil and the slightest tint of evil. It shuns everything evil and houses the precious souls of the redeemed (Revelation 21:18-21, 27).
 2. The Tree And River Of Life (Revelation 22:1-2). What Adam and Eve lost for us in the early annals of time, God's Son in the last day will restore to us (cf. Revelation 7:16-17).
 3. No Night There (Revelation 21:23,25; 22:5). No darkness with its fear and dread. The beauty of heaven will never be hidden.
 4. No Death, Pain Nor Weeping (Revelation 21:4). The violence and cruelty of death will have been vanquished. No more separation from those we love, no more sad goodbyes, no graves, no funeral processions, no dreary music.
Men enter this world crying and most leave it crying (Job 5:7).
But no such tears in heaven.
- C. But Won't It Get Boring? Some are greatly enthralled and moved by these descriptions, others are not. Others see us floating on clouds and playing harps all through eternity, or sitting inside our mansions with nothing interesting to do.
Such a concept of heaven **is** boring!
While on earth, we are constantly involved with an inner struggle, with spirit and flesh always in competition (Galatians 5:17; Matthew 26:41). Our **physical** bodies desire **physical** things (Romans 8:5). But our bodies will be changed (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). That body will not have any of our present fleshly desires and appetites, its desires will be spiritual. Our **every** desire will be to love and serve God. No it won't be boring, it will be exhilarating.

II. HELL

- A. How Real Is Hell? Ask the **only** person who could ever tell us with certainty whether or not there is a hell. What did Jesus say?
1. Matthew 5:29
 2. Matthew 10:28
 3. Matthew 23:15,33. Can anyone dispute His words?
- B. Gehenna -- Etymology Of The Word. Jesus used a word for hell that would paint a vivid picture to the Jews of His day. He spoke of hell as "Gehenna". That word would paint a mental picture so terrible they would shudder to think of an eternal home there.
1. Gehenna directly related to the Valley of Hinnom which was a deep, narrow glen south of Jerusalem.
 2. Centuries before, it was the scene where idolatrous Israelites offered their children as burnt offerings to the god Moloch (2 Chronicles 28:3; 33:6).

3. Josiah, in his reform, came to the Valley of Hinnom, destroyed the altars and images and defiled them by burning the bones of the idolatrous priests there (2 Chronicles 34:4-5).
4. Later, Jeremiah the prophet announced the name of that valley would be changed to the "Valley of Slaughter" (Jeremiah 7:30-34; 19:2-7). The Lord would judge Judah for her sins and that destruction and desolation would be so great that the valley would be filled with corpses who would lie there and decay without burial.
5. In Jesus' day, this valley seems to have been used for burning refuse and the bodies of criminals. Fires constantly burned in it. It also served as an open sewer to collect all the decaying, diseased filth and garbage which defiled the holy city.
6. Hell is a place like that, of eternal fire, where the worm does not die, where everything ungodly and unclean is cast (Revelation 21:8, 27).

C. What Awaits The Soul In Hell?

1. Eternal Punishment (Matthew 25:41,46). Men can torture and punish another for only a short period of time. Then the victim dies. God will punish in full fury souls and bodies that can never die.
2. Destroys Both Body And Soul (Luke 12:4-5; Matthew 10:28). Not utterly consuming them, but an agony and destruction which never stops. Truly God is good and gracious, but He is exacting too. Who can withstand His wrath against us and our sins (Romans 11:22; Hebrews 10:31).
3. Eternal Separation (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9). In this world, we enjoy the blessings of God whether we recognize Him or not (Matthew 5:45; James 1:17; Acts 17:25). But hell is a place of eternal separation from His love, goodness, blessings, grace, etc. When we leave God's presence, we leave **everything** that is good because these emanate from Him!

D. Description Of Hell. Remember the nature of these descriptions. Hell is the most terrible place which can be conceived.

1. Place Of Eternal Fire (Matthew 13:49-50; Revelation 21:8). There is unquenchable fire which torments but does not consume. There is such misery that the tip of one's finger dipped in water and touched to the tongue is a relief.
2. Where The Worm Dies Not (Mark 9:43-48). A place of decayed souls cast on a spiritual garbage heap. There is nothing but rotteness and corruption... the maggots and worms could exist forever because of the decaying souls there to feed upon.
Hell is a place where the greatest pleasure and blessing would be to cease existing, to rest from the pain. But there never will be any such release!
3. Outer Darkness (Matthew 25:30; 2 Peter 2:17). Throughout eternity we will suffer alone, in total absence of light, with no flicker of hope. No one will be there to comfort. Fear and loneliness will plague our souls throughout eternity.
4. Place Of Torture (Matthew 18:32-34). We'll face the terribleness of torture, not until death relieves us, but as long as God and

heaven continue to exist. Punishment will be inflicted mercilessly for all eternity.

5. Place Of Weeping And Gnashing Of Teeth (Matthew 22:13; 25:30). Sorrows will be multiplied along with tears and the pain will be so unbearable we will grit our teeth in agony throughout eternity. What won't we have to cry about?
6. Lake Of Fire And Brimstone (Revelation 14:20; 20:11-15). The destruction God has prepared will overwhelm us in this lake of fire and the burning, noxious fumes of brimstone which choke us without mercy.
7. Company With Satan And His Angels (Matthew 25:41; Jude 6). No characters in history are more evil than these. Every other evil person who has ever lived will be there too (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

CONCLUSION: We are all headed for an eternal habitation. Most will be lured by Satan to destruction (Matthew 7:13-14). God did not appoint us to wrath (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10), but He will make us face it if we do not live for Him now (2 Thessalonians 1:8).