

Preaching
the Whole
Counsel
of God
Volume 1

Sermon Outlines
by Louis Rushmore

© 2001
Louis Rushmore
Cameron, West Virginia
(888) 725-7883
rushmore@gospelgazette.com
www.gospelgazette.com

Table of Contents

Author's Preface	5
The Spider	9
The Humility of Christ.....	15
The Church For Which Jesus Died Is Divine	22
The Long Journey Home	28
Full of Days.....	32
The Nature of Repentance That Saves.....	35
Temple of God	40
Herod's Temple	45
Abortion: Murder of Innocents	51
Turning the World Upside Down	54
Adam: A Type of Christ	57
Alcohol.....	61
Archaeology and the Patriarchs	71
The Ark: A Type of the Church.....	78
The New Testament Church Is Divine in Authority.....	81
Bible Baptism: Is It Sprinkling, Pouring or Immersion?	84
Bible Baseball or The Devils Vs. The Christians	87
Saved By The Blood of Christ.....	90
Spiritual Coordination.....	96
Sin: A Type of Bondage	100
Rearing Children.....	104
Funny Money	112
Feet of Clay.....	116
The Preeminent Christ	119
Using Scripture in Context.....	122
The Covenants	129
The Weight of Disbelief and Doubt.....	132
Fear	138
Rules For Successful Fishing.....	140
Focused On Heaven	144
A Colorful Description of Christians.....	151
Journalistic Evangelism	154
The Time Is At Hand For Godly Living.....	157
A Burning And A Shining Light.....	160

Even So Come, Lord Jesus	163
The Sword of the Spirit.....	166
The Sin of Sodom	168
Hope Spoken.....	175
Jesus Christ, Our Example.....	183
In the Belly of a Big Fish.....	187
Miracles: Their Purpose and Duration.....	191
Modesty.....	194
Moses — And The Rest Of The Story.....	200
Good Old Noah.....	202
A New Covenant for a New Israel.....	209
Strangers And Pilgrims	211
Three Promises.....	220
Biblical Church Finance	226

Author's Preface

Following is an assortment of some of the sermons that I preached over the past nearly three decades. I preached my first sermon on the third Sunday evening of October in 1973 — *potluck Sunday*. Then, I was a young man in the United States Air Force, stationed near Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. While in the armed services, I preached on Sundays and upon discharge, I assumed my first *fulltime* congregational work.

Soon, I realized that my Catholic background left me ill equipped to prepare multiple Bible lessons and sermons weekly. (It was reassuring, though, to discover that my feeble studies arrived at the same doctrinal conclusions attained by brethren and honest students of the Bible before me.) Therefore, my wife, baby daughter and I moved to Memphis where I enrolled in the Memphis School of Preaching. My stint there afforded me opportunities to preach in Tennessee, Mississippi and Arkansas. Over the years, appointments and fulltime congregational ministries permitted me to preach in the additional areas of Ontario, Virginia, Illinois, North Carolina, South Carolina, West Virginia, Alabama, Ohio, New Jersey and Florida.

Since 1995, it has been my good pleasure to serve on the faculty of the West Virginia School of Preaching. Three of the four courses I teach concern biblical books, in which classes students must submit sermon outlines. I am a stickler for *organization* of one's message and relentless fidelity to the lesson's stated *thesis*. Further, I emphasize a *smooth flow* from section to section and point to point throughout a sermon. The idea is to avoid choppiness and an abrupt movement from the introduction to the body of the lesson, to the conclusion and, finally, to the invitation. Many of the following sermons contain *invitations*, by which emphasis the intention is to counteract the contemporary and popular practice of dispensing with this urgent facet of preaching.

From the usage of ample Scripture references in the following sermons, one will note that I strongly believe in *book, chapter and verse* or *thus saith the Lord preaching*. Yet, the tendency to simply amass Scripture references without sufficient explanation should be avoided. **Biblical and effective preaching involves ‘reading in the book in the law of God distinctly, and giving the sense, and causing the hearers to understand the reading’ (Nehemiah 8:8)**. Incidentally, the first seven verses of Nehemiah 8 portray other admirable characteristics worthy for imitation by both preachers and those to whom they preach (i.e., holding God’s Word in the sight of the people when reading from it; the devotion of hours to the Word of God; the demonstration of reverence for God and his Word by preachers and auditors).

The hardest and most time-consuming aspect of sermon preparation for me (and most preachers) has often been the selection of the topic. Hours and days are often wasted trying to pick the sermon that the auditors on Sunday need to hear. However, apart from being aware of something in particular that the congregation overall or certain persons need to hear, preachers should spend less time on selection of sermon topics and more time on sermon preparation.

The *shotgun* approach really works rather well. I am aware that regardless of what topic I choose, it will serve some auditors better than others. The best that any public communicator can hope to achieve is to teach something previously unknown to some of his audience and cause the rest to be reinforced in those things of which they are already aware. Seldom do faithful Gospel preachers present anything that is *new* to their audiences; frequently, we cause the brethren to *remember* God’s truths. Therefore, I concern myself less with *what to preach* and devote more time to the preparation to preach.

I load my Gospel shotgun and fire it at the audience, fully realizing that the Gospel pellets will affect some people more than others, yet all will be affected to some degree. What is important is that the Gospel is faithfully preached, irrespective of what in particular from God’s Word is preached on any given occasion. Hence, these

sermon outlines reflect numerous subjects and represent part of *Preaching the Whole Counsel of God*.

Further, the whole counsel of God needs to be preached, but not at one sitting! A humorous story I once heard illustrates this facet of preaching.

One Sunday, only one old farmer showed up for worship services. The young preacher felt funny about preaching to just one person and inquired whether he should go ahead with his sermon. The farmer replied that if only one of his cows came to be fed, he would still feed it. Emboldened by this encouragement, the young preacher preached, and preached and preached some more. Afterward, the preacher asked the farmer regarding his sermon. The farmer remarked that though he would feed the one cow, he certainly wouldn't feed it the whole wagonload!

Presuming future opportunities, preaching the whole counsel of God can be spread over several occasions, perhaps spanning many years. The significant point to remember is to preach the Word of God, preach all of it, but not necessarily at the same time. Though listeners need to devote themselves to concentration on the preaching of God's Word, no preacher truly succeeds if his auditors quit listening before he is done speaking!

The reader will notice the organizational pattern can almost be reduced to filling in the blanks for the various sections of the sermons (i.e., title, text, thesis, song, introduction, body, conclusion and invitation). The most critical part of the sermon is the *thesis*. Everything included in the sermon must correspond to fulfilling the goal of the thesis. Nothing that does not directly relate to the thesis should be included in the sermon. The *introduction* prepares the hearer for the main teaching of the sermon and may include an encapsulated foretaste of the body of the lesson. The *body* emphasizes and makes the case for the teaching under review. The *conclusion* briefly reviews the teaching just completed in the body and does not introduce new material. The *invitation* is most effective when it naturally flows from the rest of the sermon

and is connected to it with a *transitional sentence*. For a sermon to be as useful as it needs to be, it will not only provide information, but also strongly implore the auditors to any corrective action that may be needed. A sermon that provides information only or identifies the sin problem without presenting the needed action or cure for sin in our lives is sadly incomplete.

The following sermons appear in random order and treat a variety of topics. They are submitted for your review and use. Make them your sermons by your adaptations and unique qualities as a Gospel preacher. My heart will be gladdened if, even in some small way, this collection of sermon outlines lightens your load and contributes to any fruitfulness in the Lord's vineyard.

Louis Rushmore
November 19, 2000

The Spider

Proverbs 30:24-28

Thesis: To learn to emulate true wisdom wherever it may be found, in this case, from the spider.

Song: *Work, For the Night Is Coming*

Introduction:

1. Of the three references in the Bible concerning spiders (Job 8:14; Prov. 30:28; Isa. 59:5), only our context addresses them in a positive fashion.
 - a. Job 8:14 speaks of the temporary nature of life and the truly hopelessness of those who forget God. “Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust *shall be* a spider’s web.”
 - b. Isaiah 59:5-6 notes the way in which wicked men spin wicked webs and endeavor to clothe themselves with the same.
2. Our context (Prov. 30:28) portrays the spider as one from whom the children of God can learn *wisdom*.
 - a. The spider is doubtlessly to man an unlikely candidate from which to learn much of anything, especially *wisdom*.
 - b. Man, however, characteristically attempts to derive wisdom from the wrong sources, for which cause the apostle Paul rebuked the church of God at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:18-31; 3:18-20).
3. It is always important to remember that biblical illustrations should be allowed to teach that for which they were employed and that they **should not** be pressed to teach things for which they were never intended.
 - a. For instance, if the parable of the Unrighteous Judge were pressed beyond the reason for which it was put forth (to teach persistency in prayer), God would be portrayed as unrighteous (Luke 18:1-8).
 - b. The reason for which the spider is cited in Proverbs 30:28 is to teach men wisdom; other characteristics of spiders and our general reactions to them are not here under consideration.

Body:

I. One wise trait of the spider that the children of God should possess is described by the phrase “taketh hold with her hands.”

- A. The spider diligently and faithfully performs its prescribed assignment in life.
 - 1. The children of God have a prescribed assignment in life that they should diligently and faithfully perform (Ecc. 12:13-14; Rom. 12:1-2; Acts 2:40).
 - 2. A second assignment with which the children of God should equally concern themselves is saving others (Mark 16:15-16; Jam. 5:19-20).
 - 3. The apathy that if practiced by the spider would result in his death, if practiced by Christians will result in spiritual death (Rev. 2:4-5; 3:15-16; Jam. 4:17; Rom. 6:23).
- B. The spider persistently works despite peril and the ruin of its labors.
 - 1. For whatever reason, spiders are not usually well liked by mankind, and consequently, they are killed and their webs are destroyed. Notwithstanding, the spider will rebuild his web repeatedly after its destruction; the only way to permanently eliminate the web is to kill the spider. Even then, at sometime in the future, it is highly likely that **another spider** may build **another web** in the location of the former webs.
 - 2. Christians should persistently work despite personal peril and the ruin of their labors (2 Tim. 3:12; Rev. 2:10; 1 Pet. 3:14; 4:16).
 - 3. The apostle Paul worked night and day and suffered variously for the cause of Christ (1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Cor. 11:23-28); present day disciples should be prepared to do no less (Acts 5:40-42).
 - 4. The apostles continued to preach the Gospel even when they were forbidden to do so (Acts 4:18-21; 5:17-29); the apostles and other Christians could not be discouraged from preaching the Gospel (Acts 8:4). “The blood of martyrs is the seed of the

kingdom” became a motto of the Christians who suffered vigorous persecution in the second and following centuries.

5. The children of God should not fear what the world may do to them, but trust in the Lord and look to him to restore that which is lost while in his service (Matt. 10:28; Rom. 8:28; Matt. 19:27-29).
- C. The spider works as though there is no tomorrow in which its task can be completed; Christians should labor, likewise.
1. Even the longest-lived spiders have life spans which are not usually half the life expectancy of mankind; many spiders die much sooner.
 2. Not even man is promised a prolonged future during which he may serve God (Psa. 90:10; Job 14:1-2; Jam. 4:13-14).
 3. Further, it may not be God’s will to suffer time to continue beyond this very moment (Matt. 24:36-39).
 4. In any case, there will come a time in which we cannot further labor (John 9:4); therefore, we should “redeem the time” now (Eph. 5:16).
 5. Ecclesiastes 9:10 stresses, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for *there is* no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.”

II. The second wise trait of the spider from which the children of God should learn is found in the phrase “is in kings’ palaces.”

- A. The spider knows no political, racial, social, religious, geographical or economic boundaries beyond which it cannot go; the territory and general domain of the spider is universal.
1. Similarly, the Gospel of Christ by which we are saved (Rom. 1:16) and with which we are commissioned is universal (Mark 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).
 2. In the first century, the Gospel penetrated various levels of the Roman Empire’s political community

- (Rom. 16:23; Phil. 4:22; Acts 10:1ff).
3. Too, individuals from various races, nationalities and classes of society obeyed the Word of God (Acts 2:9-11; 8:5, 12, 27; 11:1; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; Gal. 3:28).
 4. Even religious leaders obeyed the Gospel of Christ (Acts 6:7).
- B. The spider, even when alone and without supervision, does its assigned work.
1. It is true that the Lord once sent his disciples out two-by-two (Mark 6:7); at the very least, each lends to the other needed moral support.
 2. Also true is the fact that Christians are part of the body of Christ into which they have been baptized (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:12-14) and members of local congregations.
 3. Christian, however, have **individual responsibilities** for which there will be an individual judgment (Ecc. 12:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; Rev. 20:12-15; Matt. 25:31-46; John 12:48) at the universal or general resurrection of the dead (John 5:28-29).
 4. All Christians, therefore, should do whatever they can and whatever the Gospel calling requires; mature Christians should be teachers (Heb. 5:12-14); husbands and wives can also teach (Acts 18:26); women also have a responsibility to teach (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15; Titus 2:3-5).
 5. Remember, the apostles remained in Jerusalem while **John Q. Christians** were scattered throughout the world, teaching and preaching the Gospel of Christ (Acts 8:1, 4).
 6. Christians need to work, though perhaps without earthly supervision or fellow-laborers.
- C. The spider may be thought of as somewhat tactful but firm; its humble size and the silence with which it moves and works do not often attract undue attention, yet it does not defer from its **spidery duties** in spite of prospective peril or ruin of its work.

1. Disciples of the Lord are supposed to be “wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (Matt. 10:16), doing the work of the Lord, fleeing when persecuted (Matt. 10:23), but not fearing men (Matt. 10:28) nor abandoning the faith when persecuted, even unto death (Rev. 2:10).
2. The apostle Paul commended those to whom he spoke when possible (used tactfulness) in preaching the Gospel (Acts 17:22ff, ASV).
3. Through the pen of the apostle John, Jesus Christ first commended congregations for their righteousness before he condemned them for their wickedness (Rev. 2:1-5, 13-16, 19-20).
4. Christians and congregations should work honestly and tactfully among sinners and saints (1 Pet. 2:11-12; Matt. 5:16), but always “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3; Phil. 1:17).

Conclusion:

1. The spider, though small and generally despised, can teach the children of God if they will carefully observe it as we have.
 - a. Wisdom is no more likely to be learned from men with their academic degrees than it is from the lowly spider.
 - b. Wisdom is the common sense by which knowledge becomes useful; without wisdom, knowledge may be lethal!
2. The persistency with which the spider works should typify the diligence and earnestness with which Christians labor in the service of the Lord.
 - a. Christians should work as though there is no tomorrow, for there may be, in fact, no new sunrise after today.
 - b. Men should endeavor to “work out” their “own salvation” (Phil. 2:12) and obey the Gospel (Rom. 6:17; Heb. 5:8-9; Rom. 1:16).

Invitation:

1. God’s plan for the redemption of lost souls is simple and found exclusively in the New Testament (i.e., hear, Rom. 10:17; believe, John 8:24; repent, Acts 17:30-31; confess Christ, Rom. 10:9-10; be baptized, Acts 22:16; faithfulness, Rev. 2:10).

2. God through his infinite wisdom and supreme graciousness has also provided a second law of pardon for erring Christians (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:6—2:6).

The Humility of Christ

Philippians 2:5-8

Thesis: To **examine** the humility of Jesus Christ, whereby the humility of our Savior can serve both as an **example** for us to follow as well as **motivate** us to practice humility in our daily lives.

Introduction:

1. Biblical “humility” is “the quality of unpretentious behavior, suggesting a total lack of arrogance or pride”¹ Through humility, then, Jesus Christ allowed himself to become the means by which sin-laden and lost souls could be redeemed.
2. Perhaps no single passage of Scripture better characterizes the humility of Jesus Christ than Phil. 2:5-8.
3. The humility of our Lord is a perfect example for us to practice humility in our own lives.
4. A close examination of the humility of Jesus Christ is also a powerful motivator for followers of Christ to demonstrate humility.
5. Practicing humility in one’s Christian life renders benefits on earth **and** eternal blessings in heaven, too.

Body:

- I. **“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” Phil. 2:5-8.**
 - A. “Let this **mind** be in you”
 1. “mind” = “It implies moral interest or reflection,

¹Louw, Johannes P. and Nida, Eugene A., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, (New York: United Bible Societies) 1988, 1989.

- not mere unreasoning opinion.”²
2. The subject of this passage, humility, attributed to Jesus Christ is exhorted to be a constant characteristic of the child of God.
 3. Humility should be a habitual trait of every Christian!
- B. “Who, being in the **form** of God”
1. The word “form” is from the Greek “morphe” and is equivalent to “essence.”
 2. This phrase represents the deity of Christ; he possessed the essence or nature of what makes God to be God.
 3. There was (and is) absolutely no difference in the quality of being God between the Father and Jesus Christ.
- C. “Who, **being** in the form of God”
1. The word “being” here “...denotes to be, to be in existence, involving an existence or condition both previous to the circumstances mentioned and continuing after it. This is important in Phil. 2:6, concerning the Deity of Christ. The phrase ‘being (existing) in the form (morphe, the essential and specific form and character) of God,’ carries with it the two facts of the antecedent Godhood of Christ, previous to His Incarnation, and the continuance of His Godhood at and after the event of His Birth...”³
 2. “The time at which the apostle says our Lord gave expression to His essential nature, that of Deity, was previous to His coming to earth to become incarnate as the Man Christ Jesus. But Paul, by the use of the Greek word translated ‘being,’ informs his Greek readers that our Lord’s possession of the divine essence did not cease to be a fact when He came to earth to assume human form. The Greek word is not the simple verb of being, but a word

²Vine, W. E., *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell) 1981.

³*Ibid.*

that speaks of an antecedent condition protracted into the present. That is, our Lord gave expression to the essence of Deity which He possesses, not only before He became Man, but also after becoming Man, for He was doing so at the time this Philippian epistle was being written. To give expression to the essence of Deity implies the possession of Deity, for this expression, according to the definition of our word ‘form,’ comes from one’s inmost nature. *This word alone is enough to refute the claim of Modernism that our Lord emptied Himself of His Deity when He became Man.*”⁴

- D. “thought it not **robbery** to be equal with God”
1. This phrase lends itself to two, compatible meanings.
 2. To be equal with God was not a prize to be usurped to himself, since the second person of the Godhead always possessed the essence or nature of being God, also true of the Father.
 3. That is, equality with God was not something subject to seizure or “to be grasped” (R.V., marginal reading).
 4. Second, though Jesus always possessed the essence or nature of being God, he did not jealously guard it so that he would not divest himself of the adoration as Deity to become Incarnate and a vicarious sacrifice for humanity.
- E. “**equal** with God”
1. The Greek is really “equalities” with God.
 2. Again, the Deity of Christ is emphasized in this verse.
- F. “But made himself of no reputation”
1. The R.V. says here that Christ ‘emptied himself,’ which might erroneously be thought to suggest that Jesus somehow became less than the eternal

⁴Wuest, Kenneth S., *Wuest’s Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1997.

- essence or nature of being God that he always possessed.
2. The KJV rendering correctly conveys the idea that in spite of his eternal essence or nature (that is, his Deity), Jesus accepted a designation and role far below his status as God.
 3. "...when we come to consider the fact that our Lord laid aside something, we will see that it was not the *possession* but the *expression* of the divine essence."⁵
- G. "took upon him the **form of a servant**, and was made in the likeness of men"
1. Instead of divesting himself of the qualities of being God (though he did lay aside the adoration due him as God), Jesus took upon himself the **additional** essence and role of a created being, namely humanity.
 2. Assuming the "likeness of men" means that Jesus took upon himself the "resemblance" of a humanity (anthropos).
 3. This further intimates that Jesus Christ maintained the essence or nature of being God, though he assumed the further role of becoming Incarnate.
 4. "His humanity was as real as his deity."⁶
- H. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself"
1. Through Incarnation, Jesus was observed by humans to possess a body and sundry other human qualities.
 2. This admission, namely of the Incarnation, does not address what or who Jesus really was or is beyond the physical form in which he appeared.
 3. The process of being God, and as such, due adoration reserved for Deity, yet assuming the

⁵*Ibid.*

⁶Robertson, Archibald Thomas, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, (Nashville, Tennessee, USA: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention) 1998, c1933.

form of humanity, the noblest part of Divine creation, though creation versus the Creator, Jesus humbled himself.

- I. “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”
 1. The humbling of Christ climaxed in his willingness to become a substitutionary sacrifice for wayward creation, mankind.
 2. The pinnacle of this obedient humility was his ignoble, excruciating execution on the Roman cross by the mankind for whom he left heaven to save.
 3. “The bottom rung in the ladder from the Throne of God. Jesus came all the way down to the most despised death of all, a condemned criminal on the accursed cross.”⁷

II. Jesus Christ is our perfect example, in so many ways.

- B. Jesus is described in Scripture as the ideal example for his followers to imitate.
 1. 1 Pet. 2:21
 2. The apostle Paul declared that Christians can follow the example of Christ also indirectly by following the example of other Christians who are faithfully following Christ (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1).
- C. In Phil. 2:5-8, “Paul presents Jesus as the supreme example of humility.”⁸
 1. Our Lord also exemplified humility during his personal ministry when he washed the disciples’ feet (John 13:1-17).
 2. The humility exhibited by the Christ, especially regarding his vicarious death, was also the subject of prophecy (Isa. 53:7-9).

III. In view of what Jesus did for us, discerning souls simply must respond in kind.

- A. The humility exhibited by Jesus Christ as depicted in Phil. 2:5-8 has as its basis the spiritual welfare of

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*

humanity.

- B. The humility that the apostle Paul urged upon the Philippian church had as its basis the spiritual welfare of Christians in Philippi.
- C. The thought was that if Jesus Christ could show such humility toward mankind for our welfare, surely Christians can demonstrate humility toward each other for their common, spiritual good.
- D. Lack of humility is divisive and disruptive of the spiritual life of any congregation of God's people.

IV. Each child of God must examine his life periodically to ensure that he is imitating the humility of Christ.

- A. Not only regarding "humility," but for all Christian traits, the apostle Paul wrote that Christians should examine themselves.
 - 1. 2 Cor. 13:5
 - 2. Periodic comparison of one's conduct with the New Testament standard can assist the child of God in practicing Christian living and making course corrections so that he does not fail to attain heaven.
- B. Several telltale signs reveal when individual Christians, congregations and the brotherhood need to try harder to practice biblical humility.
 - 1. Just as assuredly that we can substitute the human will in religion for the will of God revealed in his divine Word, we can also demonstrated a **false humility** (Col. 2:23).
 - 2. Haughty pride, arrogance, self-importance and self-serving displace biblical humility and are counterproductive to successful Christianity (Jam. 4:6).
- C. The New Testament is replete with exhortations, therefore, for the children of God to practice biblical humility.
 - 1. "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble

yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time” (1 Pet. 5:5-6).

2. “And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted” (Matt. 23:12).
3. “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” (Col. 3:12).
4. “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (Jam. 4:10).
5. “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3-4).

Conclusion:

1. Through humility, Jesus Christ allowed himself to become the means by which sin-laden and lost souls could be redeemed.
2. Jesus Christ is our supreme example of humility.
3. The humble, substitutionary sacrifice of Christ should motivate each of us also to incorporate biblical humility into our lives.

Invitation:

1. Biblical humility is a prerequisite for redemption, for without humility, one will not obey the Gospel.
2. Heb. 5:8-9 teaches that Jesus will save the obedient, whereas 2 Thess. 1:7-9 teaches that Jesus will punish the disobedient.
3. Each of us needs to ‘obey the truth’ (Rom. 6:17).
 - a. The non-Christian must...(Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38).
 - b. The erring child of God must...(Acts 8:22; Jam. 5:20-21).

The Church For Which Jesus Died Is Divine

Ephesians 3:3-11

Thesis: To identify and exalt the church of the Bible; secondly, to distinguish the church of the Bible from imitations.

Song: *The Church's One Foundation*

Introduction:

1. Only the church for which Jesus died deserves exaltation.
 - a. It is HIS CHURCH, Matt. 16:18; Rom. 16:16.
 - b. His church is the BODY, 1 Cor. 12:27; Eph. 5:30.
 - c. Jesus is the HEAD of the church and the body, Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18.
 - d. Further, this church is the BRIDE OF CHRIST, 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:27; Rev. 21:2; 22:17.
2. Churches of human origin do not deserve praise and exaltation, which rightfully belongs to the Lord's church alone.
 - a. A denominational church is neither correctly styled HIS CHURCH, the BODY OF CHRIST nor the BRIDE OF CHRIST.
 - b. Jesus Christ did not die for a denominational church, Matt. 15:13.
 - c. Denominational churches are NOT DIVINE, but DIVISIVE, 1 Cor. 1:10-13.

Body:

- I. **The Church for which Jesus died is divine in origin.**
 - A. The church originated in the mind of God, Eph. 3:3-11 (10-11).
 1. The church was not an after-thought.
 2. The church of the Bible is, therefore, DIVINE IN ORIGIN.
 - B. Denominational churches were never in the mind of God.
 1. Some of the most popular denominations are outgrowths of the human minds of Martin Luther,

Henry the VIII, John Calvin, Robert Browne, John Smythe, John Wesley, Joseph Smith, William Miller, Mary Baker Eddy and Charles T. Russell.

2. Therefore, denominational churches ARE NOT DIVINE IN ORIGIN.

II. The church for which Jesus died is divine in establishment.

- A. Jesus built his church, Matt. 16:18.
 1. Our Lord built the FOUNDATION of the church upon himself, 1 Cor. 3:11.
 2. Jesus PURCHASED the church with his blood, Acts 20:28.
- B. The Lord's church began in Jerusalem in about A.D. 33.
 1. Old Testament prophecies named Jerusalem as the place in which the church was to be established, Isa. 2:2-3; Joel 2:28-3:2.
 2. The apostle Peter said Joel's prophecy was being fulfilled on the Pentecost following the Ascension of Jesus, Acts 2:16-21.
- C. Denominational churches were built by men, in the wrong cities, at the wrong times.
 1. The foundations of denominational churches are men, not Christ.
 2. Denominations were established in 606, 1520, 1534, 1536, 1550, 1607, 1739, 1830, 1859, 1866, 1872 through the present.
 3. The most popular denominations were established in Italy, Germany, England, Switzerland, Holland and America.

III. The church for which Jesus died is divine in name.

- A. The designations that identify the church of the Bible typically glorify deity.
 1. Temple of God, 1 Cor. 3:16.
 2. Bride of Christ, Rev. 22:17.
 3. Body of Christ, 1 Cor. 12:27.
 4. Kingdom of God's Son, Col. 1:13.
 5. House of God, 1 Tim. 3:15.
 6. The Church, Acts 2:47; Eph. 3:10.
 7. Church of God, 1 Cor. 1:2.

8. Church of the First Born, Heb. 12:23.
9. Church of Christ, Rom. 16:16.
- B. The designations that identify the members of the church either refer to holy things or a heavenly relationship.
 1. Simply Members, 1 Cor. 12:27.
 2. Disciples, Acts 6:1.
 3. Believers, Acts 5:14.
 4. Saints, Acts 9:13.
 5. Priests, 1 Pet. 2:9.
 6. Children, 1 John 3:1-2.
 7. Christians, Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16 (the NEW NAME, Isa. 62:2).
- C. Denominational churches are not divine in name.
 1. Denominational names do not appear in the Bible!
 2. Denominational names often glorify men or human doctrine instead of God.
 3. Whom or what do these names praise? Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Christian Church, Russelites, Catholics, Presbyterians, Pentecostals, Episcopalians, Adventists, Christian Scientists, Congregational Churches, Church of the Brethren, Apostolic, etc.
 4. Denominational names are DIVISIVE!

IV. The church for which Jesus died is divine in membership.

- A. Jesus adds the saved to his church, Acts 2:47.
 1. Immersion for the remission of sins is the point at which one's sins are taken away (hence he is SAVED) and added to the church by Jesus Christ, Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Pet. 3:21; 1 Cor. 12:13.
 2. Immersion of an accountable person is preceded by HEARING and FAITH in the Word of God, Rom. 10:17; REPENTING, Acts 17:30; and CONFESSING before men that Jesus is the Christ, Rom. 10:9-10.
- B. Denominational churches encourage people to JOIN them or VOTE their members in.
 1. Man-made churches devise human rules of membership; human rules of church membership

lack the power to save.

2. Denominations are comprised of souls who REFUSE TO BE BAPTIZED, Acts 10:48; TEACH FAITH ONLY, Jam. 2:20, 24, 26; and generally REFUSE TO OBEY, Heb. 5:8-9.

V. The church for which Jesus died is divine in organization.

A. The New Testament prescribes a certain organizational pattern for the church.

1. Each congregation is autonomous or independent (the Bible does not describe any unity binding congregations beside the Word of God).
2. A plurality of elders are ordained in each congregation, Acts 14:23.
3. Deacons are also appointed to serve, 1 Tim. 3:8-13.
4. Preachers are charged to preach the Gospel, 2 Tim. 4:1-2.
5. Jesus Christ rules the church from heaven, Mark 16:19; 1 Cor. 15:24-28; the Lord's church has no earthly headquarters.

B. Denominations do not follow the divine pattern for church organization.

1. Denominations often belong to synods, conferences or some other humanly devised federation.
2. Denominational leaders are appointed according to human design instead of biblical instruction and given religious titles foreign to the Bible.
3. Denominations are usually ruled from earthly headquarters.

VI. The church for which Jesus died is divine in worship.

A. The New Testament church must worship according to the New Testament.

1. Worship must be in spirit and truth, John 4:24.
2. The Lord's church sings, Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.
3. The church observes the communion weekly, Acts 20:7.
4. Worship includes praying, Acts 2:42.
5. The church also practices giving, 1 Cor. 16:1-2; 2 Cor. 9:7.

6. Worship also includes preaching, Acts 20:7.
- B. Denominations do not restrict worship to divine instruction.
 1. They do more than sing.
 2. The communion is observed infrequently and on other days than the Lord's Day.
 3. Denominations encourage "tithing" instead of giving according to one's prosperity and as one purposes in his heart.
 4. Churches made by men fail to fully preach the Gospel given by God.
 5. Denominational prayers are sometimes no more than recitations of hand-me-down creeds or are repetitious, Matt. 6:7.

VII. The church for which Jesus died is divine in doctrine.

- A. The church must follow DIVINE LAW only.
 1. The Gospel alone has the power to save souls, Rom. 1:16.
 2. Only the Truth can sanctify, John 17:17.
 3. The Words of Christ alone can lead to eternal life, John 12:48.
- B. Denominations do not follow Divine Law only.
 1. These churches are guided by man-made creeds, catechisms, missals, disciplines, manuals, by-laws, doctrines and confessions, Matt. 15:9.
 2. They are additions to or subtractions from the Bible, Rev. 22:18-19.

VIII. The church for which Jesus died is divine in mission.

- A. Only the Lord's church has a Divine Mission.
 1. The New Testament church alone is charged with evangelizing the world, 1 Thess. 1:8; Mark 16:15-16.
 2. Only the Lord's church can edify itself, 1 Cor. 14:12.
 3. The church is also obligated to practice benevolence toward its members and others, too, Gal. 6:10.
- B. Denominations do not have a Divine Mission.
 1. The churches of men have not been charged to

- preach anything to anyone!
- 2. Denominations are ill-equipped to edify anyone.
- 3. While denominations do not have a DIVINE MISSION to practice benevolence, all men should treat others as they wish to be treated.

Conclusion:

1. Everything about the church for which Jesus died is DIVINE because it exists by divine implementation.
 - a. The New Testament church was in the mind of God from eternity.
 - b. Further, it was built by Jesus the Christ.
 - c. The church was also established in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.
 - d. The church for which Jesus died is guided solely by God's Word.
 - e. The basis of unity in the Lord's church is adoption of God's Word alone.
2. Every other church is at best only a futile imitation of the church of the Bible.
 - a. Denominations were never in the mind of God.
 - b. They were also built by mere men.
 - c. Again, man-made churches do not exist as a fulfillment of prophecy.
 - d. Then too, denominations are guided by the words of men.
 - e. The adoption of human creeds and divisive party names undermines any possibility of biblical unity.

Invitation:

1. The church of the Bible is the REAL THING!
2. Obedience to the Gospel will make one a REAL CHRISTIAN!
3. Why would any clear thinking person settle for anything less than membership in the DIVINE INSTITUTION for which Jesus died?

The Long Journey Home

1 Corinthians 15:20-22

Thesis: To provide family and friends an opportunity to find closure and essentially say a final goodbye to their departed loved one.

Introduction:

1. Years ago, before the popularity of funeral homes and cremation, funerals were conducted often in big old farm houses — not much unlike the setting in which we find ourselves today.
 - a. Furniture was pushed aside to make room for the casket and family and friends gathered around.
 - b. Still, many funeral homes today are large houses that have been devoted to the purpose of these memorial services.
 - c. Therefore, this is a fitting place in which to observe a memorial service for our departed loved one.
2. Mabel Porterfield was to someone a wife, a sister, a mother, an aunt, a grandmother, a great-grandmother or a friend.
 - a. We know that she lived a long life and attained the age of 92 years.
 - b. Incidentally, the Bible cites the age of only one woman at her death—Sarah—the wife of Abraham (Gen. 23:1—127 years old).
 - c. Mabel Porterfield surely encountered varied circumstances and events throughout her life—many of which would be interesting to you and me.
3. In one sense, though, mankind from his first appearance in the Garden of Eden through the present makes the same journey from birth to eternity—where God is.
 - a. Irrespective of how long or how short one lives upon the earth, we all pass our sojourn on earth preparing to meet our Creator.
 - b. The Bible divides man’s existence into three distinct historical periods, in each of which eras God instructed mankind how to live and prepare for eternity.

Body:

I. During the first period of religious history, God spoke through the fathers of the families, who, in turn, were responsible for passing that instruction to their families (Patriarchy).

- A. Adam was the first father through whom God spoke to mankind.
 - 1. We all are familiar with the instructions that the first couple—Adam and Eve—received.
 - 2. They were to (1) dress and keep the Garden, (2) populate the earth and (3) not eat the fruit of a certain tree.
 - 3. They failed to obey God regarding that prohibition and were expelled from the Garden of Eden.
- B. God spoke to Noah during this same time period and told him to build an ark to avoid the universal flood God was about to send to destroy wicked mankind.
- C. Later, Abraham, who became the father of the Jews, was sent to Canaan.
 - 1. God promised faithful Abraham that one of his descendants would be the Son of God come in the flesh to bring wayward mankind back to God.
 - 2. Of course, the prophecy referred to Jesus Christ (Gen. 12:1-3).
- D. The whole period of Patriarchy with its many faithful men and women was preparatory for the coming of Jesus Christ—by whom wayward mankind could come back to God.

II. During the second period of religious history, God ordained a national religion for the descendants of Abraham and Sarah—one of whom was to be Jesus Christ (Judaism).

- A. God chose a man named Moses and made him a great prophet and law deliverer (the Old Testament).
- B. Later, God appointed kings and additional prophets who guided the people of Israel.
- C. The Old Testament is full of prophecies about the coming of Christ.

- D. Also, the Old Testament contained a system of law by which the people were to live as well by which the people could see how much they needed God.
- E. The Old Testament was described by the apostle Paul as the “schoolmaster” to lead us to the system of faith we know as the Gospel or the New Testament (Gal. 3:24).

III. The last period of religious history—in which you and I live—is the Christian or Gospel Age.

- A. It is in the Christian Age only—through Jesus Christ—that God—through the Bible—provides mankind with the instructions how to overcome death.
- B. Hence, the New Testament says much about how to overcome death—that appointment that the Hebrews writer says comes to all (Heb. 9:27).
- C. First Corinthians 15 especially treats this all important topic—victory over death.
 - 1. 1 Cor. 15:1-4 gives the definition of the Gospel—the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - 2. The balance of 1 Cor. 15 explains the relationship between the death of Christ and the death each human being must experience.
 - 3. 1 Cor. 15:20-23 tells of Jesus breaking the bars of death first—promising victory through Jesus Christ to the faithful.
 - a. The path, though, to victory over death through Christ is difficult—because we must pass through death (1 Cor. 15:36-38, 42-57).
 - b. When we participate in the death, burial and resurrection through the Gospel of Christ—then we are victorious through Jesus Christ over death (Rom. 6:3-5).

Conclusion:

- 1. In conclusion, we all have an appointment that we cannot avoid (Heb. 9:27).
- 3. When death comes, our souls separate from our bodies—that is what death is (Jam. 2:26).
- 4. Further, we realize that at death, our souls will return to

God who gave them and our bodies will return to the dust of the earth from which they came (Ecc. 12:7).

5. Our God is a benevolent and righteous God who wants every soul to come and live with him in eternity (2 Pet. 3:9).
6. As we each approach the threshold through which Mabel Porterfield has preceded us, we can take comfort in that Jesus Christ has personally made it possible for us to resurrect from the grave.
7. Further, God's message how we can circumvent the uncertainties of death and eternity are contained with God's Holy Word—the Bible.

Full of Days

“And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, *being* old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him” (Gen. 35:29).

Thesis: To address a subject that cannot be ignored, though we earnestly wish we could; we cannot avoid death.

Songs: *Jesus Loves Me, Amazing Grace, Old Rugged Cross*

Introduction:

1. From earliest recorded history, mankind has reluctantly faced the enemy of death.
2. Without exception, man has acknowledged the passing of family or tribe members.
3. This afforded loved ones an opportunity to say a final goodbye and find closure so they can go on with living.
4. “It was customary for successive generations to be buried in the family tomb (cave or rock-cut); thus Sarah (Gn. 23:19), Abraham (Gn. 25:9), Isaac and Rebekah, Leah (Gn. 49:31) and Jacob (Gn. 50:13) were all buried in the cave of Machpelah, E of Hebron.”¹
5. Mourning for the dead has manifested itself variously among ancient peoples: “...(1) baldness of head and cutting the beard; (2) lacerating the body; (3) rending garments and wearing sackcloth; (4) scattering dust on the head and wallowing in ashes; and (5) weeping and lamentation.”²
6. Mourning also included singing: “And Jeremiah lamented for Josiah: and all the singing men and the singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations to this day, and made them an ordinance in Israel: and, behold, they *are* written in the lamentations” (2 Chron. 35:25).
7. “Notable deaths sometimes occasioned poetic laments. So David lamented over Saul and Jonathan (2 Sa. 1:17-27) ...”³

¹*The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

²*Ibid.*

³*Ibid.*

8. The Bible uses different phrases to refer to death and speaks of two different types of death.

Body:

I. The following words and phrases used in the Bible to refer to death.

- A. “Giving Up the Ghost,” Gen. 25:8; 35:29; Lam. 1:19; Acts 5:10.
- B. King of Terrors, Job 18:14.
- C. A Change, Job 14:14.
- D. Going to your fathers, Gen. 15:15; 25:8; 35:29.
- E. Putting Off This Tabernacle, 2 Pet. 1:14.
- F. Requiring the Soul, Luke 12:20.
- G. Going the Way From Where There Is No Return, Job 16:22.
- H. Being Gathered to Our People, Gen. 49:33.
- I. Going Down into Silence, Psa. 115:17.
- J. Returning to Dust, Gen. 3:19; Psa. 104:29.
- K. Being Cut Down, Job 14:2.
- L. Fleeing as a Shadow, Job 14:2.
- M. Departing, Phil. 1:23.
- N. Called Sleep: Deut. 31:16; Job 7:21; Job 14:12; Jer. 51:39; Dan. 12:2; John 11:11; Acts 7:60; Acts 13:36; 1 Cor. 15:6, 18, 51; 1 Thess. 4:14-15⁴

II. The Bible first speaks of a “spiritual” death regarding the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:17; 3:24-25).

- A. Rom. 6:23 still says that “the wages of sin is death.”
- B. Spiritual death, then, is the separation of one’s soul from God for eternity.
- C. Jesus, however, has provided a remedy to the problem of sin — which takes away the separation of spiritual death.
- D. Christ’s death and resurrection destroyed the power of death itself (2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 2:14).
- E. He is the firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5).
- F. We will finally overcome death at the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:26), so that even now death has lost its sting (1

⁴Swanson, James, Editor, *New Nave’s Topical Bible*, (Oak Harbor, Washington: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1994.

Cor. 15:51-57).

- G. Through the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, God provided a plan whereby mankind can be resurrected from spiritual death (Rom. 6:3-5).

III. The Bible also speaks of death where it means the separation of the soul from the body (Jam. 2:26).

- A. Death is the consequence and punishment of sin (Ezek. 18:20).
- B. Sin is the transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4).
- C. It was because of sin that Adam and Eve were sent from the Garden of Eden, and denied access to the Tree of Life.
- D. Jesus Christ also provided the remedy for the problem of physical death.
- E. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead also made it possible for a resurrection from the dead (John 5:28-29).

Conclusion:

1. Death is a part of life that all of us can be assured will come (Heb. 9:27).
2. Jesus, though, through his resurrection has made it possible for a general resurrection from the dead.
3. Jesus has also made it possible to be saved from spiritual death.
4. Our Lord saves those who obey him (Heb. 5:8-9).
8. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).
9. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences" (2 Cor. 5:10-11).

The Nature of Repentance That Saves

2 Corinthians 7:8-11

Thesis: To distinguish between remorse and true biblical repentance, and to exhort brethren and non-Christians to personally embrace true, biblical repentance.

Introduction:

1. The New Testament uses the word “repentance” to reflect two related but significantly different concepts.
2. In some instances, the English word “repentance” means “remorse” or “regret” and comes from the Greek word “metamelomai.”
3. In some instances, the English word “repentance” means “a change of mind that reflects itself in a change of conduct” and comes from the Greek word “metanoeo.”
4. The distinction between these two words that matters to every accountable soul is that the former does not lead to salvation, whereas the latter does lead to salvation.
5. Each accountable soul needs to assess himself to see whether his “repentance” is the kind that leads to eternal damnation or to eternal salvation.

Body:

I. Metamelomai

A. Metamelomai defined

1. “In the case of Judas, metamelomai means ‘**remorse.**’ In the case of Heb. 7:21 it means only to **change one’s mind.**” (Wuest)
2. “**to be sorry**” (Robertson)
3. “... used of a change of mind, such as to produce regret or even remorse on account of sin, but not necessarily a change of heart” (Easton).

B. Examples of metamelomai

1. Matthew 21:29: In this case, the son who initially

refused to go into his father's vineyard had remorse or changed his mind and went. Usually, though, this type of repentance lacks **corrective action** following remorse or changing one's mind. Jesus applied the same word to the chief priests and elders in verse 32 ("believed him not") as those who had no remorse or did not change their minds at the preaching of John the Baptist, and therefore did not execute corrective action.

2. Matthew 27:3-5: Judas is a prime example of this type of repentance that neither led to corrective action nor salvation. **Judas had only remorse** and hanged himself.
3. 2 Corinthians 7:8-9: This is an excellent contrast between the biblical meanings of **metamelomai** and **metanoeo**. Both words are used in the same context. The apostle Paul regretted having to send such a harsh letter of correction to the Corinthian church, but he did not regret sending such a harsh rebuke, especially since the church exercised **corrective action**.
4. Hebrews 7:21: Here the meaning has to do with whether God would change his mind and the context does not concern the human condition relative to repentance.

II Metanoeo

A. Metanoeo defined

1. "In the N.T. the subject chiefly has reference to repentance from sin, and this change of mind involves both a **turning from sin and a turning to God.**" (Vine)
2. "This includes not only the act of changing one's attitude towards and opinion of sin but also that of **forsaking it**. Metanoeo is the fuller and nobler term, expressive of moral **action.**" (Wuest)
3. "to change one's mind or purpose" (Liddell)
4. "to change mind and conduct" (Robertson)
5. "to change one's way of life as the result of a complete change of thought and attitude with

regard to sin and righteousness ... Though in English a focal component of repent is the sorrow or contrition that a person experiences because of sin, the emphasis in $\circ\mathfrak{M}\blacklozenge\mathfrak{S}\blacksquare\mathfrak{M}\blacklozenge$ and $\circ\mathfrak{M}\blacklozenge\mathfrak{S}\blacklozenge\blacksquare\mathfrak{H}\mathfrak{S}$... more specifically the total change, both in thought and behavior, with respect to how one should both think and act.” (Louw)

6. “... be **converted** ...” (Bauer)

B. Examples of metaneo

1. Matthew 3:8; Luke 3:8; Acts 8:22: The verses clearly show that metaneo pertains to **corrective action**.
2. Matthew 4:17; 3:2: This repentance was the subject of our Lord’s preaching as well as the preaching of John the Baptist.
3. Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3; Acts 13:24; 19:4: Plainly, this type of repentance is a **prerequisite to baptism!**
4. Acts 20:21: The “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:17-27) that Paul preached included “repentance toward God.” Correct repentance, then, is the **active** kind.
5. Acts 26:20: In explaining his God-given mission, the apostle Paul used metaneo twice here and otherwise explained that this type of repentance is productive or active.
6. Acts 5:31; Luke 24:47: The consequence of this type of repentance is “**forgiveness of sins.**”
7. Matthew 11:20; Luke 10:13; 11:32; 13:3, 5: **Condemnation** results from failure to exercise this type of repentance.
8. Acts 11:18: This type of repentance results in (eternal) life.
9. Luke 15:7, 10: This type of repentance results in **joy**.
10. Revelation 2:5: The church at Ephesus was twice warned in this verse to repent, and repentance was described as **active** with **works**.
11. Luke 5:32; Acts 17:30: This type of repentance is

the **duty of all sinners**. Repentance is a **universal requirement to be saved!**

12. Luke 16:30: **Failure** to repent destines one to a **woeful eternity!**
13. Matthew 12:41; Mark 1:15; 6:12; Acts 3:19; 2 Corinthians 12:21; 2 Timothy 2:25; Hebrews 6:1

III. Application

- A. There is a biblical distinction between merely sorrow and sorrow that results in a corrective change.
 1. The **thief** has to quit stealing and cannot keep what he has already stolen which remains in his possession (Eph. 4:28).
 2. The **adulterer** must cease adultery (1 Cor. 6:9).
 3. **Repetition of sins** is indicative of worldly **sorrow** rather than godly sorrow that works true repentance (2 Cor. 7:8-10).
- B. Repentance has always required an acknowledgement of one's sins.
 1. "I have sinned" (1 Sam. 15:24 (**Saul**); 2 Sam. 12:13; 24:10 (**David**); Luke 15:22 (**prodigal**)).
 2. "We have sinned" (Num.12:10 (**Aaron**); Num. 21:17 (**fiery serpents**); **Judges** 10:10; 1 **Sam.** 7:6; **Neh.** 1:6; **Isa.** 64:5; **Jer.** 14:20; **Dan.** 9:5).
 3. **Simon** (formerly) the sorcerer (Acts 8:22-24).
- C. Repentance still requires an acknowledgement of one's sins.
 1. Private sins require private repentance between the sinner and God. Sins against others require repentance toward those others as well as God (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15-17).
 2. Public sins require public repentance! (1 Cor. 5), such as, Forsaking the assembly (Heb. 10:25).

Conclusion:

1. "The **act of repentance** is based first of all and primarily upon an intellectual apprehension of the character of sin, man's guilt with respect to it, and man's duty to turn away from it. ... When the unsaved person is made to clearly understand the significance of sin, the intellectual process of changing his mind with respect to it can follow, with the result that **sorrow**,

contrition, and **turning away from** it will also follow.”
(Wuest)

2. Have you expressed only **remorse** for your past sins (especially public sins), **or** have you **genuinely repented** unto salvation?
3. The **difference** between the two is **urgent**, has **eternal consequences** and affects your **well-being** and the **spiritual health of the congregation**.

Invitation:

1. Rom. 2:4: God intends his longsuffering to permit mankind to repent (metanoeo).
2. Acts 2:38: Repentance, baptism and remission of sins are clearly linked.
3. Can we help you today to be **baptized** for the remission of sins **or** to help you as a Christian to put **away public sins**?

Bibliography

- Bauer, Walter, Gingrich, F. Wilbur, and Danker, Frederick W., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 1979.
- Easton, M. G., M. A. D. D., *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1996.
- Liddell, H. G., and Scott, *Abridged Greek-English Lexicon*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1992.
- Louw, Johannes P. and Nida, Eugene A., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, (New York: United Bible Societies) 1988, 1989.
- Robertson, Archibald Thomas, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, (Nashville, Tennessee, USA: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention) 1998, c1933.
- Vine, W. E., *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell) 1981.
- Wuest, Kenneth S., *Wuest's Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1997.

Temple of God

Matthew 24:1

Thesis: To define the usage of the word “temple” in the New Testament and impress upon one another the requirement to set ourselves apart for holy use by God.

Introduction:

1. There are primarily two Greek words that are translated as “temple” in our English Bibles.
 - a. **hieron** = a sacred place set aside for a holy use; regarding the Jewish Temple, inclusive of the several porches, courts, entrances, Holy Place and Holy of Holies within it as well as related annexes without the main structure; the collection of buildings that comprised the Temple compound. According to W.E. Vine, **hieron** is never used figuratively.
 - b. **naos** = the inner most chamber of a temple, where if a pagan temple, the gold idol was placed; regarding the Jewish Temple, special reference to the Holy Place and Holy of Holies, exclusive of the several porches, courts, entrances within it and related annexes without the main structure; the sanctuary where God dwells. **Naos** is used literally and figuratively.
2. There are, though, at least two notable exceptions to this normal usage where naos apparently is used in the biblical text as a synonym for hieron, to refer to the collection of Temple buildings instead of the Holy Place or the Holy of Holies.
 - a. Matt. 27:5 – Judas threw down the 30 silver coins in the Temple in the presence of the chief priests and elders. Access to the Holy Place and Holy of Holies was limited to priests in their official functions and the latter to the high priest only once a year.
 - b. John 2:10 – The Jews noted that the Temple overall (not just the sanctuary) had been under construction for 46 years.

3. Despite these two occasions of **naos** being used in the place of **hieron**, otherwise observing where these two Greek words are used respectively can enhance Bible study and comprehension.
 - a. Noting whether “temple” is translated from **naos** or **hieron** in various biblical passages makes those texts more intelligible.
 - b. Further, noting the special emphasis on the application of “temple” from **naos** in the New Testament makes some doctrines more meaningful.

Body:

I. Citing examples of the uses of hieron and naos for “temple” clearly distinguish between their respective definitions.

A. hieron

1. Luke 2:27 – Baby Jesus was taken to the temple [hieron].
2. Luke 2:46 – The boy Jesus stayed behind when his parents returned home; he was found in the temple [hieron].
3. Matt. 4:5 – The devil dared Jesus to jump from the pinnacle of the temple [hieron].
4. Matt. 21:13 – Jesus drove the moneychangers from the temple [hieron], (14) healed the blind and the lame in the temple [hieron] and (23) taught the people in the temple (hieron).
5. Matt. **24:1** – “And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple [hieron].”
6. Matt. 26:55 – Jesus taught daily in the temple [hieron].
7. Luke 18:10 – Jesus told the parable of the Pharisee and the publican who entered the temple [hieron] to pray.
8. John 8:20 – Jesus taught in the temple [hieron] treasury.
9. John 10:23 – Jesus taught in Solomon’s porch in the temple [hieron].
10. Luke 24:53 – Following the Ascension of Jesus, the apostles returned to Jerusalem and frequented

the temple [hieron].

11. Acts 2:46 – The early church continued to make use of the temple [hieron] rooms.
12. Acts 3:1-8 – Peter and John went to the temple [hieron] where they encountered a lame man and healed him.
13. Acts 5:20 – An angel released the apostles from jail and commanded them to teach in the temple [hieron].
14. Acts 5:42 – The apostles taught and preached daily in the temple [hieron].
15. Acts 21:26 – Paul purified himself in the temple [hieron] regarding a Jewish vow he fulfilled.

B. naos

1. Matt. 23:16-21 – The Jews made references to the temple [naos] in their oaths.
2. Matt. 23:35 – Zacharias was murdered between the altar of burnt offering in the court and the temple [naos].
3. Matt. 27:51 – Following the death of Jesus, the veil of the temple [naos] tore from top to bottom.
4. Luke 1:9 – Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, burnt incense in the temple [naos].
5. Acts 7:48; 17:24 – God does not dwell in pagan temples [naos].

II. Figurative references to temple [naos] emphasize the presence of deity.

A. **naos** denotes the sanctuary where God dwells (1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chron. 5:13-14; 7:1-2).

1. John 21:19-21 – Jesus used the word “temple” [naos] to refer to his body and that it would be resurrected after three days.
2. 1 Cor. 3:16-17 – The body which is the church in which the Holy Spirit dwells is called a temple [naos].
3. 1 Cor. 6:19 – The human body in which the Holy Spirit dwells is called a temple [naos].
4. Eph. 2:21 – The church is called the temple [naos].
5. Rev. 16:17 – The heavenly abode of God is called

a temple [naos].

- B. As the dwelling place of deity, both the church and individual Christians **MUST** be holy and set apart for use by God.
 - 1. We must be holy as God is holy; “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:15-16).
 - 2. We do this by ridding ourselves of sinful practices; “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice” (Eph. 4:31).
 - 3. We need to add the Christian virtues (2 Pet. 1:5-11).
 - 4. The children of God must think on holy things (Phil. 4:8).
 - 5. Both individual Christians and the Lord’s church are obligated to excel in good works (1 Tim. 6:18; Titus 2:14).

III. God will not continue to dwell in his temple when his children forsake him.

- A. Accordingly, God’s presence vacated the Jewish temple.
 - 1. Ezek. 10:18
 - 2. Lam. 2:7
- B. Likewise, God will not continue to dwell in either the church or Christians who forsake him.
 - 1. Rev. 2-3.
 - 2. “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple [naos] of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Cor. 6:16-18).

Conclusion:

- 1. Knowing the difference between hieron and naos, both

translated “temple,” makes Scripture easier to understand.

2. The holiness enjoined on Christians and the church is emphasized by the application of the word “temple” [naos].
3. We cannot enjoy a special relationship with God if we are not set apart for a holy use and otherwise a fitting dwelling place for deity.

Invitation:

1. As a child of God, does your temple need a house cleaning?
Acts 8:22; 2 Cor. 13:5; Rev. 2 — 3.
2. If you are not a child of God, you cannot be a temple in which deity dwells, Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16.

Herod's Temple

Matthew 24:1

Thesis: To better familiarize ourselves with the temple that Jesus and the early church knew.

Introduction:

1. There were three Jewish temples, each of which occupied Mt. Moriah at different times in history.
 - a. **Solomon's Temple:** The building materials were prepared by King David (1 Chron. 22:1-19; 28:1; 29:9) and the Temple was constructed by his son, Solomon (1 Kings 5:1—9:25; 2 Chron. 2:1—7:22). This Temple was destroyed in 587 B.C. by the Babylonians and its treasures were taken to Babylon (2 Kings 25:8-17).
 - b. **Zerubbabel's Temple:** This Temple was begun upon the return of the first wave of Jews from Babylonian captivity in 536 B.C. and completed, due to interruptions, over the next 20 years (Ezra). It repeatedly suffered damage from wars and plundering, including in 63 B.C. and 37 B.C. by the Romans when they took control of Jerusalem.
 - c. **Herod's Temple:** In about 20 B.C. Herod the Great began to repair and expand the Temple. This Temple was completed in A.D. 64, just six years before its destruction in A.D. 70 by the Romans as they quelled a Jewish rebellion.
2. Herod's Temple was the temple contemporary with the life, ministry and death of Jesus Christ as well as the early church.
 - a. Herod's Temple was the Temple to which Jesus was taken as a baby to be dedicated (Luke 2:27), to which Jesus was again taken at the age of twelve to attend the Passover feast (Luke 2:42), in which during his ministry he taught the people (Mark 12:35) and overturned the tables of the moneychangers (Matthew 21:12).
 - b. The disciples of Jesus accompanied Jesus in the Temple (Matthew 24:1).

- c. The early church continued to meet in the public areas of the Temple (Acts 2:46).
 - d. The apostles went to the Temple to teach and preach (Acts 5:20-21).
3. Since the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and the early church interacted with Herod's Temple, it would be helpful for students of God's Word to familiarize themselves more fully with that Temple.
- a. Thereby we can more easily visualize this important location that serves as the background for several passages of Scripture.
 - b. Second, we can grasp better some of the biblical messages set against the backdrop of Herod's Temple.

Body:

I. Layout of the Temple compound on Mt. Moriah.

- A. Herod the Great expanded the top of Mt. Moriah through the use of retaining walls which he backfilled or overlaid with stone.
1. The surface area was roughly 1,000 by 1,000 feet, comprising about 35 acres.
 2. Connected by a gate and stairs, but just north of this was the fortress of Antonia.

B. Porticos

1. Around the perimeter of Mt. Moriah and through which one had to pass to gain access to the rest of the Temple mount was a covered porch.
2. The eastern portico was called Solomon's Porch.
3. The southern portico was called the Royal Portico.

C. Court of the Gentiles

1. Immediately beyond the porticos was a large open area called the Court of the Gentiles.
2. The rest of the courts and Temple buildings were inside the Court of the Gentiles.
3. However a wall 4½ foot high on which warnings that the penalty of death would be exacted upon any Gentile who went beyond that wall enclosed the rest of the Temple mount and its buildings.

D. Court of the Women

1. The Court of the Women was on the eastern end of

the Temple buildings and was about 200 feet square and its floor was eight feet higher than the Court of the Gentiles.

2. It contained 13 receptacles for coins that looked like inverted trumpets.
3. At the southeastern corner of this court was the site where ceremonies to conclude a Nazarite vow were conducted.
4. The eastern access to the Court of the Women was through the Beautiful Gate, which was 65 feet wide and 75 feet tall.

E. Court of Israel

1. Westward from the Court of the Women was a corridor that abutted the area where the priests offered sacrifices. This court from which the work area of the priests was separated by a small wall was the Court of Israel.
2. The floor of the Court of Israel was 10 feet higher than the Court of the Women.
3. At the southeastern corner of the Court of Israel was the Hall Gazith where the Sanhedrin met.

F. Court of the Priests

1. The Court of the Priests was on a platform three feet higher than the Court of Israel, between the Court of Israel and the Temple building.
2. The altar of burnt offerings and laver were in the Court of the Priests.

G. House of God

1. The floor of the platform on which stood the House of God was eight feet higher than the Court of the Priests, or 29 feet higher than the Court of the Gentiles.
2. A porch, several stories high, covered the face of the House of God.
3. Three story apartments on the north and south sides housed the priests during their annual two-weeks ministry.
4. Gold plated double doors on the eastern side led to the Holy Place, in which were the table of

- shewbread, the altar of incense and the golden lamp stand. The Holy Place was 30 feet by 60 feet.
5. A heavy veil separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, which was a room 30 feet square. Since the Ark of the Covenant was lost since the time of Solomon's Temple, the Holy of Holies was empty except for a marble stone on which the high priest placed his censer on the Day of Atonement.

II. Some passages associated with Herod's Temple.

A. Fortress Antonia (Acts 21:34-40).

1. The apostle Paul was rescued from a murderous mob and taken by Roman soldiers to this castle.
2. Before entering the castle, Paul was permitted to address the mob.

B. Solomon's Porch

1. During his temptation, Jesus was led by the Devil to the "pinnacle of the temple" or battlement atop Solomon's Porch (Matt. 4:5). This was a drop of over 400 feet into the Kidron Valley.
2. Jesus taught in Solomon's Porch (John 10:23).
3. The early church assembled in Solomon's Porch (Acts 3:11; 5:12).

C. Court of the Gentiles

1. The Jews set up animal sales for the sacrifices and money exchanging in the Court of the Gentiles, which practices Jesus severely rebuked (Matt. 21:12-13; John 2:1-16).
2. The Jews accused the apostle Paul of taking a Gentile past the wall separating the Court of the Gentiles from the Court of the Women (Acts 21:28-29; 24:6).
3. The apostle Paul referred to that wall when citing the Law that separated between Jews and Gentiles was removed by Christ (Eph. 2:14).

D. Court of the Women

1. Twelve-year-old Jesus may have listened to the teachers of the Law in a chamber within the Court of the Women (Luke 2:46).
2. Jesus observed how the poor widow and others

contributed to the treasury, which was located in the Court of the Women (Mark 12:41-44).

3. Jesus preached in the Court of the Women, which was also called the treasury (John 8:20).
4. The apostle Paul and those with him fulfilled their vows in the Court of the Women (Acts 21:23-26).
5. The lame man whom Peter healed was laid daily before the Beautiful Gate that led to the Treasury in the Court of the Women (Acts 3:2-11).

E. Court of Israel

1. The Sanhedrin convened here to condemn Jesus (Luke 22:66-71).
2. Judas threw the 30 pieces of silver in the temple before the chief priests and elders, before going out to hang himself (Matt. 27:3-5).
3. The Sanhedrin convened there to rebuke the apostles, Peter and John (Acts 4:5-22).
4. All the apostles were captured and brought to the Sanhedrin in the Court of Israel (Acts 5:17-42)
5. Stephen was captured and taken before the Sanhedrin in the Court of Israel (Acts 6:12-15).

F. Court of the Priests

1. It was here that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was burning incense when the angel, Gabriel, appeared to him (Luke 1:5-10).
2. Jesus cited the murder of a priest between the altar of burnt sacrifice and the Temple (Matt. 23:35).

G. The House of God

1. The Veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies was torn from the top to the bottom when Jesus died (Matt. 27:51).

Conclusion:

1. Each of the areas of the Temple compound from the porticos through the various courts represented the progression various people could walk toward the Temple itself.
2. The Gentiles were restricted to the porticos and the Court of the Gentiles.
3. Jewish women could traverse the porticos, the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Women.

4. Jewish men could walk everywhere Jewish women could go plus the Court of Israel.
5. The priests could pass through all areas of the Temple except that the high priest alone once a year was permitted into the Holy of Holies.
6. Regarding the spiritual Temple, all Christians are priests and have unlimited access to the spiritual Temple, the church, excepting that Jesus Christ our high priest is in the presence of the Father.

Invitation:

1. If not a Christian, you are not a priest in the Gospel Age.
 - a. Become a priest today by obeying the Gospel of Christ, Rom. 1:5; 16:26; 2 Thess. 1:8-9.
 - b. Specifically, hear God's Word and believe, John 8:24; Rom. 10:17; repent, Acts 17:30; profess Jesus to be the Christ, Acts 8:37; submit to immersion, Acts 2:38; Col. 2:12.
2. If an erring Christian, you are blemished and unable to serve as a priest until cured of your sin blemish, Lev. 16:21-24.
 - a. Heal your blemish through repentance and prayer, Acts 8:22.
 - b. Continue in faithfulness, Rev. 2:10.

Bibliography

- Easton, M. G., M. A. D. D., *Easton's Bible Dictionary*, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1996.
- Gowers, Ralph, *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago) 1987.
- Jackson, Wayne, *Background Bible Study*, (Stockton, CA: Apologetics Press, Inc.) 1986.
- Kittel, Gerhard, and Friedrich, Gerhard, Editors, *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1985.
- The New Bible Dictionary*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.) 1962.

Abortion: Murder of Innocents

Deuteronomy 27:25

Thesis: Abortion equates to murder, the taking of innocent life.

Song: *Jesus Loves the Little Children*

Introduction:

1. Abortion is one of the most highly controversial subjects in our society.
2. Proponents and opponents of abortion exhibit highly charged emotions about it.
3. Abortion is far more than a social, or even a political issue; it is a biblical issue as well.
4. Legalized or not, if abortion is contrary to biblical teaching, it is sinful; and, man must please God rather than himself, Acts 5:29.

Body:

I. Unquestionably, biblically speaking, abortion involves killing innocent life.

- A. Samson and John the Baptist were Nazarites, who through the cooperation of their respective mothers, began observing the Nazarite vows before they were born, Jud. 13:3-5; Luke 1:15.
- B. Isaiah records that Jesus had a mission and a name while yet in his mother's womb, Isa. 49:1-5.
- C. Job was alive in the womb and lamented he had not died there because of the afflictions in life through which he went, Job 10:18.
- D. The Law of Moses prescribed penalties for the injury or death of an unborn child, Exod. 21:22-25.
- E. Jeremiah was sanctified and ordained a prophet while he was yet in his mother's womb, Jer. 1:5.

II. Unquestionably, even the secular world recognizes that abortion involves taking life.

- A. The State of New York once required a death certificate

for each abortion performed in that state.

- B. Medical authorities and scientists attest life begins at conception: First International Conference on Abortion (1967): “The majority of our group could find no point in time between the union of sperm and egg ... and the birth of the infant at which point we could say that this was not a human life. ... The changes occurring between implantation, a six-week embryo, a six months fetus, a one week old child, or a mature adult are merely stages of development and maturation.”
- C. The very nature of abortion indirectly affirms it involves taking human life. An unborn child is growing and if allowed to come to term is a replica of his parents; he is not a tumor, a fungus, a parasite or a member of the plant kingdom.
- D. Were an unborn child in any stage of development discovered in outer space on some distant planet, without doubt the entire medical and scientific community would unanimously acclaim the discovery of not only life, but human life; however, in the womb an unborn child is demeaned to unwanted *fetal tissue*.

III. Aggressive, non-defensive, non-punitive taking of life has always been styled murder in the Bible.

- A. The Bible made provisions for holy wars under Judaism, capital punishment and accidental death whereby such killings were not considered murder by God (e.g., conquering Canaan, stoning of idolaters, cities of refuge)
- B. All other taking of life is condemned in both testaments, Exod. 20:13; Rom. 13:9; Matt. 5:21, 22; 19:18; 1 Pet. 4:15.
- C. The Old Testament required that a murderer be put to death, Gen. 9:6; Exod. 21:12; Prov. 28:17.
- D. The New Testament condemns unrepented murderers to eternal doom, 1 John 3:15; Rev.21:8.

IV. The magnitude of abortion.

- A. Since 1973, far more unborn babies have been killed in America than the total number of U.S. soldiers killed in all the wars combined this country has ever fought.
- B. The magnitude of abortion, further, is multiplied by the

many countries in today's world that also allow abortion.

- C. Abortion is the cruelest dereliction of parental responsibility and often the solution of choice by fornicators faced with an unwanted and illegitimate pregnancy.
- D. Truly, abortion is also the most glaring example of people void of "natural affection," Rom. 1:28-32 (31).

V. How should the Christian respond to abortion?

- A. Acknowledge and, further, teach our children that abortion, though it may be legal, is murder.
- B. Teach our children about moral purity to refrain from fornication; sex education without moral values is a green light to both fornication and abortion.
- C. Collectively and individually let others know of our Bible-based convictions.
- D. Though individuals may cooperate with others in organized efforts to educate and lobby concerning abortion, civil disobedience is a violation of Scripture, therefore, sinful, Rom. 13:1-7 (unless the *specific* violation of civil law is necessary to comply with divine law, Acts 5:29).

Conclusion:

1. Abortion is a violation of God's law, and therefore sinful.
2. The sin of abortion is a reproach to our nation, Prov. 14:34.
3. Abortion represents the loss of natural affection and the general cheapening of human life.
4. Abortion is the forerunner of euthanasia. Who's to say that handicapped persons or others thought unable to live *meaningful* lives may not fall victim to a disregard for the value of human life?

Turning the World Upside Down

Acts 17:6

Thesis: Exposition of the last phrase of Acts 17:6.

Introduction:

1. Exposition of the last phrase of Acts 17:6.
 - a. “turn ... upside down” = unsettle or upset minds; excite tumults and sedition
 - b. “world” = here the inhabited earth
2. The Gospel was the catalyst for ‘turning the world upside down.’
 - a. **Acts 4:19-20.**
 - b. **Acts 5:25-33.**
 - c. **Heb. 4:12.**
3. Christians are charged with the responsibility of taking the Gospel to the world.
 - a. Matt. 28:18-20—disciple the nations.
 - b. Mark 16:15-16—take the Gospel to every creature.
 - c. 2 Tim. 2:2—pyramid distribution of the Gospel.
4. How did early Christians turn the world upside down?

Body:

I. They preached Jesus Christ, Acts 8:5.

- A. Acts 5:28-32.
 1. They taught by the authority (name) of Jesus.
 2. They filled Jerusalem with the doctrine (teaching) about and by Jesus.
 3. They preached the blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sin; all sin contributes to the death of Jesus on the cross—‘this man’s blood on us.’
- B. Acts 5:42.
 1. Early Christians preached Christ daily.
 2. They preached Jesus publicly and privately.
- C. Acts 8:30-39.
 1. Preaching Jesus involves teaching prophecy and

- fulfillment, vss 30-35.
- 2. Preaching Jesus involves teaching about belief and baptism.
- 3. Baptism involves a burial or immersion, Col. 2:12.
- 4. Preaching Jesus results in baptism, which results in rejoicing.
- D. Acts 13:38-39.
 - 1. To preach Jesus is to preach forgiveness of sins.
 - 2. Resulting belief (not faith only, Jam. 2:24) justifies.
- E. Acts 17:3.
 - 1. Jesus is preached as the Messiah.
 - 2. This preaching involves the death, burial and resurrection, 1 Cor. 1:23; 15:1-4.

II. Preached the kingdom.

- A. John the Baptist inaugurated preaching the kingdom, Luke 16:16.
 - 1. The law and the prophets ceased to be preached with the preaching of the kingdom.
 - 2. All people are intended to hear and enjoy the benefits of preaching the kingdom.
- B. Jesus preached the kingdom, Luke 4:43.
- C. Jesus called others to also preach the kingdom.
 - 1. The twelve, Luke 9:1.
 - 2. Luke 9:60.
- D. Philip preached the kingdom to the Samaritans, Acts 8:12.
 - 1. The kingdom preached belongs to God.
 - 2. Preaching the kingdom involves preaching Jesus.
 - 3. Preaching the kingdom results in baptism.
 - 4. Men and women are the auditors and the beneficiaries of preaching the kingdom.
- E. The apostle Paul preached the kingdom, Acts 20:25-27; 28:31.
 - 1. Preaching the kingdom makes one free from the blood of others.
 - 2. Preaching the kingdom involves preaching the whole counsel of God.
 - 3. Preaching the kingdom involves preaching Jesus.

Conclusion:

1. We will ‘upset’ the world around us if we practice New Testament *militancy*.
2. Further, we have an obligation to preach the Gospel to the world.
3. If we fill the community with the teaching of Jesus, we will turn it upside down.
4. Some will obey.
5. The disobedient will make a lot of noise; everywhere the apostle Paul preached he had either a great Gospel meeting or a riot.
6. 2 Tim. 4:1-4.

Adam: A Type of Christ

Romans 5:14-19

1 Corinthians 15:22, 45-49

Thesis: To show a biblical comparison of Adam and Christ, by which we can learn something about our Lord.

Introduction:

1. The Old Testament contains types of New Testament anti-types.
 - a. A type is a “representative form” or “characteristic” of something else.
 - b. Adam is a type of Jesus Christ.
 - c. Judaism was never intended by God to be his final revelation to man, but contains types, figures, patterns and shadows of New Testament anti-types, Heb. 9:9, 23; 10:1-2.
2. Old Testament types perfectly fit the New Testament church, its doctrine and the Christ.
 - a. Therefore, we can learn something about the Lord by examining Old Testament types.
 - b. Types confirm the church of the Bible to be the fulfillment of the long standing will of God, Eph. 3:10-11.

Body:

I. Comparisons between Adam and the Christ.

- A. Adam was created by miracle, Gen. 1:27; 2:7. Jesus was conceived by miracle, Matt. 1:18, 23.
- B. Adam is the head of the physical family, 1 Cor. 15:45-49. Jesus is the head of the spiritual family, Eph. 3:14-15.
- C. Adam underwent deep sleep, Gen. 2:21. Jesus experienced the sleep of death (from which he also arose), John 19:30.
- D. Adam’s side was opened, Gen. 2:21. Jesus’ side was opened, too, John 19:34.
- E. From Adam a rib was taken, Gen. 2:21. Jesus shed his blood, John 19:34.
- F. From Adam’s rib woman was formed, Gen. 2:22. With

Jesus' blood the church was purchased, Acts 20:28.

- G. Adam named his bride (generally, "woman"; specifically, "Eve"), Gen. 2:23. Jesus named his bride (generally, "churches of Christ"; specifically, "Christians"), Rom. 16:16; Acts 11:26.
- H. Adam and Eve cleaved to each other, Gen. 2:24. Christians should cleave to the Lord and each other, Luke 14:26; Rom. 12:10.
- I. Adam's family is propagated through seed, Gen. 1:27, 28. The family of Christ is also propagated by seed (which is the Word of God), Luke 8:11.

II. Observations and lessons.

- A. Rom. 5:14-19, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also *is* the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, *which is* by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as *it was* by one that sinned, *so is* the gift: for the judgment *was* by one to condemnation, but the free gift *is* of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

 - 1. Adam, representative of humanity, introduced sin into the world, which led to death, the consequence of sin.
 - 2. Jesus Christ, representative of the Godhead, introduced righteousness into the world, which leads to life.
 - 3. In both cases, individuals participate by their actions in either sin and death or righteousness and

life.

- B. 1 Cor. 15:22, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
1. Adam and Jesus Christ brought opposite gifts to mankind.
 2. However, in both cases, mankind must procure either gift.
 3. What the creation (Adam) failed to do for himself, the Creator (Jesus) did for mankind.
- C. 1 Cor. 15:45, "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a quickening spirit. Howbeit that *was* not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* the Lord from heaven. As *is* the earthy, such *are* they also that are earthy: and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."
1. Adam was made after the order of creation and also bore the image of God (a Spirit Being).
 2. Adam, however, through sin, allowed the earthly side of him to err and overcome the spiritual side.
 3. Jesus Christ, himself a Spirit Being, re-introduced the spiritual into the world.
 4. Christians in particular will bear the image of the spiritual over the image of our earthly existence.

Conclusion:

1. Examining types and their anti-types (fulfillments), one can easily see some of the significant features of the anti-type.
2. The anti-type (in this case, Jesus) is more important than the type.
3. Though we are dual beings, possessing both body and spirit, we must nurture the spirit rather than gratifying lusts of the flesh.
4. Adam introduced sin and death, whereas Jesus introduced righteousness and life.
5. Christians must follow Jesus instead of Adam.

Invitation:

1. Jesus Christ is our fitting example, who if we follow will lead us to heaven, 1 Pet. 2:21.
2. If we obey Christ, he will save us, Heb. 5:8-9.
3. If we love Christ, we will obey him, John 14:15.
4. His commandments relative to salvation include: John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Matt. 10:32; Mark 16:16; Rev. 2:10.

Alcohol

Proverbs 20:1

Thesis: To emphasize that sin, though approved by society and allowed by civil law, is no less sin before God, the consequence of which is (spiritual) death, Rom. 6:23.

Introduction:

1. Civil government, in general, is ordained of God, Rom. 13:1-7.
 - a. However, God does not authorize a particular *kind* of government (Roman Empire, democracy, etc.).
 - b. Neither does God pre-authorize specific laws of any government.
2. The apostles found it necessary to disregard civil government on occasion when it required of them something unlawful in God's law, Acts 4:18-20; 5:28-29.
 - a. However, they only disregarded civil law to the extent it required them to violate God's law.
 - b. The apostles were still bound by the balance of man's law under which they lived.
3. When civil government allows, tolerates, legalizes, taxes or sponsors sin, to that extent faithful Christians must resort to the higher law of God over man's law.
 - a. Governments sometimes legalize sin, but usually do not *require* participation in the same (e.g., abortion on demand [murder], prostitution, immodesty and even nudity, unscriptural remarriage, gambling, alcohol, etc.).
 - b. Christians must persevere in righteousness in spite of *legal permission* or even compulsion to commit sin.

Body:

I. Alcohol and civil government.

- A. Liquor was outlawed in the U.S. and its territories between 1919 and 1933.
 1. Rhode Island and Connecticut never ratified the 18th (prohibition) Amendment.
 2. In 1929, Utah became the 36th state to renounce prohibition.

3. The 21st Amendment rescinded the 18th Amendment.
 4. Several nations in the early 20th Century also practiced prohibition, later to repeal it.
- B. Alcoholic beverages are legal today and big business for manufacturers, retailers and government.
1. Largely, with the exception of some dry counties and age restrictions, alcohol is legal throughout our nation.
 2. Tax receipts are sizable of liquor's 20 billion dollars in annual sales.
 3. New York once even required police to act as a free taxi service to drunks.

II. Alcohol and the facts.

- A. Alcohol is the worst abused drug in our nation.
1. Alcohol abuse costs 100 billion dollars annually.
 2. It costs about 5 times more to address the abuse of alcohol than the money generated by retail sales of alcoholic beverages.
 3. Business, industry and government spend large amounts of money combating the abuse of alcohol in the work place.
- B. Alcohol is associated with most crime; it is involved in:
1. 70% of all murders,
 2. 41% of assaults,
 3. 50% of rapes,
 4. 60% of sex crimes against children,
 5. 56% of fights and assaults in homes,
 6. 37% of suicides,
 7. 55% of all arrests.
- C. Alcohol is a safety hazard; it is involved in:
1. 66% of fatal accidents,
 2. 53% of fire deaths,
 3. 36% of pedestrian accidents,
 4. 22% of home accidents,
 5. 45% of drownings,
 6. 50% of skiing accidents,
 7. more admissions to mental hospitals than any other cause,

8. 50% of all traffic accidents (killing 25,000 and seriously injuring 1,000,000 annually)
 9. and is the #1 killer of people 25 and under (the #3 killer in America for all ages).
- D. Alcohol is a medical hazard.
1. Alcohol is poisonous; half of 1% alcohol in the blood usually results in death.
 2. Each alcoholic drink kills brain cells (which the body does not replace); memory loss begins with the last things learned or memorized.
 3. Alcohol also damages the stomach, liver and kidneys.
 4. Only cancer and heart disease claim more lives than alcohol each year.
 5. Alcohol is a depressant drug, which affects the central nervous system.
 6. One drink (of beer, liquor or wine) produces .05% alcohol in the blood and accompanying physical impairments.
 7. Alcohol combined with medication or other drugs can kill.
 8. Alcohol consumption during pregnancy may result in birth defects (including facial abnormalities, heart defects, abnormal limb development and less than average intelligence).
 9. Even in small quantities, alcohol deadens mental activity and slows muscular response and coordination.
 10. Alcohol produces fatigue and lowers physical endurance.

III. Alcohol and society.

- A. Alcoholic beverages are widely used.
1. About 71% of Americans 18 and up use alcohol.
 2. Only 29% abstain from its use.
 3. Most restaurants serve alcohol (including Pizza Hut, Ground Round, Chi-Chi's, etc.).
 4. Where permitted, almost all grocery stores sell alcohol.
 5. Serving alcoholic beverages to guests upon

entrance into one's home has become the norm for modern hospitality.

6. Alcohol accompanies most social and sporting events.
 7. Our leaders and heroes (e.g., politicians, entertainers, athletes and most other public figures) are viewed regularly using alcoholic beverages.
- B. Even some religious leaders condone its use.
1. Billy Graham has expressed his approval of alcohol.
 2. Church festivals frequently offer alcoholic beverages.
 3. Military chaplains commonly fellowship over cocktails.
 4. The Roman Catholic Church owns wineries and uses alcohol in its worship service.
- C. Alcoholism is said to be a disease.
1. It is the only disease that is taxed by governments.
 2. It is the only disease that typically leads to auto accidents, divorce, murder, rape, etc.
 3. It is the only disease for which one can be fined for having too much of it.
 4. It is the only disease gladly accepted by its victim.
 5. It is the only disease that employs people for its manufacture.
 6. It is the only disease regulated by government.
 7. It is the only disease allowed or disallowed in a community by popular vote.
 8. It is the only disease bottled and sold.

IV. Alcohol and the Bible.

- A. Conservative religious people have always regarded alcohol as sinful.
1. Some churches oppose the selling of alcoholic beverages close to their buildings.
 2. Some churches distribute literature opposing the pleasurable consumption of alcoholic beverages.
 3. Many elders, preachers and congregations throughout the churches of Christ oppose alcohol on biblical grounds.

B. The pleasurable consumption of alcohol is condemned in the Old Testament.

1. Priests were forbidden to consume alcohol under penalty of death, Lev. 10:8-11.
2. Civil leaders were forbidden to drink alcohol lest they pervert judgment, Prov. 31:4-5.
3. Faithful Jews were not allowed even to look upon wine in its intoxicating state, Prov. 23:31.
4. Alcohol was reserved for medicinal purposes, Prov. 31:6.
5. Drunkenness was punishable by death, Deut. 21:20-21.
6. Alcohol impoverishes, Prov. 23:21.
7. Drinking alcohol demonstrates lack of wisdom, Prov. 20:1.
8. Faithful Jews were forbidden to be in the company of those drinking alcohol, Prov. 23:20.
9. Alcohol leads to other immorality, Prov. 23:29-35.
10. Alcohol is hazardous to health and safety, Prov. 23:29-35.
11. Alcohol causes God's servants to err, Gen. 9:21-22; Isa. 28:7.
12. Drinking alcohol was considered a defilement by faithful Jews, Dan. 1:5-8.
13. It was a crime to give alcoholic beverages to another person, Hab. 2:15.
14. The Israelites were forbidden to drink alcohol in order to always know God and practice his law, Deut. 29:6.
15. Alcohol is associated with violence, Prov. 4:17.
16. Total abstinence from alcohol was praised by God, Jer. 35:2-19.

C. The pleasurable consumption of alcohol is condemned in the New Testament.

1. Whereas Old Testament priests were forbidden to drink alcohol, Christians are priests (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) in the perfect tabernacle (the church, Heb. 9:11; 8:2) *all* the time.
2. Drinking alcohol is expressly forbidden, Eph. 5:18.

3. Drunkenness is a sin explicitly cited as keeping people from heaven, 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Gal. 5:19-21.
4. Drinking alcohol is drinking with the devil, 1 Cor. 10:21.
5. Drinking alcohol is a work of the flesh, warring against the spirit of man, Gal. 5:19-21.
6. Christians are exhorted to be *sober*, 1 Thess. 5:6, 8; 1 Tim. 3:2-3, 8; 1 Pet. 1:13; 4:7; 5:8.
7. Aged women are cautioned against use of alcohol, Titus 2:3.
8. Alcohol was restricted to medicinal use, 1 Tim. 5:23.
9. Leaders of the church are especially forbidden the use of alcohol, 1 Tim. 3:2-3, 8.
10. Christians are exhorted to avoid every type of evil, 1 Thess. 5:22.
11. It is sinful to harm the body, which alcohol does, 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20.
12. Drinking alcohol is sinful and associated with other sins, Rom. 13:13.

V. Objections to the condemnation of alcohol.

- A. Jesus turned water into wine at a marriage feast, John 2:1-11.
 1. The Greek word from which *wine* is translated in John 2 can mean the grape vine, the grape, grape juice, grape juice concentrate, grape juice mixed with other flavors or alcoholic wine and can only be defined by the context in which it appears (*oinos*).
 2. Jesus lived under the Old Testament, which prohibited drinking alcohol.
 3. If Jesus, then, made alcoholic wine, he sinned, and could not be the perfect sacrifice.
 4. If Jesus sinned, therefore, we all are hopelessly lost in sin, having no hope whatsoever of going to heaven.
- B. The Bible condemns *drunkenness*, not drinking alcohol.
 1. This is a faulty distinction between drinking and drunkenness, which the Bible does not make.

2. Medically, drunkenness is only a matter of degrees; one drink alone kills brain cells and deposits alcohol in the blood stream; additional drinks only increase the concentration of alcohol in the blood.
 3. The word, drunk, even by English definition is “having the faculties impaired by alcohol”; drunkenness is only a matter of degrees.
 4. Included in commands against alcohol in God’s former law is warning not to even look upon alcohol, Prov. 23:31.
 5. The Gospel commands *soberness* (*nepho*), which by Greek definition “signifies to be free from the influence of intoxicants,” 1 Thess. 5:6, 8; 2 Tim. 4:5; 1 Pet. 1:13; 4:7; 5:8.
- C. Paul told Timothy to drink wine for his stomach, 1 Tim. 5:23.
1. It is not conclusive that the word *wine* refers to alcohol.
 2. Even if *wine* here is alcoholic, the medicinal purpose taught in this verse falls far short of allowing the pleasurable consumption of alcohol as a beverage.
- D. While elders are not allowed any alcohol, deacons are permitted some alcohol, 1 Tim. 3:3, 8.
1. The Greek words translated wine here are *paroinon* and *prosecho*, which both mean “to be addicted to.”
 2. Both passages equally condemn a disposition which is attributed to drinking alcohol.
 3. Compare the inclusion of the word *much* in verse 8 to these passages, Ecc. 7:17; 1 Pet. 4:4.
- E. Ancient peoples did not know how to preserve grape juice and therefore drank alcoholic wine.
1. Ancient peoples often preferred pure grape juice to fermented grape juice.
 2. In order to preserve grape juice, they boiled it, leaving too much sugar to ferment;
 3. Or, employed filtration, getting rid of the yeast;
 4. Or, used subsidence to allow the yeast to settle on

- the bottom before skimming the juice from the top;
5. Or, used fumigation, adding sulfur to absorb the oxygen.
- F. The word *wine* is used in several instances in the Bible where its use by the children of God is not condemned.
1. The word *wine* is represented in the Bible by 10 Hebrew and 3 Greek words.
 2. Sometimes *wine* means first-fruits which are ripe first, Num. 18:12-13.
 3. It can mean the cluster of grapes, Isa. 65:8.
 4. Wine can refer to raisins, Hos. 3:1, ASV.
 5. Sometimes wine equals the winepress, Neh. 13:15.
 6. Wine can be the pure juice of the grape, Prov. 3:10.
 7. And, it can refer to alcoholic wine as well, Gen. 9:21.
 8. The context is the overriding factor determining the definition of both Greek and English words for wine.
- G. The apostles in Acts 2, and Jesus in Luke 7:34, were respectively accused of being drunken and a winebibber; both accusations suggest Jews drank alcohol.
1. The Jews were *mocking* the apostles; the verses do not conclusively argue for either alcoholic or non-alcoholic wine in view of the mocking; in any event the charge was not true.
 2. Whether any Jews were in the habit of drinking alcoholic wine does not affect whether God approved of it.
 3. In the context of Luke 7:34 (29-35) Jesus was also accused of being a glutton; other times he was said to be demon-possessed, (Mark 3:22), called crazy (Mark 3:21; John 7:20) and called a Samaritan (John 8:48).
 4. Under Judaism during which time Jesus lived, gluttons and winebibbers were sentenced to death, Deut. 21:20-21.
 5. Are the enemies of Jesus credible, to be believed?
 6. Not the Christ and no apostle admitted to the consumption of alcohol, nor gave others

permission.

- H. Jesus used an illustration in a parable about wine and new and old bottles (skins) which shows the Jews customarily drank alcoholic wine, Luke 5:37-39.
1. On the contrary, new skins were used to keep the grape juice from fermenting.
 2. Emptied old skins would develop yeast, which if transmitted to a new batch of grape juice, would ferment and the skins would expand and burst.
 3. Further, the preference for older wine in verse 39 does not prove it was alcoholic; something aged is not necessarily fermented.

Conclusion:

1. Drunkenness has always been sinful.
2. No law of man can override God's law on any topic, including alcohol.
3. Various national, state and local governments have found cause against alcohol to legislate against it.
4. Alcohol is a dangerous drug.
5. Alcohol costs more than it earns in tax dollars.
6. Alcohol is frequently associated with crime.
7. Alcohol is a safety hazard.
8. Alcohol is poisonous and otherwise harmful to one's health.
9. The use of alcohol is deeply ingrained into nearly every aspect of society.
10. Alcohol is the most unlikely and peculiar *disease*.
11. As if man didn't know it was bad for him, God denounces the consumption of alcohol as sinful.
12. No defense can be made for alcoholic beverages.
13. Christians must not consume any alcoholic beverages.
14. Christians and the church must oppose this evil to whatever extent possible, Eph. 5:11; Jam. 4:7.
15. Alcohol destroys internally, externally and eternally!

Invitation:

1. We must listen exclusively to the law of God on all subjects addressed by God in the Bible; further, we must obey, Heb. 5:8-9.
2. Repentance precedes forgiveness for both sinner and saint, Luke 13:3; Acts 8:22.

3. Non-Christians must accompany their penitence also with BELIEF, CONFESSING CHRIST and BAPTISM, Rom. 10:17; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 22:16.
4. Erring Christians express their penitence through prayer, 1 John 1:7.

Archaeology and the Patriarchs

Genesis 12:1-3

Thesis: To relate the biblical narrative of the patriarchs with the accent of archaeological insights.

Song: *Here We Are But Straying Pilgrims*

Introduction:

1. Geography, archaeology and sacred history combine to tell a fuller, value-added biblical narrative.
2. Archaeology confirms the biblical narrative where the biblical narrative and archaeological discovery address the same thing.
3. Archaeology helps the Bible student understand better the recipients of the biblical narrative and how they would have understood God's revelation.
4. Consequently, contemporary men can more easily make the correct biblical application today.
5. An added benefit is that combining geography and archaeology with sacred history makes the biblical narrative more alive and interesting.

Body:

I. City of Ur

A. General Location

1. Geographically in southern Mesopotamia
 - a. Land between the rivers
 - b. Tigris & Euphrates rivers
2. Modern day Iraq
3. About 110 miles NW of the Persian Gulf
4. On the south bank of the Euphrates River
5. Mesopotamia is the undisputed site of the origin of human civilization on earth.
 - a. Dating back to about 3,000 B.C.
6. Mesopotamia is the probable site of the Garden of Eden.
7. Euphrates River 1,780 miles long; Tigris River

- 1,060 miles long; Mississippi River 3,988 miles long; Amazon River 3,900 miles long; Nile River 4,060 miles long
8. Mesopotamia is about 600 by 300 miles.
 9. The terrain of Mesopotamia gently rises from sea level to 1,000 feet above sea level at Haran, 600 miles NW of Ur.
 10. The use of metal, tools including the wheel, writing, language and musical instruments were first used in Mesopotamia.
 - a. A universal parent language is thought to have begun in Mesopotamia.
 - b. Languages are believed to have had one common origin, which concurs with the biblical record.
- B. Ur and its inhabitants in Abraham's day
1. Typical home (*Archaeology and Bible History*, p. 46)
 - a. A drain in the corner of the lobby along with a container of water afforded visitors an opportunity to wash their feet upon entrance to the home.
 2. Citizens enjoyed an extensive education
 - a. Cuneiform writing, multiplication, division, square and cube roots, geometry
 - b. Abraham likely could read and write.
 - c. Thereby, he was likely able to read historical accounts and commit to writing contemporary information of his fellows and generations to come.
 3. Among excavated documents in Abraham's era and in southern Mesopotamia is a bill of lading.
 - a. It tells of a two year cruise after which a cargo was obtained including copper ore, gold, ivory, hardwoods for cabinet making and various stone suitable for making statues.
 - b. Additional documents recovered include other bills of lading, invoices, letters of credit, court cases and tax records.

II. The Call of Abraham

A. The move from Ur to Haran

1. Terah, father of Abram, moved his family 600 miles to Haran in northern Mesopotamia, Gen. 11:31.
2. God called Abram to leave Haran, Gen. 12:1ff.
3. Abram left behind, among other things, the idolatry that his family and perhaps even he had practiced in Mesopotamia, Josh. 24:2.
4. Terah and his family when they left Ur, or Abram and his family when they left Haran, could have gone down to the equivalent of our U-Haul dealer. (*Ibid.*, p. 53.)
5. Abram, Sarai and Abram's nephew, Lot, traveled into and through Canaan, and because of famine, into Egypt.
 - a. Abram was 75 years old.
 - b. Sarai was 65 years old.
6. Archaeological discoveries confirm that people from Palestine and Syria were coming to Egypt in Abraham's day.
 - a. Tomb painting
 - b. Hyksos people, who eventually ruled Egypt for a time
7. Abram took with him to Egypt, among other animals, camels.
 - a. Critics claim that in that era camels were neither found in Palestine nor Egypt.
 - b. Archaeological evidence confirms camels were contemporary in Palestine and Egypt with the age in which Abraham lived.
 - c. Figurines, plagues, rock carvings, drawings and bones of camels and camel hair rope have been unearthed, dating to the time and places of the narrative concerning Abraham.
8. Sometime after Abram's return to Canaan, and after Lot separated himself and his stuff from Abram, Lot was taken hostage by the army of four Mesopotamian kings, Gen. 14.

- a. Abram raised an army from his household (servants), pursued, conquered the marauders and rescued Lot.
 - b. The names of the Mesopotamian kings coincide with archaeological confirmation that those names were in use in Abraham's day — despite what critics say.
9. Later, Sarai giving her servant woman to Abram to father a child for Sarai, concurs with prevailing custom of their day, Gen. 16.
 - a. Archaeological evidence in the form of the Code of Hammurabi (which governed the Babylonians) substantiates this practice.
10. Still later, God required Abraham to circumcise males in his household.
 - a. Archaeology confirms an early practice of circumcision in the days of Abraham.
 - b. Circumcision is depicted in Egyptian reliefs and is evident on Egyptian mummies.
11. Lot (Gen. 19) was at the gate of Sodom when angels came into the city.
 - a. Palestinian cities often had stone benches built into the gate.
 - b. There, legal matters, commerce and news were attended, according to archaeology.
 - c. In this era, cities had strong walls and heavy gates because Palestine was comprised chiefly of city-states with no central, far-reaching government.
 - d. In the period of the kings, walls and gates built were not as strong.
12. According to the Jewish historian, who lived in the 1st century A.D., the remains of the “five cities” destroyed in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorah were visible at the southern end of the Dead Sea.
 - a. Apparently at that time the Dead Sea did not extend as far south as it does now.

- b. The ruins of Sodom and Gomorah are thought to be under water in the southern portion of the Dead Sea.
13. At the death of Sarah (age 127, the only woman whose age is recorded in the Bible), Abraham weighed out 400 shekels of silver, Gen. 23:16.
- a. Evidently, in that era a shekel was a weight and not a minted coin.
 - b. Abraham was not merely a nomad, living solely off the land.
 - c. Formerly, he raised a mighty army.
 - d. Plus, the purchase of the Cave of Machpelah for a burial site indicates that Abraham was wealthy and powerful.

III. Isaac, Jacob and Esau

- A. A wife for Isaac
 - 1. Isaac's wife was from the Mesopotamian city of Nahor, Gen. 24:10.
 - a. This city is confirmed as a real city of that era from its appearance in the Mari Tablets.
- B. Isaac and Rebekah's sons
 - 1. Esau sold his birthright to his brother Jacob for some stew, Gen. 25.
 - a. Archaeological evidence in the Nuzi Tablets, found in Mesopotamia and dating to Abraham's era, confirm the practice.
 - 2. In his old age, Isaac was tricked into bestowing his oral blessing on Jacob instead of Esau, Gen. 27.
 - a. The Nuzi Tablets acknowledge that patriarchal oral blessings were legally valid even in a court of law.
 - 3. Genesis 28-31 chronicle the flight of Jacob from Esau, Jacob's 20 year sojourn in Mesopotamia and Jacob's departure from Mesopotamia.
 - a. Jacob's father-in-law, Laban, pursued Jacob and his family with an army for seven days.
 - b. In part, Laban was concerned about his missing "teraphim" or family idol.

- c. The Nuzi Tablets indicate that the possessor of the family idol had legal claim to one's estate.

Conclusion

1. Of course, biblical history and archaeological confirmations also predate and postdate the period selected for our review today.
4. From today's review, we learn that when the biblical record and archaeological discoveries address the same events, the Bible and archaeology agree.
5. Archaeological evidence is an external witness to the reliability of the Bible.
6. In areas in which the Bible can be tested by external evidences (e.g., astronomy, geography, topography and other areas of true science), the Bible is uniformly shown to be accurate, well in advance of man's independent discoveries.
7. It is reasonable, then, to believe that the Bible is equally reliable in both other physical matters that have yet to be satisfactorily tested **and in spiritual matters.**

Invitation

1. The "call of Abraham" about which we talked for a little while involves "spiritual matters" besides the physical things noted.
2. God initiated his promise with Abram in Genesis 12:1-3; 15:5; 17:1-8; 18:18; 22:17-18.
3. The promise was three-fold:
 - a. Land promise
 - b. Many descendants promise
 - c. Spiritual promise (in which all classes of mankind would be blessed — pertaining to Christ and redemption)
4. The Christ who brought the Gospel (John 1:17) and who is the subject of the Gospel (1 Cor. 15:1-4) is the fulfillment of the spiritual promise to Abraham.
5. To receive that spiritual blessing, you must accept God's gift on his terms:
 - a. Hearing and faith, Rom. 10:17; Mark 16:16
 - b. Repentance, Acts 2:38
 - c. Professing Christ, Rom. 10:9-10
 - d. Immersion in water, Rom. 6:3-5; Acts 22:16
 - e. Faithfulness, Rev. 2:10

- f. Prayerful penitence for the erring child of God, Acts 8:22
- 6. When is the accepted time to be saved? Now! 2 Cor. 6:2

The Ark: A Type of the Church

Hebrews 9:9, 23; 10:1; Matthew 24:36-39.

Thesis: To note significant similarities between the ark and the church by which we can learn something about the church.

Introduction:

1. The Old Testament contains types of the ark.
 - a. A type is a “representative form” or “characteristic” of something else.
 - b. The ark is a type of the Lord’s church.
 - c. Neither Patriarchy nor Judaism were ever intended by God to be his final revelation to man, Heb. 9:9, 23; 10:1-2.
2. Old Testament types perfectly fit the New Testament church and its doctrine.
 - a. Therefore, we can learn something about the Lord’s church by examining Old Testament types.
 - b. However, it is impossible to learn anything about man-made churches from these types.
 - c. Types, then, confirm the church of the Bible to be the fulfillment of the longstanding will of God (Eph. 3:10-11), but indict denominations as mere imitations of the real thing (God’s church).

Body:

- I. **Circumstances today are similar to those existing in the world preceding the universal flood.**
 - A. The world was and is laden with sin.
 1. Most of mankind was steeped in sin in Noah’s day, Gen. 6:5.
 2. Most of mankind was steeped in sin during the period of Judaism; Jesus found the same degree of sin during his earthly ministry, Rom. 1:29-2:1.
 3. A great deal of sin persists among men today, during the Gospel age, 2 Tim. 3:1-5.
 - B. God did purpose and has purposed again to destroy the

world.

1. Gen 6:7, “And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.”
 2. 2 Pet. 3:7, 10, “But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.”
 3. The destructive deluge of Noah’s time came suddenly as will the unquenchable fire at the end of time, Matt. 24:36-39.
- C. God’s Spirit strove and strives with men.
1. Gen. 6:3, “And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.”
 2. Jesus strove with sinful men, Matt. 23:37.
 3. God continues to strive with men through his Word, 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 4:2; John 12:48; 16:8.
- D. God provided the ark for salvation from the flood and the church for salvation from fire to come.
1. See Genesis Chapters 6-8.
 2. Salvation is in and heralded by the Lord’s church, Eph. 3:8-11; the saved are the church, Acts 2:47.

II. The ark and the church compared.

- A. One ark. One church, Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4.
- B. One door into the ark. One door into the church, John 10:1-9.
- C. One window in the ark. One source of light in the church, John 3:19; Acts 26:23.
- D. One family on the ark. One family in the church, Eph. 3:15.
- E. One family name on the ark. One family name in the

church, Acts 4:12; 5:41; 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16; Rom. 16:16.

- F. The saved were on the inside of the ark. The saved are on the inside of the church, Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23.
- G. The souls on the ark were saved by water. Souls in the church are saved by water, 1 Pet. 3:20-21.
- H. The humble and obedient souls entered the ark. Humble and obedient souls enter the church, Jam 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:6; Heb. 5:8-9.
- I. All needs were supplied inside the ark. All needs now are supplied inside the church, Eph. 1:3.
- J. The lost were outside the ark. Today, the lost are outside the church, Rev. 22:15; 21:8.

Conclusion:

- 1. The New Testament church alone is the ark of safety that can bear us safely across a sea of destruction and sin, now and in judgment.
- 2. Everyone outside the church (our ark of safety) is lost and in danger of perishing.

Invitation:

- 1. It behooves every soul to enter and remain within the safety of the church (our ark).
- 2. Non-Christians must search the Scriptures to discern the Lord's church and obey the scheme of redemption revealed by God (namely, HEARING, FAITH, REPENTANCE, CONFESSING CHRIST and BAPTISM FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS, Rom. 10:17; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 2:38).
- 3. Erring children of God need to repent as publicly or privately as they have sinned, Acts 8:22.

The New Testament Church Is Divine in Authority

Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 3:17.

Thesis: To emphasize the responsibility to seek Bible authority for Christian life and service.

Song: *Do All In The Name of the Lord*

Introduction:

1. In what esteem is the authority of civil law held among the citizens of our nation, or even among Christians? (e.g., speed limits, income taxes, etc.).
2. In what esteem is the authority of parental rule held across America? What about in Christian families (e.g., discipline and instruction, disrespect, unruly, sowing wild oats, Gal. 6:7-8)?
3. In what esteem is the authority of the Bible held in religion today? What about among the children of God (e.g., worship, teaching, fellowship, etc.)?

Body:

I. “Authority” may not only permit “optional” activities, but often “requires” certain actions.

- A. 1. Some Bible authority is OPTIONAL and TEMPORARY.
 1. *Inspired advice*, 1 Cor. 7:26. Under the then present distress it was better not to incur new obligations (e.g., marriage).
 2. Circumcision of Timothy, Acts 16:1-3.
- B. Some Bible authority is OPTIONAL and PERMANENT.
 1. Some men and some women may marry — but they don't have to marry (e.g., Matt. 19:4-5 first marriages; Matt. 19:9 second marriage for innocent party of a marriage marred by adultery; Rom. 7:2-3 second marriage for a widow).

2. Christians may meet and worship in an upper room, but the place of meeting doesn't have to be an upper room, Acts 20:7, 8.
 3. Certain modes of transportation are biblically permissible (e.g., walking, Matt. 4:18; upon an animal, Matt. 21:7; ship, Acts 20:13), but not required (may go by auto, plane, bicycle, etc.).
- C. Some Bible authority is BINDING and TEMPORARY.
1. Wearing veil to distinguish Christian women from prostitutes who violated the custom of the day by not wearing a veil, 1 Cor. 11:10.
 2. The holy kiss as a usual greeting versus a passionate kiss, Rom. 16:16.
- D. Some Bible authority is BINDING and PERMANENT.
1. Matt. 22:37-40, the two greatest commandments.
 2. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Eph. 5:19, New Testament worship.
 3. Acts 15:29, drink no blood.

II. The church and Christians must recognize that some Bible authority is permanent and binding — not optional — no choice — if churches want to be faithful and fruitful.

- A. **Worship** must be in a prescribed manner with a specified frequency, 1 Cor. 16:1-2; Acts 20:7; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Acts 2:42.
- B. **Fellowship** with God and those who are in fellowship with God must be maintained.
1. This also implies one cannot fellowship anyone outside of fellowship with God (e.g., denominational people, non-Christians).
 2. Further, fellowship must be withheld from even Christians who are unfaithful (disfellowshipped), thus out of fellowship with God.
- C. **Evangelization** of the lost must be a major concern of Christians and the church, Mark 16:15-16; 2 Tim. 2:2.
- D. **Benevolence** must also be practiced, Gal. 6:10; Jam. 1:27.
- E. **Edification** or maturing in the faith should be a primary pursuit as well, 1 Cor. 14:12; Heb. 5:11-6:2.
- F. The church and Christians which comprise the church

must also **obey and do** the will of God, Heb. 5:8-9; John 14:15.

- G. Finally, God's people today must be **fruitful**, John 15:1-2.

Conclusion:

1. The Lord's church moves on Divine authority — or else it moves away from God.
2. Christians are activated by Divine authority — or else they are dead.
3. The church and Christians must acknowledge that God **requires** (authorizes) faithfulness and service.

Invitation:

1. God's scheme of redemption is unending this side of eternity.
2. Initially obey the Gospel, Acts 2:38.
3. Continue to obey the Gospel, Heb. 5:8-9.
4. Be faithful and fruitful all our lives, Rev. 2:10.

Bible Baptism: Is It Sprinkling, Pouring or Immersion?

Romans 6:3-5

Thesis: To discover the so-called *mode of the baptism*, which baptism according to the New Testament is involved in the redemption of souls.

Songs: *A New Creature, The Gospel Way, The Cleansing Wave*

Introduction:

1. There are at least seven different baptisms mentioned in the New Testament.
 - a. **baptism unto Moses**, 1 Cor. 10:2, figurative and pertaining to the nation of Israel during their exodus from Egypt and as they crossed the Red Sea
 - b. **baptism of suffering**, Mark 10:38-39, through which Jesus went as he was crucified
 - c. **baptism of Jesus** in the Jordan River, Matt. 3:13-17
 - d. **baptism of fire**, Matt. 3:11, which is reserved for the ungodly at the end of time
 - e. **baptism of the Holy Spirit**, John 14-16; Acts 1:5; 1:26 — 2:4, which was promised exclusively to the apostles
 - f. **John's baptism** of preparation, Acts 19:3
 - g. **baptism of the Great Commission**, Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16
2. The subject of our study today concerns the baptism of the Great Commission.
 - a. This is the “one baptism” to which reference is made in Ephesians 4:5.
 - b. This baptism is in water, 1 Pet. 3:20-21.
 - c. This baptism is for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38; 22:16.
3. Further, the Great Commission baptism, according to the New Testament, is **immersion**.

- a. *Webster's New World Dictionary* (Home Library Second Concise Edition): "1. the rite or sacrament of admitting a person into a Christian church by **dipping him in water or sprinkling water on him**"; the entry also indicates that *baptism* comes from a Greek word meaning "*immerse*."
 - b. *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*: "1. a Christian sacrament signifying spiritual rebirth and admitting the recipient to the Christian community through the **ritual use of water**."
 - c. *Webster's Talking Dictionary*: "1. a **ceremonial immersion in water, or application of water**, as an initiatory rite or sacrament of the Christian church."
4. Dictionary definitions of *baptism* are inadequate to define the biblical use of a word.
- a. Dictionary definitions merely describe the current usage of a word and do not indicate biblical usage.
 - b. Dictionaries define *baptism* in such a way to include immersion, sprinkling or pouring.
 - c. However, we need to learn what the Bible teaches about baptism and correspond in our teaching and practice to the biblical definition.

Body:

I. What words does the New Testament use for immersion, sprinkling and pouring?

- A. Immersion (*baptisma*), a noun
 1. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*: "baptism, consisting of the processes of **immersion, submersion and emergence (from bapto, to dip) ...**"
 2. *Baptism* is a transliteration of the word *baptisma*.
- B. Sprinkling (*rhantismos*), a noun.
 1. used frequently regarding the sprinkling of blood
 2. It is not used to describe Christian baptism in the New Testament.
- C. Pouring (*ballo, katacheo, ekcheo, ekchuno, epicheo*), nouns
 1. Various Greek words are used for *pouring*.
 2. None of these words are used in the New Testament for Christian baptism.

- D. Only one Greek word is used in the Greek New Testament for Christian baptism.
 - 1. That word is *baptisma*.
 - 2. However, though anyone can use an English-Greek dictionary, one does not have to know Greek to discover the true, biblical meaning of baptism.
 - 3. New Testament verses in our own language adequately demonstrate that true, biblical baptism is immersion.

II. New Testament Passages which teach that baptism is immersion in water.

- A. Primary passages which teach that Bible baptism is immersion.
 - 1. Col. 2:12 — “**Buried** with him in baptism”
 - 2. Rom. 6:3-4 — “we are **buried** with him by baptism into death”
 - 3. Rom. 6:5 — “we have been **planted** together in the likeness of his death”
- B. Complementary passages that support Bible baptism as immersion.
 - 1. Much water was used for baptism, John 3:23.
 - 2. Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water with which Philip baptized the eunuch, Acts 8:38-39.
 - 3. Uninformed onlookers could confuse baptism with a bath, 1 Pet. 3:21.

Conclusion:

- 1. The Great Commission baptism is immersion in water.
- 2. The Great Commission baptism is for the remission of sins.
- 3. One’s baptism can be **wrong** because it was **not immersion** in water.
- 4. One’s baptism can be **wrong** if it was for the **wrong reasons**, Acts 19:1-6.

Invitation:

- 1. Have you been immersed in water for the remission of sins?
- 2. If not, why not receive the true, biblical baptism now?
- 3. Perhaps you would like to further study this matter privately.
- 4. There may also be some member of the church present who has sinned publicly and needs to respond to the invitation.

Bible Baseball or The Devils Vs. The Christians

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Thesis: Christianity is a challenge; it is do-able; its pursuit is worth more than what it costs us.

Introduction:

1. Inspired writers compared Christianity to sporting events.
2. 1 Cor. 9:24-27 compares the pursuit of Christianity to a race and boxing.
3. Gal. 2:2 cautions to be careful not to run in vain.
4. 1 Tim. 6:12 urges to fight a good fight.
5. Heb. 12:1 adds that we must run the Christian race with patience.
6. Every athlete and every Christian, too, must endure, Matt. 10:22; 24:13; Rev. 2:10.
7. Gal. 5:7 says of the Galatians that they had run well (past), but they were not running well (present).

Body:

I. Meet the teams.

A. The Christians.

1. This is our team; we are the visitors (earth is not our home, we are just passing through — pilgrims), Heb. 11:8-16.
2. Jesus Christ is our Captain (of our salvation), Heb. 2:10.
3. We play by the rules, 2 Tim. 2:5.
4. We will not throw the game, but we will earnestly do our best to win. Hebrew Christians had endured a great fight of afflictions, Heb. 10:32.
5. We must work together as a team; there are many members, but one body, 1 Cor. 12:12-31. We are fellow laborers with one another, 3 John 8, and God, 1 Cor. 3:9.
6. We want, like the apostle Paul, to be able to review

our competitiveness and say we have fought a good fight, and that we expect to be victorious, 2 Tim. 4:6-8.

B. The Devils.

1. They are the home team; they are of and rule this world, 2 Cor. 4:4, “god of this world.”
2. Satan is the captain of “The Devils,” and though Satan and his team may appear as cute, little-leaguers, looks are deceptive, 2 Cor. 11:14-15.
3. Satan and his team don’t play fair; they break the rules, John 8:44.
4. Satan, as the pitcher for his team, throws curve balls of sin, 1 Pet. 5:8. He will pick a runner off if he can.
5. “The Devils” are not invincible, Jam. 4:7; 1 Cor. 10:13.
6. Satan’s team trembles before Jesus Christ, Jam. 2:19; Matt. 8:28-33.
7. The Devils know that they cannot win; Jesus and his team will be victorious, Rev.

II. The Game Plan.

A. Winning is worth the effort.

1. A standing Bible principle is that God compensates his followers in excess of their investment and suffering, Job; Matt. 19:27-30.
2. Winning equates to eternal joy with God in heaven, Matt. 25:21, 23 “well done...”; 34 “inherit kingdom”; 46 “life eternal.”
3. Nothing in this life compares to the glory that the righteous will enjoy in the last day, Rom. 8:18.
4. There will be no sorrow or pain in heaven, Rev. 21:4; however, for the lost there will be great torment, Rev. 20:15; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Matt. 25:46; Luke 16:23, 28.

B. How to Bring It Home.

1. **FIRST BASE:** We must begin with first principles, Heb. 5:11-6:2; 1 Pet. 2:2.
2. **SECOND BASE:** We must exhibit Christian living, 1 John 2:6; Rom. 6:4; Eph. 4:1.

3. We must learn God's Word well enough to answer the **sincere** questions of others, 1 Pet. 3:15; however, foolish questions deserve no answer, 2 Tim. 2:23; Titus 3:9.
4. **THIRD BASE:**We must tell others about Jesus, Matt. 10:32-33; 28:18-20.
5. We must worship like God wants, live like God wants, and summarized, **obey**, Heb. 5:8-9.
6. This is the last stop before going home; it is a time to reflect on successes for Christ, 2 Tim. 4:6-8.
7. **HOME PLATE:** At death, one's spirit returns to the custody of God, Ecc. 12:7.
8. Judgment follows, 2 Cor. 5:10; we don't want to be "called out" at home, Matt. 7:21-23.

Conclusion:

1. Winning is everything in this contest.
2. I'm sure everyone here wants to be on the winning team.
3. If you are not already on the winning team, you can be added to the roster.
4. If you are supposed to be a team member but you haven't been a team-player, you can be re-activated on the Lord's roster.

Invitation:

1. Erring Christians.
2. Non-Christians
3. Perhaps you need to know more about God's redemptive plan.

Saved By The Blood of Christ

Ephesians 1:7

Thesis: To demonstrate that redemption occurs only when one's soul has been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Song: *There Is Power In The Blood*

Introduction:

1. There are other elements in Scripture to which saving power is attributed in addition to the blood of Christ.
 - a. Faith or Belief, Rom. 5:1
 - b. Repentance, Luke 13:3
 - c. Confessing Christ, Rom. 10:9-10
 - d. Baptism, 1 Pet. 3:21
 - e. Faithfulness, Rev. 2:10
 - f. Obedience, Heb. 5:8, 9
 - g. Gospel, Rom. 1:16
 - h. Hope, Rom. 8:24
 - i. Grace, Eph. 2:8
 - j. Mercy, Titus 3:5
 - k. Calling on the name of the Lord, Rom. 10:14
 - l. Works, Jam. 2:24
 - m. Knowledge, 2 Tim. 3:15
 - n. Laying aside evil and receiving the Word in its place, Jam. 1:21
 - o. Preaching, 1 Cor. 1:18, 21
 - p. Love, 1 John 2:10
 - q. Etc.
 - r. Either all of these elements to which is attributed saving power work together for the redemption of a soul, or they oppose each other and the Bible is false.
2. Unlike some of these elements that possess saving power, blood has always been associated with God's approval of man.
 - a. Blood sacrifices were typical of acceptable worship in the Patriarchal Age.

- b. Blood sacrifices also characterized acceptable worship in the Mosaical Age.
 - c. The bloody animal sacrifices of the two former religious ages typified the blood of Christ shed as our Lord was sacrificed on Calvary's cross.
 - d. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from sin all the souls that come in contact with it.
3. Incidentally, we cannot study our subject from *Goodnews For Modern Man (Today's English Version)*.
- a. *Goodnews For Modern Man* is an unreliable translation.
 - b. It not only contains gross mistranslations, but omits much of God's Word, including many passages which pertain to the blood of Christ, Acts 20:28; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 1:5; 5:9.

Body:

I. Blood sacrifices characterized approved worship in the Patriarchal Age.

- A. The first recorded act of worship was by Cain and Abel, Gen. 4:3-5.
 - 1. Cain offered fruits and vegetables in worship; God was not pleased with this.
 - 2. Abel, however, offered the firstlings of his flock; God accepted this sacrifice.
 - 3. The sacrifice God accepted was an animal sacrifice, which involved the blood of the animal.
- B. After the flood receded, Noah also offered animal sacrifices, Gen. 8:20-21.
 - 1. Noah offered a multitude of burnt offerings, using one of every clean beast and clean fowl.
 - 2. These sacrifices also necessarily involved the blood of the animals.

II. Blood sacrifices characterized approved worship in the Mosaical Age and typified the redemption of souls by the blood of Jesus Christ in the Gospel Age.

- A. Blood was of primary importance in animal sacrifices under Judaism.
 - 1. Num. 18:17, "But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem; they are holy: thou shalt sprinkle

their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat for an offering made by fire, for a sweet savour unto the Lord.”

2. Lev. 3:1-17.
- B. The Old Testament was sealed with animal blood.
1. The law, the people, the tabernacle and the vessels of the tabernacle were sprinkled with the blood of animal sacrifices, Heb. 9:18-21.
 2. The blood of animal sacrifices was sprinkled on Aaron and his garments, Exod. 29:18-21.
 3. The blood of animals made atonement for sins, Lev. 17:11.
 4. The high priest entered the Most Holy Place once annually with the blood of animal sacrifices to atone for sin, Heb. 9:7; Exod. 30:10; Lev. 16:1-34.
- C. The blood of animals could not save from sin, but typified the saving power of the blood of Jesus Christ.
1. Through animal sacrifices God overlooked sins for a year at a time, but the sins were not taken away, Heb. 10:1-4.
 2. Animal sacrifices (and the blood they shed) were only types and figures of the sacrifice of Christ and his shed blood, Heb. 9:22-24.
 3. Only the blood of Christ can cleanse the conscience of sin, Heb. 9:12-14.

III. The blood of Jesus Christ, our sacrifice, is essential to the redemption of humanity.

- A. The blood of Christ is crucial to salvation.
1. The blood of the cross reconciles, Col. 1:20.
 2. The blood of Christ brings one nigh to God, Eph. 2:13.
 3. The church was purchased by the blood of Christ, Acts 20:28.
 4. We are washed from our sins by the blood of Christ, Rev. 1:5.
 5. Some of all kindreds, peoples and nations of men have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, Rev. 5:9.
 6. We shall overcome by the blood of Christ, Rev.

- 12:11.
7. The robes of martyrs are washed white by the blood of the Lamb, Rev. 7:14.
 8. We are justified by the blood of Christ, Rom. 5:9.
 9. We are redeemed by Christ's blood, Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-20; Heb. 9:12.
 10. We have faith in the blood of Christ, Rom. 3:25.
 11. The blood of Christ will one day allow the saved to enter the holy place of heaven, Heb. 10:19.
- B. The New Testament is sealed by the blood of Jesus Christ.
1. Heb. 13:20, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant."
 2. Heb 10:29, "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"
- C. The blood of Christ saves souls under both Testaments (in each of the three religious ages).
1. Animal sacrifices atoned for sins annually but did not remove the sins, Heb. 10:1-4.
 2. Unlike atonement, redemption through the blood of Christ takes away sins, Heb. 9:12.
 3. The blood of Christ also converts atonement to redemption for faithful souls who lived under Patriarchy and Judaism, Heb. 9:15.

IV. How can we come in contact with the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ?

- A. The blood of Christ is the only cure or vaccine against the disease of sin and the spiritual death it causes.
1. Of course, no one can (or should desire) to come in contact with the literal blood of Christ.
 2. However, the Bible does reveal how one may symbolically come in contact with the blood of Christ and receive redemption.

- B. Jesus shed his blood in his death, and the Bible tells how to get into the death of Christ, John 19:34.
 - 1. Rom. 6:3-11.
 - 2. Col 2:12, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”
 - 3. Baptism is, then, the means by which one gets into the death of Christ, contacts the blood of Christ and is redeemed.
- C. The New Testament also teaches in other passages that baptism is the point at which one’s sins are taken away.
 - 1. Acts 2:38
 - 2. Mark 16:16
 - 3. Acts 22:16
 - 4. 1 Pet. 3:21
 - 5. Gal. 3:27
- D. Christians also have access to the blood of Christ.
 - 1. The blood of Christ is continually applied to practicing Christians to keep them redeemed, 1 John 1:7.
 - 2. Through penitence and prayer, the sins of Christians are cleansed by the blood of Christ, Acts 8:22.

Conclusion:

- 1. All of the elements to which Scripture attributes saving power work together for the redemption of souls.
- 2. The blood of sacrifices has always been acceptable to God, first for atonement and lastly for redemption.
- 3. The animal sacrifices and blood shed thereby typified, prefigured and foreshadowed the perfect sacrifice of Christ and his shed blood.
- 4. Both Testaments were sealed in blood, the first by animal blood, the second by the blood of Christ.
- 5. Contacting the blood of Christ is essential to redemption.
- 6. The blood of Christ is responsible for the redemption of souls under both testaments.
- 7. The blood of Christ is the sole vaccine from the eternally fatal disease of sin and death.

8. The blood of Christ is contacted by being baptized into the death of Christ.
9. Christians continually apply the blood of Christ to their souls to ensure sustained redemption.

Invitation:

1. One may either apply the blood of Christ to his soul for redemption, or he may despise the blood of the covenant.
2. Preceding baptism, one must hear God's Word only, Rom. 10:17; repent, Acts 17:30; and confess Christ, Rom. 10:9-10.
3. All Christians are obligated to live faithfully, even if faithfulness should cause the loss of our lives, Rev. 2:10.
4. The power of the blood of Christ is useless until it is applied to the soul; do you need its saving power right now?

Spiritual Coordination

1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 1:22-23;
4:16; Colossians 1:18; 2:19

Thesis: To impress on Christians the necessity of working together as a unit.

Introduction:

1. I have a brother who is one year younger than me.
 - a. He is about 6' 7" (I'm the short one of the family).
 - b. He has always been tall but he was never a basketball star — even in his youth; his height never proved to be an advantage to him.
 - c. Larry also has cerebral palsy and consequently his coordination has never been perfect.
 - d. Often lack of coordination is accompanied with much frustration (anger).
2. You may know someone who through illness or injury also has coordination problems.
 - a. Such may have resulted from a car accident, an elderly person who fell or a stroke.
 - b. In such cases, one or more body parts or limbs will not cooperate.
 - c. The result is a lack of bodily coordination.
 - d. Often lack of coordination is accompanied by much frustration (anger).
3. Spiritually, the church is a body comprised of many members.
 - a. A lack of coordination in the spiritual body is no less tragic.
 - b. A lack of spiritual coordination in the spiritual body is no less frustrating to other members, elders, deacons, teachers, and preachers and disapproved of God.
 - c. A member of a physical body not exercised becomes useless, whereas a member of the spiritual body that is not exercised also becomes useless.

Body:

- I. **All members are necessary, 1 Cor. 12:12-22.**
 - A. The body is not one member, vs 14.

1. A plurality of members comprise the spiritual body.
 2. All nationalities make up the pool from which members comprise the body (Jews and Gentiles).
 3. All social classes make up the pool from which members comprise the spiritual body — the church.
- B. Each member contributes to the overall function of the body and complements every other member, vss 15-22.
1. For example, the eye guides the hands and feet.
 2. For example, a body of all eyes or all ears, etc. just wouldn't do!
 3. The members of a body do different but necessary things — they need each other.

II. Members have different but related functions, Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:27-31.

- A. 1 Cor. 12 and Rom. 12 discuss in their contexts the application of different miraculous gifts in the early church.
1. Miracles have ceased, 1 Cor. 13:8-13; Eph. 4:11-13.
 2. Miracles have been replaced with the written Word of God (which also records the miracles that confirmed the Word, Mark 16:20).
 3. However, the PRINCIPLE of each member of the body of Christ doing his part is applicable today.
- B. Then, there were miracle-assisted workers.
1. Vs 28 (e.g., apostles, prophets, teachers).
 2. Eph. 4:11 adds pastors (elders) and evangelists.
 3. Today, we have non-miracle-assisted workers (elders, deacons, preachers [evangelists], teachers and other members — assisted with the Word of God.

III. Members of the body are fitly joined together, 1 Cor. 12:24; Eph. 4:15-16; Col. 2:19.

- A. Christians are added to the body (church) by the Lord, Acts 2:47.
1. The body has been “TEMPERED” (mixed, blended

- or combined — making one) together, 1 Cor. 12:24.
2. “FITLY JOINED” and “COMPACTED” (knit together, Eph. 4:16.
 3. “JOINTS,” “BANDS,” “KNIT TOGETHER,” “NOURISHED,” Col. 2:19.
- B. God does not want an UNFIT, DISJOINTED spiritual body.
1. However, the Lord’s body is unfit, disjointed and uncoordinated when members ignore their personal, spiritual responsibilities (e.g., worship, Bible classes, personal study, teaching and living the Gospel, working for the Lord with fellow Christians).
 2. The Lord’s church is unfit when its members practice immoralities, spout impure speech and exercise bad habits.
 3. The Lord’s church is uncoordinated when its members work against each other.

Conclusion:

1. Each member of a physical body must DO ITS PART toward the coordination of that body; likewise, each member of the spiritual body must DO HIS PART toward the coordination of that body, the church.
2. Malfunctioning body parts must be brought under control (are you a tongue or a leg out of control in the spiritual body of Christ?).
3. Dysfunctional body parts are liabilities to the welfare and coordination of the body (Are you a broken toe or a dead limb in the spiritual body of Christ?).
4. Sometimes DEAD limbs or body parts must be amputated or surgically removed (Sometimes a similar procedure is necessary in the spiritual body for the welfare of the whole body).

Invitation:

1. Don’t you want to be a functioning member of the spiritual body of Christ?
2. If out of duty, out of service or guilty of public sins — won’t you come back today?

3. If you haven't been baptized yet, won't you come today, be baptized for the remission of your sins and be added to the body by the Lord, Acts 2:38, 47?

Sin: A Type of Bondage

1 Corinthians 10:1-11; Acts 7:36-38.

Thesis: To show significant similarities between Israel's deliverance from Egyptian slavery and the Christian's deliverance from the slavery of sin.

Introduction:

1. The Old Testament contains types of New Testament anti-types.
 - a. A type is a "representative form" or "characteristic" of something else.
 - b. There are striking similarities between the liberation of Israel from Egyptian captivity and the freedom enjoyed in Christ from the slavery of sin.
 - c. Judaism was never intended by God to be his final revelation to man, but contains figures, types, patterns, shadows and examples of New Testament counterparts, Heb. 10:1-2; 1 Cor. 10:1-2.
2. Old Testament types perfectly fit the New Testament church and its doctrine.
 - a. Therefore, we can learn something about the Lord's church and its teaching by examining Old Testament types.
 - b. Types confirm the church of the Bible to be the fulfillment of the longstanding will of God (Eph. 3:10-11).

Body:

I. Moses was chosen by God to liberate Israel.

- A. Background.
 1. Joseph invited his people (father and brothers) to settle in Goshen in Egypt, Gen. 47; (70 souls, Gen. 46:10).
 2. When a new line of kings began ruling Egypt, Israelites were forced into slavery, Exod. 1:8ff.
 3. After Israel's population kept increasing, their male babies were killed at birth.
 4. Moses was born during this time, but through God's providence he was reared by Pharaoh's daughter.

5. At 40 years old, Moses killed an Egyptian taskmaster and fled to the wilderness for 40 years.
- B. The call of Moses.
 1. Moses was 80 years old when he was called by God at the burning bush.
 2. Moses offered several excuses, Exod. 4.
 3. Moses was chosen by God to deliver Israel and be its lawgiver.
- C. Moses demonstrated the power of God by miracles.
 1. Miracles confirmed Moses was a messenger of God.
 2. Miracles also bolstered the faith of Israel.
 3. Miracles persuaded Pharaoh and Egypt to free Israel.
- D. Pharaoh tried to bargain with God through Moses.
 1. Pharaoh challenged God's authority, Exod. 5:2.
 2. Later, Pharaoh attempted to modify the conditions under which Israel would obey God ('sacrifice in the land,' 8:25; 'don't go far,' 8:28; 'leave the children,' 10:9-11; 'let thy flocks stay,' 10:24, 26).

II. Moses delivered Israel from Egypt.

- A. Israel heard and believed Moses.
 1. Israel ACTED on its belief in the words of Moses.
 2. Israel followed the Passover instructions and later marched to the Red Sea.
 3. Israel was, however, not delivered on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea.
- B. Israel was saved from Egyptian bondage by crossing the Red Sea, Exod. 14.
 1. God caused the Red Sea to part to allow Israel to cross.
 2. The sea collapsed on the pursuing Egyptians, killing them.
- C. Israel wandered in the wilderness.
 1. Israel experienced various trials for 40 years.
 2. When Israel obeyed God, he protected the nation through providence.
 3. Some sought to enter Canaan without God, and outside of a covenant relationship with God, Num.

14:40-45.

III. The anti-type of release from Egyptian bondage is salvation from the slavery of sin.

- A. Every accountable soul is initially in the bondage of sin from which he cannot liberate himself.
 - 1. Rom. 3:23
 - 2. 1 John 1:8
 - 3. Rom. 1-3.
- B. God sent Jesus Christ to deliver men from the captivity of sin.
 - 1. Rom. 5:8-10.
 - 2. 1 Pet. 3:18.
 - 3. John 3:16.
- C. Jesus leads sinners out of the PLACE OF BONDAGE.
 - 1. Col. 1:13.
 - 2. Before he can lead sinners, they must hear and believe, Rom. 10:17; John 20:30-31.
- D. Faith without corresponding action will no more save today than faith without compliance with the Word of God would have saved the Israelites fleeing Egyptian slavery.
 - 1. Jam. 2:17, 20, 24, 26.
 - 2. The New Testament teaches that faith must be manifested in repentance, confessing Jesus as Lord and baptism (immersion) for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38; Col. 2:12.
 - 3. Baptism is the line of demarcation between the world and the church as the Red Sea was the line of demarcation between Israel's doom and freedom, Rom. 6:3-5.
 - 4. The time for rejoicing is after baptism (Acts 8:36-39), even as Israel did its rejoicing after it crossed the Red Sea, Exod. 15.

Conclusion:

- 1. Jesus demonstrated he was sent by God by the miracles he performed.
- 2. Further, Jesus can only lead those who will follow him.
- 3. Jesus will not permit compromise or subjection to the devil, Matt. 4; NO ALTERNATE PLANS ARE ACCEPTABLE TO

THE LORD.

4. Jesus Christ is the only door to our Canaan land, John 10:1, 9;
NO ONE CAN GET TO HEAVEN OUTSIDE OF A
COVENANT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

Invitation:

1. Will you let Jesus Christ lead you from the captivity of sin?
2. One remains in the slavery of sin unless he has been immersed for the remission of sins, following faith, repentance and confessing Christ, Acts 22:16; Rom. 10:17; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:9-10.
3. One does the unthinkable and returns to the bondage of sin when he fails to consistently practice Christianity; a crown of life is reserved exclusively for those who are faithful unto death, Rev. 2:10; 2 Pet. 1:20-22.

Rearing Children

Proverbs 23:13-14

Thesis: To address biblical and practical aspects of rearing children.

Introduction:

1. Recommended readings: *Jesus Christ: The Hope of the Home* and *Christ in the Home* (both by Robert R. Taylor, Jr.), and the unparalleled childrearing encyclopedia — the Bible.
2. To be certain, there are obstacles to rearing children.
3. However, there are also rewards in rearing children.
4. We live in a largely undisciplined society; church discipline is not often practiced like it should be; and, many times discipline is sadly lacking in the home. If nothing else is remembered about this lesson today, please hear this: parents have a God-ordained *OBLIGATION* to exercise discipline (control) in the home over their children, Prov. 23:13-14.

Body:

I. Mission of rearing children.

- A. The TV series “Mission Impossible” began with the familiar line: “Your mission, Jim, should you decide to accept it ...”
 1. Sometimes it may seem that childrearing is an impossible mission and we may wonder if we will survive, but I assure you that we can survive and accomplish the mission.
 2. Every parent has opted to accept the mission of childrearing by his or her voluntary participation in sexual intercourse without the use of contraception. (It is true, though, that parents may not *REALIZE* the mission they have espoused by their actions or may be ill-suited for the task.)
 3. However, there is no turning back from the mission of childrearing for the faithful child of God from the point of conception onward.
- B. The mission of childrearing is not unlike the overall

mission of the church.

1. Benevolence, evangelism and edification must begin at home.
 2. Our children must be impressed foremost with spiritual values, Ecc. 12:13-14; Matt. 6:33.
 3. Our children must not only learn how to make a living, but more importantly how to live.
 4. Our children must be taught to seek spiritual maturity in adulthood, Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2.
 5. Our children must be taught *SPIRITUAL PRODUCTIVITY*, John 15:1-8.
- C. Children need to be groomed for spiritual service.
1. Children should be instructed and shown how to be good mothers and fathers, 1 Tim. 5:14; Titus 2:3-5.
 2. Children should be instructed and shown how to be good Christians, Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 8:5.
 3. Our children should be groomed for future teachers, elders, deacons, preachers and wives of elders, deacons, and preachers.
- D. The mission of childrearing is too important to take lightly or to fail.
1. Our children must be taught to be true to the Book — the Bible, including salvation, worship, service and Christian living.
 2. In whatever other areas of rearing our children we may succeed, if we fail to instill in them spiritual values, we fail our childrearing mission.

II. The responsibilities of childrearing.

- A. Obviously, there are *PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES* involved in rearing children.
1. These responsibilities include physical care, 1 Tim. 5:8.
 2. These responsibilities also include spiritual care, Eph. 6:4.
 3. However, parental responsibility ceases where the child's responsibility begins, Ezek. 18:20.
- B. Children must cooperate in their own rearing in order for it to be biblically successful.
1. Children must learn and practice obedience to

- parents, Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20; 2 Tim. 3:2; Deut. 21:18-21.
 - 2. Children are forbidden to strike their parents, Exod. 21:15.
 - 3. Children are obligated to show respect to their parents, Exod. 20:12; Eph. 6:2.
 - 4. This manifests itself later in life by the children's care of their parents, 1 Tim. 5:4.
 - 5. Very importantly, children must obey the Gospel for themselves.
- C. The disposition of children themselves plays a significant role in childrearing.
- 1. Every child is different, even in the same family.
 - 2. Young children are biblically innocent — without sin — not responsible for themselves, Ezek. 28:15; Matt. 18:3.
 - 3. Children have pliable minds, Prov. 22:6.
 - 4. Accountable children have freewill, Ezek. 18:20.

III. The negative side of rearing children.

- A. There are several obstacles to rearing children.
- 1. The fact that each child is different presents a theoretical problem; just when parents begin to figure out how to rear children, another child comes along who does not respond to one's newly acquired parental skills.
 - 2. Parental imperfection is bound to lead to mistakes in childrearing; probably most of us wish we could undo something in our lives that has potentially affected our children adversely.
 - 3. Parental lack of experience, which largely only disappears after a substantial amount of OJT (on the job training), is a certain obstacle.
 - 4. Then, the ungodly world is earnestly trying to pull our children into the depths of sin, 1 John 2:15-17.
 - 5. The pleasures of sin call our children while we are at the same time trying to teach them about righteousness, Heb. 11:25.
 - 6. Some sins that are characterized as “youthful lusts”

threaten to undo everything for which godly parents work and pray, 2 Tim. 2:22.

7. Erring Christians and their children can greatly detract from successful childrearing: “Everybody’s doing it,” “Brother so-n-so’s children are allowed to do it.” (This may be an area in which church discipline can also help godly childrearing.)
 8. Secular advice and books can often render more harm than good in rearing children (e.g., the Dr. Spock generation of permissiveness); any advice that conflicts with the Bible must be avoided.
 9. Sometimes, deficiencies in parental childrearing can be traced back to abuses or deficiencies in the rearing of the parents; though hard to overcome such, it can and must be done.
- B. Childrearing faces several additional contemporary threats.
1. Hedonism, entertainment and especially TV pose serious threats to Christian living and rearing children, 2 Thess. 2:12; 1 Tim. 5:6; 2 Tim. 3:4; Tit. 3:3.
 2. Peer pressure dare not be under emphasized, 1 Cor. 15:33; Exod. 23:2; Psa. 1:1.
 3. Humanism — self-centered, anti-God, secular religion — has infiltrated government, education, and religion.
 4. Materialism causes both young and old to forget God, Prov. 30:8-9.
 5. Apathy or indifference can render parental attempts at childrearing futile; sometimes children learn apathy from parents who are indifferent toward their jobs, church, responsibilities and other family members, Rev. 3:15-16.
 6. False teachers, some of whom unfortunately may truly wear sheep’s clothing as they present themselves as professors in our Christian colleges, subtly threaten our children, Matt. 7:15; 1 John 4:1.
 7. Despair is another serious threat to the well being of anyone, especially young people; unchecked,

what to a young person is a crisis resulting in despair sometimes leads to suicide in its worst scenario, Matt. 6:33-34.

8. Our young people may also be threatened by sex and dating unless both parents and their children exercise caution in this area; while sexual feelings are natural, they must be properly restrained within the bounds of the Gospel, Eph. 5:3; 1 Cor. 7:2.
9. Another threat engulfing our nation and posing a hazard for our children is drug and alcohol abuse, Gal. 5:19-21.

C. Danger signs tell of developing problems.

1. Persistently unruly children indicate problems with parental guidance or children themselves or outside influences or a combination of these; special attention must be given to the problem areas.
2. Another danger sign is when a child doesn't like attending worship or classes; this is equivalent to spiritual anorexia which may prove fatal, 1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 10:25. (Parents must be careful their children do not learn a dislike for attending worship and classes from them.)

D. There may be other areas in which parents will experience difficulties in rearing children.

1. For instance, sometimes parents have difficulty adjusting the treatment of their children according to their maturity and age.
2. Mothers and daughters may sometimes find themselves embroiled in conflicts that appear similar to sibling arguments.
3. A child may be babied to the point of debilitation, though usually less.

IV. The positive side of rearing children.

A. Successful childrearing helps qualify parents for greater service in the kingdom.

1. Especially elders must rear their children successfully, 1 Tim. 3:4-5; Titus 1:6.
2. Deacons also must demonstrate skills in rearing children, 1 Tim. 3:12.

3. Additionally, preachers and teachers will be greatly hindered in their effectiveness in teaching the Gospel unless their children are credits rather than liabilities to their parents.
- B. Happily, there are rewards in rearing children.
1. Family love — natural affection is a precious commodity, similar to the love God has for his children.
 2. One's dear children also will care for aged parents.
- C. Several positive signs may bolster the confidence of parents endeavoring their best to rear their children.
1. How wonderful it is when people you don't know feel compelled to compliment you on the good public behavior of your children (e.g., restaurants); the successful childrearing in such cases occurred at home and is only on public display otherwise.
 2. It must be encouraging to parents when they feel especially thankful for their own children when they see other people's unruly children.
 3. It is also a positive sign of good childrearing when children make it easier for parents to be good Christians.
 4. Certainly parents can rejoice when their children obey and continue to obey the Gospel.
 5. Both children and parents have grown and succeeded when parents value the judgment of their children.
 6. It is also a positive sign of successful childrearing when parents trust their children (not blindly, but based on evidence — the children have demonstrated trustworthiness).

V. Tools for good childrearing.

- A. Childrearing tools include:
1. Parental patience may very well be the product of several trials through which children put their parents, Jam. 1:2-4.
 2. Time — duration — has a way of giving parents the experience they once lacked and convincing children that their parents actually know something

- after all, Heb. 5:12.
3. Perhaps distasteful for both parent and child, corporal punishment is biblical and sometimes absolutely necessary, Prov. 23:13-14. (Beat = strike, to us, spank.)
 4. Sometimes chastisements are sufficient correction of children, Heb. 12:5-11.
 5. Additionally, *REWARDS* for compliance with parental instruction reinforces successful childrearing.
 6. Praise, too, underscores successes in rearing children.
 7. All children need special attention from their parents for their self-esteem and proper development.
- B. Some helpful “rules of thumb” for childrearing include these considerations:
1. By and large, from infancy dress children modestly; this will avoid conflict later when parents otherwise try to have the child start practicing modesty, 1 Tim. 2:9.
 2. Parents must endeavor to practice even-handedness with a child; children need to know what to expect from their parents, even as we know what God expects of us and how God reacts to different situations, Jam. 1:8.
 3. Parents must be careful not to show partiality between their children, Rom. 2:11.
 4. Parents need to remember they are responsible for controlling their dependent children; children should not be allowed to run rough shod over their parents. (The tail must never wag the dog.)
 5. Finally, all things go better with the Gospel; parroting a soft drink distributor, “The Gospel is it!”

Conclusion:

1. Admittedly, parenting is somewhat of an imperfect science.
2. However, it is a mission that godly parents cannot afford to neglect.

3. Yes, there are difficulties associated with rearing children.
4. However, the rewards, both on earth and in heaven, for both parents and children, far outweigh all the pains of parenting.

Funny Money

James 2:17-26; John 14:6

Thesis: To demonstrate the genuineness of the true church of the New Testament in contrast to manmade counterfeits.

Song: *The Church's One Foundation*

Introduction:

1. I have a free gift for each person here, today — a \$100 bill!
 - a. It is NOT counterfeit!
 - b. These are **genuine** \$100 bills — spend them anyway you want, anywhere you want.
2. What do you mean that these \$100 bills are not real?!
 - a. Is it the color of the paper — that makes you suspicious?
 - b. Is the ink the wrong color?
 - c. Maybe you think that the bills are too big — oversize.
 - d. Surely the picture on the front (of me) doesn't make you suspect that it is counterfeit.
3. It looks like *most* of you have decided that these are **not real** \$100 bills and that you might get into trouble if you try to buy lunch with them.
 - a. I guess if all counterfeit money looked like this, few of us would have difficulty discerning the difference between counterfeit and genuine currency.
 - b. Unfortunately, people in general and members of the churches of Christ, too, are experiencing greater difficulty lately telling the difference between counterfeit and genuine churches.
 - c. Let's contrast some of the characteristics between **counterfeit** and **genuine** churches.

Body:

I. Who built the church?

- A. Jesus promised to build his church, Matt. 16:18 — *Divine Builder*.
- B. Churches built by men are nothing more than 'vain labors,' Psa. 127:1 — *Human Builders*.

II. Was the church the subject of Old Testament prophecy?

- A. The church that Jesus built was the subject of numerous prophecies, Isa. 2:2-3; Eph. 3:10-11 — *Divine Prophecies*.
- B. Manmade churches are absent from biblical prophecies — *No Prophecies!*

III. What is the foundation of the church?

- A. Jesus is the foundation of the church that he built, 1 Cor. 3:11 — *Divine Foundation*.
- B. Manmade churches have *Human Foundations*.

IV. What is the name of the church?

- A. Divine designations for the church that Jesus built include “church of God,” 1 Cor. 1:2, and “churches of Christ,” Rom. 16:16 — *Divine Names*.
- B. Manmade churches often have *Human Names*, Acts 4:12.

IV. How many churches are there?

- A. There is only *One Divine Church*, Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4.
- B. There are many manmade churches — *Human Churches*, Matt. 15:13.

V. What kind of government does the church have?

- A. The church that Jesus built is governed by the authority of Christ, Matt. 28:18—*Divine Government*.
- B. Manmade churches have *Human Government*, 1 Tim. 4:1-3.

VI. How is the church organized?

- A. The church that Jesus built has elders guiding each independent, local congregation — *Divine Organization*, Acts 14:23.
- B. Manmade churches have various forms of *Human Organization*, 3 John 9-10.

VII. What is the doctrine of the church?

- A. The church that Jesus built received its doctrine from heaven through Jesus Christ personally — *Divine Doctrine*, John 1:17; Rom. 1:16.
- B. Manmade churches have adopted *Human Doctrines*, Gal. 1:6-9.

VIII. How does the church worship?

- A. The church that Jesus built worships God according to

his instructions — *Divine Worship*, John 4:24.

- B. Manmade churches worship in vain — *Human Worship* (Matt. 15:9).

IX. What is the mission of the church?

- A. The church that Jesus built is obligated to teach the Gospel to the whole world — *Divine Mission*, Mark 16:15-16; Eph. 3:10.
- B. Churches made by men have many missions, none of which compare in importance to the Divine Mission of the church that Jesus built — *Human Missions*.

X. Does the church teach the way to heaven?

- A. Jesus Christ himself, who built his church and over which he is head, is the only way — the *Divine Way*, John 14:6.
- B. The ways manmade churches have devised are various and cannot take one to heaven — *Human Ways*, Matt. 7:13-14.

XI. What is the plan of redemption?

- A. *Divine Redemption* is the only means of obtaining membership in the church that Jesus built and receiving the forgiveness of sins, Acts 2:38.
- B. Plans of salvation that are taught in manmade churches neither place one into the church that Jesus built, nor are they able to forgive sins — *Human Redemption*, Jam. 2:17-26.

Conclusion:

1. Are you able to discern the difference between counterfeit churches and the genuine church of Christ?
 - a. One can learn about the church that Jesus built, the **genuine** church, from the New Testament.
 - b. To learn of manmade churches, **counterfeit** churches, one must turn to church doctrines, manuals, catechisms, dogmas, missals, etc.
2. Instead of adopting the popular motto of “Worship at the church of your choice,” we need to be members of and worship with the **church of Christ’s choice**.
 - a. The church for which he died, Acts 20:28.
 - b. The church over which he is the head, Col. 1:18.

3. Ownership can be very revealing.
 - a. The church that Jesus built belongs to Christ and wears his name, Rom. 16:16.
 - b. Manmade churches belong to men and often wear the names of men.
4. Irrespective of whether one is a member of the church that Jesus built or a member of one of the churches built by men, **eternity is approaching**.
 - a. Manmade churches can only offer an empty promise of a doubtful eternity, Matt. 25:41.
 - b. Members of the church that Jesus built should look toward eternity with joyful anticipation, Matt. 25:34; 1 Thess. 2:19-20.

Invitation:

1. Are you a member of the church that Jesus built? Or, if are you a wayward member of the Lord's church?
2. We invite you to become a faithful member of the church for Jesus will one day return to present to the Heavenly Father, 1 Cor. 15:24.
3. Non-Christians: Mark 16:15-16.
4. Erring Christians: Acts 8:22.

Feet of Clay

Daniel 2:31-35

Thesis: As fallible creatures, mankind must be ever vigilant to ensure one's continued salvation and must be ever aware that fallible men, though esteemed, can falter, too.

Introduction:

1. The image of Daniel Two, the subject of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, is an outstanding prophecy, which is key to the establishment of the Lord's church.
2. Today, though, we turn to this image with the feet of clay to use it as an illustration.
3. Obviously, the image, with feet of clay, was **flawed**.
4. The focal point for the destruction of this image was its feet of clay.
5. From this modest beginning, permit me to emphasize that all human beings also have 'feet of clay.'

Body:

- I. **From Bible history one can observe that it is unwise to place too much confidence in even outstanding servants of God, for they also can falter (i.e., sin).**
 - A. Noah saved himself and seven other souls alone from the universal flood, yet he was not always a noble example, Gen. 9:20-21.
 - B. Even Abraham, the "friend of God," Jam. 2:23, and the father of the faithful, Rom. 4:16, sometimes sinned, Gen. 12:11-20; 20:1-6.
 - C. King David was "a man after mine own hear," Acts 13:22, God said, but David committed adultery and murder, 2 Sam. 11:2-24.
 - D. The apostle Peter denied Christ three times, Matt. 26:69-75.
- II. **The children of God must follow Jesus Christ foremost.**
 - A. Even family members must not be allowed to come

between a Christian and his Lord, Luke 14:26.

- B. Christians must not allow the pursuit of earthly things to obscure our spiritual goals, Matt. 6:33.
- C. The preservation of our lives is not more important than being a faithful Christian, Luke 12:4; Rev. 2:10.
- D. We dare not trust in ourselves (be self-guides), Prov. 3:5-7; Rom. 12:3.
- E. Further, we must follow others only as they faithfully follow Christ (and thereby lead us to Christ), 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Phil. 3:17-19.

III. Outstanding Christians today fall (or were they to fall away) and lead many to destruction.

- A. In our lifetime, preachers and elders led a prominent congregation of the Lord's church in Nashville into Pentecostalism.
- B. In recent decades, preachers led tens of thousands into "multiplying ministries" and ultimately out of the church into a new denomination called the International Churches of Christ.
- C. The director of a school of preaching, the speaker for a popular radio program, preachers and elders have committed adultery and have been found out, resulting in much hurt to the church and members in particular.
- D. Many years ago, I attended a debate in which the opponent of brother Guy N. Woods was a Pentecostal preacher. As the debate opened, the Pentecostal preacher boldly affirmed that by the conclusion of the debate brother Woods would be won over to the Pentecostal position. Of course, it never happened; brother Woods did not abandon the Gospel in favor of the Pentecostal error. However, I shuddered when the Pentecostal preacher made his audacious remark — because I was certain (and am equally certain today) that had brother Woods fallen as the Pentecostal predicted, a large, ignorant body of Christians would have blindly followed brother Woods to their eternal doom.

Conclusion:

1. Sometimes, preachers follow their teachers, school director or the school itself to a fault. Misplaced reverence allows

someone at a great distance and outside of the autonomous congregation of which one is a member to “call the shots.” Misplaced reverence can also lead one into doctrinal errors or other sins. All Christians must serve God and be true to the Book.

2. Bible history amply demonstrates the futility of revering too much even outstanding servants of God.
3. Contemporary history reinforces the danger of trusting in even the renowned Gospel preachers in the brotherhood.
4. We all have ‘feet of clay!’

The Preeminent Christ

Colossians 1:9-23

Thesis: Exposition of Colossians 1:15-17.

Introduction:

1. Who is Jesus Christ?
2. Did he, as God (Deity), participate equally in creation, or was he the first created being?
3. How does the created universe continue to exist?

Body:

- I. **Col. 1:15, “Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:”**
 - A. Compare John 1:1-3, 10, 14, 17-18; Phil. 2:6-11; Heb. 1:1-14.
 - B. The context identifies the **“Who”** as Jesus Christ, vss. 12-14.
 - C. **“image of the invisible God”**
 1. **“image”** is a copy of something. We have imaging machines (or copiers) that copy originals.
 2. Jesus is the copy of God (Col. 1:15); Christians are to be copies of Jesus, Rom. 8:29.
 3. Paul is refuting the Gnostics who perceived of Jesus Christ as being a created being.
 4. Jesus came to personally reveal the Father; Jesus was the visible manifestation of an invisible God, John 14:9.
 - D. **“invisible”**
 1. 1 Tim. 1:17, **“invisible,”** also Heb. 11:27
 2. 1 Tim. 6:16, **‘cannot see’**
 - E. **“firstborn”**
 1. The Father prophesied that he would make Christ his firstborn, Psa. 89:27
 2. Christ, as God (Deity), assisted in the creation and later took a body of flesh, John 1:1-3, 14
 3. **“firstborn”** is equivalent to **“only begotten,”** John 3:16 and **“firstbegotten,”** Heb. 1:6.

II. Col. 1:16, “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

- A. compare 1 Cor. 8:6; Eph. 3:9; Heb. 1:2
- B. **“created”** pertains to proprietorship of the manufacturer.
- C. **“heavens”** pertains to the idea of elevation, thus the sky or starry heavens.
- D. **“earth”** can mean, as it does here, the whole earth in opposition to the heavens.
- E. **“visible”** open to view
- F. **“invisible”** unseen; the same word for “visible” with the negating prefix “a”
- G. **“throne”** a chair or state having a footstool
- H. **“dominion”** lordship; one who possesses a dominion
- I. **“principalities”** the first to do something; ruler, chief, leader, Col. 2:10, 15; Rom. 8:38; Eph. 6:12.
- J. **“powers”** pertains to authority over others who are obligated to obey, 1 Pet. 3:22.
- K. **“all things”** all inclusive; Eph. 1:10
- L. **“by”** through or by means of; Rom. 11:36; Heb. 2:10

III. Col. 1:17, “And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

- A. **“consist”** approved, unite parts into a whole; stand created, remain created

Conclusion:

- 1. Jesus Christ is our Creator.
- 2. Jesus Christ is superior to all of creation, including angels.
- 3. As superior (preeminent), Jesus will be victorious over the created universe, Col. 1:20; Phil. 2:10; Rev. 5:13.
- 4. Jesus Christ maintains the created universe with the same power by which he created it.
- 5. Jesus is the head of the church, Col. 1:18.
- 6. Jesus will be our Judge, John 12:48; 2 Cor. 5:10.
- 7. Jesus is our Savior, Luke 19:10; John 4:42.

Invitation:

- 1. Obey the Gospel, by which Jesus can be your Savior, too, Rom. 1:5; 16:26; 2 Thess. 1:8.
- 2. Non-Christians, Acts 10:48; Rom. 6:1-17.

3. Erring Christians, Jam. 5:19-20.

Using Scripture in Context

Romans 14:23

Thesis: The proper use of Scripture requires that it only be used to teach the truth to which it applies.

Introduction:

1. Rom. 14:23 is the classic example of Scripture often taken out of context (“faith,” here refers to one’s conscience — not the system of faith, the Gospel).
2. It may be that Scripture is frequently used “out-of-context” proportionately to our preference for and experience in topical preaching over expository preaching.
3. Perhaps the most often overlooked context which troubles denominational people and brethren is the backdrop to the first century church of miracles and intervention in the affairs of men by the Godhead (i.e., chiefly the Holy Spirit) and angels (e.g., mustard-seed-mountain-moving faith, Matt. 17:20; 1 Corinthians 13:2; elders anointing the sick with oil, Jam. 5:14; Mark 6:13; 16:18).

Body:

I. 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

- A. “Abstain from all appearance of evil” KJV.
- B. “...every FORM of evil” ASV.
- C. I have often heard the KJV rendering of this verse used to teach avoidance of conduct or activities that perhaps harmless themselves may be perceived as evil by someone observing such (e.g., turning around in the parking lot of an unsavory and sinful establishment).
- D. “Appearance” (KJV) and “form” (ASV) come from the Greek εἶδος — from εἶδος, which means: “kind” or “species.”
 1. The same word (εἶδος) occurs in 2 Cor. 5:7 and means “sight” or “perception.”
 2. A derivative (εἶδει) occurs in Luke 3:22 and means

“form” or “external appearance.”

3. The contexts of 2 Cor. 5:7 and Luke 3:22 demand that our word refers to what is seen.
- E. First Thess. 5:22 (as in this case the ASV more clearly communicates) means ‘abstain from every **KIND** or **CATEGORY** of evil’ (e.g., avoid all fornication, i.e., adultery, homosexuality, sex between non-married people, bestiality and every other category of illicit sexual activity). There are no exceptions to sin avoidance; no pet sins are allowed.

II. Galatians 1:6-9; Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19.

- A. I have heard each of these passages used (and have used them) to counter Pentecostal and other denominational claims for continued revelation in the present.
- B. The literal translation clearly depicts the passage as condemning DIFFERENT revelation of the purported SAME Gospel.
- C. “Another” (ἕτερον — from ἕτερος) vs. 6 = another of a different kind; “another” (ἄλλο from ἄλλος) vs. 7 = another of the same kind; “other” (παρ’ from παρά) vs. 8, 9 = “in deviation from, in violation of, inconsistently with”; παρά in Acts 18:13 and Rom. 1:26 is translated “contrary to.”
- D. Additionally, Galatians may have been written about A.D. 58 whereas several Bible books were written later — through the Book of Rev. which may have been written as late as A.D. 95.
- E. The proper passages to counter modern claims for continual revelation are 1 Corinthians 13:8-13; Eph. 4:11-13; Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4; John 20:30-31.
1. Galatians 1:6-9; Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19 teach that modern revelation is wrong **BECAUSE IT IS DIFFERENT!**
 2. First Cor. 13:8-13 and Eph. 4:11-13 teach that modern revelation does not now occur since the completion of the purpose for which miracles were given.

III. Ephesians 4:13.

- A. A recent reprint of an article by a renowned preacher and editor of a widely popular Gospel magazine addressed Eph. 4:13. The author applied the phrase “Till we all come in the unity of the faith” to when brethren agree together on the doctrine of Christ.
- B. The surrounding context (vs. 11-14) addresses miracle-assisted first century servants of God (vs. 11), who in that capacity were especially enabled to edify the infant church (vs. 12), **UNTIL** their efforts were superseded by the arrival of the completed, only-one system of faith (vs. 13), a benefit that permits Christians to definitively discern between true and false doctrine (vs. 14; Hebrews 5:14).
- C. “The unity of THE FAITH” refers to the canon of the New Testament to which Christians now can literally and with certainty examine it and say, “This is what it teaches!”
- D. Eph. 4:11-14 compares to 1 Cor. 13:8-13.
- E. Notice the similar illustration in the two passages (i.e., “knowledge,” “perfect,” “when I became a man, I put away childish things” vs. “perfect [“fullgrown,” ASV] man.”

IV. 1 Corinthians 15:33.

- A. “Be not deceived: evil communications [“companionships,” ASV] corrupt good manners [“morals,” ASV].”
- B. This verse is often completely lifted from its context to teach about the dangers of corrupting influences imperiling Christians through association with sinful people.
- C. Granted, the principle is true, but the verse has another immediate application in its context.
- D. The whole 1 Cor. 15 chapter deals with a defense of the resurrection — including the resurrection of Christ — against false teachers and their false doctrines.
- E. 1 Cor. 15:32 and 1 Cor. 15:35, on either side of 1 Cor. 15:33, address the subject of resurrection.
- F. 1 Cor. 15:33 DOES NOT primarily apply (in its context)

to the dangers of Christian living.

- G. In its context, 1 Cor. 15:33 first applies to the dangers of Christians (the church) continuing to fellowship or commune with false teachers who deny the subject of resurrection. Second, the verse warns of the danger to Christians and the church in continuing to commune with/not oppose false teachers in general (cf., Rom. 16:17-18; Titus 3:10-11; Eph. 5:11).

V. Matthew 18:20.

- A. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.”
- B. Verse 20 is often rendered as a worship passage though the context in which it occurs does not address worship.
- C. Matt. 18:18-19 pertain to the authority that Jesus delegated to the apostles (cf., Matthew 16:19 relative to the apostle Peter).
- D. Verse 20 simply continues the reference to apostolic authority to ‘bind and loose.’
- E. Usage of the words “two” and “two or three” in verses 16, 19-20 pertain to the effectiveness of witnesses to or confirmation of what is true (vs. 15-17 regarding sin between brethren and efforts to effect repentance and reconciliation; vs. 18-20 regarding the veracity of apostolic authority).

VI. Matthew 3:11.

- A. “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”
- B. A renowned editor of a popular Gospel magazine wrote several lengthy articles on the Holy Spirit, in which he taught that the “fire” of Matt. 3:11 pertains to the baptism of the Holy Spirit.
- C. People often make this erroneous observation doubtless because they associate this “fire” with the “cloven tongues like as of fire” which accompanied the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles in Acts Two (Acts 2:3).
- D. The verses on either side of Matt. 3:11 each use fire in a

negative, punitive manner (vs. 10, 12). The “fire” of vs. 11 is also negative.

- E. Matt. 3:11 enumerates three baptisms: (1) water baptism upon repentance, confessing of sins (Matt. 3:1-6), for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4) and administered by John the Baptist. (2) Holy Spirit baptism, then future, to be administered by Jesus Christ. (3) The punitive baptism of fire, then and still future, to be administered by Jesus Christ (cf., Matt. 25:41, 46; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 20:14-15; 21:8).
- F. The audience to whom John the Baptist spoke was composed of people from Jerusalem, Judaea and the region around the Jordan River (Matt. 3:5). Included in that number were sinful persons (namely Pharisees and Saducees, Matt. 3:7-9). Some of John’s disciples who later became apostles were evidently present (to be promised the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Matt. 3:11; and the next day to follow Jesus, John 1:35-37).
- G. Hence, John promised at least one baptism (of the three) to each adult present (water or fire) and the baptism of the Holy Spirit additionally to any present who would later become apostles.

VII.1 Timothy 2:15.

- A. “Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”
- B. It was related to me by a preacher in the Ohio Valley that a wife in an otherwise extended Christian family exhibited no inclination to obey the Gospel — which greatly puzzled the preacher. Upon inquiry of the lady he was told that her mother had taught her that since she was incapable of giving birth that she could not be saved — based on 1 Tim. 2:15.
- C. The Greek word translated “childbearing” (τεκνογονίας derives from τεκνογονέω) means “to bear children, the rearing of a family,” Zondervan’s lexicon; “denotes bearing children, implying the duties of motherhood,” Vine.

- D. Verses 8-15 are some to which Christians turn to ascertain the role of women. Both in the church (religious matters) and in the home, women (and men for that matter) are obligated to accept the role God has ordained for the woman.
- E. When some might attempt to disregard God's role for the woman (in the church or in the home), the woman is still unable to mask the fact that God has ordained that the woman of the species give birth to the babies (with all of the attendant responsibilities in childbearing). A woman can pretend she is a man (pretending she has roles God never assigned to her) but she cannot escape her role in procreation.
- F. The context in which 1 Tim. 2:15 appears including 1 Tim. 2:15 simply affirms the role that God assigned to the woman. A woman who is unable to birth children, by this alone, does not fall into the class of women who rebel against their God-given role. There is no indictment against the salvation of women unable to birth children. Besides, childless couples may also opt to rear children through foster care, adoption, etc.

VIII. John 14:1-3.

- A. Given that John chapters 14-16 were initially spoken exclusively to the apostles and contain the promise of Holy Spirit baptism exclusively to the apostles, HOW can passages like John 14:1-3 (about heaven) be applied to Christians today?
- B. While there is a context to be respected in those chapters where certain things applied only to the apostles, some things in those chapters are subjects of a more general nature, which are elsewhere in Scripture applied to all Christians.

Conclusion:

1. Every preacher and teacher ought to exercise extreme caution not to use Scripture out of its context.
2. Scripture used out of context becomes a pretext.
3. Taking Scripture out of context is no better than the abuse of Scripture by a false teacher.
4. If the lesson being taught is true, appropriate Scriptures ought

to be employed that substantiate that teaching — rather than misusing Scripture to make it teach something that it does not.

5. Preachers and teachers ought to be careful to distinguish between the primary application of a passage and the *principle* that it teaches and that can be applied contemporarily.

The Covenants

2 Corinthians 3:14

Thesis: To demonstrate with biblical evidence that the Old Testament has been replaced with the New Testament.

Introduction:

1. A chief contributor to doctrinal error and general religious confusion is widespread misunderstanding concerning the purpose and duration of affect of the Old Testament, 2 Cor. 3:14.
2. Contemporary religions professing Christianity are usually an admixture of the Old *and* New testaments, some paganism and doctrines wholly of men's design.
3. Learning about and accepting the fact that the Old Testament *in its entirety* has been abolished and replaced with the New Testament would go a long way to correcting these ills.

Body:

I. God never purposed the Old Testament to be his final revelation to mankind.

- A. The Old Testament was purposed to enable man to distinguish between godliness and sin, until Christ came, Gal. 3:19.
- B. The Old Testament also prepared man for the coming of Jesus Christ and the Gospel, Gal. 3:23-24.
- C. The Old Testament was unable to justify men from their sins, Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16.
- D. The Old Testament, further, was fulfilled through the coming of Christ and the Gospel, and the establishment of the church, Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 24:44; Eph. 3:3-12.

II. Once fulfilled, the Old Testament was wholly replaced with the New Testament.

- A. The coming of Jesus Christ and his "last will and Testament" is the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham, Gal. 3:13-18; Heb. 9:15-18.
- B. Whereas the Old Testament was unable to justify sinners, the New Testament (through the blood of Christ)

redeems both Old Testament and New Testament peoples, Matt. 26:28; Rom. 11:27; Gal. 3:8, 9; Heb. 8:6-13; 9:15.

- C. Fulfilled, the Old Testament was removed in its entirety, including the Ten Commandments, Rom. 7:6-7; 10:4; 2 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 3:15; Col. 2:14-17. (Nine of the Ten Commandments have been re-instituted in the New Testament.)
- D. The New Testament is the universal religious law by which all men are bound today, Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 4:16-17; Gal. 3:11; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 7:19.

III. Neither the Old Testament nor the more recent doctrines of men when practiced today is pleasing to God.

- A. If the Old Testament were still in force today, men would be required to offer animal sacrifices and observe holydays, Jewish feasts and Sabbath days, Col. 2:14-17.
- B. If the Old Testament is the source of righteousness, Christ's sacrifice is useless, Gal. 2:21.
- C. Those attempting to serve the Old Law (Testament) cast off Christ and his blessings, Gal. 3:10; 5:4.
- D. The doctrines (teachings) of men have never been acceptable to God, Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 14:12; 30:6; Jer. 6:16-19; Matt. 15:9, 13; Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18-19.

Conclusion:

1. Many people today are blinded to the New Testament's teachings because they place their confidence in the Old Testament.
2. The Old Testament was never intended to be God's final revelation to man.
3. The Old Testament did not redeem or justify men from their sins.
4. Once fulfilled, the entire Old Testament was removed and the New Testament was installed in its place.
5. All souls living today must look exclusively to the New Testament for redemption.
6. Anyone trying to abide by the Old Testament or the doctrines of men stands condemned before God.

Invitation:

1. Not living in accordance with the New Testament (Gospel) is

pictured in Scripture as knocking Christ down and walking on him and despising his precious sacrificial blood, Heb. 10:29.

2. Non-Christians must hear, believe, repent, confess Christ, be immersed in water for the remission of sins and continue to live faithfully, Rom. 10:9-10, 17; Acts 2:38; Rev. 2:10.
3. Christians must continue to follow Christ and repent upon occasions of sin, 1 John 1:7; Acts 8:22; Rom. 12:1-2.
4. All men should regularly examine themselves to see if they abide in Christ, 2 Cor. 13:5.

The Weight of Disbelief and Doubt

Hebrews 12:1

Thesis: Exposition of Hebrews 12:1.

Introduction:

1. Scripture provides ample encouragement in the face of despair and trials to persevere as the children of God.
2. Many others before us have endured much more than we shall ever face.
3. The eternal reward toward which we strive is sufficient to offset the fleeting moments of discouragement encountered in our terrestrial pilgrimage.
4. The child of God must be careful not to allow disbelief and doubt to displace one's confidence in God and his Word.

Body:

I. Exposition:

- A. "*Wherefore*" prepares the reader for a conclusion based on foregoing material, here on the heroes of faith depicted in Chapter Eleven.
- B. The phrase "**we also**" corresponds to the race with patience formerly run by the heroes of faith of the preceding chapter and which is to be run with equal nobility by Christians as well.
- C. The phrase "**compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses**" depicts an overwhelming cloud, filling the whole sky, only here it represents such a colossal gathering of those who have borne faithful witness to the truth; the same dead saints are imagined to also be spectators silently cheering on Christians as they too bear witness to the truth in their lives. The witnesses of Chapter Eleven have great interest and sympathy in the present course of Christians and hence provide a measure of support to practicing Christians.
- D. The word "**weight**" literally means bulk or mass. In the

figure here used, it portrays a racer who puts away everything which may hinder his running. Christians, then, are encouraged to discard every worldly hindrance.

- E. The phrase “**and the sin which doth so easily besets us**” addresses the fact that specific sins surround one as a flowing robe might a runner, and thereby entangle him and cause him to stumble. Emphasis should be placed on both the words “**easily**” and “**beset**” (beset means surround).
- F. The word “**patience**” carries the idea of endurance and persistence.
- G. The word “**race**” here is a general term meaning “contest.”
- H. Saints before us have succeeded in the fierce contest between good and evil, and survive on the pages of inspiration (Hebrews Chapter Eleven) to encourage future generations to also persevere. Central to this perseverance is avoiding sins that will trip up otherwise faithful Christians. Some sins are more prone to cause certain Christians to stumble (sin) whereas other sins pose a greater temptation to other Christians.

II. Definitions:

A. Disbelief

- 1. **APISTEO** — This word is a compound word from a, negative, and *pistis*, faith, and means to be unbelieving. The word is most often translated “believed not” (Mark 16:11, 16; Luke 24:11, 41; Acts 28:24), though sometimes it is rendered “be disobedient,” 1 Pet. 2:7. In the case of this word, one has full opportunity and evidence by which to believe and fails to believe anyway. Naturally, this failure to believe, and hence also failure to obey, must not be true of God’s people.

B. Unbelief

- 1. **APISTIA** — This word is translated 12 times in the New Testament as “unbelief.” Examples of its usage include: Matt. 13:58; 17:20; Mark 6:6; 9:24; 16:14; Rom. 3:3; 4:20; 11:20, 23; 1 Tim. 1:13; Heb. 3:12, 19. The Hebrews passages cited teach

that this unbelief issues forth from an evil heart and will keep souls out of heaven. Obviously, then, we do not want to practice unbelief.

2. **APEITHEIA** — The American Standard Version renders this word “disobedience” in Rom. 11:30, 32 and Heb. 4:6, 11, whereas the King James Version translates it “unbelief.” This illustrates the closeness in meaning and certainly the essential sameness of the conditions of unbelief and disobedience.

C. Unbeliever

1. **APISTOS** — The King James Version renders this word “infidel” in 2 Cor. 6:15 and 1 Tim. 5:8. The plural, “unbelievers,” appears in 1 Cor. 6:6, 2 Cor. 6:14, and Luke 12:46); the American Standard Version translates Luke 12:46 “unfaithful.”

D. Doubt

1. **APOREO** — Literally it means to be without a way (*a* equals, negative; *poros* equals, a way, transit); it means to be without resources, embarrassed, in doubt, perplexity, at a loss. This *doubt* is not sinful, but refers to one’s inability to ascertain or comprehend something, perhaps because he does not have all of the information necessary to properly understand.
2. Examples of its usage include: John 13:22 where the apostles doubted concerning the statement of Jesus that one of them would betray him; Luke 24:4 records the apostles were *perplexed* concerning the empty tomb of the Lord; in Acts 25:20 Festus doubted concerning accusations made against Paul by the Jews; in 2 Cor. 4:8 Paul was *perplexed* concerning his trials but not overcome with despair; in Gal. 4:20 Paul was unsure or *in doubt* concerning the faithfulness of Galatian Christians regarding the Judaizing question.
3. **DISPOREO** — *dia* is used as a prefix on

APOREO and equals asunder, indicating a greater intensity. It means to be thoroughly perplexed, with a perplexity amounting to despair. Examples include: Acts 2:12 uses it of the doubt the masses had over the apostles speaking miraculously in various languages; in Acts 5:24 it is used of the Jewish leaders upon being informed that the apostles had escaped from prison and were again preaching Jesus; in Acts 10:17 Peter doubted concerning the vision he saw; in Luke 9:7 Herod was *perplexed* concerning the deeds of Jesus, fearing John the Baptist had risen from the dead.

4. **DIAKRINO** — This word represents a degree of faith lacking and is translated *wavereth* in Jam. 1:6 whereas the American Standard Version translates it *doubteth*.
5. **DISTAZO** — Literally it means: *dis*, double and *stasis*, standing — double standing or to stand in two ways, uncertain which way to go. Examples of its use include: in Matt. 14:31 concerning the doubt into which Peter fell while walking on the water to the Lord; in Matt. 28:17 some disciples doubted the resurrected Lord. This doubt is a failure on the part of a person to be fully persuaded in spite of sufficient evidence.
6. **METEORIZO** — Our English word meteor comes from this word. It refers to something in the air and was used of putting sailing ships to sea; metaphorically it means anxious through a distracted state of mind, wavering between hope and fear. In Luke 12:29 it is rendered *doubtful mind*. The child of God should avoid this type of doubt.
7. **PSUCHEN AIRO** — Literally it means to raise the breath. It is applied in Scripture to hold in suspense and pertains to a lack of information rather than a failure to believe. An example of its usage is John 10:24 when the Jews desired

information of Jesus by which they could decide if he were the Messiah.

8. **DIALOGISMOS** — This word expresses questioning hesitation and is used in 1 Tim. 2:8, “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” This is another type of doubt that should not be characteristic of Christians.

Conclusion:

1. There is great comfort and encouragement in the knowledge that others have preceded us who faced difficulties in life of equal or greater proportion to what we face, and they succeeded; they bore witness to the truth and so can we. If they can do it, we can do it, too. Further, we have ample evidence by which to foster biblical belief (which includes corresponding obedience).
2. If in the face of sufficient evidence we falter, practice unbelief or exhibit a wavering faith, it is evil and if uncorrected that situation will prevent us from entering heaven. To disbelieve (practice unbelief) makes of one an infidel and a disobedient person. Such people shall not enter heaven!
3. Christians certainly should not be as those who standing do not know which way to go; we should not waver. We cannot possess a doubtful mind and be acceptable to God; our faith must know no hesitation and we must not allow our minds to be distracted from the spiritual course we run.
4. There is a sense in which we run the greatest of all races together, and therefore can assist one another along the way; the team spirit and team effort will greatly contribute to the realization of our common goal, heaven. Yet, there is also a sense in which we run the race ourselves independently of all others, for we will face an individual judgment and give account of ourselves alone. In either case, for our benefit and the benefit of others too, we must put away worldly hindrances that may trip us up and cause us to lose the race. Our stumbling could cause others to be lost as well.
5. “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus,” Phil. 3:14. The Christian runner leans forward toward the finish line and does not carry excess

worldly baggage. As though he wears blinders, the Christian affixes his eyes on the goal ahead and turns his head neither to the right nor to the left. The Christian runner totally commits his whole self to the race at hand. Brethren, press on! **Let's press on together!**

Fear

Matthew 10:28

Thesis: To examine various Greek words used for “fear” and see how the topic should affect Christians.

Song: “Fear Not, Little Flock”

Introduction:

1. There is a type of fear that **must not** characterize Christians.
2. Yet, there is a type of fear that **must** characterize us.
3. A cursory review of Greek words from which the English word “fear” is translated in our Bible will be helpful.

Body:

I. Phobos [Noun].

- A. Like the words “love,” “friend” and “neighbor,” the definition of PHOBOS (fear) depends on the context in which it is found.
- B. Some form of PHOBOS is used in the following passages.
- C. FIRST DEFINITION: Fear, dread, terror, affright — sufficient to cause one to flee; phobia, Heb. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:14; Matt. 10:28; 1 John 4:18; John 7:13; 19:38; 20:19; Matt. 14:26.
- D. SECOND DEFINITION: Fear reverence, respect, 1 Tim. 5:20; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:15; 2:17, 18; 3:2; Acts 9:31; Phil. 2:12.

II. Deilia [Noun]; Deilos [Adj.]

- A. DEFINITION: Fearfulness, cowardice, timidity, 2 Tim. 1:7; John 14:27; Rev. 21:8; Matt. 8:26; Mark 4:40.
- B. It is never used in a good sense and is not approved for Christians.

III. Eulabeia [Noun].

- A. DEFINITION: Caution, reverence, Godly fear; greater expression of reverence than PHOBOS; almost always used in a good sense, Heb. 12:28.
- B. This type of fear should characterize Christians in their relationships with both man and God.

IV. Entromos [Adj.].

- A. DEFINITION: Trembling with fear; intense fear; terrified, Acts 7:30-32; Acts 16:29; Heb. 12:21.
- B. This type of fear should never characterize faithful Christians with respect to God in heaven.

V. Examples of the usage of different Greek words for fear.

- A. Heb. 12:21, “And so terrible (PHOBERON, fearful) was the sight, that Moses said I exceedingly fear (EKPHOBOS, am greatly afraid), and quake (ENTROMOS, trembling).”
- B. The first use of a form of PHOBOS, as it is used in this context refers to terror rather than reverence.
- C. The second PHOBOS is preceded with the Greek prefix EK, meaning out; Moses was frightened out, or outright frightened.
- D. The third Greek word for fear, ENTROMOS, quakes to trembling fear.

Conclusion:

- 1. Word studies can help one more clearly understand God’s Word.
- 2. In some instances the context in which a word appears is essential to properly understanding its definition.
- 3. Those who sustain a fellowship with God have no cause to live in dreadful fear of either man or God.
- 4. The children of God should respect both men and God.

Invitation:

- 1. 1 Cor. 5:10-11 (PHOBON); 1 John 4:18.
- 2. Dread of hell and reverence for God ought to combine in each person to prompt him to accept God’s scheme of redemption.
- 3. Erring Christians: Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:7-2:2.
- 4. Non-Christians: Acts 2:38; 22:16.

Rules For Successful Fishing

Matthew 4:18-20

Thesis: The urgency of fishing for the souls of men

Introduction:

1. Mention parables and one instantly thinks of Jesus and the parables he unfolded.
2. Though our Lord was not the first person to use parables, no one ever painted more vivid word-pictures than Jesus.
3. He skillfully used references to everyday activities with which the common people were familiar (e.g., farming, fishing, etc.).
4. With these earthly stories, Jesus told of heavenly truths.
5. In the vein of using an earthly illustration to talk about spiritual matters, let me direct your attention to fishing, as we enumerate some “Rules For Successful Fishing.”

Body:

I. Keep yourself out of sight.

- A. A good fisherman does not cast his shadow over the water and scare the fish away.
- B. Likewise, the shadow of self is disastrous to soul winning.
 1. Diotrefes did not stand in the shadow of the cross, but he cast his own shadow and did much damage to the church of the Lord, 3 John 9-10.
 2. False teachers are others who are little concerned about the evil shadow that they cast over God’s church, Rom. 16:17-18.
 3. Jesus came to free mankind from the “shadow of death,” Luke 1:79.
 4. The apostle Paul imitated Jesus and called upon Christians to imitate him as he followed our Lord, 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1.
- C. There are a number of ways in which even Christians sometimes cast shadows that are counterproductive to

soul winning.

1. Preachers, sometimes, attempt to impress their auditors with their oratory skills, big words, etc. Some, otherwise, appear to be standing in front of the cross (hiding Jesus) instead of hiding behind the cross and permitting Jesus Christ to shine forth.
2. When Christians fail to attend the appointed worship assemblies and Bible classes they discourage children and adults who are attending and encourage Christians and non-Christians alike to discount the importance of assembling with Christians to worship and study God's Word.
3. When Christians go places Christians ought not go, do things Christians ought not do or wear (or don't wear) clothes in such a way that does not demonstrate loyalty to Christ, they greatly hinder soul winning by others who are urgently trying to reach the lost world with the Gospel of Christ.

II. Learn what bait to use.

- A. A good fisherman knows what bait to use to attract various kinds of fish.
- B. Fishers of men know they must use Christ as the bait.
 1. The Christ of the Gospel is the sole lure that can save men from their sins and prepare them for an eternity in heaven, John 14:6; Matt. 11:28.
 2. Only one bait will draw sinners out of the world of sin into the kingdom of light, John 12:32.
 3. The Christ of the Gospel as opposed to a Christ of faction is the only drawing power by which men can be drawn to God, 1 Cor. 1:10-13.
- C. Other bait draws other kinds of souls.
 1. For many years, our religious neighbors have attempted to make Christ more appealing to the masses. They do this by representing Jesus to be a person other than he is (e.g., all love, won't really condemn even what men once perceived as abominable sins like homosexuality, abortion, gambling, alcoholic beverages, etc.).
 2. Sadly, our brethren for many years, too, have

misrepresented Jesus to be a different person than he is represented to be by the Gospel.

3. Denominational people and our brethren have often resorted to gimmicks to draw crowds (e.g., lucky seats [\$5], bicycles, hamburgers, entertainment, etc.). By whatever lure people are drawn, the same lure (and more of it) will have to be used constantly to keep them.

III. Learn to bait the hook.

- A. A good fisherman knows how to bait the hook.
 1. A fisherman may learn about the theory behind successful fishing from books, films and observation of others as they fish.
 2. Eventually, though, to be a successful fisherman, one must fish for himself.
 3. Personal preparation and acquisition of the proper equipment are essential to being a successful fisherman.
- B. Fishers of men must know how to bait the hook, too.
 1. It is imperative that fishers of men prepare themselves through study, 2 Tim. 2:15; 1 Pet. 3:15.
 2. Every Christian should avail himself of opportunities to both learn from other Christians and to teach still other Christians, 2 Tim. 2:2; Acts 18:24-28.
 3. Christians must be aware of false doctrines besides being well versed in God's Word, 1 John 4:1; Titus 1:9; 2 Tim. 2:24.
- C. Many are the Christians that profess not to know how to bait the hook.
 1. Sadly, Christians often fail to prepare themselves to reach lost souls.
 2. Amazingly, some Christians seem to be so unsure of how they got to where they think they are spiritually that they cannot tell one how to be saved.
 3. The problem of spiritual immaturity and indifference plagued the early church after a while and certainly is a major obstacle to effective

Christianity today, too, Heb. 5:11-6:2; Rev. 2:4; 3:15-16.

Conclusion:

1. There are three rules of fishing that we want to remember today:
 - c. Keep yourself out of sight.
 - d. Learn what bait to use.
 - e. Learn to bait the hook.
2. Don't darken the spiritual horizon of other souls with the shadow of sin.
3. Prepare yourself to draw honest souls from the darkness of sin to the kingdom of light.
4. After adequately equipped, go fishing, Mark 16:15-16!
5. Be persistent; don't give up in spite of often lack of interest by those before whom and to whom we attempt to take the Gospel.

Focused On Heaven

Hebrews 11:10, 14-16

Thesis: To motivate Christians to (1) develop a heightened awareness of their pilgrim status, and (2) exercise a greater degree of dedicated service in their march toward heavenly portals.

Song: *Here We Are But Straying Pilgrims*

Introduction:

1. Did you think about “heaven” this morning when you got up?
2. Did you specifically think sometime during the course of the day about “going to heaven”?
3. Did you devise a “plan” for going to heaven today — or carefully review a “plan” you previously devised?
4. Would you say that you are “focused on heaven”?
5. What about the church; would you say that it is focused on heaven?
6. Without a clear and urgent focus on heaven, it is highly improbable that we will ever arrive at that spiritual and eternal destination.
7. Even Christians desperately need to focus on heaven — as individuals and as congregations.

Body:

I. Focus On Heaven — As Individuals.

- A. The world in which we live presents a significant challenge.
 1. The world is a source of great temptation, 1 John 2:16.
 2. Yet, Christians must live in the world without becoming of the world, John 17:14-16.
 3. We are confronted with “ungodliness” and “worldly lusts,” Titus 2:12.
 4. The temptation is great to “fit in,” adopt the “American Dream” (a little white cottage with a little white picket fence), Matt. 16:26.
 5. The purposeful goal of the society in which we live is to amass this world’s goods — nice homes, nice

- cars, boats, clothes, jewelry and techno toys, 1 Tim. 6:9.
6. The tendency is great to forget God — even when pursuing honorable vocations, Jam. 4:13-16; Luke 12:16-21.
 7. Amusement and pleasure are primary pursuits of our neighbors — and Christians too — which often corrupt the children of God, Heb. 11:25.
- B. The failure to “focus on heaven” manifests itself in a number of ways.
1. Church attendance lags — especially in addition to Sunday morning worship, Heb. 10:25.
 2. Christians fail to purpose to give according to their prosperity, 2 Cor. 9:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2.
 3. Reading and studying the Bible are sorely neglected — virtually non-existent, 1 Tim. 4:13; 2 Tim. 2:15.
 4. Consequently, God’s people suffer for a lack of knowledge, Hos. 4:6; Eph. 4:14.
 5. Devoid of knowledge, God’s children are characterized with a serious lack of conviction, Jam. 1:8; 4:8; Matt. 6:24.
 6. Even Christians fill the void of Divine knowledge and wisdom with vain, human knowledge and wisdom, 1 Cor. 1:19-21; 3:18-20.
 7. Unfortunately, Christians form greater friendships with the world than with brethren — co-workers, neighbors, family, etc., Jam. 4:4; 2 Cor. 6:14-18.
 8. Without a firmer biblical foundation and support from Christian fellowship, our homes fall apart — marital problems, unconverted children, Eph. 5:22-25, 33; 6:1-4.
 9. Without being “focused on heaven,” the child of God is neither evangelistic toward erring Christians nor the other lost, Jam. 5:19-20; Mark 16:15-16.
 10. Without a focus on heaven, Christians become immoral — sometimes even involving themselves in abominable sins — immodesty, dancing, lying,

gambling, assaults, murder, adultery, Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 5.

11. Taking their focus off heaven, many Christians live like heathen and yet have the audacity to expect to go to heaven, Gal. 6:7-8.

C. How can we improve our focus on heaven?

1. Joyfully attend every assembly (including Gospel meetings, etc.) plus Bible classes, Psalm 122:1; Acts 2:46.
2. Dedicate a liberal portion of your material resources to the work of the Lord, 2 Cor. 9:13; Mark 12:42-44.
3. Feed on the Word of God, 1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:11-6:2.
4. Consequently, you will know saving truth, John 8:32.
5. Spend as much time in Christian fellowship as you can, Rom. 12:10; 1 Pet. 2:17.
6. Solidify the home with a solid biblical foundation, 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15.
7. Replace profane activities with hope of heaven coupled with purity and zeal for good works, Titus 2:12-14; John 17:18.
8. Remember, Christians do not make sinning a major characteristic of their lives; we do not continue a sinful lifestyle, 1 John 3:8-9; 5:18; 1:7-2:1.
9. Be conscious of the omniscience of the Godhead, Psalm 139:1-6; John 2:24-25, and the Divine willingness to save us, Psalm 46:1; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Cor. 10:13.

II. Focus on Heaven — As Congregations.

- A. The Lord's church faces numerous challenges from without and from within.
1. There is the challenge to be popular with government, Acts 4:18; 5:27-28.
 2. Other religions chastise the church for being exclusive, Acts 14:8-19.
 3. There is the challenge to please the membership, 2 Tim. 4:1-4.

4. Then, there is the pressure of trying to grow numerically in an often disinterested and hostile world, Acts 17:16-21, 32; 16:22-24.
 5. Facing the quandary of what to do and how to do it, the church often fails to plan and consequently fails to do anything, Matt. 25:14-30; Jam. 4:17.
 6. Often the Lord's church is apathetic, Rev. 3:14-17.
 7. The church sometimes becomes jaded to sin in its midst, 1 Cor. 5.
 8. The church is sorely challenged by false teachers whose motives are self-serving, Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Pet. 2:1-3.
- B. The failure to "focus on heaven" by any congregation manifests itself variously.
1. The U.S. government has interfered with church discipline (leveling heavy monetary penalties), restricts public proclamation of some moral issues (homosexuality), requires equal hiring opportunities for non-church members and even immoral persons in so-called para-church organizations. How the church responds is its investment in these areas, Acts 4:19-20; 5:29.
 2. In other nations, members of the churches of Christ are either imprisoned indefinitely or severely restricted in practicing Christianity and especially in evangelism. How the church responds ... Rev. 2:10; Acts 7:54-60.
 3. Many congregations pursue ecumenism with their denominational neighbors (Shelly, Lucado, pulpit exchanges, joint services, ministerial alliances and interdenominational fellowships like "Promise Keepers.")
 4. To please memberships, church leaders ignore Bible doctrine on marriage, divorce and remarriage, church discipline, fellowship with non-Christians, etc., Matt. 19:9; 2 Thess. 3:6; 1 John 1:3; 2 John 9-11.
 5. Attempting to swell numbers, the church has been led by false teachers to change the plan of salvation

(Lucado — baptism is not necessary), employ entertainment (choirs and drama), teach open fellowship 2 John 9-11, substitute “union” for “unity” 1 Cor. 1:10-13.

6. Regrettably, most congregations make no or few plans for the future and therefore do little beyond show up at the appointed times and perhaps have one or two Gospel meetings. We are largely content to sit on padded pews in air-conditioned buildings priding ourselves in our orthodoxy!
 7. Typically, congregations invest more time and money in church property (lawn care, constructing and maintaining buildings) — the overhead — than they do in the direct missions of the church.
 8. One ‘patriarch’ in the church put it this way when asked about the prospect of the church growing in the community: “Absolutely none! Everybody already knows what we believe and they don’t believe it.” Others say, “We tried that before and it didn’t work.” Apathy and indifference are perhaps the besetting sins among us!
 9. We no longer blush at sin, Jer. 6:15, even if the most abominable variety is displayed openly among our members (e.g., adultery).
 10. False teachers abound in the church and often are neither tested with the Scriptures, 1 John 4:1, nor challenged by elders, Titus 1:8-11. Elders should have stopped false teachers immediately upon proclamation of doctrinal error — instead of providing pulpits from which they can widen their damnable influence.
- C. How can we improve our focus on heaven as the church?
1. Regarding government interference with the Lord’s church, we need to ensure we comply to the best of our abilities, perhaps with some legal advice, but without compromising Divine mandate. Then, we have no choice but to persevere despite retribution, Acts 5:29.

2. Regarding fellowship, our fellowship is **exclusively** with those who are in fellowship with God, 1 John 1:3; 2 John 9-11.
3. Unlike the Catholic Church and denominations that decide upon and change doctrine from time to time, the churches of Christ are dependent on absolute, unchanging, biblical doctrine, Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Jude 3. We do not have Divine permission to redefine marriage, divorce and remarriage, Christian fellowship or ignore church discipline.
4. Though unpopular, we must adhere to the Divine redemptive plan, not substitute ‘union’ for ‘unity’ and rely on the Gospel instead of gimmickry or entertainment to promote church growth, Rom. 1:16.
5. Congregations must make plans for the future, otherwise they plan to fail — and join the congregations that “die-out” each week! Neh. 2:12-16.
6. We need to get back to the Lord’s business — the Great Commission and stop spending so much time and money on expedients. Building meeting houses neither completely satisfies our obligations — nor justifies (or sustains) our existence, Matt. 28:18-20.
7. We need to always abound in the work of the Lord and be zealous of good works — irrespective of how little favorable response we see, 1 Cor. 15:58; Titus 2:14. We cannot afford to be apathetic.
8. We need to view sin for what it is and not allow it to continue unaddressed in our churches, Rev. 2-3 — or else! If church discipline “splits the church,” it needs to split — or come out from among them, 2 Cor. 6:17. I would much rather do what God requires than pass judgment on the Word of God, John 12:48; Rev. 20:12.
9. We sorely need qualified and courageous elders today who will protect the church from wolves in sheep’s clothing, Acts 20:29; Matt. 7:15.

Conclusion:

1. Individually as Christians and collectively as the church, we simply **must** focus on heaven.
2. Our souls' salvation depends on it.
3. The eternal redemption of others, in part, also depends on the focus we should have on heaven!
4. We must never forget that we are only pilgrims ever marching toward the heavenly horizon. This earth is not our home!
5. We must remember who we are, from whence we came and where we are going.
- 6. Brethren, let's go to heaven together!**

Invitation:

1. If you have not been baptized for the remission of your sins — your focus hitherto has not been on heaven, Acts 2:38.
2. Or, you may be a child of God whose 'focus on heaven' has wavered whereby you have sinned publicly, Acts 8:22.

A Colorful Description of Christians

1 Peter 2:9-10

Thesis: Exposition

Introduction:

1. Similar OT passage: Deut. 26:17-19.
2. Similar NT passages:
 - a. Eph. 5:8.
 - b. Col. 1:13.

Body:

I. “ye”

- A. Irregular plural pronoun equivalent to “**you yourselves.**”
- B. Adds emphasis.
- C. Distinguishes between obedient and disobedient people.

II. “chosen”

- A. Translated elect 16, **chosen** 7
- B. Means picked out

III. “generation”

- A. Translated kind 5, kindred 3, offspring 3, nation 2
- B. The Jews often counted time by generations, which varied according to the frame of Bible history under consideration, Gen. 15:13, 16; 100 years. Typically, a generation is 38 years.

IV. “royal”

- A. Kingly or regal

V. “priesthood”

- A. Used twice in NT; the office of a priest; the body of priests; to function as a priest.
- B. NT reference: Rev. 1:6.
- C. OT reference: Exod. 19:5-6.
- D. As priests we have free access to God and offer praises to God.

VI. “holy”

- A. Translated holy 161, saints 61
- B. Most holy thing

VII. “nation”

- A. (eth’ nos) cf. “ethnic”
- B. Translated gentiles 93, nation 64, heathen 5, people 2
- C. A multitude living together.

VIII. “peculiar”

- A. Purchased possession; one’s own property
- B. OT references:
 - 1. Deut. 7:6.
 - 2. Isa. 43:21.
- C. NT references:
 - 1. Eph. 1:14.
 - 2. Titus 2:14.

IX. “people”

- A. (laos) a people, group, tribe, nation
- B. All those who are of the same stock and language
- C. A great population gathered together anywhere.

X. “shew forth”

- A. To declare abroad, make known by proclaiming, to celebrate

XI. “praises”

- A. Translated virtue 4, praise 1
- B. Virtue, moral goodness

XII. “called”

- A. To call aloud, utter in a loud voice, to invite
- B. To be given a name or title; to be saluted by name

XIII. “darkness”

- A. Darkness of night or blindness
- B. NT reference: 1Thess. 5:4-8.

XIV. “marvelous”

- A. Wonderful surpassing human comprehension

Conclusion:

- 1. God has **selected** Christians to be his special people.
- 2. That selection is **conditional**.
- 3. That selection involves a **purchase** price.
- 4. Christians are the **possession** of God.
- 5. Therefore, Christians have a **responsibility** to worship and

serve God (in his own appointed ways).

Invitation:

1. Jesus paid the price; won't you make yourself the **purchased possession** of God? John 3:16; Acts 20:28
2. Non-Christians: Heb. 5:8-9; Acts 2:38.
3. Erring Christians: Acts 8:22.

Journalistic Evangelism

John 20:30-31

Thesis: To emphasize the immense yet largely *untapped* potential for reaching the lost with the printed word.

Song: *Wonderful Words of Life*

Introduction:

1. It is not my purpose to *de-emphasize* any other medium of communicating God's Word (e.g., TV, radio, door-knocking, etc.).
2. It is, though, my purpose to *emphasize* the great potential of reaching the lost masses with the Word of God through the printed word.

Body:

I. The written word, what we today call journalism, is an indispensable medium of divine revelation.

- A. However, the written word has never precluded other mediums of the proclamation of God's Word.
- B. Once, God spoke directly to the fathers of families under Patriarchy; in all three dispensations God has used prophets or preachers to speak the Word of God.
- C. However, the Old Testament Scriptures were written and are a source to which men can appeal to discern divine revelation, Acts 17:11; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 3:15; John 20:30-31.
- D. The written Word can convey divine revelation when no other medium of communication is presently available (e.g., no prophet or preacher present; King Josiah, 2 Chron. 34:14-35:19).
- E. Further, the written Word is accessible anytime of the day or night and potentially any place.

II. Presently journalism relates to edification.

- A. I have heard it said that the churches of Christ have more periodicals circulating within their fellowship than any other religious group, and I fully believe it.
- B. Almost all of these journalistic efforts are directed

inwardly, toward the church and Christians.

- C. This journalism takes the form of Gospel papers, tracts, lecturership books, class and study books, etc.
- D. Comparatively little of our published material is directed *outwardly*, toward the sin-sick and dying world.
- E. Typically, material published for non-Christians includes and is limited to tracts and Bible correspondence courses.
- F. Few local and brotherhood-wide Gospel papers are published primarily for non-Christians.
- G. Many Gospel papers published with Christians in mind are less suited for distribution among non-Christians; but, Gospel magazines published primarily for non-Christians are always suitable for digestion by Christians as well.

III. Journalism well suited to evangelism.

- A. The very fact that the Old Testament exists in written form attests loudly to the significance of communicating the mind of God through the written word today, 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21.
- B. Further, New Testament writers were aware what they wrote was Scripture, 1 Cor. 14:37; 2 Pet. 3:16.
- C. Jesus repeatedly used phrases like, “It is written” and “Scripture saith” in his teaching, Luke 24:46; John 19:37.
- D. All of this demonstrates the divine wisdom by which a written format for the dissemination of God’s Word has occurred.

IV. Recommendation for journalistic evangelism.

- A. I hasten to add that I *AM NOT* advocating the neglect, exclusion or demotion of importance of any other form of proclamation of God’s Word (tracts, door-knocking, Gospel meetings, Bible correspondence courses, radio, TV, newspaper ads, etc.).
- B. Rather, there is a place for all methods of disseminating God’s Word, and the various methods used together can complement each other.
- C. The printed word, however, is unique; it can go where we don’t have money to go with TV and radio; it can go where people don’t have time for TV, radio or a personal visit; it can work when TV and radio are off the air and personal workers are sleeping.

D. It's convenient and effective for mass distribution of God's Word. Examples:

Conclusion:

1. The printed word offers an unsurpassed opportunity to get the Gospel before the lost masses.
2. Other methods of preaching the Gospel employed alongside of the written word can greatly enhance the effectiveness of all the methods employed.
3. If nothing more, the printed word offers the church the opportunity of making the Gospel available to all of the lost, regardless of whether they obey it.
4. May God richly bless any and all of our efforts to reach the lost, but let us do something now!

The Time Is At Hand For Godly Living

Revelation 1:3; Romans 13:11-14

Thesis: To encourage godliness among God's people.

Song: *Take Time To Be Holy*

Introduction:

1. God destroyed an ungodly world in Noah's day, Gen. 6.
2. God caused Israel to destroy ungodly nations in Canaan, Josh.
3. God will destroy an ungodly world in the last day, 2_Pet. 3:9-12; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

Body:

I. Examples of godliness among God's children.

- A. Good Ole Noah; the rest of the world except Noah's immediate family could not be persuaded from their ungodliness, even by a veteran servant (600 years old) though he could have preached to them for the 120 years he built the ark.
- B. All of Hebrews Chapter 11's "hall of fame (or faith)" Bible characters.
- C. Joshua affected his generation and the one that followed in godliness, Jud. 2:7-8.
- D. The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31:10-31.
- E. Lois, Eunice and Timothy represent three generations of godliness, 2 Tim. 1:5.
- F. Stephen and James practiced godliness unto death, Acts 6:8-7:60; 12:1-2; Rev. 2:10; the apostles (and other brethren) also were prepared to practice godliness unto death, Acts 4 — 5; 2 Cor. 11:23-28.
- G. Sarah is pictured in Scripture as the mother of godly women, 2 Pet. 3:4-6.

II. Examples of the lack of godliness among God's children.

- A. Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1-11; Christians cheating on income taxes about church contributions would be

comparable today.

- B. Brother who lived with his father's wife, 1 Cor. 5:1-13; even preachers have committed adultery.
- C. Diotrephes, 2 John 9-10.
- D. Demas, 2 Tim. 4:10.
- E. Simon (formerly a sorcerer) — then he repented, Acts 8.

III. Exhortations to godliness.

- A. Older men and women as well as younger men and women are encouraged to practice godliness, Titus 2:1-6; all accountable souls — especially all Christians.
- B. Qualifications of elders do not represent a degree of godliness from which other Christians are exempt, 1 Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9.
- C. Christians must obey government in order to be godly, Rom. 13:1-8; 2 Pet. 2:17; speeding tickets don't speak highly of our godliness.
- D. Godliness also requires practicing modesty, 1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:1-6; modesty not wholly dependent on society, otherwise one day we could walk down the street stark naked and consider ourselves modest.
- E. Godliness requires our abstaining from drugs (including alcohol), Prov. 23:29-35; Gal. 5:21.
- F. Godly people also abstain from pornography, Matt. 5:28.
- G. Godly people must not lie, Rev. 1:8.
- H. Godly people don't steal, Eph. 4:28; not even from the job or government.
- I. Practicing godliness means not keeping evil companions, Prov. 1:10-19; 1 Cor. 15:33; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; the so-called "good ole boys and gals" are not the ones with whom Christians should be spending their time.
- J. God's people must abstain from fleshly lusts, Prov. 5:3-14; 6:25-35; 7:10-27; 23:26-28; 2 Tim. 2:22.
- K. Godliness means accepting family responsibilities, Eph. 6:4; 5:25; 1 Tim. 5:8.

Conclusion:

1. Godliness should be practiced by God's people EVERYWHERE.
2. Godliness should be practiced by God's people ALL OF THE TIME.

Invitation:

1. Isn't it time for you to obey the Gospel and begin a life of godliness? Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:7.
2. Isn't it time for you to come back to the Lord and resume a life of godliness? Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

A Burning And A Shining Light

John 5:35; Matthew 5:14-16

Thesis: To urge each Christian to be “a burning and a shining light.”

Song: *Ye Are The Light Of The World*

Introduction:

1. *Light* and *darkness* are used extensively in Scripture to depict the polar opposites of righteousness and wickedness.
2. Jesus referred to John the Baptist as “a burning and a shining light,” John 5:35; this John very effectively contrasted light and darkness.
3. Our Lord also said to his followers, of whom we profess to be some, “Ye are the light of the world ... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven,” Matt. 5:14-16.

Body:

I. The Bible contrasts the light of righteousness with the darkness of wickedness.

- A. Light and darkness represent the opposites of righteousness and wickedness, 2 Cor. 6:14.
- B. Outside Christ’s kingdom of light is only darkness, Col. 1:12-13; 1 Pet. 2:9.
- C. There is no middle ground between light and darkness, righteousness and wickedness, the kingdom of Christ and the darkness of sin.

II. Light is divine in origin.

- A. Heaven itself is the power plant of divine light, 1 Tim. 6:16.
- B. Light is said to emanate from God himself, Jam. 1:17; Rev. 21:23-25; 22:5.
- C. It was a matter of prophecy (fulfilled in Jesus Christ) that divine light should dwell on earth in the ministry of the Savior, Matt. 4:13-17.

- D. Jesus came to be a light to Jews and Gentiles alike, Matt. 4:13-17; Luke 2:32; Acts 26:23.
- E. Jesus Christ is the only light of the world, John 1:4-9; 8:12; 9:5.
- F. Our Lord came to give light to men, Eph. 5:14.
- G. Jesus began to impart light by preaching repentance and the kingdom, Matt. 4:13-17.
- H. Jesus empowered men to become the children of light, John 12:35-36.

III. Light shines on earth through the Word of God.

- A. Paul referred to the “light of the glorious gospel of Christ,” 2 Cor. 4:4.
- B. The same divine power which spoke physical light into existence has also provided spiritual light (revelation, knowledge), 2 Cor. 4:6.
- C. The word is called a “light that shineth in a dark place,” 2 Pet. 1:19-21.
- D. The Christian’s source of light, which he in turn must reflect toward others, comes today through the Word of God, the Gospel.

IV. The followers of Christ reflect divine light.

- A. Heavenly light resides in the children of God; Christians, therefore, have the divine charge to let that light shine, Matt. 5:14-16; Luke 8:16; 11:33-36; 12:35.
- B. We are called the “children of light,” Luke 16:8; Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5-8; God is called the “Father of lights,” Jam. 1:17.
- C. Christians are children of light because they have been “enlightened” by the Word of God, Heb. 6:4-6.
- D. We are commanded to give that light away to all men, Luke 1:79; Acts 13:47; 26:17-18.
- E. The Christian light must not only burn, it must also shine, Matt. 4:14-16; John 5:35.

V. Christians are cautioned against false lights.

- A. Satan and his servants take on the appearance of light and righteousness, 2 Cor. 11:14-15.
- B. Sometimes men are false lights as often were the Jews, Rom. 2:19.

VI. How can Christians let their lights shine?

- A. Reflect only light emanating from the divine source (heaven, the Father, Christ, the Word of God).
- B. Reflect all of the light radiating from the divine source, Acts 20:27.
- C. Allow no darkness a place in one to overshadow or dim the light of the Gospel, Luke 11:33-36.
- D. Putting away unholy things, Phil. 2:14-16.
- E. Seeking only that which is holy, 1 Thess. 5:5-8.
- F. Put on the armor of light, Rom. 13:12-13.
- G. Finally, holding forth the Word of God, Phil. 2:14-16.

Conclusion:

- 1. Light reproves sin and darkness, John 3:19-21; Eph. 5:13.
- 2. The light of the Gospel is the only means by which one can avoid stumbling as if walking in the night, John 11:9-10.
- 3. Men can walk in light or darkness, not both and not in between, 1 John 2:8-11.
- 4. Only by walking in the light can one enjoy fellowship with God and the forgiveness of sins, 1 John 1:5-7.
- 5. Let's each of us determine to be "a burning and shining light," John 5:35.

Invitation:

- 1. There is a distinct difference between the light of righteousness and the darkness of sin; won't you be led by the light of the Gospel today?
- 2. Erring Christians can be rekindled, Acts 8:22.
- 3. Others can begin their walk in the light by being immersed in water for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 John 1:7.

Even So Come, Lord Jesus

Revelation 22:20

Thesis: To contrast souls who desire the speedy return of Jesus with souls who dread his return.

Introduction:

1. People who major in material things of this physical universe are by death yanked, against their wills, across the threshold of eternity to meet an angry God.
 - a. “thy soul shall be **required** of thee,” Luke 12:15-20.
 - b. “for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?” Rev. 6:17.
2. People who major in spiritual matters prepare themselves to meet God and anxiously await the Second Coming of Christ.
 - a. “the spirit shall return to God,” Ecc. 12:7.
 - b. ‘earnestly desiring,’ 2 Pet. 3:12 ASV.

Body:

I. Some people want to clutch their existence on planet earth with all their might for as long as they can.

- A. Some religions incorporate an eternal **physical** existence into their religion.
 1. Jehovah’s Witnesses — 144,000 only going to heaven.
 2. “But the day of the Lord will come as a ...” 2 Pet. 3:10.
 3. Mormons expect to marry and have children and populate new worlds — after this life.
 4. “For in the resurrection they ...” Matt. 22:30.
- B. Some people are only interested in material wealth and possessions.
 1. Luke. 12:15-21.
 2. Luke. 12:22-31.
 3. Jam. 4:13-15.
 4. 1 Tim. 6:10.

- C. Some people are not prepared to meet God.
 - 1. Rev. 21:8.
 - 2. 1 Cor. 6:9-11.
 - 3. Gal. 5:19-23. “Works of the flesh” VS “fruit of the Spirit”
 - 4. John 14:1-3.
 - 5. Rev. 6:15-17 ‘Rocks fall on us and hide us from God’

II. Some people are eager to meet God.

- A. The apostle Paul was torn between serving Christ on earth and going to heaven to be with Christ.
 - 1. Phil. 1:23-24.
 - 2. 2 Tim. 4:6-8.
- B. First century Christians were **eagerly awaiting** the return of Christ.
 - 1. 2 Pet. 3:12, “Earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God ...” (ASV)
 - 2. 1 Cor. 1:7, “waiting for the coming of our Lord ...”
 - 3. Titus 2:13, “Looking for that blessed ...”
- C. A heavenly after-life is void of all displeasure and full of joy.
 - 1. Rev. 21:4 — no tears , sorrow or pain
 - 2. described as eternal reward, Matt. 5:12.
 - 3. described as a prepared inheritance, Matt. 25:34.
 - 4. described as eternal life, Matt. 25:46.
- D. Death is not to be feared by the faithful children of God, but joyfully anticipated.
 - 1. We will have a heavenly escort through the shadows of death, Psa. 23:4.
 - 2. No sting in death for the righteous, 1 Cor. 15:54-57.
 - 3. Through the grace and mercy afforded through Christ, we can come **boldly** [confidently] before God, Heb. 4:16.

Conclusion:

- 1. All have an unavoidable appointment, Heb. 9:27.
- 2. Some will be unprepared to meet God in judgment and dread for eternity that unpreparedness.
- 3. Some will be prepared for judgment and anxious to meet God.

Invitation:

1. Young, middle-aged or elderly, if we are prepared to meet God, joy will overpower any sadness in departing this life
2. Fortunately, if you are unprepared to meet God, as time permits, you can ready yourself even today
 - a. non-Christian
 - b. erring Christian
 - c. realize you need to study further
3. Amos 4:12, **'Prepare to meet thy God!'**

The Sword of the Spirit

Hebrews 4:12; Ephesians 6:17

Thesis: To examine the multi-faceted character of God's Word

Introduction:

1. Mankind often overlooks the only power in the world that *really matters* — *the Word of God*, Rom. 1:16.
 - a. Power to us is military strength with its missiles, planes and bombs.
 - b. Power is seen as political clout — who's on top, who's running things?
 - c. To others, power is horsepower, big engines, fast cars and massive machinery.
 - d. All these things will cease, 2 Pet. 3:10.
2. God's Word is like the anvil VS hammers.
 - a. It endures despite its opponents.
 - b. [anvil article]
3. God's supreme power is demonstrated by the statements of Heb. 4:12.
 - a. God's Word is alive.
 - b. God's Word is active.
 - c. God's Word is sharp.
 - d. God's Word pierces.
 - e. God's Word discerns.
 - f. God's Word is *eternal*.

Body:

I. God's Word is alive!

- A. It is not a *dead letter*!
- B. The Spirit of God, by means of the Word of God, moves the child of God like the wind moves the trees, John 3:5-8.
- C. The Sword of the Spirit in us makes us alive spiritually, Eph. 6:17; John 6:63.

II. God's Word is active or powerful!

- A. The Gospel (Word) is the power that saves, Rom. 1:16.

- B. The Word activates when as the seed it is planted in honest hearts, Luke 8:11.

III. God's Word is sharp!

- A. It is sharper than a two-edged sword; the Word cuts coming and going, Heb. 4:12.
- B. A sword may be used defensively or offensively (part of the Gospel armor, Eph. 6:10-17).

IV. God's Word pierces!

- A. The Word pierces or divides in areas humanly impossible, e.g., soul and spirit.
- B. It penetrates to the very hearts of men, Acts 2:37; 7:54.

V. God's Word discerns!

- A. Armed with the Word of God, one can discern good and evil, Heb. 5:13-14.
- B. We should, then, use the Word now for self-examination, 2 Cor. 13:5.
- C. The Word will be used, later, for our final examination, Rev. 20:11-15.

VI. God's Word is eternal!

- A. One cannot escape the Word of God as described in Heb. 4:12, because it is eternal, Matt. 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:23-25.
- B. Further, the Word will be present in judgment to examine us, John 12:48.

Conclusion:

1. Is God's Word *alive* in us?
2. Is God's Word *active* in us?
3. Is the *sharp*, two-edged sword of God (Word) apart of our Gospel armor; do we use it for defense?
4. Does God's Word *pierce* or penetrate our hearts?
5. Can we with God's Word *discern* both good and evil?
6. Does God's *eternal Word* dwell in us?

The Sin of Sodom

Romans 1:26-32

Thesis: To discern God's evaluation of homosexuality.

Introduction:

1. The subject of our lesson today is a DELICATE matter with us.
 - a. However, it is a subject that is paraded openly before our families in schools, on TV, by famous people, in politics and even by religious leaders.
 - b. Therefore, the subject of our lesson today is one that we must also address.
2. Our topic today is something about which God speaks in the Bible — in both testaments.
 - a. However, God views this conduct as sinful and further belonging to a sub-category of what God considers an ABOMINATION.
 - b. Therefore, it is important for us to examine what God says about this topic.
3. The subject of our sermon is something that cannot be ignored, because:
 - a. It adversely affects both our nation and our society, and often results in death.
 - b. It is something that leads to SPIRITUAL DEATH, too.
 - c. It is something that already has infected religion, including members of the churches of Christ.
 - d. It affects men, women and children of all ages.
 - e. This subject MUST be examined.
4. For a few moments I direct your attention to the “Sin of Sodom” which is introduced in Genesis 19.
 - a. I will try to present this material tactfully in consideration of the children present and our sensitivities.
 - b. However, any children not old enough to understand simply won't comprehend our discussion.
 - c. Further, any children able to comprehend the presentation NEED TO HEAR THIS, too.

Body:

I. What does the Bible say about the sin of Sodom?

- A. What does the Old Testament say about the “Sin of Sodom”?
 - 1. The “Sin of Sodom” is introduced in Gen. 19:1-29.
 - a. Gen. 13:13 identifies the men of Sodom as exceedingly wicked sinners.
 - b. Gen. 18:20 says the sin of Sodom is “very grievous.”
 - c. Gen. 18:23 portrays the inhabitants of Sodom as “wicked.”
 - d. Gen. 18:24-33 shows that God could not find even 10 righteous souls in Sodom.
 - e. Gen. 19:5 (NKJV) identifies the specific sin by which the city of Sodom defiled itself.
 - f. This is the sin commonly known to us as homosexuality or sodomy.
 - g. So, under Patriarchy, God’s first system of religion given to mankind, God condemned homosexuality.
 - 2. Next, under Judaism, God also condemned homosexuality.
 - a. Lev. 18:22 reads, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.”
 - b. Lev. 20:13 records, “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.”
 - c. Though God specifically stated that this sin should not be practiced by men or women, especially in Israel, Deut. 23:17, this is one of the sins that Israel learned from the nations around them, 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7.
- B. What does the New Testament say about the “Sin of Sodom”?
 - 1. The Gospel refers back to the “Sin of Sodom” of

Genesis 19.

- a. Luke 17:29 reads, “But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.”
 - b. 2 Peter 2:6 says, “And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.”
 - c. Jude 7 records, “Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”
2. The sin of homosexuality is condemned elsewhere in the New Testament as well.
- a. **Rom. 1:26-32 (26-27).**
 - b. 1 Cor. 6:9-11 is a catalog of sins that includes “effeminate” and “abusers of themselves with mankind” or “homosexuals” and “sodomites” (NKJV).
 - c. 1 Tim. 1:9-11 is a catalog of sins that includes “them that defile themselves with mankind” or “sodomites” (NKJV).
3. The sin of homosexuality is one form of fornication.
- a. “Fornication” may involve conduct man to man, man to woman, woman to woman or humans to animals.
 - b. “Fornication,” regardless of its specific form, is condemned throughout the New Testament, Matt. 5:32; 19:9; 1 Cor. 5:9; Gal. 5:19-21.

II. How does the “Sin of Sodom” affect us today?

- A. Homosexuals have come out of the proverbial “closet” and people with moral values are being FORCED into the “closet.”

1. The homosexual movement is militant and aggressive.
2. Homosexuals are a major force behind the attempt to place compulsory sex education in every public school in America. Proposals include the teaching of homosexuality and other perversions to children from five years old and up.
3. In 1985 a homosexual school was established in New York City, funded by \$50,000 annually from public taxes.
4. Mayors of major U.S. cities have declared “gay pride” weeks during which homosexuals and lesbians march in “gay pride” parades.
5. In 1991 the governor of New York ordered military recruiters barred from the State University because the military did not accept homosexuals.
6. Homosexuals are demanding child custody rights.
7. Proposed laws (including the revision of the 1964 Civil Rights Act) would grant non-discrimination to homosexuals in every facet of American life (housing, employment, teachers, foster parents, adoption rights, marriage).
8. The FCC forbids programming that speaks against homosexuality and requires that any group doing so pay for air time for homosexuals to present their message.
9. Homosexual prisoners successfully petitioned New York City for their own prison wing.
10. Homosexual rights groups have obtained tax exempt status.
11. Marital status is being granted to homosexuals (domestic partnership may legally replace marriage).
12. There are at least 336 homosexual religious congregations in 47 states besides homosexual membership in traditional churches (including the churches of Christ).
13. Several hundred children’s pornographic books circulate in America.

14. There are an estimated 30,000 children used by homosexuals in the LA area alone.
- B. The American family is regularly bombarded with the homosexual message.
1. Homosexuality is the frequent topic of TV programming and is generally presented in a favorable light by the media.
 2. Even “Dear Abby” and “Ann Landers” have written to support homosexuality.
 3. Homosexual groups are courted by at least one political party.
 4. Even companies are publicly declaring themselves friends or opponents of homosexuality (Disney for; Cracker Barrel against).
 5. So-called “gay” children’s books are appearing in libraries.
 6. The American public is being told that homosexuality is the result of one’s genetic make-up and that God made homosexuals.
- C. About half of the states have laws against both homosexual and heterosexual sodomy.
1. In the past the U.S. Supreme Court has not interfered with those laws. The Supreme Court, of course, has demonstrated repeatedly that it cannot be trusted with the moral welfare of America.
 2. Non-enforcement of laws prohibiting homosexuality and the militant homosexual movement make those laws ineffective.
 3. Lower courts are overturning voter-approved laws that restrict rights of homosexuals.
 4. If homosexuals achieve their goals, America will become a homosexual nation and heterosexuals and dissenting groups (churches) will be outlawed.
- D. How many homosexuals are there in America?
1. Unscientific studies and militant homosexuals claim they number 10% of the American population.
 2. A 1994 University of Chicago poll using modern polling methods discovered that less than 3% of

Americans are homosexual.

Conclusion:

1. What did God intend?
 - a. God designed marriage to include one man for one woman for life, Matt. 19:4-5.
 - b. Homosexuality is condemned by God (lesbianism and sodomy included).
 - c. Husbands and wives must also avoid the sin of sodomy.
2. How does one become a homosexual?
 - a. One commits this sin the same way any other sin is committed.
 - b. Matt. 15:19 reads, “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”
 - c. Jam. 1:14-15 says, “But every man is tempted, when he drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”
 - d. This does not deny that outside influences may contribute to the temptation of this sin, but sin can be resisted. Jam. 4:7, “Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”
 - e. 1 Cor. 10:13 records, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”
3. Is there any hope for a homosexual?
 - a. Yes, some of the Corinthians were formerly guilty of this sin, but they repented (changed), 1 Cor. 6:10-11.
 - b. There is no sin, which if we will repent of it, that God will not forgive us, 1 John 1:5-10.
 - c. Happily, God also FORGETS the sins that he forgives, Heb. 8:12; 10:17.
4. There is a militant homosexual movement in our country today.
 - a. Christians must learn what God says about homosexuality and guide their families in God’s Word.
 - b. Christians and other moral persons must actively resist the encroachments of the homosexual movement in our nation

(by giving special attention to voting, school boards, libraries).

- c. **Our nation and the free practice of Christianity are at risk!**

Hope Spoken

Romans 10:13-17

Thesis: To Emphasize the urgency with which the **Gospel of Hope** must be proclaimed to a sin-laden and sorrow-ridden world.

Song: *The Gospel Is For All*

Introduction:

1. First, we must define **biblical hope** and distinguish it from mere **earthly hope**.
2. Second, each Christian, each congregation of the Lord's church, each eldership, each preacher and each teacher **must** prayerfully review his **obligation** to proclaim God's **Message of Hope**.
3. Third, we must **identify** the **target audience** to whom we ought to proclaim the Message of Hope.
4. Fourth, we must re-evaluate the available mediums of communicating the divine Message of Hope (of course, with due consideration of biblical authority).

Body:

I. Hope Defined.

A. The fundamental and underlying characteristic of the word "hope" in both its verb and noun form is "1: to **desire with expectation of obtainment**; 2: to **expect with confidence**" (*Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1993.)

1. The concept of "hope" may be applied to **non-spiritual matters** pertaining to the physical universe and one's existence therein.
2. Further, "hope" may be applied to **spiritual matters** that transcend one's physical surroundings.
3. Most people who entertain hope do so with regard to their **earthly existence only**.
4. **Christians** frequently entertain hope **both** regarding their **earthly** habitation and especially

- their **spiritual** citizenship in heaven.
5. Unfortunately, vast numbers of the world's population entertain **neither** earthly hope nor spiritual hope. **No hope**, Eph. 2:12-13!
 6. Even more sad, many souls have an empty, false spiritual hope that is **not substantiated by God's Word**, Matt. 7:21-23.
- B. Earthly hope is deficient and temporal at best — it won't last!
1. The apostle Paul wrote: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable," 1 Cor. 15:19.
 2. That sentiment is amplified for those whose hope pertains solely to this physical existence and doesn't even entertain a heavenly pursuit, Luke 12:16-21.
 3. Most of the world's population exists under some sort of great oppression that does not provide much prospect of hope in this life (e.g., political, religious, social, racial, economical, educational, handicapped, dysfunctional family, etc.).
 4. To eat, have clothes and shelter for many are their only pursuits and they will often not have enough of any of it in this life. They have no real hope. Many despair in this life and know only a miserable existence.
 5. Even for those who have real hope in this life regarding a measure of affluence, it is fleeting because of the temporary nature of life as well as the temporary duration of this world, Jam. 4:14; 2 Pet. 3:10-12.
- C. **Biblical hope** sustains God's faithful children in this life and provides a bright prospect of eternity in heaven.
1. The Greek word "**elpizo**" [**el-pid'-zo**] is translated 18 times as "trust" and 10 times as "hope." It means "1a: in a religious sense, **to wait for salvation with joy and full confidence.**" (*Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1995.)

2. The Greek word “**elpis**” [el-pece’] is translated 53 times as “hope.” It means “2a: in the Christian sense 2a1: **joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation.**” (*Ibid.*)
3. Biblical hope rests on the divine assurance of **eternal bliss** after this life is concluded.
 - a. “... in hope of eternal life ...” Titus 1:2; 3:7.
 - b. “... hope of his calling ... his inheritance in the saints,” Eph. 1:18.
 - c. “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven ...” Col. 1:5.
4. As such, then, biblical hope pertains to salvation.
 - a. “For we are saved by hope ...” Rom. 8:24.
 - b. “... hope of salvation,” 1 Thess. 5:8.
5. There is only one hope, Eph. 4:4.
6. Our “God of Hope” is the source of the Christian’s hope, Rom. 15:13.
7. The Christian hope is Messianic in nature, 1 Tim. 1:1; Titus 2:13.
8. Further, the biblical hope is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
 - a. Acts 23:6; 24:15.
 - b. “... a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,” 1 Pet. 1:3.
9. Biblical hope is the chief object of written revelation.
 - a. The testament with which the former testament was replaced provides great hope, 2 Cor. 3:11-12.
 - b. “... hope of the gospel ...” Col. 1:23.
 - c. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope,” Rom. 15:4.
10. Biblical hope was the subject of prophecy.
 - a. “... the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers ... hope to come ...” Acts 26:6-7.
 - b. “... hope of Israel ...” Acts 28:20.

11. Biblical hope provides confidence in this life and the approaching eternity, where faithful children of God will spend forever with God in heaven.
 - a. "... the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul ..." Heb. 6:18-19.
 - b. Christians, therefore have "the full assurance of hope unto the end," Heb. 6:11; 3:6; 1 Pet. 1:13.
12. Consequently, biblical hope is the source of great **rejoicing**, Rom. 12:12; Heb. 3:6.
13. It is biblical hope that animates the Christian: "... the hope that is in you ..." 1 Pet. 3:15.
14. Therefore, unlike other souls, Christians can approach death with every confidence and expectation of spending eternity in heaven with God. "... the righteous hath hope in his death," Prov. 14:32.
15. For the child of God, then, life should not be one of despair, despite the physical circumstances in which he finds himself. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God," Ps. 43:5).

II. Each Christian shares some degree of responsibility in proclaiming God's Message of Hope.

- A. **Preachers** must carefully and faithfully proclaim the good news of the Gospel.
 1. 2 Timothy 4:2, 5, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine ... But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."
 2. 1 Timothy 4:16, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
- B. **Elders** bear an immense responsibility, which

unfortunately, often is not fully recognized by those who serve as elders.

1. Hebrews 13:17, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”
 2. 1 Timothy 3:2, “... apt to teach.”
- C. **Each Christian** must teach in some degree.
1. Every Christian ought (has a moral obligation) to develop his teaching skills, Heb. 5:11-6:2.
 2. The growth of the early church was not attributable solely to the work of apostles and other preachers, but depended heavily on the teaching done by other members of the church, Acts 8:1-4; 18:26.

III. Target Audience.

- A. It must seem strange to even need to consider to whom the Gospel (with its message of hope) needs proclaimed.
1. Should we limit our presentation of the Gospel to the “unchurched”?
 2. Is anyone really lost, or will an infinitely loving God save everyone anyway?
 3. Are our denominational neighbors and friends in need of hearing the Gospel of Christ?
 4. Should the church preach the Gospel to members of the church, including faithful Christians?
- B. **Almighty God has selected the target audience!**
1. Biblical **unity** and **fellowship** are limited to those souls who have submitted to the divinely authored scheme of redemption and are practicing simple, New Testament Christianity.
 - a. 2 John 9, “... He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.”
 - b. 1 John 1:3, “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that **ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.**”

2. The so-called “unchurched” as well as every other lost soul, including denominational people, need to hear the saving Gospel with its exclusive Message of Hope.
3. Unfaithful Christians need to be rejuvenated with the Gospel, Jam. 5:19-20.
4. Even faithful Christians need to hear the Gospel over and over again.
 - a. Rom. 1:15, “So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also.”
 - b. 1 Cor. 4:17, “For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.”
 - c. 1 Tim. 4:6, “If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained.” (Also 2 Tim. 2:14).
 - d. 2 Pet.1:12-13, “Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance.”
 - e. 2 Pet. 3:1, “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.”
 - f. Jude 5, “I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this . . .”

IV. Contemporary Mediums of Communication.

- A. Anciently, the Word of God was communicated from person to person orally and in written form.
 1. Preaching is the formal presentation of the Gospel message, Acts 5:42.
 2. Teaching is the informal presentation of the God’s

Word, Acts 18:26.

3. Of course, the committing of God's Word to writing gave us both testaments (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Thess. 3:17).
- B. Throughout the years, our Lord's church has employed a variety of these methods in several forms.
1. **Preaching:** pulpit messages, lectureships, debates.
 2. **Teaching:** Bible classes, VBS, workshops, seminars, schools of preaching, church camp.
 3. **Writing:** BCC, Gospel journals, Bible class material, religious books, mass mailing.
 4. **Television:**
 5. **Radio:**
- C. Contemporary evangelism.
1. No one medium of communication is superior to any other medium of communication.
 2. Each medium of communication has its strengths and weaknesses.
 3. One or more mediums of communication should be utilized to the extent that they are useful in a given locality and financially feasible.
- D. The internet is a recently new medium of communication that should not be overlooked or underestimated.
1. It can employ preaching, teaching, oral presentations, colorful illustrations and written messages — on demand at the convenience of the auditor.
 2. The internet is high tech and yet cost efficient.
 3. The potential audience runs in the billions and spans the globe.

Conclusion:

1. You and I must explain to the world the crucial distinction between **biblical hope** and **earthly hope**.
 - a. The strength of biblical hope is the promise of a sovereign God.
 - b. The efficiency of the Christian hope depends on the Messiah — his resurrection and his promise to return for us.

- c. The confidence of hope is salvation from past sins and the prospect of eternal redemption.
2. You and I must realize that **we alone** have the responsibility to bring God's **Message of Hope** to a lost and dying world; no one else can do it!
 - a) For many in this world, they can have no hope in physical matters; their lot in life may never improve.
 - b) However, we can offer them real and enduring hope despite their physical circumstances.
 - c) These are the souls most likely to obey the Gospel (e.g., India, Russian, Africa, the poor, etc.)
3. You and I must accept the fact that **all souls** need to hear the Gospel's Message of Hope, even our religious neighbors.
4. You and I must take advantage of as many different, valid mediums of communication as possible to get God's message out to the world.
5. Brethren, let's go to heaven together — and take as many souls with us as possible. **Tell someone about God's Message of Hope today!**

Jesus Christ, Our Example

1 Peter 2:21-25; John 13:1-17

Thesis: To urge souls to follow the example of Jesus, knowing that there can be no better course to pursue.

Song: *Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah; He Leadeth Me*

Introduction:

1. One's example is a more potent instructor than his words alone.
 - a. For instance, parents give faulty instruction to their children when they mouth: "Do as I say, not as I do!"
 - b. Jesus Christ is the Master Teacher, in part, because, unlike the Pharisees, Matt. 23:3-5, he practiced what he preached. Matt. 16:24, "... If any man will ..."
 - c. The apostle Paul could urge souls to imitate Christ by following him because Paul also lived what he preached, 1 Cor. 11:1; 4:16.
2. Christians need to use Jesus Christ as their example because the world carefully scrutinizes the lives of those who profess to be the children of God.
 - a. Hence, the world reads Christians' lives as though they were epistles, 2 Cor. 3:1-3.
 - b. Christians are warned to not conform to the world, Rom. 12:1-2, that they are not OF THE WORLD John 17:16, and not to befriend the world, Jam. 4:4.
 - c. Role models are sought in parents, policemen, teachers, elders, deacons and preachers; however, every Christian should be a role model for the world.
 - d. Christians should endeavor to live like Jesus lived and otherwise ask themselves regarding any given situation, "What would Jesus do?"

Body:

I. Jesus Christ is our example when we face temptation.

- A. Jesus overcame manifold temptations, Matt. 4:1-11; Heb.

2:18, "For in that he himself hath ..."

- B. The Lord taught his disciples to pray that they might avoid temptation, Matt. 6:9-13.
- C. Scripture teaches that Christians CAN overcome temptations, 1 Cor. 10:13, "There hath no ..." 2 Pet. 2:9, "The Lord knoweth how to ..."
- D. Each Christian should strive to overcome every temptation, as did Christ, Heb. 4:15, "For we have not an high ..." Heb. 6:1, "Therefore leaving the principles of the ..."
- E. A reward awaits those who overcome, Rev. 3:5.

II. Jesus Christ is our example in prayer.

- A. Christ's life was a life of prayer.
 - 1. The Model Prayer, Matt. 6:9-15.
 - 2. Thanksgiving for things hidden and revealed, Matt. 11:25-26.
 - 3. At the grave of Lazarus, John 11:41-42.
 - 4. For Peter that his faith not fail, Luke 22:31-32.
 - 5. Prayer of thanks at the institution of the Lord's Supper, Matt. 26:26-27.
 - 6. The great intercessory prayer on the way to Gethsemane, John 17.
 - 7. The prayer in Gethsemane, Luke 22:41-44.
 - 8. The prayer on the cross for his murderers, Luke 23:34.
- B. Many passages show the early disciples prayed, Acts 2:42; 6:4; 7:59-60; 12:5.
- C. All Christians are urged to pray, 1 Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2.

III. Jesus Christ is our example in forgiveness.

- A. Jesus taught forgiveness in prayer, Matt. 6:9-15.
- B. The Lord forgave his enemies, even while they were putting him to death, Luke 23:34.
- C. Jesus is also willing to forgive all men their sins when they repent, Heb. 10:15-17; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 1:9.
- D. Christians are urged to forgive others, Luke 17:3-4; Eph. 4:32.

IV. Jesus is our example in teaching the Word of God and condemning error.

- A. Jesus personally brought the Gospel from God, John 1:17, and spoke the Word of God while on earth, John 3:34.
- B. Our Lord condemned religious error Matt. 15:9; Matt. 23.
- C. Christians are commanded to speak only the Word of God and condemn error, 1 Pet. 4:11; Rom. 16:17-18.

V. Jesus Christ did not allow his relatives to hinder his worship and work.

- A. Once the Lord's mother and brothers desired to interrupt his speaking, but he did not allow himself to be interrupted, Matt. 12:46-50.
- B. On another occasion, his brothers tried to influence the career and work, but Jesus disallowed this interference, John 7:2-9.
- C. Jesus taught his disciples that they must love God and his Word more than even family members, Matt. 10:35-38.

VI. Jesus never quit even when despised and not appreciated.

- A. If being despised and not fully appreciated were ever REASON TO QUIT, Jesus had plenty of reason, Heb. 12:1-3; 1 Pet. 2:21-25.
- B. Christians may also face despair and mistreatment, but must NOT QUIT, Gal. 6:9; 1 Cor. 15:58.

Conclusion:

1. Jesus Christ is our perfect example, 1 Pet. 2:21-25; John 13:1-15.
2. We should ask ourselves, "How would we live if Jesus were our next-door neighbor or frequent guest?" Are there changes you would make in your life?
3. Jesus is really closer than a neighbor or house guest, he dwells in each of us, 2 Cor. 13:5; Eph. 3:17.
4. Another question one might ask himself is: "Would I worship God more intently if Jesus were present in the assembly?" He is, Matt. 28:20!

Invitation:

1. Finally, though Jesus Christ needed no remission of sins, he even left the unsaved the example of being baptized, Matt.

3:13-17.

2. Baptism takes away sins, Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21.
3. The baptized believer ought to be careful not to WASTE his baptism by unfaithfulness, Acts 8:22; Heb. 10:26.

In the Belly of a Big Fish

Jonah 1:17-2:1

Thesis: To encourage the church (collective responsibility) and Christians (individual responsibilities) to engage in greater evangelistic activity.

Song: *The Gospel Is For All*

Introduction:

1. (Read Jonah 1-4.)
2. It is not often that a preacher reads an entire Bible book in the course of a sermon.
3. This short narration says much about both God and a servant of God.
4. The Bible is filled with “do’s and don’ts” on a variety of topics; here we learn how NOT TO exercise evangelism.

Body:

I. Jonah prays for a second chance

- A. Down in the deep, dark chambers and hollows of the belly of a big fish, wrapped in seaweed, after three days, Jonah desperately prayed to God. (Frankly, I’m confident that my desperation would have peaked long before that.)
 1. “Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish’s belly,” Jonah 1:17-2:1.
 2. “When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple,” Jonah 2:7.
- B. Like many of God’s children past and present, Jonah, in this instance, did not pray until he had no other recourse (no one else to whom he could appeal).

II. Jonah, the reluctant preacher

- A. Jonah was a native of the northern kingdom of Israel and a prophet of God.
 1. Jonah has made a vow regarding his role as a prophet, 2:9.

- B. Jonah was accustomed to preaching to fellow Jews.
 1. However, Jonah was unwilling to preach God's message to Gentiles — especially to the Ninevites.
 2. Only when Jonah could not escape from God and the mission on which he was sent, he **reluctantly** preached to the Ninevites.
- C. Doubtless, many of God's children today, too, reluctantly perform the will of God (worship music, assemble at appointed times, gender roles, evangelism, benevolence, edification, etc.).

III. Jonah, an angry preacher

- A. Jonah became angry when the Ninevites repented at his preaching and God, therefore, did not destroy them.
 1. Hardly a poorer example of evangelism could be imagined.
- B. God forbid that Jonah's despicable attitude should be shared by some in the church today.
- C. Jonah had more concern for the withered gourd by which he had been shaded than for 60,000 precious, penitent souls — how sad!

IV. Nobler examples of evangelism in the Bible

- A. Andrew brought Peter to Christ, John 1:40-42.
- B. Philip brought Nathaniel to the Lord, John 1:43-49.
- C. Philip the evangelist converted the Samaritans, Acts 8:5-13.
- D. The Thessalonians preached the Gospel even beyond their own city, 1 Thess. 1:6-8.
- E. The apostle Paul suffered greatly to preach the Gospel throughout the world, 2 Cor. 11:23-28.
- F. Jesus Christ left the glory and splendor of heaven to save all mankind, Phil. 2:5-8.

V. Our responsibilities

- A. We have a collective responsibility as the church and individual responsibilities as Christians to proclaim the Gospel.
- B. Like Jonah, our responsibility to preach God's message extends beyond the children of God, Mark 16:15-16.
- C. Of course, our responsibilities include edification of ourselves, 1 Cor. 14:12, and training others to also teach,

2 Tim. 2:2.

VI. Our Opportunities

- A. The churches of Christ have the resources to evangelize the world.
 - 1. We have sufficient **money** (at least for every other desirous expenditure).
 - 2. We have sufficient **technology** at our disposal to get the job done.
 - 3. We have adequate **talent** to evangelize the world.
- B. What we may lack is a desire and a commitment to save lost souls far and near.
- C. Opportunities abound in which congregations and individuals can become involved in taking the Gospel to the lost.
 - 1. television (e.g., “In Search of the Lord’s Way”)
 - 2. radio (e.g., local radio programs)
 - 3. literature (e.g., tracts, Bible correspondence courses)
 - 4. personal contact
- D. Brethren, dust on the tracts in our racks is shameful!
 - 1. The easiest and most passive type of evangelism is to give away a tract — in your bills, in rest rooms and other public places.
- E. Truth for the World
 - 1. A ministry of TV, radio, literature, campaigns targeting the world
 - 2. For instance, if sometimes the fields DO NOT appear white unto harvest locally, foreign Bible correspondence student leads are available for any congregation and its members who want to be directly involved in presenting the Gospel overseas.
 - 3. In this way, you can teach students who really want to learn God’s truth, who do learn it and obey the Gospel.

Conclusion:

- 1. Brethren, the Great Commission is **NOT OPTIONAL!**
- 2. However, do we also sometimes flee from the mission on which God has sent us?

3. Are there souls to whom we do not want the glad tidings of the Gospel to go?
4. Are songs like “The Gospel Is For All” somewhat hollow when we sing them?
- 5. Is the Gospel message confined to the deep, dark chambers and hollows of the belly of a big fish, because we will not tell others about God’s redemptive plan?**

Invitation:

1. God’s redemptive plan is not hidden, and unlike Jonah, we care for your souls.
2. Baptized believers who sin: Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:7.
3. Unimmersed believers: Luke 13:5; Rom. 10:9-10; Mark 16:16.
4. Others who wish to study God’s redemptive plan further are also invited to come forward as we stand and sing the invitation song.

Miracles: Their Purpose and Duration

John 20:30-31

Thesis: To discern the purpose and duration of miracles

Introduction:

1. The religious community is very excited about miracles today.
2. Belief in miracles today, especially tongues and healing, is common today throughout denominationalism.
3. However, what does the Bible teach about the purpose and duration of miracles?

Body:

I. The provisional nature of miracles.

- A. Creation resulted from supernatural law (miracle); procreation results through natural law (without miracles).
- B. Mankind received divine revelation through miracles; man uses divine revelation today without miracles (the Bible).
- C. Miracles are considered provisional since they ceased when they accomplished the purpose for which they were *provided*.

II. The purpose of miracles.

- A. Frequently, the primary purpose of miracles was to confirm the Word of God, Mark 16:20.
- B. Miracles confirmed God's Word through Moses, Exod. 4:1-9.
- C. The preaching of Jesus was confirmed by miracles, John 3:1-2; Matt. 9:6-7.
- D. The preaching of the apostles and other first century preachers was confirmed by miracles, Mark 16:20; 2 Cor. 12:12; Acts 8:6.
- E. Miracles have already confirmed the Word of God; hence, miracles are no longer needed, Heb. 2:3-4; John 20:30-31.

- F. Miracles were never intended to be permanent, 1 Cor. 13:8-13; Jam. 1:25; Eph. 4:11-14.

III. Not the purpose of miracles.

- A. The primary purpose of miracles was not healing, 1 Tim. 5:23; 2 Tim. 4:20.
- B. Healing was a by-product of healing miracles, Matt. 9:2-8.

IV. Additional miracles to tongues and healing.

- A. Jesus exercised power over: *DISEASE*, Matt. 8:2, 6-7; *NATURE*, Matt. 8:23-27; *THE SPIRIT WORLD*, Matt. 8:28-34; *THE MATERIAL UNIVERSE*, Matt. 14:17; *DEATH*, John 11; 10:17.
- B. The apostles also performed miracles by which they: *HEALED*, Acts 3:1-9; *STRUCK A MAN DEAD*, Acts 5:1-6; *RAISED THE DEAD*, Acts 10:36-42; *STRUCK A MAN BLIND*, Acts 13:9-12; *CAST OUT DEMONS*, Acts 16:16-18; *RECEIVED NO AFFECT FROM A VENOMOUS SNAKE BITE*, Acts 28:3-6.
- C. Therefore, proponents of miraculous tongue speaking and healing today ARE OBLIGATED to subscribe to other miraculous manifestations in the church today: *CALMING THE STORM*, *CASTING OUT DEMONS*, *MIRACLE BREAD*, *RAISING THE DEAD*, *STRIKING MEN BLIND*, *STRIKING MEN DEAD*, *BEING BITTEN BY POISONOUS SNAKES*, *WALKING ON WATER*, *TURNING WATER TO WINE*, etc.
- D. Tongues, healing, snakes, poison, casting out demons, etc. all come in the same package — proponents of miraculous tongues and healing should argue for all of it or none of it, Mark 16:17-18; Matt. 10:8.

V. Miracles unnecessary today.

- A. Miracles are not necessary to anything God wants his children to do today.
- B. There is but one baptism today, water baptism through which man is saved, Eph. 4:5; 1 Pet. 3:20-21.
- C. While once religious instruction was dependent on the Holy Spirit and miracle, men are now dependent on the written Word, John 14:26; 2 Tim. 3:16-17.
- D. Nothing today is dependent on Holy Spirit baptism or

miracles.

Conclusion:

1. Miracles were provisional in nature; having accomplished the purpose for which they were provided, miracles ceased.
2. The primary purpose of miracles was to confirm the Word of God, which they have already done.
3. Healing was a by-product of miracles.
4. Miracle workers today are too modest; they should boast ability to perform ALL of the first century miracles, or admit they can perform none.
5. Miracles are not necessary to perform anything God wants his children to do today.

Invitation:

1. One must resort to the Word of God alone to know God's will for mankind today, for by it we will be judged, John 12:48; Rev. 20:12-15.
2. The Word of God reveals God's redemptive plan, which if we obey it we will be saved, Heb. 5:8-9, and which if we disobey it we will be lost, 2 Thess. 1:7-10.

Modesty

1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:1-5

Thesis: To make a biblical investigation of the subject of modesty and make appropriate application to Christians today.

Introduction:

1. The New Testament teaches about “modesty.”
2. Further, the New Testament is authoritative, which authority has not diminished with the passing of the centuries.
3. What the New Testament says regarding “modesty” is binding upon Christians today.
4. What the New Testament teaches about “modesty” is *truth*, which if violated constitutes *sin*.

Body:

I. Definition of modesty.

- A. The English word “modesty” appears only once in the KJV, 1 Tim. 2:9.
 1. “Modesty” is from the Greek “kosmios.”
 2. It means: orderly, well-arranged, decent, modest, harmonious arrangement, adornment.
 3. “Kosmois” appears in the Septuagint, Ecc. 12:9, and is translated “set in order” and is applied to Solomon’s proverbs.
 4. “Kosmios” is derived from “kosmos” which means: order, regular disposition, ornament, decoration, embellishment, **adorning**, 1 Pet. 3:3, and is used, among other ways, of the **world** on which we live, Matt. 13:35; Mark 16:15.
- B. “Modesty” can apply to one’s manner of dress.
 1. The context of 1 Tim. 2: 9-10 affects gaudy dress.
 2. Also, the word for “apparel” is from the Greek “katastole” which means: letting down, and is used in the Septuagint in Isa. 61:3 as “garment” for the Hebrew meaning “covering” or “wrapping.”
- C. “Modesty” is also biblically applied to one’s demeanor or behavior.

1. “Kosmois” appears in the qualifications of elders as “good behavior,” 1 Tim. 3:2.
 2. The apostle Peter also taught “modesty” and addressed both what one may wear and an internal modesty, 1 Pet. 3:1-5.
 3. The Greek for “adorning” (vs. 3) is “kosmos.”
- D. The summary definition of “modesty” involves both one’s manner of dress and inward qualities.
1. The well ordering is not of dress and behavior only, but also of one’s inner life, which exhibits itself outwardly, too.
 2. **Biblical “modesty” is something that starts on the inside and works its way to the outside of a person.**

II. Modesty in context.

- A. Brief exposition of 1 Timothy 2:9-10.
1. The context of 1 Tim. 2:8-11 relates first to the public worship.
 2. Especially in the public worship, women are cautioned to be careful lest their outward adornment pose a distraction both to themselves and to others.
 3. “Shamefacedness” is the natural, internal moral quality of blushing when sin is viewed as repulsive.
 4. “Sobriety” is soundness or soberness of mind, resulting in self-restraint.
 5. “Not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array” refers to the gaudy show in which women braided their hair with strands of gold and silver which glistened in the sunlight and layered themselves with jewels, Isa. 3:16-23.
 6. “But which becometh women professing godliness with good works” is contrasted with a mere outward display; the inner display is more precious before God and more representative of Christian womanhood.
 7. The prohibition is on the extreme and otherwise addresses the priority of adornment, extolling praise on inward over outward adornment.

- B. Brief exposition of 1 Peter 3:1-5.
1. From the first verse of this context, one's *behavior* rather than anything else, such as physical adornment, is commended.
 2. Verses one and two champion chaste or holy behavior as the means for a Christian wife to influence a husband whose wife's words are ineffective toward him.
 3. The Christian woman does not rely on lavish outward adornment to secure and keep the attentions of a man; the references to adorning here are the same as those of 1 Tim. 2:9.
 4. Comparatively speaking, the inward spiritual adornment is more precious to God and more effective for Christians than outward physical adorning.
 5. The apostle Peter teaches a disposition that was also practiced by godly women, such as Sarah, verses 5-6.
 6. Peter did not prohibit wearing jewelry, cosmetics or *clothes*; he did prohibit extreme adornment or that adornment which overshadowed (displaced) a holy and reverential behavior.
 7. Both Paul and Peter urge holiness that is to be exhibited, not hindered, outwardly.

III. Is modesty a variable?

- A. There is a sense in which "modesty" *is not* variable.
1. God's Word does not change.
 2. There are no special circumstances either then or now that can mitigate or set aside this teaching.
 3. It will never be right for one's *dress or degree of undress* to overshadow and displace a Christian's holy behavior.
 4. God is concerned about Christian "modesty" (of men and women) in and out of the worship assembly.
 5. Men and women should be modestly attired (inwardly and outwardly) always, especially in public.

- B. There is a sense in which “modesty” *is* variable.
 1. “Modesty” in public worship is equivalent to what constitutes “modesty” in *any* public setting.
 2. However, what is biblically “modest” in public differs from what is biblically “modest” in the private setting of a married couple’s bedroom, etc.
 3. The modern day problem over “modesty” is not primarily *the putting on of apparel*, but *the taking off apparel or clothes*.
 4. People, and unfortunately Christians too, have taken modesty confined to private settings and moved it to public display.
 5. This is sinful, for it discounts biblical modesty, numbs the senses of morality (shamefacedness, etc.), displaces holy behavior and influence, as well as promotes lust.

IV. The topic of modesty is also affected by the topic of lust.

- A. The attire of a harlot has always aroused the baser nature of men.
 1. The “attire of a harlot” is discernible and has a calculated result, Prov. 7:10.
 2. **Is it reasonable to suppose the *dress or lack thereof* which if worn by a harlot encourages men to lust will lead to less lust if worn by a Christian woman?**
- B. Watching a woman bathe has been known to arouse unlawful lusts in a man.
 1. King David saw Bathsheba washing, lusted after her, committed adultery with her, fathered a child, murdered her husband and brought much misery upon himself and the nation, 2 Sam. 11:2-5.
 2. Is it advisable for women, especially those professing godliness, to *bathe* in the presence of men, whether it be *sunbathing, swimming*, etc.?
- C. “Lust” is a sin, which especially men are cautioned in Scripture to avoid; is it any more praiseworthy for women to dress provocatively and excite lust?
 1. “Lust” is viewed by our Lord as “adultery” only not yet enacted, Matt. 5:28.

2. “Lust” is a sin for which souls will be lost, Titus 2:12; Rom. 6:23; Jam. 1:14-15; 1 Pet. 2:11.

V. An unambiguous and concise application of biblical modesty.

- A. It is improper and sinful for Christians to dress immodestly in the worship assembly.
 1. The greater context of 1 Tim. 2:9-10 addresses the public worship.
 2. Mini-skirts, backless dresses, high-slit skirts and low-cut dresses have no place in public worship.
 3. Especially women should be careful to wear appropriate undergarments that contribute to modesty.
- B. It is improper and sinful for Christians to dress immodestly in *any* public setting.
 1. Public immodesty displaces positive Christian influence and promotes lust, and is, therefore, sinful.
 2. Added to the former list, short-shorts, halter or tube tops, sheer blouses, contemporary swimsuits, tank tops and other revealing or provocative clothing should not be worn publicly by Christians.
 3. The beach or a swimming pool does not lessen the need for Christians to dress modestly.
- C. At home, the modesty of one’s dress varies.
 1. What may be biblically modest in the inner chambers of one’s home is biblically immodest in the public areas of the house while entertaining guests or out in the yard.
 2. Further, what may be modest between husband and wife can be immodest in front of the children.
 3. What may be modest *family* dress is immodest when exhibited to others (e.g., night-clothes).
- D. Persistence in immodesty has serious ramifications.
 1. Immodesty in the face of biblical instruction demonstrates willful lack of subjection to God and one’s father or husband.
 2. Immodesty is not a usual and orderly arrangement of clothing.

3. Immodesty overshadows and displaces “shamefacedness and sobriety,” “professing godliness” and “good works.”
4. Immodesty makes impossible the influence of another with the Gospel “without a word,” 1 Pet. 3:1-5.
5. Immodesty is sinful, leads to additional sins and corrupts others.

Conclusion:

1. The topic of “modesty” is taught in the New Testament and is binding today.
2. Modesty is an orderly arrangement of clothes that does not hide the inner or spiritual side of man.
3. Immodesty leads to lust and other sins.
4. Faithful and knowledgeable Christians do not wear revealing clothing in public.
5. Persistent immodesty is evidence of rebellion toward God, his Word, the church, fathers and husbands.
6. Immodesty ruins the Christian influence and impairs the effectiveness of the Gospel.

Invitation:

1. God calls on mankind to conform to his Word rather than conform to the world, Rom. 12:1-2.
2. Initial conformity to God’s Word results in Gospel obedience and forgiveness of sins, Acts 2:38; Heb. 5:8-9.
3. Faithful children of God will continue to obey the Gospel, 1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Cor. 13:5; Rev. 2:10.

Moses — And The Rest Of The Story

Exodus 3 — 4

Thesis: To show that God does not require of man what he is incapable of doing.

Introduction:

1. Acts 7:18-22, birth and preparation
2. Acts 7:23-28, presumption of Moses
3. Acts 7:29, Moses flees
4. Acts 7:30-35, appointed by God

Body:

I. Moses, reluctant servant of God

- A. Forty years before, Moses presumed to liberate his people, Exod. 2:11-12.
- B. Now 80 years old, Moses was unwilling to liberate his people.
 1. Moses felt inferior to accomplish the task assigned to him.
 2. He offered excuses five times, Exod. 3:11, 13; 4:1, 10, 13.
- C. God countered the misgivings of Moses.
 1. God responded with a solution to each excuse Moses offered.
 2. Finally, the continued excuses of Moses angered God, Exod. 4:14.
- D. With God's help, Moses went to Egypt and liberated his people.

II. Other reluctant servants of God

- A. The churches of Christ apparently also feel inferior to accomplish the task of God assigned to them.
- B. There are souls in the captivity of sin, which if we do not accept the commission to liberate with the Gospel, God will become angry with us.
- C. With God's help, we can liberate mankind from the

bondage of sin.

- D. The Great Commission is the primary mission on which we have been sent by God, Mark 16:15-16.

Conclusion:

1. Acts 7:36; Heb. 11:23-29, mission accomplished
2. God does not require of man anything that he is incapable of doing.
3. Excuses will only anger God.
4. God is with his servants, working with them.

Invitation:

1. God has not left us alone and wondering about salvation either.
2. Unbaptized believers, Mark 16:15-16.
3. Erring Christians, Jam. 5:19-20.
4. Or, perhaps you need to study more perfectly God's plan for man, Acts 17:11.

Good Old Noah

Genesis 6:8-9

Thesis: To derive encouragement from the biblical character, Noah.

Introduction:

1. The title of this lesson is derived from the children's song about Noah, which song is sung to the tune of "O McDonald Had a Farm."
2. The faithful character of Noah is depicted in both Old and New testaments.
3. The fallibility of Noah, in spite of his otherwise usefulness as a follower of God, is also noted in the Old Testament (i.e., Noah sinned).
4. The biblical account of Noah and the universal flood also portray additional godly souls, as well as the general, widespread wickedness of the world then.
5. Finally, there are several "interesting incidentals" regarding the Bible's great flood record.

Body:

I. The Universal Flood.

- A. Before the flood, it may never have rained upon the earth, Gen. 2:5-6.
 1. Yet, Noah warned his fellow man of the impending flood (which began with rain).
- B. When God created the world, he concluded that "it was very good," Gen. 1:31.
 1. Before the flood, though, God was grieved that the wickedness among mankind was great and that man's every thought every day was evil, Gen. 6:5-6.
 2. God determined to destroy both man and animals, Gen. 6:7.
 3. God declared, Gen. 6:11-12, that:
 - a. The earth was corrupted
 - b. The earth was filled with violence

- c. All flesh on the earth was corrupted (possibly including animals)
- C. Noah was given explicit instructions (pattern) to build a large boat (ark).
 - 1. God gave Noah the dimensions of the ark, Gen. 6:15.
 - a. 300 X 50 X 30 cubits
 - b. A cubit was about 18 inches.
 - c. The volume of the ark was 1,500,000 cubic feet.
 - d. The ark could carry 24,000 tons.
 - e. It could carry the equivalent of 600 railroad boxcars.
 - f. The ark was not built for travel, but for bobbing and could resist 200 foot high waves.
 - g. It was built to survive a UNIVERSAL FLOOD.
 - 2. Noah did what he was told and in the way he was told by God.
 - a. “Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he,” Gen. 6:22.
 - b. “And Noah did according unto all that the Lord commanded him,” Gen. 7:5.
- D. Noah collected animals for preservation in the ark.
 - 1. He put a pair of each kind of “unclean” animal and seven pairs of each kind of “clean” animal in the ark, Gen. 7:2-3.
- E. Noah was 600 years old when he and his family and the animals entered the ark to avoid the universal flood, Gen. 7:6-9.
 - 1. They were all in the ark for seven days before it rained, Gen. 7:9-10.
 - a. This delay in the coming of the flood after they entered the ark may have tested the faith of Noah and his family.
 - b. Doubtless, Noah and his family had been the subject of much jest and ridicule for their call to repentance, for building an ocean going

- vessel on dry land and for warning of a rainy flood; the spite toward Noah and his family must have heightened during these 7 days.
2. God shut the door of the ark, Gen. 7:16.
 - a. It may be that the beginning of rain (which mankind had never before seen and about which Noah had been preaching) caused universal panic.
 - b. The jeering critics of Noah may have desperately banged on the door that God had closed.
 3. For 40 days Noah and his family and the animals were in the ark before the flood waters lifted the ark, Gen. 7:17.
 - a. Imagine the pitiful cries of the multitudes of lost souls who on the outside of the ark wanted more than anything to be in the ark with Noah.
 - b. Imagine the anguish of Noah and his family inside the ark hearing the wailing of the lost.
 - c. Imagine the added anguish of Noah and his family as they fully realized that their extended family members who did not choose to believe God's message were doomed to die in the flood.
 - d. Further, imagine the feeling of loss that those in the ark felt as they left most of their earthly possessions, property and homes behind.
- F. The ark floated above the mountains for a year, Gen. 7:20; 8:13.
1. Noah, his wife, their sons and their sons' wives must have felt great relief for their salvation from the unparalleled catastrophic destruction of the world.
 2. Every creature on the face of the earth in whose nostrils was the breath of life died, Gen. 7:21-22.
 3. There was only one shuttered window (perhaps in the roof) that was not opened until 40 days after the

- ark landed on a mountain top, Gen. 6:16; 8:6-13.
- 4. The living conditions were primitive, dark and smelly.
- 5. Doubtless, Noah's family was greatly occupied in caring for their animal passengers for the duration of the flood.
- G. After leaving the ark, Noah built an altar and worshipped God with animal sacrifices, Gen. 8:20.
 - 1. God placed a rainbow in the sky and stated that he would not destroy the whole earth again with a flood, Gen. 8:21-22; 9:8-17.
 - 2. God blessed Noah and his family and instructed them to multiply and possess the earth (as he had formerly instructed Adam and Eve after creation), Gen. 9:1, 7.
 - 3. God caused animals to fear mankind, Gen. 9:2.
 - 4. God then assigned animals as acceptable food for mankind, Gen. 9:3.
 - 5. Noah and his sons multiplied and spread over the whole earth (the brotherhood of all mankind after the flood), Gen. 9:18-19.

II. Good Old Noah.

- A. He was evidently a good father and husband.
 - 1. Apparently, his three sons were taught through instruction and by example to be followers of God.
 - 2. Noah's wife also must have followed the godly lead of her husband Noah.
 - 3. Together, Noah and his wife not only reared their boys successfully before God, but they doubtless contributed directly or indirectly through their sons to the conversion of their sons' wives.
- B. For 120 years Noah had the opportunity to build the ark and preach repentance to his fellow man, Gen. 6:3; 2 Pet. 2:5.
 - 1. Noah is remembered in Scripture for his righteousness, Ezek. 14:14, 20; faithfulness, Heb. 11:7 and obedience, 1 Pet. 3:20.
 - 2. For 600 years before the flood, Noah lived uprightly before God, indeed a tremendous feat.

III. Noah sinned.

- A. In keeping with the name given to him by his father, Noah resorted to agriculture, Gen. 5:28-29; 9:20.
 - 1. Noah planted a vineyard.
 - 2. After sufficient time the vines produced grapes.
 - 3. Noah made wine, which after sufficient time fermented.
 - 4. Noah drank wine resulting in drunkenness and nakedness, Gen. 6:21.
- B. This sin of Noah contributed to the sin of his son Ham, Gen. 22-27.
 - 1. One's sins affect others, too.

IV. Interesting Incidentals.

- A. Before the flood, it may never have rained upon the earth, Gen. 2:5-6.
- B. After creation AND after the flood God blessed mankind and told them to multiply and possess the earth.
 - 2. Between creation and the flood what God had deemed as "very good" became 'very evil.'
- C. God destroyed the earth with a universal flood for three reasons.
 - 1. The earth was corrupted.
 - 2. The earth was filled with violence.
 - 3. All flesh on the earth was corrupted (including animals).
- D. The ark was built to be a bobber, not a cruise ship.
- E. A pair of each unclean animal and seven pairs of each clean animal were put in the ark.
- F. Noah was in the ark for 7 days before it rained and another 40 days before the flood floated the ark.
- G. The flood floated the ark above the highest mountains for a year.
- H. The ark had one door and one window (neither of which were opened for a year).
- I. All mammals, earth bound reptiles, birds and men NOT IN THE ARK died.
- J. Creatures of the sea survived.
- K. Animals were not given to men by God to eat until after the flood.

- L. Animals were not afraid of man until after the flood.
- M. Before the flood, life spans of men (and presumably animals, too) extended for several hundred years.
 - 1. Adam lived 930 years, Gen. 5:2.
 - 2. Seth lived 912 years, Gen. 5:8.
 - 3. Methuselah lived 969 years, Gen. 5:27.
 - 4. Lamech (father of Noah) lived 777 years, Gen. 5:31.
 - 5. Noah lived 950 years, Gen. 9:28.
 - 6. After the flood, life spans began to decrease greatly.
 - 7. Finally, average life spans of mankind became what they are today, Psa. 90:10.
- N. Dinosaurs lived with mankind before the Universal Flood.
 - 1. The “giants” of Gen. 6:4 may be a reference to the animal kingdom (i.e., our dinosaurs). See Job 40:12, “behemoth.”
 - 2. If the animals before the flood had great life spans like men, and since many fish and some reptiles and plants continue to grow as long as they live, it is believable that dinosaurs lived in the time of Noah.
 - 3. Part of the corruption among flesh and the violence for which (besides wickedness) God destroyed the world included the animal kingdom; animals also suffered the wrath of God.
 - 4. Before the flood, evidently animals did not have an innate fear of men, whereas after the flood God stated that animals will fear mankind, Gen. 9:2.
 - 5. Dinosaurs were destroyed in the flood along with all but eight souls (i.e., Noah and his family) and their animal passengers.

Conclusion:

- 1. Noah was a useful servant of God, though he sometimes, weak like us, sinned.
- 2. Noah was a successful husband and father.
- 3. Noah’s wife, children and children’s wives were favorably influenced by Noah to obey God.

4. Noah and his family refused to allow the taunts of lost souls or personal doubts to lead them away from serving God.
5. Noah's family and especially the daughter-in-laws elected to follow God instead of adhere to lost family members.
6. Noah conformed to teachings that God had given man, else Noah, too, would have been lost.
7. **God gave Noah a pattern for building the ark. Noah understood the pattern. Noah followed the pattern.**

Invitation:

1. The universal flood was a time of sadness and happiness.
2. It is sad today that there are many souls outside the ark of safety (the church).
3. However, it is a time of happiness when anyone obeys God and is saved, Luke 15:10; Heb. 5:8-9.
4. Aliens from the commonwealth of God, Eph. 2:12; Acts 2:38.
5. Erring Christians, Acts 8:22.

A New Covenant for a New Israel

Jeremiah 31:31-34

Thesis: To show that God replaced the Old Testament with the New Testament

Introduction:

1. In 1816, Alexander Campbell stunned religious leaders in America with his famous “Sermon on the Law.”
2. Still today most religious people are unaware of the distinction between the Old and New testaments.
3. Some denominations even make a special appeal to the Old Testament today.

Body:

I. God never intended the Old Testament to be permanent.

- A. Jeremiah prophesied that the Old Testament would be replaced by God, Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:8-13; Gal. 3:19.
- B. Moses was the lawgiver of the Old Testament, but he prophesied that there would be another lawgiver [Jesus], Deut. 18:15, 18-19; Acts 3:22-26; John 1:17.

II. God abolished the Old Testament.

- A. The purpose of the Old Testament was fulfilled, Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 24:44; Gal. 3:23-25.
- B. God abolished the Old Testament, Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; 2 Cor. 3:11; Gal. 3:13.
- C. Some denominations attempt to divide the Old Testament into “ceremonial law” and “moral law” to make some of the Old Testament apply today [e.g., Adventists, Ten Commandments], Rom. 7:6-7.

III. God replaced the Old Testament with the New Testament.

- A. God through Christ gave us the New Testament, John 1:17; Heb. 8:6-7; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:14-15; 10:1-4; Acts 13:39.
- B. God condemns anyone today who practices the Old Testament, Gal. 2:16; 3:10-11; 5:4; Rom. 3:20.

C. Jesus died in vain for those who practice the Old Testament today, Gal. 2:21.

Conclusion:

1. People who practice the Old Testament today are ‘blinded,’ 2 Cor. 3:14.
2. People who practice the Old Testament today ‘trample the Son of God, profane the blood of Christ and despise the Spirit of Grace,’ Heb. 10:29.
3. Though not binding on us today, the Old Testament is filled with principles, examples and interaction between God and mankind, Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11.
4. The only hope for all people living today is in the faithful practice of the New Testament, Heb. 7:19; Rom. 11:27.

Invitation:

1. In order for you to receive the blessing of redemption, you must comply with God’s redemptive plan found in the New Testament.
2. Non-Christians must hear, believe, repent, confess Christ, be immersed and remain faithful Rom. 10:17; John 8:24; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:9-10; Col. 2:12; Rev. 2:10.
3. Erring Christians must repent and pray, confessing their faults one to another, afterward remaining faithful, Acts 8:22; Jam. 5:16.

Strangers And Pilgrims

Hebrews 11:10, 13-16

Thesis: To examine the hope afforded God's children throughout their earthly pilgrimage.

Song: *Here We Are But Straying Pilgrims*

Introduction:

1. A certain man came home one day and told his wife that they were about to make a move of some several hundred miles.
 - a. She asked, "When?" and he answered, "Right away."
 - b. "Where are we going," she inquired, and he replied, "I don't know."
 - c. "How long will we be gone and will we ever come back?" she verbalized. Again and for both questions, her husband responded, "I don't know."
2. Under the circumstances, they put their home up for sale. Its selling points included:
 - a. Large white masonry, 2-story home.
 - b. 10 rooms with lodging for family, servants and guests.
 - c. Large enclosed courtyard, multiple bath and washrooms with ample running water and sewage.
 - d. Urban setting in a good, upscale neighborhood.
 - e. Some of the best educational, medical, shopping and commercial opportunities in one of the most renowned cities of the world.
 - f. Excellent climate and good farmland with ample water for crops and animals.
 - g. Available for immediate occupancy! Must sell; owner leaving area.
3. The physical strains of such a move are compounded with emotional strains, too.
 - a. One's extended family, friends, neighbors and associations must be left behind.
 - b. Shopping facilities, brand name products and familiar settings must be exchanged for their unfamiliar counterparts.

- c. The disruption of routines, compacted proximity of family members to one another and even breakage during a move each produce their share of heightened anxieties.
 - d. The unknowns associated with a move to a new place can be very unsettling, too.
4. The move itself was quite an undertaking since the several family members and the family business included numerous items.
- a. Several U-Haul trucks were leased to facilitate the move of family and property.
 - b. This family made their way westward, trusting that God would guide them.
 - c. This family was committed to serve God, wherever God might lead them in that life of service.
5. To me, all of this sounds like a preacher family preparing to move from one congregational work to another.
- a. However, this plausible story pertains to the couple we best know as Abraham and Sarah.
 - b. Archaeological evidence reveals that middle-class to wealthy citizens of Ur of the Chaldees lived in such homes and enjoyed the amenities mentioned a moment ago.
 - c. Near the dawn of history, the eastern Fertile Crescent, where the city of Ur was located, became the cradle of human civilization.
 - d. Essentially the only distinction between the pleasantries of life they enjoyed versus ourselves involves our heightened technology over theirs. In some areas (e.g., mathematics) we have not surpassed their achievements even with our modern wizardry.
 - e. Even rental wagons with contracts were available in Abraham's day.
6. What's the point of this introductory material?
- a. We, like Abraham, are really pilgrims and strangers in the service of God as we wander about this world.
 - b. We, like Abraham, have a lot of possessions, prosperity and associations that can distract us from serving our God enthusiastically and faithfully.
 - c. We, like Abraham, face our share of anxieties and difficulties as pilgrims and strangers.

- d. We, like Abraham, must ever keep our eyes fixed on the heavenly horizon as we earnestly look “for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God,” Heb. 11:10.
- e. We, like Abraham, must allow heavenly hope to guide us through earthly habitations toward eternal shores.

Body: Brief Exegesis & Exposition of Heb. 11:10, 13-16.

I. Verse 10, “For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”

- A. “looked for” = a steady, patient waiting, to look for eagerly.
 - 1. Like Abraham, Christians today need to patiently and eagerly look for the fulfillment of heavenly hope.
 - 2. Unfortunately, even Christians often dread the thought of approaching eternity, either because we are not ready to cross into eternity, or because we want to enjoy God’s green earth just a little longer.
 - 3. The apostle Paul was eager to pass into eternity because he fully realized the superiority of that existence over the present, Phil. 1:21-24.
- B. “city” = same as used today; people congregated together in one place and having a common association.
- C. “foundations” = stones embedded in the earth to support massive walls.
 - 1. Today, we ‘pour’ our ‘stone’ foundations as we place cement in footers.
 - 2. Jesus Christ is the foundation of our Christian hope, 1 Cor. 3:11.
- D. “builder” = “craftsman, an architect.”
- E. “maker” = construction deriving from both design and building; a public builder.
 - 1. Only God could design and build this superior habitation for humanity in eternity.
 - 2. Abraham left one of the finest cities in the very heart of human civilization and nothing else would suffice short of the divine city built by God for which he was waiting — with much hope!

II. Verse 13, “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of *them*, and embraced *them*, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

- A. “These all died” = specifically a reference to biblical noteworthy souls cited earlier in Chapter 11: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and Sarah.
1. Other Bible heroes and faithful children of God in all ages, though we die, share the same divine hope.
 2. Rather than something to be dreaded, “death” is the doorway to realization of divine hope, Luke 16:19-31.
- B. “in faith” = strong conviction, something completely believable.
1. Each child of God needs to develop strong faith or conviction in the divine hope – by which we can live our lives and joyfully anticipate crossing the threshold of eternity.
 2. Especially in light of the popular religious misconceptions regarding “faith” today, we cannot emphasize enough that biblical faith is the result of evidence, Rom. 10:17.
 3. True hope is more than wishful thinking!
- C. “not having received” = that for which they entertained joyful anticipation and expected to possess was not yet a possession.
- D. “the promises” = represent the assurances of God of a reward and habitation that far surpasses the present human habitat.
- E. “having seen them” = using the physical senses to see (i.e., with the eyes), though used figuratively here to see heaven where God is.
- F. “afar off” = at a great distance in time or space.
1. Here the fruition of the promises were viewed with the mind’s eye at a great distance in time between the giving of the promises and our yet future complete reception of the promises, inclusive of heaven itself.

2. Yet, the lives that we live now are but passing vapors regarding brevity, Jam. 4:14. **The journey is not too far or too long that we cannot arrive.**
- G. “were persuaded ... and embraced” = looked forward to with happiness.
1. These children of God did not exhibit the least doubt regarding that for which they entertained strong and persistent hope.
 2. They were not the least deterred that the object of their hope was not realized in this life. They did not accuse God falsely of not answering their prayers or being unresponsive.
 3. These children of God were content to accept God’s timetable, rather than expect God to conform to their demands.
- H. “confessed” = admitted, come to terms with, make an agreement, solemn declaration, to declare openly by way of speaking out freely, judicial admission.
1. Here the children of God freely and unapologetically acknowledge that they are aliens to this world (i.e., this world is not our home, John 17:11-16).
 2. They come to terms with the fact of their disavowal of worldliness and their substitution of heavenly pursuits, Matt. 19:27-29.
 3. The children of God are not fearful to solemnly declare this truth with the solemnity given to judicial proceedings, Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10.
- I. “strangers” = foreigners.
- J. “pilgrims” = people living in a place not their homeland, not natives of the country in which they are living, sojourners from another land, transients.
1. The distractions and hindrances to faithful Christianity are many as long as God’s children fail to fully grasp the concept that this world is not our home – we are only passing through to a better place, 1 Tim. 6:6-12.
 2. While we often ‘confess’ that we are ‘pilgrims and

strangers,’ we often act like permanent residents – this is called worldliness.

3. Possessions and real estate with which even the child of God is infatuated threaten to derail the Christian pilgrimage, Matt. 16:26.
4. “Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,” 1 Pet. 2:11.

III. Verse 14, “For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.”

- A. “declare” = to make visible, report.
 1. Here, the unseen heaven, the object of hope, seen with the mind’s eye is portrayed so that others can visualize this same hope of heaven.
 2. Christian living provides non-believers and fellow believers alike a glimpse of heaven and gives them reason to pursue this hope, too.
- B. “country” = fatherland, homeland, home country, land of the fathers.
 1. Here the reference is not to the country from which they came, but their destination, heaven.
 2. Rather than the land of our fathers, Christians seek the land of the heavenly Father. That’s what makes our quest of hope the “Fatherland.”

IV. Verse 15, “And truly, if they had been mindful of that *country* from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.”

- A. “mindful” = thinking again and again of the country from which they came.
 1. The ‘pilgrims’ of which this passage speaks did not regret leaving their former country, though some Christians evidently regret leaving the world of sin and are yet very much attracted to it, Luke 9:62.
 2. As Christians, we must be more attracted to the hope of heaven than the present world.
- C. “opportunity” = a time in which, an occasion, a season.
- D. “return” = bend back, turn back
 1. “They did not take the opportunity that offered itself for their return. They might have had such an

opportunity. They had time enough to return. They had natural strength to return. They knew the way.”
(Matthew Henry)

2. Especially Abraham could have returned to the relative life of pleasantries and ease in the city of Ur.
3. The contemplation of the heavenly abode with God sufficiently overpowered any preferences here on earth.
4. The hope of heaven is capable of overriding our earthly affections. However, an extraordinary esteem of earthly affections will dislodge our hope of heaven if we let it.

V. Verse 16, “But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.”

- A. “desire” = strive for, eagerly long for, to stretch out after, aspire.
 1. Abraham and the other noteworthies were not indifferent and apathetic toward the hope of heaven, Rev. 2:1-7; 3:14-22.
 2. They as it were, reached out to touch their aspirations.
- B. “better” = superior to something else in characteristics or function; more advantageous or more useful; preferable; used 12 times in the Book of Hebrews.
 1. This, of course, is true when comparing heaven to any habitation upon the earth. “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless,” 2 Pet. 3:14-15.
 2. The Book of Hebrews repeatedly stresses the superiority of the New Covenant and its High Priest in leading mankind to a superior hope of heaven.
- C. “an heavenly” = pertaining to God, as a calling from

God.

- D. “ashamed” = to put to shame, to dishonor.
 - 1. Likewise, the children of God are not to be ashamed of the Gospel of God, Rom. 1:16.
 - 2. It is neither a shameful nor dishonorable thing to be known as a child of God, and we should not shrink back from exhibiting our Christianity always and everywhere.
- E. “prepared” = a state of readiness, made ready.
 - 1. From John 14:1-3 we learn that Jesus went to make a state of readiness for the people of God.
 - 2. We need to obtain and continue in a state of readiness in anticipation of entering heaven someday.

Conclusion:

- 1. Truly, *Here We Are But Straying Pilgrims*.
- 2. This old world is not our home; we are just passing through.
- 3. As the children of God, we must be very careful that we do not allow possessions and real estate to derail our journey to eternity.
- 4. We must not allow the difficulties and anxieties of the present world to cloud our vision of the world to come.
- 5. We, like Abraham, must ever keep our eyes fixed on the heavenly horizon as we earnestly look “for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”
- 6. Like Abraham, we need to patiently and eagerly look for the fulfillment of heavenly hope.
- 7. The hope that animates our Christian being and motivates us to march toward heaven rests on sure, biblical evidence.
- 8. The hope of heaven is as sure and as clear in the mind’s eye as though we have already received it.
- 9. Faithful Christians have come to terms with the fact that we are in the world but we are not of the world; we are aliens to this planet.
- 10. As children of God, we march gleefully toward the Fatherland.
- 11. We do not dwell on what we may have given up in the world; the lusts of the world have no attraction to us.
- 12. We stretch ourselves out toward our destination of heaven, willing to gladly embrace death for which we are prepared to

obtain the fruition of our hope. **Death is merely the gateway to eternity.**

13. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. Brethren, **let's go to heaven together!**
14. We, like Abraham, must allow heavenly hope to guide us through earthly habitations toward eternal shores.

Invitation:

1. One must first become a child of God in order to possess biblical hope, Matt. 28:18-20.
2. A child of God must persevere in righteousness to maintain the biblical hope, Rev. 2:10; Acts 8:22.

Three Promises

Joshua 21:43-45

Thesis: To demonstrate that our Heavenly Father has fulfilled his three promises to Abraham, the third of which all men now living are the potential and direct beneficiaries.

Introduction:

1. About 2,000 years after God created the earth and about 4,000 years ago a man named Abram lived in Ur of Chaldees.
 - a. The city of Ur was west of the Persian Gulf in modern day Iraq.
 - b. Ur was also near where the Euphrates and Tigris rivers join to form the Shatt al Arab which then flows into the Persian Gulf 100 miles away.
 - c. Ur was in the vicinity of the earliest traces of human civilization as well as in the neighborhood of the former site of the Garden of Eden.
 - d. Ur was a prosperous city and Abram's family was itself prosperous.
 - e. Citizens of Ur lived in elaborate stone homes with as many as ten rooms and running water (including toilet facilities). They enjoyed all the educational and cultural benefits afforded any man then living.
 - f. In many ways, life in Ur was comparable to the comfortable lifestyle enjoyed in western, industrialized nations today. Their amenities were ample, only differing from ours regarding the technical improvements of our own.
2. Abram and his family left the settled and pleasant life in Ur of Chaldees to eventually become nomads in foreign lands.
 - a. Abram's father died in the city of Haran, along their eventual pilgrimage that took them to Canaan.
 - b. The God of Heaven made three promises to Abram who God also renamed Abraham (the name by which we best know this Bible character), Gen. 12:1-3, "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from

thy kindred, and from thy father's house, **unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation,** and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and **in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed**"; 13:15-17; 22:17-18.

- c. These promises were ultimately re-affirmed through Abraham's son Isaac, Gen. 26:3-4, and Abraham's grandson Jacob, Gen. 28:13-14.
3. Two of these promises indirectly affect the plan of God for reconciling wayward man to himself, whereas the third promise directly affects our redemption.
 - a. Seed promise.
 - b. Land promise.
 - c. Spiritual promise.

Body:

I. The Seed Promise.

- A. The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were promised that they would have many descendants.
- B. Both biblical information and the powers of observation verify that the seed promise was fulfilled.
- C. The Seed Promise provided a specified and prophesied family through whom the Messiah was designated to come.

II. The Land Promise.

- A. The Land Promise was completely fulfilled.
 1. The great general Joshua confirmed that generally God's land promise was fulfilled. As he was nearing the end of his life, he said, "And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that **not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof,**" Josh. 23:14.
 2. The scope of the Land Promise is carefully described in Genesis 15:18. "In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, **Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of**

Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.”

3. King **Solomon** ruled over **60,000 square miles**, encompassing exactly the dimensions of the Land Promise. **“And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life,”** 1 Kings 4:21.
- B. The Land Promise was **conditional** and subject to being revoked if and when Israel disobeyed God.
1. Joshua was specifically addressing the Land Promise, from which though they then possessed it, Israel would forfeit that land if and when they rebelled against God. **“Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you,”** Josh. 23:13.
 2. The divided, northern kingdom of Israel was conquered and deported from the land by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.
 3. The southern kingdom of Judah was led captive from the land by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.
 4. Following the 70 years of captivity, the Persian King Cyrus permitted the captives from Judah to return to their homeland.
- C. The Land Promise provided a home for the descendants of Abraham, through whom the Messiah was to come.

III. The Land Promise is central to the popular and erroneous doctrine of premillennialism.

- A. Premillennialism, among false doctrines believed by purported Christians, is overshadowed in popularity perhaps only by the religious error of *faith only*.
- B. Premillennialists deny that the kingdom of prophecy has ever been established.
1. They believe that the rejection of Christ by the

- Jews thwarted Divine attempts to establish the kingdom.
2. Secondly, premillennialists affirm that the church was established in place of the kingdom as a temporary, unplanned and emergency contingency.
- C. Therefore, premillennialists misconstrue biblical prophecy to anticipate the establishment of the kingdom they say that the Godhead unsuccessfully tried to establish in the first century.
1. Overlooking clear biblical and historical evidence that the descendants of Abraham once possessed the Land Promise, premillennialists seek a contemporary fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.
 2. They also ignore the conditional element of God's promise as previously noted.
- D. The establishment of the modern State of Israel on May 14, 1948 is viewed by premillennialists as the fulfillment of God's Land Promise to Abraham.
1. Since then, national and international politics regarding Israel are clearly and heavily influenced, directly or indirectly, by premillennial notions.
 2. Nations whose citizenry overwhelmingly subscribes to some form of Christianity entertain inordinately friendly diplomacy with Israel.
 3. Avowed born-again Christian leaders such as former President Carter appear, directly or indirectly, aware of premillennial bias favoring Israel.
- E. The premillennial time-table for end of time events, including the ill-conceived and false doctrine of the 1,000 year reign, is actuated by the establishment of the modern nation of Israel in 1948.
1. Through misuse of Scripture and speculation, premillennialists imagine that they can anticipate when the second coming of Christ will occur.
 2. The fact that, according to our somewhat arbitrary calendars, a new millennium recently began, only heightens their speculative fervor.

3. In view of the absence of solid biblical support for premillennialism and since the Land Promise was both received **and forfeited**, premillennialism is much ado about nothing.

IV. The Spiritual Promise.

- A. The promise to Abraham that has a direct bearing on people now living is the Seed Promise. “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham,” Gal. 3:8-9.
- B. Both the Seed Promise and the Land Promise are **historical** and do not directly affect anyone now living.
- C. Only the Spiritual Promise has a direct and contemporary application to people now living. “**That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith ... Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ,**” Gal. 3:14, 16.

Conclusion:

1. About 4,000 years ago in a distant land, God made three promises to Abraham.
2. God repeated those promises to Isaac and Jacob.
3. The Seed Promise and the Land Promise have been undeniably fulfilled by God.
4. Premillennialism is a perverted and malicious doctrine that, among other errors, affirms that God had neither the omniscience nor the omnipotence to establish the kingdom of prophecy.
5. The Seed Promise and the Land Promise form the foundation on which rests the Spiritual Promise.
6. Only the Spiritual Promise directly and eternally affects every accountable soul now living.

Invitation:

1. The Spiritual Promise pertains to redemption from sins.
2. Contemporary souls can no more enjoy the Spiritual Promise in

religious disobedience than could the Israelites retain the Land Promise through their disobedience.

3. Obedience is a key factor in reception of the Spiritual Promise today, Heb. 5:8-9; Matt. 7:21.
4. For us, obedience includes hearing God's Word, Rom. 10:17; believing, Mark 16:16; repenting, Luke 13:5; Acts 17:30; professing Christ as Lord, Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37; immersion for the remission of sins, Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Acts 2:38; 22:16, and continued faithfulness, Rev. 2:10; 1 Cor. 15:58.

Biblical Church Finance

1 Corinthians 16:1-2

Thesis: To contrast biblical church finance (1) with former biblical means to financially underwrite Patriarchy and Judaism, and (2) with contemporary unscriptural financing of religion.

Introduction:

1. God **authorized** certain procedures for financing religion in each of the three religious dispensations that he respectively authored (i.e., Patriarchy, Judaism, Christianity).
 - a. God condemns those who **repudiate** what God has authorized, Num. 4:15; 2 Sam 6:6-7.
 - b. God condemns those who go **beyond** what God has authorized, Lev. 10:1-2; 1 Cor. 4:6.
 - c. The child of God must always be careful to conduct himself according to what God has authorized in religion, Col. 3:17.
2. God authorizes by **command, approved example or implications** (from which we are obligated to draw correct inferences).
 - a. Noah's charge to build the barge-like ark illustrates a **command**, Gen. 6:14.
 - b. The assembling the Lord's church in the first century on the first day of the week illustrates an **approved example**, Acts 20:7.
 - c. Paul's use of a ship while on an evangelistic journey illustrates valid inference from biblical **implication**, Mark 16:15; Acts 13:2-4.
3. Freewill offering and tithing are mechanisms by which God has financed religion at different times.
 - a. Under Patriarchy, Abram paid tithes to Melchizedek, Gen. 14:20; Heb. 7:6.
 - b. Under Judaism, the Jews were to pay **tithes**, Num. 18:26.
 - c. Additional to the commanded tithes and offerings, under Judaism, **freewill offerings** were also required, Deut. 12:6.

- d. Instead of tithes in the New Testament, freewill offerings are required, 2 Cor. 8:3-4; 1 Cor. 16:1-2.

Body:

I. Biblical church finance pertains to freewill offerings.

- A. 2 Cor. 9:6-7.
 - 1. Christians are to give not sparingly but bountifully.
 - 2. We are to give as we purpose in our hearts.
- B. 1 Cor. 16:1-2.
 - 1. Giving ought to occur regularly, upon the first day of each week.
 - 2. The amount of one's giving ought to be proportionate to his prosperity.
- C. Biblical church finance is restricted to the three-fold mission of the church.
 - 1. **Evangelism**, Mark 16:15-16; 2 Cor. 11:8.
 - 2. **Edification**, 1 Cor. 14:12; 9:1-14.
 - 3. **Benevolence**, Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 9:13.
 - 4. Circumstances relative to any part of the three-fold mission of the church, e.g., a place to meet for worship, 1 Cor. 14:23.

II. Christians are not obligated to tithe or give a tenth of their income under Christianity.

- A. Christians are neither subject to Patriarchy nor Judaism today.
 - 1. Christians have been delivered from the entirety of former covenants with God and mankind, Rom. 7:6; Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; 2 Cor. 3:11; Heb. 8:6-13.
 - 2. Therefore, tithing is not bound on Christians since it is not included in the New Testament.
- B. However, the freewill giving required, depending upon our prosperity, may be less than, equal to or more than the tenth of our increase.
 - 1. Strictly speaking, though, tithing cannot be commanded.
 - 2. Tithing is not the biblically authorized form of church finance about which one reads in the New Testament.

III. Unscriptural church finance is not authorized and is an affront to what God authorized.

- A. Church taxes, e.g., pew tax, annual statement.
- B. Car washes, bake sales.

- C. Investments, e.g., property, banking large sums of money for the interest income.
- D. Business and industry, e.g., tourist attractions, own and operate secular non-religious companies.

Conclusion:

1. The Lord's church is only authorized to support itself with freewill offerings.
2. Tithing was a form of finance applicable to Patriarchy and Judaism, to which the church is not subject since the Old Testament has been replaced with the New Testament.
3. The contemporary ways, other than freewill offerings, to which mankind may want to resort are unscriptural.
4. Christians and the church must appeal to biblical authority for what we do in religion, 1 Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17.

Invitation:

1. Mankind has no less of an obligation to appeal to the authority of God regarding redemption; appealing to redemptive plans of former dispensations or the unscriptural ideas of contemporary mankind will not result in salvation.
2. Rom. 10:17; John 8:24; Acts 17:30; Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 22:16; 8:22; 1 John 1:7.