

Preaching
the Whole
Counsel of God
Volume 5

Sermon Outlines
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Overview of Biblical World Geography

1 Kings 4:21

Thesis: To familiarize the audience with the geographical backdrop to the Bible.

Introduction:

1. The Bible world extends from the Persia Gulf in the east to the city of Rome in the west, and from Mt. Sinai in the south to Mt. Ararat in the north.
 - a. The Bible world, then, is about 2,200 miles from east to west and about 900 miles from north to south.
 - b. The width of the Bible world, including the vast Mediterranean Sea, comprises about two-thirds the width of the continental United States.
 - c. The height of the Bible lands is about two-thirds the distance between the Mexican and Canadian borders.
2. Bible world map demonstration: compass points, Fertile Crescent, plus Tigris and Euphrates rivers, vast desert, vast mountains, large islands, Nile River, Red Sea.
3. When we mention the Bible world, we are including areas of the world that correspond to events that appear in the combined testaments of the Bible.
 - a. If one were to include references to places besides places where events mentioned in the Bible occurred, the geographical area under consideration would be much larger, e.g. “Spain” Rom. 15:24, 28.
 - b. Most of the events recorded in the Bible took place in relatively small geographical areas comparable in size to regions of our country, states or counties.
 - c. Especially modern means of travel make the width and breadth of the Bible world appear small.
4. The topography or lay of land and geography in the Bible world is interwoven into the fabric of Bible events.

- a. For instance, Noah's ark came to rest on Mt. Ararat, Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai and Jerusalem is a mountain city.
- b. On the other hand, the Jordan River drops an average of 22 feet per mile and empties into the lowest body of water on the planet — the Dead Sea.

Body:

I. The Garden of Eden

- A. In the persons of Adam and Eve, humanity made its debut on planet earth in the Garden of Eden, Gen. 1-3.
 1. The Garden of Eden was located in the eastern part of what is now Iraq.
 2. Two of the four rivers that ran through the Garden of Eden still bear their ancient names, Euphrates and Tigris, Gen. 2:10-14.
 3. Iraq also is the land in which lie the ruins of the ancient Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians as well as the cities of Ur, Babylon and Nineveh.
- B. Archaeological discoveries provide secular and historical validation of the biblical account of creation.
 1. One of the earliest known civilizations, the Sumerians, had a king list that refers to the universal flood and long lifespans.
 2. Another ancient civilization, the Babylonians also had an account (seven Creation Tablets) of a universal flood, though there are similarities and dissimilarities to the biblical account (owing to man's waywardness, especially regarding monotheism versus polytheism).
 3. Two Temptation Seals each picturing a man, a woman and a serpent, dating to about 3,000 B.C., were discovered at Nineveh (in Iraq).
- C. Nations that occupied the land now known as Iraq were once world powers.
 1. Just beyond Iraq and still bordering the Persian Gulf, the ancient Medes and Persian kingdoms occupied what is now known as Iran.
 2. The combined kingdom of the Medes and Persians conquered Babylon, after which the Jews in

captivity there were freed to return to Palestine.

3. Hence, the Persian Gulf marks the eastern-most compass point of the Bible world.

II. Babylon

A. The ancient city of Babylon was situated in a flat, mud plain.

1. It was the site of the Tower of Babel, Gen. 11:1-9.
2. Archaeological discoveries of ancient tablets chronicle that the gods threw down the tower or ziggurat (a type of pyramid resembling a manmade mountain) in one night and confused their language.
3. Much later, the great, fortified city of Babylon was constructed in the plain, with massive outer walls besides inner walls and a moat plus numerous towers.
4. Its outer walls were 350 feet tall, 87 feet thick and had 100 gates; no battering ram could break through the walls and no catapult could heave anything over the walls; the main street in Babylon was one mile wide.

B. Hammurabi, an early king of Babylon, gave the world a complex law system called the Code of Hammurabi (1700 B.C.) that predates the Law of Moses by hundreds of years, but compares in complexity to it.

1. Abraham practiced the Code of Hammurabi when he elected to have a second wife by which to have children since Sarah was barren.
2. Archaeological discoveries provide secular and historical validation of the biblical account of God being the source of human laws; the king of the ancient city of Ur (from which Abraham began his journey to Palestine) is depicted in archaeological discoveries as receiving laws from his god (correct in assessment of law originating with God, incorrect in attributing the origin of law to an idolatrous god).

C. During the second time Babylon enjoyed dominance in the Fertile Crescent, it vanquished (among other nations)

the nation of Judah.

1. The prophesied 70 years of captivity began in 606 B.C.; a second carrying away from Judah to captivity occurred in 597 B.C.
 2. Under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon defeated Judah in 587 B.C.; the Jews were freed from captivity in 536 B.C., two years after the Persians conquered Babylon.
- D. Archaeological discoveries validate the biblical accounts associated with ancient Babylon.
1. Archaeology records various kings of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah and events associated with them, including: Omri, Ahab, Jehu, Pekah, Hosea, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh and Uzziah.
 2. Jehoiachin, king of Judah, was taken prisoner to Babylon. Jehoiachin's name appears on two seals impressed on jar handles; the seal reads: "Belonging to Eliakim steward of Jehoiachin."
 3. Also, Jehoiachin's "ration receipts" in captivity were found in Babylon.
- E. Babylon was twice a world power.

III. Palestine

- A. Palestine served as a land bridge between the continents and subcontinents.
1. Until the rise of air travel in recent history, Palestine was the geographical center of the world.
 2. It links Europe, Asia Minor, Africa, Saudi Arabia and Asia.
 3. Consequently, whoever controlled Palestine controlled politics and commerce in most of the known world.
 4. Therefore, Palestine has always been a battleground between nations!
- B. Map demonstration of Canaan:
- C. Palestine and Canaan do not represent exactly the same amount of land.
1. Technically, Canaan was the land on the west side of the Jordan River and amounted to 6,600 square miles.

2. Palestine included land on either side of the Jordan River and was about 12,000 square miles (the land over which David was King).
 3. By contrast, King Solomon ruled over 60,000 square miles from Canaan to the Euphrates River.
- D. Canaan is a land with many geographical contrasts in a relatively small space.
1. A coastal plain except for where Mt. Carmel juts into the sea runs north to south at the Mediterranean.
 2. Low rolling hills run parallel just east of the southern half of Canaan's coastal plain.
 3. The Central Mountain Range runs parallel north to south east of the low rolling hills in the south and the coastal plain in the north, and it is bounded by the Jordan River Valley on the east; mountains on either side of the Jordan River range from 2,500 to over 3,000 feet above sea level.
 4. Jerusalem, Bethlehem five miles south of Jerusalem and Hebron still further south are mountain cities; Jericho (800 feet below sea level), 16 miles east of Jerusalem (2,500 feet above sea level) is 3,300 feet below the elevation of Jerusalem.
 5. The Dead Sea's surface is 1,300 feet below sea level.
 6. Canaan, then, has the Mediterranean Sea to the west and a great desert beyond the Jordan River and to its south, plus coastal plains, hills, mountains and deep valleys; the twin Lebanon Mountain chains at the north end of Palestine rise to 10,200 feet with Mount Hermon being 9,200 feet tall.
- E. Mountain passes were critical to the history of Palestine.
1. A mountain pass just east of Mt. Carmel near the seacoast provided the only means of conveniently traveling with commerce or armies north or south through Canaan, as well as east or west at that point between the coast and the Jordan River

- Valley.
2. The various names of the vicinity are Valley of Megiddo, Valley of Jezreel and Plain of Esdraelon; this is the very spot where premillennialists believe that the Battle of Armageddon is supposed to occur.
- F. Palestine is an archaeological wonderland, besides the surrounding regions of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iraq.
1. One can hardly press a shovel into the soil without striking something that corresponds to that land's ancient history.
 2. Every major construction project from roads to buildings is often hampered while archaeologists rescue artifacts or ancient human remains.
- G. Israel under the leadership of King Solomon was once a world power.

IV. Egypt

- A. Egypt is a vast desert, the only redemption for which is owing to the fertility and water of the Nile River Valley.
1. Consequently, Egypt is sometimes referred to as "the gift of the Nile."
 2. The Nile River is the longest river system in the world and among a handful of rivers in the world that flow north; it is over 4,000 miles long.
 3. Besides the Nile River itself, irrigation drawn from the Nile River is essential to the habitability of Egypt by a population of any size.
- B. Egypt has long been known for its archaeological treasures.
1. Egypt is nearly as old as the earliest traces of humanity found near the Persian Gulf.
 2. Due to the great expanse of time inhabited and because of both the extensive use of stone and a climate friendly to the preservation of other materials, Egypt is unsurpassed in its archaeological contributions.
 3. The great, still unexplained pyramids best symbolize Egypt's ancient past.

- C. Mt. Sinai, east of Egypt and at the southern extremity of the Sinai Peninsula is where Moses received the Ten Commandments and inaugurated Judaism; Mt. Sinai is the southern-most compass point of the Bible world.
- D. It may be difficult to imagine, but once Egypt was a world power.

V. Turkey

- A. Bible students know Turkey as Asia Minor.
 - 1. Anciently, the Hittites marshaled a kingdom from the lofty mountains of Turkey.
 - 2. The Hittites were hearty warriors who themselves migrated from the Black Sea and Caspian Sea area to Turkey, from which they fought with Babylon (and sacked it) and fought to a standstill with the Egyptians.
- B. Much of the Book of Acts chronicles the missionary journeys of the apostle Paul largely through what today is Turkey.
- C. The ruggedness of Turkey, which still has not been tamed by the modern world, concealed in plain sight the mountain city capital of the Hittites; archaeologists only discovered it in the early 20th century.
- D. On the border between Turkey and the old Soviet Union, Mt. Ararat where Noah's Ark came to rest, is the northern-most compass point of the Bible world.
- E. It may be hard to believe, but Turkey was once a world power.

VI. Greece

- A. The Greeks unseated the Persians as rulers of the Bible world in 333 B.C.
 - 1. Under the leadership of a young man named Alexander the Great, Greece graduated from numerous warring city-states to superpower status.
 - 2. Against overwhelming numbers, Alexander the Great conquered the known world in 11 years, stopping his advance in India only because his army was reluctant to go further.
 - 3. Alexander the Great died of disease at the age of 33 with no more worlds to conquer.

- B. The rise of Greece was foretold in Bible prophecy, Dan. 2:31-45; 8:21; 10:20; 11:2.
 - 1. Greece gave the world its Greek culture, including a universal language, in which later the New Testament was written.
 - 2. Archaeological sites pepper Greece today and many of its ruins remain above ground as they do in Athens and Corinth; they are still impressive.
- C. Greece was once a world superpower.

VII. Rome

- A. Rome was built on seven hills in Italy, rose to dominate the known world and survived longer than any other superpower the world has known (753 B.C.—476 A.D.).
 - 1. Consequently, because of its long history as well as what remains above ground, Rome is obviously of archaeological significance.
 - 2. The Arch of Titus that commemorates the destruction of Jerusalem, the Coliseum and the catacombs remain as prominent items of archaeological interest.
- B. Rome marks the western-most compass point of the Bible world.
 - 1. Rome is primary biblical importance as it pertains to the establishment of Christianity and the Lord's church, Dan. 2:31-45; Acts 2:1-47.
 - 2. Rome provided a reliable transportation system of highways throughout its empire.
 - 3. Jesus was born, lived and died during the reign of the Roman Empire; the early church began and functioned while Rome ruled the Mediterranean world and beyond.
 - 4. There was a church of Christ in Rome to which the apostle Paul penned an epistle.
- C. Italy was once a world power.

Conclusion:

- 1. The Bible world was sufficiently small enough that when any part of it was inflamed by war, the entire Bible world was affected; 200,000 or so troops in anyone's backyard would be hard to overlook.

2. The Bible world is awash in tens of thousands of archaeologically valuable sites, the vast majority of which have not been examined yet.
3. The Bible is accurate geographically and topographically.
 - a. This is suggestive of its reliability on whatever it addresses in its pages.
 - b. Therefore, it is reasonable to accept the credibility of the Bible in areas that do not lend themselves to inspection, e.g. religious doctrine.
4. A fundamental understanding of the geography of the biblical world is essential to comprehension of Bible information and Bible truths.

Invitation:

1. More important than the geography of the Bible world is knowledge of the Bible whereby one can prepare to meet God in eternity, Amos 4:12.
2. Believers need to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins, Acts 2:38.
3. Erring Christians need to repent and pray, Acts 8:22.

Archaeological Confirmation of the Bible

Thesis: To bolster the audience's confidence in the Word of God through archaeological confirmation of the Bible.

Introduction:

1. God's Word — the Bible — is truth irrespective of whether any external evidence exists to validate it.
 - a. However, external evidences, such as archaeological discoveries, bolster the Bible believer's confidence in the divinely inspired, inerrant Word of God.
 - b. Second, God intends for external evidence, combined with the Bible's internal evidence, to appeal to nonbelievers, Rom. 1:20.
2. The simplest definition for "archaeology" is "digging up the past."
 - a. Digging up the past yields valuable information regarding the social, political and cultural past of Bible-times people.
 - b. Verifying through archaeology that the Bible is factually correct beyond the capability of mere human diligence proves that the Bible is divine in origin, God-inspired and inerrant.
 - c. After the Bible is shown to be accurate in areas that can be validated, one can be equally confident that the Bible is reliable in areas that cannot be validated by external evidence — theology or doctrine.
3. Archaeological discoveries validate the Bible regarding even incidentals.
 - a. Biblical Archaeology is simply archaeology that digs up the past respecting the time period that corresponds to Bible events.
 - b. Biblical Archaeology is impartial in purpose, but it always advances understanding of and confidence in the Bible; Biblical Archaeology and the Bible are friends who enjoy perfect agreement.

- c. The following abbreviated samples of Biblical Archaeology confirm the Bible to be God's infallible Word.

Body:

I. Archaeological discoveries validate the varying price of slaves throughout biblical history.

- A. Archaeological evidence notes the varying price of slaves, during a 2,000-year sampling of the biblical period, ranging from 10 shekels of silver to 120 shekels of silver.
- B. Accordingly, Joseph was sold for 20 shekels of silver, Gen. 37:28.
- C. The Bible records at other times slaves being sold for 30 to 50 shekels of silver, Exod. 21:32; 2 Kings 15:20.
- D. Had Joseph been sold as a slave during the Persian period, he would have brought a price of 90 to 100 shekels of silver.
- E. Bible history correctly records the price of a slave for the time period during which the Bible says Joseph was sold into slavery.

II. Archaeological discoveries of flood tablets validate the Bible's account of the universal flood in Noah's day.

- A. Clay Flood Tablets were found in Nineveh in the 1850's that correspond to the biblical account of Noah's flood.
- B. A Sumerian version of the flood also was found at Nippur among tens of thousands of clay tablets (between 1880 — 1900).
- C. An ancient Mesopotamian epic of Gilgamesh records a flood of so great proportions that it left the whole world buried under water.

III. Archaeological discoveries confirm the Bible's claim that at one time mankind spoke a single language.

- A. Both biblical and secular history ascribe language to mankind from the beginning and that all humanity initially shared a common language.
- B. Some have observed that most languages demonstrate their origin from a single *parent language*.
- C. Archaeological discoveries confirm the events recorded in the Bible regarding the Tower of Babel when suddenly the languages were confused by God, Gen. 11:1-9.

IV. Archaeological discoveries provide extra-biblical information regarding biblical characters.

- A. An inscription on the Kurkh Monolith records the formation of an alliance to resist the Assyrians.
 - 1. King Ahab contributed 2,000 chariots and 10,000 soldiers to an alliance of kings that was attempting to resist the conquering armies of Shalmaneser III.
 - 2. Though Ahab is a biblical character, these details are not recorded in the Bible.
- B. The Black Obelisk of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III records tribute brought to him by other kings.
 - 1. One of these tribute-paying monarchs was the Israelite Jehu, who brought tin, gold and silver.
 - 2. Though Jehu is a biblical character, this particular event is not chronicled in the Bible.

V. Archaeology shows that people have always used some form of writing.

- A. In the earliest writings, pictures told of man's deeds.
- B. This type of writing was used before the great flood of Noah's day; archaeologists have found stone tablets with picture writing that were written before the flood.
- C. Cities and palaces of the ancient world even maintained their own libraries with tens of thousands of inscribed tablets and stones.

VI. Archaeological discoveries sometimes aid biblical interpretation of difficult passages.

- A. An ancient Egyptian writing, the Papyrus Anastasi, explains how and why straw was used in making mud bricks.
 - 1. The straw helped keep the bricks together, especially in inclement weather.
 - 2. Using straw in making bricks is reminiscent of the slave labor of the Israelites immediately before their exodus from Egypt, Exod. 5:7-18.
- B. An archaeological discovery explains an obscure commandment in the Law of Moses.
 - 1. “. . . Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk” appears at least three times, Deut. 14:21; Exod. 23:19; 34:26.

2. Discovery of the Ras Shamra tablets explains that pagans boiled a goat kid in its mother's milk in an attempt to gain the favor of their idol gods.

VII. Archaeological review of ancient ruins identifies some of the very places Bible characters stood, walked or whose activities were recorded in the Bible.

- A. Mars Hill where the apostle Paul addressed crowds in Athens, Greece is clearly discernible today, Acts 17:22.
- B. The judgment seat in Corinth, Greece before which the apostle Paul was brought is visible today, too, Acts 12:18.
- C. Ruins of the synagogue in Corinth of Paul's day have been found, Acts 18:4.
- D. Part of the pavement laid at the expense of one of the apostle Paul's acquaintances, Erastus, has been discovered, Rom. 16:23.

VIII. Numerous archaeological discoveries coincide with incidental Bible references, which had a forger or someone out of time written the Bible the references would have been incorrect.

- A. Contracts that are recorded in the Bible correspond with archaeological discoveries respecting contracts in the same time periods, Gen. 14:13; 21:23-33; 26:29-31; 31:44-54).
- B. Geographical-political alliances recorded in the Bible conform to the geography and governments discernible through archaeology, though the *specific* alliances in some instances may not have been found, Gen. 14.
- C. Biblical references to inheritance laws (e.g., Gen. 49, equal distribution to sons; Deut. 21:15-17, double portion for the oldest son) correspond to archaeological discoveries depicting inheritance laws in the respective historical periods.
- D. Customs ascribed in the Bible to various peoples agree with archaeological evidence respecting the same periods.

Conclusion:

1. Archaeological evidence proves that the Bible could be written at the time in history and by the people it claims.

2. Other archaeological discoveries confirm the truthfulness and accuracy of the Bible in areas where it could be verified or disproved.
3. There is every reason to believe the Bible is an ancient writing handed down by God

Invitation:

1. All external evidences combine with the Bible's internal evidences to soundly confirm the Bible to be what it claims to be — the Word of God.
2. Therefore, it behooves each accountable person to become a child of God per the instructions of the Bible that are applicable today — the New Testament, Mark 16:16.
3. Likewise, erring children of God need to follow New Testament instructions to have their sins remitted, 1 John 1:9.

Biblical Timeline

Acts 3:22-26

Thesis: To present a chronological representation of the Bible with an emphasis on special dates and events.

Introduction:

1. The Bible is comprised of two major divisions called covenants or testaments, Gal. 4:24.
 - a. Scripture itself refers to its two major divisions as the old and new or first and second covenants, Heb. 8:6-13; 9:1; 12:24, or testaments, 2 Cor. 3:6, 14; Heb. 9:15, 18.
 - b. The Old Testament contains 39 books, whereas the New Testament contains 27 books, together totaling 66 Bible books.
2. There are three God-authored religious dispensations or periods within the Old and New testaments.
 - a. **Patriarchy** began at Creation in the Garden of Eden and continued for the descendants of Jacob (renamed by God, Israel) until the inauguration of Judaism with the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai; generally, Patriarchy continued for everyone else until all men became amenable to the Gospel of Christ.
 - b. God authorized **Judaism** for the Israelites from the time of its inception at Mt. Sinai until its replacement with the Gospel of Christ.
 - c. **Christianity** began as the result of the vicarious death of Jesus Christ on the cross and his subsequent resurrection and Ascension, after which it was preached beginning on the next Pentecost, Acts 2; 1 Cor. 15:1-3.
3. Everyone now living, whether he realizes it, is amenable exclusively to the New Testament or Gospel of Christ.
 - a. Neither Patriarchy nor Judaism is authorized by God any longer; only Christianity is authorized by God today.
 - b. Other world religions are not authorized by either testament of the Bible or by God.

- c. The New Testament or Gospel of Christ by which Christianity can be known and practiced, is the “better” and “everlasting covenant,” Heb. 8:6; 13:20.

Body:

I. Patriarchy was a family-type religion.

- A. Patriarchy began in the Garden of Eden at Creation with the creation of Adam and Eve.
 - 1. Various biblical chronologies place Creation at about 4000 B.C.
 - 2. Patriarchy continued for about 2,500 years until for the descendants of Jacob (Israel) it was replaced with Judaism in about 1500 B.C.
 - 3. For everyone else (Gentiles), Patriarchy continued until it was replaced with Christianity, Acts 2; 10.
- B. Under Patriarchy, God spoke to mankind through the fathers of the families, who were responsible for instructing their families.
 - 1. The word patriarch, Heb. 7:4; Acts 7:8-9, is a compound word meaning “father” and “head.”
 - 2. Generally, everyone living, before Judaism was instituted on Mt. Sinai, lived under Patriarchy.
 - 3. Adam and Eve, as well as their children practiced Patriarchal religion, Gen. 4:3-5.
 - 4. Though the rest of humanity abandoned God, Noah instructed his family in Patriarchal religion whereby his family was spared the catastrophic, universal flood about 1,650 years after Creation or about 2350 B.C., Gen. 7:13, 23; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5.
- C. A number of significant dates, events and characters pertain to the period of Patriarchy.
 - 1. The Tower of Babel (Greek, “Babylon”) following the flood of Noah’s day was humanity’s effort to thwart God’s instruction to spread over the earth and instead depend on human self-reliance, Gen. 11:1-9, occurred about 2234 B.C.
 - 2. Abraham was called of God about 1921 B.C. and all the events associated with Abraham occur until his death in about 1818 B.C. at 175 year old.

3. Moses was born about 1571 B.C., after the Israelites had already settled in Egypt and subsequently been enslaved; the Exodus from Egypt is dated about 1491 B.C.; the Israelites were in Egypt for 430 years, Exod. 12:40.

II. Judaism was a national religion.

- A. Judaism was only given to the Israelites, Exod. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 14:2.
 1. Gentiles, called “strangers” in the Old Testament, Exod. 12:48-49; 20:10; Lev. 24:16; 20:2, though, could proselyte to Judaism, Acts 2:10; 13:43.
 2. Judaism was instituted by God at Mt. Sinai in about 1441 B.C. and continued for about 1,500 years until it was replaced with Christianity, Exod. 20:1-17 (Ten Commandments).
 3. The Israelites began to conquer and settle Canaan about 1451 B.C., Josh. 3:1ff.
- B. Numerous very significant dates, events and characters pertain to the period of Judaism.
 1. After the death of Joshua, the Israelites were ruled by judges for 450 years, Acts 13:20.
 2. Eventually, the Israelites demanded an earthly king: Saul (1095 B.C.), David (1055 B.C.), Solomon (1015 B.C.).
 3. The united kingdom continued for 120 years from 1095 B.C. to 975 B.C., after which the rival kingdoms of Judah and Israel were formed, with Rehoboam as king in the south and Jeroboam I as king in the north.
 4. The northern kingdom of Israel practiced idolatry, and God allowed the Assyrians to conquer it in 722 B.C.; these former ten tribes were mostly resettled in Assyrian lands and foreigners immigrated to Israel with whom the remaining Israelites intermarried.
 5. The southern kingdom of Judah also practiced idolatry, and God allowed the Babylonians to hand Judah a series of defeats in 606 B.C. and 597 B.C., culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem in 587

B.C. (Most of the prophetic books of the Old Testament pertain to the period of apostasy and God's punishment of the divided kingdoms of Israelites.)

6. The 70 years prophesied Jewish captivity began in 606 B.C. and ended in 536 B.C. when the Persians, who had conquered Babylon two years earlier, permitted captive peoples to return to their homelands.
7. Successive returns to Canaan from Babylonian captivity occurred under the leadership of Zerubbabel (536 B.C.), Ezra (458 B.C.) and Nehemiah (444 B.C.).
8. Direct revelation and prophecies from God ended about 400 B.C., bringing 400 years of Divine silence.
9. The Intertestamental period transpires, during which the Jewish civil wars occur between the Sadducees and the Pharisees, Rome takes control of Palestine in 63 B.C. and Herod the Great began renovating the Jewish Temple in 20 B.C.

III. Christianity is the universal religion.

- A. Christianity displaced both the family religion of Patriarchy to which Gentiles were still amenable and Judaism, Eph. 2:15.
 1. The first Gospel sermon was preached in A.D. 33 to Jews and proselytes by the apostles on the Pentecost following our Lord's Ascension; Peter's sermon is recorded in Acts 2, after which Judaism was no longer authorized by God.
 2. The Gospel was preached to Samaritans whose ancestry was a mix of Jews and Gentiles, Acts 8.
 3. The Gospel was preached about A.D. 43 to Gentiles, Acts 10-11, at least by this time, Patriarchy was no longer authorized for the Gentiles.
 4. No one living today is amenable to either Patriarchy or Judaism, Gal. 3:11; 5:4.
- B. The New Testament replaced the Old Testament, lock-

stock-and-barrel.

1. The New Testament replaced both Patriarchy and Judaism, Eph. 2:11-15.
 2. The New Testament is superior to the Old Testament and replaced the Old Testament, Heb. 7:22; 8:6-13; Col. 2:14; 2 Cor. 3:6-11.
 3. Specifically, the New Testament replaced the whole Old Testament, including the Ten Commandments, Rom. 7:1-7.
- C. The New Testament books correspond to the first 70 years of the Lord's church.
1. Noting an error in our calendar, Jesus was born about 4 B.C., and his life and ministry is recorded in the four Gospel records.
 2. The Book of Acts begins where the Gospel records conclude and contains history of the early church beginning in A.D. 33 and continuing for about another 30 plus years.
 3. Many of the New Testament epistles were written during the time represented in the Book of Acts, for which the Book of Acts provides background information.
 4. At least the books of James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John, Jude and Revelation probably were written after the Book of Acts and the time period indicated therein; the Holy Spirit inspired new revelation and Scripture through near the end of the first century, after which there has been Divine silence.
- D. The New Testament foretold of an apostasy from primitive Christianity.
1. The apostle Paul warned the elders of Ephesus of a departure from within elderships, Acts 20:29-30.
 2. Paul warned the evangelist, Timothy, that church members would desire false doctrine, 2 Tim. 4:3-4.
 3. The same apostle warned that false teachers would attempt and were already leading the church away from Truth, Rom. 16:17-18; Gal. 1:6-9; 1 John 4:1.
 4. Still, a greater apostasy loomed on the horizon of

history that would all but conceal the Lord's church, 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Thess. 2:3-4.

5. For centuries, the Christian religion was grossly corrupted; with the Reformation Movement and later the Restoration Movement, mankind began to take a keener interest in pure Christianity.

Conclusion:

1. The three religious dispensations were related, successive and preparatory, either for the establishment of Christianity or regarding Christianity, preparatory for Final Judgment, John 14:1-3.
2. It was always God's plan to save wayward mankind through Jesus Christ and his church, Eph. 3:10-11; Acts 3:22-26.
3. The only religion to which anyone is amenable today, and by which one can please God, is Christianity alone.

Invitation:

1. The human timeline will be complete when Jesus returns again to reclaim his followers and punish the disobedient, 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
2. How will your life figure in to the conclusion of the biblical timeline, if you are either an erring child of God or an unbaptized believer, 1 John 1:7; Mark 16:16?

Customs of the Biblical World

Matthew 25:1-13; Luke 11:44

Thesis: To explore some of the customs of the biblical world that serve as the backdrop to the biblical text.

Introduction:

1. Customs of the biblical world can be discerned, in part, from viewing the lives and customs of people who still occupy that part of the world today.
2. Customs of the biblical world also can be determined by examining surviving artifacts, ancient pictures and antique rubbish.
3. A better understanding of the customs of the biblical world will provide an appropriate backdrop to better comprehension of the biblical text.

Body:

I. Ancient clothing differs from clothing worn today.

- A. Leather was the second material in history used for clothing.
 1. Adam and Eve sewed together belt-like, short loincloths from fig leaves, Gen. 3:7.
 2. God, however, replaced their unsatisfactory garments by wrapping them with animal skin coats that hung from the shoulders to the knees, Gen. 3:21.
 3. Subsequently, mankind also tanned animal hides and used them for clothing, belts, sandals, liquid containers and miscellaneous items, 2 Kings 1:8; Matt. 3:4.
 4. The apostle Peter lodged with a tanner of hides in Joppa, Acts 9:43; 10:6, 32.
- B. The clothes worn by men and women in antiquity were similar.
 1. Often they wore a wool tunic, a loose fitting gown,

- extending to the knees or even to the ankles and secured with a belt.
 - 2. Another robe-like garment was worn over this.
 - 3. The woman's outer garment was longer than the man's garment and concealed her feet.
- C. The purposes for typical clothing anciently differ from the purpose for typical clothing today.
 - 1. Anciently, clothing was designed to conceal the human form and provide protection from the weather.
 - 2. Of course, today, clothing is designed for so-called *style* and may do little to conceal the human form or protect from the weather.
 - 3. In antiquity, *stylish bodily adornment* amounted to jewelry that was worn by men and women, including earrings, necklaces, rings, bracelets and nose jewels.
- D. Though not as extravagant as clothing today, the ancients more highly prized their clothing than do contemporary people.
 - 1. The quantity of clothing owned today by even the poor among us far exceeds the change or very few changes of clothing owned by people in the biblical world.
 - 2. The basic garment, the tunic, was essentially a sack made from wool, linen or cotton, in which a "V" was cut for the head opening and slits were made for the arm openings.
 - 3. Clothes were considered prized possessions and were sometimes used as collateral, Prov. 20:16.
 - 4. When needing more agility or to run, the tunic would be tucked into a cloth or leather belt (i.e., called 'girding up the loins,' 1 Kings 18:46), to which the apostle Peter referred when making a spiritual application regarding preparedness, 1 Pet. 1:13.
- E. The care and cleanliness of clothes in biblical times differs from care and cleanliness of clothes in western culture.

1. Anciently as presently, people with no certain place to live gave little attention to personal hygiene or clean clothes.
 2. In the distant past and in many parts of the world today, the masses are less concerned about personal hygiene and clean clothes than people typically in modern western society.
 3. Due to a lack of sufficient firewood, hot water was not afforded bathing or washing clothes.
 4. Usually, clothes were washed by holding them in the running water of a stream or alternately beating them with clubs and rinsing them.
- F. Men and women wore leather sandals.
1. Their sandals were designed for functionality rather than for looks.
 2. Wearing sandals on the unpaved, dusty roads of antiquity, one's feet became dirty anytime he traveled.
 3. Consequently, the hospitable thing to do when receiving guests into one's home was to provide for the washing of guests' feet, Gen. 18:4; Luke 7:37-50.
 4. Having a servant or the host wash guests' feet was demonstration of even greater hospitality, John 13:4-14.
 5. Knowing the type of footwear worn in Bible times along dusty roads, our Lord's instruction to his apostles, to "shake off the dust of your feet" is more easily understood, Matt. 10:14.

II. Anciently, the hide of either a kid (i.e., young goat) or even an adult goat was sewn together to transport water, milk and other liquids.

- A. One leg of the animal was tied shut for transport and untied from which to pour the contents.
1. Liquid could also be forced from the wineskin after untying the spout by compressing the sides of the skin.
 2. The wineskin could be used as a butter churn by agitating the milk inside while compressing the

sides of the skin with one's foot or by swinging it from a tree.

- B. Jesus referred to the practice of using wineskins in one of his lessons, Mark 2:22.
 - 1. Our Lord said that putting "new wine" or grape juice into "old bottles" would cause the liquid to ferment, expand to break the wineskins and spill the liquid.
 - 2. Wineskins were customarily untied completely and cleaned when emptied.
 - 3. However, especially an uncleaned wineskin into which grape juice was placed would cause the grape juice to ferment, eventually ruining the wineskin and the grape juice.
 - 4. Jesus referred to the common practice of putting grape juice in "new bottles" so neither the wineskins or the grape juice is ruined.
 - 5. Our Lord used the common practice with which his contemporaries were familiar to teach a spiritual lesson when criticized by the religious leaders of his day.

III. The design and function of houses differs between the ancient biblical world and modern houses in which we live.

- A. The simplest homes found in small villages were made of a combination of mostly stone and sun dried mud brick.
 - 1. Wooden beams spanned from the outer wall to a center, stone pillar.
 - 2. Roofs were made of brush and mud overlaying the wooden beams.
 - 3. The roofs leaked because they were not watertight, and grass grew in the mud and brush, giving the roof a green color, 2 Kings 19:26; Psa. 129:6; Isa. 37:27.
 - 4. Houses of this sort were often windowless and had a curtain in place of a door.
 - 5. Cooking and toiletry needs occurred outside the house; the house was essentially a shelter from the weather and a place to store meager belongings.

6. These houses had very little furniture, e.g. table and chairs, 2 Kings 4:10.
 7. In good weather or because of heat, one was as likely to sleep outside his home.
- B. Better homes were constructed from quarried stone.
1. This type of home afforded the possibility of a second story.
 2. Typically residents of these houses had more furniture, including a bed, 1 Sam. 19:15-16; 2 Sam. 4:7.
- C. Oil lamps provided light in biblical world houses in the day and in the night.
1. Olive oil fueled clay lamps in which wicks made from flax were lit, Exod. 27:20; Isa. 43:3.
 2. Jesus presented a parable where a woman needed to light her oil lamp to find a lost coin in her home, Luke 15:8.
- D. Nomads lived in tents instead of houses.
1. Their tents were 15 to 40 feet long, eight to 10 feet wide, five to six feet tall in the center and made from long strips of black goat hair suspended from poles.
 2. The tent had one sidewall, one internal wall dividing the tent into two chambers and was open the length of one side.
 3. Inside the tents would be young goats, sheep and a few prized possessions.
 4. The tents had no furniture, but goat hair mats on which persons sat in the day and on which they slept at night.
 5. These tents provided no privacy and barely afforded any protection from the elements.
- E. Houses in cities were built abutting each other.
1. They filled as much of the city on the inside of the city's defensive walls as possible and even against them, Josh. 2:15.
 2. There were no yards and only narrow, irregular streets between jagged rows of houses.
 3. Canopies or arches on which were room additions

spanned the narrow streets, darkening them considerably even in the day.

4. Refuse littered the streets and rose above the thresholds to the houses and other buildings.
5. A city's walls were often 30 feet thick and 50 feet high, punctuated with towers, 2 Chron. 14:7.

IV. The Bible times diet and how the food was prepared differs from the food with which we are familiar and how it is prepared.

- A. The mud oven was outside the home and consisted of a single chamber into which both the fuel and the food were placed.
 1. The principle fuel for boiling, frying or baking was animal manure, which the women had to gather, shape into patties and stick to the side of the house to dry.
 2. After the oven was sufficiently hot, dough from unbleached flower and without yeast, which had been molded in similar fashion as had the fuel, was placed inside the oven where the fuel had been.
 3. Western travelers find the resulting bread dark, tough and unpleasant tasting.
- B. The manner in which Bible times people served their meals differs from the way western society eats its meals.
 1. Generally, all of the participants in a meal sat on the ground, ate from the same dish placed on a low stand in the middle of the floor, using a piece of bread or their fingers instead of tableware to retrieve their bites, Ruth 2:14; Mark 14:20.
 2. Rabbinic custom in the first century, rather than Mosaic law, had instituted a ritual of washing hands before a meal, but Jesus demoted the custom and elevated the law of God, Mark 7:1-9.
- C. The diet of the biblical world differs from the diet of western society.
 1. Cattle, sheep and goats grazed free-range from place to place under the oversight of shepherds.
 2. On special meal occasions, these animals were the main dish, but usually provided milk, wool and

goat hair, plus were essentially one's material wealth on the hoof.

3. The food staple in ancient times was flat bread described already previously herein.
4. Settled populations not only harvested grains, but figs and grapes also; Jesus sometimes referred to figs in his teaching, Matt. 24:32; 21:19-21.
5. In the absence of sugar, honey was used as the sweetener for foods.
6. People in the biblical era also augmented their diet with olives, nuts, fruits and vegetables.
7. First Samuel 25:18 provides a picture of a Bible-times' menu: bread, grape juice (translated wine), sheep, grain, raisins and fig cakes.

V. People in the biblical world highly regarded hospitality.

- A. No matter how humble a man's home, hospitality became the honor and responsibility of the host.
- B. Hosts would not murder one to whom they had extended hospitality and would defend them with their lives and the lives of their family, Gen. 19:1-8.
- C. Hosts would not rob someone to whom they had extended hospitality until at least three days after, according to J.W. McGarvey.

VI. Often, the city gate was the busiest place in the city and the most strategic entry into the city.

- A. Anciently, civil and legal functions occurred at the city gate.
 1. The elders of the city made decisions respecting the welfare and operation of the city at the gate, Gen. 34:20; Prov. 31:23; Amos 5:15.
 2. Stone ledges were built into the gate as seating.
 3. Legal transactions were ratified in the presence of witnesses at the city gate, Ruth 4:1-11.
 4. Visitors were greeted at the city gate, Gen. 19:1.
- B. The city gate was important to the defense of a city in time of war, Gen. 22:17; 24:60.
 1. Many cities had six-chambered gates to complicate entry by enemies in time of war, Ezek. 40:10.
 2. Often two successive gates at right angles with a

courtyard between them afforded defenders upon a wall to attack from above the enemies attempting to breach the gate.

3. The enemy had to turn left, leaving his right side (the unshielded side) open to attack.
4. In peacetime, the chambers in the gate served as meeting rooms or sites for merchants to set up makeshift shops.

VII. Ancient transportation in Palestine differed from that to which we are accustomed.

- A. Walking was the most common means of transportation.
- B. Donkeys were also ridden, Num. 22:21; Judges 12:14; 1 Sam. 25:23; Matt. 21:1-7.
- C. Oxen were used in place of tractors and other farm equipment today, and to haul freight, Deut. 25:4.
- D. Chariots were used for transportation and war, Acts 8:26-40.

VIII. Marriage customs of the biblical world and contemporary western society differ.

- A. Anciently, the male heads of respective families arranged marriages.
 1. By arranging marriages between members of the overall family clan, the preservation of the group with its customs, culture and values was assured, Gen. 27:46-28:2.
 2. Girls were eligible for marriage when they were old enough to bear children, about 12-years old plus one day, whereas men married usually when they received their inheritance or obtained their own resources.
 3. The often disparity in ages between brides and grooms helped to perpetuate the patriarchal or male headship in the home.
- B. By the first century, marriages could be voluntary between prospective brides and grooms.
 1. First, in the presence of at least two witnesses, the couple proclaimed their intent to wed.
 2. This initiated a betrothal and constituted a legal obligation to wed each other at the conclusion of

ten months to a year for maidens and after three months for widows.

- C. Betrothals were as binding as marriages.
 - 1. They could only be dissolved through divorce.
 - 2. Infidelity during the betrothal was considered adultery.
 - 3. Mary was betrothed to Joseph and it appeared to Joseph that his betrothed had committed adultery for which he was about to divorce her (until an angel apprised him that through the Holy Spirit Mary was carrying the Messiah), Matt. 1:18-25.
- D. Marriage was usually a festive occasion anciently.
 - 1. On the wedding day, the groom with some of his friends would retrieve his bride from her father's home.
 - 2. From there they would parade through town to the groom's home for a feast.
 - 3. Jesus referred several times to the marriage feast, Matt. 22:1-14; 24:38; 25:1-13; John 2:1-11.
- E. Both testaments of the Bible warn about the dangers of God's people marrying ungodly people.
 - 1. Under Judaism, marriage to non-covenant people was forbidden because God's people would be led into idolatry, Deut. 7:1-6; Ezra 10:10-44.
 - 2. Christians are warned about marrying non-Christians, especially if there is a likelihood of the child of God being led away from the faith, 1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

IX. Burial customs varied from time to time in biblical times.

- A. Sometimes the nomads, such as some of the patriarchs, buried their dead along their route of travel, Gen. 35:19-20.
 - 1. Sometimes natural caves or rock-carved tombs were used for burials, Gen. 23:1-20.
 - 2. Rock tombs were used for perpetual family burials over time, Gen. 49:33-50:13.
 - 3. Tombs were still being used in the first century when Jesus was buried, Matt. 27:58-60.
 - 4. The Essenes, a sect of Judaism, often buried their

- dead in shaft graves—vertically.
5. Most people, though, were buried in shallow graves that did not survive the passing of time, Luke 11:44; Matt. 27:1-10.
- B. A variety of things were buried with the deceased anciently.
1. Personal possessions interred with the dead indicated who the deceased was in life.
 2. Jewelry and weapons were frequently entombed with the dead.
- C. Usually, burial sites were outside cities.
1. Land within a city was limited and often reserved for the living.
 2. Therefore, burial sites, if they were available within a city, would be very costly so that only the wealthy could afford them.
- D. For 100 years either side of the time of Christ, ossuaries were used to preserve the remains of the dead.
1. Bodies placed in family tombs were allowed a year to decay, after which the bones were gathered and placed in an ossuary.
 2. An ossuary is a stone chest with a lid, similar in size to a small cedar chest.
 3. Some of them were very ornate while others were plain; the only picture surviving of the Temple is carved on an ossuary.
 4. Some, such as the ossuary ascribed to James the brother of Jesus, had inscriptions identifying the deceased incised on them.
 5. The only human remains confirming references to first century crucifixion were found in an ossuary.
- E. Bodies were typically prepared for burial.
1. The bodies were washed and anointed with spices, Mark 16:1.
 2. Next, bodies were bound in linen grave clothes, Matt. 27:59; John 11:44; 19:39-40.
 3. Often, musicians and mourners accompanied a body to its burial, Matt. 9:23; John 11:31.

X. First century Judaism was divided by sects that sometimes violently opposed each other.

- A. In the Intertestamental Period, the Sadducees and the Pharisees engaged in a civil war against each other.
 - 1. The Sadducees won and crucified 6,000 Pharisees and then murdered their families before them.
 - 2. During a Jewish civil war Rome was able to take control of Palestine in 63 B.C.
 - 3. The Pharisees and Sadducees were able to put their differences aside to join in their opposition to the Christ.
- B. There were 24 sects of Judaism in the first century, not all of which are mentioned in the New Testament.
 - 1. The Pharisees were among the strictest sects and honored traditions on par with or above the Law of Moses, Matt. 15:1-9.
 - 2. The Sadducees were politically aligned with the Romans, practiced a secular Judaism and disbelieved in life after death or spirit beings.
 - 3. The Sadducees only embraced the first five books of the Old Testament, from which Jesus quoted when refuting their error, Matt. 22:23-32.
 - 4. The Zealots were the patriots of their day who refused to pay taxes and whose nationalistic zeal finally led the Jews into a hopeless war with Rome in A.D. 66.
 - 5. Among his apostles, our Lord selected a tax collector and a zealot, Matt. 10:1-4; Luke 6:13-16; Acts 1:13.

Conclusion:

- 1. Without some knowledge of biblical era customs, the many biblical references that have those customs interwoven in them have to appear to the modern as somewhat vague.
- 2. Having some knowledge of ancient customs to which the Bible refers has to enhance the comprehension of the biblical text.
- 3. Possessing some knowledge of customs in the biblical world will help the modern reader to better understand how the original recipients of the divine message understood it.

Invitation:

1. The divine message is sufficiently simple to understand that every accountable soul can know without a doubt on what God-given conditions he may receive the blessings of the Gospel of Christ, 1 Cor. 2:1-4.
2. Unbaptized believers can know that they must repent and be immersed for the forgiveness of their sins, Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Col. 2:12; Acts 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21.
3. Erring Christians can know that God wants them to repent and pray for forgiveness, Acts 8:22; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 John 1:9.

Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls

Jeremiah 30:1-2

Thesis: To bolster the believer's faith by references to modern discoveries pertinent to the Word of God.

Song: *Give Me the Bible*

Introduction:

1. Bedouin shepherd boys who were searching for their lost sheep discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls accidentally in 1947.
2. Archaeologists uncovered about 800 books from bat dung filled caves adjacent to the ruins of Qumran.
3. The recovered manuscripts represent biblical texts, non-biblical religious texts (such as commentaries on Old Testament books) and secular writings.

Body:

I. The Qumran community and the Dead Sea Scrolls remain a mystery that archaeologists and historians have not been able to unravel to everyone's satisfaction.

- A. The Qumran ruins lie at the northwest corner of the Dead Sea, southeast of Jerusalem and south of Jericho.
 1. Qumran is two miles west of the Dead Sea.
 2. It is also seven and half miles south of Jericho.
 3. Qumran lies in the hostile environment of the Judean desert where temperatures are often 135 to 140 degrees.
 4. Qumran has been identified with the biblical "City of Salt," Josh. 15:62.
- B. The questions regarding Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls include:
 1. Who lived at Qumran?
 2. Who put the scrolls in the caves near Qumran?
 3. Why were the scrolls placed in the caves near Qumran?
 4. Who wrote the scrolls?

5. The answers to the questions swirling around Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls are tentative.
- C. Though not unanimous, most archaeologists, etc. suppose that the Essenes were the inhabitants of Qumran.
1. The Essenes were one of the 24 first century sects within Judaism.
 2. They were ascetics who practiced a strict communal existence in their pursuit of holiness.
 3. The Essenes are not mentioned in the Bible.
- D. Consequently, most people suppose that the Essenes placed the scrolls inside pottery jars and then put them in the caves.
1. The Jewish revolt against Rome in A.D. 66 that led to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 also affected the rest of Palestine.
 2. Evidently, Qumran also was the victim of the Roman-Jewish war of the first century.
 3. Perhaps to protect the scrolls though unable to save themselves, the Essenes secreted the precious texts in 11 caves adjacent to their community and 350 feet up the side of cliffs.
- E. About the only point admitted by all respecting the Dead Sea Scrolls is that they were not all written at Qumran.
1. Some of the scrolls found at Qumran were written before the time of the Qumran settlement.
 2. Still other scrolls are not Essene documents, such as the about 200 biblical books found there, i.e. every Old Testament book except Esther.
 3. Hence, it is known that the Essenes did not write all of the scrolls; at least some of them were brought from other places to Qumran and subsequently safeguarded in caves.
 4. Yet, archaeological evidence derived from Qumran as well as some of the non-biblical scrolls indicates that some of the scrolls were penned at Qumran, e.g. inkpots, tables, benches and the Manual of Discipline.

II. The Dead Sea Scrolls are arguably the most significant archaeological discovery of biblical interest in the 20th century.

- A. Perhaps the most pertinent find among the Dead Sea Scrolls for the Bible student is the Isaiah Scroll.
 - 1. The 1947 discovery of the Isaiah Scroll predates the previous oldest manuscript of Isaiah by 1,000 years.
 - 2. This scroll dates to about 100 B.C., whereas the previous oldest manuscript of Isaiah dates to A.D. 900.
 - 3. The Isaiah Scroll holds the record for being the oldest complete manuscript discovered to date for a Bible book, 2,000 years old.
- B. Two copper scrolls among the Dead Sea Scrolls appear to form a treasure map.
 - 1. Some believe these scrolls chronicle up to 64 hiding places for gold, silver and other items that the Jews hid before the approaching Roman army reached Jerusalem.
 - 2. Efforts to follow the map's directions have proved futile for the most part.
 - 3. In 1988 and 1992 respectively, some anointing oil and some spices were found by following directions on the copper scrolls.
 - 4. Some of the landmarks indicated on the map are not discernible today, or some of those landmarks no longer exist in modern times.
 - 5. If the copper scrolls refer to genuine items, many of the treasures recorded on them may have been discovered by accident or by design over the succeeding 2,000 years since it was written.
- C. The Manual of Discipline found among the Dead Sea Scrolls sheds light on the sect of the Essenes and the possible inhabitants of Qumran.
 - 1. The Manual of Discipline contains rules for members of the religious settlement at Qumran.
 - 2. The Manual of Discipline reveals that Essenes worked shifts 24 hours a day writing biblical

- commentaries and copying manuscripts of the Bible.
3. The Manual of Discipline records that to become a member of the Essenes one had to promise to love the sons of light and “hate the sons of darkness for all eternity”; Jesus may have referred to the Essenes through this doctrine he challenged when he taught that one should love his enemies, Matt. 5:43-44.
- D. The Temple Scroll found among the Dead Sea Scrolls is the largest scroll among the finds at Qumran.
1. It has an overall length of about 26.5 feet and a height of 9.5–10 inches.
 2. The Temple Scroll records the thinking of the Essenes regarding ceremonial laws of Judaism.
 3. Applying ritual cleanliness under Judaism with Jewish Sabbath Day limitations on travel to the city of Jerusalem, they concluded that toilet facilities could not be used in Jerusalem and that visiting a toilet outside Jerusalem would violate travel on the Sabbath, and therefore, **they could not use toilet facilities on the Sabbath.**
 4. The Essenes debated among themselves whether pure water in a ceremonially pure pitcher when poured into a ceremonially impure pitcher became impure as well because the impurity traveled up the poured stream of water to the ceremonially pure pitcher.
 5. The Essenes debated among themselves whether purification from ritual baths was effective at the time of the bath or when the sun set.
- E. Several of the Dead Sea Scrolls are displayed in the Shrine of the Book museum in Jerusalem.

III. The Dead Sea Scrolls validate the Bible as the reliable transmission of God’s Word to humanity.

- A. The two oldest manuscripts of the Book of Isaiah were written 1,000 years apart.
1. The remarkable agreement between the two copies of Isaiah instills great confidence in the reliability

- of biblical manuscripts.
 - 2. There are no significant additions or omissions between the two manuscripts, only minor copyist errors.
 - 3. No doctrine is affected though the manuscripts were penned ten centuries apart.
- B. Our English translations are unaffected by the discovery of ancient biblical manuscripts that predate the manuscripts from which our English Bibles were translated.
 - 1. It is uplifting to know that the modern translations of the Bible are as reliable as the translating process for any given translation is accurate.
 - 2. More recent discoveries of biblical manuscripts have not undercut the reliability of our English translations from more recently dated manuscripts.
 - 3. Doctrinal differences between various English translations of the Bible are not attributable to variations in original language manuscripts but to translating errors or intentional tampering with the Word of God.
- C. Tens of thousands of manuscript fragments representing hundreds of biblical and non-biblical books have been recovered from the caves near Qumran.
 - 1. Nothing pertaining to the Dead Sea Scrolls alters the meaning of any Bible translation based on more recent manuscript copies.
 - 2. The fidelity and carefulness with which scribes copied the Scriptures, coupled with the apparent providence of God respecting the preservation of his Word, assure modern readers of the Bible that we have the very Word of God.
 - 3. The Word of God will “stand forever,” Isa. 40:8; 1 Pet. 1:25.
 - 4. The Word of God will be the standard of final judgment, Rev. 20:12.

Conclusion:

- 1. Archaeology involves digging up the past.
- 2. Biblical archaeology is archaeology that pertains to Bible

times, Bible times places or Bible times objects.

3. Biblical archaeology is not predisposed to corroborate the Bible, but invariably biblical archaeology validates the Bible.
4. The accuracy discernible in the Dead Sea Scrolls respecting Bible books is typical of the fidelity and carefulness with which the biblical manuscripts in general have been copied.
5. The accuracy discernible in the Dead Sea Scrolls respecting Bible books is what one would expect of divine providence respecting the promised preservation of God's Word.
6. People living today can be assured that the Bibles from which they read and study reflect the very words of God, the Old Testament prophets and the apostles of Christ, Jer. 30:1-2.

Invitation:

1. If we have the very Word of God (and we do), then modern man has no excuse for not obeying God whose words are easily available to him.
2. Non-Christians and erring Christians alike are obligated to save themselves through obedience to Bible Truth, Phil. 2:12; Rom. 6:17; Heb. 5:8-9.

Getting Along with the Brethren

1 Corinthians 6:1-8

Thesis: To encourage brotherly love and brotherly kindness rather than discord among brethren through exposition of 1 Corinthians 6:1-8.

Song: *Angry Words*

Introduction:

1. All issues over which a congregation or some of its members may be troubled fall into one of two categories.
 - a. Many of the issues about which brethren disagree and that may develop into church problems pertain to matters that have no eternal significance, i.e. they are not doctrinal and they are non-salvation issues.
 - b. A few of the issues about which brethren disagree and that may develop into congregational problems pertain to divine doctrine, are salvation issues and will affect the eternal disposition of souls.
2. Anything that does not affect the eternal disposition of souls matters no more than the proverbial “hill of beans.”
 - a. Doctrinal deviations, though, must not be tolerated, even if put forth by a likeable preacher, Rom. 16:17-18.
 - b. Each child of God has the responsibility “to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints,” Jude 3 NKJV.
 - c. Every Christian must be “set for the defence of the gospel,” Phil. 1:17.
3. Disagreements between brethren, however, are first the responsibility of the brothers or sisters involved, Matt. 18:15.
 - a. Ideally, mutual brotherly love will be restored, Rom. 12:10; 1 Pet. 2:17; Acts 4:32.

- b. If brethren between whom disagreement exists are unable to resolve their differences, one or two Christian witnesses should be invited to assist, Matt. 18:16.
 - c. Only after these initial efforts to resolve disagreement prove fruitless, should disagreements between brethren become a matter for congregational involvement, Matt. 18:17 NKJV.
4. At no time should Christians or the church air disagreements between brethren before the ungodly world.
- a. The ungodly world cannot rightfully sit in judgment on the children of God, but the children of God will judge the ungodly world, 1 Cor. 6:2.
 - b. The apostle Paul through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit absolutely prohibited Christians from taking their grievances against brethren (or the church) to courts, 1 Cor. 6:1.
 - c. Yet, Christians often discuss their complaints about fellow Christians or the church with non-Christians!
 - d. Sometimes, Christians even sue fellow Christians or the Lord's church in a court of law!

Body:

- I. **“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?” 1 Cor 6:1.**
- A. This verse pertains to disagreements between Christians.
 - 1. The Epistle of 1 Corinthians was written to Christians, members of “the church of God which is at Corinth,” 1 Cor. 1:2.
 - 2. The immediate context makes a distinction between Christians and non-Christians, 1 Cor. 6:1, 6.
 - B. This context teaches that it is **sinful** for Christians to appeal to the courts to settle **personal differences** between them, 1 Cor. 6:7-8.
 - 1. Resorting to the courts to settle disputes between Christians blemishes the spotless bride of Christ (the church), Eph. 5:27; 1 Cor. 10:32; 2 Cor. 6:3.
 - 2. However, the context of 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 does not refer to matters over which the law necessarily

has legal jurisdiction, e.g. auto accidents, robbery, murder, etc.

3. The context does not advise Christians to take the law into their own hands, but it only exhorts brethren to refrain from engaging in civil suits against each other.

II. “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?” 1 Cor 6:2.

- A. Indirectly, the righteous pass judgment upon the ungodly that they are unrighteous.
 1. For instance, the same procedure by which Noah saved himself and led his family to save themselves constituted a condemnation or judgment of everyone who did not do what he did, Heb. 11:7.
 2. Likewise, when persons today become Christians and when Christians continue to obey the Gospel, they essentially condemn everyone who does not do what they do, Rom. 6:17; Mark 16:16.
 3. According to Jude 14-15, it has been a longstanding biblical truth that at the Second Coming the saints will accompany Jesus Christ as he returns to execute judgment; see also Matt. 25:31-41.
- B. Since Christians have already discerned between good and evil, they ought to be qualified to continue discerning between good and evil, Heb. 5:14.
 1. Non-doctrinal disagreements between Christians pale in importance to salvation issues.
 2. Christians have already surpassed salvation issues and, therefore, ought to be more than able to address issues of lesser importance, i.e. non-salvation issues between brethren.

III. “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” 1 Cor 6:3.

- A. This verse repeats the message of the preceding verse for emphasis, only exchanging references to sinful men with references to sinful angels.

- B. Indirectly, Christians pass judgment on the angels who sinned, Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4.
 1. Therefore, Christians ought to be able to demonstrate judgment or discernment regarding matters of less significance, i.e. disagreement between Christians.
 2. A distinction appears in the verse between issues of spiritual and eternal significance and relatively irrelevant matters that pertain to the here and the now.

IV. “If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?” 1 Cor 6:4-5.

- A. The disagreements between brethren pertain to non-doctrinal matters, i.e. “this life.”
 1. These issues out of which contention arises are not as important as salvation issues.
 2. Only doctrines of divine origin deserve the type of defense by which dissension may rightfully come.
- B. Lesser issues than divine doctrine required less vigor with which they are addressed.
 1. Even the least able member of the church who has already discerned between right and wrong when he obeyed the Gospel ought to be capable of discerning and judging respecting matters of less importance and pertaining to this world and disagreements between brethren.
 2. Nevertheless, Christians should appeal to the wisest Christians among them for helping to disarm disagreement between brethren.

V. “But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren,” 1 Cor 6:6-8.

- A. The sinfulness of Christians suing each other in civil

courts is emphasized repeatedly in this context.

1. “Defraud” and “wrong” throughout the context are used as synonyms for sin.
 2. A catalog of sins immediately follows this context, suggesting that the contexts of 1 Corinthians 1:1-8 and verses 9-11 have something in common, i.e. sinfulness.
- B. It is preferable for Christians to suffer injury than for the Lord’s cause to suffer, which occurs when disagreements among Christians are adjudicated.
1. God will ultimately avenge any wrong done to his children, Prov. 20:22.
 2. Jesus Christ also formerly taught during his ministry that his followers should turn the other cheek or submit if a court judgment succeeds against them, Matt. 5:39-40.

Conclusion:

1. Frequently, issues between brethren are nothing more than personality clashes, opinions or different ways of doing things that are neither right nor wrong.
 - a. Congregational tranquility is more important than personalities, opinions and optional matters.
 - b. It is not possible to worship God acceptably as long as brethren are at odds with each other, Matt. 5:23-24.
 - c. Christians must be careful they refrain from forcing their will on other brethren, 3 John 9-10; Titus 1:7.
2. Problems between brethren should remain within the local church—and be resolved there.
 - a. Disagreements among brethren should be resolved between the brethren involved if possible.
 - b. One or two brethren may assist resolution of disagreements between brethren.
 - c. Finally, disagreements between brethren may be resolved by the local congregation if previous efforts between brethren have been fruitless.
3. Ultimately, each child of God must be careful not to blemish the ministry of Christ or sow discord among brethren, Prov. 6:16-19.

- a. One of the Christian graces is “brotherly kindness,” 2 Pet. 1:7.
- b. “Brotherly love” for our brothers and sisters in the Christian family will alleviate many potential conflicts, Heb. 13:1.
- c. Getting along with our Christian brethren on earth certainly must be a prerequisite to any anticipated fellowship together in heaven forever!

Invitation:

- 1. The first step to being with each other in heaven forever is obedience of the Gospel, Heb. 5:8-9.
- 2. Initial obedience involves believing the Gospel, repenting of sins, professing Jesus to be the Christ and immersion in water for the remission of sins, Mark 16:16; Luke 13:3; Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 2:38.
- 3. Continued obedience by the children of God keeps us in fellowship with God and remits sins we may commit from time to time, 1 John 1:7.

The Biblical Doctrine of Worship

Matthew 4:10

Thesis: To ascertain from Scripture the nature of faithful worship.

Songs: *O Worship the King, Praise Him! Praise Him!, Hallelujah! Praise Jehovah*

Introduction:

1. The very title of this lesson, “The Biblical Doctrine of Worship,” implies that there are other doctrines or teachings about worship that differ from what the Bible represents worship to be.
2. For instance, true worship is unidirectional—toward God alone—as opposed to worshipping another god or many gods, Matt. 4:10.
3. Also, true worship must be regulated by instructions of divine origin rather than by humanly devised instructions, Matt. 15:9; Col. 2:23.
4. It is our task through the balance of this lesson to ascertain from Scripture the nature of faithful worship.

Body:

I. How do men define worship?

- A. Men have formulated several definitions for worship.
 1. Worship is the response of man to the Eternal.
 2. Worship is the recognition of the absolute worth of God.
 3. Worship is a creaturely awareness of God by means of religious exercise and moral obedience.
 4. Worship is adoration and reverence toward God.
 5. Worship is the practice of the presence of God.
 6. Worship is the overflow of a grateful heart under a sense of divine favor.
 7. Worship is an acknowledgement of the greatness of God and of the need of man.

8. Worship is the glorification of God.
 9. Worship is a group of specialized activities in which we draw near to and commune with God in an extra-ordinary manner.
 10. Worship is presenting the whole of life as his spiritual service.
- B. Further, men have graphically underscored with examples that they equate one's whole life (e.g., Christian living) with worshipping God.
1. Some teach that pursuing one's occupation is worshipping God because it falls under the category of Christian living.
 2. I personally have heard the example given that when one mows his grass he is worshipping God.
 3. The theory that one's whole life is equivalent to worshipping God means that the mother who changes a baby's dirty diaper is worshipping God.
 4. Playing golf could, then, be construed as worshipping God.
 5. Brushing one's teeth would be worshipping God.
 6. Washing one's hands would be worshipping God.
 7. Singing hymns with the accompaniment of instrumental music for social merriment would be worshipping God.
 8. When a husband and a wife enjoy the marriage bed of which Hebrews 13:4 speaks, this too would be worshipping God.
 9. Because it is a part of Christian living or one's whole life, imagine ladies if you can, that giving birth would be worshipping God.
 10. By some, everything in life, as long as it is not sinful, is considered worshipping God.
- C. However, there are untenable consequences to the theory that everything we do in life (i.e., Christian living and Christian service) is worshipping God.
1. Worship may be subconscious—one's mind is really focused on something other than worshipping God, e.g. marital intimacy or birthing babies.

2. Worship may be unconscious or while one is asleep.
3. Most importantly, the manmade theory of everything we do in life is worship conflicts with the biblical doctrine of worship.

II. How does the Bible define worship?

- A. Part of the difficulty mankind sometimes experiences when defining worship arises from the fact that the Bible does not precisely define worship.
 1. However, the Bible demonstrates within its pages what worship is and some of what worship is not.
 2. Secondly, original language definitions of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words that are translated “worship” clearly define the biblical doctrine of worship.
- B. The Bible makes a clear distinction between worship and service, which is easily seen in prohibitions against idolatry.
 1. Prohibitions against idolatry separately enumerate worshipping idol gods and rendering service or obedience to the idol cults, Deut. 4:19; 8:19; 11:16; 17:3; 29:26; 30:17; 1 Kings 9:6, 9; 16:31; 22:53; 2 Kings 21:3; 21:21; 2 Chron. 7:19, 22; 33:3; Jer. 8:2; 13:10; 16:11; 22:9; 25:6.
 2. Likewise, in every religious dispensation, worship and faithful service or obedience have been separate but companion functions.

III. The original language words that most often are used to represent worship exclude equating worship to Christian service and Christian living.

- A. *Shachah* [shaw-khaw] appears 172 times in the Hebrew Bible and is translated “worship” 99 times in the KJV and in most of the other instances where it appears it is translated as “bow,” “bow down,” “obeisance” or “reverence.”
 1. Exod. 23:24 clearly distinguishes between worship (“bow down”), servitude to and doing works for, in this case, an idol.
 2. 2 Kings 17:35 also clearly distinguishes between

- worship (“bow”), servitude and doing works (slaughtering an animal for sacrifice).
- B. *Cagad* [saw-gad’] (Hebrew) and *cegid* [seg-eed’] (Aramaic) together appear 16 times in the Hebrew Bible and are synonyms for *shachah*, plus these words mean “to prostrate oneself, do homage.”
1. Isa. 44:15, 17 and 46:6 use *shachah* for “worship” and *cagad* for “bow down” while describing acts of worship (in this case rendered to idols); *cagad*, translated “bow down” also appears in Isa. 44:19.
 2. *Cegid* appears 12 times in Dan. chapters 2 and 3, each time translated, ‘worship’; Several of these instances make a distinction between serving and worshipping, Dan. 3:12, 14, 18, 28.
- C. The Greek *proskuneo* [pros-koo-neh'-o] appears in the Septuagint in place of *shachah* and *cagad* as well as 60 times in the New Testament, always translated as worship, Matt. 4:10.
1. *Proskuneo* means, “prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore).”
 2. Consequently, *proskuneo* pertains to an act of worship rather than to Christian living or Christian service.
- D. The Greek *sebomai* [seb'-om-ahee] (and derivatives) appear 13 times in the New Testament and represent acts of worship.
1. The word means to revere or adore as worship and is translated as ‘worship, Matt. 15:9; Mark 7:7; Acts 16:14; 18:7, 13; 19:27;’ “religious,” Acts 14:23; and “devout,” Acts 13:50; 17:4, 17.
 2. A form of *sebomai* is used in Acts 17:23 and translated as “devotions” and in 2 Thess. 2:4 where it is translated “worshipped.”
 3. Another form of *sebomai* appears in Rom. 1:25, translated “worshipped.”
- E. The Greek *threskeia* [thrace-ki'-ah] means ceremonial observance and pertains to acts of worship.
1. It is translated “religion” in Acts 26:5 and Jam. 1:26-27, but “worshipping” in Col. 1:18.

2. With the Greek word for “will,” *threskeia* appears in Col. 2:23 as a compound word.

IV. The Bible uses entirely different words to represent service.

- A. The Hebrew word *sharath* [shaw-rath’] occurs 97 times in the Old Testament and means to perform menial service.
 1. It is often translated as “minister” or ‘serve.’
 2. This word does not pertain to acts of worship.
- B. The Greek word *leitourgeo* [li-toorg-eh’o] means public servant.
 1. It is translated ‘minister’ in Acts 13:2; Rom. 15:27; Heb. 10:11.
 2. This word does not represent an act of worship.
- C. The Hebrew word *abad* [aw-bad’] appears 289 times in the Old Testament and means bondservant and does not represent acts of worship.
- D. The Greek word *latreuo* [lat-ryoo’-o] corresponds to *abad* and means hireling or servant.
 1. This Greek word appears 21 times in the New Testament and is translated “serve” or “service, Acts 26:7; 27:3; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 8:5; 12:28” and “worship, Acts 7:42; 24:14; Phil. 3:3.”
 2. *Latreuo* does not refer to acts of worship but to serving.
 3. The “serve” *latreuo* in Matt. 4:10 is distinguished from “worship” *proskuneo* in the same verse.
 4. Words related to *latreuo* also mean to serve and appear about five times, *latreia* “service,” Rom. 9:4; 12:1

V. What is the nature of worship?

- A. Worship has always been an act rather than merely an attitude or relationship.
 1. Nearing Mt. Moriah, Abraham told his servants to remain behind while he and Isaac “go yonder and worship [*shachah*] and come again to you,” Gen. 22:5; worship was described as a specific act occurring at a specific place rather than Christian living or Christian service.

2. Gideon “worshipped [*shachah*, a specific act], and returned into the host of Israel,” Jud. 7:15.
 3. Samuel’s mother and father “rose up in the morning early, and worshipped,” 1 Sam 1:19; this means, among other things, that they were not worshipping while they were asleep, i.e. Christian living.
 4. David’s conduct following the death of his and Bathsheba’s child demonstrates the singularity of worship as an act distinguishable from other acts, attitudes or service; “Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped [*shachah*]: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat,” 2 Sam. 12:20.
- B. Worship is something to which one goes or comes because it is a specific act.
1. “...come to worship [*shachah*],” Isa. 66:23.
 2. “go...to worship [*shachah*],” Zech. 14:16.
 3. “come to worship [*proskuneo*],” Matt. 2:2.
 4. “came...and worshipped [*proskuneo*],” Matt. 15:25.
 5. The Ethiopian treasurer “had come to Jerusalem for to worship [*proskuneo*],” Acts 8:27.
 6. The apostle Paul went to Jerusalem to worship [*proskuneo*], Acts 24:11.
- C. The Bible is full of specific acts of worship in which the worshippers bowed down or bowed their heads or fell on their faces and worshipped.
1. Old Testament examples include: Exod. 4:31; 12:28; 34:8; Josh. 5:14; 1 Chron. 29:20; 2 Chron. 7:3; 20:18; 29:29-30; Neh. 8:6; Job 1:20; Isa. 44:15; 46:6.
 2. New Testament examples include: Matt. 2:11; 18:26; Acts 10:25; 1 Cor. 14:25; Rev. 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4, 10; 22:8-9.
- D. The Bible notes specific acts of worship, all of which praise the Godhead.

1. **Prayer:** Gen. 24:26-27, 48; Exod. 34:8-9; 2 Chron. 7:3; Isa. 44:17; Matt. 8:2; 9:18; 15:25; 18:26; 20:20.
2. **Singing:** Psa. 66:1-4; 95:1-6; 2 Chron. 29:25-30.
3. **Verbally praising the name of God:** Neh. 9:3; Psa. 29:2; 96:7-9; 99:5, 9; Job 1:20-21.
4. **The Lord's Supper:** 1 Cor. 11:23-28; Acts 20:7.

Conclusion:

1. Faithful Christians must refuse new definitions for the old Gospel.
2. We must refuse to augment Bible doctrine with the commandments of men, Matt. 15:9.
3. We must disallow bewitching new gospels, Gal. 1:6-9.
4. Faithful brethren must defend the Gospel, Phil. 1:17.
5. Clearly, not everything the child of God does in Christian living or Christian service is truly worship.

Invitation:

1. May each of us worship [*proskuneo*] God according to spirit and truth plus also practice Christian living and Christian service [*latreia* related to *latreuo*], John 4:24; Rom. 12:1.
2. Before one can worship God acceptably, he must become a child of God, Acts 2:38.
3. Erring children of God must repent before they can worship God acceptably, Matt. 5:23-24; Acts 8:22.

The Terror of the Lord

2 Corinthians 5:10-11

Thesis: To note fearsome characteristics of God whereby souls may be prompted to humbly submit to God.

Song: *There's A Great Day Coming*

Introduction:

1. The benevolent and positive characteristics of the Godhead often have been emphasized to the utter neglect of fearsome and negative characteristics of the Godhead.
 - a. Of course, it is a misrepresentation of God to portray him only as wrathful.
 - b. However, it is equally a misrepresentation of God to portray him only as all loving and kind.
2. Our God is a God of love and mercy.
 - a. "...God is love," 1 John 4:8.
 - b. In addition to love, God showers mankind with mercy and grace, Titus 3:4-7.
 - c. Rom. 15:33 styles God as a God of peace.
3. Jesus Christ is the manifestation of God's love toward mankind.
 - a. Jesus is the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, Heb. 9:26.
 - b. He is man's Savior and Mediator, John 4:42; 1 Tim. 2:5.
 - c. Jesus is the Lamb of God and the Prince of Peace, John 1:29; Isa. 9:6.
4. Yet, God is a God of wrath, vengeance and punishment.
 - a. In the Old Testament, God executed his wrath against the disobedient, Eph. 5:6.
 - b. Likewise, Jesus Christ will execute his wrath and vengeance against the ungodly upon his return, Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30; Rev. 6:16.
 - c. Jesus will return as Judge with flaming-fire vengeance toward the disobedient, Acts 17:31; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
5. Faithful Bible preaching must represent God respecting what

we might consider his positive as well as his negative characteristics.

- a. Gospel preachers must fairly and accurately portray God in keeping with what the Bible reveals about him.
- b. One-sided depictions of God are unbalanced portrayals of Deity.
- c. By inspiration, the apostle Paul referred to the harsh reality of how God responds toward disobedience to urge compliance with the will of God, 2 Cor. 5:10-11.

Body:

I. Final judgment is a theme in both Old and New testaments, Ecc. 12:13-14; 2 Cor. 5:10-11.

- A. Final judgment is **certain**, Heb. 9:27.
 1. Jesus will judge everyone, but it will be a fair judgment, Matt. 16:27; Col. 3:25.
 2. People from all nations will appear in judgment, at which time the wicked will be sentenced to a devil's hell and the righteous will be admitted to the eternal kingdom where God dwells, Matt. 25:31-46.
 3. All the dead will be raised, judged and either experience "the resurrection of life" or "the resurrection of damnation," John 5:28-29; Acts 17:31.
 4. God will judge the secrets of men with the Gospel, Rom. 2:16.
 5. Evil deeds and disobedience of the Gospel assures a judgment of wrath, Rom. 2:5-6; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
- B. Final judgment will be **personal**, Rom. 14:10-12.
- C. Final judgment will be **universal**.
 1. All nations will be represented, Matt. 25:32.
 2. All the dead will be there, John 5:28-29.
 3. The small and the great will be in judgment, Rev. 20:12-13.
 4. The living and the dead will be judged, Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:1.
- D. Final judgment will be **public**, Rev. 1:7.
- E. Final judgment will be **terrible** for the lost.
 1. The day of judgment will be the most horrific and

catastrophic event that has ever occurred in this world, 2 Pet. 3:7-12.

2. Men from every station in life will attempt to hide from the wrath of God, Rev. 6:15-17.
3. The wicked will be cast into the lake of fire, Rev. 21:8.

II. The inspired apostle Paul's reference to final judgment in 2 Cor. 5:10-11 to first-century Christians should persuade Christians today to be mindful of the Judgment, too.

- A. The "judgment seat of Christ" signals the different role Jesus Christ will assume when he ceases his ministry as the Savior to sit in judgment.
 1. It will be too late for anyone to make ready for judgment then.
 2. Especially any child of God who fails to fully commit himself to the Lord now is preparing himself (and those over which he has any influence) for an awful judgment and eternity.
- B. The phrase "things done in his body" reminds us that the body or flesh is the instrument through which, though sin originates in one's heart, is often perpetrated.
- C. The phrase "according to that he hath done" refers to God's judgment of one's actions.
 1. This refers to the power of decision or free, moral agency of man to choose righteousness or wickedness.
 2. Hence, each accountable soul is responsible for his own eternal destiny.
- D. The words "good or bad" represent the dual possibilities of righteousness or wickedness and the dual eternities of hell or heaven.
- E. The phrase "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" reminds man of the terribleness of judgment for which one is ill prepared.
 1. The apostle Paul was not attempting to frighten souls away from hell and toward heaven.
 2. The apostle used a reasoned argument to encourage Christians to practice Christianity faithfully.
- F. The phrase "but we are made manifest unto God" is

Paul's affirmation that his motive for warning about judgment was appropriate and good intentioned for the purpose of saving souls.

- G. The phrase "and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences" notes Paul's confidence that the Corinthian brethren were equally aware of his pure motives.
- H. MacKnight's paraphrase of 2 Cor. 5:11 reads: "Knowing, therefore, the terribleness of the Lords' displeasure, we persuade men to repent and believe the gospel, that they many not be punished..."

III. Numerous Bible passages refer to the terror of the Lord through the use of a number of different words.

- A. The Greek word for "terror" in 2 Cor. 5:11 is *phobos* [fob'-os], meaning:
 - 1. 'be afraid, fear, terror, alarm, fright' (*Strong's*).
 - 2. "dread" (E4's Greek Lexicon)
 - 3. However, some contexts require *phobos* to be understood as reverential fear or respect, Luke 5:26; 7:16; Acts 2:43; 9:31; Rom. 13:7; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:21.
- B. The word *phobos* is apparent in some of our English words: hydrophobia, claustrophobia.
- C. *Phobos* is translated "fear" 41 times and "terror" three times in the New Testament: fear, Matt. 14:26; 28:4; 2 Cor. 7:15; Heb. 2:15; terror, Rom. 13:3; 1 Pet. 3:14; Rev. 18:10, 15.
- D. "Fear" or "terror" is one of many motives that together should prompt souls to obey and continue to obey the Gospel.
 - 1. Obeying out of love for God would be a more noble motive to abide in the Gospel, but fear is a legitimate motive, too.
 - 2. Children are conditioned by a combination of fear and love to cooperate with their upbringing.
- E. Terror or fear of God is the characteristic of unrighteous or lost souls.
 - 1. The righteous have no reason for terror before God, 1 John 4:18.
 - 2. The devils, however, representative of all

unrighteous souls, know the terror of the Lord, Jam. 2:19.

3. Terror of God pertains to unpreparedness for final judgment and subsequent assignment to a devil's hell, Heb. 10:27, 30-31.

Conclusion:

1. Most of the people living on planet earth apparently are unconcerned about final judgment and certainly will know the terror of the Lord.
2. Unfortunately, the lost will realize their plight too late, Matt. 25:1-13.
3. Some lost souls at the final judgment will attempt to negotiate with Jesus Christ, Matt. 7:21-23.
4. Sadly, though, the majority of souls will be lost, Matt. 7:13-14.
5. The reality and certainty of final judgment ought to be apparent to Christians at least, for which cause we must be totally committed to God, Matt. 6:33.
6. Further, because of coming judgment and the potential terror with which it will be accompanied, we need to save ourselves and save others as well.
 - a. We must pursue our salvation mindful of "fear and trembling," Phil. 2:12;
 - b. The apostle Paul preached judgment before all whom he had an opportunity to preach or teach, Acts 24:24-25.
 - c. Fear may be the only motive with which we can reach some people, Jude 23.

Invitation:

1. Since it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, please respond to the Lord's invitation today.
2. Unbaptized believers need to wash their sins away while there is yet time, Acts 22:16.
3. Erring Christians must resume the pilgrimage toward the heavenly city, Heb. 11:10, 16.

Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All

1 Corinthians 15:19

Thesis: Heaven, the hope of which sustains us now, will comfort the righteous eternally.

Song: *Heaven Will Surely Be Worth It All*

Introduction:

1. Without the hope of heaven:
 - a. Life often would be unbearable.
 - b. Physical and emotional stress would be beyond toleration.
 - c. There would be nothing for which to live or die.
2. Heaven promises rest and comfort from the trials, afflictions and tribulations of this present world.
3. Heaven is something for which we all can rejoice even in times of sadness.

Body:

I. Heaven is a real place.

- A. Heaven is mentioned along with other real places.
 1. Earth, a real place, and heaven are mentioned as counterparts to each other, Ecc. 5:2.
 2. Jesus mentioned heaven and earth as realms over which God is Lord, Matt. 11:25.
- B. Heaven is habitable.
 1. God dwells there, Matt. 16:17.
 2. Christ dwells in heaven, Mark 16:19.
 3. Angels dwell in heaven, Luke 15:7, 10.
 4. The righteous will dwell in heaven, John 14:1-3.

II. Heaven is a place of comfort and rest.

- A. A beggar was comforted in the bosom of Abraham in the Hades, receiving a foretaste of comfort in heaven, Luke 16:22.
- B. Heaven is a place of rest, Heb. 4:9-11; Rev. 14:13.
- C. The tribulations of this world are contrasted with rest in

heaven, 2 Thess. 1:4-6.

D. There will be no tears in heaven, Rev. 21:4.

III. Heaven is a place of reward.

A. An incorruptible inheritance is reserved in heaven for the children of God, 1 Pet. 1:4.

B. The righteous will receive a crown of righteousness in heaven, 2 Tim. 4:8.

C. The just shall receive a crown of glory in heaven, 1 Pet. 5:4.

D. Rev. 2:10 calls it a crown of life.

E. Eternal life with God is the reward for righteousness in this life, Rom. 6:23; Matt. 25:46; Rom. 2:7.

Conclusion:

1. Like Abraham, we need to look for a city whose builder and maker is God, Heb. 11:10.
2. There is no habitation on this earth comparable to the heavenly city, Heb. 13:14.
3. As Moses looked for Canaan, let us look for our land of milk and honey, but let us watch lest we wander in the wilderness of sin 40 years and die this side of that land.

Invitation:

1. God's promise of heaven offers genuine comfort **only** to the faithful children of God.
2. Unbaptized believers can adopt the Christian hope by becoming a child of God, Acts 2:38.
3. Erring Christians can regain the heavenly hope by repentance and prayer, Acts 8:22.

The Truth About Speaking in Tongues

Thesis: To introduce the contemporary controversy about so-called speaking in tongues, biblically define speaking in tongues, define what passes today for speaking in tongues and distinguish between the two.

Introduction

1. In reality, “The Truth About Speaking in Tongues” is not difficult to ascertain.
 - a. After all, the subject only presents itself in a small number of passages.
 - b. For instance, the primary Greek word for “tongue” (*glossa*) appears just 50 times in the New Testament; however, many of those occurrences do not pertain to “speaking in tongues.”

“Only three New Testament books mention the gift of tongue-speaking or glossolalia. (Glossolalia is from the Greek, ‘glossa’ = tongue, and ‘laleo,’ to speak)” (Clarke, “Part One” 2).

“All that one can find recorded in the New Testament on the subject of ‘speaking in tongues’ is found in five passages. These are Mark 16:17-18, Acts 2:1-13, Acts 10:47 through 11:18, Acts 19:1-7, and I Cor. 12:1 through 14:40” (Bennett 19).

2. Tongue first refers to the organ of speech in one’s mouth (James 3:5-10); secondly, tongue is used figuratively to refer to speech.
 - a. As in English, the New Testament uses the word “tongue” (*glossa*) when referring to a literal tongue, something shaped like or resembling a tongue and languages.
 - b. Speaking in tongues in the New Testament pertained to languages, whereas contemporary speaking in tongues are merely ecstatic utterances.

The word *glossa* is used in various ways in the New Testament. In thirteen passages, it is used to refer to the tongue (the organ of speech). A few examples are Mark 7:33, 35; Luke 1:64; 16:24; 1 Corinthians 14:9; James 1:26; 3:5-6, 8; 1 Peter 3:10; 1 John 3:18 and Revelation 16:10. Glossa is used of “that which is shaped like a tongue” in Acts 2:3. It is used four times in a poetical or rhetorical sense (Acts 2:26; Rom. 3:13; 14:11; Phil. 2:11). In the majority of passages (thirty-two to be exact), it is used of human *languages*. Some examples are Mark 16:17; Acts 2:4, 11; 10:46; 19:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10, 28, 30; 13:1, 8; 14:2, 4, 5, 6, 1, 14, 18, 19, 22, 23, 26, 39; Revelation 5:9; 7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 1:7; 14:6; 17:5. (Stevens 21)

3. Curiously, proponents of tongue-speaking today purport to rely on the Bible for authority to speak in tongues, while ignoring biblical regulation of speaking in tongues.

In fact, it is ironic that advocates of modern day “tongue-speaking” would bring up I Corinthians 14, because, this chapter, correctly understood, literally demolishes the argument for the kind of tongue-speaking man claims today... Indeed, the so-called modern day tongue-speakers of today may claim to have the same power as believers in the first century, but they don’t want to be governed by the same rules bound upon those first century believers in the practice of these gifts! ...the conduct of women in the assembly where the tongue-speaking takes place. Paul instructed the women at Corinth to keep silence in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34). Therefore, even if women could speak in tongues today, it would be sinful for them to do so in the public assembly. Yet, the modern day “Holy Ghost” meetings freely encourage women to speak out. Paul also indicates that tongue-speaking was to be done by one person at a time (I Cor 14:27-31). This is not like the charismatic meetings of today when

all are encouraged to “get the Spirit” at the same time. We need to remember that God is not the author of confusion and all things are to be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:33, 40). (Clarke, “Part Three” 1-2)

4. The balance of this presentation will biblically define and examine the phenomena of first century tongue-speaking, define contemporary tongue-speaking, and contrast the two.
 - a. The history and modern introduction of what passes for contemporary speaking in tongues will be introduced so that its distinction from the biblical occasion of speaking in tongues can be more easily understood.
 - b. Finally, the serious ramifications for modern tongue-speaking will be enumerated.
 - c. Ascertaining the “Truth About Speaking in Tongues” is our goal, which will be relentlessly and definitively pursued in this presentation.

I. Definition of Biblical Terms

- A. According to the apostle Peter, the speaking in tongues of Acts 2 was a manifestation pertaining to the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel 2:28-3:2 (Acts 2:16-21).
 1. In addition, Jesus only ten days before speaking in tongues was inaugurated in Acts 2 specifically prophesied about them.

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall **speak with new tongues**” (Mark 16:17).

“...Mark 16:17 records the promise of glossolalia, but we must refer to the book of Acts to acquire a more accurate definition of first century glossolalia” (Clarke, “Part One” 2).

2. It is not until Acts 2 unfolds with the introduction of speaking in tongues that one finds a biblical definition for speaking in tongues.
3. Acts 2 is decisive in its definition of first century tongue-speaking, which definition carries to the

explanation of speaking in tongues elsewhere in the New Testament and which definition is the sole standard by which what passes today for speaking in tongues must be critically reviewed.

- B. Almost everyone, irrespective of some people's preference for defining speaking in tongues as ecstatic utterances, recognizes, howbeit for some reluctantly, that speaking in tongues as found in Acts 2 pertains to real, first century languages.
1. To circumvent the evidence respecting speaking in tongues found in Acts 2, proponents of ecstatic utterances resort to either of *two ploys* to offset the impact of the Acts 2 definition of speaking in tongues.
 2. They state that (1) speaking in tongues of Acts 2 is different from the speaking in tongues of 1 Corinthians 14,
 3. or (2) speaking in tongues of 1 Corinthians 14 is ecstatic utterances and must be applied retrospectively to Acts 2 to define speaking in tongues found there.
 4. Both procedures for defending modern day speaking in tongues are fallacious uses of Scripture and miserably fail respecting biblical hermeneutics.
 5. The immediately following quotation demonstrates ploy number one, and we doubt that “[m]ost scholars” concur with it.

Most scholars assume that the phenomena described in Ac 2.4 and in 1 Cor 14.2 are significantly different in that in one instance people understood in their own regional language or dialect and in the other instance an interpreter was required. It is for that reason that many interpret *glossa* in 1 Cor 14.2 as ecstatic speech, which was also an element in Hellenistic religions and constituted a symbol of divine inspiration. (Louw and Nida)

6. The quotation below, ploy number two, displays a shocking disregard for divine inspiration as it

manifested itself through divinely chosen human penman (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

Although it is generally agreed that Luke intended the phrase ‘to speak in other tongues’ to mean that the disciples spoke in foreign languages, this explanation has not been universally accepted. ...In the opinion of most modern scholars the glossolalia of Acts 2:1-13 was similar to that described in 1 Cor. 12-14, and consisted of unintelligible ecstatic utterances. They advance various theories to explain why Luke wrote instead about foreign languages. Some think he may have misinterpreted his sources and inserted ‘other’ (Acts 2:4) on his own initiative; others suggest that he may have interpolated the reference to foreign languages as a more favourable explanation when glossolalia fell into disrepute. (*New Bible Dictionary*).

7. Doubt is attached to the reference to “most modern scholars” here as well, for among other reasons, the previous source with its viewpoint and the following source with its contradictory viewpoint could hardly both be represented by the “most scholars.”
- C. Several reference works to which one might ordinarily appeal for information about any number of religious topics interject an endorsement for ecstatic utterances.
1. In addition to the sources already cited, these include the *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* and *The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.
 2. Some sources, such as *Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, attempt to appease both those who view speaking in tongues as languages and those who favor ecstatic utterances.
- D. Through divine inspiration, the apostle Peter defined speaking in tongues in Acts 2.
1. That God-given definition applies to each instance in the New Testament where speaking in tongues

occurs.

“In Luke’s writings, the gift of tongues refers to a gift of language miraculously wrought by the operation of the Holy Spirit. There is no indication that Paul used the word *glossa* in a different sense than Luke” (Stevens 21).

It must be remembered that this is the first occurrence of glossolalia. A first occurrence of anything usually requires a detailed description of the event. That is precisely what Luke gives us in Acts 2. Therefore, all other passages that refer to glossolalia are bound by the definition and pattern of “Pentecostal glossolalia” unless otherwise indicated. (Clarke, “Part One” 2)

2. Lenski, a Lutheran commentator, concurs with following astute observations.

...Luke’s description as given in the Acts is decisive for what Paul writes in Corinthians. This is reversed by some. They seek to determine what happened in Corinth and then either square Luke’s account with what they think occurred at Corinth or posit two different gifts of tongues... Luke is the one who fully describes what the tongues are while Paul takes for granted that his readers know what they are and therefore offers no description. Luke writes for a reader (Theophilus) who may never have heard of this gift, at least may never have seen this gift in operation. Paul writes for readers who have often heard members of their own congregation speak in tongues. (qtd. in Clarke, “Part One” 2)

3. The inescapable conclusion from Acts 2 is that speaking in tongues referred to speaking in languages, through the assistance of miracles, that the apostles did not know and had not studied.

What this gift actually was has been a subject of much discussion. Some have argued that it was merely an outward sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit among the disciples, typifying his manifold gifts, and showing that salvation was to be extended to all nations. But the words of Luke (Acts 2:9) clearly show that the various peoples in Jerusalem at the time of Pentecost did really hear themselves addressed in their own special language with which they were naturally acquainted (comp. Joel 2:28, 29). (Easton)

II. Acts 2

- A. The Holy Spirit baptism upon the apostles (Acts 1:26-2:4) manifested itself in tongue speaking by the apostles.

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other **tongues**, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).

1. The word “tongues” here is from the Greek *glossa*.
2. Verse six explains the “tongues” of verse four through the use of another word (*dialektos*) that is translated “language.”

“Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own **language**” (Acts 2:6).

3. This same word, *dialektos*, appears in Acts 2:8 where this time it is translated “tongue.”

“And how hear we every man in our own **tongue**, wherein we were born?” (Acts 2:8).

4. The Greek word *dialektos* means “a (mode of) discourse, i.e. ‘dialect’ (*Strong’s*).
 5. The word *dialektos* appears six times in New Testament, five times translated “tongue” and one time translated “language”; the word always means language (Acts 1:19; 2:6, 8; 21:40; 22:2; 26:14).
- B. The Greek *glossa* again follows in verse 11.

“Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our **tongues** the wonderful works of God” (Acts 2:11).

1. Clearly, *glossa* and *dialektos* are used interchangeably in Acts 2, meaning that within the context of speaking in tongues and in Acts 2 *glossa* refers to languages, not ecstatic utterances.
 2. Luke uses the words “*glossa*” and “*dialektos*” interchangeably.
 3. The apostles were speaking in tongues, “*glossa*.”
 4. The apostles were speaking in a language, “*dialektos*.”
 5. The tongues — or languages — that they spoke were not some heavenly unknown language.
- C. The languages were known by the men who heard.
1. What they heard was not a conglomeration of unintelligible syllables.
 2. What they heard was their own native tongue — the language wherein they were born. (Jividen 37)
- D. Numerous commentaries and other resources honestly record the obvious and intended sense of speaking in tongues in Acts 2, despite what popular, denominational preferences may be.
1. For instance, Matthew Henry wrote:

They began to speak with other tongues, besides their native language, though they had never learned any other. ...They did not speak here and there a word of another tongue, or stammer out some broken sentences, but spoke it as readily, properly, and elegantly, as if it had been their mother-tongue; for whatever was produced by miracle was the best of the kind. They spoke not from any previous thought or meditation, but as the Spirit gave them utterance; **he furnished them with the matter as well as the language.** (*Matthew Henry's* emphasis added)

2. Robertson noted regarding the ostentatious verbal, visual and audible display in Acts 2:

Other than their native tongues, each one began to speak in a language that he had not acquired and yet it was a real language and understood by those from various lands familiar with them. It was not jargon, but intelligible language. Jesus had said that the gospel was to go to all the nations and here the various tongues of earth were spoken. ...The gift of tongues came also on the house of Cornelius at Caesarea (Acts 10:44-47; 11:15-17), the disciples of John at Ephesus (Acts 19:6), the disciples at Corinth (1 Cor 14:1-33). ...Paul explains in 1 Cor 14:22 that “tongues” were a sign to unbelievers and were not to be exercised unless one was present who understood them and could translate them. **This restriction disposes at once of the modern so-called tongues which are nothing but jargon and hysteria.** (*Robertson’s emphasis added*)

3. Albert Barnes, the Presbyterian commentator, likewise underscores the plain, unambiguous sense of Acts 2.

“But the natural and obvious meaning of the passage is, that they were endowed by the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit with ability to speak foreign languages, and languages to them before unknown.” (*Barnes’ emphasis added*).

4. Don De Welt of the Christian Church concurs (38).

III. The Purpose of Speaking in Tongues

- A. The Acts 2 context also supplies in miniature the purpose of speaking in tongues, further confirming that speaking in tongues pertained to languages rather than ecstatic utterances.
 1. Jews from 15 different nations had assembled in Jerusalem on that Pentecost (Acts 2:9-11).

But, there were but twelve apostles, and at least fourteen different nationalities of people represented. Not fourteen different languages;

however, since all were Jews, and some of the countries mentioned utilized the same dialect. The Phrygians and Pamphylans both spoke Greek; the Parthians, Medes, and Elamites all spoke Persian, though of different dialects. Barnes estimates that there must have been some seven or eight different languages known to this crowd. (Woods 11)

...the crowd that gathered around the apostles were amazed and marveled. The men they saw were Galileans, but the language they heard was their own. The marvel of it all was that men who were of one dialect could fluently speak another language. ...some fifteen nationalities are represented by Luke in connection with the “tongue-speaking” sign. These nationalities probably refer to Jews of the dispersion who no longer knew Aramaic. If languages of these nationalities were not meant, why would these different nationalities be mentioned? (Jividen 37)

2. Speaking in tongues or languages through miraculous assistance rather than through laboriously learning fitted the apostles and other first century Christians for taking the Gospel to the world immediately, in fulfillment of the Great Commission of our Lord (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8).

The prevalent belief of the Church has been that in the Pentecostal gift the disciples received a supernatural knowledge of all such languages, as they needed for their work as evangelists. The knowledge was permanent, and could be used at their own will, as if it had been acquired in the common order of things. With this they went forth to preach to the nations. ...**We never read of foreign tongues creating any impediment to the spread of the Gospel, or requiring laborious application for the acquisition of them.** If we look

into modern missionary reports, we meet with a great deal about learning the languages of natives. Why is there nothing of the kind in the New Test., unless because they were acquired supernaturally? ...The account in Acts 2 is explicit, and allows of no uncertainty or evasion. The speakers were Galileans, capable at most of expressing themselves in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew; and a multitude of foreigners from a great many regions heard themselves accosted as in the land of their birth. If the apostles spoke just as they might have been expected to speak, and with no more compass of expression than suited their condition and history, why should any astonishment have been produced by their attainments? But the multitudes were confounded, and they were all amazed and marveled, not merely at the doctrines propounded, but, specifically, because every man heard them speak in his own language. How came Galileans, they asked, to be such linguists? to be so familiar with languages alien to their annals? There is here an obviousness of meaning which no subtlety or sophistry can ever explain away. (*McClintock and Strong* emphasis added)

- B. The affect of speaking in tongues in the first century was to undo the confusion of languages that God caused at the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:9).

“...[A]s Babel brought as its penalty the confusion of tongues, so the Pentecostal gift of tongues symbolizes the reunion of the scattered nations” (*Fausset’s*).

1. Adam Clarke, Methodist commentator, adds:

At the building of Babel the language of the people was confounded; and, in consequence of this, they became scattered over the face of the earth: at this foundation of the Christian church, the gift of various languages was given to the apostles, that the

scattered nations might be gathered; and united under one shepherd and superintendent (episkopos) of all souls. (*Clarke's Commentary*)

- C. Besides affording early Christians an expedited means of fulfilling the Great Commission, first century speaking in tongues was proof (a “sign”) to unbelievers that God was working through the tongue speakers (Mark 16:17; 1 Cor. 14:22).
1. The scenario in Acts 2 portrays a lot of excitement by unbelieving Jews over the ability of obviously inexperienced yet fluent multilingual Galileans to speak in a number of languages.

“Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?” (Acts 2:6-8).

2. Speaking in tongues was an attention-getter.
- D. Still another purpose for first century speaking in tongues was to receive and tell new revelation from God.
1. On some occasions there may be little distinction between speaking in another language through the assistance of miracles and at the same time relaying new information from God to man through the same vehicle.
 2. Especially in Acts 2, one sees **verbal inspiration** at work through the vehicle of speaking in tongues.
 3. The apostles could hardly have been expected to choose the appropriate words from their vocabularies to express, for instance, the bogus, so-called **thought inspiration**, when those foreign words were not in the apostles' vocabularies.
- E. The promise of a new power coming from the divine Spirit, giving not only comfort and insight into truth but fresh powers of utterance of some kind, appears often in

our Lord's teaching.

1. The disciples were to take no thought of what they should speak, for the Spirit of their Father would speak in them (Matt 10:19-20; Mark 13:11).
2. The lips of Galilean peasants were to speak freely and boldly before kings.
3. In Mark 16:17 we have a more definite term employed: "They will speak with new tongues."
4. It can hardly be questioned that the obvious meaning of the promise is that the disciples should speak in new languages that they had not learned as other men learn them. (*Unger's; McClintock and Strong*)

IV. Acts 10-11; 19; 1 Corinthians 14

- A. Even charismatics who reluctantly admit that the Acts 2 speaking in tongues pertains to languages suppose that ecstatic utterances are meant in 1 Corinthians 14.
 1. In truth, though, speaking in tongues is the same creature each time it is represented throughout the Book of Acts and in 1 Corinthians 12-14.
 2. Mark 16:17 introduced speaking in tongues and Acts 2 defined it, after which its use appears in Acts and 1 Corinthians without the need for any further explanation.

As to what Jesus meant in Mk. 16:17 by new tongues one must examine subsequent historical material in the New Testament. ...The inspired Luke does not leave us in doubt that the "other tongues" were actual languages. Visitors from some fifteen nations asked, "How hear we, every man in our own language-dialektos-wherein we were born?" (2:8). Certainly it was a miracle that the apostles could speak in languages which they had never learned, thus in "new tongues." ...While Peter was preaching in the house of Cornelius at Caesarea, the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles assembled there and they spoke "with tongues" (Acts 10:46). Since Peter later declared that this was

“the like gift” which the apostles received on Pentecost, it is clear that the Gentiles also spoke in actual, contemporary languages which they had not learned. The next reference to glossolalia is found in Acts 19:1-7. Paul baptized twelve men at Ephesus, laid his hands on them, and “the Holy Spirit came on them and they spake with tongues, and prophesied” (verses 5-7). It is reasonable to assume that they also spoke in actual languages, for, had the phenomenon been different from that of Acts 2 and 10, Luke would surely have given some explanation. We thus conclude that in all the incidents in Acts it was the miracle of speaking in contemporary languages which the speakers had not by natural means learned. “...gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4). ...Lenski [504-505] has aptly stated: “Luke’s description in Acts is decisive for what Paul writes in Corinthians. ...Luke is the one who fully describes what the tongues are while Paul takes for granted that his readers know what they are and therefore offers no description.” ... received on Pentecost, it is clear that the Gentiles also spoke in actual, contemporary languages which they had not learned. (Bennett)

3. Gus Nichols had a picturesque way of summarizing the first century abuses of tongues in Corinth, which description aptly describes modern day speaking in tongues, too.

Before the apostles had died, and before miraculous gifts had ceased (1 Cor. 13:8-13), the church at Corinth was in confusion, and were conducting a sort of **frog-in-the-mill-pond kind of public services** (1 Cor. 14:26). God was not the author of their confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). They were not doing things decently and in order (1 Cor. 14:40). They were following after things of show and pomp, rather than after charity or love (1 Cor. 14:1). They desired the wrong kind of gifts (v. 1). The church

was permitting speakers of a foreign, or unknown tongue, or language, to address the assembly, when no one but God could understand them. Such was forbidden unless there was some one to interpret the speeches so the audience could be edified (1 Cor. 14:2-4, 26-28). We would not permit a foreigner in his unknown tongue to lead a prayer in our services, unless he had an interpreter; for we speak only in English. Some things are not expedient (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23; 1 Cor. 14:5). **Even back there when they had the gift of tongues, there was no profit in speaking in tongues, and it was forbidden, when the audience could have been addressed in its own tongue or language** (1 Cor. 14:6-12). (25 emphasis added)

- B. What purpose would be served by orating to an English-speaking audience in Greek, Latin, German, French, Chinese and Spanish, with or without an interpreter?
1. In an effort to draw attention to oneself and to superficially enhance the spirituality of the worship assembly, aided by miracles, some Christians at Corinth arbitrarily decided to do just that.
 2. They were abusing the miracle of speaking in tongues and detracting from instead of contributing to the edification of the church.
 3. Though edification could be had through an interpreter, there was no good reason in the first place to unnecessarily speak in foreign languages under the circumstances described.

Paul indicates that he is not discouraging the use of the gifts, but that he is arguing for the necessity of correcting the misuse of the gift of tongues (1-19). ...In appealing to the church to use the spiritual gifts as they were intended, Paul sets forth certain rules and regulations to be followed (20-40). (Applebury 248-249)

- C. The regulation of speaking in tongues that applied to those in the first century who really did have miraculous

ability to speak in tongues would apply equally today to contemporary people who claim to speak in tongues.

1. It is truly remarkable that one's pitiful use of Scripture purportedly sanctions an act but refuses to be regulated by the same Scripture.
 2. That is either moral dishonesty or mental deficiency!
- D. Charismatics and Pentecostals have manufactured the doctrine of ecstatic utterances, what they call speaking in tongues, based on an italicized word that only appears in one standard translation.
1. An italicized word in a Bible translation represents the insertion of a word by the translators for which there is no corresponding word in the original language; translators do this, hoping to help rather than hinder English readers to understand the meaning of a text.
 2. The King James Version has "unknown" preceding "tongue" in 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 13-14, 19 and 27, whereas "unknown" does not appear in those verses in the ASV, NKJV, NIV, RSV and NASB.

It was never mere "ecstatic speech" without discernable meaning. Rather, it involved one man speaking in a language which was foreign to him but which was readily understood by those who normally spoke that language. ...Thus there has never been any such things as an "unknown tongue." The insertion of the adjective "unknown" into the King James Version by the translators (I Cor. 14:2,4,13, 14,19,27) was unjustified and most unfortunate for many Bible students. In the English text the word appears in italics, which means that the word is not found in the original Greek text. Someone may object to this by saying that Paul wrote of a man speaking in a tongue "unto God; for no man understandeth." (cf. I Cor. 14:2). It may be contended that this is a categorical statement meaning that there is a tongue which men can not

understand and which is intelligible only to God. In reality this verse only refers to a situation where no man present at that particular service understands the speaker. In such a case as this — where the speaker was given a language not represented by those hearing him — the man speaking in that tongue would be understood only by God! And since there would be no edification for the hearers in such a situation, Paul commanded that such persons not speak publicly until an interpreter was present (I Cor. 14:27). Thus it is shown that the tongue was never “unknown” in the absolute sense, for it was capable of interpretation. (Shelly 44-45)

- E. Cross-referencing 1 Corinthians 14:21 with its Old Testament counterpart further aids in ascertaining the nature of the tongues mentioned in 1 Corinthians 14.

Finally, Paul’s quotation from Isaiah 28:11-12 in I Corinthians 14:21 shows that languages are meant. Isaiah’s prophecy was not about ecstatic utterances, but a foreign language. Isaiah was referring to the Assyrians who would be used by God as an instrument of punishment. (Stevens 22)

1. Gus Nichols further illustrated the sense of languages with which one is unfamiliar as it is introduced in 1 Corinthians 14.
2. Other instances of similar circumstances to what appears in 1 Corinthians 14 occur elsewhere in the Bible.

The “new tongues” promised here were new languages — tongues to the apostles who formerly did not know such languages. Moses said unto Israel. “The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar... a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand” (Deut. 28:49). To Israel their tongue would be an “unknown tongue.” That is, it would be such to the Israelites. To them it would be an “new tongue” — a strange or unknown language. The fact

that Israel would not understand the foreign language does in no wise mean that those speaking were merely jabbering. In fact muttering and jabbering are no tongue at all, any more than a baby is speaking in a tongue when it is jabbering. (22)

- F. Careful attention to the context of 1 Corinthians 14 reveals that the intent of the apostolic writer is for miraculous gifts — mainly speaking in tongues — be used in such a way as to edify the church rather than mystify and confuse it.
1. Edification is stressed repeatedly in the chapter (1 Cor. 14:3-5, 12, 17, 26).
 2. The purpose of using tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 was to promote “understanding” (v. 15) and “teach” (v. 19).
 3. Ecstatic utterances appeal to the emotions but they do not edify, increase understanding or teach.
 4. Consequently, 1 Corinthians 14 was a prohibition of speaking (then, with the aid of miracles) in languages that the audience did not know and which did not edify (cause understanding and teach) the assembly.
 5. Likewise, the 1 Corinthians 14 prohibition applies to ecstatic utterances that pass for speaking in tongues (and which are not the result of miracles) because they do not edify (cause understanding and teach).

V. The End of Miracles

- A. Common sense demands that one concur with brother Roy Deaver that there were nine miraculous gifts, all of which remain if one remains, but miracles have ceased (44-46).

But before the New Testament was all written, they had nine gifts of the Spirit, or Spiritual gifts in the church (I Cor. 12:1,8-10). Tongues and interpretation of tongues were two of the nine. Some contend for tongues today, but leave the other eight behind. But they all ceased together. These

gifts were bestowed by the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:18; Rom. 1:11; Acts 19:5-7; II Tim. 3:5-6). All know that when the apostles all died they ceased to lay on hands and bestow these gifts, and they naturally ceased. (Nichols 24-25)

- B. Miracles were never an end to themselves, but they served a specific purpose, which when that purpose was fulfilled, miracles ceased.
 - 1. Miracles were *provisional* in nature; when they completed that which they were intended by God to do, they were no longer needed and they ceased.
- C. The apostle Paul addressed the use of miracles in first century Corinth, namely their abuse, in 1 Corinthians 12-14.
- D. In 1 Corinthians 13:8-13, the apostle foretold that miracles would end.
 - 1. Specifically respecting our topic, "...tongues...shall cease..." (v. 8).
 - 2. Verse 9 introduces that through miracles new revelation from God was received in parts — partial and piecemeal, respecting several inspired speakers on a number of occasions; speaking was provided them by the Holy Spirit.
 - 3. The New Testament had not been completed yet, but it was in the process of being written (e.g., 1 Corinthians).
 - 4. However, Paul contrasted that situation of partial, piecemeal revelation with a counterpart that would be complete or perfected, thereby displacing the partial piecemeal revelation attributed to miracles (v. 10).

"9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. 13:9-10).

- 5. James 1:25 refers to God's Word as "the perfect law of liberty."
- E. First Corinthians 13:11-12 present two "before and after"

illustrations to contrast partial, piecemeal revelation received through miracles with the superior completed revelation that was to displace miracle-assisted revelation.

1. Verse 11 resorts to childhood versus adulthood, miracles represented by childhood and adulthood representing completed revelation.
 2. Verse 12 refers to polished metal or other reflective surfaces such as water used anciently for mirrors versus the clarity with which one sees someone face to face.
 3. The former represents the miracle assisted, partial piecemeal revelation whereas the latter represents the completed revelation that we call the New Testament.
- F. Ephesians 4:11-14 parallels the 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 passage and also uses the illustration of childhood contrasted with adulthood for the same purpose.
1. Miracle assisted workers appear in verse 11 on whom the early church relied for revelation from God.
 2. That situation, though, was temporary and to last only “till we all come in the unity of the faith, and knowledge of the Son of God...” (v.13).
 3. Ministers, for instance, today must study God’s Word rather than rely on miraculous assistance from the Holy Spirit.
- G. The purpose of miracles appears in Mark 16:20: “...confirming the word with signs following.”
1. Miracles already confirmed the Word in the first century (Heb. 2:3-4).
 2. Therefore, when the last apostle died, and when the last person upon whom an apostle laid hands to transfer miraculous power died, miracles ceased.
 3. The death of miracle-workers and the collection of the New Testament books occurred around the end of the first century and the beginning of the second century (Col. 4:16; 2 Pet. 3:16).
 4. Incidentally, this was a long time before the

Catholic Church got around to officiating the New Testament canon.

VI. Linguistically Contemporary Tongue-Speaking Non-Languages

- A. The very sounds passed off today as speaking in tongues fail the test, on many fronts, for being languages, earthly or heavenly.
1. Whereas so-called tongue-speakers today string together nonsensical **syllables**, one mark of speaking in tongues in the first century was the use of real **words**.
 2. Peter said he was using “words” (Acts 2:22), and Paul specified the use of “words” in tongue-speaking.
 3. It is no wonder then that first century speaking in tongues could be interpreted.

It is important to notice that the apostle speaks of **words** in connection with tongue-speaking. Hence, the tongues of which Paul speaks were not comprised of syllables randomly strung together in incoherent fashion. Rather, the tongues under consideration by Paul were connected with actual **words**. This shows conclusively that the tongues under consideration here at Corinth, were actual languages, just as the tongues were on the Day of Pentecost. (Clarke, “Part Three” 1)

- B. The significance of ascertaining that speaking in tongues in 1 Corinthians 14 pertains to words cannot be overemphasized.
1. Though some charismatics and Pentecostals admit the Acts 2 speaking in tongues pertained to languages, none of them acknowledge that speaking in tongues found in 1 Corinthians 14 pertains to languages.
 2. Uniformly, contemporary tongue-speakers view 1 Corinthians 14 as justification for their ecstatic utterances.
- C. Speaking in tongues in the first century, as already noted,

aided early Christians in fulfilling the Great Commission.

1. Yet, today, those who claim to speak in tongues must use the services of an interpreter or learn the new language — like every other human being under the same circumstances.
 2. Pentecostals just laugh and offer no explanation when this glaring inconsistency is brought to their attention (Crain 2).
 3. James Bales observed: “Missionaries today must learn the language of the people to whom they preach, they do not get it by inspiration” (qtd. in Clarke, “Part Three” 2).
- D. Contemporary speaking in tongues has been the focus of several critical reviews by numerous skeptics.
1. These reviews range from astute observations to scientific analysis by professional linguists.
 2. In both instances, contemporary speaking in tongues fail to pass for genuine languages.
 3. Sellers Crain has noticed that those who profess to be speaking in tongues in our society only reflect knowledge of the English language in their selection of syllables.

“First, why were the people who said they were speaking in tongues, speaking only English syllables? If it was a different language why did it not sound like another tongue instead of English?” (3).

- E. E. Mansell Pattison disclosed some pertinent data in his article, “Behavior Science Research on the Nature of Glossolalia” in the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation*.
1. He concluded, “Thus, glossolalia does not appear to be a ‘strange language,’ but rather the aborted formation of a familiar language” (qtd. in Stevens 22).
 2. Stevens summarized respecting the linguistic quality of contemporary tongue-speaking:

Ecstatic utterances do not produce a language capable of being interpreted. ...Structural studies of glossolalia as performed by charismatics today shows that it is nothing more than the aborted formation of a familiar language that has been acquired through imitation and rehearsal. The true gift of tongues and the modern glossolalia stand worlds apart! (22)

- F. Butler, a Christian Church commentator, recorded in his commentary these telling linguistic evaluations of glossolalia.

It is clear that Paul is speaking of *actual* human languages when he says “tongues” and *not* of the modern phenomena called *glossolalia* (a word not found in that form in the New Testament at all). The modern, alleged, “speaking in tongues” has been thoroughly analyzed by linguistics and philologists and their conclusions repudiate it as being any form of language at all (see *The Psychology of Speaking In Tongues*, by John P. Kildahl, pub. Harper and Row, 1972). Dr. Kildahl also documents cases where actual human language, spoken in an audience where the language was not understood except by the speaker, received a so-called miraculous interpretation and it was not at all what the speaker said. **Modern glossolalia is pseudo-miraculous!** (307 emphasis added)

- G. B.J. Clarke gleaned the following summaries of studied evaluations respecting contemporary speaking in tongues.

One definition of tongue-speaking in a modern context is given by R.R. Williams: “ecstatic speech often connected with religious excitement.” Ira J. Martin describes it as a “frenzied, inarticulate jargon with a sprinkling of incoherent ejaculations whose inflections and fonal qualities have characteristics of speech. In his book, *Tongue*

Speaking, Martin R. Kelsey gives the following definition: “It is a spontaneous utterance of uncomprehended and seemingly random speech in sounds... (qtd. by B.J. Clarke, “Part Two” 2)

- H. The book, *Speaking with Tongues, Historically and Psychologically Considered*, published by Yale University Press, makes this assessment of modern day speaking in tongues.

“They are... but a ludicrous and silly mistake of the man’s imagination allied to some species of humorous hallucination and are not to be considered seriously, or they are a perjury, or a ghastly jest, or a very profound mental trick, or the loose jargon of a maniac” (qtd. in Clevenger 28).

“Jividen points out, the explanation of tongue-speaking experiences today are to be found in abnormal psychology and not in the New Testament” (qtd. in Clarke, “Part Three” 1).

VII. Historical Reference to Ecstatic Utterances

- A. Pagan religions that were contemporary with Christianity in the first century practiced ecstatic utterances and claimed that such displays were evidence of inspiration and revelation from their pagan gods.
1. However, what was ascribed in Acts 2 and elsewhere in the New Testament to the apostles of Christ and other Christians was discernible immediately as something different from merely ecstatic utterances with the *mere claim* of inspiration and revelation.
 2. Only being enabled miraculously and spontaneously to speak in real languages that they had not studied set the early, tongue-speaking Christians apart from babblers of their day.

Pre-Christian Graeco-Roman religions had their priests and priestesses who delivered oracles which they claimed originated with the gods, messages

spoken “with obscurity and unintelligibility” and requiring interpretation. ...A further evidence that the “tongues” of I Corinthians refers to living languages is that the tongues needed interpretation. ...In none of these passages is there any suggestion that unintelligible jargon is “interpreted.” Through careful linguistic studies of these Greek terms, appearing in both the Septuagint (Greek) Old Testament and the Greek New Testament, J.G. Davies concluded: “The word used by St. Paul of interpreting glossolalia carries with it the strong suggestion of translating of foreign language.” [“Pentecost and Glossolalia.” *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S., Vol. 3, Pt. 1 (April, 1952). p. 230.] (qtd. in Bennett)

- B. *McClintock and Strong* chronicles some of the occasions of ecstatic utterances among nonconformist groups sporadically throughout the centuries.

More distinct parallels are found in the accounts of the wilder, more excited sects which have, from time to time, appeared in the history of Christendom. Tertullian (*De Ania. c. 9*), as a Montanist, claims the “revelationum charismata” as given to a sister of that sect. They came to her “inter dominica solemnia;” she was, “per ecstasin, in spiritu,” conversing with angels, and with the Lord himself, seeing and hearing mysteries (“sacramenta”), reading the hearts of men, prescribing remedies for those who needed them. The movement of the mendicant orders in the 13th century, the prophesyings of the 16th in England, the early history of the disciples of George Fox, that of the Jansenists in France, the revivals under Wesley and Whitefield, those of a later date in Sweden, America, and Ireland, have, in like manner, been fruitful in ecstatic phenomena more or less closely resembling those which we are now considering. (*McClintock and Strong*)

- C. Butler summarizes ecstatic utterances throughout the ages.

“Ecstatic, esoteric glossolalia similar to Christian glossolalia has been practiced, and is being practiced, by pagans in ancient and modern times (Hittites, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Greeks, East Africans, Islamics, American Indians, Caribbean voodoo practitioners, and many others)” (309).

1. Clearly, ecstatic utterances lack the credibility to validate themselves as being divine in origin.
- D. The resurgence of ecstatic utterances is attributed to a college student in the early twentieth century “...on New Year’s Eve, 1900 at Bethel Bible College of Topeka, Kansas” (Clarke, “Part Two” 2).
1. The very nature of the emotional display attached to ecstatic utterances is “contagious” to persons of like emotional composition. “...ecstasy and convulsive movement that became contagious, and many who were thus seized prophesied and uttered unintelligible expressions in an unconscious state. “ (qtd. in Clevenger 28).

The modern Pentecostal revival is said to have begun on Jan. 1, 1901, when Agnes Ozman, a student in a Bible College in Topeka, Kansas, spoke in tongues. Today, tongue-speaking is practiced by most Pentecostal bodies. “Neo-Pentecostalism” is the term that refers to the spread of glossolalia to the established churches, both Catholic and Protestant. Hoekemag documents claims to tongue-speaking in such denominations as: Episcopal, Presbyterian, Reformed Church of America, Lutheran, Methodist, Baptist, and among several smaller religious fellowships. (Clevenger 28-29)

2. Clevenger adds that speaking in tongues occurs also among the Catholic Apostolic Church, Mormons, Shakers and some French Huguenots (28).

B.J. Clarke adds, “For the first half of this century [twentieth century] the ‘tongues movement’ was restricted to the Pentecostals. However, at present there are many different kinds of churches who claim tongue-speaking. They are called Neo-Pentecostals and their glossolalia claims are identical to their predecessors” (“Part Two” 2).

- E. Whether ancient pagan or contemporary worshipper, simply claiming to speak in tongues lacks evidence to substantiate any valid connection with Almighty God.

“Experiential claims are empty and vain unless Biblical proof is found in support of these claims. A million claims will not change the teaching of the Bible on the matter” (Clarke, “Part One” 1).

The claims of modern-day religionists to speak in tongues are without any scriptural basis whatsoever, and they prove absolutely nothing as far as the speaker’s relationship with God is concerned. The history of glossolalia furnishes clear and abundant evidence that tongue-speaking has not been confined to worshippers of God and servants of Christ, but pagans, unbelievers, and all kinds of people in religious error have made the same claim and demonstrated it to their own satisfaction. (Clevenger 27)

VIII. Ramifications of Modern Day Speaking in Tongues

- A. Modern-day speaking in tongues dare not be relegated to the amusing, emotional outbursts of gullible and delusional persons, as though the whole matter were of no real consequence.

“If one claims the ability to ‘speak in tongues,’ he is contending that his message is a revelation from God. In such a case, his words rival those of the Bible. Are we to understand that this is not a dangerous teaching, worthy of censure?” (Jackson 23).

- B. It is evident that charismatics and Pentecostals have very little regard for the Bible, which is how we should expect it to be if they are animated by and their very words, howbeit ecstatic utterances, are attributable to the Holy Spirit.
1. Their view of authority in religion condescends to crude subjectivism, displacing any objective view of the absolute truth of the Bible.
 2. The emotionalism of ecstatic utterances and attendant bodily demonstrations become the sole object of their religion.

Those who have embraced it largely abandon objective truth considerations in order to cling to what they deem as a “better felt than told” religion. It matters little to them what the Bible actually teaches — they just take their hand, pat their chest and say, “I’ve got it right here!” Whereupon Scriptural logic and reason flies out the window. (Maxie Boren 9)

- C. However, an ecstatic utterance (unlike miraculously speaking in unlearned languages as the apostles did, Acts 2:1ff) lacks the credibility to validate itself.

Let it first be pointed out that no claim of miraculous power to speak in tongues, heal the sick or perform any other supernatural act should be accepted at face value. Human claims are not self-authenticating in religion! There must be an absolute standard by which all men may objectively evaluate such claims. There is such a standard — and that standard is the New Testament. The New Testament must sit in judgment upon human actions, not vice versa! (Deaver 42)

1. Seth Wilson, Dean Emeritus of Ozark Bible College (Christian Church), denotes persons professing to speak in tongues today (ecstatic utterances) claim to be above critical review or amenability to the Scriptures.

The tongues-speaker (modern-day) who says, “You cannot understand or give any true judgment about a gift from God which you have not experienced and do not believe in,” is saying, in effect, that it is not subject to critical examination in the light of Scripture. An error which grows out of this is the belief that one cannot understand the Bible unless he has been “baptized in the Holy Spirit.” To say that only the believer in the tongues experience is qualified to comment on it begs the question, supposes that it is always from God, and puts the subjective (inward and personal feeling) above the Scripture as a source of truth. **This takes the attitude that tongues speaking is something that is beyond the realm of reasonable evidence or factual investigation.** (qtd. in Butler 317-318 emphasis added)

- D. Strongly fixated on so-called speaking in tongues, charismatics and Pentecostals firmly argue that no one can actually be saved unless he speaks in tongues (ecstatic utterances).
1. The United Pentecostal Church is a case in point.
 2. Yet, as Clarence DeLoach, Jr. observed, even in the first century when inarguably Bible miracles existed, not every child of God possessed the ability to perform each kind of miracle.

The glaring error of this is seen in the fact that not all believers in New Testament times spoke in tongues. Paul clearly states in I Cor. 12 that not all possessed every gift. “To another divers kinds of tongues” indicate that not everyone possessed that gift even when the spiritual gifts were being exercised. (15)

- E. One of the ramifications of modern day speaking in tongues displaces the water baptism of the Great Commission.
1. In the first century, there were two means by which miraculous power, including speaking in tongues,

was received: (1) Holy Spirit baptism like the apostles (Acts 1:26-2:4) or at least directly from heaven without human intervention (Acts 10-11), and (2) as a result of the imposition of apostolic hands (Acts 19:6).

2. All those upon whom the apostles laid their hands admittedly have died.
3. Hence, anyone today claiming to speak in tongues, at least indirectly, is claiming also that he has been baptized in the Holy Spirit.
4. However, from the time of Ephesians 4:5 forward there has been only one baptism available to humanity — the water baptism of the Great Commission (1 Pet. 3:20-21).

Obviously, the man who now claims to speak in tongues has not had apostolic hands placed upon him. Therefore, he is claiming to have received Holy Spirit baptism. But, if the baptism of the Great Commission (Mark 16:16) is baptism in water (and it is) and is for all men (and it is), and if — in addition to water baptism — there is Holy Spirit baptism, then there are now two baptisms. But, this would contradict Paul's statement in Ephesians 4:4, 5 — "There is... one baptism." If the baptism of the Great Commission is water baptism, and if this water baptism is the "one baptism" of Ephesians 4:5, then there is now no such thing as Holy Spirit baptism. And, if there is no Holy Spirit baptism, there is no speaking in tongues. (Deaver 46)

5. Speaking in tongues today would imply Holy Spirit baptism.
6. There is only one baptism today, and that baptism is baptism in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21).
7. Therefore, contemporary speaking in tongues would imply that there are too many baptisms today.

Conclusion

4. James Meadows succinctly summarizes the topic of speaking in tongues *miraculously*.

In Acts 2 tongues are definitely called languages (Acts 2:1-8). Tongue speakers in the first century understood what they were saying (1 Cor. 14:3-5, 16-19); that which they spoke could be translated into a language so as to be understood (1 Cor. 14:5); tongues were regarded as the least of the gifts (1 Cor. 12:8-10; 12:18-20); and they were for the purpose of convincing unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22; cf. Acts 10:44-46). ...There are no apostles today to transmit the miraculous power to others (Acts 6:6-7; 8:13-18; 19:1-6). (2)

5. However, for every genuine article, there is a fake that is but a fleeting shadow of the real thing.
 - a. Even a sham such as ecstatic utterances is a left-handed compliment to first century speaking in tongues, the real thing.
 - b. The counterfeit item testifies to the existence and worthiness of that which it emulates.

“Like all God’s gifts, tongues had their counterfeit. The latter are morbid, the forerunners or results of disease. The true tongues were given to men in full vigour, preceded by no fanatic madness, and followed by no prostration as the reaction” (*Fausset’s*).

6. Of course, every person today who speaks, speaks in a tongue, howbeit not miraculously, but through learning and practice.
 - a. The signal difference between first century speaking in tongues and the present is that early Christians were afforded the ability (miraculously) to speak in languages they had not studied, but anyone today needing to speak in a foreign (unknown to him) tongue must study to learn it.
 - b. The same principle applies to first century interpreters of tongues versus bona fide interpreters of tongues (languages) today; formerly during the period of miracles

Christians could interpret languages aided by miracles, but today anyone interpreting must already know the respective languages (having before learned them).

Do men speak in tongues today? Yes. In fact, there is not a speaking individual alive who does not speak in some tongue. Some are capable of speaking in several tongues: English, French, Spanish, Russian, and the list goes on. The crucial question is whether men can speak in tongues in the same manner as the apostles and other first century Christians did. (Clarke, "Part One" 1)

7. Our time spent together this morning in this session has been successful if I have adequately:
 - a. introduced the contemporary controversy about so-called speaking in tongues,
 - b. biblically defined speaking in tongues,
 - c. defined what passes today for speaking in tongues and
 - d. distinguished between the two.

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That They Might Be Saved

Romans 10:1-3

Thesis: Desire and zeal by themselves are insufficient to be saved.

Introduction:

1. Many in the religious community suppose that all or certainly most of humanity will be saved.
 - a. The rationale is that God is so good, so loving, so forgiving and so merciful that he will not assign souls to an eternity in a devil's hell.
 - b. However, God's Word provides ample evidence that God requires obedience and he promises punishment for disobedience, Heb. 5:8-9; Matt. 7:21-23; 2 Thess. 2:7-9.
2. Though the apostle Paul earnestly desired that especially his countrymen would be saved, Paul did not expect God to suspend divine law whereby God would arbitrarily save his Jewish brethren, Rom. 10:1-3.
 - a. The apostle acknowledged that God's Word is the evidence by which one can have a valid, saving faith, Rom. 5:1; 10:17.
 - b. By divine inspiration, Paul wrote that repentance precedes salvation, 2 Cor. 7:10; Acts 2:38.
 - c. The apostle noted that one must freely acknowledge Jesus Christ as Savior before he can be saved, Rom. 10:9-10.
 - d. Paul further recognized the essentiality of baptism in the divine redemptive plan, Acts 22:16.
3. All of this being true, what then, did the apostle Paul mean by his statement in Romans 10:1?

Body:

- I. **“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved,” Rom 10:1.**
 - A. The word “brethren” is both a term of endearment and relative to a kindred, Jewish relationship.
 1. The apostle Paul loved his Jewish countrymen despite their mistreatment of him, Acts 9:23-25;

- 13:50; 14:1-7, 19; 16:19-24; 2 Cor. 11:23-28.
2. We also must love sinners while we hate their sins; we must love the lost.
 3. Jesus compels his followers to love even those who hate them and mistreat them, Matt. 5:44.
 4. Jesus Christ retained his affection for humanity even in face of his cruel death on the cross, Luke 23:34; 1 Pet. 2:21-23.
 5. Stephen possessed love for his murderers as well, Acts 7:60.
- B. The phrase “my heart’s desire” expresses Paul’s longing for his countrymen to be saved.
1. Yet, he did not expect God to save his countrymen contrary to the conditions for salvation, which we read in the New Testament.
 2. Whereas hope is comprised of “expectation” and “desire,” Paul had “desire” without “expectation” regarding the salvation of his fellow countrymen.
 3. Likewise, we cannot realistically expect God to save our loved ones contrary to his conditions for salvation.
- C. The phrase “prayer to God” reflects a primary truth regarding prayer.
1. Paul’s prayer was properly directed to God as Jesus had taught in the model prayer, Matt. 6:9-13.
 2. Under Christianity, prayer is mediated by or through Jesus Christ, 1 Tim. 2:5; Col. 3:17.
 3. However, Paul’s prayer for his countrymen without their obedience could not save them.
 4. Paul, for instance, prayed for three days and remained guilty of his sins until they were washed away in baptism, Acts 9:9, 11; 22:16.
- D. The phrase “for Israel that they might be saved” speaks to the most urgent need of mankind.
1. The apostle Paul longed for his nation to be saved, but obviously not without their obedience, Heb. 5:8-9.
 2. The power to be saved was brought personally by Jesus Christ, John 1:17; Rom. 1:16; Jude 3.

II. “For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge,” Rom. 10:2.

- A. Consider the phrase, “For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God.”
1. To their credit, the Jews of Paul’s day had an intense zeal for God.
 2. They were sincere, but they were nevertheless still lost!
 3. Sincerity or zeal must be guided by truth or it does not contribute to salvation, John 4:24; Matt. 7:21-23.
 4. The Jews of Paul’s day did not worship idols or the heavenly bodies, but they sincerely worshipped the true God incorrectly and were lost.
 5. Likewise, people today may not worship idols, but they are lost if they even sincerely worship God incorrectly.
- B. The phrase “not according to knowledge” is a ringing, divine condemnation.
1. Any religious knowledge that does not originate with God is false knowledge, 1 Cor. 1:18-21.
 2. Humanly devised knowledge promotes vain worship, which is unacceptable to God, Matt. 15:9.
 3. In particular, the Jews of Paul’s day erred by attempting to practice Judaism after it was nailed to the cross, Eph. 2:15; Col. 2:14; Rom. 7:6-7; Heb. 8:6-7; Gal. 5:3-4.

III. “For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God,” Rom 10:3.

- A. The phrase “for they being ignorant of God’s righteousness” denotes a woeful deficiency.
1. Yet, this accusation does not assign any immorality or grossly evil conduct.
 2. The first century Jews were ignorant (lacking knowledge) of God’s righteousness.
 3. Ignorance here was not blissful, but it was the cause of Paul’s countrymen being lost.

- B. The phrase “and going about to establish their own righteousness” cites the compounded crime of adopting a substitute system of righteousness.
1. There is a contrast between righteousness as man defines it and righteousness as God defines it, and God’s definition carries **eternal weight**.
 2. Worshipping according to human design rather than according to divine design, for instance, is styled in Scripture as “will worship,” Col. 2:23.
 3. Ultimately, mankind will stand before the judgment bar of God to answer according to righteousness as God defines righteousness, Rev. 20:12-15; 2 Cor. 5:10; Ecc. 12:13-14.
 4. All accountable souls will be judged by the Word of God according to his standard of righteousness, John 12:48; Psa. 9:7-8.
- C. The phrase “have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God” signals one’s final doom.
1. This is the summation of why lost souls throughout the ages, in the present and in the future are lost—‘not submitting to the righteousness of God.’
 2. Faith alone lacks the power to save souls, despite that **faith only** is popular theology on which most of our neighbors bank their eternities, Jam. 2:24.
 3. A good conscience or sincere zeal alone is incapable of saving souls, e.g. Saul of Tarsus, Acts 22:3-5; 23:1.
 4. The Jews of Paul’s day and people today need to repent and be baptized to obtain the remission of their sins, Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21.
 5. Jesus Christ will return to retrieve the obedient and punish the disobedient, Heb. 5:8-9; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.

Conclusion:

1. When I go to Cracker Barrel or some other family friendly setting, I look around me at the precious souls and earnestly long for these good people to submit to the righteousness of God and be truly saved.
2. When I look around the community and muse about the souls associated with the Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians,

Pentecostals, Catholics and others, I long for these precious souls to submit to the righteousness of God and be truly saved.

3. I want our friends, neighbors and loved ones who are lost to submit to the righteousness of God and be truly saved.
4. I want erring Christians to once again submit themselves to the righteousness of God and be saved.
5. No one can be saved while in open rebellion to God, refusing to submit to the righteousness of God!

Invitation:

1. Paul's desire, your desire and my desire for lost souls to be saved is ineffective as long as they continue to go about to establish their own standard of righteousness and refuse to submit themselves to the righteousness of God.
2. Unbaptized believers can fulfill our desire toward them for salvation by obediently submitting to immersion in water to wash away sins as Saul of Tarsus did, Acts 22:16; Rev. 1:5.
3. Ering Christians can fulfill our desire toward them for salvation by repenting of their public sins, Acts 8:22.

What Shall We Do With Our Youth?

Ecclesiastes 12:1

Thesis: To evaluate the use God has made of young people in the past to determine how young people should be used in the church today.

Song: *How Shall the Young Secure Their Hearts*

Introduction:

1. Some congregations segregate their youth from the adults in worship and other activities of the church, e.g. “youth worship” or “junior church” and entertainment.
2. It is no wonder then that the youth often do not feel apart of the church and avoid accepting responsibilities in the church later.
3. Apparently, believing that the youth are the church of **tomorrow**, many people do not imagine that Christian youth are, in fact, valuable members of the church **today**.
4. Really, every Christian, irrespective of his or her age, is a member of the church **now!**

Body:

I. The first century church was comprised of men and women, Acts 8:12.

- A. Though they may be young, youths must be accountable souls in order to be amenable to the Gospel before they can obey it and receive its blessings.
 1. Acts 8:12 simply means that both sexes of mankind are subject to the Gospel of Christ and beneficiaries of its blessings, chief of which is salvation.
 2. Baptism does not make a boy into a man or make a girl into a woman with corresponding responsibilities of adults, e.g. making decisions for the church.
- B. All of the saved, including young people, are added to

the church by the Lord, Acts 2:47.

- C. Nowhere in the New Testament are young Christians portrayed as distinct from the rest of the church, e.g. the church of tomorrow but not expected to be apart of the church today.
- D. Individual Christians (no age cited) must be fruitful for the Lord, John 15:2; Matt. 25:30; 5:16; Rev. 2:10.

II. The mission of Christian youth is the same mission of the church, no more and no less!

- A. All Christians, irrespective of their ages, have the responsibility to do what they can to save souls, Matt. 28:18-20.
- B. All Christians, irrespective of their ages, have the responsibility to do what they can to edify the church, 1 Cor. 14:12.
- C. All Christians, irrespective of their ages, have the responsibility to do what they can to extend benevolence toward others, Gal. 6:10.
- D. Whatever is the work of the church is the work of young Christians, so much as they are qualified or able.

III. There are requirements that must be met by Christian youth in order for them to serve God, Ecc. 12:1.

- A. Youth must cleanse their way with the Word of God, Psa. 119:9.
- B. Youth must praise the name of God, Psa. 148:12-13.
- C. Youth must give no occasion for some to despise their youthfulness, 1 Tim. 4:12.
- D. Youth must be careful to flee youthful lusts, 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Pet. 2:9.
- E. Youth must be sober minded, Titus 2:6-8.
- F. Youth, like all other Christians, must be willing to receive instruction, 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16-17.

Conclusion:

1. Like other Christians, our youth have the responsibility to serve God in whatever ways they can.
2. Each Christian soul must serve God or face an angry God in the Judgment.
3. It is a great encouragement to me when young people involve themselves in the work of the church.

Invitation:

1. One does not have to be a young person to respond to God's invitation; the Gospel is for all!
2. Unimmersed believers, will you please accept the invitation of the Lord today, Matt. 11:28.
3. Erring Christians, God will take you back, 1 John 1:9.

Is the Church of Christ a Denomination?

Matthew 7:21-23

Thesis: To show from the Bible that the churches of Christ are not denominational.

Song: *Church of Christ*

Introduction:

1. If the church of Christ were a denomination, it would be relatively equal to and no better or worse than any other denomination.
 - a. If the church of Christ were a denomination, there would be no reason to be a member of it rather than a member of some other religious group.
 - b. In fact, it would be easier to be a member of one of the denominations in this community.
 - c. Further, it would probably be more enjoyable to be a member of a religious group that was more concerned about entertainment, social evolution and being politically correct than biblical doctrine.
 - d. In order for the church of Christ to be a denomination, it would have to exchange the objectivity of Bible authority for the subjectivism of human preference and manmade doctrines, Matt. 15:9.
2. The goal of the churches of Christ is loftier than merely being one among many manmade denominations.
 - a. The churches of Christ recognize that Jesus Christ alone adds the saved to the church about which one reads in the New Testament, Acts 2:47.
 - b. The churches of Christ realize that by **one spirit** we are baptized into **one body (one church)**, 1 Cor. 12:13.
 - c. The goal of the churches of Christ is merely to be identical to the church for which Jesus died (Rom. 5:8), over which he is the head (Eph. 1:22-23), for which he will return someday (John 14:1-3) and about which one can read in the New Testament, Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2.

3. If the church of Christ were a denomination, I would not concern myself with attempting to convert ‘goats to sheep,’ Matt. 25:32.
 - a. It is not “sheep stealing” to evangelize precious souls who may be members of a manmade denomination instead of the church that Jesus established, Matt. 15:33.
 - b. The church of the Bible is singular and of divine origin, standing in stark or vivid contrast to the manmade churches that populate our communities and the yellow pages, Matt. 16:18.
 - c. It is a false notion unsubstantiated by Scripture that there are faithful Christians in denominations.
 - d. The churches of Christ and the Christians who comprise them are not permitted by God to extend religious fellowship to the denominations and denominational people around us, Eph. 5:11; 1 John 1:7.
4. The churches of Christ and the Christians who comprise it are not mad at the world, but rather we love our fellow man enough to take the unpopular stance of acquainting it with God’s pure, unadulterated, saving truth.
 - a. The love of Christ constrains or compels us to acquaint others with the plain Gospel of Christ, 2 Cor. 5:14; Rom. 1:16.
 - b. We have the same responsibility that one would have to warn oncoming traffic about a bridge being out to warn an unsuspecting world of impending, eternal doom toward which it is rushing religiously, Matt. 3:10.

Body:

I. The term “denomination” is incompatible with the churches of Christ.

- A. The dictionary definition for the word “denomination” is: “a class or society of individuals called by the same name; a sect.”
 1. The definition for a “sect” is: “a party dissenting from an established or parent church...denomination.”
 2. The church for which Jesus died is not a sect of human origin, Eph. 3:10-11; Matt. 16:18.
 3. The churches of Christ have no parent church from

which they dissent; there is **only one** body or church, Eph. 4:4.

4. Denominations, however, arose as dissenting groups from other manmade denominations or religious groups.
 5. Denominations also exist as manmade dissenting religious organizations from the true church of the Bible.
- B. From a mathematic perspective, the word “denomination” suggests a fraction or a part of a whole.
1. The churches of Christ are not a part or fraction of anything; they simply wear the name of Christ as our Lord’s church did in the first century, Rom. 16:16.
 2. The churches of Christ strive to be identical in doctrine and practice to the church of the Bible.
 3. The church of Christ about which one reads in the Bible is the complete, whole, entire body of Christ, not just one of the denominations.
- C. The churches of Christ do not represent themselves as a denomination.

II. The churches of Christ are blood bought, whereas denominations are not blood bought.

- A. The churches of Christ mentioned in the New Testament are blood bought.
1. Jesus Christ purchased the church with his own blood, Acts 20:28.
 2. Individual members of the church are washed from their sins in the blood of Christ, Rev. 1:5; Acts 22:16.
- B. Will denominations declare that they are blood bought, and yet affirm that one can be saved without being a member of their denomination?
1. For instance, our Baptist friends teach that one is saved by faith only, **before** baptism into the Baptist Church.
 2. Therefore, Baptist doctrine makes it easier to get into heaven than into the Baptist Church.
 3. Consequently, a denomination such as the Baptist

Church (or any denomination that subscribes to faith only) cannot claim that it is blood bought.

- C. Scripture teaches that one must be a member of the Lord's church to be saved.
 - 1. Jesus is the Savior of the body, the church, to which Jesus adds the saved, Eph. 5:23; Acts 2:47.
 - 2. **The Lord's church is the body of the saved!**
 - 3. The way in which people were saved on the birthday of the Lord's church, after which Jesus added them to the church is exactly the same way in which people are saved today, after which Jesus adds them to the church, Acts 2:38, 41, 47.
- D. The churches of Christ are blood bought.

III. Attainment of church membership differs between denominations and the churches of Christ.

- A. The Lord adds the saved to his church, Acts 2:47.
 - 1. Jesus saves the obedient, Heb. 5:8-9.
 - 2. Souls are saved at the point of baptism, 1 Pet. 3:21.
- B. Denominations may be **joined**, but one can only be **added** to the Lord's church by Jesus.
 - 1. Some churches admit members only after the membership votes to allow them to join.
 - 2. Rather than attempting to join the church of one's choice, every accountable soul ought to desire to be added to the church of **Christ's choice**.
- C. The churches of Christ acknowledge that Jesus **adds** the saved to the body of the saved—his church.

IV. The churches of Christ wear no denominational names.

- A. Scripture reveals several descriptive designations for the church of the Bible.
 - 1. Examples include: "churches of Christ," "church of God" and simply "church," Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:22.
 - 2. All of the terms applied in Scripture to the Lord's church glorify God, instead of glorifying men, methods, doctrines and organizational forms as most denominations do by their manmade names.
- B. Scripture also reveals several names for members of the Lord's church.

1. Early members of the Lord's church were called "disciples," "saints" and "Christians," Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 1:2; Acts 11:26; 4:12; 1 Pet. 4:16.
 2. Denominational people today wear names that are not found anywhere in the Bible.
 3. Denominational people may consider themselves what we might call hyphenated Christians (inserting their denominational name before the hyphen), but they do not consider themselves Christians only as was the practice in the first century.
- C. It would seem, at least, that denominations suppose that one name is as good as another, but they fail to practice that profession.
1. One denomination will not wear the name of another denomination.
 2. The churches of Christ and their members glorify God by the biblical names they wear.
 3. Do you want to glorify God; you cannot glorify God by wearing denominational names, which instead glorify men, methods, doctrines and organizational forms.
- D. The churches of Christ only wear biblical names.
- V. The churches of Christ have no denominational creed.**
- A. Jesus Christ has all authority and he is the sole head of his church.
1. Jesus gave what we call the Great Commission based on his authority as the risen Christ, Matt. 28:18.
 2. Scripture repeatedly declares that Jesus alone is the head of his church, Col. 1:18.
 3. **The church has no authority of its own!**
 4. No man or council of men or women is authorized by Scripture to make religious laws.
- B. Denominations have changing manmade creeds, whereas the Lord's church has a changeless creed—the New Testament.
1. The respective denominations send forth their creeds, disciplines, manuals and catechisms from

their earthly headquarters, whereas the headquarters of the Lord's church is in heaven with Christ, Acts 7:56.

2. Denominations claim for themselves religious authority to periodically amend or change their creeds, which they do change from time to time.
 3. The ink has been dry on the creed for the Lord's church for about 2,000 years!
- C. The churches of Christ abide by the creed of Christ alone—the New Testament.

VI. The organization of the churches of Christ and denominations differ.

- A. Biblically, the local congregation is the largest organizational unit of the church on earth, Acts 20:28.
1. When fully and Scripturally organized, each congregation has elders, deacons, preachers and teachers, 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Eph. 4:11.
 2. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd who rules all congregations from heaven, 1 Pet. 5:1-4.
- B. Denominations have earthly headquarters from which they rule through an ecclesiastical hierarchy down to local denominations.
1. Denominations have a single leader or council of men or women by which they rule themselves.
 2. Denominations legislate their own church laws, irrespective of what the Bible authorizes or disallows.
 3. Denominations have districts or dioceses larger than local congregations.
- C. The churches of Christ abide by the organizational pattern of the Bible respecting the early church.

VII. The origin of denominations and the churches of Christ differ.

- A. The churches of Christ began in A.D. 33 in Jerusalem and were founded by Jesus.
1. The Lord's church was established at the correct time in history and in the right place to fulfill Old Testament prophecy, Dan. 2:31-45; Isa. 2:2-3.
 2. The Lord's church came with power in fulfillment

- of prophecy, Joel 2:28; Mark 9:1; Acts 2:1-4.
 - 3. The churches of Christ belong to Jesus Christ, Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:11; Rom. 16:16.
 - 4. The church was in the mind of God from eternity, Eph. 3:10-11.
- B. Denominations began without power, at the wrong times, were founded by the wrong people and for the wrong reasons.
- 1. Boniface III was the first universally recognized Catholic pope, giving rise to the Catholic Church in A.D. 606., nearly 600 years too late to be the church of the Bible.
 - 2. Denominations initially developed later through departures from the Catholic Church until today there are thousands of denominations.
 - 3. Scripture neither acknowledges nor authorizes the existence of denominations, but Jesus declared that every religious perversion would be “rooted up,” Matt. 15:13.
- C. The churches of Christ originated in the mind of God and were established by Jesus.

Conclusion:

- 1. Hence, we conclude that the church of Christ is not a denomination.
- 2. The churches of Christ are divine rather than denominational in origin, name, creed and mission.
- 3. The Bible is the sole creed of the churches of Christ.
- 4. The Bible makes Christians only or collectively the churches of Christ—a unique or peculiar people, 1 Pet. 2:9.

Invitation:

- 1. The churches of Christ do not want anyone to enter into eternity and stand before the Judgment Bar of God deluded, howbeit sincerely, Matt. 7:21-23.
- 2. There is only one true church, over which Jesus is head and into which Jesus alone places the obedient only, Heb. 5:8-9; Acts 2:47.
- 3. Have you been immersed in water for the remission of your sins so that Jesus will add you to his church, Acts 2:38, 47?

Rescuing the Perishing

Luke 19:10

Thesis: To paint a vivid picture of lost souls doomed eternally to a fiery hell prepared for the devil and his angels.

Song: *Rescue the Perishing*

Introduction:

1. A number of circumstances hide from our view and the view of our fellow mankind the reality of the wretched, lost condition of human souls, e.g. materialism, hedonism, denominationalism.
2. Before the children of God can grasp the urgency of evangelizing the world, we must see the lost condition of our fellow human beings in its true light.
3. Everyone, please, shut your eyes and picture with me for a moment the horrible and real, human tragedy of lost souls all around us.
 - a. Imagine that every lost soul is surrounded by the blackest darkness, but ablaze in the hottest, flaming, red-white fire.
 - b. Now think about every soul you personally know who is not a Christian (family members, neighbors, classmates, coworkers) surrounded by this dense darkness, but ablaze in fire.
 - c. Next, picture in your mind every unfaithful Christian, also surrounded by the blackness but immersed in leaping tongues of fire.
 - d. Imagine the strangers you often see at the grocery store, in restaurants and other places who are outside of Christ and lost, each soul surrounded by darkness but burning in flaming fire.
 - e. Suddenly, it becomes apparent to you that each of these black encircled souls ablaze in fire is locked in the fiercest, brutal combat with other souls who are surround by a blue haze and emitting the brightest light.
4. A gruesome spiritual war is raging between the warriors of

Satan and the soldiers of the cross.

- a. No compromise is possible and there is no neutral zone.
 - b. Eternity is at stake!
5. You can open your eyes now.
- a. Who are the warriors of Satan?
 - b. Who are the soldiers of Christ?
 - c. What exactly do Christians owe to the lost?

Body:

I. Who are the warriors of Satan?

- A. Every soul who transgresses the law of God is serving Satan, 1 John 3:4.
 1. Sin has a payday of spiritual death, Rom. 6:23.
 2. Everyone, even people we personally know or love, will be eternally lost if they pass from life or if Jesus Christ returns while they are still in the employ of the devil.
- B. Every soul who alters God's Word in any way is really serving Satan, Gal. 1:6-9.
 1. Our most sincere religious neighbor, friend or family member serves Satan if he or she adds to or takes from the Word of God, Rev. 22:18-19.
 2. Unless they surrender themselves to Jesus unconditionally, they will be vanquished by Jesus upon his return, 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
- C. Every soul who trusts in a manmade scheme of redemption serves Satan instead of Jesus.
 1. There is only One (Jesus) through whom anyone can be saved, Acts 4:12.
 2. Luther, Calvin, popes, elders, preachers, etc. cannot devise plan of salvations that differ from the New Testament by which God will be obligated to admit souls to heaven.
 3. Mortals must submit to the transforming power of the Gospel alone whereby they become the peculiar people of God, Rom. 12:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:9.
- D. Many souls in the army of Satan doubtless never intended to enlist in his ranks.
 1. However, we cannot reject the Word of Jesus Christ without throwing our lot with the devil, John

12:48.

2. We cannot disregard the law of God under which we live and be held guiltless before the Judgment Bar of God, Rev. 20:12-15.
3. The soldiers of Christ and Christ himself will gladly embrace sinners who turn from Satan's ranks of sin, 2 Pet. 3:9.

II. Who are the soldiers of Christ?

- A. The soldiers of Christ are those who are born again and added to the church by the Lord.
 1. Only those who are born again through the waters of baptism are in the Lord's army, John 3:3-5.
 2. Jesus adds those to his army who have immersed in water for the remission of their sins, Acts 2:38, 41, 47.
 3. Irrespective of how much we love someone or how much one is a good, moral person, outside of Christ, he is not in the Lord's army, but in the army of Satan.
- B. Everyone who is in Christ is a soldier of Christ.
 1. One gets into Christ by being baptized into him, Rom. 6:3-5.
 2. One gets into Christ by putting Christ on in baptism, Gal. 3:27.
 3. According to the biblical definition, only those who are baptized into Christ are Christians; no other definition matters.
- C. Those who walk by faith in the light and after the example of Jesus Christ are soldiers of Christ.
 1. One's personal faith derives from the system of faith, the Gospel, 2 Cor. 5:7.
 2. Christians continue in the light of God's Word, 1 John 1:7.
 3. Jesus is our example and the captain of salvation to the spiritual army he leads, 1 Pet. 2:21; Heb. 5:8-9.
- D. The soldiers of Christ wear the spiritual armor.
 1. This armor protects the front of God's soldier and has no protection for the back, Eph. 6:10-17.
 2. The principle weapon of the soldier of Christ is the

spiritual sword, the Word of God, Heb. 4:12.

3. Every child of God must be careful to sufficiently arm himself as a soldier of Christ, Heb. 5:11-6:2.

III. What do Christians owe to the lost, Luke 19:10?

- A. The soldier of Christ's first responsibility is to keep himself saved.
 1. Contrary to popular doctrinal error, a person does participate in his own redemption, Acts 2:40; Phil. 2:12.
 2. The soldier of Christ has the responsibility to edify himself, 1 Cor. 14:12.
 3. The soldier of Christ must maintain his determination to remain faithful, 1 Cor. 15:58; 1 John 2:17.
- B. The soldier of Christ must oppose error.
 1. First, one must identify and resist false teachers, 1 John 4:1; Rom. 16:17-18.
 2. The soldiers of Christ must abhor or utterly detest (hate) wickedness, Rom. 19:9; 2 Tim. 4:1-4.
- C. The soldiers of Christ have the obligation to rescue the perishing.
 1. First, we must warn the lost of their spiritual danger, Ezek. 3:17-21.
 2. We must be careful not to turn from our responsibilities as Jonah did.
 3. The soldiers of Christ must boldly proclaim the Gospel (e.g. John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, apostle Paul) in light of the awful peril that awaits the lost, 2 Cor. 5:11.

Conclusion:

1. The lost are perishing everyday and are destined to a devil's hell.
 - a. Simply acknowledging that biblical fact does nothing in itself to alleviate the tragedy of lost souls entering eternity.
 - b. If we have the conviction of the truth we profess to practice for ourselves, we must do something, do everything, we possibly can to save souls.

- c. That means that the soldiers of Christ must recognize sin for what it is and call sin sin, e.g., homosexuality, adultery, drunkenness, covetousness, factiousness, etc.
2. Finally, I want you to visualize the warriors of Satan and the soldiers of Christ standing before the Judgment Bar of God.
 - a. Imagine your embarrassment at the assignment of some of the warriors of Satan (friends, acquaintances and neighbors) to a devil's hell, and you did not tell them about the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - b. Such a sin of omission may hamper our eternal destinies as well, Jam. 4:7.
 - c. We must not fear the warriors of Satan and certainly we must not befriend the enemies of God, Matt. 10:28; Jam. 4:4; 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

Invitation:

1. Rescuing the perishing will contribute to our salvation as well.
2. Unimmersed believers can be immersed into Christ today and have their sins washed away, Col. 2:12; Acts 22:16.
3. Erring Christians can avoid falling into the hands of an angry God by returning to the Lord, Heb. 10:26-31; Acts 8:22.

Theft by Consent

Ephesians 4:28

Thesis: To emphasize that sin, though approved by society and allowed by the government or civil law, is no less sinful in the eyes of God, for which there are the same consequences as for any other sin in which one willfully engages.

Introduction:

1. It is obvious from the New Testament that civil government is ordained by God and that God requires mankind to submit to civil government, Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:11-17.
2. The apostles, however, disregarded civil law when and only when it contradicted the higher law of God, Acts 4:18-20; 5:28-29.
 - a. When civil government allows, tolerates, legalizes, taxes or sponsors sinful activity, to that extent and to that extent only the child of God must disregard civil law and appeal to the higher law of God.
 - b. It is possible to be legally correct in one's activities while at the same time to be spiritually lost.
3. Examples in contemporary America where our government legally protects, taxes, sponsors or promotes biblically sinful activities include:
 - a. Abortion, homosexuality, fornication, gambling, divorce and remarriage not because of adultery, alcoholic consumption, etc.
 - b. In this lesson, we will confine ourselves to contrasting biblical principles with gambling.

Body:

I. Just what is gambling, and what is not gambling?

- A. Gambling involves betting some of one's material wealth on an unknown, future result.
 1. A dictionary definition for the verb "gamble" is: "**1a:** to play a game for money or property; **b:** to bet on an uncertain outcome. **2...**take a chance"

- (Merriam).
2. The corresponding definition for the noun “gamble” is: “**2:** the playing of a game of chance for stakes.”
 3. One Gospel preacher observes: “**Artificial risks** are created in order to take from the many so as to benefit the few who are ‘lucky’ enough to get it” (Gulledge).
- B. One could and people often gamble on virtually every conceivable circumstance where the future result cannot be known with certainty.
1. Popular forms of gambling involve slot machines, card games, roulette, bingo, lotteries, raffles, horse and greyhound racing, sports pools, pitching coins, dice, punchboards, cockfights, dogfights, etc.
 2. Various parts of our nation and several Indian reservations have gambling casinos.
 3. Most states operate lotteries.
 4. Bingo games and raffles have become big business for many churches and other charitable organizations.
 5. In various parts of our country, betting on horse and greyhound racing is legal.
 6. In many places, slot machines populate bars, restaurants and even grocery stores.
 7. Betting on office sports pools and card games are common fare in American society.
 8. Even children in school sometimes initiate themselves to gambling by pitching coins.
- C. There are some activities that often are involved in gambling that do not constitute gambling when the betting or wagering is absent.
1. For instance, bingo is not gambling in nursing homes, etc. where the participants do not buy the bingo cards, even if prizes are given to winners.
 2. One may play card games, even poker, for amusement without gambling where there is no actual wagering involved.
 3. Several games like Yahtzee or Monopoly use dice

without betting and do not constitute gambling.

D. Gambling is still gambling, even if it is for a good reason or a good cause, Rom. 3:8.

1. The fact that the states that operate lotteries purport to use the state's winnings for elderly care, education, etc. does not alter the nature of gambling per its ordinary and normal dictionary definition.
2. The fact that charities, civic organizations and schools may have good uses for their share of the proceeds from bingo, raffles, etc. does not change nature of gambling.

II. Note some social attitudes toward and the history of gambling.

A. Doubtless, mankind has been gambling since near his debut on planet earth and after he became a wayward creature from the continual presence once enjoyed in the Garden with God.

“Archaeological discoveries reveal gambling devices dating as far back as 1800 years B.C. In Babylon, headless arrows were used in wagering, and ancient Greeks had dice marked with numbers on four sides” (Gulledge).

1. About the same time period, residents of Crete were gambling with gaming boards (Hearn 1).
 2. The rudest example of gambling in the Bible was at the foot of the cross where Roman soldiers cast lots for the seamless coat (tunic) of Jesus Christ, John 19:23-24.
 3. Much closer to our time, of course, yet centuries ago, the proceeds from a lottery in England financed the sailing of the Mayflower to colonize the New World (Puzo 26).
- B. The American people overwhelmingly approve of gambling.
1. Four out of 5 people in the U.S. approve of gambling as a pastime and 2 out of 3 admit to having gambled legally or illegally (Barbour G1).

2. In 1999, legalized gambling was a \$600 billion annual industry spread over 48 of 50 states (“Gambling Industry Aware” 2A).
 3. Americans bet about 5 billion dollars a year legally on horse racing.
 4. In 1976, there were 9 million problem gamblers (Barbour).
 5. One Memphis church was closed by the city after it was discovered the church conducted bingo 8 hours daily, seven days a week as opposed to a one hour religious service weekly.
- C. Historically, illegal and legal gambling has always harmed society.
1. “[L]egalized lotteries were common in the United States until they were abolished, ending with the Louisiana Lottery in 1892” (Kefauver 2), because of the great harm gambling caused.
 2. Organized crime and other criminal activity has always risen in the communities where gambling is permitted, i.e. prostitution, robbery, rape, loan sharking, bribery, murder, illegal drugs, violence, embezzling, etc.

“From 1977-1980, violent crimes, involving murder, rape, robbery...increased in Atlantic City 176%” (Clarke 2).

3. Wherever gambling is allowed a foothold, addiction to gambling leads many people to experience broken homes, domestic abuse, poverty and even suicide.

“The suicide rate is the highest in the country in Las Vegas, Nevada. ...Suicide rates for spouses of compulsive gamblers are 150 times higher than the national average” (Clarke 2).

4. Gambling produces neither products nor services, only great harm to individuals and society.

III. Gambling in light of biblical principles.

- A. The words “Thou shalt not gamble” do not appear in

Scripture.

1. Incidentally, neither do the words “Thou shalt gamble” appear in Scripture.
 2. In the strictest sense, gambling is not among the activities in the Bible that the Bible either treats as a non-issue or looks upon with favor.
 3. Several biblical principles, though, lead to the unmistakable conclusion from Scripture that gambling is an unauthorized activity and sinful.
- B. There are a limited number of ways portrayed in the Bible whereby a person may legitimately acquire wealth.
1. First and ordinarily, material wealth may be increased with God’s approval through work, Prov. 13:11; Matt. 10:10; 1 Tim. 5:18; Eph. 4:28.
 2. Second, one’s material wealth may be lawfully (God’s law) increased by commercial activity, buying and selling property and merchandise, Matt. 13:46; Acts 2:45; 4:34; 5:4; Jam. 4:13.
 3. Also, one may be the recipient of gifts or donations, Phil. 4:15; Luke 15:11-31.
 4. In addition, material wealth may be found, the owner of which cannot be known, Matt. 13:44.
 5. Lastly, material wealth may be increased, without God’s approval, by theft, Eph. 4:28.
 6. Gambling gains, for which every gambler hopes, do not correspond to wealth acquired by labor, commercial activity, gifts or found money, but more nearly correspond to theft, howbeit by consent.
 7. A renown, late Gospel preacher observed:

“Gambling is a form of theft, because it takes from many and gives without effort to a few. Most often, those from whom money is taken are least able to lose, and usually the loss falls on helpless women and children who must suffer deprivation because of the gambler’s obsession” (Woods 17).

- C. Our Lord’s *Golden Rule* must be discarded in order to pursue gambling.

1. Matthew 7:12 would have us treat others as we want to be treated.
2. Gambling, rather, is the intent to do harm to others while others attempt to do harm to us, Matt. 22:39; Rom. 12:17; 13:8-10.

“...the individuals involved want each other’s money but are unwilling to just *donate* their money to the others. Everyone who gambles is hoping to win money from others. No one wants to lose the money he gambles. Consequently, the very nature, character and essence of gambling is in direct conflict with the core and heart of Christianity as articulated by Jesus in Matthew 7:12. By definition, a gambler is treating others the way he himself *does not* want to be treated” (Miller).

- D. Gambling undercuts the work ethic, 2 Thess. 3:8-12; Eph. 4:28; Acts 20:35; Gen. 3:19.
 1. “Gambling is an obvious attempt to sidestep and short-circuit the principle of toil undertaken for noble ends” (Miller).
 2. Proverbs 28:20 teaches that hasting to get rich is sinful.
- E. Gambling is the manifestation of covetousness.
 1. True success in one’s life has nothing to do with his possessions, Luke 12:15.
 2. Covetousness has to do with the love of money, which pursuing as a chief goal in life souls err from the faith, 1 Tim. 6:10.
 3. In place of covetousness, we are to be content with what we have, Heb. 13:5; Prov. 30:8-9.
- F. Gambling makes a mockery of good stewardship.
 1. Stewardship and faithfulness stand or fall together, 1 Cor. 4:2.
 2. Jesus used examples of good and poor stewardship to portray final judgment of humanity, Matt. 25:14-30.
 3. Everything, this whole world and everything in it, including our souls really belongs to God, Psa.

24:1; 50:10-12; 1 Cor. 10:26; Ezek. 18:4.

- G. Gambling bears evil fruit and cannot be acceptable to God.
 - 1. The ill affect on gambler and society is amply documented.
 - 2. Gambling is an evil fruit, and we will be judged by our fruits, Matt. 7:16-20.
- H. Gambling is addictive and causes one to lose self-control.
 - 1. Lack of self-control is listed among other sins, 2 Tim. 3:3 ASV, NKJV.
 - 2. God calls on people to live soberly or with self-restraint, Titus 2:11-12.
- I. Gambling causes one to associate with evil persons.
 - 1. The apostle Paul warned that evil companionship has a corrupting influence, 1 Cor. 15:33 ASV.
 - 2. Especially Christians are warned in Scripture to separate themselves from those whose sinful influence may overcome us, 2 Cor. 6:14-18.
- J. Gambling leads to poverty.
 - 1. Often gamblers gamble away the grocery money, the mortgage payment, etc., 1 Tim. 5:8.
 - 2. One religious leader where bingo was conducted noted a bingo player who lost money playing bingo and then requested a benevolent handout to obtain groceries.

IV. Even some Christians attempt to rationalize approval for gambling by making unfounded comparisons with non-gambling circumstances or citing supposed benefits to gambling.

- A. Farming, for instance, is often cited as a venture characterized by chance or risk, just as gambling involves chance or risk.
 - 1. However, farming involves human labor, which God commands, as well as petitions to God for a fruitful harvest and the general providence of God (if not his special providence, too), Gen. 2:15; 2 Thess. 3:10; Matt. 5:45.
 - 2. Agriculture occupies a prominent and frequent presence in God's Scriptures, and it symbolizes the

- divinely approved work ethic, Gal. 6:7.
3. Gambling does not involve human labor, is unsuitable for petitions to God and could hardly be expected to be the subject of the favorable providence of God.
- B. Trying to defend gambling, some will state that buying insurance is comparable to gambling because insurance has to do with risk.
1. However, insurance does not create a risk and it does not increase risk as with gambling.
 2. The risk for which insurance is secured is involuntary whereas gambling involves voluntary risk.
- C. Some attempt to minimize arguments against gambling by declaring they don't gamble much and it's just for amusement anyway.
1. Since gambling is a biblically unauthorized way to increase wealth, it does not matter how little one gambles; a little bit of sin is as deadly as much sin, Rom. 6:23.
 2. Being amused with a little sin is as deadly as being amused with much sin, Rom. 6:23.
- D. Others may try to equate the chance of a marriage succeeding with chances associated with gambling.
1. Marriage is authorized by God, but gambling is not!
 2. Even if there were some observable comparison between marriages and gambling, the odds at the national average of 50/50 remain tremendously better for marriage than with gambling.
- E. Some attempt to defend gambling by equating it with door prizes and giveaways.
1. However, there is no risk involved in these things.
 2. Door prizes and giveaways are gifts.
- F. Still others hope to diffuse criticism of gambling by labeling it a voluntary rather than a compulsory activity.
1. However, participating in a duel voluntarily is still murder when death results.
 2. Prostitution and other occasions of fornication are

still sinful even when these activities are consensual, Gal. 5:19-21.

- G. Gamblers and the gambling industry claim that legalized gambling provides much needed revenues (in place of raising taxes) for such things as senior care, education, etc. as well as creates jobs.
1. In reality, “[f]or every dollar in benefits, the social costs are at least \$3” (“Professor Tells” 14; Clarke 2).
 2. The human cost as well as extra police protection and repairs to the infrastructure more than equal gambling revenues realized by government (Clarke 2).
 3. Especially casinos drive out businesses with their all inclusive, on premises services, and significant drops in population occur, partly because real estate prices climb so that only the gambling industry can afford it.

“...[S]ince casino gambling was introduced into Atlantic City, the population has declined and nearly half of the 2100 businesses have closed. ...serious crimes have tripled from 4,689 in 1977 to 14,914 in 1985. ...the population...declined by approximately 6,000 people” (Clarke 2).

Conclusion:

1. “Christians, by definition, are people who regulate their behavior by the Scriptures” (Miller).
2. Gambling is not a biblically authorized method of increasing one’s wealth.
3. There are many biblical principles that must be trampled to practice gambling.
4. Since gambling is something that harms the gambler and society, it is sinful and something from which the children of God and God’s church must turn away, Eph. 5:11.
5. Anyone who concentrates on acquiring riches and harms his fellow man in the process stands condemned by God, Jam. 5:1-4.
6. Gambling is not merely a political issue, it is also a moral issue

that runs counter to biblical principles.

Invitation:

1. Sin, though approved by society and allowed by the government or civil law, is no less sinful in the eyes of God, for which there are the same consequences as for any other sin in which one willfully engages.
2. Non-Christians and Christians both need to submit to God unconditionally through conformity to the Word of God in all matters, Rom. 12:1-2.
3. For unbaptized believers, that means complying with the apostle Peter's charge in Acts 2:38, 41, 47.
4. For erring Christians, repentance and prayer is needful, Acts 8:22.

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Upon This Rock

Matthew 16:13-19

Thesis: Exposition of Matthew 16:18 concerning the establishment of the church.

Introduction:

1. The context of Matthew 16:13-19 begins with a question posed by Jesus Christ to his apostles.
 - a. The question was, “Who do men say that I am?”
 - b. Collectively, the apostles gave the miscellaneous answers that were being given by the masses.
2. Jesus asked a second question in verse 15:
 - a. “Who do you say that I am?”
 - b. The apostle Peter correctly answered that question in verse 16.
3. Jesus praised Peter for his astute and accurate observation in verse 17.
 - a. Peter’s answer became the basis for the prophetic statement Jesus Christ uttered concerning the establishment of his church, vs. 18.
 - b. The veracity or truthfulness of Christianity rests upon this single truth.
 - c. Even the resurrection of Jesus without his deity would be pointless, 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:21-24; 1 John 3:5.
4. As a consequence of Peter’s correct answer regarding the true identity of Jesus, Jesus gave Peter a special and unique responsibility respecting the church.
 - a. Peter, though, was not the one upon whom the church was built, 1 Cor. 3:11.
 - b. Later, in Matt. 18:18, Jesus extended the same authority previously given to Peter to the rest of the apostles.

Body:

I. Jesus Christ promised to build his church.

- A. The church was founded by Jesus Christ.
 1. He called it “my church.”

2. It was not already built by John the Baptist or Abraham before him; neither of these Bible characters were members of the church, Matt. 11:11.
 3. Also, the church was not built by Peter.
 4. The Lord's church was not established by any of the Reformers such as Luther or Calvin.
 5. The church was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ, Acts 20:28.
 6. Some of the biblical designations for the church indicate ownership by Jesus Christ, Rom. 16:16.
- B. The church was yet future in Matthew 16.
1. Obviously, then, no one before Jesus Christ could have built the church, i.e. Abraham, John the Baptist.
 2. Not until Acts 2:47 is the church mentioned as already existing.
 3. The Lord's church has existed since A.D. 33, Acts 2.
- C. Jesus also promised to build only one church.
1. The words "my church" use a singular pronoun and a singular noun.
 2. Other Scriptures verify that Jesus Christ is head over only one church, Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4.
- D. The church is equivalent to the body of the saved.
1. The saved are automatically added to the church at the time of their salvation by Jesus himself, Acts 2:47.
 2. Therefore, it is not possible to be saved and not be a member of the church for which Jesus Christ died.
 3. Also, it is not possible to be a member of the church without having been placed there because of one's salvation.
 4. It is possible, though, for a person once saved and added to the church by the Lord to become lost, 2 Pet. 2:20-22.

II. Jesus Christ assured his apostles that the gates of Hades would not prevail against the church, ASV.

- A. Hades here is synonymous with death.
 - 1. Hades is the place of departed spirits.
 - 2. The unrighteous inhabit the part of Hades in Greek called Tartarus, 2 Pet. 2:4.
 - 3. The righteous are comforted in “paradise” or the “bosom of Abraham,” Luke 23:43; 16:22.
- B. The meaning of Matt. 16:18 is that death and Hades could not keep Jesus Christ as it does everyone else.
 - 1. The Jewish leaders caused the Romans to seal and guard our Lord’s tomb, but they could not prevent Jesus from resurrecting.
 - 2. Had mortal man been able to prevent the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the church could not have been established.
 - 3. Further, the Lord’s church of kingdom is eternal, Dan. 2:44; Heb. 12:28.

III. Jesus Christ promised the “keys of the kingdom” to the apostle Peter.

- A. The “keys of the kingdom” obviously refer to great power or authority.
 - 1. Through casual reading it may appear that Peter was permitted to decide spiritual law.
 - 2. However, great power and authority was given also to the other apostles, Matt. 18:18.
 - 3. The Greek verbs in Matt. 16:19 actually indicate that the apostles, including Peter, would convey to mankind laws of God already decided in heaven.
- B. The power or authority first promised to Peter and afterward promised to the rest of the apostles was used on the birthday of the church in Acts 2.
 - 1. The apostle Peter was the chief speaker and the speaker whose discourse in Acts 2 was recorded in the Bible.
 - 2. Other apostles preached that day also according to Acts 2.
 - 3. Peter, though, was the first apostle to preach the Gospel of Christ to the Jews and later the first to

- preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, Acts 2; 10.
4. Peter used the “keys of the kingdom” in a way the other apostles did not, though other apostles preached the Gospel to Jews and Gentiles.
- C. The “keys of the kingdom” were promised respecting the establishment of the kingdom or church, Mark 9:1.
1. Jesus used the words “church” and “kingdom” interchangeably, Matt. 16:18-19.
 2. The word “church” from *ekklesia* meaning “called out” refers to the relation of this institution to the world from which it was called with the Gospel.
 3. The word “kingdom” refers to the government of the same institution with Jesus Christ being its mighty potentate or king.
 4. The church also is called “the body” respecting its organization with Jesus as its head, Rom. 12:4-5; Col. 1:18.
 5. The church also is called “the house of God” as the family of God, 1 Tim. 3:15.
 6. Respecting its worship, the church is called “the temple of God,” 1 Cor. 3:16.
 7. The church also is called the bride of Christ respecting its relationship to Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22-32; Rev. 22:17.

Conclusion:

1. Jesus Christ is the founder of the church, its head and foundation.
2. Jesus Christ built one church on the truth of the profession of the apostle Peter.
3. The church was not built on Peter (*petros*, meaning a pebble); it was built instead on *petra*, meaning foundation rock.
4. The church and the kingdom are the same institution; if not, then Peter would have been a burglar instead of a doorkeeper as he opened the church with the “keys of the kingdom.”

Invitation:

1. The Gospel with which the church was begun on Pentecost has the same power today to save all who obey it, Rom. 1:16; Luke 8:11.
2. Jesus spoke the fundamental Gospel message in Mark 16:16.

3. The apostle John recorded for erring Christians the path to God's good favor once more, 1 John 1:9.

The Persuasive Power of Godly Deportment

1 Peter 3:1-6

Thesis: To demonstrate how genuine Christian living can favorably influence people indirectly with the Gospel.

Introduction:

1. The context of 1 Peter 3:1-6 is part of a larger context spanning two chapters where the apostle Peter enumerates responsibilities respecting various roles.
 - a. The apostle addressed the responsibility of first century Christian slaves toward their masters, 1 Pet. 2:18-25.
 - b. Our context pertains to the responsibility of Christian women especially toward their non-Christian husbands, 1 Pet. 3:1-6.
 - c. The apostle also addressed some responsibilities of husbands toward their wives, 1 Pet. 3:7.
 - d. Finally, the larger context of this area of Scripture also speaks to responsibilities of Christian brethren toward each other, 1 Pet. 3:8-9.
2. Our emphasis from 1 Peter 3:1-6, naturally, will pertain especially to divine instruction respecting Christian women and their non-Christian husbands.
 - a. First, conversion to Christ did not nullify contracts or covenants, including marriage, entered prior to conversion, 1 Pet. 3:1-6; 1 Cor. 7:12-13.
 - b. Second, though men and women through obedience to the Gospel are equal respecting salvation, conversion to Christianity by the Gospel did not do away with the social distinction between the roles of men and women in the home, 1 Pet. 3:1-6; Gal. 3:27-28; Eph. 5:22-33.
 - c. (It is equally true that despite equality in redemption that conversion by the Gospel to Christianity did not nullify

- distinct roles between men and women religiously, in the church, 1 Tim. 2:9-15; 1 Cor. 14:34-35.)
3. There were two reasons that first century Christian women might have little opportunity to speak to their non-Christian husbands about the Gospel of Christ.
 - a. First, unlike today in western society, culture in the first century and in many parts of the world today inhibit women from advising their husbands.
 - b. Second, in any century including today, husbands often turn a deaf ear to continual dwelling on any particular subject in which they are not interested. (The same, of course, is true regarding any persons irrespective of gender.)
 4. Consequently, when the Christian wife married to a non-Christian husband in the first century lacked opportunity to persuade him regarding the Gospel **with words**, by inspiration, the apostle Peter gave the instruction found in 1 Pet. 3:1-6.
 - a. Namely, the Christian wife can augment whatever information about the Gospel may have been previously imparted to her husband by others, maybe public knowledge, or herself with the **demonstration of the Gospel in her life**.
 - b. What we want to take from the examination of this passage today is that **genuine Christian living can favorably influence people indirectly with the Gospel**.

Body:

- I. **The apostle Peter directed Christian wives to remain in subjection to their non-Christian husbands, and he provided a noble motive for such conduct, vss. 1-2.**
 - A. “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands,” vs. 1a.
 1. Under the religious system of Patriarchy, God placed the wife (Eve) in the Garden of Eden in a helper role to man (Adam), Gen. 2:18, 22; subsequently, wives throughout Patriarchy occupied roles that were subject to their husbands, Gen. 3:16; 18:12; 1 Pet. 3:6.
 2. Under the religious system of Judaism, God continued the helper role of wives to their

- husbands, Num. 30:13; Esth. 1:20, 22.
3. Under Christianity, God continues the helper role of wives to their husbands, 1 Cor. 11:3; 14:35; Eph. 5:22-23.
 4. Besides the apostle Peter, the apostle Paul, also by inspiration instructed Christian women to be in subject to their own husbands, Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18.
 5. The subjection of wives to their respective husbands is softened with the kind disposition that husbands are supposed to have toward their respective wives, 1 Pet. 3:7; Eph. 5:25, 28.
- B. “That even if some do not obey **the word**, they, without **a word**, may be won by the conduct of their wives,” vs. 1b, NKJV (emphasis added).
1. This verse signifies that the husbands under consideration are not believers, i.e. Christians.
 2. The verse does not suppose that anyone can be saved without the Word or Gospel, but that it is possible for someone to be saved by the Gospel without resorting to words (voice) alone.
 3. The Word of God or Gospel of Christ demonstrated in the godly lives of Christian wives can go a long way to converting non-Christian husbands with whom their wives do not have the opportunity to persuade with words (voice).
 4. The difference is between **hearing** the Gospel and **seeing** the Gospel in action!
- C. “When they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear,” vs. 2.
1. The hoped conversion of non-Christian husbands in this text is a **noble reason** for which Christian wives will submit themselves even to their non-Christian husbands.
 2. “Observe” means “closely scrutinize,” which is how all non-Christians critically review professed Christian conduct.
 3. The New Testament, though, reveals other reasons as well for wives to submit to their husbands, i.e.

order of creation and who first sinned, 1 Cor. 11:8-9; 1 Tim. 2:13-14.

4. Not by debate, but by Christian example, Christian wives may win their stubborn, non-Christian husbands.
5. Whether spoken or demonstrated, the Gospel alone is still the only power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1:16.
6. The “fear” with which Christian wives are to relate to their husbands pertains to “reverence,” Eph. 5:33.

II. Verse 3-4 definitively express acceptable, calculated behavior by which Christian wives may save their non-Christian husbands.

- A. “Do not let your adornment be merely outward,” 3a NKJV.
 1. The Christian wife cannot expect to win over her non-Christian husband to the Gospel of Christ with only physical allurements.
 2. Spiritual allurements must be employed to direct husbands to spiritual stepping-stones to heaven.
 3. Artificial outward adornment should not be valued and pursued over natural outward adornment coupled with holy inward adornment.
- B. “Arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel,” 3b.
 1. Not outward adornment is condemned, e.g. wearing clothes, but outward adornment is contrasted with and found inferior to inward adornment.
 2. Gaudy and immodest adornment was condemned.
 3. The apostle Peter condemned extravagant hairdos into which were woven strands of pearls, gold and silver.
 4. The apostle Paul also addressed the proper adornment of Christian women, 1 Tim. 2:9-10.
 5. Isaiah 3:16-24 decries how some women of God anciently decked themselves outwardly instead of becoming truly holy.

6. It is sometimes difficult to identify a Christian woman by her manner of dress (or undress), but it is often easy to identify a truly religious woman by her manner of dress and adornment.
- C. “Rather let it be the hidden person of the heart,” 4a.
1. The inner person who professes to be God’s child must outshine the outward adornment.
 2. The inner person is a frequent subject of New Testament Scripture, Rom. 7:22; 2 Cor. 4:16; Col. 3:10.
 3. The biblical “heart” is the seat of human emotion, willpower and intellect.
 4. The hidden man of the heart or spiritual part of man is invisible or concealed to the eye, but a glimpse of the hidden man is observable by noting the outward, physical manifestation via adornment.
- D. “With the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit,” 4b.
1. The inward adornment is as intangible and as immune to physical decay as the inward or spiritual part of man.
 2. The apostle contrasted the tangible, outward adornment with the superior intangible, inner adornment of man’s spirit.
 3. The “gentle and quiet spirit” bears provocation without responding in kind, 1 Pet. 2:23.
 4. The godly wife does not create disturbances, but absorbs the disturbances caused by others, whereby she may favorably influence others, i.e. her non-Christian husband here.
 5. The apostle Peter directed first century Christian women, especially those married to non-Christian husbands, to pursue inward beauty as opposed to chiefly trusting in outward beauty.
- E. “Which is very precious in the sight of God,” 4c.
1. A second reason for Christian women to pursue inward beauty is because God values inward beauty over outward beauty.
 2. God who made mankind knows true beauty better

than mortal man.

3. According to God, the inward adornment of the inner man that leads one to spiritual maturity is more valuable than the expensive pearls, gold and silver that may adorn the outward person; a contrast appears respecting **value**.

III. The apostle Peter encouraged Christian wives to imitate holy women, such as Sarah, recorded in the Old Testament Scriptures, vs. 5-6.

- A. “For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,” vs. 5.
 1. Anciently, godly women practiced the deportment taught by Peter.
 2. The word “holy” means set apart to faithfulness, in this context to God and husbands.
- B. “As Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord,” vs. 6a.
 1. Sarah is one of just a few women whose names appear in the Bible as an example to be imitated.
 2. Sarah recognized and respected the roles God variously assigned to men and women, husbands and wives, Gen. 18:12.
- C. “Whose daughters you are if you do good,” vs. 6b.
 1. Of course, no one today can prove she is an ancestral descendant of Sarah, and that is not what is meant in this verse.
 2. Any wife who imitates the holy conduct of Sarah respecting God-given roles of men and women is **worthy to be compared** with saintly Sarah.
 3. Similarly, men and women who practice faith in God like Abraham did are worthy to be associated with faithful Abraham as though they were his children, Gal. 3:7.
 4. The “as long as ye do well” KJV signifies the conditional relationship to Sarah as her daughters, only valid as long as wives imitate her godliness respecting roles of wives and husbands.
- D. “And are not afraid with any terror,” vs. 6c.
 1. Wives should have no reason to be afraid of

- husbands who love them.
2. However, godly wives must revere or respect their husbands, Eph. 5:33.

Conclusion:

1. Genuine Christian living can favorably influence people indirectly with the Gospel.
2. The apostle Peter instructs Christian women to win their non-Christian husbands to the Gospel through the persuasive power of godly deportment (conduct).
3. Likewise, each of us ought to practice genuine Christian living whereby we can influence and win lost souls with the Gospel.

Invitation:

1. Are you practicing genuine Christian living and influencing others with the Gospel?
2. You cannot demonstrate the Gospel in your life if you are an unbaptized believer yourself, Mark 16:16.
3. You cannot demonstrate the Gospel in your life if you are an erring Christian, 2 Cor. 13:5.

Vote for God

Matthew 25:14-30

Thesis: To address biblical principles that require Christians to participate with their votes in a system of government that permits them to help shape the moral standards of their nation.

Introduction:

1. Irrespective of whether one has confidence in any one of the political parties or its candidates, biblical principles require Christians to act in a certain way when they have the opportunity to do so.
2. Irrespective of whether one believes his or her vote will actually make a difference, biblical principles require Christians to act in a certain way when they have the opportunity to do so.
3. Besides matters of either irrelevance to the child of God or matters perceived as indeterminate, moral issues of which the Bible has something definitive to say also are a part of the political process, e.g. abortion, homosexuality, gambling.
4. Christians have a biblical obligation, based on biblical principles, to do their part that is afforded them to help mold the moral future of the nation, i.e. vote!
5. I am as confident respecting biblical principles that obligate Christians to vote respecting moral issues as I am respecting any other biblical principles by which Christians ought to order their lives.

Body:

- I. The children of God have a biblical responsibility toward the effectiveness of government when it is afforded to them since, like the church and the home, God ordained civil government, Rom. 13:1-7 (cf. John 19:11).**
 - A. The Roman Empire was an iron-fisted government that was not especially a friend of God-ordained religion.
 1. God did not ordain a particular kind of government.

2. Roman rule was not a democracy where most of the people governed by it were permitted to help shape it.
 3. Sometimes, the Roman government worked against Christians, e.g. apostle Paul, later persecutions.
 4. Nevertheless, even Christians were obligated to submit to it, Acts 18:1-2.
- B. Christians were obligated to comply with government except in areas where the government's laws conflicted with the law of God.
1. The apostle Paul realized the right of government to exercise capital punishment toward lawbreakers, Acts 25:11.
 2. Formerly, though, the other apostles refused to comply with orders from Jewish rulers that they no longer preach Jesus, Acts 4:18-20; 5:28-29.
- C. Some governments, such as in America, permit its citizens to help mold it.
1. Opportunity always relates to responsibility or obligation, Jam. 4:17.
 2. Jesus taught that his servants who know his will and do not carry it out will be held guilty in judgment, Luke 12:47.
 3. Jesus taught that those who know better than what they do are guilty of sin, John 9:41.
 4. Jesus taught that once mankind knows his responsibility respecting the will of God, he has no excuse for not acting accordingly, John 15:22.

II. The Parable of the Talents emphasizes personal responsibility and culpability respecting matters of consequence within one's power to act for God, Matt. 25:14-30 (cf. the Parable of the Pounds, Luke 19:12-27).

- A. Literally, a talent in the first century was a quantity of silver or gold.
1. In 1915, a talent of silver was equivalent to \$2,050.
 2. In 1915, a talent of gold was equivalent to \$30,750 (*ISBE*).
- B. Both the talents of Matt. 25:14-30 and the pounds of the similar Parable of the Pounds in Luke 19:12-27 are used

in Scripture figuratively.

1. Both parables of Jesus teach personal responsibility.
 2. Both parables teach the necessity of using resources at our disposal or everything of which we are stewards of God the way God wants us to use them.
 3. Not using our resources or those things over which we are stewards for God is not an option with which Jesus is pleased!
- C. There are a number of areas in keeping with these parables where we are stewards for God and for which we have a responsibility to act for God.
1. Obviously, the financial resources at our disposal are God's and should be used accordingly for godly purposes.
 2. Our abilities, likewise, should be used in the service of Jesus Christ, e.g. the reason for which preachers choose preaching as a livelihood despite the promise of meager financial remuneration.
 3. The child of God must use his opportunities for the cause of Christ or try hopelessly to explain "why not" to Jesus someday.
 4. Christians must use their time wisely for God, Col. 4:5.
 5. Christians in America have the unique opportunity to be the voice of God respecting moral or biblical issues through their votes, and they must act accordingly to be held guiltless.

III. Participation in the political process through voting permits Christians to vote for God respecting moral issues or biblical doctrine that affects our nation, Prov. 14:34.

- A. Abortion continues to be a national sin for which God will hold our nation and its citizens responsible in judgment.
1. Abortion is shedding innocent blood, Prov. 6:17.
 2. Christians are the voice of God through the voting booth against this great sin.
- B. The homosexual agenda to legitimize itself at the

expense of the true nature of a family and the home (biblical marriage) threatens the moral fiber of our country.

1. Homosexuality is not an alternative lifestyle, but it is a sin what is severely condemned in both testaments of the Bible, Gen. 19; Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10.
 2. Christians are the voice of God through the voting booth against this great sin.
- C. Gambling and its proposed expansion counter the biblical work ethic and threaten the well being of the moral integrity of our communities.
1. Gambling runs counter to the biblical proscription for acquiring wealth and breeds other sins, too, Eph. 4:28.
 2. Whenever the child of God has an opportunity, he needs to vote for candidates that support the biblical principle respecting gambling.
- D. Continued efforts to sanitize God from every aspect of public display undermines the principles on which our nation was built, as well as removes the morality of God from our society.
1. Refusing to retain the knowledge of God breeds a host of sins, Rom. 1:21-32 (28).
 2. Christians need to exercise their votes for candidates who will not try to expunge God from our nation and society.

IV. Because we can, Christians must exercise their rights as citizens and their responsibilities as Christians to vote the moral issues or for those, irrespective of political party, who more nearly stand with God on moral or biblical issues affecting our country.

- A. Neither of the two leading political **parties** in our nation completely side with God on moral issues.
1. However, one of the two leading parties most often supports biblically moral issues.
 2. One of the two leading parties most often opposes biblically moral issues.
- B. Yet, **individual candidates**, irrespective of whether they

are democrats or republicans, hold to or oppose biblically moral issues.

1. One of the two leading candidates for President opposes abortion and homosexual rights.
2. The other leading candidate for President endorses abortion and homosexual rights.
3. On the State and local level, various candidates from various political parties endorse or oppose biblically moral issues, i.e. abortion, homosexuality, gambling, etc.
4. The child of God must vote for God in the upcoming election.
5. The child of God must vote for candidates who oppose abortion, homosexuality and gambling where he has the opportunity.

Conclusion:

1. I am as confident respecting biblical principles that obligate Christians to vote respecting moral issues as I am respecting any other biblical principles by which Christians ought to order their lives.
2. State and national “Right-to-Life” groups, etc. have literature or websites that reveal candidates who favor biblically moral issues.
3. In our time and in our nation each adult Christian has the responsibility to vote for God!

Invitation:

1. Everything the child of God does is motivated by what is authorized in the Scriptures, Col. 3:17.
2. This pertains not only to participation in government, but worship, Christian living, Christian service and salvation.
3. To be saved, unbaptized believers and erring Christians alike must conform to God’s plan of salvation, authorized in the Word of God, Acts 2:38; 8:22.

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The Christian Graces

2 Peter 1:5-11

Thesis: To learn how to equip the child of God by which he can better discern between good and evil, as well as avoid apostasy, i.e. one day enter “the everlasting kingdom.”

Introduction:

1. Peter’s second epistle was written about A.D. 65.
 - a. His volume was written to Christians in Asia Minor who had been the recipients of his former epistle as well, 2 Pet. 3:1; 1 Pet. 1:1.
 - b. Peter was anticipating his death, which history records occurred in A.D. 66, about a year after he penned this second epistle, 2 Pet. 1:14.
2. The context in which the Christian graces appear pertains to maintaining or persevering in the Christian faith already attained.
 - a. Therefore, Peter did not deal with the cardinal principles of Christianity or how a person becomes saved.
 - b. Rather, he addressed the *middle time* between conversion and reception of one’s eternal reward.
3. Obviously, then, the subject material is as equally applicable today as it was when first penned by inspiration.
 - a. Heaven is a prepared place, John 14:1-3; Heb. 11:16.
 - b. Therefore, God’s people must prepare themselves, Luke 1:17; 2 Tim. 2:21.

Body:

I. Verses 5-7.

- A. One’s personal faith, derived from the system of faith, is the foundation on which rests and on which the Christian graces are assembled, 2 Cor. 5:7.
 1. This is the faith obtained through one’s initial conversion by the Gospel, Rom. 1:16; 5:1.
 2. By faith, the child of God overcomes this old world of sin and perseveres, 1 John 5:4-5.

3. Therefore, Christians are to seek the Christian graces with “diligence,” which means earnestness or zeal.
 4. Seeking each Christian grace develops the next, Jam. 1:3; 2 Thess. 1:3; Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 6:10-18; Rom. 5:3-4.
 5. The idea of adding Christian graces involves the supplement (“supply” ASV, “supplement” RSV, “supply” NASB) of faith with additional virtues (Vincent).
- B. The first Christian grace is **virtue**.
1. Virtue means “moral excellence” (Vine).
 2. Virtue may also be described as holy courage or fortitude.
- C. The second Christian grace is **knowledge**.
1. Knowledge is translated from *gnosis*, which respecting spiritual matters pertains to absolute knowledge obtained by investigation (Strong).
 2. This type of knowledge is to “to understand completely” (Vine & Bruce).
 3. One definition includes, “the deeper more perfect and enlarged knowledge of this religion, such as belongs to the more advanced” (*Greek Dictionary* 2).
 4. This type of knowledge is true wisdom and useful intelligence for this world and the next, 1 Cor. 1:18-21.
- D. The third Christian grace is **temperance**.
1. Temperance means self-control, as it is so translated in the ASV and the NKJV.
 2. It means to hold one’s self in and pertains to self-discipline.
- E. The fourth Christian grace is **patience**.
1. Patience means cheerful endurance (Strong).
 2. The compound word from which patience is translated means to abide under trials (Vine).
 3. Consequently, the NKJV translates “perseverance” here.
- F. The fifth Christian grace is **godliness**.

1. Godliness means holiness (Strong).
 2. Vine records: “denotes that piety which, characterized by a Godward attitude, does that which is well-pleasing to Him.”
 3. Godliness is spiritual reverence and piety toward God.
- G. The sixth Christian grace is **brotherly kindness**.
1. “Brotherly kindness” means fraternal affection and is translated from the Greek word, *philadelphia* (Strong).
 2. This refers to a close-knit fellowship between brethren in Christ.
- H. The seventh Christian grace is **charity**.
1. Both the ASV and the NKJV translate “love” here.
 2. This highest form of love (agape love) is the crown and center of Christian character.

II. Verse 8.

- A. The “if these things be in you” in this verse signals the conditional circumstances (having acquired the Christian graces) whereby there can be some benefit to the child of God.
- B. “Abound” pertains to “increase” regarding the Christian graces within a child of God.
1. The Christian graces fortify faith.
 2. The Christian graces complete each other.
- C. “Barren” is the idea of “idle” (*Robertson’s*).
1. We cannot be idle when satisfactorily bolstered with the Christian graces.
 2. Unfruitfulness results from idleness.
- D. Christians are supposed to be fruitful, Titus 3:14.
1. Jesus is the branch and Christians are supposed to be the fruitful vines, John 15:1-8.
 2. Unfruitfulness and bearing bad fruit will be punished, Matt. 7:16-20.
- E. Knowledge is the only safeguard against apostasy.
1. The children of God in the Old Testament were destroyed for a lack of knowledge, Hos. 4:6.
 2. Christians who do not know the difference between right and wrong cannot adequately and faithfully

practice righteousness, Heb. 5:11-14.

3. Study of the Word of God is the source of this precious knowledge, 2 Tim. 2:15; 2 Pet. 2:2.

III. Verse 9.

- A. There is a definite deficiency in the child of God who lacks the Christian graces.
- B. Those, who lacking the Christian graces, are spiritually blind cannot see afar.
 1. These Christians are shortsighted.
 2. All they can see are the immediate surroundings.
 3. They have lost the eye of faith.
 4. These blind are willfully blind, since the biblical resources (the Bible feast) are readily available to them if they will only apply themselves.
- C. Christians not possessing the Christian graces are likely to lapse into their old, sinful habits from which they were once purged by the blood of Jesus.
- D. This is the key to explaining why so many congregations are sickly, lacking spiritual vision, zeal and faithfulness!

IV. Verse 10.

- A. The word “wherefore” signals a conclusion must be drawn from the preceding information.
- B. Peter’s use of the term “brethren” indicates his affection and love for his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.
- C. “Diligence” must be the order of the day for the faithful child of God and the faithful congregation of Christ.
- D. Our “calling and election” has to do with our redemption from a world of sin with respect to an eternity in heaven with God.
 1. The denominational doctrine of the perseverance of the saints is false!
 2. No one has a punched, irrevocable ticket to heaven.
 3. Christians must purposely persevere, and the way they will persevere has to do with acquisition of the Christian graces (Gospel armor or fruits of the Spirit, Eph. 6:10-18; Gal. 5:22-23).
- E. The word “sure” and the phrase “if ye do these things, ye shall never fall” mean firm or solid, dependable and certain.

1. The child of God's future eternity in heaven is only as certain as his continued faithfulness, Rev. 2:10.
2. Christians must remain steadfast, 1 Cor. 15:58.
3. Christians and congregations are likely if not also certain to fall unless they continue to mature (develop the Christian graces).
4. The Christian graces become an effective defense against apostasy.

V. Verse 11.

- A. Only two eternal choices confront humanity.
 1. The obedient will be saved forever in heaven, Heb. 5:8-9.
 2. The disobedient will be punished away from the presence of God, 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
- B. Heaven will not be achieved accidentally!
- C. Happily, our Lord's kingdom will never end, but endure forever.

Conclusion:

1. The Christian graces are relatively equivalent to the Christian armor and the fruits of the Spirit, Eph. 6:10-18; Gal. 5:22-23.
 - a. The Christian graces are added to one's conversion.
 - b. The Christian graces, the Christian armor and the fruits of the spirit relate to perseverance in the faith.
2. The Christian graces afford the child of God the opportunity to better discern between good and evil, which also occurs through feasting on the Word of God and subsequent maturity in the faith, Heb. 5:11-6:2; 1 Pet. 2:1-2.
 - a. The Christian graces are not obtained accidentally or merely through the course of time.
 - b. Hence, the Word of God must be thoroughly studied (as opposed to merely reading, etc.), 2 Tim. 2:15.

Invitation:

1. A prerequisite to obtaining the Christian graces is becoming and remaining a faithful child of God.
2. You can become a child of God today by following the instructions of Jesus, Mark 16:16.
3. You can be restored from your waywardness and the reproach you have brought on the Lord's church by hearkening to the inspired words of the apostle John, 1 John 1:9.

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Except a Man Be Born Again

John 3:1-15

Thesis: To explore the New Birth of which Jesus spoke.

Song: *Ye Must Be Born Again*

Introduction:

4. Without doubt, being “born again” is a prerequisite or necessary to obtain salvation (“see the kingdom of God”), John 3:3.
5. Yet, exactly *how* can a person be born again?
6. That was precisely the question of Nicodemus, John 3:4.
7. Only the sacred Word of God can satisfactorily reveal the answer to that question today to those who are willing to honestly evaluate that Word.

Body:

- I. **“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews,” John 3:1.**
 - A. Pharisees were one of 24 Jewish sects (cf. denominations) in the first century.
 1. The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the dead and angels, whereas their chief opponents, the Sadducees, believed in neither.
 2. The Pharisees were among the most conservative Jews in Jesus’ day, and they had made many religious laws that God had not made.
 3. The most famous Pharisee in the Book of Acts was Saul of Tarsus (later, the apostle Paul).
 - B. Nicodemus is mentioned only two more times in the New Testament.
 1. John 7:50-51 mention Nicodemus when he came to the defense of Jesus before the Sanhedrin.
 2. John 19:39-40 note that Nicodemus assisted in the embalming of our crucified Lord.

- C. That Nicodemus was “a ruler of the Jews” means that he was a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin.
 - 1. The Sanhedrin was composed of 71 esteemed Jews, including the high priest who served as chairman, other priests, elders and scribes as well as high-ranking members of the more prominent Jewish sects (especially the Pharisees and Sadducees).
 - 2. The Sanhedrin was the highest Jewish court for religious matters plus civil and criminal cases, though under Roman rule the Jews were forbidden to exercise capital punishment, John 18:31.

II. “The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him,” John 3:2.

- A. The fact that Nicodemus came to Jesus by night has sparked curiosity among many Bible students.
 - 1. The Bible does not say why Nicodemus came by night, and were it important for us to know why he came by night, the Holy Spirit would have caused the Bible to record why.
 - 2. However, most people suppose Nicodemus desired to minimize censure by his peers in the Sanhedrin while sincerely seeking more information from Jesus.
- B. The word “Rabbi” was an official term of honor.
 - 1. It was usually given to a teacher and means “master.”
 - 2. Rabbi is roughly equivalent to the use of Dr. when applied to one who has a PhD.
- C. The words, “we know that thou art a teacher come from God,” indicate that other members of the Sanhedrin also at least knew that Jesus was a prophet sent by God.
 - 1. Nicodemus said, “we know,” meaning: “Assured conviction” (Vincent).
 - 2. Yet, the Sanhedrin refused to acknowledge Jesus as such.
- D. The “miracles” that Jesus performed validated that God

both sent Jesus and the message that he preached.

III. John 3:3-4.

- A. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” John 3:3.
 - 1. The words “verily, verily” occur together 24 times in John and are used for emphasis.
 - 2. The phrase “except a man” makes Jesus’ words apply universally, to all people.
- B. The words “born again” use the physical birth to illustrate the spiritual birth.
 - 1. The ASV translates “born anew.”
 - 2. Nicodemus misunderstood Jesus to mean born a second time, whereas the Greek for “again” is sometimes translated, “from above,” John 3:31; 19:11 (*Robertson’s*).
 - 3. In combination with “born again,” the words “see the kingdom of God” indicate the essentiality of the new birth, by which one is added to the spiritual kingdom now and heaven later.
- C. “Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?” John 3:4.
 - 1. Nicodemus took Jesus’ words literally.
 - 2. High social, political or religious rank did not necessarily contribute to understanding spiritual matters.

IV. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God,” John 3:5.

- A. The phrase “born of water” was universally accepted as a reference to baptism until 1890.
 - 1. The phrase “born of water” respecting entrance to the kingdom corresponds to baptism by which one enters the church, Acts 2:38, 41, 47.
 - 2. Jesus Christ used the terms “kingdom” and “church” interchangeably in the same discourse, Matt. 16:18-19.
 - 3. Hence, the *new birth* or being *born again* is equivalent to being baptized for the remission of

- sins, after which Jesus adds the saved to his church.
- B. The phrase “of the spirit” is not to be construed as a separate baptism from the reference to “born of water” or baptism.
1. From the time the apostle Paul penned Eph. 4:5, there has been only one valid baptism in the Christian Age.
 2. The Holy Spirit is associated with that baptism in water, Acts 8:36; 1 Pet. 3:20-21; 1 Cor. 12:13.

V. John 3:6-8.

- A. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” John 3:6.
1. Jesus made a clear distinction between natural, physical birth and the new birth of which he spoke.
 2. Some religious people try to avoid the obvious application to baptism by saying Jesus was talking about natural birth.
 3. However, Jesus was talking about “the spirit” being born again.
- B. “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again,” John 3:7.
1. “Marvel” means to wonder.
 2. Nicodemus, a descendant of Abraham, could not imagine that as a Jew that he was not already saved and a member of the kingdom of God.
 3. “Nicodemus was probably familiar with the notion of re-birth for proselytes to Judaism for the Gentiles, but not with the idea that a Jew had to be reborn” (*Robertson’s*).
 4. John the Baptist formerly told the Jews not to rely on their Jewish lineage for salvation, Matt. 3:9.
- C. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit,” John 3:8.
1. It is man’s spirit, an invisible part of his existence, that is subject to the new birth.
 2. However, the new birth exhibits itself by outward conduct and fruitfulness.

3. The Gospel changes the lives of people who are truly converted by it.

VI. “Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?” John 3:9-10.

- A. The Pharisees were literalists and legalists.
 1. They attempted to interpret everything first literally.
 2. Then, they demanded the strictest compliance with their ultra-rigid interpretation.
 3. Hence, Nicodemus confessed his confusion.
- B. Jesus, though, rebuked Nicodemus because of his non-comprehension in view of Nicodemus’ leadership position among the Jews.
 1. With the word “master,” Jesus acknowledged that Nicodemus occupied the position of a teacher among the Jews, as the ASV and NKJV translate “teacher.”
 2. A teacher in religion ought to understand religious or spiritual matters well before supposing to teach others, Jam. 3:1.

VII. “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven,” John 3:11-13.

- A. Jesus notes that Nicodemus has difficulty comprehending (Jesus says *believing*) that which occurs on earth, such as the new birth.
- B. Therefore, Nicodemus and others like him are ill prepared for understanding additional teaching respecting events removed from this earth, heaven and the spiritual kingdom.
- C. The Jews crucified Jesus because he did not propose to establish a physical kingdom comparable to the kingdom of Solomon (whereby Roman rule could be repulsed),

John 6:15; 18:36.

- D. Only Jesus is qualified to speak concerning things in heaven, since he is the only one who has descended from heaven.
 - 1. The words “hath ascended” mean “hath been in” (Vincent).
 - 2. “There is no allusion to the Ascension which came later” (*Robertson’s*).
 - 3. Jesus is more than a prophet to whom revelation has been relayed, Jesus is an eyewitness of heaven (*Robertson’s*).

VIII. “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life,” John 3:14-15.

- A. Jesus referred to Num. 21:7-9 where God instructed Moses to make a brass snake and hoist it on a pole for penitent, viper-bitten Jews to gaze upon to survive the snake bites.
 - 1. Our Lord used that historical event to represent his impending crucifixion on the cross.
 - 2. As the wandering Israelites viewed the brass snake with faith and lived (physically), people who view the “lifted up,” crucified Christ with faith will live (spiritually) also, John 8:28.
 - 3. Under both scenarios of the ancient Israelites and modern man respectively, there were no other cures.
- B. Faith in Christ leads to eternal life.
 - 1. Eternal life is prefaced on earth with the forgiveness of past and subsequent sins, Rom. 3:25; 1 John 1:8-10.
 - 2. Bible faith is more than mere mental acknowledgement of Jesus Christ or God, but it includes obedience (works in James), Jam. 2:24; Heb. 5:8-9.
 - 3. This faith is tied to baptism into Jesus Christ, Gal. 3:26-27.
 - 4. Bible belief includes all to which the Bible

attributes salvation, i.e. faith, repentance, confessing Christ, baptism, etc.

- C. “The interview with Nicodemus closes with John 3:15; and the succeeding words are John’s” (Vincent).

Conclusion:

1. To say that the birth of water refers to one’s natural birth is ridiculous, because this would make Jesus telling someone already born into this world that he has to be born into this world to go to heaven.
2. Without doubt, being “born again” is a prerequisite or necessary to obtain salvation (“see the kingdom of God”), John 3:3.
3. Jesus’ words “born again” use the physical birth to illustrate the spiritual birth.
4. Being born again of the water and the spirit refer to believing Jesus enough to obey the command to be baptized for the remission of sins whereby Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit place one into the body of the saved, the church, Acts 2:38, 47; 1 Cor. 12:13.
5. Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other; being born again and baptized are the same act since they both put one into the kingdom of God or the church.

Invitation:

1. Have you been born again of the water and of the spirit?
2. If you have been baptized for the remission of your sins, is there any evidence or fruit in your life to suggest that?

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Except a Man Be Born Again #2

John 3:3-5

Thesis: To thoroughly define Jesus' directive to be born again.

Song: *Ye Must Be Born Again*

Introduction:

1. Several New Testament passages address being born again, Gal. 4:29; 1 Pet. 1:22-23; 1 John 1:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:4, 18.
2. These additional passages add more depth to what it means to be born again.
3. Further, since Jesus represents being born again as essential to salvation, we need to thoroughly understand it so we can experience it and be saved.

Body:

- I. **“But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now,” Gal. 4:29.**
 - A. Gal. 4:22-31 contrast the Old and New testaments through references to Isaac and Ishmael, Gal. 4:24.
 - B. Especially in the first century, the Jews who trusted in the law were contrasted with Jews and Gentiles who turned to the Gospel of Christ for salvation, Matt. 10:16.
 - C. Christians are characterized as those who have been “born after the Spirit” or “born again.”
 - D. Everyone else has merely experienced the physical birth.
- II. **“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever,” 1 Pet. 1:22-23.**
 - A. Both John and Peter address the *new birth*.
 - B. Whereas John 3:3-5 attributes the new birth to the water

and the spirit, Peter attributes it to the Word of God.

1. Either both apostles are correct or at least one of them is wrong, which if the latter were true the Bible would be unreliable.
 2. The Spirit revealed and preserved Word of God is equivalent to what is attributed to the Holy Spirit in John 3:3-5.
 3. The Word of God is the tool through which the Holy Spirit effects the new birth, 1 Pet. 1:25.
- C. Being born again is not the result of the direct operation of the Holy Spirit.

III. “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him,” 1 John 2:29.

- A. Though the spirit within a person is invisible, the truly converted (born again) demonstrates that he has been born again by his godly conduct, John 3:8.
- B. Faithful Christians produce spiritual fruit, John 15:1-8; Matt. 7:17-20.
- C. Without fruitfulness in one’s life, he cannot verify that he is born again.

IV. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother,” 1 John 3:9-10.

- A. Those born again differ from those who are not born again.
- B. Present tense Greek verbs carry the idea of continuing action.
 1. Therefore, those born again do not continually commit sin, as long as the seed (Word of God) continues to remain in them.
 2. The distinction between those whose lives are characterized **primarily** by **unrighteousness** versus those whose lives are characterized primarily by **righteousness** is clear.
 3. This verse does not deny that a Christian can sin, and even sin so as to be lost, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:8-

10; 2 Pet. 2:19-22.

C. Those who are born again act like the children of God into whose spiritual family they were born, Eph. 5:8.

V. “Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God,” 1 John 4:7.

A. Those who are born again practice love that is characteristic of God.

B. Christians who fail to evidence love in their lives are not reflecting that they are born again!

VI. “For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith,” 1 John 5:4, 18.

A. Those who are born again will be victorious over this world, Rom. 8:37.

1. Victory over the world does not pertain to the physical world and our physical survival in it, Rom. 8:36; Matt. 10:28.

2. The Christian’s victory is spiritual, Mark 8:35; Rev. 2:10.

B. Like John 3:3-5, 15-17, being born again and faith are inseparably tied to each other.

1. The world incorrectly believes that faith alone saves, Jam. 2:24.

2. Faith derives from the Word of God, that system of faith or the Gospel, Rom. 1:16; 2 Cor. 5:7.

3. The Christian will be victorious through his Bible faith.

C. Verse four is reemphasized in verse 18.

1. Faithful and true Christians do not continue lives of sinfulness.

2. They keep or discipline themselves through practice of the Word of God.

3. It is not impossible for Christians to sin, but when Christians exercise restraint in their lives, they evidence that they are born again.

4. Contrariwise, Christians who do not restrain themselves from lives of sinfulness do not evidence being born again.

Conclusion:

1. Being born again does not occur through the direct operation of the Holy Spirit.
2. Being born again involves several complementary elements.
 - a. The water of baptism.
 - b. The human spirit.
 - c. Participation by the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 12:13.
 - d. The Word of God or the seed of the kingdom, Luke 8:11.
 - e. God the Father.
 - f. Jesus Christ.
3. People who are born again are changed people—a royal priesthood, Christians, 1 Pet. 2:9; Acts 11:26.
4. Being born again is neither mere mental acknowledgement of Jesus Christ nor a nifty bumper sticker, it is a way of life following baptism for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38.
5. John 3:3-5 reveals that being born again puts one into the kingdom.
 - a. The Holy Spirit participates in baptism into the one body (church or kingdom, Matt. 16:18-19; Mark 9:1; Acts 2; Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:5), 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22-23.
 - b. Since only being born again and baptism puts one into the kingdom, the two are equal and one in the same.

Invitation:

1. If you have delayed in being born again, by putting Jesus Christ on in baptism, and if you know that were you to die this moment you would be lost forever, why delay any longer?
2. If you were born again, and yet you realize that you would be lost were you to die at this moment, why delay any longer?

Christianity: Theory and Practice

Ephesians 5:8

Thesis: To emphasize the necessity as Christians of not only **discerning** the will of God, but **doing** the will of God, too.

Songs: *To the Work, I Want to be a Worker, We'll Work Till Jesus Comes*

Introduction:

1. It is appropriate that we first define the words, “Theory and Practice.”
 - a. Though the word “**theory**” sometimes means “speculation” or “conjecture,” those are not the definitions we entertain in this lesson.
 - b. By “theory” we mean, “**1:** the analysis of a set of facts in their relation to one another,” “**6c:** a body of theorems presenting a concise systematic view of a subject (*theory* of equations)” (*Merriam*).
 - c. A “theorem” pertains to “demonstrable truth” (*Merriam*).
 - d. By “theory” in this lesson, we mean consideration of the facts concerning Christianity apart from the “**practice**” of those facts in one’s life.
2. Nearly every subject can be reduced to “theory and practice.”
 - a. As good as **book learning** is, one’s education is not complete until he has gained **experience** in the area of his education.
 - b. For instance, seasoned schoolteachers acknowledge that there is a world of difference between teacher education and teacher experience.
 - c. Likewise, imagine the contrast between book learning and actual experience respecting farming, auto mechanics, cooking or sewing.
3. Theory and practice together are essential to success in anything, including the practice of Christianity.

- a. Insufficient knowledge about farming, auto mechanics, cooking or sewing spells sure failure.
 - b. Likewise, insufficient knowledge about spiritual matters spells sure failure respecting the eternal disposition of souls.
 - c. Even with sufficient knowledge about farming, auto mechanics, cooking or sewing, failure certainly results whenever one disregards the respective knowledge for the endeavor in which one engages.
 - d. Likewise, disregard for Bible knowledge about spiritual matters results in spiritual ruin with eternal consequences.
4. A ruined harvest, a car that won't run right, bad tasting food and garments that don't fit are insignificant disappointments compared to the failure to faithfully practice Christianity.

Body:

I. The theory or facts (truths) respecting Christianity are perfect and adequate if practiced to save souls.

- A. The New Testament reveals the theory of Christianity.
 1. Though the Old Testament provides background and examples, people today must resort to the New Testament for divine instruction, Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Cor. 3:6, 11.
 2. Jesus Christ possesses authority in the New Testament era and by him all mankind will be judged, Matt. 17:1-5; 28:18; John 12:48.
- B. The theory of Christianity or the Word of God is perfect.
 1. It is the truth by which men are freed from sin, John 8:32.
 2. Hence, the Gospel is the "perfect law of liberty," Jam. 1:25; 1 Cor. 13:10.
 3. This Gospel saves, Rom. 1:16.
- C. Deviations from the theory of Christianity have disastrous consequences.
 1. Human creeds are inadequate to save souls and will cause many people to be lost, Matt. 15:9, 13; Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18-19.
 2. False teachers lead souls to perdition, Rom. 16:17-18; 1 John 4:1.

II. The practice of theory (facts and truths) of Christianity is equally important to the salvation of souls as discerning the theory of Christianity.

- A. Failure to practice Christianity is just as tragic as not knowing the theory of Christianity.
 - 1. The New Testament repeatedly affirms that Christians have a responsibility to do what they know to be right, Eph. 5:8; Gal. 5:25; 1 John 2:6.
 - 2. Knowledge without application of that knowledge is useless, Matt. 7:21-23; Rev. 2-3.
- B. It is not possible for Christians to successfully practice the theory of Christianity and serve Satan at the same time.
 - 1. For the Christian, his old man of sin has been crucified and he has been resurrected from the watery grave to walk in newness of life, Rom. 6:3-13.
 - 2. One cannot fully devote himself to our Lord and as completely pursue anything else, Matt. 6:24, 33; 10:37.

Conclusion:

- 1. Essentially, Christians must be careful to practice what they preach to remain saved, 1 John 1:7; Titus 2:14!
- 2. Christians must arm themselves with God's Word, 2 Tim. 2:15; Acts 17:11; 2 Pet. 2:2.
- 3. Then, Christians **must** serve God accordingly, Luke 6:46.

Invitation:

- 1. Failure to do what we know God requires of us is sinful, Jam. 4:17.
- 2. Failure to follow the instructions of Jesus condemns souls to a devil's hell, Luke 6:46; Mark 16:16.

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For God So Loved the World

John 3:16-21

Thesis: To examine the love of God in the context of John 3:16-21.

Song: *God Is Love*

Introduction:

1. John 3:16 may be the religious community's favorite Bible verse. Butler observes: "Verse 16 has been called the Golden Text of the Bible, Every man's Text, and other equally descriptive names. It is probably the most famous verse of the New Testament, and the most often quoted." (111)
2. The common religious view of the word "believeth" is much shallower than the biblical context.
3. Consequently, most people cheapen salvation, but expect God to honor their biblically deficient plan of redemption.
4. The context in which John 3:16 appears explains how a person can correctly apply the love of God to himself.

Body:

- I. **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16.**
 - A. Both Coffman and Butler cite the word "for" as an indication that Jesus' words to Nicodemus continue through verse 21 (Butler 112).
 - B. The word "loved" is the Greek *agapao* (ag-ap-ah'-o), the verb form for the most noble kind of love; "...the noble word so common in the Gospels for the highest form of love..." (Robertson).
 1. The affection of God for mankind does not extend to or approve of man's wickedness.
 2. God directed his love toward mankind in spite of man's sinfulness, Rom. 5:8.

3. Coffman observes, “God’s love for mankind is pure, spontaneous, and constant. Jesus did not die on the cross to compel God to love people, but because he already loved them, the cross being a result of God's love, not the cause of it.”
 4. Therefore, a primary reason for mankind responding in love toward God is that God loved us first, 1 John 4:19.
 5. However, man’s love for God must be manifested by obeying God, John 14:15, 21 ASV.
- C. The Greek for “world” here is *kosmos*, which in this context figuratively represents the inhabitants of this planet.
1. All mankind is under consideration.
 2. *Wycliffe* says, “The breadth of the divine love is emphasized in that its object is the (whole) world.”
 3. Generally, humanity is in a ruinous state of spiritual wickedness.
 4. Aside from the intervention of God, mankind is unable to save itself and is hopelessly lost, Jer. 10:23 NKJV.
- D. God “gave.”
1. Jesus Christ was God’s free, unmerited gift to mankind, Rom. 8:32; Gal. 1:4.
 2. We had no claim on Jesus Christ and did not deserve that supreme sacrifice, 2 Cor. 5:21.
 3. Jesus died for the sins of each sinner, Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2.
- E. God’s gift was his “only begotten Son.”
1. The words “only begotten” come from the Greek *monogenes* (mon-og-en-ace'), which means, “sole” (Strong).
 2. Jesus Christ has the only natural relationship with the Father in heaven.
 3. Christians are adopted sons, Gal. 4:5-7; Eph. 1:5.
 4. *Wycliffe* adds respecting “only begotten”: “This means unique, one of a kind. Sons by adoption do not become members of the Godhead.”
- F. The word “whosoever” demonstrates that God’s gift is

intended for every person.

1. God offered the gift of his Son for human salvation to the whole world—i.e. universally, Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15.
 2. No accountable soul is without conditional blessings afforded through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
- G. God's **condition** by which humanity can receive the gift of God's Son is faith—"believeth."
1. The Greek verb for belief is *pisteuo* (pist-yoo'-o).
 2. Biblically, faith is equated to mental acknowledgement and corresponding conformity by activity, Num. 20:7-12.
 3. The close relationship between belief and obedience is apparent in comparing the KJV and ASV in various passages, Rom. 11:30-31; Heb. 3:18; 4:6, 11.
 4. Biblically, faith alone is insufficient if there is no corresponding activity, Jam. 2:24.
 5. The Bible often uses faith or belief to represent the whole response to God's gift of Jesus Christ, Mark 16:16; Acts 8:12-13; 2:44; 4:4, 32; 9:42.
- H. The reason for which God gave Jesus as a sacrifice is that no one "should not perish but have everlasting life."
1. "Perish" means, "to destroy fully" (Strong).
 2. Yet, God does not want any soul to be lost, 2 Pet. 3:9.

II. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved," John 3:17.

- A. The purpose of our Lord's **first coming** into the world was not to condemn it, Luke 19:10.
1. Barnes observes the first coming was not for the purpose to "pronounce sentence on mankind."
 2. Indirectly, though, a measure of judgment resulted from the first coming of Jesus: "He came to judge the world (at the Incarnation) only insofar as it would not allow itself to be saved" (Butler 112-113).

3. Pertinent especially to first century Palestine, the Jesus informed the Jews that he had not come to fulfill their misguided expectations to condemn all Gentiles and expunge Palestine of Roman rule and presence, John 6:15; 18:36 (Coffman; Butler 112).
 4. The world was already condemned in the throes of sin before Jesus Christ came into the world, Rom. 3:23.
 5. The word “condemn” is from the Greek *krino*, which means to judge or distinguish with an eye to punish.
- B. The Greek for “saved” is *sozo* (sode'-zo), which means, ‘to save, heal and make whole’ (Strong).
- C. However, the next time Jesus comes, he will come in judgment upon sinner.
1. The disobedient will be punished, 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
 2. For the obedient, our Lord’s second coming will be to retrieve them and take them to heaven, 1 Thess. 4:13-18; John 14:1-3.

III. “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God,” John 3:18.

- A. This verse is comparable to Mark 16:16.
- B. Butler notes that only two classes of accountable souls are entertained in this Scripture, as well as throughout the Bible: “Notice that Jesus places all of mankind in only two categories : the believer and the unbeliever — the saved and the condemned” (113)
- C. There is a double condemnation on unbelievers.
1. Mankind without Jesus Christ is already hopelessly condemned in sin.
 2. Failure to believe on Jesus Christ is the source of additional condemnation, or as Clarke notes, sin is “superadded.”
 3. Coffman words it this way: “...the unbeliever is under the uttermost condemnation, not merely from the fact of all people being lost apart from Christ, but from the additional reason of his having

rejected the only means of grace and salvation.”

IV. Verses 19-21.

- A. Verse 19 essentially says that there is no excuse for anyone being lost since Jesus Christ has come into the world.
 - 1. Butler observes that here “loved” indicates that the sinner “deliberately loves the darkness and is morally rebellious and makes his own choice! ...Unbelief stems from a moral wickedness and not from ignorance!” (114).
 - 2. Vincent says of the word “evil” here that it means, “‘Actively’ evil.”
- B. Verse 20 notes that sinful men prefer the darkness of sin and do not like being exposed for what they are by the light of God’s Word, Psa. 119:105; Eph. 5:13.
 - 1. *Wycliffe* observes that the evil of which verse 20 speaks has a fuller meaning that earlier in this context: “In John 3:20 evil is a different word, denoting what is morally worthless. The offender knows he is enmeshed in wrong, but refuses to advance into the light of Christ lest his deeds, which he loves, be exposed.”
 - 2. Butler likewise observes: “There are two different Greek words used for evil works in verses 19 and 20. In v. 19 the word *ponera* which denotes an active wickedness, and in v. 20 the word is *phaula*, which denotes worthlessness...” (114).
 - 3. The mission of the apostle Paul was to turn people from the darkness of sin to the light of the Lord, Acts 13:47; 26:18.
 - 4. The children of God are called “saints of light” or “children of light,” Col. 1:12; 1 Thess. 5:5.
 - 5. Vincent notes that “reprove” means, “‘To bring to light or expose’ by conviction.”
- C. Verse 21 observes that the spiritual light that emanates from God through his Word exonerates the deeds of the children of God.
 - 1. Christians are doers of God’s Word, for which God blesses them, Jam. 1:25.

2. A mere mental acknowledgement of Jesus Christ without an accompanying compliance with the Word of God does not save.
3. Vincent observes that the passage contrasts “doeth evil” in verse 20 with “doeth truth” in verse 21; faith or lack of faith correspond to activity, namely obedience or disobedience.

Conclusion:

1. A Bible-based faith that is demonstrated by compliance with the Bible saves souls.
2. A shallow, denominational substitute for Bible faith, and which is noncompliant with the Word of God, does not save.

Invitation:

1. Salvation is conditional on conformity to the Word of God, whereby the gift of God’s Son saves.
2. Have you implemented the words of Jesus in your life, Mark 16:16?
3. Are you walking daily in the light of God’s Word whereby your sins are remitted, 1 John 1:7?

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The Transmittal of God's Word to Modern Man

2 Peter 1:20-21

Thesis: To note the means by which the Bible has been preserved until the present day.

Song: *Give Me the Bible*

Introduction:

1. The goal of this discourse **is not** to discuss the inspiration of or divine source of the Bible.
 - a. Other lessons could address God as the giver of the Bible, 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Luke 1:68, 70.
 - b. Still other lessons could be devoted to examining, for instance, the verbal (word for word) inspiration of the Bible, Jer. 11:1-3; 16:1; Matt. 10:19-20; Mark 13:11.
2. Since God, though, has given man his exact words, and he has commanded man to abide by them, it is imperative that we have access to the words of God today.
 - a. If the Word of God has survived or been preserved to the present day, mankind is responsible for complying with it, John 12:48; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
 - b. If there are corrupted translations of God's Word available today, we must avoid them, 1 John 4:1; Gal. 1:6-9.
 - c. If no faithful account of God's Word survived to the present, we would be hopelessly adrift and unaware of God's will—lost with no knowledge of how to please God, John 8:32; Matt. 7:21.

Body:

- I. **The Bible was not written originally in English, German, Latin, French, Spanish or any other contemporary language.**
 - A. The Old Testament was written by over 30 men during

about 1,300 years, under a variety of circumstances in several different nations.

1. Therefore, the Old Testament was written in more than one language.
 2. Since the Old Testament represents God's Word to the Hebrew people, much of the Old Testament was written by Hebrews in the Hebrew language.
 3. Since the Hebrew or Jewish people lived in Babylonian-Chaldean captivity, some of the Old Testament was written in Chaldean or a mixture of Hebrew and Chaldean.
 4. A quick glance at the Old Testament lexicon in the back of *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* reveals that Hebrew and Chaldean are the languages of the Old Testament.
 5. In addition, Ezra and Daniel were written partly in yet another language, Aramaic.
- B. The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.
1. The translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew to Greek was begun in the middle of the third century B.C. and completed 100 years later.
 2. It was translated by Jews in Alexandria on the northern African coast.
 3. The Septuagint also contains uninspired books in addition to the 39 inspired books of the Old Testament.
 4. Jesus Christ and some of the New Testament writers obviously quoted from the Septuagint, implying that translations of the Bible can accurately convey the very Word of God.
 5. The oldest surviving manuscript of the Septuagint is 500 years older than the oldest surviving Hebrew manuscript of the Old Testament.
 6. There is little variation between the Septuagint and the Hebrew manuscripts, together confirming the Old Testament text.
 7. The Septuagint has been used often in various translations of the Old Testament into

- contemporary languages.
8. The Septuagint and the Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament were used in the translation of the Old Testament of the *American Standard Version*.
- C. The New Testament was written by about seven men over the space of a century, also from various parts of the old world and also under varying circumstances.
1. The New Testament was written mostly if not entirely in koine Greek, the universal language of the first century, Roman-Greco world.
 2. Some of the New Testament many have been written in Aramaic.
 3. Aramaic was the language of the Hebrews in the first century and probably the language that Jesus spoke.
 4. Greek New Testaments and lexicons represent the language of the New Testament as Greek.
- D. Latin was one of the first languages into which the New Testament was translated.
1. Latin was the official language of Romans who ruled the Mediterranean world in the first century.
 2. Greek was the predominant language of the eastern segment of the Roman Empire in the first century, owing to the former rule of the Grecian Empire.
 3. The New Testament was written in Greek since Palestine and most of the other places from which Bible books were written were in the eastern segment of the Roman Empire, which predominantly spoke Greek.
 4. The most popular Latin translation was translated from Greek to Latin from A.D. 383-405 by Jerome, and it is called the Latin Vulgate.
 5. This version became the official version of the Roman Catholic Church, from which the Catholic Church translated English versions, e.g. Douai-Rheims.
- E. The Word of God has been translated into several hundred contemporary languages and dialects.
1. At least parts of the Bible have been translated into

over 1,600 different languages.

2. At least parts of the Bible have been translated into about 340 English translations.
3. There are at least 45 Old and New Testament English translations.
4. There are nine additional Old Testament English translations and 88 additional New Testament English translations.
5. There are another 197 English translations containing a portion of the Bible.

II. No autographed or original manuscripts of any Bible books are known to exist today.

- A. However, there is no cause for alarm.
 1. There are about 1,700 manuscripts or copies of the Old Testament and more than 4,000 manuscripts or copies of the New Testament in the original languages that remain to this day.
 2. Though many of the copies are only fragments, together, all of them serve to verify the text of the Bible many times over.
 3. In addition, there is an abundance of ancient translations, quotations and discourses that further verify the integrity of the Bible text.
- B. It can only be attributable to the wisdom of God that the original manuscripts penned by the prophets, apostles, etc. are not available today.
 1. Doubtless, mankind would worship or sinfully revere the autographed, original manuscripts and neglect worshipping the invisible God.
 2. The unscriptural reverence mankind bestows on supposed splinters of our Lord's cross and on the remains of Catholic "saints" betrays mankind's susceptibility to revere religious souvenirs instead of revering God.
 3. King Hezekiah destroyed the brass serpent that Moses had made in the wilderness wandering because the people of God in Hezekiah's day were worshipping it, 2 Kings 18:4.
- C. The original manuscripts are unnecessary in the presence

of the vast body of witnesses afforded the Bible text through the many thousands of manuscript copies.

1. These manuscripts are reliable and have transmitted the Word of God down through the centuries to the present.
2. The care and caution with which ancient biblical manuscripts were copied was purposely demanding as to make every effort to accurately transmit the pure Word of God from one manuscript to another (Miller 184-185).
3. Though not inspired themselves, the sheer number of copies or manuscripts by their substantial agreement verify the inspired Word of God.
4. Although some variations between manuscripts occur, no doctrine is compromised.

III. Some manuscripts are more prominent and impressive than others.

- A. Three Old Testament manuscripts overshadow all other manuscripts.
 1. The **Leningrad Codex** contains the latter prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) and the twelve Minor Prophets, is the oldest manuscript bearing a date (A.D. 916) and is housed in the Royal Library at Leningrad.
 2. The oldest manuscript containing the entire Old Testament dates to A.D. 1010 and is also in Leningrad, Russia.
 3. A manuscript of the Pentateuch (first five books of the Old Testament) called **Oriental 4445** dates to about A.D. 850 and is preserved in the British Museum in London.
- B. H.S. Miller lists eight New Testament manuscripts from the third through the sixth centuries that are the most noteworthy: Sinaitic (191-192), Vatican (193-195), Alexandrian (195-196), Ephraem (196-197), Beza (197-198), Claromontanus (198), Washington (198-199) and the Koridethi Gospels (200).

Conclusion:

1. The inspired Word of God has been preserved to the present

day through the testimony of thousands of uninspired copies.

2. Technically, none of the modern translations made from these manuscripts is inspired.
3. However, the inspired, word for word message from God is verified and preserved through meticulous copying of the original, autographed biblical manuscripts and accurate translations into other languages, e.g. English.
4. It is our responsibility to discern between accurate and inaccurate translations of the Bible into our language, and then comply with the inspired Word of God represented therein.

Invitation:

1. The reason that God has providentially preserved his Holy Word is so that mankind can know his will and obey it, Heb. 5:8-9.
2. Unbaptized believers need to be immersed into Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins, Acts 2:38; 22:16.
3. Erring Christians need to repent and pray, Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

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The Dangers of Modern Translations

Matthew 7:15-20

Thesis: To urge caution respecting some of the hidden dangers in modern English Bible translations.

Introduction:

1. Jesus spoke Matthew 7:15-20 about people who deceptively would appear innocent and godly, but who were really ungodly and evil, cf. 2 Cor. 11:14-15.
 - a. In our day, some translations of the Bible are like the wolves in sheep's clothing that Jesus described.
 - b. Deviations from the Word of God and doctrinal error have crept into some of the modern English translations of the Bible.
 - c. Consequently, when congregations of God's people resort to these translations, the error in them is transferred to members of the churches of Christ.
2. All of the colorfully arrayed volumes before me at the pulpit today purport to contain religious or moral truth.
 - a. Yet, not all of these books purport to be the "Holy Bible," manmade creeds, manuals, disciplines, catechisms, etc.
 - b. Some of these volumes are not Bible translations since they are paraphrases of other English translations or conglomerations of pieces of several English translations, e.g. *Living Bible*, *Amplified Bible*.
 - c. Some of these books are not Bible translations but contain moral stories or are highly fictionalized, *The Gospel According to Peanuts*, *The Cotton Patch Bible*.
 - d. Some of these volumes are heavily footnoted with denominational doctrine adjacent to or below the text, e.g. an early *Billy Graham Crusade Bible*, Catholic Bibles.
 - e. The worst offenders representing themselves to be Bibles on which one can rely to know the Word of God are some

- modern speech versions in which denominational doctrine has been embedded without advising the reader.
3. God has always cautioned humanity about tampering with his Word, Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19.
 - a. Unfortunately, innocently or purposely, Gospel preachers, elders, professors, colleges and bookstores have promoted modern versions of the Bible within the churches of Christ, some of which translations of the Bible are spiritually lethal.
 - b. These corrupted translations inscribed with “Holy Bible” take for themselves an air of authenticity and genuineness that they do not deserve.
 - c. Inaccurate Bible translations cast a shadow of suspicion on the integrity and authority of the very Word of God.

Body:

I. The multiplicity of modern speech versions impugns the integrity and authority of the Bible.

- A. Irrespective of whether they are good or bad, so many (several hundred English alone) translations or versions cause unnecessary confusion.
 1. When they differ, and they do differ (some significantly), the question arises, “Which Bible should we believe?”
 2. Bible classes, Bible readings in the assembly and home Bible studies are impeded by the flood of modern Bible translations.
 3. Many Bible versions in the same language imply that that there is no standard in religion.
 4. Thereby, the integrity and the authority of the Word of God are held in suspicion.
- B. The variances between many of the Bible versions amounts to doctrinal conflicts.
 1. Mankind has become accustomed to choosing **the Bible of his choice** just as he has for centuries been choosing **the church of his choice**.
 2. Contradictions between versions or even in the same version discredit the concept of a divinely revealed religious faith.
 3. Contradictions between Bible translations produce

either a sense of hopelessness or an attitude that nothing in religion really matters.

- C. There is nothing about the sheer number of English translations available today that promotes respect for the authority of God's Word.

II. Many modern speech translations have a thinly veiled denominational or modernistic agenda behind them.

- A. No translation or version of the Bible is divinely inspired, not even the KJV or the ASV.
 - 1. Not even the Greek Septuagint from which Jesus and the apostles quoted was divinely inspired.
 - 2. However, every Bible translation has some **weaknesses** and most translations have some **strengths**.
 - 3. The modern student of God's Word must select one or more translations of the Bible whose strengths exceed its weaknesses, and avoid the rest.
- B. Many of the modern speech translations have been offered to the public with the doctrines of men subtly folded into them, and in other instances portions of God's doctrine removed from them.
 - 1. Some of these versions of the Bible are by their own admission not translations of God's Word from one language to another, e.g. *Living Bible*, *Cotton Patch*.
 - 2. Some of these translations omitted doctrines deemed distasteful, such as "hell," "the blood of Christ," "the frequency of the Lord's Supper" and "the virgin birth," e.g. *New World Translation*, *Today's English Bible*, *RSV*.
 - 3. The result has been "making the word of God of none effect," Mark 7:13.
- C. The multiplying of modern speech versions pertains to human and profane motives rather than biblical and spiritual interests.
 - 1. Denominational bias favoring unscriptural doctrines has promoted Bibles in which unscriptural doctrines have been written into the Bible.

2. It may be that *modern scholarship* in some instances of Bible translation desired to flaunt itself, unjustly condemning former translations, e.g. “Preface” of the RSV.
3. Even if it were true, and it is not, that significantly different and more ancient biblical manuscripts have been discovered that demand an update to Bible translations, only desire for commercial profit can explain the constant public offerings of new Bible translations in our own lifetime.

III. Unreliable modern speech translations undermine the church for which Jesus died to establish and over which he is the head.

- A. The Bible is being replaced in our pulpits, pews, homes and schools with poor, erring, denominational commentaries—miscalled “Bibles.”
 1. At best, religious ignorance results.
 2. At worst, bindings inscribed with “Holy Bible” teach not much of anything and a little bit of everything—except the pure, unadulterated Word of God.
- B. Invariably, religious leaders of change, even within the churches of Christ, brag about their scholarship and promote some Bible translation that they assure can serve their audiences better than the translations like the KJV used by their forefathers.
 1. Religious leaders of all stripes have promoted the new Bibles without restraint.
 2. Further, these same persons are determined to destroy the former versions of the Bible that formerly acquainted us with the Word of God.
 3. Many who wrest the Scriptures are helped along in their errors by some of the new Bible translations, 2 Pet. 3:16.

Conclusion:

1. First of all, our salvation, purity of life and faithful service depend on having access to the pure, unadulterated Word of God.
2. The perceived benefit from a Bible translation that we can

more easily understand **is worthless if** that translation does not accurately represent the Word of God.

3. Some of the most trusted Bible translations (which incidentally do not contradict each other and do not introduce denominational doctrine within their pages) include (but are not limited to) the KJV, the ASV and the NKJV.
4. Once, decades ago, when I preached a lesson on the dangers of the modern versions, brethren turned over to me their pseudo-translations of the Bible.
 - a. Some of these are in my library as resources for lessons about the translations of the Bible.
 - b. Others were destroyed much like the many books in Ephesus that were burned after Paul preached on one occasion, Acts 19:18-20.
 - c. Some of the denominational doctrine books and Bibles in my library bear the mark of a rubber stamp that reads, "POISON."

Invitation:

1. If you truly are interested in being guided by the pure, unadulterated Word of God, you will want to become a child of God—a Christian— if you are not or become a faithful Christian once more if you are an erring child of God.
2. Jesus presented the *first law of pardon*, Mark 16:16.
3. The apostle John wrote to Christians about the *second law of pardon*, 1 John 1:9.

The Generation, Degeneration and Regeneration of Mankind

Titus 3:3-7

Thesis: To trace the universal spiritual decline of humanity from its purity to the utter hopelessness and filthiness of sin and back again to the favor of God.

Introduction:

1. Notice the following definition of terms.
 - a. “Generate” is a verb and means “to bring into existence; procreate; beget; produce or originate” and generally refers to birth; the English word “generate” does not appear in the KJV but it is sometimes represented by “created,” Ezek. 28:15; Gen. 1:26-27.
 - b. “Degenerate” is a noun or an adjective and means “retrograde, degraded; debased, marked by lower standards or decline in excellence; the English word “degenerate” does appear once in the KJV (Jer. 2:21), but by other words are such souls most often referred to in Scripture, Rom. 1:21-32; 3:23; 1 John 1:8.
 - c. “Regeneration” is a noun and means “formed or created again; reborn; converted; restored to a better, higher, former, more worthy state; the act or process of regenerating; renewal; recreation; new birth; the English word appears in Titus 3:3-5 and appears as “created” in Eph. 2:10; 4:24.
2. The terms *generation*, *degeneration* and *regeneration* have a religious significance in depicting the human condition.
 - a. *Generation* represents well the creation of man in the spiritual image of God, Gen. 1:26-27; Ezek. 28:15.

- b. *Degeneration* represents the universal apostasy of man, first practiced in the Garden of Eden, Gen. 3:6; Rom. 3:23.
- c. *Regeneration* represents the spiritual restoration of the soul to a state of purity whereby it can have fellowship again with God, Titus 3:3-7.

Body:

I. Every living soul has experienced *generation*.

- A. The first soul was created simultaneously with the creation of the first human body, Gen. 1:26-27.
 - 1. The creation account records both the creation of the soul and the body.
 - 2. Genesis 2:7 emphasizes the physical creation of mankind that accompanied creation in the image of God.
 - 3. Despite possessing a physical body, each person has a spirit within him (in the image of God who is a Spirit), John 4:24.
- B. After the initial creation of Adam and Eve by miraculous creation, the human race continues and expands through procreation physically and spirits given by God spiritually.
 - 1. Ezek. 28:15 appropriately refers to the whole human being, physical and spiritual, with an emphasis on the spiritual nature of man.
 - 2. As in the beginning, subsequently God makes spirits in his image that he gives to humans, Ecc. 12:7.
- C. God is responsible for the universal generation of souls in mankind.
 - 1. Therefore, the denominational doctrine of total depravity is without foundation.
 - 2. Young children who are not responsible for their actions are not guilty of sin, Matt. 19:13-14.

II. Universally, every accountable soul has experienced *degeneration*.

- A. The fall of mankind initially occurred in the Garden of Eden.
 - 1. Adam and Eve were generated pure and enjoyed fellowship with God.

2. Eve believed the lie Satan told, sinned and prompted Adam to sin also.
 3. Especially spiritually, Adam and Eve became degenerate and rejected of God when they disobeyed God or sinned.
- B. Centuries later, mankind's degeneration reached a point where it became intolerable to God, and he sent the worldwide flood of Noah's day, Gen. 6:5-17.
- C. Throughout human history recorded in the Old Testament, God often punished man for his degeneration, e.g. wilderness wandering, Assyrian and Babylonian captivities.
- D. Throughout human history recorded in the New Testament, God often punished man or warned him regarding his degeneration.
1. God determined that both Jews and non-Jews are guilty of sin, Rom. 3:9.
 2. The whole world of accountable souls is guilty of sin or degeneration, Rom. 3:19.
 3. Consequently, every accountable soul has been guilty of sin or experienced degeneration, Rom. 3:23; Gal. 3:22.
 4. The apostle John wrote that we are liars if even we who are Christians deny guilt of sin, 1 John 1:8; Jam. 3:2 ASV.
- E. The agricultural illustration of Jer. 2:21 describes the degenerated conduct of mankind, anciently and in modern times.

III. Universally, every accountable soul is afforded the opportunity to experience *regeneration*.

- A. The mission of Jesus Christ and the will of God is that all mankind should be regenerated so that none perish eternally.
1. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, Luke 19:10.
 2. Jesus further explained the reason for which he came in the flesh in John 3:14-17.
 3. God wants everyone to be saved, 2 Pet. 3:9.
- B. The Gospel call of the Great Commission reflects the universal opportunity for regeneration.

1. The passages that record the Great Commission demonstrate God's willingness, desire and provision for human regeneration, Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:45-47.
 2. Especially the ministry of the apostle Paul reflected God's efforts to provide regeneration for every wayward soul, Acts 26:16-18; 2 Cor. 11:23-28.
- C. Regeneration is not possible without obedience to God through compliance with the written Word.
1. Jesus saves the obedient, Heb. 5:8-9.
 2. Jesus will only allow the obedient into heaven, Matt. 7:21-23; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
 3. The regenerated are doers of the Word of God, not merely hearers of the Word of God, Jam. 1:22.
- D. Unfortunately, not all souls will choose regeneration, Matt. 7:21-23; John 12:48; 2 Thess. 1:7-9.
1. In fact, Jesus taught that the majority of souls will be eternally lost, Matt. 7:13-14.
 2. Obviously, Universalism, then, is not a true doctrine.
- E. Regeneration is equivalent to salvation.
1. That regeneration or renewed spiritual condition or recreation can only occur through Jesus Christ, Eph. 2:10; 4:23-24.
 2. The apostle Paul identified the water baptism of the Great Commission as the point of regeneration, Titus 3:5.
 3. Jesus referred to this as being "born again," John 3:3-7.
 4. No wonder New Testament passages of Scripture couple baptism and salvation, 1 Pet. 3:21; Acts 22:16.

Conclusion:

1. All souls are initially created or generated pure.
2. All accountable souls have sinned or experienced degeneration.
3. All souls have the opportunity to be regenerated, though not all souls will choose to be regenerated.
4. The preaching of a lie, believing a lie and obeying a lie (by Adam and Eve) led to the initial degeneration of humanity.

5. However, on the other hand, the preaching of the Gospel, believing the Gospel and obedience of the Gospel will result in the regeneration of a person.

Invitation:

1. The waters of regeneration, the new birth, stand between degenerate man and regenerate man.
2. Therefore, unbaptized believers must obey the words of Peter in the first recorded Gospel sermon, Acts 2:38.
3. Erring Christians need to return to the Lord in penitence and prayer, Acts 8:22.

The King James Version of the Bible

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Thesis: To make known the historical background, strengths and weaknesses of the KJV.

Song: *Give Me the Bible*

Introduction:

1. Overall, the KJV preserves for modern man the pure, inspired Word of God.
 - a. The KJV is true to God's plan of salvation, worship, Christian living, Christian service and doctrine.
 - b. The KJV is a version rather than a perversion of the Bible.
2. To date, the KJV will be responsible for more souls in heaven than any other English translation.
 - a. Also, the KJV is chiefly responsible for any good moral influence in our society.
 - b. The KJV was the grammar text for our forefathers.
 - c. The KJV was the basis for our first state and national laws.
3. Overall, the KJV is an accurate translation from the original languages of the Bible.
 - a. However, the rendering "Easter" instead of "Passover" in Acts 12:4 is an exception, howbeit nothing else was added in the text that would teach about the holiday of Easter.
 - b. Complaints, though valid, respecting some archaic language in the KJV, have no bearing on the accuracy of the translation when it was translated.

Body:

- I. **Consider for a moment the historical background of the KJV.**
 - A. King James I of England ordered the appointment of 54 Greek and Hebrew scholars to translate the Bible from the original languages into English.
 1. The announcement of the appointment was made

July 22, 1604.

2. The purpose was to provide a single English translation that would be commonly accepted by all English speaking people.
 3. Forty-seven translators survived to the completion of the translation.
 4. Various religious interests were represented to offset each translator's sectarian interests.
- B. A procedure for translation was chosen that was calculated to provide an accurate, unbiased translation.
1. The translators were divided into six groups that met at various locations.
 2. Each group was assigned a specific portion of the Bible to be translated.
 3. Each translator made his own translation of the group's assigned portion of Scripture before submitting it to the review of the other members of his group.
 4. Whenever a group finished a book, it was sent to be reviewed by the other five groups.
 5. Thus, the entire translation passed under the scrutiny of each translator.
 6. Finally, a committee of six representing the respective groups scrutinized the whole translation.
- C. Guidelines for translation were established (Miller 364).
1. The Bishop's Bible was to be followed and as little altered as the truth of the original languages permit.
 2. The old ecclesiastical words were to be retained.
 3. Chapter divisions were not to be changed unless necessary.
 4. No marginal notes were allowed unless explanation of Hebrew and Greek words could not be briefly and fittingly expressed within the text.
 5. Wherever the Tyndale, Matthew, Coverdale, Great Bible or Geneva Bibles agreed better with the original languages than the Bishop's Bible, they were to be used.
- D. The KJV owes its existence to several sources.
1. The Old Testament was translated from the

- Hebrew Massoretic text.
2. The New Testament was translated from the Textus Receptus, meaning the widely received Greek text of the day.
 3. The KJV of 1611 essentially was the fifth revision of William Tyndale's English translation; previous revisions included: the Bishop's Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Great Bible and Matthew's Bible.
- E. The KJV translation of the Bible has had an important affect on the world.
1. Commissioned in 1604, actual translating began in 1607, and the translation was completed and published in 1611.
 2. The KJV provided a standard English translation of the Bible.
 3. It became to be called the Authorized Version, not because any king, council or church declared it so, but because people accepted it as the authority in religion.
 4. The KJV was the result of a national effort, undertaken by scholars of varied religious background, who without bias or opinion, accurately translated God's Word into English to end all controversy regarding which English Bible translation to use.

II. Consider some of the strengths of the KJV.

- A. The KJV is an accurate translation.
1. In part because of its accuracy, the KJV has been popular as the standard English translation for over 300 years.
 2. The KJV is a far more accurate translation than most modern English versions.
- B. The language of the KJV is widely familiar.
1. Bible students for hundreds of years spanning many generations have been familiar with the language of the KJV.
 2. Consequently, the language of the KJV has been memorized and quoted for hundreds of years.
 3. (Really, the language of the KJV is not the

language of 1611, but the language of the 1769 revision.)

- C. The KJV continues to be a widely popular English translation.
 - 1. Many older members of the churches of Christ as well as church members in rural areas are the most familiar with the KJV of the Bible.
 - 2. The popularity of the KJV exceeds 300 years, and it remains the number one selling English translation of the Bible.
 - 3. Consequently, promoters of more recent Bible translations are compelled to attack the KJV to help make a place for these newer translations.
 - 4. One important reason for the continued popularity of the KJV is that most of the scholarly references books either refer to the KJV or use James Strong's numbers keyed to his concordance as well as Hebrew and Greek dictionaries (e.g. commentaries, lexicons, word studies, etc.).

III. Consider some of the weaknesses of the KJV.

- A. Archaic or seldom used words, centuries old, dot the KJV.
 - 1. No one uses and most people do not know what "wist" (knew) and "wot" (know) mean.
 - 2. Archaic language does not discredit the validity of the translation process, but it merely evidences that language changes over centuries.
 - 3. All archaic language can be understood by consulting a dictionary.
- B. Some words in the KJV have changed meanings since its publication and impede understanding.
 - 1. The word "ghost" in the KJV is better understood today as "spirit."
 - 2. The KJV made no distinction in English among the place of eternal torment, the temporary abode of departed spirits awaiting the end of time (Hades) and the portion of Hades where unrighteous souls are imprisoned awaiting the end of time, using the English word "hell" for each, Matt. 10:28; Acts

2:31, 2 Pet. 2:4.

3. The word “prevent” in the KJV has changed meaning and would be better translated today as “precede,” 1 Thess. 4:15.
- C. There is one outstanding translation error in the KJV.
1. Acts 12:4 has the word “Easter” instead of “Passover.”
 2. Previous English translations had “Easter” in several places where “Passover” should appear, and only the occurrence in Acts 12:4 escaped correction, maybe an oversight.
 3. The appearance of “Easter” in Acts 12:4 no more teaches the *observance* of Easter than the word “Passover” would teach the *observance* of the Passover today.
- D. Apparently, there is an error either in the Greek text or in translation of 1 John 5:17.
1. Commonly, 1 John 5:17 as it appears in the KJV is believed to be uninspired.
 2. There are said to be 5,000 other Greek manuscripts read differently in 1 John 5:17.
 3. This correction along with the updating of archaic language has been satisfactorily amended in the ASV.

IV. Evaluate some of the accusations against the KJV.

- A. The attacks made against the KJV, in an effort to promote new translations, are unfounded.
1. Promoters of new translations ignore the fact that the ASV has updated the language of the Bible and amended any inadequacies of the KJV.
 2. Promoters of new translations try to capitalize on the popularity of the KJV by claiming to be revisions of the KJV.
- B. Promoters of new translations falsely claim advantages for newer translations over previous translations.
1. It is grossly false to assert that modern scholarship is far superior to the scholarship available for translating the KJV (and its revision, the ASV).
 2. No discoveries of manuscripts since the translation

of the KJV (or even the ASV) have altered the text or meaning of the Bible in English.

Conclusion:

1. Overall, the KJV is an accurate and faithful translation by which true doctrine can be learned and defended against false doctrine.
2. The sense of God's Word is discernible through earnest study of the KJV, 2 Tim. 2:15.
3. The KJV was sufficient to permit men and women to restore New Testament Christianity.
4. All of the new translations combined have not yielded any *new truth!*
 - a. Contrariwise, the sheer number of new translations has caused confusion.
 - b. Worse yet, several new translations have introduced doctrinal error within the covers dubiously inscribed, "Holy Bible."

Invitation:

1. Having a reliable translation, such as the KJV, mankind can know the will of God whereby redemption is attainable, John 8:32.
2. Unbaptized believers need to repent and be baptized, Acts 2:38.
3. Erring Christians need to repent and pray, Acts 8:22.

Works Cited

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The American Standard Version of the Bible

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Thesis: To objectively review the strengths and weaknesses of the ASV.

Song: *Give Me the Bible*

Introduction:

1. Perhaps, the ASV is the most literal translation of the Bible into the English language.
 - a. Therefore, the ASV more closely adheres to the Hebrew and Greek texts than most other Bible translations.
 - b. Even critics of the ASV attribute extreme accuracy and literalness to the ASV (See the NASV “Preface,” vii).
2. The ASV is an **accurate translation** of the Bible into the English language.
 - a. Therefore, the ASV is dependable to preserve uncorrupted the doctrines of the Bible.
 - b. Therefore, the ASV is dependable **not to** fold into the Holy Word of God the doctrines of men.
 - c. In short, *nothing is missing* and *nothing has been added* in the ASV.

Body:

I. Consider the background of the ASV.

- A. The ASV is the American rendition of a joint effort between British and American scholars to revise the KJV.
 1. British scholars published an English version (the English Revised Version), which contained several strictly British expressions.
 2. The English Revised Version New Testament was well received at first, selling three million copies in America and England in 1881.
 3. The Old Testament was published in 1885, but

- enthusiasm for the English Revised Version waned considerably.
4. Later, British scholars also made the American Revised Version in an attempt to appease Americans, but this effort was of little success.
 5. The American scholars revised the English Revised Version (on which they had also labored), and Thomas Nelson & Sons published it as the ASV in 1901.
- B. The KJV was revised by 101 British and American scholars.
1. Various sectarian interests were represented among the translators to prevent denominational bias from creeping into the translation process; the goal was to produce an accurate Bible translation.
 2. The English revisers would translate a short passage and submit it to the American revisers for their scrutiny.
 3. The English revisers would review the passage again with consideration of the American observations.
 4. The passage would be reviewed once more by each the American revisers and the English revisers.
 5. Thereby, each passage of Scripture was reviewed at least five times before the final translation was fixed; essentially the translating process occurred several times for each passage before deciding upon a final rendition.
 6. To translate the ASV, the American revisers primarily exchanged the strictly British expressions with more familiar expressions to the American people.
- C. There were valid reasons for revising the KJV with the ASV.
1. The English Revised Version was undertaken to update the antiquated words of the KJV.
 2. The ASV was undertaken for the same reason and to provide an English version void of the British expressions.

3. Both translations provided continuity in translating the same original language words to the same equivalents in contemporary English.
 4. The ASV also updated ancient spellings and used “who” instead of impersonal pronouns for deity.
- D. How did the manuscript sources differ between the translation of the KJV and the ASV?
1. The ASV Old Testament was translated from the same Massoretic Hebrew text as was the KJV, resulting in little variance between the KJV and ASV Old Testament.
 2. However, the ASV New Testament was translated from more recently discovered Greek texts than the texts to translate the KJV New Testament.
 3. Consequently, there are over 36,000 variations between the KJV and the ASV.
 4. Though the number may be alarming, the actual changes are minor and affect no doctrine.
 5. Many verses in the ASV are shorter than the same verses in the KJV; on at least one occasional, a verse is omitted in the ASV; and in one instance, the ASV substitutes a different verse from the KJV, 1 John 5:17.

II. Consider the strengths of the ASV.

- A. The ASV is highly esteemed as perhaps the most accurate and literal translation of the Bible into the English language (See the “Preface” of the NASV vii).
1. A literal translation like the ASV adheres more closely to the form of the original language than other translations that are not as literal.
 2. The literalness of the translation makes the ASV a very accurate translation and especially a valuable study tool.
- B. The harmony of expression within the ASV is a definite strength.
1. The Hebrew and Greek words are translated consistently in the ASV.
 2. This harmony precludes the introduction of unintentional shades of meaning for the same

original language words.

- C. Discoveries of additional biblical manuscripts as well as historical and archaeological data have occurred since the translation of the KJV.
 - 1. Civil documents, letters and literature in the biblical languages have been discovered since the translation of the KJV, which provide a better understanding of the biblical languages and customs.
 - 2. Some highly esteemed Greek manuscripts were not found until after the translation of the KJV, i.e. Sinaitic, Vatican, Alexandrian, Ephraem.
 - 3. However, these advances and discoveries do not dispute, but rather confirm the KJV as accurate.

III. Consider the weaknesses of the ASV.

- A. Many students of the Bible think that the KJV translates 2 Tim. 3:16 better than the ASV rendering.
- B. There are no significant weaknesses in the ASV.
- C. Since the ASV is a literal translation, it appears a little choppy and more difficult to read smoothly than other translations, e.g. KJV.

Conclusion:

- 1. Though a popular and an accurate translation, the ASV has not overshadowed the popularity of the KJV.
- 2. Unfortunately, the ASV has not been able to halt the flood of modern versions, most of which claim to be updating the KJV, which the ASV already accomplished.
- 3. The ASV deserves our appreciation and use.

Invitation:

- 4. God's plan for redeeming man is clearly apparent in the ASV.
- 5. Peter's words still resound from Acts 2:38 for unbaptized believers.
- 6. Peter's words still resound from Acts 8:22 for erring Christians.

A Survey of Dangers in Modern Bible Translations

2 Peter 3:16

Thesis: To call attention to some of the prominent errors that appear in some of the modern English Bible translations.

Song: *Give Me the Bible*

Introduction:

1. The KJV, ASV and NKJV, as well as some other English translation of the Bible are reliable.
2. These translations of the Bible faithfully represent the Word of God respecting redemption, worship, Christian living and Christian service.
3. Several other English translations of the Bible are unreliable and teach falsely concerning redemption, worship, Christian living and Christian service.
4. The modern English translations and their abbreviations that we will consider today are: *The Amplified Bible* (AMP), *Contemporary English Version* (CEV), *Darby Translation* (DARBY), *English Standard Version* (ESV), *Good News Translation* (GNT), *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (HCSB), *The Message* (MSG), *New American Standard Bible* (NASB), *New International Reader's Version* (NIRV), *New International Version* (NIV), *New Living Translation* (NLT), *New Life Version* (NLV), *New World Translation*, *Revised Standard Version* (RSV), *Worldwide English New Testament* (WE), *Wycliffe New Testament* (WYC) and *Young's Literal Translation* (YLT).

Body:

- I. **Some modern English translations corrupt God's teaching about the redemption of humanity.**
 - A. Faith Only. The following translations teach that

salvation is by “faith alone,” “faith only,” “faith from first to last,” etc.

1. Rom. 1:17: CEV, ESV, GNT, NIRV, NIV, NLT, WE.
 2. Rom. 3:28: GNT,
 3. Rom. 10:10: AMP, CEV, NIRV.
 4. Rom. 11:20: WE.
 5. Gal. 2:16: AMP, CEV, GNT.
 6. Eph. 1:13: CEV, MSG, NLT, NIV, WE.
- B. The following translations teach that baptism does not save but is a demonstration of one’s confidence that he is already saved.
1. Mark 1:4: NLT.
 2. 1 Pet. 3:21: AMP.
- C. Spiritual Promise: The following translations remove the promise made to Abraham in Gen. 12:3; 22:18 about Christ and have mankind blessing itself instead: AMP, RSV.

II. Some modern English translations corrupt Christian worship.

- A. Acts 20:7: The following translation corrupts the Lord’s Supper by teaching Paul and other Christians had a fellowship meal on Saturday: GNT.
- B. Eph. 5:19: The following translation adds instrumental music to worship: AMP.

III. Some modern English translations are profane and vulgar.

- A. *The Message*.
1. John 9:34: “You’re nothing but dirt!”
 2. Acts 8:20: “Peter said, ‘To hell with your money! And you along with it...’” (Also GNT).
 3. Rom. 11:20: “...So don't get cocky and strut your branch...” [discussing the Jews being cut off and the Gentiles being grafted in].
- B. *New Living Translation*.
1. 1 Kings 18:27: “About noontime Elijah began mocking them. ‘You'll have to shout louder,’ he scoffed, ‘for surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or he is relieving himself. Or maybe he is away on a trip, or he is asleep and needs to be

wakened!" (Also HCSB, ESV; "...Maybe he's day-dreaming or using the toilet or traveling somewhere..." CEV & NIRV)

2. Hosea 4:11: "Alcohol and prostitution have robbed my people of their brains."

C. *New International Reader's Version*. 2 Cor. 12:16: "...But I'm such a tricky fellow!"

IV. Some modern English translations contain factual error and contradictions with themselves.

A. Gen. 9:20: The following translations incorrectly teach that Noah was the first farmer: CEV, ESV, HCSB, MSG.

B. Matt. 5:17; cf. Eph. 2:15.

1. The following translations teach that Jesus did not come to "abolish" the law: ESV, GNT, NASB, NIV, NLT, RSV.
2. The following translations teach that Jesus did not come to "do away" with the law: AMP, CEV, NLV.
3. The following translation teaches that Jesus did not come to "take away" the law: WE.
4. The following translation teaches that Jesus did not come to "throw down" the law: YLT.
5. The following translation teaches that Jesus did not come to "make void" the law: DARBY.

V. Some modern English translations contain doctrinal errors.

A. Matt. 16:18. The following translations teach that Peter is the rock on which the church is built: AMP, CEV, ESV, GNT, MSG, NLT, YLT.

B. Mark 16:9-20. The following translations either omit these verses or include them with a disclaimer that they do not belong in the Bible: AMP, CEV, ESV, NASB, NIV.

C. The following translations teach the Jesus was born of a girl or young woman instead of a "virgin."

1. Isa. 7:14: GNT, RSV.
2. Luke 1:27. AMP, GNT, NLV, WE.

D. The following translations remove the word "seed" referring to Jesus Christ.

1. Luke 1:55: AMP, CEV, ESV, HCSB, MSG, NASB, NIRV, NIV, NLT, NLV, WE.
 2. Acts 3:25: CEV, ESV, GNT, MSG, NIRV, NIV, NLT, NLV, RSV, WE.
 3. Gal. 3:16: GNT, RSV.
 4. Heb. 11:18: AMP, CEV, ESV, MSG, NASB, NIRV, NIV, NLT, NLV, WE.
- E. Only Begotten: The following translations remove or alter “the only begotten Son.”
1. John 1:18: CEV, ESV, GNT, HCSB, NIRV, NLT, NLV, RSV, WE.
 2. John 3:16, 18, 1 John 4:9: CEV, ESV, GNT, HCSB, MSG, NIRV, NIV, NLT, NLV, RSV, WE.
- F. John 6:45: The following translations represent God as speaking to mankind (directly) today: CEV, MSG, NIRV, NIV, NLT, NLV, WE.
- G. John 6:47: The following translations teach the impossibility of apostasy: AMP, NLT.
- H. Acts 2:1, 4: The following translations teach that the 120 received the baptism of the Holy Spirit: CEV, GNT, NIRV, NLT, NLV, WYC.
- I. The following translations teach heredity depravity (Calvinism).
1. **Psalm 51:5**: AMP, CEV, GNT, HCSB, MSG, NIRV, NIV, NLT, NLV.
 2. 1 Cor. 2:14: AMP, MSG, NIRV, NLV.
 3. Rom. 7:18: NIRV, NIV, NLT.
 4. Eph. 2:3: NIRV, NIV, NLT, NLV.
- J. Rom. 16:1: The following translations teach that Phebe was a deaconess or a leader in the church: AMP, CEV, DARBY, HCSB, NIV, NLT, YLT.
- K. 1 Cor. 14:2, 4-5: The following translations support Pentecostal or charismatic ecstatic utterances: MSG, NLV.
- L. Premillennialism: The following translations teach premillennialism
1. Matt. 19:28: AMP, CEV, ESV, HCSB, MSG, NLT, NLV, WE.
 2. 2 Tim. 4:1: CEV, MSG, NIRV, NLT, NLV, WE,

YLT.

- M. 1 Pet. 2:13: The following translations teach that men must obey every human institution and would seem to include manmade religious institutions: AMP, DARBY, ESV, HCSB, NASB.
- N. 1 Pet. 3:19: The following translations teach that salvation may be obtained after one dies: HCSB, MSG.
- O. 1 Cor. 15:29: The following translations teach the Mormon doctrine of a living person being baptized to save a dead person: CEV, ESV, MSG, NLT, WE, WYC.
- P. The following translations teach the direct operation of the Holy Spirit today.
 - 1. Rom. 8:16: MSG, NLT.
 - 2. Gal. 5:16: AMP, MSG.
- Q. 1 Tim. 3:15: The following translation teaches that truth comes from the church instead of the church heralding the truth of God: CEV.
- R. 1 Cor. 13:10: The following translation teaches that miracles remain until the end of time: NLT.
- S. The GNT once removed about half the passages referring to the blood of Jesus Christ, but has restored many but not all that refer to the blood of Christ: Heb. 10:19; 1 Pet. 1:19.
- T. The New World Translation removes “hell” from the Bible since the Jehovah’s Witnesses do not believe in hell: Matt. 10:28; 18:9; Mark 9:43-48.

Conclusion:

- 1. The thousands of ancient manuscripts from which Bible translations are made contain few errors and no doctrine is at risk of being corrupted.
- 2. However, the serious, doctrinal errors present in many Bible translations can make it impossible to learn of redemption, how to worship God in his own appointed way and practice Christian living and Christian service.
- 3. Despite boasts regarding new found ancient manuscripts, etc., there is no truth regarding redemption, worship, Christian living, Christian service or other doctrinal matters that cannot be satisfactorily understood from standard translations, e.g. KJV, ASV, NKJV.

4. Whereas standard translations were made more or less faithfully translating words from one language to another, most modern translations were made relying on thought-for-thought or dynamic equivalence translating (providing less reliable translations).
5. The standard translations were translated by scholars who believed in the divine inspiration of the Bible, whereas many translators of modern translations either did not know the original languages or did not believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God (and the resulting translations show it).

Invitation:

1. Mankind desperately needs to know the very words of God so that he can be redeemed, worship God correctly, practice Christian living and perform Christian service.
2. Reputable Bible translations record the simple redemptive plan mouthed by Jesus, Mark 16:16.
3. Peter by the Holy Spirit spoke God's plan for restoring erring Christians, Acts 8:22.

Let Us Go Into the House of the Lord

Psalm 122:1

Thesis: To explore the attitude with which and the frequency Christians ought to worship God.

Introduction:

1. Psalm 122:1 introduces a noteworthy **attitude** about worshipping God.
 - a. The backdrop to Psalm 122:1 pertains to an annual feast for which the children of God, even if living afar, would travel to worship God, Acts 8:26-39.
 - b. Jerusalem was a mountain city at about 2,500 feet above sea level.
 - c. The Temple was on the northeast of four mountain peaks on which Jerusalem was built; Barnes says, “If the psalm was composed in the time of David, this would refer to the tabernacle as fixed by him on Mount Zion; if at a later period, to the temple.”
2. The words “I was glad” signifies a worshipper’s joy upon contemplating an opportunity to worship Almighty God.
 - a. Barnes notes, “The language is expressive of the, happiness which is felt by those who love God and his sanctuary, when the stated season of worship returns. The heart is drawn to the house of prayer; the soul is filled with peace at the prospect of being again permitted to worship God.”
 - b. *Keil & Delitzsch* defines “gladness” as “rejoicing.”
3. The phrase, “when they said unto me,” refers to an invitation or reminder that it is time to worship God.
 - a. Barnes states respecting this encouragement to worship God: “The announcement was joyful; the invitation was welcome. It met the desires of my heart, and I embraced the invitation cheerfully and joyfully.”

- b. The worshipful attitude expressed in Psalm 122:1 is wholly different from the attitude toward worship that prompted the writing of Hebrews 10:25-31.
- 4. The statement, “Let us go into the house of the Lord,” means, “Up to the place where God dwells; the house which he has made his abode” (Barnes).
 - a. The very presence of God was in the Israelite Tabernacle and the Temple that replaced the Tabernacle.
 - b. Despite the sentiment of denominationalism, today, the church building (including the so-called sanctuary or auditorium) is not holy.
 - c. However, God’s presence at otherwise non-holy sites makes the location holy for the duration of God’s presence, Exod. 3:1-5; Acts 7:30-33.
 - d. The presence of deity in our worship assemblies makes them holy because Jesus is there, Matt. 26:29.

Body:

- I. **The law of God in effect today, the New Testament, legislates an assembly for worship each first day of the week.**
 - A. The New Testament has superseded and replaced the entire Old Testament.
 - 1. When fulfilled and upon the triumph of Christ, the Old Testament was replaced with the New Testament, Eph. 2:13-16; Col. 2:14; 2 Cor. 3:6, 11; Heb. 8:6-7.
 - 2. Even the Ten Commandments, a part of the Old Testament, have been replaced with the New Testament, Rom. 7:6-7.
 - 3. Consequently, people living today ought to follow the instructions of Jesus Christ rather than Moses or Elijah, Matt. 17:1-5; John 12:48.
 - B. New Testament Scripture specifically authorizes a worship assembly on the first day of every week.
 - 1. The Lord’s church began on the first day of the week, and the church worshipped through teaching, the contribution, the Lord’s Supper and prayers, Acts 2:42.
 - 2. Scripture also demonstrates that singing is a part of

the worship assembly, 1 Cor. 14:15, 23, 26.

3. The frequency of this worship is weekly on the first day of the week, Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2.

II. Additional worship to a single assembly on the Lord's Day is obligatory on the children of God today.

- A. Not all worship is limited to an assembly on the first day of the week.

1. All acts of worship except the Lord's Supper may occur on days in addition to the first day of the week, Acts 6:4; Eph. 6:18; Acts 5:1-10; 13:14-39; 16:25.

2. Only the Lord's Supper is authorized exclusively for observance on the first day of the week—every week, Acts 20:7; Exod. 20:8; Num. 15:32-36.

3. We worship daily through at least our prayers.

- B. Elders have the responsibility to feed the flock of God over which they rule, and the flock has the obligation to obey its elders.

1. The apostle Paul taught elders to feed the congregation with the Word of God, Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 2:2.

2. Each congregation must obey its elders, and the elders must account for each soul to God, Heb. 13:17.

3. Since elders are not permitted by God to alter the inspired, all-sufficient Word of God, elders enforce the Word of God and otherwise operate in areas not specifically addressed in Scripture, i.e. worship time, 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Rev. 22:18-19.

III. God demands more than mere outward form from his worshippers, John 4:24.

- A. God does require obedience to the ways in which he has specified for man to worship him.

1. Nadab and Abihu are prime examples of failing to worship God in his own appointed way, Lev. 10:1-2.

2. The apostle Paul corrected the worship abuse by the Corinthian Christians respecting the Lord's Supper, 1 Cor. 11:20-34.

- B. God also requires that worshippers worship with their hearts.
1. In the Old Testament, God rejected the very worship he had commanded because the Jews merely worshipped outwardly while inwardly they found worship distasteful, Mal. 1:1-10.
 2. Worship had become a “weariness” to the Jews, Mal. 1:13.
 3. We cannot worship God the way he wants to be worshipped if we love other people or things more than God, Matt. 6:24, 33; 22:37-38.

Conclusion:

1. The New Testament specifically requires a worship assembly each first day of the week, inclusive of singing, prayer, teaching, the Lord’s Supper and giving.
2. Elders have the responsibility to choose the time for worship and other opportunities to feed the flock.
3. Each congregation has the responsibility to obey its elders, including additional worship occasions (and Bible classes) whereby they see to feeding the flock.
4. **Therefore, every congregational worship assembly, Gospel meeting, and Bible class is obligatory unless one is genuinely unable to be present.**
5. Christian worship must be in spirit and in truth.
6. The question, “Do I have to attend every service of the church,” etc., reveals an improper attitude about worshipping God.
7. Rather, we should be glad when invited to worship God, at every opportunity possible, Psalm 122:1.
8. Any child of God who does not enjoy worshipping God at every occasion possible today will be dismayed to learn that saints in eternity will worship God unendingly, Rev. 7:1-17.

Invitation:

1. Let us always rejoice at opportunities to worship God in his own appointed way.
2. However, one cannot worship God satisfactorily if either he is not a child of God or if he is an unfaithful child of God, Acts 22:16; 1 John 1:9.

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What Do You Expect from Christianity?

Galatians 6:7-8

Thesis: To ascertain reasonable expectations one might entertain respecting Christianity.

Introduction:

1. Mankind often faces disappointments respecting this life, sometimes because he entertains unreasonable expectations regarding his earthly habitation.
2. Likewise, Christians are disappointed sometimes respecting Christianity, in part because they entertain unreasonable expectations regarding the church.
3. Scripture assures the child of God the eternal habitation will not be marred by any disappointments or unreasonable expectations, Rev. 21:4.
4. However, in this life, what do Christians have a right to expect of Christianity?

Body:

- I. **What do we expect of Christianity as a system of religion?**
 - A. Is it reasonable to expect that embracing Christianity will eradicate from our lives all personal problems?
 1. Christianity is the system of religion authorized by God and the subject of the New Testament.
 2. Christianity is not at fault when Christians fail to live and conduct themselves like Christians ought to live and conduct themselves.
 3. Christianity is not at fault when non-Christians trouble the children of God.
 - B. Christianity does not promise a life free from problems, but contrariwise, the New Testament reveals that the Christian's life may have some additional problems simply because he is a child of God, 2 Tim. 3:12.
 1. During his earthly ministry, Jesus warned that the

- world would “revile” and “persecute” disciples of Christ, Matt. 5:11; 10:22.
2. Jesus warned that “variance” would occur even within one’s family, Matt. 10:34-36.
 3. Since persecution will come to Christians from the ungodly world, Scripture advises Christians how to react, 1 Pet. 4:16.
 4. Christians in the ungodly world of the first century, according to the apostle Paul, were “troubled on every side” but persevered, 2 Cor. 4:8-9.
 5. A Christian suffering (to some degree) for the faith but persevering will be rewarded with reigning with Christ in heaven, 2 Tim. 2:12.
- C. What do Christians have a right to expect from Christianity?
1. A primary benefit of Christianity is salvation, Rom. 1:16; Acts 2:47; Heb. 5:8-9.
 2. Salvation means the forgiveness of sins, Acts 2:38.
 3. The forgiveness of sins enables one to legitimately anticipate eternal life, Matt. 25:46; Rev. 2:10.
- D. However, no one has a right to expect anything from Christianity if he personally fails to practice Christianity.
1. Disobedient souls have no pleasant anticipation of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 6:15-17.
 2. Even Christians who do not give attention to faithfully practicing Christianity cannot rightfully expect a good outcome for them respecting Christianity, Luke 6:46; Jam. 4:17.
- E. In addition, the reason some may feel that they get little personal satisfaction from Christianity is that they invest very little of themselves into Christianity, Gal. 6:7-8.
1. It is not reasonable to live like the ungodly world and expect to be the recipient of spiritual blessings either in this life or the life to come, Eph. 5:8; 1 John 2:6.
 2. Christianity is a way of life for those truly converted and a curse for half-hearted Christians, Rom. 1:17; 6:2; 8:1-14.

II. What do we expect of the church?

- A. Do we expect the church to be perfect?
 - 1. The church is composed of imperfect humanity, and it is, therefore, to that extent imperfect, 1 John 1:8, 10.
 - 2. The human element of the first century church was imperfect, though it had apostles and other inspired souls to guide it.
 - 3. It was due to human imperfection in the first century church that some of the New Testament epistles were penned, 1 & 2 Cor.; Gal.; Heb.
 - 4. Before we become too critical of an imperfect church, each of us needs to consider his or her own imperfections.
 - 5. However, individually as Christians and collectively as the church, we strive toward perfection, Phil. 3:12-14; Heb. 6:1; 2 Tim. 3:16-17.
- B. Do we expect the church to entertain us?
 - 1. Denominationalism has honed its skills in the area of entertainment to attract worldly souls, e.g. instrumental music in worship, carnivals, gymnasiums, etc.
 - 2. Scripture does not authorize the Lord's church to entertain itself, instead of worshipping God in his own appointed way and taking the saving Gospel to lost souls.
- C. Do we expect the church to continue and prosper without the dedication of its members?
 - 1. Each member of the body of Christ is essential to the proper coordination of that spiritual body—the church, Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:12-27.
 - 2. Jesus has offered no non-participating memberships in his church, John 15:1-6.
- D. What do Christians have a right to expect of the Lord's church?
 - 1. The church of Christ has a responsibility to edify its members, 1 Cor. 14:12.
 - 2. The church of Christ has a responsibility to evangelize the nations, Matt. 28:18-20; Mark

16:15-16.

3. The church of Christ has the responsibility to extend benevolence toward its own needy members as well as other needy persons when it can, 2 Cor. 9:13; Gal. 6:10.
- E. However, Christians have no right to expect that the church will succeed in any of its divinely assigned missions without the full participation by its members.
1. Consequently, when the church fails to perform its God-given mission, the church will fail to meet with divine approval, Rev. 2 & 3.
 2. No Christian has any right to expect anything of the church unless he himself has first given himself to the work of the church, Titus 2:14; 2 Cor. 8:5.
 3. Further, no Christian has any right to expect anything of the church that he does not first expect of himself.

III. What do we expect of elders, deacons, ministers and teachers?

- A. Do we expect them to be sinlessly perfect?
1. Obviously, that is not a realistic or reasonable expectation, Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8, 10.
 2. True, each Christian should strive to live his life as much in harmony with the will of God as he possibly can, and leaders in the church deserve greater scrutiny, though they sometimes falter, too, Jam. 3:1; Gal. 2:11-14.
 3. It is not fair to hold others to a different standard than to which we hold ourselves, Rom. 2:1-11.
 4. Only he who has never done anything has never made a mistake or come under sometimes even harsh criticism, but to do nothing is also a sin, Jam. 4:17.
- B. Do we expect the elders, deacons, ministers and teachers to do the work of every Christian?
1. The lost of Matt. 25:31-46 were not lost because of some great wickedness, but because they did not do anything in the service of God.
 2. Each soul will appear before the judgment seat of

Christ to answer for him or herself, 2 Cor. 5:10.

- C. What do Christians have a right to expect from elders, deacons, ministers and teachers?
 - 1. We have a right to expect that each man serving as an elder or a deacon meets each of the divine qualifications for elders and deacons, 1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9.
 - 2. We have a right to expect elders to rule and feed the flock over which they have been selected, Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2.
 - 3. We have a right to expect deacons to busy themselves with primarily physical duties respecting the local church, Acts 6:1-7.
 - 4. Christians have a right to expect preachers to always preach the whole counsel of God or the Gospel in love, 2 Tim. 4:2; Acts 20:27; Eph. 4:15.
 - 5. Christians have a right to expect preachers to present the Word of God or Gospel without admixture of human wisdom, Rom. 10:15; 1 Cor. 2:4.

IV. What do we expect concerning ourselves?

- A. Do we expect to be saved without initial and continued obedience to the Word of God, Heb. 5:8-9?
- B. Do we expect to be saved without enduring unto the end, Matt. 24:13; Rev. 2:10?
- C. What do we have a right to expect?
 - 1. Scripture assures us that death and judgment will come, Heb. 9:27.
 - 2. Jesus assures us that one of two possible eternities will be ours, Matt. 25:46.

Conclusion:

- 1. One's expectation from Christianity must begin with self and rely on Jesus Christ, Phil. 4:13.
- 2. Despite ordinary problems that may persist and other problems owing to becoming a Christian, salvation of one's soul sufficiently outweighs every difficulty in life.
- 3. We need to have reasonable expectations regarding the church, its leaders and ourselves.
- 4. Each child of God must do his or her part to make Christianity

everything it can be and should be.

Invitation:

1. If you have not done so yet, activate Christianity in your life by being baptized for the remission of sins, Acts 2:38.
2. If an erring child of God, re-activate Christianity and all of its benefits here and in the hereafter by repenting of your sins, Acts 8:22.