

BAPTIST DOCTRINES BAPTIST BELIEVE



By

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Sunday School Quarterly

Prepared by E. HAROLD HENDERSON

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Triumphal Entry to Consummation	The Early Church as Example (Acts)	Doctrinal Statement	Hebrews	Revelation
First	Second	Third	Fourth	

Lesson I

God and His Word

Aim for Quarter: Through a study of our Doctrinal Statement to encourage definiteness of purpose in the associated efforts of the churches cooperating in the North American Baptist Association.

Aim: The study of Articles 1, 2, 3. 1. The Trinity of God. 2. The infallible and plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. 3. The Biblical account of creation.

Devotional: Wrath, Romans 1:18-23.

Lesson Text: John 14:16-17; 16:13-14, 27; II Timothy 3:15; Genesis 2:1-7.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

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

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Je'-sus.

1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2 And on the seventh day God ended his

work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

4 These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,

5 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.

6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

7 And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: Matthew 3:13-17

Tuesday: Matthew 17:1-8

Wednesday: John 1:1-6, 14

Thursday: John 7:37-39

Friday: II Peter 1:15-21

Saturday: Genesis 1:26-31



For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, II Peter 1:21.

INTRODUCTION—"I don't like doctrinal lessons," someone complained. An expression like this reveals a misunderstanding of the term "doctrine." It meant "teaching, instruction" and came to mean "that which is taught." A doctrinal lesson, therefore, is one that presents Bible truths. Every scriptural

lesson is a doctrinal lesson! The term "Baptist doctrine" refers to that system of truth which is taught by Baptist churches. The next thirteen lessons will briefly survey the doctrines of the historic Baptist faith. It will follow the statement of these doctrines as set out by the North American Baptist

Association's doctrinal statement.

Any study of religious truth must begin with God. The Bible presents the revelation of God. Moved by His merciful love, because of the dread plight of mankind, God revealed Himself to men. Being a sinner, man could not find out God of his own accord. Yet he had a spiritual longing after God which could be satisfied only by a personal acquaintance with God. Moreover, man needed an authoritative guide to instruct him in all matters of faith and practice. God moved to answer this need by revealing Himself!

The Bible is an authentic revelation of God. Jesus declared the Old Testament to be authoritative and reliable, Luke 24:27. The consistency, competency, uprightness, and trustworthiness of the New Testament has demonstrated its reliability. These divinely-authorized Scriptures constitute the final court of appeal in all matters of Christian faith and practice, Isaiah 8:20. Throughout this series of lessons, the Word of God will be the sole authority for any and all statements of doctrinal principles.

EXPOSITION

I. THE TRIUNE GOD

Read John 14:16-17; 16:13-14, 27. These



are only a few verses of the many which point out that God is triune. The trinity of God is His tripersonal existence as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The word "trinity" comes from a Latin word *trinus* which means "threefold." It means, when applied to God, that the God-head is composed of three persons identified as the "Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." These three are not only a trinity (three persons) but are also a "trinity" (three in one). This doctrine is difficult to understand, though positively taught, in the Word.

1. The Trinity in the Old Testament. The doctrine of the Trinity is not positively expressed in the Old Testament but it is clearly intimated. (1) Plural names and pronouns are used for God in Genesis 1:1; 1:26; 11:7; Isaiah 6:8 and elsewhere. (2) Various theophanies (Genesis 16 and 18) identify the "Angel of the Lord" as both being God and being separate from God. (3) the work of the Holy Spirit is clearly expressed in Genesis 1:2; Judges 6:34 and elsewhere. Therefore, while the doctrine is not positively stated, it is evidenced in the Old Testament.

2. The Trinity in the New Testament. It is in the New Testament that the doctrine of the divine Trinity is explicitly declared. Here are some occasions where the three persons are clearly referred to. (1) At the baptism of Jesus the Father speaks from heaven, the Spirit descends like a dove, while the Son comes from the water, Matthew 3:16-17. (2) The baptismal formula given by Jesus to the church demands that converts be baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," Matthew 28:20. (3) The apostolic benediction speaks of "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ (Son) . . . the love of God (Father) . . . the communion of the Holy Ghost (Spirit)," II Corinthians 13:14. (4) Jesus acknowledges the existence of the Trinity when He says that He, the Son, will pray the Father to send the Holy Spirit to be with the disciples, John 14:16-17; 16:13-14. (5) The New Testament reveals a Father who is God (Romans 1:7), a Son who is God (Hebrews 1:8), and a Holy Spirit who is God (Acts 5:3-4). Other references are made to the Trinity in John 14:26-27; 15:26; 16:13; Luke 3:21-22; Acts 2:33. One writer has summed up the Biblical teachings of this doctrine in these words: "The Father is all the fulness of the God-head invisible, John 1:18; the Son is all the

fulness of the Godhead manifested, John 1:14-18; the Spirit is all the fulness of the Godhead acting immediately upon the creature, I Corinthians 2:9-10."—Boardman.

3. Relation of persons of the Trinity. The three persons of the Trinity form perfect unity in the Godhead. They are each equally divine, John 1:1; Acts 5:3, 5. They have mutual knowledge and love, Matthew 11:27; I Corinthians 2:10; Matthew 3:17; John 3:3-35; 5:30; Romans 8:27. Their offices are distinct, yet related, I Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 2:18-22. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three separate Gods (for then we would be polytheists) but are one in essence so that the three are a perfect unity. While the word "trinity" does not appear in the Scriptures, the teaching that God is triune is unquestionably there. "Three in One and One in Three."

4. Illustration of the Trinity. Understanding the doctrine of the Trinity is a matter of divine revelation, not human insight. However, it is made clearer when compared with natural things, though no illustration can exactly match the Divine Trinity. The idea of "the three are one" can be seen in that ice, rain, and snow are all water. Height, depth, and breadth are all dimensions of space. Spirit, soul and body compose one man. These, being three, are yet one whole. Even so, the Father, Son and Spirit unite in the one God whom we worship and serve. If a reader does not fully understand the doctrine, let him not dismay. Some evident truths may be believed, though not fully understood, without one being intellectually dishonest.

It has been held that the Trinity is only one person appearing in three forms. In other words, in the Old Testament He is Father; in the New Testament He is Son; in the church age He is Holy Spirit. Such a dispensational trinity cannot be demonstrated by Scripture. Jesus recognizes a Father and Spirit at the same time He knows Himself to be the divine Son. God has eternally been Father, Son and Spirit. Let no one rob you of this blessed Biblical doctrine.

II. THE INSPIRED SCRIPTURES

Which comes first, revelation or the Bible? Revelation is first. The Bible comes because God gave a revelation to men and is the record of that revelation. By "inspiration"

the revelation given to man is recorded in human speech by means of writing. Inspiration is, therefore, the supernatural communication of truth to the mind of man plus the influence which makes him able to communicate it without error. It is through this manner that the Holy Bible came to be written: God communicated truth to the mind of man and then guarded him from error as he wrote it down. Thus it is said that the scriptures are the very "Word of God."

1. An inspired Bible. The Bible is inspired of God, the Old Testament as well as the new, II Peter 1:21; II Timothy 3:16. This inspiration to be able to write the Word of God was the direct consequence of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Men did not merely decide to write some sacred scripture. They wrote as God moved upon them in the person of His Spirit. There are many proofs of inspiration. (1) Jesus vouches for the inspiration of the Old Testament by quoting it with authority. See Matthew 5:18. (2) Jesus promised the disciples would have the supernatural aid of the Holy Spirit in their teaching ministry just as the prophets experienced His help, Matthew 10:19; John 17:8; 20:22. (3) The apostles claim to have received the Holy Spirit and to have written under his authority so that their writings are equal to the Old Testament writings in inspiration, I Corinthians 11:23; 14:37-38; Galatians 1:12; I Thessalonians 4:2, 8.

The word "inspiration" means "breathed-in" and speaks of the Spirit's ministry when He puts within one the message of God. Since the contents of the Bible are nothing other than the very words of God, it must be treated with great respect. There is, indeed, such a thing as divinely inspired scripture. We have it in our Bible. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God . . ." II Timothy 3:16.

2. An infallible Bible. We believe the Bible to be the infallible Word of God. As "infallible" means "incapable of mistakes; exempt from error; unerring," we believe the Bible to be perfectly true and correct. There is no false doctrine approved and propagated therein. Jesus once said of God's Word, "Thy word is truth," John 17:17. The Psalmist testifies, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul," Psalm 19:7. No one can prove the Word of God to be erroneous on any point of its teaching.

There are some who question the reliability

of parts of the Bible. They say, "The Bible contains the Word of God, but is not wholly His word. We must study and test it to see which part is reliable and which is not." This is slanderous blasphemy against God's divinely-given revelation of Himself. No Bible-believing Christian should be led astray by such unbelief.

To say the Bible is exempt from error does not mean any particular translation (called a "version") is infallible. Translations are made by men and are subject to the limitations of finite men. But the original text, as God gave it, is a true and perfect revelation of eternal truth. Read Matthew 24:35. This is another reason why it is important for students of God's word to study it in the original languages in which it was written.

3. A verbally inspired Bible. There are several theories regarding the inspiration of the Bible. (1) The dynamical theory holds that the Spirit inspired the thought and each writer was left to his own ability in its expression. (2) The mechanical theory holds that the writers were mere secretaries who received dictation and put it down without change. (3) The naturalistic theory is that men simply wrote their higher thoughts and these gradually came to be collected into a Bible without divine aid anywhere along the line. (4) The plenary (full) verbal (word-by-word) theory is that God gave man the idea and then guided him in its expression. At the same time the words were chosen by the writer and by the Spirit. Every word is from man (who used his natural vocabulary and style) and from God (who kept the words from error and assured that the exact message would be conveyed). This last theory of inspiration is the one held by most Baptists.

Paul held to a verbal inspiration of the Bible for he says the words, not just the ideas, were inspired, I Corinthians 2:7-15. The Spirit infallibly guided the choice of words from the writer's own vocabulary. Though a man's words were used, the real speaker in the Scriptures is the Holy Spirit, Hebrews 3:7; 10:15-16. The more one studies the Bible the more amazed he becomes at the accuracy of the grammar (verb tenses, etc.) and words used to express the precise thought intended. The Bible shines with a perfection in which the turn of a word reveals the very thought of God! It may

be read, believed and obeyed without doubts. It is the very word of God!

III. THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION

Genesis 1-2 record the Biblical account of creation. This account should be read before pursuing this topic of study. We believe this Biblical account to be a factual and true record of the origin of all things. It is being assailed today by unbelievers. Christians should study this matter so as to be able to give a reason for their loyalty to this sacred record.

1. Characteristics. An examination of the Genesis account of creation may well increase appreciation for its beauty, stateliness, and truth. These qualities are suggested for study: (1) The origin of the universe is in the creative act of God, Genesis 1:1ff.; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 11:3. (2) The Genesis account is written in non-technical language as if intended for common men. (3) It is highly poetic and figurative. (4) It is pre-scientific, but not anti-scientific, and does not argue scientific matters. (5) It is in partial, outline form. The whole account is only 1500 words, two chapters, and one six-hundredth part of the total Bible. (6) It is marked by dignity and moral exaltation when compared to creation myths of other ancient religions. (7) It is wonderfully accurate and reserved in detail, presenting basic truths without bothering to answer questions of idle curiosity. (8) It is pre-eminently religious. God is at the center of all and man is made in His image and likeness. To read the creation account in Genesis is to stand amazed before the demonstration of God's power and purpose.

2. Purpose. Why did God create a universe, including man? The Bible gives a two-fold answer: for redemption and for glory. (1) God created the world for man and created man that He might redeem him. Creation and redemption are parts of one great plan, John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16; Revelation 4-5. God knew the man He would create would sin and fall, but created him anyway that He might redeem him into His family by grace. Therefore, the man who rejects God's offer of grace in Christ Jesus misses the very thing for which he was brought into existence. (2) God created the world for His own glory. This was no selfish manifestation of Himself because He is primarily glorified by blessing His creatures.

Creation finds its true purpose in redemption which works to God's glory.

3. Man. The crowning act of God's creative work was the origin of man. There are two accounts of the creation of man in Genesis 1:26-30 and 2:7. These accounts are in perfect agreement and suggest the four facts which follow. (1) Man's creation was immediate so that he did not have to evolve from the brute. Observe that three distinct creative act are attributed to God: material substance, Genesis 1:1; animal life, 1:21; and human life, 1:26-27. The creation of man is as sharply distinguished from animal life as animal life is distinguished from inorganic matter. (2) Man's body was made from earthly material previously created—"the dust of the earth." (3) The soul of man was given directly from God and made him unique from the rest of creation, Genesis 2:7. Since the soul (spirit) came from God, it will return to God at death, Ecclesiastes 12:7. (4) Man was made in the image and likeness of God, Genesis 1:26. Man is like God in that he is a rational and spiritual being with intelligence, rational affection, free will, and a moral sense. These four things mark him as being in God's image. He was made for God and is responsible to God. He will fulfill his high calling only in the will of God. Man is supreme of all God's creation. He exists solely that he might be to the "praise of His glory," Ephesians 1:12.

CONCLUSION—Today's study has dealt with God, God's Word, and God's creation.

It has been set out that God is a trinity in His person—Father, Son and Spirit equally divine and working in perfect unity. Our triune God has given a revelation of Himself by breathing His message into men. This message was then written for posterity. The written account was so superintended by the Holy Spirit that it came from the pens of men without error whatsoever. This record begins with an account of the origin of the universe and all that is therein. This record is true. Next Sunday's study will be concerned with the origin of sin and depravity in the human race. Be sure to study and be in your class for a discussion of "Satan and the Fall of Man."

QUESTIONS

1. What is the subject of study for this quarter?
2. What does "trinity" mean?
3. How can you illustrate the trinity of God?
4. Which came first, revelation or the Bible? Explain.
5. What evidence is there that the Bible is God's inspired word?
6. What do we mean by "infallible" Bible?
7. Is the Old Testament equally inspired with the New Testament?
8. Where is the account of creation found in the Bible?
9. What is meant by, "It is pre-scientific but not anti-scientific"?
10. What were the three distinct creative acts in Genesis 1 and 2?

Keep your Bible open and you will not find the door of heaven shut.

Don't think the Bible is dry inside because it is dusty on the outside.

The most desirable time to read the Bible is as often as possible.

Read it through. Pray it in. Work it out. Note it down. Pass it on.

Satan and the Fall of Man

Aim: The study of Articles 4, 5, 4. The personality of Satan. 5. Hereditary and total depravity of man in his natural state involving his fall in Adam.

Devotional: Servants, Romans 6:14-18.

Lesson Text: Genesis 3:1-7; Romans 5:8-15.

1 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6 And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.

* * * * *

8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

9 Much more then, being now justified by



For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, Romans 3:23.

INTRODUCTION—The man whom God created was placed in the beautiful garden of Eden to be master of all under his heavenly Father's sovereign care. He was given a companion, called woman, to share with him the joys of original human love. But a tragedy occurred! Man is suddenly thrust forth from the garden with no hope of return. He is no longer in fellowship with

his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Je'sus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

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

13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

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

15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Je'sus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

Daily Bible Readings

- Monday: Genesis 3:8-20
- Tuesday: Romans 3:9-20
- Wednesday: Luke 10:17-20
- Thursday: I Peter 5:8-9
- Friday: Revelation 20:1-10
- Saturday: Job 1:6-12

God. The fate of physical death hangs over him. He is a sinner condemned. What happened? Today's lesson answers this question.

Every person must face the problem of sin. He may close his eyes to its reality. He may minimize its seriousness by considering sin a mere "mistake" and a breach of the laws of society. He may admit its seriousness and accept what the Bible says about

it. The Bible says much about sin. It says sin is "transgression, missing the mark, crookedness, rebellion." It says sin is first against God and secondly against man. It says sin blights a man's conscience, disturbs his fellowship with God, and condemns his soul to hell.

Moreover, the Bible says sin is due to the evil influence of a person who heads up all evil forces. We call this person Satan, or the devil. Today's study will deal with the subject "Satan and the Fall of Man." It will set out these basic truths: Satan is a person of supreme evil; Satan brought the fall of man and its attendant consequences; Satan's power is broken in Jesus Christ. This is the story of redemption.

EXPOSITION

I. SATAN'S PERSONALITY

Though many people deny the personality of Satan, the existence, power, and persistence of moral evil in the world is evidence that there is a personal devil. Just as all good is headed up in the person of God, so all evil is headed up in the person of Satan. One who believes the Bible cannot deny this.

There Is A Key (Luke 24:47)



"...BY ONE MAN SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD..."

1. Satan's origin. Whence came the devil? The answer to this question is shrouded in mystery. Two things may be said positively. (1) Satan is a created being. God has created all things, visible and invisible, Colossians 1:16. He alone is self-existent and if Satan was not created, he would have existed eternally with God. (2) God did not create Satan an evil person. Satan became a devil by wilful rebellion against God. There is little information as to when this happened. The Bible is concerned with the origin of sin among men. This is traced back to a Satanic temptation in Eden. Many Bible students look to these scriptures as evidence of Satan's origin: Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:1-19; Colossians 1:16; I Timothy 3:16; II Peter 2:4; Jude 6, 9. Of this much we are sure: At some time in eternity an angel of light rebelled against God and became the leader of forces of darkness.

2. Satan's names. Names given Satan help reveal his character. He is called Abaddon and Apollyon (Revelation 9:11); Beelzebub—prince of demons (Matthew 12:24-27); Belial—vileness (II Corinthians 6:15); Devil—slanderer (Matthew 4:1); Satan—adversary (Zechariah 3:1; I Peter 5:8); Great Dragon (Revelation 12:9); God of this world—age (II Corinthians 4:4); Liar and murderer (John 8:44); Lucifer—light-bearer (Isaiah 14:12); Prince of this world (John 12:31); Prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2); Old Serpent (Revelation 12:9); Tempter (I Thessalonians 3:5); and the Wicked One (Matthew 13:19). His names show him to be a person of exceptional wickedness.

3. Satan's abode. Satan is not presently restricted to any one place. He has access to heaven, Job 1:6; Zechariah 3:1; Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:7-12. He has access to the "heavens," Ephesians 6:11-12. He walks up and down in the earth, Job 1:7: 2:2; I Peter 5:8. His proper place and eventual destiny is hell, Revelation 9:11; Matthew 25:41.

4. Satan's power and work. Satan is the author of sin (Genesis 3:1-6), sickness (Luke 13:16), and death (Hebrews 2:14). He enters into men (John 13:27), blinding their hearts (II Corinthians 4:4) and putting wicked purposes in them (John 13:2; Acts 5:3). He tempts men to sin (Matthew 4). He opposes the influence of the Gospel (Mark 4:15) by harassing and resisting

God's servants (Daniel 10:13; II Corinthians 12:7), hindering them (I Thessalonians 2:18), sifting them (Luke 22:31), and accusing them (Revelation 12:9-10). He seeks to infiltrate good with evil (Matthew 13:25) and transform himself and his ministers into angels of light (II Corinthians 11:14-15). Without doubt, he has great power.

5. Satan's limitations. Satan exercises his power by God's permissive will. He cannot tempt a believer (Matthew 4:1), inflict sickness (Job 1:10, 12), inflict death (Job 2:6; Hebrews 2:14), nor even touch a believer (Job 1:10-12; 2:6; Luke 22:31; I John 5:18) unless God permits it to be so! He is a coward and flees when he is resisted (James 4:7). God has not lost control of the universe to Satan.

6. Satan's defeat is first promised in the Bible in Genesis 3:15. The victory of Jesus on the cross and in His resurrection guarantees Satan's overthrow, John 13:31; Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14; I John 3:8. Satan's power is limited now. He will be confined to the abyss during the millennium, Revelation 20:1-3. After a brief release (Revelation 20:3b, 7-9), he will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, there to be tormented for ever and ever, Revelation 20:10.

7. Satan's opponents. Christians are to be opposed to the work of Satan. They are to be sober and watchful, I Peter 5:8. They must not be ignorant of Satan's methods, II Corinthians 2:11. They must give him no place, Ephesians 4:27. They must firmly resist him, James 4:7; I John 2:13. They must put on the whole armour of God so as to overcome him, Ephesians 6:13-18.

II. MAN'S DEPRAVITY

We believe in the "hereditary and total depravity of man in his natural state involving his fall in Adam."

1. Meaning of depravity. "Hereditary and total depravity" means that man's entire nature—mental, moral, spiritual, physical—is sadly affected by sin. It does not mean a man is born already guilty of sin, nor already condemned to hell, nor even as bad as he can be. It does not mean he has no conscience, nor the absence of any moral qualities, nor that he is prone to every kind of sin.

Hereditary and total depravity does not mean that infants who die are lost in hell. Bible believing Christians agree that a child

who has not reached the age of responsibility is not guilty of personal sin. So long as there is no guilt there can be no condemnation. The grace of God keeps in peace those who die in infancy.

"Hereditary and total depravity" means every man is helpless, by virtue of his inheritance as a human being, outside the provisions of God's saving grace. His whole nature—body, soul, and spirit—are weakened and warped in the direction of sin. It is, as William Evans has written, "The understanding is darkened (Ephesians 4:18; I Corinthians 2:14); the heart is deceitful and wicked (Jeremiah 17:9-10); the mind and conscience are defiled (Genesis 6:5; Titus 1:15); the flesh and spirit are defiled (II Corinthians 7:5); the will is enfeebled (Romans 7:18); and we are utterly destitute of any Godlike qualities which meet the requirements of God's holiness (Romans 7:18)." Total depravity means all of man's faculties are weakened toward sin and without divine aid, each man will forever sink deeper into sin.

2. Beginning of depravity. Depravity came through the fall of man. The Biblical account of this fall is recorded in Genesis 3 and interpreted in Romans 5:12-19; 3:10-23, and elsewhere. Sin was already in the devil, but when Adam and Eve yielded to Satan's enticement and ate the forbidden fruit, sin entered into human experience. Their sin was a voluntary act of the will. They exalted their will above God's will, deliberately transgressing a divinely marked boundary. By so doing, they became depraved in their own minds and unfit for fellowship with God.

Genesis 3 records the effects of the sin of the first humans. There were six immediate effects of their sin: conscience was awakened, a fig-leaf covering was attempted; shame possessed them; fear assailed them; they sought to hide; they sought to justify themselves. There were remote consequences of the sin also. These included: a curse upon the serpent, the woman, the man, and the ground; banishment of man from the garden; institution of sacrificial worship; promise of a redeemer; birth of children sharing the depravity of their parents; separation from the visible presence of God; physical and spiritual death. Through the sin of Adam and Eve, the whole human race is born depraved.

3. Scope of depravity. Since depravity is inherited, it is universal among men. Men are born into a sin-depraved world and are by nature children of wrath, Psalm 51:5; Ephesians 2:3. Sin is a universal experience among human beings who reach the age of responsibility, Romans 3:9. No honest man can deny that he, too, is the subject of depravity, Psalm 14:1ff.; Luke 11:13; Matthew 6:12; Jeremiah 17:9.

Depravity (weakness in the direction of sin) results in the commission of acts of sin. The seriousness of these acts of sin is revealed in that by sin a man is alienated from God, degraded, disrupted in his social relations, suffering in body and mind, and condemned already to death. Sin is most serious. It is a problem with which all human beings must deal. If a man is naturally depraved and void of those qualities of spirit which commend him to God, where is there hope for him? The answer can lie only in Jesus Christ. Praise God, He is sufficient to save all men who believe!

III. CHRIST'S ATONEMENT

God alone fully understands the meaning of depravity and the condemnation which sin deserves. Though He is moved by divine justice, He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, Ezekiel 33:11. It is not His will that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, II Peter 3:9. Therefore, He looked with merciful love upon a world of mankind condemned to eternal death by their sins and moved in grace to redeem them. Read Romans 5:8-15.

1. Man's need. Man desperately needed help. He was "ungodly" (without God's approval and help), a "sinner" (guilty of missing the mark set by God's holy law), and an "enemy" (rebelling against the known demands of God's righteousness). In such a condition he was "without hope in the world," Ephesians 2:12. Due to his depraved condition, his eyes were blinded so that he did not realize the dread seriousness of his plight and could not perceive the glorious light of the gospel, II Corinthians 4:4. Bound helplessly in sin, he needed a Saviour.

2. God's love. "God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us," Romans 5:8. The motive for salvation is not found in the goodness of man but in the grace of God.

God loved us first, before we ever loved Him, and moved to redeem us. His love is not a weak, sentimental, selfish emotion. It is a mighty force which moved across the centuries in a redemptive plan which is effective for all who believe. His love is sacrificial, giving Jesus unto death. His love is universal, embracing all of mankind. His love is persistent, seeking out the lost sheep. His love is redemptive, reclaiming all who have departed and who will return.

3. Christ's sacrifice. The story of the cross of Jesus is so familiar that it need not be repeated here. Paul simply refers to it in such expressions as, "Christ died for us" and "we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." It is, indeed, through the Lord Jesus Christ that we have received the atonement. The glorious truth of the gospel is that Christ died for our sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. I Peter 3:18. His sacrifice was for men, all men, depraved men, undeserving men. His sacrifice was valid for ". . . through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all who believe are justified from all things . . ." Acts 13:38b-39a. He is the Saviour of all who repent and trust Him.

4. Man's hope. Paul is careful to point out the seriousness of Adam's sin and man's condition as a consequence. Indeed, by the one man sin came into the world and passed upon all men because all have sinned. However, in Christ Jesus man has received much more than he lost in Adam! By the offence of the first Adam, death came. By the sacrifice of the second Adam (Jesus Christ), life is available. In Jesus the believer finds deliverance over the devil and human depravity: "That as sin hath reigned through death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord," Romans 5:21.

CONCLUSION—There is a personal devil who has set his designs to ruin man eternally. He tempted our forefathers—Adam and Eve—and through their Fall the whole race of mankind suffers under a depravity toward sin. He is active in opposition to righteousness and the influence of the Gospel. By his influence and power, men are blinded to God's offer of mercy and bound in the habits of sin. Their only hope is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth as the Saviour. In Christ Jesus, mankind gains much more

than was lost in Adam's sin for in Christ he becomes a very child of God. Next Sunday's study will set out the ministry of the Holy Spirit in his relationship to God and man. Be sure to study the lesson and join the class discussion of this important subject: "The Holy Spirit."

QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by, "The devil is a person"?
2. What was the origin of the devil?
3. How do his names reveal his character?
4. Wherein lies Satan's defeat?
5. What is "hereditary and total depravity"?
6. Whence came depravity upon mankind?
7. Does depravity mean infants who die are lost in hell? Explain.
8. Why did man need a Saviour?
9. How is a man saved?
10. How does a man gain more in Christ than he lost in Adam?

When the devil calls, let Jesus answer the door.

The devil's best work is done by many who claim to love the Lord.

"Tell the devil to get out and he's got to go!" (a child's version).

The biggest trouble with sin is the I in the middle of it.

Roman Dogma Versus Bible Doctrine

E. Harold Henderson



This timely book, written by the writer of the Adult Sunday School Quarterly, should be widely distributed. These studies were originally delivered as radio messages on the Central Baptist Hour, from Lubbock, Texas.

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Lesson III

The Divine Son

Aim: The study of Articles 6, 8, 7. 6. The virgin birth and deity of Jesus Christ. 8. His bodily resurrection and ascension back to His Father. 7. Christ's blood atonement for fallen man.

Devotional: The Good Shepherd, John 10:17-18.

Lesson Text: Matthew 1:18-25; Hebrews 1:1-4.

18 Now the birth of Je'sus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mar'y was es-poused to Jo'seph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Jo'seph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Jo'seph, thou son of Da'vid, fear not to take unto thee Mar'y thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JE'SUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Em-man'u-el, which being interpreted is, God with us.

24 Then Jo'seph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JE'SUS.

* * * * *

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Daily Bible Readings

- Monday: Luke 2:1-7
- Tuesday: Matthew 21:1-11
- Wednesday: I Corinthians 15:12-20
- Thursday: Romans 1:8-17
- Friday: Hebrews 9:25-28
- Saturday: Acts 1:1-9



This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him, Matthew 17:5c.

INTRODUCTION—"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given . . ." Isaiah 9:6a. These glad words must have chorused through the heart of Mary when, in Bethlehem, "she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger . . ." Luke 2:7a. There was something wonderfully different about this child. Before His birth the angel Gabriel had named Him, "The Son of the Highest," Luke 1:32. Upon further angelic instruction He was named "Jesus" by His foster-father, Joseph, Matthew 1:21. Another angelic messenger announced His birth to lowly shep-

herds calling Him, "a Saviour . . . Christ, the Lord," Luke 2:11. Many years after, God the Father spoke from heaven to testify, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," Matthew 3:17b. Today's study seeks to make this a blessed Christmas season by devoting special attention to Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of God.

Jesus Christ is the heart and life of the Christian religion. "It owes its life and character at every point to Him. Its convictions are convictions about Him. Its hopes are hopes which He has inspired and which it is for Him to fulfill. Its ideals are born

of His teaching and His life. Its strength is the strength of His spirit."—James Denney.

A true Christian is personally related to Christ. Through Him has come salvation (Acts 4:12) on the merits of His sacrifice (Ephesians 1:7). In Him one is made a new creature (II Corinthians 5:17). Only in Him can one have access to the Father (John 14:13; 15:16; Hebrews 10:19-25). No wonder those who serve Him are called "Christians"—"Imitators of Christ."

Recent lessons have developed the truths of the rapture, resurrections, judgments, and final destiny. Christian hope made each lesson bright. Such hope is built, however, on the birth, life, sacrifice, and resurrection of Jesus. This is the theme of today's study.

EXPOSITION

I. INCARNATE IN THE FLESH, Matthew 1:18-25.

1. Pre-existence. The birth of Jesus Christ was not the beginning of His existence. He existed before Abraham lived—2,000 years before His birth to Mary, John 8:58. In eternity, before time began in the creation, He dwelt with the Father in glory, John 17:5. The Father loved Him before creation occurred, John 17:24. His birth to Mary was



because the Father's will "sent" Him into the world, John 17:3. Jesus said of Himself what no other man can ever say, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last," Revelation 22:13. From eternity before time unto eternity beyond time, He is the same—yesterday, today and forever, Hebrews 13:8. Jesus is the eternal Son of God whose existence as a person does not depend upon His physical birth.

2. Prediction. The birth of Jesus was foretold. Prophets told of the tribe, town, family line, and other details concerning the birth of Jesus. See Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Micah 5:2; and others. His birth was also foretold to Mary (Luke 1:26-38) and to Joseph (Matthew 1:20-25), including the announcement that the baby would be a boy whose name would be Jesus! Repeatedly, the writers of the Gospel records state, "This was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets . . ." From many centuries before His birth to a few months therefrom, God's plan developed in such perfect order that exact predictions were possible concerning the coming of the Messiah!

3. Problems. One can imagine Joseph's amazement when he learned that Mary was to bear a child. The wedding had not yet been consummated. Surely he thought she had betrayed his love. His resolve to stop the wedding plans was halted only by an angelic message informing him that Mary was to bear the Christ child.

It seems very likely that Mary also suffered because of the seemingly untimely conception. One can imagine how the tongues of the gossips of Nazareth wagged! No, it is not always easy to walk in the way of God. But Mary had already vowed, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word," Luke 1:38. They took no time to offer explanations to those about them, but waited patiently for the birth of a child who was the Divine Son of God.

4. Metaphysical. The birth of Jesus Christ was supernatural. Gabriel explained it to Mary in these words, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God," Luke 1:35. Jesus was conceived as a man without the agency of a human father. In fact, no coitus

of any kind, natural or supernatural, took place. The will of God expressed itself in His power by enabling Mary to conceive and bear the Messiah. The angel said, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee . . ." but nowhere is the Holy Spirit called the father of Jesus. Jesus is the "Son of God," not because His paternity was of the Holy Spirit, but because of His eternal pre-existent relationship with the Father.

5. Excitement. The birth of the Lord Jesus aroused excitement among angels and men. As if heaven could not contain the blessed news, an angel came to announce His birth. But not one angel, mind you, but "a multitude of the heavenly hosts," announcing peace on earth among men and glory to God because His grace had produced a Saviour.

Some among men caught the vision also. Shepherds hastened away from their flocks to see the one born "a Saviour . . . Christ the Lord," Luke 2:15-17. Even men from a foreign country came to see Him and adore Him when they had seen His star from their Eastern home, Matthew 2:1-12. Cruel rulers who feared the increase of righteousness were also excited by His birth and sought to destroy Him, Matthew 2:3-8, 13-18. Yes, angels and men were excited by the birth of the Messiah, some to good deeds and some to evil.

6. Promise. The birth of Jesus Christ is the hope of the world. The angel which appeared to Joseph promised that this baby which Mary would bear "would save his people from their sins," Matthew 1:21. The angel Gabriel promised Mary that her child "shall be called the Son of God," Luke 1:35. These promises came true. It was not until thirty years afterward that Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah. Approximately three years later He was crucified. Three days after burial, He arose from the grave. Now He ever lives to make intercession for us and is, indeed, the hope of the world.

7. Deity. The birth of Jesus as a man does not deny His divine nature. "The Word was God," John 1:1c. This statement is eternally true. The fact that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us so that His glory could be beheld does not obscure the fact that Jesus Christ is the Divine Son of God. "The virgin birth was a special miracle wrought by the Third Person of the Trinity, whereby the Second Person of the Trinity, the eternal son of God, took to Himself a genuine and

complete human nature, and was born as a man, without surrendering in any way His complete divine nature."—Baker's Dictionary of Theology. The entire Gospel of John was written to produce faith that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, John 20:31. In the incarnation God was revealed in human flesh unto the redemption of sinners, Philipians 2:5-11.

II. VICTORIOUS OVER SIN, Hebrews 1:1-4.

1. Pure from sin. The personal life of Jesus Christ was unspotted by sin. His experiences in human flesh were not limited to a manger bed, choiring angels, amazed shepherds, and adoring wisemen. He grew to manhood and lived as a man in the midst of man's daily cares. Yet, in it all He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth," I Peter 2:22. This does not mean He was not tempted as are other men. (See Matthew 4.) On the contrary, He "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," Hebrews 4:15b. He was not manifested to sample man's sins, but to take them away. To do this, He must remain pure. His victory over sin assures us that we, too, will surely triumph in Him.

2. Penalty for sin. God hath set Jesus forth to be a propitiation for sins through faith in His blood, Romans 3:25. To perform this purpose, He went to the cross where He died. "the Just for the unjust," that He might bring us to God, I Peter 3:18. "The Babe of the Manger" and "the Christ of the Cross" are the same divine person! In His atoning death, God permitted the sinless Lord Jesus to become a sin-offering for guilty men so that they might receive forgiveness. Christians may joyfully proclaim, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law . . ." (Galatians 3:13a) so that, "there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus . . ." Romans 8:1.

3. Power over sin. Jesus could not be held in the clutches of death. He laid down His life as a sin-offering, but He also took it up again to be a living Redeemer, Acts 2:24; John 10:17-18. Because He has paid the penalty for sin, now living with the keys of death and hell, He is able to forgive. The pronouncement of Jesus, and the experience of the redeemed, is that "the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," Mark

2:10. Being able to save to the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25), He alone can be our Saviour, Acts 4:12.

4. Power over death. The babe of Bethlehem grew into the man of Nazareth. In due time, He became the sin-offering victim on the cross at Calvary. He died. His body was hastily prepared for burial as the Sabbath was drawing near. He was placed in a tomb. But, upon the first day of the week certain women found His tomb empty. He had arisen from the dead! To all believers He testifies, "Because I live, ye shall live also," John 14:19b. Again He bears witness, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death," Revelation 1:18. He has gained the victory already, and we gain it through Him! See John 5:24-29.

5. Power to forgive. Jesus has the ability to bestow forgiveness wherein the guilt of sin is completely removed. Paul alludes to this in Romans 8:1. The reason one "in Christ Jesus" has "no condemnation" is because there is no guilt of sin imputed to him. Through faith in Him, each believer is freely forgiven every sin, Acts 13:39. Not only has Jesus power to forgive, He is also willing to forgive. No one who comes to Him is ever cast away, John 6:37. In His grace, those sins which are as scarlet find themselves made as white as snow, Isaiah 1:18.

6. Deliverance from bondage. "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death," Romans 8:2. Paul argues in Romans 6 that, in salvation, Christ delivers us from sin's dominion as well as from its penalty. This is the message of this holiday season: In the Lord Jesus, God's grace has provided complete deliverance from sin's penalty, bondage, and even from its presence after the rapture. Blessed message indeed!

III. SAVIOUR OF MEN, I John 1:9-2:2.

The angels announced the birth of a "Saviour." Though the verses given above are not in the lesson text, they should be considered as a part of this study and in exposition of the seventh Article given in the Lesson Aim: "Christ's blood atonement for fallen man." How can a man be saved?

1. Confession, verse 9. Though God knows

all, He wishes that we admit our sin and need of mercy ere forgiveness is granted. Hence confession and faith walk hand in hand in the redeeming miracle, Romans 10:9-13. He who refuses to confess his sins and need of grace will never enjoy the forgiveness which grace brings. Covering sins brings judgment but confessing them moves mercy, Proverbs 28:13. The confession of sins is to be made to God and not to man. After all, only God is able to forgive so He alone needs to hear our admission of need and call for mercy.

2. Jesus, verse 2. Forgiveness comes only through Jesus. There is no other name mentioned among men which brings redemption save the name of Jesus, Acts 4:12. He alone has the words of eternal life (John 6:68) and God cannot be approached except through Him, John 14:6. It is in Him only that a sinner can receive the righteousness of God, II Corinthians 5:21. As enticing as other plans may sound, a man is saved through Jesus Christ or he is never saved at all. It is Jesus only, but He is enough!

3. Blood, verse 2. "He is the propitiation for our sins." The word of God says that salvation is through the blood of Jesus, Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:18-20; etc. Jesus Himself said, "My blood . . . is shed for many for the remission of sins," Matthew 26:28. God adds that without the shedding of blood there is no remission, Hebrews 9:22. Paul says Jesus is the One, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood . . ." Romans 4:25a. Men may deny it, ignore it, contest it, debate it, or believe it. Their opinions make no difference! God's Word still says that there is no forgiveness of sins apart from the atonement which Jesus brought by His sacrifice on the cross. This sacrifice is demonstrated in His shed blood. All Old Testament sacrifices predicted it. Those who believe have experienced it: "redemption through His blood," Ephesians 1:7.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the religion about Jesus called "Christianity"?
2. What does "pre-existence" mean as related to Christ?
3. What two angelic appearances announced the coming birth of Jesus?
4. What is the meaning of "virgin birth"?
5. How did Jesus become the penalty for our sins?

The Holy Spirit

Aim: The study of Article 9. 9. The person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Devotional: Scaled, Ephesians 4:30-32.

Lesson Text: John 14:16-26.

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

22 Ju'das saith unto him, not Is-car'i-ot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Je'-sus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

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

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: Acts 2:1-4

Tuesday: Acts 10:44-48

Wednesday: I Corinthians 6:19-20

Thursday: Romans 8:14-17

Friday: I John 2:18-20

Saturday: Ephesians 1:13-14



But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 14:26.

INTRODUCTION—Today, the study deals with a most glorious topic: "the person and work of the Holy Spirit." Many sincere Bible students have overlooked this blessed Bible doctrine though it holds a large place in the sacred Scriptures. Today's study is approached prayerfully that this subject may bring a revival in the heart of each one who reads. Here is the secret to Christian victory: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts," Zechariah 4:6.

Even a study concerning the Holy Spirit must depend upon Him as the teacher. The carnal mind of man is alien to the things of God, Romans 8:5-7. Spiritual truth is perceived, not by mere human wisdom, but

by that spiritual insight which the Holy Spirit alone can inspire, I Corinthians 2:9-14. It is one phase of His ministry to guide believers into all truth, John 14:26. There is no other theme in the whole gamut of Biblical theology which is the basis of such vast blessing to the believer as the truths of the person and work of God's Spirit.

This lesson is closely related to the first lesson studied this quarter. Therein it was set out that God is a Trinity: Father, Son, and Spirit. It is related to the second lesson studied also. Therein it was observed that the defeat of Satan and the solution to the sin problem of mankind rested in Jesus Christ (whose physical birth was due to the Spirit's work, Luke 1:34-35) and the salva-

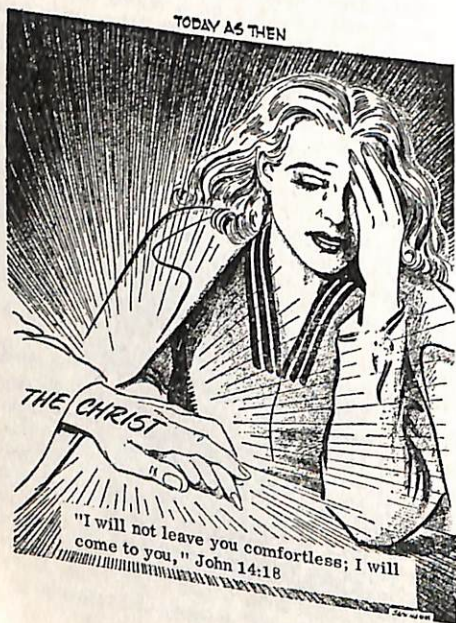
tion of those who believe. The approach to the lesson will not be a verse-by-verse commentary on the Lesson Text.

EXPOSITION

I. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON

Personality refers to one's existence as a complete character in himself. Our insistence that the Holy Spirit is a "person" is an insistence that He has a conscious existence and qualities which show Him to be a complete person in Himself. He is no mere "holy influence," but is as much a person as is the Father or the Son.

1. His attributes. The Spirit's personality is manifest in the personal attributes associated with Him. The Bible shows the Spirit has many of the same attributes as men, including: understanding (I Corinthians 2:10-11), will (I Corinthians 12:11), affection and emotion (Ephesians 4:30), moral appreciation (John 16:8), and like matters. These traits distinguish between a person and an impersonal object. As the Spirit has them, we can say emphatically that He is a person. He is more than a "divine influence" from God. He is a person. The fact that He is unseen does not mean He is unreal.



2. His work. The work which the Holy Spirit performs shows He is an intelligent person. The Holy Spirit hears (John 16:13), speaks (Acts 10:19ff.), intercedes (Romans 8:26), teaches (Luke 12:12; John 14:26), comforts (John 16:7), guides (John 16:13), reveals truth (John 16:14-15), calls to the ministry (Acts 13:2), sets pastors over churches (Acts 20:28), and other such acts. It seems that only ignorance or prejudice could keep one from admitting that One who can think, know, speak, reveal, command, strive, move, help, guide, create, sanctify, inspire, make intercession, raise the dead, and like matters, is a Divine Person. The Holy Spirit's work proves He is neither divine influence nor written word, but "very God of very God"—the third person of the Godhead!

3. References to Him. The Holy Spirit is referred to by use of the third person masculine pronoun, "HE." In John 16:13-14 Jesus refers to the Spirit as "he" no less than nine times. This shows Jesus thought of the Spirit as a person. Impersonal objects (as furniture, grass, wind, influence, power, and reputation) are called "it," not "he." They do not have personality. A man is not called "it" because he is a person. Thus the repeated references in the Bible in which the Holy Spirit is called "he" is evidence that the Spirit is a person. Any translation of Scripture which refers to the Spirit as "it" is incorrect in this point.

But is it really important whether the Spirit is a person or an influence? Yes, indeed! (1) It makes Him more real to know He is a person, and encourages our dependence upon Him. (2) It underscores the seriousness of rejection of the Spirit's leading. He who rejects the Spirit is rejecting God just as certainly as if he rejected a call of Jesus in visible form. (3) It makes Christians more dependent upon His ministry and so empowers their lives. (4) It reveals the heresy of those who deny the reality of the person of the Holy Spirit of God.

II. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A DIVINE PERSON

This truth is evident in a declaration of a belief in a Trinity composed of Father, Son and Spirit. The Spirit, as much as the

Father and the Son, is God!

1. His name. The name of "God" is given Him. The Spirit is called "God" in Acts 5:3. 5. Paul makes the same type of reference in Romans 8:9-11. He is not "the Spirit of God" in the same sense an angel is "an angel of God"—in the sense of ownership—but He is personally of a divine nature.

2. His perfections. The perfections of God are ascribed to Him. He knows all things, even the deep things of God, I Corinthians 2:10-11. He is powerful beyond understanding, Romans 15:19. He is ever-present all over the universe, Psalm 139:7-11. Now these traits of wisdom, eternal existence, ability, and omnipresence are attributed elsewhere only to God. And yet, they are the perfections of the Holy Spirit. This shows the Holy Spirit and God are co-equal personages. Father, Son, and Spirit share all the attributes of the Godhead.

3. His works. The works which God alone can do are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. These include creation (Genesis 1:2), casting out demons (Matthew 12:28), conviction of sin (John 16:8), regeneration (John 3:8; Titus 3:5), and resurrection (Romans 8:11). This is proof that the Holy Spirit is a person who is divine in His nature. He is God. He is One with God. Who but God could do works like these?

4. His worship. The same reverence and worship ascribed to the Father and Son are likewise ascribed to the Holy Spirit. The Great Commission equates the divine name (authority) of Father, Son, and Spirit, Matthew 28:19-20. If the baptismal observance is an act of worship, here worship is ascribed to the Spirit. The apostolic benediction expressed in II Corinthians 13:14 includes the three persons of the Trinity. Since apostolic benedictions are prayers, there prayer is addressed to the Spirit. The Spirit is due all the reverence and worship paid to the Father and the Son. He is co-equal with them, a divine person, and worthy to receive worship.

5. His rejection. Matthew 12:22-32 identifies the "unpardonable sin" with "sin against the Holy Spirit." The sin which is "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven unto men," verse 31. Why is such a sin so serious? Because the Spirit is God! Moreover, He is the person of the Godhead who makes effective the grace of God the Father and the sacrifice of God the Son

so that a sinner can be saved. Blaspheming the Spirit would be no more serious than blaspheming a preacher of the Gospel if the Spirit was not divine. Yet because He is God, and so intimately related to man's redemption, it is eternally tragic to blaspheme Him.

III. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A WITNESS

1. His companionship. As Jesus was the Christians' companion before His ascension, the Holy Spirit became their companion afterwards, John 14:16-17. The King James version of the Bible translates as "Comforter" a word which actually means "Companion," "one called alongside to help." This new Companion, who is identified as the Holy Spirit, was to take the place vacated by Jesus' ascension. His coming and continued presence since that day is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise, "I will not leave you comfortless (companionless orphans)." The Holy Spirit constantly, unceasingly, dwells within every believer so that no Christian is ever alone!

2. His ministry. Verse 18 of the lesson text assures the disciples that Jesus would come to them in the ministry of the Spirit. That is, the Spirit would continue the work Jesus was doing. He was to be to the disciples of all generations what Jesus was to those disciples in Palestine: companion, teacher, and guide. This is the Spirit's ministry today. He superintends the lives of God's children in this twentieth century as surely as Jesus superintended the original disciples. His ministry is presently exercised. It is an error to pray for the presence of God's Spirit. He is already here. Pray rather for a spirit of submission that His leading may be manifest in worship and service.

3. His revelation of God. Verse 19 assures Christians that they will see Jesus day by day. This promise is not realized with the physical eye, but with the eye of faith by which we know of the Spirit's presence and ministry. By His ministry, we see God in the Word, in nature, in the workings of providence. In periods of personal devotion the Holy Spirit brings such inspiration to our hearts that it seems almost that heaven is open so that God can be seen! Think how blighted and limited our spiritual lives would

be today if it were not for the Holy Spirit. With no Bible, with no understanding of spiritual things, with no Companion, with no help in prayer, how desperate would be our condition. Praise God for His wonderful Spirit!

4. His revelation to believers. The ministry of the Holy Spirit to believers includes their instruction, John 16:13-14. Only He can set out our relationship with the Father and the Son so we can understand and rejoice in it. He "bears witness along with our spirit, that we are the children of God," Romans 8:16. He makes the things of God real. He illuminates our minds as we study and pray, making an understanding of the Word possible. He closes doors and opens doors in our lives to show the way God's will would lead. But most precious of all, He makes God real! The Christian's relationship to God is not based solely upon a conversion experience which may have happened long ago, but upon the daily witness of God through the Spirit.

5. His leadership. The Spirit always leads believers in the way of obedience, verses 21-24. He who knows God, loves Jesus, and follows the leading of the Holy Spirit, will live a life of full obedience, Galatians 5:22-23. The Spirit never leads one contrary to the principles of the Word. He never leads one except in accord with the principles of truth. He who neglects God's church, ceases to pray for sinners, turns aside to false doctrines, or adopts practices unworthy of Christian conduct is proving that he follows not the Spirit. The Spirit's leadership is extended to every Christian. It can be rejected and the Spirit grieved. It can be followed and the believer blessed and God honored. How shall it be in your life?

6. His instruction. It is the Spirit who enables believers to understand the things of God, verses 25-28. His teaching ministry is extremely important. One cannot do God's will unless he knows God's will. The Spirit instructs that He might qualify and lead us into service. He is the only adequate teacher of the Word. He inspired its writing, I Peter 1:21; II Timothy 3:16. He alone understands the deep things of God, and He alone is able to communicate these deep truths to us, I Corinthians 2:10-14. He who reads the Bible should do so with the prayerful expectation that the Spirit will be his teacher. Such an approach to the Scriptures

will bring forth choice gems in the oldest and most familiar texts as well as in the new. It is not the wisdom of men, but the instruction of the Spirit, which makes one a true Bible scholar.

IV. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS INTERJACENT

As an interjacent, the Holy Spirit stands between man and God. Like the Lord Jesus, He is there to represent God before men and to represent men before God. In this position, He is vitally related to our salvation and service.

1. He convicts. John 16:8-11 describes the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit as a three-fold ministry. (1) He convicts of the sinfulness of unbelief. It is unbelief, not the so-called "bad" sins, which condemns the soul, John 3:18. Sins of the flesh are but the demonstration of the corrupt inner heart of unbelief, Luke 6:45. Salvation does not come because one quits his evil deeds, but because he quits his unbelief—he trusts Jesus as Saviour, John 3:14-18, 36; 5:24. (2) The Spirit convicts men concerning the kind of righteousness which God demands. Man can have only one of two kinds of righteousness: self-righteousness or divine righteousness. Self-righteousness separates one from God. It is as "filthy rags" before God and keeps men from submitting to God's offer of righteousness, Isaiah 64:6; Romans 10:3. When one stands before God, only the righteousness which comes by Jesus Christ will be sufficient and acceptable, Philippians 3:7-9. (3) The Holy Spirit convicts men of God's judgment against sin. This judgment is certain, Hebrews 9:27. It will be by righteous standards, Acts 17:31. Each person will stand before God to give a personal account of himself alone, Romans 14:10, 12. The Holy Spirit warns men of this and seeks to prepare them for the judgment. This is His "convicting" (convincing) work.

2. He calls. Romans 8:28-30 says the chain of redemption stretches from eternity to eternity and includes these links: foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification. Observe that the call of God is the center link. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day," John 6:44. A man is drawn by the Holy Spirit. Until one

is called ("drawn") by the Spirit, he will feel no conviction for sin and will not believe to the saving of the soul. It is only those who are called and respond who know assuredly that the Gospel is the power of God, I Corinthians 1:23-24. If any unsaved reader thinks he can be saved any time he gets ready to call upon God, he had better look at these solemn facts again! No one is saved without the call of God. This is why the scriptures admonish, "Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts," Hebrews 4:7.

3. He regenerates. "Regeneration is that act of God by which the governing disposition of the soul is made holy, and by which, through the truth as a means, the first holy exercise of this disposition is secured."—A. H. Strong. It is otherwise called "the new birth," "being born again," "being saved." It is the most glorious of human experiences and is accomplished by the Holy Spirit. This is not to say that the Holy Spirit, as the immediate agent, does not use instrumentality in regeneration. We mean only that the power which regenerates is the power of God and this is made effective by the Holy Spirit. A man who has been saved knows perfectly well that he did not work the change himself. God did it for him!

In salvation, a man hears the Word, I Peter 1:23. The Holy Spirit makes the truth of that word meaningful to him. Thus the hearer is convicted. In response to man's repentance, the Holy Spirit regenerates him by producing faith in his heart. The man exercises this faith and is made "a new creature" in Christ Jesus because the Spirit, in response to faith, produces a moral and spiritual image of Jesus in the penitent believer. So it is seen that in salvation, a man consciously and freely surrenders to Christ as Saviour and Lord. Yet, the conviction, calling, faith and offer of forgiveness are all God's work. Truly, salvation is of the Lord!

4. He sanctifies. Sanctification is consecration or dedication to God. God saves men with the intention that each one would "be conformed to the image of His Son,"—sanctified. In salvation, each Christian is sanctified in that thereby he becomes dedicated to

God. He is further sanctified in that he has an inner purification caused by transformation of character. The Holy Spirit continues to strive with a man, after salvation, to work out in his life the inner sanctification already received. So it is that the same Spirit which regenerates likewise works in the believer to produce full sanctification, II Thessalonians 2:13; I Peter 1:2.

5. He intercedes. It has been pointed out above that the Spirit stands as an interjacent between God and man. He takes the things of God and makes them understandable to man. In like manner, He takes man's praises and prayers and offers them up before God, Romans 8:26-27. Therefore, believers have not only the mediation of the Son but also the intercession of the Spirit. Praise God!

CONCLUSION—All that has been said above concerning the Holy Spirit does not lessen the importance of Jesus nor His sacrifice. He is still the Saviour by whose sacrifice men are redeemed. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the divine Trinity. He makes applicable to man that redemption which has been provided by the grace of the Father and the sacrifice of the Son. As no man can come to God except through Jesus Christ, so no man can come through Jesus Christ, so no man can come through Jesus Christ, so no man can come through Jesus Christ, so no man can come through Jesus Christ. The three are one. To each one, as well as to the three together, man owes his hope of eternity. Thank God He is a God of love and mercy. Thank God He is a Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Observe how this study relates to that designated for next week's lesson.

QUESTIONS

1. Why should we realize the Holy Spirit is a person?
2. How do His attributes and work prove He is a person?
3. Why is it significant that He is a divine person?
4. In what sense is He a "Comforter"?
5. How does He reveal God to believers?
6. What is His relationship to believers?
7. Of what does the Spirit convict the sinner?
8. How does the Spirit call one to Christ?
9. What is His relationship to salvation?
10. What is His relationship to Jesus?

Purchased Salvation

Aim: The study of Articles 10, 11. 10. Justification before God by faith without any admixture of works. 11. Separation of God's children from the world.

Devotional: Constrained, II Corinthians 5:14-21.

Lesson Text: Romans 5:1-11; 6:11-13.

- 1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Je'sus Christ:
- 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.
- 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience;
- 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope:
- 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.
- 6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.
- 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.
- 8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- 9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.
- 10 For if, when we were enemies, we were

reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Je'sus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Je'sus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Daily Bible Readings

- Monday: Ephesians 2:1-7
- Tuesday: Ephesians 2:8-10
- Wednesday: Ephesians 2:11-18
- Thursday: I Peter 2:21-25
- Friday: II Corinthians 6:11-18
- Saturday: Romans 12:1-2

Verse But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, Romans 5:8.

INTRODUCTION—

Saved by His power divine,
 Saved to new life sublime!
 Life now is sweet and my joy is complete,
 For I'm saved, saved, saved!
 These glad words of a grand Christian hymn express the wonder of salvation. The note of gladness and hope are evident therein. Saved people have something to shout about!
 Salvation is possible only because of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for mankind. As the lesson subject suggests, soul salvation is a privilege which has been purchased.

The cost of the redemptive plan is the life of the sinless Son of God, for men are saved only "through His blood," Ephesians 1:7. To be "saved" is to be "safe" and the only place of safety is in the atoning blood of the Lamb, I Peter 1:18-19.
 This study should bring the increasing realization, "It was for me that Jesus died. It was the atonement for my sin which was effected upon the cross." Such a thought should drive us to our knees before Him in sincere confession and full surrender. His death cannot be blamed upon another. He died for sinners across the world and that

includes this writer with each one who reads!

Today's study deals with two points of doctrine: "Justification before God by faith without any admixture of works; Separation of God's children from the world." These two concepts belong together. He who shares in the salvation purchased by God's own Son should have, not salvation only, but sanctification as well. Turn to Romans 5 and let us study together.

EXPOSITION

I. SALVATION'S MEANING, 5:1.

Several words are used to describe salvation: "redemption, forgiveness, atonement, reconciliation," etc. In Romans 5:1, Paul uses the term "justification." The Greek word "justified" has two meanings: (1) to declare righteous—as the pronouncement of a judge in court, (2) to make righteous. Both ideas are reflected in the New Testament usage.

The sinner penitently approaches God through Jesus Christ. He confesses his sin and asks for forgiveness, confident that forgiveness can be obtained because of the sacrifice of Jesus. God looks upon him and, because of his faith, declares him to be no longer under the guilt and condemnation of sin, i.e., declares him righteous. So the penitent,



is saved. That is only one side of the miracle of salvation, however. The act of declaring one righteous is accompanied by (and simultaneous with) the new birth in which one becomes "regenerated" so that he actually is righteous! The person who is saved becomes "a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," II Corinthians 5:17. By being "born again," becoming a new creature in Christ, the believer is actually made righteous. This is the miracle of grace!

The righteousness of the believer is not his own, but the imputed righteousness of God, Romans 4:3. God confers His own righteousness upon the penitent believer, "the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3:9), so that he becomes a "partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," II Peter 1:4. The believer is righteous, not because he suddenly can do righteous deeds, but because God declared and made him pure in salvation. As the prodigal son received a new robe from the father (Luke 15:22), so the justified man is clothed with in by God's righteousness. Justification means I am made "just-as-if-I-had-not-sinned." Praise God for saving grace!

II. SALVATION'S METHOD, 5:1.

Just how is a man saved? The Word answers, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." This does not mean faith justifies, but that God justifies in response to faith.

1. Salvation is God's work in response to a sinner's faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus has set this out so clearly in John 3:14-18. He explains what it means to be "born again." He recalls the incident in Numbers 21:4-9. Israel had sinned against God and deadly, fiery serpents were sent among them as punishment. Scores were dying from the bites of the serpents. Moses prayed and God gave a remedy: a serpent of brass was fashioned and set on a pole. Every person who looked up to this brass serpent was healed of the bite so that he did not die. In like manner, the Son of Man would be crucified that those dying in sin, by looking to Him in faith, would be healed of sin's death.

These verses clearly show unbelief as the soul-condemning sin. Verse 18 says clearly

that whether one is condemned or uncondemned depends upon whether he has believed in Jesus or not. John 3:36 testifies that faith in Jesus brings everlasting life, while unbelief exposes one to the sure wrath of God. John 5:24 points out that hearing God's word and believing is sufficient to take one from the realm of spiritual death and translate him into the eternal life found in Jesus alone. Moreover, one who has been saved in response to faith has no fear of coming into a judgment of condemnation, because he has already made the transfer from death unto life. Yes, God saves us in response to faith in Jesus Christ.

2. Faith must be exercised in Jesus as one's own personal Saviour. One can believe many things about Jesus and still be unsaved. Belief that He lived, died, arose, ascended, saved others, and offers salvation to you is not sufficient. Saving faith is a confident reliance that Jesus now becomes my own Saviour. It means: "(1) I believe Jesus can forgive sin; (2) I believe Jesus can forgive my sin; (3) I believe Jesus is willing to forgive and save me now; (4) I believe that Jesus does, right now, receive and save me because I ask Him to and trust him to." It is not mere belief that Jesus has saved nor that He can save. It is a confident trust Jesus forgives and saves me now. Jesus is not just a Saviour, He is my Saviour. This personal committal is essential to true religion and real salvation.

III. SALVATION'S RESULTS, 5:1-5.

Salvation is not an end, but a beginning, of Christian experience. Like the birth of a new baby, salvation opens an entirely new life. The experience of forgiveness brings kindred blessings.

1. Salvation brings peace with God, verse 1. Paul vividly points out that before salvation all men are "ungodly," "sinners," and even "enemies" of God, Romans 5:6, 8, 10. Living in carnality, mankind is at enmity with God and not subject to His law, Romans 8:7. In Christ Jesus, however, the enmity is overcome and we who were afar off are brought near to God, Ephesians 2:12-18. The result of this reconciliation to God by the death of His Son (Romans 5:10) is that peace is restored. This is a peace different from anything the world has ever experi-

enced. It keeps the heart and mind serene, Philippians 4:6-7. It is the peace which Jesus enjoys and is His special gift to His own, John 14:27.

2. Salvation opens the right of access to God, verse 2a. "Access" means believers can come right into God's presence! No priest or benor minister needs to go there in our behalf. Jesus represents us there and that is enough, I Timothy 2:5. This approach to God is opened because Jesus has died. Through Him we approach God with full confidence and holy boldness, Hebrews 10:19-22. Since Jesus is now in the presence of God, we come into that Blessed Presence in His merit. Therefore, Christians come confidently to God's throne and find it a throne of grace where mercy may be obtained and help for every occasion of need may be found, Hebrews 4:14-16. How blessed that each believer can go into God's presence for himself!

3. Salvation causes rejoicing in hope, verse 2b. Instead of being "without God, and having no hope in the world," the believer can rejoice in his hope. This hope is the anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. It is anchored "within the veil"—the very presence of God—and guarantees His concern. Though Jesus is not now seen, He is real to the believer so that the joy of knowing Him is beyond description and full of glory. I Peter 1:8. Being saved and having one's name written in heaven is a greater occasion for joy than being able to perform miracles, Luke 10:20. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice," Philippians 4:4.

4. Salvation permits spiritual growth under all circumstances, verses 3-4. The Lord never deserts a believer. He is always near and ready to cause circumstances to work out according to His purposes. Every circumstance of life, therefore, is an occasion for spiritual growth. Even tribulation produces patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope, and hope produces unashamed confidence. All things, whether pleasant or unpleasant, teach the believer to trust God more and more. So he is assured that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," Romans 8:28.

5. Salvation keeps a believer from being ashamed, verse 5a. The new experience of a believer in Jesus keeps him from being

ashamed. To know by personal experience the power of God in the Gospel will deliver one from shame in its proclamation, Romans 1:16. The Christian who is embarrassed to speak of Jesus is showing how little fellowship he enjoys with the risen Lord.

6. Salvation makes believers increasingly aware of God's love, verse 5b. The more one learns of God the more amazed he is at the depth of His love for men. To fellowship God is to experience His love and to fall increasingly under the control and influence of His love. Moreover, after salvation, the Holy Spirit of God broadcasts the love of God in the heart and the result is that the believer loves his brethren more and more, I John 4:7-12.

7. Salvation permits the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, verse 5c. The Holy Spirit is "given" (not merited) to each person who is saved. He takes up a permanent residence within each Christian, John 4:14; 7:37-39; Romans 8:9. The physical body of the believer becomes "the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God," I Corinthians 6:19. No one enjoys the indwelling of the Spirit unless he is saved, but every Christian has the promise, "He dwells with you and . . . in you," John 14:17.

IV. SALVATION'S BASIS, 5:6-11.

1. Salvation is based upon the sacrifice of Jesus. Observe the recurring expression "Christ died" in Romans 5:6-11. Herein is the sinner's hope. No one is redeemed without blood, Hebrews 9:22. Therefore, the Christ who knew no sin was made a sin-offering for us who are guilty that we might become righteous in Him, II Corinthians 5:21. We are healed by the stripes of suffering which Jesus received in His sacrifice of Himself on the cross, I Peter 2:24. This shed blood is the fountain in which we are washed in salvation, Ephesians 1:7; I Peter 1:18-20. The unanimous testimony of the Bible, Old and New Testaments, is that salvation is through the sacrifice of Jesus. Without Him, forgiveness is impossible. Is your hope in Him?

2. Salvation is never won by human merit. Jesus did not come to call those who were already righteous, but those who were sinners, Luke 19:10. Those who count themselves righteous (in self-righteousness) are

the farthest from the Kingdom. Salvation is "not by works of righteousness which we have done," Titus 3:5. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight," Romans 3:20a. Wherein do those who are as an unclean thing, with righteousness as filthy rags, and whose iniquities take them away from God, wherein do they have anything to commend themselves for salvation? See Isaiah 64:6. Salvation, as election, is either entirely by grace without works, or it is entirely by works without grace, Romans 11:6. It is by grace, through faith, completely independent of any kind of works which a man may perform. God said so in Ephesians 2:8-9. Read it!

3. Salvation is not won by performance of sacraments. A sacrament is a religious ritual which is supposed to confer saving grace. Roman Catholics believe there are seven sacraments which help save the soul. Many Protestants believe in two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptists know the Bible teaches these ordinances are not sacraments and that no one could be saved by performing sacramental rituals anyway. Salvation is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy," Titus 3:5. Salvation is the work of God and Bible-believing Christians are content to leave it there in His hands. We do not depend upon what we can do, but upon what Christ has done. Those who have trusted Him have found that this is enough.

V. SALVATION'S DEMANDS, 6:11-13.

1. Salvation demands death to sin, verse 11a. The believer is no more to follow the old habits of sin than a dead man is expected to continue in his normal routine of life. Christian life and sin are diametrically opposed. It would be a monstrosity for a Christian to try to live on in sin, Romans 6:1-6. He who continually practices sin, after a confession of faith, is manifesting that he does not really know the Lord Jesus as Saviour, I John 3:7-9. God has made a way for the believer to escape in the time of temptation, I Corinthians 10:13. He gains the victory over sin in the Lord Jesus Christ, I Corinthians 15:57.

2. Salvation demands a God-centered life, verse 11b. One gives up an old life to sin that he may enter into a new life in God.

This new life is the result of a heavenly experience in Christ, Ephesians 2:5-6. The man who is a new creation in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17) lives a life which is actually Christ Jesus living within him, Galatians 2:20. He is no longer his own, no longer lives for himself, but he belongs to God who has bought him with a great price, I Corinthians 6:19-20. How this new life is to be lived is described in Colossians 3. The chapter begins, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Living and working to the fulfilment of God's purposes in his life, the believer finds his highest fellowship in God. In such a life God is truly glorified.

3. Salvation demands freedom from the dominion of sin, verses 12-13a. Sin is not to reign in the physical body of the believer. Its lusts are not to be obeyed. The members of his body are not to be subject to its dominion. The believer who lives under sin's dominion cannot possibly fulfill God's purpose in his life. Words, deeds, attitudes, thoughts, even motivations must be kept free from sin. Men will see Christians and glorify the Father in heaven only as they live consistently with the Christian profession, Matthew 5:16.

4. Salvation demands dedication to God's will, verse 13b. The Christian has been resurrected from spiritual death in salvation. He lives a life in which Christ lives within him. Therefore, even his physical body should be dedicated to religious service so that each member would be an instrument of righteousness unto God. According to Paul,

the presentation of the physical body as a living sacrifice unto God is most reasonable and to be expected, Romans 12:1. True Christian dedication is like signing one's name at the bottom of a blank contract and then letting the Lord fill in the terms. This kind of dedication should be manifest by every believer in the world.

CONCLUSION—There is only one hope for the guilty sinner. That hope is Jesus Christ. Any person who repents of sin and trusts Jesus as his own Saviour will be saved. When one is saved, his whole manner of life is changed. From henceforth, he no longer lives unto himself, but unto Him who died for him. A life of service is the response of the devout man to redemption. Next Sunday's topic of study will continue the theme of salvation as we study concerning "Eternal Security."

QUESTIONS

1. Define the term "purchased salvation." Why "purchased"?
2. What is "justification"?
3. What is the relation of faith to salvation?
4. What is "imputed righteousness"?
5. Why is unbelief such a serious sin?
6. What does it mean to "trust Jesus" for salvation?
7. What are some of the blessings salvation brings?
8. What does it mean to be "dead to sin" and "alive unto God"?
9. In what sense is a believer's body a "temple of God"?
10. How does next week's lesson relate to this study?

If Christ is the way, why waste time traveling some other way?

The Lord doesn't want the first place in my life, He wants all of it.

Nine per cent of the world's population speak English, but ninety per cent of the Christians speak English.

The only person who ever lived before He was born is Jesus Christ.

Christ is needed on the avenue as much as in the alley.

Lesson VI

Eternal Security

Aim: The study of Article 14. 14. Eternal Security of the believer.

Devotional: Blessed, Psalm 32:1-7.

Lesson Text: Romans 8:1-4, 14-17, 35-39.

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Je'-sus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Je'-sus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

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

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Ab'ba, Father.

16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we

suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril or sword?

36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Je'-sus our Lord.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: John 10:22-30

Tuesday: John 11:25-28

Wednesday: John 17:1-4

Thursday: John 17:5-12

Friday: Romans 4:1-8

Saturday: I John 3:9-10



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.

INTRODUCTION—What God does is done for eternity! At no point is this more readily evident than in the matter of salvation of sinners. One of man's most wonderful experiences is to be born again. This experience becomes increasingly wonderful when it is realized that the repenting believer has received an eternally secure salvation. Yet, the new convert does not necessarily know that when he was saved he was also secured in salvation. It is possible for one to be saved without understanding this blessed doctrine. Baptists are the only major Christian group who still hold this truth. Therefore, every Baptist should study it thoroughly,

learn the scriptures which support it, and gladly share it with others that they might rejoice in it also.

"But," someone objects, "a belief in the eternal security of the believer will induce one to sin." Not so! This opinion is based upon a misunderstanding of the principles involved. Paul writes in Romans 6 that when one is saved his whole disposition of life is changed. He doesn't want to live in sin! He wants to live in holy obedience to the One who loved him and redeemed him. Any person who uses this doctrine as an excuse to live in sin is revealing an ignorance of what it really means to be saved and

is raising a serious question as to whether he is truly saved.

Rather than an enticement to sin, this blessed doctrine reveals the marvel of redeeming grace and deepens a Christian's humble dedication to God. God is glorified in having provided such a great redemption for man.

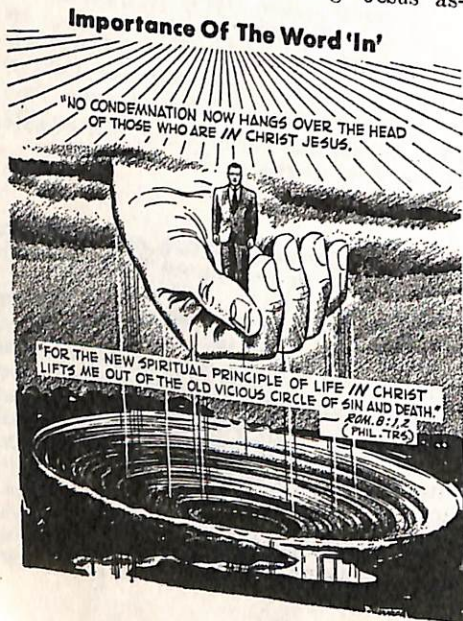
EXPOSITION

I. FREE FROM CONDEMNATION

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus . . ." Romans 8:1. To be saved is to be free from condemnation. To be free from condemnation is to be no longer in danger of a sentence in judgment. The unbeliever is already condemned, John 3:18. When a man trusts in Jesus for salvation, he is set free from the condemnation of death and hell. Therefore, there is no condemnation to the man who is in Christ Jesus, Romans 8:1-2.

Why is the believer no longer condemned? Because God has set him free from the law of sin and death, Romans 8:2. When sin is taken away in salvation, its penalty is taken away also. Therefore the result of sin—condemnation—is gone!

Freedom from sin's condemnation is not a fleeting and temporary thing. Jesus as-



sures us that the believer is so perfectly delivered from condemnation that he is not only free now, but "he shall not come into condemnation" in the future, John 5:24. This simply means that neither now nor at any time in the future will one of God's believing children be condemned to hell because of sin. This is what "security of the believer" means!

II. MADE RIGHTEOUS

Romans 8:3-4 gives yet another reason why the believer is secure in grace: the righteousness which God's law demands is actually being fulfilled in the believer! God cannot condemn righteousness and that righteousness is being worked out in the believer's life. There is nothing which merits condemnation.

The law demands righteousness. Man, without grace, is unable to reach the righteous standard demanded. He has "fallen short of the glory of God," Romans 3:23. But when a man is saved, the righteousness of God is imputed to him, Philippians 3:9. After that, when the law is set to judge the life of a believer, it is satisfied by the presence of the righteousness of God. Last week's lesson observed that in justification a man is (1) declared righteous and (2) made righteous. Why should any Christian fear for his security when the righteousness of God has been imputed to him? To be righteous is to be safe and believers share the righteousness of God himself.

III. UNDER THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The believer is saved through the Spirit. A recent study showed the Spirit's work in conviction, conversion, sealing, and indwelling. The sacrifice of Jesus is made valid to the believer by the ministry of the Spirit, who thereupon takes up permanent residence in him.

2. The believer is led by the Spirit. Romans 8:14-15. Communion and fellowship with God are enjoyed because the Spirit leads the believer to these experiences. He keeps a man in such sacred relationship with God that a mortal man looks to the Divine presence and calls him "Father." Moreover, God looks back and says, "My child." How can the believer be condemned when he is led in such a blessed company?

3. The believer is sealed by the Spirit,

Ephesians 1:13-14. The Spirit seals the believer immediately upon his exercising faith in Jesus. The sealing is God's act, performed by the Spirit as the agent of God our Father, II Corinthians 1:22. It is intended to preserve the believer in perfect holiness until he enters eternity with God, Ephesians 4:30. Sealing signifies divine ownership, a finished transaction, and security. If one man who professed Christ as Saviour stands before God's judgment and is condemned, it will be because he was never saved and sealed and not because Jesus and the Spirit could not keep him saved.

4. The believer has the Spirit as an "earnest" of his inheritance, II Corinthians 1:22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:14. An "earnest" is a partial payment made to insure the fulfillment of a bargain; a promise or indication of what will follow. In salvation, God's redemptive promise reaches unto eternity. All that salvation brings has not yet been realized. But God has given the Holy Spirit to dwell within men as an "earnest"—His guarantee that redemption will be completed unto eternal glory! Who can worry about "falling from grace" with this assurance? We are as safe as the Spirit's sealing, the Son's sacrifice, and the Father's oath! The Spirit is the earnest for all, not only a few, of God's children.

IV. NOT SEPARATED FROM GOD

1. Physical sufferings cannot separate the believer from his Lord, Romans 8:35-37. Tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, or sword bring such physical sufferings that they might tempt the believer to forsake his conviction and turn from Christ. Not so! He who really walks with Jesus is "more than conqueror" through Him. The blood of martyrs through the ages has witnessed that physical sufferings do not remove true believers from their Lord.

2. Spiritual forces cannot separate the believer from the Lord, Romans 8:38-39. This list of opponents takes in all forces, powers, and influences of intangible things, including Satan himself. The conclusion is that these are not sufficient to remove the believer from his Redeemer. As if the list is not inclusive enough, Paul concludes it with "nor any other creature" (which actually means "nor anything that is created"). Not even the believer can separate himself

from Christ. God alone could do this, for He alone is uncreated, and He has given Jesus to die for us. Read Romans 8:28-34. The child of God will enjoy heaven in spite of what any physical or spiritual force can do to stop him. This is, indeed, blessed assurance!

V. KEPT BY GOD'S POWER

God does not save a man and leave him to make it to heaven by his own efforts. I Peter 1:5 says true believers are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." This is the same truth Jesus expressed in John 10:27-30. Jesus says, (1) believers have eternal life; (2) they shall never perish; (3) they are in His hand and the Father's hand so that no power can remove them. Saints are not merely secured the Master's hand, they are likewise securely kept there. God is "able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy," Jude 24. He is both able and desirous to preserve His believing children.

God's concern is that each one of His children be kept and that none should perish. Look again at I Peter 1:5. "Kept" is a military term which may be translated "guard." It pictures the guard of divine power constantly alert. The believer is constantly being guarded by God's power because he has trusted in Jesus. God has thus pledged Himself to keep us secure! It is a great consolation to say, "For I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," II Timothy 1:12. Redemption and security depend upon God's ability and not upon man's efforts.

VI. BORN INTO GOD'S FAMILY

To be saved is to be "born again." This means we are brought into a new relationship with God. He becomes our Father and we become His children. The Scriptures speak much of the believer being born of God. See John 1:11-13; I John 5:1, 4, 8. et. al. If a person is saved by being born of God, he must be "unborn" in order to be lost. Earthly relationships teach us one cannot be "unborn." Even disinheritance of a child is only a legal matter for the blood relationship with the parent is still there.

Would God be so concerned about impenitent sinners as to give Jesus for them and then be so heartless about His redeemed children as to cast them off into hell? It is not reasonable! Those who are children of God overcome the world because they have believed, I John 5:1, 4. The person who is saved has been born into God's family and is right now a child of God, I John 3:2. As he is now God's child, he can enjoy the assurance of a child now!

VII. ETERNAL LIFE NOW

Eternal life is the gift of God when He forgives a sinner. The new life is eternal in duration and quality: it never ends and it is the kind of life we will enjoy fully in eternity. Eternal life is received immediately when one trusts Jesus as Saviour, John 3:14-16. Jesus says that (1) he who hears the Word and (2) believes on Him. (3) has eternal life right now, John 5:24. It is commonly believed that one is not really saved until eternal judgment. Not so! The believer already has eternal life abiding in him and will not wait until the judgment day to receive it.

If eternal life is enjoyed today and lost tomorrow so that one never enjoys it again, it is not eternal. It is eternal life only if one enjoys it for eternity. Jesus says that to have eternal life is to "never perish," John 10:28. God is not fickle so as to play with the destiny of our souls. He saves souls in view of eternity. Why would He even forgive if salvation was not to endure?

VIII. BEYOND SATAN'S REACH

"He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not," I John 5:18. Satan has no control over the destiny of the soul of one who has been saved. Job 1 and 2 reveals that Satan can have no control over the child of God without God's permission. Though God may permit trials to come, He will never permit one of His children to be taken from the realm of grace and condemned to hell.

Salvation delivers from the dominion of sin. John says that when one has the seed of God within him, it is impossible for him to live on in sin, I John 3:9-10. The believer's life is hid with Christ in God, Colossians 3:3. There is no danger that Satan will enter there to steal the believer away to con-

demnation. We are as safe as God is reliable. Safely enfolded within the hands of the Father and the Son, as well as sealed by the Holy Spirit, there is no way Satan can reach us to destroy our soul.

IX. THE DIVINE NATURE

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust," II Peter 1:4. The believer has exchanged the corruption of the world for the nature of God! Sharing the divine nature, he looks up into the face of God and calls Him, "Father." Now the nature of God is so pure that it is not even subject to temptation to sin, James 1:13. The divine nature within the believer is not subject to sin, either! Though there may be occasional faults, due to the weakness of the flesh, the soul once redeemed remains pure, Romans 7:15-25; I John 3:6-9. It is impossible to corrupt the divine nature so that it deserves a destiny in hell. Therefore, it is impossible to corrupt the believer to such an extent that the divine nature within him will be consigned to hell. Indeed, the very fact that the nature of God resides within will cause the believer to live holily, justly, and blamelessly in this present world. The divine nature within influences the human nature without so that words, thoughts, and actions are tempered by grace. Is there really any danger of condemnation to eternal destruction of one who shares the nature of God?

CONCLUSION—This lesson has briefly surveyed some of the reasons why Baptists contend that the believer in Jesus Christ is secure in grace. Salvation is here seen to be the work of God and independent of the works of man. Man trusts and God redeems! That is why the believer is secure.

The Christian is guaranteed absolute security in Jesus Christ because in salvation he has been set free from condemnation, made to partake of the perfect righteousness of God, made to live under the Holy Spirit, never separated from the Lord, but kept by God's power, being born into God's family and given eternal life, being set beyond Satan's reach because he has received the divine nature. Blessed assurance!

This is a message the world needs to hear. Never be ashamed of the great truth that

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the believer in Jesus is secure. In this day of doctrinal liberalism, stand firmly by this truth. Faithful Baptists teach it; the Bible guarantees it; the hearts of God's people rejoice in it. "Buy the truth and sell it not," Proverbs 23:23.

QUESTIONS

1. What is "the security of the believer"?
2. Does this doctrine encourage one to sin?
3. Why are Baptists the only major denomination who holds this doctrine?
4. What does John 10:27-30 say on this subject?
5. How do Romans 8:1 and John 5:24 relate to this study?
6. Who keeps us safe in grace according to I Peter 1:5?
7. What does the sealing of the Spirit mean in Ephesians 1:13-14?
8. How does the "earnest" of the Spirit teach security?
9. What are the reasons given to prove security in this lesson?
10. How will this lesson help you be a better Christian this week?

Far too many people are trying to change the definition of these words: EVERLASTING, ETERNAL, SHALL NEVER PERISH, SHALL NOT, NO CONDEMNATION, etc.

We never see Christians for the last time.

Many have life insurance, but no life assurance.

Faith is a firm persuasion that God will perform and provide that which he has promised.

Christ will hear you, heal you, help you, hold you.

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

--words of Jesus, John 10:27-30.

The Church Established

Aim: The study of Articles 15, 17. 15. Establishment of a visible church by Christ Himself during His personal ministry on earth. 17. Perpetuity of Missionary Baptist churches from Christ's day on earth until His second coming.

Devotional: Grow, I Peter 2:1-5.

Lesson Text: Matthew 3:1-3; John 1:35-42; Matthew 16:15-18.

1 In those days came John the Bap'tist, preaching in the wilderness of Ju'dae'a, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet E-sai'as, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

35 Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples;

36 And looking upon Je'sus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Je'sus.

38 Then Je'sus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rab'bi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou?

39 He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour.

40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was An'drew, Si'mon Pe'ter's brother.

41 He first findeth his own brother Si'mon,

and saith unto him, We have found the Mes'si'as, which is, being interpreted, the Christ.

42 And he brought him to Je'sus. And when Je'sus beheld him, he said, Thou art Si'mon the son of Jo'na: thou shalt be called Ce'phas, which is by interpretation, A stone.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Si'mon Pe'ter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Je'sus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Si'mon Bar-jo'na: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Pe'ter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Daily Bible Readings

- Monday: Hebrews 2:9-12
- Tuesday: Matthew 18:15-19
- Wednesday: Ephesians 2:19-22
- Thursday: Colossians 1:9-18
- Friday: Acts 6:1-7
- Saturday: Revelation 19:7-8

Verse Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you, Hebrews 13:17.

INTRODUCTION—Here is a personal testimony of one church member: "Thank God for my church! It is a divine institution which the Lord Jesus set in the world to perpetuate the preaching of the gospel and the teaching of the saved. It is a spiritual lighthouse in my community which would be in heathen darkness without the witness she gives. It was because of the witness of my church that I became conscious of sin and trusted Jesus as Saviour. Now the teachers who labor there and the pastor who preaches are my spiritual leaders by

whose efforts I have been led to grow in grace.

"My church gives me a part in obeying the Great Commission which Jesus gave, Matthew 28:19-20. In her visitation program I have a part in a local evangelistic missionary program. Through her denominational affiliation my offerings help preach to people of other states and nations. Through her Sunday school and Training Service I am helped and can also teach others. In her worship services I can be one of a congregation of God-fearing, Bible-

believing Christians who worship God in spirit and in truth. Through her auxiliaries I enjoy Christian fellowship in study and service.

"I owe my church a great debt. Money alone cannot pay it. Therefore, I dedicate my time, interests, money, and abilities to her welfare. I can do no less. This is not just a congregation of people, but a group of God's children whom He has joined together to propagate His Kingdom in the world. It is a divine institution! I can do nothing less than dedicate myself to the promotion of the purposes of my God by promoting the work of His church. I believe He desires glory to come to Himself through one of His local congregations. Ephesians 3:21." (Note: The term "church" is used in this study in an institutional or local sense, depending on the context.)

EXPOSITION

I. PREPARED MATERIAL, Matthew 3:1-3.

1. A chosen man. The membership of the first church was composed of people who had been prepared for that purpose by the ministry of a man of God. John 1:6 identifies



EKKLESIA; to call out (called out assembly) Always used as "local assembly"--not universal

this messenger as "a man sent from God, whose name was John." The Old Testament had told of one who would precede the Messiah to prepare a people for Him, Isaiah 40:3-5. This divinely-ordained man appeared first as a baby born to Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke 1:5-20, 57-58. He had unique qualifications for this task, being filled with the Holy Spirit from birth, Luke 1:15. All the most nothing is recorded of his childhood nor early adulthood. Shortly after his birth he dropped from view only to appear again almost thirty years later.

About A.D. 27 the people of Palestine were startled by the appearance of an unusual preacher. He was unusual in his dress (camel's hair and a leather girdle), his place of preaching (in the wilderness of Judaea), his message ("Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"), and his authority ("I am he of whom Isaiah spoke"). He foretold the soon coming of the Messiah and called upon the people to repent. Scores of people from over Palestine came and were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. So it was that when Jesus began His public ministry there was a group of people who (1) were expecting the Messiah to soon appear and (2) had already sincerely repented of their sins in preparation of His coming.

Whence came John's authority to baptize? Without doubt, it came from God, John 1:6. 33. However, John could not pass this authority on to others that they might continue it after his death. His baptism was valid when he performed it but was not continued after his death, Acts 19:1-7. When the church had been instituted, the authority to baptize lay within her for she had been so authorized by Jesus, her Head.

2. Sincere repentance. The central theme of the preaching of John the Baptist was a call to repentance in view of the coming of the Messiah, Matthew 3:2, 8, 11. He demanded all men to repent. He would baptize no man without evidence that he had repented of his sins. Even the religious leaders were commanded to repent the same as the publicans and harlots. Repentance means (1) a change of mind and (2) a change of attitude. Such a change was necessary before sinners were ready to meet the Messiah and such a change was what John demanded.

3. Scriptural baptism, Mark 1:4; Matthew 3:5-6. Those who repented of their sins

confessed their changed life in the ordinance of baptism. It was the expected thing that believers submit to this ritual. It was a natural expression of repentance and faith. Only those who were willing to repent and confess their sins in this act were "prepared" for the Lord's coming.

Baptism is still important. Jesus has given the example of His own baptism, Matthew 3:13-17. He commanded His churches to make baptism a part of their ministry: (1) make disciples, (2) baptize them, (3) teach them to observe all the doctrines He taught, Matthew 28:19-20. Baptism fulfills a distinct purpose. It is a serious error to make it so important that it is thought to be essential in order to be forgiven of sins. It is also a serious error to make it so unimportant that it is neglected. Baptism is a sacred ordinance and no truly loyal Christian can afford to ignore it. How can one walk with Jesus daily if he refuses to take this first act of obedience and confession?

4. A coming Christ. The people were led to repentance by the announcement of the coming of Christ, Matthew 3:11-12; John 1:6-8, 15-18, 29-34. These passages are a record of John's witness to Christ Jesus. His ministry reached its climax on that day when he introduced Him to the world as "the Lamb of God." From that moment on John's resolve was, "**He must increase, but I must decrease.**" John 3:30.

For many generations the Jews had looked for a Messiah to come. They expected him to be a political, as well as religious, Messiah. John's purpose was to prepare the people spiritually for His coming. The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is still the pivot of the Christian's life and the glory of his hope. It is the church's message. It must never be neglected nor deserted.

II. GATHERED MATERIAL, John 1:35-42.

1. The centre, verse 39. The first church was gathered around the person of Jesus. While John was commissioned to prepare a people for the coming of Jesus, it was our Lord who called the first church into existence. This is the way one would expect it to be. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church (Colossians 1:18) and He is to have preeminence therein. The church is His body and His fulness fills her, Ephesians

1:22-23. The institution of such a holy assembly would not be left to the hands of men nor angels, but to Him who alone is the Head. Wherever there is a true New Testament church in this twentieth century, Jesus is her Head.

2. The time. When was the church instituted? Here differences of opinion are evident. Some hold the church was instituted as Jesus went about calling one and another of His disciples (Mark 1:16-20), others say it was instituted in the mountain after all-night prayer (Mark 3:13-19), while others suggest yet other occasions. Actually, the specific time and place is not identified with out question in the New Testament. If it was of urgent importance we would expect it to have been pointed out. It is enough to know that Jesus personally gathered and personally instituted His church. That church is of divine institution, being set up during the earthly ministry of Jesus by the Lord Himself. It was empowered on Pentecost (but not organized there) and began a worldwide ministry under the Great Commission, Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2.

3. The method: personal witnessing, verses 40-42. Those who came to know Jesus as the promised Messiah were anxious that their friends should know Him also. They went out to tell others and, one by one, brought them to Jesus. This is the way the Lord intended that the church should grow. Personal testimony is the most effective means of winning men. Great mass meetings are impressive, but personal witnessing is most effective. The present generation desperately needs a revival of personal evangelism within the churches. It is not enough to build houses of worship and conduct services at stated times. An unsaved man is lost, at stated times, and blind to the truth. Why dead in sins, and blind to the truth. Why should God's people expect him to come seeking the Lord unless they are interested enough to go seek him? It is a sin against God to neglect personal witnessing. This was the method Jesus used. Have you found one more effective?

4. The method: divine call, verse 43. The familiar, "**Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men**" (Matthew 4:19) enlisted some of the early church. In this manner the Lord selected whom He would to compose the congregation of the first church. He is still building His churches in the same way.

Membership in a church must never be taken for granted. Paul says God sets every member in the church as it pleases Him, I Corinthians 12:18. Church membership, therefore, is a matter of sacred importance. When one unites with a church he testifies that (1) he is a new creature in Christ Jesus, (2) God has placed him here for membership, and (3) he will serve the Lord here with all his heart. To fail in this solemn agreement is to betray both God and men. If church membership is so vitally related to God's will, no man can neglect the duties of membership without committing sin. Each church member should either serve God where his membership now is or should seek God's will for another church where he can serve.

III. PERMANENT INSTITUTION, Matthew 16:15-18.

We believe in the perpetuity of true churches from the time Christ founded the first church down to this present hour. The Lord's church has been given an enduring character. It is preserved from extinction and caused to continue without a break. The doctrine of the "perpetuity of the church" means that true churches have existed in true, scriptural form and doctrines through all the years since the original institution and shall continue so to exist until Jesus comes again. ("The church" means the institution and not any particular congregation, as the "husband is head of the wife" means no particular husband or wife.) A particular congregation may exist or not, but across the world the Lord will always have true churches.

1. Membership, verses 15-18. The local church is composed of people truly born again and so vitally related to God as His own children. Last Sunday's lesson dealt with the security of the believer in Jesus. Now if individual believers are secure, and the Holy Spirit abides within each one, the assembly of believers in church capacity will continue so long as there are believers in the earth. God has united many believers into a local congregation that they might, in their assembly, be a place for the special indwelling of His Spirit, Ephesians 2:19-22. He will not permit these assemblies to perish from the earth. Even periods of persecution have not stopped Christians from assembling,

though they had to meet in secret. The fact that the members are so vitally related to God is one reason why they will continue to meet and the churches will continue to exist.

2. Foundation, verses 17-18. The foundation of the Lord's true churches is the truth expressed by Peter: **Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God!** If this truth was lost the church would cease being a church. This is the basic foundation, I Corinthians 3:11. If Jesus is not the Son of God, the Saviour, Jesus is not the Son of God, His promises our faith is vain. Moreover, His promises are empty and vain and the Bible is untrustworthy, if He is not the Christ. Jesus is the Son of God or the church is nothing! This is the heart of the New Testament.

Some will argue that this passage teaches the church was built upon Peter. This is in no wise the case. True, in the Greek language there is a play upon the words "Peter" (Greek, **petros**) and "rock" (Greek, **petra**). Yet, observe the spelling of these words. They are of different gender. According to the rules of Greek grammar, they cannot refer to one another so long as they are of different gender. (It would be about the same as referring to a man as "she" or "it" in English.) This is important, for it means the church does not depend upon a man, a priesthood, nor a professional clergy, but upon Jesus Christ alone as her foundation. The foundation of the church is already laid. The foundation is Jesus and He is enough!

3. Purpose, Matthew 28:19-20. The church, being composed of individual Christians, is to be God's witness to the world. The Great Commission is not given to preachers, but to the churches. The Holy Spirit empowers the entire church, not preachers alone, for this ministry of witnessing. God intends that the church should be a center from which the Gospel would radiate through a community and out to the world.

The purpose of the church is a missionary purpose. All faithful churches consider missions and evangelism their highest privilege and major task. It is God's plan that the gospel witness should be given to all the world before Jesus comes again. He will not permit the "gates of hell" to overpower the church because she is His messenger with this good news. This means the Lord's churches will continue missionary and evangelistic work until Jesus comes again. Each church will be under the special care of God,

built upon the foundation which He provided in Jesus Christ, until the saints are caught away to be eternally with the Lord!

CONCLUSION—The church (used here to refer to the institution or to the local congregation, according to context) holds a central place in God's plan. He sent John the Baptist to prepare disciples for Jesus. Jesus came and instituted the church, using primarily those who had been won by John. The church was then commissioned to spread the Gospel through the entire world.

Through the personal supervision of Jesus, the church has never ceased to exist. It cannot be traced through history by the name "Baptist," but its doctrines are evident. Baptist churches are today the descendants of the original New Testament church. It is a distinct privilege to be a member of a Baptist church. God grant that each reader is faithfully doing his best to bring to pass,

through his own church, the admonition: "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end," Ephesians 3:21.

QUESTIONS

1. How would you define "church"?
2. Who prepared a people for Jesus?
3. Who authorized him to preach and baptize?
4. Who instituted the church, and when?
5. What is meant by "the perpetuity of the church"?
6. Who is the "rock" of Matthew 16:18?
7. Why did God put a church in the world?
8. How is your church fulfilling that purpose?
9. How could you make your church's work more effective?
10. How will you serve God this week through your church?

If the church aims to hit sin it should pull the trigger.

When church services are over, your service begins.

Most churches are full of well-fed saints who need spiritual exercise.

If we are going to fight for the liberty to worship, we ought to make use of that liberty.

Christ established His church. Any founded by men belong to someone else.

Jesus said, "Keep My commandments..." --not to make new ones.

You can never build a church out of stumbling blocks.

The early church prayed until they received power.

Lesson VIII

World Wide Missions Urgent

Aim: The study of Article 16. 16. World wide missions according to the Great Commission which Christ gave His church (Matthew 28:19-20).

Devotional: Love Impels, Matthew 26:6-13.

Lesson Text: Matthew 24:4-14; I Corinthians 15:1-4.

4 And Je'-sus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.

9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end,

the same shall be saved.
14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.
* * * * *

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: Matthew 28:16-20

Tuesday: Mark 16:14-20

Wednesday: Acts 1:8-11

Thursday: John 20:19-21

Friday: Matthew 5:13-16

Saturday: Romans 10:13-17



For the mystery of iniquity doth already work . . . II Thessalonians 2:7a.

INTRODUCTION—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," Mark 16:15. "Into all the world,"—what a challenge! "To every creature,"—what a congregation! "Preach the gospel,"—what a message! Yet, this is the responsibility committed by the Lord Jesus to His churches.

New Testament churches have no greater business than missionary-evangelism. All the church does is to be related to this task. She witnesses, teaches, enlists, supports, and prays for the conversion of the lost in her home community and around the world. Only in this manner can she fulfill the ministry left her of the Lord.

Many New Testament churches have joined in cooperative efforts in education, benevolence, missions and evangelism. These organizations are commonly called "a denomination." It was for this purpose that the North American Baptist Association was organized in 1950. The missionary end of this organization of churches is being realized by the presence of missionaries in the United States, Mexico, British West Indies, Portugal, Cape Verde Islands, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Brazil, Formosa, France and Japan. Contributing churches support all this work plus educational benevolent institutions.

Today's study should stir churches to re-

newed efforts in the Lord's missionary command. The churches must prove that they are "missionary" in practice. This means she seeks to win the unsaved to Jesus in her own community, elsewhere in her state, in other states of her nation, and in foreign countries. It means she prays, preaches, and gives her money to support this type of missionary evangelism. It is the grossest hypocrisy to boast a name of "missionary" and fail in the performance of the task. Everyone can do something to promote missions. "World Wide Missions (Are) Urgent."

EXPOSITION

I. COMING DISTRESS, Matthew 24:4-14.

The Bible says a time of great distress is coming upon the world. All who believe the Bible are expecting it. Unbelievers refuse to believe it, but declare man will save his world by his own ability. The coming distress challenges the Christian to work while it is day, John 9:4.

1. False religions, verses 5, 11. The decline of Biblical Christianity, with attendant unbelief regarding the Scriptures, will prepare the way for the introduction of false religions. Men will be increasingly gullible

ONE DAY--A GOODBYE FOREVER?

"...THE ONE SHALL BE TAKEN, AND THE OTHER LEFT..."
— MATT. 24: 40-41; LUKE 17: 34-35



MISSIONS NEEDED IN THE HOME, TOO

and subject to such propaganda. In the last days (in which we are now living) there will come many false prophets (preachers) and some even claiming to be Christ. Those who have rejected the Bible will be led away.

One has only to read a book like Jan Karel van Baalen's, *The Chaos of Cults*, to see how remarkable this prophecy has been fulfilled today. Many people have started their own religious system and most of the founders have grown very wealthy as a result of their "religion." Thousands of people in the United States of America are already led away by the vain doctrines of "Christian" (?) cults. Many others are being reached each year. Jesus said it would come "in the last days," and now it is being seen!

2. International distress, verses 6-8. Man has drifted from God in an age when he most desperately needs God. Recent advances in scientific knowledge demands renewed dedication to God that the powers discovered may be controlled and used for good. Each year sees the relationship between nations becoming increasingly complicated.

International distress is a direct result of religious apostasy. When men forget God there is no political force in the universe which can preserve peace. The rise of false religions, with desertion of the true religion by many, will bring great distress. The increase of wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, and like calamities, will limit the freedom to witness to the world concerning the Gospel. The Lord's churches must arise and do mission work while there is opportunity. Days of international crisis will seriously handicap missionary outreach.

3. Religious persecution, verses 9-10. Persecution of the people of God by the zealots of a false religion is nothing new. Jesus warns, however, that in the last days, religious persecution will grow increasingly severe. Hatred, afflictions and martyrdom await many of God's faithful witnesses. Even within the Christian flock some members will turn away and betray their brethren into the hands of persecutors.

Persecution has never stamped out the truth. It hinders freedom in witnessing, closes doors of nations against missionaries, prohibits freedom of assembly, stops religious presses from publication, and often imprisons or kills the witnesses. It is unable to

stamp out the Gospel for though witnesses are bound, the Word of God is not bound. God's people are challenged today to enter every country open to missionaries and get the Gospel planted. Then, if persecution drives the missionaries away, the influence of the Gospel will continue to work.

4. Great apostasy, verses 12-13. The prevalence of unspiritual religion, the open opposition to the truth of God's word, and the vengeance meted out upon Christian witnesses will cause some to forsake the faith. The prevalence of iniquity (sometimes under the cloak of religion) will cause the love of many to grow cold. This will result in lessening support of the church. Consequently, her program will lag and mission work will suffer from lack of support. The Lord's churches had better be busy today!

This is God's challenge to "strike while the iron is hot" and major on missions now. That day of falling away may be near at hand or far off. We do not know. It is enough for us to know God has given this day as a day when witnessing is possible. Make the most of it! The business man who can purchase a greatly needed article today, knowing it will not be available later, makes the purchase even if he must borrow money to do it. How much more zealous and alert must the Lord's people be regarding missions.

5. World-wide witness, verse 14. Persecution, apostasy, or any other sort of trouble cannot stop the onward progress of the Gospel. **"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come,"** verse 14. All the world will hear the gospel! The "gates of hell" shall not prevail against the church, Matthew 16:18. How wonderful to work today with the assurance that we are one part of the witness which will be world-wide before the end comes. Thank God, He has given us the opportunity of having a part in this blessed task. Thank God for the faithful missionaries who are serving. Thank God for all his faithful saints who support them. Thank God for radio, television, and the printed page by which the Gospel is spread. Thank God especially for His assurance that this work is not in vain.

II. IMPORTANT MESSAGE, I Corinthians 15:1-4.

1. Divinely revealed, verse 1. In response

to man's need, God gave a revelation of Himself. This revelation sets forth truths which are to be shared with others. The truth the Christian bears comes from God, tells of God, and brings into communion with God. It is not the invention of men nor could it have been known by men except by divine revelation. The Bible is the record of this revelation and the authoritative statement of the truths contained therein. This Book is now in our hands. We must tell the good news over and over, until the last person has heard, for it is "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." God's message has been entrusted to men as a great treasure in earthen vessels. Oh, share the good news with someone today!

2. Saving, verse 2. The gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes," Romans 1:16b. No other power is able to bring ever been saved has received salvation by believing the truth of this message, Galatians 3:26.

Every man is affected by sin and needs to hear this message. At the cross the Lord receives the low and high, rich and poor, good and bad, black and white, Galatians 3:28. The Gospel is taken to every nation with the assurance that it is meant for them. No people are too backward or uncultured, nor are any too advanced, for the Gospel to be the answer to a basic need—forgiveness of sins and communion in peace with God through Jesus Christ.

3. Sacrifice, verses 3-4. The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus is the very heart of the Gospel message. Through this sacrifice, men are brought to God, I Peter 3:18. A certain preacher recently remarked to his congregation, "If Baptists expect to be popular and increase their standing in our generation, they must not talk so much about the blood of Jesus." But he who preaches a "bloodless gospel" (that is, leaves out the substitutionary death of Jesus) had as well not preach at all. If we have redemption at all, it is through the blood of Jesus, Ephesians 1:7. Remove this truth from the Gospel and it is not "good news" at all. Remove this and Christianity suddenly becomes a hollow, meaningless religion. Paul knew this and kept the cross of Jesus at the center of his preaching. Christians can afford to do no less today.

III. SIN'S DESTRUCTION

It has been estimated that only one out of every four people who die in the world has ever heard the gospel! Yet all men are in sin and doomed to hell until they believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ. How busy God's people must be in spreading the good tidings!

1. Sin blinds, II Corinthians 4:3-4. Unsaved people are blind to understanding the seriousness of their plight and the offer of Jesus. Satan has blinded them. This makes it the more urgent that someone who knows Jesus should witness to the lost. If a man blind physically is looked upon with patience, sympathy, and a willingness to help, how much more should those blind spiritually be aided by those who see.

2. Sin binds, Romans 6:16. The sinner is a bondsman to sin, though he may consider himself free to do as he pleases. His helplessness is evident in his inability to break his habits and quit sin's practices. Deliverance from sin comes only through Jesus, Romans 7:24-25. Yet, He so delivers that one is in no danger of being overcome by sin and being condemned, John 5:24. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed," John 8:36.

3. Sin condemns, John 3:18-19. The man who has not trusted Jesus as Saviour is dead in trespasses and sins. The guilt of sin resting upon his soul has cut him off from fellowship with God and left him with a guilt which deserves God's judgment. Such a man is "condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." He will be no more condemned after the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15) than he is right now. That judgment will only pronounce the sentence and determine the degree of punishment.

The only hope of such a man is Jesus Christ. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? . . . So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God," Romans 10:13-15a, 17. Yes, missions are urgent! How else can one be delivered from the condemnation upon sin?

4. Sin kills, Romans 5:12. Sin brought both physical and spiritual death into the world of mankind, Genesis 3:3-4. The sinner is "dead in trespasses and sins." Not because he is a wicked sinner, but because he is an unbelieving sinner. Unless one is renewed by the Second Birth during his lifetime here, there is no hope for his soul. There will be no transfer of destiny in eternity, Luke 16:26. As death finds a man, so shall the judgment; as judgment finds him, so shall all eternity. If any man dies without Christ, he is condemned to eternal suffering and separation from God. What a missionary challenge! Who will arise to it today?

IV. CHRIST'S COMMISSION, Matthew 28:19-20.

1. World-wide in scope. Matthew records Jesus' words thus, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." None are to be excluded because of nationality. The commission is made even more personal in Mark 16:15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." This includes each person in the world and points out that the Christian witness is to be given to individual men and women so as to persuade them to Jesus. It may be easier to deal with cultured people with high standards of living, but the Commission includes more than these. We are as responsible for the half-dressed savage in the jungles as we are for the well-dressed business man in our home town. God does not look at the kind of clothes nor the type of food nor the style of one's house in matters of salvation. He looks upon the heart. An unsaved man needs Jesus whether he lives in America or Africa. There is no difference here. Jesus has commissioned (commanded!) His churches to take the gospel to every man upon the earth. Missions are urgent!

2. Systematic in operation, Acts 1:8. How practical is the plan of mission work which the Lord gave. In substance, it says, "Start in your home town, cover your state, witness in the neighboring state, and continue on throughout the whole world." This is the method the early Christians used. It is the method commonly used today. Our churches do mission work through local associations, state associations, and a national association. (This latter is the North American Baptist Association, 716 Main Street, Little Rock,

Arkansas.) The dedicated church seeks to share in each phase of the work. She can witness in her area, in her home state, and through the national association she can witness across her nation and into foreign countries. In each year of the existence of the North American Baptist Association (organized in 1950), the money spent on home and foreign missions has been larger than the year before. This evidences increasing obedience to the Lord's commission.

3. Great in responsibility, II Corinthians 5:18-20. Two things are suggested here. (1) Each Christian has a personal responsibility to witness. The commission was given to the churches, but individuals compose the membership of each church. Hence, we are "ambassadors" (witnesses, representatives, apostles) of Christ, Matthew 5:14-16. (2) This responsibility can be discharged only by faithful witnessing. We are disloyal to His trust unless we support evangelism and missions. Man is out of fellowship with God. There is no hope for him without reconciliation to God through Jesus Christ. This is why Christian missions are so urgent.

CONCLUSION—We rejoice in the truth that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Remember, however, that Paul reminds us that to call upon the Lord, men must hear of Him; to hear of Him, there must be preachers sent; in sending preachers, someone must pay the bill, Romans 10:13-15. So the responsibility for missions comes back to the local church and each individual who is a member. Study your

church budget. What percent of the offerings actually go to missions? Study your teaching program. How much do the people know about the Biblical obligation of missions? Study your communication media. How much do the people know about the work presently being done by our churches around the world? Then one other question remains. "What can you do to help your congregation feel the urgency of Christian missions and are you willing to be a leader in encouraging such support in your own church?"

QUESTIONS

1. Why are missions urgent?
2. What is the name of the local, state and national organization through which your church does mission work?
3. Where are foreign missionaries of the North American Baptist Association working?
4. Are the heathen who have never heard the gospel really lost? Explain.
5. To whom was the Great Commission given?
6. How many home or foreign missionaries can you name?
7. What is a "commission"? . . . the "Great Commission"?
8. What can you do personally to support home and foreign missions?
9. How much did your church give to missions this past year?
10. How does Romans 10:13-17 show the urgency of world missions?

Christ said, "Go ye into all the world. . ." If you have not gone into "the uttermost parts," you'd better send somebody.

God through His Son told the disciples to preach the gospel to every creature, not just to the church.

Our outreach is directly dependent upon our upreach; our overflow by our inflow.

MISSIONS -- needed are men, message, money.

The Church Ordinances

Aim: The study of Articles 12, 21, 13. 12. Water baptism (immersion) to be administered to believers only and by divine authority as given to Missionary Baptist churches. 21. We believe that baptism to be valid must be administered by the authority of a true scriptural Missionary Baptist church, and we believe that a so-called Baptist church which knowingly receives alien immersion is not a scriptural Baptist church, and its ordinances are not valid. 13. The Lord's Supper as a church ordinance is to be administered to baptized believers only and in scriptural church capacity.

Devotional: Doeth Them, Matthew 7:24-29.

Lesson Text: Matthew 3:1-8, 13-17; I Corinthians 11:23-26.

1 In those days came John the Bap'tist, preaching in the wilderness of Ju-dae'a,

2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet E-sai'as, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then went out to him Je-ru'-sa-lem, and all Ju-dae'a, and all the region round about Jor'-dan,

6 And were baptized of him in Jor'-dan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Phar'-isees and Sad'-du-ces come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

* * * * *

13 Then cometh Je'-sus from Gal'-ilee to Jor'-dan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Je'-sus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.



For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified, I Corinthians 2:2.

INTRODUCTION—Today's study is on the subject, "The Church Ordinances." We believe there are two church ordinances: **Baptism** and the **Lord's Supper**. They are "ordinances" in that their observance has

16 And Je'-sus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

* * * * *

23 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Je'-sus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

24 And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25 After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26 For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: Matthew 28:18-20

Tuesday: Acts 2:37-41

Wednesday: Acts 16:25-34

Thursday: Matthew 26:26-30

Friday: I Corinthians 11:27-30

Saturday: I Corinthians 11:31-34

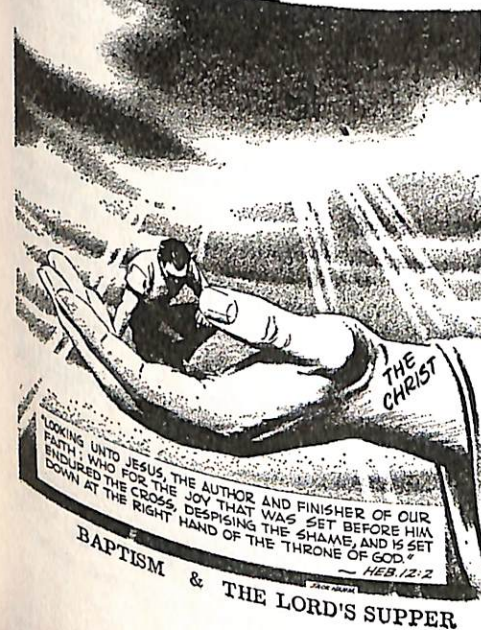
been ordained (instituted with the command that they be repeatedly observed) by the Lord Jesus. They are "church" ordinances in that they are set in the church and may be administered only to a church. Jesus, the

Head of the church, is the only One who could set ordinances for her observance.

A church ordinance may be defined as a ritual or ceremony which the Lord Jesus appointed to be administered in His churches as a perpetual memorial by visible sign of His saving sacrifice on behalf of mankind and their attendant redemption. Baptism pictures the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and also the believer's death to sin and resurrection to new life in Christ. The Lord's Supper pictures the crucified body eating and drinking, shows that the believer finds spiritual sustenance in Him. Each local church is responsible to God to keep the ordinances in their original purity, purpose, and design. Jesus commanded the disciples to wash one another's feet. Is this a third ordinance? No. It is expressive of humility and love, but not of the Lord's sacrifice.

The ordinances of the church are important. They are not sacraments which confer saving grace and thus help save the soul, as Roman Catholics hold. They do not contribute to salvation, but they are important. It is impossible to have membership in a Baptist church without baptism. Yet some Baptist church members have not observed

IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIM



the Lord's Supper one time with their church. This is a serious error. How can one be fully obedient to Christ if he refuses to obey the Lord's command to observe the rituals of baptism and the Lord's Supper in remembrance of Him?

EXPOSITION

I. BAPTISM, Matthew 3:1-8, 13-17.

1. The confession in baptism, verses 1-8. The first great preacher and baptizer in the Christian lineage was John the Baptist. He suddenly appeared about A.D. 26. He was a fearless preacher who denounced sin and demanded repentance of the people. His reason was, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Those who believed his preaching that the Messiah (Christ, Anointed One) was about to appear repented of their sins to prepare for Him. They confessed their repentance and faith by submitting to water baptism (by immersion) at the hands of John the Baptist. John refused to baptize any who did not manifest a sincere change in their lives in demonstration of their repentance.

So it is seen that the original purpose of baptism was a confession of repentance and faith. It is still so. Baptism is not essential to salvation because it is intended to confess a transaction between the repenting sinner and God which is already completed. John the Baptist baptized those who repented of sin and trusted in a Saviour to come. The Lord's churches today authorize the baptism of those who repent of sin and trust in a Saviour who has already come. To receive baptism for any other purpose invalidates it as New Testament baptism.

2. The imitation in baptism, verses 13-17. John's ministry reached its zenith with the baptism of Jesus. Jesus journeyed from Galilee to where John the Baptist was baptizing in the River Jordan, a trip of near sixty miles. He desired baptism at the hands of John who hesitated because of a sense of unworthiness. Upon Jesus' insistence, however, John baptized Him. Immediately the heavens were opened, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him as a dove, and the Father spoke from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Many suggestions have been given to explain why Jesus was baptized, including: (1) to identify Himself with John's message of

the Messiah, (2) to give the Father opportunity to confess Him before men, (3) to set an example for His disciples, and (4) to demonstrate His coming sacrifice and victory in death, burial, and resurrection. Jesus' only explanation was "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness," i.e., "It is the thing which should be done."

In many ways the Christian cannot imitate Jesus. His wisdom, power, compassion, and other attributes are far above our own. But there is one matter in which we can do exactly what Jesus did. We can be baptized just as He was. He who has received the kind of New Testament baptism which is described below has been baptized just like Jesus was!

3. The prerequisites of baptism. Baptists hold there are four things necessary for baptism to be according to the scriptural pattern.

(1) Candidate: The person baptized must be one who has repented of his sins and trusted Jesus as his own Saviour. By repentance and faith, such a one is saved, John 5:24. Read Matthew 3:5-9 and Acts 8:36-38 to observe that one who has not repented and trusted Jesus is not a proper subject for Christian baptism. To baptize an unsaved person is of no advantage whatever to his spiritual state and may serve as a handicap to his trusting the Lord later. The proper candidate for baptism is one who is already saved by repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(2) Purpose: The only valid purpose in baptism is the confession of faith in Jesus as a personal Saviour. If baptism is performed for any other purpose, it is not performed for the same purpose as New Testament baptism. Baptism performed for any other purpose is not to be accepted as valid by the Lord's churches. Since baptism is to be a profession of faith, by showing the candidate has died to sin and risen to a new life in Christ, private baptismal services (practiced by some) are not to be commended. The sole purpose of baptism is to confess salvation by faith which one already enjoys.

(3) Mode: The only valid manner in which to perform baptism is the immersion of the candidate in water, once, backwards, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Valid baptism is by immersion only. Rituals of pouring or sprin-

gling water on one is not New Testament baptism. Baptism is a "going down into the water," a burial, and a "coming up out of the water," Acts 8:38-39 cp. Romans 6:4-5. Moreover, the Greek word which is translated "baptize" means "to plunge, to dip, to immerse" and could never mean sprinkling or pouring.

(4) Authority: Only a true New Testament church has the authority to administer Scriptural baptism. The authority to baptize was not given to individual Christians nor to ordained ministers. Listen carefully to the ordination ceremony of a minister and observe that no "authority to baptize" is conferred in the process of ordination. **Only the local church has authority here.** Not even denominations can authorize the administration of the ordinance of baptism. Only scriptural doctrinal position can remove this authority from the local church. She receives it from her Head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Baptists hold a unique position regarding baptism. We reject all forms of so-called baptisms performed in the wrong manner regarding candidate, purpose, mode, or authority. The church which knowingly receives as valid a form of baptism which is unscriptural (known as "alien" baptism) forfeits her right to be considered a true church. Because of our unique position on baptism, Baptists insist on performing the ritual of scriptural baptism upon those united with the church from other denominations. By such demands, we stay true to the New Testament and protect the purity of the doctrine. We must never grow lax in this matter.

II. THE LORD'S SUPPER, I Corinthians 11:23-26.

As baptism uses the element of water to picture its meaning, so this second ordinance uses the elements of unleavened bread and "the fruit of the vine" to picture its meaning. What should this ordinance be called? Some have called it "The Sacrament," "The Eucharist," and "The Communion." The Bible calls it "The Lord's Supper" and no other name should be given to it, I Corinthians 11:20.

1. Institution. The original institution of the Lord's Supper is recorded in Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:17-20, and I Corinthians 11:23-26. Each account plainly states that it was instituted by the Lord

Jesus. He had just observed the Passover meal with His disciples. With the remains of bread and wine left from that solemn observance, He gave this symbolic picture of His death—a crucified body and shed blood.

Since the Supper is of no human institution, it is an important part of the ministry of the church. It is as important that this ordinance be observed as it is essential that baptism be administered. The church which neglects administration of the Lord's Supper is as much in error as a church which neglects baptism. The Lord instituted the Supper and commanded its observance. The church should obey in hearty devotion.

Symbolism. When Jesus said, "This is my blood of the new testament" and "This is my body . . ." (Matthew 26:26-28), He was speaking figuratively. He did not mean the bread was His actual flesh and the fruit of the vine was His pure blood, but that they symbolized such. Roman Catholics seriously err here in holding to a literal interpretation of these words. They believe that in the mass the priest is able to crucify Jesus anew, just as He was crucified on the cross! Moreover, they hold such repeated sacrifice of Jesus is necessary to their salvation. In fact, they actually believe the real sacrifice of Jesus was in the upper room, at the institution of the Supper, and not on the cross!! Of course, the Bible strictly denies this, Hebrews 10:10-14.

In the Lord's Supper we partake of a bit of bread and drink a bit of wine or grape juice (according to the custom of the church) thereby remembering the crucified body and shed blood of the Lord. The blessing of the ordinance is in the heart of him who observes and not in any inherent merit in the elements used. The elements are symbols, nothing more.

3. Memorial, verse 24d. The observance of the Supper is proper only when it is done in remembrance of the Saviour. The ordinance fails in its purpose unless it quickens the heart of the participant in remembrance of Calvary and leads him to greater dedication to the crucified and risen Lord.

Because it is a memorial, the Supper should be partaken of prayerfully and lovingly. Many congregations are asked to bow in an attitude of prayer during the observance of the ordinance that they may the more easily commune with the Lord.

Some denominations hold the Lord's Sup-

per is a time of communion between Christians. Hence, they invite all Christians to partake of the "Communion" with them. Baptists believe the communion is between the believer and the Lord and that this is a church ordinance the same as baptism. We do not declare any criticism of others in not inviting them to partake in the Supper. Indeed, if they wish to partake in the Supper with Baptists, let them join a Baptist church, receive scriptural baptism, and partake in each observance of the ordinance.

4. Regularity. The Lord's Supper should be observed regularly by each local church. The Bible does not set a certain time for its observance. Various churches observe it weekly, monthly, quarterly, or annually. Occasionally a church is found which seldom observes it, but that is rare. Possibly most churches of our fellowship observe the Supper once each quarter—four times a year. This gives members the opportunity to observe it annually at the very least and does not permit the ordinance to be commonplace if one observes it each time. It is unwise to condemn one for observing it often or not, since the spirit of the observer is the primary thing. Each church should see that the ordinance is not neglected in her services.

5. Participants. Baptists are accused of being "narrow" or "close-unionists" regarding the Lord's Supper. This is because we do not invite all denominations to join us in the observance. Actually, we are close concerning baptism. We believe that baptism must come before the Lord's Supper. Therefore, the person who is truly saved but without scriptural baptism as defined above, is not qualified to come to the Lord's Supper. Those whose baptism is not counted scriptural are not invited to participate.

But what about those with scriptural baptism? Should a church invite Baptists from other congregations to participate? There is room for question here. Actually, each church is responsible for the administration of the ordinance for her own members. Since the church should offer the ordinance to those subject to her discipline, she should confine the observance to her membership. However, if a church should wish to invite visiting Baptist brethren to participate, she would not be violating any specific Scriptural principle known to this writer.

6. Consistency. The Supper should be ob-

served by the Lord's churches "till He come," verse 26. The ordinances are still valid. They should be observed without ceasing. So long as there are true churches in the world—which will be until Jesus returns—the ordinances must be observed and administered. Both of the ordinances are a vivid witness to men—saved and unsaved. They speak of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, of His victory in resurrection, of redemption through faith in Him, of the hope of resurrection, and of the sure fact of His second coming. This witness needs to be given over and over again. The Lord's churches must not fail to declare the message of redemption by ordinance as well as by sermon. When it is enough, the Lord will come and call His children home.

7. Administration. The elements used in the Supper are bread and wine (or grape juice). The communicants are to partake of both elements. The ordinance is to be observed by the assembled congregation of the church, Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:18, 20, 23, 33-34. It is not to be taken to the sick nor observed privately. The church, as a body, is responsible for seeing that the ordinance is properly administered, I Corinthians 11:2, 23. A church member may exclude himself from privileges of participation in the Supper by immoral conduct, I Corinthians 5:1-13; disobedience to the commands of Christ, I Corinthians 14:37; II Thessalonians 3:6, 11, 15; heresy, Titus 3:10; Acts 20:30; or schism, Romans 12:17. The ordinance can be observed only by the authorization of a local church.

8. Open communion. We object to "open communion" (inviting all who call themselves Christians to partake) for these reasons. (1) The doctrinal statements of all Christian denominations (except some English Baptists and Free Will Baptists) call for "close communion" though they may be "open" in practice. (2) It assumes an unscriptural inequality between the ordinances. Open communion treats baptism as if it was optional and the Lord's Supper as if it was indispensable. (3) It tends to do away with baptism all together. "If the highest

privilege of church membership may be enjoyed without baptism, baptism loses its place and importance as the initiatory ordinance of the church."—A. H. Strong. (4) It tends to do away with church discipline. By inviting all to come the church has no authority to refuse one who is clearly unworthy. (5) Whatever error in doctrine makes one ineligible for Baptist church membership also makes him ineligible for the Supper. (6) It is based on a false sentiment that the Supper is a "communion of the saints" and that close communion breaks the bond of brotherhood in Christ. Baptists have good reasons for their insistence on each local church observing the ordinance for the good of her own members alone.

CONCLUSION—The ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are sacred obligations upon the churches. The faithful church will observe them regularly and reverently. The ordinances have no contribution to make to one's salvation, but speak rather of the Lord Jesus who takes away men's sins. As they have been entrusted to the church, we should have an increasing respect to our own local church which Jesus Christ has so honored. "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye . . . keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you," I Corinthians 11:2.

QUESTIONS

1. What is a "church ordinance"?
2. What are the two church ordinances?
3. What is the difference between an "ordinance" and a "sacrament"?
4. What four things are necessary for valid baptism?
5. In what sense is the Baptist position on baptism unique?
6. What is the proper name for the second ordinance?
7. What were the circumstances surrounding its institution?
8. How is the Supper a memorial and a symbol?
9. Who authorizes the administration of the Supper?
10. How could the ordinances be made more meaningful in your church?

Church Cooperation

Aim: The study of Articles 18, 19, 20. 18. That all scriptural churches should ever be held as equal units as to their rights and privileges in their associated capacity. 19. That all scriptural associational assemblies and their committees are servants of the churches. 20. That we brand as unscriptural open communion, alien baptism, pulpit affiliation with heretical ministers, unionism, modernism, modern conventionism, one-church dictatorship, and all kindred evils arising from these practices.

Devotional: Unity of the Faith, Ephesians 4:12-16.

Lesson Text: II Corinthians 8:1-4, 13-19, 23-24; Romans 16:17-18.

1 Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Mac'e-do'ni-a;

2 How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality.

3 For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;

4 Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.

13 For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:

14 But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:

15 As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack.

16 But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Ti'tus for you.

17 For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you.

18 And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;



But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully, II Corinthians 9:6.

INTRODUCTION—There is strength in unity. There is strength in numbers when all concerned work toward the same goal. Therefore a group of churches can accom-

19 And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind:

23 Whether any do enquire of Ti'tus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.

24 Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.

17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Je'sus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: II Corinthians 9:1-5
 Tuesday: II Corinthians 9:6-15
 Wednesday: II Corinthians 11:1-8
 Thursday: Acts 13:1-5
 Friday: Acts 15:1-4
 Saturday: Acts 15:22-27

plish more in missions, education, benevolence, publications, and other fields of endeavour, than would be possible if each church worked alone. For this reason, local

churches have voluntarily joined in cooperative efforts with sister churches to pool their resources and extend their outreach. Such an organization of churches is the North American Baptist Association, organized in 1950, which is composed of conservative, missionary Baptist churches.

Agreement is the basis for such association. In church relationships, there must be agreement concerning doctrines and methods. "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3. Understanding this truth, representatives of churches composing the North American Baptist Association drew up a "Doctrinal Statement" expressing our convictions. For a church to become a member of this Association, she must express her agreement with these doctrines. No church has the right to join in association with groups who hold heretical doctrines or erroneous practices.

The term "cooperation" suggests "joint effort." Church cooperation suggests several local congregations joining efforts, with each one doing his share, to reach a desired goal. To cooperate in an Association means more than merely belonging. It means to actually contribute to the realization of the objectives of the Association. A cooperating church is a church which contributes money, prayer,

THROUGH THE MIST OF CONFUSION



And through cooperative efforts churches show "proof of your love" for Christ.

counsel, personnel, and other things needed to promote the work. This lesson on "Church Cooperation" is presented with the desire that it may enlist greater aid of the churches in our Associational ministry at home and in foreign fields.

EXPOSITION

I. BLESSINGS IN COOPERATION, II Corinthians 8:1-4.

1. Faithful cooperation among churches brings new expressions of the grace of God, verse 1. Today's lesson text refers to a cooperation of early churches in a benevolent enterprise. Drought and famine had struck Palestine. Word came to the churches in Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia. Under Paul's leadership, they resolved to make up an offering and send it to Jerusalem to relieve the distress of the saints.

The churches of Macedonia responded in such a way to this appeal that Paul called attention to the grace of God manifested toward them. From their deep poverty and in the midst of a great trial of affliction, they gave a most liberal offering. So liberal had been their offering that Paul was hesitant to receive it all, verses 3-4. Their efforts and sacrificial giving were the opportunity for God to express His grace (unmerited favour) toward them by special blessings. God's "grace" toward them was (1) a willingness to give sacrificially, (2) a willingness to help others in spite of their own distress, (3) a deep joy in the Spirit, (4) and commendation from heaven and among men for their manifest Christian spirit.

2. Faithful cooperation among churches brings increasing joy in Christ, verse 2. The brethren in Macedonia experienced "abundance of joy" as they cooperated with their sister churches in this benevolent ministry. Even under adverse outward conditions, the Christian brethren rejoiced in the Lord.

This joy is still experienced. Have you attended an Associational meeting, or read one of the denominational papers, and found your heart rejoicing because of the great work done by cooperation of churches? Have you rejoiced as mission offerings reach new heights, or as publication ministries are expanded, or as new schools are organized and older schools strengthened? This is something of the joy the Macedonian brethren

knew because of their cooperation with sister churches.

Every church can cooperate in these ministries. Whether the financial strength of a local congregation is large or small, she can give proportionately and feel assured that she is bearing her part of the cooperative project. So a church which would never send a missionary to foreign fields, nor print a Sunday school quarterly, nor organize and support a college, nor support an orphan's home, can do all these things in cooperation with sister churches. And she will rejoice in the work that is done!

3. Faithful cooperation among churches often calls forth more sacrificial service than would otherwise be given, verses 3-4. There is a blessing in sacrificial service, though most Christians usually sacrifice little for Jesus. When one has given his last dollar to the Kingdom and has seen the Lord come to his rescue, when he has reached the end of his ability and discovered the resources God makes available, then he knows the benefit in sacrificial service. We would trust Jesus much more and love Him much more if we served Him more sacrificially. Some people feel that if they drive to church in the rain or cold, they have made a sacrifice for the Lord! Such shallow thinking is a shame to one who calls himself by the name of Christ. Only when service for the Lord has cut deep and cost you something very dear, then and only then, can you say a sacrificial service has been rendered.

Cooperative projects challenge churches to sacrificial service. Without a cooperative program, many churches spend all their money at home. They become centered in the local area, forgetting the world-wide commission of the Lord. Cooperation with sister churches lifts the vision to fields beyond. It makes us want to invest something in the Kingdom work outside our own immediate interests. It calls to sacrifice.

4. Faithful cooperation among churches enlarges opportunity for each local congregation. Cooperation means more than having one's name on the roll. Cooperation does not mean my church takes advantage of literature paid for by someone else, of schools supported by someone else, of sharing the glory of a missions program financed by someone else, of sending needy children to an orphan's home provided by someone else. A church is not a cooperating member of an association

unless she supports the program of that association of churches. Supporting the program means more than an occasional offering to one phase of the work. Most people have one phase of work which is of greater interest. However, the total program involves missions, benevolence, publications, education, etc. To support one and neglect the other would be like a parent feeding one child while requiring the others to starve. Loyal cooperation affords the opportunity to support the total program.

II. EQUALITY OF COOPERATING CHURCHES, II Corinthians 8:13-19, 23-24.

1. Each church is equal in responsibility to carry her part of the load, verses 13-15. Isn't it strange how the tendency persists to pass the burden on to others! A poorer church member may say, "Let the wealthy church member pay the expenses." A smaller church member may say, "Let the big churches pay the costs." Paul is careful to point out that the burden is not to be borne by a few. There is to be equality among all who cooperate. Each one is to do his part according to his ability.

It is wrong for a church to enjoy the benefits of an associational organization without having a part in bearing the responsibilities of the work. In our Association, there is no executive authority to require a church to support the programs. There should be none for each church is "independent and equal." Yet, it seems only the ingrate would be willing to receive continually without contributing anything. When a new member unites with a local church, he pledges himself to loyal cooperation and support. If he fails to perform this obligation, he has deceived the church. The same is true of the church which fails to stand by her sister churches in denominational affiliation. To join and not support is to deceive.

2. Each church is equal in authority in the administration of the work, verses 16-19. The funds being contributed for the poor saints in Jerusalem must have someone designated to receive and disburse them. So a "brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches" was "chosen of the churches" to travel with Paul and his company for the purpose of administering the

funds contributed. This is not called an "association" in II Corinthians 8:16-19, but that is what it was. This is the way an association of our churches operates today.

Each church, regardless of size or amount of offerings, elects from her membership a set number of messengers to represent her in the Associational meeting. Each church has the same number of messengers to express her opinion by voice and vote. These messengers, in turn, elect a "brother whose praise is in the gospel" (that is, who is known for his piety and ability) to direct the different phases of the work: missions, education, publications, etc. Upon returning home, the messengers report to their local congregation what was done. The local church should then support the program set out by the messengers of the churches unless she feels it is directly opposed to the will of God.

This is church equality of the highest order. Independent and sovereign churches submit themselves to one another in brotherly love and confidence. Each church is free from denominational control with the right to withdraw from cooperation when she chooses. In like manner, she is also free to submit herself to the program of the association for the advancement of the purposes and work of the Kingdom of God.

3. Each church is equal in representation in all meetings, verses 23-24. Those sent on missions approved by the messengers of the churches are no more the representative of one church than of another. They equally represent all those churches who had a part in selecting and sending them. The choice was not left to a few large churches with many messengers and forced upon the smaller ones with few messengers. Neither do the large churches have any extra authority over the small congregations. Each congregation, regardless of numerical size, has equal representation. There can be no big "I" and little "you" in such a system of representation. Looking to the Lord Jesus alone as Master, all churches look upon one another as equals and all messengers of the churches are equal brethren.

4. Each church is equal in her independence. Occasionally a Baptist congregation will refuse to join in associations with other churches because they want to remain "independent." Does a church lose her independence when she affiliates with a group

of sister churches? No, indeed! The church which voluntarily enters an association of churches is no less independent than when it refrained from entering. The Association simply affords a channel by which the work of the church is done outside its local community. The Bible allows no ruling committee, board, or other ecclesiastical organization, to have authority over one of the Lord's churches. Jesus alone is her head. Any who would seek control over the Lord's churches is usurping his place!

Those churches which cooperate with the North American Baptist Association are fully independent and sovereign, though in full cooperation with sister churches in an associational fellowship and program. Most churches who use this Sunday school quarterly are cooperating members of this Association. All are invited to seek other information by writing: North American Baptist Association, 716 Main Street, Little Rock, Arkansas.

III. AREAS OF COOPERATION, Romans 16:17-18.

1. Churches may cooperate in the area of Christian benevolence. Those offerings discussed in I Corinthians 16:1-4 and II Corinthians 8 and 9 were received for benevolent purposes. They were to be sent to Jerusalem for the aid of drought and famine stricken Christians. Many churches in Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia cooperated in this offering. This is the Biblical example for benevolent work by our churches.

The Apostle James has written, "**Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world,**" James 1:27. In response to this challenge, our churches support a benevolent ministry to care for orphaned children and aged ministers. This we believe to be a part of the work of the Lord's churches. Each individual State has its own institutions and agencies to carry on this work.

2. Churches cooperate in the area of Christian education. The Great Commission of the Lord, recorded in Matthew 28:19-20, sets out a threefold obligation: (1) Go and teach so as to make disciples; (2) baptize the converts in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; (3) teach them to observe

all things God has commanded. The ministry of Christian education seeks to fulfill the third part of this commission. Such effort takes a twofold approach.

First, churches cooperate in Christian education by the publication of Bible-centered literature. The North American Baptist Association publishes literature for use in Sunday school, Training Service, Women's Missionary Auxiliary, Girl's Auxiliary, Galileans, Brotherhood, Youth Work, etc., Rev. D. O. Silvey is the Editor of Publications and Bro. T. O. Tollett is Business manager of this department.

Second, churches cooperate in Christian education through the support of educational institutions. Several state Associations have colleges they support through the denominational organization. The national Association supports one theological seminary, North American Theological Seminary, located in Jacksonville, Texas. Dr. Gerald D. Kellar is President of the Seminary and Dr. W. J. Dorman is the Dean.

The total educational program of our Association includes the efforts of many writers of literature, teachers in schools and churches, and many other helpers—along with the leaders mentioned above. As your church supports the Association through her prayers and offerings, you have a part in this ministry.

3. Churches cooperate in the area of home and foreign missions. Paul says specifically that other churches paid his salary while he worked as a missionary in Corinth, II Corinthians 11:8. Following this example, churches composing the North American Baptist Association support a missions program in the United States and many foreign countries. Missionaries serve in the continental United States where the Baptist witness is unknown or is weak. These are called "Interstate" missionaries because they work within our national boundaries.

Other missionaries work in foreign lands and are designated "foreign" missionaries. At present, the North American Baptist Association is supporting missionaries in

Mexico, Guatamala, Costa Rica, Brazil, Portugal, France, Cape Verde Islands, British West Indies, Formosa, and Japan. The quality of the men who are serving in these places and the urgent need for workers to represent Christ there, make it imperative that each church support this missions program. Each church should give regular monthly offerings to missions through the Association. Rev. W. J. Burgess is Secretary of Missions of the Association and Rev. Craig Branham is Assistant Secretary.

CONCLUSION—It is right and proper for churches to join in cooperative efforts to promote the Lord's cause. A church does not lose her sovereignty nor independence by such cooperation. The New Testament sets out evidence that the early churches so cooperated. Those who join such an effort must be agreed in doctrines and practices—both being related to the Word of God which is the final authority, Galatians 1:6-9; Romans 16:17-18. Is your church actively supporting the Lord's work with her sister churches?

QUESTIONS

1. Why should churches cooperate in their work?
2. What does the term "association" mean?
3. Can a church join an Association of churches without losing her independence?
4. Why do we stress "equality of representation" in our Associations? What is it and how does it differ from some other Baptist groups?
5. How does cooperation provide enlarged outreach?
6. What benevolent work does your church support?
7. How is this quarterly a product of cooperation between churches?
8. What percentage of her income does your church give to missions?
9. Who are the leaders of our Associational publications, missions, and seminary ministry?
10. Why should all church cooperation be based on doctrinal agreement?

Christ's Second Coming

Aim: The study of Article 22. 22. The personal, bodily and imminent return of Christ to earth.

Devotional: While We Wait, John 14:12-15.

Lesson Text: Acts 1:10-11; Luke 17:22-29.

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Gal'i-lee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Je'sus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

* * * * *

22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

23 And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.

24 For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

25 But first must he suffer many things,

and be rejected of this generation.

26 And as it was in the days of No'e, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27 They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that No'e entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

28 Likewise also as it was in the day of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

29 But the same day that Lot went out of Sod'om it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

Daily Bible Readings

- Monday: Matthew 25:14-30
- Tuesday: Matthew 25:31-46
- Wednesday: Matthew 24:27-31
- Thursday: Matthew 24:32-39
- Friday: Matthew 24:40-51
- Saturday: James 5:1-8



Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh, Matthew 25:13.

INTRODUCTION—Jesus is coming! This message should be sounded out to all people. His coming is the "blessed hope" for the saints of God and is the goal toward which all human history is moving. It is the climactic event in the consummation of this present age. That will be a glorious day indeed when **"the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,"** Jude 14.

The New Testament Greek uses two words to refer to the coming of Jesus. The first is **parousia**. While it is sometimes translated "coming" it more exactly means "presence." It refers to His coming as a manifestation of His presence in the world. The second word is **epiphaneia**. It is properly translated "manifestation" and refers to the Lord's coming as an unveiling, revealing, or open display of Himself in glory and honor.

Christendom is divided concerning details

relating to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Some hold Jesus comes to initiate one thousand years of peace and righteousness on earth (premillennial position). Others hold He comes to conclude the reign of peace (postmillennial position). Other hold there will be no thousand year reign of peace (amillennial position). The official position of the North American Baptist Association is in agreement with the premillennial position and that is the interpretation followed in this lesson.

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ is as certain as the fact that He has already come as a Babe in Bethlehem. The Christian is not waiting for death, but for the Lord Jesus! This blessed fact of His soon appearing is the bright star of hope for God's people today.

EXPOSITION

I. JESUS IS COMING, Acts 1:10-11.

Jesus left the earth with a promise to return. On the day of His ascension back to heaven, He took the disciples out to the Mount of Olives. As He blessed them there. He was taken upward from them. Their astonished gaze followed Him until a cloud received Him out of their sight. Suddenly by their side stood two "men in white apparel" (angels?) with a promise that Jesus would return to earth!

1. Jesus is coming again personally. The angelic messengers announced to the disciples, **"This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."** verse 11. Careful observation of this promise will show it to mean that Jesus, Himself, will return to earth. No other shall come in His place. Having come to dishonor and death in the First Coming, He will surely come with glory and honour in the Second Coming. The important events which occur at His coming will not be left in the hands of men nor angels, but the Lord will be personally present to direct them. Paul promises, **"The Lord himself will descend from heaven . . ."** I Thessalonians 4:16. Yes, the Chris-

tians are looking for Jesus to appear!
2. Jesus is coming again in a visible manifestation. If Jesus comes "in like manner as ye have seen Him go," His coming will be visible. On the Mount of Olives the disciples watched Jesus ascend upward until He went beyond a cloud. Now, reverse this scene and see what "in like manner" means in regard to His return: disciples looking upward will see the clouds part and Jesus will be descending in His Second Coming! Revelation 1:7 records, **"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him . . ."** Today's lesson text suggests the same truth: **"For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day,"** verse 24. Therefore, the idea that the death of a Christian is Jesus' "second coming" for him, is incorrect. When Jesus comes again, He will be seen by the multitudes of men.

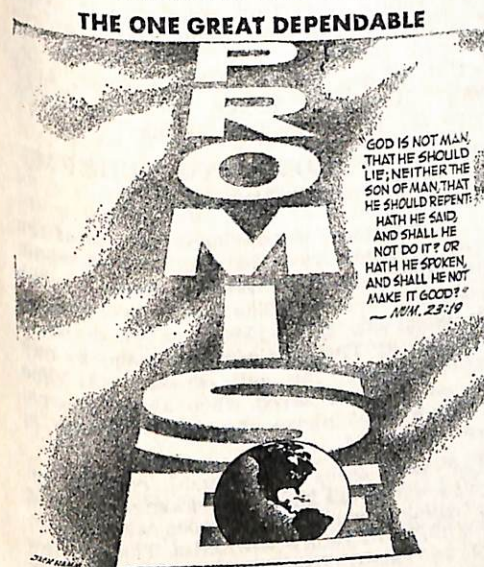
3. Jesus is coming again in his bodily form. The return of Jesus is not a spiritual manifestation, as the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. His return will be "in like manner" as His ascension—in a bodily, visible form. His body in the Second Coming will probably be the "glorious body" which He now has in heaven, Philippians 3:21. This will be a part of the "great glory" which accompanies His return.

What a wonderful day it will be when the glorified Jesus appears in His own distinct individuality, personally, bodily, with angels and great glory of the Father. No wonder the Christian looks, not for death, but for the Lord Jesus!

II. JESUS COMES UNEXPECTEDLY, Luke 17:22-29.

Jesus told the disciples that some time would pass before His return to earth. During the time between His ascension and return, days would come when they would "desire to see one of the days of the Son of man." During this interim, false Christs would arise and cause great excitement. However, at a time when people were eating, drinking, marrying, buying, selling, and otherwise pursuing their normal manner of life, Jesus would appear! That day will be both longed-for and unexpected.

1. His coming will be unexpected because



its time is unknown. When the disciples questioned Him on this point, Jesus replied, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power," Acts 1:7. Again, Jesus says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only," Matthew 24:36. How absurd, then, are all efforts of men to set the date of His return. One religious sect convened in Waco, Texas, in the Spring of 1959 because they had found the day for His return! Some of them sold valuable property at "give-away" prices. Others bought expensive automobiles and stayed in luxurious hotels because they thought they would never have to pay the bills! When Jesus did not return at the determined day, they said a mistake of one year had been made. Time has proven their error.

The indefinite, imminent nature of the Lord's return calls to watchfulness. Jesus said, "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch," Mark 13:35-37.

2. His coming will follow a period of religious apostasy, verse 23. "That day shall not come, except there come a falling away first . . ." II Thessalonians 2:3a. The condition of men in the time of religious apostasy is described by Paul in II Timothy 3:1-4. Selfishness, unholy passions, rebellion against rightful authority, pleasure loving, religious heresy, and general ungodliness will be the order of the day. In the midst of such distressing circumstances, Jesus will appear! No wonder His coming is called "the blessed hope" of the saints.

3. His coming in glory will be in contrast to His former coming in humiliation, verse 25. Paul describes the incarnation of Jesus as His "making himself of no reputation" (literally, "he emptied himself") in laying aside the perfect glory of the Father to become man, Philippians 2:5-8. His second coming will be with the glory of the Father with His angels, Matthew 16:27. His sign will appear in heaven and then He will come "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," Matthew 24:30. At first He came as the Sacrifice for sin. He will come as the Judge and Victor over sin. He came first in the likeness of man. He will come

in the likeness of God. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," Revelation 22:20c.

4. His coming will interrupt the regular pursuits of men, verses 26-29. The uncertain date of the Lord's return, plus the unbelief of many that He will ever come again, is evident in the activities of people when He does come. They will be eating, drinking, marrying, buying, selling, planting, and building. If His return was expected, they would not be going normally about their pursuits. People, generally, will not be ready when He comes.

Christians must keep their life centered in heaven, not on earth. The Lord may return soon. We must be ready all the time. His coming will catch many unawares, but the Christian must always be ready to welcome Him.

5. His coming is imminent. One man was heard to say, "There is so much prophecy to be fulfilled before Jesus returns that His coming will not be for another hundred years." His opinion must be classed with all other efforts to set dates for this important event. Jesus says that He might come at any hour and calls His people to alert watchfulness right now and all the time, Matthew 24:42. Each day, with each hour of the day, must be lived as if Jesus might return now. How wonderful it would be if that blessed event would occur today! It could. Indeed, it may! Jesus said to expect it at any time. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus," Revelation 22:20c. How our hearts yearn for His blessed appearing!

III. JESUS COMES TO REDEEM, I Thessalonians 4:13-17.

1. Jesus comes to redeem the bodies of the deceased saints from the grave, verses 14-16. The Bible suggests there are three phases to full salvation. (1) The soul is saved eternally when one trusts Jesus as his personal Saviour. (2) The life is saved in day-by-day consecration to the will of God. (3) The physical body is saved when Jesus returns. It is the third phase of salvation which is here considered.

Paul says Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet-sound of God. Those saints which have died will return with Him. Their bodies will be raised from the graves wherever they have returned to dust, the spirits will

reinhabit the bodies, and they shall live eternally with the Lord. This is exactly what God promised to do for Israel many centuries ago: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes," Hosea 13:14. Someday the graves will give up their treasures for Jesus will return to resurrect the departed saints.

2. Jesus comes to redeem living saints from a sin-cursed environment, verse 17. The resurrected saints will have no advantage over the living saints when Jesus comes. Neither will the living saints have any advantage. Just as the bodies of deceased saints will be resurrected in a glorified form, so the bodies of the living saints will be changed into glorified forms. All this will happen "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," I Corinthians 15:52.

The glorified bodies of the saints are described in I Corinthians 15:42-53. They will be incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual, and shall bear the image of the Lord Jesus! Even so, ". . . it doth not yet appear what we shall be (like): but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is," I John 3:2b. Paul adds his testimony to this glorious fact when he writes, "(Jesus) shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself," Philippians 3:21. These physical bodies have been fitted for existence in this present world system. The Lord will change them to be fitted for an existence in glory where God is revealed. Since heaven will have no pain, death, nor sickness, the resurrected bodies will no longer be subject to the infirmities of earth. All deformities, diseases, and decay will be left behind, unknown in that glorified state.

However, the redemption of the saved will also be the condemnation of the unsaved. Only the saints will be resurrected and

caught up to meet the Lord in the air. The unsaved dead are left in the graves at this time (Revelation 20:5) to await the "second resurrection" and eternal judgment. If you have a dear one who is not safe in the fold, hasten to win him today. Eternity will be too late.

CONCLUSION—Jesus is coming again. He will return in the same manner in which He ascended into Heaven—personally, bodily, visibly. No man knows when He will come. His coming may be near—very near. Until He comes, we must live worthy of the vocation into which we have been called. (1) We must be constantly watchful and ready for Him. (2) We must be busy winning others to Him. (3) We must be standing faithfully by the Word of God as the days of apostasy draw near. (4) We must share the hope of His return with those who do not have the consolation it brings. (5) We must keep our hearts tender and our hopes bright until He appears. Until that hour, may the Lord keep you "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ," Titus 2:13. Next Sunday's lesson will pursue in further detail some of the events related to the Lord's return.

QUESTIONS

1. Why is the doctrine of the Second Coming so important?
2. What is meant by, "Jesus is coming personally"?
3. What is meant by, "Jesus is coming bodily"?
4. Why will Jesus' coming be unexpected?
5. Do you believe Jesus could come today? Give reasons for your answer.
6. What are the three phases of salvation?
7. How is the second coming of Jesus an act of redemption?
8. What will the resurrection body be like?
9. What happens to the saints after the resurrection?
10. What are you doing personally in preparation for His coming?

VIRGIN BIRTH, VIRTUOUS LIFE, VICARIOUS DEATH, VICTORIOUS RESURRECTION, VISIBLE RETURN

The Rapture and the Judgments

Aim: The study of Articles 23, 24, 25. 23. The bodily resurrection of the dead. 24. The reality of heaven, involving divine assurance of eternal happiness for the redeemed of God. 25. The reality of hell, involving everlasting punishment of the incorrigible wicked.

Devotional: Preparedness, Revelation 22:12-17.

Lesson Text: I Corinthians 15:12-20; Revelation 21:1-8.

12 Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?

13 But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:

14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.

15 Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

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

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

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

* * * * *

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Je-ru'-sa-lem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with

men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Al'-pha and O-meg'-a, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: I Corinthians 15:51-58

Tuesday: Revelation 20:1-6

Wednesday: Revelation 20:7-10

Thursday: Revelation 20:11-15

Friday: Revelation 21:1-27

Saturday: Revelation 22:1-16



Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord, I Corinthians 15:58.

INTRODUCTION—The consummation of this present age will be the Second Coming of Jesus. As studied last Sunday, the return of Jesus will bring a rapture of the saints. "Rapture" means "the act of seizing and carrying off by force." It is used in this context to refer to the Lord taking up the saints to meet Him in the air, I Thessalon-

ians 4:17. At His appearing the dead bodies will be resurrected glorified bodies, the living saints will be transformed into glorified bodies, and all Christians will be caught up to meet Him.

Immediately following the rapture will come the judgment of the saints at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This will determine

the rewards received by each redeemed person. While these events are transpiring in the air (along with the Marriage Supper of the Lamb), the Great Tribulation will occur on earth. At the end of these seven years, the Lord will return to earth with His saints. After He has reigned here 1,000 years, He will raise the unsaved dead and all redeemed men will stand before Him at the Great White Throne Judgment. The wicked will be consigned to the Lake of Fire while the righteous will become inhabitants of the new heaven and earth.

It is important to remember that the wicked and righteous are raised from the dead at two separate times and stand before separate judgments. These two occasions are separated by the 1,000 year reign of Christ, Revelation 20:4-6. Men are making decisions today as to where they will be in the rapture and how they will fare in one of the judgments.

EXPOSITION

I. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, I Corinthians 15:12-20.

1. The resurrection and rapture are based upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ, verses 12, 20. If Christ is raised from the dead it is proof that a resurrection is possible.



If Christ is not raised from among the dead, we have no assurance concerning the prospect of our resurrection. Jesus has proven Himself victorious over death, hell, and the grave (Revelation 1:18) and assures us, "Because I live, ye shall live also," John 14:19. The same victory which He gained in the resurrection is assured to all believers. He has gone all the way through death, was buried, and came forth from the grave. We follow Him into death without fear knowing we shall also follow Him in the resurrection.

Paul speaks of Jesus as the "firstfruits" of the resurrection. The farmer may walk through his orchard or field and pluck some of the first ripe fruit knowing that the main harvest will soon follow. So Jesus arose from the dead as the "firstfruits" of all the redeemed who will follow Him.

2. All Christian hope relates to the resurrection of the body and the resurrection of Jesus is basic to our resurrection, verses 13-19. Five drastic consequences would follow if Jesus had not risen from the dead. (1) If Christ is not risen our preaching is vain. If Christ is not risen our preaching is vain. To be "vain" is to be empty and meaningless. We preach that by His death and resurrection Jesus paid the debt for sin. However, if Jesus has not risen—if He is still dead and still in the grave—the message we preach is not true. A message based on falsehood is useless—"vain." Every Christian message is empty and meaningless unless Christ has arisen from the dead.

(2) If Christ is not risen our faith is vain, verse 14b. We confess to have been saved through faith in a crucified and risen Jesus. But what benefit is faith if Christ is still dead? Even if one has had an emotional experience which he calls "conversion" it is useless unless Jesus lives. What advantage is there in faith if one believes a falsehood? Faith is empty unless Jesus is a living Saviour.

(3) If Christ is not risen we are false witnesses of God, verse 15. We testify that God has raised Christ from the dead. The Bible says so. But if Christ is not risen the Bible is proven unreliable and what we testify concerning God is not truth. There is no fellowship with God if Jesus is still in the grave. Falsehood cannot bring a man to God for peace and reconciliation.

(4) If Christ is not risen we are still in sin, verse 17. The only way of forgiveness is through Jesus Christ, Acts 4:12. The only

way to God is through Jesus Christ, John 14:6. But if Jesus is still in the clutches of death, unable to extricate Himself, there is no way open to God. Therefore, forgiveness of sin is impossible. No one has forgiveness, therefore, if death has conquered Christ.

(5) If Christ is not risen those who have died with faith in Christ have perished, verses 18-19. Our hope in Christ extends past death or we have no real hope in Him at all. If Christ Jesus is still in the grave, and no man has forgiveness through Him, then those who trusted their souls into His grace have been betrayed and have perished. Even if they were somehow saved by His death, there would be no hope of their resurrection, for a Saviour who could not raise Himself from the dead surely could not resurrect His disciples.

But, praise God, Jesus has risen! **"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept . . . For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming,"** I Corinthians 15:20, 22-23.

3. The rapture of the saints comes at the first resurrection, verse 20. Since the resurrection of Christ is a "firstfruit" of the resurrection of Christians, their resurrection will be in like manner to His. Paul speaks of this grand event in I Thessalonians 4:13-17. The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God, "and the dead in Christ shall rise." This is the first event following His appearing. Their resurrection bodies will be incorruptible, glorious, powerful, and spiritual, I Corinthians 15:35-54. These bodies will bear the image of the glorified Lord! The living saints will also be transformed immediately so that they all (whether dead or alive at Christ's appearing) will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. This is the "first resurrection." **"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years,"** Revelation 20:4-6.

The resurrection of the saints is called the "first" resurrection because there is a "second" resurrection to follow—the resurrection of the unredeemed. **"The rest of the dead** (that is, the unsaved dead who had no part

in the first resurrection) **lived not again until the thousand years were finished,"** Revelation 20:5. Though there is an interim of one thousand years between the first and second resurrections, every human being will be in one or the other, John 5:28-29; Daniel 12:2-3. You, dear reader, will be in one. Which?

II. THE JUDGMENT OF THE SAVED, I Corinthians 3:11-15; Revelation 21:1-8.

1. Where? The redeemed saints of God will stand before the "Judgment Seat of Christ" as described in I Corinthians 3:11-15. This event will take place in heaven. At the first resurrection the saints are raised up, glorified, and "caught up together . . . to meet the Lord in the air," I Thessalonians 4:17. They will remain in the air for a brief period of time—some scholars say seven years and other three and one-half years. During this time they will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and participate in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Meanwhile, the Great Tribulation will occur on earth. What a blessed day when the glorified saints, delivered from the very presence of a sinful environment, behold their glorified Lord!

2. Who? Only the saints will stand before God in this judgment, I Corinthians 3:14-15. Only the saints were resurrected from among the dead and only the living saints were raptured with them. The unsaved dead were left in the graves and the unsaved alive on earth were left on earth. Since the purpose of this judgment is rewards, not punishment (as will be seen below), only the saved will be there. Judgment of the unsaved will come one thousand years later and no saved person will stand in that judgment. The destiny of the soul is fully settled in this life, not in the day of judgment.

3. Why? There are two great purposes in the judgment of the saved. First, an examination of the works of every child of God will guarantee equity in the conferring of reward for faithful service. Jesus Himself will examine each one and announce the reward due him. Second, according to Matthew 25:21, this judgment will also determine the place each one will occupy in the millennial reign of Jesus Christ. There will be no mistakes nor injustice in that day

when, **"Every one of us shall give account of himself to God,"** Romans 14:12. What a challenge to each Christian to be faithful in his daily duties for the Lord, knowing **" . . . we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ,"** Romans 14:10. Blessed, indeed, is the one who hears the Lord say, **"Well done, good and faithful servant . . . I will make thee ruler over many things,"** Matthew 25:21.

4. What follows? Soon after the saints have stood before the Judgment Seat of Christ and participated in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, they will descend to earth with the Lord Jesus. Satan will be bound for one thousand years and Jesus will reign with the saints in a millennium of peace and righteousness. At the end of the thousand years, Satan will be loosed and will lead a rebellion against the Lord Jesus. His power will be cancelled and he will be cast into the Lake of Fire. The unsaved dead will be raised and all the unsaved will stand before the Great White Throne Judgment to receive their just condemnation. Eternity will then be issued in with the passing of the old heavens and earth and the creation of the new. There the saints will remain with God in the blessed condition described in Revelation 21-22. Blessed day! In the city of God, the tabernacle of God, and the garden of God, the redeemed will share the bliss of God's unveiled presence.

III. THE JUDGMENT OF THE UNSAVED, Revelation 20:11-15.

1. Where? The unsaved are judged at the Great White Throne Judgment, verse 11. The very reading of the account of this dread judgment moves the heart to awe. This is a "great" judgment because all the unsaved people of all generations and nations will appear to be judged. This is a "white" judgment because the Judge is pure and the examination and verdict will be according to righteousness. This is a "throne" judgment because God sits upon His throne of authority in that terrible day. The judgment of the "Great White Throne" will be for the unsaved—and only for the unsaved—to account to God for their failure to trust Jesus. From here they will be consigned to the torments of the Lake of Fire and eternal death.

2. What evidence? Will men be permitted to give evidence and "argue their case" before the Great White Throne? Certainly not! The evidence to be presented will be

specific and true. There will be books there which contain all the evidence necessary. (Some hold "the books" to be the Bible, while others see them as records of the conduct of those being judged.) Of special importance is the presence of the Book of Life. The redeemed have their names written therein from the foundation of the world. Revelation 17:8. Jesus said it was more important to have one's name written there than to be able to work miracles, Luke 10:20. The absence of one's name from this book is the unanswerable argument to man's claim for righteousness and evidence of his unsaved condition.

3. Who will be the Judge? Jesus Christ will be the Judge at the Great White Throne. God has already appointed a day in which He will judge the world in the person of Jesus, Acts 17:31. His resurrection is God's proof that this is so! Think of it: the Judge of the unredeemed is the same One who would have been their Saviour if they had trusted Him! What argument would any man have to offer when he stands before the Saviour of those who believe? To how many will He have to say, **"I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity,"** Matthew 7:23. **"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal,"** Matthew 25:26.

4. What is the purpose? The purpose of the Great White Throne Judgment is to determine the degrees of punishment for the wicked and execute their final sentence of doom. This judgment will have nothing to do with salvation. Those who stand before this judgment have already missed salvation. That is why they appear here instead of at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

Just as there are differences of reward for the saved, so there are differing degrees of punishment to be endured by the unsaved. Some will find it "more tolerable" in the day of judgment than others, Matthew 11:20-24. While some are beaten with "many stripes," others will be beaten with "few stripes," depending upon their knowledge of the things of God, Luke 12:27-18. He who persists in sinful rebellion will surely suffer the consequences thereof in all eternity.

5. What fate? Those condemned in the Great White Throne Judgment will be consigned to eternal suffering in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. This is the second death, Revelation 20:14-15. There, in

that place of "outer darkness," will be "weeping and gnashing of teeth," Matthew 8:12; 24:30. Those condemned thereto will "go away into everlasting punishment," Matthew 25:46. This is the place where "the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," Mark 9:44, 46, 48. It is the place where the devil, the beast, and the false prophet are tormented day and night for ever and ever, Revelation 20:10. **"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire,"** Revelation 20:15. The sufferings of the condemned will last as long as the bliss of the redeemed! Be sure you are safe in Jesus. Win every other person you can to trust Him also.

6. When? The Great White Throne Judgment will come immediately following the final insurrection of Satan against God at the close of the millennial reign of Jesus and His saints. It will mark the absolute end of this present world order. Following this judgment, ". . . the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up," II Peter 3:10. Then there shall remain only the places of eternal destiny: the Lake of Fire for the condemned and the new heaven and earth for the redeemed. Eternity will have come and time will be no more.

CONCLUSION—The Lord Jesus will come in the air and receive all the redeemed, living or dead. They will be caught up into the air to meet Him while the unsaved are left on earth. The saints will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ to receive their

rewards. Then they will return to earth to reign with Christ for one thousand years. At the end of this time the unsaved dead will be redeemed by faith in the Lord Jesus all ages will stand in the Great White Throne Judgment to receive their sentence of condemnation. The wicked shall be turned into hell and the righteous will inherit the joys of life eternal. There will be no transfer of destiny in eternity. Be sure you have been redeemed by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Divine Son of God. His person and work is the subject of study next week.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the "rapture"?
2. How is Christ the "firstfruits" of the resurrection?
3. What consequences would follow if Jesus be not risen from death?
4. What are the differences in the first and second resurrections?
5. What differences are there between the Judgment Seat of Christ and the Great White Throne Judgment?
6. Where will each judgment be held and who will be in each?
7. Do you believe in degrees of punishment for the wicked? Why?
8. Who will be the Judge in the judgment?
9. How does the Bible describe heaven? hell?
10. What is the order of events regarding the Lord's coming and the end of the world?
11. How is this lesson a challenge to Christians?

Awaited Judgment

In Pompeii the furious lava caught and sealed the people in whatever act they were engaged in--at the theater, in the kitchen, in the market place, in the haunts of sin.

So death suddenly comes to many and seals them until the day of awaited judgment.

Lesson XIII

Stedfast in the Faith

Aim: A REVIEW of the Faith wherein we stand, as set forth by the twenty-five (25) Articles of The Doctrinal Statement.

Devotional: Truth, I Timothy 2:1-6.

Lesson Text: I Peter 5:1-11.

1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

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

6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

8 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in you brethren that are in the world.

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Je'sus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

11 To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. A'men.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday: II Peter 3:1-9
 Tuesday: II Peter 3:10-12
 Wednesday: I John 1:1-7
 Thursday: I Peter 2:21-25
 Friday: Titus 1:1-5
 Saturday: I Timothy 1:1-11



Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; Whom resist stedfast in the faith, I Peter 5:8-9a.

INTRODUCTION—"I must be a better Christian today than I was yesterday." This resolve should be made anew each morning by every Christian. Why? Because yesterday's experiences have taught him new things and with increased knowledge comes increased responsibility.

Exactly so, each person who has studied the preceding lessons stands before God with greater responsibility than before. These lessons on Baptist doctrine should be studied, understood, held, defended, and propagated. These doctrines are divinely-given principles. They are the truths of God's word. They deserve utmost allegiance by every child of God.

Today's lesson is entitled: "Stedfast in the Faith." To be "stedfast" means to hold

faithfully to a thing, to be unmoveable from a conviction. The term "the Faith" refers to the system of doctrine which is set out in the Bible—God's Word. Hence, the lesson challenges each reader to take his stand with Bible truth and refuse to be moved therefrom.

This is a call to knowledge of the truth, conviction concerning it, and loyalty to it. Its challenge is worded by Peter: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear," I Peter 3:15.

Perilous days are rapidly coming upon the earth. When apostate religious systems come into world unity and form a world church,

Baptists are going to be faced with religious persecutions once again. Baptists will be asked to desert their time-honored faith. They must be ready to "give an answer" to those who oppose them. God, make us able to answer in that day! Until that day arises, we must be busy sharing the truths of God with people all over the world. Herein lies the call to missions and evangelism.

EXPOSITION

I. STEADFAST LEADERS, 5:1-4.

1. Duty: Religious leaders are to feed the flock on God's truths, verses 1-2a. The oversight of the New Testament churches was entrusted to mature and able men called "elders." Elsewhere the "elder" is called "overseer" or "bishop" or "pastor," Acts 20:17, 28. The term is a designation of work and not an official title for an office.

Religious leaders, whatever their office, are to "act as shepherds" over the flock of God—His congregation of people in a particular place. The admonition to "feed the flock of God which is among you" includes all the duties of a shepherd: feeding, guarding, tending, and guiding the flock of God. The shepherd should always remember that the flock is God's, not his own. We are



only under-shepherds. Therefore, the leader is to work for the good of the flock and not use the flock for his personal benefit.

Since the flock belong to God, they must be fed on the truths of God. Paul vindicated his ministry in Ephesus by pointing out that he shared with them "all the counsel of God," Acts 20:20, 26-28. Ezra is remembered as a great Old Testament saint because he set his heart to know God's law and his energies to obey it and teach it, Ezra 7:10. Blessed is the congregation to which God's promise is fulfilled: "And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding," Jeremiah 3:15. Such people will be "steadfast in the faith."

2. Spirit: Religious leaders are to emphasize their teachings by serving in a spirit of sincere humility, verses 2b-3a. No "constraint" is to be used in taking a position of leadership in the church. One should not serve with a "somebody has to do it" spirit nor with an "I'm the boss" spirit. Service is to be rendered for the sole purpose of doing God's will.

One's position in the church should create no feeling of superiority in him. Such will lead to an attempt to become a lord over God's heritage. No high-handed, autocratic rule of the church has been authorized of God for any pastor or church officer to perform. True spiritual power does not lie in such superficial authority. Jesus has set the rule: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant," Matthew 20:26-27.

3. Motivation: Religious leaders are to be motivated by sincere concern for the people, being free from selfish ambitions, verse 2c. No man of God must serve for "filthy lucre" (base gain). That is, the Lord's service is not to be commercialized. Does this mean that a church should not pay a salary to her pastor? By no means. It suggests, on the other hand, that only an unworthy man would enter the ministry simply to obtain material advantage. Some false prophets taught for the financial remuneration they received (Titus 1:11), but this does not indicate every preacher who receives a salary is a false prophet! The true minister will devote himself to the work of Jesus. The true church where he serves will support him so he may have physical necessities supplied

and give himself unceasingly to his work. The man who serves in the name of Christ for salary only is not worthy to be called a minister of Jesus Christ.

4. Example: Religious leaders are to be examples in their steadfast loyalty to the truth, verse 3b. Each leader is to be an "ensample to the flock." The term, "ensample," means "a print left as an impression after a blow has been struck." Each preacher, teacher, and Christian believer is to be an "ensample." The leader is to be an ensample of Jesus Christ and the followers are to copy themselves after him as he follows Jesus, I Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17. Failure to match one's self after the mould of Jesus Christ brings dishonour upon His cause. But how can carnal man be moulded after the image of Jesus? It is possible by refusing to be molded after the world and by conformation unto the will of Christ, Romans 12:1-2. All Christian believers, but especially those who are leaders, are exhorted: "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity . . . Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee," I Timothy 4:12, 16. A steadfast leader will inspire the people to a like steadfastness.

II. SUBMISSIVE FOLLOWERS, 5:5-7.

1. Submission to leaders: Those who are being taught should be submissive to their teacher, verse 5a. There is no special sanctity in age alone. Peter here assumes that a person will grow in grace as he grows in years. If so, the elders of the congregation would be the wiser teachers. Hence, the younger are taught to be submissive to the leadership afforded by the mature members. And yet, this does not mean God does not speak to and work through the younger members. There is a place in the church for each saved person, young or old. The point stressed here is that those who are duly elected teachers and leaders should have the cooperation and respect of those who are taught and led. No church can function properly without this cooperation. See I Corinthians 16:15-16.

2. Submission to equals: All Christians

are to be humble in their relations to one another, verse 5b. "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." This admonition is not for Christians to feel humble, nor to pray for humility, but to act it, to give humility expression in serving others, in taking orders from them, and in fitting into their arrangements. True, this goes against the natural inclinations of the flesh. "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you," Romans 8:9a. Moreover, we are not debtors to the flesh to live after the flesh, Romans 8:12. True humility is a most essential Christian virtue. Kenneth Wuest has observed, "The other virtues such as kindness, generosity, justice, goodness, long-suffering, when saturated with humility, are most acceptable and praise worthy, but when seen in a proud person, are like clanging brass or a tinkling cymbal." The reason why we should be submissive to our leaders is given in Hebrews 13:17.

3. Submission to God: Everyone should be fully submissive before God, verses 5c-6. Of the six things which the Lord hates—of the seven things which are an abomination unto Him—the first is pride! See Proverbs 6:16-19. Peter emphatically states here, "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." The word "proud" means "to show oneself as above." The word "resist" is a military term which describes an army set for battle. So God is shown to draw up His armies (His own invincible power) to do battle with the proud. While He is irresistibly opposed to the proud, His favour is shown to the humble. Wisdom counsels, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God."

Humility before God is not mere resignation. It is an active cooperation. It is not like a resignation of oneself to illness, but submission to a physician from whom one will receive treatment. Jesus, Himself, has promised that true humility will bring exaltation, Luke 14:11. God knows the deepest recesses of our wills. He honors our trust and opposes our self-confidence. No wonder James advises, "Submit yourselves therefore to God," James 4:7a.

This part of the study may be applied in this manner. The time may soon come (or is, indeed, already here) when it would be easier to believe nothing and do nothing so as to be popular. Christians have little

question about God's will in such a day. It is, "Study to know the truth, then live it and teach it in humble dedication to Me." This kind of submission honors God.

III. VIGILANT CONGREGATIONS, 5:8-11.

Faithful Christians will produce faithful congregations in all the churches. Peter gives four reasons why Christians should be steadfast and faithful.

1. Adversary: Christians should be vigilant because of their adversary, verse 8. God's people are challenged to be sober (mentally self-controlled) and vigilant (awake and watchful). They are challenged by an opponent who is the devil. (The Greek word for devil means "to traduce, slander, accuse, defame.") He is described in a four-fold manner. (1) He is dangerous—"a roaring lion." (2) He is hunting victims—"walketh about." (3) He is determined to destroy—"seeking whom he may devour." (4) He is equally threatening to all—"seeking (anyone) whom he may devour." No wonder God's people are called to alert watchfulness. Satan must be resisted and opposed. How is he repelled? By a confident trust in God and a firm resolve that we will obey Him alone. James writes these words of encouragement, "Submit yourselves therefore to God, Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," James 4:7. Satan is strong but God is stronger, I John 4:4.

2. Example: Christians should be vigilant following the example of their brethren, verse 9. Satan can be resisted successfully! The records of our predecessors in the faith testify to this truth. Read Hebrews 11 and see the Biblical record of the "heroes of the faith" who successfully resisted his attacks. There has been no time when Satan was not opposed to the work of God. From the time of the temptation of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden unto the moment these words are read, Satan has been trying to thwart the work of God among men. Trials today are no worse than they have been before. Christian brethren of former generations stood fast for Christ. So can we of the twentieth century! "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make

a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," I Corinthians 10:13. Take courage, Christian brother, for the God who stood by His people in times past stands by you today. He gives you victory through the Lord Jesus Christ!

3. Strength: Christians should be vigilant because God will use the trials they endure to strengthen them in His grace, verse 10. God is "the God of all grace (favour)" and will surely reveal His grace to His tried children. He has pledged Himself to lead them through troubles so as to make them mature in things of the Spirit. If trials will establish, strengthen, and settle them, He leads on in that direction. The leading of God is not only in the way of trial, however, for He has called us "unto his eternal glory."

God can be counted on to lead believers unto glory because He is the God of all grace. No believer can afford to grow negligent about service in the face of such wonderful prospects. The hope of heaven should inspire Christians to a most energetic service for the Lord who makes heaven ready for our coming. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," I Corinthians 2:9.

4. Doxology: Christians should be vigilant because it will glorify God, verse 11. The Christian is saved that he might glorify God, Ephesians 1:7. Such glory is due to be rendered to Him through His church, Ephesians 3:20-21. By living for His glory, Christians point others to the Father in Heaven that they might come to know Him also, Matthew 5:16.

QUESTIONS

1. How does today's study relate to the lessons of this quarter?
2. How does I Peter 3:15 relate to this study?
3. Who composes the "flock of God" in today's lesson?
4. Who are the "elders"?
5. What is humility? How is it manifest?
6. In what sense are all Christians examples to others?
7. How can Christians be submissive to one another?
8. Why does God hate pride?
9. What is the nature of the Christian's adversary?
10. What encourages faithfulness in the Christian?

