

CONFIDENT
LIVING IN LIGHT
OF
THE TRUTH

Foundations for **LIFE**

STU KINNIBURGH
with DR. DAN HAYDEN

Foundations for Life, Confident Living In Light of the Truth by Stu Kinniburgh and Dan Hayden

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Acknowledgement

This is my passion: to help Christians understand that they can know the truth of the Gospel with enough confidence that they can boldly go into their workplace, home, school, and yes, Church and talk about their faith. I grieve when good people share with excitement about some book they found or some speaker they heard who persuasively argues for a theology different from that of Scripture. The Bible compares us to sheep that have gone astray. It is not saying that we are *supposed* to go astray, only that we often do!! I want to help people stay on the right path, avoid the detours that confound us, and finish strong. Dan and I have served in ministry together for many years, and we share the desire to encourage Believers. That is why we are offering this book – to help you accomplish these goals. I'd like to thank some very special people that have guided me in preparing this material.

First, my wife, Jill, for her support over the years as I've developed this program – even to the point of taking a Foundations for Life class to help me polish the course material. She was a particularly demanding student, but she is a loving and supportive wife!

To Dan Hayden, my dear friend and co-laborer in the Faith. He has dedicated his life to knowing God and his Word and helping Believers to live victorious lives in Christ. There is not a more gifted Bible teacher on this planet. It is a blessing beyond measure that he would partner with me to create this material.

To Pastor Ken Gentzler, who developed a course called Equippers that I took while in my first staff position in a church. His systematic study of the main aspects of faith changed my life. When I completed the course, I not only knew what I believed, I understood *why* I believed. Ken graciously gave me his work to start the process of developing my own course that is culminated in this book. Where I am today Spiritually is largely a product of his support and investment in my life.

To Pastor Renaut van der Riet, a dear brother who encouraged me to develop and teach this material within his fellowship. He is a great example of pastors in the Church who place a priority on teaching, doctrine and truth.

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To John, Mandie, Brody and Rachel for the ideas and suggestions to help me communicate my thoughts more clearly.

Finally, thanks to the many students who have taken these classes and provided such wonderful feedback so that I could continue to refine the material for the next group of students.

One other thing -

I've heard it said that treasury agents don't study counterfeit money, they study the real thing and then when they see a counterfeit bill, they know immediately that it departs from the genuine article. I honestly don't know if that is true, but it makes sense because that is how we need to operate within the Christian Faith. I think there is value in knowing some of the arguments used against biblical truth and so I included some of them in this material, but I am more interested that you know the truth so that anything else clearly stands out. You may not remember every detail of the things you read in this book, but you will have a grasp on the big picture enough to avoid being led astray.

In His Grip,
Stu Kinniburgh

Introduction

DON'T SKIP THESE FIRST PAGES!! This information will help you as you work on the book. First, read the following excerpt from a speech by Josh McDowell printed in the Christian Post in 2010:

The faith of most Christians, even that of many pastors, will not stand up to intellectual scrutiny, according to renowned apologist Josh McDowell. He has asked hundreds of Christians and leaders why they see themselves as Christians. No one gave him an "intelligent" answer. He has asked over 4,000 pastors, leaders and parents why they believe the Bible is true. A mere six "came close to giving an intelligent answer," McDowell noted.

Ninety-five percent of Christians gave disappointing responses when asked why they believe Jesus is the Son of God. Asked why the Bible is true and historically reliable, Christians replied that it was what they had been taught by their church or parents. A common response that most Christians gave to both questions was that it is "what I believe." McDowell responded: "That's voodoo thinking. Where did we ever get that crazy idea that something is true just because we believe it? "If that is true, then there will never be heresy. Everybody would be right."

On one occasion, 13 youth pastors at a large convention were unable to reasonably answer his question. Finally one young person stood up, walked toward him and told him he knew the answer. The young man promptly held up his Bible and said, "Because I believe it." And to McDowell's dismay, all the youth pastors applauded him. McDowell said, "Young man, do you know the difference between you, me and the majority of Christians in the world? "To you, it is true because you believe it. For me, I believe it because it is true."

Another response the apologist received was: Because I have faith. He commented, "Where did we ever get the crazy idea that faith makes something true? That's idiotic. "God doesn't use faith to create truth. He uses truth through the Holy Spirit to create faith."

Christians, the apologist stressed, are called to explain their faith when asked. They are set free by the faith in the truth. Yet others say Christianity is true because Jesus changed their lives. Even this will not stand up to scrutiny, McDowell argued. "Lies change lives; cults change lives," he said. McDowell concludes: "We owe it to ourselves, we owe it to our children, we owe it to our neighbors, we owe it to the lost, to tell them not just what we believe but why do we believe it."

Does the indictment above describe your level of confidence in what you believe about your faith? Have you found yourself backing down in a discussion when

issues of faith are mentioned? Do you hear or read things and wonder if they represent truth in the Bible? Do you ever defend your beliefs with the words “I think it is in the Bible somewhere...” or “Let’s get the pastor to answer these questions...”?

This book offers a biblical explanation for the basics of what a Believer should know about his faith. If you read and answer the questions in each chapter, you should be able to answer and defend the essential questions of what Christians believe.

You may not agree with everything you read in this book. You may be tempted to put it down when you learn something that is different from what you have been taught. Let me encourage you to complete the chapters. Where you disagree, find a biblical reason for your perspective that does not violate the basic principles of reading Scripture. Don’t hold on to your beliefs because you learned them in church or from family members or because they make “sense” to you. Hold on to them because the Bible teaches them! On some of the more controversial issues, this book will explain some of the views in question and try to demonstrate why people believe them. In each case, you will learn what the Bible teaches and why, then you can draw your own conclusion. Unlike many attempts to teach doctrine today, this book tells it like it is.

These are the same basic subjects taught in Bible Colleges and Seminaries all over the world, but the information is directed at the Believer who simply wants to know what the Bible teaches about some very essential issues of life. If you decide that you want to go into any of these topics in greater depth, visit www.foundationsonline.org for our current “Want to Go Deeper?” recommendations and additional study resources, or get suggestions from your Pastor. For those who complete the book, you will be included in that small number of Believers that Josh McDowell found who could answer his basic questions. If you want to be sure, then take the evaluation at the end. Don’t think of it as a test – tests have a way of frightening people into uncertainty. Think of it as a way to prove to yourself that your efforts have paid off! Most people who have taken this course share that they did much better on the evaluation than they thought they would, and many even enjoyed it! Know that by working diligently on this course, you will fulfill the command in 1 Peter 3:15 to be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

You will start with the Scriptures, because the basis for everything you will learn is in the proper method for reading and understanding the Bible. From there, you will build on your understanding by studying topics that cover every important aspect of life.

When you read a question in the chapter, take the time to answer it in writing. Some of these questions will seem very simple and will ask you to recall something you just read. There is a method in this process that is time tested, so please answer the questions as you go. Answers to the questions are listed at the end of the book.

An excellent companion resource to this course is *Mindful of the Truth*, developed by nationally known Bible teacher, speaker and radio personality Dr. Dan Hayden. It is one of the best Scripture memorization tools available, and you can use it on your own. The most effective way to use this book is to combine it with a regular program of Scripture memorization. Either select a book and begin memorizing from the beginning using Dan's technique (1 John or James is a great start), or select a series of Scripture verses you like. *Mindful of the Truth* is available with the companion resources at www.foundationsonline.org.

Also, it will be helpful for you to have a Bible as you work through this book. You will learn the strengths and weaknesses of various kinds of Bibles in the chapter on the Scriptures, so if you do not already have a good Bible, you can wait until you complete that chapter, then make an investment that will last a lifetime and purchase a very good Bible.

Finally, thank you for entering into this training. In addition to the blessing you will receive by going deeper into God's Word, you will feel the amazing power that comes with fully understanding why you believe the things you do. It will give you a confidence that you only imagined and equip you for all aspects of your life. It may also do one more thing. It may create a hunger to continue studying God's Word to build on your understanding that will lead you into a life-long love of God and Scripture.

Studying the Bible

To begin a study on what a Christian is to believe, there has to be a common basis for truth. Without this basis, discussions about complicated issues often become nothing more than people sharing their opinion about what seems to make the most sense to them. Most of what we know has been assimilated from our family upbringing, our schooling, thoughts and ideas expressed by friends or by people in the media. When asked, most people are unable to cite exactly why they believe something to be true, they simply accept it because they “learned” it at some point.

As Christians, we believe that God has revealed His thoughts so that we can know absolute truth. Actually, God provided three important ways that we could know him. First, we can know Him through His creation that is all around us. (This will be covered more in depth later.) Second, we know Him because of the person and work of Jesus, the Living Word. And third, we know Him through the written word that was provided so that man could understand what God wants us to know about him, and His creation... the Bible. Through study of the Bible, therefore, Christians are given the opportunity to truly know what they believe and why.

Studying the bible is much like studying any other discipline. In general terms, there are three aspects to a foundational study.

Observation

The writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle created one of the most memorable characters in English literature, the detective Sherlock Holmes. Holmes could walk into a crime scene that had been studied by police detectives and others and within minutes, notice clues the others had missed that would help him solve the crime. It was Holmes’ use of observation that allowed him to see things where others did not. This same concept helps students of the Bible to study Scripture. Without any other tools, a Believer can observe many things from a passage of Scripture. What is

happening? When is it taking place? Who is involved? Have we read about these people previously? What words are being used? Are comparisons being used with other Biblical concepts?

Interpretation

Once Sherlock Holmes observed a crime scene, he was able to make determinations that yielded clues using his observations. This is the essence of interpretation, an explanation of the meaning of an observation or fact. For Holmes to do this well, he needed a wealth of information from which to draw his conclusions. In one case, he looked at two impressions left by bicycle tires and says, "I am familiar with forty-two different impressions left by tyres. This, as you perceive, is a Dunlop, with a patch upon the outer cover." For the Believer, the ability to correctly interpret Scripture is a function of our knowledge of God and His Word. You will be reading more about how to correctly interpret Scripture in a few pages.

Application

Sherlock Holmes uses his observations and interpretations to a singular end: to catch the criminal. For the Believer, the application of our study is the life we live that is dedicated to honoring Christ. With that, we are able to make decisions, help others, work and play with the knowledge that our actions are right. The guide for this knowledge is the Bible.

The Bible is the most amazing book ever written. It is not one book; it is an ancient collection of writings, comprised of 66 separate books, written over approximately 1,600 years, by at least 40 distinct authors. The Old Testament contains 39 books written from approximately 1500 to 400 BC, and the New Testament contains 27 books written from approximately 40 to 100 AD. The original Old Testament was written mainly in Hebrew, with some Aramaic, while the original New Testament was written in common Greek. The next chapter will provide greater detail about the authority, accuracy and authenticity of the Bible, but as we start working on the truth within the Bible, there are a few main points to consider.

Three Basic Assumptions

As you study the Bible, there are a few ground-rules that will be helpful to consider. These rules, or assumptions, provide the basis for any study of Scripture.

1. The Bible Is God's Word (Inspiration)

There are many books written about many things by men. Some men are brilliant and insightful; others are... well... not all that brilliant. You can learn from both

kinds of writers, but when it comes to understanding the things of God, it is essential to read and study what God, Himself, has to say. The very reason for studying the Bible is that it is inspired by God. The literal meaning of “inspired” is “God breathed” and the basis for this belief is the Bible's own testimony. II Timothy 3:16 clearly states that the words in the Bible are inspired by God and useful for teaching and training. Believing in Divine inspiration of the Bible by one Divine author means that we recognize that each passage only has one correct interpretation, obviously the one God intended.

2. The Bible is Clear and Understandable (Perspicuity)

This does not mean that the Bible is simple or that every passage is intuitively clear to interpret. A passage may say something that was quite clear to the readers of the day that is puzzling to us because of our ignorance of a multitude of things. The more we learn from archaeology about the history and culture of the times, the more these passages begin making sense.

To some who ignore this principle, the scriptures are like a piano. They sit down and play whatever they wish on it. This is what we do when we impose our thoughts on the Bible rather than letting it impose its teaching on us.

There are **three forms of interpretation** that do not hold to the clarity of the scriptures:

Allegorization

Allegorizing is finding a mystical or symbolic meaning based on the use of one's imagination. It literally changes the meaning of the text and is not based on the natural, normal, or customary sense of the word meanings or context. An example of allegorization using the story of the Good Samaritan: A Traveler (Adam) from Jerusalem (Heaven) going to Jericho (World) is attacked by robbers (satan). A Priest and a Levite (law and prophets) pass but a Samaritan (Christ) helped him – took the traveler to an inn (church) and promised to return later (second coming). As interesting as this type of interpretation might be, there is no indication that these ideas were intended by God and so they are a fabrication by man. The danger is that allegories often seem good, but usually break down at some point and can end up teaching some false doctrine.

An allegory can be a legitimate form of teaching or writing. Some of the parables used by Jesus are allegories that help us to understand a complicated truth with ideas we can understand. Also, Galatians 4 clearly indicates the allegorical nature of the text, with verse 24 stating “These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants...” and so on through verse 27. The great writer,

C.S. Lewis, made extensive use of allegories in his stories to help people understand Biblical truth. The caution mentioned here is that we must learn to recognize where allegories are being used, and where we are imposing them on the words in Scripture.

Culturalization

Understanding culture is an important aspect of studying scripture, but culturalization is different because it implies that the text, while having a specific meaning and application in the day it was written, no longer has meaning, or has a different meaning today due to the fact that the culture has changed. An example of culturalization would be to say that I Timothy 2:12, which tells women not to exercise authority over men, applied in Paul's day, but no longer applies today.

Spiritualization

To spiritualize scripture is to give a spiritual meaning that is not intended within the context. Those who spiritualize scripture believe they can go to the Bible to receive specific guidance and direction for the preference decisions of the day. Obviously this form of interpretation involves the famous flip-and-point method of decision-making. An example of spiritualization would be: God knocked down the walls of Jericho and wants to knock down the walls of your life today, or Jesus calmed the sea and He wants you to live a calm life, too. Believers do receive spiritual guidance from Scripture, however we must be cautious to ensure that the guidance we receive is consistent with all that is taught throughout the Bible.

3. The Bible is Harmonious and Consistent

The scriptures are completely harmonious. There is only one system of truth contained in the Bible, so all doctrines must be consistent and agree with all other doctrines. No two passages can disagree. This means that an interpretation of a passage cannot contradict the rest of the teaching of the scriptures. This is the basis of the principle "Scripture should be compared with Scripture" which we will study later.

Understanding that the Bible is clear, understandable, harmonious and consistent does not necessarily mean that it is easy to comprehend. One of the most amazing things about Scripture is that there is an incredible richness to the text. Do not be frustrated to hear that you might not immediately grasp deeper meaning in Scripture. The Holy Spirit helps us to understand things as we are able, and there are sometimes difficult lessons being taught that are not immediately clear. Rather than being frustrated, realize that God designed the Bible in a way to encourage us

to continually study and seek increased depth and meaning to the message that He has for us.

What three forms of interpretation do not hold to the clarity of the Scriptures?

What are three basic assumptions we must understand before we can study the Scriptures?

Basic Principles of Interpretation

Now that we know what Biblical interpretation is and understand the assumptions we often make, we are ready to study the five basic principles or rules of interpretation. Another term you might hear used for this is hermeneutics.

1. Scripture is to be Taken in its Natural, Normal and Customary Usage.

Scripture is to be taken at “face value”, employing the most natural use of the words. A language is an accumulation and combination of words that groups of people use as the expression of their thoughts. Words only have meaning as people recognize and agree on a meaning. Therefore, to understand the language of a Biblical writer, it is first necessary to know the meaning of the words they are using. Our job then is to determine the original meaning of the words as we study: what did the word mean when it was used? A modern-day example of this would be the adjective, “gay”. While it once meant a positive and happy state of mind, there are much more complicated meanings of the word today. Tools to help understand this use include dictionaries, lexicons and Bible word-study books.

2. All Scripture is to be Interpreted Within the Context of the Passage

The word "context" is a Latin word made up of two parts: con, meaning together, and textus, meaning woven. Thus it means something that is woven together. Relative to a written document, it means the connection of thought that runs

through every passage on a given topic. The context of a word can carry more weight than the definition found in a dictionary or lexicon. All passages in the Bible are in a context and it is essential that we look at the context of a passage in order to understand it.

3. All Scripture Is To Be Compared With Other Scripture

This principle recognizes that scripture is our first guide for interpreting scripture. Stated another way, it says that the interpretation of a seemingly obscure passage must bear the weight of the rest of the scriptures. The interpretation of one verse cannot contradict the interpretation of another. For example, the lamp stands mentioned in Revelation 1:13 are later explained in verse 20 to be churches.

4. Contradictions are Only Apparent

Some who try and convince a Believer that the Bible cannot be trusted will point to apparent contradictions and use them to show that the text is flawed. The basic principle here is that no interpretation of Scripture is valid that does not genuinely harmonize with other passages of Scripture. With so many words and so many stories, you are bound to hear someone tell you at some time that there is a contradiction in the Bible, and you must know and trust that this cannot happen. For example, some may question the way that Judas (the betrayer of Jesus) died, whether by hanging or falling down. Matthew 27:3-8 describes Judas' hanging and Acts 1:16-19 describes Judas' falling headlong, bursting open in the middle. Contradiction? A contradiction occurs when one statement excludes the possibility of another. It is not a contradiction to describe something differently: Judas was hung and Judas fell down. Both are possible because likely, Judas hung himself and then because of his weight or the earthquake at the crucifixion, the rope broke and he fell down and his bowels spilled out.

While this example is fairly easy to understand, there are others that are more complex. For example, we read that God is sovereign over all things and we know man is responsible for his own actions. These two ideas seem to be in conflict with each other. Consider Philippians 2: 12-13 where we are told in v. 12 to work out the implications of our own salvation, but then in v.13 it says that God is the one who works in us by affecting our will to do things that please him. Well, which one is it - do I do it or does God do it? Actually, it's both. Illustrations are sometimes dangerous because they are usually not perfect, but because of the complexity of this issue (God's sovereignty vs. man's responsibility), a possible illustration of this apparent contradiction could be the women's uneven parallel bars. These bars are the same, but parallel to each other with one bar higher than the other (God's sovereignty is always higher than man's responsibility). As the gymnast does her routine on the bars, she moves from one to the other, but is never able to work both

bars at the same time - although the whole routine uses both bars throughout the exercise. Now, we can work the bar of God's sovereignty and then we can work the bar of man's responsibility, but we can't work both bars at the same time - even though both bars come into play in the routine of our study. Some apparent conflicts in Scripture may seem to exist as separate ideas, but both are integral parts of the story and ultimately resolve in the mind of God. It is important to appreciate both ideas and not become frustrated because we can't put them together as we would like.

5. Prophecy is Recognizing The Near And Far Implications Of Scripture

When searching for the meaning of a text, it must be recognized that many prophetic passages of scripture, in both the Old and New Testaments, have both near and far implications and applications. In other words, prophecy often operates on two levels of fulfillment. On the first level, there is a divinely revealed near prediction relating to a soon-coming event. But on the second level, there is a corresponding far prediction that will be fulfilled at a later time, or in the events of the end times.

What are 5 principles for proper understanding of Scripture?

Materials to aid in the study of Scripture

1. Read a passage from various translations.

This can help by allowing the student to compare the way words and phrases are translated. Literal translations are best, but dynamic equivalent and paraphrase translations that are more thought oriented can also be helpful.

2. Use a concordance to do some cross-reference studying.

A biblical concordance is an alphabetical index of all the words in the Bible showing every contextual occurrence of the word and where to find it. Many Bibles have small concordances in the back to help a person find common references. Other concordances are stand-alone books or computer programs and contain every reference to every word in a given translation. There are also Topical Concordances that list all of the biblical references to a specific topic (like love, or hope, etc).

3. You can use a commentary to help you understand interpretations of passages or concepts.

A commentary is either a separate work or is integrated into a Bible and offers a person's (or group's) interpretation of selected verses and concepts. Commentaries are often helpful, however it is important to know the particular beliefs of the commentator so that statements can be put in that context. Good commentaries include: Matthew Henry, John MacArthur, Barnes, and Bible Gateway (available on the internet).

4. A Dictionary of biblical terms functions like a regular dictionary for language, except it focuses on defining biblical words and concepts. A popular dictionary is Unger's Bible Dictionary.

5. If you want to learn about a specific person, place or thing you can use a Bible Encyclopedia such as The Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible or the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. There are also specialized encyclopedias that address multiple interests, for example archaeological terms, people, or cultural information.

6. Bible Handbooks are written to give extended synopses of each book of the Bible. Handbooks address customs, questions, book analyses, characters and a host of other ideas with the intent of equipping the reader with an increased understanding and perspective.

7. Introductions are written to help the reader get a better understanding of biblical backgrounds. An Old Testament or New Testament Introduction delves into authorship, recipients, culture, historical backgrounds and overall themes of each book.

8. Bible Atlases are prepared to give the student an overview of the geographical areas referenced in Scripture. With an atlas, you could see the actual route of Paul's missionary journeys, or the area involved in Jesus' ministry. Bible Atlases include

helpful maps related to biblical studies.

What materials exist to aid the study of Scripture?

Translations

Different Bible versions represent the efforts of scholars to translate original manuscripts in a way that communicates effectively to a given audience or language group. It is important to note that they are not all “basically the same” as significant differences can change the meaning or intent of the original Greek and Hebrew. It is important to note the basic philosophy of translation that goes into the different versions of the Bible. This philosophy falls into two broad categories – word for word translations and paraphrase translations (sometimes called thought for thought). Word for word translations seek to define each word in the Hebrew or Greek and translate it accurately with respect to the context of the author. Because Hebrew and Greek are written in a different format than other modern languages, the order of the words must be adjusted to allow modern readers to accept the style, but this occasionally leads to a style that is different than the way people communicate verbally today. A paraphrase translation seeks to identify the thoughts taught in scripture, and then the words are chosen to express those thoughts in the most effective way possible. This allows a paraphrase to be directed to specific groups of people, including teens, students, children, adults, men, women and more. Understand that a paraphrase is the translator’s idea of what the text is saying and, therefore, includes a level of commentary.

Here are some of the most common versions of the Bible:

King James (KJV)

The KJV is the first version of Scripture authorized by the Protestant church and commissioned by England’s King James I in 1611.

- Word for word translation of the original language

Sometimes difficult to understand

- Comfort means strengthen, “suffer” means “let” (Suffer the children...)
- Examples of the challenges of reading the KJV are seen in Psalm 5:6, Ez 27:25.

New King James Version (NKJV)

The NKJV was commissioned in 1975 using 130 respected Bible scholars, church leaders, and lay Christians who worked for seven years to create a completely new, modern translation of Scripture, yet one that would retain the purity and stylistic beauty of the original King James.

- Written with faithfulness to the original Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic texts,
- It uses the translations available when the KJV was written, not the older texts discovered later
- Some KJV enthusiasts feel that too many phrases were taken from other modern translations

New American Standard (NASB)

The NASB is written in a formal style, but is more readable than the King James Version. It is highly respected as the most literal English translation of the Bible.

- Word for word translation of the original language
- Not the best for reading out-loud
- Very accurate and excellent for study

New International Version (NIV)

The NIV offers a balance between a word-for-word and thought-for-thought translation and is considered by many as a highly accurate and smooth-reading version of the Bible in modern English.

- Combination of thought and word translation of the original language
- Some theological influences exist, so it is important to read critically
- Easy to read

English Standard Version (ESV)

The ESV Bible is a relatively new Bible translation that combines word-for-word precision and accuracy with literary excellence, beauty, and readability.

- Word for word translation of the original languages
- Published in 2008, still earning popularity

New Living Translation (NLT)

Using modern English, the translators of the NLT focused on producing clarity in the meaning of the text rather than creating a literal, word-for-word equivalence. Their goal was to create a clear, readable translation while remaining faithful to original texts.

- Thought for thought interpretation of the original language
- Better than other modern story Bibles (TLB) but still lots of interpretation included

Other Issues to Consider in Choosing a Bible

Purpose

Is the purpose for the Bible primarily study or reading? It is often wise to have several bibles in your home to use for different purposes.

Size

Some bibles are very thick and heavy, and others are designed to be thin and easy to carry. A thin bible may not have as many reference tools, but might be convenient to take with you as you travel or work. Your thick bible may be loaded with study material, but if you leave it behind because of a lack of space, it won't do you much good.

Memorization Resource

What is your go-to Bible for Scripture memorization? Many people find it helpful to learn scripture from one consistent translation, and it is then wise to use that translation as the Bible you normally carry. Visit www.foundationsonline.org for Mindful of the Truth by Dan Hayden. This Scripture memory system will get you on the road to an effective and life-changing habit of hiding God's Word in your heart.

A Living Word – Marking your Bible

A Bible with notes and comments from years of study and use is valuable! The idea that the Bible is God's living Word thus has a double meaning. As you study and learn the meaning of Scripture, it is wise to write, underline, emphasize or annotate as you might find helpful. Many people are hesitant to write in their new Bible, but those notes can be vital as your study continues in the future. One warning here is that many Bibles full of information use very thin pages that allow significant bleed-thru from marking pens. Test your pages before you obliterate the text on the other side of the page of your writing.

Other types of Bibles

In addition to multiple translations, there are other Bible types that aid in study. These include:

- Parallel Bible (Several languages or versions side-by-side)

- Amplified Bible (multiple word meanings listed)

- Greek and Hebrew Bible

- Interlineal Bible (integrated language and interpretation)

Study Bibles

- Combine many of the helps already discussed

- Convenient

- Many over-use the notes and don't study

- Subject to bias

Which Bible is Best?

Christians should develop a Library of tools including Bibles, commentaries, dictionaries and resources to aid in the study of Scripture. Many computer programs offer all this and much more in an inexpensive digital format, making searching and study easier. Even with a computer or on-line resource, having a few books helps when traveling or if you are somewhere without power or Internet connection.

One excellent choice for a Bible that contains nearly every important study resource in one convenient book is the Thompson Chain Reference in your preferred version (I believe that NASB is best, but these are available in NIV or NKJV too). The Thompson chain contains:

- 100,000 margin references for 8000 topics
- Concordance
- Index of topics
- Outline studies of books and events of Bible
- Character studies
- Illustrated guides and charts
- Extensive atlas and map section
- Archaeological supplement

A strength of the NASB Bible is _____

A strength of the NIV Bible is _____

A strength of the ESV Bible is _____

True/False – The thicker the Bible, the more useful it will be.

True/False – Writing notes in a Bible is a bad idea. _____

Studying the Scripture

There are many ways a person can study Scripture. Any Christian bookstore will have a section dedicated to Bible study with books and study helps you can purchase. If you would like a way to study the Bible on your own using all that has been mentioned in this chapter, a suggestion is provided below that may help you organize your efforts.

The ABCD method of Bible Study

This method allows you to study Scripture at your own pace and with the resources you choose. It is pretty simple, but that is the secret to its success. This method can take anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour, depending on what you have available. You must get a small book or notebook in which to write your thoughts. You don't need anything fancy, but you may elect to keep these books if you find this technique helpful. You could even use your computer, however I think you might regret it if you use an electronic means and then somehow lose months or years of work through a hardware glitch, so be sure to back up your work often if you choose this method. Each letter corresponds to a part of the study.

A – select a group of verses to read. Often, bibles are sectioned with headings provided by editors and compilers of a particular version. You can use these sections, or you can select a group of any length you like, from one to many verses. Read these verses to start your study. If you are able, read them several times. Each time you read them, you will begin to understand more in the verses than the previous reading. (This is from the Observation part of this chapter). Write the letter A on the top of your page, and write the verse references to the selection you chose. If you like, you can also put the date on the top of the page. This has the added advantage of allowing you to track the time you spend in study.

B – select the best verse in the selection. The best verse is the one that speaks most clearly to you at the time. It could be a summary of the verses or perhaps a message that speaks to you in a particular situation in your life. Write the letter B under the letter A, and write out the verse that you select as the best verse.

C – write what the reading communicates to you. This does not have to be a novel; it can be a few sentences (so a small book might help you keep your time focused) or whatever you think appropriate. Write this out in the same way that you might journal your thoughts on the verses.

D – write a short prayer dedicated to God about how you could apply the message communicated to you. Again, this does not have to be long – it can be as detailed as you would like it to be.

That is it – the ABCD study method. I use it because it works. No matter where I am, or what I have with me, this system allows me to spend some productive time in the Word. It uses the techniques of observation, interpretation and application mentioned in this chapter. If you like, you can use any of the study resources you learned about to dig deeper into the words you read to understand them more completely. This may take more time, but you might find the effort rewarding.

CANON of Scripture

Who decided which books should be in the Bible?

What books are inspired and should be recognized as a part of God's authoritative revelation? Are any inspired books missing? Are any books included that should not be in our Bible? Is our Old Testament Bible the same as the Lord's and is our New Testament the same as the Bible of the church fathers? These are obviously vital questions for the people of God to determine.

The Canon is the list of books officially recognized as Holy Scripture. The Greek (Kanon) and Hebrew (ganeh) words mean "reed", which was sometimes used as a measuring rod, so the Canon is a standard rule, list or index.

Biblical Canon

There are two canons of Scripture, the Old Testament with 39 Hebrew books, and the New Testament with 27 Greek books. The biblical canon is the 66 books specifically inspired by God.

A book first has divine authority based on its inspiration, and then attains canonicity due to its general acceptance as a divine product. No church council by its decrees can make the books of the Bible authoritative. The books of the Bible possess their own authority and, indeed, had this authority long before there were any councils of the church. - Neil R. Lightfoot, "How We Got the Bible"

The Old Testament Canon

The thirty-nine books that make up the Old Testament are the books that, from the 4th Century, B.C., have been accepted as the books of the Hebrew Bible. In that Bible, they were numbered as twenty-four, with the twelve 'Minor' Prophets counted as one book and the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles counted as one book each.

Also, Ezra and Nehemiah are counted as one book. This explains the difference between an Old Testament of twenty-four books and later, of thirty-nine.

In the Hebrew Bible these books are divided into three divisions: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings. The Law comprises the five books of Moses. In the 'Prophets' are included the 'Former Prophets' as well as the 'Latter Prophets'. The 'Writings' contain firstly the Poetical books and secondly a group of five books called the 'Five Scrolls', followed by the Historical books.

The Hebrew Bible then consisted of:

The LAW

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy

The PROPHETS

Former:

- Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings

Latter – Major (not more important – just longer)

- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel

Latter – Minor (not less important – just shorter)

- The Twelve (one book)

The WRITINGS

Poetical

- Psalms, Proverbs, Job

Five Scrolls

- Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther

Historical

- Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles

The Septuagint

The Bible quoted in the New Testament and used by the early Christians was a Greek translation completed in 180 B.C. called the Septuagint. The name comes from a Latin phrase that is translated "the interpretation of seventy men", a historical reference to the 72 Jewish translators who completed the work. It is also known as LXX, the Roman numeral for 70. This was an extremely important work because it was the most accurate translation of the Old Testament into the common

language of the people of the day. It also established to order of the books that are used today.

The major headings for grouping the books in the Septuagint are:

HISTORICAL

Pentatuch

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy

Pre-Exilic (Before the exile)

Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles

Post-Exilic (After the exile)

Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

POETICAL

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon

PROPHETICAL

Major

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel

Minor: Pre-Exilic

Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakuk, and Zephaniah

Minor: Post-Exilic

Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Romans 3:1-2 tells us that the divinely appointed manager of the Canon of Inspired Hebrew Writings was Israel with its Priests & Prophets who were the official librarians. The writings were preserved in Israel's religious Center, the Tabernacle or Temple. Then, the CANON was OFFICIALLY SEALED in the 5th Century B.C so that from that time on – no books were ever added or deleted from the collection.

The Septuagint was important because _____

and because _____

The term Canon means _____

The APOCRYPHA (Old Testament)

“Apocrypha” means hidden, secretive and concealed. In A.D. 340, Jerome put a preface to the official Latin Vulgate Translation after the completion of the Old Testament translation. The words used were “Anything outside of these must be placed within the Apocrypha”. The Hebrew Canon consisted of 39 books and was closed in 500 B.C. The Apocryphal writings consist of 15 books and were written from 200 B.C. to A.D. 100. The Authors are unknown, though are believed to be Alexandrian Jews. The books are:

1. I Esdras *
2. II Esdras *
3. Tobit
4. Judith
5. Addition to Esther
6. Wisdom of Solomon
7. Ecclesiasticus
8. Baruch
9. Letter of Jeremiah
10. Prayer of Azariah & Song of 3 Men
11. Susanna
12. Bel and the Dragon
13. Prayer of Manasseh *
14. 1 Maccabees
15. II Maccabees

* Not included in the Roman Catholic Apocrypha

Historical Perspective on the problems with the Apocrypha

The books included in the Apocrypha were:

Never accepted by Jews as part of the Hebrew Canon

Never accepted as canonical by Jesus & the Apostles

Not accepted by Jewish historians of First Century A.D. – Philo & Josephus

Not accepted by much of the early church (i.e., Origen, Jerome)

Not officially accepted by the Roman Catholic Church until the 16th Century A.D.

The Roman Catholic Church and the official acceptance of the Apocrypha

The Problem – Reformation challenges to Catholic tradition. Many traditional doctrines & practices had no Scriptural support. Martin Luther said “Don’t give me tradition, give me Scripture.”

The Solution

In order to address Martin Luther and others who were against the practices of the church that were not found in Scripture, the church decided that they would officially recognize the Apocrypha as Scripture. This allowed for them to openly advocate many extra-biblical concepts, including:

Prayers for the dead – II Maccabees 12:44

The expiatory (atoning for guilt) sacrifice (Mass) – II Maccabees 12:39-46

Almsgiving with expiatory value (pay money to get forgiven) – Tobit 12:9; 4:10

Intercession prayers to the Saints – II Maccabees 15:14; Baruch 3:4

Worship of angels – Tobit 12:12

Purgatory (redemption of souls after death) – II Maccabees 12:42,46

COUNCIL OF TRENT (A.D. 1546)

This meeting of 255 delegates (2/3 Italian) was to make significant decisions on spiritual matters of the day. The extent of the Canon was NOT on the agenda.

On April 8, 1546 A.D. during the 4th (and final) session of Council (a prolonged session) only 53 delegates remained – No historical scholars; ALL Vatican delegates. The leadership raised unexpected business, the Canonization of the Apocrypha. The remaining delegates passed the Decree “Sacrosancta” with regard to the Apocrypha. Anyone not receiving the Apocrypha as Holy Scripture were declared anathema. This approval did not include I & II Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh. The decision was not ratified until the Vatican Council of 1869-70 A.D.

The approval of the Apocrypha became a wedge to drive challenges even further between the Roman Catholic Church and those interested in the sufficiency of Scripture. Scholars have repeatedly commented about the problems with these additional books, as with the following quote from Merrill F. Unger:

“The internal as well as the external evidence is overwhelmingly decisive against the canonical claims of the Apocrypha. Their historical, geographical and chronological discrepancies, their inferior moral and spiritual tone in teaching false doctrines and fostering practices contradicting inspired Scripture and their fictional, legendary and artificial characteristics prove conclusively that there is a distinct line of demarcation between the Apocrypha and the canonical books of the Old Testament.”

Why did the Roman Catholic Church press for the inclusion of the Apocrypha in the Canon of Scripture?

What are some of the practices that are taught in the Apocrypha but that are not found in the rest of the Bible?

The NEW TESTAMENT - 27 Inspired Greek Writings

The Old Testament was primarily focused on the prophets. The New Testament is focused on the Son, specifically that JESUS CHRIST is the SON OF GOD (Hebrews 1:1-2).

The New Testament Canon developed over the course of the first 250-300 years of Christian history. No one particular person made the decision which books to include. The decision was not made at a church council. The particular writings that became those of the New Testament gradually came into focus and became the most trusted and beneficial of all the early Christian writings.

The criteria for canonicity fall into two main categories – apostolic teaching and apostolic authority. In other words, is it the voice of Christ and is it written by or sanctioned by an apostle?

A little history may be helpful at this point. In the early church, there was much being said and written that was attributed to the apostles. Some of this was accurate, and some was not. A problem for the early church fathers was how to distinguish between the two, and to let the people know which writings they could trust. To this point in history, nearly everything was shared orally, though some Christian writers and historians were beginning to capture these oral traditions in writing. The question for the church fathers then, was how to determine which writing to include in the official group of New Testament texts. They examined several factors to make this determination, and it is important here to recognize that they did not decide which to include but instead, determined which books had been accepted by the greatest number of Christian writers, churches and Believers that fit with the guideline that the work must be inspired.

So, the process was that the writing was:

FIRST: Accepted by the churches

SECOND: Validated by the church fathers

And FINALLY: Ratified by the Church Councils

Some of the indicators that a work was a true apostolic writing include:

- Revered as Holy Scripture & used in worship
- Collected by individual assemblies
- Copied for wider circulation
- Quoted by Church Fathers in their writings

For example, Polycarp, a student of the apostle John, wrote in A.D. 150 quoting Matthew, John, 10 Epistles of Paul, 1 Peter, and 1&2 John. Later, Irenaeus wrote in A.D. 170 quoting every book of the New Testament. These references, together with other indicators, helped to identify the 27 books we now accept as the New Testament.

The process for canonizing New Testament writings involves:

First _____

Second _____

And Finally

CHURCH COUNCILS

Many people think the New Testament writings were agreed upon at the Council of Nicea. There were 20 canons (church rules) voted on at Nicea and none dealt with sacred writings. The first historical reference listing the exact 27 writings in the orthodox New Testament is in the Easter Letter of Athanasius in 367 AD. His reference states that these are the only recognized writings to be read in a church service. The first time a church council ruled on the list of “inspired” writings allowed to be read in church was at the Synod of Hippo in 393 AD. No document survived from this council – we only know of this decision because it was referenced at the third Synod of Carthage in 397 AD.

“It is important to emphasize that no church council made the canon of Scripture. No church by its decrees gave to or pronounced on the books of the Bible their infallibility. The Bible owes its authority to no individual or group. The church does not control the canon, but the canon controls the church.” (Neil Lightfoot – How We Got the Bible)

New Testament Apocryphal Writings

As with the Old Testament, there are additional writings that some think valuable to understanding some aspect of Christianity during the time of Christ. These writings were largely rejected for a variety of reasons, including:

- They were classified as heretical writings of the 2nd & 3rd Centuries

- They were obvious imitators of biblical New Testament genre (Gospels, Acts, Epistles, Apocalypses)
- They were written by anonymous authors under assumed names
- There was no connection to the early church Apostles
- They were often highly imaginative, mystical and fanciful
- They were never accepted as Holy Scripture by the churches, church Fathers or church councils.

The Effect of Gnosticism

Gnosticism is a belief in a capacity to claim a higher spiritual knowledge and mystical experience. It literally means in Greek – gnosis, or knowledge (i.e., prognosis – to know beforehand). The essence of this belief is that one can be saved through knowledge. Gnostics believe that they have secret knowledge about God, humanity and the rest of the universe of which the general population was unaware.

The danger of gnosticism is easily apparent. It denies the incarnation of God as the Son. In so doing, it denies the true efficacy of the atonement since, if Jesus is not God, He could not atone for all of mankind and we would still be lost in our sins. It was obviously a problem within the early church. Gnosticism taught that the God of creation was so remote from the creature that he ruled the universe by a number of intermediate deities (gods) some good, and some evil. These gods decreased in dignity as they got nearer to mankind. Gnostics also had a graduated scale of mankind: (1) The Higher Knowledge Class (the gnostics themselves, of course). (2) The "can be saved" class (believing their faith plus their works would save them). (3) The hopelessly lost class.

Many Gnostic ideas are still present today in the form of Mormonism (with its teaching of attainable godhood) and Roman Catholicism (with its mystical concept of the sacraments and its teaching of a remote God Who can only be approached through intermediaries such as saints, angels, and Mary, and its division of men into higher and lower orders, as well as its emphasis upon asceticism). In *The Da Vinci Code*, Dan Brown's scenario of conspiracies and codes treats the Catholic clergy like a pack of sinister liars who covered up truth. He recycles propaganda from folks who dislike orthodox Christianity and favor the ancient world's rival secret-knowledge ("Gnostic") sects. Oprah Winfrey, for example, has popularized a Gnostic (New Age) spiritual Jesus that can be discovered within every person's consciousness. She has helped popularize the New Age author, Eckhart Tolle, and his book, New Earth, in which he presents Jesus as a Spiritual Master, along with Buddha and others, who have tried to help humanity discover the "Christ consciousness" or "God consciousness" that is already residing within every person.

When it comes to the task of knowing the real Jesus, we cannot rely on personal experiences or esoteric visions. We must be firmly grounded in the Christ of Scripture. Only by acquainting ourselves with the real Jesus of the Bible will we avoid being led astray by the many Gnostic/false christs that Jesus Himself said would appear in the last days. “For false christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.” (Matt. 24:4,5,24).

True / False – the Council of Nicea approved the New Testament Canon.

The essence of the Gnostic belief on salvation is

The Godhead

The term “Godhead” is another way of saying “Trinity”. God is one, yet exists not as two but as three distinct Persons. This is a mystery unparalleled in our experience. No earthly illustration can do justice to the Trinity. People try and explain the trinity using various illustrations, but every one of them falls short. The idea that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit reside together as one yet remain distinct is something Believers accept in faith based on the teaching of Scripture.

Some teaching will try and explain the trinity as though there is one part that is in charge and the other parts must work on behalf of the leader. Other teaching is that God created the Son and the Holy Spirit, and so they are not equal. Still other teaching holds that there is one God who manifests Himself as Father or Son or Spirit as needed. These teachings are all false and are not taught in Scripture.

The Godhead is seen in both the Old and New Testaments.

The Godhead in the Old Testament

Gen. 1:1 - The Hebrew word translated God is *Elohim*. The plural suffix *im*, presents a singular God who is expressed as a plurality.

Gen. 1:26 - The plurality of the Godhead is also evident in creation - “let us make man, in our image.”

The Godhead in the New Testament

Luke 1:35 - All members of the Trinity were involved in Christ’s incarnation.

Matt. 3:17 - The Trinity was present at Christ’s baptism.

The Trinity was involved in the resurrection of Christ.

The Father - Rom. 6:4; Gal. 1:1; I Pet. 1:3

The Son - John 10:18

The Holy Spirit - Rom . 8:11

It is challenging to comprehend this Triune God, but we do know that He is a Father who loves us, a Son who died for us, and a Spirit who comforts us. God is far beyond our understanding and yet we can know Him through His revealed Word. Each person of the Trinity is deserving of our worship, obedience and study.

What does it mean to say there is a trinity of the godhead?

God the Father

You have probably heard many ways to describe God. In the media, He is seen as a kindly gentleman, as a benevolent man content to mop floors, as a man frustrated by the problems created by humans and countless other false ideas. The biggest problem with our ideas about God is that we try and give him human characteristics because we tend to understand things in familiar ways. We hear things like God is jealous, and we think that it is the same kind of jealousy we feel when someone has something we want. We imagine fairness in terms of what we think is fair, and expect God to operate within those concepts of right and wrong.

All of this could not be farther from the truth. God operates on a completely different set of rules than we do. His jealousy is righteous and his fairness is beyond our comprehension. Part of our frustration with life is that we don't understand when God fails to act according to our plans, yet His ways are significantly higher than ours. The God of the Bible is not the same God of our imagination, so as you look at some of the characteristics of God that follow, remember to try and change your thinking and simply take Scripture at face value.

God is Sovereign

The word "sovereignty" simply means supreme power, or freedom from external control. When we speak of God's sovereignty we mean that He does what He pleases both in heaven and earth to accomplish His purposes. There is no power or authority greater than God to whom He must submit Himself. I Cor. 8:6 tells us that God is the ultimate source and the ultimate destiny of all things. In Greek the words

“all things” signify the totality of things without any exclusion. God has made everything in all His creation and all things are under His sovereign control.

What does it mean to say that God is sovereign?

God Sustains

What God creates He also sustains, maintains, and preserves. He “upholds all things by the Word of His power” (Heb. 1:3). The Greek word for “uphold” means “to support” or “maintain.” It is used in the present tense, implying continuous action. At this moment God sustains everything in the universe. That is much more than a law of nature; it is the very activity of God. If God stopped sustaining His creation, we would cease to exist. Our lives depend on the sustaining power of God and on the physical laws He has established.

What does it mean to say that God sustains?

God Chooses

God sovereignly exercises His option as creator of all to select certain individuals to receive His divine mercy. There are three senses in which He chooses or elects.

1. Theocratic Election refers to God’s selection of the nation of Israel to be His covenant people - see Deut. 7:6; 9:6. God freely chose them out of His love and grace, not because of any merit on their part.

2. Vocational Election: God sometimes chooses particular individuals to do specific tasks. God chose Moses to lead Israel from Egypt, He chose the Levites to serve the nation as the priestly tribe, and Christ chose twelve of His followers to be apostles.

3. Salvational Election: God formed the body of Christ by His independent, sovereign choice. His choice was totally apart from any human consideration and purely on the basis of His own will - see Eph. 1:5, 11. More on this topic will be found in the chapter on salvation.

What three ways do we see God exercising election as a sovereign creator?

_____, _____

God the Son

Characteristics of Christ

It is said that there is one question a Believer can ask someone to know if they represent a biblical theology. That question is “Who do you say that Jesus is?” Denominations that are false will usually see Jesus as a great prophet, but not God. The Deity of Christ is a critical truth in Scripture and is asserted in the bible as fully and as clearly as the deity of the Father or the Spirit. Isa. 9:6-7 speaks of the birth of Jesus, and He is called “Mighty God” and “Eternal Father.” They proclaim the deity of Christ and His equality with the Father. John 1:1, 14 tells us that the Word, Jesus, is eternal, existing before creation.

Jesus is eternal - Heb. 1:8 is one of the most amazing and important statements in all the scripture - Jesus is God eternal! Jesus is no less than God. God the Father acknowledges the Son, giving clear and irrefutable proof of the deity of Christ from the Father Himself. Isaiah 9:6 calls Jesus the everlasting Father.

Jesus is creator - John 1:3 states that all things have come into being through Christ. He, being God, was actively involved in creation. Also, in Eph. 3:9 Paul declares Jesus as Creator. This is reinforced in Colossians 1:16.

Jesus is all-powerful - Men and created beings may have some power over some other created things, but this power is limited. Only God's power is unlimited such that He has all power over all created things. Nothing is impossible for God. He has the power to do anything with His creatures that He chooses to do. Matthew 28:18 states that Jesus possesses all authority in heaven and on earth.

Jesus is all-knowing - God has the power to know everything He chooses to know. God is unlimited in wisdom and knowledge in the same sense that He is unlimited in power. Colossians 2:2-3 describes Jesus saying “...in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

What characteristics demonstrate that Jesus is God?

Jesus was Fully Man and Fully God

In considering the virgin birth of Christ we must understand that it is vitally important for at least two reasons:

1. The virgin birth is important to the deity of Christ because Christ received no fallen nature from His father. Thus the testimony of scripture is that He was sinless. The virgin birth provides that there is no doubt as to the divine nature of Jesus' birth. Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, an event departing from man's normal and natural process for having children - see Luke 1:34-35.
2. The virgin birth made possible the humanity of Christ. When Jesus took on human form His deity was not diminished, nor did He surrender any divine attribute. To do so would mean that Christ ceased to be God. Rather when becoming man, Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity, meaning that the manifestations of His deity were veiled for a time.

To give up even one of His divine attributes would mean that Jesus would cease to be God. Because Jesus was totally God and totally man, He was both the perfect Sacrificer and the perfect Sacrifice for sin. Only through His death and shed blood could the penalty for sin be paid, thus providing redemption for the elect. Phil. 2:5-8 states that, though completely God, Christ willingly gave up the expression of His glory and took on human form. In doing so He became the God-man, totally God, and totally man.

Why is the virgin birth important in establishing the character of Jesus?

Jesus Paid the Debt of Sin and Freed the Human Race From Condemnation

Through Christ, the believer is set free from the bondage of sin - see Rom. 8:1. No longer are we slaves to sin, but now we are brought into a right standing before God and given all the rights and privileges of sons. Rom. 3:25 states that the only satisfaction or propitiation that could be acceptable to God and that could reconcile Him to man had to be made by God. For that reason God in human flesh, Jesus Christ, "*gave Himself as a ransom for all*" (I Tim. 2:6). In Rom. 5:8-9, we read that because we are now identified with Christ and are adopted as God's children through Him, we are no longer "*children of wrath*" (Eph. 2:3). As part of His atoning

work, Jesus delivered us *“from wrath to come”* (I Thess. 1:10), because on the cross He took upon Himself the penalty and suffered the wrath that we deserve.

What was required to free the human race from sin?

Jesus Was Raised From the Dead

Following His resurrection, Jesus made several appearances to various people over a period of forty days, after which time He ascended to heaven. At His ascension two angels appeared to His disciples and proclaimed that Jesus would come again (Acts 1:11). From that day forward the followers of Christ have expected and anticipated His return.

Jesus Will Return To Earth

According to the Olivet Discourse in Matthew 24 and 25, Jesus will return to cut short the wrath of the Antichrist and will at that time rapture the church and pour out His judgment upon unbelievers. Eventually He will return at the conclusion of the time of judgment to establish His millennial kingdom (Rev 20).

God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit may be the most difficult person of the Godhead to understand. This may be because many Believers give mystical and magical powers to the Spirit. This is unfortunate because it causes other Believers to avoid discussion on the Spirit in favor of stressing the work of the Father and the Son. In reality, the Spirit is as much God as the Father and the Son. Scripture teaches us that He is indeed God by both His attributes and His associations, and that His responsibilities are a significant part of every Believer's life.

The Activities of the Holy Spirit

- His activity as advocate and prosecutor. John 16:8-11 describes the Spirit is the “advocate” or helper of those who believe in Jesus, their counsel for the defense. But in relation to unbelievers, to the godless world, He acts as counsel for the prosecution. The Spirit's prosecuting ministry is here expressed by the verb, “elencho,” meaning to expose, refute, convince, or convict.

- His activity in creation. Gen. 1:2 states that, though the work of creation is generally ascribed to God without distinguishing the persons within the Godhead as far as the particular work of each is concerned, this verse teaches that the Holy

Spirit did play an active role in creation. The use of the word Elohim also indicates His involvement in creation.

- His activity in the incarnation. Matt. 1:18 teaches that the Holy Spirit was the agent of the virgin birth. It was through Him that conception took place. The Holy Spirit's involvement in the birth of Christ was made known to Mary - see Luke 1:35 and Joseph - see Matt. 1:20.

- His activity in inspiration. II Pet. 1:20-21 states that, although the scriptures were breathed out from God (II Tim. 3:16), the particular person of the Godhead who bore along the human authors was the Holy Spirit. The result of this divine-human effort was the inspired text of the bible.

- His activity in salvation. John 3:5-7 teaches that the cleansing work of the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential to salvation. When a sinner comes to Christ, he is regenerated, or born-again. He is cleansed of his sin through the regenerating ministry of the Holy Spirit - see Titus 3:5.

What activities of the Holy Spirit help us to know that He is God?

The Ministries of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is actively involved in the life of the believer as He carries out several ministries:

Regeneration - Divine regeneration means the impartation of a life from God that is wholly foreign to that of fallen man. It is the divine nature. It is "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27). Ephesians 2:5 states that this work of regeneration takes place at salvation.

Baptism - The word baptize comes from the Greek word "baptizo" which refers to being enveloped with an element so as to become part of that element. It has the idea of being immersed or submerged. By the Spirit's baptism into Christ the believer is joined permanently unto the Lord; he has put on Christ, and being in

Christ, partakes of all that Christ is. Like regeneration, the Spirit's baptism occurs one time, at the moment of salvation. I Cor. 12:13 makes it clear that it is through the baptism of the Holy Spirit that the believer is brought into the body of Christ. It is not possible to be a Christian and not be baptized by Christ with the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9). Nor is it possible to have more than one baptism with the Spirit. By this baptism the believer is placed into the sphere of the Spirit's power and Person, into a new covenant, a new atmosphere, a new relationship with others, and a new union with Jesus Christ - see II Cor. 5:17.

Indwelling - At the moment of salvation the Holy Spirit indwells or takes up residence in the life of the believer - see John 7:37-39. It is this indwelling by the Spirit which makes the believer the temple of God - see I Cor. 6:19-20.

Sanctification - The root meaning of sanctification is to be set apart, to be classified, and specifically qualified unto the realization of some particular end. As presented in scripture sanctification is twofold:

Positional sanctification is the setting apart which occurs when the Holy Spirit joins the Believer to Christ at the point of salvation - see Heb. 10:14-15.

Progressive sanctification is the maturing in Christ that is only possible through the work of the Spirit - see II Cor. 3:18. Unlike positional sanctification, progressive sanctification is a life-long process that will not be complete until the Believer reaches heaven.

Instructs - The Holy Spirit is the Master Teacher. Spiritually, this ministry is restricted to the Word of God given to man by God with the expectation that it would be understood and received by Believers. The Holy Spirit illuminates the Word of God so that Believers can read and understand its Truth. See John 16:12-15; I Cor. 2:9-12.

Empowers - Believers are sometimes given large tasks to accomplish by God - tasks beyond the capabilities the person may see in themselves. The Spirit empowers Believers for ministry. - see Acts 1:8.

Sealing - The presence of the Holy Spirit within the believer serves as a mark of divine discrimination - see II Tim. 2:19. The Holy Spirit's sealing speaks of a completed work. Sealing belongs to those who are justified and perfected forever in Christ, thus sealing indicates security. The one who seals becomes responsible for the object upon which the seal is imposed - see II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 4:30. Eph. 1:13 states that the believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit which identifies him as belonging to Christ and which guarantees the believers experience in heaven.

Filling – To be filled with the Spirit involves a day-by-day submission to the Spirit's control. The filling is entirely the work of the Spirit, but He works through our willing submission. Being filled with the Spirit involves confession of sins, and surrender of will, intellect, body, time, talent, possessions and desires. It is the death of selfishness. (Eph 5:18)

Which ministry of the Holy Spirit involves the impartation of a life that is wholly foreign to fallen man?

When does the Holy Spirit take up residence in the life of a believer?

What are the two aspects of sanctification experienced by the believer?

What is the significance of being sealed by the Holy Spirit?

The Angels and Satan

There is huge interest in the subject of angels. The idea that an angelic being could be hovering above us at any time, prepared to assist or protect us is both comforting and exciting. Likewise, the idea that a demon could be encouraging us to make bad decisions and lead us to sin is troublesome. People tell stories about encounters with angels or demons, and it is difficult to poke holes in their experiences without understanding the truth about angelic beings. Movies, books and television shows about angels are very popular because they address a hope that humans can actually interact with the spirit realm and enjoy some measure of extra power to deal with the difficulties of life. Unfortunately, the media often incorrectly describes angels and leaves us with the wrong idea about them. At the heart of it, most people like a good super hero story, but we all know that Superman, Spiderman and the rest do not really exist. Angels, on the other hand, are real and have specific function in the world. It is important to understand the ‘who, when, where and why’ of angels that is taught in the Scriptures.

The Origin of Angels

Who created them? Genesis 1 states that God created all things on earth, including man. Psalm 148:2-5 indicates that the angels, with all their hosts (armies) along with the sun, moon, stars, and all heavenly expanses are God’s creation. John 1:1-3 teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Word, created all things. He acted as God’s creative agent, *“All things came into being through Him; and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being”* (John 1:3). The concept of “all things” would include angels.

The apostle Paul specifically declares that Christ, who is Himself God, is the creator of all things, including angels. The eternal Son of God was the cause of every creature: *“For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him”* (Col. 1:16).

How and when were they created? Scripture implies that the angels were all created at or near the same time. Angels are not eternal as is God. They did not evolve from some other life form, and they were not formerly men. They were created as angels. Each angel is a direct creation from God, and they do not procreate as do humans (Matt. 22:28-30) The exact time of their creation is not certain, but we know that “all the sons of God” sang with joy at the creation of the earth” (Job 38:7, cf. vv. 4-7), and that Satan, an angelic creature, appears in the Genesis 3 scene. From this we conclude that God created angels before He created the earth, or at least early in the process of creation.

The method of their creation seems to be by direct command or “fiat” of God. In Psalm 148:2 angels are commanded to praise God, and they are included with other creations in verse 5: *“Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created.”*

Why were they created? The primary purpose for the creation of angels was that they might glorify God and His Christ, because they were created “for him” (Col. 1:16). The creatures of Revelation 4:6-11, probably angels of highest nature and rank, confess that they, with all things, were created for God’s pleasure and ascribe to Him glory and honor and power. In their activities they worship and serve God in the administration of His will (Heb. 1:7). They execute His commands with swift obedience and delight.

Who created Angels?

What was the method of the angel’s creation?

What is the primary purpose of angels?

Limitations of Angels

First, it is important to understand that the angels in God’s army and Satan and those who followed him are the same creatures. Some Believers seem to have no problem believing in God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and Angels, but they deny that Satan and his demons actually exist. At the same time, some Believers think that

Satan and others have power equal in many ways to God's. This is not true. Satan and his minions have the same power that other angels have and while they can be formidable, they have limitations that apply to all angels.

One limitation is that of space. Since an angel is a creature, he is not omnipresent – meaning he cannot be everywhere at once. Only God is omnipresent. Angels are primarily spirit in nature, yet they cannot be in all places, or even many places, at once. An angel must move spatially from one location to another (Dan. 9:21-23), so it occasionally may take a period of time for an angel to be where he wants to be. (Dan. 10:10-14).

Another limitation is that of power. Only God is omnipotent. Angels are greater in power than man (II Pet. 2:11) and through God have the ability to control some elements of nature (Rev. 7:1; 16:8-9), but they are limited in authority (Job 1:12; 2:6). They are sometimes weary in the accomplishment of their duties, as in the struggle of elect angels with evil angels (Rev. 12:7), and stand in need of assistance (Dan. 10:13).

Angels are also limited in intellect. They are exceptionally wise because of the qualities God gave them when they were created, but there is another factor in their favor. They have been alive for thousands of years, and have seen and experienced many things. This gives them a wisdom that man does not have, though it is less than that of God. They do not know the hour of Christ's return (Matthew 24:36) and they are amazed about the process of salvation (I Pet. 1:11-12).

They are also limited in holiness. Theirs was not absolute and unshakable as is God's. We know this because some fell into sin and bondage through defection from God's will (Isa. 14:12; Rev. 12:3-4).

What are the limitations of angels?

The Ministry of Angels

In relation to God

One of the most important ministries of angels is that of service to God. Some of these ministries are quite clearly revealed in scripture.

Ministers of worship – Their primary ministry seems to be that of worship and praise of God. *“Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of host: the whole earth is full of his glory”* (Isa. 6:3). Revelation 4:6-11 pictures the four angelic creatures around the throne of God ascribing to God holiness, worthiness, and omnipotence as the sovereign Creator.

Personal messengers - Since the word *angel* means “messenger” in both Hebrew and Greek, we should see angels playing a large role in messenger service for God. Angels hasten to carry out God’s orders, harkening to the voice of His commandments (Ps. 103:20). Some stand in the presence of God, ready to carry His messages to men. Such is the case of Gabriel, who was sent with good news to Zacharias (Luke 1:19) and to Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:26-33). An angel informed the shepherds about Christ’s birth. He was supported by a multitude of other angels in this role (Luke 2:8-14).

In relation to believers

Revealing - God has used angels to communicate His will and word to men. Angels were involved in the revelation of the Law to Moses (Acts 7:52-53; Gal. 3:19). An angel who Zechariah calls *“The angel that talked with me,”* interpreted visions from God (Zech. 4:1; 5:5; 6:5). An angel predicted the birth of John the Baptist (Luke 1:11-20), and the virgin birth of Christ to Mary and Joseph (Matt. 1:20-25; Luke 1:26-35). One revealed to the shepherds the time and place of Jesus’ birth (Luke 2:8-12).

Guiding - On several occasions angels were used by God to direct men. One told Joseph to take Mary as his wife and the virgin-born Jesus as his own son (Matt. 1:20-21). The women who came to Jesus’ empty tomb were instructed and directed by an angel.

Providing - Angels have ministered to physical needs, such as providing food in several instances. An angel, who encouraged Hagar and her son, seems also to have provided water to keep them alive (Gen. 21:17-20). Psalm 78:23-25 speaks of God’s provision of manna for Israel in the wilderness and calls the manna angels’ food.

Protecting - Daniel knew that God had sent His angel to shut the lions’ mouths (Dan. 6:20-23). When Aram’s king sent an army to capture Elisha at Dothan, the prophet told his fearful servant, *“Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them”* (II Kings 6:13-17). He prayed, and God revealed an angelic army surrounding and protecting God’s men.

Strengthening and encouraging - Not only did angels strengthen Christ Himself (Matt. 4:11; Luke 22:43), but angels have encouraged and strengthened His

messengers. After freeing the apostles from prison, an angel encouraged them to continue preaching (Acts 5:19-20).

What are the two primary ministries of angels in relation to God?

What are the primary ministries of angels in relation to Believers?

Fallen Angels

The Original State and Fall of Satan

All angels were created by God through His Son, the Lord Jesus (Col. 1:16-17). There is no creature that was not created by Him (John 1:3). God cannot be directly involved in the creation of evil for He is holy. So it is obvious from reason and from the bible that all angels were created in a holy state, each a direct creation of God and all at or near the same time.

Satan fell from his originally holy state when he tragically rebelled against God, incurring his own condemnation (I Tim. 3:6) and enticing perhaps a third of the angels to defect with him (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:4). Now Satan and his angels are permanently wicked and opposed to God and His program and people.

Satan's privileges and perversion

Initial privileges - Before his fall, Satan seems to have had the greatest privileges ever accorded to a creature.

Nature - Satan belongs to the cherub class of angelic being. From what we know, this appears to be of the highest order of angels. Among them he was the anointed one, a privilege given to a God-appointed leader (v. 14).

Position - Not only was he an anointed leader, but twice was called a guardian (covering) cherub.

Habitation - “*You were in Eden, the garden of God*” (v. 13) probably refers in earthly terms to God’s paradise in heaven. Within the paradise was “*the mountain of God,*” from which he was cast (vv. 14, 16)

Perfection - This term summarizes his personal and moral qualities. He “*had the seal of perfection*” and was “*perfect in beauty*” (v. 12). He was perfect or blameless in his ways from the day he was created until his first sin (v. 15).

Inception of perversion - Without explaining how it happened, God says, “*Iniquity was found in thee*” (v. 15). The only clue as to what occurred in Satan’s mind is found in verse 17: “*Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor*”. His sin appears to be a proud heart and preoccupation with himself. Reflecting upon his God-endowed beauty, he became enthralled with himself and was lifted up with pride (I Tim. 3:6).

He also perverted other angels from God’s way. The word *trade* (vv. 16, 18) may refer to a soliciting to his evil cause a large group of fellow angels (cf. Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:4, 9).

Indictment and punishment - Because of Satan’s sin of arrogance and violence, God cast him from his privileged position near the throne of God (“*out of the mountain of God,*” v. 16). He may have been cast to the earth after his original sin (“*I cast you to the ground,*” v. 17).

Satan’s peculiar sin - In Isaiah 14:12-17 we get a look at the sin which caused Satan to fall from his privileged position. The basic sin of Satan seems to be that of pride, as we previously noted from Ezek. 28:17. Pride or conceit is specifically labeled by Paul as the reason for “*the condemnation incurred by the devil*” (I Tim. 3:6). Isaiah pictures his pride expressed in determined rebellion. Note the five occurrences of “*I will*” in verses 13-14.

The fall of angels with Satan - It is obvious from the Bible that Satan has his angels. They follow his orders and fight for his cause (Matt. 12:24-26; 25:41; II Pet. 2:4; Rev. 12:7). Satan solicited their following in his initial revolt against God. As many as a third of the angelic creation may have followed Satan in his defection (Rev. 12:4).

How did Satan fall from his originally holy state?

What was Satan's punishment?
--

The Present Power and Activity of Satan

In relation to God

As Satan desired to be like the most High, so his power and activity are directed primarily against God. Other activities are understood as stemming from this rebellious aim. His attack on Adam was really an attack on the character and control of God (Gen. 3:1-5). Satan induced Cain to murder Abel, a man of God (I John 3:10-12). The opposition obviously comes from a character opposite to that of God's.

Satan promotes a system that we may call "the lie" (see Eph. 2:2; II Thess. 2:8-11). To explain the world, he substitutes evolution for creation, uniformitarianism for providence, human progress for divine salvation, and man's utopia for God's kingdom on earth. Atheism, agnosticism, pragmatism, existentialism, and relativism are his substitutes for truth. Satan also promotes counterfeit religions. He authors or encourages nonbiblical religions or distortions of the true religion. In this latter category, we find false ministers, Satan's messengers who transform themselves into messengers of light (II Cor. 11:13-15). Satan also promotes false doctrine, false Christs, or antichrists and false followers. They profess to believe in Christ, but they are Satan's counterfeits (Matt. 13:38-39).

In relation to the unsaved

He causes a barrier to the Gospel penetrating the mind with enlightenment concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment. This is one of the reasons for the convicting work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-11). As a result of Satan's work in this area, the Gospel sounds foolish and irrelevant to the perishing (I Cor. 1:18).

Satan and his demons use men who knowingly or unknowingly preach his lies. Either he promotes a salvation by human works, attractive to sinners who would bypass the Savior's work of salvation; or he persuades men that there is no need for salvation, only progress.

In relation to Christians

In general, Satan seeks to defeat believers in their individual and corporate life and service. The wise Christian does not dismiss this part of spiritual warfare as superstition. He will be aware of Satan's tactics and guard against them (II Cor. 2:11). He accuses us before God for our sins and imperfections. To answer these accusations, we have a defense lawyer, Jesus Christ the Righteous, who satisfied God for all our sins and who stands as witness to our right standing before God, thus defeating Satan (I John 2:1-2). Satan is also engaged in tempting believers to sin, specifically:

- a. To lie (Acts 5:3)
- b. To sex sins (I Cor. 7:5)
- c. To occupation with this world (I John 2:15-17; 5:19)
- d. To relying upon human wisdom and strength (Matt. 16:21-23)
- e. To pride in spiritual matters (I Tim. 3:6)
- f. To discouragement (I Pet. 5:6-10)

While Satan attempts to disrupt and injure all who would follow God, it would be wrong to assume that without Satan, there would be no sin. Man chose to sin against God and must daily fight against his own flesh nature of sin. Satan is a real entity who is doing all in his power to attack the person and work of God. Satan is also striving to devour all those who follow God. We must not cower amidst the power and activity of Satan. He is ultimately held in check by the power and sovereignty of our mighty God as demonstrated in the story of Job.

Satan's efforts are primarily directed against:

_____.

In order to fight against God, how does Satan attack Christians?

Creation and The Creation and Fall of Man

Creation

We learn from Scripture that creation is a gift from God, the creator of all things. Everything we experience is from God. During the eighteenth century the Age of Reason introduced explanations for creation that departed from the Biblical, or “theistic” worldview. As a result, two basic camps of people emerged from the debate: those who adopt a strictly Biblical view of creation and those who do not. In the group of those who do not, there are those who try and find common ground between the Biblical account and evidence offered as scientific. There are also those who are not concerned at all about a Biblical perspective and base their beliefs only on scientific naturalism, the belief that all things can be explained in terms of currently operating natural causes and laws.

When people turn to Scripture for a scientific account of creation, they do not find much about how God technically created things. This is because the Bible was not written to be a textbook, but it was written to describe God’s relationship to humanity. We are not told exactly how creation happened, only that God was the creator and that man was the focus of his attention.

Even with this realization, many Bible-believing Christians disagree over some aspects of creation, such as how the earth was made, whether the days of creation are literal “24 hour” days and the age of the earth. The fact of this disagreement should not prevent Christians from fellowshiping or worshipping together, but should drive each to his own study of the verses involved.

The record of creation is contained in Genesis chapter one through three. Additional verses in Isaiah 45:18 and Jeremiah 4:23 support the account in Genesis. The means of creation God used was to speak something into being. Genesis 1:3 begins the account of creation with “And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.” In the verses following, God speaks, and it becomes reality. This also

shows that God created something where there was once nothing; He did not modify an existing entity to make an earth or a sky.

The Views of Creation

Historic Creationism. This view separates the first and second verse of Genesis 1 by an unspecified period of time. God created the world, then waited, then continued with the second verse of preparing the earth for humans. This allows for an “old earth” belief yet still allows for six literal days of creation. The challenge to this view is that the words in Genesis do not naturally imply a gap of time.

Young-Earth Creationism. This view holds that God created the universe, the earth, Adam and Eve and all else in six twenty-four hour days. With this view, the earth is less than 10,000 years old and scientific findings are interpreted in view of Scripture. The challenge to this view is that findings on the age of the earth indicate an age that is older than 10,000 years.

The Gap Theory. This view again separates the first verses of Genesis with an unspecified period of time. The thought is that the entire universe was created, then due to some event (likely the fall of Satan) was destroyed and then rebuilt beginning in verse 3. The challenge to this view is that the evil that happens in the gap would not allow God to call all of His creation as “good”. It also allows for death and bloodshed before Adam’s sin.

The Day-Age Theory. In this theory, the days mentioned in Genesis represent periods of time that are geological ages, thus allowing for an old earth. The challenge to this view includes a discussion on the use of the word “day” in Scripture always referring to a 24-hour period of time, including the references to evening and morning.

The Theistic Evolution Theory. This theory holds that God started the creation process and then allowed a natural evolutionary process to bring the world to what it is today. The challenges to this view are many and are beyond the scope of this book. Studies in evolution indicate too many gaps in the process to allow single-cell organisms to develop into the human species. Biblical challenges occur when the account of Adam and Eve hold that only two humans existed in the beginning as opposed to a herd of developing human creatures. The same challenges of 24-hour days of creation from other theories are present here.

While each theory has advantages and challenges, the one that holds closest to the natural reading of the creation account would be Young-Earth Creationism. The issue of the age of the earth remains a problem for many, but there simply is no specific statement about the age of the earth found in the Bible. Suggestions as to

how the earth could be young and appear old are many; including the idea that it was made to appear old, that the flood affected geological findings or that the studies by scientists are flawed and incorrect, to name but a few. As mentioned previously, the Bible does not tell us everything we wish to know, only what God wants us to know.

The Creation and Fall of Man

Like the existence of God, the creation of man must be accepted by faith - see Job 38:1-7. The Word clearly and plainly tells us how humanity came into being. It was not by evolution but by the direct and immediate creation of God.

Some will try and balance a spiritual and a scientific view of creation. They will say that evolution is a process that God created, and so it is “His way” of creating man. This is not supported in Scripture. Genesis 1:26-27 clearly and emphatically shows that man is the result of the immediate, special, creative, and formative acts of God.

Man was not created simply to please himself, but rather was created that he might bring glory to God and enjoy fellowship with Him - see Gen. 3:8-10. It was at the fall that man’s fellowship with God was broken. The fall of Adam and its result upon all humanity can be divided into three areas: Total Depravity, Spiritual Death, and Physical Death. Since the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden all mankind, except Christ, has suffered these three consequences of the fall.

Total Depravity

Through the sin of Adam the entire human race is depraved. In other words, man is without merit in the sight of God.

Total depravity is a difficult pill for many to swallow. We all know people who are not Believers, but who are pleasant, have nice families, are giving and caring and seem “good”. We also live in a world where we need to rely on basic human kindness to get along. Not everyone is out to steal our money, ruin our property and bring death on our families. Obviously, people are able to do many things that are morally right. Even the vilest person may occasionally do something commendable. Total depravity is not speaking of specific acts or even general patterns of behavior, but of man’s inner character. The point is that there is not a single person who has ever lived, apart from the sinless Lord Jesus Christ (II Cor. 5:21), whose innermost being would be characterized as righteous by God’s standard. (Rom 3:10-11)

A study on depravity includes these words:

"Much that we take for granted in a civilized society is based upon the assumption of human sin. Nearly all legislation has grown up because human beings cannot be trusted to settle their own disputes with justice and without self-interest. A promise is not enough; we need a contract. Doors are not enough; we have to lock and bolt them. The payment of fares is not enough; tickets have to be issued, inspected and collected. Law and order are not enough; we need the police to enforce them. All this is due to man's sin. We cannot trust each other. We need protection against one another. It is a terrible indictment of human nature." - John Stott, Basic Christianity

Spiritual Death

A second consequence of Adam's sin is spiritual death. He became degenerate and depraved. He developed within himself a fallen nature that is contrary to God and is ever prone to evil. His constitution was altered fundamentally and he thus became a wholly different being from the one God had created.

Physical Death

The third result of Adam's sin was physical death. This is defined as the separation of soul and spirit from the body. It is not spiritual death, but both are a result of Adam's initial sin. A person can be spiritually dead, but alive physically. A person can also be dead physically, but alive spiritually. If a person is spiritually dead, their only hope of life is to be healed by redeeming grace. Without this grace and healing change, a person is subject to unending second death. - see Rev. 21:4; I Cor. 15:26.

The passing on of the sin nature from Adam to all men.

This is sometimes called the Adamic nature, inborn sin, original sin, or the old man. It is the idea that Adam's sin has been transmitted through the entire human race. (Rom 5:12) There is no way for a human to escape this sin. Psalm 14:1-3 names the various ways this is seen in mankind and also implies the existence of the sin nature as the source of evil in man. Left to himself, man is hopelessly lost in his sin, dead, and bound for a Christless eternity. It is only through the redemptive work of Christ that he can be forgiven and made alive.

What are five views on the creation of the universe?

What are the three consequences suffered by man as a result of the fall?

_____ ,
_____ ,
_____ .

Salvation by Grace and Eternal Security

It could be said that the entire Bible is about this one thing – Salvation. In the opening chapters of the Bible, we learn that God created a world and in it, created man and woman. Due to the sin in a man's heart, he chooses to rebel against God. God spends the rest of the Bible offering ways for man to restore his relationship with God, offering him a means of salvation from his sin. In the Old Testament, the system of sacrifices and laws was offered to gain forgiveness for sin. In the New Testament, the one perfect and final sacrifice is offered in the person of Jesus Christ, God's only son. Following the Gospel account of this story, the rest of Scripture helps explain how those that have been saved are to live and act. Since God has taken so much time to explain the concept of salvation, it is important that we learn exactly what is taught.

Regeneration

After Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden, man lost his ability to live in harmony with God. This is described as being "dead in sin"; the idea is that a dead person has no opportunity or ability to do anything at all, including any activity to restore his relationship with God. Since man is dead in his sin, unable to rightly respond to God in any way, if he is to know new life and if he is to have a personal relationship with God, God must do a work in his life. There must be the impartation of life, if there is to be genuine salvation. This first step of salvation is called Regeneration. Properly understood, it refers to the origination of the eternal life that comes into the believer in Christ at the moment of faith, the instantaneous change from a state of spiritual death to a state of spiritual life.

In many respects, regeneration is the foundation upon which our total salvation is built. Without new life in Christ, there is no possibility of receiving the other

aspects of salvation such as the indwelling of the Spirit. There are some features, however, that are immediately evident in the fact of regeneration.

When a believer receives Christ by faith, he is born again and in the act of the new birth receives a new nature. Because of the new nature, a believer in Christ may often experience a drastic change in his life, in his attitude toward God, and in his capacity to have victory over sin.

Another important aspect of regeneration is that it results in eternal security. Although some have taught that eternal life can be lost and that a person once saved can be lost if he defects from the faith, the very nature of eternal life and the new birth forbids a reversal of this work of God. Because regeneration is totally the work of God through the Holy Spirit, it should be a source of constant hope and abiding confidence *“that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus”* (Phil. 1:6).

Election

This is one of the sections I cautioned you about in the introduction. This topic has been heavily debated, but I urge you to read it, study the concepts and Scripture presented, and make a decision based on the facts, not on what you’ve been told or what seems fair.

Election teaches that, due to the corrupted nature and spiritual depravity of man, God according to His sovereign grace & will, and for His own purposes, has chosen (elected) those who will receive salvation. (Eph 1:3-6) That without this act of Mercy (Love) on God's part all men will reap the fruits of their corruption and depravity, which is eternal damnation. Basically, it is the action of God, and God alone, which brings one to salvation, and that this sovereign act is irresistible. It is sometimes referred to as Sovereign Grace Salvation.

Scripture clearly indicates the concept of election in choosing as is seen in these verses:

"For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:14)

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified." (Romans 8:28-30)

"-for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls-". (Romans 9:11)

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved." (Ephesians 1:3-6)

"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; (Colossians 3:12)

While these verses and others clearly indicate the concept of election, many who do not believe that God actually chooses those whom He saves adopt a different understanding of these verses. They interpret these verses with respect to the concept of foreknowledge, the idea that God knows who will choose salvation, and it is these that He elects. Said another way, God looks down through time and sees those who will choose Him. He then determines in His will to elect those people to salvation.

There are challenges to this idea of "election through foreknowledge" explanation. Every time "foreknowledge" is used with reference to God in the New Testament, it refers to His foreknowledge of persons. It is never used in connection with events or actions. Note particularly in Romans 8:29, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son". It is significant that the object of God's foreknowledge here is not their acts of believing, but the persons themselves. Romans 9:16 emphasizes this very point; "So then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy."

Another challenge is in a logical argument that if God is only choosing from those whom He has seen will choose Him, then the idea of His sovereign choice is severely limited to only a subset of humans. In fact, God is not really choosing in that case. The idea of choice from Scripture is that there is an actual choice that can be made. If, for example, you were told that you could choose from a list of five possible movies to go and see, but you later learn that four of the movies are no longer playing in the theater, do you really have a choice?

For many, this understanding of foreknowledge seems to resolve the issue of election that is clearly taught in Scripture. They desire to interpret the verses to allow for "free will"; the concept that man chooses to be saved by God. The reasons for this desire are many and include the ideas that:

We believe from things we learn that God wants all mankind to be saved.
We think it is unfair that salvation might be up to God alone.

We feel a responsibility to “do something” with regard to securing our salvation.

We have a problem with the idea that God has chosen that we would love him.

We are uncomfortable with the idea that we do not control our own destiny.

As you can probably tell, the above reasons have much more to do with what we “think” or “feel” is fair, and not so much with what is explicitly stated in Scripture. The idea that God chooses has been demonstrated to be consistent throughout Scripture (back in the chapter on God).

A Note on Choice

This does not mean that humans do not have some ability to choose. The Scriptures are full of stories of people who choose to do things, some right as in the case of Joshua, and others wrong, as in the case of Jonah. Making the decisions we must make each day is often a case of personal choice, yet those choices can be guided by principles in Scripture. Purchasing a cruise vacation that causes us to go into debt in favor of a get-away locally that could be paid for with funds we already have calls into account several scriptures that deal with debt and fiscal responsibility. We can choose to obey the principles of scripture or disobey them, with the possibility that disobedience may result in some kind of penalty or difficulty. With the concept of choice, it appears that one place that God draws the line on when we choose and when He chooses is with regard to salvation. Election to salvation, with its eternal and final consequences, is then relegated only to God with His perfect judgment and plan.

Security

Passages like John 3:16; John 5:24; and John 6:37-40 express the unconditional covenant of God. God promises life and security to those who come to Him. The sovereign purposes of God in salvation cannot be thwarted by the will of men.

Rom. 8:34 and I John 2:1-2 demonstrate that one of the ministries which Jesus performs on behalf of the believer is that of advocate. He died for sinners and represents them as their defense lawyer before the judgment seat of God. And on

the basis of his death he pleads for their acquittal - see Heb. 9:24. Having Jesus as our defense attorney brings assurance and security.

The Holy Spirit indwells every believer and by His presence the believer is preserved and eternally secure - see John 7:37-39; Rom. 5:5; 8:9; I Cor. 2:12; 6:19; I John 2:27.

Any one of these undertakings is sufficient to guarantee eternal security to the believer. There is no distinction between salvation and safekeeping, for God offers no salvation that is not eternal.

Regeneration takes place at the moment of _____ and is a total work of _____.

Foreknowledge is _____ looking down through _____ to see who will _____ Him.

Election is _____ according to His sovereign _____ & _____, and for His own _____, has _____ (elected) those who will receive _____.

One way that we can know we have eternal security is that Jesus is acting as our _____ before the judgment seat of God, pleading for our acquittal.

Sanctification

Understanding sanctification is a key element in understanding the human condition. You will often hear people say that a Believer is "...just a sinner saved by grace" when describing the fallible and fallen nature of mankind. Believers are much more than that – they are new creations capable of a life that unbelievers could not even imagine. The work of Christ in a person results in three descriptors that characterize the new Believer forever.

“Sanctify” This word means ‘to set apart,’ and then the state of being set apart. The basis of the classification is usually that the sanctified person (or thing) has been set apart, or separated, from others in his position and relationship before God.

“Holy” This word refers to the state of being set apart, or being separate, from that which is unholy. Christ was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” While there is a holiness ascribed only to God which denotes a perfection that humans will never achieve, the basic definition of holy is applicable to all who are in Christ.

“Saint” This term is applied only to living persons and relates only to their position in the reckoning of God. It is never associated with the quality of their daily life. They are saints by reason of being particularly classified and set apart in the plan and purpose of God. Christians are already sanctified, set apart, classified, “holy brethren,” who therefore may be called saints. Sainthood is not subject to progression. Every born-again person is as much a saint the moment he is saved as he ever will be in time or eternity.

Aspects of Sanctification

Positional Sanctification

Positional sanctification is a sanctification, holiness, and sainthood conferred on the believer by God through the offering of the body and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Because of the work of Christ, every believer is now said to be sanctified positionally, holy, and a saint before God. I Cor. 1:2 - All believers have been sanctified in Christ Jesus and are saints by calling.

Progressive Sanctification

You will sometimes hear someone describe the Christian life as a road or path on which the Believer travels. John Bunyan, in his book *Pilgrim's Progress*, describes the life of Christian and his journey to be like Christ. As various difficulties are encountered, Christian learns to respond in ways that honor God and bring glory to Him. This is the concept of Progressive sanctification, where the Believer yields more and more of his life to God, becomes more and more separated from sin, and grows to be more and more like Christ. It is a process, sometimes marked by mistakes and errors, but hopefully more often marked by making Biblically sound decisions. Growing in the Christian life is always a process, not to be perfected “until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6). Salvation is not only a transaction, but also a transformation.

Ultimate Sanctification

The ultimate aspect of sanctification, that is, one’s final perfection, will come in glory when the Believer is with Christ after his physical death. By His grace and

transforming power, God will have so changed every child of His - in spirit, soul, and body - that each will be “like him” and “conformed to the image of His Son.”

Until such time as the believer receives his ultimate sanctification, he continues to be involved in a great struggle against sin, self, and Satan. Though the battle is difficult, the formula for victory is possible, found in Eph 4:22-24, through the power of the Holy Spirit and the truth of God’s Word.

Which aspect of sanctification reflects the continual growth of the Believer in Christ?

Which aspect of sanctification indicates a completed work of God in the life of a Believer and confers “sainthood” on the person?_____

Personal Testimony development and sharing

Part of the Believer’s life is to share Christian truth with others. This can happen in many ways, however it is often difficult to know when and what to share. Do you walk up to strangers and ask them if they believe in Christ? Do you hand out the Spiritual Laws on pamphlets door to door? Do you stand on a street corner and read Scripture to all who pass?

While God can use many means to touch the lives of humans, one of the most effective ways to share the Gospel is by telling a personal story. Believers often feel that they do not have a firm enough grasp of doctrine to engage in significant discussion about the Bible, but each can speak with authority about their own story of becoming a Believer, and what it means to them. This is what is meant by a Personal Testimony.

What is a personal Testimony?

- Story of salvation
- Good news in a person’s life
- When and how a person trusted Christ as savior
- The “journey”

Basic Testimony

The story you share does not need to be complicated. It also does not have to be long. There are three main questions to answer in telling your story.

- What was your life like before Christ?

- What happened to cause you to trust Christ?
- What has your life been like after trusting Christ?

Exactly how much to share depends on several factors.

Time – are you sharing on a bus or while sitting in a restaurant? Don't make someone late for something so that you can share your story. As soon as a person feels that "time" is up, they will stop listening and begin looking for an exit strategy.

Audience – are you sharing with someone you know or a stranger? Someone you know is entitled to a bit more detail, or you can tailor comments to shared experiences or mutual friends.

Focus – are you sharing in answer to a question, or did you start the conversation?

Essentially, you can prepare a similar story for everyone, but you will add or delete details depending on these and other factors. Remember that you are not preaching a sermon, but you are sharing a story. Communication involves a two-way interaction, so be sensitive to the audience to gauge whether you are connecting or simply talking to hear your own voice. When you have finished your story, you may get questions that allow you to continue the conversation, but you may also get no response. Don't feel bad if this happens, and remember the parable of the seeds that fall on different ground. Your responsibility is to be available when God opens an opportunity to share, not to "bag another one for God".

“Jailhouse” testimonies or “solid family” testimonies – which is better?

A jailhouse testimony is a term for a testimony that is often quite graphic or exciting. Elements might include extensive drug use or criminal activity, followed by trial and jail or prison time. During this time, something happens wherein the person hears the Word of God and they become a Believer. Following this conversation, the life of crime is left behind in exchange for a life of helping teens, becoming a pastor or something similar. These more sensational testimonies are a wonderful indicator that God can work in even the most adverse situation, but the truth is that this testimony is no more exciting than that of a person who grows up in a Godly home and becomes a Believer after the prayers of a loving and caring family. Any life that is dedicated to God is precious and wonderful and worth celebrating. The Bible has examples of both kinds of testimony:

- Proverbs is full of encouragement for godly parenting
- Paul was certainly a “Newsflash event”, in that he was well known as being against the cause of Christ.

In Summary, Be prepared to share when you have the chance.

- Short or long (elevator testimonies) Be prepared to share your story quickly, as in, on an elevator, if you get the chance. That means you'll have 30 to 50 seconds.
- Written testimonies for jobs or Christian ministry applications. You will likely get the chance to write your testimony for a position at Church or something similar.
- Consider the experience of the audience (bikers, drinkers, sports, military, Christians...) Bring up certain aspects of your life story that will communicate to your audience.
- The level of detail is determined by audience and time
- Practice! Practice! Practice! This cannot be overemphasized. The more you practice, the more comfortable you will be with the idea of sharing your story. Try it first as you look in the mirror. Then try it in front of a family member or friend. Roll play to get used to answering questions and comments with your story in a natural way.

What are the three questions to answer when sharing your testimony?

The Church

The term “church” is used in several ways. While not all are legitimate biblically, the word “church” is used to refer to a local congregation of professing believers, a denominational group of congregations, the universal body of true Christian believers, and a building used for religious uses.

The church began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) when Peter proclaimed the finished work of Christ upon the cross and thousands were saved. The church continues to be formed today, as the believer’s ministry of soul-winning and edification of the body of Christ continues. The formation of the church will be complete when *“we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ”* (Eph. 4:13). The church will be complete when Christ returns for His own at the rapture.

The world cannot detect the invisible church of real Christians. They see only the visible church of those who profess to be Christians. The Lord intended to establish a visible church as a testimony to the world. When we gather together on the Lord’s Day, we are a testimony to the world that Christ exists and leads His people.

As taught in Matthew 28:19-20 the mission of the church is to make disciples who will in turn engage in worship, growth, fellowship, and service. In other words, they will evidence genuine salvation by their commitment to Christ and their involvement in the local church. This mission of making disciples is carried out through the evangelizing of the lost and the edifying of the saints.

The basic task of the church is to teach sound doctrine. In Titus 2:1 Paul writes, *“Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine.”* If the church of Jesus Christ is to be protected from false doctrine, the elders who lead it must be faithful to teach sound doctrine. Many other things are good, but they’re not priorities. As a minister of Jesus Christ, an elder is first of all responsible to God for the purity of the

church and its protection from false doctrine. All ministers of the gospel are answerable to Christ for how faithfully they protect and nurture the flock. Unfortunately, there are many pastors whose churches expect them to do everything under the sun and not what Christ intends - teaching the Word of God. Their energies are dissipated into other responsibilities rather than their prime duty.

Three forms of church government are found in the history of the church:

Episcopal

In this system the chief ministers of the church are bishops. On this view the apostles were the supreme ministers in the early church, and they took care that suitable men were ordained to the ministry. To some of them they entrusted the power to ordain and so provided for the continuance of the ministry to succeeding generations. The Church of England (Catholic Church) retained the historic episcopate. Some of the Lutheran churches opted for an episcopal system but did not remain in the historic succession. In more recent times other churches have decided to have bishops - e.g., some Methodist churches - and these too have rejected the historic succession. More Christians accept episcopacy than any other form of church government, but episcopal churches are, for the most part, not in communion with one another.

Presbyterian

This system emphasizes the importance of elders, or presbyters. From the Reformation onward the presbyterian form of church government has been of very great importance. John Calvin organized the four churches in Geneva on the basis of his understanding of the New Testament ministry as fourfold: the pastor, the doctor (or teacher), the deacon, and the presbyter (or elder). It was the pastor who had the care of the congregation. This was not the full presbyterian system, but it laid the foundation for it, and presbyterianism developed in Switzerland, Germany, France, the Netherlands, and elsewhere. On the continent the name "Reformed" is used for these churches. From Europe, more particularly from Britain, the church spread to America, where it became one of the most significant groups of Christians.

Congregational

As the name implies, this form of church government puts the emphasis on the place of the congregation. Congregationalism as a system appeared after the Reformation. Some among the Reformed rejected the idea of a state church and encouraged believers to form a "gathered church," that included those who heard the call of Christ and responded. Denied the freedom to put all this into practice

in England, many crossed into Holland. It was from the church at Leiden that the Pilgrim fathers sailed from America in 1620 and established congregationalism in the new world, where it became very important.

While these forms of government are implied in Scripture, there is one form of church government described; that being presbyterian or elder rule. In Hebrews 13:17, the leaders of the church are called elders (presbyters) or overseers (bishops), the titles being interchangeable. These mature men are ordered by the Spirit of God to rule over His church on earth until Christ returns. As they traveled about, Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church they established (Acts 14:23). Paul directed Titus to “appoint elders in every city” (Titus 1:5). Every New Testament congregation had such men who ruled it. They fed and led the flock (Acts 20:28).

What are the three types of church government implied in Scripture?

_____, _____

and _____

Which type of church government is described in detail in Scripture?

Elders

The highest position of authority in the church belongs to elders, who rule under Christ as undershepherds (I Pet. 5:2-4). Elders are responsible for teaching doctrine, administering, disciplining, protecting the flock, praying for the flock, and studying the Word of God. They are answerable to Jesus Christ for their ministry.

I Timothy 3 lists what is required of an elder: *“This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless”* (vv. 1-2). That requirement encompasses all others. What does it mean to be blameless? It doesn’t mean that a man has to be perfect. If so, we would all be disqualified! It means that there must not be any great blot on his life that others might point to.

Verse 7 says that the bishop or elder *“must be above reproach, as God’s steward.”* He must realize that he is a steward who doesn’t own anything, but merely manages the affairs of God for the body of Christ. Also he must not be *“self-willed, not quick tempered, not addicted to wine”* (v. 7). Also an elder must not be *“pugnacious”* or *“fond of sordid gain”* (v. 7). He doesn’t react with his fists and he doesn’t pursue money as his primary goal.

On a positive note, verse 2 says that an elder should be *“hospitable.”* He must be willing to open his home to strangers. Besides the evidence that a well-managed

household gives of his ability to manage the church (I Tim. 3:4-5), it sets a good example for strangers and makes them feel welcome. An elder needs to have a home that displays what Christian living is all about. Furthermore, he *“must not be a recent convert...be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace,”* (vv. 6). An elder should know his priorities and practice self-control as he lives by the standards of God’s Word. A man who meets those qualifications has been given by God to the local church to rule and teach it, and is therefore worthy of honor.

Deacons

Basically, deacons are servants. They are collectors of funds, distributors of relief, and agents of mercy. They help the poor, the jobless, the sick, the widowed, the elderly, the homeless, the shut-in, the refugees, and the disabled. They counsel and guide people. They visit people in their homes. They relieve suffering. They comfort, protect, and encourage people, and help to meet their needs. Simply put, deacons do what is ever necessary to minister to the needs of others within the congregation.

The qualifications for deacons, which are found in I Timothy 3:8-13, can be divided into two categories: personal character and spiritual character:

Personal Character

Paul listed four personal qualifications. First, deacons must be men of dignity (v. 8). This means that they must be worthy of respect and serious minded, not treating serious things lightly. I Tim. 3:8 also says a deacon must not be double-tongued, or one who says one thing to one person and something else to another - a malicious gossip. They are always consistent and righteous in what they say. Next, deacons are not addicted to much wine. Rather, they are noted for their clear thinking and self-control. Finally, Paul said that deacons should not be fond of sordid gain. That would be important because deacons are sometimes responsible for handling funds. Therefore their goals in life must not be monetary.

Spiritual Character

Paul also listed four spiritual qualifications. First, he must have convictions based on the knowledge of true biblical doctrine. His clear conscience implies that he lives out his convictions. He must hold to the faith and apply the truth to his life.

A second spiritual qualification for deacons is given in verse 10: *“And let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons if they are beyond reproach.”* Before a

man is officially appointed as a deacon, he must have proved himself faithful in serving the Lord

Third, a deacon must be morally pure in every way, just as an elder is to be. Literally verse 10 says, “*Let them serve as deacons if they are in the process of being irreproachable.*” Those who are not above reproach are disqualified from serving as deacons. Verse 12, which says, “*Let deacons be husbands of only one wife,*” also implies that deacons are to be morally pure. But that does not necessarily mean a deacon is to be someone who has never been divorced, although that would be a disqualification if his sin contributed to the divorce, or if the circumstances of the divorce bring reproach on him. The main point is that a deacon must be totally consecrated and devoted to his wife.

The fourth characteristic of a deacon’s spiritual life is that he leads his family well. Deacons are to be “*good managers of their children and their households*” (v. 12). A deacon must demonstrate some kind of management ability. The proving ground for leadership is how a man manages his children and household.

What are the primary responsibilities of the elders in a church?

What are the primary responsibilities of deacons in a church?

Discipleship

From Matthew 28:19-20 we read these words, “*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I command you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.*” The Greek word, translated “make disciples” is the main verb and the central command of these verses, which form the closing sentence of Matthew’s gospel. The root meaning of the term refers to believing and learning. Jesus was not referring simply to believers or simply to learners, or He would have used other words. In this context it relates to those who place their trust in Jesus

Christ and follow Him in lives of continual learning and obedience. “If you abide in My word,” Jesus said, “then you are truly disciples of Mine” (John 8:31)

The Great Commission is a command to bring unbelievers throughout the world to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the term the Lord uses in this commissioning is “*make disciples*.” Jesus’ supreme command, therefore, is for those who are His disciples to become His instruments for making disciples of all nations. Jesus’ own earthly ministry was to make disciples for Himself, and that is the ministry of His people. Those who become His disciples are themselves to become disciple makers. The mission of the early church was to make disciples (see Acts 2:47; 14:21), and that is still Christ’s mission for His church.

Discipline

Church discipline is applicable only to those who desire to be associated with the church, and is not meant to give license to Church leadership in gray area trivia, but rather the end result should be to purify the Church (I Cor. 5:6-8), to restore an erring person, to deter sin, and to demonstrate the reality of righteous living to the unsaved world.

Church discipline should not be exercised in every case of sin or deviation from the truth, for it is not God’s method for making the Church sinless. Instead, sin that damages the Church, weakens its testimony, or promotes disunity constitutes a disciplinary offense that primarily includes the following:

Divisiveness - II Thess. 3:11; Tit. 3:1-11; Rom. 16:17-20.

Unruly, disorderly and undisciplined living - II Thess. 3:6, 11, 14; I Thess. 5:14.

Disruptive conflict between members - I Cor. 6:5; Phil. 4:2-3; Matt. 18:15-18.

Sins of the flesh - I Cor. 5:11; 6:9-10. In particular, but certainly not exclusively, homosexuality, lesbianism, adultery and fornication should be addressed in this context. God’s Word is clear that these unnatural relationships must never be tolerated in the church (Rom. 1:26-27).

Public denial of the doctrines of the Church - I Tim. 6:3; II Tim. 2:16-18; Tit. 3:10; II John 1:10-11; Rev. 2:14.

Church discipline is to be handled prayerfully, carefully, and justly, and only after several individual attempts of corrective or preventative action has been taken as follows:

First step: Note and mark those who are in need of correction - Rom. 16:17; II Thess. 3:14.

Second step: Arrange a private meeting with the offender - Matt. 18:15. Rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him - Luke 17:3.

Third step: If this fails, set up a second meeting, this time with several others present - Matt. 18:16. During these preliminary private and semiprivate meetings the individual should be repeatedly admonished (Tit. 3:10), rebuked (II Tim. 4:2), and warned (I Thess. 5:14), for the sake of bringing about genuine repentance in the life of the offender. If genuine repentance does occur, the offender should seek the forgiveness from the circle of offense, and no more.

Fourth step: As a final resort, the unrepentant one is to be brought before the entire Church - Matt. 18:17; I Tim. 5:20.

Fifth step: Upon refusal to submit to Church discipline the guilty party is to be spiritually excommunicated.

He is to be denied Christian fellowship:

- ✠ II Tim. 3:5
- ✠ II Thess. 3:6
- ✠ I Tim. 6:3, 5
- ✠ Titus 3:10
- ✠ II Thess. 3:14

He is to be delivered over to Satan, meaning that he is allowed to follow his sinful ways, the realm and domain of Satan:

- ✠ I Cor. 5:5
- ✠ I Tim. 1:20

Upon refusal to heed the warning and correction of the Elder Board and of the Church, he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the Church with the hope of future repentance and reconciliation. There shall be no appeal to any court as a result of this decision (I Cor. 6:1-2)

In all matters of church discipline, when the body of the Church becomes aware of the disciplinary measure being brought against the unrepentant member, the church congregation is expected, with no exceptions, to keep silent about the matter to any and all outside the congregation, avoiding the common sin of “slander” (II Cor. 12:20).

What is the purpose of the Great Commission?

What is the ultimate purpose of church discipline?

The Ordinances Of The Church

The word *ordinance* comes from two Latin words which in their final meaning signify “that which is ordered or commanded.” This term has been used to describe the two institutions, baptism and the Lord’s Supper, left to the church by Christ. We are to observe them until His return.

Baptism

Baptism is the divinely appointed ordinance by which a Christian confesses to others, by submitting to his immersion in water, not only his faith in the Son of God, but his spiritual identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection on his behalf. As Christ went through the awful reality of dying for our sins, being buried and rising again; so the believer, by going down under the waters of baptism and emerging, announces to all who witness it that he confesses he has died to sin, has been buried with Him and has been raised together with Him, to walk with Him in newness of life and live to His glory.

It is important to remember that baptism is only an illustration of what has already taken place in the experience of the believer. The ordinance itself has no saving virtue. It does not make a person a Christian, but simply marks him as a Christian.

Understanding that baptism in the bible is always believers baptism eliminates the false theory of infant baptism, or infant sprinkling or pouring, a thing the New Testament knows nothing whatever about, for not a single instance is recorded of such an event in its pages.

Two modes of baptism are generally accepted today, immersion (to be immersed in water) and affusion (by washing or sprinkling). The example in Scripture is set and practiced to be immersion. While baptism is not essential for salvation, it is an ordinance given to the church by Christ. Therefore, it is a responsibility both

corporately and individually to participate in believer's baptism and to encourage others to do so.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a spiritual experience. The bread and wine are not transubstantiated—turned into the actual body and blood of Christ—as Roman Catholics believe, or consubstantiated—having the actual body and blood existing alongside them—as many Lutherans believe. Christ cannot be sacrificed again, because He was offered only “*once to bear the sins of many*” (Heb. 9:28). Not only that, but at the first Lord's Supper, in which Christ Himself passed the cup and the bread, He had not yet been crucified; His physical blood had not yet been shed. When believers partake of Communion in faith, the Holy Spirit uses those symbols as sensitizers to kindle our spirits in awareness and appreciation of our Lord's great ministry and sacrifice for us.

Instruction as to how to observe the Lord's Supper are found in I Cor. 1:27-29. The Lord's Supper is only for those who have come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, by the sovereign work of God. Observance must be with due reverence and self-examination. One who partakes of the celebration in an unworthy or careless manner brings condemnation upon himself.

The Lord's Supper has been rightly regarded by many Christians as a sacred time of commemoration of the death of Christ and all its meaning for the individual Christian. As indicated by Paul, it is a time of heart-searching, a time of confession of sin, and a time of restoration. It is also a reminder of the wonderful benefits which have come to every Christian through the death of Christ.

As the Lord's Supper points back to the historic fact of the first coming of Christ and His death on the cross, so it also points ahead to His coming again when observance of the Lord's Supper will cease. While the frequency of observance is not clearly given in the Scriptures, it seems probable that the early Christians practiced it frequently, perhaps as often as each week, as they gathered on the first day of the week to celebrate the resurrection of Christ. In any case, observance of the Lord's Supper should not be infrequent, but in proper and respectful obedience to the command of Christ to do this until He comes.

_____ is only an illustration of what has already taken place in a Believer's heart.

Why is it not appropriate for an unbeliever to partake in the Lord's Supper?

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End Times

There are few topics of greater interest and greater confusion than discussing the timing and elements that make up the end times. Many Believers are comfortable thinking that this topic is so cryptic that it is perfectly fine not to know any of the details. The End Times has been the subject of many books and movies, and so based on this media, countless Believers have formulated an understanding more oriented in fiction than fact.

The truth is that there are many things that can be known about the end times. Moreover, these things *should* be known so that God's people can be prepared for what may happen in the not-to-distant future. Consider these words from Revelation 1:3 - *Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.* There are no other words in Scripture that promise a blessing for reading or hearing the text, so these words carry a unique significance. Also, even for those who might seek to discount the writing of Revelation, the story of the end times is found in many other places in Scripture, from the prophets in the Old Testament to Jesus' own description in Matthew 24.

It is important to clarify what the Scripture states objectively, and what we must infer based on the context. It is also important to set aside pre-conceived notions of what seems "right" or "makes sense" to us as we study this topic. Let us simply see what God tells us in His Word.

Overview of the End Times

The study of End Times can be as exciting as it is exhausting. It is also known as the "Second Coming" because the time leads up to the arrival of Jesus Christ. There are prophecies to consider, historical references, figurative language and a lack of specifics in some areas. On the other hand, it is some of the most interesting Scripture in the entire Bible. While there may be some elements of the end times that are complicated to understand, the basic time-table of the last seven years can

be understood quite clearly when taking Scripture at face-value. The basic overview includes:

- The seven-year period, known as the 70th Week of Daniel, begins when Israel signs a peace treaty with the Antichrist. (Dan 9:27)
- The first 3½ years of the 70th Week of Daniel are characterized as beginning birth pangs. (Matt 24:8)
- The mid-point of the 70th Week of Daniel is marked by the Antichrist declaring himself to be God and demanding worship, what Daniel calls the Abomination of Desolation. (Dan 9:27, Matt 24:15)
- The period of time from the mid-point of the 70th Week of Daniel until the rapture is known as the Great Tribulation, a time when the Antichrist seeks to destroy Israel and believers. (Matt 24:21)
- The rapture of the church cuts short the wrath of the Antichrist and commences the Day of the Lord. (Matt 24:22)
- The Day of the Lord is God's judgment upon the Antichrist and those who follow him. (Rev 19:20)
- The Day of the Lord is climaxed and ended by the battle of Armageddon when God destroys the armies of the earth. (Rev 16:13-16, Rev 19:19-21)
- God throws the Antichrist and the false prophet into the lake of fire. (Rev 19:20)
- Satan is bound and thrown into a pit. (Rev 20:1-3)
- A thousand years pass as Christ reigns over the people on the earth that survived the tribulation. (Rev 20:4)
- Satan is released, he attempts to overthrow God, and he is thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev 20:7-10)
- The story ends describing a time of eternity with beautiful promises of a Christ-focused life for the elect. (Rev 21)

Now, let's go back and explore some of the events of this 7-year period and afterward.

The Tribulation (70th Week of Daniel)

Scripture describes a seven-year period that immediately precedes the thousand-year reign of Christ. This seven-year period of time is popularly called the Tribulation period or the 70th week of Daniel. Gabriel told Daniel in chapter 9, verse 24 through 27 that “70 weeks” had been decreed for the Jewish people until their nation, Israel, was established as God’s final kingdom. Gabriel then broke down the 70 weeks into time increments. Each “week” referred to a 7-year period. He said that “69 weeks” would pass from the time the Jewish people were released from captivity and rebuilt Jerusalem until their Messiah came (verse 25). After 69 weeks, the Messiah would be “cut off” and Jerusalem and the temple would be destroyed. This would be followed by a gap of time characterized by wars and desolations (verse 26). Then the “prince who is to come” (the Antichrist) would strengthen a covenant with “many,” including Israel, for “one week”, the 70th week. So, when people talk about “end times”, they are often referring to the Tribulation period, or the 70th Week of Daniel.

The Rapture

The words *raptured*, *snatched*, or *caught up* have come to be used interchangeably. They are used to describe the initial phase of the second coming of Christ, who, by the Word of His power, will snatch, catch up, or rapture His true church out of the gravitational pull of this planet to meet Him in the clouds and to remain forever with Him.

The question is, at what point during the 70th Week of Daniel will this rapture of the church occur? There are four popular views:

The Pretribulation Rapture: represents the belief that Christ will rapture true believers before the Tribulation period or seventieth week of Daniel begins.

The Midtribulation Rapture: the catching away of the church will occur three and one-half years into the Tribulation period, or the mid-point, immediately prior to the Great Tribulation.

The Posttribulation Rapture: is the position that the church will go through the entire seven-year Tribulation period. At the end of that time of wrath, Christ will return to the earth. This view, unlike pretribulationism and midtribulationism does not exempt the church from the time of God’s wrath.

The Pre-Wrath Rapture: This position holds that the church will be raptured sometime during the second half of the 70th week, when Christ returns to cut short the great tribulation under the Antichrist and to pour out the wrath of God upon

unbelieving humanity. (Rev 7:9-17) In my opinion, this view is the one that best harmonizes all the relevant Scripture on the topic.

The Great Day of the Lord

The primary purpose of the day-of-the-Lord wrath will be to destroy the kingdom of darkness, giving specific attention to the final beast empire of Satan which will then dominate the world. It will begin on the same day that the Rapture occurs, cutting short the great tribulation by Antichrist, sometime during the second half of the seventieth week. It will be announced with a sign divinely displayed in the heavens. (Zephaniah 1:14, Rev 8)

The day of the Lord's wrath is composed of two major parts. The first is the series of God's trumpet judgments against the earth's wicked, including unsaved Israel, that will occur while the seventieth week is in progress. The second part is the series of bowl judgments, "which are the last, because in them the wrath of God is finished." These will begin after the seventieth week is complete, after the surviving remnant of Israel is saved and the Lord has hidden them for protection. The day of the Lord will be climaxed and ended at the battle (or campaign) of Armageddon.

Overview of the Millennium

The term "millennium" refers to the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth (Rev. 20:1-7). A natural reading of the text appears to support the idea that Christ returns and rules on earth during the one thousand years, but theologians have debated this issue. There are three main views of when and how Christ rules during this time:

The Premillennial View, Christ will return to the earth *before (pre)* the Millennium begins to inaugurate and reign over it.

The Amillennial View, Between His two comings Christ rules over a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of mankind.

The Postmillennial View, Man will bring in the Kingdom through the spread of the gospel. Christ will return *after (post)* its universal acceptance to sit upon His throne.

There are a number of events that occur during the first day of the Millennium. Chapters 20 and 21 of the book of Revelation record these events. It is apparent from John's description that these events occur in succession, one right after the other - see Rev. 20:1-4; 21:1-2.

Satan is Bound

When Christ receives absolute, divine, sovereign control over the earth as King, His first order of business will be to deal directly with Satan.

Although Satan's forces under Antichrist will have been totally destroyed at Armageddon, Satan himself will still be alive and on earth (Rev. 12:9). Because God's plan is not to send him eternally into the lake of fire until after the Millennium (Rev. 20:10), Christ will have to neutralize him for that thousand years. Consequently, as John saw in his vision, an angel *"laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, and threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he should not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed; after these things he must be released for a short time"* (Rev. 20:2-3). Because Satan will be bound for a thousand years, he will, of course, have been bound immediately after the Millennium begins – that is, in the first event of the first day, as suggested by Revelation 20:1-2.

The Sheep and Goat Judgment

The first event at the beginning of the Millennium, as we have just seen, is the binding of Satan for a thousand years. The next task is to eliminate all the Gentile *"children of wrath"* (Eph. 2:2) who survived the day of the Lord. This will take place at the Sheep and Goats judgment, which will be the very next event on the first day of the Millennium. This separation process is described in Matthew 25:31-40.

From this passage many things are evident. First, the Lord makes clear that He will personally conduct the judgment from His throne. Second, *"all the angels [will be] with Him"* (v. 31). Third, *"all the nations [peoples] will be gathered before"* Christ to undergo judgment (v. 32).

The Sheep and Goat judgment will be based upon two issues. The first issue is whether or not the non-Jewish survivors of the day of the Lord have worshipped the beast or his image or have taken his mark (Rev. 16:2; 14:9-11). The second basis of judgment will be their individual treatment of Israel—that is, their treatment *"of these brothers of Mine"* (Matt. 25:40). In other words the way in which the *"nations"* treat the Jews will be considered the same as their treatment of Christ Himself (Matt. 25:40, 45; cf. Gen. 12:2, 3).

"Beheaded" Martyrs Resurrected

After Satan is bound and after the judgment thrones appear, the souls of those who have been *"beheaded"* during the great tribulation by Antichrist will be resurrected - see Rev. 20:4-5.

It is likely that these martyred souls are those who have died by “beheading” and are seen under the throne of God at the fifth seal. They are the faithful seventieth-week witnesses who were “*slain because of the Word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained*” (Rev. 6:9).

New Heavens and New Earth

At some point early in the thousand years, God prepares for the eternal state. The creation of a new heavens and a new earth is among the most beautiful promises in God’s Word. More than twenty-five hundred years ago the Lord proclaimed through the prophet Isaiah: “*For behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create*” (Isa. 65:17, 18a).

Why will the Lord create a new heavens and a new earth? The earth will be in a state of devastation when the battle of Armageddon is over and the day of the Lord is completed. The destruction of the heavens and earth will be so devastating that a new heavens and new earth will have to rise from the ashes. In other words, the heavens and earth will be remade and perfected by Christ into a splendid new and uncorrupted form.

The New Jerusalem

In this event something beyond our comprehension will happen. The New Jerusalem, the heavenly mansions prepared for the bride of Christ (John 14:2), in brilliant beauty beyond anything we can imagine, will descend from heaven. And within this holy city the Old and New Testament saints – those taken to heaven together, and rewarded together at the bema seat – will now descend together adorned in resplendent garments as Christ’s own bride.

John’s vision of the New Jerusalem is recorded in Revelation 21:1-7. While this passage has a number of important truths contained within it, one of the most important is that there will be “*no temple in [the New Jerusalem], for the Lord God, the Almighty, and the Lamb, are its temple*” (Rev. 21:22). When the New Jerusalem descends from heaven, it will hover directly above the earth, with its center encompassing the newly built Temple on top of Mount Zion, their bases adjoining at the same elevation on the summit of Mount Zion. The Temple of God will therefore be the focal point both of the New Jerusalem and of the entire earth. In other words, Christ will rule over earth from His throne room in the new Temple, which will be an inseparable part of the New Jerusalem.

The Lord describes a place where the *“river of the water of life [flows] clear as crystal”* (22:1), where the *“tree of life”* bears eternal fruit (v. 2), where the curse is forever gone (v. 3). The bride of Christ will dwell in the heavenly New Jerusalem in the presence of the Lamb, and John proclaims the beautiful promise that God *“shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall no longer be any death; there shall no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed. . . Behold, [God will make] all things new”* (21:4, 5a).

This time in history is not clearly detailed in Scripture. Consequently, there are some who favor a different time that the new heaven and earth and New Jerusalem arrive. A basic reading of the text in Revelation might reveal the idea in chapter 21 that the things John is “seeing” happen chronologically after the things he reported seeing in chapter 20. The trouble with this is that verse 27 of chapter 21 refers to unclean things or those not in the Lamb’s book of life who are unable to enter the New Jerusalem. This implies that there are unclean things that could enter, and unclean things would not be in existence during the time after the millennium. Further, the verses preceding 27 speak of the nations and the kings of the earth, another reference to the Kingdom Age, or the Millennium. It is likely that John’s description of what he sees is not chronological, but is descriptive of what he is being shown at the time.

This brings up an important point for Believers to consider. Some may become passionate about an aspect of the timing of these end-time events. Jesus intended the words of Revelation to stimulate us to living a life dedicated to serving Him, and millennial events occur long after we can affect any changes. It is not a cause to break fellowship or split friendships. This kind of discord is a Spiritual attack on Believers, designed to get us to mistrust Scripture and avoid studying the Bible. Satan knows that the more confident we are in our belief, the more likely we will be to live according to the teaching of Scripture and turn from his tempting ways. If you prefer a different interpretation of Scripture, attempt to support your thoughts with the entirety of God’s Word.

Living During the Millennium

Life during the Millennium is difficult to describe accurately. Scripture does not offer too many specifics on the quality of life during this time, however we know several things.

Humans will inhabit the earth. Revelation 19:11-21 does not tell us that all humans are destroyed with the destruction of the nations. Matthew 25:31 teaches that people will be left who are the “sheep” of the sheep and goat judgment.

Further, Isaiah 65:17 tells us that there will be great increase in the numbers of humans on the earth during the millennium.

Christ is in charge. With Satan bound and captive in a pit and all his demons in the lake of fire, there is no Spiritual war being waged on the earth. This will be a time of increased prosperity as Christ rules with an iron scepter. Those who love Christ will enjoy nearly all aspects of life in the Millennium, particularly the opportunities for worship.

Many Believers ask: “What happens to the saints during the Millennium?” It is likely that saints, that is, those raptured from the church and those Believers who died in Christ, will rule with Christ. The actual process for this is unclear, but imagine for a moment that there are more people living on the earth than currently live there now and most of the nations of the earth exist in their current general locations. Though Christ is in charge, it is consistent with Scripture that the saints will be given leadership roles within the nations and in the Holy City to assist Christ during this time. We will “live” in the New Jerusalem and probably work on the earth as needed. We will have the ability to move from the earth to the New Jerusalem at will, but humans will be limited to life on earth.

Some will rebel. Those who are alive will be in their natural bodies and will be able to have babies who will populate the earth. Some of these children will choose not to follow Christ. Zechariah 14:16-19 describes what happens to the families that choose not to worship the King, and despite this treatment, many choose to live apart from the rule of Christ and defy Him. At the end of the thousand years, though many of us might find it hard to believe, the numbers of those who are hostile to Christ number “like the sand of the seashore”, describing an extremely large number of people.

There is a final battle. Revelation 20:7-8 tells us that Satan is released from his prison and he is freed to come and deceive all those people again and gather them to fight against Christ. With very little pomp and circumstance, Revelation 20:9 describes that they gather together, surround the camp of the saints and then fire comes from heaven and devours them. Following this event, Satan is thrown into the lake of fire and never again bothers mankind.

While putting an end to the rebellion of Satan, this battle also puts an end to the false theory that man, under a perfect environment, will willingly serve the God who created and redeemed him. Even in the ideal situation of the millennial reign of Christ, many immediately respond to the first temptation to rebel. This is the end of the road for the nations who rebel against God as well as for the career of Satan.

There is final judgment. After crushing the rebellion at the end of the millennium all unsaved mankind are dead (Rev. 20:9), their spirits are confined in Hades, and their bodies are in various places throughout the earth (Rev. 20:13). They are raised from the dead in the bodies in which they lived, bodies that can be hurt by the second death (Rev. 20:6, 12-13). This is the final resurrection (I Cor. 15:24; Rev. 20:5).

The appearance of the great white throne and its Occupant is awesome. The dazzling whiteness of the throne speaks of the purity of Christ, and also of the unyielding justice of the judgment. The destiny of those who live in darkness has been sealed. It only remains to determine the degree of punishment. The book of life is present to confirm the fact that they are lost and deserve to be at this throne, because their names are not recorded in it (Rev. 20:12, 15).

The judgment proceeds against every man, according to his works (Rev. 20:12-13). While the identity of these books is uncertain, what we do know is that there is an indelible and an inescapable record of the deeds of every man.

The temporary abode of the wicked, Hades, is merged with the lake of fire (Rev. 20:14), so that at last there is just one place of confinement. The wicked are cast into this place (Rev. 20:15) along with Satan and his demons (Rev. 20:10, 15; 21:8; Matt. 25:41; Luke 8:30-31). This is the second death: a death in which the spiritual aspect of separation from God is made permanent (II Thess. 1:8-9).

The Millennial kingdom is really a fulfillment of God's promise to Israel. Though they forfeited their blessing due to disobedience, they fully realize God's blessing and provision in the Millennial kingdom. The nation of Israel and all others will enjoy a period of harmony, justice, and peace far superior to anything they have ever experienced. (Isa 9:7)

Eternity

Several scriptures give us a glimpse into what Eternity will be like. Essentially, eternity will be a continuance of the Millennium, with no resurgence of evil or rebellion. For the believer, these include some of the most wonderful promises in the Bible. When we read promises such as these from God's Word the only response of those who truly know the Lord is to be filled with hope and joy and awe! The church today lives at a time in history when these promises could be fulfilled in our lifetime!

Questions?

If you have completed the chapters in the book thus far, congratulations! You now likely recognize that you know more than you did when you started, but that there

are many more issues and truths yet to understand. If you take the time to answer the questions in the final evaluation, you will have a measure of how comfortable you are answering some of the basic issues in the Christian faith. It is entirely possible that you have additional questions about things that were not addressed in this book, and I want to offer a place where you can ask those questions and get answers. A website has been established at ***www.foundationsonline.org*** for this purpose. On this site, you can read questions and answers offered by some of today's leading Christian thinkers with experience in the issues facing us. You can also enter your own question for evaluation. You will get a timely response, and your question may even be added to the collection on the website to encourage others.

The millennium refers to:

The Tribulation refers to:

The Rapture occurs when:

Why is it necessary for God to usher in a new heaven and a new earth?

What does Satan do after he is released following the millennium?

How does God deal with Satan ultimately?

Who is judged at the Great White Throne judgment?

Answers to Chapter Questions

Chapter 1

What three forms of interpretation do not hold to the clarity of the Scriptures?
Allegorization, Culturalization, Spiritualization

What are three basic assumptions we must understand before we can study the Scriptures?

The Bible Is God's Word (Inspiration)

The Bible is Clear and Understandable (Perspicuity)

The Bible is Harmonious and Consistent

What are 5 principles for proper understanding of Scripture?

Scripture is to be Taken in its Natural, Normal and Customary Usage

All Scripture is to be Interpreted Within the Context of the Passage

All Scripture Is To Be Compared With Other Scripture

Contradictions are Only Apparent

Prophecy is Recognizing The Near And Far Implications Of Scripture

What materials exist to aid the study of Scripture? Study Bibles, Concordance, Encyclopedia, Dictionary, Atlas, Introductions

A strength of the NASB Bible is it is very accurate and excellent for study

A strength of the NIV Bible is it is easy to read

A strength of the ESV Bible is it combines precision with readability

True/False – The thicker the Bible, the more useful it will be. False

True/False – Writing notes in a Bible is a bad idea. False

Chapter 2

The Septuagint was important because it was the most accurate translation of the Old Testament into common language and because it established the order of the books used today.

The term Canon means the list of books officially recognized as Scripture

Why did the Roman Catholic church press for the inclusion of the Apocrypha in the Canon of Scripture? To address the concerns of Martin Luther and other that practices of the church were not found in Scripture.

What are some of the practices that are taught in the Apocrypha but that are not found in the rest of the Bible? Prayers for the dead, expiatory sacrifice, almsgiving, intercession prayer, worship of angels, purgatory.

The process for canonizing New Testament writings involves: First: acceptance by the churches, second: validation by the church fathers, and finally: ratification by the church councils

True / False – the Council of Nicea approved the New Testament Canon. False

The essence of the Gnostic belief on salvation is that one can be saved through knowledge.

Chapter 3

What does it mean to say there is a trinity of the godhead? God is one being in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to say that God is sovereign? He has supreme power to do as He pleases on earth and Heaven.

What does it mean to say that God sustains? He upholds, supports and maintains His creation.

What three ways do we see God exercising election as a sovereign creator? Theocratic, vocational and salvational election.

What characteristics demonstrate that Jesus is God? Eternal, creator, all powerful, all knowing.

Why is the virgin birth important in establishing the character of Jesus? It allowed Jesus to be totally God and totally man, making him the perfect sacrifice.

What was required to free the human race from sin? Christ's sacrifice on the cross

What activities of the Holy Spirit help us to know that He is God? His activity in creation, the incarnation, inspiration and salvation.

Which ministry of the Holy Spirit involves the impartation of a life that is wholly foreign to fallen man? Regeneration

When does the Holy Spirit take up residence in the life of a believer? At the moment of salvation.

What are the two aspects of sanctification experienced by the believer? Positional and progressive.

What is the significance of being sealed by the Holy Spirit? It guarantees the believer's experience in Heaven.

Chapter 4

Who created Angels? God in the person of Jesus.

What was the method of the angel's creation? They were created at the direct command or fiat of God.

What is the primary purpose of angels? To glorify God.

What are the limitations of angels? Space, power, intellect and holiness.

What are the two primary ministries of angels in relation to God? Ministers of worship and personal messengers.

What are the primary ministries of angels in relation to Believers? Revealing, guiding, providing, protecting, strengthening and encouraging.

How did Satan fall from his originally holy state? He rebelled against God.

What was Satan's punishment? God cast him from his privileged position near the throne of God.

Satan's efforts are primarily directed against God.

In order to fight against God, how does Satan attack Christians? He seeks to defeat them in their individual and corporate life and service.

Chapter 5

What are five views on the creation of the universe? Historic, young-earth, gap theory, day-age theory, theistic evolution.

What are the three consequences suffered by man as a result of the fall? Total depravity, spiritual death, physical death.

Chapter 6

Regeneration takes place at the moment of salvation and is a total work of God.

Foreknowledge is God looking down through time to see who will choose Him.

Election is God according to His sovereign grace & will and for His own purposes, has chosen (elected) those who will receive salvation.

One way that we can know we have eternal security is that Jesus is acting as our defense attorney before the judgment seat of God, pleading for our acquittal.

Which aspect of sanctification reflects the continual growth of the Believer in Christ? Progressive

Which aspect of sanctification indicates a completed work of God in the life of a Believer and confers “sainthood” on the person? Positional

What are the three questions to answer when sharing your testimony? Life before Christ, what happened to cause trust in Christ, life after Christ.

Chapter 7

What are the three types of church government implied in Scripture? Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational.

Which type of church government is described in detail in Scripture? Presbyterian

What are the primary responsibilities of the elders in a church? Teaching doctrine, administering, and disciplining.

What are the primary responsibilities of deacons in a church? Collectors of funds, distributors of relief, agents of mercy.

What is the purpose of the Great Commission? To bring unbelievers to a saving knowledge of Jesus.

What is the ultimate purpose of church discipline? To purify the church, deter sin, and restore an erring person.

Baptism is only an illustration of what has already taken place in a Believer's heart.

Why is it not appropriate for an unbeliever to partake in the Lord's Supper? It is a spiritual experience for those who have a saving knowledge of Jesus.

Chapter 8

The millennium refers to the thousand-year reign of Christ on earth.

The Tribulation refers to the seven-year period prior to the kingdom, also called the 70th week of Daniel.

The Rapture occurs when Christ's true church is snatched or caught up and removed from the earth.

Why is it necessary for God to usher in a new heaven and a new earth? Because the old earth has been destroyed by the effects of the Day of the Lord and the battle of Armageddon.

What does Satan do after he is released following the millennium? He resumes his wicked ways and rallies people to fight against God.

How does God deal with Satan ultimately? He is thrown into the Lake of Fire.

Who is judged at the Great White Throne judgment? All unsaved mankind.

Final Evaluation

1. **List** three Bible Study Tools and **describe** how you would use them to understand a passage of Scripture.
2. A person tells you that the Bible is mostly allegory and that you can't really trust what you read. **List** the five principles of Biblical Interpretation. **Explain** how you know that your Bible is true from cover to cover.
3. **Describe** what you would say to a person who believes that there are contradictions in Scripture.
4. **Describe** the issue of God's sovereignty. **Why** do some people have trouble with this issue?
5. **Demonstrate** with Scripture that Jesus Christ is God. Use at least two references.
6. **Describe three** ministries that the Holy Spirit accomplishes in the life of a Believer.
7. **Describe three limitations** with respect to the power, intellect and holiness of Angels.
8. **Describe three ministries** particular to Angels in the lives of believers.
9. Satan is at work today in relation to both unbelievers and believers. **Describe two** of his activities in **each** of those relationships.
10. You hear that someone thinks the actions of a friend are being controlled by a demon sent from Satan. **Can a Believer be "demon possessed"** (have a demon operating inside them)? **Explain.**
11. Someone tells you that man is basically good and, left to his own, will usually do good things. **Describe** the issue of total depravity. If Satan was not active today, would man still sin?

12. A person in a Bible Study tells you “their loving God wants all people to be in Heaven and that all people could be saved”. How does the doctrine of **election** differ with that of ‘**free will**’ with respect to salvation?

13. A friend tells you that they are seeking a “second baptism” from the Holy Spirit so that they can demonstrate the gifts of the Spirit. **Describe** the problem with what they are talking about. **Include** the issues of positional, progressive and ultimate sanctification.

14. A person tells you that they think there should be more concerts and parties for singles at church. **Discuss** your view of this thought and **describe** what Titus 2:1 and Matthew 28: 19-20 say about the mission and ministry of the church.

15. A new attendee at your church asks you when they are going to have congregational meeting to vote on new leadership and to approve the new budget. **Describe** the different forms of government within the church, and **explain** a biblical structure for decision-making.

16. You become aware of a regular attendee at your church who is involved in a moral sin. What are the 5 steps of how you handle the situation Biblically?

17. Someone asks you why people do communion at their church. **Describe** the two ordinances Christians observe and the significance of each; **what they mean**, as well as **what they do not mean**.

18. Someone tells you they saw a ‘Left Behind’ movie and says that we can be taken “at any time”. Give them the **Scriptural perspective** on end time events. (To help organize your thoughts, **include** - but do not limit your answer to - concepts of the beginning birth pangs, the rapture, the tribulation, the Day of the Lord, the millennial kingdom and the battle of Armageddon.)

Evaluation Answers

Before you simply read the answers to the evaluation, take the time to try and answer the questions yourself. If you have gone through the book and answered the questions in each chapter, your answers to these questions will be better than you might imagine. Try not to think of this as a “test”. The questions are phrased to represent issues that might come up in your home, church or place of work. The answers listed below represent the basic points to answer the questions in the evaluation. Of course, more lengthy answers and additional Scriptural references are possible, but these answers will give you a start.

1. **List** three Bible Study Tools and **describe** how you would use them to understand a passage of Scripture.

Concordance – to cross-reference words to find other scriptures that use the same word

Study Bible – to learn what someone else thinks about a particular topic

Bible Dictionary – to learn the appropriate culturally correct definition of a word

Encyclopedia – to learn about general topic areas

2. A person tells you that the Bible is mostly allegory and that you can’t really trust what you read. **List** the five principles of Biblical Interpretation. **Explain** how you know that your Bible is true from cover to cover.

Scripture is to be Taken in its Natural, Normal and Customary Usage

All Scripture is to be Interpreted Within the Context of the Passage

All Scripture Is To Be Compared With Other Scripture

Contradictions are Only Apparent

Prophecy is Recognizing The Near And Far Implications Of Scripture

2Pet 1:19-21 states “...that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 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.” Since God’s Word is perfect, and the Bible was written by God via the Holy Spirit, it is all true.

3. **Describe** what you would say to a person who believes that there are contradictions in Scripture.

While it may appear that certain scriptures do not agree, the basic principle is that there are no contradictions in scripture. There is only one truth contained in the Bible. Psalm 19:7-11 states that God's Word is perfect, sure, right and pure. Because scripture is inspired, its one Divine author requires that each passage has one correct interpretation. If something appears to conflict, it is safer to believe that more study is required to get to the true meaning of the verses.

4. Describe the issue of God's sovereignty. **Why** do some people have trouble with this issue?

Sovereignty means supreme power or freedom from external control. God does what He pleases to accomplish His purposes. There is no power or authority greater than God. 1 Cor 8:6 tells us that God is the ultimate source and destiny of all things – which means without exclusion. Nothing can frustrate the timing and purpose of God. Because this sovereignty has no exclusions, it extends to areas where humans believe that they have authority and control, including areas we normally ascribe as “free will” or choosing Christ in salvation. 1 Peter 1:1-2 and Ephesians 1:4 state that God elects certain people for salvation. The idea of a God who does not allow us to choose him on our own volition is difficult for some to accept.

5. Demonstrate with Scripture that Jesus Christ is God. Use at least two references.

In the Old Testament, Isa 9:6-7 call Christ the “Mighty God” and the “Eternal Father”. In the New Testament, John 1:1,14 tells us that Jesus is equal with the Father, and that the Word, Jesus, is eternal. Further, John 1:3 establishes Christ as creator, an ability reserved for God. Though born of a woman, his birth was unique in that Mary was a virgin. Luke 1:34 establishes His birth apart from any normal human process. Philippians 2:5-8 asserts that Christ was completely God.

6. Describe three ministries that the Holy Spirit accomplishes in the life of a Believer.

*Regeneration – the impartation of life from God which is wholly foreign to fallen man
Baptism – 1 Cor 12:13 states that the baptism of the Holy Spirit brings a believer into the body of Christ.*

Indwelling – Holy Spirit indwells the life of the believer

Sanctification – Heb 10:14-15 states that the Holy Spirit joins us with Christ.

Instructing – John 16:12-15 states that the Holy Spirit is the master teacher.

Sealing – Eph 1:13 states the believer is sealed with the Holy Spirit as belonging to Christ.

7. Describe three limitations with respect to the power, intellect and holiness of Angels.

Space – as creatures, they do not have omnipresence. They must move spatially from one location to another.

Power – Only God is omnipotent. Angels are greater in power than man (II Peter 2:11) but not equal to God. They are sometimes taxed in the accomplishment of their duties (Rev 12:7)

Intellect – though mighty in wisdom, they need God's revelation and can be amazed as they learn (1 Pet 1:11-12)

Holiness – Isa 14:12 states that they fell into sin and bondage through defection from God's will.

8. Describe three ministries particular to Angels in the lives of believers.

Revealing – God uses angels to communicate His will and word to men. Acts 7:52

Guiding – Used by God to direct men. Matt 1:20-21

Providing – Provided physical needs like food. Gen 21-17-20

Protecting - Caring for Daniel in the lion's den (Dan 6:20-23)

Strengthening and encouraging – After freeing the apostles from prison, an angel encouraged them (Acts 5:19)

9. Satan is at work today in relation to both unbelievers and believers. Describe two of his activities in **each** of those relationships.

For Unbelievers –

Causes a barrier to the Gospel to penetrate the heart

Makes Gospel sound foolish

Promotes salvation by works

Persuades there is no need for salvation

For Believers

Seeks to defeat in life and service

Tempts to sin with lies, sex sins, rely on human wisdom, pride, and discouragement

10. You hear that someone thinks the actions of a friend are being controlled by a demon sent from Satan. Can a Believer be “demon possessed” (have a demon operating inside them)? **Explain.**

No. When saved, the Holy Spirit regenerates the Believer and the Spirit resides in us, making us sanctified and holy, ultimately making us the temple of God. No evil can reside within that temple. John 7:37-39 and Rom 5:5

11. Someone tells you that man is basically good and, left to his own, will usually do good things. **Describe** the issue of total depravity. If Satan was not active today, would man still sin?

Man was created by God to bring glory to Him. At the fall, that fellowship was broken, resulting in total depravity, spiritual death and physical death. Total depravity holds that man is bad-off – because of sin we are parted from God. II Cor 5:21, and there is no way that we can repair that relationship on our own. Left to himself, man is hopelessly lost in his sin dead and bound for a Christless eternity. If Satan were not active, our condition would be the same – Satan only makes matters worse by tempting man to a life void of victory.

12. A person in a Bible Study tells you “their loving God wants all people to be in Heaven and that all people could be saved”. How does the doctrine of election differ with that of ‘free will’ with respect to salvation?

The doctrine of election states that God does not simply look down through the corridors of time to look for those who will respond favorably to the gospel, but rather, He determines by a sovereign work those who will be saved. Eph 1:4-6 stipulates that God selected those he desired to elect, that no man would, on his own, seek God.

The doctrine of “free will” uses the issue of foreknowledge to say that God, in his omniscience, sees who will choose Him, and so he elects to choose those individuals for salvation. The basis for this belief is that it would be unfair for God to choose some and not others, and it offers man an opportunity to have a part in the salvation process. The fallacy of this point of view is that scripture allows for God to choose throughout the Old and New Testament, yet in this area, God is somehow seen as un-loving if He were to act as sovereign.

13. A friend tells you that they are seeking a “second baptism” from the Holy Spirit so that they can demonstrate the gifts of the Spirit. **Describe** the problem with what they are talking about. **Include** the issues of positional, progressive and ultimate sanctification.

Normally, the second baptism is considered an event after a person realizes salvation where the Holy Spirit gives additional gifts or strength. It is sometimes considered because of the descending of the Spirit at Pentecost, and Believers today assume that it continues in the lives of all current believers. It is a false belief because the Spirit indwells the believer at the moment of conversion, making the believer positionally sanctified (I Cor 1:2) for all eternity. Progressive Sanctification depends on some degree of yieldedness to God wherein the Believer grows in his Christian life. We are

Ultimately Sanctified into final perfection in glory when we see Christ face-to-face after our physical death.

14. A person tells you that they think there should be more concerts and parties for singles at Church. **Discuss** your view of this thought and **describe** what Titus 2:1 and Matthew 28: 19-20 say about the mission and ministry of the church.

The mission of the church is to make disciples who will in turn engage in worship, growth, fellowship and service. The task of the church is to teach sound doctrine. (Titus 2:1) While there is room for many other activities within the walls of the church, the idea that the church can be a social club, a restaurant, a music hall or a fellowship group should be secondary to the primary mission taught in Matthew 28:19-20 - making disciples.

15. A new attendee at your church asks you when they are going to have congregational meeting to vote on new leadership and to approve the new budget. **Describe** the different forms of government within the church, and **explain** a biblical structure for decision-making.

There are three types of church government.

Episcopal, where the chief ministers are Bishops, taken from the view that the original apostles became Bishops who then appointed new Bishops throughout history to lead the church. This system is primarily seen in Catholic Churches as well as some Methodist and Lutheran Churches.

Presbyterian, where stresses the importance of elder leadership with pastors, deacons and elders to direct the ministry of the church.

Congregational governments put the emphasis on the congregation because we are all priests under Christ. This form of government was adopted by the Pilgrim Fathers and so became the style of leadership within many new churches after 1620.

There is only one form of government that is described in detail in scripture – Presbyterian (Titus 1:5, Acts 14:23).

16. You become aware of a regular attendee at your church who is involved in a moral sin. What are the 5 steps of how you handle the situation Biblically?

Discipline has been established not to punish a believer, but to restore them to fellowship after sins of divisiveness, discipline, disruption or sins of the flesh have been made known. There are 5 steps, though the process may be ended at any step if appropriate measures and correction are made.

1. Note and mark those in need of correction.

2. Arrange a private meeting with the offender

3. A second meeting with others present

4. Bring the unrepentant one before the entire church

5. Excommunicate the unrepentant one, denying Christian fellowship.

17. Someone asks you why people do communion at their church. **Describe** the two ordinances Christians observe and the significance of each; **what they mean**, as well as **what they do not mean**.

The two ordinances are baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism has been divinely appointed to allow Christians to confess to others, by immersion in water, faith and identification with Christ. It is an illustration of what has already taken place and in itself, has no saving virtue, nor is it essential for salvation.

The Lord's Supper is a spiritual experience commemorating the death of Christ and its meaning for those in the church. It is a time of heart-searching, confession and restoration. We do not believe that the juice and bread actually become the blood and body of Christ, but are a symbol of them for the Believer.

18. Someone tells you they saw a 'Left Behind' movie and says that we can be taken "at any time". Give them the **Scriptural perspective** on end time events. (To help organize your thoughts, **include** - but do not limit your answer to - concepts of the beginning birth pangs, the rapture, the tribulation, the Day of the Lord, the millennial kingdom and the battle of Armageddon.)

We believe that though we do not know the exact timing of end time events, there are indicators that allow us to know approximately when things will happen and what will happen. We do not hold to a belief that end time events are a mystery that we cannot understand. We hold to a pre-wrath rapture, pre-millennial view and believe that certain things will happen to indicate where we are in the cosmic time-clock established by God. The overview of the end time is also known as the 70th week of Daniel lasting approximately 7 years, beginning when Israel signs a peace treaty with a being later known to be the Antichrist.

The beginning birth pangs take place in the first 3 ½ years of the 70th week and are characterized by various difficulties including wars and rumors of wars, famine, and death.

The period of time from the mid-point of the 70th week until the rapture is known as the Great Tribulation, when the Antichrist seeks to destroy Israel and believers in Christ.

The rapture takes place to cut short the tribulation, and removes all believers in Christ from the earth.

The Day of the Lord is God's judgment upon the Antichrist and those who follow him, and consist of the Trumpet and Bowl judgments.

The Day of the Lord is climaxed by the battle of Armageddon when God destroys the armies of Satan and the earth.

The Millennium begins after the battle of Armageddon and continues for 1000 years where Christ reigns on earth. There is one final battle where those who rebel against God are destroyed along with the final destruction of Satan. This begins a time of Eternity and contain some of the most beautiful promises in Scripture for the Believer (Rev 20,21) A new heaven and a new earth, river of water of life, tree of life, no death, no pain, no mourning or crying.

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