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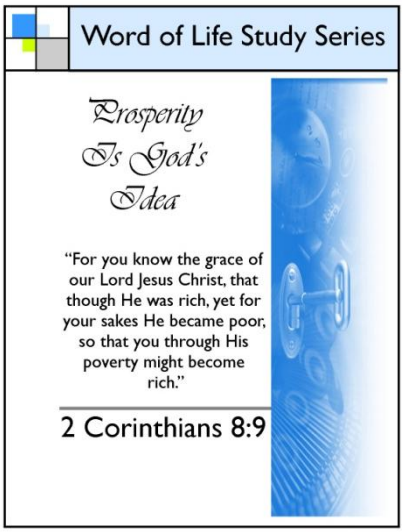

But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.
Deuteronomy 8:18

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Lesson 1
Prosperity Under the Old Covenant

I. Prosperity – The Will of God

Suppose a lady should say, "My husband, who was very rich, has passed away; I wish I knew whether he left me anything in the will." I would say to her, "Why don't you read the will and find out?"

- If we want to know God's will on any subject, let's read His will in His Word.
- The word "testament," legally speaking, means a person's will.
- Jesus is not only the testator who died, He was resurrected, and is also the mediator of the will.
- He is our Representative at the right hand of God.
- It seems that the New Covenant, like the Old Covenant, makes God's people rich!

Proverbs 10:22 AMP
The blessing of the Lord — it makes [truly] <u>rich</u>, and He adds no sorrow with it [neither does toiling increase it].

2 Corinthians 8:9
For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become <u>rich</u>.

If prosperity is in God's will for us, then to say that prosperity is of the past or under the Old Covenant is virtually saying what is the opposite of the truth, that a will is no good after the death of the testator.

- Since faith begins where the will of God is known and God's Word is God's will- **1 John 5:14.**
- Let's study the Bible, open the will and find out what is included in our inheritance in Jesus.

If a billionaire were to appear before an audience of a thousand people, with the announcement that he was **<u>able</u>** to give each one a million dollars, this would be no basis for any faith for a million dollars, because faith cannot rest on ability alone. If he should go further, and say, "I will give **<u>fifty of you</u>** a million dollars each," even then there is no basis for anyone in the audience to have faith for the million dollars. Were you to ask one of them if he or she were "fully assured" of receiving a million dollars from the billionaire, the answer would be, "I need the money, and hope I am among the lucky ones, but I cannot be sure." But, should the billionaire say, "**<u>It is my will</u>** to give all of you a million dollars each," then everyone in the audience would have a basis for faith- it's a sure thing, no more guess work. Everyone would undoubtedly say to the rich man, "Thank you! I'll take my money now."

A. Prosperity Under the Old Covenant

We are going to look at a few examples of financial prosperity in the lives of God's covenant children in the Old Testament. So if the Old Testament Saints had it good materially speaking under their Covenant, how much more should we expect God's will under the New Covenant to be even better.

1. Beware of a Poverty spirit

There has been a scourge to the Body of Christ over that last few centuries concerning religious traditions of men that poverty and godliness go hand in hand.

- That God purposely holds His children back from becoming rich in order to keep them humble.
- The notion espouses that to be Christ like and financially secure, are at odds with each other.

1 Timothy 6:10
For <u>the love of money</u> is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

- Like Paul's thorn in the flesh, religious folks read into this Scripture things that are not there.
- Money itself is not evil, it's the love of it that gets folks into trouble.
- A poverty mentality makes us beggars and whiners, shrinking back in condemnation and guilt.
- We need money to finance the Great Commission and build His Kingdom!
- It's a great witness to the world when God's children are well taken care of.

Deuteronomy 8:18
But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

Proverbs 13:22- A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous.

God does not mind His children being rich, He just does not want us to be covetous and seek things instead of seeking first His Kingdom.

- Generation of Job and Abraham did not know anything other than God blessing them financially.
- One couldn't sell that old lie that God makes us poor in order to stay humble.
- Without doubt, wealth, prosperity and the blessing of the Lord was central in the Old Covenant.
    - **Genesis 13:2; 24:34-35; 26:12-14; Job 1:1-3; 42:10.**

The source of that "poverty spirit" teaching partly came from Zen Buddhism, through the study of Eastern religion by European people at the turn of the 19th century. That philosophy worked its way from there and started a trend of poverty vows and poverty oaths which are not in the Bible nor a part of the New Covenant, but is actually in violation of the Covenant.

- Beware of this Poverty spirit of religious piety to stay humble.
- It's just the devil trying to steal from God's children and keep finances out of God's Kingdom.
- Yet on the other hand watch out for the spirit of materialism, consumerism and greed.
- There is such a thing in the Bible that is called "False Humility"- **Colossians 2:18-23.**
- Poverty is a curse, it's not a blessing; even common sense will tells us that.
- We need to be saying, "I'll never be broke another day of my life in Jesus' Name."
- The cure for a poverty mentality is to renew our minds with God's Word in this area.
    - **Job 36:16; Nehemiah 9:21; Deuteronomy 8:7-11; Psalms 37:25-26.**

Psalms 35:27 NKJV
Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, "Let the Lord be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant."

Now our heads will fight us on this because of the traditions of men in this area, passed down to us from one generation to another. Poverty mentality is this, "I'm not going to have enough, I'm going to run out and I don't know where it's going to come from." It just boils down to faith versus fear.

- Hallelujah, God takes pleasure in the prosperity of His children- **Psalms 35:27.**
- To fear and worry about need is a lack of faith and that is sin- **Romans 14:23.**
- God is our source and He has billions of channels that He can use, if only we will believe.
- God's will for us is that we never experience lack, become behind and have need.
- Let's forget about our past failures: Foreclosures, repossessions and even bankruptcy.
    - **Philippians 3:13-14; Lamentations 3:22-25.**

The Poverty Mentality Test
Let's see how much of this poverty and scarcity thinking is in us. It's not hard for God to get money to us, we are the ones who hinder the flow of God in our lives- it's all up to what we believe.

- Remember, it's not according to the ability of God, but according to our faith.
- Let's get free from small thinking, "Bills will come up, but the money won't be there."
- What is prosperity mentality, "I'll always have more than enough, thank you Lord!"

1) Death grip on things.
- Do we save, keep and hold onto everything? Do we keep stuff long after it's worn out.
- Do we have tons of stuff that we have not used in years and years- like a pack rat.
- Do we struggle to turn things loose. Got to hold onto it, just in case, in case of what?
- It's one thing to be a good steward and avoid waste, it's another thing to be hoarding out of fear.
    - **Proverbs 11:24-25; Acts 5:1-2.**

2) Do we frown on waste?
- Do we always have to clean the plate, and eat it all until there is nothing left like no tomorrow.
- Are we rinsing the shampoo bottle with water three times before breaking out a new one.
- Don't become preoccupied with potential problems, lack or to fall on hard times.
- Now if the Lord leads us to put some money aside, fine, let's not get into fear.
- Do we calculate the 15% tip to the last penny- let's get beyond being stingy.
- Do we consider God filling our cup to running over as wasteful?

3) Are we worried about how much things cost?
- Are we occasionally, frequently or always complaining about how much things cost.
- Commenting a lot about the cost of living, paying taxes and complaining about paying bills.
- When is it ever okay to complain according to the Bible? **Philippians 2:14-16.**
- We really need to eliminate this phrase from our vocabulary- "We can't afford it."
- What about God, can He afford it? Why are we only trusting in ourselves then?
- Saying we can't afford things teaches our kids not to trust God and builds a poverty mentality.
- Let's teach our children to sow and pray the prayer of agreement, and believe God.

Why do so many Christian parents not pray with their children for things, maybe they are afraid that little Johnny or Suzie will be disappointed- obviously we don't believe it themselves- **Mark 9:21-23.**

4) Preoccupied with bargain shopping.
- Are we always trying to get it for less or for free?
- Do we bug the salesperson and wear them down excessively.
- Are we bargaining, bugging, pleading and dickering them down to next to nothing.
- It's fine if people offer us a great deal because we believed God for favor.

- However, we should not begrudge the salesperson from making something on it.
- Do we have a compulsive disorder to collect coupons?
- Beware of asking for Christian discounts, "This is for the church, can't you give us a better deal?
- Do we burn a tank of gas to save five dollars by driving to the other side of town.

Sometimes it can be a good witness to pay full price, be a blessing, and show people God is not broke- be led by the Spirit!

5) Do we think too small, with little or no vision?

- Do we not even bother to look at the highest priced items that are for sale.
- The mentality is that those expensive things are for somebody else.
- If God can't get us to see ourselves in it and receiving it, He can't get it to us.
- Vision is so important, faith needs a target, or a goal- something specific to shoot for.
- Can we see ourselves writing those big checks for the offering- thousands of dollars?

But one may say, "But I'm on a fixed income and I can't!" Quit that cussing, just quit it! Say it out loud, "I'm rich, I'm rich!" **Hebrews 11:1.**

6) Are we critical of others getting blessed?

- Are we bothered by what other people spend, have or do- does it bother us?
- Do we think it is wasteful for someone to spend $10,000 dollars for a watch?
- We don't know if that was something the Lord wanted to bless them with- still a good steward!
- Remember God wants us rich, He does not want us covetous.
- If I sow big, should I not reap big? Should we apologize for reaping big?
- We will never prosper in our life if we have issues with others prospering, and judging them.
- Why should the ungodly have all the best things in life?
- We need to work on more mind renewal with the Word of God.
    - **John 12:1-8; 1 Timothy 6:17; Proverbs 13:22.**

We should be thankful and praise God when we see our fellow Christians blessed- Lord give them more! Why, because there is also plenty for us, we are in the same blessing line!

- We need to become as comfortable to say I am rich as I am saved.

Let's try that right now, say out loud, "My Father's will is that I become rich, having a full supply that just keeps running over with all kinds of good gifts, lots of money and material blessings."

- Now did you cringe when you said that; did your mind throw up some red flags?
- If so, then this teaching series is for you; the Bible has a lot to say about money- not all negative.

But some will say with a pious voice, "Well we should just be content with going to heaven and not expect much in this life; you are just pushing a 'Prosperity' Gospel."

- That's right, it was and still is God's idea that we prosper- **Psalms 23.**
- The table of the Lord is full of healing, life, forgiveness, prosperity, peace, joy & so much more.
- Everything about "Salvation" is prosperous in nature when we examine it in the Bible.
- Our whole problem has been a lack of expectation and according to our lack of faith.
- God's will is that we enjoy heaven here on earth before we get there- **Matthew 6:10.**

Suppose in the name of trying to be humble a believer approaches this banquet table sheepishly, and apologetically; only taking a couple of scoops from the plate of forgiveness and that's it. He looks next to him and sees one of those "Full Gospel" folks, just digging in. I mean, he is taking huge helpings of everything on that salvation table, he just wants to try everything. Meanwhile, our religious brother, looks forlornly at his meager sampling. In jealousy, he begins to chide his other brother for being greedy, arrogant and selfish to presume that he can help himself to the master's table and partake of whatever and as much as he wants.

He tells him, "What, do you think this is all for your benefit? You need to show some restraint brother, first prove your loyalty to the Lord and suffer lack, sacrifice and suffer hunger and pain for the Master- who do you think you are!" Just then the Lord interrupts and says to this pious one, "Who told you to carry the burden of sin and the curse that only I could bear for humanity. Why are you shrinking back from what I have provided for your benefit and cost me everything. It is right and proper to be excited as a little child and jump in and enjoy the Salvation I have richly provided for you."

- Certainly, the Bible teaches us to be content and thankful for what we have.
- I am not promoting selfishness or self-indulgent spoiled disciples of Christ.
- We want to avoid the ditches of poverty spirit and self-centeredness.
- So let's approach the table of the Lord with boldness and confidence and dig into our redemption
- No apologies, no excuses and no denying oneself for the sake of religious piety.
- Be sure to take some to go in order to share it with others.
    - **2 Corinthians 6:1-2; Hebrews 4:16; 1 Timothy 6:17; 2 Peter 1:3.**

God is glorified and pleased when His children enjoy the "good life"- provided for us in salvation.

Psalms 34:8-10
Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, <u>but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing</u>.

I am convinced that many Christians when they get to heaven will realize that religion had cheated them out of so many legitimate blessings from God- Prodigal Son in **Luke 15:25-32.**

- This example reminds me of the reaction of the older brother in the story of the Prodigal Son.
- The older son represents the faithful Christian, who servers the Lord faithfully for years.
- When he/she sees other Christians, who may be uncommitted get healed, it chaffs them.
- They get all bent out of shape and mad, thinking God owes them something.
- The promises of God have been provided as a gift and so must be received by faith.
- Notice how the father pleads with his older son in the story, *"everything I have is yours."*
- In other words, all you had to do was ask, according to **John 16:24.**
- Everything the older brother wanted or needed was at his finger tips.
- It's not the father's fault if his son does not take advantage of what already belongs to him.

2. Examples of Old Covenant Prosperity

The Bible is divided into two divisions: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The more proper name for these two divisions however, is "covenant." So the Bible is really the story of an Old Covenant and a New Covenant. The subject of blood covenant is huge in the Bible.

- Now, in the Bible, the word covenant means a binding agreement between two parties.

- It actually means to "cut covenant." By definition, it is an agreement to:
- **"Cut a covenant by the shedding of blood and walking between pieces of flesh."**
- So the two divisions in the Bible are about an Old Blood Covenant and a New Blood Covenant!
- God cut Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses.

Job had a covenant with God, a life keeping Covenant. He was delivered from his troubles when he finally got his mind on his Covenant instead of his problems- can't get anything from God with self-pity.

Abraham
We see through Scripture that God entered into blood covenant with Abraham as a vehicle for the establishment of a nation of covenant people- prepare for the coming Seed of the woman, **Genesis 3:15.**

- All nations practiced blood covenant because man instinctively sought this relationship.
- The covenant God cut with Abraham was a covenant of strong friendship.
- The New Covenant Jesus cut on our behalf was a Covenant of adoption into the family of God.
- The matter of blood covenant is very pertinent to the subject of prosperity.
- So what are some reasons people enter into covenant?

  Protection- A covenant partner is bound to come to your aid when in trouble.
  Provision- What is yours is mine and what is mine is yours.
  Posterity- Descendants are covered and benefit from the relationship.
  Relationship- A deep love, devotion and respect for each other.

In a covenant, I say, "All my assets are yours. All my money, all my property and all my possessions are yours. If you need any of them, you don't even have to ask. Just come and get it- **1Corinthians 3:21-23.**

- But at the same time, you also get all my liabilities.
- If I ever get in trouble financially, I can say, "Where's your checkbook."
- These terms are referred to as the Law of the Covenant.
- So we stand there and read off, before witnesses, our list of assets and liabilities.
- That is exactly what Jesus did for us, He took on our sin, sickness, poverty and death liabilities.
- In exchange we get His righteousness, healing, riches and eternal life- what a deal!
    - **2 Corinthians 5:21, 8:9; Isaiah 53:4-5; Philippians 4:19; Hebrews 9:15.**

All this is made possible through the instrument of blood covenant. So the reason Abraham was made righteous before God, healed, protected and made rich is the same reasons we are today as Christians- Blood Covenant- **Genesis 13:1-2, 5-6; 15:1; 24:34-36.**

- Abraham was rich materially <u>only</u> because of his covenant relationship with God.
- So if we have a better covenant, than we should be as rich as Abraham was- right?
    - **Hebrews 7:22; Hebrews 8:6.**
- It all comes down to exercising our rights in this New and better Covenant- **Romans 3:3-4.**
- Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for not teaching the people on covenant- **Luke 13:16.**

But some will say, "Yea but I'm not rich like Abraham!" That is not God's fault, it's in the Covenant!

Isaac
Like his father Abraham, Isaac was in covenant with God and was enjoying the same benefits.
Genesis 26:12-14.

- He had a blessing to pass onto his children in **Genesis 27:28-29; 28:3-5.**

Jacob
No surprise that Jacob did very well in the prosperity arena as his father Isaac & grandfather Abraham.

- Jacob deceived Isaac, but he blessed Jacob and sent him away to Laban- **Genesis 27:41-28:5.**
- Jacob stopped for the night and God reaffirmed the covenant in a dream- **Genesis 28:10-15.**
- You know the story, his uncle Laban in Haran deceived him many times.
- However, Laban convinced Jacob to remain for 6 years in order to acquire wealth.

Jacob made a deal with Laban that for his wages, Jacob would take into his possession all the sheep that were speckled or spotted, and every dark-colored lamb in **Genesis 30:32.**

He takes fresh-cut branches of poplar, almond and plain trees, and made white stripes on them by peeling the bark and exposing the white inner wood of the branches- puts them by the watering holes.

- But he only did so in front of the strong females when they were in heat.
- What happens next in nothing short of an amazing faith story- **Genesis 30:38-40.**
- A classic example of calling those things that be not as though they were- **Romans 4:17.**
- Jacob called for what he wanted, spotted sheep, and got it.

Genesis 30:42-43
So the weak animals went to Laban and the strong ones to Jacob. In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, and maidservants and menservants, and camels and donkeys.

- I believe God gave him this insight in keeping with the covenant to make Jacob wealthy.
- Apparently, Laban changed Jacob's wages 10 times- **Genesis 31:7, 10-13.**

Joseph
He was one of Jacob's favorite sons, but as the story goes out of jealousy he was sold as a slave and wound up in Egypt.

Joseph behaved himself so discreetly in the service of Potiphar, and was so led of God, that he found great favor with his master, who gave him the direction of all his affairs- **Genesis 39:2-6.**

- We see again how God gives favor, wisdom and success to those in covenant with Him.
- Even before the 10 commandments were given Joseph, understood that adultery was wicked.
- He remains his integrity and refuses his master's wife- **Genesis 39:6-20.**
- In prison, God made Joseph prosper & have success in everything he did- favor, **Gen. 39:20-23.**
- God gave Pharaoh dreams which Joseph interpreted = becoming second in command.
- A great famine hit the land of Canaan hard, Jacob and his family were greatly affected.
- Through Joseph, the Lord saved Jacob's family from starvation- covenant promise to Abraham.
    - **Genesis 46:2-4.**

The Nation of Israel
Jacob's family upon arriving in Egypt was very small, only 70 in all. Yet 400 hundred years later the decedents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will have multiplied to a few million.

- They were enslaved by the Egyptians as you know in bitter toil- **Genesis 15:13-15.**
- All through the years, the Lord remember the Covenant- **Exodus 2:23-24.**
- Later, God miraculously appeared to Moses to reveal His plan for deliverance- **Exodus 3:6-10.**
- Yet the Lord made sure they received their back wages- **Exodus 12:31-36; Proverbs 13:22.**

The Promised Land
The place is Kadesh Barnea on the outskirts of the Promised Land; at last the people of Israel are on the verge of entering into their land flowing with milk and honey- **Numbers 13:17- 14:12.**

- This is the same land that God had promised Abraham for his decedents to inherit- **Heb. 11:8-10.**
- Moses initially told the folks to just go straight in and take possession of it.
- He told the people not to be afraid or discouraged; enemies of our faith to enter in.
- But the people came up with the fatal decision of sending 12 spies- **Deuteronomy 1:21-25.**

I love how Moses told the people, "Go for it, reach out and take what belongs to you; that which God has graciously promised on oath to your forefathers!"

The Days of King Solomon
The Lord was showcasing the nation to the world as a people who were in covenant with God. This visible display of power, wisdom and great riches, lured people from all nations to find out the secret to their great success- it was the Lord of course- **1 Kings 10:21-27.**

- The glory days of Israel during the reign of Solomon were meant to last for all times.
- Oh the incredible potential they had of blessing and protection- as God's special people.
- Sad to say, the majority of the history of Israel was that of tragedy, oppression and lack.
- Not that God had failed or changed His mind; the people were unfaithful, idolatrous, rebellious.
- They opened the door to Satan, time and time again to come in and kill, steal and destroy them.
    - **Deuteronomy 7:11-12.**
- We learn from their mistakes, so we don't lose out on our New Covenant- **1 Corinthians 10:6-7.**

America has experienced such prosperity and quality of life because it was originally founded as a Christian nation rooted in Biblical principles- **Proverbs 14:34.**

Other nations that are struggling to develop are not short on natural resources and potential; it is the forces of darkness through false religions and ignorance of Jesus that impedes them. However, America is in decline as she abandons her Christian roots.

3. Good Gifts from a Good God

Religious ideology has done much to tarnish/obscure the accurate Biblical view that God is a good God. There seems to be some lingering doubts that our Lord withholds and afflicts us for our ultimate good.

- It saddens me to say that the goodness of God is not fully settled in Christians minds.
- Certainly there are many aspects to God's nature and character.
- He is a holy God who does execute judgment and punishment on the wicked.
- He also disciplines His children with His Word, and we learn from what we reap in life.
- Yes, as Christians we will all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ- give an accounting.

Scripture reveals that the Father God is primarily interested in our character development and spiritual maturity; being conformed into the image of Jesus Christ from glory to glory.

- However, the scope of this teaching material is on the subject of prosperity in redemption.
- Our view of the Heavenly Father has tremendous affect on our relationship with Him.
- The kind of earthly dad often times influences our perception of our Father God.

If we have been intimidated, belittled and unloved by our earthly father, we may be suffering from what I call the "Oliver Twist" syndrome- "Please sir, may I have some more" – gruel soup that is.

- Oliver, due to the circumstances of life suffered from a severe inferiority complex.

When we approach our heavenly Father like Oliver, begging, pleading, groveling and slobbering at the throne of Grace, that is not being humble or reverent- that is really ignorance in light of Scripture.

- So no more fogging up and drooling at the window, outside in the cold- **Hebrews 4:16.**
- As a child of God, you have a right to sit down at the Master's table, boldly and with confidence.
- It's up to us to take possession and claim this New Covenant Promised Land in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 7:9-11
"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, <u>how much more</u> will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

- Natural human love is conditional/selfish, what you can do to please me to get my approval.
- Jesus came and set the record straight that we have a loving, caring Father God- **3 John 4.**
- If God seems distant, than who moved? **James 4:8.**
- God's love is unconditional, regardless of our behavior He still loves us- not always what we do.
- When we sin, our fellowship is broken, not our relationship as a child of God- **1 John 1:9.**
    - **Romans 8:15-17; John 1:12-13; Psalms 68:5-6; Hebrews 13:5-6, 8.**

However, it is more fundamentally true that our Father in heaven loves us simply because we are His children. His love for us doesn't grow or fade based upon what we do or don't do.

With all the absentee father's in our country's homes today, the spirit of "abandonment" runs rampant.

- Jesus Himself said that He would never leave us in **Matthew 28:20; 2 Timothy 2:13.**
- We serve a good God, full of mercy & overflowing with compassion- **Ps 103:1-5;Mk 1:40-42.**
- Jesus cared about all humanity's needs, teaches the Word and meets needs- **Mark 6:34.**
- Body of Christ today needs a greater revelation that God is a good God, all the time.
- Good God versus Bad devil, simple theology that keeps the record straight- **John 10:10.**
- When it pertains to Christians, the Lord is about giving life and the devil is about taking it.

When we mix the two and confuse God with what the devil does alone through trials, tests and temptations, we are in trouble.

Luke 4:18
The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

- The New Birth is the greatest miracle and it opens the door to Sonship.
- So what would good news be for the poor? You don't have to be poor anymore?
- Financial prosperity is God's idea and is part of our redemption!
    - **James 1:16-18; 1 Timothy 6:17-18; Philippians 4:19-20.**
- We need to get our minds renewed- God wants His children, healed, prosperous, blessed!

2 Corinthians 8:9
For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Lesson 2
Redeemed from the Curse of the Law

B. Redeemed from the Curse of the Law

Galatians 3:13-14
<u>Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law</u> by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit."

- Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of the law according to **Galatians 3:13.**
- So what is the curse of the law you may ask? Let's look in the book of Deuteronomy.
- God had revealed to the children of Israel the consequences of breaking God's law which is sin.

God's revelation to humanity concerning the Law of God or the Ten Commandments was significant for many reasons.

- The law reveals the holiness of God & His righteous standard of conduct- **Romans 3:19-20.**
- The law defines clearly right from wrong with no gray areas- **Romans 5:12-14; 7:7.**
- The purpose of the law is to frustrate man, impossible to keep, need a savior- **Galatians 3:19-20.**

Because of the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, we are all born into sin with a sinful nature inherited by Adam in our physical body- **Romans 8:3-4.**

- At the age of accountability we all sin, receive Satan's spiritual sin nature.
    - **Romans 7:9-12; 1 John 3:7-15.**
- Religions of the world are works based systems that fall short of His righteousness- **Isaiah 64:6.**
- Nothing that is man-made can change the heart of man, wicked- **Jeremiah 17:9; Ro. 3:9-18.**
- What man needs is a spiritual new birth, a rebirth of the human spirit- **John 3:3-8; 6:28-29.**
- That is the only way to heaven, born again through faith in Jesus Christ- **John 1:36.**

So the purpose of the law is to reveal God's perfect standard that holds man accountable, define right from wrong, and frustrate mankind in order to look for a savior, Jesus- **Galatians 3:21-29.**

- The curse of the law is experienced when God's law or His Word is broken, we call that sin.
- Sin is a very easy thing to commit and it represents anything less than perfection.
    - **Romans 14:23; James 4:17.**
- When people sin they are a lawbreaker and invoke the curse of the law which is death.
    - **James 2:10-11; Romans 6:23; 1 John 3:4.**
- Manifestation of the work of Satan, either directly or indirectly as a result of the fall of man.

Romans 6:23
For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. Poverty is a Curse

- Death is more of a who rather than a what, and I am not talking about the grim reaper either.
- As far as the Bible is concerned, who is the father of sin or who committed the first sin? Satan!
- Everything that results in death is a product or the handiwork of Satan- to kill, steal, or destroy.
    - **John 10:10; Ezekiel 28:15-17; Hebrews 2:14-15.**
- The only way legally Satan can get his hold on folks lives is through their sin.
- Sin subjects humanity to Satan's dominion, jurisdiction and authority.
- All who sin are in rebellion, and come under his control and ownership and share his doom.

Therefore, all that is bad, sickness, pain, evil, poverty was created by and perpetuated through Satan's kingdom of darkness- **Romans 6:16-17; John 8:34-37**

- Jesus came to take away our sin and ransom us from Satan's tyranny- **Hebrews 9:15.**
- When we confess Jesus as Lord, we changed masters, Satan is no longer our lord- **Romans 10:9.**

Colossians 1:13-14
For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- So the curse of the law and Satan are one and the same.
- The full account of what the devil does to make life miserable for people is in- **Dt. 28:15-68.**
- The specific areas that are affected financially are in **Deuteronomy 28:15-19, 38-40.**
- God does not administer, nor is He the agent of death and the curse of the law.

Reading these Scriptures in the Bible would lead us to believe that God Himself puts sickness and affliction upon His people, for it reads, "The Lord will send on you…"

Dr. Robert Young, was a Hebrew and Greek Scholar (Old Testament was written in Hebrew, New Testament was written in Greek), and the author of *Hints and Helps to Bible Interpretation*. He says in this book, that in Exodus 15:26, the literal Hebrew *reads "... I will permit to be put upon thee none of these diseases which I permitted to be brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that heals you."*

The original Hebrew of these scriptures was in the permissive tense, but because the English language has no corresponding permissive tense, the verbs were translated in the causative tense. The KEY to understanding these different passages of Scripture lies in knowing that the active verbs in Hebrew have been translated in the causative tense when they should have been translated in the permissive tense. So, Deuteronomy 28:27 should have been translated something like, *"The Lord will **allow/permit** these plagues to be brought upon you..."*

- Old Testament Scripture language frequently attributes directly to God what He merely permits.
- Many other verbs were translated in the causative sense in the KJV.
- Isaiah 45:7, "Does God create evil?" Well the answer would be no! **Amos 3:6.**
- God may permit evil, but He does not create it. Adam gave his dominion to Satan- 2 Cor. 4:4.
- There is a vast difference between commission and permission.

During the Passover night in Egypt (Exodus 12:12), the casual observer may think that God personally killed all the first born who did not have the blood applied.

However, when we read down to verse 23, we see that when the blood was applied to a house, the Lord would not permit the "Destroyer" access to that home. Well, who is the "Destroyer" then?

There is a small letter beside the name "Apollyon" in my Bible, and the interpretation for that name is "Destroyer," speaking of Satan- **Revelation 9:11; Hebrews 11:28.**

We see throughout Scripture is that God is passing judgment that allows the destroyer access to people in the Old and New Testaments- lifts His hand of protection.

- God would clearly state the consequences of sin and opening the door to the devil.
- People would forget/ignore this an fall into sin and backslide from God.
- God would send prophets to warn them of impending judgment if they do not repent.
- Eventually God would lift His hand of protection and their enemies would flood in.
    - **Judges 2:14; Psalms 78:61-62; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; 1 Timothy 1:19-20.**
- God always gives people an opportunity to repent-**1 Corinthians 11:29-32; Revelation 2:21-22.**
- God permits it because He is not about to become a willing accomplice to our sin- don't repent.
- Satan could challenge God's justice if sinful man is not turned over to him to be judged.

When the children of Israel had enough suffering and misery, they would repent and God in His mercy and faithfulness would restore His hand of protection, deliver them from the hand of Satan/enemies.

- A vicious cycle of Blessing, Backslidden, Warning, Judgment, Repentance, Blessing…
- Chapter ten of first Corinthians provides warnings of Israel's history- learn from their mistakes.

So we are seeing in Scripture, to be judged by the Lord, is to be turned over to the hand of the enemy.

- And what does the enemy promptly do? Set out to destroy our lives- what he's waiting for.
- Once people have exhausted God's mercy, he pounces on them with sickness/poverty/death.
- We can open the door through the simple admission of ignorance and a lack of knowledge.
- It does not have to be legitimate sin as a cause for attack, as far as the devil is concerned.
- The Bible does not say he can devour anyone he wants to- looking for candidates- **1 Peter 5:8.**
- As Christians the devil has no right to attack us unless we allow him do- sin/ignorance/unbelief.
- If we resist him with the Word, the Name and blood of Jesus he flees from us- **James 4:7.**
- At least for until another time (Luke 4:13), must stay vigilant- **Ephesians 6:18; 1 Th. 5:6.**

Some people think God is quick to judgment, not so, just look at how He dealt with Israel, who were more times than not, steeped in rebellion, idol worship, sacrificing their children to demons and the like.

- Still God was so merciful and longsuffering, He gave them years to repent and warned them.
- However, they would kill the prophets, and what would God do, send them another prophet.

Someone might say, "Well, fine then, maybe God didn't exactly send the poverty on them, but he permitted it," implying that since He permitted it, He had some purpose in it.

- In other words, God really wanted something bad to happen to them, to teach them a lesson.
- That would mean that God was wishing ill will on His people- No! **Matthew 7:11.**
- Sure God works the good **(Romans 8:28)**, but we were reaping what we had sowed.
- Was it God's will for the Children of Israel to wander in the desert for 40 years and die there?
- They missed their Promised Land because of unbelief (Hebrews 3:19)- was not God's will.
- Just because God permits something doesn't mean He has a purpose in it. Satan won that battle!
- In life many of our trials/tests/temptations we brought on ourselves by the choices we made.
    - **Proverbs 1:31; 18:21; 21:23.**
- For example, it was not God's will for Israel to have a king, He permitted it- **1 Samuel 8:4-9.**
- Don't forget the blessing part of the law that God is responsible for- **Deuteronomy 28:1-14.**

2. Requirements for Prosperity

I wish that prosperity was as automatic as breathing, but it is not. When we look at the promises of God in the Bible, we readily see that there are conditions associated with them.

- It is not about deserving or earning the blessing of God; faith/obedience – **Dt. 11:26-28.**
- Knowing the will of God concerning prosperity.
- Renew our minds and get our thinking, talking and actions in line with the Word.
- A lifestyle of honoring God and putting His Word first place in our life.
- Consistent application of the principles of God's Word concerning prosperity.
- The Israelites under the Old Covenant had to obey the whole law.

The Law of the New Covenant is that we walk in love- **Romans 13:8-10; John 13:34.** Walking in love is manifested by obeying God's commands as Jesus said in **John 14:15; 1 John 5:2-3.**

- Everything we receive from God must be appropriated by His grace and through our faith.
- Every promise of God is appropriated in our lives through faith in God's Word.
    - **Ephesians 2:8-9; 2 Corinthians 1:18-21; 2 Peter 1:2-4.**
- As we already established, prosperity is a redemptive right to be claimed by the believer.
- It is not automatically applied to our lives without our cooperation- mixing His Word with faith.

Heb. 4:1-3; Mt. 18:19-20; Mk. 9:23; 11:22-24; Jn. 14:13-14; 15:7; 16:23-24; 1 Jn. 3:21-22; 5:14-15.

- Notice how many times the Scripture use the words "Whatever" and "Anything" you ask for.
- God is the constant that does not change, and His Word never fails.
- We are the variable, in that we may or may not believe, which determines if we receive or not.
- God's Word is God's Will, and that is eternal and unchanging.
- So if we fail to receive, it is not that God changed His mind or made an exception for us.
- Simply missed it somewhere, ask God for wisdom in the matter according to **James 1:5.**

If we need to repent of sin (**1 John 1:9**), judge ourselves (**1 Corinthians 11:27-34**), or get into faith, let's do it- **Matthew 13:57-58; Mark 5:34; 16:14; Romans 3:3-4.**

Roadblocks to Prosperity:

- Willing and Obedient to the call of God and purpose for our life- **2 Corinthians 2:9.**
- Must give with right motives out of love for His Kingdom- **Matthew 6:33; James 4:3.**
- Can't be motivated out of fear or guilt instead of faith and love- **Galatians 5:6.**
- Greed, selfishness and materialism- **Luke 12:15.**
- Dishonesty in the way we do business or our work ethic- **Proverbs 11:3; 13:11; 20:23.**
- Impatience, these are principles that work with a consistent lifestyle- **Heb. 6:12; Galatians 6:9.**

If we continue to honor and obey God and His Word, the money and material blessings will come! It won't happen overnight, but it will come in time if we keep sowing the right seed!

a) Qualifications for Prosperity- Esteem Earthly things lightly, as Temporary

Moses did not put the things of this world first; rather he esteemed the Kingdom of God more than the material world around him- he was looking ahead to his reward- **Hebrews 11:24-26.**

There is a price to following Jesus, but it's not to be sick, oppressed, impoverished and starving to death. **Psalms 37:25.**

Moses gave up worldly fame, prestige and power, but he never lacked any good thing from God- his needs were always met.

- It's not wrong to have money, it's wrong for money to have us- the love of money.
- The Lord wants us to be rich, just not covetous; we can't serve two masters- **Matthew 6:24.**

b) Put God's Word first - Obey His commandments

It is not enough to be obedient or just willing; we must be both willing and obedient in order to qualify for the blessings of God- **Isaiah 1:19-20.**

- Spiritual prosperity comes before financial prosperity- **3 John 2-4.**
- Physical prosperity is a byproduct of spiritual prosperity- **Exodus 15:26; 23:26.**
- Training in godliness must be a priority according to **1 Timothy 4:8.**
- All the blessings of God begin first in the spirit of man- **Luke 17:20-21.**

When we are first rich in the Word, dwelling in our hearts, than all the blessings of God will be added to us. We need to get our minds renewed with the Word so we think in line with the Bible:

- God's will is for His children to be blessed to overflowing.
- Let's not limit God according to the circumstances of life.
- The blessings of God will not fall on us automatically; be diligent in faith and walking in love.
- We have to get our thinking, believing and talking synchronized with the Word of God.

If our thinking is wrong then our believing is going to be wrong. If our believing is wrong, then our talking will be wrong- results in not receiving or receiving the wrong things.

3. Our Authority in the Area of Finances

When we consider the extravagance of heaven, streets made out of gold (**Revelation 21:18**), why should we think that the Christian life is meant to be a "barely get along" affair.

- Isn't it wonderful to know that it was God who created wealth, gold, silver and abundance.
- The Lord who instructed His disciples that God's will be done on earth as in heaven- **Mt. 6:10.**
- Make no mistake about it, money denotes power and influence in the earth.
- Christian piety alone won't get the Gospel proclaimed throughout the earth- it takes money.

Psalms 50:10, 12
For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is mine, and all that is in it.

Haggai 2:8- "The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the Lord Almighty.

Fortunately for us, we have an awesome God who gives us the ability to produce wealth and who transfers the wealth of the wicked to the children of God- **Deuteronomy 8:17-18; Proverbs 13:22.**

- Jesus has restored our lost dominion in the garden of Eden through His redemption-

Romans 5:17 AMP
For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness <u>reign in life</u> through the one man, Jesus Christ.

According to **Luke 4:5-8; 2 Corinthians 4:4** and **1 John 5:19**, Satan being the god of this world system wants to dominate the financial world to fund his enterprises for sin and rebellion.

- The wealth of the wicked is laid up for us so we can funnel it into spreading the Gospel.
- The money we need is down here on earth. It isn't up in heaven.
- God is not going to rain money down here on earth- that would be counterfeiting.
- Whatever we need financially, just claim it in faith in Jesus' Name!
- It's through the hands of men/women that God brings finances into our lives- **Luke 6:38.**

We have a right to claim our needs met, is because Jesus came to the earth and defeated Satan. Jesus has given us His Name, in order to keep the enemy under our feet in submission- **John 15:19.**

- Financial prosperity is part of our redemption and being redeemed from the curse of the law.
    - **Galatians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 9:11; 1 Timothy 6:17.**
- We must exercise our God given authority & enforce Satan's defeat in this area in Jesus' Name.
    - **1 Corinthians 2:4-6; Colossians 2:13-15.**
- We have authority through the Name to pry finances out of Satan's tightly clenched fists.
    - **Luke 10:17-20; Colossians 1:12-13.**

- Concept of, "power of attorney" is foundational in understanding the authority of the Believer.
- It gives another person legal authority to act on behalf of another.
- Jesus gave us the power of attorney, the legal right to use His Name as His Body on the earth.
- Value of the Name of Jesus is based on how much power is backing the Name that it represents.
- All that is invested in the Name belongs to us, unqualified use- **Matthew 18:18-20; 28:18.**
- What Jesus did, He did for us and we enter into His victory through faith in Him and His Word.

Jesus gave us His Name to use in prayer, dealing with demons, ministering healing, water baptism, impartation of laying on of hands.

We have the authority to tell Satan to take his hands off what belongs to us- including our finances.

- We are a good soldier in the occupation army of the Lord until He returns again- **2 Timothy 2:3.**
- Our job today is to simply "mop up" behind what Jesus has already won! Triumphant Church!

We are the triumphant Church, not the warring Church, because we have already won in Christ- just need to enforce Satan's defeat- **1 John 4:4; Colossians 1:27.**

This all has a direct connection to our finances. Since Satan is the god of this world system; Jesus defeated the works of the devil- including poverty and lack- **Colossians 2:15.**

- Since Jesus reduced them to nothing, they can't dominate our finances anymore.
- Why are these dethroned powers still operating- the world does not know they are dethroned.
- Without Jesus, they will be dominated by the devil- **1 Timothy 4:9-10; Titus 2:11.**
- Since they don't know about the Good News, they can't act upon it.
- Church is anointed to preach the Good News to the captives- "You have been delivered!"

Jesus has set you free; just receive it and enter into the rest, provision and protection of God. The enemy has been dethroned and brought to nothing- **1 Corinthians 2:6.** Just accept it by faith.

That is why we just need to claim the money we need- Jesus already became poor to make us rich- **2 Corinthians 8:9.** Command the devil to get his hands off your finances.

Speak the Word concerning prosperity, this releases the angels of God, our ministering spirits to cause the money to come in- **Psalms 103:20-21; Hebrews 1:14.**

- We have to exercise spiritual authority in the area of finances.
- Satan would like to hinder and delay but he can't make it stay, we will prosper anyway!
- No more bondage, don't have to be poor no more; whom the Son sets free- free indeed!
- When it comes to redemptive items like prosperity; already been provided- appropriated by faith.
- We are praying when we should be proclaiming what is already an established fact.

Oh, by the way, the word "might" in **2 Cor. 8:9** does not mean, "Well maybe if it is God's will, you might become rich." Rather it means that it is emphatically God's will for us to be made rich but "it's not automatic and must be appropriated and mixed with faith for it to become a reality in our lives."

- Becoming rich is not up to God, but is up to us to receive individually for ourselves.
- Just as the New Birth was not automatic; had to confess Jesus as Lord and believe in our hearts.
- So don't ask the Lord or pray to God for finances anymore.
- Angels are sent to be our ministering spirits to see that God's Word comes to pass in our lives.

Whatever you need, claim it in Jesus' Name. Say, "Satan, take your hands off my money," and then say, "Go, ministering spirits, and cause the money to come according to the Word of God."

- Many things in this life can only come through other people- money is one of them- **Luke 6:38.**
- The Lord will move upon people to give, but it may be the 17th person who finally obeys.
- This takes time, so let's not reason away that it was not God's will for us to receive.

A Great Confession
"The angels are a working, bringing the money in, by faith we always win. By His riches up in glory, my needs He does supply. My God has never failed me, on Him I will rely. God is prospering, everything I do, by His faithfulness, I know He'll always see me through. Though the enemy may try to hinder or delay, he can't make it stay, I will prosper anyway!"

Put Pressure on the Word, not on People
Mixing God's Word with faith and action will bring results every time. Yet there is a man-ward side and a God-ward side to receiving the blessings of God- remember Isaiah 1:19.

- Remember our obligations to the Word- willing and obedient to mix it with faith and obey.
- Keep your eyes on Jesus and the Word- God is our source and not man- **Hebrews 3:1.**

The Power of Words
Our words set the landmarks of our life; they locate whether we are in faith or fear. They set us free or hold us in bondage- **Proverbs 6:2.** If you have messed up in this area, just repent and believe God.

Mark 11:23 NKJV
"For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but <u>believes</u> that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says."

- Notice in Mark 11:23 that Jesus pointed out to "Say" three times to "Believing" just once.
- When it comes to the operation of faith, we are to make speaking God's Word a priority.
- In order for the Word to work for us, it's got to be both in our mouth and in our heart.
    - **Romans 10:8-11; 2 Corinthians 4:13; Philippians 4:19.**

Folks can say things, but if they don't really believe what they are saying from their heart, it won't work. Nor can they believe something in their heart without speaking it, and expect it to come to pass.

- So let's speak God's Word, the promises of God, victory, success and overcoming in Jesus.
- Let's talk about how wonderful our Heavenly Father is, let's boast in God- how awesome He is.
- Training in godliness dictates that we speak life, not death and defeat.
- Whatever we think on and speak about will build an image of faith or fear in our spirit = receive.
- If we talk about a lack of finances or a bad economy, it will stop the money from coming in.
- So faith for finances works just like faith for healing- just claim it.
- If we'll believe in our heart what the Word of God said and confess it with our mouths = results.

If we talk about our trials, tests and temptations, and how the devil is making our lives hard, and how we are struggling financially, our faith will just shrivel.

Sifted as Wheat

The greatest battle that any child of God will ever fight is the battle of Faith. Which is living out, acting on, practicing in, and putting the Word of God first place in one's life- **Hebrews 4:16.**

- This is where the rubber meets the road for the Christian.
- This is where Satan will come with trials, tests and temptations to challenge what we believe.
    - **Hebrews 10:32-39; Revelation 2:10.**
- Satan wants to discredit our faith in God and try to make us a liar or false- **Luke 22:31-34.**
- What Satan is after is the Word, to steal it out of our lives- he is afraid of its awesome potential.

He will use persecution to discourage us, temptation to defeat us, and condemnation and a feelings of unworthiness to shame us. Anything at his disposal to keep us from living a life of faith and victory.

- If that does not work, he will try to get us to compromise, to slow down, and present distractions.
- Just like in the parable of the sower in Mark chapter four- distracting cares to choke the Word.

A Christian can have 10 miles of tests and trials and not grown an inch unless they act on God's Word in the midst of it and overcome. We are never a failure until we give up- **Matthew 14:26-33.**

Jesus did not coddle Peter in **Matthew 14:31** and say, "It's okay Peter that you doubted me, it's only natural to be afraid of storms, at least you tried- better luck next time."

- Peter received a rebuke for giving into fear, because that is sin.
- Of course the Lord was merciful and saved him when he cried out for help- us too!
- We have to be vigilant not to be judgmental other's faith failures- **Galatians 6:1-5.**
- We have to get the revelation of God's Word concerning prosperity in our own heart.
- Meditate on the Scriptures "Word of Faith," get the Word in our hearts- **Romans 10:5-8.**
- Become fully persuaded in our heart concerning the matter- **Romans 4:21.**
- The "Spirit of Faith" in **2 Corinthians 4:13**, just has to say it once and praises God after.
    - **Mark 11:23-24; Luke 17:6-7.**

Lesson 3
Good Stewards of God's Resources

C. Prosperity under the New Covenant

1. The Grace of Giving

As Christians, when we give, the Scriptures declare that act of giving of sowing financial and material seed as an act of God's Grace.

- The subject of God's Grace is a central theme in the New Testament- expressed many ways.
- In Ephesians 2:8-9, we see that faith and grace go hand in hand- God's grace our faith = mine.
- **2 Corinthians 8:7:** faith, speech, knowledge, earnestness, love and giving.

2 Corinthians 8:7- But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us-see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

a) What is Grace?

Simply put according to the Bible, grace is the power of God at work in us who believe! God's grace is God's Power and is contained in God's Word- the Bible.

- We ingest into our spirit God's power and creative life into our spirit- **John 1:16-17; 6:63.**
- Jesus is the Word of God in **John 1:1**; the Word of God = the Grace of God.
- So God's Grace, God's power for living comes through the Word of God- the Bible!
    - **Acts 20:32; Romans 1:16; Ephesians 3:7.**

The secret to living by grace through faith is simply found by getting God's Word from off the pages of the Bible and into our spirit- that is done by meditating or confessing God's Word out of our mouths.

Psalms 119:11- I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Our spirit is the production center, the fertile ground from which the seed of God's Word is planted and grows to produce after its own kind in a multiplied fashion- **Luke 17:20-21.**

- Let's now look at the "Grace of Giving" in action, in the life of a disciple of Jesus.
- I believe that 2 Corinthians chapters eight and nine, provides an excellent model for us to follow.

b) Giving without Regard to Self

The believers in Achaia were undergoing severe economic times. As followers of Jesus Christ in the midst of a pagan culture, they were persecuted and oppressed- making ends meet was a challenge.

- In the natural, the human tendency for them would be to hoard and hold onto the little they have.
- However, the Grace of God was upon them to such an extent, that they gave generously.

2 Corinthians 8:2- Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity.

c) Giving Beyond our own Ability

When word reached the Corinthian church that their fellow saints in Jerusalem where suffering materially, the love of God that was shed abroad in their hearts (**Romans 5:5**) stirred them to action.

2 Corinthians 8:3-4

For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and <u>even beyond their ability</u>. <u>Entirely on their own</u>, they urgently pleaded with us for the <u>privilege</u> of sharing in this <u>service</u> to the saints.

- Human sympathy conjures up feelings of empathy, but the compassion of God moves us to act.
- The Corinthian believers in Achaia gave "beyond their ability" in the natural
- That is a clear evidence of the supernatural Grace of God in operation.
- They were not asked to give, God moved on their hearts to give, not out of duty but a privilege.
- In the Old Covenant we see by God's grace, an amazing amount of generosity- **Ex. 35:20-22, 29.**
- In **Exodus 36:3-7**, Moses had to restrain the people from bringing more- building the tabernacle.

d) Give as unto the Lord

We are giving unto the Lord as we put our material possessions into the hands of men. This makes it an act of devotion, and so reaffirms the covenant we have with God through Jesus Christ- we are all His!

2 Corinthians 8:5- 6

And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.

- So in order to give by God's Grace, we must consecrate our giving first as unto the Lord.
- The amount is to be in conformity to the "will of God" as He deals with each individual.
- This makes it a personal thing between us and the Lord.
- So when needs come up, our response should be, "How much do you want us to give Lord?"

e) Grace to Give and Grace to Receive

We are talking about divine transactions of sowing and reaping in the supernatural realm, that makes things happen in the natural realm- **2 Corinthians 5:7.**

- Bottom line, it takes God's Grace to give and it takes God's Grace to receive.
- When we sow financial seed, there so much more that is set in motion than what meets the eye.
- Our faith to obey God in giving, releases His grace to return a greater measure.
- This process of giving and receiving, results in a marvelous cyclical growth process- prosperity.
- Giving and Receiving as the Spirit of God leads us will make us rich- **2 Corinthians 9:8-11.**
- Those whom we bless will glorify God; will pray for us to be blessed- **2 Corinthians 9:12-15.**
- But some of us have a special ministry of giving- **1 Peter 4:10; Romans 12:4-8.**

All believers have a Biblical responsibility to give financially and materially to our local church, missions, the poor and the Kingdom of God in general.

2. God Loves a Cheerful Giver

2 Corinthians 9:7

Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a <u>cheerful</u> giver.

- The word "cheerful" is translated in other versions as a "joyous or prompt to do it" kind of giver.
- I love it in the Greek; the original meaning for "cheerful" is being a "hilarious" giver.
- So when the collection is being passed around, we should be doing cart-wheels/jumping around.
- Why, in excitement for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints!
- When it comes to the subject of giving, it all boils down to a matter of the heart- it's fun to give!

Our heavenly Father delights to see His children live out His nature of love and live to give, and lay their lives down for others- what a way to live- **2 Corinthians 9:2; Acts 20:33-35.**

2 Corinthians 8:12
For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.

- God is not looking at the amount, but rather He is looking at the heart.
- It's our willingness in giving that makes the gift acceptable, not the value- **Mark 12:41-44.**
- When we give with enthusiasm as a hilarious giver with a willing heart- Father God is pleased.
- Not so if our giving is out of fear, tradition, obligation or grudgingly.
- Better hold onto that gift until we make a heart adjustment and become willing and obedient.

Isaiah 1:19- If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land…

a) The Chief Expression of Love is in Giving

The greatest expression of love is giving; for God so loved the world that He gave! Being generous and willing to sow into the lives of others and make eternal investments should be second nature to us.

- The nature of sin is selfishness and the nature of God's love is to give- **1 John 3:16-18; 4:9-10.**
- Love for God is to walk in the truth and obey His Word- **1 John 5:2-3.**
- Feelings or emotions are not the chief expression of love.
- The world does not know what love is and even some Christians are still unsure.

3. Eternal Life

John 10:10- The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Jesus came that we may experience the abundant life, but what kind of life was Jesus talking about in the above passage of Scripture. The Greek word translated "life" in this verse is zoe- the God-kind of life.

- Satan came into the garden of Eden to work death into the human race- **Romans 5:12.**
- Jesus came to destroy that evil work (1 John 3:8) and undo what Satan had done- **Romans 5:21.**
- Eternal life is a free gift, it is the ability of God to be His sons by spiritual nature- **Romans 6:23.**
- Eternal life is often misunderstood among Christian as living for ever or just going to heaven.
- There is so much more to Eternal life than going to heaven, and everyone lives forever- where?
- This eternal life He came to give us is the nature of God within us- **John 1:4; 5:26; 1 John 5:13.**

Light stands for development, this God-kind of life has made us new creations in Christ Jesus, and it enriches every area of our life mentally, physically and financially.

1 Corinthians 1:5-7- "For in him you have been enriched in every way — in all your speaking and in all your knowledge— because our testimony about Christ was confirmed in you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed."

First of all, we must understand that if you are born again through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, then you have eternal life NOW- John 6:47, *"I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life."*

- We possess in our spirit man the very life and nature of God Almighty right now!
- If we have the nature of God, we will do the things that the nature of God would do.
- That is why we are called children of God- **1 John 3:1; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 5:1.**
- We must yield ourselves to this new nature in us by renewing our minds with the Word.
- That is how the good stuff inside us, becomes real and apparent to others around us.
- As I have said already, "Before we can prosper outwardly, we have to first prosper spiritually."

This eternal life in your spirit will also rise up and influence your mentality and physical being if you learn how to walk in the light of it through faith in God's Word- **2 Corinthians 4:10-11.**

- In the Old Testament we know of successful/prosperous people- **Joshua 1:6-9.**
- How much more should we as children of God succeed and be the best in every station in life.
- All creative ability is in the born again human spirit, that is where God's nature resides.
- Therefore, our human spirit is the fountain out of which all the creative energy flows.

It is a remarkable thing that when a man/woman receives eternal life through the new birth, and allows it to develop in him, his creative energy is at once awakened. It changes his mental processes. It quickens his sense of perception; in reality sin makes us dumb, ignorant and bound!

- Man apart from God has no means of gaining knowledge except through the five senses.
- The limitations of sense knowledge are apparent to every thinking individual.
- Natural man cannot know beyond the contacts that he makes with the five senses.
- Then revelation knowledge comes to their rescue through the new birth.
- The door is open for supernatural understanding to empower us in our decisions, to prosper!
- We must learn how to walk in the light of eternal life to enjoy the fullness and the reality of it.
- However, it is not automatic, our faith in God's Word draws it out into our lives and works!

II. Good Stewards of God's Resources

A. God's Plan for Stewardship

The subject of stewardship is significant all throughout the Bible; since the charge God gave Adam in the garden of Eden. Father God entrusts us with His resources, commissions us to do His work, holds us accountable and rewards us for our faithfulness- **Genesis 2:15; Matthew 25:14-15.**

- How we use the gifts God has given us will be revealed at the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- How faithful we have been in discharging the grace God has given us into others.
- I love how He gives us such rich purpose and meaningful labor in this life- naturally/spiritually.
- As Christians we are all in the family business together- leading people to Jesus.
- Humanity receiving "Eternal Life" is our end game, final objective, the Great Commission.

So being a financial steward of God's resources means channeling the money God places in our hands towards His Kingdom work as He directs us- **2 Corinthians 5:20-21; Luke 14:23; John 3:36.**

Therefore, we should be excited and embrace this commitment to work in the Master's vineyard and harvest field- **2 Corinthians 6:1-2; Luke 10:2; Matthew 20:1-2; Colossians 3:23-24.**

- Stewardship comes down to two simple principles: Obedience and Fruit!
- Jesus gave many illustrations of this through His parables as recorded in the Gospels.
- Obedience comes down to a choice as we exercise our free will; fruit is the result of choices.
    - **Matthew 21:28-31; 21:33-34; Luke 13:6-9; 1 Thessalonians 1:3.**

Our Father wants to see us mature spiritually as we take steps of obedience to do His will, but He also wants a return on His investment and receive the fruit or results in our lives and what we do for others. Financial stewardship requires obedience & fruitfulness- let's show Him the money when He asks for it!

- We need our minds renewed, that it all belongs to God in the first place- we are caretakers of it.
- Our joy in life is tied to our willingness to be a channel for God to flow through and bless others.
- If God can get it through us, He can give it to us- **Proverbs 11:24; John 15:1-8.**

1. What we have we have Received

"Everything I have belongs to God" is a Biblical perspective that runs contrary to world thinking. "What's mine is mine! I worked for it, earned it, paid taxes on it, so it's now mine to do what I want!"

- Yet we are forgetting that everything we have has been given to us- **Deuteronomy 8:17-20.**
- God created the material world and us and without Him we would not exist- **1 Cor. 11:12.**
- In our western culture we have to be on guard against materialism, consumerism & idolatry.
- Everything we have that is good is from God; we have received all these things for a purpose.
    - **John 3:27; James 1:16-18; 1 Corinthians 4:6-7.**
- Our Father wants us to be rich financially, to be a greater blessing- just not covetous.

Please don't misunderstand me, the Lord will bless us with good things in this life to enjoy, we just have to keep our priorities right and seek first His Kingdom and serve Him faithfully with His resources.

2. What is Required of a Steward

The Lord requires of us as stewards in His Kingdom, is to be faithful, trustworthy, willing and obedient- with the things that He entrusts to us- **Matthew 24:45-51; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5.**

- In reality it's a lot easier said than done!
- The selfish impulses, world system & the devil are all pushing us away from godly stewardship.
- it takes deliberate and decisive actions on our apart, through faith in God's Word to succeed.
- Certainly the subject of stewardship has broad applications to the believer in Jesus Christ.
- Everything that we do as unto the Lord should be done with excellence and integrity.

Jesus calls a servant faithful and wise who has been put in charge of things, and is a good caretaker, responsible and diligent- **Matthew 25:40.**

- I am appalled at the attitude of so many who give less than their best to God.
- For many of us if we would get fired from our job if we worked that way as we do for the Lord.
- There is such a lack of respect for the things of God in the Body of Christ today.

A tremendous motivation that we have as stewards of God's resources is looking forward to the day when we as believers, must stand before Jesus Christ at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

- On that great day of accountability, we must all give an account of our stewardship on earth.
    - **Acts 24:15-16; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10-12.**

B. Eternal Investments

I came across a statement that was used as a slogan at a church years ago that has always stuck with me, "People Matter to God."

1. Investing In Others

- Our lives are rich with purpose- to live for eternity by making investments in others.
- Consider the parable of the rich man who hoarded for himself- **Luke 12:16-21.**
- The prosperity of God is not just about having money and stuff- **Luke 12:31-34.**
- The parable of the noble man is significant to us today in how we live- **Luke 19:11-27.**

Then the noble man gave them a very important instruction in regards to the money he gave them- "Put this money to work. Trade and invest the money I have entrusted to you so that it grows.

- The noble man represents Jesus; when He returns we will have to give Him an account.
- The first servant had multiplied his master's money ten-fold- given 10 cities to rule.
- The second servant multiplied his mina into five and so he was made ruler over five cities.
- The third servant did not bother to invest it, he just sat on it- not too wise.
- The master called him a "Wicked" servant, because of his laziness, and by giving into fear.
- This was no idle story that Jesus made, it applies to us; Judgment Seat of Christ!
- Based on our faithfulness and diligence to multiply God's grace and goods in the lives of others.

The only thing that lasts for eternity is what we do for others for God's glory here and now on planet earth. Not just winning souls, but serving in children's ministry, visiting those in jail, feeding the poor, supporting our local church, giving to missions, and those doing the work of God- **Ephesians 5:15-17.**

- Once we get to heaven, there is no coming back, we can't win another soul or sow into others.
- At minimum, we should be a salt and light to the world around us, and be doing something.
- The goal of our lives here on earth are to hear those beautiful words someday in heaven,
    - "Well done, thou good and faithful servant!"
- The more we know about these truths, the more accountable we are to obey them.

There is no prosperity without investing both spiritually and naturally- not just money, but our whole life- **Peter 4:10-11; Luke 12:47-48; 1 Timothy 6:12-13.**

- It takes faith to make deposits and it takes faith to make withdrawals- **John 4:38.**
- We lay hold on eternal life here and now by enjoying the first-fruits of our salvation in this life.
- Christians who are making regular deposits in the Kingdom of God over the years is great!
- But need to learn how to make withdrawals; it's not just giving but also receiving- **Php. 4:15.**

To say, "Well God knows I have needs" is the same as saying the "Bank knows I need to pay my bills, so whatever they will for my life is what I will receive." Whose responsibility is it to make a withdrawal and pay our bills, the bank? No! Neither is God responsible for making withdrawals from our heavenly account to meet our needs in this life.

- Folks read into **Matthew 6:32** as though it's not necessary for us to ask God for anything.
- Jesus is just saying that God knows and has made provision, but we still need to ask for it.
    - **Matthew 7:7-8; 21:22; John 16:24.**
- When we claim our need met, we are making a withdrawal- we are receiving by claiming it.
- So the blessings of God are not automatic, but require that we walk in love and release our faith.

Learning how to reap or make withdrawals is just as important and necessary as it is to sow seed. We need both in order to get the goods we need in order to further God's Kingdom on the earth.

2. Taking Care of the Poor

Right now at the time of this writing, around 17% of American families living under the "poverty threshold" and roughly 40% falling below the poverty line at some point within a 10 year time span.

- Most Americans (58.5%) will spend at least one year below the poverty line- between 25 – 75.
- Yet the curse of poverty is harder felt in most other countries around the world.
- While Satan is the god of this world system, poverty will continue to be a scourge of humanity.
- Poverty is a curse and it brings ruin, hardship, suffering and in many cases death to humanity.
- The curse of the law is three-fold: Poverty, Sickness and Death.
- Since we have been redeemed from the curse of the law, prosperity is part of our redemption.
- If it's part of our redemption, than it's also a part of the Good News Gospel message.
- The Gospel of Jesus Christ, contains the good news concerning deliverance from poverty!
    - **Acts 5:20; Galatians 3:13-14; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Luke 4:18-19.**

Folks who think that we are insensitive or brash for sharing the prosperity message in the poor in this country or around the world are suffering from case of spiritual political correctness.

- God's Word works no matter where it's appropriated by faith.
- The anointing on the Word of God breaks every yoke of bondage- **Isaiah 10:27 KJV.**
- Before Jesus ministered to the sick and oppressed, He taught them the Word.

Material Needs Met
The Bible has a lot to say about taking care of the poor, but there is a right and wrong way about it. Jesus was not so heavenly minded that He was no earthly good. Jesus provided for people in many tangible ways in the Gospel accounts.

- Turned the water into wine- **John 2:1-11.**
- Jesus told Peter to catch a fish, take a coin out of its mouth to pay their taxes- **Mt. 17:24-27.**
- Jesus fed the 5,000 one time and 4,000 folks another time- **Matthew 16:8-10.**
- Peter lets his nets down for a huge catch- **Luke 5:4-10.**

- However, these solutions were only temporary, but God still cared about them- **John 6:26-27.**
- The Lord wants us to grow up and learn to receive through faith- not looking for handouts.
- Which is better to give a person a fish or teach them how to fish?
- The Biblical pattern for ministering to the poor seems to be two-fold.
- Certainly provide tangible gifts of food, clothing and shelter.
- Our main objective is to get them saved and learn how to believe God and receive for themselves
- Helping the poor (orphans, widows, homeless etc) is a responsibility for the church- **Mark 14:7.**
- **Proverbs 10:15; 14:31; 19:17; 21:13; 22:9; 22:22-23; 28:27.**

James 1:27
Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

- Careful not to go from one extreme to another when dealing with the poor in our society.
- We could just ignore them and pawn them off onto the government to take care of them.
- Only meet material needs without getting to the root of the problem and get the truth into them.

We can't show favoritism on behalf of the poor to the exclusion of the financially well off who are impoverished in soul and spirit. Jesus made numerous references to taking care of the poor.
Matthew 19:21; 25:34-40; Luke 7:22; Luke 14:12-14, 21-24; James 2:14-17.

- The early Church made it a priority to look after the poor among them and around them.
    - **Acts 6:1-4; 9:36-39; 24:17; Romans 15:25-27; Galatians 2:9-10.**
- In **Galatians 2:9-10** Paul specifically drew attention to his ministry to the poor as a top priority.
- But how can we provide for the poor adequately if we ourselves are struggling financially?
- Sadly, many churches are not teaching a Gospel that includes the prosperity message.
- There are reasons why people are struggling financially and find themselves homeless and broke.
- Often times, poverty is perpetuated from one generation to another- a poverty mentality.
- Bad decisions and environmental influences all contribute to their present station in life.
- **1 Thessalonians 5:14-15; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15.**

Proverbs 21:17
He who loves pleasure will become poor; whoever loves wine and oil will never be rich.

Proverbs 23:21- For drunkards and gluttons become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags.

Proverbs 10:4- Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth.

Proverbs 20:13
Do not love sleep or you will grow poor; stay awake and you will have food to spare.

For me it seems like Christianity 101 to reach out and minister to the poor in order to lead them to Christ, and help them grow in the truth that will make them free- **James 4:17.**

- Even if they don't respond to our ministry, we did our job and they have no excuse.
- The Church can do such a better job than any social problem; since deal with the heart of man.

One great advantage that local churches provide is that they are able to pool resources together in an organized fashion to serve as outreach ministries to the community.

- It's amazing that Christians in our own churches are struggling and need our faith, love, support.
- The Lord has charged us to make it a priority to take care of our own- **1 Timothy 5:3-15.**
- It's important that the poor put in something for the Lord to multiply- **Mark 12:42-43.**
- When we give to the Lord it's a memorial offering to the Lord- **Acts 10:1-6; 1 Timothy 6:17-19.**

Lesson 4
Beware of the Love of Money

C. Beware of the Love of Money

With any blessing from God there is a real and present danger that abuses can take place for selfish gain. The Bible provides us with many admonitions to guard against things like, greed, covetousness/idolatry.

- Material blessings are no less susceptible to be abused- **Proverbs 30:7-9.**
- Yet that is no reason to go to the other extreme and purport a "Poverty Gospel."
- My goal with this teaching series is to be fair and balanced on the subject of prosperity.
- Spiritual maturity is to find oneself in the middle of the road, avoiding the extremes.

Psalms 34:8-10
Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

- Godly contentment is such a wonderful virtue that stems from the peace of God.
    - **Psalms 23; Philippians 4:11-13; 2 Timothy 2:3-7.**
- God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness according to **2 Peter 1:2-4.**
- What a rest we have in Jesus to come and dine at the Master's table.
- We don't need to be desperate, living in survival mode to scratch out a living- survival mode.
- God is our source, so we can trust in His precious promises to produce an abundance for us.

Psalms 37:25-26
I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be blessed.

The Lord wants us free from the love of money, no longer subservient to the god of materialism.
1 Timothy 6:6-10; Matthew 6:24.

- Worry and fretting about our life is nothing more than a lack of faith that doubts God's Word.
- We need to get a revelation of the Father's love for us- **Matthew 6:25-34.**

Romans 8:32- He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

- Things are temporary and the things of this life are to be used and enjoyed- **1 Corinthians 7:31.**
- Never to illicit our devotion and attention away from seeking first His Kingdom- **Mt. 16:24-26.**
- If God can get things through us, He can get things to us.

1. Beware of Greed and Covetousness

A simple definition of greed is: "The excessive desire to acquire or possess more (especially more material wealth) than one needs."

Luke 12:15- Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed ; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

My definition of rich is to have a superabundance, a full supply, where my cup runs over, in order to place me in a position to be a blessing to others and help further God's Kingdom.

- The Bible calls greed, "Idolatry" in **Colossians 3:5.**
- God wants His children rich, not covetous. Don't have to be millionaires to have a full supply.
- Material things are a means to an end, to bless others and help further God's Kingdom.
- Isn't it interesting that "Covetousness" is declared in the Bible as the 10th commandment.

The very need for this commandment points out a fundamental flaw to sinful human nature; it's never satisfied, always lusting for more- **Exodus 20:17.**

- This aspect is seen more clearly in the principle of "Diminishing Returns."
- Always look for that next bigger and better high- **James 1:14-15.**
- If we are unable to enjoy contentment at any station of life, than we are covetous- **Psalms 10:3.**
- Freedom from covetousness is one of the great difficulties and roadblocks to Christians.
- Greed is a temptation that affects the rich, poor and everybody in between.

We need to identify areas of covetous, greed or materialism, and seek to eliminate it from our lives.

- Paul in **Philippians 4:12** had to "Learn" to be content, he was not born with it.
- That does not mean that we just settle for perpetual lack in our lives.
- It means that during periods of lack we do not postpone our contentment.
- So we continue to rest in God and rejoice in the Lord.

Hebrews 13:5-6
Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

- Remember that Jesus said where our treasure is, that is where our heart will be.
- So if we are continually invested in others and the Kingdom of God- that is where our heart is.
    - **Colossians 3:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; Philippians 2:4, 20-22.**
- The Christian experience is about continually keeping all forms of selfish at bay.
- There are some things in the financial realm that we have to die to- not allow money to control.
- Jesus is not going to allow prosperity to destroy us if our heart is not yet ready to handle it.
- Proverbs 30:9, *"Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord ?'"*
- Will we remain faithful to the Lord and keep on serving Him when He makes us rich.
- Will we keep on seeking first His Kingdom; character makes riches a blessing, not a curse.
- We can add things to ourselves, but that is not the same as the Lord adding them to us.

Proverbs 10:22 NKJV- The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it.

- If some things mean too much to us, we have to die to it- **Luke 16:10-13.**
- The test if something has us or not is if the Lord were to ask us to give it away, could we?
- When we die to it and allow the Lord to add it to us, then it will be a great blessing to us.

Did you know that the Lord is a jealous God? The Lord does not care if we have millions of dollars, as long as there is no question as to who is first, and nothing is ever a close second.

If He is really our Lord and not just our Savior from hell, than we will honor Him with our life and always put Him first- **Colossians 3:3-4; Matthew 10:37-39.**

- Nothing is this world, spouse, kids, career, hobbies etc. are to take the place of Jesus- He is Lord.
- When material things are always on our mind, working for it, serving it – we are idolaters.
- We must always be willing to let it go when asked to- **Colossians 3:5-9.**
- The first principle of prosperity is to seek first His Kingdom- **John 17:3.**

Psalms 35:27 NKJV
"Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, 'Let the Lord be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.'"

2. The Prosperous Soul

3 John 2 NKJV
Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

So when the Bible states that our "Soul" must prosper it is specifically talking about our spirit and soul first prospering before our physical body prospers, and also our checking account- **1 Th. 5:23.**

- People who make fun of the "Prosperity" message in the Bible are making fun of God.
- We are not following some Christian fad or Charismatic ministry- this is Jesus talking.
- So we should not back off from it or make any apologies for it because it's Scripture.
- And if it's Scripture than it's God's will to be obeyed; not so would be sin then.
- So then it would be disobedience to shrug off the fact God wants us healed and prosperous.
- Not just for our own good, but so that we can be in a position to be a blessing to others.
- Being sick and poor would be a unloving thing to do, since it hinders us from serving others.
- Someone might say, "Well I can't help it!" The Bible says we can, we're redeemed from it.
- So if we are not healed and prosperous it's our fault and it's sin- **Romans 14:23; James 4:17.**

This puts a whole new angle on the subject of healing and prosperity when we look at it as a command from God to obey as His perfect will for our lives- Lord, be it unto me according to your Word!

So folks who mock these truths concerning the principles of faith are making fun of what Jesus said. **Mark 11:22-24; John 14:12.**

Now the key to understanding how we receive healing and prosperity from God is found in the phrase "just as your soul prospers" according to **3 John 2.** This is the key to our lives prospering!

- Sadly, not many of us understand what it means for our soul to prosper- **Colossians 3:16.**
- Our souls prospers through the Word of God and from prayer and fellowship with the Father.
- Being faithful to gather with other believers and submit ourselves to good teaching ministries.
    - **Colossians 1:10-12; Ephesians 4:11-13.**

2 Peter 1:2
<u>Grace and peace be yours in abundance</u> through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

- As a result, we begin to know and understand the will of God for our lives- **Romans 12:2.**
- God's Word is God's will and faith begins where the will of God is known.
- Our minds become renewed and our spirit man built up in the Lord = soul prosperity.
- Therefore, doors begin to open for our body and finances to prosper as a result.

Even though it's God's will for our lives to be blessed, it's not automatic. We have to do these things in order to get ourselves into a position to receive. Our prosperity in the natural realm is a byproduct of prospering in our spirit and the renewing of our minds with the Word- **John 8:31-32; Eph. 4:14-15.**

- Did you know one powerful way to receive revelation knowledge from God is to ask for it.
- Praying the Epistle prayers- **Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-14; Eph. 1:17-21; 3:14-21.**
- So as we dig into God's Word, the Spirit of God imparts spiritual wisdom and revelation.

- It takes more than just giving to prosper; operating in the sheer mechanics of giving.
- Our giving could be out of fear that something bad is going to happen if we don't.
- It could be out of desperation at the last minute, obligation/ritual, greed/wrong motives.
- Some are following the crowd out of impulse or even feeling sorry for someone when they give.
    - **Psalms 127:1; Proverbs 19:2.**

- New Covenant giving is always done by faith, with a motive of love- willing and cheerful heart.
- Must get free from small religious thinking, being stingy, a wrong mentality of poverty thinking.
- Jesus redeemed us from the curse of poverty, sickness and death- **Dt. 28; Galatians 3:13-14.**
- I'm saved, I'm healed and I'm rich, now! Not going to be, hoping and a praying- it's mine now!

We walk by faith and not by sight, we walk by the finished work of redemption that was already accomplished in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ!

- We were made rich when Jesus was made poor- **2 Corinthians 8:9.**
- Not ours until our soul prospers in the area of prosperity and receives a revelation of it.
- We need to be agreeing with what God's Word has already said- it's a settled matter.
- We walk by faith and not by sight, regardless of how things look, god's our source- **Ro. 4:17.**

People are still doing that with healing, "I'm not going to believe I have something that I don't feel that I've got. I'm just being real and stating it the way it is." Yea, real carnal & really controlled by feelings!

- If God says we are rich & have a full supply, than we are to agree with what He has already said.
- To say I'm saved, healed and rich is right in line with Scripture.
- Why, because these are redemptive realities in the Bible for us to enjoy today.

So if the Bible says I am rich according to **2 Corinthians 8:9** just as I am saved according to **Romans 10:9**, why do people make such a fuss about it? One word- RELIGION!

- Through faith in God's Word, the provisions of the Kingdom are drawn out of our spirit.
- They are manifest in our lives through the Word of Faith and Spirit of Faith principles.
- **Luke 17:20-21; Romans 10:8-10; 2 Corinthians 4:13.**

Sense Knowledge vs. heart Faith
Sense knowledge is based upon physical evidence. One believes in what they can see, hear or feel. Baby Christians, untaught in the Word are seeking for someone who can pray the prayer of faith for them.

- Simple confidence in the Word is never sensible to the natural man who lives in the sense realm.
- They only believe what they can see, hear or understand- Thomas kind of faith- **John 20:24-27.**
- Doubting is to question, hesitate, a reluctance to trust God's Word- **Luke 24:38-39; James 1:6-8**
- Beware of trusting in man/natural means instead of the Lord- **Psalms 118:8; Jeremiah 17:5-8**
- Faith is giving substance to things that sense knowledge cannot understand or see.
- It lifts one out of the realm of the senses and into the realm of the recreated human spirit.

There is a big difference between doubt and unbelief. Doubts are in the mind, but unbelief is of the heart. Doubt is unsure of the promises of God stemmed from a lack of knowledge, unbelief is a stubborn refusal to believe the promises of God when knowledge is plentiful.

- This is what kept the children of Israel out of their Promised Land.
- Doubt wavers at God's Word, but unbelief rejects God's Word.
- The cure for doubt is to continue to meditate on the promises of God- **Colossians 3:16.**
- The cure for unbelief is repentance- **Isaiah 1:19-20; Hebrews 3:7-19.**

- We are not made rich automatically, just because the Bible says we are.
- Is it true in and a present reality as revelation truth in our spirit for us to act upon.
- We have to meditate on these truths (I am rich in Christ) continually- speak it out of our mouths.
    - **Joshua 1:8; Psalms 1:1-3; Romans 4:18-22;**
- Until we believe them in our heart and become fully persuaded.

Psalms 107:2 NKJV
Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy

Joel 3:10 NKJV- "Let the weak say, 'I am strong.'"

- Let the weak say I am strong, the sick that they are healed, and the poor that they are rich!
- Never say "I Can't, I Never" but "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!"

That is where God's incorruptible seed (1 Peter 1:23) gets planted and grows; in the womb of our spirit, the good ground of our heart- Luke 8:11, *"The seed is the word of God."*

We become impregnated with God's Word, and in due season we give birth to the manifestation of the promise of God in our lives.

- I would rather hear a person cuss than speak doubt and unbelief.
- Faith speaks the Word in the face of contradiction.
- That is faith and it please God when we boast in Him and His Word- **Mark 4:26-29.**

When we get five big bills in the morning, our response should be, "I'm rich, I'm rich, Jesus became poor to make me rich!"

- Are we the lost or are we the saved; which group do we identify with?
- Are we the sick or are we the healed, are we the poor or are we the rich?
- We can't be both, only one or the other- the choice is ours.
- I am not the sick, trying to get healed, I am the healed already.
- It's just the devil trying to put symptoms on me to mess with me, but I am resisting it- I'm healed
- Just because we sin does not mean we identify with the lost- repent and keep running your race.
- Continue to walk with God and say, "I am the saved, I am the righteousness of God in Christ."
- Are we then broke, are we the poor, the middle class or are we the rich?
- Our wealthy future begins right now in our heart and in our mind, if we will embrace these truths
- I am rich in Jesus' Name according to the Word of God!

If we believe it, we will be excited about it. If we are not excited about it, than we have not accepted it yet; we are not convinced or fully persuaded. Just keep meditating on the promises of God.

- When the light of revelation dawns on your spirit, then you will be fully persuaded/excited.

There is no doubt from Scripture that it is God's will that we excel in the grace of God concerning giving and receiving- **Hebrews 4:15-16.**

2 Corinthians 8:7
But just as you excel in everything — in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us-see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

2 Corinthians 9:8
And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that <u>in all things at all times, having all that you need</u>, you will abound in every good work.

- I like 2 Corinthians 9:8 as a complete definition for Bible prosperity!
- Biblical prosperity covers all our needs all the time and then some!
- In the final analysis what we teach on the most is where our faith is the strongest.

As we grow spiritually and develop our love walk by living according to God's Word (**1 John 5:1-5**), we will exhibit holiness, sanctification and Christ-like character in our lives.

- This is what it means for our soul to prosper; a prerequisite for us to prosper financially as well.
- Training in godliness is profitable for all things in this life and in the life to come.
- Our physical, material, financial prosperity depends on our spiritual prosperity!
    - **2 Chronicles 26:5; John 8:31-32; 15:7-8; 2 Timothy 3:16-17.**

1 Timothy 4:7-8
Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

- Not all up to God or to us, but together we can see God's perfect will come to pass in our lives.
- A God-ward side and a man-ward side to appropriating the promises of God- **Ephesians 2:8-9.**
- It's up to us to take God at His Word and mix it with our faith in order to release His Grace.

1- We have to honor God by walking in the light of His Word that we have, not just some of it
2- We don't give primarily to get, that is secondary; we want to see God's Kingdom advance
3- Laziness or being idle is condemned in the Bible- all hard work brings a profit
4- Living in excess- greed will make money our god and hold us in bondage
5- Poor management- not using basic budgeting skills and financial planning

When people get into trouble with credit cards and act extravagantly, that's the flesh; that's not the devil. Just say no and discipline the flesh!

- We often wonder why is it so hard to believe God, read the Bible, pray and praise Him.
- We are surrounded by currents of fear, doubt and unbelief, so subtle.
- Satan does not want us to prosper, to make life miserable for us- discredit our testimony.
- The enemy also to keep the church poor and unable to fund missions.
- Trials- to sink our faith, turn on God, and walk away from Jesus because it's too hard.
- What the enemy meant for evil, God turns it around for good, only when we stand on the Word.

The good news is that this constant resistance builds our faith muscles as lifting weights and aerobic exercises does naturally. What the devil throws at us to destroy is, we overcome it through faith in God's Word and become stronger spiritually in spite of it- **James 1:2-4; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.**

Lesson 5
God is our Source

III. The Laws of Giving and Receiving

When it comes to sharing the Word of God with people, only give to them what they have a capacity to appreciate and receive. The more we treasure, esteem, and value the Word of God, the more revelation we will get from the Holy Spirit.

- The Bible talks about having ears to hear- **Mark 4:23-25.**
- Don't give precious things to people who have no appreciation for them- **Matthew 7:6.**
- Giving is the chief expression of love- **John 3:16.**
- If He has to, He will use a dog bringing a paper bag full of money to our front door.
- Just as the Lord used the ravens to feed Elijah in the desert- **1 Kings 17:4.**

We need to obey God when He deals with us, because we may be the only one around at the time for God to use. Even though God deals with people, that does not mean they will obey Him.

A. God is Our Source

The Scripture does not say that God meets our needs according to our job, government, parents, inheritance or the economy- **Colossians 1:27; 2:2-3.**

1. Abundance Mentality

- Just because people have stuff does not automatically mean that God gave it to them.
- Folks can get things through debt, by stealing and fraud.
- For most of us, the Lord is not satisfied with where we are at in the financial arena.
- Sure, He is pleased that we are making progress, but there is so much more to God's economics.
- We need to develop a mentality of abundance.

Beware of always telling your children, "We can't afford that," because it builds a consciousness of lack and limitation in their hearts.

- Instead, encourage them to believe God for it- **Mark 9:23.**
- Teach your kids to sow and give, and then pray the prayer of agreement with them.
- Our kids need to learn that mom and dad is not their source, but God is!
- Certainly our job is a channel, but God uses many channels to bring provision to us.
- That does not mean that we live recklessly, charge up debt and call that prosperity- it isn't.
- God's prosperity brings financial freedom, not financial bondage to greed or materialism.

Haggai 2:8- "The silver is mine and the gold is mine, declares the Lord Almighty."
Psalms 50:10- "For every animal of the forest is mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills."

His resources are unlimited and are inexhaustible- we need to meditate on His ability and resources.

Whatever we look to in the time of crisis and when the time of need arises, indicates what we consider to be our source- whether it is our job, credit cards or God!

Some will say, "Well maybe I can do some more overtime or get a second job" but that is not the first place we should look. We should pray and seek God for direction.

- In ministry, the congregation is not the source for the church to receive finances.
- Pastors can't let themselves look to the people, but to God.
- If we are really in faith as God as our source, we will put no pressure on people- none!
- Neither should we be putting pressure on our employers for a raise.
- If we are in sales, putting pressure on people to buy a car is not looking to God as our source.
- We don't have to resort to the world's tactics of pressure/manipulation to seduce people to buy.

God will honor our integrity; not just our effort but the blessing of the Lord that makes the difference.

It's the devil and the flesh that pushes us to act hastily rather than in peace, and be led by the Spirit of God and the timing of God.

- Jesus is the master for providing from unexpected sources, because He gets all the glory.
- Remember how Elijah was fed by birds at a brook during the time of famine.
- Next, the Lord sends him to a widow woman with a handful of food and starving to death.
- I am sure Elijah's flesh would have preferred to be led to a wealthy person's house.
    - **1 Kings 17:1-15.**
- The Lord is not limited by our circumstances- **Proverbs 3:5-6.**
- He provided for the children of Israel in the desert with manna and water from a rock.
- The Lord even caused quail to fly in so they could have some meat to eat on occasion.
- The Lord may ask us to do things that does not fit with conventional wisdom.
- Just make sure it's the Lord, there is no shortage of foolish actions done in the Lord's Name.

When Peter needed tax money, the Lord told Peter to go fishing; that was probably not what Peter was thinking they needed to do- **Matthew 17:24-27.**

- What is a million dollars to God, how small would that be?
- The main hindrance to our prosperity is our limited thinking.
- In the beginning we work to generate seed to sow- **Ephesians 4:28.**
- In time as the Laws of Increase kick in, we can start living off of the return of our giving.

God wants us to get to a place where we only have to live on a small portion of the abundance that we have, with plenty left over to give to other ministries and individuals.

Remember, our job is not our source. Other people should be able to look at our job, and then notice the high standard of living we are enjoying, and wonder- how does that work?

- And it's not because we are up to our ears in debt!
- God is our source and He uses many avenues to meet our needs.
- We don't have to see or know how God supplies our needs.
- Just sow, believe, claim and receive the provision of God- **Mark 4:26-29.**

There is plenty of money around in the world. God knows how to get it to us, but we have to get our eyes off the limitation of our jobs, economy and this and that.

2. Jehovah Jireh Our Provider

There are those who believe in a historical Jesus, who came and died and rose again, but they are still lost because they have failed to receive Him as their personal Lord and Savior- **Romans 10:9-10.**

Mental Assent
In our culture of knowledge and surfing the information highway of the world wide web, what it means to believe with the heart can be quite foreign to us. So what is mental assent?

- One who mentally acquiesces to truth in their head, but do not believe it in their heart.
- They claim to believe the Bible from cover to cover, but are not fully persuaded in their heart.
- In the time of crisis, he/she turns to the world for help or despairs and cries in self-pity.
- Mental assent is one of the most dangerous and deceitful enemies to a life a faith.
- It's a really self-deception, when people acquire facts, thinking it's faith from the heart.
- It looks and sounds so religious, but it's a fake. Many people going to hell because of it.

1 Corinthians 8:1-3
We know that we all possess knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. The man who thinks he knows something does not yet know as he ought to know. But the man who loves God is known by God.

The Word of Faith principles consists of a process of hiding the Word in our hearts through Bible meditation- speaking the Word out of our mouths continually.

- Don't just say God is able if He wants to. We all know God can, but is it His will?
- When it comes to receiving from the Lord, He requires something of us- faith in His Word.
- Abraham offering Isaac is a great example of faith- **Genesis 22:7-8, 13-14.**

Genesis 22:14
So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided."

- "The Lord Will Provide" is a Hebrew redemptive Name of God- Jehovah Jireh.
- The original language goes even deeper- "Jehovah will see to it."
- Nothing takes God by surprise- **Matthew 6:31-33.**

In other words, He sees the needs that we have ahead of time and sees to it that they are met when the actual need arises. I wonder where that ram (sacrificed instead of Isaac) was at 5:00am that morning when Abraham got up. The Lord saw to it in advance that this ram was available just in time.

- Just because we made our bed hard does not mean we have to sleep on it.
- If we get on our face and repent (turn and change) of what got us there in the first place.
- We can ask the Lord for mercy, grace and help- the Lord will turn our financial situation around.
- The devil will try to lie to people and get them to believe that they have to pay for their mistakes.

There are many Scriptures about the mercy of God where people sinned and missed it and God restored and delivered them in spite of what they did in messing things up!

One could say, "Well we sinned and made our bed, so now there is no other choice but to go to hell." Thank God for the mercy of God, there is a choice for mankind to die in their sins or not.

3. Faith Rests on More than Mere Ability

I want you to notice that according to the Bible, when the Lord fills our cup, it's not just half full in order to keep us humble. What does Psalms 23:5 say, *"my cup overflows…"*

- Well that just sounds wasteful, extravagant and excessive!
- He must not care if it runs over the top and onto the table and all over the floor and out the door.
- When you have as much as God has got, you don't care about spilling it over!

Psalms 23:5-6
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

God is our provider, He sees our needs and prepares beforehand, and He provides superabundantly! **Psalms 65:9; 68:10; 132:15.**

Ephesians 3:20 AMP
Now to Him Who, by (in consequence of) the [action of His] power that is at work within us, is able to [carry out His purpose and] do superabundantly, far over and above all that we [dare] ask or think [infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, hopes, or dreams].

- Faith works 24-7 in the unseen realm, bringing substances to the things we hope for.
- The incorruptible seed of God's Word will not return to Him void when spoken from the heart.
- Not just making confessions, obedience that sets in motion God's increase for future provision.
- So we hear the promise, believe it in our spirit and then obey it = results.
- We can't just decide to be rebellious, selfish, disobedient, run from God, do our own thing.
- But if we choose to believe God and obey Him = greener pastures & still waters- **Psalms 23.**
- God is not obligated to support anything that is not His plan or His way.

If we get on the wrong road, we can find ourselves in places in life where we do not need to be- called the hard way.

- It is not okay to worry about bills or our finances or anything for that matter.
- Worrying over our finances is not being a "Responsible" adult- makes the problem worse!
- To worry and fret is to say I'm on my own without God and without hope- is that true?
- When the Bible tells us to do or not do something, the grace (power) is inherent in the Word.
- It's amazing how people rationalize and justify their doubts and lack of faith.
    - "Well I am just human. I just have bad days like everyone else."

It is one thing to say we have had bad days, it's another thing to say that we are expecting to have bad days- prophesying and calling for those things to happen in the future.

- When tempted to fear, we can resist it in Jesus' Name, speak the Word in the face of problems.
- Just keep obeying God by casting your bread upon every wave- **Ecclesiastes 11:1!**
    - John 14:1, *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me."*
- Right now God is preparing our dwelling place in heaven- it's going to be off the chart!
- When we get to heaven, we won't have to wait in a half-way house for its completion.
- God is not behind, backlogged and trying to catch up. When we get to heaven it's prepared.
- He knows the end from the beginning, and He is always ready- **John 14:2-3.**

Read the Will and Know
If we want to know God's will on any subject, let's read His will in His Word. Faith begins where the will of God is known and God's Word is God's will- **1 John 5:14-15.**

- The principles of faith work the same for all areas of the Christian life.
    - Born Again, Filled with the Spirit, Healed, Needs Met, Being Led, Protected etc.
- However, our faith for each individual area must be developed.
- So a Christian can have strong faith for healing, but little faith for prosperity.
- Just as in the natural, we can have a strong upper body, but our legs are like tooth picks.

Just as they meditated on healing Scriptures until the Word of God was built up in their spirit to produce strong faith for healing, the same must be done concerning Scriptures on prosperity.

Just because we were strong in faith concerning a particular Bible topic ten years ago, if we just cut that off and stop talking about it, quit thinking and feeding on it, listening and reading about it, we will begin to get weak in that area.

If we get in great physical shape, but then decide, "that's enough," and stop working out, what happens?

- If we only major on one area of the Bible, we will be weak in other areas.
- The key to spiritual maturity is to have a balanced diet.
- Certainly there will be times when the Holy Spirit wants us to major on a specific area.
- But never at the long term exclusion of other areas indefinitely.
- It's good to hear familiar subjects covered over and over again = Faith = **Romans 10:17.**
- I get amused when Christians say, "Well I heard that before."
- Oh really, if it's old to you then it was never real to you in the first place.
- Spiritual things never get old, when Bible revelation gets in our heart, we don't mind hearing it.
- **John 14:26; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; Philippians 3:1; 2 Peter 1:12-15.**

4. The God of Abundance

Our biggest challenge (a good thing) concerning giving, is when we hear about needs that we ask the Lord, "do you want us to pay all of it or half of it?" **2 Chronicles 16:9.**

- If we are not excited and expectant about God's provision, than we are not in faith.
- It is not God's will that we be so strapped in debt that we are not in a position to be a blessing.
- Before God can turn our situation around, we have to change on the inside in our heart and mind.
- We have to get excited about God as our provider so we can become a big giver.
- So God is not only my savior, my healer, but He is also my provider.
- Being fully persuaded that God takes good care of me, never lack or want for any good thing.
- When God's children are not well provided for, it is a negative reflection upon the Lord.
- Just as if we are always sick, the world wonders what kind of a God do we serve.
- Yet if we are sick, poor and oppressed it's not Jesus' fault- it's ours!
- If we have not mixed our faith into the Grace of His Word through His precious promises.
- That is why many unbelievers are not excited about becoming a Christian- poor example set.

If our own natural children went around in ragged clothes, all sickly and malnourished, what kind of a reflection upon us as parents would that cast?

Jesus is the Good Shepherd. When the world looks at the condition of the Lord's flock, it is a direct reflection upon Jesus as our Shepherd.

Christians who are broke, sick and depressed, tell their family and friends that God put this on them in order to discipline them or keep them humble. Why would that want to get saved?

- They have as much sense not to want a shepherd like that, who steals and kills from them.
- Twisted theology has taught people that the worse we look, the more glory it gives Jesus.
- As God's ambassadors, our lives should display all the grace of God in our lives.
- To be the salt and light of the world carries with it may aspects of representing Jesus.
- Making the Lord attractive- spiritually, mentally, physically and materially.

However, when everybody else's kids are sick and yours are healthy. When others around you are struggling financially, but you are getting promoted. A wind storm comes through and tears everything up around you but your property is undamaged. After enough of this, people begin to ask questions as to why you are enjoying such an abundant life.

- If folks are smart, they will want to have that in their lives too- come to Jesus- **Romans 2:4.**
- Sure it may be for selfish reasons, but what else can sinners do? **Romans 5:6-8.**
- There is nothing wrong with wanting to escape hell and have an abundant life on earth.
- We want our local churches to have the reputation of taking care of its own- **John 13:34-35.**
- This kind of Agape love is like ringing the dinner bell in a love starved world- **Acts 4:32-37**

The greatest advertising to the world for Jesus is found in how we love and take care of one another.

- The Early Church was all about feeding and taking care of their own first before reaching out.
- The Church has left the social programs of feeding and caring for people up to the government.
- When it could be a tremendous soul winning avenue and displays the true nature of Christianity.

Romans 8:32
He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Jesus if the Good Shepherd, if He would give His life for us, what is stopping Him from giving us a new car, get us out of debt, and pay off our house so we can be a greater blessing.

John 10:10 AMP
The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).

- Let's look at the word "Abundantly" in John 10:10 in the Greek.
- It literally means, super abundant in quantity and superior in quality.
- By implication according to Strong's Concordance, it means "Excessive."
- They attribute excess to greed, the love of money and living like there is no tomorrow.

But whose idea was it in the first place to be excessive about creating this vast universe and this wonderful world that God has made with all of its innumerable varieties of plant and animal life.

- God is the author of excess and extra; the devil has come along and perverted it for selfish ends.
- God is into excess, why is it that Christians have developed such a keen aversion to that word.

Let's not throw out the baby with the bath water, and go to a religious extreme of vows of poverty and living without in the name of piety- that is just Biblical ignorance.

The original Greek puts abundance in **John 10:10** as "Superabundance" so what does that look like?

- For starters it is always having more than enough- super sized!
- Well we know that anything that is abundant and plentiful is a good thing.
- Apparently with God, abundance is not good enough in His economy.

Thayers Dictionary puts "Abundance" as: "Exceeding the measure or rank or need. Over and above, more than what is necessary, super added, superior, extraordinary, surpassing uncommon, superabundance, excess."

- The Lord sees ahead as our provider and prepares all we need in advance.
- So that the provision is there when we get there- **Psalms 23:5; John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 1:20.**
- Jesus is the same Good Shepherd in **Psalms 23** as He is today for us- **Hebrews 8:6; 13:8.**

If God is the kind of God some people construe Him to be, there would be only three types of flowers with only three kinds of colors- light gray, medium gray and dark gray.

- They claim to hold a conservative view of God, but I call that narrow, restrictive and limited.
- God's creation reflects the nature of God- excessive in its varieties/textures/smells and sounds.
- Heaven, streets made of gold, walls made of precious jewels and gates made out of pearl.
- If we made our driveway out of gold and our garage door out of pearl- just like Father God.
- God is intense from every angle- He is not a God of mediocrity.
    - **Daniel 7:9-10; Ezekiel 1:22-28; Revelation 4:2-6; Hebrews 12:28-29.**

We sing that song, "Our God is an awesome God" and then leave church wondering how we are going to make our next mortgage payment- do you see the great contradiction here?

What we need to do is connect the dots, God is awesome in creation, in heaven and also wants to be awesome, excessive and superabundant in our lives as well.

- Means to talk and act like God is our provider. The Lord is my Shepherd and I shall not want!
- God has never been into bare necessities, just enough to meet our basic needs as He wills.
- When the Father's children start getting rich & wealthy as He is, why do folks throw such a fuss?
- Actually it is the devil who gets all bent out of shape- it chaffs him.
- Money means power and influence- the devil does not want the Church of Jesus to prosper.
- The more we prosper, the more it leads to his demise in this world- fulfill the Great Commission.
- The devil wants us broke so we can't do anything for the Kingdom.
- Our financial prosperity siphons money from the world system into God's Kingdom.

Consider Job
Satan came to God to press his rights in order to gain access to Job. The devil hates righteous God fearing people, especially rich righteous people- Job was a powerful man of influence for God.

- Every person in the Old Testament who had a covenant with God was extremely wealthy!
- Job had a covenant with God, but through fear he opened the door to the devil- **Job 1:10; 3:25.**

In Job 1:8, *"Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job?'"* The Hebrew literally says, **"Have you set your heart upon my servant Job?"** God was not daggling Job out in front of the devil saying, "come and get him."

- Here we see a rare glimpse of the operation of the High Court of Heaven.

Satan began to accuse Job and question his commitment and motivation. He began to present a case to God twice- once against his possessions and secondly against himself personally. What we see happening here is Job got judged and turned over to the hand of the enemy.

- Let's not accuse God of evil, He is not the author of it.
- He only permits it as a last final act of judgment when folks have exhausted all of God's mercy.
- God is not the author of tornadoes, cancer and other calamities- those are acts of the devil.
- The word "Devil" means slanderer and that is what he tries to do with God's Name- **Gen. 3:1, 4.**
- People begin questioning the faithfulness of God. Why did He allow this to happen.
- There is always a reason and we may not always know it; God is always good- **James 1:16-17.**
- Let's just settle it in our minds that it is never God's fault, He is never to be blamed.
- Just because people fail to receive does not mean that God had failed- **Romans 3:3-4.**
- This was the trap Job found himself in- blamed God for his troubles- **Job 38:2.**
- God's superabundance for our lives is not wasteful, it is to bless us to be a blessing.

I have never read in the Bible anything like this, "My children get as broke as you can be, be as sick as you can and be as depressed as possible, for it glorifies me." Yet that is how many ministers preach it.

5. More where that Came From

It's a lot easier to give things away to people when we have the mentality that it's not ours in the first place, and that there is a lot more where that came from; knowing that God is an excessive God.

- The reason people have trouble turning loose of things; doubt that God can restore it back.
- There is this scarcity mentality, like survival of the fittest- us four and no more.
- The reason we don't give as God asks us to, a lack of faith, get the money to us to pay bills.

If He fed millions in the desert with manna, multiplied fish and bread to feed thousands, turned water into wine, multiplied oil and flour for a widow woman during famine, who's to say that He can't continue to provide us with an abundance- **Ephesians 3:20-21; Luke 6:30; 12:13; 1 Corinthians 6:7-8.**

Our God is a net breaking, ship sinking, cup running over, too much, excessive provider that does exceedingly abundantly above all that we can ask or think kind of God! **1 Corinthians 7:29-31.**

Sadly, many Christians believe that when they give, it's just gone, they will never see a return on it until they get to heaven- that is not all there is to it though- **Colossians 1:11-12, 27; 2:2-3; 2 Peter 1:3-4.**

- Yes, we are laying up treasure in heaven, but we are also sowing seed here on earth for harvest.
- Not just the amount we sow, but a superabundance- 30, 60 and 100 fold return!
- Paul's material support was apparently up and down like a roller coaster.
- Folks withhold or delay in their giving, God has to find another channel who will obey Him.

When we are going to live by faith concerning finances, there may not always be a steady consistent stream of finances. Why is that? It's not God who is the variable, but man, because people do not always give and obey God like they should in the area of finances- **Luke 6:38; Philippians 4:10-13.**

The Poverty Test: Do we keep our faith during times of lack?
The Prosperity Test: Do we keep our faith in plenty?

When folks experience lack over a period time they can become offended at God; perceiving that He had abandoned them. It's never God's fault; it's foolish and prideful to blame God for our problems.

Doing God's perfect will for our lives is not as difficult as you may think. God is not unjust, He does not set us up for failure, making it impossible to meet His expectations- **Dt. 30:8-16; 1 John 5:3.**

- If we want God's perfect will for our life, we have to do God's perfect will for our life.
- God just expects us to walk in the light and revelation of God's Word that we have.
    - **Luke 12:48; 16:10; 1 Corinthians 4:2; Philippians 3:16; Colossians 4:17; 3 John 4.**
- If there is anything we know we should be doing, but are not doing it, that is sin- **James 4:17.**
- This is true for all areas of the Christian life- health, prosperity, ministry, the anointing.
- So often we are living so far below where we should be in receiving God's highest and best.
- We disqualify ourselves through a lack of faith, disobedience or ignorance- **1 Cor. 9:24-27.**
- We hang onto weights & sins in our lives; not doing the perfect will of God- delayed obedience.
    - **Matthew 14:29-30; Mark 4:18-20; Hebrews 12:1-3; Galatians 6:9-10.**

If we would just be quick to forgive, quick to repent and quick to obey, we would be positioned to receive God's perfect will for our lives- **Acts 26:20; 2 Corinthians 4:18.**

The enemy uses all kinds of distractions, cares and anxious circumstances and thoughts to get our eyes off of Jesus and the Word.

- The devil fights us so hard to get us lukewarm, marginalized and minimized.
- He does not want our testimony to be seen by others shining brightly.
- Health, prosperity, and a strong family is a witness to others- being a salt and a light.

Back to Philippians chapter four. Notice that Paul stated that his contentment and faith in God was not moved by whatever his present financial position was at the time- **Philippians 4:11-13.**

- He maintained his joy and peace regardless of the circumstances of life.
- Consider Job, he remained faithful even though he blamed God falsely- **James 5:11.**
- Thank God for things and for material stuff, but it won't make us happy in and of themselves.
- Only true satisfaction & joy comes from the ultimate pleasure of knowing the Lord- **1Pt. 1:18-19**
- Certainly our Father God gives us things to enjoy- **Matthew 7:11; 1 Timothy 6:17.**
- But like kids we become so bored with new toys- **1 Corinthians 7:30-31.**
- We are spirit beings, and only God can fill and satisfy our hearts- **John 15:5-6; Acts 17:28.**
- We cannot enjoy the material things of this life unless our hearts are right with God.
- God is our source, the goal and prize of life, material things are secondary, just to be enjoyed.
- We can use things and they can serve us instead of the other way around which is idolatry.

Psalms 34:19- A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all…

Psalms 34:19 NKJV- Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all.

- Paul said in **Philippians 4:14** that financial lack was trouble and an affliction.
- Those are things the Lord has promised to deliver us out of.
- In **Philippians 4:15-17**, Paul brought up the matter of "Giving" and "Receiving."
- Note, this is not just a matter of knowing how to give but also how to receive.
- There is nothing wrong with expecting to receive, we just don't give with that motive only.
- We should want to receive so we can give more in return.
- In **Philippians 4:17**, "Account" that Paul referred to, was their Kingdom of God Account.

Lesson 6
Different Levels of Faith for Prosperity

6. Your Heavenly Account

Question, do you know what the balance is in your checking and savings accounts? What about in your investment accounts or 401K. So what about your heavenly account?

- If you are a born again Christian, you have an account in the First Bank of Heaven!
- Paul wanted the accounts of the Philippian Christians to increase and abound.
- The money and material gifts that Paul received = "fragrant offering" & "acceptable sacrifice."

It was sweet smelling money my brother and sister, not filthy lucre or evil money, but fruit that was pleasing to God- **Philippians 4:18; Genesis 2:10-12.**

- By virtue of creation, God created all the gold, silver and costly stones and He said it was good!
- Money is based on gold and precious metals and God told man it was good- Genesis chapter 1.
- The devil peddles doctrines of demons in deceiving the Church into thinking money is evil.

The KJV uses the term "Filthy Lucre" which is talking about acquiring wealth through ill gotten means. The NIV translates it the "Love of Money" which addresses the greed aspect of materialism or idolatry.

- Money in and of itself is neutral, it is what we do with it that can be good or bad.
- God works through people to bless us- jobs, gifts etc. He also gives us strength, wisdom, & favor

Deuteronomy 8:17-18
You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so <u>confirms his covenant</u>, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

- Acquiring wealth is a good thing, provided the motives are right.
- We take care of our families and we get to enjoy the rest.
- It's okay to want to enjoy the blessings of God as long is that is not the number one reason.
- We honor God first by giving as the Spirit and the Word direct us for His Kingdom- **Mt. 6:33.**
- The Lord wants to expand our vision and increase our insight in these matters.
- Our receiving is in proportion to the vision we have of God brining increase into our lives.

We may be satisfied and get by with a little, but the greater question is this, is God satisfied and pleased with us just getting by in life? If He is not, then there is a problem!

- We have already established that it is His will for all His children to be rich.
- To have a full supply, and have no room to receive all His blessings.
- So are we going to obey the will of God in this matter?
- God needs channels for His provision to flow through; it's not all for us.
- God has plans, big plans for His Kingdom and it requires money.
- Imagine all of the Body of Christ, being in positions to give into the Lord's projects.

There is a danger when Christians hear a verse like Philippians 4:19, thinking they know what it all means. Perhaps we do know some things about it, but not all things, just a part. No one has exhausted all the light from Scripture.

- Paul was rejoicing in the Lord over a big offering he had received in **Philippians 4:10.**
- So is it okay to rejoice when God blesses us in this way- absolutely?
- Do you have to be an occupational minister to receive a gift from others? No!

Some folks get the idea that this is just for preachers, no this is for all God's children who are operating the principles of giving and receiving.

I have noticed in my own life and in Scripture that the Lord provides windows of opportunities that need to be acted on because they will only remain open for a season.

- Most of the time it is not going to be convenient, but it's a test of obedience and faith.
- If we miss that opportunity there is no guarantee that we will get another chance.
- Likewise with giving into God's Kingdom, we need to take opportunities when they arise.
- Sometimes people need our help right now, but later on they won't need it in that way.
- It's not always going to be convenient when folks need our help- **Ephesians 5:15-16.**
- If you perceive a prompting to give, don't feel compelled that very second to give.
- Check with the Lord first to confirm, but don't want to wait too long and miss God.
- I have found that if it is God today, it will be God tomorrow; if the confirmation continues, give.
- That little test of time rules out emotion and impulse; generally we have a day or two to test it.

I have made it a practice that whenever a church offering is being taken, to always put something in the offering, even if it was only $1.00.

- It demonstrates an attitude and willingness to live to give.
- We should always look to the Lord whenever a need is presented; what He would have us do.
- There will be times where He will not direct us to do anything at the time- should not feel guilty.
- The key is to be led by the Holy Spirit, by faith and in love.

When the Lord directs us to give money that we had already ear marked for some other bill or item, the temptation is to first check if there will be some other means to recoup that money. "Well I have my house payment coming up in a week, so…"

- That should not be the prerequisite to our giving, how will I make the money up.
- The real issue is whether the Lord is dealing and prompting me to give.
- What the Lord is looking for is obedience and trust in Him as our source- get the money on time.

Our giving should not solely be in response to them telling us a sad story, going under or out of business. It is one thing to present a need, it is quite another to use the world's devices of manipulation, guilt and pressure to squeeze money out of others.

- If they are trusting in God to begin with, they would never resort to such tactics.
- They would simply present the need and look to God to meet it- no pressure or strings attached.
- Many times when large bills come up, we don't even have half of what we need anyway.
- So if God is dealing with use to give, let's trust God with the little we have to multiply it.
- Better to have seed in the ground, obeyed Him to give, expecting a harvest- **Matthew 14:15-21.**

We don't want to give out of fear; feeling that we will come under some sort of curse if we don't give.

- Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law according to **Galatians 3:13.**
- The New Covenant way is to give out of love and joy as the Spirit leads us.
- We give first and foremost because we love God and recognize that everything comes from Him.
- Second we want to see His Kingdom grow and expand for the sake of the Great Commission.
- Third, we give because we want to be blessed so we can give even more to God for His glory.
- We give out of faith and love in obedience to God's Word- **1 Samuel 16:7; Acts 20:35.**

As we are led to give in the local church, missionaries, ministries, other believers and the poor, our account will be credited- **2 Corinthians 9:12-15; Philippians 4:14-17; 1 Timothy 4:8.**

- If we fail to give as the Lord is prompting us to, we are delaying our prosperity and increase.
- So many people have good intentions concerning the matter of giving.
- They tell themselves that when their ship comes in, win the lottery, or inheritance they will give.
- So we are really talking about pride, they won't give until they can give a "Big" offering.
- We won't get to that place of giving big offerings until we start with small ones first.
- Remember our faith grows only as we act on God's Word.

If we are only in a position to give $1.00 a month to a ministry, start there! In a few months you can give $10.00, and then another month after that $20.00. Before you know it, you will be giving $1,000 offerings and $10,000 offerings if we will just start with the $1.00 a month- **Ecclesiastes 11:1.**

- That is how the principles of seed time and harvest and sowing and reaping work.
- The idea is to start with something small and allow God's principles of increase to multiply it.
- The issue is not about how much we have; being good stewards of what we do have right now.
- Let's humble ourselves and admit where we are currently at in our faith and in our finances.
- To have a harvest coming in consistently, we need to be sowing something consistently.

Jesus is not saying we can't have a savings account, money market account or investments, but we do have to watch out that these financial vehicles do not become our source.

- What Jesus is saying is that there are no safe investments on earth- **Matthew 6:19-21.**
- So as we give, and invest into God's Kingdom, our spiritual account will be credited.
- Folks will say that we can't touch that until we get to heaven- like a 401K at retirement.
- Thank God for all the rewards when we get to heaven, but we need God's provision on earth.
- We cannot find a better return, than to invest into God's Kingdom.
- The only catch is that it takes faith; no monthly statement from heaven- account activity/balance.
- From the natural, some Christians think when they give that money, it's just gone.
- However, if we have faith and we know the truth, it has been credited to our account.

Just remember, in dealing with our kingdom account, it takes faith to put it in and it takes faith to draw it out, but it is real. According to Jesus who are we laying up treasure for in **Matthew 6:20?**

- If it's for ourselves, is that wrong? Well not according to Jesus.
- Concerning the rich man in **Mt. 19:16-24**, wanting to receive eternal life- what did Jesus say?
- Now was Jesus telling the man to give all his money so he would never see it again?
- Was Jesus asking the man to take a vow of poverty? Having nothing for the rest of your life?
- Jesus is not saying that in order to serve Him, you can't have any money- no!
- Yet people have read these things into this passage of Scripture.

Jesus was providing an investment opportunity that was out of this world. To multiply what he had on earth beyond measure in his heavenly account (that he could access while on earth), and follow Jesus.

He was telling him, "I want you to transfer your wealth to my system. To exchange or convert your worldly goods into Kingdom currency." **Mark 10:17-23.**

- Unfortunately this young man did not grasp what Jesus was offering him.
- Jesus was not telling him that he could not have anything to serve Him.
- For a number of reasons, the young rich man's faith was in his stuff and needed to be in Jesus.
- Next, Jesus was telling him that his possessions would be safe in his heavenly account.
- So he could have access to it in order to do all the things he will need to do in following Jesus.
- Realize it or not, but it takes money to do kingdom work in the earth.
- For all the giving to the poor, sending out missionaries, building churches- that all takes money.
- Remember the parable of the Samaritan man who took care of the injured man- took money.

If God leads us to pay for all the medical bills of someone today in a serious accident who had no insurance, that takes a lot of money- **Luke 10:30-37.**

- So where is all that money going to come from? Making withdrawals from our Kingdom account
- Every time we put in a offering, we are making deposits,
- Over time it gets multiplied, and then it is available for future withdrawals.

There is an illusion or false security that worldly wealth is secure. Jesus was trying to convey that to the rich young man- **1 Timothy 6:6-8; 1 Corinthians 7:31.**

- He could have gotten ill and spent all his money on doctors and never got any better.
- It's not impossible for rich people to get saved, Jesus just said it was a challenge.
    - **Mark 5:25-26; 10:24; 1 Timothy 6:17.**
- Peter brought to Jesus' attention that they had left all to follow Him- **Mark 10:28-30.**
- Jesus stated they would receive in this life one hundred times as much- not just in heaven.
- This Kingdom account we have in heaven is for this life and the life to come.
- Even persecutions- not everyone is going to be happy about God prospering you!

Unfortunately, many Christian folks have added a verse to this passage that is not there, when Jesus said that we are laying up treasure in heaven, "and thou cannot touch it until thou are dead."

- Let's look again at the having the right motive when it comes to handling money.
- The context of **1 Timothy 6:3-12**; false teachers, using godliness as a means to financial gain.
- Paul was talking about the love of money, in context with ungodly men, not to be like them.
- Money does not make us godly or ungodly, it is the manner in which we use it and acquire it.
- **Proverbs 23:4; 28:22; 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Corinthians 2:17; 1 Corinthians 5:11.**

Paul addresses those who are rich in this world, and instructed them not to put their hope in wealth.
1 Timothy 6:17-19; Proverbs 13:7; 30:8-9;

From a worldly point of view, Kingdom principles does not make common sense. That's because it requires a revelation of the truth to accept it- **1 Corinthians 2:12-16.**

7. Borrowing

Remember, it's not material things that is the problem, but the preoccupation of them- to be more interested in them, than in the Lord. God does not have a problem with His children being rich, but how we acquire this wealth is what we need to look at next.

1- We can steal it from someone.
2- We can wish and wait for it- like an inheritance or gambling like the lottery.
3- We can work extra jobs and save up for it.
4- We can borrow and get into debt.
5- The Best way is to sow and believe it in from the Lord.

Ephesians 6:1-3
Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"-which is the first commandment with a promise- "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

The word honor in the Bible, often times is referring to the support we provide to bless people with finances- not just to pay them respect.

- The context of Romans 13 is about giving people what we owe them- **Romans 13:6-7.**
- So if we have debt, we are to pay it back- **Psalms 15:4; Matthew 18:25; Luke 12:58-59.**
- It is not saying don't borrow, just be sure to pay what you owe- **Psalms 37:21.**
- The most serious aspect as far as debt is concerned, is to protect the integrity of our word.
- If we promise to pay a loan back and have signed our name, we have given our word.
- If things are not convenient, folks file for divorce, they file for bankruptcy- hurts our faith!
- Bottom line is, people lose when others do not keep their word and honor their commitments.

If we honor our debts, God will honor our integrity and when we cooperate with the laws of giving and receiving we will get out of debt God's way- through the laws of increase.

- Never God's intention or will for His children to live in a perpetual state of debt all the time.
- Under the Mosaic law, all debts were to be cancelled after seven years- **Deuteronomy 15:1-2.**

The Lord did not forbid them from ever borrowing, He just did not want them to live under that burden indefinitely- **Deuteronomy 15:4-6.**

- The blessing is not to have to borrow, but to be in a financial position to lend or invest.
- Instead of us paying interest, the world would be paying us interest.
- Jesus in His teachings compared the releasing of debt with the forgiveness of sins.
- So debt is an obligation and justice demands repayment.
- The Father does not want us to be in debt, spiritually or naturally- slave to the world system.
- The lender is the one on top and the borrow is servant to the lender- **Proverbs 22:7.**

Sin is a debt, I owed a debt I could not pay, He took a debt He did not owe, I needed someone to wash my sins away- that someone was Jesus- **Matthew 18:21-35.**

Some people pretend to be on a higher level of prosperity than they really are through debt- delusion.

Proverbs 13:7
One man pretends to be rich, yet has nothing; another pretends to be poor, yet has great wealth.

- We have to humble ourselves and admit where we are and start there.

We say everything in our life belongs to the Lord, but let's see the paper work- it actually belongs to the bank and credit card companies. No wonder we can't give it away even if the Lord asks us to.

The Hebrew word for "Interest" like credit card interest, means to receive a "Sting" or "Bite" of an adder or snake.

- When we look at our mortgage statement and see the interest we are paying- ouch!
- Paying too much interest can actually delay our prosperity- less money to sow- that's the trap!
- If we can just bite the bullet and budget financially where we are at.
- Resist the temptation of getting into debt as a means of stimulating our prosperity- government.

In time, the harvest of our giving will overtake us and we will live on a new level of increase, and be where we were trying to get to through debt.

8. Different Levels of Faith for Prosperity

1) **No Faith**

- Where God is not our source and provider.
- Totally depending upon ourselves just like the world does.
- Some are too scared to believe God to make a payment on anything- trusting the Lord to provide.

2) **Payment Faith**

- Notice how sales folks always ask you, "So what payment can you afford?"
- Even though we will end up paying for it twice when it's all said and done!
- This level, we have faith in God to provide us with the money to just make the payments on time
- There is a higher level of faith than making payments all our life.
- Sure, we all start at this level, and there is nothing wrong with that- better than no faith at all.

3) **Payoff Faith**

- Which means to believe God, not just to pay a thing off, but to pay something off early.
- We always go into a loan having a vision to pay it off early.
- Suppose it is a five year car loan, and we believe that we will pay it off in two years instead.
- To believe God for chunks of extra over and above finances to come in.
- Not just an extra few dollars here and there, but thousands so we can pay it off early.

4) **Believe it In**

- This is God's best for His children. It's not about working harder to earn it.
- Having to borrow any money for it, or just saving and scraping every dime we get.
- Simply believing for it all to come in from God through the Biblical method of sowing/reaping.
- It starts with having a Biblical revelation of this in our hearts, and then acting on it by faith.

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 NKJV
"Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the Lord your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And <u>all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you</u>, because you obey the voice of the Lord your God."

- We have been redeemed from the curse of the Law- Poverty.
- We have inherited the blessing of Abraham through Jesus Christ.

Here is a word of wisdom, as the Lord blesses our storehouse, during times of plenty, we need to save some of that money- that is wisdom and not a lack of faith.

- We don't need to spend everything we get in our hot little hands.
- Often times the Lord will lead us to save for future projects.
- Remember when Joseph was warned by God to prepare for famine- set aside during plenty.

This was not a lack of faith on his part concerning the famine, God directed him what to do- save for it. **Genesis 41:25-36.**

- In life, some events will have an effect on a whole lot of people, like a country's economy.
- But the Lord will give His children a heads up so they can save and prepare for it.
- Other events that have a limited affect on our lives, we can change and prevent.
- But not necessarily when it's a consequence that affects a region, a nation or the world.
- We just have to get ready for it- **Acts 11:27-30; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Deuteronomy 28:5.**

I have learned that there are some great deals out there during a bad economy, if we just had the liquid assets, we could make off like a bandit.

- The Holy Spirit can show us things to come; get us in a position to receive a wonderful blessing.
- Don't be condemned for those missed opportunities of the past, learn from them- future is bright.
- The Lord wants to bless our storehouse! **Deuteronomy 28:11-14.**

When Israel was in the wilderness, their life sustaining necessities was a day to day proposition- they had to believe God from one day until the next. Like folks today living from paycheck to paycheck.

- This is where the majority of the body of Christ is today.
- Making their payments, paying their bills and in debt- just struggling to get by.
- This kind of existence, surviving instead of thriving financially, surely there is a higher level?

Is there not some kind of Promised Land for us today to enter into and enjoy a lifestyle of milk and honey like the Old Covenant saints did? **Exodus 3:8; Hebrews 4:1-2, 6-11.**

- Canaan's Land is not living from day to day in the wilderness, it is not payment faith.
- First we must keep the Word of God before us, in our hearts and spoken out of our mouths.
- When we talk about the Promised Land, we are not talking about working for it.
- It is a "Promise" by God's grace, given through our faith.
- Things we did not work for, earn or deserve but received through faith in God's Promises.
- Now in Canaan they still had to take possession of it and fight the giants that were there.
- We still have to fight the fight of faith because the devil is not going to stand idly by.
- We work so we have seed to sow & live by the laws of seed time & harvest, the law of increase.
- His plan is that we plant financial seed through giving and believe Him for a multiplied harvest.
- We did not save, borrow or strain for it- this is entering into the rest of God.
- Enjoying the promises of God and our glorious inheritance in Jesus Christ, today!
    - **Deuteronomy 6:3-12; Proverbs 13:22.**

- This is the highest level of prosperity, to believe it in.
- Now remember that we don't start out in this highest form of faith for prosperity.

People want to jump a level or two. No we start out with "Payment Faith" and then go onto "Payoff Faith" before we get to "Believe it in Faith!"

How wonderful it becomes in our life when we want something, we don't look for extra overtime at our job, or pull out the credit cards; instead we sow financial seed for it and just believe God.

- It takes time and must become a lifestyle and not something we just try.
- When God does it for us, and it's paid for and completely ours- praise the Lord, nothing better!
- Sounds too good to be true, it would be if it was not so explicitly stated in the Bible.

Proverbs 10:22- The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, and He adds no sorrow with it.

If our prosperity relied solely on us being sharp, shrewd, working and saving, we would get the glory or credit for it as a result of our labor and works. By God's way, God gets the glory not us!

- People will say, "How did you get that, you must be a hard worker and saved all your pennies?"
- No, God gave it to me, like the children of Israel in the Promised Land!
- Houses I did not build, vineyards I did not plant- just believed it in- **Deuteronomy 6:10-12.**
- A minister once said, "If I can't get it with my faith, I don't want it in my house."

We want God to get the glory for the prosperity that we enjoy, this is the highest form of faith for prosperity, and it should be our goal- **Genesis 14:22-24.**

If we adopt His way of doing things, concerning material blessings, we will inherently overcome covetousness which says, "Get it now anyhow! I just wanted it so I got it!"

- But faith says, "If you'll just wait it will be great!" Just wait and trust and believe God.
- Assuming we always have to get into debt to have something- just unbelief/ lack of faith in God.
- We can have it God's way, but it won't be as quick as we want it.
- But it will be a blessing instead of a burden or just another distraction in our life.
- When the Lord adds it to us, it's a blessing because the Lord gave it to us His way.

- Who is suppose to do the toil and scraping and gathering and saving?
- The sinner, let them do the work, like the Canaanites, let them build the cities/houses/vineyards.
- Let them do all the back breaking work; the people of God can enter in and take possession of it.
    - **Proverbs 13:22; Ecclesiastes 2:26.**
- Income gained by those exploiting the poor will end up in the hands of those who pity the poor.
    - **Proverbs 28:8; 13:22; Job 27:16-17.**
- The Lord will allow them to toil and work just so it all ends up in our hands.

Do you see the pattern here in the Bible, the Lord is allowing the ungodly who amass all these resources by ill-gotten means to be stored up for His children to receive.

Our giving into God's Kingdom produces a multiplied 30/60/100 fold withdrawal from Satan's kingdom. That is why the devil fights the Biblical prosperity message so much- it will make him broke.

It is never God's will that we continue to wander in the desert of debt, lack and poverty because of fear, unbelief and a lack of faith.

Let's embrace the spirit of faith like Joshua and Caleb, that we are well able to take the Land of Promise (Healing, Prosperity and Life), because the Lord has already given it to us- **Numbers 14:6-9, 24.**

Lesson 7
Biblical Laws of Increase

B. Biblical Laws of Increase

Our God is the God of blessing and increase and He has given the earth to us to enjoy, develop and utilize for His glory- **Psalms 115:12-16; Revelation 11:18.**

- He wants us to increase in all areas of our life, spirit, soul and body.
- This also includes financially and materially- blessed to be a blessing!
- Just because it is God's will does not mean that it just automatically happens.
- There are conditions of obedience and faith associated to working the principles of God's Word.
- When we fail to receive, we need to ask God for wisdom and open the Word to us.

There are reasons why people do not get saved, filled with the Holy Spirit, healed, receive strength and live a long life, but it's not a failure on God's part or the integrity of the Word.

- When we get excited about revelation truth, we know it has gotten into our hearts- it's life!
- When we get excited about giving, we know faith is present and God is pleased.
- So many of God's children are hurting and struggling in the financial area.
- There are two main areas that the devil will harass Christians: healing and finances.

If he can keep believers broke and sick, they can't do much for the Kingdom of God; don't feel like doing ministry and unable to afford it.

- Jesus went to a lot of trouble to make financial provision available for us.
- Health and prosperity is a strong witness to the world.
- Can't tell me that people are not interested in a God who will keep them healthy and wealthy.
- The Word "Gospel" means good news- healing and prosperity is good news- **Luke 4:18-19.**
- Jesus was anointed to preach the gospel or good news to the poor, prisoners and sick- so are we.
- The good news for them is they don't have to be poor, bound or sick anymore.
- That is the Gospel Jesus preached and it should be the same one that we preach.

1. The Law of Honoring God

The key to Exercising faith for finances is to sow seed according to **2 Cor. 9:6 and Luke 6:38**. Spiritual laws, like natural laws always work the same for whomever works them, no matter who the person is.

- If a person will just obey the Bible, they will reap many wonderful results.
- Just as gravity works the same for each person so do spiritual laws in the Bible.
- The concept of cause and effect, when we act on the Word in faith, the results are forth coming.
- Therefore, we have a part to play in our prosperity- it's not all up to God- **Ephesians 2:8-9.**
- Watch out for poverty thinking rooted in envy- **Matthew 26:6-13.**

It's not what we know alone that sets us free, but what we know and put into practice that makes us free.

Likewise when we go to Church it's not about going through the motions, but to get something accomplished, to see God move and have His way- not to just come and hear something nice.

- We should be challenged to change, put the Word into practice.
- To do something, increase something, decrease something, stop something, start something.
- If we do nothing, than we are not doers of the Word; there will be no improvement in our lives.
- I want to encourage you to not let an offering bucket go by without putting something in it.
- Obeying the voice of God in giving also translates over into other areas of life and ministry.
- Obedience to God translates in the Lord using us in all forms of service and ministry.

Proverbs 3:9-10
Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.

As New Covenant believers, we are to honor God with all that we have, and keep it on tap to give it away when the Lord asks for it. Put God's Kingdom first, so His things are taken care of first.

- He will surely take good care of us and our things- NT equivalent to **Proverbs 3:9** is **Mt. 6:33.**
- However, other things are usually a priority- violating the first law of increase.
- Many things under the OT were written down for our admonition as types and shadows.
- The practice of tithing was instituted as an Old Covenant ordinance for the nation of Israel.
- So what kind of type would it be for us living under the New Covenant?
- Another word used many times in conjunction with the concept of tithing was "Firstfruits."
    - **Deuteronomy 14:22; 26:2; Leviticus 23:10, 14; 27:30.**

Exodus 23:19- "Bring the best of the firstfruits of your soil to the house of the Lord your God."

What is the essence of these Scriptures saying? They addressed the need of putting God first and honoring Him with their possessions by giving Him the first things that come in.

- When we honor God with what we have, it is for His exclusive use.
- When something is holy unto the Lord, it is for His purpose and not something secular.
- In speaking to the support of the Levitical Priesthood- **Numbers 18:12-15**

The Pharisees tithed to the extreme, even the herbs in their gardens. However, they missed the spirit of the law of honoring God with their whole life, and not just their possessions- **Luke 11:42.**

- Jesus pointed out that His covenant people (Old & New) belong to God and what we have is His.
- There is an expectation to support His Kingdom and program in the earth- **Matthew 22:17-21.**
- The Old Covenant Levitical Priesthood in Israel was supported by tithes and offerings.
- The Church of the Lord Jesus Christ is a global enterprise of God and requires our support.
- Includes the local church, missions and any other ministry that fulfills the Great Commission.

- Jews were taught for centuries that the tithe, the best and the first of the crop belonged to God.
- The tithe in the Bible does not just mean 10% but refers to the first fruits and the best.
- When the Lord said to honor Him with our substance there is a principle- He will honor us.
- To know His will and honor it by doing it as a first priority- **1 Samuel 2:30.**
- There is a connection between the word "Honor" and financial and material giving.
- The word does not just mean giving "Respect or Reverence."
- It always carries with it a material giving component.

Did you know when the Bible refers to the term "despise" it doesn't just mean to detest, hate or loath something. In the Bible there is a much broader meaning; when we fail to see the importance of a thing.

- When we hear a Biblical truth & yawn, and just treat it as common, we are in reality despising it.
- A failure to honor what God says is important to Him is despising a thing.
- A perfect example of this is Esau & how he despised his birthright and sold it for a bowl of stew.
- He just flippantly disregarded it as something not valuable and inconsequential- **Gen. 25:29-34.**
- The Bible calls Esau "godless" for what he did in **Hebrews 12:16.**
- It's very important that we understand this concept; don't treat the things of God as common.

To God, despising something is simply a failure to value, respect and esteem what He sees as significant. We need our minds renewed so we treat His things with honor and dignity.

- The word honor in the Hebrew means "heavy or weighty," inferring something of value.
- In Bible times they did not have paper money, they weighed precious metals by weight.
- Valuing the things of God translates into honoring the Lord.
- If we give God anything but our best, we are despising Him.
- **Malachi 1:6-14,** Israelites were cheap with God, bringing lamed, sick and worthless animals.
- They had might as well have brought road kill to the Lord to sacrifice- grievous & contemptible.

Honoring the Pastoral Office
A modern application of this would be if a Christian was taking an old beat-up piece of furniture to the city dump, but then half way there, decides to dump it on his/her pastor instead- that is a contemptible offering and dishonors God by dishonoring His servant.

Romans 13:7-10; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; Luke 10:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Corinthians 9:7-14; Galatians 6:6-7; Hebrews 13:7, 17.

- A fundamental key to prosperity is taking care of our pastor financially.
- Churches that muzzle God's servant never prosper.
- Spiritual blessings are withheld from them because they're in violation of God's Word.
- The local church sows seed just as individual church members sow seed.
- The Lord does not accept all offerings and neither should we if they are not right.

Someone trying to buy, influence or direct the local church like a lobbyist in Washington with money.

- If God is our source, than we don't have to resort to anything scrupulous.
- If someone in a healing line gets instantly healed, & they want to write the minister a check- No!
- We shouldn't accept that- we can't buy the blessings of God!
- It was already done 2,000 years by the blood of Jesus- **1 Peter 1:18-19.**

In **Malachi 1:11** a reference is made to "pure offerings." A pure offering is done from a right heart, in faith and in love. It is giving our best to God in order to honor Him- not giving Him the junk, but best.

- Consider the poor widow who threw in a few copper coins- **2 Corinthians 8:11-12.**
- God does not look at the amount, but the percentage, the heart of faith in love.
- Jesus is still watching what people put in the offering bucket today- **Mark 12:41-44.**
- In **Acts 10:1-4** we see a Gentile honoring God by taking care of the poor and seeking God.
- To honor something means to see the value of it, and in so doing we are esteeming it.
- That requires have a revelation of it, through God's eyes- **2 Corinthians 5:14-16.**

If the expectation in the Old Covenant was to bring in 10% of their increase, how much more should we be giving over and above that amount under the New Covenant- **Isaiah 1:19-20.**

- It's giving what God has asked us to give for the occasion.
- Consider Cain and Abel, it was a blood sacrifice that God required- **Genesis 4:2-5; Heb. 11:4.**
- The difference between these two brothers was obedience, not God showing favoritism.
- What God is primarily after is our heart, loyalty, obedience and devotion.
- It's not the amount, but the response in faith and love to honor God with all that we have.
- Everything we have comes from Him in the first place- **Dt. 30:19-20; John 15:5-6; Acts 17:28.**

Check up on Ministries that you Give to
Sure there are crooked folks who would extort finances from believers, and prophesy money out of their pocket and into theirs. But that is true about anything good from God, the devil tries to pervert it.

- That is why it is so important to be led by the Spirit, as to whom we sow our finances.
- Because if someone has false motives and is a crook, the Holy Spirit will warn us.
- That is why we should not give mechanically and methodically; pray about these things.
- We need check those ministries and/or individuals out and not just once.
- People and ministries can start out right, but then go wrong later on and not produce.
- We can make bad investments spiritually just as we can naturally.\

Poor Widow Woman
Now the Lord led Elijah to this particular widow woman who was not even an Israelite, because He needed someone to demonstrate faith in order for God's grace to produce a miracle- **1 Kings 17:8-16.**

- So Elijah went to this poor widow woman and asked her to first feed him before themselves.
- Now this woman had to make a choice, because in the natural this was literally her last meal.
- This woman put God first and that is what the Lord is looking for- **Luke 4:25-26.**

The Lord does not need it personally, but His Covenant children need it, and He takes it personally when they go without.

The City of Jericho
Here is another example of putting God first with what we receive. Remember the first city that Joshua and the children of Israel came across in the Promised Land- it was Jericho.

- Marched around that city as the Lord instructed them and the walls fell down supernaturally.
- But do you remember what the Lord instructed them to do concerning that city?
- He declared that city was devoted to Him as the first city taken- the firstfruits!
- All the spoils belonged to the Lord and no one was to touch any of it.
- Remember Achan, when he saw some gold and clothes, he took it and hid it under his tent.
- As a result, they were defeated at Ai in battle. Someone touched he devoted things- **Joshua 7:1.**
- Jericho was branded into their minds as a reminder of the principle of firstfruits- don't touch it!
- When people are disobedient and deceitful to the Lord, it's sin- **Acts 5:1-11.**

The issue is not that God does not want us to prosper and have things, He wants us to put Him first in everything. All the other cities that the Israelites conquered after that; were permitted to receive all of it.

Building the Temple
The whole theme of the Book of Haggai is equivalent to **Matthew 6:33**- putting God first.

The people who were referenced in the book of Haggai were quick to make for themselves comfortable dwellings, at the expense of neglecting the reconstruction of the Temple- **Haggai 1:2-11.**

- As a result, they were reaping what they were sowing and experienced lack.
- The harder people work to do their own thing, the harder it will be for them to get ahead.
- So the Lord challenged them to consider their ways.
- To consider the "Win – Win" scenario of putting God first so they could be blessed.

We have all been guilty of that mentality, "Well I just don't have anything to spare right now, but one of these days…" But we are violating the first law of Increase, by putting ourselves first.

- Need to start where we are at, & put God first and build from there as the laws of increase work.
- We need to do is look at our spending & always judge it in light of how it will affect our giving.
- If our giving to the Lord would become diminished, we need to believe that thing in- keep giving
- Many of us instead will acquire debt and then create obligations that squeeze out our giving.
- That is dangerous because it will affect our future harvests = an ever diminishing return.
- We work so we can have seed to sow and live on the increase, not just to spend what we earn.

Back to the children of Israel, the Lord pointed out to them, that when they put themselves first, they suffered poverty, but when they started putting the Lord first = prosperity- **Haggai 2:15-19.**

For the New Covenant believer, I am not fussing about tithing, I believe that it is a good place to start. For every believer, the laws of increase when obeyed can get us to a place over time where we give 90% and live off of 10%, while enjoying a greater standard of living.

- I believe that is the model for New Covenant grace of giving by the Spirit!
- People who fuss about not having to give 10% do so, they don't have to give that amount.
- However, these same people cannot escape the laws of sowing and reaping-**2 Corinthians 9:6.**

Regardless, the principle of honoring God, obeying Him with our life and putting Him first with all that we have transcends dispensations- it is an eternal law! It's His will to bless us to begin with.

- When we do that, the Bible declares that He will honor us and bless us beyond measure.
- He cannot bless stingy, greedy, selfish and materialistic children who do their own thing.
- Let's get God's vision for increase; blessed to be a blessing for His Glory- **Acts 20:33-35.**

2. How to Honor God

The Lord is called El-Shadi; the God who is more than enough, not El-Cheapo or the God that lets us barely get by. Too bad so many Christians are embarrassed to talk about the prosperity message.

- To honor God means that we invest into His Kingdom on earth- **Psalms 115:12-16.**
- When we cooperate with the spiritual laws of giving and receiving we will prosper.
- If we don't than we will suffer lack, because spiritual laws work indiscriminately.
- To be quite frank, our prospering is more up to us than to God.

Some are just waiting for God, "Well if it's God's will for me to prosper than He will, He knows what I need, it's just up to Him. I guess it's just not His will for me to have much."

- Well God is waiting on these individuals to mix His Word with faith.

Deuteronomy 26:1-11- When it comes to giving offerings unto the Lord, we bring it to Him with a confession of faith and thanksgiving and declare the covenant promises with rejoicing. Acknowledging that all we have came from Him, so we gladly honor Him with all that we have.

Honor God by Honoring the Local Church
Under the Old Covenant the tithe came in the form of produce or food to feed the Levitical priesthood. The whole purpose of the tithe was for the Israelites to support the priests and Levites in their ministries.

- First we need to support the local church where we are fed and ministered to on a regular basis.
    - **Malachi 3:8-12.**
- The tithe was always in the form of crops or livestock. To meet the needs of God's ministers.
- If someone wanted to pay money, they had to add a fifth to the amount- **Leviticus 27:30-34.**
- These Old Covenant laws are principles for us to take care of those in full-time ministry.
- To bless them so they are never in want of anything- well-taken care of.

We see to it that the church's needs and bills are paid for, and is well supplied to do the work of the ministry. This is honoring to the Lord- **1 Corinthians 9:3-6, 7-14.**

- The Apostle Paul taught about the rights of those called to full time ministry.
- When spiritual investments are made, people ought to respond materially.
- It is actually commanded that those who preach the Gospel receive a living from the Gospel.

Yet Paul, in his passion to win the lost, was willing to forfeit his right to receive material support from those he ministered to in order not to hinder the cause of Christ- **1 Corinthians 9:15-20.**

- So our attitude should be if the pastor needs something, he's got it.
- If the minister or missionary needs something, they got it!
- People don't realize how much they are hurting themselves by being so stingy and selfish.
- If they would just bless God's work and people it would come back to them multiplied over!

When people get stingy and say, "Lord keep our pastor humble and we'll keep him poor," it's just wrong on so many levels- **Matthew 25:40; Galatians 6:10; Hebrews 6:10; 13:16.**

False Humility
I have heard people who were trying to be humble, not allow others to minister and bless them with something. Most of these folks are sincere, but that is actually pride and selfishness; by cutting off an opportunity for others to sow and be blessed themselves- **Colossians 2:18-23.**

- If we will allow others to bless us, the Lord will bless them.
- The people who are hurting the most financially are the ones who need to sow the most.
- If a financially distressed person gives you a crumpled up $5.00 bill, don't give it back to them.
- Let the Lord bless them by you gratefully receiving that $5 dollar bill- sowing seed for harvest.

Ministry in third world nation, particularly need to learn about the prosperity message in addition to our charitable gifts. They need to learn how to sow and reap. The Word works no matter where people are.

Honor God by Honoring our Parents
Another way that we honor God is by providing for and honoring our elders. That would be our natural parents and our spiritual ones to- **Ephesians 6:1-3; 1 Corinthians 4:15-16; 1 Timothy 5:8.**

- Here is a great motive to want to prosper- to be able to bless those who deposited in our lives.

- It's not just a good thing to do, it's a requirement if we are going to live long and prosper.
- When we honor people, we value their input in our lives.
- We need to realize that many times when the Bible talks about honor, it is talking about giving.
- So when the Lord says to honor our parents, it's not just with respect, but also financially.
- Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for looking for loop holes to honor parents- **Mark 7:10-13.**

Deuteronomy 5:16 TLB
"Honor your father and mother (remember, this is a commandment of the Lord your God); if you do so, you shall have a long, prosperous life in the land he is giving you."

Honor God by Honoring our Instructors
I want to encourage you not to forget those people who have helped you in life, both naturally and spiritually. As the Lord blesses you as a result of their input in your life, be sure to return the favor and bless them- that honors God- **1 Timothy 5:17-18.**

1 Timothy 5:17 TLB
Pastors who do their work well should be paid well and should be highly appreciated, especially those who work hard at both preaching and teaching.

- Those who work hard in the ministry should be well paid- **Romans 15:27.**
- Whatever spiritual or material position the minister is in, the people under him will be also.
- If the leaders are wicked so are the people, but if they are blessed so are the people.
- It behooves folks to take good care of their leaders, that God has set over them- comes on them.
- The condition of the people will be a reflection of the condition of their leaders over them.
- Notice that the Lord honored the Shunammite woman for what she did for His prophet Elisha.
- One day the Lord spoke to Elisha to bless her in some way- **2 Kings 4:8-17.**

It's no wonder that the devil has created such a fuss about ministers having anything, because he knows that is the key to crippling the finances of the whole church- **Hosea 4:9; Luke 6:40.**

Galatians 6:6
Anyone who receives instruction in the word <u>must share all good things</u> with his instructor.

It's a spiritual principle that those who have made an impact in our life, and have sowed into our lives wonderful spiritual things, we should seek to bless them materially.

- We cannot put a price on spiritual revelation and the things we have received through the Word.
- Others have had to toil and labor in the Word, pray and seek God in order to deliver fresh bread.
- Some may say, "well yea they will get their reward when they get to heaven."
- True, but the Lord also said to honor and bless them while they are on earth.

Honor God by Blessing the Poor
We honor the Lord and give to him when we give to the poor. By ministering to a person who is experiencing lack or contributing to a ministry that is ministering to the poor, we are honoring the Lord. **Proverbs 14:31; 19:17; 28:27; James 1:27.**

- Those among us in our own local church that are hurting and don't have money for groceries.
- We need to be sensitive to that and minister to the poor.
- According to the Bible, God takes it personally when we minister to the poor- giving to Him.
- When it comes to giving to the needy, we need to be covert and do it privately.
- We need to be sensitive, and when God speaks, move quickly and quietly.

These folks will not always look like they are broke, because a lot of times those who are walking by faith are not going to be singing sad songs, but look as good as they can. Let's not judge by the outward appearance- He will supernaturally lead us. **Matthew 6:3-4; 1 Corinthians 11:20-22; Proverbs 13:7.**

- We need to be sensitive and not dress to the hilt in certain company- not walking in love.
- Learn to relate to others, and get on their level as we reach out to them- **1 Corinthians 9:19-23.**

3. The Law of Sowing and Reaping

We need to cooperate with Biblical principles in order for us to receive His highest and best for our lives. The Lord is not impressed with large offerings- **Psalms 115:14; Galatians 6:6-10.**

3 John 2 NKJV
Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

- He looks at the gift in proportion to what we have, not what we don't have.
    - **2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 11-12; 9:7.**
- What makes the gift acceptable is the "Willingness" to give it according to what one has.
- He uses our giving to finance His work on the earth.
- He also uses it as seed sown in order to multiply it back to us for future giving.
- What a wonderful cycle of sowing and reaping that takes place for God's glory.
- If we sow, we will reap, if we give, it will be given to us.
- A spiritual law, it does not just sometimes work, it works all the time the same way for all.
- Everything we give into God's Kingdom and God's people, should be seen as seed sown.
- We should be excepting a return, if not, according to our faith it will be unto us.

We are not throwing that money away, "Well I gave this to the poor, but I will never see that again in this lifetime." If that is our level of faith when we give, than that's how it will be, but God wants us to mix our faith with everything we give- **2 Corinthians 9:6.**

- Jesus is talking about sowing and reaping in **Luke 6:36-38.**
- If we sow mercy and judgment that is what we will reap- **James 2:12-13.**
- This natural law established in Genesis chapter one is a reflection of an eternal spiritual law.
- The parable of the Sower in Mark chapter four reinforces this principle- **Mark 4:13.**
- Jesus talked about sowing the Word in order to produce a harvest –30, 60 or 100 fold.
- The condition of the heart determines the amount of the harvest that is yielded.
- If the yield of a harvest is not very good, it's not the seed's fault, but the quality of the soil.
- If we are experiencing lack in any area of our life, simply check on your sowing.

A lot of people have been reaping some things, and they want to blame the devil or others for the seed they have sown in the past. Now they are reaping an unpleasant harvest since they did not judge themselves and repent- **Mark 11:25; 1 Corinthians 4:1-5; 11:29-32; James 5:16; Proverbs 3:27-28.**

- The first area of sowing is found in the confession of God's Word- begins there, **1 Peter 1:23.**
- Are we meditating and speaking God's Word out of our mouth continually = harvest.
- The corresponding action for prosperity is giving- **Luke 6:38; Matthew 7:12.**
- Well if we would like for someone to give us $1,000, what should we first be doing?
- The problem with many Christians is they are trying to reap in areas they have not sowed into
- If we sow clothes, we reap clothes, if we sow jewelry, we will reap jewelry, if sow friendship etc
- If we want to reap specifically in an area, than we need to sow specifically in that area.

Here is a word of advice, don't ever become attached to things, be able to give away anything; avoid becoming emotionally attached to stuff.

- The Lord asked for Abraham's best, Isaac, and he did not hesitate to obey God.
- Let's be quick to give, because if it's our best, then God has a big blessing waiting for us.
- If we can get free from the attachment to things, and allow them to flow through us = more.
- As we give, we can learn to make withdrawals from our Kingdom account here on earth.
- God is an equal opportunity God, He has set it up in such a way that it's up to us.
- So how blessed do you want to be? Instead of a bigger car payment, more giving for a new car.
- Now Luke 6:38 in the KJV says, "**shall men give into your bosom.**"
- So how are things going to come to us, will they just drop out of the sky?
- No, it is through people that God prospers us, God is our source, but people are His channel.

4. The Law of Stewardship

If we are going to prosper, we have to follow this law of stewardship. If we are faithful in a little, He will add more to us. This principle applies to all aspects of our life: money, anointing, revelation etc.

- We could be sowing big and still not be prosperous and get in debt.
- Having more come in does not necessarily denote prosperity- it's what's left over that counts.
- This is where stewardship comes in and having the wisdom of God in dealing with finances..
- God wants us to have the best and plenty of it, but He is big on stewardship!
- We must learn to have wisdom with things, to know when, who, where and how much to give.
- Unless we are led by the Spirit, we are not going to be prosperous- our priorities need to be right.
- The Lord wants us to have the best of the best, but He wants us to first learn stewardship.

We may want something, and the Lord will say "son/daughter, instead you need to tighten your belt on spending, you are not giving enough. You need to be seeding for a future harvest"

- The Lord wants us sowing so we can reap a harvest and live on the increase of our giving.
- We need to learn patience and pay off debts.
- We have to put God first, be good stewards and make giving a priority in our lives.

Need to repent for being foolish when we get into debt, but the Lord will help us get out from under it.

First of all we have to know exactly what we owe and how much our income is so that we can start giving within our means and know where we need to apply our faith for increase.

- We need to know how much debt we have, what our payments are and our income.
- Good stewardship is not flying by the seat of our pants- that's not faith - being lazy.
- It is not faith to just launch out without any idea, plan, vision and foundation.
- We need to get things in order, on paper and planned out- that is being a good steward.
- He wants us to be generous, but not wasteful, because what we do not waste, we have to give.

Proverbs 27:23-24
Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds; for riches do not endure forever, and a crown is not secure for all generations.

Once we are in a position of knowing what is going on, where the money is going, than we can begin to cut out the waste. Even though God is a supernatural God, a God of abundance and increase, the God who is more than enough; He expects us to be a good steward of the small things in our life.

When Jesus fed the 5,000, He told the disciples to pick up the fragments, "but Lord can't you just multiply more food the next day for us? Why bother picking up a few pieces, God can rain manna out of the sky!" Jesus was teaching them stewardship; being faithful- watch the little things, watch the dollars.

- That does not mean we are stingy and tight, it means we are being a good steward- **Mt. 14:20.**
- When it comes time to give, be liberal and generous.

Now a huge part of stewardship is being led by the Holy Spirit. How do we know when to buy and when not to buy, "Don't get this here, there is something else better coming. We need to cut back on this, and do more in this area." The secret is being led by the Spirit.

- If we will just follow Him, He will lead us into God's highest and best- God's perfect will.
- Sometimes we just move to fast, if we would just wait on Him, we would come across a deal.
- God knows where all the good deals are; often times we have to wait on it-**John 16:13; Ro. 8:13**
- But our flesh or impulsive desires wants it right now, but we have to overcome our flesh.
- If we just allow the Lord to lead us by His Spirit, in time He will make us rich- **Pr. 11:25-26.**
- He is not opposed to His children being rich, He is opposed to us being covetous.

Isaiah 48:17 NKJV
Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, The Holy One of Israel: "I am the Lord your God, Who teaches you to profit, Who leads you by the way you should go."

We can be in good shape financially and make a bad investment and lose it all, because we were not led by the Spirit. We can even make big investments into God's Kingdom and not prosper- must be led!

There will be times where we will give here and give there, and other times we are led to tighten our belts and save, the bottom line, we need to follow the leading of the Spirit- **Acts 11:27-30.**

- Since, nothing takes God by surprise, why should we be put in a bind by not knowing.
- Sometimes, the Lord will deal with us to "Go all In" and other times, to put some back.
- The issue is doing what the Lord tells us to do, when He tells us to do it.
    - **Genesis 41:33-36; 18:16-17; John 15:15.**

5. The Laws of Diligence, Obedience and Faith

There are two extremes to hard work and diligence with people. There are those who we would call "workaholics" and think it's all up to them if they prosper or not. Then there are those who all they want to do is lay around on the sofa and make confessions and not do anything.
Proverbs 10:4-5; 13:4; 14:23; 22:29; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-13.

If we will first wait on the Lord, and get His plan, purpose and pursuit, than with that vision in hand, go out and do it with all diligence. **In Ecclesiastes 10:10**, sharpen your tools before you go to work. It's not about how much activity we exert, it's productivity that we want- being in the right jungle to begin with. **Psalms 127:1; Proverbs 19:2; 2 Samuel 18:19-33; 1 Corinthians 9:26-27.**

- Obedience to God's plan is what brings us blessing- **1 Samuel 15:22-23.**
- God gives us the ability to gain wealth, we still have to work- **Deuteronomy 8:18; Col. 3:23-24.**
- When God fed the Israelites manna, they still had to go out & pick it up and make bread from it.

If the children of Israel where like some Charismatic's today, they would have just starved, staying in their tents making confessions.

Lesson 8
Rules of Reaping

C. Rules of Reaping

For most of us, when prompted by the Lord to give, we have doubts that He is able to get it back to us in time in order to meet our other obligations that are coming up. "Well Lord, if I give that $500 to so-in-so, that I have set aside for this bill that is due in 15 days, can You really get it back to me in time?"

Proverbs 10:5
He who gathers crops in summer is a wise son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.

- Here is a provocative question, "can Christians sleep through their harvest?"
- We have to sow before we can reap and our lack of giving often finds its roots in a lack of faith.
- If we give as the Lord has asked us to, there would be no problem in reaping a harvest today.
- Consider the Lord's response to another person who was asking the Lord for help- **Mk. 9:21-24.**

Ecclesiastes 11:1-4
Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again. <u>Give portions to seven, yes to eight</u>, for you do not know what disaster may come upon the land. If clouds are full of water, they pour rain upon the earth. Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there will it lie. Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.

- When reference is made to "Give portions to seven, yes to eight" it is talking about giving extra.
- Sow extra seed because you do not know what the future holds.
- If we wait for perfect conditions, we will never get anything done.
- Hesitate and miss opportunities to give because it is not convenient, we can't expect a harvest.

The Lord is not going to go up to us and ask, "Is this a good time for you," when it comes to obedience. Let's just go ahead and obey God when He deals with us- **Luke 11:5-8.**

- The key is to give immediately when the Lord prompts us to give- that is faith.
- When people need us, they need us now, not later on when it's more convenient for us.
- So looking at Proverbs and Ecclesiastes we can see situations where people are failing to reap.
- So is it possible for us to sleep through our harvest- yes!
- We could be distracted or be at the wrong place, or be at the right place, but at the wrong time.

1. Why Some People Don't Have Harvests

Our Heavenly Father wants us to reap big, abundant & bumper crop harvests, but we need to learn how.

Reason #1: They Have not Sowed
The obvious reason why some people are not receiving a harvest is because they are not cooperating with the spiritual law of sowing and reaping.

The Bible is very clear that what we sow is what we will reap in all areas of life, particularly in the areas of finances; it's not called, "Reaping and Sowing" but "Sowing and Reaping."

- The first rule of reaping is that we have to have sown something- **Luke 6:38.**
- I know this seems very elementary, but not everyone connects the dots in this area.
- Other times, people know what to do, but are not simply not doing it- **2 Corinthians 9:6-8.**

Genesis 8:22
"As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

- There is more to prosperity than making confessions and turning in prayer requests.
- We have to sow, give and plant financial seed to reap a financial harvest.
- Jesus and the apostle Paul, both compared natural sowing/reaping with spiritual sowing/reaping.
- God patterned the natural world after the spiritual realm by design- easier for us to learn.

2 Corinthians 9:10-11
Now he who <u>supplies seed</u> to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

- Here is some good news: If we have absolutely nothing to give, He will give us seed to sow.
    - *"Now he who supplies seed to the sower."* All we have to do is ask- **James 4:2.**
- So how does this process get started in our lives, He will start it.
- If we have nothing to start with, we can ask Him for seed to sow.
- The key is to not eat all the seed that He gives us to start with.
- The idea is to sow it in order to receive a multiplied harvest.

Sure we can eat some of it, but the intent is to sow more the next time, and so on and so on it goes- this is referred to as the Law Increase- **Genesis 1:11-12.**

- Some are not reaping a harvest specifically in an area, they have not given into that specific area.
- Have to sow in every area that we want to reap. Because every seed produces after its own kind.
- This simple concept, that orange seed produces orange trees and not apple trees.
- If we want apple trees, than what do we plant in the ground- apple seed of course.
- There are different areas to give into, so the return comes from those areas we have sown.

So if we are experiencing lack in a particular area (no harvest), we need to examine our giving practices and ask ourselves, "Have I sown in that area?"

- If I was in need of new clothes, what do I sow- I give some of my clothes away to others.
- If I need my car paid off, what do I sow, I help someone else pay off their car first.
- If I need finances to go on a mission trip, I help support someone else to go on their mission trip.
- If I want people to just walk up to me and give me money, what do I need to be already doing?

So if we sow money in an area, we reap money in that area, if we sow clothes, we reap clothes, if we sow cars we reap cars, help someone to pay off something, someone will help us pay off something.

- Therefore, sow specifically in the area that you want to reap in.
- This area of sowing and reaping is not limited to just material things- like friends, favor, mercy.

Folks misunderstand **Luke 6:27** as a mandate from the Lord to be a door mat for others to walk all over.

- Jesus was instructing us in this passage concerning the spiritual law of sowing and reaping.
- We are to treat others the way we want to be treated- sowing good seed for a harvest.
- The opposite is true, if we mistreat people & are selfish, we are sowing bad seed for bad harvest.
- I would call that sowing weeds in our life for future disappointments- **Genesis 3:17-18.**
- Before the Fall of Man and the knowledge of evil, there were no weeds- nothing unproductive.
- Likewise, nothing evil came out of the mouths of Adam and Eve- no selfish evil behavior.
- Weeds provide no benefit to people, they waste the soil they are planted in.
- Weeds are a type of evil, foolish, idle and worthless talk and acts of selfishness.
- **Matthew 12:33-37; Galatians 5:17-18; James 3:9-12; Ephesians 4:29.**

Therefore, we find ourselves in a position where we are capable of sowing both good and bad seed in our lives- by our words and actions. The key is to be only sowing good seed.

Reason #2: They Got Tired, Waiting for the Harvest and Gave Up
Don't ever put a time limit on when the harvest is ready. Stay in a state of eager expectation and don't quit until it comes to pass in your life. What if it took 5 years for something to come to pass?

- Abraham had to wait 25 years for Isaac to be born- **Genesis 12:4; 21:5.**
- The key is understanding that we will reap a harvest if you do not quit- **Galatians 6:7-10.**
- There is something to be said for perseverance, patience and being steadfast in our faith.

Folks have certain expectations on when they should reap a harvest, so when it does not materialize in a certain amount of time, they just throw in the towel and lose hope. If there are things you believed for and you gave up, go back and pick it back up and keep believing, keep expecting- **Hebrews 6:11-12.**

- In our western thinking, we want it "Now" which I call our microwave mentality.
- If I can't have it quick, then I'll get it my own way- charge it on a credit card.
- Satan seems to have a sense of when harvest time is near.
- He will strive to deny people of their harvest by manufacturing difficulties and circumstances.
- Why, in order to deceive them into casting away their confidence in the Lord- **Proverbs 13:12.**

It's sad when people have sowed for a long period of time, and worked for God, so when harvest time finally comes to reap the fruit of their labors, they have given up already- **2 Kings 19:3.**

- That is why we are encouraged to stand fast until the harvest comes in- **Hebrews 10:23.**
- Just mark it down, harvest time will generally always be later than what we want.
- Naturally speaking, when we sow a seed in the ground, harvest does not come the next day?
- It does us no good to try and rush the ground or scream at our seed to speed up and grow faster.
- If we truly need it tomorrow, than what we need is a miracle from God- miracle grow!
- The principle of due season- sowing/reaping works all the time, just can we wait for it!
- God backs up His Word with an oath, It's impossible for God to lie- **Heb. 6:13-19; 10:35-39.**

The cost of time is something that many folks are not willing to pay, and so fail to reap a harvest because they simply give up. They look at Mark 11:23, and assume if they just speak to the mountain that it will move, but they are missing a very important part of this principle of mountain moving faith. They have to believe it in their heart! It's one thing to just throw words at the circumstances of life, it's an entirely different matter to take the time to meditate on the Word day and night until we believe it in our heart and become fully persuaded- that my friend takes time, possibly even years.
Isaiah 55:10-11; Mark 11:12-14; 20-25; 2 Corinthians 4:13; 5:7.

- So a lot of God's people fail to reap because they get tired of waiting and so give up.
- People forget that they have sown in that area; they don't take it seriously enough some times.
- We can sleep right through our harvest and miss it. Harvest requires us being there, bring it in.

Certainly our sole motive in giving is not to get, rather to further God's Kingdom and be a blessing to others. Even if we did not receive anything in return, our primary motive is to honor God with the resources that He has entrusted to us. The Bible does promise a harvest- **Jeremiah 5:24.**

- Would it be an act of humility to just leave the harvest out in the field and not reap it in? No!
- If we planted a tomato plant along side of the house, it could have great big ripe tomatoes on it.
- However, if we forgot about it, what ends up happening to those delicious tomatoes?
- They fall off and rot and go to waste, and are not harvested and enjoyed as a blessing from God.

Often times, when people give they look at it as gone, "Well I won't ever see that money again, but at least it went to a good cause."

- With that kind of an attitude they are not looking for a harvest and will miss God's increase.
- When we sow, we need to keep track of it on paper, and look for the harvest- expectant faith.
- We are checking on it, thanking God for it, we don't forget that we sowed in that area- reap it!

Reason #3: Many think that Reaping is Automatic
The parable of the growing seed is talking about the spiritual counterpart to the natural process of seed growing in the soil. So in this parable, who sowed the seed? The man did. Who caused the seed to grow and develop? The soil or God does. Who reaped the harvest, God or man? The man did- **2 Cor. 3:5-9.**

- Many are of the opinion that they have nothing to do with the reaping aspect of the harvest.
- People also have the mentality that the harvest will just automatically come in all on its own.
- That it just magically happens whether they know the harvest has come or not.
- Reaping the harvest is no more automatic than sowing the seed is.
- We are responsible for the sowing and the reaping. God is responsible for making it grow.
- Sadly, many are waiting on God when God is waiting on us.

Mark 4:26-29
He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain — first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as <u>the grain is ripe</u>, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

Once we get the seed in the ground, then the growth is automatic, but when the harvest is ready, does the crop just jump from the field into the barn automatically? No!

That is why many have not been receiving God's provision for their lives, because they don't realize that they are the ones responsible for going out there into the field of opportunity and provision in order to gather it up and reap it all into their life.

- The Kingdom of God is within our spirit **(Luke 17:20-21)**, that is where the seed operates, in us!
- As we sow financial seed, we may not need the multiplied return from it in the near future.
- It just sits safe and secure until that day our faith makes a withdrawal on it.
- Our faith places a demand on our spiritual account to make a withdrawal- has to materialize.
- Angels work on our behalf to bring the money in through human channels- **Psalms 103:20-21.**

- We can prematurely dig up our seed by wrong confessions/wrong actions, and fail to repent of it.
- Like a farmer we are involved in "Cultivating" the seed we have sown.
- We prepare the ground of our heart.
- And sow the seed of God's Word by confessing it.
- Next, we irrigate it through praise and thanksgiving and living right.
- Don't forget to pull out the weeds of doubt, worry and fear.
- We must protect it from the devil who would like to kill, steal and destroy it.
- Finally when the harvest has come, we do the reaping, believing, and receiving of it.
- We have to take possession of the harvest; walk through those doors of opportunity He provides.

Certainly, God makes it grow, but it is not completely God's responsibility, we have a crucial part to play in this. The sooner we know our part and do it, the sooner we will start seeing results.

When Jesus said for us to come to Him and rest, He did not imply that we would never have to lift a finger again for anything, just sit back in our spiritual lazy-boy- the blessings of God just fall on us.

- The yoke being easy/burden light, was describing the life of faith in contrast to the law of works.
- There is still study, effort, believing and receiving involved on our part.
- In comparison of the world sweating and straining in their own strength- easy! **Mt. 11:28-30.**
- God will from time to time perform financial miracles, because we get ourselves in such a mess.
- However, He does not want us to live from one crisis to another.
- He is not interested in enabling ignorance, laziness and poor planning- **2 Corinthians 9:6-9.**
- To learn and become skilled and proficient by operating in the principles of His Kingdom.
- He wants us to learn how to fish instead of being dependent on receiving a fish all the time.
- God's best for our lives is that we learn how to live on the increase of our sowing and reaping.
- As long as we put up with lack and struggling financially, we are going to keep on having it.
- We have to become fed up with lack and get serious about putting God's Word into practice.

2. How to Reap

So the next obvious question is this, "having sown material seed, how do we reap a material harvest?"

- We can be walking by faith in one area of our life, and not walking by faith in another.
- We can be living in divine health, but be struggling financially.
- Faith in one area of the promises of God does not automatically make all the promises work.
- The principles of faith are the same, but we have to have the Word in our heart in each area.
- We need to stop praying for money and about money the way we have been up until now.
- The money we need is in this world, God does not have it in heaven.
- If we are a giver in line with the Scriptures, we are sowing material seed- harvest is out there.
- Believe that you receive it and claim it in Jesus' Name- **Mark 11:22-23.**

Therefore, instead of asking God for money, I claim it by saying something like this, "I claim (the $$$ I need) out of this world system, Satan, keep your hands off my finances, so go ministering spirits and cause the money to come in Jesus' Name." Keep on believing until it materializes- **Hebrews 1:14.**

- This action of claiming what we need, translates into getting into the field and reaping.
- We are taking the sickle of faith and reaping the specific amount we have claimed- meet needs.
- So we sow by faith, God makes it grow, and then we reap by faith, and according to our faith.

In **1 Timothy 6:12**, notice that we are to fight the good fight of faith, in other words enforce our rights by laying claim to the promises and provision of God for our lives.

- We are the ones who are to "Take Hold" of our glorious inheritance in Christ- **1 Tim. 6:17-19.**
- And how do we do that, by making the good confession of God's Word.
- When a harvest of corn in the natural is ready, what do we do?
- We go out into the field and lay hold of as many ears of corn that is needed to take care of dinner
- If we needed seven ears of corn, but we only gathered three, whose fault is that- ours!
- Be specific about the dollar amount we claim, and don't be timid to bump the number up a bit!

So the real question presented to us here is, are we as good at laying hold of the promises of God as we are at sowing? Are we as good in the reaping arena as we are in the sowing area- **2 Corinthians 8:9.**

- It takes faith to sow and it takes faith to reap. Christians know about sowing, but not reaping.
- But the Bible teaches us that it's our responsibility to lay hold of and reap the harvest.
- If we are just waiting around for God to do something about our finances- waiting a long time.
- If we are not enjoying prosperity, it's generally because we are not rising up to take hold of it.
- We are not trying to rend something out of the hand of God that He does not want us to have.
- Going into the field of financial provision and taking hold of the harvest that is already ours.
- We can't be a timid soul and be successful in the Kingdom of God- **2 Tim. 1:7; Matthew 11:12.**
- Now if we say, "Now Lord I am just waiting on you to bring the money in."

What we are basically saying by that statement is, "Lord I am going to sit here in my living room, would you mind going on out there and bring the money in for me and drop it in my lap." No, we are the ones who put out the sickle and reap the harvest, not the Lord. I am not just a sower, but a reaper also!

The Promised Land for Israel and the Church
All the stories about the children of Israel and the Promised Land required faith and taking hold of their inheritance through force.

- The first generation wandered in the desert because they did not have enough faith to take it.
- Thankfully the next generation took it, they were tired of wandering in the desert.

Sadly there is a prevailing mentality in the Body of Christ that God is so sovereign that it's all up to the Lord to do something about our needs, and when He sees fit to it, He will give us something.

- This unbiblical thinking, reducing God's children to beggars looking, for scrapes.
- When all along the Lord has prepared a table before us and is beckoning us to come and dine.
- The Lord does not spoon feed us, He gives us the dignity, honor and glory to feed ourselves.
- We take hold of it through the hand of faith by fighting the good fight of faith.
- But mark this down, we will not experience anymore than what we ourselves take hold of.
- The Lord says it's ours, but are we laying hold of the good things in this life on earth by faith.

Judges 18:9-10- They answered, "Come on, let's attack them! We have seen that the land is very good. Aren't you going to do something? Don't hesitate to go there and take it over. When you get there, you will find an unsuspecting people and a spacious land that God has put into your hands, a land that lacks nothing whatever."

- The less finances we have, the more tempted we are to eat all our seed- spend it on ourselves.
- Don't do it, be wise and always re-sow seed back in the ground, wait for the harvest.

3. Why Some Have A Small Harvest

The people of God are reaping a harvest, but they are much smaller than they need to be.

Reason #1: They Sowed Sparingly
When folks get a revelation of this, they will start liquidating their assets so they can get a lot of seed in the ground, because they realize that is the secret to big harvests is big giving- **2 Corinthians 9:6.**

- Unless led by the Lord, we will make the decision of how much we are going to sow.
- In making that determination, we are determining the size of our harvest.
- God is not the one who determines the size of our harvest, we do, based on our past giving.

So instead of bumping up our standard of living with the harvest we just received, let's sow that seed in the ground and reap an even bigger harvest next year.

- Keep doing that for a few years, we will have so much increase, we won't be able to contain it.
- Our level of prosperity tomorrow is determined on how disciplined we are today- eating our seed
- Our seed is precious, if we are wise we will sow as much of it back in the ground as possible.
- Have a vision to increase your sowing, budget all your finances around it- **Luke 6:38.**
- Ask God for wisdom as to what and where to sow.

It's those first few years when we are starting out in this, our decisions in this area of giving will either delay or speed up our harvest.

The Dynamic Kernels
Next, I would like to share an incredible illustration that I found from "Believe It Or Not" by Ripley. It will illustrate the law of increase for us.

- This principle has been so powerful for mankind when worked in the natural.
- Imagine how powerful it's going to be for us when we use the Word as our incorruptible seed.
- The harvest will just blow us away.
- Instead of just reaping wheat, rice and cotton; start reaping new births, healings, prosperity etc.

It all began with Perry Hayden of Tecumseh Michigan, inspired by a Biblical quotation found in **John 12:24**. He began an experiment of sowing and reaping in connection with tithing. His plan was to begin by sowing 1 cubic inches of wheat, and after tithing from the harvest, to sow the entire 90% back into the ground. This was to continue for 6 years.

John 12:24
I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.

John planted a cubic inch of wheat in 1940 and by 1946 the harvest was 75,000 bushels of wheat valued at $150,000.00. That was in 1946, can you imagine how much that would be worth today?

At the end of this experiment it was calculated that if the average farmer in the area had done the same experiment, continually re-sowing 100% rather than 90% (after tithing) and at a high yield of 30 bushels per acre, the sixth harvest would have been 5,297 bushels. But with tithing Mr. Hayden's harvest was 72,150 bushels which is 13.5 times greater.

- We can't out give God! Consider the generations of Job and Abraham.
- They did not know anything other than God blessing them financially.

You can't sell that old lie of the devil that God brings poverty on all of us to keep us humble to the Jewish folks, their Bible does not say that, neither does ours.

The source of that kind of teaching apparently came from Zen Buddhism, through the study of Eastern religion by European people at the turn of the 19th century. That philosophy worked its way from there and started a trend of poverty vows and poverty oaths which are not in the Bible nor a part of the New Covenant, but is actually in violation of the Covenant. Then it came over into North America.

Reason #2: They did not sow in good ground
The seed sowed into the hard, stony and thorny soil did not produce a harvest at all and so was wasted.

Mark Chapter 4 – Four kinds of Soil:

Mark 4:15- seed along the path
Mark 4:16- seed sown on rocky places
Mark 4:18- seed sown among thorns
Mark 4:20- seed sown on good soil

We can have good seed and sow a lot of it, but if the ground is not good, we are not going to get a very good harvest. In contrast, sow that same seed in good ground, the ground will produce accordingly.

Mark 4:28-29
"All by itself the soil produces grain — first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

- All ground is not automatically good ground, some is average, poor, good or great ground.
- Not all ministers/ministries are of the same caliber of quality- be led, don't waste good seed.
- Jesus said that we would know people by their fruit.
- The Holy Spirit is not going to lead you to sow into bad soil and waste your seed.
- Don't assume that the ground that is good today will remain that way tomorrow- check it!

Reason #3: They forfeit the Blessing of God
In the natural, when a developing crop does not have the proper balance between rain or sunshine, those factors will affect the outcome of the harvest; these are conditions that are outside of our control.

- This is God's part, when He blesses our seed by providing the right elements to cause it to grow.
- **Mark 4:26-27; 1 Corinthians 3:6-7; Matthew 5:43-46; Acts 14:15-17.**
- In the Bible, rain is a type of spiritual blessing- **Hebrews 6:7.**
- No matter how hard we work, if God does not bless it, it's not going to flourish.
- Wrong motives, selfish living and lukewarm Christian walk = no blessing for you- **James 4:1-5.**
- If we are not obedient to the Lord's plan, purpose and pursuit for our lives- **Isaiah 1:19-20.**

So what is the key to receiving the blessing of God on our giving, (Rain and Sunshine), obeying God's commandments, walking by the truth of His Word which is to walk in love- **Psalms 127:1; 1 Peter 3:7.**

Reason #4: Allowing the thief to come in to kill, steal and destroy
Yielding to our flesh and treating people wrong, opens the door to the devil to devour our harvest. It matters how we live and how we treat other people; walking in love will always keep us on the side of God's blessings for our lives- **John 10:10; Ephesians 4:25-28**

- If we are not vigilant in watching our crop, enemy will come in and totally devour our harvest.
- Satan has no desire in seeing God's covenant children prosper and further God's Kingdom.
- We have to use the Name of Jesus to rebuke the enemy and order him to keep his hands off.
- When trials, tests and temptations come, it's just the enemy trying to gain access to our lives.

We could have the right ground, seed, fertilizer and conditions, but if we don't exterminate the pests that seek to eat our harvest, it will all be for naught.

Reason #5: They do not discern their harvest or only part of it
People do not even realize that they need to discern the harvest in order to reap it. I am talking about discerning the timing of the harvest; thinking that the harvest is at a different time than it really is.

- It is like baking something in the oven, too early it's gooey and too late it's all burnt.
- For many things in life, timing is everything; like discerning the right time to reap our harvest.
    - **John 4:35-38; Luke 12:56.**

If our crop is ready right now, but like the disciples we think it's going to be four more months, what happens? There are several elements that we have to discern about the harvest:

- Where is the harvest at- location, location, location?
- When is the harvest ready, it's all about the timing?
- Discern how much of the harvest there is- in order to know how much to claim- the yield!

How can we discern that the harvest is ready? We have already said, if we plant something today, we are not going to reap it tomorrow. There has to be some time elapse between planting and harvesting.

- The Bible uses the phrase, "Due Season" in reference to the timing of a harvest.
- The Holy Spirit will lead us to the right channels and reveal the right place and time- listening?
    - Romans 8:14, *"because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."*

So when the Holy Spirit gives us a witness that we are close to a harvest, begin to thank God for it and pray in tongues for the details to be worked out- **John 16:13; Romans 8:26-27; 1 John 2:20.**

- Another indicator is a supernatural anticipation of joy that comes from God.
- Faith is always proceeded and followed by the joy of the Lord- joy is the note of victory!
- When we have believed the report (**John 12:38**), we are full of joy and not despair = power!
- We wait in joy, and through faith and patience, look for a future harvest- **Romans 14:17.**
- There is a season for sowing, waiting and harvesting- **Isaiah 9:3; Psalms 126:5-6.**
- We can sense in our spirit when the harvest has come- **John 2:4; 12:23; Luke 22:53.**

Where are we reaping our harvest is significant. It is true that we don't know exactly how God is going to multiply our seed back to us; the exact channels He is going to use, and the exact time it is going to be. It's on a need to know basis, when we need to know, He reveals it to us, until then we walk by faith.

- There's a connection to reaping our harvest as it pertains to discerning where our harvest is at.
- The Lord will show us where our harvest is at- step into it by faith to get it and claim it.
- Whether it is a business or ministry opportunity, a new job or creative way to make money.

If we don't have to faith to step into those new open doors the Lord provides, than we will never enjoy the fruit of it- **Deuteronomy 8:17-18.**

- When Peter made his boats available to Jesus, he was sowing something into Jesus' ministry.
- Peter had just fished all not, got nothing and was tired/exhausted- it was harvest for Peter.
- Jesus did not say, "Thank you Peter you will get your reward when you get to heaven."
- Smartest thing to do is to let Jesus use what we have. The little boy's lunch/5000- got leftovers.
- The Lord tells him to go back out onto the lake & let his nets down for another catch- **Lk. 5:1-10**

What if Peter went by how he felt and dismissed the Master's offer- they would have missed out on a big blessing from the Lord. It took faith for Peter to reap in his harvest; thankfully, he took Jesus at His Word and received a big catch of fish!

- We need to realize that we have more to do with our prosperity than we realize.
- God never fails in doing His part, so when we fail to receive, who is left to blame?
- We are responsible for sowing in faith, waiting by faith and reaping by faith.

Countless times when believers have given their time/treasure and waited on God for their harvest; and when it finally came in the Lord said, "here it is, walk through this door of opportunity, take this step of expansion, get involved here, start this business there, here is the harvest you have been believing for."

- But what if they do not have enough faith to seize the opportunity and trust God to act on it?
- It means we did not discern where our harvest was and go seize it- so we do not reap it.
- We have to take the steps of obedience to eat the good of the land.

Faith is a noun and to believe is a verb- an analysis of these two words may help us in trusting the Lord.

- Believing, being a verb, is an action word, it really means "taking hold of; to take or to grasp."
- To believe in Jesus means to take Jesus for what the Scriptures declares Him to be.
- To believe on Christ as a Savior, means to take Christ as my Savior- personalized.
- To believe in Christ as a healer, take Him as my healer, and recognize Him our great Physician.
- Corresponding action = to declare Him from our lips and by our actions that He is our healer!

Believing is an act of the will, when I believe, I have acted, having acted, I have laid hold of what the Bibles calls faith. Bible faith has corresponding action, there is always something I do in response to what the Bible says I am or directed to obey. Confession of God's Word turns into believing God's Word which results in doing God's Word in order to receive the blessings of God- **James 2:14-26.**

- The rest of God is to stand on His Word and claim it as our own.
- Speak it out of our mouth and apply the Truth to every fact of life that we encounter.
- It may be a fact that we are struggling financially, but the truth that supersedes facts- **Php. 4:19.**
- Coming into the greater harvest is not for the timid or scared.
- It means more work, sacrifice, commitment and going out on a limb by faith on His leading.
- The harvest will come in the form of new contracts, job promotions and new opportunities.
- We need to act on those creative ideas and witty inventions that come from the Lord- **Pr. 8:12.**
- When the Lord leads us to receive more education and training, it's in preparation.
- For new opportunities, to increase our earning potential to be a greater blessing.
- The question is, will we get up, go out and pursue it- **1 Thessalonians 1:3.**
- Harvest infers work, effort and labor to bring it in from the fields of God's provision.
- It takes faith to do those things, and if we fail to act, we are failing to discern the Lord's harvest.

For example, Isaac who at the time was in the Land of Canaan and there was a great drought. He was thinking of going to Egypt, but the Lord said stay and God would bless him- **Gen. 26:1-3**. Well it took faith for him to stay put, and it seemed foolish for him to plant seed- 100 fold return- **Gen. 26:12-14.**

How many times throughout life have we overlooked those little nagging ideas that would not go away for a long time. When we give up on them and say, "Nah, I can't do that, how would that work anyway."

- In so doing we missed a wonderful opportunity from God to prosper- **Ephesians 5:15-17.**

God has plans for our lives, but He requires our faith to act on and obey His directions, in order for them to become a reality. So be sensitive and don't be scared- **Isaiah 30:21.**

- When the Lord tells you to act, you will not lose everything you have and become destitute.
- But some will say, "How will I know it's the Lord, and not just me?"
- That is where learning how to be led by the Spirit is so important.
- First, the idea can't violate Scripture- the Lord will not lead us to become a drug dealer.
- Next, do we have peace in our spirit about it, as we think on it and talk about it.
- Does the Spirit bear witness to it with peace in our heart about it?
- Finally, I like to use the test of time, if it's God today, it will be God tomorrow or next week.
- So if you are still not sure, just pray about it and wait on God until you know- prepare for future.
- God always gives us something to do in the mean time- **Jeremiah 29:11; Isaiah 40:29-31.**
- When you know it is time, and you are settled in your heart about it, step out in faith- **Josh. 1:6-9**

So we have been saying, if we discern when the harvest is ready, through a supernatural revelation of joy as we get close to it, it will also be revealed to us which steps the Lord will leads us to take.

Reason #6: We need to discern how much of the harvest we are going to receive
Here is an important question that needs to be answered, do we know how much our giving has been in the past year? Are we keeping track of what and where our seed has been sown.

- Ask yourself what a 30, 60 or 100 fold return on that investment into God's Kingdom would be.
- Planting a bushel of wheat to an acre of land, not uncommon to reap 40 to 60 times- good year.
- Folks who think we should not expect to receiving anything from our giving are misguided.
- As Jesus often said, "According to your faith, be it unto you." Not expecting = not receiving.
- Well look at your giving and multiply that by 50 times, that could be a really big number.
- Now the next question is, are we really expecting all that to come in?

What would you think of a farmer who had bumper crop of 100 acres and only reaped 20 percent of it, quit and went home? Yet that is what so many of us have done.

- With our little faith that only reaps a little amount of a much bigger harvest that is at our disposal
- We do not reap according to what we have sown, we reap according to our faith to receive.
    - **Matthew 9:29-30; 17:19-20; Mark 5:34.**
- In the natural, if a harvest is not reaped, it will rot and deteriorate over time and spoil.
- That does not apply to spiritual harvests, they are incorruptible.
- So those harvests we have not reaped are still out in the field waiting to be gathered in.

I am not talking about figuring out the harvest to the penny, & be overly legalistic about it, but we need to have a general idea. Our expectations are generally way lower than the reality of God's provision that is available to be reaped- so often times we fall way too short- **Matthew 6:19-21; 1 Timothy 6:18-19.**

- So keep track of your giving and what you should be expecting to come in- ball-park speaking.
- How else will we know if we have received all there is to the harvest? Leaving half in the field.

Yet some will say, "Yea well brother, if I just have my needs met and my bills paid, I'll be content with that." Well aren't you just a selfish rascal! If that is the way you feel and think, what about other people, the church, the poor, missions, the Kingdom of God and your family.

- If you just want to get by on a little handful, then that's your business, but use your faith to bless.
- Consider the parable of the Talents, the principle to invest God's resources- **Matthew 25:14-30.**

A Lesson from the Promised Land
The people of Joseph came to Joshua and said we need more land, we are a large people and the allotment you gave us is not big enough- **Joshua 17:14-18.**

- So they were putting pressure on him to do something about their situation.
- But Joshua straitened them out and pointed out a mountain and valley area next to their territory.
- "So you want more land, go and take possession of it for yourselves."
- In response they whined, "But there are giants over there, decedents of the Rephaites."
- Joshua told the tribe of Joseph, just go take as much as you want, trust God to win your battles.

That is just like so many "Faith" people today who make all these claims, but when they face a little opposition, they come back whining- "I don't have enough, I need more money and a bigger house!" And of course they want you to do something for them.

- Look at what is said in **Joshua 18:1-3** concerning some of the other tribes of Israel.
- Out of the 12 tribes of Israel, only 5 had made any substantial claims on the inheritance of God.
- What were the others waiting for? Over half still had not taken possession of the Promise.
- I believe that there is a spiritual application for us today that God is asking of His people.
- "How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the promises of God?"
- That over half have not entered into their glorious inheritance in Jesus Christ!
- Unfortunately they have not had enough faith to go up and take it- **Hebrews 4:1-3.**

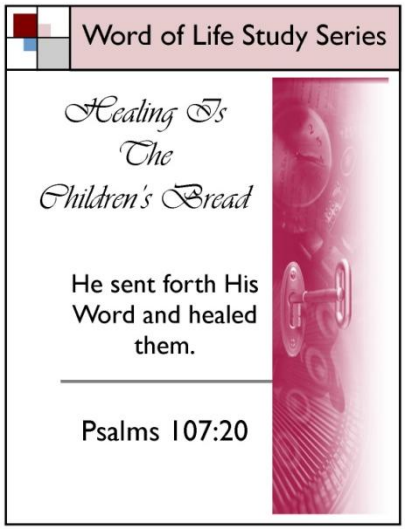
So some tribes took full possession of the land they needed, others like the tribe of Joseph took only a little bit, whining for more to be given to them. Still, others had not even taken a foot of ground yet.

- It appears that Judah took on more than what they needed.
- Tribe through whom Jesus came, the chosen ones, the praising ones, the faith bunch took more.
- When they got to taking the land, they got carried away and took more than they really needed.
- So the tribe of Simeon was able to cash in on their conquests- **Joshua 19:9.**
- Did the Lord rebuke the tribe of Judah from taking too much? No!
- We need to get delivered from this religious junk that keeps people timid about pressing in!
- From being fearful of taking too much and offending the Lord.
- "Well, if the Lord wants to give me something He can, I just want to be polite."
- Then people get upset because they are not able to enjoy much in God.

When the young son in the story of the Prodigal Son (**Luke 15:11-32**), boldly asked for his inheritance early, the Bible does not paint that in a bad way. It's what he did with it that was bad- wasted it on prostitutes and wild living. His father did not rebuke him for asking for his share of the inheritance.

- Who does the father in this story represent? The Father God of course.
- The younger son went out and blew it all, was in poverty and then came to his senses.
- He returned to his father's house, and was restored back as a son and threw a party in his honor.
- The older son heard about it, got mad & accused his father of being unfair- give him nothing.
- Representative of many in the Body of Christ who serve God, but are not partaking- blame God.

But what was the father's response, "look son all that I have is already yours, so why have you not just helped yourself to what was already yours!" The father made no apology to his older son. The problem with the older son, and so many in the Body of Christ, is that he did not discern his own harvest- who he was and what he already had; did not have the faith or the boldness to appropriate it. The father basically was saying, "Son, don't wait for me to come with a silver spoon and stick it in your mouth!
Luke 11:8-10; 12:32; 17:20-21; 22:29; James 4:2.



He sent forth his word and healed them;
he rescued them from the grave.

Psalms 107:20

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Lesson 1
Healing is God's Compassion in Action

Acts 10:38
How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

A. Who Has Believed the Report

Isaiah 53:1
"Who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

- Utterance is greatly affected by the hearer.
    - When people get bored, heard it before attitude- it grieves the Holy Spirit.
    - Folks that are hungry and thirsty for the Word of God.

Let's be like the Bereans:

Acts 17:11
Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

And Like Mary, the sister of Lazarus:

Luke 2:19- "But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart."

- The Arm of the Lord.
    - When God raised Jesus from the dead- **Ephesians 1:19-20.**
    - The Finger of God to drive our demons- **Luke 11:20.**

The arm of the Lord or the power of God is revealed on behalf of those who believe the report.

- The measure of our attention is the measure of what we will receive.
    - Spiritual things never grow old, so if it's old to us, it was never real to us.

Mark 4:24-25
Consider carefully <u>what you hear</u>," he continued. "With the <u>measure</u> [attentiveness to the Word] you use, it will be <u>measured</u> to you — and even more. Whoever has [ears to hear] will be given more; whoever does not have[ears to hear], even what he has [knowledge of God's Word] will be taken from him [will forget it]."

Luke 8:18
Therefore consider carefully <u>how you listen</u>. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has will be taken from him."

- How do I know that I believe the report?
    - If after hearing the Word, instead of fear and anxiety I have joy and peace.
    - The doctor's report maybe a fact, but it's not the truth.
    - When the devil brings thoughts of death and suffering, I laugh and begin to praise God.

Psalms 118:17- "I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done."

- The greatest hindrance to receiving healing and to live long on the earth.
    - Is it God's will to heal all, all of the time?
    - Appropriating faith cannot go beyond one's knowledge of the revealed will of God.
    - Faith begins where the will of God is know.
    - God's Word is God's Will.
    - Unbelievers must know it's God's will to save them before they get saved.
    - Christians must know it's God's will for them to be healed before they get healed.

1 John 5:14-15
This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

John 8:31-32
To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will <u>know the truth</u>, and the truth will set you free."

- God does nothing without His Word.
    - *"He sent His Word and it healed them"* in **Psalms 107:20**- Fenton's Translation.
    - It's planting, watering and receiving from God's incorruptible seed.
    - Many, instead of saying, "pray for me" should first say, "teach me God's Word.

"The prayer of faith" which heals the sick is to follow (not precede) the planting of the "seed" (the Word) upon which alone faith is based.

Faith Rests on More than Mere Ability- God has the power to heal but is it always His will?

If a billionaire were to appear before an audience of a thousand people, with the announcement that he was **<u>able</u>** to give each one a million dollars, this would be no basis for any faith for a million dollars, because faith cannot rest on ability alone. If he should go further, and say, "I will give **<u>fifty of you</u>** a million dollars each," even then there is no basis for anyone in the audience to have faith for the million dollars. Were you to ask one of them if he or she were "fully assured" of receiving a million dollars from the billionaire, the answer would be, "I need the money, and hope I am among the lucky ones, but I cannot be sure." But, should the billionaire say, "**<u>It is my will</u>** to give all of you a million dollars each," then everyone in the audience would have a basis for faith- it's a sure thing, no more guess work. Everyone would undoubtedly say to the rich man, "Thank you! I'll take my money now."

When we finish with this series, it will be self evident, by the Authority of Scripture that it is Always God's Will to Heal, all the time and every time!

1. Read the Will and Know

- The word "testament," legally speaking, means a person's will.
    - The Bible contains God's last will and testament.
    - He bequeaths to us all the blessings of redemption.
    - His "last will and testament," means anything submitted later is a forgery.
    - A man never writes a new will after he is dead.
    - If healing is in God's will for us, then to say that the age of miracles is past is illegal.

Proverbs 30:5-6
"Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar."

His first covenant and Redemptive name, Jehovah-Rapha, translated, "I am the Lord who heals you." **Exodus 15:22-26.**

- Keeping God's commandments was the precondition for Israel's healing.

He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not permit on you any of the diseases I permitted on the Egyptians, for <u>I am the Lord, who heals you</u>."

- Obeying the law of the New Covenant is our precondition to healing- to walk in Love!

John 13:34-35
"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

- This is God's word, "settled in heaven," a never-changing fact concerning God.

To say that this privilege of health is not for God's people today, is to change God's "I Am" to "I Was" Jehovah-Rapha.

- Later on the Israelites grumbled and complained- opening the door to the enemy.
    - Poisonous snakes came among them and many died.
    - They repented of their sin and asked for mercy.
    - God gave instructions to Moses- a bronze snake.

Numbers 21:8-9
The Lord said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can <u>look</u> at it and live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, he lived.

- Every one that was bitten lived by looking at the bronze snake- not some but all.
- A foreshadowing of the coming sacrifice upon Calvary by Jesus, on our behalf.
- Universal Health care is not a new concept – it originated with our God.

Psalms 105:37 NKJV- "He also brought them out with silver and gold, and there was none feeble among His tribes."

B. God at Work

- Jesus Christ is the absolute expression of God's will.
    - God's will was clearly demonstrated through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.
    - He was the expression of the Father's will.
    - Jesus literally acted out the will of God for humanity- healing everywhere He went.

John 6:38
For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

John 14:9-10
Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing <u>his work</u>."

- Do you want to know what God is like? Look at Jesus.
- Do you want to see God at work? Look at Jesus.
- Do you want to know the will of God? Look at Jesus.
- Jesus is the will of God in action.

Acts 10:38 AMP
How God anointed and consecrated Jesus of Nazareth with the [Holy] Spirit and with strength and ability and power; how He went about doing good and, in particular, curing all who were harassed and oppressed by [the power of] the devil, for God was with Him.

A commission was appointed by the Episcopalian church to study the subject of healing and report back.

After three years of study and research in both the Bible and history, they reported the following, "The healing of the sick by Jesus was done as a revelation of God's will for man." Because they discovered that His will is fully revealed, they went on to say, "No longer can the Church pray for the sick with the faith destroying, qualifying phrase 'If it by Thy will.'"

The Gospels teach a message of complete healing -spirit, soul and body- for all who came to Jesus.

- Yet, many today say, "I believe in healing, but I do not believe it is God's will for everyone."
    - How then can we pray the prayer of faith without knowing His will?
    - Are we to set our Bibles aside and wait for some special revelation from the Spirit.
    - Are we also to apply this same approach to the lost, if God's will is in question to save.
    - The Scriptures plainly tell us how God heals the sick.

Psalms 107:20- "He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave."
Jeremiah 1:12- "…for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled."
Proverbs 4:22- "…for they are life to those who find them and health to a man's whole body."
John 6:63- "The words I [Jesus] have spoken to you are spirit and they are life."
Isaiah 55:11- So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.
Hebrews 1:3 AMP- "Jesus is upholding and maintaining and guiding and propelling the universe by His mighty word of power."

1. God's Great Mercy

Psalms 145:8-9
The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

- Nothing reveals the character of God more than these two verses of Scripture.
    - The Lord is gracious, and He's full of compassion.
    - The dictionary tells us that "to be full of compassion" means to be merciful.
    - So "compassion" and "mercy" are companion terms.
    - The same Hebrew/Greek word is translated one time "mercy" and another "compassion."

- God's mercy is expressed in more ways than just toward the sinner.
    - We also need to see God's mercy in connection with healing.
    - Healing is a display of God's compassion.

Mark 1:40-42
A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

2. Compassion Compelled Jesus

- Let's look at another example of the Lord's compassion in relation to healing.

Matthew 14:13-14
When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had <u>compassion</u> on them and healed their sick.

- Compassion moved Jesus to heal all their sick.
- Thank God, Jesus is still the same compassionate Lord who heals all through His Name.

Matthew 20:29-34
As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, <u>have mercy on us</u>!" The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, <u>have mercy on us</u>!" Jesus stopped and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. "Lord," they answered, "we want our sight." <u>Jesus had compassion</u> on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

- When Jesus asked what they wanted, it was not the forgiveness of sins, but healing.
    - Is God any less merciful to the sick?
    - These men were asking for mercy in connection with healing.
    - There is so much more to God's mercy than we realized.

- Another example of God's mercy is manifested in the form of deliverance?

Mark 5:19-20 – The man possessed by a legion of demons Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had <u>mercy</u> on you."

- A third example of Jesus being moved with compassion and mercy- He fed the multitudes.

Mark 8:1-3
During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "<u>I have compassion for these people</u>; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance."

- Material provision is provided in redemption as much as healing and forgiveness of sins.

2 Corinthians 8:9
For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you <u>through his poverty might become rich</u>.

3. The Father of Mercies

2 Corinthians 1:3 NKJV
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of <u>mercies</u> and God of all comfort.

- Mercy isn't just something that God has or shows; it's part of His nature.
    - The world sees God as a traffic cop or aster judge just looking to put the smack down.
    - Picture God as waiting with a giant flyswatter, ready to swat them; they stop moving.
    - Yes God is a Holy God, but He is more of a God of mercy and compassion.
    - Our view of God has a direct impact on receiving healing.
    - Is God still merciful and compassionate today? Than healing is still available today!

James 2:13- Mercy triumphs over judgment!

4. Jesus is the Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever- **Hebrews 13:8**

John 14:12- "he will do even greater works than these" – not "less, some or few works."

- Why, would Jesus say that, "because I am going to the Father"- Mediator, Intercessor, Advocate.

John 16:7- Jesus said, "It is for your good that I am going away."

Jesus' going away could not be a good thing if His going away would withdraw, or even modify, the manifestation of His compassion in healing the sick.

He's the same now as He was back then. So if He was gracious then, He's gracious now. If He was full of compassion then, He's full of compassion now. If He was merciful then, He's merciful now.

Lesson 2
Healing Under the Old Covenant

C. God's Healing Provision for Israel

- If the Lord declares Himself to be *"I am the Lord that heals you."*
    - How could He turn around and contradict Himself and make people sick.
    - Satan is the one responsible for sickness and disease.
    - Jehovah declares that He is Israel's Healer and He is our Healer today as well.

Exodus 23:25-26
Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. <u>I will take away sickness from among you</u>, and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span.

- As long as Israel walked in the Covenant, there was no sickness among them.
- With sickness taken away they just fell asleep at a ripe old age, full of years.
- Known as the "Death of the Righteous," no wasting disease eating away at them.

Genesis 49:33
When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

- Someone will invariably say, "But that was Israel and does not apply to us today."
    - The Bible says He does not change according to **Malachi 3:6**.
    - God was against sin in the Old Testament and He is against sin in the New Testament.
    - He was against sickness in the OT, and He is against sickness in the New Testament.
    - He made provision for healing in the OT, and He made provision for healing in the NT.

Deuteronomy 7:13-15
He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the crops of your land — your grain, new wine and oil — the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks in the land that he swore to your forefathers to give you. You will be blessed more than any other people; none of your men or women will be childless, nor any of your livestock without young. The Lord will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict *[permit]* on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt…

- John 3:16, *"For God so loved the world that He gave…"*
    - God's love gives healing, it does not take it away.
    - How much more should we have under the New Covenant- better promises, not less.
    - Hebrews 7:22, *"Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant."*

Why would Jesus lay down His life to redeem us from the curse of sickness, to just put it back on us- this would be a major contradiction, but God does not contradict Himself.

1. Examples for Us

- As the Old Testament saints were God's covenant people so are we.

Galatians 3:29
"If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

- The Old Testament serves as examples for us.
    - Learn from their mistakes- **1 Corinthians 10:1-13.**
    - Be quick to forgive and quick to repent.

Isaiah 1:19-20
If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

2. The Heroes of Faith

- The Old Testament is also full of examples of faith and obedience to the plan and will of God.
    - Ordinary people of God doing exploits through God.

Hebrews 11:39-40
These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

3. Types and Shadows

- The Old covenant is full of types and shadows pointing to the fulfillment in Christ.

Colossians 2:16-17
Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

Hebrews 10:1-2
The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming — not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.

4. Precious Promises

- Scripture tells us that the promises of life under the Old Covenant apply to us as well.
- The God who does not change, has never changed His mind to bless and provide for His children

2 Corinthians 1:18-20
But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

Galatians 3:13-14- Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit

- Redemption has already happened 2,000 years ago, it's forever settled.
    - People miss it by saying, "I know God promised to heal me, but He hasn't done it yet."
    - But God didn't promise to heal them someday.

- He said in His Word that they were healed and healing already belongs to them now!
    - By His stripes we "Were" healed! Not going to be some day in the sweet bye and bye.

To say that God has promised to heal us someday is like an unsaved person saying, "I know God has promised to save me, I just hope He will." No, God didn't promise to save the sinner in the future.

- Today is the day for the lost to receive salvation that has already been bought and paid for.
    - Salvation for the lost just needs to be received.
    - Healing for the sick just needs to be received.
    - It's a gift, by His Grace and through our faith.
    - Yet there are conditions of faith and obedience that must be met.

- In the mind of God we are already healed, He sees it as a past event.
    - He had laid all our sickness, disease and pains on Jesus 2,000 years ago.
    - We need not bear what Jesus already bore for us.
    - If we defer our healing to a future event, as something God will do, we've missed it.

1 Peter 2:24
He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you <u>have been</u> healed.

So let's change our talking from "God going to heal me," (waiting on God to do something) to "God has already healed me, praise the Lord," which is faith receiving now what God has already done in Christ.

Romans 10:10 NKJV- For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

- Like salvation, confession is made unto healing for my body and mind.

Speaking as though it already happened brings the reality of it into manifestation in our lives.

- So if Jesus had already healed us, why would we then ask Him to heal us now.
    - If we were healed then, we are healed now.
    - We agree to that redemptive reality by speaking the Word on healing- personalize it.
    - We begin to thank Him and praise Him for what He has already done.
    - Mark 11:24, before we receive, we must first believe that we have already received it.
    - God's Word is the only evidence we need to know we are healed- **Hebrews 11:1.**
    - God's Word has the grace and power as spiritual seed to manifest our healing.

Mark 11:24- … <u>believe that you have received it</u>, and it will be yours.

- So Jesus said it is only in believing we were healed, that we become healed.
- When we stand in faith on God's Word, our body comes in line and every symptom leaves.

5. God was Israel's Healer

The psalms were Israel's prayer and song book, and they continually mention that God was Israel's Healer- Psalms 103 is a classic example.

Psalms 103:1-5
Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits — who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

- Disease came to Israel through disobedience of the Law, because it opened the door to the devil.
    - God allowed the enemy access when the people refused to repent.
    - However, when they repented and sin was dealt with- healing resulted.

Psalms 107:17-20
Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.

- We too can take ourselves out from under God's protection through:
    - Ignorance.
    - Disobedience.
    - Lack of faith.

- Did you know that ignoring the leading of the Spirit is just as much disobedience as telling a lie?
    - We need to be sensitive to our spirit when it condemns us of sin.

1 John 3:19-24
This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. Those who obey his commands live in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

John 16:7-11
Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

- Long life is a wonderful promise from God for all His children- Old and New Covenant

Psalms 91:16- With long life will I satisfy him and show him my salvation.

Ephesians 6:1-3
Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"-which is the first commandment with a promise— "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Jeremiah 29:11-13
"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

I believe it is the plan of God that no believer should ever be sick, just as it's His will that all be saved and go to heaven. Do all get saved, no and neither will all be healed, but that is not God's fault, nor has His Word failed.

Romans 3:3-4
What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar.

There are reasons why not everyone gets saved just as there are reasons why not everyone gets healed but it's not because God has changed His Mind or His will on the matter.

Human beings are the variable in this equation; their free-will and decisions make all the difference on whether they get saved or healed.

God has done all He is ever going to do in providing salvation and healing, now it's up to folks to mix God's Word with faith in order to receive for themselves God's highest and best for their lives- but it's not automatic!

D. God's Covenant Names

- In the Bible, names are significant and worth studying.
    - Jerusalem means "city of peace," derived from the Hebrew word *shalom* ("peace").
    - Often a name provides an important clue to the nature of a person or place.
    - The Bible refers to God by many different names.
    - Each one reveals some aspect of God's character or His relationship with us.
    - Modern translations replace the original redemptive name of God with "God" or "Lord."

1) The Lord – Yahweh/Jehovah
2) The Lord Is God – Jehovah-Elohim
3) The Lord God Most High – Jehovah-Elyon
4) The Almighty God – El-Shaddai
5) The Lord Will Provide – Jehovah-Jireh
6) The Lord Is Healer – Jehovah-Rapha
7) The Lord Is Our Righteousness – Jehovah-Tsidqenu
8) The Lord Of Hosts – Jehovah-Tsebaoth
9) The Lord Is Conqueror – Jehovah-Nissi
10) The Lord Is Peace – Jehovah-Shalom
11) The Lord Is There – Jehovah-Shamah

- We of course are going to focus on the redemptive name "Jehovah Rapha."

According to Brown Driver & Briggs Hebrew Lexicon, *rapha* means "to heal, to make healthful." The word was first used in **Genesis 20:17-18**- Abraham prayed for Abimelech's household.

- It was introduced to the Israelites when they complained due to a lack of water.

Exodus 15:25-26
Then Moses cried out to the Lord, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became sweet. There the Lord made a decree and a law for them, and there he tested them. He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring *[permit]* on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you [Jehovah-Rapha]."

- Why throw a piece of wood into the bitter waters to make it sweet?
    - The wood points to the cross that would turn our bitter lives into something sweet.
    - Our spirit, soul and body.

Galatians 3:13
Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

- "Jehovah-Rapha" reveals His nature of *healer* to His people.

It's also used in Isaiah 53:5, *"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed-rapha."*

And He was certainly not talking about "spiritual healing," but rather physical healing because the diseases which came upon the Egyptians were not "spiritual."

- Jesus was nailed to the cross and cast into the bitter waters so that we can be healed.
    - Surely He has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains on Calvary's tree.
    - The devil would make us to be his pack mule- be a carrier of his stinking diseases.
    - We must be adamant that what He bore as our substitute we will refuse to carry again.
    - Otherwise, what Jesus did for me was in vain.

2 Corinthians 6:1-2
As God's fellow workers <u>we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain</u>. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

- When symptoms try to attach themselves to our bodies, we don't have to accept it with our heart.
    - Just keep on resisting them in Jesus' Name.
    - say, "No in Jesus' Name, sickness you cannot stay here, return to sender!"

Lesson 3
Healing and the Atonement

E. Healing and the Atonement

1. The Right Sacrifice

Genesis 3:21- The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

- After the fall of man, God revealed to mankind the power of blood sacrifice to cover sin.
    - It must have been a shocking experience for them to see that animal slain before them.
    - There is nothing pretty in slaying an animal- it reveals the awfulness of sin.

Genesis 4:1-7

- The birth of religion is found with Cain who offered the fruit of His hands.
    - Abel's sacrifice of blood was accepted because it was done in faith and obedience.
    - Innocent blood had to be shed to redeem a guilty individual.
    - Only innocent life can be given on behalf of the guilty.
    - Blood has deep spiritual meaning in the Bible- Christianity is bloody.
    - The scarlet thread of blood covenant runs all throughout the Bible.

The universal law of God for payment of sin is a blood sacrifice- it is the only acceptable way to pay the penalty of sin. Human works, and good deeds - Isaiah 64:6 *"all our righteous acts are like filthy rags."*

Leviticus 17:11
For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to <u>you to make atonement</u> for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

- The best definition for sin is "To miss the mark"- meaning anything less than perfection.
    - The wages of sin is death- **Romans 6:23.**
    - All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God- **Romans 3:23.**
    - That is why Jesus came- to take away our sins.

John 1:29
The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God , who takes away the sin of the world!

Read Hebrews Chapter 9

2. Atonement

- Definition: Atonement- Turning aside God's wrath, by taking away sin.
    - The appeasement of God's wrath and satisfying God's Judgment.

Read John 1:29 above again!

- The place of atonement was made upon the mercy seat by the blood of Jesus.

Romans 3:21-26
But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <u>God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement</u>, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Hebrews 9:5
"Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover."

- Mercy, forgiveness, justification and reconciliation are all wrapped up in the term atonement.

1 John 2:1-2
My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

1 John 4:10- This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

- When the children of Israel under the old covenant offered a burnt offering the Scriptures say.

Leviticus 1:9- It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the Lord.

- Why would such a sacrifice be pleasing to the Lord.
    - Because of what it was pointing to- the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 1:18
"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

Isaiah 53:10- NKJV
Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin…

Hebrews 12:2-3
Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

It was the father's will to make Jesus our scapegoat and substitute for sin- to bear the wrath of God and satisfy God's justice and holiness. He paid a debt He did not owe, I owed a debt I could not pay, I needed someone to wash my sins away- that someone is JESUS!

- By the way did you know that blood has a voice?

Genesis 4:10
The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground."

- The blood of Abel calls for vengeance.
    - But the blood of Jesus calls for mercy and redemption?

Hebrews 12:24
To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

4. Healing was Purchased for us in the Atonement of our Lord

Principle of Redemptive Equivalency:

- Most if not all Christians know that Jesus bore their sins on the cross.
    - Few make the connection between Jesus' blood and their healing.
    - Healing is in the atonement or redemptive work of Christ.
    - In other words, we are redeemed from sickness as much as we are from sin.

- Why do so many Christians have great faith concerning the forgiveness of sins.
    - Faith comes by hearing the Word.
    - Yet the Bible puts healing and forgiveness on equal redemptive grounds.
    - Actually, forgiveness of sins has paved the way for our healing.

5. The Sure Foundation for Believing in Divine Healing

1 Corinthians 3:11
For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

- The sure foundation for Divine healing is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
    - It cannot be in personal experience is seeing others healed or not healed.
    - We must see healing provided for us in the atonement of Christ.
    - We see it in the Word of God.

Isaiah 53:4-5 NKJV
Surely He has borne our griefs [kholee, <u>sicknesses</u>] and carried our sorrows [makob, <u>pains</u>]; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

Matthew 8:16-17
When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."

Matthew 8:17 AMP
And thus He fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, He Himself took [in order to carry away] our weaknesses and infirmities and bore away our diseases. [Isaiah 53:4.]

- The English translation of Isaiah was really unfortunate: "Griefs" and "Sorrows"
    - "Griefs" in the Hebrew is *kholee* = Sicknesses
    - "Sorrows" in the Hebrew is *makob* = Pains
    - So original Hebrew text would read:

Isaiah 53:4 - Surely He has borne our <u>sicknesses</u> and carried our <u>pains</u>…

- The English translations are thus inaccurate, except for Young's Literal Translation.

Isaiah 53:4, YLT - Surely our <u>sicknesses</u> he hath borne, and our <u>pains</u> - he hath carried them…

- Lets now see how these Hebrews words are used elsewhere in the Old Testament.

Kholee: Sicknesses
In Deuteronomy 7:15 NKJV we read, *"And the Lord will take away from you all sickness [kholee]…"* This word is translated "sickness" in **Deuteronomy 28:61, 1 Kings 17:17, 2 Kings 1:2; 8:8**, and other places.

Makob: Pains
Makob is translated "pain" in Job 33:19 KJV, *"He is chastened also with pain [makob]."* In Jeremiah 51:8 KJV we read, *"Take balm for her pain [makob]."*

- Let's look at the verbs in **Isaiah 53:4**- "Borne" NIV(took up) *[nasa]* and "Carried" *[sabal.*

Nasa: Borne
Means to bear in the sense of "Suffering punishment for something."
Leviticus 5:1 KJV, *"And if a soul sin. . . then he shall bear [nasa] his iniquity."*
Isaiah 53:12 KJV*"And He was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare [nasa] the sin of many."*

- Now how did Christ bear our sins?

Vicariously- Definition: performed, exercised, received, or suffered in place of another: vicarious punishment. Taking the place of another person or thing; acting or serving as a substitute, as our Substitute.

But this is the same verb used in Isaiah 53:4 KJV, *"Surely he [Christ] hath borne [nasa] our sicknesses."*

- **Isaiah 53:12**- teaches that Jesus bore *[Nasa]* our sins vicariously.
- **Isaiah 53:4**- Jesus also bore *[Nasa]* our sicknesses vicariously.
- Jesus bore our sicknesses in the very same way that He bore our sins.

Yes, the very same verb (*nasa*) is used of bearing our sins in Isaiah **53:12** as is used in **Isaiah 53:4** in regards to bearing our sicknesses.

Therefore we are as healed as we are forgiven- bodily healing is in the Atonement.

Sabal: Carried
This verb *sabal*(carried) also means "to bear something as a penalty or chastisement."
Lamentations 5:7, *"Our fathers sinned and are no more, and we bear [sabal] their punishment."*
Isaiah 53:11 KJV, *"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied . . . for he shall bear [sabal) their iniquities."*

Now how did Christ bear our iniquities? Vicariously as our Substitute.

- If you had a child that was suffering and you could bear it for him/her- would you?
- **Isaiah 53:11**- Jesus bore *[sabal]* our iniquities.
- **Isaiah 53:4**- Jesus carried *[sabal]* our pains.

Isaiah 53:4 KJV, *"Surely he hath borne [nasa} our sicknesses, and carried [sabal] our pains.*

- So Christ died for our sicknesses in the very same way that He died for our sins.

- Some have insisted that **Isaiah 53:4** was only referring to **"spiritual healing."**
    - Referring to the New Birth- being born again.

When the Bible talks about the New Birth, it speaks of the destruction of the Old Man, not to heal it.

Galatians 2:20- I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.

Romans 6:6-8
For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

2 Corinthians 5:17-18
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

- When our bodies are healed, we do not receive a brand new body.
- When a person is born again, they become a new creation; something that did not exist before.
- The Bible does not teach the New Birth experience as "inner healing.
- Neither does the Bible say to heal our minds, but to renew it with God's Word- **Romans 12:2.**

Ezekiel 36:26-27
I will give you a <u>new</u> heart and put a <u>new</u> spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

- Context in **Matthew 8:14**, was not referring to "spiritual healing," but physical healing.

Matthew 8:14-17
When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him. When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."

- Peter also witness to this great fact that bodily healing is in the Atonement.

1 Peter 2:24 AMP
He personally bore our sins in His [own] body on the tree[as on an altar and offered Himself on it], that we might die (cease to exist) to sin and live to righteousness. <u>By His wounds you have been healed</u>.

Isaiah 53:5, which reads in the Septuagint (Greek version of the Old Testament):

*"But he was wounded on account of our sins, and was bruised because of our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his **bruise** [**molopi**, by the bruise of Him] we are healed."*

- The word for "**healed**" here, both in the Septuagint and the Greek New Testament, is ***iaomai.***
    - A verb that always speaks of physical healing in the New Testament.
    - It is used 28 times in the New Testament, and always in connection with physical healing
    - Therefore, **1 Peter 2:24** was referring to physical healing and not spiritual healing.

Both Isaiah and Peter use the singular word "bruise" or "stripe" (*molopi*) and not "bruises" or "stripes."

Mark 15:15
Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

If Christ had been so scourged that the mark of each blow could plainly have been seen on His back, then the rule of Greek grammar would have demanded here the use of *molopsi* (bruises), and not the singular *molopi* (bruise).

Our dear Savior's back had been so terribly scourged that not one blow could possibly be distinguished from the other. Every spot on His back was so bruised and lacerated that it was just like one great bruise.

- The Jews had a law of 40 lashes minus one- the Romans had no such law.
    - So they often scourged their victim until he bled to death.
    - The cruel Romans also plucked out His whiskers by the roots and spat upon Him.

Isaiah 50:6
I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.

10. His Visage was Marred Beyond Recognition

He became a Man of pains acquainted with sicknesses because He was carrying all our diseases as well as physical and mental pains. In fact, His face and body were so disfigured by the diseases and pain that those who saw Him were appalled and hid their faces from Him.

Isaiah 53:3 NKJV
He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows [pains] and acquainted with grief [sickness]. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Isaiah 52:14
Just as there were many who were appalled at him — his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness.

- How many of you have seen the movie by Mel Gibson- "The Passion of the Christ."

Now we can understand why Peter asserts with Isaiah, that *"by his bruise [not bruises}, we were healed[bodily]."* We were bought (Redeemed) – spirit/soul/body at a terrible price- our ransom!

1 Corinthians 6:19-20
Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought [*egorasthete*] at a price. Therefore honor God with your body – *One way of honoring God with our body is by keeping it healed!*

Revelation 5:9 NKJV
And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed [*egorasas* NIV: Purchased] us to God by Your blood.

1 Timothy 2:5-6
For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men — the testimony given in its proper time.

The redemptive realities and precious promises have been bought and paid for- just claim them now!

- Let's not try to bear what He already carried for us as our substitute.
- Satan has no legal right to oppress our bodies with sickness and disease.

Colossians 1:13-14 AMP
[The Father] has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, In Whom we have our redemption through His blood, [which means] the forgiveness of our sins.

- At Rhema they have Healing and Prayer school in the afternoons Monday – Friday.
- They are really healing technicians- specializing in ministering God's Healing Word to the sick.
- For us to receive our healing- we have to be serious, focused and deliberate about it.

Proverbs 2:1-11
My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones. Then you will understand what is right and just and fair — every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you.

Lesson 4
The Passover, Communion & Redemption

F. Passover

Exodus 12:1-2
The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, "This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year."

- Exodus Chapter 12 begins with the creation of the Jewish calendar.
    - On the tenth day of this new month, each household is to take a lamb.
    - The lamb is to be a one year old male without blemish or defect.
    - They are to keep the lamb for four days so they can become attached to it.
    - On the fourteenth day at twilight, all the community must slaughter their lambs.
    - Some of the blood is put on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the houses.
    - Lamb is roasted over the fire as is and is eaten along with bitter herbs/unleavened bread.
    - They were to eat it in haste, fully dressed and ready to leave- it is the Lord's Passover.
- God used the innocent lamb as a type of Jesus being the perfect, sinless sacrifice for mankind.

Isaiah 53:7
He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

John 1:29- The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

The blood of the lamb was applied by dipping a bunch of hyssop in the blood and striking the two side posts and the upper post or lintel of the door.

Exodus 12:23
When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

- Did you know one of the symbols representative of Egypt was the serpent.
    - In the Bible, the serpent represents Satan- **Genesis 3:15; Revelation 12:9.**
    - God used the blood of the lamb to destroy Satan's power; set people free from bondage.

- Egypt is a type of the "World System" that Satan dominates; formerly held us in bondage.
    - The new birth represents our spiritual Exodus out of the kingdom of darkness.
    - Through the blood of Jesus we have been delivered and ransomed from an old life.

Colossians 1:13-14 AMP
[The Father] has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, In Whom we have our redemption through His blood, [which means] the forgiveness of our sins.

- The Passover event turned into a annual ordinance called the "Feast of Unleavened Bread."
    - Until its fulfillment in Jesus Christ at the Last Supper.
    - Jesus instituted a new ordinance under the New Covenant called Communion.

1. The Way Unleavened Bread is Made

- Yeast or leaven in the Bible is a type or symbol representing sin.

1 Corinthians 5:7-8
Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast — as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.

- Jewish matza is striped with tiny holes; it also has many burnt marks.
- The matza clearly represents the body of our Lord- By His stripes or bruise we are healed!
- The stripes, wounds and bruisings speak of the scourging He endured to purchase our healing.
- The holes speak of His piercing by the crown of thorns, nails and Roman soldier's spear.
- The burnt marks speak of the fiery wrath of God Jesus endured 3 days in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 12:40
For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

3. None Feeble Among Them

- The very first Passover meal was eaten on the night before the Israelites left Egypt.
    - When they left, the Bible says that not one was feeble among them- that's 2-3 million.

Psalms 105:37 NKJV
He also brought them out with silver and gold, And there was none feeble among His tribes.

- That is amazing when you consider the fact that the Israelites we slaves for centuries.
    - Every household partook of the lamb which was a type and shadow pointing to Jesus .
    - Jesus is the bread of life – our life, strength and sustenance- **John 6:24-35.**
    - In Him we live and move and have our being- **Acts 17:28.**

Psalms 28:8- The Lord is the strength of his people, a fortress of salvation for his anointed one.

Psalms 27:1 NKJV
The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?

Philippians 4:13 NKJV- I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

5. The Blood for our Protection

- It was the blood on the doorposts that stopped the plague from coming into the house
    - We see protection from deadly diseases in the blood of Jesus

Revelation 12:11
They overcame him [Satan] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony…

- The wine in communion represents the blood of Jesus- shed for our deliverance.
    - We can claim protection from accidents, sicknesses, attacks-both physical or spiritual.
    - Satan was the destroyer of Egypt.

Hebrews 11:28
By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

Hebrews 2:14-16
Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

John 10:10
The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

- The blood of Jesus speaks a better word than the blood of Abel- **Hebrews 12:24.**
    - Jesus was already slain on our behalf- by the grace of God He tasted death for everyone.
    - The blood of Jesus says that the same crime cannot be punished twice.
    - But like the Israelites, we must apply the blood of Jesus over our lives through faith.
    - Speaking the Word concerning what the blood and the Name of Jesus.

1 John 5:18 NKJV
We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

Luke 10:18-19
He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

Psalms 91:10-16 NKJV
No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot. "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation."

- Old Time Pentecostals had a saying – "Plead the Blood!"

For example, Christian parents can lay hands on their children and say, "Father, I apply the precious blood of Jesus over my children who are going to school now. Watch over them and protect them from all manner of harm."

As Jesus prayed in John 17:15, *"My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one."*

Even though Jesus did not call upon 12 legions of angels in **Matthew 26:53** to deliver Him, we can!

Hebrews 1:14- Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

Psalms 103:20 NASU- Bless the Lord, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word!

- When we speak and stand on God's Word – Angels have their marching orders!

6. Jesus our Passover Lamb

1 Corinthians 5:7- For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

In Matthew 26:26 NKJV
And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

In **Mark 15:25**, Jesus was nailed to the cross at the third hour- 9 o'clock in the morning, Jewish time.
- There He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows.
- He was wounded for our transgressions.
- He was bruised for our iniquities.
- The Lord laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all.
- He was oppressed and afflicted. Yet He opened not His mouth, like a lamb led to the slaughter.

Read: 1 Corinthians 11:23-32

To realize these redemptive provisions, we need to discern, recognize and appreciate the Lord's Body!

- Know what it represents!
- First, His body was broken for our physical and emotional healing.
- Second, we recognize the Body of Christ by walking in love towards other believers.
- Failure to neglect these two aspects of the Body of the Lord leads to trouble.

- The words, *"This is my body,"* gave to the unleavened bread a new character.
    - Representing the broken body of Jesus for our healing.
    - The cup, which was *"the New Covenant"* in His blood.

1 Peter 2:24: literal translation - *"By the bruise of whom you were healed physically."*
The word "healed" in 1 Peter 2:24 (*iaomai*) without one exception in the New Testament refers only and always to physical healing, never to spiritual healing!

- Therefore, communion clearly declares that health and healing are provided for in the atonement.
    - Bread is a symbol of healing and deliverance- Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter.

Matthew 15:25-28
The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." "Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

We are to recognize the Lord's body believing and receiving by faith what the bread and wine represent- the pierced, striped, bruised and broken body of our Lord for our healing, and the blood for our justification and ongoing righteousness and protection. Are we laying hold of these truths and claiming the benefits by faith as we partake of the elements?

- Religious penance or beating ourselves up offers no grace or power to overcome sin.
    - Put your trust in the power of the blood and redemptive work of Christ to do the job.

Colossians 2:20-23
Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

2 Corinthians 5:21- God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Romans 5:17- …how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

- Beware of false condemnation it is a thief- to beat us down and hinder us from receiving.

G. Salvation- More than Forgiveness of Sins

- The Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul made an outstanding statement in:

Romans 1:16- "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation…"

Dr. Scofield, a Greek and Hebrew scholar, made a reference to this verse in his footnotes in regards to the word "salvation" that is awesome. Dr. Scofield says, "The Greek and Hebrew words translated salvation imply the ideas of **deliverance, safety, preservation, healing, and health**." "Salvation is the great inclusive word of the Gospel, gathering into itself all the redemptive acts and processes." The Greek word for "salvation" is *soteria*, implies deliverance, preservation, healing, health, soundness, and in the New Testament is applied sometimes to the spirit or soul, and at other times to the body only. The Greek word "*sozo*" translated "saved," also means "healed," "made sound," or "made whole."

- Romans 10:9 translated "saved" is in reference to the New Birth.
- In Acts 14:9 the same Greek word is translated "healed" in referring to the healing of a lame man
    - The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto deliverance.
    - The Gospel is the power of God unto safety.
    - It is the power of God unto preservation.
    - And it is the power of God unto healing and health.

Acts 14:6-10
But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, where they continued to <u>preach the good news</u>. In Lystra there sat a man crippled in his feet, who was lame from birth and had never walked. He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, <u>saw that he had faith to be healed</u> and called out, "Stand up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

- Paul was preaching the gospel, the message of salvation.
- Paul had to be talking about Christ the Healer and God's will for everyone to be well.
    - **Romans 10:17**- faith comes by hearing – the crippled man had faith to be healed.
    - Paul had to have incorporated the message of healing in his presentation of the gospel.
- Another example of "sozo" or "saved" being used in connection with healing.

Matthew 9:20-22
Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, <u>I will be healed</u>." Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has <u>healed</u> [*sozo*] you." And the woman was healed from that moment.

- The woman did not say, "well I hope I'll be healed" or "maybe if it's God's will I'll be healed."
    - She was the only one who touched Him in faith- the others were hoping sparks would fly.
    - I've asked this question before, "Is it God's will for all people to be saved?"

1 Timothy 2:3-4 -This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants <u>all</u> men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

- Since healing is part of "Salvation" would it then be God's will for all to be healed?

Luke 6:17-19
He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the people <u>all</u> tried to touch him, because <u>power</u> was coming from him and healing them <u>all</u>.

According to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, *sozo* means:
"To save, to keep safe and sound, to rescue from danger or destruction universally, to keep one (from injury or peril); to save a suffering one (from perishing), e.g. one suffering from disease, to make well, heal, restore to health." Wow, I like that, we have received salvation from suffering sickness and disease through faith in Jesus Christ as our Healer. As we can see, one of the meanings of *sozo* is to save a suffering one from perishing of his/her disease, that is, to make well, to heal and restore him/her to health- not just remission of sins!

3 John 2 NKJV
Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.

James 1:21 AMP- In a humble spirit receive and welcome the Word which implanted and rooted [in your hearts] contains the power to save *[sozo]* your souls. – *Was talking to saved believers.*

Psalms 107:20- He sent His word and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions.

Proverbs 4:20-22 AMP
My son, attend to my words; consent and submit to my sayings. Let them not depart from your sight; keep them in the center of your heart. For they are life to those who find them, <u>healing and health</u> (Heb- Marpe- a curative medicine/deliverance – God's Word = medicine) to all their flesh.

- The Full Gospel Message puts Healing on the same redemptive ground as the remission of sins!

Acts 5:19-20
But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the jail and brought them out. "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said, "<u>and tell the people the full message of this new life</u>."

2. The Same Crime Cannot be Punished Twice

Because Christ bore our sicknesses and pains on the cross, it would make no sense for us to bear them again. Do we go around carrying our sins and feeling condemned? No, because Jesus already bore our sins for us. He was judged and punished in our place because He was carrying our sins. So for us to carry on bearing our sins and condemning ourselves is to not trust in the finished work of Christ and to dishonor it. It is the same with sicknesses and pains. Why should a Christian suffer cancer and be in pain when Christ has already borne that cancer and pain in His body on the cross? If Christ has already been punished with that cancer, why should that Christian be punished again with the same disease?

1 Corinthians 6:20, *"Therefore honor God with your body."* Be vigilant to keep sickness off our bodies.

3. Why Jesus could Heal Then and Now

Here are six reasons why we should expect God to heal us from sickness and diseases today:

1) Because God used to heal the sick as Jehovah-Rapha (the Lord our Healer), and He is "the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

2) Because Christ died on the cross to atone for our sicknesses, just as He died to atone for our sins.

3) Because all sickness is the result of Satan's work. When he introduced sin into this world and "Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil."

4) Because the very same Holy Spirit is in the Church today who did all of Christ's miracles and all of Paul's miracles; is the very Holy Spirit who raised Christ from the dead. Since this is true, why should we not expect Him still to heal the sick?

5) Because of Christ's last Great Commission in **Mark 16:15-18**, and because of His direct command in James 5:14-15, *"Is any of you sick, … the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well"*

6) Because of all His marvelous promises, the fulfillment of which depends altogether upon the exercise of our own faith in God's Word.

Lesson 5
Right and Wrong Thinking about Healing

Lesson five is the beginning of unit two, "Roadblocks to Healing" which is an important section in this series on Divine Healing. In this unit we will challenge modern religious ideology that contradicts Scripture.

John 8:31-32 AMP
So Jesus said to those Jews who had believed in Him, If you abide in My word [hold fast to My teachings and live in accordance with them], you are truly My disciples. And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free.

- If we abide in His Word.
- If we put His Word first place in our lives and put it into practice.
- We will know the truth by living the truth in our lives and that truth will make us free.

A. Wrong Thinking About Healing

Romans 10:14-15, 17
How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.

- How we think is so important; particularly as it pertains to the subject of Divine Healing.
    - If what we hear is wrong, then our thinking will be wrong.
    - If our thinking is wrong then our believing will be wrong.
    - If what we believe is wrong than our decisions/actions/behavior will be wrong.
    - Our lives based on misinformation- hearing, thinking, believing and doing error = tragedy

Satan uses the power of suggestion to plant seeds of doubt in our minds- "Did God really say, 'Surely he took up your sickness and carried your pains?'"

Song of Solomon 2:15
Catch for us the foxes, the little foxes that ruin the vineyards, our vineyards that are in bloom.

For most people, not all of what they hear is wrong, but it's these little doubts and that are subtly added to the mix that makes us ineffective in receiving from God.

Proverbs 23:7 NKJV- For as he thinks in his heart, so is he

Romans 12:2
Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

Ephesians 4:17
So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer <u>live as the Gentiles do</u>, in the <u>futility of their thinking</u>.

Colossians 3:8-10
But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have <u>taken off your old self</u> with its practices and have <u>put on the new self</u>, which is being <u>renewed in knowledge</u> in the image of its Creator.

- Our lives are the result, the sum total or the harvest of our thinking
- Behavior modification begins with renewing our minds with truth
    - **John 17:17- Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.**

Ephesians 5:25-26
Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the <u>washing with water through the word</u>, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

- One of the main objectives of the five-fold ministry gifts is to:

Ephesians 4:12-13
1) to prepare God's people for works of service
2) so that the body of Christ may be built up
3) until we all reach <u>unity in the faith</u> and in the <u>knowledge of the Son of God</u>
4) and become <u>mature</u>, attaining to the <u>whole measure</u> of the fullness of Christ.

Some Christians who need healing have said to me, "Maybe God put this sickness on me for some special purpose."

- Question: "Do we have any Biblical account where Jesus ever put sickness on anyone?"

When people came to Him for healing, did He ever turn even one away saying, "No, it's not My will to heal you just now, you're going to have to suffer a little longer. You haven't learned your lesson on humility just yet."

- If the truth makes us free, than error and half-truths will hold us in bondage.
- Addressing the religious leaders of Jesus' day He condemned their religious traditions harshly!

Luke 11:46
Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them.

Luke 11:52
"Woe to you experts in the law, because you have taken away the key to knowledge. You yourselves have not entered, and you have hindered those who were entering."

Religious philosophy, based on human reasoning and tradition has robbed countless of God's children of His redemptive provision for their lives.

Colossians 2:20-23
Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom , with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Religion will say:
- "You're not worthy to be healed, perhaps if you work harder for the kingdom, He might heal U."
- "Suffering sickness and disease will purify your soul of pride, just hang in there and persevere."
- "It's just not always God's will to heal, you need to just trust in His sovereign plan."
- I could go with many more examples, but my response to such rhetoric is:
    - Proverbs 30:6, *"Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar."*

- When some folks don't get healed, they feel compelled to come up with an explanation as to why
    - Why not admit we missed God somewhere and ask for wisdom.
    - It's a dangerous practice to spiritualize experiences- dismissing explicit revelation.
    - The next time it comes to believe God for healing we have created a religious roadblock.

1. Trying to Be Humble – Big Mistake!

Some take pride in how humble they are- living in lack, oppressed, sick- thinking they are suffering for Jesus when what they are doing is just being ignorant of the Bible.

- Religion makes humility out to be self-abasement- **refer again to Colossians 2:20-23 above.**
- To deny oneself of any pleasure, joy or blessings from God.
- Human nature goes from one ditch to the other on this matter- Self-Indulgence to Self-Denial.
- For the early church, dealing with error and excess was a full-time job.

1 Timothy 1:3-4
As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work — which is by faith.

- So where do a lot of these religious ideologies come from?

1 Timothy 4:1-5
The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

We already established the fact that Divine Healing is part of the Gospel message and Atonement- right?
- The devil wants to add a bunch of exclusions and amendments to the simple truth and nullify it!
- As Jesus said in Mark 7:13 concerning tradition- it nullifies the Word of God.
- Let's stay with the truth of God's Word like the Bereans in **Acts 17:11!**
- Let's now take a look at the table that the Lord has been prepared before us.

Psalms 23
The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

- So what do you think the Lord has put on His table for us?

Suppose in the name of trying to be humble a believer approaches this banquet table sheepishly, and apologetically; only taking a couple of scoops from the plate of forgiveness and that's it. He looks next to him and sees one of those "Full Gospel" folks, just digging in. I mean, he is taking huge helpings of everything on that salvation table, he just wants to try everything. Meanwhile, our religious brother, looks forlornly at his meager sampling. In jealousy, he begins to chide his other brother for being greedy, arrogant and selfish to presume that he can help himself to the master's table and partake of whatever and as much as he wants.

He tells him, "What, do you think this is all for your benefit? You need to show some restraint, first prove your loyalty to the Lord and suffer lack, sacrifice and suffer hunger and pain for the Master- who do you think you are!" Just then the Lord interrupts and says to this pious one, "Who told you to carry the burden of sin and the curse that only I could bear for humanity. Why are you shrinking back from what I have provided for your benefit and cost me everything. It is right and proper to be excited as a little child and jump in and enjoy the Salvation I have richly provided for you."

Psalms 34:8-10
<u>Taste and see that the Lord is good</u>; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Fear the Lord, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. The lions may grow weak and hungry, <u>but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing</u>.

Hebrews 4:16
Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence , so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Now, for those Christians out there who are trying to be humble, I believe their hearts are right most of the time. They sincerely think they are pleasing God by their actions- sadly they are misguided in this.

Proverbs 14:12- There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.
Hosea 4:6- My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.
Proverbs 19:2- It is not good to have zeal without knowledge, nor to be hasty and miss the way.

Why is it always seem to be the religious folks that give us full-gospel people a hard time about "Forgetting not His benefits?" Is it out of envy, pride or comparison. It reminds me of the attitude that the older brother had towards his younger brother in the story of the Prodigal Son.

The older son represents the faithful Christian, who servers the Lord faithfully for years. However, when he/she sees other Christians, who may be uncommitted get healed, it chaffs them. They get all bent out of shape and mad, thinking God owes them something.

However, they fail to realize that the promises of God have been provided as a gift and so must be received by faith. Good works does not get us saved nor do they get us healed; only faith in God's Word appropriates the provision of God in one's life. Notice how the father pleads with his older son in the story, *"everything I have is yours."* In other words, all you had to do was ask, according to John 16:24, *"Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."* Everything the older brother wanted or needed was at his finger tips- he just didn't know it or was to proud to ask. It's not the father's fault if his son does not take advantage of what already belongs to him.

Luke 15:25-32
"Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!' "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and <u>everything I have is yours</u>. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

3. Was Divine Healing Only for the Early Church

Many Bible teachers today tell us that the age of miracles passed away with the death of the apostles. So Christ is not healing the sick today. Let us investigate this subject and find out for ourselves. Listen to Justin Martyr (165 A.D.), one of the great Church leaders and scholars of his day:

He says, "For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world and in your city, many of our Christian men, exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, have healed, and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of the men, though they could not be cured by all the other exorcists, and those who used incantations and drugs" (Apol. II, Chapter 6). Then this Apostolic, miracle-working power was in the Church down to 165 A.D.

Listen to Origen (250 A.D.): "And some give evidence of their having received through their faith a marvelous power by the cures which they perform, invoking no other name over those who need their help than that of the God of all things, and of Jesus, along with a mention of His history. For by these means we too have seen many persons freed from grievous calamities, and from distractions of mind and madness, and countless other ills, which could be cured neither by men or devils" (Contra Celsum Book III, Chapter 24). Then down to 250 A.D. this same Apostolic, miracle working power was in the Church.

Theodore of Mopsueste (429 A.D.) says: "Many heathen amongst us are being healed by Christians from whatever sickness they have, so abundant are miracles in our midst" (Christlieb – Modern Doubt, page 321).

Rev. A. Bost (History of United Brethren, Page 17) quotes the famous Zinzendorf's words, spoken in 1730: "To believe against hope is the root of the gift of miracles; and I owe this testimony to our beloved church, that Apostolic powers are there manifested. We have had undeniable proofs thereof in the unequivocal discovery of things, persons, and circumstances, which could not humanly have been discovered. In the healing of maladies in themselves incurable, such as cancers, consumptions, when the patient was in the agonies of death, all by means of prayer, or of a single word."

B. Understanding the Fall of Man

Genesis 1:26 NKJV
Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

1. How did Sickness Enter this World?

Our answer is found in Romans 5:12, *"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned."* Therefore, physical death and all that produces it are the direct results of sin.

John 10:1-2
"I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who enters by the gate is the shepherd of his sheep.

- Satan is the thief who came into the Garden of Eden to steal man's dominion.
    - So how did he do it? By listening to and obeying Satan- became subject to him.

Romans 6:16
Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey — whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

- When Jesus was tempted of the devil, he tried the same trick on Jesus- it didn't work!

Luke 4:5-8
The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

- So why did Jesus come to earth- to fulfill **Genesis 3:15.**

Genesis 3:15
And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

1 John 3:8- The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Hebrews 2:14-15
Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Revelation 1:18
I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

1 Corinthians 15:24-26
Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.

Revelation 20:14-15
Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Death entered the world through Adam, death has been defeated by Jesus and will eventually be destroyed in the Lake of Fire.

Romans 5:12, 17
Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

- Jesus came to undo what Satan did through Adam's disobedience- it will come full circle!

2. Jesus Rebuked the Storm

From the natural standpoint, it is difficult for people to understand that most of the laws governing the earth today came into being through the fall of man – when Adam sinned and the curse came upon the earth. Hurricanes, tornadoes, earth quakes, tsunamis, plagues, famine, wars and human misery.

- These are not acts of God but of the devil and the result of the fall of men.
- Bear in mind that Jesus said, *"He that has seen Me has seen the Father"* (**John 14:9**).
- Well, we don't see Jesus bringing any storms on people. We see Him calming the storms!

Mark 4:35-41- He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

3. Jesus Rebuked the Fever

Whenever Jesus saw the work of Satan on display through sickness and disease or demon possession, He intervened and rebuked it. Again Jesus was not rebuking the work of God in folks lives. Jesus' mission was to destroy the devil's that was oppressing humanity- not encourage it.

Luke 4:38-39- Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.

Another reason why we are absolutely sure Satan is the author of sickness as well as sin, is because Christ always uses the same harsh word, *epitimao*, to rebuke sickness (Satan's work) as He uses to rebuke evil spirits. In Luke 4:35 NKJV we read, *"But Jesus rebuked [epetimesen] him [the evil spirit in a man], saying, 'Be quiet, and come out of him!'"* In Luke 4:39 NKJV we also read, *"So He stood over her and rebuked [epetimesen, the same word as in Luke 4:35] the [spirit causing the fever] fever, and it left her."*

Lesson 6
Why do Christians get Sick?

- In lesson six we begin to explore the causes or reasons behind Christians getting sick.

C. So is God in Control of Everything on the Earth?

We need to get some of these things straight in our minds, because many in the church world are confused. People have all kinds of unscriptural ideas. Some think, Well, God's got everything under control, He is sovereign, so whatever happens does so for a reason- so don't question or resist it. But that may or may not be so, according to how you mean it. If you mean that God is ruling the earth right now – no, He isn't! He's going to rule it again one of these days, but He's not right now.

There was an interesting article by a well-known newspaper columnist. He said, in effect, "I don't claim to be a Christian, but I'm not an atheist or an agnostic. The atheist says there is no God. I believe there is one. The agnostic says there may be a God; he doesn't know. I believe there is. "I don't believe everything just happened into being," he continued. "I believe some Supreme Being created everything. But what hinders me from being a Christian is what I hear preachers saying. I'm confused because they say God is running everything. And if He is, He sure has things in a mess." Then the man alluded to wars, children being killed, poverty, disease, and sickness, saying, "I believe that there is a Supreme Being somewhere and that everything He made was beautiful and good. I just can't believe those things are the work of God."

Luke 4:5-7
The devil led Jesus up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, <u>for it has been given to me</u>, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

2 Corinthians 4:4
The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

For the time being, even though Satan is a defeated foe, he is still the god over this world system! That is why the world is in such a mess.

John 10:10-11 AMP
The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows). I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd risks and lays down His [own] life for the sheep. (see also Psalms 23)

- We need to keep our theology straight in this matter.
    - Good God versus bad devil.
- Christians confused in making this clear distinction are hindered in receiving their healing.
    - The Lord is our good shepherd – green pastures and quiet waters – restores our soul.
    - If we get out of line, the Good Shepherd uses the rod of His Word to correct and train us.

God does not brake our arm to get His point across or afflict us with cancer to keep us in line. Certainly, He can work the good out of what the devil meant for harm, but He is not the author of it.

- Our Heavenly Father uses His Word to correct and train us.

2 Timothy 3:16-17
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

How can we have a basis of faith for healing if there is even the remotest possibility that it was God's will for us to be afflicted with sickness and disease for some esoteric spiritual reason. As a result, to believe God for healing would be praying against the so-called will of God.

- Satan is the author of trials, tests and temptations- what he is after is our faith.

Luke 22:31-32- "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

1 Thessalonians 3:5
For this reason, when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith. I was afraid that in some way the tempter might have tempted you and our efforts might have been useless.

If God was responsible for even one trial, test or temptation, than the following Scripture would be untrue!

Psalms 34:19- Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of <u>them all</u>.

For God to deliver us from an affliction He authored, would be a contradiction and His kingdom would be divided according to Matthew 12:25! Galatians 2:18, "If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker." Therefore, God never makes us sick, just so He can turn around and heal us.

2 Timothy 4:18- The Lord will rescue me <u>from every evil attack</u> and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

- How could the Church of Jesus Christ become so confused over something so simple.
    - <u>Brice- Testimony of the little red headed 5 year old girl</u>- God is good and the devil is bad.
    - Great revelation is often revealed to little children – open hearts and simple minds.

Matthew 11:25-26
At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.

- Let's take a look at the Great Commission.

Mark 16:15-18
He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; <u>they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well</u>."

Let's stop and analyze this, which one of the sick did Jesus say to lay hands on? He just said the sick, period. Well, if God were the author of sickness, if He did put sickness and disease on people, and if it were His will for some to be sick, then this statement would be confusing- because Jesus authorized us to lay hands on all the sick and Jesus said they would recover.

- Sickness and disease is either direct or indirect oppression from the devil.

Acts 10:38
How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and <u>healing all who were under the power of the devil</u>, because God was with him.

If it were God's will for some to remain sick, Jesus would have had to have said something like, "Lay your hands on those for whom it is the will of God to heal, and they shall recover. And those whom it isn't God's will to heal, they won't recover." But that wasn't the case.

- God set the Church against sickness, period!

James 5:14-15
Is <u>any one</u> of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

Verse 14 asks, "Is any sick among you?" Among whom? The Church. So it must be God's will to heal any of the sick in the Church. Therefore, it can't be the will of God for "any" in the Church to stay sick.

D. So Why do Christians Get Sick

I have heard it, and you have probably have too, "Why haven't I been healed?" "Why did my mother die?" "Why was my baby born handicapped?" We all have a lot of "why" questions. I have plenty of my own, but not all of them will be answered in this life.

- However, the Scriptures does shed a lot of light on many of the "Why's" that we have.
- We are going to cover some of these pitfalls that Christians fall into.
- But one thing we do know for sure, it's God's will for all to be healed, all the time.
- When we fail to receive according to His Word, that is never God's will.

So many of our "why" questions would be answered if we only looked at the way we live, and compared it with the standard of obedience required by the Word of God.

- I am not just talking about living right by walking in love- that is an important part of it.
- It is also learning how to follow simple instructions in God's Word.
- Being skilled and trained in the Word and not being ignorant of Satan's devices.

1. Lack of Faith

Romans 3:3-4
What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar.

- Depending on your prior Christian upbringing this phrase may bring up some negative emotion.
    - But consider how many times Jesus contributed their faith to their healing.

Matthew 9:22 "…your faith has healed you."
Matthew 9:29 "… according to your faith will it be done to you."
Mark 9:23 "…'if you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."
Mark 10:52 "…your faith has healed you."
Luke 17:19 "…rise and go; your faith has made you well."
Luke 18:42 "…receive your sight; your faith has healed you."
Luke 8:25 "…where is your faith?"
Mark 4:40 "…why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

- If faith was not an important factor in receiving healing, why would it be said of Jesus in:

Mark 6:5-6
He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at <u>their lack of faith</u>.

- A lack of faith is not the only reason, but is a reason why people do not receive from God.

Many splendid Christians are not healed by prayer, because they cannot pray the prayer of expectant faith. "Perhaps God does not desire to heal me yet," and this "perhaps" causes a doubt in their heart.

James 1:5-8
If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

Many of you know about the Thomas Kind of Faith
Some will not believe that their prayer for healing has been heard until they have experienced and seen the answer in advance.

John 20:25, 29
"Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Mark 11:24- States that we must first believe before we receive:
Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, <u>believe that you have received it</u>, and it will be yours.

In other words when we first believe the Word of God in our spirit, then and only then will the answer materialize. So, which comes first the "believing" or the "receiving?"

2. Lack of Knowledge of God's Word

What we don't know can hurt us, ignorance of God's Word can cost the believer dearly!

Proverbs 21:23- He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity
Hosea 4:6- My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.

- We can't experience first-hand in our lives what we don't know exists.
    - For example, I went 9 years without receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 19:1-2
There Paul found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

You can have a million dollars buried in your back yard, if you don't know it's there-can't receive it!

- Our job is to point people to the treasures of God's Word.

Ephesians 3:8- to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Matthew 13:44
"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."

- God's Word is spiritual light for revelation knowledge – it is the key to enter into God's rest.

Psalms 119:130- The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.
Ephesians 1:17- Believe God for a spirit of wisdom and understanding!

- The Word of God works when we work it according to directions in the Scriptures.
    - Faith in God is a elementary teaching of Christ- spiritual milk.
    - We need to learn and cooperate with God's spiritual laws.
    - Do we know how to skillfully plant the incorruptible seed of God's Word?

Hebrews 6:1-3
Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of <u>faith in God</u>, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.

3. Disobedience to God's Word

Proverbs 28:13- He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

- Unrepentant sin gives the enemy the right to kill, steal and destroy in our lives.
    - The whole context of **Ephesians 4:26-27** is believers caught in the old way of life.

Ephesians 4:26-27
"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold- an open door or place in our lives- we open the door, not God!

Proverbs 19:3- "A man's own folly ruins his life, yet his heart rages against the Lord."

- We can't live any ole way and expect God to sanction and bless it.
    - The Law of the New Covenant is that we walk in love.

John 13:34-35
"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

1 John 4:19
We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Romans 13:8, 10
Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

- Not walking in love will hinder our faith because faith works by love- **Galatians 5:6.**

1 Peter 3:7
Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

Mark 11:25
And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

4. Many Christians are not Healed because of False Teaching

Jesus blasted the religious leaders for nullifying the Word of God with their religion.
Matthew 15:6, "Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition."

Tradition 1- It is not God's Will to Heal All
One such tradition is that, *"it's not always His will to heal, for God sovereignly chooses who to heal and who not to."* Some go so far that God purposely puts sickness on people in order to discipline them for their own good.

- Studying the life and ministry of Jesus should be sufficient clarification for this point.
    - God's Word reveals that Jesus healed all who had faith to receive and turned none away.

If it is God's will to heal only some of those who need healing, then none have any basis for faith, until they have received a special revelation that they are among the favored ones to be healed. If God's promises to heal are not for all, then no man can ascertain the will of God for himself from the Bible. Are we then to close our Bibles and get our revelation directly from the Spirit before we can pray for the sick, because the will of God in this matter cannot be ascertained from the Scriptures? No my brothers and sisters, God's Word is God's Will and our final authority – God's Word is explicit on healing!

Tradition 2- Developing Patience in Sickness
Another tradition which is responsible for thousands dying a premature death after years of physical agony, is the teaching that *"we glorify God more by remaining sick and exhibiting patience than we can by being divinely healed."*

An honest but unenlightened minister will often kneel at the bedside of one suffering with arthritis or cancer or some other terminal disease and pray, "Lord, since in Thy loving providence Thou hast seen fit to lay Thine afflicting hand upon our dear sister. Give her fortitude and patience to bear this affliction."

- What about the command to "anoint the sick" and pray the prayer of faith- **James 5:14.**

Which method John Wesley says was the only process of healing in the Church until it was lost through unbelief.

Tradition 3- The Age of Miracles has Passed
Here is another common and threadbare tradition in the worn-out statement that *"the age of miracles has passed."*

- As we have stated earlier in **Exodus 15:26, for <u>I am the Lord, who heals you</u>."**

To say that this privilege of health is not for God's people today, is to change God's "I Am" to "I Was" Jehovah-Rapha. God's has not changed His mind concerning Healing people!

Tradition 4- If it by Thy Will
It is impossible for one to ever pray with faith until the "If" has been removed from his/her prayer. To have real faith is to be "fully persuaded" that God will do what He has promised to do. "If it be Thy will" automatically inserts doubt and question- Faith begins where the will of God is known!

Since God has already revealed His will in this matter through His precious promises, for us to say, "If it be Thy will" when praying for healing is the same as to say, "If it be thy will to keep Thy promise."

It other words, we are saying "Lord I am not so sure You mean what You say and will keep Your word." God's response is, "Are you calling Me a liar?"- Only the Prayer of Consecration uses "If it be thy will."

Tradition 5- Paul's Thorn in the Flesh was Sickness
This unfortunate modern teaching, proposes that Paul's thorn in the flesh was some kind of physical illness- We will cover this in depth in a future lesson.

Tradition 6- Jesus Healed as the Son of God
Here is a tradition that has hindered the ministry of healing in teaching that Jesus healed the sick as the Son of God, not as the Son of Man. Such teachers believe that all healing came from Jesus because He is God. Now that He is in heaven, we should not expect such works to continue today- Greater works/Auth

Philippians 2:6-8
Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but <u>made himself nothing</u>, taking the very nature of a servant, <u>being made in human likeness</u>. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!

Tradition 7- Our Lifestyle is not a Factor
We can't violate the laws of nature and abuse our bodies and expect to walk in divine healing.

Tradition 8- God uses Sickness to Lead us into His Perfect Will
Some subscribe to the notion that God puts sickness and affliction on some as a way to rein them into the center of His will, and when this has been done, He removes the sickness. If He were to remove the illness too soon, many would run away, and so deprive themselves of the pleasure of living out the Divine will of God for their lives and beautify their character.

This tradition keeps saints from praying the prayer of faith to be healed, because they believe it is God's will that they should be sick, but they can, without any hesitation, send for a physician and use all possible human remedies to get rid of that which God has sent upon them for their so-called good. If sickness, as some think, is the will of God for His faithful children, then it would be a sin for them even to desire to be well, to say nothing of spending thousands of dollars to defeat His Sovereign purpose for their lives.

As one writer was quoted as saying, "Every physician is a lawbreaker; every trained nurse is defying the Almighty; every hospital is a house of rebellion, instead of a house of mercy," and instead of supporting hospitals, we ought to do our most to close everyone."

Many today hold that God afflicts even the obedient, because He loves them. Making sickness a love-token from our Heavenly Father. If this is true, why do they try to get rid of His love token? Why doesn't the one suffering with a cancer pray for a double portion for themselves and also ask Him to thus bless his wife, children, father, mother, neighbors, etc? Certainly, God will allow or permit His children to be attacked by the enemy because of a door we have opened, but that is never His will for us.

Again, this is classic human reasoning and there is no Scripture to support this line of thinking, that God uses Sickness to Lead us into His Perfect Will-Just because God allows it doesn't mean He sent it.

10. Don't Spiritualize the Situation

When tragedy hits a Christian, the biggest mistake they can make is to spiritualize and reason out the cause for the calamity. Suppose a fine Christian lady experienced a driving accident that left her paralyzed, changing her life dramatically, spiritualizing the situation would sound something like this:

"God knows what He is doing. I am being made Christ like, and God is being glorified in my infirmities, more than He would be glorified in my physical healing. The same was true of Paul with his thorn in his flesh. We may not fully understand how this is to our benefit or how God can be glorified in this way, but He is. There are special cases in which God demonstrates His Sovereign love through giving patience and strength instead of healing. Sometimes, He is healing and perfecting our spiritual lives first."

It's unfortunate when bad things happen to good people, but show me in the New Testament, where such a line of thinking would be supported by the Bible. It just isn't there.

When people fail to get healed, they have to come up with a reason to explain their persisting conditions. Often times, their rationale sure sounds religious, but is not Bible; as a consequence they are held further captive by religious ideology which becomes a stumbling block for the next time they need to believe God for healing! **Let us not be found guilty of nullifying the Word of God with human traditions!**

Lesson 7
Kicking Over Sacred Cows - Part 1

1. The Curse of The Law

So what is the curse of the law? For the Old Covenant believer, the curse of the law was this: Failure to obey all of God's commandments all of the time opened the door to the devil for him to bring down on them all sorts of curses and bad things.

It is imperative that we understand that Satan is the agent of punishment, the destroyer and afflicter!

- Sin is Satan's territory and when folks tread there, the devil has a right to attack them.
- God is a just and holy God who allows or permits the devil to carry out judgment on the guilty.

Deuteronomy 28:15
"But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you…"

- The old covenant law was a works based system.
    - It required perfection on behalf of the follower.
    - Breaking a single commandment meant judgment.
    - The Levitical Priesthood was a sacrificial system to provide temporary atonement.

- But is sickness part of the curse of the law? Most definitely!
- The list of curses found in Deuteronomy 28, among others includes sickness and disease.

Please note the "permissive" tense, that the Lord would allow the devil to bring these things against the children of Israel which were already oppressing the Gentile world.

Deuteronomy 28:21-23
The Lord will plague you with diseases until he has destroyed you from the land you are entering to possess. The Lord will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish.

Deuteronomy 28:27-28
The Lord will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the itch, from which you cannot be cured. The Lord will afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind.

- But the most significant one is this all-inclusive curse of sickness clause:

Deuteronomy 28:61- The Lord will also bring on you every kind of sickness and disaster not recorded in this Book of the Law, until you are destroyed.

Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law; from all the sicknesses listed in **Deuteronomy 28**, as well as any other sickness that are not listed there. Galatians Chapter 3 – Covenant- cant + or- **Hebrews 8:6-** Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant; founded on better promises

2. Permissive versus Causative Tense

There are many who oppose divine healing in Christian circles today and they will point out all kinds of scriptures to support their case.

- Note that the majority of them are found in the Old Testament.
- The Bible is Progressive revelation – more light is revealed over time – **2 Corinthians 3:7-18.**
- Why walk in the shadows when you can walk in the light of the New Covenant.

Deuteronomy 32:39
See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand.

1 Samuel 2:6-7- The Lord brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up. The Lord sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and he exalts.

Hosea 6:1- Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds.

Job 5:18- For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.

1 Samuel 25:38- About ten days later, the Lord struck Nabal and he died.

2 Chronicles 21:18-19- After all this, the Lord afflicted Jehoram with an incurable disease of the bowels. In the course of time, at the end of the second year, his bowels came out because of the disease, and he died in great pain.

No wonder folks are left with the impression that God is behind sickness, disease and calamities!

Dr. Robert Young, was a Hebrew and Greek Scholar and the author of *Hints and Helps to Bible Interpretation*. He states in this book, that in Exodus 15:26, the literal Hebrew *reads "... I will permit to be put upon thee none of these diseases which I permitted to be brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that heals you."* The original Hebrew of these scriptures was in the permissive tense, but because the English language has no corresponding permissive tense, the verbs were translated in the causative tense. The KEY to understanding these different passages of Scripture lies in knowing that the active verbs in the Hebrew have been translated in the causative tense when they should have been translated in the permissive tense.

So, **Deuteronomy 28:27** should have been translated something like, *"The Lord will **allow/permit** these plagues to be brought upon you..."*

It is an unfortunate translation of the Old Testament Scripture, where the language frequently attributes directly to God what He merely permits. For example, in Isaiah 45:7, the question is raised "Does God create evil?"

"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."

Amos 3:6 KJV
Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?

Well the answer would be no. That would make God a devil. God may permit evil, but He does not create it. If God commits or creates evil, then He has no right whatsoever to judge man for sinning.

Galatians 2:17-18
If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin ? Absolutely not! If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker.

God never makes people sick so He can turn around later and make them well. We must take the whole counsel of God's Word into consideration when interpreting these Scriptures, God is not responsible for evil, He only permits evil. *There is a vast difference between commission and permission.*

- Someone may say, "But these Scriptures are in the Bible, so are they not inspired by God?"
    - We need to understand something about Bible Inspiration.

Understanding Inspiration

2 Timothy 3:16-17 NKJV- All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

There is much history and many personal observations recorded in the Bible. What we are assured of is that the record is true. The Holy Spirit directed and influenced the writers so that, by inspiration, they were kept from every error of fact and doctrine. The Bible records the words and acts of God, men and the devil. It is very important to take careful note of who is speaking and in what dispensation and covenant (Old or New) that it was written under.

WM, Evans has expressed it well:
Though all Scripture is inspired, it does not stamp with divine authority every sentence which it reports as uttered by the men of whom it speaks, nor does it mark with divine approval every action which it relates as performed by those with whose biographies it deals. In the book of Job, for example, Inspiration gives with equal accuracy the language of Jehovah, the words of Satan, and the speeches of Job and his three friends; but it does not therefore place them all on the same level of authority for building doctrine for us to live by- each is responsible for their own utterances.

Neither Satan, Job or his three friends spoke by inspiration of God. They gave utterances to their own opinions; and all that Inspiration vouches for is that no one of them was misrepresented, but that each one spoke the sentiments that are attributed to him in Scripture. Therefore, what is said gives insight into the character, activities, and motives of the devil and men. Remember, that what they said is inspired by God but **only** in the sense that what they said was **accurately recorded** as reliable information for our benefit to learn from.

So Let's Set the Record Straight

What we are seeing over and over again throughout Scripture is that God is passing judgment that allows the destroyer access to people in the Old and New Testaments. When they ignored God's warnings and refused to repent, the Lord simply lifts His hand of protection over them and Satan through their enemies would rush in like a flood to kill, steal and destroy them.

Judges 2:14
In his anger against Israel the Lord handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist.

Psalms 78:61-62
He sent [the ark of] his might into captivity, his splendor <u>into the hands of the enemy</u>. He gave his people <u>over to the sword</u>; he was very angry with his inheritance.

- The vicious cycle of Israel- Prosper, Forget, Warned, Judgment, Repentance – All over again.

- Principle: You cannot curse what God has blessed- unless you can get them into sin.
    - Satan uses trials, tests and temptations to get people to sin so he can have access to them.

Revelation 2:14 – Jesus speaking!
Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality – 23,000 died from a plague in Numbers 25; 1 Corinthians 10:8

- Let's look at some examples of being turned over for judgment in the New Testament.
    - Remember Judas who betrayed Jesus, the Lord allowed it to happen.

John 13:26-27- Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

- The Church of Corinth was surrounded by immorality – it got in the church- incest committed.

1 Corinthians 5:4-5
When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, hand this man over to Satan, so that the sinful nature may be destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

- God gives us an opportunity to judge ourselves and repent of disobedience.

1 Corinthians 11:29-32
For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world.

1 Timothy 1:19-20- Holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.
Revelation 2:21-22- I (Jesus) have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways.

- To be judged by the Lord, is to be turned over to the hand of the enemy.
- So what does the enemy promptly try to do?
- So what do we need to do? Be quick to forgive and quick to repent!

1 Peter 5:8
Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist Him – by the Word, the Blood & the Name of Jesus- Authority of the …!

- Some people think God is quick to judgment, not so, just look at how He dealt with Israel.
    - You can read **Matthew 23:34-39.**

Ezekiel 18:23
Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?

Please consider this parable from the Lord; it illustrates a central truth that God gives people many opportunities to do the right thing before passing judgment.

Luke 13:6-9
Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree, planted in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it, but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, 'For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?' "'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.'"

- People read the Old Testament and sometimes get confused.
- God destroying this and God smiting that, the world's perception of God is one sided.
- We must take the Scriptures in context. When in doubt, always stay on God's side.
- The devil is a slanderer, God often gets the bad rap for Satan's activities.

Calvinism at the Root of Denominational Theology

I want to briefly introduce some theological beliefs that were first promoted by John Calvin (1509-1564), one of the leaders of the Protestant reformation. I believe that his teachings have cast a shadow on present day Christian theology and has affected believer's concerning the subject of Divine Healing.

Let's look at one of the fundamental principle in Calvinism called "Unconditional Election." It states that God not only knew what choice every person would make in his/her life, God had actually decided what choices everyone would make in advance. Individuals had no choice in this. Human Free Will was only an illusion. Therefore God had decided that certain people would live a Christian Life and be saved- supporting the concept of eternal security of the believer, also known as once saved always saved. He had also decided that the rest would sin and be eternally condemned. If you were predestined to be condemned there was nothing you could do about it. God's will was Sovereign. All Humans were "totally depraved" and unable to do anything to help themselves. God's salvation was a gift of Grace that He bestowed on who He chooses. Christ died, not to save everyone, but only to save a chosen, predestined "elect."

So Generally Speaking What's Wrong with Calvinism?
To many, Calvinism goes against the whole flow of New Testament teaching. It substitutes a vengeful, capricious and merciless God, for the loving Father of Jesus' teachings. It also substitutes God's sovereignty for man's free will to choose. Calvinism finds its root in the Old Testament where God is painted as the author of good and evil, without the clarification of the New Testament, that Satan is actually the author and instigator of evil.

However many Christian churches today do not subscribe to such an extreme view of Calvinism, but through careful observation, subtle nuances of fundamental Calvinism can be seen interwoven in their theology. You here statements like, "God is sovereign and may have a special purpose for this illness in your life." Or "God sovereignly chooses whom He will heal, sometimes it's 'Yes' and sometimes it's 'No'. Who are we to question the Almighty." But just a minute, it was God's sovereign will for healing to be made available to all, like the forgiveness of sins, all the time in both the Old and New Covenants.

Arminianism
Arminianism was started by Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). He was born slightly before John Calvin died and was actually taught by Calvin's son-in-law. He was a Calvinist until one day when forced to defend his beliefs and found that his opponent could more ably defend his views against Calvinism. This caused Arminius to reject his Calvinistic background and "sought to modify Calvinism so that God might not be considered the author of sin, nor man an automation in the hands of God."

The arminian point of view recognizes that God, knowing all things 'Foreknew' what choice everyone would make in advance, but did not make the choice for them as in the case of unconditional election of the Calvinist. The Tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil in Genesis 2:9, makes it clear that God leaves man with a choice to obey or disobey Him. God did not create us as robots, so our free will becomes the variable or condition of whether or not we receive the promises of God in our life.

Deuteronomy 30:19
This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now <u>choose</u> life, so that you and your children may live…

- We receive healing based on our free will, exercising faith in the Word- not God's Sovereignty.
- God has done all He is going to do for our healing - it's now our responsibility to receive.
- Instead of looking to God, God is looking to us to accept our healing by faith– Let's take it now!
- I believe in the Sovereignty of God- His Sovereign Grace and our free will to exercise faith.

Kicking Over Sacred Cows

- Many of the people of India worship cows, but would not dare eat them.
- What God meant to be a blessing becomes a curse – **1 Timothy 4:1-5.**
- So let's kick over some Religious Sacred cows that are holding people in bondage on healing.

Sacred Cow #1- God Show Favoritism for whom He Heals?

In Calvinism, God makes choices on whom He shows favor or kindness to, regardless of what the person does- it puts everything on God- If I get healed that God's will, if I don't that's God's will too!

- The Bible makes us responsible for our choices and the results that follow- consequence/reward
    - Calvinism turns believers into passive Christians, always waiting on God- Pool of Beth.
    - Whatever shall be shall be. It is fatalistic by nature, putting all the responsibility on God.
    - The Word speaks quite to the contrary.

Matthew 12:36-37- But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

Isaiah 1:19-20
"If you are <u>willing</u> and <u>obedient</u>, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

- With that being said, does God show favoritism or partiality?

Colossians 3:25- Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and <u>there is no favoritism</u>.

James 2:8-10
If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, <u>you sin</u> and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

Ephesians 6:9
And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and <u>there is no favoritism with him</u>.

Romans 2:9-11
There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. <u>For God does not show favoritism</u>.

If God showed favoritism, than healing would not be for all, but only on whom His favor rested at the time. Now this premise opens the door to religion, in order to earn or deserve our healing.

Ephesians 2:8-9- For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

Jesus healed all who came to Him, there were no "Lucky" ones-it was not about fate or chance but faith! Jesus made no exceptions, showed no favoritism and was no respecter of persons because of some mysterious sovereign will of God. Take note of the "All's" and "Every's" used in these passages:

Matthew 4:23-24
Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing <u>every</u> disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed <u>them</u>.

Matthew 9:35- Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing <u>every</u> disease and sickness.

Matthew 10:1- He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal <u>every</u> disease and sickness.

Matthew 12:15
Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed <u>all</u> their sick…
Matthew 14:14
When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed <u>their</u> sick.

Matthew 14:34-36- When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and <u>all</u> who touched him were healed.

Luke 6:17-19
He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coast of Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by evil spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them <u>all</u>.

We see throughout the Gospels that, in bringing the sick to Jesus for healing, it was repeatedly stated that they brought them all, which included all the so-called unlucky ones whom supposedly it was not God's sovereign will to heal. If according to modern tradition, it's God's will for some of the sick to patiently remain so for His glory or to build character in suffering or receive divine discipline, isn't it strange that there was not even one of these cases in all these multitudes brought to Jesus for healing?

If God showed favoritism, than prayer would be sometimes "Yes" and sometimes "No". So are matters of redemption based on His Sovereign will which can be one thing one time and something else another. Is the "Prayer of Faith" then a moving target to connect with a God who changes and is unpredictable.

2 Corinthians 1:18-20
But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

- God does not change, neither does His Word - Spiritual laws , eternally fixed.
- We can count on God to be and do everything His Word says He will do all the time, every time!
- The laws of seed time and harvest does not show favoritism or partiality.
- It does not care who you are or what you look like, you always reap what you sow.
- You can always count on it to work the same way- How much more God's incorruptible seed.

Psalms 119:89- Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven.
Psalms 119:160- All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.
Mark 13:31- Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.
Psalms 102:27- But you O Lord remain the same, and your years will never end.

God is Sovereign in that He creates the rules, boundaries & spiritual laws that govern His kingdom.

- God plays by His own rules and does not violate them, change or make accommodations.
- Why is this clarification on Calvinism and God's Sovereignty so important?
    - Because it defines God's part (Grace) and our part- free will to exercise faith.
    - So as to safeguard Redemption as accessible and available for all, all the time.
    - And establishes the certainty of the Promises of God as always being 'Yes' in Christ.

Lesson 8
Kicking Over Sacred Cows - Part 2

Sacred Cow #2- Did God Harden Pharaoh's Heart?

Faith always carries with it personal free will and responsibility on behalf of the individual to exercise it.

- If we fail to receive it's never God's fault, the Word didn't fail; we simply missed it somewhere.
- Redemption in the New Covenant cannot be set aside, added to or taken from.
- **Galatians 3:15-** No one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established.
- Healing is in the atonement and is forever settled – God Himself will not and cannot change it.
- Healing is guaranteed- Hebrews 7:22 "Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant."

This question concerning Pharaoh poses a larger question concerning the manner in which God deals with people in general.

- Does God sovereignly supersede and circumvent man's free will – unable to resist.
- Perhaps if God can harden Pharaoh's heart than God can make me sick for some special purpose.
- The fundamental premise of Calvinism is that it supposes an arbitrary God, One.
    - Who saves only a predestined few – even though the Bible teaches salvation for all.
    - Who sovereignly heals whom He chooses- Healing in Atonement- Healing/Forgive- all.
    - Makes promises sometimes 'Yes' and sometimes 'No' 2Cor 1:20- always 'Yes' in Christ.

Why is the question of God being arbitrary according to Calvinism in Christian theology so important? Because if God is that way, than healing would become arbitrary, inconsistent and unpredictable!

Imagine if the New Birth was like that. If one acted on Romans 10:9, and sometimes it was God's will for one to be saved and other times not? Than it no longer really depends on faith, rather God's predestined will to be saved. The same reasoning would be applied to healing- sometimes Yes and No!

Romans 9:17-18-
For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

Did Pharaoh have no choice in the matter? Was His free-will violated in his heart becoming hardened?

- In reality, it was Pharaoh who in the beginning persistently hardened his own heart against God!
- God had simply predicted (foreknew) what was already going to happen.
- Not because God made it that way- He was not doomed by God's will to reject Him- unjust!

Read Exodus 7:1-13
Later on, as more plagues came Pharaoh would relent but when relief came, he hardened his heart again

Exodus 8:12-15- After Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the Lord about the frogs he had brought on Pharaoh. And the Lord did what Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the courtyards and in the fields. They were piled into heaps, and the land reeked of them. But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, <u>he hardened his heart</u> and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said.

Exodus 8:30-32- Then Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the Lord, and the Lord did what Moses asked: The flies left Pharaoh and his officials and his people; not a fly remained. But this time also <u>Pharaoh hardened his heart</u> and would not let the people go.

I want you to notice the connection made between God and Pharaoh in this next passage:

Exodus 9:34- 10:2- When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: <u>He and his officials hardened their hearts</u>. So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the Lord had said through Moses. (10:2) Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these miraculous signs of mine among them that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the Lord."

In other words, Pharaoh's hardening his heart is considered to be the same as God hardening Pharaoh's heart. I take this to mean that Pharaoh did the actual hardening, as we see it; he decided on his own not to listen to God and let the Israelites go.

- God did not predestine Pharaoh to have a hard heart.
- God uses the choices and actions of men to fulfill His purpose – He does not make men evil.
- God foreknew that Pharaoh would respond this way and choose him to be the man of the hour.

Acts 17:26- God determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live

- Sadly, many times God is said to be responsible for the things He only **<u>permits</u>** to be done.

God gave Pharaoh the occasion to resist Him and he hardened his own heart in the same way that the gospel saves or damns people today; softens or hardens; and makes alive or kills all who hear it.

2 Corinthians 2:14-16
But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task?

As the sun hardens the clay and softens the wax, so it is with truth. The result is not in the sun (or in God), but in the composition of the materials- the response people make with their own free will in relation to God and His Word. In Luke 20:17, Jesus was quoting Psalms 118:22, *"The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone."* He went on to say in verse 18, *"Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, but he on whom it falls will be crushed."* Two outcomes for humanity concerning what they do with Jesus: Option 1- Repentance & Salvation - to be (broken to pieces) or Option 2- Rejection & Damnation – to be (crushed) as is stated in **John 3:36.**

Unbelief is a hardening of the heart, it happened to Pharaoh, the Israelites and people today! **Hebrews 3**

Acts 19:8-9 NKJV
And Paul went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the kingdom of God. But when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil of the Way before the multitude.

Acts 19:9 AMP- But when some became more and more stubborn (hardened and unbelieving)

Sacred Cow #3- Does God send Desert Experiences to keep us Humble?

I have heard it and perhaps you have to, where some have said, "The Lord is just leading me through a desert experience in my life through suffering in order to purify my life." They will use Jesus' example

Luke 4:1-2- Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

- God led Jesus into the desert for us – there are some things Jesus did as our substitute.
- God did not lead the Children of Israel into the desert for 40 years- their unbelief!
- So does God lead His children into dry places- the valley of trials, tests and temptations?

Matthew 6:13- And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

John 17:15
My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

Since Satan is the god of this world, he will send trials, tests and temptations into our lives. In spite of what the devil meant for evil, God works them out for our good- **Romans 8:28.**

Psalms 34:19- Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all.

2 Thessalonians 3:2-3
And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil men, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.

- If the Lord delivers us from evil, than He did not send it or lead us into it in the first place!
- If God led us into trials and tests than He would be leading us into temptation- **1 Cor. 10:13.**
- A trial and test is from Satan is designed to tempt our faith- to doubt and turn our backs on God.
- It must be clear in our hearts that Satan, not God is the author of those attacks.
- The devil is trying to defeat and marginalize our Christian faith and witness.

James 1:13- When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone…

Revelation 2:10- Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

The Children of Israel at Kadesh Barnea

- God was faithful to bring them to the Promised Land, yet it was up to them to possess it!
- The people were faced with a choice after the 10 spies returned.

Numbers 13:31-33- But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." And they spread among the Israelites <u>a bad (or evil) report</u> about the land they had explored.

Unfortunately the people embraced the "Bad Report" to their own loss of their Promised Land inheritance. A classic example of the power of words, life and death are in the power of the tongue.

Numbers 14:1-4
That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "<u>If only we had died in Egypt</u>! Or in this desert! Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? <u>Our wives and children will be taken as plunder</u>. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

- How pathetic, after all that God had done for them.
- Yet we too find ourselves in the same mire of self-pity and despair – does not help our cause!
- Let's beware of the whine in our voices when faced with adversity.

Joshua and Caleb made one last attempt to encourage and rally the people to believe God.

Numbers 14:6-9
Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And <u>do not be afraid</u> of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. <u>Do not be afraid of them</u>."

Fear and intimidation is the greatest weapon and temptation of the enemy- to shrink back, disobey God and doubt His ability. Fear is a temptation and to yield to worry, anxiety and fear is sin- Romans 14:23, *"…and everything that does not come from faith is sin."* Fear not! No spirit of fear!

Satan tries to frighten us with images of sickness and disease through the power of suggestion he tries to deceive us and to believe the lie-God can't keep you well, you're going to get sick. Let's not be like Job:

Job 3:25- "What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me."

Hebrews 10:35-39
So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

The Israelites shrank back from their Promised Land; let's not shrink back from ours!

Hebrews 3:18-19; 4:1-3
And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were not able to enter, <u>because of their unbelief</u>.

Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said…

2. Our Father Uses His Word to Purify Us

If the valleys and deserts of trials, tests and temptations alone make people more committed, virtuous and sanctified than the Israelites would have been the model of character, holiness and dedication to God.

- They come from Satan to kill, steal and destroy us- to sift our faith as wheat- **Luke 22:31.**
- There are many people who have become bitter and fallen away from God due to tests and trials.

We can have 10 miles of trials, tests and temptations and not grow an inch unless we overcome them through faith in God's Word.

- God uses His Word and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit to purify His children.

John 17:17 AMP
Sanctify them [purify, consecrate, separate them for Yourself, make them holy] by the Truth; Your Word is Truth.

Ephesians 5:25-27
Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

1 Corinthians 6:11
But you were washed , you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

- As I have shared before, it is imperative that we know the source of sickness and disease.

James 1:16-17
<u>Don't be deceived</u>, my dear brothers. <u>Every good and perfect gift is from above</u>, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

- God is good. Healing is something good. Healing is a good gift from God!
- Simple theology that even a child can understand in John 10:10- Good God / bad devil.

Matthew 7:9-11
"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, <u>how much more</u> will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

A paraphrase of Matthew 7:9-11 could go something like this:

"Which of you would break his son's arm to teach him a lesson. Or would put cancer on your daughter to discipline her. If you then, though you are evil, would not do those things to your children, how could you possibly imagine that I would be responsible, condone or approve of Satan's attacks to kill, steal and destroy your lives. Does it not say in my Word, 'The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work' in 1 John 3:8."

Sacred Cow #4- Job's Trial- Why do Bad things Happen to Good People?

Satan came to God to press his rights in order to gain access to Job. The devil hates righteous God fearing people, especially rich righteous people- Job was a powerful man of influence for God.

Job 1:3- He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

In Job 1:8, *"Then the Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job?'"* The Hebrew literally says, **"Have you set your heart upon my servant Job?"** God was not daggling Job out in front of the devil saying "Come and get him."

Here we see a rare glimpse of the operation of the High Court of Heaven. Satan began to accuse Job and question his commitment and motivation. He began to present a case to God twice- once against his possessions and secondly against himself personally.

- If the devil is so powerful, why would he go to God for permission to afflict Job.

Job 1:10
Satan said, "Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land."

Job was found guilty of fear and got judged and turned over to the hand of the enemy.

Job 3:25- What I <u>feared</u> has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me.

- Even though Job had a covenant with God, through fear he opened the door to the devil.
- God being a righteous judge allowed access to Job.
- It was Job that broke down the hedge, not God.
- It seems that Job's fear was concerning his children.

Job 1:4-5
His sons used to take turns holding feasts in their homes, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would send and have them purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "<u>Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts</u>." This was Job's regular custom.

- Let's not accuse God of evil, He is not the author of it.
    - Saying, "Evil prevails when good men do nothing"- if we allow it, so does God!
    - Yet people begin questioning the faithfulness of God, as if it's all God's responsibility.
    - God honors His part of the covenant when we do our part through Faith and Love.

- There is always a reason why bad things happen, but it is never because God or His Word failed
    - 1 Corinthians 13: 8, *"Love never fails!"* God will never let us down
    - Let's just settle it in our minds that it is never God's fault, He is never to be blamed
    - We are the ones who are dropping the ball, opening the door or allowing them to persist

In Job's limited knowledge, he thought that God was sovereignly putting him through these trials to test his loyalty, to keep him humble or whatever other religious reason one can think of.

Job had accused God for being the reason for all his troubles, yet what was the Lord's response in Job 38:2, *"Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?"* When life becomes confusing, give God the benefit of the doubt, ask God for wisdom according **to James 1:5** instead of jumping to religious conclusions.

Romans 3:3-4
What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar.

- Satan was after Job's faith, to get him to denounce and curse God.
- Job at the time did not realize it was the devil and not God that was afflicting him.

Job 2:7-10
So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head. His wife said to him, "Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!" He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?" In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

- When Job finally got his mind on his covenant with God instead of his problems, God intervened

Job 42:10 KJV
And the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

It is strange that Christians who believe in suffering sicknesses "for God's glory" often point to Job's sufferings, but never to his perseverance, healing, double blessings and long life. Bible scholars agree that the entire Book of Job took place in nine to eighteen months. Yet folks will leave the impression that Job's experience lasted much longer.

- The Lord turned Job's captivity- sickness and poverty was being in captivity to the devil.
- Job lived 140 years after he got healed! That's God's work!
- The lesson to be learned from Job's experience was to always persevere- hold onto your faith.
    - Stand on the Covenant and enforce Satan's defeat.

James 5:11
As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Sacred Cow #5- The Chastening of the Lord

This next sacred cow is akin to the previous one, but examines the notion that God hurts and afflicts us for our good, as a form of discipline. This is an important question, so in what manner does God discipline His children- does He use sickness and disease ?

Read Hebrews 12:1-11

It is true that the Bible says in Hebrews 12:6, *"Because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son."* However, it does not say, "Whom the Lord loves He also makes them sick in order to teach them a lesson!"

- No mention of Sickness in this text .
- Nor does the original Greek infer that God disciplines us with sickness and disease.

The full meaning of this word can be gleaned from the writings of Dr. Robert Young, a recognized Greek scholar, and W. E. Vine, author of An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. We learn from them that "discipline" literally means to child train, educate, or teach. Just as small children need to be taught and corrected so that they can grow to be healthy children and adults, baby Christians need to be taught and corrected with the Word of God so that they can grow to be spiritually healthy Christians. God's children need to be disciplined and governed, which is what the word "discipline" means in the original Greek.

- Children must be disciplined, corrected, and trained in love.
- One meaning of the word "chasten" is to educate.
- Parents send their children to school so they can be educated.

Parents don't tell the teacher, "If my child doesn't act right, just knock his eye out or break his leg."

- That isn't the way to educate a child. And that's not how God educates His children either!

2 Timothy 3:14-17
But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for <u>teaching</u>, <u>rebuking</u>, <u>correcting</u> and <u>training in righteousness</u>, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1 Timothy 4:7-8
Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

2 Timothy 2:15
Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

- God wants our faith to grow.
    - By hearing the Word and putting it into practice.
    - Renewing our mind with His Word- that is how our lives are transformed.

Lesson 9
Kicking Over Sacred Cows - Part 3

Sacred Cow #6- Paul's Thorn in the Flesh

- Is one of the most prevalent objections raised against divine healing.
    - The notion that Paul had a sickness that God refused to heal.
    - The idea that it was from God to keep Paul humble.
    - Paul's thorn has been espoused to be anything from sore eyeballs to ingrown toenails.

Scripture interprets scripture, so let's see how the Bible uses the term of "thorn" elsewhere in the Bible.

- The expression "thorn in the flesh" is never used in the Bible to mean sickness.
    - When the expression is used, it is always self-evident as to what it means.
    - For example, God warned the Israelites that if they did not kill all the Canaanites = thorn.

Witness 1
Before the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, Moses told them:

Numbers 33:55- "But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land, those you allow to remain will become <u>barbs</u> in your eyes and <u>thorns</u> in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live."

Witness 2
Many years later, Joshua said the same thing about the Canaanites:

Joshua 23:13
"Then you may be sure that the Lord your God will no longer drive out these nations before you. Instead, they will become snares and traps for you, whips on your backs and <u>thorns</u> in your eyes, until you perish from this good land, which the Lord your God has given you."

Witness 3
In the book of Judges, the Lord told the children of Israel the same thing:

Judges 2:3
"Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be [<u>thorns</u>] in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you."

Witness 4
Our fourth witness is David, who said:

2 Samuel 23:6
But evil men are all to be cast aside like <u>thorns</u>, which are not gathered with the hand.

In all four cases, the Bible makes it explicit what the "thorns" are, so there is no need for wild speculations. And in every case, the "thorns" refer to personalities, not sicknesses.Paul quoting the Old Testament made reference to a Biblical principle:

2 Corinthians 13:1-"Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."

- I have given you four witnesses from the Bible as to the use of "Thorn in the Flesh"

Today, we still use the same expression. According to The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (New Edition), when we say that someone is "a thorn in one's flesh/side," we are saying that that person is "a continual cause of annoyance or problems." Similar expressions are "pain in the neck" and "pain in the rear."

Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10

- Bible scholars believe that the man Paul was referring to was himself.

The Apostle John used the same language concerning himself; for example in **John 13:23** in reference to the Last Supper He said, *"One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him."*

- Question- do you think perhaps Satan felt threatened by Paul's ministry to the Gentiles?
    - Satan assigned one of His fallen angels to stir up persecution for Paul- to give up.

2 Corinthians 12:7
To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

Angel

The original Greek word for "messenger" here is "angelos". According to Strong's Concordance, it means "a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, an angel, a messenger from God."

This Greek word "angelos" appears 186 times in the Bible, and is translated "angel" 179 times and "messenger" the other seven times. In all 186 cases, without exception, it refers to a person and not a thing or disease.

It is also interesting to note that the Rotherham and Weymouth translations use the pronoun "he" to refer to Paul's "thorn" or "the messenger of Satan." *"As for this, three times I besought the Lord to rid me of him."*

Torment = Buffet

Buffet- to strike with a clenched fist or open hand- a steady buffeting like a wave buffeting a ship. This is talking about Persecution!

Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-33

Notice in chapter 11 verse 30- "I will boast of the things that show my weakness."
Notice in chapter 12 verse 9 & 10- the word "Weakness" & "Weaknesses" are used three times.

- They are all the same Greek word – the context here is persecution not sickness and disease!

If Paul's thorn was sickness, then it would mean that Paul was continuously sick. But we don't see a sickly Paul in the Bible. And how could the apostle travel great distances, preaching boldly and healing the sick, if he was so sickly? The sick would have laughed at him for preaching about God's healing power!

Acts 14:2, 5, 19-20
But the Jews who refused to believe <u>stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds</u> against the brothers. There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city.

- Paul asked the Lord to take away this messenger of Satan – three times.
    - Notice Jesus' response.

"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

- Was Paul to just lay down and passively take this constant beating from the devil.
    - No the Lord wanted Paul to exercise authority over the devil in Jesus' Name.
    - Jesus has defeated the devil 2,000 years ago- we must resist him and enforce his defeat.
    - God's grace and power is revealed in our lives when we exercise our authority in Jesus.

- Why would God give Paul a thorn in the flesh anyway?
    - Would God give His ministers a revelation and then turn around and hinder them.

2. Suffering According to the Will of God

- Did you know that Christians could suffer for things that are not His will?

1 Peter 4:19- So then, those who <u>suffer according to God's will</u> should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

- Suffering for things that Jesus suffered in our place like – the consequences of sin- sickness.
- Suffering for doing wrong- committing a crime.
- So what would be considered Biblical Suffering- there are two areas.
    - Suffering persecution for being a Christian.
    - Suffering from crucifying the flesh- saying no to the evil desires of the body.

1 Peter 2:20-24
But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.

Read 1 Peter 4:12-19

2 Timothy 3:12-
"In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted…"

- Suffering in the Body is the worst form of suffering .
    - For example, Jesus humanity did not want to go to the cross.

Luke 22:44
And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

1 Peter 2:11
Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

1 Peter 4:1-2
Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God.

- Notice that there is no mention of suffering sickness and disease – not found in the NT.

Sacred Cow #7- An Appointed Time to Die?

- So do we have any say in when we leave our physical body?
- Does God set an appointed time for when people should die?

Some will misquote **Hebrews 9:27** and say, "Well you know everyone has their appointed time to die and they have no say so in the matter. When their time is up and ole Grim Reaper appears, ready or not, it's their time to go- whether it's 16, 25, 35 or 55 years old, you never know."

Hebrews 9:24-28
For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared <u>once</u> for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. Just as man is destined to die <u>once</u>, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed <u>once</u> to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

- Notice that this passage of Scripture is emphasizing the word "once."
    - Jesus appeared as a man once.
    - Man will die physically once.
    - Jesus was sacrificed for our sins once.

- We are promised a long and satisfying life.

Psalms 91:15-16
He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. With <u>long life will I satisfy him</u> and show him my salvation."

Sometimes people think they are ready to go home early because they are tired of life. That is probably because they are not living on the level of victory they should be- no reason to check in premature!

2. The Death of the Righteous

Balaam said in Numbers 23:10, *"Let me die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like theirs!"*

- A good example of the death of the righteous is Jacob.
    - Lived a full life- no ravenous disease at the end – blessed his kids.
    - It is none of the devil's business when and how we go- we have a lot to do with it.

Genesis 25:8
Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people.

Genesis 35:29 NKJV
So Isaac breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people, being old and full of days.

Genesis 49:33
When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

1 Chronicles 29:28
So David died in a good old age, full of days and riches and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place.

2 Chronicles 24:15 NKJV
But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old when he died.

3. How we Live can Add or Shorten our Life

How we live makes a difference. There are too many scriptures that tell us that how we live will have an effect on the quality and length of life. It is not God's fault or responsibility in how long we live. He has already provided His grace in His precious promises to cause us to live long and be satisfied with a good life.

Deuteronomy 5:32-6:2
So be careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. Walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess. So that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.

Proverbs 3:1-2
My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.

Proverbs 4:10- Listen, my son, accept what I say, and the years of your life will be many.

Proverbs 9:11- For through me your days will be many, and years will be added to your life.

Proverbs 10:27- The fear of the Lord adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short.

4. So How long is Long?

Many Christians look at Psalm 90 and think that 70 – 80 is the maximum life expectancy for people. However when you look at the context of this chapter, it is the Psalm of Moses concerning the backslidden Israelites who died in the desert living under the wrath of God.

Psalms 90:7-10
We are consumed by your anger and terrified by your indignation. You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your presence. All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan. The length of our days is seventy years — or eighty, if we have the strength; yet their span is but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.

In Numbers 14:29 the Lord declared that those 20 years and older would not enter the Promised Land, but would die in the desert. In Numbers 14:32-35 they would spend 40 years in the desert, so that generation would have been dying around 70 or 80. So this is not meant to be the maximum for God's people walking in His will.

- If you are not satisfied at the age of 80 or 90 or even 100 then keep on living.

Genesis 6:3
Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."

Not just Quantity of Life, but also Quality!

Exodus 23:25-26
Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span.

Psalms 92:14- They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green,

Job 5:26-27
You will come to the grave in full vigor, like sheaves gathered in season. "We have examined this, and it is true. So hear it and apply it to yourself."

- As long as we are on earth, we are bearing fruit for God's Glory- consider Paul's choice.

Philippians 1:21-26
For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

We have a lot to do with how long we live and the quality of life we live. Unless we choose to be a martyr (between you and God), no person or demon has the right to take our life.

John 10:17-18
"The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life — only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

Hebrews 11:35
Women received back their dead, raised to life again. Others were tortured and refused to be released, so that they might gain a better resurrection.

When folks believe the lie that they will die of a heart attack at age 50 like their uncle John, they open the door to the enemy.

Psalms 118:17- <u>I will not die but live</u>, and will proclaim what the Lord has done.

5. Keys to Living Long

- **You Must be a Fighter.**
- **Must be Led by the Spirit.**
- **Learning and Practicing Honor in our Life – Ephesians 6:1-3; Romans 13:1-3.**
- **Discern the Lord's Body- Healing in the Atonement and Walk in Love**
- **Control of the Tongue- Read 1 Peter 3:8-12.**
- **Obedience to the Plan and Will of God – Be willing and Obedient- His plans, purposes.**
- **Knowing how to Rest, Live in and Walk in Peace- Hebrews 4:1-2 – Rest = Mix the Word.**

Sacred Cow #8- Spiritualizing Experiences

Beware of forming spiritual interpretations solely on natural circumstances as a means of understanding the will of God.

- What we see is not always the way things appear – Satan can confuse natural circumstances.
    - God's Word is our final authority.

- Religious folks will go to one of two ditches
    - Supernatural events in the Bible were figurative - in the midst of Historical narrative?
    - Hyper-spiritualize the promises of God, relegating them to the future in heaven.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6
For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We <u>demolish</u> arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we <u>take captive</u> every thought to make it obedient to Christ. And we will be <u>ready to punish</u> every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.

2 Corinthians 10:5 AMP
[Inasmuch as we] refute arguments and <u>theories and reasonings</u> and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the [true] knowledge of God.

So when the devil tries to dismiss the supernatural and God's precious promises for our life today, what do we do? We must demolish and refute those arguments with the truth of God's Word.

- So why do Christians rationalize situations when folks do not get healed?
    - Pride- Instead of admitting they missed it somewhere it's easier to put it off on God.
    - Ignorance- Many have been religiously brainwashed instead of New Testament taught.
    - Deceived- Bought into the doctrines of demons.

Cop-out #1- "Well I guess it's just not the will of God for everyone to be healed."
Cop-out #2- "You can't expect too much in this life, after all we are just passing through."
Cop-out #3- "It's hard to say what God's will is, sometimes it's 'Yes' and sometimes 'No'."

1. Delay is not Denial

- When Daniel set his heart to pray for the nation of Israel to be restored from exile

Daniel 10:12-14
Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. <u>But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days</u>. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

Exodus 14:13-14
Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. <u>Stand firm</u> and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; <u>you need only to be still</u>."

- Beware of lying symptoms and circumstances the devil conjures up for us to believe the lie

5. Beware of the Fleece

A huge distinction between Old Covenant believers and New Covenant saints is the way in which we serve, worship and know God.

- OT was about outward signs and physical demonstrations – not born again
- NT is about being led by the Word and the Spirit of God

Judges chapters 6-8 – Israel was backslidden and oppressed by Midianites, Amalekites, eastern peoples

- An Angel of the Lord appears to Gideon - **"The Lord is with you, <u>mighty warrior</u>."**
    - 1st Sign- Dew on the fleece but ground is dry
    - 2nd Sign- Fleece dry but the ground is dry
    - Beware of the Thomas kind of faith- unless I see, I will not believe
    - Problem with signs, the devil, an angel of light performs lying miracles- anti-Christ

Matthew 8:8-9
The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just <u>say the word</u>, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

Lesson 10
God's Primary Way to be Healed

- God has provided many avenues for people to be healed- because that's His will
    - One way to be healed is through the healing anointing – laying on of hands.
    - Another way is through the manifestation of the Holy Spirit – Nine Gifts.
    - The primary way to receive healing from God is through faith in His Word!

- Why is Faith in God's Word the best way to be healed?
    - Give him a fish and feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and feed him for a lifetime.
    - Freely you have received – now you can freely give and teach others how to be healed.
    - What gets you healed, keeps you healed.

Faith In God

Let's now cover the fundamentals of faith that apply to receiving anything from God – healing.

Hebrews 6:1-3
Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.

1. What is Faith

Faith is the result of God's Word abiding in our hearts. It is a process of meditating on God's Word in order to believe it in our heart which results in the release of God's power in our lives.

Hebrews 11:1 AMP
NOW FAITH is the assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses].

- Faith is the substance of things hoped for.
    - Faith in its seed form are words.

Hebrews 11:3
By faith we understand that the universe was formed at <u>God's command</u>, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

- Faith is the creative power of God released through faith filled words.

Hebrews 1:3 AMP
Jesus is the perfect imprint and very image of [God's] nature, upholding and maintaining and guiding and propelling the universe by His mighty word of power.

- Our own world is framed by the words we speak.
- Jesus is the Word of God.

John 1:1-4
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

Romans 10:17 NKJV- So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

2. Words are Containers

- All words that are spoken contain a substance- Faith, fear, love, anger etc.

John 6:63
The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

2 Timothy 3:16- All Scripture is God-breathed

- God's Word contains a substance called Grace.

Acts 20:32
"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace , which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

John 1:14, 16-17
The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

- So if the Grace of God comes from the Word of God, what is Grace then?
    - The Holy Spirit through Paul provides some insight in describing his calling & gospel.

Ephesians 3:7-8
I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ…

Romans 1:16
I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes…

- Definition: Grace is the power of God at work in you who believe!
    - 2 Timothy 2:1- Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus- **Eph. 6:10**- Strong in the…

Grace described as "God's unmerited favor" would do better to fall under the category of God's Mercy

Hebrews 4:16- Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

3. The Spirit of Man is the Production Center

Physical healing that comes from God is spiritual in nature. It is not mental as Christian Science and Unity and other metaphysical teachers claim. Neither is it physical as the medical world teaches. When God heals, He heals through the spirit of man and healing virtue in turn resonates and quickens the mortal body.

Proverbs 18:14- <u>A man's spirit sustains him in sickness</u>, but a crushed spirit who can bear?

Romans 8:11
And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also <u>give life to your mortal bodies</u> <u>through his Spirit, who lives in you</u>.

- Everything we receive from God comes to us first through our spirit.

Luke 17:20-21
Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

Proverbs 20:27 KJV
The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly.

- We are a tricotomy – We believe and conceive God's Word in our spirit!

1 Thessalonians 5:23
May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Faith as a Seed

- The Law of Genesis says that every seed produces after its own kind.

Genesis 1:11 NKJV
Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so.

The Law of Sowing and Reaping states that the measure and what is sown determines the harvest.

Genesis 8:22
As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

- God's Word is incorruptible seed.

1 Peter 1:23 NKJV
having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible , through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

Read Parable of the Sower – Mark 4:13-20 & Parable of the Growing Seed – Mark 4:26-29.

5. The Word of Faith – Believing the Word of God in your Heart

Read Romans 10:5-10

- So how do we get God's Word in our heart? By first putting it in our mouth!
    - The Sowing of God's Word is in the speaking of God's Word.

Joshua 1:8
Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

Psalms 1:1-3- Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

- The Word of Faith principles deal with a confession of God's Word unto Faith.
    - Goal - to hide God's Word in our heart, so that we believe it in our heart.
    - Mental ascent is not Bible faith- it's simply an accumulation of head knowledge.
    - Initially, Bible meditation first renews our mind while we have doubts in our head.
    - In the course of time, the Word drops in our spirit and we become fully persuaded.

Read Romans 4:17-22

6. The Spirit of Faith

Where the Word of Faith ends (in getting God's Word in our heart), the Spirit of Faith begins- speaking the Word of God from our heart back out of our mouth to move mountains out of our lives.

2 Corinthians 4:13
It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken." With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak…

- Jesus always operated in the Spirit of Faith- His Words never returned to Him void.
- We must first exercise the "Word of Faith" before we can operate in the "Spirit of Faith."

Mark 11:22-24
"Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Luke 17:5-6
The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you.

Jesus said that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks according to **Matthew 12:34.**

Proverbs 18:20
From the fruit of his mouth a man's stomach is filled; with the harvest from his lips he is satisfied.

7. Why are the Spiritual Laws of Faith so Important- Because Jesus said it was!

Matthew 9:22 "…your faith has healed you."
Matthew 9:29 "… according to your faith will it be done to you."
Mark 9:23 "…'if you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for him who believes."
Mark 10:52 "…your faith has healed you."
Luke 17:19 "…rise and go; your faith has made you well."
Luke 18:42 "…receive your sight; your faith has healed you."
Luke 8:25 "…where is your faith?"
Mark 4:40 "…why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith ?"
Mark 6:6 "…and he was amazed at their lack of faith."

Healing is primarily a faith proposition on the part of the individual who receives. No matter how much faith a minister may have, the effects of an individual's doubt will nullify that minister's faith. This is another area where some folks have made a great mistake. They think that if a minister has faith and he/she prays the prayer of faith for them, they'll get healed – whether they have faith or not. Even under Jesus' ministry not everyone was healed- not because it was not His will, but rather a lack of faith. On one occasion in his own hometown of Nazareth, only a few people received healing.

Mark 6:5-6- He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

- Jesus taught and preached the Word and then he healed the sick.

Matthew 4:23
Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people

In Acts 18:11, it states that Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half teaching them the Word of God.

Divine Intervention – Where the Lord Initiates Something

Many Christians who desire healing are waiting for an intervention of divine sovereignty from God to initiate something on their behalf.

- Signs and wonders are primarily intended for the confirmation of the Gospel for unbelievers.

Hebrews 2:3-4
How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Acts 8:4-8
Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in that city.

Mark 16:20- Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

Certainly manifestations of the Spirit do operate on behalf of Christians, but that is not His ordinary way of doing things for His children. Healing is a redemptive reality, a guaranteed provision like the forgiveness of sins in the atonement. Unlike unbelievers who don't have a covenant with God, we can receive healing anytime and every time through faith in God's promises. It's the lost that need the anointing through a believer or special manifestations of the Spirit if they are going to receive anything.

Read John 5:1-15 - The Crippled Man at the Pool of Bethesda

- This man had no faith in Jesus to be healed- didn't know it was Jesus in the beginning.
- Jesus healed the man out of mercy.
- Jesus warned them that not only would he lose his healing, but something worse would happen.

We are barking up the wrong tree if we expect to receive healing by waiting around like the lame man. We do people a great disservice to pray for their healing without ensuring that they have a foundation of God's Word in them to keep them healed. It's like leading a person to Christ and not disciple them.

What Gets Us Healed, keeps us Healed!

The same principle applies to those who are delivered from demon oppression and possession. If we don't get the Word in them, than they will most assuredly slip back into the same ole sin.

Matthew 12:43-45 NKJV- "When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Unfortunately, many Christians are waiting for divine intervention, for God to move sovereignly. They are waiting for God to initiate something out of the ordinary, which He may or He may not do, while all the time, God's best – everything He has for us – is at our disposal by the claim of faith.
Let's listen to three stories from Brother Hagin that illustrate three scenarios:

Not Healed
"I remember a dear lady who was bedfast with terminal cancer. Medical science did all they could do for her, and then they gave her up to die. This lady was not a member of the church where I was preaching, but the pastor had visited her and she told him that she wanted me to come and pray for her. I went with the pastor to visit her. As always, I looked to the Lord to see if He would initiate or say something. He didn't say anything. I didn't have any kind of manifestation of the Spirit. Well, what do you do if the Lord doesn't initiate something? You give people the Word of God. You put the Word into them in order to get them to believe God. And if you can get them to believe God, then you can agree with them. So that's what I began to do with this lady who was dying of cancer. I began to give her the Word so that she could believe and be healed. But she wasn't interested in believing the Word of God. She was convinced that there was a person somewhere who was going to heal her. I told her, 'I'm sorry to disappoint you, sister, but there is no one anywhere who can heal you or anyone else. No person can do it.' She said, 'Well, I'll just lie here and hope that there will be.' I said, 'You will die in hope then.' And I'm sad to say that she did die."

Healing by a Manifestation of the Spirit
Here is another example that Brother Hagin gave that illustrates how on occasion God does move sovereignly to heal people by a manifestation of the Spirit.

"I knew another woman who was bedfast and dying with terminal cancer. She had deteriorated to the point where she couldn't even feed herself, much less get up out of bed. As we prayed together, there was a manifestation of the Spirit. In other words, the Lord initiated something. Now, please understand this: I can't initiate a manifestation of the Spirit. I am not God. But, as I prayed for this woman, I heard the Lord speak to me and tell me to do something. So I did what He said to do; I went to the head of the bed and said, 'Come out, you spirit of doubt and fear in the Name of Jesus.' The woman rose up shouting and jumped out of bed. She went from not being able to get out of bed to being instantly healed. She went out in the backyard and sat down and ate watermelon with us that very afternoon! Glory to God! The Lord initiated something on His own that day. Now, I'd be a fool to tell everyone who has cancer that that's the way healing is ministered. I'd be a fool to tell people, 'I found out how to get people healed. Just cast the spirit of doubt and fear out of every one of them.' No, that may not be the problem with every person. Again, if the Lord doesn't tell you anything, just put the Word into people. There is a connection between God's Word and healing. People are healed by hearing and saying words."

Some folk are trying to do with prayer, what only the Word of God can do!

Healed by Hearing and Speaking God's Word
Finally, let's look at a third example from Brother Hagin that illustrates God's main, highest and best way to receive healing- simple faith in His Word.

"I knew another woman who had been diagnosed with terminal cancer and was told by her doctor that medical science had done all they could do for her. When I went to pray for her there wasn't any manifestation of the Spirit- the Spirit of God didn't say anything to me. What did I do? I did the same thing I tried to do with the first woman who was dying; I gave her the Word. But unlike the first woman, this woman decided she would put God's Word into practice for herself. She received the Word as I gave it to her and began to speak it. And do you know what happened? The same doctors who diagnosed her couldn't find any cancer in her body – it had disappeared! She was healed by hearing and speaking God's Word! Remember, I didn't lay hands on that woman and pray for her to be healed. It was her faith in God's Word that made her whole. You see, all of God's provision is ours by the claim of faith. But faith must be released through the words of your mouth. While doubt can cause you to receive something less than God's best, faith will cause you to receive God's best. And, remember, faith must be released through your words."

Read Mark 5:24-34 - The Woman with the Issue of Blood

Read Matthew 8:5-10 - The Centurion's faith

Lesson 11
Practical Principles to Healing

Prayer for Healing

Ephesians 6:18
And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

- The Bible teaches that there are several kinds of prayer.
    - We are going to focus.

- During the life and ministry of Jesus, He was living under the Old Covenant.
    - The New Covenant did not go into force until after His resurrection.

John 16:23-24
<u>In that day</u> you will no longer ask me anything. I tell you the truth, my Father will give you whatever you <u>ask in my name</u>. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

"In that day…" speaking of the day we live in today, the Age of Grace where the New Covenant is in force through Jesus Christ as our Mediator and Great High Priest.

Not until after the resurrection do we see the Scriptures empowering believers to use the Name of Jesus.

Mark 16:17- And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will

Acts 3:6-7, 16
Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

Acts 4:12
"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

During the transition between the Old and New Covenants, Jesus gave his disciples the Lord's prayer.
- That prayer is a beautiful prayer and we can glean many wonderful truths from it.
    - But where is the Name of Jesus in that prayer.
    - Notice in John 16:23-24- Jesus changed how they should pray after the resurrection.

1. Prayers Based on the Word Get Results

Prayer is successful only when it is based on the promises of God's Word! Faith begins where the will of God is known and God's Word is God's Will. Our prayers are powerful when we pray God's Word.

- Faith begins where the will of God is known and God's Word is God's Will.

1 John 5:14-15
This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

- For example, I highly encourage you to pray the Epistle Prayers.
    - Personalize them and put other folks names in there.

2. Asking vs. Claiming

- When I tell people they don't have to pray to be healed, they look at me in amazement.
    - This is where a lot of potential confusion can take place.
    - We find ourselves asking for things that we already have in Christ.

When the Bible specifically tells us to ask for something, we should then ask.

James 1:5-8- If any of you lacks wisdom, he should <u>ask</u> God, who gives generously to all…
Luke 10:2- <u>Ask</u> the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.
Ephesians 1:17- I keep <u>asking</u> that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may…

- Yet when it comes to redemptive items like healing, it has already been provided.
    - The Keys analogy! When the keys are already in your hand, don't need to ask for them.
    - Therefore we don't need to ask God, but claim what already belongs to us.

- Confession from a believing heart brings possession- Claim it, Healing is mine, I take it now!
- For example, when a sinner wants to receive the gift of eternal life, do they pray for it?
    - **Romans 10:9-10**- confession unto salvation.

Romans 10:10, 12-13 NKJV
For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Remember the Word of Faith principle – Confess with your mouth in order to believe with your heart.
- This same principle that works for the New Birth also works for Healing and everything else.
    - Christianity is known as the "Great Confession."

Joel 3:10- Let the weak say, 'I am strong!'

Psalms 107:2 NKJV
"Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy"
Hebrews 4:14 NKJV- Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession."

Hebrews 10:23 NKJV
Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 3:1- Therefore, holy brothers, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess.

So what are we to hold fast to? We are to hold fast to the absolute integrity of the Bible, to our confession of the glorious redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

<u>Our Confession will do Three Things for Us</u>:

1) Locates us spiritually: Matthew 12:34-35;Proverbs 16:23.

Proverbs 16:23- A wise man's heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction.

- We can locate a person by what they say if they are in faith or fear.

2) Sets the land marks of our life: James 3:3-4

James 3:3-4- When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go.

We will never rise nor experience God's blessing beyond our confession of God's Word. If we say we can't, then we can't!

3) Words we speak will affect our spirit: Proverbs 18:4, 8

Proverbs 12:18- Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing

- Words that we speak are like seeds that are planted in our heart and will produce in time.
- So many Christians have never dared to confess who they are in Christ.
- Find Scriptures that use the wording: In Him, In Whom, In Christ etc.

Ephesians 1:7- In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins.
2Cor 5:17- There if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.
Colossians 2:2-3- Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

It's hard to hold fast to a pure confession of faith in God's Word concerning healing, that does not waver when there is pain in our body. For many people, the result is two confessions are being made. One is an honest attempt to speak God's Word in the face of adversity, and another is siding in with the symptoms and speaking what we feel instead of calling those things that be not and speak what we believe to be true in God's Word. Unfortunately, the second confession undermines and nullifies the first good confession. We can't be double minded on this issue.

3. Making a Demand in the Name of Jesus

The Name of Jesus belongs to us as Christians, and we have a right to use that Name. But we need to know the power and the authority that's in Jesus' Name, and we must learn to exercise that authority.

John 14:12-14- I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you <u>ask</u> in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may <u>ask</u> me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

- John 14:12-14 is not a reference to the prayer of petition.
- It's really referring to the believer's right to exercise spiritual authority in the Name of Jesus.

According to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, the meaning of the Greek word "ask" in **John 14:13-14** implies a demand of something due. Jesus told the disciples in John 14:14, *"You may ask [demand] me for anything in my name, and I will do it."* We are not demanding anything of God, but rather the devil. Jesus is was talking about using His Name as a basis for authority. Like when we drive out demons in the Name of Jesus. When we lay hands on the sick and demand in the Name of Jesus for it to go!

Acts 3:16- <u>By faith in the name of Jesus</u>, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is <u>Jesus' name</u> and the faith that comes through him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see.

- Having faith in the Name of Jesus is essential to receiving and ministering Divine healing

Matthew 17:18
Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed from that moment.

Mark 4:39
He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

Luke 4:39
So Jesus bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.

We have to get a revelation of the Name of Jesus down in our spirit, that is where it works. That is only accomplished by meditating on the Scriptures concerning the use of the Name continually- let's not try, rather let's do what the Word says, speak the Name of Jesus.

Luke 17:6
He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you.

Mark 11:22-23
Have faith in God," Jesus answered. "I tell you the truth, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him.

4. The Prayer of Agreement

Matthew 18:19-20
"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about <u>anything you ask</u> for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where <u>two or three come together in my name</u>, there am I with them."

Wherever two people are, agreeing in prayer, Jesus is there to see that what they agreed on happens.

- Jesus is not talking about a church service – Jesus is with us when we are alone.
- Demanding healing in Jesus' Name- **John 14:12** a demand of something due- not of God- Cov.
- Jeremiah 1:12- God watches over His Word to perform it.
- We can agree on anything that is in line with God's Word which is His will.
    - Only two are needed- not 10,000 people and 500 ministers.

We agree that this need is met – not that it is going to be, because that is not faith, that would be future tense. That would be hope, not faith. We agree that the need is met, so we are praising God because we have agreed that it's a done deal.

Suppose we were to ask the person after prayer, "So do you believe you receive what you asked for?"

- "Well if it's God will it sure is…"
- "I sure hope so…"
- "Certainly it was worth a try, I don't think I can stand this pain anymore."
- "Brother, please keep praying for me."

- These responses are statements of hope, not faith, so there is no agreement and no results

So there is no use in our going around blaming God and casting bad reflections on the Bible if it didn't work. If there are still doubts concerning God's will to heal you, hold off on the prayer of agreement. Get in the Word until you become "Fully Persuaded" then pray the prayer of agreement, believing & receiving.

5. Add Praise and Thanksgiving to our Prayers

Praise has been called the highest form of prayer – Prayer fundamentally is communion with God.

Joy has been called the "Note of Victory." In other words if we are wringing our hands and are downcast and depressed, there is no faith present is there?

- If we have believed the Report, we will be full of joy and peace.
    - Until then – keep on meditating and speaking the Word.

Isaiah 61:3- The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.
Proverbs 17:22- <u>A cheerful heart is good medicine</u>, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.
Philippians 4:4-7- <u>Rejoice in the Lord always</u>. I will say it again: <u>Rejoice</u>!

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18- <u>Be joyful always</u>; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, <u>for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus</u>.

Acts 16:25- About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God.

6. Final Prayer Tips

- Let's look at a few important Biblical principles as they pertain to prayer.

RULE #1: Free Will

Deuteronomy 30:19
This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now <u>choose life</u>, so that you and your children may live.

Our prayers cannot override another person's free will- we can't force the blessings of God on someone if they do not want it.

RULE #2: The Love Rule

Galatians 5:6 AMP
The only thing that counts is faith activated and energized and expressed and working through love.

1 Peter 3:7
Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that <u>nothing will hinder your prayers</u>.

If we are not walking in love towards others then we can expect our prayers to be hindered!

1 Corinthians 11:29-30
For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

RULE #3: The Obedience Rule

James 4:17- Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.
1 John 3:21- Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God

Isaiah 1:19-20
If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

- This includes following the Lord's plans, purposes and pursuits for our lives.

RULE #4: The Repetitious Rule

Matthew 6:7
And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

The prayer of faith is prayed once, and then we thank the Father for answering our prayer thereafter.

RULE #5: The Will of God Rule

1 John 5:14-15
This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us- whatever we ask- we know that we have what we asked of him.

John 15:7
If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

We all know that faith begins where the will of God is known. If the will of God is in doubt concerning a need, it is impossible to pray the prayer of faith until we find Scripture that covers the need.

RULE #6: The Right Motive Rule

James 4:1-4
What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

- When we are motivated by love instead of selfishness and greed we have confidence before God.

RULE #7: The Law of the Harvest Rule

- Jesus described the Kingdom of God on the "Seed Time and Harvest" principles of Genesis.
    - God's Word is incorruptible seed (**1 Peter 1:23**).
    - Sometimes people think it's going to happen just because they say it a few times.
    - Saying it is involved in planting the seed it, but there is more to it than that.
    - We have to believe the Word in our heart.
    - We need to persevere and hold fast to our confession of faith in god's Word.

Hebrews 6:12
We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

Galatians 6:9- Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

We can't rush the harvest from the confession of our faith! Let's look at the process of the growing seed.

Mark 4:26-29
He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain- first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

If we don't like the kind of harvest we are reaping, we had better check on the seed we have been sowing in our lives and others- are they seeds or weeds.

What we say is what we will eventually get, because if we keep saying it, we will eventually believe it in our heart. The things that we believe in our heart, will come to pass in time. Remember it's not going to happen just because we say it once. Generally speaking, we must say it over a period of time for it to be really planted in the soil of our heart.

- The key is the be specific, be deliberate and precise with the type of seed you sow.
    - If you need healing, speak healing Scriptures not Scriptures on peace.
    - The soil of our heart grows whatever is planted there.

Some people have gotten the idea that it does not matter what kind of seed they sow, and it does not matter what they say. People will often say, "Well, God knows what I meant." Maybe so, but the issue is our heart is it not? It's programmed by God to produce whatever we sow in it (our words, good or evil).

Some people in an attempt in being honest will share with others how they feel. Even when they pray, they pray the problem instead of reminding God of the promise (**Isaiah 43:46 KJV**).Thus, they put a death sentence over themselves with their words.

Proverbs 21:23- He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.

We need to learn how to call those things that be not- to say what we want, not what we have.

- In an attempt to be real, authentic and transparent, we can accidentally dig up our seed.

In the final analysis, receiving from God through faith in His Word requires patience and perseverance.

Luke 8:15
But the seed on <u>good soil</u> stands for those with a <u>noble</u> and <u>good heart</u>, <u>who hear the word</u>, retain it, and <u>by persevering</u> produce a crop.

After sowing the healing Word of God in our spirit, we believe it is growing before we see it grow. That faith in God's Word is our "evidence" of things not seen- Hebrews 11:1. In Christ, we have perfect evidence for faith. Any man or woman can get rid of their doubts by looking steadfastly and only at the evidence which God has given for our faith- His Word. Seeing only what God says, will produce and increase faith. This will make it easier to believe than to doubt; for the evidences for faith are so much stronger than those for doubting. Don't doubt your faith, doubt your doubts for they are unreliable.

Lesson 12
Different Methods to be Healed

As we have been saying, our Father has provided numerous methods to receive healing, because bottom line, He wants His children healed!

1. The Manifestations of the Spirit

- One way to receive healing is through the manifestation of one of the gifts of the Spirit.
    - Particularly through the "Power Gifts."
    - Working of Miracles, Special Faith, and Gifts of Healings.

- Working of miracles is defined as a divine intervention in the ordinary course of nature.
    - Like the parting of the Red Sea.
    - Someone born with no eyes, receiving new ones.

I like the Weymouth translation of **1 Corinthians 12:9**, because it calls this spiritual gift "special faith." You see, this faith is special faith because every believer already has faith according to **Romans 12:3.**

- Special Faith is a manifestation of the Spirit to the believer that he/she might receive a miracle
    - Working of miracles is a gift of the Spirit to the believer that he/she might work a miracle
    - One gift receives something, and the other does something.
    - There is saving faith, that is a gift from God to be born again- **Ephesians 2:8-9.**
    - There is the fruit of faith or faithfulness- character that grows in the Christian life.
    - And there is "Special faith" that is a manifestation of the Spirit's power.

When this power gift is in operation, we believe God in such a way that God honors our word as His own and miraculously brings to pass whatever we believe or say.

Smith Wigglesworth said that if we will take a step of faith – use the measure of faith we have as a Christian – when we come to the end of that faith, very often this supernatural gift of special faith will take over. Under Wigglesworth's ministry, at least three different people were raised from the dead.

A Story of one Raised From the Dead:
One day Wigglesworth visited a sick neighbor who had been close to death. After coming home from an open-air meeting the following day, Wigglesworth learned that his wife Polly was at this neighbor's house. As Wigglesworth approached the house, he heard screaming. He went inside and found the sick man's wife, crying, "He's gone! He's gone!"

Wigglesworth said, "I just passed by the man's wife and went into the room. Immediately, I saw that he was gone. I could not understand it, but I began to pray. My wife was always afraid that I would go too far, and she laid hold of me and said, 'Don't, Dad! Don't you see that he is dead?' But I continued praying. "I got as far as I could with my own faith, and then God laid hold of me. It was such a laying hold that I could believe for anything. The faith of the Lord Jesus laid hold of me, and a solid peace came into my heart. I shouted, 'He lives! He lives!' And my neighbor is still living today."

- In Raising the dead it often takes all three Power gifts, working together in harmony.
    - Special Faith- to call a person's spirit back after it has left the body.
    - Miracles- to recreate decomposed flesh- like Lazarus in **John 11:39**- stinks.
    - Gifts of Healings- to heal the condition that caused death in the first place.

Gifts of Healings

In the original Greek translation of **1 Corinthians 12:9** and **30**, this gift is listed as "gifts of healings" – both gifts and healings are plural.

- These are supernatural manifestations of the Spirit.
    - Not to be confused with medical science.
    - Nor is it metaphysical or power of the mind.

The manifestation of gifts of healings operate as the Spirit wills, which differs from a believer simply exercising faith in God's Word for healing which can be received whenever he/she wills.

- Takes more effort to meditate on the Scriptures and believe it in our heart.
- But what gets us healed, keeps us healed.

However, when crisis comes, and we don't have the time to build faith in our hearts, we need to "Eagerly Desire" spiritual gifts and receive our healing pronto or we won't be around for very long.

Healing as a Gift vs. Gifts of Healings

Now some have said, "Any time you receive healing, it's a manifestation of the gifts of healings." But I disagree with that statement. Healing is a gift, all right, in the general sense that anything you receive from God would be a gift. But that doesn't necessarily mean that these spiritual gifts are in operation.

Mark 11:22-24- talks about having "Faith in God" which is to say, "Faith in His Word" to receive.

Healing in a general sense is part of Redemption and based on Precious Promises; which means any believe can tap into this Grace through faith.

Special Healing Ministries

- Every believer is called to lay hands on the sick, but some have a special healing ministry.

1 Corinthians 12:28-31

And in the church God has <u>appointed</u> first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

There are those whom God has put in the Church who are specifically equipped or anointed by the Holy Spirit to be used by Him in the area of Healing, with a special healing anointing.

- For example, Philip was an Evangelist who deferred to Peter and John to minister the Infilling.

A special healing anointing can be imparted to any believer called to minister to the sick in specialty areas. Since God has provided a diversity of function in the Body of Christ, so that a interdependence is cultivated within the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ- Gifts of Healings!

- Just as there are medical doctors who specialize in certain human anatomy.
    - Certain believers have greater degree success in dealing with specific conditions.

2. The Anointing

Hebrew Definition: Through the idea of contact; to smear or rub with oil, i.e. (by implication) to consecrate to an office or religious service. Often Oil is used as a symbol of the application of the anointing on one's life.

- In the Old Testament- generally it was the Prophet, Priest and King who were anointed.

Leviticus 8:12
Moses poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him.

Consider David:

1 Samuel 16:13
So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power.

- What enabled David to kill the lion, bear and Goliath – the anointing.
    - However, it was David's faith that activated the anointing in his life.
    - One more example- Samson.

Judges 14:5-6
Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him. <u>The Spirit of the LORD came upon him in power</u> so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done.

- After the baptism of John, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power.

Luke 4:14
Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside.

Acts l0:38 indicates that the terms "the anointing," "the Holy Ghost," and "power" are virtually synonymous. This means that we are able to use these terms interchangeably when discussing the subject of the healing anointing and the power of God.

Acts 10:38
How God <u>anointed</u> Jesus of Nazareth with the <u>Holy Spirit</u> and <u>power</u>, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

- Jesus was completely dependent on the Power of the Holy Spirit to heal the sick.

Luke 5:17-18
One day as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there. And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.

Consider the Name of Jesus Christ- Christ is not Jesus' last name. The word "Christ" in the Greek is "Christos" meaning, "Anointed One."

- Jesus is not the only one who was anointed with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 11:26
So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

- Christian also means anointed ones who are followers of Jesus.

1 John 2:20, 27
But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him.

The Greek Word anointing or Unction in the KVJ is c*hrisma*- an ointment or smearing, a special endowment of the Holy Spirit- very similar to the Hebrew definition. It is where we get the word "Charismatic" from.

- Again, what is the Anointing?
    - The power of the Holy Spirit in manifestation – the Greater One living inside and upon.

Luke 24:49
I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Acts 1:8
But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

- Just as Jesus was baptized with power in John's baptism, so are we in the Holy Spirit Baptism.

Ministering the Healing Anointing

To be sanctified from a Biblical perspective means to be set apart for God's holy use. We are ambassadors for Christ, called and equipped to carry on His ministry in the Great Commission.

1 Corinthians 6:11- But you were washed, you were sanctified , you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Now the "Laying on of Hands" makes perfect sense in the context of understanding the anointing. The power source is being clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. The "Doctrine of Laying on of Hands" is mentioned in Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 2.

- It's all about the transference of the anointing and impartation- mentioned throughout the Bible

Romans 1:11-12
I long to see you so that I may <u>impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong</u>— that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.

Impart Blessing:
- Jacob laid his hands on his grandsons and spoke words of blessing over them- **Genesis 48:14.**
- Jesus laying hands on the little children in **Matthew 19:13-15** and blessing them.

Separation unto Ministry and Equipping:
- God directed Moses to lay hands on Joshua as the next leader in **Numbers 27:18-23.**
- When Paul and Barnabas were sent out on their first Missionary journey in **Acts 13:1-4.**
- Timothy received the gift of God to minister through the laying on of Paul's hands- **2 Tim 1:6.**

Receiving the Baptism with the Holy Spirit:
- Peter and John placed their hands on the believers in Samaria and they received- **Acts 8:14-19.**
- Paul placed his hands on the believers in Ephesus and they also received- **Acts 19:1-7.**

Ministering Healing through the Laying on of Hands:
- Numerous times throughout the ministry of Jesus, He was touching and healing the people.
- The Great commission tells us to lay hands on all the sick and they would recover- **Mark 16:17.**
- Paul placed his hands on folks on the Island of Malta in **Acts 28:8-9.**

Acts 19:11-12
God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

Acts 5:15-16
…people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing their sick and those tormented by evil spirits, and all of them were healed.

1 Corinthians 4:20, "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power."

The anointing is measurable, in other words some individuals have a greater manifestation of the Spirit of God operating in their life and ministry than others.

- Elisha asked Elijah for a double portion in **2 Kings 2:9-11.**
- Jesus was the only One who had the anointing without measure- **John 3:34.**

A person can be less anointed or more anointed to minister healing just like a preacher can be less anointed or more anointed to preach. In the same way, a person can be less anointed or more anointed with the healing anointing.

Electricity and the Anointing
A good analogy for understanding the anointing or the power of God was made by the late Rev. John G. Lake when he said, "Electricity is God's Power in the natural realm; Holy Ghost power is God's power in the spirit realm." You see, just us electricity is in existence in the natural world, the power of God is in existence in the spirit world. And just as there are laws that govern the operation of electricity in the natural realm, there are also laws that govern the operation of spiritual power. The problem has been that in times past, we have thought that if the anointing was present, it would automatically manifest itself and just work automatically. That's just not so.

Faith and the Anointing go hand in hand

- Our faith places a demand or draws from things that are anointed.
    - The Word of God.
    - The Spirit of God- Praying in Tongues.
    - Praise and Worship.
    - Anointed ministries of men and women.

- The anointing is also tangible. The word "tangible" means perceptible to the touch.

Luke 6:19
and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

Consider the woman with the issue of blood- her touch of faith triggered the anointing- the power of God to be manifested in her life.

Luke 8:46, 48
But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me." Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

The healing anointing flowed out of Jesus' clothes and into the woman with the issue of blood. But Jesus said to her, *"Your faith has healed you."* It wasn't the healing anointing alone that healed this woman. It was her faith in the healing anointing that healed her. Or we could say it like this: It was her faith and the healing anointing that healed her! The healing power of God – the anointing – is a tangible substance that is released through our faith.

- Doubt and unbelief break the connection of God's power from flowing.

Romans 1:16-17
I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes…

Sinners connect to the saving power of God through faith which makes a demand on the anointing, the Holy Spirit to make them a new creation.

Titus 3:5-6
He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Faith is the trigger, the switch, the catalyst that sets the power of God in motion- Confessing, believing and acting on God's Word! We as Christians are we mixing God's Word with faith and tapping into the anointing- power of God!

- It's the prayer of faith that releases the power.

James 5:16 AMP
The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working].

- It's not just the faith of the one doing the ministering, but also the one doing the receiving.
    - We must minister by faith and receive by faith.

In ministering the tangible healing power of God, one could lay hands on people and sense the power of God go into them and then come right back out. Why? Because they didn't take hold of it! This usually happens because folks are trying to receive healing with their mind- the same can be said of receiving the Baptism with the Holy Spirit and speaking with other tongues. But divine healing is not mental. We can't contact God with our mind because He is not a mind, He is a spirit, John 4:24, *"God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."*

Sometimes, the healing power of God is ministered to a sick person so that the person is manifestly supercharged with heavenly electricity. Yet no real or final healing takes place until something occurs that releases the faith of the individual.

- Brother Hagin's example of a woman lifted out of her wheel chair.
- That is why it is so important to teach people how to operate in faith.

Well, thank God for the Word, and thank God for every avenue of healing:

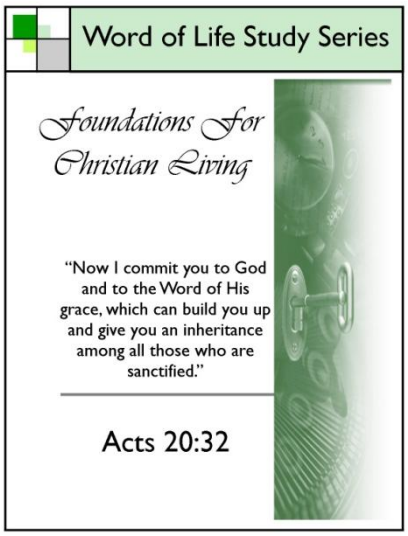
1. Simple faith in the anointed Word of God.
2. The laying on of hands by believers anointed with the Holy Spirit .
3. Those specially anointed to minister to the sick .
4. For supernatural manifestations of the healing power of God according to **1 Corinthians 12.**

We know that each of these methods of healing is scriptural and that they all work mightily on our behalf – when we mix faith with the power!

Empty Hands on Empty Heads

I realize that there is an unprofitable kind of laying on of hands. There are extremes of it in the Church world. One extreme is a mere ritual. There are churches that have a ritual of laying hands on people to confirm them. According to some church creeds, one receives the Holy Spirit at this time- not at all talking about the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. But this is a mere ritual and formality, and nothing happens. On the other hand, there have been extremes even in Full Gospel circles. People have had hands laid on them for nearly everything you could mention – and some you couldn't. I am not going to be frightened out of a New Testament practice, however, because of fanaticism, nor am I going to be frozen out because of formality. The real is not done away with because of excesses. I'm going to practice the New Testament doctrine of laying on of hands and it's going to produce New Testament results!

1 Timothy 5:22
Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.



By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 3:10-11

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Lesson 1
The Bible is God Speaking to Me

The Bible is God Speaking to Me- *maximizing the Bible in your Life.* The Bible is a book in a class all by itself.

- The Inspiration of the Scriptures- Final authority for all things that pertain to life and conduct.
- The Origin and Cannon of the Bible- Translations and how the Bible got into its present form.
- The Anatomy of the Bible- Old and New Testament, Law, Prophets, Gospels, Epistles, etc.
- Bible Devotions- Key to spiritual growth, by feeding on the Word and is the source of Faith.

A. The Inspiration of the Scriptures

1. Inspiration Explained

2 Peter 1:20-21
Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

Definition: The supernatural action of the Holy Spirit on the mind of the sacred writers whereby the Scriptures were not merely their own but the Word of God. Scripture not merely contains but is the Word of God.

Inspiration is the process through which God, by means of the Holy Spirit, assured the existence of an exact and true record of the redeeming work of Christ, and the corresponding interpretation of the redemption story, produced in written form by holy men of God.

The foundation of our Christian faith is found only in one book!

- Who we are, where we came from and where we are going.
- It explains the "why" of the human condition, and the existence of evil in the world.
- We become acquainted with the God of the universe.
- In it is everything He has chosen for us to know- this is by design…need to know basis.

- If we consider the Bible the Word of God we will put it into practice.
- Our final authority, the Bible is God Speaking to Me.

1 Thessalonians 2:13-14
And we also thank God continually because, when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as it actually is, <u>the word of God</u>, which is at work in you who believe.

2 Timothy 3:16-17
All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

- Inspiration simply means God-Breathed – Like God breathing into Adam **Genesis 2:7.**
- The Bible is an inherent, infallible book:
    - It contains words, phrases, and sentences as it was originally written.
    - The Word of God contains no errors.
    - Doctrinally there is no error
    - The essence of the Word is still intact even when it is translated into other languages.

God is more than able to preserve the integrity of his Word and to protect his eternal truths for all generations.

John 6:63-64
The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing . The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

The Holy Spirit utilized all the faculties of the writer. He guided the writers to choose the narratives and materials that was necessary to relate the divine message of salvation.

- Their distinctive ways of writing stand out, as in the four gospels.
- Some biblical writers like Moses and Paul were highly educated; others were not.
- Certainly, some passages of Scripture have been received by audible dictation.

Exodus 19:3
Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel…"

- However, many were guided by a silent activity of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 1:1-4
Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

2. Thousands of Prophecies Fulfilled

The fulfillment of thousands of prophecies that were recorded in the Bible proves that it is inspired by God himself. About 3,300 verses of prophecy have been fulfilled, predictions made hundreds and even thousands of years before fulfillment. Not one detail has failed. Already, most of them have been fulfilled and are being fulfilled today.

- The foretelling of Jesus' suffering in Isaiah 53 is very compelling.

Matthew 24:35
Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

3. Science Confirmed

Since God's creation is accurately recorded in the Scriptures, it proves that the Bible is inspired by God Himself.

- The Bible is scientifically and historically correct.
- Many statements on history, astronomy, botany, geology, or any other branch of learning.

Romans 1:18-20
The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Psalms 19:1-4
The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

B. The Origin and Cannon of the Bible

1. How the Bible Came to Us

- The English word "Bible" comes from the Greek word *biblos*, meaning "a book."

The Bible is also called:
"The Scriptures" **Mark 12:10**; "The Sacred Writings" **2 Timothy 3:15**; "The Oracles of God"; **Romans 3:2**; "The Word of God" **Hebrews 4:12.**

2. Bible Writers

- The Holy Spirit used between, 35 to 40 writers over a time period of around 1500 years to write the Bible, in different parts of the world, time, environment, personalities and culture.

- Yet they were consistent in what they wrote and did not contradict one another- miracle!

- The Bible is the Word of God, preserved by God, and inspired by God.

3. Writing Materials

- Many of the first copies of the Bible were written on papyrus or on parchments.

- Papyrus, the "paper" of the ancient world was made from a reed with the same name.

- The NT was written on rolls or loose sheets of papyrus until the Second Century, A.D.

Another format known as the codex; the sheets were attached together at the spine, similar to the books of our time.

The Parchments: Made of animal skins, this material was more durable and costlier than papyrus.

- **Luke 4:16-21- Jesus read from a scroll concerning Himself.**

2 Timothy 4:13
When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments .

4. The Scribes

Since the printing press was not invented until the 15th century AD, copies of the Bible before that time were made by hand.

- This was accomplished by a group of scholars called scribes.
- The rules for copying the Biblical text were very strict:

    - The parchment must be prepared from the skin of a clean animal.
    - Each column must have between 48 and 60 lines.
    - The ink must be black.
    - No word or letter is to be written from memory- authentic copy read out loud.
    - Clean pen before writing the word "God" and bathe/change clothes on "Jehovah."
    - Each word and each letter is to be counted- one mistake destroy the document.

2. Cannon Explained

The word "canon" comes from the Greek *kanon*, meaning "a measuring rod or reed," and signifies a rule, a standard.

The Canon of the Bible consists of those books considered worthy to be included in the Holy Scriptures.

- It was self-evident that the books in the Bible are given by divine authority.

The Old Testament of the Israelites was divided into three parts: the Law, the Prophets and the Writings.

1. The canonization of the Old Testament- Criteria

- The divine seal upon the book (inspiration).
- The human recognition of that inspiration.
- The collection of the inspired books.

Exodus 24:3-4
When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the LORD has said we will do." Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.

The Dead Sea Scrolls (written during the first and second centuries A.D. which were found in 1947 in some caves near Jerusalem) testify to the early existence of the Old Testament Canon.

- We have the same books in our Old Testament as it had in the time of Jesus.

2. The Apocryphal Books

- The Apocryphal books are the fourteen books written between the third and first century B.C.
- Both the Jews and the early church fathers refused to recognize the Apocrypha as inspired.
- The Roman Catholic Church declared in 1546 that the Apocryphal books were canonical.

3. The canonization of the New Testament

- The books of the New Testament were written between 45 and 96 A.D.

Tests Used to Determine Canonicity

Apostlicity. Was the book written by an Apostle, or one who was closely associated with the Apostles?

Spiritual Content. Was the book being read in the churches and did its contents prove a means of spiritual edification? This was an important practical test.

Doctrinal Soundness. Were the contents of the book doctrinally sound? Any book containing heresy, or that which was contrary to the already accepted canonical books was rejected.

Usage. Was the book universally recognized in the churches, and was it widely quoted by the Church Fathers?

Divine Inspiration. Did it give true evidence of Divine inspiration? This was the ultimate test; everything finally had to give way to it.

- The two Testaments encompass the complete revelation of God- 66 books!
- We need nothing more. It is complete and totally trustworthy.

Many times a cult will claim inspiration for a book written by one of their leaders and add it to their canon. For example, the Mormons consider the Book of Mormon as a third Testament. The Jehovah Witness's have their 'new World Translation' which systematically waters down the deity of Christ.

3. Bible Translations

- The Bible was originally written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

The word "manuscript," as it is used today, is restricted to those copies of the Bible which were made in the same language in which it was originally written. At present, there are some 4,500 manuscripts of the New Testament.

This number is significant when it is considered that scholars are willing to accept ten or twenty manuscripts of classical writings to consider a work genuine.

- Translation like the New International Version versus a paraphrase Message Bible.

C. Bible Devotions

1. The Bible is Key to Spiritual Growth

Daily Bible reading is essential for spiritual growth and is a prerequisite to becoming a successful disciple of Jesus Christ. The Bible is God speaking to me, so as I read God's Word, God speaks to me through the Scriptures. Since faith begins where the will of God is known and God's Word is God's Will; I discover God's will for my life through the Bible!

John 8:31-32- Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

Here are four steps that we can take in order to develop our human spirit.

- Meditate On The Word Of God.
- Practice The Word Of God In Your Life.
- Put The Word Of God First Place In Your Life.
- Instantly Obey The Voice Of Your Spirit.

Isaiah 1:19-20
"If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword." For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

A minister once said, "People wonder why they don't have any faith to receive from God.They feed their body 3 hot meals a day, but their spirit one cold snack a week."

Matthew 4:4
Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Colossians 3:16-
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another…

- We feed our spirit through meditating in the Word of God.

"Meditate" in the Hebrew means- To murmer or mutter, to ponder, imagine, speak, study, talk and utter- **Joshua 1:7-8; Psalm 1:1-3.**

The best place to start reading in the Bible would be in the New Testament, beginning with the Gospel of John and read on through to Revelation- don't speed read, chew on it like a cow with cud!

2. By Grace Through Faith

Ephesians 2:8-10
For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

- There is a real risk for new believers to revert back to the old ways of the world- works.
- The believers in Galatia were being corrected for slipping back into legalism and religion.
- Our society has been poisoned by a philosophy of moral relativism.
- No amount of zeal will please God, only faith according to **Hebrews 11:6.**

Galatians 3:1-5
You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now <u>trying to attain your goal by human effort</u>? Have you suffered so much for nothing — if it really was for nothing? Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?

Romans 10:1-4
Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

3. The Word of Faith

- So what are the works that God desires from us.
- To mix the word with Faith according to **Hebrews 4:1-3.**

John 6:28-29
Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

- Definition of Grace: God's Power at work in you who believe.

God's grace is God's Power and is contained in God's Word- the Bible. As you meditate on the Bible, you are ingesting God's power and creative life into your spirit- John 1:17, *"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."* Note, in verse 1 Jesus is referred to as "The Word" in this chapter. The Word of God = the Grace of God. So God's grace, God's power for living comes through the Word of God- the Bible!

- The Kingdom of God Within- **Luke 17:20-21.**
- It all about hiding God's Word in our hearts according to **Psalm 119:11.**
- Parable of the sower and growing seed in Mark- Word won't return void in **Isaiah 55:10.**
- The Law of Genesis according to **Genesis 1:11-12**, everything produces after its own kind.
- Word of Faith Principles in **Romans 10:8-9.**
- The Spirit of Faith in **2 Corinthians 4:13-14.**

So we see two spiritual laws at work! First begins the spiritual law of the 'Word of Faith' which states, "When you meditate on God's Word (speak it out of your mouth), it will get into your heart where it will grow until harvest time. The next spiritual law begins where the "Word of Faith' ends and that is the 'Spirit of Faith'. The Word of God in your heart comes back up out of your mouth to manifest and cause what you speak to come to pass- **Luke 17:5-6; Mark 11:14,20-25.**

Lesson 2
Creation, The Fall & God's Solution

Creation, The Fall & God's Solution- *the promise of a Redeemer.* Our focus here is to provide a big picture orientation of the origin and redemption of mankind.

- Who am I? Created in God's image. The tri-cotomy of man.
- Why am I here? God's dream for us as it began in the Garden of Eden.
- What in the world happened? The fall of man, consequences of Death due to disobedience.
- God's Solution! The promise of a Redeemer and the redemption of mankind.

A. Who Am I

1. The World Before Ours: Pre-Adamite Creation

- God is the author of all life and creator of the earth and the universe.

Psalm 24:1-2
The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

- We know by Scripture that man has been on the scene for about 6,000 years.

Mankind on the Earth – Adam was created around 6,000 years ago!

The genealogies of Luke 6:23-38 describes the godly line from Adam to Jesus.

A generation is calculated to be around 40 years- **Numbers 32:13.**

Matthew 1:17 describes 42 generations from Abraham to Jesus-	1,680 years
Genesis chapter 5 describes the generations from Adam to Noah-	2,242 years (Septuagint)
From Jesus until today-	2,000 years
	5,922

Genesis 1:2
Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

- Something happened between Genesis 1:1- we don't know exactly how old the earth is
    - **Ezekiel 28:12; Isaiah 14:12-15; Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:4.**

The word "**was**" in Genesis 1:2 would be better translated in the Hebrew 'hayah' as "**became**."

In Genesis 1:28 in the KJV and some other translations refer to "Replenish" the earth just as Noah and his family were instructed "… and replenish the earth" in **Genesis 9:1.**

2. The Beginning of Our Time: A New Creation; A Clean Slate

- God starts over by re-creating the earth as described in Genesis chapter one
    - In Six days God re-creates the earth and on the seventh He rested.

- God spoke creative words and what He said came to pass- with Word He created!

Hebrews 1:3 (AMP)
Upholding and maintaining and guiding and propelling the universe by His mighty word of power.

Hebrews 11:1, 3 NKJV
Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

3. The Anatomy Of A Human Being

- The theory of evolution is not proven and contradicts the Word God.
- God made man as a full grown mature being just like everything else in **Genesis 1.**

True science rejects the notion:

- The theory that the hair is but elongated scales of pre-historic animals.
- The legs of all animals developed from warts on aboriginal amphibians.
- Eyes are but accidental development of freckles on blind amphibians; responding to the sun.
- Ears came about by the air waves calling to spots on early reptiles.
- Man came from monkeys.
- The vast universe came from a few molecules.
- Nothing working on nothing by nothing, through nothing, for nothing, begat everything.

- Of the animal kingdom he said, "Be fruitful and increase in number" **Genesis 1:22.**
- Of the plant world he said, "Seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit.
- Complete with seed in it, according to their various kinds" **Genesis 1:11.**
- Of man God said, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it" **Gen 1:28.**

- Here we see what we call the "Law of Genesis"- everything produces after its own kind!
- God made a physical body for man out of the dust of the ground; 4004 BC-Young's Conc.
- Adam name = 'of the ground'; Hebrew- Ruddy, to flush or turn rosy; red clay
- Man alone of all created beings received the breath of God- became a spirit being!

Genesis 2:7
The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Scientists say that the 16 compound ingredients found in clay make up 16 primary elements of the human body. The earth supports and transfers vitamins and minerals into plant and animal life which we consume in order to nourish our physical bodies that originated from the ground.

Genesis 1:26- 27
Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness…So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

- This spiritual attribute of man is what makes him unique to the animal creation.
- In fact, James 2:26 states, *"The body without the spirit is dead."*
- A tri-cotomy, a three part being. You are a spirit, you have a soul and you live in a body.

John 4:24- God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.
Jer 1:5- Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart…

1Thessalonians 1:23
May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole <u>spirit</u>, <u>soul</u> and <u>body</u> be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You are a spirit- The real you that lives forever. Conscience is the voice of your spirit. With your spirit you can contact God and have a relationship with Him by faith.

You have a soul- The intellect, free-will and emotions. Reason is the voice of your mind. With your mind you contact the intellectual realm of thought, memory, reason, and *imagination. This is not to be confused with brain matter, your soul like your spirit is eternal. God speaks to us through our spirit and our spirit then enlightens our mind so that we can understand it- this is referred to in the Bible as revelation knowledge*- **Ephesians 1:17.**

You live in a body- The physical body that is mortal. It is the shell, the house, the earth suit that we live in and allows us to dwell on this earth. With it we contact the physical world through our five senses. Our feelings are the voice of our body. When the body dies, the spirit and soul of a person leaves the body- **James 2:26**

B. Why Am I Here – The Meaning of Life

1. God's Dream for Man

- To know, experience, and have fellowship with Him our Creator God!

Acts 17:24-28
"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'"

- We were given a job to do on this earth- to replenish it with people and rule over His creation

Genesis 1:26, 28- "And let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; replenish the earth and subdue."

- As parents see children as an extension of themselves to love and cherish … the Father too.

Matthew 7:9-11- "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

- The Meaning of life: is found in relationships, God made us as relational beings
- First to have a personal relationship with Himself, and then with others.
- The impact we make in the lives of others for God's glory, lives on for eternity.
- Ray Boltz- Thank you for giving to the Lord, I am a life that was changed and in heaven.

1 Timothy 6:7, *"for we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it."*

1. The Garden of Eden

- God prepared a beautiful place for Adam called the Garden of Eden.
- A canopy of water encircled the earth- created a green house effect- temperate climate.

Gen 2:6- But streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.

Gen 2:8-9, 15
Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. And the LORD God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground- trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

- Adam needed a helpmate, God created Eve from Adam's rib in **Genesis 2:20-25.**

The word woman comes from the Hebrew- Ish shah, fem of Ish, of man. It literally means she-man; womb-man; man with the womb; or female-man, because she was taken out of man.

1 Corinthians 11:11-13
In the Lord, however, woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

C. What in the World Happened – why is this present world so messed up?

1. To Obey Or Not To Obey

Genesis 2:16-17
And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

- Why would God have one tree that could not be eaten from?
- God did not make mankind to be a race of robots we have a free-will to choose!

Death would occur only if Adam disobeyed the command of God- tree of the knowledge of good evil.

The Probation of Man
In Genesis 2:15, God told Adam to "take care of it or to keep it." Which implies to guard and protect it from intruders. This is the first reference of an enemy to God and man- Hebrew meaning:

shamar (shaw-mar'); a primitive root; properly, to hedge about (as with thorns), i.e. guard; generally, to protect, attend to…
Man was created in God's image. He was endowed with intelligence, emotion and will. He was a free moral agent, therefore, he was capable of making a choice. Since man was created for God's glory (Isaiah 43:7), and since he could best glorify God by freely choosing to worship and serve Him, it was necessary that Adam be given an opportunity to make a choice.

For Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden was not only a home in paradise; it was also a place of probation, a place to test their obedience and loyalty to God. The probation of Adam and Eve was based upon a clear direct commandment, a simple law of works. The law had two parts:

1) A positive part, consisting of a glorious provision.
2) A negative part, consisting of a clear prohibition.

The probationary commandment given to Adam was personal, not moral. There was no obvious wrong in eating from the forbidden tree; the Fall of Adam and Eve was the result of disobedience, not the result of a clearly immoral act. The prohibition of eating from the tree of good and evil was a testing law, because the evil was not self-evident; the evil was in the disobedience of the commandment. The fall of Adam and Eve resulted from a pure act of willful disobedience.

The Temptation

2 Corinthians 11:3
But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

- The serpent allowed Satan to speak through it in order to deceive Adam and Eve.
- Satan was allowed an opportunity to tempt man to see if Adam and Eve would rebel.

Read: Genesis 3:1-7

- The first thing Satan did was to create doubt in order to deceive.
- He was trying to undermine what God had clearly stated as truth.
- Satan outright calls God a liar, accusing Him of denying Adam and Eve of their potential.

Adam and Eve were already gods of this earth:

God had made Adam and Eve the gods of this world!

Psalms 82:6- "I said, 'You are gods;' you are all sons of the Most High."

John 10:34-35
Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are gods'? If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came-and the Scripture cannot be broken."

2. What Did Adam & Eve's Disobedience Mean For Mankind

Slaves to whom you obey
Here is something important that you should know, it's a universal law, that a person becomes a slave to the person he/she obeys. If Satan could get Adam and Eve to obey his words and do what he says, Adam and Eve would then become his slave and Satan would have Adam's domain.

Romans 6:16-17
Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey-whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

- So what contributed to the fall of Adam and Eve, SELF, DOUBT and PRIDE!
- Unfortunately, Adam and Eve took the fatal bite they died – three forms of death- separation!
- They lost God-consciousness and gained self-consciousness.
- They lost the power to do good, and gained the power to do evil.
- Adam lost that glorious sinlessness and innocence – now twisted and marred by sin.
- What a deal, we got the 'Knowledge of Evil' I have had a belly full of it- how about you?

The original sin is the same temptation used today in order to entrap people in the bondages of disobedience and slavery to the law of sin and death:

- The lust of the flesh- *Good for food.*
- The lust of the eyes- *Pleasing to the eye.*
- The pride of life- *Desirable for gaining wisdom.*

1 John 2:15-17
Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world-the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does-comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

In Luke 4:5-7 Satan said to Jesus, *"I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to."* That's right sports fans, Satan stole that authority from Adam in the Garden of Eden." When Adam and Eve obeyed Satan and rebelled against God, Satan become the god of this world instead of Adam and Eve. When we say 'world' we are referring to the culture, economic and political affairs of man, the world system is what Satan is god over. Creation as we said before still belongs to God. Satan is the god of this world now, that's why it's in such a mess!

2 Corinthians 4:3-4
And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

1 John 5:19-20- We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

Adam committed high treason and gave the dominion that God had given him to the devil to be slaves!

- Adam and Eve made coverings to deal with the shameful exposure of sin.
- Man has been trying to cover up sin ever since; with religion being one of the worst.
- Sin is spiritual crime with corresponding punishment- commit the crime do the time!

Full Exposure
Adam and Eve were clothed with the glory of God. That was their covering before they sinned. Since God Himself is light, it is no surprise that Adam and Eve reflected God's glory, which was their covering. **Psalms 104:2- He wraps himself in light as with a garment.** When Adam and Eve sinned, the glory of God left them and they became exposed- the light went out.

- The next effect that resulted from Adam and Eve's disobedience was fear.

1 John 4:18
"But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."

Read: Genesis 3:8-19

Sin will cost you more than you are willing to pay, take you farther than you want to go, and keep you longer than you are willing to stay. So Adam and Eve, was it worth it? NO!!! Not for them or for us! Lets break this thing down, that was a lot to take in, but it sure does explain a whole lot.

- **Judgment on the Serpent:** Once beautiful and upright, now slithering in the dirt.
- **Judgment on the Woman:** Pain in child bearing and now in submission to man.
- **Judgment on the Man:** Work becomes a toil and a burden- essence diminished greatly!

3. Man's Hopeless Predicament

Galatians 3:22- But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin.

Born Into Sin:
Due to Adam's transgression, every human being that is born on this earth, has a propensity to sin. In other words, the blood line of mankind is contaminated with a sinful nature that every person is born with- optional reading **Romans 7:14-20**. Even as little child, the inherent selfish sinful nature is on display- the whole world revolves around him/her.

Romans 5:12
Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

Age of Accountability:
A baby or small child is spiritually alive unto God until they are old enough to choose to disobey.

Romans 7:9-10
Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.

If Adam had obeyed, resisting Satan's temptation, he would have possessed holy moral character, and would have risen to a new level of blessing and fellowship with God; he would have had heaven on earth; unfortunately human history has been mostly hell on earth.

D. God's Solution, the Promise of a Redeemer

Genesis 3:15
"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

God in his infinite mercy, made a declaration that a man would be born of a woman who would crush Satan's dominion over mankind, but in the process Satan would make it painful. Approximately, four thousand years later, God the Son became a man and his name was Jesus. As the divine God/man, Jesus defeated the devil as a man but paid an incredible price in the process through his death, burial and resurrection.

- Through the ages God has never left himself without a witness, testifying to his existence.

- **God's first witness, lowest revelation: Creation.**

Romans 1:19-20
Since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Unfortunately, over the ages, men chose to follow evil and worship Satan- 1 Corinthians 10:20, *"No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons."*

- **God's second witness, next revelation: The Law & the nation of Israel.**

God had revealed himself to a man named Abram who lived back then in present day Iraq. God made a covenant or a contract with Abram that through him, a great nation would be created, the present day Jewish people in the land of Israel. Through this nation God would bring the Savior of the world, Jesus! The birth of Jesus did not occur until a few thousand years later.

From the time of Moses until Jesus, the way for people to be saved was to become a Jewish proselyte and convert to Judaism. To obey the 10 commandments and observe all the Jewish customs and sacrifices.

Isaiah 49:6
"I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

- **God's Final witness, the ultimate revelation: The Lord Jesus Christ.**

John 14:6-7
Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Since the resurrection of Jesus, the gospel message of the saving grace of Jesus Christ is being preached throughout the world. In the present age we live in, the way of salvation is only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Read Acts 17:22-31

Lesson 3
The Glorious Godhead

The Glorious Godhead- *Introduction to the Trinity.* God is one, expressed in three persons- Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- Attributes of God- Trinity, Omnipresent, Omnipotent, Omniscient- Names, character of God.
- God the Father- introducing the Father's heart and leadership role in the family of God.
- God the Son- the Word of God and executor of the Father's will and plan.
- God the Holy Spirit- The seven fold Spirit of God, magnifies Jesus and the believer's helper.
- Cults & False Religions- Understanding Satan's attempt to counterfeit the truth.

A. The Attributes of God

1. Definition of Terms

- We understand that theology is the study of God.
- In contrast, religion has to do with the practice of faith.
    - the way in which we worship God.

Religion is the combination of beliefs, practices, customs and institutions through which the followers of Christ express their faith and worship to God.

Our goal as to maintain a good balance between doctrine and religion thus avoiding the extremes.

- Too much emphasis on theology(knowledge of God),become dry/lifeless- head knowledge.
- Yet too much religion(the practice) at the expense of theology we become religious fanatics.

James 1:27
Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

2. What We Believe

Every Bible believing church has a set of core values and tenants of their faith. This is referred to as a dogma, or the expression of cardinal points of doctrine. Dogma summarizes the fundamental points of the faith. In this aspect, it is used as a positive term.

What is the relationship between doctrine and dogma? Doctrine is the revelation of God regarding a truth which is found in the Bible. Dogma is the declaration of man about this truth, expressed in a creed. For instance at our church, this is what we believe:

HAVE STUDENTS TAKE TURNS READING EACH OF THE 12 TENANTS!

3. The Existence of God

Nowhere does the Bible argue for God's existence, everywhere the Scriptures assume His existence as an accepted fact!

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

- God reveals Himself through three primary ways: **Nature, Conscience and Revelation.**

Nature:

- Every painting has a painter, every building an architect, fine pottery has a potter.

Psalms 19:1-4
The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

Conscience:

- The human conscience comes from God; makes us aware of moral realities of right/wrong.
- Unfortunately it can be overridden and seared and allow folks to do anything.

Romans 2:14-15
Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.

Revelation:

- The Bible is God's word for humanity, it contains details and specifics!
- Unlike nature and conscience, revelation = revealed truth of God, His nature and redemption.

Romans 16:25-27
Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him— to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

4. The Nature of God

- Obviously this is a huge subject!
- God is a spirit being with no beginning or ending, He represents absolute perfection!

John 4:24
"God is a Spirit (a spiritual Being) and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

God is Light: He is a consuming fire, speaking of God's absolute holy character and creative power. 1 John 1:5, *"God is light; in him there is no darkness at all."* **1 Timothy 6:15-16; Hebrews 12:28-29.**

God is Love: Not that He has love, He absolutely represents, optimizes and is all that love is- 1 John 4:8 *"Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love."*

God is Perfect: God is the absolute model of perfection, He cannot improve or make mistakes. Matthew 5:48 *"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*

God is Personal: A personal being is one that is self-conscious, who possesses intellect, feeling and will. He is not some impersonal mist or blob in the universe that does not care about us or is indifferent.

When Moses asked what God's name was, this was the response in Exodus 3:14, *"God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

God is Self-Existent: God is the Absolute Source of all life and being, the Uncaused Cause. God is not dependent for being or essence upon any source outside Himself, thus He is Self-existent. Colossians 1:17, *"He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."*

God does not Change: There is no variableness, uncertainty or change with God. He is not schizophrenic. He is all that He has declared Himself to be in His Word all the time and in every way.

Consider Malachi 3:6, *"I am the Lord, I change not"* or Hebrews 13:8, *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever"*

God is Eternal: As stated so eloquently in Psalms 90:2, *"from everlasting to everlasting you are God."* Our finite minds cannot comprehend eternity, for human beings everything has a beginning and an end, but not with God! 1 Timothy 1:17, *"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."*

- Omnipresence- Everywhere at the same time.
- Omniscience- All knowing, nothing takes God by surprise.
- Omnipotent- All Powerful, there is nothing He can't do or accomplish.
- Sovereign- His divine will supersedes everything but not over man's free-will.
- Holy- He is perfect in all His ways and separate from sin- cannot stand in His presence.
- Righteous and Just- He is the judge of the universe and established His perfect Law.

- Everything we need to know of God is found in His Word- we have eternity to know more.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12
For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

5. The Trinity of God

Overall the Trinity of the Godhead is a profound mystery, but God's Word does give us plenty of insight into the unique members of the Godhead.

- Even though a family is one in unity they are made up of individuals with unique roles.

In Creation:

Genesis 1:26- Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness…"

The Baptism of Jesus:

Matthew 3:16-17
As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

The Great Commission:

Matthew 28:19-20
"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit…"

- In 325 AD at Nicea, the early church fathers saw the need for a formal creed

"We believe in one God – And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, light of light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father – And we believe in the Holy Spirit, who is the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and Son, is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets."

- The word "Trinity" not only means a quantity of three, but also implies a unity of three.
- We see a perfect unity of purpose and will.
- We are mono-theistic which means to worship One God expressed in three persons.
    - Pagans are typically poly-theistic in the worship of many.

1 Corinthians 10:19-20
Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons.

B. God The Father

1. Leadership in the Godhead

- The will of God has its origin in God the Father- He is the leader with in the Godhead.
- That does not take away from the significance of God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 8:6
Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

John 6:40
"For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

John 4:34-35- "My food ," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work."

- Consider the Lord's prayer and how it begins in **Matthew 6:9-13.**
- Everything begins with God the Father, in Him resides the will of the Godhead.

Ephesians 3:14-16- For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

- He may be God to the world but He is Father to us- He is a loving Heavenly Father.
- Abba Father in **Romans 8:14-17.**
- He disciplines us with His Word- **Hebrews 12:9-11.**
- The God of the universe is our Daddy God- **1 John 3:1.**

Matthew 23:9-10, *"And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and He is in heaven."*

2. The Ancient of Days

- God the Father is referred to in the Bible as- 'Ancient of Days' who is seated upon a throne.
    - Old Testament in particular is a revelation of God the Father.
    - The Gospels we see more of God the Son.
    - In the Book of Acts and the Epistles we see a lot of the Holy Spirit.

In the Bible we see the Trinity working together fulfilling specific roles, each complimenting the other!

Daniel 7:9-10
As I looked, "thrones were set in place, and the Ancient of Days took his seat. His clothing was as white as snow; the hair of his head was white like wool. His throne was flaming with fire, and its wheels were all ablaze. A river of fire was flowing, coming out from before him. Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. The court was seated, and the books were opened."

Ezekiel 1:26-28
Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him.

C. God The Son

It is important to realize that God the Father did not create God the Son. All the persons of the Trinity are co-equal and co-eternal. The relationship that we see in the Bible between the Father and the Son has to do with their self-revelation to us as it relates to the redemption of mankind.

- Nothing has been under such attack by Satan than the deity of Jesus Christ.
- Clearly out of all the God-Head Jesus is revealed the most in the Bible.

As a matter of fact, all the Old Testament covenants God made with man, the institution of the sacrificial system and many of the prophetic declarations were all made on behalf of Jesus and His redemptive work. Accomplished in His Death, Burial and Resurrection- **1 Peter 1:18-21.**

1 Peter 1:10-12
Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

John 1:29-30
The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God , who takes away the sin of the world!

Before His incarnation and taking the name of Jesus, He was and still is the Word of God- **Jn. 1:1-4, 14.**

- Jesus declared that He is the Great "I AM" and that He had appeared to Moses.

John 8:58-59
"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.

Matthew 1:23
The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him "Immanuel"-which means, "God with us ."

Read Colossians 1:15-20- The deity of Jesus Christ

- Jesus born of a virgin, pre-existent and not contaminated with Adam's sin.
- Bore our sin as the perfect substitute- Mark 15:34, *"My God, My God."*
- Jesus became our sin, our curse upon a tree- **1 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13.**

1 John 3:8 "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."

Acts 10:38
How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Hebrews 2:14-15
Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil— and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Revelation 1:17-18
"Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades."

On the third day God had raised Jesus from the dead and has since gone into heaven and is currently seated at the right hand of God the Father in a place of triumph and victory. Jesus conquered Death, Hell and the Grave, once for all time. Jesus is always the expressed and manifested will of God!

Acts 10:39-41
"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen."

When Jesus came to earth the first time, He came as a Lamb, but the next time He will come as a Lion to rule and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords- that is our glorious hope we have in Him.

D. God The Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal force, He is a person, the third person of the Godhead!
- He is not a thing or an it- He can be grieved, resisted and blasphemed according to the Word.
    - **Matthew 12:31-32; Ephesians 4:30; Acts 7:51.**
- The Spirit of God was in the beginning during creation.

Genesis 1:2
Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

During this dispensation(period of time) called the 'Church Age' or the 'Age of Grace' the Spirit of God is God's representative on the earth while God the Father and God the Son are in heaven. As a matter of fact, the Holy Spirit indwells the believer according to **1 Corinthians 3:16**. He leads us into all truth, shows us things to come, reveals God's Word to us. He comforts us in our troubles and orders our steps and so much more- **John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; Romans 8:14.**

1 Corinthians 6:19-20
Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit , who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Here are some symbols of the Holy Spirit that represent the unique ways in which He works:

- Spirit of God- **1 Corinthians 2:11.**
- Spirit of Christ- **1 Peter 1:11.**
- The Counselor- **John 14:26.**
- Fire- Purification and empowerment- **Luke 3:16; Acts 2:3.**
- Wind- Work of regeneration and refreshing- **John 3:8; Acts 2:2.**
- Water- Purification, renewing and power **John 4:10-14; 7:38-39.**
- Seal- Branded by God with divine ownership- **Ephesians 1:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22.**
- Anointing- Equipping for service- **Acts 10:38; 1 John 2:20, 27.**
- Dove- Speaks of the beautiful and majestic presence of God- **Matthew 3:16.**

- In the Old testament the Prophet, Priest and King were anointed- now all believers are.
- He was the manifest presence of God in the Old Testament Holy Of Holies- now in us.
- The Holy Spirit is the manifestation of God's Power.
    - Consider the nine manifestations of the Spirit in 1 Corinthians chapter 12.
- Demons are cast out by the Spirit of God in **Matthew 12:28.**
- The Seven-Fold Spirit of God.

Isaiah 11:2
The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him - the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

Before Jesus left the earth, He promised that He would send another Helper, Comforter, Counselor and Advocate according to **John 16:7**- in the Greek the word is '*parakletos*' which means 'One called alongside to help'. We could not make it as Christians without the Holy Spirit working in our lives.

John 16:7
But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

- **Romans 8:14**- the sons of God are led by the Spirit of God!
- Dual work of the Spirit- Spirit within and the Spirit upon.

D. Cults and False Religions

1 Timothy 4:1-2
The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.

The enemy wants to rob people of the truth by offering counterfeit religions or raising up cults to keep people from getting saved. A good portion of the new Testament is devoted to refute false teachings! **Jude 3-4; 2 Peter 2:1-3-** Be like the Bereans in **Acts 17:11-12.**

- The central error of these cults and false religions has to do with their assessment of Jesus.
- Their beliefs are just a works based system, in order to earn their way into heaven.
- Our best defense is to know the truth so well that the counterfeit stands out like a sore thumb.

So what is a cult: It is a perversion, a distortion of biblical Christianity and/or a rejection of the historical teachings of the Christian church. It is a group of people polarized around someone's interpretation of the Bible and is characterized by major deviations from orthodox Christianity relative to the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, particularly the fact that God became a man in Jesus Christ. These cults will introduce themselves as Christians but deny Christ in their teachings.

Jehovah's Witnesses- Officially known as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, the Jehovah's Witnesses are a product of the life work of Charles Taze Russell, born February 16, 1852. Their theological views are found in their various publications, including The Watchtower and Awake- they have their own version of the Bible- The New World Translation.

Mormonism- The founder of Mormonism, or The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Joseph Smith, Jr., was born on December 23, 1805. He alleged having a vision with an angel telling him that all churches are in error- Angel of light according to **2 Corinthians 11:14.**

Both cults do not believe in the doctrine of the Trinity, deny the deity of Jesus Christ, there is no salvation outside their group, there is no such thing as hell, salvation is a works based proposition.

Lesson 4
All Kinds of Prayers

All Kinds of Prayer- *a guide to communicating with God.* Prayer is our life-line to the throne of God.

- What is prayer? Communication with the Father God by the Spirit in Jesus name.
- Claiming the Precious Promises- Entering into God's provision for your life.
- Effective Prayer- Faith, Hope & Love- the cornerstones to a powerful prayer life.
- All kinds of Prayer- Bonus Material: Study the various modes and operations of prayer.

A. What is Prayer

1. Communication with God

Ephesians 6:18
And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

- The brown paper bag of putting all prayers together- shaking them up, they're not the same.
- Through Jesus Christ we can have fellowship, talk and commune with God.

1 Timothy 2:5-6
For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men…

- God created mankind for the express purpose for divine relationship & communication.
- Think of it, the right to commune with the creator of the universe.
- God actually enjoys spending time with us! If you need a reason to live, here it is!

Isaiah 1:18- "Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

- Sin caused our wonderful communication line with our Creator to be cut off!
- However through Jesus Christ we have been reconciled.

2 Corinthians 5:18- All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation

- Our heavenly Father is interested in all the details, let's not leave Him out of anything.
- If it concerns you, then it concerns Him- Mt. 11:28, *"Come to me, all you who are weary."*

1 Peter 5:7 AMP
Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on Him, for He cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully.

- Unfortunately many Christians see prayer as pulling the fire alarm- Oh, has it come to that!
    - Prayer is a lifestyle as normal as breathing, simply talking to God- **James 5:13-16.**

- Prayer is our life-line to the throne of God, be in contact with our God throughout the day
    - Practicing the presence of God, frequently being conscious of Him in the day.

- With no condemnation, guilt or shame because of the blood of Jesus come to God.

Hebrews 4:16
Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

- When you talk to God, talk normally; speaking in 1611 King James does not impress Him.
- Obviously, be honest since He knows things about us we don't even know.
- Don't be afraid to share your heart, concerns, joys, ideas He wants to hear from you.
- **1 John 1:9**- restores broken fellowship, relationship in tact- be quick to forgive/repent/obey.

Isaiah 43:25-26 NKJV
"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins. Put Me in remembrance; Let us contend together; State your case, that you may be acquitted."

Note: Faith pleases God so it is always good to end a negative item in, "But I trust you God in this situation and I cast these cares in your hands, you are more than able to bring me through!" **Heb. 11:6.**

There is No god as BIG as MINE – The Heart of Praise!!!

1 Corinthians 1:31- "Therefore, as it is written: 'Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.'"

When we look at prayer as communication, we understand that concept. We also understand that for any relationship to remain fresh and healthy, there needs to be continual communication- so it is with God!

Isaiah 62:5- "as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you."

- So in a relationship should we do all the talking, obviously no!
    - God speaks to us primarily through His Word- *Logos.*
    - He also speaks to our hearts by the Holy Spirit- *Rhema.*
    - He speaks to us through the manifestation of spiritual gifts- **1 Corinthians 12.**
    - He speaks to us through other believers.

1 Kings 19:12- After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.

Psalms 46:10 "Be still, and know that I am God."

Psalms 139:17-18
How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand.

Whatever you hear, ALWAYS filter it and judge it with the Word of God- our final authority!

B. Claiming The Precious Promises

- Bible teaches that all the promises are 'Yes' in Christ, but many are not automatic- Faith!
    - Mark 9:23, *"Everything is possible for him who believes."*

2 Corinthians 1:18-20
But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silas and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ.

- All things for life and godliness, has already been provided- **KEYS ILLUSTRATION!**

READ 2 Peter 1:2-5 - All things that pertain to life and godliness

1 Corinthians 3:21-23
All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future — all are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

1. Good God vs. Bad Devil

- A simple theology that often gets complicated by well meaning folks- **John 10:10.**
    - Hosea 4:6, *"my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge."*
- If you don't know who the source or origin is of bad things how can you stand against it?
- Jesus uses simple common sense to clarify the matter:

Matthew 7:9-11
"Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

James 1:16-17
Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

- So was it an act of God or an act of the devil- tragedies – rooted in Old Test mentality?
    - Permissive versus Causative sense.

Dr. Robert Young, was a Hebrew and Greek Scholar (Old Testament was written in Hebrew, New Testament was written in Greek), and the author of *Hints and Helps to Bible Interpretation*. He says in this book, that in Exodus 15:26, the literal Hebrew reads "... I will permit to be put upon thee none of these diseases which I permitted to be brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that heals you." The original Hebrew of these scriptures was in the permissive tense, but because the English language has no corresponding permissive tense, the verbs were translated in the causative tense. The KEY to understanding these different passages of Scripture lies in knowing that the active verbs in Hebrew have been translated in the causative tense when they should have been translated in the permissive tense. So, **Deuteronomy 28:27** should have been translated something like, "The Lord will **allow/permit** these plagues to be brought upon you..."

Romans 8:19-22: The creation groans under the fall and curse in the earth!

- Acts 10:38 makes it plain that sickness and disease is directly/indirectly Satanic oppression.
- God is a good God, and everything He does is just and perfect.

Luke 13:16
"Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham , whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

2. Establishing God's Will on the Earth through Prayer

- There is a devotional side of prayer that we have just discussed and a ministry side.
- God's will on earth as it is in heaven- **Matthew 6:9** the Lord's Prayer.
- Yet as ambassadors of Christ we are called to be change agents in the earth.
    - Releasing the power of God on earth through prayer!!!

Ezekiel 22:30
So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.

God is certainly Sovereign and there are events in our human history and future events that will occur, regardless. Yet God has chosen men and women in the past to establish covenant as an entry way into the affairs of mankind- like Abraham, Moses, David, and even Jesus Himself as the Son of Man. The Holy Spirit uses the believer to intercede (stand on behalf of another) for others in tongues, praying the perfect will of God on their behalf.

READ: 1 Timothy 2:1-5; Romans 8:26-27

It seems that God needs human representatives on the earth to work through and fulfill His plans and great purpose for mankind. God wants to use you and me as His ambassadors to manifest His kingdom throughout the earth- Prayer is a primary means by which this is accomplished.

1 Peter 2:9
But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

- Jesus our Great Intercessor! Jesus also intercedes for us according to Romans 8:34!

C. Effective Prayer

1. Keys to a Successful Prayer Life

- For our prayers to be effective we need to follow the principles of God's Word.
    - Prayer can be done in vain if we don't follow the instructions.

Psalms 127:1- Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.

When it comes to prayer we want to avoid the 'Traditions of Men' as it pertains to prayer!

Matthew 15:9- "They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."

2. Faith, Hope and Love

1 Corinthians 13:13
And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

- To have an effective prayer life we must have Faith, Hope and Love working in our lives!

Hope

- It all begins with hope, it is the reason why, the goal, blueprint, recipe for what we do!
    - Hope is the springboard from which we believe, the framework.

Colossians 1:5- "The faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven."

- Bible hope is not like the world's definition, as the world has a perverted definition of love.
- The Bible definition of hope is 'Eager Expectation' on the God who does not lie!
    - Philippians 1:20, *"I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed."*

Hebrews 6:18-19
God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.

Upon hearing the promise of God, Hope springs up from the Bible to inspire us to believe God. It also gives us the endurance to wait patiently for the promise to be fulfilled- the blueprint for faith.

Faith

- The goal of faith is to take the blueprint of Hope, the promise of God and make it a reality.
- Faith is always 'Present' tense, faith is 'Now!'
- The whole purpose of faith it to take the unseen, and make it seen- IT IS THE SUBSTANCE.

Hebrews 11:1 AMP
NOW FAITH is the substance, assurance (the confirmation, the title deed) of the things [we] hope for, being the proof of things [we] do not see and the conviction of their reality [faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses].

- Faith begins where the will of God is known, and God's Word is God's will.
- This is where faith always begins, with the Word of God! The Bible is God speaking to me!
- Hear God's Word, the force of faith, God's power comes into my spirit, causes me to believe.

1 John 5:14-15
This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him.

- God's Grace is the power of God at work in me who believes- **Acts 20:32.**
- It is impossible to have faith without God's Word- Word of Faith vs Spirit of Faith.
- The goal is to hide the Scriptures in our hearts by meditating on the Word- speak it out.
- The sowing is in the saying, spiritual seed growing in your spirit to produce a harvest.
- Beware of 'Mental Assent' versus to believe with the Heart- **Mark 4; Luke 17:21.**
- God's Word is the cure for doubt- more Word less doubt, less Word = more doubt.

James 1:6-8
But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

Consider Abraham- Romans 4:17-22

- It took Abraham 25 years of hearing the promise "Father of Many Nations."
    - Our problem in America is that we are too impatient, lazy and uncommitted.

Galatians 6:9
Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.

Hebrews 6:12
We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

- Delay does not mean denial- consider **Daniel 10:10-13- 21**, a few days delay.
    - **Isaiah 55:11**- God's Word will not return void.
    - Angels are a working bring the answer in – **Psalms 103:20.**
- Avoid repetitious asking for the same thing according to **Matthew 6:7-8.**
    - Speak the answer and not the problem- Thermostat vs. Thermometer Christians.

Love

- Walking in love is absolutely crucial to a successful prayer life.
- If we mistreat others you will see that your prayer life will stall.
- Walking in Love is the greatest of all spiritual pursuits.

Galatians 5:6 AMP
…but only faith activated and energized and expressed and working through love.

1 Peter 3:7 AMP
… in order that your prayers may not be hindered and cut off. [Otherwise you cannot pray effectively.]

- To walk in love is manifested in one's life by simply obeying and practicing God's Word.
- When we walk in Love we are walking in the Spirit- **Galatians 5:16.**
- **Romans 5:5** tells us God's love is shed abroad in our Hearts.
    - We are born again with God's Love nature = Being in the Light **1 John 1:7.**

1 John 5:2-3
This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.

Galatians 5:22-23- But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

- When we sin, the Holy Spirit does not convict us (John 16:8) our own hearts will condemn us

1 John 3:21-23
Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us.

- When we walk in love we fulfill the law- **Romans 13:10**- It's the Law of the New Covenant.
- Love keeps our motives right and brings the flesh under- **James 4:1-2.**
- If we don't forgive others our Faith is paralyzed- **Mark 11:25.**

Prayer does not change God because God does not change, prayer changes us and the circumstances around us; through Faith, Hope and Love!

1 Thessalonians 1:3
We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith , your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Asking vs. Claiming

- Unfortunately there is a lot of confusion when it comes to taking the right approach in prayer.
- Do we ask or do we claim?
    - We ask for what we don't have but we claim what we already have in our possession.
- Confession of God's Word brings the possession of God's Word- Mix the Word with Faith!

Hebrews 4:14
Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

Hebrews 10:23 KJV
Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)

The dictionary says that to confess means "To acknowledge or to own, to acknowledge faith in." There is more to confession than just the confession of your faults, but also what you believe. Confession is affirming something we believe. It is testifying to something we know. It is witnessing for a truth we have embraced. Christianity is known as the "Great Confession", it all begins with the new birth.

- When it comes to Our Glorious Redemption in Christ, it's already ours- past tense- Claim.
    - New Birth, Healing, Peace, Prosperity among others- you confess it to have it.
    - So whatever we have been redeemed from Galatians 3:13- no need to ask, Claim it.
- When the Bible instructs us to ask, than do so.
    - For wisdom in **James 1:5-8**, ask the Lord of the harvest in **Luke 10:2.**

James 5:15
And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven.

Luke 17:21- "because the kingdom of God is within you."

4. Beware of Experiences

There is an old saying that goes as follows, "You can have 10 miles of trials and not grow an inch if in the midst of those trials you did not act on God's Word." There is a huge danger for believers to build doctrine on their experiences. If something goes well, it must be God's will, if something does not work out, it must not be God's will- that is dangerous! The Devil can have a field day with that by shaping a believer's theology by their five senses, by their experiences.

- Jesus telling the disciples to go to the other side of the lake in **Mark 4:35-41**- Storm!!!
- Jesus unable to do miracles in hometown- took Him for granted as carpenter's son.

Mark 6:5-6
He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

God's will is based on God's Word and it does not change- Mark 13:31, "*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away."* Jesus said in Mark 9:23 that *"Everything is possible for him who believes."*

God is not schizophrenic, nor does He give and then take away- you won't find Scripture in the New Testament to support that. God is sovereign as the Scriptures explain Him as such- He Cannot:

- Break His Covenants- **Deuteronomy 7:9** or Violate an individual's free will- **Dt. 30:19.**
- Lie or change His mind- **Numbers 23:19** or Allow His Word to fail- **Isaiah 55:11.**

Romans 3:3-4
What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar.

- So why do bad things happen to good people? It's never God's fault, will- Word did not fail.
- We may not know the reason but there is one- lots of ways for folks to miss God!

1 Corinthians 11:30-31
That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment.

5. Trouble Shooting our Prayers- Diagnostic Checks

2 Corinthians 13:5- Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you — unless, of course, you fail the test?

- Are my prayers founded on God's Word and am I expecting results.
- Am I being specific with God- we reap what we sow, vague prayers are not effective.
- Are my motives pure in the matter and have I cast all my cares upon the Lord.
- Am I walking in love and forgiving others.
- Am I living in purity- applying the blood of Jesus often according to **1 John 1:9.**
- Am I willing and obedient to follow God's will/direction for my life- seek first the kingdom.
- Have I overloaded my faith in the matter, I may need to involve others.
- Ask God for wisdom and counsel. The Holy Spirit is a great teacher.
- **Matthew 6:7**- Avoid repetitious prayers- praying the same thing over and over again.
- Am I using praise and thanksgiving in my prayer life.

Lesson 5
Our Glorious Redemption

Our Glorious Redemption- *Welcome to the Family of God.* Being in Christ opens a whole new world of exciting possibilities and discoveries.

- Spiritual Adoption/Inheritance, a new creation, born into God's family as a son or daughter.
- Redemption- An explanation of what Christ's death, burial and resurrection means to us.
- The doctrine of Baptisms- Baptism into the body of Christ, in water and in the Holy Spirit.
- The Church- What it is, ministry gifts and your unique gifting and endowments.

A. Spiritual Adoption and Inheritance

1. What We Were

- It helps to know where we came from so we can fully appreciate what we are now.
- We experienced spiritual death (**Hebrews 2:9**) – separated from God.
- Enemies of God and in league with Satan and his rebellion- **Romans 5:10.**
- There are only two types of people in this earth according to Scripture.

1 John 3:10, *"This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are…"* Sin was brought into the world through Adam's transgression and with sin came death- Satan's rule!

Romans 5:12
Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.

1 Peter 1:18-21
For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Read Ephesians 2:1-10

2. The Kingdom of God

Luke 8:1
After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him,

- Jesus' ministry addressed the subject of His coming Kingdom- after resurrection and beyond.
- The people of the time thought His kingdom would by a physical one immediately.
- At the moment the Kingdom of God is Spiritual, but it will become Physical some day.

Luke 16:16 AMP
Until John came, there were the Law and the Prophets; since then the good news (the Gospel) of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone strives violently to go in [would force his own way rather than God's way into it].

Luke 17:20-21
Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you."

- The kingdom to us Today is a spiritual reality of God's dominion/laws/provisions in us.
- You must be born into this kingdom to share in its bounty as a citizen- **Philippians 3:20-21.**
- Jesus taught using many parables to explain what the Kingdom of God is like.
    - The Epistles explain it thoroughly - **Colossians 1:26-27** the mystery.

John 3:3 AMP
Jesus answered him, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that unless a person is born again (anew, from above), he cannot ever see (know, be acquainted with, and experience) the kingdom of God.

3. Spiritual Adoption

Romans 8:15-17 AMP
For [the Spirit which] you have now received [is] not a spirit of slavery to put you once more in bondage to fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption [the Spirit producing sonship] in [the bliss of] which we cry, Abba (Father)! Father! The Spirit Himself [thus] testifies together with our own spirit, [assuring us] that we are children of God. And if we are [His] children, then we are [His] heirs also: heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ [sharing His inheritance with Him]; only we must share His suffering if we are to share His glory.

Ephesians 1:5-6
He predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

- Through the New Covenant we are granted the privilege of becoming children of God.
    - **Galatians 3:26-4:1; Galatians 4:4-7.**
- In the Old Covenant they were considered "servants."

1 John 3:1
How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!

Luke 7:28
"I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

4. Heir of God and Co-Heir with Jesus Christ

Romans 8:17
Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

- Today we understand the concepts of a will and inheritance- a rich uncle.
- Through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, by God's Grace we have an inheritance.
    - Do you know what is included in your inheritance? God's Word has the answers!
    - Ephesians 1:18-21, *"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened…"*

Now:

- *A New Creation*- **2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:15.**
- *Remission of our Sins*- **Colossians 1:14; 1 John 1:9.**
- *Healing for our Bodies*- **1 Peter 2:24; Mark 16:18.**
- *Authority over Satan*- **Luke 10:19; Mark 16:17.**
- *Peace of Mind*- **Philippians 4:7.**
- *Prosperity*- **2 Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 4:19.**

Later:

- *New Glorified Bodies*- **Romans 8:23; Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:35-57.**
- *See God Face to Face*- **1 Corinthians 13:12; Revelations Chapter 21.**

As you read through the Epistles you will find over 100 references to expressions like, "in Christ," "in Him," "in Whom," "through whom," etc.

- Personalize them, put your name in into these redemptive realities- Their yours to receive!

B. Redemption

- To 'Redeem' something means to buy back, as something that was once originally yours.
- We were bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus- our ransom from Satan's tyranny.
    - Mark 10:45, *"…to give his life as a ransom for many."*
    - **Colossians 1:13-14; Ephesians 1:7.**

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption , the remission of sins. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.

- Only the blood of Jesus Christ could cancel the sentence of death over our lives- why blood?
- In the beginning God instituted that the guilty can only be set free by an innocent substitute
    - Cain and Abel **Genesis 4:1-7.**
    - Old Covenant Sacrificial System – characterizes the awfulness of sin!

Leviticus 17:11 AMP
For the life (the animal soul) is in the blood, and I have given it for you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement, by reason of the life [which it represents].

The Old Covenant animal sacrificial system could only cover sins as a temporary shadow of better things to come in Jesus- the Lamb of God who takes the away the sins of the world! **Heb. 10:3-4; 9:11.**

1. Justification

The best definition for sin is, "To miss the mark"; in other words, it means anything less than perfection. Sin is spiritual crime that has a penalty- the death sentence!

James 2:10
For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

- Purpose of the Law & 10 commandments was to frustrate mankind to reveal the sinful nature
    - Not to bring salvation but to identify what sin is and that we need a savior.

Gal. 3:24- So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

- The plan of redemption centers around God's justice, His Law being satisfied through Jesus.
    - Justification is a free gift given through faith in Jesus as Lord.

Romans 5:9
Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!

Justification: God's act of remitting the sins of guilty men, and accounting them righteous, freely, by His grace, through faith in Christ, on the ground, not of their own works, but of the representative law-keeping and redemptive blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus Christ on their behalf. Justification confers a legal status upon the believer by canceling all legal liability for past, present and future sins. We have been made righteous forever in Jesus. Thus an open door is provided by which Gentiles and Jews alike stand on equal footing to the adoption and heirship of the children of God- **Titus 3:7.**

2. Remission of Sins

This phrase is used in the King James version but is replaced with the word "Forgiveness" in most modern translations. Forgiveness can be misunderstood of what God did with sins under the Old Covenant- only covered them for the future. However, the New Testament word "Remission" is what the blood of Jesus does to our sins when we are born again, blot them out as though they had never existed.

Matthew 26:28 (KJV)
For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

3. The Gift of Righteousness

Romans 5:17 AMP
For if because of one man's trespass (lapse, offense) death reigned through that one, much more surely will those who receive [God's] overflowing grace (power of God) and the free gift of righteousness [putting them into right standing with Himself] <u>reign as kings in life</u> through the one Man Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).

- Righteousness is imputed unto us as a free gift–to credit to ones account, to impart or transfer
- Right standing with God is a free gift as Ephesians chapter 2 verses 8 and 9.

2 Corinthians 5:21
God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

No more striving and struggling to meet the grade. No more living in fear, worrying if when I get to heaven God won't let me in because my bad works outweigh my good works.

- When God looks at us He only sees the perfect righteousness of Jesus credited to us.
    - He sees the blood of Jesus that has made us white as snow.

Two Sides of Righteousness:

- The first side is the legal side in which case righteousness is imputed to by faith.
    - This is what makes us acceptable to God and get into heaven- can't be improved!
- The second side is the vital side- our righteousness a walk or lifestyle every day of our life.
    - Living out the Christian faith as disciples of Christ being a doer of His Word.

4. Atonement

The word "Atonement" means reconciliation, it was associated with sacrificial offerings to remove the effects of sin and in the New Testament, refers specifically to the reconciliation between God and humanity affected by the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

- **Romans 3:25:** Sacrifice for Atonement = "Turning aside God's wrath, by taking away sin."

Expiation emphasizes the removal of guilt through a payment of the penalty of sin, while propitiation emphasizes the appeasement or averting of God's wrath and satisfying the claims of God's justice. Both words are related to reconciliation, since it is through Christ's death on the cross for our sins that we are reconciled to God. So mercy, forgiveness, justification and reconciliation are all = the term atonement.

1 John 4:10
This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

5. Sanctification

There are two forms of Sanctification that the Holy Spirit and the Word of God play in a believer's life. But what does Sanctification mean? According to the Greek, it simply means, "To Set Apart and to Make Holy."

Hebrews 13:12
"And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood."

- Instantaneous that takes place at the New Birth- taking on The Father's Holy Nature.
- Progressive throughout our life on earth by the Spirit through the Word to be like Jesus.
    - Renewing our minds with God's life, clothing ourselves with Christ, holy vessels.

2 Timothy 2:21, "If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."

6. God's Love Nature Created Within Us

- So how do we know we are saved- what is the biggest sign that we have?
    - Not water baptism, not church membership or being.
- By confessing Jesus is Lord and believing God raised Him from the dead- yes – fruit?

John 15:5-6
I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

What is Truth said Pontus Pilate- Jesus is the embodiment of truth. What is good, only God is good!

1 John 3:14-15
We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.

John 13:34-35
"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

-We are love children of a love God, his nature and character resides in our spirit nature as His offspring
-Our spiritual growth is tied directly to the development of our love walk in the footsteps of our Father!
- I believe that the Bible calls the characteristics of our love nature "Fruit" is because fruit grows!

7. ZOE - Eternal Life- the God-kind of life

John 10:10
The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have <u>life</u>, and have it to the full.

- Eternal Life does not mean to live forever; saint or sinner will live forever, but where?
- Eternal life will cause your mentality to increase, physical health, marriage- everything!

In John 1:4, *"In him was life, and that life was the light of men."* Light stands for development, this God-kind of life has made us new creations in Christ Jesus- we have Eternal Life now through the new birth according to **John 6:47; 1 John 5:13!**

Receiving eternal life is in reality, God imparting His very nature, substance, and being to our human spirits- A New Creation! This new kind of life (God's Nature), produces certain changes in a person. You can see the effects of that life almost at once. You can see it in a person's habits and speech. It changes conduct, corrects habits, and forms new ones- Eternal life is the answer to all of man's social ills !!! The New Birth is a Re-Birth of the Human Spirit with the Life and Nature of God Himself!

C. The Doctrine of Baptisms

Hebrews 6:2 in discussing the "Elementary Principles of Christ" talks about the, "Doctrine of Baptisms" meaning plural. The word 'Baptized' comes from the Greek word 'baptizo' (bap-tid'-zo); to immerse, submerge; to make overwhelmed (i.e. fully wet); used only (in the N. T.)

1. Baptized into the Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:13
For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

At the time of the New Birth, the Holy Spirit baptized us into the body of Christ, and each one of us has a special function to fulfill.

2. Water Baptism

An ordinance of the Church instituted by Jesus Christ Himself. Water Baptism does not save us, it is simply an outward expression of an inward work. It is a pledge if total committal to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Hence water baptism, symbolizes the death of the old man and the emergence of the new man in Christ.

1 Peter 3:21
And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also, not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

3. Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Acts 1:4-5
On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them <u>this command</u>: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

- The Spirit within as a result of the new Birth- **John 4:7-14.**
- The Spirit upon as a result of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit- **John 7:37-39.**
- **Acts 1:8**- Power- Greek "Dunamis"

D. The Church

Acts 9:31- Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace. It was strengthened; and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it grew in numbers, living in the fear of the Lord.

A local assembly of believers as well as the redeemed of all the ages who follow Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Church began on the day of Pentecost, this word is used 115 times in the New Testament.

- The Church is not a man made institution but is a spiritual assembly.
    - Comprised of all those born again on earth and in Heaven.

Hebrews 12:22-23
But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.

- **Church**- Greek word 'ekklesia' (ek-klay-see'-ah); a calling out.
    - 1 Peter 2:11, *"Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world…"*
- It is God's will that we congregate together on a regular basis for fellowship/ministry.

Hebrews 10:24-25- And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

- The Church is not a club of perfect people but rather a hospital for restoration.
- Yes there are hypocrites in the church you saw one this morning in the mirror.
- The Bible tells us to carry one another's burdens and serve one another- Galatians 6:1-2.

1. Five-Fold Ministry Gifts & Church Government

We are all called to use our God given gifts to serve others, but I am now referring to the call of full-time ministry Hebrews 5:4 says, *"No one takes this honor upon himself; he must be called by God"* **Ephesians 4:11-13.**

a. Apostles
The Greek word APOSTOLOS translated apostle means one sent forth, a sent one, with a commission. Charged with creating new works, new foundations in spreading the Gospel- signs and wonders follow!

b. Prophet
He speaks from the impulse of a sudden inspiration, from the light of a sudden revelation at the moment. This office not to be confused with the simple gift of prophecy. To stand in the office of a prophet, one must have a more consistent manifestation of at least two of the revelation gifts (word of wisdom, word of knowledge, or discerning of spirits) plus prophecy- has visions and revelations.

c. Evangelist
The meaning of the word "evangelist" is: one who brings the evangel (the good news); a messenger of good tidings. The evangelist's favorite theme is salvation in its simplest form, to preach Jesus- Acts 8:5-8, 35. The supernatural equipment accompanying the evangelist's ministry includes "miracles" and "gifts of healings" not to be confused with an exhorter who preaches the message without the signs.

d. Pastor
The Greek word translated "pastor" literally means "shepherd." Jesus is the Great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, of all God's sheep. Under Jesus he is the head and responsible for that local congregation.

e. Teacher
One can stand in the office of pastor and teacher, or prophet and teacher, or evangelist and teacher, and so forth. Usually has a traveling ministry among the churches with a special anointing to explain truth.

2. Body Gifts- **1 Peter 4:10-11.**

- Romans 12:4-8, a reference to believers given grace (power) by Jesus Christ to minister to one another.

3. Nine Manifestations of the Spirit- **1 Corinthians 12:1-11**
The Revelation / Power & Utterance gifts!

Lesson 6
Angels, Satan and Demons

Angels, Satan and Demons- *Origins and operations.* Extraterrestrial spiritual agents of Light and Darkness.

- Synopsis of Satan- origin, fall, the garden, mission, defeat at Calvary and final destination.
- The kingdom of Darkness- Hierarchy and classification, world system, tactics and operations.
- Angels- Origin, classification, function- examples of operation throughout the Bible.
- Authority of the Believer- The triumphant Christ Jesus, what is authority, the Name of Jesus.

A. A Profile on Satan

1. His Origin

- There was an Arch-Angel at one time named Lucifer- an Arch-Angel is a high ranking angel.
- *"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!"*
- He had authority given to him upon this earth, a throne over the nations of that time.
    - He had dominion given to him, just as God had given dominion to Adam and Eve.
- His rebellion included 1/3 of the angels in **Revelation 12:4.**
    - *"His (Satan) tail swept a third of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the earth."*
    - Luke 10:18, *"Jesus replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven."*

Isaiah 14:12-15
You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.

- Lucifer was originally created a perfect angelic being- but it all went to his head.
- Notice the reference to kings on the earth – this was before Adam and Eve.

Read Ezekiel 28:11-19

1 Timothy 3:6-7- … become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.

- As a result of Lucifer's rebellion God destroys the earth and all it inhabitants.
- Unlike Noah's flood:
    - The earth became formless and void- a chaotic state like Jupiter.
    - Absolutely no people or creatures remained to replenish the earth.
    - The sun was gone, no light whatsoever was shining.

- We cannot say exactly how old the earth is because we do not know when the beginning was.
    - From **Genesis 1:1 – Genesis 1:2** could have been millions of years.
    - In light of the Scripture, geologists, fossil records and carbon dating makes sense.

Lucifer was already a fallen creature when he came into Adam's Eden, having already ruled the earth, rebelled and caused the first flood. The word "**was**" in Genesis 1:2 would be better translated in the Hebrew 'hayah' as "**became**." So this verse should read, "Now the earth became formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep…"

- Notice the same wording is used "Formless and Empty."
- We can't bee dogmatic about this, but there is enough Scripture to make a compelling case.

Jeremiah 4:23-26
I looked at the earth, and it was <u>formless and empty</u>; and at the heavens, and their light was gone. I looked at the mountains, and they were quaking; all the hills were swaying. I looked, and there were no people; every bird in the sky had flown away. I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert; all its towns lay in ruins before the LORD, before his fierce anger.

Genesis 1:1-2
Now the earth was <u>formless and empty</u>, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

This much is certain, according to Scripture, the earth is more than 6,000 years old and there were inhabitants on the earth before the days of Adam.

Mankind on the Earth – Adam was created around 6,000 years ago!

The genealogies of **Luke 3:23-38** describes the godly line from Adam to Jesus.

A generation is calculated to be around 40 years- **Numbers 32:13.**

Matthew 1:17 describes 42 generations from Abraham to Jesus-	1,680 years
Genesis chapter 5 describes the generations from Adam to Noah-	2,242 years (Septuagint)
From Jesus until today-	<u>2,000</u> years
	5,922

2. The Garden

- Satan's entourage encompasses 1/3 of God's previous elect angels
- The disembodied Pre-Adamite nations known today as demons

Ephesians 6:12-13
For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

- When God instructed Adam and Eve to replenish the earth, Satan and his hosts were present.
- Remember God instructed Adam to take care of the Garden of Eden- **Genesis 2:15.**
    - Heb shamar (shaw-mar')- to hedge about- to guard, protect and attend to- not alone!
- Satan must have looked at Adam and Eve with envy to see God's new favorites- replaced!

Genesis 3:1
Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.

Many scholars believe that the serpent was originally an upright animal and was the most beautiful of all the creatures- not surprising concerning Satan's pick as he was lifted up in pride on account of beauty.

The serpent allowed Satan to manifest himself through it in order to address Adam and Eve with a proposition to rebel against God- here we go again, just like he had done previously!

Jesus described Satan in **John 10:1-3** as a thief who "climbs in by some other way" speaking of the Eden.

- Satan's objective was to usurp Adam's dominion and become ruler over the earth again.
- Universal law- slaves to whom you obey- Satan also tried it on Jesus but failed.

Romans 6:16-17
Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey-whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Luke 4:5-8
The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'"

When Adam and Eve obeyed Satan and rebelled against God, Satan become the god of this world system instead of Adam and Eve- that is why the world is in such a mess- knowledge of evil!

God allowed it, honoring Adam's & Eve's free-will choice! **2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 1 John 5:19-20.**

3. Satan's Mission, Defeat and Eternal Destination

- Satan's ambitions to dethrone God and rule the universe has not changed- round two- ding!

Revelation 12:7-9
And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

- The Promised 'Seed' of the woman would crush the head of the serpent- **Genesis 3:15.**
    - **Revelation 1:18, Hebrews 2:14-15, Colossians 2:15**
- In the process Jesus would suffer indescribably according to **Isaiah 53.**

- Jesus came to destroy the devil's work and undo what he had done in the Garden.
    - Restore Adam's lost dominion- through Jesus more than conquerors.
    - **Romans 5:17**- reign in life through Jesus Christ.

- The affects of the fall still in the earth; but we have been redeemed!
- Luke 16:19-31- Hell a jail for those awaiting the Great White throne Judgment- **Mt 12:40.**
- Lake of Fire- Final destination- **Matthew 25:41, Revelation 20:11-15, 21:8**- even death/hell.

B. The Kingdom of Darkness

2 Corinthians 2:11 AMP
To keep Satan from getting the advantage over us; for we are not ignorant of his wiles and intentions.

Satan prefers anonymity, if he can deceive people into thinking he does not exist, than no one will oppose him, he can operate in this world with impunity. Through the light of God's Word we are going to expose a number of his dark secrets so we can put him in his place, under our feet in a place of defeat.

1. The Nature of the Beast

- Bottom line Satan is all about opposing everything that is of God!
- In your notes you will notice the Scripture has a lot to say about our enemy.

- Lucifer- (Used Once)- Morning Star- *his name given him by God before his fall.*
- Satan - (Used 56 times)- The Adversary.
- Devil- (Used 33 times)- The Accuser and Slanderer.

- The Bible refers to the affects of the curse of the law- Satan is that affect or result.
    - Deuteronomy 28:15-68 lists all his handiworks.
- Satan has a legal right to afflict folks when they are sin- God allows it.
- Remember the simple theology of "Good God vs. Bad Devil."

John 10:10 AMP
The thief comes only in order to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance (to the full, till it overflows).

2. Satan's Hierarchy

- Ephesians chapter 6 gives us some insight into the hierarchy within the kingdom of darkness.
- Satan has obviously placed himself at the top of the food chain.
    - **Eph. 6:12**, wicked spirits- fallen angels- regional authority- **Daniel 10:13, 20-21.**
    - Highest demonic level is 'world rulers', then powers and finally principalities.

Ephesians 6:12 AMP
…but against the despotisms[principalities], against the powers, against [the master spirits who are] the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spirit forces of wickedness in the heavenly (supernatural) sphere.

- There are numerous demonic spirits that specialize in vice and infirmities of all kinds.
    - All for the purpose of ensnaring humanity in a grip of oppression and misery.
- A spirit of infirmity- Peddling in sickness and disease, creating suffering, misery and death.

Acts 10:38 AMP
How God anointed and consecrated Jesus of Nazareth with the [Holy] Spirit and with strength and ability and power; how He went about doing good and, in particular, curing all who were harassed and oppressed by [the power of] the devil, for God was with Him.

Read Luke 13:11-12, 16- NKJV "a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years"

Familiar spirits- These demonic spirits are familiar with people's lives and reveal facts about them

Leviticus 19:31 NKJV
Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after them, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.

- Unclean spirits- In the Greek it refers to moral lewdness, particularly sexual sins.

Mark 1:23 NKJV
Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit.

There are others like deaf and mute spirit in **Mark 9:25**, witchcraft, religious spirits and many others. Behind every vice work of the flesh or oppressive sickness and disease there is a demonic spirit that specializes in it.

Even though all these evil things originate from Satan and his kingdom of darkness, that does not necessarily mean there is a demon behind every evil behavior or illness because of the sinful nature in the flesh and the this present fallen world contaminated with stink of death- bacteria germs and such.

3. The World System

Satan is referred to in Ephesians 2:2-3 as, *"The ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."* In 2 Thessalonians 2:7 the devil is referred to as, *"The secret power of lawlessness is already at work…"*

- Like puppets on a string, unbelievers are being manipulated by the devil continually.
- Behind the scenes he uses Media like Hollywood, political, educational and religion.
    - Pushing his rebellious antichrist agenda.
    - He appeals to the lust of the flesh, eyes, and the pride of life **1 John 2:15-17 NKJV.**
- **2 Corinthians 4:4-5** points out how the god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers.
- **1 John 5:19** states that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

The Scriptures are very clear about not subscribing to the world system because it is under Satan's control. We must avoid being unequally associated with unbelievers as our close friends-
2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Romans 12:1-2.

God does not want his children contaminated, corrupted and perverted by the world. His will is that we keep ourselves pure and not share in the sins of others, to avoid the very appearance of evil- **1 Timothy 5:22; 2 Timothy 2:22.** The world system under Satan's control has one primary agenda, to keep you from God, particularly Jesus. So, to overcome the world is to believe on Jesus Christ and stand on His Word in our lives!

1 John 5:3-5
This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

4. Tactics, Devices and Operations

- Trials, Tests and Temptations come from the enemy in an attempt to derail our faith in God.
- To rattle out cages to the point that we say "This is not worth it"

2 Timothy 3:12
In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted

- I got news for you, it's worse for unbelievers living under Satan's tyranny!

Proverbs 13:15 AMP
Good understanding wins favor, but the way of the transgressor is hard [like the barren, dry soil or the impassable swamp].

- Only by standing on the Word as declaring "It is written" as Jesus did will we overcome.
- Only by the blood of Jesus are we delivered from the authority of darkness **Colossians 1:13.**
- Only by maintaining the fellowship of the believers according **Hebrews 10:25.**

Revelation 12:11
They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.

- Trials, Tests and temptations only build character/perseverance when overcome.
    - They are designed by Satan to destroy you.
- In **Luke 22:31**, Satan wanted to "Sift" Peter as wheat as a result of his pride.
    - **Revelations 2 & 3 Hebrews 10:32-39; James 1:2-18; 1 Peter 4:1-5, 12-19.**
- In **2 Corinthians 12:7-10** Satan assigned a demonic spirit to harass Paul- the thorn.
- The only power Satan has against Christians is deception to open door to oppression.
- Only Unbelievers can be totally possessed- spirit, soul and body.

- Beware of opening the door to the enemy:
    - Disobedience- If we persist in sin without repenting.
    - Ignorance- The enemy can exploit a lack of knowledge- **Hosea 4:6.**
    - Fear/Doubt/Unbelief- Beware of Satan's lying symptoms and circumstances.

Ephesians 4:27 AMP- Leave no [such] room or foothold for the devil [give no opportunity to him].

C. Elect Angels

Hebrews 1:14
Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

According to Job 38:4-7, the angels were present when God created the earth, they are created beings like us- **Psalms 148:2,5; Colossians 1:16.**

- Angels had their probationary period before Adam and Eve- 2/3 remained faithful.
- Now they serve God's purpose of Redemption for mankind as servants.
    - The Word 'Angel' in the Greek means messenger.

In the Old Testament, the reference, "The Angel of the Lord" refers to Jesus in His pre-incarnate state- **Genesis 16:7-14; 22:11-18; Exodus 3:2-5.**

Psalms 103:20 NASB- Respond to God's Word being spoken
Bless the Lord, you His angels, Mighty in strength, who perform His word, Obeying the voice of His word!

Classifications:
Arch Angel- Michael warring angel- **Daniel 10:13,21;12:1; Revelation 12:7.**
Arch Angel- Gabriel chief messenger- **Daniel 9:21; Luke 1:19; 1:26.**
Cherubim- Worship of God and Holiness- **Genesis 3:24; Exodus 37:6-9; Ezekiel 10; Revelation 4:6-9.**
Seraphim- Mentioned in **Isaiah 6:1-7**, they surround God's throne.
Guardian Angels- Protecting the saints and doing God's Business- **Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:14.**

Function:
Protection- They act as bodyguards for believers- **Psalm 91:11; Acts 5:19; 12:7.**
Judgment- Instruments of God's wrath on evil- **Genesis 19:12 – 24; Matthew 13:41; Acts 12:23.**
Messengers- Carriers of God's will on the earth- **Matthew 2:13; Luke 2:10; Acts 27:23; Rev. 1:1.**
Strengthening- Used oftentimes by God to provide strength- **Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43.**
Warfare- Often engaged in spiritual warfare on our behalf- **2 Kings 6:17; 2 Chronicles 20:22; Dan. 10.**

Miscellaneous:
The worship of angels is forbidden in Scripture- **Colossians 2:18; Revelation 22:8-9.**
Angels are spirit beings, but they can take on human form- **Hebrews 13:2; Genesis 19:1.**
There are a countless number of elect angels in existence- **Revelations 5:11; Matthew 26:53.**
They dwell in heaven and operate in the earth- **Genesis 28:12; Luke 2:13-15; John 1:51.**
Angels are highly intelligent, rational beings with a will and emotions- **1 Pt 1:12; Lk. 15:10; 2 Pt. 2:4.**
Obviously God's angels are very powerful; good to have them on our side- **2 Peter 2:11; 2 Thes. 1:7.**

Their ministry is up close and personal among us, working behind the scenes 24/7 to aid us and serve God's will on our behalf. Remember we do not worship, pray or talk to them, that honor is left for God alone. We will ever be grateful to our loving heavenly Father for giving His angels charge over us!

C. The Authority of the Believer

1 John 3:8 AMP
The reason the Son of God was made manifest (visible) was to undo (destroy, loosen, and dissolve) the works the devil [has done].

1. Jesus is Victorious

In **Ephesians 1:15-23**, the Apostle Paul prayed for the saints at Ephesus that their spiritual eyes would be opened to the truth concerning the triumphant Christ over Satan, Sin and Death. This Biblical truth and present reality is absolutely essential for us to grasp and appropriate in our lives! Ignorance of these truths will result in a whole lot of unnecessary grief and tragedy.

Jesus is referred to as the Last Adam in **1 Corinthians 15:45**; Satan tried tempting Him in all points but failed- **Hebrews 4:15.** Jesus was the Lamb of God slain as our substitute for sin. It was our sin that brought us under the authority of Satan, it was the blood of Jesus that remitted our sin that released us from the authority of Satan. Jesus destroyed him who had the power of death- **Hebrews 2:14-15** and took the keys of death and hell according to **Revelation 1:18.**

Colossians 1:13-14 AMP
[The Father] has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, In Whom we have our redemption through His blood, [which means] the remission of our sins.

Colossians 2:15 AMP
[God] disarmed the principalities and powers that were ranged against us and made a bold display and public example of them, in triumphing over them in Him and in it [the cross].

- Jesus is the Lord of lords and King of kings- His name above every name.
- Jesus restored Adam's lost dominion.

2. What is Authority

- Authority simply means delegated power.
- We received this authority when we were born again- Commissioned-**Mk 16:15; Mt 28:18.**
- It is exercised through the power of attorney in Jesus name- Heaven backs it up.
    - Illustration- The police officer.
- We have Badge, a seal, the Holy Spirit who empowers us- **1 John 4:4.**
    - **Luke 10:18**- Authority to trample on snakes and scorpions- even demons submit.
    - We are called to do even greater works in **John 14:12-14.**

3. The Name of Jesus

- Even though Jesus soundly defeated Satan, we still have to enforce it- God won't do it!
- When we pull the devil into the realm of faith in God's word we defeat him every time.

For Salvation: There is no other name by which mankind can be saved- **Acts 4:12.**
For Healing: By faith in the name of Jesus; all the power we need for healing- **Acts 3:16.**
For Deliverance: For putting the enemy under our feet and casting him out- **Acts 16:18.**
Everything we Do: Our entire Christian life revolves around speaking the Name- **Colossians 3:17.**

- When the Bible talks about keys, it refers to authority/access to unlock & release something.
- Jesus has given us the keys to His spiritual kingdom in us on this earth- **Luke 17:20-21.**
- God's will in the Lord's Prayer is for God's will on earth as it is in heaven- **Matthew 6:10.**
- Someday His kingdom will be a physical one- Millennium- **Revelation 20:1-10.**
- In the meantime we have keys to bind and loose what is already in heaven on the earth.
    - In the Name of Jesus **Matthew 16:19; 18:18.**

So what should our response be to such an indescribable gift as the 'Name of Jesus' given to us, paid for in His blood- 'Freely you have received, freely give!'

Matthew 10:8-9
Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received , freely give.

Acts 3:6
Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not have, but what I have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."

Lesson 7
End Times

End Times- *The end of Adam's lease and the ushering in of the endless age.* God's sovereign conclusion to the world as we know it.

- Signs of the Times- The Hope of Glory; concerning Adam's lease and the end of all things.
- The Tribulation Period- Rapture, Antichrist & False Prophet, and The Great Tribulation.
- Second Advent- The Lord's Second Return and Millennium Reign.
- Judgments- The Resurrection, Judgment Seat of Jesus Christ and the Great White Throne.
- The Endless Age- When everything is made brand new.

A. Signs of The Times

1. Hope of Glory

Colossians 1:27
To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

I have wonderful news for you, God will not allow an eternal perpetuation of this current state of affairs for this world of sin and death- 1 Corinthians 7:31, *"...for this world in its present form is passing away."*

- God in His grace has given us a deposit of our inheritance to enjoy here and now on earth.
- But there is a whole lot more for us to enjoy in the future.
- Remember Hope is always future tense = strength to endure & joy to stand.
    - We WIN!!! **Read Romans 8:18-25**

2. Adam's Lease

- In **Genesis 1:28** God had opened the door for stewardship over the earth for a period of time.
- This probationary period would allow for mankind's allegiance to be tested.
- Even Satan knows that being god of this world was for period of time- not indefinite.

Matthew 8:29- "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

Matthew 24:3
As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us," they said, "when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

- We currently live in what is referred to as the Dispensation of Grace.
- Now it's up to the Church to fulfill the Great Commission then the end comes.
- At present the Kingdom of God is a spiritual one- it will manifest completely in the future.
- In the Millennial reign of Jesus-One world order not more political correctness/humanism.

Luke 21:20, 24
"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near…They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

Matthew 24:14
And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

1 Peter 4:7
The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.

3. The End of All things is at Hand

- The world mocks those whom they call 'Doomsday Prophets'- **Read 2 Peter 3:3-7.**
- For Christians, it's not a matter of 'if' but rather a matter of 'when' – Tribulation Period.
    - **Matthew 24:36-39; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3.**
    - Gospel of Kingdom must be preached throughout the world.
    - Jesus is coming back for a radiant Church- **Ephesians 5:27.**

Matthew 16:2-4- He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times."

- **Daniel 9:20-** Daniel's 70 weeks decreed concerning the end of time.
- Prophetic clock began ticking(Daniel 9:25) when Persian King Cyrus made decree Ezra1:1-2.

Daniel 9:24- "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy."

- Decree of Cyrus to rebuild Jerusalem to Jesus Crucifixion = sixty-two 'sevens' = 434 years.
- Jesus Crucifixion to Jerusalem destroyed = seven 'sevens' = 49 years later.
- Church Age or Dispensation of Grace- the mystery has been 2,000 years and counting.
- Tribulation Period and the Anti-Christ = one 'seven' = 7 years.

From the rebuilding of Jerusalem until it's destruction in 70 AD by Titus the Roman general there will be 483 years, just 7 years shy of the total 490 years that were decreed.

- For the past 2,000 years or so Israel had been dispersed in 70 AD, until last century in 1948.
- It shows the wrapping up of the Church Age and for Daniel's last 7 years to unfold.
- This 'Mystery' in **Eph 3:1-11; Col 1:25-27**- confused the 1st Century Jews.

B. Tribulation Period

1. The Rapture

- The word 'Rapture' does not appear in the Bible- it represents the catching away.
- 3 points of view of when: pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation and post-tribulation period.
- two things will happen at the coming of the Lord: Get Ready for **Glorified Bodies!!!**
- Enoch in **Genesis 5:22; Hebrews 11:5** and Elijah **2 Kings 2:11-12**-a type of the rapture.

The Dead in Christ Rise First: Those who are in heaven, who have already died, return with Jesus and receive their former bodies that are in the grave, raised back to life as brand new glorified bodies.

We who Remain: Speaking of those born again believers who are alive physically at the coming of the Lord- they won't taste of death. Their bodies are transformed instantly into glorified bodies and are caught up into the clouds and return to heaven with Jesus and the saints who had died formerly. **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.**

- Our new glorified bodies will be just like the Lord's- Flesh and Bone bodies with no blood.

Philippians 3:20-21
But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Luke 24:37-39
They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost . Jesus said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have <u>flesh</u> and <u>bones</u>, as you see I have."

- The Rapture creates in us a sense of urgency to fulfill the Great Commission and live holy.
- Wording "Coming of the Lord" **1Th 4:15** = rapture / "The Day of the Lord" Second Advent.

2 Thessalonians 2:1-2
Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that <u>the day of the Lord</u> has already come.

Why Pre-Tribulation Position:

First: In 1 Thessalonians 5:9, *"For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath"* makes reference to God's justice in not condemning the righteous with the wicked.

Genesis 18:23, 25 NKJV
Would You also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

1 Thessalonians 1:10- …Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

Revelation 3:10
Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come upon the whole world to test those who live on the earth.

Second: The Scripture below can be interpreted as the "Church of Jesus Christ". It can't refer to the Holy Spirit since He will be in earth facilitating the salvation of multitudes during the Tribulation Period- **Revelation 7:14.** Jesus referred to us as the "Light and Salt" of the earth- **Matthew 5:13-14.** It is our prayers that acts as a restraint towards evil in the earth- take us out the antichrist comes- earth rots!

2 Thessalonians 2:7-8
For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till <u>he</u> is taken out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

Third: For Daniel's 70th week to be completed with Israel at center stage, the Church needs to be taken out of the way. God still has plans for Israel, God raises up 144,000 Jewish servants of God in **Revelation 7:1-8.**

Romans 11:25
I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.

2. The Antichrist & False Prophet

- His name, "Antichrist' simply means, "The one against Christ, God's anointed."
- "The secret power of lawlessness" is this spirit of rebellion- Satan's kingdom.

1 John 2:18-19, 2:22
Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist he denies the Father and the Son.

Read 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12

- Believe the "lie' refers to the explanation the antichrist will give to the world for the Rapture.
- The antichrist will be a Gentile man while the false Prophet will be a Jew.
    - **Revelation 13:1-2, 11-14**
- Initially the Anti-Christ will be a peace maker- peace in the middle east at last!
- He will break it half way in it and place an idol of himself in the temple- **Rev. 13:15-18.**

Daniel 9:27
He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.' In the middle of the 'seven' he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing [of the temple] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."

At the Second Advent of Jesus, there will be a final battle called the "Battle of Armageddon" in the valley of Megiddo in northern Israel- Revelation 16:16, *"Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon ."* The antichrist and his armies will assemble in order to deal a final destructive blow on Israel, but Jesus returns with the armies of heaven and destroys them all. The antichrist and the false prophet are honored with being the first ones cast into the lake of fire. **Revelation 19:19-21.**

3. The Great Tribulation Period

- In Matthew Chapters 24-25 concerning the end time Jesus was speaking primarily to Israel
    - With the exception of verses 4-14 which describe the time we live in today

The latter half is considered to be the "Great Tribulation." **Rev 11:2-3; Daniel 9:27, 12:11; Rev 12:14.**

1- The removal of the Church and the restrainer of evil- **2 Thessalonians 2:1,7-8.**
2- Restoration of the daily sacrifice in the rebuilt temple by covenant with the antichrist- **Daniel 9:27.**
3- Outpouring of judgments resulting from the opening of the seven seals- **Revelation 8:6-11:15.**
4- Taking away of the daily sacrifice; setting up an idol of antichrist- **Daniel 9:27; Mt 24:15.**
5- Increased persecution for Israel and Tribulation saints- **Revelation 7:1-17; Chapter 12.**
6- Totalitarian Regime- mark of the Beast 666 to buy or sell- Mandatory Beast Idol worship- **Rev 13.**
7- The judgments resulting from the outpouring of the seven bowls of wrath- **Revelation 15 & 16.**
8- Judgment upon the Harlot, mystery Babylon in Rev chapters 17 & 18- false religion- **2 Tim 3:5.**
9- Gathering of the kings of the East and armies of the antichrist- Armageddon-**Rev 12:17; 16:12-16.**
10- Celebration of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb to the Bride(Christians) in **Revelation 19:6-9.**
11- Jesus returns with the armies of Heaven- defeats the Beast and his armies-**Rev 19:14-21; 2Th 2:8**
12- The Beast and the False Prophet are cast into the Lake of Fire- **Revelation 19:20.**
13- Satan is cast into the Bottomless Pit(the abyss) for one thousand years- **Revelation 20:1-3.**

It is important to point out that we will be in heaven during this time enjoying the marriage supper of the Lamb where we, the Bride of Christ, all the saints will be united with Jesus forever.
Please Read Ephesians 5:22-33.

C. The Second Advent

Titus 2:11-13
For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope — the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

- Christ's coming is mentioned more than 300 times in the New Testament.
- Eight times more references to His Second Coming than to His First Coming.
- The Second return will be as literal as His First one was.

1. Jesus Returns

Acts 1:10-11
They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

- We don't know the exact timing of the rapture nor the Second Advent- end of 7 years.
- **Read Matthew 24:1-41**- Events leading up to the Second Advent.
- From Matthew chapter 24 verse 42 through Matthew chapter 25 speaks of readiness.

Concerning the Second Advent, when Israel is at the brink of destruction by the armies of the antichrist at the battle of Armageddon in Revelation 16:16 it seems that the Jewish nation will at last recognize Jesus as their Messiah and call on Him for help according to **Luke 13:35**. Jesus returns to earth with the armies of heaven according to **Revelation 19:11-21** and brings things to an end.

2 Thessalonians 2:8-9
And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming.

Luke 13:35
"I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

- Those who are not born again at the Lord's return are put to death-**Rev 19:17-18; Rev 19:21.**
- Jesus gave a parable of the weeds in **Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43.**

Matthew 24:40-41
Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

B. The Millennial Reign

- Like the word 'Rapture' "Millennium' is not found in the Bible- means 1,000 year reign.
- The Millennium will be a period during which Satan will be bound in the Abyss bottomless.
    - **Revelation 20:1-3.**

Jesus comes to earth, as described in Revelation chapter nineteen, as King of kings and Lord of lords-verse 15-16. The resurrected Church saints together with the Tribulation saints will reign with Christ in His Millennial Kingdom- **Revelation 19:7-10, 14; 20: 4, 6.**

- Among the millennial family of nations, Israel will occupy the central place- **Dt. 32:8-10.**
- Jerusalem will become the capital of the world where Jesus Himself will rule and reign.
- The twelve Apostles of the Lamb will rule over the twelve tribes of Israel.
- Glorified saints will be working for Jesus in His kingdom over the nations-**Rev. 5:9-10; 20:6.**
    - **Matthew 19:28; Revelation 2:26-28.**
- There will be universal peace, justice and holiness because of the Sovereign Rule of Christ
- Children born during the Millennial reign will have an incredible exposure- Jesus & Saints

1. Christ's Millennial Reign will be characterized by universal justice and righteousness. **Jeremiah 23:5-6; Isaiah 11:3-5; 52:1, 16; Psalm 72:1-8.**
2. All the earth will be under the righteous discipline of King Jesus- the perfect theocracy. All who disobey Him will be punished- **Zechariah 14:16-21.**
3. There will be peace among all the nations- **Psalm 72; Isaiah 2:4; 9:5-6; 32:1,17-18; Micah 5:4-5.**
4. There will be happiness and joy in His kingdom- **Isaiah 9:2-4; 25:6-9; 35:10.**
5. People will enjoy health and longevity- **Isaiah 35:5-6; 65:20-22.**
6. There will be great prosperity- **Psalm 72:15-16; Amos 9:13-15; Zechariah 3:10; 8:12.**
7. The earth will be freed from the curse (**Ro. 8:19-22; Isaiah 55:13; 41:18-19**). With the removal of the curse, wild animals will lose their ferocity- **Isa. 11:6-9; 65:25; Ezk. 34:25,28; Hosea 2:18.**

Isaiah 65:20
Never again will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his years; he who dies at a hundred will be thought a mere youth; he who fails to reach a hundred will be considered accursed.

- At the end the Lord's Millennial reign, Satan is allowed out of his prison.
- Crazy enough multitudes follow him in his crazy coup- **Revelation 20:7-10**

At the end of the Millennium reign, God's plan of redemption is all but complete; with Satan finally dealt with, death and hell cast into the lake of fire along with everyone else whose names are not found in the Book of Life at the Great White Throne of Judgment- in **Revelation 20:11-15.** Jesus hands over the kingdom to God the Father, having dealt with all rebellion since Satan's original fall and the fall of man. Everything is finally put back in place and restored. **1 Corinthians 15:24-28.**

Rapture / The Tribulation / The Final Coming of Christ as King.
The Millennial Reign of Christ on Earth / The Eternal State of a New Heaven and a New Earth.

D. Judgments

Acts 24:15-16
I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

1. The Resurrection

There is a Biblical doctrine in Hebrews 6:2 called the, "Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Judgment." The Resurrection will be universal. All do not have eternal life, but all have eternal existence. All persons will be resurrected, the just and the unjust; all will be raised but not at the same time. The Bible does not teach reincarnation according to Hebrews 9:27, *"Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment."*

- Enoch & Elijah taken up into heaven without experiencing death- **Gen. 5:22; 2 Kings 2:11**
- Jesus the firstfruits, the first born from the dead as a pattern of what is to come- **1 Cor. 15:23**
- Old Testament Saints taken into heaven after the resurrection of Jesus- **Ephesians 4:7-10.**
- Rapture of All Saints- Those who had died and those still living at the return of Christ.
- The resurrection of the two witnesses of Revelation 11:12 during the Tribulation Period.
- The "First Resurrection" of the Tribulation Saints; beginning of the Millennium- **Rev 20:4-6.**
- Last resurrection will be of the unrighteous dead; stand before the Great White Throne.

Without the revelation of the "Resurrection" meaning in life would be pointless. Our existence would be no better than the animals, to live and die and to be no more- 1 Corinthians 15:32*, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."* Worse than that, we would still be lost in our sins if Jesus was not raised from the dead- **1 Corinthians 15:12-23.** However, Jesus was raised from the dead and God has created us to live forever, the question is where will we spend eternity; this question is answered by what we do with Jesus- **Matthew 27:22; John 3:36; Hebrews 2:3.**

2. The Judgment Seat of Christ

All men, whether saint or sinner will stand in judgment for a life lived on this earth before God, the big difference between the two judgments is the end results.

- The first judgment occurred at the Cross where all the sins of the world were laid upon Jesus.
- As believers we must all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.
    - not for sin but faithfulness- rewards and rebukes- **1 Corinthians 4:5.**
- The Parable of the Minas in **Luke 19:11-27; 1 Peter 4:10**- use God's gifts
    - Determines our position of authority during the Millennium
- To whom much has been given much more is required- **Luke 12:42-48.**

Hebrews 4:13
Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

2 Corinthians 5:10
For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15
For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work . If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.

3. The Great White Throne- Revelation 20:11-15

All those who reject or ignore God's provision of salvation through Jesus Christ, must give an account before God for every word and action, every thought and motive of the heart. All is laid bare, everything has been recorded, all the events of human life have been written down on books, nothing is missing- **Malachi 3:13-18.**

John 3:36
"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

All those who die in their sins, must now pay for those sins even though Jesus had paid for their sins already. Rejecting or ignoring Jesus is what sends people to eternal fire, but that was never God's will- **Matthew 25:41; John 6:8-11; 12:48-49 ; 1 Timothy 2:4.**

- The Lake of Fire is the Second Death, this is the eternal abode of the spiritually lost.
- Hell is just a temporary jail, holding the condemned for the Great White Throne.

2 Peter 2:9
The Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.

Revelation 21:8
But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

E. The Endless Age

- God purifies the earth by fire so there is no trace of death or the curse left.
- The "Old Order" of things pass away, and there will be no more crying and no more pain.

2 Peter 3:10-14
But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.

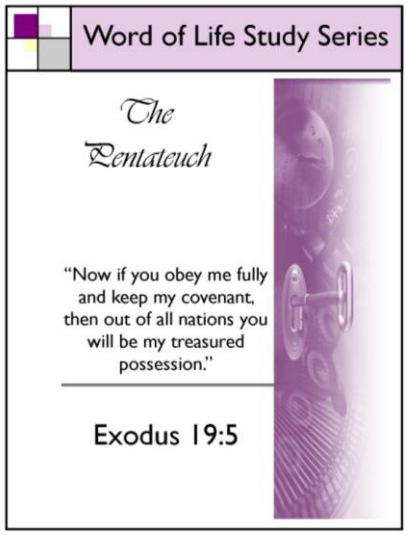
- A New heaven and New Earth- no more sea- Earth becomes the capital.
- The New Jerusalem will be 1,400 miles square, 12 gates of pearl, 12 foundations.
- City made out of pure gold as transparent as glass.
- No more night, no need for the sun or moon, for the glory of the Lord will be its light.

Revelation 21:1-5
Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

For a long time I have mused in my heart about what God has in store with the universe; our age can't be the end, surely God has not finished creating yet. Whatever unimaginable plans God has for eternity future, as children of God we get to share it with Almighty God- God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. We get to enjoy each other's company and never exhaust the wonders of discovering new revelations of God for all eternity- Come Lord Jesus, COME !!!

Revelation 22:12-15
"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city."

Revelation 22:17
The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!"



These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.

1 Corinthians 10:11

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Lesson 1
The Creation Story

Why the Old Testament

Let's examine the place and importance of the Old Testament in the Bible. The Old Covenant writings are just as much as inspired by the Holy Spirit as the new.

Romans 15:4- For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

- The Bible is actually a library of books, 66 in number.
- Its name, taken from the Greek *ta biblia*, originally meant "the books."
- When passed into Latin (Middle Ages), it became singular in form, *biblia*, or "the Book."
- No other writing could be known simply as "the Book."
- There is a silent tribute to the uniqueness of the Bible in the very simplicity of its title.

1. The Structure of the Bible

- Divided into two great sections, known familiarly as: **Old and New Testaments.**
- The term testament here carries the sense of "covenant" or "agreement."
- The Old Testament was referred to as "the Scriptures," or "the Law and the Prophets."

The Unity of the Bible
Approximately 40 different writers contributed to the formation of the Bible, and their work took a period of about 15 centuries, from Moses to John the Revelator.

Men of every rank and station in life made their contributions: princes, kings, priests, prophets, herdsmen, farm laborers, fishermen, tax collectors, physicians, lawyers, and teachers.

- Some wrote without knowing what any of the others had written.
- Many wrote with knowledge of on1y a meager portion of the rest.
- None wrote having at hand all the other books.

Yet the whole comprises a unity of theme and purpose which can be accounted for only on the basis that "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" **2 Peter 1:19-21.**

In reference to the Old Covenant Law we see some powerful references being made in the New Covenant: "living words", "what is superior" and "you have in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth." **Acts 7:38; Romans 2:18-21.**

The grand theme of the Bible is the story of redemption, conceived in the mind of God, accomplished through the obedient life of Christ, and conveyed by the work and will of the Holy Spirit.

From the creation recorded in Genesis to the consummation or fulfillment described in Revelation, the whole grand scope of human life is described.

- The redemptive Cross stands at the heart of the Bible.
- All of the Old Testament and the bulk of the Gospels look forward to it.
- All of the NT after the Gospels looks back to it as the supreme basis of faith and confidence.

2. The Order of the Books

The arrangement of the books of the Bible is partly chronological and partly logical. That is, the order is largely historical, in time sequence; and at the same time an arrangement by type of material is provided.

Historical

The first books of the OT are in the main historical, and carry the thread of narrative from creation to the return of Israel from captivity in Babylon. Traditionally, these 17 books are divided as follows:

I. The Pentateuch-known as the Five Books of Moses or the Law

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy

II. The Historical Books- 12 in number

A. The Period of Tribal Government

Joshua
Judges
Ruth

B. The Rise and Fall of the Monarchy

I and II Samuel
I and II Kings
I and II Chronicles

C. The Return from Exile

Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

III. Wisdom and Poetical- 5 books

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

IV. The Major Prophets- 5 books

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel

V. The Minor Prophets- 12 books

Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

3. The New Testament

- A similar pattern of arrangement is found in the New Testament.

Historical
The first five books give the historical narrative and basis of fact upon which the remainder is built.

I. The Gospels

Matthew	Luke
Mark	John

II. The Book of Acts

The Epistles
Following the books of historical, emphasis comes upon the Epistles, grouped into two major divisions:

III. The Epistles of Paul

Romans	Colossians
I and II Corinthians	I and II Thessalonians
Galatians	I and II Timothy
Ephesians	Titus
Philippians	Philemon

IV. The General Epistles

Hebrews	I, II, and III John
James	Jude
I and II Peter	

Prophetical
The New Testament closes, as does the Old, with a book of which the primary emphasis is on prophecy, directed toward the future:

V. The Book of Revelation

4. Parallelism of the Old and New Testaments

It will be noticed that there is an interesting parallel in the arrangement of the books as they stand in our Old and New Testaments:

	Old Testament	**New Testament**
a. History	I. The Pentateuch	I. The Gospels
	II. The Historical Books	II. The Acts
b. Interpretation and Application	III. The Poetical and Wisdom books	III. The Pauline Epistles IV. The General Epistles
c. Prophecy	IV. The Major Prophets V. The Minor Prophets	V. Revelation

It should also be noted that the relationship between the structures of the Old and New Testaments is progressive as well as parallel.

The New Testament builds upon the Old Testament. The prophecies of the Old Testament, fulfilled in Christ, become the histories of the New Testament.

5. The Importance of the Old Testament

> The authority of the Old Testament is more firmly established in the Bible than is the New. The basis upon which both the teaching of our Lord and the testimony of the apostles rests is the acknowledgement of the revelation of God in the law, the prophets, and the Psalms. We destroy the New Testament if we repudiate the Old.

A thoughtful Hindu was given the New Testament by a missionary friend. He read it carefully, and came back to the missionary saying, "Please give me the other half." Curious, the missionary asked him how he knew there was another half. He replied, "The first verse says that this is the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. I need to know about David and Abraham."

- The thoughtful reader of the New Testament quickly senses its dependence upon the Old.
- More than 250 direct quotations from the Old Testament to be found on the pages of the New
- Even more important are the vast number of references and allusions to the OT.
- One scholar lists a total of 1,603 quotations, references, and allusions- linking NT with OT.
- The Book of Isaiah is the most frequently used Old Testament book- 308 NT links.
- Psalms runs a close second , with 303 references.
- Revelation has the most links back to the OT, with 574 references, 1/3 the total for the NT.

All of the New Testament writers assumed that God's dealings with man in the history of redemption form a continuous whole, out of which whole came both the Old and New Testaments.

A "New" Covenant implies an "Old" Covenant, to which it stands in relation as well as in contrast. Indeed, the idea of fulfillment of the Old Testament in the New means continuity with the past, as well as the introduction of something new and better.

Neither the Old Testament nor the New is fully understandable without the other. Both form two halves of a perfect whole.

The Old Testament without the New is like a head without a body- "In the Old Testament the New is concealed; in the New Testament the Old is revealed."

I. The Creation Story

Before we discuss God's creation, it is vital to realize before there was anything in this physical material world or the spiritual world, there was God and God alone.

A. Creation

1. Dateless Past

According to Christian doctrine, God alone is eternal. With the exception of God, the material universe, and everything else in all creation had a beginning- **Psalms 90:2; 93:2; Isaiah 46:9-11; Daniel 7:9-10.**

- They were absolutely created, made "out of nothing," by the power of Almighty God.
- Many of the pagan nations of the ancient world had their own creation stories.
- In these stories, their gods evolved out of natural processes connected with the world itself.
- They believed the material universe was eternal, and it brought their gods into being.
- Genesis declares that God existed before creation & is in full control of the physical universe.
- He called the physical world into existence out of nothing but by His own spoken Word.
- His power is absolute. He does not have to conform to nature and cannot be threatened by it.
- God is sovereign and does not have to share His power with other supernatural beings.

Since God created the universe out of nothing, it belongs to Him and will always serve His purpose. As He shaped creation without any interference from anyone, He will bring creation to its desired end.

- No power can frustrate God in His purpose to complete the process started in creation.
- Our hope rests in the sovereign power of Him who created the world.
- Then re-created us through the saving power of His Son, Jesus Christ- the new birth!

1 Timothy 1:17
Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

2. God's Creative Word

Hebrews 1:3 AMP
Jesus is the perfect imprint and very image of [God's] nature, upholding and maintaining and guiding and propelling the universe by His mighty word of power.

- God created the universe through the Word of His power.
- All things are sustained and have their being because of the spoken Word of Jesus.
- We will find throughout the Scriptures that God never did anything without saying it first.
- God is a faith God, His kingdom operates on faith principles.
- The source of God's power is found in the Word of His power.
- It is through that same Word that we will receive His power in our lives to frame our world.

Hebrews 11:3 AMP
By faith we understand that the worlds [during the successive ages] were framed (fashioned, put in order, and equipped for their intended purpose) by the word of God, so that what we see was not made out of things which are visible.

Jesus is the express will, and spoken Word of the Father. That is why Scripture says the universe was created from the Father **through** the Son; through God's spoken WORD (Jesus)- **John 1:1-4, 14, 16-17; Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 1:2; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Romans11:36.**

- God's Word is a living force, *"For the Word of God is living and active."* **Hebrews 4:12.**
- Of course it is, because the Word of God is a person, the second person of the trinity.
- Unlike the words of men that are empty and void of power- **Ephesians 5:6; 2 Peter 2:18.**
- Since Jesus is full of spirit life, grace and truth, then so are His words- **John 6:63.**

When we take those words, and put them in our mouths, they will release those very same substances in our spirit, and manifest His glory and provision in our lives.

God's Word is a Creative Force!
God's Word that is conceived in our heart, then formed by the tongue, and spoken out of our own mouth, becomes a spiritual force releasing the ability of God within us.

- The spoken Word of God is creative power; Kingdom of God responds to faith filled words.
- God never did anything that He didn't say first. He said it, then He did it.
- The power to do it was in the spoken Word.

One translation of the Bible (The concordant literal NT) puts Luke 1:37 this way, *"It will not be impossible with God to fulfill his every declaration."*

- Words are unseen to the five senses but they are real.
- We cannot see electricity, but it has power to bless or destroy.
- We cannot see atoms but they are the building blocks of the universe.
- As human beings we get so hung up on seeing it first before we believe it- **John 20:25.**
- There are a lot of things we cannot see, we see the affect they have on us, and the world.

Words are unseen forces that work for faith like electrons are unseen forces that work for electricity. They are unseen, but very real, they are governed by laws, and they show no favoritism.

Hebrews 11:3- By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

When God spoke His faith filled words into the empty darkness, the act of creation was released. While looking at the dark empty expanse of the universe, He did not say what He saw, but what He wanted.

Psalm 33:6, 9
By the word of the Lord, were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.

3. The First Creation

Genesis 1:1- In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

- So what happened between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2?

Genesis 1:2
Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

- What God did during eternity past before **Genesis 1:1** is not revealed in Scripture.

Deuteronomy 29:290 The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

1 Corinthians 13:12- Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

- We cannot say exactly how old the earth is because we do not know when the beginning was.
- God's creation of the heavens and the earth in the beginning could be millions/billions years.

If geologists can prove the age of the earth to be what they claim, we have no scriptural authority to disagree. They cannot contradict the Bible, for it does not reveal any time element in this regards.

- The genealogies of Luke 3:23-38 describes the godly line from Adam to Jesus.
- A generation is calculated to be around 40 years- **Numbers 32:13.**

Matthew 1:17 describes 42 generations from Abraham to Jesus-	1,680 years
Genesis chapter 5 describes the generations from Adam to Noah-	2,242 years (Septuagint)
From Jesus until today-	2,000 years
	5,922

This much is certain, according to Scripture, the earth is more than 6,000 years old, and there were inhabitants on the earth before the days of Adam.

- This explains why geologists have found fossil records dating so old by carbon dating.
- These creatures belonged to the Pre-Adamite age millions of years ago.
- Besides dinosaurs, these fossils depict ape-like Neanderthals with primitive tools.
- Having human characteristics, but not human - they were hunters and gatherers.

The Bible does not have a lot to say about what happened between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, so we cannot be dogmatic about this. However, we do get a glimpse here and there- **Job 38:4-7.**

4. The Pre-Adamite Creation

God created the angelic hosts along with earth and the universe, earth at that time was inhabited by a Pre-Adamite creation. The fossil records of today are the only descriptions we have of those creatures. **Isaiah 45:18.**

The length of this rule under God's authority is unknown, but there were other thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers also in place over other parts of the universe- **Col. 1:16-18; Eph. 6:12-13.**

- There was an Arch-Angel at that time named Lucifer- an Arch-Angel is a high ranking angel.
- Isaiah 14:12 (KJV), *"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!"*
- He had authority given to him upon this earth, a throne over the nations of that time.
- He had dominion given to him, just as God had given dominion to Adam/Eve in **Gen 1:28.**
- At that time, the Pre-Adamite earth was referred to as "Eden, the garden of God."
    - **Ezekiel 28:12-19; Isaiah 14:12-15.**

Lucifer, the original ruler of the planet earth, conceives an idea to dethrone God in a coup, by eliciting the help of other angels. Why, to become the exalted supreme ruler of the universe pride- **1 Tim. 3:6-7.**

Lucifer leading his rebel force from the appointed place of mobilization on earth into heaven in his attempt to dethrone God. He is met by Michael and the other faithful angels and is defeated.

- He said, "I will raise my throne above the stars of God…" his throne being on this planet.
- the "stars of God" being the other angels. Here we have an account of the original Star Wars!
- The result was catastrophic for Lucifer and the inhabitants of the earth- **Luke 10:18-20.**
- Lucifer became Satan and single handedly deceived 1/3 of the angels- **Revelation 12:4.**

God destroys Lucifer's kingdom on earth completely, every created thing, inhabitants, & all vegetation. He then turns the earth upside down so-to-speak, and by means of a great flood makes it empty & waste.

- The length of this Pre-Adamite flood on the earth is unknown, but was devastating!
    - **Genesis 1:1-2; Jeremiah 4:23-26; 2 Peter 3:5-7.**
- Noah's flood does not fit this absolute scale of destruction.

The only time (as far as we know) the earth has ever been without form and void was before the 6 days of Genesis 1:3-2:25 when it was made chaos through the fall of Lucifer and the Pre-Adamites.

The purpose of God in showing Jeremiah the total destruction of life on the earth in 4:23-26, was to reveal how the land of Judah would be destroyed, and to make a comparison between the two times.

- The earth was cursed and flooded in Genesis 1:2 because of sin.
- Occurring before the 6 days of re-creation in **Genesis 1:3- 2:25.**
- Lucifer was already a fallen creature when he came into Adam's Garden of Eden.
    - Having already ruled the earth, rebelled and caused the first flood.
- Word "**was**" in **Genesis 1:2** would be better translated in the Hebrew 'hayah' as "**became**."
- Obscuring of the sun and consequent darkness are always the result of judgment- Joel 2:31.

So this verse should read, *"Now the earth <u>became</u> formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep…"* because of rebellion and the resulting judgment.

Genesis 1:3, "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light."

The word "Let" as it pertained to Genesis chapter 1 is used thirteen times; 1,464 times elsewhere, and in no case is an original creative act implied.

- The sense is to make appear or visible in connection with already existing things.
- Light, expanse, waters, earth, darkness, all other things mentioned were already in existence.
- Had been thrown into chaos & the laws which previously governed them had been made void
- The very purpose of their existence had been annulled because of sin.

Now, in the restoration to perfection and original usefulness, God merely commands and the sun again gives light on this planet, as it had done all through Lucifer's kingdom.

In **Genesis 1:28**, some translations like the King James and American Standard Version use the word "Replenish" the earth. The same thing is said of Noah after that flood in **Genesis 9:1.**

- God did not say "plenish" the earth, but instead to fill it up again as it once was.
- Can't replenish something that hasn't already been plenished; something that once existed.
- We cannot be dogmatic about this, because there is not enough Scripture- do get a glimpse.
- Many millions of years may have elapsed between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2.

5. Our Present Creation

Day 1: Day and Night- Genesis 1:3-5
Here we have the restoration of day and night on planet earth. Notice what is being said in Genesis, *"God Said,"* He created the heavens and the earth with faith filled words.

- Notice that when God said *"Let there be light"* it did not result in something else!
- Suppose the Bible said, "And God said, 'Let there be light,' and dry land was formed."
- There is a principle here that God wants us to get a hold of.
- What God said produced exactly what He said, something else did not happen.
- Only way that something else could result is if we change our confession to something else.
- Since Genesis 1:1, light continues to travel, the universe continues to expand- won't stop.

Day 2: The Sky- Genesis 1:6-8
It is important to note that originally, God had created a canopy that was saturated with water, high above the earth- separated by an expanse of sky or air.

- This created a greenhouse effect that kept out harmful rays from the sun.
- Also allowed for conditions that would be lush and green on the whole surface of the earth.
- Before Noah's flood, the earth never experienced rain, but a mist (KJV).
- Streams came up from the earth to water the whole surface of the ground- **Genesis 2:4-6.**

Day 3: The Land, Seas & Vegetation- Genesis 1:9-13
In order for the water to recede so that dry land would be uncovered and exposed, much of it returned to the bowels of the earth from which it originally came- assisted in causing the first flood in Lucifer's time. This massive reservoir laid in wait for another global flood to occur in Noah's time- **Genesis 7:11.**

- The law of Genesis was established by God as a fixed law from the beginning of creation.
- This law operates in the spiritual realm as well as the natural.
- Law of Genesis = "Everything produces after its own kind, and the seed is in itself."
- It works this way all the time, it is an absolute law.

If we take vegetables for example, the seed to produce more vegetables is found in the vegetable itself. In the act of creation, God made the vegetable first with seed in it in order to perpetuate it from then on.

- Therefore the age old question of , "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" is answered.
- The Bible declares, the chicken, carrot, flower, tree, animal, fish, and the man came first.
- Within God's creation was the seed to re-produce itself from then on, and forever.

Jesus explained in the parable of the sower that God's Word is spiritual seed, *"The seed is the Word of God"* (**Luke 8:11**). The ground that Jesus refers to is the human spirit- **Luke 8:15.**

- From this spiritual principle we can see that all words are seeds of one kind or another.
- But God's Word is incorruptible seed, it never changes or fails – **1 Peter 1:23; Isaiah 55:11.**
- The words we speak are seeds being sown in the hearts of the hearers.
- Words are containers that hold a substance of the thing it represents- **John 6:63; Heb. 11:1.**
- If we give love, we will reap love. The seed is in itself to produce more.

The seed of strife is in strife itself. If we get into strife with someone by speaking strife filled words, it will create more strife- **Proverbs 17:14.**

When man discovered the law of electricity, it did not mean that the principles of electricity all of a sudden came into being. They were operating since the beginning of creation.

- The light bulb, computers, electric appliances could have been invented many years ago.
- Discovery does not create the law, but rather harnesses it for a particular use.
- The law of faith has been in existence for all eternity past.
- Through God's Word we will discover its operation and use in order to harness/produce.
- So natural laws and principles are based on spiritual realities that are more real.

Day 4: The Sun, Moon & Stars- Genesis 1:14-19
There are trillions of solar systems beyond ours. Distances out there are measured by light-years. How far light travels in a year, at the rate of 186,324 miles a second or about 5,800,000,000,000 miles a year is recognized as one light-year.

- It takes light 400 light-years to reach us on earth from the North star.
- 700,000 light-years for it to reach us from the Great nebula, the galaxy nearest our own.
- 500,000,000 light-years for light to reach us from the faintest galaxy seen by our telescopes.

Day 5: Fish and Birds- Genesis 1:20-23
So the age old question is finally answered, which came first, "The Chicken or the Egg." That's right, the "Chicken" and the chicken would then produce the egg.

Day 6: Animals and Man- Genesis 1:24-26

6. Creation Not Evolution

The theory of evolution is that all forms of life derived by gradual modification from earlier and simpler forms or from one rudimentary form.

- The theory of evolution is just that, a theory, yet many educators act as though it is fact.
- It teaches a process in which something complex is developed by itself from a simple beg.
- It accepts the existence of the cause or causes of the first substance, but can't explain it.

The theory of cosmic evolution claims that from lower units of matter (atoms and molecules) the vast material suns, moons, stars, planets, and universes were formed by themselves.

Organic evolution teaches that the vegetable and animal kingdoms evolved from lower forms of life to what they are today. Evolutionists do not deny the first cause.

- Their theory begins with the assumption of matter or substance already in existence.
- Yet they have no explanation of how it got there.
- Just like the big bang theory, they have no explanation as to what started it.
- In this they are silent and reduced to speculation.

True science rejects the notion:

- The theory that the hair is but elongated scales of pre-historic animals.
- The legs of all animals developed from warts on aboriginal amphibians.
- Eyes are but accidental development of freckles on blind amphibians- responded to the sun.
- Ears came about by the air waves calling to spots on early reptiles.
- Man came from monkeys.
- The vast universe came from a few molecules.
- Nothing, working on nothing by nothing, through nothing, for nothing, begat everything.

- It is the law of nature that nothing reproduces anything greater than itself.
- Consider the millions of creatures that reproduce their own kind by fixed and eternal laws.
- It must be the work of an all-powerful and all-wise Creator.

The intelligent and innumerable self-producing species of creatures, each with its own eternal and consistent traits, infinite combinations of chemicals, could never be the product of unintelligent matter.

- God is the creator of everything, originally made in a perfect state all at once.
- Since the beginning, everything God created reproduces after its own kind.
- No one thing could break this law or mold and produce any other kind.
- Now, after 6,000 years the law of reproduction is still unbroken.
- Crossing different species has never produced a different kind that is fertile and reproduces.
- The crossing of a donkey and a mare will produce a mule which cannot reproduce itself.
- No monkey has ever produced a man and the missing–link, is still missing and always will be

The sponge is still a sponge and has not become an oyster, octopus, a turtle, frog, fish, or a crab. None of these have ever reproduced anything but their own kind.

The theory of evolution teaches transmutation, a change in nature, substance, form, and alteration of essence by a slow and gradual process of mutation from one species to another, and from lower to higher. This has never been done, nor can it be done.

- Endless variations with each species or kind, but no change from one species to another.
- Without a change in species there can be no evolution.
- Try crossing a dog with a cat, it doesn't work, God made it that way in **Genesis 1:25.**
- Scientists trying to tack on more millions of years to help their probability = foolishness.
- Taking a watch apart and hope it puts itself back together- no amount of time will help.

God has made life so that it interbreeds in closely related variations; when interbreeding is attempted between different kinds of species it is found that there is an impassible gulf which cannot be crossed.

B. The Origin of Man

- First of all, mankind was created in the image of God, not monkeys- **Genesis 1:26.**
- Note that the words, "us" and "our" is used in **Genesis 1:26** support the trinity.
- God is one expressed in three distinct persons in **Matthew 28:19.**
    - God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit
- So what does it mean for us to be made in the image of God?

1. Created as Eternal Spirit Beings

Through the act of pro-creation our bodies are formed in the womb- God who creates the human spirit.

- At conception, God places the human spirit within that tiny body.
- The real you and the conceived life at conception are united by God Almighty!
    - **Psalms 139:13-14; Zechariah 12:1; Isaiah 57:16**
- It's the spirit of a man that brings animation or life to the physical body- **James 2:26.**
- We are created by God as eternal spirit beings. We have a beginning with no ending.
- We will never cease to exist, God made us to live forever- **Matthew 25:46.**
- each one of us in this life chooses our own eternal destiny to live with or without God.
- God created us as free moral agents with the right to exercise a free will- **Dt. 30:19-20.**

God Created us for His Glory
God wants to commune and have a precious and priceless relationship with us. We are the objects of His affection, recipients of His love and goodness- **Isaiah 43:7; John 4:24.**

- You are no accident, God knew you before the creation of the world, you exist on purpose.
    - **Ephesians 1:4-6; Jeremiah 1:5.**
- God determined at what time you would be born on the earth- **Acts 17:24-28.**

2. Man Consists of Three Parts

- Man was created a tri-cotomy, as the glorious Godhead is referred to as the Divine Trinity.
- We are not just a physical body just as the Godhead is not the Father God only.
- I am a spirit, I have a soul, and I live in a body- **1 Thessalonians 5:23; John 4:14.**
- The Godhead is comprised of God the Father, God the Son, And God the Holy Spirit.
- The soul of man is not to be confused with the spirit of man- **Hebrews 4:12.**
- Something needs to be pointed out here, man is the only creature in this class on earth.
- The animal kingdom is not comprised of spirit beings- bodies driven by instinct.
- When animals die, that is the end unless you can find Scripture that says otherwise.
- So where is that spirit located you may ask, the Bible has the answer.

Proverbs 20:27 KJV
The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the *belly*.

John 7:38 KJV- If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believes on me as the Scriptures have said, *out of his belly* shall flow rivers of living water.

The heart in Biblical context refers to the very center of man's being- his spirit.
It is the spirit of man that is born again- **Jn:3:3; 2Cor.5:17**
The new birth is a spiritual circumcision- **Rom.2:29;Col.2:11;Tit.3:4;Acts 7:51**
It is the spirit of man that has the life, love and nature of God in it- **Rom.5:5; 1Jn.5:12**
It is with your spirit that you believe- **Acts 16:14; 2Cor.3:3; Rom.10:10-11**
It is with your spirit that you worship God and do his will- **Eph.5:19; 6:6**
It is in your spirit that the Holy Spirit dwells, your body is the temple of your spirit- **1Cor.3:16;6:19**

Man is a Spirit *(Conscience)* - Conscience is the voice of your human spirit- spirit world.
He has a Soul *(Emotions, Will, Intellect)* - Reason is the voice of your soul- intellectual world.
He lives in a Body *(5 Senses)* - Feelings is the voice of your physical body- physical world.

- Being born again, our conscience is a safe guide; not for unbelievers- **1 Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:15.**
    - **Hebrews 10:22;1 Samuel 24:5;25:31; Acts 24:16; 1 Corinthians 8:7; 10:25-27.**

3. Adam, the First Human Being
Adam's name means in the Hebrew- Ruddy, to flush or turn rosy- red. Adam's body was formed from the dust of the earth, or red clay- so were animals and birds- **Genesis 2:7, 19; Job 12:10.**

- Man alone of all created beings received the breath of God- lump of clay became alive.
- Adam (spirit/soul) took residence in his new earth suit- contacts the world via body.

Scientists say that the 16 compound ingredients found in clay make up 16 primary elements of the human body. The earth supports and transfers vitamins and minerals into plant and animal life which we consume in order to nourish our physical bodies that originated from the ground.

Lesson 2
The Garden of Eden

4. God Gave Man Dominion

By virtue of creation, the earth and all that God has made belongs to God because He is the author of creation. God is the owner, He holds the title deed, it all belongs to Him, in this aspect He is sovereign.

Psalms 24:1-2
The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters.

Haggai 2:8- "The silver is mine and the gold is mine," declares the LORD Almighty.

Yet as soon as He finished restoring the earth to an habitable state, He turned it over to Adam, to be a steward and caretaker of it; to rule over and have dominion- **Genesis 1:26-28; Psalms 8:3-9.**

Psalm 8:3-9 AMP
When I view and consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have <u>ordained</u> and <u>established</u>. What is man, that you are mindful of him, the son of [earthborn] man, that you care for him? Yet you have made him but a little lower than <u>God</u> [or heavenly beings], and you have <u>crowned him with glory and honor</u>. You made him to have <u>dominion over the works of your hand</u>; you have put <u>all things under his feet</u>.

- Notice that God made man a little lower than Himself.
- Unfortunate translation to use "Angels" for HEB "elohiym"; translated as God elsewhere.
- God made us a little lower than Himself not a little lower than the angels.
- God made Adam and Eve the gods of this world!

'elohiym (el-o-heem'); plural of OT:433; gods in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God; occasionally applied by way of deference to magistrates; and sometimes as a superlative: KJV - angels, X exceeding, God (gods)- dess, -ly), X (very) great, judges, X mighty.

Psalms 82:6- "I said, You are 'gods'; you are all sons of the Most High."

John 10:34-35
Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are gods'? If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came-and the Scripture cannot be broken."

- "Ruler", "Dominion", "In Charge" "gods" is what God had done for man in the beginning!
- Why is this important, because redemption is all about restoring us to our original place.
- So we need to know where we were before the fall of man, so we know who we are in Jesus.
- Adam had authority to name all the animals God had created. We still name things today!

When God gave dominion to Adam in the Garden, He was instructed by God to keep and watch over it.

The important thing to consider about Adam's authority, is that first of all it was given to him from God. Secondly, this authority was expressed or exercised through words.

- Man is the only living creature on this earth who is a spirit being- dominates through words.
- Physically he would not be able to subdue the whole earth.
- He had to do it by faith, and through the power of words.

If Adam had a problem in the garden, he was expected to release faith filled words to change things just like God did through the act of creation.

- It's the Father's will for us to speak His Words after Him and apply them to our lives.
- In order to manifest His Kingdom in the earth- **Matthew 6:9-13; Acts 12:24; 13:49; 19:20.**

We know that God's Word is God's will, and when we speak it in faith, His Kingdom manifests on the earth in the form of salvation, healing, deliverance, love and so on.

C. The Garden of Eden

- The garden was located in the east of Eden, which was evidently a large district- **Gen. 2:8-14**
- Two of the rivers had well known names- Euphrates and Tigris- present day Iraq.
- Gihon compassed Ethiopia and may refer to the Nile and Pison compassed Arabia.
- There is no known spot where these physical features point us to an exact location.
- The garden has been destroyed and the surface of the earth changed.

Genesis 2:15
The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

- The Garden of Eden was not a place of idleness for Adam- zoologist & horticulturist.
- Adam kept and tended the garden, giving it touches of human handiwork.
- Creative occupation is positively essential for fulfillment.
- Work became "toil" only when sin entered the scene.

If God had a purpose in creating Man, He must have desired to communicate with His creation to reveal something of His will and purpose- **Genesis 3:8; Isaiah 1:18.**

Man is the only one of earth's creatures able to reason abstractly, to create, to innovate, to choose as a free agent, to communicate with and to worship God.

- The animals' activities, on the other hand, are instinctive, not free- **2 Peter 2:12; Jude 10.**
- Does man's personal and rational faculties constitute God's image?
- Or man's capacity to have dominion/rule over earth's creatures constitute the Divine image?
- Man's conquest of space, his control of atomic energy, his harnessing of electricity.
- What does all this point us to, we were created in God's image; not evolved from a monkey.
    - **Genesis 1:28-31; Psalms 8:4-9.**

1. Then came Woman

Just think, Adam named all the animals, but none of them was suitable to be a helper or companion for Adam according to **Genesis 2:18-20.** A dog may be man's best friend, but it is nothing compared to the woman God had created for him!

- Man is a social creature, he was made for companionship.
- In the garden, Adam had daily communion with the Lord.
- When Eve was created, he had constant companionship with a being of his own kind.
- A helpmate suitable to man intellectually, morally, and physically- as his counterpart.
    - **Genesis 2:21-25.**

Woman is said not to have been taken out of man's head to be lorded-over by him, nor from his feet to be trampled on by him, but from his side to be equal with him, from under his arm to be protected by him, and from near his heart to be loved by him.

The word woman comes from the Hebrew- Ish shah, fem of Ish, of man. It literally means she-man; womb-man; man with the womb; or female-man, because she was taken out of man- **1 Cor. 11:11-13.**

- We see the first institution of marriage presided by God when He gave woman to Adam- Eve
- It was God's purpose for man and woman to cleave to one another and procreate- **Gen1:28.**
- God made Adam and Eve, not Adam and Steve or Jane and Eve!
- Homosexuals cannot pro-create, it's against nature, a perversion- grievous sin in God's sight.
- It's represents an institution of Satan in rebellion against God's design- **Romans 1:26-27.**
- Homosexuality is a sin like any other and like all sine, folks must repent and turn from it.
- Like God, we love the person, but hate the sinful act of homosexuality.
- To say that a person was born a homosexual is to contradict God's original design.
- We were born with a sinful nature in our body, but sin is a choice- **Romans 7:9.**

2. The Probation of Man

In **Genesis 2:15**, God told Adam to "take care of it or to keep it." Which implies to guard and protect it from intruders. This is the first reference of an enemy to God and man.

- Why put that tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden in the first place anyway?
- What good is it to have a free will if we do not have an opportunity to make a choice.
- Adam was created with the potential of immorality. Death would only occur if disobedient.

Genesis 2:16-17- And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."

- Man was created in God's image. He was endowed with intelligence, emotion and will.
- He was a free moral agent, therefore, he was capable of making a choice.
- Man was created for God's Glory (Isaiah 43:7), best shown by freely choosing to obey God.

For Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden was not only a home in paradise; it was also a place of probation, a place to test their obedience and loyalty to God.

- The probation of Adam and Eve was based upon a clear direct commandment- works!
    - A positive part, consisting of a glorious provision.
    - A negative part, consisting of a clear prohibition.
- It needs to be explained how beings who were created with holy natures could sin.
- Our first parents had holy natures, but they did not yet have holy characters.

A holy nature is the result of creation; a holy character is the result of testing in which a choice of good is made, where a choice of evil was possible.

- A choice of evil results in an evil character.
- God desired the worship and service of beings with holy moral characters.
- Free choice then, was necessary for the development of mature holiness and blessedness.
- With free choice there is, of necessity, the possibility of a wrong choice.
- Adam and Eve made the wrong choice with disastrous consequences for all mankind.
- The fall of Adam and Eve resulted from a pure act of willful disobedience.

If Adam had obeyed, resisting Satan's temptation, he would have possessed holy moral character, and would have risen to a new level of blessing and fellowship with God.

- There is a hint of this in the character and in the consequent translation of Enoch.
- Enoch developed holy character even after inheriting an Adamic nature.
    - **Genesis 5:23-24; Hebrews 11:5-6.**
- If Adam had obeyed, he would have had heaven on earth.

God would not have subjected Adam to probation, had it not been necessary for Adam's highest good.

3. The Fall of Man

Genesis 3:1
Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made.

In Genesis chapter three, the temptation of Adam and Eve is attributed to the serpent who is said to have been, "more crafty than any of the wild animals."

- It was Adam's responsibility to keep and protect the Garden of Eden from intruders.
- Satan, as a fallen angel was imprisoned on earth, observed all God had done for Adam.
- The serpent allowed Satan to manifest himself through it in order to address Adam and Eve.
- To rebel against God, just as he originally had done with one third of the angels- **2 Cor. 11:3.**
- Satan was after Adam's dominion over the earth, as he once had and then lost- **Rev. 12:9.**
- The serpent was originally an upright animal and was the most beautiful of all the creatures.
- Since the curse upon the serpent reduced him to a crawling, slithering creature.

Satan finally had an opportunity through the cooperation of the serpent to beguile Adam and Eve into committing high treason, thus rebelling against God through disobedience and thus turning over man's dominion and authority over to Satan the usurper.

- Jesus put it this way, the devil was not created as a part of God's redesign of earth.
- Satan was an outsider, an alien wanting in, a thief and a robber- **John 10:1-3.**
- His objective was to steal man from God as a way of getting back at God and rule again.

But Jesus became a man, born into this world through the virgin birth. Jesus is the *"man who enters by the gate (and) is the shepherd of his sheep."*

Genesis 3:1
He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

- Here we see the first distortion of the truth. Remember, Satan is a liar and the father of it
- Jn. 8:45, *"When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."*
- Satan did not appeal to Eve's desires until he first caused her to doubt the Lord.
- He began his temptation with the insinuating question, "Did God really say?"

A question contrived to make Eve doubt God's goodness. Yet Eve corrects Satan by quoting what God said, if only the conversation would have ended there!

Genesis 3:2-3- The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"

- Next, Satan our right calls God a liar in Genesis 3:4-5, *"You will not surely die…"*
- That somehow God was depriving Adam and Eve of their rightful privilege of divine status.
- But they were already like God, created in His class, in His image and likeness.

Genesis 3:5- "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

- What Satan was offering was slavery and servitude to him and the law of sin and death.
- It's a universal law, that a person becomes a slave to the person they obey.
- Hearing the devil's words produces fear, and results in death when believed and acted upon.
- His words are full of deadly poison; referred to as a serpent in **Revelation 12:9.**

If Satan could get Adam and Eve to obey his words and do what he says, Adam and Eve would then become his slave and Satan would have Adam's dominion in the earth- **Romans 6:16-17.**

Genesis 3:6-7
When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

- Once the seed of doubt had been planted and germinated, the appeal to desire was effective.
- Desire becomes "lust" when it is contrary to the Spirit and the Word- **James 1:13-18.**

Eve may have thought, "If the Lord's truth and goodness are suspect, one must pursue one's own best interest." The Fall of Man was motivated by Satan, as disobedience to God's specific commandment.

- The original sin is the same temptation used today in order to entrap people into bondage.
    - **1 John 2:15-17.**
    - The lust of the flesh- *Good for food.*
    - The lust of the eyes- *Pleasing to the eye.*
    - The pride of life- *Desirable for gaining wisdom.*
- Note that it was on these three same levels that Satan had tempted Jesus, the last Adam.
    - **Luke 4:1-12; 1 Corinthians 15:45.**
- Notice that Satan admits to stealing Adam's dominion- **2 Cor. 4:3-4; 1 John 5:19-20.**

Luke 4:5-7- The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

- So what contributed to the fall of Adam and Eve: SELF, DOUBT and PRIDE!
- Note that Adam was there the whole time, Eve was deceived, but Adam was not- **1 Tim.2:14**
- Adam was ultimately responsible; should have thrown that snake out of the Garden!
- They lost God-consciousness and gained self-consciousness.
- They lost the power to do good, and gained the power to do evil.

Thus, instead of becoming like God, they became unlike Him in that He has the power to do only good. It is morally impossible for Him to sin. Adam lost that glorious sinlessness and innocence.

Genesis 3:7
Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

- Adam and Eve made coverings to deal with the shameful exposure of sin.
- Man has been trying to cover up sin ever since- **Isaiah 64:6.**
- Religion is one of the worst coverings man has fabricated.
- Through a system of works of self-righteousness, man tries to make up for past failures.
- Sin is spiritual crime that carries an eternal death sentence- do the crime, must do the time.
- Unless there is someone else worthy to take our place as a substitute- that would be Jesus!

Results of the Fall
God had warned them back in Genesis 2:17 that when they ate the forbidden fruit, they would surely die.

- **Naked Exposure:** Adam and Eve were clothed with the glory of God- God is light-**Gen.3:10**
    - **Psalms 104:2; 1 John 1:5-6; Revelation 1:16.**
- Even Moses reflected God's Shekinah glory- **Exodus 34:33-35; 2 Corinthians 3:7-13.**
- When Adam and Eve sinned, the lights went out which exposed their nakedness.

- **Fear:** They had never experienced it before, it must have been horrible for them- **Gen.3:8-10**
- When the Lord came as usual to visit with them, this time they ran away and hid from Him.
- Fear is a horrible thing, it brings torment and apprehension of punishment- **1 John 4:18.**

Adam and Eve had an opportunity to come clean with their sin and take responsibility and admit to God that they had failed. I wonder what would have happened if they did admit their mistake to God?

- With the Fall of Man begins the blame game and pass the buck- **Genesis 3:11-13.**
- The judicial results of the fall now ensued, since no one took responsibility = no room mercy.

Judgment on the Serpent- Genesis 3:14
This apparently upright and beautiful creature was doomed to a crawling posture. The eating of "dust" was a term denoting utter humiliation- even into the millennial 1,000 year period in **Isaiah 65:25.**

The Woman- Genesis 3:16
The judgment upon the woman was that of pain and sorrow in child bearing and submission to her husband. The woman's lot in pagan countries is an exaggerated manifestation of the curse. Only in lands reached by the Christian Gospel has womanhood experienced a measure of redemption.

The Man- Genesis 3:17-19
The judgment upon the man was not that of labor, but of wearisome toil and lack. The judgment upon the ground was that of lowered productivity and the introduction of thorns and thistles. Everyone knows that weeds grow easier than crops.

- Note, that marijuana which is a weed and other narcotics were introduced after the fall.
- Perverted substances are used to relinquish the control of the human mind over to evil spirits

4. The Penalty of Death

- The most disastrous consequence of the Fall was the introduction of death into the world.
    - **Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:20; Romans 6:23.**
- Sin entered into the world through Adam and Eve's high treason.
- As a result of their rebellious act of aligning themselves with Satan.
- Death came into the world, reigning and dominating mankind- **Romans 5:12-14.**
- The fall of man has brought him to the depths of baseness, at times man acts like an animal.
- Saved and unsaved, we will all have to give an account to God one day- **Acts 24:15.**
- Some false religions believe in reincarnation, wrong- **Hebrews 9:27.**
- Some cults teach that when evil man die their souls just fall asleep, wrong- **Luke 16:19-31.**
    - **1 Corinthians Chapter 15; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.**

Three Forms of Death
The Bible identifies three categories of death. Death can simply be defined as separation:

- Physical Death: Separation of Soul and Spirit from the physical body- **James 2:26.**
- Spiritual Death: Taking on the nature of Satan as his child- **1 John 3:10.**
- Eternal Death: Unbelievers being cast into the Lake of Fire forever- **Revelation 20:14-15.**

Physical Death
Adam did not immediately die physically; in fact, the Bible states that he lived nine hundred and thirty years, but the process of disease and mortality began the moment he sinned- **Genesis 3:19.**

- Medical science will tell you that our physical bodies were engineered to live on indefinitely.
- Since cell reproduction and regeneration is a part of the human anatomy.
- In our DNA is an aging component built in that prevents immortality from happening.
- Only Enoch and Elijah escaped physical death **Genesis 5:24; 2 Kings 2:11** in the OT.
- Only those who are taken up in the Rapture escape physical death- **1 Th. 4:16-17** in NT.

Spiritual Death
Spiritual death is separation from God. Certainly, sin separates and alienates people from God, but there is more. When Adam and Eve sinned, their spiritual natures was changed into the image of that of Satan himself. Instead of the nature of God to do right, man received the spiritual nature of the devil.
John 8:44-45; Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:10. Sin in God's presence always results in judgment.

- This sinful nature did not stop with man's spirit, but infected his soul and body.
    - **Romans 1:28-29; 7:4-25; Titus 1:15-16.**
- We are all born into sin because of Adam's transgression, sinful nature in our flesh.
- Blood stream has this satanic sinful nature; passed on from man to his offspring- **Lev. 17:11.**
- When a child is born, their spirit is alive unto God until the age of accountability- **Ro. 7:9.**
- Until we get a new resurrection body, it will always gravitate towards sin- **Philippians 3:21.**
- We call this "Body of Sin" the "Flesh" or our carnal (earthly) nature.
- **Ro. 6:6; 7:23-25; 1 Cor. 3:2; Galatians 5:24; 1 Peter 2:11; 4:1-2; Jude 22-23.**

This human dynamic is what necessitated among other reasons, Jesus' virgin birth- to keep His body from being contaminated by Adam's sinful nature through the male human seed.

- Why Jesus had said in **John 3:3** that men and women must experience a spiritual re-birth.
- The new birth is a re-birth of the human spirit- **2 Corinthians 5:17.**
- Our present physical bodies cannot enter into heaven- contaminated with sin- **1 Cor. 15:50.**

Eternal Death
Eternal death is the condition of those who have the spiritual nature of Satan, and depart this earthly life without repentance of sin and without faith in the Lord Jesus Christ- eternal separation from God! **Matthew 25:41-42; John 8:24; 3:36; Galatians 1:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10.**

- Hell, Hades(Greek) or Sheol(Hebrew) is an actual place in the center of the earth.
- Scientists theorize that the earth's core is hot as it's because it is cooling down- billions years
- Actually, it is the place for the departed dead awaiting judgment- **Matthew 12:40.**
- It's hot because that is where hell is located, a place torment- **Luke 16:19; 2 Peter 2:9-10.**

Deuteronomy 32:22 (KJV)
For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.

Isaiah 14:9 (NKJV)
Hell from beneath is excited about you, To meet you at your coming; It stirs up the dead for you.

- Let's look at the natural judicial system, when we commit a crime we go to jail.
- A date for a court appearance is set in the future where we will stand before the judge.
- Upon sentencing we are transferred from the county jail to the state or federal penitentiary.
- When a person dies in their sins, they go to hell (jail) to await trial at the Great White Throne
- The wicked dead will have their day in court before God at the Great White Throne.
    - **Daniel 7:9-10; Acts 24:15-16; Revelation 20:11-13.**
- Then they are sentenced to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire- **Revelation 20:15; 21:8.**
- Death and Hell itself will be cast into the Lake of Fire (**Rev.20:14**); so hell is temporary.

Those who were considered righteous in the Old Testament were escorted into Abraham's bosom which was a compartment adjacent to hell. There was no torment or anguish there- **Luke 16:19-31.**

- The OT saints had a limited salvation/righteousness based on Abraham's covenant.
- They were looking for the promised Messiah to come and pay the ransom for their salvation.
    - **Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:15.**
- At the resurrection of Jesus, He preached the Gospel to these men and women- got saved.
- Now Abraham's bosom is now empty- **Ephesians 4:8-10; 1 Peter 3:18-19.**

Some people question the goodness and love of God to cast people into hell. First of all hell was not created for man but for the devil and his angels, people go there by choice- **Matthew 25:41.**

Secondly, what kind of God would leave evil unchecked and unpunished. To permissively allow it to run rampant and throw the universe into chaos and ruin? The Lake of Fire will act as a quarantined area, to contain all evil in the universe in one area- Praise God Forever More!!!

- Now for us under the New Covenant, when we leave this earth, we go straight to heaven.
    - **2 Corinthians 5:8-10; Philippians 1:20-24.**

5. The Promise of a Savior

In the midst of God pronouncing judgment in the Garden after Adam and Eve's transgression, a promise was made that would change the destiny of mankind and undo what Satan had just done in the Garden. **Genesis 3:15.**

The seed of the woman, a man born of woman would crush Satan's authority and release mankind from the slavery of sin and death. In other words, it would bring about the eventual doom of Satan. **Revelation 1:18; Hebrews 2:14-15; Colossians 2:15.**

However, in the process of crushing Satan's dominion, Satan will have the opportunity to inflict pain and suffering on Jesus via the beatings and crucifixion- Please read all of Isaiah 53 for details!

- Jesus Christ, we have been given back Adam's lost dominion- **Romans 5:17.**
- Through Jesus Christ we are more than conquerors and can reign in this life- **Romans 8:37.**
- If the rapture does not take place in our life time, expect long life- **Psalm 91:16; Genesis 6:3**
- The good news is that Satan is not our god anymore- **Colossians 1:13; Luke 10:19-20.**

The affect of the fall of man is still seen in creation today, and the misery on this earth due to Satan being the god of this world- **Romans 8:18-23; Isaiah 65:17-18; Revelation 21:1-5.**

The First Sacrifice
The first animals are sacrificed on behalf of fallen man, and there will be many more until Jesus comes and makes the one and final sacrifice for sin- **Genesis 3:21-22.**

- Skins of these animals are put on Adam and Eve as a covering for their apparent nakedness.
- Remember, formerly they had been robed in the light of the glory of God.
- Adam and Eve were vegetarians, and so were the rest of the animal kingdom- **Genesis 1:29.**
- However, with death in the earth, the wild animals became carnivores and so did man.
- During the Millennium, these carnivores will be back on a diet of grass- **Isaiah 11:7; 65:25.**

Now that Adam and Eve had taken on Satan's spiritual nature of death, God did not want this spiritual state to become permanent. Thus He denied them access to the Tree of Life, that would have bound them into a hopeless eternal sinful condition- no chance of salvation- **Genesis 3:22-24.**

D. Cain and Abel

The account of Cain and Abel is very significant because it points out a very important principle in regards to the means by which fallen man can be reconciled back to God- **Genesis 4:1-7.**

- How to deal with the sin problem that separates us from God.
- Cain put his trust in his own labor as an offering to be acceptable to God- rejected.
- Cain is a type and shadow for religion today, man's manufactured effort to come to God.
- Abel was a man of faith who obeyed God's instructions to offer a sacrifice of blood.

The Lord having made for Adam and Eve coats of skin presupposes the slaying of animals; and doubtless implies that Abel's sacrifice of an animal life was an act of faith which rested on God's command (though not expressly recorded) that such were the sacrifices He required- **Hebrews 11:4.**

1. The Right Sacrifice

What Abel offered was "much more a sacrifice" according to Wycliffe in the Greek, than Cain's. *"By faith Abel offered unto God a much more sacrifice than Cain,"* i.e. one which had more of the true virtue of sacrifice.

For it was an animal sacrifice of the firstlings of the flock, a token of the forfeiture of man's life by sin.

The universal law of God required payment for sin, a blood sacrifice is the only acceptable way to pay the penalty of sin. Innocent blood had to be shed to redeem a guilty individual.

Leviticus 17:11- For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

The blood of a living creature is a powerful thing according to the Bible, the blood of a human being is even more powerful, but the blood of Jesus is the ultimate statement.

- Our western mind looks at blood merely as a biological necessity in order to sustain life.
- According to the Bible, the blood has a deep spiritual meaning – represent life- **Lev. 17:11.**
- From the beginning of time, it was God's method of choice in dealing with the sin problem.
- Soon after the Fall of Man, God shed blood on their behalf as a model to follow- **Gen. 3:21.**

The very first record of a life being taken from earth was the life of an animal in order to clothe man due to his sin. Evidently God had instituted the shedding of blood as a means to approach Him according to the story of Cain and Abel.

The best definition for sin is, "To miss the mark"; in other words, it means anything less than perfection. Sin has a horrible consequence called death as mentioned in **Romans 6:23.**

Atonement
The King James version uses the word "Propitiation" in **Romans 3:25** and "Reconciliation" in **Hebrews 2:17**. Therefore the word "Atonement" means reconciliation

- It was associated with sacrificial offerings to remove the affects of sin.
- In the NT = reconciliation between God and humanity- death, burial and resurrection of Jesus
- Expiation- removing the barrier that sin creates between God and man.
- Expiation emphasizes the removal of guilt through a payment of the penalty of sin.
- Propitiation- the appeasement/averting of God's wrath, satisfying the claims of God's justice.
- The place of atonement was made upon the mercy seat by the blood of Jesus- **Heb. 9:5,12.**

Both words are related to reconciliation, since it is through Christ's death on the cross for our sins that we are reconciled to God. So mercy, forgiveness, justification and reconciliation are all wrapped up in the term atonement- **1 John 2:1-2; 4:10.**

The Birth of Religion- 1 John 3:12-13
The first two brothers in history stand as types or representatives of the two main and enduring divisions of mankind, bear witness to the absolute antithesis and eternal enmity between good and evil, grace and works. Envy of the godly was "the way of Cain" in **Jude 11; Mk. 15:10; Acts 7:8-12; 13:45; Php. 1:15**

Blood has a Voice
Abel ranks as the first martyr, whose blood cried out for vengeance. Jesus spoke of "the blood of righteous Abel" and implied that Abel, the first righteous martyr, anticipated in symbol His own death on Calvary at the hands of evil, jealous men- **Matthew 23:35; Genesis 4:10; 9:4-6.**

However, the blood of Jesus appeals to God for the forgiveness of sin, and speaks of the salvation and redemption of mankind- not of vengeance- **Hebrews 12:24.**

So for the murder of Abel, God had pronounced judgment upon Cain in **Genesis 4:11-16** who became a wanderer for the rest of his days.

Lesson 3
Noah and the Flood

E. Noah and the Flood

Noah was only nine generations removed from Adam; and his father, Lamech, was 56 years old at the time of Adam's death.

1 Chronicles 1:1-3
Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah.

Noah was 500 years old when he had three sons.

Genesis 5:32- After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Noah was around 600 years old, the flood waters came- took him at the most 100 years to build the ark.

Genesis 7:6-7- Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth.

1. The World before the Flood

- So what was life like on the earth before Noah's flood. What kind of people were they?
- When God had created Adam and Eve, he told them in Genesis 1:28 to be fruitful/multiply.
- By the time Noah came on the scene the world was a very evil and wicked place.
- The depravity was widespread. And it was inward, continual and habitual.
- Man was utterly corrupt, bad in heart and in conduct. There was no good in him.
- The whole bent of his thoughts/imaginations was completely out of line with the will of God.
    - **Genesis 6:5-8.**

In the 1,656 years before the flood, there were 150,000,000 to 500,000,000 million people on the earth.

- It is generally believed that there were only two branches of the race of man.
- One, a godly line through Seth (third son of Adam and Eve).
- The other, an ungodly line through Cain (First son of Adam and Eve).
- Why godly, Seth's ancestral descendants are traced from Adam to Jesus in Luke 3:23-38.
- Noah and his three sons were descendants of Seth, but the rest & Cain's destroyed by flood.

I point this out because some interpret "sons of God" in Genesis 6:2 as decedents of Seth, but not so if the majority of the descendents of Seth were swept away by the flood.

Genesis 6:1-2
When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose.

- In some cases in Scripture "sons of God" may be identified with "angels" or "messengers."
- Jesus is the "Son of God" in a unique sense and we are "sons of God" as children of God.

In the OT however, "sons of God" are a special class of beings that make up the heavenly court- angels.

Job 1:6 NKJV
Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

Job 1:6
One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them.

- A reference to angelic beings who existed before the creation of man- universe created.
- Before Lucifer's fall, all the angels were holy, they were all called sons of God.

Job 38:7 (KJV)- When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?
Job 38:7- while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?

Remember, in Genesis 3:15, when God prophetically spoke of a redeemer that would come as a man, the "seed of the woman" who would crush the head of the serpent. Speaking of Jesus, defeating Satan and taking back what he stole from Adam.

- So was that an idle threat from God- No! So what went through Satan's mind at the time.
- Do everything in his power to keep the "Seed of the Woman" from ever being born!
- Because of Adam's Fall, Satan became the god of this world- **Luke 4:5-6; 2 Cor. 4:4.**

Job 1:7- The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it."

If Satan could pollute the race of mankind, deliver them all to absolute wickedness where no one served God, then he could prolong his kingdom indefinitely.

So from Cain murdering Abel until the birth of Jesus, born of a virgin, human history was comprised of the pointless pursuit of Satan trying to nullify God's Word by infecting and corrupting humanity with wickedness and somehow prevent the coming of the Messiah and Redeemer of mankind- Jesus.

Giants in the Land- Nephilim (Hebrew)- A bully, tyrant, or giant.

"Mighty Men" OT:1368- gibbowr (ghib-bore'); or (shortened) gibbor (ghib-bore'); intensive from the same as OT:1397; powerful; by implication, warrior, tyrant: "The name is from a root, 'to fall,' i.e., on other people" KJV- champion, chief, X excel, giant, man, mighty (man, one), strong (man), valiant man.

Genesis 6:4
The Nephilim were on the earth in those days- and also <u>afterward</u>- when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

Genesis 6:4 (AMP)- Concerning the "Nephilim" existed "in those days" before the flood and "also afterward" after the flood.

There were giants on the earth before the flood, and also afterward, when the sons of God cohabitated with the daughters of men, and they bore children to them.

- These were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown.
- In other words, fallen angels cohabitated with human women- produced a race of giants.

These ancient heroes or giants became the gods of the heathen neighbors of Israel and Greek mythology. The fact that giants were partly of supernatural origin made it easy for men to regard them as gods.

Josephus, an ancient Jewish Historian:
"Many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust, and despisers of all that was good, on account of their own strength… these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Grecians called giants." Again he says, "There was till then left the race of giants, who had bodies so large, and countenances so entirely different from other men, that they were surprising to the sight, and terrible to the hearing. The bones of these men are still shown to this very day."

- A race of giants, the offspring of angels cohabitating with human women.
- A freak of nature, twisted, wicked evil tyrants who were huge in stature.
- God's law of reproduction from the beginning has been everything after its own kind.
- It is not possible then, that giants could be produced by men and women of ordinary size.
- It took the supernatural element, the purpose and power of Satan and his angels to do it.
- To make offspring of such extra size within the human species in order to contaminate it.
- They in turn produced others of like size instead of ordinary sized people.

The Nephilim are considered by many to be giant demigods, the unnatural offspring of the "daughters of men" (mortal women) in cohabitation with the "sons of God" (angel- Genesis 6:1-4).

This utterly unnatural union, violating God's created order of being, was such a shocking abnormality as to necessitate the worldwide judgment of the Flood.

- Unlike mankind, God's elect angels have been forbidden by God to procreate themselves.
- God created them as a set or fixed number, never to increase- **Matthew 22:30-31.**
- So some of Satan's fallen angels participated in this forbidden practice.
- So what was Satan's agenda to produce this race of Nephilim giants in the first place.
- An attempt to pollute the pure human stock descended from Adam and created by God.
- However, God swiftly judged those angels who committed this grievous sin.

2 Peter 2:4-5
For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell, putting them into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment; if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others…

Jude 6
And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home- these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day.

The world had been corrupted and contaminated, Satan had introduced a race of half-human, half-fallen angel offspring. Genesis 6:11- The world had corrupted(2 Peter 1:4) their ways and was full of violence.

- Angels can still appear in human form according to Scripture- **Hebrews 13:2.**
- The angels that went to Sodom and Gomorrah looked like regular men- **Genesis 19:1-2.**
- What is also interesting is that the Bible teaches that there were giants after the flood.
- Consider the kingdom of Og, the king of Bashan and Goliath and his brothers.
- Why doesn't Satan do it today, what's the point, the giant gets killed, angel goes to abyss.

How could the "sons of God", supposedly being Seth's line be able to marry the "daughters of men," Cain's line to produce giants, when all of Cain's descendents were killed during the flood?

2. The Profile of a Giant

When God promised not to destroy the earth by another flood (**Gen. 9:11**) Satan probably thought they he could reintroduce these giants again, but this time they won' t be destroyed by a flood. It's from these post-flood references that we can build a profile of these half-angel and half-human Nephilim giants.

- God made a covenant with Abraham, establish a nation- promised seed of the woman come.
- Knowing the land where the nation would be established, Satan occupied it via Amorites.
- The Amorites were one of the major tribes or national groups, living in Canaan.
- The Old Testament frequently uses "Amorites" as a synonym for Canaanites in general.
- Known as the "Tall Ones" in Amos 2:9; Numbers 13:33; Deuteronomy 2:10.
- The Book of Genesis cites, the man "Canaan" as the ancestor of the Amorites- **Genesis 10:16**
- They were one of the seven tribes whose lands were given to Israel- **Genesis 15:16; Dt. 7:1.**

The sin of the Amorites reached full measure when the Nephilim giants were introduced into their race. **Genesis 15:12-21.**

- The Israelites found east of the Jordan two Amorite kingdoms: that of Sihon-along the Jordan
- And that of Og, king of Bashan, from the valley of Arnon to Mt. Hermon- **Dt. 3:4,8-9.**
- They immediately attacked Israel, were defeated, Israel possessed territories- **Dt. 3:10.**
- God had made it very clear to Israel that these giant infested nations had to be purged.
    - **Deuteronomy 20:17-18; Numbers 32:33.**

The Giant named "OG"- King of Bashan was an Amorite chieftain

Deuteronomy 3:11
Only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaites. His bed was made of iron and was more than thirteen feet long and six feet wide. It is still in Rabbah of the Ammonites.)

Og was of a different race, namely, "of the remnant of the giants," the Rephaim before the Amorites came- **Deuteronomy 3:13**. The Amorites by intermarriage with the Rephaim were in "height like that of the cedars and strong as the oaks" in Amos 2:9.

- He was defeated by the Israelites at Edrei, with his children and his people- **Num. 21:33-35.**
- The presence of giants in Scripture is very clear, and their origin, supernatural- evil that is.
- Rapha, was the name of a giant, the father of all the giants mentioned in these passages.
- From the original Rapha descended the Rephaims.

Thus ended the mighty races of giants that were born of a union of the daughters of men and fallen angels after the flood of Noah.

The Giant named "Anak"

- Anakim, a race of fierce giants (**Dt. 1:28; 2:10-11; Joshua 14:12,15)** descended from Anak.
- The reference to "Anak" is latter referred to a race rather than an individual- **Joshua 14:15.**
- In Numbers 13 we have an account of the children of Israel spying out the Promised Land.
- The decedents of Anak who came from the Nephilim were there- **Numbers 13:31-33.**
- The 10 spies came back with a comparison of "mere grasshoppers" evaluation.

"We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them." An ordinary sized man of 5 foot 8 in. next to a giant of over 10 feet tall & 5 feet wide looks kind of small in comparison.

It was necessary for this race of giants to be completely destroyed- remove Satan's corrupt race of giants that stood in the way of God's people and their Promised Land. This was necessary in order to establish the children of Israel in their land in preparation for the coming Messiah- **Joshua 10:40-42.**

- Under Joshua, however, the Israelites destroyed many of the Anakim- **Joshua 11:21-22.**
- A remnant of these giants took refuge among the Philistines: cities of Gaza, Gath, & Ashdod.
- David and his men would encounter & eliminate them a few hundred years later for all time.
    - **1 Samuel 17:4-7; 2 Samuel 21:15-22; 1 Chronicles 20:4-8.**
- Goliath was around 9 feet and 9 inches tall.
- The independent histories Joshua and 1 and 2 Samuel, confirming the truth of both.

They are represented on Egyptian monuments as tall and fair. The hieroglyphic Tanmahu represents Talmai, and one of his tribe is depicted on the tomb of Oimenapthah I.

So why is it important to know all of this?

- Satan adversely opposes the purpose of God and will do all he can to thwart it.
- It is a futile attempt on his part to try and make the Word of God null and void.
- A tactic of the enemy- introduce ungodly influences to contaminate, pollute, defile & corrupt.
    - **2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Timothy 5:22.**

God will judge and amputate such leprous corruption in the human race in order to preserve godliness. The Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah and the Canaanite nations that Israel exterminated.

- But He will not condemn the righteous with the wicked- **Genesis 18:22-25.**
- In Scripture, when God exercises divine judgment, it's upon only the wicked!
- So calamities today, if they affect Christians, it was not from God.
- Likewise, saints will not be present during the Tribulation Period- **1 Thessalonians 1:10;5:9.**

It is really the mercy of God to judge and purge such reprobate and irrevocable evil from the earth, in order to preserve future generations from being born in such lands, to be made subject to such evil that basically dooms their existence to wickedness- **Acts 17:26.**

- God gives these people opportunity to repent- like Nineveh had repented- **Jonah 3:3-10.**
- The Canaanites did not repent (**Genesis 15:16**) and were exterminated from off the earth.
- That was how God dealt with the nations of the Old Testament.

Now that we live in a dispensation of Grace, God deals with people and nations in quite a different manner. Primarily because, God's people are intermixed with the ungodly, and God will not judge His children along with the wicked- **Matthew 13:24-30; 24:36-41; Revelation 19:17-21.**

- Now we see the reason behind the flood of Noah and the destruction of the Nephilim.
- Prevent Satan from poisoning the pure blood line of Adam's original pedigree lineage.
- Noah and his family were the only ones spared; flood = a fresh start- **Genesis 6:12-14.**

Job 22:15-17
"Will you keep to the old path that evil men have trod? They were carried off before their time, their foundations washed away by a flood. They said to God, '<u>Leave us alone</u>! <u>What can the Almighty do to us?</u>'"

3. Ark Building Time

- Up to 1850 A.D. there was no ship in the history of the world as large as the ark.
- The capacity of the ark was equivalent in tonnage to more than 600 freight cars.
- Which would form a train about 4 miles long capable of handling over 90,000,000 pounds.
- There was plenty of room for all and enough food for a year and 17 days.

Recent archaeological findings at Nippur disclose that the ark had a sewage system unsurpassed by that of any modern city and that there were openings for light and ventilation in each story- **Genesis 6:14-16.**

- Enoch, walked with God & then was taken to heaven when he was 365 years old- **Gen. 5:24.**
    - **Hebrews 11:5-6; Jude 14-16.**
- Before he was taken he had a son named Methuselah- oldest living man on record- 969 years.
- His name means: "when he is dead it (the deluge) shall come." That's what happened.
- Noah was a preacher of righteousness; 100 years building the ark, people warned- **Heb. 11:7.**
- Noah took God at His word and obeyed. Up to that time it had not yet rained on the earth.
- The whole earth was surrounded by a canopy of water in **Gen. 1:7; 2:6**; greenhouse effect.
- Ark is a type of Jesus, when we are in him, saved from the judgment of sin- **Gen. 6:18-19.**

Imagine the miracle of being able to secure a pair of every animal, male and female that God had created and place them all in the ark- **Genesis 6:19-22; 7:8-10.**

4. The Deluge

Around 100 years had passed and apparently no one listened or were interested in Noah's pleas to escape the coming judgment- **Genesis 7:1-8; Psalms 104:6-9.**

- Noah & his family, all the animals entered the ark, God himself shut its door- **Gen. 7:16.**
- God sealed the judgment against the ungodly who had refused to heed Noah's warnings.
    - **Matthew 24:37-41; 1 Peter 3:20.**

When the catastrophe came, the physical means employed were twofold, namely the breaking up of the "springs of the great deep" and the opening of "the flood gates of heaven" in **Genesis 7:11, 17-24.**

- The ark rose to a height of 20 feet above the highest mountain, Mount Everest.
- The springs of the deep and the floodgates (canopy) of the heavens had been closed- rain stop
- God had sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded- **Genesis 8:1-4.**
- Eventually, the Ark came to rest on Mount Ararat.
- Mount Ararat is located in Eastern Turkey on the borders of Iran and Armenia.
- From this region streams converge to form the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers.

Occasional expeditions have been launched to find it. However, shifting glaciers, avalanches, hidden crevices, and sudden storms make the mountain so difficult to climb that it is referred to by the native inhabitants of that region as "the Painful Mountain."

- Here it rested 40 days before the water subsided sufficiently to suggest disembarking.
- Noah, his family and all the animals were in the ark for 1 year and 17 days.

Compared with other traditions (Egyptian/Indian/Chinese/Greek/British/Babylonian/American Indian) of the Deluge the resemblances are striking; however, the Biblical account is obviously most credible.

American Indian Traditions: Among the American Indians traditions of the Deluge were found by travelers to be widely disseminated. Mr. Catlin says, "Among the 120 different tribes which I visited in North, South, and Central America, not a tribe exists that has not related to me distinct or vague traditions of such a calamity, in which one, or three, or eight persons were saved above the waters upon the top of a high mountain."

Dry Ground
Once it was safe for Noah and the animals to emerge from the ark onto dry ground, God gave them the green light. Must have been so grateful to step on dry ground after being on the ark for just over a year. After the Flood, Noah built an altar to God and made a sacrifice- **Genesis 8:20-22.**

5. God's Covenant with Noah

God's Blessing and Directives for Mankind after the Flood:

- **Genesis 9:1:** The Lord blessed Noah & restored the creation command- be fruitful- **Gen 1:28**
- **Genesis 9:2:** God sovereignly put the fear of man into animals.
- **Genesis 9:3:** After the flood, man's diet changes to include the consumption of animals.
    - Before the flood man and animals were vegetarians- **Genesis 1:29-30.**
- **Genesis 9:4-6:** We are instructed not to consume blood, universal death penalty for murder.
    - Blood is sacred to God back then and today- **Leviticus 17:11.**

This is how God views murder, of people walking on the earth or in the womb, blood is spilled in both cases, and in God's eyes, abortion is murder too.

- God puts the sign of a rainbow in the sky as a sign, never to flood the earth- **Genesis 9:13.**
- Formerly, with no rain, there was never a rainbow seen until now.
- With the flood, the canopy (Genesis 1:7) was gone, created a lush greenhouse effect.
- No canopy = created the current weather systems and patterns we now experience today.
- After the flood, the introduction of "cold and heat, summer and winter" in **Genesis 8:22.**

Without the protective canopy, life on earth changed dramatically after the flood, deserts and polar caps developed, distinct seasons of the year came into being.

Genesis 6:3- Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years."

- God spoke prophetically, the days of man's life would be shortened to 120 years.
- This canopy acted as a shield from the sun's harmful rays and prolonged man's life.
- The protective canopy removed, the harmful rays of the sun accelerated the aging process

I'm glad that human life is limited to 120 years. Can you imagine an evil person becoming increasingly evil for hundreds of years due to such a long life. That kind of perfected wickedness was probably additional cause for God's judgment back then.

Remember the Tree of Life in **Genesis 3:22**; prevent a natural life, living forever in a sinful fallen state.

- Noah became the first tiller of the soil and keeper of vineyards after the Flood- **Gen. 9:20-27.**
- Whether in ignorance of its properties or the post-flood climate changes- got drunk & naked.
- Ham, seeing the nakedness of his father, displayed a lascivious bent of character.
- Other two brothers covered their father, Ham, the father of "Canaan" was cursed for it.
- After this we hear no more of the patriarch Noah, but the sum of his years 950- **Gen. 9:28-29**

F. Table of Nations

Every human being alive today is a descendant of Adam and Eve, all the way through Noah and then one of the three sons of Noah- makes up the current nations of the earth- **Genesis 9:18-19.**

Interesting to note that all races, colors, and distinct physical characteristics of men came into being after the flood. Since Noah and his three sons and their wives were the only survivors of the great deluge.

- Even though today we have many distinct ethnic groups, all came from the same family tree.
- In Christ, the Bible makes it clear that race and gender is not a spiritual characteristic.
- We all have the same equal standing before God through Jesus Christ- **Galatians 3:28-29.**

Genesis 10:1
This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons, who themselves had sons after the flood.

- Japheth settled in the north, west and east Europe and in Asia.
- Ham settled in Africa, parts of Arabia and the land God promised to Abraham.
- Shem settled in the countries surrounding Palestine to the east.
- There are evidences they say, that Hebrew was the original language of the whole earth.

The Descendants of Shem: Genesis 10:22-30
The descendents of Shem are very important in the Old Testament, because it was through his lineage that Abraham, the nation of Israel and Jesus Christ, born of the virgin Mary, were all descendants of

Shem- **Genesis 11:10-32; Luke 3:23-38; Romans 9:4-5.**

- Those who settled in the Persian Gulf, Arabia, Syria.

The Descendents of Ham: Genesis 10:6-7, 13-19
Of the nationalities regarded as descending from Ham, none can be described as really black.

- First on the list as being the darkest is Cush or Ethiopia **Genesis 10:6**
- After which comes Mitsrayim or Egypt, then Put or Libya and Canaan last.
- Egypt being the first civilized was singled out as the chief country of Hamite settlements.
- The first steps in the arts and sciences seemingly are due to the Hamites.
- The earliest empires were theirs, their power of organization being great.
- Material rather than moral greatness was theirs.
- Their civilization, though early, decayed sooner than that of the Semitic and Japhetic races.

The Descendants of Japheth: Genesis 10:2-5
Japheth means enlargement or extension. This was true of him, for his posterity spread over all the earth.

Gomer- Progenitor of the ancient Galatians and Phrygians, from which came the natives of northern Europe known as the Gauls and Celts, and in later times as the Persians, Spanish, Greeks, Germans, Russians, French, Welsh, Irish, Britons and various Anglo-Saxon races.

Genesis 10:32
These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood.

Nimrod
The Hebrew name Nimrod means "let us rebel," given by his contemporaries to Nimrod as one who ever had in his mouth such words to stir up his band to rebellion- **Genesis 10:8-12.**

- Nimrod subverted the existing patriarchal order of society.
- He set up a chieftainship based on personal valor and maintained by aggression.

Nimrod's designation as a "hunter" of men, clearly connects him with the founding of the military state based on absolute force and tyranny.

- He lorded it over others, hunting and destroying all who opposed him in his despotic rule.
- Josephus, "Nimrod persuaded men not to ascribe their happiness to God, but to him as cause"
- He became a great leader; taught men to centralize, organize and dominate.
- He defied God to send another flood, hence the tower of Babel was built.
- For the purpose of astrology and a means of protection from another flood.

Nimrod, a Hamite intruded into Shem's territory, violently set up an empire of conquest, beginning with Babel, built in present day Iraq. Babel was a symbol of world power in hostility to God.

- It is said that Nimrod hunted down wild beasts also, which were killing many people.
- He taught men to build walls around cities for protection against them.
- He established the first kingdom and the first great universal false religion opposing God.
- This was done "before the Lord," that is, openly in the presence of God, with all defiance.
- That's why God came down to see Babel, took action to counteract the rebellion of Nimrod.
- Nimrod was the Bel, Belus, or Baal, i.e. lord of Babel, its founder.
- He abandoned Babel for a time after the miraculous confusion of tongues, founded Nineveh.

1. The Tower of Babel
In the 100 years after the flood, mankind traveled from Mt. Ararat in Armenia to the east of the Euphrates where they settled- **Genesis 11:1-4.**

- A Babylonian description of the tower of Babel was discovered in 1876.
- Tower itself was 300 ft. high with decreased width in stages- from lowest to highest point.
- There were many small shrines at the base of the tower dedicated to various gods.
- On the very top platform was a sanctuary for the god Bel-Merodach and signs of the Zodiac.
- The builders finished the tower, for the work was stopped on the city only- **Genesis 11:5-9.**
- Supernaturally God confused their languages; unified, nothing could stop them.

History has shown that when men come together in large groups, Satan gets in there and perverts it into an evil empire. God scatters the people of the earth, so they reach out and find Him- **Acts 17:26-28.**

2. The Division of the Earth
Men were not divided as to tongues and nations until after the event of Genesis 11:1-9. Hence, Genesis 10 gives the earliest division of men after the confusion of tongues and before the division of the earth into continents and islands which took place in the days of Peleg- means earthquake- **Genesis 10:25.**

- In the beginning it was just one gigantic land mass before the divine "Earthquake"
- So first, God created unique languages and scattered the people, then continental separation.
- The reason is clear, divided they would be more likely seek after God- **Romans 2:14-16.**
- Now that Jesus has come, God expects all mankind to put their faith in Him- **Acts 17:30.**
    - **John 14:6-7; Acts 4:12.**

Lesson 4
Blood Covenant – Part 1

II. The Patriarchs

Before we talk about Abraham and the patriarchs, we need to lay a foundation concerning blood covenant. The basis by which God and the ancient civilizations entered into agreement with one another.

- Certain parts of the world today still practice covenants in blood as they did 1,000 years ago.
- This is a foreign concept to our western minds; it is not a barbaric or primitive practice.
- The whole concept of covenant was established by God Himself- a solemn legal contract.
- Even today we practice many forms of covenant in our society and do not even realize it.

I am convinced that the subject of blood covenant is one of the most important and misunderstood subjects in the Bible. When the child of God fully grasps in his/her spirit the ramifications of these powerful truths, all things truly become possible to them who believe as Jesus said in **Mark 9:23.**

A. The Covenant

- The Bible is divided into two divisions: the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- The more proper name for these two divisions; however, is "covenant."
- So the Bible is really the story of an Old Blood Covenant and a New Blood Covenant.
- Now, in the Bible, the word covenant means a binding agreement between two parties.
- It literally means to "cut covenant" as defined:
    - **"Cut a covenant by the shedding of blood and walking between pieces of flesh."**

A blood covenant between two parties is the closest, the most enduring, the most solemn and the most sacred of all contracts!

- The first covenant recorded in the Bible was between God and Adam and Eve- **Genesis 3:21.**
- When an animal was slain and its skin used as a covering for them.
- Job had a life keeping Covenant with God; delivered when he got his mind on the covenant.
- God cut the Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses.
- The subject of blood covenant is huge in the Bible, without it, no salvation for mankind.
- Let's now look at a covenant of blood, or the covenant of strong friendship.
- Abraham through blood covenant become the friend of God- a covenant of strong friendship.
- New Covenant Jesus cut on our behalf was a covenant of adoption into the family of God.

1. Covenant Dynamics

So what are some reasons people enter into covenant?

- **Protection-** A covenant partner is bound to come to your aid when in trouble.
- **Provision-** What is yours is mine and what is mine is yours.
- **Posterity-** Descendants are covered and benefit from the relationship.
- **Relationship-** A deep love, devotion and respect for each other.

The blood covenant is a very sacred covenant. It is the most sacred covenant that mankind has ever known or has ever adhered to. Dr. Livingstone and Mr. Stanley were in Africa for many years as missionaries, and in all that time, they never heard of a covenant being broken.

- If someone in Africa broke the covenant, whole family would hunt him down and kill him.
- Would not be able to go very far. Everybody would be on his trail if he broke the covenant.
- It could not be annulled; children down to the fourth generation would honor it.
- Grandchildren would share everything that they owned, it would never be cancelled.
- Blood covenant is also known as a covenant of strong friendship- becoming blood brothers.
- A red thread woven through clothing or a head dress signified covenant- other tribe or person

It absolutely cannot be broken. If we were to enter into blood covenant with someone, we promise to give them our life, our love and our protection forever, "till death do we part."

- Just like marriage, which is also a blood covenant- when consummated with a virgin.
- Now we can see why God says pre and extra-marital physical intercourse is a sin- **Heb. 13:4.**
- Sexual immorality is an offense to the covenant of marriage that God has instituted.
    - **Exodus 20:14; Matthew 5:27; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 10:8; Galatians 5:19.**

Many Christians who are saved and filled with the Holy Spirit and do not realize they have a Covenant with God. We have covenant with God and it is a blood covenant- **Leviticus 17:11.**

- God used the vehicle of blood because of its sacredness, the life of the flesh is in the blood.
- Blood is the sign of what is sacred, blood is not what makes the covenant sacred however.
- The sacred thing is the covenant itself, WORDS, are the most sacred things that exist.
- The power of life and death are in the tongue- **Proverbs 18:21; Mt. 12:36-37; Malachi 3:16**
- Lawyers spend hours choosing words that will explain the contract- not interpreted wrong.
- The Bible is a Covenant contract (OLD and NEW)- sacred and legal in the court of heaven.

When it comes to establishing a covenant, they first sit down and negotiate the conditions of the covenant, what is it going to address. There is a blessing and a curse to a covenant.

- For instance there are two tribes, one is weaker than the other.
- The weaker tribes calls for protection from the stronger tribe if attacked.
- But the stronger tribe will say what will we get out of it.
- The weaker may say we are good farmers, so we will feed your tribe if you fight for us.
- Those are the articles of the covenant, that is the LAW of that covenant.

You help us fight and I will help you with your food, now we have established a law concerning this covenant, a covenant of war and of provision.

- Next, we establish a curse that is associated with the covenant.
- We would go through all the curses if you do not feed me or fight for me against an enemy.
- For instance, may you die of the ring worm of the nose.
- Now we have a covenant, with a Law and a Curse- words establishes this.
- They will exchange gifts with one another and now there is a blessing on this covenant.
- We enter into the agreement, the cup is raised and the covenant is cut.

Now one of them may come over and steal one of your wives, but that was not mentioned in the Law of the Covenant- nothing wrong with that. But when the conditions of the covenant come to be fulfilled, we better do it.

Divorce rate so high in our nation, people are ignorant of the marriage covenant. Christian couples entering into marriage covenant before God, it is a covenant in blood- **Malachi 2:14; Proverbs 2:17.**

- When the bride and groom feed each other the wedding cake; an ancient act of covenant.
- Symbolically, "I'm coming into you and you into me. The two of us are becoming one."
- The wedding ring on the third finger- has a nerve leading to the heart, symbol of life.

We use the word "heart" to represent the total person. It stands for our whole being, our whole nature, our whole life. When we love someone with all our heart, we love them with all our being.

- When we give our heart to someone, we are giving them our total life.
- This is the essence and spirit of the blood covenant which God ordains in the Bible.
- We need to realize the blood covenant we have with God and with each other.
- As a result, we would never speak evil of another brother or sister in Christ.
- Our faith would explode, God has bound Himself to His Word to fulfill it; Bible has to work.
- No more faith accidents when it comes to receiving from God, we have a new confidence.
- This is why David ran at Goliath, he knew that he had a blood covenant with God.
- So bold faith comes from a revelation knowledge of the covenant.

2. The Hebrew Ritual

- The Hebrews had a blood covenant ritual that was similar to the other nations around them.
- All nations practiced blood covenant because man instinctively sought this relationship.
- Any blood covenant that involves the drinking of blood is not of God, but is a perversion.

Genesis 9:4-5- But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting.

- Two Hebrew males entered into a blood covenant; went through a very specific ceremony.
- Let's explain as though you and I were going to enter into a blood covenant together.

Step 1. Take off Coat or Robe
The first thing I do is take off my coat or robe and give it to you. Now to the Hebrew, a person's robe represents the person- that is why Joseph's coat of many colors was so important.

- Taking of my robe and giving it to you. I'm symbolically saying, *"I'm giving you all myself.*
- *"My total being and my life, I pledge to you."* And then you would do the same to me.

Step 2. Take off Belt
Next thing I do is take off my belt and give it to you. Now I don't use my belt to hold up my pants, but to hold up my weapons. My belt holds my armor together; my dagger, my bow and arrow, my sword.

- Symbolically I'm giving you all my strength and pledging you all my support and protection.

And as I give you my belt, I'm saying, *"Here is my strength and all my ability to fight. If anybody attacks you, they are also attacking me. Your battles are my battles and mine are yours. I will fight with you. I will help defend you and protect you."* And you do the same to me.

Step 3. Cut the Covenant
The next step is to actually "cut the covenant" by taking an animal and splitting it right down the middle. In the Bible, an animal is only cut down the middle and split in two in a covenant ceremony.

After we split the animal, we lay each half to the side of us and stand in between the two bloody halves of flesh, with our backs to each other. Then we walk right through the bloody halves, making a figure eight, and come back to a stop facing each other.

- We are saying that we are dying to ourselves, giving up the rights to our own life.
- We are beginning a new walk with our covenant partner unto death- **2 Corinthians 5:14-15.**
- You see, in this covenant, each half of the dead animal represent us.

Since the blood covenant is the most solemn pact, we each point down to the bloody animal split in two and say, "God do so to me and more if I ever try to break this covenant. Just feed me to the vultures."

Step 4. Raise the Right Arm and Mix Blood
Then we raise our right arms, cut our palms and bring them together. As we do, our blood intermingles. Then we swear allegiance to each other.

- As our blood intermingles, we believe our lives are intermingling and becoming one life.
- This is because our blood is our life and to intermingle blood is to intermingle life.
- This symbolically shows the two of us becoming one- **2 Corinthians 5:17-18.**

Step 5. Exchange Names
Then as we stand there with our blood intermingling, we *exchange names*. I take your last name as part of my name and you take my last name as part of your name- **Acts 11:26; Revelation 3:20.**

Step 6. Make a Scar
The next step is to rub our blood together and make a scar as a permanent testimony to the covenant. The scar will bear witness to the covenant we have made. It will always be there to remind us of our covenant responsibilities. It is the guarantee of our covenant- **Ephesians 1:13-14; 2 Cor. 1:21-22.**

- If anyone tries to harm us, all we have to do is raise up that right arm and show our scar.
- By that we are saying, "There's more to me than meets the eye.
- If you're coming after me, you're also going to have to fight my blood covenant partner.
    - **Matthew 25:40; Acts 26:14-15; 1 John 4:4; James 4:7.**
- Henry Stanley, explorations through Africa, cut covenant 50 times with various chieftains.
- Anytime he would come across an unfriendly tribe, he would just hold up that right arm.
- Today, when we meet friends, we don't show scars, we shake hands- **John 10:28-30.**

1 Timothy 2:8- I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing.

- Hands are also symbols of a covenant that was struck- **Isaiah 49:14-16.**
- Hand shake is reminiscent of the covenant, the hand of fellowship or the hand of friendship.
- When the Bible refers to "being taken by the hand" it is talking about honoring the covenant.
- This is why we lift up holy hands unto God, it is a visible sign; our covenant in Jesus.
- The raising and extension of our hands is an act of friendship, loyalty and surrender to God.

To not raise our hands to God is like us extending our hand out to someone in friendship, but they withhold their hand.

Step 7. Give Covenant Terms
We stand before witnesses and give the *terms of the covenant*. I say, "All my assets are yours. All my money, all my property and all my possessions are yours. If you need any of them, you don't even have to ask. Just come and get it. These terms are referred to as the Law of the Covenant- **1 Cor. 3:21-23.**

What's mine is yours and what's yours is mine. And if I die, all my children are yours by adoption and you are responsible for my family. But at the same time, you also get my liabilities.

- If I ever get in trouble financially, I don't come ask you for money.
- Rather, I will come to you and say, "Where's our checkbook?" We are in covenant.
- Everything I have is yours and what's yours is mine, both assets and liabilities.
- So we stand there and read off before witnesses, our list of assets and liabilities.

Step 8. Eat A Memorial Meal
Then we have a *memorial meal* to complete the covenant union. In place of the animal and blood, we have bread and wine- **John 6:48-58; 1 Corinthians 11:23-32.**

- In the Bible, wine is called the blood of the grapes (**Genesis 49:11**)- our own life blood.
- The bread represents our flesh. Take a loaf of bread and feed each other- becoming one.
- Then we serve each other wine, symbolic of our life blood which is now yours.

Step 9. Plant a Memorial
We now leave a *memorial to the covenant*. We want to always remember it. We do this by planting a tree that we have sprinkled with the blood of the animal.

- The blood sprinkled tree, along with our scar, will always be a testimony to our covenant.
- Well, this completes the ceremony. From now on, the world will know us as friends.
- In Bible times, one didn't use the word friend loosely as we do today- **John 15:12-17.**
- We became friends only after we had cut covenant. Children alive and unborn are included.

Now we can understand how Judas was cut to the heart when after he had betrayed Jesus, the Lord had called him "Friend." Just a few hours before Judas was there at the Last Supper- **Matthew 26:48-50.**

Identifying the Covenant
Now, anytime we see these events happenings or these words referenced in the Bible, either actually or symbolically, we now know the parties were entering into a blood covenant.

We won't find all the details spelled out step by step as they are here, because back then, everyone knew all the details and it wasn't necessary to record it all.

3. David and Jonathan Cut Covenant

The covenant that was made between these two men is significant in that it illustrates the far reaching power that covenant has on the lives of those it affects. The story begins in 1 Samuel 18:1-9.

David
David is a giant killer. He is the great warrior who could crush his foes and all the enemies of Saul. And the Bible says that David is a man after God's own heart- Acts 13:22. Even though Saul tried to kill David, he never returned the favor on many occasions.

Saul
Saul, on the other hand, is just the opposite of David. He has a knack for being outside the will of God. He is rebellious and seeks to do his own thing rather than God's thing. Saul makes everyone in his family afraid of David. The portrait he paints to his family is, "Big bad David is out to get us. David, of course, is just the opposite of what Saul makes him out to be, but his family doesn't know any better.

Jonathan
Now, Saul has a son named Jonathan. Jonathan is just the opposite of Saul and the rest of the family. Although a member of the family of Saul, it's like he really doesn't belong there. He is more like David. Jonathan loves David as himself, at a young age Jonathan and David entered into a blood covenant.

Mephibosheth
Later, when Jonathan marries, he has a son named Mephibosheth. In 2 Samuel 4:4 we read that when Mephibosheth is five years old, Saul and Jonathan are killed in the battle at Jezreel. So when the news of Saul and Jonathan's death reaches Jerusalem, Mephibosheth's nurse grabs him up and flees. In her haste to get away, she falls and drops Mephibosheth. As he hits the ground both feet are crushed.

- Because of all of Saul's lies, Mephibosheth is hiding for his life in a place called Lodebar.
- While hiding at Lodebar, his heart hardens against David.
- His two lame feet are a constant reminder that David is out to get him.
- He doesn't know he is in covenant with the king David, through his father, Jonathan.

David Reigns as King
Meanwhile, David reigns as king. And in 2 Samuel 9, we find David wondering if any of Saul's family is still alive. He wants to show them kindness because he is in covenant with Jonathan.

- But every time he approaches someone to ask about Jonathan's family, they say nothing.
- They believe David is just trying to trick them; if he ever found Mephibosheth, kill him.
- However, David finally finds out and retrieves Mephibosheth at once to the palace.

David Remembers Covenant
Mephibosheth falls down on his face before David. And just as he expects the guards to grab him, David says, "Mephibosheth, don't be afraid. I've asked you to come so I can be kind to you because of my covenant with your father, Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul, and you will live here at the palace." **2 Samuel 9:6-8.**

- Mephibosheth can't believe his ears! This is the king who hates me and wants to kill me?
- Guilt probably gripped him due to all the bad things and ill will he had towards David.
- Regardless, David was honoring the blood covenant he had with Jonathan.

And here are the terms of the covenant. I will restore all your land. I will bless you. I'll forgive your past wrongs against me. My house is your house and you will live here at the palace. I'll be a father to you and adopt you as my own son. This scar is the testimony and witness to my covenant with you." Wow, does this sound familiar? Jesus!!!

Mephibosheth Chooses
Naturally Mephibosheth is shaken. He can't believe it. But he must now make a choice, either to enter into the covenant with David or go back into the desert. Doesn't sound like much of a choice, does it?

- The man he has hated all his life he must now love with all his life.
- He must swallow his pride and humble himself. He must admit he was wrong and repent.
- His choice, has a free will to choose his own destiny. David can't force the covenant on him.
- Gratefully, Mephibosheth chooses to enter the covenant with David- was lost and now found.
- Immediately, all things David promised took place. Mephibosheth's land was restored.
- He was blessed with the blessings of a child of the king. Past wrongs against David- forgiven
- From then on he enjoyed eating at the King's table, protection, provision and company.
- His decedents were also blessed and part of the covenant, no one could harm them.

4. The New Covenant And You

In this story, David represents God. He loves His creation with all His heart. He wants to show us mercy and kindness. He wants to take us out of the desert and wilderness of life and adopt us into His own family, to be His own children, to sit at the table with Him and live with Him at the place He has prepared for us.

- But unfortunately, we're in the family of Satan- we're rebellious.
- We want to do our own thing, we don't want anybody telling us what to do, especially God.
- We don't know God loves us and wants to bless us.
- We've always been told He is a God of wrath and wants to bring judgment on us.
- So we run and are afraid of Him; we laugh about Him and use His Name in vain.
- We bring grief and sorrow on ourselves out in our own wilderness of Lodebar of sin.
- What about Jonathan? He was in the family of Saul yet he didn't really belong there.
- He was like David who delighted to do the will of God.

He was very Saul but also very David, like Jesus Christ, the Word of God who became flesh and dwelt among us. He was very God but at the same time very man- **Colossians 2:9.**

- In Him is life, He is the source of life. Being God, all creation is in Him and comes from him.
- As creator, He is worth all His creation. How many creatures are equal to the Creator?
- How many humans are equal to God? All creatures combined together don't equal the Jesus.
- God became a man, while at the same time, remained God, He could stand in for all creation.
- He could represent all mankind. All humanity would be in Him.
- He could take the place of every person who ever lived.

And being equal to God, even though a man, He could enter into covenant with Himself on behalf of all humanity, and that is exactly what He did!

Our New Covenant does not have a curse associated with it, since Jesus fulfilled God's terms of the covenant perfectly. However, we must still exercise faith in the provisions of the covenant and uphold the royal law of the New Covenant and walk in love- **John 13:34-35.**

Enter Jesus Christ
Jesus Christ is that perfect God-Man. The Bible says that it was decided on before the foundations of the world. *And we were there when the covenant was cut because, as our Creator, we were in Him.*
Hebrews 12:9; 1 Peter 1:18-20.

He was born of the seed of woman, not man, so that the blood flowing through His veins would be uncontaminated by sin. He didn't carry that deadly blood disease passed on by Adam called the sin nature- **Romans 5:12.**

- As God, He was perfectly holy and righteous- **Philippians 2:5-11.**
- And He prepared for Himself a body- **Hebrews 10:5**. Knew no sin- **Hebrews 4:15.**
- Therefore, the blood in that body was spotless and without blemish- **Hebrews 9:14.**
- He called Himself the son of Man to identify Himself with all mankind.

So the pre-existing, eternal Christ, the Son of God exchanged names with us and became Jesus, the Son of Man . . . the representative of all mankind. For 33 years He lived a perfect life in order to be the once for all perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world.

Jesus Cuts Covenant
During the covenant ceremony, Jesus gathers His disciples together to participate in the covenant meal of bread and wine. After the meal Jesus went out and left a memorial to the covenant.

- He planted a tree, and He poured out His own blood on it, all of it- **Galatians 3:13-14.**
- It was all His blood poured out at the foot of the cross, the blood- **John 1:29-31.**
- The stained tree that stands forever as a memorial to the covenant- the cross of Calvary.
- The "Lamb of God" slain from the foundations of the world cut covenant for all mankind.
- We were crucified with Him (Galatians 2:20), we were in Him as our Creator.

He took on our robe of self-righteousness which is like filthy rags- Isaiah 64:6. He took on our nature, the satanic sin nature. He took on all our liabilities which are the sins of all mankind. They were all placed on Him. All of our spiritual leprosy, that deadly blood disease we carry, was put on Him and He who knew no sin became sin for us- **Isaiah 53:6.**

- Necessary for God to do this because the sin nature within each of us separates us from God.
- All of us have sinned and come short of God's Glory according to **Romans 3:23.**
- The penalty for our sin is death- Romans 6:23. Jesus took the rap for our sin- **Eph. 2:11-13.**

Jesus Remembers Covenant
Before we accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior, at one time we were sitting in church, at home, with a neighbor, at a Bible study or at work and the chariots of one greater than David, the Holy Spirit, invited us to come to God thorough Jesus Christ. We were fighting this all our life.

- We had been running from it, hiding behind the mask of religion, drugs, sex, work, money.
- We probably thought that God was out to get us and spoil our fun.
- To tell us not to dance, drink, smoke or chew or go with girls that do.
- We did not know that God loves us and wants to bless our spirit, soul and body.
- So instead of living like a child of the king, we were living like a runaway slave.
- We didn't believe those Christians who told us about the love of God.
- But then the Holy Spirit began to draw, convict and convince us of our need for Jesus.
- So at last saw the truth, the "Goodness of God" that brought us to repentance- **Romans 2:4.**

We Must Choose
Like Mephibosheth, we had to choose. We probably could not believe our ears when we heard the good news of the gospel message- **Romans 5:6-8.**

- At the time, we could not believe our ears, "I thought God just wants to punish me!"
- We cry out, "But God, you don't know what I've said about you."
- I've used your name in vain and how I've hated You and cursed You, made jokes about You.
- Why, I even said You were dead. You just don't know all the terrible things I've done.

And God replies, "You don't understand. I know you don't deserve it. I know there is nothing that you can do to make up for your thoughts and actions against Me. You could serve Me a thousand years and never make it up. But this has nothing to do with deserving it. I'm doing this because I've sworn by My own blood and entered into an everlasting covenant and you were there; you were in Me at the time." **Hebrews 7:23-25; Ephesians 2:1-10**

Covenant Terms
God says, "And here are the terms of the covenant. I'll take all your liabilities, all your sins, on Myself and become sin for you. I'll forgive your iniquities and remember them no more- **Hebrews 8:7-13.**

I'll take all your self-righteousness and give you My own righteousness which is pure and holy and acceptable to Me." **2 Corinthians 5:21.**

"You clothe Me with your robe of sin and I'll clothe you with My garment of salvation and My robe of righteousness through My pure life blood poured out on the cross for you. I'll impute it to you and count you as righteous. We'll exchange natures (Son of Man / Christian)" I'll take on your sin nature on the cross and crucify it there so you can take on my righteous nature For I'll put My Spirit within you and bless you with all spiritual blessings. You'll partake of My own nature by the intermingling of our blood through faith." **Romans 6:6-7.**

- "You can become part of me and I'll live in your spirit. My house will be your house.
- You can feast at My table. I'll be a Father to you and adopt you as My own son.
- You will reign with Me for a thousand years and have eternal life with Me.
- This is My free gift to you to show you that I love you." **Romans 8:14-17.**
- **Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 11:19-20; Ezekiel 36:25-28; Revelation 20:4; 22:1-5.**

Entering the Covenant
Well, this discovery undoes everything most people ever thought about God. But everyone will make a choice. Ignoring or putting it off is a choice, it is rejecting the gift just the same as saying no.
John 3:35-36; Hebrews 2:1-4; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2; Philippians 3:7-15.

- Our parents can't make it for us. Our religious organization can't make it for us.
- Either to enter into the covenant with God through Jesus Christ or go back into the desert.
- We must swallow all our pride, humble ourselves and admit we were wrong.
- All our old friends most likely ridiculed us, and had made fun of us.
- If you decide no; you go back into the desert, lost forever.
- If you decide yes, you will have communion with God and receive His very divine nature.
- And Jesus says, "If you enter into the covenant, you'll be known as my friend"- **Jn. 15:14-15**
- You'll even exchange names and be called a Christian- **Acts 11:26.**

Supernatural Scar
Like the scar, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to all who will enter into covenant with Him- John 20:22. The Holy Spirit is the seal that bears witness and testifies to the covenant. He is the constant reminder, the guarantee, the deposit or first fruits of our inheritance, that we are in covenant with God through the blood of Jesus Christ- **Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; 2 Cor. 1:22; John 14:15-17, 26-27; 15:26; 16:7-11.**

Showing the Scar
So when Satan, the enemy, comes against the Christian, we show him our scar! By speaking the Name of Jesus and the Word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. All born again Christians have the scar, but only those who show their scar through faith will put the devil on the run.

- The devil is taking advantage of many Christians today because of ignorance.
- God will only back us up when we enforce our rights as a partner in the blood covenant.
- Jesus, our covenant brother has already whipped the devil- **Philippians 2:9-11.**
- Power of attorney, ambassadors of Christ- **1 Cor. 12:12-27; Titus 3:3-7; Luke 10:18-20.**
- **Mt. 28:18, John 14:12-14; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; Heb. 13:20-21; Col. 2:13-15; Eph. 1:19-23.**

The Covenant Invitation
Jesus came for the very purpose to reconcile us back to God. Jesus is the "Seed of the woman" that God promised back in the Garden of Eden who would destroy Satan's dominion of slavery over mankind.
1 Timothy 2:4-5; John 3:16-17; Matthew 11:28-30; John 6:37.

Lesson 5
Blood Covenant – Part 2

5. God's Covenant with Job

This generation of Job and Abraham did not know anything other than God blessing them financially. You can't sell that old lie of the devil that God brings poverty on all of us to keep us humble to the Jewish folks, their Bible does not say that, neither does ours- **Colossians 2:16-23.**

- The source of that kind of teaching apparently came from Zen Buddhism.
- Through the study of Eastern religion by European people at the turn of the 19th century.
- That philosophy started a trend of poverty vows and poverty oaths- violates Scripture.

Job had a covenant with God, a life keeping Covenant. The reason I say that he had a life keeping Covenant is because in Job 2:6 the Lord forbids Satan from taking his life- **Job 1:1-3.**

- The Bible calls Job "Blameless and upright" which does not mean perfect or sinless.
- It meant that he or she kept the law or requirements and obligations of the covenant.
- Whatever the terms of the covenant stipulated, no more and no less.

In **Job 1:6-11,** we see that God does not put a hedge of protection and bless everything that an individual has for no reason. Job had to have a covenant with God = God intervenes in his life.

- Job kept the law of the covenant and in verse 5, he sacrificed burnt offerings to the Lord.
- Yet Job gave into fear and had opened the door to the devil- **Job 3:25.**
- There are only two sides to a covenant, God did not falter on His part, but Job did.
- It was Job's fears concerning his children that opened the door- **Job 1:4-5.**

Job 1:12 NKJV
So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD."

- The Bible has much to say about the enemy of fear, it is the opposite of faith.
- Faith comes by hearing the Word of God, and fear comes by hearing the words of the devil.
    - **Romans 10:17; Deuteronomy 20:3-4; 1 Peter 3:6.**
- Job yielding to fear gave power to the devil to come in and kill, steal and destroy **Jn. 10:10.**

Yet instead putting faith back into the covenant he had with God, he stumbling into yet another trap, the trap of self-pity. We can't get anything from God with self-pity which is selfishness.

- For forty chapters, Job complained and whined, never enforcing his rights in the covenant.
- God wants us to be bold, not arrogant, but confident in God that He will honor His Covenant.
- God wants us to put Him in remembrance and declare the stipulations of the covenant.
- So He can legally release His power on the earth and in the affairs of men- **Isaiah 43:26.**
- Job finally got his mind on his covenant with God instead of his problems, God intervened.
    - **Job 42:10-11.**

6. God's Covenant with Abraham

Adam, Job, Noah and others could have served as God's choice to create a nation through which the promised Seed of the woman would crush the head of the serpent.

- None of them were suitable for what God needed until He found Abram- Ur of the Chaldeans
- What was so special about Abraham that made him acceptable in God's sight?
- God foreknew that Abraham would walk by faith, and live a life of obedience.
- More importantly, he would pass the legacy of his covenant with God onto his children.

Genesis 18:18-19
"Abraham will surely become a great and powerful nation, and all nations on earth will be blessed through him. <u>For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him</u> to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just, so that the LORD will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him."

- It's been years since the flood and again the world had turned from God to idol worship.
- Abram's family were idol worshippers; worshipped the sun and the moon.
- It was from this environment, God called Abram to His covenant of love.
- What an invitation, an offer of a lifetime given by Almighty God Himself- accept or reject.
- God called him out of his pagan homeland to a place that God would later show him.
- There God would bless him and make him a great nation- **Genesis 12:1-3; Hebrews 11:8-10**
- Form Abram's seed (singular, Jesus), all nations of the world would be blessed- **Gal. 3:16.**
- Four times the Bible says that Abraham believed God and was counted as righteousness.
    - **Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6 and James 2:23.**
- So what exactly was it that Abraham believed in?
- It represents the very foundation of our Christian faith!

So God brought Abram to the land of Canaan and God approached him in a way that Abram could understand. He established a blood covenant with Abram; like Adam and Eve, and Noah before him.

- And so God progressively continues to reveal His covenant with man- since the beginning.

Before He actually comes to earth to cut covenant Himself as a man (Jesus), He reveals it most clearly through Abraham- **John 8:56-59.** The covenant ceremony is described in **Genesis chapter 15.**

Ceremony Described
Having laid a foundation concerning the principles of covenant, we are now going to study the blood covenant as God revealed it through Abram; later called Abraham after the covenant was established.

- God says, "Abram, I am your shield, I am your very great reward."
- I will protect you and fight your battles for you. I will be your strength.
- If anyone attacks you, they are really attacking Me. Your battles are now mine- **Lk. 1:67-75**
- With this statement, God is taking the initiative by offering His robe and His belt to Abram.
- Instead of a robe, God exchanges His very Self- "All that I am, I give to you."

All that I am, I give to you. I am holy; I give you my holiness. I am righteous; I give you My righteousness. I give you my life, Abram, pledging to lay it down on your behalf if you will accept this covenant and enter into it with me."

- In **Genesis 15:8**, Abraham asks the obvious question, legally, how will all this happen.

Well God answers Abram's question in terms Abram can understand- the language of blood covenant.

- The Lord tells Abram to gather up some "clean" animals- substitutionary sacrifices.
    - A heifer, a goat, a ram, a turtledove and a young pigeon.
- Abram splits the ram, goat and heifer right down the middle and divides the halves.
- Abram knows that God is making a covenant with him; making promises of God a sure thing
- Rest on God's promises, through the blood covenant, he has a hold on God- **Heb. 6:13-19.**
- There's only one problem here. How can the creation enter into covenant with the Creator?
- What does Abram have to offer God in return of equal value; as it is in a human covenant?
- Is he going to rescue God and help Him out in some way; there is no common ground.

In **Genesis 15:11** we see Abram trying to help God out. As the bloody halves of the animals lay there separated, fowls swoop down and try to devour the carcasses- fowls = unclean.

- Jesus compared Satan to the unclean birds that snatch the seed of the Word- **Mt. 13:4, 19.**
- The fowls in Genesis represent Satan swooping down to break up this covenant.
- So we see Abram trying to help God out by shooing them away.

If God is going to establish a covenant with man; He is going to have to do it all, if it's going to be done at all. If Abram got involved in any way, he would have just messed up the covenant- unacceptable.

Hebrews 6:13-14
When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants."

- Therefore, God made a covenant with Himself, His oaths were made unto Himself.
- To keep Abram from messing up the covenant ceremony, puts him into a deep sleep.
- Then Abram saw passing between the bloody animals, someone taking his place.
- As a smoking furnace and a burning lamp, meaning a bright light- **Matthew 17:1-3.**

John chapter one: pre-existence of Jesus, Word of God, the Second Person of the God Head. Christ the eternal Son of God, in His pre-existing glory, cut covenant with God the Father and stood in for Abram.

- He is the only one who could stand in for Abram, and all of Abram's unborn seed- in him.
- The sacrifice was representative of Jesus the "Lamb of God" who would take our sins away.
- The blood of animals could only cover sins. The blood of Jesus takes it away.

The Seal of Circumcision
Then, in Genesis 17, God awakens Abram to seal the covenant. The seal is always the scar given as the testimony to the covenant. The scar would bear witness to the covenant- guarantees the covenant.

- It would always remind God and Abram of their covenant responsibilities to each other.
- The scar that sealed and testified to this covenant was circumcision.
- Abram would bear in his flesh, the evidence that he had entered into blood covenant.
- All of Abram's natural descendant would confirm their accepting of the covenant.
- By taking the seal of circumcision for all new born males.
- Jesus is scared for us for all eternity to bear witness to the everlasting covenant with us.
- This background should cause the New Testament to make a lot more sense- **Acts 4:12.**
- The Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul is speaking to us in the language of covenant.
- When born again, receive a divine seal; Holy Spirit within us- **2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph1:13-14.**
- In the natural a seal is used to stamp a document, giving it legal validity and ownership.

Through faith in Jesus Christ, we become God's property, bought by the blood of Jesus.
Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23.

- Through faith in Jesus Christ we become the spiritual seed of Abraham.
    - **Romans 2:29; Galatians 3:28-29; Colossians 2:11-12.**

Change of Names
Then according to the covenant ritual, God and Abram changed names. God, who is called YHWH in Hebrew, took the "H" out of his own name and put it in Abram's name.

- So Abram's name was changed to Abraham. Likewise, Sara's name is changed to Sarah.
- God took on Abraham's name and became known as the God of Abraham.
- And now that the covenant was cut, they are known in the Bible as friends- **James 2:23-24.**
- Jesus calls us friends, entered into covenant through Him with God the Father- **Jn. 15:13-16.**
- When we entered into covenant with God, we too received a new identity and a new name.
    - Acts 11:26, *"The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch."*
- We died to the old identity- **Col. 1:13-14; 3:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:14-17; Gal. 2:20-21.**

But Abraham Has No Son
Abraham is now the covenant friend of God. And God has promised him a seed (singular) through Sarah, a descendent who would be a blessing to the whole world. He has also promised him a land of rest and blessing upon Abraham and his descendants- **Hebrews 6:13-19.**

- There's only one problem with all these promises, Abraham has no son through Sarah.
- Abraham had earlier given birth to Ishmael through Hagar, Sarah's hand-maiden-**Gen 16:1-4**
- Ishmael is the founder of the present day Arab nations, who hate Israel, Isaac's offspring.
- However, the promised seed was to come through Sarah. Abraham 100 and Sarah 90.
- He's impotent and she is past the age of child bearing- **Genesis 18:11.**
- If Abraham is going to have a son, it will definitely have to be a supernatural birth.
- Abraham's name means, "A Father of many nations." Faith comes by hearing- **Ro. 10:17.**
- Abraham's faith began to grow until he could finally become fully persuaded- **Ro. 4:17-22.**
- God is faithful to His part of the covenant and enables Abraham and Sarah to have a son.
- Abraham is also faithful to the covenant and circumcises Isaac- **Genesis 21:1-5.**

Abraham's Test of Faith
Do you recall that Abraham slept through the covenant? God did it all. Abraham had nothing to do with it. God is proving Himself faithful so now it's time to test Abraham's faithfulness to the covenant.

- When a covenant is cut, each part completely surrenders himself in loving trust to the other.
- He must be willing to give his total being, his total life, his total heart, without question.
- It is a dying to one's self and a surrender of yourself to the one you are in covenant with.
- The blood covenant is not a mere intellectual understanding- **Galatians 2:20; Luke 14:27.**
- Certainly Satan is going to require that this covenant be proven, ratified and tested!

The Test
There is only one way to find out Abraham's commitment to the covenant. That way is to test Abraham with that which is most dear to him- his only son. All over the world, men in blood covenant were willing to give that which was most dear to them.

- Devotees of pagan gods would give their first-born- **Jeremiah 19:5.**
- However this was something the Lord never required- **Deuteronomy 12:29-31; 18:10-13.**

Yet in Abraham's case, God tested him with this very thing, to sacrifice his son as a burnt offering. However, God would never let Abraham go through with this act- **Genesis 22:1-2.**

- This is a tough test for Abraham even though offering the first-born was a common practice.
- Since Abraham was 100 years old at the time, everything hinged on Isaac living.
- To offer his only son's life was a far greater sacrifice than offering his own life.
- In the Middle-Eastern mind, to die without a son was the most terrible thing in life.
- Your whole life would be considered a failure. There would be no perpetuation of lineage.

So in offering his only son, Abraham would prove in the most supreme way that he loved God and would be faithful to the covenant which God required.

Abraham Offers Isaac
Abraham arises early the next morning to begin his three day journey toward a mountain at a city called Salem, later to be called Jerusalem. This journey is described in **Genesis 22.**

- Isaac is as good as dead in Abraham's heart, he was totally committed to the covenant.
- On the third day of the journey, God points out Mount Moriah where Isaac is to be sacrificed.
- Many scholars believe that Mount Moriah is the same location where Jesus was crucified.

Genesis 22:5
He said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then <u>we will come back to you</u>."

- Notice the faith statement that Abraham makes in **Genesis 22:5**, "we will come back…"
- Abraham believed that even if God did take Isaac, He would resurrect him- **Heb. 11:17-19.**
- Now Isaac was no small child, probably in his twenties or early thirties.
- Jewish age for maturity is 30, & Isaac did not marry until he was 40, no children until 60.
- So Isaac asks Abraham the obvious question, "where is the lamb" in **Genesis 22:6-8.**

John 1:29
The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

- So Abraham builds the altar and places Isaac on it. Isaac does not resist Abraham at all.
- Just as he is about to make the sacrifice and take his own son's life, God stops him via angel.

Genesis 22:11-12
But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son."

- Isaac symbolizes humanity in that we deserved to die for our sin- **Hebrews 9:26.**
- Jesus is the lamb of God that God had provided as our substitute sacrifice- **Genesis 22:13-14.**
- However, unlike Isaac, God the Father allowed Jesus to be sacrificed for us.
- 3 days & 3 nights in the heart of the earth as our ultimate substitute- **Matthew 12:40.**
- 3 day when the claims of justice were satisfied, raised from the dead- **Eph. 1:19-22; 4:8-10.**

If Abraham would be willing to offer his son, then God would in turn would offer His according to the covenant- this would make it legal for Jesus to come to earth as our Savior! Satan can't challenge it!

What did Abraham Believe

1. First of all, he believed in a supernatural birth. He believed God would supernaturally bring a son into the world. God did and Abraham called him Isaac.
2. He believed God enough to offer his only son as a sacrifice, and he did.
3. He believed for three days that his son was as good as dead, and he was.
4. He believed God would provide a sacrifice substitute or raise his son from the dead with many children coming to him through his son Isaac, and God did.
5. He believed on that very mountain, God would provide Himself the substitute sacrifice- a few thousand years later, at the same place, Jesus, the lamb of God was sacrificed for us.

Since Abraham believed these things in his heart, God gave Abraham His own robe of righteousness.

7. The New Covenant Parallel

What God was offering Abraham was salvation from sin, for his family tree and for the whole world. He know that a Savior would be born from his lineage, he believed it and was saved.

John 8:56 RSV
"Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad."

Since Abraham looked forward to the coming Savior (Jesus), we look back to the Savior who came, died and rose again. Whether it was Abraham or us, it requires faith, and that faith equals our salvation.

Galatians 3:6-9
Consider Abraham: "He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, & announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

A Supernatural Birth
So first, we are asked to believe in a supernatural birth. As with Abraham, God would bring His only begotten Son into the world in the flesh, supernaturally- **Matthew 1:23; John 1:1, 14; Luke 1:30-35.**

- Jesus, born of a virgin, Seed of woman, not inheriting man's sin nature passed from Adam.
- Jesus, circumcised on the eighth day to prove He was still honoring the covenant- **Luke 2:21.**
- Satan tried to swallow up the sacrifice, through mass murders via Herod- **Matthew 2:16-18.**

Keeping the Covenant Promise
However, God had promised Abraham that in his seed, all nations of the earth would be blessed. Now it's time for God to prove His fidelity to the covenant with Abraham and Abraham's seed.

- At 33 years of age, Jesus began a long climb to the top of a mountain.
- Like Abraham, God placed the wood for the burnt offering on His Son's shoulders.
- That wood was the cross that Jesus voluntarily took on Himself.
- God offered His only Son as a burnt offering (in the heart of the earth, Hell) for the world.

When we, like Isaac turn to God and ask, "Where is the sacrifice? Who will take my place and be my sin substitute? Who will pay the penalty for me?" The answer comes back, God will provide Himself the Lamb for a burnt offering." Jesus Christ is the "Lamb of God." God truly did provide Himself.
Colossians 1:19; 2:9.

The Perfect Substitute
God Himself climbed up on that altar of the cross on the same mountain where Isaac was offered 2000 years earlier. But this time God did not stop the sacrifice; the real substitute was already, on the altar.

- Jesus Christ is the "Lamb of God" slain from the foundations of the world.
- Now He's come to shed His blood in fulfillment of the covenant.
- This is the covenant He swore by Himself to make, from the beginning.
- As with Abraham, a great darkness fell upon the earth- **Matthew 27:45.**
- Asked to believe that God sent His only Son to sacrifice Himself as a sin offering for us.

Jesus the Resurrection
Next, we are asked to believe that after Jesus was in the grave for three days, God the Father resurrected Him to be the first-born of the covenant children of God, and many would come thereafter through Jesus Christ. We even change our name, are called Christians. Jesus becomes our friend, our covenant partner.

The Heavenly Bride
And seven weeks after the substitutionary sacrifice, (On the Day of Pentecost) the Holy Spirit comes to begin His work of seeking the bride for Christ. He wants to deliver us from our slavery to sin and bring us into the Promised Land of rest in Christ.

- Jesus is the heavenly bridegroom and He seeks us for a bride.
- All the while, Satan is there trying to keep us from entering the covenant.

His words are very familiar to us, "You don't need all that blood business. You are a good person, an outstanding member of your community and a fine church worker. Why your morals are much better than your neighbors. And it's all relative anyway. Surely a loving God wouldn't turn you away.

- These are lies of Satan who disguises himself as an angel of light.
- In actuality, he wants to devour us like a roaring lion and sift us as wheat.

The Holy Spirit brings us to Jesus and says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me. The penalty for sin is death and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. And it's my blood you must accept on your behalf to become a covenant child of God."
John 14:6; Romans 3:23; 6:23; Hebrews 9:22.

The Real Children of Abraham
So we see that Abraham is the spiritual father of all who believe as he believed. Jesus said that the real children of Abraham do the works of Abraham- **John 8:39**. Again, Jesus said that the work of Abraham is that he believed the witness of God to His Son- **John 6:29, Romans 3-4; Galatians 3:6-9.**

The Child of God
We become children of God by faith in Jesus (**Galatians 3:26**); not evidenced by a circumcision of the flesh, but a circumcision of the heart. This happens when Christ puts His Spirit within us- **John 20:22.**

- The Spirit brings with Him spiritual blessings; a Promised Land of rest in God via Jesus.
- It is the Holy Spirit within us who is greater than he (Satan) who is in the world.
- He is our source of strength. He fights our battles for us. Fills us with joy/peace- **Ro. 14:17.**
- John 10:10, is the result of His life manifested in us through the Holy Spirit- **Hebrews 4:1-3.**

Romans 15:13- May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Entering into the Covenant
God desires to count you as righteous, just as He did Abraham. He wants to bless you with all spiritual blessings. For you to partake of His very own divine nature- must say yes to the covenant invitation.

You must agree with God that you are separated from Him by your sins, and there is nothing you can do to earn your way into the covenant. Jesus made that covenant walk for you, just as Abraham did.

When you enter into the covenant, all the promises made to Abraham become rightfully yours.
Philippians 3:3; Romans 2:29; Dt. 10:16; 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; 9:25-26; Galatians 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17.

The covenant of love through the blood of Jesus Christ brings both Jew and Gentile into union with God. We both become one new creature in Christ Jesus- **Galatians 3:28-29; Ephesians 2:14-22.**

The Gospel of the Covenant
According to Genesis 17:1, all nations would be blessed when the Covenant was cut. Abraham walked in his covenant with God as far as he knew.

- God cutting the Covenant with Abraham was in fact God preaching the gospel to him.
- The gospel is the message of the Covenant that he believed and accepted = righteousness.
- He knew if an enemy came against him, the enemy did not have a chance covenant with God.
- He knew that there were things he could do in regards to that Covenant that God would do.
- As long as Abraham believed God, his faith = righteousness, sins covered until Jesus came.

Jesus said, go into all the world and preach the Covenant, the words of the Covenant produces Faith to receive- **Romans 10:17.** When we know it is a Covenant guaranteed by the body, blood, life and throne of Jesus according **Hebrews 7:27.** We have every right to every ounce of it.

- The Holy Spirit was sent here on behalf of the New Covenant, Dispensation of Grace.
- A covenant can't pass away or be annulled unless we replace it with a better one.
- Jesus is the guarantee of a better covenant- **Hebrews 7:12; 18-19, 22; 8:6-8**
- I have responsibilities as it pertains to this Covenant, walk in love.
- But that's not enough, we also have to believe and act on the words of the covenant.

The rich young ruler, who kept all the law from birth and was rich because of it. Yet he did not recognize Jesus, when He offered him a high office, but turned it down. He did not know the Covenant he had with God, only the law of the Covenant- he missed the forest for the trees- **Mark 10:17-22.**

The Law of the New Covenant- Love: John 13:34-35; 15:12-13
When we are born again, we are made a new creation (**2 Corinthians 5:17**) and the Love of God becomes our new spiritual nature- **Romans 5:5.** God is love and we are born of God with His love nature- **1 John 4:8, 16**. When we walk in love we fulfill the law- **Romans 13:8-10.**

- So how do we live out this new kind of supernatural love that is not of this earth?
- It is by grace through faith we are saved according to **Ephesians 2:8.**

The Christian life must be lived out by God's grace(God's power in the Word) through our faith in God's Word (released when we speak the Word).

- Otherwise, trying to walk in love by our own strength and in our own way is religion.
- According to the Bible, a works based religion is a curse- **Gal. 3:10-12**

Christians do it all the time, take communion and perform religious works but have no idea that the NT is a Covenant that we have with God. He will always honor His Word; appropriated individually.

> "There is a people on the earth who are not moved by what they see and decided that what God says is so. I challenge my body, my bank account, the devil, everything on earth- spirit, soul and body and fear itself. I believe the Word of God, for I am born again, baptized with the Holy Spirit and I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me! All that He promised me in the Covenant is mine through Jesus and I am going to go out and do it."

- When Adam fell the curse came on the earth, Satan is the bringer of the curse- **John 10:10.**
- Satan is the curse, manifested, punishment afflicted, the result of breaking God's Covenant.
- Man was looking for a way out from the curse, God came to Abraham for that very purpose.
- The Covenant provides protection, healing prosperity, long life and posterity- **1 Cor. 1:30.**
- God came to Abraham as Jehovah Jireh, "Jehovah will see to it" needs are met- **Gen 22:14.**

As long as we walk under the New Covenant with God, we are under that umbrella of protection, and can walk without the affect of the curse.

- Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law- **Galatians 3:13.**
- However, all outsiders to the Covenant, the curse is upon them, the devil oppresses them.
- As long as we meet the conditions of the Covenant- faith in Jesus Christ, and walk in love.

Everything that Satan brought upon the earth through Adam's fall Jesus bore, in His Spirit, Soul and Body from Gethsemane to the resurrection. He bore it all, the curse, death and separation from God.

- Jesus absorbed the full force of death, His body was so marred and deformed- **Isaiah 53:1.**
- Every strain of sickness, disease and the affects of sin was laid upon Jesus all at one time.
- Jesus was cursed for us, absorbing all of Satan's work so we can live free- **Romans 5:12-21.**
- The effects of the curse is still out there because of Satan, god of this world- **2 Cor. 4:4.**
- It does not have any authority on us anymore because of Jesus- **Colossians 1:13-14.**
- Name of Jesus, curse has no choice but to bow its knee and say "Jesus is Lord" **Php. 2:9-11.**
- To Abraham and his Seed were the promises made- **Gal. 3:6-9; 16-18; 29; Acts 3:24-26.**

The Great Trap

Had Satan realized the mystery of God concerning the redemption of mankind and Satan's own doom, he would not have crucified the Lord of Glory! **1 Corinthians 2:7-8.**

- Through Moses and the Levitical Priesthood God rejuvenated the covenant- **Dt. 29:24-28.**
- If anyone breaks this law we will have a priesthood in place to atone for sin.

Instead of killing a man, they killed a lamb as a sacrifice for the man under the Old Covenant. God set a precedence for it as a legal act; the institution of blood sacrifice- the innocent offered on behalf of the guilty. Jesus came as the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.

Jesus came into the earth and walked a perfect and upright life before God, fulfilling all of the law of the Covenant. Satan didn't think He could do it, but He did. Jesus never did break the law of the Covenant at any point during his earthly life- **Hebrews 2:18; 4:15.**

The Covenant is God's Word, Jesus had lived perfectly upon the earth and HAD NO RIGHT TO BE KILLED. Jesus should have lived forever, an eternal man just like Adam should have. Jesus is the last Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45), born of a virgin, He did not have the seed of death in Him. First Adam.

When Jesus came to the earth, Satan had not yet been defeated, he still had the authority that Adam had given him when he tempted Jesus with all the kingdoms of the earth in **Luke 4:5-8.**

- When Satan crucified Jesus, he was subjecting an innocent man illegally to death- **Heb. 2:14.**
- Every other human deserved to die because of sin, but not Jesus, He never sinned.
- Through the resurrection, Jesus triumphed over the enemy; keys of death and hell- spoils.
    - **Revelation 1:18; Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 4:8-10.**

Virgin Birth & The Covenant
No man has ever had anything but death in him. Passed on through man's seed and finds its way into the blood of the developing baby. The woman carries a child without the seed of her blood in the baby.

- Science has proven that the baby's blood comes from the man.
- God wouldn't violate His Word, He gave this earth to mankind, man gave it over to the devil
- God would have to do it legally- bring a Savior into the world as a man to redeem mankind.
- Through Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, He fulfilled the Old Covenant.
- **John 1:29; 10:18; 18:11; Luke 22:42-44; 24:25-27; 44-49.**

God would bring Jesus, born of a virgin to earth legally as a man and in so doing would set a trap for Satan. Jesus appeared to be an easy target for Satan's revenge. Tempt Jesus like Adam, did not work!

The Key to living victoriously under the Covenant of God
Everything Jesus said on the earth, he said as a man, a seed of Abraham. When Jesus was 8 days old He was circumcised. Jesus is a blood partner of the seed of Abraham, He has a blood Covenant with God.

- He and His Father are one, if God wants something done He has Jesus.
- If Jesus needs something He has God the Father.

Jesus walked perfectly & uprightly before God in that Covenant, and everything that was God's was His and everything that was His was God's. When Jesus said rise and take your bed and walk, it was done!

> "Glory to God I am Healed! I can see there are symptoms in my body, I don't deny the sickness; I deny its right to rule in my body. I speak from my position in Christ Jesus and in Christ Jesus I am healed. Do I always talk from the supernatural standpoint, absolutely- I am imitating my heavenly Father and walking as Jesus did as the Scriptures tell me to. The longer I talk that way and talk the Covenant, the more it changes the natural circumstances."

- Get single minded on the Covenant of God. Jesus said lay hands on the sick- shall recover.
- Do I ever wonder if they will recover, that is none of my business, recovery is His business.
- He promised recovery, I didn't; hands are my business and recovery is His.
- My part of the Covenant is to place my hands on a person and His part is to do the healing.

It does not have any more right to stand up in front of me in Jesus Name as it does in front of Jesus when He was standing here on earth in the flesh. We are Jesus in the flesh, as part of the Body of Christ.

- We are not of this world as Jesus is not of this world- **1 Peter 2:11.**
- The world may be sick and broke and miserable, but not us.
- We have a Covenant that makes us rich, having all that we can need.
- Through faith in the Covenant, have everything that we can think of to use for God's Glory.
- Fearlessly let's stand on the provisions of the New Covenant- **2 Chronicles 20:6-9.**
- Boldly declare the provisions of the New Covenant ratified in the Blood of Jesus.

Lesson 6
The Patriarchs – Part 1

B. Abraham

Patriarchs = (head of a father's house)

The founder or ruler of a tribe, family, or clan; the forefathers of the Israelite nation. Specifically, it is used of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the 12 sons of Jacob. Therefore, the patriarchs were the ancestors of the Israelites from Abraham to Joseph.

Hebrews 7:4- Just think how great he(Melchizedek) was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder!

- The name Abraham was given him by God meaning, "Father of a multitude."
- The accounts about Abraham are found in **Genesis 12:1-25:11.**
- He is the ancestor of the Hebrews, Arabs, Edomites, and kindred tribes.

1. The Call of Abram

- Abraham's genealogical background in Scripture- **Genesis 11:26-32; Acts 7:2-4.**
- Descendant in the ninth generation from Shem, the son of Noah.
- Abraham was a native of Chaldea in ancient southern Babylonia.
- His father's name was Terah, and he was born in the land of Ur (present day Iraq).
- Abram was 70 when called to leave his homeland.
- With his father, Terah, his nephew Lot, and his wife Sarah, went to live in Haran.

Notice that God did not tell him specifically where he was going, yet Abram by faith, obeyed and went. For this reason and for many others, Abraham is regarded as a great man of faith.

Suppose God were to speak to you and instructed you to go west, not knowing what was ahead of you until you got there- would you go?

- God give Abraham a wonderful promise- **Genesis 12:1-7; Hebrews 11:8-10.**
- At the age of 75 Abram's father dies and God calls him a second time- with a promise.
- God did not tell him specifically where he was going, yet Abram by faith, obeyed and went.
- Abram arrives in the land of Canaan- **Genesis 12:4-7.**

Arrival in Canaan
He traveled until he came into the land of Canaan, and there he formed his first encampment beside the oak of Moreh, between the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim.

- The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land."
- Abram's manner of life may best be described as being "semi-nomadic."
- Residence is in tents, wealth consists of flocks, herds and slaves.
- No ownership of ground except perhaps a well or tomb- Nomad life.

To Egypt
The first bump in the road in Abram's journey in following God, there was famine in the land of Canaan. So compelled by a famine, he went into Egypt. - **Genesis 12:10-20.**

- Unfortunately Sarai was very beautiful, Abram lies and calls her his sister out of fear.

What Abram said was partly true, for she was his half sister, having the same father but a different mother (**Genesis 20:12**). Sarah was taken to the royal harem.

- Abraham was loaded with valuable gifts which he did not deserve.
- Serious diseases befell pharaoh and his household because of Abram's covenant with God.

Warned of his mistake, Pharaoh summoned Abram and indignantly rebuked him for his deception. He then dismissed Abram, who went out of Egypt, taking his wife and Lot and his great wealth with him.

Genesis 12:20
Then Pharaoh gave orders about Abram to his men, and they sent him on his way, with his wife and everything he had.

Back to Canaan
Abram returns to Canaan since the famine had passed. Having reached his former encampment between Bethel and Ai, he again established the worship of Jehovah- **Genesis 13:3-4.**

- God prospers Abram and Lot, need to separate- Lot takes the plain of Jordan near Sodom.
- In **Genesis 13:14-17** God reiterates His promise to Abram.

The kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fell, their cities were spoiled, and Lot and his goods were carried off in **Genesis 14:1-12.**

- Abram & 318 men, with his Amorite allies overtook & defeated them at Dan - **Gen. 14:13-20.**
    - This all took place around 2080 BC.
- Abram meets Melchizedek after defeating the kings and gave 10% of the plunder- **Gen. 14:18**

By strict right, founded on the war usages still subsisting in Arabia, Abram had a claim to all the recovered goods. The king of Sodom recognized this right, but Abram refused to accept anything, even from a thread to a shoe latchet, lest any should say, "I have made Abram rich"- **Genesis 14:17-24.**

The Promise of an Heir
Ever since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, God was looking for a man in order to enter into covenant with to bring about the "Seed of the Woman" (Jesus) into the earth- undo what Satan had done.

- The Blood Covenant and Promise of God given to Abram- **Genesis 15-19.**
- Abram was looking at the logistics of his situation, both he and Sarai were barren **Gen. 15:1-6**
- God's promise would need a heir, carry on Abram's lineage, cuts covenant- **Gen. 15:7-21.**
- God predicts the 400 years of slavery concerning the Israelites in Egypt- **Gen. 15:13-14.**
- Abram & Sarai have Ishmael through Hagar(Egyptian)- father of Arab nations. **Gen. 16:1-4.**
- Family quarreling was the inevitable result and Hagar fled from Sarai- **Genesis 16:4-12.**

Instead of trusting God's timing they took matters into their own hands. The nation of Israel throughout the centuries has certainly regretted that decision, especially today. Ishmael's descendents, the Arabs, hate their half-brother Jewish nation of Israel. So now we know where all this started from!

2. The Covenant is Confirmed

Thirteen more years passed, and Abram reached his ninety-ninth year. God appeared to him and favored him with still more explicit declarations of His purpose.

- **Genesis 17:9-14-** the covenant is confirmed with the sign of circumcision.
- God changes Abram to Abraham and Sarai to Sarah- **Romans 4:17-22.**

Abraham is a covenant partner with God, his life, prayers and possessions are significant. He prays for Ishmael that he would live under God's blessing and God honors that request and blesses Ishmael.

- The Lord and two angels appear to Abraham, and about Sarah having a child- **Gen. 18:9-15.**
- Sarah laughs about it, but is rebuked by the Lord for lack of faith.
- Abraham intercedes for Sodom since his nephew Lot lives there- **Genesis 18:17-19.**
- A key purpose for marriage according to **Malachi 2:14-16** is to raise up godly children.

The visitors continued on their journey, Abraham walking some of the way with them. Since Abraham was the friend of God, the Lord revealed to him the coming judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

- Abraham reasons with God that if at least 10 righteous men were in the cities- spare them.
- Here we see an important principle, God does not condemn the righteous with the wicked.
- God is looking for intercessors, to stand in the gap for individuals, cities, & nations- **Jas.5:16.**
- God is not willing that any should perish, we are the salt and light of the earth- preserve it.

Genesis 18:23-25
Then Abraham approached him and said: "Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? Far be it from you to do such a thing — to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Ezekiel 22:30-31
"I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none. So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign Lord."

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah occurred around 2063 BC- their sin reached full measure. God's divine judgment upon irrevocable evil was an act of mercy for future generations that would have been born under such evil. Same principle concerning Canaan- **Genesis 15:16.**

- But God remembered Abraham and brought Lot out of the catastrophe- **Genesis 19:27-29.**
- Lot made drunk by his two daughters, commit incest- Moabites & Ammonites nations.

In Genesis chapter 20 Abraham journeyed southward, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar. Here we find the story of Abraham and king Abimelech- **Genesis 20.**

- Abraham and family move into the Negev region, lies to king Abimelech, Sarah is his sister.
- God warns the king in a dream, release Sarah or die.
- Since Abraham is a prophet he prays for the king so he and his household conceive children.

Another example when you are in covenant with God, He takes it personal when people mess with you, even if it was innocent. We are a covenant friend of God like Abraham through Jesus, so our prayers are powerful and effective as well.

Isaac is Born

- The Birth of Isaac is accounted for in Genesis 21 & 22.
- Abraham 100 and Sarah 90 receive the birth of Isaac in 2061 BC.
- No room for two sons, so Ishmael and Hagar are banished by Abraham- **Galatians 4:22-31.**

Yet God was with Hagar and Ishmael just as God had promised Abraham. Since Ishmael was still Abraham's son, he was a benefactor of his father's covenant with God, blessed. **Genesis 21:13; 20-21.**

Abraham's Great Test
In 2036 BC, when Isaac was nearly grown (twenty-five years old, says Josephus Ant. 1.13.2) God put Abraham (125 years old) to an incredible test of faith and obedience- **Genesis 22:1-2.**

- Abraham is required to confirm the covenant and offer Isaac as a sacrifice.
- Imagine what was going through Abraham's mind- **Genesis 22:7-8.**

Abraham had made some mistakes, but it took an incredible amount of faith for him to offer his only son without ever arguing, complaining or doubting God.

- God is clearly against human sacrifice with Jesus having been the only exception.
- Yet Isaac willingly submitted himself to his father to be sacrificed.
- God stops Abraham, the covenant is ratified so God can send Jesus- **Genesis 22:11-14.**
- Abraham calls the place Jehovah Jireh, "The Lord will Provide." **Genesis 22:13-14.**

With the promise firmly rooted in Abraham's mind, he reasoned that God would have to raise Isaac from the dead if he sacrificed him. God had already said that it would be through Isaac that his offspring would be reckoned- what incredible trust and faith! **Hebrews 6:13-19; 11:17-19.**

- Because of Abraham's act of faith and obedience it legally sealed the covenant.
- Now God could do the same and sacrifice His only Son 2,000 years later- **Genesis 22:15-18.**
- One man's obedience was all that was required. So it is with us today, obey God's plan!

The Death of Sarah
The next event recorded in Abraham's life is the death of Sarah, 127 years of age at or near Hebron.

Abraham purchased from Ephron the Hittite the cave of Machpelah, the field in which it stood and all the trees in the field and there he buried Sarah- **Genesis Chapter 23.**

Marriage of Isaac
His next care was to procure a suitable wife for Isaac. He commissioned his eldest servant to go to Haran, where Nahor had settled and get a wife for his son from his own family.

- Servant went and directed by God selected Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor.

When we are in covenant with Almighty God, walking in obedience and appropriating the provisions of the covenant we result in tremendous blessing- **Genesis 24:35; Proverbs 10:22.**

In Genesis chapter 25 we see some time after that Abraham took on another wife, Keturah; by whom he had several more children. Sent them off to the East with an inheritance- not to interfere with Isaac.

- The life of Abraham begins to wind down in **Genesis 23 – 25:7.**
- Altogether he lived 175 years, buried by Isaac and Ishmael around 1986 BC.
- Abraham is the father of our faith; plays a huge role in God's redemptive plan for humanity.
- Abraham's faith in the covenant was and still is key to God's redemptive plan in the earth.
    - **John 8:38-59; Galatians 3:6-18; James 2:21-23- Luke 1:67-75.**

For instance, almost 2,000 years after the death of Abraham, at the birth of John the Baptist, his father referenced the Abrahamic covenant- **Luke 1:67-75.**

Here is an interesting point to make. When the Old Covenant saints died, they could not go to heaven until Jesus came and provided purification from sins. As a result, until Jesus came, they were escorted by angels to the center of the earth in a compartment of hell called Abraham's bosom.

- No torment there, but it was a prison, for they were waiting for the coming Messiah.
    - **Luke 16:19-31; Ephesians 4:8-10; 1 Peter 3:18-20.**

Speaking of Abraham and looking forward to the New Jerusalem in Revelation chapter 21.

Hebrews 11:10
For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

In three great world religions-Judaism, Islam, and Christianity-Abraham is revered as one of the eminent men of all time.- "I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse."

Genesis 12:2-3
"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

- By his own personal example of faith and the faith manifested by his descendants.
- This covenant reality has been remarkably fulfilled even to this day.

Nations who have persecuted the Jews have fared ill, and those who have protected them have prospered. That is another reason why America has prospered so much- we are Israel's ally.

In the Koran
To Mohammed, Abraham is of importance in several ways. He is mentioned in no less than 188 verses of the Koran, more than any other character except Moses. He is one of the series of prophets sent by God. He is the common ancestor of the Arab and the Jew.

- He plays the same role of religious reformer against his idolatrous kinsmen as Mohammed.
- As in the Bible, so it is in the Koran, Abraham is the recipient of the Divine covenant.

He receives marked tokens of the Divine favor in the shape of deliverance, guidance, visions, angelic messengers (no such credit for Mohammed), miracles, assurance of resurrection and entrance into paradise. He is called "Imam of the peoples" (2:118)

Lesson 7
The Patriarchs – Part 2

C. Isaac

I'SAAC (i'zak; Heb. yishaq, "laughter," i.e., "mockery"). The only son of Abraham by Sarah. The name Isaac was fitly chosen by Jehovah in commemoration of the child's miraculous birth in **Genesis 17:19**, and of the obvious laughter and joy as a result.

1. Personal History

Early Life
The birth of Isaac around 2061 BC when Abraham was a 100 years old and Sarah 99- **Genesis 21:5**. He was circumcised when he was 8 days old; his mother's skeptical laughter was turned into exultation/joy.

- Isaac is his weaning, according to Eastern custom when he was two years old- **Genesis 21:8.**
- In honor of the occasion Abraham made a great feast; Ishmael saw no occasion for rejoicing.
- Isaac was Abraham's heir, Ishmael mocked Isaac, angering Sarah, banish him- **Gen. 21:9-14.**

Offering
We are next informed of the event connected with the command of God to offer Isaac up as a sacrifice on a mountain in the land of Moriah according to **Genesis 22.**

- By 2045 BC he was probably about twenty-five years of age according to Josephus.
- Offered no resistance to being offered as a sacrifice- **Genesis 22:7-8.**
- Isaac's conduct proved him to be a fitting type of Jesus who came to do not His own will.

Marriage
- A long gap occurs in the narrative of Isaac's life, until his marriage to Rebekah.
- His marriage took place after his mother's death, when Isaac was thirty-seven years old.
- A bride is chosen from among Abraham's kin by the Spirit's leading.
- Rebekah was chosen and became his wife, when he was 40, about 2021 BC- **Genesis 24.**

Death of Abraham
- Previous to his death Abraham made a final distribution of his property.
- The sons of Hagar & Keturah were sent away with presents into the eastern country of Arabia.
- Leaving to Isaac all his possessions.

Isaac and Ishmael buried their father in the cave of Machpelah and Isaac took up his residence by Beer-lahai-roi- **Genesis 25:5-11.**

Children
- About twenty years later, 2001 BC, and in answer to prayer, Rebekah gave birth to two sons.
- Isaacs covenant prayer was powerful- **Genesis 25:21-22.** Twin boys, Jacob and Esau.

There was something very interesting going on in the womb of Rebekah that would have a profound influence on their lives and reverberate throughout time. There was a prophetic revelation given to her.

- War in the womb- flowing over into their lives – the birth of two nations **Genesis 25:22-23.**
- Genesis chapter 36 talks about Esau's decedents being the Edomites in the hill country of Seir
- When the boys were born Esau emerged first with Jacob clasping his heel- **Gen. 25:24-28.**
- Isaac favored Esau the hunter while Rebekah favored Jacob, dweller of tents.
- Favoritism certainly added to the drama of this seemingly quiet rural family.

Isaac and Abimelech

- Famine was again found in the Land of Canaan, but warned by God not to go to Egypt.
- The Lord appears to Isaac to renew the covenant promise in **Genesis 26:2-6.**
- Like Abraham, he lied about Rebekah as his sister to Abimelech- **Genesis 26:7-11.**
- Land of the Philistines, reaped 100 fold first year- grew very rich- Covenant! **Gen 26:12-16.**
- Obviously the covenant Abraham and Isaac had with God included financial prosperity
- Our covenant with God today has the same provisions, are we tapping into it?

Deuteronomy 8:18
But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

Some misguided and well meaning folks think that being financially poor and broke is a mark of spirituality, and it would be if there was Scripture for it. The Bible calls us the spiritual seed of Abraham in Galatians chapter 3 and heirs according to the promise.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were the wealthiest men of their day because they knew and acted on their covenant with God. For Christians to suffer under the curse of poverty is not right and is not God's will.

- We were redeemed from poverty and God wants His children to prosper and enjoy abundance.
    - **Philippians 4:19; 3 John 2; 1 Timothy 6:17, James 1:17; 2 Peter 1:3-4.**
- That does not mean God wants us to be like the world; greedy, covetous, selfish/materialistic.
- Heavenly Father want to give good things to His children that ask him- **Matthew 7:11.**

2 Corinthians 8:9
For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

- Out of envy the Philistines drove Isaac out of their territory.
- He then reopened the wells that his father had dug and that the Philistines had filled up.
- Digging also several new ones, which they claimed as theirs.
- Finally dug one that he was allowed to keep, called it Rehoboth, broad places- **Gen. 26:12-22.**
- Returned to Beersheba, where the Lord appeared to him and repeated the covenant blessing.

Genesis 26:23-24
From there he went up to Beersheba. That night the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham."

- Abimelech obtained from Isaac a covenant of peace- Genesis 26:24-31.
- Esau 40, Isaac 100, he married daughters of Canaan- caused parents grief- **Gen. 26:34-35.**

After some time Jacob returned and found his father at "Mamre of Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned." Here Isaac died at the age of 180, "and was gathered to his people, and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him" about 1881 BC- **Genesis 35:27-29.**

Types and Shadows
His surrender and submission to the sacrifice on Moriah in **Genesis 22** can be seen as a type of Christ, "obedient to the point of death"- Philippians 2:5-8. Abraham is set forth as a type of the Father who *"did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all"*- **John 3:16; Romans 8:32.**

- A ram was miraculously caught in the thicket, and sacrificed instead of Isaac
- This is a type of substitutionary atonement in our place.
- Jesus offered as a burnt offering in the place of sinners **Hebrews 10:5-10.**

Abraham statement in Genesis 22:5, "*Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you"* speaks of the resurrection- **Hebrews 11:17-19.**

- In Genesis 24, Isaac again appears as a type of Christ as the bridegroom.
- Rebekah being a type of the Church, the ecclesia, the virgin bride of Christ.
    - **Genesis 24:16; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-32.**

Abraham appears as a type of the Father and the unnamed servant, a type of the Holy Spirit who "will not speak on His own initiative" but takes the gifts of the bridegroom to woo the bride- **John 16:13-14.**

D. Jacob

The second born of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah, their conception being supernatural in answer to Isaac's prayer. JA'COB (ja'kob; "heel-catcher, supplanter"

- Jacob was born when his father was sixty years old **Genesis 25:21-26**, about 2001 BC.
- Jacob as a new born baby was grasping his brother's heel would be significant in later life.

1. Personal History

- It is recorded that Jacob grew up to be "a peaceful man, living in tents," quiet home life.
- He was the favorite of his mother, whereas Isaac showed partiality toward Esau.

The first incident mentioned is his purchase of Esau's birthright for the insignificant sum of a pot of stew, thus making use of his brother's hunger to advance his own ambition.- **Genesis 25:29-34**

You may wonder why the birthright is important- the birthright consisted afterward in a double portion of the father's inheritance according to Deuteronomy 21:17; but with the patriarchs it embraced the chieftainship, rule over the brethren and the entire family- **Genesis 27:29.**

Not to mention the title to the blessing of promise (**Genesis 27:4,27-29**), which included the future possession of Canaan and of covenant fellowship with Jehovah- **Genesis 28:4.**

- I wonder if Jacob somehow felt cheated being the second twin emerging from the womb
- It may have been a factor that embolden him to scheme and deceive.

Jacob gets Isaac's Blessing
Isaac, now aged, was about to pronounce his blessing upon Esau, his elder son, but was undermined by the deception practiced upon him by Rebekah and Jacob.

- While Esau is out hunting, Jacob deceives his father and get the blessing- **Genesis 27:28-29**
- Jacob impersonated Esau and lied to his father.
- Thus Jacob received his father's blessing instead of Esau- **Genesis 27:1-29.**
- God knows the heart, chose Jacob over Esau to continue His covenant through Jacob's lineage
- Esau was godless (**Hebrews 12:16-17**), but Jacob esteemed the covenant.
- Jacob deceived his father, later Jacob's sons deceived him about Joseph being dead.
- Not to mention how his uncle Laban also deceived him on more than one occasion.
    - A classic case of reaping and sowing.
- Once Isaac spoke the blessing it was a one-time shot- can't be repeated

Genesis 27:28-29
"May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness - an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed."

Flight from Esau
Rebekah, informed of Esau's intent, advised Jacob to flee to her brother Laban in Haran. Obtaining Isaac's consent, that he wished Jacob to marry one of his kinswomen, and not a daughter of Canaan.

- Esau was planning on killing Jacob, but not until after his father died.
- Jacob flees to Rebekah's brother Laban in Haran- he was 77 years old when he fled.
- Isaac blessed Jacob again and sent him away- **Genesis 27:41-28:5.**

Hebrews 11:20- By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future

Dream at Bethel
On his journey to Laban, he stopped at Luz for the night and was given the vision of the ladder and the ascending and descending angels.

- By many the rendering "staircase" (NIV, "stairway") is preferred- rocky mountainside.
- It was here God confirmed the covenant promise to him- **Genesis 28:10-15.**
- Speaks of the ministry of angels. Type of Jesus being the way to heaven.
- It is He who really bridges the divide between heaven and earth, God and man.

In recognition of the divine dream, Jacob called the place Bethel, which means "House of God" and made a vow dedicating to Jehovah a tenth of all God gave him- **Genesis 28:10-22.**

2. Jacob Serves Laban
Arriving at Haran, Jacob met Rachel, Laban's daughter, by whom Jacob's coming was made known to her father. After a month, Laban inquired what wages Jacob desired for his services.

- Jacob works seven years as a shepherd in order to marry Rachel- so he thought.
- Laban substitutes Leah the older daughter for Rachel- works another seven years for Rachel.

Upon the discovery of the deception, Laban excused himself by saying: "It is not the practice in our place, to marry off the younger before the first-born."

- Leah became the mother of Jacob's firstborn, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah.
- Through Rachel's maid Bilhah, Dan and Naphtali were born.
- Leah's Maid Zilpah produced Gad and Asher.
- Leah bore Issachar and Zebulun and a daughter Dinah.
- Later on Rachel became the mother of a son, whom she called Joseph- **Genesis 29:1-30:24.**
- A number of years later Benjamin was born; shortly thereafter Rachel died- **Genesis 35:16-20**
- After 14 years for two wives, he works six more for wages, in order to gain wealth.

Jacob made a deal with Laban that for his wages, Jacob would take into his possession all the sheep that were speckled or spotted, and every dark-colored lamb.

Genesis 30:32
Let me go through all your flocks today and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb and every spotted or speckled goat. They will be my wages.

- Took fresh-cut branches of poplar, almond and plane trees and made white stripes on them.
- As the sheep mated they looked at these stripes and produced striped and speckled lambs.
- He was strategic, placing the wood stripes with only the best of the sheep- **Gen. 30:38-40.**
- Great faith lesson: *"calling those things that be not"* in **Romans 4:17.**
- Jacob called for what he wanted, spotted sheep and got it.
- I believe God gave him this insight in keeping with the covenant to make Jacob wealthy.

Genesis 30:42-43
So the weak animals went to Laban and the strong ones to Jacob. In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, and maidservants and menservants, and camels and donkeys.

- Apparently Laban changed Jacob's wages 10 times- Genesis 31:7.

When the wage was changed to spotted sheep, the young were born spotted, when the wage was changed to streaked sheep, the young were streaked- God confirmed that with a dream **Gen. 31:10-13.**

- God tells Jacob to return to Canaan in a dream, but Jacob does not tell Laban.

Flees from Laban
Gathering together his family and property, he set out for Canaan, about 1900 BC. On the third day, Laban learned of Jacob's departure and followed after him but was warned by God- don't harm him!

- After much reproach & recrimination peace was restored- Laban returns home- **Gen 31:17-55**

Shortly after the departure of Laban, Jacob met a company of angels and called the place, in honor of them, Mahanaim ("two hosts")- **Genesis 32:1-2.**

News from Esau
Jacob sent messengers to Esau with a friendly greeting. They returned with word that his brother was on the way to meet him with 400 men.

- Jacob lets Esau know of his return, who in turn comes with 400 men to greet him
- Alarmed & distressed, he divided his people with the flocks and herds into two companies.
- He prepared a present for Esau, sending it ahead; hoping to pacify his brother- **Gen. 32:1-23.**

Jacob Wrestles With God
During the night, the Angel of the Lord wrestled with him. During this all night wrestling match with God, through faith his name was changed from Jacob to Israel ("wrestler with God").

- His request, that he might know the name of the person with whom he wrestled- denied!
- Jacob named the place Peniel, "the face of God" in **Genesis 32:24-30.**
    - Genesis 32:30, *"It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."*

Reconciled to Esau
In the morning Jacob saw Esau approaching with his army and sent forward first his women servants, then Leah and her children and last Rachel and Joseph.

- Esau's bitter feelings gave way at the sight of his brother, liberal gifts and earnest entreaties.
- They embraced as brothers and for all we know, maintained friendly relations thereafter.
- Jacob remained for a while on the other side of the Jordan at Succoth.
- He then came to Shechem, camped there and purchasing a plot of ground.
- He "erected an altar, called it El-Elohe-Israel,", "Mighty one, God of Israel" **Genesis 33:20.**
- Here is located "Jacob's well" in **John 4:6.**

Goes to Bethel
Having been brought into collision with the people of Shechem because of the violation of Dinah and the revenge taken by her brothers, Jacob was commanded to go and dwell in Bethel.

- At Bethel God blesses Jacob and confirms the Abrahamic covenant- **Genesis 34:1-35:-15.**
- In **Genesis 35:27-29** Jacob sees Isaac before he dies at age 185, buried by his two sons.
- Jacob himself dies in Egypt but by request is returned in Canaan- **Genesis 49:29-33**

E. Joseph

JOSEPH (jo'zef; "may he," i.e., Jehovah, "add"). The eldest son of Jacob and Rachel, born while his father was still serving Laban in Genesis 30:22-25, about 1910 BC.

- After Joseph's birth and Jacob's flight from Laban, no mention of him until he is 17 years old.

Trouble back on the Ranch
As the child of Rachel, "son of his old age" and doubtless also for his excellence of character, his father loved him more than all his brothers- **Genesis 37:2-4.**

This, together with the fact that he reported to his father the evil conduct of the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, caused his brothers to hate him- **Genesis 35:22.**

- Their jealousy was aggravated, Jacob showing his preference in presenting Joseph with a coat.
- Probably a long tunic with sleeves, worn by youths of the richer class.
- So we have a tattle telling little half-brother who was favored by their father above them.

The Dream
To make matters worse, God gives Joseph prophetic dreams about his future and being an impetuous teenager, he does not use discretion, but eagerly shares them with everyone.

I have always been curious to see how different Joseph's life could have turned out if his father had not favored him so, and if he had kept the secret things of God secret- **Genesis 37:5-11; Matthew 7:6.**

- I still believe God would have fulfilled His purpose in saving the house of Jacob from famine.
- When people say, "Everything happens for a reason"; fatalistic, ignores free-will, sow/reap.
- God would honor His covenant no matter what circumstances would have happened.
- If He had to, God could have given them manna as He did the children of Israel in the desert.

One thing the story of Joseph tells me is that even when we blow it and make mistakes God can work the good out of any bad situation- to say that God caused Joseph's misfortunes would be a mistake.

- Often God is just cleaning up after our mistakes in His mercy- **Romans 8:28-29.**
- As in the case of Joseph, we will see that evil men can't keep a covenant friend of God down.

1. Sold as a Slave

- Jacob sent Joseph from Hebron to Shechem to inquire concerning the welfare of his sons.
- They were not at Shechem, but were found by Joseph in Dothan.
- His appearance aroused their hatred, wanted to kill him, except for Reuben.
- Reuben convinced them to throw him into a pit, and later rescue him to his father.
- This they did with much enthusiasm, after stripping him of his tunic.

While they were eating, a company of Arabian merchants (Ishmaelites) appeared, and at the suggestion of Judah and in the absence of Reuben, Joseph was sold to them for twenty shekels of silver.

- Dipping Joseph's tunic in the blood of a goat, they sent it to Jacob- killed by a wild animal.
- Their trick succeeded and Joseph was mourned as dead.
- The merchants sold Joseph to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh.
- Joseph became an Egyptian slave in **Genesis 37:12-36**, about 1897 BC.

What a terrible tragedy! The consequences of jealousy and envy will plague humanity for centuries. **Matthew 27:18; Acts 7:9; 17:5; Proverbs 14:30.**

- We see again how God gives favor, wisdom and success to those in covenant with Him.

Joseph behaved himself so discreetly in the service of Potiphar, and was so led of God, that he found great favor with his master, who gave him the oversight of all his affairs- **Genesis 39:2-6.**

Joseph in Prison
Even before the 10 commandments were given, Joseph understood that adultery was wicked. He refused the seductive invitations of his master's wife, and for his integrity he gets into trouble- **Genesis 39:6-20.**

- Even in prison, God made Joseph to prosper and have success in everything he did.
- God was with Joseph, granting him favor in the eyes of the governor of the prison.
- he entrusted all the prisoners to his care, leaving everything to his supervision- **Gen. 39:20-23**
- While in prison Joseph interpreted correctly the dreams of two of his fellow prisoners.
    - Pharaoh's chief cupbearer and baker.
- These interpretations were fulfilled three days afterward, on the king's birthday- **Genesis 40.**
- Unfortunately the cupbearer forgot about Joseph- **Genesis 40:23.**

Exaltation
After two years Pharaoh had two prophetic dreams that the magicians and wise men of Egypt were unable to interpret. The cupbearer, calling to mind the service rendered him by Joseph, advised his royal master to put his skill to the test.

- Joseph was sent for and interpreted the dreams: 7 yrs of plenty followed by 7 yrs of famine.
- He followed up with a recommendation to find a wise man to manage the situation.
- Joseph was appointed ruler over Pharaoh's house and over all the land- 2nd in command.
- This promotion took place when Joseph was thirty years of age in **Genesis 41:1-46**, 1883 BC.
- Joseph set aside 20% of the harvest during the 7 yrs of plenty- **Gen. 41:53-57; 47:14-26.**
- During these years his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim were born in **Genesis 41:47-52.**
- When scarcity began, Joseph was in a position to supply the needs of Egypt & nations.

He put all Egypt under Pharaoh-first the money, then the cattle, the land (excepting the priests), and eventually the Egyptians themselves became the property of the crown.

2. Joseph and His Brothers

Early in the time of famine the brothers of Joseph, except Benjamin, went to Egypt to buy food.

- They came to Joseph who had control over the food supply- they did not recognize him.
- Joseph knew them, but he acted as a foreigner toward them, spoke harshly to them.
- Inquired whence they had come and accused them of being spies- all this to test them.
- After putting them in prison for three days he sent them home- bring back Benjamin.
- This they did, but Joseph tested them further by placing his goblet in Benjamin's sack.
- When Joseph's brothers were willing to take the blame, he revealed himself to them.
    - **Genesis 44 & 45.**

He charged them to return to Canaan and bring Jacob and their families to Egypt, saying that he would provide for them during the five remaining years of famine.

Joseph welcomes Israel
Israel, convinced that Joseph still lived went to Egypt, on the way there he stopped at Beersheba and offered sacrifices to the God of Isaac- **Genesis 46:2-4.**

Jacob's family upon arriving in Egypt was very small, only 70 in all, yet 400 hundred years later the decedents of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would multiply to a few million- **Genesis 46:26-27.**

- Jacob was tenderly welcomed, provided for and placed in the land of Goshen.
- When he died, embalmed by order of Joseph and carried by him to Canaan- **Gen 45:25; 50:13**

Hebrews 11:21-22
By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

When it came to blessing Joseph's sons, Jacob grants participation and inheritance rights into the covenant of Abraham- **Genesis 48:5-7.**

It is very interesting that Jacob blesses the younger son of Joseph as if he was the first born.
Genesis 48:8-20.

The blessing of God, a powerful declaration of faith that does not return void. As parents, let us also continually declare God's Word over our children, set the spiritual landmarks of success over their lives.

- In Genesis chapter 49, Jacob speaks prophetically about his sons.
- To me, the death of Jacob is an example of how the righteous should die.
- Lived a long life serving God and at the end of his days; spoke by faith prophetically-family.
- Just before he fell asleep, he gave instructions about his burial in Canaan- the Promised Land.
- He simply drew up his feet and breathed his last at the age of 147.
- He was not racked in pain or eaten away by cancer.
- He was not delirious or out of his mind, he simply jumped out of his earth suit into eternity.

Genesis 49:33
When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

- Joseph himself, a man of faith spoke of the exodus of the Israelites- **Hebrews 11:22.**

Remaining History
Upon their return from Canaan Joseph found his brothers in fear, with their father being dead, he would punish them at last. He assured them that this was not his intent.

- Joseph lived to be 110, before death, made his brothers promise to carry his bones to Canaan.
- At his death, embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt in **Genesis 50:14-26**, about 1800 BC.

The promise was religiously kept, for "Moses took the bones of Joseph with him" in **Exodus 13:19**, and they were at length put in their final resting place at Shechem according to **Joshua 24:32.**

It is important to point out that the Old Covenant Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were men of faith who took God at His word without even seeing the promised Messiah. Jesus would not come to the earth until two thousand years later- **Hebrews 11:9-10.**

What **Heb. 11:9-10** is talking about, "the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God" is referring to the New Jerusalem that comes out of heaven according to the book of Revelations- **Rev 3:12**

Revelation 21:1-3
Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

I love Stephen's defense as he stands before the Sanhedrin on false accusations. As was Jewish custom, he articulates masterfully the Jewish origins, serves as a great review for our purposes- **Acts 7:1-17.**

Lesson 8
The Birth of a Nation

III. The Birth of a Nation

God made an incredible statement in regards to His purpose for Israel, their destiny as a nation for generations to come- **Exodus 19:3-6.**

- Hebrew language, 'treasured possession' means a rare jewel, peculiar and special!
- The nation of Israel were to be unique above all other nations- God's ambassadors.
- A kingdom of priests infers the unique role as mediators/intercessors; stewards covenant.

When God spoke of this covenant with Abraham, his descendents were meant to be a blessing to all nations by preaching the gospel message of their time throughout the world; to be a salt and a light as the Church of Jesus Christ is destined for in this dispensation.

- God is about reconciling every person from all nations; not His will for anyone to go to hell.
- This fits right in line with the Promise of Jesus coming in the Garden of Eden- **Genesis 3:15.**
- Israel ended up acting like the other nations and indulged in idolatry = exile in Babylon.
- Later on they went to the other extreme; shunned the Gentiles and their idolatry.
- Sects like the Pharisees and teachers of the law became very zealous for God.
- Israel will be given another opportunity during the Tribulation Period- **Ro. 11:25-26; Rev. 7:4**

In both cases they missed God's purpose for themselves and God ended up raising the Church to take the Good News to all nations- **Luke 20:9-19.**

A. Moses

1. Background

E'GYPT (e'jipt). The ancient Egyptians knew their native country by the term Kemet (the "black land"), from its dark-colored Nile mud in contrast with the golden sands of the desert.

- Egypt is also called in the Bible "the land of Ham" in **Psalms 105:23,27; 78:51.**
- "Ham" in Hebrew denotes sun-burnt, as a characteristic of African tribes.

Territory and Divisions

In ancient times Egypt consisted mainly of (1) the narrow strip of land watered by the Nile, extending from Memphis or Cairo as far as the First Cataract and (2) the so-called Delta, the pie-shaped area between the Mediterranean Sea and Cairo- 125 miles N and S and 115 miles E and W.

- Upper Egypt, denoting the long, narrow fertile valley; Lower Egypt, constituting the Delta.
- 725 miles long from the Mediterranean to the First Cataract and only 30 miles wide.
- Amazingly, its cultivated area did not exceed 10 miles. It was all about the Nile river.
- Irrigation was indispensable and agriculture was the foundation of its economy.
- Geographically isolated, bounded on either side by untraversable deserts and mountains.
- A prominent factor in its long and splendid history and brilliant civilization.

History
Manetho, a priest of Sybennytos, in 290 BC, wrote a history of Egypt in Greek. He divided the history of united Egypt into thirty royal dynasties; the first of his dynasties around 2900 BC.

Religion
The Egyptian religion was an utterly bewildering polytheistic conglomeration in which many deities of the earliest periods, when each town had its own deity.

- Every object beheld, phenomenon of nature, to possess a spirit- chooses its own form.
- Holy Animals- the bull, the cow, the cat, the baboon, the jackal, and the crocodile.
- Some of the deities were composite, with human bodies and animal heads.
- Great pains were taken to insure the welfare of the deceased in the hereafter- pyramids.
- Immortality of the soul and future rewards and punishments at the judgment were taught.
- The Israelites fell into their idolatries in Egypt **Joshua 24:14; Ezekiel 20:7-8.**
- Readiness to worship the golden calf, resembling the Egyptian ox-idol, Apis (Exodus 32).

Romans 1:21-23
For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

2. Israel in Egypt

The closing verses of Genesis leave the Israelites enjoying the favor and bounties of Egypt. The opening chapter of Exodus reveals a very different situation. Period: Approximately 1525 B.C. to 1400 B.C.

Jacob's family had settled in Egypt at a time when the land was governed by the friendly Hyksos or "Shepherd" Kings (2100-1580 B.C.). Like the Hebrews, they were of Semitic origin, from the east.

- About 1580 B.C., the native Egyptians expelled the "foreign" Hyksos legacy.
- In place, they put a new king of Hamite origins, who did not know Joseph- **Exodus 1:8.**
- He became alarmed at the increase in Semitic population within his territory.

How could he manage them in case an Eastern army should invade Egypt and secure these Hebrews as their allies? **Exodus 1:6-14**

- As a result, the Hebrews were reduced to servant hood- taskmasters and slave labor.
- There were economic benefits too, free labor to build impressive monuments.
- Bricks were the common material of building- using chopped straw for strength.
- The severity of the toil was steadily increased.
- The midwives were ordered to destroy all the male children- **Exodus 1:15-17, 22.**

Moses, The Deliverer
According to Stephen's speech recorded in the seventh chapter of Acts, the life of Moses was divided into three periods of 40 years each:

l- 40 years in Egypt as the son of Pharaoh's daughter, **Exodus 2:1-15; Acts 7:23.**
2- 40 years in Midian, **Exodus 2:15-4:19; Acts 7: 30.**
3- 40 years from Egypt to the crossing of the Jordan, **Exodus 4:20; Deuteronomy 34; Acts 7:36.**

Birth and Preparation (Exodus 2:1-15)
Moses was the son of Amram and Jochebed, both of the tribe of Levi, who had two older children, Aaron and Miriam. At the time of Moses' birth in about 1525 B.C.

The Egyptians were attempting to destroy all Hebrew male children as soon as they were born. Jochebed concealed her infant son in the home for three months.

When this was no longer possible she placed him in a waterproof reed basket in the Nile river. His sister, Miriam, was standing watch when the daughter of Pharaoh came and discovered the infant.

The baby cried and the princess "had compassion on him." She accepted Miriam's quick-witted offer to secure a Hebrew nurse for the child, and Miriam ran for Jochebed.

So he was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, who called him Moses, she said, "I drew him out of the water." Acts 7:22 states, *"Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action."*

- He also grew in the spiritual knowledge of Jehovah under the apt tutelage of his own mother.

When Moses "was grown," he began to realize the gulf between court life in Egypt and the slavery of his Hebrew kinsmen. He began now to live for the deliverance of his people from servitude.
Hebrews 11:24-27.

One day, observing his people struggling with their burdens, Moses struck and killed an Egyptian who was brutally mistreating a Hebrew, and hid the body in the sand- the Hebrew people rejected him!

Exile in Midian (Exodus 2: 15-4: 31)

- Moses now fled to the land of Midian, east of the Red Sea.
- He rescued 7 daughters of the priest Jethro from Bedouin shepherds.
- Moses found refuge in the home of Jethro and became shepherd of the flocks.
- Here he became shepherd of the flocks, and later married one of Jethro's daughters, Zipporah.
- The Midianite country was located near Sinai, where Moses was to spend 40 years in exile.
- He could study the customs of the Bedouin tribes with which he would have to deal with later.
- Moses now received the training he needed for the great task for the last 40 years of his life.
- At age 80, the Lord appeared to Moses at Horeb, in a burning bush- **Exodus 3:7-10.**

God renewed the covenant He had made with Abraham, giving to Moses the commission which once had been given to the patriarchs- **Exodus 3:13-15.**

- Moses objected that the people would not believe him and that he was not eloquent in speech.
- The Lord promised him his brother, Aaron, three years older, as a spokesman.
- Instructed to take his rod as a symbol of God's power- miracles and a mighty deliverance.
- God predicts Pharaoh will harden his heart against God and will not let the Hebrew people go.
- Through a mighty display of signs and wonders, the gods of Egypt are judged.

Yet God's people were not going to leave Egypt empty handed- let's say over 400 years of back wages, payback time- **Exodus 3:18-22.**

- At Mt. Sinai he met Aaron, who had been commanded to meet him in the Wilderness.
- Together they made the journey to Egypt, summoned the elders, announced deliverance/

B. The Exodus

Moses and Aaron made the request that Pharaoh allow the Hebrew people to make a three days' journey into the wilderness in order to sacrifice to the Lord their God. The whole exodus - **Exodus 5:1-15:21.**

First Attempt Failed: Exodus 5:6-9
Pharaoh increased the amount of work required of the Israelites- now they had to find their own straw, but still meet the same quota of bricks.

- God appeared to him and once more renewed the covenant- **Exodus 6:1-6.**
- The Israelites did not listen to Moses because of their discouragement & cruel bondage.
- The Lord sets to stage for a miraculous show of deliverance- **Exodus 7:1-7.**

God was not unfair as it pertains to the hardness of Pharaoh's heart; it was a choice that he made and God allowed it. God used him and the stubbornness of his heart to display His Glory- **Acts 17:26.**

Second Attempt Failed: **Exodus 7:8-13**
A second time Moses made the same request, and when Aaron cast down his rod it became a serpent. The magicians imitated this miracle, but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods.

1. The Plagues

The plagues inflicted upon the rebellious Egyptians represented more than a contest between Moses and Pharaoh, or even a contest between a nation in slavery and its oppressors.

- The outcome was to be a victorious conquest by Jehovah over Egypt's pagan gods
- Israel in bondage was Satan's futile attempt to nullify the Covenant spoken to Abraham.
- Very nature of the plagues were obnoxious to the Egyptians who worshiped idols and animals.
    - Who prided themselves in being ceremonially clean.
- Many of the plagues involved pests which were known in Egypt.
- But their progressive order and increasing intensity served God's great purpose.

The first nine plagues may be grouped into three series, with three plagues included in each series.

1st Series	**2nd Series**	**3rd Series**
1) Blood **Exodus 7:14-25**	4) Flies, **Exodus 8:20-32**	7) Hail, **Exodus 9:13-35**
2) Frogs, **Exodus 8:1-15**	5) Livestock, **Exodus 9:1-7**	8) Locusts, **Exodus 10:1-20**
3) Lice, **Exodus 8:16-19**	6) Boils, **Exodus 9:8-12**	9) Darkness, **Exodus 10:21-27**

- In the first series, Aaron's rod was used.
- In the second, no rod at all.
- In the third series, Moses' rod.

In the first two plagues the magicians of Egypt were able to reproduce the plagues, except the third! They acknowledged the plague of lice to be the "finger of God."After the third plague, Egyptians alone were afflicted. Israel's protection was announced each time except before the boils and locusts.

Note: When things got bad with this plague, Pharaoh was quick to repent and gave God lip service. However, once the plague stopped he changed his mind. **Revelation 9:20-21; 16:21**

1) **Blood- Exodus 7:14-25**

What is amazing about this miracle is that water within wooden buckets and stone jars immediately turned to blood- all water in Egypt literally turned into blood, not muddy water.

- The first miracle was announced to Pharaoh "in the morning" beside the river.
- Of course Pharaoh's heart became hardened when his magicians could do the same thing.
- If Jesus turned water into wine, (**John 2:9; 4:46**), water into blood is not hard for God.

2) **Frogs- Exodus 8:1-15**

Through Aaron, God caused a multitude of frogs to come from the Nile and cover the earth, and the magicians were able to reproduce it as well- Satan has power but it has its limits.

- The second was declared to him in his royal palace.
- Moses declared when the plague stopped the next day, it was not coincidence, but the Lord.
- Pharaoh hardened his own heart and denied the Hebrews leave to go.

3) **Lice- Exodus 8:16-19**

It is not easy to identify the exact pests involved in the third and fourth plagues. Various translations have lice (KJV, NKJV), gnats (NASB, RSV, NIV), maggots (NEB), and sand flies and fleas (RSV).

- The third smote the Egyptians without any warning at all.

4) **Flies- Exodus 8:20-32**

Up to this point the Hebrews in the land of Goshen were affected by the first three plagues, but not this time- God made a distinction between the Egyptians and Hebrews.

- When God removed the plague, it was stated that, "not a fly remained."

5) **Livestock Died- Exodus 9:1-7**

God allowed a terrible plague to befall all the livestock in the field, but none of the livestock of the Israelites were affected.

Exodus 9:4
But the Lord will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and that of Egypt, so that no animal belonging to the Israelites will die.

6) **Boils- Exodus 9:8-12**

The next plague was festering boils upon all people and animals as well. Again another supernatural judgment upon the Egyptians.

- The magicians could not stand before Moses since they were covered with boils.
- Sad that Pharaoh's stubbornness resulted in such pain, suffering and loss for his people.

7) **Hail- Exodus 9:13-35**

God begins to turn up the heat on Pharaoh and lets him know, it is only by His mercy that He has allowed his nation to survive- remember Sodom and Gomorrah- **Genesis 19:24.**

- So God gives them a warning to take shelter; sad that some still defiantly resist.
- No devastating hail falls upon the land of Goshen where the Hebrews were.
- Wicked men in the past will be the same as in the future- **Revelation 9:20-21; 16:21.**

8) Locust- Exodus 10:1-20

So whatever was left green in Egypt was about to be devoured by swarms of Locusts(grasshoppers).

- This severely affected their food supply- had to be devastating economically for them.

9) Darkness- Exodus 10:1-20

Total darkness covered all of Egypt for three days- a darkness that could be felt. It was so intense that no one could see anyone else or leave his place. Judgment of the wicked- **2 Peter 2:17; Jude 13.**

- Consider the future Anti-Christ's kingdom plunged into darkness- **Revelation 16:10.**

Egypt is often used in the Scriptures as a metaphor, speaking figuratively of the "world system" under Satan's control.

- Pharaoh threatens Moses with a death sentence upon seeing Pharaoh's face again.
- This time a righteous indignation comes upon Moses and he pronounces the last plague.

Back-Wages

I love God's style, he instructs Moses to tell the Israelites to ask their neighbors for articles of silver and gold- back pay for over 400 years. God gave the people of Israel favor with the Egyptians, so they ended up plundering Egypt- **Exodus 11:2; 12:35-36.**

Moses was highly respected and regarded by Pharaoh's officials and the people of Egypt- **Exodus 11:3.**

10) The Last Plague, Firstborn- Exodus 11:1-12:42

This last plague will become the proverbial last straw that broke the camel's back. Considering the nation of Egypt was in a shamble, absolutely devastated and traumatized, the loss of their first born, a death in every household proves to be too much.

Exodus 12:30

Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.

Lesson 9
The Passover

C. The Passover

(pas'-o-ver) (pecach, from pacach, "to pass" or "spring over" or "to spare" Exodus Chapter 12 begins with the creation of the Jewish calendar. Exodus 12:1-2, "*The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt, 'This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year.'"*

- On the 10th day each family takes one lamb; a year old lamb without spot or blemish.
- They keep the lamb for the next four days so they can become attached to it- is personal.
- Not an adult sheep or goat, the lamb symbolizes innocence, being only a year old.
- At twilight, on the 14th the whole community slaughters their lambs.
- Take some of the blood and apply it to the sides and tops of the door frame.
- Roast the lamb whole over the fire and eat it with bitter herbs and bread without yeast.
- They are to eat it in haste for it's the Lord's Passover.

1 Peter 1:19- but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

- You can imagine that the land of Goshen smelled like one great big lamb cookout.
- The smoke ascended up into the heavens, it reached the very nostrils of God.
- Now the covenant meal was being consumed to celebrate the communion of that covenant.

It was the evidence to God that the blood, representing the covenant relationship with Abraham's descendants, had been applied.

Did you notice that God required a perfect lamb without defect or blemish to be chosen for the sacrifice.

- The life of a lamb in substitution for the lives of those living in the house.
- Sin has a price, death (**Romans 3:23**), for justice to be satisfied someone has to die.
- However, justice will only accept an innocent sacrifice to take the place of a guilty person.
- A condemned man cannot pay the crimes committed by another condemned man- pay his own
- God used the innocent lamb as a type of Jesus being the perfect, sinless sacrifice for mankind.
    - **1 Peter 1:18-21; Revelation 5:6-14; 7:14, 12:11, 13:8, 17:14; 19:7-9; 22:3-5**

Isaiah 53:7
He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth.

John 1:29
The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

- We know who the gods of Egypt were, they were demons- **1 Corinthians 10:18-21.**
- Satan and his hosts are so conceited and full of pride that they long to be worshiped.

Although the family was inside the house and couldn't see the blood covering, they had faith that God would save them because of it.

- As they ate their meal, God allowed the angel of death to sweep through the land.
- As he passed from door to door, he sought to enter every household.
- If the entrance was covered by blood the angel of death could not get in- pass over that house.
- It was by faith the blood was applied; a seal protecting the people inside.
- Where the blood was not applied, judgment occurred and the firstborn died.

In **Revelation 9:11**, a name for Satan is defined as "Destroyer." We know he had the power of death in **Hebrews 2:14** until Jesus took it from him- **Revelation 1:18**. In **Job 1:11-12**, the Satan goads God to "stretch our your hand and strike" yet it is Satan who actually does the job, God just allowed it.

Job 1:11-12
"But stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face." The Lord said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger." Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

When the tenth plague judgment struck Egypt, it was the destroyer (Satan) who executed the death sentence of those not protected by the blood.

Exodus 12:23- When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and <u>he will not permit the destroyer</u> to enter your houses and strike you down.

Hebrews 11:28 AMP
By faith (simple trust and confidence in God) he instituted and carried out the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood [on the doorposts], so that the destroyer of the firstborn (the angel) might not touch those [of the children of Israel]. [Exodus 12:21-30.]

Even as the Israelites were travelling through the desert and disobeyed God, they opened the door for Satan to attack them- **Ephesians 4:26-27.**

1 Corinthians 10:10
And do not grumble, as some of them did — and were killed by the <u>destroying angel</u>.

The blood of the lamb was applied by dipping a bunch of hyssop in the blood and striking the two side posts and the upper post or lintel of the door.

In the Mosaic ritual the bunch of hyssop was tied with a scarlet thread (Numbers 19:6). In the account of the crucifixion (John 19:28-29) it is recorded, "they put a sponge full of sour wine upon a bunch of hyssop, and brought it to His mouth." A long, straight stalk, downy leaf, and white blossom.

- The blood was to be sprinkled on the threshold so that the feet would trample on it.
    - **Exodus 12:22-23.**
- It typified the blood of Jesus sprinkled for believers; ransom paid, deliverance wrought.

Colossians 1:13-14 AMP
[The Father] has delivered and drawn us to Himself out of the control and the dominion of darkness and has transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, In Whom we have our redemption <u>through His blood</u>, [which means] the forgiveness of our sins.

Why bread without yeast- yeast as you know is the substance that causes bread to rise through a fermentation process. The Bible refers to "yeast" as a type of sin- **1 Corinthians 5:6-8.**

- Bitter herbs were to be used with the meal- chicory, wild lettuce and horehound.
- They were to remind Israel of their bitter slavery in Egypt from which God delivered them.
    - **Ephesians 2:1-5; John 8:34-36.**

This final plague, the tenth plague was the most severe, yet Pharaoh brought it upon himself and his nation. It is a solemn warning for those who wave their fist at God and defy Him- **Exodus 12:12-30.**

1. A Lamb Defeats a Serpent

This was the Lord's Passover, and we see that He used the blood of the lamb as the means for bringing His people out of bondage to Egypt.

- Now the symbol of Egypt was the serpent (Satan)- **Genesis 3:15; Revelation 12:9.**
- Egypt is a type of the "World System" that Satan dominates- **2 Corinthians 4:4.**
- He will also use the blood of the Lamb (Jesus) to destroy Satan's power and set us free.
- The new birth represents our spiritual Exodus out of the kingdom of darkness- **Ro. 6:15-23.**

God made the Passover or the "Feast of Unleavened Bread" an ordinance for Israel to follow each year until its fulfillment in Jesus Christ at the Last Supper- **Luke 22:1; Mark 14:12.**

- At the Last Supper Jesus officially ended the ancient this ordinance and instituted a new one.
- This new ordinance of the Church under the New Covenant called Communion.

A House Cleaning
Now before the Passover celebration could begin, all the leaven was to be removed from the Hebrew's house. The leaven represented their old life of bondage in Egypt.

- They couldn't have leaven in the house while at the same time commune with God.
- Taking a lighted candle, search every nook/cranny of the house looking for any hidden leaven.
- If he found any, he would immediately remove it from the house.

The Cup
Now when God renewed His covenant with Abraham, He made Abraham three promises.
Genesis 12:1-3; 13:15-16; 15:18; 17:1-8.

1) He would have so many descendants, like the stars in the sky and the sands upon the sea shore.
2) His descendants would possess the land God had given to Abraham.
3) One would come as a descendant of Abraham who would be a blessing to the whole world.

Now after the Hebrews possessed their promised land and became a great nation, they began to look for the fulfillment of this third promise; they began to look for the "coming one." What better way could they anticipate his coming than by setting aside a place for him (Jesus) at the Passover meal.

- They placed a cup at the end of the table.
- It was called "the cup" or "the cup of blessing" in **1 Corinthians 10:16.**
- No one could drink from "the cup" because it was reserved for the "coming one."
- Tradition- when He came, would drink of "the cup" and cut a new covenant with His people.
- So they left a place looking forward to this time, the coming of the Messiah.

Imagine the impact upon the disciples when Jesus took that cup, drank from it and shared it with them in the Lord's Supper!

- They also set aside a cup for Elijah- **Matthew 11:11-15; 17:10-13.**
- Believed that Elijah would come and announce the coming of the king- **Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6.**
- He would prepare the people to receive the "coming one."
- Then they recite the following prayer:

"How long, O Lord, how long wilt thy anger not be turned away from thy people Israel and wilt thou have mercy and restore us again to thy favor? Behold our sufferings: we are scattered among the heathen and they mock us saying: where is thy God, and where is the promise of His coming? We grow faint, yet we hope."

So sad, Jesus, their Messiah had already come and they missed Him because He did not come and do as they expected- **Luke 12:54-56; 13:34-35; 19:41-44.**

The Bread
Instead of putting unleavened bread on the plate, they began to put it in a small bag embroidered with gold thread. This bag had three compartments.

- 3 pieces of unleavened bread, matza, were placed in the bag, one piece in each compartment.
- During the meal, the host would take out the middle piece of matza, break it- pass it around.
- Each member would then break off a piece and eat it.

The Hebrew believed that these three pieces of bread represented their forefathers; Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They broke the middle piece to symbolize Isaac being offered as a sacrifice.

- But they didn't quite understand this Interpretation because Isaac was not really sacrificed.
- Even today, they can't satisfactorily explain it.
- The middle piece is called the "afikomen," which means the "Coming one."

The Temple Passover
Later when the Temple was built, instead of killing the lambs at the doorpost, the people would bring the lambs to Jerusalem and kill them at the Temple.

- The Passover celebration was a time of great joy, praise and adoration in worship to God.
- As they sacrificed at the Temple, the Levites would lead the people in singing the Psalms.
- They specifically sang **Psalm 113-118**. They begin by all singing the first line of each Psalm.
- Then the Levites would sing the second line of each Psalm- people say Hallelujah.

The singing was accompanied with musical instruments of trumpets, harps, flutes, tambourines, the cymbals, and other instruments. It reached its peak as the entire nation sang **Psalms 118:24.**

One Passover, during the reign of King Hezekiah, was such a wonderful festival of praise, that they continued it for seven more days according to **Chronicles 30:23-24.**

- It was like bringing God back for an encore.
- King Josiah, personally contributed 30,000 animals for sacrifice in **2 Chronicles 35:7.**
- So Passover was a time of great joy and celebration.

Temple Lambs
In time, it became more difficult for the people in the outlying areas to bring their sacrifice to Jerusalem. So the Levites began raising lambs for the Passover sacrifice in Jerusalem & selling them at the Temple.

- Then when the Hebrew came to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, he could buy a lamb.
- It was already set aside, inspected and met the ceremonial qualifications for perfection.

Arriving for Passover
Put yourself in this scene and come along with me now to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. It's always exciting to go to Jerusalem- this is the city of your God.

- The majesty of the Temple dominates the city; everyone crowding into the temple area.
- In the midst of all the confusion, you manage to purchase yourself a lamb.
- You overheard someone say there are about 250,000 Passover lambs this year.
- Josephus, a first-century Jewish historian reported there were 256,500 lambs one year.
- The sounds of hundreds of thousands of lambs waiting to be sacrificed fill the city.
- There is an excitement in the air as people anticipate the festival of praise.
- It's not much time now until 3 o'clock when the lambs are to be slaughtered.
- The very time Jesus said "It is finished" on the cross and gave up His spirit- **John 19:30.**

The Jerusalem Slaughter House
The Levites are lined up in two long rows stretching from the Altar way out to the people. Each Levite has a basin in his hand to catch the blood. Just as the threshold caught the blood back in Egypt.

- Basin is pointed at the bottom, keep the Levite from setting it down- so blood not congealed.
- Finally the time everyone has been waiting for arrives- it is 3 o'clock pm.
- All you can see is the flashing of knives as the bloody animals are being slaughtered.
- When you cut the throat of your own lamb, the warm blood flows through your fingers.
- Though it's not your pet lamb from home, you can still identify with the animal.
- The Levite standing before you catches the blood in the basin.
- Quickly he passes it up the line to the Levite nearest the Altar.
- Very methodically, he takes the basin and throws the blood against the altar.
- He passes the empty basin back down the line of Levites to catch the blood of another lamb.

And so you rejoice and sing the great Psalms of praise to God as you prepare for your Passover meal.

2. Jesus Partook of Passover

Let's look at how Jesus partook of the Passover under the Old Covenant on that night when Jesus and His disciples met together to eat the Passover- **Matthew 26:19; Mark 14:16; Luke 22:13.**

- How Jesus' time partook of Passover was quite different than originally prescribed- **Ex. 12.**
- The multitudes that came up to Jerusalem met as they could find accommodation.
- Either, family by family, in groups of friends, one of them being the "celebrant" of the feast.
- The ceremonies of the feast took place in the following order:

Matthew 26:26-29 NKJV
And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

1) The members of the company that were joined for this purpose met in the evening and reclined on couches, their position being a matter of rule based on standing. **Matthew 26:20; Luke 22:14; and John 13:23, 25.**

   - Celebrant, began by a form of blessing over the cup, of which he and others then drank.
   - The wine was, according to rabbinic traditions, to be mixed with water- best way to use wine.

2) All who were present then washed their hands; this also having a special benediction.

3) The table was then set out with the Passover lamb, unleavened bread, bitter herbs, and the dish known as Charoseth.

   - A sauce made of dates, figs, raisins, and vinegar- commemorate their bondage in Egypt.

4) The celebrant first, and then the others, dipped a portion of the bitter herbs into the Charoseth and ate them.

5) The dishes were then removed, and a cup of wine again brought. Then followed an interval which was allowed theoretically for the questions that might be asked by children or proselytes.

   - Ask about such a strange beginning of a feast.
   - The cup was passed round and drunk at the close of it.

6) The dishes being brought on again, the celebrant repeated the commemorative words which opened what was strictly the Passover supper, and pronounced a solemn thanksgiving, followed by **Psalms 113 and 114.**

7) Then came a second washing of the hands, with a short form of blessing as before, and the celebrant broke one of the two loaves or cakes of unleavened bread, and gave thanks over it.

   - All then took portions of the bread and dipped them, with bitter herbs in the Charoseth-ate.

8) After this they ate the flesh of the Passover lamb, with bread, and, after another blessing, a third cup, known especially as the "cup of blessing" was handed round.

9) This was succeeded by a fourth cup, and the recital of **Psalms 115-118**, followed by a prayer, and this was accordingly known as the cup of the Hallel, or of the Song.

10) There might be, in conclusion, a fifth cup, provided that the "great Hallel" (possibly **Psalms 120-137**) was sung over it.

The narratives of the Gospels show how strongly the disciples were impressed with the words which had given a new meaning to the old familiar acts.

   - The newly introduced ceremonies transferred to the Christian Church and perpetuated in it.

Luke 22:19-20
And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you."

Old things were passing away, and all things becoming new. They had looked on the bread and the wine as memorials of the deliverance from Egypt. They were now told to partake of them "in remembrance" of their Master and Lord.

- The festival had been annual. No rule was given as to the time and frequency of the new feast.
- Only the new command to, "Do this as often as you drink it"- **1 Corinthians 11:25.**
- A more continual recurrence, as a memorial of one whom they would never forget- Jesus!
- The words, *"This is my body,"* gave to the unleavened bread a new character- **John 6:32-58.**
- To see in the bread, a broken body as a witness; closest possible union with their Lord.
- The cup, which was "the New Covenant" in His blood foretold in **Jeremiah 31:31-34.**

The crowning glory was in the promise, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." His blood was shed, as He told them, "for them and for many," for the remission of sins.

What He had been proclaiming throughout His whole ministry, was to seal a New Covenant; foretold through the sprinkling of blood from the time of Moses in **Exodus 24:8; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.**

The New Covenant
Jesus, born of the seed of the woman (Galatians 4:4), born of a virgin. He was referred to as Emmanuel which means "God is with us." They called His name Jesus - **Luke 1:27-31; Matthew 1:23.**

A prophet in the spirit of Elijah, a forerunner, would proceeded Jesus to prepare the people to receive Jesus as the "coming one, Messiah" John the Baptist was that voice crying in the wilderness, *"... Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight"* **Matthew 3:1-6; Luke 1:16-17, 76; 3:3-4.**

Matthew 3:1-2
In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

- In essence, John was saying the King is coming, get ready to receive Him!
- Jesus said that John the Baptist was the one who would announce that the King is Coming.
- **Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6; Mt. 3:2; 17:10-12; 21:12; Mk. 1:2; Lk. 1: 16-17; 7:27.**
- Announced by John as the "Lamb of God" who takes away the sin of the world- **John 1:29.**
- The climax of John's ministry is when Jesus in water baptized by him- **Luke 3:21-22.**

In **Luke 4:1-15**, immediately after the proclamation of Jesus being the Lamb of God, He is led into the wilderness to do battle with the serpent; but He returns in the power of the Spirit- His fame spreads.

Three years later on the 10th day of the month of Passover, which was exactly the same day the pet lambs were set aside back in Egypt, the real "Lamb of God" enters Jerusalem.

- The people take branches of palm trees and go out to meet Him shouting- **John 12:13.**
- Entering Jerusalem on a donkey, was fulfilling a 400 year old prophecy by Zechariah.

Zechariah 9:9
Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

- Yet still the seed of the serpent, certain religious and political leaders, seek to kill Him.
- For five days they observe and test Him, but there's nothing wrong with Him.
- He is spotless and without blemish, because He was born to die as a Passover lamb.

So as Passover begins on the evening of the 14th, Jesus is careful not to be seen around the Temple. He sends two of His disciples, Peter and John, into the city.

- They are to find a certain man who has purchased a lamb and prepared a room for them.
- There, they can safely have their Passover meal together in **Luke 22:1-13.**
- Jesus also knew Judas was going to betray Him and did not what him to know where.
- Jesus, as the head of the group, explains the meaning of the Passover.

No doubt He leads them in singing, "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it."

The New Covenant Meal
At the end of the meal, Jesus makes an unusual move. He picks up the bag with the bread in it and pulls out the middle piece. Then Jesus breaks the middle piece, gives it to His disciples and says in Luke 22:19, *". . . This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."*

- It's not Abraham, Isaac and Jacob after all. It's Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Middle piece didn't look back to Isaac who himself needed a substitute; be sacrificed for him.
- It looked ahead to Jesus, the real "Lamb of God" who was to give Himself.
- Jesus is that broken matza. Then Jesus took "the cup," and gave it to His disciples and said…

Matthew 26:27-28
Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."

Then Jesus said…

Matthew 26:29
"I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom."

With these words Jesus was saying, "Men everywhere long for life. They seek a share in the life of God.

- We drink the wine/juice as a substitute to express our desire for union with God.
- We eat of the bread to express their desire for communion with God.
- All that man reaches out for, Jesus supplies, in Him is life- **John 6:63.**
- Jesus is the "coming one" who came, died and rose again, that mankind is looking for today.
- If we will partake of His life through faith, we will partake of the very life of God- **Acts 4:12.**

1 John 5:11-12
And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

3. The Lamb on the Cross

Then Jesus went out and had a personal confrontation with Satan. At 9 o'clock that morning as the lambs were being prepared for sacrifice, Jesus was nailed to the cross in **Mark 15:25.** The third hour was 9 o'clock in the morning, Jewish time.

Genesis 3:15
And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will <u>crush your head</u>, and <u>you will strike his heel</u>.

There He bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The Lord laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted.

- See **Isaiah 53; Psalms 22:14-17** for prophecies on the crucifixion.
- Yet He opened not His mouth, like a lamb led to the slaughter.
- His strength was poured out like water.
- His bones were out of joint and His heart melted like wax.
- His strength dried up like sun-baked clay. His tongue stuck to His mouth.
- His bones protruded out of His body. He was sheared like a lamb at the slaughter house.
- His heel was bruised, by pushing himself up by His heel to get more air into His lungs.

Then at 3 o'clock in the afternoon as the people are singing praises to God that echo throughout the hills of Jerusalem, the lambs are slaughtered. At the same moment, as the shouts of "Hallelujah" and "Praise ye the Lord" ring out on the hill called Calvary, Jesus died.

John 19:28-30
Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished ." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

- Like the doorpost back in Egypt, the blood of the lamb covered the cross.
- To perfectly fulfill the Old Covenant not one bone of the "Lamb of God" was broken.
    - **Exodus l2:46; Psalms 34:20; John 19:36.**
- The entire lamb was consumed being roasted by the judgment fires of God- sin substitute.
- Lamentations 1:13, spoke of God sending fire into His bones, consume the entire sacrifice.

The Jews, not knowing they were further fulfilling prophecy, hurriedly look the body down before 6 o'clock, so that there would be nothing left over for the next day- **Exodus 12:10; John 19:31.**

Blood and Water
I mentioned that the Hebrews back in Egypt used a hyssop bush to sprinkle the blood of the lamb on the doorpost. The hyssop bush carries water in its stem.

- When the blood was applied, water would flow out of the stem and cover the blood.
- So the entire entrance into the house was actually sealed with blood and water.
- When Moses received the Ten Commandments, he took a hyssop bush dipped it into blood.
- He then sprinkled it over the stone tablets and all the people.
- Later, he sprinkled blood over the Tabernacle and all its furnishings as well as the priests.
- They were all sealed with blood and water.

Then in order to enter the Tabernacle and approach God, the High Priest had to go by way of the blood at the Altar and the water at the laver.

At the Temple, blood drained into basins underneath the Altar. Water flowed through these basins carrying the blood outside the Temple, that the people could see that their sacrifice had been accepted.

- What they saw was blood and water mixed together.
- Jesus was crucified, they pierced Him in the side, out flowed blood and water- **Jn. 19:34-37.**
- All these sacrifices were pointing to Him as our Passover Lamb! **1 Corinthians 5:7-8.**
- The blood represents a life given while the water represents a life received.

Jesus gave His life for us at the cross. There His blood was poured out on our behalf, but we get no benefit from Him giving His life unless we personally receive it for ourselves. The blood of Jesus alone will not save us unless we appropriate it for our own life through faith- **Romans 10:9-10.**

- We appropriate His redemption by calling on the Lord Jesus- words, **Matthew 12:37.**
- When we accept Him into our heart as the "Lamb of God" who died for our sins- the blood!
- Jesus then comes into our life through the person of the Holy Spirit- the water!
- This is the meaning of the water that sealed every place where the blood was applied.
- Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit and Power, after water baptism- **Lk. 4:14; Acts 10:38**

Whoever applies the blood of Jesus to their life is sealed with the Holy Spirit- **Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 1 Peter 1:5.** Water is a type of the Holy Spirit- **John 4:10; 7:38-39.**

So now you see how in the Old Covenant, the water and blood was a type of Jesus and the Holy Spirit ushering in the New Covenant. As believers in Jesus Christ we are washed in the blood of Jesus and filled with the Holy Spirit; we too enter into God's Kingdom through water and blood- **1 John 5:6-12.**

- This is what the New Covenant meal is all about. When we partake of it.
- We are not just remembering a life given, we are celebrating a life received- the life of God.
- This is why communion is to be a time of great joy, praise and worship.
- Most communion services are dry and remind me of a funeral home.

Everybody wears a long face and will hardly breathe lest their gasping for breath break the silence and offend God. Believing this "holy hush" is pleasing to God. Well, that's okay if your god is dead.

- But ours isn't! The cross is bare! The tomb is empty! Jesus is alive, Lord of lords…
- He publicly destroyed Satan at the cross where He purchased our salvation- **Colossians 2:15.**
- The blood of the Lamb destroyed the serpent, set us free from bondage to him- **Heb. 2:14-15.**
- Death can't enter the heart of one who is covered with the blood of Jesus & sealed with Spirit.
- Death is swallowed up in victory, the war is over and we won in Jesus- **1 John 5:4-5.**
- Yet we live on to fight the good fight of faith and enforce Satan's defeat- **Ephesians 1:19-23.**
- The seed of the woman bruised the head of the serpent through His resurrection.
- And now we have received that same life in us- **John 10:10.**
- We too have victory over Satan because of the greater who is in us- **l John 4:4.**

4. The Lamb On the Throne

In Revelation chapter 5 we see a revelation concerning the Lamb of God worthy to open the seven seals and usher in God's final judgments upon the world system- **Revelation 5:9-14**. The Greek word John chose to refer to this lamb is *arnios*. It means a little, "pet lamb." Just like back in Egypt.

The King is Coming
All who know Jesus as their Lord and Savior drink of the fruit of the vine in remembrance of His life given for us and to us. As we partake of the covenant meal we look forward to the time when we will partake of it with our heavenly Father at the "Marriage Supper of the Lamb" according to **Rev. 19:1-9.**

- A time of great joy and praise to God, echoing throughout the hills of the New Jerusalem.
- And instead of being on Mount Calvary it will be on Mount Zion.
- Jesus, the "Lamb of God," will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords- **Ps. 2:6-8; 48:1-2.**
- There we shall reign with Him as kings and priests of the most high God.

The Jews complete their Passover service by saying. L'Shanah Ha, Baah, Bee-Ru-Sha La-Yim. Which means "next year in Jerusalem." So we partake of the covenant meal by saying, "next year at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb." Hallelujah! The King is coming.

The Covenant Terms
Before partaking of the covenant meal. It is good to be reminded of the terms of the covenant. When we hear them, it fills our hearts with songs of joy- **Isaiah 35:10; 51:11; Ezekiel 36:24-28; Heb. 8:10-13.**

There Is Only One Lamb
We who are Christians all know God because the Holy Spirit within us bears witness to our human spirit that we are children of God by faith in Jesus Christ- **Romans 8:15-16; Galatians 3:26.**

- The "Lamb of God" has come to live in each of us in the person of the Holy Spirit.
- Although we, like the Jews, may come from different denominational tribes, same "Lamb."
- There is no Catholic and Protestant "Lamb of God."
- Neither is there a Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, Pentecostal or Presbyterian "Lamb of God."
- There is only one "Lamb of God," and He is in each of us who have received Jesus as Lord.
- We're not in covenant with an organization; we are in covenant with a Person.

1 Corinthians 10:16-17
Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

- Therefore, all who know Christ Jesus are welcome to share in the covenant meal.
- All may feed at the table of communion, this is what is meant by open communion.

This is a Biblical principle for those who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus are part of one Faith, one Lord and one Baptism- **Ephesians 4:4-6.**

A Spiritual House Cleaning
Remember the Hebrew had to purge out the leaven from his house before he could eat the communion meal. Well, in the Bible, leaven represents sin and Christians are now the spiritual house of God.

- Our body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit according to **l Corinthians 3:16; 6:19-20.**
- So, we too must take a lighted candle, which is the Holy Spirit through the Word of God.
- Let Him search through every nook and cranny of our spiritual house- **1 Corinthians 5:7-8.**
- Looking for any hidden leaven (sin) that would keep us from enjoying fellowship with God.

As the head of the Hebrew household would not touch the exposed leaven, so God says to us in 2 Corinthians 6:17*, ". . . touch not the unclean thing; and 1 will receive you."*

Instead of burning leaven in a cloth, we let the fire of the Holy Spirit cleanse us through the washing of the water through the Word and by the blood of Jesus- **1 Corinthians 11:27-31.**

- We need to remember to walk in love toward others and keep ourselves from sin.
    - Be quick to forgive and quick to repent.
- In this way we judge ourselves and keep the door shut on the enemy- **Ephesians 4:25-26.**
- When we do sin we have **1 John 1:9** to receive forgiveness of our sins as believers.

As a result, there is no more condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus- **Romans 8:1; Jude 24-25.**

D. The Red Sea

In the terror of the Egyptians at the slaughter of their firstborn, the people of Israel began their exodus from Rameses to Succoth, in the month of Abib, or April, about 1450 B.C.- **Exodus 12:31-36.**

- There were about 600,000 men on foot besides women and children; 2 million- **Ex. 12:37.**
- God had a specific plan when He led them out of Egypt; route to take- **Exodus 13:17-18.**
- Moses took Joseph's bones according to the oath they took- **Genesis 50:25; Exodus 13:19.**
- An amazing sign took place; by day as a pillar of cloud, a pillar of fire at night- **Ex. 13:21-22.**

The length of time the Israelites had been in Egypt according to Exodus 12:40 was 430 years to the day.

I want to point something out for you in regards to God using angels as His agents in regards to fulfilling His covenant to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob- **Acts 7:35-38.**

- It was an angel that appeared to Moses in the burning bush- **Acts 7:30-31.**
- An angel that God spoke to Moses and delivered the ten commandments- **Galatians 3:19.**
- It was an angel that protected them from Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea- **Exodus 14:19.**
- It was an angel that protected them as they journeyed to the Promised Land- **Exodus 23:20-24**

1. Pharaoh Takes the Bait

What is incredible at this point is that God is not done with Pharaoh yet. The king of Egypt gets lured into a trap by God Himself!

- Pharaoh's army according to Josephus was 50,000 horsemen and 200,000 footmen.
- Now the Lord was going to finish them off once and for all- **Exodus 14:1-4.**
- Even though God got them out of Egypt, it seemed impossible to get Egypt out of them.
- Pharaoh and his army approached the Israelite camp, they panicked, fear/doubt- **Ex. 14:10-12.**
- The casual observer my state that was a natural reaction; not after this mighty exodus.
- Moses tried to get their focus on God as their deliverer and have faith in Him!

Exodus 14:13-14
Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."

- I love God's response at this moment!

Exodus 14:15-16
Then the Lord said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.

I believe this scripture gives us some insight that God is not too fond of His people whining, complaining and being in despair. Even Jesus displayed some annoyance in **Mark 9:21-27.**

- God provides a protective barrier between the Hebrews and the Egyptians- **Exodus 14:19-20.**
- This alone should have scared off Pharaoh, but his heart was so hard with pride!
- Perhaps he was thinking, "Better to die in battle with God than to live in shame."

Exodus 14:21-22
Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

- At the place where Israel crossed, it was about 12 miles wide, and from 75 to 100 feet deep.
- Imagine a wide path with walls of water suspended by the hand of God on either side.
- Predictably, the Egyptians follow them into the divided sea- **Exodus 14:23-25.**
- The Lord instructed Moses to stretch out his hand over the sea- **Exodus 14:26-31.**

Hebrews 11:29
By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

The Lord was fighting against Egypt because of the covenant He had made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and God was honoring it- there was no other reason. **Exodus 15:20-21.**

- To preserve his lineage and bring the promised Savior to the world- Jesus Christ!
- As New Covenant believers, we have a host of promises from God, to protect us.
    - **Psalms 32:7; 56:4; 2 Timothy 4:18; 1 John 5:18.**

There is an important type here that took place when the people of Israel crossed the red sea. It was their rite of passage out of Egypt (type of the "world system, the place of bondage to sin") through the Red sea (type of "New birth, salvation and water baptism") on their way to their Promised Land (type of "Baptism in the Holy Spirit, glorious inheritance and promises of God in Christ")-**1 Corinthians 10:1-2.**

- The Promised Land is not a Type of heaven; as there are no battles to be fought in heaven.
- As there are for the believer today; fighting the good fight of faith, taking God at His Word.

E. The Law

1. Mount Sinai

Next Moses led the Israelites through the towering mountains into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped on an extensive plain at the base of the "mount of God."

- This was the birthplace of the Hebrew nation.
- When Bible refers to the Wilderness in Exodus 19:1, at the foot of Mt Sinai or peninsula.

Moses shares with the people of Israel what the Lord had said and they accepted His calling for them, Exodus 19:8, *"The people all responded together, 'We will do everything the LORD has said.' So Moses brought their answer back to the LORD."*

Next, the Lord provides instructions in preparation for the people to hear God's voice for the first time, all 2 million plus of them- **Hebrews 12:18-29.**

- Moses put a perimeter around the base of the mountain that no person or animal could cross.
- Otherwise they would be stoned to death or pierced with arrows- **Exodus 19:12-13; 20-25.**
- Even though the people had consecrated themselves, sin kept them from coming close to God.
- the Old Covenant had strict regulations, to protect people from incurring judgment.

We live under a New and Superior Covenant that allows us to approach God, since the blood of Jesus has forever eradicated our sin- **Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 4:16.**

- God's judgment for our sins was placed upon Jesus.
- To enter God's presence with freedom and confidence, without guilt or condemnation.

2. The Ten Commandments

The Decalogue (from the Greek, "10 words" or "10 sayings") given to Moses at Mt. Sinai was a moral code of 10 commandments written on two tables of stone. Greek- deka, "Ten" Logos, "Word"

- In Hebrew the name is "Ten Commandments" Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4.
- It is also called "the moral law," "the two tablets of the testimony"- Exodus 34:29.
- "The tablets of the covenant" (**Deuteronomy 9:9**), and "His covenant"- **Deuteronomy 4:13.**
- New Covenant called "the commandments", **Mt. 19:17;Ro. 13:9** & "the Law" **1 Tim 1:7-10.**

Commonly supposed that the first 4 commandments were written on one tablet & the last 6 on the other.

- The first tablet set forth the duties of a holy people to a Holy God.
- the second asserted the ethical duties of man to his neighbor.

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make unto yourself any graven image.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery
8. You shall not steal
9. You shall not bear false witness
10. You shall not covet

Although God gave the Ten Commandments to His people through Moses at Mount Sinai more than 3,000 years ago, they are still relevant today.

- They have an abiding significance, for God's character is unchangeable.
- These laws originate from God and from His eternal character; moral value cannot change.
- The world desperately needs to see the name and character of God displayed in our lives.

These Commandments, particularly coupled with the teachings of Jesus, are still the best guidelines for practical daily living known to man.

1. "You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3)
Since God's character forms the basis of the covenant with His people. He demands absolute loyalty. And when the intent of the heart is to put God first, a person's outward actions will reveal it.

- God is a jealous God, and He will not share His glory with another- **Dt. 4:23-24; Isaiah. 42:8.**

2. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image" (Exodus 20:4)
The second commandment is necessary because people do not always keep the first. The Israelites made a golden calf to worship even as the Lord gave the laws to Moses.

- Since Israel had so many contacts with people who did worship images, gave them this law.
- God has never been a tangible, visible Being (**Dt. 4:12**), but always a Spirit Being- **John 4:24.**
- It requires faith to serve God, but He rewards those who diligently seek Him- **Hebrews 11:6.**

3. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain" (Exodus 20:7)
God's name and His character are inseparable. Using His holy name lightly in a vain, empty manner is insulting and degrading. This could be done by perjuring oneself in a court of law or by cursing.

- This commandment also applies to hypocritical meaningless worship/prayer- **Isaiah 29:13.**
- Sad that Hollywood has no clue in this area when they make their films.

4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8)
Sabbath means "rest," but God intended for this day to stand for more than an absence of work. It was to be a day of worship as well, a day for setting aside all thoughts of materialistic gain & seek Him.

- God Himself set the pattern by ceasing from His labors after creating the world- **Genesis 2:2.**
- Why, then, must modern-day Christians feel that being busy is equated with being spiritual?
- Our culture drives us to a point where we are too busy for God or worn out to serve Him.

5. "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land" (Ex. 20:12)
God established parents as the authority figures in the family unit. Children often get their first impressions about God from their parents.

- Parents who walk in the Spirit, honestly desiring to follow Biblical guidelines = good example
- Children who want to please God will respect their parents, regardless of peer pressure.
- Children learn submission and authority principles from parents- critical to live long and well.

6. "You shall not murder" (Exodus 20:13)
Commandments six through nine pertain to our relationships with one another. The breakdown of these guidelines has plunged many civilizations into decay.

- A person who cares about others, beginning in the home, does not want to harm them.
- This law reveals God's attitude toward people created in His image.
- No one has the right to take that life from another with evil intent- **Genesis 9:5-6!**
- This also applies to taking life inside the womb as it does outside.

7. "You shall not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14)
Technically, this commandment refers to being sexually involved with a married person; but it is traditionally used to prohibit all sexual relationships outside of marriage.

- Again, this commandment involves a right relationship with God and with others.
- Adultery is possible only if people are prepared to hurt others, a very selfish act.

A right attitude toward keeping God first and not harming others is tied together in these commandments. A person who does not steal will not take another's mate. And he does not allow covetous thoughts to grow in his mind. He wants God to have his total allegiance.

8. "You shall not steal" (Exodus 20:15)
Stealing involves taking something that does not belong to you. This could be another's life, marriage partner, or reputation.

- This law also emphasizes the importance of getting all you own through lawful channels.
- As you can see, the command has broad implications in regards to theft.

9. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (Exodus 20:16)
A good relationship demands honesty in speaking of another. The old saying, "A man's word is as good as his name" is sometimes a joke today.

- But God's people ought to cherish their own reputations and that of others.
- If a person is unwilling to speak ill of another, he is less likely to steal or murder him.
- Any form of lying, falsehood, exaggerations or intent to deceive is sin- **Pr. 26:18-19; Col. 3:9**

10. "You shall not covet" (Exodus 20:17)
Jesus elaborated on this commandment by stating, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (**Matthew 22:39**). The negative and the positive work together. You do not harm people you care about.

- This tenth commandment is an outgrowth of the first.
- If a person's heart is fixed on the Lord, he will have the right attitude toward others.
- Consequently, the desires that rise from his heart will not cause pain or loss to others.
- Jesus enlarged on the idea prevalent in the Ten Commandments; heart attitude- **Mt. 5:8.**

The right motive (pleasing God who is first in your life) will result in obeying the other commandments (not hurting others). The New Covenant is the fulfillment of this; New Birth- **John 13:34-35; 15:12-14.**

Romans 13:8-10
Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet," and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

Ten great words; the Law is perfect- **Psalm 19:7-11**. Ten being considered the most perfect of numbers.

- About 1,300 years after God gave the Law, Jesus upheld them perfectly
- Calling them the "commandments" and listing five; rich young ruler- **Matthew 19:16-22.**
- His teachings often referenced them; sermon on the mount- **Matthew 5:21, 27-28.**
- Jesus placed His eternal stamp of approval on the law- **Matthew 5:17-19.**

Jesus made the same distinction between the duties to God and duties to man when He summarized the commandments- **Matthew 22:37-40 (Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18).**

Jesus actually placed these laws on a higher plane by demanding that the spirit as well as the legal aspects of the law be kept.

Even for those who do not hear the gospel message, God uses His universal Law that is inherently and instinctively written upon the conscience of every human being as the standard for judgment in **Romans 2:12-16.**

The chief dispute Jesus had with the Pharisees, was there propensity to exalted the minor law, the ceremonial observance, and throw the duties of the Ten Commandments in the background.

Mark 7:9-13- And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban ' (that is, a gift devoted to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."

- The foundation and source of the moral law is God's character- **Exodus 6:7-8.**
- The Hebrew name here used (Everlasting Eternal Almighty).
- "I am . . . you shall." That is the connection. The moral law, in its unchangeable majesty.
- Right is what it is, because God is what He is, and therefore it is as unchangeable as God.
- 10 commandments were written by God's own finger, and on durable tablets of stone.

In the symbolism of the East, the stone signified the perpetuity of the law written upon it. Written on both sides, it meant the completeness of the code- **Deuteronomy 9:11.**

- Still another fact marks the unique place of the Ten Commandments- Ark of the Covenant.
- Were put in the most sacred place in the world- in the Tabernacle, in the "holy of holies."

Thus they were plainly recognized as containing in themselves the sum and substance of what was held to be strictly required by the covenant- **Romans 2:17-24; Acts 7:37-38.**

Remember, Jesus came not to abolish but to fulfill the Law in **Matthew 5:17**, by living the perfect life. The Ten Commandments are, as the Reformers taught, identical with the "eternal law of nature."

- Paul says, "The law was added because of transgressions"- **Galatians 3:19.**
- The negative form is due to the shocking depravity of those to whom it was addressed.
- A prohibition means a disposition to do the thing prohibited- identifies sinful human nature.
- The law can only provide a standard and a consequence to restrain the act.
- Statutory law may restrain/regulate actions, cannot transform the sinful heart- **1 Tim. 1:8-11.**
- It cannot implant the positive virtue to do right- that is where the New Birth comes in.
- By becoming a New Creation according to **2 Corinthians 5:17**, the Law is fulfilled in Christ.

Galatians 3:21-22
For if a law had been given that could impart life , then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

The Law or 10 commandments represents God's absolute standard of right and wrong, black and white.

- No room for negotiation or compromise, it is what it is; either we accept it or reject it.
- God is a Holy God and a God of justice that demands absolute obedience and the perfect life.
- Mankind is inherently sinful by nature and opposed to god's Holy Law- **Romans 7:5-6, 21-25**
- God cannot judge the devil and let mankind slide, that would make Him unjust- impossible!

As a result, God's justice requires punishment for the evil doer, the same justice that condemns Satan, the fallen angels, demons and their rebellion.

So what is God to do, He wants to send the host of darkness to the Lake of Fire (**Matthew 25:41**) and reconcile mankind to Himself (**1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9**).

- The Law of God holds sin accountable, provides a punishment for it- **Romans 5:13.**
- The wages of sin is death (**Ro. 6:23**) and we see its effects clearly throughout human history.
- We brought this tragedy upon ourselves, God is never to blame- Garden of Eden.
- Subjected creation to the curse of sin, Pandora's box, released hell on earth- **Ro. 8:20-21.**
- Committed high treason, gave our dominion to the devil- that's why the world in such a mess.
- We created this mess, God is in the process of cleaning it up, we don't deserve it- **Ro. 5:15-18**
- So every baby born today is already hardwired to sin and selfishness- born into sin.
    - **Romans 4:15; 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 15:56-57.**

- This is where Jesus the lamb of God, slain before the foundations of the world comes in!
- He alone will be our sin substitute, bearing God's wrath for our sin.
- Appeasing His justice & rescuing us from the power of darkness-Jesus alone; God and Savior!
- In this way God's Law is upheld and salvation is afforded for mankind.

3. The Mosaic Law

The Ten Commandments are a statement of the terms of the covenant God made with His chosen people; respectively, they are to be distinguished from the elaborate system of law known as the Mosaic.

The vast legal system of Israel's civil, criminal, judicial, and ecclesiastical systems were framed after the covenant law- not with a view of expanding it, but to enforce it- practical application.

- The elaborate system was designed as an educator, to lead the people by these ideals.
- Great principles of life embodied in the Ten Commandments and afterward exhibited in Jesus.
- The Mosaic law was only a temporary expediency to achieve a given end.
- The Ten Commandments are a statement of eternal principles to continue for all time.
- This unique place of the Ten Commandments is seen in the circumstance of their delivery.
- Rest of the law was given by God through the lips of Moses; 10 com. God Himself- **Ex. 19.**
- It appears also that angels were active in the proclamation of the law.
    - **Deuteronomy 33:2-3; Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2.**

So the Law of Moses or the Mosaic law, which follows the Decalogue (The Law of the Covenant) in the Exodus account, contains chiefly judicial statutes pertaining to Israel's new national life, as growing out of the moral requirements of the Decalogue- **Exodus 21 – 23:19.**

There are many other civil and social directives in the Pentateuch that are purely civil in nature seeing that the nation of Israel was originally a theocracy; a nation ruled by God, so God was providing rule of law and national stipulations for conduct.

4. The Purpose of the Law

So now we understand man's dilemma and God's solution, let's look at the purpose of the Law. God's law holds all mankind accountable. One big reason for the Law is that it identifies what sin is for us. **Romans 3:19-20; 7:7-8.**

There is a concept referred to as, "The age of accountability" that holds human beings accountable for sin when they are old enough to choose for themselves, right from wrong- **Romans 7:9-13.**

- I believe there is no set age, but rather awareness of sin and the ability to make a choice.
- When they choose to break one of the 10 Commandments, they die spiritually- forbidden fruit
- Death enters their spirit and they take on the spiritual nature of Satan and become his child.
    - **Galatians 3:22; 1 John 3:10; 5:19.**

- If they were to die physically prior to being aware of sin, he/she would have gone to heaven.
- When that first conscious sin is made, he/she is now accountable for their actions to God.
- Even though our bodies gravitate to sin, as believers, our spirit has been born again.
- By God's grace through our faith, renew our minds and bring our bodies under subjection.

Another purpose of the Law was to frustrate us, God's perfect standard was unattainable in our own strength, devices or pursuits.

- We simply cannot live the perfect life in motive, thought and action that God requires.
- The Law is strict in the extreme- **Deuteronomy 27:26; 2 Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 10:28.**
- The law is impossible to be kept perfectly because of our sinful human nature.
- It was never meant for mankind to uphold apart from God's Grace.
- The Law reveals our awful dilemma, doomed to destruction, sons of perdition.
- In the midst of this despair, God revealed His answer, a Savior.
    - **Luke 2:10-12; Romans 3:21-24; Galatians 4:21-29; Acts 28:23-24.**

God had given Abraham a promise that he believed by faith that God would solve the sin problem. **Galatians 2:15-21; 3:17-25.**

- It was a gift of God's grace, through our faith, not by works that brings salvation- **Eph. 2:8-10**
- All the religions of the world are all about, trying to earn their way into heaven.
- The presumption that my good works will somehow outweigh my bad works- falsehood!
- The Scriptures declare that just one sin, dooms a person to eternal perdition- **James 2:8-11.**

We cannot recall the punishment of our sin as much as a murderer can pardon himself by being a good person for the rest of his life- when we commit the crime, we have to do the time.

- Unless we are able to find a willing substitute to take our place.
- Only one who is worthy, who has never committed a sin- that would be JESUS!
- I owed a debt I could not pay, He paid a debt He did not owe; we all need a Savior .
- Jesus Christ to save us from our sins and the penalty of sin- death!
- When we sin, we confess our sins and the blood of Jesus purifies us- **1 John 1:9.**

If as Christians, we try to serve God in our own strength or make up our own rules and depart from revelation in Scripture, we are in effect putting ourselves under the curse of the law- **Gal. 3:1-12; 5:2-6.**

- This is religion, and it only produces death. Certainly God wants us to produce fruit, His way.
- God's method is by His grace and through our faith in His Word, even after we are saved.
- Allowing the transforming power of His Word and Spirit to change us- **Galatians 5:16-18.**

The Old Covenant Law was never achievable for humanity apart from God's grace. Through the New Covenant, God's nature is put into us, providing the godly desire within to live for God- **1 John 3:4-9.**

The Old Covenant failed to bring righteousness to humanity, but it succeeded in leading us to Jesus Christ as our one and only Savior by frustrating us into failure to seek deliverance from God! **Hebrews 7:18-19; 8:7-8, 13; Romans 3:28, 31; 4:4-8.**

- Remember, with every covenant there is a blessing and cursing part to it.
- The Law of the covenant stipulates the requirements or commands that must be kept.
- When these mandates are kept, the blessings of the covenant are enjoyed.
- When they are violated, the curses are invoked. 10 Commandments, Law of this covenant.
- Godly fear was instilled in the Hebrews to keep them faithful- **Exodus 20:18-21; 22-23.**
- Deuteronomy 28 the blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience are outlined.
- Satan is the agent through which the curse is administer to the violators of this covenant.
- In the New Covenant, Jesus has redeemed us from this curse of the law- **Galatians 3:13-14.**

An interesting point that is seen in regards to God's specifications in building an altar for sacrifice in Exodus 20:25-26, *"do not build it with dressed stones, for you will defile it if you use a tool on it."*

- I interpret *'dressed stones'* as a type of man's effort, works and religion to make things better.
- Our self-righteousness is as filthy rags to God (**Isaiah 64:6**, Heb. meaning 'Menstrual cloth')
- He wants our sacrifices to Him to be an act of pure obedience to His Word; no help from us.

The Lord warns them not to worship other gods, but to destroy any remnant of them. Likewise, we too must purge out of our lives any remnant of worldly ungodliness- **Deuteronomy chapter 7.**

- God provides some wonderful promises for His covenant people, Old and New- **2 Cor. 1:20.**
- God's blessing would be upon our food and water so we would not get sick.
- That was particularly important back then, since they did not have refrigeration.
- God will prevent any sickness from coming near us and protect women in child bearing.
- Long life, a timeless pursuit of every generation- serving God reaps great results- **1 Tim. 4:8!**

Exodus 23:25-26- Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span.

5. The Covenant Confirmed by Blood

When Moses had conferred upon the people all the Lord's words and laws they responded with one voice, "Everything the LORD has said we will do."

- Moses wrote down everything the Lord had said and build an altar- **Exodus 24:1-4.**
- The 1st covenant was put in effect and God's people were sealed through blood- **Heb 9:18-22.**
- The universal law of God required payment for sin, a blood sacrifice is the only way.
- Innocent blood had to be shed to redeem a guilty individual- **Exodus 24:5-8.**

Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, along with 70 elders of Israel actually saw the God of Israel and ate and drank with Him- a covenant meal- **Exodus 24:9-11.**

- God instructed Moses to come up the mountain alone, the 10 commandments- **Ex. 24:12-18.**
- Notice how the glory of God is described, like a cloud and a consuming fire.

We see that God had remembered His covenant with Abraham. With a great show of power, He delivers this nation of several million. The final escape brought about by parting the Red Sea for the Hebrews to pass through. When God took the children of Israel to Mount Sinai, and delivered the 10 commandments, it revealed to them how Holy God is and how sinful they were- **Jeremiah 17:9.**

Lesson 11
The Wilderness – Part 1

F. The Wilderness

The teaching on the "Wilderness" experience of the children of Israel will address the highlights and major events over a 40 yr period. Will try to cover the material in sequential order as much as possible.

- Events were recorded for our benefit as warnings; not to repeat their mistakes- **1 Cor.10:1-14.**

1 Corinthians 10:6- Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

1. Establishing Precedence

- As we cover their Israelites successes and failures, remember they were not born again.
- They did not have the Holy Spirit living on the inside of them, to empower their lives.
- This is one reason why God worked such incredible signs and wonders on their behalf.
- He could not influence their hearts and motivate them from the inside out.
- He had to appeal to their five senses and reveal Himself through outward manifestations.
- Most of them were like Thomas in the gospels in **John 20:24-29**- see it to believe it.
- Yet with all the miracles, you will see that in their hearts they still turned back to Egypt.

We see an important precedence here, miracles and supernatural manifestations are not enough to influence a heart towards God. It requires God's Word in our heart, faith to transform a life.

- The miracle that Jesus performed for the invalid in **John 5:1-15**; man turned on Jesus, no faith
- Story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke chapter 16; someone raised from the dead.
- Ultimately, signs don't save people, only faith in God through His Word.
- Signs just make people wonder, get their attention to listen to the gospel message- credibility.

Luke 16:31 - "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

It's hearing the message, believing it in the heart and confessed out of the mouth that brings salvation to a person- Romans Chapter 10!

- God looks for faith, people taking God at His Word and believing it in their hearts- **Heb. 11:6.**
- Sometimes God will act out of mercy and in spite of our unbelieving selves- not His best.
- However if we want to tap into the mother lode of God's provision for our life- Bible faith.
- God is not impressed with desperation, pleading, begging, whining and crying.
- He wants us to grow up and be a man and woman of God, a people of faith.

Luke 18:8- "However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Unfortunately, with the children of Israel, what we see from most of them is ungrateful, nearsighted, grumbling, complaining and hard hearts that were full of bitterness- **Hebrews 3:7-19.**

- In this way they put the Lord to the test; Moses' intercession saved them many times.
- Note that half the murmuring was for food and water; other half out of jealousy and greed.

2. The Waters of Marah

Their first test of faith in the desert came after three days of being in the desert they came to a place called Marah (which means bitter) and found the water was bitter- **Exodus 15:25-26.**

- Israel's response was that they grumbled against Moses- very short sited people.
- Yet in the New Covenant we are instructed in **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18** to rejoice/thanks.
- We don't give thanks for the circumstance, but in the circumstance we give God the glory!
- Notice that obedience to God's Word keeps us under God's protection and provision.
- For us under the New Covenant, the Law of love is our only rule- **Jn. 13:34-35; Ro 13:8-10.**

Exodus 15:26- He said, "If you listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord, who heals you."

Something to consider, God allows the consequences of sin to come upon men through the universal law of sowing and reaping- **Galatians 6:7-8.** The wages of sin is death according to **Romans 6:23.**

- Adam let death into the world through the original sin in the Garden of Eden- **Ro. 5:12-14.**
- God permits people to reap the consequences of sin when they fail to repent.
- So it's not God afflicting or punishing us- remember simple theology, Good God - Bad devil.
- It's essential for Christians to understand the source of good and bad- where and why.
- Satan is the agent through which death and the curse of the law is administered.
- When God lifts His hand of protection, the enemy comes in and does his work- **John 10:10.**
- It's not God's will that people perish or suffer, but He cannot condone sin.
- Satan has a legal right to gain access to Christians who refuse to repent of sin- **Eph. 4:27.**
- Satan is the delivery boy of bad things, and they always happen for a reason- victimize us.

If it ever entered the heart of God to be the afflicter of people than the Garden of Eden would have been a different place before the fall of man. We need to take responsibility for our choices and do our part not to open any doors to the devil, resist him when he is on the prowl to try to rip us off- **Heb. 2:14-15.**

If we believe that God puts sickness or trouble in our lives to teach or discipline us, than we won't be inclined to believe God for healing or deliverance; for that matter nor should we take any medicine or seek for help, since it would go against God's so-called sovereign will for the affliction to finish its work in us, to purify and humble us- such reasoning is flawed, unscriptural and dangerous.

- This kind of gross error has resulted in untold, needless and unnecessary suffering.
- Just consider the ministry of Jesus, did He ever defer healing for people for some reason?
- When Jesus corrected His disciples did he afflict them with cancer or an accident.
- Faith begins where the will of God is known, we need to be fully convinced from God's Word
- If there had been no sin, there would have been no curse.
- Jesus took care of the sin problem and in so doing redeemed us from the curse- **Gal. 3:13.**
- New Heaven and New Earth finally comes about there will be no more death- **Rev. 21:1-22:6.**
- Just because God permits evil and the consequences of sin; doesn't mean He author/condones.

3. Manna and Quail

Psalms 78:24-25
He rained down manna for the people to eat, he gave them the grain of heaven. Men ate the bread of angels; he sent them all the food they could eat.

- For the 40 years the people of Israel were in the desert, God provided for their every need.
- God was revealing to them that He was their source, provider and supplier.
- Every day God was faithful to give them their daily bread until **Joshua 5:11**- Promised Land.
- God supplied them with Manna, (Hebrews for "What is it") from heaven- **Exodus 16:1-5.**
- The Lord also caused a multitude of quail to come and cover the camp- **Exodus 16:13-15.**
- Important point about grumbling against leaders- against the Lord- **Ex. 16:6-8; Heb. 13:17.**
- People of Israel were instructed to only collect what they needed each morning for the day.
- They were reassured that it would return again the next morning- walk by faith & trust God.
- But of course some did not believe it and collected more and kept it over night.

Exodus 16:19-20- Then Moses said to them, "No one is to keep any of it until morning." However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell. So Moses was angry with them.

- They were also instructed on the eve of the Sabbath to go ahead and collect twice as much.
- So they could stay in their tents on the Sabbath and rest according to God's command.
- The manna kept for the next day and did not rot, God preserved it from decay.
- Still people went out to look for it on the Sabbath, wasn't there, dumb- **Exodus 16:27-30.**

The Lord commanded Moses to keep a jar of manna for generations to come as a reminder of how He provided for them all those years- **Exodus 16:32-35; Hebrews 9:4.**

Fire From the Lord
Let's take a look in the book of Numbers where the good folks in the wilderness were getting into murmuring and complaining in the desert- **Numbers 11:1-3.**

- When we keep pushing the Lord, whining and crying = sin, His anger gets stirred up.
- Not to say that God is harsh and insensitive, He is full of compassion and mercy.
- Faith pleases God and He wants us to trust Him- in everything give thanks and rejoice!
- NT admonitions, instructs and warns us to stay clear of complaining- **Php. 2:14-18.**

Another Quail Incident
Later during their desert travels, we see a second incident of wide scale disgust for manna. In **Numbers 11:4-6**, the Bible refers to the complainers as "The rabble among them" began to crave other food.

- There is a danger for the believer to look back and yearn for what we once had- perception.
- Whether it was in the world or even past Christian experiences that were good- **Php. 3:12-15.**
- The Bible is clear about keeping our attention on God's plan for the here and now.
- Don't get me wrong, thank God for His faithfulness to us in the past, just don't live there.
- Moses vents to God and asks for help, the burden is too heavy in **Numbers 11:10-15.**
- Lord instructs him to appoint 70 Israel's elders, share the burden with Moses- **Num. 11:16-17.**

Numbers 11:10
Moses heard the people of every family wailing, each at the entrance to his tent. The Lord became exceedingly angry, and Moses was troubled.

From Numbers 11:18-20, God rebukes the people for their rejection of Him by saying, *"We were better off in Egypt. Why did we ever leave Egypt."*

It's as if God was saying in a New York accent, "So you want some meat eh, manna is not good enough for you eh! I'll give you meat, so much meat that it will come out of your nose"- paraphrase God said.

- Moses responds with a little doubt, not seeing how God could feed 600,000 men for 1 month.
- I love the Lord's response to this! Reminds me of what Jesus said to doubters- **Mark 9:21-24.**
- How often we limit and disappoint God, when He wants to do something awesome for us.
- Remember, it was a lack of faith that hindered Jesus in **Matthew 13:58.**
- According to **Romans 3:3-4**, it's not God's fault when people don't receive.
- When prayer not answered – don't hyper spiritualize the situation, say that it isn't God's will.

Numbers 11:23- The Lord answered Moses, "Is the Lord's arm too short? You will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you."

- Illustration: 70 elders prophesied once in Numbers 11:25; like believers speak in tongues once
- When two elders were not present prophesied, Joshua want to stop them- keep Moses' honor.
- Moses was not only a man of great humility, but spoke of a New Covenant realities.

Numbers 11:29- But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!"

- So we see in **Numbers 11:31-35**, the Hebrews finally got what they wanted and a much more!
- God brought the quail in the camp, three feet deep and as far as a day's walk in all directions.
- Sad, it was a fatal first bite for the main agitators, the Lord permitted a plague to kill them.

Lesson learned, whining, wailing, complaining and grumbling will not win us brownie points with God. The enemy of our souls loves it when we entertain such folly.

4. Water from the Rock

Water is essential to sustain life, God knows this, and one could reason that if God delivered them from Egypt, surely He will not let them die from thirst- **Isaiah 48:21; 1 Corinthians 10:3-5.**

Exodus 17:3
But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

- Unfortunately, they complained and quarreled with Moses again. Notice his response…
    - Exodus 17:2, *"Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?"*
- Interesting, so complaining and grumbling about things is a lack of faith, rooted in fear.
- Worrying about the bad things that could happen- doubting God's ability to take care of us!
- Jesus made reference to "Great faith, little faith, small faith, lack of faith, and no faith."
- Faith can be measured by the amount of God's Word we have abiding in our heart.

Psalms 37:25- I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.

- Moses cried out to God because the people were about to stone him to death- **Exodus 17:5-7.**
- The audacity from them to say, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

5. The Amalekites Defeated

When Israel was vulnerable, the Amalekites attacked them- obviously used by Satan to exploit the people of God. However, God worked through Moses and Joshua in a mighty way- **Exodus 17:10-13.**

- While Moses had his hands upraised with the rod of God in hand, the Israelites were winning.
- But when his hands grew tired and were lowered they begin to lose.
- Aaron and Hur placed a stone for Moses to sit on and each one held up his hands.

Jethro Visits Moses
Jethro was the father-in-law of Moses and he came out to visit Moses in the desert. Moses received him warmly and shared with him all that God had done for Israel.

- I love what Jethro said in response to all that Moses said in **Exodus 18:11.**
- Jethro noticed that Moses was the only judge over all 2 million plus folks.
- There was no none else that an Israelite could take his/her complaints to be judged- **Ex. 18:13.**
- Jethro had some great advice in the area of delegation- **Exodus 18:17-23.**
- Fortunately for Moses and the people of Israel, he took Jethro's advice on this matter.

6. The Golden Calf

This event is probably one of the most famous in the Old Covenant. It represents supreme betrayal and rebellion- **Deuteronomy 9:7-22; Acts 7:39-43.**

- God had delivered the nation if Israel from hundreds of years of bondage.
- He parted the red sea, supernaturally fed them with manna and quail.
- He led them by a pillar of fire by night and a cloud of smoke by day.
- Just prior to Moses ascending Mount Sinai, God spoke to the people in a cloud of glory.
- Covenant confirmed and the fear of God was put into them not to sin- **Hebrews 12:18-21.**

Moses, along with Joshua his aide went up the mountain to receive the covenant law for the people. **Exodus 24:12-18; 31:18.**

After Moses had been on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights, the natives had gotten restless in a bad way. They asked Aaron for a golden calf, made one from the gold they had taken from Egypt.

Exodus 32:4
He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

- No words can describe the level of such wicked treachery.
- They proceeded to have a pagan orgy in **Exodus 32:6.**
- Realize that idol worship is really demon worship- **Deuteronomy 32:15-21; 1 Cor. 10:18-22.**
- God wanted to destroy them, had Moses not interceded for them- **Ex. 32:11-14.**
- Within a short time of hearing the 10 commandments, the people broke them- **Ex. 32:17-20.**
- The Bible has a lot to say about intercession and standing in the gap on behalf of another.
    - **James 5:16-19; 1 John 5:16; 2 Corinthians 1:10-11; Romans 8:26-27.**

Moses took the calf and ground it into powder, scattered it into the water, made the people drink it. About three thousand of them died at the hand of the Levities in **Exodus 32:26-28.** Also the Lord permitted a plague in **Exodus 32:35.**

Aaron never really took responsibility for letting everything fall apart. Interesting that he claimed that he threw the gold into the fire and "poof" out came a golden calf all by itself- **Exodus 32:22-24.**

- Moses did an incredible thing for the people of Israel, he could have allowed them all to die.
- Moses risked his own salvation on behalf of the people, to save them.
- The Lord forgave the people but made an incredible statement, **Exodus 33:5.**
- He would send His angel ahead of them to drive out the Canaanites in **Exodus 33:1-6.**

Exodus 32:31-32
So Moses went back to the Lord and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. But now, please forgive their sin — but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."

The Death of Nadab and Abihu
Here is a lesson about reverence for the Lord and respecting the office of ministry. God is a Holy God and must be respected accordingly- **Leviticus 10:1-3, 8-11.**

- These two men were sons of Aaron and served as priests before God.
- They paid the ultimate price for functioning in their ministry in a drunken state.

7. Miriam and Aaron Oppose Moses

The following historical event is significant because it deals with the age old issue of submission and authority and man's continual challenge with authority.

- It also speaks of jealousy that takes place and the consequences of it.
- Here we have Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses.
- First it began in regards to his Cushite wife and then crosses the line.
- Notice what the Scriptures declare concerning Moses' humility- an amazing leader.
- Now Moses did not make a fuss and defend himself and put Miriam and Aaron in their place.

Numbers 12:1-3
Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. "Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" <u>And the Lord heard this</u>. (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

- When people talk of course God hears it, so how is it that we forget this simple fact.
    - **Exodus 22:28; Malachi 3:13-18; Matthew 12:36-37; Hebrews 4:13.**
- What happens next is incredible, the Lord sticks up and defends Moses.
- Lord calls for a special meeting, just the three of them to set the record straight- **Num. 12:5-9.**
- Be careful not to talk against our spiritual leaders; Lord takes it personally- **Hebrews 13:17.**
- Miriam ended up becoming a leper from head to foot, but Moses prayed for her healing.

Another lesson to be learned here is that God will back us up, the Scriptures tell us to love our enemies and do good to those who use and take advantage of us according to **Luke 6:27-36.**

- God will stand up for His children and defend them- **Romans 12:17-21; 1 Peter 2:21-24.**
- When we take matters into our own hands than we are on our own.
- However, if we put our trust in God and walk in love, God will make things right!

8. Exploring Canaan

The place is Kadesh Barnea on the outskirts of the Promised Land; at last the people of Israel are on the verge of entering into their land flowing with milk and honey- **Deuteronomy 1:21-25.**

- The same land that God had promised Abraham for his decedents to inherit- **Heb. 11:8-10.**
- After all this time, God's promise is about to be manifest.
- This is one of the great Old Covenant stories, for it teaches volumes on the principles of faith.
- We will reference the book of Deuteronomy which makes an interesting point.
- Moses initially told the folks to just go straight in and take possession of the land immediately
- However, the people wanted to send in spies first, one from each tribe, just to make sure.
    - **Numbers 13:21-25.**
- That fateful decision to hesitate will cost them dearly, one whole generation in the desert!

I love how Moses told the people, "Go for it, reach out and take what belongs to you, which God has graciously promised on a oath!" Notice he said, don't be afraid or discouraged, these are the same stumbling blocks we have to deal with today- fear, doubt and intimidation.

The Evil Report
So after 40 days, the twelve spies returned and freely acknowledged that the land was everything it was said to be, a land flowing with milk and honey- **BUT**! **Numbers 13:28-29.**

- Now what they said concerning their mere observations was correct.
- It was were those conclusions led them to that was wrong.
- This is a great lesson of faith as seen by Abraham and the Promise of God- **Romans 4:17-21.**

There is a big difference between truth and fact, it was a fact that the people of the land were great and powerful, but the truth was God had already delivered them into their hands.

- So the folks have to make a decision as to what to believe, the facts or the truth.
- Immediately we see the faith of Caleb, one of the twelve spies begin to kick in.
- How do you see his faith you may wonder, listen to what he said- faith has a tone about it.
- Faith is of the heart, and what is in our hearts comes out of our mouths- **Matthew 12:34-35.**

Numbers 13:30
Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, "We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."

- Notice the response of the other spies, fear and doubt dominated them- **Numbers 13:31-33.**
- They spread a bad or evil report of doubt, unbelief and fear; referencing the giants in the land.
- Remember Og, king of Bashan, he was a descendent of giants, literally like goliath.

Deuteronomy 3:11
Only Og king of Bashan was left of the remnant of the Rephaites. His bed was made of iron and was more than thirteen feet long and six feet wide. It is still in Rabbah of the Ammonites.

- So when the spies said they looked like grasshoppers, now we know why.
- So the people were left with a choice, on the one side they had God's Word.
    - **Exodus 13:4-5; 23:23, 27-31; 33:1-6.**
- On the other hand, we have the report of the majority of the spies- walked by sight.

The Bible calls their testimony a "bad report" because it flies smack in the face of what God had promised them, basically calling God a liar and too weak to fulfill His promises to them- **Num. 14:1-4.**

- Unfortunately the people embraced the "bad report" to their own loss of their Promised Land.
- Classic example of the power of words, life & death are in the power of the tongue- **Pr. 18:21.**
- How pathetic, after all that God has done for them; we too have fallen into that same trap.
- How disappointing, having gone so far and to have fallen short just at the Promised Land.
- It was not without reason that Moses and Aaron fell face down in front of the whole assembly.
    - "Uh Oh, how will God respond to this one!"
- Joshua and Caleb made one last attempt to encourage and rally the people to believe God.

Numbers 14:6-9- Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

The last straw, now the Hebrews were beyond hope, they now talked about stoning Joshua and Caleb for their stand of faith in **verse 10- Numbers 14:11-12**

- Religion of doubt, unbelief and fear turned from weeping and wailing to hatred and murder.
- Unbelief, a deliberate refusal to believe is rebellion, costly- **Hebrews 3:7-19.**
- God had heard enough, Scriptures teach us that He is longsuffering, His patience is not eternal
- Works with His people for a time, giving opportunities to repent, for a season- **Rev. 2:20-23.**
- Today is the Day of Salvation, but it will not always be Today- **2 Corinthians 6:1-2.**
- Again Moses interceded for them & God forgave them again, but not without a consequence.
    - **Numbers 14:20-25.**
- Wow, their unbelief cost them the Promised Land, according to their words- death in desert.
- Was this God's perfect will, No! A thousand times No!
- Yet is not God Sovereign, could He not have made them do the right thing, best for them.

God is Sovereign as the Scriptures dictates that He is, but He will not violate free will or His own Word.

- The first desert experience in route to the Promised Land was God's will; faith training.
- The 40 years of extra desert wandering was not God's will.

As Christians we can't assume that the deserts of trials and tests alone make a person holy, the Hebrews seemed to be worse off at the end of their desert experience.

We can have 10 miles of tests and not grow an inch unless we overcome those trials through faith in God's Word.

- Tests, trials and temptations come from Satan, and are designed to kill, steal and destroy us.
- Many people who have become bitter and fallen away from God due to tests and trials.
- God uses His Word and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit to purify His children.
- Certainly as we go through this world we will be persecuted, tempted, and crucify the flesh.
- Only though faith in God's Word will we overcome these things that seek to destroy us.
- Let's remember the source, so we can resist the devil when he comes against us.
- Only good gifts come from God- **James 1:16-17; Matthew 7:9-11.**
- So the verdict is in, those 20 years of age and older will never make it into the Promised Land.

Numbers 14:26-38
The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: "How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. So tell them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Lord, I will do to you the very things I heard you say: In this desert your bodies will fall — every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. But you — your bodies will fall in this desert. Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the desert. For forty years — one year for each of the forty days you explored the land — you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.'

I, the Lord, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this desert; here they will die." So the men Moses had sent to explore the land, who returned and made the whole community grumble against him by spreading a bad report about it — these men responsible for spreading the bad report about the land were struck down and died of a plague before the Lord. Of the men who went to explore the land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh survived.

- It all comes down to faith, believing and acting on God's Word.
- The difference between life & death, blessing or still living under the oppression of the devil.
- Interesting that the people received a self-fulfilled prophecy.
- God quoted from their own mouths, and that is what happened.
- Both Faith and Fear come by the principles of hearing words over and over again.
- Hearing God's Words produces faith, hearing the words of the devil produces fear.
- The men responsible for the "Bad Report" died immediately.

Good folks falling short of God's best for their lives, but it does not mean that God or His word failed, we just failed to believe God- **Romans 3:2-3.**

Hebrews 4:1-3
Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith. Now we who have believed enter that rest , just as God has said,

"So I declared on oath in my anger,
'They shall never enter my rest ."'

Hebrews 4:6
It still remains that some will enter that rest, and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience.

- Finally the Israelites regret their sin instead of repenting of their sin- **Numbers 14:39-45.**
- For in their presumption they disobey the Lord's instruction and try to take the Promised Land

For some more helpful insight into this account, read from the book of **Deuteronomy 1:19-46; 9:23-29**. It contains things that were said that make the picture even more clear, it would behoove you to read it.

Lesson 12
The Wilderness – Part 2

There are many types/shadows for us to learn from the people of Israel on their journey to the Promised Land. Consider a few that were record in the Old Covenant and parallels with the New Covenant:

1 Corinthians 10:2- They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

Baptized into Moses at the Red Sea- New Birth
Egypt is a type of the World System, when God's people came out of Egypt and passed through the Red Sea, it was symbolic of the New Birth and water baptism.

The Jordan River – Baptism of the Holy Spirit
On the verge of entering into the Promised Land, the people passed through the Jordan river like the Red Sea, it was parted before them and they walked on dry ground.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the door way into partaking of all of God's promises and power.

Promised Land- Our glorious inheritance and redemption in Jesus
Yes there are giants in the land in this day, but the fight we fight today is by faith, but the battle has already been won through Jesus Christ.

- A spiritual kingdom flowing with life, and that more abundantly.
- Yes there are giants of doubt, fear, cancer, lack and the like- we have God's Word, can't fail.
- The Word of God will always work when we mix it with faith.
- If it did not work, it's because we did not work it according to the principles in the Bible.
- Ask God for wisdom and go after it again, do give up or be discouraged- **Hebrews 11:6.**

9. Korah's Rebellion

Jude 11
Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

- As you can imagine, the Hebrews were very upset about missing their Promised Land.
- All they had to look forward to was to spend the rest of their lives in the desert and die there.
- The only hope they had left was for their children to enter in on their behalf.
- I'm sure that a number of them allowed themselves to become very bitter- not God's fault!

Korah was a Levite, and along with a few others: Reubenites, Dathan and Abiram became insolent and rose up in rebellion against Moses in **Numbers 16:3.**

- With them 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders, joined them in this coup.
- I believe that Moses knew this was a death sentence for them- **Numbers 16:4-7.**
- Moses gets angry with the Levities and proceeds to rebuke them in **Numbers 16:8-12.**
- The Levities were called to serve as ministers before the Lord- they should know better!

I suppose Korah and some of his fellow Levities were tired of playing second fiddle to the priests. It reminds me of Lucifer's rebellion and one third of the angels who were seeking a power grab- rebellion in the kingdom of God is a very serious matter- **Numbers 16:11!**

- Moses had summoned Dathan and Abiram, the leaders from the tribe of Rueben.
- Their bitterness comes out in **Numbers 16:12-14,** and they refuse to obey Moses.
- Moses gets pretty steamed at this insolent response by these men in **Numbers 16:15.**
- I love how God backs up His Man Moses when the people get together the next morning.
- Lord does not waste any time in wanting to destroy the whole community- **Num. 16:20-21.**
- Moses intercedes, only those who specifically rebelled should be punished- **Num. 16:22-24.**
- Moses warned the people to move their tents away from these men in **Numbers 25-27.**
- Lord judged them for their rebellion, they were swallowed up by the earth- **Num. 16:28-35.**

What is incredible here is that the people of Israel after seeing how God deals with rebellion revolt against Moses for what had justly happened to these evil men- **Numbers 16:42-45.**

- Moses intercedes for them, he instructs Aaron to take his censor and offer atonement.
- Their sin which incurred upon themselves a severe plague that was already in progress.
- Numbers 16:46-50, *"…He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped…"*
- This speaks of what an intercessor does, stands in the gap on behalf of another- **1 Pt. 2:5, 9-10**

As ministers of the New Covenant, we have a priestly duty of proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel to the lost, to stand in the gap and intercede for the lost and for the saints- **Jude 22-23.**

- This is our primary way of being a salt and a light- through prayer- **James 5:16.**
- Salt preserves, our prayers avail much to keep back the plans of Satan to destroy people.
- Much of what happens on the earth (good or bad) is the result of prayer or lack of it.
- So many wars, death and famine could be avoided if the Church would pray- **1 Timothy 2:1-6**

Romans 15:16- To be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

As a light, we show the world in a tangible way the love and mercy of God through good works, healing, deliverance and proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ- **Acts 10:38; Hebrews 13:15-16.**

The Budding of Aaron's staff
God wanted to get rid of this constant grumbling of who is approved by God, so the Lord asks for twelve staffs from each tribe with their name on it- **Numbers 17:8-11.**

- Moses placed them before the Lord in the Tent of the Testimony.
- The next day, an amazing miracle takes place with Aaron's rod.

10. Water from the Rock

As the Hebrews moved back into the desert, there was no water for them to drink; you know the drill already- they complained about it- **Numbers 20:2-5.**

The Lord tells Moses to speak to the rock this second time instead of striking it like he did before in **Exodus 17:1-7.**

The rock speaks symbolically of Jesus that accompanied them. Jesus was struck once speaking of the crucifixion which was to be done once for all men, that is why Moses struck the rock the first time.

However, this second time the Lord instructs Moses to speak to the rock and living water would flow- now all we have to do is ask in Jesus' Name to receive from God- **1 Corinthians 10:3-5.**

- Moses, being fed up with the children of Israel, strikes the rock two times instead.
- He disobeyed a direct command from the Lord, cost him the Promised Land- **Num. 20:10-12.**
- With great position comes great responsibility and Moses knew this.
- The more light we have of God's Word the more responsible we are- **Luke 12:48.**

The Death of Aaron
Aaron dies and his son Eleazar take his place as High Priest. The Levitical Priesthood was meant to be a temporary order, lasting until Jesus would come, as our Great High Priest- **Hebrews 7:23-25.**

The Bronze Snake
Okay, here we go again, the Israelites are at it again, murmuring and complaining about their unpleasant conditions that they had brought upon themselves- **Numbers 21:4-5.**

- God allows venomous snakes to come in among them, and many died.
- The people repented and ask Moses for help, so Moses prayed for the people.
- The Lord instructed him to put a bronze snake on a pole; all who looked at it lived.

There is something extremely significant that needs to be pointed out because it has huge prophetic significance for us as believers today.

- Remember that a snake in the Bible is a type of Satan and sin- **Luke 10:19.**
- In the Bible, a capital offense = hanging a dead body on a tree, but not overnight.
- That was symbolic of that person being under God's curse- **Dt. 21:22-23; Acts 5:30-32.**
- Jesus became the snake for us on the cross, became sin for us- **2 Corinthians 5:21.**
- Became our curse, received God's wrath on our behalf so we would be saved- **Gal. 3:13-14.**

The bronze snake is a type of Jesus becoming a curse for us, having been hung on a tree at Cavalry. Everyone who looks to Jesus as the Hebrews did to the bronze snake, receives healing and deliverance.

11. Balak and Balaam

Balaam was a magician or soothsayer who was summoned by the Moabite king Balak to curse the Israelites before they entered Canaan in **Numbers 22:5-24:25; Deuteronomy 23:4-5.**

- Balaam wavered when he was asked by Balak to curse the Israelites.
- He finally agreed to go when the Lord specifically instructed him to go- **Numbers 22:20.**
- However, it was his donkey that saved his life from being killed- **Numbers 22:22-35.**
- Meeting Balak, he announced to him his purpose of saying only what the Lord would reveal.
- So they built seven altars; each of Balaam's 3 utterances were blessings and not curses.
- Abraham's covenant of protection continued to extend towards his descendents- **Num. 24:9.**
- Of course Balak was not happy about Israel being blessed instead- **Numbers 24:10-11.**

Numbers 23:23
"There is no sorcery against Jacob, no divination against Israel. It will now be said of Jacob and of Israel, 'See what God has done!'"

What is interesting to note is that even though Balaam could not curse Israel he did not want to leave empty handed since he was apparently a covetous man.

- He gave Balak some advice as to a manner by which he can do harm to Israel.
- Balaam is accused by Moses of seducing the Israelites to commit fornication- **Numbers 31:16**
- The affect of this whole affair is recorded in Numbers chapter 25.
- A battle was fought afterward with the Midianites, Balaam died with them- **Numbers 31:8.**

The **"error of Balaam"** in **Jude 11** was the diviner-prophet's mistake of pitting God against Israel. Concluding that if he could entice Israel to sin, God would be obligated to judge them for it.

Jude 11
Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

The **"way of Balaam"** in **2 Peter 2:15** is the covetous conduct of the typical hireling prophet, solicitous only to commercialize his gift.

2 Peter 2:15-16
They have left the straightway and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Beor, who loved the wages of wickedness. But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey — a beast without speech — who spoke with a man's voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

The **"teaching of Balaam"** in Revelation 2:14 was the teaching of the mercenary seer to abandon godly character and separation from the world in favor of worldly indulgence.

Revelation 2:14
Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality.

This tactic of doing harm to God's people by enticing them into sin is a practice that was conceived by Satan and is what the World System is all about- **2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.**

12. Joshua Succeeds Moses

When the Lord was preparing Moses for his death, He reminded him that he had disqualified himself from entering in due to striking the rock instead of speaking to it as instructed.

- Yet Moses was not bitter from what we can tell- **Numbers 27:15-17.**
- Moses was a true leader even to the end, yes he made some mistakes along the way.
- History reveals, that in light of his accomplishments, there is no man like him.

The Borders of the Promised Land
- For more reading: **Number 33:50-34:18; 36; Deuteronomy 3:12-20.**
- Not exactly the size of the nation of Israel today- missed God's best, a lesson for all of us.

Taking Canaan
Some very important instructions were given to Israel in regards to them taking possession of the Promised Land- **Deuteronomy 7; 9:1-6.**

God made it very clear for them to completely destroy these nations, down to the last person. This may seem harsh, but these folks had become so corrupt, it was an act of mercy preventing others from being born under such wicked circumstances. God makes reference of this to Abraham- **Genesis 15:16.**

- Special directive from God was unique to that dispensational period under the Old Covenant.
- Remember, Israel at that time was a theocracy, one nation ruled by God.
- There is no such directive for the Dispensation of Grace that we live under today.
- For us, the message is a gospel of reconciliation to the nations; not convert or death.
- Our warfare is not with flesh and blood but with the powers of darkness- **Ephesians 6:10-20.**

However, at the second return of Jesus (Daniel's 70th week), He puts to death everyone who had accepted the mark of the Beast and rejected God's plan of salvation for them- **Revelation 19:11-21.**

- God makes some real powerful points concerning Israel- **Deuteronomy 7:6.**
- Found Abraham and chose him because God foreknew the qualities of the man- **Gen. 17:3-8.**
- He would be faithful to pass this covenant down to his children- **Genesis 18:19.**
- It was through Abraham's decedents that the Seed (Jesus) of the woman would be born.

Genesis 3:15 NKJV
"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

God kept His Covenant obligations that enabled Him to act on Israel's behalf on such a grand scale. God was show casing Himself to the world as the One True God through Israel- for the nations to be saved.

Deuteronomy 7:8-10- But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commands.

- Any gentile person could become a proselyte or convert under the Old Covenant, be saved!
- This is why Satan hates Israel so much, because of this everlasting covenant.
- It was through Israel that Jesus came and defeated him 2,000 years ago.
- During the millennial reign, Jerusalem will be the capital of the world.
- There are still future promises to be fulfilled for Israel, so they remain a target.

Exodus 34:12-16
Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles. Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. "Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. 16 And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.

- God warned the people of Israel not to intermarry with their neighbors or have a treaty.
- Less their pagan idolatrous ways would infiltrate their society = spiritual adultery.
- This in turn would bring about their demise which history proved out to be the case.
- The same warnings apply to us; we are in this world but not of it.

James 4:4 AMP
You [are like] unfaithful wives [having illicit love affairs with the world and breaking your marriage vow to God]! Do you not know that being the world's friend is being God's enemy? So whoever chooses to be a friend of the world takes his stand as an enemy of God.

Oh the incredible potential they had of blessing and protection, to be God's showcase on the earth, if they would just obey His commands- that was it, simple right? **Deuteronomy 7:11-12.**

13. Don't Forget the Lord

There is a key to understanding why God led them through the desert and provided for them as He did. The Lord was trying to instill in them a lifestyle of obedience and faith in God's Word, to seek God first in everything as their source- **Deuteronomy 8:1-20.**

- To never put confidence in man, but to honor the Lord by obeying His Word always.
- God speaks prophetically concerning the future, in regards to their Promised Land.
- God's awesome provision for their lives, God's Covenant promise to Abraham.
- God warns them about the trap of self-sufficiency, becoming arrogant, and forget God.

Being so presumptuous as to think, by their own skill and wisdom they became wealthy, taking the credit; but it was God who gave them this ability, because He honors His Covenant of Love

Deuteronomy 8:17-18
You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

- God gives them a solemn warning, if they forsake Him, they forfeit their own protection.
- This principle is absolute in Scriptures and is referred to numerous times in different ways!
- **Nehemiah 9:9-37** – A warning concerning Israel's prosperity – caused them to forget God!

Deuteronomy 8:19-20
If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. Like the nations the Lord destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the Lord your God.

Fear the Lord - Deuteronomy 10:12-22
To fear the Lord is a reverential awe of God. One would not dare to do anything that would displease Him, because our God is an awesome God.

- This does not speak of the tormenting variety of fear that Satan uses.
- This kind of fear has a purifying and consecrating affect that keeps us from evil.

Proverbs 16:6
Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for; through the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil.

Love and Obey the Lord - Deuteronomy 11; 32:44-47
For saints in both covenants alike; it really comes down to simple obedience to God's Word. Obey God and be blessed, disobey God and the devil is just waiting to wreak havoc in our life- **1 John 5:2-3.**

- The key to perpetual obedience is to impress these things on each new generation.
- So they can carry on in God's commandments and remain faith to His Covenant- true today.
- This is why children and youth ministry is so vital- **Deuteronomy 11:13-21.**
- That is why Satan is so diligent to target the young with his propaganda.

Life and Death - Deuteronomy 30:11-20
This is a very famous passage of Scripture in the Bible because it sets the ultimate ultimatum for mankind. It calls upon our God given free-will to choose.

- Our decisions determine our destiny, so God is beseeching that all mankind choose life.

Moses Dies - Deuteronomy 32:48-52; 34
The Lord instructs Moses to climb Mount Nebo to look at the Promised Land that he was not allowed to enter. Even though he was 120 years old, he still had his eyesight and strength- God is good!

- Moses makes the Faith Hall of fame, a fitting tribute to a life of great meaning and worth!
    - **Hebrews 11:23-29.**
- An interesting side note concerning the body of Moses after his death in the book of **Jude 9.**

Lesson 13
The Tabernacle

IV. The Old Order

Along with giving the Ten Commandments, God gave special instructions for building a Tabernacle, for establishing an elaborate system of sacrifices, and for ordaining a priesthood- **Psalms 50:5.**

- After receiving these instructions, Moses built an altar and offered a sacrifice to God.
- He took the blood of the sacrificed animals and splashed it against the altar.
- He sprinkled blood over the Book of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments & all laws.
- After reading the law of the Covenant, he applied blood to the people themselves.
- Later he would sprinkle blood over the Tabernacle and all its furnishings- **Hebrews 9:18-22.**

Exodus 24:8
Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

- God never intended for the Hebrews to approach Him by trying to keep the Law.
- The Ten Commandments can't offer the blood evidence of a life given.
- Like Abel, God was showing that only by blood sacrifice can sin be atoned for- **Gen. 4:2-7.**
- Either we follow God's requirements for blood or we invent something on our own- religion.
    - **Romans 10:1-10.**

Galatians 2:15-16- "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified."

God had in mind that when the Hebrew heard the Ten Commandments he would run as fast as he could to the Tabernacle, kill a lamb and offer the blood in his place as a substitute sin offering to a Holy God.

- God established a Tabernacle, a sacrifice system and a priesthood for them to approach Him.
- The Hebrew was not to approach God by the Ten Commandments; through blood/sacrifices.
- The Law was designed to identify what sin is (**Romans 7:7**), not to save anyone from sin.
- It was already a given that the people would sin due to the Adamic sinful nature in the body.
- God's Old Covenant solution was the Levitical priesthood offering blood- only covers sin.
- It was a temporary order until Jesus the last Lamb would remove our sin once for all times.
    - **Romans 3:20, 25-26; Hebrews 9 – 10:23.**
- Under the New Covenant, Jesus has become our Great High Priest- **Hebrews 7:17-25.**
- All believers would become priests, offer spiritual sacrifices- **Ro. 12:1; 1 Pet. 2:5; Heb 13:15**
- the Temple would be in us and the laws would be written on our hearts- **Matthew 27:51.**

The earthly Tabernacle symbolically represents and points us to the real Tabernacle who is Jesus Christ. God gave the Tabernacle and the details of its construction to portray in a temporary way, what He would one day do permanently through Jesus Christ- there's only ever been one way- **John 14:6.**

A. The Tabernacle

God gave precise instructions to Moses in how to construct the natural replica of God's tabernacle that was already in heaven- **Exodus 25:1-9; Hebrews 8:1-8.**

- The tabernacle was to be the place where God will meet and dwell with His covenant people.
- God gives Moses detailed plans on how to build the Tabernacle- **Ex. 25-27; 30-31; 35-38.**
- Also the detailed instructions on how to make the priestly garments- **Exodus 28-29, 39.**
- The reason for the precise details is that the earthly Tabernacled matched the one in heaven.
- Tabernacle was the place where the Hebrews would bring their sacrifices for sin and praise.
- They could only do this at the Tabernacle, not in the hills or wherever they wanted.
- He couldn't approach God his own way, as it is today; only through Jesus.

Ephesians 4:4-6
There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called- one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

- The Tabernacle was portable so that the Hebrews could carry it with them on their journey.
- Later on in Solomon's day, a permanent temple was built- **1 Kings 5-8.**
- Was destroyed in 587 B.C. when Jerusalem finally fell to the Babylonians- **2 Kings 25:8-9.**
- Returning from captivity, they rebuilt the Temple in 536 B.C.- **Ezra 1:1-2.**
- Due to meager resources, this Temple was not as glorious as Solomon's Temple- **Haggai 2:3.**
- About 19 B.C. Herod began to restore this Temple making it more grand and majestic.
- In 70 A.D. the Temple was destroyed again this time by the Romans.
- The Jews will rebuild the Temple in the latter days, just before the return of Jesus Christ.
    - **Revelation 11: 1; Daniel 9:27.**

1. The Campsite

The tribes of Israel were camped around the Tabernacle in specific locations which God assigned to each of them. Also, each tribe flew its own flag- **Numbers 2:2.**

- At the center of these tribal compounds will be the Tabernacle- **Numbers chapters 2 & 3.**
- The Levite tents surrounded the Tabernacle shielding the people from the wrath of God.
- The flag for the tribe of Judah was a lion of gold on a field of scarlet.
- The flags of each tribe point us to the real banner of God, Jesus Christ- in the four Gospels.
- In Matthew, Jesus is presented as the King of the Jews- the lion from the tribe of Judah.
- In Mark, He is the suffering servant (the ox). In Luke, He is the Son of Man.
- In John, Jesus is revealed as the Son of God (the greatest heavenly being).

As the Son of God, Jesus represents God to man. As the Son of Man, He represents man to God. **Revelation 4:6-8.**

The Courtyard- Exodus 27:9-18; 38:9-20
The Tabernacle stood inside an outer enclosure or courtyard. The size of this courtyard was 150 feet long and 75 feet wide. That's one-half the length of a football field, and about as wide.

- Anyone could go inside the courtyard, only the priest could go into the Tabernacle itself.
- Only the High Priest could enter the inner room called the Holy of Holies once a year.

The Coverings- Exodus 26:14
The Tabernacle had two coverings. The outer covering visible to the passerby was made of badgers skin. It was a dull, unattractive grayish color.

- However, the inside of the Tabernacle, the coverings were ram's skin, dyed red.
- Remember the ram was the substitutionary sacrifice for Isaac; red represents blood.
- There is much more to say, but it all points to the greater Tabernacle made without hands.
- The goal is to get to God in the Holy of Holies, but not until Jesus comes and makes a way.

John 1:14 NKJV
And the Word became flesh and <u>dwelt</u> among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Greek word for dwelt is ***<u>skenoo</u>***. It means to encamp, occupy, reside, indwell or "tabernacle."

- God was tabernacled among us in the form of a man named Jesus Christ- **Matthew 1:22-23.**
- In Him dwelled all the fullness of the Godhead bodily- **Colossians 1:19; 2:9.**
- It was His body that God prepared for Himself- **Hebrews 2:14; 10:5.**
- Paul writes in **2 Corinthians 4:6** that the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ.
- Paul even referred to Jesus as "the Lord of Glory" in **1 Corinthians 2:8; Hebrews 1:1-3.**

Like the badger's skin veiled God's glory in the earthly Tabernacle, it was also veiled in Jesus- **Philippians 2:7.** To the passerby, there was nothing exciting about this carpenter from Nazareth.

But as the ram's skin that had been dyed red, the blood of God flowed underneath the outer shell of Jesus' body. It was to be the substitutionary blood to take away the sins of whole world.

- Through the blood covenant, He would come to live in us by His Spirit- **Romans 10:9.**
- We then would become the new Tabernacle or dwelling place of God- **John 20:22.**
- Through the New Birth, the individual Christian is now the temple of the Holy Spirit.
    - **1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:19-20; 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 1:14; 2:21-22.**
- The world is clueless about this, it's up to us to share the Good News- **Ephesians 1:11.**
- We live under a better covenant than Moses, now through Jesus- **2 Corinthians 3:4-18.**

2. Entrance Gate

First, you will notice there is only one way to get into the courtyard. This way is through the eastern opening called the GATE.

- As you approach the Gate, you must have an acceptable sacrifice to get in- **John 10:7-10.**
- Here is another example of God showing us that Jesus is the only way to God- **Exodus 27:16.**

3. Brazen Altar

The first object staring you in the face as you enter the courtyard is the BRAZEN ALTAR (brazen means brass)- **Exodus 27:1-8; 38:1-7.**

- It is seven and a half feet square and four and a half feet high.
- The Altar is the place where you make your sacrifice.
- It is called the "Altar of Burnt Offering" in **Exodus 30:28.**

Leviticus 1:9 describes the burnt offering as, *"an aroma pleasing to the Lord"*- it is the smell of atonement for sin. You cannot be pardoned from sin and blessed by the priest until you come to this Altar with a sacrifice- **Leviticus 17:11-14.**

- You can be the most moral Jew in your tribe but you still have to bring the sacrifice.
- You can have lots of good works but you still have to bring the sacrifice.
- Under the Old Covenant, apart from the Brazen Altar, you cannot approach God at all.

In God's economy, blood is sacred, it represents life, which God has ordained as the only acceptable payment for sin and the penalty of death- **Matthew 26:28; Romans 3:25-26; Ephesians 1:7.**

- In blood covenant, the sacrifice represents you, and will take your place on the Altar.
- Bringing your sacrifice to the Altar, you lay (heavily lean) your hands on the animal's head.
- In effect, you are claiming its death as a sacrifice on your behalf.
- Unless you claim the animal as your sin sacrifice, you cannot be accepted and declared clean.
- Only with the blood at the Brazen Altar can you enter the Tabernacle and get to God.

As you press your hand heavily on the animal's head and kill it, the priest, standing there with you, pours out the blood of the animal at the foot of the Altar.

- You approach God by faith, your sins are symbolically being transmitted to this animal.
- The slain animal becomes your personal sin substitute.
- Of course the blood of an animal cannot take away your sins, could only cover them.
- They were being postponed until the ultimate sacrifice takes them away forever- **John 1:29.**

The Old Covenant sacrificial system finds it's fulfillment in the person placing their faith in Jesus Christ as their ultimate substitute and sacrifice for sin. Not the blood of an animal, but the blood/life of God.

- Nothing pleasant or pretty about cutting the throat of an animal and collecting its blood.
- It really sends the message home of the awfulness of sin, does not sugar coat sin.
- God's justice demands innocent life as payment for the wages of sin which is death- **Ro. 6:23.**
- Only the perfect, sinless Jesus could ransom us from Satan and satisfy God's justice.
    - **Matthew 20:28; Hebrews 9:15; 4:15-16.**
- He gave Himself up to God on our behalf as a sweet smelling sacrifice to God- **Eph. 5:2.**

The Brazen Altar represents the cross of Jesus. This is where the new covenant was cut. As the blood was poured out at the base of the Altar, the blood of Jesus was poured out at the foot of the cross.

When Jesus appeared to His disciples right after the resurrection, He made an amazing statement…

Luke 24:38-39- He said to them, "Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."

Notice that Jesus said, "Flesh and Bone" but what about His blood? He had already poured it out for us and taken it into the heavenly tabernacle, upon the mercy seat- having forever paid the price for our sins.

- The Bible clearly teaches us that good works cannot undo the sentence of sin – eternal death.
- One mistake, wrong thought, motive or action is all it takes to be condemned forever.
- The Law cannot save, it ends up condemning mankind and pointing us to a Savior- Jesus!
    - **Philippians 3:9.**

The only solution is found in the universal principle of a blood sacrifice from an innocent victim as a substitutionary transference of sin, taking the penalty in place of another- **Hebrews 9:22; Isaiah 64:6.**

Leviticus 17:11
For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

- May be good compared to our neighbor, but our neighbor is not the standard that God uses.
- He compares us to Himself and none of us can measure up to His perfect absolute standards.
- It is absolutely impossible to approach God with our own goodness- **2 Corinthians 5:21.**
- Our access to God is based on what Jesus did for us, not on what we try to do for God.

When we personally accept by faith the blood of Jesus as our own substitutionary sacrifice for sin, His righteousness is imputed or counted to us. As Jesus said in John 20:30, **"It is finished!"**

- Where the blood of animals covered sins, Jesus takes them away- "Once For All."
    - **Romans 6:10; Hebrews 7:27; 9:12, 26; 10:2, 10; 1 Peter 3:18.**
- The sin debt has been "paid in full" for all who receive it for themselves- faith in Jesus.
- Out of love to our divine covenant partner we, who claim the name "Christian."
- What could be our reasonable response to all of this- **Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 7:1.**
- We live the rest of our lives on earth and for all eternity for His glory- **Ephesians 1:14.**

4. Brazen Laver

The next object you encounter is the BRAZEN LAVER. The Laver is a wash basin, perhaps "four or five feet high, filled with water- **Exodus 30:17-21.**

- It is made of polished brass that the women used as a looking glass or mirror.
- Now as the priest ministered during the day, he would get dirty- washed in the Laver.
- As he looked into the Laver, he would see himself in the polished brass.
- The Laver showed him how dirty he was and where he needed to wash & provided cleansing.
- So to enter the Tabernacle, one has to go by way of the blood sacrifice & washing by water.
    - **Hebrews 4:12; James 1:23-24; Ephesians 5:25-27; 1 John 5:6-8.**

When Aaron and his sons were consecrated, or set apart as priests, they washed their entire body in the Laver- **Exodus 29:4; Leviticus 8:6.**

- Thereafter, they only had to wash their hands and feet- **Exodus 30:17-21; 38:8.**
- God required them to wash their hands and feet before entering the Tabernacle.
- Remember when Jesus washed the Disciples feet in **John 13:9-10.**

We are born again once (totally immersed in living water), then after that as we walk in this world, we get sin on our hands and feet. Therefore, we have **1 John 1:9**, to confess our sins and to be cleansed.

- Water baptism symbolizes this total immersion into Christ, in His death/burial/resurrection.
- We don't have to born again all over again!

Whereas the Altar points to the death of Jesus, the Laver points to His life coming into us through the Holy Spirit- **John 3:1-7; 4:13-14; 7:37-39; Titus 3:4-7.**

The word for regeneration in the Greek is *paliggenesia.* It means to have a spiritual rebirth. God spoke of this spiritual cleansing through the Old Covenant prophet Ezekiel- **Ezekiel 36:25-29.**

- Accepting Jesus as our Savior, His blood cleanses us from all our sins- **1 John 1:7.**
- His righteousness is imputed to us- **Romans 4:22-24; 8:4; 2 Co. 5:21; Philippians 3:9.**
- We are set aside to be ministering priests of the most high God- **2 Peter 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6.**
- And we never have to go back to the Brazen Altar gain. We never have to go back to the cross
- The Holy Spirit seals us into the covenant- **Eph. 1:13; 4:30; 2 Co. 1:22; 1 Pt. 1:3-5; Jude 24.**
- The Holy Spirit testifies with our own human spirit, we are children of God- **Romans 8:15-17**

Even as children of God, we still have a body with a sin nature, and our minds are in the process of being renewed with God's Word; as a result when we sin, we break our fellowship with God.

- As we walk in the world ministering as a priest of God, we get dirty spiritually- we sin.
- We do not have to be born again, again- going back to the brazen altar so to speak.
- Instead we go to the Laver, not to take a bath, but to wash our hands/feet- **1 Jn. 1:9; Jn. 13:10**
- The water in the Laver points us to the Holy Spirit; water is a type for the Holy Spirit.
- The polished brass mirror points to the Word as revealed through the Bible- **James 1:23-25.**
- As we look into the Bible, it's like looking into a mirror; reveals sin and provides cleansing.
- When we try to live our Christian life without regular bathing (Word/blood) we begin to stink.
- Oh we try to cover it up with speed stick deodorant or perfume of religious piety- get the idea.

The Holy Spirit scrubs us down with the Word of God real good; in all those places in our life where we're dirty. We need this spiritual bath regularly- **John 17:17; Ephesians 5:25-27; Hebrews 10:19-22.**

The same Word of God that reveals our sins also washes them away by the power of the Holy Spirit.

This washing of our hands and feet by the Holy Spirit restores our fellowship with God, so like the Old Covenant priest, we can go into His presence and minister on His behalf to others- a clear conscience.

1 Timothy 1:5- The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

The New Covenant light in Christ Jesus perfectly fulfills the Old Covenant shadow pointing to Him.

5. The Holy Place

You now approach the door of the Tabernacle. It is a linen veil of blue, purple and scarlet. Behind it are hidden the truths of God. Once inside, you see another veil that divides the Tabernacle into two rooms.

- The first outer room is called the Holy Place- **Exodus 25:30-40; 37:10-28.**
- The Holy of Holies is the inner room behind the veil; dwells the very presence of God.

There are three pieces of furnishings in the Holy Place; the Golden Candlestick, the Table of Shewbread, and the Incense Altar.

Now that we have come by way of the blood and the water, we can now enter through the Door of the Tabernacle.

John 10:9 KJV- I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Golden Candlestick- Exodus 25:31-39; 27:20-21; 37:17-24
Immediately to your left is the GOLDEN CANDLESTICK. It weighs about 107 pounds and has seven branches. The middle branch is the central shaft that continually feeds oil to the other six branches.

- These six branches, in turn, illuminate the taller central shaft.
- They are trimmed morning and evening to insure continuous light.
- The Golden Candlestick provides all the light for the Holy Place- no natural light gets in.
- The golden Candlestick points us to the triune Godhead.
    - **John 1:4-5; 8:12; 9:5; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 5:8; 1 John 1:5.**
- We are light bearers since the Holy Spirit lives inside of us.
- Through His life flowing in us, we not only give off light; draw attention to Jesus.
- This is most clearly taught in the Golden Candlestick. Gold represents deity.

The Candlestick itself represents God the Father. The central shaft points us to God the Son, Jesus Christ. The oil symbolizes God the Holy Spirit. The six branches fed by the Holy Spirit represent believers- the Church- **Revelation 1:12-13.**

Matthew 5:16- In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your <u>good deeds</u> and praise your Father in heaven.

- By "good deeds," Jesus does not mean being active in all the programs at the church.
- That His own character of holiness and righteousness manifest through us by the Spirit.
    - **John 15:26; 16:14; Ephesians 1:4; 2:10; Galatians 5:22-25.**

As the branches of the candlestick were trimmed morning and evening to insure continuous light, the believer must continuously be filled with the Holy Spirit- **Acts 2:4; Ephesians 5:18-20; Jude 20.**

Table of Shewbread- Exodus 25:23-30; 37:10-16
To your right, directly across from the Golden Candlestick, is the TABLE OF SHEWBREAD. This table was three feet long, one and a half feet wide and two and a half feet high.

- 12 loaves of bread (1 loaf for each of the 12 tribes) are placed on the table- 2 heaps of 6 loaves
- Then the loaves are covered with frankincense.
- Every Sabbath the old loaves are eaten by the priests and new loaves are placed on the table.
- On the table beside the loaves are trays and vessels of wine.
- The bread and wine represent the blood covenant meal; representing the sacrifice at the altar.

The blood covenant meal at the Table of Shewbread, points to the time when man would have communion with God through the Holy Spirit- **John 6:51-58, 63.**

Altar of Incense- Exodus 37:25-28
Straight ahead of you and directly in front of the second veil is the ALTAR OF INCENSE. The Altar is three feet high and one and a half feet square.

- Every morning and evening the priest puts burning coals on this Altar.
- He then sprinkles incense over the coals.
- When the incense touches the coals, it fills the room with a fragrant white cloud of smoke.

Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the priest sprinkles blood from the sin offering on the horns of this altar and enters the Holy of Holies with incense billowing up in front of him.

Blood sprinkled horns of the Incense Altar were proof that the sin offering had been made. This blood evidence allowed the High Priest to enter the Holy of Holies into the very manifest presence of God.

- As he went behind the Veil, the incense billowed up in front of the Ark of the Covenant.
- Incense is a symbol of prayer- **Psalms 141 :2; Revelation 5:8; 8:3-4.**

6. The Holy of Holies

The second veil separates the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. This veil was so woven together that two pairs of oxen attached to either side and driven in opposite directions could not tear it apart.

- Behind this veil is the throne room of God, His manifest presence on earth.
- Only the High Priest can enter God's presence and only on the Day of Atonement once a year.
- This was because the sacrifice was incomplete and had to be offered year after year.
- The blood of bulls and goats only covered the people's sins; it didn't take them away.
- The body of Jesus was the Veil that hid the Glory of God on earth.
- When Jesus was crucified, God the Father split the veil from top to bottom.
    - **Matthew 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45.**
- It was no longer needed because the once and for all perfect sacrifice was being made.
- The blood of animals only covered sins, the blood of Jesus takes them away forever.
    - **Romans 6:10; Hebrews 7:27; 9:12, 26; 10:2, 10; 1 Peter 3:18.**

Hebrews 10:18- And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin.

The blood of Jesus opens the way for all to go right into the heavenly throne room of God and commune with Him through the Holy Spirit- **Ephesians 2:13-18; Colossians 1:20-22; Hebrews 10:1-22.**

- With the New Covenant we don't have to worship God in Jerusalem- **John 4:19-24.**
- The Holy Spirit would take us right into "Father's house"; the heavenly Holy of Holies.
- This is done by faith through the Name of Jesus, regardless of where we might be physically.
- So it's not about being in a building anymore, we are that building as believers.

Ephesians 2:21-22
In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Ark of the Covenant- Exodus 25:10-22; 37:1-9
The only piece of furniture in the Holy of Holies is the ARK OF THE COVENANT. The Ark of the Covenant is a small chest 3 ¾ feet long, 2 ¼ feet wide and 2 ¼ feet high.

- The lid attached to the Ark is called "The Mercy Seat." Place for propitiation or atonement.
- Simply means to turn away God's wrath by removing sin and satisfying His violated justice.
- Remember the only offering that will turn away His wrath and satisfy His justice is blood.
- It is the only evidence that the penalty for sin has been paid through a life that was given.
- The Mercy Seat is where the blood will be applied.
- A replica of a cherubim (angel) is attached to each end of the Mercy Seat.
- Their wings are outstretched touching each other at the middle of the lid.
- Right between the two cherubims and above the Mercy Seat is a blinding light.
- This bright light is called the "Shekinah," means the presence of God's glory.
- It is the manifested presence of God dwelling in the midst of the people.

The Holy of Holies is God's earthly throne room, the Mercy Seat is His throne and the great light is His visible presence- **Psalms 99:1.**

- Three objects were placed inside the Ark under the Mercy Seat- **Hebrews 9:1-5.**
- Aaron's rod that budded, a small pot of manna and the stone tablets- 10 Commandments.
- These are all evidences of the children of Israel's sin and falling short of God's glory.

Aaron's rod, when the Hebrews had earlier rejected His leadership through Aaron- **Numbers 16-17.** The pot of manna spoke of their earlier rejection of God's provisions- **Numbers 11.** The 10 Commandments were broken by the Hebrews; reminded God that the people fall short of His holiness/glory- **Exodus 32.**

- As incense fills the room, High Priest sprinkles the blood of the sacrifice over the Mercy Seat.
- Instead of God seeing the evidence of their sin, He sees the blood covering them.
- Covering them until Jesus comes to remove them from us forever!

The blood-covered Mercy Seat (not the Ten Commandments) changes God's throne from one of judgment to one of mercy. Justice has been administered and God's wrath is vindicated, for another year

- After His resurrection, Jesus and made an amazing statement of what He would do- **Jn. 20:17.**
- Enter into the Heavenly Holy of Holies and sprinkle His own blood on the Mercy Seat.
- When He offered it, He sat down at the right hand of the Father.
    - **Acts 2:30; Hebrews 1:3; Revelation 3:21; 5:6-9; 21:5.**
- His blood that completely satisfies God's wrath & violated justice- **Ro. 3:20-26; 1 Jn. 2:1-2.**
- It's His blood that changes God's throne from judgment to mercy- **Hebrews 4:14-16; 9:6-15.**
- Like the Hebrew of old, you must flee to the real Tabernacle of God, Jesus Christ!

The blood covenant is an eternal, everlasting covenant. All who enter into it will dwell with God forever as stated in **Revelation 21:1-7.** Hopeless and futile to enter in by the Law or good works- perfection.

Building the Tabernacle
A collection was made from the Israelite community for the construction of the Tabernacle- **Exodus 35:4-9, 20-22, 29.** An amazing amount of generosity was on display on behalf of the Israelites.

- They gave too much, even to the point, where the people had to be restrained- **Exodus 36:3-7.**
- God had anointed men with the Holy Spirit to be skilled craftsmen- **Exodus 35:30-35.**
- God continues to anoint His children today with all kinds of talents and abilities.
- Trust God to take His calling for your life (career/trade) to the next level.

In Exodus chapter 40 we see the Tabernacle being set up under the watchful eye of Moses to ensure that God's requirements are fully met.

- When completed we see God's approval as His glory fills the Tabernacle- **Exodus 40:34-35.**
- The cloud by day and fire in the cloud by night is a reminder for us that God is our source.
- When He moves we ought to move with Him- **Exodus 40:36-38; Romans 8:14; Gal. 5:18.**

Lesson 14
The Sacrifices

B. The Sacrifices

The law, Tabernacle, priesthood and sacrifice system were of the Old Covenant. But they pointed the Hebrew to the New Covenant when God, Himself, would come in the flesh.

- When He came, He would do away with these temporary provisions that pointed to Him.
- The imperfect Old Covenant would be replaced by a perfect, everlasting, New Covenant.
- It's unfortunate that many Christians still have an inordinate affinity of the OT- **Luke 5:39.**

The Tabernacle was a physical representation showing us the way to God. We now want to learn about the sacrifices which are so strange to our western minds- doesn't seem logical to our culture do they?

1. Background

- In the beginning, God created a perfect universe that was orderly and harmonious.
- But man chose to rebel (sin) against God's will; resulted in chaos and destruction.
- God told Adam, the day he sinned by eating the forbidden fruit he would die- **Genesis 2:17.**
- The penalty for sin is death, the evidence that the penalty has been paid- blood. **Heb. 12:24.**

God's Dilemma
Now God is a God of order and He cannot tolerate rebellion in His universe- it must be dealt with and punished. Otherwise, the universe would slip into chaos and God would cease to be God.

- Now that would not be love would it- to overlook a little sin.
- Winking at little sins, overlooking white lies, as long as it does not hurt anybody is no big deal
- This is seriously flawed thinking, very convenient to the perpetrator isn't it. Relative moralism
- Theme of a me-centric generation that follows its own path of virtue and happiness- not new!
    - **Job 21:14; 22:17; Judges 17:6; Proverbs 21:2; Isaiah 53:6; 56:11-12.**

Proverbs 29:18
"Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law."

- God can't allow chaos to ensue in His universe, so rebellion and sin must be punished.
- God is also a God of love, He loves man, but He must punish man for man's rebellion.
- He cannot exercise His love at the expense of His justice, so He made provision for man's sin.
- God knew it would happen so He planned ahead on how to deal with it- **Romans 5:6.**
    - Revelation 13:8, *"... the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world."*

God's Plan
God's plan says, "Although the penalty for sin is death, you're doomed, but you don't have to pay it. I'll come to earth and pay it for you. I'll purchase your salvation with my own blood- Life."

From the beginning, God determined that He would provide Himself, His own blood to save us from sin.

This is God's provision and is the "out" God ordained for man because it satisfies His perfect love without violating His perfect justice- **Galatians 4:4-5; 1 Peter 1:18-20.**

- He determined that at a certain time in history, He would become the "Lamb of God" **Jn. 1:29**
- Before Jesus came, all who have believed and accepted God's plan in their heart- saved!
- Today we look back to what Jesus had done around, confessing Jesus as Lord- **Romans 10:9.**
- For those who try to dictate their own salvation, lost- **Luke 7:30; 19:44; Romans 10:1-3.**

Jesus had first came as a Lamb to take away their sins, upon His second coming, He would come as a Lion to rid the world of spiritual darkness.

God Gives a Preview
God gave us a preview of His plan from the very beginning as He tells us about it- Gen. chapter 3. Here is what happened, when Adam and Eve sinned, they covered themselves with leaves and hid from God.

- Fig leaves was their way of covering their sin, it stands for manmade religion- doesn't work.
- God immediately explains to them the only solution for the sin problem- blood sacrifice!

He must kill an innocent animal and accept its blood in substitute as a temporary covering of their sin.

- So God killed an animal and showed it to Adam and Eve.
- Now Adam and Eve had never seen death before, they were not accustomed to it.
- It must have made them sick to see life taken away from one of God's creatures.

Genesis 3:21- The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

- Their clothing was a constant reminder that innocent life was shed to cover their sin/shame.
- Even though the Genesis account given through Moses does not give us the details.
- I believe He had Adam watch Him kill the animal, and then said something like this:

"Adam, you remember I told you the penalty for sin is death? Well, this is what I'm talking about, horrible, isn't it? Makes your stomach draw into knots, doesn't it? I don't like it any more than you do, but the wrath from my violated justice must be satisfied."

"Now do you understand how horrible sin is in My sight? I can't even stand to look at it. And those fig leaves you are wearing can't hide your sins. Because when I look at you with those fig leaves, I don't see the proper evidence that the price has been paid. I still see your sins and My eyes are too holy to look at you. So your way of covering your sins is not acceptable. But if you will accept this dead animal as your sin substitute for now, I'll let it pay the price for you; I'll let it temporarily cover your sins until I come Myself and take them away permanently."

- It would be an imperfect substitute and only cover sin;
- However, it would point everybody in the right direction, to look for Jesus to take sin away.
- Then when He came along Himself, He would be the perfect substitute.
- His blood would do more than just cover sin. It would take it away.
- Then Praise God, no more sacrifices would be needed.

Hebrews 9:22 AMP
[In fact] under the Law almost everything is purified by means of blood, and without the shedding of blood there is neither release from sin and its guilt nor the remission of the due and merited punishment for sins.

At this time, He evidently instructed Adam to bring an acceptable sacrifice and later when children would come along, Adam would teach them to do the same.

- This was because all of humanity would now inherit Adam's sin nature- **Ro. 5:12; Eph 2:3.**
- All would require the innocent substitutionary sacrifice.

Even remote cultures around the world understand the ancient rite of sacrifice to appease the wrath of a god; even though it is not the God of the Bible they are sacrificing to- **1 Corinthians 10:20.**

- How did they learn this, if not passed down from generation to generation from beginning.
- Unfortunately, over time it was perverted and included human sacrifice.
    - **Deuteronomy 18:9-13; Jeremiah 7:31; 19:5; 32:35.**
- Even in the case of Isaac, God stopped Abraham; God would only accept Jesus' sacrifice.
- So this is why religious works to earn God's favor or nullify sin can never work!
- So from the beginning, man has known to approach God through the blood covenant.
- The spilling of blood of an innocent victim on behalf of the guilty.

Adam Teaches His Sons
As time passed, Adam and Eve became the proud parents of two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain was the oldest and took up farming as a livelihood. Abel was a shepherd- **Genesis 4:1-2.**

- Now Adam had to learn things the hard way about the spiritual facts of life.
- To spare his children the same heartache, he was obedient to teach them- blood covenant.
- So in **Genesis 4:3-4**, we find two young men bringing an offering to God.

Abel Accepts the Covenant
Abel brought the best lambs from his flock, so God approved of Abel's offering because this was the way He established for sinful man to approach Him.

- Abel was accepted by God, not by his own goodness- based on the innocent blood sacrifice.
- Nor did God show partiality or favoritism to Abel, nor was it Sovereign predestination.
- It was the divinely ordained substitutionary sacrifice that made Abel acceptable to God.
- The blood was the evidence that the penalty for sin had been paid- righteousness- **Heb. 11:4.**

Cain Rejects the Covenant
Contrary to his younger brother, Cain rejected God's way- he rejected the blood covenant. Instead of bringing an Innocent sacrifice, he brought the fruit of his own labor.

- Cain probably brought his very best, but it represented his own good works.
- Cain's best goodness could not measure up to a perfect, absolute holy God- nor can we.
- But just as God rejected Adam and Eve's fig leaves, He also rejected Cain's offering of fruit.
- The fruit offering did not satisfy the wrath of God's violated justice.
- So the very best Cain had to offer of his own merit was not good enough.
- There was no evidence that the penalty for sin had been paid- no innocent blood was shed.
- Cain was trying to approach God with his own self-righteousness- man doing it ever since.
- Sound familiar, Cain represents all the works based religions of the world.

It was sinful man trying to approach a Holy God on his own good works rather than through the blood of an Innocent substitutionary sacrifice.

- God's rejection angered Cain, so he became outraged against God. God reasons with him.

God gave him a chance to repent, and probably said something like, "Cain, it's just like I told your parents. Our fellowship is restored by My grace and through your faith in accepting My way. It is My gift, not your works, so instead of boasting about how good a farmer you are, just accept My provision for you- a blood sacrifice. If you don't, your own pride will ultimately destroy you." **Genesis 4:5-8.**

- As you can see in the above verse, that Cain wouldn't repent because evil had filled his heart.
- He would not confess his need for God's provision and humble himself and admit his need.
- When his pride turned to hate, he killed his brother; religion has been killing ever since.
    - **Mark 15:10; John 8:31- 47; Acts 17:5; 1 John 3:12.**
- God was left with no choice but to drive Cain from His presence in **Genesis 4:8-24.**
- We see the makings of a population of rebellious God haters that brings on Noah's flood.
- God gives a solemn reminder Jude 11-13, *"Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain…"*

Job 22:15-17- "Will you keep to the old path that evil men have trod? They were carried off before their time, their foundations washed away by a flood. They said to God, 'Leave us alone! What can the Almighty do to us?'"

The Covenant Continued
God gave Adam and Eve another son to replace Abel- his name was Seth. Seth's descendants called upon the name of the Lord according to **Genesis 4:26.**

- Accepting God's covenant through blood; offered an innocent substitutionary sacrifice for sin.
- One of Seth's descendants was Noah, walked with God, the only righteous man left- **Gen 6:9.**
- What do you think Noah did as his first act on dry land after the flood was over?
- He offered a blood sacrifice unto God, he took notice and was pleased- **Genesis 8:20-21.**
- All the patriarchs practiced blood sacrifice, God counted it unto them as righteousness.
    - **Genesis 26:24-25; 31:54; 33:20; 35:7; 46:1.**

This is why God could introduce Himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob- **Ex. 3:15.**

- Moses asked the Pharaoh for permission to sacrifice in the desert- **Exodus 3:18.**
- During the Passover, every believing Hebrew family offered a sacrifice to God- protection.

Form the very beginning of man's history, God ordained the innocent, substitutionary sacrifice as a basis of faith to come into right standing with God apart from human effort- religious works.

- It also afforded the means to teach and prepare humanity for God's ultimate plan of God.
- Consummated in Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God, slain from the foundations of the world.

Since our educational system and many churches do not teach these ancient Biblical principles, it is imperative that we do so in order to truly appreciate and understand God's redemptive plan.

2. The Sacrifice System

- Now God is going to make things even clearer by establishing an elaborate sacrifice system.
- The sacrificial system would have five types of sacrifices.
- Each sacrifice would uniquely reveal something about the nature of the final sacrifice- Jesus.
- Taken as a whole, they would form a complete picture of the perfect sacrifice.
- That way everybody would recognize Him when He came on the scene.
- This system called for 1,273 public sacrifices a year- **Numbers 28-29.**
- 2,000,000 public sacrifice ceremonies: from the inception to consummation at Calvary.

It included sacrifices each morning and evening, each Sabbath, the first day of each month and during the special feasts days of assembly and celebration.

- Once Jesus made the last sacrifice of Himself, animal sacrifice is no longer needed.
- Under the New Covenant, we offer ourselves as living sacrifices- **Romans 12:1-2.**
- In addition to the official public sacrifices, there were millions of individual offerings.
- Their number was staggering; so it was a continual blood bath.
- As a result, God's message concerning redemption from sin rang out loud and clear.
- God was making it clear that man can only approach Him through an innocent blood sacrifice.

The Old Covenant
The five types of offerings were…Sin Offering…Trespass/Guilt Offering…Burnt Offering…Meal/Grain Offering…Peace/Fellowship Offering. These offerings were to be the physical outward expressions of the longings of the inward heart in seeking communion with God.

- Sin Offering and Trespass Offering were mandatory offerings- sins of the nation/individual.
- Burnt , Meal and Peace Offerings were voluntary offerings of praise and thanksgiving.
- They were not associated with the individual's sin but were part of his worship to God.
- 3/5 of the offerings were associated with praise/worship rather than sin; pattern for us today.

Hebrews 13:15-16- Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise- the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

- The Old Covenant sacrifices had to keep being made, could never take away sins- only cover.
    - **Isaiah chapter 1; Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 7:27; 10:1-4.**
- That is why when the Old Covenant saints died, they did not go to heaven- **Luke 16:19-31.**
    - The only exceptions we know of is Enoch and Elijah.
- At the resurrection of Jesus all those in Abraham's Bosom were released- **Ephesians 4:8-10.**

The New Covenant
In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born as a Jew- **Galatians 4:4.** All the fullness of God dwelled in Him. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself- **2 Cor. 5:19.**

- He came to purchase our salvation with His own blood- there is no other way.
    - **Mt. 20:28; Acts 4:12; Col. 1:15-20; 2:9; 1 Timothy 2:6; Heb. 9:15; Rev. 5:9.**
- All the Old Covenant sacrifices and Messianic prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus.
    - **Matthew 5:117-18; Luke 24:25-27; Acts 3:24-25.**
- God knew exactly what He was going to do when He would come to offer Himself.
- This is why He gave such specific details on how to offer each sacrifice- pointed to Him.
- This is how the entire Old Covenant points to Jesus.

If you wanted someone to recognize you, you would tell them everything about yourself in advance. Then when you arrived on the scene, they would know who you are.

Luke 24:44
He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."

- Let's now look at the specific offerings in turn as if you were an Old Covenant Hebrew.

3. The Sin Offering- **Leviticus 4:1-5, 13; 6:24-30**

- You present the Sin offering to God because you are a sinner.
- The Ten Commandments made that very clear, though you tried to keep them, you can't.
- Maybe you never killed anybody, but you wanted to on occasion.
    - And that's what the commandments were all about.
- They were concerned with what you wanted to do, not so much with what you actually did.
- So in order to approach a holy God, you must have a Sin Offering- **Leviticus 4:13-14.**

You see before knowing Jesus, you were not a sinner because you had sinned; but you sinned because you were a sinner. That's who you were, it was your nature. You inherited it from Adam.

- The offering you bring must be spotless, with no defects or blemishes- foreshadows Jesus.
- As you bring your offering to the Altar, the priest is waiting to meet you.
- Next, you place the offering on the Altar and lay (heavily lean) your hands on its head.
- As you cut its throat, you personally identify with the animal; it should be you dying instead.
- By faith your sins are being symbolically transmitted to this animal; dying in your place.
- You feel him dying on your behalf; grateful for the innocent substitutionary sacrifice.
- Except for the grace of God, you would be on that Altar paying the price for your own sins.

- As you kill the animal, the priest is standing there with you in order to catch the blood.
- He sprinkles some of it on the horns of the altar; pours out what is left at the base of the Altar.
- Then the priest takes the fat of the inward parts of your sacrifice and burns it on the Altar.
- The Middle-Eastern Hebrew considered the fat as the choicest part of the animal.
- It protected the vital life giving organs; the inward parts represented the heart of the animal.
- So symbolically you are giving your sinful heart to God on the Altar.
- The sacrifice has to be taken outside the camp away from the presence of God.
- Taken beyond the gate and camp to a place where ashes are brought from the Altar.
- God has declared this place to be ceremonially clean because of the ashes- sin dealt with.

Now the priest was always rewarded for the service he performed. Except for his portion, the entire animal was burned outside the camp at the place of ashes.

- All of the animal had to be burned because it represented sin- God consumed all the sacrifice.
- You get none of the offering yourself because that would indicate communion with God.
- And God cannot commune where there is sin- **Romans 3:23-24; 6:23.**
- Since Jesus had never sinned, He was a perfect sacrifice without spot or blemish- **Heb. 4:15.**
- Jesus Christ is our perfect sin offering- **1 Peter 1:18-20.**
- The blood on the horns of the Altar looked ahead to the blood of Jesus on the cross.

As the blood is poured out at the foot of the Altar, all His blood was poured out at the foot of the cross.

- Fulfilling the Sin offering, Jesus went beyond gate of the Temple, outside the camp, Jerusalem
- There, high upon a hill called Calvary, God placed the sin of the world upon Jesus.
- All sins past, present and future and He endured the wrath of God almighty.
    - **John 1:29; Romans 8:3-4; Hebrews 13:11-14; Isaiah 53:4-6, 10-11.**
- Jesus as our total sacrifice was consumed as He became sin with our sin, placed upon Him.

Just as the priest placed his hands on the sacrifice confessing the sins of the people before it was slain, so the Father placed all the sin of the world upon Jesus and sacrificed Him on our behalf.
Leviticus 16:21-22; 2 Corinthians 5:21.

God the Father could not look upon Jesus as our Sin Offering. Jesus, as our Sin Offering, cried out from the cross- **Matthew 27:46.** First time in all eternity that Jesus was separated from the God-Head.

The torment of the cross was nothing compared to the unimaginable anguish of this separation.

- Jesus took on our sin nature when He became sin for us- He became who we were.
- In terms of blood covenant, we exchanged spiritual natures at the cross.
- Remember in blood covenant, I take off my coat or robe and give it to you.
- Now to the Hebrew, a person's robe represents the person.
- When Jesus was crucified, He took our robe of sin (sin nature) self-righteousness- **Isa. 64.6.**
- In exchange, we received His perfect robe of righteousness, God now sees us as He sees Jesus
    - **Isaiah 61:10; John 5:24; Romans 8:1; Hebrews 10:1-20.**
- The New Birth is a rebirth of the human spirit, brand new spiritual nature- **2 Cor. 5:17-21.**
- Claiming Jesus' death on our behalf, is being crucified with Him- **Galatians 2:20.**
- Our sins are no longer put to our account, they were put to His account on the cross.
- Therefore, God does not see us as sinners, He sees us clean, holy and righteous- by grace/faith
- We can never in all eternity improve upon what God has already done in via New Birth.
- Entrance into heaven requires absolute perfection; the New Birth accomplishes this.

We are not sinners saved by grace, rather we were sinners, but now by God's grace we are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus- **Hebrews 10:10; 1 Peter 2:24.**

Without being clothed with the righteousness of Christ, we have no right to be in heaven or enjoy reconciliation with God- **Matthew 22:11-14. Romans chapter 4.**

- That does not mean we are fully mature believers when we receive God's free gift of salvation
- Still have to grow in the knowledge of God, learn to walk like Jesus- **1 Jn. 2:6; Eph. 4:13-16.**
- We approach God through faith in the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from our sins- not works.
- When we accept Jesus as our Savior we give Him our heart; not acquiesce to a historical man.
- Through child-like faith we offer absolute surrender, desperate abandonment, cling to Jesus.

The greatest horror story in the history of the world is when a person chooses to pay for their own sins by rejecting Jesus as their sacrifice- **John 8:24; Galatians 2:16-21; 3:15-25.**

- Now that we have been crucified with Christ, we no longer have to serve sin- **Romans 6.**
- It no longer has dominion over us, unless we allow it to by our own free will.
- Jesus is our perfect, complete, once for all time sin offering.
- **Isaiah 53; Galatians 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Hebrews 9-10; 13:8-15; 1 Peter 2:24.**

4. The Trespass or Guilt Offering- Leviticus 5:14-19; 7:1-10

Whereas the Sin Offering deals with your position before God as a sinner by nature, the Trespass Offering addresses your walk with God, affected by individual sins committed.

- You offer it for the sins you have committed, rather than for sin itself.
- Old Covenant people of God were not born again as we are- still sinners by nature.
- When they sinned, they needed to bring a Trespass Offering for those specific sins.
- The New Covenant equivalent would be what Christians do when they sin- **1 John 1:9.**

As you lay your hands on the offering, identifying yourself with it, you confess your particular sins.

Statement of confession offered to God is, "O Jehovah, I have sinned, I have done perversely, rebelled and have committed (naming the sins). But I return in repentance and let this be for my atonement."

- Confessing your sins removes the burden of guilt and it brings continuous forgiveness.
- This allows you to approach God with a clear conscience.
- The priest offers the fat of the inward parts to God upon the Altar.
- Sprinkling blood back & forth on the Altar & pours out the remainder at the base of the Altar.
- The priest eats the remainder of the offering as a reward for their service.
- But you do not share in the offering because it is for sins you have committed.

Along with the offering, you must make restitution for any harm you may have done to a fellow Hebrew. This includes reimbursing him in full and adding twenty percent to the value of his loss.

- This brings about a reconciliation between you and the one you have harmed- **Lev. 6:1-7.**
- The Sin offering and Trespass Offering you express your desire for communion with God.
- You know that the blood of animals is only a temporary provision to cover you sins.
- You are looking forward to the time when the perfect sacrifice will come to take them away.

Jesus not only took on our sin nature, but He also took on all the sins that we have or will ever commit.

- He died not for who we were but also for what we have done.
- In the Sin Offering Jesus Christ destroyed the power of sin over us- **Isaiah 53:6; 1 John 3:10.**
- The Bibles calls it iniquity or the sin nature- Satan's crooked, perverse and twisted nature.
- We no longer need to serve our old nature because it was crucified with Christ- **Gal. 2:20.**
- Yet, we still sin, when we do, we need a Trespass Offering. Jesus is our Trespass Offering.
    - Colossians 1:14, *"…in whom we have redemption, the remission of sins."*
- Covers all past, present and future sins- **Colossians 2:13-15; Psalms 103:12; Isaiah 43:25.**

2 Corinthians 5:19 (TLB)
For God was in Christ restoring (reconciling) the world to himself, no longer counting men's sins against them but blotting them out. This is the wonderful message he has given us to tell others.

There is a power Biblical truth concerning 'Remittance' which is an accounting term that means to blot out or erase like it was never there.

- God's amazing grace this is what He does with our sins through the precious blood of Jesus.
- Not only has God forgiven us of all our sins, but He doesn't even remember them.
- He blotted them from His memory; animal blood can't do it- **Hebrews 10:11-14, 17-18.**
- When we sin, the Scriptures tell us that our own heart will condemns us- **1 John 3:19-22.**

Jesus stated that the Holy Spirit would convict the world of the one sin (**John 16:8-11**) that is left for unbelievers to commit, the one sin that sends them to hell- the sin of rejecting Jesus as their Lord/Savior.

- He already bore all the sins of the world, all that is left for man now is confess Jesus as Lord.
- The Bible never tells the sinner to confess their sins to God- **Romans 10:9-10; Eph . 2:8-9.**
- Perfect righteousness, reconciliation, justification, sanctification; included in salvation.
- When we do sin we have a promise; **1 John 1:9** for the believer to confess their sins to God!
- Watch out for false condemnation; Satan trying to take advantage of Christians.

When we confess our sins to God our fellowship that was broken by sin is now restored; we continue to be a child of God, so our relationship is intact even when we sin- keep door shut- **Eph. 4:27; Jn. 10:10**

Along with our confession to our Heavenly Father, we must also confess our sins and make restitution to anyone we may have harmed by our sins. Jesus spoke of this in **Matthew 5:23-24.**

- The danger of unconfessed sin is that it hardens our hearts - **Hebrews 3:13.**
- When this happens, the root of bitterness begins to take hold- **Hebrews 12:15.**
- That's just the foothold Satan needs to destroy us and create strife with another person.
- As a result, our faith & prayers won't work- M**ark 11:25; Galatians 5:6; 1 Peter 3:7.**
- Well, God has a better life for us than that- **Ephesians 4:31-32; James 5:16.**

Many people desire to commune with God by accepting Jesus as their Sin Offering & Trespass Offering. They realized they could not save themselves and so they turned to Jesus Christ as their Savior.

- Yet they are not experiencing the abundant Christian life the Bible promises.
- They are not enjoying the spiritual blessings God has for them.
- Have not appropriated Jesus Christ as their Burnt Offering, Meal Offering and Peace Offering.
- Remember that these are voluntary offerings of praise and thanksgiving.
- They are not associated with our sin, but with our worship to God.
- God won't force us to worship Him. We must choose to do so of our own free will.

Yet the only way to experience the abundant Christian life is by expressing our readiness to have it through these offerings.

5. The Burnt Offering- Leviticus 1:3-17; 6:8-13

- The Burnt Offering expresses your readiness for communion with God.
- It is a voluntary offering of yourself. God doesn't force you to make this offering.
- The offering you bring is a bull, lamb, or goat. The poor, may bring a turtledove or pigeon.
- These are not wild animals, but domesticated pets you have personally raised.
- As with all the offerings, they must be spotless, without defects or blemishes.

As you bring the animal you have raised from its youth to the Altar, you lay your hands on its head to identify with it. If the offering is a lamb, you kill it on the north side of the Altar.

- The priest catches the blood and sprinkles it roundabout and upon the Altar.
- Then the priest skins the animal to expose all of its inward parts.
- He then carefully dissects the animal checking each part to make sure it is free from defects.
- Finally, he burns the entire animal on the Altar, except for the skin.

So also Jesus was carefully examined by the religious leaders to look for a flaw, a crack or any tiny issue that would disqualify Him from being the Messiah- **Luke 11:53-54; 20:39-40; 1 Peter 1:19.**

- Entire animal is offered as an expression of your readiness to present your entire being to God
- Nothing can be held in reserve if you want to commune with Him.
- The smoke from the Burnt Offering ascends as a sweet aroma to God- **Leviticus 1:9.**
- For his service, the priest receives the skin of the offering; evidence of the sacrifice made.
- Since an entire sacrifice is offered to God, there is no portion left for you.
- Jesus Christ voluntarily left His home in glory to become our Burnt Offering- **Php. 2:5-8.**

As the animal was killed on the north side of the Altar, Jesus, too was crucified on the north side of Jerusalem. He perfectly fulfilled every detail of the Old Covenant- **John 4:34; 6:38; Ephesians 5:2.**

As Jesus offered Himself to God with no reservations, so we must do the same concerning our own lives- **Ephesians 1:14; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20**

- As a Burnt Offering, we lay ourselves open for God to inspect us- **Psalms 139:23-24.**
- Jesus as our Burnt Offering- **Psalm 40:6-8; John 4:34; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 9-10.**

6. The Meal or Grain Offering- Leviticus 2; 6:14-23

At this point you've expressed a desire for communion with God through the Sin Offering and Trespass/ Guilt Offering. You then expressed a readiness for communion with God through the Burnt Offering.

- You now come to the Meal or Grain Offering.
- The Meal Offering symbolizes your walk in communion with God.
- The Meal Offering was the only offering without blood.
- However, it was only offered along with the Burnt Offering.
- The offering consisted of fine flour mingled with oil.
- Salt was added for seasoning and frankincense for spice.

You offer it as raw flour, or as unleavened cakes and wafers that have been baked, fried, or roasted. No leaven or honey could be used in the flour.

- In the Bible, leaven or yeast represents sin. Honey with leaven represents the pleasures of sin.
    - **Matthew 16:6; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Revelation l0:9-10.**
- As the perfect Meal Offering, Jesus knew no sin according to **2 Corinthians 5:21.**
- The Bible uses oil as a symbol of the Holy Spirit.
- In place of the leaven and honey, Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit- **Mt. 3:17; Luke 4:18-19**
- As oil was poured on the flour of the Meal Offering, it was poured upon Jesus- **Acts 10:38.**
- Salt preserves and purifies from corruption. Jesus is our salt, keeps us from falling- **Jude 24.**
- Salt relates to our position with God; this is the "sealing" with the Holy Spirit.
    - **Ephesians 1:13; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:22; 1 Peter 1:5.**
- We are called the salt of the earth by Jesus Himself; our walk with God- **Matthew 5:13.**

Since the Meal Offering represents your walk with God by His might and power and for His glory alone, you do not share in the meal. Jesus lived in total surrender to the Father's will- **John 4:34; 8:29.**

- Having properly prepared the offering, you present it to the priest.
- The priest offers a handful to God and eats the remainder; represents the whole offering.
- In **John 12:24**, Jesus was speaking of His death and resurrection.
- He perfectly fulfilled the Meal Offering by becoming the bread of life for us to feed on.

As there was no leaven or honey found in Him, neither should there be any found in us. This means to walk with God in the power of the Holy Spirit- **1 Corinthians 10:13; James 1:13.**

- Since we live in the Spirit we should also walk in the Spirit according to **Galatians 5:16-25.**
- To make the Meal Offering a reality in our life, live Spirit-Filled life- **Ephesians 5:18.**
- Only when we allow Him to control our life, experience fellowship with God- **Col. 3:1-3.**
- There is nothing sweeter than God's presence- **Psalms 16:11; 63:3; 84:10.**
- It becomes our motivation to want to come out from the world and be separate- **2 Cor. 6:17.**
- It moves us to be holy as He is Holy- **1 Peter 1:16; 2:9.**
- Like frankincense, our lives will be a sweet fragrance to our heavenly Father- **2 Cor. 2:14-16**
- Jesus as our Meal Offering- **John 4:34; 8:29; 12:23-24; Luke 4:18; Eph. 5:2; 1 Peter 2:22.**

7. The Peace or Fellowship Offering- Leviticus 3; 7:11-36

By the time you come to the Peace Offering, you have expressed a desire for communion with God through the Sin and Trespass Offerings. You have expressed a readiness for communion through the Burnt and Meal Offerings. You are now going to celebrate that communion through the Peace Offering.

- All the other offerings have been leading to the Peace offering.
- This is the one you have been looking forward to presenting- you get a portion of it.
- It symbolizes the completion of your union the Lord and the celebration of it with Him.
- But first you had to be cleansed of your sins and offer your total being to God.
- This is what you've always wanted. This is why you made the other offerings.

Through the Peace Offering, the cry and yearning of your heart is met as you enter into communion with God by sharing in this offering.

- With noticeable anticipation, you hurriedly lay your hands on the head of the animal and kill it
- The priest catches the blood and sprinkles it all around and upon the Altar.
- He then takes the fat, places it on the Altar and offers it to God.
- You now offer to God the breast and right shoulder of your sacrifice with the priest's help.
- The breast represents your heart; the right shoulder, your strength.

The priest places his hands under yours, and together you move the sacrifice up and down, right and left, in a waving motion resembling a ''T''.

- The High Priest receives the breast and the right shoulder goes to the priest, who helped you.
- You also bring unleavened cakes and wafers mixed with oil plus loaves of leavened bread.

There, in the courtyard of the Tabernacle, you eat the remainder of the sacrifice along with the loaves with your family and friends. It is a time of great joy as together you celebrate communion with God.

- God has returned part of the offering, you now are symbolically feeding on His divine nature.
- He is coming into you and you into Him. You are becoming one with God- the ultimate goal.
- When Jesus was born, all of heaven gave praise to God in **Luke 2:14.**
- God's favor rests on all who have accepted Jesus as their Peace Offering.
- He is the "true meat and drink" that satisfies the longings of the human heart- **Jn. 6:53-63.**
- This is the offering we've been looking for, all the other offerings were leading up to this one.
    - **Ephesians 1:3; 2 Peter 1:2-4.**

In the Peace offering, the breast and right shoulder that were waved before God in a "T" motion, looked ahead to the cross of Jesus; where He suffered as our sin sacrifice- **Psalms 22:14-15.**

- Just as the breast & shoulder were given back to the priest, so we were given back to Jesus.
- Through His intercession on our behalf, we can cast all our cares upon Him- **Php. 4:13.**
    - **1 Peter 5:7; Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34; 1 Timothy 2:5-6.**
- We may now walk in peace with Him and with each other- **John 14:27; 16:33.**
- Jesus as our Peace Offering- **Luke 2:14; Col. 1:16-23; 3:15; Eph. 2:14; Ro. 5:1-2.**
- When Jesus gave Himself as the perfect sacrifice, He fulfilled the Old Covenant.
- We no longer worship a system but a person, Jesus Christ- **Hebrews 10:5-7.**

Both Jew and Gentile can now enter into a New Covenant as a new creation, as one new man through the blood of Jesus, the once and for all perfect sacrifice!

Lesson 15
The Priesthood

C. The Priesthood

So far we have learned that when God gave the law, He also established a Tabernacle, a sacrifice system and a priesthood.

- The Tabernacle was a physical representation showing the people how to approach God.
- Tabernacle worship centered around the offerings; uniquely revealed something about Jesus.
- God chose Aaron and his sons to serve Him exclusively as priests- **Exodus 28:1; 29:9.**
- Aaron was the first High Priest. At his death, he would be succeeded by his oldest son.
- This way the priesthood could be passed down from generation to generation.
- Aaron's sons were to begin their priestly responsibilities at the age of 30- **Numbers 4:3.**

When Aaron and his sons were consecrated, or set apart for their priestly office, they along with their priestly garments were sprinkled with blood- **Exodus 28-29; Leviticus 8.**

- This was a necessary part of the ceremony because they were sinners themselves.
- You see, the priests were to be the mediator between God and man.
- Yet God, in His holiness, could not receive them unless their sins were covered by blood.
- Yet it pointed the entire nation to a future time, when a perfect priest would come.
- Set Himself apart and give His own blood as the perfect mediator between God and man.

1. The Old Covenant High Priestly Garments

- The Central figure in the Old Covenant system was the High Priest- **Exodus 28.**
- Very important because he represented the nation before God.
- He wore seven different pieces of clothing. Seven represents perfection in the Bible.
- So symbolically, the High Priest was perfectly clothed for his position.
- His garments consisted of fine linen beautifully interwoven with blue, gold, scarlet & purple.
- Their glory and beauty gave the proper dignity and honor to the High office- **Exodus 28:2.**
- They also uniquely revealed something about the nature of the perfect High Priest- Jesus!

Like the sacrifices, when taken as a whole, they formed a complete picture of the one who would be greater than Aaron.

- The High Priest wore white breeches of fine linen next to his body.
- Over the linen breeches, he wore a white coat of fine linen that hung to his feet.
- This was his ordinary dress as well as the dress of the other priests.
- In the Bible, fine white linen represents perfect righteousness- **Revelations 19:8.**
- The High Priest wore a blue robe over his coat. The blue color speaks of heaven.
- It represents a heavenly appointment by God Himself who selected Aaron as the High Priest.

The blue robe hung slightly above the white coat. Embroidered on the bottom of the robe were golden bells alternating with pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet. Gold represents deity.

The purple and scarlet refer to royalty and blood sacrifice. These colors pointed ahead to the time when God, Himself would come from heaven to establish a kingdom with His own blood.

- High Priest walked back and forth inside the Tabernacle, the people outside could not see him.
- But they could hear the bells jingling. And as long as they heard the bells jingling- Alive!
- Over his robe, the High Priest wore a short sleeveless jacket, called an ephod.
- The ephod was made of beaten gold, cut into thin wires and woven into fine linen.
- Consisted of two pieces, front and back, that were joined at the shoulders by two gold chains.
- Two onyx stones were set in gold and fastened to the ephod at the shoulders.

The names of the 12 tribes of Israel were engraved with a seal on these stones, six names on each stone.

- Ephod reached from the shoulders to below the waist, hanging slightly above the blue robe.
- A sash of fine linen fastened around the ephod.
- Sash served as a reminder, the High Priest was a servant of both God and the nation of Israel.
- A gold breast plate, also of blue, purple, and scarlet was attached to the ephod.
- Twelve beautiful stones were attached to the breast plate.
- The name of one of the 12 tribes was engraved with a seal on each stone.
- The stones were attached in four rows with three stones to a row.

As the High Priest interceded for the people, he symbolically carried the entire nation into the presence of God. The stones on his shoulders symbolized his strength. Those over his heart represented his love.

- The seventh article of clothing was a turban (mitre) worn as a head piece.
- A gold plate was attached to the turban with a blue ribbon.
- The words "HOLINESS TO THE LORD" were engraved with a seal on the gold plate.
- It was the crowning piece of the garments of glory and beauty.

By wearing it on his forehead, the High Priest would symbolically bear the guilt of any unclean sacrifices made to God- it also made him acceptable before God.

So we see that when the High Priest was set apart for his office, he, along with his garments of glory and beauty, were sprinkled with blood.

- Ministering on behalf of the people before God as the holy and righteous representative.
- God accepted the covenant people in their priest.

2. The Day of Atonement

- The High Priest had many duties and responsibilities that fell under his job description.
- His most important duty was to minister on the Day of Atonement- **Leviticus 16; 23:26-32.**
- Occurred on the 10th day of Tishri, which is the 7th month on the Hebrew religious calendar.
- This corresponds to the Gentile months September-October.
- The Day of Atonement is also known as the Day of Forgiveness- Jews call it "Yom Kipper."
- The most solemn of all days, covering for the sins of the entire nation of Israel.
- The one day of the year when the High Priest could go behind the veil into the Holy Holies.
- There he would offer the blood of the sin offering on the Mercy Seat.
- God would accept it as covering for the sins of the people.

The pressure was on the High Priest. If he made a mistake, the whole nation would be without forgiveness. So God gave detailed instructions to the High Priest.

The instructions pointed the nation to a Priest who would come as one greater than Aaron. When he came, everyone would recognize Him because He would perfectly fulfill every one of these instructions.

- Leviticus 16 describes the ceremony on the Day of Atonement.
- The High Priest is in complete charge of the service, he must perform it all by himself.
- No one can help him or touch him until the ceremony is completed.
- We will follow the events step by step; put yourself in the role of a Hebrew.

Come with me to the Tabernacle and together we will watch as our High Priest ministers on our behalf on the Day of Atonement.

High Priest Washes Himself Clean
First, the High Priest is to wash himself. The washing represents a symbolic cleansing of any ceremonial defilement. Therefore the High Priest is cleansed so that he might minister on behalf of the people.

Dresses for the Service
After washing, the High Priest dresses for the service. He puts on his linen breeches, his white robe, his sash and his turban.

- These are the clothes he will wear to represent the nation before God in the Holy of Holies.
- But notice that these are not his garments of glory and beauty.
- His blue robe with the beautiful colors, golden bells pomegranates embroidered on the bottom
- Neither does he put on his glorious ephod and breast plate.
- He is dressed very plainly in his white coat of fine linen, and he looks just like everybody else

Makes Sin Offering for Himself
Now that he is properly dressed for the occasion, the High Priest begins the ceremony. His first action is to sacrifice a bull as his own sin offering. You see, the High Priest is just a man.

- So he must make atonement for his own sins before he can represent the nation.
- As a man, he does understand your problems, he can identify with you and you with him.

Enters Holy of Holies
After the High Priest makes his sacrifice, he takes some of the blood of the sacrifice and carries it inside the Tabernacle. The High Priest cannot enter the Holy of Holies except on the Day of Atonement.

- First he must pass through the outer room called the Holy Place.
- He goes by the Golden Candlestick and Shewbread Table but stops at the Incense Altar.
- There he puts coals from the Altar into a golden censor and fills his hand with incense.
- Then he goes behind the veil into the inner-room called the Holy of Holies.

The Holy of Holies has only one piece of furniture- the Ark of the Covenant. It is a small chest about two feet high, two feet wide and four feet long. The lid of the Ark is called ‘‘The Mercy Seat.”

- A replica of a cherubim (angel) is attached to each end of the Mercy Seat.
- Their wings outstretch touching each other at the middle of the lid.
- Right between the two cherubims and above the Mercy Seat is the blinding light
- It is the manifested presence of God’s glory dwelling in the midst of the people.

The Holy of Holies is God’s earthly throne room, the Mercy Seat is His throne, and the great light is His visible presence. The glory of God is so bright that the High Priest cannot stand in His presence.

So as he goes into the room he puts incense over the hot coals in the golden censor. When the incense touches the coals, it completely fills the room with a fragrant white cloud of smoke.

- In the midst of it, the High Priest sprinkles the blood of his sin offering over the Mercy Seat.
- But before he can represent the nation, he must first make atonement for his own sins.
- Seven times he sprinkles the blood over the Mercy Seat.
- The number seven looks ahead to the perfect sacrifice that will come and take them away.
- To this point, the work of the High Priest has been for himself.
- It's all leading up to the main event of the day which is the sin offering for the nation.
- Having made atonement for his own sins, comes out of the tabernacle to the Brazen Altar.

Sin Offering for the Nation
Two goats are provided as one sin offering for the nation. One goat will be sacrificed to God while the other goat win be set free.

- The High Priest brings the two goats before the Altar at the entrance of the Tabernacle.
- There he casts lots to determine which goat will die and which will be let go.
- He places one of the goats on the Altar, heavily leans his hands on its head and kills it.
- The sins of the nation are symbolically being transmitted to this animal.
- He is dying in your place as he symbolically becomes your sin substitute.
- Then the High Priest takes the blood of the animal into the Holy of Holies.
- This is the most crucial moment of the biggest event of the year.

Not only is the High Priest nervous but you are nervous, particularly when the High Priest disappears from your view back into the Tabernacle. Forgiveness of sins is for the next year is all riding on this.

- You'd like to go in there with him and make sure he does it just right.
- You see, this is your sin he is atoning for, goes alone for the nation into the Holy of Holies.
- This same ritual is repeated year after year, the same intense moments in time.
- Surely there must be a real sacrifice, a real High Priest to put an end to this once and for all.

But for now you must stand on the outside believing, that the blood of a goat is going to cover your sins and bring you forgiveness before God.

Before God in the cloud of incense, the High Priest sprinkles the blood of the goat over the Mercy Seat.

- Under that Mercy Seat in the Ark of the Covenant are the stone tablets- 10 Commandments.
- These are the commandments that you and the nation of Israel have broken.
- The broken law is evidence of your rebellion and sin, and the penalty for sin is death.
- The wrath of God's violated Justice must be satisfied. The price must be paid.
- But God in His great grace has made a provision so that you don't have pay it.
- He has declared that the blood of the innocent sacrifice will take your place.
- Temporarily cover your sins, until the ultimate sacrifice in the future atones for them forever.
- Only the blood of Jesus actually takes those sins away, remits and blots them out.

Hebrews 8:12-13- "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear.

7 times the High Priest sprinkles the blood, innocent substitutionary sacrifice over the Mercy Seat. As God looks down from His cloud of glory, doesn't see evidence of your sins, instead He sees the blood.

The blood of the innocent sacrifice tells God that life has been given to pay the penalty. The blood covered Mercy Seat changes God's throne from one of judgment to one of mercy.

- Justice has been administered and God's wrath is vindicated or postponed for now.
- The High Priest then returns from inside the Tabernacle back into the courtyard.
- Goes directly to the Altar and smears the blood of the bull and goat on the horns of the Altar.
- Then he sprinkles blood upon the Altar seven times.
- This is a ceremonial cleansing of the Altar from the sinfulness of the nation.

The Scapegoat
Now the High Priest needs some way to visibly show you that your sins have been dealt with and separated from you. This is the purpose of the second goat.

- The High Priest lays his hands on the goat symbolically transmitting to it- everyone's sins.
- Then he sends the goat into the wilderness, and your sins symbolically go with it.
- The scapegoat is set free only because the first goat was sacrificed to the sins of the nation.
- Now the blood of the first goat represented you; symbolically applied through 1st goat.
- 2nd goat means that you are forgiven and your sins have been separated from you.

The High Priestly Garments
But just as you are becoming overjoyed with this glorious news, the High Priest disappears again. He goes back into the Tabernacle to remove his plain white coat and to wash himself.

- Would God accept what the High Priest has done on your behalf?
- Are you really forgiven for another year? Is God pleased? How will you know?
- By hearing the jingling of the bells as the High Priest puts on his garments of glory and beauty
- There in the Holy Place, puts on his beautiful blue robe with the gold bells and pomegranates.
- He puts on the ephod and breastplate with the stones bearing the name of your tribe.
- Symbolically he is carrying on his shoulders and over his heart.
- As he walks around inside the Tabernacle, you hear the jingling of the bells.
- Evidence that your High Priest is still alive and will soon be coming out to meet you.

A Burnt Offering
Finally as the High Priest appears in his garments of glory and beauty, great shouts of joy go out form the people. You've been forgiven for another year.

- To conclude the ceremony, the High Priest offers a burnt offering to the Lord.
- It is a sacrifice of praise that God receives as a sweet aroma- all is well.
- That is until next year, when it has to be done all over again!

A Shadow of Better Things to Come
Once again we see the inadequacy of the Old Covenant system. It is true the Ten Commandments were perfect; but they were written on tablets of stone rather than the fleshly tablets of the peoples' hearts.

2 Corinthians 3:3
You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

- The Tabernacle was just a temporary building, made with human hands.
- The sacrificial system of bulls and goats could never really take away sins.
- Job of the High Priest was never finished, same sacrifices year after year- **Heb. 10:1-4, 11-14.**

Aaron and his sons were imperfect. But God in His grace, accepted the people in their High Priest as their holy and righteous representative.

- Like the sacrifice system, it was only intended to be temporary system or stop-gap.
- Until the permanent solution presented Himself, JESUS! **Hebrews 7:11, 18-19.**
- Since Jesus lives forever, and is God, we now have absolute perfection- Praise God!
- Jesus never fails, grows tired or loses interest- **Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:23-26.**
- He always lives to make intercession for us, mediate and represent us to the Father!
- He is the One, the High Priestly garments were pointing to.

3. The New Covenant High Priestly Garments

Now a perfect High Priest has come to fulfill what the Old Covenant High Priest could not do. **Philippians 2:5-11; Isaiah 6:1-5** gives us some details.

- Jesus, being God lays aside all divine attributes to become a man, to identify with us.
- Peter, James and John saw Him transfigured on the mountain- **Matthew 17:2.**
- John also had a special vision of Jesus after His resurrection- **Rev. l4; 4:3; 1 Timothy 6:16.**
- Jesus laid aside His garments of glory and beauty to become a servant of mankind.
- To be a High Priest for us who would feel our infirmities and be tempted as we are.
- He would be a God we could identify with and who could identify with us.
- He experienced the full force of temptation having a weak human body that He indwelt.
- Jesus overcame every enticement and solicitation of sin that was thrown at Him- **Lk. 4:1-13.**

As a result, He was qualified to take our place and be our substitute in order to pay the penalty of sin by giving His life that canceled the sentence of death that hung over us- **Hebrews 4:15-16; 5:7-9.**

Dresses for the Service
At the same time Christ laid aside His glory, He dressed Himself for the perfect atonement service. He dressed for the service by preparing Himself a body and becoming one of us.

- The Master became the servant. The Son of God became the Son of Man.
- The Lord of Glory became a baby in a manger, and they called His name Jesus.
- Through the incarnation, the virgin birth, Jesus became as much human as you and I are.
- The hypostatic union- the union of Christ's divinity in human form- the God man.
- At the same time remained the Son of God just without all the supernatural enabling.
- He looked just like everybody else. Why you couldn't tell Him from the next guy.
- He didn't have a halo around His head, you know.

He just wore a plain white linen robe- just like the Old Covenant high priest did while carrying out his ministry. But no man spoke like this man, perfectly fulfilling the Old Covenant in His lifetime on earth.

- For the first 30 years, His life was very ordinary like those around Him.
- It was not until the Baptism of John that He started His ministry and was anointed.
- With the power of the Holy Spirit to start His earthly ministry- **Luke 3:23; 4:14; Acts 10:38.**

Symbolic Washing
John the Baptist, baptized Him in the Jordan River. In this way Jesus identified Himself with the Old Covenant High Priest who was washed in water on the day he was set apart for his priestly ministry.

- Jesus didn't need be cleansed, was already perfect, fulfilled types/shadows- **Mt. 3:13-15.**

4. The Sin Offering for the World

The High Priest after the seed of Aaron was a sinner just like everybody else; however, Jesus was a High Priest, being in nature God. He came from God the Father, He was God but also very man.

- He was perfectly righteous from within and knew no sin.
- Therefore, it was not necessary that He sacrifice for Himself- **Hebrews 7:27-28; 8:3-6.**
- Instead He sacrificed Himself for us, He who knew no sin became sin for us- **2 Cor. 5:21.**
- He became that once and for all perfect sacrifice, that removes sin from us forever.
- He got up on the altar by His own free will- that altar was the cross- sin offering for the world.
- He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
- On the morning of His resurrection, He appeared to Mary in **John 20:17.**

Like the Old Covenant High Priest, Jesus was on a mission until He had completed His work in the heavenly tabernacle- **Hebrews 8:1-2, 4-8.**

- Later that same evening Jesus appeared to His disciples; flesh & bone body- **Luke 24:39.**
- That's because all of His blood was poured out at the foot of the cross.
- Now that His work was over, they could touch and hold onto Him again.
- It happened just like it did in the Old Covenant except this was not the blood of a goat.
- On resurrection morning, He entered into that more perfect Tabernacle in heaven.

He went right into the heavenly Holy of Holies. It was the real High Priest, entering the real throne room of God, with the real sacrifice. The real sacrifice, His own blood that He sprinkled over the Mercy Seat.

- With His blood, He purchased our eternal redemption and salvation- **Revelation 5:9.**
- The Old has passed away, it was temporary- served its purpose, lead us to Jesus- **Gal. 3:19-25**
- The New Covenant is here to stay for all eternity; scars of Jesus testify to it- **Hebrews 8:13.**

When Jesus had given up His spirit on the cross by becoming sin for us, the great curtain in the temple that had separated the Holy place from the Holy of Holies was supernaturally torn in half- was thick.

- Signifying that sin which had separated us from Him was now taken away through Jesus.
    - **Matthew 27:50-54; Hebrews 10:19-22.**

In 70 AD the Romans came and besieged Jerusalem, the Roman commander Titus, literally flattened the entire city including the Temple of God- **Luke 19:41-45.**

- Which certainly served God's purpose, since Jesus had ushered in the New Covenant.
- We are now God's temple, which is way better than a physical building- **1 Cor. 6:19-20.**

Certificate of Debt
Someone dies and leaves a will, there must be evidence of the death before the will can be executed. Evidence that New Covenant can be executed, the blood of Jesus sprinkled on the Mercy Seat in heaven

All who claim His death as their personal sin substitute receive the gift of the will which is eternal life in union and communion with God.

Criminals in Roman jails: crimes and the number of years penalty were listed, nailed to their cell door. Each year the jailer would go by the cell door and mark off the time served until the debt had been paid.

- This paper was called a Certificate of Debt.
- When the time was served, jailor would take it to the judge who would stamp it "paid in full."
- Then the prisoner would be set free. This is what God has done for all who will receive it.
- He took our Certificate of Debt that lists all our sins and He nailed it to the cross of Jesus.
- When it was over, the He cried out, "It is finished" in **John 19:30.**
- In other words, our sin debt was paid in full for all who would receive this gift- **Col. 2:13-15.**
- All the sins that were committed before Jesus were handled in a special way- **Ro. 3:21-26.**

God in His justice dealt with all sin, past, present and future when he nailed them to the cross in Jesus.

- When Jesus said, "It is finished" He meant it, there is no longer a sin issue.
- The only question left for mankind is, "What are you going to do with Jesus?" **John 3:36.**
- Folks rejecting Jesus as their Savior will die in their sins and pay for them- **John 8:21-24.**
- It's the sin of rejecting Jesus as Lord and Savior that sends people to hell- **John 16:8-11.**

According to Romans, 10:9 salvation comes simply by confessing Jesus as Lord, not by confessing all your sins; it would be impossible to remember them all anyway.

The Perfect Atonement
We have been forgiven and made clean once and for all by blood of Jesus, He is the perfect sin offering. Through His blood, He has forever made us holy and righteous in the eyes of God- **Hebrews 10:8-10.**

- The blood of Jesus did what the blood of bulls and goats could never do.
- It didn't just cover sins, it took them away to be remembered no more.
    - **Psalms 103:12; Hebrews 8:12; 10:17.**
- The distance between east west cannot be measured- it is infinite.
- So is the distance that the blood of Jesus has removed us from our sins.
- No more bringing the same sacrifice year after year, as under the Old Covenant- **Heb. 9:24-28**

So when sins have been forgiven and forgotten, there is no need to offer more sacrifices to get rid of them. We are like the scapegoat. We are set free from sin- **Romans 6:7, 18, 22.**

The angels must have shouted for joy that day when Jesus went into the heavenly Holy of Holies with His own blood.

- His wounded, pierced, bruised body was the final burnt offering.
- God the Father received the sacrifice of His only begotten Son as a sweet aroma- **Eph. 5:2.**

The High Priestly Garments
The veil of the glory of God has now been lifted off of Jesus. As our High Priest, He has now put back on His garments of glory and beauty- **Hebrews 2:9; John 17:5.**

- God the Father exalted Him and given Him the name that is above every name- **Php. 2:10-11.**
- Jesus is now seated on a throne of glory at the Right Hand of God the Father.
- Jesus is seated because it is finished, He has already bought and paid for our redemption.
- He is not going to do anything more for our salvation and redemption.
- Jesus is also seated because He has triumphed over death, hell and the grave.

Revelation 1:18; Hebrews 2:14; 1 Corinthians 2:6-7; Ephesians 1:19-23; Colossians 3:1; 1 Corinthians 15:24-26; Acts 2:33-34, 5:31; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2.

5. The Perfect Priest

For unlike the Old Covenant High Priest, Jesus lives forever. Since He lives forever, He is always there to remind God the Father that He has paid for our sins with His own blood- **Hebrews 9:11-14.**

- He is exactly the kind of High Priest we need, not going to have a heart attack, be replaced.
- For God the Father has given Him the place of glory and honor in heaven- **1 John 2:1-2.**
- Jesus now ministers before God the Father as our holy and righteous representative.
- Bears our name on His shoulders and over His heart in the very throne room of God.
- He ministers there on our behalf as the perfect mediator we need- **Php. 4:13; Hebrews 9:15.**
- When we sin as Christians, we can confess them to God and be forgiven- **1 John 1:9.**
- He is able to keep us from falling and present us faultless before His presence- **Jude 24.**

Therefore, when Jesus died, the veil in the Temple that hid the glory of God from the face of the people was split in the middle. No longer needed, because New Covenant had been cut at the cross.

- Through the blood of Jesus we have direct access to the Father- **Hebrews 4:16; 10:20.**
- We may pray directly to God the Father, in the Jesus' Name, by the Holy Spirit.
    - **John 16:23-24; Ephesians 2:18.**
- Now, all believers in the Lord Jesus are now ministering priests of the most high God.
    - **Romans 15:16; 1 Peter 2:9.**

6. The High Priest on the Throne

When Jesus sprinkled His blood on the Mercy Seat, He did something that the Old Covenant High Priest could not do. He sat down on the throne- **Ephesians 1:20; Revelation 3:21; 21 :5; Acts 2:30.**

- This High Priest is on the throne, because His work is complete- **Zechariah 6:13.**
- Jesus is on the throne of God as King of kings and Lord of lords.
- There He represents us before God the Father, He is our High Priest.
- All of humanity must stand before God in the heavenly courtroom of eternity.
- The only evidence for our salvation for the will to be executed is the blood of Jesus.
    - **Hebrews 9:16-23.**
- If you have appropriated His blood, He will be your advocate before God the Father.
- The blood of Jesus will cry out on your behalf, "Holiness unto the Lord." **Hebrews 12:24.**
- You will be accepted in your High Priest, Jesus Christ the Righteous.

In the future, all who stand before the Great White Throne judgment (**Revelation 20:11-15**), are there because they have already rejected Jesus' blood sacrifice on their behalf.

- These are the people who always said they were good enough to stand before God.
- That their good works outweigh their bad works, didn't need all that "blood business."
- Therefore, God judges them on their own good works just as they desired.
- New Flash: just one sin is needed to condemn a person, cannot be undone by good deeds.
- God's standard is absolute perfection and we have fallen so far short of it.
- However, forgiveness and reconciliation to God is available through the blood of Jesus.
- He's already taken your Certificate of Debt and paid the price for all our sins.
- The universal question that every human being will answer, "What will you do with Jesus?"

Those who reject, ignore or forget Jesus are cast into the lake of fire because their works of self-righteousness cannot cry out on their behalf, "Holiness to the Lord." **Hebrews 2:3; 1 John 5:10-12.**

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture Quotations in this study book are from the *New International Version* of the Bible.

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