

# **What is REAL Christianity?**

**Book 3:  
Lessons 9-12**

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NOT FOR SALE

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# Bible Study Center

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## What is REAL Christianity?


Book 3 – Lessons 9-12

### Welcome Back!

We have graded and returned your **Book 2** Answer Sheet. Please take some time to review any mistakes and comments made by your teacher. If you have any questions please feel free to contact your teacher personally.

Now that you have completed **Book 2**, you are ready for **Book 3**. With this material, we will continue our study of the religious history.

You will be asked to find, read, and carefully think about a large number of passages from the Bible. Remember how important it is always to place each passage into its proper **context**. Use your notebook to record your findings for each and every verse you study and if at any time you do not understand what you are supposed to do, contact our office and we will assist you. If you apply the Bible study skills you have learned you should have no trouble finding the answers to the test questions.

The procedure for **Book 3** is the same as for **Books 1** and **2**. You will study through each lesson and then proceed to the test questions. Remember that you need to score **at least 70%** to graduate. Some lessons also have supplementary **HANDOUTS** or **WORKSHEETS** included. If you encounter the symbol  then please **STOP** reading the lesson material at that point and complete the research assignment before returning to the lesson material.

We know that you will learn much from this study. If you happen to encounter some things that seem “different” from what you have grown up believing, please remember that we are not demanding that you agree with anything we present in the course. All that we ask is that you study through all of the evidence presented in the course material, establish the context, and then combine the facts together as you make your conclusions. What you do with the conclusions is for you to decide.

Remember that if at any time in the study you have questions about the content of the material or the procedures, please feel free to contact us. There is space on the back of the “Answer Sheet” for you to use. We will do our very best to help you find the answers you seek. As we said in the letter we sent with the first booklet, if you have friends that you think might like to study with us, please send us their names and mailing addresses. We will be happy to send them our **FREE** course **Jesus: Man of the Bible**, so that they can get started in their own search for the truth!

Enjoy your study!

-- The Bible Study Center Staff



# LESSON NINE

## The Problem Restated!

In the previous five lessons we have tried to survey the history of denominationalism and show how from the time of the Apostles people who, for reasons all related to **SELFISHNESS** and not being satisfied with the “teachings of Christ”<sup>1</sup> distorted, changed, altered, added to, took away from, misapplied, or just plain lied about the truth of original Christianity! While the Apostles were still around the damage was able to be kept to a minimum, but even then many were affected and the **UNITY** Christ sought for his church when he prayed to his Father in **John 17:21** was spoiled. After the Apostles were gone things became worse and changes became official teachings in the church.

As time passed the visible “church” that history follows slowly morphed away from the simple family of God’s people called out from the world and became an institution that was **RULED** by men who increasingly craved power and emphasis slowly shifted away from following the Bible as a guide for Christianity in favor of a more “democratic” way of determining truth and direction. The ultimate result was the Catholic Church, which we followed through the early centuries and saw how, through the various councils, changed and evolved farther away from the simple model of original Christianity into the world-dominant political force of the Middle Ages, able to command the great armies of Europe to wage earthly war upon all who would challenge its ambitions.

Worldliness and corruption became so great that many, from simple lay persons to several prominent Priests and taking their lead from men like Luther and Calvin, **PROTESTED** the church leading to the **Protestant Reformation**. However, instead of bringing “the church” back to the Bible all the Reformation did was create more confusion. We discovered that all the mistakes we found in Catholicism were transferred into Protestantism so that it was just as guilty of allowing men different backgrounds and agendas to put forward their opinions as suggestions for the way for people to be pleasing to God and as leaders emerged and territories established Protestantism became just as ruthless as Catholicism!<sup>2</sup>

**SELFISHNESS** more than anything else has contributed to today’s ever increasing and confusing picture of “Christianity” and as long as people do what **THEY THINK**<sup>3</sup> and as long as people **THINK DIFFERENT THINGS** then the situation will only get worse. In the 1980’s there were an estimated 20,000 groups worldwide. In 2009 there are an estimated 38,000 groups! “How many groups will there be in 10 years?” That is **NOT** the most important question to ask. The most important question is, “Is this ‘**CHRISTIANITY**’ what Jesus prayed to his Father and died on that cross for?” When Jesus confronts all these people in the Judgment will he say “Well done good and faithful servant”, or will he say “Depart from me you who work lawlessness”?<sup>4</sup>

## The CURE!

The problem facing the religious world is a great one and a solution will not be easy to implement, but as we said at the beginning of this course, **can we say that the problem is too great and cannot be solved?** Of course not! The problem we face is not new. If we go back to the time of Israel we find a similar history among the kings of that nation. We know that God originally gave the Israelites a system of government that relied upon Judges without a king. However, after many years the people decided that they wanted a king just like the other nations. God gave in to their request and Saul was chosen as the first king. If we continue we find that after some time **the nation of Israel became divided into TWO kingdoms**, each with its own king. After their own “Big Split” the two kingdoms of Israel developed along different timelines, each one experiencing good times and difficult times. As time passed the people drifted further and further away from God **because of the influence of their political leaders**, most of whom were selfish and ambitious for power and wealth, and also **because of the influence of the native people** and their idolatrous religious beliefs. There are many similarities between what we have seen happen to Christianity and what happened to Israel.

In about the year 460 BCE a man named **Josiah** became the king of the nation of Judah.<sup>5</sup> From the start it seems

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<sup>1</sup> **2 John 1:9**

<sup>2</sup> Do not forget that the Protestant leaders, like Calvin, had many of their opponents killed after branding them as “heretics”!

<sup>3</sup> There is currently in the Philippines a man who is a very popular religious teacher and **claims** that **HE** is Jesus Christ and that Jesus has become the Father!

<sup>4</sup> Please do **NOT** forget the point Jesus made in **Matthew 7:21-23!**

<sup>5</sup> His story is found in the **2 Chronicles chapters 34 and 35.**

that he was a good king in the sense that he did things to reform the religion of the people. He did not agree with his predecessor who allowed people of different religious beliefs to construct altars on mountains from which to offer sacrifices to their false gods. For six years<sup>6</sup> he traveled around the kingdom having those places torn down and the statues smashed into power dust! After completing his work in the countryside he turned his attention to repairing the Lord's Temple in Jerusalem. He arranged for different workers to rebuild it and the priests of the Temple brought out money from the treasury to pay for the work. As they were bringing out the money one of the priests found a copy of the "Book of the Law" that God had given the people through Moses. The book was brought to the king and when it was opened and read to the king he "tore his clothes" and commanded that someone go to a prophet and inquire from God what was to happen. God's response through the prophetess Huldah is recorded in **2 Chronicles 34:23-28** and was as follows;

*"Thus says the Lord God of Israel, you say to the one who sent you to me, 'Thus says the Lord, Behold, I am bringing evil things upon this place, all the words that have been written in this book that was read in the presence of the king of Judah. **Because they left me behind and burned incense to foreign gods in order that they might make me angry in all the works of their hands and my anger was started against this place and it will not be put out!**' And to the king of Judah who sent you to seek the Lord thus you will say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel the words that you heard and your heart paid attention to and you were humbled from my face when you heard my words upon this place and upon the ones living in it and you were humbled in my presence and you ripped your clothes and you wept in my presence and I heard you, says the Lord. Behold, I will give you over to your fathers and you will be given over to your graves in peace and your eyes will not see all the bad things I myself am bringing upon this place and the upon the ones living in it.' And they brought back word to the king."*

God was very angry with the people and promised revenge upon them. Why was he angry? Because the people **left him behind** and **went after other gods!** Did the people think they were doing wrong before Josiah came along? No. They believed they were doing alright because they were simply doing what their leaders told them was alright for them to do. The only reason anyone – including Josiah – knew differently in the end was because of the Book of the Law that was found and read. Once Josiah read that book he immediately saw that what the people had been doing, what they were made to understand was alright to do, was in fact very wrong and that God was very angry.

So what did King Josiah do?

First, before he actually did anything it must be remembered that he **READ the Book of the Law**. The knowledge he gained from doing that is what made him see that there was a problem. When he read it and realized things were bad he was convicted in his heart! Later, he had the entire book read to all his people so they could also see what was wrong in their society.

Next, because of his conviction **he immediately changed his attitude** about himself. He **WAS** the king but he realized after reading that book that there was an authority much higher than him – God - and that as the leader of the people HE was not doing what he was supposed to do. He immediately humbled himself to God and got all his own subjects to do the same!

Next **he decided to do only those things written in the Book of the Law**.<sup>7</sup> Josiah made a commitment to do only those things found in the Book of the Law and he got the people to do the same.

Finally, **he implemented those things written in the Book of the Law** throughout the entire kingdom and did so all through the days of his reign as king of Judah. He did not change, add to, or take away from what the Book said and he got all the people to do the same.

In summary, King Josiah and his people **RESTORED** "original Judaism" in the kingdom of Judah! That was the solution to the problem Josiah faced in his kingdom. **RESTORATION!**

We believe **RESTORATION** this is the CURE for our problem in "Christianity" today! We need to **RESTORE** original Christianity in the world! We do not need a **NEW** church and we cannot solve the problem by creating a worldwide **UNION** of existing churches. We surely cannot continue adding more and more groups! What we need is a return to the original!

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<sup>6</sup> **2 Chronicles 34:3-8**

<sup>7</sup> From our past studies we know the message contained in this "Book of the Law" was the First Agreement from God and was for ALL Israel. The message for us today is not that message. Our "Book of the Law" is in fact the "teaching of Christ" John mentioned in **2 John 1:9** – the New Agreement or "New Testament"!

# How can we RESTORE original Christianity IN OUR TIME?

So HOW can we do this?

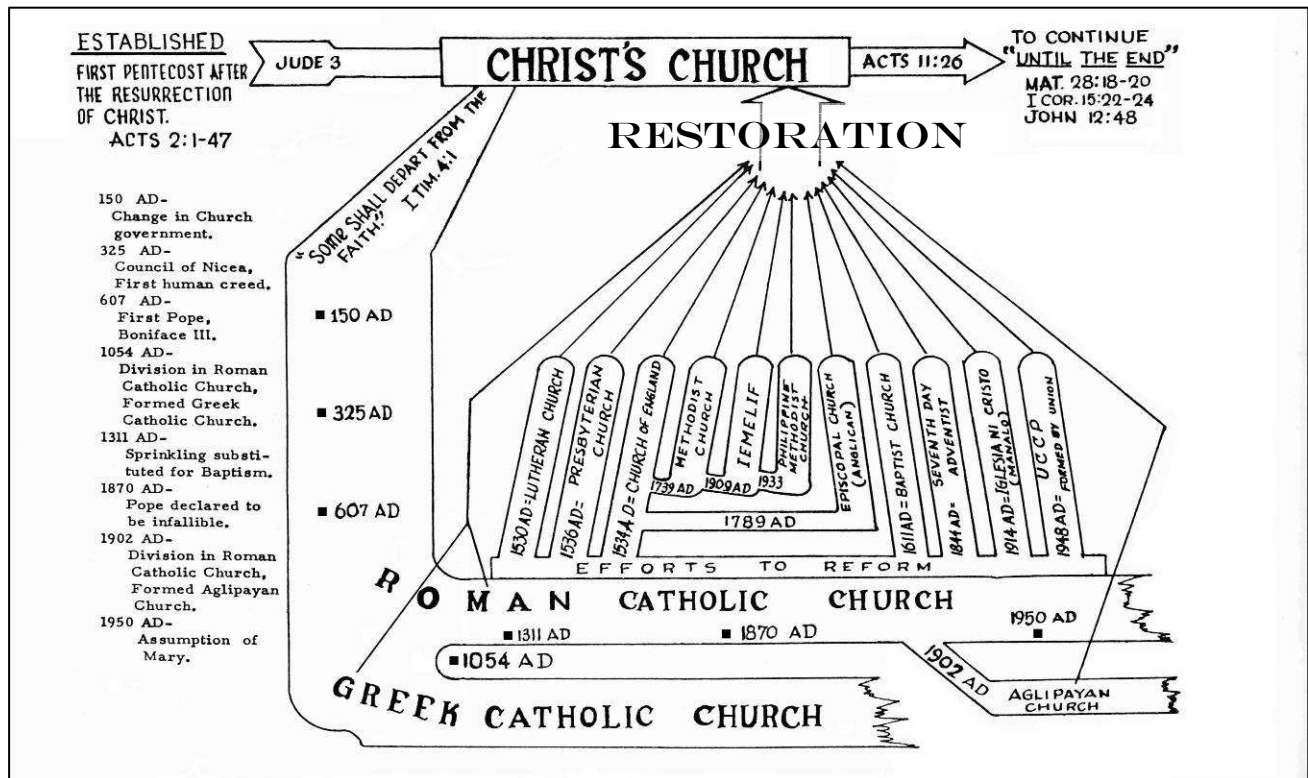
First, we ALL must study OUR “Book of the Law”, which is the New Testament<sup>8</sup>, and discover what the “will of my Father who is in the heavens” actually says about all the things we need to do to please God. It is very important to pay careful attention to all the discussions we had early in our studies about “How to study the Bible” and “context” and go carefully through all the teachings of Christ and the original Apostles. If we all will do this then it will become clear that we have a problem and we will see all the things we are NOT doing correctly. The Bible itself will correct us!

Second, we must admit that there is a problem and be humble about it! It is useless to try and justify what is happening today with the 38,000 churches and say that it fulfills Jesus’ prayer for UNITY in John 17:21! It is useless to say that the 38,000 churches are all the ONE TRUE church that belongs to Jesus. DIVISION is undeniable and there is no unity of belief and practice. It is simply horrible!

Third, we must commit ourselves to doing only those things that are actually written in God’s will found in the New Testament. If we limit ourselves to only those things that are written then God will unify us all in those things and no one will overstate the importance of one person over another and cause any one teacher to become exalted to the point where the people follow him or her instead of what is written in the Bible!

Finally, we must implement those things written in the New Testament! Whatever it takes and whatever the consequences might be we ALL MUST DO what GOD tells us to do!

If all people who claim the name of Christian will go to the Bible and do these four things then we believe that the entire system of thee 38,000 can be eliminated and original Christianity be restored in our time! It CAN happen, but WILL it happen? That depends upon you and the rest of the “Christian” world!



ALL denominations must give up their man-made teachings and GO BACK to the Bible as a guide for teaching and practice!

Study the Bible and record what you see taught in the “will of the Father”. Compare what you find to what your religion has taught you and ELIMINATE ALL THAT DOES NOT AGREE EXACTLY with the Word of the Lord. Find other people who are also doing this and become the group of believers that originally existed in the time of

<sup>8</sup> Remember that this is the reason God gave us the Bible in the first place; to instruct, correct, and train us!

original Christianity. Do this and you will restore original Christianity. If everyone does this then **in our time** there will once again be only **ONE** body (church), **ONE** Spirit, **ONE** hope, **ONE** Lord, **ONE** faith, **ONE** baptism, and **ONE** God and Father of everything just as Paul described in **Ephesians 4:1-4** and the 38,000 "churches" will be gone!

## Before proceeding, answer the following test questions for Lesson 9:

The questions for this lesson work the same as the ones for the previous lessons. Read each question and review the lesson material carefully. Choose the answer that best fits the question and darken the CIRCLE for that answer choice on the answer sheet.

1. The motives of men in the First Century to change the "teaching of Christ" are all related to what?
  - a) Selfishness
  - b) Patience
  - c) Sincerity
  - d) Careful Bible Study
2. The UNITY Jesus prayed for in **John 17:21** was already spoiled as early as the time of:
  - a) Jesus
  - b) The Apostles
  - c) The early church fathers
  - d) The Council of Trent
3. As long as people do what THEY THINK and people THINK DIFFERENT THINGS, the confusion in religion will only get worse.
  - a) True
  - b) False
4. What was the ultimate result of the church's shift from a simple family of God's people to an institution?
  - a) The Lutheran Church
  - b) The Catholic Church
  - c) The Baptist Church
  - d) The Calvinists
5. The Protestant Reformation:
  - a) Removed the confusion and brought UNITY.
  - b) Brought "the church" back to the Bible.
  - c) Create more confusion for those seeking truth.
  - d) None of the above.
6. The problem of **division** in religion is too great and cannot be solved.
  - a) True
  - b) False
7. When God set up leaders for the Israelites, who did he set up to lead the people?
  - a) Prophets
  - b) Judges
  - c) Kings
  - d) All of the above.
8. After the Big Split, influential leaders and idolatrous actions caused the people in Israel:
  - a) Drifted away from God.
  - b) Became a closer community.
  - c) Study the law closer.
  - d) None of the above.
9. King Josiah of Judah agreed with his predecessor and continued to allow the worship of false gods.
  - a) True
  - b) False
10. What did Josiah do with the idols of the people?
  - a) Put them in a museum.
  - b) Build bigger and better high places for them.
  - c) Hold feasts and festivals for them.
  - d) Smashed them into dust.
11. After destroying the idols, Josiah turned his attention to doing what?
  - a) Killing the false prophets.
  - b) Conquering more land.
  - c) Rebuilding the temple.
  - d) All of the above.
12. Josiah's reaction to the reading of the law was?
  - a) He burned the book.
  - b) He lost his mind.
  - c) He tore his clothes.
  - d) He threw it at the high priest.
13. What was the name of the prophetess who God sent a message to Josiah through?
  - a) Esther
  - b) Huldah
  - c) Hagar
  - d) Rahab
14. How was the "Book of the Law" discovered?
  - a) It was found while gathering money for the temple rebuilding.
  - b) It was kept in the Ark of the Covenant.
  - c) It was hidden in a cave.
  - d) None of the above.
15. King Josiah wanted to REFORM "Original Judaism".
  - a) True
  - b) False



16. What was the **FIRST** thing Josiah did to correct the problems in Israel?
- He read the Book of the Law.
  - He changed his attitude.
  - He decided to do only those things mentioned in the Book of the Law.
  - He implemented the things written in the Book of the Law.
17. What was the **SECOND** thing Josiah did to correct the problems in Israel?
- He read the Book of the Law.
  - He changed his attitude.
  - He decided to do only those things mentioned in the Book of the Law.
  - He implemented the things written in the Book of the Law.
18. What was the **THIRD** thing Josiah did to correct the problems in Israel?
- He read the Book of the Law.
  - He changed his attitude.
  - He decided to do only those things mentioned in the Book of the Law.
  - He implemented the things written in the Book of the Law.
19. What was the **LAST** thing Josiah did to correct the problems in Israel?
- He read the Book of the Law.
  - He changed his attitude.
  - He decided to do only those things mentioned in the Book of the Law.
  - He implemented the things written in the Book of the Law.
20. The **CURE** for the confusion in religion today is:
- Reformation
  - Restoration
  - Division
  - Union
21. What is our **guide** for restoration today?
- A strong religious leader.
  - Our own feelings and opinions.
  - Praying for guidance from the Holy Spirit.
  - The Bible.
22. Instead of trying to justify the 38,000 groups in religion today, we should humble ourselves and admit there is a problem.
- True
  - False
23. Everyone must follow what the Bible says.
- True
  - False
24. Unity is only possible **IF**:
- We all listen to the same teachers and follow whatever they say.
  - We commit ourselves to doing only the things written in God's will.
  - We all choose one man to teach us what to do
  - None of the above.
25. If all people would look to the Bible as their guide for religion and follow **EXACTLY** what it says, the **UNITY** mentioned in John 17 and Ephesians 4 will happen and the 38,000 "churches" will be gone.
- True
  - False

## LESSON TEN

### So... What IS REAL Christianity?

Up to this point, we have spent considerable time studying a brief history of the religion that started with the one church of Jesus that is found in the pages of the New Testament and then working through the long process of human change that has resulted in the more than 38,000 churches we see today who **CLAIM** that they follow the Bible, **CLAIM** that Jesus is their Lord, and **CLAIM** that they are the true Christians, and yet no two groups teach the same things! We have seen that the major reason for this problem is the selfishness of people who over the years have tried to use religion as a way to gain power and wealth! Throughout our studies we have continually come back to several passages<sup>9</sup> in the New Testament that consistently warn all who read them to be careful in evaluating the religious situation they might see around them. In the final three lessons of this course we want to look back again at some of the **foundation topics** that make up REAL Christianity as presented in the New Testament.

<sup>9</sup> The message comes from God and is complete, **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, **2 Peter 1:20-21**, it will judge us, **John 12:48-50**, and we cannot change it in any way, **Matthew 7:21-23**, **Galatians 1:6-9**, **1 John 2:3-6**, **2 John 1:9-11**, **1 Timothy 4:1**, **2 Timothy 3:1-7**, **2 Timothy 4:1-4!**

# The CHURCH that belongs to Christ!

When we studied about the church in **Lesson 3**, we pointed out that it is **not** a building or an institution. As we learned from our study of the first few chapters of the book of Acts, the church is **supposed to be a FAMILY**. The original church that belongs to Christ opened its arms to new believers **who were added by the Lord!** The members became close and helped one another whenever it was necessary. They met together regularly – as often as they could – and everyone was encouraged to attend a Sunday assembly, where the Christian had activities that were supposed to **build up** one another and **challenge** one another **to love and good works**.<sup>10</sup> The **focus** of that Sunday assembly was the **Lord's Supper**, which was a time when all members sat together and **through the eating of unleavened bread and the drinking of wine** they **remembered** Jesus' life and death, as well as their commitments to God made when they stood in the water of immersion.<sup>11</sup> **These are all the basic things that bound them together and helped them overcome many obstacles in the time of original Christianity.**

We also found that the church has a purpose, or a mission. God desires to use his children as instruments to expand his Kingdom all across the world.<sup>12</sup> We learned that he planned to do this through the examples of changed lives and also through their efforts to teach and share their knowledge of the New Agreement with those lost people they come into contact with.

In this lesson we want to spend some time looking at the structure of leadership of the church and compare this to what we see being practiced in religion today because does it not make sense that in addition to the teachings and practices, **REAL Christianity today** should organize itself in the same way that the original church did? If everything else about the church **MUST** be done according to the book then this should too!

## Church GOVERNMENT?

We begin our journey with a look at what the New Testament says about leaders. However, before we go any further let us point out and stress that nowhere in the pages of the New Testament does Jesus or any Apostle or writer speak of "**church GOVERNMENT**"! This is because leadership in original Christianity was not a **political**, or **corporate**, type of leadership where representatives are elected and they formulate and enforce laws and policies. Leadership in original Christianity **was a FAMILY type leadership** where men and women rose to **positions of respect** among their brothers and sisters **due to success in their own lives and families**, a success that was achieved through years of dedication and commitment **to the Lord**. They were people who were first and foremost **SHEEP**, fellow sheep in the Lord's flock, who never separated themselves from or "lorded it over" the others! They "**ruled**" only by example and the only laws they ever had or "enforced" were those **set down by the only HEAD the church has ever had, JESUS!**

The foundation for church leadership is laid in **Ephesians 4:11-16**. (Please stop here and read it carefully.) If we look back to the start of chapter 4 we find our old friend the **UNITY** passage! God **WANTS UNITY** in his group of believers! How does he expect to **create and preserve** this unity? By giving **leaders!** In **verse 11** we see a list of these leaders. First, we have **APOSTLES**, next **PROPHETS**, then **EVANGELISTS**, and finally **SHEPHERDS WHO ARE TEACHERS**. In **verse 12** we see the main **DOUBLE purpose** of the leaders, which is **to train the members of the church for the work of serving and for building up the body**. **Verse 13** shows us how long this training and building up is to continue. There are **three** "**until we ALL might attain**" objectives. The first is "**a unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God**", the second is "**being a complete man**" and the third is "**a portion of what Christ was in his life**". **Verse 14** then shows us that there is a **purpose** for accomplishing those goals in the lives of the members, "**so that we might no longer be infants being tossed around and carried by every wind of the teaching in the trickery of the men, in craftiness toward a plan of deception.**"

If you have been paying attention to all of our studies since **Lesson 1** you cannot help but sit back and say, "**WOW! If this had only been achieved and maintained** in the original church **after the death of the Apostles** then we would have never seen the division and the emergence of denominationalism!" After all, if we were to summarize everything that we have seen and then come up with a single cause for the process that has now led to 38,000 churches of today, could we not easily say that it was "**false teachings of tricky men who were crafty in their plan to deceive**"? Could we not also **EASILY** say that the plans of the tricky men succeeded and continue to succeed today **because people become ignorant about God's plan for unity and about the Son of God?** An

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<sup>10</sup> Hebrews 10:23-25

<sup>11</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:44-49.

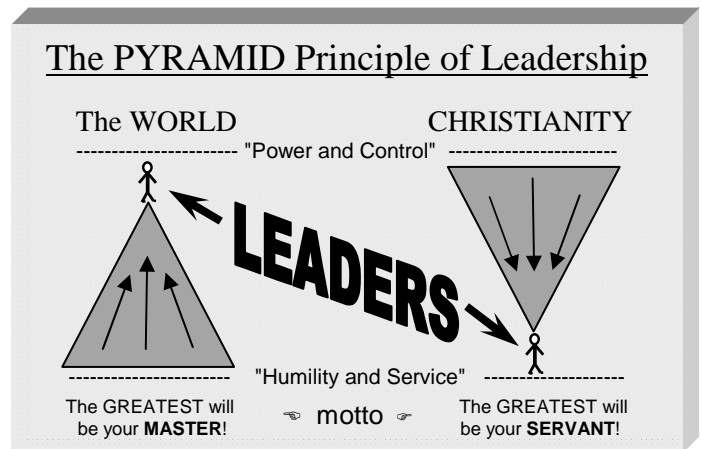
analysis of this passage and careful comparison to what history has revealed to us helps us understand what really happened! Since the preventative measures of God's plan DID NOT happen, and "Christianity" has gone so FAR AWAY from the original ONE CHURCH that Jesus started, then one logical cause would be **poor quality leadership!** This makes sense! After all, we saw how the whole process got started when early leaders became corrupted by the ideas, ambitions, and teachings of certain men and once that became widespread then human changes came in. It was a gradual process at first but once Constantine legalized Christianity the pace became faster!

This means that if we want to **restore original Christianity** in our time we must also **restore the Bible idea of leadership!** That is the only way to ensure that each new generation will remain faithful to GOD and to HIS MESSAGE, and that the CHURCH that belongs to him will remain one!

## Clash of the TITANS!

The leadership plan God gave in Ephesians 4 makes great sense. We know from our past studies that when a person comes up out of the water of immersion, no matter how old they are or how much religious experience they might have had, **they are a BABY in Christ!** We saw how the Apostles Peter and Paul, plus the Hebrew writer, **ALL** spoke about this and how that when a person is a baby in Christ they need "milk" until they are capable of handling "solid food".<sup>13</sup> How are spiritual babies supposed to be fed? This is why **GOD placed LEADERS** in the church. Since Christian leadership is **experience based** this means that the people who have been Christians longer should set the example for the ones coming up behind them.<sup>14</sup>

**Leadership in Christianity IS NOT like leadership in the world.** In fact it is exactly the opposite! Leaders in the world sit at the top of a pyramid of power – as is seen on the left side of the diagram to the right. They started their journey to the top in humble beginnings where they had no power and were servants to everyone "above" them. However, through time they rose through the ranks fighting to get to the top and once there exercise complete power and dominance! They typically become arrogant and abusive and are very much worse people than they were when they started down at the bottom! Their slogan could easily be "The **GREATEST** among you will be your **MASTER!**"



Leaders in Christianity are different. In **Mark 10:42-44**, Jesus gave the principle of leadership in **REAL** Christianity! **We call it the UPSIDE DOWN pyramid of leadership!** It is illustrated on the right side of the diagram. When people become Christians they may be sorry for their sins and willing to commit to God and the terms of the New Agreement, but they are still fresh from the conditioning of the world and changing that way of thinking will not be easy and will not happen quickly! They have been taught from the time they were very young to be competitive, to always look out for themselves, to be the best of everyone else, and to strive to get the biggest and best portion of everything no matter what the cost! It is precisely this way of thinking that leads us to become as James described in **James 1:12-15** when he told us that we sin because we think about things that we should not and when those thoughts become actions then it is sin.

In this way, they begin their Christian lives **at the "bottom" of the pyramid** which is the top now because it is upside down. They start at this NEW "top" because they are at their most selfish and arrogant point in life – at least this is how it will be **IF Christianity works as it is supposed to and as they grow and become more like Christ they become less selfish and more servant like.** They move **DOWNWARD little by little each day**<sup>15</sup> and when

<sup>13</sup> **1 Peter 2:22, 1 Corinthians 3:2, Hebrews 5:12-14**

<sup>14</sup> Consider what Paul says about this in **Titus 2:1-5** when he speaks of older women. One great problem today is what is often called "the Generation Gap", where the younger generation does not look to the generation of their parents for guidance and council due to a feeling of superiority that is caused by the gap in intellectual knowledge between the new "enlightened" generation and the "old fashioned and obsolete" generation. Young people forget that in terms of living faithful to God, there is NO NEW information to be had and the best teacher is one who can share the real meaning of the will of God with first hand experience of what to do and what not to do!

<sup>15</sup> Here is what Paul was talking about in **Romans 12:1-2** and **2 Corinthians 3:18** when he spoke of Christians becoming more and more like Christ from one degree to another through **METAMORPHOSIS!**

“God’s love finally **reaches its goal** in the person”<sup>16</sup> they are **SERVANTS!** Their slogan is “The **GREATEST** among you will be your **SERVANT!**”

These are the people that God intends to be the **leaders** in his church because **THEY** will be the ones who truly understand the goal of Christianity and **who know FROM STUDY AND EXPERIENCE what is required!** They will also be the best ones to be trusted with keeping the direction of the group of believers focused upon Christ and **what HE wants his church to be doing in the world!** They will not add or take away from God’s message and will not lift up their opinions so that people will become their disciples<sup>17</sup> or use their opinions or writings<sup>18</sup> to explain what the Bible teaches.

## More about the Leaders Mentioned in Ephesians 4!

Since the model for and purpose of Christian leaders is discussed by Paul in Ephesians 4 it will be good for us to look at each one and see what we can learn.

### 1. APOSTLES

Although in our time it is almost exclusively so, the word “**apostle**” was **not a religious word** during the time of original Christianity. It was an every-day sort of word that meant “**someone sent to do something**”. In fact, the English word apostle is not a translation of the original word, but a transliteration.<sup>19</sup> A more accurate English translation might be “**messenger**” or “**representative**”. A “**messenger**” could be anyone, however, in the context of the New Testament we find a **special use** in that this was the word used by Christ to describe “**the twelve**” that he **chose and sent to be his special representatives**.<sup>20</sup> We know that the number **12** was somehow important because after the Apostle Judas killed himself the followers saw a need to chose a replacement. We also know that one **requirement for being considered** as an Apostle was “**being with the Lord**”<sup>21</sup> and this is why the Bible translators use a **capital letter “A”** when they write that word in the verses.<sup>22</sup> However, we also see the Greek word for apostle used in the New Testament to refer to others who had **NOT** been with Jesus but who had likewise **been “sent” to do something**<sup>23</sup> and so these would be apostles with a small letter “a”. We see that evidently there were certain **signs** that an Apostle did **so that people would know that he was legitimate**.<sup>24</sup> Finally, we also know that the number 12 was increased to 13 when the Apostle Paul **was chosen and added later by Christ himself**.<sup>25</sup>

The Apostles were “**representatives**” of Jesus and they were assigned to carry on his work of bringing the message and spreading Christianity after he went back to heaven. They continued and completed the delivery of the “second message”<sup>26</sup> from God after Jesus left it **unfinished**.<sup>27</sup>

With the possible exception of John, these men all died during the 1<sup>st</sup> century and if we survey the writings from the next few generations of leaders after the original Apostles there does not seem to be evidence of any **NEW** Apostles (with a capital “A”) in the church.<sup>28</sup>

Considering the fact that to be an Apostle (with a capital A) one had to have spent time with Jesus when he was

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<sup>16</sup> Here is how the point John made in **1 John 2:3-6** really fits into the larger picture of what Christian growth really means.

<sup>17</sup> This is what was happening in Corinth where we first saw the UNITY problem in original Christianity.

<sup>18</sup> Like Calvin, Luther did during the so called “Reformation” and many others do today.

<sup>19</sup> As we pointed out in an early lesson, transliteration is when a translator does not translate a word but uses the letters of one language to simply write the original word. Therefore, the Greek word APOSTOLOS became the English is APOSTLE.

<sup>20</sup> **Matthew 10:1-7, Mark 3:14-19, Luke 6:13-16**. These were chosen by Christ himself.

<sup>21</sup> **Acts 1:21-23**

<sup>22</sup> The original Greek text of the New Testament did **NOT** have a capital “A” in the word apostle!

<sup>23</sup> **Acts 14:14** – Barnabas and **Philippians 2:25** – Epaphroditus. Considering the overall context of how the word apostle was used in the time of the New Testament these guys would most likely be apostles with a **small “a”**.

<sup>24</sup> **2 Corinthians 12:11-12**

<sup>25</sup> **Acts 9:10-16, 1 Timothy 2:7, 2 Timothy 1:11, Romans 11:3**.

<sup>26</sup> **Hebrews 1:1-2**

<sup>27</sup> **John 16:12-15 → Acts 2:42, 2 Peter 3:2, Jude 1:17**. It seems that even while the Apostles were alive God decided to take some of the special abilities that they had and give them to individual Christians as “gifts” of the Holy Spirit. (See: **1 Corinthians 12:28-31**)

<sup>28</sup> The collection of books, **The Ante-Nicene Fathers** (religious leaders living in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries), shows numerous references back to the **original Apostles** of Christ but not to any **new** Apostles during their own times.

here and considering also the fact that the Apostles' assigned work from Jesus had been completed<sup>29</sup> in their lifetime, it seems clear that there will be no Apostles (with a capital A) in the church today or in the future.

## 2. PROPHETS

Like the word **apostle**, many people also associate the word "**prophet**" with religion. However, just as in the case of the Greek word for **apostle** the Greek word for **prophet** was an every-day word. It has also been transliterated by the translators!<sup>30</sup> The original word meant "**a spokesperson**". It was the word used for someone who spoke on behalf of another. The modern idea that prophets always tell the future is not accurate because sometimes the message had nothing to do with the future. The message could be about the present, past, or future. The important thing to remember is that a prophet always spoke for another. Their authority came from the one they spoke for and they had no authority to change the message in any way!<sup>31</sup>

During the time of the New Testament **there was no written "New Testament"** containing the 27 books and all the teachings of the New Agreement. Instead, God assigned certain people (both male and female) to be spokespersons for him. We even see a special "gift" of the Holy Spirit for "prophecy", as well as a couple of other gifts that relate to receiving and giving messages from God.<sup>32</sup>

In the time of original Christianity, prophecy was mainly concerned with **the receiving of the message of the New Agreement** and since that message was completed in the 1<sup>st</sup> century there was no more need for prophets in the later centuries. Since the message **remains complete today** there is no need for **miraculous** prophecy. However, in the most basic sense of the word, **anytime someone speaks from the Bible he or she is speaking on behalf of God**. The only difference between this and what happened in the time of original Christianity is that their message came straight from God while our message today comes from the written copy of **that original message. Therefore, we need to be careful what we say, like the Apostles James and Peter warned us!**<sup>33</sup>

## 3. EVANGELISTS

The term **evangelist**, like **apostle** and **prophet**, is a transliterated term from Greek.<sup>34</sup> It means "**someone who brings good news**" and like the other terms was NOT a uniquely religious word. It could be **anyone** who brought any good news. The "Good News" many religious people speak of comes from a related Greek word. Because of this, some like to describe an evangelist as "a good newser". In the context of Christianity an evangelist is someone who brings **THE GOOD NEWS!**

In the New Testament, we find only two people named specifically as **evangelists**; Phillip and Timothy.<sup>35</sup> However, in the same way that we see the life and work of Timothy, and especially his close association with and help given to the Apostle Paul, the New Testament points to a number men who like Timothy were instrumental in the spread of early Christianity. Timothy is by far the most well known and well described in the New Testament. Relying heavily upon what we learn about Timothy, from the two letters of Paul addressed to him, and certain consistent things we can observe in the lives of others who were doing the **same kind of work** Timothy was doing, we can get a pretty good idea of what evangelists were like in the time of original Christianity.

- 1) Timothy was **NOT** what people today call a "priest", "preacher", or "pastor" – one who is hired in a place to do the preaching and nurturing of a group of people. He moved around and only visited congregations for relatively short periods of time - as his help was needed.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> The various warnings issued by the Apostles indicate that the message that Jesus left unfinished WAS finished by them. Otherwise, how could they be so strict in forbidding anyone from listening to any teacher who came with a message different from the one **they** gave the people? See: **Galatians 1:6-9, 2 John 1:9-11 → 2 Timothy 3:16-17** "man is **complete**"

<sup>30</sup> The Greek word PROPHETES became the English PROPHET.

<sup>31</sup> We saw this idea explained in the context of God's prophets in **2 Peter 1:20-21**.

<sup>32</sup> See **1 Corinthians 14:1-14** about the relationship between speaking in and interpreting tongues and giving messages from God. **James 3:1** and **2 Peter 1:20-21**.

<sup>34</sup> The Greek word EUANGELISTES became EVANGELIST.

<sup>35</sup> **Acts 21:8** and **2 Timothy 4:5**.

<sup>36</sup> The modern concept of having **priests, pulpit preachers, pastors** or any other **titled "ministers"** who are hired by a congregation of believers to be their teacher, trainer, problem solver, counsellor, motivator, confessor, "marrier and burier", etc. **did NOT originate in the New Testament**. The Greek language has a word that is translated "preacher" (KERUX) and that word is **not** found in **Ephesians 4:11-16**. The word "minister" has been taken out of its original New Testament context to be applied to only certain individuals. However, the original concept of "minister" applied to **all Christians**. (**2 Corinthians 5:18-20**) The concept of the Protestant EVANGELIST-PASTOR was started by Reformers like Calvin (Ecclesiastical Ordinances in 1541) who sought to find a replacement for the Catholic term "priest".

- 2) When Timothy visited congregations he helped them solve problems, sometimes facing great difficulties, and then moved on.<sup>37</sup>
- 3) He also chose leaders in the city of Ephesus.<sup>38</sup>
- 4) There were other men doing the same kind of work Timothy was doing.<sup>39</sup>

If Timothy is the **model** for evangelists then he might be more like what modern religion calls a “missionary” than a “priest”, “preacher”, or “pastor”!

#### 4. SHEPHERDS WHO ARE TEACHERS

The final group in the chain of **Ephesians 4:11** is often listed as two separate sets of people in certain Bible translations. However, in the original Greek text the way the words are constructed make the terms “shepherds” and “teachers” go together as one group.<sup>40</sup>

This is a very interesting topic because of the simple way the Bible explains things. It is made more interesting by the fact that religion today almost completely ignores what the Bible says about the matter and instead uses a model of leadership that is based completely upon the opinions and teachings of men.

The “shepherds” mentioned here are called by two other terms in the New Testament. That means there are in fact **three different words that refer to this one group of leaders**. This is very important. These three words are **NOT “titles”** for these men and they do not occupy an “office” as some kind of elected official. The three words are actually terms used by the writers to **describe the responsibilities of these leaders**. The first word that we see here in Ephesians 4 is “shepherds”. Other Bible translations also use the word “pastors”. Even though most people today think of “**a religious leader**” when they hear the word “**pastor**”, in the time of original Christianity it was **not** a religious word at all, but actually meant “**a shepherd**” as in **a person who watches animals**. In that time shepherds were common and most people knew what a shepherd did. This is why the word made a good description for what leaders in the church were supposed to be. In the context of Christianity, we know that Jesus spoke often of believers as “sheep”.<sup>41</sup> The church is spoken of as a “**flock**” and, therefore, it is quite natural for leaders to be referred to as “**shepherds**”, whose responsibility it was to watch over, feed, and protect the flock. This is what Paul is referring to when Paul speaks of these leaders as “shepherds” in Ephesians.

There is a second word found in the New Testament that applies to these “**shepherd**” leaders and in most English Bibles it is the word “**bishop**”. While this English word is almost exclusively used in religion, in the time of original Christianity it was also an every-day word. It was used to describe **someone who watched over things**, usually in behalf of another person and so a better translation into English might be “**overseer**” or “**guardian**”. This word was used to represent the person that Caesar left to oversee his affairs in a city that his army conquered! An overseer had no authority except that which was given to him by the owner of whatever he was guarding! In the context of Christianity, these leaders are given the task of watching over Christ’s affairs in **HIS church**. An overseer in the church has no **authority** because **it is not HIS church**. He only serves as a servant of Christ!

The third word is “**elder**”. This word is also used in religion today but in the original time of Christianity was not exclusively religious. The word simply means “**an old man**” and many, if not most communities of that time period had **councils of old men** who were the leaders of the people. They were trusted because of their extensive life experience and wisdom. In the context of Christianity, this does not mean that “**elders**” must be **PHYSICALLY old-aged** men! The idea of wisdom and life experience are the focus point of how and why the word is used to describe Christian leaders, however, it is Christian-old-aged experience and not necessarily physical age. It was, and still is today, possible for a person to be an old man and yet be a baby in Christ!

So... This one group of leaders was referred to by the **THREE descriptive words** “shepherds”, “overseers”, and “elders”. The important thing **YOU MUST REMEMBER** is that these are **not THREE different sets of leaders**. A shepherd is also an overseer and an overseer is also an elder, therefore an elder is also a shepherd! How do we

<sup>37</sup> **1 Corinthians 4:17, 1 Thessalonians 3:2.**

<sup>38</sup> **1 Timothy 3:1-13.** Titus was sent to do a similar task in Crete. (See: **Titus 1:5-9**)

<sup>39</sup> Men like Titus, Aristarchus, Silas, Demas, Apollos, Barnabas, Tychicus, Sopater, John Mark and many others.

<sup>40</sup> Some Bibles say “and the shepherds and **the** teachers”, however, in such a case that second “**the**” is **not in the original text**. While the list has the article before the individual words for apostles, prophets, and for evangelists, but the text actually **has one article shared by the last two words**. The translation would therefore be “he gave **the** apostles, and **the** prophets, and **the** evangelists and **the** shepherds and teachers. The idea would be something like “shepherds who are also teachers”.

<sup>41</sup> **John 10:1-5**

know this? In **Acts 20:17-35** we read how, in verse 17, the Apostle Paul called together the **ELDERS** from Ephesus and when they arrived he spoke to him. In verse 28 of the chapter he used the other two words in the following message;

*“28 you turn attention to yourselves and to every **flock** in which the Holy Spirit placed you as **overseers**, to **shepherd** the church of the God, which he paid for through the blood of his son.”*

This is how we know that these three words go together to represent the same people! Therefore, **a church today who teaches that a Pastor and an Elder and a Bishop are different people is not teaching what the Bible says!** Going back for a moment to what we discussed above regarding Evangelists, an Evangelist is **NOT** a Pastor! A Pastor **can do evangelism** but to be a Pastor is to be a special leader. Remember that one who is a Pastor is also a Bishop and an Elder. An Evangelist is **NOT** an Elder/Bishop/Pastor because he has a different function of leadership!

We have two accounts of a **description** by Paul of the kind of person God is looking for to be **shepherds**, **overseers**, and **elders!** These are found in **1 Timothy 3:1-7** and in **Titus 1:5-11**. These were given to two of his assistants whom he sent to different places for the purpose of choosing leaders. We need to look carefully at these because they help us to understand what **REAL leadership** in original Christianity was about!



PLEASE STOP HERE AND WORK THROUGH THE ASSIGNMENT WORKSHEET for **Lesson 12**. After completing your study of the passages then you may continue.

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One of the first things we should notice is found in the Titus passage, in verse 5. Paul sent Titus to Crete to help work out some problems with the different congregations there and to “**appoint ELDERS in every place**”. Notice that he is to appoint a **plural** number of elders in every **singular** place. This shows that in the New Testament time, the Apostle Paul taught that elders/pastors/bishops **are a group of leaders within each congregation**. It was never a practice of the original church to place one person as a bishop in a congregation. History shows that this practice came about as a result of changes **made by men in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century** and beyond. Remember that it was men, and especially the councils, that made the change giving one man rule over a group of congregations. Therefore, the teaching and practice changed from **the original God-given idea** of having a group of men in each place, to having one man in charge of a group of places. Why did the men change it? They changed it **because they wanted to** and **because they believed** they had the authority to do it.

Another outstanding thing we notice about Elders/Shepherds/Pastors is that they **MUST** be married men! IN addition, **their wives must be serious Christians**, and they must also have **children who are serious believers!** In other words, they must be experienced family men. This makes sense when we read the statement of Paul in **1 Timothy 3:5**, where he says;

*“5 for if a certain man does not know **to lead his own house** how can he care for God’s church?”*

It is the experience a man obtains as he grows through all the stages of being a husband and father, to several children, that he gains **the training he needs to be a leader** in God’s church. The church is a family and therefore needs family leaders to feed, advise, and watch over it! That is the way God wanted it!

The remaining descriptions have to do with the character and abilities of the man. An Elder should not be addicted to alcohol, cannot be a recent convert, must be well thought of by outsiders, and he should be serious and one who is skillful at teaching. This “teaching” quality is especially important seeing that, according to Paul in **Acts 20:28**, it is the responsibility of the Elders/Shepherds/Pastors to “**feed the flock**”, which in context can only mean through teaching the Bible!<sup>42</sup>

Another important thing to notice is that a man **must want to serve** as an Elder/Shepherd/Overseer. He cannot be forced!<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> As we indicated earlier, there is **no such thing** as the Protestant Evangelist-Pastor, Catholic Priest, or Pulpit Minister mentioned in the Bible. The only people we see given the specific task of teaching/feeding the members of the church are the Elders/Bishops/Pastors!

<sup>43</sup> **1 Timothy 3:1**

**NOTE:** Although not mentioned in the list of Ephesians 4, Paul mentions “deacons” immediately after speaking to Timothy about Elders. (Please read **1 Timothy 3:8-13.**) The word “deacon” is a transliteration of the Greek word **DIAKONOS** and means “**an assistant, or helper**”. As was the case of so many other words we have studied, this one was also **not** a religious word during the time of original Christianity. In the context of what Paul says “deacons” are to be helpers for and servants with the Elders (See: **Philippians 1:1**) and the guidelines given by Paul show that these “assistants” should be **equally spiritual married men with equally spiritual families!**

In summary, Elders/Shepherds/Overseers are groups of older-in-the-faith men with families **that reflect the successful change that happens when the seed of the Word gets planted in “good soil”**.<sup>44</sup> They should be men who show that they are at the **top** of the “**upside down pyramid**” by being “living examples” of what Christ came to change in mankind! **THEIR EXAMPLES** should give hope and courage to all the young Christians coming behind them and their “never surrender” attitude, and willingness to work together with fellow elders and the rest of the flock, should create such a strong **UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND OF PEACE** that the Evil One will never be able to destroy the work of God. God wants Elders to teach and lead and he wants the members of the church to follow **THESE** leaders<sup>45</sup> while everyone applies the model for “leadership by example” that was set down by Paul when he said “**follow me as I follow Christ**”.<sup>46</sup>

If we compare this model to what we see in the 38,000 groups of the current religious world we see a very different picture. The Catholic Church uses leaders **who are FORCED to remain unmarried - with no families or family experience**. It also appoints one person as the leader for a group of people, and still has that hierarchy that evolved over the centuries – led by the Pope! This is **VERY** different from what Paul told his two assistants and relies upon leaders with **NO PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE in guiding a family**. It is no wonder that this church has so many problems and seems more like a country than a family!

Unfortunately, the Protestant idea does not seem to be any more accurate because instead of having a plurality of these Elders/Shepherds/Overseers in each place, most Protestant churches have **one** “Evangelist/Pastor” in each church. We do not find in the New Testament writings any instruction about a single individual PASTOR, possibly not married and without believing children, being described as a leader in original Christianity! Therefore, even though **many people today accept this kind of leader**, and there are **many** Pastors who are decent people, this does not make the practice legitimate. The only thing that would make it legitimate would be to find it taught in original Christianity because that would make the practice something that came from God and not men! Unfortunately we do not find any evidence to support the practice. The evidence that we do find all points to the practice as something that started much later and originated from men!<sup>47</sup>

Today, all religious groups seem to think that their leaders are somehow better or more spiritual than the regular members, and are people who have been “called to the ministry”. Many groups set their leaders apart with special titles and special clothes. They act differently whenever these leaders are around and often show special respect to them through acts like bowing or kissing the hands and such. We find none of this in original Christianity. In previous studies **you have seen that ALL who have been “saved” have also been “given the ministry of reconciliation”**.<sup>48</sup> The “clergy/laity” idea that evolved over the centuries originated from men, but unfortunately it is alive and well in religion today. However, since this was not taught by Jesus or the Apostles in original Christianity then it is wrong. The leaders of original Christianity were just “regular members” who agreed to take on the responsibility of **public** leadership. These men, together with their wives and children became examples for the rest of the flock and provided God with instruments he could use for teaching, guarding, and training the flock for the work of service!

The point we want to make clear is this. **IF modern churches (Catholic or Protestant) REALLY ARE Christ’s original church then why do they practice leadership in a different way from that way Jesus gave to his Apostles?** Should not Christianity today be exactly the same as the original? Yes, it should! Does anyone have the authority to change its teachings or practices? No they do not!

<sup>44</sup> The parable of the man planting seeds in **Matthew 13:3-8;18-23.**

<sup>45</sup> **Hebrews 13:7;17**

<sup>46</sup> **1 Corinthians 11:1**

<sup>47</sup> It must be remembered that the Protestant EVANGELIST-PASTOR came from the ideas of men like John Calvin who used the Catholic priest as a model the position. Calvin and others had no problem with the idea of **one man ruling** in a congregation of people. They just did not like calling that man a “priest” and so **they decided** that “pastor” would be a better choice of words. Do not forget that these men were **NOT** guided by the Holy Spirit!

<sup>48</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:18-20!**



## Before proceeding, please answer the test questions for Lesson 10:

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The questions for this lesson work the same as the ones for the previous lesson. Read each question and review the lesson material carefully. Choose the answer that best fits the question and darken the circle for that answer on the answer sheet.

26. The church was **originally** designed to be a:
- Social Club
  - Family
  - Organization
  - All of the above.
27. Which of the following passages tells us the **purpose** of the Sunday assembly Sunday?
- Hebrews 10:23-25
  - 1 John 3:14
  - Matthew 7:21-23
  - Ephesians 4:11-16
28. Ephesians 4:11-16 tells us that there are **three** "until we might ALL attain" **objectives**. Which of the following are included?
- A unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God.
  - Being a complete man.
  - A portion of what Christ was in his life.
  - All of the above.
29. In order for religion today to be to be REAL Christianity, it should **organize leadership** the same way the original church did.
- True
  - False
30. The men who became leaders of the church **in the first century**:
- Were trained by the apostles.
  - LORDED over the other sheep in the flock.
  - Went to a preaching school.
  - Were trained by the experiences in their own families.
31. IF the **original UNITY had been preserved** then the 38,000 religious groups would **not** exist today.
- True
  - False
32. Leadership in Christianity **is**:
- Not like leadership in the world
  - An "Upside-Down" Pyramid
  - "The Greatest among you will be your servant"
  - All of the above
33. As a Christian moves **down** the **upside down pyramid** they become:
- More like Christ
  - Less selfish
  - More like a servant
  - All of the above
34. What does the word "**apostle**" mean?
- A spokesperson
  - Someone sent to do something
  - Someone who brings good news
  - Someone who watches the flock
35. The apostles (with a capital A) were chosen to:
- Continue the delivery of the "second message".
  - Finish Jesus' unfinished message.
  - Represent Jesus.
  - All of the above.
36. What does the word "**prophet**" mean?
- A spokesperson.
  - Someone sent to do something.
  - Someone who brings good news.
  - Someone who watches the flock.
37. A prophet had **no authority to change the message** he was given and the authority of the message came from the one who gave it to him.
- True
  - False
38. In the most basic sense of "prophecy", anytime a person is **speaking from the Bible** he or she is speaking **in behalf of God**.
- True
  - False
39. What does the word "**evangelist**" mean?
- A spokesperson.
  - Someone sent to do something.
  - Someone who brings good news.
  - Someone who watches the flock.
40. Which two men are mentioned specifically as evangelists in the New Testament?
- Philip and Timothy
  - Peter and James
  - Paul and Barnabas
  - Judas and Philemon
41. If Timothy is the model for evangelists, he might be more like what **modern religion** calls:
- A pastor
  - A priest
  - A preacher
  - A missionary

42. What does the word “**shepherd**” mean?
- A spokesperson.
  - Someone sent to do something.
  - Someone who brings good news.
  - Someone who watches the flock.
43. The terms used to describe leaders in the church **refer to what?**
- Their title.
  - Their responsibilities.
  - Their wages.
  - None of the above.
44. An elder, an overseer and a shepherd are **different** leaders with different responsibilities.
- True
  - False
45. All the words naming leaders in the church had everyday meanings, but **men** changed the teachings and made leaders into something God did not intend.
- True
  - False
46. Elders/Shepherds/Overseers are **supposed to be men who:**
- Are married, who have a serious Christian wife, and have serious Christian children.
  - Are living examples of what Christ came to change mankind.
  - Watch over the flock and lead by example.
  - All of the above.
47. The 38,000 groups **follow the leadership model** set up by God in the New Testament.
- True
  - False
48. Christianity today should be the same as the original **IN EVERY WAY**. If not, then it is not REAL Christianity.
- True
  - False
49. Instead of REFORMATION, religion today needs **RESTORATION**.
- True
  - False
50. If we want to be REAL Christians today then we ought to:
- Rejoice because of the many “churches” today.
  - Do what feels right and hope for the best.
  - Believe, practice, and teach the same things the original Christians believed and taught.
  - None of the above.

## LESSON ELEVEN

### The problem of SIN!

As we learned from our studies in **Jesus: Lord of Our Lives**, **SIN** is the problem that caused the need for God to make the plan that caused Jesus to come here, live his perfect human life, and shed his blood to pay the price so that ALL men **MIGHT** be saved!

We looked at the closest thing we have to a Bible definition for sin, in **1 John 3:4** and found that sin is **a conscious act** of a person when they **CHOOSE** to do wrong when they are tempted and then actually **DO** the wrong thing. From **1 Corinthians 10:13** we saw how temptation may be the starting point for sin, but that God protects each person by limiting the strength of the temptation so that no person ever has been nor ever will be **FORCED** to choose to sin. **As long as God is faithful to his promise and man has the free will to choose whatever he wants then it will always be POSSIBLE for a person to choose the right every time he or she is tempted!** We learned from **James 1:12-15** how temptation works and discovered that the worst enemy we have is NOT Satan, but ourselves! **WE are the only one to blame if we sin!**



As we have seen in this course, many past and present religious leaders believe that mankind had a problem with **SIN** from the time he was created and that God is somehow responsible for that. The Catholic world believes that when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden<sup>49</sup> that their children and everyone else after that inherited the guilt of their sin. As we pointed out in our previous studies about the topic of sin they have even given this idea a special name “**Original Sin**”, and they have explanations and teachings based upon the opinions of various Catholic teachers and councils down through the centuries to support their ideas.

The Protestant world also believes that the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden had an effect upon all men after them to live without sin. They commonly refer to mankind as being **depraved**, meaning that when Adam and Eve sinned all of mankind acquired a **sinful nature** that prevents him from living without sinning. Therefore, they believe that the urge to sin is in each person from birth and it is not possible for the person to resist it. The point is best represented in John Calvin’s writings on the topic of what he, and most Protestants today, call “**total depravity**”.

In response to the Catholic and Protestant ideas we ask you to consider the following **FACTS**;

- The Bible **does NOT say** that all mankind, except Mary Jesus’ mother, is born with the sin of Adam and Eve.
- The Bible **does NOT say** that all mankind is born with something called “**original sin**”.
- The Bible **does NOT say** that all mankind is created and/or born in a state of “**total depravity**”.
- The Bible **does NOT say** that all mankind is born with a “**sinful nature**”.
- Neither Jesus nor his Apostles **used these terms** or **described anything similar to what they represent!**

**ALL** of these terms and ideas came **from the comments and writings of men** who lived many hundreds of years after Jesus and the New Testament writers. The men who created these ideas **were NOT** guided by the Holy Spirit!

Both the Catholic and Protestant ideas would have us believe that we **INHERITED** sin and/or a sinful nature from Adam. If you will recall our detailed study about sin in the course **Jesus: Lord of Our Lives**, the Bible **DOES** speak about the idea of people **INHERITING** sin but it does not support the idea. Please review the message from God to the people of Israel in **Ezekiel 18:1-20** and note **the story of the 3 men!** This one place in the Bible that directly discusses the possibility of children being accountable for the sins of their parents clearly shows that **God does not hold children accountable for the sins of their parents** neither does **HE** hold parents accountable for the sins of their children!

*“The soul that sins is the one that will die. A son will not bear the sin of the father nor shall the father bear the sin of the son. A good man’s goodness belongs to him alone and **a bad man’s badness belongs to him alone.**”*

***The point is simple and clear. GOD does not hold a person accountable for a sin committed by another person!***

The greatest problem with “original sin” and “total depravity” is that they are not fair! There is simply no **JUSTICE** in them! In our world **JUSTICE** is given to each person based upon the **actions of the person** and not on the actions of another. You simply cannot be held responsible for the crime of another person. **You CANNOT INHERIT a crime!** Let us also not forget that in **2 Corinthians 5:10** the Bible showed us that, in the Judgment Day, each person will be responsible for the sins **they committed** while they were alive in their body.

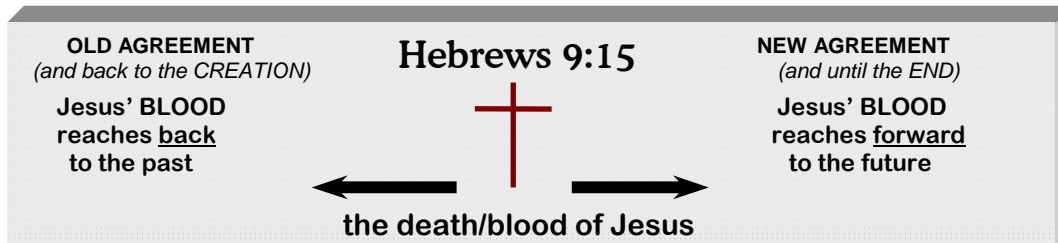
One final thought to consider. If “original sin” and “total depravity” were true then **would they not affect ALL people who ever lived** - going back to the times of the Old Testament and even back to the very first people – Adam and Eve? Of course! For example, **IF** “original sin” was true then would it not be true for all people starting from Adam? Yes! Then **IF** the way God gave people to get rid of original sin was to have infant children baptized then should we not see these instructions given to the people in the Old Testament from the time of Adam? Of course we should, but the fact is that we do not see ANY mention of the topic or instruction for the people on how to get rid of it.

**On the other hand, IF “total depravity” is correct then should we not find explanations about “total depravity” and the sinful nature of man going all the way back to the book of Genesis?** Yes, we should! **IF** these problems have affected **ALL** mankind since Adam then we should see God giving instructions to people about

<sup>49</sup> Their sin is recorded in **Genesis chapter 3** but it is not called “Original Sin”. That phrase is not found in any of the books of the Bible or in any of the writings of religious leaders for several hundred years after the time of original Christianity.

them back in those early times! However, we do not find any such explanation or remedy mentioned **ANYWHERE** in the Bible. The only place we read about these teachings is in the writings of the different men who were not guided by the Holy Spirit and who lived hundreds of years after Jesus and the Apostles died!

If “original sin” and “total depravity” were true from the Beginning **we certainly would expect to find these teachings explained and represented in the “Law of Moses”**. We would expect to find them connected in some way with rituals and sacrifices of the priests and these would later be explained by the writer of the Hebrew letter in the New Testament to be symbolic representations of mankind’s problem that Jesus came and fulfilled with his death. We say this because that writer goes to great lengths to explain the shadow/reality relationship that existed between what God told the Israelites to do in the “Law of Moses” and what Jesus came and did with his life and death on the cross. The **Old Testament was the shadow and Jesus the reality!** Remember that in **Hebrews 9:15**



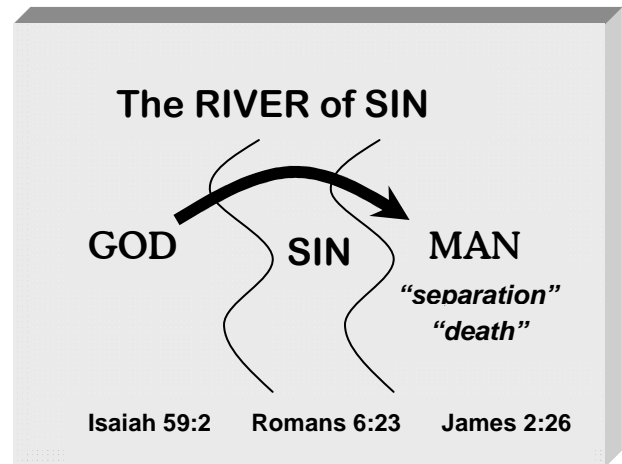
we learned that the death of Jesus reaches back and forgives the sins of the people under the first agreement. If they are really true then why does the Hebrew writer not mention “original

sin” or “total depravity”? If these ideas are taught by Paul in the book of Romans then why does Paul – who WAS guided by the Holy Spirit - not mention them by name? If these ideas are true why didn’t any teacher or writer in the Bible mention them? The answer is very simple. **There was no such thing as EITHER “original sin” or “total depravity” until MEN made them up many years after the message of the Bible was completed!**

The Bible message is very simple on this topic. **God is a God of JUSTICE!** In other words, **HE is FAIR** and only holds us accountable for our own mistakes. Therefore, **HE is also fair to judge all people** because **HE KNOWS** that all people who sin did not have to sin **because HE was watching over them and regulating their temptations** so that they would **ALWAYS** have that way of escape!<sup>50</sup>

Man sins because he makes the free-will choice to do wrong when he could just as easily choose to do right. He is fairly judged because he did NOT have to sin! Therefore, sinful man is guilty because of his own doing and NOT because God created him with a **tendency or weakness** to sin!<sup>51</sup>

We also learned that when people sin **they earn DEATH** and that this death is “**separation**” from God and that this is the “**BAD NEWS**” that affects all mankind! The diagram at the right shows us “**The River of Sin**” that we discussed in **Jesus: Lord of Our Lives**.



## TULIP – No it is NOT a flower!

In our course **Jesus: Lord of Our Lives**, we studied about the **TWO AGREEMENTS** found in the Bible and we saw that the First Agreement was between God and only the nation of Israel but the Second Agreement was and is **OFFERED** to all people from every nation! It is through this New Agreement (or New Testament) that God provides all people with the opportunity to have forgiveness of sins and a life with him!

In the book of **1 Timothy 2:1-7**, Paul writes about matters relating to praying for the leaders of the civil government. In verses 3 and 4 he then makes the following statement;

**“3 this is a good and welcome thing in the presence of God our Savior, 4 who wants all men to be saved and to come into a knowledge of truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, 6 who gave as a ransom in behalf of all men,”**

<sup>50</sup> **1 Corinthians 10:13**

<sup>51</sup> Please do not forget the very severe words of the Hebrew writer in **Hebrews 10:26-31**, or Paul’s points in **Romans chapter 6!** It MUST be possible to DIE to sin, which MUST therefore mean that once a person becomes a Christian they CAN (and SHOULD) choose **NOT** to sin each and every time they are tempted!

In his second letter, the Apostle Peter writes on the topic of the end of the world. In **2 Peter 3:9** he makes the following statement regarding the alleged slowness in the Lord coming back and ending the world;

*“9 The Lord is not delayed of the promise, as certain ones consider a delay, but he is patient unto you, not wishing certain ones to be destroyed but **for all to come to repentance.**”*

In **2 Corinthians 5:14-15**, Paul makes the following statement;

*“14 For the love of the Christ compels, we judging this, that **one man died on behalf of all men**, therefore all men died; 15 and **he died on behalf of all men** so that the ones living might no longer live for themselves, but for the one **who died on behalf of all men** and was raised.”*

In **Romans 1:16**, Paul says the following;

*“16 For I am not ashamed of the good news, for it is God’s power into salvation **to everyone who believes**, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”*

In **Acts 10:9-48** we have the story of how a Gentile believer, named Cornelius, became the first non-Jewish person to become a Christian. The Apostle Peter was told to go to his house and teach him what to do. When Peter arrives and witnesses all that happens he makes the following statement in verse 34-35;

*“34 And Peter after opening his mouth said, ‘On truth I realize that the God is not one who shows favoritism, 35 but **in every nation the one fearing him and working justice is welcome to him.**”*

In **John 1:12-13** we read the following statement;

*“12 But **whoever received him, to the ones believing** into his name, he gave them permission to become God’s children, 13 who were not born out of blood, nor out of a will of flesh, nor out of a will of man, but out of God.”*

In **Mark 16:15-16**, the Lord Jesus himself says the following;

*“15 And he said to them, ‘After going into all the world, you preach the good news **to every creature.** 16 The **one who believes and is immersed will be saved**, but the **one who does not believe will be condemned.**”*

These passages offer some of the clearest evidence found in the New Testament to the facts that;

- 1) God wants **ALL** people to be saved.
- 2) Jesus died for **ALL** men.
- 3) God offers salvation to **ANY** person from **ANY** nation.
- 4) **Those who believe** will be welcomed by God and saved!
- 5) **Those who do not believe** will be condemned!

These facts explain why everything we discovered in previous study about the topic of **salvation** in **Jesus: Lord of Our Lives** proves that the New Agreement is **OFFERED to ALL people** and that **ANYONE who wants to** can receive Jesus’ blood for the forgiveness of their sins! **No person is excluded from the offer!**

This is a very important point to consider because both Luther and Calvin suggested that God does **NOT** offer salvation **to ALL people!** Instead they believed and taught that God has **CHOSEN** those whom he wishes to save and those he wishes to condemn and that salvation has nothing to do with whether a person desires it or not! Mr. Calvin was especially convinced of this and it became one of the 5 major teachings of Calvinism. They are often represented by the acronym<sup>52</sup> **TULIP**. Many, if not most, Protestants today believe these 5 points to be true. They are listed and explained as follows;

T = “**Total Depravity**”, which is the idea that man is born completely sinful, which is just another way of saying that man cannot resist sinning and so cannot live without committing sin. It even goes so far as to say that man cannot even choose to follow God. God must choose man!

U = “**Unconditional Election**”, which states that before the creation of the world God chose which people he wants to save and he did not do this based upon what the individual’s conduct or beliefs might be. He chose who he wanted to because he is God!

<sup>52</sup> An **acronym** is a word formed by taking the first letters of the words of a phrase and placing them side by side to form a word.

L = “**Limited Atonement**”, which states that Jesus did not die for ALL men, but only for the ones chosen by God for salvation.

I = “**Irresistible Grace**”, which means that those God has chosen will not be able to resist the call to salvation. The Holy Spirit will work to bring them to repentance.

P = “**Perseverance of the Saints**”, which is basically the idea of “once saved, always saved”. Once a person has been chosen by God he or she cannot fall.

Rather than God setting up a situation where any person from any nation can choose accept or reject the conditional terms of the New Agreement that he made to escape the **BAD NEWS**, Calvinism states that God chooses the people he wants to save and condemn, that the ones to be saved will not be able to resist God’s efforts to bring them into his fold, and that once in the fold these saved souls can do nothing to lose their salvation! We need to investigate TULIP farther.

**Regarding the first point (T):**

Calvin states that **a child is born “totally sinful”** as a result of what Adam and Eve did in Eden and **from that moment is helpless against the power of sin**. The Lord Jesus himself once called children “the **greatest** in the Kingdom” and used them as examples of what adults need to be in spirit and attitude. Would Jesus use children as an example if they were sinners? Is Jesus, who **IS** the Lord, correct or is Calvin, who **IS NOT** the Lord? In addition, The Apostle Paul, whose book of Romans Calvin takes much of his material from, wrote to the Corinthians about temptation and sin. In **1 Corinthians 10:13** he very clearly tells the readers that “**God is faithful and will NOT LET you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but with every temptation will also provide a way of escape SO THAT YOU CAN ENDURE IT.**” Calvin, who **WAS NOT** guided by the Holy Spirit, says that sin overpowers man and he cannot avoid committing sin, Paul, who **WAS** guided by the Holy Spirit says that God keeps sin from overpowering man and he can keep from sinning if he chooses the way of escape provided by God. Who is correct?

**Regarding the second point (U):**

Calvin states that **God chooses only certain ones to be saved**. The Apostle Paul told Timothy that God “**desires ALL men to be saved** and to come to a knowledge of truth”. Is Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ and one who **WAS** guided by the Holy Spirit, correct or is Calvin, who **WAS NOT** guided by the Holy Spirit?

In addition, what about the instruction to evangelize the whole world Jesus gave his followers just before he left the earth? If God had already **chosen his people before time began** then **WHY DID JESUS SEND HIS FOLLOWERS OUT** to “preach the good news to every creature”, with the **condition** that those who “believe and be baptized will be saved” but “those who do not believe will be condemned”? If Calvin is right then the Holy Spirit would activate the faith in those who were “chosen” and they would be overpowered by the Spirit into conforming to what God wants.

Let us also consider what Paul says in **2 Thessalonians 2:9-12** where he speaks to the Christians there about false teachers. In **verse 11**, much to our surprise, he says that **IF** people do not “love the truth and so be saved” God might send upon them a “strong delusion to make them believe what is false”. This gives a very different picture from what Calvin is saying. It seems that **God offers EVERYONE the chance** to “believe” and “love the truth and so be saved”. In fact, God gets so angry when people refuse to believe that Paul says that **he will actually make people believe that lies are true!** Paul **WAS** guided by the Holy Spirit, Calvin **WAS NOT!**

We also looked at the example of Cornelius becoming a Christian and Peter’s observations about **God welcoming any person from any nation who believes and does right**. Peter **WAS** guided by the Holy Spirit, Calvin **WAS NOT!**

Finally, let us consider one of the main Bible passages that Calvin and others believe teaches that God chooses who whom he will save and whom he will condemn, apart from their actions. In Romans 8:29-30, we read the following statement;

*“29 For **those he foreknew** he predestined to be formed alike in the image of His son, so that he might be the first-born of many brothers; 30 and those he predestined these he also called and those he called these he also made right, and those he made right he also glorified.”*

The Protestant teachers maintain that God “predestines” some to be saved. They define this predestination after the ideas of Calvin and others who shared his opinions – that God does this without any consideration of the actions of the people. One thing that stands out in verse 29 is the statement that God predestines **THOSE HE FOREKNEW!**

Calvin specifically denies this in his teachings, maintaining that God makes his choice based not upon the actions of the people! Is **THAT** what this passage is really saying? Let us work through it carefully and see.

All we have to do is trace Paul's point back from the end to the beginning. We find that he, in fact, **bases the entire point on the fact that God FOREKNEW those people he glorifies!** In other words, God knows beforehand which people will choose to accept his offer of salvation and which ones will not. This is very much the opposite of what Calvin said! We have clearly seen that God offers salvation to everyone. He does this because he is FAIR and only punishes those who reject him. However, because he has **foreknowledge he already knew who would and would not choose to follow him even before he made the world.** He made his PLAN for salvation making use of this foreknowledge!<sup>53</sup>

**Final Result: God GLORIFIES  
Who? Those he MADE RIGHT  
Who? Those he PREDESTINED  
Who? Those he FOREKNEW**

*It ALL begins with FOREKNOWLEDGE!*

#### Regarding the third point (L):

Calvin says that **Jesus did not die for all mankind.** Looking back at the list of verses at the beginning of this lesson, Paul specifically tells both Timothy and the Corinthians that Jesus "**died in behalf of ALL people**". This is a fact of history that is not dependent upon all people **accepting** the New Agreement. Paul points to the reality that it is by his death that Jesus came to be the LORD of all people. Paul **WAS** guided by the Holy Spirit when he wrote those things, Calvin **WAS NOT** guided by the Holy Spirit.

#### Regarding the fourth point (I):

Calvin states that **no person God calls can resist his efforts to save him.** In **Mark 16:15-16**, Jesus stated that a person who is taught the good news **can accept OR reject it.** Is the Lord Jesus correct or is Calvin?

In addition, the Apostle Paul, who Calvin credits with influencing him to believe this through what Paul wrote in the book of Romans, speaks of people who became Christians but who stopped doing right, thus showing that he believed that a person **CAN** resist the work of the Spirit.<sup>54</sup>

Let us not forget the passage by Paul in **2 Thessalonians 2:9-12**, mentioned in point 2 above. People **CAN** refuse to love the truth! The Apostle Peter describes the same thing in his second letter (**2 Peter 2:20-22**) and so does the writer of Hebrews (Hebrews 6:4). The Apostle John also speaks of such people (**3 John 1:9-10**). From what John also says in **1 John 2:24-27**, we see that Christians of that time who possessed special guidance from the Holy Spirit still retained their free will and could decide to either do or not do what they were taught by the Spirit. Note how John **appeals to the readers to DO what the Spirit tells them!** The fact that he **must appeal to them** proves that they had a choice! The Spirit did not overpower them! It is therefore **POSSIBLE for a person who was called by God to start out well and then RESIST the change of life that God wanted all his people to have!** At least this is the teaching of the Apostles, who **WERE** guided by the Holy Spirit. Calvin **WAS NOT** guided by the Holy Spirit!

#### Regarding the fifth point (P):

Calvin states that **once a person is chosen by God and saved they cannot lose their salvation** because God protects them. Jesus said on many occasions, "**he that endures to the end will be saved**".

Paul, the one whose Roman letter influenced Calvin very much, told the Corinthians (**1 Corinthians 15:1-2**) that they were saved by the good news and would remain so **only as long as they remained faithful**, otherwise their faith would be useless. He told the Colossians (**Colossians 1:21-23**) that they were once lost but were saved and **would remain saved provided that they remained faithful.** Paul spoke to Timothy on two occasions by letter and in **BOTH (1 Timothy 4:1-3 and 2 Timothy 4:3-4)** he speaks about people who would start out as Christians but would **later leave behind the "correct teachings"**, finding for themselves teachers that would say what they wanted to hear.

<sup>53</sup> See also **Ephesians 1:3-12!**

<sup>54</sup> See **1 Timothy 1:18-20** where Paul mentions two Christians, named Hymenaeus and Alexander, who did not hold fast to their faith.

Peter, as stated in the previous point, mentions a person who becomes a Christian **and then turns back**. So does the writer of Hebrews! What more evidence do we need? Calvin, who **WAS NOT** guided by the Holy Spirit, says that it **IS NOT** possible for one who is saved to fall, but Jesus and his Apostles, all who **WERE** guided by the Holy Spirit, say that it **IS** possible. Who is correct?

You must consider all the evidence and decide for yourself!

Just remember these important facts. There is no "TULIP", or any of the five individual parts of it, found in the verses of the Bible and John Calvin was **NOT** guided by the Holy Spirit!<sup>55</sup>

## **Before proceeding, answer the following test questions for Lesson 11:**

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**The questions for this lesson work the same as the ones for the previous lesson. Read each question and review the lesson material carefully. Choose the answer that best fits the question and darken the circle for that answer on the answer sheet.**

51. The main reason for the problem of the 38,000 groups all centers around:
- Greed
  - Selfishness
  - Hunger for power
  - All of the above
52. The problem of sin caused the need for which of the following?
- God to make his plan to save mankind
  - Jesus to live a perfect life
  - Jesus to shed his blood
  - All of the above
53. The verse which gives the closest thing to a Biblical definition of sin is:
- James 1:12-15
  - 1 Corinthians 10:13
  - 1 John 3:4
  - None of the above
54. As long as God is faithful to his promise and man has the free will to choose whatever he wants then it will always be POSSIBLE for a person to choose the right every time he or she is tempted
- True
  - False
55. Which of the following is the teaching which says that after Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden their children inherited their sin?
- Once Saved, Always Saved
  - Original Sin
  - Total Depravity
  - Limited Atonement
56. Ezekiel 18:1-20 is Biblical proof that you CAN inherit sin from your parents.
- True
  - False
57. If the teaching of "Total Depravity" is correct, we should find explanations about it going all the way back to when?
- the time of Jesus
  - the time of the Prophets
  - the time of Genesis
  - the time of the early church
58. Writers of the New Testament who were guided by the Holy Spirit do not mention the teaching of "Total Depravity".
- True
  - False
59. Which of the following do we learn from 1 Corinthians 10:13?
- God is fair
  - God gives us a way of escape with every temptation
  - No human being MUST sin
  - All of the above
60. We learned in Jesus: Lord of Our Lives that there are TWO agreements in the Bible. Which is the one for us today?
- The Old Agreement
  - The New Agreement
  - Both A & B
  - None of the above

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<sup>55</sup> Please do not forget that Calvin had a man who disagreed with his views killed. And on what basis did he have the man killed? On the basis of what Jesus taught? Impossible because nowhere does Jesus teach his followers to have anyone killed. Calvin determined that the man was a "heretic" based upon his convictions **for his own beliefs and opinions**. They became so important to him that he became blinded to the truth. Proof of this can be seen in the fact that the first edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was a mere 6 chapters long but by the time it was last updated, before his death, it exploded to **80 chapters!** His book became "a companion" to the Bible for many Protestant scholars and his opinions (Calvinism) continue to shape the basic beliefs of thousands of the 38,000 groups today! If Calvin was not guided by the Holy Spirit then his book is not needed. All we need is the Bible! Could it be that God sent upon Calvin a strong delusion to make him believe what is false?



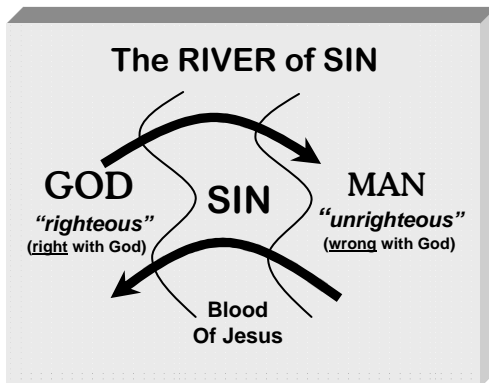
61. **TULIP** is:
- A flower
  - A doctrine of Calvinism
  - A currency
  - A method of gardening
62. Who does God want to save?
- Those he chooses
  - Those who do enough good works
  - All men
  - None of the above
63. How many people did Jesus die for?
- Those who believe
  - Any person from any nation
  - All men
  - All of the above
64. Luther and Calvin suggested that God **CHOOSES** those he will save.
- True
  - False
65. "Total Depravity" means:
- man is born completely sinful.
  - before creation God chose who he would save.
  - Jesus did not die for all people.
  - Once a person has been chosen by God he or she cannot fall.
66. "Perseverance of the Saints" means:
- man is born completely sinful.
  - before creation God chose who he would save.
  - Jesus did not die for all people.
  - Once a person has been chosen by God he or she cannot fall.
67. "Limited Atonement" means:
- man is born completely sinful.
  - before creation God chose who he would save.
  - Jesus did not die for all people.
  - Once a person has been chosen by God he or she cannot fall.
68. "Irresistible Grace" means
- Those God has chosen will not be able to resist the call to salvation.
  - Once a person has been chosen by God he or she cannot fall.
  - before creation God chose who he would save.
  - Jesus did not die for all people.
69. "Unconditional Election" means:
- Those God has chosen will not be able to resist the call to salvation.
  - Once a person has been chosen by God he or she cannot fall.
  - before creation God chose who he would save.
  - Jesus did not die for all people.
70. Though Calvin used Romans to get many of his teachings, what other book that the Apostle Paul wrote contradicts the teaching of "Total Depravity"?
- Galatians
  - Ephesians
  - First Corinthians
  - Second Thessalonians
71. Even though Calvin says in the teaching of "Unconditional Election" that God has already chosen those he will save, the Bible says that there are requirements for those who wish to be saved, including:
- Believing in the truth
  - Loving the Truth
  - Be baptized
  - All of the above
72. Paul, who was guided by the Holy Spirit, says in the books of Timothy and Corinthians that Jesus "died in behalf of all people".
- True
  - False
73. The passage written by the Apostle John which shows that a person has free will to decide whether he will follow what the Holy Spirit teaches him is:
- 3 John 1:9-10
  - John 3:16
  - 1 John 2:24-27
  - John 1:1-3; 14
74. Unlike what Calvin said in his teaching "Perseverance of the saints", Jesus and the apostles clearly said that **WHO** will be saved?
- Those who gave alms to the poor
  - Those who endured to the end
  - Those who studied the Bible 3 hours a day
  - Those who built large church buildings
75. The teaching of TULIP by Calvin cannot be found in the Bible and John Calvin was **NOT** guided by the Holy Spirit.
- True
  - False

# LESSON TWELVE

Now that we have reviewed the basic idea of SIN and compared that to the Protestant idea of Calvinism as it is represented by "TULIP", we hope that you can see the difference and agree with us that what the Bible teaches is the only acceptable belief on the matter. Why? We must only accept the Bible because the Bible message is the only message that came to us from God. "TULIP" came to us from the teachings and opinions of men, most especially one man, John Calvin, who was **NOT** guided by the Holy Spirit. The fact that millions of people **believe** TULIP does not prove that it came from God and is a correct teaching of **REAL Christianity** any more than the fact that millions of Catholics believe in Original Sin proves that it came from God and is a correct teaching! Neither of those beliefs are found in the pages of the Bible and we have seen many times how Jesus and the Apostles warned the first Christians to always make certain that any teaching they are given agrees with the original teachings received from God. They also warned us that people would someday make changes and that those people would be very convincing. However, we must always consider the teachings found in the Bible to be the true ones and judge all teachings we hear about today by those original teachings of Christianity. Never forget that **no man or group of men have the right to make changes to God's message.**

In this final lesson we will review the details about the instructions given by God regarding HOW a person becomes part of the New Agreement and received Jesus' blood into his or her life! As we go along we will bring in the basic teachings of the 38,000 so that we can know what they teach and see how those teachings compare with the teachings of original Christianity.

## Righteousness, Grace, and BLOOD!



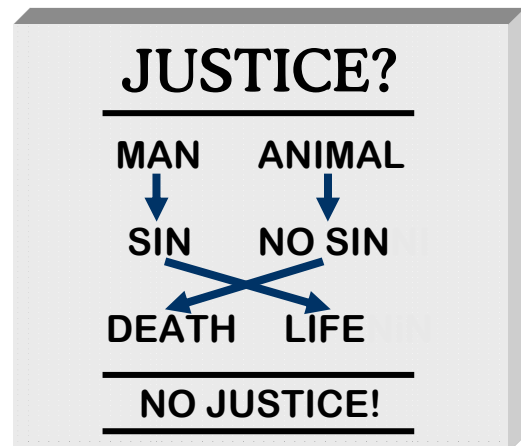
One of the most important topics we studied in our course **Jesus: Lord of Our Lives** was **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. If you will recall, we discovered that the word was not a religious word back in the time of the Bible and it actually meant **JUSTICE** or **FAIRNESS**. It had to do with "balance" and was used to describe man's relationship with God and the effects of sin upon that relationship.

As long as people do what God wants their lives are **in balance** with his expectations and thus they are "righteous". When people sin their lives are out of balance with God's expectations. They get transported across the River of Sin and become **LOST!** Therefore, they are "unrighteous" or wrong with God. To be saved or become **RIGHT** with God, **LOST** people must get rid of the sins that cause the separation.

Our studies of the Old Agreement showed us that God told the Israelites to have their sins removed with animal sacrifices. Our follow-up studies from the book of Hebrews showed us that it was actually the **shedding of blood** that was important. **Hebrews 9:22 explained to us that only BLOOD can take away sins.** This was a very important discovery in our studies!

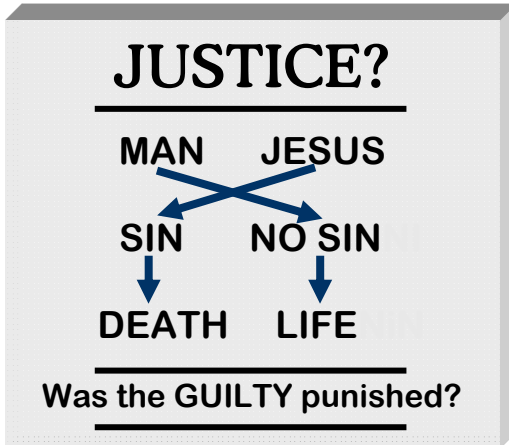
Hebrews chapters 9 and 10 showed us that only the **BLOOD OF CHRIST** can take away sins. This is the reason why Jesus had to die, so that he could provide the blood! The animal sacrifices the people made only reminded them of their sins but could not take away the sins. We found in **Hebrews 10:1-4** that the animal sacrifices could not take away sins. It seems to be a matter of **JUSTICE**. It was not a **FAIR** system because it substituted an innocent animal to take the punishment for a guilty person who actually made the sin. The animals were not guilty of anything. Justice could never accept such a system because it operates on the principle that the one that sins is the one who will die!<sup>56</sup>

**Justice is not satisfied until the GUILTY has been punished!**



<sup>56</sup> This is the principle set down by God in **Ezekiel 18** when he told the people that children are not responsible for their parents' sins, and vice versa. This principle is also included in all the Judgment Day passages in the New Testament, such as **2 Corinthians 5: 10**.

We learned that **Christ's death** took care of the problem but it was not as easy as some people try to suggest. Most religious teachers today teach that Jesus **substituted** for our death on that cross. However, when we tried to **substitute** Jesus to take our death we found the same **JUSTICE** problem we had with the animal sacrifices. You cannot substitute an innocent victim to take the punishment for the guilty. As long as Jesus is innocent justice will not accept his death as payment for sin.



We discovered that God found a way to solve the problem. He did not make Jesus take our death. He made Jesus take our sins and make them his own. Jesus **BECAME** a sinner! This is what we found in **2 Corinthians 5:21** and **1 Peter 2:24**. Consequently, Jesus died and **because he was guilty JUSTICE was satisfied!**

The only thing that saved him through that ordeal was the **SINLESS BLOOD** that was in his body. That blood paid the price for those sins. Remember that the proof that all this happened was contained in the statement Jesus made on the cross when he said, "My God, My God, why have you left me alone?"<sup>57</sup> This is the reason why no sinner can be righteous without the blood of Jesus!

We discovered another important point relating to righteousness and the blood/death of Christ. A number of passages mentioned something called the "**grace**" of God. Perhaps the most outstanding of these was **Ephesians 2:8-10**, where we learned that man is "**saved by grace**" and that this grace comes to people "**through faith**". When we looked at the background of the word we noticed that **GRACE** was **an ordinary word** in the time of the Bible and had no unique religious significance. It basically meant "**a FAVOR someone does for someone who does not deserve it**". It could be any favor! Therefore if we apply the meaning to what the Bible says, that man is saved "by the **GRACE** of God", it means that man is "saved by a **FAVOR** God did for man, who did not deserve it". From that point all we needed to discover **WHAT** the grace of God actually is was **look for a favor** that God did for us that we did not deserve. That was simple! Jesus coming to the earth, taking our sins, and shedding his blood to pay for them! **THAT** was the favor God did for us and **THAT** is what saves us.

**THE POINT**

**IF: the GRACE of God = the Favor God did for us!**

**And IF: the Favor God did for us = Jesus' DEATH/BLOOD!**

**THEN: the GRACE of God = Jesus' DEATH/BLOOD!**

**THEREFORE:**

**Saved BY GRACE = Saved BY JESUS DEATH/BLOOD!**

## The INSTRUCTIONS for ALL mankind!

The Ephesians 2 passage pointed out that this saving grace is a "**gift** of God". We discussed the fact that a gift must be received in order to benefit the recipient and that those things done to receive the gift **are not considered "works"** done to "**earn**" the gift. This ultimately led us on another journey to search for **INSTRUCTIONS** from God by which a person can **receive** the blood/ death of Jesus into their life **so that THEY can have THEIR sins forgiven!**

To accomplish this search you were assigned a worksheet containing around 70 passages that had some information on the topic. Combining all the details, we discovered **five basic instructions** that God provided to help a person **receive** that gift of Christ's blood/death and be transferred out of the **LOST** side of the River of Sin and placed on the **SAVED** side where God is.

In **Jesus: Lord of Our Lives** we focused our attention on verifying the truthfulness of each of these and then understanding what each one meant. While we need to review the basic details of that information we will focus our

<sup>57</sup> Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34

attention in this course upon areas where the 38,000 differ from what the Bible teaches.

## 1) SAVING Faith = Belief + Action!

There are many passages that **use the word FAITH but not so many that help us to understand WHAT faith is.** In our past courses we found **Hebrews chapter 11** to be helpful, as well as **James 2:14-26**. We discovered that the popular idea, that FAITH is simply something that **God makes happen** in the mind and heart, is not the picture the Bible presents. James was especially helpful because he defines “saving faith” as the combination of believing “that God is real” PLUS the added element of obedience. After all, as James says, “the demons **believe** and tremble”, and yet we know they are not acceptable to God! His conclusion “faith without works is dead” agrees with everything we see mentioned about faith in Hebrews 11, as well as every story and teaching from every prophet and the Lord Jesus himself! James rightly points out that it is the obedience that proves that there is faith!<sup>58</sup> Since saving faith requires the free will participation of obedience on the part of the one possessing it, we cannot say that God will interfere with the process of free will and **produce** faith in a person. If God did this for one then he would have to do it for all people, because he himself tells us over and over again that **he does not show favoritism**. However, we KNOW that God does not make people believe because then everyone **WOULD believe** since God “desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of truth!”<sup>59</sup> The fact that all do NOT believe is all the proof we need to show that God DOES NOT force faith upon a person. It must be a free will response!

This view is very different from what most Protestants believe. They insist that faith is a state of mind and heart **that God creates** through the work of the Holy Spirit. Of course they believe that way because of the influence of Calvin and his idea that God uses the Holy Spirit to overpower the will of the person to save the ones that he has chosen! However, that is not what James is saying in chapter 2 of his letter. Otherwise, **IF** God **DOES interfere** with man’s free will and **produces** faith in him then **WHY** is James writing to people **we KNOW are Christians** (and, therefore, are chosen by God) telling **THEM** that **THEY** need to **choose** to obey if they desire to have saving faith?

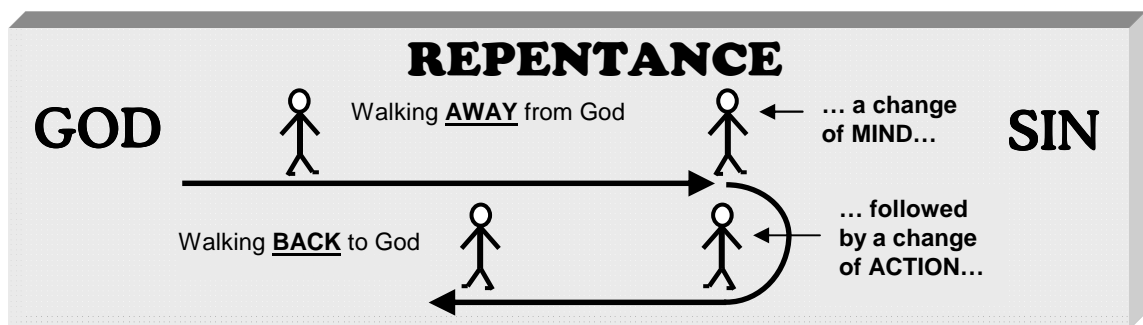
As James said, it is the obedience that proves that one truly believes! This agrees with Jesus’ two major statements on the topic of those who **claimed** to be his followers. “Why do you call me Lord and not do what I say?” and “If you love me then keep my commands!”

**TRUE FAITH** would never try to find an excuse for not doing something that the one who died says to do!

## 2) TRUE Repentance = Change of Mind + Action!

In past studies we found this idea in many places in the Bible. We found it to be a natural response to making mistakes. If we make mistakes then God expects us to repent. We also found that the word is not a religious word but was an everyday word in the time of the New Testament. It **carries the idea of changing one’s mind** and applies easily to the topic of sin. Before forgiveness will be granted by **God he expects the sinner to change his or her mind about what they did**. We also found that **that change of mind MUST lead to action!**

**Acts 26:20** showed us the whole idea in action. The point is simple. **How can anyone CLAIM to have TRUE repentance and continue to do the sin they are**



**sorry for?** This is one area that most religious groups teach correctly. Of course it is hard to imagine anyone **claiming** Jesus as Lord that would teach that it would be acceptable to Christ for someone to SAY they are sorry for having done something bad and still continue doing the bad thing!

<sup>58</sup> This is found in **James 2:21-24**.

<sup>59</sup> Do not forget **1 Timothy 2:4!**

### 3) ADMIT/CONFESS THAT YOU BELIEVE!

This instruction has been made popular by the Protestants and “Born Again” groups, who emphasize this one instruction so much that they often do not even mention any of the others. This is very surprising when we take note of the fact that **this particular instruction has the least amount of explanation in the New Testament**. We found that **CONFESSING CHRIST WITH THE LIPS** was a major point in Paul’s writings to the Romans, in **10:9-13**, but **WHAT ARE WE TO SAY in this confession?** There does not seem to be an explanation located anywhere in the Bible that gives the needed details. The most common **pattern** used today in religion is something called “The Sinner’s Prayer”, which is a prayer that is taught for receiving Jesus as personal Lord and Savior. However, **IF** this were true, **then** we would find instructions telling people to **SAY such a prayer to receive Christ**, we would also find evidence of the wording of a “Sinner’s Prayer” **inside the pages of the Bible**, and we would find evidence, among the many examples of people becoming Christians that were recorded in the book of Acts. Those examples are the key because finding people **actually saying a prayer to receive Jesus** into their lives would be undeniable proof! The truth of the matter is that we find **NONE OF THESE** in the New Testament!

We find no evidence of a “Sinner’s Prayer” or any other prayer being taught for receiving Jesus in the writings of the New Testament or of the early church leaders before the Council of Nicea. The Catholics from Nicea onward mention nothing about people receiving Jesus by means of a prayer. Even the first REFORMERS did not mention people having to say a prayer to receive Jesus. In fact, they would actually be against that idea because saying a prayer would be a “work” in their view and **NO WORK** is done to receive salvation.

Attempts to trace the origin of the “Sinner’s Prayer” yield evidence suggesting that it was possibly either Billy Graham or the group “Campus Crusade For Christ” that started the practice! If this is true, then the practice **cannot be considered genuine** seeing that these are 20<sup>th</sup> century people and NONE are guided by the Holy Spirit.

The strongest evidence we have to consider from the New Testament, for determining if this popular Protestant practice is part of original Christianity, is the examples of people becoming Christians recorded in the book of Acts. In the course **Jesus: Lord of Our Lives** you were given an assignment to review each of the **9 examples**<sup>60</sup> found there. At that time you were even specifically asked to watch for any direct mention, hint, or inference pointing to an instruction for anyone to say a prayer to receive Christ’s death into their life. There was NONE!

One in particular that is really worth mentioning is the very first one – the 3,000 people who responded to Peter’s speech in **Acts 2:1-41**. This is an important case because we have the most details revealed and because being the first one it sets the foundation for all that follow. It took place on the Day of Pentecost, which was about 40 days after Jesus had ascended into heaven. In verse 14, the Apostle Peter stands and begins a speech to the crowd of people that had gathered. If we follow along in his speech he told the people many things about Jesus, who he really was and how God chose him and gave him a special authority. Then he told them about God’s plan and how he used them as instruments to have Jesus killed and how God raised Jesus from the dead and made him “both Lord and Christ”. Evidently, the message of Peter caused them to think because we find that they were convicted in their hearts and they interrupted Peter’s speech and asked **“WHAT SHALL WE DO?”** Here, then, is why this example is so important. It is a situation where people want to know what they must do to be saved. The one speaking is an Apostle and so the authority and knowledge of the truth is unquestionable! It is the perfect **CONTEXT!** Whatever answer Peter will give is going to be true and will set the example for Christianity in all places and times to follow! The answer Peter gave was;

*“Each one of you **repent and be immersed for the forgiveness of sins** and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” **Acts 2:38***

As we consider the Protestant idea of a “Sinner’s Prayer”, the point we must make here is simple. **IF** what modern Protestants believe is correct, that a person receives Jesus and is saved by saying the “Sinner’s Prayer”, **THEN** Peter **would have given THAT explanation** to the crowd. He did **NOT!**

Thinking down that same line of reasoning, **IF** what the first Protestant “reformers” believed was correct, that a person does nothing but believe and by that belief alone – apart from saying or doing **anything** – they are saved, **THEN** Peter **would have given THAT explanation** to the crowd. He did **NOT!**

What Peter told them is recorded in the text, and is seen being **carried out in ALL of the other examples** recorded. Not only that, but even a casual look at the writings of the “church leaders” from the next three centuries

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<sup>60</sup> The nine examples are found in **Acts 2:1-41; 8:4-13; 8:26-39; 9:1-19** (again in **22:12-16**); **10:23-48; 16:13-15; 16:25-34; 18:8; and 19:1-7**.

will reveal a constant understanding and practice of what Peter told the people in **Acts 2**. If we review the final instructions Jesus gave to his disciples before he left the earth, recorded in **Matthew 28:18-20** and **Mark 16:15-16**, we find that he told them to preach the good news and anyone who believed and was immersed would be saved. This is why Peter gave the answer he did and why every other example recorded in the book of Acts ends in the people being immersed in water. This is what original Christianity believed and taught.

The simple fact is that **none of the original Christians ever taught that a person is saved by means of a “Sinner’s Prayer”**. It is also a fact that **no writer from the first few centuries after the last Apostle ever read Romans 10:9-13 and taught that Paul is saying that people receive Jesus’ death by simply saying a prayer!** They taught that people received Jesus’ death by being immersed in water.<sup>61</sup>

The “Sinner’s Prayer” as a confession, using **Romans 10:9-13**<sup>62</sup> as a basis, is a **CHANGE** from what was originally taught by the Apostles. Once again, we must ask if it is acceptable to claim to be a Christian today and teach something that was not taught by the original Christians. Of course it is not! This situation illustrates the danger of looking at **partial information** and not considering **the context** of passages and the existence of this teaching is why we had you do the worksheet on the examples of people becoming Christians in the New Testament.

So **WHAT** is confession? As we discovered in previous studies, it is being willing to stand up and admit publicly that you are a follower of Christ and NOT denying Christ. (**Matthew 10:32-33**) It is also trusting God and obeying him daily! There is no such thing as a **secret** Christian!

## 4) Immersion Into Christ’s Death/Blood!

The most unique of all the instructions has to be **IMMERSION** in water to join with the death/blood of Jesus. We learned that **ONLY BLOOD** can take away sins.<sup>63</sup> That was why God told the Israelites to kill animals and throw their blood on the altar to have their sins forgiven. The Hebrew writer showed us that those sacrifices were symbolic of what Christ was to come and do. We finally came to understand that **ONLY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST** can take away our sins.<sup>64</sup> Our studies showed us that **IMMERSION** is the time and place where a lost person makes contact with and puts on the death/blood of Christ. Passages like **Galatians 3:27**, **Colossians 2:12**, and **Romans 6:3-6** all picture immersion as a burial with Christ or into his death! This is the key to being saved because **it is only the DEATH that can save** and a lost soul must join with that death in order for it to have the saving effect upon it. This joining happens in immersion!

Most Protestants object to this, saying that immersion is a “work” and that we are not saved by “works”. It is true that man is **NOT** saved by works and it is also true that a “work” is taking place when a person is immersed! The question is **“WHO is DOING the work during immersion?”** The answer is found in **Colossians 2:12**.

*“12 having been buried with him in the immersion, in which you were also raised with him **through faith in the working of the God** who raised him out of the dead”*

It is God who is doing the work during immersion. The one being immersed is not doing anything. He or she is **DEAD!** They are **BEING** buried with Christ. They are **BEING** joined with Christ’s death. Notice the language of the passages. Immersion is **passive** meaning that it is **DONE TO** someone, **BY** someone else!

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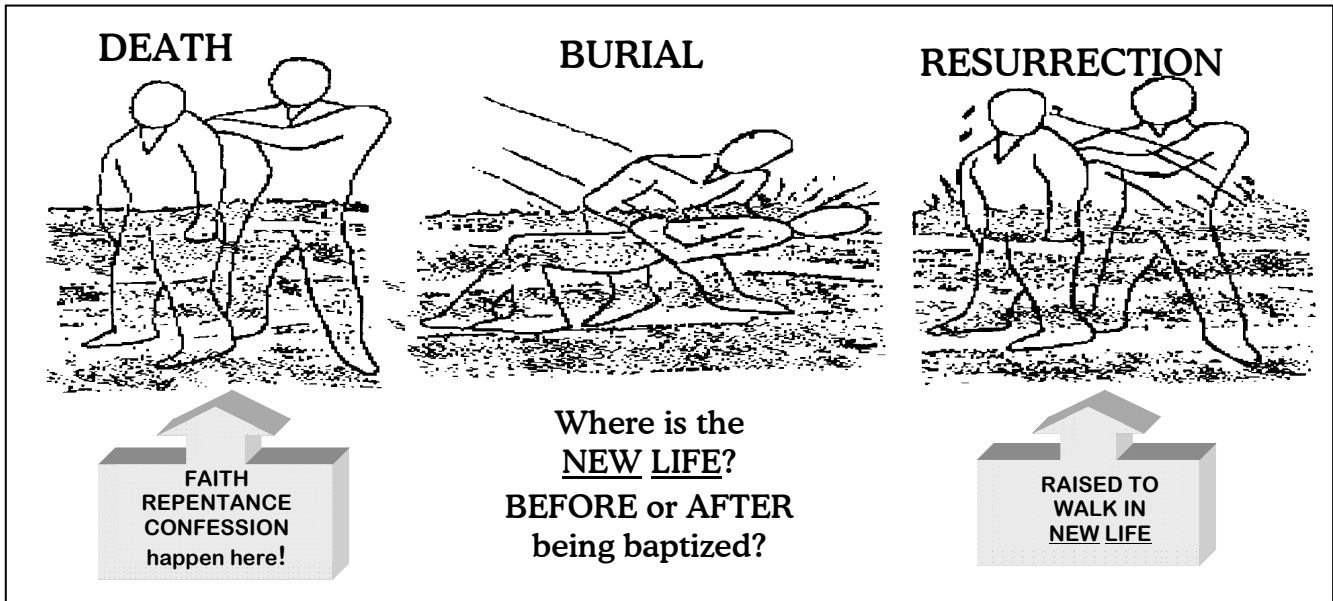
<sup>61</sup> Please note that by the 3<sup>rd</sup> century we find a very few writers speaking of substituting sprinkling in place of immersion, and some later possibly suggesting that infants might need immersion, but **NONE** ever wrote about “only believing” or “saying a prayer”.

<sup>62</sup> It is very important to remember the context of the book of Romans. Paul was writing to people who were already Christians. He is dealing with **SPECIFIC PROBLEMS** that these people were suffering from. Context indicates that he was dealing with false teachers who were telling these people wrong things about the relationship between **FAITH, RIGHTEOUSNESS, and WORKS OF OBEDIENCE**, and were very likely to be the problematic Jewish Christian teachers we see mentioned and alluded to many times in Acts and the other writings of the New Testament.

<sup>63</sup> **Hebrews 9:22**

<sup>64</sup> **Hebrews chapters 9 and 10, and also Romans 5:9-11!**

We believe that the diagram below illustrates the point clearly.



A careful analysis of **Romans 6:3-6** will reveal the facts about what happens when a person is **immersed INTO CHRIST!** It also gives us a way of testing what the Protestants say regarding their **CLAIM** that immersion has no role in the salvation of sinners. In the diagram, the **first picture** on the left shows a person **BEFORE** being immersed. The person has **FAITH** and **SORROW** for their sins, but are they saved? To answer that question let us look at Paul's explanation in Romans 6. Where does **HE** place the "**new life**"? Does it come before or after immersion? **Romans 6:4** puts the "new life" clearly after "the likeness" of the resurrection of Christ that a person experiences **when they are raised up from the water like a person resurrecting out of a grave!** That happens in the third picture in the diagram above. The reason for "new life" being placed in the third picture is because when the person was under the water, in the second picture, **THERE** they **JOINED** with the **DEATH/BLOOD** of Christ and that is the place and time when the sins are forgiven. Since the sin is gone when the person is joined with Jesus then he or she rises out of the water free from sin and **is a possessor of NEW LIFE** – "born from above"<sup>65</sup> in a **SPIRITUAL** rebirth! How do we know this is true? It is because God tells us that it is true and just like Paul explained to the Colossians we are putting our faith in "the working of God" when we are immersed!

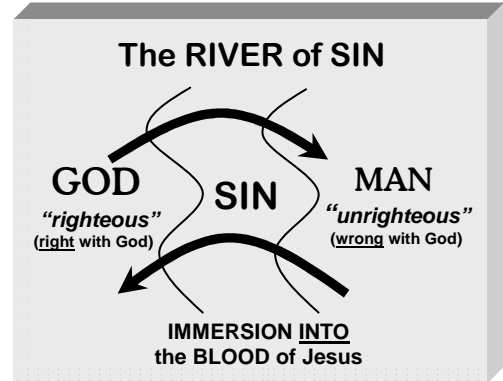
**Immersion has no effect without FAITH and it has no value unless there is REPENTANCE!** This is why Jesus told the disciples to immerse every new disciple and why Peter gave the answer he did in Acts 2. Does immersion have anything to do with my salvation? **Jesus said it does.** After all, it was Jesus who said, "He that believes **and is immersed** will be saved, but he that does not believe will be condemned." Why would anyone who claims to love Jesus fight against what Jesus is saying here? It was Calvin and Luther, and those like them who caused people to think that immersion is not important. Are you going to put your trust in what those men thought and taught? Are their ideas more important than what Jesus said? Does not Jesus say that if a person has faith **and** is immersed then he or she will be saved, does this not agree with what Peter told the people in his answer to the question "What shall we do?", and is this not shown to be a true and correct understanding by the fact that every example of people becoming Christians recorded in the book of Acts indicates that all the people were immersed?

One final point regards the method of immersion. **We have chosen NOT to use the word BAPTISM in this lesson for a reason.** If you recall our discussion back in **Jesus: Lord of Our Lives** we looked carefully at the origin of the word and the controversy surrounding the different methods of "baptism". We found that the word found in the Bible passages only means "**immersion, dipping, or submerging**". It could not mean "**sprinkling**" because there was a Greek word for that, **RHANTISMA**, and it could not mean "**pouring**" because there was a word for that as well, **EKCHEO**. These other two Greek words were commonly used in that day and are found in the New testament, however, **IN ALL VERSES** that speak about "baptism" the Greek word is **BAPTISMA** or **one of its forms**. This means that "baptism" can only be immersion. **If God had intended any OTHER method he would have used one or more of the OTHER Greek words in his original message!** The confusion and changes in teachings are primarily due to **the failure of the Bible TRANSLATORS to properly translate the original Greek word** in those verses. Instead **they simply leave it untranslated**, creating the situation where **different religious groups feel**

<sup>65</sup> As Jesus explained to Nicodemus in **John 3:1-8!**

free to **SUBSTITUTE** the action of sprinkling or pouring in place of the true meaning of immersion! This is not acceptable! The Bible translations should read **immersion** and its forms, not baptism! It does not take much to see **WHY** God chose immersion, as it accurately represents “a burial”, as the immersion diagram clearly demonstrates. Why change what God has said? Why resist when the truth of the matter is brought out? If everyone truly LOVES God then you would think that they would be like King Josiah and rejoice when their misunderstandings were corrected and that they would do whatever they had to do to bring themselves in line with God’s will!

In summary, **IMMERSION** is a burial in a watery grave for the purpose of joining a lost person with the death/blood of Jesus so that their sins are counted among those paid for by Jesus and forgiven. A person goes into the water with FAITH and REPENTANCE, they are placed under the water, joining with the death, and thus receiving FORGIVENESS, and they are raised out of the water to walk in newness of life! As a practice and teaching, it was given by the Lord Jesus and it was taught and applied by his Apostles in the lives of every soul they came into contact with from Pentecost onward!



**The Thief on the Cross and IMMERSION!**

It is no secret that most Protestants deny the importance of immersion in the process of a person being saved. One reason they mention is the case of the thief who died on the cross beside Jesus. In **Luke 23:39-43** we read about the thief who asked Jesus to remember him when he went to his Kingdom. In response Jesus told the man that he would be with HIM “in Paradise”! Protestants typically point to this man as a case where someone was admitted into heaven without being immersed. On the basis of this fellow they dismiss immersion as being essential for joining with Jesus’ death. Is this a valid argument? Let us consider certain facts.

First, Jesus was alive when he promised the man he would be with him in Paradise. This is important because we know that the New Agreement came through Jesus and that he was the “mediator” of it.<sup>66</sup>

The next point we need to consider is found in **Hebrews 9:15-17**. Here we learn that no “will” goes into effect until after the death of the one who made it. It is extremely important to note that the word “will” in our English Bibles is in fact the word for “Agreement”, or “Covenant” or even “Testament”. The writer’s point is that Jesus was the mediator of the New Agreement and that this New Agreement did **NOT go into effect until AFTER Jesus died!**

Technically, **the thief was never part of original Christianity**. He died under the time of the Old Agreement, which, according to what the Apostle Paul tells us, in **Ephesians 2:11-22**, was abolished when it was “nailed” to Jesus’ cross! “Christianity” started **after** the death of Jesus. In fact the New Agreement started after the final prophecy for its coming was fulfilled, that of the Holy Spirit being poured out. In **Luke 24:44-47** Jesus told his disciples about all the things written in the Old Agreement that had to be fulfilled and then he told them to wait in Jerusalem **until they received POWER from above**. In **Acts 2**, the Holy Spirit came down on the disciples and in his speech, Peter related what had just happened as the fulfillment of the prophecy of **Joel 2:27-29**. This event marked “the beginning” of Christianity! We know this because of what the Apostle Peter says in **Acts 11:15**. Peter was present when Jesus explained about “fulfillment” to his disciples (**Luke 24**). He was also there at Pentecost to receive and witness the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2**). He was, as we studied earlier in this course, also at the house of Cornelius when God showed him and his “Jewish” Christian companions that the non-Jews were acceptable to HIM - by pouring out the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius and his household. After staying with Cornelius for a few days, Peter went back to Jerusalem to report what had happened. This is recorded in **Acts 11:4-18**. In verse 15 Peter makes a reference to the first time God poured out the Holy Spirit, on Pentecost in Acts 2, and **HE, Peter**, refers to that original outpouring of the Spirit as “**the beginning**”.

Therefore, on the basis of what the writer of Hebrews said about agreements and the death of the ones making them, of what Jesus said about “fulfillment”, of what actually happened on Pentecost and Peter’s explanation to the crowd that gathered there, and, finally, upon Peter’s statement in his report in Jerusalem we conclude that **original Christianity (The New Agreement) BEGAN on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2!** If true, then that means that the thief on the cross **never lived during the time of Christianity!**

There is one final point to consider. The instructions Jesus gave about the good news being preached and people responding by believing and being immersed **were not given by him until AFTER he had risen from the dead**

<sup>66</sup> See: **Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24**, plus **1 Timothy 2:5**.



**and was about to leave the earth.** The thief was long dead before those final instructions to immerse people were given.

There was an immersion being practiced **BEFORE** the one we see taught by Peter on the day of Pentecost. It was the one practiced by “John the Immerser”<sup>67</sup> and also by Jesus and his disciples<sup>68</sup>. However, we **KNOW** that this immersion **was DIFFERENT from the immersion of Acts 2 and following**. We know this because if we go to **Acts 19:1-7** we find twelve followers of John who were met by Paul in Ephesus and when they discussed the question of immersion it is determined that those people had been immersed by John. Paul explained to them that John’s immersion was only an “immersion of repentance” asking the people to “believe on the one who was to come”. **These followers were then IMMERSSED AGAIN, this time to join with Jesus!** Therefore it seems that the immersion practiced **before Pentecost was NOT the immersion that Paul described in Romans 6**. It is not difficult to understand. After all, how could anyone be joined to Jesus’ death while Jesus was still living?

Therefore, it is unfair and incorrect to suggest that **IMMERSION is NOT involved in people becoming Christians** because of the example of the thief on the cross. The command of Jesus to preach and immerse believers **for salvation** was not given and put into effect until well after the thief died and was buried! Immersion to join with Jesus – as described by Paul in Romans 6 - started in Acts 2! Therefore, even **IF** the thief had been immersed while he was alive it would have been that “immersion of repentance” and he would have needed to be immersed again, just as the followers of John were in Acts 19! Therefore, today, even though many groups practice immersion one cannot assume that their immersion is the one that is needed. **It depends upon the REASON WHY the immersion is done.** The immersion of original Christianity was to join sinners with the death/blood of Jesus. The only acceptable immersion today is for that same purpose. **A person today that has been immersed but for a reason other than to join with Jesus death is no different than those people that Paul found in Acts 19!**

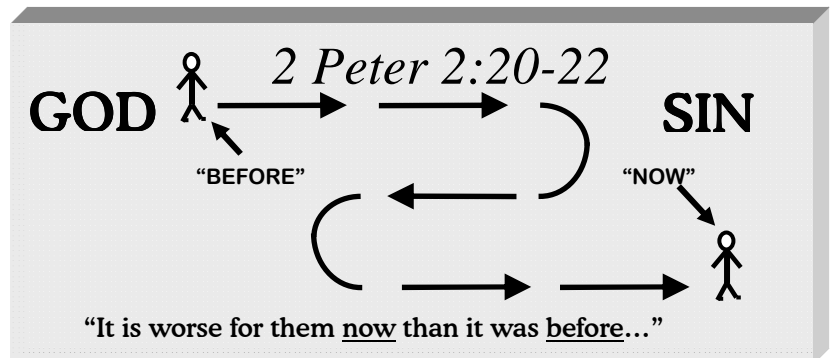
You can believe what the Bible teaches or you can believe what the Protestants teach but **you cannot believe BOTH** because they are saying different things!

You must decide this matter for yourself!

## 5) Endure TO THE END!

As we stated earlier, when we were discussing the 5 points of Calvinism, remaining faithful to the end is a very important part of God’s plan of salvation. In that worksheet assignment you accomplished back in **Jesus: Lord of Our Lives** you found numerous places where Jesus made the statement, **“he that endures to the end will be saved”**. In addition, you found many other passages where the Apostles and writers told the Christians that just because they had been immersed and received the forgiveness of their sins, there was still something they needed to accomplish. That thing was the constant humble obedient life of service to God, to fulfill the promise of loyalty they made to God when they stood in the water of their immersion! Their point was simple. **We MUST REMAIN faithful to our commitment to God** or else our faith, and immersion, is useless!<sup>69</sup>

In our earlier discussion of the “P” of the **TULIP**, we brought out this point very clearly. All we want to do now is restate the basic facts and show how this fits into the larger picture of the Christian life. While there are many passages that prove that the Protestant idea that is often called “once saved always saved” is not found in the Bible, there is no better passage than **2 Peter 2:20-22**. The diagram at the right illustrates what Peter seems to be saying. It begins with the man at the top left walking away from **GOD** in the direction of **SIN**. At some point he comes to **FAITH**, he **REPENTS** and is **IMMERSSED**, meaning that he reverses direction and begins walking back to **GOD**. However, Peter then says that the person **REPENTS** again, this time in a bad way, and begins walking away from **GOD**. This man is represented by the man walking at the bottom right portion of the diagram. Peter maintains that the second case of the man walking away



<sup>67</sup> Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3

<sup>68</sup> John 4:1-2

<sup>69</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:1-2, Colossians 1:23!

from God **IS WORSE than the first one**. Why is this? It is because the first time the man was walking away from God he was ignorant of the truth and when learned it he subsequently changed his life and direction. The second time, however, is different. What can we say to him to cause him to change? Can we tell him about Jesus and his love and death for him? He will simply say, "Yes, I already know that and I tried it for a while!" It is WORSE for that man because **there is very little chance he will ever return!** It does not mean that he **CANNOT** return. He could return if he wanted to, but Peter is saying that **if he turns away** then he is lost and most likely **will not return!** In **Hebrews 6:4-6** the writer is even **MORE** negative! He maintains that **it is IMPOSSIBLE to restore a person** who starts out as a Christian and then turns away!

Without a doubt, it **IS** possible for a person to become a Christian and then **LOSE** their salvation! Not by God disowning them but by them making a free will choice to disown God!

Therefore it is important for each person to look carefully at the details of the **NEW AGREEMENT** and understand all the details of the expectations of God before they go into the water of immersion because just like the **OLD AGREEMENT** that Israel had, this **NEW Agreement is CONDITIONAL!** If you look closely, God has always had a condition in his relationship with mankind. With the words, "**IF** you will obey my voice and keep my agreement then you will be my special possession" God made his agreement with Israel at Mount Sinai, but the idea of listening to and obeying God as a condition for being accepted by him has been in the foundation of every relationship God ever had with a human, **including his own Son when HE was living here as a human!**<sup>70</sup>

## Summary of the INSTRUCTIONS:

In this lesson we have covered the basics of **SALVATION from SIN!** We are saved from sin **by God's GRACE**, which was a favor he did for us when we did not deserve it. That favor was Christ making our sin to be his own and dying to pay the price with his blood. Therefore, **only the blood of Christ can save people!** We cannot do any good work to pay for sin because **only BLOOD** can take away sins – **JESUS' BLOOD!**

In order for God's grace to have an effect in our life **we must receive the gift** of Christ's death. To do that God left instructions for us to follow. We must have **FAITH**, which is a combination of believing God and obeying him. We must **REPENT** of our sins, which means that we must make a commitment to stop sinning and then follow that commitment with action. We must be willing to **TELL PEOPLE** that we believe in Jesus. We must **BE IMMERSSED** in water **to join with** Jesus' death/blood so that our sins will be removed and we can have "new life". Finally, we must **REMAIN FAITHFUL** until the end of our lives!

These are the details we found in the Bible and **we ALL must apply them if we want to restore original Christianity** in our lives! Do these details agree with what you have been taught and experienced in your own religious life? If not then we strongly recommend that you go back again and study this material again very carefully and then compare what you find with what you have experienced. If what you have experienced is **exactly** the same then there is no problem. However, **if there are any differences then you must decide if you need to do something to make your life right with God.**

In this lesson, we have provided what we believe is an accurate representation of the TRUTH. However, **do NOT take our word for it.** You study for yourself and see if we are correct. If not, then **do NOT believe us!**

## WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN?

We began this course by asking what **REAL Christianity really is.** How did the world go from a time where Jesus established his **ONE church** on the earth, and prayed to his Father that his followers would **always be ONE**, to the situation in our time today with its more than 38,000 "Christian" groups, all **CLAIMING** to be Christ's and yet teaching different things?

We established the fact that Original Christianity was very simple and strict in upholding the original teachings received from God. The warnings we found in the New Testament are proof that 1) the teachings of original Christianity were completed during the lifetimes of the Apostles, 2) that it **IS** possible for a person to make a commitment to Christ and then become a traitor, and 3) that no man has the authority to add, subtract, or change God's message in any way.

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<sup>70</sup> Remember what we learned about Jesus and his obedience from **Philippians 2:6-11**. Jesus HAD to obey his Father in all things! If Jesus had not been obedient would he still have been the "beloved son" and the Saviour of the world?

Starting with the 1<sup>st</sup> century, we traced the history of “Christianity” and found that what started with a few false teachers living during the time of the Apostles slowly grew and evolved over centuries until what we know today as “Christianity” has become nothing more than a remnant of a few original teachings dispersed among **a shameful collection of HUMAN teachings and traditions** that are similar, only in name, to what Jesus originally taught!

People today twist the passages of the Bible to suit their needs<sup>71</sup> and surround themselves with teachers who say the things they want to hear.<sup>72</sup> We noted how Jesus and the writers predicted this happening and **warned those of us who would live in later times** to be extremely careful concerning **what we believe** and **what we endorse**. **Matthew 7:21-23** continues to haunt our thoughts as we see Jesus sending away people **who FELT SECURE in their faith**, who **did many things for the name and glory of Christ**, and yet were called “**evil doers**” by him and dismissed into punishment! Why? It was all because they **did not do THE THINGS his Father wanted done!** **2 John 1:9-11** told us not to go beyond the teachings of Christ but it also warned us **not to ENDORSE anyone who teaches things that are different from what Jesus taught** because **if we do endorse them** then God will consider us to be **partners** with them in **their evil work!** This is why it matters what we believe, practice, and teach.

This is why we must study and compare and make judgments, because we all must stand one day and give an account to Jesus for what we believed! We have made specific comparisons between what the religious world today **teaches** and what the Bible **teaches** and **discovered MANY areas** where people today, like the people in Matthew 7, **CLAIM to be honoring Jesus and his Father, but are not doing and teaching what God says in his Word**. One important thing we learned from all of this is that EVIL does not always come in the form of rape, murder, and theft! Evil can come under **the appearance** of goodness and holiness! However, if we read the Bible then this does not surprise us because it is in the Bible that we read even Satan can appear to be an angel of light.<sup>73</sup> If we were to look at all the **GOOD** in the 38,000 groups today and **judge its validity only by that GOOD**, then **everyone** would be acceptable! However, **determining TRUTH is not simply a matter of “doing good” alone**. It is **doing GOOD in the way that the FATHER wants it done**. This is our test of faith!

It is hoped that you, the student, have been able to **understand** these differences and what they mean, as far as the Judgment Day is concerned.

Our firm conviction remains! **If we who live in the world today want to be Christians then we must believe, practice, and teach the same things the original Christians believed, practiced, and taught!** If we do this then we will not be starting a new church but rather we will be **RESTORING the original church** of Jesus in our world. We believe that by encouraging all men to leave behind the confusion of denominationalism and to return to the teachings of the New Agreement we will **HELP bring about the end of the 38,000 groups, restore the church of Christ**, which he lived and died for, and **restore and preserve the UNITY** that Jesus prayed for in **John 17:21!**

However, through all of this we continue our appeal to you... **Do NOT take what we say as “truth”** simply “because we said it” or trust us because you believe that we are “good people”. As the Lord once said, there is no one good but God!<sup>74</sup> **YOU must study the evidence for yourself and then make your own conclusions**. If you happen to agree that our conclusions about the 38,000 groups and our suggestions for a cure are valid then please let us help you do what is lacking in your life so that you can be added to God’s church and take your place beside us as fellow workers in the Kingdom.

If you have not yet done so but you believe in Jesus, trust in his death, feel sorrow for your past, and are willing to make the commitment to change and tell others about Jesus, and if you are willing to join with his death through immersion so that your sins can be removed, and if you are willing to assume your place in the family of God fighting against the powers of darkness with all your strength until the day you die, then why not become a New Testament Christian today? **Why not become JUST a Christian?** Why not become part of the Christianity that existed in the beginning? **You CAN become a Christian without joining a denomination!**

Thank you for taking the time to study this course.

May God help us all to strive harder to become the people he wants and may we seek always to show our gratitude for all he has done through our humble and obedient service to him for all our lives and beyond!

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<sup>71</sup> **2 Peter 3:14-17**

<sup>72</sup> **2 Timothy 4:3-4**

<sup>73</sup> **2 Corinthians 11:12-15** – This fits exactly into the context of our lesson! People were “DOING GOOD” while teaching error then and people are doing the same today!

<sup>74</sup> **Mark 10:18 and Luke 18:19.**

## This is the last set of test questions for this course.

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The questions for this lesson work the same as the ones for the previous lesson. Read each question and review the lesson material carefully. Choose the answer that best fits the question and darken the circle for that answer on the answer sheet. Remember that you must have an average score of at least 70% to graduate.

76. Righteousness means:
- a) Justice
  - b) Fairness
  - c) "Balance"
  - d) All of the above
77. Which of the following passages tells us that only BLOOD can take away sins?
- a) Hebrews 10:1-4
  - b) 1 Peter 2:24
  - c) Hebrews 9:22
  - d) 2 Corinthians 5:21
78. Which of the following passages is where we learn that the animal sacrifices could not take away sins?
- a) Hebrews 10:1-4
  - b) 1 Peter 2:24
  - c) Hebrews 9:22
  - d) 2 Corinthians 5:21
79. Justice is not satisfied until the GUILTY ONE has been punished.
- a) True
  - b) False
80. When Jesus died on the cross, he:
- a) took our death
  - b) took our punishment
  - c) took our sins
  - d) None of the above
81. What is the grace of God?
- a) Jesus' blood and death
  - b) The Holy Spirit
  - c) God forcing us to follow him
  - d) All of the above
82. God left instructions for people by which they can receive the blood of Jesus into their lives and have their sins forgiven and they ALL must be followed.
- a) True
  - b) False
83. James 2:14-26 and what passage explain faith to us?
- a) John 11
  - b) Hebrews 11
  - c) Isaiah 11
  - d) Ephesians 11
84. God will force a person to believe in him, even against their will.
- a) True
  - b) False
85. TRUE FAITH means:
- a) Do what the Lord says
  - b) Choosing to obey
  - c) Never looking for excuses to disobey
  - d) All of the above
86. What is repentance?
- a) Changing one's mind
  - b) Changing your actions
  - c) Both A & B
  - d) None of the above
87. Though we know that "Confessing Jesus with the lips" is very important, the New Testament gives very little explanation as to what we are to say.
- a) True
  - b) False
88. The Protestant world say that "Confessing Jesus with the lips" is:
- a) Praying the Sinner's Prayer
  - b) Writing down every sin you've ever committed
  - c) Telling the world Jesus is Lord
  - d) All of the above
89. After Peter's speech in Acts 2, what did he tell the people they must do to be saved?
- a) Say a prayer to receive forgiveness of sins
  - b) Nothing, they were already forgiven
  - c) To wait and see if God had chosen them
  - d) To repent and be immersed
90. "The Sinner's Prayer" was a change from the original teachings of the apostles.
- a) True
  - b) False
91. Confessing Christ is to:
- a) Be willing to stand up and publicly declare you are a follower of Christ
  - b) Not denying Christ
  - c) Trusting and obeying God
  - d) All of the above

92. When a person is immersed they join with the death of Christ.
- a) True
  - b) False
93. Who does the "work" in immersion?
- a) The one being immersed
  - b) The one immersing
  - c) God
  - d) None of the above
94. The Greek word BAPTISMA means:
- a) Immersion
  - b) Sprinkling
  - c) Pouring
  - d) All of the above
95. Having FAITH, REPENTING, CONFESSING Jesus with the lips and IMMERSION are all one needs to do in order to be saved.
- a) True
  - b) False
96. Once a person is saved they will always be saved.
- a) True
  - b) False
97. If a person LOSES their salvation, whose fault is it?
- a) Their preacher's
  - b) Their parents'
  - c) Their own
  - d) God's
98. Why was it possible for the thief hanging on the cross with Jesus to be saved even though he was not immersed?
- a) He was still a member of the Old Agreement
  - b) Jesus had not yet died
  - c) The New Agreement did not come into effect until after the death of Jesus
  - d) All of the above
99. The immersion "John the Immerser" was practicing was an immersion of:
- a) Salvation
  - b) Repentance
  - c) Confession
  - d) None of the above
100. Everyone wishing to become a member of the New Agreement must accept the terms given by God, not man, in the Bible.
- a) True
  - b) False

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## CONGRATULATIONS!

You have now completed the last set of test questions for this study course. As always, if you have any questions that you would like to ask, please write them down and bring them to class with you. Do not forget to tell your friends or family members about our classes and let them know that it will be offered in our next session of classes that should start in a few days! Thank you for your continued interest in learning God's word! Never stop questioning and never stop studying. Remember that our Lord once said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free!"

May God be with you!

--- From the Bible Study Center Staff...



2. Make a list of the different qualities that a man must have in order to be a BISHOP.

3. What kind of wife must a man have in order to be considered to serve as a BISHOP?

4. What kind of children must a man have in order to be considered to serve as a BISHOP?

• **Considering BOTH passages please answer the following questions.**

1. From what you read in **1 Timothy 3:5**, why is it that a man cannot be a bishop/elder/pastor if he is single or if married but without any children?

2. **Why** does it matter what kind of **wife** he has?

3. **Why** does it matter what kind of **children** he has?