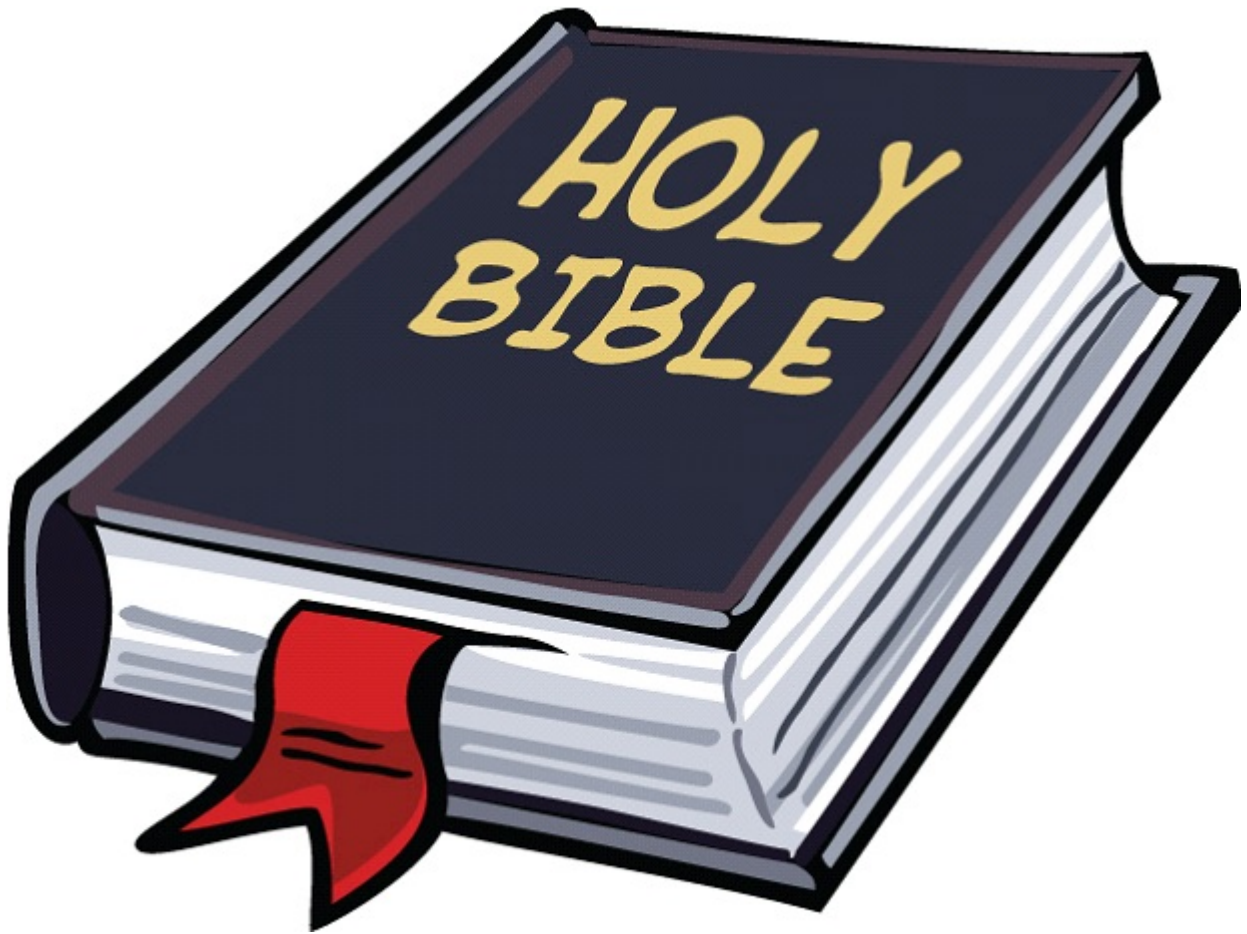


What's In Your Bible?



SUNDAY MORNING ADULT CLASS - FIRST QUARTER 2018
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You Have a Detailed Description of God In Your Bible

When the apostle Paul came to Mar's Hill in Athens he said, *"as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you"* (Acts 17:23). Far too many of those who consider themselves Christians do not really know the God they serve. Just as Paul needed to distinguish the true God of Heaven from the man-made pagan gods of his day, so today Christians need to study the attributes of God to distinguish Him from the imaginary Gods conceived in the minds of men.

Is the God of the Bible the product of man's imagination? Atheist Robert G. Ingersoll wrote, "An honest god is the noblest work of man." Prat de Lamartine said, "God-but a word invoked to explain the world." Pagan gods are the inventions of mortal men. In his letter to the Romans Paul gave us a motive for man inventing gods to his liking. *"Although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things"* (Rom. 1:22-24).

The fact is man would have never invented the God described in the Bible. God is Holy. So holy in fact He nothing to do with sin, cannot even be tempted to sin, and is separated from sinners. Why would man invent a God who is perfect, while know that all men are imperfect. Man is weak when born and weakens as he grows old. Why invent a all-powerful God man is unable to manipulate and control. God is angry with sinners every day and full of wrath. He will condemn impenitent sinner to an eternal Hell of fire. Surely, man would have never wanted a God like this. When men create a God He is someone they can outsmart and manipulate. They create a God who has the same moral weaknesses that plague their existence.

It is not enough for Christians to merely believe that God is, that is, He exists (Heb. 11:6). He must know the God he believes in. *"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'"* (Ps. 14:1). If the atheist is a fool for declaring there is no God, how foolish is the Christian who declares there is a God yet does not know who he is.

Many of those who are ignorant of God have the mistaken idea that God is somehow like man in his nature. The image, man paints God to be, is someone who is not appealing. No one would really want such a God to be their friend. Many are losing their faith, not because God has let them down but because they have believed so many lies about who God is. He is not too busy or cruel, vindictive, a liar, blood-thirsty, etc. Others have trivialized God into a kindly grandfather who is so loving He would never condemn even the most wicked man to hell. In this postmodern world God has been given a make-over to make Him more appealing to the masses. God is not anything we want Him to be. Karen Armstrong, a former nun and a fellow of the *Jesus Seminar*, explained how one ought to pursue God, "just keep your mind open and look for God. I like to look for God in other people, in other things, rather than thinking of a being up there."

Yet God was not created in our image. Man was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26,27). To know who God is will help us understand ourselves better and who God wants us to be.

The first thing man should discover in his pursuit of who God is, is that He is far greater than any man. To understand and to truly get to know God is a noble pursuit but also a most challenging task. *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 'For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His*

counselor? Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?’ For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:33-36).

How can we worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:23,24), if the truth is: we do not know the truth about who God really is? Such worship would be vain. Is it possible to pray to God without understand who it is we are addressing in prayer, thanking, and petitioning? We sing “How Great Thou Art” and “Our God is an Awesome God,” but do we really know the One we are praising?

“Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?” (Job 11:7). The answer is “NO!” By himself man cannot understand or know the great attributes of God. God has revealed Himself through nature and through the inspired scriptures. In addition, the God of the Old Testament the same as the God explained in the New Testament.

God is His attributes. Know these attributes is to understand His nature. Through the promises of God we are to be *“partakers of the divine nature”* (2 Peter 1:4). This is not possible if one does not know the nature of the divine. Being like God is something that is learned not instantly obtained the moment one arises out of the waters of baptism. He must study the Bible’s description of God.

A boy was once drawing a picture of God. He was informed that no one knew what God looked like. The boy said, “They will when I get through.” Hopefully, when you are through this study the God of the Bible you will have a clearer and more detailed picture of who God is.

- **God is Eternal**

Where did God come from? When did He come into being? The answer is that the question does not even make sense. It is like asking, “What does thunder smell like?” Thunder is a noise and is not in the classification of things that have odor, so the query itself is defective. It is like asking, “Who made the Unmade?” or, “Who created the Uncreated?” One may as well ask, “Who are the parents of the unknown soldier?” If you could answer who his parents were he would no longer be the unknown soldier. Likewise, you cannot answer how old God is or where He came from, because if you did He could not be the eternal God. This line of questioning assumes that everything is subject to the limitations of time and space, and there is nothing outside the limitations of time and space.

He is the *“Eternal God”* (Dt. 33:27) and the *“everlasting God, Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth”* (Is. 40:28). In fact, the very name of God “Yahweh” means “the Eternal” (Genesis 21:33). When Moses suggested that people would ask him who had sent him to free the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, God told him to say that “I AM THAT I AM” had sent him. (Ex. 3:14). In short, God just is.

- **God is Changeless**

The old saying: “The only thing that is constant is change” is apparently true. However, there is One who never changes: GOD. Time changes everything, but it cannot change the eternal God. Unlike the false gods of paganism, who were thought to be fickle and whose capricious anger was thought unpredictable. God is not subject to no mutations. God has neither evolved, grown or improved. As He has declared, *“For I am the Lord, I do not change; therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob”* (Mal. 3:6).

- **God is the Father**

When discussing the Fatherhood of God it is imperative to keep in mind that there are three types of relationships involved. First, God is the Father of all mankind in the sense that He is their progenitor or creator. *“For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ “Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising”* (Acts 17:28,29). In relationship to the rest of the Godhead, God is Father to His one and only Son, Jesus Christ. *“While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!’”* (Matt. 17:5). Finally, God is the Father of those who have been born again of water into His family, those who have obeyed the Gospel to be saved, and added to the household of God *“For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother”* (Mt. 12:50). *“Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. (Mt. 23:9; cf. Jn. 1:12; 3:3).* It is the Father/Child relationship which God has with His redeemed which is the focus of this lesson.

- **God is Jealous**

Jealousy can be a bad character trait. In fact, it is listed as one of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19f). Yet, the fact is, *“the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God”* (Ex. 34:14). How can God be jealous? *“God is love”* (1 Jn. 4:8) and *“love is not jealous”* (1 Cor. 13:4 NAS). Can God be sour and selfishly possessive? The truth is, jealousy is not always a negative character trait. It can be a divine virtue.

The Hebrew word for “jealousy” means “redness of the face that accompanies strong emotion” (Feinberg, 1942, p. 429). The Old Testament word “jealous” means to become intensely red. Just as we become red in the face when angered or embarrassed or passionate about something or someone, so our God has emotions as well. The term can be associated with fire. “For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Deut. 4:24).

- **God is All-Knowing**

God’s omniscience (all-knowing) extends throughout the entire known and even unknown universe. He is also perfectly cognizant of every event. *“Great is our Lord and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite”* (Ps. 147:5). Were it in anyway possible for something to occur apart from either the direct means or sanction of God, God would not be seen a omniscient. God is all-knowing, unlike Zeus and the pagan gods who were often tricked by cunning men and women.

- **God is All-Powerful**

One of the most common words used in the Hebrew in reference to deity is “el.” It is from a primitive Semitic name meaning “to be strong”. The term is commonly found in the poetical books of Psalms and Job. It was El who was able or powerful enough to deliver the children of Israel out of Egypt. *“For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe”* (Deut. 10:17). Jesus is prophesied to be *“Mighty God”* in Isaiah 9:6. The term “El” is often used in combination of other terms to describe the nature of God, such as, El Shaddai (Lord God Almighty) or El Elyon (The Most High God). El is found in ancient compound proper names as El-isha, El-izabeth, Isra-el, Beth-el, Dani-el.

Another common description and name of God is “Almighty.” It is used 48 times in the Old and 9 times in the New Testaments. The word “almighty” means holding sway over all things or ruling everything. It is first used when God appeared to a ninety-nine year old Abram, *“I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless”* (Gen. 17:1). Thus, God is omnipotent or all-powerful.

- **God is Everywhere**

God is here and near and everywhere. This is not pantheism. This is a doctrine which identifies God with the universe. To the pantheist God is everywhere in everything and is everything. God, is however, omnipresent or all present. He is everywhere at the same time.

- **God is Love**

One of the most profound statements about God and love is: *“for God is love”* (1 John 4:8b). Notice John did not claim that “God had love” or “God will love” or “God is loving,” but “God is love.” Every other attribute of God’s nature is influenced by this characteristic of the Divine.

- **God is Holy**

No other of the attributes of God’s nature is ascribed to Him more than that of “Holy.” It is the very centerpiece of His nature. The holiness of God permeates all Divine attributes. His name is holy (Psalm 97:12). God is the Holy Father (John 17:11). His power is a *“holy arm”* (Psa 98:1). *“Power is God’s hand or arm, omniscience His eye, mercy His bowels, eternity His duration, but holiness is His beauty”* (Stephen Charnock). God is referred to as *“Holy, Holy, Holy”* (Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). This represents an emphatic statement pointing out the importance of recognizing God is totally holy. He is infinitely holy.

- **God is Just**

God is a just Judge of all the earth and He always does what is right. God’s righteousness refers to His fairness, His impartiality, and His justice. He is no *“respector of persons”* (Rom. 2:11; Eph. 5:9; Col. 3:25; 1 Pet. 1:17; Acts 10:34,35). God possesses the quality of fairness to a perfect degree. No one can sustain a charge of unfairness against God.

The enemies of God have often complained of God being unjust. David while suffering under the punishments of God confessed sinner *“against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge”* (Psalm 51:4). Justice

and righteousness is an inherent part of the very nature of God (Is. 45:21). It is the habitation of His throne (Ps. 89:14). His justice is said to be abundant (Job 37:23); certain (Zeph. 3:5); unparalleled (Job 4:1); immutable (Job 34:12); upright (Deut. 10:17); unbiased (Jer. 32:19); and without prejudice (Rom. 2:11). God is seen to be just in all His ways, forgiveness, plan of redemption, His judgments, and even the final judgment.

- **God is Trustworthy**

There is a book titled, "If God Loves Me, Why Can't I Get My Locker Open?" In other words, can God really be trusted? God is indeed 100% perfect and worthy of our trust because of His great character. God keeps all His promises. "*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful*" (Heb. 10:23). Although all men lie God does not lie. "*Indeed, let God be true but every man a liar*" (Romans 3:4). In fact, we can live "*in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie*" has promised (Titus 1:2).

Questions:

1. What is the question "from where did God come?" not a logical inquiry?
2. Does the Bible ever explain where God came from or when He began to exist?
3. In what two ways do man and God differ with regard to time and space?
4. T F Everything and everyone changes sooner or later.
5. List some ways in which God never changes.
6. List the three relationships in which God is the Father?
7. T F Jealousy is always portrayed as a negative character trait in the Bible.
8. What Hebrew name for God describes His great strength?
9. What does "almighty" mean when used to refer to God?

10. Is belief in an omnipresent God the same as pantheism? Explain.

Application and Discussion:

1. How would you explain to those who are opposed to the ideal of the existence of Hell (eternal punishment) is compatible with a just God who also is a loving God?

2. When are you most likely to have a lack of trust in God? What might be done about this?

You Have the Example of a Perfect Man in Your Bible

What does it take to be a real man or a perfect example of a man? According to Romans 3:23, *"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* There is no such thing as a perfect man. Even Christians will sin from time to time (1 John 1:8-10). However, there was a man who lived some two thousand years ago who was perfect. He never sinned. He is the perfect example of a man.

Yet, Jesus was more than just as man. He was the incarnate Son of God or God in the flesh. *"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation"* (Col. 1:15). *"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"* (Col. 2:9). This did not mean He did not have to learn and grow like all men (Luke 2:52). Neither was Jesus free from temptation. *"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need"* (Heb. 4:15-16).

- **Perfect Example of a Sinless Life**

His ability to live up to His teaching separates Him from all other great teachers. His perfect life promotes His perfect doctrine. He teaches against revenge even though He was greatly persecuted. He taught forgiveness even in His dying prayer: *"Father, forgive them; they know not what they do"* (Luke 23:34). Jesus even challenged men to convict him of sin. *"Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?"* (John 8:46). Pilate's verdict after extensive examination of Christ was: "I find no fault in Him". The centurion who watched Him and heard Him on the cross said, *"Truly, this was the Son of God"* (Matthew 27:54).

- **Perfect Example of Submission to God's Will**

Jesus submitted to God's Will in perfect obedience by coming to earth and fulfilling His mission. Jesus said, *"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work"* (John 4:34). He even boldly claimed, *"I always do those things that please Him"* (John 8:29). He left the a home in Heaven to come to earth to live in poverty. Jesus said, *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head"* (Matt. 8:20). He lived a life of self-denial even to the point of death on the cross. *"And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross"* (Phil. 2:8). He did this so mankind could be saved. *"Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him"* (Heb. 5:8-9). On the night He was betrayed, He prayed in the garden, *"Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will"* (Mark 14:36).

- **Perfect Example of Suffering**

It was prophesied Christ would suffer. *"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth"* (Isaiah 53:7). How He conducted Himself in His sufferings is an example to all. *"For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, [a] leaving us [b] an example, that you should follow His steps: 'Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth'; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously"* (1 Pet. 2:21-23).

- **Perfect Example of Humility**

When he left heaven for earth, He became a lowly servant of sinful men. *"Let nothing be done*

through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). Jesus invites all men to come to Him because He is lowly. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

- **Perfect Example of Love**

If "God is love" (1 John 4:8), then Jesus' life on earth was a perfect manifestation of that Divine attribute. Jesus told His disciples, "as the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends" (John 15:9-13). Paul wrote concerning this, "for when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:6-8). Christians are encouraged to walk after His example of love. "Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma" (Ephesians 5:1-2).

In establishing His Kingdom, Christ excluded the use of force. Instead the King of kings conquered the world with love. Napoleon said, "Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and myself founded empires. But on what did we found them? On force! Jesus Christ alone founded His on love, and today there are millions who would die for Him." Once when a shell fell near him in battle a soldier threw his arms around Napoleon and saved his life. Later, Napoleon complained that no one was willing to draw the sword for him while he was in exile. Christ is dead and there are still some who will die for the belief that He was the Son of God even 2,000 years after His crucifixion.

- **Perfect Example of Self-Denial**

No king ever established a world empire by dying. No king ever promised a kingdom, then died leaving no successor. He only commissioned 11 "lower class" disciples to accomplish this (Mt. 28:18-20). Jesus, after all His talk of a great Kingdom, was crucified like a felon. No wonder certain men "laughed Him to scorn" (Mark 9:24). The King of kings denied himself the riches of Heaven and this world. "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9).

- **Perfect Example of Forgiveness**

Jesus performed miracles to show that He was indeed the Son of God. He also provide miracles as evidence that He had the power to forgive sins. "But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"--then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house" (Matt. 9:6). His critics were astonished by His bold claims to have the right and ability to forgive sins against God. "And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' Then He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace'" (Luke 7:49,50). Even while being crucified Jesus told the thief on the cross beside Him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Lk. 7:49,50). Only God has the right forgive sins, yet Jesus claimed to do so on several occasion supporting His assertions with miracles. Today, Jesus' forgiveness is the standard by which all men are to forgive others. "Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do" (Colossians 3:13).

- **Perfect Example of Service to Others**

Isaiah describes the Messiah (Jesus) as a Servant "Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He will not cry out, nor raise His voice, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till He has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands shall wait for His law" (Isaiah 42:1-4). Jesus taught His disciples that greatness is found in servanthood "But Jesus called them to Himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great

among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25-28). He did not just teach this to His disciples, He modeled service before them by washing their feet. *“You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him”* (John 13:13-16).

Jesus points out in these scriptures the basic truths about servanthood. A true servant does not seek to be served. A true servant aims to serve others. A true servant does not aim to do his own will. A true servant does not promote himself.

- **Perfect Example of Self-control**

When Jesus went out into the wilderness after His baptism by John, He fasted for forty days. He face the temptations by the Devil in this condition. However, He practice self[-control by successfully tell the devil “no” to each and every temptation (Matt. 4:1-11). Later, when Peter cut off the ear of Malchus in the garden, *“Jesus said to him, ‘Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?’”*(Matthew 26:52-54).

Jesus Christ is the perfect example for every man and every woman with regard to every virtue and in every situation. All Christians are to walk in His footsteps. *“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked”* (1 John 2:6). True discipleship demands following Jesus. *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me”* (Matthew 16:24). Paul encouraged the Christians at Corinth to *“imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ”* (1 Corinthians 11:1).

Questions:

1. How does the fact Jesus was tempted just like we are help us follow his perfect example?
2. Other than to God to whom else did Jesus submit?
3. Other than the cross how did Jesus hand the other things with which He suffered, such as persecution?
4. List some other situations in the life of Christ where he demonstrated humility?
5. Explain how Christ-like love will demonstrate itself in the life of a Christian when it comes to his wife, children, enemies, etc.

6. List other ways Christ demonstrated His self-denial.
7. How does the fact Christ forgave you help you forgive others?
8. List other examples of Christ serving others.
9. Make a list of area where men need to show self-control. Next, be ready to show how Jesus was able to control Himself.

Application & Discussion

1. What are some other perfect aspects of Jesus?
2. In what ways are you most like Christ? In what areas do you need to improve?

You Have the Answers to the Questions of Life in Your Bible

Mankind has been engaged for many years searching for the answers to questions concerning human existence. He wishes to know how he got here, who put him here, what he is doing here, where is he going and how does he get there? Man has a right to know the answers to these, furthermore he must know them. So, let us consider the Bible answers to these pertinent questions.

"Who Am I?" & "Where Did I Come From?"

You have probably wondered before: "Who am I?" and "Where did I come from?" or "How did I get here?" Let us consider for a moment what some people believe. They turn to evolution for their answers. Life evolved from non-living matter. Life forms evolved from single-celled animals into fish, then into reptiles, then into mammals, and then from there into man. So they believe that man is merely the finest product of the evolutionary process; in other words we are simply highly intelligent animals. We know this cannot be true.

Why isn't it true? Because the Bible gives us the real answers to these vital questions. The very first verse in the Bible tells us, *"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"* (Gen. 1:1). In the rest of the chapter it tells us that God created all living things. Then in verses 26 and 27 it says, *"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:... So God created man in His image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."* Again in Gen. 2:7: *"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."* Therefore, we came from God, He created us, and we are in His likeness. What is His "likeness" you might ask? Whatever it is, we know that it is unique to man, because the Bible does not tell us that any of the other items of creation were made in His image. Jesus said in John 4:24 that *"God is a spirit."* The "likeness" or "image" of God is His "Spirit." We are different from the rest of creation because we have a spirit in the likeness of the eternal Spirit of God.

"Who Is Above Me?"

Another important question to consider is: "Who is above me?" It could be answered by simply saying "God." But you might inquire "Why is God above me?" For example, if someone came up to you on the job and started giving you orders, you would stop and ask him, "What gives you the right to tell me what to do?" If he answered, "Because I'm the new boss" then you would understand. So, let us consider why God is above us.

First, because God has all authority. He is the top executive in the universe, because He created it all. He created us, so He is the authority on the way man should live his life. For example, if you created a car that could operate on water, not only would you become very rich, but you would be considered the authority on the water-powered car. If anyone wanted to know something about your water-powered car they would come to you. In like manner, God is the authority to see concerning His creation - man. We cannot determine how to lead our own lives, we must depend upon God for our directions. God says, so we must do as He says. He is the Master Mind of creation. He therefore understands all about it and has all the answers. We must rely upon God, because His ways and His thoughts are greater than ours. *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts"* (Is. 55:8,9). We must also rely on His orders in this life because we do not have the ability to live life our own way. After all, our ways lead to misery and death. *"I know, O*

Lord, that a man's way is not in himself; nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Pr. 16:25).

Also, God is above us, because He is Holy. What does "Holy" mean? To be holy is to be set apart from the world; to be separated from sin. God is holy in that He is 100% pure from sin. God is so much more holy (separated from sin) than man could ever be. God is so holy that He is never even tempted to commit any sin. As we learn in James 1:13 *"let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone."* God is so holy that He cannot even be tempted. We are often tempted by the Devil to do wrong, but God is never tempted. If we found a wallet filled with money we might be tempted to keep it for our own, but God would not be tempted at all.

Finally, God is above us because He is the source of all life. He created all living things. He breathed into man the breath of life. Without God there would be no life. If God went out of existence this instance all of creation would cease to exist. Air is a source of life for us. If you cut off all the air in the world all would die. Thus, God as the sustainer of all life is above us.

Not only do we depend upon God for the existence of physical life, but we also depend upon Him for all spiritual life. Our spirit came from Him, He created it, and gave it life. God's Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life"* (Jn. 14:8). We must rely upon Christ for all spiritual life now and forever.

"What Am I Doing Here?"

A puzzling question that needs our consideration is one that most men have already given some thought to. The question is: "What am I doing here?" Many men have come up with many different answers, but God through His inspired writers has given us the real answer. Solomon wrote a great deal in Ecclesiastes dealing with the purpose of life. In chapter twelve he concludes by saying, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."* To "fear" means to "respect." We must have a true respect for your God because He is most deserving. If we really respect Him we will live our lives according to His commandments. That is, we will conform our life to God's Will, for this is what the life of a man is all about. God created us to perform in a certain way. When we exercise our freedom of choice not to conduct ourselves according to His Will, we become useless to His cause. Just suppose for a moment that you were able to invent a gadget that could shave your face in the morning and then you could use it to mow your lawn on Saturday. But let's say that you put it on the market just to find out that after a few weeks it wouldn't work. People would end up mowing their face in the morning (which would be very painful to say the least) and shaving their lawn on Saturday. Because your creation failed to work according to your design it became dangerous and useless. So is man dangerous and useless when he fails to act according to the Creator's directions.

"Where Am I Going?"

For the atheist there is no place to go. Because there is no life after death according to his belief. As an atheist lamented over the casket of a fellow atheist, "Poor Fred is all dressed up, but has no place to go." Others claim that all roads lead to heaven. But Jesus said that there are only two roads to choose from in this life. One leads to heaven and the other leads to hell. *"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it"* (Matt. 7:13,14). When you think about it, it's not much of a choice. It certainly should not be a hard choice to make for anyone.

"How Do I Get There?"

Well if this question is asked in relation to hell then the answer is easy. According to Romans 3:23 *"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."* Thus, to go to hell just do nothing about your sin. Or better yet, like many people today just plan to do something about it someday. But remember, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 informs us that ignorance and

disobedience will cause many to suffer eternal punishment. "...when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and those who do not obey the gospel. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." Now getting to heaven involves a bit more effort. The extra work is well worth the trouble, especially when you consider the alternative. Jesus tells us in His sermon on the mount that it involves genuine obedience to God. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matt. 7:21-23). It involves a lot of devotion to the Lord and a lot of preparation to get to heaven. But God gives you a lifetime to get ready. Just remember, heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.

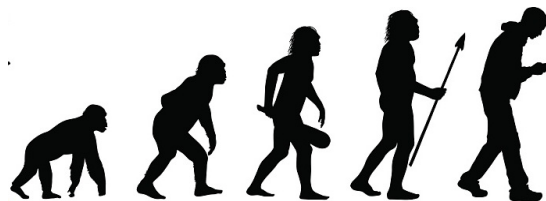
Summary

In conclusion, the following answers to some of life's momentous questions have been established.

- 1) We came from God, who is our Creator. He not only created us as a physical being, but we are also an eternal spiritual being in the likeness of God.
- 2) God is above us, because He has all authority over all of His creation; because He is holy (totally separated from sin); and because He is the source of all life.
- 3) The true meaning of our existence is to respect God and to live as He would have us to live.
- 4) We are either going to spend eternity with God in Heaven or spend eternity separated from God in hell.
- 5) We can reach our eternal destiny by doing nothing about our sinful condition and thus suffer eternal punishment or we can obey the Will of God and share eternal glory with Him.

Questions:

1. Evolution teaches that man is...
 - a) a highly developed animal
 - b) a creation of God
 - c) an alien from another planet
 - d) all the above



2. Matching: Genesis 1:1

In the beginning ... God ... created ... the heavens ... and the earth.

action matter time force space

3. How is man different from the rest of God's creation?

4. God is above man because...

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

5. God is the source of man's _____ life and man's _____ life.

6. What hope does an atheists have in life beyond the grave? _____

7. True False Jesus said that all roads lead to heaven.

8. What are the two eternal destinies for the souls of men?



9. Cross out the things man can do to attain eternal punishment. Circle those things he must do to attain eternal life.

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Nothing | Do the will of the Father in heaven | hear God's Word |
| Believe Jesus is the Son of God | Repent of sins | know not God |
| Confess Jesus as Son of God | Just be sincere and follow your conscience | |
| Be baptized for forgiveness of sins | obey not the gospel | |

10 Matching:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| _____ Who am I? | a. Either Heaven or Hell |
| _____ Where did I come from? | b. God who has all authority and is holy |
| _____ Who is above me? | c. By doing the Will of the Father in Heaven |
| _____ What am I doing here? | d. Man was created a physical and spiritual being |
| _____ Where am I going? | e. We came from God, who is our Creator. |
| _____ How do I get there? | f. Serving God and heading back to Him. |

You Have the Truth to Live By in Your Bible

Today, we are living in an age inundated with self help guides of every flavor and hue. In any corner book store you can find a volume to tell you how to firm your tummy, reduce tension or squeeze more time out of your jumbled life. Guides can be found to tell you how to live better socially, emotionally, mentally, physically, etc. Yet, the most popular "How to" book for living a better life spiritually is being overlooked. This Guide is called the "Bible".

One of the incomparable characteristics of Christianity is the Bible. Not only is it the best selling book in history and a volume that has been translated into nearly every language and dialect in the world, it is the very Word of God.

Many Infallible Proofs of Inspiration

The Bible is not merely a book about God, rather it is a book from God. How do we know this? First, because of its great literary unity. Nowhere but in the Bible do we have anything like its 66 books written over some 2100 years in three languages by about 40 authors from many countries and all walks of life on hundreds of topics, all the while preserving a striking unity and continuity.

Additionally, the Bible contains specific prophecies which have been fulfilled with great accuracy. One hundred and fifty years before Cyrus was ever born, Isaiah prophesied that a man named "Cyrus" would restore the Jews to Palestine following their Babylonian Captivity. At the time of his writing the Jews were an independent nation and the Assyrian Empire was the dominant force in the Middle East.

Add to this is the Bible's astounding historical and scientific accuracy. The only logical explanation for these amazing characteristics is the Bible must have been authored by one who acted to unify the whole, foretell the future, experience man's history, and know all about science. In other words, only God could be the author of the Bible.

This fact appears even more compelling when the Bible is compared to other religions writings. Consider the Koran, Vedas, Granth, Zend-Avesta, Analets, Toa Tasang, Torah, Koriki & Nihongi. All of these contradict, are difficult to understand, and are illogical. Yet the Bible is not a book of blatant contradictions.

The denominational creeds of men that are said to be based upon the Bible, such as, Baptist Manuals, Lutheran Catechism, Methodist Discipline, Book of Mormon, Presbyterian Confession of Faith, writings of Ellen G. White, etc. do contradict the Bible. However, these are the writings of mere men and not the inspired word of God. If these creeds say more than the Bible they add to the word of God. If they say less they subtract. If they say the same thing than why do you need them, let's just read the Bible.

The Bible even claims to have originated from the very breathe of God, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Tim. 3:16,17). The Greek term for *"inspiration"* means "God-breathed".

A Standard of Right and Wrong

According to the Bible, sin is a violation of God's Law (I John 3:4). God's Word therefore is an absolute ethical standard. In it one can learn where the lines of right or wrong are drawn on the pathway of life.

When faced with the perplexing issues of our times one can turn to the Bible and find the answers. Concerning divorce Jesus said, *"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery"* (Mt. 19:9). What about a solution to the AIDS epidemic. *"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed*

undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). Is homosexuality a morally valid alternate lifestyle. "as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 7). The Biblical answer for the raising rate of teenage pregnancy is "flee fornication". This ancient Book's remedy for our prolific crime rate is: "Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil" (Ec. 8:11). What about juvenile delinquency? "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of correction will drive it far from him" (Pr. 22:15). The Word of God even declares a solution for alcoholism (1 Pet. 4:3). For every moral dilemma the Bible contains a relevant solution.

The Bible Contains the Truth to Live by

Jesus said, *"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32). The Bible is like an "operator's manual" explaining the workings and needs of the human "machine." Man has never been able to lift himself by his own bootstraps; but the Bible has lifted him. Have you ever heard a man say, "My life was once in ruins. I was a liar, thief and drunkard. I was unfaithful to my wife and abusive toward my children. But then I read a book on Advanced Abstract Mathematics and was from that time forward a changed man!" No, but you have heard people proclaim that about the Bible.*

Who or What Determines Morality?

From where does the concept of right and wrong arise? Why are some things "right" and other things "wrong?" Ethics deals with what is morally right and wrong. Morality is concerned with establishing and disseminating principles of right and wrong in conduct or behavior. Simply put it states what one "ought" and "ought not" do. The Bible has much to say about ethics, morality, goodness, and truth. But first, man has tried to discover morality apart from Him.

● **Morality Is NOT Determined by the Individual**

The Greek philosopher Protagoras claimed "Man is the measure of all things." According to the "New Age" movement every individual is God. As God he can look from within and decide what is right or wrong.

Jeremiah wrote, *"O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jer 10:23). And Solomon wrote, "there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Pr 16:25). If every man did his own thing anarchy and chaos would prevail over society. No one could be accused of a crime and no one would have a right to object to the behavior of another.*

● **Morality is NOT Determined by Power**

What if right or wrong was determined by certain powerful individuals. The Greek philosopher Thrasymachus said, "justice is the interest of stronger party." Right makes right. This could be political, military, religious, or financial power. Thus, the rules for right and wrong are determined by the golden rule: he who has the gold makes the rules. However it has been said that "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Nero and other tyrants of history have shown that those with great power can propagate great evil.

● **Morality is NOT Determined by Humanity**

The next view not only takes the job the moralist out of the hands of the every individual and powerful individuals, it puts it in the hands of all men in general. Now mankind is the measure of all things.

Yet humanity as a whole or in part has never been able to determine what is right or wrong. Only if majority rule were enforced could this methodology work. When that happens the issue of the source of morality is back in the hands of a few powerful individuals.

● **Morality is NOT Determined by Culture**

Societal traditions become the determining factors of what is considered morally right or wrong. Samuel Butler said, "morality is the custom of one's country: cannibalism is moral in a cannibal country." At the war crimes trial in Nuremberg, Germany, Hitler's henchmen argued that they had broken no laws. Germany's own legal system, they contended, permitted the elimination of those who impeded the advance of the Third Reich. Adolph Eichmann protested before his execution, "I had to obey the laws of war and

my flag".

Robert H. Jackson, chief counsel for the U.S. in the Nuremberg Trials, was forced to appeal to permanent values, "a law beyond the law." That law is the moral code of God found in the Bible. Furthermore, to let culture determine morality is to say that the majority rules when it comes to morals. Augustine aptly wrote, "right is right even if no one is doing it; wrong is wrong even if everyone is doing it."

- **Morality is NOT Determined by the Times**

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus maintained that "no one ever steps into the same river twice, for fresh waters are ever upon him." Times are always changing. Some will argue against a moral standard they consider archaic by demanding that everyone needs to step into the twenty-first century. "There probably cannot ever be any absolutely correct or proper rules of morality, since people and conditions change over the years and what is 'right' today may be 'wrong' tomorrow. Sane ethics are relativistic and situational" (Albert Ellis, *The Humanist*, Sept/Oct, 79, 18.)

Can a book over 1900 years old be relevant for the 21st century? Is Biblical morality out of date?

God is the author of the Bible and Jesus is the Truth and the Word. They do not change (Heb. 7:12; 13:8). An unchanging, all-knowing God can make laws for all the ages. Times have changed greatly in the scientific community. However, the law of gravity is immutable or changeless. It keeps things grounded to the earth's surface. God's moral laws are equally immutable.

- **Morality is NOT Determined by What Feels Good**

Hemingway believed, "what is moral is what you feel good after, and what is immoral is what you feel bad after." According to modern man, "if it feels good, do it." This is the old Epicurean philosophy hedonism. Today, Coliss Lamont explains this view in modern terms, "for Humanism no human acts are good or bad in or of themselves. Whether an act is good or bad is to be judged by its consequences for the individual and society...He bows down to no alleged supreme moral authority either past or present" (Lamont, 235).

However, not everything that brings pain is evil. Giving immunization shots to children causes pain yet is for their good. Conversely, not everything that brings pleasure is good. This is especially true when comparing the temporary pleasure of sin with eternal glory. "By faith Moses, ...choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward" (Heb. 11:25-26). The artist formerly known as "Prince" said it well, "hard to say what's right when all I wanna do is wrong."

- **Morality is NOT Determined by Moderation**

Since man cannot control his passions and desires for what makes him feel good than some believe all things are acceptable in moderation. This is what Aristotle called the "golden mean." He "believed that temperance is the mean between indulgence and insensibility. And pride is the moderate course between vanity and humility. Likewise, courage is the halfway point between fear and aggression" (Geisler, Norman L., *Christians Ethics*, 19).

Not everything can be practiced in moderation. For example, how can anyone accept murder, rape, adultery, stealing so long as it is done in moderation. Who gets to determine what is moderate and when an action becomes immoderate? Some virtues are not meant to be down in moderation. Paul commanded the Christians of Corinth to "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). God's children are not to practice moderation when it comes to love. "In sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart" (1 Pet. 1:22).

- **Morality is NOT Determined by Situations**

Joseph Fletcher's book *Situation Ethics - The New Morality* claims that morality is determined by the current situation. He told *Time Magazine*, "as to sexual morality, the traditional rules are giving way to 'situation ethics' - meaning that nothing is inherently right or wrong, but must be judged in contest on the spur of the moment" (*TIME*, Apr 22, '66, 42). "Is adultery wrong?" Fletcher says, "one can only respond, "I don't know. Maybe. Give me a case. Describe a real situation." According to the *Humanist Manifesto II*, humanists "affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life... We strive for the good life, here and now"

(17).

● **Morality is NOT Determined by Love**

Fletcher even spoke before the Southern Baptist Convention, "I am prepared to argue that the Christian obligation calls for lies and adultery and fornication and theft and promise-breaking and killing sometime, depending on the situation. The normative in Christian decision-making is loving concern rather than law" ("Morality Gap Shoo-Out", Christianity today, Apr. 10, 1970, p. 647).

Love cannot be the lone factor in determining right from wrong because men will be lovers of self (2 Tim. 3:2); lovers of money (1 Tim. 6:10); lovers of the world (1 Jn. 2:15); lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (2 Tim. 3:4) and "the love of many will grow cold" (Mt. 24:12). Love does have a great deal to do with right or wrong, but only when love has the right object and does the right thing. Jesus explained that the essence of all law is love for God and fellow-man (Matthew 22:36-40). Yet, Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word" (Jn. 14:23). "God is love" (1 Jn. 4:16) and therefore He alone has the right to define what is love and what is the loving thing to do. "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1 Jn. 5:3). Paul said, "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10).

● **Morality IS Determined by God**

God created man. He made man in His own image. He lovingly created rules with man's best interest in mind. His moral laws for us cannot be improved or replaced. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts'" (Is. 55:8,9). What is wrong has nothing to do with God not wanting us to be happy, but for us to rejoice in this life and have eternal joy in the next. What is good is not good simply because He said so, but it is only good because God is good. Love is good because "God is love." Honesty is always the best policy because God never lies. His moral code is knowable (Jn. 8:32) and absolute (Jn. 14:6; Pr. 3:5-7). He gives us lists of what is evil and therefore must be repented or and avoided or else forfeit eternal life (Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8). He list virtues that must be practiced (Gel. 2:22,23). It is by His law that all will be judged (Jn. 12:48).

Questions:

1. The Bible is divided up into _____ different books. These books were written over a period of about _____ years. About _____ human authors wrote these books. The was originally written in _____ different languages.

2. List some infallible proofs that the Bible is Inspired of God
 - a) _____
 - b) _____
 - c) _____
 - d) _____

3. How does Truth make man free instead of restricting his freedom?

4. Match the Bible verses with the sin.
- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| _____ Divorce | a. Jude 7 |
| _____ Homosexuality | b. 1 Peter 4:3 |
| _____ Fornication | c. Hebrews 13:4 |
| _____ Crime | d. Proverbs 22:15 |
| _____ Juvenile delinquency | e. Matthew 19:9 |
| _____ Drunkenness | f. Ecclesiastes 8:11 |

5. Matching Quotes to Author:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| "Man is the measure of all things" | Humanist Manifesto II |
| "Justice is the interest of stronger party" | Moses |
| "morality is the custom of one's country" | Joseph Fletcher |
| "You shall not follow a crowd to do evil" | Hemingway |
| "no one ever steps into the same river twice,
for fresh waters are ever upon him." | Heraclitus |
| "Believed that temperance is the mean
between indulgence and insensibility." | Coliss Lamont |
| "What is moral is what you feel good after,
and what is immoral is what you feel bad after." | Protagorus |
| "nothing is inherently right or wrong, but must be
judged in contest on the spur of the moment" | Aristotle |
| "Ethics in autonomous and situational" | Samuel Butler |

5. Fill in the blanks:

- "in sincere _____ of the brethren, _____ one another fervently with a pure heart" (1 Peter 1:22).
- "if anyone _____ Me, he will keep My word" (John 14:23).
- "God is _____" (1 John 4:16).
- "For this is the _____ of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 John 5:3).
- "_____ is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10).

You Have Two Complimentary Testaments in Your Bible

Not only does the Bible have 66 books. These books are divided into two different sections. The Old Testament has 39 books, while the New Testament has 27. There is about a four hundred year gap between the close of the Old Testament with Malachi and the writing of the first books of the New Testament.

These two Testaments cover three divisions of Bible History. First there is the Patriarchal age where God spoke directly to the fathers. It was a family religion which lasted from the sin of Adam in the Garden till the death of Christ on the cross. The Jews lived under the Mosaic Dispensation from the time of the giving of the Law of Moses at Mount Sinai till Christ's death on the cross. This was a National Religion given only to the Jews. The Christian Dispensation began with the first sermon on the day of Pentecost and will continue till the second Coming of Christ. It is a universal religion for all mankind both Jews and Gentiles.

◆ **The Law Was Only Given to the Nation of Israel**

The Old Testament law was given to a specific group of people, the Jews and was never said to have been given to anyone else. The Law of Moses was never intended as a universal law. It was not intended for other nations (Deut. 4:7-8). Paul clearly points to the fact that the Gentiles had not been given the Law as to the Jews (Eph. 2:12). The Law was never designed for Gentiles or even Christians.

While the Israelites were assembled at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:1), God delivered through Moses the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1f). Moses was the Lawgiver. He received the Law from God and delivered it to the children of Israel. In the second giving of the Law, Moses clearly states that the covenant was not made with the Gentiles or even with the Israelites' forefathers, but only with the nation of Israel whom God had led out of Egyptian bondage. And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: *"Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. 'The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive'"* (Deut. 5:1-3).

◆ **The Law Was Given to Point out Sin**

Paul wrote *"...for by the law is the knowledge of sin"* (Rom. 3:20). *"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.'"* (Rom. 7:7).

◆ **The Law Was Not Good for Saving from Sin**

If one sinned and violated the covenant he could not be justified by the Law. *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith'"* (Gal. 3:10,11). Those who seek justification via law are under a curse, the curse of demanded perfection.

◆ **The Law Was a Good Schoolmaster for the Jews**

Since the Law of Moses is to be replaced by a better covenant and that it could not save from sin *"What purpose then does the law serve?"* (Gal. 3:19). In verse 24 Paul answers his own question, *"Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith".*

The term for "tutor" is also translated *"schoolmaster"* from the Greek word *paedagogus*. This term

does not have an exact equivalent in the English language. The pedagogue, an old trusted slave was selected to accompany minor children of noble families in Rome and Greece. These competent custodians were highly esteemed by parents, and children were required to respect them. A "schoolmaster" was not the teacher, but one who saw to it that the child was escorted to the teacher. He was a guardian who was responsible for the well-being of the student. Having been given the general care and duty of looking after the child in his play hours. He was responsible for teaching the fundamentals.

Certain legal limitations applied to immature heirs, thus the need for a pedagogue. While a child, the tutor is useful and necessary, but when the child becomes a grown man the pedagogue will be a hindrance. Likewise, the Law's purpose was important, but preparatory, to prepare for faith in Christ. So to return to the Law was to regress to childhood and relinquishing all rights, freedom and privileges found in adulthood. The Law is here represented, not so much as one who conducts one to the Teacher, but to the Savior of their sin.

Five times in the Galatian letter Paul used the phrase "under the law" (Gal. 3:23; 4:4; 5; 4:21; 5:18) showing the idea of the Jews being in subjection and under a limitation with the Law, their schoolmaster. Now we are "under law to Christ" (1 Cor. 9:21).

◆ **The Law Testifies of Jesus**

Jesus recognized the authority of the Law. At age 12, he amazed the Jewish rabbis with His understanding. His response to Satan's temptations was to quote Scripture (Luke 4:4; 8, 12). Not only did He testify that the Law was of God but the Law testified of Him. Jesus said, "you search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39). The apostles, prophets and evangelists of the first century also used the scriptures to tell the story of Christ.

Jesus affirmed that He came to fulfill the Law. "For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. "Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:18,19). After His resurrection Jesus explained to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me" (Luke 24:44).

The Law fulfilled the seed promise to Abraham. Again Paul asks, "Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not!..." (Gal. 3:21). God had promised Abraham that of his descendants one would come to bless the whole world (Gen. 12:3). Christ is the promised seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16). The Old Covenant served the purpose of keeping Abraham's seed a separate and distinct race until Christ, the promised seed, came.

The Law pointed to the coming Messiah. In Deuteronomy 18:17-18 Moses prophesied of a prophet to come who would be like him. Peter proclaimed that Jesus was that prophet (Ac. 3:22,23). Jesus quoted often from the Old Testament to prove His deity (Lk. 4:17-21; Jn. 5:39). Considering the mass of detailed prophecies about Christ the Jews were without excuses for not accepting Jesus of Nazareth as the Promised One. Jesus fulfilled the Law by fulfilling all that had been prophesied about Him. There are some three hundred specific prophecies concerning the Christ in the Old Testament. Jesus did not just fulfill some of them. He fulfilled all of them. He was miraculously be born of a virgin (Is. 7:14). He was born in the city of Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2). Not one single time did He fail to fulfill a prophecy.

Jesus fulfill the Law in that He kept every single commandment perfectly (Heb. 4:15). He had to in order to be the sinless sacrifice for the sins of the world.

◆ **The Law's Purpose Has Been Fulfilled**

No man can live under to sets of laws at the same time. I cannot live by the rules of the United States and that of Saudi Arabia. Neither can any man live under the Old Law and the New Testament at the same time. For example, the Law of Moses requires animal sacrifices. In the New only the sacrifice of Christ is permitted.

The Law separated Jews and Gentiles. That wall of separation has been abolished by Christ. Now in the New Covenant (Testament) both Jew and Gentile can be united in Christ. "He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one

new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near” (Eph. 2:14-17). When Jesus died the Old Law was nailed to the cross. Christ “having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it” (Col. 2:14-15). It is like the restaurant bills the used to spike on a nail after it was paid, showing it has been paid in full or the fulfilled. Christ is dead and His Will of Testament is not in effect. “For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives” (Heb. 9:16,17).

Many erroneous practices exist among those striving to be Christians today because they fail to distinguish between the Old Testament and the New. I often tell folks that as a New Testament Christian I do not keep the TEN Commandments. This in no way means I believe Christians permitted to steal or commit adultery. Christians today are not subject to the Ten Commandments given in the Law but nine of the ten are commanded in the New Testament for Christians to observe today. Some appeal to the Old Testament for authority to worship God with mechanical instruments of music. King David certainly worshiped with trumpets and stringed instruments (Ps. 22:1-3; 150:3-5), because God commanded their use (2 Chron. 29:25). However, God had specified that Christians sing, not play (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16,17). Some believe Christians are to worship on Saturday, the seventh day of the week, and not Sunday the First Day of the Week. However, Paul wrote, “*therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ*” (Col. 2:16,17). Others command tithing instead of giving a free will offering (1 Cor. 16:2). Some people even argue that they do not need to be baptized because the thief on the cross was not baptized. They fail to realize that the thief lived and died under the Old Law.

Those who go back to the Old Law to keep part of it are condemned by God if they fail to keep all of it. One might as well have a High Priest with animal sacrifices as to keep the Sabbath or Tithe. With rightly dividing the Word of God (2 Tim. 2:15) some could just as well end up obeying Noah’s command to build an ark of gopher wood or obey God’s command to the Israelites and mark around Jericho thirteen times in seven days. Paul warns, “*you have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace*” (Gal. 5:4).

◆ **The Law Is Good for Our Learning**

Two extreme views exist with regard to the Law. Some contend that the Old Testament is valid for all people today. On the other side of this extreme are those to claim that the Old Testament is of no value to us today. However, consider what the following verses teach: “*For WHATEVER THINGS WERE WRITTEN BEFORE were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have HOPE*” (Rom. 15:4). “*Now all these things happened to them AS EXAMPLES, and they were WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, on whom the ends of the ages have come*” (1 Cor. 10:11). “*For the law, having A SHADOW OF THE GOOD THINGS TO COME,...*” (Heb. 10:1).

Timothy was exhorted to stay with the lessons he had learned while a babe because God’s word is profitable and brings men to salvation. Paul told Timothy in writing, “*and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work*” (2 Tim. 3:16,17).

It is hard to imagine trying to teach the lost without making reference to the old Law. Philip began with Isaiah 53 to teach the Ethiopian Eunuch about Christ (Acts 8:26f). The Apostle Paul made constant reference to the Law of Moses while teaching and preaching.

It has been well explained that “The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed. And the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed.” They go together like hand and glove to convince us that the totality of the Bible is indeed revelation from God to man. Just as we need the Old Testament to comprehend much of the New Testament, the New Testament opens many of the mysteries of the Old

Testament.

Questions:

Matching:

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------------|----|----------------------|
| 1. _____ | schoolmaster | a. | National Religion |
| 2. _____ | testament | b. | In the Bible |
| 3. _____ | 39 books | c. | Family Religion |
| 4. _____ | 27 books | d. | In the Old Testament |
| 5. _____ | 66 books | e. | pedagogue |
| 6. _____ | Patriarchal Age | f. | Individual Religion |
| 7. _____ | Mosaical Age | g. | will or covenant |
| 8. _____ | Christian Age | h. | In the New Testament |

9. True or False: The Law of Moses was only given to the nation of Israel and not to the Gentiles.
10. True or False: Although the Law was able to save men from their sins, it was unable to identify sin to the Israelites.
11. True or False: A schoolmaster is the same thing as a teacher.
12. True or False: Christ is the fulfillment of the seed promise to Abraham in that all the world is blessed through Him.
13. True or False: Jesus was prophesied to be a prophet like Moses.
14. True or False: Jesus had to keep the Law of Moses perfectly.

15. List THREE passages showing that the Law of Moses came to an end with the death of Christ on the cross.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

16. List THREE Current Religious Practices Today which are Based on the Old Testament

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

17. "You have become estranged from _____, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have _____ from grace" (Gal. 5:4).

18. List THREE Good Reasons Why New Testament Christians Should Read and Study the Old Testament.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

19. Discuss the Saying: "The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed. And the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed."

Lesson 6: *Sunday Morning, February 11, 2018*

You Have the Complete Word of God in Your Bible

The term "Bible" is from the word *biblia*, literally meaning "the books." The Bible is composed of 66 books in two Testaments. The Bible as a whole is often referred to as the biblical canon. A canon is a list or collection of books accepted as authentic Scripture from God. "Canon" originally meant 'reed' and came to signify a ruler or measuring stick. In this sense the Bible is the rule or standard of authority for Christians" (Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary 200). The canonicity of a book refers to whether it is a genuine writing inspired by God.

Some are arguing today that the Bible is not complete. There are lost books of the Bible. Books and Gospels which have been left out of the canon. The Bible itself does refer to several books which are no longer available or known. The Old Testament writers refer to the book of Jasher (Joshua 10:13; 2 Sam. 1:18); the book of the Wars of the Lord (Num. 21:14); The book of the Acts of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41); the book of the Genealogies (Neh. 7:5); the Records of Nathan the Prophet; the Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite; and the visions of Iddo the Seer (2 Chr. 9:29). In the New Testament Paul had written a third epistle to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 2:4) and a letter to the Laodiceans (Col. 4:16). If God wanted us to have these in addition to the sixty-six they would have been providentially preserved for use to be read today.

Why are just sixty-six included in most Bibles? Are there not other books in the Catholic Bible, such as, 1, 2 & 3 Maccabees, Tobit, and additions to Daniel and Esther? Are there not other Gospels in addition to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, such as, the Gospel of Thomas and the Gospel of Barnabas? Who determined that there should only be sixty-six books in the Bible? What rules and criteria did they use to determine which books were legitimate?

Some ask today, "did not the early church with its council determine which books were in the canon and which books were not authorized to be a part of the Bible?" Neil R. Lightfoot in his book *How We Got the Bible*, explains, "a book first has divine authority based on its inspiration, and then attains canonicity due to its general acceptance as a divine product. No church council by its decrees can make the books of the Bible authoritative. The books of the Bible possess their own authority and, indeed, and this authority long before there were any councils of the church" (Lightfoot 153). The canonicity of a book is not determined by the church or council of men but by God. God determines which books are inspired by Him and mankind merely discovers with which ones are from God based on logical and biblically sound criteria.

Criteria for Canonicity

Consider the criteria used by scholars to help determine the canon of scripture. A book must be written by a known prophet of God or one of Jesus' apostles. Many of the Bible prophets are identified in the first few verses of their book.

Furthermore, a book in the Bible needs to claim inspiration. "*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*" (2 Tim. 3:16). The term "*inspired*" literally means "God-breathed." God breathed His words into the writers of the inspired books. He guided them as to what to say to the readers. The books had to bear in them the marks of inspiration. Many of the prophets in the Old Testament began by stating "*Thus says the Lord...*" The apostles claimed authority for their writings. Paul wrote, "*I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read*

to all the holy brethren” (1 Thessalonians 5:27) The apostle’s writings were equated with Old Testament scriptures. *“Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures”* (2 Peter 3:1-2, 15-16).

To be a book of Divine Scripture it had to be truthful and factually accurate. No truly inspired prophet of God could lie. *“If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let us go after other gods’—which you have not known—‘and let us serve them,’ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul”* (Deut. 13:1-3). *“But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.’ And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’— when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him”* (Deut. 18:20-22). Since God is the Creator everything in the Bible must be scientifically accurate, that is, in accordance with the actual laws of nature. Since God is eternal and all knowing, everything He inspires must be historically accurate. Since God never can lie, everything He writes through men must tell the truth. Books must be consistent with other revealed truth from God and cannot contradict them.

A book which has been corroborated by either Jesus or a prophet or one of Christ’s apostles was considered Scripture. Christ referred to the Old Testament books as “scripture”. Jesus said, *“These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me ”* (Luke 24:44). Peter knew of the writings of the apostle Paul and considered them to be Scripture. *“A also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures”* (2 Peter 3:16).

The original readers of the books needed to understand that they were reading the Scriptures. Paul told the church at Thessalonica: *“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe”* (1 Thess. 2:13). These letters and Gospels had to be recognized by early Christians to be inspired writing from God. This is an argument for the Bible canon based on antiquity. Earlier the acceptance the greater the evidence and inclusion. For example, The Muratorian Fragment listed 22 out of 27 of the New Testament books was accepted by the Shepherd of Hermas as genuine. Josephus, the Jewish historian (A.D. 95), indicated that the books of the Old Testament were recognized as authoritative in his day.

Many of the writings and writers of the books of the Bible have been authenticated by the miracles used to confirm the message the wrote and/or spoke.

Apocryphal Books are Non-Canonical

About fifteen books were written by the Jews during the 400 years between Malachi the final book of the Old Testament and the beginning of the Gospel story. These years are often referred to at the intertestamental period. The word apocrypha is from the Greek meaning “hidden.” In other words, the origin of these books is not clearly known. Therefore they cannot be considered a part of the canon. The books are included in the Catholic Bible called the Douay Version. They are considered inspired scripture just like the Pentateuch, Psalms and Prophets of the Old Testament. Therefore, the Catholic Bible has forty-six instead of thirty-nine books in the Old Testament. Catholic doctrines, such as purgatory and prayer for the dead, find authority for these writings. Keep in mind these books were included in the Greek Old Testament called the Septuagint. But were separated into a section as books to be read.

Many of these books teach things contradictory to the Law of Moses and encouraged immoral behavior. In 2 Maccabees it says you can tithe for the sins of the dead. "After taking a collection from each man, he sent the sum of two thousand silver drachmen to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. He was acting honorably and appropriately, thinking about the resurrection. If he hadn't been looking forward to the resurrection of the dead, then it would have been unnecessary and frivolous to pray for them. He was looking, however, to that best reward laid up for those who die in godliness, and so this was a pious and holy thought. Thus he made an offering of reconciliation so that the dead would be forgiven of their sin" (2 Macc. 12:43-45). Tobit encouraged the use of witchcraft to cast out demons and the use of magic. "The angel said to him, "Cut open the fish and remove its gallbladder, heart, and liver and keep them with you, and throw away the guts. Its gallbladder, heart, and liver are useful medicines." So Tobias cut open the fish and gathered up the gallbladder, heart, and liver. He cooked the fish and ate it; and the remaining part of it, which he salted, he put aside. Then they both journeyed together until they approached Media. Tobias asked the angel, "Brother Azariah, what medicine is there in the fish's heart, liver, and gallbladder?" (Tobit 6:5-7). The apocryphal books are also filled with contradictions historically, chronologically, geographically and with the Bible.

These books do not claim to be inspired by God. In fact, they speak of a lack of prophets of God in the land at the time they were written and long for a time when God will send prophets back to His people. "So there was great distress in Israel, the worst since the time when prophets ceased to appear among them" (1 Maccabees 9:27). "The Jews and their priests have resolved that Simon should be their leader and high priest forever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise" (1 Macc. 14:41).

The Apocrypha can be sub-divided into books of history, didactic (teachings), romance, prophetic, and legends. Some the Apocryphal Books are...

- ◆ 1 Esdras
- ◆ 2 Esdras
- ◆ 1 Maccabees
- ◆ 2 Maccabees
- ◆ Additions to Daniel: Susanna, Prayer of Azariah, Song of the Three Young men, Bel and the Dragon
- ◆ Additions to Esther
- ◆ Baruch
- ◆ Ecclesiasticus
- ◆ Judith
- ◆ Letter of Jeremiah
- ◆ Psalm 151
- ◆ Tobit
- ◆ Wisdom of Solomon
- ◆ Wisdom of Ben-Sira

There are several good reasons why the Jews never included any of these apocryphal books in the Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus used the Palestinian Canon of the Old Testament and treated these books and their authors as inspired. He never quotes from any of the apocryphal books. He alludes to the entire Old Testament in Matthew 23:35. The New Testament never quote from the apocryphal books

The Jews never accepted the Apocryphal books as part of the Old Testament canon. Philo of Alexandria never quotes from them. Josephus wrote, "For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing form and contradicting one another [as the Greeks have,] but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine." At Council of Jamnia (AD 90) Jews accepted all books which are in our Old Testament today as inspired. They did not include the Apocrypha.

It was not until the Council of Trent in 1546 the Roman Catholics declared canonicity of the apocryphal books

1 Maccabees was a history of the rule of Judea by the Greek Seleucid Empire. It tells of the revolt of the Jews against the evil ruler Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Covering the history of Palestine from 175 to

134 BC, it focuses on Mattathias' family who lead the fight for freedom.

2 Maccabees tells of the revolt focusing on Judas Maccabeus the hero of the book.

1 Esdras is talking about the Greek Ezra.

The Wisdom of Solomon is not really from Solomon and leans toward the philosophy of Stoicism.

Ecclesiasticus or *Sirach* was written by the Jewish scribe Jesus ben Sirach of Jerusalem. It resembles the book of Proverbs.

Tobit tells the story of Tobit living in Ninevah after being deported under the Assyrians. Forgiveness of sins by almsgiving. "For everyone who does it, donating money to the needy is a good gift in the sight of the Most High. ...9 Giving to the poor saves from death, and it washes away every sin. Those who give to the poor will feel satisfied with life" (Tobit 4:11; 12:9).

Judith is the story of a beautiful widow troubled over her fellow Jews not trust in God for deliverance from their enemies. She gains the trust of the enemy Assyrian general whom she beheads when catching him asleep one night.

Baruch is a written about Jeremiah's trusted scribe. It begins with, "and these are the words...which Baruch...wrote in Babylonia.... And when they heard it they wept, and fasted, and prayed before the Lord." It is used to offer comfort for those in Babylonian captivity.

The *Letter of Jeremiah* is said to be written by the prophet Jeremiah. And it is more of a satire about idolatry. Bruce M. Metzger suggests "one might perhaps characterize it as an impassioned sermon which is based on a verse from the canonical Book of Jeremiah." It encourages the Jews not to worship idols of Babylon while in captivity.

Six additional apocryphal chapters are added to the book of Esther. One provides the contents of the decree by Haman against the Jews. Other a copy of the decree in favor of the Jews. And one chapter has prayers by Mordecai and Esther.

The Prayer of Azariah or Song of the Three Young Men is placed after Daniel 3:23 when the three youths were in the burning fiery furnace.

Susanna is a Jewish wife who is blackmailed. But refuse to have sex with her two blackmailers and is arrested. A young, wise Daniel comes to her rescue.

Bel and the Dragon Daniel kills the great dragon worshiped in Babylon by baking pitch, fat and hair and having the beast consume it and it dies.

Prayer of Manasseh is based on the idolatrous king of Judah repentance in a foreign prison (2 Kings 21:1-18; 2 Chronicles 33:1-17).

Although these books are not inspired of God they do have some value to the Bible study. They help explain the history of the Jews and their social, political settings and customs during the four hundred year period between the testaments. They help with the vocabulary of the New Testament as well as explain the origins of the Jewish sects of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians.

Pseudopigraphal Writings are Not Inspired

Also during the intertestamental period other writings have been claimed to be part of the Old Testament scripture. These are rejected for the same reasons the apocryphal books are excluded from the Old Testament Canon.

The term "pseudepigrapha" literally means "false writings." It includes many books written under a forged name of a Biblical figure. Thus these were authors who desire to use the name of someone well-known. The true authors are unknown. The authors were either Hellenized Jews or Gnostic Christians or some other heretical group. Most were written between the years 250 B.C. to 300 AD.

The pseudepigraphical books do have some value even if they are not inspired by God and thus do not belong in the New Testament. Some contain important historical information, contain contemporary customs of the ancient societies where Jews and Christians lived and worked, insight into how various sects of Jews and Christians interpreted Scripture, assistance in understanding the meaning of various words used in the dead languages of Hebrew and Koine Greek, and help with knowing the beliefs of the Hellenist Jews and Gnostics.

A partial list of pseudepigraphical books associated with the Old Testament stories are...

- 2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch
- 3 (Greek Apocalypse of) Baruch
- 4 Baruch
- 1 (Ethiopic Apocalypse of) Enoch
- 2 (Slavonic Apocalypse of) Enoch
- 3 (Hebrew Apocalypse of) Enoch
- 3 Maccabees
- 4 Maccabees
- 4 Ezra
- Ahiqar
- Apocalypse of Elijah
- Apocalypse of Adam
- Apocalypse of Abraham
- Apocalypse of Zephaniah
- Apocalypse of Daniel
- Apocalypse of Sedrach
- Apocryphon of Ezekiel
- Eldad and Modat
- Greek Apocalypse of Ezra
- Hellenistic Synagogal Prayers
- History of the Rechabites
- History of Joseph
- Jannes and Jambres
- Joseph and Asenath
- Jubilees
- Ladder of Jacob
- Life of Adam and Eve
- Lives of the Prophets
- Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah
- More Psalms of David
- Odes of Solomon
- Prayer of Jacob
- Prayer of Joseph
- Prayer of Manasseh (sometimes in Apocrypha,
- Prayers, Psalms, and Odes:
- Psalms of Solomon
- Pseudo-Philo
- Questions of Ezra
- Revelation of Ezra
- Sibylline Oracles
- Testament of Job
- Testament of Adam
- Testament of Moses
- Testament of Solomon
- Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs
- Testaments of the Three Patriarchs
- The Letter of Aristeas
- The Sentences of the Syriac Menander
- Vision of Ezra

The *Book of Jubilee* covers the same material as the book of Genesis with some additional information. For example, Cain's wife was his sister, Awan. The language of Hebrew is the language of Heaven and spoken by both man and animals in the Garden of Eden.

1 Enoch is accepted as inspired by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. Chapter one and verse nine of this book is quoted in Jude 1:14-15.

The *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* includes the final wishes of Jacob's twelve sons. The twelve chapters include prophecies.

The *Psalms of Solomon* contain eighteen psalms by the wise King. One of them is very similar to Psalm 72.

Another addition to the Psalms is *Psalm 151*. It was written in Hebrew and was a part of the psalter used by the Qumran community. The title given to this psalm in the Septuagint : "This Psalm is ascribed to David and is outside the number. When he slew Goliath in single combat".

The early Christians wrote some pseudepigraphal books. They even pretended to be one of the apostles. These false writings included: The *Third Letter to the Corinthians*, *Correspondence of Paul and Seneca*; *Paul's Letter to the Laodiceans*; The *Preaching of Peter* and *Pseudo-Titus*. There are several additional Acts of the Apostles: *The Acts of John*, *The Acts of Thecla*, *The Acts of Thomas*; and the *Acts of Peter*. In the *Acts of Paul* the apostle is about to be eaten by a lion in Ephesus, but Paul reminds the lion he had baptized him after his confession. So the lion helps him to escape.

Many claim that as many as seventy five books have been removed from the Bible. But there is no evidence that these books were originally part of the inspired books of the Bible. They are not confirmed by fulfilled prophecies. They were not confirmed by the supernatural. They contain no new messianic truth.

Despite how many books are found some want included in the Bible, the word of God is complete. "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). The Scriptures God has given us "as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). The prophetic and apostolic offices of the early church no longer exist, therefore no one is qualified to write additional Scripture. Peter wrote, "for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). There are not more with the gift of prophecy for that which is perfect the complete Word of God has been revealed. "Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away" (1 Cor. 13:8-10). No one is to add to the Word of God. "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Rev. 22:18-19)

Questions:

Matching:

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. ____ Bible | a. whether a book is genuinely inspired by God |
| 2. ____ inspired | b. "the books" |
| 3. ____ Canonicity | c. Paul wrote this letter according to Colossians 4:16 |
| 4. ____ Acts of Solomon | d. a list or collection of books accepted as authentic Scripture |
| 5. ____ 1 Maccabees | e. A book not found in Old Testament but mentioned in 1 Kings 11:41 |
| 6. ____ Epistle to the Laodiceans | f. found in the Catholic Bible |
| 7. ____ Canon | g. "God-breathed" |
| 8. True False The canonicity of a book is determined by men not God. | |

Fill-in-the-Blanks: Criteria for Canonicity

- 8. Book must be written by a _____ of God or one of Jesus' _____.
- 9. Book must claim _____.
- 10. Book had to be truthful and factually accurate. _____ and _____.
- 11. Book had to be book which has been corroborated by either _____ or a prophet or one of Christ's _____.
- 12. Book's original _____ needed to understand they were reading the Word of God.

Matching: Apocryphal Books

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 13. _____ apocrypha | a. rejected the canonicity of the apocryphal books |
| 14. _____ 2 Maccabees | b. Jeremiah's trusted scribe |
| 15. _____ Tobit | c. "hidden" |
| 16. _____ 1 Maccabees | d. catholic church officially accepted the Apocrypha into the Canon |
| 17. _____ Josephus | e. Jewish wife rescued by Daniel |
| 18. _____ Council of Trent | f. leans toward the philosophy of Stoicism |
| 19. _____ Wisdom of Solomon | g. encouraged the use of witchcraft to cast out demons |
| 20. _____ Ecclesiasticus | i. Resembles of the book of Proverbs |
| 21. _____ Baruch | j. states that prophets have ceased to be in Israel |
| 22. _____ Susanna | k. says you can tithe for the sins of the dead |

Matching: Pseudopigraphal writings

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 23. _____ pseudepigrapha | a. quoted in Jude 1:14-15 |
| 24. _____ Book of Jubilee | b. tells of Paul's escape from a lion in Ephesus |
| 25. _____ 1 Enoch | c. final wishes of Jacob's twelve sons |
| 26. _____ Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs | d. pseudepigraphal book of the New Testament era |
| 27. _____ Correspondence of Paul and Seneca | e. false writings |
| 28. _____ Acts of Paul | f. Cain's wife was his sister, Awan |

Fill-in-the-Blanks

29. "...the _____ which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).
30. "...has given to us _____ that pertain to life and godliness..." (2 Peter 1:3).
31. "for _____ never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the _____ (2 Peter 1:21).
32. "For we know in part and we _____ in part. But when that which is _____ has come, then that which is in part will be done away" (1 Cor. 13:10).
33. "If anyone _____ to these things, God will add to him the _____ that are written in this book..." (Rev. 22:18).

You Have Four Compatible Gospels in Your Bible

It is being argued today that there are not just four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) as are found in the New Testament but more than thirty “gospels.” There are so many books being written about these “gospels” and other ancient books, modern bookstores now have a section called “Alternative Christianity.”

- ▶ Papyrus Egerton 2: The Unknown Gospel
- ▶ The Coptic Apocalypse of Peter
- ▶ The Coptic Gospel of Thomas
- ▶ The Epistle of the Apostles
- ▶ The Gospel of the Nazareans
- ▶ The Gospel of the Ebionites
- ▶ The Gospel According to the Hebrews
- ▶ The Gospel According to the Egyptians
- ▶ The Gospel of Barnabas
- ▶ The Gospel of Judas
- ▶ The Gospel of Peter
- ▶ The Gospel of Mary
- ▶ The Gospel of Philip
- ▶ The Gospel of Truth
- ▶ The Gospel of the Savior
- ▶ The Infancy Gospel of Thomas
- ▶ The Proto-Gospel of James
- ▶ The Second Treatise of the Great Seth
- ▶ The Secret Gospel of Mark

Infancy Gospel of Thomas

Before the four gospels of the New Testament were written, the sayings of Jesus had to be passed on orally by the Apostles and prophets and eyewitnesses of Jesus. Those sayings of Jesus that were not recorded in New Testament are referred to as the *agrapha* or “not written”. God Himself prepared by divine inspiration the four Gospels which contain what He wanted to be known about the life of Christ. “There are a total of 89 chapters in the (Gospel) accounts. Four deal with the first 30 years of Christ’s life, and 85 deal with the last three years. Yet 27 of these chapters deal with the last eight days of His life.” (Boyd 379). Since the Gospels only give limited information about the life of Jesus Christ, some have been tempted to supplement the missing information about the early years of Jesus by creating stories to help fill the gaps. The Infancy Gospel of Thomas is one such “gospel.” It tells of Jesus bringing to life clay birds and making them fly, or causing dead salted fish to swim. This “gospel” is filled with other fanciful stories about young Jesus.

After this he again went taught the village, and a child ran and knocked against his shoulder. Jesus

was angered and said to him, 'You shall not go further on your way', and immediately he fell down and died. But some, who saw what took place, said, 'From where was the child born, since his very word is an accomplished deed?' And the parents of the dead child came to Joseph and blamed him and said, "Since you have such a child, you cannot dwell with us in the village; teach him to bless and not to curse, for he is killing our children".

Many of these stories are incompatible with the rest of the Bible and in particular the four Gospels. This work of literature was never accepted by early Christians as an inspired writing.

The Gospel of Barnabas

Some of these later gospels are forgeries such as the Gospel of Barnabas used by Muslims to help support their beliefs about Jesus. Some Muslims evidently believe that the pen is mightier than the sword. Their jihad consist of a written defense of Islam. One of the most often recited Muslim best seller in defense of Islam is called *The Gospel of Barnabas*. "It is called 'Essential reading for any seeker of the truth'" (Haneef 186). It defends the Islamic belief that Jesus did not really die on the cross but Judas was His substitute. Further, Muhammad is mentioned as coming to save the whole world, while Jesus came only to save Jews. It claims that Jesus was not the Son of God but merely a prophet.

Could this book have been written by the first century companion of Paul, Barnabas? "in my opinion scholarly research has proved absolutely that is 'gospel' is a fake. This opinion is also held by a number of Muslim scholars" (Giesler 295, 296). There is no confirmation of the book or mention of it before the 15th century. The oldest copy is in Italian from the 18th century. It contradicts the Bible, teaching that Jesus was born when Pilate was governor and Barnabas was one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus. It claims the year of Jubilee took place every 100 years instead of every fifty years. In AD 1343 a papal declaration had changed it to every 100 years. The Gospel of Barnabas also contradicts the Qur'an by condemning polygamy, claiming that Jesus was not the Messiah, and accepting the consumption of pork. It quotes from the Qur'an of the seventh century, the fourth century Latin Vulgate, and even Dante's Divine Comedy from the 13th century. It is filled with descriptions of mediaeval life from 13th century western Europe. Surely, this "Gospel" is a forgery from the no earlier than the 14th century.

The Gnostic Gospels

In 1945 in upper Egypt two brothers were digging for fertilizer near Nag Hammadi. They unearthed clay jars containing thirteen codices. The fifty-two treatises written on papyrus were written in the Coptic language. They are dated to around 370 AD. These documents are mostly Gnostic texts. They included several of these Gnostic "gospels".

◆ **What is Gnosticism?**

Many Gnostic cults of Christianity had developed after the final books of the New Testament had been written. The Greek word *gnosis* means "knowledge". Gnostics believed they had a special connection with god and an internal spark which allowed them to possess or attain special knowledge. Gnostics believe the Serpent was good in giving Eve the chance to have knowledge from the forbidden tree. This claim to special or secret knowledge which gave them a unique and superior insight in turn resulted in their pride.

The basic tenets of Gnosticism included the dualistic worldview. Their concepts about dualism appears to be greatly influenced by the Greek philosopher Plato. They believe Spirit is good and matter is evil. The creator god is evil for he made matter and all matter is evil. He is both transcendent and unknowable. He is responsible for all the evil and suffering in the world. However, the true god is good and knowable and the giver of secret superior knowledge to those who are worthy. They held that the world and all of creation is evil. This lead to the belief that all flesh is evil. Christ could not have been flesh and thus his body was an illusion. Man is trapped in his evil flesh. Salvation comes to him only in the form of being set free from the material prison the body and the material world which is so evil. Ignorance, not sin, is man's greatest flaw. Hidden or secret meaning could be uncovered from the Bible. Much of their

teaching from the Bible and their scriptures involved a nonliteral or allegorical interpretation. Very few ever attained this special knowledge. These had to assist others in coming to the light of knowledge out of the darkness of ignorance. Without the help of these special enlightened teachers the secrets to salvation could never be uncovered from the cryptic sayings of Jesus and others. This teaching was appealing to those who sought knowledge and had rejected the true Gospel. It also resulted in the Gnostics becoming either ascetic (that is, practicing self-denial of their fleshing desires to an extreme) or going to the other extreme of hedonism (that is, giving into to the sinful indulgences and desires of the flesh).

Although the Bible does not directly deal with Gnosticism it does warn of many of the doctrines which became associated with this movement, such as, forbidding to marry (1 Tim. 4:1-3); Hymenaeus and Philetus denying a future bodily resurrection (2 Tim. 2:17-18); strange teachings by Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:3,4; 6-7,20); Diotrefes rejection of apostolic authority (3 John 9); the denial of Jesus' having "come in the flesh" (1 John 4:1-3); the doctrine of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6,15), etc. The early Christian writers attacked Gnostics with the same fervor as did the New Testament writers.

◆ **Gospel of Thomas**

One of the best known Gnostic gospels is that of the *Gospel of Thomas*. It was found among the documents discovered at Nag Hammadi. The *Jesus Seminar* promotes the Gospel of Thomas as being the fifth gospel. Some go so far as to claim it to be necessary to understanding and coming to know what the true Jesus was really like. The book is a pseudonym of the Apostle Thomas. No one, not even the Gnostics, held the view that Thomas was the actual author.

The *Gospel of Thomas* is not like the four Gospels of the New Testament in that it is not a narrative of the life of Christ but a collection of his sayings. It consist of 114 logia or sayings of Jesus. Many of these sayings are cryptic in nature and teach things in direct contradiction to the New Testament Gospels. For example one say reads, "the disciples said to Jesus: 'We know you will go away from us. Who is it who shall be great over us?' Jesus said to them: 'Wherever you have come, you will go to James the Just for whose sake heaven and hearth came into being'" (logion 12) Jesus could never have said this during His lifetime because James, His brother, was an unbeliever (John 7:35). It was only after the resurrection the James believed (1 Cor. 15:7). Another saying is pantheistic, that is, god is all things and in all things. The Gospel of Thomas claims Jesus said, "I am the light that is over all things. I am all; from me all came forth, and to me all attained. Split a piece of wood; I am there. Lift up a stone, and you will find me there" (logion 77). In keeping with Gnostic beliefs they hold that Jesus taught the body was evil and a curse to the spirit. "Jesus said, 'Wretched is the body that is dependent upon a body, and wretched is the soul that is dependent on these two'" (Logion 87). "Jesus said, 'Woe to the flesh that depends on the soul; woe to the soul that depends on the flesh'" (logion 112). This Gnostic gospel does explain their special means of salvation. "Jesus said, 'I disclose my mysteries to those who are worthy of my mysteries'" (logion 62). But, how does one become worthy? "Jesus said, 'let us who seeks, not cease seeking until he finds and when he finds, he will be troubled, and when he has been troubled, he will marvel and he will reign over all' (lgoion 2). The Gospel of Thomas claims secret knowledge in not from an external, but from an internal source. "Show us the place where you are" Jesus replies, "there is light within a man a light and he lights up the whole world. If he does not shine, he is darkness" (legion 24). And thus, salvation is from within a man. "Jesus said, 'if you bring forth the within you, that which you have a will saved you'" (logion 70a).

This Gnostic gospel shows a low view of women. "Simon Peter said to them: 'Let Mary go out form among us, because women are not worthy of the Life.' Jesus said: 'See, I shall lead her, so that I will make her male, in order that she too may become a living spirit, resembling you males. For every woman who makes herself male will enter the Kingdom of Heaven'" (logion 114). This gospel rejects the idea of a future kingdom. "When will the rest for the dead come about, and when will the new world come?" the reply of Jesus is, "What you expect has come, you don't know it" (logion 51).

The Gospel of Thomas does not have anything in it related to the death and resurrection of Christ. There are however several parables with four being unique. All in all, the Gospels are not a complimentary addition to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

◆ **The Gospel of Judas**

On April 9, 2006 the *National Geographic Society* sponsored a Television special on the *Gospel of Judas*. For the first time in many centuries scholars were able to understand the content of this long lost

piece of Gnostic literature. The *Gospel of Judas* had been known to exist from the writings of early Christians. Around 180 AD Irenaeus wrote, "they declare that Judas the traitor was thoroughly acquainted with these things, and that he alone, knowing the truth as no others did, accomplished the mystery of the betrayal; by him all things, both earthly and heavenly, were thus thrown into confusion. They produce a fictitious history of this kind, which they style the Gospel of Judas" (Against Heresies 1.31.1).

The *Gospel of Judas* had been discovered in 1978 in a cave in Egypt. It was written in Coptic and experts have dated it to around the fourth century AD. This gospel begins by stating: "The secret account of the revelation that Jesus spoke in conversation with Judas Iscariot." Bart D. Ehrman gives a synopsis of the ancient text.

The Gospel of Judas presents a different view, insisting that Judas was the only one of the disciples who understood his Lord. Jesus came not from the creator god but from the "realm of Barbelo." So, too, did some of us. Some of us are trapped here in the prisons of our bodies, but once we learn the truth that Jesus delivered to his one faithful disciples, Judas, we will be able to escape to return to our heavenly home. Judas is the one who leads the way. He is the "thirteenth," because he stands outside the number of Jesus' twelve disciples, who never did grasp his teachings and never did realize that their devotion to the creator god is misplaced. Only Judas has a glimpse of the truth. And so to him alone did Jesus reveal all that needs to be known. In return, Judas performed for him the greatest service imaginable. His betrayal was not the act of a traitor to the cause. It was a kind deed performed for the sake of his Lord. He turned Jesus over to the authorities so that Jesus could be killed and escape and confines of his body. In so doing, Judas is the greatest of all the apostles. In the memorable words of Jesus, "you will exceed them all. For you will sacrifice the man who clothes me. (Gospel of Judas 180)

This Gnostic gospel presents Judas as a hero instead of a villain. He is heroic in that Jesus being trapped in the evil flesh is released from the material shell and is saved by Judas. Therefore, he considered the number one apostle of Christ. However, it was prophesied that one would betray Jesus (Psalm 41:9). Judas fulfilled that prophecy (Matt. 26:23). He is called the "*son of perdition*" (John 17:12). Satan had entered into him (Luke 22:3). Jesus said, "*the Son of Man indeed does just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born*" (Matt. 26:24). Jesus' crucifixion was a wicked act (Acts 1:18a; 2:23). Judas hanged himself (Matt. 27:3-5). Judas "*turned aside to go to his own place*" a euphemism from his receiving the punishment of the unjust in the afterlife (Acts 1:25). The details about Judas show him to be anything but a hero but verify God's condemnation upon him.

Why Just Four Gospels in the New Testament?

Some believe that Constantine threw these other "gospels" out at the Council of Nicaea. This is based on the false presumption that these Gospels were ever included as part of the New Testament in the first place. Constantine and the council did not create the New Testament canon. They only recognized that it only contained four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Are the Gnostic gospel even "gospels". The English word "gospel" is from the Greek word *euangelion*, meaning "good news". Mark L. Strauss explains well the general meaning of the term "gospel" as used in the New Testament. "The gospel is the message of the salvation accomplished through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In this sense there is only one gospel, one message of God's salvation that is now available to all people everywhere" (Hays 486). The early Christians began to associate the term "gospel" with the four narratives of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

The Gospels are narrative. While the others are collections of sayings attributed to Jesus. They tell no story. The Gnostic gospels are much more abstract and philosophical. In fact, there is no reason to include them in the same literary genre as the four Gospels.

God in His providence has preserved these four Gospels to be read through the centuries. Not only was the *Gospel of Judas* missing from nearly two millennium some forty-two pages are missing. These false gospels were written much later than other material. The late date of the Gnostic documents could

also be evidence that the movement simply did not yet exist in the apostolic age. Therefore, they could never be placed on a par with that of apostolic authority or inspiration.

The Gnostic gospels are forgeries designed to promote their false doctrines.

Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are different yet complement each other. The four gospels are not histories or biographies of the life of Christ. They are portraits of his life. Matthew sees him as the King of the Jews the Messiah of promise. Mark shows him to be the suffering servant. While Luke depicted the humanity of Jesus as the Son of Man. Finally, John's Gospel manifest for us the divine side of the Son of God. Matthew to the Jews. His Gospel by far has the closest affiliation with the Old Testament quoting directing from it 53 times and alluding to it some 76 times. This would have appealed to the Jews who were knowledgeable of Messianic prophecies. Mark wrote to the Romans. Luke wrote to Theophilous and thus to the Greeks. John penned his Gospel primarily for the benefit of believers in churches everywhere. The World's Bible Handbook sees the content of the Gospels differing in their content: Matthew - the Teachings of Christ, Mark - the Works of Christ, Luke-the Parables of Christ, and John - the Conversations of Christ (Boyd 378).

Matthew as a tax collector. Luke a physician before becoming a missionary with Paul. John had been a fisherman before becoming an apostle. All that was known of Mark was his companionship with Peter. Matthew and John had been eyewitnesses of Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension. It is because of these difference the God may have chosen them to be His penmen for the Gospels.

Keep in mind the writing material was expensive in the first century. Copying had to be done by hand. The writers were dealing with limitations as to material and space. The Holy Spirit purposely directed the authors' selection so that what they included was sufficient for faith.

The Gospel of John helps to sum up the reason why God have given us but four Gospels and the brevity of material they contain. *"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name... And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen"* (John 20:30-31; 21:25).

Those who are following after or listen to others about the "value" of these other "gospels", need to heed the warning of the apostle Paul, *"I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed"* (Galatians 1:6-9)

Questions:

Matching:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. ____agrapha | a. Number of chapters in the Gospels which deal with the last eight days of Jesus life |
| 2. ____ 27 chapters | b. contains a story about a child struck dead by young Jesus for bumping into him |
| 3. ____ 4 chapters | c. location when Gnostic text were found in Egypt |
| 4. ____ Infancy Gospel of Thomas | d. saying of or about Christ not written down by the Apostles and prophets |
| 5. ____ The Gospel of Barnabas | e. meaning knowledge |
| 6. ____ Nag Hammadi | f. all matter is evil while the spirit is good |
| 7. ____ gnosis | g. practicing self-denial of fleshing desires to an |

8. ____ dualistic worldview
9. ____ ascetic
10. ____ Gospel of Thomas
- h. extreme
Number of chapters in the Gospels dealing with the first thirty years of Jesus life.
- i. popular Gnostic gospel containing 114 sayings of Jesus
- j. Tells of Judas being crucified in Jesus' place

Give three pieces of evidence why The Gospel of Barnabas is a fake.

11. _____
12. _____
13. _____

Fill in the Number of the Saying (or logion) from the Gospel of Thomas that fits the statement.

14. Logion ____ Jesus calls upon his disciples to imitate the faith of James the Just
15. Logion ____ Pantheistic claim that God is in everything and everything is god.
16. Logion ____ Teaches the body is evil.
17. Logion ____ Only those who are worthy can find the knowledge that leads to salvation
18. Logion ____ Claims secret knowledge comes from within a man
19. Logion ____ Views women as not worthy of Life
20. Logion ____ Rejected the idea of Christ's future kingdom
21. Logion ____ About the death and resurrection of Christ
22. True False The Gospel of Judas was known by the early Christian writer Irenaeus who rejected it.
23. True False The Gospel of Judas represent Judas as a hero for killing Christ.
24. True False The Bible prophesied that Judas would be the thirteenth apostle.
25. True False The Bible calls Judas the "son of perdition" who betrayed Jesus and then killed himself.
26. True False Constantine formed the New Testament canon at the Council of Nicaea.
27. True False The Gnostic gospels are narrative in literary style.
28. True False The Gnostic gospel were written long after the four Gospels of the New Testament.
29. Fill in the Blanks:

Gospel	Portrait of Christ	Written to	Content	Occupation
Matthew			Teachings of Christ	Tax Collector
Mark	Suffering Servant	Romans	Works of Christ	
Luke	Son of Man			Physician
John			Conversations of Christ	

30. "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are _____ written in this book; but these are written that you may _____ that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have _____ in His name (John 20:30-31).

31. ... And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were _____ one by one, I suppose that even the _____ itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen” (John 21:25).
32. if anyone preaches any other _____ to you than what you have received, let him be _____” (Galatians 1:6-9).

Lesson 8: *Sunday Morning, February 25, 2018*

You Have Guidelines For Choosing The Right Church in Your Bible

Just suppose you lived during the time of Noah as he was preparing an ark. Next imagine several other people also making arks. The worldwide flood is imminent. You want to be saved from drowning. Which ark to you choose? The one which has the most people, the prettiest, the one all your family and friends like, etc. These are not reliable guidelines for choosing an ark which will survive the deluge. The best guidelines would be to choose an ark built according to God's specifications. These are found recorded by Moses in Genesis chapters six and seven. They call for one door, specific dimensions, one window, gopher wood, animals entering the ark two by two being male and female, etc. However, Noah's neighbors have built arks which are different. One of them has ended two doors, so one can be for an exit plan. Another ark has added dozens of windows for ventilation. Still a different ark design has pine instead of gopher wood. Down the street a little further is an ark with an extra twenty cubits in length for family entertainment center with a basketball court. Finally, you can choose a more progressive think re-designer of God's plan for the ark which has two male turtles and two female hamsters. Safest and smartest choice would be to God with Noah's ark. He built according to God's blueprint. *“Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did”* (Genesis 6:22).

What about choosing a church? Does God have a blueprint on how it was to be designed? Does it really make a difference what church you attend or belong to?

Is One Church as Good as Another?

Remember back in 1978 when a preacher from the United States established the People's Temple in South America. Many of his congregation were from the states as well. One day 913 members of this church lined up a drunk cyanide laced, purple Flavor-Aid out of a vat. This was a well rehearsed suicide plan called "White Night." It started when California congressman, Leo Ryan and four others, were gunned down after his visit to Jonestown, Guyana. Jones cried, "hurry, my children. Hurry....Lay down your life with dignity". Moments before committing suicide a cult member exclaimed, "we'll all fall tonight, but he'll raise us tomorrow." They are all still dead.

How about the Branch Davidians who were burned to death in David Koresh's church in Waco, Texas? He and seventy-nine members of his group perished in a fire that consumed the religious compound.

Then there is the Heaven's Gate group who in March of 1997 committed mass suicide so they could reach the extraterrestrial ship following the Hale-Bopp comet. Thirty-nine members perished in this event.

Quite a few men and women say they believe *"one church is as good as another"*. However, practically everyone I've met is repulsed by at least one or two practices being performed in the name of

religion. Most of us would not have agreed that being a member of the People's Temple, Branch Davidians or Heaven's Gate were as good and every other church. Others will strongly disapprove of the Jehovah's Witnesses view of Christ. Some church shoppers would have nothing to do with the Christian Scientists, Mormons, or Pentecostal groups and their "miracles". Still others reject the formality of Episcopalians and Presbyterians, the traditions of Catholicism, etc. The mere fact that over 700 churches (all claiming allegiance to Jesus Christ) exist in America proves that nearly everyone dislikes something about some church. Thus, no one really believes one is as good as another. Being a member of the wrong church can cost you your life. Furthermore, being a member of the wrong church can cost you more than your life it can cost you your soul.

Jesus Did Not Believe this Nor Does the Bible Teach: "One Church is as Good as Another"

When Jesus walked upon this earth He had to deal with a variety of different religious "denominations" and doctrines. There were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Samaritans and the Essenes. Each of these religious groups had their own religious doctrines and practices. Did Jesus believe that it made a difference which of these groups his disciples belonged to?

Oddly enough many Christian follow the Hindu belief that "there are many roads or paths (yogas) that lead to heaven." If there is no standard or spiritual map to determine which roads lead to heaven than naturally all roads do lead to heaven. Yet consider the road of Buddhism, Shintoism, and atheism. Do these roads equally lead to heaven? Jesus never taught nor believed that all roads lead to heaven. He said, *"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it"* (Matt. 7:13,14).

It will be surprising to a lot of people that the Bible never teaches that one church is as good as another. As a matter of fact it teaches just the opposite. One church is not as good as another. The seven churches of Asia were not as equally good. The church at Ephesus had left her *"first love"* (Rev. 2:4). Pergamos had members who held to *"the doctrine of the Nicolaitans"*, which the Lord said, *"I hate"* (2:15). Thyatira permitted *"that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols."* Sardis was condemned as being dead (3:1). Because of lukewarmness Jesus threatened to remove Laodicea's candlestick (3:15-17). However, please note that not a word was expressed against the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia (2:8-11; 3:7-13). Thus, the New Testament teaches that one church of Christ is not as good as another. Moreover then, how could a man-made church be as good as a church like Smyrna or Philadelphia?

False Guidelines

In looking for a church many will use shallow and unscriptural guidelines to choose a church. Most of these suit one's personal preferences and have nothing to do with what the Bible says about the church. Some will attend or join a church simply because:

- ✓ it's **near**
- ✓ it has an **impressive building**
- ✓ **friends and relatives** attend there.
- ✓ it has a **large membership**
- ✓ the type of **music**
- ✓ they have **entertainment**
- ✓ they like **coffee and donuts** which are provided

What Guidelines Does God Recommend in Choosing a Church?

◆ Respect for God's Word

When asked why a certain person would never attend or be a member of a homosexual church or a polygamy practicing church they will claim: "The practice of this church is contrary to the Word of God".

This remark presupposes that there is a standard by which a given church must be measured and has correctly identified it as the Word of God. If you find so much as one church to which you object on some Biblical basis, you have given up the belief that "one church is as good as another".

A New Testament church uses the New Testament as his only source of authority. A New Testament Christian therefore derives his teachings from the New Testament and insists that Scripture alone is the all-sufficient authority for everything he says and does in religion. A New Testament church will not add to or take away from God's Word (Rev. 22:18,19). He will not go beyond what is written (1 Cor. 4:6). He abides in the doctrine (teachings) of Christ (2 Jn. 9). Whenever he speaks, he speaks as the words of God (1 Pet. 4:11). All that he does is done by the authority found in the name of Christ (Col. 3:17). He can give you book, chapter, and verse for everything he practices and teachings. When choosing a church select a one manifesting true respect the authority of the Bible (Matt. 28:18; John 12:48).

◆ **Unity of Belief**

A New Testament Christian practices the form of unity described in the New Testament. Paul told the church at Ephesus that they needed to endeavor "*to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*" (Eph. 4:3). He went on to list the seven ones of unity in verses four through six:

1. One Body
2. One Spirit
3. One Hope
4. One Lord
5. One Faith
6. One Baptism
7. One God

Notice "*there is one body...*" According Ephesians 1:22,23 it is "*..the church, which is His body...*" Therefore, the early Christians did not believe in many churches, but only one. They were to be just as united in one church as they were to be united in One Lord or One God the Father. The end result would require New Testament Christians to practice exclusive non-denominational unity.

Paul had taught the Christians of Corinth to have a strict unity of beliefs. "*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, 'I am of Paul,' or 'I am of Apollos,' or 'I am of Cephas,' or 'I am of Christ.' Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*" (1 Cor. 1:10-13). He command something similar of the saints in Philippi. "*Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind*" (Phil. 3:16). This would not permit the early Christians found in the first century to disagree or be divided over the teachings of Christ. One would be able to teach that there is no such thing as an eternal Hell while another taught there was such a place (Matt. 25:46). A certain Christian would not be found teaching that baptism is necessary to wash away sin (Acts 22:16) while another proclaims the one is saved at the point of faith and later as a saved believer is baptized. Neither could a Christian express his belief that homosexuals could marry while another Christians has the equally valid belief that marriage was between a man and a woman (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6; Eph. 5:31). The Word of God would be the deciding factor as to what belief was correct and which was wrong. Christians should and can unite over what the Bible teaches. Christians cannot unite over what the Bible does not teach.

Jesus made it clear in His lengthy prayer for the disciples that He desired the same type of unity among them as He enjoyed with His Father. "*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me*" (John 17:20,21). What kind of unity did Jesus Christ, the Son of God have with God the Father? - perfect unity on every subject. Jesus did nothing apart from His Father. He obeyed the Will of God perfectly on earth even to the point of death

on the cross. Three times He prayed to the God, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matt. 26:39).

◆ **Worship in Truth**

Is an "X-rated" church just as good as Christ's church? An Associated Press article out of Dallas said,

"Some churches have hell, fire, and brimstone ...The First Unitarian Church of Richardson has a stripper. Diana King danced for the congregation last Sunday. When she was through, there was nothing left but . . . the congregation's imagination. The tall blonde stripper said she 'would like to do a sermon using the exotic dance, and members of the congregation could join me if they liked.'" The reporter goes on to say that "the church's 200 adult members and their children watched in fascinated silence as Diana removed her clothing and did the same dance she performs nightly at a Dallas night spot". Mr. Bill Nichols, "Pastor" of the suburban Dallas church said, "I have not had one complaint. I feel like exotic dancing is a part of life. It fit very well into our service." Billy Graham said, "Bad religion is a particularly evil thing. Misguided religion is worse than no religion at all" (Houston Post, Dec. 10, 1964).

A New Testament church worships according to the pattern of worship found in the New Testament. According to Jesus the time has come when all are to worship God in Spirit and Truth. He said, "*but the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*" (Jn. 4:23,24). After three thousand became Christians on the day of Pentecost, "*they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers*" (Acts 2:42). New Testament Christians will preach the teachings of the apostles as they had received them from the Lord and were guided by the Holy Spirit. They will not adopted the creeds of men. They will not follow the current trends in culture. New Testament Christians will pray. They will pray to God through the name of Jesus Christ. They will do so according to His will. As New Testament Christians they will observe the Lord's Supper which is referred to here by the phrase "*breaking of bread.*" This they will do on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). A New Testament Christians will follow the New Testament instructions on what and how to partake of this memorial meal. Paul wrote, "*for I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'take eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'* For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes" (1 Cor. 11:24-26). New Testament Christians will all sing together "*speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*" (Eph. 5:19). New Testament Christians will follow Paul's instructions which were given to all the churches of Galatia and the congregation in Corinth. "*Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: on the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may proposer, that there be no collections when I come*" (1 Cor.16:1,2). This is to be done not because they are compelled to give a certain percentage, but they are to "*give as he purposes in his heart, no grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver*" (2 Cor. 9:7). A New Testament Christian will seek to be a true worshiper by worship God in spirit and in truth

◆ **Biblically Organized**

The church of Christ is organized and governmentally structured the way the Bible reveals with Christ as the head, and there being no ecclesiastical hierarchy or organization larger than the local church. The local church is overseen by men of certain qualifications called elders, or bishops, or pastors, who are shepherds of the flock. There are deacons who serve. The rest of the church is composed of the other members, including preachers and teachers. Each congregation is self-governing or autonomous, being tied together by a common salvation and conviction.

◆ **Name**

According to the New Testament the Bride of Christ was called by His name. *“Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you”* (Rom. 16:16). Christ’s Bride is not called Lutheran or Baptist. Martin Luther is not the groom of the church, Christ is the groom and His Bride bears His name. The church is not the bride of John the Baptist. My wife would not like to be called Mrs. John Smith because that does not properly reflect her marriage relationship. Likewise, the Lord’s Bride which He died for should not be known as Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, Nazarene, Mormon, etc.

When the church at Corinth was divided in regard to who they followed, Paul let them know through three rhetorical questions which name they should wear. Paul wrote, *“now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, ‘I am of Paul,’ or ‘I am of Apollos,’ or ‘I am of Cephas,’ or ‘I am of Christ.’ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”* (1 Cor. 1:10-13). The only way by which the Corinthians could wear Paul’s name is if Paul was crucified for them and they were immersed in the name of Paul. Christ was crucified for them (1 Cor. 6:19,20). They were baptized in the name of Christ (Acts 19:5). Christ is not divided nor is his body (1 Cor. 12:25). Therefore, the only name that can be worn is that of Christ. Paul is saying it is wrong to wear another name.

◆ **Plan of Salvation**

A New Testament church will be united on the plan of salvation as it is revealed in the New Testament. Although some denominations are debating the necessity of belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God in order to have salvation, New Testament Christians believe that it is only through faith in Him that one can come to God or be saved. Jesus said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me”* (John 14:6). Jesus clearly stated that all paths or religions do NOT lead to God. Peter preached, *“nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12). Since faith in Christ as God’s Son is required evidence for that belief must be found. *“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Rom. 10:17). Just before He ascended into Heaven Christ command His disciples to go to all the world and preach, *“he who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”* (Mark 16:16). Any church which teaches the wrong conditions of pardon is not as good as the one that teaches the truth. Many pervert the plain teachings of Jesus in Mark 16:16. The Atheist teaches: *He that believeth and is baptized shall not be saved.* Universalist’s doctrine would render it: *Every man shall be saved whether or not he believes and is baptized.* The Calvinist: *He that is predestined to be saved shall believe and be baptized.* Catholicism’s rendition would be: *He that is baptized (infant baptism) shall be saved and later believe.* A Baptist would represent it as: *He that believeth is saved and should be baptized.* Later, just after Peter accused the crowd at the Temple there for the Jewish feast of Pentecost of killing the very Son of God, their pricked conscious caused the to ask the apostles what they could do about this grave sin against God. *“Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...’”* (Acts 2:38). Not only is one to believe and repent it is important that those wishing to be saved are willing to confess their faith in Christ both verbally and publically. Paul wrote to the Romans *“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”* (Rom. 10:9,10). Although some may wish to stop at this point, confession is only *“unto salvation.”* One must be baptized before he can be saved. Saul of Tarsus was told by the Lord to go to Damascus and wait at a certain man’s home and he would be told what he must do to be saved from the sins of persecuting Christians. God sent the preacher, Ananias, who said, *“and now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord”* (Acts 22:16). Peter taught that this baptism is the point at which one is truly saved, *“there is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, “* (1 Peter 3:21). Finally, although salvation is realized at the point of baptism, a New Testament Christian realizes that he still can go back into sin and be lost (2 Pet. 2:19-22). He must *“be faithful until death”* and Jesus promised

"I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10b). Paul was certain of his salvation because he had led a faithful to God. He believed that all Christians could have this same hope. He wrote in his final letter, "for I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

Choose the Church of God's Choice

A common mantra of the err is "Join the church of your Choice." What about the church of God's Choice? Does He not have a say in this matter? After all, He sent His Son to die on the cross for all mankind. Does not the Son of God, Jesus Christ have a say in this matter? He purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). He built one church, *"Upon this rock I will build my church"* (Mat. 16:18). He has but one bride (Eph. 5:23f). He is the one head of the one body (Eph. 1:22,23; 4:4-6; Col. 1:13,18).

The problem of mistaken identity. A brother followed his wife into the auditorium one Sunday. From behind, he mistook another sister for his wife. Only after sitting down beside the sister and putting his arm around her did he realize his mistake. It amused those who watched but embarrassed them. However, a passenger plane being shot down being mistaken for a fighter jet is a tragedy. Worst yet, mis-identifying the church of the New Testament can cost one their soul. The good news is that anyone can easily identify the church of God's Choice by checking to see if the church matches the characteristics of the church you read about in the New Testament.

How Good is Your Church?

Was Jim Jones' church of Jonestown in South America where over 913 people were forced to drink cyanide laced kool-aid out of an old bath tub as good as the church where you can drink the water of life which Christ gives? (Cf. John 4 & 6). Is a Gay Synagogue or People's Church Community of the Love of Christ as good as one teaching one man for one woman? The church of the New Testament never advocated homosexuality! Was David Koresh's church with its sexual immorality, murdering, and mass suicide as good as the church which teaches moral purity and is pro-life? Was the Heaven's Gate cult just as good as the one whose Headquarters is in Heaven, accessed by those who enter the Narrow Gate. Is a church which advocates the right of a woman and her doctor to terminate an unwanted unborn baby as good as a church which believes in the sanctity of life? Is a man made church or denomination purchased by the mere sweat and money of mere men as good as the church purchased with the blood of Christ (Ac. 20:28)? Is the any other man just as valuable as the blood of Christ? Is a church founded by a sinful man as good as a church founded by Christ? Is a church built by mere mortals as good as the church Christ built (Matt. 16:18)?

Questions:

1. What became of those who did not get on Noah's ark?
2. Add up the total of those in died in People's Temple, Branch Davidians, and Heaven's Gate churches.
3. Demonstrate from the Bible that Jesus did not believe one church is as good as another?

4. Where the seven churches of Asia in Revelation chapters two and three equally "good" in the eyes of Christ? Explain.
5. List some other false guidelines people use in choosing a church and be ready to explain why these are poor guidelines to use.
6. What is the only creed or source of authority for the New Testament church?
7. In what ways do New Testament Christians manifest their unity?
8. What are the acts of worship for the New Testament church? How do denominations pervert these acts of worship?
9. What three reasons did Paul give for rejecting denominational names at Corinth? Which group was using the correct name?
10. Give some illustrations of how some denominations differ for the New Testament plan of salvation.
11. Why is it more logical to let God choose the church for us?

Application & Discussion:

1. What would be necessary for one to honestly or consistently believe that "one church is as good as another" and that everyone should just "join the church of their choice"?

2. How would you go about answering someone who argued that "one church is as good as another" or "just join the church of your choice"?

Lesson 9: *Sunday Morning, March 4, 2018*

You Have Instruction on How to Communicate with Life Beyond this World in Your Bible

Most people have are excited about the possibilities of communicating with life from beyond our planet. Some hope that they are more advanced and could tell us how to solve mankind's greatest problems, like global warming or provide answers to questions concerning the origin of life or what happens after death. Billions of tax dollars have been spent on a vast array of satellites in a program called SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence). After decades of monitoring every corner of space, they have not found and transmissions from civilizations on distant planets. This has led some scientist into considering that there is no intelligent life out there in the universe. Mankind is alone.

This is not true. You can communicate with intelligent extraterrestrial life. Everyone one can. It does not cost billions. What is it this means of communication: Prayer. It is the ability of man to communicate with the Creator.

What are the requirements for utilizing this means of communication?

◆ **Prayer Must be Address to God**

In His Sermon on the Mount Jesus told His disciples, *"but you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. ..In this manner, therefore, pray 'Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name'"* (Matt. 6:6,9).

Some prayers do not reach God because they are falsely addressed. Some pray to saints, to Mary, to be heard of men. Still others pray about of mere duty, need, etc. The Christian Scientist cannot really pray. They only meditate. Mrs. Eddy denied the existence of a personal God and she denied the atoning efficacy of the blood.

What makes it possible for our prayers to come into the presence of God? It is the blood of Christ. (Heb. 10:19). Christ is the only way to God (John 14:6).

Our ultimate goal prayer is to reach God. Unless prayer reaches the ear of God man has not communicated with anyone. It is just as futile as to pray to a stone God (Rom. 1:21 -23).

◆ **Prayer Must Be in the Name of Christ**

Jesus command His disciples to pray in His name. *"And whatever you ask in My name, that I will*

do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son” (Jn. 14:13). “And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:23-24).

Before investigating what it means to pray in the name of Jesus, first a look at what it does not mean. It is not part of a ritual or ceremony. We are not praying in the name of someone who is absent. It is not a prayer formula. Mere repetition of a phrase is not what He has in mind. It is not to drive away the devil.

According to Thayer the use of the term “name” in this phrase means “by a usage chiefly Hebraistic the name is used for everything which the name covers...i.e. for one's rank, authority, interests, pleasures, commands, excellences, deeds, etc...i.e. relying or resting on the name of Christ, rooted (so to speak) in His name; mindful of Christ... Col. 3:17 ...Eph. 5:20...to ask a thing, as prompted by the mind of Christ and reliance on the bond which unites us to him...” Vine informs us that “name” stands “for all that a name implies, of authority, character, rank, majesty, power, excellence, etc., of everything that the name covers... in recognition of authority” (Vine 91). Praying in Jesus name means in His or by His authority.

Many things in Christianity are to be done in Christ's name, such as, be baptized (Acts 2:38); giving a cup of cold water (Matt. 25); salvation (Acts 4:10-12); and everything one does in word or in deed (Col. 3:17).

Just who can pray in the name of Jesus? Those in conformity to His will (Jn. 14:23;24; Lk. 6:46; Col. 3:17). Those who are united with Christ. Those who are entrusted with His name. No one gives use of their name to anyone without first being assured that his honor and interests are safe with that person. Use of one's name is always a token of great confidence and union. Those who so all in His name can ask all in His' name (Col. 3:17; Jn. 14:13; 1 Jn. 3:22). Those who are saved by his name and wear his name (Acts 4:10-12; Gal. 3:27). Those who believe on, love, and are obedient (1 Jn. 3:22; Gal. 5:6).

There are many reasons for praying in name of Christ. 1) . Because He is the one mediator between God and men. “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1Tim. 2:5). Before He died, arose, and ascended no one could pray in His name. Before that night Jesus had taught them to pray without use of His name (Mt. 6:9-13). From His death on they were instructed to pray in His name (Jn. 16:24). “Hitherto” means “up to this time, as yet, up to now.” The phrase “In my name” equals “by my authority.” Jesus told them to “ask in my name” because “I go to my Father” (Jn. 14:12,13). Before He had authority, He had to ascend first (Jn. 20:16,17). He had to remove the Old Testament system of approaching God (Eph. 2:14-16; Col. 2:14-16). He could not fill the high priestly office while on earth (Heb. 8:4; 4:14-16). 2) Because of the greatness of his name. His “name...is above every name.” As the names of God represent some part of the glory of God. Christ's name represents everything He has done and can do. 3) Because it gives glory to God (Jn. 14:13; 1 Pet. 4:4,6). 4) Because he is our high priest (Heb. 4:14-16). 5) Because He is our only access (Heb. 2:18). 6) Because He is our intercessor and advocate (1 Jn. 1:1;2). 7) Because we are commanded to give thanks to God by him (Col. 3:17). 8) Because we have acceptance only through Him. 9) Because His name gives us authority to make request of Heaven (1 Jn. 3:15). We have no claims to God; God owes us nothing; but we ask God for things on the ground of what Christ has claimed for us in heaven. Not one of us deserves anything from God. If we got what we deserved, every last one of us would spend eternity in hell. We can ask anything because of our relationship to Christ and His relationship to heaven.

Some have sought to please the Muslims, Jews, Hindus, etc. by removing the name of Jesus from their prayers. The consequences of not praying in the name of Christ are many. No mediator to access the throne of God. No high priest and thus no finding of grace and mercy in time of need. No blessings. No giving of thanks. God is not going to ignore the meditorial position of Christ just to hear a prayer designed not to offend unbelieving mere men. If Christ's name is not used, it is a denial of Christ and Christ died in vain.

◆ **Prayer Must Be According to God's Will**

John wrote “whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that” (James 4:14-15). This is how Christ prayed “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You wills” (Mt. 26:39).

It is possible to pray out of accord with God's Will. Sinners cannot pray while out of His will (Jn. 9:31; 1 Pet. 3:12). One cannot pray according to God's Will and be ignorant of His will. One cannot pray according to God's Will and ask amiss. *"You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures"* (James 4:3).

Prayer is an establishing of harmony between two wills - God's and man's. "The object of prayer is not to bend God's Will to ours, but to raise ours to God's". We will not desire for God to do that which is contrary to His set will. Prayer can ask God to change His will in our life and the lives of others by prayer, for example, Moses, David, Hezekiah. All prayer is to be: *"if the Lord wills"* (Jn. 4:15). We need to pray that His will be accomplished on earth (Mt. 6:10).

◆ **Prayer Must be With a Forgiving Spirit**

Again, during His Sermon on the Mount Jesus gave an example on how disciples should pray. *"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.... but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"* (Mt. 6:12,15). Jesus gave the Parable of the Unjust Servant (Mt. 18:21-35) to show the need for man to forgive others if God was to forgive them. Our access to God is destroyed by not forgiving one another. Paul wrote, *"and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you"* (Eph. 4:32). How would it be if God forgave us the same way we forgave others.

◆ **Prayer Must Be Coupled with Godly Living**

The promise of prayer is conditioned upon our godliness in life. True, no one receives God's answer to his prayer on the basis of his own merits (Lk. 17:10). The "if" in John 15:7 shows that it is conditioned on abiding in Him: "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you." We need to make sure that we are the 'we's' the Bible is talking about in 1 Jn. 3:22: *"And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight."* Communicating with God in prayer is conditioned upon our willingness to listen to God. *"One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination"* (Pr. 28:9). Turn a deaf ear to God and he will turn a deaf ear to you. It is conditioned upon us drawing near to God. *"Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God"* (James 4:4). We must listen to God in public in order to talk to Him in private. We need to have God's presence in our everyday life, to have His presence in the closet. To pray right is to live right.

Prayer is not a substitute for the Christian's responsibility to serve God or vice versa. As the monks devoted themselves to formalistic pieties; we pray without a holy life or try to have a holy life without prayer. We attempt to please God by substituting a "non-sinful" life or religious activity for a prayer life and godly living. Some substitute lip service for prayer (Mt. 15:9).

Righteousness and wickedness are opposites in prayer (1Pet. 3:12). The sinner's prayer is never acceptable. The Psalmist wrote, *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear"* (Ps. 66:18; cf. John 9:31). Homer Hailey said, "There are two things you do not find on The same body, a praying knee and a dancing foot."

Prayer, character, and conduct are interdependent. Conduct, is what we do; character is what we are. Conduct is outward; character is inward. Conduct is the product of character. Godly conduct promotes prayer and prayer promotes godly conduct. Prayer closest are neglected, because too many are working overtime and have not time for God.

Remember, the righteous man's prayer is effective. *"Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much"* (James 5:16). To place the power of prayer in the hands of an unbeliever would be like placing the car in the hands of a toddler.

◆ **Prayer Must Be With Faith**

Jesus said, "therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them" (Mk. 11:24). It is faith in God hearing our prayers. First, one must have faith in the reality of God. If there is not God there is not sense in praying to no one. However, there are not atheist in foxholes or on planes about to go down. Second, faith that there is a God who is able and willing to hear prayer. *"And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the*

petitions that we have asked of Him" (1 Jn. 5:15). Confidence we can draw near to Him (James 4:8). Belief that His eyes and ears are open to the righteous' prayers (1 Pet. 3:12). Third, one must trust in God willingness to answer prayer. God cannot lie and therefore He can be trusted to keep His promises to answer prayer.

Faith makes for acceptable prayer. Unbelief causes us to depart from God (Heb. 3:12). Without faith that he rewards those who diligently seek Him, we cannot please Him (Heb. 11:6). Prayer for wisdom must not be with doubting. *"But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind"* (James 1:4-6). Jonah's prayer in the belly of the great fish was acceptable because of his faith that the God who put him there could get him out again. Abraham's prayer of intercession for the city of Sodom was acceptable because of his faith (Gen. 19:21).

Faith is the opposite of worry. Prayer is an acknowledgment of faith; worry is a denial of faith. Prayer is putting one's hand in God's and trusting in His loving guidance; worry is withdrawing one's hand and denying God's power to lead. Prayer leads through the door of faith into the presence of God; worry leads, through the door of anxiety into the darkness' of loneliness and discouragement. If prayer does not cancel worry, worry will cancel prayer.

Faith makes prayer powerful. Jesus demonstrated this with the cursing of the fig tree and the removal of mountains. The leper told *"Lord, if you are willing, You can make me clean."* In contrast, Peter failed to walk on the water because he failed to have the faith.

If one lacks faith he cannot effectively pray. If he needs greater faith he should pray. *"The apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith'"* (Lk. 17:5). As Christ prayed for Peter's faith (Lk. 22:31). Faith grows by the word of God (Rom.10:17). Therefore, also pray, for wisdom in studying it.

Have you communicated with intelligent life from beyond this world lately?

Questions:

1. How do some falsely address their prayers?
2. What does praying in "Jesus' name" not mean?
3. What other things are to be done in Jesus' name?
4. Just who can pray in the name of Jesus?
5. List several reasons for praying in the name of Christ.

6. What are the consequences of not mentioning Jesus in prayer?

7. What does it mean to pray according to God's Will?

8. What is the consequence of not forgiving others?

9. Why is godly living necessary for a healthy prayer life?

10. What three things must one have faith for prayer?

Application & Discussion:

1. What should a Christian do if asked to offer up a public prayer but to leave out the name of Jesus?

2. What things can someone do to help increase their faith in prayer?

You Have a Simple Plan to Become Wealthy in Your Bible

How Do You Find Great Wealth?

Paul is making a direct contrast with the motive of the false teachers in verse five. In fact, he agrees with them in part. Godliness is the means of great gain. However, Paul gives a formula for getting rich that defies not only their view of gain but our modern concept of how to become wealthy. *“Now godliness with contentment is great gain”* (1 Tim. 6:6). Here is Paul’s simple formula: Godliness + Contentment = Great Gain.

➤ **Great Wealth is Found in Godliness**

Godliness refers to being like God. Faithful teaching accords without godliness (6:3). The exercise of godliness is profitable for all things now and eternal (4:8). God knows how to deliver the godly from temptations (2 Pet. 2:9). Godliness will make us fruitful (2 Pet. 1:5). Godliness results from loving God never from loving money.

➤ **Great Wealth is Found in Contentment**

Contentment “is an inward self-sufficiency, as opposed to the lack or the desire of outward things” (Vincent 4.275). This contentment comes from being godly and has as its ultimate source God Himself. *“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”* (Phil. 4:11-13). A wealthy man thinks has all he needs and has want of nothing. A content person has all they need and has want of nothing.

Many of millionaire never knew the contentment of a godly man. The first billionaire in the world, John D. Rockefeller said, “The poorest man I know is the man who has nothing but money.” It is the rich who visit psychiatrists and/or commit suicide more often than the poor. Money can buy a lot of things in this world. Two things necessary to have a great wealth, godliness and contentment cannot be bought a any price. True happiness and riches are found within the rich relationship a believer has with God in his heart, not the amount of money he has in his bank account.

➤ **Great Wealth is Not Found in Temporal Goods**

“For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (1 Tim. 6:7). This is one of the most well attested axioms in the Bible. Job said, *“Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord”* (Job 1:21). Solomon wrote, *“As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return, to go as he*

came; and he shall take nothing from his labor which he may carry away in his hand" (Eccl. 5:15). "Do not be afraid when one becomes rich, when the glory of his house is increased; for when he dies he shall carry nothing away; his glory shall not descend after him" (Ps. 49:16-17). An old Spanish proverb reminds us that there are no pockets found on a burial shroud. You can amass material goods on this earth, but you cannot take them with you. Have you ever seen a hearse pulling a u-haul?

In fact, spending one's life to make more and more money to buy mounds and mounds of material goods does not make a lot of sense. After all, all of it one day will either rust, decay be stolen or inherited by another (Matt. 6:19,20) or burned up (2 Pet. 3:10,12). No matter how much you have you can never buy back your lost soul (Mk. 8:36). Truly, "one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15).

➡ **Great Wealth Can Be Found in Food and Covering**

Jesus had food and covering. He never showed signs of discontent. The bare necessities of life are all that is needed for one to be rich in this life. "And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (1Tim. 6:8). A rich miser cannot even enjoy his own food. In fact, some have been known to starve to death while sleeping on a mattress loaded with money. A wealthy man like John D. Rockefeller could not even eat a steak because his pursuit for riches had destroyed his stomach with ulcers. Those who cannot be content most likely will never learn to be content. They will desire more and more.

What Are the Pitfalls of Worldly Wealth?

x Worldly Wealth is Destructive

Those who make it their life's goal to be rich set themselves up for a fall. "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition" (1 Tim. 6:9). Like a baited trap Satan waits for those who lust for more and more go for the temptation. Those who want to be rich continue to fall and fall for one scheme after another. Enough is never enough. "He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase. This also is vanity" (Eccl. 5:10). They will borrow many things they do not need. In the end they drown. It is interesting that Paul uses a metaphor here of a man drowning in his attempt to be wealthy. It is said that when a great ocean liner sank to the depths of the sea a richman went back for his money belt weighed down with gold. His efforts to swim to a lifeboat were in vain as he slipped beneath the waves and drowned. Many never have any riches or gold, but they drown in the red ink of credit card debit.

The Bible is replete with examples of those trapped by their own greed. Achan brought destruction upon himself because he took contraband at the destruction of Jericho. Judas hung himself having betrayed the Lord for thirty pieces of silver. Ananias and Saphirra both dropped dead at Peter's feet because of their dishonesty over money. The list goes on and on.

x Worldly Wealth Costs Too Much

"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10). Notice it is not money that is the root of all kinds of evil, but the love of money. It literally means "affection for silver." No matter how much you have no amount of money is worth losing your soul. Gold cannot replace God. Fortune cannot replace faith. The riches of the world cannot compare with the riches of Heaven. Though money itself is not evil, but a gift from God; money tempts us into thinking it is the giver of all good things instead of God. Some Christians think they can love both God and material goods. Jesus warned, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt 6:24).

Riches do not equal happiness. Jay Gould is rumored to have been worth \$100 million at the time of his death. He died saying, "I'm the most miserable man in the world." Money die disillusioned by what money seems to promise and what it actually gives in return. All that is spent or lost to get wealth, time, marriage, children, health, the soul is too great compared to what little is received in return.

How Must a Christian Use His Wealth?

- **Must Trust in God**

Jesus told a parable about a rich farmer who trusted in his bumper crop. *“And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry. But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God”* (Luke 12:19-21). Riches cannot save your soul. Furthermore, with regard to riches it is here today and gone tomorrow. One moment the farmer was alive to enjoy his riches the next he was dead and far removed from enjoying them. However, if he would have trusted in God who is living and eternal he would have had both God and riches. On our money we put “In God We Trust”. The way we live our lives it should read, “In Gold We Trust.” Money is uncertain. It does not provide us with the security we seek. God is certain. He will be alive tomorrow. The cannot be robbed or bankrupt. Three reasons are given not to trust in money: riches are uncertain; God is living and can never die; and God gives all for our enjoyment. *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning”* (Js. 1:17). *“Nothing is better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God”* (Eccl. 2:24). Not only does God supply us with all He does so richly. He is not stingy. Just giving enough to say He has helped. God keeps pouring out the gifts till they overflow.

- **Must Do Good**

Whatever is noble or excellent in character. Good cannot be defined by the rich. They need the wisdom of God to know how to spend their money for good. The Bible can supply us with every good work (2 Tim. 3:16,17). He can help the widows and orphans (Js. 1:27). The wealthy can help the spreading of the Gospel. Funds for needy saints as well as their needy lost neighbor can be provided by the rich Christians. A Christians cannot be just a giver so good can be done. He must do something with his riches. Too often wealthy members literally pass the buck so they can skip out on the work.

- **Must Be Rich in Good Works**

The rich work to make riches to put to work for good works. Earthly gain is only good for heavenly riches. The term *rich* means that they are abounding with good works. The give enough and more to do the job. The work enough to accomplish the good.

- **Must Be Ready to Give**

In order to be ready to give requires preparation. Some wealthy people can never help because they have their money always tied up in other ventures. Not only does money need to be available they need to make their own lives available. Implied in the term to give is a level of generous of bountiful given. It would require an unselfish, liberal, cheerful and sacrificial giving.

- **Must Be Willing to Share**

David noted the kind of giving by the Israelites for the building of Solomon’s Temple. David prayer, *“with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here to offer willingly to You”* (1 Chr. 29:17). Share is the term *koinonia* translated in other places “fellowship”. These rich Christian are assessable to the needy. They have made themselves and their money available. They have not been forced or coerced into giving. They are like Barnabas instead of Ananais and Saphirra (Acts 4:32-5:11).

- **Must Store Up Riches**

No better commentary on this passage can be found that what the Lord said in His Sermon on the Mount. *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”* (Matt. 6:19-21). Storing up is what a rich man does with his funds or in this passage foundation. These funds are not found as a future foundation on earth but in Heaven. Rich people long to learn about a good investment. There is no better investment than in the futures of mankind. To be rich in this life and poor in the next result from very poor financial planning.

Questions:

1. What is Paul's simple formula for becoming rich?

2. Define contentment.
3. Where else in the Bible is the axiom of verse seven found?
4. What is the amassing of material goods such an illogical use of time and energy?
5. T F Those who are rich fall into temptation and a snare.
6. What will drown those who desire to be rich?
7. List some people in the Bible who were destroyed by their desire for riches.
8. T F Money is the root of all kinds of evil.
9. Explain why money costs too much.
10. Give some examples of evil which has been produced by the love of money.
11. Who are the rich in our modern society?
12. How do rich demonstrate haughtiness?
13. Contrast the trustworthiness of money with the faithfulness of God?
14. To what extent does God supply us and why?
15. Why should the rich do good instead of just pay people to do it for them?
16. What does "*ready to give*" imply?
17. Give an example of those in the Bible who were willing to share?

18. How can the rich store up riches?

Application & Discussion:

19. How can one tell when he is falling in love with money?

20. Should a Christian set as his goal in life to become a rich man?

Lesson 11: *Sunday Morning, March 18, 2018*

You Have “Flee”s and Worms in Your Bible

You Have “Flee”s in Your Bible

What would you do if you looked down one day while reading the scriptures and found a flea in your Bible? Well, the Bible has several “flee”s and each one calls for some kind of a response from the reader. Obviously, this lesson is not about a very small insect that bothers your pets and will even bite their owners. The Greek term for “flee” is *pheugo*. Strong’s defines this term: “apparently a primary verb; to run away (literally or figuratively); by implication, to shun; by analogy, to vanish.”

It is true the Bible commands the soldier of Christ to put on the armor of God and make stand against the enemies of the faith (Eph. 6:10f). God tells the saints to “*resist the devil, and he will flee from you*” (James 4:7). Yet making a stand and resisting the devil are not the only commands with regard to sin and temptation. Sometimes Christians need to flee. It may turn out to be the wisest and most courageous course of action. There are times when soldiers must retreat. When a roaring lion is seeking someone to devour, it is time to run. An experienced child of God knows when it is time to stand and fight or a time to take flight. Even a seven hundred pound grizzly bear who meets a skunk in a garbage dump will have the sense to know (at least by their second meeting), it is better to turn and flee rather than stand their ground.

■ **Flee From a Strangers Voice**

In John chapter ten Jesus describes His disciples as sheep. He said concern real and spiritual sheep: “*Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers*” (John 10:5). Sheep learn to follow the voice and thus the commands of their shepherd. Several shepherds will mingle their flocks. When it is time for one of the shepherds to move on, how can he separate his sheep from the other flocks. All he has to do is call out to them and they will follow his voice. This can save the sheep from rustlers who will lead them off to be slaughtered. Years ago during the time of the Ottoman Empire to Turkish soldiers were attempting to use the butts of their rifles to drive a flock of sheep. A young shepherd boy on the other side of the valley only had to call out to them and the flock turned around and returned to their shepherd.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd or the Chief Shepherd (John 10:1; 1 Peter 5:5). Disciples will listen to His words and follow Him. When their peers at school say, “hey, let’s go this party Friday night. There will be lots of free beer and drugs.” They will flee. When their professor in High School or College teaches them that evolution is a fact and they are only the product of time and chance, they were flee and listen

to the words of their Creator (Gen. 1:26,27). When religious leaders tell them to “join the church of their choice. One church is as good as another,” they will not listen. Instead, they will follow the Head of the Church who establish it with His blood. When their denominational friends tell them that baptism is not necessary for salvation, they will listen to the words of Christ. *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”* (Mark 16:16).

■ **Flee Sexual Immorality**

Paul commanded the Corinthians to *“flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body”* (1 Cor. 6:18, KJV). What is “fornication”? Most young people do not really have a proper understanding of this Biblical term. The only time they hear the term is when they happen to be listening to the preacher or they happen to stumble across it in an archaic version of the Bible. They are not alone. Even some seasoned saints have trouble with the term. One congregation divided over whether the term included “homosexuality.” In 1 Corinthians 6:9 four out of the five sins mentioned would be a form of fornication: *“...fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites...”*. In more modern translations of 1 Corinthians 6:18 the word “fornication” is replaced with “sexual immorality.”

Experts of today will argue with the wisdom of God’s Word by claiming that young people cannot flee or abstain from sexual activity. According to their thinking the best thing society can do is merely help them avoid the consequences of having sex outside marriage. Yet, when Paul told the Corinthians to flee from fornication it implies there is a way of escape. Joseph, when constantly being tempted to commit adultery with Potiphar’s wife (and yes, adultery is a form of fornication), was able to literally flee from her presence (Gen. 29:11-12).

What can a Christian do to flee from fornication? First, he must be careful what they think. Jesus said the fornication begins in the heart (Matthew 5:27-30). Do be careful about the television shows and movies, music, magazines, internet sites, etc. you permit to influence your thinking. Instead, fill your mind with good thoughts (Phil. 4:8). Second, be careful where you go and avoid places which promote lust, such as, night clubs, drinking parties, dancing, etc. Do not create unnecessary temptations for yourself. Do not be alone with the opposite sex. Learn to respect sex as a gift from God to be enjoyed only in the realm of holy matrimony. *“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge”* (Heb. 13:4). The world tends to treat sex like a form of adult recreation. They trivialized sex. As a consequence fornication is a form of sexual abuse of another soul. Finally, meditate on God’s Word. *“How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word”* (Psalm 119:9).

■ **Flee Youthful Lusts**

Paul told Timothy *“flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart”* (2 Tim. 2:22). Obviously, fornication would be but one of these lusts youths must flee. There are some sins which are more common and tempting to young Christians, such as, giving into peer pressure, following after evil companions, drinking, immodest fashion, stealing, smoking, cheating on tests, gambling, dancing, etc. So, how shall the young secure their hearts against these youthful lusts? They must learn to flee, run away, just say “NO!” and mean it. They must keep in mind that God is the one who made them and knows way is in their best interest. *“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them’”* (Eccl. 12:1).

■ **Flee Idolatry**

Again, Paul commands the Corinthians *“wherefore, my dearly beloved flee from idolatry...”* (1 Cor. 10:14). The city of Corinth in the first century was filled with the practices of pagan idolatry. Many can only think of a golden calf or a Catholic statue of a saint or the veneration of the image of Mary, when it comes to the idea of idols. However, Paul defined covetousness as idolatry (Col. 3:6). Any time man gives to any created thing either by God or man the veneration or worship which belongs to God alone they have created an idol in their hearts. Today, it is not uncommon to see even Christian replace their devotion to God with their devotion to a favorite TV show, car, house, job, even their own bodies.

■ **Flee Greed**

Right after Paul warns Timothy that the *“love of money is the root of all kinds of evil”*, he commands

him: *“but you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness”* (1 Timothy 6:11). Timothy was to be God’s man instead of a man of means. False teachers would often exploit religion for financial gain (6:5). The desire to get rich is a snare or trap which will cause men to drown. Instead of pursuing after riches saints must flee greed and follow after several virtues. They must not focus on obtaining more and more goods for this life, but *“...lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called ...”* (1 Tim. 6:12). Remember the Rich Young Ruler came to Jesus seeking the way to eternal life, but greed kept him from it (Matt. 19:21-22).

■ **Flee the Wrath to Come**

While John the immerser was baptizing at the Jordan River, *“he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, ‘Brood of vipers? Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?’*” (Luke 3:7). The Pharisees’ were like the desert viper. Their real nature was hidden, making them appear harmless. However, they were hypocrites who were warned about hell fire by Jesus. Their superficial and insincere acts of obedience would not save them. The wrath of God is coming upon all those who do not obey the gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9). All sinners can flee from the wrath to come by turning to humble obedience to the gospel of God. In this way baptism and continued faithfulness to God is like a spiritual fire insurance policy.

You Have Worms in Your Bible

A minister decided that a visual demonstration would add emphasis to his Sunday sermon. Four worms were placed into four separate jars. The first worm was put into a container of alcohol. The second worm was put into a container of cigarette smoke. The third worm was put into a container of chocolate syrup. The fourth worm was put into a container of good, clean soil. At the conclusion of the sermon, the minister reported the following results: The first worm in alcohol - dead. The second worm in cigarette smoke - dead. Third worm in chocolate syrup - dead. Fourth worm in good, clean soil - ALIVE! So the minister asked the congregation, “What can you learn from this demonstration?” A little, old man in the back quickly raised his hand and said, “As long as you drink, smoke and eat chocolate, you won't have worms!”

Often in both the Old and even in the New Testaments, the reader’s attention is directed to the creatures of God’s creation for the lessons they can teach. Solomon told us to look to the ants for wisdom. Jesus asked His audience to consider the lilies of the field or the foxes that have holes and the birds of the air have nests showing that God takes care of them. Today, the Bible Study should focus on the lessons that can be learned from worms mentioned in the Scriptures. What possible lessons can be gleaned from these blind, gooey creatures of the dirt? Let us just see the role worms play in the Bible.

While Moses was leading the children of Israel through the wilderness, they complained. This was what they did best, even though God had done everything necessary to take care of them. This time they were complaining about the food. God blessed them with manna from heaven. We don’t know exactly what it was, but I bet it tasted a lot better than sweet potatoes. Furthermore, you did not have to dig it up out of the ground or even plant it. Every morning manna appeared in the camp of the Israelites. All they had to do was gather up enough for that day’s meals. The rest of the manna disappeared as the dew would evaporate with the rising sun. *“And the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need. And Moses said, ‘Let no one leave any of it till morning.’ Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them”* (Exodus 16:17-20). God gave a gift of good food for His children. All they had to do was gather it daily according to the rules.

Today, we must obey God’s commandments on a daily basis. God never goes on vacation. His laws do not become null and void while we are on vacation. Being a Christian means following Christ 24/7 for 365 days of the year. We are to take up our cross daily and follow Him (Luke 9:23). We are to give thanks for our daily bread. Therefore, we are to pray every day. When we neglect or disobey our daily duties we bring hardships upon ourselves. No, I am not saying that if you forget your daily prayers you are going to get worms, but why should you take a chance on something worse - like losing your soul?

Then there is the worm that taught the prophet Jonah a well-deserved lesson on mercy. Jonah did

not want to go preach to the Ninevites. So, he ran to Joppa and boarded a ship for what is modern-day Spain. God prepared a great sea creature to swallow him. After three days of prayer in its belly, he was vomited up on dry ground. After those three days, forty days of preaching in Nineveh was a cinch. He was a success! They all repented in sackcloth and ashes from the king on down. You would think Jonah would be on top of the world. Instead you find him on top of a hill complaining about the results. God blessed Jonah with a gourd vine to protect him from the sun. Then He sent a worm to kill the gourd. He topped this off by sending a hot, blistering east wind. Jonah was really mad now. *"Then God said to Jonah, 'Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?' And he said, 'It is right for me to be angry, even to death!' But the Lord said, 'You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city'"* (Jonah 4:9-11a). Yes, a worm helped teach a great lesson on mercy. And, it can help us remember Jesus' words: *"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy"* (Matt. 5:7).

We even find worms teaching lessons in the New Testament. King Agrippa was invited to feast in his honor by the people of Tyre and Sidon. He was the keynote speaker for the event. Herod was decked out in his royal bling, bling for the occasion. The people, trying to gain favor with him, offered flattering words. *"The voice of a god and not of a man!...Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died"* (Acts 12:23).

What do we learn for these worms? Don't steal God's glory! Although it is not necessary to walk around all day repeating "Praise God" to everyone over everything, we need to realize that God is Great and deserves due recognition. Although it may be a little thing to some, I do not allow anyone to call me "Reverend." Reverend is a term which indicates that one is worthy of worship. Only God is worthy to worship. Only He is Reverend (Ps. 111:9). In comparison, everyone else is a worm.

Over three hundred years, ago the great hymn writer of another era, Isaac Watts, wrote: "Alas! And did my Savior bleed, And did my sovereign die? Would He devote that sacred head for such a worm as I?" You will find that the hymn has been changed to read, "For sinners such as I." Perhaps, the word "worm" is just too revolting to man's self-esteem. Yet, compared to the greatness of God, man is but a worm. Bildad told Job, *"How can man be righteous before God? How can he who is born of woman be clean? Behold, even the moon is not bright and the stars not clean in his sight; how much less man, who is a maggot, and the son of man, who is a worm!"* (Job 25:4-6). We, as men, are worms. God even said his chosen people are in the condition of a worm. *"Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel! I will help you, says the Lord; your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel"* (Isaiah 41:14). Israel needed not to be seized with terror but cherish the assurance found in God. He will always assist those who fear Him.

Being compared to a worm is not so bad when you consider that being a worm identifies you with the Son of God. *"But I am a worm, and no man; A reproach of men, and despised of the people. All those who see Me laugh Me to scorn; They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 'He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!'"* (Psalm 22:6-8). Jesus became a worm, the ultimate worm. All this He did for us (Phil 2:7-8). He didn't pick it because He deserved it. They mocked, flogged, and crucified Him, but He was innocent of any crime or any sin. He died as the Worm for us worms. Seen any animal rights activists out screaming for the rights of a worm - "Let the worms live! Stop the cruelty to worms! They don't deserve to be put on those hooks. They don't deserve to be fed to the fish!?" No; a worm is a grimy, grubby creature. A worm is wretched, weak and worthless. And because of sin, so are we wretched, weak and worthless. Yet, while we are helpless and sinful, Christ died for the ungodly worms (Rom. 5:6-8).

Three times in Mark 9:43-48 Jesus warned His disciples about the terror of going to Hell as a place *"where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched."* If you are not saved by One who became a worm to save you, and learn the lessons taught by the worms in your Bible you will be tormented by the worms of Hell forever. This final and most sobering lesson learned from worms is not meant to bring fear but encourage faithfulness to the Lord who says, *"I will help you, says the Lord; your redeemer is the Holy One of Israel"* (Isaiah 41:14).

Questions:

Matching:

- | | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 1. _____ | "flee" | a. _____ | ...and he will flee from you" |
| 2. _____ | "Resist the devil..." | b. _____ | sexual sin including adultery and homosexuality |
| 3. _____ | Good Shepherd | c. _____ | to run away, to shun |
| 4. _____ | sheep | d. _____ | tempted Joseph to commit fornication with her |
| 5. _____ | fornication | e. _____ | Jesus |
| 6. _____ | Potiphar's wife | f. _____ | will not follow the voice of a stranger |
| 7. | What can a young person do to help him or her avoid fornication? | | |

List some other youthful lusts from which a young Christian must flee?

8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

11. True False Any time man gives to any created thing either by God or man the veneration or worship which belongs to God alone they have created an idol in their hearts.
12. True False Money is the root of all kinds of evil.
13. True False The Rich Young Ruler gave all he had to the poor and followed Jesus.
14. True False All sinners can flee from the wrath to come by turning to humble obedience to the gospel of God.
15. True False The manna from heaven for the Israelites had not restrictions as to how much and when it was gathered.
16. True False Jonah was happy about the repentance of Ninevah upon hearing him preach.
17. What lesson did the worm help teach Jonah when the gourd it was chewing on died?

18. What lesson does one learn from the worms which ate up King Agrippa I?
19. Compared to the greatness of God men are but...
 a) ants
 b) worms
 c) a little lower than the angels
20. In Psalm 22:6-8 Jesus is called a...
 a) shepherd B) king c) worm d) son
21. The phrase "*where the worm does not die*" is in reference to
 a) the city dump
 b) good soil
 c) hell
 d. heaven

Lesson 12: *Sunday Morning, March 25, 2018*

You Have A Road Map to Heaven in Your Bible

A man once stopped at an gas station to ask for directions to the zoo. The attendant told him to drive north for two miles on the highway and look for a Shell Station on his left. The driver was to stop there and go in and ask them for directions. "Why can't you just give me all the directions I need?" the traveler asked. The attendant replied, "because you cannot get to the zoo from here."

How does one get to Heaven from Grand Prairie, Texas? Is it even possible to someone to get to Heaven from here? Some false doctrines claim that only a few select souls will go to Heaven. Calvinism teaches that only the preordained elect shall inherit heaven Witnesses teach that only 144,000 shall go to heaven. Some claim that all roads lead to Heaven. The true is God has promised us heaven, in virtually every book of the New Testament. His book is a virtual road map to Heaven from any place on earth. All can go to Heaven if they just follow the directions on Heaven's road map: the Bible.

Desire to Make the Trip to Heaven

Do you really desire to go to Heaven? Paul did. He wrote to the church at Philippi, "*for to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better*" (Phil. 1:21,23). Paul was saying he was wanting to go but willing to stay. This is not how many Christians feel. They are willing to go, while wanting to stay.

There is an abundance of evidence that many folks would not enjoy Heaven. Their idea of heaven is that it has to be a lot like earth. In the U.S. Catholic Magazine some people were asked what they wanted in heaven. A woman in Fresno, Calif. wanted "an unlimited charge card." A Maryland woman wanted "all the chocolate she could eat". A Swanton, Ohio a man wanted to play golf every day. Too many have the attitude like the old Hank Williams Jr. song:

If heaven ain't a lot like Dixie

I don't wanna go
If heaven ain't a lot like Dixie
I'd just as soon stay home
If they don't have a Grand Ole Opry
Like they do in Tennessee
Just send me to hell or New York City
It would be about the same to me

Do you really desire to go to Heaven where you will be with God forever? Do you enjoy worshipping Him? Do you enjoy singing songs praising Him? Do you enjoy spending time in prayer talking to Him? Do you desire to spend time with other Christians? If you don't desire to do such for a short time upon this earth than you really do not want heaven where the saints will do these things forever. You might not want to go to hell, but from all indications you would not be happy in heaven.

One thing which might help one's desire for Heaven is to lay up treasures in Heaven. Jesus told His audience in the Sermon on the Mount: *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal"* (Matt. 6:19,20). Like the song we sing: "This world is ;not my home, I'm just a passing through, My treasures are laid up somewhere beyond the blue..." Heaven is your hometown; think about home, and not about the destruction -doomed things of the world.

Acquire a Passport

When you travel to another country, it is essential that you have a passport that proves your citizenship. As a sojourner on earth, a Christian is on a journey home to Heaven with a passport in hand which verifies his citizenship. Our early existence is not being home but being pilgrims who are traveling this earthly existence on their way home. *"Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul"* (1 Pet. 2:11).

While imprisoned in Rome around AD 63 Paul wrote to the church at Phillippi reminding them, *"for our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ"* (Phil. 3:20). Phillippi was a Roman Colony (Acts 16:12). The citizens of Philippi were privileged to be Roman citizens away from Rome. When a baby was born in Philippi, it was important that its name be registered on the legal records. The citizens were mostly soldiers who had served their time--twenty-one years--and who had been rewarded with full citizenship. Roman citizenship was then highly prized. "Roman citizenship could be gained in several ways; birth to Roman parents, including birth to a Roman woman without regards to identity of the father; retirement from the army; being freed from slavery by the Roman master; burying freedom from slavery; being given citizenship by a Roman general or emperor as an individual or as part of a political unit; purchase of citizenship." (Holman Bible Illustrated Dict., 305). Though Phillippi was some six hundred miles away from Rome, it was still a colony of Rome. Though far from the city, they dressed Roman, spoke Latin, observed Roman morals, were governed by Roman magistrates, "remained unshakably and unalterably Roman".

Christians likewise constitute a colony of heaven on earth. The verb is (Greek, huparchei) indicates that this citizenship was a present possession. It is a present reality. We are earthy people by birth, and heaven people by the new birth. Jesus informed Nicodemus that one becomes by a new birth. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God"* (John 3:5). "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19).

As citizens of Heaven Christians are to obey the laws of Heaven. Roman citizens in Philippi dressed as Romans, spoke the Roman language, lived by the laws of Rome, engaged in Roman pleasures and social affairs, and worshiped the Roman gods. They were governed by Roman law. We are governed by Christ's law. In Philippians 1:27 Paul wrote, *"Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ."* The word translated "conduct" here (3:27) (politeuma) is the word we get "politics" from and it means to "behave as a citizen."

Citizens of Rome in Philippi worshiped and severed their king or caesar. Citizens of Heaven while on earth serve and worship their King Jesus Christ.

Those whose names were recorded in a registry of citizens in Philippi were also considered Romans. The US government has documentation that I'm a United States citizen. (Birth certificate and passport.) Our names are on heaven's RECORD, *"the Book of Life"* (Phil. 4:3).

The citizens of Rome living in Philippi spoke Roman (Latin) language. A citizen of France is most comfortable speaking French. A citizen of Japan is most comfortable speaking Japanese. Those who "mind earthly things" talk about earthly things. Our speech should show us to be Christians.

Even in a Roman colony Roman citizens dressed like those in Rome. As citizens of Heaven the saints must clothe themselves in righteousness.

In any emergency the Roman citizens in Philippi could expect Roman armies to come swiftly to their defense. A citizen of Rome could not be executed without a trial and would not be crucified except by order of the emperor (Acts 25:11). Christian trust in God's protection while living on earth.

Pack the Anchor of Hope

If the child of God's voyage home is likened unto a ship upon the sea of life, we would describe the waters upon which they sailed a troubled waters. The Devil does not want us to dock our ship in the haven called "Heaven." If I were the Devil and wanted to destroy a Christian voyage to heaven, one of the first things I would want to do is to destroy his anchor so that he would lose stability in the time of storms and give up all hope. Christians do have an anchor it is our hope of heaven. *"This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast"* (Heb. 6:19).

Hope is more than just a desire for something. It also involves an expectation of the thing which is desired. I might desire to live in the White House, but I don't expect to be there. This hope motivated Moses to endure a ceaseless series of privations, *"for he had respect unto the recompense of reward"* (Heb. 11:26). What would life be without hope? The farmer plants in hope. the worker toils in hope. a parent brings up children in hope. Without hope, the Christians' life would be bleak indeed.

Follow the Right Directions

Nothing can be more frustrating than following the wrong directions. Man often has thought he has known the way to go. Jeremiah realized, *"O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps"* (Jer. 10:23). Some claim that actually all sincere people will be going to heaven. Some are trusting in their good moral life to get them to heaven. Others take refuge in the fact that they are religious.

Jesus is the only way. "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). "Way" a road or manner of accomplishing something. Jesus is that road. There are only two roads in life one leads to heaven the other to hell. *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it"* (Mt. 7:13,14).

Many hold this idea that there is but one way to be narrowminded. There is no room for broad-mindedness in the chemical laboratory. Water is composed of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. The slightest deviation from the formula is forbidden. Little Willy was a chemist/ now little willy is not more/ what willy though was H₂O/ was H₂SO₄. There is not room for broadmindedness in music or mathematics.

The judgment will surely hold some surprises. Jesus said concerning Judgment Day. *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 'Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 'And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"* (Mt. 7:21-23). The only sure way to know that we will be saved in heaven is to obey the Lord. Heaven is conditional; that is, God grants it on certain conditions which He stipulates. It truly is quite a long way to heaven. Let's not make the fatal mistake of trying to take a shortcut. There are some stops along the way. Do not forget to stop by the baptistry, worship at the local congregation, and the neighbors house to teach them the Gospel.

Heaven must really be in our plans for we will not arrive there by accident. The foolish virgins were not foolish because they were immoral, they were virgins. They were not foolish because they were in the wrong company, they were with the wise. They were foolish because they had a vain expectation of seeing the bridegroom. They had not been willing prepare for him. they counted on others to have their preparation for them.

Where are you in relationship to Heaven? Are your bags packed and ready to go. Jesus Christ may return at any moment. If you miss heaven, you've missed all there is.

Questions:

1. Calvinism teaches that only...
 - a) 144,000 will go to Heaven
 - b) everyone will go to Heaven
 - c) only the preordained elect by God will go to Heaven
2. The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that only...
 - a) 144,000 will go to Heaven
 - b) everyone will go to Heaven
 - c) only the preordained elect by God will go to Heaven
3. True False Paul have a greater desire to die and be with Christ than to remain on earth.
4. True False Some people really wold not enjoy being in heaven.
5. *"Do not lay up for yourselves _____ on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in _____, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal"* (Matt. 6:19,20).
6. *"Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and _____, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul"* (1 Pet. 2:11).
7. *"For our _____ is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ"* (Phil. 3:20).

Matching:

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| 8. ____ Philippi | a. What citizens must obey |
| 9. ____ New birth | b. The only way to Heaven |
| 10. ____ Laws | c. What Christians are while sojourning on earth |
| 11. ____ Latin | d. Christian's hope of heaven |
| 12. ____ Pilgrims | e. Means by which one becomes a member of God's kingdom |
| 13. ____ Hope | f. Leads to destruction |
| 14. ____ Anchor | g. Those who practices such will not enter into the kingdom of heaven |

15. ____ Jesus
16. ____ Narrow Gate
17. ____ Wide Gate
18. ____ lawlessness
19. ____ Five Foolish Virgins
20. What are the various detours many take on the road to Heaven?
- h. Leads to life
- i. A Roman Colony
- j. Desire plus expectation
- k. They failed to be prepared
- l. Language of Roman citizens