

There has been a period of about 400 years without God adding to His Bible. It is called the Intertestamental period or the time between the Old Testament and the New Testament. While the Bible is silent during these years, history records it to be a very active period. The Persian's were the strongest power at the end of the Old Testament. Alexander the Great, who was a Greek next, became the leader of Greece. He led Greece into becoming a world power. Next came the Romans who were in power at the time the New Testament began. Let's do a brief review of the history of God's people from the time of King Solomon to the New Testament:

1. Northern kingdom lasted from 930 BC to 722 BC a period of 208 years. The kingdom ended when Assyria took the people into captivity, and they disappeared from view. The Southern Kingdom or Judah lasted from 930 BC to 597 BC, a period of 333 years. Judah was taken away into captivity when captured by Babylon.
2. Seventy years later many of the Jews returned to Jerusalem where they lived under the rule of Persia.
3. The Greeks and their successors ruled Israel from about 331 BC to 164 BC. At first the Jews prospered under their rule. This changed in 198 BC when a new group of Greeks took control of the land. They were very harsh to the Jews even forcing them to worship their pagan gods and eat pork.
4. The harsh rule caused the Jews to revolt and they were successful in their revolt, and for just over a hundred years they ruled themselves independently from 166-63 BC. It was during this time that two different opposing groups developed in Judea or Israel. These were the Pharisees and Sadducees, the people who battled so often with Jesus. The Pharisees were very legalistic while the Sadducees did not believe in life after death and therefore they did not believe in hell. These groups are often criticized by Jesus. They were bitter enemies and onetime while the Sadducees were ruling they crucified 800 of the Pharisees.
5. The Greek influence in the area caused the Old Testament to be translated from Hebrew into Greek. This was done by seventy scholars who worked independently to ensure greater accuracy. It is known as the Septuagint which means seventy.
6. This infighting among the Jews made it possible for the Romans to come in and easily conquer Israel. This was the last time for an independent Israel until after World War II.
7. The birth date of Jesus is thought to be 6BC, and His death was probably in 30 AD. We don't know for sure the exact dates when He lived on earth.

8. After the death of Jesus, the Jews revolted against Roman rule resulting in the death of many. They were finally defeated in 70 AD, and the temple and much of the city was destroyed. The remaining Jews were forced to leave Israel and they were scattered over much of the earth. They have had no place to offer sacrifices for almost two thousand years because they are supposed to only sacrifice in the temple which is still not rebuilt.

The Romans ruled over much of the known world with the exception of southern Africa and eastern Asia. They enforced laws which provided stability to the area. They encouraged the use of the Greek language which is a great language for communicating the Bible. Greek, for example, has several words which mean love. They have a word for husband-wife love, another word for brotherly love, and another word for fatherly love. They had an excellent system of roads which allowed Christianity to be rapidly spread throughout the empire. In other words God arranged for this to be the correct time for Jesus to be born, and for the Gospel to be accurately recorded, and for Christianity to be rapidly spread. For example, when the Apostle Paul arrived in Italy he found Christians waiting for him.

The New Testament reports the life of Jesus Christ here on Earth. We learn from Him that there is only one way for us to get to heaven, which is by putting all our faith and trust in Jesus and allowing God the Holy Spirit to take over our lives. We must repent of our sins and follow Him in obedience. Much of the New Testament contains instruction about how we are to live as Christians. There is one prediction about the future; that Jesus will return to judge all people.

Overview of The Gospels

There are four books in the Bible which are referred to as the Gospels; Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. They are named after the human authors and tell about the life of Jesus from different viewpoints. Matthew wrote his version to the Jews to prove that Jesus is the Messiah, the eternal king. Mark wrote to the Christians in Rome to present the person, work and teachings of Jesus. Luke was not a Jew and he wrote to the Gentiles. His purpose was to present Jesus as the perfect human and the perfect Savior. John wrote his gospel to new Christians and non-Christians. His purpose was to prove conclusively that Jesus is the Son of God and that all who believe in him will have eternal life.

Three of the Gospels are called the Synoptic Gospels. Synoptic comes from a Greek word meaning together or common. These books are Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and they report many common stories. The book of John has much material which is only found in John. It has been said that if every book of the Bible was lost, except for John and Romans, Christianity could survive.

We will look at parts of all four gospels including a close look at Matthew 5-7 which is the Sermon on the Mount. We will look at some similarities of the Synoptic gospels and we will look at the Gospel of John which is quite different from the other gospels. For example, John has no parables and, of the seven miracles reported in John, five are not in the other gospels. The Gospel of John is strongly theological, and it deals with the nature of Jesus' person and with the meaning of faith in Him.

Matthew

Matthew was a tax collector which was a despised occupation. Tax collectors lived on the money they could force out of the people. His becoming one of the disciples of Jesus proves that anybody can become a Christian and be used by God for His kingdom work.

1. Matthew 1:1-17 gives us the genealogy of Jesus. Verse 1 reminds us that He is a descendent of both Abraham and King David. This is important because this fulfills earlier promises from God.

A. Remember Genesis 12:3 where God promises Abraham that all peoples shall be blessed through his descendants. This blessing is to be delivered through Jesus. Later in 2 Samuel 7:11-13 God promised David that his throne will be established forever. King Jesus is David's descendant and Jesus is the eternal king. Psalm 132:11 and Jeremiah 23:5 reminded the people of this promise from God.

B. Women are not usually mentioned in genealogies but here in Matthew we read about five women who remind us that God often does the unexpected.

i. Matthew, in verse 3, reminds us of Tamar and the ugly story involving Judah (Genesis 38:1-30). Remember, Jesus is a descendent of the tribe of Judah.

ii. Verse 5 talks about Rahab who was a prostitute.

iii. Ruth is also mentioned in verse 5 as an ancestor of Jesus. Remember she was from Moab, one of Israel's enemies. See Deuteronomy 23:3-5 to read how God put the people of this nation under a special curse.

iv. Matthew, in verse 6, tells us that Bathsheba the wife of Uriah, is in the bloodline of Jesus. Remember she was King David's partner in adultery and murder.

v. The last lady Matthew mentions is Mary the mother of Jesus. Jesus was promised back in Genesis 3:15. 2. Next read chapter 1:18-23 to see the birth of Jesus foretold. Mary, His mother is pregnant and she is a virgin. This fulfills Old Testament prophecy from Isaiah 7:14.

A. Virgin birth is a supernatural birth. Jesus has The Holy Spirit as His father and Mary, a human, as His mother. He was fully man and fully God. He was able to never sin because He was God and He was able to satisfy God to satisfy the wrath of God because He was a human.

3. Chapter 2 is a story only found in Matthew and is the story of the wise men. Many people such as the wise men seek to worship Jesus but others, such as King Herod, hate Him and seek to destroy him. God protected Jesus by warning Joseph and they fled to Egypt for safety.

4. The work of John the Baptist is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy (see Isaiah 40:1-5 and Malachi 4:5- 6). His mission was to announce the coming of the Messiah; to prepare as Matthew 3:1-3 say the world for the arrival of its savior.

A. The baptism of John the Baptist was not the same baptism we Christians practice. Remember the purpose of John the Baptist was to announce the coming of Jesus and the coming new covenant. The Baptism of John prepared the people for the coming of the Christ. The baptism of Jesus identified Jesus with the Jews and proclaimed that He came to take the sinner's place under God's judgment. Our baptism identifies us as Christians.

5. Chapter four reports a story found in all the Synoptic Gospels. Matthew 4:1-11 records that Jesus was led into the desert by the Holy Spirit where He fasted forty days. After this, He was tested. The first thing Satan tempted Him with was food as He must have been hungry. Jesus resisted all temptations and did not sin. It is not a sin to be tested; to be tempted. It is only a sin when you give in to the temptation and commit a sin. Jesus said no to all of Satan's temptations and remained without sin.

6. Jesus begins His public ministry after John the Baptist is arrested. Matthew 4:17 reports His message was a call to repentance which is the same message John the Baptist preached. He also started selecting His first disciples. Verse 18 reports He called Simon Peter and Andrew, two fishermen. Verse 19 reports why He called them; Jesus called them to follow Him and He would make them fishers of men meaning they were to help catch people into the kingdom of God; to evangelize.

7. Chapters 5-7 contain what is known as The Sermon On The Mount. We read that Jesus went up to a mountain with a large crowd and He sat down and preached a perfect sermon. This is very important teaching, and should be taught to all churches.

A. Read chapter 5:2-12. These are called The Beatitudes which means blessings; Read and discuss each of these.

i. Verse 3 tells us that the poor in spirit are blessed. This means that it is blessed to understand your deep spiritual poverty before God so that you can be blessed by God.

ii. We read in verse 4 that those who mourn are blessed. The mourning is over sin. We are comforted by the gospel message which tells of the forgiveness of our sins.

iii. We are blessed verse 5 says for being meek. Another word for meek would be gentle. This does not mean to be a coward, remember Numbers 12:3 tells us that Moses was the meekest person on earth. This verse comes from Psalm 37:11 and it means to accept what God gives each one of us and enjoy what God gives us. We are not to cause trouble by fighting for more.

iv. Verse six says blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. These people are blessed because they want to live in ways that please God. This is only possible for the person who belongs to Jesus. Our desire is to be righteous as Jesus is; to live our lives as free from sin as possible.

v. Verse 7 tells us that the merciful are blessed. This is because mercy is what we receive when we are saved. This is an inner quality and we are blessed when we extend mercy to others. Matthew 18:21-35 is a parable about extending mercy to others. We see the principle that we expect mercy from God and other people so we must give mercy to others. See Matt 6:12 for confirmation of this. Remember forgiveness, mercy, and reconciliation are at the heart of Christianity.

vi. Blessed are the pure in heart. This goes back to Ps 24:3-4. We are blessed because the Christians have pure hearts and so we are brought into the kingdom.

vii. Verse 9 refers to being blessed when we are peacemakers. This can be when we share the gospel that allows a person to come to peace with God. It also refers to us being blessed when we work toward reconciliation between people especially Christians.

viii. Verse 10 this is tough but we are blessed when we are persecuted because of righteousness. Note that Jesus is not promising health, wealth and prosperity. Verses 11 and 12 say we are rewarded because of our relationship with Christ when we are persecuted because of this relationship. We are blessed because we are identified with Jesus in righteousness. We may suffer because of our relationship with Jesus, but verse 12 tells us it will be worthwhile because we will be rewarded in heaven forever. Currently millions of Christians are being persecuted around the world.

B. Verses 13-16 are the well-known salt and light verses. We are salt when we help preserve the earth from falling into greater darkness. We are light when we spread the light of the Gospel to all peoples. Our testimony is so very important.

i. How can we lose our saltiness? We lose it when we fail to reflect the light of Jesus or in other words when we do not do what Jesus asks us to do.

ii. We are salt and light when we obey and serve Him faithfully. We are light when we share the gospel with others.

C. In Matthew 5:20 He lays out the rule for salvation, "For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." We can't do this in our own strength. Jesus has to give us His righteousness. Look at Ephesians 2:8-9.

D. The rest of chapter five in verses 21-25 teaches us to live at peace with each other. We learn from verses 21 & 22 that anger in the heart is sin in the heart. We commit murder in our hearts when we wish another person dead. We see that this anger is so serious that we are not to worship when we are not at peace with each other. Always remember that no person has ever done as much to hurt you as your sins have done to hurt God. If we expect God to reconcile and forgive us then we must reconcile and forgive each other. Christianity is all about forgiveness.

8. Chapter five told us the standards of righteousness which are the rules we are to live by. Now in chapter six Jesus tells us how these standards are to look as we live our lives. Another way of saying this is how Christians are to behave which we call their testimony. We are to show Jesus to the world.

A. In chapter 6:1-6 Matthew tells us that we are to do good things privately such as giving money to charity and praying. He assumes Christians will give to charity and that we will pray, but we are not to do them in such a way that people will see us doing these good things and say how good we are. We are not politicians seeking votes, rather we are seeking to please God and we don't have to tell others what we are doing. God already knows everything we do. Remember that God is to get all the glory.

B. He tells us a good way to pray. We are not to say the same things over and over. Jesus gives us a good model of a way to pray in chapter 6:9-13. While it is good to pray the way these verses teach us, we also must pray with other words at times.

i. Don't keep repeating the words "God and Lord" over and over again.

ii. A good way to start your prayer is to thank God for being the kind of God He is. This means repeating something about His characteristics such as being all powerful, being holy, being good, etc.

iii. Another good way to begin a prayer is to start by using scripture such as Psalm 117, Psalm 146:1-7, Psalm 148:1-7. There are many good praises you will find throughout the Bible.

C. Verse 14 tells us what our attitude about forgiveness should be. We must always forgive others who seek forgiveness. Consider how much God has forgiven you.

D. Verses 16-18 contain a lesson about fasting. Note verse 16 says when you fast and not if. This means we are supposed to fast. Most of the time we are to fast in secret. However, there are times when your church or a small group wish to fast together, and this is all right.

E. Repeating: Chapter six teaches us that we are to do good things but, whenever possible, we are to do them secretly. We are not to do them to build a good reputation among men. We are not to do them so that people will say how good we are. We are to do them because we are trying to obey and please God. How much you pray and how much you give is to be a secret between you and God.

i. While we don't tell people that we are Christians; we live our lives in such a way that we show people that we are Christians. When people learn by our actions, our deeds that we are Christians and this is good.

F. Verses 19-21 talks about money and possessions. Read and comment about how we can't take money with us but we can take our good works with us. Our ATA teachers are all volunteers who will wait until heaven for their rewards. We have more than 1,000 volunteers serving our Lord.

G. Verses 25-34 is good advice about the futility of worrying---we are better off trusting our sovereign God. See Romans 8:28.

9. Chapter 7 has teaching about judging others, about asking God for things and a lesson about a tree and its fruit. We will talk about judging others when we get to Luke chapter 6.

A. Verse 12 has really good teaching about what we call the "Golden Rule". Another way to state this rule is to say that we are to treat other people the way we want to be treated by them. We are to do good things for others. Do you enjoy sharing your property with other people?

B. Verses 21-23 are some of the most frightening verses in the Bible. Jesus is talking to all Christians, especially people like me who teach the Bible. We must make sure that we really belong to Jesus. We must remember that God uses all people including the unsaved for His purposes. The fact that you are a pastor or other church leader does not mean that you are saved.

C. Build your house on a rock—read verses 24-27. Who is the rock we are to build all our future on? Jesus.

D. Verses 28-29 Jesus taught as if He had authority which he did have because He is God.

10. Chapter 8 begins reporting a series of miracles that Jesus performed. We closed out chapter seven by reporting that Jesus has all authority and here he proves it by performing several miracles. One of the purposes of miracles is to prove that Jesus is God. Another reason is to show compassion to hurting people.

A. Verses 18-22 have teachings many would like to forget or ignore. Becoming a Christian does not mean that a person can expect to be healthy, wealthy, and prosperous; rather, for many there is a cost to be paid.

11. Chapter 9 read verses 35-38. This is talking about how there are a lot of people to be reached with the gospel but the ones willing to spread the good news are few. We are called to pray here. When you pray for people to be missionaries around the world, also ask God if you yourself should go. Are you willing to go?

12. Chapter 10:1-15 we have the first mission trip reported here. Note that the missionaries were the 12 disciples and they were only sent to the Jews. It was not yet time for the gentiles to be reached.

A. Verses 1 & 8 are sometimes misinterpreted. The disciples, and only the disciples, were given special powers to heal. Some Christians today feel that they also were given these powers to heal, but this is not true. Our only power is to pray for people and ask God to heal. Also note verse 8 says they are to not charge any money. We should never charge anything to pray and serve other people.

B. Verses 16-23 Jesus teaches again that the “health, wealth and prosperity” gospel is wrong. Look how He promises persecution to His followers as they serve Him. Read Acts 9:16 tells that the Apostle Paul is going to suffer as he serves Jesus. This is another lesson for all of us.

i. Be prepared for persecution so that you can stand fast and continue to be faithful to God and continue to do His work.

ii. Verses 19-20 remind us the God the Holy Spirit will always be there to help you. See also Acts 1:8 where Jesus promises again the Holy Spirit to help us. He will give you strength to do whatever God wants you to do.

C. Verse 28 is good advice. Our suffering on this earth is of little importance. We will soon leave this life behind forever. Christians live for the next life which will last forever. This life only last for a short time.

D. Verses 32-33 be bold in telling people about Jesus and tell everybody that you are a follower of Jesus. 13. Chapter 11:1-15 John the Baptist, who was in prison, had doubts about Jesus being the Messiah. This shows that at times everybody will have doubts. The best way to reassure ourselves is to pray and read the Bible. To reassure John, Jesus draws attention to the miracles He performs which prove His ministry. Note verse 11 which teaches that the least person in heaven has a greater position than the greatest person on earth.

14. Chapter 12:1-21 Opposition increases against Jesus because the Pharisees are angry because Jesus does not obey the rules that they the Pharisees added to the Bible's laws. The issue is about proper keeping of the Sabbath. Verses 1-8 are about harvesting and eating on the Sabbath. Then in verse 9-13 Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath. Verse 14 this leads to the Pharisees plotting His death.

A. Matthew 12:3-8 three points about the Sabbath:

i. Man is more important than obeying rigid rules. Luke 14:5

ii. The Sabbath is made for man; it is a gift from God. Mark 2:27

iii. Mark 2:28 Jesus also taught that He is Lord of the Sabbath—Jesus announced that He is divine. In

other words, Jesus is boss of the Sabbath, and He makes the rules.

One commentator says about the Sabbath that," it is to be lived in whatever manner will most honor and

glorify the Lord Jesus Christ." It is for believers only. We should enjoy the Lord's Day; enjoy worship fellowship and family. We need a break from our regular schedule.

B. The Pharisees had added many rules to the Bible which were not proper and made life very difficult. Below are some of their rules that apply to the Sabbath. These were legalistic rules that were meant to make

it appear that they were following the letter of the law, but which meant they could avoid the spirit of the law. In others words they externally obeyed the law, but inside they were disobeying the law. Look at the following examples. Some of this is ridiculous and silly.

“The Pharisees had added man’s regulations to God’s law, reducing a right observance of the Sabbath to the most terrible forms of legalism. Here are some examples.

1. The law said that man was not supposed to travel on the Sabbath (Exodus 16:29). Fair enough! But what constitutes traveling? The Pharisees asked. As an answer, they developed the concept of a Sabbath’s day journey, roughly three hundred meters. A man could walk that far on the Sabbath, but if he went farther, it was sin. However, if a rope was tied across the end of a street, the whole street technically became a dwelling place, and in that case a person could go three hundred meters beyond the rope. Or if he deposited some food at a given place on a Friday night, on the next day he could walk to it to eat his meal (thereby technically establishing a new home), then go three hundred meters beyond that. I suppose that if he were clever enough, a determined man could walk halfway across Palestine.

2. The law forbid the carrying of a load (Jeremiah 17:21-27). But what was a load? Was a piece of clothing a load? The Pharisees answered that if it was worn as clothing it was not, but if it was carried it was. So the way to get a jacket from one room to another was obviously to put it on, walk to the second room, and take it off.

3. The law forbade work. The same logic worked this way. A man is out walking. He spits. Is that work? Answer: It depends on what happened to the spit. If it goes into the dirt and makes a slight furrow, then it is plowing, which is work. If it hits a rock, no work is done. Under this system, being a devout Jew seemed to depend in part on where one spit on Saturdays.

15. Jesus gives us more ideas about how we are to apply the teaching from the Bible about the Sabbath. We certainly are to eat and do acts of mercy. Jesus says it is about the heart attitude of people and not about external appearance. With the Pharisees, it was all about the external for show. Jesus exposed their phony religion and made them very angry with him.

A. Why do we celebrate the Sabbath on Sunday instead of Saturday?

i. Jesus rose from the grave on Sunday.

ii. Acts 20:7 indicates that the early church met on the first day of the week.

iii. The early church had many difficulties with Jewish converts trying to make Christianity part of Judaism.

Many of these converts thought that Christians needed to keep the Old Testament Jewish laws. It was important for everyone to understand that Christianity was different; the old covenant was past and there was a new covenant. Worshipping on a different day helped in this. The early church picked different days than the Jews to fast each week to emphasize that Christianity is different.

16. Matt. 12:22-32 talks about the unpardonable sin. Verse 24 is an effort by the Pharisees to discredit Jesus. They said it was by the power of Satan that He performed miracles. Verse 31 mentions the unforgivable sin which is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. What is this sin? Answer--The Holy Spirit is the one who enlightens us to be able to accept the gospel. The unpardonable sin is when a person rejects The Holy Spirit and God allows their heart to harden in their rejection of Jesus. The person who commits this sin does not worry about it so if you are concerned it is a sign that you have not committed this sin.

17. Chapter 13 is a series of parables. A parable is a story which has a meaning. True understanding of a parable requires a right relationship with Jesus. For us to understand a parable look for one central idea. Read 13:1-9 the parable of the sower. Look at verse 18-23 to see the explanation from Jesus. The seed it talks about is the gospel and the soil is the human heart. Three kinds of hearts are described which hear the gospel and in the end they reject Jesus. The last heart hears the gospel and becomes converted to become a Christian. We learn:

A. Not all the people who hear the gospel become Christian. You must have an open heart to become a Christian.

B. We show that we are Christian by displaying fruit which means we will do good works and we will start to live the way Jesus wants us to.

C. Let's look at the next parables verses 44-46. The idea in this parable is that these men find the value of the kingdom of heaven to be worth so much that they will sacrifice anything to get the kingdom of heaven

D. The next parable which is the parable of the net is found in 13:47-50. This is the second time in chapter 13 that Jesus teaches the same lesson. See the parable about the burning of the weeds found in verses 24-30. Jesus is teaching us a lesson about how even though many non-Christians are in the church, at the end of time Christians will be separated from non-Christians. These non-Christians will be sent to hell. See Matthew 25:46 and Mark 9:43 & 48 and Luke 16:26.

i. We must understand that both heaven and hell are permanent. Many people and many cults believe that they don't have to fear going to hell because it is not real, and if it is real then it is not too bad and it is not permanent. Non-Christians say that they did

not know anything before they were born and they will not know anything after they die. They are only fooling themselves and after they die and it is too late they will experience the truth of the Bible: that hell is worse than we can imagine and it is permanent.

18. Chapter 14 tells how Jesus feeds the 5,000 in verses 13-21. The story tells how Jesus has compassion on the hungry people and how He is able to provide our necessities.

19. Chapter 16 we see in verses 21-23 that Jesus begins to prepare His disciples for His coming death. Note Peter's response and then what Jesus says to Peter's comment. The death of Jesus on the cross was God's perfect plan to defeat Satan and redeem us. To oppose this would be to oppose God. Remember that God is always in control.

20. Chapter 16 verses 24-25 we again see this idea that we must be prepared to suffer and pay a great price to follow Jesus. As the parable we studied in chapter 13:44-46 says, we must be ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of the kingdom. Read the following true story which happened recently in the United States. This story is about a seventeen year old, former Muslim girl, who was murdered because she became a Christian. At first her family tried to convince her to return to Islam, then they tortured her, and she ran away. She was staying with family when she was killed probably by family members. This girl understood that often there is a price to pay for following Jesus, and she willingly paid it.

21. Chapter 17:1-8 reports what we call the transfiguration of Jesus. This was also reported in Mark and Luke, and referred to in 2 Peter 1:16-18. The transfiguration was a revelation of Jesus' deity. The transformation in the appearance of Jesus was a momentary transition or temporary change from the hiding of His divine glory that marked His days on earth to the manifestation or showing of His glory that will be revealed when He returns. God in the transfiguration is confirming who Jesus is; He is God.

22. Matthew 18:15-17 is an important teaching about how Christians should make peace with each other if one sins against another Christian or just disagrees with another.

A. The first thing we are to do according to verse 15 is for you and the other Christian to meet privately and try to solve your dispute privately.

B. The next step, if you can't agree, according to verse 16 to take one or two brothers with you to try to see if they can't help you to come to an agreement with each other.

C. The third step according to verse 17 is to take the problem to the church which usually means the elders. If the offending person refuses to follow make peace then he should be put outside the church.

D. Christians are told, in 1 Corinthians 6:6-7, that we are never to sue a fellow Christian in the civil courts.

E. It is very important that disputes between Christians be resolved, and that the problem not be ignored. Often if the problem is not taken care of when it starts, later it causes serious problems for the whole church. 23. Chapter 19:3-9 teaches about marriage and divorce. We know from Genesis 2:24 that in God's eyes, we become one person when we get married and we are to remain one person. Jesus quotes this verse to show His dislike for divorce. He says that Moses only allowed divorce because of the hardness of the people's heart. Now Jesus tells that if your spouse commits the sin of adultery, then you are free to divorce and remarry. However you can stay married. 1 Corinthians 7:15 also allows a person to divorce and remarry if abandoned by his unbelieving spouse. This is a very specific. All other divorces are prohibited although some feel divorce is allowed for abuse. Divorce affects many innocent people especially children. We must deal tenderly with people affected by divorce. There is always a lot of pain in a divorce. We, the church, must reach out in love to those involved in a divorce. Now we are to look at other teaching from other gospels. We are not teaching from the book of Mark only because we don't have time to cover the gospels in more detail. Mark is a very important book and you need to study it in detail.

Some teachings from Luke.

Luke gives us the most information about the early life of Jesus. Luke was not a Jew, and he was a medical doctor. He was also the human author of the book of Acts. He gives us a very good picture of heaven and hell. He teaches much about prayer. We do not have enough time to look at the whole book so we will only look at some of the teachings of Luke which are different from the other gospels.

1. Luke 1:26-56 reports about Mary, she was a special person but she is not a god as some churches teach. She was a sinner as we all are, and she also needed salvation. Do not pray to her because she has no special power.

2. Luke 2:8-20 Angels brought reports of Jesus birth to the lowest of the low class of their society—the shepherds. Jesus came to minister to all kinds of people; especially the poorest.

3. Luke 4:16-30 Jesus begins His ministry after he has been tempted in the desert. He begins by teaching in the synagogue in His home town of Nazareth. This shows the

importance of public worship because we see Jesus worshipping publically. Hebrews 10:25 tells us to worship together.

A. In verses 16-21 Jesus is teaching by reading scripture to the people. He quotes a passage from Isaiah which is a prophecy about the coming Messiah. He announces that He, Jesus, is the fulfillment of this prophecy. In other words, Jesus says that He is the Messiah.

B. He (verses 25 & 26) tells the story about Elijah and how he went to a foreign people at Zarephath to minister to the widow.

C. Jesus (verse 27) tells how the foreigner, Naaman, was healed. The message to the Jews, in both of the above examples, was that God was not just for the Jews. God is for all peoples on earth.

D. Verses 28 & 29 tell that these three statements by Jesus infuriated the Jews. First they were angry because Jesus made the claim to be God. Then they got even angrier because He said that God was for all people on earth and not just the Jews. It is hard to understand why the Jews were jealous because of this; after all God and heaven are big enough for everyone.

E. The Jews wanted to kill Jesus, but we read in verse 30 that Jesus just walked away from his attackers. It was not yet the correct time for Him to die. He shows here that He is in charge and not the Jews. We must remember that Jesus went to the cross because He loves us and He went willingly. No person or persons on earth could have ever forced Him to go to the cross.

4. Luke 5 starts out telling how Jesus called some of His disciples. We see that He chose common people such as fishermen.

A. Verses 27-32 report that Jesus even called a tax collector to be a disciple. Levi the tax collector, which is another name for Matthew, He even fed Jesus and other tax collectors at his house. We read the reaction of the enemies of Jesus, the Pharisees. They condemned Jesus because He associated with these and other sinners.

i. Verses 31 & 32 teach us a lesson in evangelism. We must spend time with sinners to evangelize them. Many Christians only want to spend time with their Christian friends. We must be willing to invest our lives in unsaved people just as Jesus did.

B. Verses 33-39 tell us a couple of things.

i. While we are not specifically ordered to fast, Jesus assumes in verse 35 that Christians

will fast after He is gone, but while He is with his disciples, they will not fast. After all, fasting is not normally associated with times of joy but with times of sorrow. His disciples are joyous as long as Jesus is with them.

ii. The Christian reason for fasting is different from the Old Testament. Jesus uses the example of the wine skin to teach a lesson about the joy associated with the new covenant; the new way of fasting and serving Jesus. The old covenant which is legalistic was not good while the new covenant with Jesus is good. We don't want to mix the new covenant of grace with the old covenant of law and works.

iii. Verse 39 is saying that the Pharisees and their followers would not accept the new covenant of grace which promises eternal life. They wanted to keep the old covenant of the law which will not save anyone. People often want to stay with the old ways of doing things even when they are shown new and better ways of doing things. We must always be open to learning new ways from the Bible as we study.

5. Luke 6:37-38 & 41-42 also Matthew 7:1 talk about judging and are often misunderstood. This is also part of the Sermon on the Mount. There are times when we must judge. For example we must use our Bibles to judge whether or not the preacher is preaching the truth. Judging is something we must all do.

A. We are being told to not be people who continually try to find fault with other people especially our church leaders. We don't want to be troublemakers; we should not be gossips. Look at verses 41-42 to understand this passage. The idea is that we all have many things that we can be judged for because we all sin. We must first make sure we are not ourselves guilty, and then we must judge with the correct attitude. We must not judge quickly and harshly. We must judge as we ourselves want to be judged.

6. Luke 6:39-40 is a parable which illustrates the problem in the church which we are trying to help fix. It is the reason for Africans Teaching Africans Bible teaching. We must have Bible educated church leaders to teach their people and to help the church learn the truth about God.

A. The first problem we see in verse 39 is that we have church leaders who have not been trained in the Bible trying to teach their church members about the things of God. This is an example of the blind leading the blind.

B. The second problem is expressed in verse 40. The goal of church in preaching and teaching is of course to honor God which a person does when he learns more about his God. If a pastor is well taught in the Bible, then he can teach his people well and help elevate them. As the church leader is elevated through his own Bible education; so he can help raise his people also by sharing what he learns as he teaches. This is the goal of

“Africans Teaching Africans”; to see the church elevated and to see the light of Jesus take over here in Africa.

C. Teaching people lessons from the Bible is very important. Jesus spent three years while He was alive on earth and then Acts 1:1-3 tells us he spent 40 days teaching His disciples. It is very important that we don't teach until we have ourselves first learned the lessons of the Bible. 2 Timothy 2:15 tells teachers they must understand the Bible and teach the truths of the Bible correctly.

6. It was no surprise when Jesus was crucified. Jesus often predicted his death and we see this mentioned twice in chapter 9:21-27 & 43-45. This teaches us that God has complete control of all events.

7. Luke 15 has three parables, with a common theme, for us. We see that God really cares for the lost as these parables teach us that even one lost person is important to God. Verses 8-10 teach that just as a person searches carefully for a lost coin so does God search for even one of His people who is lost.

A. Luke 15:11-32. This story is called the story of the prodigal son and is taught and preached very often in churches. There are really two different lessons in these verses although the stories are connected.

B. Luke 15:11-24 is a story which also teaches about the importance of even one lost sinner who is found. Briefly, we read that the one son is lost and goes away from the father where he suffers. He comes to his senses and returns to his father who is so overjoyed that he has a big party celebrating the return of his son. This story teaches us that God is so happy when the sinner who has wandered away from Him returns and repents and is saved.

C. A second story, verses 25-32, teaches us about the second son who had not wandered away and had stayed with his father. This son was angry at the way his father was so overjoyed with the return of his other son. This second son is the one who is lost but does not realize that he is lost. He thinks that he is right with God, but he is not and he is in trouble of never realizing that he is lost. This is like the Pharisees that Jesus fought with. They thought they were perfect and everybody else was wrong. You must know that you are a sinner to be saved. It is difficult to reach a person who is like this with the gospel.

8. Luke 16:19-31 is a story which teaches us much about heaven and hell, and also a lesson about getting our rewards here on earth or in heaven. We see that the rich man enjoyed his life on earth and he did not ever make peace with God. So, after his death, he is sent to a place of torment. The poor man belonged to God and so after he died,

verse 22 tells us that an angel transported him to Abraham's bosom which is a very good place. We see some important lessons here.

A. Heaven and hell are real places. Heaven is wonderful and Hell is a terrible place of torment.

B. The torment of hell will be increased because the people in hell will be aware of the people in heaven and they will know that they could have also been in heaven (verse 23).

C. Don't live for earthly rewards because they are only temporary (verse 25). i. Heaven is a wonderful place (verse 25).

D. Verse 26 tells us that a person will stay permanently in the place he is sent. There is no passing between hell and heaven or between heaven and hell. There is no second chance.

E. Verse 31 tells us that the Scriptures are sufficient to bring a person to salvation. The lost will even ignore the fact that Jesus rose from the dead.

F. This story illustrates for us that our status in life on earth is not as important as our position after death. There is nothing wrong with being rich while we live on earth as long as we have a right relationship with Jesus and we realize our responsibility to share our riches.

G. There is comfort for the Christian who lives in terrible poverty. Life on earth is only for a very short time. You will be richly rewarded in heaven for all eternity. There is an angel waiting to carry you to heaven (Luke 16:22). We must be faithful in all circumstances.

H. We learn that people go either to a place of suffering after death or to be with God in a good place. There is no delay and they go immediately. 2 Corinthians 5:6 and Hebrews confirm this.

9. Luke 18:1-8 tells a parable which teaches about the value of persistence. The widow would not accept the unfair ruling from the judge. She kept returning to him until he gave her justice. We should persist in prayer even for years if necessary. Don't get discouraged and quit praying for something good. You might have to pray for decades before God grants your request, and He may never give you what you want.

i. An example of persistent prayer is that my wife and I persistently pray for the salvation of three children of ours who are not Christian. We have been praying for over thirty-five years and we continue to pray.

10. Luke 22:14-23 while in the Upper room, during the Passover meal, Jesus instituted The Lord's supper or Holy Communion which He told them to do in remembrance of Him. We will study this at length when we study the book of 1 Corinthians.

11. As we study the final hours of Jesus we become aware that He was extremely alone and He was terribly aware of the horrible suffering that he would have to endure.

A. All His disciples let Him down. We see this very clearly in the garden of Gethsemane when in Mark 14:32- 42 He asked his disciples to stand watch while He prayed, but we read that they fell asleep even after he woke them and again asked them to stand watch.

B. In Luke 22:42 we read where Jesus ask that if possible that God would take the cup of His (God's) wrath away. Jesus understood that this cup of wrath was a terrible punishment. He knew exactly how bad His suffering would be. Even knowing this Jesus told God that He was willing to go to the cross and do the will of God. Each Christian must also be willing to do what God wants no matter what trouble he faces.

C. Luke records in Luke 22:44 that Jesus was in such agony and prayed so earnestly that his sweat fell to the ground like drops of blood. Doctors tell us that this indicates that Jesus was under extreme stress.

D. We know from this story that Jesus loves us enough to suffer for us.

12. Luke 23 tells how Jesus was sentenced to death by Pontius Pilate even though Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent. The chapter also tells us about the crucifixion of Jesus.

A. Luke 23:39-42 is a well-known story which teaches us some important things.

i. WE do not have to be baptized to be saved. The criminal who was saved was not baptized and he is in heaven.

ii. We do not have to do any work to be saved. All this criminal did was to believe that Jesus is God and trust Him for his salvation and admit that he was guilty of sin and ask Jesus to forgive him. It is the same with us; we do no work to be saved. Instead we do just as the criminal on the cross. We believe that Jesus is God, we ask Him to save us from our sins, and we repent and we are saved.

B. Luke 23:46 tells us that Jesus was dead. Verse 53 tells us that they buried the dead Jesus.

13. Luke 24:1-6 teaches us that after three days Jesus was no longer dead that He had conquered death. This is called the resurrection of Jesus.

The death of Jesus on the cross was where Jesus was punished for the sins of every Christian. On the cross He suffered more than any other person suffered. He died on the cross willingly for all Christians. It was on the cross that Jesus defeated Satan. The death of Jesus on the cross is the reason Christians will not have to be punished in hell for their sins. This is because God accepted the punishment of sinless Jesus as payment for our sins. All people who die without being Christians go to hell to pay for their own sins.

The resurrection of Jesus is proof of the fact that Jesus conquered death when He was on the cross. The resurrection of Jesus proves that every Christian has conquered spiritual death and will go to heaven instead of hell.

Overview of John

A very important book of The Bible which was written by the Apostle John. An Apostle is a person called by God to be an apostle; a person who actually saw Jesus. Romans 1:1 tells us that Paul was called by God to be an apostle. There are no Apostles living today. The book of John clearly presents Jesus as God. We learn much about Jesus and that He is (God) in the Book of John. Over 90% of the book of John is different from the other gospels. For example, there are no parables.

1. John 1:1-5 these are very important verses. John is telling us that the Word (Jesus) is God. That Jesus has all of God's attributes including eternity and He is our creator. Our life is found in Jesus, He is identified with light and He is victorious over darkness (evil).

A. The most important question in life is "who is Jesus Christ? Is he only a man to you, or is He God to you? To be a Christian you must believe that He is God and you must follow him. What does this mean? It means that you must trust, obey, love, and serve Him. You must believe that Jesus is God, you must invite Jesus to be your Lord and you must repent of your sins.

B. John 1:10-13 tells us that many people refuse to acknowledge the one who made them. They are still rebelling against Jesus. Isaiah 1:3 tells us that even the ox and the donkey can tell who their master is, but man often does not seem to know that God is their master. This is true today.

C. Verse 12 Christians become the children of God, adopted by God. We are God's children and we have all the rights and privileges of children including communication and care from God.

D. Verse 13 introduces the idea of spiritual birth—being born again. This spiritual birth is from above, and to be a Christian you must be born again. Spiritual birth is from God as opposed to physical from a mother. E. Verse 14 God lives with man which is utterly amazing. He willingly gave up the wonders of heaven and came to live with us. He suffered and was tempted just as we are. Jesus humbled Himself.

2. John 2:1-11 The first reported miracle is water turned into wine-Jesus shows concern for all aspects of His people. Why did Jesus perform miracles? One reason was to authenticate His ministry. Another reason was because Jesus had compassion for people, and He enjoyed helping people.

A. John 2:13-17 Jesus cleans out the temple just as Nehemiah 13:8 says Nehemiah did. The lesson for us is that we worship God in church and we must keep the non-believer from interfering with this. We must be careful to allow only trusted Christians to speak in our churches. We must never allow a person to speak in our church because he offered us money. We must allow only preachers who faithfully teach God's word to preach in our churches.

B. In verses 18-22 He gave them a sign that no one understood until after the event. He gave them a prediction about His death and resurrection.

3. Chapter 3 read verses 1-17.

A. Jesus knew the heart of Nicodemus because Nicodemus was representative of all men. He was seeking spiritual fulfillment on his own terms; he would not want to accept Jesus's answer. We must remember that Jesus is Lord and he makes the rules.

B. Verses 1-2 Tells us that Nicodemus is a rich ruler who secretly came to see Jesus. He wanted answers from Jesus because he knew Jesus was someone special but he had his mind made up and was not really ready to accept what Jesus told him. Verse 13 Nicodemus argues with Jesus. We can only accept Jesus on His terms, and recognize that we should not argue with God.

C. Verses 3-5 Being born again. All Christians are born again. This means that we are born spiritually and this birth is from God. Our first birth was physical and was from our mother.

D. Verse 5 mentions born of water and spirit. Water metaphor (figurative language) for the Word of God. Spirit=God's witness== Holy Spirit in us. In other words, the Bible and the Holy Spirit work together to cause us to become Christians.

E. Verse 6. Like produces like, in other words, flesh (sin) in natural man produces natural sinful man.

Spirit of God produces a Spirit filled man-- a new life. A godly life can only come from a spirit changed person. There must be change in every Christian even if the change is slow.

F. Verses 14-15. It is not by works that we are saved, but by looking to God in faith.

G. Let's study John 3:16 which is the best known Bible verse in the world. God's love is not very well understood. Let's discuss God's love:

i. The word believe in Greek=faith so we can translate this verse as anyone who has faith in Jesus is saved.

Definition of faith=belief in something unseen. We believe in God even though we don't see Him.

ii. God's love is infinite Eph. 3:17-19. There is no end to God's love

iv. God's love is a giving love—it cost God—God the Father gave up His Son to come to earth and Jesus left

heaven to come to earth and suffer terribly. True love is love that survives suffering.

v. We can look at the story of Hosea to see an example of costly love. We see a lot of parallels as we compare Hosea's love for Gomer with God's love for His people.

a. Hosea was a good husband—a good provider just as God is a good provider.

b. Hosea had an unfaithful wife who ran off with other men just as God's people run off after other gods. Still, Hosea, under God's orders, provides food for her just as God continues to provide for His unfaithful people. Hosea even redeems her when she is sold as a slave just as Jesus redeems us from the bondage of sin.

c. God's love, like Hosea's, is a pursuing love. God pursues us and even though we are very wicked He saves us from our deserved fate which is Hell.

H. When we add verse 17 to verse 16 of John 3 we see a more complete story of God's love. We see that Jesus came to earth to save us and salvation is through Him.

4. John 3: 18-21 why don't people want to believe in Jesus and be saved?

A. Many people do not accept Christ because they enjoy their sin. Many non-Christians wrongly think becoming a Christian stops all their fun. They think they will have their fun now and later become a Christian. The problem with this is that they may die first or God allows their heart to harden in their sin and so they are condemned by their own actions. Remember Pharaoh?

B. Psalm 10:4 identifies pride as a major reason people reject Jesus. Pride causes people to reject God because people want to do things their way instead of God's way. People often are too proud to accept salvation which is freely given; instead they want to earn salvation by their own works.

5. Verses 22-36 again we see both the humility of John the Baptist and also the proper elevation of Jesus Christ. Verses 22-30 consider that John was great and had a following before Jesus, but John was glad to turn the ministry over to Jesus. You should be willing to turn your ministry over to someone else when the time comes? John had his eye firmly fixed on Jesus

A. Verses 31-36 authenticate the call of Jesus. Jesus alone and no one else comes from God carrying God's authority because He alone is God. If you reject Jesus you reject eternal life and choose God's wrath. Look at the truth of verse 36.

6. Chapter 4:1-14 we see the humanity of Jesus—How? Verses 5-7 tell us that He was tired and thirsty. He was in Samaria which was a place Jews never visited because of their hatred of the Samaritans who had taken over what was previously Jewish land. By going to Samaria, Jesus is showing that salvation is not just for Jews. Revelation 5:9 says that He came to save people of every tribe and language and people and nation.

A. Note that just like in the Garden of Eden, God speaks to the woman before she speaks. God speaks first to establish a relationship. We humans don't try to establish a relationship rather it is God who seeks us out to establish a relationship because He loves us.

B. Verse 10 Jesus offers the woman living water—what is this? Water in arid regions is a symbol of life itself. The grace of God is like a spring which provides water which is so necessary for life— God is necessary to life. He offers us eternal water or eternal life.

Several times in O.T. living water is spoken of see Isaiah 12:3 and Psalm 42:1 and Jeremiah 2:13

7. Verses 23-24 tell us the only thing God seeks from man. He wants us to worship Him in spirit and truth. The chief end of man is to worship God and enjoy Him forever. We were created to worship God.

Note that God desires our worship. He doesn't want much from us but He does desire our worship.

A. The book of John gives three absolute requirements for correct worship.

i. Chapter 3 verse 7 says we must be born again. The unsaved person can't worship God. After all, how can

a person worship God when he doesn't believe in God?

ii. Chapter 3 verse 14 says Jesus must be lifted up. We must elevate His word—the Bible.

iii. Chapter 4 verse 23 we must worship in spirit and truth. What does this mean?

B. Worship= we express to God His true value, God is worthy of all our worship.

i. Worship in spirit=true worship occurs when our spirit which is that part of us which sets us apart from

the rest of creation and is most like God actually meets with God and speaks with God.

ii. Worship in Truth=

a. We approach God honestly with our whole hearts

b. We worship God on the basis of His Word to us. The main elements of worship are praise, prayer, and preaching His word—the Bible, also the sacraments which we observe in some but not every service. We can use Bible verses` for the words of our songs and also as part of our prayers.

C. We can only worship God through Christ, see John 14:6. 17

8. Verses 25-42

A. In verses 25-26 Jesus again reveals himself as God the Messiah

B. Chapter 4:27-30 the disciples were surprised because Jews did not talk to Samaritans, and it was illegal,

under Jewish law, for a man to talk to a woman in public. Both of these rules were made by humans; they are not from God. Jesus showed that He came for all people, including Samaritans. By talking to the woman in public, Jesus shows that women are important and they are to be respected.

i. I believe one of the reasons the woman was saved was because Jesus knew she would be faithful and do what we all should do when we are converted; she went and told other people about Jesus. She evangelized.

C. Jesus came to save other people groups in addition to the Jews, and this made the Jews very angry with Jesus. The first time the Jews tried to kill Jesus was when He told them this. See Luke 4:26-30 where Jesus was telling them that just as Elijah went to a foreign land to save a foreign person so Jesus came to earth to also save foreign people; not just Jews. Romans 1:16 tells us the Jew is first and then gentiles next.

D. Verses 31-34 tell us that true satisfaction comes from doing God's will. If we don't do God's will then we are doing Satan's will. We are either doing God's will or our own

sinful will. We should only do God's will. How do we know God's will? Scripture often tells us; we should also pray and ask God to reveal His will. We also need to study the gifts God gives us.

E. Chapter 4:35-38 is a well-known call for missionaries. Jesus is saying that people are waiting to hear the gospel so that they can respond and join the church. Africa is ready to hear the truth about Jesus and become Christian. Africans Teaching Africans is growing very quickly because people want to hear the truths about Jesus. People are tired of going to church and hearing lies; they want to hear the truths of the Bible. There is an urgent need for many more missionaries.

F. Verse 39-42 The woman spread the word about Jesus which caused others to come and be saved. This lady was a true evangelist.

9. Chapter 5 starts out talking about the Sabbath.

A. Verses 1-9 Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath and brings down the wrath of the Jewish leaders on Him. They should have been glad to see the man healed.

B. Verses 17-23 from this time on the Jewish leaders hated Jesus and tried to kill him. Here is a statement that Jesus is equal with God the Father because He, Jesus, is God. We see that Jesus has authority. He is to be worshipped; He and the Father are one.

C. Verse 18 says that the Jews would not accept this and sought to kill Him. It is true today that many will not accept Jesus as He really is; they want to manufacture a god who pleases their own sinful desires.

D. Verses 24-29 teach more about Jesus authority. We see here that Jesus has the authority to save us, and that we are saved by (verse 24) our belief in Jesus.

i. This is a matter of life and death and many don't believe this teaching. There are three doctrines here: ii. Death is not the end of us, see Gen 25:8, Hebrews 11:35, John 11:21-24 and many others.

iii. There are two places to exist after death. Hell see Revelation 21:8 and heaven see Revelation 21:4 iv. Where you go depends on your relationship with Jesus.

E. Will God allow you a second chance? No, He made the rules and there is no second chance. Remember our study at Luke 16:19-26 which tells us that a person can't travel from hell to heaven. Remember one of God's attributes or characteristics is that He does not change—ever.

F. John 5:39-44 The Jews misuse scripture. Verse 39 says the purpose of all scripture is to point to Christ. The Jews made the Bible an end to itself. They studied it for their own purposes. They make Jesus only a man and not the God that He is—do you do this? They worship the Bible and not the author. They only emphasize certain parts of the Bible. They study the Bible but not God. They felt that works such as memorizing Scripture would save them. We know that we are saved only by faith and not by works. The Jews felt good about obeying rules and they never understood that Christianity is all about our correct relationship with Jesus. We aren't saved by obeying rules.

G. Verses 45-47 Jesus says that it is the words of the Bible that are the people's accuser. The people ignored the teaching of God as delivered through Moses and they are already condemned.

10. Chapter 6 verses 1-14 Reports the only miracle which is reported in all four gospels. By this time Jesus had attracted a large following. The people followed Him because they wanted something from Him.

A. The people were physically hungry, and there was no human way to meet their need so they turn to Jesus. Jesus alone is sufficient to meet this need which this story reports he did and they were fed.

B. John 6:30-35 & 48 & 51 talks about how the people have another need, another hunger—spiritual; they need salvation. They must recognize their need and that there is no human way to meet this need. They must turn to Jesus to meet their spiritual need as this spiritual need can only be met by Jesus. When we turn to Him, He will meet this need. He alone is sufficient--more than sufficient. Just as He supplies our daily bread, He is our spiritual bread.

i. We know that we need physical bread daily to live. We also need spiritual bread daily to live.

ii. We need to grow spiritually from this bread of life, and we do when we pray and read the Bible daily. Remember, men have died for the privilege of reading the Bible. Do you read it every day?

iii. Verse 49 Jesus reminds the people that in the desert God provided physical bread which they ate and which provided physical nourishment, but they still died.

ii. Verse 51 then He talks about spiritual bread which will keep us alive forever spiritually. This is provided by God and is permanent unlike the manna in the desert.

iii. At the end of verse 51 Jesus refers to the sacrifice that he will offer with His body.

C. Let's look at verse 37 which says that God will accept all who come to Him and He will never cast out any

of those who seek Him. This means that Jesus will adopt all people sent to Him and that once Jesus accepts a person as a Christian that Jesus will make sure that this person will stay a Christian all the way to heaven. This person will never lose his salvation.

i. John 6:40 teaches the same thing which is that once a person becomes a Christian, he will always stay a Christian. God will make sure this person is not ever lost and that this person goes to heaven.

D. Verses 6:41-47 tell us that this caused the Jews to complain about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." John 6:42 they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

E. John 6:43 Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves." He tells them the rules about becoming a Christian in verses 44-47. Many people are not happy to accept God as He is. We want to change Him. The problem is that if He changed He would not be perfect anymore, and He would no longer be God. We must submit to God, and not try to change Him.

i. All the false gods are manmade inventions, and they are a horrible burden on the people who worship them. Witchcraft and witch doctors are examples of the kind of gods men make. They are horrible gods. Isaiah 46:1-4 talks about the burden idols are and compares them to God who helps us.

11. John 6:51-59. This passage is taken mistakenly by some people who think Christianity is a religion of cannibals. This really refers to spiritual feasting. We spiritually take Jesus into our bodies and just like digested food He becomes a permanent part of us.

A. John 6:66-68 teaches that at times only a few remained with Jesus but that He will always have His faithful followers. Many followers fall away when the going gets rough—how about you? The people who fall away were never really Christian.

B. John 6:69-71 We read here the reply of Peter to the falling away of people from Jesus. Peter is loyal, but Jesus predicts that one of His disciples will betray him, and we know that this is Judas.

12. John chapter 8:1-11. This story is not reported in the earliest manuscripts, but the story is consistent with the rest of the book and there are some lessons for us.

A. Adultery requires a man. Leviticus 20:10 tells us the man should also be punished along with the woman.

B. We must remember verse seven when we seek to punish someone. We should only punish someone when justice demands it; not because of personal desire or enjoyment. This is a good rule to follow when we punish children. Remember, we all have plenty to be punished for. The Jews here only arranged this confrontation to trap Jesus and not for justice.

13. Chapter 8:12-59.

A. In verses 12-16 Jesus makes the statement that He is God. The Pharisees in verse 13 call Jesus a liar, and this causes Jesus to make accusations against them:

- i. Verse 15 having faulty human judgment.
- ii. Verse 19 not knowing God the Father. Isaiah 1:3 teaches the same message.
- iii. Verses 21 & 24 perishing in their sins.
- iv. Verse 23 of being worldly and full of sin.

v. Verse 34 of being slaves to sin.

vi. Verse 44 of being children of the devil. Every person is either a child of the devil or a child of God. Before

our salvation we were children of Satan.

B. This is all true, but it made the Jews very angry with Jesus. Let's look at their reaction:

- i. Verse 41 they accuse Him of illegitimate birth.
- ii. Verse 48 they accuse Jesus of being a Samaritan and not a Jew and that He is a demon.

C. Verse 59 reports how they tried to kill Him, but they could not do this because it was not in their power.

14. Chapter 9:1-3 we see Jesus go from being threatened with death to immediately being presented with a human need for mercy. How many of us could control our emotions and immediately go from an angry confrontation to doing an act of mercy as Jesus did? It shows the great the love of Jesus is for people.

A. Verses 2-3 we are presented with the wrong idea that specific sins always causes a person to have problems. The thought is that if you re ill then the illness was caused by your specific sin. This was a common idea back in Bible times and also today. Look at Luke 13:1-5 to see that this is not true.

B. While it is true that all suffering is caused by sin; your particular suffering is not necessarily caused by a specific sin although it could be. Often false preachers manipulate people by telling them they are suffering because of something they did. It is very cruel to tell a person that he is suffering because of what he did; even if it is true. For example, if a person is dying because of Aids caused by sexual sin don't add to his misery by pointing out that it was his sin which is causing his suffering.

C. Some illnesses are caused by the sins of someone else. Examples of this are Aids or fetal alcohol syndrome damage (which is caused by a pregnant mother drinking alcohol during pregnancy).

15. Chapter 10 we see Jesus pictured as the good shepherd. A shepherd takes very good care of His sheep. He makes the statement that he is the way to salvation and that He is the Shepherd who will give up his life to save His people.

A. Verses 27-29 are of great comfort to all Christians. Jesus is saying that he will never let go of His children. In other words, if you are saved then you will stay saved. This is very comforting.

B. This new claim to be able to save people caused the Jews in verse 39 to again seek to arrest Him. Once again He escaped because they lacked the power to arrest Him. They could only arrest Jesus if He allowed them to do it.

C. Verses 19-21 and 42 reports division among the Jews and that many believed in Him.

16. Chapter 11:1-44 is the story of Lazarus dying, being buried, and then Jesus raises him from the dead and restores him to life.

A. This story shows that Jesus does have power over life and death and He is God because only God has this power. Verse 15 tells us that a purpose for this story is to cause people to believe.

B. Verse 35 says Jesus wept. Why did He weep? After all He knew that Lazarus was going to come back to life.

i. He showed his love for people as He shared the people's grief.

ii. He showed that it is all right for people to grieve over the death of a loved one even knowing that the loved one is in heaven. Sermons have been wrongly preached saying that we should not weep for those who have recently departed for heaven.

iii. Some say He wept because of sadness over the futility of death.

C. Verses 4 and 40 tell us that another purpose of this story was to show the glory of

Jesus.

D. Chapter 11:45 reports that some of the people started believing in Jesus because He raised Lazarus from

the dead. Others continued to be blind and ignore the fact that Jesus had proved that He was God. Verses 46- 53 report that the blind ones made plans to kill Him.

i. Chapter 12:9-11 also tells how people started believing in Jesus because of His raising Lazarus from the dead. This caused the chief priest to try to kill Lazarus.

17. Chapter 12:1-8 is a story of how Mary honored Jesus by anointing his feet with costly ointment. This was done to honor Jesus at a dinner given for him.

A. Verses 12-19 report how Jesus triumphantly entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey as prophesied in Zechariah 9:9. The church celebrates the Sunday before Easter, because of verse 13, as Palm Sunday. Luke 19:33-38 reports that the crowds welcomed Jesus as a hero on Sunday and on Thursday they wanted to kill Him. Humans can lift you up one minute and the next they condemn you. Only God is consistently faithful. 18. Chapters 13-17 are known as the upper room discourse. The night before His crucifixion Christ met with His disciples in the upper room to teach them the new responsibilities and privileges that would be theirs as a result of His death, In other words, it is time for the disciples to grow up and take responsibility as empowered by the Holy Spirit for starting and spreading Christianity all over the known world. Acts reports that they did this very thing.

A. Chapter 13 verses 3-10 reports that Jesus washes the feet of His disciples. There is a lot to be learned about humility in this action as we read that God Himself washed the feet of lowly human beings. We must copy Jesus and serve with humility. We are not ordered to wash feet; remember this was a cultural thing at the time of the Bible.

B. In verse 10-11 Jesus mentions that one of His disciples is a traitor.

C. Verse 16 teaches us that we must submit in humility to Jesus who is greater than the leadership in the church or anybody. His wisdom is best.

i. Verses 34-35 Jesus issues a new command about how we are to love each other. See Mark 12:31 to see how important this is.

ii. Verses 37-38 reports how Peter boasted of his courage and how Jesus predicted that Peter's courage would fail. This is a well-known story. We must be careful about boasting.

19. Chapter 14:1-4 Jesus continues to prepare His disciples for His imminent death, and teaches a message of great comfort.

A. Verse 1 tells them to trust God and be comforted.

B. Verse 2 Jesus tells them that Heaven has room for everybody, and He is going to prepare a place for them to join Him.

C. Verses 3-4 Jesus tells them that He will return and take them to heaven. This is a message to help comfort them through the coming difficult days. This should also comfort us because this message is meant for all Christians.

D. We come in verses 5- 6 to a very important doctrine. The question is do you believe in Jesus alone? John 14:6 says “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through me.”

i. A Christian is one who puts his faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone. Christianity is an exclusive religion; our God is a jealous God. He shares His glory with no one, see Isaiah 48:11. We are to have nothing to do with witch doctors and we are not to believe any superstitions.

ii. Many churches in the world are starting to teach that all good moral people go to heaven no matter what they believe. We must never allow this teaching to enter our churches. The Bible is very clear that the only way we are going to go to heaven is through our belief and trust in Jesus Christ alone.

E. Jesus in verse 9 states that He is one with God the Father, and our understanding of the trinity verifies this. In other words Jesus is God.

F. Chapter 14 verses 12-14 are often misunderstood.

i. This verse is talking about evangelizing. Jesus is saying in verse 12 that the disciples spiritual power will

be greater than His after He ascends to heaven because He Jesus only worked in Israel and He only reached a few people with His message. The disciples will be given the Holy Spirit to help them and with His help these disciples will plant the church all over the known world and reach many more people than Jesus did.

G. Verses 13-14 teach that when we petition God for proper things in the name of Jesus we will be given these things.¹

H. John 14:15 gives us instruction about loving Jesus. We love Him by obeying Him. There is a lot of teaching throughout the New Testament about the importance of showing love for God by obeying Him.

I. Jesus promises us the third member of the Trinity who is God the Holy Spirit. Verses 16-17 describe what this means to believers.

i. We see His purpose is to help us. Acts 1:8 says that The Holy Spirit gives us power. Our Christian walk is done with the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the power which gives us boldness when we need it such as when we evangelize or come under persecution.

ii. Verse 16 tells us that when the Holy Spirit comes into us He will never leave us.

iii. This means that when we are saved, the Holy Spirit enters us (1 Cor. 6:19) and since He will never leave us we are secure in our salvation. We Christians can relax knowing that nothing will keep us from going to heaven see Romans 8:35-39.

I Verse 20 also teaches us about the unity of our one God and the church.

J. Verses 21-24 again reinforce the idea of loving God by obeying Him.

20. Chapter 15:1-17 Jesus explains that there is now a new relationship between Himself, the disciples, and all Christians. We are all united. Jesus is the vine and we are the branches.

A. This tells us that all Christians are to be active in serving God and that we are given power in our service through our connection with Jesus. We are privileged to be able to serve God, but if we fail to serve Him we may lose the privilege of serving Him. He may not ask us to serve if we keep saying no when He ask us.

B. Verses 9-13 tell us about God's love for us, and again we read about the connection between our obedience and our love for God.

C. Verses 12-13 tell us of God's great love for us. It is a love so strong that Jesus willingly died for us. We see this idea in Romans 5:7-8.

D. In verses 14-15 Jesus tells us that we have a new relationship with Him. He considers us His friends. What an honor this is. We are also His fellow kingdom workers; see 1 Corinthians 3:9.

E. Verse 16 tells us that Jesus chose us to be His friend and His fellow worker. We are his fellow workers. 23

F. The rest of the chapter Jesus teaches that we should expect to be persecuted just as He was. We read here that this hatred is without cause, but we must expect persecution. Verses 18-19 says the world hates Jesus so the world also hates us.

21. Chapter 16 verses 1-4 tell us the reason that we are warned to expect persecution and suffering is so that we will be prepared and with God's help we will not be defeated. It is so that we will stand firm in the faith. There is much teaching in the New Testament that prepares us to suffer. Currently many Christians are being persecuted for their faith.

A. Chapter 16:5-8 teaches more about the Holy Spirit.

B. Jesus says He is going away, but He will be replaced as our helper by God the Holy Spirit. C. God the Holy Spirit will convict us of our sin and cause us to become Christians.

D. Jesus teaches in this section that the disciples will be sorry when He leaves, but the sorrow will turn to joy because they will understand that He will overcome the world.

22. Chapter 17 is a wonderful prayer for His church. This prayer is known as the High Priestly Prayer. Jesus is our high priest and here He is praying for Christians only.

A. This is the real Lord's Prayer. What we call the Lord's Prayer is found in Luke 11:1-4 and teaches us how to pray. Here is the actual prayer that Jesus prayed for us.

B. His first request verses 1-5 is to be restored to His former glory before He came to earth as a human. Jesus gave up some of His glory when he came to earth.

C. Beginning in verse 6 He prays for all Christians. In verses 9 and 20 He states that this prayer is only for His people and not the unsaved world. We Christians are special to God.

D. In verse 11 and 15 Jesus prays for God to keep us faithful even in our trials. Note in verse 15 that Jesus does not ask God to take us out of the world but to save us from persecution. He ask God to preserve us in the faith and protect us from harm from the evil one. I have read of Christians being persecuted praying a similar prayer. They don't ask God to remove them from the persecution, but that God's purpose in their suffering would be accomplished and that they might remain faithful to God.

E. Jesus is praying in verse 17 that we would be holy, and in verse 22 that we be united as one body. He also asks that we will be with Him (verse 24).

F. Verses 14-16 tell us that the world will hate us because we are not really of this world. This world is where Satan lives and rules while our real home is heaven. Your unsaved

family and friends will often think that you are crazy because of your behavior as a Christian. They just can't understand you.

23. Chapter 18 verses 1-11 reports the story of the arrest of Jesus which takes place in the garden that Mark identifies as the garden of Gethsemane. Jesus freely admitted who He was so it was not necessary for Judas to betray Jesus. We must understand and appreciate that Jesus was not forced to go to the cross; nobody is strong enough to make Jesus do anything. He did it because He loved you and me.

A. Verses 12- 27 report that Jesus stood trial before the Sanhedrin which was the Jewish court. The Sanhedrin sent Jesus to the Roman court because the Sanhedrin was not allowed to sentence a person to death.

B It was during this trial that Peter three times denied knowing Jesus and verse 25-27 tells us the cock crowed, which Jesus had predicted in chapter 13. There is a remarkable lesson for us in how defeated Peter must have been at this point and yet Jesus later made great effort to build Peter up so that he became one of the leaders of the church.

C. The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus but they did not have the authority to do this; so they sent Him to the Pontius Pilate the Roman governor who had the power to execute Jesus.

D. Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent, see John 18: 38 and chapter 19 verses 4 & 6. He tried to release Jesus (see verse 12), but the Jews were against this. Pilate wanted to please the Jews so he sentenced Jesus to be crucified even though he knew Jesus was innocent.

24. Chapter 19 reports about the crucifixion and burial of Jesus. We see that a number of Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in the crucifixion of Jesus. Even though the crucifixion of Jesus was prophesied in the Old Testament, there is no excusing this sin.

A. Psalm 22:18 is fulfilled in John 19:24

B. Psalm 34:20 prophesied that no bone would be broken when Jesus was killed. John 19:33 & 36 confirm this happened.

C. Zechariah 12:10 is fulfilled in chapter 19:37.

D. Jesus suffered terribly on the cross both physically and emotionally. Crucifixion was the most painful death known to man—it was extreme torture. Also, for the only time in all eternity, God the father turned His back on Jesus. Study Psalm 22:1-22 to get a good understanding of how much Jesus suffered for us.

E. Verses 30 and 33 report that Jesus was dead. It is important that we make this clear because enemies of the church said then and now that He did not really die, and that He was only wounded and that He recovered. There is absolutely no doubt that Jesus died.

- i. It was on the cross that Jesus won the war against Satan.
- ii. It was on the cross that Jesus paid for every sin that was or will be committed by every Christian who ever lived or will ever live.
- iii. Satan is still fighting, but he is defeated. The cross is all important to us.

24. Chapter 20 verses 1-10 report that the tomb is empty, and the body of Jesus is missing. His followers did not remember that Jesus had said that He would rise from the dead. Even though this had been predicted way back in Psalm 16:10 and earlier by Jesus Himself in several places such as Luke 24:46.

A. The rest of the chapter sees Jesus appearing to various people. It is interesting to note that, as verse 14 reports, Jesus first appeared to a woman. Actually, as reported in Luke 24, He appeared to many women. 25. Chapter 21 verses 1-14 report that Jesus then shows Himself to His disciples.

A. Verses 15-19 tell how Jesus ministered to Peter to rebuild him. Peter felt very discouraged after he had denied knowing Jesus. We read here how Jesus took Peter and restored him to useful service. The lesson for us is that no matter how low in life you are, Jesus can restore you to useful service in the kingdom. Peter became one of the strongest church leaders.

B. Jesus, in verses 18-19, talks about how Peter is going to die. Tradition reports that Peter was crucified.

i. These verses also describe how many old people live. Old people lose the ability to do things for themselves and so often other people take care of them. Often old people have to be taken care of just like when they were babies.

C. John closes His book by stating that Jesus did so much that there aren't enough books to write down all His deeds.

As we close our study of the gospels it is important to say that there is no doubt about the death and resurrection of Jesus.

His death on the cross is where He was punished for our sins, and it was this punishment which allows us to go to heaven. This is where Satan lost the war. His resurrection is proof of this.

The enemies of the church have always tried to spread lies which would hurt the beliefs of the church. So, down through history different statements have been made by the church to reaffirm, in a simple statement, the truths of the Bible. One of these is known as the Apostle's Creed. Let's briefly look at this.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic (universal and not Roman Catholic) church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. AMEN.

Acts of the Apostles

This book discusses the last appearance of Jesus on earth and His ascension to heaven. It covers the establishment and spread of the church. The church took advantage of the roads and common language of the Roman Empire to spread all over the known world. The book of Acts is very easy to read and full of action. There is much instruction for us about how to worship and how to conduct church business. The earliest churches were established by the Apostles, and we can learn much by observing their actions.

We learn about the office of elder and deacon in the church, and their proper roles as church leaders. We learn much about God the Holy Spirit who is our great helper and protector and teacher.

Just as today, the early church faced persecution. The earliest persecutors were the Jews. Rome itself recognized that Christianity was a spiritual thing and that it did not threaten the government. It was thirty years later that Rome started persecuting Christians.

Battling Judaism was a problem both externally and inside the church. We read in Acts how the Jews tried to destroy the church, and how the Apostle Paul was one of the fiercest enemies of the church before he became a Christian. The Jews who became Christian often wanted to bring their Jewish practices with them and force them on others. We will see the battle that was fought to establish the fact that Christianity was a separate faith open to all peoples, and that the gentiles were not inferior Christians.

Miracles are an important part of the book of Acts. Altogether there were twenty-five miracles reported. They ranged from raising the dead to prison doors opening to Paul's snakebite which did not affect him. This extraordinary outpouring of miracles helped build the infant church. The miracles testified to the truth of the gospel message that the people were hearing.

Chapter 1 verses 1-11 tell us about the last days that Jesus was on earth and describes His ascension to heaven. He spent forty days on earth before He went to heaven, and He was seen by many people. Verse 1-2 tells us that He spent His time teaching and commanding until He ascended to heaven.

1. Verse 8 records the last known words of Jesus just before He went to heaven. We know that a person is only going to speak about what is most important to him when he knows that this will be his last words ever to his audience. Jesus once again commands us to tell others about Him all over the world. The second most important task of the church after worship is evangelizing. Verse 8 is a good verse to memorize. It tells us to evangelize in our home village, and surrounding towns, and around Uganda, and around the world.

A. The apostles and the early church certainly took this instruction to heart. They quickly spread the gospel all around the Roman Empire and even further. However, the zeal for spreading Christianity all over the world quickly disappeared and so today much of the world is not Christian. Most Christians do not tell others about Jesus which is wrong.

2. Verses 9-11 describe how Jesus rose to heaven—lifted up by a cloud. Verse 11 tells us that He will return the same way. We know that Jesus is coming back, but we don't know when, and any person who prophesies the date when Jesus will return is a liar.

3 The rest of chapter describes what happens as they wait for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. We see in verse 14 that they spent their time praying as a group. A church is to pray together.

A. In verse 15 we see Peter assuming a place of leadership in the church. He certainly is a different Peter from the days at the end of Jesus' life.

B. Verse 26 tells us that Matthias is chosen to replace Judas. We really know nothing about him other than that he was the replacement for Judas.

C. Apostles were men who were sent out with special authority from Jesus. For example, Romans 11:13 tells us Paul was an Apostle to the gentiles. An apostle in the Bible is defined as a follower of Jesus who has physically seen Jesus. 1 Corinthians 9:1

F. Disciples are followers of Jesus and so we Christians are all disciples of Jesus. Gathering together and praying are very important parts of a Christians life. This is mentioned many times in the Bible. Acts 2:46-47, Acts 4:23-24, Acts 5:12, Acts 15:25, Romans 15:6, Ephesians 5:18 for example.

Chapter 2 verses 1-13 tell about the Holy Spirit descending which is a very important event. This occurred fifty days after Easter Sunday.

1. Verses 1-3 describe the way the Holy Spirit descended.

2. Verses 4-13 tell how the Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit and they spoke to people, who did not speak their language, and these people were able to understand the Christians as they shared the Gospel. This is called speaking in tongues. Note that the purpose of speaking in tongues is to allow people to understand a message that they ordinarily could not understand. Look at 1 Corinthians 14:26-28 to find further instruction about the use of tongues.

A. Acts 10:46 also talks about the use of tongues for communicating about God. The primary use of tongues in the Bible was to be able to communicate the truth about God.

3. Peter then in chapter 2:14-36 delivers a powerful sermon.

A. He first talks about the time they were living in as being one of fulfillment of prophecies. He also talks several different times about the prophecies that were being fulfilled with the coming of Jesus.

i. His first point is that the people are not drunk. This outpouring of the Holy Spirit was predicted in the Book of Joel 2:28-32.

ii. Earlier in Acts 1:16 & 20 Peter spoke that the betrayal of Jesus by Judas was predicted in the Old Testament see Psalm 41:9.

iii. In Acts 3:18 Peter told how it was predicted that Jesus would suffer (Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53).

iv. Acts 2:23-28 Peter told that the resurrection was predicted in Ps. 16:10 which says Jesus will see no corruption which is normal for person destined to stay in a grave. This is because Jesus will not stay in the grave.

v. Acts 2:33-35 tells that the ascension was predicted in Psalm 110:1.

4. Acts 2:41 tells the immediate reactions to Peter's sermon as 3,000 people were immediately converted to Christianity.

5. Verses 42-47 describe how the believers fellowshiped. We see that they were devoted to teaching and fellowship which is a good model for us. We learn from verse 47 that God is the one who adds people to the church.

Chapter 3:6 we see that Peter and John were given power to heal. This verse tells us that this power came from Jesus. Note that they did not charge anything to heal this person. Verses 11- 26 give us the reason that they had this power and why they healed this man. It was to cause people to come to Jesus.

Chapter four verses 1-4 tell us that the religious leaders got upset because they could see that the actions of Peter and John were causing people to believe in Jesus so they arrested Peter and John. Why such opposition?

1. We read in verse 4 that about 5,000 men were converted in addition to the 3,000 that chapter 2:41 reports were saved at Pentecost. The authorities threatened and warned the apostles not to speak anymore about Jesus. In verses 19-20 Peter and John boldly said they would continue speaking the truth. We Christians today must also have this boldness to tell people about Jesus even when it is dangerous to do this.

Chapter 5:1-11 reports the well-known story about Ananias and Sapphira. This story happened at a time when people were selling their land and donating the money to the church. Ananias and his wife promised to do the same, but after making this commitment they kept back some of the money for themselves. They were not required to give any of the money to the church. However, once they promised the money to God it became God's money. The penalty for stealing it was death. We must be careful to keep our promises to God. Why do you think Ananias promised money to God when He really did not want to give the money away? Maybe it was to boast about his generosity? We must try, to the best of our ability, to keep any promises we make to God. If we fail to keep the promise because we are unable to keep it, God will forgive us. God knows our hearts and will only hold us accountable if we choose to not keep our promise.

1. Chapter 5 also tells how the apostles were arrested, and verses 18-20 tell how an angel of the Lord let them out of prison and ordered them to go to the temple and teach the gospel. Once again the apostles were brought to the Jewish leaders. Verses 28 and 29 teach a very

important lesson. We are to obey the laws of the land unless the laws of the land are against God's laws. Then we are to obey God's laws and disobey man's laws. We are to do this even when it is dangerous to us. We see, in verse 40, that they beat the apostles. Note the attitude of the apostles in verse 41 and that they continued as verse 42 reports to teach about Jesus. These Christian workers would not allow anything to stop them from continuing to serve God.

Chapter 6:1-7 the office of deacon is started. Chapter six tells us that seven men were chosen to do the routine work, such as taking care of widows, so that the apostles (elders) could concentrate on preaching and teaching the word of God. We see that the office of deacon is ordained by God.

A. verse 7 tells us the result of the elders being able to concentrate on preaching the gospel was an increase in the number of Christians.

Chapters 6:9-7:60 reports how Stephen the first deacon mentioned became the first Christian martyr.

1. Chapters 6:9-7:1 Stephen is seized and brought before the Jewish council.

A. Chapter 6:12-14 tells how they lied and brought false charges against him.

B. Verses 10 and 15 report that Stephen was empowered by the Holy Spirit and that he had complete peace as he confronted his accusers and murderers.

C. Chapter 7 verse one see Stephen asked if the charges were true. He begins, in verse 2, a long speech reciting the history of the Jewish people starting with Abraham and ending with the building of the temple.

2. In verses 51-53 Stephen makes accusations against the Jewish leaders which of course made them very angry with Stephen. They at once stoned him to death.

A. Where did Stephen get his boldness from? Verse 55 tells us that it was from God the Holy Spirit. The lesson for us is that we must be prepared to die if necessary for the cause of the kingdom, but we must look to God for the wisdom to act as Stephen did, and the courage he showed. The Christian church was built on the blood of the martyrs of the church. Acts 12:2, Matthew 14:10,

B. Look at verse 58 to see that a future Christian leader was part of the stoning of Stephen. Who was this?

Chapters 8 and 9 are about Saul-Paul.

1. Chapter 8 verses 1-3 we see that Saul is very active in attacking and murdering Christians.

2. Then we read in 9:3-8 Paul experienced what is called Paul's Damascus Road experience where he meets the Lord and is converted. Look at verse 15 where God says that Paul is chosen by Him to spread the gospel, and in verse 16 God predicts that Paul would suffer serving God and history reports that Paul did suffer.

3. In Acts 9:20 we read that Paul immediately began teaching about Jesus. Often new converts are very eager to share the news about Jesus, but after they have done this for a short time, they lose interest. We must follow the example of Paul who never lost interest in telling people the truth about how to be saved. We must be ready to work the rest of our lives to reach people with the story of Jesus.

Chapters 9:36-chapter 12

1. Chapter 9:36-42, Peter restores a woman named Dorcas to life. These verse report that many were converted to Christianity because of this.

2. We read in verse 41 that another name for Christians is saints. All Christians are saints. Not just a few designated ones.

3. Chapter 10-11:18 teaches two important things.

A. We see in verses 10:9-16 and 11:5-10 that the ceremonial laws about clean and unclean foods were done away with. Jesus actually taught this back in Mark 7:14-19 when He explained that it was not anything that went into a person that made the person unclean. It was what came out of a person that made him clean or unclean. It is the heart which sends forth evil thoughts and deeds.

B. This was done to prepare Peter and the rest of the believers to welcome the gentiles into the church. Peter now preaches to Cornelius the message of salvation through faith in Jesus and Cornelius and his friends were saved. Chapter 10 verse 44 says the Holy Spirit fell on these people.

C. In chapter 11 verses 2-3 Peter was criticized by the faction of Jewish Christians who did not understand that Jesus was for all peoples. A major problem in the early church was that many of the Jewish Christians either did not want to welcome gentiles, or they felt that gentile Christians must be circumcised and obey all the Jewish laws to become Christians. Peter answers the critics by explaining the message he received from God. Verse 18 of chapter 11 says that they must understand that God has granted repentance

to all peoples. God loves all His people equally. He does not favor one race of people or old Christians over new ones.

3. Acts 11:26 tells us that it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.

4. Chapter 12 tells us that there was great persecution of Christians by the Jews which caused many of the Christians to flee to many different parts of the world. This was the way many parts of the world were evangelized because these fleeing Christians told the gospel to their new friends and neighbors.

A. In verse 2 we learn that The Apostle James is beheaded by order of King Herod Agrippa. Verse 3 reports that Peter is arrested. We see that by the hand of God Peter was released from prison. Herod did these things so that he could please the Jews even though he knew it was wrong to persecute James and Peter.

B. Verses 21-23 report how Herod accepted praise that he was God and God immediately punished King Herod as reported in verse 21- 23 with death. The death that he suffered was extremely painful.

Chapter 13-14 the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas. We know that Paul went on at least three missionary journeys.

1. Verse 2 of chapter 13 tells us that the Holy Spirit called Paul and Barnabas to be set aside to be missionaries. Verse 3 is good instruction for us about the importance of praying and fasting before starting the Lord's work. We must feel the call of God before we undertake to do His work. A good way to know if you are called by God is to fast and pray and ask God for his guidance. Note that sending out of missionaries is part of the earliest church. We should be doing the same. We can send our missionaries right next door as well as around the world.

2. The first missionary journey is to the gentiles who lived in what we call Asia Minor or modern Turkey. They had both success as people were converted and failures because of strong opposition. The local Jews often opposed them, and we read in chapter 14:19-20 that the opposition stoned Paul and almost killed Him. However, we read that Paul then went to another city and again preached the gospel. Paul really loved the Lord and he would not stop preaching even if it cost him his life. Are we willing to serve God even if we lose our life doing this or do we just follow God to see what good things we can get? Paul's attitude is the correct attitude for a Christian.

3. Acts 14:23 the early Church fasted when they ordained elders. We should learn from their example and do the same.

Chapter 15 talks about disagreements in the church

1. Some of the Jewish Christians were insisting that the gentile converts must be circumcised; this was wrong. Paul, Barnabas, and other church leaders said that requiring circumcision was wrong because requiring circumcision would be requiring work for salvation. The Bible teaches that salvation is by faith alone and that Jesus did all the work.

2. Agreement was reached that circumcision was not required and verses 19-20 report they sent out letters announcing this. The letters asked that the Jewish Christians and the gentile Christians should refrain from doing things that would offend each other. The Jewish Christians should not insist on the gentiles being circumcised and the gentiles should refrain from practices like eating blood. This was a good decision because they stood firm on the issue of forced circumcision which was not Biblically correct, but they compromised on minor issue of eating blood so that they did not offend their brothers. We must do this also.

A. A modern example is how we Christians should not fight with each other about how we are to be baptized. Some Christians believe a person must be completely immersed and others believe in sprinkling with water. We should not argue with each other about this because the way a person is baptized will not save anybody. All Christians must work together.

3. We see in verse 28 an important principle. The only rules Christians must follow are from the Bible. We must refrain from adding man made rules like the Pharisees did which made Jesus so angry. An example is when churches prohibit cooking on Sunday.

4. Verses 36-41 report that Paul and Barnabas argued over taking Mark with them on their next mission trip. They ended up separating and going to different places and not working together again. Unlike what often happens in our modern church, we don't see that they fought with each other. It is all right to disagree about issues such as the direction ministry should take, but we must remain friends and continue to work together for the kingdom. There was a positive result from their splitting and each going to different place to evangelize. They were able to reach twice as many places with the gospel.

Chapter 16-20 covers Paul's second and third missionary journey which we will mostly skip over due to a lack of time. We do want to look at a few points. It is good for you to read all of these chapters by yourself.

1. Acts 16:7 is a lesson for us to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit. God is in charge, and we must try to determine His will and obey Him.
2. Acts 17:23 tells how stupid people can be because they would rather worship an unknown God than the true God who has revealed himself through Scripture. All through history people have always wanted to worship the false gods they have created instead of the only true God. Now in many modern societies many people have decided there is no God; instead they make science their god. They worship a false god they have made themselves. They worship an unknown god just as verse 23 says.
3. Acts 17:29-31 reports that before Jesus came, God was more lenient with people. However now all the mysteries of salvation have been revealed and all people are called to repentance and belief in Jesus. Paul in these three verses gives us three reasons to repent now. During Old Testament times Jews were saved by looking forward to an unidentified Messiah. We are now saved by looking back to the cross to Jesus who we now know by name.
 - A. God has been patient with us, but time is running out and He could act at any time against those who have not repented.
 - B. God has ordered all people to repent to be saved. Acts 2:38
 - C. God has appointed a final day of reckoning when Jesus will be the final judge.
4. Chapter 20:7 tells that that the early church met on the first day of the week which is Sunday.

Chapters 21-26 tell about Paul's time back in Jerusalem.

1. Chapter 21 sees Paul arrested again because of his bold stand for the gospel.
2. Chapter 23 sees Paul brought before the same Jewish council where Jesus received His unfair trial.
3. The Jews were fighting with each other so fiercely that it appeared a riot would start so the Roman tribune took him away. In verse 11 of chapter 23 God tells Paul that the reason for all of this is that this is God's way of sending Paul to Rome to evangelize.
4. Verse 12-14 reports that the Jews were so angry with Paul that forty of them took a rash vow not to eat or drink before they kill Paul. Perhaps they soon died of thirst and hunger because God did not allow them to kill Paul.
5. Paul is a Roman citizen which gives him special protection under the law and so Paul is sent to Felix the governor who examines Paul and then sends him to prison where he stayed for the next two years. A new governor named Festus offers Paul a trial by Jewish judges which Paul wisely refuses. Paul has the right as a Roman citizen to demand trial by Caesar which Acts 25:11 reports he does. This is how God planned to send Paul to

Rome where God wanted him to go.

6. Next, we see King Agrippa comes to meet with Festus, and together they examine Paul. In Acts 25:25 Festus admits that he has found nothing wrong in what Paul has done. The only reason that Festus does not release Paul is the same one as why Jesus was not released. It was to please the Jews even though it was wrong to do so. Both these governors and Pontius Pilate did the same thing by refusing to free a man they knew was innocent. We must always do what is right in God's eyes, and not worry about what man thinks.

7. Chapter 26 reports how Paul defended himself by reciting his biography as a Pharisee, his conversion experience and how he preaches the gospel, which is the reason the Jews attack him.

A. Paul presents the gospel to King Agrippa who, in verse 24, declares that Paul must be crazy. Paul then tries to convince the king that he should become a Christian.

B. In verse 27 Paul concludes his attempt to convince Agrippa to become a Christian. Look at the stupid answer of Agrippa in verse 28 as he terminates the talk. So God allows Agrippa to harden his heart and refuse the lifesaving gospel. It was soon after this that Agrippa died and then it was too late for him to accept the God that Paul had presented to him.

7. Verses 31-32 report that neither Festus nor Agrippa can find anything that Paul did wrong. Paul could have been set free except that he had appealed for trial by Caesar the emperor of Rome. This was the method God used to move Paul out of Jerusalem and on to Rome.

Chapters 27-28 Paul goes to Rome.

1. The voyage to Rome was done at a dangerous time of the year during a time of fierce storms. We read that a fierce storm leaves Paul shipwrecked on the island of Malta. The ship was destroyed, but God saved the lives of everyone on board which Paul had earlier predicted in Acts 27:34.

2. Paul finds himself shipwrecked on the island of Malta which is close to Italy. God continues to protect him when a snake bites him and he does not suffer any problems because of this. A lesson for this is that we should do God's work with boldness. He will protect us as long as He has work for us, and then He will take us to heaven.

3. When the winter is over, Paul goes on to Italy. We see in chapter 28:14 that even in faraway Italy Christianity was already present.

4. We see, that even though Paul was under arrest, he still was allowed to teach his many visitors the truth about Jesus. We must understand that nothing will keep God's plans from being carried out, and God wanted Paul to continue teaching even in jail.

Romans

This is the first epistle or letter of Paul. There are 21 different letters written to instruct Christians about what they should believe in and how to live Christian lives. Some of the letters were written to correct errors in churches and individuals. Paul wrote 13 of the 21 letters.

The book of Romans was written to the Roman church before Paul went to Rome. This is an excellent book which teaches the basic doctrines of the church. We see that every person is accountable to God and needs personal salvation. Paul teaches about how to obtain righteousness, and how to properly live as a Christian. He teaches about how God will deal with the Jews. Paul not only tells us how to live properly before God; he set an example for us with his devotion to God and his continuing to serve God even when he is severely persecuted.

It is a very practical book. We could spend a year studying this book and not learn everything about it. I know of a pastor who spent nine years preaching through the book. The book of Romans presents many doctrines that were taught earlier in the Old Testament especially in the book of Isaiah. For example, God is completely sovereign and in control of everything that happens. Isaiah 43:1 God redeems us; Isaiah 43:21 & 25 God made us for His own purpose and He redeems us for His own purpose; Isaiah 44:1&2 God chooses who He will redeem. Isaiah 45:1-7 is a further statement about God's sovereignty. We will see these same teachings in Romans. The Bible is consistent throughout

St. Augustine and Martin Luther both used the book of Romans to develop their teachings about God. Luther learned from Romans that works played no part in salvation and that what he had been taught by the Roman Catholic Church about this subject was against the teachings of the Bible. We are justified by God's work alone. Ephesians 2:8-9

Martin Luther is regarded as the father of the Protestant church. All churches which are not Roman or Greek Catholic are Protestant. Martin Luther was very upset by the practice of selling indulgences by the Roman Catholic Church at the time. These indulgences were pardons from sin. You could buy one to be forgiven of a sin that you intended to do tomorrow. You could even buy them to have a dead persons sins

forgiven. Luther's reading of Romans showed how wrong the Roman Catholic Church was.

I. First section of Romans is about the fact that all humans are rightly condemned because of their sins. Romans 1 through 3:20

1. Paul starts out by greeting the people, and in verse one he identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus. In his greeting, Paul tells in verse 13 of his desire to travel to Rome. We know from reading Acts that he will soon have his wish fulfilled.

2. Chapter 1:14-23 teaches that God has revealed Himself to all men and that all men are guilty before God

A. We learn in verses 14-15 that the gospel is not just for the Jew, but for everyone both Jew and Gentile alike. This is a major theme of the book of Romans and the whole Bible. There is no difference in God's eyes between people of different races and backgrounds. Every Christian has equal importance in God's eyes. The pastor of your church is no closer to God than you are.

B. Verses 16-17 say that we should not be ashamed of the gospel because the gospel contains the instruction that leads to salvation. We must live by our faith in Jesus. God offered salvation first to the Jew and then to the gentiles, but most people rejected Jesus then and today.

C. Verse 17 tells us the righteous shall live by faith.

i. To get to heaven we must be justified as righteous before God. Justification is God's act of pardoning sinners and accepting them as righteous for Christ's sake. Being righteous and justified means that in God's eyes we are innocent of sin. This justification can only happen once in a person's life, and it is permanent.

ii. We receive this pardon through our faith in Jesus Christ. We receive this free gift by Jesus giving us His righteousness which is called imputation. What happens is that Jesus is given all our sins and He was punished on the cross for them.

iii. We all have faith in many things such as the chair we sit in being strong enough to hold us up. Saving faith refers to our belief and trust in Jesus who we can't see or touch.

3. Paul now deals with why we need salvation. Romans 1:18-20 Paul says God is angry with people because we are so sinful. He says that we have no excuse because we should know God because God reveals Himself to us. Revelation is what allows us to

know God. The word revelation means unveiling or showing what was hidden. This revelation means that we know we should worship the true God and we know in our hearts what is right to do and what is wrong to do

A. God reveals Himself to us in two ways. These are general and special revelation.

i. General revelation. All humans experience general revelation which is what we see of God as revealed in creation; in nature. All men can observe the world around us. Psalm 19:1-6; Rom 1:19, 20; 2:14, 15. In other words, nature proves there is a God, but this knowledge by itself is insufficient to save us because we can't identify Christ in it. In other words, we can see there is a God in nature, but we can't identify Jesus in nature.

ii. Special or Specific revelation is how we know the name of Jesus which is necessary for us to be saved. Romans 10:9-10 tells us that to be saved we must call on the name of Jesus. It is the revelation of God through the Bible which instructs us in the way to salvation through Jesus by name.

B. Scripture is how Jesus reveals Himself to us. All we know about God is found in the Bible. We do not know anything about God except what is in the Bible. The Bible is the word of God; it has no errors and it is authoritative. 1 Corinthians 2:13, 2 Timothy 3:16 The Bible is complete. Revelation 22:18-19 Remember-only believe what the Bible tells you about God and only teach what the Bible teaches about God.

C. Verse 20 teaches us that because God has revealed Himself to us, we have no excuse when we choose to not worship Him. We deserve our punishment; it is our fault when we choose to go to Hell.

E. We must look at verse 18 which talks about the wrath of God. We must teach our people about how bad the wrath of God is—we must warn people. The Old Testament does a good job teaching us about the wrath of God. Many people don't want to hear about God's wrath instead they want to hear pleasing messages about how good they are or messages of health, wealth, and prosperity. See 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

i. Many churches only preach messages that are pleasing to the ear. They approve or tolerate many sins such as homosexuality or divorce. These are not really Christian churches.

ii. Many pastors don't want to preach about the wrath of God because they want to have big churches. God wants pure churches before He wants big ones. He is more concerned about quality than numbers.

iii. Church leaders have a big responsibility to teach about the wrath of God. We must forcefully and diligently present this message to warn our people before it is too late and they are being judged by Jesus. Another reason to teach about the wrath of God is that we can't truly understand what God has saved us from without understanding the wrath of God. As we learn more about the wrath of God, we are more thankful because Jesus saved us from the eternal punishment of hell.

iv. There are more passages in the Bible warning about God's anger, fury, and wrath than about His love and tenderness. There are more than 600 passages about wrath see Exodus 22:22-24 and the book of Revelation for examples. God wants to make sure we are warned so we don't go to hell. It is a good rule for pastors is to preach about God's wrath but also to teach equally about His grace.

D. The summary of verses 18-20 is that all people know it is wrong to make their own gods such as idols. We also know that it is wrong to do such crimes as murder, rape, abortion, murder, etc. therefore there is no excuse for our crimes. Terrible punishment is coming for those who continue to disobey God.

4. Verses 21-23 read and see why God is angry with us. We just saw that God has revealed Himself to us and we have no excuse not to worship and obey Him.

A. As we just studied, all people know that certain things are wrong. God is angry because we choose to disobey Him which we know is wrong.

5. Verses 24-28 teach that because of the evil in people's hearts, God gave the people up to their sins. In other words God allows people to choose to continue to sin. He allows people to indulge and enjoy their sins. People do this without considering that there is punishment coming which we will study in chapter 2.

A. Verse 26 may mean that God just abandons the people to their sins. We see this in Europe which is spiritually dead but the people are still prosperous.

B. Verse 26 may also mean that God will punish the people by giving them poor government which will hasten the destruction of a people. See Isaiah 3:1-8. Look at the United States to see bad government which is ruining the country.

C. Consider, is your country under judgment?

D. The sin of homosexual behavior is used as the example of terrible sin in verses 26-27. This certainly relates to the western world. Forty years ago homosexuals were few in number and they hid their sin from the world. Now they show their sin, without any shame, to the whole world. Homosexuals are even allowed to marry in many countries. They suffer much in this world for their sin, especially in health matters, but the real punishment for unrepentant sin will come after death.

i. Homosexuality is a terrible sin and God absolutely hates this sin. Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13 He condemns this sin over and over. It is the reason He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

ii. Why does God so hate the sin of homosexual behavior? One reason He hates it is because it is an attack on the family. God instituted families when He instituted marriage (Genesis 2:24). Satan tries to destroy families and in many countries he has succeeded to a large degree.

How about here in Africa?? Is the family still strong??

6. Romans 1:28-32 repeats this idea that God allowed them to continue to sin and that their sins would increase and that eventually they would cease to consider what they are doing as being terrible sin. They no longer feel restrained by any thought of doing wrong, and lose all thought of coming punishment. The first time we choose to sin we may be conscious that it is wrong, but after we repeat this sin a few times we forget that it is a bad thing to do. Our sins such as lying or beating our wife get easier to do the more we repeat these sins; our consciences become numb. God abandons us to our sins and this is dangerous to us.

7. Chapter 2:1-5 tells us that nobody has a valid excuse for his sins and we will be held accountable for each sin. God's anger is building up because of our continued sinful hearts and His wrath and severity of punishment are building up.

A. Don't envy the unrepentant sinner who may be living a very luxurious life. Remember the story of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16; also read Psalm 46 especially verses 16-20. Just be concerned with your own walk with God. We are to live for eternity and not the pleasures of this world.

8. We see that at the right time God will punish unrepentant sinners. Chapter 2:6-16 say that every person will be held accountable for their actions. This means the Jews will be judged by their stand in Christ and not by their heritage. Ezekiel 18:30.

A. Verses 9-11 teach that God will judge us based on the facts and the facts alone. God's judgment will be impartial—no favorites.

B. Verses 12-15 teach that God will judge based solely on the law of God. There will be no excuse for not knowing the law.

C. Verse 16 teaches that we will be judged for all things including even secret things. God will judge the heart by His standards.

9. Chapter 2:17-29 Paul again addresses the Jew. He tells them that they will be judged by their actions. Many Jews felt that because of their special relationship with God they would not be punished by God. Paul wants to make sure that the Jews know that they are not excused from judgment just because they are Jews. All people including pastors will be judged.

A, In fact, in verses 17-24 Paul tells the Jews that they have a special duty because they have been instructed in the law and they are supposed to teach and live as examples. He scolds the Jews because they teach the law but they don't obey it. He tells them that such actions are an insult to God. We must do what we teach otherwise we are hypocrites.

B. Verses 25-29 He talks about circumcision which compares to baptism and also church membership, and he tells that these things do not make us right with God. Let us follow his thinking in the next verses.

i. Verse 25-26 he argues that circumcision/baptism is only an outward sign and is worthless if it is not also inward. Your baptism tells the world that you are a Christian, but it is your actions which prove if this is true. God wants to see that we have a correct heart or inner attitude towards Him. He wants to see that we truly try to obey His laws. Your heart attitude is more important than your outer appearance. Do you love the Christian life?

iii. Verse 27 says that we are set aside by our actions. The person who is God's shames the one who is not. In other words the gentile who belongs to God shames the Jew or any person who disobeys God.

iv. Verses 28-29 summarize this passage. The outward appearance is not as important to God as is the heart of a person. The heart is what God judges. A person can lie to another person but he can't lie to God.

We see examples of this over and over again in the Bible. Let's look at the book of Amos:

1. Amos 5:11-12 describes evil which comes from the heart.

2. Verse 16 describes judgment because of this.

3. Verse 21 God hates worship from these sinners because it is for external show only and not from the heart.

4. Verse 24 we see that God wants justice or a pure heart. We must worship God with clean, repentant hearts.

Every person ever born is judged by their actions and not by anything else. The Christian is judged by his action of belonging to Christ, of his faith in Christ. Many people think that they will be accepted by God because they grew up in a Christian home or they are members of a church. Just like the Jew they will only be acceptable if they belong to Jesus.

10. Romans chapter 3.

A. Verses 1-4. What advantage is there being born a Jew or into a Christian family? Paul answers this by saying that a Christian family has knowledge of God and so they teach the truth about Jesus to the child. This means a person born into a Christian family is more likely to become a Christian than a person born into a pagan family.

B. 3:9-18 tells us that no person is righteous and that we are all condemned for our actions. (We will see more of this in Romans 9).

i. We see here the doctrine of total depravity. This is that all humans except Jesus inherit the sin of Adam. Our own nature is that we are without any good of our own. The only good in us comes from God.

ii. The effect of God the Holy Spirit is shown in individuals and in groups. God the Holy Spirit lives in each Christian and Christians can have an impact for good on their unsaved neighbors. Our good comes from God. James 1:17

11. These verses end the first main section of Romans. We have seen three main points in these verses which summarize the first section of Romans.

1. Every person is accountable to God for what he or she has done.
2. Every person is guilty of having done countless wrong things or sins. 3. No person will ever be justified by his good works.

II. We have completed the first section of Romans which teaches us that we are all rightly condemned. We are now ready to look at the next section about how we obtain righteousness; how we are saved through our faith in Jesus.

1. Romans 3:21-31 Righteousness through faith. The only way to salvation.

A. God's righteousness is discussed in verses 21-26.

i. It is revealed to us now and it is outside the law. This means we can't be justified by the law. Verse 21

B. His righteousness is available to us only by our faith in Jesus Christ, and it is needed by all people. Verses 22-23.

i. Romans 3:23 is one of those verses that we should all memorize because it is so important that we truly understand what it is saying.

C. Salvation is a free gift to us, but we must remember that this gift was costly to Jesus. verse 24-25 The price of our salvation is the blood of Jesus.

D. God's judgment is satisfied by the sacrifice of Jesus and if we believe in Jesus, ask Him to save us, and repent then we receive His righteousness and we receive eternal life.

Verse 26 E. Two truths we see in verses 27-30.

i. First we see that we humans do absolutely no work to receive our salvation and since this is true we have no reason to boast. Our attitude is to be one of gratitude. Verses 27-

ii. Second we see that both Jews and gentiles are alike in God's eyes. God sees us as either lost sinners or repentant and saved sinners. This applies to all people on earth. God sees Africans, whites, Asians the same. Verses 28-29

F. Why is the law needed? It is needed to define what is right and what is wrong. We see that all humans fail to keep the law and so the law shows the need we have for Jesus our savior. Verse 31

2. Paul uses Abraham in chapter 4 as an example of the fact that our belief in Jesus is how we are justified. Abraham was declared righteous by his faith see Genesis 15:6 before he had done any works such as being circumcised.

A. Abraham was justified by faith verses 1-8. Paul uses Abraham because the Jews so respected him and to show that man has always been saved by faith, and not by works.

B. Verses 9-12 teach that circumcision or works has absolutely nothing to do with salvation.

i. Verse 11--Abraham's faith is seen as the early example for all the gentiles—Abraham is the

father of all believers. We see this again in verses 23-25. This tells us that the justification Abraham received was for us also—you and me.

ii. We see in verse 11 that circumcision or works came as a product of his faith. Faith produces works.

iii. In the Old Testament circumcision was a sign that the Jew belonged to God. Today in the church baptism replace circumcision as a sign of our relationship with God.

iv. We can compare the work of circumcision as a sign of salvation and not a way of earning salvation with what James says in James 2:14 & 17-18. Our salvation produces work. Our work does not produce salvation because we are saved by faith alone.

C. We see more lessons about faith in verses 16-22.

i. As believers we are all children of Abraham's verse 16-17.

ii. Verses 18-21 report that even though his wife Sarah was really too old and she was barren, Abraham believed God when God said that he would be a father. iv. Verse 22 says this belief was accounted to him as righteousness.

E. This promise of righteousness was also applied to all believers. In the Bible, a person is considered to have saving faith when he knows the truth necessary to save him, assents (agrees) to it, rests upon it and trusts it. This faith leads to true repentance which is necessary for salvation. It is important to examine ourselves, to see if we have such faith.

A. In other words a person is saved by his belief that Jesus is God, by the person asking Jesus to be his God and save him as he puts all his trust in God and truly repents for his sins.

3. Chapter 5:1-11 tells us that there are blessings which accompany justification.

A. Immediate blessings verses 1-2.

i. These are verses that comfort me. The picture is that every unsaved person in the world is at war with God. When we become Christians and are justified we become at peace and no longer at war with God. I find being at war with our powerful God to be a frightening thought so we can rejoice that we are at peace with him.

B. Verses 3-5 disagree with the "health, wealth, and prosperity gospel" we hear so much of in local churches. We are not to be saddened and lose faith when we suffer. Look at what suffering produces; it produces the hope in us that we are assured of our salvation. It gives me complete confidence in my salvation.

C. Verses 6-11 help us understand how much Jesus loves us. We read that a person might possibly consider giving up his life to save a very special person. Consider that Jesus gave up His life to save us while we were at war with Him. In other words, Jesus died for us when we were fighting Him. This is proof of how much Jesus loves us.

D. Romans 5:9-11 give us assurance for the future. This teaches that we have been justified by the blood of Jesus and so we don't face the wrath of God. In other words we will not be punished in eternity for our sins. Verse 10 confirms this, and verse 11 reassures us that we can rejoice in being at peace with God.

E. Romans 5:12-21 talks about the first Adam and the second Adam (Jesus). Many people deny that Adam ever existed. We Christians can't ever believe this. We have no salvation if Adam did not exist. We must believe God created everything and that evolution is false. The theory of evolution only exists to deny the role of God in creation and all other things.

i. We see that all sin entered the world through one man, and has spread to all men through Adam. All death entered the world through the sin of Adam verses 12-14.

ii. Verses 15-21 our ruin is through one man, but our greater salvation is also through one man, Jesus. God's free gift of salvation is greater than the sin of Adam.

a. Verses 18-19 one act of sin led to man's condemnation and one act of righteousness led to justification & eternal life.

b. Verses 20-21 shows exactly what sin is and that as sin increases, grace increases even more and God's grace is greater than sin. No sin is too big for God to forgive. Remember sin is anything we say, do, or think which displeases or disobeys God. It also is anything we don't do, say, or think which God wants us to do.

III. Romans 6-11 Things are different now that we have the gospel. WE are no longer slaves to sin and now we can live in ways that please God which we couldn't do before we were saved.

I. Romans 6:1-11 the old master and the new.

A. Paul asks a question in verses 1-2. If righteous living does not save us then why should we try to live righteous lives? Why don't we just enjoy our sin? Paul's answer is that we are not to live in sin if we are dead to sin. Christians don't deliberately choose to sin. A Christian wants to please God and so a Christian does not want to sin.

A. Verses 1-2 Paul reacts to the idea that a Christian can live his life like the unsaved world with shock. One of the advantages of being a Christian is that we can now live our lives in ways that are pleasing to God. If we choose to continue our sinful lives we are living in contradiction to our new identity with Jesus. In other words changing the way we live our lives in ways that are pleasing to God are signs that we really do belong to Jesus and that we really are His children.

B. Paul has talked about the free gift of grace, and some people think that all we have to do is accept this free grace and live the way we want. Paul, in chapter 6, begins teaching that Christians must live in ways that show they have a new master. We must obey God and show that we no longer are slaves to sin.

2. Paul now in verses 12-14 tells how we are supposed to do this. We used to be slaves to Satan and to sin. We now serve a new master who is God and this is because of Jesus. A practical way we say no to sin is to devote all our energy to serving our new master. We must not let the old master dominate us because we are now owned by a new master. We must make every effort to please God.

A. Sin will always be a part of our lives, but the closer we get to God the more often we will choose to not sin by the grace of God. Here are some ways to do this:

i. Avoid temptation. If consuming alcohol or drugs or immoral sex is a problem for you then stay away from where people are drinking.

ii. Learn from your old mistakes and ask God to help you when you are tempted to sin.

3. Now, beginning in Romans 6:15-23 Paul repeats what he said at the beginning of chapter 6 asking why bother obeying the law since we are not rewarded or penalized by it. Paul answers this question by asking questions which he answers with the only possible answer.

A. Verses 16 Paul tells us that our master is the one we serve. Our obedience is evidence that we really are saved.

B. Verse 21 tells us that as Christians we are ashamed of our sin and that our sin leads to death.

C. Verse 22 tells us that if we really are slaves to God then we are going to have eternal life. D. Romans 6:23 is one of those verses we should memorize. It tells us that we earn eternal death by our sins, but Jesus gives us eternal life as a free gift if we have faith in Him.

4. In chapter 7:1-6 Paul talks about how a marriage comes to an end in death and frees the surviving spouse to remarry if they desire. He applies this story to the idea that when we become Christians we no longer are bound by the law (verse 6). We are free from the law and we are now bound by the Spirit. The idea that we are no longer bound by the law means that it no longer condemns the Christian. We are still supposed to obey the Ten Commandments, but when we disobey them, we are not eternally condemned by our disobedience.

A. To avoid confusion let us restate what Paul has said about our freedom and obligation to not sin.

i. There is no doubt that a Christian does sin, but sin is not the characteristic or desire of a genuine Christian.

ii. You can only measure what sin is by the law. A true believer must be characterized by law- keeping.

iii. A true Christian keeps the law out of love and not duty. An example is that we do good things for our family because we love them, and not just because it is our duty.

5. Chapter 7:7-25 talks about the past and present experience of a Christian.

A. Romans 7:7 again tells us that the purpose of the law was to identify sin. There is nothing wrong with the law. In fact verse 12 tells us that the law is holy. The problem is with us because we don't have the moral power to obey the law.

i. The purpose of the law is to help us understand the difference between right and wrong, and help us see that we can't do right in God's eyes. It is only after we realize our helplessness that we can be ready for a savior.

6. Romans 7:14-25 describes the struggle between our sinful nature which wants to follow its own sinful desires and our spiritual nature which wants to obey God. It is only through the influence of God that we can ever do right. This struggle will last the rest of our lives. As Christ has more and more influence in our lives we will do what is right more often. This is one reason why we must study our Bibles and learn all we can about God.

A. We will struggle with sin as long as we live.

B. Let us summarize this. We Christians are no longer judged or condemned by the law. The law was designed to point us toward the necessity of salvation by faith in Jesus. One of our tasks as preachers is to do what the Puritans used to do which they called "slay" men by the law so that they might be raised up by the gospel. What this means is that we must teach our people about how lost they are if they rely on their own good works for salvation. They need to be taught how totally lost they are without a savior. Note that Puritans refers to a group of very informed Christians who really knew their Bibles. These were early settlers of The United States of America.

7. Chapter 8:18-39 present sufferings—a prelude to glory.

A. We see in verse 18 that we should easily endure the sufferings of our lives because we have a glorious future waiting for us. We again see the fact that we can expect to suffer, but the sufferings are for a short time and they lead us to heaven. To us the present sufferings may seem to be great, but they are nothing compared to the reward coming to us in heaven.

i. Paul is very well qualified to instruct us about suffering because he suffered terribly for the sake of the gospel see 2 Corinthians 11:23-28. He is leading by example and not by words. Paul was a great leader—he set a good example for us.

B. Verses 19-27 talk about three groanings; these are all the result of Adam's sin. Just like Adam, often our sins hurt others.

i. The first groaning we find in verses 19-22 tell us that the sufferings of all creatures, all animals during this present time is the result of Adam's sin.

ii. Verses 23-25 tell us that we humans groan and that we also suffer because of sin.

iii. Verses 26-27 tell us that the Spirit also groans on our behalf. He intercedes for us by properly presenting our prayers to the Father. Remember the Holy Spirit is our helper.

C. We are now presented with six reasons for daily rejoicing in verses 28—39.

i. Another one of those great verses we should memorize is Romans 8:28. What this means is that we can trust God and be comforted in all our trials. Are you suffering from a painful accident? Take comfort in knowing that your suffering is working for your good. We can't truly understand why we have to suffer and why many things are the way they are, but Isaiah 55:8 tells us that God does not think the way we do. We must trust God. Look at Genesis 50:20 to see a similar lesson about how God works things for our benefit.

a. These two verses help us to be able to forgive and forget the wrong things a person does to us. Genesis 50:20 shows that Joseph had completely forgiven his brothers.

ii. Verses 29-30 tell us that we rejoice because God will take His people all the way to glory. He will not fail to take us to heaven.

iii. Verse 31 tells us that God is on our side and because of this our enemies will not prevail. It is good to have one as strong as God on our side.

iv. Verse 32 tells us that God gave up His son for us and He will certainly give us all the things we need such as grace, courage, and heaven.

v. We Christians are not condemned verse 33-34 because of the work of Christ.

vi. We rejoice because as verses 35-39 tell us of God's great love for us. This love is so great that it will take us all the way to heaven and nothing will separate us from Jesus. Look at verse 37 and remember that you are a conqueror. The hard things in your life should not defeat you because through Jesus Christ we are victorious. Jesus wants us to

live with confidence because we have Him.

8. Chapter 8 is one of the most triumphant passages in the Bible and now in chapter 9 Paul tells us about a picture of extreme sadness. The sadness is of perishing people all around us. Paul talks about Jews but for us today, the perishing people are our neighbors, family, etc.

A. Paul in chapter 9:1-5 shows that he loves his fellow Jews so much that he is willing to give up his place in heaven if this sacrifice would save the Jews. Do we love the unsaved people around us enough to even share the gospel, let alone perish for them?

i. A true Christian pastor is like Paul. He loves his people so much that he will sacrifice for them. He will freely pray for them and share his resources with them.

B. Verses 10-18 are a statement about how God is sovereign. WE learn that even before they were born, God hated Esau and loved Jacob. Verse 15 tells us that He will have mercy on those He chooses to and as verse 18 says, God will harden the hearts of those He chooses to.

C. Paul tells us why the Jews were left unsaved by God while He saved gentiles. It says in verses 30-33 that the Jews were determined to save themselves by their works such as obeying the law, and they refused to accept that God's way to salvation was by having faith in Jesus. The Jews are hard headed see Isaiah 30:1, just like we are. People are proud and they want their own way instead of God's.

9. Chapter 10 is a great missionary chapter

A. Paul starts out in verses 1-4 expressing the desire for the salvation of his Jewish brothers. He talks about how the Jews have a zeal for God, but they are determined to do things their own way instead of the correct way which is through God. Verse 4 clearly states that Christ is the only answer.

B. Verses 9-10 describe how a person is saved. This is plain talk and easy to understand. We are saved by our belief in Jesus and by trusting Him for our salvation. The mouth refers to the fact that what comes out of our mouths is what is in our heart. If Jesus is really in our hearts then our words will show this fact to others.

i. One example of this is telling others about being Christian. ii. Another example is when we evangelize.

C. We see in verse 11-13 that God is Lord over both Jew and Gentile and there is no difference between people in His eyes. All God's children are equally blessed.

D. The problem is that someone must tell the unsaved person about salvation through Jesus, and most Christians don't have any interest in evangelism. The message of verses 14-21 is that evangelists are needed to reach the lost. This is the job of every Christian.

A. After all, as verse 14 points out how is a person to believe in someone they have never heard of, and as verse 15 says, how can someone tell them about Jesus unless someone is sent to tell them.

i. This means that some people are called to leave home to be missionaries in foreign places.

ii. The rest of the people are called to stay at home and be missionaries or evangelists right where they live. All Christians are to be missionaries. We either go, or we pray and we send others.

iii. There is a blessing for people who share the good news found in Isaiah 52:7. The person who helps send a missionary is blessed just like the missionary himself.

B. Verse 16 says that not everyone who hears the gospel will believe. It is our job to share the gospel with people, but only God can convict the person of the truth.

C. We see in verse 17 that the Word of God (The Bible) is necessary for faith. The Bible is how we learn about Jesus and salvation through Him. Remember that everything we know about God is found in the Bible; so don't believe anything about God unless you read it in the Bible.

D. To summarize this very important teaching, a person can only be saved by believing and trusting in Jesus. It is necessary for someone to tell the unsaved person who Jesus is. All Christians are ordered to both tell people about Jesus and to help send missionaries to every part of the world. We send missionaries by praying and financially supporting them. Every Christian is to be an evangelist and to support missionaries or he is disobedient.

10. Chapter 11 again talks about Jews

A. In verses 1 and 2 Paul asks whether God has rejected the Jewish people and chosen the

gentiles in their place. Paul answers his own question by saying that this is not true after all he himself is saved. So there are some Jews who are currently Christians.

B. Verses 25-32 continue to talk about the status of the Jews in this present age and also in the future.

i. Verses 25 Paul says that a partial hardening has come upon Israel this means that some Jews are soft to the gospel and are becoming Christians but most are still hard and resist the gospel.

ii. Verse 26 is open to much discussion and disagreement. There are two main different thoughts:

a. Some say verse 26 refers to the fact that the only way the Jews or anybody is to be saved is through a Jew—Jesus Christ.

b. Most say this verse refers to a future time when there will be a mass conversion of Jews just before Jesus returns. No one can say for sure.

C. Verses 33-36 we see Paul breaking out in a song of praise because of God's wonderful plan of salvation. Often the human Bible writers would think about how wonderful God is and they would break out in a song of praise. We should do the same.

III. Chapters 12-16 Practical application of the doctrines presented in the first 11 chapters. How to properly live the Christian life or how should we respond to the great gift of salvation.

1. The first thing we learn from 12:1 is that we must consecrate or dedicate our lives to serving God. In other words, we must make serving God our main purpose in life. We must entirely devote ourselves to God. Christians are to be different from the rest of the world.

A. We Christians should worship and serve Jesus to the best of our abilities. God is more pleased if we give ourselves to Him than He is if we give Him things such as money. We must realize that we belong to God and we should seek to imitate Jesus and not the world. We must pray to become more like Jesus. We must become totally committed to Jesus.

2. Verses 3-8 are about church unity. We Christians are all part of one body and we must all work together using our individual gifts and abilities to work together for the glory of God and for the welfare of each other. Christians are one family, and we must be involved in a church.

A. Verse 3 tells us to examine ourselves to see what skills or gifts God has given us to serve Him and others. Do not easily assume that you have a certain gift such as being a pastor. Pray and seek God's affirmation of your gifts. Do you know your gifts?

B. Verses 4-5 teach that the church of Christ is one body and it works best when each member contributes to the whole body. The human body works best when all our parts are working correctly and it is the same with the church.

C. Verses 6-7 tell us to properly use these gifts from God to help each other. 3. Verses 9-21 give a lesson in how a Christian should act.

A. Verses 9-10 say that we should have true love for each other. We should think more highly of other people than we do of ourselves. 1 John 4:11-12

B. Verse 11 don't be idle; do be busy serving God. We only have one life to live for God.

C. Verse 12 be constantly in close contact with God by reading the Bible and praying. D. Verse 13 be devoted to helping your fellow saints who have needs.

E. Verse 14 gives us advice about how we are to react to the persecution which many

Christians will have to endure. This advice to bless our persecutors is contrary to our normal way of behaving. A normal reaction is to try to hurt those who are hurting us, but the Bible says to bless them. Matthew 5:44 and Luke 6:28

F. Verse 15 tells us to be intimately involved with others. We should rejoice when they rejoice and we should agonize with others when they suffer such as the persecuted church. Heb. 13:3

G. Verse 16 tells us to live in harmony with each other. We are to treat each person as an equal and not look down on anybody no matter how low in life they are. It doesn't matter how great a pastor you think you are, you must treat every person with respect. God looks at each Christian equally. Proverbs 3:7 is good advice.

H. Verses 17-19 teach us to live at peace with each other. Ignore the one who injures or insults you as much as possible. Don't seek revenge, leave that to God, avoid bitterness.

I. Verses 20-21 give hard advice. Conquer your enemy with love when he attacks you. Do not return evil for evil.

4. Chapter 13 teaches us to be good citizens. We are told to obey the laws of the land and obey our rulers. No ruler of a country should ever persecute Christians because the Bible teaches us to be good taxpaying citizens.

A. The idea here in verses 1-2 is that government gets its authority from God and that disobeying our government is the same as disobeying God.

B. There are times when we should not obey our government. This is when the government orders us to do things against God's word. Acts 4:19 and Acts 5:29. Examples:

i. The Romans ordered all its citizens to worship the ruler as if he were a god. The Christians correctly disobeyed this order.

ii. In America a church is ordered to hire homosexuals to work with its children.

iii. The government orders a pastor to preach in a way contrary to the Bible.

C. Verses 3-4 tell us that government exist for our good, and it is proper for government to punish us when we are disobedient even punishing us with death. We are to obey our government.

iv. We can see how bad things are when there is no government; look at Somalia. Many of their people are starving but their government is not strong enough to protect workers who bring food to give to these starving people so the starving people are not fed. Everyday babies are starving and dying. Somalia and all nations need Christian government.

D. Romans 13:5-7 give specific examples of obeying rules. We are told to be honest and pay all the taxes we owe.

i. When you consider this instruction from the Bible about us obeying the laws and paying our taxes, the question is why do so many governments persecute their Christians? We Christians are very good citizens.

F. Verses 8-9 teach us to treat each person as if we love them. Here Paul repeats the words of Jesus as found in Mark 12:31.

G. Romans 13:10 describes love and tells us this love is pleasing to God.

H. Verses 11-14 tell us to be quick to live properly because the second coming of Jesus will be soon and time is running out for us to be living as we should. The time as verse 11 says is closer today than it was yesterday. We are to live each moment as if it is our last moment.

5. Chapter 14 is practical teaching about how to live peacefully with each other, and also more teaching about unity in the church. It deals with the fact that different Christians have different opinions about what they are allowed to do in areas of life where there are no clear cut directions from God. The stronger brother figures that if something is not specifically forbidden then it is all right to do. For example, one person thinks it is all

right to drink alcohol, or for a woman to wear trousers to church, or it is all right to watch television or go dancing or go to a movie theater. The weaker brother might think all these things are forbidden. We see in chapter 14 that in the earlier church one of the disagreements was about the foods they ate. The lesson is that we must not argue about these little things. The Bible allows us much freedom in many areas.

A. Verses 1-6 tell us to do all that we can to cooperate with each other. We should compromise on unimportant issues. If we want to, we can find a way to argue and disagree with anybody and still be friends. Our goal must be to get along if at all possible.

i. Verse 1 tells us to receive him as your brother with respect. Accept him just as he is and don't try to change him. Respect the weaker brother.

ii. Verses 2&3 tell us to respect him and do not look down on him. We should compromise on unimportant issues, and to get cooperate if at all possible. An example is that Africans Teaching Africans is for all Christians and denominations are put aside. This is a good principle for a good marriage also.

iii. Verses 3&4 do not judge him. Matthew 7:1.

iv. Verse 5 make sure that what you are doing is really all right.

v. Verse 6 reminds us that each brother is to do everything he does to honor God.

B, Verses 7-9 Remember that our aim is to please God. Each of us is to act with the right motive—our hearts must be right.

C. Verses 10-12 tell us that we are not to set ourselves up in judgment over another brother.

God is to be our only judge. Just concern yourself about your own deeds because we will all have to give an account of what we have done to God.

D. The rest of this chapter continues this idea of cooperating with each other. We should not be a stumbling block to each other which means that we should not cause another person to sin because of our actions. An example of this would be to play loud music of a type that your neighbor hates which might cause him to lose his temper and attack you. Don't have cigarettes around a person who is trying to stop smoking.

E. A good example of this teaching concerns baptism. Baptism does not save anybody so we do not need to argue about the way we baptize people. There are many good arguments about baptizing infants and there are many good arguments that say we can only baptize adult believers. We should each baptize the way we feel is correct, but we

should not criticize those who baptize another way. We should respect each other's opinion about this. We should save our arguments for issues that clearly disagree with the Bible such as the idea that we are saved by our works. We must argue against this false idea.

6. Chapter 15 continues the same thoughts that we saw chapter 14. Romans 15:1-13 talk about true brotherhood. Paul starts in verses 1-6 talking to the strong and weak person.

A. Three things to do.

- i. The strong person is to help the weak person verse 1.
- ii. Verse 1 also teaches us that we are not to live mainly to please ourselves, rather we are to first please God and then the other person.
- iii. Verse 2 tells us to help others to build them up.

B. The reasons for doing these things verse 3 says that we are following the example of Jesus. C. Results from this behavior.

- i. Verse 2 tells us this will encourage and build up our brother.
- ii. Verse 6 tells us that this will bring unity to the church.
- iii. Verse 6 also tells us that this unity will bring more glory to God. The main purpose in our life is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

D. Now in verses 7-13 Paul talks to Jews and Gentiles. He tells them that it is God's purpose that they should both be saved so that they together, in unity, will praise God.

Psalm 117:1 E. Paul now starts writing about personal things. He talks about the work God has had him doing. He has been a missionary to the gentiles and he has worked in places where the gospel has not been before. He tells about his plan to travel to Rome by way of Jerusalem. We know from the book of Acts that he did travel to Rome, but not the way he planned.

8. Chapter 16:1-16 Paul talks about various people as he finishes this letter.

A. Paul again gives warning to us is to be aware that people will try to divide the church so do not let them. Verses 17-18 he says that people who bring dissension to the church do not serve God; rather they serve themselves. See 3 John 1:9.

B. Verse 16 is a lesson in Bible interpretation. Paul is not saying that we have to kiss each other. He is saying we need to greet each other in a friendly manner according to local culture.

B. Paul's final words in Romans are an inscription, or praise, to God. Many churches close their worship service by the worship leader giving a blessing from God to the people. These are words of blessing taken directly from the Bible. This practice started in Numbers 6:22-27. This is called a benediction and it is proper to do this and it is proper not to do this. This is an example of something which the Bible gives us freedom to do what we feel is correct.

First Corinthians

Paul wrote this book while he was living in Ephesus, a city in modern day Turkey. He wrote it to the church in the Greek city of Corinth which was a wealthy city. The letter was written to correct problems in the church, and to promote unity.

Chapters 1-6 Paul replies to reports that had reached him about the church

1. Paul makes it clear that he is writing this letter to Christians in verse 2 as he greets the church and he encourages them. He is letting them know that even though he will be correcting problems in the church he still appreciates them. The principle is that even if you have to discipline a fellow Christian, you still love and care for him. Church discipline is done to restore the brother to full fellowship.

2. The first problem Paul talks about in chapter 1:10-17 is the divisions in the church. He is careful to not name anyone, but the problem is that different people have set themselves up as leaders, and divided the church. Paul says that the church is to be like Christ who is not divided. Paul here is addressing a common church problem where people forget that they are not the head of the church and in their pride they set themselves up as head.

3. Verses 18-25 teach that the gospel is foolishness to those who do not believe in Jesus. The unbelievers all think that we Christians are foolish.

A. We learn in verse 25 that God's foolishness is wiser than man's wisdom and that God's weakness is stronger than man's strength. In other words God is always smarter and stronger than we are.

4. Paul finishes out chapter one talking about how God enjoys using the weak person to do His work. If we try to work in our own strength, then we will not be successful and as verse 27 says we will be shamed. I know that any success that I have enjoyed as a Christian worker is because it is done with God's help.

A. We must all do as verse 31 says which is to boast in God and His power because He is the only source of our strength. We humans are not strong enough to work effectively

in our own strength. God delights in using weak humans to show that He, God is the one doing the great deed and He deserves the glory. See the story of Gideon in the book of Judges, Chapters 6-8. 5. Paul goes on in chapter 2:1-5 to illustrate the point by telling how the power of Paul's preaching is not in Paul's skills as a speaker; instead the power is from of God. (verse 5)

A. Sometimes the best Bible preacher is the one who is the poorest speaker. Jonathon Edwards is regarded as one of the best preachers of all times, but he spoke in a boring way. He delivered a sermon called "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" which is one of the most powerful sermons ever delivered by a pastor, and he delivered it when he was sick. Many came to Christ because of this message and it was influential in starting a revival. More than two hundred years later this sermon is still moving people to Christ. The power from this sermon came from God.

B Paul teaches, in verse two, that the message he preaches is Christ and Him crucified. There is power in this message and this is the message all preachers must preach.

6. The next section teaches us in verses 6-14 that our understanding of God comes from God. Spiritual wisdom is hidden from the lost person and as verse 10 says is revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. He reveals the secrets of the Bible to us as we read and study the Bible.

A. Verses 11-12 teach us that only Christians can truly understand the Bible. This is because the Holy Spirit helps us understand the Bible and only we Christians have the Holy Spirit in us. 7. Chapter 2: 14-3:3 Paul identifies three types of people.

A. Verse 14 talks about the natural person who is unsaved.

B. Next is the spiritual person verses 15-16 who knows God's Word and is mature enough to have the mind of Christ—to understand what Christ is trying to teach us. This is the mature Christian. This person often studies his Bible and he spends much time praying and being with other Christians. God is the most important thing in his life.

C. Chapter 3:1-3 talks about the person who is saved but he really knows very little about God. This person does not study the Bible so he knows very little about God. This type of person is very common and he causes much trouble in the church because he acts like the unsaved person. This Christian can even be a pastor but, because of not understanding the Bible, he leads his church astray. The best situation is to have a church where the pastor and the people seriously study the Bible.

i. Often this type of person just described is mixed up with the person who attends church and pretends to be a Christian, but is really unsaved. This unsaved person in the church causes much trouble and must be guarded against. He is the person spoken of in Matthew 7:21-23.

8. Paul closes this section of teaching about divisions in the church by calling for Christians to work together.

9. In chapter 5 Paul talks about sexual immorality which must have been reported to him as being one of the sins of the church in Corinth. This is a very bad sin and a real problem even today in churches. Paul in verse 13 tells us to drive the unrepentant sexually immoral person from our presence. We are to set him or her out of the church if he doesn't repent.

10. Chapter 6:1-8 teaches that Christians should not go to court against each other. We are to settle our disputes inside the church. Verse seven says that we should be willing to suffer loss rather than taking a brother to court.

A. We see in chapter 6:2-3 that we Christians are to judge the world and angels so we should be able to solve our own disputes without bringing them to a pagan court.

11. Paul now returns in verses 9-20 to condemning immorality especially sexual immorality.

A. Verse 15 tells us that our bodies are part of Christ and we should not make them part of a prostitute. We become one with a prostitute when we join with one. This is a sin which is inside our bodies. Sexual immorality is an attack against our own body; just ask a person with Aids if this statement is true.

B. Verses 19-20 teach us that we must take care of our bodies because our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. We see that we do not belong to ourselves rather we belong to God because He bought us with a price, and Jesus paid the price. If we truly understand this, then we will change the way we live and instead of living life for ourselves, we will live it for the Lord.

Chapters 7-16 are about problems the Corinthian church had asked Paul to advise them on.

1. Chapter 7:1-16 again we read marriage instruction about proper sexual behavior. The teaching here is against what most of the world believes, but it is the way God wants people to behave.

A. Most of the world thinks that there is nothing wrong with sex whenever two adults consent, however God says we must be married. Currently studies in the USA show that most of the population no longer believes in marriage. This is not Christian behavior.

B. The first rule we see in chapter seven is that sex is not allowed outside marriage. Paul recognizes that people have strong sexual desires and there is nothing wrong with these desires, after all, God gave us these desires. Verse 2 says that it is good to marry to satisfy these desires. Paul gives us some guidelines which say that both the husband and the wife have duties to each other sexually. We see that both the husband and wife have rights. Christianity is the only religion which respects the wife's rights. Men tend to think that it is all about them, but we see here that it is not.

C. Verses 8-9 say that it is all right for a person to not marry as long as a person's sexual desires are controlled, but they are to marry if they have strong sexual desires. A major problem in the west is in the Roman Catholic Church which has ignored God's rule and made a rule that forbids the priest to marry. Many, many priests have been exposed for sexually exploiting young boys and girls. It is a major scandal in the church, and the sin is widespread throughout America and Europe. God allows pastors to get married.

D. Paul goes on to give us more rules about marriage when a believer is married to an unbeliever. We are to remain married. We are to, as verse 16 says; try to cause our unbelieving spouse to become a Christian. The Christian is not to leave the marriage. We have seen that some pastors and some Christians do not understand this teaching. They feel that if a person becomes a Christian and the spouse does not then it is all right for the Christian to leave. But God says we are to stay married. We can't undo something we have already done.

2. Chapter eight is teaching that at first we might ignore. After all, we don't have a problem with eating sacrificed meat in our society. However, there is application for us in this chapter. Verse 13 is a lesson for us. We have talked earlier about not being a stumbling block to our weaker brother. Paul, in chapter 9:19-23 says that we must be willing to give up our rights if necessary for the sake of a weaker brother.

A. An example of this involving a weaker brother is that we should not drink alcohol around weaker brothers who might be tempted to become alcoholics.

B. Another example of what Paul is talking about we see in chapter 9:20. We should avoid doing something that might offend another person's religion in an attempt to win this person to Christ. The following story is told by a person who was a Hindu and became a Christian. As a Hindu he believed that eating meat was a sin, but after becoming a Christian he knew that it was all right to eat meat. However he did not ever eat meat out of respect for his family. At first his father disowned him for becoming a

Christian, but later his father became a Christian because of the respect the son showed him and his traditional Hindu beliefs.

3. Chapter 10:14 is warning us to flee from those who practice immorality, such as idolatry, or sexual immorality, or drunkards. An example here would be to avoid spirit worshippers. Does alcohol tempt you? Stay away from where it is consumed. Are you tempted by another woman? Stay away from her.

A. Verse 13 teaches us not to blame anybody for our sins. We are responsible ourselves for every sin we do. Everyone will be tempted at times; even Jesus was tempted. It is not a sin when we do not give in to the temptation. We read here that we should never blame our sin on Satan or another person. For example don't blame the other person for your sexual sin because it was your choice to do the sin and no one made you. If you rely on God to fight temptation, this verse says God has provided a way to escape the sin. Adam tried to blame the very first sin on Eve and so Eve blamed the serpent.

4. Chapter 11 begins by talking about observing cultural practices. In New Testament times custom required women to wear head covering in worship. Men on the other hand were ordered not to cover their heads in church. 1 Corinthians 14:34 says women are not to speak in church. Today there is disagreement about whether these rules must be obeyed. Some people say that these rules are not in force today because they were cultural rules, and other people say they must be obeyed because they are in the Bible. This is an example of where we can be tolerant of what others believe. This is not a salvation issue so let each person pray and do what he feels is correct.

A. Chapter 11 has detailed instruction about the Lord's Supper which is also called Holy Communion. As we study, we will see what this sacrament does and what it does not do.

B. A sacrament is a sign and seal of our covenant relationship with God. A seal is like a signature which shows us that our Christians relationship is recognized by God. It makes our relationship official.

C. The Lord's supper is not meant to satisfy our physical hunger. It does not cause miracles such as healing and prosperity.

D. The Lord's supper does strengthen and bless us as we are reminded of our present relationship with Jesus. It also is a time when we remember the sacrifice our savior made for us.

E. Let us look at instruction from our scripture:

i. Verse 24 says the bread represents the body of Christ which was broken on the cross

for us. The bread does not change into anything else. ii. Verse 25 says the cup represents the blood of Jesus which He shed on the cross for us. The liquid in the cup doesn't change into anything else. The liquid in the cup is not identified.

F. Verses 27-30 warn us to only participate in the Lord's Supper properly. We are not to take it unless we are indeed Christians and understand what we are doing. The church has a responsibility to see that nonbelievers and children who don't understand do not take part. We are warned to examine ourselves before taking part. For example if we are involved in unrepentant sin, or under church discipline, or involved in quarreling with another believer then we should not take part.

5. Chapter 12 talks about spiritual gifts. Paul lists some but not all of the spiritual gifts. See Romans 12:6-8 and Ephesians 4:11 for others.

A. Verse 7 says that every Christian has received spiritual gifts from God and that we are to use them for the benefit of the whole church. Paul does not say that one gift is more important than others. The person who cleans the church is as important as the pastor. It takes the whole body working together to allow the work of the church to go forward.

B. A lack of helpers in some churches often keeps the pastor from doing his job. The leader of a church needs help to do all the work of a church. Moses learned this from the instruction of Jethro in Exodus 18. The elders were unable to do their work so they appointed helpers see Acts 6:1-5. All Christians must help do the work of the church.

6. Chapter 13 is often called the love chapter because of its message. Read the chapter and follow the simple instruction. Everything we do for God is worthless unless we do it with love.

A. Verses 1-3 teach that love is the most important part of our Christian work. Our work only has value if we do it with love.

B. Verses 4-7 describe the characteristics of love.

C. Verse 13 is interesting because we see that love is more important than faith and hope. Why is this? One reason might be because it is permanent while faith and hope will end when we go to heaven.

7. In chapter 14 we are now taught about the proper use of certain gifts such as prophecy and the proper use of tongues. The most important rule about using our gifts is to use them to build up the church and never to divide the church.

A. Verse one talks about prophecy being important. Prophecy here means teaching. Teaching God's word to people is so very important.

B. The second thought here is about the use of tongues. Let's look at verses 26-33 for our teaching about their use. Note especially verse 27. We see here that God instructs that an interpreter must be used or no one should speak in tongues. Verses 33 and 40 tell us that God likes order and not confusion.

7. Chapter 15 was written to correct some doctrinal errors. Verses 1-4 teach that we must believe that we are going to be raised from the dead just as Jesus was bodily resurrected.

A. Chapter 15:5-11 discuss the fact that many, many people saw the resurrected Jesus. In order to be Christians we must accept as fact that He rose from the dead. We will also rise from the grave

B. Verses 12-20 argue that if we aren't raised from the dead, Jesus also did not rise from the dead. We Christians are to be pitied because this would mean that we have no hope and we are wasting our time being Christians. Verse twenty states strongly that Christ did in fact rise from the dead so we can continue to rejoice in our coming resurrection.

C. Verse 29 is not totally understandable. There is much disagreement among Bible scholars about the meaning. The true meaning seems to have escaped us over the last two thousand years and vast cultural differences.

D. Paul teaches us in chapter 15:40-44 teaches about the human body. Verse 40 teaches we have two bodies; one is for here on earth and the other is for heaven. Verse 42 says that our new body will be imperishable, it will last for eternity; verse 43 says it will be powerful and verse 44 says it will be a physical and a spiritual body.

E. Verses 50-58 teach that when Christ returns, Christians will rise out of their graves and with thee Christians who are still alive rise to meet Jesus and be changed to our new bodies.

F. Verse 55 repeats the thoughts of both Isaiah and Hosea that death is defeated. It no longer has any sting.

G. This chapter closes encouraging us to be faithful and keep working for the kingdom because there is an important purpose for our work and our work will not be in vain.

Second Corinthians

Paul wrote this book to express his delight at the repentance of the Corinthian church. He also states his authority as an apostle appointed by God.

Chapters 1-2:11 Paul defends his conduct. It is a fact that Christian leaders will always be attacked, and we should expect these attacks. A sign that our ministry is effective is when Satan attacks it using his people.

1. Chapter 1:1 Paul first tells that his authority comes from God.
2. Verses 3-11 of chapter one are about Paul's suffering. He tells of much suffering. Verse 8 Paul says the suffering was severe enough that he thought he would die. In verse 10 he says that he was rescued from suffering by God. In verse 9 he tells that one positive lesson from this was that he learned he needed to rely on God and not himself.

There is more about suffering in chapters 11-12

1. We see that Paul suffered for the sake of teaching the gospel. Read 11:23-29. We should be prepared to suffer just like Paul.
2. We see 12:7-10 that Paul also suffered from other problems. Paul says this was to keep him from being proud; that the suffering helped him keep humble.

A. We learn in verses 8-9 that, even though Paul asked God to remove the problems, God said no. God told Paul that he should rely on God to help him overcome the problems and keep serving God. We can never use the excuse that we are too inadequate to serve God because we need to rely on God to provide all we need to serve him.

B. Look at Paul's attitude in verse 10 and ask God to give you the same attitude. It is the proper attitude for a Christian.

3. We also learn from Paul's suffering that a person is unable to heal by his own strength. Paul was able to do miracles but he was unable to heal himself.

Chapter 2:12-chapter 9 Paul defends his ministry

1. In chapter 3 verses 6-18 Paul talks of the new covenant. We are blinded like a veil is over our faces until Jesus removes this veil and we turn to the Lord. Then as verses 16-18 say, we can truly see the glory of the Lord and we are transformed into the image of Jesus. This refers to the idea that we Christians begin to look like Jesus and our goal is to look like him more and more. A sign that we are indeed Christians is that we change and that we see the fruits of the Spirit in us. Galatians 5:22-23

2. In chapter 4:2 Paul says that he is going to teach God's Word faithfully just as it comes from God. We must do the same which means that we should never change our message to please our audience. Our first goal is to please God.

3. Chapter 5:1-10 Paul talks about how little he fears death. Verse 6 and 8 tell why.

According to verse 6 when we are alive we are away from the Lord and verse 8 says the when we are dead we are with the Lord. A Christian can't lose. We can't lose because as soon as we die we go to heaven to be with God..

A. Verses 9-10 tell us that we must do all we can to please God because we will stand before him to be judged for the things we have done. Christians will not be punished for what they have done wrong, but they will receive rewards for their good deeds. We will receive our rewards in heaven. The Bible teaches that there are varying degrees of reward in heaven. See Mark 10:29-30 and Revelation 22:12

4. Chapter 5:17 is a very encouraging verse. Following are two applications for us:

A. One thought is that being a new creation means that our old self is gone. All our previous

sins are forgiven. No matter how bad we were before we came to Christ, we are forgiven and are new people. Consider how bad Paul himself was.

B. Another thought is that we are new creatures and we should be able to live as new creatures. We should live lives that show we are part of Jesus, remember we talked about this in chapter 3:16-18 where we said that we should live our lives looking more like Jesus. All Christians should be able to see change in the way they live as they become more mature in the faith.

5. Chapter 6:14-18 contains very important teaching for us.

A. Verse 14 tells us not to be partners with unbelievers. This includes marriage, business, and in church.

i. Marriage customs in the west are different than in Africa and many times Christians choose to marry non-Christians. This is sin and leads to many problems especially when children come.

ii. A Christian must not become partners with a non-Christian because our moral standards are supposed to be different and because we have different masters. A Christian's master is Jesus and a non-Christians master is Satan.

iii. We must guard our churches from becoming partners with unsaved people. We should never allow an unsaved or unknowledgeable person to speak to our people in church. We must make sure that only the truth from the Bible is taught and preached in our churches.

B. Look at verse 16 which says that we are the temples of God the Holy Spirit so we can't partner with unsaved people. This is like allowing the unsaved person to mingle his gods with our true God who is in us.

C. Verse 17 says that we must not have close relationships with unsaved people, after all as verse 18 says, we have God as our father so we have no need to marry the unsaved spouse, or to have the unclean business partner, or the unsaved person being a partner in our church.

i. We must have some relationship with unbelievers so that we can evangelize them.

6. In chapters 8-9 Paul talks about money and giving to God's work. Now as we study this subject remember Paul is talking to very poor people and he is asking them to give to help others. Jesus has always expected His people to donate to the church and as we read in Luke 21:1-4 He delighted in the sacrifice of the poor widow. Giving is a blessing it is a gift from God. Remember Jesus does not need our gifts. Psalm 24:1 and 50:10-12. He already owns everything.

A. Chapter 8:1-7 is an excellent example of how God wants His church to share their resources. We see the Macedonian church which is a poor church giving sacrificially for God's work. Paul says they not only gave what they could afford, but they gave more than they could afford which defines sacrificial giving. Verse four shows that they understand that God was blessing them by allowing them to give.

B. Verses 6-7 Paul encourages the Corinthian church to do what the church in Macedonia did—to give and to give sacrificially. This is what God wants the church in Africa to do.

C. Chapter 9:5-7 we see that the reason Paul talked about the Macedonian church was to help encourage the Corinthian church to also give liberally to meet their obligation (verse 5). Paul gives us an important principle that we must follow when we give. Only give willingly or not at all. God does not need your money, but he allows you to give if you do it willingly and cheerfully.

D. Chapter 9:15 Paul switches from the idea of the church giving to God's work to talking about how much God has given us. Verse 15 says He has given us a gift which is indescribable or unspeakable. How can we ever describe Jesus? No matter how much we give back to God, we can never give back to Him anything worth even a small amount of what He gives us. His gift will keep on giving throughout eternity.

E. Malachi 3:10-11 tells us to test God by giving faithfully to Him even when we don't have much. We are really being told to trust God. Jesus praises the widow who gave her

little amount to God. Mark 12:42-43

7. Paul warns the people 2 Corinthians 13:2-3 to accept his authority or he will deal strongly with them when he comes. He wants to come and enjoy fellowship with the church; not discipline. Church discipline must be administered when needed, and he states in 13:9-10 the reason for church discipline is to restore the sinner to the full fellowship of the church.

A. Paul closes this letter in verse 11 urging the people to put aside their differences and live and work in peace with each other.

Galatians-Ephesians

Galatia is a part of Turkey, and this letter was written to a church or churches in this area. These churches were planted by Paul on his first missionary journey. This letter is missing a greeting because Paul is concerned enough by false teaching going on there to immediately attack the problem. The people are being taught a false message of salvation. They are being taught that they must have works to go along with their faith. The works they were being taught was they were to live obeying Jewish laws and customs.

Galatians

Chapters 1-2 Paul argues for his authority

1. Verses 1-3 Paul makes it clear that he is given his authority from God and not man.
2. He attacks those who are teaching false doctrine to the people even pronouncing a curse on them in verse 9. What is so bad about false teaching like this? It leads people away from Jesus. False teaching leads people away from Heaven straight into Hell. The best defense against false teaching is to really study your Bible. Don't believe anything someone says about God or what God teaches unless you see the teaching in the Bible.
3. Paul goes on in verse chapter 1 verse 10 to state the only correct priority. We must not worry about pleasing man with our message; we must please God first. Often the man who tries to be true to God will anger someone. Our choice must be to please God even if we displease man. Preaching the health, wealth and prosperity gospel is wrong because this preaching is designed to place man's interest ahead of God.

4. Verses 1:11-12 tell us that we should only teach what God gives us to teach. Paul got his message directly from Jesus and we get our message directly from the Bible.

5. Paul in chapter 2 points out that the other apostles accepted Paul's authority, and that they did not require Titus to be circumcised see verse 3. If it was necessary for a convert to be circumcised, the apostles would have demanded that Titus be

circumcised. Today circumcision is not an issue but some churches teach that we must do some work such as being baptized or living a good enough life to be saved

Chapter 2:15 through Chapter 4 Salvation by faith alone

1. We are saved by faith alone and not by works according to chapter 2:16. Chapter three has the same message. Listen to Paul's argument about this:

A. Chapter 3:1-5 Paul reminds the Galatians about their own salvation experience. In verse 3 he asks why they felt that they had to improve on the salvation they experienced which was by faith.

B. In chapter 3:6-9 Paul reminds the Judaizers that Abraham was justified by faith (Genesis 15:6). This was before he was circumcised and long before the law was given to Moses. This is additional proof that a person is saved by faith and not by any work such as circumcision. A Judaizer is a Christian who converted from being a Jew but still wanted to obey the Jewish law. There are still people in the church today who want to bring their traditions with them. We must stop them from bringing their idea that works are part of salvation into the church.

C. Verses 10-14 Paul tells that the law is a curse because, as verse 10 says, we are cursed by the law if we do not obey all the law. One sin is enough to put us under a curse. Verse 11 points out that we are justified by faith because no one will be justified by the law.

2. If the law can't save us, then why did God give us the law? Paul answers this question in chapter 3:19-4:7.

A. Verse 19 tells us that a purpose of the law was to identify sin so that people knew what God expected them to do. See Romans 4:15 which is clearer.

B. Another purpose of the law was to help men see their helplessness so that men would be driven to place their faith in Jesus.

C. We see in verses 24-26 that the law served as our guardian when we were under the law. Now the guardian has been replaced by grace, so we no longer need this guardian. We are now under God's rule and He is our guardian. The law served several purposes:

i. As our guardian the law restrained us from evil. 61

ii. The law also introduced us to Christ because it showed our need for a savior because man can't perfectly obey the law.

D. Chapter 4:5-7 Paul develops the idea (see Romans 8:15), that we Christians are adopted as sons by God. We see here that our relationship has changed and that we

have a special relationship with God. We are one family.

3. Paul argues in the rest of chapter 4 that since they have been set free from the law, that returning to it is to return to slavery.

1, Chapter 5:1 and Romans 6 teaches us that because of Christ we do not have to come under the yoke of slavery to sin. Instead we are free to live as Christians should live; we are free to walk by the Spirit, and choose to do the right thing and not sin. Paul teaches a similar lesson in Colossians 3:5-17.

A. He tells us that we must not walk in the way of the flesh. He lists specific things we are not to do in verses 16-21. The sins Paul list here he says are attacks against the Holy Spirit and those doing these will not inherit the kingdom of God

B. Paul immediately tells us in what we are to do. We are to do the following which is the fruit of the Spirit (see verses 22&23). The fruit of the Spirit is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Chapter 6 He lists in chapter 1-10 some of the qualities of a spiritual person:

2. Chapter 6:1 give help to restore a sinning brother

3. Verse 2 says we will help each other. One way to do this is to pray for each other.

4. Verse 3 a spiritual person will not be proud.

5. Verse 4 he will examine himself and his Christian service before God. His concern is for God's glory and not for human recognition.

6. Verse 5 says the spiritual person takes responsibility for his own spiritual stand with God.

7. Verse 6 says the spiritual person will support their teachers financially.

8. Verses 9&10 sum things up for us. We must do good things and we must persist in doing this and not get discouraged and quit. Verse 10 gives us a rule for helping others. First we help fellow Christians, and then others.

Ephesians

Paul wrote this letter while he was in prison in Rome. He did not write it because of a problem in the church, but because he wanted to teach some lessons. Ephesus is a part of what today is Turkey, a Muslim country, in Asia Minor. We learn in verse 1 that Paul is an apostle and the he is writing this letter to Christians.

1. Chapter 1:3-14 in the Greek language is one long sentence in which Paul praises God. Verses 3-5 He praises God the Father especially for our spiritual blessings which we receive in Christ. These spiritual blessings are the true wealth of the church and daily we need to praise and thank God for them.

A. Verses 4-5 teach us that God chose His people long before he made the world. He did this for His own pleasure, for His own purpose. We see that He chose us as an act of His love.

2. In verses 7-11 Paul now focuses his praise on the work of the Father through Jesus. Once again in verses 7-8 we see that our salvation is not earned by us because it is given to us through the blood of Jesus. It says here that we are forgiven through the shedding of His blood. We see this fact over and over again which tells us that it is such an important point that we must never feel that we must help God with our works to be saved. We are saved by the free gift of His sacrifice and nothing else.

3. In verses 12-14 Paul then praises the Holy Spirit for His work of sealing us-- verifying that we belong to God.

4. In verses 17-18 we see that it is God Himself who reveals all we can know about Him. We are to faithfully read the Bible, really study it and then ask God, by the power of The Holy Spirit, to reveal the truths of the Bible. The reason the church in Africa can look forward to being an effective means for the spreading of the gospel and the maturing of the Christians is that all we need is the Bible which we have. We don't need Bible colleges and seminaries to be able to teach and preach God's word; all we need is a Bible and hard work. We need to ask God to bless our efforts and fill us with His knowledge. Remember, all the earliest church had was the Gospel; the rest of the New Testament was still being written.

5. Chapter 2:1-10 we see a description of Christians. We see that we were all dead as we followed Satan as our leader. Verse 3 says that we were people who faced God's wrath. We were headed toward Hell, but verses 4-5 say that because of His love for us He rescued us and made us spiritually alive. Even as verse 6 says we are elevated to heaven with Jesus.

A. We once again see in verses 8 & 9 how we are saved. This is very specific that we are saved by grace and not saved by our works. Grace refers to God's free gifts to us which we do not deserve such as our salvation and even the breath of air we are breathing.

B. Verse 10 tells us that we are not saved just for our own pleasure; rather we are saved to do good works. Just as we know that good works will not save us, we know that we are saved by God's grace to do good works. God's grace is the favor He gives to us which we don't deserve.

C. A Christian knows when he will die. Do you know when you will die? Well the answer is when you have finished the work God assigned you.

6. Chapter 2:11-22 we Christians are all united because we are one in Christ. Verse 19 tells us that we are all members of the household of God. It does not matter if you are a

Jew, an American, an African, an Asian or whatever; if you are a Christian then we are all members of the same household. An African Christian is more closely related to an American Christian than he is to his unsaved mother.

Chapter 4:1-9 talks about the way a church should operate

1. Chapter 4:11-16 again Paul calls for church unity. Paul says in verses 11-16 that God called people to different task in the church to build up the church. We are to help other Christians mature so that the whole church can work together to build each other up. Our job as leaders is to help equip the saints to work together so that we could better serve God and each other.

B. Chapter 4:17-32 teaches that we Christians must not live like the rest of the world. For example, we are to show the “Fruits of The Spirit” (Gal.5:22-23) in the way we live.

- i. Verse 25 tells us to not lie that we are to be honest and only speak the truth.
 - ii. Verse 28 says that we should work instead of stealing. We should give instead of stealing.
 - iii. Our speech verse 29 should build up people rather than tearing them down.
- James 3:5-10

teaches us that the tongue is a powerful weapon

- iv. Verse 30 tell us to not grieve the holy Spirit which lives inside us. We do this when we deliberately choose to sin.
- v. Verse 32 tells us to follow the example of Jesus and be kind to each other and be quick to

forgive each other. Forgiveness is the key to getting along with each other. At times we all do something that causes another person to become offended. If we are quick to forgive, we can maintain good relations. A marriage is a good example; a successful marriage is full of mutual forgiveness.

2. Chapter 5 gives us more instruction in how to live as Christians.

A. Verses 1-2 tell us to imitate the behavior of Jesus; as we have said earlier, we must live like Jesus.

B. We are not to get involved in the sinful practices of the world especially, verse 3 says, sexual immorality. For, as verse 8 says we were previously children of darkness, but now we are children of light. Romans 6 told us we are no longer slaves to sin.

C. verse 18 tells us that we are not to become drunk. We have no need to be drunk because we are filled with the Holy Spirit which allows us to show joy, thanksgiving, and submission.

D. the rest of chapter 5 deals with relations between a husband and wife. This is very important teaching. Some of this teaching may disagree with normal practice, but here God gives us the formula for a happy family and one which honors God. Remember God loves the Christian woman just as much as He loves the man.

E. Let's study God's instruction for our marriages.

i. Verses 22-24 are instruction to wives about the leadership in the family. The husband is the leader and he bears final responsibility for the marriage. The wife submits to his decision with respect. This introduces us to the important teaching coming next.

ii. Verses 25-33 give husbands important responsibilities. 64

iii. Verse 25 teaches husbands that they are to treat their wives with the same love Jesus had for His church. How much did Jesus love the church? He willingly died for the church, and husbands are to be willing to die for their wives?

iv. The purpose for our love is, as verses 26&27 say, to build her up in the Lord. We men are to be spiritual leaders.

F. The rest of the chapter makes the point that in God's eyes we are one flesh with our wives. We men must treat our wives the way we want to be treated.

3. Chapter 6:1-4 starts out also teaching about the relationship between children and parents.

A. Children are to obey their parents this is the fifth commandment.

B. Parents also have a responsibility here. We are to bring up our children with the idea that they are important. Remember 2 Corinthians 2:14 says parents have a responsibility to their children. We parents are to teach our children about God; this is a very serious matter. When verse 4 says we are to discipline our children we must understand that beating a child is not discipline. The purpose in disciplining a child is to cause him to know that he is doing wrong and to teach him to do the right thing. Only hit the child to teach him and never hit the child when you are angry.

4. Verses 5-9 deal with the relationship between slaves and their masters which was a common relationship in Bible times. Today the idea here is applicable to employee and boss. Slaves and employees owe their boss honest work and loyalty, and the boss owes

his employee treatment that imitates the way our Christian master (Jesus) treats us. Malachi 3:5 has a warning for the employer who cheats his employee. We have a saying in America that goes this way, "An honest day's pay for an honest day's work."

5. The final teaching in this chapter begins in verses 10-18.

A. We must understand that we are engaged in spiritual warfare with Satan and that Satan is much stronger than we are. See how in Jude verse 9 that even a powerful angel, the archangel Michael, did not directly argue with Satan. We must only fight Satan using the armor of God because we are not fighting humans rather our enemy is demonic. Prayer is our best weapon. 6. Paul requests in verse 19 that the church in Ephesus pray for him. All Christian leaders need prayers.

Philippians-Colossians

Paul is in prison as he writes to the church in Philippi in northern Greece. He wants to inform them of his status and to thank them for a gift they sent. He also has some teaching for them about their duties and the danger of false teaching.

Philippians

1. This letter is written to the Christians in Philippi.

2. The main point of chapter 1:1-19 is that being in prison has not stopped Paul's ministry. He uses the opportunity to write some of the New Testament and also to share the gospel with many including his jailers. Paul never got discouraged even in prison he continued his work.

3. Paul expresses that he has no fear of death. He knows that he could be killed at any time, but that he says in verse 21, as a Christian if he dies he wins. He does lose his life here on earth, but he gains life in heaven.

4. In verses 20-26 he says that while he is torn between wanting to continue living and dying, he desire to live because by living he can help the church more. Our attitude should be to serve God even in extreme danger, and not to be concerned about our death because we can't lose. We should all be willing. as verse 29 says, to suffer for the sake of the gospel.

5. Chapter 2 Paul knows that the Philippians are concerned for his well being, and so he tells them that he wishes them be united. This can only happen if they think like Jesus (verse 5). God must be the object they focus on; God must be all important.

6. Chapter 2:9-11 states something that is a fact to Christians and is a myth to non believers. Everybody will confess that Jesus is God. We Christians will do this with glad hearts. The lost person will do this with a sad heart at his judgment when he is on his way to Hell.

7. Chapter 3 finds Paul warning again about the false teaching of salvation by works. Look in verse 2 at his description of the people who bring false teaching to the church.

A. Paul says in 3:3-11 that he used to put his faith in being a good follower of the law. He tells all that he had done to earn his salvation. He is saying that if it was possible for a person to earn salvation then he certainly would have. In verse 7 Paul states that he realizes all his efforts to earn his own salvation were futile. He now knows (verse 9) that his righteousness only comes from faith in Jesus.

B. In verses 12-21 Paul says that we must work toward the goal of serving Jesus and being more like Him. He tells us in verse 20 that our citizenship is in heaven and we are waiting for Jesus who will transform our lowly bodies to be like the glorious body of Jesus.

8. Paul in 4:1 shows the true heart of a pastor. He loves his people and wants to be with them. The true mark of a pastor is not that he is a great speaker, but that he loves and cares for his people. He cares for their physical and spiritual health; like Jesus he serves his flock, and is a good shepherd.

9. In verses 2-3 Paul is addressing two people who have been feuding, and he asks them to end the problem. He asks others in the church to mediate and help Euodia and Syntyche settle their dispute so they can work together in the church.

10. We all need the heart of Paul. Chapter 4:10-13 says that no matter how poor our situation in life is, we must be content. If God gives you a dangerous job or a job which is difficult we must be content no matter what.

A. Look at the encouragement in verse 19 where God says that He will provide all we truly need. It might not be what we think we need, but it will be what God knows we need. Remember, even if our situation leads to our death we still win see 2Cor. 5:8. A Christian is always a winner.

Colossians

Paul wrote this book to the church in Colossae which is a church he never visited. Paul once again wrote this book when he was in prison. He wrote this letter to combat the dangerous heresies that had crept into the church. Once again the Jewish element in the church was causing problems. They were wrongly arguing that Jesus alone was not sufficient for salvation. Paul wrote this letter to address this problem.

1. Paul begins once again in greeting the church and reminds the people that he was appointed by God to be an apostle, and his authority comes from God.

2. Although Paul is writing to correct problems, he doesn't open his letter by talking

about these problems. Instead, he starts out in the first 8 verses by mentioning the good things they had learned. This is a good way win a person to your viewpoint; If you start your discussion attacking what a person believes often he becomes defensive and argues with you. The best way to win him to your side is just to tell the correct way to do things, and let him see his errors by listening to you instruct without telling him he has done wrong.

A. The good things they have learned are faith and love in verse 4, and hope in verse 5.
3. Paul in verses 13-19 teaches about the nature of Jesus.

A. Verses 13-14 say that he is our redeemer.

B. Chapter 1:15 says that He is the heir or ruler of all of the created universe.

C. Jesus is the creator of all things verses 16-19 and He is the first in all things. He is the head of the church.

4. Verses 20-23 again teach that Jesus is the only hope of the world.

5. We see in 1:24-2:3 that every saint (verse 26) has been given the secret to God which is Christ. We get all our answers about God from the Bible.

6. Paul next in chapter 2:4-8 tells them the reason for this teaching is to protect them against false teaching which can lead them astray and even prevent them from becoming Christians. The best protection for people so that they are not led astray is for them to study their Bible. 7. Because of Christ, verses 9-23 teach us that we do not have any need to follow legalistic rituals such as diet restrictions to save ourselves or circumcision. This is another argument against any work being necessary for salvation.

A. Verse 11-13. In Christ we are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands ([Col_2:11](#)), by the work of regeneration in us, which is the spiritual or Christian circumcision. He is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, [Rom_2:29](#). This is owing to Christ, and belongs to the Christian dispensation. It is made without hands; not by the power of any creature, but by the power of the blessed Spirit of God.

B. Verse 18 tells us to not rely on things like visions instead rely on the word of God.

C Verse 23 warns about relying on manmade religion which is what most people do.

8. Since we are raised with Christ 3:1-17 says we should seek the things that are above such as in heaven. Like in Galatians where we studied the fruits of the Spirit, now Paul tells us what we should not do and then what we should do.

A. Chapter 3:5-9 gives us a list of things we should do because we have put off our old self and we are new creatures.

B. We should, verses 10-11 tell us put on the new self, and we are told what our Christ like behavior should look like.

C. Verse 17 is another one of those great verses to memorize. All that we do we are to do to in the name of the Lord. We are to do everything with thanksgiving and to the glory of God. Even while we are suffering we are to do it to God's glory see James 1:2. When we are digging in our gardens we are to be doing this with thankful hearts.

9. Chapter 3:18-22 Paul gives instruction telling families how they are to live. They are to put into practice the Christian principles they have learned.

10. Chapter 4:2-6 he gives four commands to be followed by all church members.

A. First they are to continue in prayer. Verse 2-3

B. Then they are to be thankful. Verse 2

C. They are to walk in wisdom toward unbelievers. Verse 5 Here Paul is instructing them to be kind to non-believers, so that you can lead them to Christ.

D. Lastly their speech should always be filled with grace. Verse 5-6

11. Paul closes this letter informing them that Tychicus was his representative being sent to encourage them. Chapter 4:7-8

12. Paul in verse 15 mentions house churches. In many parts of the world Christians meet in house churches. This is especially true in countries where Christians are persecuted. It is not allowed or safe in countries like China and Saudi Arabia for Christians to meet except secretly in houses.

Thessalonians

These two letters were written by Paul to the church in Thessalonica which is in northern Greece. Paul uses these letters for more teaching. One of the subjects was about end times, and he also used these letters to help encourage the church during persecution.

Paul begins his letter by encouraging the people. They are suffering persecution and Paul does his best to encourage them. This is an important thing for we church leaders to do. It is our responsibility to encourage the members and help them in difficult times.

1. He begins in chapter 4 to talk about some problems in the church. Look at verse 1 as Paul tells Christians that we are to live our lives pleasing God. This should be the goal of every Christian at all times. Paul also, in verse 2, tells the people that he is to be listened to and obeyed because Paul's authority comes from God.

2. Verses 3-8 deal with sexual immorality again. This is a major problem for Christians as we can see because the Bible both in the Old Testament and the New Testament continually teaches us to be sexually pure. Many a church leader has fallen because of sexual immorality. We must continually guard against falling into this sin. The best way to protect ourselves is to pray and never allow ourselves to be in situations where we can fail. An example of this would be to never visit a member of the opposite sex alone. Always have a witness of the opposite sex with you when you visit to serve as your witness.

A. In the western church many pastors and seminary students have fallen because they get involved with pornography while using the internet.

B. The sex drive is very strong and to protect ourselves we need to, as Ephesians 6 teaches, put on the full armor of God. Remember as Paul says chapter 4:5 we are not to behave like the unsaved people who can't control themselves. Paul taught us back in Romans 6 that sin is no longer our master. So we can control ourselves and not give in to sexual temptation.

C. Paul in verse 8 tells us that we are disobeying God when we are involved in sexual immorality, but that we don't have to surrender to this sin because God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us resist sin, and with God's help we can overcome sin.

3. Paul in verses 9-12 has two teachings for us.

A. First Paul tells them that they are doing a good job in caring for each other; for showing brotherly love. However, he exhorts them to do better.

B. Apparently chapter 4:11-12 some of the people were no longer working and earning their living. Paul tells them that we Christians are to work and not be a burden on others. What we know about the church there was that many people expected a momentary return of Jesus and so they quit working. No one knows when Christ will return so we are to live our lives normally as we wait His imminent return.

4. Paul, in verses 13-18, reassures us that Jesus will come back again for us and he teaches the order of events that will occur when He comes back.

A. Verse 16 tells us that the dead will rise first.

B. Verse 17 tells us next those people alive will next rise to meet Jesus in the air and we will all be with Jesus forever. It is also a great encouragement for us to know that when a Christian we love dies that we will be reunited with him in heaven. There is a saying

that, “Christians never say goodbye, they just say see you later.”

5. Chapter 5:1-2 tells us that the Day of the Lord is coming. What is the Day of the Lord?

A. The term is first used in Isa 13:6 Wail, for the Day of the LORD is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come! This term is used 23 times throughout the Bible, in both the OT and the NT. See also Joel for the meaning of the day of the Lord in judgment for Israel; it is a time of judgment. Read Joel 2:1-11 to see how bad the day of the Lord is when it is judgment.

i. The day of the Lord can refer to the time we are living on earth. It is a time of severe judgment because of sin. Life in many nations reflects that we suffer because of our sins and for these people this is the day of the Lord. For, example, much suffering, on earth, is caused by bad government which is a sin problem.

ii. Usually “the day of the Lord” refers to the time when Jesus comes back again to judge all men; the end time. For most people this will be a terrible time of judgment.

iii. The day of the Lord is also the day when Christians are rewarded eternally. Talk about difference between the day of the Lord for a Christian and for a non-Christian. A Christian can look forward to the day of the Lord because it is the day when we are welcomed into heaven by Jesus. A non-Christian as we have already said will begin his time of eternal punishment in Hell.

B. Paul in chapter 5:1-11 reassures us that we Christians have nothing to fear in the day of the Lord. He does this by presenting a series of contrasts between the fate of the Christian and the lost person. Let us look at a few examples:

i. Verse 5 reassures us that we are children of light and not darkness.

ii. Verse 9 reassures us that we are not destined for destruction.

iii. Verse 10 reassures us that we are going to be with Jesus whether we are dead or alive.

C. Chapter 5:12-22 gives us some final instructions.

i. Verses 12&13 teach to respect and support those in authority and our fellow workers in the church.

ii. Verse 14 instructs the strong Christian to encourage those who are not doing what they should be doing to do, and to help the weaker brothers.

B. Verse 15 teaches how to treat those who mistreat us. Remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount see Matthew 5:39. See also Proverbs 25:22 or Romans 12:20.

Paul in verses 16-22 gives a series of commands.

A. Verse 16 rejoice always

B. Verse 17 pray without ceasing-- We are to have regular schedules of prayer. We are to always have an attitude of prayer—to never be far from prayer.

C. Verse 18 give thanks in all circumstances-- This is sometimes difficult, but remember no matter how hard your situation is no one can take away your Christian joy. We can always look forward to heaven and that should cause our hearts to be thankful.

D. Verse 19 says do not quench the Spirit—we do this when we walk in the way of Satan and ignore the Word of God.

E. Verse 20 do not despise prophecies—welcome the teaching from God's Word.

F. Verse 21 test everything—compare everything to the Word of God. We must study the Bible and when someone teaches something about God we must make sure he agrees with

God's Bible. The Bible is God's standard.

G. Verse 21 says hold fast to what is good. We must only accept the things that are good in God's eyes. We must do what is good in God's eyes.

H. Verse 22 says to abstain from evil. So we learn what is good by using the Bible. Then, we do what is good, and we choose to not do evil.

8. Paul closes this teaching by telling us in verse 23 that we are to walk faithfully with God. We are not to follow the evil one. Verse 24 says that Jesus will help us to do this.

Second Thessalonians

This book was written a few months after the first letter perhaps in response to some information Paul received from the church. Paul's message in this letter is about persecution, the Lord's return, and the need for godly living.

1. Chapter 1:4-12 is about suffering.

A. Paul tells them that he is proud of how they stay true to Jesus even when they are

suffering. This proves that they are worthy of being Christians. Verse 4-5

B. The ones who are making Christians suffer will be made to suffer and their suffering

will be forever. Verses 6 & 8-9

C. Our suffering is only for a short time. Verse 7

D. Paul desires that God will be glorified in our suffering. Verse 12 Somehow, in a way we don't understand, God is glorified in our suffering and His kingdom advanced.

2. Chapter 2:1-12 deals with the fear that some of the saints have. They fear that they have missed the day of the Lord; that Jesus has come back for His saints and that they missed Him. Paul says that this has not yet happened because the signs preceding the day of the Lord have not yet come.

A. One of the signs is that the man of lawlessness has not yet come. This will be a man who is very wicked and who sets himself up as an object of worship in place of God. There will be a time of great rebellion. Verse 3 Many times in history people have thought this was happening, but we can't ever tell for sure who the man of lawlessness

3. In Chapter three verses 10-13 Paul calls on believers to not be idle. They are to work and earn their own living. To make the point about how important this is verse 11 says let the person who will not work go hungry. Paul says this to stop the practice of some who are not working.

A. Again in verse 13 as we saw in Galatians 6:9 we are encouraged to keep working and not to grow tired of serving God. We must be careful to be able to work for a long time. Many Christians make the mistake of trying to do too much and they get tired after a while and they quit working for the kingdom. We must work at a level that we can maintain for a long time.

Timothy-Philemon

Paul wrote two letters to Timothy to encourage and instruct him. Timothy after his conversion became a pastor and is facing a difficult time. Paul writes to Timothy and also Titus to instruct these young pastors in how to be effective pastors. He warned them of dangers from false teachers, he encouraged them in the face of persecution, and he gave them instructions in worship and ministry.

First Timothy

1. First area of concern is false teaching chapter 1:3-11. He names Hymenaeus and Alexander as two of the false teachers in verse 20. When Paul says that he handed them over to Satan, he is probably saying that he put these two people outside the church. We must learn from this and do all we can to stop false teaching in our churches.

2. Paul then directs the church to have a prayer life. He directs them to prayer for others. Chapter 2:1-2 Paul directs them to pray for others such as rulers so that as verse 2 says we might have peaceful and dignified lives.

3. Chapter 2:9-15 give some instruction about the role of women in a church. He instructs women to dress modestly. He also orders (verse 12) that women not exercise authority over men.

4. Chapter 3 instructs how churches are to be governed.

A. Verses 1-7 talk about one office with three different names all meaning the same thing—

elder, bishop. Or pastor. We see that he is to be a man of good public reputation. He must also manage his own house well. He can not have more than one wife. Note that he must be able to teach the Bible. The elders rule the church under the leadership of Jesus. Elders are to be good examples to the church.

B. Verse 5 makes the point that a man who can't manage his affairs in his private life is not qualified to help manage a church.

C. Verse 6 teaches a good principle. Do not give responsibility to new believers. Wait until they have had an opportunity to mature and prove themselves.

D. Elders have much responsibility, and they must be chosen with much care. They must first feel the call from God, and then this call must be affirmed by the church. A person should not lightly assume the office of pastor or elder.

5. Verses 8-13 talk about deacons who do much of the practical work of the church. We see that they also must have a good reputation. They must be tested (verse 10) which means that they must not be new believers, and they must show they live by godly standards.

6. Chapter 3:15 tells us that the local church is the place where the truths about Christ are to be proclaimed and where the truths are protected. Paul has earlier in this chapter instructed how people are to behave, and how the leaders are to be chosen. This chapter has much practical instruction for churches.

7. Chapter 4:1-5 warns Christians to be on guard against false teaching because some church leaders will not follow the Bible in their teaching.

8. Chapter 4:6-16. The first point is made in verse 6 which teaches that a good preacher is to be trained in the words of faith; this means that preachers are to be students of the Bible. We should never preach or teach the Bible until we have seriously studied the Bible and have a good understanding of its truths.

A. Verse 7 says they are to have nothing to do with myths which means they are not to teach anything that is not from the book of truth which is the Bible. Remember we do not believe anything about God unless we read it in the Bible, and I repeat, we have a responsibility to only teach or preach what we find in the Bible and nothing else. These are God's orders. This is very serious.

B. Verse 13 instructs that public reading of Scripture is proper. It is good for a church read a large portion of the Bible out loud Sunday at worship.

C. Verses 15-16 tell that the leader of a church is to practice what he preaches and not just speak or teach. We must set a good example.

9. Chapter 5 teaches about responsibilities within the church family.

A. Verses 1-2 teach the pastor to respect and love the members of his church like he does his own family.

B. Verses 3-16 teach about how a church should treat widows.

i. Identify who are truly widows. These are the ones who have no family to take care of

them. It is the family's responsibility to care for its widows. Verse 8 is very strong teaching about those who don't take care of their family's widows. If there is no family to take care of them then verse 16 says the church should do it. What about when there is a family but they will not take care of their widows—should the church take care of the widow? My opinion is yes. I believe this teaching also applies to orphans. James 1:27

ii. Verse 14 teaches that it is good for a widow to remarry so that means that it is good for a man to marry a widow.

10. The next teaching instructs the church how to treat pastors and elders. 5:17 says they are to be honored and verse 18 says they are to be paid—especially pastors. A church can only pay pastors if they have money, and many churches lack the money, but if able then pastors should be paid. It is good for a church to have a fulltime pastor who can devote all his time to serving as pastor and not have to work to earn his living.

A. Verse 19-21 talk about accusing an elder or pastor of doing wrong. The first thing is do not make charges against an elder unless you have witnesses—do not gossip about the leaders of your church. Your attitude toward church leaders should be that you want to support them.

B. However, elders and pastors are also sinners and verse 20 teaches that they are to be disciplined when they persist in sin. Sometimes they must be removed from office.

Verse 21 warns us not to do this from personal feelings rather only do this as a last resort and only based on facts.

C. We can avoid much trouble in the church if we do as verse 22 says. We must be very careful in the choosing of our leaders. Examine them and take our time and only after much fasting and prayer do we appoint our leaders. Acts 14:23 1 Timothy 5:24 says that with some people we can easily see their sins, but other people can keep them hidden for a long time. We must be careful, and we should discipline where necessary.

11. Paul in chapter 6:3-10 tells Timothy to stay away from those who teach false doctrine and who cause trouble in the church. 2 John 1:10-11

A. Paul teaches that one of the motives of the false teachers is money. Look at verse 7 for a true statement that many people can't seem to make themselves believe. Verse 8 teaches us to be content with the basic necessities of life. Verse 9 tells that those who desire riches fall into a trap and as verse 10 says it brings them to ruin. This is because for many people chasing wealth is their first priority and they feel they never have enough money.

B. Paul is talking to church leaders here. It seems that he was talking to many of our pastors here in Uganda. He is condemning those who use their churches to become wealthy.

12. Paul goes on in verse 11 to instruct all teachers, all preachers to not teach false doctrine and to not use their office to get rich. Instead they are to pursue righteousness and fight the good fight.

13. Paul teaches in verses 17-19 that is all right to be rich if you have the right attitude about your riches. People are not to be proud of their wealth, and they are not to put their faith in their money. They are to recognize that their riches came from God and they are to be generous with sharing their wealth. The man who started the Caterpillar Company gave 90% of the company's income to church work and God richly blessed the company which makes many of the bulldozers we see in Uganda. This story refers to the old company not the current one which is not owned and controlled by Christians.

Second Timothy

Paul wrote this book to continue to encourage and instruct Timothy. He knew that difficult times were coming and he wished to encourage both Timothy and the church.

Paul was in prison shortly before his execution when he wrote this letter which is the last letter he wrote. Nero was emperor of Rome and he terribly persecuted Christians.

1. The first thing to look at is found in chapter one verse 5. We see that Timothy's grandmother and mother were both believers. It appears that they did their job and taught Timothy about Jesus. Every Christian parent and all relatives are responsible to teach their children the truth about Jesus. There is much teaching in the Bible regarding how we are to teach our children about God. See Ps. 34:11 for example. You will answer to God for your faithfulness in this matter. You are not responsible for your children accepting Jesus and becoming Christian, but you are required to teach them. Most people who become Christian are converted at an early age.

2. Paul in chapter one continues to encourage Timothy.

A. Paul in verse seven teaches that we are not to be fearful people.

B. Paul goes on, beginning in verse 8, to tell believers to stand strong when suffering. In verse twelve he reminds them that they should not be ashamed of their suffering when we suffer because of our beliefs. 1 Peter 4:12-16 Paul says that we need to trust Jesus to help us in our trials.

3. Paul, in chapter two, continues to encourage the people to continue in the faith even when they suffer. He points out in verses 3 & 4 that we are soldiers in God's army. Our suffering and the attacks on us by the enemy are because we are engaged in spiritual warfare. Verses 6-7 mention that there are rewards for our perseverance; the Christian's rewards are eternal.

A. In 2 Timothy 2:8-13 Paul encourages pastors to endure suffering for the sake of his people. In verse 10 Paul says that he suffered for the sake of spreading the gospel and all pastors must be willing to do the same for the good of the elect; to help them obtain salvation. Verses 11-13 tell us that we Christians should suffer with Jesus if we expect to reign with Him. The statement that, "if we deny Him, He will deny us" is a warning against apostasy or falling away. Verse 13 is a verse of encouragement for us. It tells us that while we Christians can be faithless, Jesus will always be faithful. Remember Jesus Himself suffered for the sake of the elect. He is not asking you to do anything that He has not done.

4. Chapter three verses 1-14 predict both (verse 12) persecution for the Christians and false teaching. Major topics in the New Testament are that we should expect suffering and persecution and also that there will be many false teachers. Read verses 1-9 and see that Paul is describing the church in Uganda.

A. Paul tells us in verse five that we must be very careful to make sure our pastors and teachers are really Christians. We must stay away from preachers and teachers who are not really Christians. This means that we must judge our leaders and the only way we can do this is to compare what they teach with what the Bible says.

5. Chapter 3:16-17 is one of the best known Bible passages in the Bible, and it is good to memorize these verses. All scripture, beginning in Genesis and ending in Revelation, is the very word of God, and it is accurate, and authoritative. The purpose of our learning all we can about the Bible is for us to be able to be more effective Christians. We study the Bible so that we can worship and serve God better. This is the reason for this class.

6. Paul goes on in chapter four to instruct Timothy and all pastors to faithfully preach the word of God, and to be ready to do this at any time. Verses 3-4 describe the church today where people want to hear pleasant messages and don't want to hear the hard teachings from the Bible such as in verse 5 where we are told to endure suffering. People want to be fooled by pleasant messages instead of God's true teaching. We must always preach to please God first and not man. All of our lives must be focused on God. If by teaching God's truths, we are persecuted by man then we must endure this persecution.

A. The words of Paul in verses 6-8 should inspire all of us. Paul knows that he is near death and he is satisfied that to the best of his ability he has served God faithfully and he is ready to go to heaven. This is a statement of victory from Paul a man who has suffered much to advance the kingdom of God. Paul was executed soon after he wrote these words.

B. We see in verses 9-18 something that every Christian leader must be prepared for.
i. We see in verses 10 and 16 that often when you are having trials and you need the support

of other Christians, that they will desert you. Matthew 26:31

ii. Some people according to verse 14 will even attack and hurt you.

iii, God will always be with you; He will not desert you. He will, according to verses 17 and

18, strengthen you during your time of trial. You can always count on God. Titus

Paul wrote this book a few years earlier than second Timothy. He is writing to Titus a younger church leader. He is concerned about all the false teaching going on in the church, and the lack of good works by the Christians.

1. Paul, in chapter one verses 5-9, instructs Titus to appoint elders and he gives him instruction about what their qualifications are to be. This teaching about elders we also saw in his first letter to Timothy. It is important that the church has godly leaders. He makes the same point in verse 7 that he had made in First Timothy which is that a church elder or pastor must have a good testimony; he must live a moral life. He must

be a good example. Verse 9 says an elder must be able to faithfully teach the lessons of the Bible and to defend the faith against attack.

A. Verses 10-15 deal with the enemies facing the church and its leaders. The reason we need good elders is as Paul demonstrate to protect the church against false teachers. He describes some of the false teaching. Paul in verses 7 and 11 teaches against those who teach because they want money. Our position as leaders is we serve God to advance His kingdom, and not so that we can become wealthy.

B. Verse 16 teaches that many leaders talk a good story about being good Christians, but their lives show that they are not really Christians.

2. Chapters 2-3 give instruction about how to live our lives. We are to do good works because we are saved; not to be saved.

A. Verses 1-8 we are to live our lives as good examples to others, and older people have a special responsibility to do this. Verse 14 says we are to be eager to do good works.

B. Chapter 3:1 tells us to be good citizens and obey the laws of our nation.

C. Chapter 3:10 instructs us to deal with the divisive person. We are to warn him And if he persists then we are to have nothing more to do with the person who seeks to cause dissension in the church. Put them outside the church? We must protect the church.

Philemon

This is a short letter Paul wrote on behalf of a new Christian. The Christian named Onesimus was a slave who had stolen some money from his master and then escaped to Rome. He met Paul and became a Christian and also a friend of Paul's. Paul convinced Onesimus to do the correct thing which was to return to his master. Paul wrote a letter to the master named Philemon asking for mercy for Onesimus who is now a fellow Christian. We don't know the results of Paul's efforts.

This concludes the thirteen books that Paul wrote for the New Testament. Note how Paul liked to introduce his books with a greeting and end his letters with a farewell which included a blessing.

Hebrews

Who wrote the book—no one really knows. It was written to Jews, but we don't know which group of Jews although we know it was written to Jewish Christians to encourage them to remain strong in the faith and to not turn back to Judaism. There is a lot of

important teaching for us in this book. One teaching is to demonstrate the superiority of the work of Christ over the Old Testament system of sacrifices.

1. Chapter one verses 1-4 is another strong statement like the one in John 1:1-5 testifying that Jesus is God. Verse 2 repeats what John chapter one said that all things were created through Him. The author of Hebrews stresses the superiority of Christ. Verses 1-2 talk about how God previously spoke through the prophets, but now He speaks directly to us in a superior way through Jesus. The Jews would have known that the phrase “in these last days” referred to the time of the Messiah.

A. The next section, verses 5-14 make the point that Jesus is superior to angels who as verse 14 says, are to serve Jesus and humans. Angels are not higher than man and they worship Christ just like we do (verse 6). In fact I Corinthians 6:3 says that we humans will judge angels. 2. Chapter 2:1-8 talk more about angels and their relationship to man and Jesus. We know from chapter one verse 14 that the angels will serve us and Jesus, but 2:7 says that for a short while Jesus humbled Himself and was made lower than the angels. This was only for a short time. Note in 2:2-3 a strong warning for us. We must not reject the offer of God’s salvation when God offers it because He may not offer it again.

A. Verses 9-18 teach about the humanity of Jesus and how He unites with us. We must understand that Jesus was both God and man at the same time. Verse 13 tells how Jesus shared all things with us such as illness, hunger, and temptation (which He did not give in to). It was through the death of this perfect man that the power of Satan was destroyed and, as verse 15, says we were delivered from Satan. Verse 16 says that Jesus did His work for humans and not angels. Fallen angels are not going to be saved from their sins, but we can be saved.

B. Verses 17-18 tell us the reason that Jesus was a person just like us is so that His sacrifice for our sins would be acceptable to God. Verse 17 teaches that the punishment of Jesus was acceptable to God as punishment for our sins, in other words Jesus was punished for all the sins of all Christians. Verse 18 says Jesus’ punishment is acceptable to God because Jesus never sinned even though he was tempted just like we are, and yet He did not sin, see Hebrews 4:15. Remember Jesus was fully man and he had the same temptations as we. He was also fully God which allowed Him to not sin.

3. Chapter 3:1-6 teaches that Christ is superior to Moses. Many of the Jewish converts did not understand the correct relationship between Jesus and Moses. They thought that Jesus was to impose the Law of Moses on all people. They failed to realize that Jesus was higher than Moses. After all Jesus is God and Jesus created Moses. Verses 5-6 tell us that Moses was a faithful servant while Jesus is a faithful son. All church leaders

must be faithful to realize that we are only lowly servants, and the only one to be lifted up is Lord Jesus.

A. Verses 7-19 are a warning to believers to not just become knowledgeable about Jesus. We must increase this knowledge and do good things with this knowledge. Knowing that Jesus is God is not enough by itself. We must make Him our God by trusting Him enough to follow and obey Him and serve Him. Verse 19 says that the reason the Hebrews could not enter the Promised Land was because of their unbelief. In other words they believed in God but not enough to follow and obey Him and completely trust Him.

B. The Bible talks about the difference between faith and saving faith in several places. Saving faith is working faith. We will talk more about this subject when we study the book of James.

4. Chapter four talks about entering God's rest which all true believers will do when they die. The warning here is for us to not fail to enter this rest as the people of the Old Testament did because of their disobedience.

A. Verse 12 is a well-known verse which talks about the power of God's Word, the Bible. We must recognize that the Bible is the very word of God and that there is power in the message. The teaching here is in response to this fact. All we know about God is found in the Bible. We Christians must study and preach God's Word faithfully.

5. Chapter 4:14 through chapter 10 is a discussion about Jesus as our high priest.

A. Chapter 4:14 talks about the fact that Jesus is our high priest and He is now in heaven.

Jesus is our perfect high priest because He was tempted just as we are but He never sinned. We therefore have access to God because we have been purified and we have been made righteous by His sacrifice for us.

B. Chapter 5:1-10 compares Jesus to the human priest from the tribe of Levi who offered sacrifices for the people's sins and also for their own sins. Jesus was from the tribe of Judah and He was appointed to the position of high priest by God. According to verse 9 Jesus's sacrifice was sufficient to allow our forgiveness because He, unlike the human priest, was innocent of any sin so Jesus did not need forgiveness. The human priest had his own sins to be forgiven of.

C. Verses 11-14 through Chapter 6 are a criticism of the Jewish converts. These were immature Christians and they were not living the way Christians should. There is a

warning here to all Christians that we must make sure to study the Bible and grow in the faith. We must live lives that show that we clearly belong to Jesus, and we must grow continually in our faith so that we live more and more the way He wants us to live.

D. Chapter 6 verses 4-6 are a warning to the people who pretend to be believers, but who are not really believers. The warning is that just going to church and associating with the church will not save you. The idea is that just a taste (verse 4) of Jesus is not sufficient we must (verse 7) drink and take Him into our bodies. When people truly fall away they are condemned because they stubbornly refuse to accept the sacrifice of Jesus. These people knew about Jesus but they never became Christians.

E. Chapter 7 compares Jesus to Melchizedek another high priest. See Genesis 14:18-20 where we read that Melchizedek was a priest of a different type than the Levites. We know that he was superior to Abraham because we see that he blessed Abraham and that Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek. The one who is superior gives the blessing to the lower one. Melchizedek was both a priest and he was the king of Salem which is the early name for Jerusalem. His name was made up of two Hebrew names. Melek means king and Zedek means righteous.

i. Verses 13-28 tell of the superiority of the priesthood of Jesus. This is because the priesthood of Jesus is eternal.

F. Chapter 8 tells us that the new covenant is superior to the old covenant. The Old covenant centered on the law while the new covenant centers on Christ and is sealed with His blood.

Verse 1 tells us that the new covenant is centered in heaven rather than on earth like the old covenant. Look at verse 6 which tells us that the new covenant is superior and it gives better promises; so it replaces the old covenant.

G. Chapter 9 compares Christ to the tabernacle. In other words, this chapter compares the New Testament or the new covenant with the Old Testament or the old covenant of the law. We see how much superior the new covenant is over the old.

i. Verses 1, 11, 24: the sanctuary of the original tabernacle is of this world; the true tabernacle is the dwelling place of God in heaven.

ii. Verses 7 & 12 teach us that the new covenant is permanent unlike the old one.

ii. Verse 12 tells us that under the new covenant all sins are forgiven rather than only specific sins under the old covenant.

iii. Verses 13-14 tell us that the sacrifice of animals was able to bring cleanliness to the

outer person. The superior sacrifice of Jesus is able to make mankind spiritually clean in our hearts and presents us righteous before God.

iv. Verses 15-28 talk about the new covenant or the New Testament. The Greek word for covenant also means testament. The Old Testament is the covenant of the law. The New Testament is the covenant of Grace. Unlike the old covenant the new covenant is permanent. The perfect sacrifice of Jesus is the last sacrifice needed.

H. Chapter 10:1-25 tells us again that the sacrifice Jesus made is sufficient for all time. When Jesus was on the cross He gained forgiveness for all the sins His children would ever do. A Christian's sins are forgiven forever.

I. Chapter 10:26-39 warns people not to reject the salvation offered through Jesus in hopes that there is another salvation that we might like better. Forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus is the only salvation there is. Verse 26 is a warning to accept the salvation offered by the sacrifice of Jesus as soon as we hear of it because, if we don't, there is no other choice available. People want to do things their own way and this includes how they are saved. One proof that the Bible account of Jesus is true is that humans would never have written a story picturing such a humble God who was beaten and crucified.

i. Verses 27-31 promise fearful punishment for those who reject Jesus. Look at verse 31 for a statement that should give us all a warning to think about and to act on. Verse 28 teaches that there was terrible punishment for disobeying Moses who was a human; just think how much worse the punishment will be for disobeying Jesus who is God.

6. Chapter 11 is devoted to the idea of faith. Verse 1 defines faith for us. Faith is trusting something we can't see or touch such as putting all our faith for our eternal future in Jesus. Chapter 11 lists many Old Testament saints who were faithful, and it is good for you to look through this list. This passage is talking about Old Testament people, but verses 36 & 37 could be predicting how many Christians would exercise faith in the future. These two verses describe what happened and continues to happen to many Christians. We must all be prepared to suffer and even be killed because of our faith in Jesus.

7. Chapter 12 tells us to keep our eyes on Jesus

A. Verses 1-2 explain that we have the example of all Christians who died before us including all those people listed in chapter 11 to help us live as we should. We also are instructed to keep our eyes on Jesus to help us through this life. We are to look at life as an endurance race. Many people live for a short time imitating Christians but then they fall away. The true Christian is the person who looks to Jesus to help him live as a

Christian until the end of his life no matter how long or hard. Verse 3 repeats the idea that our task is to be patient and endure until the end of our life.

B. Verse 4 tells us that we must be prepared to even give up our blood if necessary in the struggle against sin. Faith will help you endure.

C. Verses 5-13 tell us that sometimes we suffer because God is disciplining us. God's discipline is a sign that we belong to Him. Read Proverbs 3:11-12. If you are not punished for repeated and unrepentant sin then maybe you don't belong to God.

D. Verses 14-17 remind us that we are supposed to live in a way that shows that we belong to God and not the world. We are to have a good testimony as we live our lives imitating Jesus. We don't earn our salvation by our behavior but we do show that we are saved by our obedience to Jesus.

E. Verses 18-24 are a comparison between the old and new covenants.

i. The old covenant is not a comforting covenant because it keeps us from being close to

God. Moses in verse 21 describes this as a frightening covenant. The people were threatened with death if God spoke to them (Exodus 20:19). They were threatened with death if they even touched the mountain where God was (Exodus 19:13).

ii. The new covenant as described by verses 22-24 brings us close to God; we have access through Christ to God. We see a description of a festive gathering of the righteous people in heaven. The new covenant is a joyous one in contrast to the old one. The high priest was between the people and God under the Old Covenant. Under the New Testament we go into the presence of God ourselves.

F. The chapter closes in verses 25-29 telling us to not reject the warning from heaven because as this chapter says in closing, our God is a God of fierce judgment.

8. Chapter 13 verses 1-6 close the book of Hebrews with a series of commands we are to obey.

A. Verse one tells to always practice brotherly love.

B. Verse 2 tells us to be hospitable to others.

C. Verse 3 teaches that all Christians are one body and when one Christian suffers we all

suffer. An example is when a Christian is being persecuted and is imprisoned for being a Christian we should consider that it is like we also are in prison. We should do what we can to help. Often the only thing we can do is pray so we should often pray for them.

D. Verse 4 gives a command about the importance of keeping our marriages sexually pure. E. Verse 5 tells us to not love money; to be content with what God has given us.. F. Verse 6 says we can face life with confidence because Jesus is on our side. We can face

everything with confidence because of Jesus. Even death can't hurt us.

9. Verses 7-17 contain more instructions for us. We are to follow our leaders and avoid false teachers. Verse 8 tells us that we can count on Jesus because He never changes. Verse 16 tells us to do good things; to share because this pleases God.

10. Verses 18-25 the author closes this book with a request for prayers for the Christian leaders who we are told in verse 17 to obey. So we should be faithful to pray for our leaders.

A. Verses 20-31 are a benediction. A benediction is a blessing from God given to the people by the priest in the Old Testament or the Christian pastor. Leviticus 9:22-23 There are many benedictions found in the Bible.

The main purpose of Hebrews:

1. To show the superiority of Christ over all creation such as angels and Moses.
2. To show that Jesus is our high priest and He is superior to all other priest.
3. The superiority of the New Covenant or Testament over the Old Covenant or Testament.

James

James is a book full of practical instruction for Christians. The book was addressed to Jewish believers who because of persecution have fled from Jerusalem and have been scattered throughout the world. The purpose of the book was to exhort (strongly encourage) readers to live their lives as they should and not to just talk about living as a Christian should because it is important how we Christians live our lives. There is much good Christian wisdom in this book as well as instruction to be doing good works. It is a very practical book.

1. Chapter 1:1-8: trials, perseverance, wisdom, faith

A. Verses 2-3 go together. Verse two by itself is a very strange command. The teaching here is that God sends trials to produce patience and to mature us. Suffering is good for us so in that sense we should be joyful. We know that according to Romans 8:28 that our suffering is good for us.

B. Verses 5 & 6 tell us to ask God for wisdom, and then to trust Him after we ask. Pray and ask God to guide you and then in confidence act on the decision He gives you.

2. Chapter 1:9-18 Riches, temptations, The New Birth

A. Verses 9-11 tell us not to be concerned with how rich we are because all our riches on earth are only temporary. Even the poor brother can rejoice in his poverty because his destiny is heaven.

B. A good translation of verse 12 is that the man who resists temptation is blessed.

C. Verses 13-15 deal with temptation. God does not tempt us. Satan uses our own sinful desires to entice us to sin. I Corinthians 7:15 teaches us that it is Satan who tempts us. God does test us to confirm our faith and to prove our commitment as we see in Genesis 22 which is the familiar story about Abraham being ordered to sacrifice his son Isaac and also Exodus 20:20.

i. A good explanation of test is having the opportunity to sin with the decision of actually sinning being left to the individual.

ii. A good explanation of being tempted is having the opportunity to sin and then being encouraged by a person or Satan to go ahead and sin. God does not ever tempt us.

iii. Each person makes the decision as to whether to sin or not. We can't blame our sins on anybody else because it is our own choice.

D. Verse 17 tells us that we receive all good things from God. There is nothing good coming from Satan.

3. Chapter 1:19-27 is more instruction.

A. Verses 19-21 teach us to exercise self-control which we earlier learned in Galatians 5:23 was one of the fruits of the Spirit.

B. We see in verses 21-25 that we are to show our saving faith by putting it into action. Saving faith is

an active faith. We are to do what the Bible teaches to do and not just talk about what the Bible says to do. Prove your faith by your actions such as helping others, serving in the church, donating money to the church, etc.

C. Verses 26-27 talk about pure religion. First we read that if you don't control your tongue, your religion is worthless. The uncontrolled tongue is such a terrible thing that James will mention it again in chapters 3 and 5. Next we read that valuable religion is that which produces good works and not just idle talk.

A. Note in verse 27 that Christians are instructed to provide necessities for the widows and orphans. 4. Chapter 2:1-13 talks about the sin of showing favoritism in the church. It is a common practice in churches to treat members differently based on their wealth and social class. We must remember that in the eyes of Jesus we are Christians all the same. The poor Christian is just as important as the rich Christian is to God.

5. Chapter 2:14-26 talks about the idea that saving faith is faith that produces work. The idea is that after a person is saved he will produce good works if he really is saved. Saving faith is an active faith and not a passive faith.

A. We see some examples of the idea that saving faith is an active faith.

i. Verses 15-16 say we should not just tell people we are sorry and that we will pray for them. We must also help them if we are able. For example, if their family is starving we should help feed them. ii. Three times (verses 17 & 20 & 26) James says that a mere profession of faith without works is dead.

iii. James in verse 19 shows that the even the demons believe, but they are not going to heaven.

B. It is important to remember that we are saved by faith alone and not by any work on our part (Ephesians 2:8-9).

C. We must also remember that Matthew 7:21-23 warns people to examine themselves to be sure that they really have saving faith.

D. This teaching is very important because it means that our churches are filled with people who are not going to heaven. Many people never do anything about their faith except to attend church on Sunday. The Bible is clear that it takes an active faith to be a saving faith. If everyone who claims to be a Christian really was, the world would be a much better place to live in.

6. James in chapter 3:1-12 mentions the tongue. There are some valuable lessons about the damage that a tongue can do.

A. First verse 1 gives us very serious warning about the responsibility of teaching. We teachers must understand how important a teacher is. We can either help lead a person into a closer relationship with God or, our teaching can lead a person away from God and straight to Hell. Teachers must be well prepared to teach and we must pray and ask God to guide every word we use in our teaching. One wrong word can cause e damage which can't be fixed.

B. We read mostly negative things about the tongue. We read that it is a very powerful and damaging weapon. Words from our little tongues can hurt other people terribly. Words lead to church splits and even wars. Verses 9-10 tell how the tongue can be used for good things and for bad things. We must use our tongues for good things such as praising God and building up fellow Christians.

7. Chapter 3:13-18 is about wisdom.

A. In verse 14 James talks about some bad things people do such as being jealous, selfish, boastful, and

liars. Verse 15 tells us that this kind of behavior shows the kind of wisdom that comes from the devil. B. Verses 17-18 talk about good deeds which come about because of good wisdom which comes from above or from God. We should try to gain our wisdom from God and we can do this by praying for God to lead us into paths of true wisdom.

8. Chapter 4 is a chapter with many good observations.

A. The first observation is found in verses 1-2. Coveting or wanting other people's property leads to many problems. It leads to many wars. The last of the Ten Commandments tells us to be satisfied with what God has given us and to not covet the property of others.

B. Verse 3 tells us that our prayers are unanswered because they are only about worldly desires. Our prayers are to be about God's Kingdom not just about our own selfish passions.

C. Verses 4-10 repeat what Jesus said in Matthew 6:24 that we can't serve two masters at the same time. We are to make God our first priority; our first love. We must choose God first and then the proper things of the world. We must not seek to gratify only our worldly desires.

D. Verses 11-12 again for the third time James talks about problems with the tongue.

E. Verses 13-17 remind us that all our plans must revolve around God's will. All our plans depend on the will of God. It is arrogance, which is a sin, to think that we are in control and not God.

9. Chapter 5 has more good observations.

A. Verses 1-6 talk about it being wrong to live to get rich. We are to live for God and be satisfied with the amount of money He gives us. Verse 4 talks about the sin of getting rich by cheating people, and how God condemns this.

i. Verse 5 we read about how they are enjoying living in their luxuries which are earned by cheating others. God in many places in the Bible condemns those who cheat to get rich. I am reminded now of the story about Lazarus and the rich man found in Luke 16:19-31. It is all right to be rich as long as we are rich by honest means and we don't let our riches control us; that we use our riches to serve God.

B. Verse 12 again talks about the tongue. Use your tongue for good purposes and not bad ones. The example here is to use our tongues to tell the truth. We Christians must be known as people who always tell the truth.

C. Chapter 5:13-18 is a section about prayer.

i We see in verse 13 that we are to pray when we are suffering. We also see that we are to not only rejoice inside when things are going well; we are also to praise God out loud.

ii. When a person is sick, we see in verses 14-15 that, the person who is sick is to call in the church elders to pray over him. It is God who will heal him through the believing prayers of those who prayed. Note that it is God who heals and not any person. Also note that no money is paid to the elders to pray for the sick person.

iii. Verses 16 talks about accountability to each other. It is a good idea for us to have someone who we can tell of our struggles such as our sin problems and who we can pray with.

iv. Verses 17-18 are examples of the value of effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man. The prayer of a Christian is a powerful tool.

D. Verses 19-20 refer to the importance of either helping restore a brother to the fellowship with the church, or to helping lead a new believer to Jesus. We see that there is blessing for this.

First Peter

First Peter was written to the church scattered throughout Asia Minor. It was written at a time of severe persecution. It was written to encourage Christians who were suffering severe persecution. Peter directly contradicts the modern message of the "health, wealth, and prosperity preachers". We learn that as Christians we can expect to suffer, and that our suffering has a purpose. There is a lesson in this book about the sufficiency of God's grace.

1. First Peter chapter 1 begins with Peter giving his qualification. He is an apostle; he is the same Peter who was a companion of Jesus.

A. Chapter 1:4-5 is encouraging. We are told that our inheritance of being God's children is permanent and this permanent salvation is guarded by the power of God.

B. Now that Peter has encouraged us, Chapter 1 has some hard lessons for us beginning in verses 6-9. This is a message about suffering, a subject Peter talks about many times in this short book. There is much teaching about suffering throughout the New Testament because God wants us to be prepared when suffering comes. The teaching from the Bible says that the idea that as a Christian you can expect to be healthy, wealthy, and prosperous is all wrong.

i. There are reasons for our suffering. Verse 7 says suffering tests the genuineness of our faith. We must remember that if God is our God when things are going well, then He is still our God when things are difficult and we are suffering. (Job 2:10)

C. Verses 10-12 are a section explaining that the prophets (verse 10) did not have the clear picture of salvation that verse 13 says was revealed to us at the coming of Jesus. The prophets had hints about salvation, but they did not know the name of Jesus which we know.

D. Verses 13-21 are about how we are to live lives pleasing to God. We are reminded in verses 18-19 that we were bought with the precious blood of Jesus.

E. We are reminded in chapters 1:22-2:10 of four responsibilities we Christians have. A. First verse 22 says we are to love each other for the good of the other person.

B. Second, verse 2:2 says we are to grow spiritually. We do this mostly by reading and seriously studying the Bible.

C. Third verse 5 says we Christians are a holy priesthood able to offer spiritual sacrifices. We Christians do not need a priest to approach God. Each Christian is able to approach and pray and worship God and this is acceptable and welcomed by God.

D. Fourth, verses 2:9-10 say; proclaim the truth about Jesus. We are able to do this because of who we are. See what verse 9 says about who we are. We are God's chosen people and since we have received His mercy we are to share this with the world. We are to evangelize.

3. 1 Peter 2:11-17 tells us to treat all people fairly. To have a good testimony at all times. We are to obey our rulers.

4. Chapter 3:1-7 talks again about husband and wife relationships.

A. Christian wives are responsible to continue to live with their husbands and encourage their

husbands to also become Christians. This also applies when the husband is saved and the wife is not. See 1 Corinthians 7:13 for confirmation of this Biblical principle.

B. Verse 7 teaches that we men are to treat our wives in a very good way or our relationship with God will be impaired. See Ephesians 5:25-31 for confirmation of this Biblical principle.

5. Chapter 3:8-4:6 includes a variety of teachings for us including how we are to live.

A. 3:8-11 calls for us to do good things to people; even loving those who do evil to us.

B. 3:13-14 asks who will harm us if we do good deeds; we don't expect harm if we do good things. However, we may still suffer for the sake of doing good deeds and we should have no fear. We will be blessed for the good things we have done.

C. We see in verse 17 that we must do the right thing even if doing so means we will suffer. Verse 18 reminds us that Christ suffered.

D. Verses 20-21 could easily be misunderstood. Peter is remembering how water was involved in the saving of Noah and the use of water is a symbol of our salvation through Jesus. Verse 21 mentions the resurrection of Jesus which is a sign of our resurrection.

6. Chapter 4:7-11 tells us to be prepared at all times for the return of Jesus and gives instructions about how we are to live since we expect this return soon. Read this instruction for an example of how we should live.

7. Chapter 4:12-19 is more teaching about suffering.

A. Verse 12 tells us to expect to suffer.

B. Verse 14 tells us that we are blessed because we belong to Jesus.

C. Verses 15-16 tell us we are to make sure our suffering is not for crimes we do, but to make sure we are suffering because we are Christians. We are to glorify God when we suffer. We do this by staying faithful to God which requires prayer.

D. Verse 19 tells us that we should suffer knowing that our suffering is God's will and we should patiently endure our suffering for His glory. Romans 8:28 tells us that our suffering is good for us.

8. Chapter 5:1-4 gives instruction on how pastors and elders are to behave. We church leaders are to live to help our people and to lead them for their own good. Remember that the church members are not there to make us rich although they can give their

pastor enough for his basic living cost. Verse 2 says that we do our job not for financial gain but because we love God. Verse 3 tells us to be humble and we are not to be domineering. We elders are to be good examples to our members. We are to lead by being good examples and not just by telling people what to do. We elders are to work toward the crown of glory that verse 4 talks about. This is our reward in place of financial gain.

9. Chapter 5:5-11 begins with a lesson to us in how we should respect elders, and in verse 5 he tells how the attitude of everyone including the elders is to be humble. It is earlier taught in the Bible that we are to respect older people (Leviticus 19:32).

A. The Bible tells us not to worry (Matthew 6:25-34). Here in 1 Peter 5:7 we are told the same thing. We have no reason to worry; we should turn our cares over to God and trust Him to take care of us.

B. Verses 8-9 remind us that the devil is doing all he can to defeat us, and we must use our faith in God to resist him because Satan is too strong for us to fight without God's help. We must do as Ephesians 6:11 says, and put on the armor of God. We see again in verse 9 that suffering is common for Christians.

C. Verse 10 means that we may suffer for a short time. But soon God will call us to eternal glory in Christ which means the joys of heaven.

Second Peter

Peter wrote this book to help protect the church against false teaching. He tells people to become mature in the faith because that is good protection against false teachers. It is thought that Peter wrote this book shortly before he was executed.

1. 2 Peter 1:1-11 tells us that the best way to protect ourselves against false teachers is to learn all we can about our God. We see this idea in verses 2,4,5,6,8.

2. Verses 12-18 Peter knows that he is soon to be killed and he shows that he has the heart of a true pastor. We see this in verses 13-15 where he tells that he wants to make sure that after he dies the church members can continue to protect themselves. A true church leader is more concerned about his people than he is about himself.

A. Verses 16-18 Peter proves the truth of his message by reminding us that he was present with Jesus at the transfiguration.

3. Verses 19-21 Peter tells where true prophecy comes from. First verse 20 tells us that prophecy does not come from humans, rather as verse 21 says true prophecy only

comes from the Holy Spirit as he guided men. In other words, true prophecy only comes from God.

4. Chapter 2:1-3 again Peter warns about the fact that there will be false teaching. He tells that these false teachers will teach false heresies, even as it says in verse one, denying God. Verse one also tells us that the false teachers will bring destruction on themselves because of their false teaching. Verse 3 says that one of the reasons for this false teaching is so the false teachers can get rich. A true teacher is motivated by his love for God, and not to receive money. He looks to heaven to receive his rewards. Again we see that the false teachers are headed for certain destruction. A false teacher is one who teaches anything about God that is not in the Bible. A true teacher is one who faithfully teaches only what he reads in the Bible.

5. 2 Peter 2:4-9 first lists how God punished sinners in the past even angels. He then states that God also rescued righteous people in the past. In verse 9 Peter states that God still knows how to rescue righteous people, and He still will punish sinners. We Christians are to be comforted by knowing that we are going to be rescued from our trials. Verse 9 also says he will certainly punish the unrighteous.

6. Peter in verses 10-18 says their actions are so bad that they demand punishment.
A. Verses 10-13 say that these sinners are very bold they even sin in ways that angels, who are more powerful than men, are afraid to sin. These people are arrogant and they demand God's punishment.

B. Beginning in verse 14 Peter talks about the sins these people enjoy doing. However, in verse 17 we see that God has reserved a place of utter darkness which is Hell.

7. Peter identifies these false teachers in verses 19-22. These people who delight in their rebellion are those who have come close to becoming a Christian, but they never actually become Christian. Our churches are full of people who know about Jesus but who never truly became Christian. Matthew 7:21-23 tells what happens to these people.

8. Chapter 3:1-9 Peter addresses the false teachers who say that Jesus is not coming back again. They say this based on the fact that Jesus, in their minds, had delayed in coming back.

A. Verse 8 tells us that God has a different understanding of time than we do. It is hard for us to wait on God until he decides it is time to do something.

B. We see one reason in verse 9 for God's delay in returning. He is a God of mercy and He wants to allow time enough for His people to be saved.

9. Verses 10-14 warn that God's patience will last only so long, and we better make sure that we are prepared for him before he returns. Verse 10 again mentions the day of the Lord which will be that terrible Day of Judgment which will sneak up on us without warning. If we are not Christians before Jesus returns, it will be too late.

10. Chapter 3:15-18 Peter closes out his letter by warning us to be wary of those who twist the true meaning of scripture for their own purposes. We must always read scripture with a learner's heart. Our idea must be to learn what God is teaching us, and not to read it in a way to prove our own special interest. For example some people have misread Genesis 9:25-27 to prove that black people are cursed and it is all right to mistreat them. This is the basis for the sinful practice of Apartheid that was the law in South Africa for so many years. The Bible teaches that God love all His people equally; no matter their race.

A. Peter again warns us in verse 17 to be careful not to be misled. He closes in verse 18 telling us to grow in grace and the knowledge of Jesus. Our best protection against false teachers is to know our Bible. We should always make sure our teacher is faithfully teaching what the Bible says. If the teacher is not faithfully teaching what the Bible teaches then we should immediately stop the teacher or, if that is not possible, then we should leave and not listen to the false teacher.

John's Epistles- Jude

The apostle John wrote these three letters late in his life. First John was written to help protect against false teaching. There was a particular group of false teachers called Gnostics. These people claimed to have special knowledge which they added to the Bible's teaching. They believed that the human body was composed of two different parts. They believed that sin was only found in the body, and the human spirit was occupied with the things of God. They believed that it was all right for the human body to sin as it wanted, and this would not affect the spirit. They believed that you rose to spiritual things by acquiring knowledge. The Gnostics also believed that Jesus did not live as a man.

1. 1 John 1:1-4 starts out like the Gospel of John. We read in verse 1 that Jesus is eternal.

Verse two tells us that Jesus was manifest which means He was visible to man, and that God lived with man. Jesus had a real human body. This teaching was aimed directly against the teaching of the Gnostics. If Jesus was not a man then God would not have accepted His sacrifice for our sins. God required a human who had lived a sinless life to

be punished in our place for us to be forgiven of our sins.

2. Chapter 1:5-10 talks about the light of God and the sins of the world.

A. Verse 5 tells us that Jesus is the light of the world, and that there is no darkness or sin in him. John said the same thing in his gospel in John 1:4-5.

B. John in verse 6 tells us that we can't plan to walk in sin and have fellowship with Jesus. What this means is that we can't choose to deliberately sin if we really belong to Jesus. We must always try to not sin. While we will continue to sin our sins will not be planned but will happen without us wanting them to happen.

C. Verses 8 and 10 tell us that as long as we live, we will continue to sin and verse 7 says the blood of Jesus will continue to clean us from sin. Any person who says that he no longer sins is a liar according to the Bible.

D. The true Christian is very sorry for his sins and he truly repents in his heart. Verse 9 reassures us that we will be forgiven by our faithful God who will clean us from all our unrighteousness.

3. 1 John 2:1-17 talks about walking in sin and darkness.

A. The message in verse one is that a Christian will do his best to not sin, and as we mature as

Christians we will not sin as often and our sins will not be as big as previously, but we will still sin. However our faithful God will continue to forgive us if we truly repent.

B. Verse 2 uses the word propitiation or atonement about Jesus. This means that the punishment of Jesus on the cross satisfied the wrath or anger of God so the punishment of Jesus is accepted by God in place of our individual punishment. Jesus paid for the sins of Christians only. Any person who has not become a Christian is still going to be punished in hell for his own sins.

C. Verses 3-6, again we see this idea that we show our love for God by us obeying Him. We also show this by trying to live the way He did.

D. Verses 9-11 tell Christians that we must love each other. We may have arguments but we will quickly make peace with each other because we love each other.

E. In verses 12-14 John commends Christians for their victories over past sins and for their spiritual relationship with God.

F. Verses 15-17 teach us to not love the world; to not become trapped by the world's things such as money, lust and pride. These things are only temporary. The good things from God, on the other hand, are permanent; they are eternal.

4. The rest of chapter 2 deals with the Antichrist and those who are not really in the kingdom.

A. The word Antichrist found in verse 18 is found only in the letters of John and nowhere else in the Bible. There is no clear teaching identifying the Antichrist although there are many theories as to who it is. Possibly the reason that John did not have to identify the Antichrist is because his audience knew who he was talking about. We have lost this knowledge over time.

B. One idea, which applies to us today, is that there would be a spirit of anti-Christian teaching in the latter days. This spirit would show itself in many ways. We certainly see much teaching against the Bible today and any person who teaches against the Bible is certainly anti-Christ.

C. Verses 19 and 24 talk about the person who has spent time in the church and maybe learned a lot about God, but he was never saved and so he fell away because this person never became a Christian. In other words the Holy Spirit never came into the person. When a person becomes a Christian, verses 20 and 27 teach that the Holy Spirit comes into the person. The Holy Spirit protects the person from false teaching and ever falling away from Jesus.

D. Chapter 2 finishes with verse 28 telling us to remain faithful to Jesus. Verse 29 tells us that people who are righteous are those who have received their righteousness from Jesus. Our right standing or righteousness before God is a free gift from Jesus.

5. Chapter 3:4-10 talks about righteousness, and makes very strong statements about sin.

A. Verse 6 says that a person who continues to choose to sin does not know God. B. Verse 8 says that whoever willingly does what is sinful is of the devil.

C. Verse 9 says no one who is born of God makes a practice of sinning.

D. Contrasting this is 1 John 1:8 and verse 10 which say that if we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves.

How do we explain the idea that it seems the Bible is telling us in one place that as Christians we don't sin and then in another place the Bible says all people sin?

What the Bible is teaching us is that while every person sins, the Christian truly does not want to sin, and he does not plan to sin. An example of this is that a Christian might have an argument with someone and become angry and lose his temper and beat the person. This is sin of a kind we all experience. However the Christian would not hate a person and plan to ambush him and beat him up. The difference in these two sins is that a Christian does sin but he does not plan to sin.

The following statement comes from page 812 of Halley's Bible Handbook:

How do we explain these paradoxical statements? There is a difference between sins of weakness and willful, habitual sin. An eagle may dip its wings in the mud, but it is still an eagle. A righteous man may have sins of weakness and yet be a righteous man. John may have had in mind certain heretical teachers (such as Jezebel, Revelation 2:20) who, while claiming special, superior fellowship with God, were at the same time wallowing in the filth of immorality.

As long as we live we shall continue to sin, but our desire is to not sin. We will not continue in habitual sin such as adultery that continues for a long time. We will not sin as much after we are saved as we did before. We will develop the habit of not sinning while the unsaved person will constantly sin without caring. Our heart's desire will be to not ever sin.

6. 1 John 3:13-24 and chapter 4:7-21 is about love.

A. Verse 13 tells us that the world does not love Christians instead the non-Christian actually hates us. This helps us understand why Christians are persecuted all over the world. We are hated by those who are not Christians.

B. Many verses in this section tell us that love is an essential part of being a Christian. Verse 12 of chapter four says that, if we love one another, God lives in us. If you have no love for others, then chapter 4:20 says you don't love God.

C. Our love for each other must be an active love. Look at James 2:14-18 for an example of active love. We must help each other.

D. 1 John tells us, in several places, that even though we are saved by the grace of God, we still must obey him.

i. Read Chapters 2:3, 2:4, 3:22, 3:23, 3:24, 4:21, and 5:3 to see how important obeying God is.

7. 1 John 4:1-6 is about false prophets.

A. Verse one tells us that there are many false teachers in the world and that we each

have a responsibility to identify these false prophets.

B. Verse two tells us that we can tell the true prophet by his message. The true prophet will bring a message of truth about God which he gets from the Bible. We Christians are responsible to know if the prophet is speaking the truth about God. We do this by making sure his message is from God. This is the same thing Moses said in Deuteronomy 18:22 two thousand years earlier.

C. Verses 4-5 tell us that while non-believers listen to teaching that is not from God; we Christians will only listen to teachers who are from God and who teach only from the Bible.

8. Chapter 5 is a chapter about assurance of eternal life. Ten times scattered throughout this letter, John uses the word know to make his point that we can be assured that we are saved. See 2:3, 2:5, 3:2; 3:14, 3:19, 3:24, 4:13, 5:13, 5:15, and 5:19.

A. We see in 5:4-8 a teaching about the trinity; God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and they all testify about Jesus.

B. Verses 9-13 assure us that God promises that whoever believes in the Son of God has eternal life and will never lose it.

C. Verse 16 talks again about the unpardonable sin which we studied previously in Matthew. This is the sin of refusing to accept Jesus as our Lord and savior and repent.

Second John has only one chapter in which two points are stressed.

1. Verses 1-4 mention the word truth five times. We are to walk in truth.

A. Verse one says that we are to love in truth which means we truly love each other.

B. Verse one also says we are to know the truth which we can only do by studying the Bible. C. Verse 2 tells us that the truth is in Christians; we Christians are to be truthful people.

D. Verse 3 tells us that God's grace (favor), mercy, and peace will always be with us. Life is good for a Christian because of this. Christians have more fun living because God's rules bless us with a good way of living.

E. Verse 4 tells us that the Christian walks in truth. We must always tell the truth.

2. Verses 5-6 again order us to love one another just like what Jesus said in Mark 12:31. Verse 6 again tells us that we must obey God and that this a commandment.

3. Verses 7-11 are further teaching about false teachers.

A. We see in verses 7 and 8 that first of all there are many antichristian teachers in the land. We must guard ourselves against these false teachers so that they will not interfere in our walk with Jesus. A close walk with Jesus is very rewarding and we don't want false teaching to interfere with this pleasure.

B. Again we see how very serious false teaching is. God wants to make certain that we are on guard against false teaching because it is so destructive.

C. Verse 9 says our relationship with God is dependent on the teaching of God being part of us. If His teaching does not live in us then we do not have God in us. However if we do have the Word of God inside then we do have God also.

D. Verse 10 is an order that goes against our natural instincts of hospitality. We are told that when a false teacher comes around that we are not to even greet him. We are to be rude and not to greet him or invite him into our house. Send the person away. God certainly wants to protect us from these false teachers. Remember that the only things we believe about God is what we read in the Bible.

Third John is another short letter of instruction.

1. The first thing we are going to look at is found in verses 2-4 which contain a prayer. The apostle John prays for the well-being of his disciple Gaius. John prays for his health and his spiritual well-being. A true pastor cares for the well-being of his people. He is not jealous if his disciple prospers, rather he enjoys it when his disciple is healthy and prosperous.

2. Gaius demonstrates his spiritual maturity as reported in verses 5-8 where it is reported that he provides materially for God's workers. We see here that we Christians are to support those who work for the Lord. An example is the missionary who needs financial support to go serve in a strange place. Another example is the pastor who devotes all his time to shepherding his flock. Our support of a Christian worker makes us partners in his work.

3. Verses 9-10 warn us of a constant problem in the church. There is always someone like Diotrephes who causes trouble. These people often are not truly saved and they put their own interest ahead of the churches. These people operate in pride. Church leadership must always be on guard against this type of person to protect the church. Proper church discipline must be exercised to both protect the church and to restore the person to full fellowship.

4. Verse 11 is advice for us to do good. We see that the person who does good is from God, but that the person who does evil is not part of God's church.

Jude is another short book about the continual problem of false teachers.

1. Jude begins (verse 1) and ends his writing (verse 24) by reassuring his readers that their salvation is eternally secure; a Christian never loses his salvation. He tells them in verse 1 that they are "kept for Jesus Christ". In verse 24 he tells them that Jesus will keep them from stumbling and he will present them blameless to God the Father.

A. Verses 20-21 tell us that our prayers are the means that God uses to keep us saved.

2. In verses 3-4 he tells that his purpose in writing is to warn them about the false teachers who are in their midst. He says they crept in. This warns us to be careful of the person who at first seems to be a true man of God but, after we trust him, he then introduces his heresies. Many cults at first pretend to be orthodox Christians. For example, Mormons at first pretend to be Christian but, later on they slowly reveal their false teachings. Again, our best defense against this kind of teacher is to know and use the Bible.

3. Verses 5-7 describe terrible punishment for those who rebel against God.

4. Verses 6-16 describe different types of disobedience. These are easy to understand, however, verse 9 is another one of those verses we don't have a good explanation for.

5. Verses 17-25 close this letter with Jude giving us defense against false teaching. First he reminds them that they have been warned earlier to expect false teachers. False teachers should not surprise us and we should be ready to fight them.

A. He lists four things which will keep us safe against false teachers.

1. First thing is listed in verse 20 where he says to build ourselves up in our holy faith. We do this by seriously studying the Bible so that a false teacher can't deceive us.

2. The second thing is also found in verse 20 which calls for us to pray in the Holy Spirit. We earlier in Ephesians 6:18 were instructed to pray in the Holy Spirit as part of our defense against Satan. This is the prayer of a Christian because we have the Holy Spirit in us and we pray with His help. Remember Romans 8:26 tells us that the Holy Spirit helps us in our prayers.

3. The third thing we find in verse 21 where we are told to keep ourselves in the love of God. We do this by staying close to God as we read the Bible, pray often, go to worship and spend time with our fellow saints. We immerse ourselves in the things of God.

IV. Verse 21 tells us to keep loving God while we wait for His mercy which leads to eternal life.

B. Verses 23-25 tell us to have mercy on the lost; to do all we can to lead the lost to Christ.

Revelation of Jesus Christ

This book was written by the Apostle John but as 1:1 tells us, it is actually the revelation of Jesus Christ. The book was written to encourage the church of Jesus Christ. The theme of the book is the complete and final victory of Jesus and His church over Satan and his agents. John wrote the book while he was in exile on the island of Patmos. There are many different views about many of the messages in the book. Our study is only an overview so we will only study the highlights of the book. We will not be able to investigate many of the difficult passages. This will have to wait until you study this book in detail, and even then you will find little agreement about the meaning of many of the different teachings.

There are many things we can learn from Revelation. For example, the major theme is the absolute victory Jesus will have over evil. Satan and his allies will be totally defeated by God. Another major theme is that there are only two types of created beings. There are those who are on God's side and those who are with Satan. God's people will enjoy a wonderful eternity with God in Heaven. It is true that often it is a hard life to be a Christian with much suffering but we must look at the reward in heaven for our faithfulness. Satan's people will spend eternity in a horrible place called hell.

1. Chapter 1:1-3 the revelation of Jesus Christ. We read in verse 1 that this book is about the future. We also read in verse 10 that John will be writing about things he sees that have already happened. We read in verse 1 that this message was given to Jesus by God and was sent by an angel to John.

A. Verse 3 promises blessings for reading this book and hearing the reading and for obeying what is read. I often wonder why this book is never read in church. God's Word is supposed to be the central part of our worship service so our worship services should have extended periods of reading without any human comment in addition to the sermon.

2. Verses 4-8 John greets the seven churches in Asia Minor. It is interesting to note that at the time of John, Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey had many churches and was a strongpoint of Christianity. Today all this area is Muslim.

Let's look at the main emphasis of the book
He Who Is, and Who Was and Who is to Come. One of the main emphases of this book is the eternity of God's nature.

1. Him who lives forever and ever chapter (4:10).
2. Lord God, who was, and is, and is to come (4:8).
3. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End (1:8, 21:6

and 22:13).

4. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty" (1:8).
5. "I Am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive forever and ever. And I hold the keys of death and Hades" (1:17-18).

We live in a world where it seems everything changes. We are reminded that God is eternal and He never changes. This is comforting because we can always rely on God to be the same and we can always trust His promises. This knowledge helps the saint who is being persecuted to face martyrdom and to persevere. God imparts this eternal nature to us when we get to Heaven which means that we too will never change throughout eternity.

Christ is the Ruler of the Kings of the Earth chapter 1:5. The current rulers of the earth will pass away. As one author wrote, these monsters from hell are all doomed. Christ is in command of the earth.

He who has freed us from our sins by His blood (1:5).

1. "With your (Christ) blood you purchased men for God" (5:9).
2. "They overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb" (12:11).
3. "These are they who...have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (7:14).
4. "Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life" (22:14).

We see clearly that our salvation comes through the blood of Jesus.

To Him be glory and power forever and ever (1:6).

1. "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power" (4:11).
2. "Worthy is the Lamb...to receive...glory and praise!" (5:12).
3. "To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, forever and ever!" (5:13; 7:10, 12).
4. "Great and marvelous are your deeds...Just and true are your ways, King of the ages" (15:2- 3)
5. There is great rejoicing in Heaven because Jesus reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give Him glory!" (19:1-7).

The 24 elders and the four living creatures (5:4-14), millions of angels, and vast multitudes of redeemed people from all nations, in voices like the ocean's roar, make heaven resound with praise to God. This is a model for us in our churches. We should make them resound with praise to God. Our praise must be enthusiastic. It must be for His praise and His glory not for our entertainment. This is what we will be doing forever in heaven.

He is coming with the clouds

1. Every eye will see him even those who pierced him (1:7).
2. "Hold on...until I come "(2:25).
3. "I will come like a thief" (3:3).
4. "I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have." (3:11).
5. "Behold, I come like a thief!" Blessed is he who stays awake" (16:15).
6. "Behold, I am coming soon" (22:7).
7. "Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me" (22:12).
8. "Yes, I am coming soon" (22:20).
9. "Amen, Come, Lord Jesus (22:29).

The only Bible prophecy We can safely predict is that Jesus is coming because the Bible tells us so. He will come unexpectedly like a thief and you must have your heart right because it will be too late to change after He returns. We need to be prepared at all times for His return.

The book of Revelation teaches us much about angels. There are 27 different references.

Returning now to verse one of Revelation

1. Chapter 1:9-20 talks about Christ and the churches.
 - A. Verse 10 tells us that John is having a vision which is reported through verse 20. This vision shows us the powerful side of Jesus. His second coming will be in power as the conqueror. i. Verse 13--Jesus is dressed as the high priest of the Old Testament was dressed. This is because Jesus is our high priest.
 - ii. He holds the angels in His hand according to verse 20.
 - iii. Verse 14 tells us that His hair is white as snow; His eyes are like a blazing fire.

iv. His face is like the sun shining in all its brilliance verse 16.

v. Out of His mouth comes a sharp, double-edged sword. What is this sword? See Hebrews 4:12 for the answer.

2. Chapters 2 and 3 report about letters written to seven churches.

A. John uses these letters to give a report about churches. Every church today should compare itself to these churches. Let's see how Jesus felt about these churches.

i. The two churches at Smyrna and Philadelphia were very good churches. ii. The two churches at Sardis and Laodicea were very bad churches.

a. Verse 4-5 of Revelation 3 teaches us that even in these very bad churches, God can have Christians in them.

iv. The three churches at Ephesus, Pergamum, and Thyatira were sometimes good and sometimes bad.

B. We can't study each letter in detail, but there is a pattern to the letters that we can study. i. Introduction.

ii. John commends each church where he can. He can't commend either Sardis or Laodicea

because they were so bad.

iii. He then gives condemnation to the churches except for Smyrna and Philadelphia. These

two churches were good so no criticism for them.

iv. Jesus through John then gives individual instruction to each church.

v. He then gives promises to the churches.

3. Revelation chapter 4 is a vision of God sitting on His throne. The theme of this chapter focuses on the creative power of God. John is taken in a vision to the throne of God.

There he is reassured that no matter what happens; God is still on the throne ruling over everything. There are many different interpretations among Christians explaining what John sees. We are not going to discuss these. Our comments are restricted to a brief non-controversial simple explanation of the text.

A. Verses 2-3 describe God's appearance on the throne.

B. Verse 4 talks about 24 elders. A possible interpretation is that these represent all of God's people glorified.

C. Verses 6-11 report that John sees four living creatures. These creatures could be cherubim such as Ezekiel describes in chapter 1 and 10. We see in Revelation 4 that one of the things everyone will do in heaven is to praise God. It would be good periodically to include Verse 11 in our prayers.

4. Revelation 5 focuses on the redemptive power of God as John continues to describe the scene in heaven.

A. Verses 1-4 introduce us to the seven sealed scrolls. These scrolls contain terrible messages of coming disasters. There is heart break because no one is worthy to break the seals and open the scrolls.

B. Verses 5 & 6 talk of Jesus as both the lion of Judah and the lamb. The lion represents power and the lamb represents sacrifice and ultimate victory. Generally throughout the rest of this book Jesus is referred to as the lamb.

i. Verse 5 tells us that Jesus is able to open the scrolls.

ii. Verse 6 the seven horns represent power and the seven eyes represent all knowledge.

C. Verses 8-14 are songs of praise to God.

5. Revelation 6 The first six seals. These describe a series of tribulations or trials. There are people who think some of these things have already happened. These signs follow the same order that Jesus speaks of in Matthew 24.

A. Verse 1-2 the first seal. The white horse, some see this as Christ, but it is more likely to be the Antichrist. Matthew 24:3-5 talks about false teachers coming to deceive the people.

B. The second seal we see in verses 3-4. The red horse represents open warfare. See Matthew 24:6.

C. The third seal in verses 5-6. The black horse represents famine. See Matthew 24:7.

D. Verses 7-8 the fourth seal is the pale horse representing death which is the natural result of war and famine. Verse 8 indicates that one fourth of the earth's people will die. Matthew 24:7-8 talks about war.

E. The fifth seal verses 9-11 opens the vision of the martyrs. Many Christians have been martyred. Matthew 24:9-13.

F. The sixth seal, verses 12-17, reveals worldwide destruction such as earthquakes, Matthew 24:29.

6. Revelation 7 is an interlude between the sixth and seventh seal. We see a report about a group in heaven and a group on earth who will be protected (verse 3). This is talking about spiritual protection. Ezekiel 9:4 also talks about being sealed against spiritual harm.

A. Verses 4-8 talk about the 144,000 which is felt to be a symbolic number of Jews who will be saved.

B. Verses 2-3 tell that God's people will receive an identifying mark.

C Verses 9-17 refer to the gentiles who will be saved. We see in verse 9 they will be too numerous to count and they will be from all over the earth.

7. Revelation 8 we see the seventh seal opened.

A. Verse one tells how, after the seventh seal was opened, there was silence in heaven for about a half hour. This is because this seal contains the terrible plagues of the seven trumpets which are even worse than the first six seals.

B. This chapter lists the destruction to be caused by the first four trumpets.

i. The first trumpet in verse 7 tells us that one third of the vegetation will be destroyed. It is

not sure if this refers to the whole world or just to Palestine.

ii. The second trumpet, in verse 8, tells us that one third of the sea will become blood.

iii. The third trumpet, in verse 10, tells how a great star blazing from heaven fell into one

third of the rivers and streams and their water became bitter.

iv. The fourth trumpet tells us, in verse 12, that one third of the sun, the moon and the stars

were struck so that their light was diminished.

C. Verse 13 warns us that the next three trumpets will announce worse is to come.

8. Chapter 9 tells about the fifth and sixth trumpet. Their announcement is so bad that they are called woes.

A. The fifth trumpet in verses 1-11 announce that a horrible plague of locusts is coming. These are demon locusts who are so terrible that their sting is like a scorpions but it will not kill, only torment. Their power will last for five months and their sting so painful that the people will long for death which will elude them.

i. Verse 4 says they can't harm any of God's people or any other life. God's people were previously marked; see Rev. 7:2-3.

B. Verses 12-21 see the sixth trumpet announce the second woe.

i. The second woe will bring more than torment—it will kill one third of humanity.

Remember chapter 6:8 reports that one fourth of humanity had already died.

ii. Incredibly, even after all these disasters, verses 20-21 tell us that the people still living did not repent and turn from their wicked ways.

9. Revelation 10 the little scroll is open during the time between the sixth and seventh trumpet. The angel with the little scroll is thought to be Christ.

A. Verse 6 says it is time; there will be no delay. The forces of evil will find their time to do evil is running out, and the time of judgment is at hand.

B. John is given a strange command. He is told that instead of reading the scroll, He is to eat it instead. He is told that the scroll will taste like honey in his mouth but will be sour in his stomach.

i. The sour stomach means that the scroll contains news of more suffering.

ii. The sweet as honey refers to the sweetness of the communion we Christians have with God.

10. Chapter 11:1-14 the two witnesses continue this vision, and the seventh trumpet 11:15-19. Much of this vision can't be explained and understood with any certainty.

A. Verse 3 introduces two witnesses who are not identified. There are many theories that these are Moses or Elijah or Enoch, but we can't tell for sure. These are representatives of God. I. As in John 10:1-11, the passage of the good shepherd, their behavior serves as a model for

all Christians to imitate. All Christians must be ready to face martyrdom and give up our lives. B. We see here that God will have witnesses even in the most difficult of times. An example of this today is the persecuted church. In dozens of countries, Christians are persecuted. It is estimated, that more than 250,000 Christians are killed each year because of their testimony for Christ.

C. We see in verses 5-6 that God provides protection for these two witnesses for three and a half years, until their work is done.

D. Verse 7 says that when their work is done God allows the enemy to kill them. These Christian witnesses are so hated that their bodies are left in the streets for the whole world to see. Verse 10 tells that people will rejoice and celebrate over these bodies. The world hates Christians this much.

E. Verses 11-12 reports that God brings these two witnesses back to life and he takes them to heaven. There is a lesson here for us about how we Christians should fearlessly serve God even if we suffer torture and death because God is faithful. We can't lose because we will be taken to heaven. The martyr's death is not defeat, but victory in union with Christ.

f. Verse 14 brings the end of the sixth trumpet and the second woe. The third woe is about to begin.

11. Chapter 11:15-19 the seventh trumpet blows.

A. Verse 18 we now focus on the last judgment and verses 15 & 17, the triumph of God's rule.

B. Verse 19 tells of the opening of God's temple and the revealing of the ark which was the most holy object in the tabernacle. The revealing of this innermost object signifies that God has fully revealed His glory and His mercy. God revealing Himself shows the majesty of His power and the renewal of all things (21:1-22:5).

12. Chapter 12 is about the woman, child, and the dragon.

A. The woman is thought to represent Israel. In verse 2 we see Isaiah's vision (Isaiah 66:7-8) of a woman (Israel) bringing forth a male child, fulfilled. We are told in verse 5 that the child is Jesus who will rule over the whole earth.

B. Verses 3-4 tell us about a red dragon who according to verse 9 is the devil. The devil is pictured as a dragon which symbolizes great power. Look at verse 4 for a description of this power. We know that Satan's power is much too strong for us to fight in our own strength. . We see that the devil is very, very powerful. We must not directly confront him. For example we should never order him to do something, instead we must go through God (Ephesians 6:10-18).

C. Verses 7-12 tell us about the war in heaven which sees Satan thrown out of heaven and thrown down to earth. Verse 5 told of the victory of Christ at Calvary, and the defeat of Satan. We take comfort in knowing that Satan has lost the war. We know from

scripture like Luke 10:18 that Satan had access to heaven, but no longer after this war which was fought in heaven. Even though Satan has lost the war, he still continues to fight. We see in verse 9 that his goal is to lead the whole world away from God.

D. Verses 13-17 the woman's flight in the desert. The devil having failed to destroy Christ tries to destroy the people of Christ.

i. Verse 15 tells how he tried to destroy using his mouth to deceive people.

ii. Verse 16 tells us that the earth protects the woman. The very structure of God's created world restricts and frustrates Satan's plans, and he can't destroy the church.

iii. Verse 17 tells that Satan continues to persecute Christians.

13. Chapter 13 the two beasts. These two beasts are described as terrible monsters who according to verse 4, the world will worship.

A. Chapter 13:1-10 talks about the first beast. Verse 7 tells us that the beast made war on the church. This could refer to past persecutions and/or future ones. Persecution is always with us; sometimes it is very strong and sometimes it is not so bad. Currently persecution is very bad and this prophecy could be referring to particularly bad persecution coming just before Christ returns.

B. Verses 11-18 talk about the second beast. This beast unlike the first one doesn't look like a monster; instead it looks like a lamb. These two beasts are allies of Satan and seem to get their power from him. They form a fake trinity with Satan as Satan continues trying to be a counterfeit God.

i. We see this counterfeiting in verse 13-14 where he counterfeits the work of the Holy Spirit. The beast is copying the Spirit filled works reported in the book of Acts.

ii. The second beast promotes worship of the first beast Rev. 13:12, just as the Holy Spirit promotes worship of Jesus.

C. Verse 15 reports that those who do not worship the beast will be slain. This is what Nebuchadnezzar and the Roman Empire did to Christians. Verse 15 along with verse 16 tells that Christians will be forced to participate in a certain amount of idolatry by their societies. We see examples of this in the United States. All Americans are forced to pay taxes, and some of this money is spent by the government on abortions. Some of the tax money is spent on public education which promotes things against God's Bible such as the theory of evolution. Evolution teaches that life just evolved instead of the fact that

the Bible says God created everything. This has only started happening recently; in the last 40 or so years.

D. What is the mark of the beast mentioned in verses 13-17? The mark is a spiritual one and not necessarily a physical one. It means that the person has allegiance to the evil one and not Jesus.

E. Verse 18 mentions the number 666. Many books have been written trying to identify the man who has this number, but all we can do is speculate.

14. Revelation 14 the Lamb and His followers.

A. 144,000 (verses 1-5) represent the saints in their complete number. The number 144,000 is symbolic and stands for all the saints.

i. The loudness from heaven seen in verse 2 may be the praise coming from the saints.

ii. Verse 3 tells us that only the saints can sing the new song. It is a fact that the unsaved can't truly participate in worship or understand the Bible. True worship is reserved for those who are redeemed.

B. The angel with the everlasting Gospel verses 6-7. This may be a last time pronouncement of the Gospel. This may be the last chance the unsaved will ever have to respond to the call of Jesus.

C. Verse 8 announces the fall of Babylon. Babylon is represented as the great seducer of the nations, the one who leads the people away from God, and she is going to fall.

D. Verses 9-12 report that all those who worship the beast instead of God will feel God's wrath on them and will suffer everlasting torment. The description given in verses 11-12 tells how horrible God's wrath is.

E. Verse 13 gives the picture of those who die as Christians. Look at the difference in the fate of Christians and those who worship the beast.

F. verses 14-20 talk about the appearance of one like a Son of Man. It represents the second coming as the harvest over which the Son of Man presides. This passage is about judging the wicked and how bad their fate is going to be.

15. Chapters 15-16 talk about the seven bowls of God's wrath. Chapter 15 introduces these seven bowls containing plagues, which are the judgments of God by which the power of Babylon is broken. Babylon represents a coalition of a political beast and the false prophet.

A. 15:2-4 the song of the victors. The saints are rejoicing over God's final victory; rejoicing over God's justice. We see one of the major points in this book is that there are two types of people. Those headed to terrible punishment and God's people who are headed to wonderful joy.

B. The seven bowls mentioned in verse 7 are the bowls of the wrath of God, and these complete the wrath of God.

C. Verse 8 says the sanctuary is closed. This means that nobody can enter to avert judgment because the day for intercession is over.

D. Chapter 16:2-9 the first four bowls. These bowls of judgment are poured out over the earth.

i. The first is that harmful and painful sores come on the ones who belong to the beast instead of God.

ii. The second bowl kills everything in the sea.

iii. The rivers and the fountain also became blood from the third bowl.

iv. The fourth bowl caused the people to be scorched with the fire of the sun. v. Even with all this, the people still were stubborn and refused to repent.

E. The fifth bowl 16:10-11 brings complete darkness over the land. Despite this and their pain from the previous judgments, the people still curse God and will not repent.

F. The sixth bowl (verses 12-16) tells of the assembling of the enemies of God ready to do battle against God in the final battle of Armageddon. The river Euphrates is dried up to allow the army to easily come to the battlefield. This battle is predicted in Ps 2:2-4.

G. The seventh bowl (verses 17-21) brings the cycle of judgments to an end. God uses hailstones and an earthquake stronger than any other to defeat the enemy's army before the battle really gets started.

16. Chapter 17 is the first angelic message. Babylon the great prostitute appears, representing the seductions of the world (verse 4). The destruction of Babylon represents the destruction of evil. Babylon here is not the ancient city rather it is a name that represents the godless world. It can be applied to many cities.

A. Verses 1-2 demonstrate that this is a vision of judgment for Babylon and those who have been corrupted by her.

B. In verses 3-4 John is moved to where he sees a vision of a prostitute who represents the sins of the world. For the moment (verse 4) the prostitute has the luxuries and pleasures of the world.

i. Verse 4 while picturing luxury and pleasure on the outside, tells us that all is not well on the inside. Her cup is full of bad things.

ii. The woman offers all kinds of pleasures which are fun for a short time, but the long term consequences are very bad.

iii. Remember Romans 6:23 tells us that the wages of sin is death. The joy of sex with a person who has AIDs is replaced with a sickness that leads to death. The use of drugs starts out with pleasure, but grows into a monster that consumes.

C. Verse 5 reminds us that Babylon represents all the cities who are united in their opposition to God.

D. Verse 6 tells us that her greatest crime is the persecution of the saints.

E. Verses 7-18 tell the first angelic message, about war and the Destruction of Babylon.

i. We see in verse 7, once again angels being used to explain mysterious visions.

ii. We read in verse 8 a counterfeit or wrong use) of the statement about God from Rev. 4:8. Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!" The beast continues to compete with God for who is really in charge.

iii. We also see in verse 8 that people, whose names are not written in the book of life, continue to be misled by the beast.

iv. The seven hills in verse 9 probably refer to past and present kingdoms. v. The seven kings in verse 10 are rulers.

vi. Verse 12 talks about future kings who along with the Antichrist will receive power and authority from Satan during the final hour. Verse 13 tells us they will unite.

vii. Verse 14 says the Lamb will defeat this coalition because of who He is—The Lord of lords and the King of kings.

17. Revelation 18 contains the messages which announce the fall of Babylon. Babylon is chosen for the name of the fallen city which is totally destroyed because Babylon was the city that had taken God's people captive. Here, Babylon represents the world's cities which were so sinful.

A. The second angelic message beginning in verse 2 says their destruction is complete because verse 3 says they were so sinful.

B. The third angelic message contains a warning to the saints. Verses 4-8 describe God calling His people to stay away from sin. God does not want Christians indulging in the sins of the world, and our best protection against this is to stay away from sin.

i. Verse 5 tells how they sinned so often that their sins are heaped as high as Heaven, in other words they sinned all the time.

C. Rev. 18:9-20 reports how three groups of people lament over the fall of Babylon. These groups appear to be people who admired the practices of Babylon. They admired and coveted the luxuries of Babylon and they miss these luxuries. These people are not moral and they are lost even though they didn't take part in the worst of the sins. They admired the luxuries and they took their share of these luxuries. They did nothing to stop the sins of Babylon.

i. An example would be found in the following story. A group of thieves sets a trap on a highway that causes a loaded truck to crash so that they can steal from the truck. While they are looting the truck, you come along and you start stealing from the truck. You did not commit the original sin of causing the truck to crash, but you took advantage of the situation and stole from the truck.

D. Rev. 18:21-24 tells us the final message of destruction of Babylon. This message dwells on how complete the destruction is and that it is permanent. There are descriptions of previous pleasures which are gone forever.

i. The chapter closes by saying this fierce judgment was caused by their persecution of the saints.

18. Rev. 19 The destruction of the beast and the false prophet.

A, Verses 1-10 describe how everyone in heaven rejoices over the defeat of the enemy. The rejoicing is a final victory celebration. God's victory is complete.

B. The wedding imagery in verse 7 expresses the love and intimacy between Christ and His people. We will be very close.

C. Verse 8 talks about fine linen which represents the righteous acts of the saints.

D. Verse 9 reminds us that we who belong to Christ are blessed because we are invited to the marriage supper of the lamb. Be sure not to miss this supper. E. The appearing of Christ riding a white horse (verses 11-16).

i. Verse 11 tells us that the heavens open and Christ returns to earth riding on a white horse. Jesus is accompanied by all the redeemed in heaven who are also riding on white horses (verse 14).

F. The final battle dooming the beast and the false prophet (verses 17-21). We read of the total destruction of the enemy, and how they are dishonored by being eaten by birds rather than being buried. They have no honor. Verse 20 tells us of the permanent fate of the false prophet and the beast which is to be thrown into the burning lake of sulfur which is hell.

19. Chapter 20 the millennium and the judgment. How you view the millennium depends on how you interpret the thousand year period. We will confine our study to a few comments from the scripture. Investigating the different opinions is beyond this study.

A. We see in this chapter the final triumph of good and the final destruction of evil. Pictured is a thousand year period when Satan and his forces are bound and not able to exercise their evil deeds. It is during this time that Jesus and His saints will reign with Him. This may be what Isaiah 11:6 is talking about.

B. Verses 1-3 tell that for a 1000 years Satan will be confined to the abyss (Luke 8:31) and unable to make trouble. This prison is not the final destination of Satan.

C. Verses 4-6 describe the millennial reign of Christ and His church. This may or may not be an actual 1000 years remember 2 Peter 3:8 teaches that God looks at time differently than we do.

i. The thrones of judgment in verse 4 refer to the saints who will sit on these thrones and rule with Jesus.

D. We see Satan's final doom in verses 7-10. Satan is released from prison and he makes one last effort to regain power, but it is a futile effort and Satan is totally defeated.

i. Verse 8 tells us that after he is released that Satan gathers a huge army. Gog and Magog from Ezekiel 38-39 represent the final enemies of God, who attack from the north. Where did all these enemies of God come from? The answer is that these people lived during the period of the millennium and they had free will. When Satan reappeared they did the same thing as Adam and Eve; they chose sin over obedience to God. Just as Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 1:9, there is nothing new under the sun. The basic nature of man is to choose sin and our only hope to please God is in Jesus our savior.

i. Verse 10 describes the final destination of Satan and all those who belong to him. It's very clear that the fate of the person who does not belong to God is terrible beyond what we can imagine.

E. The final judgment which follows the thousand years is described in verses 11-15. Jesus now executes His judgment over the created universe. This vision shares features with Matthew 25:31-46, Daniel 7:9-10, and Psalm 7:6-8; 47:8-9.

i. This scene is the one that Paul describes in Romans 2:16: the day when Jesus will judge all men's secrets. There are only two types of people on earth, the saved and the lost. Every saved person who ever lived is listed in the Book of Life and for him there is no second death. Every other person who ever lived and who is not listed in the book of life is, as verse 15, says thrown into the lake of fire with Satan and his allies. This is the second death.

20. Chapter 21:1-8 is a wonderful passage describing the wonders of what waits for the Christian. We see here a description of the new heaven and the new earth. Reading this chapter strengthens us to remain true to God even when we are undergoing trials and tribulations (troubles) of all types.

A. There are two sides of judgment. The punishment side of judgment was described in chapter 20. Now, in chapter 21, we see the pleasant side of judgment which is the reward of the righteous.

B. There are many different opinions about the new heaven and the new earth of verse one. Is it a new physical creation or is it symbolic of a place where sin is no longer?

C. Let's concentrate on some of the blessings described here.

i. Verse 3 tells us that we will be dwelling with God.

ii. Verse 4 tells us there will be no sorrow or pain. All the bad things of this life will be gone

because as verse 5 says, all things are new.

iii. Verse 5 says this is for all those who have been faithful to God.

iv. Verse 8 closes out this section with one last mention of the terrible fate of the people

who died without being Christian.

21. Chapter 21:9-22:5 describe the New Jerusalem.

A. In verse 9, John is taken to the bride. As a bride, we enjoy personal intimacy and joy in the presence with God.

B. In verse 11 the fundamental character of the new city is that it shines with the glory of God. C. The rest of chapter 21 tells us that we will be well taken care of. There will be no shortages.

D. In Chapter 22:1-3 we are back to the Garden of Eden at the end of Revelation right where we started in Genesis. However, now we can freely eat all we want from the tree of life. Verse 3 tells us that there will no longer be anything cursed by God.

22. Chapter 22:6-21 closes the Bible.

A. Verses 5-16 the importance of the book. This section reaffirms that this is the Word of God and it is not to be neglected.

i. Verse six reminds us that the words of the Bible are true and that they are God's words. ii. Verse 10 reminds us that we are to study the Bible and know the Bible.

iii. Verse 11 is acknowledgment that the lost are lost and the saved are saved. Their

destinies (final destination) are fixed when they die or when Christ comes back again, and nothing can change this. These destinies are not arbitrary decrees of God, but an inevitable result of their actions.

iv. Verses 14 & 15 again repeat the message of the absolute separation of the lost and the saved. Over and over the Bible teaches the message of the two classes of people and their two different destinies.

v. Verse 16 (see also Numbers 24:17); Jesus says the He is the one who all prophecy points toward. There is no other.

B. There is one last invitation given in Rev. 22:17 for people to come to Jesus.

C. Verses 18 & 19 along with Deuteronomy 4:2, warn against adding any words to the Bible or subtracting from the Bible. Everything God wants us to know about Him is found in the Bible. There are no new revelations from God. We are to teach and obey everything in the Bible. There are terrible penalties for the person who adds, subtracts, or changes any words in the Bibles.

i. God speaks to us today through the Bible and not through visions or dreams.

ii. We must obey everything the Bible teaches and not choose to disobey any rule in the Bible because of our personal desires. Romans 1:26-27 forbids homosexual behavior yet, there are so-called churches where they actually ordain homosexual as pastors and bishops. This is an example of subtracting from the Bible.

D. Jesus promises in verse 20 to do what every Christian should wish Him to do. He promises to come again soon.

E. The last verse of the Bible is a benediction for us. A benediction is a blessing from God for His people. (Numbers 6:22-27).