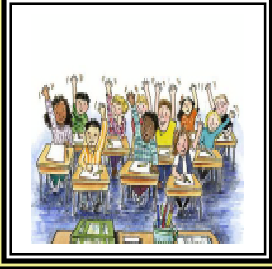


Jr. High (Grades 6-8) Curriculum Studies



**"The Beginnings
of Faith"
(#3)**

- 1—Growing in Faith (Survey Last Lessons)
- 2—The One Faith versus Many faiths
- 3—What Kind of Faith do You Have?
- 4—The New Covenant versus the Old
Covenant
- 5—A Faith Worth Dying For
- 6—The One Baptism versus Many baptisms
- 7—The Six Baptisms in the New Testament

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Lesson One

"Growing In Faith"

True spiritual development leads to a mature person in Christ. We start out as "babes" in Christ and develop to full maturity. It takes time to develop a deeply spiritual person. It is not a magical process of instant osmosis, but a gradual growing process.

It is important to recognize that a spiritual person may not be a mature person, and that a spiritually-minded person may not be a mature person. To be spiritually-minded is to have one's mind on what the Holy Spirit teaches. His teachings affect our thinking and actions for good. But one cannot become spiritually mature without being spiritual or spiritually-minded.

All Christians share a common goal—the challenge to become mature in Christ. It is a command of God (2 Pet. 3:18). It is not an option, but a necessity. Such needs to be looked upon as a challenge and a blessing—not a curse!

Concepts that denote Spiritual life or living

- Rom. 6:4 _____
- Rom. 6:11 _____
- Rom. 6:18 _____
- Rom. 6:22 _____
- Rom. 8:5 _____
- Rom. 8:6 _____
- Rom. 8:9 _____
- 1 Cor. 2:15 _____
- 1 Cor. 14:37 _____
- Gal. 6:1 _____

Concepts that denote the opposite of Spiritual life or living

- 1 Cor. 3:1 _____
- Gal. 5:16-21 _____
- Gal. 5:24 _____

Every person has the choice as to whether he will set his mind on carnal things or upon spiritual things. We will reap the fruits of the choice that we make (Gal. 6:7-8).

Basic Elements in Spiritual Development

1. A spiritual-mindedness must replace carnal-mindedness! (Rom. 8:5-6). We must come to mind the things of God's Spirit. Our lives must come more and more into the control of the Spirit's Will. This is not done by direct intervention. The Holy Spirit does not cancel out human will or responsibility. He does not cause us to act contrary to our own desires. The Holy Spirit controls us by our willingness to listen to what He says in His Word (Eph. 6:17; 1 Cor. 2:13). He controls us by our willingness to have our thinking transformed into right thinking—like God thinks (Rom. 12:2). He controls us by our willingness to let God's Will become supreme in our lives. God commands us to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). This happens when we learn more of the Teachings of the Spirit and put it into practice in our lives. We have a song that expresses this concept: *"All of self and none of Christ; Most of self and some of Christ; Some of self and more of Christ; and none of self and all of Christ."* We have the "mind of Christ" when we accept His Will as my will (1 Cor. 2:16; Phil. 2:5).

2. Our affections must be set on things above. (Col. 3:1-2). Our life before the new birth was one of loving the world and the things in the world. We are now urged to no longer love these things (1 Jn. 2:15-17). Our main interest is no longer the fleshly, but the spiritual (Rom. 8:5). Our development is shown by ceasing to sin, loving sin, or walking in sin (1 Pet. 4:1).

3. We are now to live a holy life. (1 Pet. 1:16-17). Our relationship with God leads us to become like Him. He is holy, so we should be holy. Our lives will increasingly reflect God's control and living within. It should be more than mere submission to authority. It should be a loving obedience (1 Jn. 5:3). It is giving recognition that our inner man has been reconciled to God. Therefore, duty becomes both an honor and a privilege to serve and suffer for Christ's sake (Gal. 6:14). Our lives will more and more manifest the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). It is to think God's thoughts. It is to do God's Will. The end results will be a full-grown man or woman in Christ Jesus (Eph. 4:13).

Priorities that help Spiritual Growth

1. We must give ourselves to the study of the Word of God. (1 Pet. 2:1-2). God's grace has provided His Word that we may grow. It is food for our souls (Deut. 8:3). It can perfect us (2 Tim. 3:16-17). By such the Spirit leads us to spiritual heights in Christ (Jn. 17:3).

2. By Public and Private Worship. (1 Cor. 11:17, 29-30). The church was undermining the purpose of the assembly. It is to uplift, not cause

the church to be weak and sickly. Corrupt, unspiritual, hypocritical worship does no good (Matt. 15:7-9). It should be uplifting and edifying (1 Cor. 14:26). It can be a very desirable atmosphere (Ps. 119:63; 1 Cor. 15:33). There needs to be a togetherness, love, and concern shown for each other.

Private worship has its place as well (Jas. 5:13, 16). We can pray, study, and meditate upon God's Word in the privacy of our own home. We can see how the Word relates to life and how it can change my life for the better (Ps. 1:1-2). It is our way of drawing nigh to God, and He to us (Jas. 4:8). It is realizing I must carry my own burdens (Gal. 6:4-5; Phil. 2:12). It is the realization that I have direct access to God through Christ (Matt. 6:6).

3. By learning to accept and benefit from chastisement. (Heb. 12:5-13). This can be God's way of cleansing and purifying us for more fruit bearing (Jn. 15:2). It can be God's efforts to make us better and not bitter! "Woes" today can make us better fit for tomorrow. God tempts no man to sin and be lost, but He does send trials to strengthen us (Jas. 1:12-14; 1:1-4). And He will not allow us to be tried above our ability to deal with it (1 Cor. 10:13). **Jacob** of old is a great example of this! He underwent great trials and became "Israel," the prince of God. Simon Peter, the rash, weak, and blundering disciple—after undergoing trials—became the sturdy, mellow, and wise Peter—the rock!

4. By exercising ourselves in service to God. (1 Tim. 4:7). We are called upon to offer these spiritual services (Rom. 12:1-2). Such activities go up as a sweet smell before God (1 Pet. 2:5). It is a choice of denial of self and bearing of our cross to follow Christ (Matt. 16:24). It is to be obedient, doing our duty, and engaging in good works (Matt. 25:31-46; Tit. 3:8).

**Spiritual Growth is both
a Negative and Positive Process.**

1. It is a putting off of the undesirable things in our lives. (Eph. 4:22). The worldly way of life leads to corruption and death and needs to be forsaken! Things to put off are listed in Eph. 4:25-31.

2. It is a putting on of the desirable things in our lives. (Eph. 4:23-24). In order to do this, we must be renewed in the spirit of our minds so that we can live a righteous and holy life. It is to enthrone Christ in our hearts (Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20). Things to put on are listed in Eph. 4:32.

Spiritual living is not just putting off undesirable things, but also a putting on the desirable things!

Concluding Thoughts

The job of the Christian is not to only secure spiritual life, but to develop it to completion (maturity).

Being spiritual is not shown by constant discontent, or a withdrawing from the saints, or of being so emotionally involved as to ignore God's written Word. It is shown by bearing the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and patience (Gal. 5:22). It is shown by following what the Spirit teaches and thereby being filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

Questions for Discussion

1. Does every new Christian start out as a "babe" in Christ? Explain your answer.

2. Is it true that a spiritually-minded person may not be a mature person?

3. What is "spiritual life?"

4. What is the opposite of "spiritual life?"

5. What three things can help us grow in our faith?

6. What are some priorities that helps spiritual growth?

7. Is our growth in faith both a negative and positive process?

Lesson Two

"The One Faith versus Many faiths"

The Bible states that there is “one God and Father,” “one Lord Jesus Christ,” and “one Faith (Ephesians 4:4-6). We have previously looked at reasons for believing in the first two—now, we want to see the reasons for believing in “the faith” or “one faith.” To begin with, we need a clarification of terms. Lessons two and three dealt with why I believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God. It is now important to identify what the “one faith” of Ephesians four is talking about.

Contained within the Bible is what is called the “New Covenant” that God wants to make with mankind. This New Covenant is the basic beliefs and practices of what we refer to as “Christianity.” Jude, in his short letter, is reminding his readers of their receptivity of “the faith” that was once delivered to the saints (Jude 3)—which faith is to be upheld or contended for with diligence. Jesus, obviously, is the giver of this New Covenant or “the faith” (Hebrews 1:1-2; 9:13-17). But Jesus also brought us “the truth” (John 1:17; 14:6; Galatians 3:23). It is this truth that can set us free from the bondage of sin (John 8:32) and sanctify us before God (John 17:17). The expression, “the truth,” would seem to be used synonymously with “the faith.” We are to believe “the truth,” but we are to also believe “the faith.” We are to hold to and follow “the truth,” as well as to hold to and follow “the faith” (Acts 6:7). Our souls are purified upon our obedience to “the truth” (1 Peter 1:22), but we are also called upon to be obedient to “the faith” in order to be right with God (Acts 6:7; Romans 1:5; 16:26).

WHAT IS THE ONE FAITH (THE FAITH)?

From the above, we would suggest that the “one faith” is “the faith” or the “common faith” (Titus 1:4) which was once delivered to God’s people. It is that body of beliefs and practices that: (1) Has to be preached (Galatians 1:23) for people to hear, believe, and obey to be right with God; (2) Must be held to (2 Timothy 4:7, contended for (Philippians 1:27), be steadfast in (Acts 14:22; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Peter 5:9), be grounded and established in (Colossians 1:23; 2:7), and to be sound in (Titus 1:13). Those who are weak in “the faith” are to be encouraged and helped (Romans 14:1). The whole church is to be established in “the faith” (Acts 16:5) and be unified in “the faith” (Ephesians 4:13). We are exhorted to examine ourselves to be sure we are in “the faith” (2 Corinthians 13:5). Those who are in “the faith” are also “in Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 3:13).

The following passages help us to see that "the faith" is an expression used to denote also "the word of God" or the "gospel."

1. **Acts 6:7**—The word of God spread and people were obedient to the faith.
2. **Acts 13:7-8**—The proconsul heard the word of God, but Elymas sought to turn him from the faith.
3. **Acts 14:21-22**—They preached the gospel and they exhorting the hearers to continue in the faith.
4. **Rom. 1:5**—All peoples were called to be obedient to the faith.
5. **Gal. 1:23**—Saul now preaches the faith which he once tried to destroy.
6. **Phil. 1:27**—Christians are to stand fast in the faith of the gospel.

It would seem obvious that the expression "the faith" has reference to the word of God or the gospel of Christ. The Bible stresses that there is but "one faith" or "one gospel" (Eph. 4:5; Gal. 1:6-9). This expression would seem to carry with it the idea of something that has been given and is complete and final and should be not only held to but contended for! See 2 Pet. 1:3; John 16:13; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). "The faith" is not something to be taken lightly, ignored, or be indifferent to; but rather, it is to be contended for! It contains and gives directions to all peoples on how to be saved and live a righteous life in order to receive a "crown of righteousness." It can furnish us completely for every good work that should be done. The Apostles were to be guided into all truth (Jn. 16:13); therefore, we can conclude that "the faith" was completely given during the life-time of the Apostles! After their death, there was to be no more added to "the faith." It was complete, final, and once for all delivered to mankind in general and to the "saints" in particular. Religious leaders of various kinds who claim to believe in Jesus, but claim to have "latter day revelation" are in direct opposition to what Jude has stated by the inspiration of God! Such persons as Joseph Smith, Ellen G. White, Mary Baker Eddy, and a host of others are all false prophets with a false message. Even when men meet in religious conferences or synods and give a pronouncement—it is false unless it agrees with "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." Once "the faith" is delivered, it never changes (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 Tim. 2:2).

It is important that we diligently hold to "the faith" because there are those who will strive to lead us from it. If we do not have the courage to uphold what we claim to believe—it puts in doubt as to whether we really believe such or not. It is also important that we do not go to extremes in this matter. It is necessary to contend for the faith, but with the proper spirit. But to have a "namby-pamby" spirit and unwilling to stand up for that which is truth certainly shows a great weakness on our part and would seem to put us in danger of being led astray from the faith. Please read Paul's exhortations in regards to this matter: (2 Tim. 4:1-5; Tit. 2:1; 1 Tim. 6:3-5, 20-21).

Logically, we evaluate the end result of something to determine if we want to believe or follow that particular teaching or set of beliefs. The purpose of the “one faith” is to make us right with God—to cleanse us, to sanctify us, to forgive us, and to bring us into a saved relationship with God. The reason for holding to the “one faith” is to make sure we keep this relationship with God intact. If we depart from the faith, we depart from God (2 John 9). And....the dangers or possibilities are real. Several warnings are given in the New Covenant Scriptures about the dangers of departing from “the faith” (1 Timothy 4:1). It is possible to deny “the faith” also (2 Timothy 2:18). Any deviations from “the faith” can be dangerous according to the Apostle Paul in Galatians 1:6-9. We are strongly urged to abide in the teaching of Christ (the faith) in order to keep our relationship with the Father and the Son (2 John 9).

REWARDS OF THE ONE FAITH (THE FAITH)

To believe and obey “the faith” is to bring us into a saved state with God. To continue to believe and obey “the faith” is to maintain our relationship with God. But why is this so important to us? To hold to “the faith” opens up to us the great assurances needed by man. Life has its challenges and trials. We need something to hold to that gives meaning and purpose to our existence upon this earth—as well as the motivation to hold to something that is firm and sure. “The faith” gives us the assurance of God’s love (1 John 4:16), God’s promised care over our lives (Hebrews 13:5-6), God’s promise of working out all things for our good (Romans 8:28), God’s promise that He will not bring upon us more than we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13), and the assurance of God’s mercy and continued forgiveness when we fall short of perfect obedience to “the faith” (1 John 1:7-10). But especially, when we face death or the death of a loved one, we need assurance of what to expect for them or us beyond this life (1 John 5:12-13).

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

What a blessing to have assurance that we are so tied with God that we can face whatever life may bring us and in death be prepared to go home to be with Him (Psalm 23). The Apostle Paul stated this assurance for himself in this way: ***“For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.”*** (2 Timothy 1:12). Of all “the faiths” in this world, “the one faith” given by God through His son (Hebrews 1:1-2) is the one alone in which men can have full confidence. Have you believed, obeyed this “one faith?” If you have, are you still sound in it?

True or False

- ___ 1. There are many “faiths,” but only “one faith” given by God.
- ___ 2. “The faith” and “the truth” are one and the same thing.
- ___ 3. Assurance of eternal life is only given to those who hold to the “one faith.”
- ___ 4. God wants His people to be unified in “the faith.”
- ___ 5. A person can be weak in “the faith” and needs to have help.
- ___ 6. A person cannot examine himself to see if he is in “the faith.”
- ___ 7. Those who are in “the faith” are in Christ.
- ___ 8. A person can err from “the faith” only if he is forced to do so.
- ___ 9. It is possible for someone to preach another Gospel (the faith) and be condemned by God.
- ___ 10. The end result of a certain kind of life should help us make wise decisions.

Lesson Three

"What Kind of Faith do You Have?"

The strong emphasis on faith in the Bible certainly indicates its great importance in our lives. We cannot over-stress its necessity to be right with God, but we can pervert its proper place in the salvation of a man's soul. Below are just a few of the passages indicating its necessity:

- John 1:12 _____
- John 3:16 _____
- Rom. 1:16-17 _____
- Rom. 5:1 _____

However, it is a grave mistake to conclude from the above passages that justification before God is by "faith alone!" The very opposite is taught in many different ways. Please notice that Rom. 5:9 states that man is justified by Jesus' blood. One of two things is obvious:

- 1) Faith and the Blood of Christ are in conflict;
- 2) Or, they are both involved in our justification.

It should be obvious that if both are necessary to our justification; then, we are not justified by any "one" thing! If we look closely at this context, we can see that several things are involved:

- 1) Rom. 5:1 _____
- 2) Rom. 5:2 _____
- 3) Rom. 5:9 _____
- 4) Rom. 5:17-18 _____
- 5) Rom. 5:19 _____

All are obviously involved, all are essential, and all mesh together to provide redemption for fallen man. It should be obvious that justification by faith alone is an impossibility. To hold to a "faith alone" doctrine would automatically eliminate God's Grace, Christ's Blood, Christ's Righteousness, and Christ's Obedience! The very term is very misleading. Man's salvation involves both God's Work and Man's Work in order to be completed.

But some would like to advocate that man's part in his salvation is by "faith alone!" They recognize that God has had to do His part. Now man must do his part....and that part is "faith alone!" Let's look at this concept a little more in depth.

CLARIFICATION

The issue is not whether faith is necessary to our justification or salvation—this is an obvious fact overwhelmingly stated in Scripture. The thing that needs to be clarified or dealt with is the question: *"What kind of faith do we have to have to be saved?"*

The Scriptures indicate that there are different levels or kinds of faith that men may have. The 12 disciples (later called apostles) had left all to follow Jesus. you would think that they really believed in Him. Yet, upon several occasions, He rebuked one or more of them for their "little faith."

Matt. 14:31 _____

The apostles evidently got the message towards the end of Jesus' public ministry (3 1/2 years). It was shown by a request that they made of Him.

Luke 17:5 _____

They were recognizing the weakness and shallowness of their faith in comparison to what it ought to be. Jesus' next statement to them was trying to drive this point home!

Luke 17:6 _____

Here were men who had left all to follow Jesus—yet, their faith was far from what it ought to be.

MATTHEW 8:5-13

The apostles were in this audience, as well as many religious people. Here was a Centurion (a Roman soldier) and a Gentile who showed more faith than even Jesus' close disciples. Jesus marveled at the man's faith!

What kind of faith did he have? _____

Several passages indicate that there are different levels or kinds of faith:

Rom. 15:1 _____

2 Thess. 1:3 _____

1 Thess. 1:3 _____

Acts 6:5 _____

James 2:5 _____

James, in his letter to Christians, takes a little different approach to the question of faith. He doesn't talk about a weak faith or a growing faith, but a "dead" faith! Read James 2:17-26 and answer the following questions:

- 2:17—What made it a dead faith? _____
- 2:18—How does one show that he has faith? _____
- 2:19—Who besides humans believe there is one God? _____
- 2:20—Who does James call foolish? _____
- 2:21—By what was Abraham justified? _____
- 2:22—What did Abraham's works do for his faith? _____
- 2:23—What Scripture did James quote that told how Abraham was Justified before God? _____
- 2:24—What does James say does not justify us? _____
- 2:25—How was Rahab justified? _____
- 2:26—What is a dead faith compared unto? _____

It would seem quite obvious that it is not only important what we believe, but our faith needs to be the right kind of faith, as well!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We first need to have the kind of faith that brings us into a saved relationship with God. This faith not only puts its trust in the death of Christ for our salvation, but it is an active obedient faith"

Acts 2:37-41 _____

Then, as a Christian, this faith needs to be fed so it can grow, increase, and become full, complete, and steadfast!

- 1 Cor. 15:58 _____
 - Rev. 2:10 _____
 - Rev. 17:14 _____
 - Heb. 3:12-14 _____
- _____

The reason for stressing faith is—"*Without faith, it is impossible to please God!*" (Heb. 11:6). But it is not enough to say, "I believe!" Our faith must be an obedient faith! We must hold on to "**the Faith!**"

QUESTIONS for DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. A person must now believe in Jesus in order to have eternal life.
- ___ 2. Salvation by "faith alone" is a very desirable doctrine to believe, but such teaching is incorrect.
- ___ 3. If we are justified by the blood of Christ, then we cannot also be justified by faith.
- ___ 4. Justification of man must involve God and Man.
- ___ 5. Man's part in his justification is by "faith alone."
- ___ 6. The issue is not whether man is saved by faith, but by "faith alone."
- ___ 7. The Bible recognizes different kinds or levels of faith.
- ___ 8. James makes it clear that man is not justified by faith alone.
- ___ 9. James uses 3 different persons to show that man is justified by an obedient, working faith.
- ___ 10. Repentance and baptism are activities of faith that makes our faith acceptable to God.
- ___ 11. A faith that is "alive" is a "growing" faith.
- ___ 12. It is not enough to say: "I believe!"

Lesson Four

"The New Covenant (Law) versus the Old Covenant (Law)"

The term "law" can be a good term or a bad one—depending upon one's attitude towards the concept of law. The lawless do not respect law and would like to do away with law. Those who see the need of law and try to live by its directions would think of law as something good for mankind. It should be obvious that this lesson will uphold law and call upon men to respect and strive to live by law. However, when it comes to the Bible, you have not only the concept of law, but a contrast being drawn in Scripture between two separate laws given by God.

The Hebrew word for "law" in the Old Testament is "Torah." The Greek word for "law" in the New Testament is "Nomos." Both terms carry with them the ideas of: (1) Giving directions for men to follow; (2) Authoritative instructions given by God; and (3) A standard for administering justice. Law can be written down and accepted as a right way for man to conduct himself or it can be an unwritten code of ethics by which a person directs his or her life.

There are two terms that are closely identified with Law: Testament or Covenant. They are not necessarily the same—and yet, they are used as one. For the Jew, the Covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai also contained the "Law of Moses." For the Christian, the Covenant that all men come under when we accept God's Grace in His appointed way also contains the "Law of Christ."

The word "law" in the New Testament can have reference to several different things as can be seen in the following Scriptures:

- a) To the principle of Law in General (Romans 2:12-14).
- b) To the Ten Commandments in the Old Covenant (Romans 7:7).
- c) To the Pentateuch (1st five books of the Old Testament) (Luke 24:44).
- d) To all of the Old Testament Scriptures (John 10:34; 12:34; 15:25).
- e) To the Gospel and/or the teachings of Christ (Galatians 6:2; James 1:25; 2:8; Romans 8:2).

The context needs to be looked at carefully to be able to make a proper distinction as to the meaning of use of the word. But our study in this lesson is about the Contrast between the Old and New Laws given by God. We will look

at the weaknesses of the Old Law and how the New Law is superior to the Old Law and deals with these weaknesses.

FOUR MAJOR WEAKNESSES OF THE OLD LAW GIVEN THROUGH MOSES

1. It could not give righteousness or life.

- a) Rom. 7:10—*“And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.”*
- b) Gal. 3:21—*“Is the Law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.”*
- c) Gal. 2:21—*“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”*
- d) Rom. 3:21—*“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.”*
- e) Rom. 8:3—*“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh...”*
- f) Heb. 8:7—*“For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.”*

The Law itself is not weak and sinful, but holy, just, and good (Rom. 7:12). Some parts of the law were too high for weak man to live up to. Also, some parts were elementary, shadowy, or representations of that which was to come. The law was never meant to give life, but to control life. It was not give to confer life or restore life, but to regulate life. It was not to impart righteousness, but to show the way to live a righteous life. The law merely showed man how truly sinful he was (Rom. 3:19-20).

2. It would not fully convey the terribleness of sin. It could name what actions were wrong, such as: Theft, Adultery, Murder, etc (Exo. 20). It was clear that such actions were offensive to God. And as well, such actions were seen to be hurtful to man by his own experiences. He may have also understood that sin deserved death, but none of these things showed the terribleness of sin for man.

3. It did not have an example of perfect obedience to follow. Many great men and women are mentioned in the Old Testament. Hebrews chapter eleven gives a long list of names of the great men and women of faith in God. But none of them are presented as perfect in their lives. The good in them was held up to view with the thought of us following their example.

4. It was not a suitable law for all men and nations. The Old Law was given to the Israelite Nation at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:1-2, Romans 3:1-2; 9:4) and

not to other nations (Psalm 147:19-20). This law was sufficient for the Jewish people, but it was not a sufficient law for all peoples and nations.

THE STRENGTHS OF THE NEW LAW GIVEN THROUGH CHRIST

1. Christ's law could give righteousness and life. Not law in the sense of moral conduct, for no one could live the law perfectly; but law in the sense of the Gospel of Grace that was extended to all men through Christ (Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:21; James 1:25). Righteousness and life is still not attained by "Law Keeping," but by Grace through an obedient faith in Christ. But unless man strives to keep the law of Christ, he will not be saved eternally (Heb. 5:8-9).

2. The New Law (Covenant) reveals the terribleness of sin. The Old Law had exemplified God's hate of sin by:

- a) What happened to man in the fall and driven from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:16-17).
- b) The destruction of the world by the Flood (Gen. 6:5-7).
- c) The confusion of man's languages at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:5-9).
- d) The destruction of the cities of Sodom & Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24-25).
- e) And the thousands upon thousands that died and were destroyed by God at different times.

But none of these were sufficient to show the terribleness of sin and its eternal consequences. God's New Law (Covenant) makes this very clear! The coming of God in the flesh, to live among us, and to be rejected, mocked, falsely accused, ridiculed, and nailed to the cross where he hung in agony of mind, body, and spirit. He tasted of death for every man (Heb. 2:9). It was physical death, but more----it was a spiritual death (separation from God) that Jesus experienced when He cried out, "*My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*" Such a statement gives insight to how terrible sin's consequences really are.

3. The New Law also furnished us with a perfect life of obedience to God. Jesus spoke as no other man spoke (John 7:46). He lived as no other man lived (1 Peter 2:22). There is none greater than Jesus, for he did not sin (1 Peter 2:22)! And to imitate Jesus is to be obedient to God's Law in all things!

4. The New Law becomes a Universal Law for all men and nations! All the limited characteristics of the Law of Moses have been removed. All the Religious Leaders' false interpretations have been rejected and removed. Only

those laws that are of a universal nature were retained in this New Law or New Covenant that God wants to make with men.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

True or False

- ___ 1. The words “Covenant” and “Law” are often used with reference to the same thing.
- ___ 2. The word “Law” can have reference to the teachings of Christ.
- ___ 3. The Old Testament was incapable of making a person righteous before God.
- ___ 4. The Old Law is holy, just, and good—but incapable of saving a person.
- ___ 5. The Old Law tells us about a lot of great men and women, but no one that was perfect.
- ___ 6. The Old Law was only given to the Israelite Nation.
- ___ 7. Man has to obey the New Law in order to be saved by Jesus.
- ___ 8. The terribleness of sin is seen in what was required of Jesus in order to redeem man.
- ___ 9. The New Law is universal for all men.
- ___ 10. God has commissioned us to go and preach the Old Law to the world.

Lesson Five

"A Faith Worth Dying For"

The apostle Paul had changed from Judaism to Christianity! It was out of strong convictions of Truth! He was supremely convinced that Jesus was truly the "Son of God!" He not only believed it himself, but tried to convince others of such....and he was even willing to die for his new found faith in Christ!

What would cause a man to change from his father's religion?

What could cause a man to give up position & prestige in his past religion?

What could cause a man to be willing to die for his beliefs?

Christianity must have something of great value for someone to make such changes and even to be willing to give up his life for teaching it. In this lesson, we want to look at three basic values of Christianity that makes it worth dying for.

A GREAT PURPOSE

Solomon, who the Scriptures say was the wisest man on earth, after trying all the avenues of satisfaction in this life, declared: ***"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter, fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."*** (Eccl. 12:13) Is man's purpose no higher than to be born, live, eat, work, reproduce, and die? What does Christ offer as a great purpose for living?

1 Cor. 6:19-20 _____

Not only does Christ offer a great purpose for living, but the reward of fulfilling that purpose makes it worth dying for, as well! (John 3:16). All that we do, say, or think is to be directed toward glorifying God. He is our creator, our benefactor, and our savior—he deserves to be glorified!

Rev. 4:11 _____

Rev. 5:9-10 _____

Rev. 5:13 _____

Rev. 15:3-4 _____

A GREAT RELATIONSHIP

Anyone can have relationships with other human beings, and often on such limited terms. However, fellowship with God is not so easy to come by. There are strict terms of involvement, such as the following:

- Heb. 11:6 _____
- 1 Peter 1:22-25 _____
- Rom. 6:1-2 _____
- Rom. 6:3-4 _____
- Rom. 6:6 _____
- Rom. 6:8 _____
- Rom. 6:12-13 _____
- Rom. 6:16 _____
- Rom. 6:17-18 _____

Not only must we meet the terms of conditions in order to have fellowship with God, but we must continue to maintain that relationship by doing the following:

- 1 John 1:3-4 _____
- 1 John 1:5-6 _____
- 1 John 1:7 _____
- 1 John 1:9 _____
- 1 John 2:1 _____
- 1 John 2:4 _____
- 1 John 3:24 _____
- 1 John 4:16 _____
- 1 John 4:20-21 _____

The **Benefits** of such a relationship is what makes such so desirable, as the following Scriptures indicate:

- Acts 2:38 _____
- 1 John 1:7 _____
- 1 John 3:1 _____
- 1 John 3:22 _____
- 1 Peter 5:6-7 _____
- Phil. 4:6-7 _____
- Rom. 8:28 _____
- Matt. 6:33 _____

Heb. 5:8-9 _____

Such benefits are not promised to the non-Christian or even to the unfaithful Christian. If the non-Christian has the same benefits that the Christian has...why become a Christian?

But not only does the faithful Christian have all these benefits of a relationship with God (Eph. 1:3), but he also is blessed with a very desirable relationship with his fellow-Christians. We can enjoy the fellowship with other faithful, devoted, godly people of like-mind and spirit (1 Cor. 1:10-13).

A GREAT INFLUENCE

The Christian has the opportunity to exert a great influence for good upon this earth. Corrupt Christianity cannot have this kind of an influence, nor can the worldly-minded or carnally-minded person (Rom. 8:5-6; 1 Cor. 3:1-3).

Phil. 2:15 _____

Acts 26:18 _____

Such an influence can be far-reaching and endless in its impact for good. It can even lead many to eternal life. Our world is definitely a better place in which to live because of this influence.

Matt. 5:13 _____

Matt. 5:14 _____

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

We believe that people should want to become Christians because:

1. It gives people the greatest challenge for living;
2. It offers the greatest of relationships and the blessing that comes from such;
3. It has the greatest influence for good in our world to bless mankind.

But people should also want to become Christians because it is a "Faith" worth dying for!

QUESTIONS IN REVIEW

True or False

- ___ 1. There is no "Faith" that is worth dying for.
- ___ 2. Christianity has very little to offer in comparison to other religions or the beliefs of men.
- ___ 3. The summation for man's existence and living is to be obedient to God.
- ___ 4. Another way of stating the same thing is for man to glorify God.
- ___ 5. Both the Father and the Son are said to be worthy of man's praise and glory and honor.
- ___ 6. Securing and keeping a relationship with God is relatively easy on man's part.
- ___ 7. One of the requirements of maintaining our relationship with God is that we must love our brother in Christ.
- ___ 8. God not only hears, but answers the prayers of those who keep his commandments.
- ___ 9. The person who claims a relationship with God but walks in darkness is said to be a "liar."
- ___ 10. Forgives of past sins and present sins is one of the benefits of a relationship with God.
- ___ 11. The "peace that passes all understanding" comes to only those who maintain their relationship with God.
- ___ 12. God's providential care is actually over all people—whether Christian or not.
- ___ 13. There is no purpose for becoming a Christian if the non-Christian has the same benefits that the Christian has.
- ___ 14. Christians and their influence for good is compared to both "Light" and "Salt."
- ___ 15. Christianity is a "faith" worth dying for!

***"The One Baptism versus
Many baptisms"***

There has been for many years a question about the meaning of the word "baptism." People want to know how it is to be administered—is the person to be "**sprinkled with water,**" "**have water poured over him,**" or is the person to be "**immersed in water?**" What makes the answer to this question critical deals with another vital question about baptism—is it essential or necessary in order to be saved or made right with God? Both of these questions deal with the issue on how to approach and study the Bible to arrive at its vital truths. This lesson will deal with both of these questions.

The Meaning of the Word "Baptize"

Unfortunately, those who have translated the Bible into English have been a major cause of so much questioning over baptism. They could have easily solved the problem, but they have not done so (and will not do so!). The Greek word has not been translated, but merely "transliterated" into our English language. If you will look at the Greek word below and fill in the English equivalents, you can see the truth of this matter.

Greek Word-----**Βαπτίζω**

English Letters-----Baptizo

Most of us have been exposed to the Greek Alphabet so that we can pretty well figure out that the translators only transliterated and did not translate the Greek word. This leaves the average Bible reader with two choices: (1) To try to find if the Scriptures actually tell us how baptism is to be performed; or (2) To look up the meaning of the Greek word in a Greek Lexicon. Please look up the following Scriptures and see if they give an "indication" or a "statement" as to how baptism was performed.

John 3:23 _____

Acts 8:35-38 _____

Acts 8:39 _____

Romans 6:4 _____

Romans 6:5 _____

Colossians 2:12 _____

In addition to the above Scriptures, the definition of the word makes it very clear how the act is to be administered.

1. *"to dip repeatedly, to immerge, submerge"*
2. *"To cleanse by dipping or submerging"*
3. *Metaphorically, "To overwhelm"*

----Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

Thus, not only does the Bible tell us the "how" to administer "baptism" but the meaning of the Greek word supports it clearly.

Three Different Actions: Sprinkling, Pouring, and Immersion

Three different English words are used to describe how some feel that baptism is to be administered: Sprinkling, Pouring, and Immersion. However, these are three different actions and cannot be the same. An interesting fact about these three words is that the Greek language has three **different** words for these **different** actions.

Rantizo is translated "sprinkling" in such passages as Hebrews 9:13.

Cheo is translated "pouring" in such passages as Acts 2:17.

Baptizo is described as a burial in such passages as Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12.

These are three different words and three different actions. God chose the Greek word that He commanded of men—**Baptizo—to dip, to submerge, to immerse**. If Jesus is Lord, then we will do what He commands (Lk. 6:46).

The Necessity of the "One Baptism"

We now need to look into the necessity of water baptism. It is a command that we can obey and must obey (Lk. 6:46) in order to be acceptable to God. It is interesting to notice that in every case where "water baptism" is mentioned and "salvation" or its equivalent is mentioned in the same passage—that "salvation" or its equivalent always came to a person after being "immersed in water" in obedience to God's will. Notice these Scriptures:

Mark 16:16—*"He who believes and is baptized will be saved"*

John 3:5—*"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."*

Acts 2:38—*"Repent and....be baptized....for the remission of sins."*

Acts 22:16—*"Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins."*

Rom. 6:4—*"buried with Him through baptism.....walk in newness of life"*

Rom. 6:17-18—*"you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine...and having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."*

Col. 2:12-13—*"buried with Him in baptism.....made alive...having forgiven you all trespasses."*

1 Pet.1:22-23—*"you have purified your souls in obeying the truth..... having been born again."*

1 Pet. 3:20-21—*"eight souls, were saved through water.....an antitype which now saves us—baptism"*

Concluding Thoughts

We believe that the evidence is overwhelming for immersion. However, a question could be asked: *"If the evidence is so overwhelming for immersion, then why do so many churches practice sprinkling?"* We believe the answer should be obvious—**The authority of men has replaced the authority of God and His Word!**

Which authority do you recognize, respect, and go by? Have you been immersed into Christ upon a confession of your faith in Him as being the Son of God....for the remission of sins? (Acts 2:38). God's word says that it is necessary—have you obeyed God?

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ ___ 1. "Baptizo" is a Greek word that **cannot** be translated!
- ___ ___ 2. There is no different between transliteration and translation.
- ___ ___ 3. The New Testament no where tells us how "baptism" was performed.
- ___ ___ 4. Greek Lexicons translate the word "Baptizo" as a choice of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.
- ___ ___ 5. This Greek word is used in a figurative or metaphorical way in the New Testament.
- ___ ___ 6. There are no Greek words for "sprinkling" or "pouring" in the New Testament.
- ___ ___ 7. It is not important to know what God is commanding of us in the Greek word "baptizo."
- ___ ___ 8. John's baptism did not end at the time of Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.
- ___ ___ 9. "Salvation" or its equivalent never comes before baptism, it is always (without an exception) after baptism.
- ___ ___ 10. Baptism in water has nothing to do with receiving the remission of our sins.

"The Six Baptisms in the New Testament"

People who have some Bible knowledge know that the Bible teaches a person to be baptized in water. The use of water as a means of cleansing is an obvious fact. And, the use of water religiously as a means of cleansing is not an uncommon thing.

1. The High Priest, under the Law of Moses, was to bathe himself before putting on his special garments to serve in the Temple (Lev. 16:4, 23-24).
2. For some reason the Jews required a Gentile who wanted to become a Jew to go through a ceremonial cleansing (called baptism).
3. John, the baptizer, came calling the Jewish people to repentance, confession of sins, and baptism to get them ready for the coming of the Messiah (and His new Kingdom) (Mark 1:1-5).
4. Jesus, Himself, was baptized by John and afterwards taught the people to be baptized with John's baptism (His disciples did the baptizing) (John 3:26; 4:1-2).

So, it was no surprise to Jesus' disciples that He commanded baptism of those who wanted to become His followers (Matt. 28:18-20). Baptism is an act commanded by God under this New Covenant given through Jesus to all nations.

However, part of the confusion over "baptism" is the fact that there are possibly "six" different "baptisms" mentioned in the New Testament. Most of these pose no problem, but a couple do cause some confusion.

Listing of the six Baptisms

1. **Baptism of the nation of Israel in the Red Sea** (1 Cor. 10:2). This is a figurative use of the term and is a past historical event that does not involve us.
2. **John's Baptism** (Matthew 3:6-7, 11, 13-14, 16; Mark 1:4, 5, 8-10; Luke 3:3, 7, 12, 16, 21, 7:29-30; 20:4; John 1:25-26, 28, 31, 33; 3:22-23, 26; 4:1-2; 10:40; Acts 1:5, 22; 10:37; 11:16; 13:24; 19:3-4). This baptism was no longer valid after the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ (Acts 19:1-7).
3. **Baptism of Jesus' suffering** (Matt. 20:22-23; Mark 10:38-39; Luke 12:50). This is a figurative use again and a past historical event that does not involve us.

4. **Baptism of the Holy Spirit** (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16). This was a promise by Jesus to His Apostles (Acts 1:5) and a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:1-4; 11:14-18). This baptism served its purpose and is no longer valid for today.
5. **Baptism in water under the Great Commission**(Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16).
 - a. This baptism is a command to those who believe and repent (Acts 2:38, 41; 8:12-13, 16, 36, 38; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 18:8; 19:5; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 1:13-17; 12:13; 15:29; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12; Heb. 6:2; 1 Pet. 3:21).
 - b. This baptism is done in order to be saved or receive remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).
 - c. This baptism superseded John's baptism (Acts 19:1-7).
6. **Baptism of fire** (Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16). This is used figuratively with reference to future punishment.

The "One Baptism"

Out of the six baptisms mentioned above, only **ONE** is now valid according to the inspired statement of the Apostle Paul (Eph. 4:5). Please notice that in Acts 2 (A.D. 30) there are two baptisms mentioned:

- 1) Acts 2:1-4 (1:4-5)—This one is called a baptism by the Holy Spirit.
- 2) Acts 2:38, 41—This one is a command to be immersed in water.

In Eph. 4:5 (A.D. 63), the Apostle states that there is "one" baptism! One of the two baptisms mentioned above had to cease or we would have "two" baptisms that would be valid! The logical one to cease would be the one that was a promise (a baptism of the Holy Spirit). The other baptism is a command that must be obeyed in order to receive remission of sins (Acts 2:38). An important study would be to see further the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Once we see its purpose, it is easy to see that it is the one that ceased—not water baptism!

Examples of People Obeying the Command to be Baptized

John's work was to prepare the way for the Messiah. Shortly afterwards Jesus began His public ministry. After about three and one-half years, Jesus gave Himself over to be crucified, buried, was raised from the dead.

During a period of about 40 days He appeared to His disciples so they would have ample proof of His resurrection (Acts 1:3), but would also know what was expected of them after the Holy Spirit came on them. Before ascending, He gave the Apostles their marching orders:

Matt. 28:18-20 _____

Mark 16:15-16 _____

After Jesus ascended back to the Father, where he was crowned "King of kings" and "Lord of lords" and "Head of the church," He sent the Holy Spirit to the Apostles to give them power and to be a guide for their preaching (Acts 1:8; John 16:13-16). As they went preaching by the revelation and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we can easily see that they did command people who believed, repented, and were willing to confess Him as the "*Christ, the Son of God,*" to be baptized (in water, understood). Following are the recorded examples in the book of Acts that show this:

Acts 2:38, 41 _____

Acts 8:12, 13 _____

Acts 8:35-39 _____

Acts 10:47-48 _____

Acts 16:15 _____

Acts 16:30-33 _____

Acts 18:8 _____

Acts 19:1-7 _____

Acts 22:16 _____

Concluding Thoughts

The two factors that pose a problem to a correct understanding about baptism we have tried to deal with in this lesson:

1. The word not being translated;
2. The 6 different usages of the word "baptism."

I hope that we have given sufficient information that can remove the problem of correctly understanding what God is trying to say to us. If you have additional questions, please feel free to ask questions.

Questions for Discussion

- _____ 1. There are at least a possible six usages of the concept of "baptizo" in the New Testament.
- _____ 2. John's baptism did not end at the time of Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension.
- _____ 3. Three of the six usages of "baptizo" are used figuratively.
- _____ 4. While there were two valid baptisms mentioned in the beginning of the New Testament Age (A.D. 30); yet, only one of them was valid by A.D. 63.
- _____ 5. Logic easily indicates which of the two baptisms in Acts 2 later ceased.
- _____ 6. Only lost people should be baptized.
- _____ 7. If God commands immersion, then sprinkling is in reality disobedience.
- _____ 8. The book of Acts actually records people being baptized again who had been baptized.
- _____ 9. Baptism could be God's test of our faith in Him.
- _____ 10. I have not been correctly baptized.

