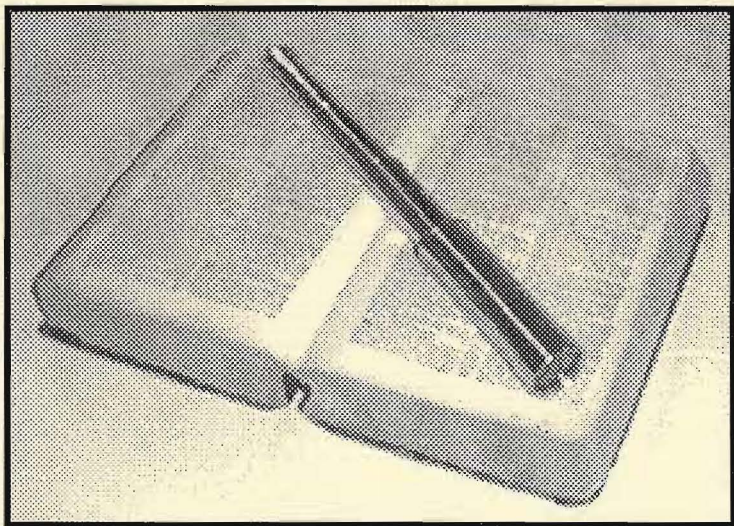


# Seeing The Invisible

~ William S. Cline ~

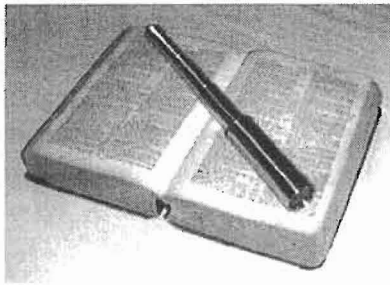


"While we look not at the things which are seen,  
but at the things which are not seen:  
for the things which are seen are temporal;  
but the things which are not seen are eternal."  
(II Corinthians 4:18).



# *Seeing The Invisible*

~ William S. Cline ~



1940 – 1991

In Memory of William S. Cline  
by the  
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# Foreword

The book of superb sermon outlines/Bible class material which you hold in your hand was written by a *gospel* preacher, a great and good man, **William S. Cline**. His having been born on November 9, 1940, in Columbus, Mississippi, he was trained and began preaching when the Lord's people were virtually all united upon a "Thus saith the Scriptures" and were the fastest growing religious group in America. He never lost that strong Bible emphasis and loyalty nor that evangelistic zeal.

This work was completed by brother Bill not long before his untimely death on December 10, 1991. His lovely and supportive companion, Jean, gave the completed material and any profit which might come from its printing to the Memphis School of Preaching Alumni Association. Brother Cline and brother Andrew Connally were the first two honorary alumni of the School.

Brother Cline was an outstanding preacher and real scholar of the Word. Brother Rex A. Turner, Sr., lauded him as one of the top students ever to attend Alabama Christian School of Religion. A five talent man, in addition to his local work in Mississippi, New Jersey, and Pensacola, he served ably as director of Bellview Preacher Training School, director of the Bellview Lectures, editor of **Defender**, board member and secretary-treasurer of Four Seas College of Bible and Missions in the Republic of Singapore, editor of the **Firm Foundation**, director of the **Firm Foundation Lectureships**, et al. He made numerous evangelistic trips to the Far East.

It was my privilege to know personally brother Cline, beginning from the time we both grew up in Baldwin County, Alabama. I followed his work with interest all through the years, being deeply impressed with his

wisdom, his courage and conviction, his love for souls, and his encouragement of faithful men and loyal works, and his deep friendship. He was an enthusiastic supporter of the work of the Memphis School of Preaching. My life was enriched by our association on several trips to Singapore and on lectureships, working with him on the **Firm Foundation**, et al. I remember him as a lover of people, a tremendous encourager, a great defender of the faith, and one who loved the Lord's church. I cherished our times together.

It is fully appropriate (and brother Bill's wish) that this volume be **dedicated** to his beloved wife, Jean, and their dear children: Cathy, Billy, Mary, and Becky. He was a loving and wise family man, a devoted husband and caring father.

It is with delight that we send forth this volume. Like Abel of old, "*...he being dead yet speaketh*" (Heb. 11:4). The great truths herein should be studied in every classroom and preached in every pulpit.

Curtis A. Cates, Director  
Memphis School of Preaching

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## Lesson 1

# ***Why Every Person Should Be A Member Of The Church Of Christ***

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Matthew 16:13-18; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; Acts 2.
2. Regarding the texts:
  - (1) In the readings given we have the promise to build and the actual beginning of the New Testament church.
3. Our purpose is to show why every person should be a member of that church, the church of Christ, the one identified in the New Testament.

### DISCUSSION: EVERY PERSON SHOULD BE A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST BECAUSE:

#### I. IT WAS HEAVEN PLANNED.

1. Purpose: Ephesians 3:8-10.
2. Promise: Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:16.
3. Prophecy: Isaiah 2:2-3.
4. Preparation: Matthew 3:3 (cf., Mark 1:1-4; Luke 3:1-6; John 1:19-28).
5. Perfection: Acts 2 (It was just as God wanted it. Not one thing was wrong. Such is not the case when men build things. Men make mistakes.)

#### II. IT IS HEAVEN APPROVED.

1. First, let us stress it is the **ONLY ONE!**
  - (1) Christ *built* only one (Matthew 16:18).
  - (2) Christ *purchased* only one (Acts 20:28).
  - (3) Christ is the *head* of only one (Ephesians 5:23).
  - (4) Christ is the *saviour* of only one (Ephesians 5:23).
  - (5) Christ will deliver up only one (1 Corinthians 15:24).
  - (6) There is no such thing as a multiplicity of

churches in the New Testament. There is only one—not many.

2. It has the proper *qualifications*.
  - (1) It began in the proper *place* (Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8).
  - (2) It has the proper *head* (Colossians 1:18).
  - (3) It has the proper *name* (Romans 16:16; Acts 4:12).
  - (4) It has the proper *plan of salvation*.
    - A. Hear (Romans 10:17).
    - B. Faith (Hebrews 11:6).
    - C. Repentance (Acts 2:38).
    - D. Confession (Romans 10:10).
    - E. Baptism (Galatians 3:26-27).
    - F. Remain faithful (1 Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10).
  - (5) It has the proper *worship*.
    - A. Sing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).
    - B. Pray (Acts 2:42).
    - C. Preach/Teach (Acts 20:7).
    - D. Giving (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).
    - E. Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20-29).
  - (6) It has the proper *organization*.
    - A. Elders (Acts 14:23; 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17).
    - B. Deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-13; Philippians 1:1).
    - C. Evangelists (2 Timothy 4:1-5).
    - D. Members (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 5:30).

### III. IT IS HEAVEN BOUND.

1. All the *saved* are in it (Acts 2:47). No saved can be found any place else.
2. It is the *family* of God (1 Timothy 3:14-15).
3. It is the *kingdom* of God (Acts 2:38, 47; Colossians 1:13-14).
4. It is *heaven bound* (1 Corinthians 15:24).

5. The saved, the family of God, and the kingdom of God are heaven bound!

#### CONCLUSION:

1. We have discussed why every person should be a member of the church of Christ.
2. We have stressed there is only one New Testament church.
3. We have carefully noted the identifying marks of the New Testament church.
4. That church was and is: heaven planned; heaven approved; and heaven bound.
5. Do you believe the Bible? Are you a member of the church?

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Many people teach that God thought of the church only after the Jews rejected Christ. How can you prove this doctrine to be false? Be complete in your answer.
2. Prove from the scriptures that there is only one church.
3. From where did a multiplicity of churches come?
4. Why is one church not as good as another?
5. What is the difference between a man-made church and the church built by Jesus?
6. When was the New Testament church built?
7. How may we know that we have found the New Testament church? How many of the identifying marks of the New Testament must a church have to be the right church? Explain your answer.
8. What will happen to those who are not members of the New Testament church?



## Lesson 2

# *The Faith Of Abraham*

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Read Hebrews 11:17-19 and Genesis 22:1-14.
2. May we strive to have the faith Abraham had. Such faith will save our souls in the day of judgment.

### DISCUSSION: THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM.

#### I. WAS BASED ON WHAT GOD SAID (22:1).

1. Bible saving faith has as its foundation revelation from God (Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Romans 1:16-17. NOTE: To live by faith is to live by divine revelation.
2. Many try to base their conduct or their faith on what God has not said. Carefully study Hebrews 7:14 and 1:4-5. On one occasion a visitor asked the teacher of a Bible class, "Teacher, why ain't you got no piano in this here church?" Before the teacher could answer, another class member said, "Cause there ain't no scripture fer it" and another chimmed in, "There you are." They may have been crude, but they understood the point of Bible faith or Bible authority. Many of us need to learn the same lesson.
  - (1) People will argue that the instrument is acceptable in Christian worship because there are no scriptures which condemn the instrument. They predicate their argument on the silence of the scriptures.
  - (2) Several years ago a brother argued with me that it was alright to have the Lord's Supper on Thursday night because there was no scripture that condemned such.
3. We must be bound by the scriptures. Our faith, our authority must be based on what the Bible says,

*not on what the Bible does not say.*

## II. WENT EXACTLY WHERE GOD SAID GO (22:2).

1. When Joshua and the children of Israel took the city of Jericho, they did so because they did precisely what God said do (Joshua 6). The same lesson is learned from Naaman (2 Kings 5). He was cleansed of his leprosy when he did expressly what God told him to do.
2. If our faith is like the faith of Abraham we will do exactly what God has said we should do. Nothing more, nothing less.
  - (1) In our worship.
  - (2) In the plan of salvation.
  - (3) In the appointment of elders.
  - (4) In all matters which pertain to life and godliness in the kingdom.

## II. DELAYED NOT. ABRAHAM ROSE UP EARLY (22:3).

1. The prophets often rose up early to do God's work. Such was an indication of their concern. The same is true of us today. If we have something important to do, we will rise up early to do it.
2. The godly woman of Matthew 28 rose up early.
3. The apostles (Acts 5:21) rose up early to preach the gospel.
4. Abraham was going to make a sacrifice to God. He was deeply concerned about his worship. He did not put off doing what God told him to do. He rose up early. Many would have put it off for days or weeks or even not have done it at all.

## IV. WAS SINGLEMINDED (22:3-10).

1. Read the passage and mark every time the word "and" is used. This is a Hebraistic form which stresses determined action. Read the passage aloud, stressing the word "and" and note how it does stress intent, decisive action.
2. 2 Timothy 2:4. A good soldier practices single-minded service.

3. Hebrews 12:1-2. This is singleminded service. We must put our mind on the goal and diligently strive for that goal. We must not look to the right or to the left lest we have our minds diverted and our service altered.
4. Matthew 6:33 stresses singleminded service. God must be first. When we have something to do for God we should be blind to the various allurements of the world that seek to turn us aside from serving the Lord.

#### V. TRUSTED IN THE PROMISES OF GOD (22:5).

1. Note Genesis 22:5 and Hebrews 11:18-19.
2. Psalm 37:3; 2 Peter 1:4.
3. Romans 4:11-12,21.
4. Abraham's faith was not nearsighted. He could see past the sacrifice to the promise of God. He believed that if he sacrificed his son, God would raise him up. He did not doubt or waver at the instruction of God.
5. Often congregations and individuals are nearsighted. They cannot see beyond the commands of God. For example, God has commanded that we withdraw from those who persist in sin. But some will refuse to obey the command to withdraw because they say it will cause others to quit the church. They look at numbers and dollars more than they look at God's commands. They look at supposed, bad consequences instead of looking at what they must do to be pleasing to God. How tragic that this is often the case.
6. We must trust God as Abraham did. Do what God says do the way he said do it. Trust God and leave the consequences in his hands. There is no other acceptable way to function.

#### VI. MANIFESTED ITSELF IN DEEDS.

1. Hebrews 11:8,17.
2. James 2:21-24.

3. Genesis 26:4-5.

4. Matthew 7:21-27; Hebrews 5:8-9.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Abraham believed God, even when God's instructions were contrary to human wisdom, reason, experience, and opinion.
2. We must have that kind of faith today if we obey and serve God.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it wrong to try to base one's faith on the silence of the scriptures?
2. What are some denominational doctrines which are based on the silence of the scriptures? What are some doctrines brethren try to establish on the silence of the scriptures?
3. Is it important that we do exactly as God instructs? Why do you so answer? Give examples of those who did or did not do so.
4. What do we mean by singleminded service?
5. How did Abraham demonstrate his trust in the promises of God? How do we demonstrate our trust in the promises of God?
6. How important is it that our faith manifest itself in deeds? What kind of faith do we have when it fails to be obedient to God's word?
7. Discuss James 2:14-26. There are three kinds of faith listed in this passage. Note and discuss each of them. Note the faith a man claims to have; the faith of devils; and, the faith of Abraham. How do they differ? Of what value is each? What kind of faith is a faith without works? Do we see any of these faiths in the world today? Please illustrate.
8. Can men today have Abrahamic faith? (See point under the conclusion.) Must men today have Abrahamic faith? Give examples of men having this kind of faith.



For example, what about the one who is baptized for the remission of sins? Is this not very contrary to human wisdom, reason, experience, and opinion? Does it not take Abrahamic faith to be baptized? Now, give other examples and make application to our daily Christian living.



## Lesson 3

### ***Why Be Baptized?***

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. There is much controversy over the subject of baptism. Perhaps no subject is more debated in the religious world than this one.
2. We must have a reason for our baptism and it must be a biblical reason (1 Peter 3:15).
3. Members of the church need to restudy this material to: (A) keep their faith and knowledge strong, and (B) help them in their constant efforts to teach others the truth of the gospel.

#### DISCUSSION: IN THIS LESSON LET US NOTICE:

(1) NEGATIVE REASONS; (2) POSITIVE REASONS; AND, (3) SOME OBJECTIONS.

#### I. NEGATIVE REASONS:

1. *Not because it is the teaching of the church.*
  - (1) A common question often heard is, "What does the church teach about baptism?" That is the wrong question. The church is not the standard of authority in such matters.
  - (2) The question should be, "What does Christ teach?" or "What does the Bible teach?"
  - (3) The scriptures are our authority for our religious practice:
    - A. Matthew 28:18.
    - B. 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
    - C. 2 Peter 1:3.
    - D. 1 Peter 4:11.
2. *Not because we perform any meritorious act to earn salvation.*
  - (1) We are saved by grace, through faith, coupled with our obedience or good works (Ephesians 2:8-10).

- (2) The plan of salvation is not based on works (Titus 3:5; Romans 4:1-5; 11:6).
- (3) Baptism is an act of faith, an act of obedience to God's word (Acts 2:38; 10:48).
3. *Not because there is power in the water.*
- (1) The doctrine of "water regeneration" is a doctrine that is false and foreign to the Bible.
- (2) There is no such thing as holy water.
- (3) There is no saving power in water:
- A. Naaman (2 Kings 5). Was the power in the Jordan river or in obeying God's word?
- B. The man born blind (John 9). Where was the power?
- C. See Luke 6:46.
- (4) We do not teach water salvation. The power is in the blood of Christ (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Revelation 1:5) and our obedience to God (Acts 10:48). We receive the remission of our sins after baptism, not before (Romans 6:3-4, 17-18).
- (5) There was no power in the brazen serpent (Numbers 21). Everyone bitten had to look upon the serpent or they would die. Suppose one said he believed, yet he refused to look upon the brazen serpent? Would he have lived or died? Was that snake salvation?
4. *Not because "baptism only" saves.*
- (1) "Faith only" (James 2:24) is a false doctrine. So is the doctrine of "baptism only."
- (2) "Repentance only" will not save. It takes all that God requires of us—not just a part here and some other part there—as it may suit the mind of man.
5. *Not because baptism will make one immune to sin.*
- (1) Some believe that after baptism one cannot sin.
- (2) Scriptures: Acts 8:13, 18-23; 1 Corinthians 9:27; James 5:19-20.

## II. POSITIVE REASONS.

### 1. *Baptism is commanded by Christ.*

(1) Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16. What better reason could there ever be? If you came up with a thousand reasons, none would be as valuable as this one.

(2) Some say baptism is optional. See Acts 10:48.

(3) We must obey. Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 7:21.

### 2. *We are saved by baptism.*

(1) 1 Peter 3:21.

(2) Acts 2:38.

### 3. *In every case of conversion after Acts 2, all were baptized.*

(1) Acts 2:41; 8:12,36-39; 18:48; 16:14-15,31-34; 18:8.

(2) One can search until he wears the ink off the pages of the Bible and he will not find an exception to the above statement.

### 4. *Every time in the New Testament where salvation or its equivalent and baptism are mentioned in the same passage, baptism always comes before salvation.*

(1) Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16.

(2) This is exactly opposite to what most people teach.

### 5. *Baptism puts one into Christ.*

(1) Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-4.

(2) It is essential that we be in Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:10; Ephesians 1:3).

### 6. *Baptism is where the blood is contacted.*

(1) Christ's blood was shed in his death (John 9:34; see Romans 6:3-4).

(2) We purge our conscience by the blood (Hebrews 9:14) and by being baptized (1 Peter 3:21).

(3) The blood was shed for our remission (Matthew 26:28) and we are baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

(4) The blood washes us from our sins (Revelation

1:5) and baptism does the same thing (Acts 22:16).

(5) Note: In these verses we have the "what" (the blood) and the "how" (baptism). They must go together.

### III. SOME OBJECTIONS:

#### 1. *The thief on the cross.*

(1) He lived under the Old Covenant (Hebrews 9:16-17). One may as well argue that Moses or David was never baptized as to argue that the thief was not.

(2) He died over a month before Jesus gave the great commission. However, one could never prove that he was not baptized under John's baptism.

#### 2. *What about the one on the way to be baptized who suddenly and accidentally was killed?*

(1) What about the bride on the way to the wedding who was suddenly killed? Did she die married to the prospective husband or did she die unmarried to him?

(2) What if Naaman had died on the way to the Jordan river? Would he have died cleansed or a leper?

(3) We need to spend our time doing what God commands instead of trying to justify disobedience.

#### 3. *What about loved ones who never were baptized?*

(1) If they knew as much as you know and were humble and God-fearing people would they have been baptized?

(2) What others have done has nothing to do with one's personal responsibility to God.

### CONCLUSION:

1. Read Exodus 12:1-28. How does the blood of the passover compare to our baptism? How did the blood save? Would you have put the blood on your house?

How does baptism save? Do not both the blood of the passover and baptism stress the power of God and our submission to and obedience to his will?

2. Have you been baptized?
3. What biblical reason can you give for not doing so?

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Can we be baptized for the wrong reason? What would be the result of such? Would our baptism in such circumstances be of any value?
2. List each of the wrong reasons for being baptized. Discuss each. Can you think of other reasons why we should not be baptized?
3. What is the most important reason why we should be baptized? Why?
4. How does one get into Christ? Why is it important to be in Christ?
5. What do we mean by the "what" and the "how" of our salvation with regard to the blood and baptism?
6. How do men try to use the thief on the cross as an objection to baptism? How would you answer this objection?
7. Can unusual circumstances justify disobedience to God's will?
8. How may we show that we have the faith that the children of Israel had when they put the blood of the lamb on their homes? Discuss several ways in which we show this today.





## Lesson 4

# **God Demands Obedience** **Matthew 7:21**

### INTRODUCTION:

#### 1. Read Titus 2:11-14.

(1) We are saved by grace (v. 11), but—

(2) It is required that we live righteously and godly (v. 12).

(3) We must be a people of good works or an obedient people (v. 14).

#### 2. Read Ephesians 2:8-10.

(1) This passage does not teach we are saved by grace alone.

(2) Like Titus 2, it shows the necessity of obedience (v. 10).

### DISCUSSION: GOD DEMANDS OBEDIENCE.

#### I. GOD DEMANDS THAT WE MUST OBEY IN ORDER TO BE SAVED.

##### 1. Read Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

(1) Note: We are to fear God. This is the beginning of knowledge.

(2) We respect God because of who he is. We love God because of what he has done for us. We fear God because of what he can do to us.

(3) The word "duty" does not belong in the text (v. 13). The "whole" of man—the summary for man's existence—is to obey God. Obedience is not a passing thing.

2. Hebrews 5:8-9. No one has ever been exempt from obeying God. Even the Son of God had to obey. See John 14:31 and Philippians 2:8.

3. Romans 6:16-18. Freedom from sin comes after obedience to the gospel (Vv. 1-4), not before.

4. These passages, plus many others which stress the

same point, surely demand that we STUDY the Bible.

(1) How can we obey that which we do not know?

(2) 2 Timothy 2:15. It is not only logical that we must study, but it is commanded that we give diligence (ASV) to know the will of God.

A. Most children of God do very little Bible study.

B. Getting our Bible lessons and reading a few verses each day do not satisfy our obligation to study.

C. How does our Bible study compare to the study we place on other things in the physical world?

(3) If we are going to obey God, we must know what God would have us to do and what he would have us not to do. We must be careful, diligent students of the word.

5. God's requirement that we be obedient to his word also demands that we practice SELF-EXAMINATION.

(1) 2 Corinthians 13:5.

A. To examine one's self by the Book means one must know what the Book teaches. This is a sobering task.

B. To "prove" means to put to a diligent test.

(2) James 1:21-25. It is of no value to look into a mirror unless one makes use of what he learns by so looking. We are to look into God's word and do as it requires (v. 25).

6. Read Colossians 3. Note that as children of God we are to set our affections on things above (v. 2). As you read the chapter make note of the things we are TO DO and the things we are NOT TO DO if we are to be pleasing to God. There are more than thirty requirements in this one chapter. Looking into this passage, and the rest of God's word, certainly will cause one to practice self-examination.

## II. GOD NOT ONLY DEMANDS THAT WE OBEY—HE DEMANDS SPECIFIC OBEDIENCE.

1. It is human nature to argue the rightness or the wrongness of a thing based on the largeness or the smallness of that thing.
  - (1) For example: The rule is no television until all homework is done. But the child argues it is all right to watch the television since almost all of the school work is done. He would never argue that it was all right to watch TV since most of his homework was not done.
  - (2) Further: Mother says no cookies before dinner. If the child disobeys there will be no desert after dinner. He eats a cookie and then is outraged when he gets no chocolate cake. He argues, "But I only ate ONE cookie."
  - (3) 1 Samuel 14:43. (Read context). Saul's son thought the punishment was too severe since he ate but a "little honey."
  - (4) How much money must one steal to be a thief?  
How many men must one kill to be a murderer?  
How much gossip must one tell to be a gossip?
2. Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:3-7). God specifically told them what to offer (Hebrews 11:4 "by faith"; Romans 10:17). Cain did not obey God's word. His action was cold, hard disobedience.
3. Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-2). They knew from where the fire was to come, but they ignored God's specific instructions. God never has and never will allow such disobedience to go unnoticed and unpunished.
4. Uzzah (2 Samuel 6:6-7). What he did may seem good. To many the situation may seem to have justified his touching the ark. But, God said, "Don't touch." He meant what he said. Because Uzzah disobeyed God's specific instruction, he was struck dead. There is never a situation that will allow one to disobey a law of God.

5. Saul (1 Samuel 15:1-23). Saul may have had, in his own mind, good reason to bring back the best of the animals. He would offer them as sacrifice. He thought he was doing something good for God. But, instead, he was disobeying God's specific command to destroy all. One of the greatest lessons in the entire Bible is found in verse 22, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." You do not do good for God when you do not do as God requires.
6. What God tells us to do is so very important. And, when he tells us more, such as how we are to do a thing, we must follow his instructions.
  - (1) The Lord's Supper. The items that make up the supper are just as important as eating the supper and when we eat.
  - (2) Baptism. It is a burial in water, for a believer, for the remission of sins.
  - (3) Worship in song. We are to sing, not play on an instrument or hum and make musical noises with our mouths.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. God demands obedience.
2. God demands specific obedience when the specifics are given.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the relationship of grace, faith, and works (obedience). Look at James 2:14-26.
2. How does (1) Bible study and (2) self-examination relate to the fact that we must obey God in order to be saved?
3. What are some ways to improve our Bible study? What are some ways we can practice self-examination on a daily basis?
4. Have you ever argued something was right because it was only a little wrong? Be specific and give an example.
5. What do you mean by specific obedience? Discuss several examples of men in the Bible who obeyed God's specific commands.

## Lesson 5

### ***False Standards Of Authority*** ***Jeremiah 44:1-25***

#### INTRODUCTION:

##### 1. Read Jeremiah 44:1-10. Note:

- (1) God had brought tremendous evil upon Jerusalem because the people had served idols (Vv. 2-3).
- (2) God had sent warnings, but the people did not listen (v. 4).
- (3) What they did was so stupid (Vv. 6-8).
- (4) Could they not remember the past? You just can't warn some people (Vv. 9-10).

##### 2. Read Jeremiah 44:11-14. Note:

- (1) They thought they were running from the sword, famine and pestilence, but actually were running to the same.
- (2) Safety was not in Egypt but rather safety was in serving God.

##### 3. Read Jeremiah 44:15. Note:

- (1) The men and women stood to argue with Jeremiah. They did not accept his preaching that it was wrong to serve idols.
- (2) From the entire text it seems that the women were the main ones who argued with Jeremiah.

##### 4. They gave several reasons why they believed it was right to worship idols. They gave forth false standards of authority for their religious practice.

##### 5. Please note, as this lesson develops, that the standards for authority which the people gave to Jeremiah are false standards of authority which many give today to justify their false religious practices.

**DISCUSSION: THERE ARE WRONG AND THERE ARE  
RIGHT STANDARDS OF AUTHORITY.**

## I. THE FALSE STANDARDS OF AUTHORITY OF JEREMIAH 44.

### 1. We want to do it (v. 16).

- (1) They said, "We will not harken to thee."
- (2) They understood that Jeremiah came to them "in the name of the Lord" (or by the Lord's authority, Acts 4:7. "In the name of" in Acts 2:38 means "by the authority of"). Still they refused to hear him. A powerful standard of authority that will just about justify anything is "we are doing what we want to do."
- (3) Millions today practice religious error because they are doing what they want to do (e.g., mechanical, instrumental music).

### 2. It has been done a long time.

- (1) "We, and our fathers" (v. 17).
- (2) To have done a thing a long time does not make it right or wrong.
- (3) Yet, religious people, even members of the church, will argue the correctness of an action on the fact that such has been done a long time.

### 3. Important people have done this thing.

- (1) "Our kings, and our princes" (v. 17).
- (2) No man can ever be the authority for a religious practice.
- (3) How often are we guilty of calling some brother's name, a religious paper, or some man's writing as proof that some certain doctrine or practice is acceptable to God?

### 4. Many people (large numbers) have done it.

- (1) "In the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem (v. 17).
- (2) In the Bible, the majority has always been wrong.
- (3) We are not to follow the multitude to do evil (Exodus 23:2).
- (4) It is amazing how people find comfort in large

numbers. It is always the case that those who practice some form of error are quick and powerful to stress large numbers who agree with them. (Crossroads was this way. Boston is this way. So are the Pentecostals.)

5. Things went well when we did it.

(1) "Had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil" (Vv. 17-18).

(2) Just because one prospers does not mean he is right in the sight of God. Some of the most evil men who have ever lived also have been some of the most physically blessed.

6. We were told we could do it.

(1) "Without our men" (v. 19).

(2) Their husbands told them they could do it, but where in all the world did their husbands get the authority to do such a thing?

(3) A woman said she could lead prayer in the assembly because the elders told her she could. But no eldership has the authority to authorize any such thing because it is a violation of God's word (1 Timothy 2:8-12).

7. Our duty demanded it.

(1) "We will surely perform our vows" (v. 25).

(2) They had vowed to worship idols, thus they had to keep their vows, thus it was their duty to worship idols.

(3) Men often justify the practice of error as the doing of a duty.

(4) Men reasoned the gospel needed to be preached around the world. They started the missionary society.

(5) Men reasoned they needed to improve the quality of their singing, so they added the mechanical instrument.

(6) Men reasoned that children were not getting much out of the worship, so they started "children's church."

(7) Men have seen the need for elders and when none were properly qualified, they appointed elders anyway.

(8) Great numbers of things wrong in religion have been started out of some supposed duty to do better for God.

## II. THERE IS A RIGHT STANDARD OF AUTHORITY (1 Peter 4:11).

We must speak as the oracles of God because:

1. God commanded it.

2. God is true (Romans 3:4).

3. God's word is true (John 17:17).

4. God's word is complete and sufficient (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

5. We all must walk by the same rule (Philippians 3:16).

6. We have the obligation to prove all things (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

(1) There is a standard of authority, the Bible. Just as there is a standard of authority in weight (the scale), in length (the ruler), there is a religious standard.

(2) That standard can be known (Ephesians 5:17; Colossians 1:9).

(3) It is possible and necessary to follow that standard (Romans 16:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6).

7. God's word is the power to save (Romans 1:16).

8. God's word will last forever (Matthew 24:35).

9. God's word will judge us (John 12:48)

## III. IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE, WE SHOULD:

1. Love the truth (Psalm 119:97).

2. Buy the truth and sell it not—it is valuable (Proverbs 23:23).

3. Know the truth (John 8:32). In keeping with this we should:

(1) Read (Revelation 1:3).

(2) Search (Acts 17:11).



- (3) Study (2 Timothy 2:15).
- (4) Contend for (Jude 3).
- (5) Preach (Mark 16:16).
- (6) Live (Revelation 2:10).

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Men must be careful and not follow false standards of truth.
2. We must follow the one standard, God's word.
3. We must speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where it is silent.
4. We must always have a "Thus saith the Lord" for all we do in religion.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What was the background to Jeremiah's sermon in Jeremiah 44?
2. How do men violate each of the false standards given in the lesson? Illustrate by false standards in the denominational world and within the church.
3. What do we mean by "standard of authority"?
4. Discuss various standards of authority, such as scales and ruler. How do men agree on the weight of a thing or the length of a thing?
5. How can men agree on points of religious doctrine?
6. How can one know if he is following or not following the Bible?
7. Discuss the importance of John 12:48 and 2 Corinthians 13:5.
8. What is the significance of "in the name of"? How does this relate to our daily living for the Lord?



## Lesson 6

### ***Religious But Wrong***

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. By nature, man is a religious being. He may worship nature, some form of plant or animal life, other humans, or some spirit. Some even worship Satan! Few men have ever lived that did not worship something.
2. There are three words that generally are used to discuss one's spiritual condition. One is, "religious," a second is "honest," and a third is "sincere." Among most men there is the idea that if a person is religious he is a good man. Further, it is usually conceded that if a person is sincere in his religion his religion is acceptable. Again, it is generally suggested that if a person is honest in his religion, he is a fine and upstanding religious person. Much value is placed on being religious, honest, and sincere.
3. We would not cast any negative thoughts against being religious, honest, and sincere. Certainly all of these are good qualities. I know of no one who would rather have a hypocrite for a friend instead of an honest person. But, just because one is religious does not mean he is in a right relationship with God. Just because one is honest and sincere in his religion does not mean that his religion is acceptable to God. There has to be more to one's faith than being honest and sincere.
4. In Matthew 15:8-9 we see people who were religious but wrong.
5. Paul was a most religious man, but at one time was very wrong when he persecuted the church of Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:15).
6. The idea that you can't be wrong if you are religious is a wrong idea. There are many ways to be religious, yet

wrong with God.

**DISCUSSION: ONE MAY BE RELIGIOUS BUT WRONG BY:**

**I. WORSHIPPING THE WRONG GOD.**

**1. Idolatry is clearly forbidden (Exodus 20:2-6).**

(1) Still the Jews continually worshipped idols. Their history is one of idol worship. Think of the book of Judges for example. They would turn from serving God to worshipping idols. God would punish them. They would cry for deliverance. God would deliver them. They would serve Jehovah for a time and then turn back to serving idols.

(2) They practiced idolatry until they finally were taken away into Assyrian and Babylonian captivity. It was only the small remnant that returned to Jerusalem, after Babylonian captivity, that the people served the Lord God Jehovah and did not return to idols.

(3) They were religious, but they were wrong.

**2. Religion means "manifesting devotion to or influenced by, belonging to, devotion."**

(1) We have our own gods of idolatry. (See Colossians 3:5b).

(2) How many worship (are devoted to, belong to) jobs, pleasure, hobbies, money, self, family, and such like?

**3. The people of Athens were religious but wrong (Acts 17:22).**

**4. The worshippers of Baal were very sincere but wrong. Read and carefully note the story in 1 Kings 18:20-40. They were so certain that their god would answer their prayers that they cut themselves until the blood gushed forth. No one doubts their honesty, devotion, and sincerity, but they were as wrong as the devil himself. One person, or a nation, may be very devout, but very wrong, because they worship the wrong god.**

## II. WORSHIPPING THE TRUE GOD IN THE WRONG WAY.

1. This generally is done by adding to or subtracting from the word of God. See 1 Peter 4:11; Revelation 22:18-19; Proverbs 30:6; and Deuteronomy 4:2.
2. Cain is a classic example of subtracting from God's word. Read Genesis 4:1-16 and Hebrews 11:4. Cain and Abel came to worship God because he told them to do so. "By faith" means in accord with instruction given. See Romans 10:17. Where there is faith, there must be instruction from God. Cain did wrong and Abel did right. One obeyed God. The other did not obey God. Abel brought "gifts." God must have required more than one. Cain brought one single gift. He did not do as God instructed. He subtracted from the word of God and his worship was rejected. He was religious but he was wrong because he worshipped in the wrong way.
3. Nadab and Abihu show us how God reacts when men add to his word. Read Leviticus 10:1-6. The "strange" fire these men offered was fire which did not have its authority from God's word.
4. Jesus condemned the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:8-9).
5. One can be religious and wrong because he worships the right God in the wrong way.

## III. WORSHIPPING GOD, BUT NEVER OBEYING THE GOSPEL.

1. Cornelius was a devout man but when Christianity came into existence there was something more he needed to do. See Acts 10:2-6, 48. He could no longer be a devout man and worship God under an obsolete system. He had to obey the gospel.
2. The man of Ethiopia was a very religious, honest, sincere, and devout man, but his religion needed to make a change. He worshipped God, but he had not obeyed the gospel (Acts 8:26-39). When he was baptized he became a new creature (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:3-4) and went on his way rejoicing.

3. There are many religious people, whose religion is not according to knowledge, and they are wrong (Romans 10:1-3). They need to learn the truth and obey the gospel (Romans 10:16). This is the state of denominationalism.
4. Saul of Tarsus needed to obey the gospel (Acts 22:1-16).
5. The devout men of Acts 2, on Pentecost Sunday, needed to obey the gospel (Acts 2:1-41).
6. No man can correctly worship God until he obeys the gospel. He may be very religious and very sincere, but he also is wrong until he obeys the gospel and puts on Jesus Christ.

#### IV. BEING A TRUE WORSHIPPER, YET NOT LIVING A FAITHFUL LIFE.

1. It is not enough to obey the gospel and become a child of God. One must be faithful (1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Corinthians 13:5).
2. Ananias and Sapphira were members of the church but they lost their souls because they sinned (Acts 5:1-11).
3. Simon had obeyed the gospel but he sinned and stood in jeopardy of losing his soul. He fell to temptation (Acts 8:9-24).
4. Some in Corinth were carnal minded (1 Corinthians 3:1-3), and some were immoral (1 Corinthians 5:1ff).
5. Some in Galatia had fallen from grace (Galatians 5:4). They had moved away from the gospel (Galatians 1:6-9).
6. Brethren can sin and be lost (James 5:19-20). Children of God must be faithful to the doctrine (2 John 9-11). Note the churches of Asia in Revelation chapters two and three. Man must be faithful, even if such costs him his life (Revelation 2:10).
7. How many today have ceased to walk with Christ (Ephesians 4:1)? A majority of those who obey the

gospel sooner or later fall away and no longer live as they should. They do not have their hope and affections set on heaven as they should (Colossians 3:1-2), and, as a consequence, they fall away from the truth and lose their souls.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. It is very possible for one to be an honest, sincere, religious sinner. Most religious people are wrong and are not accepted of God.
2. The beautiful point is that it is possible to be religious and right. One can worship the right God in the right way and, being faithful to God, can be saved in heaven for eternity.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Why is it not enough to be sincere and honest in religion? Name some who were honest and sincere but were wrong. Do we have people today who are guilty of this? Give examples.
2. What is wrong with idolatry? How may men be guilty of idolatry today? How is idolatry in America usually different from the idolatry practiced in other countries?
3. Look up the word "strange" in a good Bible concordance. Note how it is used in Leviticus 10 and in many other places in the Old Testament. What is the significance of its usage?
4. What happens to one's relationship to God when he obeys the gospel? Discuss putting on Christ, being in Christ, becoming a new creature, and walking in newness of life. Give scripture for each of these.
5. Can a child of God fall from grace? Give scripture.
6. What must we do when we fall away from the truth? What is involved in repenting of error? How did Simon receive forgiveness of his sin? How often can one repent of sin and pray for forgiveness?
7. What qualities must we have to go with being honest and sincere?





## Lesson 7

# “Take Ye Away The Stone”

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Sympathizing friends, brokenhearted sisters, and the weeping Saviour stand around the silent grave and Jesus says—
2. John 11:39.

### DISCUSSION: Let us note:

#### I. GOD REQUIRES MAN'S COOPERATION AS THE CONDITION OF THE BESTOWING OF HIS BLESSINGS.

##### 1. Israel at the Red Sea.

(1) Egyptians pursuing—mountains on each hand—raging sea in front;

(2) God spoke to Moses.

(3) What *if* Moses had said:

A. “I don’t understand the voice I hear.”

B. “The act commanded has no meaning and thus cannot be from Jehovah.”

C. “I shall *wait* for a command in keeping with his almighty mind.”

(4) What would Egypt have been doing?

(5) What would have happened to the people of Israel?

(6) Would they have mounted the opposite shore and sung the song of victory or would they have been slaughtered at the hand of the Egyptian army?

##### 2. Israel encamped at Gilgal.

(1) Land was occupied by enemies.

(2) Jericho (5 miles west of Jordan) was an extremely well fortified city. It easily could be seen in the distance.

(3) Here with its walls 32 feet high and 11-12 feet

thick lay the first obstacle and scene of conflict.

(4) God said, "March around the walls and they will come tumbling down."

(5) Now, can you, in your eye of historical imagination, see them marching silently around those tremendous walls?

(6) No weapons, no display, SIMPLY OBEYING GOD!

(7) Can you hear the soldiers on top of the walls hurl their sarcastic remarks and laugh those methodical, marching Jews to scorn?

(8) The man who is honestly obeying God can well afford to bear a laugh or a cry of scorn for he is marching toward certain victory and nothing under the silent stars of heaven can do him any lasting damage.

(9) On that 7th day, after all the circuits had been completed and all of God's instructions had been carried out, after the walls came tumbling down—how speedily the laugh of scorn must have changed to wailing and weeping—how quickly the countenance of those of Jericho must have fallen!!

(10) God's grace and man doing his God-given duty are never very far from each other.

3. "Go wash in the pool of Siloam" (John 9:7)

(1) Simple.

(2) Easy.

4. "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a drought" (Luke 5:3-9; note verse 4).

5. John 8:24; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 8:22; 1 John 1:9.

6. All of these stress the point that God's grace has always been attached to man's responsibility to obey God. Man must cooperate with God to receive his blessings.

## II. STONES THAT GOD'S PEOPLE TODAY NEED TO TAKE AWAY.

1. The stone of inconsistency.

(1) Our lives are not in keeping with our profession. We sin, but we do not call it sin. We want sin without guilt. We call it an *infirmity*, something to be *pitied*, *unfortunate*, BUT NOT GUILT. We want sin without guilt. We don't want to have to change very much. The drunkard wants a church that does not condemn drinking. The adulterer; the gossip, and such like.

(2) James 4:4, 7-10.

(3) 1 John 2:15-16.

(4) Matthew 23:1-3.

2. The stone of indifference.

(1) With respect to the unconverted world.

(2) Mark 13:10.

(4) Matthew 28:19-20.

(4) Romans 1:14.

(5) Romans 10:1-2.

3. The stone of ignorance.

(1) We are not a people of the Book as we once were!

(2) Amos 8:11-13: "Famine in the land."

A. Does not mean that God would withhold his word! That is a surface interpretation.

B. Man becomes so hardened—refuses to discern and accept God's word.

C. Thus; No *message* for man to believe; no *word* to take hold of his life; no *authority* to command him. *That is famine in the land!!*

D. God's people had substituted the *creature* for the *Creator*. They had gone after the calves of Dan. Anytime we fail to put God first we have done the same and there will be no *voice*, no *virtue*, no *vision*, or *victory*—*a famine in the land—this is what we have in the church today!*

E. The *sealing* of the Bible always follows failing to put God first. *Famine and death are sure*

*to follow.*

F. If we could rid ourselves of our idols, the famine would be over and *the word of God would be living in us again.*

G. Our *lack of concern* for God's word is seen in our various forms of apostasy. It is seen in the fact that most members of the church do not possess the Bible knowledge they possessed a generation ago. There truly is a famine in the land.

H. We need to roll away this stone of ignorance and idolatry.

4. The stone of inactivity.

(1) James 1:21-22, 25.

(2) Matthew 7:21.

(3) What if I serve God and do not do it out of love? How can I know I am serving out of love?

(4) First, if an individual cannot judge his own motives—*no one else can!*

(5) Second, look at the Bible.

(6) We are commanded to serve God out of *fear!*  
Read these verses:

A. Ecclesiastes 12:13.

B. Luke 1:50.

C. Psalm 103:11.

D. Joshua 24:14.

E. Romans 19:9.

F. Revelation 2:10.

G. Psalm 112:1.

H. Acts 9:31.

I. Psalm 2:11.

J. Deuteronomy 6:13.

(7) 1 John 5:2-3: Fear, obey, love. That is the Bible formula.

(8) But what about 1 Corinthians 13:1-3?

A. Look at the context. They were in the midst of a discussion of the use of spiritual gifts where the gifts were used for *personal gain!*

They were concerned about self.

B. Paul said if he did these things outside the *sphere of obedience to God*, it would profit him nothing. *Why??* Not doing it out of fear, obedience, and thus love, but rather for personal gain. Thus, he condemned the conduct of the Corinthians.

(9) When we obey God and do what he has said, simply because he said do it, we are well on the road of Christian service.

#### 5. The stone of individualism.

(1) By this I mean the attitude of self-centeredness.

(2) We see too much of this attitude. The attitude that the church owes me something.

(3) Perhaps it comes from an attitude in the world that society and government owe us.

(4) Why do you think we have so many youth directors? We want our young people catered to.

A. We always hear, "They don't do enough for our young people." People who try to help often are criticized.

B. Men try to thrust the responsibility of rearing children on the church.

C. The church may well complement what the parents do, but cannot replace the parents.

(5) Why do you think one of the most popular items in the church today is a gymnasium? We want ourselves catered to. We want to gratify self.

(6) What do you think gives such fuel for fussing and complaining in the church?

A. "I was thus and so and the church did not do such and such for me."

B. "I did thus and so and the church did not respond with this and that."

C. People constantly cry that they expect to be served and when they *do not get petted and pampered* they complain—*boy do they*

*complaint!*

D. Christ came not to be ministered to but to minister and give his life as a ransom for many. We have not learned that lesson.

E. Far too many are in the church to be ministered to and when they are not, they create chaos! They especially try to cause trouble for the preacher and the elders.

(7) This individualism concept, which demands that everyone be catered to, is why we have the *Singles Ministry*, the *Singles Again Ministry*, the *Senior Citizen's Ministry*, the *Young Couple's Ministry* and a host of other self-serving, group serving "ministries." We are making a social club out of the church!

6. The stone of inflammation.

(1) Have you ever had inflammation of the shoulder, elbow, knee?

(2) I'm talking about that which causes such a storm in the church that it makes hurricanes, typhoons, and tornadoes look like calm spring rains.

(3) James 3:13-4:1.

(4) Some people always have a cloud of contention around them. They cannot go very long without creating a fuss. Have you ever heard, "Everywhere he goes, they have a fuss?"

(5) Some brethren have a chip on their shoulder, a temper and a quick trigger. They are a first class church fuss just waiting on someplace to happen.

(6) We need to learn to be *kind, easily entreated*, and able to get along with brethren.

(7) Colossians 3:12-15.

(8) Ephesians 4:25-32.

(9) It is sad when brethren depart from the faith and we have to stand against them.

(10) It is enough when we have to stand against

false brethren.

- (11) It is the grief of heaven and the glory of hell when brethren who stay with the truth cannot live together in peace!!

7. The stone of insubordination.

- (1) By insubordination I have in mind those who have no respect for God's authority or respect for *how* God authorizes.
- (2) It has gotten to where you can show a brother something in the *Book* and he *could not care less* about what God says.
- (3) For decades we have bemoaned the fact that denominationalists were this way. An example is Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38. They deny the scriptures.
- (4) But now we have the same problem with brethren: 1 Timothy 2:8; 2:12; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians 14:23; Acts 20:7; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 13:17.
- (5) Today, you ask brethren where their authority is for a practice and they look at you in a most puzzled fashion.
- (6) Where is the authority for many of the innovations in the church today? Who cares? Many do not.
- (7) For many brethren, the authority to begin a new practice is:
- A. Is it successful?
  - B. Will it draw a crowd?
  - C. Will it make folks feel good and happy?
  - D. Will it keep kid's attention?
  - E. Will it get many responses?
  - F. Do we like to do it?
- (8) To ask for book, chapter, and verse authority insults many brethren!
- (9) This is the attitude that gives birth to vast numbers of church problems. When men ask for Bible authority, some look upon them as

troublemakers and church dividers. Can you believe it? Yes, when respect for God's word is abandoned the door is opened for every problem that hell can provide.

(10) God's word authorizes by:

- A. Direct statement (8 in the Greek).
- B. Example (must be a background command).
- C. Inference.

(11) But brethren want to add their own ideas.

(12) Read Matthew 15:7-9; 1 Corinthians 4:6 (ASV); 1 Peter 4:11.

(13) God has total authority to command us. We want God. We want to believe in God. But we do not want a God of the throne: A God who has the power to command, the strength, the mind, and the passion of man. Man wants a God made in his image. A God that accepts man as he is. Man wants some sickly, sentimental God that bends with every whim and passion of man. A God that will accept everything that man does without ever considering the idea of sin and disobedience. We don't want to change—we want God to change for us!

(14) We need to learn to ask for and accept *Bible authority*. Anything short or long of *that* is sin!

#### CONCLUSION:

1. God does for us what we cannot do for ourselves.
2. But, he wants *us* to take away the stones by doing our everyday duty and obeying his word.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. Explain the relationship between God's grace and man's obedience.
2. Why does God require action on the part of man?
3. Please give the Bible references of Israel at the Red Sea and Israel encamped at Gilgal. What do we learn from these two Old Testament accounts?



4. What would have happened to the walls of Jericho if one of God's instructions had been omitted? How does this relate to us today?
5. Why and how is the church experiencing a famine in the land regarding Bible knowledge? What can we do to improve the situation?
6. How can we serve God out of fear and love at the same time?
7. How does the concern for self cause problems in the church?
8. How can we help keep down church fusses? What about 1 Peter 4:8?
9. How important is it that we have Bible authority for all of our religious practices?



## Lesson 8

### *Respect*

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. Respect is, "Honor manifested toward the worthy."
2. The Bible has a lot to say about respect. Let us learn this lesson well so that we may live closer to God.

#### DISCUSSION: THE BIBLE TEACHES:

##### I. GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS.

1. Acts 10:34-35. We should respect gospel preachers and others in the church, but such a demonstration as shown here and as seen in much of the religious world is wrong. We do not give special titles to preachers nor do we show special submission and servitude to men in the church.
2. 1 Samuel 16:7.
3. James 2:1-9. It is a flagrant sin to show respect of persons in the kingdom. Some show respect with regard to social standing, economic standing, education, racial background, and other such standards. We must not do this. (Study this passage carefully. Note verses 1 and 9.)

##### II. WE MUST RESPECT GOD.

1. Isaiah 17:7-8; 25:1. There is no place in all this world for our addressing God as "Hi dad" or saying "I know a guy." This is blasphemy from the very beginning.
2. Psalm 72:17-19.
3. We must respect God because of who he is; love him because of what he has done for us; and fear him because of what he can do to us (cast us into hell).

##### III. WE MUST RESPECT GOD'S WORD.

1. Psalm 119:6; 1 Timothy 2:15.

2. Psalm 119:11-16, 71-72, 93 (cf., 1 Peter 1:23, 25), 105, 160, 161-168, 169-176.

(1) Psalm 119 is an interesting and beautiful Psalm.

(2) It is in acrostic form. The first eight verses each begin with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The second eight begin with the second letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The third eight begin with the third letter, etc. There are twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet, thus the total number of verses in this Psalm are 176.

(3) The theme is "the word of God." Verse 161 is most emphatic in showing the proper attitude we should have toward God's inspired word.

3. Respect certainly requires that we study, know, and obey God's word (John 8:32; 1 John 2:3; 5:3).

#### IV. WE MUST RESPECT CIVIL RULERS.

1. Ecclesiastes 10:20.

2. Romans 13:17; 1 Peter 2:13, 17.

3. We must obey laws which are not contrary to God's laws (Acts 5:29).

4. There is no place for the railing, the rebellion, and riots which occur in this country.

5. It is wrong for men to disrespect the flag and make fun of the National Anthem.

6. The president should not be made fun of and joked about.

7. Much of the conduct we see today with regard to our civil rulers is contrary to the teaching of the scriptures.

#### V. WE MUST RESPECT RELIGIOUS LEADERS.

1. This is different from the idea suggested in Acts 10:34-35.

2. Philipians 2:19-30. Respect led the brethren to take care of Paul's needs.

3. 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:7, 17.

4. Acts 23:3-5.

5. 2 Kings 2:23-24. It is a serious sin to make fun of God's servants. Study Numbers 16. The people spoke against God's appointed leaders and God destroyed thousands of the Israelites because of this terrible sin. When we are inclined to speak evil of God's leaders, especially elders and preachers, we need to read Numbers 16 and take special hold of our tongue. It is no small thing to ridicule and mock men who are doing as God has instructed them to do. It is often the case that elders and preachers are spoken against today in much stronger language than were God's leaders in Numbers 16. How can men expect such to pass the judgment eye of God?

#### VI. WE MUST RESPECT THE ELDERLY.

1. Leviticus 19:32. There was a time the younger arose when an elderly person entered the room. We do not see such respect shown today.
2. Proverbs 23:22; 1 Timothy 5:1. This does not mean when one becomes older that he is beyond teaching or correction (1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 2:15).
3. Just because one is old does not mean he is stupid.
4. Let us never make the mistake of putting the elderly on the shelf. There is much they can contribute if we will let them do so.
5. 1 Timothy 5:8. We have a serious obligation to take care of our own, especially the elderly, when they can no longer care for themselves. It is a serious sin to fail to care for our families.

#### VII. WE MUST RESPECT OUR PARENTS.

1. Exodus 20:12; Proverbs 30:17.
2. Matthew 15:4; Ephesians 6:1-2; Colossians 3:20.
3. 1 Timothy 5:4, 8.
4. Mark 7:9-13.
5. Joseph (Genesis 47:12); Jesus (Luke 2:51; John 19:25-27).

## VIII. WE MUST RESPECT ONE ANOTHER.

1. Romans 12:10; Philipplians 2:2-4.
2. 1 Peter 2:17; 4:8.
3. Matthew 7:12. We must respect the person, his property, his name, and all that pertains to him.
4. Luke 10:30-37.

### CONCLUSION:

1. The subject of respect is a very serious one. We can lose our souls if we violate God's word in this matter.
2. We must work hard at showing proper respect. There is much temptation toward all, but especially our young people, to cause them to disrespect civil authorities, the elderly, parents, and the Bible.

### QUESTIONS:

1. How are we to understand that "God is no respecter of persons?"
2. How can we show disrespect toward God by the way we address him or the way we make reference to him?
3. Note the attitude the people had toward the word of God in Nehemiah 8:5. How do we show disrespect for his word in our worship? How do we show disrespect in other ways?
4. How do we show respect for civil rulers?
5. Is it wrong to respect religious leaders? Give scriptures that show we must manifest respect for them. How does your answer harmonize with Acts 10:34?
6. How do people fail to show respect to the elderly?
7. How do children fail to show respect to parents?
8. How can we show and fail to show respect to one another?

## Lesson 9

# *The Problems Of Malachi*

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Nehemiah 13:6—the 32nd year of Artaxerxes.
- 2 This was after the three returns. (1) First, in 536 under Zerubbabel; (2) Second, in 520 with Haggai and Zechariah; (3) Third, in 458 with Ezra.
3. When Malachi returned to Jerusalem he found tremendous problems which existed among the priests and thus among the people.
4. The problems with which Malachi was confronted are much the same as are many of the problems we face in the church today.
5. The problems of Malachi are so up to date with many of the problems in the church today that one might think Malachi was writing about the church in the twentieth century and not the problems in Jerusalem five centuries before Christ.
6. Let us carefully note the problems Malachi dealt with and make the proper application to our religious lives.

### DISCUSSION: THE PROBLEMS OF MALACHI.

#### I. THEY DESPISED THE NAME AND THE SERVICE OF JEHOVAH (1:6-7).

1. To these people the services of the Lord were contemptible (v. 7). There was nothing about worship that they enjoyed.
2. Their attitude was—we have come to the place of worship. Now let's hurry up and get this thing over and go home. (How much is this like many of us today?)
3. They showed they despised God's name by what they:
  - (1) Said (v. 13). It was a "weariness" for them to worship God.

(2) Did (v. 7). They offered polluted bread as sacrifice.

## II. THEY OFFERED INFERIOR SACRIFICE TO GOD (v. 8).

1. They would not offer the lame or the sick to the governor. They would be too ashamed to do such a thing. They also knew that the governor would not accept such an evil gift.
2. Yet, they offered suchlike to Jehovah God and expected him to be pleased with such disgrace in sacrifice!
3. Read Romans 12:1. We must always offer to God our best. The philosophy of offering God the leftovers or our second best is the doctrine of the devil, designed to cause us to lose our souls. God would not accept second best in Malachi's time, and neither will he do so today.
4. Read 1:10. Our worship, our Christian living must be our best or God will not accept it.

## III. THEY DID NOT REVERENCE GOD'S NAME (2:3-5).

1. We must be careful not to use God's name flippantly or in some irreverent manner.
2. Exodus 20:7.
3. Read Nehemiah 8:1-8. Note the attitude the people had for the word of God. See verses 5 and 6.
4. Note how plain the speech is in 2:3. If they did not reverence God's name, then their food at their solemn feast was nothing more than human refuse or dung.

## IV. THEY CAUSED MANY TO STUMBLE AT THE LAW (2:8).

1. They caused the people to stumble by what they did and what they taught. See 3:7.
2. See Ezra 7:10; 2 Timothy 2:2; and James 3:1. The Bible is filled with warnings to the teacher to be careful with what he teaches and how he teaches. It is a fearful thing to cause one to stumble. See Mark 9:42.



V. THEY SHOWED RESPECT OF PERSONS (2:9).

1. Study carefully James 2:1-9.
2. We often show respect of persons with regard to:
  - (1) Education;
  - (2) Financial standing;
  - (3) *Social influence*; and
  - (4) Racial.
3. Illustrations:
  - (1) We will overlook the sin of a man who gives \$100.00 a week, but withdraw fellowship from one who commits the same sin and only gives \$10.00 a week.
  - (2) We will appoint a successful business man to the eldership who is not fully qualified on the grounds of his social success and recognition.

VI. THEY HAD PUT AWAY THEIR WIVES AND MARRIED FOREIGN WOMEN (2:13-16).

1. God had made them one (v. 15), yet they put away their wives.
2. God hates putting away (v. 16).
3. It is no different today. God's law is one man for one wife for life. He hates putting away (Matthew 19:4-6).
4. There is only one Bible reason for divorce (Matthew 19:9).
5. Think of all the sin and suffering that exists in the world today because men and women put their mates away without a just cause.

VII. THEY PRAISED AND SUPPORTED THOSE IN ERROR (2:17).

1. This wearied the Lord. He has no pleasure in unrighteousness (Psalm 5:4). God hates every false way and so must we!
2. Today we have trouble getting some brethren to recognize that there is such a thing as false teachers. Brethren continually want to fellowship and speak good of those who teach soul-damning,

church-dividing false doctrine.

3. To encourage or support the false teacher is sin. It will cause one to lose his fellowship with God (2 John 9-11).
4. We must recognize the false teachers, correct them if we can, and mark and refuse them if they refuse to change (Romans 16:17-18).
5. See Titus 1:9-16.

#### VIII. THEY HAD ROBBED GOD (3:8-10).

1. They had robbed God in tithes and offerings. They had not given as they should have.
2. We must give as we have prospered (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). To fail to do so is to rob God.
3. Study 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 (note, first gave themselves); 8:7; 9:6-8.
4. If the people would give to God as they should, then he would shower them with bountiful blessings (Malachi 3:10).
5. The same is true with us today (2 Corinthians 8:14-15; 9:8-11).

#### IX. THEY SPOKE AGAINST GOD (3:13-14).

1. They served God for profit and when something did not go right for them they blamed God and said it was no profit to be a servant of the Lord.
2. See Job 1:9. The devil wants us to serve God on this "profit" basis. Then if we lose a loved one, have health problems, or encounter some other problems he tries to get us to forsake God on the idea that we are not being rewarded for serving God.
3. The devil wants us to blame God when things go wrong.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Note that in each of these problems the priests argued with God.
2. We must recognize the possibility of each of these problems of Malachi becoming problems for us today and avoid them with all of our being.

## QUESTIONS:

1. How can we despise the name and the service of God today?
2. How important is it that we offer God our best? Please give Bible illustrations of those who did and those who did not.
3. How do men take the Lord's name in vain today? Give examples.
4. What is God's attitude toward those who cause others to stumble? How does example of life have anything to do with this?
5. Discuss the difficulty of correcting error that one has taught by mouth and the printed page. Error that one taught on the printed page 100 years ago could still be causing some to stumble today!
6. What can be done to cause people to take marriage more seriously? What are some of the problems that divorce causes in the home, the church, and society?
7. What are some of the problems caused by brethren overlooking the false teachers we have among us? Discuss departures which have come about because we have not properly dealt with the situation. What role and responsibility do elders have with regard to false teachers? See Titus 1:9-11 and other passages such as 1 Peter 5:1-3.
8. How should we give to God today? Is the manner and the amount of our giving important? What if we lie about our giving (Acts 5:1-11)? How can we be guilty of lying about our giving?
9. How should the faithful child of God look upon problems and sufferings which he experiences in this life? What will it take for him to grow closer to God instead of blaming God and turning his back on the Lord?



## Lesson 10

# ***The Character Of A Soldier Of Christ 2 Timothy Chapter 2***

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Members of the Lord's church are soldiers in the Lord's army (Phillipians 2:25; 2 Timothy 2:3-4).
2. As soldiers, there are certain characteristics that God demands.
3. In 2 Timothy chapter 2 there are several such characteristics given.

### DISCUSSION: IN THIS CHAPTER WE LEARN THAT A SOLDIER OF CHRIST IS:

#### I. STRONG.

1. "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (v. 1).
2. See 1 Kings 2:2-3; 1 Corinthians 16:13; Ephesians 6:10.
3. It takes strength to be the king of a nation, and it takes tremendous strength to be a Christian.
4. Think of the strength (the faith) it took for Gideon (Judges chapters 6-7) to reduce his army from 32,000 to only 300 and with that small number face a "multitude" of the enemy.
5. It takes strength to stand for the right and against the wrong. Our young people show tremendous strength when they stand against all the evils that seek to ensnare them in today's sinsick world.
6. It takes strength to stand for the doctrine of Christ, not going beyond or falling short of his teachings.
7. Preachers must be strong to preach the word (2 Timothy 4:1-4).
8. Elders must be strong men (Titus 1:9-11).
9. The soldier must be strong in the word (v. 2).

- (1) Note: Men are to:
  - A. Learn the word;
  - B. Be faithful to the word; and
  - C. Teach the word.
- (2) This is precisely what we read in Ezra 7:10. Ezra had prepared his heart to learn, live, and teach the law of God.
- (3) As faithful soldiers we must likewise do the same.

## II. SINGLE MINDED

1. "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life" (Vv. 3-4).
2. We must be people who have our priorities in proper order. We must learn to put first things first (Matthew 6:24,33).
3. There never will be the occasion or the circumstance when it will be right to put spiritual things in second place.
4. If we are going to be the kind of soldiers we must be, we will have to learn the lesson of single minded service. Some become so busy in the affairs of everyday life they do not have time to study the Bible, attend the worship services, or do the great number of other things that the Lord requires of them.
5. No man ever truly excelled at anything worthwhile unless he put forth a lot of energy and devotion to that thing.
6. Illustration: Years ago a famous shooter, a gunman for the Winchester gun company, set a new record for shooting one and one-quarter inch square blocks of wood with a 22 rifle as the blocks were thrown into the air. The shooting would stop when he missed his third block. He hit nearly 30,000 before he missed the first one. The next miss came around the 55,000 mark, and the third miss came after he had broken over 76,000 wooden blocks.

Oh, yes, because of the weight of the gun and tired arms, he was not able to shoulder the gun and aim after about 25,000 shots. The rest of the time he shot from the hip! When asked what was the first thing he ever remembered, he said it was shooting a 22 rifle. He was one of the greatest marksmen that ever lived. He was such because he devoted his life to it. What kind of soldiers do you suppose we would be if we devoted such time, talent, and energy to serving the Lord?

7. Men who excel, in whatever it may be, do so because they devote their very being to the endeavor. How can we do less as we serve the Lord?

### III. STRICT.

1. "He is not crowned except he strive lawfully" (v. 5).
2. We must not go beyond the things written (1 Corinthians 4:6 ASV).
3. We must abide in the doctrine of Christ. To fail to do so is to cease to have the fellowship of God (2 John 9-11).
4. We must avoid those who teach error (Romans 16:17).
5. We must withdraw from the disorderly (2 Thessalonians 3:6).
6. Our society needs to be far more strict with its laws than it is.
7. Parents need to be strict in the home. Preachers and elders need to be strict with the word of God. We must speak where it speaks and be silent where it is silent.
8. Some would have people think it is being too strict to refuse to use the mechanical instrument of music, or too strict not to allow women in the business meetings of the church, or too strict to practice New Testament church discipline, or too strict to hold fast to a great number of things taught and demanded by the inspired word of God.

9. When men are wedded and welded to the word of God, they are not too strict, they are just right, as strict as God would have them be. We must precisely follow the pattern (Hebrews 8:5).

#### IV. SECURE.

1. "We shall also reign with him" (Vv. 12-13).
2. "Once saved, always saved" is a false doctrine (James 5:19-20).
3. But we must not let that false doctrine keep us from knowing that we are saved, faithful servants of God.
  - (1) A child of God never will make a practice of sinning (1 John 3:9).
  - (2) Study carefully 1 John 5:11-13. We can "know" that we have eternal life. It is not a guess or some slim, gray hope.
4. The child of God is secure because of:
  - (1) What he has done. He has obeyed the gospel and has been raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-4, 17-18).
  - (2) Where he is. He is in Christ (Ephesians 1:3; Galatians 3:26-27).
  - (3) Where he is going (1 Corinthians 15:24). Faithful children of God are bound for the promise land.

#### V. SOUND IN THE FAITH.

1. "Strive not about words to no profit;" "Study to show thyself approved unto God" (Vv. 14-18).
2. The good soldier of Christ must avoid false doctrine and with tremendous diligence give himself to the study of the Bible.
3. False doctrine will eat away the soul like cancer will eat away at the body (v. 17).
4. Note the false teaching of Hymeneus and Philetus (Vv. 17-18).
5. We must always place great value on our relationship to the word of God. We must speak as the



oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11).

6. Many men believe and follow false doctrine, not because the Bible is difficult to understand, but rather because of what men have said the Bible teaches when in fact it does not, and by their false teaching lead men astray.
7. For example: Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). But multitudes of men say, "He that believes shall be saved and later baptized as an outward sign of his salvation." The tragedy of it all is that most believe what men say instead of what Jesus said.

#### VI. SANCTIFIED.

1. "Sanctified and meet for the master's use" (Vv. 19-22).
2. "Sanctified" means to be set apart for special service or use.
3. A Christian is sanctified in purpose:
  - (1) See verses 20-21.
  - (2) He is different. He is prepared unto every good work.
4. A Christian is sanctified in practices:
  - (1) See verse 22.
  - (2) His life is totally different from the worldly life. There are great numbers of things which he refuses to do because to do them is sin. And, there are great numbers of things he does do because to fail to do them is sin.

#### VII. SERVANT.

1. "And the servant of the Lord" (Vv. 23-26—note v. 24).
2. Even Jesus was known as a servant. He taught the great lesson that his disciples needed when he washed their feet, showing them that there would be no big "I's" and little "you's" in the kingdom (John 13:4-17).
3. James, a half-brother to the Lord, gloried in the

fact that he was a "servant" (James 1:1).

4. Some get to the point in life they believe they no longer have to be servants of the Lord. I have seen preachers and elders who felt this way and were quick to let others know of it.
5. He that is greatest in the kingdom is he that gives and does the most. We should be proud and honored to be servants of God!

#### CONCLUSION:

1. These are not the only characteristics of a soldier of the Lord. There are many, many more. But these are some Paul gave in his letter to Timothy.
2. May we strive to have these qualities stand clear and strong in our lives.
3. Think how strong the church would be if every member possessed the qualities of character that we have discussed in this lesson.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What does strength have to do with our living the Christian life?
2. What do we mean by "strong in doctrine"?
3. How does double minded service weaken us as Christians?
4. Have you ever known anyone whom you felt was too strict in his Christian life? Can we become too strict? What about those who bind where the scriptures do not bind. Have they become too strict? Can you give some illustrations of men binding where God has not?
5. How can you know that your life is secure in Christ? Should we speak of "I think" or "I know"? Why do you so answer? Discuss the false and soul-damning doctrine of "Once saved always saved." Refute the doctrine with the scriptures.
6. How important is it that we be sound in the faith? How can we help ourselves to be sound in the faith?

7. What does "sanctified" mean? How is the child of God sanctified? Discuss sanctified in purpose. What does that mean? Give several examples. Discuss sanctified in practice. How do we accomplish this?
8. How would the attitude of servant which Jesus showed to his disciples help solve many of the problems in the church today? How does 1 Peter 4:8 relate to this problem? What can be done to impress upon the minds of all children of God the importance of being a true servant of the Lord?



## Lesson 11

### ***Don't Make Things Your God***

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. Our lesson is taken from five chapters in Luke (Luke 15-19).
2. Jesus was dealing with people who loved the things of this world and cared not for things spiritual. Note Luke 16:14.
3. These people also thought highly of themselves but looked down their "righteous" noses at others (See Luke 18:9-14, note v. 9).
4. They certainly did not have love for lost souls. Our section begins with the scribes and Pharisees complaining because Jesus spent time with sinners (Luke 15:2), and it ends with them making the same complaints (Luke 19:7). They were so in love with the things of this world that they did not love the lost souls of the multitudes around them.
5. The key passage which states the theme of this lesson is Luke 12:15: "And he said to them, Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."
6. What a hard lesson to learn! Things are not the standard on which we judge the success or the failure of one's life.
7. We must not put *things* first. We must not make *things* our God!

#### DISCUSSION: IN THIS LESSON WE SEE:

##### I. A YOUNG MAN WHO LET THINGS TAKE HIM AWAY FROM HOME.

1. This is the prodigal son of Luke 15:11-24.
2. He wanted his father to divide his inheritance with him so that he could go out on his own and "do his own thing."

3. He went away into a far country and lived up his inheritance in riotous living (v. 13).
4. He went to the very bottom and wound up feeding swine and eating the food he fed to the hogs (Vv. 15-16).
5. The story has a beautiful ending, for the young man finally came to himself and determined to return home (Vv. 17ff).
6. This is the story of a young man who: (a) Became sick of home; (b) Later became homesick; and (c) Finally experienced a most wonderful home-coming.
  - (1) Many young people today become sick of home with its rules and regulations. They leave to be on their own, when such a decision is not a good one.
  - (2) Many of these young people are lost to the church, and unlike the prodigal son never return.
  - (3) They allow things to lead them away from God, to cause them to make decisions and live their lives in such a way as to lose their souls.
7. We must live our lives in such a way as never to allow the things of this world to lure us away from God (See James 1:13-15). The grass may seem greener on the other side of the fence but, in reality, instead of green grass there may be the pigpen.

## II. ONE WHO ALLOWED THINGS TO BLIND HIM OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES.

1. This is the story of the rich man of Luke 16:19-31.
2. A beggar, Lazarus, was laid at the rich man's gate each day.
  - (1) His body was full of sores. He had to be carried there. He was so weak that even the dogs licked his sores. He could not keep them away. All he wanted was the scraps which fell from the rich man's table.

- (2) The rich man did nothing for Lazarus. In his thinking he had many things more important to do than to see to the needs of some poor, insignificant beggar.
  - (3) He reminds us of those today who are so busy with the things of this life that they do not have the time to study the Bible, visit the sick, preach or teach the word to those lost in sin, help the poor, attend the worship services of the church, and a multitude of other such good and righteous things.
3. The rich man lost his soul. He could not dodge responsibilities which were his and remain in a right relationship with God. And, neither can we. We have opportunities and responsibilities which we must face, and we must never allow the things of this world to blind us to them. To do so is to sin and lose our soul. We must not allow things to become our God.

### III. A MAN WHO ALLOWED THINGS TO CAUSE HIM TO DECIDE TO TURN FROM GOD.

- 1. This is the story of the Rich Young Ruler of Luke 18:18-25.
- 2. This young man had many good qualities: (a) He came to Jesus when he was young; (b) He was a ruler who was very religious; (c) He was rich, yet very religious; (d) He was very eager. He ran to Jesus; (e) He was brave. He came when Jesus was very unpopular; (f) He was reverent. He kneeled at Jesus' feet; (g) He was serious minded; (h) He was wise. He went to the right source; (i) He was dedicated. He kept the law from his youth up; (j) Mark said that Jesus beholding him loved him.
- 3. I have no doubt that he expected Jesus to give him his approval of his conduct of life. Perhaps he thought Jesus would ask him to make some large contribution, but there is one thing for certain—he

never expected Jesus to say what he did—that he must sell ALL he had and distribute among the poor (v. 22).

4. He may have been dedicated in many ways, but he was not that dedicated. He suddenly had his God and his gold placed before him, as if they were on a balance scale, and he was made to see which weighed the most, or which he loved the most. The bottom line was that he loved his gold more than he loved his God and that his love for the gold, the things of this world, was so strong that it led him to make a decision to turn his back on God and cast his soul at the very feet of the devil.
5. Think how strong men become attached to the things of this world. People will take jobs that will cause them to lose their souls. They will involve themselves in marriages that will cost them their souls. In the desire to be happy, to enjoy the things of this world, people will make decisions like the Rich Young Ruler made, which will cause them to lose their souls in the day of judgment.
6. Several years ago I had a young lady ask me about a marriage she was contemplating. I showed her what the scriptures taught and that such a marriage would place her into living in adultery. Her response was, "But I want to be happy." Happy now but hell forever is quite a price to pay for a poor decision. She had made things her God. She married the man, left the church, and as far as I know is completely lost to the Lord with no intentions of correcting her situation. The sad part of it is that multitudes have done and will continue to do as she did. Like the Rich Young Ruler, they allow things to become their God.

#### IV. A MAN WHO REFUSED TO ALLOW THINGS TO COME BETWEEN HIM AND HIS GOD.

1. This is the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-9.



2. Zacchaeus was a very rich man who had made his living as a tax collector. It was a common thing for tax collectors to extract falsely great sums of money from the people and put that money into their own personal accounts. This is why most of this profession were very rich and very hated by the people.
3. Zacchaeus said he would give half of his goods to the poor and if he had falsely taken any money he would restore it fourfold. The "if" in verse 8 is to be taken as is the "if" in Acts 8:22 and the "if" in Philippians 2:1. It does not suggest doubt but rather suggests "since."
4. This man would not allow anything, even his great riches, to come between him and his God. He was not wedded to the things of this world, but instead he was now dedicated to serving the Lord in total submission.
5. May we learn this lesson well. What comes between us and God must be forsaken. See Matthew 5:29-30 as an example. Nothing is as bad as being lost for eternity. We must forsake anything that would cause us to lose our soul.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. Read Psalm 42:1. Picture the hart or a deer running for its very life. Dogs are chasing it. It has run until it can hardly run any longer. Its tongue is swollen out of its mouth. As it runs through a cool, clear water brook, it longs to stop and take just one quick sip of water, but it knows it cannot do so, for such would mean certain death. David said that in just that way, with that tremendous desire shown by the hart, his soul thirsted after God.
2. Why don't men, today, so thirst after God? The gasoline engine is made to run on a certain type of fuel and nothing else will work. One cannot put honey, water, or cane syrup in a gasoline engine and have it run. It

will not work. Why? Because it was made to run on gasoline and not on honey or some other product.

3. Just so, man is made to run on God and he cannot run on the things of this world. To try to do so is total disaster for the soul. Our spirit cannot run on things, it must run on God.
4. Let us learn from this lesson a proper value for the things of this world and put them in their place. Let us determine never to allow things to cause us to make decisions that will cost us eternal life with the Father and the faithful of the ages.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. How do men often judge that things are what really makes a life successful?
2. How did the prodigal son allow things nearly to ruin his life? What is meant by "riotous" living (15:13)? See 15:30.
3. How do men overlook responsibilities, even to the losing of their souls?
4. Discuss several lessons we learn about life after death from the rich man and Lazarus.
5. How is the love of money the root of all kinds of evil (1 Timothy 6:10)?
6. Can a rich man go to heaven? (See Luke 18:24-25; 1 Timothy 6:17-19).
7. What was the Rich Young Ruler's big mistake? How do you explain his being sorrowful? Doesn't it mean that he knew better?
8. What was the commendable attitude of Zacchaeus? How can we apply this attitude in our daily Christian living? Discuss the repentance seen in this example.
9. What happens when man tries to run his life on things? Please give several illustrations of this. Use Bible examples and present day examples. What can we do to grow closer to God?

## Lesson 12

### *Lost In Sight Of Home*

#### INTRODUCTION:

1. John 14:6; Matthew 7:13-14.
2. Regarding the texts:
  - (1) The way that leads to heaven is a narrow way.
  - (2) It is not enough just to be *NEAR* this way—we *must be in the way*.
3. Some are *near* the kingdom of God (Mark 12:34).
4. Others are *far* from God (Matthew 15:7-8).
5. We sing, "I've wandered far away from God; now I'm coming home."
  - (1) Unfaithful members need to come home.
  - (2) Accountable people—lost in sin need to obey the gospel.
6. This lesson has to do with people. People like you and me. People who were near their goal but for various reasons did not make it. I am within my mark when I say they were *Lost in Sight of Home*.

#### DISCUSSION: LET US NOTICE THAT:

- I. THE RICH YOUNG RULER (Luke 18:18-25) WAS LOST IN SIGHT OF HOME.
  1. He was no near eternal life that he *lacked only one thing*.
    - (1) What was it?
    - (2) Covetousness.
    - (3) As a result of this he left in sorrow.
  2. He was one of the most remarkable young men I have ever read about.
    - (1) Matthew says he was *young*.
    - (2) Luke says he was a *ruler*.
    - (3) Matthew, Mark, and Luke say he was *rich* (very rich).
    - (4) He was *eager*—he *ran* to Jesus.

- (5) He showed *reverence*—he kneeled before Jesus.
- (6) He was *brave*—he came at a time when Jesus was very unpopular with many.
- (7) He was *serious minded*—he was interested in eternal life.
- (8) He was *wise*—he went to the right one with his problem.
- (9) He was *dedicated*—he faithfully kept the law from his youth up. (When Jesus heard this, Mark says, "Then Jesus beholding him, loved him.")

3. How near was this young man?

(1) Jesus said, "One thing..." (Luke 18:22).

(2) But he failed because he was covetous.

A. It is not a sin to be rich (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

B. But it is a sin when wealth becomes our God.

C. He needed to learn the lesson of Luke 12:15.

4. He was so near home, yet he walked away lost.

(1) He did not love Christ enough to obey him—yet his departing hurt him so much that he went away *sorrowful*.

(2) Has it ever occurred to you that had he gone away *laughing* he would have been no more lost?

(3) What a *tragedy!* This young man was so near eternal life, so near he only lacked one thing, but covetousness separated him from Christ and he was lost.

II. THE FIVE FOOLISH VIRGINS (Matthew 25:1-13)  
WERE LOST IN SIGHT OF HOME.

1. Home for them was the marriage feast which in the ultimate application is *heaven* for us.

2. Five were wise—and five were foolish.

3. While they slept the cry was made that the bridegroom was coming.

(1) The five foolish needed oil to trim their lamps.

(2) While they went away to get oil, the bridegroom came and the five wise virgins entered into the

marriage feast.

4. Afterward the five foolish virgins came, The door was shut therefore they pleaded, "Lord, Lord, open to us." But the door was not opened. They were lost on the outside knocking at the door (25:12).
5. Why were they lost in sight of home? Because they were unprepared!
  - (1) "Careless soul why will you linger, wandering from the fold of God, hear you not the invitation, O prepare to meet thy God."
  - (2) Amos 4:12: "Prepare to meet thy God." Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people (John 14:1-6).
  - (3) These five foolish virgins were not prepared.
6. The Lord concluded, "Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour."

### III. FELIX WAS A MAN LOST IN SIGHT OF HOME (Acts 24:22-25).

1. Felix was near the kingdom—he heard Paul preach concerning faith in Christ.
2. How near was he? The Bible says he *trembled*.
3. Paul preached:
  - (1) Righteousness—man's heavenly responsibility.
  - (2) Temperance—human responsibility.
  - (3) Judgment to come—accounting day.
4. Felix made the mistake of waiting for a "*convenient season*."
  - (1) It is never convenient to leave sin and obey Christ. The Devil sees to that.
  - (2) Many a person will be lost in hell because he waited for a convenient season which never came.
5. Felix was but a step—the step of obedience—from the kingdom, but he was lost—*Lost in Sight of Home*.
6. Multitudes will go to eternity in the shoes of Felix. They know the truth but fail to obey.

#### IV. AGRIPPA WAS LOST IN SIGHT OF HOME (Acts 26:26-29).

1. He was so near, yet so far away. He was almost persuaded to become a Christian.
2. Paul was not seeking to persuade Agrippa to become a Catholic, a Baptist, a Methodist, etc. Those sects did not arise until hundreds of years later.
3. After Paul had preached to him, Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."
  - (1) We sing the song "Almost Persuaded."
  - (2) How near was Agrippa? He was *almost persuaded*.
4. What hindered him?
  - (1) The Bible does not say.
  - (2) He may have been like Felix, waiting on a convenient season.
  - (3) He may have been afraid of what people may say.
  - (4) The heart that beats beneath a royal robe is too deeply encased in worldly cares often to entertain seriously the thoughts of religion.
  - (5) Whatever the reason it was strong enough to cause him to remain in a lost condition while he was in sight of salvation.

#### V. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA WERE LOST IN SIGHT OF HOME (Acts 5:1-11).

1. They were near being saved in eternity.
  - (1) If they had lived 100 years it would not have been very long compared to eternity.
  - (2) If they had lived faithfully, heaven would have been their home.
  - (3) But they fell from grace. (Discuss the story).
2. If you are an unfaithful member, God will not slay you miraculously. However, do not deceive yourself into believing you can escape the judgment of God.
3. Why were Ananias and Sapphira lost?

- (1) It was greed.
  - (2) There are many today with the same problem. They live exceedingly well on what they have and give God the *scraps* or the leftovers.
  - (3) They plead poverty but are truly rich. If the Lord made us as poor as we pretend we are, we would surely do some complaining!
4. Here we learn of two who were in the kingdom—two who were on their way *home*, but they were lost—lost in sight of home because they fell from grace. They lied about their giving.

## VI. MOSES WAS LOST IN SIGHT OF HOME.

1. When I read of how close Moses was to Canaan it moves me.
  - (1) I would have made many more mistakes than Moses made.
  - (2) He was one of the best men ever to live.
  - (3) For 40 years he endured the unfaithfulness and complaints of the Israelites.
  - (4) The only recorded mistake of Moses is in Numbers 20:7-12.
    - A. Discuss his disobedience. It seems so simple, yet it was an act of disobedience!
    - B. Read Deuteronomy 3:23-28.
    - C. Read Deuteronomy 34:1-7.
2. Moses is the only man that the Bible says God buried. What a great man he must have been!
3. Moses was near Canaan and home. How near? So near he could see it.
  - (1) But he was not permitted to enter.
  - (2) He ascended Pisgah's height and surveyed the promise land.
  - (3) Then he lay down in death not able to enter the promise land because he had disobeyed God.
  - (4) The burial of Moses:
 

*By Nebo's lonely mountain on this side  
Jordan's wave,*

*In a vale in the Land of Moab, there lies a  
lonely grave.  
No man dug that sepulchre, and no man saw  
it e're;  
For the angels of God, up-turned the sod, and  
laid the dead man there.*

4. Most of us would not have done as well as Moses.
  - (1) He was so near the promise land he could see it.
  - (2) But because of disobedience no entrance was granted unto him.
5. Do not misunderstand me. God forgave him.
  - (1) He will be in heaven.
  - (2) But he committed sin; therefore, God would not allow him to enter the physical Canaan land.
  - (3) The lesson for us is that sin can keep us out of heaven.
  - (4) We must remember one can be so *good*, so *near*, and yet so *far*.
6. It is tragic to be lost, but oh, how tragic to be lost in sight of home.

#### CONCLUSION:

1. We have sought to emphasize the *tragedy* and the *possibility* of being lost in sight of home.
2. We must be an humble, submissive people to the saving of our souls in the day of judgment.

#### QUESTIONS:

1. What is the significance of being near and far from the kingdom?
2. What caused the Rich Young Ruler to be far from the kingdom?
3. What do we need to do to be certain that we are prepared to go to eternity?
4. Why do men procrastinate in doing what God requires of them?
5. Why is it never convenient or easy to obey God?



6. What was the significance of Moses' disobedience?
7. What lasting lesson of eternal value must we learn from this material?



## Lesson 13

# ***Seeing The Unseen*** **2 Corinthians 4:8-5:11**

### INTRODUCTION:

1. Read 2 Corinthians 4:8-15.
2. All men suffer pain and decay (Vv. 8-10).
3. Four reasons are given as to why we are able to endure suffering in this present life (Vv. 11-15).
  - (1) We truly believe God's word (v. 13). If we do not believe God's word then we should keep our mouths shut.
  - (2) Death will not rob us of our crown (v. 14).
  - (3) Our suffering brings others to Christ (v. 15).
  - (4) Bringing others to Christ glorifies God (v. 15; John 15:8).

### DISCUSSION: SEEING THE UNSEEN (4:16-18).

#### I. WE FAINT NOT (4:16).

1. The true believer is not disturbed by physical decay. (See verse 17; also Psalm 116:3).
2. The inward man is renewed daily. The outward man decays (v. 16).

#### II. WE LOOK NOT AT THE THINGS UNSEEN (V. 18).

1. Illustration: Note the beautiful things we see in this world.
  - (1) The mountains and the natural beauty of this earth.
  - (2) Things made by man—the Golden Gate Bridge, castles, temples, and other like things.
2. Things seen will pass. The most fragile orchid or the largest galaxy in the universe will pass.
3. Things unseen are important and lasting in Christianity.
  - (1) The grace and love of God.

- (2) The forgiveness of our sins.
- (3) The fellowship of the saints (Psalm 119:63).
- (4) The hope of heaven (Hebrews 6:19).

### III. WE ENDURE AS SEEING THE UNSEEN (V. 18).

1. Hebrews chapter 11 is a great illustration of this.
2. This wonderful world was made from the unseen (11:3).
3. Three illustrations:
  - (1) Noah (11:7): The flood was far in the future. There was no natural evidence of such. It had not rained for 1600 years. He was ridiculed and scorned. Yet he built the ark.
  - (2) Abraham (11:8-10).
  - (3) Moses (11:24-27).
4. A person who obeys Mark 16:16 is a person who sees the unseen.

### CONCLUSION:

1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-11.
2. The end of the matter—we have a tabernacle from God (Vv. 1-4).
3. We must die in order to get it (Vv. 5-8).
4. We must obey God in order to receive it (v. 9).
5. There is a coming judgment (v. 10). Hang on. Stick it out.
6. Knowing the terror of the Lord—we persuade men (v. 11).

### QUESTIONS:

1. How should the Christian view the suffering and pain he has to endure in this life?
2. Discuss the four reasons why we are able to endure suffering and make practical applications to our everyday living.
3. Why is a true believer not disturbed by decay?
4. How is the inward man renewed daily? Discuss worship, prayer, Bible study, fellowship, and other important sources of strength.

5. Why should we be careful of the value we place on things that are seen?
6. How did seeing the unseen affect and influence Noah, Abraham, and Moses?
7. Discuss the importance of obedience as it relates to our tabernacle which we will receive from God.
8. How can we best be prepared for the judgment of God?







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