

# *Truth For The World*



## 13 Lessons including:

- \* The existence of God
- \* Salvation
- \* The church
- \* Worship
- \* Christian living

© 2019  
Truth For The World

**This book may be reproduced  
and distributed, provided that  
no alterations whatsoever are  
made and no charge is required  
for the receipt of it.**

*Truth For The World* 

# Table of Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>1 - It is Reasonable to Believe in God.....</b>                 | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>2 - The Godhead .....</b>                                       | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>3 - Who is Jesus? .....</b>                                     | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>4 - The Bible is the Word of God .....</b>                      | <b>12</b> |
| <b>5 - Science Proves the Bible.....</b>                           | <b>17</b> |
| <b>6 - Authority in Religion.....</b>                              | <b>20</b> |
| <b>7 - The New Covenant.....</b>                                   | <b>23</b> |
| <b>8 - The Steps of Salvation .....</b>                            | <b>25</b> |
| <b>9 - The Church Built by Jesus.....</b>                          | <b>29</b> |
| <b>10 - The Worship of the Church of Christ .....</b>              | <b>31</b> |
| <b>11 - Organization of the Church of Christ.....</b>              | <b>34</b> |
| <b>12 - All Things That Pertain to Life and<br/>Godliness.....</b> | <b>37</b> |
| <b>13 - The Vine and the Branches .....</b>                        | <b>40</b> |

# 1 - It is Reasonable to Believe in God

We live in an unbelieving world! Many have accepted Satan's lie that faith in God as the Creator of all things disagrees with modern science. Such could not be further from the truth! Faith in the existence of God as Creator is both reasonable and in harmony with the facts of science. A refusal to believe that God created all things is very unreasonable.

Faith in God as Creator is reasonable because creation requires a creator. If one sees a lovely, well-built house, he does not say, "I wonder how that house came into existence." He knows that the existence of the house means that someone built it. This is also true of our world. The fact that it exists requires that there must be one who built it. *"For every house is builded by some one; but he that built all things is God."* (**Hebrews 3:4**).

Faith in God as the Creator of all things is reasonable because life can only come from life! Everyone understands that that which is dead can not produce that which is alive. In Europe during the Middle Ages, people were very ignorant. They believed in "spontaneous generation," that is, that non-living things could give birth to living things. Louis Pasteur, a great French scientist in the 19th century, proved that spontaneous generation is false. Only life can produce life!

Let us make application to the world and the people in it. How did it come to be? There are only two possibilities. Either the world and all living things in it came from dead, non-living, non-thinking matter, or it came from mind, intelligence, life, therefore, God. What do you think?

Does a nest create a bird to sit in it, or does the bird, a living being, create the nest? Does a car make a man to drive it, or does the man who is living and intelligent create the car? The non-living things are created by the living things, not the other way around. It is totally unreasonable to believe that the earth which is filled with living plants, animals and persons, was brought into being by dead matter, or by nothing at all. However, it is

very reasonable to believe that a supreme, intelligent Being, God, brought into existence the universe and the wonderful varieties of life which live in it.

It is also reasonable to believe in God as Creator because of the plan and purpose in the universe. The universe operates according to law. Scientists are busy discovering these laws which they use for man's benefit. The order and design of the laws point to a Master mind who originated them. It is not possible that our orderly universe happened by chance. For example, the earth is 93 million miles (150,000,000 km) from the sun. If the earth were closer, it would burn up. If it were farther away, the earth would freeze. Did this just happen by chance? Or, did a living Mind, God, design this in order to serve the purpose of supporting life?

Did the complex universe which operates in such orderly fashion, according to definite laws, just happen by chance? Or, is it the result of an intelligent God who created it? It would be more reasonable to assume that the telephone directory of Sydney, Australia, a city of more than 4,000,000 people, just happened by chance than to assume that the orderly universe came into existence by chance!

It is reasonable to believe that, "*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth*" (**Genesis 1:1**). Only a powerful, highly intelligent God could have created the wonderful, complex world in which we live. Truly, "*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God*" (**Psalms 14:1**).

Let us humble ourselves before our Creator that made the world and all things therein (**Acts 17:24**). Let us acknowledge that in him we live, and move, and have our being (**Acts 17:28**). To deny the existence of God is the greatest of all foolishness!

## 2 - The Godhead

Since man has known God, there has been some confusion about who God is. This confusion basically comes from false teachings about God and His nature. When we read the Bible as a whole, we can clearly see who God is and what He consists of.

When we say the words “human nature,” we are talking about the characteristics that make someone human. There is only one human nature. Someone is either human or they are not. But even though there is only one human nature, there are billions of persons who possess that human nature.

Similarly, when we say the word “God,” we are talking about the “divine nature.” Divine nature refers to the characteristics that make someone divine. There is only one divine nature, and therefore there is only one God. Someone is either divine or they are not. But even though there is only one divine nature, there are three persons who possess that divine nature. We refer to them as 1) God the Father, 2) God the Son, and 3) God the Holy Spirit.

Saying that there are three persons who possess divine nature is NOT declaring that there are three “Gods.” Remember, the word “God” means “divine nature,” not the persons who possess that divine nature. Since there is only one divine nature, there is only one God.

The Bible teaches there is only one God, or divine nature. **Isaiah 44:6** says, “*Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God.*” **Galatians 3:20** says, “*God is one*”! **Mark 12:32** says, “*And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but he.*” The Bible clearly teaches there is only one God (**James 2:19; Romans 3:30**).

Remember, even though there is only one God (divine nature), there are three persons who possess it. Notice **Deuteronomy 6:4**, “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one*

*LORD:*” The word for “one” in this verse is a Hebrew word meaning “united.” This verse is not talking about the divine nature and saying that there is only one God in number, but instead it is talking about the fact that the different persons of the Godhead are united. It is the same same as a coach telling a team to play together as “one.” The coach would be telling the multiple personalities of the team to work together and be united. But you couldn’t have a team or unity if you didn’t have multiple personalities. In **Genesis 1:26**, God said, “*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...*” Notice the inspired Word of God here quotes God referring to Himself by using “*Us*,” and “*Our*.”

There is one God because the word “God” means “divine nature” and there is only one divine nature. But there are three persons who possess that divine nature. These personalities are separate in function, yet one in thought and purpose. They are unified as one, perfect, complete God!

Let’s notice the distinct personalities in the following verses. In **Ephesians 4:6**, Paul said, “*one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.*” Paul refers here to the one God, known as the “Father.” **Matthew 1:23** says, “*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, And they shall call his name Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us.*” Here we see a reference to God, the Son (**John 3:16**). Finally, in **Acts 5:3-4**, we see the final personality of God: “*But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou has not lied unto men, but unto God.*” Here Peter told Ananias that he had not lied to men but to God, the “Holy Spirit.” These three personalities make up the one Godhead.

Who is God? In the very first verse of God’s Word, the Bible, we see who God is. **Genesis 1:1** says, “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*” Here we see that God is the Creator. This gives us an idea of how powerful and magnificent God is.

Let’s consider a few other important facts about God:

- He is eternal, which means without beginning or end (**Psalm 90:2**).
- He is all powerful, so powerful that He even created the world and us!
- He is all knowing; nothing can be hid from God (**Proverbs 5:21; 1 John 3:20**).
- He is everywhere, at all times (**Psalm 139:7-10; 2 Chronicles 16:9**).
- He is perfect, and does not sin (**1 John 1:5**).
- He is unchanging, and will always remain the same (**Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8**).
- He is a Spirit, not flesh (**John 4:24; Luke 24:39**).

This is the God you and I serve!



### 3 - Who is Jesus?

Who is Jesus? Since He came into this world, there have been those who have asked, “Who is this man? Is He just a man, or is He the Son of God and the Saviour of the world?” From the Scriptures we may find the answer.

In the first place, Jesus is referred to as “God” in the Bible. The prophet Isaiah, in **Isaiah 9:6-7**, called Him “*Mighty God.*” In **John 1:1-3, 14**, Jesus is called “*the Word*” which is God and became flesh and dwelled among men. In **Hebrews 1:8** we read, “*but of the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*” In **John 3:16**, Jesus is called the Son of God sent to save the world from sin. Yes, Jesus is Divine, according to the Scriptures. He is referred to as God, as the living Word, the Christ (the Anointed One), and as the Son of God. He is not just a good man or teacher.

In the second place, Jesus showed that He is God. Who but God has the power to create? In **John 1:1-3**, we read that all things were created through Jesus Christ. Who is to be worshipped but God? Scriptures such as **Matthew 4:10**, **Revelation 19:10**, and **Revelation 22:9**, show that men are to worship God. Jesus accepted the worship of men while on earth (**Matthew 8:2; 9:18**). Therefore, Jesus is God. He is eternal. He is not a created being. He is the author of Creation. He is the living Word through whom all things were created.

The epistle to the Colossians sets forth the dignity and the Divinity of Jesus (**Colossians 1:13-20**). Also in **Philippians 2:9-11**, Paul wrote, “*Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” Thus, Jesus the Christ is more than an angel and He is more than a prophet. Jesus Christ is Deity. He is the Son of God.

Who has the right to forgive sins? God has the right to

forgive sins. While on earth, Jesus had the power to forgive sins and to heal miraculously (**Mark 2:1-12**). Only God can forgive sins. Therefore, since Jesus forgave sins while on earth, Jesus is Deity.

Finally, we note that Jesus was one with the Father. In **John 10:30**, we read, *“I and the Father are one.”* These are the words of Jesus describing His relationship to the Father. They are one in nature, purpose, and teaching. Philip once said to Jesus, *“Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus answered, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father?”* (**John 14:8-9**). In **Philippians 2:5-8**, there is a statement which shows that Jesus was one with God. *“Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.”*

What has been said of Jesus here is true of no other person who has ever lived. He is the Son of God, He is not mere man! He is not a created being! He is not as one of the angels, He is above the angels!

The entire epistle to the Hebrews points out the contrast between the old Law of Moses and the New Covenant of Christ. It also exalts Jesus above all. The epistle begins: *“God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he made the worlds; who being the effulgence of his glory, and the very image of his substance, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; having become by so much better than the angels, as he hath inherited a more excellent name than they.”* (**Hebrews 1:1-4**).

When we sinned by rebelling against God’s commandments we became spiritually separated from God. *“For the wages of sin*

*is death.*” (**Romans 6:23**) “Death” means “a separation.” The only way back to the presence of God is through obeying Jesus. “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*” (**John 14:6**). The words of Jesus tell us to believe in Him as the Son of God (**John 8:24**). We must then repent of our sins, that is, change our minds and then change our lives, turning away from sin (**Luke 13:3**). Then we must confess Jesus as the Son of God, and be buried in baptism for the forgiveness of our sins (**Acts 8:36-39**). It is then that we are cleansed by the blood of Christ, and added by the Lord to the church of Christ, which was purchased with His precious blood (**Acts 2:41, 47; 20:28**). The church is the body of Christ. (**Ephesians 1:22-23**) Jesus has promised to save the faithful in the body, the church. (**Revelation 2:10; Ephesians 5:23**)

## **4 - The Bible is the Word of God**

Many people deny the Bible is the Word of God, God's revelation of Himself to us, but many others have clearly seen the overwhelming evidence. We must respect it, obey it, and see it as the singular standard of authority for our lives. As we apply it to our lives and live it as we should, then we enjoy peace, comfort, and the hope of eternal life.

In **2 Timothy 3:16-17**, the apostle Paul affirms, “*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*” The word in the original Greek translated “inspiration” means “God-breathed.” The Scriptures contained in the Bible are a product of the Divine breath. They are a complete record of what God needed to communicate to man. Nothing is left out. Everything we need is furnished through the Word of God.

But the Bible has its critics—those who have leveled, and continue to level, attacks against it, yet, without foundation. Let us look at some of the great truths of the inspiration of the Word of God, the inspiration of the Bible. The arguments will clearly tell us God has “breathed” this book. It's His book, His word. He inspired the writing of it.

### **PREPARATION**

How can there be such unity and harmony in the word of God, considering that it was written over a period of some 1,500 years by more than 40 different men? Well, it was all orchestrated or directed by the inspiration of Almighty God.

We might liken that to a block of stone from which 40 different sculptors each took away a piece. Each would work on his piece for a time; and, then, when all the pieces were brought back together, they formed a beautiful statue, a great work of art. How could that be done? The only way would be to have someone

masterminding it, according to a pattern or a plan that had been given them.

That's exactly what we have with the Bible. We have Someone masterminding its preparation. We have the Master of the Universe, the God of Heaven, through the Holy Spirit, inspiring the 40 or so writers of this book over a period of 1,500 years to write it just as God wanted it written, with perfect harmony, absolute unity, and with a great theme of redemption, or the salvation of mankind, through, ultimately, the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ.

## PEOPLE

The people depicted in the Bible say something about the inspiration of this Book. When man is writing about a great person, he tends to gloss over the inadequacies or the wrongs of that great man, but not the Bible. It depicts both the good and the bad qualities of its characters with complete and absolute fairness and objectivity, as no other book would do. Think of the great king of old, David, one who was called "the man after God's own heart." (**Acts 13:22**) He was a great man, yet, he sinned. His sins are pointed out. His shortcomings are set forth in fairness and objectivity. Such is the case with every character depicted in the Bible. Man would not write a book in this way, but the people depicted in the Bible show it is written by the inspiration of God.

## PROPHECIES

How many prophecies there are that are fulfilled in the greatest detail in the Bible! Many Old Testament prophecies are fulfilled in complete detail in the New Testament. We see the principle of the fulfillment of prophesy and that it shows God is the author of the book. In **Isaiah 41:21-23**. God, writing through the prophet, says, "*Produce your cause, saith Jehovah; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring forth, and declare unto us what shall happen: declare ye the former things, what they are, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or show us things to come. Declare the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods:*

*yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.”*

In other words, in challenging false prophets, or false gods, God says through His prophet Isaiah, “You predict the future. You show us the things that are to come. Let this be clear evidence that you have divine power.” They could not do so, but God has done so. Prophecy is a tremendously powerful proof of the inspiration of the Word of God. It’s interesting this same prophet Isaiah could mention a man by the name of Cyrus, King of Persia, call him by name as the one who would ultimately issue the decree that would allow God’s people to return from Babylonian Captivity under the Persian reign. When did he mention Cyrus by name? More than 100 years before Cyrus was ever born! How could it have been done? Only by the inspiration of God. Hundreds of prophecies relating to Jesus Christ are made in the Old Testament and fulfilled in minute detail in the New Testament.

## **PRIOR KNOWLEDGE**

The Bible makes statements concerning science, geography, or medicine which reveal things not discovered by science until hundreds or thousands of years later. This prior knowledge could not have been known other than by the inspiration of God. This is called scientific foreknowledge. In **Leviticus 17:11**, Moses says, *“For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life.”* Blood has always been important in God’s scheme of redemption. There were animal sacrifices made under the old covenant that pointed to the ultimate shedding of the precious blood of Jesus Christ, which would take away the sins of the world (as we respond and are obedient to the teachings of the Gospel).

How could Moses have known the life of the flesh is in the blood? Haven’t we always known the life of the flesh is in the blood, that if we drain the blood from the body we die? No. In fact, in one point in history, during the time George Washington lived, bloodletting was still practiced. It was believed that by letting out the blood, one let out the disease. Of course, this was not true,

but George Washington was bled to death in the process. It was not helpful, but harmful. How did Moses say the life of the flesh is in the blood, when we really didn't understand that concept for hundreds upon hundreds of years thereafter? He knew by the inspiration of God.

In **Job 26:7**, the writer says, "*He stretcheth out the north over empty space, And hangeth the earth upon nothing.*" How did the ancient writer of Job know that God has hung the earth upon nothing? Have we always known that? Certainly not. We have had fanciful ideas such as Atlas' supporting this earth on his strong shoulders, or the earth's swimming in a cosmic sea on the back of a giant turtle—neither idea very scientific and both certainly false. How did the writer of Job so long ago say the Lord hangs the earth upon nothing? He knew by inspiration, and only by inspiration.

## PRESERVATION

The fact the Bible has been preserved down through time, despite its attackers and critics, despite those who would have set it aside, despite those who predicted it would never last, is a proof of its inspiration. How has it survived? How has it been preserved? It has been preserved through the providence of Almighty God. We don't have the original manuscripts of the Bible, but we don't need the original manuscripts. More copies of the New Testament have been preserved through time than any other ancient book. To say we do not have an accurate copy of the New Testament is to say we do not have any accurate copy of any ancient book. But we do not dismiss other works as being inaccurate due to fewer copies, so therefore, we should not dismiss the preservation of the Bible.

Why was it preserved as it was? Why has it come down through generation after generation as it has? Because Jesus said, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away.*" (**Luke 21:33**) God, in His providence, has preserved for us down through time accurate translations of His inspired Word given to the original writers, that we might know with certainty there is abundant proof for the validity, the accuracy, the genuineness of the Bible text we have. Without question, there is more manuscript evidence for this book than any other great book

written by mere man.

## PRODUCT

The product of the Word is a life of peace and the promise of a beautiful eternal life in Heaven with God. These products are the result of a complete transformation that can only come through obedience to the inherently powerful, inspired Word. Paul urged the Roman Christians to continue to transform their lives by feeding upon the Word of God. (**Romans 12:2**) He commended the Ephesian elders to the Word of God, which is “*able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified.*” (**Acts 20:32**)

The Word of God will cause one to say, “*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ living in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me.*” (**Galatians 2:20**). The word of God will cause me to say, “*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing.*” (**2 Timothy 4:7-8**). The Word of God will cause me to say that I look forward to the heavenly home of the soul as a result of my sweet and continual obedience to the word of God, which is able to build me up and to give me an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.



## 5 - Science Proves the Bible

Sometimes we are led to believe that all true scientists do not believe in God, or the Bible. However, this is not correct. True science is not opposed to the Bible. In fact, science, properly applied and understood, proves the Bible to be inspired. The Bible is not a science textbook. However, whenever it makes a statement relating to a scientific principle or fact, it is completely accurate.

Let us notice some examples of the harmony between science and the Bible. “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*” (**Genesis 1:1**) This was written by Moses through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit about 1500 B.C. In 1820 A.D. a man named Hubert Spencer gave the world five scientific principles by which man may study the unknown. They are time, force, energy, space, and matter. However, Moses, by inspiration, gave us those scientific principles in **Genesis 1:1**. “*In the beginning*”—time; “*God*”—force; “*created*”—energy; “*the heavens*”—space; “*and the earth*”—matter. All of Spencer’s scientific principles are right there in **Genesis 1:1**.

When we come to the Psalms, we find an interesting statement in **Psalms 8:8**. The passage mentions “*The birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.*” The phrase the paths of the seas caused a man named Matthew Fontaine Maury to begin a search which led to the discovery of ocean currents, the natural paths of the seas created by God. Maury concluded that if God’s Book said they were there, they must be there! He was right.

The Bible is not a geography textbook, or an archaeology textbook. However, whenever the Bible makes a statement relating to these sciences, it is completely accurate. Notice the Lord’s statement for example, in **Luke 10:30**. “*Jesus made answer and said, A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho; and he fell among robbers, who both stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead.*” Now, Jericho is northeast of Jerusalem, and normally we do not speak of going down when

we refer to going north. We generally speak of going down south and up north. Why did the Lord say the man went down from Jerusalem? It is because Jerusalem is some 2,500 feet (762 meters) above sea level. When one leaves Jerusalem in Palestine he goes down to go anywhere in the area. Therefore, our Lord's statement is completely accurate, and is recorded accurately by inspiration.

Many archaeologists have explored the land of Palestine. Has any one of those scientists ever discovered anything which disproves the Bible? No. Many archaeological discoveries have confirmed the Biblical record. However, none has ever contradicted the Word of God.

If the Bible claims to be a product of the divine breath, which it does in **2 Timothy 3:16**, then we would expect God to get geographical and archaeological details right. If we can't trust the Bible with geographical and archaeological facts, then why would we trust it in matters of a soul's salvation? In reality, the Bible records things like geography and history accurately. Other books claiming to be inspired of God make errors in geography, math, or whatever. Those books are clearly not from God due to their errors. But the Bible gets facts correct, including scientific facts that were not "discovered" or learned until hundreds of years later.

Many other examples of the harmony between science and the Bible could be given. However, the ones we have examined are sufficient to show that the Bible is the word of God. As the apostle Paul declared, *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"* (**2 Timothy 3:16-17, KJV**).

The Bible is accurate in matters of science, history, and geography, and it is accurate in the matter of salvation. The Bible tells us that to be saved we must believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. *"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."* (**John 8:24**) However, the same Lord said, *"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish."* (**Luke 13:3**). Jesus also spoke of confessing Him before men. *"Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my*

*Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father who is in heaven” (**Matthew 10:32-33**). And Jesus declared, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned” (**Mark 16:16**). It is then that the Lord Himself adds us to the church of the New Testament, the one body of believers. If the Bible is accurate in matters of science, it is accurate in the matter of salvation. Will you respond to the inspired Word?*

## 6 - Authority in Religion

When God found that the children of Israel were becoming disobedient to Him, He spoke to them through Moses and warned them that He would bring forth a man like Moses to speak to them. Whoever disobeyed His word would perish (**Deuteronomy 18:15-19**).

This promise to the children of Israel was fulfilled by the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ (**Acts 3:19-26**). He was born to redeem the world. But He was rejected by the children of Israel among whom He was born and grew up.

One day during His earthly ministry our Lord took three of His disciples and went up into a high mountain and he was transfigured, or changed, before them; *“and his garments became glistering, exceeding white, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them. And there appeared unto them Elijah with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answereth and saith to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. For he knew not what to answer; for they became sore afraid. And there came a cloud overshadowing them: and there came a voice out of the cloud, This is my beloved Son: hear ye him.”* (**Mark 9:2-7**).

What was the meaning of all this? Moses stood for the Law. People should no longer follow the Law of Moses as a system of worshiping God. Sabbath-keeping, tithing, animal sacrifices, and instrumental music are no longer required. Elijah stood for the prophets who spoke about the coming on earth of a Saviour from the seed of David. Now that the Saviour has come, men should not go back to the Law and the prophets, but obey the words of Jesus Christ!

Whatever Christ said was not of His own, but words from God the Father. *“And if any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath*

*one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I spake not from myself; but the Father that sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life eternal: the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto me, so I speak.” (John 12:47-50).*

Many people do not obey the words of Christ. Even many religious people have turned away from the words of Christ and substituted their own thoughts. They do not think that Christ was right when he said: “*I will build my church*” (**Matthew 16:18**). “My” indicates ownership. It is completely wrong for a man or a group of people to form their own denomination and worship the Lord there. Jesus said: “*Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit.*” (**Matthew 15:13-14**).

The founders of human denominations are blind leaders. Those who worship therein are blind followers. This is why Jesus warned: “*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*” (**Matthew 7:21-23**). At the Judgment, Jesus will deny certain ones, not because they did not worship Him, but because they did not do it according to His will.

We know His will because His words are recorded for us in the Bible. Before, He left to return to Heaven, Jesus passed His authority on to His apostles and those inspired by the Holy Spirit. Those men were to carry on the work of Jesus. “*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*” (**Matthew 28:19-20**) The Holy Spirit made sure that the inspired writers wrote down what was correct. The Scriptures they wrote were

a product of the divine breath, or God-breathed. *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”* The Bible is the word of God and is a product of the divine breath. It gives us everything we need for doctrine, correction, instruction in righteousness, and equips us for every good work. The authority of God is locked in the Bible.

God promised to build a house (**Isaiah 2:2-3**). This house is what Christ called My church. Jesus bought this church with His blood: *“Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.”* (**Acts 20:28**). No one has a right to form any other church or call it by any name of his choosing.

Let us respect God’s authority! We must not add to the things which God has commanded! We must not subtract from any of the things God has commanded (**Revelation 22:18-19**). If we do not respect God’s authority in the Bible, we cannot be saved (**2 John 9-11**).

Remember, we will be judged by the words of Christ. *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”* (**John 12:48**)

## 7 - The New Covenant

Christians today are not under the law God gave to Israel at Mt Sinai. While this law (covenant) was in effect, Jeremiah, the prophet, foretold the Lord would make a new covenant with His people (**Jeremiah 31:31-34**). This was fulfilled when the New Testament was given (**Hebrews 8:6-13**). We today do not live under the law God gave to Israel. We live under the Law of Christ. In the times of the Old Testament, different men served as High Priest. Jesus Christ is now our High Priest (**Hebrews 4:14-16**). *“For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law”* (**Hebrews 7:12**). That Old Law, which was given to Israel at Mt. Sinai, ceased when Jesus died on the cross: *“having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out that way, nailing it to the cross”* (**Colossians 2:14**; please see also **Galatians, chapter 3 and 4** and **II Corinthians, chapter 3**).

Jesus Christ was born under the Law of Moses. He kept it perfectly. That is why He worshipped in the synagogue and the temple.

After Jesus returned to Heaven and gave His apostles the command to teach men His instructions, (**Matthew 28:19-20**), he apostles often went into the synagogues to teach because the Jews gathered there. But the apostles were not observing the Sabbath as a special day of worship anymore. They were simply using it as an opportunity to teach the gospel!

The Bible plainly teaches the special day of worship for Christians is the first day of the week. (**Acts 20:7**; **1 Corinthians 16:1-2**)

The Old Testament records the history of the world and communicates to us about who God is and the fact that He would send a Savior. Now that the Savior has come, we are to listen to Him and His teachings and follow a New Covenant. (**Hebrews 1:1-2**)

When governments publish lawbooks they sometimes

contain old laws carried over from previous years. The New Testament has thoughts and ideas that were contained in the Old Testament, such as “Do not commit adultery.” However, new lawbooks sometimes strike out old laws and do not carry them over, and even print new laws. Similarly, the New Testament does not carry over some things from the Old Testament, such as animal sacrifices. Also, the New Testament establishes new things such as worshipping on the first day of the week.

Just as lawyers and judges may learn from older lawbooks, we learn from the Old Testament. But none of us should follow laws that do not apply to us today.



## **8 - The Steps of Salvation**

The Bible teaches that sin is a transgression of God's law (**1 John 3:4**). All people who know the difference between right and wrong have sinned (**Romans 3:23**). The punishment for sin is death, which means a separation from God (**Romans 6:23; Isaiah 59:1-2**). This is the second death which is the lake that burneth with fire (**Revelation 21:8**).

God loves us. He does not want us to be separated from Him. Therefore, He has provided a way for us to be forgiven (**John 3:16**). God created man perfect, but lost that perfect man when he sinned. Only a perfect man could be given back to God to restore what He had lost. Since we sin, we are not perfect and cannot restore a perfect man back to God. God sent His only Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life and to die as a perfect sacrifice for our sins (**1 John 4:10**). Jesus suffered the punishment which we should have received for our sins (**Isaiah 53:4-6**). He did not die for His own sins, for He had none (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). He suffered for our sins on the cross so that we can be forgiven (**Romans 5:6-8; 1 Peter 2:24**). In order for us to be forgiven of our sins, and therefore receive eternal life, we must accept the salvation which Christ has made possible. There are six steps which we must take to receive this salvation.

### **HEAR**

First, we must hear the Gospel of Jesus. The Bible teaches that faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (**Romans 10:17, KJV**). One is not a Christian because his parents are. Faith cannot be inherited (**Ezekiel 18:20**). Each person must believe in Jesus for himself. Christianity is a religion of teaching (**Matthew 28:19-20**). Unless one has heard the Gospel and learned that Jesus Christ died for his sins, was buried, and arose from the dead, he cannot be saved (**1 Corinthians 15:1-4**). The apostle Paul wrote: *"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not*

*heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"* (**Romans 10:14**) One must first hear the Gospel before he can believe it.

## **BELIEVE**

Second, one must believe that Jesus is the Son of the living God (**Matthew 16:16**). Jesus said: "...except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (**John 8:24**). The jailor at Philippi asked Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They told him to *Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house*" (**Acts 16:30-31**). Jesus also said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (**Mark 16:16**). One comes to believe in Jesus Christ when he hears the Gospel taught. Faith comes only by hearing the Word of God (**Romans 10:17**). This is the reason it is so important that the Gospel be preached to the whole world (**Mark 16:15**).

## **REPENT**

Third, one must repent of his sins in order to be saved (**Acts 17:30-31**). Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change in actions. It is changing your mind about a life of sinning and rebelling against God's commandments and changing your actions to stop sinning and start following God's commandments. Jesus commanded that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (**Luke 24:47**). Repentance is a result of being sorry for one's sins (**2 Corinthians 7:10**). When the Jews on Pentecost Day learned from Peter that they had crucified the Son of God, they were cut to the heart (**Acts 2:37**). They wanted to be forgiven of their sins, so they asked, "What shall we do?" They were told "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins..." (**Acts 2:37-38**). When one repents, he turns away from his sins (**1 Thessalonians 1:9**). He shows he has repented by doing good works (**Matthew 3:8**).

## CONFESS

Fourth, one must confess that Jesus is the Son of the living God (**Matthew 16:16**). This great truth is the very foundation upon which the church of Christ is built (**Matthew 16:18**; **Acts 4:11-12**; **1 Corinthians 3:11**). Jesus said that we must be willing to confess Him before men if we want Him to confess us before the Father (**Matthew 10:32-33**). The apostle Paul wrote: “*But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach: because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*” (**Romans 10:8-10**). When Philip preached Jesus to the Ethiopian eunuch, the eunuch asked, “*what doth hinder me to be baptized?*” Philip told him he could be baptized if he believed. The eunuch then confessed, “*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God*” (**Acts 8:35-38**). We must make this important, yet simple confession also in order to be saved.

## BE BAPTIZED

Fifth, one must be baptized in order to be saved. Jesus said: “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*” (**Mark 16:16**). Please note that baptism follows belief. One who does not believe the Gospel cannot be truly baptized. Therefore, babies cannot be baptized for they are too young to (1) have sin, (2) hear the Gospel, (3) repent of sins, and (4) confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Baptism also follows repentance. On Pentecost Day, Peter told those who asked what to do to be saved to “*Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you...*” (**Acts 2:38**). One cannot be truly baptized who has not truly repented.

Baptism is a burial in water (**Romans 6:3-4**; **Colossians 2:12**). Therefore, sprinkling and pouring are not proper baptism. Baptism is in order to be saved (**Mark 16:16**; **1 Peter 3:21**). One is not saved before he is baptized! Baptism is “*unto the remission [forgiveness] of sins*” (**Acts 2:38**). Just as Jesus shed His blood in order to obtain the remission of sins (**Matthew 26:28**), so we are

baptized in order to receive the remission of sins. In baptism, the sinner's sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus (**Acts 22:16**).

What does one have to do in order to be forgiven of his sins? He must

1. Hear the Gospel of Christ;
2. Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;
3. Repent of all his past sins;
4. Confess that Christ is God's Son;
5. Be baptized for the remission of sins.

When he does this, he is added by the Lord to His church (**Acts 2:41, 47**). He is born again (**John 3:3-5**; **2 Corinthians 5:17**). He is in Christ where all spiritual blessings are to be found. (**Ephesians 1:3**; **Galatians 3:26-27**). In short, he is a Christian (**Acts 11:26**; **26:28**; **1 Peter 4:16**).

Are you saved from your sins? Have you taken these simple steps to salvation? If not, why not do so today?

## 9 - The Church Built by Jesus

Jesus said to Peter, “*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it*” (**Matthew 16:18**).

Jesus promised to build His church! He did not promise to build many churches, but only one.

The church that Jesus built was not built upon Peter. The word Peter in the original Greek text of the New Testament is “petros,” which is a masculine word meaning “little rock.” Jesus said “*upon this rock*” I will build my church. The word translated “*rock*” is the Greek word “petra,” which is a feminine word meaning “big rock.” It is impossible for the “*rock*” upon which Jesus was going to build His church to be Peter, because the word for “Peter” and the word for “rock” are two different words with different gender and meanings. Instead, the church was built upon the great truth which Peter had just confessed that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (**Matthew 16:16**). The “Christ” means “The Anointed One.” Jesus was the one the Old Testament prophets had prophesied would come and He is the one sent by God to offer salvation to mankind. The church would be built on this truth, not on Peter.

Paul wrote, For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (**1 Corinthians 3:11**). If a church is built on any other foundation, it cannot be the church Jesus built!

Jesus is the head of His church: “*And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence*” (**Colossians 1:18**).

The Pope in Rome is not the head of the church which Jesus built. No man on earth, or group of men, is the head of Jesus’ church. Only Jesus has all authority, both in Heaven and on earth (**Matthew 28:18**).

If a church does not have Jesus only as its head, it is not the church which Jesus built!

The church is the body of Christ: *“And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all”* (**Ephesians 1:22-23**). A man can have only one body. Since Jesus is the Head of the church, and the church is His body, this means Jesus has only one church. *“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling”* (**Ephesians 4:4**).

Jesus is the Savior of the body, which is His church: *“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body”* (**Ephesians 5:23**).

Since the church is the body of Jesus and Jesus is going to save His body, this means that if one wants to be saved, he must be a member of the church which Jesus built!

The church which Jesus promised to build began on the first Pentecost Day following the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Peter preached the crucified, resurrected, ascended Lord to a large crowd of people. He said, *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ”* (**Acts 2:36**). *“When the people heard this, they were pricked in their heart and cried out Men and brethren, what shall we do?”* (**Acts 2:37**). Peter plainly commanded them to *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost”* (**Acts 2:38**).

The Bible says, *“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls”* (**Acts 2:41**).

The last verse of Acts, chapter two, says: *“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved”* (**Acts 2:47b**). When the people believed that Jesus is the Son of God, turned away from their sins, and were baptized for the remission of sins, God added them to His church, the body of the saved.

Are you a member of the church Jesus built? You can be in the same way they did on Pentecost Day when the church began. Believe, and confess that Jesus is the Son of God, repent of your sins, and be baptized for the remission of your sins. When you do this, the Lord Himself will add you to the church which Jesus built.

# **10 - The Worship of the Church of Christ**

Jesus said, “*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth*” (**John 4:23-24**). Two things are required of worshipers if our devotions are to be acceptable to God.

1. **We must worship in spirit.** That is, our hearts must be right. We must be right in life. We must have the correct attitude. We must be thinking of what we are doing (**Isaiah 1:11-20**; **Proverbs 28:9**; **Matthew 15:8**).

2. **We must worship God in truth.** To worship God in truth means that we will worship God according to the truth. God’s Word is truth (**John 17:17**). Therefore, for our devotions to be acceptable to God, they must be offered in accordance with His Word.

The New Testament gives the acts of worship in which Christians are to engage. The acts of worship mentioned in the Old Testament such as dancing, instrumental music, animal sacrifices, special singers, and the burning of incense, were commanded only of the nation of Israel. The Old Testament as a binding law for God’s people ended at the cross (**Colossians 2:13-14**). Christians must learn from the New Testament, the law of Christ for all people today, how God wants to be worshipped today. The acts of worship required by God are plainly set forth in the New Testament.

## **THE LORD’S SUPPER**

The Lord’s supper or communion (**1 Corinthians 10:16**) consists of two things: (1) unleavened bread (without yeast) and (2) the fruit of the vine (grape juice). The purpose of the Lord’s Supper is to bring to our remembrance the sacrifice of the body and blood of Jesus on the cross for our sins (**Matthew 26:26-29**). We must be very careful when we partake of the communion that

we remember the blood and body of Jesus so that we partake in a worthy manner (**1 Corinthians 11:23-30**). Christians are to eat the Lord's Supper every first day of every week (**Acts 20:7**).

## PRAYER

Prayers offered to God are to be a part of our public worship as well as our private daily devotions. There are many examples and precepts concerning prayer in the New Testament (**1 Timothy 2:1-2, 8**; **Philippians 4:6**, etc.). In our prayers to God we give thanks and praise His name. In our prayers we can pray for our needs and for the needs of others. Jesus gave us a "model" prayer in **Matthew 6:5-15**. He did not intend for us simply to repeat this prayer by rote, but gave it as an example by which we could pattern our own prayers. Jesus Christ is our mediator and High Priest. Therefore, our prayers are addressed to God in the name of Jesus (**John 16:23**; **1 Timothy 2:5**; **Hebrews 4:14-16**; **1 John 2:1-2**).

## PREACHING AND TEACHING GOD'S WORD

God has commanded us to teach His Word (**Matthew 28:19-20**). Both saved and sinners need to be taught. Therefore, a lesson from the Bible is one of the acts of worship in which Christians are to engage (**Acts 2:42**). We must learn God's Word so that we can grow stronger in Christ, teach others, and overcome false teachings (**1 Peter 2:1-2**; **2 Timothy 2:2; 4:1-5**).

## GIVING

Giving of our means is a part of our worship to God. This is the way Christ's church gets the necessary funds to do its work. God has given us the perfect plan for giving (**1 Corinthians 16:2**). We are told who is to give, "*Let each one of you.*" We are told when we are to give, "*On the first day of the week.*" We are also told how much to give, "*As he may prosper.*" We show our love for God when we give cheerfully and willingly to Him (**2 Corinthians 9:7**).



## SINGING

Christians are commanded to praise God in song (**Colossians 3:16**). The kind of music God commanded for His church is vocal music only, that is, singing. There is no command or example anywhere in the New Testament for the use of mechanical instrumental music in Christian worship. To add instruments of music to our singing is a sin for it is adding to what God has told us that He wants. No man has the right to do this (**Revelation 22:18-19**; **2 John 9-11**). We are to make melody in our hearts (**Ephesians 5:19**), the instruments made by God, not instruments made by man! Neither has God commanded us to have special singers in our worship such as choirs. We are told to speak to ourselves (**Ephesians 5:19**) and to teach and admonish one another (**Colossians 3:16**). If it is my responsibility to speak, teach, and admonish through singing, then I cannot pass off that responsibility to others in a choir or other body. Every Christian must praise God in song just as every one must partake of the Lord's Supper for himself.

God is the audience and recipient of our worship. The purpose of our worship to God is not to entertain ourselves. Therefore, what we do in worship is not based on whatever appeals to us, but must be based upon what pleases God!

When we understand God's glory, majesty, wisdom, and strength, and reflect upon His infinite mercy in giving His Son to save us from our sins, our hearts will overflow. We will want to offer up a sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to his name (**Hebrews 13:15**).

# **11 - Organization of the Church of Christ**

The church is a kingdom over which Christ rules as king (**1 Timothy 6:15**; **John 18:37**; **John 19:19**). Christians are citizens in this kingdom (**Colossians 1:13**; **Hebrews 12:28**; **Revelation 1:9**). The world is the territory of this kingdom (**Matthew 28:19**; **Mark 16:15**; **Acts 1:8**). The new birth is the way we enter this kingdom (**John 3:5**).

## **ONE HEAD, ONE KING—CHRIST**

The church is the body of Christ and Christ is its only head (**Ephesians 1:22-23**; **4:4**). He has all authority (**Matthew 28:18**; **Colossians 1:18**). Because Christ is the head, we take our instructions from Him. Because He is king, we must obey Him (**Ephesians 5:24**).

The church has no earthly headquarters. The headquarters of Christ's church is in Heaven. Each congregation of the Lord's body is independent and self-ruling. There is no pope, council, conference, or group of people controlling all the congregations of the Lord's body. In the second and third chapters of Revelation, we can see Christ speaking directly to different congregations. Each one must answer to Christ for both the good and bad they have done.

## **ELDERS**

Elders are to be appointed in every church when qualified men are available (**Acts 14:23**; **Titus 1:5**). In the New Testament, elders are also called presbyters (**1 Timothy 4:14**); bishops (**Philippians 1:1**; **1 Timothy 3:1-2**); overseers (**Acts 20:28**; **1 Peter 5:2**); pastors (**Ephesians 4:11,12**); and shepherds (**1 Peter 5:1-4**). The word "pastor" is simply another word for "shepherd." The preacher of a congregation is not called a "pastor" unless he also serves the congregation as an elder. The elders of the local congregation are the pastors (shepherds) of each local church (**1**

### **Peter 5:1-4).**

Qualifications for elders are listed in **1 Timothy 3:1-7** and **Titus 1:5-13**. In addition to being a faithful Christian, an elder must be a man with a wife and faithful children. He cannot be a new member and be qualified. Also, there must be more than one elder serving in the local congregation. The Bible says “elders” (plural) (**Acts 14:23; 20:17-18, 28**). These elders are to guide, guard, feed, and rule the flock of God (**1 Peter 5:1-4; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17**).

## **DEACONS**

Deacons are to be appointed in every church where qualified men are available and where qualified elders have been appointed (**Philippians 1:1**). Their qualifications are listed in **1 Timothy 3:8-13**. The work of deacons would include what was done as recorded in **Acts 6:1-6**. Deacons can only be men. Women are not qualified to be deacons because they cannot be a husband of one wife (**1 Timothy 3:12**).

## **PREACHERS**

Preachers have the responsibility to preach the word (**2 Timothy 4:1-5**). As with elders and deacons, preachers are males (**1 Timothy 2:8-15**). They are evangelists, ministers of the Word of God (**2 Timothy 4:5**). In the New Testament, preachers are never called by titles such as “Reverend” or “Father” (**Matthew 23:8-12**).

## **MEMBERS**

Anyone who has obeyed the Gospel is a member of the Lord’s church (**Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 1:3**). Members of the church are to obey the elders (**Hebrews 13:17**). They are to teach the lost (**Acts 8:4; 2 Timothy 2:24-25**). They are to practice pure religion (**James 1:27**). They are to edify and build each other up. (**Hebrews 3:13**) They are to serve their fellow man. (**Matthew 22:39; Matthew 20:26**)

Christ is the head of all the congregations of His church and qualified men serve as leaders of the local autonomous congregation. Sometimes a church may not have elders or deacons for a time, whether it be due to death or not having men that are qualified. Congregations without elders or deacons can still be faithful to God and if at a later time men do meet the qualifications of elders and deacons they can serve in these roles when possible.

## 12 - All Things That Pertain to Life and Godliness

One purpose of the book of **2 Peter** is to combat heresy and Gnosticism. True knowledge is introduced (**1:2**) and this through Jesus Christ. True knowledge comes from fellowship with Christ (**Colossians 1:9-10**). False knowledge is that Gnostic doctrine that denies the deity of Christ, that defies God's authority, and is an inevitable failure under God's plan of salvation. Another purpose of this book is to assure the Christians, to whom it was written, of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. The main subject of the book of **2 Peter**, however, is salvation to all men.

Simon Peter (**1:1**), of course, wrote the book. Simon was his given Hebrew name but this was later changed to Peter (πέτρος [petros] - a pebble). This name was given to him by Christ (**John 1:42**). Peter addresses himself as a servant and an apostle (**2 Peter 1:1**). He was a servant of Jesus as Lord, Master, and King. He was an apostle of Jesus as the Messiah, the Christ who brought eternal life.

Grace and peace (**1:2**) is the usual blessing and these come only through the knowledge of Jehovah God.

Peter writes of His divine power (**1:3**) which refers to the divine power of God and not of himself. Since salvation is the subject under consideration, His divine power would necessarily refer to the Gospel which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (**Romans 1:16**). It is the Gospel that gives all men all things that pertain unto life and godliness. Therefore, any doctrine or practice that is not authorized by the Gospel does not have anything to do with spiritual life and godliness and is therefore damnable (**Colossians 3:17**). It is through the Gospel of Jesus Christ that man has everything needed to live a godly, spiritual life and to go to Heaven. This is why God has commanded "*Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed,*

*handling aright the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15).* One who does not give diligence and who is not earnest in the study of God’s word is one that cannot be approved of God. But if one will exert himself in the study of God’s word and apply it to the actions of his body and his mind, his works will be approved of God and he will have nothing to be ashamed of.

One who gives himself to God and His Word may claim the exceeding great and precious promises of God (1:4). The promises are great because no one but God can grant such promises and they are precious because all the wealth of the world cannot purchase them. The pure blood of the Lamb, Jesus Christ, purchased them. It is through these promises that one may partake of the divine nature which means that one will develop god-like qualities which will distinguish him from those in the world.

Then in verses 5-7, one is given instruction on how to become fruitful in the Lord. Again, one must be giving all diligence (1:5). No exertion must be spared. There must be the fullest cooperation with God. Then we are to add to your faith virtue (1:5) which is moral courage (not compromising the truth). This is a natural part of trusting God. One must next add to virtue knowledge (1:5). Moral courage must be guided by knowledge. Not of self (as the Gnostics) but of God. And to knowledge temperance must be added to our lives (1:6). Temperance (self-control) is standing for right without undue anger. To this, one is to add patience (1:6). A Christian must consistently practice self-control and be longsuffering, patient, and willing to endure (hold up under pressure of) the heavy loads of life. To patience one must add godliness (1:6). This means reverence for divine things and fearing and obeying God. And to godliness one must add brotherly kindness (1:7), a practice of kindness toward his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Finally, one must add to brotherly kindness charity, or love. This is the agapē love that cares for both the physical and spiritual needs of all men (Matthew 5:44-46; Romans 12:20-21; Galatians 6:10). Love is wanting what is best for the other person even if it means you do not get what you want. Christ showed us that love when He went to the cross, and now we must show that love to all men. This love is to be characteristic of

the Christian's life.

It is these qualities in one's daily life that will bring forth good fruit (**1:8**). Therefore, these qualities must abound and if they do, they will show forth the knowledge of Christ in us, they will show forth our sincerity as Christians, and our devotion to Christianity.

But without these qualities one is blind. He has defective moral vision, he cannot see what his future good requires, and he cannot see how once he was lost. One needs these qualities to make his calling and election sure.

Diligence to the end is needful in order to obtain salvation. With these qualities in use in one's daily lives, he sets forth the proper example and his entrance into heaven will not be in question (**1:9-11**).

Gnosticism is a knowledge of self and denies Christ. Christianity is a knowledge of God and the hope of eternal salvation. Do you know the Lord? More importantly, does He know you? He does not if you have not obeyed the Gospel and are not faithful to Him (**Matthew 7:21-23**).

## **13 - The Vine and the Branches**

Jesus Christ was the greatest teacher the world has ever known! He made very difficult ideas easy for people to understand. He often used things in nature to explain His teachings. One example of this is found in **John 15:1-8**.

Here Jesus compares Himself to a vine. God, the Father, is the vinedresser, the one who cares for the vine. Disciples of Jesus are the branches in the vine. Jesus said: *"I am the true vine."* The vine is the means of giving life to the branches. It is only by remaining in the vine that a branch can have life. It is only through Jesus that we can have eternal life.

Many others have claimed to be the way to God. Mohammed boasted that he was God's last and greatest prophet. Millions of people follow him. But Mohammed died and remains dead. He can give life to no one! Buddhists claim Gautama was the "Enlightened One" who came to show us the true way to God. But Gautama has been dead for 2,500 years. He can give life to no one. He was simply a man.

Jesus died, but He did not remain in the grave. He arose from the dead (**1 Corinthians 15**). He has power over death and will live forever (**Revelation 1:17-18**). He is the creator of the world and the giver of life. (**John 1:3**) He is eternal. (**1 Timothy 1:17**) Would it not make sense then that Jesus is the giver of eternal life? (**Hebrews 5:9**)

We can have hope of eternal life only if we trust in Jesus Christ and obey Him. Jesus said: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (**John 14:6**). John wrote: *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life"* (**1 John 5:11-12**). Jesus also said: *"I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing"* (**John 15:5**).

Many false teachers today say that Christ is the vine



and the various man-made churches or denominations are the branches in the vine. They say, "One branch is the Baptist Church, another the Lutheran, another the Roman Catholic, another the Seventh Day Adventist, etc." Jesus did not say, "I am the vine, and denominations are the branches!" He said, "*I am the vine and you are the branches.*" He said, "*If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch...*" (**John 15:6**) Disciples of Christ are the branches in the vine, not denominations. If you are a Christian, you are a branch in Christ.

When God created the world. He gave the law of reproduction. He ordered that every form of life would produce after its kind (**Genesis 1:11-12**). Can you imagine a tomato vine producing from the same vine corn, beans, and cabbages?! It is not possible. A tomato vine can only produce tomatoes. Christ, the true vine, can only produce Christians. He cannot produce Lutherans, Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc. The seed is the word of God. (**Luke 8:11**) If we sow the seed of Christ it will produce Christians, which are followers of Christ. Sowing the true, uncorrupted seed of God's word, the Bible, will produce true, uncorrupted Christians, not hyphenated Christians such as Lutheran-Christians.

Christ's church was promised by the Lord (**Matthew 16:18, 19**). It was built on the first Pentecost Day following His return back to Heaven. If we obey the Word of God, we will be added by the Lord to His church, not to some man-made denomination (**Luke 8:11; Acts 2:36-38, 41, 47**).

Too, Jesus, the true vine, taught that branches in Him must bear fruit. "*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*" (**John 15:2**).

Fruit is not produced directly from the vine, but the branches in the vine bear the fruit. Jesus does not directly tell men today what to do to be saved. He gave the Great Commission to men (**Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46-47**). It is our job to preach the gospel to the world and to baptize believers into Christ.

Branches in a vine which do not produce fruit are cut off

and burned. Those who obey the gospel, but who do not work for the Lord and bear fruit, will also be cut off. Christians must use their talents to serve the Lord.

Some falsely teach that a child of God cannot fall from grace and be lost. But Jesus said that unfruitful branches will be cut off and burned. The Apostle Paul warned: “*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*” (**1 Corinthians 10:12**). He also spoke of some fell from grace (**Galatians 5:4**).

The branches which are burned teaches us that lazy Christians will be cast into Hell and burn forever and ever (**Matthew 25:30, 41, 46**; **Revelation 21:8**). Christians are branches in Christ which bear much fruit by living faithful lives, helping others, and serving God. Men will see their good works and praise God (**Matthew 5:16**). Christians must always be ready to do good (**Galatians 6:10**; **Titus 3:1**).

Are you a branch in Christ, the true vine? If not, you do not have eternal life.

You can become a branch in Christ if you will believe in Him (**John 8:24**), repent of all your sins (**Luke 13:3**), confess Christ before men (**Matthew 10:32**) and be baptized into Him (**Mark 16:16**).

If you are a branch, but are not producing fruit by doing good works, you will be cut off and be lost. You need to repent and receive the Lord’s forgiveness (**Acts 8:22**; **1 John 1:6-9**).

***Truth For The World*** is a global,  
evangelistic effort overseen by the  
Lebanon Church of Christ in  
Lebanon, Virginia, USA.

Evangelistic works like these  
are made possible by the generous  
donations of Christians and  
congregations of the Church of  
Christ.

***Truth For The World***

PO Box 241

Bethel Springs, TN 38315

United States of America

[www.truthfortheworld.org](http://www.truthfortheworld.org)



