

THE FATHER'S HEART

New Believers Course



STUDY

PAGE

CONTENTS

- 1 ALL HAVE SINNED 2
- 2 ALL CAN BE SAVED..... 10
- 3 WATER BAPTISM 19
- 4 VICTORIOUS LIVING 27
- 5 THE LORD'S SUPPER 34
- 6 THE CHURCH 41



Welcome to the SPIRITUAL DISCOVERY SERIES We are glad you have chosen to study with us. We believe the discoveries you make

through the use of the *Spiritual Discovery Series* will positively impact your life.

The *Spiritual Discovery Series* will challenge the user to ask questions of the biblical text, discover principles from the text and make personal application of those truths. The Bible is the text. This guide is a tool for study.

The *Spiritual Discovery Series* is for use in either individual or group settings. Individuals will be excited by the discoveries made possible through a structured inductive study. Sunday School classes and other groups will find the *Spiritual Discovery Series* a valuable tool for promoting enlightened discussions centered on biblical truth.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

1. **PRAY** before beginning each study session. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate your mind. 2. **CHOOSE** a translation of the Bible which you trust and can understand. It will be helpful to have

more than one translation available to aid your understanding of the biblical text.

3. **THE BIBLE** is your primary text. Avoid using commentaries or reference books until after completing your own study. Reference works are best used to confirm your findings. On occasion, the study guide will direct you to use reference material. This is done when special insights are necessary for proper interpretation.

4. **READ** the assigned biblical text at least twice before answering any questions. This will provide an overview and focus on God's Word.

5. **CONCENTRATE** on the biblical passage which you are studying. It is tempting to jump from one passage of Scripture to another in an attempt to make spiritual connections.

6. **SEEK** tangible ways to apply the principles gleaned from each study. Bible study should never result in "head knowledge" alone. Bible study should lead to action.

STUDY 1

ALL HAVE SINNED

Society has made self-improvement very popular. It's almost impossible to keep track of all the new exercise equipment, beauty techniques, and fashions available to enhance one's appearance. But even those with no Bible knowledge realize that fixing up the exterior does not meet the

underlying need they have in their lives. People try to ignore this deeper problem by busying themselves with self- improvement. What they don't realize is that ignorance is not always bliss.

God states untiringly that mankind's problem is that we have all fallen short of his requirements for us. All have sinned. No individual can escape this fact. In every race, economic level, age level, and career path, sin can be found. Only Jesus is sinless. This sin separates us from God, and in doing so, creates a feeling of emptiness. What we need to know is this: what is sin and how does it affect our lives?

THE IMPARTIAL STANDARD

God has held up the same standard of judgment to all people of all times--obedience to him. This obedience is demonstrated in the life of every person who accepts Salvation through Jesus Christ as the restoration of fellowship with God. What brings people to this point of restoration is the realization of their spiritual condition and the willingness to accept God's plan.

- 1. Read Isaiah 64:6 and Romans 3:23. What did these verses state about our spiritual condition?**

- 2. In Genesis 2:16 - 17 what command did God give Adam and expect him to obey?**

- 3. Read Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 26:18, 28:1, 9; 32:46-47. Record below the different times God expressed His desire for obedience from the Israelites in these passages.**

What would be the result?

Twice Moses was called to the top of Mount Sinai by the Lord. The first time God spoke the Ten Com- mandments to Moses (Ex. 19:16 to 20:17). The second time, after 40 days and nights on the mountain, Moses retraced his steps down the mountain carrying with him the two tables of stone (Exodus 24:12-18; 31:18). The Ten commandments were the Law which God gave to His chosen nation to obey.

4. Read Romans 3: 1-2; 9: 4-5. What privileges given to Israel called for their obedience to God's law?

5. According to Deuteronomy 28: 9 - 10, why was Israel to obey God's law?

6. What do Acts 10: 34-35 and Romans 2:11 reveal about God's expectation of obedience from people?

How can God expect obedience from the Gentiles if he has not given them the Law to obey? He does not hold the Gentiles responsible for sinning against the Law of the Old Testament. However, he does hold them responsible for sinning against a law which He has written in their

hearts, and especially for their lack of response to the urging of the Holy Spirit to repent and accept Christ as their Redeemer.

God has given to all people, everywhere, means of knowing right from wrong. The Law, as transmitted to Israel, enabled the Israelites to know right from wrong in an absolute and final way. Human experience does not give an absolute final knowledge of right and wrong, but it does provide a relatively accurate knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. Failure to do what they know is right is to sin against God.

7. Read Romans 2: 14-15. According to this passage what is expected of those who do not have the law?

THE IMPARTIAL JUDGE

God does not show favoritism (Romans 2:11). He is an impartial Judge using the same standard for all people.

8. According to Romans 2:12 -13, how can someone escape the judgment of God?

THE IMPARTIAL VERDICT

Guilty! God has made His verdict very clear. It holds true for all people. Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

9. Genesis 3:6. What motivated Eve and Adam to deliberately disobey God?

10. Read Genesis 3:16 - 19. What were the specific judgments against Eve and Adam?

Adam and Eve suffered God's judgment and were banished from the Garden of Eden. Even today we still feel the effects of this verdict upon their disobedience. When the nation of Israel received the Law through Moses, conditions were not greatly altered. Death had entered the world because of Adam and Eve's sin and had continued to the time of Moses.

11. Read Romans 5:12-14. What explanation for the continuation of death between the time of Adam and Moses can be found in this passage?

12. Read Romans 3:19-20; 5:20. Did the Law eliminate the possibility of sin? Explain.

13. Read Leviticus 18:5 and Ezekiel 20:11. What do these verses say about what may be gained by keeping the Law?

Compare the above Scripture references with Galatians 3:10 and James 2:10. What do these verses say about living by the Law?

14. Read Romans 3:10, 12. What verdict has been given by God to all people, including the Gentiles?

What significance is there to the fact that all people have sinned through disobedience to God? There must be a reason for God to so explicitly demonstrate our sinfulness. There must be a penalty from which He wants to steer us.

15. Read Matthew 13:41-42; 25:46; Mark 9:43; Luke 16:19-31; John 5:28-29; 2 Thessalonians 1:9 and Revelation 20:15. How is the penalty for disobedience described in these passages?

16. Read Romans 1:20-23. What does this passage say about the attitude of people about God throughout all times?

How have the events of Romans 1:24-32 been fulfilled in today's society?

In Matthew 10:28 Jesus warned His followers to fear the One who was able to destroy both soul and body in hell rather than one who could kill only the body here on earth. He intended that this truth of eternal punishment should change the behavior of the disciples. Eternal punishment is not just a scare tactic to get people to give up their sinful lives. It is an attempt to cause individuals to see the reality of their need for

a relationship with God in which they obey His commands and not their own desires.

God has not left people without a solution upon the recognition of their need. He is not just an impartial Judge. He is also a loving, gracious Father. As much as He has pointed out the sinfulness of people, He has also revealed His plan for redemption from this eternal punishment.

17. Read 1 Timothy 2:4-6. What is God's desire for all people and how can this be accomplished?

SUMMARY

All people throughout history have sinned against God. From Adam and Eve, to the giving of the Law, to the time of Jesus, to now--everyone has fallen short of God's standard. Jesus alone is sinless. As harsh a reality as it may seem, the punishment for this sinfulness is eternal torment in separation from God.

Nothing we can do can repair our relationship with God. Obedience is His expectation. But in ourselves, we are unable to fulfill this expectation. And sometimes in our efforts we only draw ourselves further away from Him.

But God, while demanding obedience impartially from all people and judging us all guilty, is loving and merciful. As our Creator, He desires that all people would come to know Him and be in relationship with Him. He has provided a way for us to reconcile ourselves to Him--Jesus Christ, His Son. By accepting His sacrifice as substitute for ours, we can be in right relationship with God and experience eternal life with Him.

LET'S REVIEW 1. If Israel was expected to obey God, in what way was Israel privileged?

2. How can God expect obedience from the Gentiles if He has not given them the Law to obey?

3. Does the Bible teach that life may be gained by keeping the Law? Explain.

4. What is God's penalty for sin? What will be the future condition of sinners?

5. What is God's desire for all people? How has He offered this opportunity?

STUDY 2

ALL CAN BE SAVED

The fact that everyone has sinned and is under the penalty of eternal punishment places a dark shadow over our lives. To live with this knowledge with no offering of hope would throw people into despair. Could a truly loving God leave us in this state of hopelessness?

God's resounding answer to that question is: No! Just like the sun breaking through after a dark storm, God presents His plan for hope to us--all can be saved. His desire is that no one would die in his or her sinful state, but would allow God to have His way in his or her heart. God's provision for individuals is not through church attendance or membership in a certain congregation. It is through belief on Jesus Christ and repentance of sins. It's really that simple and is impartially available.

NEEDED BY ALL

In God's sight, all people stand condemned and lost. It's all good and well to tell everyone they have sinned against God but some will ask, "In what way have I sinned?" God has identified the different ways people have sinned so that their sinfulness is stated more clearly.

- 1. Read Psalm 5:9; 10:7; 140:3; Romans 3:13-14; and James 3:5-6, 8. What descriptions of sinning are recorded in these passages?**

Many people believe that this area of sinfulness is not serious. What are a few words of gossip, an angry remark under one's breath, a teasing comment taken the wrong way? Some people throw words around without thinking of their lasting effect on another individual. But God's Word makes it clear that He feels sins of this type are quite grievous. Reconsider the adjectives used in the above Scripture references. This instrument is violent and evil. None can tame it.

To sin by the use of hurting words would seem to include every person. If that doesn't impress an individual of his or her lack of perfection, there are other areas mentioned in the Bible.

- 2. Read Isaiah 59:7 and Matthew 5:38; 15:18-20. What do these passages reveal as another source of sin in people's lives?**

Why might this type of sin be so difficult to deal with?

- 3. Read Isaiah 59:6-7 and Romans 3:15-16; then read John 8:41, 44. What realm of sin is identified in these references?**

Who is their source?

Usually those people who ask, "In what way have I sinned?" are speaking of outward acts of sin. Many of these persons may have hidden their sinful deeds from human view, but God sees everything that everyone does. He can read every thought, hear every word, and observe every deed. Who wants to be faced with a recording of all that he or she has thought, spoken, or done? Small wonder it can be said that every person has sinned and needs salvation.

PROVIDED FOR ALL

Just as God impartially judged all people of sin, so He impartially grants salvation to all who believe. God has provided it for everyone, but each individual must accept His gift of salvation.

4. On the lines below, write out Romans 3:22-24 and memorize the passage.

There are three theological terms that describe this salvation from God and its provision to restore a person's relationship with Him.

q Justification. God's salvation offers justification to the sinner. To be justified is to be accounted or declared righteous. When a person is justified or declared righteous, it does not mean that the person has never sinned. But the sinner does become, in God's sight, as though he had never sinned, declaring him or her to be righteous even though he or she has sinned. What a wonderful provision of salvation this is! God offers to forget the past, to wipe out the sins of people's lives, and to consider each one just and pure.

q Propitiation. God's salvation contains a propitiation. A propitiation is a satisfying atonement or appeasement which favorably alters a relationship. A person's sins bring him or her into an unfavorable relationship with God. This relationship has been positively adjusted through the payment Christ made on the cross for the sins of all people. Christ's shed blood is a propitiation for every person and satisfies the demands of God's righteousness and justice, atoning for sins. It enables God to call individuals just.

q Redemption. God's salvation provides complete redemption. Redemption means "*buying back at a cost or a price.*"

5. Read 1 Peter 1:18-19. Identify the price by which our redemption was bought and by what we are not redeemed.

6. Read Romans 3:25-26. In what two ways did God demonstrate justice to mankind?

7. Read Romans 3:27-30. What do these verses disclose about God's plan for redeeming people to himself?

What part does the individual play in this plan?

God's salvation has not lost its power by the passage of time. It is still all that is needed for an individual to face temptations and failures of the future. A person needs only to receive God's gift to experience a restored relationship with God.

OFFERED TO ALL

God not only has provided salvation for all, but He also offers salvation to all. He impartially extends His gift of salvation to every individual.

8. Read Ezekiel 18:32 and 2 Peter 3:9. What is revealed about God?

9. Now read 2 Peter 3:4-6. How did this instance of intervention demonstrate the above characteristic as well as God's judgment?

10. How do Jesus' words in Matthew 24:14 demonstrate God's desire for all to turn to Him?

Satan would like people to see God as cruel and demanding, unjustly throwing weak, helpless humans into eternal torment. He portrays God as finding joy in damning souls. So many people see Him as Someone who is just waiting for them to make a mistake so that He can "zap" them. But the Bible gives the true picture of a loving but just God who gains no joy from the death of sinners. He would rather they all come to know Him and turn away from the wicked things they do. (Ezekiel 33:11).

There are several phases involved in receiving salvation which God offers to all.

q Repentance. To accept God's offer of salvation, the sinner must repent of his or her sins. This is more than simply feel bad because of sins.

11. Read Ezekiel 18:21-23. Write out the definition of true repentance as it is described in this passage. What is the result of this repentance?

q **Faith.** By faith the sinner receives salvation. The repentant sinner longs to be free of the bondage of sin; by faith he or she permits Christ to break the bonds.

12. Read John 20:31; Romans 5:1; Galatians 2:15-16; 3:26-28; and Ephesians 2:8. What do these passages tell us about faith and its relationships to salvation? Where is it from?

13. Read Romans 6:23. What benefit results from demonstrating faith in Jesus Christ?

q **Regeneration.** When the sinner repents and turns to God in faith, God regenerates or gives the sinner a rebirth.

14. Read John 3:3-6. Describe the type of rebirth received upon regeneration by God.

15. According to 2 Corinthians 5:17, how does Paul explain regeneration?

Just as God has no favorites whom He protects against judgment, so He has no favorites to whom He offers exclusive rights to be saved. All people can be saved. God wants everyone to repent, to believe, to be regenerated.

16. Read Romans 10:13. What guarantee does a sinner have when he or she repents and asks God for salvation?

Sin and salvation both reach beyond this life into eternity--one into eternal torment and one into heavenly bliss. Salvation provides many rewards here on earth also. Christians are free from the guilt and power of sin, no longer captive to the lusts and desires of the flesh. They are brought into fellowship with God, candidates for Holy Spirit baptism, and experience peace and contentment they never imagined possible before they were saved.

All of these blessings are enjoyed on earth, during this present life. But the final reward of a Christian is not on this earth.

17. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:17. What is the ultimate reward for a Christian?

18. Read Matthew 6:20; John 14:1-6; and Revelation 21:1 through 22:5. On the lines below, write out the description of heaven and the New Jerusalem found in these passages. (Look for more than the appearances.)

19. According to the following passages, what will be the condition of the Christian once in heaven? (Matthew 13:43; Romans 8:17; 2 Corinthians 4:17; Ephesians 1:18; Philippians 3:21; Colossians 3:4, 2 Timothy 2:10; Revelation 22:5).

SUMMARY

Although God has judged every individual to be guilty of sin, He has a plan that will allow individuals to have a relationship with Him and receive the ultimate reward of sharing eternity with Him. We all need salvation and He has provided a way for us to accept His offering.

Through faith in Jesus Christ and repentance of sins, God gives us new life. This new life is a spiritual life. Through this regeneration, God justifies us and declares us to be righteous. His gift is offered to all people with no exceptions. Despite Satan's attempts to show Him otherwise, God is patient and loving, not wishing that any individual should die without coming into relationship with Him. He would like to have all His creation spend eternity with Him.

Heaven is a wonderful goal toward which we must travel each day of our lives. Let's live with eternity's values in view. Let's remember the unending glory that will be ours in that place and do our best to bring other lost souls with us to heaven.

LET'S REVIEW

1. In what ways do people sin?

2. What is contained in the salvation that God has provided?

3. Define propitiation.

4. What does redemption mean?

5. With what did Christ redeem us?

6. Describe the final reward for a Christian.

STUDY 3

WATER BAPTISM

The Christian life is basically one of obedience. One command Jesus gave just before His ascension was that His disciples practice and teach water baptism (Matthew 28:19). In light of this, water baptism is not optional.

One of the first things a Christian wants to do is let others know of the change that has occurred in his or her life. One of the ways to make a public testimony is by being obedient to Jesus' command to be baptized in water. But water baptism is also a deeply spiritual rite that has meaning far beyond the testimony given. It is meaningless unless it is the act of one who has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior.

COMMANDED BY JESUS

The practice of water baptism reaches back to the very foundation of the Christian Church, for it is one of two things Christ commanded all believers to observe. Historically, Protestants have recognized water baptism and the Lord's Supper as ordinances. In its broadest sense, the term *ordinance* simply means "a thing commanded or ordained." In the Church, an ordinance is a commandment given by Christ which all believers must follow.

For the Early Church the idea of water baptism was not entirely new. It was a Jewish custom to baptize Gentiles who became converts to Judaism. And, immediately prior to Jesus' ministry, John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ by calling for persons to be baptized in water.

1. Read Mark 1:4, Luke 3:3, 21; and Acts 19:4. What was the purpose of John the Baptist's baptism? Who took part in this baptism?

2. Read John 1:26-27, 29-34. What is said about John's baptism in this passage?

The baptism in water as practiced by John and the baptism in water as commanded by Jesus had different meanings.

3. Read Acts 19:2-5. How does this account make it evident that the two baptisms were not the same?

PRACTICED BY THE APOSTLES

The commandment Jesus gave to His apostles in Matthew 28:19-20, was spoken at the time of His ascension to heaven. After Christ disappeared into heaven the apostles returned to Jerusalem to await the coming of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit filled the disciples (Acts 2:1-4), a great crowd gathered to see what the commotion was about, then lingered as they heard the disciples glorify God in other tongues.

Although the apostles had done some baptizing during the ministry of Jesus (John 3:22, 4:1-2), the first baptizing by the apostles after the commandment of Jesus seems to have taken place at Pentecost, ten days after the ascension of Jesus. The multitude that gathered while the disciples spoke in tongues also heard Peter's sermon, explaining what was happening, and why.

4. Read Acts 2:37-41. What precedent was set following Peter's sermon?

How many followed Christ in this manner on that day?

5. Read Acts 8:13, 8:36-38; 9:18; 16:14-15, 31-34; 18:8 and 1 Corinthians 1:14-16. List on the lines below the incidents of baptism recorded in these passages. (Who baptized and who was baptized?) What requirement for Christian baptism is made clear by these passages?

6. Read Acts 10:47-48. What is revealed about the availability of water baptism?

NEEDED BY BELIEVERS The Meaning of Water Baptism

We see the reason for the Lord's emphasis of water baptism when we understand its true meaning. It is a picture or representation of a spiritual truth. Baptism in water is a representation of the identification or union of the believer with Christ.

There are many Scripture passages that clarify the relationship of water baptism to the Christian's identification with Christ. Perhaps Romans 6:1-11 gives the most complete picture. So how do we identify with Christ through water baptism? There are several ways.

Baptism shows that the believer is identified with Christ in His crucifixion . Stepping forward to take part in water baptism is a physical demonstration of what the Bible says in several passages.

7. Read Romans 6:1-2, 6 and Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 6:14. According to these passages, in what way does the baptized person identify with Christ's crucifixion?

How, then, is this an important symbolic step for the Christian?

Baptism shows that the believer is identified with Christ in His death. (See Romans 6:3) Christ died for us because of sin. We die to sin because of Christ. The individual who accepts Jesus as Savior is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). Baptism in water is a picture of that baptism into the body of Christ.

Baptism shows that the believer is identified with Christ in His burial. The believer's past with its sins and disgraces are all buried.

8. Read Romans 6:4 and Colossians 2:12. How does the Christian demonstrate identification with Christ's burial?

Baptism shows that the believer is identified with Christ in His resurrection . The Christian life involves far more than crucifixion, death, and burial of self and sin. It also includes resurrection!

9. Read Romans 6:5, 8; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 2:4-6; and Colossians 2:12. For what reason are given this resurrections?

10. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17. What is the final display of this resurrection?

Baptism shows that the believer is identified with Christ in His walk in newness of life . Before becoming a Christian a person is following the vain thoughts of his or her own mind; understanding is darkened because of separation from the life of God. Because of this, the sinner's way of life is entirely different from what God wants and expects. This person is uneasy in church, dislikes gospel services, and feels most comfortable around people who are unsaved.

11. Read Romans 6:4; Ephesians 4:22-24; and Colossians 2:6. What happens to a sinner after repenting and giving his or her life to God?

Where and with whom might the new Christian feel most comfortable?

12. Read Colossians 2:10, 12-13. How does Paul describe what we gain through salvation and following Christ in baptism?

THE MANNER OF WATER BAPTISM

The question often arises, "What is the scriptural manner of baptism?" The believer wants to follow the Lord's instructions, but sees many different religious organizations practicing different methods of baptism. Some groups sprinkle water on the candidate for baptism. Others pour water on the person. Still others immerse the individual in the water. But what do the Scriptures teach?

13. Read Mark 1:9-10; John 3:23; and Acts 8:38-39. What manner of baptism is indicated in these passages?

The English word *baptism* is a transliteration of the Greek word *baptisma* . That is to say, we have made the Greek word into an English word. So, wherever the English word *baptism* occurs in the New Testament, it represents the Greek word *baptisma* , and preserves the same meaning as the Greek word.

The Greek word, *baptisma* , is based upon another Greek word, *bapto* , which means "I dip" or "I dye". It is used in three instances in the New Testament.

14. Read Luke 16:24; John 13:26; and Revelation 19:13. The Greek word *bapto* is used in each of these verses. What meaning of the word is disclosed?

If *baptism* is derived from the Greek *baptisma* or *bapto* , what conclusion can be drawn concerning the biblical manner of water baptism?

Another important part of the manner of baptism is found in Jesus' command to His disciples just before His ascension.

15. Read Matthew 28:19. Concerning baptism, what was Jesus' command?

16. Read Acts 2:38. How can Peter's statement be reconciled with Jesus' command?

SUMMARY

Water baptism is a symbol of believers turning away from their old sinful lives and following Christ in all ways. It is an outward show of giving themselves to God through faith in Jesus Christ. It demonstrates the stages of crucifying their old self, dying to the things of the flesh, putting past sins behind them, rising anew through the power of God, and walking in relationship with Jesus.

Water baptism doesn't grant salvation but gives testimony of it. It does not rid us of our old selves, but signifies the being rid of it. It is a natural step to take after becoming a believer. Water baptism is one way in which a Christian can live in obedience to Christ, since He commanded us to do so (Matthew 28:19).

The practice of water baptism had been around for quite some time before Jesus stated to His disciples that they should make disciples themselves and baptize them. But the ordinance as we know it began at the point of the Church's first major growth spurt--the Day of Pentecost. Three thousand new believers were baptized after listening to Peter's sermon. We need to continue to follow Him in water baptism, demonstrating our dying to ourselves and allowing Him to live through us.

LET'S REVIEW

1. What does ordinance mean? What is a Church ordinance?

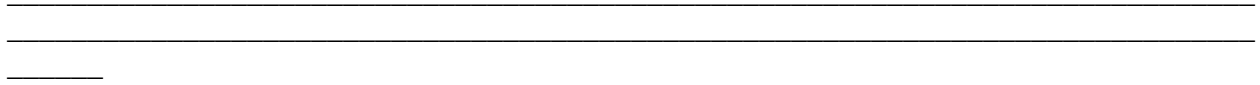
2. When did Jesus command water baptism?

3. Was water baptism a completely new idea to the apostles? Explain.

4. How was the baptism which Jesus commanded different from the baptism practiced by John the Baptist?

5. In what ways does baptism illustrate the believer's identification with Christ?

6. What is the biblical manner and formula of water baptism?



STUDY 4

VICTORIOUS LIVING

What do we mean by the phrase "a victorious Christian life"? Perhaps we can understand better by way of contrast. A defeated Christian is insecure, constantly yielding to temptations, and unhappy. He or she does not have peace because a spiritual fight is still going on within. A defeated Christian has not yielded completely to God.

Victory is not an elusive quality which is beyond our grasp, but neither can we gain it by our own efforts. Victorious Christians have learned a wonderful secret. The way to power over sin, temptation, and self is by claiming Christ's victory over Satan as their own. True victorious living means complete identification with Christ. Yielded to Him, the child of God enjoys the actual victories Christ purchased on the cross.

GOD'S PROVISION

The victorious work of Christ has always been part of the eternal plan of God. His victory over Satan and the powers of darkness was foreseen by God. To understand victorious Christian living, one must look at the enemy who attempts to keep us from victory. Christ defeated him on the cross, but why was that necessary?

1. Read Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:16-17. What is revealed about Satan in these passages?

What sin was attributed to him?

What was God's response?

2. Read Genesis 3:15 and Luke 23:44-46; 24:1-7. What judgment did God pronounce on Satan in this verse?

How was the prophecy given in the Genesis account fulfilled in the Luke accounts?

3. Read Romans 5:6; Galatians 4:4-5; and Hebrews 2:14-15. What is stated about the timing of Christ's coming to earth?

For what purpose did He become a man and live with us? (See also 1 John 3:8).

4. Read John 8:34 and Romans 6:16. How do people enslave themselves to Satan?

Christ came to bring freedom to people who are in slavery to Satan. His victory over Satan was complete. He stripped him and his demons of all power. Colossians 2:15 tells us that He made public displays of them. But Christ did not intend to keep His victory for Himself only. He came to share it. In Christ's victory Satan and his forces were forever made powerless against Him and all those who believe in Him.

5. Read 2 Timothy 1:10. What else did Christ bring to those who would believe in Him?

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Satan continually tries to make the Christian look at himself and his shortcomings rather than to Jesus and His victory. The basis for victorious Christian living is found in the Christian's union with Christ. The person who is united with Jesus finds that Christ's victory over Satan is his or her victory. Satan is powerless against such a person.

Many people who believe in Christ do not realize the comprehensive nature of the victory which they have in Christ. These people try to live victoriously by their own efforts. These attempts are very sincere but if their source of strength is only within themselves, they cannot succeed. Individuals who try to find victory in this way will be sure to give in to temptation or seek to justify themselves with self-made rules and regulations.

6. Read Colossians 2:20-23. What does the Bible say about those who live according to human rules?

7. Read 1 Corinthians 15:57. From where does our victory come?

8. Read Romans 6:8-14. How was spiritual victory accomplished and how is it ours?

God has given us the wonderful promise of victory. The key to victorious living is not daily resolve to over- come this or that sin. In fact, that attitude brings the sin too much to the mind of the believer. The secret of victory is to yield completely to Christ, to fill the mind with the things of God, and to remain open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The person who is caught up in the sin of loving money more than anything cannot gain victory over it by just gritting his or her teeth and determining to stop wanting money. There must be a conscious act of focusing on heavenly riches; seeing that heaven is near, life is short, and eternity

is unending. To be truly wealthy this individual must lead people to Christ and invest in God's work. As God makes these truths real, this person will find complete victory over the love of money. A greater love for God will replace a lesser love

for worldly possessions. In this way, he or she gains victory.

We can accomplish victory by realizing that we are truly dead to our sinful lives but alive in God through the work of Jesus Christ. We are not only dead with Christ; we are also risen with Christ. Through this identification in the resurrection of Christ, sin is made powerless over the believer.

9. Read Colossians 3:1-3. What responsibility does the Christian have to live victoriously?

10. Paul gave specific instruction concerning victorious living. Read Romans 6:12-13. What is indicative of the victorious life?

Obedience to rules and regulations of humankind does not prove that individuals are living victoriously. Some people have taken the attitude that since Christ supplies the victory, they need do nothing. They feel that any effort on their part is a work of the flesh. This attitude is entirely wrong. Each believer has a will. Individuals control their own lives and guide their own decisions every day. They decide whether or not to

let Jesus rule their lives. Victorious Christian living is like boarding a train. The train does the work; it carries the passengers at a speed far faster than they could run. But the passengers decide whether or not to board. Thus Christians who live victoriously do so by the strength and power of Jesus Christ, but believers choose whether or not to claim this victory.

A person demonstrates yieldedness to God in practical Christian living. The person who is yielded to God does not yield to sin.

11. Read Colossians 3:5-9. In order to live in victory, what must we do?

12. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Ephesians 4:22-24. What happens when someone becomes a Christian?

13. Read Colossians 3:12-15. What evidences of a victorious life should we display?

SUMMARY

The victorious Christian recognizes that his or her life is actually Christ's. The believer is united with Christ in His glorious victory over Satan. He or she is a new creation, free from the domination of sin because of that victory. There is no excuse for not living victoriously. The Christ-life is a victorious life, a life transformed through Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit of God. All that is necessary is that the believer use the power for victorious living which has been made available in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Christian merely needs to begin to live like the victor he or she already is.

Satan claims that the victorious life is impossible. But God says it is ours to claim, if we will. It is a life of Christlikeness; a life created anew from the ruins of past failures; a life formed by the power of the indwelling Son of God. None of the defeats we have suffered in our Christian walk prove that a victorious life is impossible. Instead, they merely show that victory through our own efforts is impossible.

We have victory. Victory through Jesus Christ our Lord!

LET'S REVIEW

1. Why was the victory of Christ over Satan necessary?

2. What caused Satan to rebel against God who created him?

3. What is it that brings people into the slavery of Satan?

4. What responsibility does the Christian have to live victoriously?

5. How does a person show that he or she is yielded to God?

STUDY 5

THE LORD'S SUPPER

The cost of redeeming people's souls was colossal. It was nothing less than the blood of Jesus Christ. The sinless One gave up His life for the sinful many.

Just before Jesus was to go to the cross, He had one last meal with His disciples. At this meal He instituted the observance of the new covenant He was about to make available to those who would follow Him. This observance has been labeled the Lord's Supper and the direction to participate in it came straight from Jesus. Christ shared the first Lord's Supper with His closest friends, the disciples, and directed them to continue its observance in remembrance of Him. The Lord's Supper is a memorial to the sacrifice Christ made to obtain eternal salvation for us.

JESUS COMMANDED IT

Several sessions ago, the ordinance of water baptism was studied. As you may recall, an ordinance is a commandment given by Christ which all believers must follow. Most Protestants believe that there are only two such ordinances. The Lord's Supper, or Communion, is the second ordinance.

It was during the last night of His life, the night He was betrayed, that Jesus commanded the observance of the Lord's Supper. When so much was crowding in upon Him, Jesus must have felt the ordinance was very important to have taken the time to set it before His disciples on that last night, just before He went to Gethsemane and to the cross.

1. Read Luke 22:17-22 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. What are the specifics of Jesus' command?

Until what time are we to continue observing this ordinance?

Jesus was aware of the fact that His death was imminent. He had prophesied of it many times during His three-year time of ministry.

2. Read Mark 2:20 and John 2:19, 21; 6:51. Identify the symbols Jesus used to refer to himself when prophesying of His coming death.

Unlike us who have no certain knowledge of the future, Jesus knew His ministry would come to an end, He would be betrayed by a friend, and His death would involve great suffering. Jesus, throughout His ministry, had spoken of His death many times. Death to self was central in the mission of Christ. It must also be to us.

In the last few months of His life, Jesus referred to His approaching death even more often. He would share these prophecies while teaching the disciples. While on the way to Jerusalem on His last journey, Jesus prophesied His death with great detail.

3. Read Luke 18:31-34. What details does Jesus share with His disciples in this passage?

Read Mark 9:31-32. How had the understanding of the disciples changed since the time of the prophecy recorded in Mark 9 to the prophecy recorded in Luke 18?

4. Read Luke 22:14-16 and 1 Corinthians 5:7. Why, do you think, had Jesus been looking forward to this Passover?

Jesus knew that after this Passover supper, His death was not far off.

Some people have confused the Passover supper and the Lord's Supper, thinking they were the same observance. They were separate events. The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ after He and his disciples had eaten the Passover supper.

The Passover which they were observing was instituted to commemorate the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt by the Lord. It reminded them of the Passover lamb whose blood was shed to provide protection for the inhabitants of each house. (See Exodus 12:3-17.) The Lord's Supper which Jesus instituted was to remind Christians of the Lord's death on the cross.

But it is significant that the first Lord's Supper coincided with the Passover.

5. Read John 1:29, 36 and 1 Peter 1:18-19. Considering the title used to refer to Jesus in these passages, what is the significance of the timing of the first Lord's Supper?

The night Jesus introduced the Lord's Supper was a night of transition. The Passover, which spoke of God's former covenant with His people, was to be replaced by the Lord's Supper, which celebrates God's new covenant with the sinful people of this world. The event marking the dividing line between the two covenants was the cross of Christ. The death of the Passover lamb provided deliverance from Egypt; the death of Jesus Christ provided deliverance from sin. The one foreshadowed, or pointed toward, the other. When Christ died, the reality symbolized by the Passover observance materialized (Colossians 2:16-17). There was no longer any need for the Passover observance.

THE APOSTLES OBEYED HIM

On the night before He died, Jesus observed the Lord's Supper with His disciples. There was the feeling of close fellowship brought by the ordinance as Jesus once again told the disciples He would become their substitute as He died for their sins.

6. Read Matthew 26:28 and Luke 22:19-20. How did Jesus express to His disciples the message of His substitutionary death?

7. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23. From this text, how would you assume Paul learned about the Lord's Supper?

What does this method of communication say about the importance of this ordinance?

8. Read 1 Corinthians 10:16; 11:26. When we take part in the Lord's Supper, what should we recognize about Jesus' death?

What are we saying with our actions when we eat the bread and drink from the cup?

THE CHURCH SHOULD CONTINUE TO OBEY HIM

The apostles received the ordinance of the Lord's Supper to pass it on to the Church. Every Christian should observe the ordinance. All believers should be conscious of the meaning of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper as they take part in it.

9. Read 1 Corinthians 11:20-22. What was the problem in Corinth in regard to the church's observance of the Lord's Supper? Why was this a problem?

Now read 1 Corinthians 11:30, 32, 34. What was the result of their abuse?

Like anything related to Christianity, this ordinance can be abused. The Corinthian church did not fully understand the symbolism of the bread and the wine. Instead they used it to fulfill their personal appetites. In his letter, Paul gave them, and us, directions for properly observing the Lord's Supper. When properly understood and practiced, the Lord's Supper can become a milestone in the spiritual development of the sincere child of God who desired to obey the command of the Lord.

There are four distinct characteristics relative to the observance of the Lord's Supper.

1. It is a time to remember.

The meaning of the Lord's Supper is the same today as it was in the early days of the Church. When Christians take the Lord's Supper, they are looking back at the way in which Christ died as a substitute for them. The taking of the bread and the cup proclaim that Christ has become their personal Passover Lamb (See 1 Corinthians 5:7; 11:26.)

In Luke 22:1, Jesus instructed the disciples to observe His Supper in remembrance of Him. In remembrance of what exactly? There are at least a couple things about Christ's life and work for us that we can remember at the time of taking the Lord's Supper.

10. Read Isaiah 53:4-5 and 2 Corinthians 5:21. In what way do these passages prompt us as we take Communion to remember Christ?

Now read John 6:48, 50-51, 53-56. Based on this passage, in what other way should we remember Christ and what He has done for us when we take the Lord's Supper?

Upon considering His suffering, we also remember what our end would have been had we not met and accepted Christ as our Savior. He is the Bread of Life! His Supper helps us keep that fresh in our minds.

2. It is a time to anticipate.

We are to observe the Lord's Supper until He comes (1 Corinthians 11:26). This speaks of two things: (1) We are to continue observing the event until Jesus returns; and (2) Jesus will come back someday. Jesus' return for His Church is inevitable; we are told to testify of this belief by participating in the Lord's Supper. Each time Christians gather around the Lord's table they remember His words and look forward in anticipation of the Second Coming. One day the Lord's Supper will be observed for the last time of earth. Then Jesus will return and gather His redeemed children to himself!

3. It is a time to evaluate.

We cannot speak of salvation and the Second Coming without also considering our own selves. The Lord's Supper is a time when a Christian should put himself before the spotlight of the Spirit.

11. Read 1 Corinthians 11:27-31. What instructions does Paul give the Corinthians, and us, in this passage? What is the importance of doing this before taking the Lord's Supper?

4. It is a time to fellowship.

The word *communion* actually means "fellowship," "partnership," or "sharing." This term appears in 1 Corinthians 10:16 when referring to the cup and the bread which are blessed. When believers take the Lord's Supper, they are drawn into close fellowship with each other as they unite in remembering the shed blood and the broken body that purchased their redemption.

But the fellowship is more than Christian with Christian; it is Christian with Christ. Christians experience the same close fellowship the disciples experienced the night Jesus instituted the ordinance. It's a time when people realize that Jesus has taken their sins, and they share His righteousness. The Lord's Supper seems to be a time when God's presence is especially evident as believers faithfully observe the ordinance of God.

SUMMARY

Jesus has directly given the Church only two ordinances: to be baptized in water, and to remember Him by taking part in Communion or the Lord's Supper. It seems the importance of these two acts is unquestionable since Jesus went out of His way to emphasize them.

Jesus instituted His Supper in recognition of His death to cover the sins of all mankind. It replaced the recognition of the Passover. His sacrifice was a sacrifice once and for all. The Lord's Supper was directed so that Christians throughout time would never forget the substitutionary death of their Lord Jesus Christ. Just as the Passover lamb protected the Israelites in Egypt, Jesus offers protection and redemption for all who believe on Him. His was the greater sacrifice which paid the debt of all humanity in full.

The Lord's Supper is an opportunity for believers to recall the incredible price paid for their redemption. It is an opportunity to identify with Christ in His death (1 Corinthians 10:16). It is an opportunity for believers to realize where they would be without Christ's sacrifice. And it is an opportunity to proclaim that they believe in His return. Jesus died on our behalf, offering His body and His blood for us. We need to observe the ordinance of the Lord's Supper with a full appreciation of its meaning.

LET'S REVIEW

1. Why are water baptism and the Lord's Supper ordinances?

2. When did Jesus command observance of the Lord's Supper?

3. How are the Passover supper and the Lord's Supper different?

4. How did Paul become aware of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper?

5. Explain the four distinct characteristics of the Lord's Supper.

STUDY 6

THE CHURCH

What is the Church? Is it a building? Is it a group of people? Is it a system of rituals and beliefs? Exactly what or who makes up the church?

The true foundation of the Church is Jesus Christ Himself. A person becomes a member of the Church by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, not by merely signing the membership roll of a local church. The membership of the Church is far more exclusive than that of church organizations. Many people are united physically with a church group who are not united spiritually with Christ.

Once someone joins the Church through faith in Christ, he or she becomes part of a larger Body. Each member contributes toward the well-being of the entire Body. Every individual needs to recognize his or her function and perform it whole-heartedly for the glory of the Lord, for the good of the Body as a whole, and within the organization of the Church.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH

About six months before His death, Jesus asked His disciples a very important question, which is recorded in Matthew 16:13. Jesus asked His disciples who people said He was. This disciples' response to that question indicated the popular opinions people had regarding His identity.

1. Read Matthew 16:13-14. What was the response of the disciples?

What does this say about the clarity of most people's view of Jesus' identity? 2. Read Matthew 16:15-16. How did Peter respond to Jesus' more direct question to the disciples?

Jesus' question to the disciples was important; it was doubly important considering to whom it was directed. They had been with Him, hearing Him teach and seeing Him work. Of all people, they were given the best opportunity to discover His identity.

Peter's answer was a good one, having its source in divine revelation rather than in the opinions of other people. Jesus even commented on the fact it was the Father who had opened Peter's spiritual eyes to recognize who Jesus really was.

Peter's confession of faith revealed a foundation upon which Jesus could build His Church. He could not build it upon the uncertain foundation of men, even men like John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or even Peter. At best, these men of God could be stones.

3. Read Matthew 16:17-18. How does Jesus respond to Peter's answer?

In order to understand that Jesus' response was not to imply that Peter would be the foundation of the Church, we must look at the Greek text and how it is literally transliterated into the English text. The word *Peter* is a transliteration of the Greek word *petros* , which means "stone" or "a piece of the rock." The word *rock* is a translation of the Greek word *petra* , which means "solid bedrock." The use of the two distinctly different words shows that Jesus did not intend to build His Church upon Peter. Peter was a stone in the total structure, not the "solid bedrock" upon which the Church stands. Jesus Christ is the foundation.

4. Read Ephesians 2:19-20 and 1 Peter 2:4-8. How do these two passages refer to Jesus?

Read 1 Peter 2:4-5. How does Peter refer to believers?

Just as Peter is a stone in the structure of the Church, so are we. He became a stone through his confession of faith (Matthew 16:16). We become stones in the Church in the same way Peter did, that is, through faith or belief in Christ Jesus as the Son of the Living God. Peter knew he and all believers were just parts of the structure of the Church. He knew that Jesus Christ was the chief cornerstone.

A cornerstone is a foundation stone occupying a key position in the structure of a building. In biblical times, a cornerstone not only united two walls, but it also bore the pressures exerted by those walls.

5. Read Isaiah 53:6, 12. Considering the previous paragraph's description of a cornerstone, how would the verses in Isaiah describing the coming Messiah point to Jesus?

6. Read Isaiah 28:16; 1 Corinthians 3:10-11; and Ephesians 2:21-22. What important facts about the Foundation of the Church are shared in these passages?

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

The Bible presents several word pictures of the Church. We have just seen it described as a building of which Christ is the foundation and Chief Cornerstone. The Church is also pictured as the Body of which Jesus is the head--the spiritual body of Christ.

Christians are not only pictured as individual living stones composing a building; they are also pictured as individual parts composing a body.

Although no one picture fully embraces the complete glory and majesty of the Church, each helps us visualize the invisible Church. Each picture gives us an intimate glimpse into the close relationship which Christ has with each member of His Church.

7. Read Ephesians 1:22-23 and Colossians 1:18. By whose authority and for what purpose is Christ the Head of the Church?

Read Ephesians 5:23-24. How should we honor Christ as the Head of the Body?

8. Read 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Ephesians 5:23. How do people become members of the Church?

The Church is composed of all those who have accepted Christ as Savior. Just as being registered on the membership roll of a local church does not make someone a part of the Church, not being registered does not exclude someone from membership in the Church. As long as that person believes on Christ, he or she is a member of the body of Christ, the Church.

Every member of the body of Christ is important. The well-being and proper functioning of the Body is dependent upon the well-being and proper functioning of all the members of the Body. Paul shares this principle with some humorous words.

9. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12, 14-17, 19-26. In what ways does Paul compare the functioning of the body of the Church to a human body's functions?

What does Paul say about the status of the different body part? What is the purpose of maintaining this status?

10. Read 1 Corinthians 12:18 and Ephesians 4:16. Who determines where each member of the Body fits? What is necessary for the Body to benefit (grow)?

Proper functioning of the Body means that every member of the Body is in its right place performing its proper task. Paul highlights this in his comical discussion of the different body parts and their jealousy of other parts (1 Corinthians 12:15-17)

The place each member of the body of Christ occupies in that Body is dependent upon God and His will, and is not dependent upon the ambitions or desires of each individual. Each member is assigned to the position and function in which he or she can best work for the general welfare of the Body. Each Christian can know that God, in His love and mercy, has placed him or her in the best possible ministry. That is why, for example, the Holy Spirit has bestowed different spiritual gifts upon different members of the Church (1 Corinthians 12: 8-11). God knows through which members of the Church He can best exercise specific gifts for the good of all the members of the Body.

11. Read Romans 12:4-8. In what manner should members fulfill the demands of their different positions and functions?

12. Read 1 Peter 4:10-11. What is the ultimate purpose of members properly filling their positions?

As we trust God in His assignment of responsibility within the Body and begin to operate in those assigned functions to the best of our ability, personal glory will diminish. God is glorified when each of us functions as a good steward of the particular position given to us. Even if a job or position seems quite routine, it is eternally important because it is the job God has assigned.

No member of the Church should feel that his or her particular ministry, service or gift makes him or her better than some other member. It is God who is supposed to be glorified by the Church, not the members of the Church. God does not view the functioning of one member of the Body as being more honorable than that of another. (See 1 Corinthians 12:24-26.)

13. Read Romans 12:3 and Philippians 2:3-11. How should we treat one another? After whom are we to fashion our attitude toward others?

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

The Church, the body of Christ, is a living thing--an organism. Every part of that organism, every member, is equal to every other part or member. The head of the Church is Christ. Every other member is subject to Him.

However, every body is assembled in a certain way. For example, as we examine our own bodies, we see that they are put together in a specific way. The way a body is put together is called its organization. No body exists without some degree of organization. When a body loses control of its arms and legs, it is partially impaired. It can not perform its tasks perfectly, as originally designed. Likewise, the body of Christ must be a smooth-working organism that proceeds in an organized manner.

In the Early Church the need for organization came as the scope of the Church enlarged. The Church was centered in Jerusalem, and the apostles were the leaders or overseers of that Church.

14. Read Acts 1:15-17, 20-26 and 6:1-7. For what two reasons did the leaders of the Church have to make changes in the organization of the Early Church?

As more local churches came into being, they each had their own bishop, or overseer, and deacons (Philippians 1:1). These bishops and deacons exercised important ministries in the Early Church.

Bishops (overseers):

Our word *bishop* means "overseers," which is a good translation of the Greek word *episkopos* from which it comes. The function of bishops was to oversee a local church. They were also called *elders* or *shepherds*. They were responsible for the spiritual condition of the local church. Most people today would call them pastors.

15. Read Acts 20:28. Who did Paul say had placed these men over the local churches?

In present time, when a pastor comes to lead a congregation, the members should consider that the Holy Spirit has appointed this person for their church for that particular period. Many churches could have greater influence for the Lord if other members of the Body would accept their pastor as selected by God.

16. Read 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17-19; and Titus 1:5-9. How should overseers or pastors be treated?

What are the qualifications for holding the position of overseer?

Deacons:

The office of deacon is also highly spoken of in the Bible. Our word *deacon* comes from the Greek word *diakonos*, which we have borrowed and made part of our language. The Greek word is translated to reference the work of a servant, but not a slave.

17. Read Acts 6:1-4. What incident prompted the selection of the original deacons?

What did the work of the deacons free the apostles to do?

Now read 1 Timothy 3:8-13. What are the qualifications for serving as a deacon?

Deacons were added to free those exercising the pastoral ministry from the cares of the temporal affairs of the church. The original deacons were selected to "wait on tables" (NIV) or "serve tables" (KJV). The word *tables* in this passage (Acts 6:2) actually refers to money tables. Therefore, deacons were most likely responsible for the financial affairs of the church. This allowed the apostles more time for preaching and praying. The appointment of deacons should not imply that one job was more important than the other, since we have already learned that all members of the Body are vital and important (1 Corinthians 12:15-17). What this does show is that temporal affairs of the church must be tended to. Christ expects His Church to meet both its temporal and spiritual responsibilities.

18. Read Acts 11:1-18; 11:27-30; 15:1-30 (especially vv 6, 12, 25). From these passages, how were the individual churches of the Early Church associated? (Was there an overriding governing body?)

SUMMARY

First and foremost, we must believe that Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Church. No one else is able to fulfill this function. Every believer is a part of His Church, but Jesus is the One who holds it together.

God has given each believer a gift to be used for the good of the Church and to the glory of God. As all believers work together in harmony and love, the Church will benefit and will grow. God's perspective is that

every member of the body of Christ is equally important and all should work as servants to the others.

God has also built a system of government for local churches. He establishes pastors and provides deacons and other lay leadership to care for both the spiritual and temporal aspects of church responsibility. And in all of this, a believer's goal should be to love others and work toward sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with the world.

LET'S REVIEW

1. Who did the general public believe Jesus was? How about the disciples?

2. Describe a cornerstone.

3. How does Jesus fulfill the description as the cornerstone of the Church?

4. How do people become members of the Church?

5. What was the function of deacons in the Early Church?

6. What was the function of bishops (overseers) in the Early Church?
