

# DOCTRINAL OUTLINES



Worldwide Church of God

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## GOVERNMENT IN GOD'S CHURCH

### I. Introduction

- A. Which form of government is proper for the Church? Incredible as it seems, while most thinking people have at least paused to ponder the merits of various civil governments, hardly anybody stops to notice the type of government in the church he or she attends, or to ask if it is indeed biblical.
- B. This ignorance is dangerous! For how can a church claim to be true unless its very foundation -- its government -- is patterned after the heavenly rather than the earthly?
- C. You need to understand how the government of God's true Church is designed, and how it must operate.

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. God's government in His Church is a theocracy, with Christ at the helm and God's chosen ministers fulfilling responsibilities under Christ in the form of a pyramidal hierarchy.
- B. It is a government of faith, in which the leaders submit their wills to Christ and the members trust God to administer His Church through those leaders.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. It takes no great thought to see that the governments of the churches of established Christianity find themselves far afield of the biblical model.
- B. Many churches are democracies, in which the members elect their officials to run the church and even hire and fire the ministers. Others are partial democracies, in that their prime leader is voted into office, although lesser officials may then be appointed.
- C. Some churches have independent local governments that send representatives to larger councils to decide important matters, while others have religious patriarchs who make the decisions by themselves.

- D. Still other churches seem to be governed by a sort of "survival of the fittest" rule, in which those who have the necessary political savvy vault themselves into top leadership positions.

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. Just what is the proper government for God's true Church? How does it work? How are its leaders appointed? Who keeps the leaders on the right track?
- B. No serious Bible student could successfully argue, based upon the Scriptures or upon the laws of logic, that the Bible propounds any governmental structure except that in which God is the living head. Thus it is a theocracy, which means a government by God.
- C. Indeed, God the Father is supreme commander of all things, including the Church. Even Christ stated: "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28).
- D. Even so, the Bible directly states that Jesus Christ has been delegated the overall direction of the affairs of the Church. Read Ephesians 1:22, 5:23 and Matthew 16:16-18.
- E. Although the Scriptures clearly pronounce Jesus to be the Church's Head, the government of the Church does not cease with Christ.
1. Christ is the cornerstone of the government, He appoints men to official positions under Him as parts of the governmental foundation.
  2. In Ephesians 2:19-20 Paul states the Church is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone."
- F. In the New Testament, the offices of government are primarily those of the ministry, with other administrative offices being filled by qualified lay persons as necessary.
1. Ephesians 4:11 states: "And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers."
  2. I Corinthians 12:28 mentions other unordained offices that fill administrative functions.
- G. It is plain from these verses that although all ministers are "elders" (a general term roughly equivalent with "minister"), all ministers are not of equal rank or responsibility.

- H. Verses such as I Timothy 5:17 and I Corinthians 5:1-5 prove that God has given the ministry authority to govern and not merely to preach truth without being able to enforce it within the Church.
- I. Hence we see that the Church is governed through its officers, the ministry, according to their individual ranks and functions, under the direction of Jesus Christ, who Himself is subject to God the Father.
- J. But of supreme importance are two remaining questions regarding proper government in the Church.
1. Who appoints the ministers in the Church and how?
  2. Since the leaders of the Church are appointed and not elected, who keeps the leaders on track and guides their actions to ensure they remain steadfast?
- K. To begin with the first question, ministers are appointed to their posts and ordained to their ranks by the Church, through the other ministers who are already ordained. This in accordance with clear biblical directives.
1. Christ told His disciples that they had not chosen Him, but that He had chosen them (John 15:16).
  2. They were not voted in nor did they volunteer.
  3. Further, the apostles were commanded by God to ordain others (Acts 13:1-3), and Paul directed that qualified men be ordained (Titus 1:5).
- L. This process of ordination is not capricious, at the whim of either the individual who does the ordination or the one to be ordained.
1. The person considered for ordination must first meet the qualifications of the position, as described in I Timothy 3:1-7.
  2. In addition, proof must exist that he is called to the job by God. That proof must be found in the form of the fruits of his life, which exhibit themselves to the existing ministry of the Church (Matthew 7:15-16).
  3. These important decisions may be accompanied by much prayer and fasting (Acts 13:3)
- M. As can be seen, the office of the ministry is not something for which one can volunteer or something one can choose for himself in the traditional sense.



- N. Because ministers are appointed by those above them in the chain of authority, one might wonder how the chief minister of the Church, the pastor general, is chosen, and by whom.
1. In the case where an existing pastor general anticipates his own death or disability, he may, after prayer and wise counsel, himself appoint a qualified successor.
  2. If he dies or becomes disabled without having appointed a successor, the ministers of highest rank in the Church would appoint a successor according to God's will after prayer.
  3. If no such appointment were made, God would by circumstances of His own design thrust the man of His choice into the forefront of the Work (even against the man's own will if necessary -- see Jonah 1 and 2).
- O. It must be stressed that God chooses the man appointed to the job of pastor general. The individual did not choose himself. It is not something for which a man can volunteer. Neither is it the choice of the man or men who may appoint him, although they might be used as human agents to discover God's will and then implement it. The choice is God's.
- P. God places each member of the Church into whatever responsibility in the Church pleases Him (I Corinthians 12:18).
- Q. All that has been said thus far about government in the Church highlights the need to understand the second question posed above: Since Church leaders are appointed and not voted into office, and since, therefore, the members are not watchdogs over the leaders, who is responsible for keeping these leaders on track spiritually and administratively?
1. The answer is that God's government in His Church is a government of faith. Simply put, this means members believe that behind the physical, outward appearance of the Church, is the unseen hand of Jesus Christ, who directs its affairs.
  2. True Christians today trust Christ to direct the Church, bless it, correct it or its officers if need be and steer its general course.
  3. From the time of Moses and the rebellion of Korah (a leader in the congregation who was killed by God for insubordination -- Numbers 16), through

the age of the apostles and the rejection of Judas Iscariot from his apostleship, to the present day, Christ has demonstrated His ability to:

- a. run His Church,
  - b. place capable men in their proper positions,
  - c. discipline those who need it,
  - d. and reject from His Church those unfit to wear the Christian mantle.
4. The very existence of the Church and the Church's continuing vitality proves this beyond dispute!

#### V. Key Verses

Here are a some important scriptures to specially note:

- A. Ephesians 1:22, 5:23 -- Christ is the Head of the Church.
- B. Ephesians 2:19-20 -- the foundation of Church government is key men upon the cornerstone of Jesus Christ.
- C. Ephesians 4:11 and I Corinthians 12:28 -- offices of the ministry are listed in terms of rank.
- D. I Corinthians 5:1-5 and I Timothy 5:17 -- ministers have authority to rule.
- E. Acts 13:1-3, Titus 1:5, I Timothy 3:1-7 -- ministers are appointed by God's will according to their qualifications.
- F. I Corinthians 12:7-10, 18 -- Christ places men into various offices as it pleases Him.

#### VI. Conclusion

Yes, though men through the millennia have struggled to form effective governments for their nations, they have left virtually unnoticed the question of proper church government. But God has not neglected His Church, and has put within it the cornerstone of His Son Jesus, and the foundation of those He has called to serve as leaders in His Church with power and vigor.

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## WHO AND WHAT IS GOD?

### I. Introduction

- A. "Everyone knows His name," observed one wise man, speaking about God, "but no one seems to know Him!"
- B. True words, those. And ironic words, too. For in a modern world packed with Bibles of every translation and description, and even having the Word of God on computer, millions have indeed heard God's name. But precious few seem to know much about the living God!
- C. What a pity. But we need not -- we must not -- remain in ignorance of this absolutely foundational principle of Christianity. We simply must know who the real God is and what He is like.

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. The Bible clearly reveals God's nature, to those who will listen and believe. God is the eternal, supreme Creator.
- B. He is one God, but at present a Family of two beings, the Father and Son, who are alike as the loving, kind, merciful rulers of all reality, and who have opened their Family to all those humans who will be saved.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. Of course, the religionists of this world would not quickly agree with this definition.
- B. The non-Christian world has images of God -- or of "gods" -- that cover virtually every possible (or, rather, impossible) conception.
- C. Some view God as an animal-like creature, or as the sun, or like a man but with six arms. Others think god is "everywhere," meaning He is in water or sand or the wind.
- D. Still others think of Him only as a force, a great beginning power that has no personality, form or shape.

- E. Even Christians argue among themselves. Usually, though, in Christian circles, believers think God is a trinity -- a three-in-one God that they admit is a "mystery."
- F. Further, they believe that this trinity is closed, that none shall ever enter within this sacred triumvirate of the God-realm.
- G. Some, especially those who fancy themselves as cosmopolitan and educated, don't believe God exists at all, or if He did, that He is now dead!
- H. Which, if any, of these ideas is correct?

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. Probably the place to begin is with God's composition. We, of course, are human -- that is, mortal and made of the elements.
- B. It is not so with God, for Scripture plainly says that "God is a Spirit" (John 4:24, Authorized Version).
- C. We know from other verses that beings composed of spirit, including angels, for example, are on a higher level of existence than we, and that such spirit is not limited by the physical laws of nature to which humans are bound (John 3:5-8, Deuteronomy 4:12).
- D. But, although composed of spirit like the angels, God is not a mere angel. No, He is in a class, quite literally, by Himself: "To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord Himself is God; there is none other besides Him" (Deuteronomy 4:35).
- E. And not only is God in a class by Himself, but He is higher in rank than all other things, since He is the Creator of all things, and it follows that the creator is above the creation.
- F. Notice this very point, made by the author of Hebrews: "He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:3-4).
- G. Time and again God confirms He is the only God, and a God above all else:
  1. "I am the Lord, and there is no other; there is no God besides Me" (Isaiah 45:5).
  2. "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last" (Revelation 1:11).

- H. Besides being a spirit, the only God and above all else, we find that God is both eternal (having no beginning or ending) and immortal (will live forever).
1. Deuteronomy 33:27 -- God is called "eternal."
  2. Deuteronomy 32:39-40 -- "Now see that I, even I, am He, and there is no God besides Me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand. For I lift My hand to heaven, and say, 'As I live forever....'"
- I. Of course, it is natural for humans to want to see God or, if we cannot, to at least know what He looks like. Unless we can see at least a mental image of God, we cannot feel we know Him. Yet Scripture, contrary to the beliefs of many, says plainly and pointedly, "No one has seen God at any time" (John 1:18).
- J. Clearly, the prospect of seeing God in the flesh is nonexistent. But we are not left in darkness, for the very one who said no one has seen God, the apostle John, also said in the same verse, "The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He [Jesus Christ] has declared Him."
- K. One way Jesus declared the Father was through Jesus' very presence on earth as a visible person. In response to Philip's request that He "show us the Father," Jesus said: "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:8-9).
- L. We know from this verse and many others (such as Genesis 1:27) that the Father resembles human form, although He (like Jesus Christ, pictured in Revelation 1:13-16) is glorified in flaming brilliance, with hair white as snow, "eyes like a flame of fire," with "feet...like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace," and His face "like the sun shining in its strength."
- M. God is no rock or fish, no washed-out, pale stone statue dead on an altar, without any life whatsoever except for moss clinging to it through the centuries. He is like the sun, while retaining the general features found in humans.
- N. Yet, such a powerful, brilliant, eternal, immortal, omnipotent being would be but a terror to us all if such a one were evil and wicked, a spiritual despot who wreaked havoc through the universe and only made

humans to torment or to provide entertainment for His own fiendish schemes.

- O. But our God is not such a God. No, He is the very opposite of that worrisome picture, so much so, that John, unable to find stronger words to describe God's goodness, says, merely, "God is love" (I John 4:8).
- P. Love, then -- and love is an outgoing concern for others -- is God's greatest single attribute, His greatest quality.
- Q. Yet it is not God's only character quality, for, as the Bible shows, He is also full of "joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control," the fruits of His Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).
- R. And even that is not all, for it would require many more pages to quote verse after verse describing all God's attributes -- God's loving forgiveness and mercy, His power, His zeal, His eternal, positive, immortal, immutable, unstoppable greatness!
- S. Yes, our God is a good God, filled only with desire to do good for us. He would never hurt us. No, He would die before He hurt you, and, in fact, He has. Read about it in John 3:16!
- T. In the face of such great news about God, it's hard to imagine what could be said further. But the best is yet to come. And that best is this: God is a Family -- a Family you can enter as a full member and child!
- U. The fact that God is Family should not have eluded so many professing Christians for so long. The Scriptures abound with references to God the Father and God the Son. Yet most have simply chosen the plain meaning of these verses and instead interpret such words as merely symbolic.
- V. A great block to understanding that God is a Family is found in the common misconceptions about the Holy Spirit (misnamed "Holy Ghost") being a person. Such a nonbiblical belief must be handled in detail elsewhere, but suffice it to say that such a belief chokes out the truth about the God Family by:
  - 1. adding a third person to the Godhead who has no assigned role as Father or Son, and hence does not fit the Family scheme (and thus diverts one's understanding from it) as revealed in the Bible,

2. and creates the familiar closed trinity that so many Christians believe in.

- W. Such a belief contradicts the greatest truth of God, that you and I can enter the God Family as full members, on the God level and thus very God ourselves, under the authority of the Father and Son. This incredible truth is the plain teaching of God's Word (John 1:11, 12, II Corinthians 6:17, 18, Galatians 4:5-7, Romans 8:14-17, I Corinthians 15:35-55, John 17:20-26).
- X. For more information on this vital subject, read "Just What Is the Holy Spirit?," The Incredible Human Potential and Your Awesome Future -- How Religion Deceives You.

#### V. Key Verses

Although this is a large subject, it helps comprehension to remember, or even memorize, a few key verses:

- A. John 4:24 shows God is a spirit being.
- B. Isaiah 45:5 shows God is the only God.
- C. John 1:18 reveals that no one has seen God, but that the Son has declared Him.
- D. Revelation 1:13-16 describes God's glorified body that shines with tremendous brilliance.
- E. John 1:11-12 conveys the astounding truth that we can enter the God Family.

#### VI. Conclusion

Yes, this world knows God's name, but does not know Him. But those who will hear and believe the simple, but exciting truths that flood from His Word can know both His name and who and what He is!

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## WHAT IS MAN?

### I. Introduction

- A. "I am not an animal! I am a human being!" exclaimed John Merrick, the so-called "elephant man," called this because he was sadly deformed by a physical debility that twisted his features to loosely resemble that creature.
- B. Yes, John Merrick knew he was not an animal, but these days evolutionists are not so sure. They believe we are all animals, mere descendants of primitive life forms that also spawned the apes and other creatures on this earth by the process of evolution.
- C. Are they correct? Is man an animal, or an immortal soul in a mortal body (as most religionists would argue)? Can we know?
- D. Happily, the answer is yes, we can know, for the Bible plainly reveals the answers.

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. Man is not an animal, nor an immortal soul housed in a fleshly body. He is, rather, a totally mortal being but with a spiritual component -- the spirit in man.
- B. The spirit in man gives him the power of conscious human mind and free will, and coupled with God's Holy Spirit forms the converted Christian mind.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. The nonbiblical misconceptions about this subject form strong emotional attachments for scientists and religionists alike.
- B. Many scientists, of course, believe in the unproven theory of evolution, and think man to be merely the most advanced link in the unbroken chain of animal life that sprang spontaneously from chemical soup by blind chance.
- C. Religionists, on the other hand, cling with equal vehemence to the belief that man is an immortal soul



housed in an evil fleshly body, waiting to be freed at death and serve out eternity in blissful happiness in heaven or endless agony in hell.

- D. Surprisingly, both theories are wrong. Of course, the theory of evolution does not make the pretense of originating with the Bible.
- E. The proponents of the immortal soul theory, on the other hand, assume their belief has its roots in God's Word. But they, too, are incorrect.
- F. For, astoundingly, the belief in the immortal soul arose, not from sound biblical doctrine taught or written by the prophets or apostles, but from ancient, heathen Egypt.
- G. Then it was adopted by pagan Greek philosophers like Plato.
- H. Finally it infiltrated traditional Christianity through church "fathers" who themselves believed the teaching, but who had adopted it from pagan Greek philosophy -- not from the Bible.
- I. No wonder the apostle Paul wrote for us to "beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men" (Colossians 2:8, King James Version).
- J. But we need not rest on the historical record alone, for the doctrine of the immortality of the soul falls shattered to the ground in light of the plain teaching of God's Word.

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. To be sure, the Bible does indeed use the word soul, (never the phrase "immortal soul," however).
- B. But the word soul is merely a translation in the Old and New Testaments of other words from both Hebrew and Greek.
- C. We must look to these languages and the context in which the words are used if we are to understand the words translated "soul" in modern versions.
- D. To begin, notice that man "became a living soul," according to Genesis 2:7 (KJV). And observe that this verse does not say man has a soul, but that he is a soul.

1. Further, the English word translated "soul" here and in other places is the Hebrew word nephesh, which means a "living, breathing creature"; it thus includes both animal and human life.
  2. The very same word, nephesh, refers to animals in Genesis 1:20-21, 24, 2:19 and 9:10, 12, 15, where it is translated "creature," as well as in Genesis 1:30, 9:4, Leviticus 11:10, 17:11 and other scriptures.
  3. Not only does the word translated "soul" in the Old Testament not imply immortality, nor even superiority to animals, but it is even used to represent dead bodies in Leviticus 21:1, 11, Numbers 6:6, 11 and elsewhere.
  4. And twice in the same Bible chapter does God directly say, when speaking of human beings, "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4, 20).
- E. The Greek word translated "soul" in the New Testament is used in a similar sense, referring only to physical, mortal life (I Corinthians 15:45).
1. Jesus Himself proclaimed that the soul can be destroyed in hell (Matthew 10:28).
  2. The apostle John shows men are not immortal souls with his statement that "no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (I John 3:15).
  3. Paul proclaimed man's mortality with the words "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), not immortal life in hell!
- F. Clearly, the doctrine of the immortal soul is a myth, foisted upon the Christian world from paganism!
- G. But more must be said about this important topic of what man is. For, although man is merely a mortal soul -- a mortal, living, breathing creature like an animal -- man is nonetheless clearly not a mere beast like a monkey or a goat or a horse.
- H. For man -- unlike the animals who have been made each "after his [own] kind" (Genesis 1:25, KJV) -- is made in God's own "image" and "likeness" (verse 26), and is therefore after the God kind and with God's general appearance.
- I. Also, and even more importantly, man has a spiritual component, the "spirit in man," which, when combined with the human brain, produces the human mind, with

its unique self-awareness and capacity for free will and character development.

1. As the book of Job says, "It is a spirit in man...that giveth them understanding" (Job 32:8, Jewish Publication Society translation).
2. Likewise, the prophet Zechariah confirms that God "forms the spirit of man within him" (Zechariah 12:1).
3. Paul declares that man has a "spirit" within him -- a human spirit that gives man his unique human mind: "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?" (I Corinthians 2:11).

J. But caution is in order here. It is tempting for some who have believed in the immortal-soul theory to conclude that the spirit in man is merely another term for the immortal soul and that the whole argument is simply one of semantics. Not so.

1. This spirit essence is not an immortal soul.
2. The spirit in man is not the man. It is something in the man.
3. It has no life of itself, for the life of a man is in the air he breathes and in the blood that circulates that breath through his body (Genesis 2:7, Leviticus 17:11).
4. It does not of itself see or hear (for even a blind or deaf person, though deprived of one of his senses, is altogether human.)
5. And at death it has no consciousness of itself, for it sleeps (I Corinthians 11:30, 15:51, I Thessalonians 4:14)

K. Yet the spirit in man imparts the human qualities of mind to the man (read I Corinthians 2:9-12), and, like a tape recorder, forms a permanent record of the qualities of mind and character built by a man during his lifetime.

1. Much as a used tape is stored lifelessly on a shelf till activated for use in a recorder, so does the spirit of man "return to God who gave it" after death.
2. It remains with God until the resurrection when life is again given to a person (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

- L. But those whom God has called and chosen -- and they alone -- receive yet an additional component added to their makeup. It is not the spirit of man, for man has that naturally and automatically.
- M. It is another spirit, the Spirit of God Himself, which is given to those who have been called and properly baptized with the laying on of hands (Acts 2:38).
  - 1. This Spirit begets us spiritually much like a human is begotten physically in his mother's womb (I Peter 1:3).
  - 2. It joins with our own spirit (Romans 8:16-17) and provides both the fruits or qualities of God Himself in us and the ability to understand, not merely the things of men, but spiritual knowledge from God (I Corinthians 2:11-12).
  - 3. Further, once we become converted and are filled with that Spirit, we have the seed and down payment of eternal life within us, which, unless rejected later by us, will indeed blossom into full eternal life at Christ's return (II Corinthians 5:1-5).
- N. How incredible that we -- mere humans -- may have within us the mind of God and the very knowledge of God!

#### V. Key Verses

It helps understanding to remember the most important scriptures on a topic. Here are a few:

- A. Genesis 2:7 -- man is a soul.
- B. Genesis 1:20 -- the same word used as "soul" in Genesis 2:7 is here translated as "living creature."
- C. Ezekiel 18:4, 20 -- souls can die.
- D. Job 32:8, Zechariah 12:1, I Corinthians 2:11 -- there is a spirit in man.
- E. I Corinthians 2:11-12 -- the spirit in man gives man the unique powers of human mind, and the Spirit of God in a man gives him a godly (spiritually enlightened) mind.

#### VI. Conclusion

The incredible and true picture is now complete. Man is not an animal nor an immortal soul housed in a fleshly

body, but is rather a totally mortal being, but with a spiritual component -- the spirit in man, which gives him the power of conscious human mind and free will, and which couples with God's Holy Spirit to form the converted Christian mind.

Yes, John Merrick, the "elephant man," was right. Neither he nor the rest of us are animals, but rather human beings, made in the image of God with the hope of eternal glory!

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT BAPTISM

### I. Introduction

- A. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations," Jesus commanded His disciples, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).
- B. This plain, direct command of Jesus Christ certainly sounds simple enough, doesn't it? Yet surprisingly, today, more than 1,900 years later, the varying opinions about the proper methods, reasons, symbols, age for and words said at baptism are legion.
- C. But the incredible need to properly understand this topic is greater in our sinful age than ever before! For every single one of us has, in the clearest terms, been commanded to be baptized upon meeting the qualifications.
- D. As Acts 2:38 directs, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you" (King James Version).
- E. How can we be properly baptized unless we understand this important doctrine of Jesus Christ? Happily, in spite of the utter confusion surrounding this subject in religious circles, the biblical truth about baptism is plain and clear.

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. Water baptism is the ceremony by which a mature person is immersed quickly under water, upon proper repentance and belief, accompanied by the proper words, in a symbolic burial of the sinful man and raising of the new, as a show of faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- B. Those who undergo a proper baptism are promised forgiveness of sins and receipt of God's Holy Spirit.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. Certainly, many religionists would disagree with the simple definition above, even though each part can be proven from the Bible.

- B. Some think, for example, that children and even infants of only a few days old should be baptized. Others do not believe in immersion of the baptizee, but rather consider sprinkling or pouring of water over the person to be sufficient to baptize properly.
- C. A few have even misunderstood one biblical verse to conclude that they may, and even should, be "baptized for the dead" (meaning to them that they may be baptized in place of and for the benefit of a deceased person).
- D. Finally, some misunderstand John the Baptist's words that Jesus Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11), thinking this means that Christians will speak in an excited jibberish that they mistakenly call "tongues." Clearly, the confusion needs to be wiped away.

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. We should review the clear command that we be baptized, which states in part: "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, KJV).
- B. Further, we should compare that verse with Romans 8:9, which states dogmatically, "Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His."
- C. The conclusion is astounding:
  1. If we are not baptized we do not receive the Holy Spirit. Yet if we do not receive the Holy Spirit, we do not belong to Jesus Christ!
  2. Proper baptism is essential.
- C. The word baptize comes from the Greek word baptizo, which means "immerse" or "plunge into."
  1. Since the word baptize means "to immerse," to say that sprinkling or pouring means to baptize is a contradiction of terms.
  2. Sprinkling or pouring is not immersing, and therefore is not baptizing.
- D. Besides, those who would say it is proper to sprinkle or pour ignore the plain examples of the Bible.

1. Jesus Himself was baptized in the Jordan River and had to have been immersed, for He "came up...from" the water (Matthew 3:13-17).
  2. Likewise, John baptized in Aenon because there was "much water" there (John 3:23). He wouldn't have needed "much water" for mere sprinkling or pouring.
  3. Again, Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch traveled to where they could find enough water to go "down into" (Acts 8:36-39).
- E. But what does the immersion of a person under water symbolize? Romans 6:3-4, 6 explains:
- "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life...knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin."
- F. Baptism is a symbolic burial of the old, sinful self. A new person intent on obeying God in every way comes out of the water. Baptism is therefore an outward statement, by our actions, of the inward determination to obey God and leave our sinful past.
- G. But it is even more than this, for, as Paul explains in these verses, our baptism is also a subtle picturing of our faith in the death and burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. By acting out His death in our baptism, we show our acceptance of His death's meaning in our life. The results of baptism in our spiritual lives are the forgiveness of our sins and the subsequent receipt of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
- H. The actual process of forgiveness through Jesus' blood is called justification. And although proper baptism is prerequisite to receipt of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit is actually received in an associated but separate ceremony called the laying on of hands, performed immediately after baptism.
- I. Forgiveness of sin and receipt of the Spirit do not come to us automatically. No, there are qualifications one must meet before baptism.
1. The first of these is repentance (Acts 2:38). Repentance is the abhorrence of past sin and the



sinful self, and the decision to obey God in the future.

2. The second qualification is ~~belief~~ faith (Mark 1:14-15, Acts 8:34-37, Mark 16:15-16).
  - a. The faith required by a person at baptism is our own human faith, rather than the faith of Jesus Christ in us, which we receive after baptism, by His Holy Spirit in us (Galatians 2:16).
  - b. This faith is toward Christ (Acts 20:21), and is a belief in who and what Christ is, in His message (the Gospel) and in His sacrifice and forgiveness through it.
- J. Now we can begin to see why an infant or even teenager should not be baptized. Children are simply too young to understand the deep symbolism, or to assume the responsibilities of such a decision.
- K. And certainly, the living attitudes of mind required for proper baptism preclude anyone being baptized on behalf of a deceased person.
- L. Finally, proper baptism requires the proper words be said. Confusion has arisen about whether we should be baptized in the name of Jesus or in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
  1. We should indeed be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38). But this phrase merely means that the person who does the baptizing (usually the minister) is doing the baptism not on his own authority, but by the authority of Jesus Christ.
  2. In addition, we should be baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).
    - a. The Greek word for "in" here would better convey the sense if translated "into."
    - b. We are baptized into the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, meaning we are being initiated into the Family of God.
    - c. We are baptized, not into a denomination of men, but through receipt of the Spirit into the Body of Christ, which composes the Church (I Corinthians 12:13).

- M. A few words must be said about John the Baptist's statement in Matthew 3:11 that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit.
1. This merely refers to the actual receipt of the Holy Spirit after baptism (in the laying-on-of-hands ceremony).
  2. The sometimes-held belief that baptism with the Spirit is the overpowering gyrations and jibberish that some people call "tongues" is mistaken.
  3. Our booklet The Tongues Question contains more information on this subject.

#### V. Key Verses

Here are a few main scriptures that help explain baptism:

- A. Hebrews 6:1-2 shows baptism is a basic doctrine of God's Church.
- B. Acts 2:38 shows baptism is commanded, that it should be in Jesus' name, that repentance is required, that it is for the forgiveness of sins and that receipt of the Holy Spirit will follow (after laying on of hands).
- C. Acts 8:37 shows that belief is required for baptism.
- D. Romans 6:1-6 shows the dual meaning of baptism as the burial of the old self and the analogy of Jesus Christ's sacrifice.
- E. Matthew 3:13-17 shows that baptism is by complete immersion in water, since Jesus Christ Himself, after baptism in the Jordan River, "came up...from the water."
- F. Matthew 28:19 shows that the Church should baptize, and that baptism is into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- G. Our booklet All About Water Baptism offers a thorough study of this topic, including many other facts and scriptures.

#### VI. Conclusion

Yes, baptism is a most important subject. And, although through the last 1,900 years many religions have professed to baptize properly and have not, baptism is accurately understood today by God's true Church, and done exactly as Jesus commanded.

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE CONVERTED

### I. Introduction

- A. "Unless you are converted..." said Jesus Christ in Matthew 18:3, "you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."
- B. This plain and simple statement should rivet our attention. It literally demands that we find out what Jesus Christ meant -- what it means to be converted!
- C. For unless we know what true conversion is, and further, unless we become converted, we will have no place in the Kingdom of God, and our hope is lost. This is what Christ our Savior said.

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. Conversion is the changing of our minds and actions from the carnal way of the natural man to the spiritual way of thinking and acting of God Himself.
- B. It includes changing, or converting from the physico-chemical state of mere existence in which we now find ourselves to the immortal, glorified life that God Himself enjoys.
- C. It begins at baptism with the receipt of the Holy Spirit, continues throughout life with the spiritual growth of the individual and culminates at the resurrection when one is born into God's Kingdom as a new creature -- a spirit-composed member of God's Family.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. The religious teachers of this world have not fully understood this vital process. They have instead attached a meaning to the word conversion far diluted from the pure truth of the Bible.
- B. Commonly the term is used to mean the simple change one makes when he embraces a new faith or denomination.

- C. Hence one who changes his beliefs, as it were, from, say, Judaism to Christianity (of whatever denomination) is said to "convert."
- D. But this is not the true substance and meaning of conversion as explained in God's holy Word. To the contrary, Christ's statement cited above (that unless they were converted they would not enter the Kingdom of God) was made to ones already labeled by the Bible as "disciples."
- E. Certainly such ones would already be professing a belief in Jesus and hence be already "converted" in the sense most often meant by this world.
- F. Further, Christ told the apostle Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:32, Authorized Version).
- G. Clearly, even the apostles, although in every way expressing their profound belief in Jesus, were not, during Jesus' life, even themselves yet converted.
- H. Just what, then, is true conversion? To begin, we need look no further than the plain and simple meaning of the word conversion itself as we might use it in any other, nonreligious context.

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. To convert something means to change it from one purpose or form or use to another one.
- B. This not hard to understand when applied to the physical world and context, such as in the case of the conversion of a farm into a real estate subdivision for homes. The use and purpose of the land has been changed from one thing into something different.
- C. Likewise, when one is converted, or goes through conversion, he or she is changed from one thing -- one type of creature -- into another totally different type of person.
- D. This conversion is not merely a change in profession of faith (although that is included), or of some merely outward form, but is a total and inward change.
- E. Of course, to change a person means to change his or her mind -- that is, the way one thinks -- for a person is his or her mind.
  - 1. Proverbs 23:7 says, "As he thinks...so is he."

2. One's mind is the core of one's personality, character and thought.
  3. To change a person you do not simply change the hairstyle or wardrobe. To change the person you change his or her mind (Romans 12:2).
- F. The key to understanding conversion is to understand that there are two possible types of minds that a person can possess (with God's help, in the case of one of them).
- G. There is the carnal mind, and there is the spiritual mind.
- H. The carnal or fleshly mind (the word carnal literally means "fleshly") is the natural mind that a person has apart from God and influenced by this world.
1. It is not the mind of a mere animal, but the superior mind of a human, and consists of the brain and the spirit in man (this spirit in man should not be confused with the pagan concept of the "immortal soul").
  2. Paul wrote of this carnal mind when he asked, "What man knows the things of a man except [by] the spirit of the man which is in him?" (I Corinthians 2:11).
- I. But the carnal mind, although it is the mind that occurs naturally and normally within a man, is insufficient for salvation.
1. Paul goes on to explain, in part, why: "The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14).
  2. So one reason why the carnal mind is not sufficient is that it cannot discern spiritual things, and indeed such spiritual things seem like foolishness to it.
  3. But Paul in another place proclaims the need to convert the carnal mind to the spiritual mind in even stronger terms: "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh [those who have a carnal mind] cannot please God" (Romans 8:6-8).

- J. This, then, is the reason Christ said if we are not converted we cannot enter the Kingdom of God.
1. The carnal, unconverted mind cannot know the things of God, cannot obey God, cannot please God.
  2. It is therefore cut off from God. "To be carnally minded is death" (verse 6)!
- K. But the spiritual mind, on the other hand, is different from the carnal mind. It has an additional component -- the Holy Spirit of God.
- L. Indeed, this is what Paul says next: "But you are not in the flesh [you do not have a mere carnal mind] but in the Spirit [you have a spiritual mind] if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (verse 9).
1. Yes, to have a spiritual mind and be converted -- to even be a Christian in God's eyes -- you must have a spiritual mind.
  2. And that only comes from having God's Spirit dwelling within you (I Corinthians 2:11-12).
- M. Acts 2:38 tells us how we may receive that converting Holy Spirit of God.
1. Upon repentance, we can be baptized, and after the laying on of hands, which follows baptism, we will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit -- the Holy Spirit that gives us a spiritual mind and converts us to creatures God can use.
  2. Therefore, to become converted, we must repent and be baptized. There is no other way.
- N. But even here, some have misunderstood. They think that once a person has received God's Spirit, conversion is total and complete, and that the person cannot or will not sin at all -- ever. Such is not the case.
- O. Conversion is a process, and is likened in the Bible to the process of a baby's gestation and birth.
- P. In both cases, the newly conceived person -- be it a physical child or a spiritual child of God -- must grow and develop over time before birth.
1. Spiritually, Paul talks about this growth process in many places, including Romans 7. Read all of

Romans 7 and see how Paul describes the struggle he had to endure while the still-remaining carnal component of his nature struggled against the Spirit of God dwelling within him.

2. In the case of a physical child, in time it will be born as a separate person able to live on its own.
  3. Likewise, a spiritual convert must change and grow until the resurrection, when he or she will be literally "born again" (John 3:3-6) -- this time of the Spirit -- and will enter God's Family as a spirit being.
- Q. At that time the conversion from physical to spiritual will be complete, and our carnal, fleshly mortality will be displaced and "swallowed up by life" (II Corinthians 5:4). We will be quite literally a new creature!
- R. Truly, to see the Kingdom of God, we must indeed be converted -- in mind and, eventually, in body as well.

#### V. Key Verses

The process of conversion is so important that it is helpful to remember, and perhaps mark in one's Bible, key verses describing this process. Here are some of them:

- A. Matthew 18:3 -- we must be converted or we will not enter God's Kingdom.
- B. Luke 22:32 -- conversion is not merely belief, because even Peter, though he believed, was told he had yet to be converted.
- C. Romans 12:2 -- conversion involves a change in our mind.
- D. I Corinthians 2:9-14 -- the carnal mind does not understand spiritual things -- only the spiritual mind does.
- E. Romans 8:5-9 -- the carnal mind is not sufficient for salvation, and the indwelling of God's Spirit is the source of the spiritual mind.
- F. Acts 2:38 -- the Spirit of God is given to those who repent and are properly baptized.

VI. Conclusion

"Unless you are converted..." proclaimed Jesus, "you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven." But with proper baptism and the consequent receipt of God's Holy Spirit, we can become a new creature (II Corinthians 5:17) -- converted -- with the hope of eternal glory!



---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## GOD'S PURPOSE FOR CREATING MAN

### I. Introduction

- A. That's Incredible! was the name of a popular American television program. It specialized in showing the viewer unusual and spectacular -- that is, incredible -- stunts, people and events.
- B. This show dealt, of course, only in the physical phenomena.
- C. God's transcendent spiritual purpose for man can be described only with the same superlative -- it's simply incredible!
- D. Yet, precious few really understand exactly why God made man, or what is God's purpose and destiny for humanity.
- E. Think what this means! Without the knowledge of why he exists, man has no real meaning or purpose in life. Man has no ultimate goal or destiny, and spiritually is like a cork adrift on an ocean, at the mercy of every force, good and bad, with no direction or anchor. Life is futile and uncertain.
- F. Yet it need not be so, for God, the giver of every good and perfect gift, has clearly spelled out man's purpose in the Bible, for those who will read and believe.

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. The purpose for human life is this: God is literally reproducing Himself through man.
- B. He made man to be His sons in His own Family -- the God Family -- and hence to someday be Gods themselves.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. Religious teachers of this world have fallen disastrously short of knowing or teaching this incredible truth.

- B. Some religious people say God promises heaven to the saved, although few seem to know exactly what man will do in heaven for all eternity.
- C. Others say that the saved become angels.
- D. Still others believe in reincarnation -- a sort of ladder-like hierarchy of life forms (from animal to human, and, in some cases, to supernatural) upon which one continually ascends or descends (after death and rebirth), depending upon his goodness or badness now.
- E. Some non-Christians believe when one dies his mind loses its identity and combines in blissful oblivion with the forces of the universe.
- F. Those who subscribe to no religion usually think the purpose of life can be nothing higher than "to make this world a better place to live."
- G. But none of these ideas, no matter how seemingly noble or widely held, have, even remotely, a basis in the Bible.
- H. What, then, is the purpose for life? Why did God create man?
- I. To quote the same question from King David's lips, "What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?" (Psalm 8:4).

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. To answer this question -- and to learn the purpose for man -- we must first learn something about God. We must learn that God is a Family!
- B. This plain truth is hinted at from the very first verse in the Bible. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
- C. This word translated "God" is the Hebrew word Elohim, which allows for plurality, like the English words group and church.
- D. Genesis 1:26 further adds weight to this truth, because it quotes God (Elohim) as saying, "Let Us make man in Our image."
- E. John 1:1-2 removes all doubt about God being more than one when it pronounces: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God."

- F. No question remains. God is composed of at least two beings who are different yet are both God.
- G. Other verses prove that this group of two God beings is more than a group like a team, but is rather a literal Family.
1. For example, upon Christ's being baptized, "A voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:17).
  2. Further, Christ confirmed in the most dogmatic terms that He and the Father are indeed related as a Family. In John 10:29-39, He time and again referred to God as His "Father," much to the displeasure of some of the Jews, who knew He meant it literally and therefore threatened to stone Him for it!
- H. Clearly, we must conclude the obvious. God is more than one. He is a group of two beings. And He is more than a group of nonrelated Gods. He is, by His own admission, a Family!
- I. But the most breathtaking part is that we -- you and I -- are destined to become full members of that Family as literal sons! That is the purpose for man!
- J. The Scriptures abound with direct, incontrovertible statements proving this.
1. John 1:12 says quite clearly, "As many as received Him [Christ], to them He gave the right to become children of God."
  2. Romans 8:15-16 pronounces: "You received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."
  3. Galatians 4:5-7 announces that we have been redeemed by Christ "that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."
  4. Compare also Hebrews 2:11, which proclaims that, since Christ and we who are converted have the same Father (God), He is "not ashamed" to call us brothers.

5. And in Revelation 21:7 God says, "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son."
- K. But some would read these verses to be mere figures of speech. They would tell us that we are not to be literal sons of God.
- L. Are they correct? Are we to be members of God's Family only in a symbolic sense?
- M. Clearly we will not be angels.
1. In Hebrews 2:5-11 we read that man will have the world to come in subjection under him, but that angels will not. Hence men will not become angels.
  2. We are told in Philippians 3:21 that we look to Christ from heaven "who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Authorized Version).
  3. And in I John 3:2 we read: "Now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."
- N. There it is! We shall be like Him -- not like an angel or some other being of inferior type. We shall be sons of God and part of His Family, and therefore, since God is a Family name, literally Gods ourselves!
- O. Yet some will still not believe. They will feel such a statement surely must be blasphemy. Read again John 10:29-39.
- P. See how some of the Jews themselves sought to stone Christ because He said He was God's Son, and therefore a God and equal with God. They said He spoke blasphemy.
- Q. His reply? "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, 'You are Gods''? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"
- R. These Jews could not even accept that Christ was God. Yet He told them that, potentially, they were Gods themselves!
- S. They would not believe. Will you?

- T. Some will wonder, "If God wanted sons, why didn't He just create them as powerful spirit beings rather than as human beings who must be changed into spirit?"
1. The answer is that God created us human first so we may build character (change) and make any mistakes on a relatively low level of power (compared to a spirit being).
  2. And since humans are subject to death (spirit beings are not); unrepentant sinners, along with the misery caused by all the sins we have all committed, can be extinguished from the universe by the final lake of fire.
- U. God's Family and government will increase forever. David and the apostle Paul predicted the vast reaches of the entire universe will be our inherited domain (Psalm 8:4-6, Hebrews 2:6-8).
- V. You need to understand all the aspects of God's amazing plan -- what we as members of God's Family will be doing during the Millennium and throughout eternity, and how we may qualify to fulfill that awesome destiny.

#### V. Key Verses

Such an astounding truth is worth remembering by reviewing from time to time the basic scriptures that prove this doctrine. Here is a summary of the most important ones:

- A. Genesis 1:26 and John 1:1 -- God is a group of, at present, two beings.
- B. Matthew 3:17 -- the relationship between the two God beings is Father and Son (a literal family relationship).
- C. John 1:12, Romans 8:15-16, Revelation 21:7 -- our destiny is to be spiritual sons of God.
- D. Philippians 3:21 and I John 3:2 -- we will look like Christ and hence be on the same God level as He.
- E. John 10:29-39 -- Christ told the Jews that all men are potential Gods.

#### VI. Conclusion

The truth about why God made man is indeed astounding. Stated simply, we are to be God's sons. As Christ stated, potentially, "You are Gods"!

Now, that's incredible!

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## THE BLESSING OF TITHING

### I. Introduction

- A. Treasury bills, certificates of deposit, mortgages, stocks, bonds, real estate -- the complicated vocabulary of our modern money system seems hard to master. And new money-making schemes are constantly being dreamed up.
- B. It seems almost every conceivable way of making one's money stretch and grow has been tried.
- C. Every one but one, that is -- the very one that the Bible, God's instruction Book for man, proclaims as the true investment vehicle for financial peace of mind!
- D. That virtually untried system is tithing.
- E. The very suggestion that modern man should tithe strikes most as laughable. But isn't it strange that the bonds of a human government millions of dollars in debt make sense as an investment, while the tithing system of the God who created and owns everything in the universe is treated with scorn?
- F. Should tithing be treated scornfully? Is it passe? Or is it a command and a financial law that we must observe today?
- G. You need to know, for Malachi 3:8-10 pronounces a blessing on those who tithe and, conversely, a curse on those who won't.
- H. If tithing is for today, that blessing or curse is for you!

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. To tithe means to allocate one tenth of one's income to Christ for His Church.
- B. Tithing has always been God's financial system and continues to be a binding obligation upon New Testament Christians, to whom blessings are promised for tithing and curses for refusing to do so.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. Of course, the law of tithing finds precious little support even in religious circles today, to say nothing of financial advisers who would openly laugh at the idea.
- B. Many, though not all, religious leaders proclaim that we need not tithe, saying that the New Testament just requires giving as we are able.
- C. Some say tithing was just for the Jews, or that the law of tithing was done away with the passing of the Old Covenant and the law of Moses.
- D. Others maintain tithing was only a civil matter even in Old Testament times, and the existence of civil tax codes negates the need to tithe today.
- E. Others say the tithe was only to help the poor and that our modern welfare systems take its place.
- F. Still others say they believe in tithing, but conclude that the word simply means giving money to the Church in whatever amount one chooses.
- G. Many of these beliefs may be well intentioned, but all of them are proven wrong by plain biblical evidence.

### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. The mind of man is selfish, and thus swayed, by covetousness, not to believe that one should give anybody -- even God -- a tenth of one's income.
- B. Most often this selfishness is framed by the argument that says: "I've worked hard for my paycheck and the money is mine! Why should anybody be able to tell me what to do with it?"
- C. But this argument is fallacious. We make money with talents God gives us, with a life He gives us, with elements from the earth He created and owns.
- D. God says plainly in Job 41:11, "Everything under heaven is Mine." And in Psalm 50:12, "The world is Mine, and all its fullness."
- E. We are mere guests blessed with the privilege of living here and using God's beautiful earth. So our money is not really ours!

- F. And why should it seem wrong for God to command that we tithe our income to Him? Even the governments of this world make prior demands on our income in the form of taxes, and we quickly agree with their right to do so, if not with their means or amounts.
- G. The place to begin for this topic is to define the word tithe. It means an exact tenth of something.
  - 1. As used in the Bible, it refers to allocating one tenth of one's income to the Work of God's Church.
  - 2. It does not mean simply giving in a general way.
- H. The crux of the tithing doctrine is simply this: The only financial system for the support of the Church commanded, illustrated or even referred to in the entire Bible -- in both Old and New Testaments -- is tithing.
- I. No other overall financial system is recognized. The Church is not authorized to charge for its services, nor is it put into the position of having to beg for money.
  - 1. Abraham tithed to the priest Melchizedek long before the children of Israel were ever given the tithing law (Genesis 14:18-20).
  - 2. Tithing was commanded of the Israelites in later centuries as God's chosen method of financing the priesthood (Leviticus 27:30).
  - 3. The prophets denounced those who would not tithe (Malachi 3:8-10).
  - 4. Tithing was the recognized system during Christ's time (Matthew 23:23).
  - 5. The apostle Paul proclaimed that God's ministry should receive the tithes of the people in the New Testament era of the Church (Hebrews 7:4-14).
- J. Those who oppose tithing cannot turn to Scripture to support any supposed substitute. So what men have instead tried to do is frame counter arguments against tithing in an attempt to say it was done away.
  - 1. One such argument against tithing states that we need not tithe today since we are bound to the spirit of the law and not the letter.
    - a. For proof, some will turn to II Corinthians 9:6-7, which seems to imply a person can give whatever he wants.



- b. But to obey the spirit of the law means to go above and beyond the letter, not to annul it.
  - c. Therefore tithing is not annulled by the spirit of giving, but merely consigned to be the least a person must do.
2. Another supposed reason why we need not tithe, critics say, is that tithing was only for the Jews.
- a. Of course, those who use this argument don't even address 1) that the law God gave Israel was not just to the Jews, 2) that God said the law He gave Israel was full of wisdom and understanding (Deuteronomy 4:5-6) or 3) that we all must become spiritual Jews to receive salvation (Romans 2:29, John 4:22).
  - b. But even in addition to these truths, it is plain that tithing was not merely for the Jews, since Abraham tithed to God long, long before God gave Israel His tithing law.
  - c. Abraham was, of course, not a Jew, but was the father of the faithful, one who feared God and kept His commandments (Genesis 26:5), as should we.
3. Tithing is not necessary, say some detractors, because it was part of the Old Covenant, and the Old Covenant is done away.
- a. True, tithing was indeed part of the Old Covenant. But Abraham tithed, and he lived long, long before the terms of the Old Covenant were instituted.
  - b. What the Old Covenant did not originate did not die with it.
  - c. Rather, tithing was part of the Old Covenant because tithing is the system God has always used to finance His Work.
4. Some who are uninformed will say tithing was purely a matter of civil taxation, or was only to help support the poor. They say that our government tax systems and welfare programs take the place of the tithe.
- a. But the Bible is clear on the matter.

- b. The first tithe was specifically for the support of the religious system and priesthood (Numbers 18:20-21).
5. Finally, some will say that they do not tithe since it is "not commanded" in the New Testament.
- a. Again, this is a fallacious argument, and for numerous reasons.
  - b. First, those who say such a thing are requiring, in effect, a direct "Thus saith the Lord" before they will obey God on any point.

The Bible shows God's will on many doctrines without using that exact expression.

Those who will not obey God unless He uses some magic words of which they approve plainly do not want to obey God, and will always try to find a way to justify not obeying Him, no matter what He says. It's as simple as that.

- c. Second, the New Testament does indeed clearly confirm the tithing law for us today.

For example, in Matthew 23:23 Christ upbraided the Pharisees for ignoring justice and mercy, but added that tithing (which they did do, albeit in a wrong manner) should not remain undone. Hence He confirmed the tithing law.

- d. Further, Paul spoke of tithing in Hebrews 7. Paul showed that the priesthood of Jesus Christ supersedes the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament.

We must tithe today! Hebrews 7:5 clearly labels tithing as a law.

- K. In summary, then, the law of tithing remains what it has always been -- the only system of finance for God's Church that has ever been used, espoused or even referred to in the Bible.

#### V. Key Verses

Tithing is such an important topic that we should briefly list the main scriptures one may turn to in explaining it:

- A. Genesis 14:18-20 -- Abraham tithed long before Israel was commanded to do so.

- B. Leviticus 27:30 and Numbers 18:20-21 -- Israel was commanded to tithe in support of God's religious system.
- C. Job 41:11 and Psalm 50:12 -- God owns everything, even things we think are ours.
- D. Matthew 23:23 and Hebrews 7:4-14 -- even after Christ's death, Paul called tithing, which was confirmed by Christ, a law.
- E. Malachi 3:8-10 -- blessings for tithing and curses for not tithing.

#### VI. Conclusion

Yes, man in general has looked to every conceivable method of finance and money management, but has ignored the very system God ordained to finance His Church and bless His people personally.

But God's Church today stands as a bright beacon, proving for all to see that God's tithing system works.

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## ETERNAL JUDGMENT

### I. Introduction

- A. One of the most astounding truths revealed in the Bible is that God is not trying to save all the world now!
- B. And yet, conversely, another one of the most encouraging and positive Bible truths is that all mankind shall have a chance for salvation.
- C. How can both these teachings be true? If God is not trying to save the world now, how can all humanity have a chance for salvation? The answer to the seeming dilemma is in the Bible doctrine of eternal judgment.
- D. What about all the billions of people who lived from Adam till now, who never knew of the name of Jesus Christ, the only name under heaven by which people can be saved (Acts 4:12)? Are they lost forever -- doomed to die with no hope for eternal life? What about the idolaters and heathen throughout history?
- E. And what about even much-loved members of your own family -- now deceased without knowing Jesus Christ, perhaps, or alive but not now religiously minded? What about them?

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. You need to know and be able to explain how you know what good things are in store for all these people. This information will help you to explain the doctrine of eternal judgment.
- B. The judgment period for a person is the time of his calling, until death or change into a spirit-composed member of God's Family. It is during this time that a person's life is continually being judged against the biblical standard of righteousness.
- C. For different groups of people, this judgment will occur at different times -- either now (as in the case of God's Church), during the Millennium or after the Millennium in the Great White Throne Judgment.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. The teachings of the churches of this world are far afield from the clear revelation of the Bible. Most churches do not even understand that all people are not being called to salvation now, let alone understand the connection between the time of one's calling and his period of judgment.
- B. The churches usually view the judgment merely as the time of passing of a sentence upon a person. Many people probably picture a courtroom, complete with a fatherly but somewhat stern God in a black robe behind a large desk, faced by fearful, once-living sinners waiting to see if they will go "up" or "down." But such a picture is in no way that presented by the Bible!

### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. The astounding, central truth essential to understanding this topic is that God is not trying to save all the world now. Satan is said to be deceiving the whole world (Revelation 12:9). If the whole world is is deceived, how can it be in the process of being saved?
- B. From the days of Adam and his eviction from the Garden of Eden, through the days when Moses told the children of Israel that "the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear" (Deuteronomy 29:2-4), it has been obvious that God is not now saving the whole world.
- C. Paul said, "God hath concluded them all [humanity] in unbelief, that he might [eventually, but not now] have mercy upon all" (Romans 11:32, Authorized Version).
- D. No wonder Satan is called the "god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4, AV) and God's way is called the way only "few" now take (Matthew 7:14). No wonder Paul called the vast majority of humanity "strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:11-12).
- E. But why? Why has God chosen not to save all people? The answer, simply, is that for God to fulfill His master plan of building righteous, holy character in humans and then to put those humans into His powerful, universe-ruling Family, He must first allow humans to learn that they need God. People will learn that crime against God's law doesn't pay -- that life without God leads to war, misery, unhappiness and destruction.

- F. Therefore most, but not all, of humanity are being left to themselves now.
- G. Some are being called by God now to preach His message as a witness to the world (not to proselyte or convert the world -- Matthew 24:14) and to learn God's way, so they may teach the masses when God finally does call the rest of the human race and open their minds (Revelation 5:10).
1. Two key scriptures in this regard are II Corinthians 6:2 and I Peter 4:17.
  2. II Corinthians 6:2 is misleading in some translations, which read that God has succored us in "the" day of salvation. But this verse, both in the original Greek and in the Old Testament verse from which it is quoted, does not contain the definite article, but reads that now is "a" day of salvation." Obviously, if now is a day of salvation, then there must be other times when God has dealt or will deal with people.
  3. I Peter 4:17 makes the point that now is only a time of salvation more clear, showing for whom now is the time for salvation: "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God."
- H. Notice that a judgment is now on the house of God -- the Church of God -- but not upon others.
1. And clearly this judgment is not a mere sentencing, but a process of evaluation made by God as He watches over our growth through a period of time.
  2. Of course, ultimately, judgment includes God's final decision about our spiritual state, and even the reward if we qualify or the sentence to death if we don't, but to call eternal judgment merely the single moment of decision for God is mistaken.
- I. But if now is not the only time when God will call humanity -- that is, subject mankind to spiritual judgment for their works, while they know God's law -- then when are the other times?
1. The first period of judgment, when most will be deceived and only a few will be called, is now (I Peter 4:17).
    - a. This era ends with the return of Jesus Christ to set up His Kingdom, and the resurrection to eternal life of all who were called and qualified from Adam's time till then.

- b. As Revelation 20:5 says, "This is the first resurrection." It is the time of redemption of the few "called" (Romans 8:28) who form the "firstfruits" (not the whole spiritual harvest -- James 1:18, Revelation 14:14) of God's master plan.
2. The second time of judgment is during the Millennium the 1,000 years immediately after Jesus' return to set up His Kingdom.
- a. One clear theme running throughout the Bible is that during the Millennium all then alive will know the truth of God (Isaiah 11:9, Jeremiah 31:34, Joel 2:32).
  - b. This millennial period of judgment differs from the world now in that all people then alive will have a chance for salvation.
  - c. But, still, those who lived and died from Adam till Jesus Christ's return and the first resurrection will not yet have had a chance. Their chance will come, however.
  - d. It is spoken of in Revelation 20:11, which describes the Great White Throne Judgment. This is the time of the second resurrection, when the dead from all time, small and great, will be raised to another physical existence, except this time with a difference.
  - e. This time the "books" (the Bible) are opened to their understanding (verse 12), and they live out a full life span with the chance to know God and the truth of salvation.
  - f. This is the time when all the humans who have not had a chance will be given one. This is the time of judgment for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, as Jesus revealed (Matthew 11:22, 10:15).
  - g. It is spoken of in plain terms by the prophet Ezekiel: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up...I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live" (Ezekiel 37:12, 14).
3. Now God's merciful, fair plan will be complete. All will have had a chance for salvation, a period of living during which the truth of God will be open to their minds, and they will be judged according to it -- their judgment period.

4. For the Church that period is now. In the Millennium all those then alive will have their chance. Finally, during the Great White Throne Judgment all the former dead who didn't have a chance before will get their opportunity. No one will get a "second chance," but will get one full opportunity for salvation.

#### V. Key Verses

Here are some main scriptures relating to eternal judgment:

- A. Mark 4:11-12 and John 6:44 show that God is not trying to save all the world now.
- B. II Corinthians 6:2 explains that now is not the only day of salvation.
- C. I Peter 4:17 shows that judgment is a process of time while one is under review by God, and that judgment is now on the Church.
- D. Revelation 20:1-12 describes the various resurrections that delineate the various judgment periods.
- E. Isaiah 11:9 and Jeremiah 31:34 say that all people will know God in the Millennium.
- F. Ezekiel 37:12-14 illustrates how the former dead will be raised and given the truth of God during the Great White Throne Judgment.

#### VI. Conclusion

~~Of all the doctrines of the Bible, none show God's~~ boundless fairness any more than the truth about judgment. All people everywhere will receive an equal chance at salvation, and at a time in which their own chance of success will be great indeed.

Truly, our loving God is not a respecter of persons, but fair to all humanity!



---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## THE CHRISTIAN CALLING

### I. Introduction

- A. "You are cordially invited to attend..." begins an invitation to a formal dance. It is beautifully printed, and goes on to describe the elegant and enjoyable evening to which you are invited.
- B. A simple dance or party invitation is easy for us to understand. But many people today do not understand how God invites -- calls -- those He wants into His Church.
- C. They do not understand the Christian calling. That is, they do not understand whom God calls, or how, or why.
- D. Such a lack of understanding is saddening, for those God now makes the heirs to salvation are commanded to "walk worthy" of their calling (Ephesians 4:1), and to make their calling "sure" (II Peter 1:10).
- E. How can we do this if we don't even understand what our calling is?
- F. Yet we need not remain in darkness about this vital and foundational subject. The Bible teaching is plain.

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. When God calls a person, He invites him into His Church to help the Church perform its great commission of preaching the Gospel to the world (Matthew 24:14), and to prepare to rule with Jesus Christ and teach God's way in the world tomorrow (Revelation 2:26-27, 3:21).
- B. That is the main purpose for being called now.
- C. A person called at this time is also one of the relatively few to whom God is now offering the chance for salvation.
- D. God alone decides who shall be called, by opening a person's mind to understand His truth.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. Most professing Christians feel that God is now calling everybody to salvation.
- B. Others think that God calls to salvation those who wish to be called, or those who seek to be called by deciding to "give their hearts to the Lord."
- C. Still others feel God must surely call only the best society has to offer -- the "good people" who try to obey God as they see Him.
- D. A few feel that a person has not been called unless he has had some type of special religious experience such as "speaking in tongues."
- E. Certain preachers must feel that they have the power to call people, since they tell people at tent meetings to come forward and profess Christ.
- F. Amazingly, all these common teachings and impressions are proven false by the Bible.

### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. Although many people use the biblical expression and profess to have been "called" (e.g., "It has been two years since I was called to the Lord"), few have ever stopped to realize and understand what they are saying.
- B. The New Testament was written in Greek, and the English is only a translation. Nonetheless the English word call well reflects the process described in the Bible. To be called is to be invited or hailed by God, much as a person might telephone a group of friends and invite them to a party.
- C. Notice the illustration in Matthew 22:1-14. "The kingdom of heaven," Christ said in a parable, "is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding" (verses 2-3).
- D. Quite plainly, then, God's calling is an invitation.
  - 1. Galatians 1:6 says it is a calling -- an invitation -- to the grace of Christ.

2. I Peter 2:9 says it is a calling from darkness to light.
- E. Briefly, being called means that one is invited to be a member of God's Church, with all the responsibilities that entails and the hope of salvation.
- F. The Greek word translated "church" in the New Testament is ecclesia, which literally means "called-out ones." Hence when we are called we become part of the "called-out ones" -- that is, the Church.
- G. And here another important point must be stressed: The common teaching that God is calling all now -- that is, that He is now trying to save the world -- is utterly false.
- H. When asked by His disciples why He spoke in riddles, Christ said, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given" (Matthew 13:11). That is, the disciples had been called to know the truth, but others had not been so called.
- I. This is not to say that the others will never be called, just that they will not be called in this era or this lifetime.
- J. Those who are called now -- a relative few -- are called to help preach the Gospel as a witness (Matthew 24:14) and to prepare to be teachers and rulers in the world tomorrow under Christ, when God will begin to call humanity as a whole (Revelation 5:10).
- K. God's calling is, in part, an invitation to salvation now with His Church. Who, then, are now being called?
- L. Christ makes the answer clear in John 6:44. Here, surely to the astonishment of the religious teachers of this world, Christ states, "No one can come to Me [that is, no one is invited or called] unless the Father who sent Me draws him."
1. No one can be called unless God Himself decides to call him or her.
  2. Astoundingly, this means that God does not call everyone -- not those who wish to be, nor those who try to be, nor those who are talked into joining churches by well-intentioned but misguided preachers, nor just the "good" among people.

3. Rather, He calls those He decides to call for His own reasons.
- M. Notice how Paul states it in Romans 9, where he discusses this precise topic: "So then it [one's calling] is not of him who wills [he who wants to be called], nor of him who runs [he who even tries in his own way], but of God who shows mercy" (verse 16).
- N. Paul is not saying those not now called will not be saved, only that their chance for salvation is not in this age, but later.
- O. Still, we cannot help but wonder upon what God bases His decision to call or not to call a certain person. God does state certain qualifications, and gives some examples from which we can glean answers.
- P. The most poignant of scriptures on this question is I Corinthians 1:26-31, where Paul writes: "For you see your calling, brethren...God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things...and the things which are despised...and the things which are not."
1. Literally, then, God picks those who are foolish, weak and despised -- in the eyes of this world, that is.
  2. He does so in order that those who are saved are humble and don't take the credit themselves.
  3. He does it so all can see that if God is able to save the weak now, He must surely be able to save the strong later.
- Q. To be sure, God looks for other qualifications as well -- such as the natural abilities He wants for certain future jobs, and a willing attitude. Hence we see how Joseph and Moses and David and many others were used by God in accord with their natural abilities, and will fill places in His Kingdom that will utilize the same abilities.
- R. Probably one of the most important questions asked by those who consider this topic is "Am I being called by God -- how do I know?"

- S. Notice John 10:1-28. In these verses Christ likens the true believers to sheep, with Himself as the shepherd. He says the true sheep will know their spiritual shepherd because they will hear His voice and understand His words. See especially verses 3-6, 14, 26-28.
1. The point of the analogy is this: One whom God is calling will have his mind opened to understand when he hears God's truth.
  2. One who is not being called may hear the words, but, like a foreign language he does not understand, those words will not be mixed with understanding and belief.
  3. God calls, then, by opening one's mind to understand and believe the truth when he or she hears it.
- T. Are you being called? You are if you are understanding and believing the truth. Such is the clear meaning of many verses, such as Isaiah 6:9-10, Acts 28:23-27 and Romans 11:8-10.
- U. Of course, once God has opened the mind of a person to understand spiritual knowledge, He must bring that person into contact with the truth so he or she may hear the call.

#### V. Key Verses

This topic is so fundamental and pierces through so many commonly held wrong beliefs that it is important to highlight a few important verses one may remember or mark in one's Bible:

- A. II Peter 1:10 -- Christians are commanded to make their calling and election sure.
- B. Matthew 22:1-14 -- God's calling is His invitation to become part of His work and prepare for salvation now.
- C. John 6:44 -- no one is called unless God initiates the call.
- D. John 10:1-28 and Matthew 13:10-17 -- God calls by opening our minds to understand the truth, and those not called are spiritually blinded.

VI. Conclusion

Yes, it can be an enjoyable thing to be invited to a social gathering or party. But, it is joy unspeakable to be among the few now invited -- called -- by God to fulfill the great commission and qualify for salvation and eternal life as children of God.

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## THE RESURRECTIONS

### I. Introduction

- A. Upon the whitewashed crosses standing over the seemingly endless graves of "unknown" soldiers who died in the great world wars of this century, these words are engraved: "Here lies in glory and honor..." or "A comrade in arms..." or "Known but to God..."
- B. Certainly no one can read those words and look upon the graves of those fallen men without being sobered.
- C. Yet, to those who understand the biblical doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, these same graves are a sure sign of the incredible power of the living God, who will one day make all these men stand upon their feet and live again!

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. Briefly stated, the doctrine of the resurrection is the truth that the God who resurrected Jesus Christ will also raise to life again (resurrect) all the dead.
- B. For some that resurrection will be to eternal life; for others it will be to physical life with an opportunity for eternal life; for some few it will be a resurrection to the second death.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. The religionists of this world rarely address the doctrine of the resurrection.
- B. The few who do usually misunderstand either the time, purpose, nature or numbers of the resurrections.
- C. Some, in a feeble attempt to reconcile the nonbiblical doctrine of the immortal soul with the resurrection, contrive a vague theory that the resurrection is not a resurrection at all, but merely a reuniting of the body of a deceased person with his immortal soul, which had been liberated at death and has been living without the body since.

- D. Certainly such a theory is in no way supported by the Bible, but it is a good place to begin a study of this important subject.

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. The resurrection is one good proof that man does not have an immortal soul. If man had an immortal soul (which today's religionists would say lives after death), why would a resurrection from the dead be needed in the first place?
- B. Numerous utterly dogmatic Bible statements promise the dead the hope of life again after death!
1. Notice the words of Paul in his defense before Felix: "But this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and the Prophets. I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust" (Acts 24:14-15).
  2. To those who doubted that a resurrection for all would occur, Jesus Christ proclaimed: "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth -- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28-29).
  3. Further, even Old Testament writers like righteous Job and Daniel knew and spoke of the resurrection from the dead (Job 14:14-15, Daniel 12:2).
- C. In addition to the wonderful promises of God Himself, we have an actual example we can look to as visible proof positive that God can and will resurrect the dead.
- D. That example is the resurrection of Jesus Christ our elder brother.
- E. The fact of the resurrection is clearly shown from the biblical eyewitness records and informed testimony (Romans 1:4, I Peter 1:3).
- F. But many have overlooked that while Christ's death pays for our sins, nonetheless "we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10) -- a life He is still living in us daily (since His resurrection, which brought Him back to life) through the power of His holy spirit (Galatians 2:20).



- G. Further, His resurrection is incredibly important to us for another reason. It proves by example that God can and will resurrect us. Since Christ was resurrected, we can be, too. He was not to be the only one resurrected, just the first!
- H. Notice: "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.... But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits [not only one] of them that slept [died]. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:13-14, 20, 22, Authorized Version).
- I. Yes, the promise of the resurrection is indeed the very hope of us all, since we all are only mortal and, unless resurrected, will die and remain dead without hope of eternal life.
- J. Nonetheless, the time and nature of this resurrection will not be the same for all.
1. Paul stressed: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But each one in his own order" (verses 22-23).
  2. This passage of scripture goes on to say that Christ was first ("Christ the firstfruits"), and then "afterward those who are Christ's at His coming" (verse 23).
- K. Hence we see that, besides Christ, the first group to be resurrected from the dead are those who are called and chosen of God.
1. Those who "are Christ's" (that is, in whom the holy spirit dwells as a result of repentance and proper baptism -- see Romans 8:9).
  2. I Thessalonians 4:16 speaks of the same time.
  3. Revelation 20:4-6 confirms the same event. Those who are resurrected then will be resurrected as spirit beings who cannot die (verse 6). They "shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years [i.e., during the Millennium]."
- L. This is not the only resurrection -- verses 5 and 6 refer specifically to this resurrection as the "first resurrection."

- M. Verse 5 tells us when the next -- the second -- general resurrection will occur in God's plan:
1. "The rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years [the Millennium] were finished."
  2. This resurrection will be of all those who lived and died and, for one reason or another, have not had a chance for salvation.
- N. Obviously, this group comprises the bulk of humanity, for only relatively few have ever heard the name of Jesus, let alone truly received God's holy spirit.
- O. Therefore this resurrection is not of the spirit to eternal life (these, of course, have not yet qualified for God's Kingdom), but to physical life with, finally, a chance to learn of God's truth and qualify for His Kingdom.
1. Note for proof verses 11 and 12 of Revelation 20, which find the rest of the dead (at a time after the Millennium) resurrected before God, not to be condemned, but to have the Word of God opened to their understanding so they can learn of God and qualify for His Kingdom. This is the second resurrection.
  2. The second resurrection is spoken of more fully in Ezekiel 37:1-14 where the physical nature of the resurrection is clearly seen, and where it is evident that the resurrected ones will finally know God.
- P. Finally, the Bible speaks of yet one more resurrection for the group not dealt with in either of the other two. This is the third resurrection.
- Q. It is a resurrection to the second death, since those resurrected will be cast into the lake of fire and burned up.
1. Daniel spoke of this resurrection in Daniel 12:2, where he said some would be resurrected to life and some to "shame."
  2. Christ also spoke of this resurrection in John 5:29 and called it the resurrection of "condemnation."
  3. Revelation 20:14 says this: "Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."

- R. The second death is actually a type of mercy killing, because those who die in the lake of fire, because of the twisted thinking that led them to become worthy of such a fate in the first place, would, if given eternal life, live out immortality in misery.
- S. Yes, in these three resurrections are contained the hope of all humanity. That hope is the promise of life after death in the resurrection from the dead.

#### V. Key Verses

With any doctrinal subject such as this one, it is good to remember, or even mark in one's Bible, the most important scriptures on a subject. Here are some on the resurrections:

- A. John 5:28-29, Acts 24:14-15 -- both Jesus Christ and the apostle Paul predicted the resurrections.
- B. I Corinthians 15:12-24 -- since Christ was resurrected, we will be also.
- C. I Thessalonians 4:16, Revelation 20:4-6 -- the first resurrection is here explained.
- D. Revelation 20:5-6, 12, Ezekiel 37:1-14 -- the second resurrection is described.
- E. Revelation 20:13-14, John 5:29 -- the third resurrection is described.

#### VI. Conclusion

Yes, to some, those who died over the years, like the fallen soldiers mentioned at the start, may indeed be "unknown" or, though perhaps known, unremembered. But God knows them all and will not forget them.

For to them - and to all of us mortals who know we shall die but know not the hour -- God offers the blessed hope we may all long for -- the resurrection of the dead to life again with the hope of eternal glory!

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## WILL YOU GO TO HEAVEN?

### I. Introduction

- A. Heaven! This one short word summarizes the blessed goal of all Christians. It gives the very meaning of the purpose of life, and the essence of the hope of life after death. Or does it?
- B. Millions of professing Christians think so. But are they correct? Is heaven what they think it is -- namely, the prayed-for and worked-toward reward of the saved?

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. You need to know the truth! And even if you already know the truth, you need to be able to prove it.
- B. No doctrinal question strikes closer to the heart of traditional Christian belief than the truth of the biblical teaching on the doctrine of heaven.
- C. Quite surprisingly, the biblical teachings about heaven can be easily summarized in a brief sentence or two: In short, heaven is the celestial place of God's throne, His headquarters of government of all things seen and unseen. It is decidedly not the promised reward of saved Christians, however.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. No doubt that last sentence -- the one saying that heaven is not the promised reward of the saved -- would shock most professing Christians. Most have been taught, and have blindly accepted without proof, that heaven is indeed the goal and hope of life itself.
- B. Most persons, even though not having seen heaven, carry with themselves a mental image of it. Usually this image is of a sort of spiritual paradise, replete with adorning clouds populated by angels (with wings, halos and long, flowing, golden hair).
- C. Also to be found there are the "souls" of the faithful, clustered together in holy groups, playing

on harps or beholding the face of the Lord in trance-like fixation millennia after millennia.

- D. Yes, this is probably most people's belief about heaven -- what it is for, and what it is like. But it is not the picture the Bible gives!

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. It is best to first show what heaven is, and then what it is not.

- B. Many are surprised to find that the Bible speaks of not just one but three heavens.

1. The first heaven is our earthly atmosphere -- the blanket of life-sustaining gases that encircles our globe, the heaven where the birds fly (Genesis 1:20) and from where the dew falls (Deuteronomy 33:28).

2. The second heaven represents the expanse of this great universe -- the outer space where we find the sun, moon, stars, comets and planets. It is of this heaven that God spoke when He said that the sun, moon and stars were to be for lights (Genesis 1:15-17).

3. The final heaven -- the "third" (II Corinthians 12:2) -- is indeed the location of God's holy throne and the seat of the ruling authority of all physical and spiritual reality. And it certainly does have some of the qualities traditional Christianity assigns to it.

a. For example, this third heaven is a type of spiritual paradise. The apostle Paul said as much in II Corinthians 12:4 when he briefly described the place and called it "Paradise."

b. Further, it is plainly the seat of God's throne and of His power, for we are taught by Jesus Christ not to swear by heaven, because "it is God's throne" (Matthew 5:34).

c. God further draws back the curtain and reveals more about His throne in Revelation 4, where, in a few sweeping verses the apostle John tantalizes us with panoramic glimpses of the celestial pageantry and power of the heavenly throne room.

d. Of the specific layout and furnishing of the place we know but little. However, in

addition to the items listed in Revelation 4, we are told that the lampstand, table, showbread and other artifacts of the earthly tabernacle were merely physical counterparts of heavenly things (Hebrews 9:1-5, 23), although an exact explanation of what this means is not given.

- C. But we need not guess about whether heaven is the reward of the saved. We are directly told, in no uncertain or ambiguous terms. And the answer will shock many!
- D. Jesus plainly taught, "No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man" (Jesus Himself -- John 3:13). Astoundingly, that scripture means just what it says: No man -- not Abraham, Isaac or Jacob -- no one -- has gone to heaven! There are no souls of the saved in heaven. It cannot therefore be the reward of the saved.
- E. People do not like to believe this plain statement of Jesus. Yet even King David, said to be a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22) and one who found favor with God (Acts 7:46), was not in heaven even after Jesus' death. As the apostle Peter said, "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day" (Acts 2:29). Peter then added, "For David did not ascend into the heavens" (verse 34).
- F. We have now seen that heaven is God's throne, and we have read that it most assuredly is not the abode of the deceased souls of the righteous. But, then, what is the future hope and goal of the true Christian?
1. Put briefly, the hope and goal of a Christian is not to enter heaven and play a harp for eternity, but to be born into the Family of God (as a member of the God Family and hence become a literal God) and rule in God's government and Kingdom with eternal life from (on) the earth. See Revelation 5:10, Daniel 2:44, 7:27 and Matthew 5:5.
  2. Even the plain scriptures cited above, showing that heaven is not the abode of the righteous dead nor the promised reward of the saved, are scarcely ever sufficient to answer the objections of those who believe that Jesus promised heaven to the good who die.
  3. Rather, they point to numerous scriptures that, in their minds at least, seem to say we do go to heaven at death.

- a. For example, some will point to John 14:1-4, which quotes Jesus telling the disciples that in His "Father's house are many mansions" that He was going to prepare for them, and say this passage proves we go to heaven.
  - b. But these verses say no such thing. For the Father's "house" is not heaven, but the Temple of God (John 2:16), which had many chambers or "mansions," each for the use of a specific job or function.
  - c. The disciples correctly understood Jesus to be saying that in His Kingdom were many responsible positions, and that He was going to prepare a job for them, and that He would bring it with Him when He comes again (John 14:3, Revelation 22:12) to set up His Kingdom on earth.
4. Others turn to Philipppians 1:23-24 and quote Paul's statement that he desired to "depart and be with Christ" as a proof text for going to heaven at death.
- a. But Paul does not in this verse say where he will meet Jesus Christ, nor when.
  - b. Paul does in other verses clearly show that he and the rest of the righteous will meet Jesus at the time of the resurrection, and on earth in its "clouds," at His Second Coming (I Thessalonians 4:16-17), not in heaven.
  - c. And consider this: If the saved souls of millions are now in heaven, why must there be a resurrection of the dead in the first place (I Corinthians 15)? Obviously because the dead are just that -- dead and in their graves, not in heaven.
5. Likewise, the oft-quoted scripture saying "great is your reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:12) is misunderstood by many. Often verse 5 of that chapter is not read, where Jesus says the righteous will "inherit the earth."
6. Nor is this section compared with I Peter 1:3-4, which says a Christian's reward is "reserved in heaven," and Revelation 22:12, which shows that -- although the reward is reserved in heaven -- Jesus will bring it with Him and give it to us when He returns to earth.

- G. Space fails us to address in detail other misunderstood passages of Scripture such as those concerning the true fate of Enoch and Elijah, whom many falsely suppose went to heaven based upon misunderstood verses, or the story of the thief on the cross, Lazarus and the rich man and Paul's vision of heaven in II Corinthians 12:1-6.

These and related verses are explained fully in our booklets Where Are Enoch and Elijah?, What Is the Reward of the Saved? and Lazarus and the Rich Man.

#### V. Key Verses

- A. Aside from a knowledge of the oft-misunderstood verses just mentioned, the whole subject of heaven can be grasped by remembering relatively few scriptures.
- B. The main ones are:
1. Matthew 5:34, which says heaven is God's throne.
  2. Revelation 4, which describes that throne.
  3. John 3:13, which states no man has ascended to heaven.
  4. Acts 2:29-35, which states that -- even after Jesus Christ's ascension -- David the righteous had not gone to heaven.
- C. Also, it is helpful to remember a few verses showing that God's Kingdom will be on earth (Matthew 5:5, Daniel 2:44, 7:27, Revelation 5:10).

#### VI. Conclusion

Yes, the biblical truth about heaven is easily summarized: Heaven is God's throne and current seat of government, but it is not the promised reward of the saved. How wonderful is our God to reveal through His true Church the blessed truth about this important subject in this end age!



---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## SIN -- A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH

### I. Introduction

- A. "Sin is fun!" So scribbled the graffiti author on a decaying brick tenement wall deep in the slums of a large city.
- B. While the elements may soon wash these words from the masonry, false beliefs about sin, like this one, will long engrave the minds of millions of humans everywhere.
- C. Few people, graffiti artists and professing Christians alike, really understand the biblical doctrine of sin!
- D. This state of spiritual blindness is dangerous, for our Savior Jesus Christ gave His life to pay the penalty for sin.
- E. Surely, anything that demanded the life of God Himself must truly be a matter of life and death for you and me!

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. In spite of the supreme importance of understanding what sin is and what it does, the actual biblical teaching about sin is easy to state in a few words.
- B. Sin is transgression against the way of God as defined by God's perfect law. Although the penalty of sin is death, forgiveness is gladly given by God to those who repent and accept Jesus Christ as their Savior and continue in God's way.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. Although the biblical truth about sin is easy to define (and, when fully understood, also deeply profound), nonetheless the veritable hodgepodge of human misconceptions about the topic is a nightmare of confusion.
  1. Some believe that there is no such thing as sin.

2. Others feel that sin is not sin unless the act in question "hurts somebody," or is against some sort of personal code.
3. Others include almost any and everything under the definition of sin -- such as all movies or even wearing any type of clothing but drab, all-black fashions out of the 17th or 18th century.
4. Others divide sin into various categories such as "original sin" and "mortal" and "venial" sins.

B. Truly, this subject needs to be made plain.

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. When it comes to understanding the subject of sin, the Bible does indeed devote much time to this doctrine, and in the plainest words.
- B. For example, the Bible leaves no doubt about the definition of sin when it proclaims, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4, Authorized Version).
- C. This statement that sin is the transgression of the law goes a long way in dispelling many myths about sin, such as the falsehoods that there is no sin or that sin is only sin when it "hurts somebody" or transgresses your own personal code.
- D. It says plainly that sin is disobedience to God's law, period, regardless of intentions, beliefs or personal codes to the contrary.
- E. But sin in this context means far more than only a technical or in-the-letter violation of one of the Ten Commandments.
  1. It includes, as I John 5:17 states, "all unrighteousness."
  2. For we find that Jesus Christ expanded the law of God to include not only transgression in the letter (however broadly defined), but also transgression in the spirit and intent of the law (Matthew 5:21-28).
- F. Thus sin includes not only wrong actions we commit, but also the evil attitudes of mind and thoughts of the heart of every one of us.

- G. Since sin is the transgression of the law, it is obvious that there is no sin without law (Romans 7:7).
- H. God's law is in force today. That alone will come as a shock to many people.
- I. Yet, the law is not our enemy but our friend, even though it defines sin: "The law is holy...and just and good" (verse 12).
- J. This is because God's law exists not merely to provide meaningless dos and don'ts for God's amusement (like mere artificial rules in a board game), but to reveal and define to humans what actions and attitudes are harmful.
- K. Certainly, when we see how deeply sin can permeate each of our lives, we can easily see how "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
- L. And yet, it is vitally important to realize much more about this subject of sin.
- M. For example, we must know that pure temptation, not followed by wrong actions or attitudes or thoughts, is by itself decidedly not sin.
  - 1. It is plain that Jesus Christ Himself was tempted severely (Matthew 4:1), in "all points...as we are" (Hebrews 4:15), and yet did not sin.
  - 2. Therefore we see that sin comes only when the temptation takes root in us -- "conceives" (James 1:14-15) -- and brings forth its evil results.

We must also realize that God is not the author of such temptation or its resultant sin.

  - 1. Rather, Satan was the first sinner and is hence its author (Ezekiel 28:13-15).
  - 2. And humans, in turn, sin when drawn away by the lusts of their own nature (James 1:14-15) or tempted by the unseen but powerful evil hand of Satan and his demons (Genesis 3:1-6, Ephesians 6:12).
- O. Further, we need to be aware that sin came into the human race from Satan, but through Adam, the first man.
  - 1. Nonetheless, we are all guilty of our own sins and not, instead, born with the sin of Adam staining

us (as the teachers of the false doctrine of "original sin" would have us believe).

2. For, as the apostle Paul wrote, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12, AV).
- P. Hence, the blame for sin belongs in two distinct places -- on Satan as its instigator and upon us as its willing participants.
- Q. Truly, this important lesson is the one taught by the symbolism of the two goats in the sacrificial ritual performed by ancient Israel on the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16).
- R. No discussion of the topic of sin would scratch its surface, however, without explaining the most important characteristic of sin -- its penalty. That penalty is the ultimate -- death! "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).
1. Such a direct and plain Bible statement may astound those who cling to the false belief in the immortality of the soul and who would think that the penalty would be to burn forever in hell fire.
  2. But God's plain and direct statement cannot be gainsayed nor doubted. "The wages of sin is death"!
- S. And notice that the wages is the same for all, great and small.
1. God does not categorize sin spiritually, calling some "mortal" and others "venial."
  2. All sin is mortal in the sense that it generates the death penalty if unrepented of.
- T. That is not to say that some sin is not more morally depraved than other sin, or involves more character destruction, or incurs greater bad results here on earth now. But the spiritual penalty for all sin -- the spiritual death penalty -- is equal in every case of sin.
- U. Yet the wages of sin are not only death, but include the suffering that such sin may bring in this life, such as broken marriages, wars and every other type of suffering, and the alienation and cutting off of the sinner from the living, eternal God (Isaiah 59:1-2).

- V. Certainly, we who have all sinned and therefore stand in jeopardy of suffering alienation from God and ultimate death, need an escape from and a protection and antidote to this horrible enemy of sin. Thankfully, we have it, through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 7:13-25).
- W. With all that has been said about sin, one question still remains: Why does God allow sin?
1. The answer is that sin is a natural possibility arising out of the freedom of choice -- the free moral agency -- God has given us humans.
  2. Since we have freedom to choose, we have freedom to sin. And we must have freedom to choose if we are to build the character God wants us to build in us, since character is by definition the choosing of right over evil.

#### V. Key Verses

Since the topic of sin is so vital to the understanding of the Bible, it is good to remember a few key verses on the subject. Here are some:

- A. I John 3:4 says sin is the transgression of God's law.
- B. Romans 6:23 shows that the penalty of sin is death.
- C. Isaiah 59:1-2 shows that sin cuts one off from God.
- D. Romans 3:23 states that all have sinned.
- E. I John 1:19 shows that God is faithful to forgive our sins when we repent of them.

#### VI. Conclusion:

- A. This subject of sin is too important to lie misunderstood in the minds of those whom God would call to salvation.
- B. Sin is transgression against the way of God as defined by His perfect law.
- C. Although the penalty of sin is death, forgiveness is gladly given by God to those who repent -- turn from sinning -- and who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and dedicate their lives to living God's way, obeying His perfect law.

- D. Yes, sin may be "fun" for a while, but its penalty is anything but fun -- death!
- E. Yet we who can learn what sin is, and who bitterly repent of it, can rely upon the merciful forgiveness of the great God who yearns to give us His Kingdom and eternal life.

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## HAVE YOU REALLY REPENTED?

### I. Introduction

- A. The basketball coach was astounded! A player from his team had stolen the ball, but in his excitement he was headed toward the wrong basket! "You're going the wrong direction!" the coach shouted. "Stop! Turn around! Go the other way!" But to no avail. The player didn't listen. He scored a goal -- for the wrong team!
- B. Just as this player was told to stop and turn around, God has told humans to stop and turn around spiritually, in the Bible doctrine of repentance.
- C. But few understand what real repentance is. What a pity. Those who do not understand are doomed to continue in the wrong direction spiritually, and to ignore God's plain commands that we should repent (Mark 1:14-15, Acts 2:38, 3:19).
- D. Such ignorance need not plague those willing to learn, however.

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. To repent means to change from living our way to living God's way.
- B. Repentance comes when we see our sins, are deeply remorseful of them, stop sinning, resolve to obey God and, with His help, actually do obey Him.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. Most people hold impressions about this subject that are far afield from the simple Bible truth. Some see no need for repentance because they feel they have not sinned.
- B. Others do not repent because they think all one must do is believe or accept the truth academically.

- C. Others confuse real repentance with temporary sorrow, remorse or simple emotion unaccompanied by any permanent change.
- D. Clearly, such false beliefs cannot fulfill God's command.

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. The English word repent is, of course, merely a translation from the original biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek. The words from which "repent" is translated means to turn -- to change direction.
- B. Such a change in direction requires one to first see that he is going the wrong direction, stop going the wrong way and finally to resolve to go God's way and obey God, with God's help.
- C. But a person cannot even see that he or she is going the wrong direction until God opens the person's mind to see it.
- D. This truth -- that one cannot truly repent until God grants repentance -- so strongly flies in the face of the teachings of this world that many simply cannot accept it.
- E. Nonetheless, the Bible clearly states that it is not our own will, but the "goodness of God" that "leads" us to repentance (Romans 2:4).
  - 1. The Bible further states that repentance is something God must grant, as He did when He "granted to the Gentiles repentance to [eternal] life" (Acts 11:18). See also II Timothy 2:25.
  - 2. God offers to grant one repentance when He calls a person to His truth, and we cannot be called to the truth unless God -- by His and not our own initiative -- decides to call us (John 6:44).
- F. If you are reading this, understanding it and being convicted by it, then God is calling you and leading you to repentance, if you will follow His lead.
  - 1. When God calls a person and begins to lead that person to repentance, He does so by showing the person that he or she has been living wrong -- that is, by showing the person his or her sins.
  - 2. And since "sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4, Authorized Version), God shows the sins



by opening one's mind to understand God's law, which defines His way of truth.

3. One who really understands God's law sees that he has not been living in accord with it, that he has been sinning and needs to repent -- change.
- G. We all need to repent.
1. Paul says in Romans 5:12, "All have sinned" (AV).
  2. John declares plainly that "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8).
  3. This presence of sin in us demands repentance, for God does not promise to forgive our sins unless we repent and are baptized, and the wages (result) of unforgiven sin is death (Romans 6:23)!
  4. See also Luke 3:9. Clearly, repentance is not a matter to be taken lightly.
- H. Nonetheless, many do not see the need to repent because, like the self-righteous Pharisees, they do not see their sins (Mark 2:16-17).
- I. When one truly sees his sins in sharp focus, he will be deeply broken up about them.
1. Hence, repentance is accompanied by serious emotion and sorrow.
  2. King David was deeply remorseful at his sin with Bathsheba, and his state of mind is reflected in his psalm and prayer of repentance (Psalm 51).
  3. Other examples like that of Job (Job 42:5-6) could be cited.
- J. Yet it must be stressed that although emotion usually accompanies repentance, bare emotion or sorrow unaccompanied by true change is not repentance!
- K. Paul addresses this issue squarely in II Corinthians 7:8-11, where he shows the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow.
1. He explains that worldly sorrow "produces death" because it is only the temporary sorrow of being caught, a type of self-pity, a fear of punishment or embarrassment.

2. But the sorrow of God "produces repentance to salvation" because it causes a permanent change in behavior, and leads to a person's becoming totally "clear" from the reoccurrence of sin.
- L. In fact, the change of behavior that accompanies repentance is the best proof of one's repentance.
1. John the Baptist refused to baptize those who had not shown by their changed behavior that they had brought forth the true "fruits" of repentance (Matthew 3:7-8).
  2. Christ dogmatically stated that mere lip service -- misnamed "belief" by some -- is not sufficient for salvation: "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).
- M. Repentance is not merely emotional sorrow, and neither is it penance.
1. Penance is an act or acts designed to try to pay the penalty of sin for oneself, such as by doing some good work of charity.
  2. Although good works are necessary in a Christian's life, they do not forgive past sins or pay their penalty, for our sins are forgiven by grace and not works.
  3. The Bible simply does not teach the doctrine of penance, and penance is in no way even similar to repentance, which God's Word teaches and indeed commands.
- N. Salvation requires obedience, and it therefore requires one to stop his old ways and begin obeying God -- it requires repentance!
- O. Such repentance is toward God the Father, who is the author of His law and against whom our sins are directed (Acts 20:21).
- P. Such repentance goes far beyond a mere outward verbal expression of belief, and even far beyond a few mechanical changes in behavior.
1. It pierces deep into the heart and mind of the person, and embodies an unconditional surrender from living one's own way to truly living God's way of life.

2. It requires putting Christ above all else in one's life (Luke 14:26-33), and hence in a symbolic sense sacrificing your own life (Romans 12:1-2).
- Q. Further, true repentance is not a once-and-for-all event, nor is it synonymous with perfection.
1. The repentance required before baptism is indeed a focused turn-around from our way to God's way -- a massive spiritual reversal.
  2. Yet, even at baptism God does not reveal all of our sins to us at once, nor do we immediately overcome all our sins.
  3. We continue to see and battle them over time while we "grow" in God's grace and knowledge of His ways (II Peter 3:18).
- R. As He reveals His law to us, and hence our sins (as we see how we fall short of that law), we must daily repent.
- S. We must see our sins, stop them, resolve to do right and follow through with God's help -- continually. Indeed, we must grow spiritually for the rest of our lives.
- T. But our obedience to God's law comes with help from Him.
1. No one can obey God's law in its fullest spiritual sense, in heart and mind, without His help (Jeremiah 10:23).
  2. This is because the minds of humans are susceptible to the pulls and deceptions of Satan.
  3. Yet, the spirit of God, which is given to those who have been properly baptized after true repentance, is more powerful than Satan and can and will give us the strength to obey!

#### V. Key Verses

Here is a brief summary of the key scriptures about this subject.

- A. Mark 1:14-15, Act 2:38 -- we are commanded to repent, which means to change from our way to God's way.
- B. Romans 2:4, Acts 11:18 -- repentance must be granted by God, who calls according to His will.

- C. Romans 6:23 -- the wages of sin is death.
- D. II Corinthians 7:8-11 -- sorrow that produces true repentance is far different than mere worldly sorrow.
- E. Matthew 7:21 -- salvation requires obedience to God.
- F. Jeremiah 10:23 -- we cannot obey God without His help.
- G. II Peter 3:9, 18 -- spiritual growth is a process and doesn't happen all at once.
- H. Psalm 51 -- repentance is often accompanied by deep emotion.

**VI.** Conclusion

The importance of repentance cannot be overemphasized. It is a first step toward salvation.

Have you repented? If not, then the words shouted by the basketball coach to the confused player are for you:

"You're going the wrong direction! Stop! Turn around! Go the other way!"

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## THE TRUTH ABOUT THE GOSPEL

### I. Introduction

- A. Ask any professing Christian whether he believes the Gospel, and he will immediately respond with a resounding "Yes!"
- B. But press that same person to explain just what that Gospel is and, if he is able to reply at all, he will almost surely give an answer that is false!
- C. This is frightening. For Jesus Christ commanded that true Christians repent and believe the Gospel (Mark 1:14-15). How can one believe if he doesn't even know what the Gospel is? And Jesus commanded His true disciples to preach the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:15). How can they unless they understand the Gospel message?
- D. Further, God inspired the apostle Paul to pronounce a double curse on all who would pervert, twist or teach another gospel than the true message Jesus brought (Galatians 1:8-9).
- E. How many of this world's churches are unwittingly bringing such curses on themselves and their followers simply because they don't know what the true Gospel is?

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. The Gospel is the good news Jesus Christ brought and announced of the Kingdom of God.
- B. And for those few God is calling now, that message includes the knowledge of how we may enter that promised Kingdom.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. This is decidedly not what is being taught by most churches today. As strange as it seems, today's churches have lost, changed, twisted and perverted the true Gospel. Some groups have actually changed the

title of the Gospel to the "social gospel" or the "gospel of wisdom" or some other nonbiblical title.

- B. But by far the most common mistake has been to take the words gospel of God and apply them to a different (false) message than the one brought by our Savior Jesus Christ. Usually they preach a message about Jesus Christ -- about His birth, life and death -- even though writers admit that the Bible does not provide a complete account of Jesus' life because that is not its purpose.
- C. Or they preach the subject of law and grace -- usually stressing that "we don't have to keep the law anymore" -- as the Gospel message.
- D. But these subjects, although important and necessary when rightly understood, are not the message Jesus brought. They are not the Gospel!

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. Actually, although it has been forgotten by this world, the true Gospel message is plain and easy to explain.
- B. Just what, then, is the Gospel?
  - 1. To start, the word gospel is translated from a Greek word that means "a good message," that is, "good news." This, of course, is commonly understood even by the churches of this world. But, the Gospel is the good news of what?
  - 2. No clearer verse can be found to answer that question than Mark 1:14. Read it in your own Bible: "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God."
  - 3. There it is: The Gospel is the good news of the coming Kingdom of God!
  - 4. This Gospel -- the true Gospel of the Kingdom of God -- has not been preached by this world's churches, and hence they have not understood the truth about that Kingdom.
  - 5. Yet that Kingdom is spoken of in both Old and New Testaments.
    - a. Daniel, for example, spoke of this Kingdom in Daniel 2:44-45: "And in the days of these

kings [i.e., a prophesied end-time empire of united kings] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these [other] kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

- b. Isaiah also speaks of it: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder.... Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice" (Isaiah 9:6-7).
  - c. Many other verses could be cited. But it is quite clear that what the prophets speak of here is indeed a literal kingdom -- with laws, rulers, domain and subjects -- not merely a spiritual or ethereal kingdom set up in "men's hearts."
  - d. The Kingdom of God is a literal kingdom to be set up here on earth during the Millennium after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.
  - e. It will break in pieces the kingdoms of this world and rule the physical nations of this world, with Jesus Christ as the head.
  - f. It will be a time of peace, prosperity and tranquility, when all God's perfect laws and ways will be administered (Isaiah 11:1-10, Micah 4:1-5).
- C. Further, as the New Testament emphasizes, those who are saved in this age will rule with Jesus Christ over these nations as kings themselves, but with eternal life as spirit beings (Revelation 3:21).
- D. And, astoundingly, these spirit beings, the saved, will not be mere angels, but members of God's own Family, on His own plane of existence, and hence very God themselves under the Father and the Son (I John 3:1-3, I Corinthians 15:35-58, Romans 8:12-17).
- E. Therefore, the Kingdom of God is, in its spiritual sense, the Family of God, its members on the God-plane. And when the time comes in God's plan that all physical humans who will qualify for that Kingdom have qualified and have been born into that

Family, then that Kingdom will be only spirit beings who are literal children of God.

- F. Now that truly is breathtaking good news! And it is the very same good news ("Gospel") that Jesus Christ brought!
- G. Jesus' coming and His role as the announcer of the Gospel were precisely told by Malachi: "Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me [this role was fulfilled by John the Baptist]. And the Lord [Christ], whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant [i.e., the bringer of the Gospel -- the good news], in whom you delight" (Malachi 3:1).
- H. Jesus Christ was the messenger who brought -- announced -- the good news of the coming Kingdom of God. No wonder He is called "the Word," for He is the communicator of God's great plan to humanity. Yet, the message was not His message, but the Father's (John 12:49-50, 14:24).
- I. And Jesus had no doubts what that message was, for He preached it -- the Gospel of the Kingdom -- everywhere He went (Mark 1:14-15, Matthew 9:35, 24:14).
- J. And the apostles also were not confused about the message. They knew that they must at first preach to the crowds who Jesus Christ was, for in the first century Jesus' identity was not taken for granted as it is today. They therefore prefaced their preaching with explanation that Jesus Christ was the Messiah -- the "Messenger of the covenant" who was expected (Malachi 3:1-3) -- and they used the unanswerable reality of the resurrection to prove it.
- K. But they knew the Gospel was not merely who Christ was, but what He said. It was the Gospel of the Kingdom (Luke 9:1-2, 10:1-2, 9, Acts 8:12, 20:25, 28:30-31, Matthew 24:14), and it was preached to Jews and gentiles alike (Acts 10:34-38).
- L. To be sure, for the relatively few whom God is calling now, the Gospel message of course includes not merely the announcement of the Kingdom of God, but the details of salvation and of how one can enter and be born into that glorious Kingdom.



- M. But the churches of this world have erred in thinking that God is trying to save the whole world now, and have for this and other reasons fallen into the teaching of a false gospel -- the emphasis of a wrong focus -- ignorance of the Kingdom of God.
- N. What a pity! And what a curse has been the ignoring of the true Gospel by the preachers of this world.
- O. Yet God's Church has not forgotten it, but has been preaching it for the first time in 1,900 years, through the printed word and over the airwaves in accordance with Jesus' command in Mark 16:15. And, in Matthew 24:14, Jesus explicitly stated that this Gospel of the Kingdom was to be preached in all the world for a witness.

#### V. Key Verses

Since it helps in personal study to remember key verses, here are some on this subject:

- A. Mark 1:14 -- the Gospel is the message of the Kingdom of God.
- B. Malachi 3:1 -- Jesus was the prophesied messenger of that good news.
- C. John 12:49-50 -- Jesus was not the originator of the message, but merely repeated what the Father told Him to say.
- D. Luke 9:1-2, Acts 10:34-39 -- the apostles also taught the same Gospel.
- E. Galatians 1:8-9 -- a curse is pronounced on any who would teach another gospel.
- F. Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16 -- the Church is commissioned to preach this Gospel to the whole world.
- G. Matthew 24:14 -- a prophecy that the Gospel will be preached to the world before the end of this age.

#### VI. Conclusion

Yes, the Gospel message is plain. It is the good news of the coming Kingdom of God and includes, for the few

now called of God, the way of entering into that Kingdom.

This world's temporary ignorance of the meaning of the true Gospel may sadden us who patiently wait for God's Kingdom. Yet we may rest assured in the knowledge that, nonetheless, the Kingdom is every day one step closer to being here!

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT HELL

### I. Introduction

- A. When you die, you are going straight to hell!
- B. Does that statement shock you? It shouldn't, or at least it wouldn't. It wouldn't, that is, if you knew that many times the word hell in the Bible means "the grave."
- C. But, sad to say, most people do not understand what the Bible says about this subject of hell. Millions live in fear of dying and going to an eternally burning, fiery hell where they will be tortured throughout all time.
- D. Others live with another type of fear -- the hideous worry that some departed loved one is right now suffering such a fate, and will continue to do so, throughout eternity.
- E. Still others are unable to accept that a good God would punish even the wicked in such a manner, and therefore reject God's existence altogether.
- F. Such states of mind need not afflict those who will look into God's Word for themselves. The biblical teaching about the topic is plain and reassuring.

### II. The Basic Doctrine

Depending upon the Hebrew or Greek word from which the English word hell is translated, the word hell in the Bible means, simply, the grave, a place of restraint for demons (not man) or the place where the wicked mercifully shall be burned up and die (not live immortally in pain) if unrepentant.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. Most believe hell to be a hideous place of eternal torment -- perhaps even inside the center of the earth -- where the immortal souls of the wicked roast forever without burning up. Satan is pictured as in charge,

with him and his demons inflicting unbearable pain and laughing with glee all the while.

- B. Thankfully, this is not at all the picture of hell that the Bible paints for us. To the contrary, many popular conceptions about hell did not originate from the Bible at all, but from the imaginations of a writer during the Middle Ages named Dante Alighieri, and his classic work The Divine Comedy. His ideas were in great part based upon two pagan philosophers with whom he was enraptured -- Plato and Virgil.
- C. The fact is that much common thinking about hell is merely the thoughts of men and not the revelation of God.

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. The place to start is to remind ourselves that the biblical writers did not write in English, but mostly in the ancient languages of Hebrew and Greek.
- B. The original idea behind the words translated "hell" in the Authorized or King James Version is not faithfully conveyed to us by the word hell today.
- C. Four words -- one from the Hebrew and three from the Greek -- are translated as "hell" in the Authorized Version, the one still in widest use among Christians.
  - 1. Two of these words, sheol in Hebrew and hades in the Greek, simply mean "the grave."
    - a. This is the meaning of the word from which the English "hell" was translated in Acts 2:27, which says, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [the grave], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption."
    - b. It is also used in Revelation 1:18, which says of Christ, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell [the grave] and of death."
  - 2. The Greek hades, which means the grave but is often translated hell, or its Old Testament Hebrew equivalent (sheol) is found in many other verses. See Matthew 11:23, Luke 10:15, Revelation 20:14, Proverbs 5:5, 7:27.

3. In I Corinthians 15:55, the translators themselves rendered the Greek word hades as "grave" instead of hell. To make the true meaning more plain, many modern translations render these two words other ways, such as leaving the Greek as "hades" or saying "the grave."
- D. Of the other two words translated into English as "hell," one occurs only one time. It is the Greek word tartaroo, found only in II Peter 2:4.
1. The word actually means a place of restraint or incarceration, and it is used only of the fallen angels (demons) -- never of man.
  2. Further, it carries no implication of ever-burning fire. It requires no further discussion here.
- E. Yet, the final word translated "hell" in many English versions does indeed refer to a punishment for the wicked in fire.
1. Notice Mark 9:43, where Christ warns that the evil will go "into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched."
  2. See also verse 45, where He says one can be "cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched."
  3. See also other verses where the word translated "hell" does indeed refer to a fiery punishment for the wicked -- Matthew 18:9, 10:28, 5:22, James 3:6.
- F. In all of these places the word translated into the English "hell" is the Greek word gehenna.
1. It refers to a valley just outside Jerusalem, called the Valley of Hinnom, which at the time of Christ was the place where refuse and even dead bodies of animals and despised criminals were thrown to be burned up.
  2. Christ used this valley to describe, in type, a very real punishment by fire for the wicked and unrepentant.
- G. But the time, place and nature of that real hell fire is different indeed than the mythical hell of men's imaginations through the ages!

- H. For one, that hell is much hotter than the mythical hell fire, since it burns up and kills those who are thrown into it.
1. Malachi 4:1 says it will burn up the wicked, not torment them without end forever.
  2. Verse 3 says they will be ashes under the soles of the feet of the righteous.
- I. Actually, the reason many believe that hell fire torments one but does not kill him is that they believe the false doctrine of the immortality of the soul. But the Bible plainly says God will destroy -- not merely torture -- unrepentant souls in hell (Matthew 10:28).
1. This lake of fire will only be kindled at the end of this present age, when God resurrects from death, death being like a sleep with no consciousness or thought (Psalm 6:5, I Thessalonians 4:13-18).
  2. The wicked will then be burned up at one time. See Revelation 20:14-15, which shows this lake of fire will burn at the end time of God's plan of salvation for man. See also Matthew 13:30 and John 5:28-29.
- J. Finally, realize exactly where this hell fire will take place. II Peter 3:10 gives the answer: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
- K. This earth will be burned up after the end of this age. This fire is the real hell fire, which will serve the same purpose as the gehenna fire Christ used to describe it.
1. It will burn up the wretched refuse of man's civilization gone sour.
  2. It is "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" described in Revelation 21:8 and 20:14-15.
- L. Although the fire will burn the wicked, it will kill them and burn them up. Our loving God will not torture the unrepentant for time immemorial! They will die in what amounts to a mercy killing, for the very attitudes

that demand their death would make them miserable if they were allowed to live. Truly, God is a good God of mercy and justice.

- M. Although the verses cited above make the subject of hell plain, some people cite certain scriptures to try to prove that hell is an ever-burning fire that tortures the wicked forever.
1. One such series of verses is Mark 9:43-48, which speaks of the hell fire that shall never be quenched. This means that the fire is not put out, but goes on until it burns up the wicked and dies out itself.
  2. Revelation 14:11 is also misunderstood. It says the smoke of the wicked's torment rises forever. This means that those who choose to follow the coming beast power will not be able to escape God's ultimate, final punishment on that satanic government.
  3. Some say Matthew 25:41-46 proves the punishing of the wicked is everlasting. But these verses rather show that this fire into which the wicked are cast was prepared for the demons.
    - a. When a man dies in this fire, he dies. His punishment is forever, although his punishing is over quickly.
    - b. For the demons, who are immortal, this is not so; they "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 20:10).

#### V. Key Verses

Since this subject is so important, it would be helpful to remember a few of the main verses that clarify the truth:

- A. Acts 2:27, Revelation 1:18 -- examples of places where the word translated "hell" means "grave."
- B. II Peter 2:4 -- the word "hell" here means a place of incarceration; this is the only place in the Bible where the Greek word is used, and it refers to the demons.
- C. Mark 9:43-48, Matthew 18:9 -- there is a real hell fire punishment for the wicked.

- D. Matthew 10:28, Malachi 4:1-3 -- the fire burns up the wicked and they die.
- E. II Peter 3:10 -- hell fire is the destruction of this world by fire at the end of the age.
- F. Revelation 20:14-15 -- the lake of fire is kindled at the end of the age.

VI. Conclusion

The subject of hell is much misunderstood. The truth is sobering but reassuring, and gives much peace of mind to those who seek to know and obey the merciful God of love.



---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## WHAT IS DEATH?

### I. Introduction

- A. Public enemy No. 1! That's how death can be described. For truly it will slay us all, and at a time of its own choosing.
- B. But paradoxically, although we all know we will die, very few know exactly what death is. Certainly death must be the least understood although most relentless enemy!
- C. Yet it need not remain a mystery to those who will look into their Bibles to read -- and believe -- what God says. For God has not left us in ignorance about this important subject.

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. Since life is merely a temporary, mortal, chemical process (with man being made from the physical elements -- "dust"), death is just the cessation of life.
- B. One who is dead has no consciousness separate from his body and feels no pain nor pleasure, but is as if asleep.
- C. Nonetheless, we all will live again after death, after a passage of time, when resurrected back to life again.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. Most professing Christians believe that at death they do not really die -- that is, cease to live in any form.
- B. They instead believe that at death only the body dies, and that the "soul" is then liberated to live on in heaven or hell (depending upon the moral merit of the former life).
- C. Others believe in reincarnation, thinking that their soul, which is liberated at death, will be placed in a

new body to live again, with this process occurring over and over.

- D. Scientists who believe evolution seem to recognize death for what it is (the total cessation of life), but they also err because they know nothing of the hope of the dead -- life again after a resurrection.
- E. Even other beliefs about death exist.
- F. Yet, surprisingly, these concepts are not from the Bible!

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. Perhaps the main reason why people, religious or otherwise, do not understand death is because, first of all, they do not understand what life is.
- B. But the Bible makes it plain. Genesis 2:7 records, "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Authorized Version).
  - 1. Notice! Man does not have a soul. He is a soul.
  - 2. The word translated "soul" here is the Hebrew word nephesh. It means a living, breathing, physical creature. The word carries no implication of immortality.
  - 3. In Genesis 1:24 nephesh is translated "living creature" and refers to animals.
- C. Further, the Scriptures say dogmatically that the soul can die and therefore cannot be immortal. See Ezekiel 18:4, 20 and Matthew 10:28.
- D. The Bible nowhere teaches that man has an immortal soul. In fact, the immortal soul doctrine was adopted by professing Christianity from pagan Egypt through the Greek philosophers.
- E. But note that man, as God stated, is composed of the physical elements of the earth and is dust. God plainly told Adam, who sinned, "For dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:19).
- F. But men do not want to die, so they do not want to believe God. They do not want to believe that man's life is merely a physicochemical existence that will run down and stop -- and die!

- G. Hence, they choose instead to believe the lie Satan told Eve when he said, "You will not surely die" (Genesis 3:4). They believe that within this dusty body, as a sort of prisoner of the flesh, is an immortal soul that is unleashed at the death of the body and that continues in conscious life forever.
- H. To be sure, man is not merely an animal. For one, man is made in God's image and in God's likeness (Genesis 1:26-27). And man's potential -- that of being born into the God Family -- is far more incredible than the fate of any animal.
- I. Further, God reveals that there is a spirit in man (I Corinthians 2:11) that gives man mental superiority over animals.
1. It is this spirit that imparts the power of mind to man, and the power of moral decision, including the ability to grow in character.
  2. But this spirit is not the man. And it is not an immortal soul.
  3. It is something in man that gives man a dimension of life above the animals.
  4. It does not give him immortal life, however.
- J. To understand death requires that we know that man's life is merely a chemical process involving physical elements. When that process stops, we die. We are dust, and when we die our bodies decay and return to the dust.
- K. When we die, all conscious thought and awareness ceases.
1. Notice Psalm 6:5: "For in death there is no remembrance of You; in the grave who will give You thanks?"
  2. And compare Ecclesiastes 9:4-5: "For him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion. For the living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing."
  3. The apostle Peter knew that even the righteous die and lose consciousness and bodily presence, for he stated: "Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead

and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day.... For David did not ascend into the heavens" (Acts 2:29, 34). Even righteous David was not an immortal soul that left his body and went to heaven. Even David was dust and decayed back to the elements.

- L. Other scriptures supply even more detail about death, comparing it in a figure of speech to sleep (I Corinthians 11:30, I Kings 2:10). When a person is asleep, he loses consciousness and is unaware of his surroundings.
- M. The topic of death is in some ways unique. Most people will not believe what God says if their senses tell them differently. For example, Adam and Eve did not believe God's warning about the tree of good and evil, because the fruit of it looked good and desirable.
- N. Yet, in the case of death, people will not believe God when He says death is what it indeed appears to be to the most casual observer -- namely, the cessation of life! People will not believe God no matter what He says, whether our senses tell us to agree or not.
- O. But caution! Nothing said here means to imply that death is the end of all hope of life. It is not. An old saying goes, "Where there is life, there is hope."
- P. But God says, in effect, that even where there is death there is still hope -- in fact, the main hope.
- Q. That hope is the resurrection of the dead from death to life again. Notice Job's question and answer about death: "If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come" (Job 14:14, AV).
- R. Realize this: This demonstrable fact of the resurrection of the dead proves once and for all that humans are not immortal souls. If they were, why would the dead have to be resurrected? They would already be alive.
- S. And see further Christ's startling statement: "Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live" (John 5:25).
- T. Jesus knew His statement might startle His audience, so He said further: "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear

His voice and come forth -- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation [judgment]" (verses 28-29).

- U. The Scriptures are plain that all people will be resurrected, even those who will eventually be cast into the lake of fire to die the "second death."
- V. The apostle Paul chose to comfort the living relatives of those true Christians who had died by reminding them of the wonderful resurrection to come (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).
- W. To alleviate their sorrow, Paul explained that the dead in Christ will be resurrected at Christ's return, and that they will forever be with Christ.
- X. Yes, the truth about death is far less foreboding than the fanciful imaginations of well-intentioned but errant religionists!

V. Key Verses

When properly understood, this topic of death can fill us all with real hope, for then we know the wonderful truth that we will all see our beloved deceased relatives again. Therefore it may be well to note specially the basic scriptures that describe the truth about death. Here are some of them:

- A. Genesis 2:7 and 3:19 -- man is a mortal being made from the dust.
- B. Genesis 1:24 -- the Hebrew word translated "soul" in Genesis 2:7 is translated here as "living creature" and refers to animals.
- C. Ezekiel 18:4, 20 and Matthew 10:8 -- the soul is not immortal; it dies.
- D. Psalm 6:5 and Ecclesiastes 9:4-5 -- the dead have no consciousness.
- E. John 11:11-14 and I Kings 2:10 -- death is compared to sleep.
- F. John 5:25, 28-29 and I Corinthians 15 -- the dead will be resurrected.

VI. Conclusion

Death is indeed an enemy but through the resurrection from the dead this enemy is annihilated. Therefore Paul says in I Corinthians 15:26, 54-55 (AV): "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.... So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## WHICH DAY IS THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH?

### I. Introduction

- A. Which day should a Christian observe as God's day of worship?
- B. Millions of Christians today -- indeed, most -- observe Sunday as the "Lord's day." But are they correct?
- C. These are important questions, for the Bible shows that God's Sabbath is a sign that identifies His people (Exodus 31:12-17).
- D. Hence those who keep the wrong day are not God's people, no matter how sincere they may be!

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. The seventh-day Sabbath was ordained at creation and reconfirmed to ancient Israel.
- B. Christ and the apostles faithfully kept it, and it is binding upon us today.
- C. The Sabbath is a memorial of creation, a sign of God's people, a time of physical and spiritual rest and refreshment and a picture of the coming millennial rest in the Kingdom of God.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. The vast majority of Christians today, without thinking, accept Sunday as the day of worship. They would recoil at the suggestion they might be wrong.
- B. Yet different Christian denominations differ widely as to exactly why they observe Sunday, what they believe the day means and how it should be observed.
- C. But while Sunday keepers disagree about their reasons and methods, they all agree on one issue: They believe the Sabbath need not be kept.
- D. Therefore, the question here is whether the Bible proves we must keep the Sabbath.

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. The place to start is Genesis 2:1-3. Here we see that God rested on the seventh day of creation. He "blessed the seventh day and sanctified it." Exodus 20:11 states that the day God sanctified was the Sabbath.
- B. Thus we see that the Sabbath did not originate with Israel or the Jews of the Old Covenant, as some maintain, but rather at creation itself.
- C. It hence is a memorial of creation and a reminder that the true God is Creator. And since the Sabbath began before the Old Covenant was ratified, it cannot somehow be negated by the Old Covenant's passing.
- D. Exodus 16:1-30 shows how God gave manna to the Israelites on six days each week, but not on the seventh. The purpose of the manna, as verse 29 shows, was not just to feed the people but to teach them to observe the Sabbath.
- E. This incident occurred before the terms of the Old Covenant were given. Therefore the Sabbath, though it was later made part of the Old Covenant, was not confined to it.
- F. The fact the Old Covenant is not now in force for true Christians does not disannul the requirement to keep God's Sabbath.
- G. The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus 20:1-17. Verses 8 to 11 comprise the Fourth Commandment, a resounding call by God to keep the Sabbath holy. We are also reminded here that the Sabbath is a rest day; indeed the word Sabbath means "rest."
- H. The fact that the Sabbath is one of the Ten Commandments is no small matter, for most Christians regard keeping the Ten Commandments to be among man's most fundamental obligations.
- I. Of course, some will say the Ten Commandments are done away, but can they seriously mean this? Is it now OK to have other gods before God, or to commit adultery, to lie, to steal or to covet? Of course not.
- J. Virtually all would concur that all the commandments should be kept -- all of them, that is, except the Fourth, which demands we keep the Sabbath holy! How illogical!
- K. Some who have seen this illogic but who wish to keep Sunday anyway will maintain that the verses mean we



must indeed keep a day holy, but that the day is now Sunday and not Saturday.

- L. But the idea that the Sabbath was changed to Sunday is even less logical, and is rejected by every respectable authority on the Bible and history.
- M. Next, Leviticus 23:1-3 lists the Sabbath as a feast day of God, not of the Jews. This passage further calls the Sabbath a holy convocation, and hence a day for a worship meeting.
- N. Any one of a number of verses could be cited to make the next point, but Ezekiel 20:1-26 is a good illustration.
  - 1. These verses show that one of the greatest reasons ancient Israel was sent into captivity was because they broke God's Sabbath law.
  - 2. Nehemiah 13:15-18 confirms that the Jews who returned from that captivity realized this fact.
- O. Can we not see from these verses how seriously God takes the Sabbath? Breaking the Sabbath demands the death penalty for sin (Romans 6:23). How can some conclude that they can take the Fourth Commandment lightly now, in the face of such evidence of God's desire for us to keep the Sabbath?
- P. The New Testament contains much powerful evidence for Sabbath observance as well.
  - 1. Paramount among this evidence is that Jesus Christ Himself kept the Sabbath, not Sunday. Luke 4:16 and other scriptures clearly show that this was His custom, or habit.
  - 2. In Mark 2:23-28, Christ confirmed that "the Sabbath was made for man" [not just for the Jews!], and that He was the "Lord of the Sabbath." He was thus qualified to state how it should be properly kept.
  - 3. He was the Lord of the Sabbath because He was the Creator God of the Old Testament (Colossians 1:15-16) -- and therefore the Creator of the Sabbath!
  - 4. He rested on the Sabbath at creation and He kept it when He came to the earth in human form as Jesus Christ!
- Q. Other verses show more proof.
  - 1. For one, New Testament Christians kept the Sabbath after Christ's death, and therefore after

everything that was "nailed to the cross" was nailed.

2. For example, Luke 23:55-56 shows that the women who wished to embalm Jesus' body rested on the Sabbath after His death, "according to the commandment."
  3. Verse after verse likewise confirms that the apostle Paul habitually preached in services on the Sabbath.
    - a. See Acts 13:14-15, 16:13, 17:2, 18:4.
    - b. And he preached not just to Jews, but to gentiles as well (Acts 13:42-44). This shows that Paul had one custom both for Jews and gentiles, not two separate customs.
  4. Also, see Acts 15, especially verse 21. James' statement here shows that he assumed the gentiles would continue to hear God's Word preached on the Sabbath.
    - a. This confirms that converted gentiles kept the Sabbath, and that they would continue to do so even though the decision in Acts 15 to not force circumcision upon gentiles freed them from some Old Testament requirements.
    - b. Clearly, it did not free them from the Sabbath command, as is sometimes wrongly alleged.
  5. Likewise, Hebrews 4:4-9 confirms the Sabbath is binding today. The final rest of God is yet future for us, in the coming Millennium.
    - a. The Sabbath pictures that rest.
    - b. That being so, does it not make sense that the Sabbath day, which pictures the ultimate rest, would continue in full force till the pictured rest arrives?
- R. Two more important points must be made.
1. The first is that the Sabbath will be kept in the world tomorrow, as can be seen from Isaiah 66:22-23. Does it make sense that the Sabbath was to be kept from creation, and by ancient Israel, and by Christ, and by the apostles, and in the future, but not now in this day?
  2. Finally, one more powerful Bible proof for the Sabbath is the very argument some cite against it. Some refuse to keep the Sabbath because the New

Testament does not command Sabbath observance with a direct command such as "You shall keep the Sabbath even in New Testament times. Thus says the Lord."

- a. But the lack of such a command shows that whether to keep the Sabbath was never an issue in the early Church!
- b. Had it been an issue, it certainly would have been addressed strongly one way or the other, as the less-important subject of circumcision was.
- c. The absence of such statements actually speaks quite loudly for the Sabbath. It shows that continued Sabbath observance was taken for granted by the early Church.

#### V. Key Verses

Here is a brief summary of important scriptures about the Sabbath.

- A. Genesis 2:1-3, Exodus 16:1-30 -- the Sabbath was instituted before the Old Covenant.
- B. Exodus 20:8-11 -- it is one of the Ten Commandments.
- C. Leviticus 23:1-3 -- the Sabbath is God's day, not just the Jews' or anyone else's day; it is a holy meeting day.
- D. Ezekiel 20:1-26 -- God sent Israel into captivity because of their Sabbath breaking.
- E. Luke 4:16 -- Christ kept the Sabbath.
- F. Acts 13:14-15, 42-44, 15:21 -- Paul kept it; so did the gentiles.
- G. Hebrews 4:1-10 -- the Sabbath pictures the coming millennial rest.
- H. Isaiah 66:22-23 -- the Sabbath will be kept in the world tomorrow.

#### VI. Conclusion

Which day is the proper day for a Christian to observe as holy to the Lord? If the Bible is to be our guide, the answer is clear -- the Sabbath!

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## WHO AND WHAT IS SATAN?

### I. Introduction

- A. The B-2 stealth bomber, an airplane developed by the United States government, is touted to be invisible to enemy radar. The plane supposedly can perform the ultimate disappearing act! Can it?
- B. Or do we know of an invisible enemy who has been around for millennia, wreaking havoc? He is Satan the devil, and although unseen, he is real!
- C. Or is he?
- D. You need to know, for an enemy you can't see may be an enemy who doesn't exist. Or he may be an enemy who not only exists but is your most fearsome foe!

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. If the Bible is our authority, then the answer is clear: Satan not only exists, he is a powerful, wicked, spirit being.
- B. He was created perfect, but became corrupted by sin.
- C. He is the invisible leader of all fallen angels, the unseen author of all evil and the tempter, deceiver and destroyer of mankind.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. Because Satan is a spirit and unseen, humanity has forged many false ideas about just how he must look. He is often imagined to be a short, skinny elf in red tights, with pointed ears or horns, a barbed tail and a pitchfork in his hand.
- B. Sad to say, this erroneous mental cartoon of Satan's appearance seems so funny that many conclude he is but a harmless little creature on a par with a villain from a Walt Disney film.
- C. A few philosophical types view Satan as a convenient -- but totally imaginary -- way to describe or personify all the evil in this world.

- D. Others have no use at all for the devil, and consider him a total fake, pure and simple.
- E. But some religious people are downright, openly afraid of the devil. They ascribe to him personally every bad thing that happens to them, be it a failed marriage or a flat tire on their car.
- F. Just what is the truth?

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. To begin, the Bible shows that three levels or classes of being exist in the universe.
  - 1. Man and animals, both composed of physical matter, make up one class.
  - 2. The spirit-composed members of the God Family, which at present includes God the Father and Jesus Christ (John 1:1-2, 14), are another class, the highest form of life.
  - 3. The third class of being is the angels.
- B. Angels are "spirits" (spirit beings -- Hebrews 1:7) who serve as God's helpers as He unfolds His plan for man (verse 14).
  - 1. Hebrews 2:5-7 explains that man right now is lower than the angels.
  - 2. But man will eventually be set in authority over angels when he is finally resurrected as a spirit being (verse 8, I Corinthians 6:3).
  - 3. Thus we see that angels are spirit beings of superior power and authority to man. They minister as God's servants in matters God directs.
- C. Within the angelic realm, differing ranks or stations of angels exist.
  - 1. Two that the Bible mentions specifically are the cherubim (Genesis 3:24) and the seraphim (Isaiah 6:2).
  - 2. We can conclude from biblical evidence that there are probably just two cherubim, and that they hold special responsibility at God's throne. More on this below.
- D. Some angels are righteous and some are wicked (Luke 11:26), the latter having "sinned" and been "cast down" (II Peter 2:4, Jude 6).

- E. These fallen angels -- demons -- have over them a ruler or prince or boss. His name is Satan (Matthew 9:34, Luke 11:14-19)!
- F. Exactly how did Satan come to his position as chief of the wicked spirits? Two main portions of Scripture fill in the important details: Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-17.
1. Isaiah 14 starts with a taunt against Babylon, which carried the nation of Judah into captivity.
    - a. Verse 12, however, makes a literary jump into prehistory and begins to speak to the real power behind Babylon -- Satan the devil, here called Lucifer. Verse 12 exclaims that Satan was "cut down."
    - b. Verses 13 and 14 reveal that the thoughts of his heart had been to exalt his authority even above God's -- actually to knock God off His throne!
    - c. Verse 15 shows that these evil plans were ill-fated, for God was to bring him "down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit."

Notice how these verses parallel Christ's statement that He beheld Satan "fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18), and Peter's record that the demons were "cast down" from God's presence (II Peter 2:4).

2. Continuing, now in Ezekiel 28, we find more of the details. Ezekiel 28 opens with a prophecy against the ancient city of Tyre, a powerful seacoast kingdom in Palestine during Old Testament times.

The prophecy against the entire city is couched in terms directed to the "prince" or ruler of Tyre, since the ruler is responsible, in God's eyes, for the sins of the city.

- a. But in verse 12, a complaint or cry is made, not against the "prince," but against the "king" of Tyre. The language that follows makes it plain that no human being is spoken of here, but rather that the evil power behind the prince of Tyre -- the king of evil, Satan the devil -- is actually being addressed.
- b. Verse 12 shows Satan was created full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
- c. Verse 14 states that Satan was an angel of the

type or rank of cherub. He had been at the very throne of God!

- d. Verse 15 says he had been created perfect, but that iniquity "was found" in him.
  - e. Verses 16 and 17 indicate his sins included vanity, covetousness and selfishness.
- G. Before summarizing these two sections, it is helpful to briefly cite Revelation 12:3-4. Here we see Satan, symbolized as a dragon, having authority over one third of the angels of heaven (called "stars").
- H. When we combine this with Isaiah and Ezekiel, the full picture emerges!
1. Satan was a powerful and beautiful angel, a cherub, with high responsibilities, reporting directly to God's throne.
  2. He had, apparently, power over one third of the angels.
  3. Most likely the other two thirds of the angels were under the direction of the other two cherubim (Michael and Gabriel, probably).
  4. Although created perfect, Satan had the power of free choice. He chose to follow the way of vanity and covetousness, and thus became corrupted. He tried to overthrow God, but was beaten back and thrown down to the earth along with his angels, who became demons.
- I. A brief survey of the biblical names for Satan shows Satan's present role and character. He is called:
1. a serpent (Genesis 3:1), the devil and Satan (Revelation 12:9),
  2. the evil one (John 17:15),
  3. the angel of the bottomless pit and Abaddon and Apollyon, which both mean "destroyer" (Revelation 9:11),
  4. Beliel (II Corinthians 6:15) and
  5. Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24).
  6. Though this may surprise many, the Bible clearly calls Satan the ruler of this world (John 12:31) and the god of this age (II Corinthians 4:4)!

- J. Of course, Satan is man's chief tempter (Mark 1:13, 4:15, I Corinthians 7:5). He is the deceiver -- not of the few, but of the whole world (Revelation 12:9, II Corinthians 11:14).
- K. But how does Satan work? Although spirits can possess a person if given permission, this is not the usual way they tempt or attack.
- L. All of us know how every person exudes a power of personality that radiates from him through his moods, emotions and tastes. Thus a person may be said to be the life of the party, or the drag on the company. His or her influence seems infectious for the good or bad of others.
- M. Satan, a spirit being, is far more powerful than any human.
  - 1. He is able to transmit, as it were, the attitudes or moods of rebellion, vanity and hate and to infect others with these attitudes, just as surely as a sour person can dampen a party. And this influence occurs without physical contact.
  - 2. Satan is able to "fill" one's heart (Acts 5:3).
  - 3. He transmits his evil moods and attitudes through the "air" (Ephesians 2:2), much like radio waves travel through the air.
- N. Yes, we all have been deceived. But the greatest deception of all is the one many people now believe: that Satan doesn't exist in the first place or, if he does, that he is a harmless cartoon elf. The Bible states differently!
- O. Satan is a powerful, evil being. His whole purpose, Christ said, is "to steal, and to kill, and to destroy" (John 10:10)!

V. Key Verses

Here are some of the main Bible verses about Satan:

- A. Hebrews 1:7, 2:5-7 -- the role of angels is defined.
- B. Luke 11:26, II Peter 2:4, Jude 6 -- some angels are wicked and have been cast from God.
- C. Matthew 9:34, Luke 11:14-19 -- the leader of fallen angels is Satan.
- D. Isaiah 14:12-15, Ezekiel 28:12-17 -- the story of Satan's rebellion.



E. Revelation 12:9 -- Satan deceives the whole world.

F. John 12:31, II Corinthians 4:4 -- Satan is called the ruler and god of this evil world.

VI. Conclusion

Yes, America's stealth bomber may or may not succeed. But one thing is sure: Satan the devil, a hidden but powerful foe of mankind, is indeed the original -- and most deadly -- disappearing act of all time!

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## THE TONGUES QUESTION

### I. Introduction

- A. Here is a vital question! You need to know the answer!
- B. Are the ecstatic utterances -- called gibberish by some observers -- that boil forth from the mouths of members of some charismatic churches true manifestations of the New Testament gift of tongues? Are they from the holy spirit?
- C. Or are they, as others would contend, a ridiculous and dangerous counterfeit?
- D. This question is of no small importance. Many feel such "speaking in tongues" is proof one has the holy spirit, or at least proof one has some superior level of the spirit. Is this true? You need to know.

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. The Bible gift of tongues is the God-given, miraculous ability to speak in a human language that one has not learned in any normal way.
- B. It is decidedly not that manifestation of emotional and indecipherable babbling that some charismatic circles today label "tongues."

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. With all the confusion, how can we prove, with confidence, exactly what the Bible teaching on tongues is -- and what it isn't?
- B. The process of proving the Bible truth about tongues has three steps: 1) Listing the common teachings. 2) Carefully examining all the major Bible verses about tongues and distilling from them all the essential traits of speaking in tongues. 3) Comparing the common beliefs with the clear biblical record and seeing if the two match or clash.
- C. The commonly held false beliefs about this subject form a thick web teeming with pet theories and often contradictory ideas.

- D. Often such "speaking in tongues" takes place at an emotionally charged religious service called a "tarry meeting," where the "spirit" is "called down" or "worked up." Often such "working up" consists of frenzied repeating of certain phrases like "Glory, glory" or "Sweet Jesus."
- E. Suddenly one or two or more, either men or women, are "overcome with the spirit" and begin shouting gibberish. Usually this includes waving of the arms, jumping, shouting or even rolling on the floor.
- F. One or another of the congregation may rise to "interpret" what a speaker is saying, usually attributing to the person great utterances of praise for God and other spiritual insights.
- G. Some groups view this phenomenon as absolute proof one has the spirit of God. Some even believe it is the only proof.
- H. Still others allow that Christians who do not "speak in tongues" in this manner may have the spirit, but that those who do "speak in tongues" have attained to a "higher level" of the spirit with such speaking. It is a greatly prized spiritual goal in all tongue-speaking circles.
- I. Some believe that such "speaking in tongues" is related to the episode of the "tongues of fire" in Acts 2:3. Others believe it to be the "baptism of the Spirit" predicted by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:11).
- J. Beliefs differ, too, as to whether the utterances mean anything in any language. Some believe the utterances to be the "tongues of angels" (I Corinthians 13:1). Others say the languages are unknown and cannot be known.
- K. Still others believe such utterances to indeed be known foreign languages spoken today, or at least previously known languages such as ancient Hebrew.
- L. All who do such speaking take the greatest pride in the fact they "spoke in tongues," not in what, if anything, they said that might have meant something.
- M. But few, it seems, stop and ask themselves whether their gift accords with what the Bible calls "tongues." Often such speakers do indeed quote chapter and verse to support their ideas, but usually such quotations are ripped entirely out of context and explained illogically.

- N. When we look carefully at the main verses, however, a clear picture emerges.

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. The place to begin is Acts 2:1-21. The verses in this passage form the crux of the Bible doctrine of tongues.
1. Here recorded is the first outpouring of the holy spirit. After the death of Christ, believers were assembled on the day of Pentecost when a mighty wind filled the room, fire descended upon them and they began to speak in tongues.
  2. The apostle Peter then spoke in tongues to others who were gathered in Jerusalem; all marveled at the gift.
- B. Such a brief summary at first might seem to support the beliefs of the charismatics. But look closer!
1. Note that this was not a "tarry meeting," but a church service on Pentecost, a Holy Day the Bible commands true Christians to keep (Leviticus 23:15-21). Pentecost was a day -- a Holy Day -- not an event.
  2. And those who advocate tarry meetings simply misunderstand Christ's command for the apostles to wait in Jerusalem till the spirit was given (Luke 24:49). The word tarry in this verse comes from the Middle English tarien, meaning "wait." Modern translations bear this out.
  3. Further, Acts 2:2 shows a wind filled the whole house suddenly. It was a wind that made the noise, and it was sudden. It was not that their mouths gradually worked up a wind!
  4. Further, the tongues of fire were not the tongues in their mouths, but small, burning fires.
  5. Notice, also, that all were filled with the spirit, not just some.
  6. And, most importantly, see that the tongues Peter spoke in were known languages of the day that were clearly understood by those listening.
    - a. The listeners marveled because Peter, in their ears, seemed to be speaking in their native, local dialects, although he obviously hadn't learned all these languages by going to school or through some other normal method of study.

- b. Peter was not speaking unintelligible gibberish. Further, we see no descriptions of wildly gyrating bodies, waving hands or rolling on the ground.
- c. Before leaving the book of Acts, we must examine one more instance of speaking in tongues, this time in Acts 10:44-48. It was on the occasion of the first outpouring of God's spirit to the gentiles.
  - 1. The account is brief, but verse 46 clearly states that those listening heard those speaking in tongues "magnify God."
  - 2. The only conclusion is that these tongues again were known languages of the day.
- D. Acts 19:1-6 relates a similar episode.
- E. The book of I Corinthians has much to say about tongues. I Corinthians 12, verses 1 and 10, mention the gift. But verses 27-31 are the most crucial.
  - 1. In verse 28 Paul lists the governmental offices of the Church, including apostle.
  - 2. Then, beginning in verse 29, through a series of rhetorical questions, Paul emphatically proves that not all have the gift of tongues (or any of a number of other gifts, for that matter).
  - 3. Clearly, having the gift of tongues cannot be the only proof one has God's spirit. Nor is it proof of superior righteousness, for verse 31, coupled with I Corinthians 13, declares unabashedly that love is a greater gift of the spirit than speaking in tongues!
- F. I Corinthians 13:1 says that even if one has the power to speak in the "tongues of angels," he is spiritually worthless unless he has love.
- G. These are strong words indeed, and should once and for all lower tongues from any imaginary position of superiority among gifts of the spirit!
- H. And these verses do not imply that the Corinthians spoke in angelic language. For in I Corinthians 13:1-2 Paul lists numerous incredible feats, all of them beyond the capability of men (such as moving mountains with faith, and understanding every single mystery of life).
- I. He wanted the Corinthians to see that even if they could do certain things far beyond their normal

abilities, it still wouldn't make them righteous unless they were filled with and expressing God's love.

J. It is clear that he spoke of the tongues of angels also as something beyond their current abilities, just like moving mountains.

K. I Corinthians 14 is a crucial chapter, for it is devoted entirely to the topic of tongues. Be sure to review every word of this chapter on your own. Numerous points stand out and with great force defeat the arguments of modern tongue speakers.

1. To begin, the same Greek word for "tongues" used in Acts is also used here, not some different word. Further, the overwhelming conclusion is that Paul wrote these words to downplay and control the gift of tongues, not to extol it.

2. The first verse of the chapter unceremoniously dethrones tongues from a position of preeminence among gifts, since it encourages normal, inspired preaching (called "prophesying," in the Authorized Version) over the gift of tongues.

3. The next verses time and again stress that the purpose of speaking in tongues is to edify the audience, not the speaker.

This, of course, is vastly different from modern tarry meetings and the like, where the one who "speaks in tongues" is the center of attention while the audience just sits back and watches the show. No real edification takes place.

4. Verses 10-17 stress the need for the audience to understand the words, and thus make plain that the words are capable of being understood. Clearly, Paul is writing of common human languages of the day.

5. Verse 23 makes the same point in a different way. Paul warns against speaking in a language the audience doesn't understand, saying that to do so would make one who is an unbeliever or unlearned think the believers were crazy.

(After all, what sense does it make to speak French to an audience if the audience doesn't know French?)

6. When Paul says an unlearned person would be confused, he tacitly is saying that a learned person would not be confused. It is abundantly

clear that these languages were real ones that could be learned!

7. The remaining verses drive the final nails into the coffin of the modern misunderstanding. Verse 27 limits the number who may speak in tongues at any one time to two or three who must take turns.

It demands calm order in the service -- the very opposite of the emotionally charged atmosphere of a tarry meeting.

8. Verse 28 requires the tongues be translated for those who do not understand. If there is no translator then no speaking in tongues is allowed -- period.
9. Verse 31 demands tongues be used one by one in turn -- not at the same time in confusion.
10. Verse 32 states that the one who speaks in tongues is at all times in control of himself. This is the very opposite of modern speakers, who give themselves over to tongues and are for a while controlled by the phenomenon, so much so that they may not remember or even know what they said!
11. Finally, women are forbidden by Paul to preach in the Church at all, let alone use tongues (verse 34)! Such is not so today, when many if not most of the speakers are women.

- L. We now have listed the main beliefs about modern "speaking in tongues," and we have examined the pertinent Bible verses and extracted the key points.
- M. How obvious it is that modern "tongues" and biblical tongues are not merely different -- they are indeed opposites!
- N. The Bible tongues are real languages, modern tongues are not. One is always under control, the other is worked up to uncontrolled frenzy. One is in turn by two or three at most, the other is disorderly and confused.

One must always have an interpreter, the other may not. One is for instruction, the other for display and self-glory.

One is at a preaching service where people are to be edified by the content of the speech, the other is at an emotional tarry meeting. One is vocal only, the other is linked with wild physical movement.

- O To be fair, some modern tongue speakers do claim their tongues are real languages, and some claim to interpret. Impartial studies, however, have shown that such claims are not supported by the facts.

Often only a few words or phrases of a real foreign language are detected in the ecstatic utterances -- as if spoken only by accident! -- and so-called interpretations of the same tongue-speaking episodes often vary widely and are very general even then.

- P. Further, John the Baptist's reference to the baptism of the holy spirit (Matthew 3:11) does not refer to tongues as some separate baptism in addition to one's initial receipt of the holy spirit.

It is, instead, a reference to that very act of receiving God's spirit after repentance, which baptizes us into the Church of God (I Corinthians 12:13).

- Q. The final two remaining questions are why God ever gave the gift of tongues, and whether the genuine gift exists today.

- R. No doubt the gift of tongues was for the same purpose as other miraculous manifestations in the early Church -- to call attention to the initial outpouring of God's power, to attract attention to the Gospel message (not to the speaker) and to spread the Gospel in a part of the world peppered with people who spoke many different languages.

- S. Despite claims to the contrary, people today are not seen to speak miraculously in languages they did not learn in the normal way.

- 1. But the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32, cited by Peter in Acts 2:16-21, may indicate God's servants will again exercise that gift at a time of God's own choosing yet future.

- 2. When and if that happens, God's Church will, of course, acknowledge it, while it also recognizes such a thing as one of the lesser gifts of the spirit.

#### V. Key Verses

The main verses about this subject fall into a few easily remembered sections of scripture.

- A. Acts 2:1-21 -- the first outpouring of tongues occurred on the day of Pentecost.



- B. Acts 10:44-48 -- the first outpouring of the holy spirit on gentiles is described.
- C. I Corinthians 12 -- various scattered statements about tongues.
- D. I Corinthians 14 -- Paul's instruction about and limitations regarding tongues.

VI. Conclusion

As with so many other subjects, once again we have seen that despite their sincerity, people can be led far afield from the truth when they allow their own thoughts and emotions -- and evil spiritual influences! -- to dictate their beliefs, rather than God's precious Word.

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## JUSTIFICATION -- YOUR NEW LEASE ON LIFE

### I. Introduction

- A. "I know that you are guilty of the crime," stated the governor, "but I believe that you are truly sorry and will not do it again. Therefore, I hereby pardon you and release you to society on your honor. You now have a new lease on life."
- B. The words of this governor perfectly illustrate the Bible doctrine of justification. But how many Christians truly understand this subject?
- C. What about you? Do you understand justification? You must, if you are to enter God's Kingdom, for no one can be saved without being justified from sin!

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. Justification is the process by which God forgives a person's sins by grace through faith. It implies not only forgiveness, but imputing to the person a positive state of righteousness in God's eyes.
- B. It is not earned through obedience, but requires repentance and keeping God's law.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. Some people don't have a clear idea in their minds about just what justification means because they confuse it with the related but separate subjects of faith, grace or law.
- B. Others believe that we are justified by works instead of faith. Some go to the opposite extreme and think that justification means that the law is done away.
- C. Some feel we are justified when we do nothing more than "profess Christ" or "believe on His name" in some public or private profession of belief. They may feel we don't need to be baptized or even repent in the true sense of the word.
- D. What, then, is the truth?

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. The best place to begin is with a simple definition. To justify means "to prove or pronounce one blameless of some wrong act."
- B. In everyday English parlance, we use the term to describe what people try to do when they are indeed guilty but wish to talk their way out of some trouble by denying their guilt.
- C. But in the Bible, justification is not what a person says about himself or herself, but what God Himself does for the person!
  - 1. To be justified, in Bible usage, means to be pronounced not guilty -- not because one has not done wrong, but because one has been forgiven by God for the wrong done.
  - 2. For proof, read Romans 3:21-31, which shows that justification is the forgiveness of sin.
  - 3. See also Romans 5:9, which shows that justification is made possible by the shed blood of Christ.
- D. After our total spiritual cleansing by God, God views us as being righteous!
  - 1. As Romans 3:21-22 shows, this righteousness is not something we earn; rather, it is imputed to us when we are justified by faith.
  - 2. God forgives us totally and gives us His own Spirit of righteousness.
  - 3. Romans 4:1-8 says God imputed -- that is, credited -- Abraham with righteousness because of Abraham's faith, which resulted in his justification. Abraham had not earned such favor. But God imputed righteousness to him after forgiving his sins, because Abraham had faith.
- E. But forgiveness of sin coupled with a pronouncement of righteousness -- justification -- does not come automatically. It has conditions. And here is where many jump the track.
  - 1. For one thing, man cannot justify himself. It is something God must do. Jesus upbraided the Pharisees because they sought to justify themselves before others (Luke 16:15).
  - 2. Certainly, people cannot justify themselves with verbal pronouncements of innocence, for they are

not innocent. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," says Romans 3:22.

3. The Pharisee in the parable of the publican and the Pharisee (Luke 18:9-14) tried this approach. He listed all the good he had done, in the hope that God would see his righteousness.
    - a. But Christ said that the publican, not the Pharisee, went down to his house justified.
    - b. The publican truly repented of his sins, and God imputed His own righteousness to him.
  4. Romans 4:1-8 states that Abraham was not justified by works but by faith.
  5. Romans 3:20 proclaims that "by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight." Verse 28 says, "a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law."
  6. Galatians 3:11 confirms that, "no one is justified by the law," and Galatians 2:16 repeats that "a man is not justified by the works of the law."
- F. But do not misunderstand! These verses do not mean that we need not keep the law. More on this later. For now, however, notice plainly that one cannot earn justification by anything he or she alone says or does.
- G. How, then, can we be justified? How can we find forgiveness and have God's righteousness imputed to us?
1. First, we must realize that it all happens by God's grace. We are, as Romans 3:24 says, "justified freely by His grace."
    - a. Grace is simply unmerited favor.
    - b. To be justified by grace therefore means that justification is a gift that God gives -- not something we earn. It is given because of God's goodness, not ours.
  2. Second, justification is through faith.
    - a. Acts 13:39 says those who "believe" -- those who have faith -- are justified.
    - b. Romans 3:26 concurs that God is the justifier of "one who has faith in Jesus."
    - c. See also Galatians 3:8, 24.

- H. Faith is belief that God exists and that He will do what He says He will (Hebrews 11:6). When God calls a person and grants the person a gift of repentance (Romans 2:4), He extends forgiveness to the person when he or she turns from sin and begins to obey God.
- I. Hence justification involves grace and faith. As Ephesians 2:8 says, it is by grace through faith. It is because of God's favor and not our own goodness, but faith is a necessary condition.
- J. But even this faith is not something the person alone supplies. True faith is a gift from God. It is not found naturally in any person (Galatians 5:22). Yet it requires a person's cooperation.
- K. Here is how it works: When God decides to call a person, that person at first responds to God with only human belief. But it is belief backed by action. As James 2:26 says, "Faith without works is dead."
1. The first action is repentance -- the act of ceasing to sin and changing one's whole life to obey God in everything God commands.
  2. The next step is baptism, which follows after belief and repentance (Acts 2:38).
    - a. It is only at baptism that one's sins are finally forgiven. It is only then that we are justified and our sins are covered by Christ's shed blood and death (Romans 5:9).
    - b. As a result of baptism and the laying on of hands by one of God's ministers, we receive God's Spirit and are filled with true faith. Thus the process starts with human belief but leads to Christ's own faith being placed in us.
- L. But why does God justify only those with faith -- belief that causes them to act? The answer is that one who truly believes God only disobeys out of weakness of the flesh and the pulls of Satan. He does not intend to disobey. He constantly strives to obey God, with God's help. He lives under God's grace, and God continues to justify him and impute righteousness to him.
- M. A person without faith thinks he knows better than God. He wants to follow his own way. He intends to and will disobey God.
- N. Faith is the difference! Therefore God requires faith -- trust in Him -- to justify us.

- O. But one final piece must be put into the justification puzzle at this point.
  - 1. Many believe that once you are justified, you need not keep God's law. But to say we are not justified by the law (which is true) is something totally different from saying that we don't need to keep the law (which is false).
  - 2. Romans 2:13 makes this truth plain: "For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified."
  - 3. What could be plainer? And Romans 3:31 adds, "Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law."
- P. You will not be saved because your obedience earns it, but your disobedience can and will disqualify you.

#### V. Key Verses

Here are some basic scriptures about this topic:

- A. Romans 3:21-31 -- all have sinned and need to be justified; justification includes the forgiveness of sin.
- B. Romans 4:3 -- justification also includes the imputing of righteousness.
- C. Romans 5:9 -- justification is made possible by Christ's sacrifice.
- D. Luke 16:15 -- we cannot justify ourselves.
- E. Romans 4:1-8, Galatians 2:16, 3:11 -- we are not justified by the law or works.
- F. Ephesians 2:8 -- we are justified by God's grace through faith.
- G. Romans 2:13, 3:31, James 2:14-26 -- works and law keeping are both necessary, although they don't justify us.

#### VI. Conclusion

God's forgiveness of our sins and imputing of righteousness to us is a wonderful blessing, made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. And once justified by God, we, just like a criminal pardoned for his crime, can begin again with a brand-new lease on life.

---

# Doctrinal Outlines

---

## SALVATION -- HOW GOD WILL RESCUE MAN!

### I. Introduction

- A. "Save me!" shouted the little boy. Wind-whipped lake waters had just capsized his small sailboat, and he was in peril of drowning.
- B. And the boy was saved, by the skills of a quick-thinking lifeguard.
- C. Yes, this little boy knew that he needed saving, but today a lot of adults aren't quite so sure about whether they need to be saved, at least not spiritually. They don't even know what salvation is, let alone whether they need it.
- D. Therefore, they stand in potential peril far more terrifying than the little boy above did. They stand in peril of not obtaining eternal life!
- E. This must not happen to you. You must understand the Bible doctrine of salvation.

### II. The Basic Doctrine

- A. Salvation is God's rescue of man from eternal death, which man has earned by sin, to the safety of eternal life at Jesus Christ's return.
- B. Salvation is a process made possible by the life and death of Christ.

### III. The Usual Teachings of This World

- A. Often it is taught that salvation is the saving of man from ever-burning hell fire to eternal bliss as an angel in heaven.
- B. Others believe that our salvation is totally, absolutely and completely guaranteed at baptism, and that once baptized you are forever saved (or, as it may be stated, "once saved, always saved").
- C. Still others don't even require baptism, but teach that if a believer will just "give his heart to the Lord" or call upon or profess Christ's name, he will be saved.
- D. Some equate being saved with being "born again."

E. But what is the truth? What does the Bible say?

#### IV. The Bible Teaching

- A. To begin, even a simple dictionary definition of the word salvation reveals that to save someone means to rescue him from some sort of evil or undesired fate.
- B. But in the case of our Christian calling, we must ask, what is it that we are saved from, and why? Further, we must find out how we are saved, and when, and by whom.
- C. It doesn't take much thought to see that man's greatest enemy is death!
1. Ecclesiastes 9:5 says, "The living know that they will die; but the dead know nothing, and they have no more reward, for the memory of them is forgotten."
  2. Paul adds in I Corinthians 15:26, "The last enemy that will be destroyed is death."
- D. And why do we die?
1. The Bible records, simply, that death (that is, the second death -- death with no hope of life again) is the penalty for sin, "For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).
  2. The Bible further states that into the world came "death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12).
- E. Thus we need to be saved from death because of sin, just like the little boy needed to be saved from death because of drowning. See also Romans 7:13 and James 1:15.
- F. This truth -- that death is the penalty of sin -- will shock those who have been falsely taught that the wages of sin is eternal life in a forever burning hell fire. Such teachings are untrue!
- G. But if salvation means being saved from death, to what are we saved? Romans 6:23 supplies more of the answer when it says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."
- H. Hence we are saved, logically, from death to life -- to eternal life! Yet other scriptures go on to show that this eternal life is not eternal physical life, but spiritual life.



- I. Notice I Corinthians 15, especially verses 12 to 58. The whole point of the last part of this chapter is to show that saved man is composed of spirit and not flesh, and has eternal life.
- J. In that light, Paul, speaking of the change that one who is saved goes through, from flesh to spirit, states that one starts out with a physical body, but at the resurrection "is raised a spiritual body" (verse 44).
- K. Other verses show that our level of existence will not be merely that of angels, but that our bodies will be transformed so they conform "to His [Christ's] glorious body" (Philippians 3:21), and that we will be members of God's own Family (I John 3:1-2, John 1:2-13).
- L. But understand this: Nowhere does the Bible promise heaven as salvation. Instead, it says no man has ascended to heaven except Christ (John 3:13), and specifically includes even righteous David among those not in heaven (Acts 2:34).
- M. But how does God save man? The wages of sin is death. Therefore for God to save man requires that He remove this penalty by forgiving sin, and further, that He replace man's nature with a new nature that will not sin.
- N. Numerous verses prove beyond all doubt that the forgiveness of sin is possible because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Virtually every Christian denomination would agree with that statement.
  1. Acts 2:38 states that all (because all are sinners) must repent and be baptized in an outward show of the acceptance of Christ's sacrifice for our sins.
  2. Acts 2:21 and Romans 10:13 make clear that salvation requires one to believe in the sacrifice of Christ and all it entails.
  3. Romans 5:10 states plainly that we are justified from our sins through the sacrifice of Christ, and then saved by His life.
  4. Ephesians 2:8 tells us that salvation is not something we earn, but a gift of grace from God, through faith in Christ.
- O. It should be obvious that our salvation is accomplished finally only at the resurrection, when our mortal bodies are changed into immortal bodies with eternal life as God's sons.

- P. Yet many in traditional Christianity persist in the notion that once a person is baptized, or once a person has at least "accepted" Christ verbally or called upon the name of the Lord, that he is now saved (Romans 10:13). Clearly, this is not the teaching of the Bible. None of us is yet finally saved or lost!
- Q. Numerous verses prove that one can be disqualified from eternal life even after baptism or professing Christ.
1. Christ plainly taught that only "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Matthew 10:22). Therefore salvation is in the future -- after the end of a person's life -- and requires enduring during this life.
  2. Paul himself confirmed that it was possible even for him to lose out on salvation, saying he fought to keep himself under spiritual subjection to Christ, "lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified" (I Corinthians 9:27).
- Certainly he did not teach that we are saved now, nor did he teach that we cannot lose out on salvation no matter what we do.
- R. Thus the so-called "once saved, always saved" teaching evaporates! Those who believe such misconceptions usually do so based on an incorrect understanding of some Bible verses.
1. They, for instance, look to Acts 2:21 or Romans 10:13, which both state, "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."
  2. See also John 1:12.
- S. They take these verses to mean that all one must do is make some sort of verbal profession of acceptance of Christ -- either publicly, as in a tent meeting, or perhaps privately to oneself -- to have fulfilled all the requirements of Christianity for all time!
- T. But the Bible shows what it means to call upon the Lord -- that it takes knowledge, understanding, obedience, overcoming, faith and enduring.
- U. Even as the saving of a drowning victim has certain stages (such as the throwing of the life buoy, the victim's reaching for it, his being towed in and, finally, his reaching dry land), so also is salvation a process begun with repentance, baptism and forgiveness of sin, continuing through a life of overcoming and culminating at the resurrection.

- V. But it is only then, at the resurrection, that we can say we are truly "saved" in the final sense.
- W. To be fair, however, we must look finally at II Timothy 1:9 and Titus 3:5, which both state that God has saved us. In light of what we have already proven, it is clear what Paul means.
- X. Those on the road to salvation are in a special category -- they are the saved as opposed to the lost. Paul phrased these statements this way not because our salvation is now complete, totally assured or perfected (for remember, Paul himself stated that even he could fall away and lose out), but because our salvation is sure if we continue faithfully in the category God has called us to.

V. Key Verses

Here are some verses to remember about this important subject:

- A. Romans 6:23 -- we are doomed to die because of sin, but can have eternal life if saved.
- B. I Corinthians 15:12-58 -- eternal life comes through a change from a mortal body to a spiritual, immortal body at the resurrection.
- C. Acts 2:21, 38 and Romans 10:13 -- to be saved we must profess Christ.
- D. Matthew 10:22 -- to be saved we must endure.
- E. I Corinthians 9:27 -- we can lose out on salvation after baptism.

VI. Conclusion

Whether we are a drowning boy or a man or woman full of years, we all know that we are, apart from God's salvation, doomed to death. But the good news is that our God stands ready to rescue those He calls, who come to Him in obedience for forgiveness, with a cry of "Save me!"