

The Way of Salvation

Study Series

The Midlands Churches of Christ

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Lesson One:

Our Father in Heaven

Describe the kind of relationship you presently have with God. What adjectives do you think best describe God?

1. The Incredible Nature of God

- A. God's knowledge goes far beyond human understanding (**Isaiah 40:12-14**)
- B. The power of the nations is like dust or a drop in a bucket compared to God (**Isaiah 40:15-17**)
- C. The greatness of God is beyond human imagination (**Isaiah 40:18-20**)
- D. The vastness of the universe and passage of time are small things to God (**Isaiah 40:21-26**)
- E. Most incredibly, he cares for each one of us and gives strength to those who put their hope in him (**Isaiah 40:27-31**)



Isaiah 40:22 – *He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth...*

2. God Cares for Each One of Us

- A. God knows exactly what we need (**Matthew 6:25-32**)
- B. If we seek first his kingdom and righteousness, our needs will be met (**Matthew 6:33-34**)

3. God Created Us for a Purpose

- A. Being 'religious' is not enough – we must seek the truth (**Acts 17:22-23**)
- B. God does not need anything from us since he is the source of life (**Acts 17:24-25**)
- C. God has given us free will – we choose to seek him or not (**Acts 17:26-27**)
- D. Everyone has been made in God's image and therefore inherently knows how God wants to be loved and treated – we are just like him (**Acts 17:28**)

4. God Created Us in His Image (**Genesis 1:26-31**)

- A. The Hebrew text pairs a plural noun *Elohim* (literally, "gods") with a singular verb "to create" to make the sentence – *God* [plural] *created* [singular] *man in his own image*. This purposeful grammatical construction shows us that the Creator's personal nature is more than ordinary human language can describe and quite possibly signals the co-working of Jesus the Son together with God the Father.
- B. The creation of mankind in God's image also required the mention of both "male" and "female" together—a single gender is not sufficient to describe God's person and potential.
- C. God also gave man the capacity to take responsibility for his surroundings and manage the blessings that he has given us.

5. God Created Us to Have a Relationship with Us

- A. **Genesis chapter 2** gives us a little more detail as to how God created us in **chapter 1**.



- B. God gave man a great place to live (**Genesis 2:4-9**)
- C. God also gave man free will so that he could choose obedience to God.
- D. God created mankind in a special way in order to show us our nature and his image—we were made for relationships (**Genesis 2:15-20**)
- E. Marriage is something God ordained and is not of human origin, and is used by the Bible time and time again to describe God's covenant relationship with his people (**Genesis 2:21-25**)

6. God Listens to Our Prayers

- A. Jesus came to help us build a relationship with God and teach us to pray (**Luke 11:1-4**)
- B. Our attitude needs to be proactive and open to learning through our relationship with God—we are not just seeking God's blessing but seeking his will (**Luke 11:5-10**)
- C. Not only is God good and the giver of good gifts—he also desires to hear us openly express our hearts (**Luke 11:11-13**)
- D. Make a decision to pray daily! (*Just 5-10 minutes each day would be a great beginning*)

Homework: Review the study, and read **Psalm 8** and **Psalm 139**.

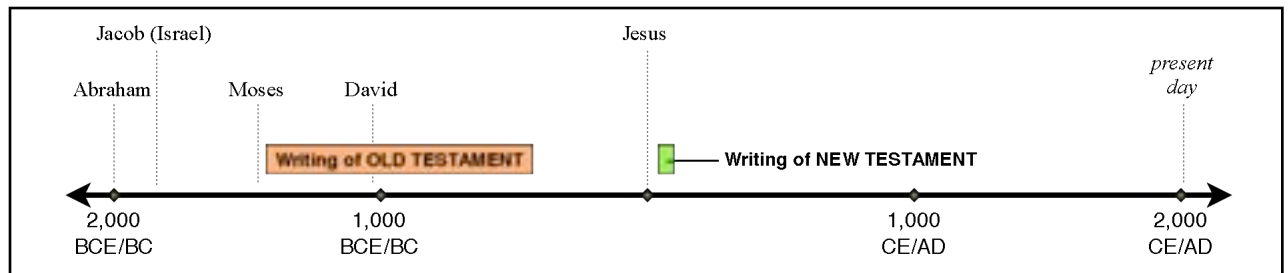
Lesson Two:

Living Words – the Old Testament

How would you feel if you received a notice in the mail stating that you had received a personal letter from the Creator of the Universe?

Introduction:

- This study series is based on the assumption that God speaks to us today through the Bible, and that these words of revelation are reliable and trustworthy.
- The Christian Bible has two major divisions: *the Old Testament and the New Testament*. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic between 1400 and 400 BC, and is still accepted today as the Holy Scriptures of Judaism. The New Testament was written in Greek during the first century AD and was completed within 45 to 60 years after the resurrection of Jesus and the beginning of the church.



- Since Jesus and his apostles were all of Jewish origin, Christianity was initially considered a Jewish sect, but within one generation, Christianity established itself as a movement independent of Judaism due to the great number of *Gentile* (non-Jewish) converts as well as the acceptance of the *New Testament writings* as inspired and authoritative. Unfortunately, not all the Jewish people accepted the message about Jesus so the New Testament records a number of instances where first century preachers needed to defend their faith in Jesus before both the religious and secular authorities.
1. *Short History Lesson* (from Stephen's defence before the Jewish High Council in Jerusalem, circa 33 AD)
 - A. God called Abraham to leave his people and move to a land that he promised to give Abraham's descendents as an inheritance (i.e., *the Promised Land*) (**Acts 7:1-8**)



- B. Abraham's grandson Jacob, also known as Israel, moved to Egypt with his twelve sons, whose descendents would later become the tribes of Israel (**Acts 7:9-16**)
- C. After a several generations had passed, the Israelites grew in number and were oppressed and enslaved in Egypt. Moses tried to help the Israelites but was rejected and fled from Egypt (**Acts 7:17-29**)
- D. Later God called Moses to be a prophet, lead the people of Israel out of Egypt with miraculous signs and wonders, and pass on to the Israelites '*living words*' from God (**Acts 7:30-38**)
- E. These '*living words*' from God were written down and combined with the historical records of that time to give us the first five books of the Bible traditionally referred to as the '*Book of Moses*,' '*Law of Moses*' or simply '*The Law*.' (i.e., *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*).
- F. Over the next thousand years, God added to these '*living words*' the inspired words of other writers who recorded both the history of the people of Israel and God's ongoing message to them. The Jews often referred to the Old Testament as *the Law and the Prophets*.

Lesson Two (continued): *Living Words – the Old Testament*

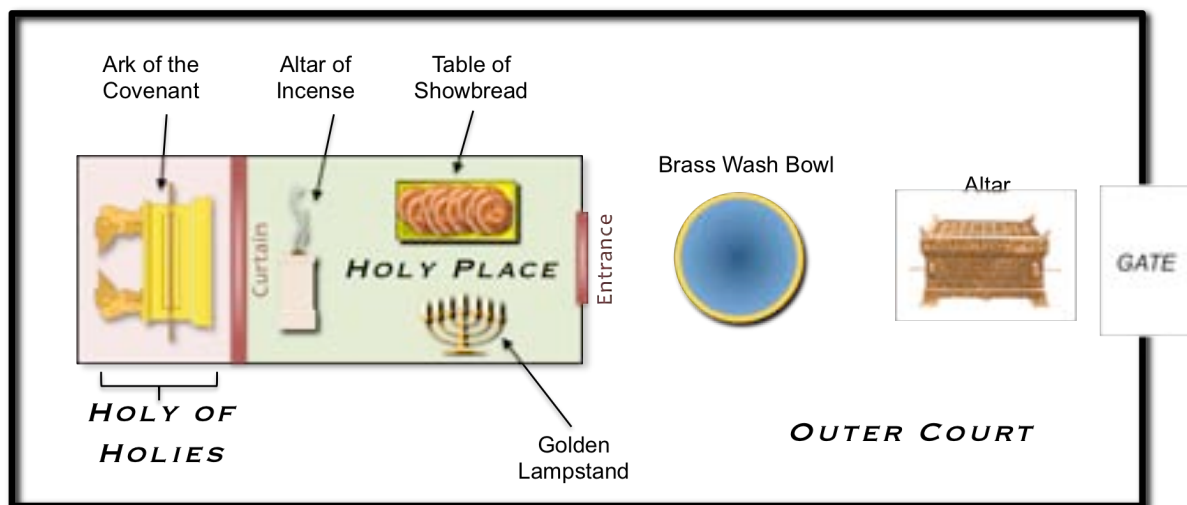
2. The Law Came Through Moses

- A. These laws can be categorized into three types:
 - i. **Ceremonial Laws** covering worship, sacrifice, priestly duties, purification, diet, etc.
 - ii. **Civic Laws** covering social order, government, marriage, inheritance, legal process, penalties, etc.
 - iii. **Moral Laws** covering issues of the human heart and righteousness before God, and transcending the simple compliance with civic laws and ceremonial laws.
- B. Following God's laws set Israel apart from the other nations—they became radically different
 - i. As a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (**Exodus 19:3-6**)
 - ii. Worshiping the Creator and not manmade idols (**Exodus 20:1-6**)
 - iii. As a testimony and witness to the nations around them about their special relationship with God (**Deuteronomy 4:5-8**)
- C. The experiences of the Israelites were written down as examples and warnings for future generations of Christians since we are also called to be God's chosen people (**1 Corinthians 10:11**)
 - i. A kingdom of priests and a holy nation
 - ii. Worshiping the Creator in truth
 - iii. A testimony and witness to the world

3. The Law Was a Shadow of Things Yet to Come

- A. The Law of Moses included a system of sacrifice based on the principle that only blood can make atonement for sin (**Leviticus 17:11**)
- B. The fact that the sacrifices needed to be repeated proved that they were earthly and ultimately ineffective—the law is only a shadow of the good things coming (**Hebrews 10:1-4**)
- C. The design of the temple demonstrated that sacrifice and cleansing must precede true fellowship with God and the way to into God's presence was yet to be revealed (**Hebrews 9:1-10**)

The Plan of the Tabernacle Revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai



4. Jesus Christ Came to Fulfil the Law

- A. Ceremonial laws and regulations have been superseded since the reality is found in Christ (**Colossians 2:16-17**)
- B. Jesus summed up the law and the prophets with two simple commands: 'Love God' and 'love your neighbour as yourself' (**Mark 12:28-34**)
- C. Make a decision to start reading the Bible—beginning with 1 or 2 chapters from the *Gospel of John* each day.

Homework: Review the study, read **Psalm 19**, and answer the question 'What do the creation and Scriptures have in common?'

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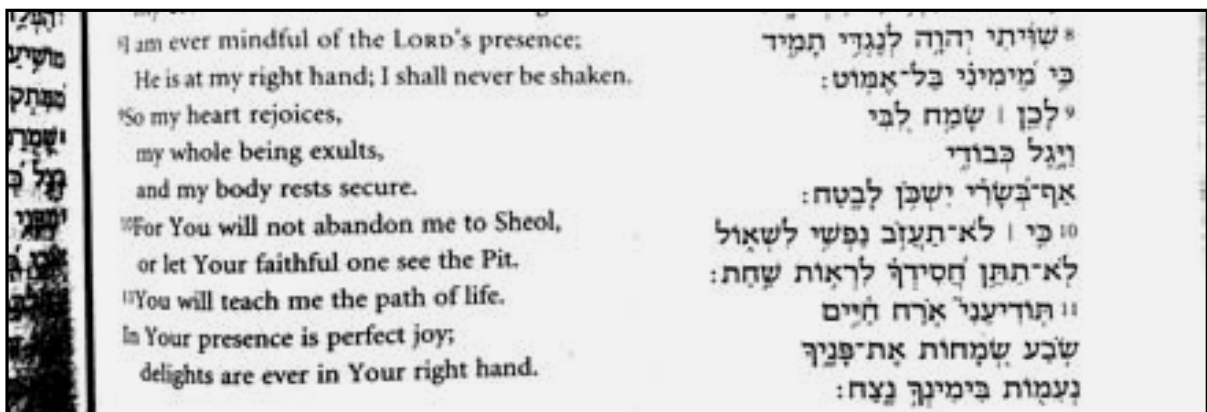
Lesson Three:

Living Words – the New Testament

As understood from the previous lesson, God spoke ‘living words’ through his prophets to give his people specific direction and teaching with the ultimate goal of preparing the world for the coming of Jesus Christ.

After Jesus had fulfilled his earthly mission, God again spoke ‘living words’ through the Christian apostles and prophets to understand the Old Testament writings, record the teachings of Jesus together with narrative details of his life, death, burial, and resurrection, and to lay the foundation for Christian doctrine and practice.

1. After His Resurrection, Jesus Prepared His Apostles for Their Ministry (**Luke 24:44-49**)
 - A. He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures
 - B. He outlined the message they were to preach—*repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations*
2. The Apostles Used These Insights in Their Teaching and Preaching
 - A. In his first sermon, the apostle Peter quoted David from **Psalm 16:8-11** [circa 1,000 BC] saying that *Jesus would rise from the dead (Acts 2:22-32)*



Psalm 16:8-11 from the *Hebrew-English Tanakh* (Jewish Publication Society: Philadelphia, 2000, p. 1426)

- B. In another sermon, the apostle Peter also quoted Moses from **Deuteronomy 18:18-19** [circa 1,400 BC] saying that *a prophet like me will come (Acts 3:17-23)*
 - C. The apostle Paul also explained and proved from the Old Testament that *Jesus had to suffer and rise from the dead (Acts 17:1-4)*
 - D. The apostles were given full understanding as to the meaning of various Old Testament teachings and practices (i.e., *animal sacrifice* and *temple worship* as mentioned in the previous lesson)
3. Along with the Apostles God Also Empowered a New Generation of Prophets
 - A. New revelation about the mystery of Christ (**Ephesians 3:2-6**)
 - B. New prophetic writings for the benefit of *all nations (Romans 16:25-27)*. This is well demonstrated by the four gospels which are the same story but clearly written in different styles for different audiences:
 - i. *Matthew* for Jewish Christians (emphasis on kingdom and prophetic fulfilment)
 - ii. *Mark* for Gentiles (non-Jewish) Christians, probably Roman (direct and concise style)
 - iii. *Luke* for Greek Christians (addressed to *Theophilus* [literally, *friend of God*])
 - iv. *John* for more general audience (complementary details to the other three gospels)
 4. The Gospels Accounts Were Written As a Testimony And Call to Faith
 - A. The word *gospel* literally means ‘good news.’
 - B. Just like Peter and Paul, the gospel writers made extensive use of the Old Testament prophecies to demonstrate how Christ fulfilled the Law and the Prophets.
 - C. John affirmed that his written gospel served the same function as the ‘miraculous signs’ performed by Jesus—to call people to a decision of faith (**John 20:30-31**)
 - D. Luke explained that his gospel was written so that the details of the gospel could be known with certainty—he also mentions that other accounts had already been written (**Luke 1:1-4**)
 - E. Luke also wrote a sequel to his gospel, called *Acts* recording a brief history of the early church

Lesson Three (continued): Living Words – the New Testament

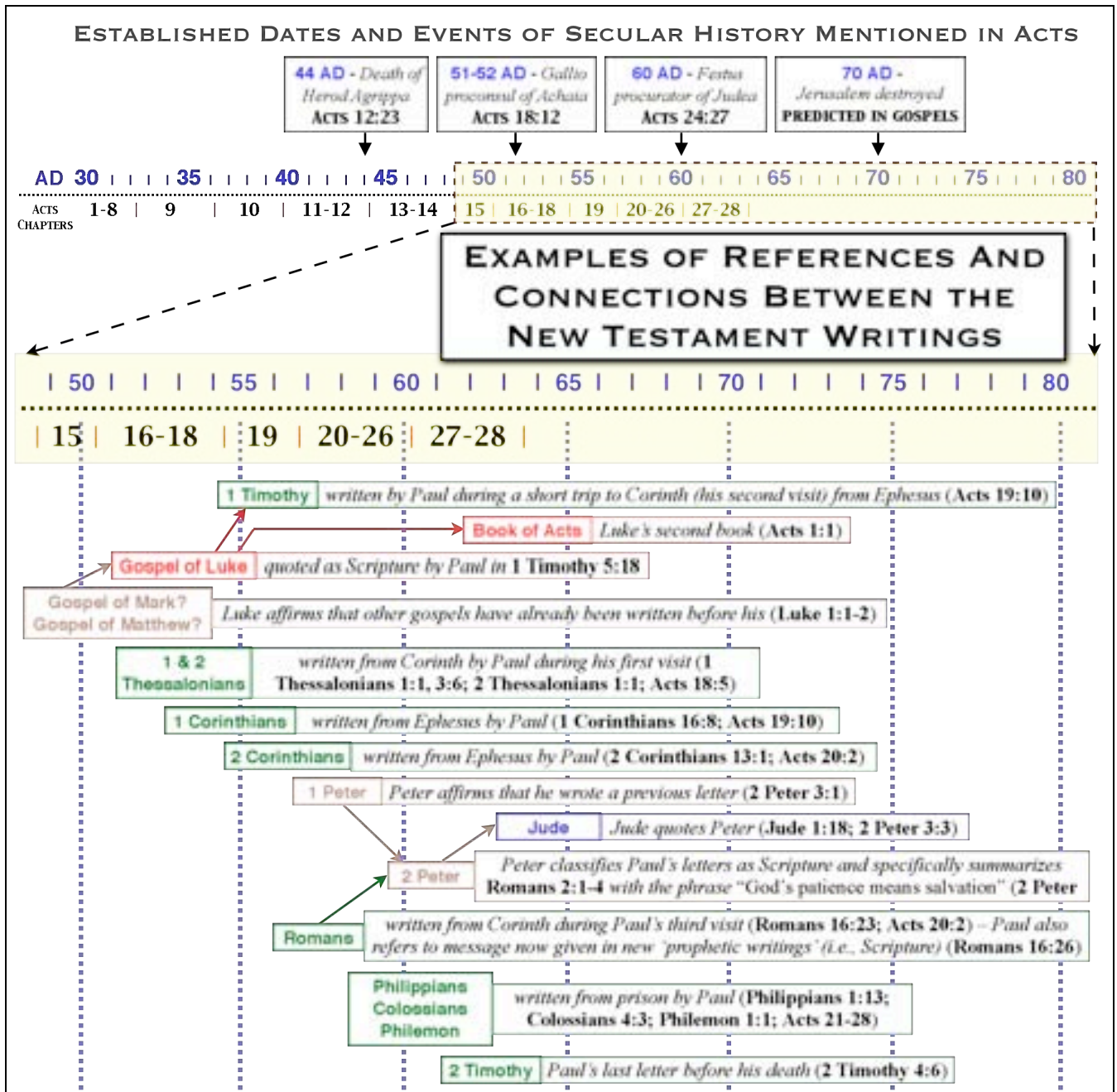


Chart demonstrating the historicity of the New Testament by:

- 1) accurate record of secular events
- 2) narrative details support a working chronology for the writing dates (places and circumstances)
- 3) Paul and Peter view the new gospels and letters as "Scripture" equal with the Old Testament

5. The Letters Were Written To Confirm What Had Already Been Taught

- A. Paul – as a safeguard (**Philippians 3:1**)
- B. Peter – reminders to stimulate wholesome thinking (**2 Peter 3:1-2, 15-16**)

6. God Trains Us Through the Scriptures (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**)

- A. All Scripture is *God-breathed* or *inspired* (just like Adam, God has breathed life into it)
- B. Teaching, correcting, rebuking and training in righteousness are parental terms

7. The Scripture Is Our Standard of Truth (**Acts 17:10-12**)

- A. Make a decision to increase your Bible reading time to 10-15 minutes *every day!*

Homework: Review the study and read *Acts 1-2* in preparation for the next lesson—also continue reading through the *Gospel of John*.

Lesson Four:

Your Kingdom Come

What is your concept of “the kingdom of God?”

1. Repent, For The Kingdom of God Is Near!
 - A. John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus with this message (**Matthew 3:1-6**)
 - B. After John’s imprisonment, Jesus began preaching the same message (**Matthew 4:12-17**)
 - i. Matthew quoted **Isaiah 9:1-2** (written in 750 B.C.) to describe the effect of Jesus beginning his ministry (i.e., like the shining of a bright light), and that prophecy goes on to describe the coming of Jesus and the establishment of an eternal kingdom (**Isaiah 9:6-7**)
2. Daniel Also Prophesied Of A Coming Kingdom (550 BC)
 - A. Background: Daniel was a Jewish prophet captive in Babylon after God had punished the Israelites for their unfaithfulness and carried them into captivity
 - B. Daniel interpreted the king’s dream and explained that a kingdom was coming that would not be established by human hands, but by the power of God (**Daniel 2:1-49**)



1. **Head of Gold** (current supreme power) representing the
BABYLONIAN EMPIRE
2. **Chest and Arms of Silver** (inferior to Babylon) representing the
MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE
3. **Belly & Thighs of Bronze** (world rule) representing the
GREEK EMPIRE
4. **Legs of Iron** (strong, breaking and smashing everything)
Feet of Iron & Baked Clay (eventual dividing) representing the
ROMAN EMPIRE
5. **A Rock Cut Out of a Mountain But Not By Human Hands**
representing a divinely established
ETERNAL KINGDOM

- C. Notice that the rock that destroyed the statue grew into a ‘mountain’ (**v. 35**)—in Old Testament prophecy this image is used symbolically of strength and stability, and in Daniel and Isaiah represents the coming kingdom
- D. Therefore, Daniel sets the time for this coming kingdom as during the time of the Roman Empire, which is also the setting for the gospels (**Luke 3:1-3**)
 - i. Note: the Roman Empire was politically reorganized a number of times until it finally divided East and West in 394 AD—and eventually disappeared completely

Lesson Four (continued): *Your Kingdom Come*

3. Complete the Following Chart:

- A. Read through all of the verses listed in columns I to III (i.e., first read **Isaiah 2**, then **Daniel 2**) and list details about the predicted 'coming kingdom' in column IV
- B. Then read all of **Acts 1 & 2** in column V beginning with **Acts 1:12**, and notice the verses where specific details were fulfilled

I Old Testament	II <i>before</i> resurrection	III <i>after</i> resurrection	IV <i>DETAILS</i>	V ACTS references
				1:15-19
	Mark 9:1		<i>during some disciples' lifetimes</i>	v. 13, 18
				2:1-4
	<i>Mark 9:1</i>	Luke 24:46-49	<i>come with power</i>	v. 2-4
		Acts 1:1-8	<i>come with power</i>	v. 2-4
				2:5-17
Isaiah 2:1-4		<i>Luke 24:46-49</i>	<i>all nations in Jerusalem</i>	v. 5
Isaiah 2:1-4			<i>in the last days</i>	v. 17
				2:32-36
Daniel 2:44	Matthew 16:13-19¹		<i>endure forever (overcome death)</i>	v. 32
				2:37-41
	Matthew 18:1-4		<i>requires a change of heart</i>	v. 37
	John 3:1-7		<i>new birth - water & Spirit</i>	v. 38
	<i>Matthew 16:13-19</i>		<i>Peter given the keys of kingdom</i>	v. 38 ²
	<i>Matthew 16:13-19</i>		<i>Kingdom and Church are connected</i>	v. 38, 41
		<i>Luke 24:46-49</i>	<i>repentance and forgiveness of sins</i>	v. 38
		<i>Luke 24:46-49</i>	<i>preached to all nations</i>	v. 39
				2:42-47
	Luke 17:20-21		<i>spiritual kingdom (is within)</i>	v. 42

4. The Reign of Christ In Our Hearts

- A. A kingdom not of this world (**John 18:33-37**)
- B. We need to “seek his kingdom first” (**Matthew 6:33**)—this would include being devoted to the fellowship of the church (**Acts 2:42**)
- C. We also need to pray “you will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (**Matthew 6:9-10**)
- D. The church is a manifestation of God’s kingdom on earth—we show ourselves to be his people through our loyalty and devotion.

5. The Church Is Much More Than It Appears To Be (**Hebrews 12:22-29**)

- A. God sees more than the assembled church—he sees it together with the heavenly host
- B. For faithful Christians, eternal life with God begins here on earth
- C. Make a decision to attend the worship services of the local church

Homework: Review the study and read **Hebrews 11** in preparation for the next lesson—also continue reading through the **Gospel of John**.

¹ If there is any question as to whether Jesus could have meant that Peter himself was to be the foundation of the church and not simply the truth of Peter’s confession, please read **1 Corinthians 3:11**.

² Jesus promised to give Peter keys that would both bind on earth and in heaven—in other words, becoming part of the church fellowship on earth gives one corresponding membership in the heavenly realm.

Lesson Five:

Faith That Pleases God

For those with a religious background, construct a timeline of significant spiritual events in their lives such as when they:

A. *were born again*

B. *were baptized*

C. *confessed Jesus as Lord*

D. *were confirmed*

E. *became a Christian*

F. *had their sins forgiven*

G. *were saved*

H. *received the Holy Spirit*

I. *came to faith in Jesus' resurrection*

J. *accepted the Bible as God's words*

K. *repented from sin*

L. *started to study the Bible seriously*

M. *became a disciple of Jesus*

N. _____

Birth

Today
201 _

1. Faith Goes Beyond What We Can See (Hebrews 11:1-3)

A. Faith is a conviction of truth beyond the confirmation of our senses

B. Faith is the full acceptance of the truth of God's word (i.e., the universe was formed at God's command) – faith must be put in something greater than ourselves

2. Faith Pleases God (Hebrews 11:6)

A. Without faith it is impossible to please God

B. To come to God one must believe that he exists *and rewards those who earnestly seek him*

3. Faith Is Necessary for Salvation (Ephesians 2:8-10)

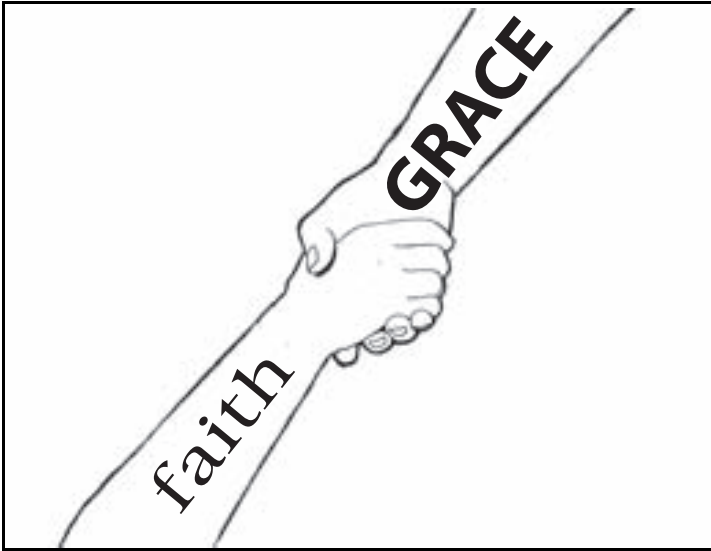
A. Salvation is only possible if there is both grace and faith

B. Only God has the power to give grace (i.e., forgive the eternal consequences of sin)

C. Only man can have faith since God is all-knowing and all-powerful

D. Therefore salvation is a gift made available through God's grace, which can only be received by us through faith – grace and faith must work together

Lesson Five (continued): *Faith That Pleases God*



*For it is by **grace** you have been saved, through **faith**—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

Ephesians 2:8-10

4. Faith Without Action Is Dead (**James 2:14-26**)
 - A. Faith without deeds cannot save and is useless
 - B. Faith is made complete by one’s actions—they work together.
5. Consider These Examples from Old Testament History:
 - A. By faith Abel pleased God through his offerings (**Hebrews 11:4**)
 - B. By faith Enoch pleased God and was taken from this life without death (**Hebrews 11:5**)
 - C. By faith Noah built the ark to save his family after being warned by God (**Hebrews 11:7**)
 - D. By faith Abraham obeyed and went to a foreign land because he understood that God was calling him to an even better home (i.e., heaven) (**Hebrews 11:8-10**)
 - E. Faith is the righteous response to the living words of God
6. Through Faith We Receive Blessings from God (**Hebrews 10:35-39**)
 - A. We need to persevere in doing God’s will so that we can receive what was promised since many of God’s promises are conditional statements with a blessing dependent on our obedience
 - B. Consider these promises:
 - i. *If we seek God’s kingdom and righteousness first, then God will take care of all our physical needs* (**Matthew 6:33**)
 - ii. *If we come to Jesus, take his yoke and give our burdens to him, then we will find rest* (**Matthew 11:28-30**)
7. God’s Covenants Are Based on Promises (**Hebrews 8:6**)
 - A. Although the Old Covenant is most often thought of in terms of commandments, it is actually the promises behind those laws that are the foundation of the covenant (**Deuteronomy 7:12-15**)
 - i. The promises of the New Covenant are even more amazing (God’s presence with us, eternal life)
 - ii. God’s blessings are assured through the faithful fulfilment of the conditions of his promises!
8. Faith Is of Greater Worth Than Gold In God’s Sight (**1 Peter 1:3-9**)
 - A. It is faith in the resurrection of Christ that gives us the hope of an eternal inheritance
 - B. Through faith we are shielded by God’s power even as we face difficulties
 - C. Through faith we have confidence and joy in the salvation of our souls
9. Our Lives Need To Be In Agreement With What We Believe (**1 Timothy 4:16**)
 - A. Spend time this week reflecting on what you believe and how well you are living out those beliefs.

Homework: *Review the study and continue reading through the **Gospel of John**.*

Lesson Six:

Sin & Consequences

What is 'freewill' and why has God given it to us?

1. Sin Came Into the World Through Adam and Eve

- A. God gave Adam a single command that had *death* as a consequence for disobedience (**Genesis 2:15-17**)
- B. Eve was tempted through her own desire and doubted God's good intentions (or at least thought she knew better than God)—Adam joined her in sin (**Genesis 3:1-6**)
- C. Adam and Eve felt shame and wanted to cover their differences—*sin separates us*. God showed his love for Adam and Eve by calling out to them (**Genesis 3:7-10**)
- D. Adam and Eve made excuses but they were obviously without excuse (**Genesis 3:11-13**)
- E. God punished them with consequences so that they would learn not to sin (**Genesis 3:14-20**)
- F. God made them clothing that was acceptable because he gave it to them—note that it required the shedding of blood and loss of life (**Genesis 3:21-24**)
- G. God also expelled them from the Garden so that they would face physical death—their sin had already killed them spiritually (i.e., separated them from God)

2. God Deferred Final Judgment Until a Moment of His Choosing

- A. When the guilty (Adam & Eve) were given a second chance, the innocent would suffer (i.e., all the descendents of Adam and Eve would be born outside the garden of Eden and would eventually die)
- B. We should be merciful to others when we consider God's mercy towards us—his kindness, tolerance and patience gives us a chance to repent (**Romans 2:1-4**)
- C. God has set a day for judgment desiring that people will make use of their opportunity to repent. There is no favoritism and everyone will face his judgment (**Romans 2:5-11**)

3. God Shows His Love for Us by Seeking For Us Today

- A. The creation testifies to his eternal nature and divine power (**Romans 1:18-20**)
- B. Our consciences also testify to a moral truth and judgment (**Romans 2:12-16**)
- C. The law was given to make us conscious of sin (**Romans 3:19-20**)
- D. Physical death also helps us face the truth about our spiritual condition (**Ecclesiastes 7:2**)

4. The True Spiritual Condition of Mankind (**1 Peter 2:9-10**)

- A. Everyone is either in the *darkness* or in the *light* – there is no twilight zone

DARKNESS	GOD'S LIGHT
Not a People	God's People
No Mercy (<i>Unforgiven</i>)	Mercy (<i>Forgiven</i>)

- B. 'Being in God's light' is much more than an 'intellectual' state (i.e., *enlightenment*) but it is our true spiritual condition before God

5. Sin Separates Us from God (**Isaiah 59:1-2**)

- A. Each person will bear their own guilt (**Ezekiel 18:20**)
- B. Spiritual death comes to each person through their own sin (**Romans 7:7-13**)
- C. Sin is falling short of what God created us to be (**Romans 3:23**)
- D. Each one of us has proven through our own decision to sin that we would have done exactly as Adam and Eve did if we had been there in their places

6. Sins of Commission (**Galatians 5:19-21**)

- A. Review this list of sins share from your lives.
- B. This list is incomplete—any action that puts worldly desire before the will of God is sin.

7. Sins of Omission (**James 4:17**)

8. The Wages of Sin Are Death But the Gift of God Is Eternal Life (**Romans 6:23**)

Homework: Review the study and read **Psalm 51**—also continue reading through the **Gospel of John**.

Lesson Seven:

The ‘Good News’ About Jesus

The word ‘gospel’ is translated from the Greek word for ‘good news’. Why do you think that the story of Jesus is ‘good news’?

1. Review the Ending of Adam and Eve’s Story
 - A. God covered Adam and Eve’s nakedness with animal skins to make a point—the covering of sin required the shedding of blood and loss of life (**Genesis 3:21-24**)
 - B. God also expelled them from the Garden so that they would face physical death since their sin had already killed them spiritually (i.e., separated them from God)
2. The Gospel Is The Power of God for Salvation (**Romans 1:16-17**)
 - A. The righteousness of the gospel comes only through faith
 - B. The facts of the gospel are that Jesus died, was buried, and was raised to life (**1 Corinthians 15:1-5**)
3. The Gospel Was God’s Plan From the Beginning (**1 Peter 1:18-21**)
 - A. Jesus was the lamb of God chosen before the creation of the world
 - B. His resurrection gives us faith and hope
4. The Sacrifice of Jesus Began Long Before His Death On the Cross (**Philippians 2:5-8**)
 - A. He gave up equality with God
 - B. He took the form of a servant being made in human likeness
 - C. He humbled himself to the point of death
5. The Old Testament Foretold Many Details about Jesus’ Death (consider just two Old Testament passages then Matthew’s account—even more details are confirmed in the other gospels)
 - A. David foretold his abandonment and crucifixion (**Psalms 22:1-18**) [1000 BC]
 - i. **Psalm 22:1** – he felt forsaken by God
 - ii. **Psalm 22:6** – he was scorned and despised
 - iii. **Psalm 22:7-8** –he was mocked by passersby
 - iv. **Psalm 22:16** – his hands and feet were pierced
 - v. **Psalm 22:18** – his clothing was divided among them
 - B. Isaiah foretold his suffering and sacrifice for our sake, as we (**Isaiah 52:13-53:12**) [750 BC]
 - i. **Isaiah 52:14** – his form will be disfigured
 - ii. **Isaiah 53:3** – he was despised and rejected by men
 - iii. **Isaiah 53:4-5** – he suffered (and died) for us—by his wounds we are healed
 - iv. **Isaiah 53:7** – he did not open his mouth to defend himself
 - v. **Isaiah 53:9** – he was assigned a grave with the rich
 - vi. **Isaiah 53:9** – he had done no violence nor was any deceit in his mouth
 - vii. **Isaiah 53:10** – it was the Lord’s will that he should suffer and make his life as a guilt offering
 - viii. **Isaiah 53:11** – after his suffering, he will see the light of life
 - ix. **Isaiah 53:12** – because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors ... for he bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors
6. Read **Matthew 26:31-28:10** By Sections. Reflect on three things: Jesus’ willingness to suffer and die, our similarity to those around him, and the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy:
 - A. **Matthew 26:31-35, 36-46, 47-56**
 - B. **Matthew 26:57-68**
 - i. His form will be disfigured (**Isaiah 52:14**)
 - C. **Matthew 26:69-75, 27:1-10**
 - D. **Matthew 27:11-26**
 - i. He did not open his mouth to defend himself (**Isaiah 53:7**)
 - ii. He was despised and rejected by men (**Isaiah 53:3**)

Lesson Seven (continued): *The 'Good News' About Jesus*

E. **Matthew 27:27-31**

- i. He was scorned and despised (**Psalm 22:6**);

F. **Matthew 27:32-44**

- i. His hands and feet were pierced (**Psalm 22:16**);
- ii. His clothing was divided among them (**Psalm 22:18**);
- iii. He was mocked by passersby (**Psalm 22:7-8**);

G. **Matthew 27:45-56**

- i. He felt forsaken by God (**Psalm 22:1**);

H. **Matthew 27:57-61**

- i. He was assigned a grave with the rich (**Isaiah 53:9**)

I. **Matthew 27:62-66**

J. **Matthew 28:1-10**

- i. After his suffering, he would see the light of life (**Isaiah 53:11**)

7. Christ Suffered For Us In His Body (**1 Peter 2:21-24**)

A. Christ set us an example by trusting in God through his trials

- i. He had done no violence nor was any deceit in his mouth (**Isaiah 53:9**)
- ii. He suffered (and died) for us—by his wounds we are healed (**Isaiah 53:4-5**)
- iii. He bore the sins of many (**Isaiah 53:12**)

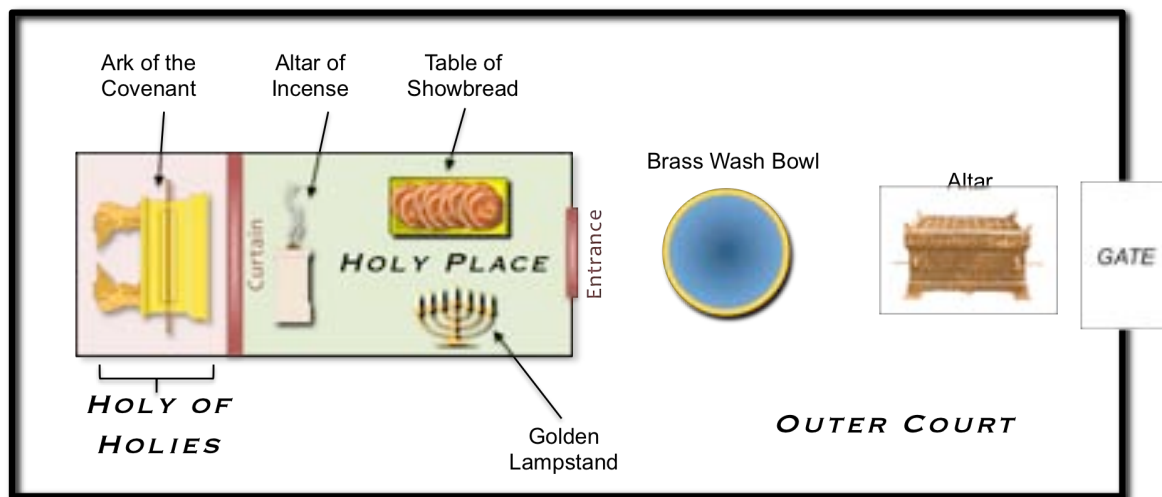
B. Christ wants us to die to sins and live for righteousness (*explained more fully in next lesson*)

8. The Incredible Power of the Blood of Christ (**Hebrews 9:11-15, 22-28**)

A. The blood of Christ cleanses our consciences and sets us free from the guilt of our sins because God has accepted his sacrifice as perfect and sufficient

B. The blood of Christ puts the new covenant into effect and guarantees forgiveness—*once and for all!*

The Plan of the Tabernacle Revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai



9. The Sacrifice of Jesus Both Condemns Us and Saves Us (**Romans 8:1-4**)

A. *Condemnation* because we no longer have any excuse for sin (i.e., *I am only human*)—Jesus shared our humanity, was tempted as we are, and yet did not sin

- i. It was the Lord's will that he should suffer and make his life as a guilt offering (**Isaiah 53:10**)

B. *Salvation* because Jesus offers us the opportunity to participate in his sacrifice (i.e., accept that it was for us and because of us)—Jesus is our high priest and mediator before God

- i. Because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors ... for he bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (**Isaiah 53:12**)

C. The only way to accept the 'good news' about Jesus is to accept our responsibility for his death—*he died for our sin and only through his sacrifice can we have true fellowship with God.*

Homework: Review the study and start reading through the **Book of Acts**.

Lesson Eight:

Saved By Grace Through Faith

How can someone know **for certain** that they are saved? (See Lesson 5)

1. Jesus Taught That We Must Be Born Again (**John 3:3-8**)
 - A. Being born again is equated with being born of water and the Spirit
 - B. No one can enter the kingdom unless they are born of water and the Spirit
 - C. Being born of the Spirit is invisible and miraculous
2. The Apostles Taught That We Believe the Gospel and Respond (**Acts 2:22-24, 36-41**)
 - A. Our sins put Jesus on the cross (i.e., we ‘crucified’ him as surely as the Roman soldiers did)
 - B. Jesus physically rose from the dead
 - C. The truth should cut our hearts and help us surrender to God’s will: “What shall we do?”
 - D. Everyone must make their own decision *to repent and be baptized* – these are the *conditions* connected to God’s promise of forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. *Review the concept of how faith works from Lesson 5.*

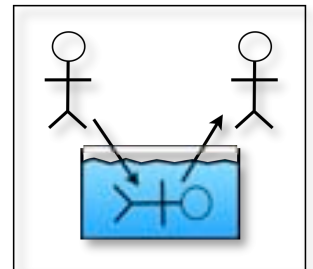


Repent (translated from the Greek word meaning ‘to change your thinking’)

3. Repentance Leads to Salvation (**2 Corinthians 7:10,11**)
 - A. Sorrow for sin is not enough – godly sorrow leads to repentance and worldly sorrow leads to regret and death
 - B. True repentance comes from the heart and is zealous in both attitude and action
4. Repentance Is Also a Turning to God
 - A. Brings times of refreshing (**Acts 3:17-20**)
 - B. Demonstrated by actions (**Acts 26:19-21**)

Be Baptised (transliterated from the Greek word meaning ‘to immerse’)

5. Baptism Unites Us With the Death of Christ (**Romans 6:3-7**)
 - A. Baptism is a burial so that we might be raised to a new life
 - B. Through baptism we acknowledge that our ‘old self’ (our sins) was crucified with Jesus on the cross
 - C. In many places salvation is described as being “*in Christ*”—notice here that baptism puts us “*into Christ*”
 - D. Physically, we were all *in Adam* when he sinned (i.e., we are his offspring and were in his body), so that when he was kicked out of the Garden of Eden—so were we. Spiritually, baptism puts us in Christ, so that we might die, be buried, and rise with him to eternal life. (**1 Corinthians 15:20-22**)
6. Baptism Saves Us (**1 Peter 3:21-22**)
 - A. Not through ceremonial cleansing but by virtue of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and our faith in the promise of God (i.e., the response of a good conscience)
7. Baptism Is the Putting Off of the Sinful Nature (**Colossians 2:9-15**)
 - A. A spiritual circumcision that takes place through faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ
 - B. Jesus also cancelled the written code of the Law through his perfect sacrifice
8. Baptism Is an Expression of God’s Kindness, Love and Mercy (**Titus 3:4-7**)
 - A. Salvation comes through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. Remember the words of Jesus, ‘You must be born again – born of water and the Spirit’
 - B. Our own righteousness cannot save us, but we are justified by his grace
 - C. We become heirs of God with the hope of eternal life



Homework: *Review the study and continue reading through the **Book of Acts**.*

Lesson Nine:

God's Spirit Lives In Us

What does the phrase 'to be born again' mean to you?

1. Review the Old Testament's Teaching – God Is Spirit
 - A. The Spirit is the power of God (**Genesis 1:1,2**)
 - i. 'Spirit' is translated from the Hebrew word for 'wind' or 'breath'
 - ii. *The earth was formlessness, empty and darkness was over the surface of the deep.* The creation was then transformed into form, order, life and light by the Spirit of God
 - B. The Spirit is the presence of God (**Psalms 139:7-10**)
 - i. The Spirit of God being everywhere means that God is everywhere
 - C. The Spirit is the person of God (**Isaiah 63:7-10**)
 - i. God responded personally to the condition of Israel – distress and grief
 - D. The Spirit of God moves like the blowing of an invisible wind – through the Spirit we see the effects and evidence of God's power, presence and person in the creation
 - E. *God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in Spirit and in truth* (**John 4:19-24**)
2. The Gift of the Indwelling Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:17-21, 29-41**)
 - A. After Jesus was raised to life, he ascended to heaven and received the promised Holy Spirit from God that he then poured out on all people on the day of Pentecost
 - B. Only those that repent and are baptized with water will receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (i.e., be 'born again')
 - C. This succession of events resulted in the quality of 'sonship to God' being made available to anyone who responds in faith to the gospel of Jesus Christ (**Galatians 3:26-27, 4:4-6**)
3. The Gift of the Holy Spirit is the Power of Christ in Our Hearts
 - A. To guarantee our salvation and help us stand firm in Christ (**2 Corinthians 1:21-22**)
 - B. To be transformed into the likeness of Christ (**2 Corinthians 3:7-18**)
4. The Gift of the Holy Spirit is the Presence of Christ in Our Hearts
 - A. To make our bodies temples of the Holy Spirit and to prove our spiritual union with him (**1 Corinthians 6:17-20**)
 - B. To guide us in spiritual living and produce God's character in our hearts (**Galatians 5:16-18, 22-25**)
5. The Gift of the Holy Spirit is the Person of Christ in Our Hearts
 - A. Helping us in our prayers by interceding for us to God (**Romans 8:26-34**)
 - B. Enabling Christ to dwell in our hearts through faith (**Ephesians 3:16-19**)
6. If Anyone is in Christ There is a New Creation (**2 Corinthians 5:16-17**)
 - A. This miracle happens through the gift of the Holy Spirit in our hearts
 - B. Christ now works, lives and guides our hearts through the Spirit—as new creations the Spirit brings order, life and light into our hearts (just like the physical creation)

Homework: *Review the study and continue reading through the **Book of Acts**.*

Lesson Ten:

Members of One Body (The Church)

What image comes to mind when you hear the word ‘church’?

1. ‘Church’ is translated from the Greek word meaning ‘assembly’ or literally ‘those called out’
 - A. In the New Testament, the word ‘church’ is mostly used in a spiritual sense as the *assembly* of God’s people both *universally* and *locally* (i.e., part of God’s eternal kingdom as shown in *Lesson 4*)
 - B. Universal Church: The *assembly* of all who will eventually live in heaven with God forever
 - i. Only the church of Jesus can overcome death (**Matthew 16:15-19**)
 - ii. The names of the saved are written in heaven (**Hebrews 12:22-24**)
 - C. Local Church: The *assembly* of baptized disciples in a certain geographic area devoted to the apostles teaching (i.e., Bible), fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer (**Acts 2:41-47**)
 - i. The ‘breaking of bread’ includes regular hospitality and communion (**1 Corinthians 11:23-26**)
 - ii. As the gospel spread there came to be many local churches on earth (**1 Corinthians 16:19**)
2. Powerful Descriptions of the Church (**Ephesians 2:19-22**)
 - A. God’s Household: therefore making all members ‘brothers and sisters’ to each other
 - B. A Building: requiring a plan for construction and fulfilling a well-defined purpose
 - i. Jesus is the chief cornerstone (his teaching and person provide orientation for the foundation)
 - ii. A local assembly is part of God’s universal church only if it is built in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament—the foundation laid by the *apostles* (Paul, Peter, John, Matthew) and *prophets* (Mark, Luke, James, Jude, writer of Hebrews)
 - C. A Holy Temple: just as God’s Spirit lives in each one of us (*Lesson 9*), God’s Spirit governs the relationships we have with each other
 - D. The Body of Christ: Christ is the head of the body, which is the church (**Colossians 1:15-20**)
 - i. Just because we are different from each other we should not say that we do not belong to the body (**1 Corinthians 12:14-20**)
 - ii. Just because others are different from us we should not say that they do not belong to the body (**1 Corinthians 12:21-26**)
 - iii. God has put us together in one body just the way he wants us to be
3. Understanding Unity in the Church
 - A. Universal Church: baptized in *one* Spirit into *one* body (**1 Corinthians 12:12-13**)
 - B. Local Church:
 - i. Unity in mind and thought requires focus and effort (**1 Corinthians 1:10-13**)
 - ii. God doesn’t want divisions or denominations—only a biblical foundation, not human opinions, will keep us together (**1 Corinthians 3:1-7, 4:6-7**)
4. Leadership and Authority in the Local Church Is God’s Plan
 - A. Needs to be respected (**1 Thessalonians 5:12-13**)
 - B. Their faith should be imitated (**Hebrews 13:7**)
 - C. Submit to their authority since they are accountable to God (**Hebrews 13:17**)
5. Be Devoted to the Fellowship (**Hebrews 10:24-25**)
 - A. One purpose of meeting together is to ‘spur one another on to love and good deeds’
 - B. Effective encouragement requires forethought and determination
6. The Expression of God’s Manifold Wisdom (**Ephesians 3:7-12**)
 - A. The church demonstrates God’s eternal purpose for all peoples of every nation
 - B. This knowledge allows us to approach God with freedom and confidence
 - C. Make a decision to be fully committed to the meetings of the local church (if you have not done so already)—even rearranging your work schedule and weekly activities

Homework: Review the study and continue reading through the **Book of Acts**.

Lesson Eleven:

Go and Make Disciples of All Nations

What word is used more in the New Testament—Christian or disciple?

1. The Origin of the Name ‘Christian’ (**Acts 11:19-26**)
 - A. ‘Christian’ was a name that the world gave to the followers of Jesus and they proudly adopted (found only 3 times in New Testament)
 - B. Most often, the followers of Jesus are referred to as ‘disciples’ (more than 250 times in the New Testament) and Jesus clearly defined its meaning through his example and teaching
2. Jesus Gave His Disciples A New Purpose (**Mark 1:14-18**)
 - A. Jesus began his earthly ministry by calling people to “follow” and they immediately left everything
 - B. Jesus called them to be “fishers of men” using the preaching of the good news as a net (just like he did)
 - C. He finished his earthly ministry with the same charge: “Go and preach the good news...” (**Mark 16:14-16**)
3. Matthew Records The *Great Commission* In Even Greater Detail (**Matthew 28:16-20**)
 - A. This command is for every disciple (whether going to another country or just next door)
 - B. God uses faithful disciples to make more disciples and bring them to maturity: *discipleship* means “teaching each other to obey the commands of Christ”
 - C. Faithfulness to God’s plan could evangelize the world in one generation through exponential growth

Observe how the plan of Jesus to evangelize the world could be accomplished. Compare a preacher who converts 100 people per year, to a disciple who makes one more disciple (with both of them making one more disciple the next year, and so on).

<u>Year (n)</u>	<u>Preacher (n * 100)</u>	<u>Disciple (2ⁿ)</u>
1	100 (1 * 100)	2 (2 ¹)
2	200 (2 * 100)	4 (2 ²)
3	300 (3 * 100)	8 (2 ³)
10	1,000 (10 * 100)	1,024 (2 ¹⁰)
20	2,000 (20 * 100)	1,048,476 (2 ²⁰)
30	3,000 (30 * 100)	1,073,741,824 (2 ³⁰)
33	3,300 (33 * 100)	> 8,000,000,000 (2 ³³)

4. Disciples Are Called To Love Each Other Like Jesus Loves Us (**John 13:34-35**)
 - A. We must use the gifts that God has given us to speak and serve in his name (**1 Peter 4:8-11**)
 - B. Competent to teach—if I know enough to become a disciple, I can help someone else (**Romans 15:14**)
 - C. Confess our sins and pray for each other (**James 5:16**)
 - D. Encouraging each other—even helping each other to confess (**Hebrews 3:12-14**)
 - E. We need to help each other materially (**1 John 3:16-18**)
5. The Good News Should Be Shared (**2 Corinthians 5:17-6:2**)
 - A. *Baptized disciples* are new creations and have been given a new purpose—to be Christ’s ambassadors
 - B. The good news is clear and personal for each one of us: ‘God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God’
 - C. Jesus still calls us to respond today—today can be ‘the time of God’s favour, the day of salvation.’

Homework: Review the study and continue reading through the **Book of Acts**.

Lesson Twelve:

Faithful to the End

What do you think will be the greatest challenge to your remaining faithful in your decision to follow Jesus?

1. Following Jesus Is a Personal Choice (**Luke 9:22-26**)
 - A. We must deny ourselves like Jesus did in his prayer before the crucifixion – “*Not my will, but your will be done*” (**Matthew 26:36-39**)
 - B. To carry the cross daily means that we are always prepared to sacrifice our individual wills
 - C. Either we choose to gain the world and lose our souls, or lose ourselves to Jesus and receive eternal life
 - D. God’s grace is being extended to us now, but our response affects God’s final judgment—i.e., *if we are ashamed of Jesus and the gospel, he will be ashamed of us*
2. Following Jesus Changes Our Priorities
 - A. We must love Jesus’ will for our lives more than any one else’s – even our own (**Luke 14:25-27**)
 - B. We must *count the cost* since not finishing the Christian life is meaningless (**Luke 14:28-30**)
 - C. As disciples, we can no longer see ourselves as ‘owners’ but as ‘managers’ of the gifts and resources that God has given us (**Luke 14:31-33**)
 - i. One way to fulfil this is through *regular contribution* to the work of the church
 - ii. Another way is through *hospitality* and *helping the poor*
 - D. If we give up following Jesus then our decision will become worthless and useless (**Luke 14:34-35**)
3. God Tests Us by Allowing Difficulties In Our Lives
 - A. The testing of faith develops our character and helps us to mature (**James 1:2-4, 12**)
 - B. Difficulties in our lives train us so that we might be more holy and righteous (**Hebrews 12:7-11**)
 - C. When we suffer unjustly we are participating in the sufferings of Christ (**1 Peter 4:12-19**)
 - i. At the same time, when we suffer because of our own sinfulness or foolishness, there is nothing commendable in it (i.e., just because you are being persecuted or insulted, does not necessarily mean that you have been righteous in your actions)
4. God Has Given Us Ways to Make Our Salvation Certain
 - A. His grace teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions (**Titus 2:11-14**)
 - B. Make every effort to grow in Christian character and you will never fall (**2 Peter 1:3-11**)
 - C. Remain in Christ through prayer and devotion, and he promises to *remain in us* (**John 15:1-4**)
 - D. These statements are all *promises* from God—if we fulfil the conditions, *then* the blessings are guaranteed!
5. Some Specific Warnings
 - A. Simply having a good reputation as a church member is not enough—God sees our hearts and knows our possibilities (**Revelation 3:1-3**)
 - B. Following human tradition must never replace simple obedience to God’s word (**Mark 7:5-8**)
 - C. *Watch your life and doctrine closely*—God opposes hypocrisy (**1 Timothy 4:16**)
 - i. Another promise—if you persevere in your life and doctrine *then* you will save both yourself and your hearers
6. Fix Your Eyes on Jesus (**Hebrews 12:1-3**)
 - A. We must run with perseverance and follow the course that Jesus has laid out for us
 - B. Only the promise of being in heaven with God, can give us the strength to finish!

Questions for Discussion:

1. What encourages you most about God’s plan for your life?
2. What do you think will be your greatest challenge to living faithfully as a Christian?
3. Discuss setting a time for your baptism—possibly even later today or tomorrow. *Take some time to pray (and fast if possible), and then obey the gospel through being united with Christ in baptism.*