

FUNDAMENTALS

OF THE

CHRISTIAN



Trinity Bible Church

Sunday School, Summer 2018

FAITH

Fundamentals *of the* Christian Faith

*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
how unsearchable are his judgments,
and his ways past finding out!
For who hath known the mind of the Lord?
or who hath been his counsellor?
Or who hath first given to him,
and it shall be recompensed unto him again?
For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things:
to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

Romans 11:33-36

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Introduction

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge,”¹ warned the prophet Hosea over 2,500 years ago. The nation Israel was facing the imminent judgment of the LORD God. God had chosen them to bless and to be a blessing, but instead, they had become indistinguishable from the pagan nations in their great sinfulness. With this cryptic comment, Hosea identified the root cause of their apostasy: there was no knowledge of God in the land.

We understand such a statement when made about unregenerate men. The natural man is in bondage to sin and neither knows nor seeks God. But here, Hosea is speaking about God’s chosen people. It was the nation which had seen the very visible hand of God in their deliverance from bondage in Egypt and their possession of the Promised Land. It was the nation which had uniquely received the revelation of God through the Law of Moses, the psalms of King David and the wisdom of his son Solomon. It was the nation among whom God had revealed His glory in the Tabernacle and the Temple. It was the nation to whom God had spoken by the prophets. It was the nation that had been given tremendous opportunities to learn of God, and, from what we learn from the historical accounts, a nation that still followed many of the religious practices of the surrounding nations. They still claimed the LORD God as their God. But they were sinful in heart and conduct, and God’s wrath was about to fall upon them. To this people, the prophet Hosea came with a call to repentance. His great concern was not primarily their sins, which were many and heinous, but the root problem: there was no knowledge of God in the land.

¹ Hosea 4:6

How can this be and how does the knowledge of God pertain to the conduct of His people? The Bible is very explicit in the place it gives to the knowledge of God in the work of salvation. As already noted, our condition as natural, unregenerate people is characterized by ignorance of God. It is by the Divine work of reversing this spiritual ignorance and shedding upon us the light of the knowledge of Jesus Christ that we come to salvation through faith in Him.² We come to know God through Jesus Christ and receive eternal salvation. Subsequently, growth in holiness comes through the knowledge of God in Christ.³ As we increase in the knowledge of God, we are transformed daily into the image of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, when Christ returns, there will be a wonderful expansion of our knowledge of God.⁴ Our understanding will no longer be impeded by the residual effects of sin. Therefore, where there is no knowledge of God, there is no salvation, no holiness, and no hope of glorification.

*And this is life eternal,
that they might know thee
the only true God,
and Jesus Christ,
whom thou hast sent.
John 17:3*

How can we avoid the fatal flaw of Hosea’s age? Surely Hosea is not saying that our condition as God’s people is determined by our ability to recite the teachings of the Bible. What does he mean when he speaks of the knowledge of God? Clearly, it must include a basic knowledge of the truths about God, His person, and work. But more than that, it is a penetration of that truth into the very heart and soul of the child of God. It is truth mixed with faith and love. True knowledge of God leads to a fear of God Who is holy and to a delight in God Who is good. It is evidenced by the pursuit of God and His holiness. It is a knowl-

² 2 Corinthians 4:6

³ John 17:17; 2 Peter 1:3-4;
2 Timothy 2:16-17

⁴ 1 Corinthians 13:12

Introduction (continued)

edge that grips the believer as much as the believer grips it. It is a knowledge that works transformation of character and leads men to desire Christ and His holiness.⁵

It is the burden of the Scripture writers, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, to provide this knowledge of God, and they are explicit in the exhortations to this end.⁶ The life of the people of God begins with a revelation of the knowledge of God and continues with a growing understanding of the glory and majesty of our sovereign, gracious God. The hope of every believer should be to stand in the presence of Jesus Christ our Savior and to know Him more clearly than we could ever imagine. This hope is expressed by seeking to know Him more in this lifetime.

The mission of the church is to focus upon this great task of leading the people of God to an increasing knowledge of God.⁷ Only as the people of God are girded with a true knowledge of God will they be able to please Him and avoid sin.⁸ Had this pursuit of the knowledge of God characterized the people of Hosea's day, they would not have faced God's wrath. The same is true of our own generation. It is with this concern that the

study series in this booklet was prepared. In this study, we will attempt to provide an introduction to some of the more fundamental truths of the Christian faith. We will focus upon foundational truths about God, His Person, and His Works. God's glory is seen most clearly in the work of salvation through His Son, and these truths will be the central part of this study. The study is presented with a firm belief in the fact that the knowledge of God is essential to spiritual growth. It is the means of the transformation of the child of God into the image of Christ.⁹

The complaint of Hosea is not ancient history. It is the abiding danger of every generation of believers, including those of our own age. The Bible is more widely disseminated and the Christian message is more broadly proclaimed throughout the world in printed and electronic media than in any previous generation. Sadly, it seems true that the ignorance of God is also more extensive than in any other generation. The people of God must seek remedy for this dilemma. They must pursue the knowledge of God with great diligence and perseverance.¹⁰ This study should be considered a beginning and not an ending. For the new believer, it is an introduction. For the more mature believer, it is a re-examination of the foundation of our salvation. There is much more to be learned, but there cannot be less for those who truly seek a knowledge of God.

⁵ Philippians 3:10

⁶ Proverbs 2:1-5; John 17:3;
Philippians 3:8; Colossians 1:10;
1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18

⁷ Ephesians 4:11-16

⁸ John 17:26; Psalm 119:11;
Ephesians 6:11

⁹ 2 Corinthians 3:18

¹⁰ 2 Timothy 2:15

Schedule

June 3 **Lesson 1 – Preview: The Importance of Doctrine in Faith and Practice**
Scriptures: 2 Timothy 3:1-4:5

June 10 **Lesson 2 – The Bible**
Scriptures: 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21;
1 Corinthians 2:6-12

June 17 **Lesson 3 – The Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit**
Scriptures: Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 14:7-9, 16-17

June 24 **Lesson 4 – Creation**
Scriptures: Genesis 1:1-2:25; Psalm 19:1-6; John 1:1-3; Romans 1:18-20

The Doctrines of Grace

July 1 **Lesson 5 – Salvation – Part 1: Total Depravity of Man**
Scriptures: Genesis 3; Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:9-20; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3

July 8 **Lesson 6 – Salvation – Part 2: Unconditional Election**
Scriptures: Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:3-6; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

July 15 **Lesson 7 – Salvation – Part 3: Limited Atonement**
Scriptures: John 10:11, 15-16; Ephesians 2:4-7; 5:25-27; 1 Peter 2:24

July 22 **Lesson 8 – Salvation – Part 4: Irresistible Grace**
Scriptures: John 6:44, 63-65; Romans 8:28-30; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31;
Galatians 1:15-16

July 29 **Lesson 9 – Salvation – Part 5: Perseverance of the Saints**
Scriptures: John 10:27, 28; Colossians 1:21-23;
1 John 1:5-7; 2:3-5, 15-17, 19

August 5 **Lesson 10 – The Christian Life**
Scriptures: 1 Peter 2:2-3; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Ephesians 4:17-24

August 12 **Lesson 11 – The Christian's Three Enemies**
Scriptures: Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16-26; 1 Peter 5:6-10

August 19 **Lesson 12 – The Church**
Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:11-16; Galatians 1:1-3, 21-24;
1 Timothy 3:1-13

August 26 **Lesson 13 – The Last Things**
Scriptures: John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Matthew 24:1-31; 25:31-46

September 2 **Lesson 14 – Review**
Scriptures: Joshua 1:8; Matthew 7:21-29, Colossians 1:9-14;
James 1:19-27; 4:17

Scripture Memory

Isaiah 55:6

Seek ye the LORD while He may be found,
call ye upon him while He is near:

Isaiah 55:7

Let the wicked forsake his way,
and the unrighteous man his thoughts:
and let him return unto the LORD,
and He will have mercy upon him;
and to our God,
for He will abundantly pardon.

Isaiah 55:8

For My thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways My ways,
saith the LORD.

Isaiah 55:9

For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways,
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55:10

For as the rain cometh down,
and the snow from heaven,
and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth,
and maketh it bring forth and bud,
that it may give seed to the sower,
and bread to the eater:

Isaiah 55:11

So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth:
it shall not return unto Me void,
but it shall accomplish that which I please,
and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Hebrews 13:20

Now the God of peace,
that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great Shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

Hebrews 13:21

Make you perfect in every good work to do His will,
working in you that which is wellpleasing in His sight,
through Jesus Christ;
to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Amazing Grace

John Newton, 1725-1807

American melody

1. A - maz - ing grace-how sweet the sound- That saved a wretch like me!
2. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears re - lieved;
3. Thro' man - y dan - gers, toils and snares, I have al - read - y come;
4. And when this flesh and heart shall fail, And mor - tal life shall cease,
5. When we've been there ten thou - sand years, Bright shin - ing as the sun,

I once was lost, but now am found- Was blind, but now I see.
How pre - cious did that grace ap - pear The hour I first be - lieved!
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.
I shall pos - sess with - in the veil A life of joy and peace.
We've no less days to sing God's praise Than when we've first be - gun. A - men.

Preview: The Importance of Doctrine in Faith and Practice

Lesson 1

Scriptures: 2 Timothy 3:1-4:5

Memory: Isaiah 55:6

Hymn: “Amazing Grace”

THE PURPOSE: *In a day when in many churches, the importance of Biblical doctrine is either minimized or denied altogether, it is important for Christians to see the place that doctrine has in Scripture along with the practical application of those doctrines to daily living.*

2 Timothy 3:1-4:5

1. What will men be like in the last days?
2. Why did Paul say to turn away from these evil men?
3. Why did Paul compare these men to Jannes and Jambres?
4. What was the testimony of Paul’s life to Timothy?
5. How could Timothy guard himself against false teachers?
6. What did Paul say about Scripture?
7. What charge did Paul give to Timothy?
8. What did Paul tell Timothy about the time to come?
9. What was Timothy’s responsibility?

Notes on Lesson 1

THE IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINE IN FAITH AND PRACTICE

I. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE BACKGROUND OF TRINITY BIBLE CHURCH

- A. Central Bible Church: For twenty-three years our pastor was on the staff of Central Bible Church here in Portland—ten years as Assistant Pastor of the church, and thirteen years as pastor. While many of the people who now make up Trinity Bible Church had formerly attended Central Bible Church in Portland, we believe that, under the leading of the Lord, Trinity Bible Church was established by the Lord for the purposes which are emphasized in what follows. We have no desire to dwell upon the past except to emphasize that there were specific reasons for the establishing of a new church in Portland. We believe that to have a clear understanding of the origin of our work will, under God's blessing, help us to maintain the distinct character of Trinity Bible Church.
- B. The issues which led to the pastor's resignation:
 - 1. Practical: the pastor's opposition to the contemporary trends in churches today, especially in music, but also in methods of ministry. This was considered by many to be hindering the growth of the church.
 - 2. Doctrinal: the pastor's teaching of The Doctrines of Grace. (These doctrines are listed on page 22 and will be studied in lessons 5 through 9.)
- C. The Division: On Sunday morning of January 18, 1981 the pastor preached his final message at Central Bible Church.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRINITY BIBLE CHURCH – JANUARY 24, 1981 TO THE PRESENT

- A. The Beginning: At the time of the pastor's resignation from Central Bible Church, there were no plans for the formation of a new church. But people who on their own had decided to leave Central Bible began to call to find out what others who were leaving were going to do. And so Trinity Bible Church was not pre-planned, but spontaneous under the moving of the Holy Spirit. A men's prayer meeting was called for Saturday, January 24, 1981. Our first Sunday meeting was at the Gresham Armory, January 25, 1981.
- B. Our Meeting Places: The Gresham Armory, David Douglas High School, Centennial High School, three Parkrose Schools—Thompson, Sacramento, and Knott Elementary School, and now the PDX South Shore Campus.
- C. The Development of the Work: Much prayer and searching of the Scriptures went into the planning of Trinity Bible Church. For many weeks the men met faithfully to seek the Lord's leading for our work. We wanted even our name to indicate the nature of our work. And so we chose the name, Trinity Bible Church. We believe in the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, all co-equal in Deity. The Bible is the foundation of all that we believe, and our guidance as to what the Lord wants us to be and how we are to live. We are a church, dedicated to the glory of God, seeking to edify believers through the teaching of the Word, and ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ at home and around the world as the Lord leads us.

Notes on Lesson 1 (continued)

It was our conviction from the very first that the ministry of the church should be God-centered, not man-centered, and that it should be our primary purpose to please God, not people. We believe that, if God is glorified, the people who attend our services will receive true spiritual blessing. We believe that the trend in many churches today is to have programs that will please and attract people instead of seeking to glorify God. When God is glorified, we believe people will be blessed.

Furthermore, we believe that the only way we can know that we are glorifying God is to make sure that our lives are pleasing to the Lord, and that we are conducting the work according to the teaching of the Bible, which we believe to be the very Word of God.

From the beginning, our church has also emphasized the importance of the leadership of men, not only in the church, but also in the home.

1. The leadership of Trinity Bible Church: We believe that the New Testament teaches that the local church is to be under the direction of elders and deacons. Our pastor is one of the elders.
2. Our services: The Scriptures teach that we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and so we have regular meetings every Sunday, morning and evening, plus a meeting on Wednesday night for Bible study and prayer. The main emphasis in all of our meetings is upon the exposition of Scripture.
3. Music: We believe that God is glorified in the singing of the great hymns of the Church, and we avoid contemporary music which is patterned after the world's music.
4. Money: We believe that the Lord's work should be supported by the Lord's people, and that each one of us should give as the Lord prospers us and leads us to give. No one is ever asked to pledge money to the church, nor are offerings taken in our services. An offering box is provided for the convenience of those who desire to give. Our Church Treasurer keeps accurate records of all gifts which are identified.
5. Evangelism and Missions: We believe that it is God's will that those who believe in Christ should participate in the spread of the Gospel at home and to the whole world. Thus, it is both a personal responsibility for every believer as well as the responsibility of the local church. We believe that the methods employed in evangelism and missions should reflect the teaching of the Scripture regarding the spread of the Gospel to the world.
6. Special Ministries: We broadcast the Trinity Bible Hour each Sunday at 8:00 a.m. on KPDQ (800 AM), and again at 4:00 p.m. on KPDQ (93.9 FM), Pacific Standard Time. We also have a Spring Bible Conference and a Summer Family Camp each year.
7. The Ordinances of the church: We believe the Scriptures teach that there are two ordinances of the church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We baptize by immersion those who have professed faith in Christ. We observe the Lord's Supper twice each month—usually on the first Sunday morning of the month and the third Sunday evening. We also observe the Lord's Supper on Days of Prayer, and other times at the discretion of the elders.

Notes on Lesson 1 (continued)

By “doctrine” we mean *the teaching of the Bible*. By “faith” we mean what we are to believe. And by “practice” we mean *how the teaching of Scripture is to affect our lives*.

During the following weeks we are going to be examining the great doctrines of Scripture. We want you to be confirmed in your belief that the Bible is truly the Word of God. We will be looking at what the Bible teaches about the three Members of the Godhead—Their glorious attributes. We will see that man was created by God without sin, but that Adam disobeyed God and by his sin brought judgment upon the whole human race. We will see what the Bible teaches about God’s eternal plan of salvation. We will be considering in a special way the truths which have been called, *the doctrines of grace*, which is another way of describing our salvation through Christ. Then we will consider together what it means that we are the children of God, and how we should live as God’s children. After that, we will examine the Biblical teaching regarding the church, and conclude our studies with a lesson on what the Bible teaches prophetically about the last days.

By way of getting started in our studies, let us consider together the Apostle Paul’s instructions to his son in the faith, Timothy, in **2 Timothy 3:1-4:5**. This epistle was the last of Paul’s letters, written under the direction of the Holy Spirit and included in the Scriptures. He had no way of knowing how things would be in the last days, but they were sovereignly revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. And these verses serve to guide all of us who minister in the years following the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. What the Apostle Paul told Timothy almost two thousand years ago is God’s message for us today.

There are three parts to what Paul told Timothy:

- 1) Conditions in the world in the last days (2 Timothy 3:1-13),
- 2) What Timothy needed to be concerned about with regard to himself (2 Timothy 3:14-17),
- 3) What Timothy needed to do in his ministry, and why (2 Timothy 4:1-5).

The Bible

Lesson 2

Scriptures: 1 Thessalonians 2:13;
2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21;
1 Corinthians 2:6-12

Memory: Isaiah 55:7 and review

Hymn: “Amazing Grace”

THE PURPOSE: *To teach the verbal inspiration of Scripture*

1 Thessalonians 2:13

1. For what was Paul thankful about the Thessalonian believers?

2 Timothy 3:16-17

2. Why is Scripture so valuable to us?

2 Peter 1:19-21

3. What did Peter say about the prophetic word?

4. How did we get the prophecy of the Scripture?

1 Corinthians 2:6-12

5. What did Paul say was not true about the wisdom he spoke?

6. What did Paul say was true about the wisdom he spoke?

7. What evidence did Paul have that the rulers of this age did not know God’s wisdom?

8. What lesson did Paul learn from the Old Testament Scripture?

9. What has God done that we might understand His wisdom?

Notes on Lesson 2

THE BIBLE

Trinity Bible Church is strongly and unalterably committed to the preaching and teaching of the Bible. We hold to this conviction because:

I. WE BELIEVE THE BIBLE TO BE THE VERBALLY INSPIRED WORD OF GOD.

The Bible has been given to us by God through the Holy Spirit. It is true, and unchangeable—all sixty-six books of the OT and NT. See 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

II. WE BELIEVE THAT THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY WRITTEN REVELATION FROM GOD, AND THAT IT IS THE ONLY WRITTEN REVELATION OF GOD.

Therefore, no other message could possibly be as important. The revelation of God has been completed in Christ. See Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39.

III. WE BELIEVE THAT THE MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE IS THE MESSAGE THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT BLESSES AND USES.

The Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture, and He is the Teacher of Scripture. He has been given to all of us who are believers to guide us into the truth. The Bible is “the sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17). See also John 16:7-15.

IV. WE BELIEVE THAT THE BIBLE IS THE COMPLETED WORD OF GOD.

There is no need for anything more than what we have in the Word, because there is nothing that needs to be added since Christ came and the New Testament was completed. See Colossians 1:25-29.

V. WE BELIEVE IN THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE AS THE WORD OF GOD.

This follows from the fact that it is the Word of God. Therefore, it does not need to be defended, but to be proclaimed. See Matthew 4:1-10; also Isaiah 55:10, 11; Hebrews 4:12.

VI. WE BELIEVE IN THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE.

The Bible itself is enough for the salvation of sinners, and it is all that is needed for the spiritual growth of the people of God. See 1 Peter 1:23; 2:2, 3; 2 Peter 1:1-4.

VII. WE BELIEVE THAT PREACHING AND TEACHING THE WORD OF GOD IS THE WILL OF GOD FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH.

This is the main emphasis in all of our services. We believe that this is important for people of all ages and that we need to begin teaching the Bible to our children as soon as they are capable of understanding it. See 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5. The church is not for entertainment, but for edification. Therefore, our primary ministry is to the people of God, and evangelism is the fruit of that ministry.

The Godhead – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Lesson 3

Scriptures: Matthew 28:18-20;
2 Corinthians 13:14;
John 14:7-9, 16-17

Memory: Isaiah 55:8 and review

Hymn: “Amazing Grace”

THE PURPOSE: *To show that there are three Persons in the Godhead, a brief introduction to their attributes, and the work of each in salvation*

Matthew 28:18-20

1. What claims did Jesus make about Himself in these verses?
2. What command did Jesus give His disciples?
3. How does this passage teach the doctrine of the Trinity?

2 Corinthians 13:14

4. How does this passage support the doctrine of the Trinity?

John 14:7-9

5. How can we know the Father?
6. What did Philip ask?
7. How did Jesus answer Philip?

John 14:16-17

8. How do we receive the Spirit of Truth?
9. How do the disciples of Jesus differ from the world?

Notes on Lesson 3

THE GODHEAD – FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT

I. THE PERSONS OF THE GODHEAD

Of all of the doctrines of Scripture, this is the most important. The Bible is pre-eminently a revelation of God. Therefore, our first objective in studying the Bible should be to know God.

We believe that the Bible teaches that there are Three Persons in the Godhead: God, the Father; God, the Son—the Lord Jesus Christ; and God, the Holy Spirit. We believe that They are individual Persons Who are one in nature, meaning that They are identical in nature, each possessing the same divine attributes. They are also equally worthy of our worship, our trust, and our obedience.

Cf. Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 14:8, 9, 16, 17.

II. THE ATTRIBUTES, or CHARACTERISTICS, OF THE GODHEAD

A. God's nature is revealed in the Name He has taken for Himself: *Jehovah (YHWH)*. He is the living God, eternal, and unchanging. He is without beginning, and without ending. Cf. Isaiah 42:8.

B. God is a spirit. Cf. John 4:24.

C. God is love. Cf. 1 John 4:8, 16. As such, He is gracious, merciful, good, faithful, patient, and full of lovingkindness. Cf. Psalm 89:1, 2; 103:8; Nahum 1:7.

D. But God is also holy and righteous. He is absolutely without sin in His nature, and so is incapable of sinning in thought, word, or action. Cf. Ex. 15:11; Isaiah 6:3.

E. God is omnipresent (everywhere present at the same time in the completeness of His Person), omniscient (all-knowing, knowing all things—the end from the beginning, infinitely wise), omnipotent (almighty, sovereign, with unlimited power over all creation).

God is infinite in His presence, wisdom, and power. It is our conviction that the work of the Lord in our day has become very man-centered, and that people in our churches know very little about God. We believe that the Lord's work needs to be God-centered, and that the people of God need to understand that God is sovereign in all things: in the affairs of nations, in the lives of all people, and in the carrying out of His purposes regarding salvation.

Notes on Lesson 3 (continued)

III. THE WORKS OF THE GODHEAD

- A. In creation: (Our next lesson will be on creation.) All Three Persons of the Godhead were active in creation, and all Three are active in sustaining creation, and in ordering the course of human affairs (for nations as well as individual people) to the end of time.
Cf. Genesis 1:1, 2; John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16, 17; Hebrews 1:3.
- B. In salvation: In order to understand salvation, we must begin with God, not with man. All three Persons of the Godhead have been, and are, active in salvation.
1. God, the Father: Salvation originated with God. The Members of the Godhead determined in eternity past that there would be salvation, the conditions under which people could and would be saved, and even who would be saved. Election to salvation is recognized in Scripture as the work of God, the Father. Cf. Ephesians 1:3, 4; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14.
 2. Christ, the Son of God: The Lord Jesus Christ, through His birth by the virgin Mary, came to the earth to accomplish two important works:
 - a. He came as the final and complete revelation of God, the Father.
Cf. Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1-3.
 - b. He came to provide salvation for all whom the Father had chosen. (We will be dealing in detail with this in a later lesson.) He did this by His death on the Cross, by His bodily resurrection, and by His present intercessory work in heaven. The work of salvation will be completed for us when the Lord returns. Cf. Romans 5:8-10; 1 Corinthians 15:3, 4; Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 3:2.
 3. The Holy Spirit: As the Author of Scripture, the theme of which is Christ and His redemptive work, the Holy Spirit is carrying out the redemptive plan of God in the following ways:
 - a. He convicts of sin. Cf. John 16:7-11.
 - b. He regenerates (known in the Bible as the new birth). Cf. John 3:5-8.
 - c. He indwells each believer to fulfill the work of sanctification. Cf. John 14:16, 17.
 - d. He seals every believer in Christ, thus making salvation secure. Cf. Ephesians 1:13, 14.
 - e. He baptizes every believer into the body of Christ. Cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13.
 - f. He teaches every believer the truth of Scripture. Cf. John 14:26.
 - g. He bestows spiritual gifts on the people of God for ministry. Cf. 1 Corinthians 12.
 - h. He restrains sin. Cf. Galatians 5:16-26.
 - i. He empowers for living and for service. Cf. Acts 1:8.

Creation

Lesson 4

Scriptures: Genesis 1:1-2:25; Psalm 19:1-6;
John 1:1-3; Romans 1:18-20

Memory: Isaiah 55:9 and review

Hymn: "Amazing Grace"

THE PURPOSE: *To examine the Biblical account of creation and to show how God has glorified Himself in creation*

Genesis 1:1-2:25

1. What is the first claim in the Bible?
2. How did God create the heavens and the earth?
3. What did God make on each of the six days of creation?
4. What is unique about the creation of man?
5. What special duty did God give to man?
6. Why did God create Eve?

Psalm 19:1-6

7. What is the testimony of creation?

John 1:1-3

8. What does this text teach about the creation of the world?

Romans 1:18-20

9. What is the testimony of creation?

Notes on Lesson 4

CREATION

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION

The Bible begins with God and immediately relates the account of creation. So we can justly say that the revelation of God creating the heaven and the earth is the foundational doctrine of Scripture. After that, we find hundreds of references to God and creation throughout the Word of God. To be mistaken about the origin of the universe and the origin of man, is to be mistaken about everything else in life. We all have noticed how otherwise intelligent people are quick to speak about “Mother Nature” and what “she” does to bring our weather, whether it be good or bad. It has gotten so that our educators speak of evolution as a proven fact when actually it still remains as a ridiculous theory. To ignore the fact that God is the Creator of all things, as well as the Sustainer of the universe, keeps people from facing the fact that they are responsible to God for their behavior, and that in the catastrophes that we experience in floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, famines, and the like, God is speaking to us of His displeasure with what we are doing. They also are signs, as were the plagues which God brought upon Egypt, that greater judgments are ahead if we do not listen to what He is saying and change our ways. When we fail to see what God is doing in events which are becoming more and more common, we are walking a path which will lead to greater and greater judgments.

On the other hand, as we shall see in Scripture today, God has revealed His own glory in the work that He has done in creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork,” we are told in Psalm 19:1. It follows that when we see God’s hand in nature, we begin to see evidence of His presence and power in all of the circumstances of our lives. So it is really impossible to overstate the importance of belief in God as our Creator and the Creator of the universe in which we live. Furthermore, to see the universe as the work of God makes us realize how insignificant we are in comparison with all that God has done. David confirmed this in Psalm 8:3-4 when he wrote these words:

3. When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars,
which thou hast ordained;
4. What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

To emphasize in your own mind the importance of the doctrine of creation, begin to make a record now of the verses and passages in Scripture which make any reference to creation. The number of references in the Bible is a powerful testimony to the importance of this doctrine.

II. SOME SIGNIFICANT PASSAGES WHICH DEAL WITH THE SUBJECT OF CREATION

- A. Genesis 1:1-2:25: Obviously, no human being was present when the universe came into being. Therefore, we are dependent upon God to tell us how it all began. Moses, who wrote the book of Genesis, was not there in the beginning, and so, as we learned in our lesson on the Bible, he was one of those whom God used to give us the divine revelation of the truth. And here it is! The simple truth is that “God created the heaven and the earth.” The remainder of these two first chapters in Genesis tell us how He did it. A careful reader of Genesis 1, however, cannot escape the repetition of those words at the beginning of each day’s work, “And God said.” Cf. Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 26. If we miss the power of those words, they are pointed out very clearly in Psalm 33 where we have these words:
6. By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.
 7. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses.
 8. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.
 9. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast (Psalm 33:6-9).

Many times in the creation passages we find, as we do in Psalm 33, that the recognition of creation as the work of God is used as an appeal to stand in awe of Him, and to worship Him.

These two chapters in Genesis teach us much about God: His eternal character, His mighty power, His infinite wisdom, His goodness, His holiness, and His authority over man and all other creatures.

- B. Psalm 19:1-6: God has seen fit to make Himself known to men. He has done this in various ways. He has done this in His Word, as we have already learned. Related to this is the way He revealed Himself through the prophets and apostles. Pre-eminently, He revealed Himself through Christ, His Son. In a more limited way, He reveals Himself through you and me, His children. But the first way that God revealed Himself was through creation!

Look at what David has written in this Psalm. He was speaking here primarily of what we see in the heavens, but he declared by the Spirit that there is no place on the face of the earth where the glory of God is not manifested by what we see in the heavens. Man in his spiritual blindness may give the glory to heathen gods, but the glory rightfully belongs to the living and eternal God.

Notes on Lesson 4 (continued)

- C. John 1:1-3: This New Testament passage gives us light on the subject of creation which is not made clear in the Old Testament. It is true that the word *Elohim*, which is the Hebrew word for God in Genesis 1, is a plural, and suggests that there is more than one Person in the Godhead, yet here in John 1 we learn that our Lord Jesus Christ had a hand in everything that was created. We know that the Father was active in creation, and Genesis 1:2 speaks of the Holy Spirit, so all of this means that all three Persons of the Godhead were active in creation. So these verses at the beginning of John's Gospel are very important creation verses.
- D. Romans 1:18-20: We are yet to learn about man in our studies, but here we learn something about man which you do not find recognized by most of our experts in human psychology. This passage teaches us that the testimony of the existence of God is so great in creation that there really are no atheists in the world, not in any part of the world, and there never have been. This is another way that God has seen fit to reveal Himself: in the consciences of every person who has ever lived. No person will ever be surprised when he or she dies, to find out that it is God with whom they have to do. Man may try to silence the testimony in his own heart, but it is there.

I want to add one more passage which was not included in the lesson questions.

- E. Colossians 1:15- 17: The Apostle Paul was speaking here of Christ. He declares that Christ was not only our Creator, but He is the Sustainer of all creation. This is brought out in the last part of verse 17: "And by Him all things consist." Our Lord is the One Who is holding together day after day the wonderful works of creation. Cf. Hebrews 1:1-3.

These are just a sample of the many passages which have to do with creation. One of the greatest ways to know God is to see Him in the Scripture passages which speak of Him as our Creator and Lord.

Notes on Lesson 5

SALVATION – PART 1: TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN

In Lesson 3 we looked briefly into the nature of the Godhead and saw the part which each Member of the Godhead has in the work of salvation. We now turn to consider more fully the doctrine of salvation itself.

Salvation is the work of God whereby sinful human beings are saved for ever from the consequences of their sin. Salvation is only by grace through faith in the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation includes:

- 1) Justification. See Romans 3:24; 5:1.
- 2) Sanctification. See Romans 6:22; 1 Corinthians 6:11.
- 3) Glorification. See Romans 8:18, 28, 29.

This is the only way of salvation. In its entirety “it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

Another way of referring to the doctrine of salvation is by the expression *the doctrines of grace*. To help in remembering them, these doctrines are often presented in the following acrostic. Please memorize them.

T — Total Depravity
U — Unconditional Election
L — Limited Atonement
I — Irresistible Grace
P — Perseverance of the Saints

The remainder of this lesson will be devoted to *the Doctrine of Total Depravity*.

I. THE DEFINITION OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY

Total Depravity expresses what man is before God. It does not mean that man is always, and in every instance, as bad as he can be. It does mean that man, in his whole being, has been corrupted by sin. It is total because it includes man's total being: body, soul, and spirit.

II. THE SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE

A. The doctrine of original sin. See Romans 5:12; Psalm 51:5.

It was through the original sin of Adam that the whole human race fell under the judgment of God. See Genesis 2:16, 17; Romans 5:18; 6:23.

Illustration: Hebrews 7:9, 10.

B. Man is spiritually dead. See Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13.

Notes on Lesson 5 (continued)

- C. Man does not seek God. See Romans 3:11. The whole passage, Romans 3:9-18, is a revelation of man's Total Depravity. Here we also see that the natural heart of man prefers sin rather than God. Note also the teaching of our Lord in Matthew 15:1-20.
- D. Man is in bondage to his sin. In addition to the fact that he does not seek God, our Lord taught that man cannot come to Him for salvation, speaking of that which man is naturally capable of doing for himself apart from God. See John 6:44, 65; 8:34.
- E. Man is not only in bondage to his sin, but to Satan also. See 2 Corinthians 4:3, 4. Thus, man is also blinded to the truth of the Gospel.
- F. Consequently, man is incapable of doing anything that will please God with respect to salvation. Man cannot contribute to his salvation in any way. See Romans 8:8.

Conclusion: From the above teachings we can only conclude that man's condition in sin is hopeless. He cannot do anything for himself with respect to salvation, nor does he want to. He cannot and will not seek God. He is in bondage to his sinful nature, and to Satan also. His will is not free. His only hope for salvation is that God will intervene on his behalf. This is what God has done! He sent His Son to be man's Savior. This required that the Lord Jesus Christ die on the Cross for all who would believe on Him.

Thus, we see that the salvation of sinners is dependent upon the sovereign action of Almighty God, Who is greater than all of the forces which hold man hopelessly in bondage to his sin. It is God Who justifies, Who sanctifies, and Who will glorify all who believe in Christ.

So, in order to understand salvation, it is absolutely necessary that we understand the nature of God, the nature of man, and the nature of sin. When we do, then we will be able to see why salvation had to be the way God has ordained it. We will also see that all of the doctrines of grace fit together perfectly.

As we discuss the other doctrines of grace in the following lessons you will be able to see how salvation is all of God, and that all of the glory for salvation, therefore, rightfully belongs to Him.

Recommended reading: The Bondage of the Will, by Martin Luther.

Salvation – Part 2: Unconditional Election

Lesson 6

Scriptures: Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:3-6;
2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

Memory: Isaiah 55:11 and review

Hymn: “Amazing Grace”

THE PURPOSE: *To show the Father’s work of choosing those who would be saved*

Romans 8:28-30

1. For whom will all things work together for good?
2. Who will be glorified?

Ephesians 1:3-6

3. Why did Paul bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?
4. What did God choose before the foundation of the world?
5. Why did God do this?

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14

6. Why was Paul bound to give thanks to God?
7. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation?
8. What is the role of the Word of God in salvation?
9. What reason is there to preach the Gospel?

Notes on Lesson 6

SALVATION – PART 2: UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

We must always keep in mind the absolute sovereignty of God in all things. This, because of the very nature of God, applies also to salvation. It would have been completely within the sovereign right of God if He had not chosen to save anyone. It was equally within His right to have saved all people without exception. And we must conclude that it was also His right to do as He has done: to save many, but not to save all.

This doctrine of Unconditional Election, like Total Depravity, is rarely taught in our homes, in our churches, or in our Christian schools today. Therefore, when it is taught, it stirs up a lot of opposition because many people do not believe it is the teaching of Scripture. It seems to them to be inconsistent with the love of God. Christians have been so indoctrinated with a belief in the so-called “free will of man” that they usually reject the doctrine of election without examining the evidence in Scripture, and without listening to an explanation of it.

There is no question but that this is a difficult doctrine, and that it runs contrary to what man naturally believes to be fair. However, let us remember that there is no major doctrine in Scripture but what there are so-called problem passages which seem to be in contradiction to it. That is true of this doctrine. However, the main issue, as with all doctrines, is this: Is it taught in Scripture? Does the Bible teach Unconditional Election? If it does, then Christians need to believe it, and seek, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to understand it. If it is not taught in Scripture, then it certainly needs to be rejected and exposed as error.

Our first task, then, is to explain what we mean when we speak of Unconditional Election.

I. UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION DEFINED

God has sovereignly chosen those who are to be saved, and this choice was made solely on the basis of the will of God and the grace of God. No sinner is worthy of salvation, and so the choice could not have been made upon the basis of personal merit. Nor was God's choice made on the basis that He knew that certain ones would accept Christ, that is, the foreknowledge of God. God certainly knows who will be saved. However, that was not the basis upon which election rests. People receive Christ because they are chosen by God. It is not the teaching of Scripture that people are chosen because God knew that they would believe. Be sure that you apply to this doctrine what we learned about man in the doctrine of Total Depravity.

II. UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION AND TOTAL DEPRAVITY

There are two things to keep in mind regarding all of the doctrines of grace:

- 1) They all glorify God, not man.
- 2) They are in perfect harmony with each other.

The Scriptural doctrine of Total Depravity teaches us that man not only cannot come to God, but also that he would not if he could. Therefore, if anyone is to be saved, God must take the initiative.

This initiative was taken by God in eternity past when, according to the Scriptures, He chose those whom He intended to save. So we see that divine election is perfectly consistent with the doctrine of the depravity of man.

III. THE SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

See Ephesians 1:3-6, 11, 12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14; Romans 8:28-30, 33; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; 2 Timothy 2:10.

IV. ELECTION AND THE WILL OF MAN

This subject will come up again when we consider the doctrine of IRRESISTIBLE GRACE, but we need to note here that, since the will of man is in bondage, and, therefore, man cannot and will not come to Christ, it is necessary for God to work in the heart of man, changing his will, giving him the desire to be saved, and enabling him to come in faith to Christ for salvation. Cf. John 6:44; Philippians 2:12, 13.

An outstanding example in Scripture is to be seen in the salvation of Saul of Tarsus, who became the Apostle Paul. Cf. Acts 9:1-22.

V. ELECTION AND REPROBATION

Since God has ordained some to be saved, the Scriptures teach that He has chosen to pass by the rest of mankind, leaving them to suffer the just consequences of their sins. See Romans 9:1-24; 1 Peter 2:8; Jude 4. This means that those who are lost have been rejected by the decree of God.

VI. ELECTION AND EVANGELISM

Rather than discouraging evangelism, the doctrine of election is a great encouragement to witness for Christ. Without the sovereign work of God in choosing some to be saved, the work of evangelism would be utterly impossible because of man's depravity. But since we know that God has His elect who must be saved, we know that the work of proclaiming the Gospel cannot possibly fail. Cf. John 10:16, 25, 26; Acts 18:9-11; 2 Timothy 2:10.

Salvation – Part 3: Limited Atonement

Lesson 7

Scriptures: John 10:11, 15-16;
Ephesians 2:4-7; 5:25-27; 1 Peter 2:24

Memory: Hebrews 13:20 and review

Hymn: “Amazing Grace”

THE PURPOSE: *To answer from Scripture the question, “For whom did Christ die?”*

John 10:11, 15-16

1. Who is the Good Shepherd, and what does He do?
2. For whom did Jesus lay down His life?
3. What did Jesus say about other sheep?

Ephesians 2:4-7

4. What did God do for us?
5. Why did God do this?

Ephesians 5:25-27

6. What pattern does Christ set for a husband?
7. For whom did Christ give Himself?
8. Why did Christ give Himself?

1 Peter 2:24

9. What did Christ accomplish on the cross?

Notes on Lesson 7

SALVATION – PART 3: LIMITED ATONEMENT

I. LIMITED ATONEMENT DEFINED

This doctrine is concerned with the question, For whom did Christ die? Did He die for all people without exception, or did He die in particular for the salvation of those whom the Father had chosen to be saved? This also raises the question, Did our Lord merely provide the possibility of salvation for sinners, or did He actually secure the salvation of the elect and guarantee that they would be saved?

Christians throughout the years have been divided on these questions. Most Christians in our day hold to the view that Christ died for everyone. But there are others (and this is the position we take at Trinity Bible Church) who believe that Christ died for the purpose of saving the people who have been chosen by God for salvation. The first position is called Universal Redemption, that is, that Christ died for those who will be in hell as well as for those who will spend eternity in heaven. The second view is called Particular Redemption, meaning that Christ died to redeem particular people, that is, that He died for the elect of God, and that His death guarantees their salvation. This is the view that we are discussing now which is best known by the term, Limited Atonement. You will also find some writers who refer to this doctrine by the title, Definite Atonement. Limited Atonement does not put any limitation on the value of Christ's death. His death is sufficient to save every sinner who has ever lived. But the issue raised in the atonement question has to do with the purpose of Christ's death. Did Christ go to the Cross hoping that all people would be saved, or did He offer a sacrifice which would be accepted by the Father to secure the salvation of those whom the Father had chosen?

And so, when we speak of the Atonement, we are speaking of the saving work of Christ on the Cross. When we speak of Limited Atonement, we are saying that the purpose of the death of Christ was limited to the elect.

Universal Redemption carried to its extreme is the belief that all people will eventually be saved. But most people who believe in Universal Redemption actually hold that the saving merit of the death of Christ is limited to those who receive Christ as their Savior. So it is apparent that all evangelical believers put limitations on the death of Christ, either as to what is actually accomplished by it, or as to its purpose.

II. CALVINISTS AND ARMINIANS

It is often regrettable that we identify each other with certain labels, but we have to recognize that the terms, Calvinistic and Arminian, do have historical as well as present-day significance. Many who are Arminian today claim to be Calvinistic because they believe that once a person is saved, he is always saved. It is true that Calvinists believe this, but they also believe in Limited Atonement. So the people who believe that salvation is eternal and yet hold to Universal Redemption really are Arminian in their view of salvation, and cannot rightly claim to be Calvinists.

Notes on Lesson 7 (continued)

III. THE DOCTRINE OF LIMITED ATONEMENT ESTABLISHED BY SCRIPTURE.

A. The Arminians' objections to Limited Atonement.

1. The use of the expression "the world" in many verses of Scripture dealing with salvation. See John 3:16; 1 John 2:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19.
2. The use of the word "all." See 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15; 1 Timothy 2:1-7. This would also apply to a verse like John 10:9 where the word "any" is used.
3. The expression "whosoever believeth" or "whosoever will." See John 3:16; Revelation 22:17.
4. The verse which many Arminians feel is an unanswerable objection to Limited Atonement: 2 Peter 2:1.
5. Arminians appeal also to the fairness of God, that it is not fair to provide salvation for some, but not for all. But this is where we must remember the teaching of Isaiah 55:8, 9.

B. The Calvinists' case for Limited Atonement.

1. The answers which can be given to the problems stated above. Every doctrine in Scripture has its problems, and those problems always have to do with verses which seem to teach the opposite. If possible, these problems need to be answered. Where they may not be cleared up, then we need to accept the teaching which has the greatest Scriptural support.
2. The attributes of God, especially His sovereignty and His wisdom. Add to these the unity of the Godhead, and ask yourself the question, *Would Christ attempt to go beyond the will of His Father in His death, or, did He come to do the will of the Father—to provide salvation for those whom the Father had chosen?* Thus we are asking the question, *Is the doctrine of the atonement in conflict, or in harmony, with the doctrine of election?*
3. The glory of God. Which gives God the greatest glory, a doctrine of a salvation which cannot be completed until man adds his faith, or a doctrine of salvation that was completed by the death and resurrection of Christ?
4. Those passages which specifically teach Limited Atonement, or Particular Redemption. See Matthew 20:28; John 10:11, 15, 16, 25-30; Ephesians 5:25-27.
5. Those passages which give strong support to Limited Atonement. See Isaiah 53:6; Romans 4:25; 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24, 25; 3:18; 1 John 4:9, 10; Revelation 1:5, 6.

Worthy of special mention are those passages which speak of the believers union with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension. See Ephesians 2:4-6; Colossians 2:12, 13; 3:1.

Notes on Lesson 7 (continued)

6. The problem of Double Jeopardy

This represents the problem which the Arminian faces. He teaches that, if a sinner believes in Christ, then he is forgiven of his sins. This, of course, is true. But the Arminian also believes that if a sinner does not believe in Christ, it is as though Christ had not died for him. Therefore, the Arminian believes that Christ paid for every sinner's sins, but that the unrepentant sinner who does not believe in Christ must spend eternity in hell paying for his sins the second time. This means that the sins of that condemned sinner are paid for twice (Double Jeopardy): once by Christ, and again by the sinner. What does such teaching do to the righteousness of God? Would He not be unjust to demand a double payment for sin?

Some Arminians say that sinners are not condemned for their sins, but because of their failure to believe in Christ. In this way they try to answer the problem of Double Jeopardy. This, however, is not what the Scriptures teach. See Ephesians 5:5, 6; John 8:24.

And so we come down to the question as to whether or not the Lord actually put away the sins of those for whom He died (Hebrews 9:26). Were we really reconciled to God by the death of His Son (Romans 5:10), or was reconciliation merely a possible reconciliation, provided for any who would take it? The statements of Scripture are far too strong to admit any other teaching than that the Lord accomplished and guaranteed the salvation of all for whom He died. He put away the sins of His people. They were reconciled to God.

There is much more sense to saying that Christ died for all, and that all will eventually be saved, than to say that He died for all, but that only some of those for whom He died will be saved. However, neither of those positions is according to Scripture.

Conclusion:

The truth is this: CHRIST'S PURPOSE IN DYING WAS TO SECURE THE SALVATION OF THOSE WHO WERE CHOSEN BY THE FATHER. ALL OF THE ELECT, WITHOUT EXCEPTION, WILL BE SAVED, KEPT, SANCTIFIED, AND ULTIMATELY GLORIFIED.

Salvation – Part 4: Irresistible Grace

Lesson 8

Scriptures: John 6:44, 63-65;
Romans 8:28-30; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31;
Galatians 1:15-16

Memory: Hebrews 13:21 and review

Hymn: “Amazing Grace”

THE PURPOSE: *To show the work of God in drawing sinners to Christ in order that they might be saved.*

John 6:44

1. What does it mean to come to Jesus, and who can come?

John 6:63-65

2. What is the source of life?

3. How can anyone come to Jesus?

Romans 8:28-30

4. What does it mean to be called of God?

5. How does this text teach the doctrine of irresistible grace?

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

6. Why does no one have cause to glory in the presence of God?

7. What does Christ become for those who are in Him?

8. Why must all believers glory in the Lord?

Galatians 1:15-16

9. When did Paul become a believer in Christ?

Notes on Lesson 8

SALVATION – PART 4: IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

I. IRRESISTIBLE GRACE DEFINED

In the divine plan of redemption, God the Father eternally chose those whom He intended to save, and He gave them to Christ. In the fullness of time Christ came to secure the salvation of the chosen ones, the elect, and this He did by His death on the Cross. However, since the elect are totally depraved, unable and unwilling to come to Christ, it is necessary that they be drawn to Christ. This also is the work of the Godhead, but particularly the work of the Holy Spirit. He it is Who convicts the elect of their sin and their need of Christ, and Who regenerates them. This is the new birth. Therefore, all three Persons of the Godhead are involved in the work of salvation. And even though particular passages may not always make the distinctions that are made above, yet enough is revealed in Scripture to show that the works of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit can be so distinguished.

This work of the Holy Spirit is called “irresistible grace” because it is completely unmerited. No one deserves to be saved. From a human standpoint there is no reason why anybody should be saved.

It is called “irresistible” because it is effective. It means that God actually saves all of those whom He intends to save. It does not mean that any of the elect is saved against his will, but it does mean that God works in an irresistible way in the hearts of His elect to make them willing to be saved, and enabling them to believe. But it also indicates that God provides everything necessary for our salvation: the will to come, the power to come, the repentance that is necessary, and even the faith necessary to believe in Christ. Those words, “the will to come, the power to come,” indicate that God actually gives life to the one He is saving even before that person believes. If He did not, the sinner would not come because he could not come. These points will be established by Scriptural evidence later in this lesson.

Sometimes the word efficacious is used instead of irresistible. Efficacious is defined in the dictionary as the power to produce an intended result. God possesses this power, and exercises it in the salvation of all of the elect. This is why we speak of sovereign grace.

This doctrine is also identified by the term, effectual call. In the preaching of the Gospel there is a general call for all to believe. We are issuing a general call when we say, “Whosoever will may come.” But the effectual call, or effective call (which is the meaning of effectual) has to do with that work of the Spirit whereby the elect, upon hearing the Gospel, are constrained to come to Christ to be saved. The elect do not always come the first time they hear. They may hear the Gospel many times before they come to Christ. But eventually all of the elect do come to Christ and trust Him as Savior.

II. SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE OF IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

- A. Isaiah 55:10, 11.
- B. John 6:37, 44, 63-65.
- C. John 10:16.
- D. Acts 16:14 (Lydia).
- E. Acts 18:27.

Note the word called in the following two passages:

- F. Romans 8:28-30.
- G. 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 14.
- H. Acts 9:1-22 – that which can be considered the greatest illustration of irresistible grace in the Bible: the salvation of the Apostle Paul!

See also in this connection, 1 Corinthians 15:8-10; Galatians 1:15, 16; 2 Timothy 1:8-11.

- I. An illustration of irresistible grace: the raising of Lazarus from the dead. See John 11.

What did the Lord tell Lazarus to do? What did Lazarus require before he could obey the Lord? Did Lazarus obey? In the light of man's depravity (as illustrated in the death and resurrection of Lazarus), it is necessary for God to do everything that is necessary for man's salvation. This means that even repentance and faith must be given by God.

- 1) On life before faith, see John 1:12, 13; 3:3, 5.
- 2) On repentance, see 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Acts 5:31; 11:18.
- 3) On faith, see Romans 10:17; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Philippians 1:29; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 1:21.

III. THE DOCTRINE OF IRRESISTIBLE GRACE REQUIRES THAT ALL PRAISE RIGHTFULLY BE GIVEN TO GOD FOR OUR SALVATION.

See Ephesians 1:3, 6, 12, 14; Romans 11:33-36; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Revelation 1:4-6.

Salvation – Part 5: Perseverance of the Saints

Lesson 9

Scriptures: John 10:27, 28; Colossians 1:21-23;
1 John 1:5-7; 2:3-5, 15-17, 19

Memory: Review

Hymn: “Amazing Grace”

THE PURPOSE: *To emphasize the practical effects of salvation which will be evident in the life of a person who has really been saved.*

John 10:27, 28

1. Why are the sheep eternally secure?

Colossians 1:21-23

2. What transformation is accomplished by Christ’s death?

3. What is the evidence of this work of transformation?

1 John 1:5-7

4. What message did John declare and where did he get this message?

5. What is the significance of our walk?

1 John 2:3-5

6. What comes from keeping God’s commandments?

1 John 2:15-17

7. Why did John command us not to love the world?

8. What did John teach about the world?

1 John 2:19

9. What is the difference between those with true faith and those with a false profession of faith?

Notes on Lesson 9

SALVATION – PART 5: PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

I. PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS DEFINED

This doctrine has to do with *the duration* of salvation, that is, that true salvation is eternal. But it also teaches us that, once a person has really been born again, he will *persevere* throughout his life as a child of God. He may displease God by sinning, but he will never fall away and become unregenerate again.

The doctrine which teaches that once a person is saved he will always be saved, is *the doctrine of eternal security*. See John 10:27, 28. *The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints* is a Biblical part of that doctrine, but it goes beyond what is usually taught by those who hold to the doctrine of eternal security. It has to do with *the practical effects of being saved*, that no one can rightly claim to be saved unless those practical effects are to be seen in his life. See 1 John 2:19.

Therefore, we must understand that these doctrines have to do only with those who *in reality* are saved. They have to do with true saints, the elect. It assures nothing for those many people throughout history who have *merely professed* to believe, but who have not actually been saved. For a true believer, perseverance is the inevitable consequence of his having been saved.

II. SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

- A. See again John 10:27, 28. Note the words, “and they follow me.”
- B. Colossians 1:21-23
- C. Hebrews 3:6, 14
- D. The epistle of 1 John, with its evidences of salvation, indicates what one may expect to see by way of continuing proof of salvation in the life of one who is a true child of God. Among these evidences are the following:
 - 1. Walking in the light (1 John 1:6, 7). Note that John contrasts walking with merely talking.
 - 2. Obedience to the Word of God (1 John 2:4, 5).
 - 3. Not loving the world of evil (1 John 2:15).
 - 4. Belief in the doctrine of Christ (1 John 2:22, 23).
 - 5. Love for other believers (1 John 3:14; 4:7, 8).

Notes on Lesson 9 (continued)

SALVATION – PART 5: PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

- E. The warnings of Scripture regarding the possibility of professing to know Christ without actually possessing salvation:
1. Matthew 7:21-29
 2. Romans 2:28, 29.
 3. Hebrews 4:1-3.
 4. The references to overcoming in the Lord's letters to the seven churches (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21).

III. OTHER RELATED TEACHINGS OF SCRIPTURE

The following doctrines support the doctrines of the security of the believer in Christ and his perseverance in the faith.

- A. The omnipotence of God. See Ecclesiastes 3:14. Also see Genesis 17:1-8; Ephesians 3:20, 21; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Jude 24, 25.
- B. The present intercessory work of Christ in heaven (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25. Also see John 17:11, 12, 15, 24).
- C. The sealing work of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:21, 22; 5:5; Ephesians 1:13, 14; 4:30).
- D. The will of the Father (John 6:39, 40).
- E. The immutability of God (Romans 11:28, 29).
- F. The love of God (John 13:1; Romans 8:38, 39).
- G. The teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:24; 7:37-40; 10:27-30). Actually, every verse in which the Lord spoke of “everlasting life” or “eternal life” would apply. See John 3:16.

The Christian Life

Lesson 10

Scriptures: 1 Peter 2:2-3; 2 Peter 3:18
1 Corinthians 3:1-4; Ephesians 4:17-24

Memory: Review

Hymn: “Amazing Grace”

THE PURPOSE: *To show that after a person is born again, he or she needs to grow as a Christian*

1 Peter 2:2-3

1. Why did Peter speak of babies and milk?

2. To whom was Peter speaking?

2 Peter 3:18

3. What was Peter’s final word to the Church?

1 Corinthians 3:1-4

4. Why did Paul speak of babies and milk?

5. What does it mean to be carnal?

Ephesians 4:17-24

6. What did Paul say about the walk of the Ephesians?

7. How did Paul describe the unbelieving Gentiles?

8. What is the old man that Paul said to put off?

9. What is the new man that Paul said to put on?

Notes on Lesson 10

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

In our last lesson on *the perseverance of the saints*, we learned that certain changes are to be expected in the life of any person who has truly been saved. It also needs to be said that the longer a person knows the Lord, the more prominent and perfected those changes will appear. Believers are exhorted in Scripture to grow, to “grow in grace”, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). In 1 Peter 2:2-3 we read these words:

2. As newborn babes, desire the sincere Milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:
3. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

And, as is the case with physical growth, spiritual growth is personal. Every Christian needs to grow, and our growth must continue through our Lives. The Bible makes it very clear as to what spiritual growth is, and how it is experienced.

I. THE MEANING OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

The purpose of salvation is that we become like the Lord Jesus Christ. See Romans 8:29, 30; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 1 John 3:1-3. This is accomplished by means of spiritual growth. By growing spiritually, we become what God wants us to be. A Christian is growing when he (or she) is becoming more and more like the Lord. The commandments of Scripture are given to help us in this. In a sense we become like the Lord by doing what pleases Him, but that is only true if we are doing His will from the heart. It is possible to go through the motions of obedience without doing what we do from the heart. But this is hypocrisy – and the Lord despises the hypocrite. We are to love the Lord with all of our hearts. See Matthew 23:37. And if we love Him we will keep His commandments. See John 14:14.

II. THE MEANS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

God has provided all that is necessary for our spiritual growth. There are at least six things that we need to be concerned about if we are to grow in the Lord.

- A. The Word of God. There can be no spiritual growth without the Word. The Word needs to be read daily. The more a believer gives himself to the Word, the greater will be his growth. Remember 1 Peter 2:2-3.

Every believer needs to pursue his or her own understanding of the Bible. The Word should be read thoroughly from Genesis to The Revelation. Once each year is a good minimum. We have printed schedules which are available with an Old Testament reading for the morning, and a New Testament reading for the evening. Many of our people have their own plans. Meditation on the Word should follow the reading. Memorizing the Word is a good habit. To encourage this at Trinity we have memory work in our Sunday School, and each year, beginning in January, we have twelve weeks which are set aside for special memory assignments. You will hear this called “BMA” because we followed for many years the plans provided by the Bible Memory Association. For the past few years we have been using the format of “BMA,” but with our own assignments.

Notes on Lesson 10 (continued)

- B. The Holy Spirit. There can be no true understanding of the Word of God apart from the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. And so neither can there be any progress in spiritual growth and life without the Holy Spirit. In Lesson 3 we considered the Holy Spirit as a Member of the Godhead, but let us review some of the details about the ministry of the Spirit that are important in the spiritual life.

The Holy Spirit indwells us. See 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. The Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture. See 2 Peter 1:21. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher. See John 14:26; 15:26; 16:12-15. We are to be filled with the Spirit. See Ephesians 5:18. We are to walk in the Spirit. See Galatians 5:16. We are to be careful so as not to grieve the Holy Spirit. See Ephesians 4:30. The Holy Spirit is the power of our lives and of our witness. See Acts 1:8.

- C. Prayer. The apostles set the pattern for the Church in all future times when they told the church in Jerusalem, "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word" (Acts 6:4). The Word without prayer causes hardness; prayer without the Word causes lightness.

Prayer is an expression of our devotion to God, and of our dependence upon God.

Many denominations have what they call their Prayer Book. The Bible is the best Prayer Book that has ever been written. It not only teaches us how we should pray, but it guides us as to what we should pray for. There are many prayers recorded in the Bible. These are also given to guide us in our praying.

It is good to have a specific time and even a particular place for prayer each day. We need to cultivate the habit of praying throughout each day. Prayer falls into five different types:

- 1) Worship. Here we are concerned with the adoration of the Three Persons of the Godhead.
- 2) Praise, or Thanksgiving. We need to thank God for the blessings He is continually giving, not only the physical and material blessings, but the spiritual blessings also.
- 3) Confession. Unfortunately we all have daily sins which we need to confess to the Lord, seeking His forgiveness and cleansing.
- 4) Intercession. We pray for others.
- 5) Petition. We pray for ourselves and our own needs.

Occasionally the church will have days of prayer. We also have prayer in our classes and preaching services, a Wednesday night prayer meeting, and a men's prayer meeting each Saturday morning. And it is to be hoped that we all pray privately as well as with our families.

Notes on Lesson 10 (continued)

- D. The ministry of the church. No Christian is ever strong enough to get along without the fellowship of other Christians. The spiritual growth of the people of God is the objective of the regular church meetings.

According to Scripture, God never intended for the church to be involved in many of the things that churches are doing today. The church is to exist for God's glory and for the edification of God's people, with evangelism as an outreach of the ministry. That is why at Trinity we concentrate on the exposition of the Word of God, emphasizing both the doctrinal and practical teachings of Scripture. More will be considered about this in our next lesson, but the point needs to be made here because it is a very significant part of God's provision for the growth of His people. See Ephesians 4:11-16.

- E. The providence of God.

God orders our steps. He is the One Who directs the course of our lives. He gives us trials and testings so that we will learn to trust Him more and more, and so we will walk in closer fellowship with Him. Our trials are for our good – spiritually! See Romans 8:28-30. It is in our trials that we really learn to know God.

- F. Our ministry to each other in our own church family, as well as to other Christians we know, and even to people who do not know the Lord.

This not only takes place when we meet at church, but it can take place anywhere Christians are together. This is not just the privilege of the pastor, nor of the other leaders of the church, but it is for all of the people of God. People minister to us; we minister to them. Often great blessings are passed on through casual conversations. We all have needs. Sometimes our needs are critical. The Lord has ways of ministering to us and through us that are unplanned and completely unexpected.

This is one reason we need to be faithful in reading the Word and in prayer. We never know when we will have the privilege of being an instrument in God's hands for the blessing of someone else who is going through a time of spiritual need.

Thus it behooves each one of us to make sure that we are making the proper use of the provisions the Lord has made for our spiritual growth and, ultimately, for His glory.

The Christian's Three Enemies

Lesson 11

Scriptures: Romans 12:1-2; Galatians 5:16-26;
1 Peter 5:6-10

Memory: Review

Hymn: "Amazing Grace"

THE PURPOSE: *To show that there are three major enemies every child of God faces: the world, the flesh, and the Devil, and how Christians are to deal with each of them.*

Romans 12:1-2

1. What is our reasonable service?

2. What can we learn about the will of God, and how can we learn it?

Galatians 5:16-26

3. What conflict is present within the believer?

4. What are the works of the flesh?

5. What is the fruit of the Spirit?

6. What provision has been made for us to walk in the Spirit?

1 Peter 5:6-10

7. Why is the might of God a comfort to believers?

8. Why must the people of God be sober and watchful?

9. How can we resist the devil?

Notes on Lesson 11

THE CHRISTIAN'S THREE ENEMIES

The main purpose of this lesson is to point out the three major enemies of every Christian, and to learn how we are to overcome them. But before we get to that let us take some time learning about Angels, and then about Satan in particular since when we discuss Satan we are talking about a fallen angel.

I. ANGELS. The word *angel* in both the Hebrew and the Greek languages means *a messenger*. They are created spirit-beings (Colossians 1:16, 17), higher in God's order than men are (Psalm 8:4, 5), created to be the messengers of God. We assume from Matthew 22:30 that there is neither an increase nor a decrease in the number of angels. We do not know how many angels there are, but Hebrews 12:22 speaks of "an innumerable company of angels." See also Psalm 68:17; Revelation 5:11. We assume that the abode of angels is the second heaven. (See Paul's reference to "the third heaven," or "paradise," in 2 Corinthians 12:2, 4.)

However, some angels rebelled against God as we learn from 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6. Hell has been prepared for them. See Matthew 25:41. Those who did not fall are called "elect angels" (1 Timothy 5:21). These angels will never fall into sin, and so we assume again that all who are going to sin have sinned. The Bible never speaks of a salvation for angels.

The angels who have sinned are referred to in Scripture as "devils." See Matthew 8:28-34; James 2:19. However, the preferred translation is *demons*. There is only one Devil, but many demons. The demons are under the authority of the Devil and cooperate fully with him in his opposition against God. Another name for the Devil is Satan.

Angels were created to worship God (Psalm 148:2), and to serve Him. They are not omniscient (1 Peter 1:12), even though they are very wise (Ezekiel 28:12). The elect angels minister on God's behalf to the saints (Psalm 34:7; Hebrews 1:14).

II. SATAN. The fallen angel we know as Satan and the Devil, may have been the most glorious of all of God's creatures. He was certainly the wisest and the most powerful, having the greatest authority among all of the angels. But it was through pride that he rebelled against God, led other angels to join him, and has since been the archenemy, the principal enemy, of God and men—not only of the people of God, but of all people and all nations. It was through him that Eve sinned, and then she got her husband to disobey God. He continues to be the major enemy of all Christians. This is why the Apostle Paul wrote the following words when he was discussing the spiritual warfare all of us as Christians are engaged in:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:12).

Satan is *the* ruler of the darkness of this world. "Satan" means *adversary*; "the Devil" means *accuser*. He is subtle and deceptive. See 2 Corinthians 11:3. He is an angelic being, created by God, but not created as he is now. Isaiah 14:12-14 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 give us the Scriptural background of Satan. He is now the leader of all of the forces of evil in the universe.

Notes on Lesson 11 (continued)

Satan's sin of rebellion against God came before the sins of Eve and Adam in the Garden of Eden. See Genesis 3. He is “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4), “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2), “the prince of this world” (John 16:11). At the present time he sometimes assumes the role of “an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:13, 14); at other times he is like “a roaring lion” (1 Peter 5:8,9). Although he was judged at the Cross, he, in the providence of Almighty God, is permitted to carry on his evil work even though he is ultimately to be cast forever into hell, the lake of fire. See Revelation 20:10.

III. THE CHRISTIAN'S THREE ENEMIES.

The child of God has three enemies: Satan, the world, and the flesh. The Scriptures indicate that the three are opposed primarily to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, but they are also opposed to the Lord's people because of their relationship to Him.

Satan is opposed to all Three Members of the Godhead, but it is interesting to note his special opposition to God and to the Word of God, and then to Christ especially during His earthly ministry. See Genesis 3:1-5; Matthew 4:1-11.

In 1 John 2:15-17 we see the world in opposition to the Father. And then in Galatians 5:17 we see how the flesh opposes the Holy Spirit.

However, the Christian also faces opposition from the world, the flesh, as well as the Devil, and the three are often combined in their efforts to defeat the child of God. We know, too, that the world, the flesh, and the Devil continually oppose the people of the world (the unsaved) to keep them from coming to Christ.

The Lord has made provision for the Christian's victory over his three enemies. The main provision is in the death of Christ (cf. Hebrews 2:14, 15; 1 John 3:8; Romans 6:1-14). But as to the practical things that we are to do, enabled by the Holy Spirit, and because of the triumphant death and resurrection of Christ, we have the following Scriptural teachings as to how victory is attained over each of the Christian's enemies:

- 1) For Satan, see James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9; Ephesians 6:10-18. An example of how Satan is to be opposed is seen in the temptation of our Lord. Cf. Matthew 4:1-11.
- 2) For the world, see Romans 12:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; 1 John 2:15-17.
- 3) For the flesh, see 2 Timothy 2:22; Galatians 5:16-26; Romans 6:11-13.

But in all of this we need to remember constantly that nothing that we do will make us victorious unless we are trusting the Holy Spirit to enable us to obey these instructions from the Word, *plus* we must never forget to do what Paul admonished the Ephesian believers to do. We find his words in Ephesians 6:18:

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching there unto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

The Church

Lesson 12

Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 12:13;
Ephesians 4:11-16; Galatians 1:1-3;
Galatians 1:21-24; 1 Timothy 3:1-13

Memory: Review

Hymn: “Amazing Grace”

THE PURPOSE: *To point out how the word Church is used in Scripture, who its leaders are, and what specifically is the ministry of the Church.*

1 Corinthians 12:13

1. What does this verse teach about the Church?

Ephesians 4:11-16

2. What did Christ give to the Church?

3. What is the purpose of the offices in the Church?

4. What should be expected from the ministry of a pastor-teacher?

Galatians 1:1-3

5. To whom did Paul write this epistle?

Galatians 1:21-24

6. Who heard about Paul’s conversion and ministry, and how did they react?

1 Timothy 3:1-13

7. What personal characteristics are required of a bishop or deacon?

8. What did Paul teach Timothy about the family life of a bishop or deacon?

9. Why is the public testimony of the bishop so important?

Notes on Lesson 12

THE CHURCH

I. THE SCRIPTURAL USE OF THE WORD, CHURCH.

A. The meaning of the word *church*. The Greek word is *ekklēsia*, *a called-out people*.

It is illustrated by Paul's message to the church at Corinth in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.

B. The origin of the church. Cf. 1 Corinthians 12:13; Acts 1, 2.

There can be no church without the baptism of the Spirit, and there is no record of that work of the Spirit until the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.

C. The use of the word *church* in the New Testament:

1. Distinguished from Israel. Cf. 1 Corinthians 10:32.

It is not Scripturally accurate to speak of Israel as "the church in the OT," nor is it right to call the church in the NT "spiritual Israel." Much confusion has resulted because some teachers have taught that Israel of the OT became the church of the NT.

2. The two uses of the word *church* in the New Testament:

a. The Church, the body of Christ. Cf. Ephesians 1:22, 23.

There is only one body of Christ which is made up of all believers from Pentecost in Acts 2 until the church is raptured.

b. Local churches. Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; Galatians 1:1-2, etc.

II. THE LEADERSHIP OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

A. Elders (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).

B. Deacons (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Timothy 3:8-13).

III. THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH.

A. Toward God: glorification. Cf. 1 Peter 4:10, 11.

B. Toward the people of God: edification. Cf. Ephesians 4:11-16.

C. Toward the world: evangelization. Cf. Acts 1:8.

IV. THE ORDINANCES OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

- A. The Bible teaches that baptism is for believers only, and that it is administered only once. Baptism by immersion, picturing the truth of Romans 6:1-10. It symbolizes our union with Christ in His death and resurrection. See also Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:38, 39.
- B. The Lord's Supper. Cf. 1 Corinthians 11:23-34. The Lord's Supper is symbolic, picturing the Lord's death. The Scriptures do not specify how often the Lord's Supper is to be observed, just how it is to be observed.

V. THE MEETINGS OF THE CHURCH.

The early church met on Sunday, the Lord's Day, commemorating the resurrection of Christ. Cf. Mark 16:1-2, 9; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2. They also met at other times as the Lord directed. The meetings were for worship, teaching, prayer, fellowship, and witness to the world. Cf. Acts 2:41-47.

We do not believe that Sunday is the Christian Sabbath. The Sabbath was the seventh day of the week, observed under the Law. It was replaced by the Lord's Day, as stated above, to commemorate the resurrection of Christ. But there is no evidence in Scripture that the Jewish Sabbath was changed to Sunday. Believers today observe the Lord's Day as a special day for worshiping the Lord, but are not under the legal restrictions to do so as the Jews were under when the Mosaic Law was in force.

VI. THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH.

It is the return of Christ and the glorification of the Church which will take place at that time. Cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 John 3:1-3.

The Last Things

Lesson 13

Scriptures: John 14:1-3;
1 Thessalonians 4:13-18;
Matthew 24:1-31; 25:31-46

Memory: Review

Hymn: “Amazing Grace”

THE PURPOSE: *To acquaint us briefly
with prophecy which is yet to be fulfilled*

John 14:1-3

1. What word of comfort did Jesus speak to His disciples?

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

2. What did Paul teach about those who had “fallen asleep”?

3. How did Paul describe the coming of the Lord?

Matthew 24:1-31

4. What are the beginning of sorrows?

5. What is the time of great tribulation?

6. What will happen immediately after the time of great tribulation?

Matthew 25:31-46

7. What will the Son of Man do when He comes?

8. What will happen to the sheep and why?

9. What will happen to the goats and why?

Notes on Lesson 13

THE LAST THINGS

I. THE LAST THINGS DEFINED.

This doctrine has to do with prophecy which is yet future. We believe not only that God knows the end of all things from the beginning, but that He has ordained that which will come to pass in the last days.

When we speak of the last things, we are referring to those events which are introduced by the return of Christ for His Church, and all of the subsequent events which lead up to the Eternal State when time shall be no more.

II. THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE LAST THINGS.

A. The imminent coming of Christ: John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54. This is usually referred to in prophetic preaching and teaching as *The Rapture*. To be raptured means to be transported from one place to another—in this case, from earth to heaven.

When the Lord returns there will be a physical resurrection of all saints who have died. They and the saints who are living at the time will then receive their glorified bodies.

B. The Great Tribulation is described in detail in Revelation 6-19. See also Matthew 24:1-28.

The purpose of the Tribulation is twofold:

- 1) To judge the earth.
- 2) To bring the elect of Israel back to the Lord.

This period is called “the time of Jacob's trouble” in Jeremiah 30:7. It is also said in that verse that “none is like it.” This agrees with our Lord's words in Matthew 24:21 where it is recorded that He said,

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

The Great Tribulation will end with the return of Christ to reign upon the earth.

Notes on Lesson 13 (continued)

C. The reign of Christ on the earth, the Millennium, is spoken of in Revelation 20:1-6. See also Matthew 24:29-31; 25:31-46. It is also spoken of in many Old Testament passages. Thus we are pre-millennial, believing that Christ will come and establish His own world-wide reign on the earth. Those who believe that Christ will come at the end of the Millennium, are post-millennial. And those who do not believe that there will be a thousand year reign of Christ on the earth are called a-millennial. It is important for us to remember that there are sincere believers who hold different views about the return of the Lord, and we need always to speak “in love” what we believe to be the truth.

The Scriptures teach that during this time Satan will be bound in the bottomless pit, and there will be righteousness and peace on the earth.

- D. The events following the reign of Christ on the earth are spoken of in Revelation 20:7-22:7.
1. Satan will be let out of the bottomless pit, and then, after a period of renewed rebellion against God, will be cast into the lake of fire eternally.
 2. The Great White Throne judgment.
 3. The establishing of “a new heaven and a new earth” (Revelation 21:1; see also 2 Peter 3).

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPHETIC TRUTH.

We believe that prophecy, the doctrine of the last things, is, like all of the doctrines of Scripture, extremely important. We believe that it is a great incentive for holy living. See 2 Peter 3:11, 14, 17, 18; 1 John 3:1-3. The people of God need to understand that this world is not going to continue on forever so that their hopes will not be upon this present life, but upon the life to come. This is also an encouragement to be diligent and faithful in serving the Lord. See 1 Corinthians 15:58.

The prophetic views expressed in this lesson are those held by the leaders of Trinity Bible Church. As mentioned above, we are aware that not all Christians have the same views concerning the coming of the Lord and the last days, but we believe that these views are the teaching of the Word of God. A true believer will certainly believe that Jesus Christ is coming again. This is what is important for all of the people of God to know. But our fellowship is not based upon the fact that we must all agree on every detail of prophecy; our fellowship is based upon Christ and upon our mutual relationship to Him as our Savior. No one knows the truth perfectly. It is our desire that all of us, under the ministry of the Word and in our fellowship with each other, will continue to grow in our knowledge of the Lord through His Word while we wait for the coming of the Lord.

A Life Changing Study

Lesson 14

Scriptures: Joshua 1:8; Matthew 7:21-29
Colossians 1:9-14; James 1:19-27; 4:17

Memory: Review

Hymn: "Amazing Grace"

THE PURPOSE: *To re-emphasize the practical effect that the knowledge of the Scriptures should have upon our lives.*

Joshua 1:8

1. What did the LORD tell Joshua about the Book of the Law?

Matthew 7:21-29

2. Who will enter the Kingdom of God, and who will not?

3. How did Jesus describe the wise man and the foolish man?

Colossians 1:9-14

4. What prayer did Paul make for the Colossian believers?

5. Why should we give thanks to God our Father?

James 1:19-27

6. What word of instruction did James give to his beloved brethren?

7. Why did James liken the Word of God to a mirror?

8. What is true religion?

James 4:17

9. What is sin?

Notes on Lesson 14

This is the fourteenth week of our study together as we have looked into the great doctrines of Scripture. Obviously because of the limitation which time has placed upon us, this has been more of a survey of the truth than an in-depth study. But it is hoped that all of us have experienced a greater desire to continue studying the great truths of the Word of God. Regardless of how much we know, and regardless of how many times we have gone through the Bible, there is always more to learn. None of us will ever be able in this life to come to a complete understanding of all of Scripture. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher, and He is the One Who guides us in our understanding of the truth. But it is my prayer that you have found this not only enjoyable, but profitable, and that your desire to know more of all of these truths has been greatly increased.

We started fourteen weeks ago seeking to emphasize not only the importance of correct doctrine, but the equal importance of looking for the practical applications that each of us needs to make as a result of our reading and our study of the Word of God. God intends that the knowledge of His Word should be life-changing for all of us. The purpose behind all of our exposure to Scripture should be that we would desire to be what the Lord intends for us to be. And what does He intend for us to be? Everyone who truly knows the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior has been predestined to be conformed to the image of God's Son. That is God's purpose for us in the salvation we have in Christ.

Here are some suggestions for the practical application of the truth of God's Word in our lives.

- I. MEDITATION (Joshua 1:8).** Meditation is encouraged both in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Cf. Psalm 1:2; 119:97; 1 Timothy 4:15. We need to think about our Bible reading, and we need to think about the teaching that we hear. Rarely do we get real profit from the Word just with a hurried reading. We need to read the Word over and over. And we need to think about what it means. Meditation enables us to dig more deeply into what the Word has to say to us.
- II. PRACTICAL APPLICATION.** After the Lord had given the Sermon on the Mount, He concluded with an appeal for those who heard to do the will of His Father Who is in heaven. Cf. Matthew 7:21-29. It is good to read the Word, and it is good to hear the Word taught and preached. But the blessing of reading and hearing is multiplied many times over when we seek to know what we are to do—and then do it! This is what James was concerned about when he wrote his epistle. See James 1:19-27. He said that it is in hearing and doing that the real blessing comes from God. His words seem to indicate that obeying the Word is what really makes reading the Word a delight to us. It is through obedience that we become holy. And James added that to know what to do, but to fail to do it for whatever reason, is sin. See James 4:17.
- III. PRAYER.** The Old Testament and the New Testament have many prayers. The Psalms in particular tell us how David and the other Psalmists prayed for themselves. Our Lord gave us much wonderful teaching which we find in the Gospels on the subject of prayer. Most of the prayers which have been recorded by the Apostle Paul are prayers that he was praying for people in the churches, but they must have been prayers which he also prayed for himself and indicators also of how he wanted others to pray for him. Faithfulness in prayer is one way the Lord has of reminding us that the life that we are to live is far beyond us, if we are thinking in terms of what we are able to do. The more we see how needy we are, the more we are going to pray.

Notes on Lesson 14 (continued)

One outstanding example of prayer which combines doctrine and the practical application of the doctrine, is Paul's prayer for the Colossian church which we find in Colossians 1:9-14. There is a progression which is easily seen as we read it from beginning to end.

- A. The emphasis upon doctrine (Colossians 1:9). We may pray this prayer for others, but we need to pray this prayer for ourselves. Only the Holy Spirit can teach us the great truths of Scripture. In fact, every bit of truth that we know has been taught to us by the Holy Spirit. And all of the truth we will ever know will be ours because the Holy Spirit has been our Teacher. The only place that we can find the will of God is in the Word of God. Paul indicated in his prayer that in most cases such understanding is given in answer to prayer.
- B. The primary reason for knowing God's will (Colossians 1:10a). This shows Paul's great concern for the application of doctrine, the application of the Word of God, to the lives of the people of God. We should want to know the truth so we will know how to *walk*, which means, so we will know how *to be* what God wants us to be, and how *to please the Lord in all that we are and in all that we do*. Our walk includes all of that. It is through knowing the Word and living according to the Word that a godly character is produced which produces a holy life. Actually there is nothing more basic for us than that we know the truth, and then live according to the truth.

I used to think that there were four more requests in this prayer, but I see now that what remains in the prayer were the results which could be expected from the two requests that we have considered. So the prayer contains just two requests. One has to do with doctrine; the other has to do with the practical application of the doctrine. And then the results are listed. Note what they are.

- C. The results which follow from reading and personally applying the truth of Scripture:
 - 1. "Being fruitful in every good work" (Colossians 1:10a).
 - 2. "Increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10b).
 - 3. "Strengthened with all might according to His glorious power" (Colossians 1:11).
 - 4. "Giving thanks unto the Father" (Colossians 1:12-14).

We live in a day when perhaps the majority of people, at least in our country, who profess that they are Christians, have little or no desire to understand the Scriptures. Consequently, they are not going to know how to live to please God, and they are cutting themselves off from all of the blessings which come when we delight in knowing God's Word, and then faithfully seek under God's blessing to apply the truth that we are learning so we can live to please God. May God keep us faithful, and may He keep Trinity Bible Church faithful to the great truths of His Word, in doctrine and in practice. Perhaps the Lord will use us to awaken others to the true joy of knowing God and His beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.