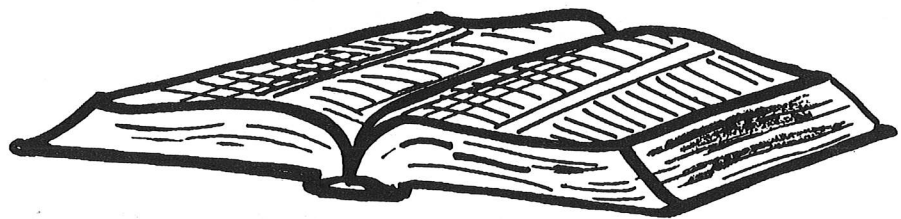


VOLUME 1

From the Library of
JAMES MEADOWS

You Can Understand The Bible!



Preparing The Heart For Submission To God

*"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments."
Ezra 7:10, KJV*

16 to 20 class sessions are suggested for Volume 1.

BY THOMAS B. WARREN, PH.D.

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YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE!
VOLUME 1: PREPARING THE HEART FOR SUBMISSION TO GOD

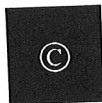
by Thomas B. Warren, Ph.D.

1994

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PREFACE

It is planned that there will be at least ten books in this series. The title of the entire series will be: *You Can Understand The Bible*. This title for the series of books has been chosen in order to keep before the readers that very fact: humans can understand the Bible, provided that they study the Bible honestly, diligently, and prayerfully (note II Tim. 2:15; II Pet. 1:10; James 1:5; cf. Acts 20:20,27).

It will be the abiding purpose of all of the ten—or more—books to teach only lessons which are taught by the Bible. These lessons will be: (1) very simple (and, thus, easily understood), (2) well-illustrated (with drawings), (3) quite crucial to one's spiritual well-being, and (4) helpful in motivating the student to want to both learn and obey what the Bible teaches.

It is my sincere hope that each person who studies the lessons in this series of books will use his/her mind both carefully and honestly, thoughtfully evaluating each claim which is made in any and every book which is a part of this series.

The author has the very strong conviction that (1) the Bible sets out even the most crucial matters in the simplest of terms (at the same time, recognizing the principle of "again it is written," cf. Matt. 4:1-11—one must often consider relevant passages in order to learn—see the whole truth) and (2) the illustrations (charts) make clear that the Bible is easily understood. The New Testament is addressed to all people of accountable age and mentality and, thus, also makes clear that people of accountable age and mentality are able to interpret correctly the Bible. Thus, it should be clear that each such person is able to learn the truth as to what he/she must do in order (1) to become a Christian and (2) to live faithfully as a Christian.

Most of the lessons in this series of books have also been preached (by the author) in the process of preparing full-color video tapes. Some of them were preached on television and in various pulpits around the nation. Some of them are still available on video tapes.

It should be noted that the lessons have been allowed to remain—with very few changes—in the words in which they were delivered orally during the preparation of the video tapes.

This series of lessons can be used in a number of ways: (1) as a study guide for Bible classes in local congregations, (2) as a study guide for home Bible studies by Christian families to strengthen (give depth to) family Bible study, (3) as a study guide in home Bible studies in cases in which the people involved are not Christians, (4) as sermons in local churches (for regular services), (5) as material for lectureships and various other similar Bible studies, (6) as material

which can enhance mission work both in the U.S.A. and in foreign countries. and (7) other endeavors as well.

May it be remembered by one and all that the Apostle Paul exhorted people to "prove all things" and to "hold fast that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21).

It is sincerely hoped that this series of studies can truly help people to do all of the above mentioned things—and more.

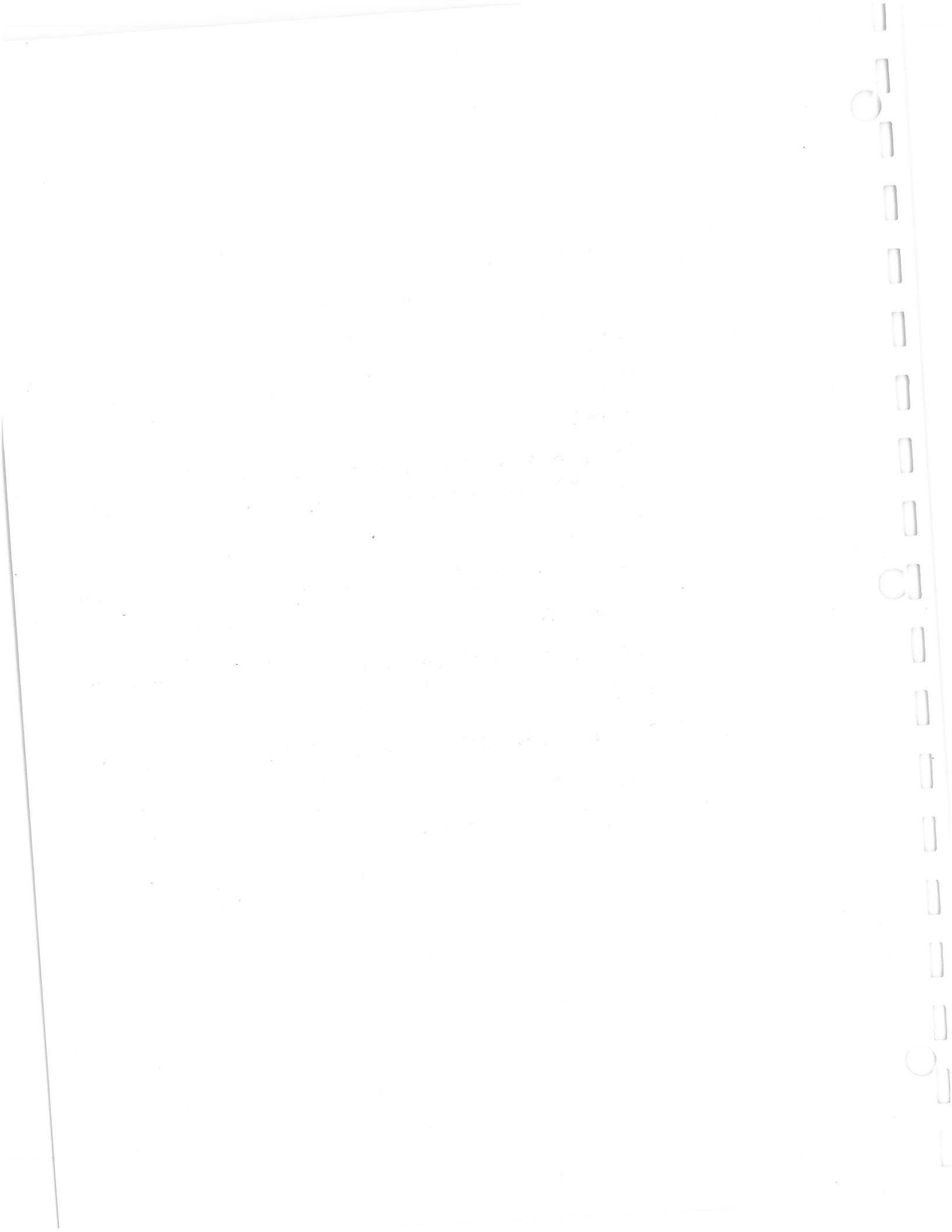
I extend my sincere and deeply abiding gratitude to Lolly and Paul Brown (two great Christians) for their work and sacrifice in helping me to accomplish the writing of this series of books.

My wife, Faye—who for almost 53 years—has been faithful, loving, and competent in helping me in practically all of my work. She has been especially helpful in the preparation of this series of books.

Thomas B. Warren

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Is Being Sincere Enough?



2 TO 3 CLASS SESSIONS ARE SUGGESTED FOR THIS LESSON.

BY THOMAS B. WARREN, PH.D.

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YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE!
PREPARING THE HEART FOR SUBMISSION TO GOD
LESSON 1: IS BEING SINCERE ENOUGH?

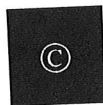
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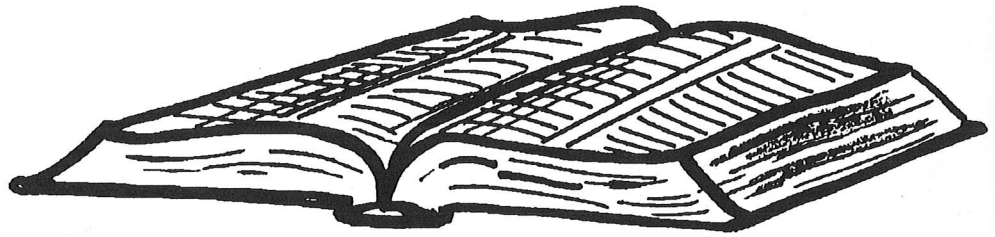
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Is Being Sincere Enough?



The basic goal of this study.

It is so good to have you in our audience today. I hope that you will have your Bible handy and that you will read along with me and think about the things that I shall have to say. But I urge you to accept only what you can see, from your own Bible, to be taught by the sacred word of God. I plan to study with you a lesson which is very, very important. That lesson is: while it is necessary for all of us to be sincere—certainly none of us can be saved unless we are sincere in our religion—there is the fact that just being sincere is not sufficient to result in one's being saved. I want to suggest to you at the very outset that the Bible teaches that this is not the case.

Acts 22:30–23:1

I now want to read to you from Acts 22:30 through 23:1. *“But on the morrow, desiring to know the certainty whereof he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him and commanded the chief priests and all the counsel to come together and brought Paul and set him down before them.”* This is a reference to the apostle Paul. And now continuing, *“And Paul looking steadfastly on the counsel said: Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience unto this day.”* Let us remember that, in seeing this statement, we should also take into account the fact that he was the one who referred to himself as the chief of sinners. And all the while he did this in all good conscience! So let us note the title of our study here: “IS BEING SINCERE ENOUGH?” I want to insist that we cannot be saved unless we are sincere. Certainly, God would not be pleased with the person who is a hypocrite. In Matthew 23, The Lord Jesus Christ condemned hypocrisy in the strongest possible terms. There are many people, however, who accept the idea that just being sincere in religion is sufficient. The saying goes that everybody has a right to his own belief, and, from a legal and civil standpoint, that is true. But the question is: Do we have the right to be wrong and still be pleasing to God?

Paul before the counsel.

Matthew 23

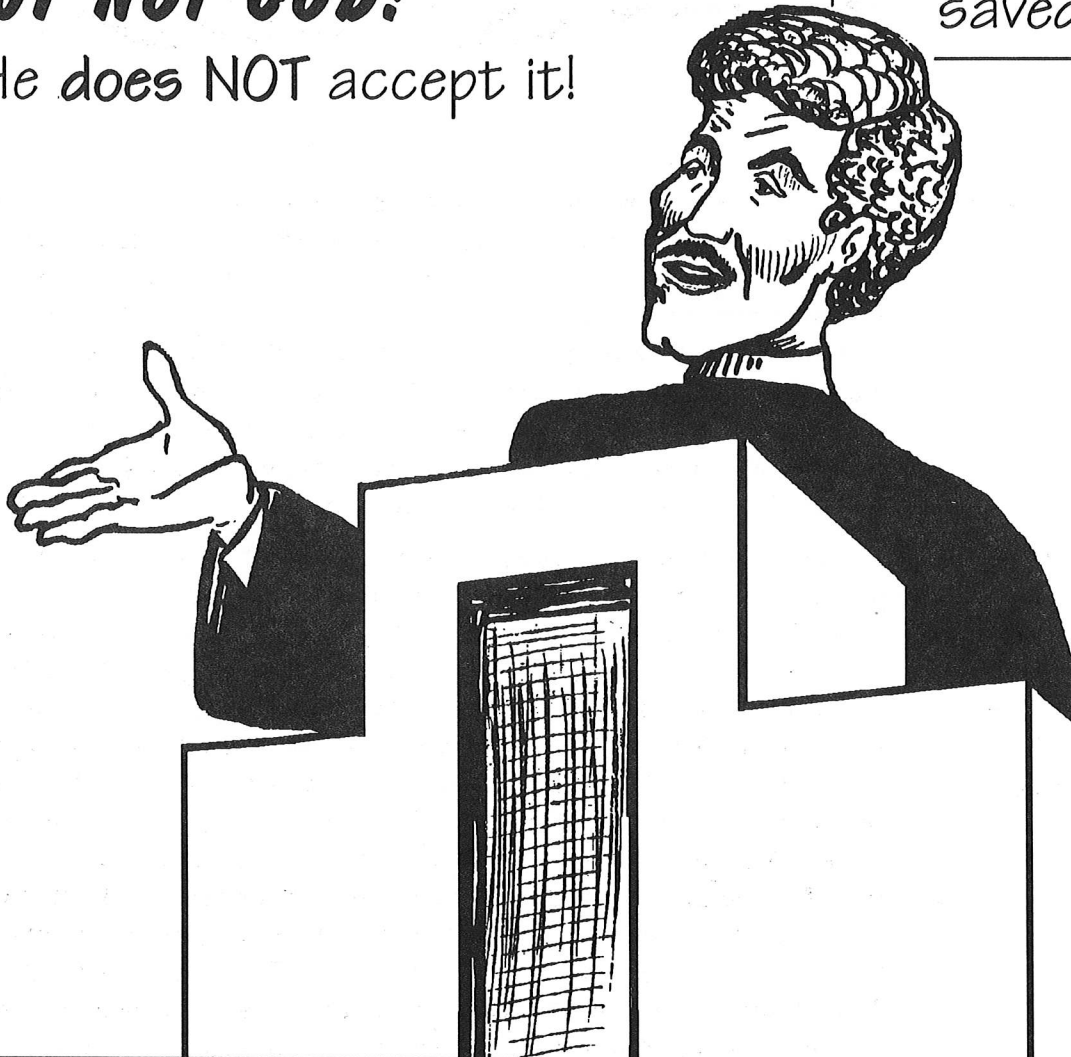
IS SINCERITY ENOUGH?

MANY people accept
this idea in religion!

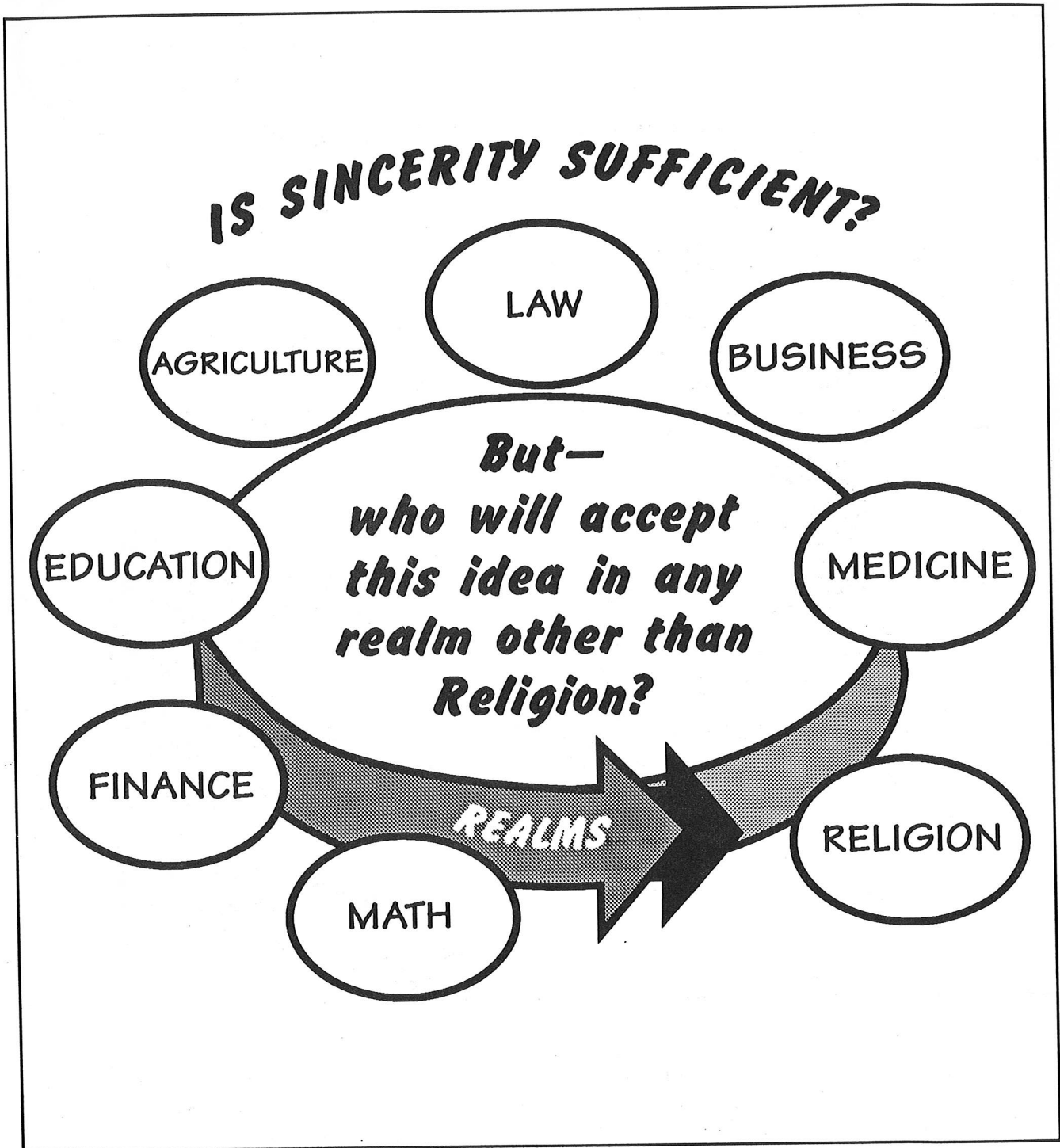
BUT NOT GOD!

-He does NOT accept it!

Just be
sincere and
you will be
saved.



Here I indicate a minister saying, "Just be sincere and you will be saved." That's a very common message from contemporary preachers. However, God will **not** accept such.



I suggest to you that **religion** is the **only** realm in which this view is accepted—if there is any other realm, I cannot think of it. Religion is the only realm in which men hold to the idea that just being sincere is sufficient. Who will accept the idea in other realms? Let us carefully consider this question.

MEDICINE

MEDICAL DOCTORS?

Were you sincere when you swallowed this poison?

Yes, I sincerely thought it was a vitamin pill!



In the realm of medicine—will doctors accept it?

For instance, I suggest to you that no one will accept it in the realm of medicine. If we go to a doctor, we do not think that his being sincere—apart from knowledge and correct treatment—will cause us to be cured of our disease. Notice here in the cartoon. Here we have the doctor speaking to the patient in the bed (who had swallowed a deadly poison) who is very gravely ill. And the doctor asks him, “Were you sincere when you swallowed this poison?” And the man replies, “Yes, I sincerely thought that it was a vitamin pill.”

MEDICINE

IS THE SINCERITY OF MEDICAL DOCTORS ENOUGH?

If you were sincere, the poison will not hurt you!

I understand, Doctor!



Doctors will not say this.

Some preachers—in contrast to physicians—will say it!

And so then on CHART 1.4, we have the doctor saying, "Well if you were sincere in thinking that it was a vitamin pill and not poison, then the poison will not hurt you!" And so we have the patient saying, "Yes, I understand, doctor." Do we not all know that nobody would do that in the realm of medicine? If a fellow took a vitamin pill, but the doctor said, "Hey—you really took a poison," he would not accept the idea that he was O.K. But in religion, if you just imagine the minister here and have him saying to a lost person, "Well, if you are sincere, it doesn't matter what doctrine you believe, you will be O.K. The Lord will save you." And the average person will then say, "Yes, Brother So-and-So, that's exactly what will happen." Why will people accept this false view?

BUSINESS

WHAT ABOUT BUTCHERS?

Say, butcher, is that **dog meat** you are giving me?

It doesn't matter—I am **sincere** in what I am doing!



Butchers—and dog meat.

What about butchers? Here we have a fellow saying, "Say, butcher, is that **dog meat** that you are giving me?" And the butcher says, "Ah well, it doesn't matter, I'm **sincere** in what I'm doing. Who cares?" Would you accept that from a butcher? No, you would not! I know that you would not.

LAW

WHAT ABOUT LAWYERS?

Did I violate
the LAW?

Well, if you were
sincere in what you
did—it **doesn't**
really matter!



*Lawyers—and errors
re the law.*

Matthew 23

What about lawyers? Note on the chart: here's a criminal. He asks his lawyer, "Have I violated the law?" The lawyer replies, "Well, if you were **sincere** in what you did, it really doesn't matter whether you broke the law or not. Your sincerity will **change** that crime into a non-crime—just as any wrong answer can be changed, by sincerity, into being the right answer." But that is not true—sincerity does **not** change **wrong** answers into **right** ones! Of course, we must be sincere. Hypocrisy is condemned. Jesus made that clear in Matthew 23. But we can all see that just being sincere is **not enough** in **other** realms. So why would any one think that it would be enough in the realm of **religion**?

WHAT ABOUT FARMERS?

I wanted a harvest of watermelons, but I planted onion seed, sincerely believing they were watermelon seed!

Well, as long as you were sincere, you will get watermelons!



Sincerity of the farmer does not cause onion seed to produce watermelons.

What about farmers? Here is one farmer [points to the chart], and here is another farmer. This fellow says, "I wanted a harvest of watermelons. But I planted onion seeds sincerely believing they were watermelon seeds." So he says aloud, "Well, I have a disaster here. I am not going to have watermelons. I am going to have onions." But the other farmer says, "Oh, no. As long as you were sincere you will get watermelons!" But let me say this: there is not anybody listening to me right now who believes that. No one who is in his right mind believes that watermelons can be harvested from onion seed. If you did believe it, you would not really be responsible, you would have to have somebody to take care of you. Yet, many people insist on that principle in religion!

WHAT ABOUT TEACHERS?



Teachers do not allow the sincerity of a student to turn his wrong answer into the right one.

What about teachers? Here's the student, and he answers the question which the teacher has asked him, "Which is the largest state in the union?" Of course, we all know that it used to be **Texas** but it is now **Alaska**. But the student's answer is: "Rhode Island is the largest state"—which happens to be the **smallest** state. And so the teacher says, "Well, as long as you are sincere, your answer is acceptable." There is not one of us who believes that. There is not one of us who will accept it! But when we come to preachers, what do we have? We have people who say, "As long as he is sincere, God will be pleased even if he is wrong!" But such is simply not true!

FINANCE

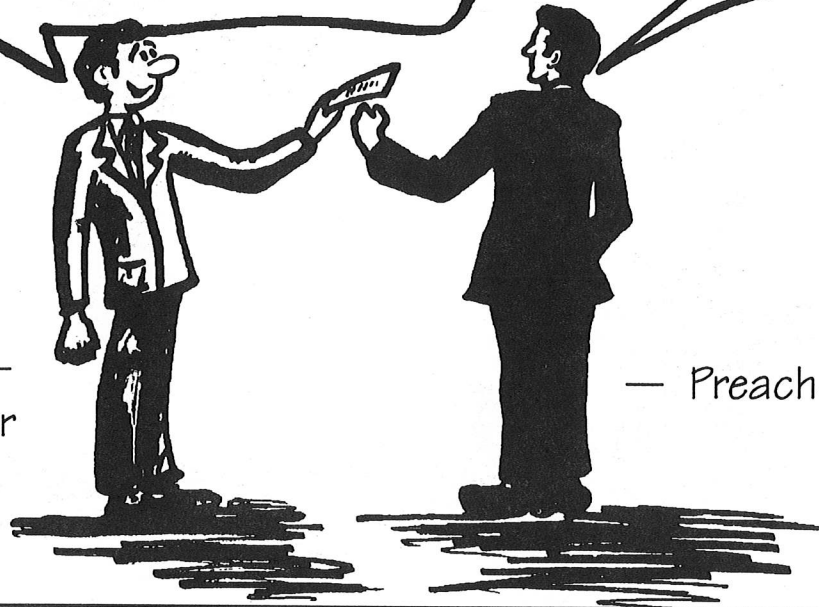
WHAT ABOUT PREACHERS?

I made out your check for \$50 less than it was supposed to be—I was sincere when I did it.

If you were sincere, then it is O.K.—don't worry!

Church —
Treasurer

— Preacher



Not even preachers would accept this.

But what about preachers? Note CHART 1.11. Here we have the church treasurer. He is the one who pays the preacher. He makes out the preacher's check, and he gives it to the preacher and then says, "I made out your check for \$50 less than it was supposed to be; but I was sincere when I made it out." We have the preacher here saying, [certainly contrary to what he really would do; but we are trying to imagine the comparison between this and what people do when they are told in religion that everybody has the right to be wrong as long as he is sincere], "Well if you were sincere when you made it out, then it is O.K." But he would not say that. He would say, "Listen, you need to either give me another check for \$50 or else tear that one up and give me another one for the correct amount."

WHAT ABOUT MATHEMATICS?

$$2+2=?$$

5? 4? 6?

O, Well, as long as I
am **sincere** it does
not matter!



Does $2+2=5$ if one is sincere?

But what about mathematics? Let us suppose that a boy is given the task of giving the answer to $2+2$. What if he gives, as the correct answer, 5? Or 4? Or 6? If he were truly sincere in giving any of those answers, would his being sincere change any of those **wrong** answers into **right** answers? Of course not! We all know that **sincerity** would **not** change those **wrong** answers into the **right** answer!

Of course, the **right** answer is **four**.

DAVID WAS SINCERE
 when he built the cart
 to transport the ark of the
 Covenant— (2 Sam. 6:1-5)

Yet God was not
 pleased with him!

Cf. Uzzah— (2 Sam. 6:6-7).

Leviticus 10:1-2

Similar to the case of David is that of Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron. Perhaps they were **sincere** when they offered strange fire unto God (Leviticus 10:1-2). There are many people who have little concept of the idea that God demands that we do only what the Bible authorizes. It is not merely that it says it **explicitly**, but if it is taught **implicitly**, if it is implied by the explicit statements in the Bible, then we must honor that.

The Lord's Supper.

We do not use ham and eggs in the Lord's Supper simply because they are not authorized! There is **no** statement in the Bible that says **explicitly**, "Thou shall not have ham and eggs in the Lord's supper." But it does teach it **implicitly**. The Bible does **forbid** it by simply **not authorizing** it. A fairly recent issue of TIME magazine had a photograph of a Marine colonel with his statement, "Everything that I did was authorized." You see, we recognize that **principle** in other phases of life, and we need to be very careful in the matter of our study of the Bible.

Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire. Not that God had said, "Now listen, you shall not use that fire." He simply had **not authorized** it! We all understand that. When we go into a restaurant and desire to go into a restroom, we look, and see that one door has just a single word, "Men," on it, and another door has "Women" on it. We men know that we **are authorized** to go into the door that has "Men" on it and that we are **not authorized** to go into the one that has "Women" on it. We know that if we went into the one marked "Women," we would be arrested, even though there is not any statement there that says, "No **man** should enter here!" That's a very wonderful principle which we need to study. However, we will go into that in more detail in studies later on.

*Numbers 16:1-3,
31-34*

CHART 1.16

Another similar case is that of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. These men rebelled against the leadership that God had given them (the leadership of Moses assisted by Aaron). They did not have the right to oppose the leadership which God had given them. So, God punished them. God destroyed both them and those who followed them. The earth opened up and swallowed them (Numbers 16:1-3 and 16:31-34). No doubt these men were **sincere** in what they were doing, but God was **not pleased** with them even if they were sincere.

There is no doubt
that **MOSES**
was sincere when
he struck the rock

(Num. 20:3-11)

But God punished him!

Moses and the rock.

*Numbers 20:3-12,
20:12*

*The ten unfaithful
spies.*

In the case of Moses, a great and good man, he is pointed to in the Bible as a man who is a classic example of faith. The Bible says, "By faith Moses did this, by faith Moses did that." God wants us today to recognize Moses to be a great and good man, one who was worthy of our emulation. But, on one occasion, Moses **struck** the rock even though God had told him to **speak** to it. God had not **explicitly** told Moses **not** to strike the rock. Moses was simply **not authorized** to do it! Moses was **sincere** when he struck the rock (Numbers 20:3-11), but God punished him (Numbers 20:12). He was not allowed to go into the promised land. Is it not clear that, while sincerity is **necessary**, it is **not sufficient**?

Likely, the Israelites were sincere when they decided to go back to Egypt, but God punished them for that. You will remember that the twelve spies went up into the land to spy it out before they went into it to be their home. Ten of the twelve spies came back with a very **pessimistic** report. But Caleb and Joshua, two great and good men, came back with an **optimistic** report. They were men of faith. Caleb said, "Let us go up at once and possess it for we are well able to overcome." Joshua stood by his side and out of all the entire adult population of Israel, only those two men went into the promised land. This shows that, in spite of the undoubted **sincerity** of these other men who wanted to elect a new leader and go back to Egypt into bondage, God was not pleased with them. They had heard the word of God, they had the opportunity to know the truth, and they needed the faith to obey it. And God blessed the men who

obeyed it. But He punished the men who did not, and they all wandered in the wilderness until they died—i.e., those who were twenty years or older. And, because they complained about the danger of their little children going into the land, God destroyed them and allowed their children to go in. My friends, surely this is something that ought to strike to the very depths of our souls in helping us to understand that while sincerity is **necessary**, it certainly is **not sufficient**!

CHART 1.17

WAS THE JEWS' SINCERITY ENOUGH?

Many of the **Jews** who crucified Jesus Christ were **sincere**. (Acts 3:17)

But they were guilty of sin, were lost, and needed to be saved!

(Acts 2:21-47)

Acts 3:17

Acts 2:22-23

Many of the Jews who crucified Jesus were sincere. The Apostle Peter said, as recorded in Acts 3:17, *"I know that in ignorance that you did it."* They did not really understand that He was the Son of God, the Messiah. Peter also said, in Acts 2:22-23, *"Ye men of Israel, hear these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you, by mighty works wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know: him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay."*

Now, friends, the Bible here makes clear that they did this in ignorance. Therefore, they were sincere, and yet Peter told them that they had crucified Christ by the hands of the Romans. That is, by the hands of men who had not been under the law of Moses. Sincerity is **necessary**, but it is **not sufficient**. One must come to **know** the truth, **love** the truth, and **obey** the truth. Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all those that obey him.

WAS THE ETHIOPIAN'S SINCERITY ENOUGH?

The Ethiopian
of Acts 8:26-40

was a sincere man—but
he was lost and needed
to be saved!

*The sincerity of
the Ethiopian.*

Acts 8:29-35

Acts 2:38; 22:16;

Rom. 6:3-5;

Gal. 3:26-27;

Mk. 16:15-16

The Ethiopian Eunuch had been to Jerusalem to worship. He had traveled all the way from Ethiopia to Jerusalem to worship the one true God. As he returned home, he was reading from the prophet Isaiah. Yet he was not saved. An evangelist, named Philip, came along-side, (according to the Spirit's direction) and—after getting into the chariot—preached unto him “Jesus” (Acts 8:29-35). As they came to a certain water, the Ethiopian cried out, “*See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?*” You see, he was still lost in sin, because he had not yet been baptized in the name of (by the authority of) Christ for the remission of his sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:26-27; Mk. 16:15-16).

WAS SAUL'S SINCERITY ENOUGH?

Saul of Tarsus was sincere.
(Acts 23:1)

Yet he was

“chief of sinners.”

He was lost—and
needed to be saved!

Read Acts 9, 22, and 26.

The sincerity of Saul.

Acts 9, 22, and 26

Acts 22:16

Saul of Tarsus was sincere. We noted that fact in the very beginning of our study. Later he claimed that he had “lived in all good conscience before God until this day.” But he was lost. He was lost out on the road to Damascus when the Lord Jesus appeared to him. He asked what to do, and the Lord said, “*You go into the city and there it shall be told thee what thee must do.*” I hear many preachers say that Saul was saved out there on the road the very moment he believed, but he was not. He himself knew that he was not saved, Jesus knew he was not saved. Ananias, whom Jesus sent to tell him what to do to be saved, knew that Saul was not yet saved. According to Acts 9, 22, and 26, when Ananias came to Saul of Tarsus and laid his hands upon him, there fell from his eyes as it were scales [no doubt to indicate that this was the man who was to tell him what to do] told him what to do to be saved. He did not say, “Now, Saul you are already saved, you have nothing to do.” But here is what he said, “*And now why tarriest thou, Arise and be baptized, wash away thy sins calling on his name*” (Acts 22:16).

SINCERITY IS NECESSARY BUT, NOT SUFFICIENT

In conclusion, let us note that while sincerity is necessary, it is not sufficient (that is, it is not the only thing that is necessary).

Obedience to the Lord's will is also NECESSARY!

Note these passages:

John 8:32; Heb. 5:8-9;

Heb. 11:6; Acts 17:30-31;

Rom. 10:9-10; Gal. 3:26-27



And so, my friends, we know that we simply cannot be saved by sincerity alone. It is **necessary** for us to be **sincere**, but it is **not sufficient!**

In conclusion, we note that II Thessalonians 2:10 demands that men love the truth. According to Matthew 7:21-23, it is not enough just to cry, "Lord, Lord!" But—to be saved from his sins—one must do the will of the Lord. That is the one whom the Lord saves. In John 8:32, Jesus said "*Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.*" Hebrews 5:8-9 teaches that Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all those that obey him.

II Thess. 2:10
Matthew 7:21-23

John 8:32
Hebrews 5:8-9

May God help you,—as a result of your study here, if indeed you have not already done so—to obey the word of God, to be obedient to Jesus Christ. This is our sincere prayer.

In summation, let us note that there are some things about which—in order to be saved—we simply must be right. Note Chart 1.21.

CHART 1.21

**ONE MUST BE
RIGHT ABOUT AT LEAST
SOME THINGS:**

1. Faith in God—Heb. 11:6
2. Faith in Jesus—John 8:24
3. Faith in the Gospel—
Mk. 16:15-16
4. Repentance—Lk. 13:5;
Acts 2:38
5. Confession—Rom. 10:9-10;
Mt. 10:32-33
6. Baptism—John 3:5;
Gal. 3:26-27
7. Faithfulness unto death—
Rev. 2:10

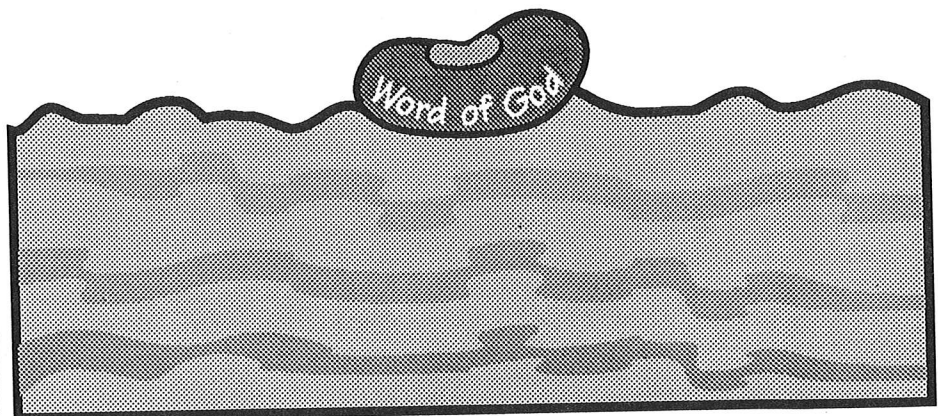
There are some matters about which men and women do not have the right to be wrong.

Conclusion: merely being sincere is not enough—one must also both learn and obey the truth.

Which Kind Of "Soil" Are You?

- WAYSIDE?
- STONY?
- THORNY?
- GOOD?

How does Jesus evaluate
human hearts and lives?



1 OR 2 CLASS SESSIONS ARE SUGGESTED FOR THIS LESSON.

BY THOMAS B. WARREN, PH.D.

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YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE!

PREPARING THE HEART FOR SUBMISSION TO GOD
LESSON 2: WHICH KIND OF "SOIL" ARE YOU?

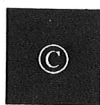
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Which Kind of "Soil" Are You?

Luke 8:4-15

*The parable
of the sower.*

*The disciples ask
for an explanation
from Jesus.*

Jesus explains.

An account of the parable of the soils is found in Luke 8:4-15. "And when a great multitude came together, and they of every city resorted unto him, [that is, Jesus], He spake by a parable: The sower went forth to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden under foot, and the birds of the heaven devoured it. And other fell on the rock; and as soon as it grew, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other fell amidst the thorns; and the thorns grew with it, and choked it. And other fell into the good ground, and grew, and brought forth fruit a hundredfold. As he said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

And his disciples asked him what this parable might be. And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to the rest in parables; that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. [Please notice that the "seed" in this parable is the word of God.] And those by the wayside are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved. And those on the rock are they who, when they have heard, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. And that which fell among the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on in their way they are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. And that in the good ground, these are such as in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, hold it fast, and bring forth fruit with patience."

Luke 8:4-11

*What kind of person
are you?*

I want to study with you, "Which Kind Of Soil Are You?"—that is, what kind of heart do you have? What kind of life are you living? I ask myself that question as I ask you to ask yourself. From Luke 8:4-11, which we have just read, we see that this is the basic thing that Jesus is getting at: to ask you just what kind of person are you? What kind of heart do you have? Do you love truth or do you love false doctrine? Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ or do you love Satan? These are the basic questions that everyone of us should ask himself. Of course, there are various degrees and shades in regard to these matters, but Jesus classified people into four different categories:

- (1) There is the "wayside" soil,
- (2) the "stony" (or rocky) soil,
- (3) the "thorny" soil, and,
- (4) finally, the "good" soil.

Each of us is one of these kinds of soil. So, let us look at what Jesus would have us to learn from this parable. It is obvious that, in telling this parable,

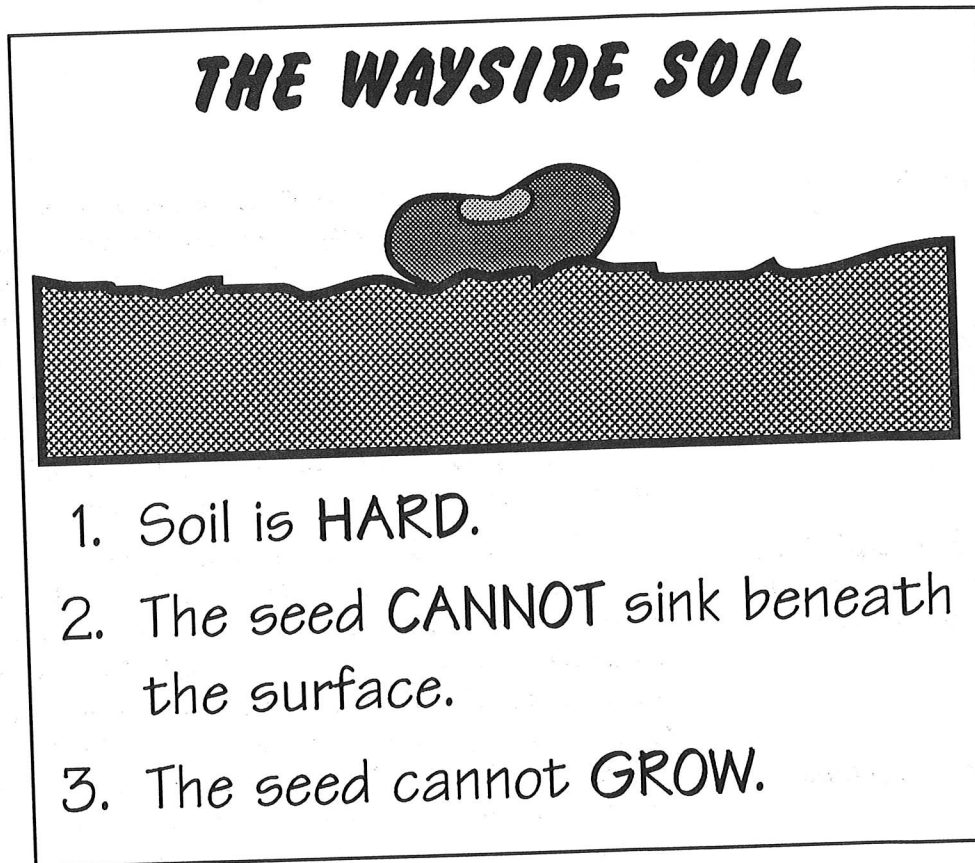
Jesus is really explaining how He evaluates the hearts and lives of human beings. Because the soil was hard, the seed did not germinate.

CHART 2.1

An outright rejection of the gospel of Christ!

The devil takes the word from their hearts—so, they do not believe and obey.

Note: the essentiality of obedience.



I call your attention to the Chart 2.1 simply by way of trying to help you to visualize the lesson that Jesus is setting out in regard to the “wayside” soil. This tells of the seed that fell on the “wayside” soil as the sower was planting, and it simply stayed on the top of the ground. It was by the “wayside”; that is, it was possibly where the plow had not gone so that the ground was not soft. Surely we have all seen that on farms. The seed simply stays on the top of this kind of soil. Or, perhaps, it was in a path that went across the field caused by men walking back and forth on it, causing the ground to become too hard for the seed to sink down into it. And, so, we notice the seed here on **top** of the soil. We let this area here [pointing to the Chart 2.1] represent the soil onto which it fell. Let us notice some things about that soil.

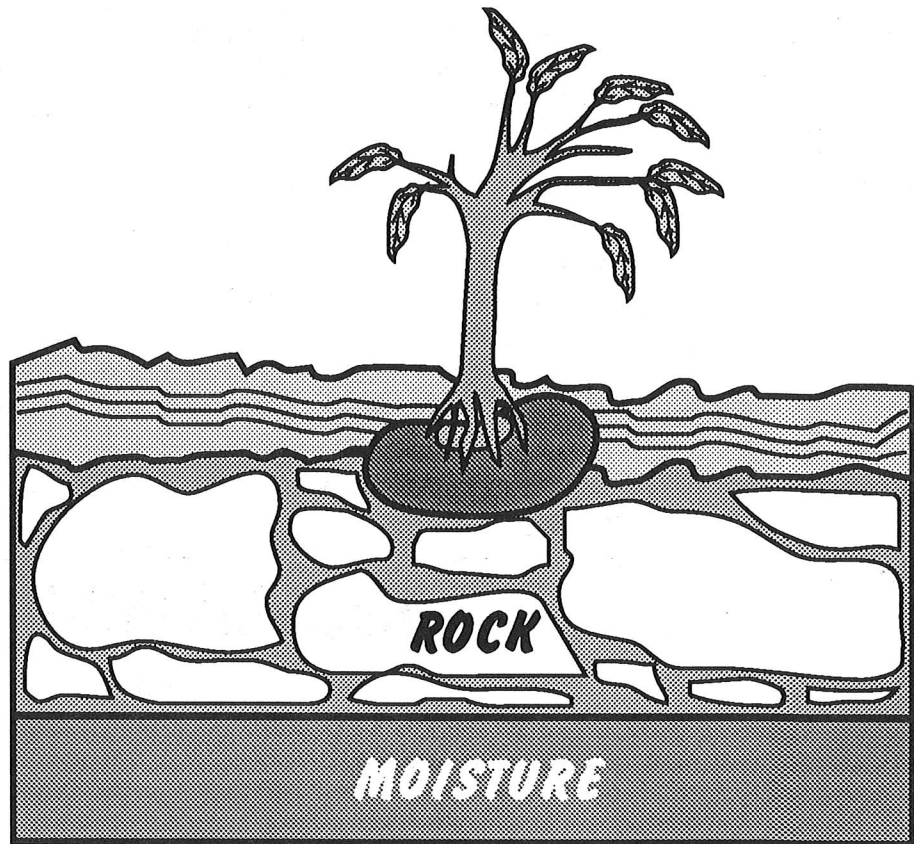
Characteristics of the “wayside” soil.

AGRICULTURE
See Lesson 1

First, the soil is **hard**. That would be analogous to a human heart being hard—a human heart that will **not** be receptive to the truth. **Secondly**, this seed cannot sink into or beneath the surface of the soil. And that is the way it is, sometimes, with people: when they have an opportunity to hear the sacred word of God—the Bible—preached, their hearts are so **hard** that they simply reject it. Going back to the realm of agriculture, we see that this seed is lying on the top of the soil, and the birds come and snatch it away. They eat it before it can sprout. **Finally**, we learn that the seed cannot grow. We must keep this in mind as we go on through this study of our hearts and try to evaluate ourselves (our lives) as honestly and sincerely as we can. Have you found yourself? Is **your** heart like the “wayside” soil; i.e., have you rejected the gospel?

A shallow, temporary response to the gospel. This is the case even though they initially receive the word with joy.

THE STONY SOIL



1. Soil is **SHALLOW**.
2. The soil is **ROCKY**.
3. The seed cannot get to the **MOISTURE**.
4. The seed sprouts, but the plant **DIES**.

The "rocky" soil.

The **second** kind of soil about which Jesus spoke was the **rocky** soil. Note, on Chart 2.2, we find that the seed sinks beneath the surface of the soil. The top part of the soil is soft; it has been cultivated—plowed perhaps—and, so, the seed germinates. However, it cannot sink very far from the top of the soil and the sun shines upon it and it causes the plant to grow. Note that right under the seed there is a layer of **rock**. This rock lies between the seed and the water. The area that is beneath it is the area in the soil where there is **moisture**.

The sun shines upon this top part—that is, the part above the rock—dries it out, because there is not much moisture there. There was enough to germinate it and cause the plant to begin to grow, but notice that the plant is beginning to die. It is wilting.

[SEE CHART 2.2]

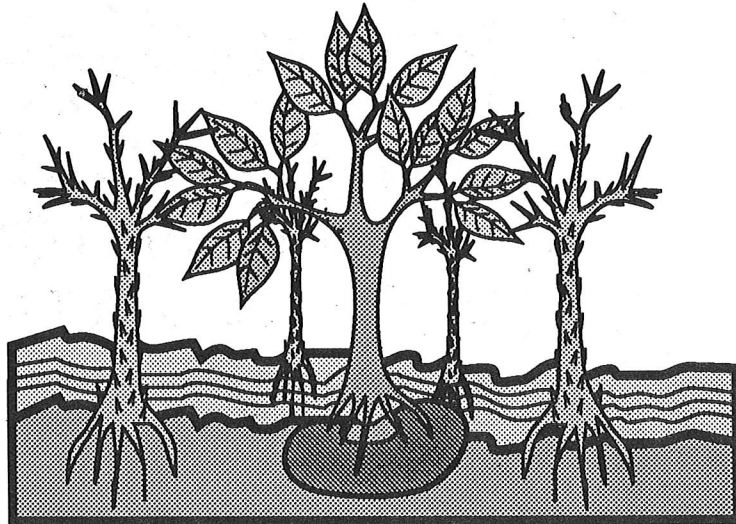
Characteristics of the "stony" soil.

In summary, we note these things about the "stony" soil: first the soil is shallow. Notice there, how shallow it was. The seed could not go down beneath the rock (where the moisture is). That is like people who are shallow in their approach to life. They think about little except sensual pleasure, money, fame, fortune, and all of those things for which the devil wants people to strive. Second, the soil is "rocky". Here [pointing to the chart] is the layer of rock. Third, the seed cannot get down to the moisture. It cannot get down to the water, which it must have in order to grow. The seed, the word of God, the Gospel, must have a good and honest heart in which to grow. However, this is not that kind of soil. In the fourth place, the seed sprouts, here it is growing a bit [pointing to the chart], but the plant dies. That is the picture of something that happens to human beings that we will be looking at in a few moments in order to see the spiritual application of it.

CHART 2.3

A good beginning in a heart that is temporarily receptive—but has a terrible defect.

THE THORNY SOIL



1. Soil is SOFT.
2. The soil is DEEP.
3. The soil is FERTILE.
4. But the soil has THORNS also.
5. The thorns CHOKE the plant.

[SEE CHART 2.3]

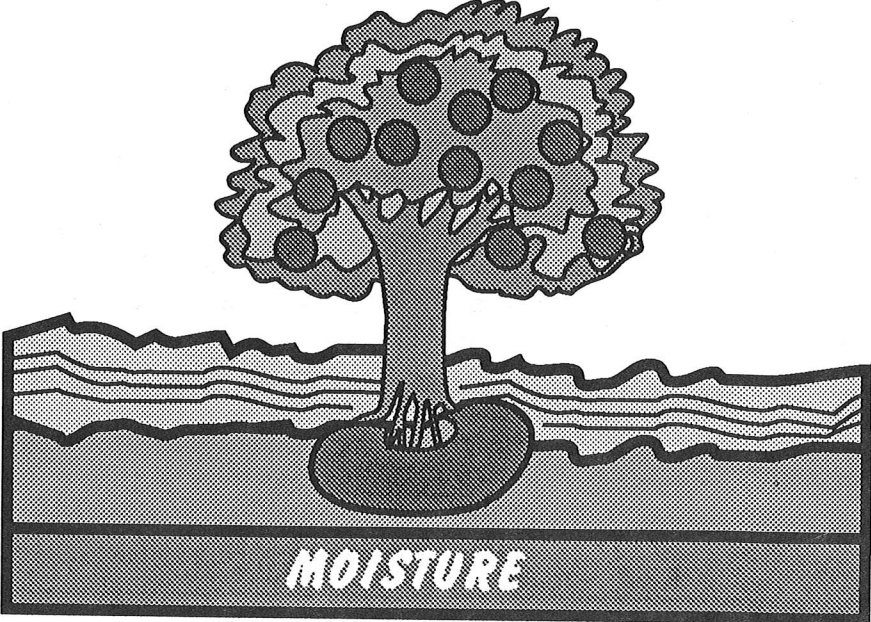
Characteristics of the "thorny" soil.

Let us now look at the third one: the "thorny" soil. This is the soil that, as you can see, is not **hard** like the "wayside" soil. The soil is not **shallow** so the seed can go down deep into the soil. The soil is not **rocky** so the seed can get down to the moisture. So you see that, apparently, this is a "good" soil from one standpoint. Notice carefully these points however: (1) the soil is **soft**, (2) the soil is **deep** (so here we have the seed down here beneath it; it gets to the moisture). It germinates and it grows, but there is **something wrong here!** The thing that is wrong is that even though this would be basically a "good" soil—a place from which one would expect a great crop—there is something else growing along with it! (3) You see, it has these **thorn bushes** also growing. (4) They **choke** this plant so that it does not bear fruit. So, as we note in point four: this soil allows the seed to **germinate** and **grow**, but it has thorns also, and the thorns choke the plant so that it does not bear fruit.

CHART 2.4

This soil represents a person whose heart is honest and good—it is one who obeys the gospel and remains faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). Every other response fails.

THE GOOD SOIL



1. Soil is **SOFT** and **DEEP**.
2. Plenty of **MOISTURE**.
3. Soil is **FERTILE**.
4. Plant grows, **BEARS MUCH FRUIT**.

We come now to the "good" soil. Jesus is referring here to people with **good and honest hearts**. Let us see how He describes that soil from just "everyday" nature. One can see that what the Lord is doing here is similar to the way Bible writers compare the living of a Christian life with the running of a race.

Matthew 7:24-27
Luke 8

All of us are "running a race" with our lives. You are to run your race on "the track" as God would have you to do it. And you are to run it on to the end of the race. Or, you can run off through the country-side. In which case you are going in a way that the Lord would not have you to go. At times, human life is described as a "warfare." At times it is described as building a house. (See Matthew 7:24-27). But here in Luke 8, the Lord is using **conditions of soil** to help us to learn about ourselves. We should ask ourselves, "Am I **this kind of soil, that kind of soil, or the other?**" And so, in this case the seed falls on "good" soil. Consider the qualities of the "good" soil.

[SEE CHART 2.4]

First of all, it is **soft**. You see, here is the **surface** of the soil (pointing to the chart)—it is **soft** enough for the seed to go down beneath the surface. Also, it is a soil of **depth** and it is a soil where there is **moisture**. And, there is nothing that prevents the seed from getting down to the **moisture**. You will remember that, in the case of the **rocky soil**, the layer of rock kept the seed from getting down to the moisture. And, in this case, we have this seed, and it is growing. It is in "good", rich soil, and there is plenty of moisture.

*Characteristics of the
"good" soil.*

Notice these things about it.

- (1) The "**good**" soil is **soft** and **deep**. Here it is soft. The seed can sink into it because the soil is soft and deep.
- (2) There is plenty of **moisture**, (plenty of water) to cause the seed to grow! We know that seeds do not grow where there is absolutely no water at all. (Some seeds out in the desert can grow on less water than others.) Some seeds cannot germinate in a desert area at all. But this was a place where there was plenty of **moisture**.
- (3) The soil is **fertile**. It is a **rich** soil. And, so,
- (4) A plant **grows** and it **bears much fruit**.

This is a picture of a kind of soil, from everyday life, in agriculture, Jesus wants us to understand this soil as representing a good and honest heart—one that bears much spiritual fruit.

WHICH OF THE SOILS REPRESENT FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS

1. **WAYSIDE**— does not become a Christian.
2. **STONY**— becomes a Christian, but dies (becomes unfaithful).
3. **THORNY**— becomes a Christian, but dies (becomes unfaithful).
4. **GOOD**— becomes a Christian, and lives faithfully, and bears much fruit.

That brings us to the question, "Which of these various soils represent faithful Christians? Which one of these soils represents a person who is what God would have him to be?" My friends, there is no greater question than that for any of us to ask. What kind of soil represents what I ought to be? And am I that kind of person? Am I that kind of "soil"?

Recall, please, that there are four types of soil according to Jesus' categorizations. There is the "wayside", the rocky, the "thorny", and the "good". This may be a surprising thing to you, but as you study carefully here and honestly examine the evidence, you will see that only one of these kinds of soils (the "wayside" soil) represents a **non-Christian**. This is the only one of the four types of soil that represents a person who rejects the gospel altogether.

Jesus classifies every person (other than those who are too young to be accountable), who has not been baptized into Christ, under the category of the "wayside" soil. One who—even though he may hear and/or read the gospel—simply rejects it. He never obeys the gospel. He never becomes a faithful believer in Christ. He never repents of his sin; that is, he does not change his

[SEE CHART 2.5]

Galatians 3:26-27
II Timothy 2:10

mind and direct his life toward serving God. He is never willing to live the kind of reformed life that Christ requires—the kind of life that follows repentance. He will not confess Christ before men, and he will not be baptized into Christ (cf. Gal. 3:26-27; II Tim. 2:10). This is the one and only of the four soils that represents a person who has not obeyed Jesus in being baptized for the remission of his sins.

John 3:5

You see, friends, you cannot be saved without being baptized. Jesus said in John 3:5, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Not may not or possibly not; but Jesus says he cannot enter the kingdom without being born of water and the Spirit! And when Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," He is saying that the one who has both believed and been baptized shall be saved; but the one who does not believe shall be damned. This is the man who has never been baptized in the name of Christ, has never been baptized by His authority, has never been immersed in water as a penitent believer. Incidentally, friends, sprinkling or pouring is simply not baptism according to the New Testament. You must, as a person who is dead to the love and practice of sin, be buried in the watery grave which is baptism to rise to walk in newness of life, saved by the grace of God through the shed blood of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:3-5; Eph. 2:8-9; Eph. 1:7). So here is the man, he may even be a religious man, this man right here. But he is not receptive to the gospel. He may be receptive to the doctrine of this particular religious group or that one or the other—there are hundreds, even thousands of them in the world. But it does not matter how many religions you accept, how many doctrines you accept, if it is not the gospel of Christ, you are not a Christian.

Romans 6:3-5
Ephesians 2:8-9
Ephesians 1:7

Galatians 1:6-9

In Galatians 1:6-9, the apostle Paul clearly taught that even if "we" (apostles) or an angel would preach unto you any gospel other than that which Paul and the other apostles had preached unto you which was the pure one gospel of Christ, then he said, "let him be anathema". That means to be under the curse of God. So, here is a man who is not a Christian. He has not obeyed the gospel. He might even have believed it, but he did not obey it. And Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all those that obey him (Heb. 5:8-9).

Hebrews 5:8-9

Note carefully that all three of these ("rocky", "thorny" and "good" soils) represent people who become Christians. They are baptized into Christ. The "stony" ground—you see, the seed germinates and grows into a plant. And that is the way it is with the gospel. Here is the word of God. If I hear it, believe it and obey it, then I am baptized into Christ. But that does not mean that I will be faithful. There are some people who teach "once saved always saved", but the Bible does not teach that. I read a tract written by a man who said, "We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul." But the Bible does not teach that! The Bible teaches that a man who becomes unfaithful after becoming a Christian, is like a dog turning to his own vomit and like a sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire (II Pet. 2:20-21).

II Peter 2:20-21

What kind of person is this "stony ground person?" It refers to a "shallow" person. You will remember, of course, the seed that fell on the "stony ground" soil. Just underneath the surface there was a layer of rock. This is a shallow

soil. This is the kind of person who hears the gospel and believes and obeys it with joy and for a time is very excited about Christianity. But then some little thing comes up in life—maybe something he does not like. Perhaps someone hurts his feelings. And he falls away. If some human being does something they do not like, then they reject Christ—even though Christ did not do anything but love them and die for them and want them to be saved. Thus, they reject the wrong person. But, at any rate, they fall away and become unfaithful. But one must be faithful unto death in order to be saved. The Bible teaches that **people must be faithful unto death in order to gain the crown of life** (Rev. 2:10).

Revelation 2:10

The “thorny” ground represents a person who is a “good” rich soil and who is responsive to the gospel. He is baptized into Christ, but he becomes worldly. He becomes a victim of the works of the flesh which are set out in Galatians 5:19-21. He becomes a drunkard, or a fornicator, or a thief—a person who is interested in the sensuality of the flesh. He falls away and becomes unfaithful. The “good” soil represents the person who loves God, loves the Lord Jesus Christ, loves truth (the gospel), wants to be saved, wants his sins to be forgiven. Thus, he obeys the gospel.

Galatians 5:19-21

And so, just to emphasize the point, I ask—here on this chart: **Which of the four soils represents faithful Christians?** The “wayside” soil does not, because he does not represent a Christian at all. He simply does not become a Christian.

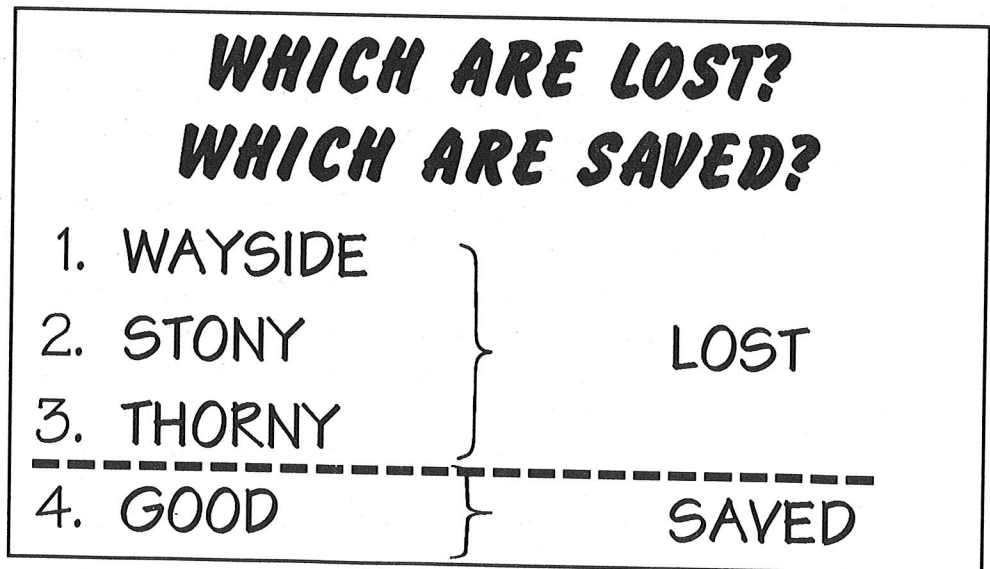
The “stony” ground represents a shallow Christian—one who soon falls away and becomes unfaithful because of his shallowness.

The “thorny” ground represents a person who is “rich soil” and obeys the gospel. And, for a time, he is faithful, but then he becomes worldly. He begins to seek after sensuality. Perhaps, he becomes a drunkard, a dope addict, a fornicator, an adulterer and so forth. All three of these are lost.

I Corinthians 15:58

The “good” soil represents the person who has a good and honest heart, one who obeys the gospel and then lives a life of always abounding in the work of the Lord, as we find in I Corinthians 15:58.

CHART 2.6



Which Are YOU?

Acts 17:1

I plead with you to open your heart and your mind to the nobility of the Bereans as they searched the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so (Acts 17:11). I plead with you, not to take my word for it, but to take your Bible and read the story for yourself. Who are the lost people? Three "classes" of people are lost. Only one is saved!

CHART 2.7

WHICH ARE SAVED?

1. **WAYSIDE**—Non-Christian—**LOST** in Eternity.
2. **STONY**— Christian, but **LOST** in eternity.
3. **THORNY**— Christian, but **LOST** in eternity.
4. **GOOD**— Christian and **SAVED** eternally.

CF.: Revelation 2:10

Which are YOU?

There are **three** classes of lost people. (1) The "**wayside**" hearer—the person who is represented by this kind of soil, is lost. He never becomes a Christian. Both (2) "**stony**" (rocky) ground and (3) the "**thorny**" ground become Christians. However, they fall away and become unfaithful. And, so, all three of these classifications of people are lost: the **non-christian**, the **unfaithful**, **shallow Christian** and the **unfaithful, worldly Christian**.

The **only** one who is saved is the person who has been **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ, becomes a **member** of the Lord's church and remains **faithful unto death**. Again we ask: which type of soil is saved? The "**wayside**" (the non-christian) is lost. The "**stony**" ground, a shallow Christian, is not saved in eternity. The "**thorny**" ground is a worldly child of God, and he falls away (in his worldliness) and is lost in eternity. The "**good**" soil is the **faithful Christian** (member of the church), one baptized into Christ, lives faithfully unto death and, thus, is saved eternally (Rev. 2:10).

Revelation 2:10

I ask all of us to: suppose that we were in an audience with a chalkboard on which these things are written and here is a box that had not been checked; and you were to walk up [pointing to a box on the chart] in front of all of that audience, and God was there, you knew that God was watching and you had to tell the truth about it. Which one of these four types of people will God save? May God help us to be honest in our hearts and to check the right box in the light of the teachings of the sacred book of God, the Bible. Here is the chart. How would you check it? That is, which box would you check (as to your own status)? If you cannot honestly and truthfully check Box number 4 (below), will you go to heaven?

THINK ABOUT IT!

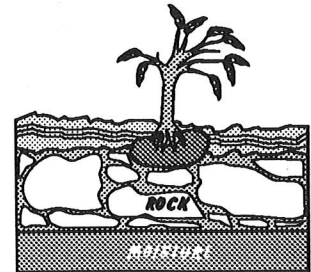
CHART 2.8

CHECK THE RIGHT BOX— WHICH SOIL ARE YOU?

1. WAYSIDE ?



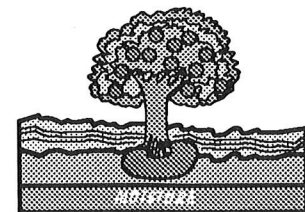
2. STONY ?



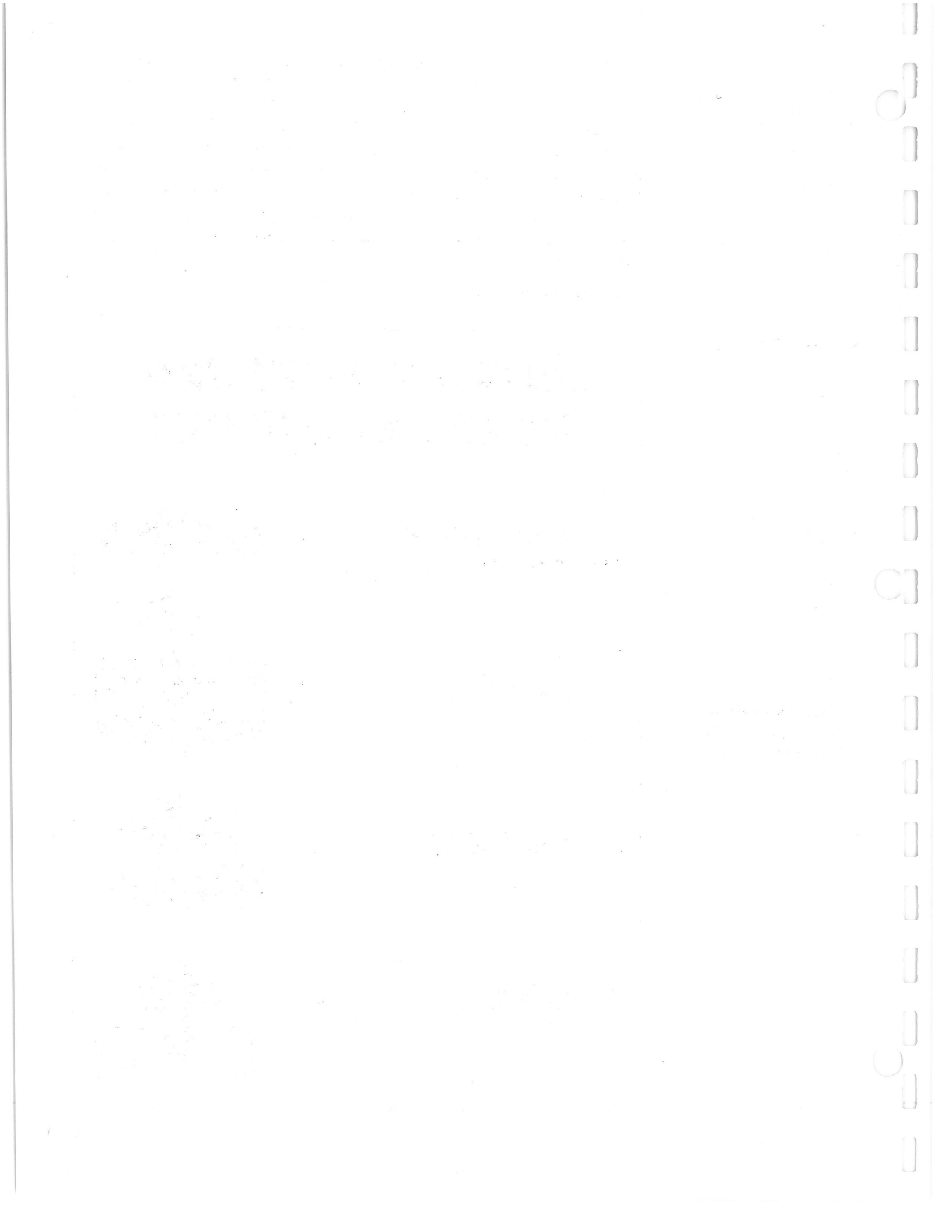
3. THORNY ?



4. GOOD ?



*How does Jesus
evaluate YOUR
heart?*



YOU CAN BE JUST A CHRISTIAN AND KNOW THAT YOU ARE JUST A CHRISTIAN



1 OR 2 CLASS SESSIONS ARE SUGGESTED FOR THIS LESSON.

BY THOMAS B. WARREN, PH.D.

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YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE!

PREPARING THE HEART FOR SUBMISSION TO GOD

LESSON 3: You Can Be Just A Christian And Know That You Are Just A Christian

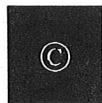
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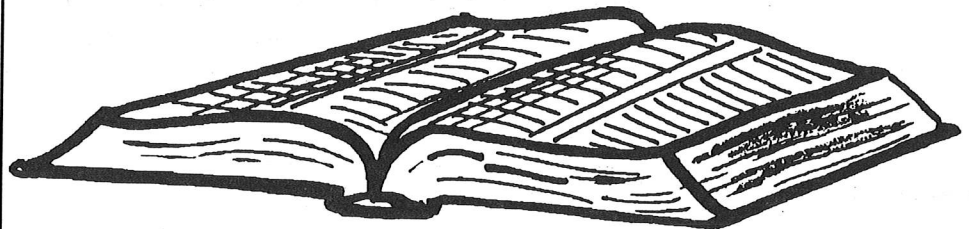
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You Can Be Just A Christian And Know That You Are Just A Christian

CHART 3.0

“ALL HAVE SINNED...”

“...but the gift of God is eternal
life through Christ Jesus
our Lord.”



*Rom. 5:8-9;
Eph. 2:8-9
Rom. 3:23*

Rom. 6:23

Acts 20:28

It is a genuine pleasure to have you in our audience today. We want to study with you as important a topic as the human mind can address itself to—the question as to whether you have been saved from your sins, whether you are a Christian, a child of God, one saved by the grace of God through the blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:8-9; Eph. 2:8-9). The Bible teaches that “*all have sinned, and fallen short of the glory of God*” (Rom. 3:23). Yet, it also teaches us that by the grace of God—that is, by his love and mercy, without our being able to earn it—we can receive salvation from our sins. Salvation is a gift of God. The apostle Paul declared that “*the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Rom. 6:23). Notice “*the gift of God.*” Salvation is something that God gives us. But no one can have this salvation without becoming a Christian, that is, without becoming a child of God.

The title of this study is: YOU CAN BE JUST A CHRISTIAN AND KNOW THAT YOU ARE JUST A CHRISTIAN. By this title I do not mean some particular kind of Christian. I do not mean a member of a denomination—but just a Christian, a member of the church that Jesus bought with his own blood, about which we read in Acts 20:28. It is possible for you to **know** that you are just a Christian. I repeat, you can be just a Christian and know that you are just a Christian. There is a basic principle which is behind this, which helps us to understand just how simple the matter is.

Gen. 1:11-13

Here are some charts which I have designed to help you to follow in the reading of the Scriptures with us. Let us read in Genesis 1:11 (in the setting of Gen. 1:11-13). Here is the record of God's creation. In the eleventh verse it states, "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind...." Carefully consider those words. "...yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind." Consider carefully the repetition of "after his kind." We continue, "...and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day" (1:11-13). Now let us note a New Testament statement, regarding the fact, that every seed brings forth after its kind. Of course, we would know that this is true from our own experience. When we plant watermelon seed, we know that if anything grows, it is going to be a watermelon vine. We also know that if anything grows on that vine, it would be watermelons. In Galatians 6:7-9, the apostle Paul writing to the churches of Galatia said, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption. But he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." These two passages make clear the great truth with which we are concerned in this chapter.

Galatians 6:7-9

CHART 3.1

EVERY SEED BRINGS FORTH AFTER ITS KIND

Gen. 1:11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

Gen. 1:12 And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

Gen. 1:13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

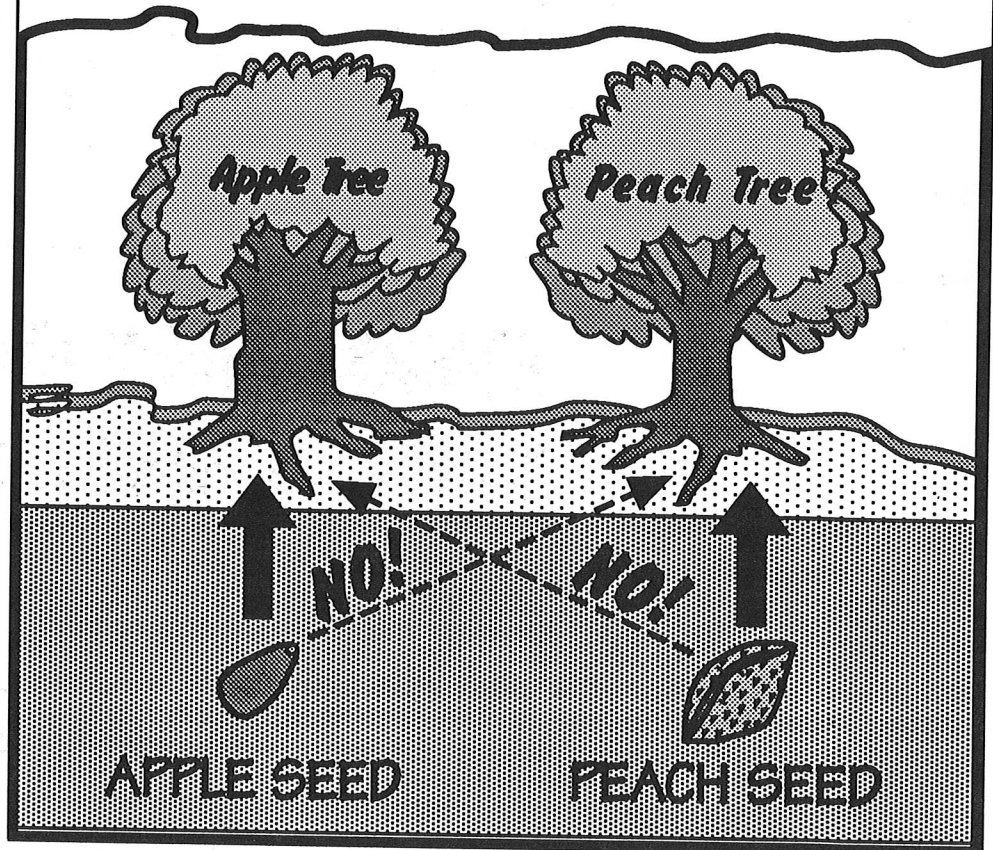
Gal. 6:7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Gal. 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

Gal. 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

EVERY SEED BRINGS FORTH AFTER ITS KIND

Gen. 1:11; Gal. 6:7-9



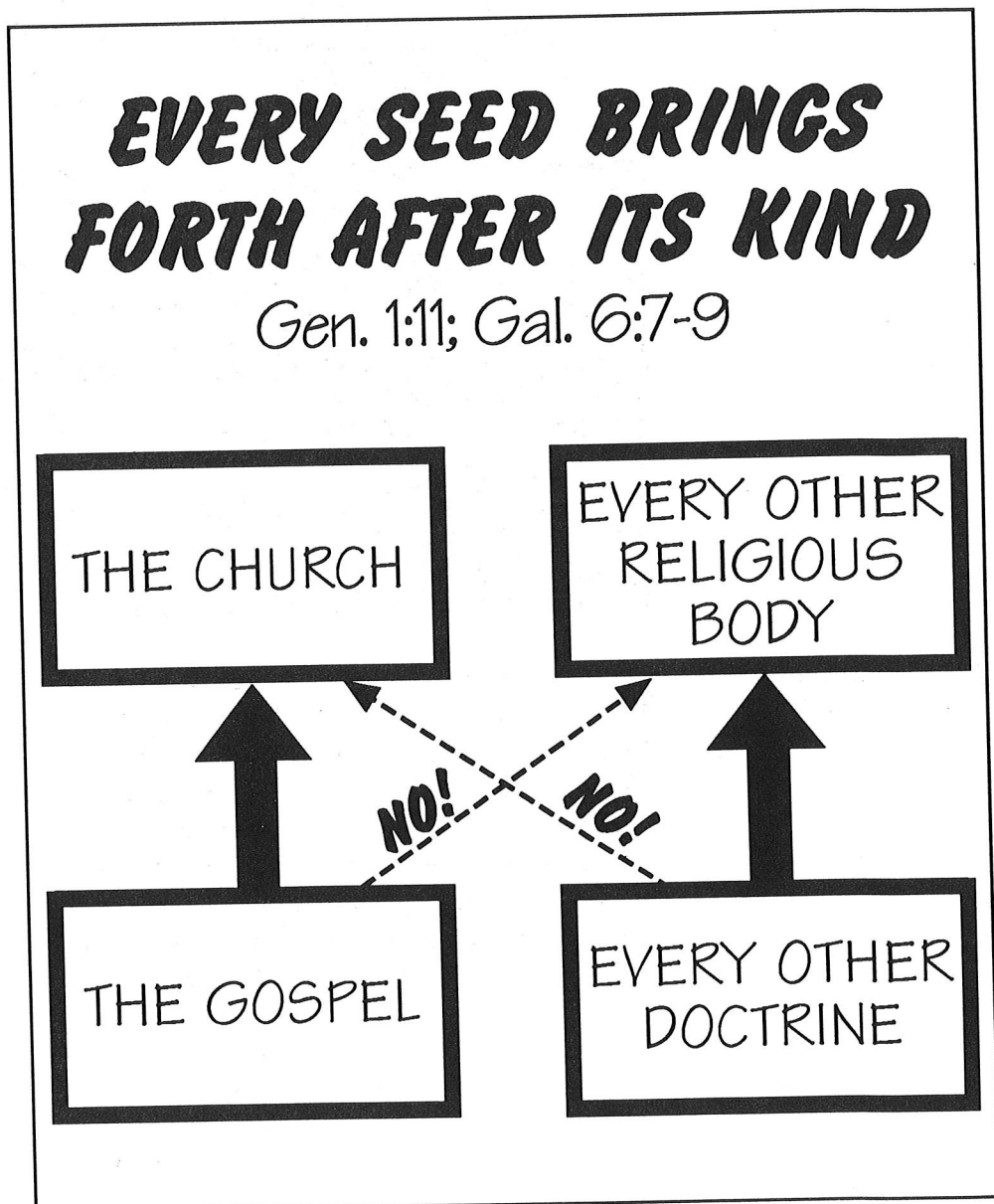
Genesis 1:11 and Galatians 6:7-9

Every seed brings forth after it's kind, as we have just noticed in Genesis 1:11 and Galatians 6:7-9. I urge you to jot that down or—if you have your Bible with you—to turn and read it for yourself, as we have read it together. Notice how this principle works. As I suggested a few moments ago, all of us understand this. There really is no need for my having to explain this to anyone. Everyone except small children already understands it. Let us take look at CHART 3.2. Let us suppose that we have an apple seed and a peach seed and that we have some good fertile soil. So we go out into the field and plant those two seeds. Then we find that both of the seeds germinate, resulting—in each case—in some kind of plant. Both of the plants grow. **Question:** what will be the result of the growth of the apple seed? It will be an **apple tree**. Notice carefully: it will **not** be a **peach tree**. You see this line I have drawn across here (pointing to the arrow going from the apple seed to the peach tree). No, it will not result in a peach tree. What if something grows on the apple tree? What if some kind of fruit grows on it? Will it be **peaches** or **apples**? Will it

be apples or oranges or bananas or just what? Surely it is the case that all of us know that if any fruit grows, it will be **apples**! In the same way, if the peach seed grows, the result will be a **peach tree**. And, if any fruit grows on it, it will be **peaches**. There will not be even one apple tree to come from this peach seed. There will not be even one apple to grow on the peach tree. This is a fundamental point! God uses these simple things from everyday life to help us to understand what to do to be saved, so that men—no matter how very intelligent they are, no matter how educated they are—cannot draw us away from the truth. They cannot deceive us if we are willing to let the Bible speak to us and help us to see just how simple this matter is. There is no more possibility that one could plant an apple seed and get a peach tree with peaches growing on it than there is that he could obey the gospel of Jesus Christ and become—from doing so—something other than simply a Christian—something other than simply a child of God, a member of the one church for which Jesus died (Acts 20:28).

Acts 20:28

CHART 3.3



(SEE CHART 3.3)

I want to illustrate that point on this chart, and I invite you to follow this carefully if you will. I suggest very humbly that you think seriously about this matter. Here [pointing to the chart] you see that we have the two things. Just as we had (on Chart 3.2) an apple seed and a peach seed, so it is that we have, here on CHART 3.3, (1) the gospel of Christ, and (2) every other doctrine. The gospel is the truth, the law of Christ, the New Testament. You will recall that, in Mark 16:15, Jesus (speaking to His disciples) said, "*Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned.*"

Mark 16:15

The devil has persuaded many millions of people to reject what Jesus actually said and to believe that Jesus said: "Go ye into all the world and persuade people merely to be religious—as long as they are religious, I will save them by my blood!" There is nothing in the Bible which teaches such a doctrine. Nowhere does the Lord Jesus Christ teach such—either explicitly or implicitly. There are others who hold that Jesus said: "Go ye into all the world and preach some religious message. It doesn't matter which message it is. There are all kinds of messages. One is as good as another. There are all kinds of faiths and one is as good as another." But Jesus did not say that. He instructed men to go preach the gospel—the one and the only gospel!

Gal. 1:6-9

In Galatians 1:6 the apostle Paul, writing to the churches of Galatia, said, "*I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you in the grace of Jesus Christ, unto a different gospel*"—that is, unto a message which is not the gospel—which is not another gospel of the same kind. Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, said, "*But though we or an angel from heaven should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema*" (Gal. 1:8)—that is, Paul says, let him rest under the curse of God! So important was this matter, that Paul basically repeated it: "*As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema*" (Gal. 1:9). This means that such a man will be lost! I do not have the right (the authority) to preach any message other than the gospel of Christ!

If any man has the right to preach some message which is different from the one which Jesus gave to us in the New Testament, then you and I would also have that right. Every other preacher on radio or television would have that right. Given this view, we could all just "make up" (invent) our own religion. We could make up our own message. If this is true, then I would be authorized, right in this moment, to simply invent a religious doctrine, knowing that it would be just as good as the gospel of Christ—the only message which Jesus authorized.

But friends, let me persuade you, let me urge you to study the Bible so that you can see for yourself that the Bible makes clear that only obedience to the gospel results in Christians. Only the gospel! People must hear, believe, and obey it! The gospel! The message of Christ! Not something that differs from it. Every other doctrine—whether it is something that purports to be in harmony with the Christian religion, or if it is some religion which rejects all claim to being Christian—is condemned by Jesus Christ (Matt. 7:13-27; Gal. 1:6-9).

Matt. 7:13-27

Gal. 1:6-9

Eph. 4:4-6

Eph. 1:22-23

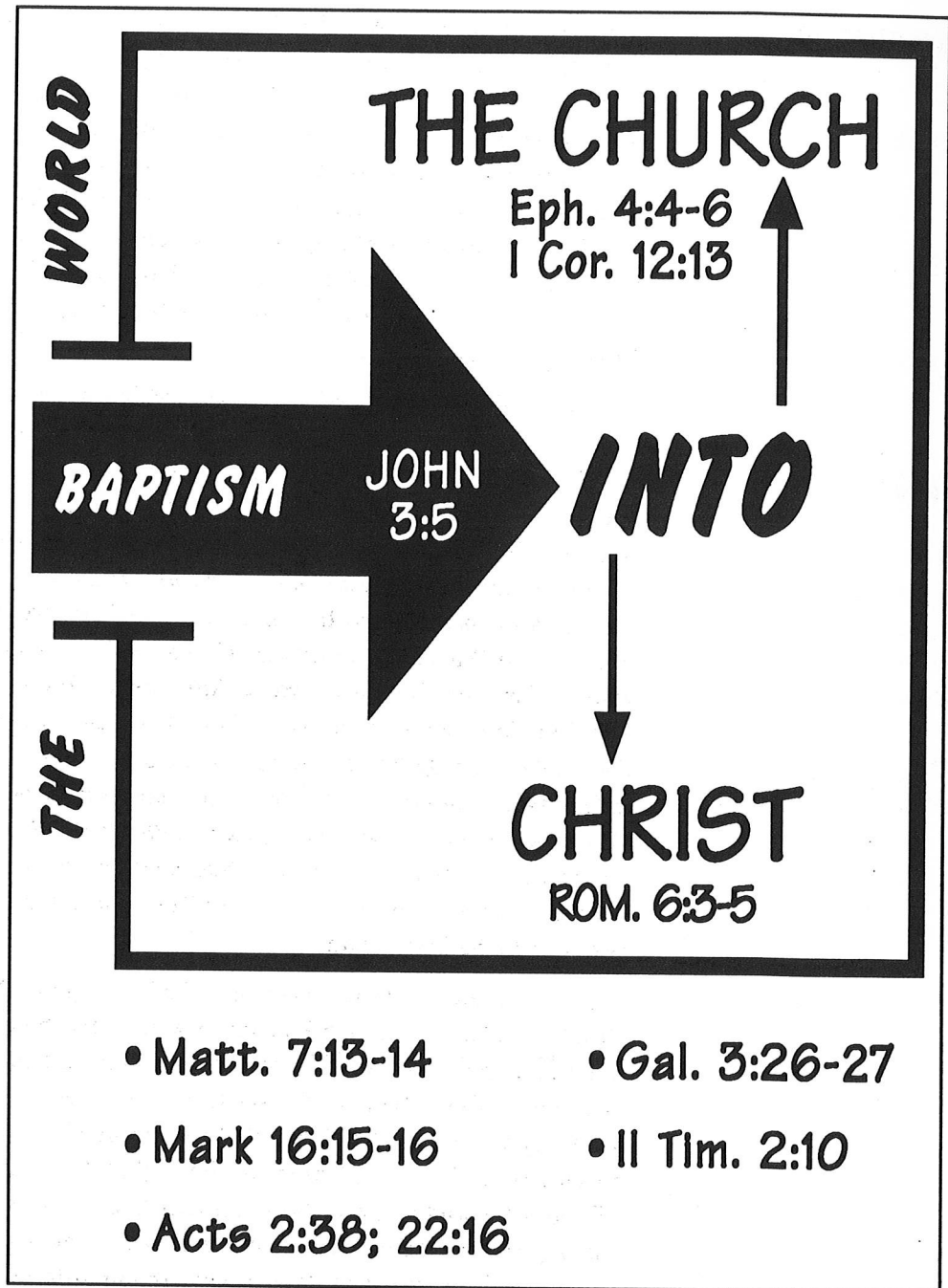
Heb. 9:22;
Rom. 5:8-9

Mk. 16:16;
II Tim. 2:10;
Rom. 6:3-5;
Gal. 3:26-27;
Acts 22:16
Rom. 4:20-21

cf. Acts 2:41, 47;
20:28

No doctrine which is not the gospel of Christ will result in one's becoming a member of the church (being saved). I plead with you to bear in mind that we are referring here not merely to a church, but the church about which you can read in the New Testament. Paul made clear (in Eph. 4:4-6), that just as there is one God, one Lord (Jesus Christ), one Spirit (the Holy Spirit), one faith (the gospel), one baptism, and one hope, there is just one body. He identifies that body in the first chapter of that same book as being the church (Eph. 1:22-23). The church is the one and only body of saved people. No one can be saved apart from the shedding of the blood of Christ. No one can be saved without coming under the saving power of the blood of Christ (Heb. 9:22; Rom. 5:8-9). Since Christ bought the church with his blood, you cannot be saved unless you are a member of the church. People are saved when they, having good and honest hearts, hear the gospel, receive it (they love the truth and open their hearts to it), want to do what is right, and be baptized into Christ (Mk. 16:16; II Tim. 2:10; Rom. 6:3-5; Gal. 3:26-27; Acts 22:16; et al.).

That is what it means to be a person of faith—to trust in and obey God. This means that one is to live a life of taking God at his word (Rom. 4:20-21)—not merely espousing some religious doctrine. Any doctrine other than the gospel will not do it. It must be the gospel of Christ! Everyone—without even one exception—who obeys the gospel of Christ, becomes a member of the church for which Jesus died (cf. Acts 2:41, 47; 20:28). Jesus bought the church with his blood. Jesus did not buy a denomination with his blood. Every religious body other than the church is without authorization by Jesus Christ. The gospel, believed and obeyed, never results in one becoming a member of anything other than the church of Christ. When one is baptized in the name of Christ (by His authority), that is, when he, as a penitent believer in Christ, is immersed in water, understanding that this act of obedience is the act of obedience which brings one into the body of Christ, then Jesus adds that person to the church (saves him, washes away his sins). There is no other way of becoming a Christian.



Eph. 4:4-6

Let us now note CHART 3.4. This chart will enable us to go into a little more detail on the crucial matter at hand. I am hopeful that this chart will help us to see just how important the church is in God's scheme of things. The act of being baptized (the one baptism) is to be immersed in water, not in the Holy Spirit. It must be noted that the apostle Paul said, "There is one baptism" (Eph. 4:4-6). May it be noted that the New Testament refers to a number of baptisms. It refers to the baptism of John, the baptism of fire, the baptism of suffering, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, so on. But now (at this present time) there is one—and only one—baptism. That one baptism is in the name of Christ—that is, it is by His authority. It is the one baptism which is now authorized (by Christ) for men living today. I repeat: that baptism is in water.

Acts 10:47-48

Notice carefully, in Acts 10:47-48, that the apostle Paul, at the household of Cornelius said, "*Can any man forbid the water, that these cannot be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?*" He then commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. This means that he commanded them to be baptized by the authority of Christ. For what element did he ask when he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Christ? He asked for water—not the Holy Spirit! Note these words again: "*Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ*" (Acts 10:47-48).

John 3:3-5

Earlier, during the earthly ministry of Jesus, Nicodemus came to Him by night and told Him that "we know that no man can do these things except God be with him" (John 3:3-5). Jesus told him that except a man be born again, he cannot see (experience, be in) the kingdom of God. Then Nicodemus asked the question, "*How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?*" You see, today sometimes people say—in an effort to avoid the obvious force of this passage—that the alien sinner is saved the very moment he believes in Jesus (before he is baptized in water). They say that Jesus was talking about, first of all, the physical birth and then, later on, birth by Holy Spirit baptism. But this is not true. Nicodemus already knew how babies come into this world. He asked, not how do babies get into this world, but, "*How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?*" You see, Nicodemus already knew about babies being born. He was not asking that question, but what he was asking is: "How can a man be born when he is old? How can he be born again?"

Jesus had taught that a man must be born again. And so Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." To be born of water and the Spirit is to be immersed in water by the authority of Jesus Christ. It is to be baptized in water as a means appointed by the Holy Spirit for the new birth. Please do not anticipate hearing some "still, small voice in the night." If you learn the truth of God, you will do it by studying the Bible (doing it honestly—carefully studying and drawing the conclusions which its explicit statements imply). To be born of water and the Spirit is to do just what the apostle Peter was telling the people of the household of Cornelius to do—that is, to be baptized in water. Philip the evangelist, preaching to the man of Ethiopia as they rode along in the chariot, preached "Jesus" to him. When they came to a certain water, the Ethiopian man cried out: "*See here is water, what doeth hinder me to be baptized?*" (Acts 8:36). How did he learn about water? How did he learn about baptism? He learned it by Philip's preaching "Jesus" to him!

Acts 8:36

I sometimes hear men say that they just "preach Jesus." I have had people to ask: "Why don't you just preach Jesus and leave baptism alone?" There is no possible way that I could adequately "preach Jesus" and not preach about "the one baptism"! When Philip, inspired by the Holy Spirit, preached "Jesus" to the man of Ethiopia, he told him that he needed to be baptized. It is clear that the Ethiopian was anxious to be baptized.

Acts 22:16

Baptism is essential to salvation.

I Cor. 12:13

Romans 6:3-5

Galatians 3:26-27

Acts 2:41,47

Matthew 7:13-14

Mark 16:16

In addition, Saul of Tarsus was baptized for the remission of his sins. He was not saved while he was still out on the road to Damascus. According to Acts 22:16, Ananias (a man who was sent to Saul by Jesus) came to Saul (a man who was in agony of soul because he realized he was still lost), and said to him, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on his name." In other words, Ananias told Saul to call on the name of Christ for salvation by obeying Jesus by being baptized into His name. Thus, it is clear that, at first, the Ethiopian was outside of Christ. Even if he was a believer, even if he was a penitent believer, even if he was a penitent believer who has confessed Christ (as was the case with Saul of Tarsus), he was not yet saved because he had not yet been baptized. Thus, he had not entered Christ; he had not entered the church. The church is the one body of Christ. We enter it when (under the instruction of the Holy Spirit through his word) we are baptized into that one body. Note this please: "For by one spirit were we all baptized into one body" (I Cor. 12:13). That fits with the instructions given to the man of Ethiopia. When he came to water, he said: "See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" It was by God's infinite wisdom that lost people are instructed to be baptized in water in order to enter Christ. Paul said, in Romans 6:3-5, "Or are you ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" (i.e. into the realm where you become a beneficiary of Christ's having died and shed his blood for all of us).

My friends, there is nothing else in the Bible, there is no passage in the Bible that tells you any way to get into Christ in any way other than by being baptized into him. In Galatians 3:26-27 (notice carefully now) the apostle Paul said, "So then you are all sons of God" (i.e. you are in Christ, you are children of God, you have been added by the Lord to His church; that is, the only way you can get into the church is for Christ to add you to it (Acts 2:41,47). I repeat: "So then you are all sons of God, through faith" (actually, through the faith, the gospel), in Christ Jesus." You see then that you are a son of God in Christ. Out of Christ you are not a child of God—you are a child of Satan. However we might not like that, it is still plain Bible teaching. So we see, in Matthew 7:13-14, that Jesus made clear that there is one and only one gate which you must enter and only one way that leads to life everlasting. In Mark 16:16, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." My friends, you cannot give language its very import and deny the truth that the believer in Christ is not saved until he is baptized in water by the authority of Christ.

**HAVE YOU BEEN
BAPTIZED INTO
CHRIST, INTO HIS
CHURCH?**

YES?

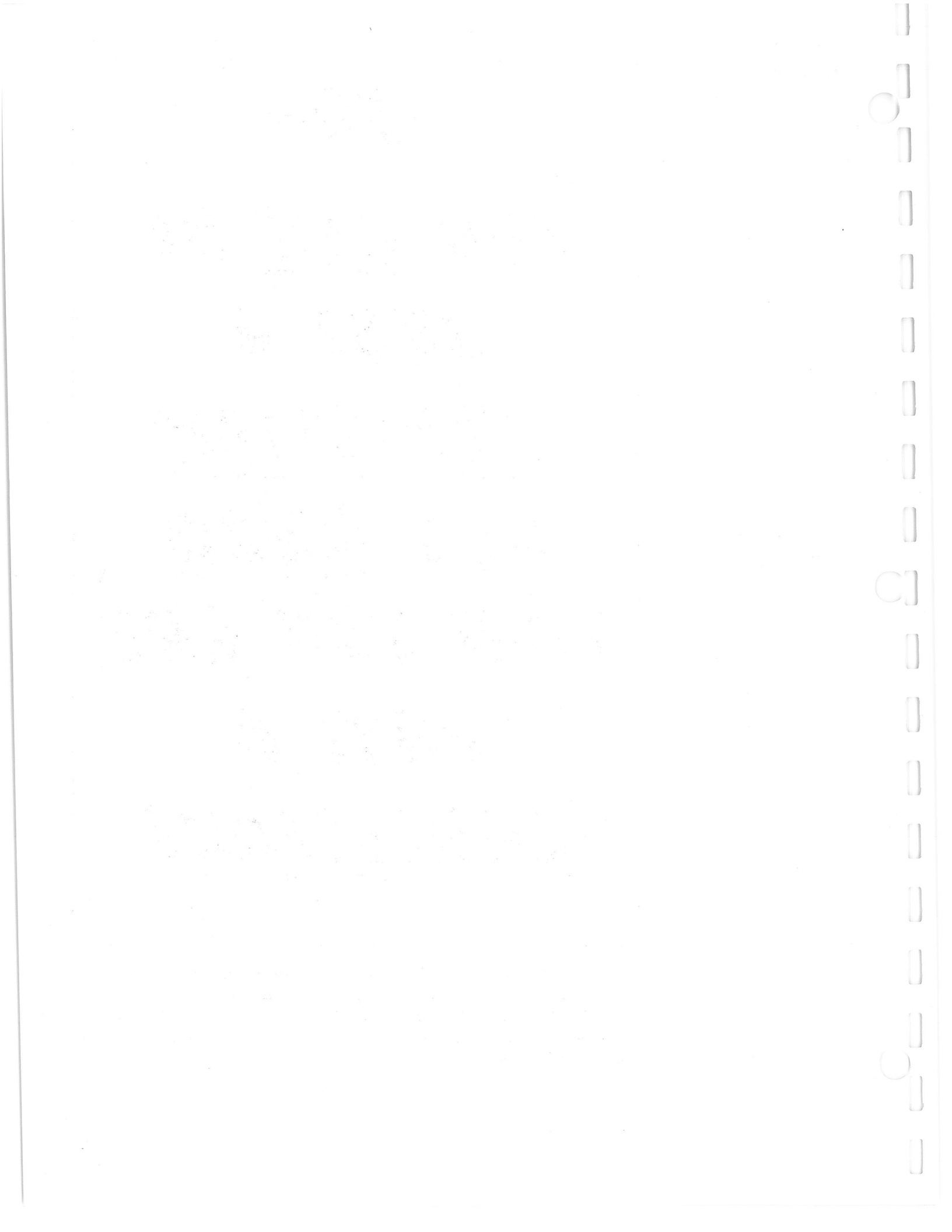
NO?

If NOT, then you are
not a Christian!

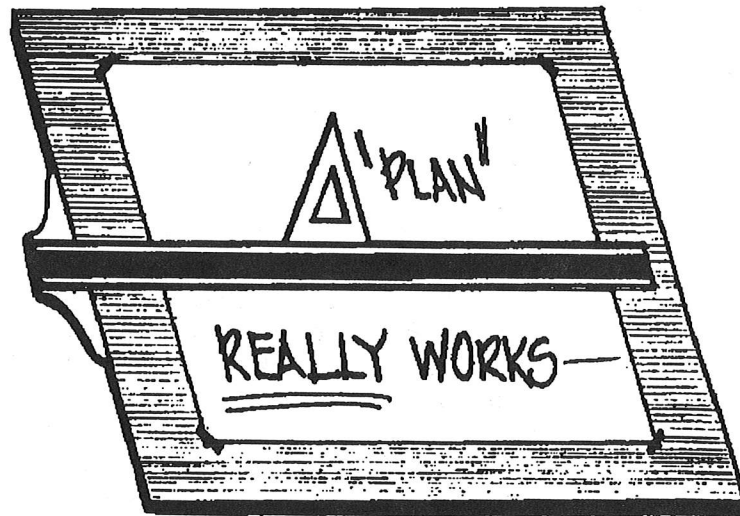
Let me close by asking you a question: "*Have you been baptized into Christ? Into the church?*" Into the body of Christ? Can you truthfully answer, "Yes"? Or must you answer, "No"? If you must answer "No", then you are **not** a Christian. I say that as kindly and lovingly as I can.

—SO—
YOU CAN BE
JUST A
CHRISTIAN
AND KNOW
THAT YOU ARE
JUST A
CHRISTIAN!

I do want to sincerely and lovingly urge you to accept the great truths that you can be just a Christian and that you can know that you are just a Christian! Search the Bible for yourself and see that such is the case. May God bless you and help you as you study His sacred Word, to love the truth and to obey it.



WHICH



MAN'S OR GOD'S?

Deut. 11:26-28; Matt. 21:23-37

3 CLASS SESSIONS ARE SUGGESTED FOR THIS LESSON.

BY THOMAS B. WARREN, PH.D.

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YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE!
PREPARING THE HEART FOR SUBMISSION TO GOD
LESSON 4: WHICH PLAN REALLY WORKS—MAN'S OR GOD'S?

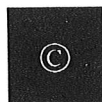
by Thomas B. Warren, Ph.D.

1994

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Which “Plan” Really Works— Man’s or God’s?

In the Old Testament, Moses set out one of the most important principles which God has given to men: in religious matters, (1) **God’s plan** always **succeeds** (when it is followed) and (2) **man’s plan** always **fails** (when it is followed). Note carefully the following statement from God, through Moses: *“Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: the blessing, if ye hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah your God, which I command you this day; and the curse, if ye shall not hearken unto the commandments of Jehovah your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known”* (Deut. 11:26–28).

Deut. 11:26–28

CHART 4.1

JESUS MAKES CLEAR:

1. The Plan which FAILS &
2. The Plan which SUCCEEDS:

23 *And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?*

24 *And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.*

25 *The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?*

26 *But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.*

27 *And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.*

Matt. 21:23–27

Matt. 21:23–27

Matt. 21:25

“...From Heaven or From Men?”

Matt. 21:25

In the New Testament, Jesus set out the **same basic principle** when He said: "And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one question, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, From men; we fear the multitude; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We know not. He also said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things" (Matt. 21:23-27).

Matt. 21:23-27

The reader is urged to grasp the point that Jesus makes it clear that **everything** we do in religion is either by the plan of **God** or by the plan of **man**. This means that everything a human being does in religion is either authorized by **Bible** teaching (the doctrine of **God**) or by mere **human** teaching (the doctrine of men). Everything we human beings do in religion is either (as Jesus put) from "heaven" (God) or from "men" (mere **human** doctrine).

Let us look at the Chart 4.1. Which plan really works? We have, here on the chart, a drawing board. Perhaps it might be used by an architect to draw plans for a house. Think for a moment: if you have engaged and paid an **architect** to draw the plans for a house which you wish to build, then you certainly do **not** want the **builder** of that house to be following some **other** (different) plan. In much the same way, God is the architect of man's spiritual life. God has authority. Jesus has authority. It is only the Godhead (including God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit) who has the right to tell us what to do in religion. So, the question before us is: "Which plan really works, **man's** or **God's**?" I know that men have invented many plans for religion. Obviously, there are many kinds of religions in the world. Some of them even reject **God**. Others believe in God but reject the **Bible**. Still others reject **Jesus Christ**. And others reject the **plan of salvation** which is set out in the Bible. So I want to point to the various charts which I plan to use in our study. I want to call your attention to (and help you to focus on) just what we are talking about: namely, that everything we believe and do in religion is either according to **man's plan** or to **God's plan**. There is not any other alternative. As we go through this and look at the various divisions of this lesson, I want to point out to you that there will be three main divisions which we will follow. There will be the setting forth of an argument. Note carefully: I do **not** mean an argument as in the case of a **wrangle** (a fuss or some sort of strife). I **do** mean an argument in the sense of presenting **evidence** (presenting **proof**).

I Thess. 5:21

You may recall the words of the apostle Paul, as he was guided by the Holy Spirit, to write, "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21). So, I will be setting out an argument which, I hold, will constitute **proof** that, in religion, **man's** plans always fail, but **God's** plans always **succeed**. I will present one argument proving that **man's** plans always **fail**. I will present another **argument** proving that **God's** plan always **succeeds**. I will draw a **conclusion** from those two arguments.

I want to set out the **basic form** of this argument (which see): (1) if proposition P implies proposition Q, and (2) proposition P is true, then (3) it **necessarily** follows that proposition Q is also true.

Now, let us be more specific: (1) If (in religion) the plans of men always fail, then (in religion) the plans of men should **always** be **rejected** by everybody. (2) **The plans of men do** always fail in religion. Therefore, it follows (3) that the plans of men should **always** be rejected by everybody. Just to be sure that you understand what I am saying, let me show you an illustration.

CHART 4.2

AN EXAMPLE ARGUMENT

Major Premise:

1. If John is the father of Charles, then John is older than Charles.

Minor Premise:

2. John is the father of Charles.

Conclusion:

3. Therefore, John is older than Charles.

First, if John is the father of Charles, then John is older than Charles. (We all **know** that this is true, because we all **know** that no one can be the **father** of another person unless he is **older** than that other person.) **Secondly**, John is the father of Charles. **Conclusion:** Therefore, it follows that John is older than Charles.

Why do we go about the matter in this fashion? Because it is a **valid** argument form. To say of an argument that it is "valid" is to say that **if all of the premises are true, then the conclusion must be true**. As a matter of fact, the Bible itself uses this procedure over and over and over from the beginning of the Bible to the end.

The Bible never makes a mistake in logic. God is infinitely wise. He knows everything (past, present, and future). He knows how to present proof. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles and prophets in the giving of the evidence which God has given to man in His sacred word, the Bible. All Bible writers set out their arguments in **valid** form. So, all can see the value of a syllogism or any other argument form which is valid. If the **premises are true** and the **argument is valid**, then the **conclusion must be true!** We are taught in the Bible (I Thess. 5:21) to **prove** all things and to **hold fast** to that which is good.

I Thess. 5:21

Thus, the responsibility that you and I have is not only to **read** the Bible but to **think** about it carefully in order to ascertain whether the arguments which we ourselves (or others) formulate are **sound**. To say that an argument is **sound** is to say: (1) that the **argument** is **valid** (in form) and (2) **all** of the **premises** are **true**. For example, if some one alleges that lost people are saved the very moment that they believe, we have to study the Bible to see if that doctrine really is taught there.

Of course, the Bible does teach that people are saved by faith; but let me emphasize that the Bible does **not** teach that people are saved by **faith only** (which is a **dead faith**—powerless, unable to accomplish anything at all toward salvation).

CHART 4.3

**REGARDING THE PLANS OF
MEN—OUR BASIC ARGUMENT**

Major Premise:

1. If the plans of men always fail to bring God's blessings, then everyone should reject the plans of men (in religion).

Minor Premise:

2. The plans of men do always fail to bring God's blessings.

Conclusion:

3. Therefore, everyone should reject the plans of men (in religion).

Thus, the PLANS of MEN should be rejected.

First, all of us should carefully note (on Chart 4.3) that **if the plans of men always fail** to bring the blessings of God, **then** such plans should be **rejected** by **all** people at **all** times! Surely, we can all agree that this proposition is true. **If the following** (in religion) of the plans which **men invent** will never bring God's blessing, **then** none of us should follow those plans.

The **second** point is: the plans of men **do** always fail to bring the blessings of God. I am simply saying here that **if** one is following a plan that has been invented by a **man** (whether that man is yourself or some other individual or some group of men), **then**—no matter how learned they may appear to you, no matter how much worldly honor they may have received—that plan is a **false** one. Worldly honors do not change a false doctrine into a true one. You **cannot** be saved by following the **plan of any man!** Thus, we have this **conclusion**: the plans that men invent should always be rejected by all people at all times.

The preceding two propositions imply the conclusion: everyone should **reject** the plans of men (in religion). I will now proceed to prove that the Bible teaches that the plans of men do always fail.

CHART 4.4

1. TYPES OF PROOF:

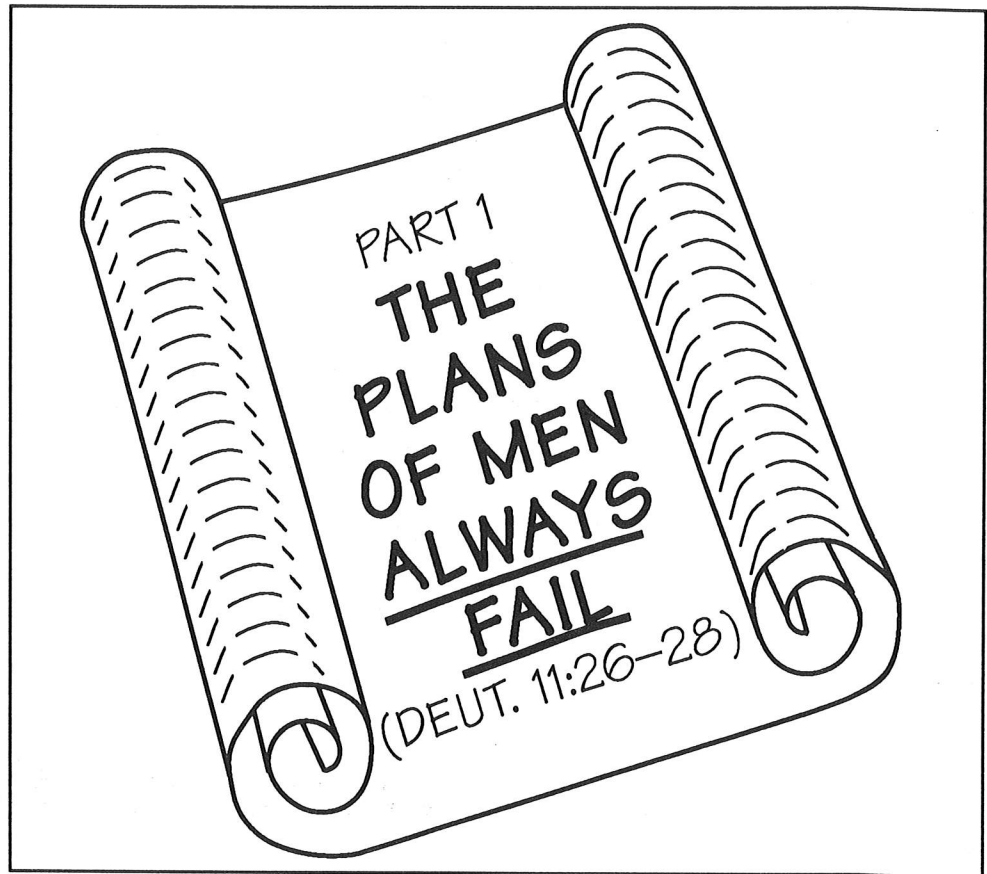
1. By precept.
2. By account of action or circumstance.

Let us now note the types of proof: (1) by **precept** and (2) by **account of action**. By "precept," we mean that the Bible just says—in just so many words—either to do a particular thing or **not** to do it (this teaching may be done either **explicitly** or **implicitly**).

By "**account of action**," we mean that the Bible gives a description of some action by some person(s). For instance, the Bible gives **the account** of how Noah built the ark, how he and his family went into the ark, and how they were saved from the flood by his having been obedient to God in the building of the ark and going into it.

A **precept** is "I set before you this day a blessing and a curse"—a curse if you do **not** obey and a **blessing** if you **do** obey (Deut. 11:26–28). This is a very, very important passage. It is one that actually sets the **principle** of what God **demand**s of us as people who are responsible to Him while we live our lives on this earth.

Deut. 11:26–28



Note the proof by precept in regard to the contention that the plans of men always fail.

SO—

**PROOF BY PRECEPT
THAT THE PLANS OF MEN
ALWAYS FAIL TO BRING THE
BLESSINGS OF GOD!**

1. II Chronicles 15:1-2
2. Galatians 1:6-9
3. II John 9-11

First, I want to call your attention to II Chronicles 15:1-2: "*And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Obed: And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but [note this carefully] if ye forsake him, he will forsake you*" [emphases mine]. There is not a place in the Bible where this principle is not applicable. From the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation, God says, in effect: "If you will seek me, you will find me. If you are obedient to me, I will bless you; but if you forsake me, I will forsake you. If you are disobedient, I will punish you." This truth is the basic thrust of this particular lesson. II Chronicles 15:1-2 sets out this basic principle.

II Chronicles 15:1-2

Galatians 1:6-9

In Galatians 1:6-9, the apostle Paul says to the churches of Galatia: "*I marvel that ye are so quickly removing from him that called you the grace of Christ unto a different gospel; which is not another gospel: only there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema.*" I have had people to tell me that they have awakened in the middle of the night and an angel, who was—they said—standing in their room and that the angel told them that they were—in that very moment—saved from their sins! They had become children of God! Saved from their sins! But Paul is really saying that even if an angel or an apostle ["we"] were to tell you something which contradicts the gospel, then he would bring himself under the anathema (curse) of God. Even if someone as great as Paul were to tell men something which contradicts the gospel, then he would bring himself under the anathema (curse) of God! That truth is absolutely "ungetoverable"! It is the basic principle of what this study is all about.

II John 9-11

Next, let us consider II John 9-11, "*Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God.*" Whoever presumptuously walks out of the path to which the gospel of Christ points does not have God. The basic attitude that we find among many people today is: They say, in effect, that it really does not matter whether one follows the Bible or not. Just being a good sort of a religious person or good moral person or one who is good to his wife and children or is good to his friends and neighbors, is all that is required. Such moral action, they hold, "will take care of" all of the sins in one's life. However, the Bible teaches that "something must be done about" one's sins if he is to be saved. God will not—even cannot—tolerate sin. The only way any sinner can be saved is by the grace of God through the blood of Jesus Christ (Heb. 9:22).

Heb. 9:22

**PROOF BY ACCOUNT OF ACTION
THAT THE PLANS OF MEN
ALWAYS FAIL TO
BRING THE BLESSINGS OF GOD!**

1. Adam and Eve – Gen. 1:27–28
2. Cain – Gen. 4:1
3. Noah – Gen. 6–9; II Pet. 2:4–5
4. King Saul – I Sam. 15
5. Israel & Promised Land –
Num. 13, 14
6. Nadab & Abihu – Lev. 10:1–2
7. Naaman – II Kings 5

Thus, having looked at Biblical passages which utilize **precept** in proving that men's plans always fail to bring God's blessing, let us now look at some **accounts of action** (referred to by some people as "examples") which prove that the plans of men (in religion) always fail. Now let us consider some accounts of action in which it can be easily seen that the plans of men **always fail**.

First, in Genesis we find God giving some crucial instructions to **Adam and Eve**: "*Of every tree of the garden, thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die*" (Gen. 2:16–17). That is a simple instruction—easily understood. But the serpent came and persuaded the woman (Eve) to reject God's way. She, in turn, persuaded the man (Adam) to disobey God. They both ate of the tree of which God told them **not** to eat. (Gen. 3:6). What was the result? God put them out of the garden. You see, their own plan, suggested to them by the serpent, was **not** just as good as God's plan! As a matter of fact, it caused them to lose their access to the tree of life. It caused them to be put out of the garden, to face physical death, and other terrible results. (Gen. 3:7–24).

Gen. 2:16–17

Gen. 3:6

Gen. 3:7–24

Gen. 4

In the case of **Cain** (Gen. 4), he did not, as did his brother **Abel**, follow God's plan in offering a sacrifice. He followed a plan of his own devising. In doing so, he was **not** pleasing to God.

Gen. 6

II Peter 2:4-5

In the case of the people in **Noah's** day, we find that they were very wicked (Gen. 6). But **Noah** was a preacher of righteousness. According to II Peter 2:4-5, **Noah** preached the message of God, warning the wicked people of the enormous consequences of those sins, trying to persuade them to repent, to change their minds and live as they should. However, they rejected **Noah's** warning. As a result, **not even one person** outside of the family of **Noah** was willing to repent of his wickedness and to then obey God. I raise the question: How many people who followed the plan of men, in this case of Noah, were saved from the flood? Not even one! Only **Noah, his wife, his three sons and their wives**, (eight people) were saved by water (I Pet. 3:18-22). Note please that they were the **only ones** who followed the **plan of God!** Those who were lost followed the **plan of men!** I plead with you to think about that as you consider your own salvation, your own standing in the sight of God.

I Pet. 3:18-22

I Sam. 15

In the case of **King Saul** (I Sam. 15), when God told him to go into the land of **Amelek** and to utterly destroy **all the people and all the cattle and all the sheep**, he decided that he would **save king Agag and the best of the sheep and the cattle**. But God sent **Samuel**, a faithful prophet to warn him that, because he had been unfaithful to God, he was rejected as being king. He was not put out (as being king) at that very moment, but his dynasty was rejected. His children did not succeed him as king. **The plan of men failed!** Before he acted, **King Saul** evidently had decided that the plan of God was simply not as wise as the one which he (**Saul**) devised. It is a rather common attribute of us human beings that we want to decide that our own way is better than **God's** way or at least that some **human way** (that is, some way other than) what **the Bible** teaches is what we ought to follow. Perhaps people simply decide that the plan of God is too stringent, too hard and, so, they (we) invent something else for themselves (or ourselves).

cf. Num. 13, 14

In the case of Israelites and their God-assigned task of conquering the promised land, the people wanted to elect a new leader and go back into Egypt. This occurred after the twelve spies came back from spying out the promised land, and ten of them gave an evil report while only two of them gave a good report and said, "Let us go up at once and possess it for we are well over to overcome" (cf. Num. 13, 14). Just think! In all of that nation, only two men, of the entire **adult population** (**Caleb** and **Joshua**) wanted to follow **God's** plan! **All the others** wanted to follow a plan of **their own** devising. Every one of those who followed the plan of man, wandered in the wilderness until they died. The **principle** thus taught is truly crucial for **every human being!** Next, we note that **Nadab** and **Abihu** offered "strange fire" unto God (that is, **God had not authorized them to offer such fire**). So, God sent forth fire from heaven and destroyed them. Why? Because they had rejected **God's** plan and followed one of **their own** devising! **Man's** plan always fails. It is absolutely clear, therefore, that-to be pleasing to God-one must both learn and obey **God's** plan but not **man's** plan.

Naaman provides a very challenging lesson. He was a Syrian Captain who had leprosy. At first, he rejected God's plan to go dip in the river Jordan seven times. Let it be noted that Naaman rejected God's plan and suggested one of his own. However, his servant wisely persuaded him to obey God's plan. Let it be noted that until he obeyed God's plan (of dipping seven times in the river Jordan) he remained a leper. Man's plan always fails and, thus, should always be rejected (II Kings 5).

II Kings 5

CHART 4.8



RE THE PLAN OF GOD OUR BASIC ARGUMENT

1. If the Plan of God always **succeeds** in bringing the blessings of God, then God's Plan should be **accepted** (believed & obeyed) by **all people at all times**.
 2. The Plan of God always **succeeds** in bringing the **blessings of God**.
 3. Therefore, it logically follows that the Plan of God should be **accepted** (believed & obeyed) by **all people at all times**.
- * The Argument is **VALID**, both **PREMISES** are **TRUE**—it follows that the **CONCLUSION** is **TRUE**.

Let us now turn to the second major argument: We turn from the sub-arguments which prove that the plans of men **always fail** to the sub-arguments which prove that the plan of God **always succeeds**. As with the preceding major argument, let us set it up in strict logical form. (1) If the plan of God always succeeds in bringing the blessing of God, then this plan should be accepted by all people at all times. Then (2) the plan of God **does** always **succeed** in bringing the **blessings of God**. (Never, never, never does the following of God's plan result in one's **not receiving** the blessing that God which God promised, the blessing which God wanted him to receive. On the other hand, we have already seen that the plans of men **always**, -without exception- fail to bring God's blessing. And so (3) the **conclusion** is: the **plan of God** should be **accepted by all people at all times**. Let us prove this, first of all, by precept.

PROOF BY PRECEPT

1. Hebrews 5:8, 9
2. John 6:37
3. II John 9-11

Hebrews 5:8-9

Here we deal with "proof by precept." On Chart 4.10, we note Hebrews 5:8-9. In that passage we find, in reference to Jesus, that "though he were a Son" (that is, in spite of the fact that He was (and is) the Son of God) "yet learned he obedience". [That means He had to go through the experience of obedience. Not that he was at one time disobedient and then became obedient! But this means that He had to go through the experience of obedience.] "though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." In being made perfect, He became to all them that obey Him the author of eternal salvation. In John 6:37 makes clear that Jesus will never "cast out" (fail to save) those who come to Him In II John 9, the emphasis is on this truth: whosoever goes on (in his life) and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God, but if one follows the doctrine of Christ, then he does have God!

John 6:37
II John 9

PROOF BY "EXAMPLE"

(Account of Action or Circumstance)

1. Adam & Eve - Gen. 2, 3
2. Abel - Gen. 4
3. Noah - Gen. 6-9
4. People & Brazen Serpent - Num. 21:4
5. Israel & "Promised Land"
6. Naaman - II Kings 5:1-19
7. Blind Man - John 9:1-12

In continuing the proof that God's plan always works (succeeds), we turn from **precept to example**. Please note that As long as they were obedient, to God, they were blessed by God.

- (1) **Adam and Eve** had God's blessing; If they had obeyed God's instructions, they could have remained in the garden with an ongoing access to the tree of life.
- (2) By faith, **Abel** offered unto God, the sacrifice that God had told him to offer. Because of his obedience to God, he had witness from God that he was pleasing to him.
- (3) **Noah** was a great man who faced enormous opposition. No doubt, what Noah did in obedience to God, looked foolish to other men. It was surely the case that Noah was the object of ridicule day by day as others would laugh and make fun of him. Noah's following of God's plan was successful in gaining salvation from the flood for himself and his family.
- (4) The **people** who erected the brazen serpent in the wilderness. God's plan (in regard to when the people were bitten by the fiery serpents in the wilderness) was for the people to make a serpent of brass and put it on a pole. It would then come to pass that whoever looked at it would be healed of the snake bite. No person who looked at it would fail to be healed of his bite. Those who did not, of course, would not have been healed. As always, when people obeyed God, they were blessed.
- (5) The Israelites, who were told to march around the city of **Jericho** once each day for six days and, on the seventh day, to march around seven times, to blow on the ram's horn and to shout. Facing such instructions, likely most people would say, "What a foolish plan! I am simply not going to follow it! I can think up one better than that." But every person who has read the Bible knows that, as they **followed God's plan**—as they marched around the city once each day for six days and on the seventh day seven times and then blew on the ram's horn and shouted—the walls of Jericho fell down. Hebrews 11:30 plainly tells us that "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they had been compassed about seven days." Obviously, the plan of God succeeded!
- (6) When **Naaman** dipped in the river Jordan seven times (according to God's plan), his leprosy was healed (II Kings 5).
- (7) **The blind man** in John 7, Jesus spat on the ground, made clay of the spittle, put it on his eyes, and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam.

Hebrews 11:30

II Kings 5

John 7

The man did as Jesus told him, and when he did, he "came seeing" (returned with the ability to see). The plan of God, even if it seems foolish to men, always succeeds in the bringing about man's being blessed. When obeyed by human beings, always results in those human beings being blessed by God. Obeying the plan of God always results in blessings.



Now, our task is to see the application. Here is the big question: What is God's plan for man today?

“There is ¹one body¹, and
²one Spirit², even as ye are
called in ³one hope³ of your
calling; ⁴one Lord⁴, ⁵one faith⁵,
⁶one baptism⁶, ⁷one God⁷
and Father of all, who is
above all, and through all,
and in you all.”

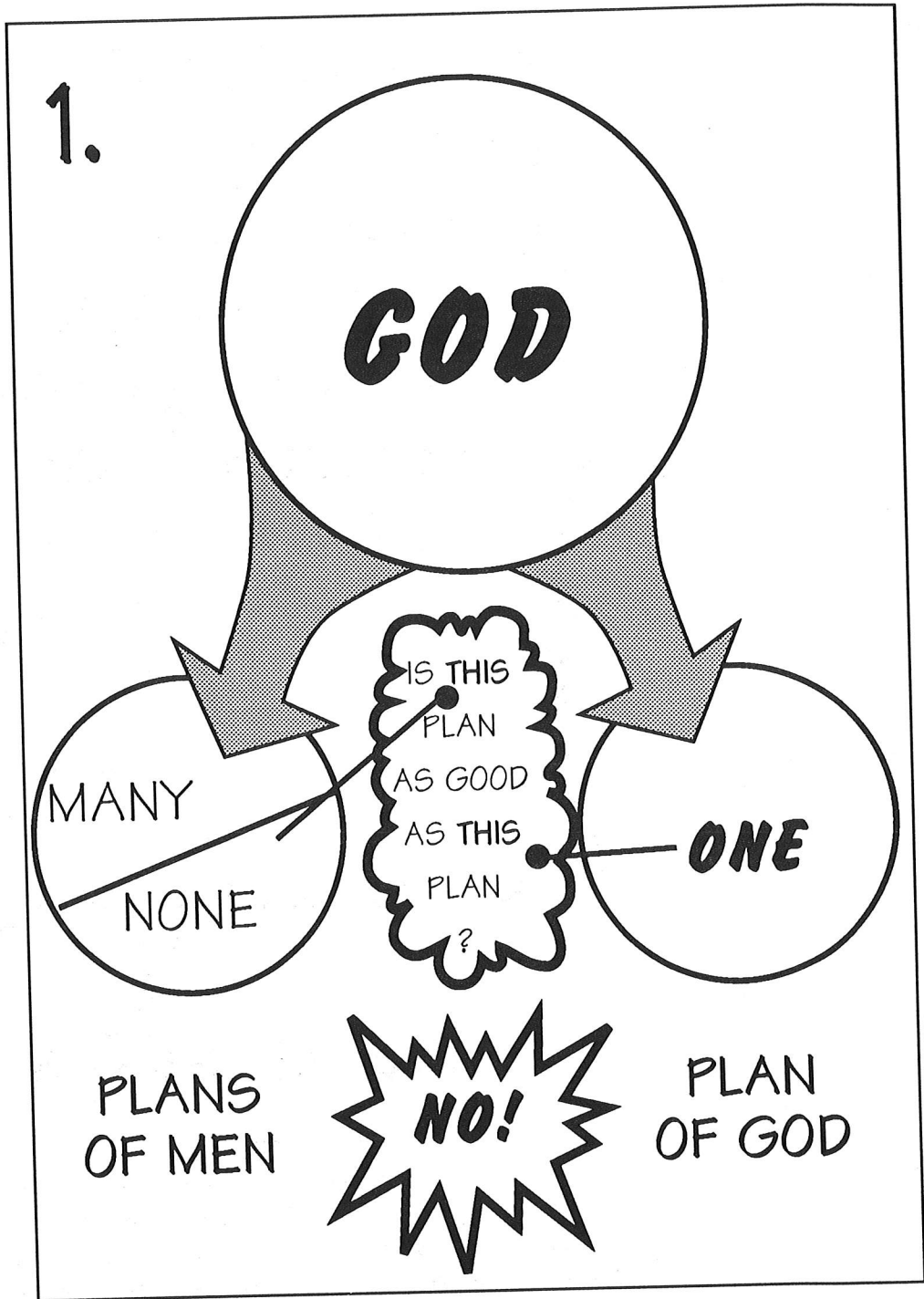
— Eph. 4:4–6

THIS IS GOD'S PLAN

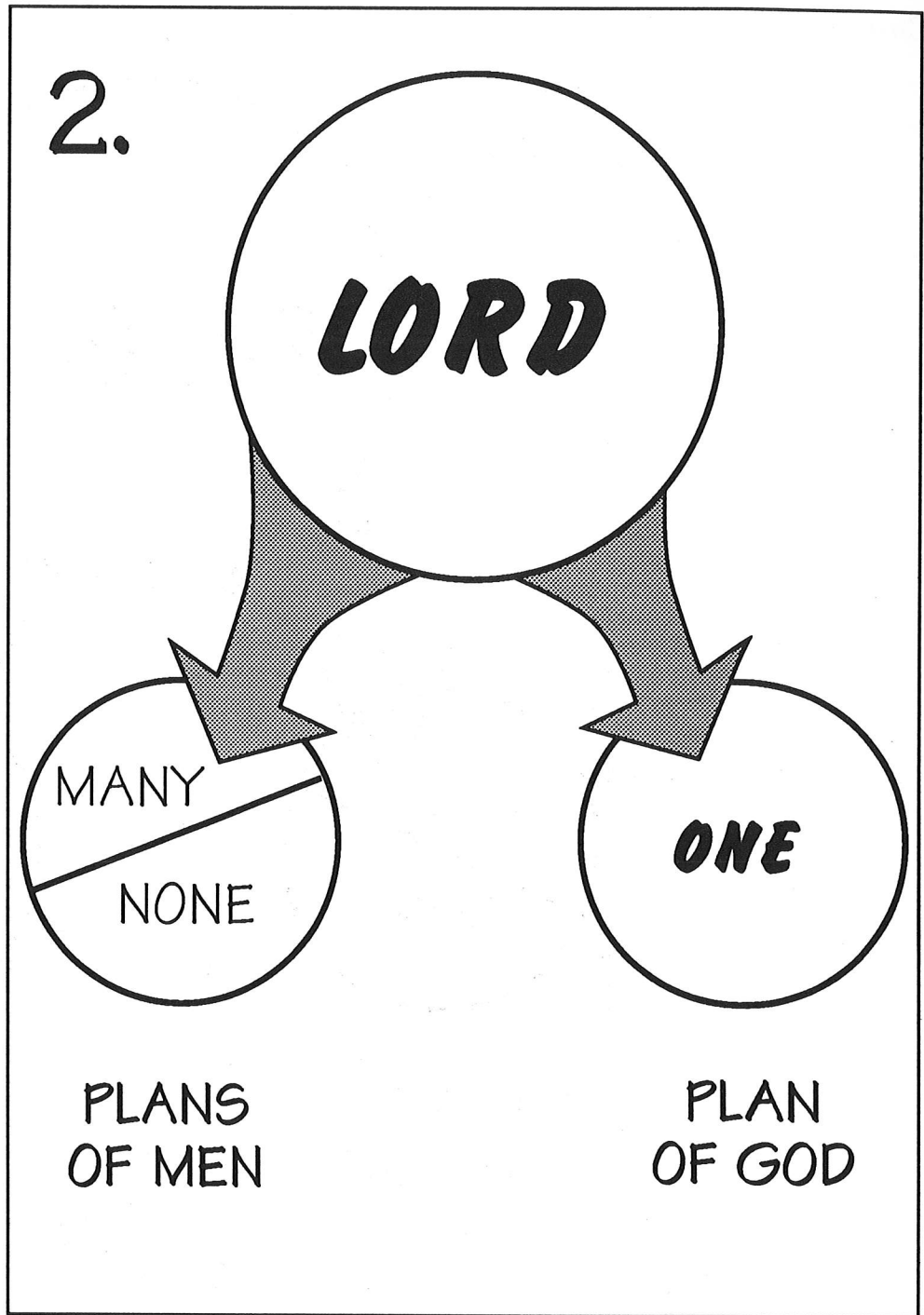
Ephesians 4:4–6

Acts 20:28

As we turn to Ephesians 4:4–6, we find seven items listed there. On Chart 4.13, they are listed as they are in Ephesians 4:4–6. However, for a special emphasis, I want to list them in this order: there is **one God**, there is **one Lord**, there is **one Spirit**, there is **one Hope**, there is **one Faith**, there is **one Baptism**, and there is **one Body**. (the church which Jesus bought with His own blood, Acts 20:28).

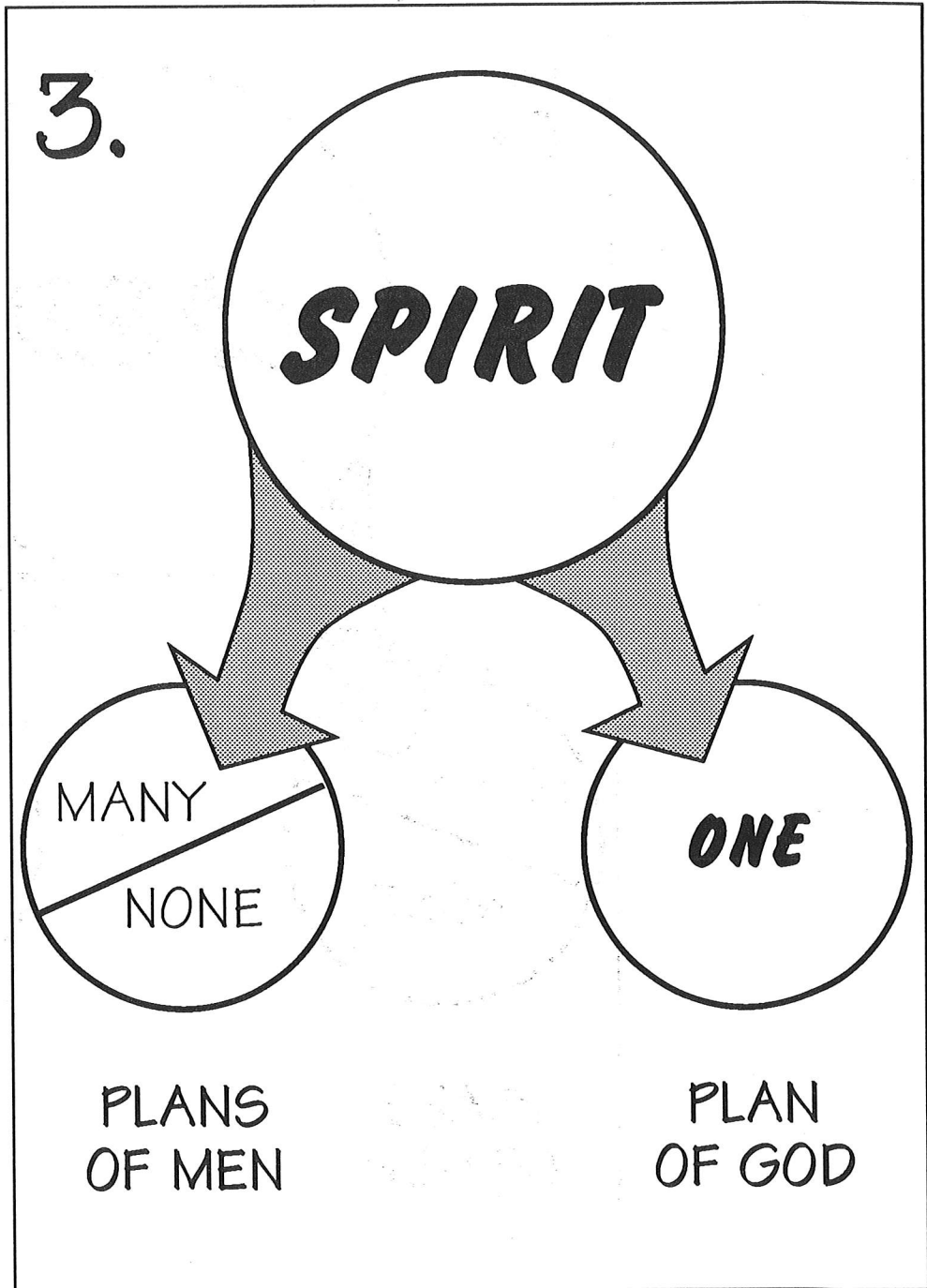


Let us look at the chart and compare the plans of men with the plan of God. In regard to God. Some men say, that there are many Gods, and one of them is as good as another. Others say there is not any God at all! You see, the plans of men are either (1) there are many gods or (2) no God at all. But according to God's plan, there is one! There is just one God! The plans of man, suggesting either many or none (gods or no God) simply "will not do!" I plead with one and all to recognize that there is the one true living God, infinite in all His attributes!

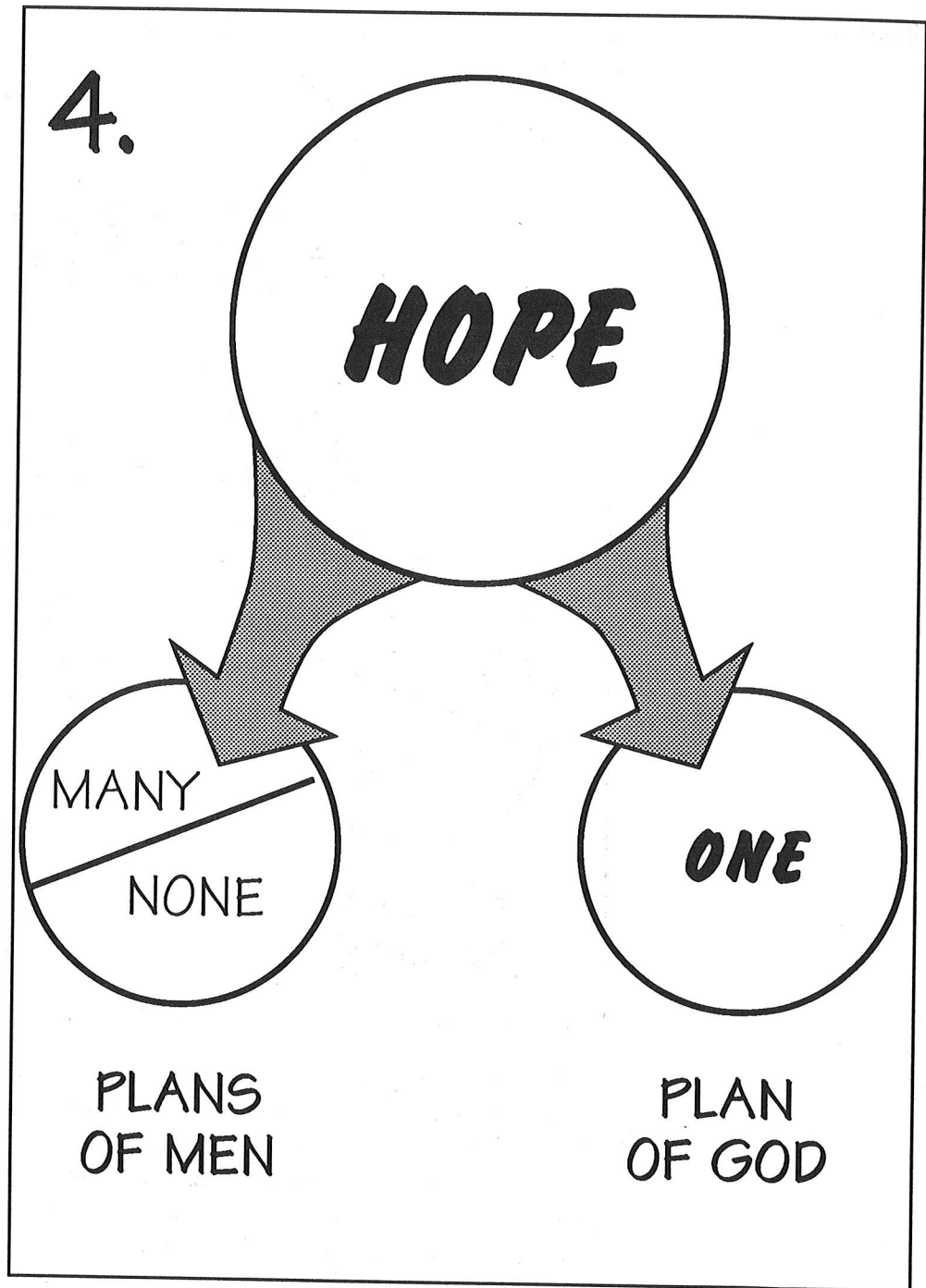


In the matter of the Lord, the Lord is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the **one** and **only** Savior. But the plans of men affirm either **many** or **none**. But the plan of God declares: There is **one** Lord. One Lord Jesus Christ. It is He who was born of the virgin Mary, who lived a **perfect** life (never sinning even once), who died on the cross (not for His own sins [for He had **none**!] but for the sins of every person (he will save all who obey Him, Heb. 5:8-9).

Heb. 5:8-9

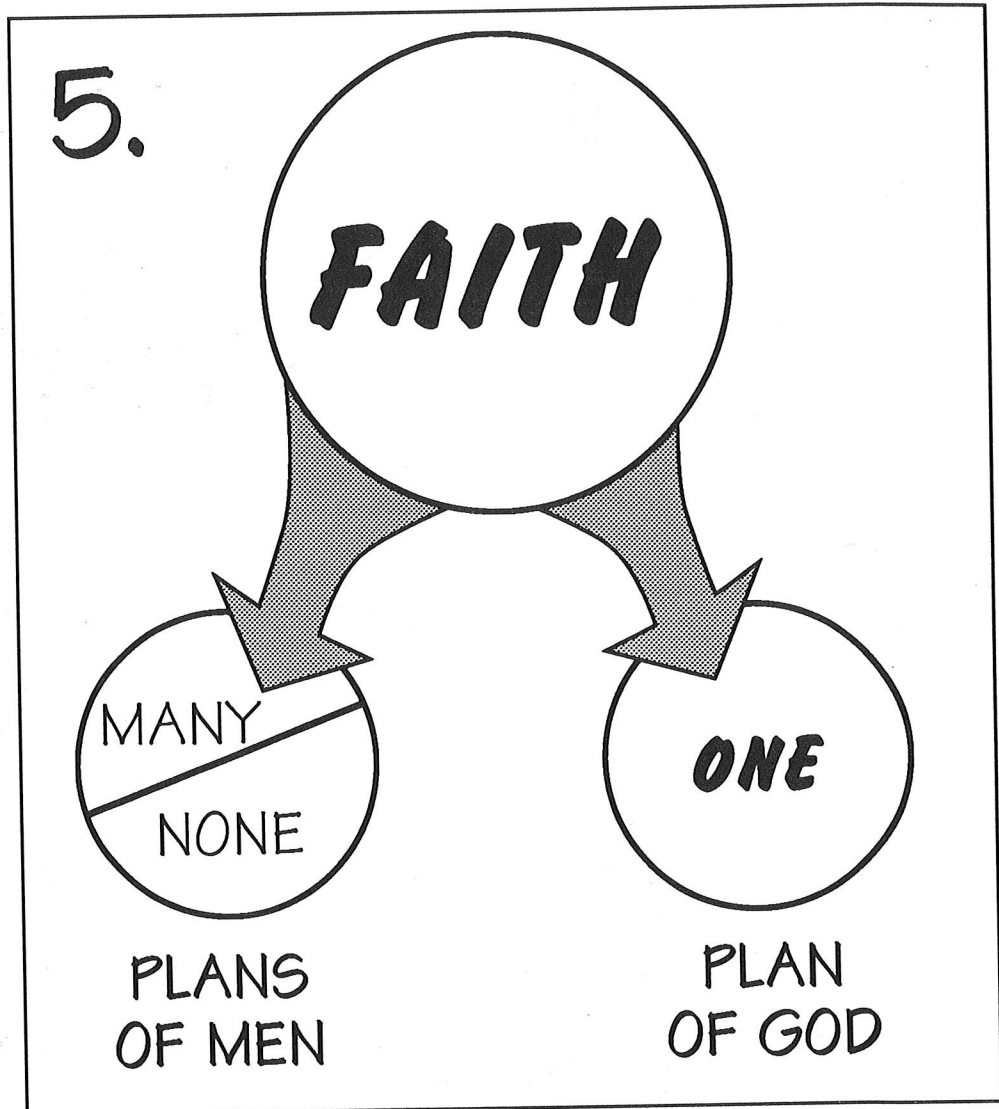


There is one Spirit—the **one** Holy Spirit (a member of the Godhead). Some men say there are many spirits and others say there is not any at all. But according to the plan of **God**, there is **one** Holy Spirit—one person, who is a member of the Godhead (the Trinity, three persons in one Godhead). He is the inspirer of the Bible—the one who enabled the men to work miracles in the days of the New Testament.



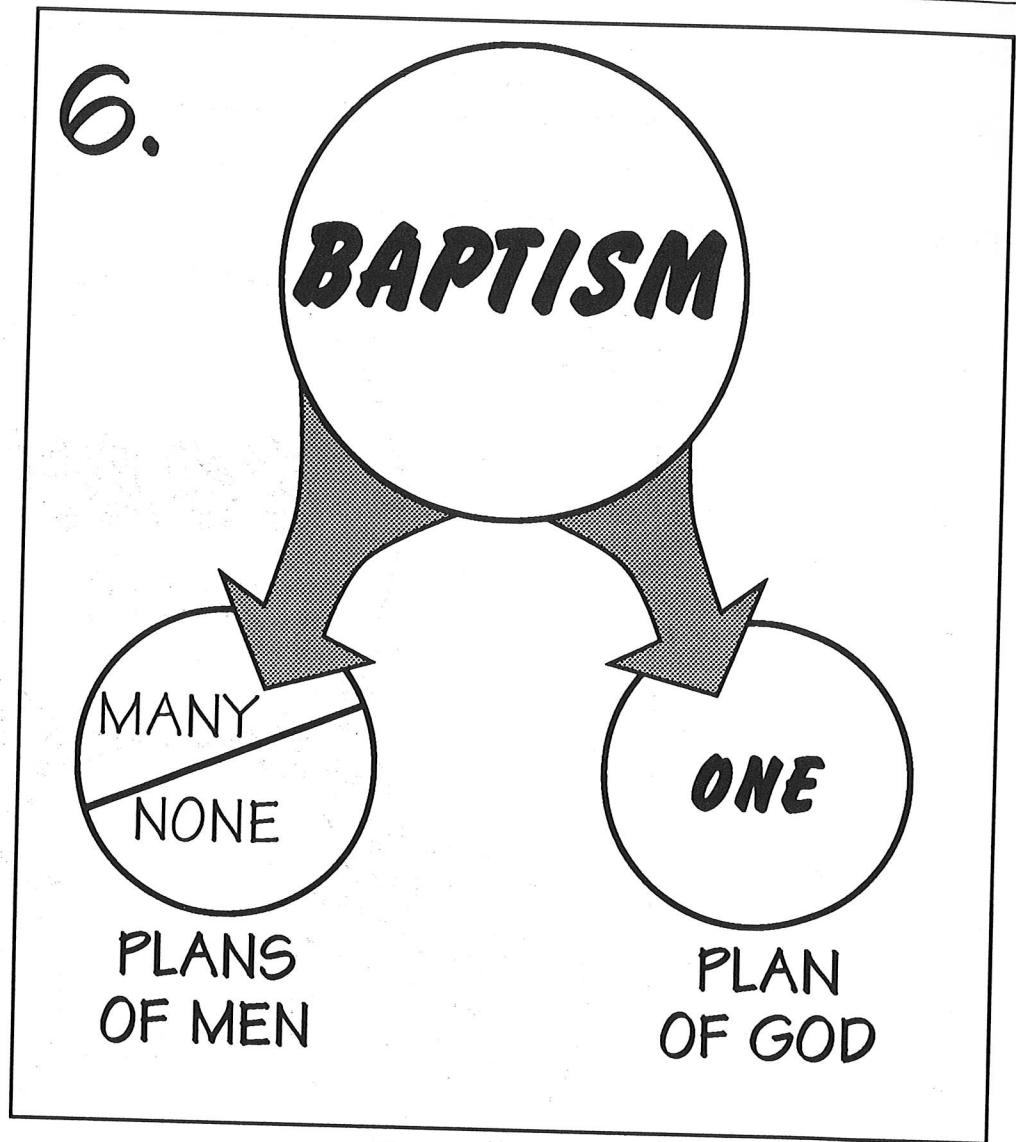
Also, in the plan of God, there is **one hope**. Some men say there are **many** hopes and others say there is **none**. Some say, "Oh well, there are a lot of hopes, and one of them is as good as any another." But others say, "There is **not any hope** at all! All human life is simply characterized by despair." But according to the plan of God, there is **one hope**. What is that hope? Christians live in hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2). This hope is the promise that He promised us, even life eternal (I John 2:25). That is the hope with which every Christian lives—the hope of being with **God** throughout the unending ages of eternity!

Titus 1:2
I John 2:25



Next, we note the crucially important matter of the **faith** (Eph. 4:4–6). This means: **the one body of doctrine**, the New Testament, the gospel of Jesus Christ! Some men say, “There are **many** religious messages—many doctrines—and one is as good as another. It does not matter which one you follow.” But others say, “There is not any at all—that is, not any that matters at all!” Still others say, “All religion is simply a matter of foolishness.” So, the plans of men in regard to **the faith** are either that there are **many** faiths [and one is as good as another] or that there is none! But the plan of God, according to Ephesians 4:4–6, is that there is **one faith** (one body of doctrine, the Gospel of Christ)! That is as plain and simple as language can make it. We often here people say, “Of which faith are you?” My friends, there is not but **one faith**! That faith is **the gospel of Jesus Christ**. And if you **do not understand** that gospel, if you **do not believe** that gospel, and if you **do not obey** that gospel, then you cannot become a Christian. And if you have become a Christian, but you are not now following that one faith, then you are an **unfaithful** Christian. If such be the case, then we plead with you to “come back home” (to a life of faithfulness) and “walk with Jesus Christ” for the rest of your life.

Eph. 4:4–6



Next, I call your attention to the matter of baptism. Some people say, "There are **many** baptisms, and one baptism is as good (valuable) as any other baptism." Some say that baptism is accomplished by **sprinkling**, some by **pouring**, some by **immersion** in water. Still others say, "No, baptism is in the Holy Spirit." My friends, some men say that there are **many** baptisms and others say that there is **none**—no baptism at all! But God's plan plainly says that there is **one** baptism—and that it is accomplished **only** by **immersion**. That is the very meaning of the word "baptism." One must be **immersed, dipped or plunged**, —be fully immersed in the water. Immersed in **water**—, **not** baptized in the Holy Spirit today. There is one baptism. Baptism in the name of (by the authority of) Jesus Christ requires **water**. According to Acts 10:47, the apostle Peter said, "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" He then commanded them to be baptized in the name of (by the authority of) Jesus Christ (Acts 10:48). You see, when you compare that passage with Acts 2:38 in which believers are come baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins, it is clear that the baptism which is in the name of Christ, which brings us into salvation—is in **water**! There is no Holy Spirit baptism for men today.

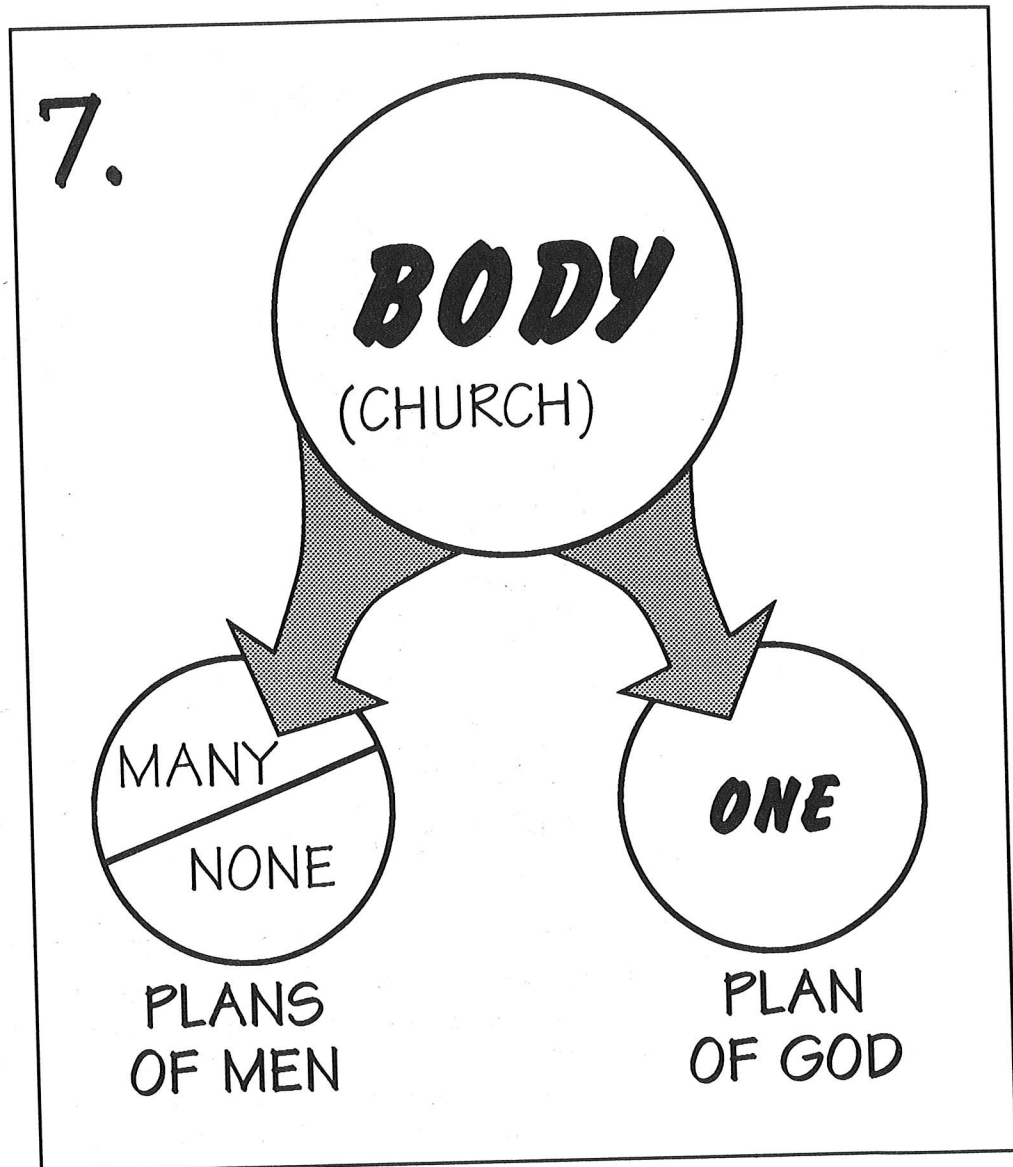
Acts 10:47

Acts 10:48
Acts 2:38

The Bible makes clear that now (at this present time) there is only one baptism, and that that one baptism is in water and that it is "unto the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38) —one does it to be saved from his sins.

Acts 2:38

CHART 4.20



And then finally, in regards to the Body, (that is, the church). Some people say, "Go join the church of your choice!" The Bible teaches no such thing! To be saved, one must be baptized into the one church which was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28). The Bible approves of one—and only one—**one church** (one body). There are **many members**, but there is only **one body** (I Cor. 12; Rom. 12)—just as is the case with each human being. In contrast to there being **many members**, the Bible says there is **one body**! That body is the church (Eph. 1:22–23; Col. 1:18). According to the Bible, there is no such thing as "joining the church of your choice"—not if you are to be pleasing to God! To be pleasing to God, one **obeys the gospel**! The gospel is the seed of God. And the only thing that will result from one's obeying the gospel—from

Acts 20:28

I Cor. 12;

Rom. 12

Eph. 1:22–23;

Col. 1:18

obeying the one faith—is to be saved from sin, to enter Christ, to be added by the Lord to the church (the body for which He died). We plead with you not to make a mistake about that! The Lord does not tell you to obey the gospel and then to go “join the church of your choice.” You must not join a denomination—something started by men—in order to be saved. This is the case because the very act of your obeying the gospel puts you into the church which was purchased by the blood of Christ! Let us look then at this fact (from Eph. 4): *there is one body, there is one Spirit even as also you were called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all who is over all and in all and through all.* Follow God—not mere men!

CHART 4.21

PLANS OF MEN		
	THE PLAN OF GOD	
NONE	ONE GOD	MANY
NONE	ONE LORD	MANY
NONE	ONE SPIRIT	MANY
NONE	ONE HOPE	MANY
NONE	ONE FAITH	MANY
NONE	ONE BAPTISM	MANY
NONE	ONE BODY	MANY
Note: This Plan Always FAILS	Note: This Plan Always SUCCEEDS!	Note: This Plan Always FAILS

Let me close by putting this whole matter on a chart which, that I hope, will be of real value to you. Note that here [pointing to the chart] is God’s wonderful plan. It is **wonderful** in the sense that it is **all-sufficient** (it can save you), **attainable** (it can be learned), and **unique** (it is the **only** message that can save you, Gal. 1:6–9). There is one of each of these [pointing to the middle column]. There is **one body** (one church), **one Spirit** (one Holy Spirit), **one hope** (of life everlasting), **one Lord** (Jesus Christ), **one faith** (the gospel

Gal. 1:6–9

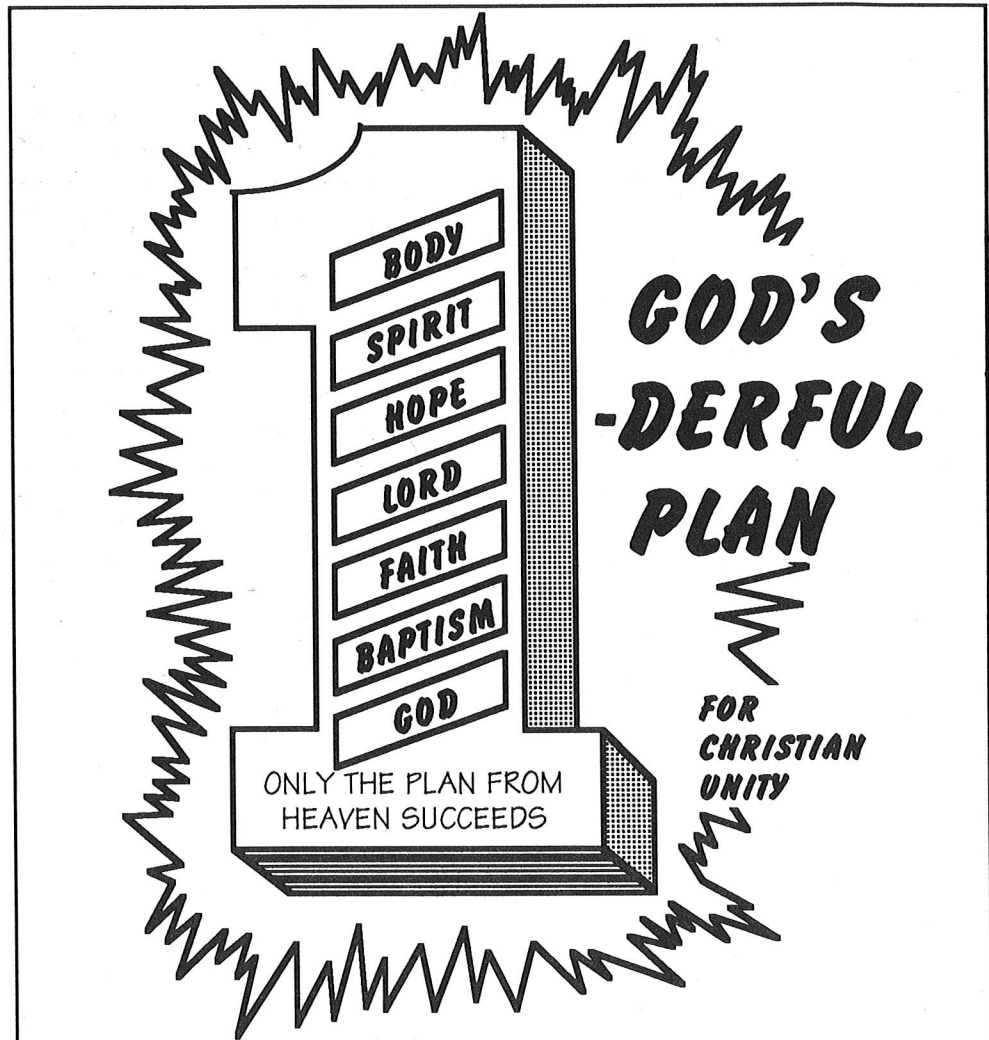
of Christ, the truth of Christ), **one baptism** (immersion in water unto the remission of sins) and one God! The Bible plainly teaches this. Please note that the plans of men always fail, but the plan of God never fails. I challenge you to take your Bible—if indeed you think that what I have said is **not** the truth—to find in the New Testament where it teaches that there is more than **one body**, more than **one spirit**, more than **one hope**, more than **one Lord**, more than **one faith**, more than **one baptism** or more than **one God**.

II Tim. 4:1-5

Acts 17:11

My friends, I am pleading for the souls of us all including my own soul—to be faithful in **preaching** the gospel (II Tim. 4:1-5). And for **your soul**—if you have been misled by the doctrines of various denominations. I plead with you to open your Bible and see whether it teaches this: one plan of salvation which teaches all of these marvelous things. It has been such a pleasure to have been with you, and I hope that you will take your Bible to search and see,—as did the people of Berea (Acts 17:11)—if these things were so. Will you do that? May God bless you in the doing of it. To help you in making your search one of the greatest profit, I show you one more chart. Please study it carefully and accept the Biblical truth which it sets out.

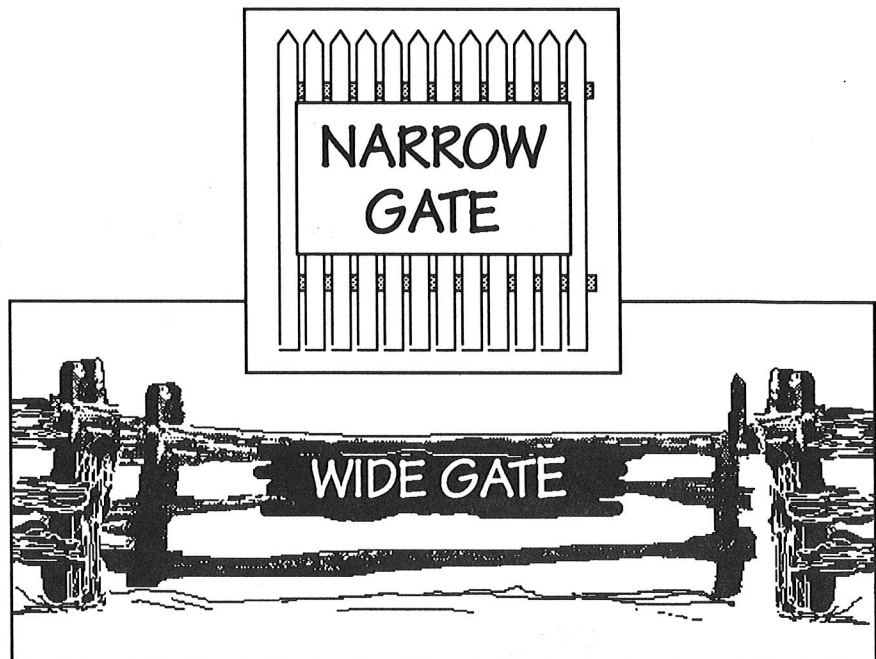
CHART 4.22



Ephesians 4:4-6

May God richly bless you as you prayerfully consider the “seven ones” of Ephesians 4:4-6.

***“There is
No Middle
Between...
AND...”***



Matthew 7:13-14

1 OR 2 CLASS SESSIONS ARE SUGGESTED FOR THIS LESSON.

BY THOMAS B. WARREN, PH.D.

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YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE!

PREPARING THE HEART FOR SUBMISSION TO GOD

LESSON 5: "THERE IS NO MIDDLE BETWEEN...AND..."

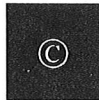
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“There Is No Middle Between... And...”

Luke 8:4-15

I often hear people say, perhaps as conversation about **religion** comes up, “I just try to live by the Sermon on the Mount.” They seem to have the idea that living by the Sermon on the Mount amounts to nothing more than just being a “jolly good person”—that being “good” to your neighbor, being “good” to your wife and your children, working hard for a living is about the “end” of it. They seem to hold that if one lives that way, God will surely save him eternally when earthly life is over. It is **true**, of course, that people are under **obligation** to live by the principles which are set out in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). But that sermon does not allow a casual or flippant attitude toward Jesus and His truth.

Matt. 5-7

CHART 5.1

JESUS TAUGHT THAT THERE IS NO MIDDLE

“Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.”

Matt. 7:13-14

Jesus taught, “Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.” Some people seem to believe that every human being will spend eternity in Heaven. The average person believes that at least **almost everybody** is going to be saved in heaven. Most preachers

never "lose a case" at a funeral service. It seems that even if a deceased person has actually rejected God, Christ, the Bible, the church, and the Christian life (and has lived a reprobate life) that somehow or other he is nevertheless expected to go to heaven. However, the Bible teaches otherwise. I plead with you to note carefully the words of Jesus in this marvelous passage in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7:13-14.

Matthew 7:13-14

CHART 5.2

SOME FACTS ABOUT YOU

1. You are being invited by two inviters.
2. By means of two messages.
3. To walk through one of two gates.
4. To walk down one of two ways.
5. To be involved in one of two destinies— forever.

Let us look—in some detail—at these facts.

Now, I would like to look at some things which are crucial for all of us. I have on the Chart 5.2 some facts about you (and me). They are just as much facts about every other person as they are facts about you. The **first** fact is: you are being invited by two inviters. We will discuss that in detail. **Secondly**, you are being invited by means of two messages. **Third**, you are being invited by two inviters by means of two messages to walk through one of two gates. **Fourth**, you are being invited to walk down one of two ways. And, **finally**, you are being invited to be involved forever in one of two destinies. Let us look at these matters in some detail, remembering that every person (of accountable age) faces these five alternatives. There are no others.

THERE IS NO MIDDLE INVITER



Note: Every one will respond either to the invitation:

1. Of Jesus – Matt. 11:28–30
- OR –
2. Of Satan – 1 Pet. 5:8

There is no other possibility.

Matt. 7:13–14

I want to remind you of this—that is, to have you to look at it with me on the chart. Jesus taught—He clearly implied—that there is **no middle** involved in any of these five crucial matters. Note this message from Jesus. It is a part of the Sermon on the Mount. If you are striving to live by the Sermon on the Mount—which you certainly ought to be—recall, and remember always, that this statement from Jesus (Matt. 7:13–14) is in it. *“Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it.”* Jesus taught that **few** will find **life** (eternal salvation in Heaven) and **many** will find **death** (eternal punishment).

In Chart 5.3, please note that the affirmation that there is no middle inviter is clearly implied. By that I mean that only **Jesus** and **Satan** are the **ultimate inviters** of mankind. There is no middle inviter between Jesus and Satan. Both Jesus and Satan are inviting you to accept their respective invitations. By rejecting **Jesus’** invitation, you accept **Satan’s** invitation. Accepting the invitation of either Jesus or Satan implies the **rejection** of the other. There is no middle inviter between Jesus and Satan. There is simply **no other possibility!** Every person will respond either to the invitation of **Jesus Christ** or to the

cf. I Pet. 5:8

Matt. 11:28-30

I Pet. 5:8

Matt. 25:46;
II Thess. 1:7-9

invitation of **Satan** (cf. I Pet. 5:8, warning all people that Satan is "roaring lion," seeking whom he may devour). Recall the invitation of Jesus: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. 11:28-30). Other than Jesus, the **only** inviter is **Satan**. We **emphasize**: Satan's invitation is **implied** in the following statement: "Be sober, be watchful; your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (I Pet. 5:8). Jesus wants you to be **saved!** He wants you to live a **wonderful** life, through the **grace** of God, here on this earth. But **Satan** wants you to live a **degraded** life on this earth and spend **eternity** in a state of **punishment** (Matt. 25:46; II Thess. 1:7-9). Think carefully about this, will you? Think about the **impossibility** of there being a **middle inviter** between Jesus and Satan. **There is no middle inviter between Jesus and Satan!** At this very moment of our lives, each one of us is listening either to the invitation of **Christ** or to that of **Satan**.

CHART 5.4

THERE IS NO MIDDLE MESSAGE

Note: Every one will respond either to:

1. The TRUTH – John 8:32
- OR –
2. FALSE DOCTRINE – II Pt. 2:1-22

There is no other possibility.

I now call your attention (on Chart 5.4) to the fact that there is **no middle message!** On the one hand, there is the **truth** of Jesus Christ (the New Testa-

Mark 16:15-16

ment, the gospel of Jesus Christ which is to be preached to every person in the whole wide world, Mark 16:15-16). On the other hand, there is the **false doctrine** of Satan. Every doctrine which contradicts the doctrine of **Christ** is **false doctrine**, that which contradicts the truth. There is **no middle message** between **the truth** and **false doctrine!** If it does not fit with the truth, if it is **not a part** of the explicit truth, if it is **not implied** by the truth, then it is **false doctrine!**

John 8:32

Everyone will respond to the truth by either **accepting** it or **rejecting** it. Jesus said, "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*" (John 8:32). It is **possible** for human beings to **learn** the truth. The truth is **absolute**; that is, it is not changed by some person drawing a conclusion about it (interpreting it). Truth is **absolute**, not **relative**. I repeat: it is **attainable**, it can be **learned**. Jesus said, "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*"

Rom. 1:16-17

The truth is not only **absolute** and **attainable**; it is also **powerful!** The apostle Paul said, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed the righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith*" (Rom. 1:16-17).

II Peter 2:1-22

On the other hand, II Peter 2:1-22 strongly **condemns** false teachers. Consider the truth that the fact that I am preaching at this moment, is not—within and of itself—a **guarantee** that I am preaching in a way that is **acceptable to God!** Paul made clear that even if an angel from heaven or if he (Paul himself) were to preach some gospel other than the one true gospel, even he would be anathema; that is, he would rest under the curse of God.

Gal. 1:6-9

II Peter 2:1-22

And so, you see, there is the **true doctrine** of God, (the gospel, the New Testament) and there is also **false doctrine**. (Which is any doctrine other than the gospel, Gal. 1:6-9). There is **no middle message** in between **true** and **false doctrine**. If it is neither explicitly stated in the New Testament nor implied by the explicit statements of the New Testament, then it is not the truth but is **false doctrine!** I repeat: II Peter 2:1-22 makes clear that **false doctrine**, **false preachers**, and **false teachers** simply will **not** be acceptable to God, and there is no alternative between these two.

THERE IS NO MIDDLE GATE



Note: Every one will go through either:

1. The NARROW GATE

– OR –

2. The WIDE GATE

There is no other possibility.

John 3:5, Mark 16:15-16

Matthew 7:13

In Matthew 7:13, Jesus said, “Enter ye in by the narrow gate”.

There is **no middle gate** between the **narrow gate** and the **wide gate**! The **narrow gate** is what one enters in **obeying the gospel plan of salvation**. In doing so, one enters into the **kingdom of God, the family of God, the church** which Jesus bought with His blood.

The **wide gate**, then, is any gate other than the **narrow gate**. I hear some television preachers saying, “Do this,” and another saying, “Do **that**” in order to become a Christian, to enter into the kingdom of God. Some say, “All you have to do is just pray and lay your hands on your television set” or some such thing. The Bible does **not** teach people to do any such thing. The Bible **does** implicitly teach that such teaching is false doctrine (John 3:1-5; Gal. 3:26- 27). So, if you, as an accountable person, have not entered the **narrow gate**, then of necessity you have entered the **wide gate**.

*John 3:1-5;
Gal. 3:26- 27*

John 3:3

But what is the **narrow gate**? Jesus said in John 3:3, “*Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God.*” Nicodemus, the Jewish leader to whom Jesus was speaking these words, had two questions: “*How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?*” Jesus replied by saying, “*Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*” (John 3:5).

John 3:5

In saying this, Jesus was not telling Nicodemus how **babies** get into this world. No doubt, Nicodemus already knew that. He was the one who asked the questions, "*How can a man be born again when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb (emphasis is mine) and be born?*"

So Jesus told him how a **man**—not a **baby**—can be born again when he is **old**. Jesus taught Nicodemus that a **man** must be "*born of water and the Spirit.*" As we go on through the rest of the New Testament, we can see that it means that after men **hear the gospel, believe it, repent of their sins and confess the blessed name of Christ, they are to be baptized into Christ,** by His authority (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Rom.6:3-5; 10:9-10; Gal. 3:26-27).

So, it is clear that, to be saved, one must be **immersed in water unto the remission of sins.** Being **sprinkled with water, or having water poured onto you is not the baptism of the Great Commission** (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; et al.) It is **not baptism in the name of Christ.** Any one is **wrong** if he thinks that his **baby**—who cannot even **understand the gospel and, besides that, has not sinned**—is a proper subject of baptism! The Bible teaches that the **only** proper subject of New Testament baptism is a **penitent believer,** a sinner, one who himself has **sinned**—not merely **inherited sin.** It is one who himself has sinned and who then has heard the gospel and has become a **believer in Christ as the Son of God, and who realizes that he is lost in sin.** He must be **penitent**—one who has repented of his sins, who confesses that Jesus is the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10) and who wants to be saved. He understands the necessity of his being **immersed in water as a means appointed by God for the new birth.** That is why we find in Acts 2:38 believers being told to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of sins.

And, it must be noted that, when you go through this narrow "gate," you do not enter a **denomination!** You do not enter some church invented by **man!** If **any one** of us men has the right to start a church in competition with the church which **Jesus bought with His blood, (the one that God planned in eternity before He created the world, and which was a part of God's plan down through all of the Old Testament period), then each and everyone of us would have the right to start his own church!** There would be no common ground of our being in the body of Christ.

The Bible does not teach any such thing as that. Just as there is one **God, one Lord Jesus Christ, one Holy Spirit, one hope (of life everlasting), one gospel (one "good message")** just so there is one **baptism and the one body** which is the church. Today, men enter that one church when and only when they are **baptized into Christ, and the Lord Himself does the adding.** Friends, when you, as a penitent believer, obey the one baptism, being immersed in water unto the remission of your sins, the Lord **himself** puts you into the church (**His church!**) He **adds you to the church** (Acts 2:36-47).

Thus, it is clear that there is **no middle gate** between the **narrow gate** and the **wide gate.** The wide gate is every way other than being baptized (as a penitent believer) into Christ, being added by the Lord Himself to the church. My friends, there is simply **no middle gate!** Either you have entered the **narrow gate** of Jesus Christ or you have entered the **wide gate** of

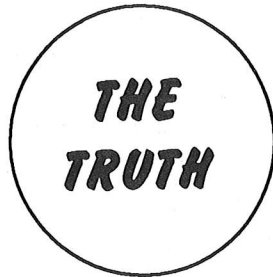
Mk. 16:15-16;
Acts 2:38;
Rom. 10:9-10;
Gal. 3:26-27
Matt. 28:18-20
Mk. 16:15-16
Acts 2:38

Rom. 10:9-10

Acts 2:38

Acts 2:36-47

THERE IS NO MIDDLE DESTINY



Note: Every one will spend ETERNITY in either:

1. HEAVEN – Matt. 25:46
– OR –

2. HELL – Matt. 25:46

There is no other possibility.

We come now to the last point of this study: **there is no middle destiny.** We all face **death.** We all face **eternity.** There will **never** be an **end** to any of us.

Matt. 25:31–46

Each one of us will go either to heaven eternally or to hell eternally (Matt. 25:31–46). That marvelous passage makes clear that, at the judgment, there will be a great division. Every person who has ever lived on this earth will be either on the right hand of Jesus or on His left hand. Those on the right hand will hear the words, *“Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter thou into the joys of our Lord.”* Those on the left will hear the words that will damn them to everlasting punishment. I urge you, today, to look at this matter seriously: **there is no middle destiny between Heaven and Hell!** There simply is **not** a “middle” destiny! If you do not go to **heaven**, then you will go to **hell!** If you do not go to **hell**, then you will go to **heaven**—there is no middle destiny (Matt. 25:46).

Matt. 25:46

SUMMARY:

“THERE IS NO MIDDLE...”

1. There is no middle **INVITER** between **Jesus** and **Satan**.
2. There is no middle **DOCTRINE** between **The Truth** and **False Doctrine**.
3. There is no middle **GATE** between the **Narrow Gate** and the **Wide Gate**.
4. There is no middle **WAY** between the **Light** and **Darkness**.
5. There is no middle **DESTINY** between **Heaven** and **Hell**.

In closing, let us look at a **summary** of our study, let us sum up that about which we have talked. I urge you to give close attention. I urge you to take **your own Bible**, when this lesson is over, study the Bible and think about this question: Has the truth been told in this study in regard to **Matthew 7:13–14**? Let us sum up what we have seen: (1) there is **no middle inviter** between Jesus and Satan; (2) there is **no middle doctrine** between **true doctrine** and **false doctrine**; (3) there is **no middle gate** between the **narrow gate** and the **wide gate**; (4) there is **no middle way** between the **light** and **darkness**,—between walking in the **broad way** and in the **straitened way**; and (5) there is **no middle destiny** between **heaven** and **hell**.

My friends, you and I face death. There is a sense in which death is **certain** (those living on earth when Christ comes again will not die, but will be changed, **I Thess. 4:13–17**). It is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment (**Heb. 9:27**). But there is another sense in which it is **uncertain**. This is the case because none of us knows the day, the hour or the minute that we shall die. What we need to do, everyone of us, is to get ready—to be prepared **today!** My friends, I urge you, make today right. (I urge all of us to “make today right!”) Study your New Testament, **love it, learn it and obey it**. Obey the gospel, being baptized (immersed) as a penitent believer, live the faithful Christian life and you will have the promise of the Lord that you will be saved eternally when this life is over (**Rev. 2:10**).

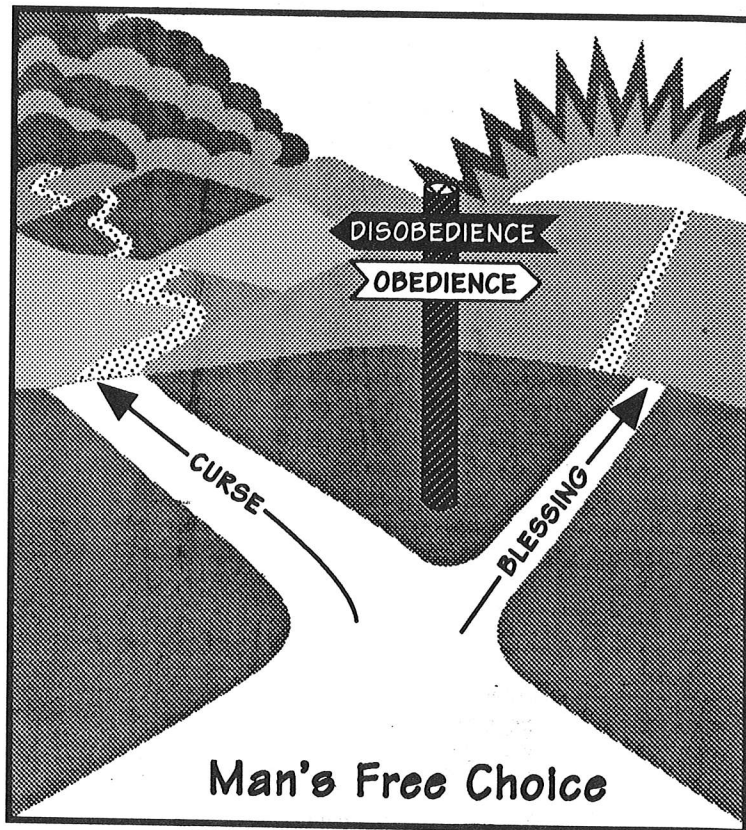
Matthew 7:13–14

I Thess. 4:13–17
Heb. 9:27

Rev. 2:10



The Paths AWAY FROM AND BACK TO GOD



3 CLASS SESSIONS ARE SUGGESTED FOR THIS LESSON.

BY THOMAS B. WARREN, PH.D.

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YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE!

PREPARING THE HEART FOR SUBMISSION TO GOD

LESSON 6: THE PATHS AWAY FROM AND BACK TO GOD

by Thomas B. Warren, Ph.D.

1994

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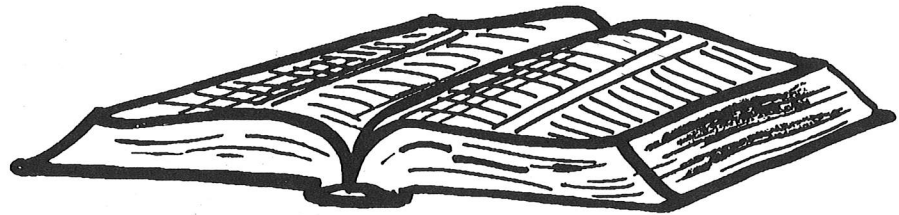
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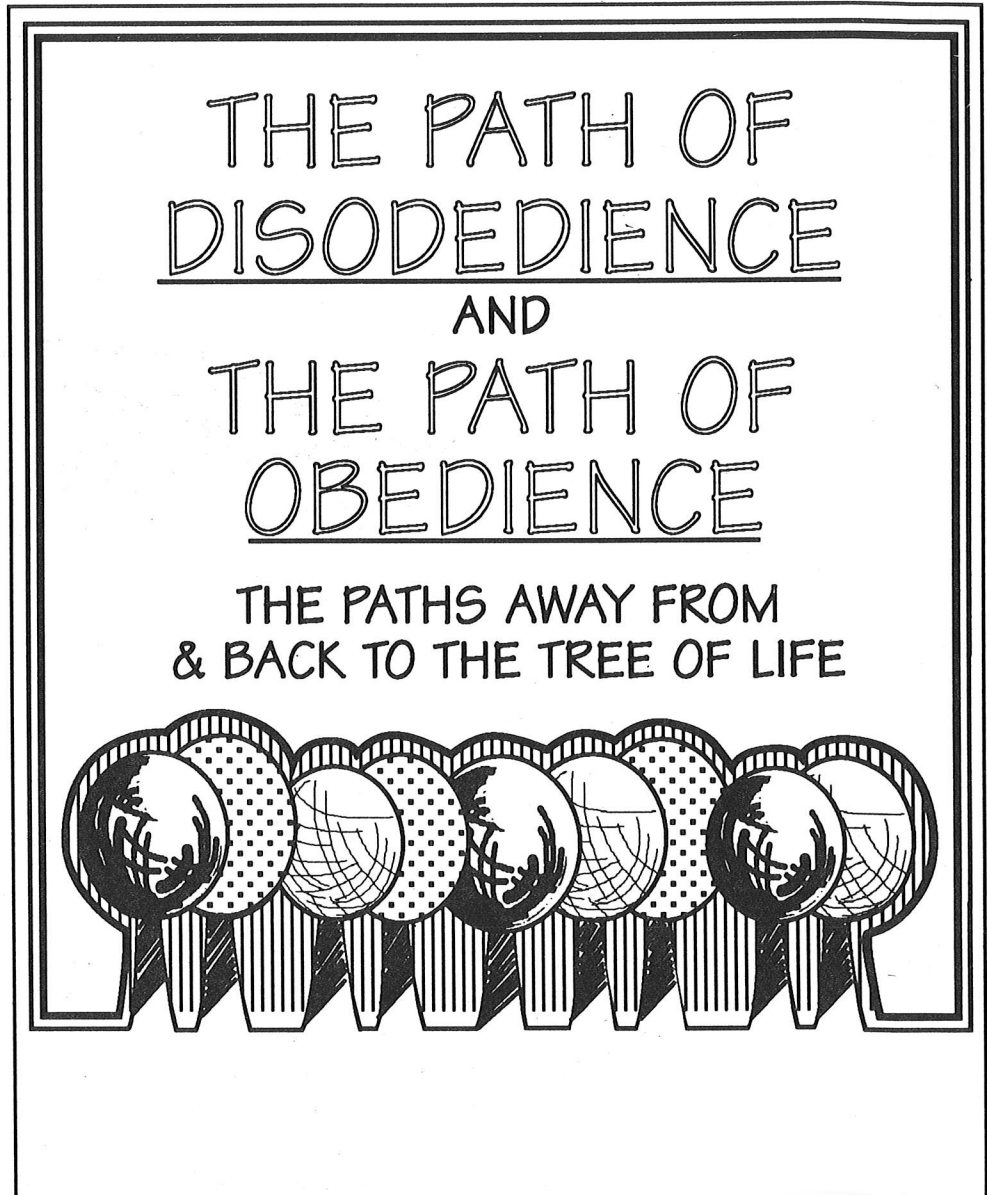
Genesis 3:1

I would like to suggest that you take your own Bible, right there in the privacy of your own home, turn with me to Genesis 3:1, and we will begin reading there.

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons” (Gen. 3:1-7, KJV).

Gen. 3:1-7, KJV

God had given instruction to Adam and Eve after He had created them: *“Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* God’s plan was plain, and it was simple. But the serpent came and suggested to the woman a different plan. The serpent’s plan **contradicted** God’s plan (way). He suggested that it was not really the best thing for her to refrain from eating of the **tree of knowledge** which was in the midst of the garden, but that it would be a wise and good thing for her and her husband to eat of it. And they did. You see, Adam and Eve were in the fellowship of God, with everything they possibly could want, but they were persuaded to reject and to disobey the plan of God. And so, we find in this story both the path **away from** and, as we study the rest of the Bible, we can ascertain the path **back to** God.



This actually amounts to a consideration of two paths: (1) the path of **disobedience** to the will of God and (2) the path of **obedience** to the will of God—the paths away from and back to God.



THE TREE OF LIFE

THE PERFECT STATE

- Perfect **Sinlessness**
- Perfect **Health**
- Perfect **Life** (No Death)
- Perfect **Conditions** (No Need)
- Perfect **Communion with GOD**

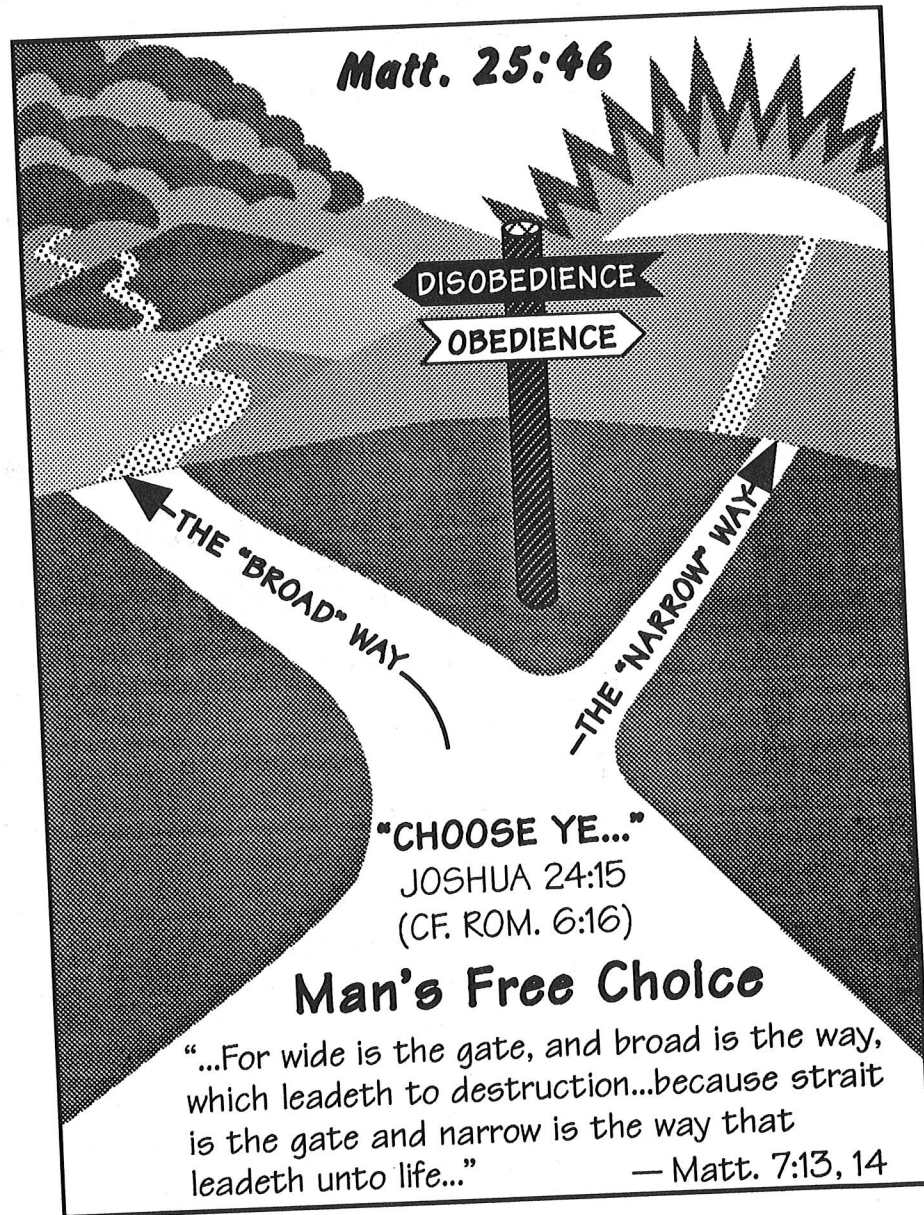
I want to show a diagram, here at the beginning of our study [that we will look at again at the close of it], which shows the basic points of our study. Here [pointing to the chart] we have Adam and Eve (in a perfect state) in the garden of Eden. They have access to the tree of life. They have never been involved in sin—they are sinless. They are in **perfect physical health**—they do not face physical death. They have **fellowship** with God; their situation is **absolutely perfect**.

But, then they hear a falsehood (a lie)—they hear **false doctrine!** Eve believed that false doctrine, and she persuaded Adam to go along with her (I Tim. 2:1-14). Consider these steps that are involved in enticing them away from God. Then they **believe that lie**; then they **obey that lie**; and this puts them into **death**. God had said, "*For in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*" They died spiritually that day because they were guilty of sin. And they then were put into a situation, having been put away from the tree of life, so that they faced not only **spiritual death** but **physical death**.

I Tim. 2:1-14

Later on, we are going to look at the ultimate consequence of this, to be lost in hell forever, if one does not avail himself of the path back to God. Now what is the path away from God? It is the following of the pathway of hearing, believing, and obeying falsehood, (false doctrine, that which is **not true**). But the path back to God involves itself with **truth**. You have to hear the truth, believe the truth, and obey the truth. Now let us go back and look at Chart 6.2 in some detail.

CHART 6.3



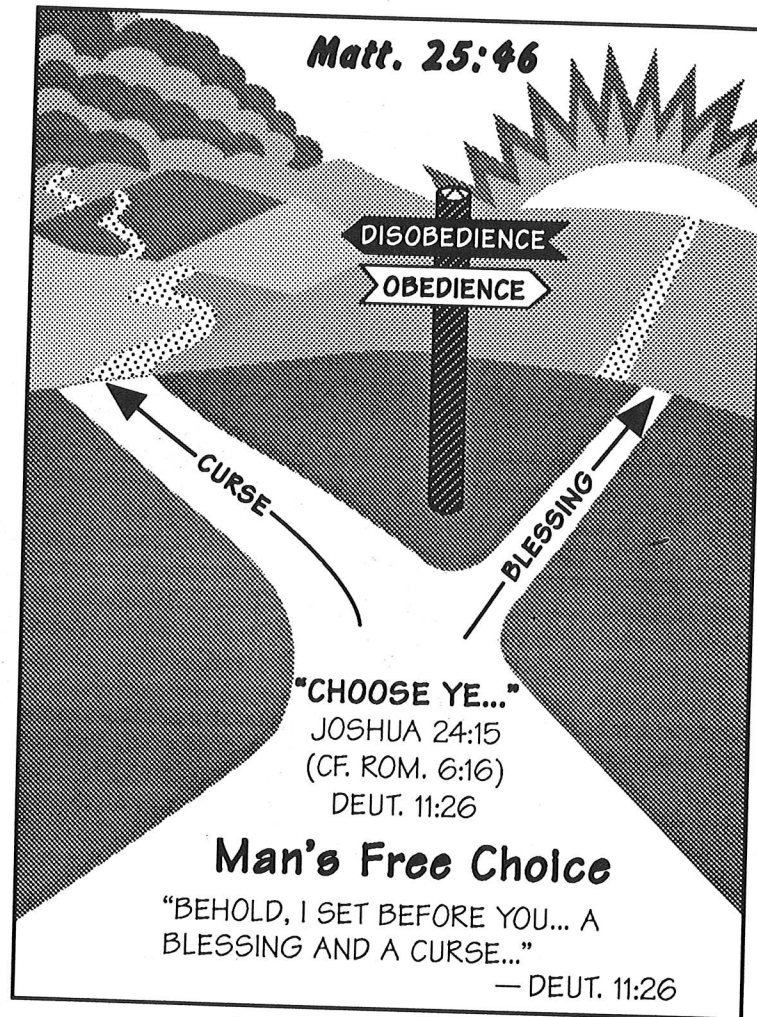
First of all, let us look at them in the beginning—in a perfect state, as having access to the tree of life. They are in a perfect state; they have perfect sinlessness; they are in perfect **physical health**; they have perfect **life**; there is no **death** facing them in this situation; there are perfect **conditions**; there are no needs that are not satisfied; they have perfect **communion with God**; they are not separated from God because of sin. Study carefully Genesis 2:9,17. Let us now see how the principles which we are considering are constituent elements in the New Testament.

Genesis 2:9,17

Matthew 25:46

In Matthew 25:46 we have a very awesome passage in which the writer of Matthew is describing the final judgment, Jesus saying that those on the left, that is, those who are wicked, those who have followed the pathway of false doctrine, these shall go away, He said, into eternal death; but those on the right hand, those who have been obedient, will go away into eternal life.

CHART 6.4



Joshua 24:15

According to Joshua 24:15—when the Israelites had come into the land of Canaan—Joshua said to them, "Choose ye this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). Today everyone faces this choice. We come right up to the fact that when we reach the age of accountability, we are following either the path that leads to a **curse** [as we read in Deut. 11:26-28] or the path that leads to a **blessing**—a blessing in this life (Mark 10:28-30), a hundred-fold more in this life and, in the world to come, eternal life. One who chooses this path will finally end up with God in eternity; but one who chooses the path otherwise—to follow the plans of men, false doctrine—will, at the last, be in eternal punishment.

Deut. 11:26-28

Mark 10:28-30

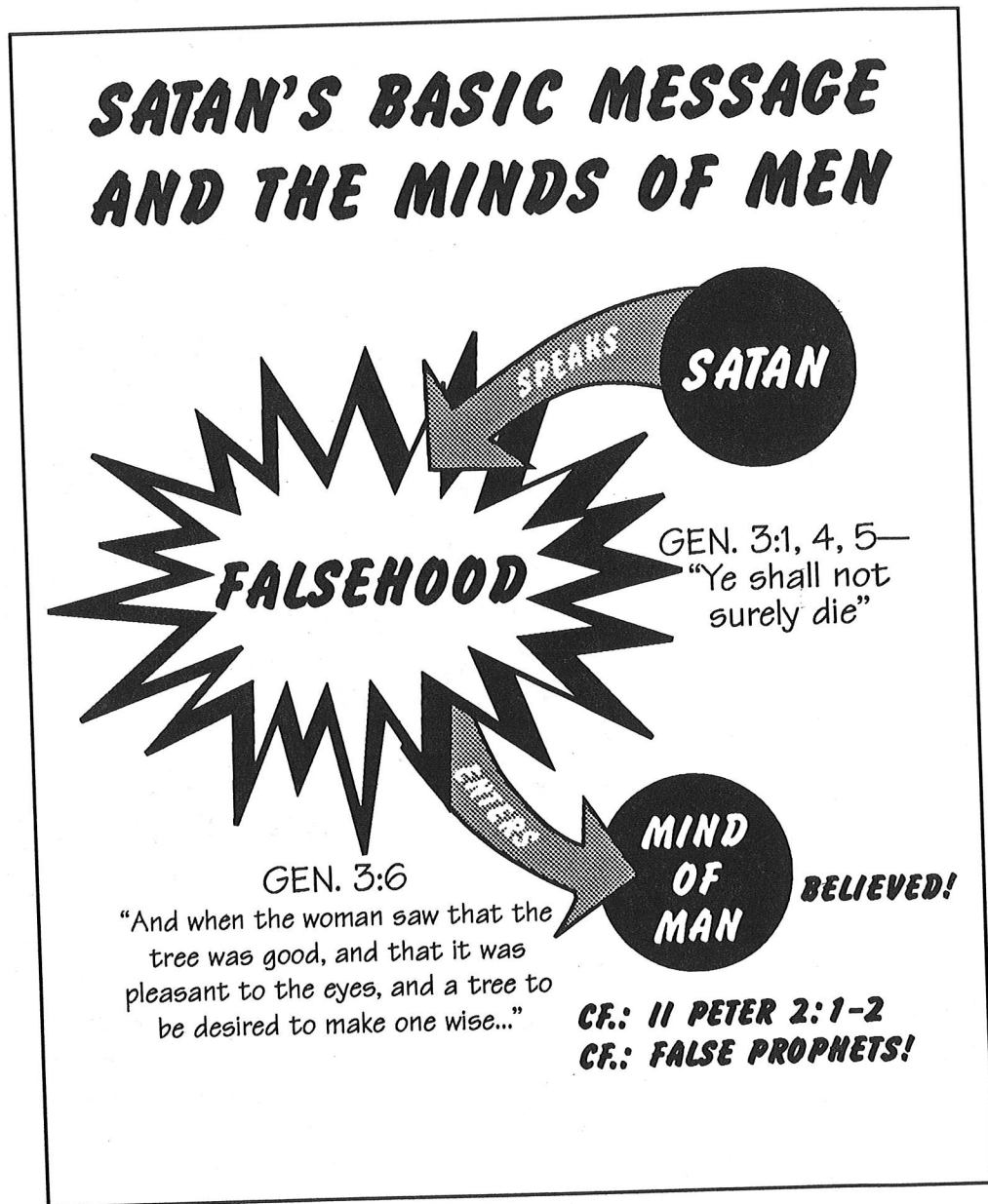
Matthew 7:13-14

I want to emphasize man's free choice. It is either the **path of disobedience** or the **path of obedience**. Jesus emphasized this in Matthew 7:13-14

when He said, "Enter ye in at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth unto destruction and many are they that enter in thereby; but narrow is the gate and straitened is the way that leadeth unto life and few there be that find it." Note the signs on the pole (which I have drawn to illustrate the point on Chart 6.4): (1) disobedience and (2) obedience (cf. Matt. 7:13-14; Josh. 24:15).

cf. Matt. 7:13-14;
Josh. 24:15

CHART 6.5



Notice carefully the crucial role that falsehood (false doctrine) can play in our lives. In Genesis 3:6, we read, "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat." Notice here: God has given man the truth; but Satan speaks falsehood to man—as we find in Genesis 3:4. Falsehood enters the mind of man and leads to his disobedience to the will of God. But all of us should reject Satan's lie ("ye shall not surely die").

Genesis 3:6

Genesis 3:4

THE PATH OF DISOBEDIENCE

TEMPTATION

MAN...

- **SINNED**— turned his back on the **Tree of Life**— because he yielded to **temptation**.
- **STARTED** down the **Path of Disobedience**.

BUT HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

- Let us consider the path **away** from the **Tree of Life**.

Temptation is involved in this whole situation. Man sinned. He turned his back on the tree of life because he yielded to temptation. We do not have to yield to temptation. We all are **tempted** to sin; but we do **not** have to **yield** to being tempted. When man yielded to that temptation, he stepped into the path of disobedience. But the question arises as to **how** did it happen?

SIN—THE PATH AWAY FROM THE TREE OF LIFE

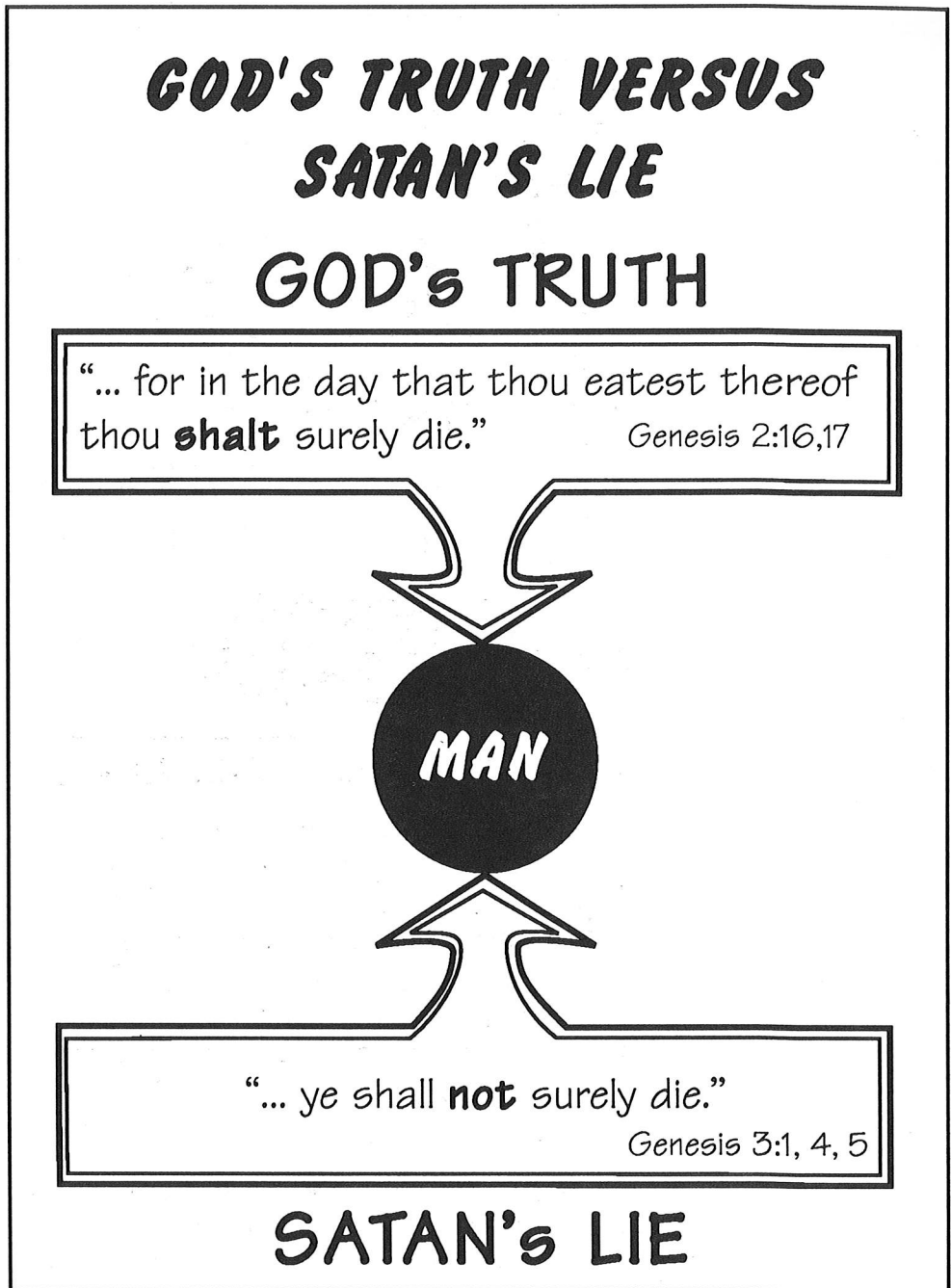
SIN...

— **James 1:13-15** Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

— **1Cor. 10:13** “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

Let us consider sin—the path away from the tree of life. “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempted he any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:13-15). That can happen to everyone of us. In I Corinthians 10:13, we read, “Therefore hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape.” Please note the crucial relationship between falsehood and sin!

James 1:13-15
I Corinthians 10:13



Gen. 2:16-17

Gen. 3:1,4,5

On Chart 6.8, we note God's truth in relationship to Satan's sin. God's truth: He said to Adam and Eve "...for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17). That is a message of God to man, "Do not eat of the tree." But Satan says, "No, it will be good for you to do it. You shall **not** surely die." Note that Satan put a **not** right in the middle of God's statement. God said, "Thou shalt surely die," Satan said, "Thou shalt **not** surely die" (Gen. 3:1,4,5).



TREE
OF
LIFE

HEARS

FIRST—

— MAN HEARS A LIE.

(NOTE: Man did not **have to listen!**)

FALSEHOOD

“Ye shall not surely die.”
— Gen. 3:1,4,5

II THESSALONIANS 2:10-12—

“... because they received not a love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

The journey to separation from God **begins** with the **hearing** of a **lie**. That just means that he hears false doctrine. Friends and neighbors, there are all kinds of false doctrines about us. The Bible just teaches the truth and it is up to each one of us to study the Bible for ourselves. Do not take any man's word for it, do not take **my** word for it, do not take the word of the preacher where you go—do **not** take his word for it! You have the responsibility and the ability to go to the **Bible itself** and study it and learn what it teaches.

On this chart, we see: man heard the falsehood that Satan gave. **First**, man **hears** a lie. He did not **have to listen** to that lie. He did not have to **believe** that false doctrine: “*Ye shall not surely die.*” Consider II Thessalonians 2:10-12 in the New Testament, “*Because they received not a love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*” No one is forced to believe false doctrine! And so, you see, we have the first step: You **hear** the falsehood. You **listen** to it, you sort of “lull it around” in your mind and **think** about it.

II Thess. 2:10-12



TREE
OF
LIFE

HEARS

BELIEVES

NEXT—

— MAN **BELIEVES** A LIE.

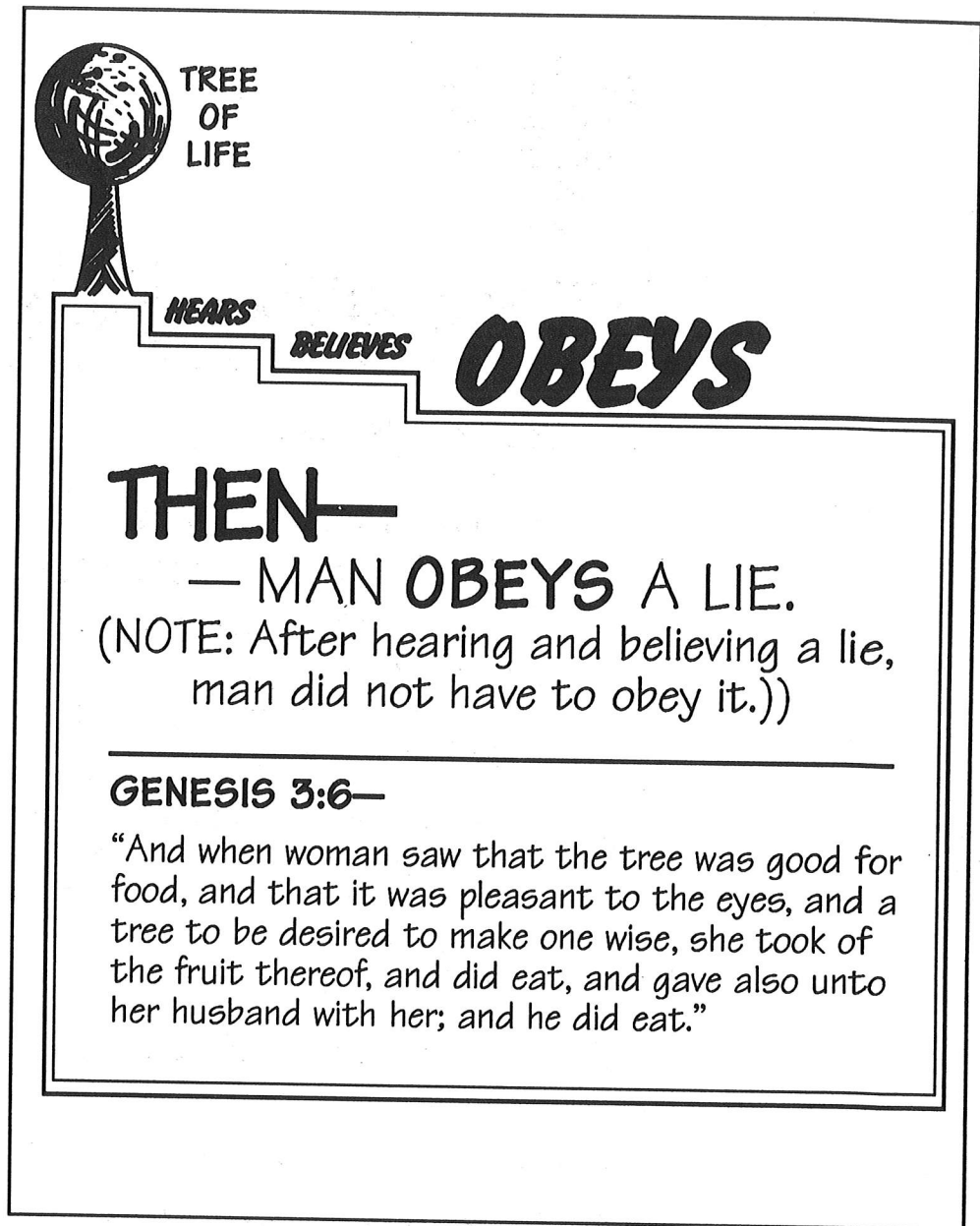
(NOTE: Man did not **have** to believe Satan's lie. He could have believed the truth of God.)

GENESIS 3:6—

“And when the woman **saw** that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

Genesis 3:6

And then, **secondly**, man believes a lie. Adam and Eve **heard** the lie of the serpent and **then** they **believed** it. Note that man did not **have** to believe Satan's lie. He could have believed the **truth of God!** Genesis 3:6 (which we have already covered) makes that clear.



After believing the lie, the inevitable followed: the man and woman obeyed the lie. After hearing and believing, they did not have to obey it. Not in any sense were they forced to obey a lie!



THE RESULT: LIFE

— “Therefore being **justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

Rom. 5:1-2

”For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is **the gift of God**: ...For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

Eph. 2:8-13

”Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death**? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life...”

Rom. 6:3-8

— NOTE: WE GET **INTO** CHRIST WHERE SALVATION IS BY MEANS OF BAPTISM.

c.f. Gal. 3:26, 27 and Col. 2:12, 13.

Genesis 3:19

Ezekiel 18:4

Romans 6:23

Romans 5:12

Revelation 20:10-15

Rom. 11:22

And now what is the result of hearing, believing, and obeying a lie? The result is that God cast man out of the Garden—and, thus, away from the tree of life. As a result, there is death. Physically, man started to age and to die; whereas, before, he had access to the tree of life. In Genesis 3:19, God says to the man and the woman, “*In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*” There is also the matter of **spiritual death**. [Note the chart]. They were separated from God because of their sin. And you and I also will be if we live and die in sin. We will be eternally separated from God. Ezekiel 18:4 states: “*...the soul that sinneth, it shall die.*” Romans 6:23 says: “*For the wages of sin is death.*” Romans 5:12 affirms that “*death passed unto all men, for that all have sinned.*” Revelation 20:10-15 tells about the enormous punishment of the wicked who shall be “*cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, ...which is the second death.*” How enormously important are these—and other—warnings of the severity of God (Rom. 11:22)!

GOD'S PERFECT JUSTICE...

GOD ONLY ACTS IN KEEPING WITH—

1. INFINITE JUSTICE

- Man *deserves* to die.
- He *earns* it (Rom. 6:23).

2. THE TRUTH

- That which God says is true, regardless of man's reaction to it.
- Psalms 19:9— "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

3. PERFECT GOODNESS

- Psalms 119:68— "Thou art good and doest good..."
- Romans 11:22— "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity: but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

It is also very important for us to realize that, in the midst of these matters, we must recognize the crucial place of the **infinite justice** of God. Let us all remember that God is holy, God is righteous, He cannot tolerate sin. "God cannot deny himself." Paul said, in writing to Timothy, that God must be faithful—He can not deny himself (II Tim. 2:13). He can not be other than God. And that means—among other things—that he can not tolerate sin. It is not an arbitrary act of God Almighty that simply says, "Well, I am going to punish sin." He cannot be God and not do so. But He loves us so much that He gave His Son to die that, through His grace, by the blood of Christ, we can be saved (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8-9). But the grace of God (which is offered to everybody, Titus 2:11: "For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men") is **contingent**. Paul said it is offered to everybody, but Jesus said that only a few shall be saved but many will be lost (Matt. 7:13-14). That means it is **conditioned** to our response to the grace of God. The Bible says in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). But that offer does not mean that—just because God offered it—all of us are going to be saved. In comparison to the number that will be lost in hell, few will be

II Tim. 2:13

John 3:16; Rom. 5:8-9
Titus 2:11

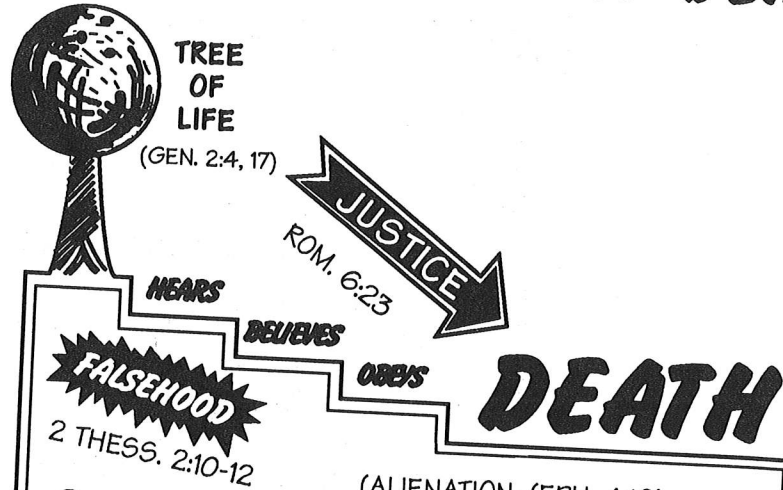
Matt. 7:13-14
John 3:16

Rom. 6:23

saved in heaven. And so we come face-to-face with the justice of God. God acts only in keeping with His infinite justice. If we live and die in sin, then we deserve to be lost forever—we will have earned eternal punishment. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Think about that! It is like going up to "the pay window" at the judgment day—that is, you will—if you are not saved—get what you have earned. On the other hand, if you have availed yourself to the grace of God by loving obedience to His will, then you will get what you do not deserve, you will get the gift of eternal life from God!

CHART 6.14

THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH



So... mankind took the path of disobedience: he heard, believed & obeyed a lie. He sinned—turned his back on the Tree of Life. This resulted in his **SPIRITUAL & PHYSICAL DEATH!** The death he received was **JUST RECOMPENSE** for his sin.

Eph. 4:18—

"Having the understanding darkened, being **ALIENATED** from the Life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:"

Col. 1:21—

"And you that were sometime **ALIENATED** and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled."

Rom. 6:23

As Chart 6.14 shows, the justice of God demands death for sin! "The wages of sin is death"—what you earn by it (Rom. 6:23). And so, Adam and Eve heard a lie, they believed a lie, and they obeyed a lie, and their deeds resulted in their separation from the tree of life, which—as we have discussed already—involves both physical and spiritual death. And so, man took the path of disobedience. Man heard, he believed and obeyed a lie—he sinned, he turned his back on the tree of life. This resulted in his spiritual and physical death. The death he received was just (righteous) recompense for his sin. As we

Ephesians 4:18

Colossians 1:21

read in Ephesians 4:18, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." In Colossians 1:21 we read, "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." Let none of us think for even a moment that God's justice will not act in either your situation or mine. If you live and die in sin, you will be lost forever.

CHART 6.15

GRACE AND OBEDIENCE

WHAT CAN MAN

DO...

...To **REGAIN** the Tree of Life he has **LOST**?

He must turn around and follow the **PATH OF OBEDIENCE**— which only **God's Grace** provides— back to the **Tree of Life**; or he must depart into **outer darkness**!

Eph. 2:8-9— For by **grace** are ye **saved** through **faith**; and that not of yourselves: it is the **gift** of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

What must we do?

Now, what can we do about it? If we are separated from God because of sin, can we come back to God? Adam and Eve were separated from the tree of life and went into death, both physical and spiritual. What can we do to regain "the tree of life" (fellowship with God) which we lost when we first sinned? Man must "turn around" and follow the path of **obedience** in contrast to the path of **disobedience** that he had followed. Man must follow this path of obedience—which God's **grace** provides—back to the "tree of life." Failing in that,

Matthew 25:46

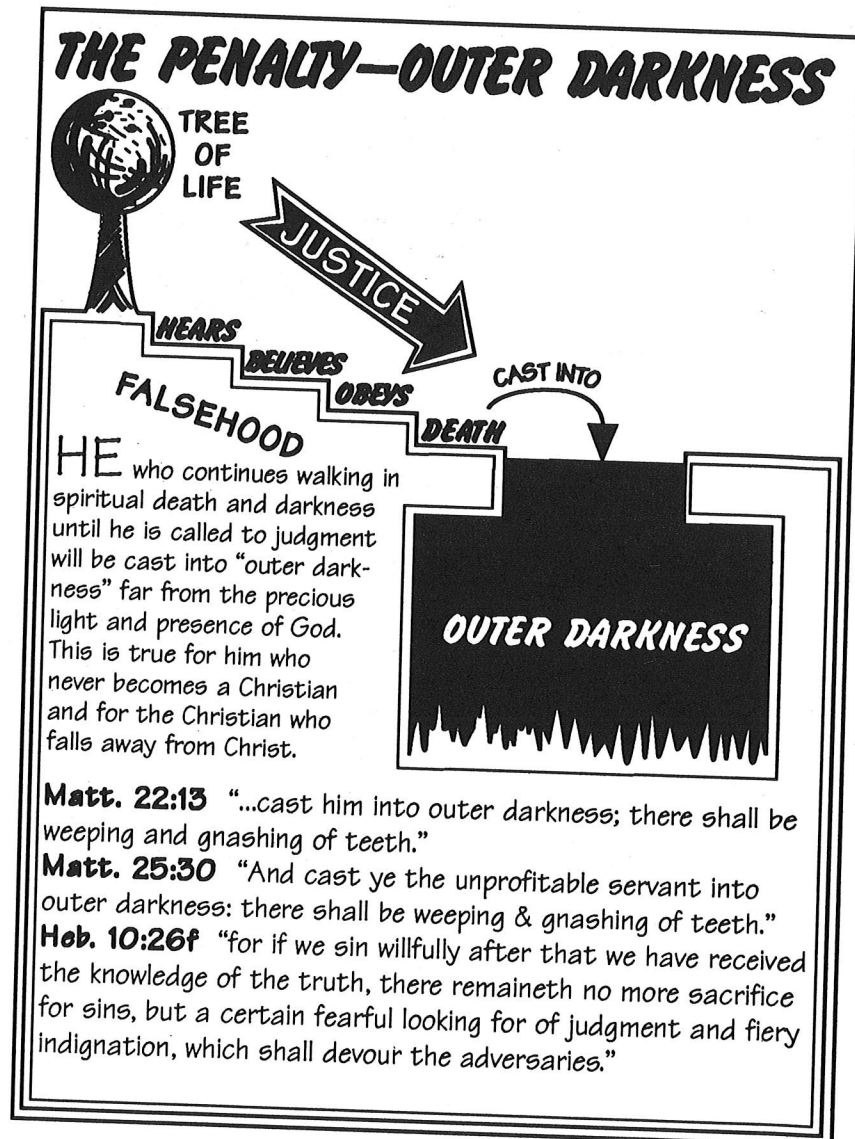
Eph. 2:8-9

Hebrews 5:8-9

Matt. 7:21

CHART 6.16

one will depart into outer darkness, as Jesus taught in Matthew 25:46, "For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Now that does not mean that we do not have to obey God! Hebrews 5:8-9 says that Christ is "the author of eternal salvation to those that obey him." He is not the author of salvation to any disobedient person. This means that there are no works of merit, there are no meritorious works which, when we have done them, validly allow us to turn to God and say, "Aha, now I have earned my salvation." No matter how many acts of obedience you do, you will not have earned your salvation! If you are saved, it will be by the grace of God. And the grace of God involves the necessity of obedience (Matt. 7:21).



Let us think a little further on this matter of the justice of God. Consider the justice of God in relationship to the penalty. Adam and Eve heard a falsehood (they heard a lie), they believed a lie, they obeyed a lie. That put them into a situation of death (alienation from God). He who continues walking in spiritual death and darkness until he is called to judgment will be lost—that is,

he will be cast into "outer darkness," far from the precious light of the presence of God Almighty. And this is true for him who never becomes a Christian and also for the Christian who, having been faithful, walks away from God (becomes unfaithful, cf. Heb. 12:14). Matthew 22:13: "...cast him into the outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 25:30: "...and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." In Hebrews 10:26 and following: "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Now, friends, there is a description of the terrible fate of those who live and die in sin. But, it need not be that way; it need not be that we follow the path of hearing a lie, believing a lie and obeying a lie. We can hear, believe, and obey the truth (John 8:32; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Rev. 2:10; II Pet. 1:5-11).

cf. Heb. 12:14
Matthew 22:13

Hebrews 10:26

John 8:32

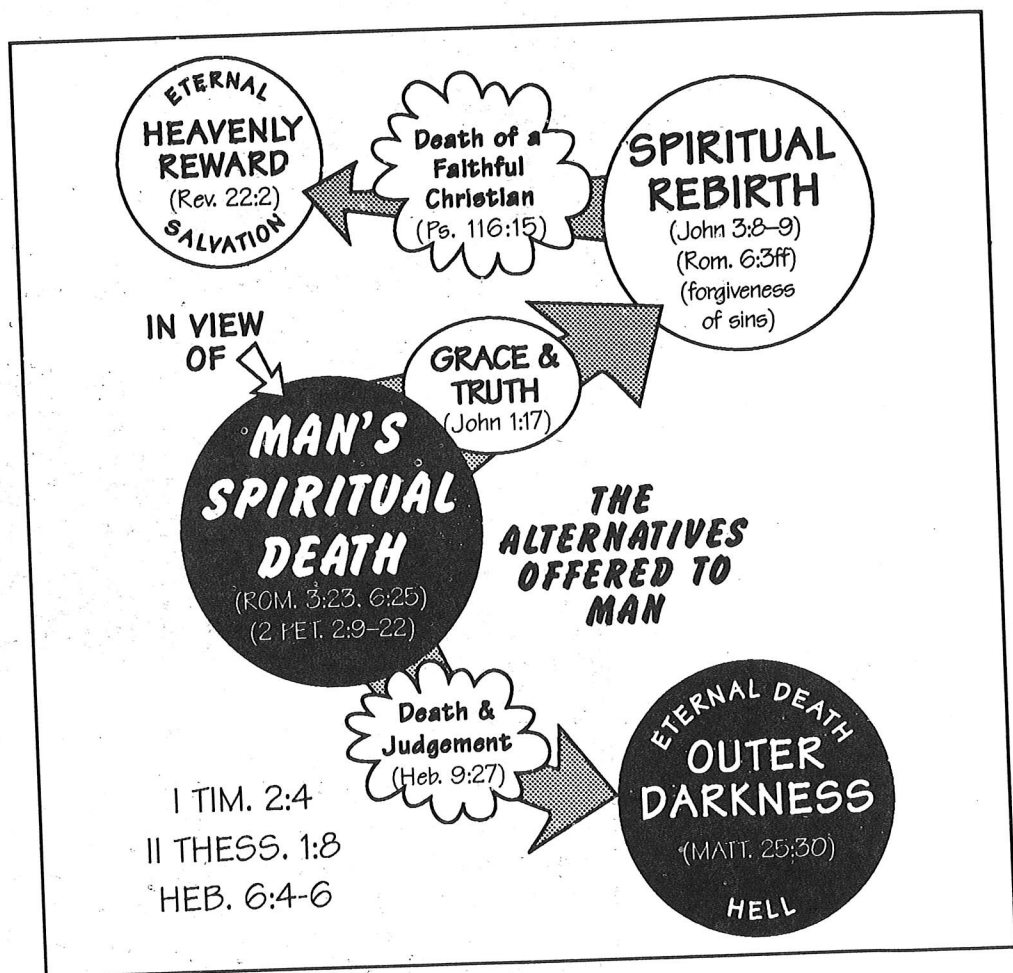
Mk. 16:15-16

Acts 2:38

Rev. 2:10

II Pet. 1:5-11

CHART 6.17



Here is what can be the case for you and for me, for everyone who is listening, for everyone in the world who hears and obeys the gospel. [Note the chart.] There is the heavenly reward: God wants everyone of us to be saved. Peter said that God is not wishing that any should perish (II Pet. 3:9). It is not his desire that a single one of us should perish. However, men will perish if they are not obedient to God's will. Note [on the chart] man's spiritual death: Here, we are in a situation of having sinned. If we come into the judgment

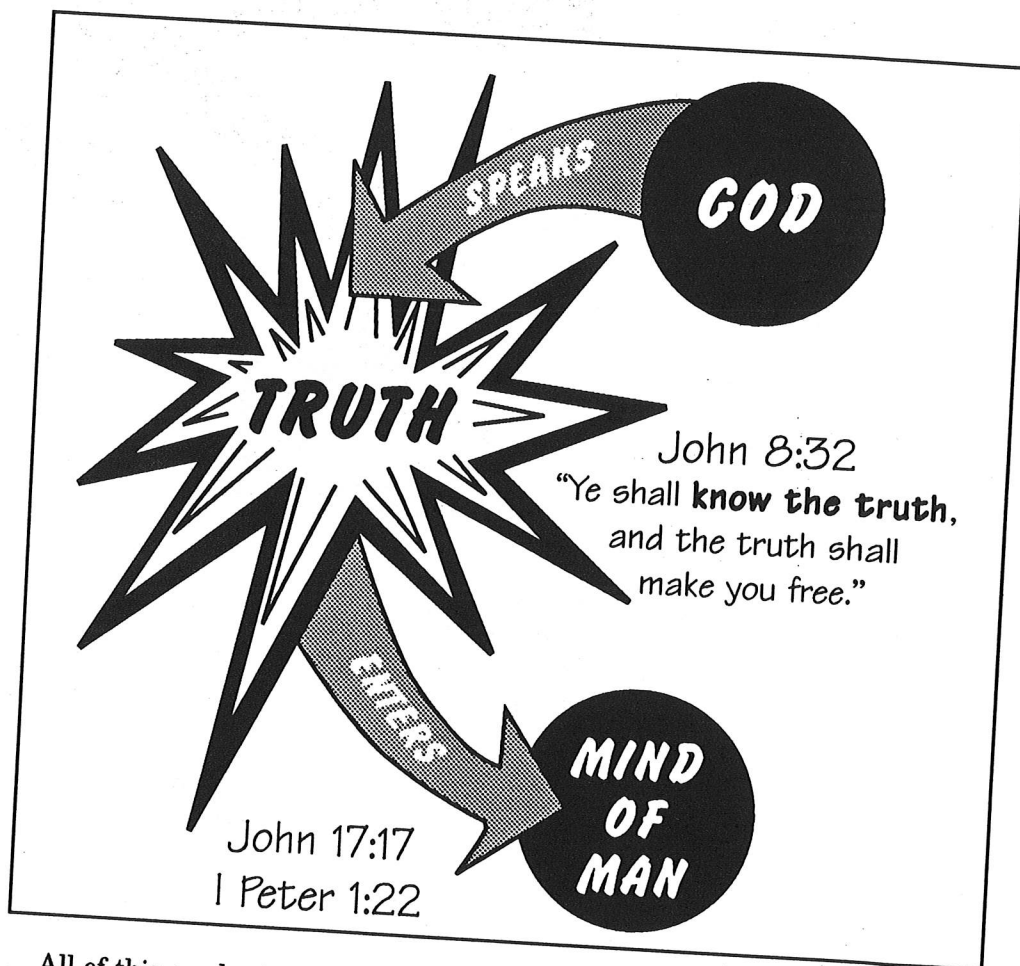
II Pet. 3:9

Matthew 25:46
 Matthew 7:13-14
 Matt. 25:30, 46
 Rev. 20:10- 15

John 3:3-5
 Mk. 16:15;
 Acts 2:38; 22:16
 Rev. 2:10
 I John 1:7
 Matt. 25:46
 Heb. 12:14

without having truly repented (and thus, with sin upon our souls). Jesus here makes clear (Matthew 25:46 and Matthew 7:13-14) what the fate of the wicked will be. It is to be cast into "outer darkness" (Matt. 25:30), into eternal punishment (Matt. 25:46), into the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10- 15). Eternal punishment is described under different figures, but it all results from **hearing, believing, and obeying a lie** (false doctrine). But Jesus also offers **everlasting life** in heaven with God Almighty, with Christ, with the Holy Spirit, with the saved of all ages. Gaining that life involves a **spiritual rebirth**, being born of water and the Spirit (being baptized, immersed in water as a penitent believer **unto** the remission of our sins by the grace of God through the blood of Christ, John 3:3-5; Mk. 16:15; Acts 2:38; 22:16). And, if you live your life faithfully, walking in the light of God's word (Rev. 2:10; I John 1:7), then you **shall** be ushered into heaven when this life is over. As Jesus said in Matt. 25:46, "*And these (that is referring to the faithfully obedient, Heb. 12:14), shall go away into everlasting life.*"

CHART 6.18



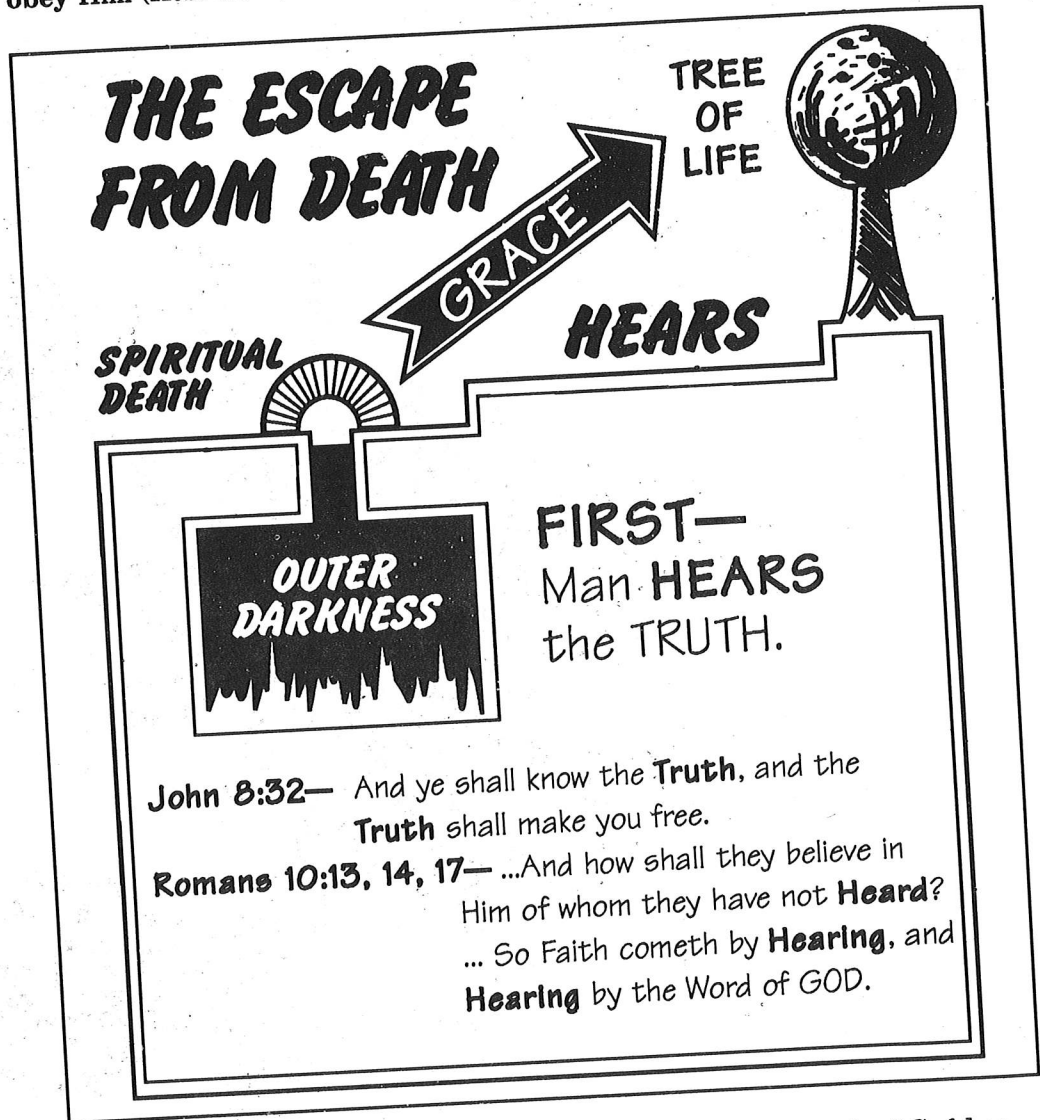
John 8:32
 Galatians 1:6-9

All of this emphasizes the power of truth to save us from our sins. God uses **the truth** to save men (John 8:32). [See Chart 6.18] Jesus said, in John 8:32, "*Ye shall know the truth.*" It is possible for us to really know the truth, to be certain of it, to know that we know it. "*Ye shall know the truth...*" and what shall happen? "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*" (John 8:32). I plead with you to study that. Galatians 1:6-9 makes clear that **any** religious doctrine other than **the truth** will lead to your damnation and

not to your salvation. And, friends, no message can contradict itself and be the message of God. If the Bible teaches that we are saved when we are baptized into Christ, we can be certain that it does not teach that you are saved the moment you believe. The idea that one is saved the very "split second" he believes is a **human doctrine!** It is a **false doctrine!** It is **not taught** in the Bible! I speak to you—as one who loves your soul, who himself wants to be saved, and who wants you to be faithful to the truth which is the gospel of Jesus Christ. God has given us the truth, and when it enters the mind of man and is believed, then it should result in obedience. It leads to our **hearing** the truth, **believing** the truth and **obeying** the truth. Christ is the Savior of those who obey Him (Heb. 5:8-9).

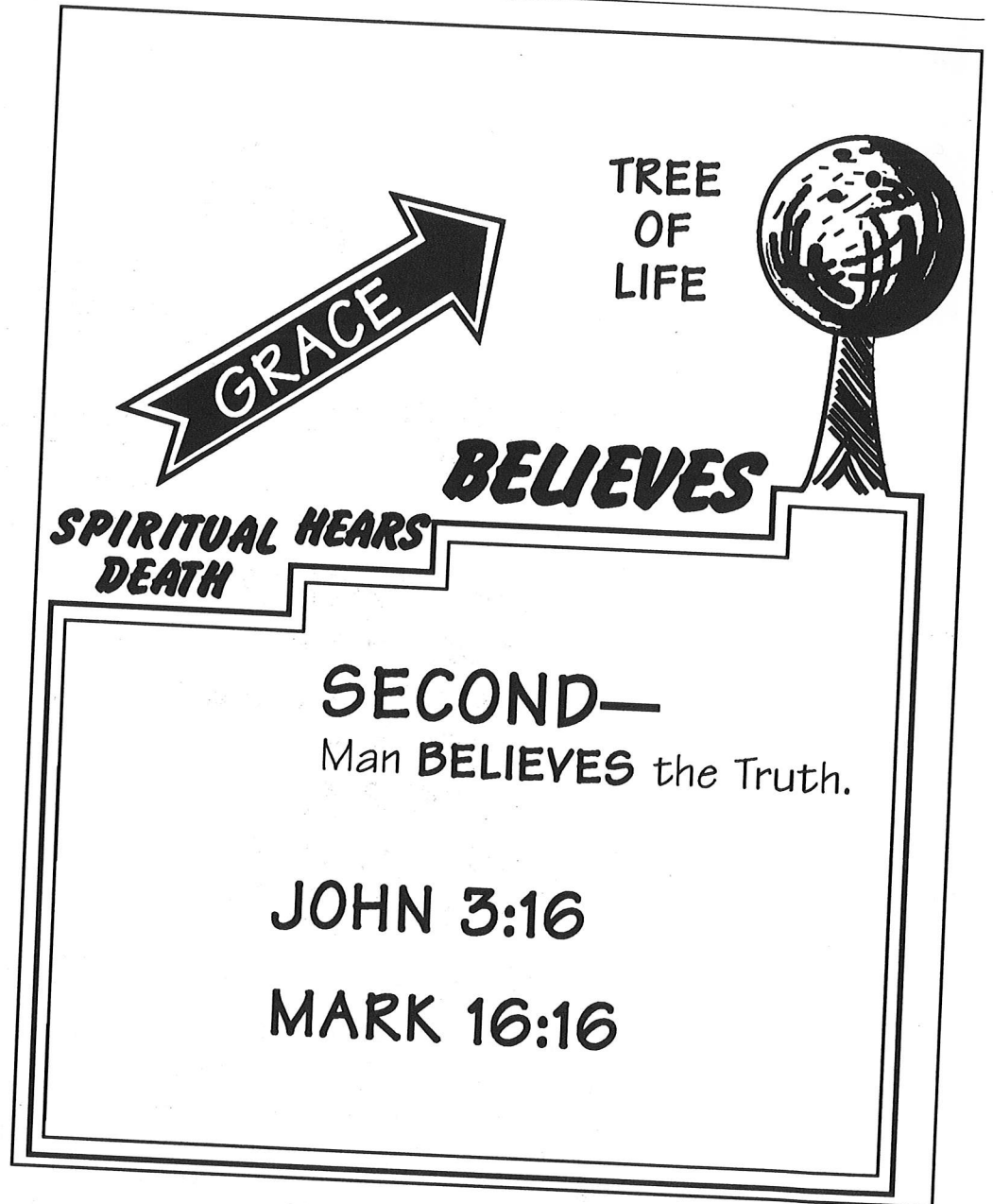
Heb. 5:8-9

CHART 6.19



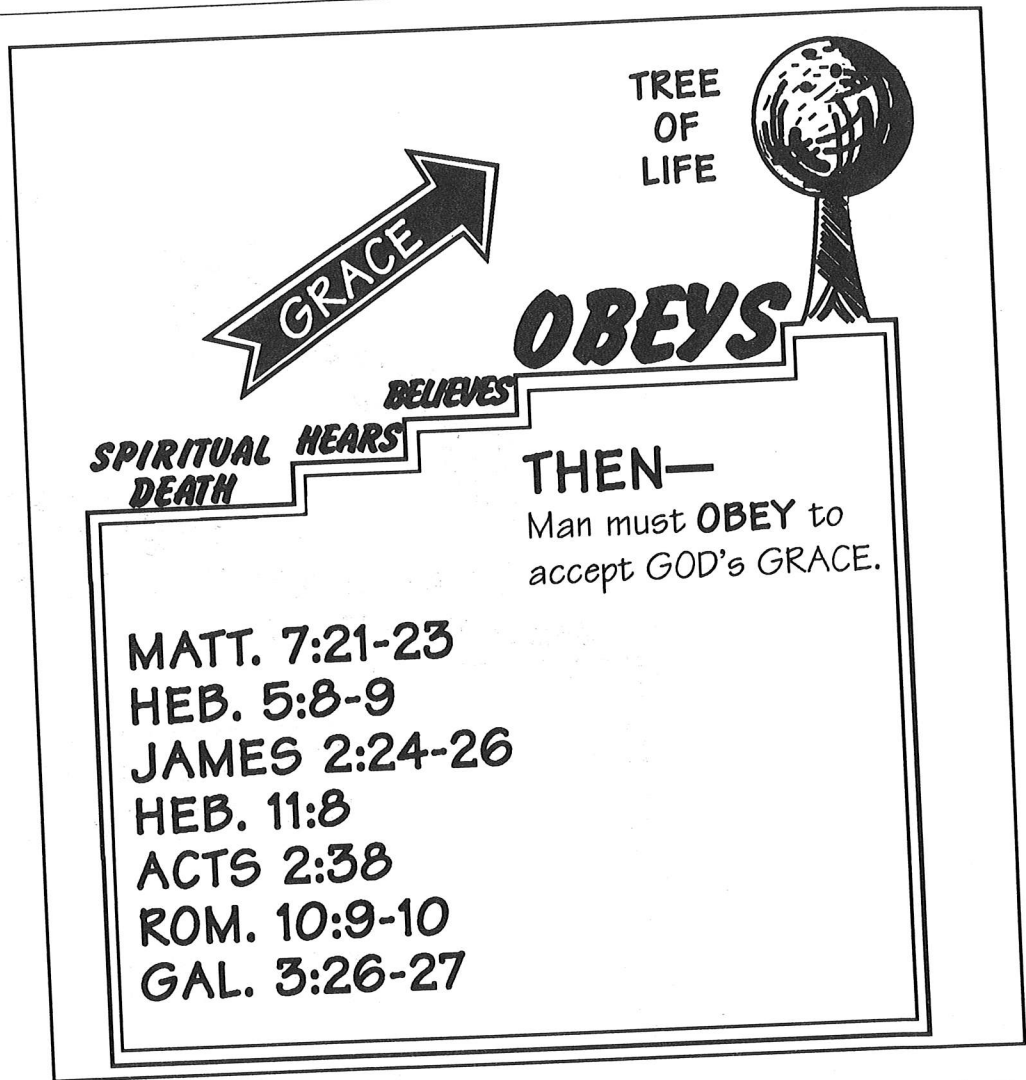
This chart illustrates the fact that the first step after the truth of God has been presented to us is: we hear it (we listen to it, willing to examine it to see whether it is true). That is the first basic step: an attitude of mind that will lead one to say, "I am willing to listen, I am willing to decide whether what I have already believed is the truth or is not the truth." You see, we must be willing to listen and weigh evidence to see what the Bible really teaches—to see whether we are going to accept it (cf. Rom. 10:14-17; II Thess. 2:10-12).

cf. Rom. 10:14-17
II Thess. 2:10-12



Prov. 3:5-6
John 3:16
Mark 16:15-16

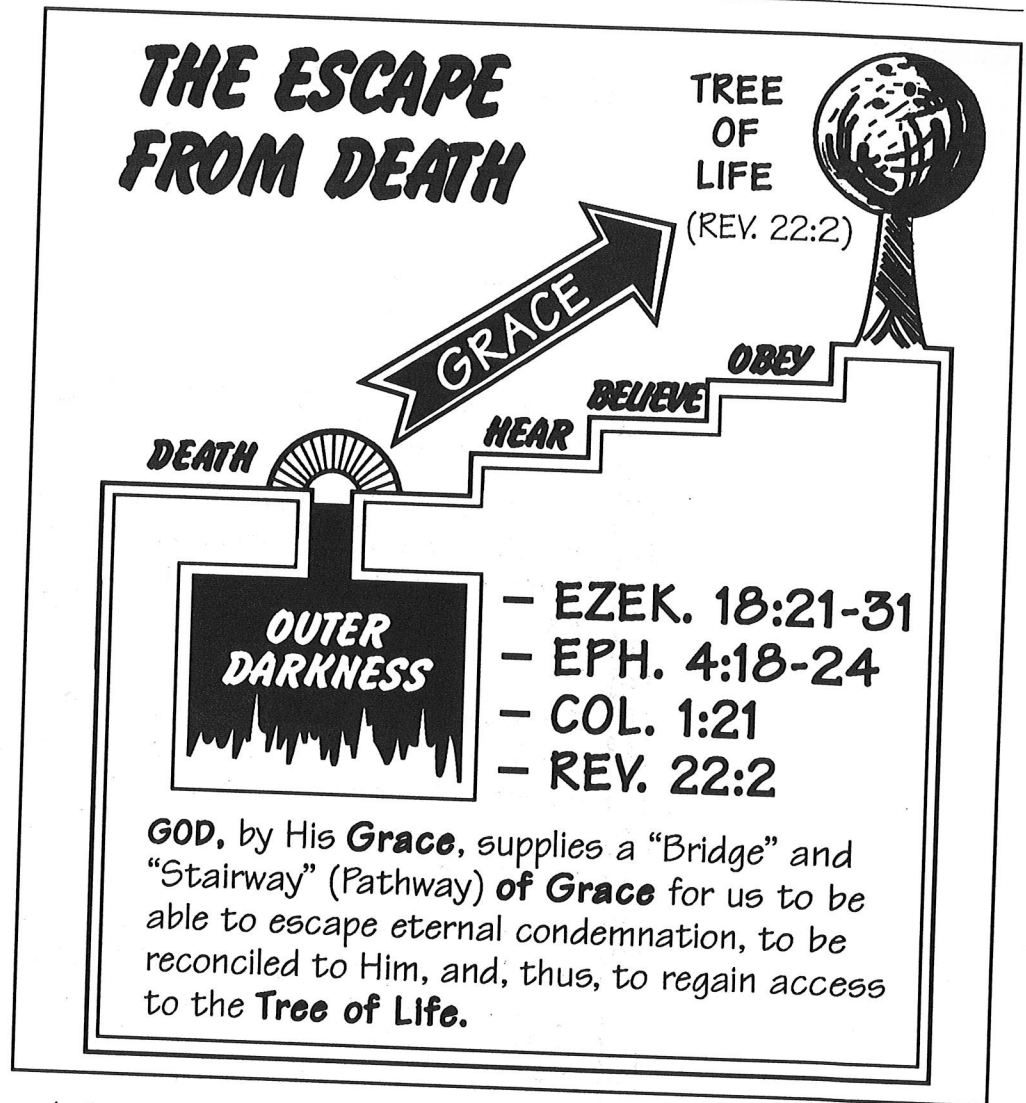
After you have **heard** the truth, the **next step** is that you accept it, you **believe** it. The second basic step: to **trust** in God. The way you trust in God is by trusting in his **Word**. There is a marvelous passage in Proverbs 3:5-6, which states, *“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all they ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”* (Recall John 3:16 and Mark 16:15-16.) Friends, that teaches plainly that you must **hear** the truth of God, **believe** the truth and then you must **obey** the truth of God. See Chart 6.21.



Notice these steps: After you are lost, because of your sin, you are involved in spiritual death. If you have not been saved by the blood of Christ—and may I emphasize that you have not been saved if you have not been baptized into Christ—then you are in spiritual death, you are *lost* in this condition. To be saved, you must **hear** the Word of God (the truth), you must **believe** that truth and then you must **obey** it. It is not enough to merely carry around a Bible or to have a Bible in your home and read it once in a while. You must—I emphasize—both **learn** the truth and **obey** the truth. The Bible teaches in James 2:26, *“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”* You are not—you cannot be—saved by faith alone. *“Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only”* (Jas. 2:24). Friends, this means that you simply must take this culminating step: **obey** the truth. I repeat: it is not enough just to **hear** the truth; it is not enough just to **believe** it, you are **not** saved the moment you believe it. You are saved when you **obey** Him. He is the author of eternal salvation to all those that **obey** Him. And the culminating act of obedience, in becoming a Christian is, as a penitent believer that you are **baptized** into Jesus Christ, immersed in water as the means appointed by the Holy Spirit for the new birth. (John 3:3-5; Mk. 16:15; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27). Please study honestly and carefully the other passages of Scripture which are listed on Chart 6.21.

Jas. 2:26
Jas. 2:24

John 3:3-5
Mk. 16:15
Acts 22:16
Gal. 3:26-27



And so here—Chart 6.22—we see, the way you escape being cast into outer darkness at the judgment: you **hear** the truth of God, (you hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, the one faith) then you **believe** it, and then you **obey** it, and you **live it faithfully** as a Christian (as a member of the church to which Jesus adds you when you are baptized). As we have indicated earlier, when you obey the gospel, when you—as a penitent believer—are baptized into Christ; the Lord adds you to the church for which he died.

The soul that sinneth it shall die, but the one who becomes a Christian and is faithful unto death will be saved eternally (Rev. 2:10). This does not mean that you have to go through life constantly feeling guilty and afraid. You can live your life in hope and joy. The apostle Paul said, *"In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus"* (Phil. 4:6-7). *"If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, then the blood of Jesus Christ will keep on cleansing us from all sin."* (I John 1:7). There is a great deal of difference between a person who willfully turns away from the truth and one who, from weakness, now and again stumbles and falls. Please study Chart 6.22 carefully.

Rev. 2:10

Phil. 4:6-7
I John 1:7

NO ONE CAN EARN SALVATION



THE RESULT: LIFE

— “Therefore being **justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

Rom. 5:1-2

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is **the gift of God**: ...For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.”

Eph. 2:8-13

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were **baptized into his death**? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life...”

Rom. 6:3-8

— NOTE: WE GET **INTO** CHRIST WHERE SALVATION IS BY MEANS OF BAPTISM.

c.f. Gal. 3:26, 27 and Col. 2:12, 13.

Roms. 5:1-2

And so you see, the result of this kind of response to God (hearing his truth, and believing his truth, and obeying it) is life! In Romans 5:1-2 Paul says, “Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” God’s perfect grace is the means of our salvation. No matter how much we do in obedience, we do **not** earn it; but it is the grace of God, in the light of our obedient faith, that leads us to be saved. Crucial to the entire matter is the fact that **salvation by grace** demands hearing, believing, and obeying the truth.

GOD'S PERFECT GRACE...

— **PROVIDES** the path back to the Tree of Life (the path of obedience).

— **NO MATTER WHAT** man does in receiving salvation, it is still *God's Grace*, not man's meritorious work, which provides it. (We could never earn salvation and heaven. Note the following scriptures)

— **Isa. 64:6**— "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags..."

— **Luke 17:10**— "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

— **Eph. 2:8, 9**— "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-9

Saul of Tarsus—who became the apostle called Paul— was, at one time, as zealous an enemy of Christianity as there was in the first century. But he did all that he did in persecuting Christ by persecuting **the church** for which Jesus died (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-9). When Saul of Tarsus did that in good conscience but then became a believer in Christ out on the road to Damascus, he was not saved the moment Jesus appeared to him. Saul knew that he was not saved. He asked Jesus what to do, but Jesus did not tell him, "Well you are **already** saved and you have **nothing** else to do." Rather, Jesus told him to "*arise and go into the city and there it shall be told thee what thou must do.*" Saul arose and went into the city. For three days and nights he was in such agony of soul that he would neither eat food or drink water. But, finally, Ananias, a man sent to him by Jesus, came and told him, "*And now why tarriest thou. Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins calling on his name.*"

GRACE

-EPH. 2:8-9

+

OBEDIENT

FAITH

-HEB. 5:8-9



SALVATION

GOD builds the stair-steps back to the **Tree of Life** (this is His **GRACE**). But we must climb back to it and eat its fruit (this is our **REAL, LIVING OBEDIENT FAITH**, Heb. 11). Faith is **NEVER** blessed (even by **SALVATION**) until it **OBEDIENTLY ACTS**.

Heb. 5:8-9
Jas. 2:24-26

Acts 22:16
cf. Rom. 10:13-14
Acts 2:21; 2:38; 22:16

II Tim. 2:10
Rom. 6:3-5

No one is saved by **unconditional** grace. No one is saved by faith only. But people are saved by grace plus obedient faith (Heb. 5:8-9; Jas. 2:24-26). My friends, you do not call on the name of Christ for salvation by just lifting up your face and your hands towards heaven, crying out to God, "Oh, save me." No! You do it by **obeying the gospel!** As you read in Acts 22:16, Ananias said, "*And now why tarries thou? arise, and be baptized, calling on his name that your sins may be washed away.*" You call on the name of the Lord for salvation when you are **baptized** in obedience to His will. (cf. Rom. 10:13-14; Acts 2:21; 2:38; 22:16). Saul of Tarsus was saved by **grace**, but not until, as a **penitent believer**, he was **baptized** into Christ (II Tim. 2:10; Rom. 6:3-5).

TODAY

MAN CAN FOLLOW:

THE PATH OF—OR...

DISOBEDIENCE

1. **Hear** Satan
2. **Believe** Satan
3. **Obey** Satan
4. **Unite** with Satan

OBEDIENCE

1. **Hear** GOD
2. **Believe** GOD
3. **Obey** GOD
4. **Unite** with GOD

— **Joshua 24:15**— “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

And so, it is up to each one of us. Each one of us can follow either (1) the path of **disobedience**: of hearing Satan, believing Satan, obeying Satan, and uniting with Satan **OR** (2) the path of **obedience**: of hearing God, believing God, obeying God, and uniting with God. Thus, in the words of Joshua to Israel (the same principle applies to us today), “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve, whether the gods that your fathers served on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose lands ye now dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” I hope and pray that all of us will be able to say, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” Will you not seriously and carefully consider the things from God’s word that we have said today? Search and see for yourself. Study very carefully and prayerfully Chart 6.26 and Chart 6.27. Please do take your own Bible and study the passages of Scripture which are listed there and walk down the path which lead you back to God.

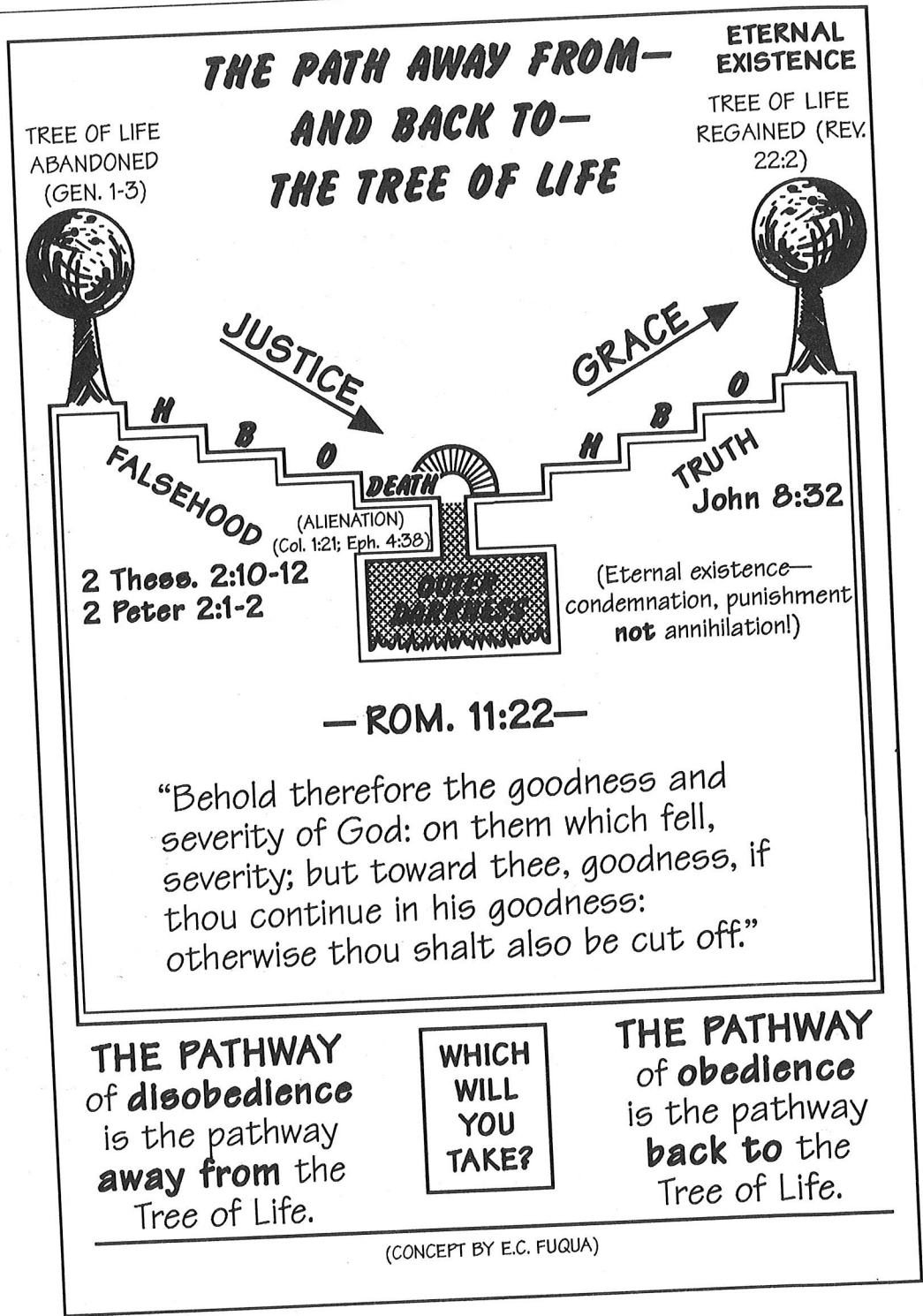
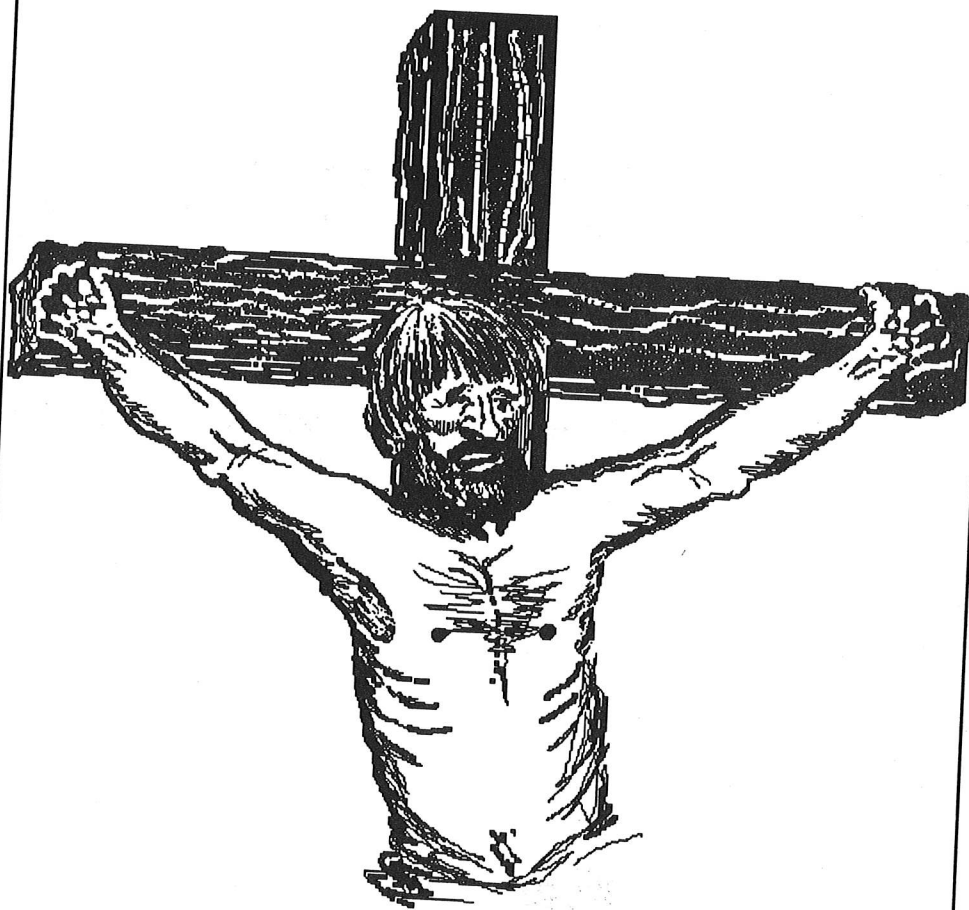


Chart 6.27 sets out the totality of this matter in diagrammatic form. May God bless and keep you in my sincere prayer.

The Thief On The Cross



2 CLASS SESSIONS ARE SUGGESTED FOR THIS LESSON.

BY THOMAS B. WARREN, PH.D.

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YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE!
PREPARING THE HEART FOR SUBMISSION TO GOD
LESSON 7: THE THIEF ON THE CROSS

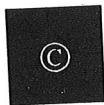
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The Thief On The Cross

Mark 16:15-16

One of the most crucial passage found in the Bible, for those living today, is that found in Mark 16:15-16, where, in the giving of the Great Commission, Jesus said to His disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the world to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."

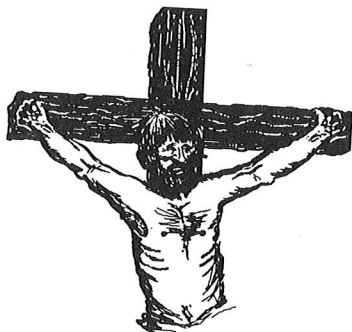
Eph. 2:8-9;
Rom. 5:8-9

Jesus here makes clear that both believing and being baptized are essential to one's being saved by the grace of God through the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 5:8-9). In fact, in the Greek New Testament, Jesus actually said, "He who having believed and having been baptized shall be saved." There is no way we can give language its fair import and not recognize the essentiality of being baptized. I hear many people say, "Well, I do not believe that one has to be baptized to be saved, even though Mark 16:16 says what it says. Also, I often hear, "I want to be saved just like the thief on the cross," This is the response that we get from many people. So let us study the thief on the cross. It is a sorely needed subject.

Mark 16:16

CHART 7.1

**CAN PEOPLE BE SAVED TODAY BY
DOING JUST EXACTLY WHAT THE THIEF
ON THE CROSS DID?**



Luke 23:39-43

Matt. 27:41-44

First, please note the question which is stated on this chart: "Can people be saved today by doing just exactly what the thief on the cross did?" I kindly suggest to you that the **Bible answer** to that question is "No." That is the case because the thief lived under a different dispensation—different testament—from the covenant under which we live.

Matt. 27:41-44

Next, let us consider Matthew 27:41-44, *"In like manner also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him. He trusteth on God; let him deliver him now, if he desireth him: for he said, I am the Son of God. And the robbers also that were crucified with him cast upon him the same reproach."*

Luke 23:32-43

And, next, let us read together Luke 23:39-42. This is a very crucial passage. It tells us about the thief making his plea to Jesus to remember him when He came into His kingdom. Let us begin with verse 39, *"And one of the malefactors that were hanged railed on him, saying, Art not thou the Christ? save thyself and us. But the other answered, and rebuking him said, Dost thou not even fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed, justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom.'" And he said unto him, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise."*

Luke 23:40-43

There should be no doubt that the thief was saved. That is what Jesus was telling him when He said, "Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise, "Paradise" is where the righteous go immediately subsequent to their deaths (Luke 23:40-43).

However, before we go further into that matter, let us consider Chart 7.2, on which I have stated a number of very important facts about the thief on the cross who was saved. You will recall that there were two thieves who were crucified with Jesus—only one of the two was saved.

**SOME FACTS ABOUT THE THIEF
ON THE CROSS**

Lk. 23:32; Matt. 27:41-44

1. He was a sinner— (Lk. 23:32).
2. At first, he joined others in reproaching Jesus— (Mt. 27:44)
3. Later, he repented and asked Jesus to remember him when He (Jesus) came into His kingdom— (Lk. 23:42).
4. In reply, Jesus told him, "...today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Lk. 23:43).
5. He lived and died before the Gospel of Christ became a LAW IN FORCE— (Heb. 9:16-17).

*Luke 23:32-43;
Matthew 27:41-44;
Hebrews 9:16-17*

*Luke 23:32
Heb. 4:15*

Matt.. 27:41-44

Lk. 23:42

Lk. 23:43

Mk. 16:15-16; et al.

This chart is entitled, "Some Facts About The Thief On The Cross." Passages which are especially crucial to this chart are Luke 23:32-43; Matthew 27:41-44; and Hebrews 9:16-17.

1. First, we note that **both** of the men who were crucified alongside Jesus were sinners ["malefactors," "robbers"] (Luke 23:32). Jesus was without sin (Heb. 4:15).
2. At first, the thief (the one who was later saved) joined his fellow sinner in reproaching Jesus. The two thieves cast the same reproaches upon Jesus as did the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders, who said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save..." and so forth (Matt.. 27:41-44).
3. However, later on, the thief under consideration repented of his wrong attitude and actions and asked Jesus to remember him when He (Jesus) came into His Kingdom (Lk. 23:42).
4. In response to the thief's plea, Jesus said to him, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Lk. 23:43). This was the way Jesus used to let the man know that he would be saved eternally.

Question: Since the thief on the cross could **not** have been baptized with the baptism of the Great Commission (Mk. 16:15-16; et al.), does this fact warrant

the conclusion that men and women living on earth today can be saved without being baptized with that baptism? The answering of **that** question [in the **negative!**] is the main burden of this present study.

Heb. 9:16-17

5. It must here be noted that the thief, who is under consideration here, both lived and died before the law (gospel) of Christ became a law in force! (Heb. 9:16-17). How very, very important to the understanding of message of the New Testament is the matter just mentioned; namely, the thief on the cross did not live under the law (gospel) of Christ—that is, the New Testament!

CHART 7.3

SOME CRUCIAL QUESTIONS

1. Does Lk. 23:43 imply that the thief was saved?

2. If so, was he saved without being baptized in the name of Christ?

3. If so, does this mean that people living today can be saved without being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ?

What does the BIBLE teach?

What does the LAW of CHRIST teach?

The asking of the right questions can be extremely important—even vital—to the study of a given matter. So it is with Chart 7.3: three crucially important questions are raised.

Luke 23:43

Acts 2:29-36
cf. Lk 16:19-3

I Cor. 15:51-57;
I Thess. 4:13-18
Acts 2:29ff

Mk. 6:15-16;
Matt. 28:18-20
Acts 2:38

1. Does Luke 23:43 imply that the thief was saved? Answer: there should be no doubt that he was saved. The soul of Jesus went that day to that part of Hades (the unseen realm where spirit [soul] goes when the body dies-*cf.* Acts 2:29-36). Paradise is that part of Hades where the souls of the righteous go at death (*cf.* Lk 16:19-31) to be there until the resurrection of the dead at the second coming of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 15:51-57; I Thess. 4:13-18). So, it is clear that Jesus told the thief that his soul was going to be in the same place where His (Jesus') soul was to be (Acts 2:29ff). Thus, it is clear that thief was saved.
2. The second question is: If the thief was saved, was he saved without being baptized in the name of (by the authority of) Christ? Since the Bible does not state whether the man was baptized with the baptism of John (the Baptist), we do not know whether he was or was not baptized with the baptism of John. But, we do know that he was not baptized with the baptism of the Great Commission (Mk. 6:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20)-that is, baptism in the name of [by the authority of Jesus Christ, Acts 2:38]. This is the case because the law of Christ (the gospel) was not yet in force. It came into force on the first day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ.
3. The third question here is: "If so, does this mean that **people living today** can be saved without be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ? The answer to this question is: no, it does not mean such. Being baptized in the name of Christ is **absolutely essential** to the salvation of any sinner who has lived-or will live-on earth from the day of Pentecost (Acts) until Jesus comes again. This matter is at the heart of this present study.

What each of us must both **ask** and **answer** is: What does the Bible teach about the matter? More particularly, what does the law (gospel) of Christ teach about it?

To answer that, we must first learn (or be reminded of) some principles of law. So, let us turn to **Chart 7.4** and look at some of these principles of law in general.

SOME PRINCIPLES CONCERNING LAW

1. Transgression of God's Law is SIN— (1 John 3:4).
2. Where there is no LAW, there is no transgression— (Rom. 4:15).
3. The only persons who are under obligation to obey a LAW are those to whom it is addressed— (Rom. 3:19).
4. A LAW may at one time be in force to a group of people and then be REPEALED (and, thus, no longer be in force)— (Heb. 10:9).
5. One LAW may be taken away so that another LAW may be established—

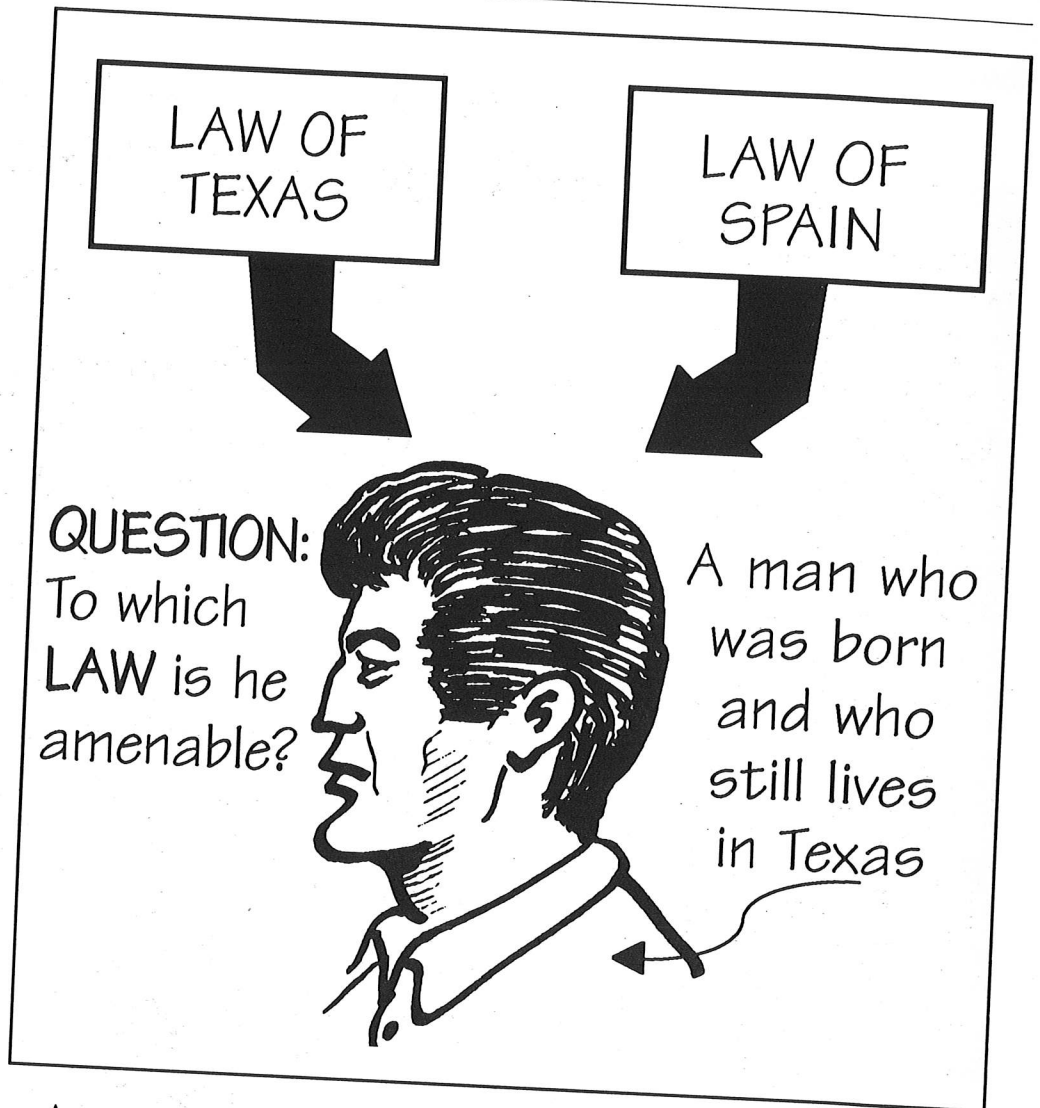
I John 3:4

Rom. 3:19

Rom. 4:15

Rom. 3:19

1. I John 3:4 makes clear that the transgression of God's law is sin. And, whatever a law has to say, it says to those who are **under** (amenable to) that law (Rom. 3:19). No **man can violate a law to which he is not amenable!** But all who are amenable to a law are people who can be guilty of transgressing that law.
2. Where there is no law (addressed to one) there can be no sin by that person. Where there is no law, there is no transgression (Rom. 4:15).
3. The only persons who are under obligation to obey a law are those to whom it is addressed. (Rom. 3:19).



A man who was born in Texas-and who has lived there all of his life-is **not amenable** to the law of Spain, of Mexico, of Germany, et al.-or even of the law of Louisiana or of Oklahoma, et al. This is a simple, obvious fact-one that we all understand in ordinary affairs of life. But-it seems-when men come to the law of Christ, for some reason or other, they seem to "lose track" of the "good old common sense" which they use in other phases or realms of human life.

Hebrews 10:9-10

4. Next, we note that a law may at one time be in force to a group of people and then be **repealed**-and, thus, no longer be in force. Hebrews 10:9-10 makes this clear. Patriarchal law was, at one time, over all men. However, when the law of Moses came into force for the Jews, then the Jews were no longer Patriarchal law.

5. In this connection (point 4), it is clear that or e law may be taken out of the way (repealed) in order that another law may be established as a law in its place. This truth is made clear by such passages as Hebrew 10:9; Ephesians 2:13-15; Colossians 2:13-15; Gal. 3:25; et al.

Now let us note the significance of the facts which relate to wills (the last wills and testaments of human beings).

*Hebrew 10:9;
Ephesians 2:13-15;
Colossians 2:13-15;
Gal. 3:25; et al.*

NOTE AN ORDINARY HUMAN WILL (TESTAMENT)

LAST WILL and TESTAMENT

John K. Brunen

Robin A. Smith

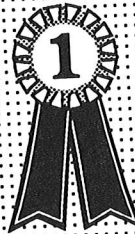
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Jason K. Wilson

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1. Has NO force before the death of the testator. (Heb. 9:16-17).
2. But AFTER the death of the testator, it controls the disposition of the estate. (Authority)

Note: God expects us to learn from this truth (Heb. 9:15-17).



What does this chart tell us about ordinary wills (testaments)?

1. First, we know that no will (testament) is in force before the death of the testator (See Chart 7.6). Note the example of this characteristic on Chart 7.7. The man on the left is asking the man on the right for a gift of \$100.00 so that he can feed his family. But the other man responds by indicating that, while he would like very much to give him the money, he cannot do so because he has willed (in his will) all of his money to his wife. But everyone knows that this is not adequate grounds for the refusal of the gift. Everyone knows that wills (testaments) are valid (effective, in force) only after the death of the testator (the one who made the will).

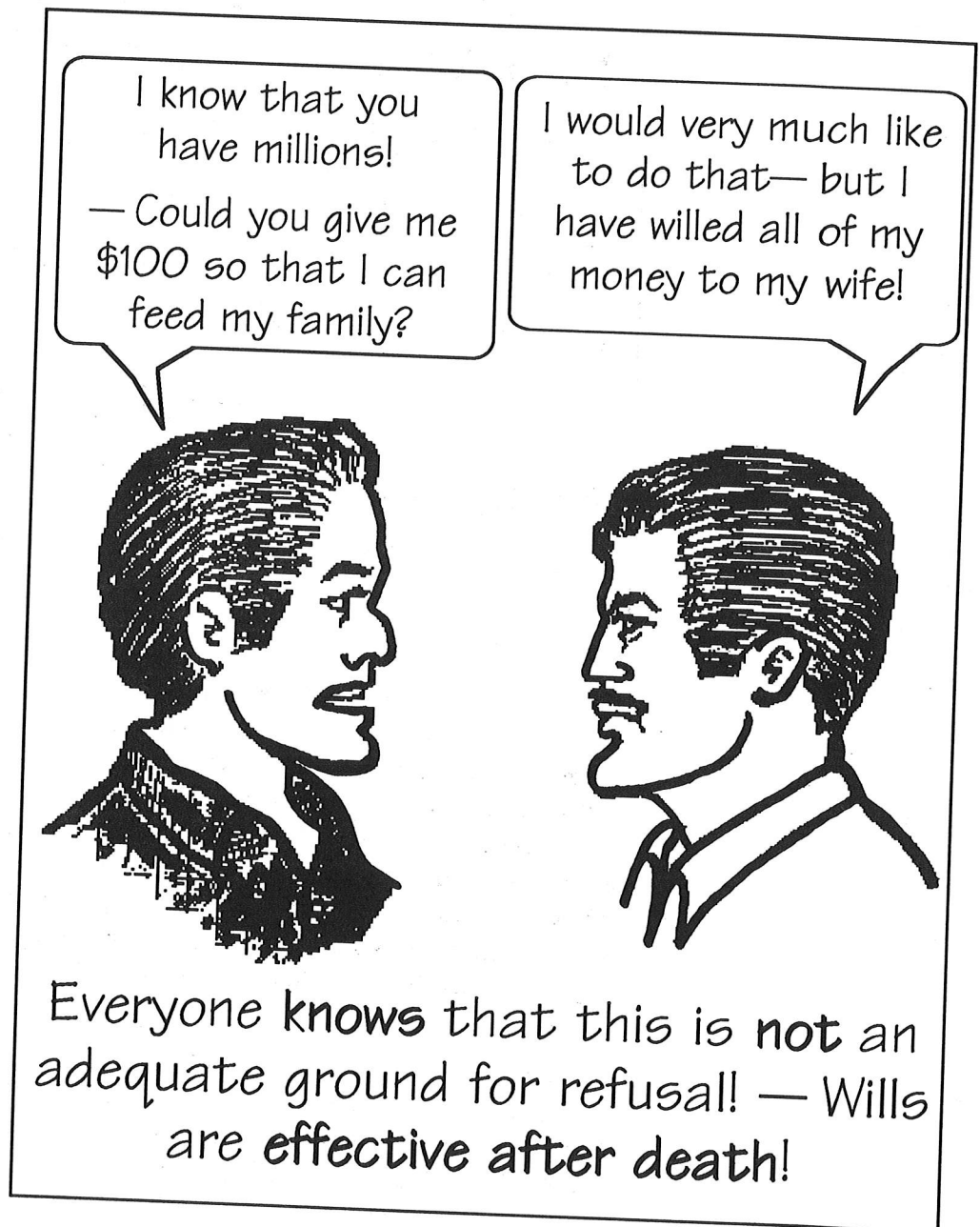
SEE CHART 7.6

2. But, it also must be noted that **after** the death of the testator, the **will** controls the disposition of the estate. Thus, after the death of the testator, the **will** becomes **authoritative**. Thus, the will (testament) of Christ was not in effect when he spoke to the thief ("...today thou shalt be with me in Paradise") while they were still on crosses. So, what happened there was not governed by the New testament.

Heb. 9:15-17

It must be noted by all men that God expects all of to learn, and profit by, this truth (Heb. 9:15-17).

CHART 7.7



Note the conversation of the two men on Chart 7.7. Consider it carefully. Everyone knows that what the man on the right has said is not an adequate ground for his refusal to make a gift to the man on the left.

NOTE FURTHER:

“But before FAITH came, we were kept in ward under the LAW, shut up unto the FAITH which should afterwards be revealed. So that the LAW is become our TUTOR to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith, but now that FAITH is come, we are no longer under a TUTOR.”

— Galatians 3:23–25

No person now living is under (amenable to) the Law of Moses.

This passage should be studied very carefully. It is so important to one's seeing the truth in regard to the covenants. Paul here makes clear that before the gospel (the New Testament) came into force [which it did on the first day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ from the dead] the Jews were under (amenable to) the law of Moses [they were, in effect, “guarded” by the law of Moses until the law (gospel) of Christ would come into force]. Thus, the law of Moses was their teacher (or guide) to bring them (the Jews) to Christ, so that they could be justified by faith. But now—that is, now that the faith (the gospel of Christ) has come into force, they (the Jews) are no longer under the law of Moses.

The thief on the cross was not saved by obeying the gospel (law) of Christ. Why not? Because at the time Jesus told the thief, “Today shalt thou be with me in paradise,” the law of Moses was in force for the Jews and Patriarchal law was in force for Gentiles but the law (gospel) of Christ was not yet in effect.

Note, again, Paul's statement, “Now that the faith [the gospel] has come [into effect] we [Jews] are no longer under a tutor [the law of Moses].”

Galatians 3:23-25

Thus, Galatians 3:23-25 constitutes **proof** that the thief was **not saved** by believing and obeying the gospel of Christ. This was the case because the gospel was **not yet in force!** But **no person living today** can be saved by obeying either **Mosaic** or **Patriarchal** law. Persons living **today** can be saved **only** by obeying the **gospel of Christ!**

Romans 8:1-5

Note: No one could be saved by the works of the law of Moses or by Patriarchal law, but this requires a separate, detailed study (which see). Here it must suffice to point the reader to the truth on this matter which is set out in Romans 8:1-5 (the law of Moses could not save anyone-but God can by sending His Son to "taste of death" for all people).

Rom. 4:15

Mk. 16:15;

Rom. 1:15-17;

Matt. 28:18-20

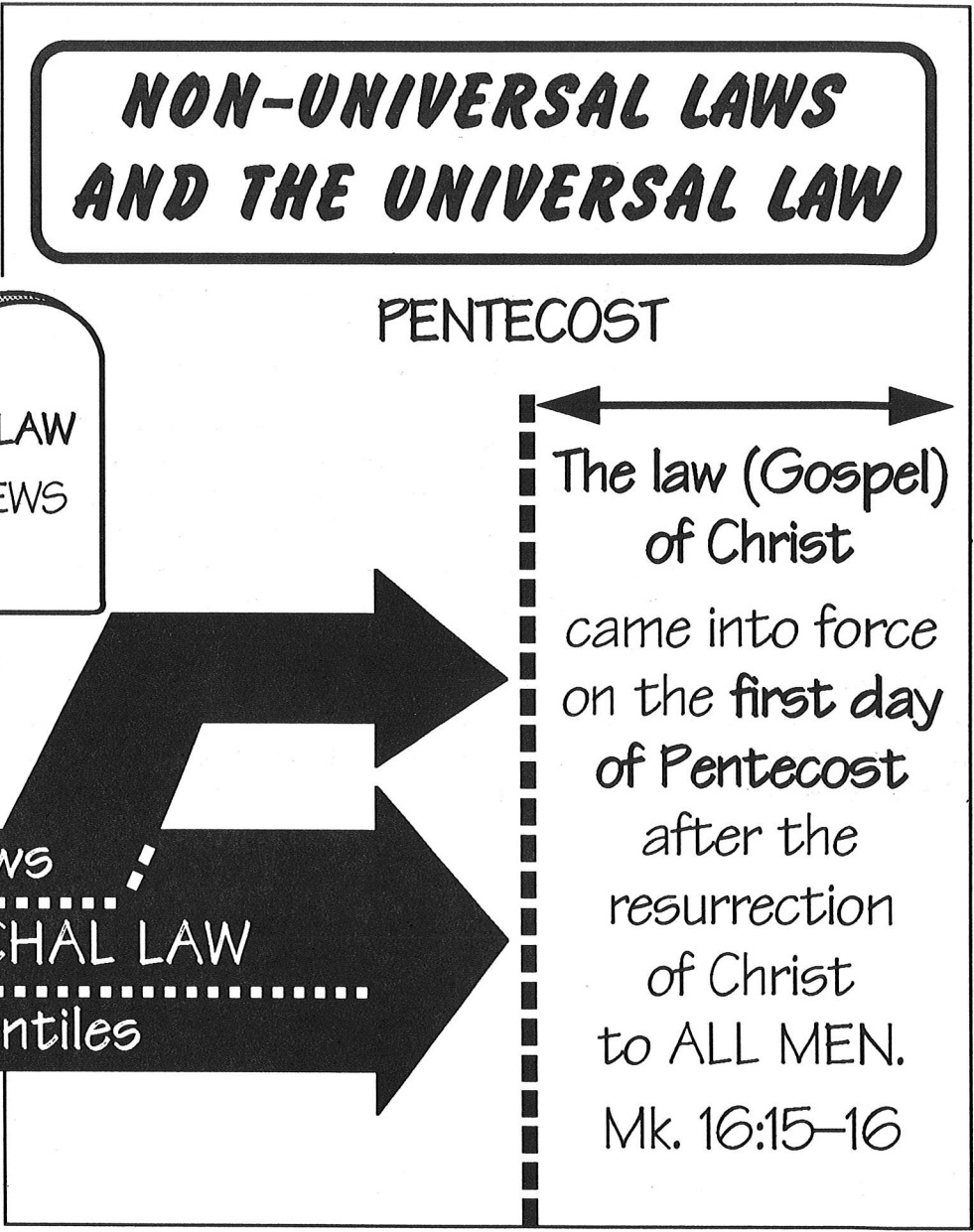
Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mk.

16:15-16; Gal. 3:26-

27; Rom. 6:3-5; II

Tim. 2:10; et al.

In order to sin, people must be **under law**, for where (or when) there is **no law**, there can be **no transgression** (see Rom. 4:15). Today all people are under (amenable to) **the gospel (law)** of Christ (Mk. 16:15; Rom. 1:15-17; Matt. 28:18-20). However I emphasize that the thief on the cross was **not under** (amenable to) the **gospel (law)** of Christ. Therefore, that thief could not be saved as those who live today are saved. To be saved, the thief did not have to be baptized unto the remission of his sins in the name of (by the authority of) Jesus Christ). Thus, the account of the thief on the cross is no evidence whatever that people living today do not have to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ in order to be saved (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mk. 16:15-16; Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3-5; II Tim. 2:10; et al.).



When God created the first man and woman, he placed them in the Garden of Eden and told them that they could eat freely of every tree of the Garden except one: the tree of the knowledge of good evil. When they violated God's instructions, God cast them out of the Garden (Gen.1-3).

Gen.1-3

From that time until the giving of the law of Moses to the Jews, mankind lived under what is well termed, "the Patriarchal law." All of mankind was under Patriarchal law until God gave the law of Moses to the Jews (Ex. 20ff). It should be noted, on Chart 7.8, that the Gentiles (all non-Jews) continued under Patriarchal law when the Jews were given the law of Moses. Further, as Chart 7.8 shows, the Gentiles continued under the Patriarchal law, and the Jews then continued under the law of Moses until the law (gospel) of Christ came into force on the first day of Pentecost after the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Acts 2; Isa. 2).

Ex. 20ff

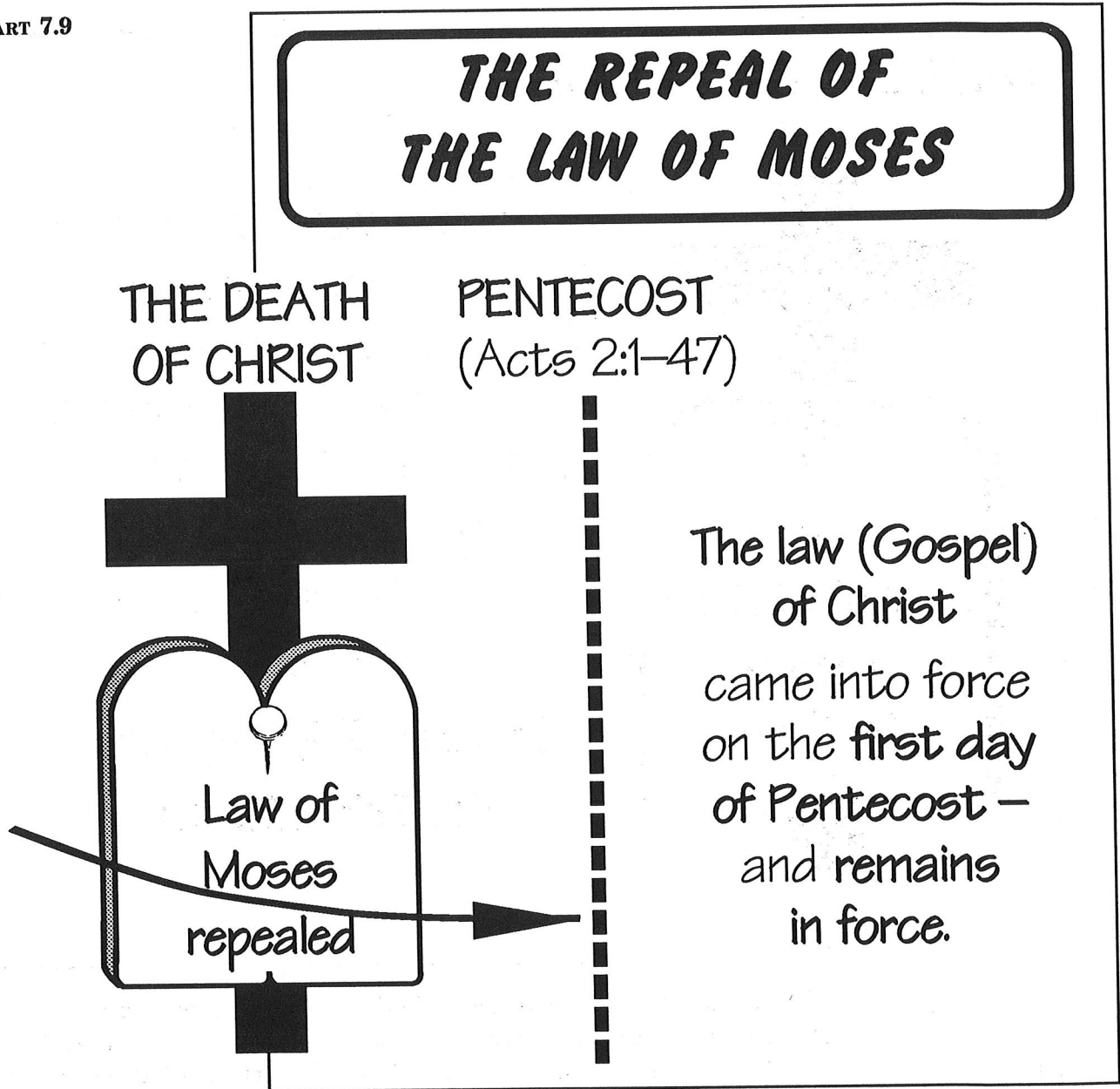
Acts 2; Isa. 2

cf. Mk. 16:15-16;
 Matt. 28:18-20;
 Lk. 24:44-49;
 Acts 2:1-47; 17:30-31;
 et al.

When the law (gospel) of Christ came into force, then all men on earth became amenable to it (cf. Mk. 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20; Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 2:1-47; 17:30-31; et al.).

May it be emphasized once more: the thief on the cross never lived during a time when the gospel of Christ was a law in force. This constitutes **proof** that the case of the thief on the cross is **not** evidence at all that any one living to-day can be saved **without** being baptized in the name of Christ.

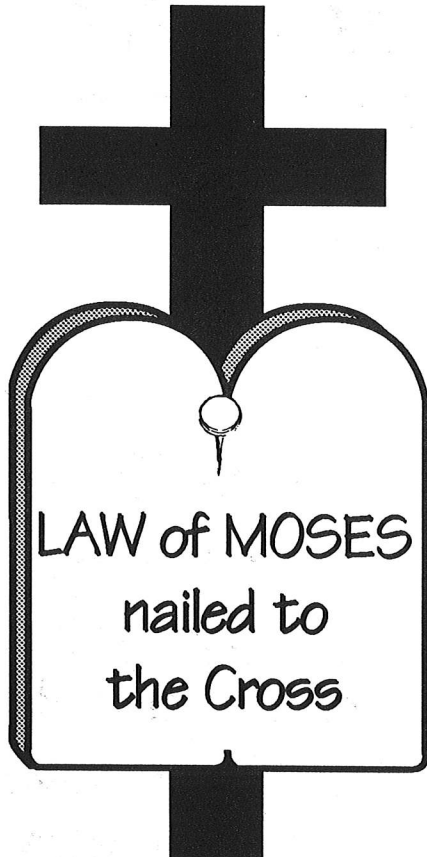
CHART 7.9



This Chart 7.9 "says again" what has already been said in connection with Chart 7.8. It gives more details, graphically speaking, than does Chart 7.8. It is hoped that you (the listener or the reader) will profit by it to the end of clarifying the relationships which obtain among the law of Moses, the cross of Christ, the day of Pentecost, and the gospel of Christ.

THE LAW OF MOSES WAS NAILED TO THE CROSS

THE DEATH OF CHRIST



“... having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross...”

Col. 2:14

Cf.: Rom. 7:4; Heb. 10:9

Cf.: Eph. 2:13-16

Col. 2:14
Romans 7:4;
Hebrews 10:9;
Ephesians 2:13-16

Once again, there is a bit of an overlap with what has already been said. Please read the chart very carefully-not only the passage which is stated there (Col. 2:14) but also the other passages, which are merely listed at the bottom of the chart: Romans 7:4; Hebrews 10:9; and Ephesians 2:13-16. All of these passages teach (at least implicitly) that the law of Moses was done away. Passages which we have already considered teach that the gospel came into effect (as God's law in force) on the first day of Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ.

What follows from the preceding material? What should we conclude from it all? Let us look at Chart 7.11 and Chart 7.12 for the answer to our questions.

IT FOLLOWS THAT:

- ★ No one can learn what to do by studying only instructions given **before** the Law of Moses:
 - ADAM— “Don’t eat of tree.”
 - Noah— “Build an ark.”
 - Abraham— “Offer son.”
- ★ No one can learn what to do by studying **only** the Law of Moses:
 - It was given only to Israel—
Deut. 5:2,3; 4:7,8; Ex. 20.
 - It did not offer absolute forgiveness of sins—
Rom. 8:1-5; Heb. 9:22; 10:4; 9:12ff.
 - It was taken out of the way
Col. 2:14; Gal. 4:21-31;
Eph. 2:13-16.

Note carefully the details of Chart 7.11:

1. That no one can learn the details of what to do (to be saved from one’s sins) by studying only the instructions which God gave before He gave the law of Moses to the Jews!
 - a. No person living today is required to refrain from eating of a particular tree,
 - b. No person is required to build an ark, and
 - c. No person is required to offer his son as a sacrifice,

2. That no one can learn the details of what to do (to be saved) by studying only the law of Moses:
 - a. The law of Moses was given to the Jews (for a limited time),
 - b. The law of Moses did not offer absolute forgiveness of sins, and
 - c. The law of Moses was taken out of the way (it was nailed to the cross).

The Bible clearly teaches that there is a crucial relationship among:

1. **faith**,

2. **works**, and

3. **grace** (cf. Rom. 15:4; 4:23-25; Eph. 2:8-9, et al.). Hebrews clearly teaches that, without **faith**, man's **works** cannot save (Heb. 11:6). James makes clear that, without **works**; man's **faith** cannot save (James 2:24-26). And without God's **grace**, no one can be saved (Eph. 2:5-9; Rom. 3:24; 11:5-6; 2 Tim. 1:9).

cf. Rom. 15:4; 4:23-25;
Eph. 2:8-9, et al.
Heb. 11:6
James 2:24-26
Eph. 2:5-9;
Rom. 3:24; 11:5-6;
2 Tim. 1:9

CHART 7.12

THUS-IT IS CLEAR THAT:

Before Christ died:

1. Patriarchal Law (for Gentiles) and the Mosaic Law (for Jews) were in effect.
2. The New Testament (the Gospel) was not in effect.
3. Thus, the terms of pardon according to the New Testament were not in effect.

So — the thief was **not** saved by obeying the New Testament (the Gospel).

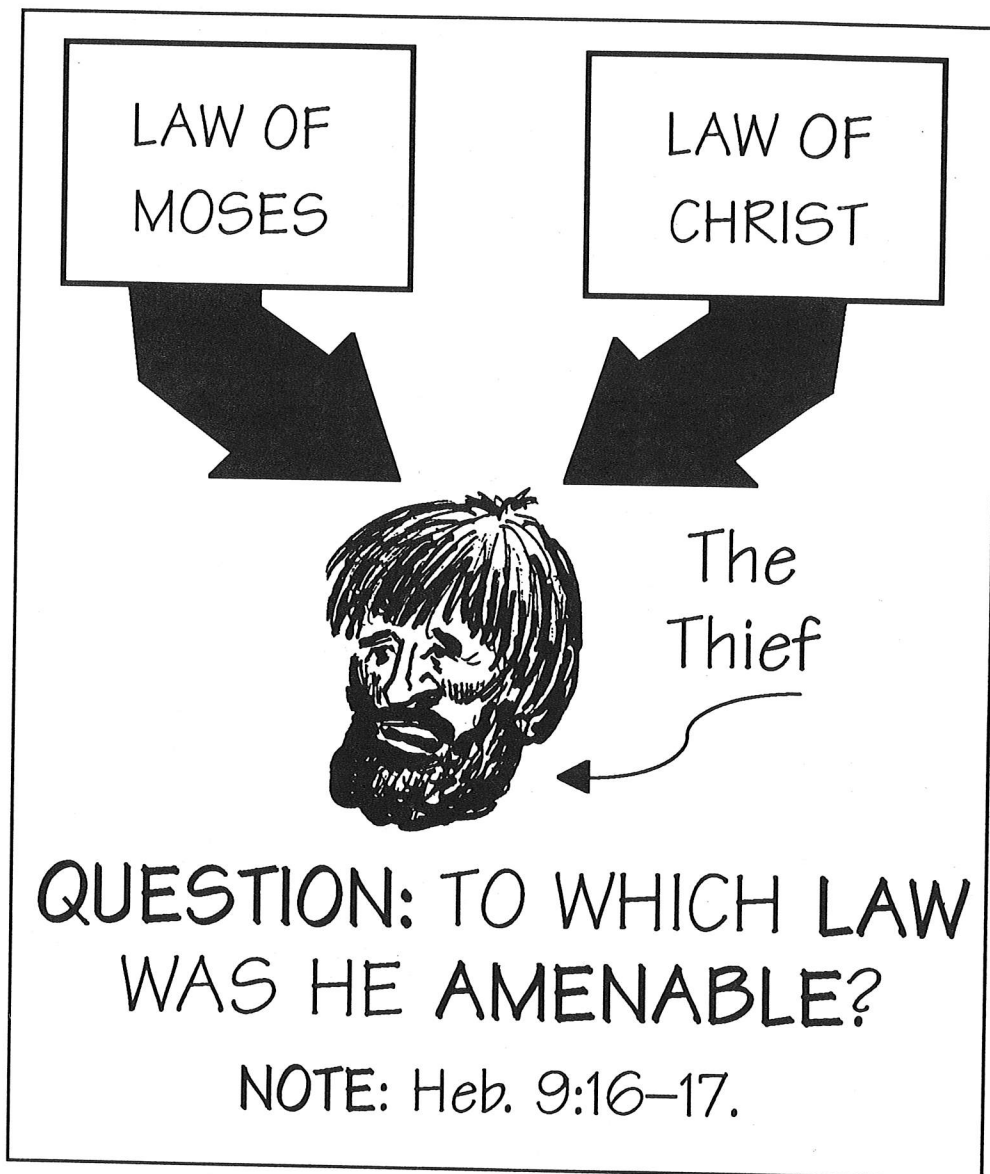
SEE CHART 7.12

So, let us now note (on Chart 7.12) that some very important matters are thus made clear—namely, that before Jesus Christ died:

1. Patriarchal law (for the Gentiles) and the Mosaic law (for Jews) were in effect.
2. The New Testament, (the gospel of Christ) was not in effect,
3. Thus, the terms of pardon according to the New Testament were not in effect.

So—the thief on the cross was not saved by obeying the New Testament (the Gospel).

CHART 7.13



Hebrews 9:15-17

Here is one more chart (see Chart 7.13) to emphasize this truly important question: to which law was the thief amenable—(1) the law of Moses or (2) the law of Christ? Hebrews 9:15-17 makes clear that he was not under (amenable to) the law of Christ.

Under the law of Christ



THE GREAT COMMISSION

- Matthew 28:18-20
- Mark 16: 15-16
- Luke 24:45-49
- Acts 1:1-8
- Acts 15:7-9

There is **NO** responsible person living on earth today who is **not** under (amenable to) the **Gospel**.

This chart lists the passages which are most crucial in regard to the Great commission. I urge every listener (and reader) to study the above listed passages of Scripture in a most fervent (hungering and thirsting after righteousness) way in order to both **learn** and **obey** the plan of salvation.

Let it be noted and remembered: there is no responsible person on earth today who is **not** under (amenable to) the gospel of Christ.

WHAT DOES THE GOSPEL TEACH ABOUT SALVATION?

1. Hebrews 5:8-9
2. Matthew 7:21-23
3. James 2:24-26
4. Mark 16:15-16
5. Matthew 28:18-20
6. Acts 2:38
7. Acts 22:16
8. II Timothy 2:10;
Galatians 3:26-27;
Romans 6:3-5

On Chart 7.15, there is a listing of a number of passages of Scripture which, in addition to the ones which we looked at on Chart 7.14, explain the gospel plan of salvation.

Hebrews 5:8-9

1. Hebrews 5:8-9 makes clear that Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to those who **obey** Him.

Matthew 7:21-23

2. Matthew 7:21-23 emphasizes the fact that just crying, "Lord, Lord," will **not** save a person, but **doing** His will will save a person.

James 2:24-26

3. James 2:24-26 makes clear that lost people are saved, not by **faith only**, but by **living (obedient) faith**. James makes clear that faith without works (acts of obedience) is dead. Whatever is dead is powerless, inoperative—unable to accomplish anything at all. No one can be saved by **dead** faith. A human body without its **spirit** is dead! In the same way, **faith** without **works** is dead.

Mark 16:15-16

4. Mark 16:15-16 teaches that **the gospel (not "a gospel")** is to be preached to every person on earth. Those who believe and are baptized shall be saved. Those who do **not** believe shall be lost.

Matthew 28:18-20

5. Matthew 28:18-20 teaches that men are to "make disciples" (that is, make Christians out of non-Christians) of all the nations. This is to be done by **teaching and baptizing** them. Compare, "Go beautify the barn, painting and cleaning it." Two things must be noted here: (1) the barn is to be beautified and (2) the barn is to be beautified by **painting and cleaning** it. Also, those who do the work will **know**-just from the nature of each element of work-that the **cleaning** (scraping, etc.) of the barn must precede the painting of it. In the same way, we know that **teaching** a non-Christian **precedes** our baptizing him.

Acts 2:38

6. Acts 2:38 is a crucial passage. Here the believer is told to repent and to be baptized unto (in order to reach, gain) the remission of his sins. John 3:3-5 makes clear that if one does **not** do this (be baptized) he will be **lost!**

Acts 22:16

7. Acts 22:16 is a very important passage. After Jesus appeared to Saul of Tarsus (who at that time was **not** a Christian), he (Saul) **became** a penitent believer in Jesus. Being told by Jesus to go into the city of Damascus and that there it would be told him what he **must** do (to be saved from his sins), Saul went into the city, and for three days and nights he neither ate food nor drank any water. Ananias, a faithful disciple, was told by Jesus to go speak to Saul. He did so, and Saul received his sight. Ananias then told Saul to "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Saul arose and was baptized. Thus, it is clear that baptism is essential (absolutely necessary) for one to have his sins washed away (by the blood of Jesus Christ), thus becoming a Christian!

*II Timothy 2:10,
Galatians 3:26-27,
Romans 6:3-5*

8. II Timothy 2:10, Galatians 3:26-27, and Romans 6:3-5 make clear that salvation is **in** Christ and that one enters Christ by being baptized.



SO THEN—

It is clear that no one living today can be saved by doing exactly what the THIEF did.

It is also, clear that the THIEF did not obey the Plan of Salvation which is set out in the New Testament (the Gospel).

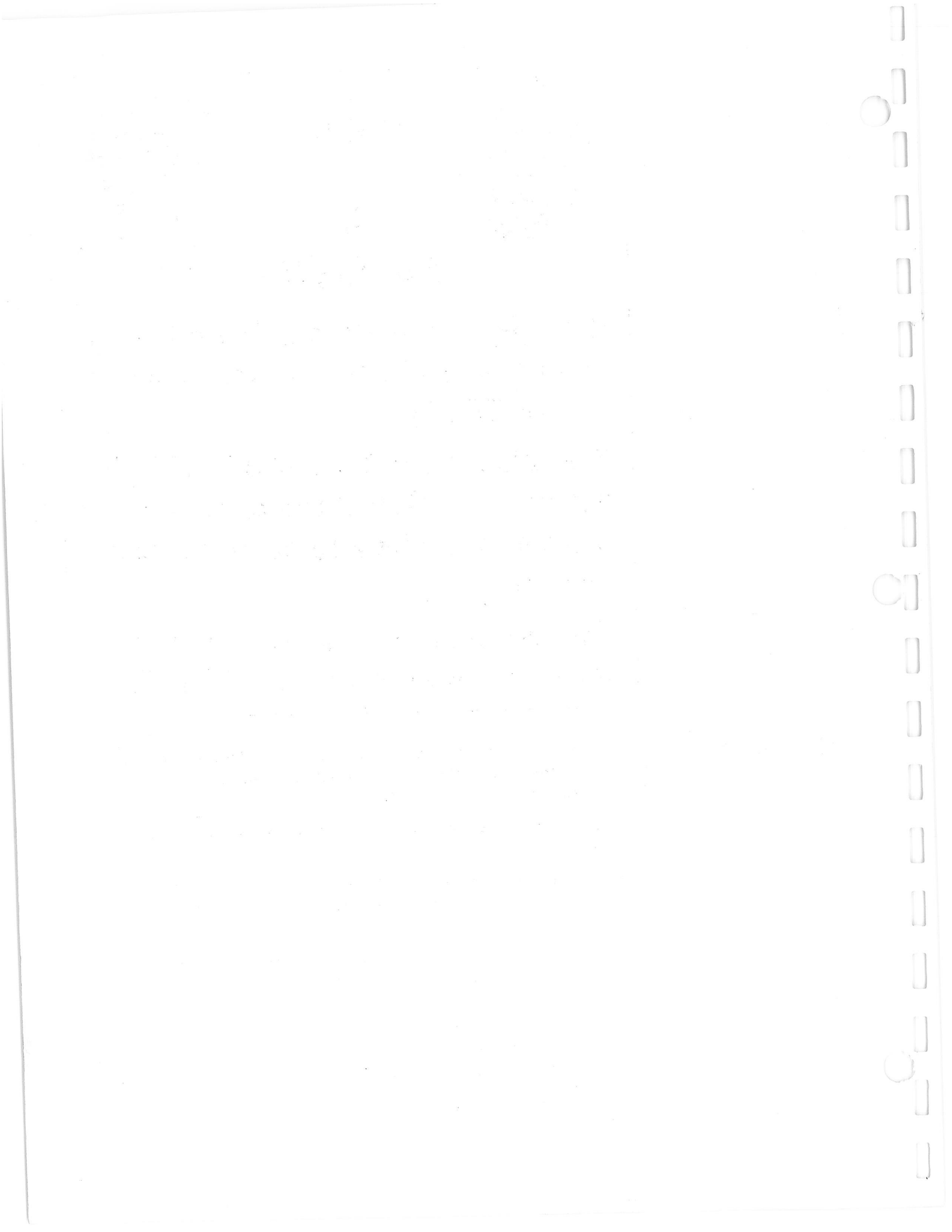
The Gospel was not even in force when Jesus spoke to the THIEF!

CONCLUSION

1. Since the thief on the cross both lived and died **before** the New Testament (the law of Christ) came into effect, it is clear that the thief was not saved by obeying the New Testament.
2. Thus, it is clear **no one** living today can be saved by doing **exactly** what the thief did.
3. It is also clear that the thief did **not** obey the plan of salvation which is set out in the New Testament. The gospel was not even in force when Jesus spoke to the thief on the cross.
4. Instead of using the thief on the cross as an example of what to do to be saved, one should use such examples as the Pentecostians (Acts 2), the Ethiopian eunuch. (Acts 8), Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9), Cornelius (Acts 10, 11), and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16).

Acts 2
 Acts 8
 Acts 9
 Acts 10, 11
 Acts 16

May God bless you all in your search for truth and righteousness. No one can truly understand the great messages of the Bible without understanding the various dispensations (the Patriarchal, the Mosaical, and the Christian dispensations), and their relationships to one another.



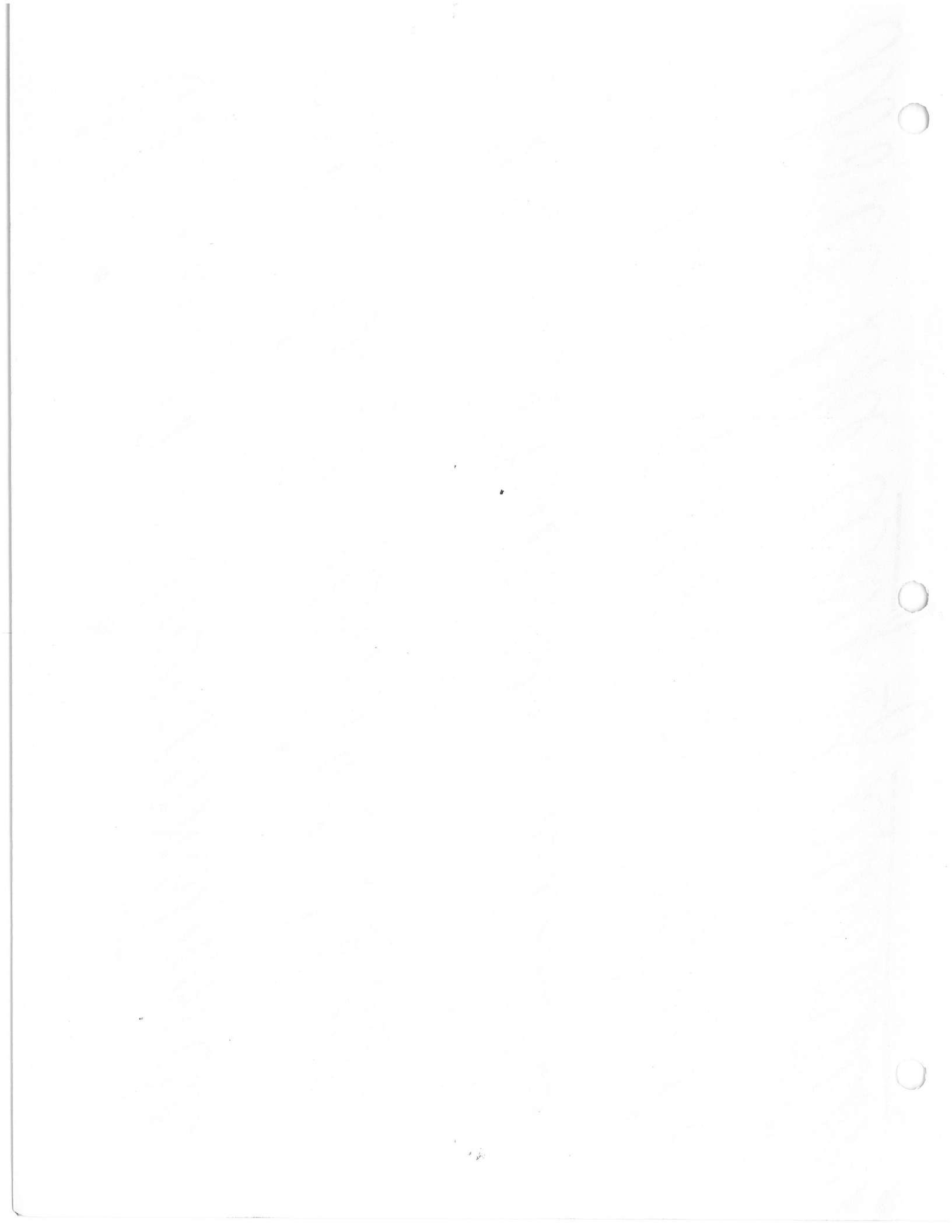
"Does Every Man
Have A Right To
His Own Belief?"

No. 2

John 14:1-6



It is a circumstance
not to be denied that
great obligations exist
in the public mind
about the way of abortion.



They are trying to
determine if by what
the multitude is

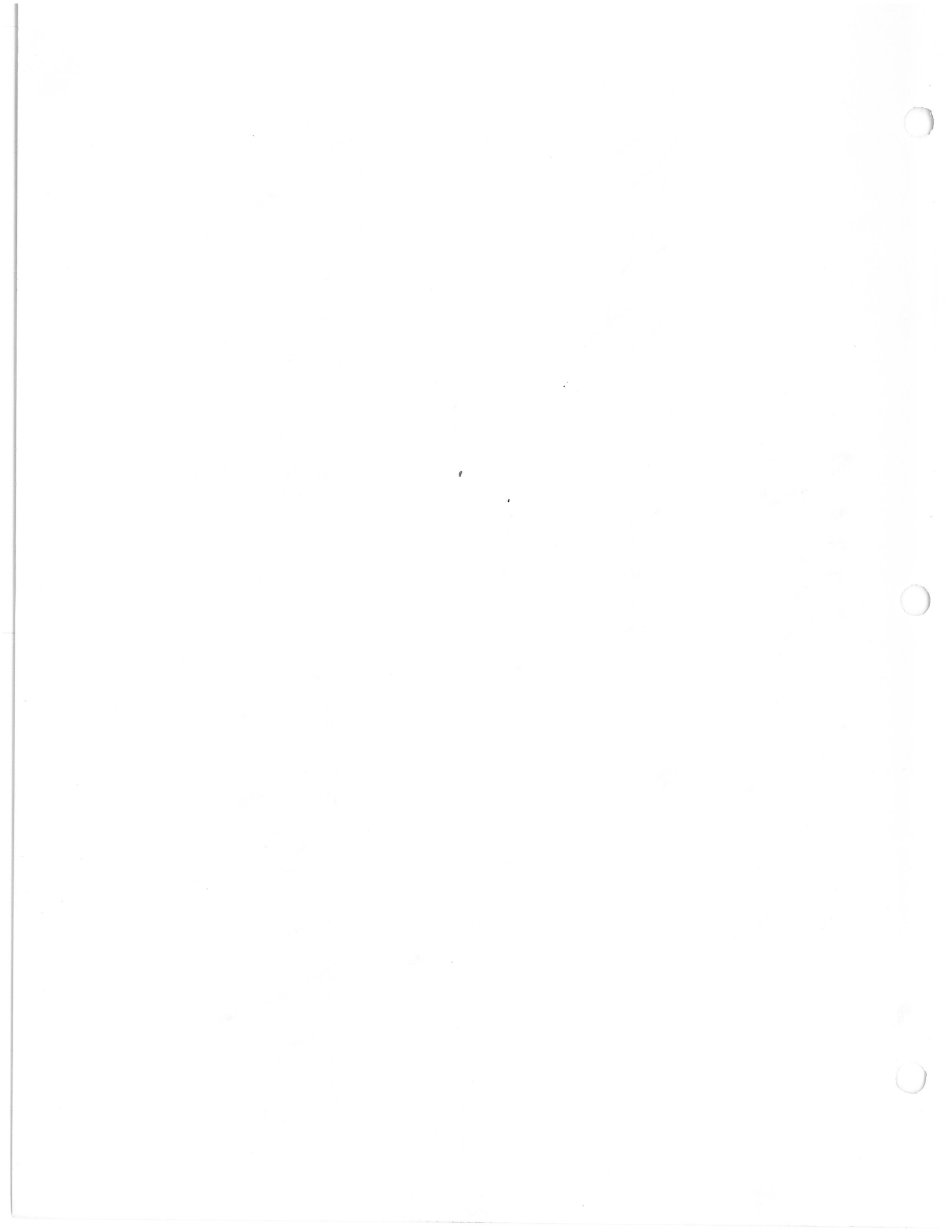
doing. Ep. 23:2

[Faint, illegible handwriting, possibly bleed-through from the reverse side of the page]



Some are following
what seems right
unto man.

Prov 14:12



Some use of the
opinion that the
way is not too im-
portant as long as one
is sincere.

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6

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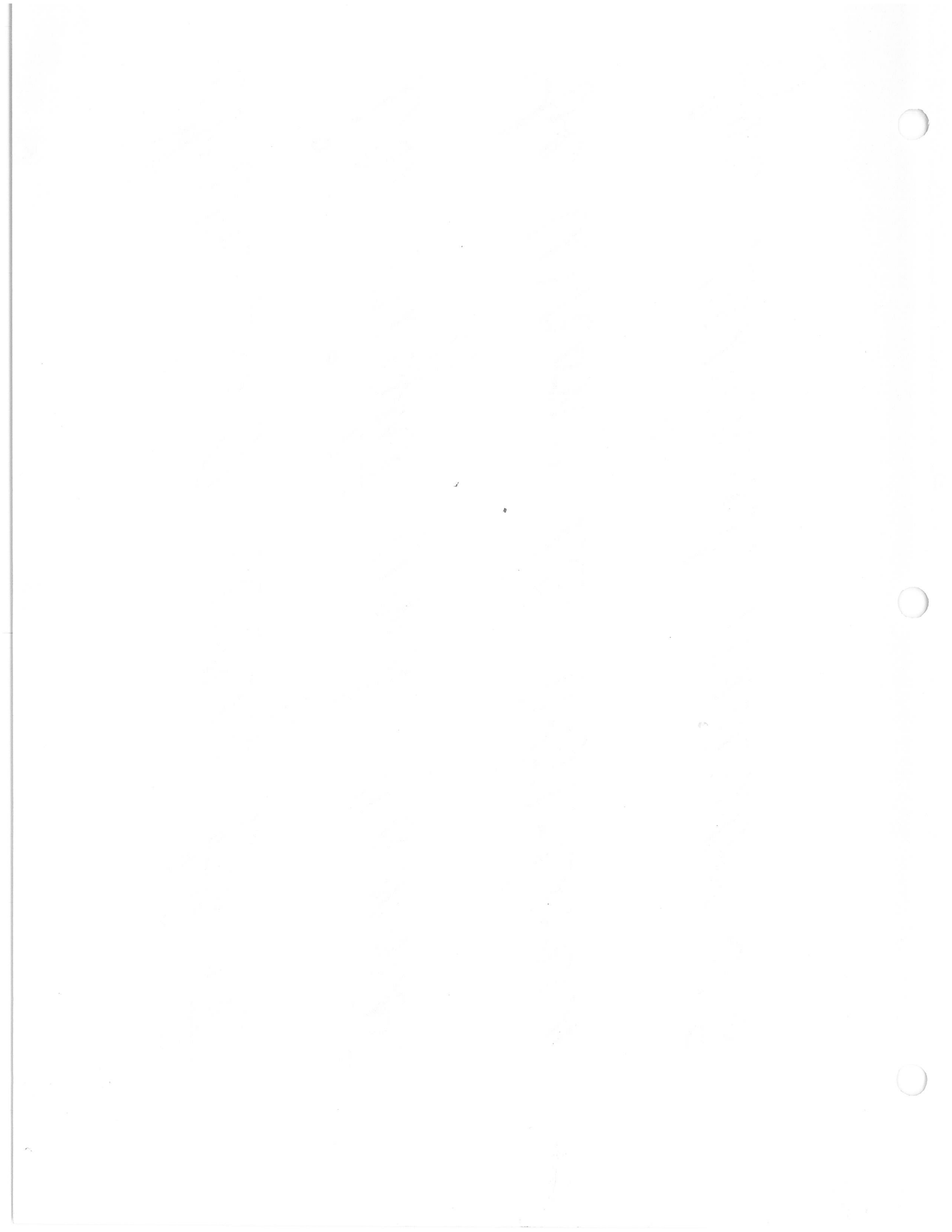
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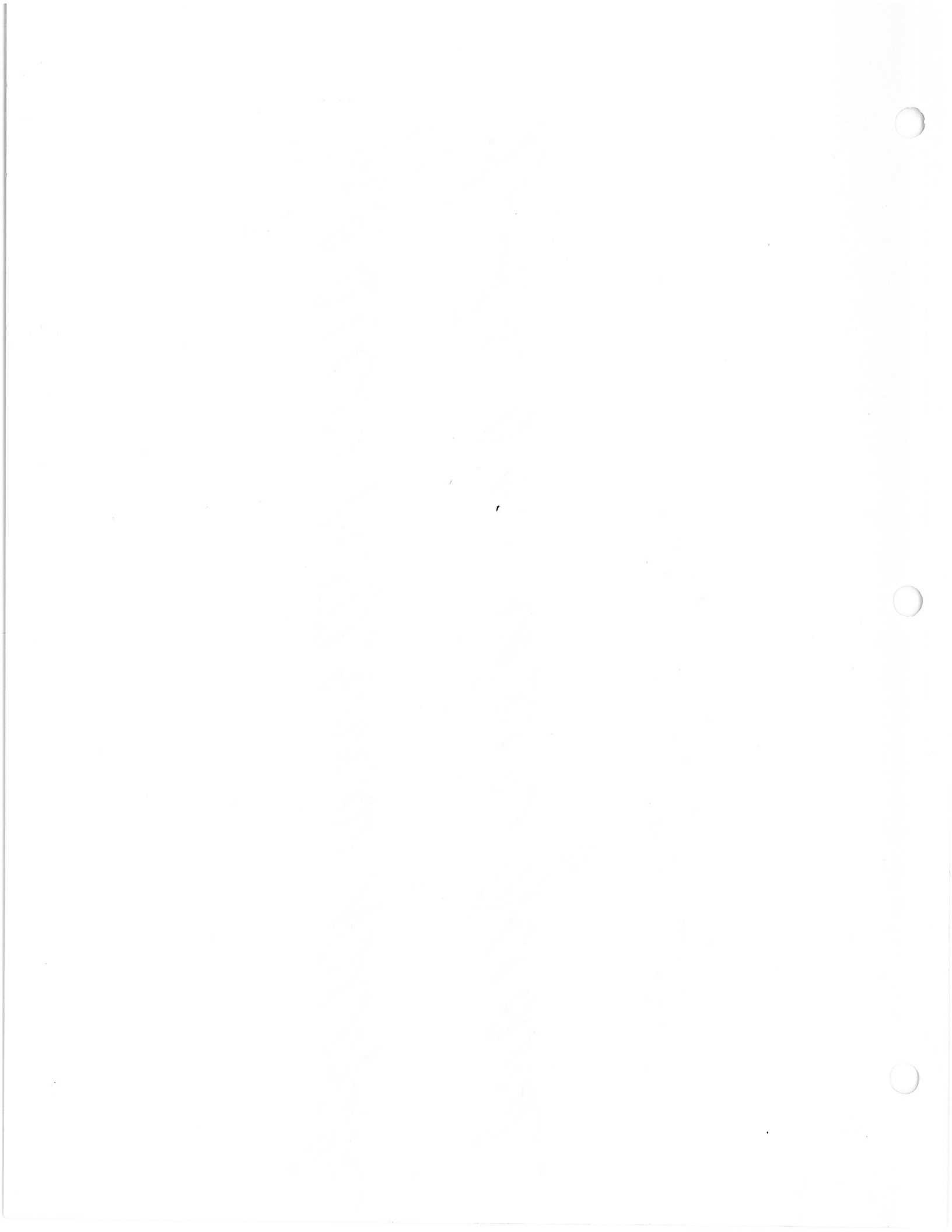
14

There is a way that
is right and cannot
be wrong in business
for mutual reasons?

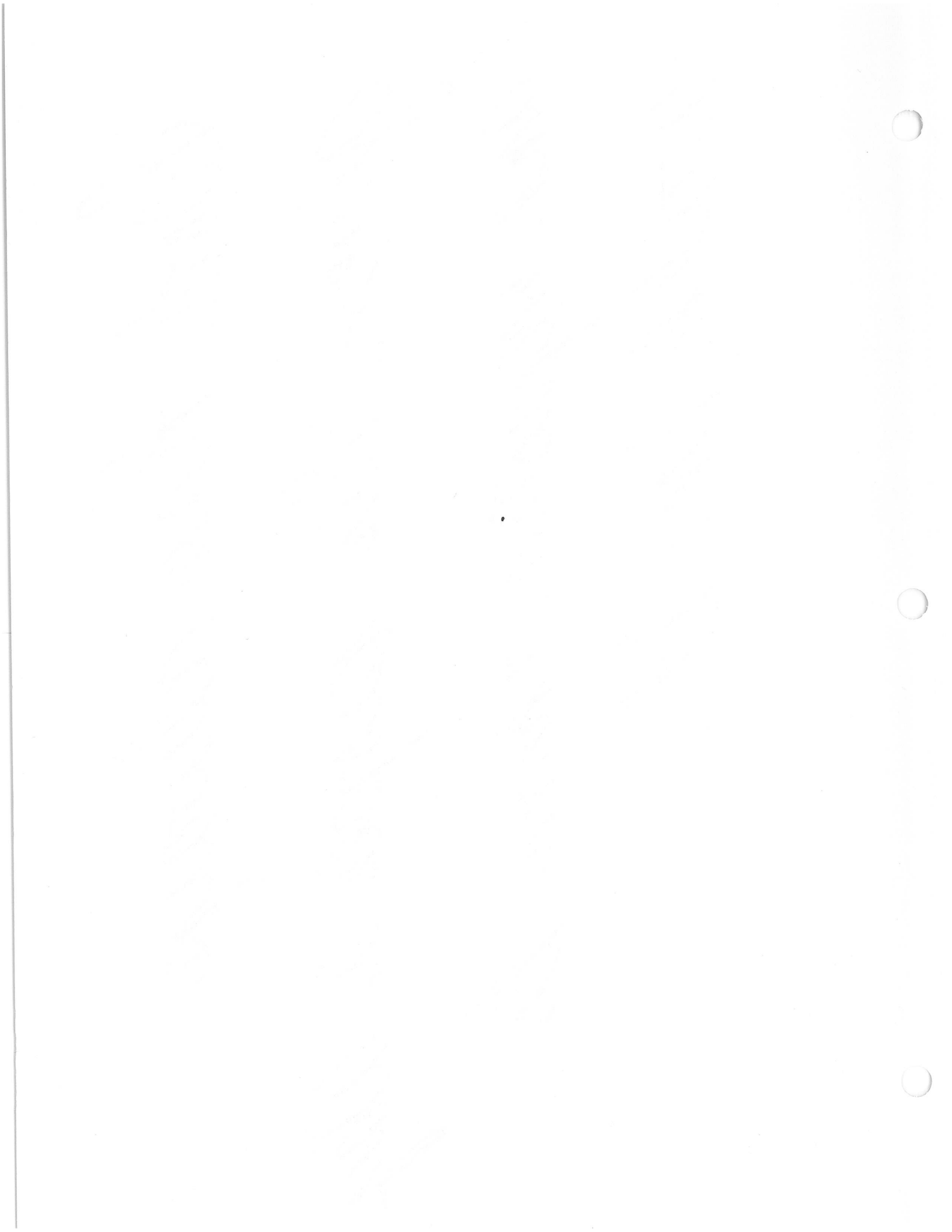


Learn what you people
to be on their guard.

Feb. 13:24-27



And has always
given his people a way
and expected them to
walk in it.



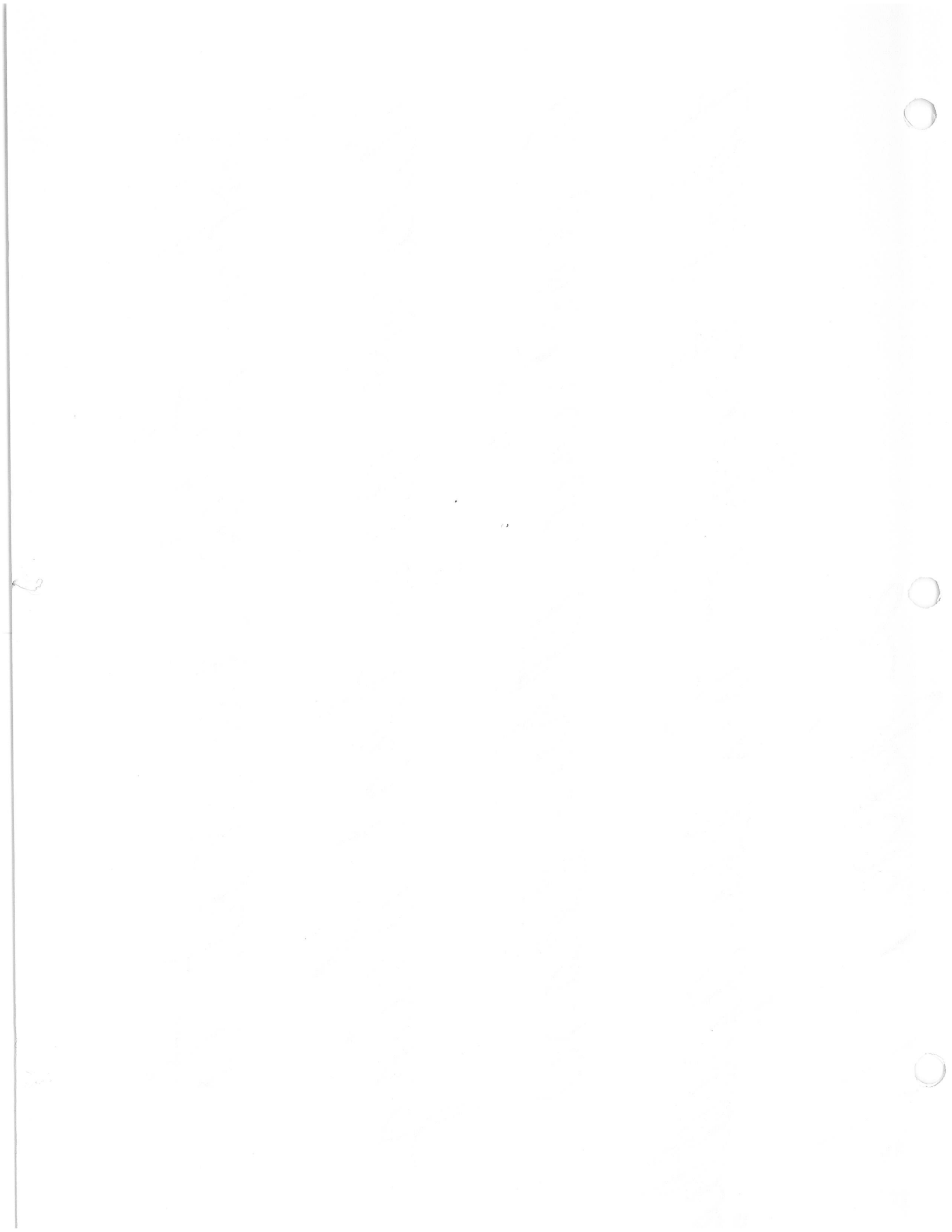
A man is accused
that preaches any doctrine
other than that preached
by the apostles.

Gal. 1:8-9

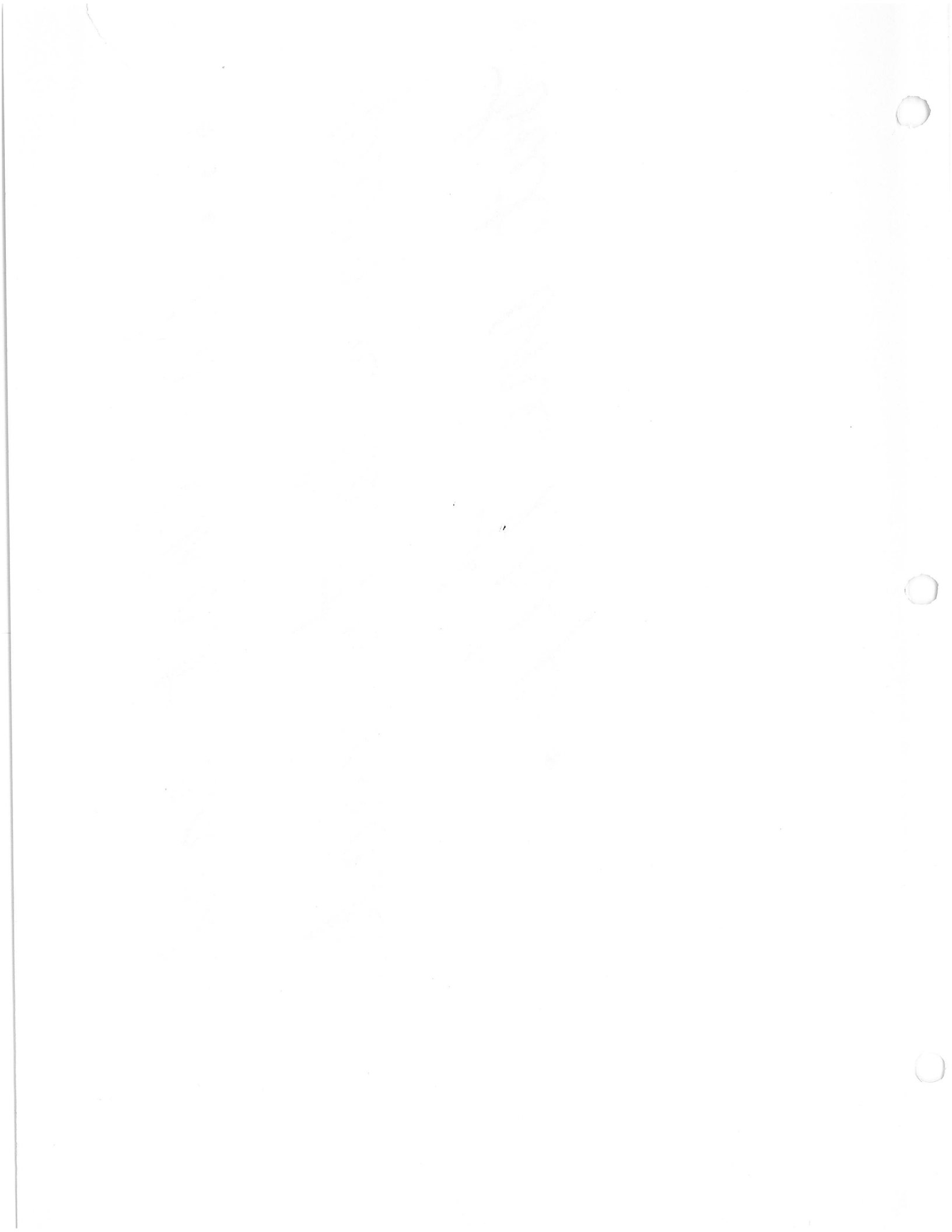


John tells us not to
receive any that bring
a doctrine other than
that taught by the apostles.

2 John 9-11.



... is that each
person is to make
but one trip.



But we pass over
this way but once.

And if we miss it, the
mistake can never be
corrected.



3

What is the
way of God?