

# Jesus: The Right Direction

Maturing In The Faith: Shelf 3 — Volume 21

God revealed something to Noah and his family that encouraged them to persevere through faith throughout the one hundred years it took to build the ark (Hb 11:7). And then there was Abraham who pulled up tent stakes in Ur of the Chaldeas, took his wife by the hand, and then headed out by faith to a land to which neither of them had been before (Hb 11:8-10). It says in the New Testament of this permanent excursion that Abraham *“was looking for a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God”* (Hb 11:10).



AN EVENT OF FAITH

We can assume from these two cases that much more was revealed to Noah and Abraham, and others like them, than what we have recorded in our Bibles (Hb 1:1). There were details in God's message to them that drove them by faith to launch out, or in Noah's case, to keep hammering away in building an ark.

We are driven to conclude that the nature of the **Seed** of woman (Gn 3:15), the **Blessing** (Gn 12:1-4), and the **Suffering Servant** (Is 53) were all the same and in some way revealed in great detail to the patriarchs. All these patriarchs walked by faith in the Seed of woman who would in their future be

Heroes Of Faith  
Venture Into  
What Was  
Unknown  
To Them.

more than a man, and certainly more than a prophet. We would be correct to conclude that more was revealed to the “heroes of faith” before the cross than what is recorded in our Old Testament. At least enough facts were revealed to them to encourage them to live faithfully throughout innumerable struggles on their adventure to walk

according to the will of God, and in reference to their salvation, according to the instructions of God.

We today have the privilege of reading an inspired History Book about the One who would build the eternal city. We would correctly conclude that those in the Old Testament era who walked by faith in the verbal revelation of the same, had enough information about Him to take them through the most trying of times. In fact, we even call them “heroes of faith” **because they stayed the course regardless of the trials of a world in which they lived** (See Gn 6:5). Therefore, we would also walk together with them by faith toward a heavenly city that is to come when the Lord Jesus is again revealed.

Nevertheless, with all the examples and information that we now have in hand in a 66-book Bible library, we still have a tendency to waver in our faith. We waver by writing our own road map in order to arrive at the destiny that is reveal in the word of God. But according to the inspired Road Map we have in hand, we are not allowed to do this (See Gl 1:6-9; Rv 22:18,19). Regardless, many good people give it a good try, even to the point of creating their own “church,” which is really just another religion.

**If We Are To Arrive At The Destination At Which God Desires For Us, We Must Follow His Road Map.**

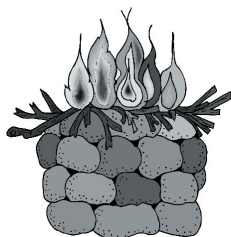
We have often been guilty of skimming across the pages of the Holy Scriptures in an effort to reap favorite “proof texts”—often out of context—in our efforts to define “the true church.” However, we must caution ourselves about our Bible-study method of “skimming hermeneutics.” We must because people have often in the past had a bad habit of drawing up their own road maps concerning “church.” They then convince themselves that they can to find solace in the fact that they have restored the “true church.”

We do this because religious “map making” brings a sense of religious security. When in doubt concerning our direction, we can put our finger exactly where we are on our religious map-making journey. No faith required.

The world is filled with thousands of similar zealous religious folks who have likewise drawn up their own “theological road maps,” often driving themselves into conflicting directions, but mostly into a quagmire of religious confusion. People have established a catalog of churches that are simply the expression of Bible-challenged theologians or hysterical experientialists who are seeking to establish their own way to the eternal city. This is the world in which we live, and thus, preaching the simple gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ can be quite challenging. But we must not forget that it is only this simple gospel that will get us all on the right road to eternal glory.

Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and the rest of those we respect as faithfuls, did not maintain a faith that was based on a doctrinal outline, nor something they had concocted from their own religious inclinations or experiences. Neither was their true worship of the true and living God confined to the construction of four walls in which they could legally perform some ceremonial acts of worship in order to self-righteously declare themselves justified after successfully performing during a “worship hour.”

On the contrary, they walked by faith, so much so, that the Holy Spirit used them as examples for us to maintain the same course of faith in the revealed, whether verbal or written, revelation of God. What God revealed to them led them into eternal glory, and we have faith that the same will result in the same destiny. It is simply quite interesting to note concerning their worship, **that the faithful patriarchs worshiped God for thousands of years without any regular “place of worship,” or worship that was formalized in the performance of some ceremonies.**



THE PATRIARCHS BUILT  
ALTARS FOR SACRIFICE  
EVERYWHERE.

If the Holy Spirit would use as examples of faith people who lived centuries before the revelation of the incarnate Son of God, then certainly we are not

out of line to do the same today. Those patriarchs will remain as our heroes of faith regardless of their limited understanding they had of the incarnate Son of God. Likewise, we will refrain from writing an outline of a supposed doctrinal road maps of “church,” and then convince ourselves that we have established the “true church.” Church is not established if we successfully perform a legal ceremony of “worship laws.”

It is for this reason that we are very cautious about identifying the people of God today by what is legally performed on Sunday morning during the “hour of worship.” We would subsequently challenge everyone



Church Is People,  
Not The Performance  
Of Ceremonies.

who has been in the bondage of a “man-mapped” assembly of defined religiosity. By being in the bondage of the theological maps of man, one usually does not realize that he or she has been spiritually hijacked. One does not realize that some self-proclaimed prophet or apostle seeks to dominate and control simple people of faith who simply want to walk daily by faith.

As Abraham and Noah, and all the other Old Testament faithfuls who were known throughout their generations to be representatives of God on earth, we too seek to be known throughout our generation for being representatives of Jesus on earth. We likewise seek to worship God anywhere and anytime without all the man-mapped restrictions of “worship services” and ceremonialized worship performances we presume to identify our worship.

**The wonderful nature of true worship is that it is not confined to specific locations or legalized through performed religious ceremonies.**

1. **T or F:** All the patriarchs who lived by faith, died, not knowing the sacrificial death of the incarnate Son of God on the cross.
2. **T or F:** The fact is that we do not have the right to draw up our own definition of that the church is, for the church belongs to Christ.
3. **T or F:** The patriarchs always established a place of worship where they carried out their ceremonies of worship.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Which patriarch left his home with his wife, and journeyed to a land to which he had never been before?  
(A) David, (B) Samuel, (C) Abraham, (D) Isaiah

The good news is that when we restore ourselves from following after our legal identity of church that is opened and closed by prayers on Sunday morning, something wonderful begins to happen in our lives. We start focusing on who Jesus really is, and what impact we will allow Him to have on our hearts. His incarnational journey into and out of this world, with a cross as a center of reference, has a tendency to humble us to the point of transforming our lives in order to be identified with Him. At least this is what happened in the first century long before “church” was institutionalized into a corporate body of adherents with registered membership cards who localized and continued their worship to temples, and then formalized the same through legalized ceremonies.

As the church, the early disciples lived Jesus to the point that they were the signal to the world that Jesus was alive in their hearts, and thus alive wherever they were present. Their faith moved them to be different from the religions of the world. When we discover their true identity as the church, it is then that we begin to understand that “church” is not a set of rules and rituals that must be legally performed, which rules and rituals become a fake identity of the body of Christ. On the contrary, “church” is a family of people who have sought to the best of their ability to identify with the incarnate Son of God, and thus, be identified with Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. And as the members emulate their King in their hearts, something wonderful happens.

Those Who  
Seek To Live  
The Mind Of  
Christ Are  
Church.

A peace of mind simply radiates throughout our entire soul as we would sit quietly on a beach, or in a calm forest, or in the aftermath of a peaceful snow, or just sitting before and listening to the crackle of a wood-burning fire. The surrealism of the environment sparks the serenity of worship. Just ask Paul after reading Philippians 4:7.

**We must not forget that “church” in the New Testament is never identified as a group of people legally performing ceremonial acts on Sunday morning.**

- 5. T or F:** If “church” is identified by the performance of certain ceremonial laws at a particular location, then when the ceremonies are not performed at a certain location, then church does not exist.

## Chapter 1

### ~ Incarnational Identity ~

Everyone who would be a disciple of Jesus should seek to live according to the example of the incarnate Son of God. This is living the power of the gospel. Once we understand the incarnational journey of Jesus, we then begin to understand some of the exciting historical statements in the New Testament that were made concerning the behavior of the early disciples. We begin to understand that they were identified by how they behaved seven days a week.

**The identity of the church is revealed in how the members live daily in response to the incarnate Son of God.**

### A. Church Caring For Church

During the first days after the official announcement of the gospel reign of Jesus on the throne of David in heaven, the early disciples **“sold their possessions and goods and divided them to all [the members of the church], as everyone had need”** (At 2:45).

We have always wondered why the early resident Christians in Jerusalem did this. Since we ourselves often live in materialistic societies that teach us to keep our stuff stored up in closets and garages, some have wondered why the early resident Christians did what they did, and thus, their behavior was historically recorded in Holy Scripture for our benefit. We would correctly assume that the Holy Spirit wanted to provide us with a commentary on what it means to have the **“mind of Christ”** (See Ph 2:5-8).

Our “materialism” of the Western world—to acquire

and hoard material things—makes it difficult for us to understand the behavior of these early disciples as it is historically stated by Luke in the preceding statement of Acts 2:45. However, when we begin to understand the surrounding circumstances of those who had obeyed the gospel on Pentecost, then the reason for their “selling” becomes evident. What happens in one’s own heart when he or she joins Jesus on His incarnational journey to the cross, is a radical transformation of one’s heart. **The transformed thus begin to understand that submitted souls seek to emulate in their behavior the incarnate Servant who transformed into the flesh of man for our spiritual benefit (Jn 1:1,2,14).**

**The Transformed  
Start To Behave  
As The One  
Who Transformed  
For Us.**

In the historical setting that generated the need, **many of those who initially obeyed the gospel in Jerusalem on Pentecost had come from great distances.** After they obeyed the gospel, they needed help to stay in Jerusalem in order to be taught by the apostles (At 2:42). When they ran out of supplies—they had originally planned to stay in Jerusalem only from Pentecost to Passover—the **local disciples supplied their needs in order that the returnees sit as long as possible in the Bible classes of the apostles.**

Those local disciples who had “possessions and goods” sold them in order to care for their new visiting brothers who were soon to return to their homelands with the message of the gospel. The selling of the “possessions and goods” by the local Christians, therefore, was **an evangelistic effort** on the part of the members who resided in Jerusalem. **Acts 2:45 was an evangelistic partnership of the local disciples with those new disciples who were retuning home throughout the world in order to preach the gospel that they had learned and obeyed in Jerusalem.**



**The First Disciples  
Sprinkled The Salt  
Of The Gospel  
In All The World.**

In the historical setting of the preceding statement concerning the early disciples making sure that each brother or sister in Jerusalem was supplied with physical needs, those first resident disciples were willing to forsake what they possessed, **just as Jesus forsook heaven that He possessed** (See Jn 1,1,2,14). He forsook heaven in order to serve our spiritual need for redemption from the state of condemnation in which we lived (See Ph 2:5-11). Therefore, it was only natural that since Jesus forsook His “possession” in heaven for us, **then we should be willing to forsake our possessions for those who are in need**. This is as close as we can become to living the mind of Christ. This is how we resurrect Jesus before the people in this modern world.

Anyone who would live the incarnational life after the example of the Son of God, will be willing to share that which he or she possesses in order to make sure that the physical needs of those who preach the gospel preached to the world.

6. **T or F:** As one begins his or her transformation as a disciple of Jesus, he or she begins to make sacrifices as Jesus made for us.
7. **T or F:** The Judean disciples sold their possessions and gave to the disciples who were returning to their homes throughout the world because the returning disciples would go forth and preach the gospel.

## B. Living The Transformed Life

The transformed behavior of the early disciples continued far beyond Pentecost. In fact, the disciples, as the universal representatives of the Son of God on earth, were identified by the sacrificial offerings of the members. **The early church was never identified by its assemblies, but by how the members emulated the behavior of the Christ in whom they believed.**

A few years after Pentecost, this behavior was again revealed in Luke’s historical statement concerning the sacrificial life-style of the disciples: **“And no one said that any of the things he possessed was his own”** (At 4:32). This is what people who have been crucified with Christ say about themselves.



**We must not forget that the church of 3,000 baptized believers existed as the church seven days BEFORE there was an assembly the following Sunday. Therefore, the church is not identified by what may transpire during an assembly, but by what the members do in response to the gospel.**

- 8. T or F:** The first disciples were not officially the church until they had met the first Sunday after the Sunday Pentecost of Acts 2.

**Acts 2:45** is an incarnational statement concerning the nature of those who lived incarnationally. Those first disciples were the metaphorically resurrected Jesus in the city of Jerusalem. Why would the Holy Spirit make such a statement as this concerning the “behavior of the church” if only a few of the members behaved in such a manner?

The point is that the Spirit recorded for posterity through Luke the very heart of the early disciples as a whole. They lived Jesus among themselves and the world as a whole. This was a paradigm shift in how the early disciples took ownership of their own lives as the disciples of Jesus. It was a paradigm shift from the behavior of idolatrous religionists of the day in order to following a God who was incarnate in the flesh of man. We would be right to say that **the early disciples were simply passing on their blessing that they received in Christ.**

The Jerusalem resident owners of possessions still had control of their possessions (See At 5:4). No one gave themselves into poverty, nor were they required to do so. However, they were willing to relinquish their ownership of what they possessed in order to give to the needs of the visiting Jews, who were now their brothers in Christ. These same visiting Jews were packing their bags and getting ready to return to their homelands with the message of the gospel. They were the first world evangelists.

Though the local disciples were exhorted to be generous givers, they still retained a right to be in some business in order to have the continual financial ability to give to the body and evangelism (See 1 Tm

6:17-19; 3 Jn). From this one example on the part of the local Judean Christians that is recorded in Acts 2:45, **we must assume that the local Christians did the same thing the following year on the day of Pentecost when other Jews would make the journey to Jerusalem, and subsequently, hear and obey the gospel, and then return home** (See At 8:4).

**The incarnational offering of the Son of God involved His relinquishing of Himself in heaven in order to take ownership of the spiritual poverty of humanity.**

9. **T or F:** The resident disciples in Jerusalem chose to sacrifice themselves for the benefit of the many visiting new Christians.
10. **T or F:** We would not assume that the local Christians in Judea would do the same as they did on the first Pentecost in order to preach the gospel to the world.

### C. Sacrificial Nature Of Discipleship

There were few anomalies among the early disciples in reference to sacrificial contributions. The very nature (behavior) of the early church was identified by the incarnational sacrifices that every member made in order to meet the needs of the entire church, especially in preaching the gospel to the world. Jesus had revealed that His disciples would be defined and identified by their love for one another (Jn 13:34,35). That was exactly what happened when men and women in those early days of the church were obedient to the incarnational example of the Son of God. **They understood that gospel living was inherently sacrificial.**

**Gospel Living Assumes Gospel Giving.**

**Since the gospel is inherently sacrificial, then those who have obeyed the gospel are not looking for an opportunity to get something for free, but an opportunity of how they can share with someone else.**

The apostle John later wrote a commentary on this identity of the church: ***“By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”*** (1 Jn 3:16). ***“But***

*whoever has this world's goods,"* John continued to explain, *"and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?"* (1 Jn 3:17). This is the commentary of Acts 2:45. We get the point. However, we notice in these statements that there is a specific group of people who must be the object of the churches' incarnational giving. The individual to whom the church as a whole must give in order to help in a time of need, **must be a brother in Christ**. The examples of sacrificial giving by the apostles and early disciples was in reference to the disciples taking care of one another. Though Christians must take every opportunity to do good to all unbelievers, their obligation is first to the household of God (Gl 6:10).

**Incarnational living can be revealed in our hearts only when we give to the needs of our brothers and sisters when they are in need.**

**11. T or F:** Because Jesus laid down His life for us, He assumes that we would lay down our lives for one another because we love one another as He loved us.

In the following words, Luke further explained this incarnational giving in response to the example of the Son of God who gave up heaven for us:

*Nor was there any among them [the Christians] who lacked, for as many as were owners of land or houses [in Jerusalem] sold them and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold [to the apostles]"* (At 4:34).

And likewise did Jesus who left his "land" in heaven. He gave an example for all those who would be His disciples. *"Whoever of you who does not forsake all that he has, cannot be My disciple"* (Lk 14:33). This was in the prophesied relationship that Jesus would have with His disciples during His ministry. Therefore, Jesus required, *"He who finds his life [in this world] will lose it. And he who loses his life for My sake will find it"* (Mt 10:39). The point is that when we become disciples of the One who gave up being on an equal-

ity with God in heaven, we lose our own lives in the needs of one another. This is the loving behavior **that identifies the true church of Christ** (See again Jn 13:34,35).

**Because of what they believed concerning the incarnate Son of God, the early disciples were identified as the church of Christ because of how they behaved.**

**12. T or F:** Since Christ was incarnate in the flesh for us, then it is assumed that the church of Christ is identified by those who follow His example of giving their lives for others.

## Chapter 2

### ~ The Church Of Lost Lives ~

In the following statement, Jesus defined the behavior of those who would become His church: ***“For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever wishes to lose his life for My sake and the gospel’s, the same will save it”*** (Mk 8:35). This is gospel behavior after the example of the incarnate Son of God. This is the true identity of the church of Christ. Those first resident members of the body on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:45 “lost their lives.” They “sold possession” for the sake of the gospel being preached where now their visiting brethren had come for Pentecost. Luke would later explain this in Acts 4:32: ***“And no one said that any of the things that he possessed was his own. But they had all things in common.”***

Jesus continued in Mark 8:36, ***“For what will it profit a man if he will gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”*** (Mk 8:36). If we are not living after the example of Jesus, that is, willing to sacrifice the “whole world” for the gospel’s sake, then according to what Jesus just said, we are in danger of losing our soul. Most of the time, we are simply afraid to understand what Jesus meant in Mark 8:36. However, if we are willing to leave all for Jesus—that is, if necessary—then Jesus promises the following in this life:

***Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers***

or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for My sake and the gospel's, **who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time ... and in the age to come eternal life** (Mk 10:29,30).

- 13. T or F:** If one is not willingly lose all he or she has for Jesus, then Jesus said that he or she will not save his or her soul.

### A. Paul Lost His Life For The World

Paul lived this incarnational life. He wanted all of us to know this: ***“What things were gain to me [in my former life as an unbeliever], “those things I have counted loss for Christ”*** (Ph 3:7). When he was baptized into the body of Christ (At 22:16), and thus, he came into the realm of living sacrificial life, just as Jesus. When he obeyed the gospel, Paul stepped into the reality of incarnational discipleship. He continued, ***“I count all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord”*** (Ph 3:8).

In order to express his radical life-style transformation that illustrated the example of incarnational living, he wrote the following in reference to those things he gave up and left: ***“I count them refuse so that I may gain Christ”*** (Ph 3:8). The Greek word for “refuse” in this text is the Greek word for “dung.” Aspirations for those things of the world become repugnant for those who live the incarnate life. They are refuse to be discarded and never viewed again as the priority of one's life.

This is certainly a graphic description of the things and ways of the world that Paul sacrificed in order to illustrate before the church what Jesus sacrificed by leaving the purity of heaven in order to come into this world of “refuse” for us.

**An entire world of possessions can never be claimed to be owned by the one who has given his or her life to the Lord Jesus Christ.**

- 14.** \_\_\_\_\_ Who counted all things lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ?  
(A) David, (B) Isaiah, (C) Paul, (D) Judas
- 15.** \_\_\_\_\_ When he became a disciple, what did Paul consider the things of the world?  
(A) Precious, (B) Satisfying, (C) Desirable, (D) Dung

## B. Philippians Lost Their Lives

**The Philippians lost their lives for the Thessalonians.** For the disciple who seeks to live the mind of Christ, resources become an opportunity for benevolent sharing and preaching the gospel to the world. The Philippians saw this in the lives of Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke when the four evangelists walked into Philippi. When the Philippians saw this gospel behavior in the lives of these four evangelists, they subsequently behaved the same in their own lives after only a few days as disciples of Jesus. When Lydia and the jailer, with their households, observed the life-style examples of the four evangelists, they knew what they were getting themselves into when they obeyed the gospel.

Paul, Silas and Timothy were in the city of Philippi only a few days on the second mission journey of Paul—Luke stayed when the other three went on to Thessalonica (See At 16:12; 17:1). During the short time while the evangelists were in the city, Lydia and the jailer, with their households, obeyed the gospel (At 16:15,33). When they came forth from the waters of baptism, “newness of life” meant that they join in partnership with Paul, Silas and Timothy. We can do the same today.

It Does Not  
Take A Lifetime  
To Lose One's  
Life For Christ.

Several years later, Paul wrote from prison of his partnership the new disciples in Philippi that began many years before. He reminded the first disciples in Philippi that immediately after obeying the gospel, they began to support the preaching of the gospel when he, Silas and Timothy traveled on to Thessalonica.

*Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel [in your lives] when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. **For even in Thessalonica you sent once and again for my needs** (Ph 4:15,16).*

Why do new Christians do things as this? The answer is simple. When evangelists go forth living the

incarnate life of the One they proclaim, then those who obey the gospel know exactly what they are getting themselves into before they go down into the water. They first count the cost in reference to the behavior of the self-sacrificing evangelists, and then they begin to understand that in this life God will do them right regardless of their sacrifices (See Lk 14:28-33). But most important of all, God will reward them with eternal life when the Son returns.

**The disciples in Philippi revealed Jesus to the residents of the city of Philippi because they lived the crucifixional example of the Son of God.**

16. \_\_\_\_\_ Who stayed in Philippi when Paul, Silas and Timothy went on to Thessalonica?  
(A) Luke, (B) Peter, (C) Aristarcus, (D) Mark
17. \_\_\_\_\_ Who sent necessities to Paul once and again while Paul was in Thessalonica?  
(A) The Laodiceans, (B) The Philippians, (C) John, (D) Mark

### C. Macedonians Lost Their Lives

**The Macedonians lost their lives for the Judeans.** As Paul lived after the example of Jesus, so did the Thessalonians and Philippians in reference to making themselves the slaves of others who were in need. They followed the example of those first disciples on Pentecost many years before. When the gospel of grace comes into one's life, marvelous things happen.

*We make known to you the grace of God that has been given to the churches of Macedonia [that includes those in the cities of Thessalonica and Philippi], that in a **great trial of affliction**, the abundance of their joy and **their deep poverty**, abounded in the riches of their liberality. For I testify that according to their ability, yes, and **beyond their ability they gave of their own accord** (2 Co 8:1-3).*



All the disciples in the province of Macedonia followed the incarnate example of the first evangelists who came to them. They did so because one of those first evangelists, Paul, later wrote to the disciples

throughout Achaia, ***“Be imitators of me even as I am also of Christ”*** (1 Co 11:1). As Christ gave up things in heaven for us, so we are willing, if the need arises, to give up things on earth for the church of our Lord and the preaching of the gospel.

As Jesus made Himself a slave to our needs, so we likewise make ourselves slaves to the needs of others. This is the gospel of incarnate living after the example of the Son of God. This is the true identity of the church of Christ. In fact, ***“this is the message that you [we] have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another”*** (1 Jn 3:11; see Jn 13:34,35). When people live incarnationally, they are living in love of one another.

We can know that we are the church of Jesus Christ by our response to the needs of fellow Christians, as well as the spiritual need that the gospel be preached to the world. ***“We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren”*** (1 Jn 3:14). ***“By this we know love, because He [through incarnation and the cross] laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren”*** (1 Jn 3:16). Therefore, ***“Whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of [the incarnate] God abide in him?”*** (1 Jn 3:17).

The true church of our Lord Jesus Christ is not identified by what the members’ ceremonial performances during their assemblies. On the contrary, the church is known by members performance in reference to the spiritual and physical needs of others and one another seven days a week.

We must not forget what Jesus said in Mark 8:35. If we would be the church of Christ, then we must lose our lives for the sake of the gospel of Christ. In other words, any church that is not in some way contributing to the preaching of the gospel is not a church of the Christ who forsook all in heaven in order to bring the



Lovine One Another  
As He Loved Us.



gospel into this world. Those who would claim to be the body of Christ must behave as the Christ.

**Taking the gospel of the Lord Jesus into all the world involves losing our lives on behalf of those who have not heard the gospel.**

18. \_\_\_\_ Who gave out of their deep poverty in order to help Paul while he was in prison?  
(A) Judeans, (B) Philippians, (C) Antioch, (D) Tarsus
19. **T or F:** Living incarnationally means living out of love as Jesus loved us through His own incarnation and the cross.
20. **T or F:** The church is identified by the members' ceremonial performance of laws during their assemblies.

## Chapter 3

### ~ Crucifixional Identity ~

God's love was demonstrated at the cross. The cross happened in history, therefore, not because we were worthy people, **but because we were made worthless by sin.** Nevertheless, ***"God demonstrates His love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"*** (Rm 5:8). The cross, therefore, was a demonstration of love. There was no "faith only" business in reference to God's love for us. And neither will He accept some "faith only religiosity" in response to His demonstration of love at the cross.

**The Son of God did not stay in heaven and just wish us into the grace of God. On the contrary, His love for us ended Him up on a cross.**

### A. Living The Life Of Love

The incarnation was for the purpose of making a sacrificial offering for our sin. It was a demonstration of the fact of God's love for us. For this reason, His love for us must be reciprocal. Therefore, ***"we love because He first loved us"*** (1 Jn 4:19). During His ministry, Jesus prepared His disciples for the crucifixional life-style of love that would come from us as He came for us.

**We Love Others  
Because God  
First Loved Us.**

When we see the cross, we must understand that what happen there was the result of God's love for us.

*“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple”* (Lk 14:27). Crucifixional living is the demonstration that we are disciples of Jesus because we are willing to follow in His steps of love for us to our own cross. By our love, we too demonstrate that Jesus lives through us in the world (Jn 13:34,35).

All those who would simply cry out “Lord, Lord,” without bearing a cross, have deceived themselves into believing that an unloving faith is profitable before God. James asked those who would trust in such an inactive faith, *“But are you willing to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?”* (Js 2:20). So James admonished, *“You see then that a man is justified by works and not by faith only”* (Js 2:24). The crucifixional life is a revelation to the world that we have been crucified with the Christ who loved us to His cross. Our faith led us to the cross of Christ. And once at the cross of Christ, we respond in our own hearts to be sacrificial cross-bearing disciples to serve others.

Crucifixional living is evidence that we have been crucified with Christ, and the life we now live, is no longer for ourselves, but for service of others.

**21. T or F:** As God's action at the cross was not a “faith only” demonstration of His love for us, in like manner He will not accept a “faith only” response to the cross.

## B. Living The Crucifixional Life

The crucifixional life is as what Paul stated of himself: *“I die daily”* (1 Co 15:31). He further explained, *“I have been crucified with Christ. And it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me”* (Gl 2:20). Bearing the cross of Jesus means living daily the crucified life. In reference to what Jesus did for us at the cross, notice the **passive tense** in the phrase that Paul wrote in reference to our obedience to the

gospel in baptism: *“Our old man was crucified [Gr. passive] with Him”* (Rm 6:6).

**Passive means that our old man was acted upon.** At the cross, Jesus acted upon our old man of sin. We were thus crucified with Him two thousand years ago. Our obedience to the gospel today is our acceptance of His crucifixional offering that He lovingly made for us at His own cross. We thus begin our own walk of the crucified life when we are raised from the waters of baptism. *“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death [crucifixion], we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection [from the dead]”* (Rm 6:5). He was resurrected to reign as King of kings. And by walking the crucifixional life, we too reign in life with Him (Rm 5:17).

**When one is buried with Christ in baptism today, Christ has already acted on behalf of the soul of that person through His blood that was shed on the cross over two thousand years ago.**

Paul also wrote, *“We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to Gentiles foolishness”* (1 Co 1:23). The Jews who were looking for a messiah who would deliver them from Roman oppression, and subsequently, reign on this earth, could never follow a crucified messiah. And then for most Gentiles who were idol worshipers, following a crucified Jewish leader was out of the question. Therefore, most of the Jews and Gentiles would not allow themselves to respond to someone who was crucified by the Romans. Such things were contrary to their religious world views.

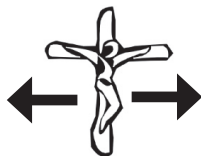
- 22. T or F:** Living the crucifixional life as a disciple of Jesus means that there is a cross in the life of every disciple that must be carried.
- 23. T or F:** When the Son of God made atonement for the sins of the world, His sacrifice was for all sins of the world before and after the redemption of the cross.

### C. Unleashed Power At The Cross

Consider this statement that Paul wrote to those in Corinth and the entire province of Achaia: *“For though*

*He [Christ] was crucified because of weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we will live with Him by the power of God toward you” (2 Co 13:4).*

The power of the gospel to both save souls and change lives was unleashed at the cross. Jesus allowed Himself to remain weak in the flesh in order to be taken in bodily form to the cross. But He was raised up by the power of God, and thus He was *“declared to be the Son of God with power ... by the resurrection from the dead”* (Rm 1:4).



In the same manner, we allow ourselves to be crucified with Christ in order that by the power of a forgiving God, we can be raised to walk in newness of life (Rm 6:4). The crucifixional life is the result of our submission to Jesus' crucifixion for us, as well as His resurrection and reign by the power of God. This is exactly what Peter reminded those on Pentecost who enabled those who sought to crucify Jesus: *“Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this same Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ”* (At 2:36).

The result of our submission to the gospel of the crucifixion is the unleashing of the power of the gospel in our lives. When we understand the magnitude of the love of God that was unleashed through the cross, there is also power unleashed by which we are driven to transform our own lives. We must not forget that those who directly participated in the crucifixion of the Son of God were personally guilty for their deed. We are guilty also because the crucifixion was necessary for our sins.

We thus live the cross because Jesus went to the cross for us. *“Now those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires”* (Gl 5:24). We can thus do only do as Paul wrote: *“God forbid that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world”* (Gl 6:14).

**The crucifixional life is a life of self-denial, as the Son of God denied Himself on the cross.** In other words, and with the same thought, Paul reminded the disciples in Colossi, *“For you are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God”* (CI 3:3).

We die with Christ on a cross of self-crucifixion. Our lives are embedded in the crucified Christ, and thus we have died to the world. In living the crucifixional life, we “put to death” our fleshly personal desires that crave the things of this world (CI 3:5-7). Therefore, *“If you then were raised with Christ [from the waters of baptism], seek those things that are above”* (CI 3:1).

**Restoring crucifixional power means that we must die to our lust for the things of the world. We must do so in order to live the cross on which Jesus was crucified.**

- 24. T or F:** Living the crucifixional life does not mean that we should be willing to forsake all for Jesus.
- 25. \_\_\_\_\_** On what must one focus when he or she has been baptized into Christ?  
 (A) Things of the world, (B) Heavenly matters, (C) The business of the religious world, (D) Financial well-being

### D. Vanishing “Comfort Zones”

Living the crucifixional life is more than venturing outside our “comfort zone” to do an occasional soup kitchen in the ghetto. If there is still a “comfort zone” in our lives as a Christian, then we are struggling to find either the incarnational, nor the crucifixional life. There are no “zones” to which one can escape when living the Christian life. In other words, we cannot leave who we are as heirs of God.

Comfort zones vanish away when we do as the self-crucified Paul stated, *“We endure all things so that we should not hinder the gospel of Christ”* (1 Co 9:12). Therefore, we must live as Paul. *“I have become all things to all men so that I might by all means save some”* (1 Co 9:22). As Jesus moved out of His “comfort zone” in heaven in order to go to the cross, we too must move out of our self-made “comfort zones” in order to live crucifixional in the world in which we live. This is the true identity of the

members of the church of the Christ who was crucified for each member. And thus, this is the true identity of the church. **It is for this reason that one cannot leave the church, for each of us as members of the body, are the church.**

Though we may not have to forsake all when we move out of our comfort zones, we must at least understand that all we are belongs to the Lord. When one obeys the gospel, his or her attitude toward the possessions of the world changes. Before obedience to the gospel, one consumes all things upon his own lusts. **But after obedience to the One who gave all for us, our possessions become the opportunity for us to reveal that we have crucified ourselves in giving to the needs of our brethren, as well as preaching the gospel to the world** (See 3 Jn 1-8). This is transformational living, and thus, the identity of the church of Christ. This was what the Philippians observed in the lives of Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke. It was this behavioral attitude of life that they accepted and became.



Living The Crucified  
Life Is More Than  
Hanging A Cross  
Around One's Neck.

**When we transform to crucifixional living, we are moving our minds out of our own heads in order to move in the mind of Christ.**

- 26. T or F:** It is the challenge of the disciple of Jesus to replace his or her mind with the mind of Christ.
- 27. T or F:** Being crucified with Christ means that we can hang on to the things of this world, as long as we perform the correct ceremonies in an assembly with other Christians.

### E. Kicking At The Cross

If one is supported by those who make sacrifices to support them, then they must listen carefully to what God said through Samuel to Eli over three thousand years ago:

***Why do you kick at My sacrifice and at My offering that I have commanded in My habitation [Israel], and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?*** (1 Sm 2:29).

God has not changed His mind in over three thousand years. His attitude toward those who would take advantage of the sincerity of those who would be incarnational contributors is still valid today as it was when Eli and his sons brought judgment upon themselves by taking advantage of contributors.

In the context of the preceding statement, the sons of Eli wickedly took advantage of the people's willingness to give sacrifices to the Lord (See 1 Sm 2:1-17). It seems that even Eli ate of some of the stolen sacrifices of his sons. So the sin of Eli was that he **did not** correct his sons, but participated in their wickedness. His failure to correct his sons subsequently led to God's judgment of him because he honored his sons more than God.

In like manner as Eli and his sons who "kicked at the dedicated sacrifices" of the people, we must be cautious that we do not do the same today. Eli and his sons "kicked at God's sacrifices" that were made by sincere people. They simply wanted more meat than what was allotted to the priests by the Sinai law. This behavior is first a kick against the sacrifice of the Savior on the cross, and then it is a direct kick against the sacrificial offerings of the people of God who simply want to give in response to God's love for them.

**If one kicks against the sincere sacrifices of the people, then it is the same as one kicking against the sacrifice of the Son of God on the cross.**

- 28.** \_\_\_\_ Who was judged by God because he did not correct his sons who took advantage of the contributions of the people?  
(A) Samuel, (B) Eli, (C) Joshua, (D) Isaiah
- 29. T or F:** It is a kick against God to take advantage of the free-will offerings of those who make sacrifices for God.

## Chapter 4

### ~ Resurrectional Identity ~

Living the resurrectional life is evidence that the gospel is alive in our lives. It is evidence that we have been raised with Christ to walk in newness of life.

Herein is revealed the power of the gospel to inspire a paradigm shift in our personal lives, and as a result, resurrect a “living Jesus” among the multitudes in cities, towns and villages in which we live throughout the world.

We remember what was preached by the apostles on Pentecost that first cut searching people to the heart:

*Foreseeing this, he [David] spoke of the resurrection of the Christ .... **This Jesus God has raised up** .... Therefore, being exalted at the right hand of God .... God has made this same Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ (At 2:31-33,36).*

Because many in the audience on that day of Pentecost had personally participated in the scheme of the religious leaders of Jerusalem to murder Jesus, the people were stunned by the news of the resurrected and reigning Lord Jesus Christ whom they had been told was only a Jewish rebel. Luke recorded that “**they were cut to the heart**” when they heard the truth of the gospel resurrection (At 2:37).

What cut the people to the heart was the fact that the One whom they had encouraged to be crucified had actually risen from the dead. If this were true, and it was, then they had participated, or at least enable, the execution of someone who was more than a man, and certainly was totally innocent of all charges. He was at least a prophet of God. But even more than a prophet. He was the incarnational God who gave of Himself for their sins. We can only imagine the amount of guilt those people must have felt for participating in the deed of the Jerusalem mob of religious leaders.

The man Jesus was proclaimed to be Son of God by the resurrection, and subsequently proven to be the Christ (Messiah). It was by the power of His resurrection that God proved that He was His Son (Rm 1:4). He was now the resurrected and reigning King



Power  
Of The Resurrection



Jesus. The power of who He was was now released into the world. It is this power that motivates the transformation of lives, just as it did in the lives of those first believers who responded to Peter's announcement.

Realizing The  
Resurrection  
Of Jesus  
Brought  
Repentance.

The power for transformation resides in the fact that we recognize that an incarnate God died in order that we might live. This is the meaning behind what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:15: *"For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace that is reaching many people may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God."*

True Christian faith is revealed in the continued transformation of submitted lives.

- 30. T or F:** Believing that Jesus was actually raised from the dead gives evidence that He was more than a good religious leader.
- 31. T or F:** Believing in the resurrection of Jesus empowers us to live according to His teachings.

### A. Power Of The Resurrection

In the inspired record of the New Testament, the Holy Spirit, through Paul, rehearsed the power of the resurrection in the lives of men and women who truly believed that Jesus was raised from the dead. The Spirit also wanted us to realize that if we take away the fact of the resurrection from Christianity, then our faith is simply just another religion. So Paul began his rebuke of some in Corinth who doubted the resurrection with the question, *"Now if Christ is preached that He rose from the dead, how can some say among you that there is no resurrection"* (1 Co 15:12). And again, *"But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain and your faith is vain"* (1 Co 15:13,14).

**Belief in the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is absolutely necessary in order to be a Christian.** Those who do not believe in the resurrection are simply religionists who are striving to please a god they have created after their own imagination. We must not

in any way, therefore, associate Christianity with the religions of the world that do not believe in the bodily resurrection and ascension of Jesus of Nazareth.

So if Jesus was not raised, *“Then those [Christians] also who have fallen asleep [died] in Christ have perished”* (1 Co 15:18). If Jesus was not raised, then we are to be pitied for our foolish faith that He was (1 Co 15:19). So *“if the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die”* (1 Co 15:32).

The importance of the resurrection to the Christian faith lies in the fact that if Jesus were not raised from the dead, then the power of the gospel to motivate incarnational transformation vanishes away.

**32. T or F:** If Jesus were not raised from the dead, then Christianity is just another religion of man.

**33. T or F:** Paul argued that if the dead are not raised, then we should just live as we so choose.

## B. Power Of Focus On Heaven

Since Jesus has been raised, then this changes everything. The power that motivates a moral paradigm shift in our lives is our faith in the resurrection and current reign of King Jesus. Paul said as much in Colossians 3. The introduction to the thoughts of Colossians 3, however, is Romans 6:4:

*Therefore, we are buried with Him [Christ] through baptism into death that just as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, even so we also might [be raised up from the waters of baptism to] **walk in newness of life.***

Paul introduced his motivation for living the resurrectional life by referring to the Colossians' former baptism into Christ: *“If you then were raised with Christ [from the waters of baptism], **seek those things that are above**”* (Cl 3:1). Because the Colossians had believed in the resurrection, they were buried with Christ in baptism in anticipation of a final resurrection to come (Jn 5:29).

**The power of the resurrectional life is in the resurrection of Jesus**, for His resurrection assumes His present kingdom reign, and our future resurrection.

This is the power that refocuses our attention from this present world to His present reign in heaven. Our minds turn from those things that are on this earth in order to be tuned in to the reigning King Jesus who is seated at the right hand of God (Ep 1:20,21; Hb 8:1).

Believing in the resurrection of Jesus is our motivation to *“put to death your members that are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry”* (Cl 3:5). The resurrection empowers us to *“put off ... anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy speech”* (Cl 3:8). Belief in the resurrection of Jesus, therefore, empowers us to transform our lives into the image of our King.

Those who doubt the resurrection of Jesus have cheated themselves of the power that is able to transform their lives.

**34. T or F:** One can be a Christian regardless of believing in the resurrection of Jesus.

### C. Putting On The New Man

Since we have put off the old man of sin in the waters of baptism (Rm 6:6), then we *“have put on the new man, who is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created him”* (Cl 3:10).

If There Is No  
Belief In The  
Resurrection,  
Then There Is  
No Power  
In Our Faith.

Therefore, our faith in the resurrection first moves us to the grave of water to join Jesus in His burial. By continuing our initial faith in the resurrection that moved us to baptismal water, this faith must continue to move us to live the resurrectional life. It is in this way that our faith in the resurrection of Jesus empowers us to live the resurrection.

Preaching the gospel, therefore, is giving people the opportunity to be transferred out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom light of the resurrected King Jesus (See Cl 1:13). In other words, obedience to the gospel transfers one from being a disobedient subject of Jesus' kingdom reign over all things, to being a submitted subject of King Jesus as a part of

His body, the church.

Christians will always live in a world of moral degradation. This is the way of the world. If Christ were not raised from the dead, then we would have no reason to be repulsed by the moral degradation of the world. If Christ has not been raised, then there is no such thing as “moral degradation,” for mankind would be free to live as every individual so chooses. There would be no moral rules simply because there would be no sense of accountability.

But if Christ has been raised from the dead, then everything changes. God sees the world through the resurrection, for in the resurrection He proved to us that Jesus was His Son (Rm 1:4). And since Jesus was His Son who came into the world, then the world will eventually be held accountable to the moral standards of His Son. *“He who rejects Me,”* the Son said during His earthly appearance, *“and does not receive My words, has one who judges him. The word that I have spoken, the same will judge him in the last day”* (Jn 12:48).

The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation upon which His sonship was confirmed, and thus, His right to be the standard by which the world will eventually be held morally accountable.

**35. T or F:** Regardless of the resurrection of Jesus, mankind would still have a sense of giving account of their sins before God.

**36. T or F:** The resurrection inspires a sense of accountability in all those who believe in the resurrection.

The time is coming when God will judge *“the world in righteousness by the Man [Jesus Christ] whom He has ordained”* (At 17:31). So eventually, every soul on earth must *“appear before the judgment seat of Christ”* (2 Co 5:10). Knowing that we will give account before the resurrected Son of God inspires us to live resurrectionally according to the standards of His word. Therefore, the gospel of the resurrection is our motivation to stand confident in the fact that Jesus will come to raise us from the dead (See 1 Th 4:13-18).

## Chapter 5

### ~ Kingship Identity ~

The church of believers all started with a repentant response to the following historical statement: *“Now when they [the Jews in Jerusalem] heard this [the resurrected and reigning Son of God], they were cut to the heart”* (At 2:37).

#### A. Power Of Kingdom Reign

Something on that Pentecost in Jerusalem two thousand years ago was spoken that caused a traumatic response from the hearts of about 3,000 people. What Peter preached was not sweet Jesus, meek and mild. He did not preach church or ceremonial attendance. He did not initially preach repentance and baptism. But something he did preach eventually led to the world being spiritually turned upside down by the transformed lives of an initial 3,000 people.

On the Pentecost of Acts 2 Peter preached that the One whom the people had only a few weeks before cried out to be crucified, was now actually reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Peter’s initial gospel message began with King David. King David of Israel knew that the authority of his kingdom reign **always originated from heaven at the throne of God**. Therefore, when God promised that He would in the future set Someone on his throne, David correctly concluded that the One who would eventually reign on his throne would rule from heaven with the authority of God.



David Sat On  
The Throne Of God.

By the Spirit, therefore, David subsequently prophesied of such a reign in Psalm 110:1: *“The Lord [God the Father] said to my Lord [the Son of God], ‘Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”*

All who were in attendance on that memorial Pentecost two thousand years ago knew by heart the pro-

phetic statements of David in reference to someone sitting on his throne. Peter's message helped them to connect the dots between prophecy and fulfillment between, David and Jesus.

In announcing the resurrection and coronation of Jesus, Peter convinced many in his audience that "this Jesus" whom they had crucified was the "Lord" about whom David had prophesied. Jesus was the Son whom the Father had promised would be seated on the throne of David in heaven. Peter proclaimed that the man Jesus was the Man, and now the King. It was gospel news that He was resurrected and reigning on David's throne.

**The present reign of Jesus on the throne of David is part of the gospel in which we find motivation, and thus the gospel is more than the cross and resurrection.**

37. \_\_\_\_\_ Who prophesied that the Lord would sit One on his throne?  
(A) David, (B) Ahab, (C) Hezekiah, (D) Saul

## B. Power Of A Reigning King

The same Jesus whom Peter's audience had previously known only as a good Teacher from Galilee, was raised up by God to be seated on the throne of David (At 2:32). This same Jesus was at the time of Peter's pronouncement, "*both Lord and Christ*" (At 2:36). This was Peter's initial gospel message. This was all he had to say in order to cut to the heart many people in his audience who knew all the prophecies.

When people understood that Jesus was the reigning Son of God who is coming again to take vengeance on those who do not know Him, then they were cut to the heart. Many sincere Jews on Pentecost were subsequently

**Jesus Was Already  
Reigning In Heaven  
When Peter  
Instructed People  
To Be Baptized.**

motivated to submit to Peter's instructions on how to respond to this gospel news. Their response involved repentance and baptism for the remission of their sins (At 2:38; see 1 Th 1:6-9). Therefore, repentance and baptism are not the gospel. These are responses of people who recognize the present reign of a King who

died for the sins of the world before His coronation.

It is the gospel of the **incarnation, atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension, coronation, kingdom reign, and final coming** that cuts sinners to the heart, and thus, motivates true believers to respond to this gospel message.

We must understand the kingdom reign of Jesus as it is defined in the rest of the New Testament, for Peter did not have time on Pentecost to reveal the full extent of Jesus' kingdom. The same Jesus about whom Peter spoke, **was at the time he delivered this gospel message, reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords** (1 Tm 6:15). All authority in heaven and on earth had been given unto Him (Mt 28:18). All things had been put under His feet, and He was the controlling head over all things (Ep 1:22). Even angels and all earthly authorities and powers have *“been made subject to Him”* (1 Pt 3:22). *“God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name that is above every name”* (Ph 2:9). If we would in any way minimize the totality of the present reign of Jesus over all things, **then we at the same time have somewhat minimized the power of the gospel.**

The fullness of all that was prophesied concerning the gospel reign of Jesus has now been fulfilled in His present position as King of kings and Lord of lords.

**38. T or F:** Baptism for remission of sins is the gospel.

**39. T or F:** The gospel is the event of the establishment of the church.

### C. Kingdom With Limitations

The Hebrew writer did not want us to assume that Jesus' reign was limited to some national kingdom as that over which David reigned. He did not want us to place any restrictions on the galactic reign of King Jesus at the right hand of God. On the contrary, the Hebrew writer wanted us to understand that King Jesus' reign clearly extended far beyond David's reign over nations of people on earth. So with the following words, the Hebrew writer clarified the present galactic

kingdom reign of Jesus from heaven over all things:

*You have put all things in subjection under His feet. For in subjecting all things to Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we do not yet see all things put under Him* (Hb 2:8).

On Pentecost, Peter was speaking to unbelieving Jews. At the very time Peter addressed these Jews, they were under the kingdom reign of a new King in heaven, though they did not realize (“see”) it at the time. The reign of King Jesus had already begun when Peter made the announcement of the coronation of the ascended King. It was now time for those who were the true Israel by faith to be transferred unto this existing kingdom reign and new King (Cl 1:13).

Since the reign of Jesus on the throne of David at the right hand of the Father began before the day of Pentecost, then the church was established after this reign began when people first responded to Peter’s announcement of the reign.

- 40. T or F:** The kingdom reign of Jesus is now limited only to His reign over the nations of this world.
- 41. T or F:** Only when Jesus comes again will He sit on the throne of God and reign over the galaxies.

### D. Unbelieving Subjects

On Pentecost, Peter preached to unbelieving Jewish subjects of the kingdom. Those who initially heard Peter’s announcement on Pentecost **were not members of the church**. At the time, and during the ministry of Jesus, the majority of the Jews did not believe that the One about whom David prophesied was Jesus from Nazareth (See Mt 16:13-20). On Pentecost, however, Peter informed them that there had been a change of kingship in heaven, and that the resurrection proved Jesus to be more than a good Rabbi from Nazareth. His ascension and coronation to the right hand of God on David’s throne had already begun, and thus **the kingdom of Jesus began before the church was established**.

The Church  
And  
The Kingdom  
Are Not  
The Same.



For the first time in history, therefore, Peter announced the good news (gospel) that Jesus was proved to be the Son of God by His resurrection and that He was now reigning as King in heaven. This reign began at the coronation of Jesus when He ascended unto the Father, just as Daniel had prophesied:

*And behold, one like the Son of Man [Jesus] came with the clouds of heaven. And He came to the Ancient of Days [the Father]. And they brought Him near before Him. **And there was given Him dominion and glory and sovereignty** (Dn 7:13,14).*

On that same day of Pentecost when the fulfillment of this prophecy was first declared, about 3,000 Jews believed. These now believing Jews were subsequently transferred unto this kingdom reign (sovereignty) of Jesus as a result of their obedience to the gospel (Cl 1:13).

The 3,000 were, before their obedience to the gospel, under the kingdom reign of Jesus for about a week, but only as uninformed unbelievers. At that time during their ignorance of the coronation of Jesus, they were not obedient subjects of the kingdom, and thus not the church. However, in their positive response to the gospel on Pentecost, **a church of obedient subjects was established**. Those who responded to Peter's announcement submitted to the King who had already ascended to the right hand of God in heaven only about a week before. In other words—don't miss this point—**King Jesus was already made King of kings over all things in heaven and on earth BEFORE the first announcement of His kingdom and reign was made by Peter on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2.**

The word "kingdom" refers to Jesus' reign from heaven, whereas the word "church" (assembly) refers to those on earth who have obediently responded to the reign of King Jesus from heaven.

## E. GOSPEL

The totality of the gospel entails the **incarnation** of the Son of God (Jn 1:1,2,14), His **atoning death** for our redemption (1 Co 15:3), His **resurrection** that proved Him to be the Son of God (Rm 1:4; 1 Co 15:4), His **ascension** and **coronation** to be head over all things for the sake of the church (Ep 1:22), His present **kingdom reign** and **priesthood** over all nations of the world (Hb 8:1), and His **final coming** to take us to our eternal home (1 Th 4:13-18). It is our plea that these teachings be correctly understood and restored to the thinking of those who believe in Jesus. It will only be when people respond to what Jesus accomplished on earth, and now is in heaven, that there will be a global restoration of the gospel.

If we limit the present kingdom of Jesus to the church of obedient subjects, then we have marginalized the power of His reign in our lives because we have marginalized the gospel.

We must clearly understand that the present kingdom of Jesus and the church **are not the same**. The members of the church are the obedient subjects of the kingdom of Jesus on earth. However, **the kingdom of Jesus presently extends from heaven and far beyond the church of obedient subjects**. It extends to angels, earthly governments, kings and lords. Even Satan is under the kingdom authority of Jesus, for it is Jesus, when He comes again, who will have the authority to cast the old serpent into fire and brimstone (Mt 25:41; 1 Pt 3:22; Rv 20:11-15).

Even in His lower state during His earthly ministry, Jesus had authority over all the “underworld.” One terrified demon even cried out to the incarnate Son of God, *“I beg You, do not torment me!”* (Lk 8:28). If Jesus had such authority over demons even while He was on earth, then certainly we can find great comfort in the fact of the authority He now has as King of kings and Lord of lords over the universe.

The knowledge of Jesus' present kingdom authority over all things is our inspiration to transform our lives, as well as, live with peace of mind that all things will work out according to His eternal plan.

**42. T or F:** Even though Satan goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, he and his angels are still within the realm of the kingdom reign of Jesus.

We must keep in mind that Jesus presently has authority over all things **for the sake of those who have submitted to the gospel of His reign** (See Ep 1:20). We must not forget that the church is composed of all those who are obedient subjects of the kingdom reign of Jesus. However, **not all the kingdom of Jesus is limited to those who are the church**. Though we may not now see all things subjected to the reign of King Jesus, as stated by the Hebrew writer, we must not be fainthearted (Hb 2:8). There will come a time in the future when King Jesus will subjugate all things, including death, and then cast the wicked angels (demons) and Satan into eternal annihilation (2 Th 1:6-9). It will be then that He will return kingdom reign to the Father.

*And when all things are subjected to Him [King Jesus], **then will the Son also Himself be subject to Him who put all things under Him, so that God may be all in all*** (1 Co 15:28).

And since King Jesus will eventually return the kingdom to the Father, then His personal reign as King of kings will cease when the last enemy, death, is terminated by the final resurrection. **He will have no purpose to reign when there are no more kings and lords over which to reign**. It will be then that the church will forever be with Jesus who relinquished His reign to the Father in order that God may be all in all. And finally, it will be then that all this world will have passed away with all its evil and suffering. The earth will have fulfilled its purpose to populate heaven, and so, the world as we now know it will no longer exist (See 2 Pt 3:10-13).

This indeed is the gospel (good news) of the coming kingdom of heaven where we will dwell in peace with Jesus. Until that time, however, we are encouraged to do as Paul instructed the Philippians, *“Rejoice in the Lord always. And again I say, rejoice”* (Ph 4:4). And for those brothers and sisters in Galatia who were being recruited to turn aside unto another gospel than the one Paul had preached to them—which gospel we also have received (Gl 1:6-9; 4:17)—he exhorted, *“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage”* (Gl 5:1).

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### CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

1. Why is it erroneous to identify the church by religious performances that are carried out only on one day of the week?
2. What is the true identity of the church that lives after the example of Jesus?
3. Why is giving to the needs of others so natural for those who seek to live incarnationally after the example of the Son of God?
4. In 1 John 3, what is John's definition of loving one's brother?
5. Why should Christians sacrificially give?
6. How is giving to the needs of others following the example of the Son of God?
7. How do the followers of Jesus show their love for one another?
8. How was the cross a manifestation of God's love for us?
9. In reference to making a change in attitude toward the things of the world, why do most people today not respond to the gospel?
10. What did Jesus mean when He made the statement that if one finds his life he will lose it?
11. What did Paul mean when he used the word “dung” in reference to the things he gave up in order to be a disciple?
12. Why do newly baptized disciples behave as Lydia and the jailer in their relationship with Paul, Silas, Luke and Timothy?
13. How do disciples reveal their love for one another?
14. How must we reciprocate the love of God?
15. What does our belief in the resurrection of Jesus empower us to be?
16. What does living the crucifixional life infer about our relationships with one another?
17. What does it mean for one to be crucified with Christ?
18. How did the crucifixion of Jesus unleash the power of the gospel?

19. What does it mean for one to kick against the sacrifice of the cross?
20. Why is a transformed life the only evidence that one has truly reveal that he is a disciple of Jesus?
21. Why is gospel preaching useless if there is no resurrection?
22. What power was unleashed by the resurrection of Jesus?
23. Why does the resurrection of Jesus make Him the moral standard by which all the world will eventually be judged?
24. What is the extent, or realm, of the present reign of King Jesus?
25. Why did the church not exist before the events of Acts 2?
26. Why is the present reign of Jesus over all things part of the gospel?
27. What is the difference between the kingdom of Jesus and the church of Jesus?
28. What are the fundamental events of the gospel?



## ABREVIATIONS

### OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis - **Gn**, Exodus - **Ex**, Leviticus - **Lv**, Numbers - **Nm**, Deuteronomy - **Dt**, Joshua - **Ja**, Judges - **Jg**, Ruth - **Rt**, 1 Samuel - **1 Sm**, 2 Samuel - **2 Sm**, 1 Kings - **1 Kg**, 2 Kings - **2 Kg**, 1 Chronicles - **1 Ch**, 2 Chronicles - **2 Ch**, Ezra - **Er**, Nehemiah - **Ne**, Esther - **Et**, Job - **Jb**, Psalms - **Ps**, Proverbs - **Pv**, Ecclesiastes - **Ec**, Song of Solomon - **Ss**, Isaiah - **Is**, Jeremiah - **Jr**, Lamentations - **Lm**, Ezekiel - **Ez**, Daniel - **Dn**, Hosea - **Hs**, Joel - **Jl**, Amos - **Am**, Obadiah - **Ob**, Jonah - **Jh**, Micah - **Mc**, Nahum - **Nh**, Habakkuk - **Hk**, Zephaniah - **Zp**, Haggai - **Hg**, Zechariah - **Zc**, Malachi - **Ml**

### NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew - **Mt**, Mark - **Mk**, Luke - **Lk**, John - **Jn**, Acts - **At**, Romans - **Rm**, 1 Corinthians - **1 Co**, 2 Corinthians - **2 Co**, Galatians - **Gl**, Ephesians - **Ep**, Philippians - **Ph**, Colossians - **Cl**, 1 Thessalonians - **1 Th**, 2 Thessalonians - **2 Th**, 1 Timothy - **1 Tm**, 2 Timothy - **2 Tm**, Titus - **Ti**, Philemon - **Pl**, Hebrews - **Hb**, James - **Js**, 1 Peter - **1 Pt**, 2 Peter - **2 Pt**, 1 John - **1 Jn**, 2 John - **2 Jn**, 3 John - **3 Jn**, Jude - **Jd**, Revelation - **Rv**

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