

Experiencing the **GOSPEL** With Jesus



A Guided Road Map Adventure
Of Study And Preaching The Gospel

DICKSON

Experiencing The Gospel With Jesus

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Jesus said to His disciples:

***“If anyone desires to come after Me,
let him deny himself and take up his cross
and follow Me.”***

(Matthew 16:24)

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COME GROW WITH US IN THE GOSPEL – A Quest For Fellowship In Gospel Growth –

Jesus commissioned His disciples to go into all the world and preach the good news of His coming into the world in order to offer an opportunity for all of us to have hope beyond this world (See Mk 16:15,16). However, in carrying out this commission, we sometimes forget about ourselves and our own response to the gospel. We forget that the gospel is the primary motivation for us to grow continually in the spiritual fruit of the Holy Spirit. If we sincerely believe the gospel of the revealed grace of God, then we can be better people if we continue to grow in our knowledge of the gospel.

- **Allow grace to be our teacher:** In the letter of 2 Peter, the apostle Peter wrote to Christians. When he concluded this letter, he encouraged those to whom he wrote to grow in the realm of God's grace: *"Grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"* (2 Pt 3:18). By growing in our knowledge of the grace of God, grace becomes our instructor as to how we can live a spiritually abundant life (See Jn 10:10).

We must allow the grace of God that appeared on earth through the Son of God to teach us how to live a better life. The Holy Spirit instructed,

*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, **teach-
ing us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live
sensibly, righteously and godly in this present age*** (See Ti 2:11,12).

The gospel of God's grace must be our teacher as to how we should live. Grace teaches us how to live a better life. It is for this reason that Christians must continue to grow in their knowledge of the revelation of the grace of God that was revealed to humanity through the appearing of the Son of God in this world.

The apostle Paul's desire to go to Christians in Rome illustrates the mission of teaching grace in order to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. We must allow the grace of God to teach us how to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. This teaching on the subject of grace is necessary in order that we live righteously and godly in this present world.

Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome that he planned to come to them in order to accomplish the mission of producing spiritual fruit in their lives. He explained that he wanted to come to them **“so that I might have some fruit among you also”** (Rm 1:13). His motivation for going to the Roman disciples reveals how he would produce this spiritual fruit: **“I am a debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you [Christians] who are at Rome”** (Rm 1:15).

Paul’s primary motivation to go to Rome was to preach again the gospel of grace to the believers in Rome, not unbelievers, though he would take every opportunity to preach the gospel to unbelievers. However, his primary objective of going to Rome was to produce spiritual fruit in the Roman Christians as they continued to grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. **This means that we must always allow ourselves to be taught the gospel of God’s grace. It is through study of the gospel of grace that we are motivated to grow in the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.**

Paul continued to explain to the Roman disciples what would cause spiritual growth in their hearts: **“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes”** (Rm 1:16). We often quote this statement in reference to preaching the gospel to unbelievers. But in the context of Paul’s desire to go to Rome, **he made the statement in reference to preaching the gospel to believers in order that the power of the gospel continue to produce spiritual growth in the lives of the Christians in Rome.**

The gospel is the power by which God produces spiritual fruit in our lives. In other words, the more we grow in our understanding of all that God did for us through the gospel of His Son, the more we are motivated to respond with gratitude for what Jesus did for us. All things that God did for us through Jesus causes thanksgiving for the gift of His Son (2 Co 4:15). It is in this context that Paul wrote, **“For the love of Christ compels us”** (2 Co 5:14). God’s love for us through Jesus compels us to grow spiritually as we emulate His love for us in our love for others (See 1 Jn 4:7-11). The more we study the good news of the coming of the Son of God into this world for us, therefore, the more we grow spiritually in response to God for giving His Son for us (See Jn 3:16). It is for this reason that we, as believers in Christ, must grow continu-

ally in our knowledge of the gospel. The more we understand the revelation of the gospel of God's grace, the more we are motivated to grow spiritually.

- **Salvation by the gospel is conditioned on faith:** So you might ask why we continue to send forth this book throughout the world to those who already believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The answer to this is what Paul stated to the Christians who were in the city of Corinth: *“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you [Christians] the gospel which I preached to you”* (1 Co 15:1). Here again, as to those Christians in Rome, the apostle Paul saw in the lives of some of the Corinthians a weakening of their faith. So he reminded them that their faith stood on the foundation of the gospel, *“by which [gospel] also you are saved, **IF you hold fast that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain**”* (1 Co 15:2). The Corinthian Christians would stand fast in the gospel if they continued to believe the words by which Paul had formerly communicated the gospel to them. If they failed to continue believing his word by which he had formerly communicated the gospel to them, then their weak faith would be in vain in reference to their living *“sensibly, righteously and godly in this present age”* (Ti 2:12).

- **We must continually study the gospel:** We have learned the gospel by studying the historical report of the gospel in the New Testament. Therefore, we must continue to study this Holy Spirit-inspired report in order to grow in our knowledge of the gospel, lest we too, as the Corinthians, seek to survive as Christians on the foundation of a weak faith. If we fail to continue our study of the gospel as it is reported in the Bible, then our faith in the gospel will grow weaker every day. We pray that this book will renew your desire to study the gospel in order to solidify the foundation upon which our faith stands. If all of us do this, then we will reaffirm our salvation that we have in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we ask that you join with us in studying again the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. The fact is that we cannot study this subject too much. As a Christian, it is our lifetime study. The more we study the gospel, the more spiritual fruit that is produced in our lives. Our sending forth of this book is an invitation to everyone who believes in Jesus Christ to join with us in our daily efforts to learn more about the Son of God who came into this world in order to take us all to an eternal home with Him in glory.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation For Gospel Study

Discipleship means that individuals implement in their lives the life and work of Jesus by living the gospel of God's grace. The Son of God came in the flesh of man into this world in order "*to seek and to save that which was lost*" (Lk 19:10). This mission has become the life-style of all those who would call themselves after Jesus. For this reason, when Jesus called His first disciples, He revealed to them that He would also make them "fishers of men."

- **Living the gospel by sharing it with others:** Those today who volunteer to live as disciples of Jesus will also live in response to the call of Jesus to seek and to save the lost. True discipleship, therefore, means that one is a fisher of men. The material of this book is distributed for the purpose of aiding Christians to do that which they are to be doing as disciples in living the gospel. If we seek to be disciples of Jesus, then we will make every effort to follow Him as those early disciples who were personally motivated by Jesus to preach the gospel to the world.

Since it is our mission as disciples to populate heaven by winning souls for Jesus, then it is imperative to be motivated by the gospel in a way that will help us to be better fishers of men. This is not an option in being a disciple of Jesus. This is discipleship. The mark of a true disciple of Jesus is that one is doing what Jesus came into this world to do, that is, to be a fisher of men by seeking and saving the lost.

Jesus said that we too must preach the gospel to the world (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15). In order to accomplish this mission in our lives as disciples of Jesus, we must equip ourselves with the most effective way of sharing the gospel of Jesus with others. The material of this book is a simple organized and graphical method of teaching by which one can lead others to understand better the simple message of the gospel, and then share it with others.

- **Growing evangelistically by sharing the gospel:** One of the first responsibilities of the disciple of Jesus is to encourage others to also share the simple message of the gospel with others. One can extend his or her evangelistic efforts far beyond oneself by discussing the gospel as much as possible with those who love God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Since every Christian should be able to teach the gospel, the material that follows in this book will provide information that will give one confidence to grow in one's faith. We grow by sharing the gospel with our friends in order that they also might understand better the continued mission of Jesus in this world.

When Paul went to Corinth, as well as to all locations to which he traveled as a messenger of the gospel, the first thing he preached was the gospel. He later wrote to the Corinthians about a previous journey he had made to Corinth:

*For I delivered to you **first of all** that which I also received: that **Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, and that **He was buried**, and that **He rose again** the third day according to the Scriptures (1 Co 15:3,4).*

This is the core of the gospel message. This is the message that all unbelievers must hear. The death of Jesus for our sins and His resurrection for our hope were historical events concerning our redemption. As disciples of Jesus, we must continually remind one another of these precious truths, as well as proclaim this good news to the unbelieving world.

- **Remembering the core of the gospel:** When we discuss the gospel with others, the first thing we must discuss is the gospel of Jesus' death for our sins, His burial and His resurrection for our hope. If we have not studied these important points that were revealed through the historical event of the cross and resurrection, then we cannot understand the complete message of the gospel that is beyond His death and resurrection.

It is good news that Jesus died for our sins and was bodily resurrected for our hope. We must believe and connect with these gospel events through baptism into Christ (Rm 6:3-6). However, in our study of the gospel, it is necessary that we study and understand the entire gospel journey of Jesus into and out of this world. We must study the gospel of the incarnation, atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension and present kingdom reign of King Jesus. We must understand that there is one more event of the gospel that is yet to be revealed. This is the good news of Jesus' final coming. In our study of the gospel, therefore, we must continue to expand our understanding of all that God did through His Son in order to bring us into His fellowship, and eventually, into eternal dwelling in His presence.

- **Focusing on the simplicity of the gospel:** We use the charts of this book to graphically explain the central message of the gospel. These charts illustrate the basic concepts that should be understood when discussing the subject of the gospel with those who have never heard the gospel. Each chart presents a study of important concepts that must be understood by every disciple of Jesus concerning the good news of God sending His Son into this world. The charts represent the simple message of the gospel that must be shared with others.

Please keep in mind that this series of charts illustrates the core of the gospel, and thus one's study of this subject should continue beyond the material that is presented. In our lifetime study of the gospel, we must keep in mind what Paul meant in the following statement: "*Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out*" (Rm 11:33). Paul wrote this statement as a challenge. Though we will never come to a complete understanding of all the ways of God, we will understand one very important way. Jesus said to His disciples, "*You know where I am going, and you know the way*" (Jn 14:4). When the disciples asked concerning this "way," Jesus responded, "***I am the way, the truth, and the life***" (Jn 14:6). We can know the truth of His way. We can thus find our way into eternal life through the gospel of the Son of God.

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 and Romans 6:3-6 are crucial texts that explain our primary motivation and means by which we respond to the gospel. These are the three most important scriptures to study in reference to the core of the gospel. The three charts that are presented to illustrate these principle scriptures convey the primary concepts that everyone must know in reference to our salvation. All the charts of this book, as well as our Christian life, are centered around what is revealed in these three scriptures. In the statements of these texts the Holy Spirit revealed life-changing concepts and responses to the gospel.

- **Remaining focused on the gospel:** A general principle to remember in studying the gospel is that all our teaching and lives must be centered around and based upon the gospel. The gospel is our purpose for believing and living with Jesus as our Savior. Whenever we discuss the gospel with others, therefore, we must continually refer to the atonement of the incarnate Son of God for our sins and His resurrection to give us hope of life after death.

The incarnation of the Son of God into the flesh of man is the revelation of the heart of God. Therefore, we better understand God when we understand the sacrificial offering of the incarnate Son of God on the cross of Calvary. When we understand how much the Son of God gave up for us, we are motivated to give all to Him.

In other words, people **respond to the gospel of God's heart** in order to do what God wants us to do as His children. If we simply study what one must legally do to be saved, then one will not have a satisfying response to the gospel of God's heart. And for this reason, the gospel will have little power in motivating one to live "*sensibly, righteously and godly in this present age*" (Ti 2:12).

We must keep in mind that the gospel deals with our hearts, whereas matters regarding law deal primarily with our heads. With our hearts, we must respond to the grace of God that was revealed through Jesus. Response to the gospel must always be a response to the heart of God that was revealed through Jesus, though we must go through our heads in order to get to our hearts. Once we understand in our hearts what

Jesus gave up for us, it is then that we grow in the realm of God's grace.

- **Presenting illustrated concepts for Bible study:** The instructions with each of the following charts are directed toward helping one to study effectively the concepts of each chart. With each chart, we have given some information that can be discussed in a study with others concerning the central message of each particular chart. However, expanded studies surrounding the gospel must also be considered and presented. We must take the opportunity to share with others what we personally understand concerning the gospel. However, it is necessary to grow continually in our knowledge of the gospel in order to spiritually grow in Christ (See 2 Pt 3:18).

Once one understands the central message of the gospel, then one's entire study of the Bible must be centered around God sending His Son into this world for the salvation of humanity. For example, understanding the work of God through Israel in the Old Testament is understood only in view of the gospel of the incarnate Son of God, the Messiah. It is for this reason that we must maintain the gospel as the center of reference for our understanding of the Bible. Our world view of history must be centered around the gospel. When we understand that God created the world for the purpose of bringing created beings into His presence for eternity, then we understand that all of God's work with humanity throughout history is to accomplish this objective through the gospel of Jesus Christ. We are living the gospel work of God in the history of the world.

- **Preaching Jesus, not church:** We must always keep in mind that the gospel message is simple. Sometimes it is so simple that people have a difficult time struggling through the heritage of religious traditions, theologies of men, and denominational church loyalties in order to get to the heart of the gospel message. Therefore, we must guard ourselves against promoting "church," instead of gospel. "Church" does not save, for the church is people. Gospel does save because the gospel is all about the Lord Jesus Christ.

We must always stay with the gospel message of Jesus when dis-

cussing with others that which is most important in order to come into a covenant relationship with God. Therefore, people must respond to Jesus in order to come into the fellowship of the saved, the church. Those who do respond in a positive manner through obedience of the gospel, are the church.

- **Gospel study and sharing is discipleship:** We must be as the apostle Peter who wrote to Christians in the first century: “*I will not be negligent to always remind you of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth [of the gospel]*” (2 Pt 1:12). As a reader of this book, we assume that you know the basic concepts of the gospel. However, as Peter, we will not be negligent to remind you of matters concerning the gospel. This is our responsibility, as well as yours, because we all live a life of studying and sharing the truth of the gospel. We also live with the curse that we become so enthralled with religious matters that we often forget the gospel.

In learning how to present the gospel, it is necessary to remind ourselves continually of the concepts surrounding the gospel. In doing this, we are motivated to change our own lives in response to the gospel. It was for this reason that Peter was not negligent to remind his Christian readers concerning the truth of the gospel. It was for this reason that Paul wanted to make his way to the disciples in Rome (Rm 1:13-16). Those who share the gospel grow in the gospel.

We have found that the more one discusses the truth of the gospel with others, even brothers and sisters in Christ, the more confidence he or she has in sharing with others the tremendous impact that Jesus has had on one’s life. Continual sharing of the gospel encourages us to maintain the gospel as the center of reference of our lives. By developing a life-style of gospel discussion with others, we learn how to better understand key concepts that surround the gospel, as well as how to answer commonly asked questions concerning our faith. For those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, discussing with others the impact that His incarnational journey has had on our own lives is only natural. We must always go tell others what Jesus has done for us in changing our lives (See Lk 8:38,39).

- **Emphasize fundamental points:** The following points are important to remember when approaching a study of any particular Bible subject. This is especially true when studying those key concepts that explain the gospel.

1. Remember the objective. Each chart of this study has one or more objectives that must be understood. Before progressing to a following chart, the objectives of each chart study must be clearly understood. In order to understand the objectives, be sure to study the scriptures that are listed with each particular chart. Though each chart has one primary objective, keep in mind that all the charts are leading the study to a final conclusion in reference to one's response to the gospel, both in obedience to the gospel, as well as a lifetime of spiritual change in response to the grace of God (See 2 Co 4:15). If one studies through the principles of each chart, the conclusion to which one will come by the final chart will be very exciting.

2. Remembering key scriptures. Each chart of this book is a study of one or more key scriptures that are listed with each chart. It is best to study only one or two scriptures that explain the objectives of each particular chart. If one is a novice student of the Bible, then sometimes it is best to study only a few key scriptures in order not to be confused as one studies through all the charts.

As one studies the gospel throughout the years as a disciple of Jesus, however, it is imperative to add to one's understanding of the gospel by adding a catalog of scripture texts that expand one's understanding of the simple gospel message. We must keep in mind that one passage that is adequately understood is sufficient to teach a particular truth concerning the gospel. A great number of scriptures do not make a truth more valid. Nevertheless, with the study of other scriptures, a truth may be better understood and greatly appreciated.

Other scriptures can be studied later to reinforce the material that is studied with any particular chart. It is not the multiplicity of scriptures that we study that proves a point, but our understanding of a particular scripture in its biblical context. It is good to know many scrip-

tures, but it is not necessary at first to refer to everything that the Bible teaches on a particular subject in order to understand the subject.

We must always keep in mind that our study of the gospel is a lifetime project. Throughout our Christian life we must never cease studying the majesty of the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and present kingdom reign of King Jesus. These charts only present the beginning of a thrilling journey that should be carried on throughout the remainder of one's life.

3. *Remembering the spiritual journey.* As you study through the charts of this book, please keep in mind that you are on an intellectual and emotional journey with Jesus. As students of the gospel, we must be sensitive to the emotional impact the gospel should have on our hearts. The gospel deals with our hearts, though we must go through our heads in order to change our hearts. In any study of the gospel, one must be prepared for a change in heart, and thus, a change in behavior.

Studying the gospel is not simply an intellectual exercise of studying Bible events. It is a study in how the events of the gospel will have an impact on our hearts. It is for this reason that studies of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is a lifetime adventure of spiritual growth in the grace of God. We are simply asking that you use the charts of this book to go along with us on this exciting gospel adventure.

After one has obeyed the gospel, than as a teacher of the gospel he or she must be sensitive to the feelings of others. We must remember the first time we heard the gospel and the impact that it had on our own hearts. Studying the gospel with others is more than sharing facts and reading scriptures. It involves our understanding of the impact the gospel must have on our hearts and the hearts of those with whom we discuss these matters. When we become teachers of the gospel, therefore, we must keep in mind that we must teach God's word in a way that reflects our grateful response to God in our own obedience to the gospel. The gospel changes lives, and thus, it will change the lives of everyone who understands all that God did for us through His Son.

4. *Writing one's own charts.* The charts of this study of the gos-

pel are only examples of what one can do in writing his or her own diagrams to illustrate the truth of the gospel. We have found that it is best to study a Bible subject with a **pencil**, a piece of **paper**, and a Bible. In this way, we can make notes of our Bible discoveries, and if possible, make simple diagrams to illustrate gospel truths of the Bible for others.

With the preceding thoughts in mind, welcome to the greatest adventure there is in this world. When people discover the gospel of Jesus Christ, it is only natural for them to take others on this exciting discovery into the heart of God. We ask, therefore, that you join with us in joining with others on this exciting gospel journey.

Discovery 1 EVALUATING WHERE WE ARE

Our First Response To The Grace Of God

- | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. I am SAVED: | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. WHEN was I saved: | Date: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/> | |
| 3. I am a MEMBER of a church: | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. WHEN I became a member of a church: | Date: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/> | |
| 5. I have been BAPTIZED: | YES <input type="checkbox"/> | NO <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. WHEN I was baptized: | Date: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/> | |
| 7. HOW I was baptized: | <input type="checkbox"/> Immersion <input type="checkbox"/> Sprinkling | |

Directions: In relation to today's date, indicate on the "life line" below the order of when you were saved, baptized and became a member of a church.

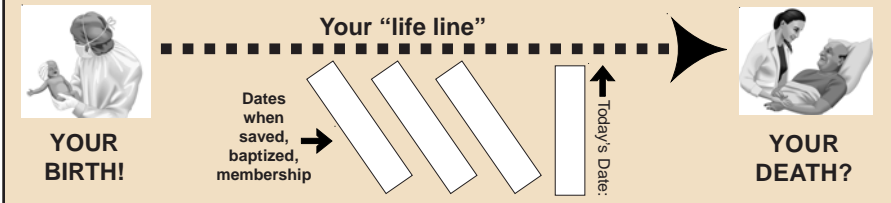


Chart 1

Before one sets out on his or her gospel journey, it is always good to write down first where one is in his or her relationship with God. Completing the following will help you establish exactly where you are in understanding your present relationship with God. Please complete the following before continuing:

A. Objectives of chart 1:

- **To review our own response in how we formerly established a relationship with God.**
- **To refocus our attention on our past experiences in reference to our response to the gospel.**
- **To record our past experiences in reference to the gospel**

in order to make any adjustments according to what we may learn throughout the remainder of this study and our response to the gospel of God's grace.

Before one studies the gospel with others, it is best to make a written record of how we feel we personally came into a relationship with God through the gospel. This is important in order to explain to others where we are in our own relationship with God and what effect our relationship with Him has had on our lives.

B. Presentation instructions for gospel teachers:

1. Religious heritage: When we are discussing gospel matters, it is very important to be interested in the religious background experiences of other people. Our interest in the relationship that other people have had with God, especially in the area of their initial response to the gospel, will motivate everyone in a religious discussion to explore one another's existing relationship with God through the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can always learn something from others in reference to their study of and response to the gospel. Throughout the study of this book, it is our prayer that we too can explain our gospel experience with Jesus.

2. Conversion experience: It is best that everyone write down his or her "conversion experience" as to when he or she came into a saved relationship with God. This is especially important if the following study is the first organized study one has had in reference to the gospel. After completing this study, one can refer back to this record of one's initial commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Salvational events: It is important to make a record of the time when one was "saved," "baptized," or became a member of an existing church. **After** the study of the charts of this book have been completed, **we suggest that reference be made to what was recorded on this chart.** This is important in order that we reevaluate our present rela-

tionship with God. If one came to the Lord when very young, then the study that follows in this book will clarify one's present status in reference to his or her relationship with God.

Please keep in mind that we must continually study the gospel in order to have a better understanding of our existing relationship with God. God was patient with our ignorance of information concerning salvation matters in our youth, but He may not be patient with those who refuse to grow continually in the grace and knowledge of His Son (See 2 Pt 3:18). It is the purpose of this study to help in accomplishing the goal of growing spiritually in our relationship with God.

4. Conversion experience: When discussing the gospel with others, it is important to allow everyone in the discussion to explain his or her "conversion experience." We must be interested, not arrogant, in reference to salvational matters in the lives of others. The word of God must be our final authority in these matters. We must always understand that all of us are on the same gospel journey to learn more about the eternal sacrifice of the Son of God for our eternal salvation. Every time we study the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and kingdom reign of King Jesus, we always grow spiritually. We must always allow ourselves to be open to learning more in the Bible on these matters lest we be carried away by the zeal of those who are more religious and less Bible oriented.

EXPECT A LIFE CHANGE!

What you have written down on the preceding chart may be somewhat different than what you discover by the end of this study. But this is the point of Bible study, especially in reference to any study of the truth of the gospel. We seek to learn more. And when we learn more, we seek to bring our lives into conformity with that which we have learned. This is the identity of a true and honest Bible student.

Remember: *He who rejects Me 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).

Most people throughout the world who believe in Jesus as the Son of God have come to God through Jesus in different ways. However, we must know that there is only one clear way by which everyone must come to Jesus. As you study through the following chart illustrations of this book, please keep in mind that we must discover how God desires that we establish a covenant relationship with him. The manner and means by which we would establish a covenant with God is not ours to determine. On the contrary, only God can establish the conditions by which we are to come into a covenant relationship with Him.

We must not determine our own means or methods by which we establish a relationship with God. This would be subjective, if not arrogant, thinking. By subjective, we mean that our relationship with God would be subject to our own means and methods, or even our own feelings. If we declare our own means and methods of establishing a covenant relationship with God, then we are arrogant.

We must be confident that we have a covenant relationship with God that is based on the word of God. And in order to be confident in our relationship with God, He must determine what we must do in order to establish this relationship. This is the purpose for this exercise of study in reference to the gospel. Once you study through to the conclusion of this series of studies, you will have that confidence if you follow up on all that you will learn from the word of God.

Discovery 2

THE BEGINNING OF THE GOSPEL

A. Objectives for a study of the incarnation:

- To understand to the best of our ability the subject of our eternal God being incarnate in the flesh of man.
- To understand the extreme sacrifice that the Son of God made on our behalf, and how such should motivate us to make every sacrifice possible in order to extend our gratitude to Him for His grace.

The word “incarnation” means “to be made in the bodily flesh of man.” This word can only be applied to God coming in the flesh of man, for God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have always existed eternally in spirit form. In reference specifically to Jesus, the Son of God,



He who was in spirit in eternity was revealed in this world in the flesh of man. An angel named Him “Jesus,” meaning “savior” (Mt 1:21).

The Holy Spirit gave us a commentary on this incarnational journey of the Son of God in **Philippians 2:5-11**. This commentary begins with the following statement: “*Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus*” (Ph 2:5). Before He explained the incarnational journey of the Son of God in this text, the Holy Spirit first stated that everyone who would be a Christian must think and behave after the example of the incarnational sacrifice of the Son of God. The Spirit emphasized the importance of this thinking and behavior in reference to the continued transformation of our lives in response to the grace of God (See Rm 12:2; Ti 2:12).

In Philippians 2:6, the Spirit continued to explain, “*Who [that is, the Son of God], being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God*” (Ph 2:6). Jesus was previously in the nature (“form”) of God. However, He did not consider this equality with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as the one God in spirit something to be continually grasped. He did not because all people of this world would continue to be dead in their sins if there were no incarnational offering for them (See Rm 3:10). Therefore, through His incarnational sacrifice, the Son of God was willing, on our behalf, to give up His eternal equality in spirit with the Father and Holy Spirit in order to come into this world.

The Holy Spirit, through the apostle John, further informs us what happened through the incarnation of the Son of God into the flesh of man: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*” (Jn 1:1). The preceding Philippians 2:6 statement revealed that the Word initially “existed in the form of God.” So as one with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Word—this was Jesus in the spirit before He was born into this world—**was God**. He was one with God, and thus existed in the spiritual form of God.

However, the Holy Spirit continued to explain through John, “*He was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made*” (Jn 1:2,3). The Holy Spirit revealed the following work of the Son while He was still in spirit with God before the creation: “*For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him*” (Cl 1:16). In other words, the world and all mankind were created for the Son of God. We were created in order that the love of God eventually be manifested in history through the incarnation of our Creator, the Son of God (See Gl 4:4).

In the beginning when all things were created, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit said, “*Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness*” (Gn 1:26). In this statement God was not saying that the image of God before creation was physical as that which we see in man. If the

Son of God were in any way physical in eternity, **then there would have been no such thing as an incarnation of the Son of God into the flesh of men.** We must remember that God is Spirit (Jn 4:24). He is not flesh. Therefore, the extent of the incarnation of the Son of God is in the fact that He, in the spirit, had to be revealed in this world in the same flesh into which He originally created humanity from the dust of the earth (Gn 2:7).

The preceding is exactly what the Holy Spirit continued to reveal in the context of Philippians 2: *“But He [the Son of God] made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and being made in the likeness of men”* (Ph 2:7). And in the incarnate form of the flesh of man, *“He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross”* (Ph 2:8). **If there were no incarnation, then there would have been no cross, for a spirit cannot be crucified.** And if there were no incarnational offering for our sins, then all of us would be without any hope in this world.

Incarnation means that the Son of God took upon Himself that which would be able to suffer crucifixion. We would indeed have a shallow understanding of the cross, if we did not first comprehend the magnitude of the incarnational suffering of the Son of God on the cross.

The incarnational crucifixion of Jesus’ body on the cross was prophesied to be His destiny the moment it was said, *“Let us make man”* (Gn 1:26). The Son of God knew that it was His destiny from the time the very first word was spoken in reference to creating humanity in the beginning. Even before the Son of God created Adam and Eve, He knew that all humanity would sin (See Rm 3:10). Therefore, we correctly conclude that before the Son of God spoke the first word to create, He had already planned to be incarnate in the flesh of man in order to be crucified for our sins.

We cannot fully understand the extent of the cross until we understand to the best of our ability the extremity of the incarnational sacrifice of the Son of God giving up existence in the “form” of God in order to come into this world in the flesh of man. The extremity of the incarnation reveals the extreme love that Jesus has for us.

When we consider our own response to the gospel, therefore, we

must understand that our obedience is not a matter of conforming to laws of obedience in order that we might legally, according to law, justify ourselves before God (See Gl 2:16). On the contrary, our obedience must be the result of our gratitude for what the Son of God did for us through His incarnation into our flesh in order to go to the cross for us. The Holy Spirit explained this in the following statement of the apostle Paul: “*For all things are for your sakes [that is, all things in reference to our salvation], so that the grace that is reaching many people may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God*” (2 Co 4:15). It was by grace that God extended to us His Son who was destined to suffer on the cross. It is this grace that motivates us to respond with thanksgiving to our crucified Savior.

It was because of the love of God that the Son of God was incarnate into the flesh of man for our salvation (See Rm 5:8). This revelation of God in the flesh came as a result of the fact that “*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*” (Jn 3:16). When we understand this tremendous amount of love that was revealed through the incarnate Son of God on our behalf, then we are compelled to respond to Jesus’ gospel journey into this world. As the people compelled Jesus to bear His own cross, so we are compelled to respond to His cross (Mt 27:32).

Jesus’ love offering for us in His crucifixion for our sins compels our love response to Him to preach the gospel to others: “*For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge that if one died for all, then all died*” (2 Co 5:14). All of us must be compelled by the love and grace of God that was revealed through the incarnate Son of God. **We cannot grow in the realm of the gospel of the crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and sovereign reign of the Son of God, if we do not understand the extent of His incarnation into the flesh of man.**

Discovery 3

AUTHORITY OF OUR CREATOR

A. Objectives of chart 2:

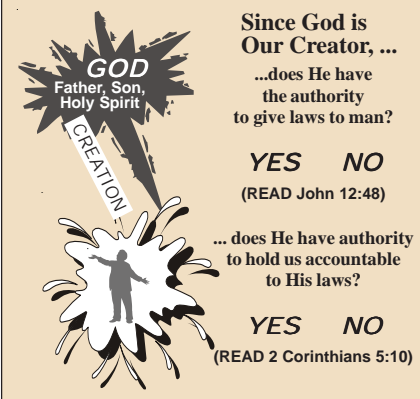
- **To emphasize that there is a God to whom obedience must be rendered because He is the Creator of humanity and all things.**

If one does not believe in God, or questions whether God exists, then there is no reason to consider continuing the study of these charts. This is the time to begin a study in Christian evidences in order to con-

clude that it is more reasonable to believe that God exists. If one is studying with a person who does not have a biblical background, and he or she claims to believe in God, then it would be good to ask questions concerning what they believe about God, especially the incarnation of God into the flesh of man. Those who have a lack of Bible knowledge may believe in God, but their concept of God is often contrary to the Bible definition of God.

(For a greater understanding of those evidences that conclude in the belief that it is more reasonable to believe in God, download from the Internet the following free book from the Biblical Research Library at www.africainternational.org: Book 25, *The Existence Of God.*)

- **To emphasize the final authority of the Bible in all matters of faith, and the fact that it will be the only standard by which all people will be judged in a final judgment that is yet to come.**



GOD
Father, Son,
Holy Spirit

CREATION

Since God is Our Creator, ...
...does He have the authority to give laws to man?

YES NO
(READ John 12:48)

... does He have authority to hold us accountable to His laws?

YES NO
(READ 2 Corinthians 5:10)

Chart 2

If everyone in a religious discussion cannot agree on the authority of the Bible in all matters of faith, then it is useless to continue any discussion concerning faith. If the discussion is continued, then there will be endless arguments over what the Bible claims to be the truth. Those who do not believe that the Bible should be our only authority in matters of faith will find the authority of their faith in their personal experiences. In presenting the gospel, therefore, it is absolutely essential that all of us who are studying agree on the fact that the Bible will be our only authority in matters of faith.

If someone has a strong traditional religious background, then it is very important to establish the fact that the Bible must be obeyed regardless of our religious heritage. If we do not agree that the Bible is our final authority to establish what we must do to serve God, then a thorough discussion of Mark 7:1-9 is in order. Every person of faith must understand that traditions will not save us, and thus must never stand in the way of what God requires of us to be saved.

B. Presentation instructions for gospel teachers:

1. Created by God: **Genesis 1:1,26,27** is the reason for the gospel plan of salvation, for God is not willing that any of His creation should perish (See 2 Pt 3:9). Since the world and humanity was created by God, then we must assume that it was in the plan of God to redeem from all humanity those who would reside with Him in eternity. This earth, with all humanity, therefore, were created in order to populate heaven.

2. The rights of God: When considering Genesis 1:1,26,27, we must ask this question, **“Since God is our Creator, does this give Him the right or authority to give us law that we must obey?”** There must be a definite **“YES”** answer to this question. If there is no positive answer, then the word of God is not the final authority in all matters of our faith.

3. Rejecting authority: In **John 12:48**, Jesus said, **“He who rejects Me 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.”**

This statement of Jesus directs us specifically to the word of Jesus as the authority in matters of faith for those who live during this dispensation of time. John 12:48 teaches that we will eventually be judged by the word of Jesus, not the religious traditions of men. We must understand that when we stand before God in judgment, we must not be fearful concerning obedience to human religious traditions as a standard of our judgment. We will not be judged by religious traditions, and thus, we must not make religious traditions an obstacle to our obedience to the will of God. Everyone has religious traditions, but no religious tradition will be the standard of our judgment.

4. God's right to judge: We must ask ourselves, “**Since God is our Creator, does He have the authority to judge us by His law?**” We must be in agreement on this point. The purpose for asking this question is to establish again the Bible as our only authority in discussing those matters that are necessary for obedience to God and our salvation. If the question is answered negatively, then there is no agreement on the matter that the authority of the word of God must be our final authority in matters of faith.

5. Judgment through Jesus: Acts 17:30,31 specifically states that God will through Jesus judge those of this dispensation (compare also Jn 5:22; At 10:42). It is important to emphasize the point that Jesus will be the final judge of all people (2 Co 5:10). Therefore, it is important to understand the word of Jesus, and our accountability to keep His word, since this word will be the standard of our final judgment. By establishing the truth that we will stand before Jesus in judgment, we are establishing the necessity that all of us must listen to what Jesus says, as opposed to what our religious traditions dictate. We must understand this in order never to underestimate the hold that religious traditions have on the hearts of people. Unfortunately, many people find it easier to continue obedience to the religious traditions of their heritage than obey the commandments of God. This was the problem of the Jews during the ministry of Jesus: “*For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men*” (Mk 7:8).

Discovery 4

WHERE SIN TAKES US

A. Objectives of chart 3:

- **To emphasize man's separation (alienation) from God because of rebellion against the authority of His will.**

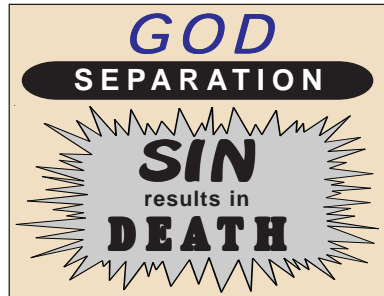


Chart 3

In order to appreciate the gospel, we must realize the consequences of our rebellion against God. Eternal life is sustained **only** in the presence of God

because God only is eternal. If one does not come into the presence of God after death, then he or she cannot have the opportunity of eternal existence. Therefore, we must find a solution for any action of our lives that would separate us from God, and thus cheat us of eternal life.

- **To emphasize the fact that every person has personally sinned against God, and thus is separated from God and in need of reconciliation (to be brought back) with God.**

We must clearly understand that **reconciliation is a restoration of ourselves to the presence of God**. Reconciliation is the work of God through the gospel. God is not reconciled to us. We are reconciled to Him. Since it is our sin that separates us from God, then we must seek to be reconciled to Him through our obedience to the gospel.

When discussing the concept of reconciliation, we are establishing the foundation upon which the appeal of the gospel is emphasized. The more we emphasize the curse of sin, and subsequent separation from God, the greater the appeal of the gospel as the only means by which we can be reconciled to God.

When studying through the concepts of sin, separation and death, the point must be emphasized that in a state of separation from God there is absolutely no hope for salvation. In this state of separation, we cannot self-justify ourselves of sin by keeping religious traditions or by doing meritorious good works. It is because we cannot save ourselves on the basis of our own performance of law, or atoning good works, that we must be driven to the good news of salvation that was revealed through Jesus.

B. Presentation instructions for gospel teachers:

1. **All are sinners:** When we read **Romans 3:9,10,23**, we must ask ourselves, “**Have all people sinned against God?**” The answer to the question, “Yes.” If we answer “No,” then there may be a misunderstanding concerning the concept of sin, and its existence in the life of every individual. We must keep in mind that when considering concepts of sin, we must emphasize the fact that **we are totally unable to make any personal atonement for our sins**. In other words, one cannot do good works in order to put God in debt to forgive our sins (See Rm 4:4).

Sin is a violation of God’s law. We cannot rectify our sin against God’s law as we would against man’s laws. In order to find atonement for sin against God’s law, we must approach God concerning His conditions for His forgiveness of our sins. When discussing sin in our lives, therefore, we are emphasizing the grace of the gospel of God as it was revealed on the cross. Obedience to the gospel is God’s condition for His forgiveness. This is good news because we cannot legally perform good works in order to put God in debt to save us.

2. **Sin separates:** When we read **Isaiah 59:1,2**, we must ask, “**What is the key word in this context that stresses the result of sin in one’s relationship with God?**” The answer is, “separation.” Sin always results in separation from God. When we are separated from God, we are separated from the presence of God and the eternal life that only God can offer. Therefore, since sin separates us from God,

then we must discover what God says we must do in order to be reconciled to him.

3. Separation means death: When considering sin, the following is a true statement: **“When we think about sin, we must always think about separation from God. Sin and separation must always be linked together when considering our relationship with God.”**

4. Definition of sin: In order to better understand the concept of sin, consider **1 John 3:4** and **James 4:17**.

a. 1 John 3:4: *“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”* **God gives both positive laws and negative laws in reference to our obedience of His will.** In order to explain the nature of sin in reference to God’s law, it is necessary to understand how one breaks the law of God.

(1) God’s positive laws: These are those things that God says we **must do**. For example: *“Take care of the orphans and widows”* (Js 1:27). If one does not do this, then he or she sins against God. This is the **sin of omission**. In other words, we commit a sin by omitting to do what God specifically says we must do. We omit doing His commandments in our lives.

(2) God’s negative laws: These are things that God says we **must not do**. For example: *“Avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless”* (Ti 3:9). If one does that which God says we must not do, then he or she commits sin against God. This is the **sin of commission**. We do that which God says we should not do.

b. James 4:17: *“To him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”* **God gives biblical principles of good that we must do.** If one does not do a biblical principle of good, then he or she sins against God.

A biblical principle of good is good that is stated in principle in the word of God, but not specified in detail. For example, Galatians 6:10 states, “*Let us do good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of the faith.*” The specifics of how we are to do good to others is not stated in this principle of good. Therefore, we must work out the specifics of exactly how we are going to accomplish the principle of doing good to all people, realizing that the specifics in order to accomplish a principle of good cannot become a religious law. Each one of us can do good in our own way, and according to the opportunities that present themselves to us to do good. The important thing to remember is that if we do not work out a way to accomplish a biblical principle of good, and have the resources and opportunity to do the good, then we sin against God.

If one thinks his or her life is without sin, then he or she does not understand sin, or is not being honest. However, most people will confess that they have not always done the good that they know they should have done. All have sinned, therefore, because we all have failed to do all the good we know we should have done (Rm 3:9,10,23).

Discovery 5

THE SEPARATION PROBLEM

A. Objectives of chart 4:

- To emphasize the two greatest problems that face every person: **SPIRITUAL** death and **PHYSICAL** death.

Every man must recognize these two great problems. Without finding a solution for these problems, there is no hope of eternal life. It is imperative,

therefore, that the teacher of the gospel emphasize these two great problems when sharing with those who have not obeyed the gospel.

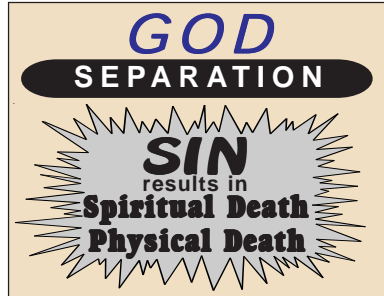


Chart 4

- To move one to seek the good news (gospel) that the gospel was revealed for the death problems that face every person.

We must keep in mind that the better one understands that there is no hope for salvation when separated from God, the more he or she will desire to draw close to God. One will be motivated to search the Scriptures in order to discover the conditions one must do in order to be restored to a correct relationship with God. The gospel is what draws people to God, and thus provides a solution for the problems of both spiritual and physical death. Obedience to the gospel is the solution for our two great problems concerning death.

B. Presentation instructions for gospel teachers:

1. Wages of sin: In **Romans 6:23** Paul wrote, “*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our*

Lord.” The meaning of this verse is that the salary (wages) or result of sin is spiritual death. When we think about sin, therefore, we must always think about death, specifically, spiritual death that results from being separated from God. Romans 6:23 is stating that everyone has sinned, therefore, everyone who **has not** obeyed the gospel is separated from God, and thus in a state of spiritual death. It is for this reason that we must thoroughly understand this point when considering those who have not obeyed the gospel.

We must not forget that the religious world in general is familiar with Romans 6:23. However, many do not understand why spiritual death is the result of one’s personal sins against God. We must understand, therefore, that sin causes separation from God, and **it is this separation from God that results in death**. Sin is the cause of the separation. The separation is the cause of our spiritual death.

2. Origin of sin: In **Romans 5:12** Paul stated, “*Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death passed to all men because all have sinned.*” The first half of this verse refers to Adam’s **personal sin** against God. It speaks of his personal spiritual death, and separation from God that resulted from his own sin of eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden (See Gn 2:16,17; 3:1-24).

The second part of Romans 5:12 emphasizes the problem of spiritual death that **each person suffers as a result of his or her personal sin against God**. All people are personally separated from God, and thus, all people are spiritually dead because of their own sins. Since all people sin, then all people suffer individual spiritual separation from God (See Rm 3:9,10,23).

3. Death of the body: **Genesis 3:22-24:** As a result of Adam’s sin of eating of the forbidden fruit, he was separated from the tree of life, and thus, neither he nor all humanity after him could eat of the tree of life and live forever (Compare Hb 9:27). Therefore, we suffer the **consequences** of Adam’s eating of the forbidden fruit because no one can now eat of the tree of life because Adam and all humanity was driven

from the Garden of Eden (Gn 3:22-24).

4. The bodily resurrection: 1 Corinthians 15:20-22: The context of 1 Corinthians 15 is discussing the **bodily** resurrection. Verse 20 discusses Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead. His resurrection from the dead was the "firstfruits" of all those who have died in the past and those who will physically die in the future.

The word "firstfruits" is a metaphor taken from the Sinai law of the Old Testament. According to the Sinai law, the first cuttings of the harvest were offered to God for the support of the Levitical priests. **These cuttings were an indication or promise of the greater harvest to come.** Jesus' bodily resurrection from the tomb was a signal of the greater resurrection that is yet to come in the future.

Jesus' resurrection from the dead was different from the resurrection of Lazarus and others who were raised before Him. Jesus' resurrection was different in two ways: (1) Jesus was resurrected never to die again. (2) Jesus was resurrected with an immortal, incorruptible body as we will have when He comes again (Compare 2 Co 5:1-8; Ph 3:21; 1 Jn 3:2).

When considering 1 Corinthians 15:20, we must clearly understand the "man" to which Paul referred. This was Adam. Because Adam sinned, physical death was introduced into the world when he was separated from the tree of life. As the father of humanity, Adam subsequently separated all of us from the tree of life. However, through Jesus Christ came the promise of an eventual bodily resurrection from the dead (Compare Jn 5:28,29; 11:25; 1 Th 4:13-18). All who come to Jesus have access to the tree of life through Him. These are those who will be bodily resurrected to live forever when Jesus comes because they were "bodily" resurrected from the waters of baptism. Because baptized believers experienced the first resurrection in baptism, they will experience a second resurrection when Jesus comes again.

We must all must suffer from the consequences of Adam's sin, and thus, physically die. We must because all of us have been separated from the tree of life as Adam when he was driven out of the Garden of Eden (See Gn 3:22-24). However, those who establish an "in Christ"

(covenant) relationship with Jesus, will be bodily resurrected to life when He comes again. Though all physically die as a result of Adam's separation from the tree of life, when Jesus comes again those who are in Christ will be made alive (See 1 Co 15:22). Therefore, one must be "in Christ" in order to be resurrected to life. Those who are outside Christ will be resurrected to an eternal destruction (Compare Rv 20:12-15; 21:8).

The more we emphasize the hopeless situation of being in sin, and thus separated from God, the greater the appeal there is for obedience to the gospel, through which we are reconciled to God. It is important, therefore, to dwell on these thoughts in order to make sure that everyone understands the curse of being in the bondage of sin. We must understand that there is absolutely no hope for eternal life while one is separated from God in sin.

Reading

Open to me the gates of righteousness.

I will go into them and I will praise the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord into which the righteous will enter.

(Ps 118:19,20)

Discovery 6

WHERE THE GOSPEL TAKES US

A. Chart 5 objectives:

- **To emphasize the power of the gospel in the lives of those who have obeyed the gospel, and thus enjoy Jesus' atonement for our sins on the cross.**

We must emphasize the fact that Jesus can help those who desire to be helped. However, if there is no desire to voluntarily respond to the gospel of His incarnational offering for our sins, then there can be no blessings from Him in reference to His cleansing of our sins.

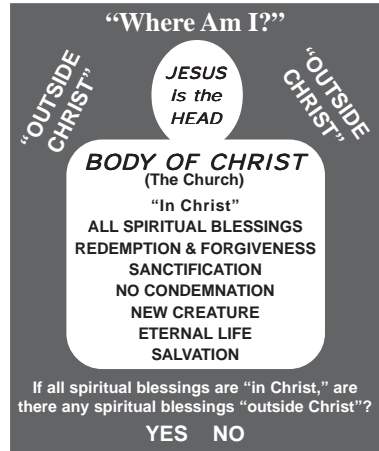


Chart 5

- **To emphasize the spiritual blessings that come to those who live in response to the gospel.**

Spiritual blessings refer to salvational benefits one receives as a result of coming into a covenant relationship with Jesus. Obedience to the gospel brings one into contact with these blessings, and thus as one lives the Christian life, he or she enjoys all the spiritual blessings that result from one's obedience to the gospel.

B. Presentation instructions for gospel teachers:

1. Headship of Jesus: It is important to understand the metaphor “head” as it is used in reference to Jesus' relationship with His body, the church. The word “head” refers to **control** and **center of refer-**

ence. When one voluntarily responds to the gospel of Jesus, then Jesus “controls” that person through the powerful motivation of the gospel. The gospel of Jesus is the center of reference to all those who subsequently obey the gospel (Compare Jn 12:48; Cl 1:12-18; Hb 1:2-3; 4:12). As the Head of the individual disciple, Jesus becomes the center of reference as we live according to the gospel (See Ph 2:5-8).

We must clearly understand that Jesus can be our head only when we voluntarily respond to the gospel. If Jesus controls the individual in a subjective manner through a supposed direct control of the Holy Spirit, then Jesus cannot be the total head of the individual. Jesus knew that some would eventually assume that their head, or source of motivation, would supposedly be the Holy Spirit. Because Jesus saw this coming in the lives of some of His disciples, He made the following statement in reference to the work of the Holy Spirit: “*He [the Holy Spirit] will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will declare it to you*” (Jn 16:14).

The headship of Jesus in the life of the individual Christian depends on the voluntary submission of the individual to the authority of the word of Jesus that was recorded by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (See 1 Co 14:32; 2 Tm 3:16). Jesus delivers people into freedom from both sin and religious traditions. He does not bring us into some subjective bondage of the Holy Spirit, and thus violate our free-moral choice. On the contrary, He allows us to make a free-moral choice in our personal response to what He did for us at the cross. We voluntarily respond to the grace of God that was revealed at the cross. The Holy Spirit spoke of this: “*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*” (2 Co 4:15).

2. “In Christ” relationship with God: The metaphor “**in Christ**” means that one is in a covenant relationship with God through the Son of God. When one is literally in a building, he or she has protection and security. Being in a building means being in a relationship with what the building has to offer as long as one remains inside. When one is “in Christ,” he or she is in a gospel relationship with Jesus where there is protection from Satan. In Christ there is the daily cleansing

blood of Jesus for sins that we commit (Compare 1 Jn 1:7). “In Christ” we are sanctified by the blood of Jesus, and thus secured in our salvational relationship with God through Jesus.

When one agrees to submit to Jesus’ headship and direction through obedience to the gospel, he or she receives all spiritual blessings that result from this submission. The following scriptures remind us of those spiritual blessings of the gospel that we continually enjoy as we live “in Christ”:

a. Ephesians 1:3: “**All spiritual blessings**” refer to those salvational blessings that were made possible by the cross of Christ and are made applicable to one’s life upon obedience to the gospel. The following is a list of these blessings that we enjoy in Christ (Compare 2 Pt 1:2-4):

b. Ephesians 1:7 (See also Cl 1:13,14): **Redemption** means that Jesus paid a price for our sins in order to bring us back into a reconciled relationship with God. His sacrificial offering redeemed (bought) us out of the captivity of sin from which we could not redeem ourselves (See Rm 3:24,25). **Forgiveness** means that through the blood of Jesus God will forget all sins that we have committed against Him. He will remember them no more (See also Rm 11:27; Hb 8:12; 1 Jn 1:7-9).

c. 1 Corinthians 1:2: **Sanctification** means to cleanse or purify. When one is in a covenant relationship with Jesus, he or she is continually cleansed of sin by the blood of Jesus (See also 1 Co 6:9-11; 1 Jn 1:7). Therefore, we do not need to attempt to self-sanctify ourselves through good works. We work because of what Jesus did for us at the cross, not in order to meritoriously sanctify ourselves through good works (See Ep 2:8-10).

d. Romans 8:1: When one is in Christ, he or she is **not under a sentence of condemnation** because of sin. When one has established a covenant relationship with Jesus, he or she is safe from condemnation (See also Mk 16:16; 1 Jn 5:13-20).

e. 2 Corinthians 5:17: When one is in Christ, he or she is a **new creation**, or new creature. He or she is new because one is in a spiritual relationship with God because of the cleansing blood of Jesus

(See also Ep 4:17-24).

f. 1 John 5:11: When one is in Christ, he or she has **eternal life** that is conditioned on remaining faithful to living the gospel of Jesus (See also Jn 10:27,28).

g. 2 Timothy 2:10: **Salvation** means that one has the spiritual blessings of redemption, forgiveness and sanctification. Having such means that one is not living under the judgment of condemnation, but is a new creature who has eternal life. This is what God wants every person to have (See Jn 3:16; 2 Pt 3:9). This is why Jesus came into this world in order to offer an eternal sacrifice for our sins.

It is the call of God through the gospel that all people have an “in Christ” relationship with the Son of God. The following outlined information of 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 in the next discovery explains what is coming in the future. The information that is revealed in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 emphasizes what God had to do in order to make it possible for us to come into a covenant relationship with Him. Once we understand what it cost God in order to reconcile us to Him, we are motivated to come into a covenant relationship with Christ through obedience of the gospel. This is the power of the gospel (Rm 1:16).

The previous charts have illustrated that our sins have brought us into a realm of spiritual death. However, though God is just to give law by which we must live, it is impossible for us to keep any law perfectly in order to save ourselves. Therefore, God sent His Son into the world in order to do for us that which we could not do for ourselves. We are justified in reference to law by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

Through His Son, God revealed where He wants us to be in this life. He wants us to be in Christ. We must keep in mind that it is the gospel that motivates one to respond to Christ in order to be brought into Christ. It is the power of the love offering of the gospel that motivates us to respond in obedience to what God did for us through the incarnational revelation of His Son.

Discovery 7

WHERE JESUS CAN SEND US

A. Chart 6 objective:

- **To emphasize the necessity of obeying the gospel in order to come into Christ where there is deliverance from destruction when Jesus comes again.**

It is very important to clearly understand the text of 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. The better one understands this text, the more power the gospel will have in one's life. If one understands the nature of what Paul was explaining in this revelation, then there will be no question in reference to the following scriptures as to what one must do in order to obey the gospel.

RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

ETERNAL TRUTH

- Jesus gives assurance to those who are persecuted for His sake.
- Jesus will be revealed from heaven.
- Jesus will be revealed with mighty angels.
- Jesus will be revealed in flaming fire.
- Jesus will be revealed to take vengeance.
- Jesus will take vengeance on those who do not respond to the heart of God.
- Jesus will thus take vengeance on those who do not obey the gospel of God's heart.
- Those who do not obey the gospel will be punished with destruction from the presence of God.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:

Must one "obey the gospel" in order to escape the judgment of condemnation when Jesus comes again?

YES

NO

Chart 6

B. Presentation instructions for gospel teachers:

1. Revelation concerning the final coming: The following are some questions to ask concerning what Paul stated in the revelation of 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9:

a. **“What future event is discussed in verse 7?”** The answer is, “The final coming of Jesus.”

b. **“How is Jesus coming?”** He is coming, *“In flaming fire.”*

c. **“Who will be judged with vengeance when Jesus comes again?”** The answer is, “Those who do not know the God of love and grace who sent His only Son into this world.” If one does not know the loving heart of God for His creation, then he will never respond to what God has to offer in order to bring one into His eternal presence. One must emulate within himself or herself the heart of God in order to reside in the presence of the heart of God.

d. **“What will happen to those who do not respond to the gospel?”** The answer is, “They will suffer eternal destruction from the presence of the God who gave His only begotten Son.” They will suffer this because they have not obeyed God’s solution for sin, and thus cannot reside in the eternal presence of God.

It is important that everyone who would seek to be eternally saved must believe the teaching of 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. Acceptance of this teaching is important because this lays the foundation upon which the following two charts are based.

2. Coming destruction: “Does 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 teach that one must obey the gospel in order to escape the coming judgment of condemnation?” There must be a definite positive response to this question. If the answer is not in the affirmative, then we must read again the passage, for the passage is quite clear.

It is very important to understand what Paul said in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 in order for one to be motivated to respond to the gospel. When one clearly understands what 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 states in reference to our eternal salvation, then he or she will be committed to a conclusion that will be established in the following charts.

3. Two eternal questions: If one must obey the gospel in order to escape the coming destruction, then two questions must be asked and answered:

- 1. What is the gospel?**
- 2. How can one obey the gospel?**

1 Corinthians 15:1-4 (chart 7) and **Romans 6:3-6** (chart 8) in the following discoveries answer these two questions. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 answers the first question concerning what the gospel is and Romans 6:3-6 answers the second question concerning how one can obey the gospel.

Several passages in the Bible could be used to answer these two questions. However, one must not allow himself to believe that a truth that is so simple must be validated by an assortment of scriptures. If a great number of scriptures are used, those who do not know the Bible well, might be intimidated or confused concerning a simple truth. We must always keep in mind that the gospel is a simple message to share and understand. It can be presented in all its simplicity. We must not give the impression that the gospel is a complex system of theology or church tradition. Therefore, the simpler one's presentation of the gospel, the easier it is for people to understand and appreciate its message.

The preceding two questions must be asked and answered according to what the Bible says. These are not questions that ask for subjective answers and obedience. In other words, the answers are not based on what one **feels** is right. The answers are objectively based on what we read in the Bible. The correct answers to these two questions will determine if one has correctly obeyed the gospel in order to escape the coming judgment of destruction that is explained in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

Discovery 8

LIFE-CHANGING HISTORICAL EVENTS

A. Chart 7 objective:

- To understand the gospel as it was revealed through an event of history when Jesus offered Himself in order to answer our two greatest problems.

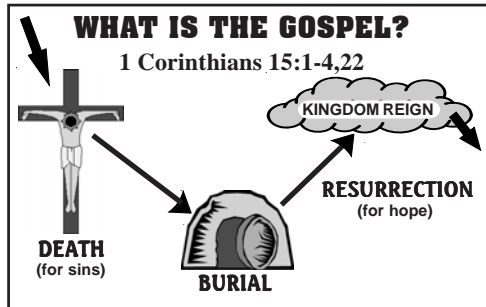


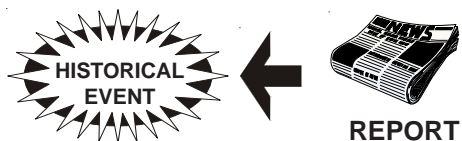
Chart 7

In a world of religious confusion, it is necessary to clarify the event of the gospel, as well as the use of the word “gospel.” The first simple fact to understand is that the gospel was revealed through an event of history. Once this is understood, the conclusion to what one must do in order to connect with the historical events of the gospel in order to connect with God, must also be understood.

B. Presentation instructions for gospel teachers:

1. The newspaper report: Before considering **1 Corinthians 15:1-4**, we use a newspaper to illustrate the difference between a **report** (the newspaper) and an **event**, a historical happening about which reports are made in the newspaper.

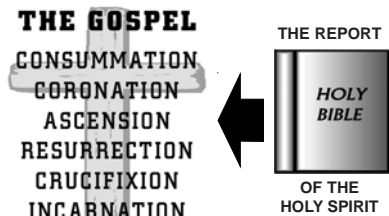
The events of a newspaper happened **before** the report (the newspaper) was written. The newspaper is a report of historical happening of the events that



took place at a specific time in history. There is a difference, therefore, between the events and the report of the events.

2. The report and the gospel events: We must ask, “**What is the gospel?**” Typical answers are, “the Bible,” “the teachings of Jesus,” or “the New Testament.” These are wrong answers, and thus illustrate that most people do not have a correct understanding concerning the difference between the historical events of the gospel and the report of these events. These answers cannot be right because if the gospel were, for example, the teachings of Jesus, then one can never fully obey the gospel. This is true because we cannot live perfect lives according to the word of God. We can make an effort to obey the teachings of Jesus. However, we will always know that we cannot obey all the teachings of Jesus, for all sin and fall short of perfect obedience (Rm 3:23). We simply cannot **perfectly** obey the teachings of Jesus. And because we cannot perfectly obey, we need the gospel of God’s grace. It is for this reason that if the gospel were the teachings of Jesus, **then one would never know for sure if he or she had obeyed the gospel, for no one can keep law perfectly.**

3. The good news report of the gospel: Many people will respond that the gospel is the “good news.” But this is the meaning of the Greek word that is translated “gospel.” Therefore, if one responds that the gospel is the good news, then we would ask, “The gospel is good news about what?” The answer to this question is that the gospel is good news about our two greatest problems, spiritual and physical death. The New Testament is a report of the gospel event that took place before the New Testament was written. Therefore, we read the Bible in order to understand more about the revelation of the gospel through the historical events that revealed the gospel. Paul explained this in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. This passage answers the question that was previously asked from the reading of 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, “What is the gospel?”



4. Report of the gospel: Paul wrote, “*Moreover, brethren, I de-*

clare to you **the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, IF you hold fast to that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.**" (1 Co 15:1,2).

a. In 1 Corinthians 15:1,2 Paul talks **about** the gospel. Therefore, the inspired words that he used to talk about the gospel are not the gospel itself. In other words, **the inspired words of 1 Corinthians 15:1,2 are not the gospel.** These are words the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to use to explain the gospel. Paul reported the effect the gospel had on the lives of the Corinthians to whom he preached it.

This same thought is found in **Romans 1:13-16.** Paul wanted to go to Rome to the disciples who lived in the city, and who had formerly obeyed the gospel. "*So as much as in me is,*" he wrote, "*I am ready to preach the gospel to you [Christians] also who are at Rome.*" The Christians in Rome had already obeyed the gospel. Their obedience to the gospel occurred long before any of the New Testament books were written, including the book of Romans. Nevertheless, the Roman disciples needed to continue to learn more about the gospel they had obeyed in order that the gospel's full power work in their lives. For this reason, Paul wanted to go to them in order to reveal more information about the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, kingdom reign and final coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. These things we can now read in the New Testament (See 2 Pt 3:18). But as the Corinthians, the Romans had obeyed the simple message of the death of Jesus for our sins and His resurrection for our hope.

(1) Through the medium of words, the gospel was **declared** (announced) to the Corinthians. The gospel is declared with words, and thus, the words are not the gospel.

(2) The gospel was **preached** to the Corinthians. The gospel event and message are preached by use of words. Therefore, the gospel is not the words, whether written or spoken. Words are the medium through which the gospel message is communicated to people.

(3) The gospel was **received** by the Corinthians. When one

receives something, he or she accepts what is received as true. The Corinthians believed the gospel event because they received what Paul said about the events to be true.

(4) One **stands** in the gospel. In other words, one bases his or her emotional and spiritual well-being on the foundation that the gospel event was an actual historical event that revealed the grace of God through the cross. When we are sharing the gospel with others, there is more involved than a simple belief in the words that communicate the event of the gospel to us. We must accept the fact of the gospel to the point that it becomes the emotional foundation upon which our feelings are based and controlled. Receiving (believing) the message of the gospel must have a spiritual and an emotional impact on our hearts. We must be cut to the heart by the incarnation and atoning sacrifice of Jesus (At 2:37; see Ph 2:5-11). The gospel deals not only with the head, but also with the heart. So unless the message of the gospel gets from our heads to our hearts, our lives will remain unchanged.

(5) One is **saved** by the gospel. The Corinthians were saved by the gospel, though they were not in Jerusalem when the gospel events occurred. The events of the gospel happened many kilometers away and several years before the preaching of Paul in the city of Corinth. But because the gospel is more than historical events, the Corinthians could still make contact with Jesus in obedience to the gospel in the city of Corinth.

(6) One is saved by the gospel **IF he or she continues to believe the word by which the gospel is communicated**. The Corinthians had to continue to believe Paul's words by which he communicated the gospel to them. Therefore, salvation by the gospel is based on the condition that one continues to believe the word by which the gospel is communicated to us. In other words, we today must believe the New Testament that communicates to us the message of the gospel that was revealed through the historical events of the cross and resurrection (Compare Rm 10:17). If we start doubting the report, then we will fall from our salvation. It is necessary, therefore, that we continue to believe the inspired report. It is for this reason that those who do not study the Bible are moving away from Jesus because they are moving

away from a knowledge of the gospel of Jesus.

In the context of the Corinthians, some were starting to doubt the resurrection of Jesus. But if this good news concerning our own resurrection is not true, then the gospel means nothing. The incarnation of the Son of God was a wasted effort on His part. If there were no resurrection to eternal life, then there would be no need for the incarnational sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for our sins.

5. Gospel events: In 1 Corinthians 15:3,4, Paul continued, “*For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, that **Christ died for our sins** according to the Scriptures, and that **He was buried**, and that **He rose again** the third day according to the Scriptures.*”

a. The gospel was the first thing Paul preached when he arrived in Corinth. It is interesting to note this point because it determines what is most important when we are approaching unbelievers. The good news of Jesus’ death for our sins and resurrection for our hope is the most important subject that unbelievers must hear. It is important to those who are stuck in religious performances because so many people are confused concerning what they must do in order to obey the gospel.

b. The gospel is centered primarily around **Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross for our sin problem**. Our number one problem in our relationship with God is sin. Sin has separated us from God, and thus it is necessary to take care of our sin problem before there can be a renewed covenant relationship with God. The resurrection would mean nothing if there were no atonement for our sins. Our obedience to the gospel, therefore, is absolutely necessary in order for one to reconnect with God in a covenant relationship.

c. The gospel of living forever was revealed through the **burial of Jesus in a tomb in order that He be victoriously raised from the dead**. The burial of Jesus was a distinctive part of the gospel because **if there could be no burial then there was no death and resurrection**. It is for this reason that the empty tomb revealed the victory of

Jesus over death. It has also become a defense for our faith. If there were no empty tomb, then the foundation of our hope to live forever would be destroyed.

Our physical resurrection, because of Jesus' physical resurrection, is the theme of the entire chapter of 1 Corinthians 15. The gospel message is valid because of the empty tomb. The death on the cross has effect because Jesus is not like other religious leaders who have founded their faith on their own selves and teachings. The teachings of Jesus are beneficial for living. However, if Jesus had not been raised from the dead, then His teachings would always be in competition with other teachings of other religious leaders who are still in their tombs. Christianity is founded upon an empty tomb, not simply the teachings of Jesus. Jesus was more than a good teacher of Israel. He was proven to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead (Rm 1:4).

d. The gospel was revealed through the event of **Jesus' physical resurrection to give us hope of overcoming our physical death problem**. In our thoughts concerning the death of Jesus on the cross, we often fail to continue our thinking concerning the empty tomb. The cross is only part of the gospel. The resurrection adds more to the subject, and thus should be equally emphasized when we discuss the subject of the gospel. If there were no bodily incarnation of God into the flesh of man, then there could have been no bodily crucifixion (See Jn 1:1,2,14). If there were no bodily crucifixion, then there could have been no bodily resurrection and ascension.

e. Jesus was raised to sit at the right hand of God in order to reign over all things (Ep 1:20-23; 1 Tm 2:5; Hb 8:1). This is good news. When Jesus gave the great commission to the apostles, it is interesting to note that He introduced the subject of preaching the gospel to the world with an announcement of His authority over all things. He said in Matthew 28:18, "*All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.*" When presenting the gospel to someone, it is important to emphasize this fact.

Jesus is not only the Savior because He took care of our sin prob-

lem, He is our King who gives hope by maintaining control over all things (Hb 1:3; 1 Pt 3:22). His authority over all things assumes that we must submit to His gospel reign. When presenting the gospel, we emphasize the authority of Jesus in order to establish the necessity that one submit to the reign of Jesus over all things. One is not recognizing the kingship of Jesus if he or she is not willing to submit to obedience of King Jesus. When one is baptized, therefore, he or she is submitting to the authority of King Jesus to command such in the lives of those who would be His subjects. It is for this reason that Luke mentions several times in Acts that people were baptized “in the name of Jesus” (See At 2:38; 10:48; 1 Co 1:13).

6. Good news about physical resurrection: In 1 Corinthians 15:20-22 there are important statements to read in order to emphasize the effect of Jesus’ resurrection. Verse 22 is specifically important: “*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all will be made alive.*”

a. The context of 1 Corinthians 15 is the **physical resurrection**. 1 Corinthians 15 is not the context for discussing our spiritual separation from God because of sin. The context is dealing with **physical death and physical resurrection**.

All physically die because of an indirect result of Adam’s sin. As a result of his sin, he, and all humanity, were driven from the Garden of Eden. He was driven from the Garden lest he eat of the tree of life and live forever. **Genesis 3:22-24** is the historical event that states this fact. Genesis 3:22 reveals that God drove Adam out of the garden “*lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.*” We physically die, therefore, because our forefather, Adam, was driven from the tree of life. It is important to emphasize this point because the only way we can be restored (reconciled) to the source of life—God—is through obedience of the gospel. Those who do not obey the gospel will suffer the punishment of destruction from the presence of God. Obedience to the gospel is the answer to our second greatest problem, which is physical death.

b. Because Jesus was raised from the dead, all those who are “in Christ” will be raised to live again. It is interesting to note that there are no promises made in the New Testament that the unbelieving will be raised to eternal life. Even John 5:24,25 emphasizes the fact that the dead who “hear” the voice of the Son of God—the unrighteous do not hear (obey)—are raised to everlasting life. The unrighteous face eternal destruction, but the righteous will come out of their graves for the purpose of eternal dwelling. It is for this reason that one must be “in Christ” in order to have hope of eternal life. Only those who are “in Christ” are promised to be raised from the dead to enjoy everlasting life in the presence of God. **There is no promise of resurrection for eternal life made in the New Testament for those who are outside Christ.** One must have a covenant relationship with God in Christ in order to enjoy the rewards of this covenant.

7. Good news about physical death: 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 answers the first question that 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 poses, that is, “What is the gospel?” We review these thoughts in order to emphasize the fact that this question has been answered. The gospel is good news about our physical death problem. Jesus was raised from the dead, and thus He has given hope to all who are in a covenant relationship with Him at this time. Our hope is that we too will be raised from the dead when Jesus comes again. The righteous look forward to the coming of Jesus because they will receive eternal life. The unrighteous do not look forward to His coming because they will be raised for eternal destruction.

8. Imperative gospel obedience: Since it is imperative to obey the gospel in order to be delivered from eternal destruction, then we must ask, “**How can one obey the historical event of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus?**” The answer to this question is found in Romans 6:3-6. Romans 6:3-6 is Paul’s answer to the second question that 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 poses, that is, “How can one obey the gospel?”

We must fully understand that the gospel was revealed through the historical event of the death of Jesus for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection to give us hope of resurrection after physical death. Those with whom we share the gospel should be seeking an answer for their sin problem. They should also be seeking hope in view of physical death that every person must experience (Hb 9:27). The gospel answers these two greatest problems for which all people must find answers. It is for this reason that the gospel is good news. It is good news about our spiritual death problem. It is good news about our physical death problem.

If we have laid the correct intellectual and emotional foundation with those whom we share the gospel, the following chart reveals a tremendous discovery in reference to our obedience to the gospel. Those with whom the gospel is shared will not be able to deny the answer that Romans 6:3-6 gives as an explanation for obedience to the gospel.

Discovery 9

WHERE WE MUST TAKE OURSELVES

A. Chart 8 objectives:

- To teach that baptism (immersion) is the manner by which we obey the gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

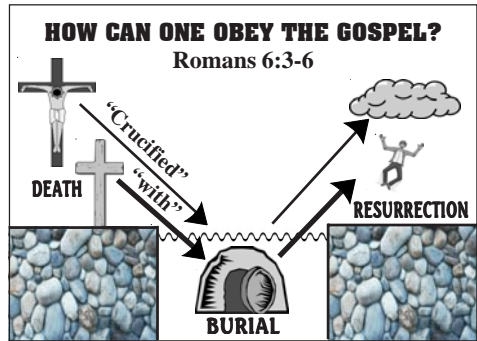


Chart 8

As we come to this chart in sharing the gospel, a connection is made between the gospel that took place in Jerusalem over two

thousand years ago and those today who want to obey the gospel. All those who seek a covenant relationship with God must obey the gospel through baptism.

- To teach that one cannot be saved from the coming judgment of destruction of unbelievers if he or she does not obey the gospel by immersion in water for the remission of sins.

B. Presentation instructions for gospel teachers:

1. **Baptism and Jesus:** It is important to understand what the Holy Spirit said in the text of **Romans 6:3-6**. The following are critical points from this text that must be understood in order to identify the response of baptism with the gospel of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection:

- a. Romans 6:1-3 lists a series of questions. There is a question

mark after each verse. Paul asked three questions that he answered in the context of chapter 6.

b. Verse 3 is the third question that is first answered by verse 4, and then again in verse 5. The questions of verses 1 & 2 are answered in the context of chapter 6.

Paul asked, “*Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized [immersed] into Christ Jesus were baptized [immersed] into His death?*” In Paul’s answer to the question of verse 3, he first answered the question of verse 3 in verse 4. Because of the importance of the answer, he answered the question again in verse 5, but with different words and phrases. Therefore, verses 4 & 5 are the same answer to the question that is presented in verse 3.

c. After reading the question of verse 3, we must ask, “**How is one baptized into the death of Jesus that took place over two thousand years ago and several thousand kilometers away?**” Paul answered this question in verse 4, and again in verse 5. But in his answers we must discover that the event of baptism is more than an obedient repetition of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. Baptism is a spiritual connection with the atonement of the cross of Jesus and our future resurrection with Him. It is a moment in history where the obedient believer connects with God because of the washing away of all sins.

2. Connecting with Jesus: In verse 4 Paul answered, “*Therefore, we are buried with Him through baptism [immersion] into death, that just as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, even so we also might walk in newness of life.*”

a. One is buried with Jesus in baptism. The preposition “with” emphasizes a union with Jesus in one’s obedience to Jesus’ death and burial that took place over two thousand years ago. Baptism answers the desire of all true believers who want to be with Jesus in eternity. In fact, Paul wrote the desires of all of us when he stated, “*We are confi-*

dent, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and be present **with the Lord**” (2 Co 5:8). In order for one to be **with** Jesus in eternity, he or she must be **with** Jesus in this life. In order to be **with** Jesus now, we must be buried **with** Jesus in baptism. There is nothing difficult about understanding this point.

b. One is buried in order to be resurrected to walk in newness of life. There is no resurrection to newness of life if there is no burial. Through burial and resurrection one comes into a saving relationship **with** Jesus. Therefore, baptism is necessary in order to receive all spiritual blessings that are “in Christ.” Enjoying the benefit of all spiritual blessings is the beginning of walking the gospel in one’s life. Through immersion in water one is brought into Christ, wherein are all spiritual blessings in which one walks the gospel.

In order for one to connect with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, he or she must be immersed in water for the remission of sins. This is what Paul was reminding the Christians in Rome. They were immersed and resurrected with Christ. It is possible that they did not understand all the implications of their immersion at the time they were immersed. In the context of Romans 6, they certainly did not understand the fullness of their walk in the gospel. For this reason, therefore, Paul wrote at the beginning of the Romans letter that he sought to go to them in order to produce gospel fruit in their lives. He wrote, “*So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome*” (Rm 1:15). It was this gospel that would continually empower their lives (Rm 1:16).

We must keep in mind that Romans 6:1-6 was written to those who had already been immersed. Paul was reminding them of what happened in the spiritual realm at the time of their immersion. He was also laying the foundation for the arguments that he presented in the entire context of Romans 6. He was not arguing that they needed to be rebaptized because they did not fully understand all the implications of their immersion when they were immersed in the past. They were immersed for the right reasons, but they did not fully comprehend the entire journey of obeying the gospel in order to come into Christ. They

did not fully understand that living the gospel meant putting away all unrighteousness.

3. *Being like Jesus:* In Romans 6:5 Paul restated what he said in the previous verse. *“For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection.”*

a. Paul repeated in verse 5 the concepts and actions of verse 4 in order that this very important point not be missed or misunderstood.

b. One is united together with Jesus in the likeness of His death in order to be in the likeness of His resurrection. In verse 4 one is immersed **with** Christ. In this answer to the question of verse 5, one is “united together” with Christ. The thought is the same as verse 4, but the way Paul expressed it is different.

c. The conclusion to one’s immersion, therefore, is that one obeys the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus by immersion in and resurrection from a grave of water. By the event of immersion in one’s life, he or she obeys the event of the gospel. One “obeys the gospel” by being immersed (buried) in water and resurrected out of water in order to walk in newness of life. Obedience to reenact the event of the gospel connects one with the atoning blood of the cross. And in this connection, sins are washed away (At 2:38; 22:16). One is once again reconciled to God. He is born again and brought into fellowship with his or her Creator (Jn 3:6,7). This is why Jesus said, *“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God”* (Jn 3:5).

Paul has now answered the second question that was posed by his statement in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. The first question was “What is the gospel?” This question was answered by 1 Corinthians 15:1-4. The second question was, “How can one obey the gospel?” This question is answered by Romans 6:3-5. The impact on one’s heart of this truth is life changing. When one first considers that baptism is a con-

nection with the gospel of grace that was revealed through the cross and resurrection of Jesus, it should change one's life in a positive way. When one learns that in order to escape the coming destruction that is revealed in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9, the response should be that which was expressed by the Ethiopian eunuch. He was not asked to be baptized. He took the initiative to be baptized as soon as he found water (See At 8:36). This is the natural response of those who truly understand the gospel. They do not have to be asked to obey the gospel. They are moved by the gospel as to when and where they can be baptized in obedience to the gospel.

Before one is immersed, the thought of verse 6 must be clearly understood. There is a cost that must be paid because Jesus paid a price for us. A decision to sacrifice must be made before one can go to the grave with Jesus. Becoming a disciple of Jesus calls on both sacrifice and service. Old sinful habits must be sacrificed, and living for Jesus must become a part of one's daily walk in response to the gospel. Paul explains this decision clearly in verse 6.

4. A reminder: Romans 6:6: *“Knowing this,”* Paul continued, *“that our old man was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, that we should no longer be bondservants to sin.”*

a. Here again the concept of “with” Jesus is repeated. Before one is buried with Jesus, he or she must first be crucified **with** Jesus (See also Gl 2:20; Cl 2:20; 3:1-3). To be crucified with Christ means to give one's life in response to the gospel. Such is repentance, a turning from the way of the world and turning to a life continually being driven by the power of the gospel (Read also Rm 6:7-23). Emphasizing this point lays the foundation for the concept of the next chart. Before one can go to the grave with Jesus, he or she must first count the cost of the cross. Jesus said, *“If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me”* (Lk 9:23).

b. The “body of sin” in verse 6 is our old way of life that must be discarded in order to walk a gospel-obedient life with Jesus. Instead

of using our body to commit sin, the crucified believer must use it to the glory of God. In order to reaffirm these concepts, consider the following key study passages that must be read in reference to one's obedience to the gospel: **Repentance** (Lk 13:3; At 2:38; 3:19; 17:30,31; 2 Pt 3:9), **baptism** (Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:16; Jn 3:3-5; At 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pt 3:21), **examples of baptism** (At 2:41-47; 8:26-40; 9:17,18; 10:34-48; 16:13-15; 18:8; 19:1-5).

The last chart of this presentation of the gospel seeks to call on a commitment to discipleship in response to the gospel. We have found that the term "Christian" has been misused so much in the religious world that people do not attach the concept of commitment to being a Christian. Some often refer to people as "Christian," but see no commitment of living the gospel attached to being a Christian. On the other hand, the term "disciple" calls for action in the life of the one who would seek to follow Jesus. We are Christians. But we are Christians who are disciples of action. It is for this reason that this last chart is a call for committed discipleship on the part of the one who wants to obey the gospel.

Discovery 10

COMMITMENT TO THE GOSPEL

A. Objectives of chart 9:

- To teach that one must be willing to sacrifice all that is necessary in this life in order to obey the gospel and be a disciple of Jesus.
- To teach that no human relationship of this life must come between Jesus and His commitment to follow Jesus.

B. Presentation instructions for gospel teachers:

COUNT THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP!

Luke 14:25-35

Verse 26:	Are you willing to put Jesus before all personal relationships on earth?	YES	NO
Verse 27:	Are you willing to bear the suffering of Jesus in your life as a disciple?	YES	NO
Verse 33:	Are you willing to make all necessary sacrifices for Jesus?	YES	NO

1 Peter 4:17: What Will Be Your End?

Chart 9

1. Cost counting: Luke 14:25-35 is a key text in reference to what Jesus requires of those who would be His disciples. The following are some of the key points that Jesus emphasized in reference to being one of His disciples:

- a. In verse 26 Jesus emphasized the fact that relationships of

this world should not separate one from the eternal life that one has as a disciple: Jesus said, *“If anyone comes to Me and **does not hate** his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”* In reference to this statement of Jesus, everyone who hears the gospel must ask the question **“Am I willing to put Jesus before all personal relationships on earth?”** If one truly understands the incarnational offering of Jesus for our sins, then one’s answer to the question must be “Yes.”

In this statement of Jesus it is often difficult for people to understand what is meant by the word “hate.” Matthew recorded a similar statement of Jesus that may have been made on a different occasion: *“**He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me**”* (Mt 10:37).

The use of the word “hate” in Luke’s account means to love one’s father or mother on earth less than loving Jesus. **A disciple must be willing to put Jesus first before all human relationships**, even his relationship with his or her own father or mother. If one is not willing to do this, then Jesus said, *“He cannot be My disciple”* (Lk 14:26).

b. In verse 27 Jesus turned to one’s personal commitment. *“And whoever does not bear his own cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.”* The following question must be asked and answered: **“Am I willing to bear the suffering of Jesus in my life?”** One’s answer must be “Yes” if he or she would commit to obeying the gospel.

c. In Luke 14:28-32 Jesus calls on us to “count the cost” of discipleship, and then consider the consequences of making Jesus one’s enemy.

Verses 28-30 emphasize the fact that one must first count the cost of discipleship before obeying the gospel. Emphasis is on taking the initiative to build. When one understands the simplicity of the gospel, he or she is often too quick to rush to the waters of immersion in order to start building a tower. It is great to take the initiative. However, if one fails to complete the building, it is as Peter wrote, *“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and*

overcome, ***the latter end is worse for them than the beginning***” (2 Pt 2:20).

Luke 14:31,32 emphasize the fact that one must sit down and consider whether he or she is able to stand against Jesus if he or she does not take the initiative to obey the gospel.

Imagine for a moment if we would make Jesus our enemy. As the enemy of Jesus, we would eventually suffer the fate of what Paul stated in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. **There is only destruction to come for the one who would seek to make war against God.** It is for this reason that one must sit down and take counsel. If one comes to the right conclusion that he or she cannot win the war against God, then it is time to seek conditions for peace. We must remember that it is God who determines the conditions for peace, not us. Obedience to the gospel is God’s condition for peace with God.

d. In Luke 14:33 Jesus emphasized the necessity for sacrifice in response to the incarnational sacrifice that Jesus made for us. Therefore, we must ask ourselves, **“Are we willing to make all necessary sacrifices for Jesus?”** One’s answer must be “Yes.” It is not that we will have to make the extreme sacrifice that Jesus made to come into the flesh of man (Jn 1:14). However, if there is no sacrifice in our lives, there is no spiritual growth. For example, when one becomes a disciple of Jesus, his or her standard of living usually comes down. Before one is a disciple, all the money that one had was often consumed upon one’s own lusts. However, after becoming a disciple one uses what he or she has for the purpose of serving others. We no longer consume everything upon our own lusts. Living the gospel life is a life of self-sacrifice (See Rm 12:1,2).

e. In Luke 14:33,34 Jesus wanted us to know that if we are not willing to make all necessary sacrifices in order to be a disciple, then we are of no use for His purpose. The uncommitted life without sacrifice is as salt that has no saltiness. It has no preservative power. It is thus cast out because it is worthless. The uncommitted disciple that is not willing to maintain commitment to Jesus is lukewarm, and thus spewed out by Jesus (Rv 3:15,16).

The concept of discipleship that Jesus emphasized in the context

of Luke 14:25-35 is very important. Before one makes a decision to obey the gospel, the following are some points that one should first consider:

(1) For many years after the establishment of the church in Acts 2, those who had obeyed the gospel were referred to as the disciples of Jesus. It was not until the gospel was preached and obeyed in Antioch that the disciples were referred to as Christians. Luke recorded, *“And it came to pass for a whole year that they assembled with the church and taught many people. **And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch**”* (At 11:26). The disciples were not called Christians by Christians. They were called Christians by those who were making derogatory remarks about the beliefs of the disciples. The unbelievers thus referred to the disciples as Christians. They were called Christians about ten years after the establishment of the church in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30.

It is interesting to note that the word “Christian” is used only three times in the New Testament to refer to the people of God (At 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pt 4:16). However, the term “disciple” is used over two hundred times in reference to God’s people. The point is that one must be a disciple in order to be a Christian (Mt 28:19). One is not a Christian in order to be a disciple.

The generic term “disciple” refers to one who is an apprentice. An apprentice is one who has committed himself or herself to follow the instructions of his or her teacher. In order to be a successful apprentice, the student must be willing to leave his own life in order to cleave to his teacher. This point was illustrated in the early part of the ministry of Jesus when He called His first disciples. In Mark 1:16-18 Jesus called Simon (Peter) and Andrew to discipleship. Jesus said to them, *“**Follow Me** and I will make you become fishers of men.’ And immediately they left their nets and followed Him.”* Becoming a disciple of Jesus means leaving something and following someone. It means seeking. Simon and Andrew immediately left their nets to follow Jesus in order to become fishers of men. They were given a new destiny when they became disciples of Jesus. Though one does not have to leave his

vocational means of support as Simon and Andrew who were called into apostleship, something or someone usually has to be left in order to accomplish one's new purpose in life, that is, to be a fisher of men. Those who count the cost of discipleship, therefore, must seriously consider leaving something, and if necessary someone, in order to accomplish the task of being a fisher of men.

In the context of Luke 9:23-26 Jesus emphasized the extent to which discipleship would cost those who decided to build with Him. *"If anyone will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me"* (Lk 9:23). Discipleship includes denial of self and sacrifice on a cross. In order to be crucified with Jesus (Rm 6:6), one must bear a cross. In the context of the first century disciples who committed themselves to follow Jesus, the cross often meant death. In other words, they had to decide to go to death for Jesus if that was what discipleship meant. Such was expressed in the words of John in Revelation 2:10. *"Be faithful unto death and I will give you the crown of life."*

If one seeks to save his life through an uncommitted life, he or she will lose his or her eternal life in the destruction of hell (Mt 10:28; Lk 9:24). In the statement of Luke 9:25, Jesus wanted us to know that all the possessions of the world are not worth one's eternal salvation. Therefore, He concluded by saying, *"For whoever will be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when He comes in His own glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels"* (Lk 9:26). A disciple cannot be ashamed of Jesus. He cannot be ashamed of the death of Jesus on a cross (Rm 1:16). Ashamed Christians do not assume their responsibility of being fishers for men. If one is ashamed of sharing the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (the gospel), then he is not worthy of the confession of Jesus before God and the holy angels.

The cost of boldly standing as a fisher of men before the world was also illustrated by the desires of a certain lawyer in Luke 10:25-28. The lawyer asked Jesus, *"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"* (Lk 10:25). This question presented the occasion for introducing the parable of the good Samaritan. After the priest and Levite had passed by

the one who had been beaten and robbed, the Samaritan took action. He defined and answered the question of the lawyer, “*Who is my neighbor?*” (Lk 10:29). For the disciple of Jesus, our neighbor is everyone who is in need, even complete strangers. Discipleship demands doing good to our neighbors (Gl 6:10).

From Jesus’ teaching and example of discipleship, we can understand why His final words on earth urged His disciples to make disciples. “*Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*” (Mt 28:19). As His disciples, we are to go and make disciples of others. Once an unbeliever makes a decision to become a disciple of Jesus after counting the cost, then this person is ready to obey the gospel for the remission of his sins (At 2:38).

(2) If any of the previous three questions of chart 9 are answered with “No,” then one must consider **1 Peter 4:17**: “*For the time has come that judgment begin at the house of God. And if it first begins with us, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?*”

1 Peter 4:17 is a question. Peter assumed that we, the Christian readers, would give the correct answer. And the correct answer to his question is that there is no hope for those who do not obey the gospel by immersion in water for the remission of sins. Those who do not obey the gospel have no hope of salvation. Peter was saying that if only by the grace of God the judgment of death is waved from those who are in a covenant relationship with God (the house of God), then those who are outside this covenant are doomed to eternal destruction from the presence of God. It is imperative, therefore, that one come into the house of God through obedience to the gospel.

OUR GOSPEL NATURE

Evangelism is not a program that Christians do. It is a way of life of the true disciple of Jesus who seeks to live the gospel that he or she obeyed. True disciples of Jesus must speak the things that they have heard and learned. When the Jewish council commanded Peter and John not to speak in the name of Jesus, they replied, "*Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you more than to God, you judge. **For we cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard***" (At 4:19,20). This is the way it is with disciples who seek to live the gospel.

We cannot box the evangelistic nature of a Christian into a program. The sign of a true Christian is that he or she is using every God-given gift to reach others for Jesus. Christians realize that they have the gift of eternal life. They realize that they have the key message to bring others into eternal life. And because they are confident of their own salvation by the grace of God, they seek to give others a piece of the eternal pie.

It would be unnatural and selfish for a Christian not to speak about his gospel gift of eternal salvation. One must speak about that which is most precious in his or her life. It is for this reason that Christians must speak those things that they know. And because they know the gospel, it is imperative that they speak and live the gospel.

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 Book 24: *Authentic Church*
 Book 25: *The Existence Of God*
 Book 26: *The Bible And Science*
 Book 27: *The Bible And Faith*
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 Book 32: *Making Disciples In A Global Community*
 Book 33: *21st Century Restoration*
 Book 34: *Restoration!*
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 Book 36: *Worship Freely*
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 Book 38: *The Christ-Centered Faith*
 Book 39: *The Lord's Supper*
 Book 40: *Fundamental Messages*
 Book 41: *Obedience To The Gospel*
 Book 42: *The Music Of The Church*
 Book 43: *Exercising Sobriety And Self-Control*
 Book 44: *Experiential Religion Versus Word-Based Faith*
 Book 45: *Grace Response Versus Tithing By Law*
 Book 46: *The Religious Sectarian*
 Book 47: *Fellowship And Unity Of The Organic Body*
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 Book 51: *Our Faith – Our Salvation*
 Book 52: *His Grace – Our Faith*
 Book 53: *The Living Sacrifice*
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 Book 55: *Organic Function Of The Body Of Christ*
 Book 56: *The World As It Is*
 Book 57: *The Godly Giver*
 Book 58: *Thirsting For Word From God*
 Book 59: *Following Jesus Into Glory*
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ABBREVIATIONS

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**