

EVANGELICAL BIBLE COLLEGE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE LORD'S CHALLENGE TO FACE THE REALITIES OF OUR BRIEF TIME HERE

by

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**(The Lord faces tough topics – speaking
directly about hypocrisy in giving, sexual
relationships, and lies about eternity and
Hell itself.)**

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TOPICS MOST CHURCHES WILL AVOID

What are the topics that many ministers will avoid in their search for the next three-point sermon series? Money, Sex, and Hell are at the top of the “avoidance-list” of too many. Yet as we recently have been advancing through the study of the Harmony of the Gospels, we were all struck by how often our Lord spoke of all these things. Check the lectures on the Harmony of the Gospels on www.orakeibaptist.org.nz

As you know, at EBCWA, we do not believe in “Three-Point sermon series” on anything, because we believe that systematic verse by verse teaching through the books of the Bible is the key to building understanding of everything, and the “topical series” approach robs the church members of the truths that the Holy Spirit will always allow to emerge if we just open the Word and teach it verse by verse.

So, this present study is not a shift in our philosophy. We will not start a topical series of books on the many topics within the Bible Topic Book, for in that book (BTB) the topics people desire to know about are all covered. That book is the source for understanding of most topics by systematic bible study of all the doctrines covered there. It was especially the satanic team’s attacks on the biblical teaching on these three subjects that led me to write this. As the pressures of life have built around me with my house move imminent, the Holy Spirit moved me to look at these things deeply. Why is it that the focus of evil is so directed to these three topics?

This short book emerging from the “Harmony” studies is simply sent out as an example of just how important our Lord considered these things, and how straight forward the understanding of these topics is, if only we will simply teach systematically, especially teach the Harmony of the Gospels regularly in our churches. We need to hear our Lord’s words on all the topics of daily life, and HE teaches all thing very directly – so let us be challenged as we see the enemy’s focus upon these things today.

1. Money and Giving. The two topics are related, simply because money is given to us from gifts, legacies and the daily grind of work, so that we might give/assign it to useful service during our brief pilgrim journey through space-time. Money/giving are only for space-time. There is no money in heaven, nor any in hell. Satan delights in distracting us with what money can buy, rather than asking what the money received can “do” for the Lord’s Kingdom.
2. Sexual expression of love within faithful and godly Biblical Marriage is a topic also that is restricted to our pilgrim journey through space-time. Sadly, very few find the joy of sexual love with one faithful and loving partner because they have been robbed of that reality by the sinfulness of others, or their own casual attitude towards what is meant to be very special. Satan’s distractions are always designed with robbery at their core. Sex is a major concentration of the enemy, and we see this expanding to the point of obsession for so many today, but robbery of real joy is always Satan’s objective, and the jadedness of the sex-obsessed creates a bitterness and evil heart that truly gives them a glimpse of hell before they fall forever into it.
3. Hell itself is the waiting place for the lost before the “Great White Throne” Judgment described in **Revelation 20:11-15**. Jesus most powerfully shocking stories relate to Hell

as the destination of the lost, (especially **Luke 16:19-31**) and they are always quietly and deeply arresting of the attention of the crowds he spoke to. The shock-factor is significant in these words of the Lord because they challenge the expectation of the crowds, who all expected religious people to get an automatic acceptance for heaven, and are shocked to hear Jesus tell them, this is not the case.

Satan wants all women and men distracted from the eternal realities of each of these three topics. So let us be careful, prayerful and systematic in our study and truly hear the Lord's words and then the apostles teaching building on the Lord's messages.

Life is truly "too short" to get these three topics wrong. From this brief study let us then return to simply hearing the Lord and the Apostles as they walk through the books the Holy Spirit has ensured we have before us for our spiritual life now.

THE THREE TOUGH TOPICS

General Introduction - Systematic Theology

Let us remember that the problems we can have with "things", be it pride, anxiety or lust based, stems back to the Garden of Eden. We must remember that decisions on our values are critical for our future direction in life, as every minor object we focus on can have us off course in life. Distraction from the task the Lord requires of us will always delay obedience at best or have us seriously chasing a lust that will disable us over time. Understanding our parent's fall can help us focus daily and achieve what we are here for.

ADAM – THE FALL

1. SCRIPTURE - Genesis 2:19 - 5:5.

2. BIOGRAPHY

Adam ("red earth"), the first man, was created in the image of God. As the first man, he was created on the sixth day out of the earth from which he received his name. He was placed in the Garden of Eden where food was provided for him without heavy toil. He named all the animals. Finding no companionship in the animal kingdom God formed woman out of a rib of Adam. They lived for an indeterminate period in innocence in the garden where there was only one test of their free will - the tree of the knowledge of 'good and evil'. Eventually the woman, beguiled by the devil utilizing the serpent, ate of the fruit of the tree. Adam, having to choose between God and the woman, chose the fallen woman causing sin to enter into mankind. Adam, the woman and the serpent were all judged with penalties being applied to them all.

3. EVALUATION: Genesis 3:1-21.

- a) Satan indwells a beautiful serpent (3:1).
- b) He attempts to show that God is unfair (3:1) and somehow "mean" by His law.
- c) The woman is confused and misconstrues the command of God (3:2-3).
- d) Satan lies to the woman (3:4) and she doesn't check this out with her man.

- e) Satan appeals to the woman's pride (3:5) and separates the couple from fellowship and the communication that would have given them both the opportunity to approach God for a discussion of the issue before the sin or disobedience occurred. **James 1:2-8.**
- f) The woman sins, and having tempted Adam, he disobeys God also. (3:6-7).
- g) Their nakedness immediately becomes apparent, and they attempt to cover it with fig leaf clothes (3:7). They use “human works” to cover sin and avoid divine judgment.
- h) They attempt to hide from God (3:8).
- i) God makes the first approach of seeking out fallen man (3:9-10).
- j) Man and woman each try to blame others for their sin (3:11-13).
- k) The serpent is judged (3:14).
- l) The first gospel message is given (3:15).
- m) The woman's penalty (3:16).
- n) The man's penalty (3:17-19).
- o) The man is told he will eventually die (3:19).
- p) God provides man with a coat of skins (3:21), the blood shed of an animal they had both known and may have spoken to.

4. PRINCIPLES

- a) Satan can use many devices to deceive man (Genesis 3:1, Revelation 20:7-10) but doubting God's Word is a central trick he uses.
- b) Knowledge of the Bible is essential to combat the wiles of the devil.
- c) Lies and pride are two of the greatest sins (Proverbs 6:16-19), and they are broken by good pastoral care and counsel and solid prayer life based in the Word.
- d) Other believers who are out of fellowship can cause us to fall into sin (1 Corinthians 5:6).
- e) Human good (using our own works - fig leaves - to cover up sins, Psalm 66:18, Isaiah 64:6) is not acceptable to God. The appearance of respectability does not necessarily reflect fellowship with God (Matthew 7:21-23), for God looks to the heart that loves and obeys Him.
- f) God always seeks out those who are lost (Luke 19:10).
- g) Sinful man will blame others or his environment for his condition rather than face his sin (1 Kings 18:17-18).
- h) God always provides grace before judgement (Romans 6:14).
- i) The gospel message is given. Salvation is for mankind, not for the demons or Satan, for they have made their decisions before space-time and are locked into them, as those in hell are. (Psalm 49:12; Revelation 20:10).
- j) The penalties on individuals are tailored for the individual. The woman who tried to rule over the man is herself ruled over (Proverbs 24:12).
- k) God provides a blood sacrifice to provide clothes of skin. Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22).

CHRISTIAN LIFE – GRACE GIFTS GIVEN AT SALVATION

Listed below are the 34 things God provides for every believer at the point of salvation. These are our “divine operating assets” and may all be claimed and utilized to stand against all falsehood and temptation to stray from the pilgrim path.

1. In the eternal plan of God. (Sharing the destiny of Christ – we have an eternal position now)

- a) Foreknown (Acts 2:23, Romans 8:29, 1 Peter 1:2)
- b) Elect (Romans 8:33, Colossians 3:12, 1 Thessalonians 1:4, Titus 1:1)
- c) Predestined (Romans 8:29, 30, Ephesians 1:5, 11)
- d) Chosen (Matthew 22:14, 1 Peter 2:4)
- e) Called (1 Thessalonians 5:24)

2. We are Reconciled by God's work to fellowship with God.

- a) By God (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19, Colossians 1:20)
- b) To God. (Romans 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:20, Ephesians 2:14-17)

3. We are Redeemed – the price was paid (Romans 3:24, Colossians 1:14, 1 Peter 1:18)

4. Condemnation is eternally removed. (John 3:18, 5:24, Romans 8:1)

5. Under Grace instead of judgement; God is satisfied with the death of His Son. (Romans 3:24-26, 1 John 2:2)

6. All sins judged by the death of Christ. (Romans 4:25, Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 2:24)

7. Dead to old life - alive to God.

- a) Crucified with Christ. (Romans 6:6, Galatians 2:20)
- b) Dead with Christ. (Romans 6:8, Colossians 3:3, 1 Peter 2:24)
- c) Buried with him. (Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12)
- d) Raised with Christ. (Romans 6:4, Colossians 3:1)

8. Free from the law.

- a) Dead. (Romans 7:4)
- b) Delivered. (Romans 6:14, 7:6, 2 Corinthians 3:11, Galatians 3:25)

9. Regenerated. (John 13:10, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Titus 3:5)

- a) Born again. (John 3:7, 1 Peter 1:23)
- b) Children of God. (Galatians 3:26)
- c) Sons of God. (John 1:12, 2 Corinthians 6:18, 1 John 3:2)
- d) A new creation. (2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Ephesians 2:10)

10. Adopted into the family of heaven with full rights that are eternal. (Romans 8:15, 8:23 (future) Ephesians 1:5)

11. Acceptable to God. (Ephesians 1:6, 1 Peter 2:5)

- a) Made righteous (Romans 3:22, 1 Corinthians 1:30, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Philippians 3:9)
- b) Sanctified positionally. (1 Corinthians 1:30, 6:11)
- c) Perfected forever. (Hebrews 10:14)
- d) Made meet (qualified) (Colossians 1:12)

12. Justified (declared righteous). (Romans 3:24, 5:1, 5:9, 8:30, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Titus 3:7)

13. Forgiven all trespasses. (Ephesians 1:7, 4:32, Colossians 1:14, 2:13, 3:13)
14. Made nigh. (Heavenly citizenship based on reconciliation) (Luke 10:20, Ephesians 2:13, 19)
15. Delivered from the kingdom of Satan. (Colossians 1:13, 2:15)
16. Transferred into God's kingdom. (Colossians 1:13)
17. On a secure foundation. (1 Corinthians 3:11, 10:4, Ephesians 2:20)
18. A gift from God the Father to Christ. (John 10:29, 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 12, 24)
19. Delivered from the power of the sin nature. (Romans 2:29, Colossians 2:11)
20. Appointed priests unto God.
 - a) Holy priesthood. (1 Peter 2:5)
 - b) Royal priesthood. (1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6)
21. Under the care of God as a chosen generation and a peculiar people. (Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 2:9)
22. Given access to God. (Romans 5:2, Ephesians 2:18, Hebrews 4:14, 16, 10:19, 20)
23. Within the "much more" care of God. (Romans 5:9, 10)
 - a) Objects of His love. (Ephesians 2:4, 5:2)
 - b) Objects of His grace.
 - i) For salvation. (Ephesians 2:8, 9)
 - ii) For keeping. (1 Peter 1:5)
 - iii) For service (John 17:18)
 - iv) For instruction (Titus 2:12)
 - c) Objects of His power. (Ephesians 1:19, Philippians 2:13)
 - d) Objects of His faithfulness. (Philippians 1:6, Hebrews 13:5,6)
 - e) Objects of His peace. (John 14:27)
 - f) Objects of His consolation. (2 Thessalonians 2:16)
 - g) Objects of His intercession. (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25)
24. God's inheritance (Possession). (Ephesians 1:18)
25. Beneficiaries of an inheritance as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. (Romans 8:17, Ephesians 1:14 Colossians 3:24, Hebrews 9:15, 1 Peter 1:4)
26. A new position. (Ephesians 2:6)
 - a) Partners with Christ in life. (Colossians 3:4)
 - b) Partners with Christ in service. (1 Corinthians 1:9)
 - c) Workers together with God. (1 Corinthians 3:9, 2 Corinthians 6:1)
 - d) Ministers of the New Testament. (2 Corinthians 3:6)
 - e) Ambassadors. (2 Corinthians 5:20)

- f) Living epistles. (2 Corinthians 3:3)
- g) Ministers of God. (2 Corinthians 6:4)

27. Recipients of eternal life. (John 3:15, 10:28, 20:31, 1 John 5:11, 12)

28. Members of the family and household of God. (Galatians 6:10, Ephesians 2:19)

29. Light in the Lord. (Ephesians 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:4)

30. United to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

a) In God. (1 Thessalonians 1:1) of "God in you" (Ephesians 4:6)

b) In Christ. (John 14:20 of "Christ in you" Colossians 1:27)

i) A member in His body. (1 Corinthians 12:13)

ii) A branch in the vine. (John 15:5)

iii) A stone in the building. (Ephesians 2:21, 22, 1 Peter 2:5)

iv) A sheep in the flock. (John 10:27-29)

v) A part of His bride. (Ephesians 5:25)

vi) A priest of the kingdom of priests. (1 Peter 2:9)

vii) A saint of the "new species". (2 Corinthians 5:17)

c) In the Spirit. (Romans 8:9) of "the Spirit in you"

31. Recipients of the ministries of the Holy Spirit.

a) Born of the Spirit. (John 3:6)

b) Baptised with the Spirit. (Acts 1:5, 1 Corinthians 12:13)

c) Indwelt by the Spirit. (John 7:39, Romans 5:5, 8:9, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19, Galatians 4:6, 1 John 3:24)

d) Sealed by the Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 4:30)

e) Given spiritual gifts. (1 Corinthians 12:11, 27-31, 13:1, 2)

32. Glorified. (Romans 8:30)

33. Complete in Him. (Colossians 2:10)

34. Possessors of every spiritual blessing provided in eternity past. (Ephesians 1:3)

To live in accordance with the standards that these things signify is to live intelligently in terms of our eternal position in Christ Jesus. Most testing circumstances we will ever face are resolved and actually disappear when we go through this list of "assets" and utilize them in praise and prayer moment by moment through the battles of the day. **Isaiah 61:3.**

CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIFTS: SPIRITUAL GIFTS

1. There are three general passages which list spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:11, 1 Corinthians 12:28-30, Romans 12:3-8).

2. The purpose of spiritual gifts is to serve and build up the church (Ephesians 4:8-13), to bless all in the church and bring glory to the Lord. They are not for personal pleasure or entertainment.
3. The gifts are given by the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation according to the eternal plan of God to meet all the needs of every local church, and the gifts become clear as we grow spiritually (1 Corinthians 12).
4. Some gifts were temporary (1 Corinthians 13:8-10) and others permanent (1 Corinthians 12:28 cf. 1 Corinthians 13:8).
5. A temporary gift was one used before the canon of scripture was completed. The purpose of temporary gifts was to function in the place of a completed canon of scripture. (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). Gifts will be guided by the Holy Spirit as to their use in each local context, and only Holy Spirit filled believers will be able to exercise the gifts to God's glory.
6. The operation of a spiritual gift depends entirely on the Filling of the Holy Spirit to be effective (Acts 2:4) and where they are present the church will grow and be powerful. The exercise of the gifts will be accompanied by the fruit of the Spirit in the life of the servants exercising their gifting.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – FRUIT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. The filling of the Holy Spirit produces fruit in the life (love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance). (**Galatians 5:22-23**) Note that "fruit" is singular - all the characters are produced at the same time in the filling of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Fruit of the Spirit is also listed as follows:-
Romans 14:17 Righteousness, Peace, Joy
Colossians 3:12-15 Compassion, Kindness, Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Forgiveness, Love, Peace, Thankfulness
1Thessalonians 1:3 Faith, Love, Endurance, Hope
3. In principle, it is the imitation of God (Ephesians 5:1). The reason we are left on the earth after salvation is to produce fruit that people may see Christ in us. (John 15:16, Philippians 4:17)
4. We produce fruit by hearing the Word (Mark 4:20-28) and prayerfully applying it to our lives. (Hebrews 4:2)
5. Failure to grow and produce fruit is disobedience, and eventually means divine discipline, even to the point of the believer's early departure from this life. (Luke 13:6-9 John 15:2)

6. Rewards in eternity are distributed on the basis of faithful production of fruit through the pilgrim journey in space-time. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10)

7. Fruit is not to be confused with spiritual gifts. These are listed in (Romans 12:6-8; 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 12:8,10; 1 Corinthians 12:28-30; Ephesians 4:1) and other places.

8. One can know Christians by their fruit (Matthew 7:16-20; Luke 6:43-45; 1 John 3:10 & 11; John 15:8) especially by their love (John 13:35) but not by their gifts, as Satan can imitate them (2 Thessalonians 2:9). Genuine use of real spiritual gifts will always produce fruit.

9. Three natural fruits represent some of the facets of the fruit of the Spirit: Apples - love, Grapes - Joy, Pomegranates - Peace.

10. In **Galatians 5: 22-23** the fruit of the Spirit is divided into three sections

[a] Love, Joy and Peace towards God;

[b] Patience, Goodness and Kindness towards others;

[c] Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control towards oneself.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MENTAL ATTITUDE

1. Definition: Attitude or Mental attitude is the state of mind where the mind is set on a course of action on the basis of the whole function and thinking of the soul.

2. Every believer faces the inner conflict of divine versus human viewpoint as we face decisions relating to testing and temptations. These two attitudes are at war in humanity in human history from the time of the fall. (Isaiah 55:7-9). In our topic here in this book, our attitude towards money, sex and death is the “arena” of conflict in the angelic conflict.

3. We are commanded to have divine viewpoint in our souls on each topic, not the viewpoint of Satan (“worldliness”, “mammon” or “carnality”). 2 Corinthians 1:7, 10:5. (Via Doctrine in the Soul)

4. Attitude determines both the life and character of a person - what you think is what you are over time (Proverbs 23:7). Our constant decisions wear a track through life and make us more or less what God wants.

5. As Christians we are commanded to have our thinking in tune with the mind of Christ. God's plan for our lives calls for a new attitude in our souls, a new viewpoint, without any human viewpoint or mental attitude sins (1 Corinthians 2:16, 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 Romans 12:2, Philippians 2:5, 2 Timothy 1:7).

6. Fellowship within a church is based on believers all being in tune with what the Bible teaches. Philippians 2:2.
7. Knowledge of the Bible (the mind of Christ, 1 Corinthians 2:16) and control by the Holy Spirit renews the mind of the believer, giving divine viewpoint. (Romans 12:2)
8. The right mental attitude produces joy (Philippians 2:2), confidence (2 Corinthians 5:1,6,8), stability (Isaiah 26:3-4, Philippians 4:7, 2 Thessalonians 2:2), true giving (2 Corinthians 9:7), love (1 Corinthians 13:5).
9. Human viewpoint is called worldliness. (Romans 12:2, Colossians 3:2).
10. Evil is what you think as you are following Satan's policy. Matthew 9:4, Galatians 6:3. Mental attitude sins produce self-induced misery. (Proverbs 15:13).
11. Without clear thinking there is conflict in the mind of the believer. Isaiah 55:6-9, James 1:7-8.
12. True stability of Character comes only this way. Philippians 4:7, 2 Thessalonians 2:2.
13. Giving is a mental attitude. 2 Corinthians 9:7. Love is a mental attitude. 1 Corinthians 13: Deuteronomy 6:5,10:12.
14. Worldliness/Carnality is a mental attitude: It is all non-grace thinking i.e. Anti Gods Plan, Colossians 3:2.
15. Confidence in service and living generally flows from having "Divine Viewpoint" which has other advantages such as

[a] Stability in life - James 1:8

[b] Prosperity of soul - Philippians 4:7

[c] Giving to the Lord - 2 Corinthians 9:7

[d] Spiritual rather than worldly - Romans 12:2, Colossians 3:2

[e] Purity rather than evil - Matthew 9:4

[f] No arrogance - Galatians 6:1-5.

[g] Inner beauty - 1 Timothy 2:9,10,15.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MATURITY

Categories of Believers

1. Standpoint of Spirituality:

a) Spiritual believer - the Holy Spirit controls the inside of the believer (Romans 8:6b).

b) Carnal believer - the sinful nature controls the inside of the believer (Romans 8:6a).

2. Standpoint of Growth:

- a) Baby - one who has just received Christ as Saviour.
- b) Adolescent - one who has learned some doctrine but is not yet in the application state.
- c) Mature - one who knows and applies doctrine and spends a maximum amount of time in the filling of the Holy Spirit.

3. Relationship of Maturity and Spirituality:

- a) Spirituality is an absolute. The Holy Spirit either controls or He does not. One cannot be a little bit carnal. If he is carnal he is NOT spiritual.
- b) Maturity is speeded up by spirituality, but a baby believer can be either carnal or spiritual, and a mature believer can be carnal or spiritual.

As we mature we get our decision-making more and more in accordance with biblical doctrines and so they are more godly and helpful for witness and life work for the Lord's glory. It is serious discernment that we need today as we face the enemy's deviousness and the total focus of modern media on the distortion of the biblical truths surrounding our three tough topics.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MATURITY – CROSS TO THE CROWN

1. Salvation is only the beginning of the plan for man. After salvation the believer's objective is to advance in stages of spiritual growth on the path from the Cross to the Crown.

2. At each stage the believer faces increasing intense tests that can only be passed by faith. Paul in Romans 1:17 says believers progress from faith to faith. The five Hebrew words for faith illustrate the five stages of growth described in the New Testament.

a) The Babe - 1 Peter 2:2 - AMEN - the leaning faith of Genesis 15:6

All believers enter the family of God as infants when they exercise faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. After the tremendous stress of birth, of coming from darkness into the light the infant's impulse is to nurse. The objective is nourishment but the baby also receives great comfort in feeding. God's objective for the spiritual infant is for growth, but He commences this with comfort. Not much is expected of a baby in his first few years; he cannot feed or change himself. Spiritual infants are just as helpless and need a great deal of nurturing, encouragement and patient encouragement and patient instruction.

b) The Adolescent - 1 John 2:13-14 - BATACH - the wrestling faith of Psalm 37:3

Adolescents are young, strong and eager believers. This is the stage where people have grown to the point at which they understand some of the principles of truth and are beginning to apply them to their lives. But like most adolescents, they have the growing pains of arrogance and rebellion against authority; they are sometimes too eager to act on their own, and this often gets them into trouble. They have knowledge which they mistake for wisdom, but they lack the experience. Their tendency is to want to apply the truth to other people's lives. Adolescents may be troublesome, but at least they are not apathetic. They must be patiently trained and

encouraged to channel their energies. No one makes it to maturity without passing through adolescence.

c) The Mature - Hebrews 5:14, 6:1 - CHASAH - the confident faith that takes refuge in the Lord - Psalm 57:1

The mature believer is able to take meat, the advance doctrine of the Word. A believer who has arrived at spiritual maturity knows enough about the Bible to take responsibility for his own life. He knows how to apply the Word of God to himself so rather than airing all his problems he knows how to solve them. He is not ready to take on every one else's problems but he can take control of his own life. He understands that God has a plan for his life and sets about fulfilling that plan. He gives himself to training and discipline, exercising himself and building spiritual muscle.

d) The Hero of Faith - Isaiah 53:12, Hebrews 11 - YACHAL - the healing faith of Job 13:15

Heroes of faith are men and women who have gone beyond maturity and have learned to fight the good fight. They have advanced beyond simply taking responsibility for their own lives to becoming responsible for the lives of other people. They are always willing to pick up fallen comrades, to treat their wounds, to encourage them and supply their needs. Heroes of the faith still make mistakes, they still fail but they always stand back up and go back into battle.

e) The Friend of God - James 2:23-25 - QAWAH - the enduring faith of Isaiah 40:31

The highest of all possible achievements in life is to become a friend of God. Every believer has the potential and the assets necessary to reach this point, but very few Christians do. It takes persistency and tenacity. The only people who make it this far are those who absolutely refuse to quit.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – MATURITY – SIGNS OF MATURITY (ROMANS 15:1-15)

1. Helping others (v 1-3) The mature believer should bear the infirmities of the weak (v 1; cf. Galatians 6:2). Paul includes himself as a believer of mature strength.

a) A mature believer is characterised by:

- i) Knowing doctrine.
- ii) Knowing promises.
- iii) Spending a maximum amount of time by the filling of the Holy Spirit.

b) A weak or immature believer may be:

- i) A new believer.
- ii) An ignorant believer who does not know the Word.

c) A mature believer bears the infirmities of the weak believer by:

- i) Giving information about the Word (doctrine, promises, procedures). This may be in private conversation.
- ii) Giving advice based on the Word.
- iii) Exercising grace; listening to and helping others with problems.

d) The mature believer is not to "please himself" (v 1,2):

i) He is not to feed his ego or brag about helping others. It should never be done for self-glory or self-stimulation, but for God's glory.

ii) Christ as the supreme example (v 3):

He did not please Himself; but as a man He received more pressure than we will ever have. The Old Testament says, "the reproaches of Israel ('them') that reproached the Father ('Thee') fell on the Son ('Me') on the cross." Paul quotes a Messianic Psalm (Psalm 69:9). Christ was under maximum pressure when He bore our sins on the cross.

2. Knowledge of the Word of God (v 4)

a) The Old Testament ("things written aforetime") was the only scripture existing at the time Romans was written. The canon is now completed.

b) the purpose of the Word:

i) Learning - doctrine God wants us to know.

ii) Patience - faith in the long distance race. Believing moment by moment.

iii) Comfort - in trials and difficulties of life.

iv) Hope - for the future. Believers know where they are going.

3. Attitudes (v 5-6)

Believers are to see others from the divine viewpoint and be "like-minded one toward another". Their one purpose in life, after salvation, is "with one mind and one mouth, glorify God" (v 6). This is only possible from the divine viewpoint.

i) We are all saved by grace. Christ died for us when we were His enemies (Romans 5:8).

ii) We all have the same spiritual privileges and responsibilities (except spiritual gifts).

iii) Every believer has a sinful nature but have different ways of expressing it.

iv) We all get spirituality the same way (filling of the Holy Spirit) and all grow the same way, by the Word.

v) God loves each believer with the same amount of love, whether we are in or out of temporal fellowship.

4. Fellowship as the basis of grace (v 7)

a) Believers are to receive one another as Christ received them.

b) He received them in GRACE to the glory of God.

5. Ability to distinguish between Israel and the Church (v 8-12)

a) Christ was a minister under the Law (v 8).

i) He was born, ministered, died, arose and ascended under the dispensation of the Law.

ii) Therefore all He said (except Matthew 16 and John 14-17) amplified the Mosaic Law, confirmed the four unconditional covenants to Israel and the future of Israel with Him as their King. Some principles He gave are re-stated in the Epistles as the Christian way of life.

b) Before the Law was given (v 9) the Abrahamic and Palestinian covenants promised blessing to the Jews, that the Gentiles may glorify God for His mercy.

c) Paul quotes (Psalm 18:49; Deuteronomy 32:43; Psalm 117; Isaiah 11:1-10). (Jesus Christ as the root of David and Jesse, is to reign over the Gentiles too.)

6. Faith that appropriates (v 13)

- a) The God of hope is to fill the believer with joy and peace in the sphere of believing. Faith is the means.
- b) Faith appropriates salvation, restoration to fellowship, filling of the Holy Spirit, doctrine, promises.

7. Knowing the operation of grace (v 14,15)

- a) A mature believer realises all he has is because of God's grace and he operates his life on the basis of grace.
- b) Grace is manifested in the believer in:
 - i) Salvation (Ephesians 2:8,9)
 - ii) Prayer (Hebrews 4:16)
 - iii) Suffering (2 Corinthians 12:9)
 - iv) Releasing power (2 Timothy 2:1)
 - v) Growth and stability (2 Peter 3:18)
 - vi) Restoration and fellowship (Hebrews 12:15; 1 John 1:9)
 - vii) Producing works (1 Corinthians 15:10; 2 Corinthians 6:1; 9:9)
 - viii) Christian way of life (2 Corinthians 1:12; Hebrews 12:28).

CHRISTIAN LIFE – OUR PILGRIM JOURNEY

1. A pilgrim is a sojourner in a strange place; a stranger in a foreign country.
2. The believer is a pilgrim in this world as our real home country is a heavenly one (John 15:19, Ephesians 2:19, 1 Peter 2:11).
3. This is illustrated in the lives of the patriarchs (Genesis 47:9; Exodus 6:4; Hebrews I I:8-10; 13 -16). They are incredible encouragers, as most don't "get it" until quite late in life. If ever we feel we are not measuring up we look at them and get encouragement.
4. When the people of Israel were living in the promised land they were, from a spiritual point of view, still pilgrims (Psalm 39:12; 119:54).
5. So too are Christians, even when living in peace and prosperity under a Christian government (Matthew 6:19-21; Luke 12:34).
6. The life of a Christian is a pilgrimage. This theme is worked out in great detail in John Bunyan's well-known allegory, "The Pilgrim's Progress".
7. Our heavenly home will not come gradually, nor will we enter it by our own efforts – its grace and God's provision all the way into eternity. The existing "space-time" universe system will be destroyed and replaced by God Himself (2 Peter 3:12-13; Revelation 3:12; 21:2,10). The best is yet to come, so as Peter notes, what sort of people ought we to be?

As we face the planned end of the present universe we ought to be quite different people to our pagan friends and neighbours, for we see that all that is visible will become “invisible” and will be replaced by something better, more amazing. In light of that what are our daily priorities?

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRIORITIES

1. The First Person - Jesus Christ has ultimate priority - Colossians 1:16-18. So, what does the Lord require of me today? That is our daily prayer.
2. The First Possessions - The kingdom of God, the greatest gift - Matthew 6:33. We have an eternal destiny with our Lord and all the saved of the ages, so let's get excited about that now.
3. The First Offering - the giving of oneself - 2 Corinthians 8:5. Nothing held back from God – as we say – “all in the pot” for Jesus' glory.
4. The First Denial - the denial of self - Matthew 7:5. We simply don't have the mental capacity to make intelligent plans for our lives.
5. The First Discipline - the discipline of prayer - 1 Timothy 2:1-4. Praying always, like breathing, “with the frequency of a hacking cough...”. Ephesians 6:18, 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
6. The First Commandment - to love God supremely - Matthew 22:37-38. Love is the fruit of the Holy Spirit towards both God and all our brethren.
7. The First Excuse - too busy to have time for God - Matthew 8:21-22. We recognize that being distracted is the enemy's tool to ruin our present and rob us of our eternal rewards. Colossians 2:18.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRIORITIES – CROSS - TAKING UP YOUR CROSS

1. Scripture – Matthew 10:38 **“And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.”** This was one of the topics of our last book on “The Fellowship of the Lord's Suffering”, for his command to us is clear – “Take up your Cross!”

2. What does it mean to take up your cross?

[a] This is the first reference to the cross in Matthew.

[b] This does not refer to the cross of Christ but to the Roman custom of crucifixion. The Romans crucified many thousands of Jews during their occupation of Judea.

[c] It was common practice for the person who was being crucified to carry his cross to the point of execution. The condemned person carrying his cross was seen to be in disgrace and viewed with contempt and rejected by bystanders.

[d] Carrying the cross therefore means placing Christ and His Word, which is the mind and heart of Christ [1 Corinthians 2:16] ahead of everything else in your life, even though this means contempt and derision from those around you. Ready to die in disgrace if required.

3. By going to the Cross Jesus Christ had his relationship with his family severed.

[a] By giving his mother Mary into the care of the Apostle John, who cared for her until her death many years later in Ephesus.

[b] He was also separated from His Father during the period of judgement of the sins of the world on the Cross, and John was finally also separated from his family and house, when he led the church out of Jerusalem in October of AD 66.

4. See Christian Life: Priorities – Hate your Father and Mother [below] for Matthew 10:37 – a parallel illustration.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – PRIORITIES – HATE YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER

SCRIPTURES

Luke 14:26. "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother and wife and children, and brethren and sisters yea and his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

Matthew 10:37. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."

2. Apparent problem in Luke - In order to be a disciple of Jesus Christ a person has to hate others.

3. Evaluation

a) The main problem in this verse is the verb translated "hate".

b) "hate" - MISEO - in the Greek this word has a comparative connotation and can be translated "to love less", to "abandon", "to hold in less esteem/value than another".

c) When viewed in this light the person being a disciple of Christ has to hold his family and even his own life in less esteem than Jesus Christ and his plan for your life - Christ has to be first and his plan for your life the only consideration.

4. Conclusion

In the Christian life for a person to be a disciple of Christ, the Lord Jesus must have pre-eminence in that person's life. (Colossians 1:18) With sin in one's life self becomes more important than Jesus Christ and therefore while one is out of fellowship technically the carnal believer is not a true disciple, for they have become "double-minded". James 1:2-8.

The saddest distraction of all of Satan's tricks to deceive mankind, and hold the away from the truth of Christ, is human-works based religion. Religion is subtle but fatal for all who enter its "play-acting" hypocrisy, yet think they are believers on the way to heaven. Sadly they are not – they are play-actors on their way to hell.

RELIGION – Satan's "Ace-Trump Card" to deceive

1. Satan's religion is a humanly acceptable one: no sin, no judgement, no Saviour and no Hell. Satan appears as an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:13-19,26)

2. Many pastors in the churches are servants of Satan's policy, knowingly or unknowingly by their teaching that leads people away from relationship with the Lord to religious activities. (Isaiah 30:12, Jeremiah 2:8, 2 Peter 2:1-10)

3. Satan's strategy towards unbelievers is to keep them blinded to the gospel, and false religion appeals to the Old Sin Nature of many unbelievers. (2 Corinthians 4:3-4, Colossians 2:8, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10)

4. Satan's strategy towards believers is:-

- a) To confuse by false teaching. (Matthew 7:15, Romans 16:18)
- b) To appeal to pride. (2 Corinthians 10:12)
- c) To promote idolatry. (Habakkuk 2:18,19)
- d) To promote legalism. (1 Timothy 1:7-8)

5. Satan's policy calls for counterfeit faith:-

- a) Counterfeit gospel. (2 Corinthians 11:3-4)
- b) Counterfeit pastors. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)
- c) Counterfeit communion. (1 Corinthians 10:19-21)
- d) Counterfeit doctrine. (2 Timothy 4:1)
- e) Counterfeit righteousness. (Matthew 19:16-28)
- f) Counterfeit way of life. (Matthew 23)
- g) Counterfeit power. (2 Thessalonians 2:8-10)
- h) Counterfeit gods. (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4)

Notes

Tough-Topic Number 1. Money and the other “Details of Life”

Let's be very clear from our introduction that the Lord wants us to think very differently to our pagan and religious/carnal neighbours. Whether they are unbelievers or religious/confused believers we are to be quite different to them in our priorities and daily life choices, guided by biblical doctrines not social or other media influences.

The first topic we have chosen to illustrate this is that of Money-Wealth-Giving.

Let us begin by walking through the Lord's teaching on these inter-related subjects and then examine the relevant Doctrines from the Bible Topic Book.

The Love of Money is the issue, not the money – it's just a “detail of life”, but our attitude towards it determines its use in the Lord's Plan for our life, or its deceptive danger. Our walk along the pilgrim path needs the provision of money to pay the bills on the way, but what is our approach to this fact?

We are ambassadors for Christ. **2 Corinthians 5:20**. The ambassador does not provide for themselves but is supported by their nation and we are supported by the Lord within the Plan for our life also. Our job is to be obedient to the Plan of God for our life and the Lord has the responsibility to provide all we need to meet His holy demands within the plan.

How much emphasis do we give to getting and holding onto money, obtaining wealth and then to giving to the Lord's work from what we have received? What do we love? Do we love the Lord and his path for us, or do we truly love the things of this present world that “money can buy”? Do we seek to walk God's path for us as his ambassadors, or are we singling Frank Sinatra's song, “I did it my way...”.

1 Timothy 6:10. *“6. But godliness with contentment is great gain.*

7. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

8. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content.

9. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

10. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

11. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”

Note the context of verse ten, which is so often misquoted. See how Paul builds upon all aspects we have seen in our systematic theology introduction.

1. Godliness (focus on God's will for your life) keeps you settled under temptations.

2. Contentment is really powerful to help us advance in the spiritual life, for you are relaxing into God's provision and not desiring things the Lord hasn't provided.
3. Remember how you entered the world and how you will leave it – naked of all the details of this temporary life, so why stress about details of life now? God will give you what you need, in order to accomplish His will for your life. His character is at stake in this for it is His Plan and you are His Ambassador here!
4. Having the basics to serve the Lord be content and focus on the task before you.
5. Rich people can desire more and more temporary wealth, and so destroy themselves in the quest for lust filled power and foolishness. It all ends at death!
6. Love of money is the root of most major troubles in this life.
7. Flee all such lusts for things that do not last, follow after the fruit of the Holy Spirit and serve the Lord to the end.

Who owns the money we use? Just as in the Lord's own day our money is stamped with the government sign or the picture of the sovereign to show that they own it. Whose face is upon the coins and notes? What does this mean for us? What is the money for? Do we live for what we can get out of our brief life here in our present and very temporary nation? Or do we live for eternity, bringing glory to the Lord now and forever?

Matthew 17:24-27, 22:16-22. *"24. And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute? 25. He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? 26. Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. 27. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee. 22:16. And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. 17. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? 18. But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? 19. Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. 20. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? 21. They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. 22. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way."*

What is the money that passes through our fingers actually to be used for? Note that all money passes through our fingers, for it has no value unless spent on something we need on the pilgrim path. Money is spent by the apostles on rent (Paul's stay in Rome and other places), on food, and on paying taxes. All these uses of money, including paying exorbitant taxes (for the Roman taxes were certainly neither fair nor just) are legitimate "details of life" in the present world. These are

to be matters of no great concern or agonizing to us – we pay our bills, and we move onwards, for our focus is on the Lord not the tax man, or the next required house, set of clothes or meal.

We are to see all money and any bank accounts as simply resources for use in pouring out in the Lord's service. Exactly as our energy, it is there for pouring out also in the Lord's work. We are here to "pour" out our lives as a drink offering, not hold back and save things for later! **2**

Timothy 4:6-8. On specific missions the disciples were actually told specifically not to take any money with them. **Luke 9:3, 10:4, 22:35-36.** Our Lord was getting them to see past physical needs, simply pray about everything, and just focus on the mission!

Money may also be spent on dodgy objectives by the carnal and false brethren. It was used to bribe the Temple Guard soldiers guarding the then empty tomb. Unlike the unbelieving religious plotters who worked against our Lord, we don't have to put money aside for "plots and schemes" for we are to walk a straight path through life, following the Holy Spirit's guidance. We leave the devious use of money to the enemy.

As spiritual believers we pray over the money we have and seek always the Lord's best usage of it for His Kingdom work. It's just a resource not an object of our emotional attention or desires. Money is a neutral thing, but what makes it an evil thing is the lust/plots/evil associated with its use for bad ends. As we saw above, and will see below, the Lord specifically told the disciples on two missions to take no money, so they would learn to trust prayer and God's direct provision, not their bank account, resources.

Note the contrast in the verses below between the mental attitude of the believers and the unbelievers. Let's relax into the Lord's arms and accept his provisions for the task He has assigned, for we are here to do his work as his ambassadors and the ambassador depends totally upon her/his government. For us that means we look to heaven and pray for provision and fresh guidance whenever it is required. Money is a detail – not a focus for us at all – at best it is a subject for/of prayer.

Mark 6:8. *"7. And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;
8. And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse:
9. But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.
10. And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place."*

Luke 9:3. *"2. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.
3. And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.
4. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.
5. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.
6. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the gospel, and healing every where."*

Matthew 28:12-15. “11. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.
12. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,
13. Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.
14. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.
15. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.”

Acts 24:26. “25. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.
26. He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.
27. But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.”

Acts 4:37. “34. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,
35. And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.
36. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus,
37. Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.”

What money cannot do is purchase any spiritual status or genuine gifting, yet fallen men and women seek to use their wealth for religious purposes as if it will bless them in time and reward them in eternity, but it will not. Money isn't spiritual or carnal, it just sits there waiting to be used, and what we use it for, and our motivation and heart towards what is purchased is what is spiritual or carnal.

Our choices and the behaviours that flow from our choices and become habitual show our family likeness.... Note Simon the “magician” and his “family likeness” below.

Acts 8:17-21. “17. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.
18. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,
19. Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.
20. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.
21. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.”

Simon the “magician”, or better “cultic pagan con-man”, is after power and money, both signs that he valued the things of this present world not eternal life with God. In contrast to him, our values have shifted in our relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. No-one can serve God and Mammon! We simply cannot have a foot in the devil’s camp and God’s eternal family without losing our balance and falling into evil and disasters. Simon illustrates the pagan viewpoint of money and power – we are to be as far away from such behaviours as possible. The Lord was very clear in his challenge – decide what side you are on and throw yourself into eternity with your choice – for all such choices are indeed eternal!!!!

Matthew 6:24. *“24. No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”*

Luke 16:9-13. *“9. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*

10. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12. And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

13. No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

Let us finish this study of money-wealth and giving by looking at a beautiful story from our Lord’s ministry that illustrates nearly every point we have seen so far – the account of the widow giving the two mites into the temple treasury. Note the two accounts and remember this woman is giving her two mites to the temple treasury, controlled by the corrupt priesthood that will play an active part in the murder of the Lord, and of James, and they will try to kill Paul later also. Remember where the money is going before you read the accounts below.

The entire temple building will be destroyed within 38 years of this time! Reflect now, what significance did the lady’s gift have? Answer, humanly speaking, none at all, and that is the thing the Lord identifies, especially by telling the disciples about the coming destruction. When we give to the Lord, with our heart right before the throne of grace, it doesn’t matter where the actual money given goes, even if it’s stolen by corrupt religious con-men, if our heart before God was right when we gave it, it is valuable in heaven forever! It’s not ever about the money given, it’s always about the heart that gives!

Mark 12:42. *“41. And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.*

42. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

*43. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:
44. For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.”*

Luke 21:2. *“1. And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.*

2. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.

3. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:

4. For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

5. And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said,

6. As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”

Let's now pause and reflect upon the doctrines that apply to the subjects before us. Let us just walk through these as we did the words of the Lord and Apostles. The doctrines of the Lord's Holy Word give us our thinking-belief framework to operate within. Believers with a systematic doctrinal frame-work can face most dilemmas and see the Lord's way through.

GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS

1. The “Divine Institutions” is the name given by the Reformers to the Biblical building blocks which are absolutely necessary for the efficient working and stability of the human race. They are available for both believer and unbeliever alike, and provide a stable base for any society, and so give the foundation for the free giving of the Gospel Message.

2. There are four divine institutions:-

a) Free Will. (Genesis 2:16-17, John 7:17)

b) Marriage. (Genesis 2:22-24, Matthew 19:5-6)

c) Family. (Genesis 2:24, 4:1, Psalm 68:6, Ephesians 6:1-4)

d) National Government. (Genesis 9:6, 11:9, Romans 13:1-7)

3. Within the four are principles ordained by God for the protection, orderly function, survival and blessing of the human race through space-time, that each person might be challenged by their need for eternal life with the Creator-Saviour.

4. Satanic attack on the things that God holds sacred is a reflection of his policy of “evil”. Anything that attacks, or violates the four “divine institutions” is always going to be a reflection of satanic viewpoint and philosophy – of evil: -

a) All violation of, and breaking down, by any means of the free will of human beings is evil doing.

b) All violation of marriage is evil doing. Adultery and all forms of promiscuity, pornography, or other perversions (child abuse, etc), is evil doing.

c) All attacks on the sacredness of the family are evil doing. Child abuse comes into all three categories as one of the great evils that Jesus was especially “hot” on. Matthew 18:1-7, 18-35, 19:13-15, Mark 9:42, 10:13-16, Luke 17:1-2, 18:15-17.

d) All attacks upon the integrity of societies making up the nation state are evil, for God has established the nations as his way to limit evil and enhance opportunities to spread the gospel, reversing the curse of the tower of Babel.

5. Every divine institution is dependant for its function on the previous institutions: nations depend on families, families depend on marriage, marriage depends on freedom.

6. Believers are not to be known for attacking these four divine institutions; we are to be known as people who respect them and uphold them at all times.

GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF AUTHORITY

DEFINITION: Legal power delegated by God under the Laws of Divine Establishment for the protection of the free will (volition) of others. This authority exists in both the temporal and spiritual realms. There is authority within Marriage, the Family, and the State, and the Church.

In each area legitimate authority will always protect individuals from evil and ensure their freedom to serve God and fulfil the Lord's will for them is maintained.

We stand for stability in society, for then there is a safe and stable place to proclaim the Gospel Message, and giving operates within this context – Satan’s is the team that creates chaos. It’s a “fruit” by which the enemy is known. They will always waste money rather than have it spent on missions, and they will create chaos. We are people of decency and order. 1 Corinthians 14:40.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIVING

1. Giving is an important part of the expression of our spiritual life. It includes our attitude, the giving of ourself, our capacity as well as our possessions. Giving is as much a part of worship as praying, singing, listening to teaching, observing the Lord's Table, reading the Word. It is a function of priesthood for teamwork and is to be done as often as needed to sustain the work of leadership in the local fellowship.

2. Basic Principles of Giving – Grace.

(a) Old Testament Giving - this giving was grace giving just as it is in our age. (Proverbs 11:24,25)

(b) New Testament Giving - (2 Corinthians 9:7) also grace giving.

(c) Tithing - this means ten per cent. It was a form of income tax in Israel. Offerings or giving were above this. Tithing was for all Jews, offerings for believers only. It should be remembered that Israel was a theocracy.

[i] In Israel two tithes were required annually

[ii] Tithe 1 - for the maintenance of the Levites (Numbers 18:21, 24) Civil servants in a theocracy.

[iii] Tithe 2 - for national feasts and sacrifices (Deuteronomy 14:22-26)

[iv] Every third year a third tithe was required:-

[v] Tithe 3 - for the poor of the land. (Deuteronomy 14:28, 29) Social security. In (Malachi 3:8-10) it mentions tithes and offerings, the tithes to be brought to the storehouse or treasury.

(d) The time to give - the first day of the week. (1 Corinthians 16:2)

(e) How much - as God has prospered (1 Corinthians 16:2)

3. General Scripture on New Testament Giving. (2 Corinthians chapters 8 & 9)

(a) 2 Corinthians 8:1-8. Contrasts the Macedonian givers to the Corinthian givers, the former having been made poor by Roman oppression gave liberally. The Corinthians, the richest Church in Greece, gave sparingly, as they were distracted by their wealth and felt they “needed it” and so were not 100% happy giving all of life’s wealth to the Lord.

(b) Giving is an attitude of grace and inner happiness rather than compulsion or the amount donated (2 Corinthians 8:2)

(c) Before money is given you must give yourself. (2 Corinthians 8:5)

(d) Giving is as important an act as any other act in the fellowship. (2 Corinthians 8:7)

(e) Giving is love giving not law giving (2 Corinthians 8:8)

(f) Giving depends on being oriented to grace, the prime example being the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 8:9)

(g) Money given in the Lord's service must be properly administered. (2 Corinthians 8:19-21)

(h) If you give in grace, you reap bountifully. If you give in legalism or with strings you reap sparingly. (2 Corinthians 9:6)

(i) How to give. Giving is a reflection of your character, by grace not habit. (2 Corinthians 9:7)

(j) God has given unto us his unspeakable Gift. (2 Corinthians 9:15, 1 Peter 2:24)

(k) Giving should be regular. 1Corinthians 16:2.

(m) As we are prospered so we give: God provides the capital with which to give. 2 Corinthians 9:7-10.

(n) Mature believers are most effective givers. 2 Corinthians 9:10. Generosity of mind leads to generous giving. 2 Corinthians 9:11. Philippians 4:14-18.

(o) The pastor's logistical support comes from giving: He makes an issue out of the word never money, if he does his job God will provide the money. Pastor provides spiritual food and receives money for physical needs. Mutual blessing is thus assured, as the people show their appreciation for the ministry of the word. 2 Corinthians 11:7-9, Philippians 1:3-5, 4:10, 4:14.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – GIVING – OUR “STEWARDSHIP”

1. As all provision is from God it is the believer's duty to be a wise steward of not only her/his money but also time and talents. In this manner true orientation to grace is shown.

2. Your relationship with allocation of your talents, time and possessions to God will determine the quality of your Christian life and its divine-good production here in space-time. Acceptance of grace as the basis of giving should become the basis of generous giving. (2 Corinthians 9:6)

3. There are five reasons for giving to the work of the Lord.

a) That God's work might be supported. (1 Timothy 5:17-18)

b) That God might be glorified. (2 Corinthians 9:12)

c) That needy saints might be provided for. (Acts 2:44-45, 11:29)

d) That other Christians might be challenged. (2 Corinthians 9:2)

e) That the giver's life might be blessed forever by what was poured out in space-time. (2 Corinthians 9:6)

4. Giving alms to the poor:

a) In the Bible, almsgiving means giving to the believing poor and needy.

b) The Pharisees distorted the principle of giving by making a public display. The Lord Jesus rejected this pride-based/driven approach. (Matthew 6:1-4).

c) When we give alms, we have to do it in secret, so that we honour God and not ourselves. (Matthew 6:1-4).

d) The giving of alms to the poor is encouraged. (Luke 12:33; Acts 10:2,4,31) and will be rewarded (Matthew 6:1-4).

MONEY

1. Money in coin form was unknown until the 7th century BC. Prior to coins, money or valuable metal was measured in terms of ingots or rings. Croesus, King of Lydia first preserved his money

in coins. When Cyrus the Great conquered Lydia, he picked up the concept of coinage and gave it to the entire world.

2. Money is not evil. It has a legitimate function for trade. (Genesis 23:9, Jeremiah 32:44)

3. The believer is urged to be content with what he has received, in his position, from the Lord. 1 Timothy 6:6-10, Philippians 4:11-13, Hebrews 13:5-6.

4. It is the lust for money and goods that corrupts a person. Jude 11.

5. The giving of money is an expression of the believers' priesthood. (1 Corinthians 16:2, 2 Corinthians 8 & 9)

6. Coveting money makes one a slave to his desire. (Matthew 6:24). Money is a useful servant but a harsh master.

7. The danger of money to the unbeliever.

a) Salvation cannot be purchased with money. (Mark 8:36-37)

b) Money causes the rich man to put his trust in the wrong things. (Mark 10:23-25)

c) Money often hinders the unbeliever from seeking salvation. (Luke 16:19-31)

d) Money has no credit with God. (Proverbs 11:4,28)

8. The danger of money to the believer:

a) Money can become part of a slavery to a vain search for happiness, thinking some object bought will make us "happy". (Ecclesiastes 5:10-6:2)

b) Love of money becomes a root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:6-12, 17-19)

c) Money can contribute to pride and self-centredness. (Acts 5:1-10)

9. Wealth is deceitful if a person believes it will buy him happiness or provide security Matthew 6:24-33, Luke 12:16-21. Proverbs 18:10-12, Proverbs 13:7.

10. It is the believer's duty to wisely use his possessions, time, abilities and spiritual gifts which God has entrusted to us.

11. Three dangerous illusions about money.

(a) Money can bring happiness:- for the believer the Christian way of life is the only source of happiness.

(b) Money provides security:- grace provides the only real security within the plan of God for your life here and now. (Matthew 6:24-33)

(c) Money can buy many things such as salvation, love, happiness, tranquillity:- all these are spiritual assets.

POVERTY

1. God can raise the poor out of the poverty of their circumstances, but can also use them in their poverty and great suffering. (1 Samuel 2:8, Psalm 113:7)
2. There is a special happiness for those who help the poor. (Psalm 41:1, 2, Proverbs 19:17, Proverbs 29:14)
3. The poor are not only delivered by God from poverty but in the reality of their poverty they often see their need of salvation and respond to the gospel. (Psalm 72:12-14, Matthew 11:5)
4. Whilst charity is good and honourable, it can be abused (Proverbs 14:30-31, 19:17) Charity is for the poor, but excessive dependence upon welfare makes the poor lazy (2 Thessalonians 3:10-11)
5. There is a special curse for those who ignore helping the poor. (Proverbs 21:13, 22:16, 28:3). There is also a special curse for those who take advantage of the poor. (Proverbs 22:22-23)
6. Until the Millennium there will always be poverty in the human race. (Mark 14:7)
7. The poor are a target for hypocrisy and its victim. (John 12:5). They are also the victims of backsliders. (James 2:2-4)
8. Poor believers have the same spiritual privileges as rich believers. (James 2:5). A person can be poor in material things but rich in doctrine.

WEALTH

1. Wealth may be in the form of money, gold or silver, goods or land. Wealth is always relative to the values within a society. What is wealthy within a poor culture is seen as “poor” within a more wealthy culture. What individuals feel is wealthy will differ from person to person; some will never feel they are wealthy enough. The believer is urged to be content with what he has received, in his position, from the Lord. 1 Timothy 6:6-10, Philippians 4:11-13, Hebrews 13:5-6.
2. Money has a legitimate function, and wealth generally is, like money, a neutral thing; something to be used to facilitate daily life. Money and goods are used to pay taxes Matthew 22:17-22, Luke 20:20-26, buy goods needed for the family, and give towards the Lord's work in the church. Money is not evil. Genesis 29:3, Jeremiah 32:44.
3. It is no evil to have wealth or lots of money, it is the lust for money and goods that corrupts a man, as it did Balaam, Jude 11.
4. Money and wealth generally, are great slaves but terrible masters. Wealth is deceitful if a person believes it will buy him happiness, provide him with security, or give him immortality. Matthew 6:24-33, Luke 12:16-21 Proverbs 18:10-12, Proverbs 13:7.

5. Money and wealth will not buy respectability with God, nor will it purchase salvation. Mark 8:36,37, Acts 8:18-24, Mark 10:23-27.
6. Wealth may get in the way of the simple message of salvation, as the Rich Young Ruler found. Matthew 19:16, Luke 18:19,20, Mark 10:17-27.
7. Money may get in the way of spiritual growth, when we pay more attention to our wealth than we do to applying doctrine in our lives. Solomon in Ecclesiastes 5:10 6:2, Balaam in Jude 11, Ananias' and Saphira in Acts 5:1-10, All of us in James 5:1-6.
8. God is not impressed with money and pride filled shows of wealth. Luke 16:10-31, Proverbs 11:4,28.
9. Wealth can be a great blessing received by believers in maturity, and if it is it is to be used for the Lord's work, as well as for lifestyle. Proverbs 13:8ff, Hebrews 13, Refer Doctrine Of Giving.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

1. The Rich Young Ruler shows a noble attempting to gain the favour of God by keeping the law, and its associated status and wealth within his society.
2. General Scripture Matthew 19:16-22.
3. Evaluation:
v 16 Good Master he says - notice the Rich Young Ruler does not call Jesus Lord.
What good things can I do to inherit eternal life - notice the emphasis on self.

In v 17 Jesus shows that one can only be saved by keeping the requirements of the Law, and mentions a number of the commandments - (Numbers 6, 7, 8 & 9), including loving his neighbour as himself (Leviticus 19:18).

In v 21 Jesus says to him, "If you will be perfect sell what you have and give to the poor.
But the rich young ruler is not willing to do this.
4. Principle: -
People are not saved by selling possessions and giving them to the poor. Jesus is showing that the rich young ruler loves his riches more than God and more than his neighbours. He therefore does not keep the Law, and falls short of the righteousness of God.

Jesus then states that it is more difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven than a camel through the eye of a needle (v 24). The rich tend to rely on their riches, rather than God. Man cannot provide his own salvation.

5. Summary on the Rich Young Ruler:

- a) The rich young ruler did not recognise Jesus as the Lord, the Messiah, the Son of God.
- b) The rich young ruler wished to be saved by keeping the law and staying within society's norms - no one can be saved by keeping the law.
- c) The rich young ruler said that he had kept these all from the age of accountability. Jesus proved to him that there was one which he had not kept.
- d) Since the rich young ruler had not kept this commandment he was guilty of all (James 2:10).
- e) Ultimately the problem of the rich young ruler was that he failed to fully trust in the Lord for he depended upon his status and wealth (Matthew 19:28).

6. The Solution "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Notes

Tough-Topic Number 2 Sexual Love and Marriage

This is an area of human life that is most powerful in emotional and physical joy, or it can be the worst form of pain known to men and women – for love is as strong as death and lost love and betrayal causes most murders and heartbreak today. To get love and sexual expression of it right is wonderful, but to get it wrong, as Satan intends, is to court total life misery, relationship destruction and even eternal regret.

Satan's hatred of genuine love and his use of hypocrisy in this area is seen wonderfully by our Lord's confrontation with Satan's team when they bring the "woman caught in adultery" before the Lord and he thoroughly exposes their religious lying hypocrisy. Our Lord hates the religious hypocrisy of the Pharisees and shows compassion without excuses for the woman caught by her own casual immorality.

John 8:1-12. *"1. Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.*

2. And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

3. And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4. They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6. This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11. She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

12. Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

The Lord isn't excusing the adultery here, for it was real and clearly frequent for both the woman and the legalistic and immoral man, who obviously was part of the group of accusers. All the divine institutions are to be defended, but marriage is especially to be defended by word and deed, for to allow marriage to be debased by any casual attitude to adultery is to open society to chaos and children to psychological, physical and sexual abuse.

Our Lord hates this level of slackness on the part of his people – we must heed His call and lift up marriage and the family. Any casual attitude to sexuality and sexual expression reflects Satan's "confusion policy", for anything he can do to make sex appear to be a thing to explore and experiment with will break down the individual's sanity and society's stability.

Divorce had become simply "transactional" in Jewish society before the Babylonian Exile, indeed part of the reason for God's judgment was their collapse of morality in marriage and their easy acceptance of divorce. Jesus didn't want anyone to be unclear about this. Divorce is always the cause of sadness in God's eyes and never to be flippant and casual. Jeremiah bluntly records the facts, and that God was about to "divorce" his people because of it, and the shock is that we are here now in our own day.

Jeremiah 3:8-9. *"8. And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.*

9. And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks."

Casual attitudes to marriage and divorce are a sign of moral and societal collapse, not of "freedom" and "modernity". There is nothing modern about immorality and adultery; it's as old as Satan himself. He couldn't be faithful to his own team and his own cannot be faithful to him – they are all narcissistic and so are all who follow them into a casual attitude towards sex, marriage and divorce.

Matthew 5:27-32. *"27. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:*

28. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

31. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

32. But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”

Matthew 19:9-18. “9. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

10. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.

11. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.

12. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

13. Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

14. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

15. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

16. And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17. And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

18. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,”

Mark 10:11-19. “11. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

12. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

13. And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

14. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

15. *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*

16. *And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.*

17. *And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*

18. *And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.*

19. *Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. “*

Luke 16:18. *“18. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.*

19. *There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:*

20. *And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,*

21. *And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.....”*

Note – straight after these last words we are into the story of the “Rich Man and Lazarus the Beggar”. The connection is clear, for those who treat marriage lightly also treat their eternal salvation lightly, thinking their traditional religious practises are enough. The “rich man” is relaxed about his eternal life because he is wealthy and successful and cannot imagine that God won’t accept him, but he is unsaved and shocked to find himself in hell. God’s standards are set and do not change – it is real relationship with God that alone saves, nothing else. A “fruit” of that right relationship with God is carefulness and faithfulness in marriage.

All God’s called pastor-teachers were to be “One-Woman-Men”. They were to have eyes for their own wives alone, and not to be men who wandered off to check out the alternatives to their own wife. It was not just to be married only once, for many are saved after lives that were immoral and they had many partners before salvation but are “new creations” in Christ-Jesus, and so the very precise definition applies to us all – eyes for our partner only! Faithful by nature – “one women men”. Note the context below, for morality and faithfulness are simply one aspect/fruit of a dependable and faithful servant of the church.

1 Timothy 3:2. *“2. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;*

3. *Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;”*

Titus 1:6. *“5. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:*

6. *If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.*

7. *For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;*
8. *But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;*
9. *Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."*

Paul had to address this subject very directly to the Corinthians, in one of the most "sex-obsessed" cities of the ancient world. In this Greek-Roman world sex was a commodity and a recreational pursuit, much like it is to pagans today, and Paul had to call the church back to the biblical standard, exactly as Jesus did for the Jewish people in his earthly ministry. Just read through his two key passages on marriage and refer to the Commentaries on the website to go further.

For our topic today in this present book just read the passages through and let the main theme emerge – to be focused on the Lord's purpose for your life and your marriage partner's life and to live together in respect, appreciation and prayerfulness.

- 1 Corinthians 7:1-39.** *"1. Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*
2. *Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.*
 3. *Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.*
 4. *The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.*
 5. *Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*
 6. *But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.*
 7. *For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.*
 8. *I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.*
 9. *But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.*
 10. *And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:*
 11. *But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.*
 12. *But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.*
 13. *And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.*
 14. *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.*
 15. *But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.*

16. *For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?*

17. *But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.*

18. *Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised.*

19. *Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.*

20. *Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called.*

21. *Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.*

22. *For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.*

23. *Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.*

24. *Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.*

25. *Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.*

26. *I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.*

27. *Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.*

28. *But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.*

29. *But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;*

30. *And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;*

31. *And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.*

32. *But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord:*

33. *But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.*

34. *There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.*

35. *And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.*

36. *But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.*

37. *Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.*

38. *So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better.*

39. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord."

Ephesians 5:18-33. *"18. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

19. Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

20. Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

21. Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

22. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

31. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

32. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

33. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

The normal way I teach is to spend a long time on each verse, and I won't change that in my weekly bible study sessions, but here there is value in getting a biblical overview and just allowing the text to wash over us. Can you see Paul's "big-idea" in both passages, that he wants all the believers focused on their marriages as a "team" project to build each other up and focus forward always upon the task the Lord has for both on their pilgrim journey.

Let's now check out two biblical couples and see what they show us about marriage. It's just a very short summary but an instructive one for today's world. Firstly, let's see what **not** to do in your marriage, with Ananias and Saphira, and then an example of a servant-hearted marriage with Aquila and Priscilla, ready to move around the Empire, and be used of the Lord until the end of their lives, possibly as martyrs, like Peter and his wife and their old friend Paul.

Acts 5:1-11. *"1. But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,*

- 2. And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*
- 3. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?*
- 4. Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.*
- 5. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.*
- 6. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.*
- 7. And it was about the space of three hours after, hen his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.*
- 8. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.*
- 9. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them, which have buried thy husband, are at the door, and shall carry thee out.*
- 10. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.*
- 11. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."*

Note that this couple certainly "worked together" and discussed things carefully to achieve their goals, but what was their goal here? They wanted to have the reputation of Barnabas. They wanted to be seen as the "power-wealthy-couple". They wanted to be popular and even famous in the church. Barnabas wasn't at all concerned about fame or reputation, he had simply heeded the Holy Spirit's urging within and sold the vineyard and given the money to the Lord's work. Money was a simple detail of life to Barnabas, to be used for the Lord not held onto as if his future security depended upon it!

Ananias and Saphira were not that wealthy, for they sold a property but held back (Peter will say "by fraud") some of the proceeds for their own expenses. They couldn't really afford to give at the level Barnabas had, and the Lord didn't expect them to give at this level. No believer is to give in comparison to any other, we are to be guided by the Holy Spirit alone. Had they just prayed and heeded the Holy Spirit's urging they would have given a portion of the proceeds and been honest about it.

Also giving is based upon what the Lord has given you already, for you only give to the Lord according to what you have control over and don't need for urgent expenses! No giving is ever to be "in advance of the Lord's provision" – that is not biblical. As the Lord has given in grace, and we have thankfully received, so we prayerfully decide what to do with the things we have not commit to give what we don't have yet to give. This "give in advance" system not "faith-giving" it's a crooked system of manipulation used by dodgy pastors (wolves?).

This foolish couple were not driven by prayer, for they didn't heed the Holy Spirit, they followed their own lust for recognition, approbation and approval by the church. They plotted and schemed and then they covered that plan by lies to the apostles. It is a dumb thing to lie to a

prophet, for the prophet knows the facts directly from the Lord and Peter “saw” the truth immediately from the Holy Spirit, and correctly identifies that this lie was directly against God. God judged them as a lesson to the church then and now.

Let us learn from these “dodgies”, but more let us learn from the wonderful couple we will look at next. Heed the Holy Spirit and focus your life decisions on bringing glory to the Lord on the pilgrim road through your life’s obedience and confront and reject any lust for any other thing as the sin it is. So, let us now turn to another couple who show a very modern readiness to travel anywhere to achieve the Lord’s purpose in their life. At a time when most never moved far from their place of birth this couple move all over the eastern Mediterranean and are used of the Lord everywhere they go.

Acts 18:2, 18, 26. *“1. After these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;*

2. And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them.

3. And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

18. And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

19. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

24. And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

25. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

26. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.”

Romans 16:3. *“3. Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus:*

4. Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.

5. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well-beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ.”

1 Corinthians 16:19. *“19. The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.”*

2 Timothy 4:19. *“19. Salute Prisca and Aquila, and the household of Onesiphorus.”*

Note this couple’s journey, for it is not trouble-free at all. They are introduced to us as the fellow tent-makers and believers who Paul stays with in Corinth, but their story has great pressure and

possibly extreme trauma associated with it. When Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome they were forced to flee at the risk of their life and they with the other hundred or more thousand Jews forced to flee lost all property. Over 6000 young Jewish men were forced to join a Roman Legion or go to be worked to death in the mines, so this couple have lost nearly everything and relocate a couple of times to get work, and they still support the local churches where-ever they are.

They support Paul in Corinth then head across to Ephesus and work with Paul there, and move again, but Paul's final letter tells us they are back with Timothy in Ephesus just before Paul's execution. They may be martyred in this Neronian persecution or be there to greet John when he takes over the church around 67 after Timothy's death and the escape of the Jerusalem church in October 66.

This couple have a story to tell in heaven, but they are totally focused on making their home a church centre and they work together in teaching and encouraging others and suffer great financial loss but are always there for Paul. They demonstrate the decision making of a mature Christian couple, asking not just "where to from here?", but what does the Lord want us to do. They are not focused upon their losses but upon their opportunities to minister in new places, right to the end of their lives. This is our standard also.

Some doctrines below are helpful to reflect upon as we think about lust uncontrolled for any object or state, but also think about commitments within marriage, and about divorce and the root problem in all relationships – pride and self-centredness.

CHRISTIAN LIFE – ROYAL FAMILY OF GOD

1. Definition.

Who are we brethren? We need to daily remember that all believers of the Church Age belong to a unique system of royalty. Revelation 1:6. This royalty is based on spiritual principles of Bible doctrine. While regeneration has occurred in every generation since the beginning of time, it is only the believers of the Church Age who form this eternal nobility that will be exercised and recognized forever.

2. Basis of our Royalty in the Church Age.

- a.) The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the basis of royalty. Acts 1:5; Romans 6:3,4
- b.) No believer before or after the Church Age receives at salvation the baptism of the Holy Spirit; it is peculiar to this Age of history. Colossians 1:25,26
- c.) In every dispensation, the believer is regenerated by the Holy Spirit at the moment she/he believes in Christ; but in the Church Age the Holy Spirit also baptises the believer into the Body of Christ. I Corinthians 12:13. It is a unique relationship in history.

3. Precedent for Royalty.

- a.) The order or battalion of Melchizedek provides both the pattern and precedent. Hebrews 5:6,10
- b.) However, Melchizedek acquired his royalty by becoming king of Salem, while Jesus Christ was born Royalty in the line of David. Matthew 1
- c.) Through the baptism of the Spirit, every believer is entered into union with Christ; hence, believers are known as the Body of Christ, and in this relationship we "inherit royalty through Jesus our Lord. Colossians 1:18
- d.) As a member of the Body of Christ, every believer of the Church Age is eternally and personally related to the King of kings. Galatians 3:26-29
- e.) When the Body of Christ is completed, the Church Age terminates with the resurrection or the Rapture, at which time the Body of Christ becomes the Bride of Christ. Matthew 25:1-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18
- f.) During the Tribulation, the Bride is prepared for, "Operation Footstool", the second phase of Christ's strategic victory, when all enemies are put under His feet. Hebrews 1:13.

4. Sign of Royalty.

- a.) The sign of royalty is the unprecedented and universal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- b.) The purpose of this indwelling is to glorify Jesus Christ forever. John 7:37-39

5. Security of Royalty.

- a.) The sealing ministry of the Holy Spirit guarantees the eternal security of the believer. Ephesians 1:13,14
- b.) Positional sanctification places every believer in the "palace" (heaven) forever. Ephesians 1:3,4,11

6. Function of Royalty

- a.) The believer must advance toward the objective of spiritual maturity, at which time he or she receives the accoutrements of royalty as well as the tactical victory of the angelic conflict.
- b.) The believer fulfils the status of royalty in the modus operandi of the new priesthood. Hebrews 7-13. As believers in Christ Jesus we have a holy obligation to live as we are, through behaviour that befits the royal family of God.

7. Future of Royalty.

As members of the Body of Christ and the Royal Priesthood (1 Peter 2:9) all Church Age believers will return with Christ at the Second Advent to participate in the strategic victory of the overthrow of Satan and the Millennial reign of Christ. 1 Thessalonians 3:13; Revelation 5:10

CHRISTIAN LIFE – CAPACITY FOR LIFE

- 1. Jesus prayer for all believers is that we might have "joy fulfilled in us". John 10:10, 17:13. His prayer expresses the desire for us all, that we might have his joy within us; a

fountain of joy welling up within our souls, so that we can rejoice in him in every situation of life. Refer Fruit of The Holy Spirit. This means that every aspect of our lives is to be a testimony to the Lord's glory and power.

2. Paul repeats this prayer of our Lord's to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 9:6. Only as we sow do we reap. Only as we grow spiritually, rejoicing in all the Lord sends our way, do we enter the reality of the life of spiritual joy. This is not a life of false smiles and cheery grins that have nothing behind them, but the biblical joy of the soul of a believer who rests and rejoices in all God is doing with them, and is walking close to their loved Lord. Refer Christian Life - Walking and Holy Spirit Filling.

3. Christian maturity is another way of expressing this joy. One expression of this is the giving of the mature believer, with real capacity for enjoyment of everything life throws at them, and real enjoyment of passing blessing on through giving. 1 Corinthians 9:7. Refer Christian Life -Giving.

4. God's desire is to super-abundantly give us things that we can turn into more blessing for others. These super-abundant blessings may be opportunities, monies, assets, gifts, friendships, ministries, sufferings, or positions to be filled from which influences can be had. God's desire is to give us more and more, so we use more and more, and so our ministry grows, and so the Lord is glorified through our life more and more. 1 Corinthians 9:8-11. This is reflected not only in giving, but in our relationships with family and friends and work-mates, but especially with our marriage partners.

5. In this concept of "capacity for life" we see the truth of the real prosperity gospel. God's desire is to enrich us, but this does not refer to money alone or at all, in most cases. None of the apostolic band died wealthy, all however died rich beyond all the men of their day. All were given abundance of blessings, but often within sufferings, yet they turned their sadness into joy, their pain and discomfort into occasions for rejoicing. Romans 8:24-39, 2 Corinthians 11:18-12:10. In this last passage we see Paul demonstrating the spirit of joy, the reality of true capacity for life in all situations that life can dish up for him. He is rejoicing in the power of God to bring him through all things with joy and strength, and bring him to the end of his life, though without earthly riches, with heavenly rewards beyond man's imagining. 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 18. Refer Crowns and Rewards.

GOD – DIVINE INSTITUTIONS – MARRIAGE

1. Man and angels have personality but only men and animals have a mortal soul "nephesh" and experience physical death. Angels do not die because they are spirits and were present "before" space-time.

2. Marriage requires both personality and soulish life, therefore it is only applicable to man. There is no marriage in the angelic realm. (Matthew 22:30)

3. Definition:- the personal relationship between a male and female member of the human race, or love, respect, and desire for mutual blessing, which typifies the saving relationship between Christ and believer.

4. God's instruction - "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish and the fowl and every living thing". This shows that man should subdue and have dominion over the animal kingdom.

5. If God was a solitary personality there would be no divine example of relationships, however with the three personalities in the Godhead relationships are demonstrated. He is a personal God and we can therefore have a relationship with him.

6. Marriage typifies the relationship between Christ and the church.

a) In the form of grace and faith (Ephesians 5:22), the word submit meaning to fall into line to the law of God which the carnal mind cannot do. (Romans 8:7; 10:3)

b) You submit yourself by an act of freewill.

c) A family can strain marriage relationships if they are not submissive to legitimate biblical and liberating authority – for God's view of authority in marriage is freedom enhancing and a source of blessing forever. (Romans 13:1,5)

7. Grace is typified by the male and faith by the female. If this pattern is not adhered to it results in misery and suffering.

8. Grace and the man.

a) The man is in the role of an initiator.

b) The man provides information to which the woman can respond but must not coerce her free will. He must be worthy of respect.

c) The man has to show his character to the woman.

d) The man has to be patient, and respectful, a form of grace.

9. Faith and the woman.

a) The woman is in the role of a responder.

b) The woman makes the choice of her free will.

c) She is the one who uses faith.

d) The woman needs time to grow and the man is the facilitator of that or the killer of her love.

10. Glory revealed.

a) The glory of God is shown in the man in the form of a changed life through regeneration.

b) The glory of the man is shown in the woman by changes in the woman as she grows in respect for herself in her relationship.

11. Compatibility.

a) The important area of compatibility is that in the spiritual realm as one can be psychologically compatible with many people.

b) Spiritual compatibility is indicated by the phrase "one flesh" and is a picture of the union of Christ and the church.

12. Satan will attempt to blur the differences between man and woman and cause role reversals, but will not stop there as we have seen in our day with transgenderism and other nonsensical concepts. The degree to which this occurs reflects the level of decadence in a society.

13. Legitimate reasons for the termination of marriage:-

a) The death of one of the partners.

b) The desertion of a believer by an unbelieving spouse where one of the two partners has become a Christian after marriage. (1 Corinthians 7:10-16)

c) Inappropriate marriage partners such as close relations as specified in (Leviticus 18).

d) Adultery or fornication as this causes the destruction of the one flesh principle by forming another one flesh. (Matthew 5:32; 19:9)

CHRISTIAN LIFE – HUMILITY

1. Humility is to be sought - Zephaniah 2:3

2. Humility is manifest in restraint - Luke 6:28-29

3. Humility is produced by the Holy Spirit - Galatians 5:22-23

4. Humility is essential in teaching - 2 Timothy 2:25

5. Humility is essential in learning. - James 1:21

6. Humility is valuable to God. - Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5

7. Humility is the path to promotion - 1 Peter 5:6

8. Humility gives proper self evaluation. - Romans 12:3

9. Examples of humility

a) Moses - Numbers 12:3

b) David - 2 Samuel 16:11

c) Jeremiah - Jeremiah 26:14

d) Stephen - Acts 7:60

e) Paul - 2 Timothy 4:16

10. Evidences of humility

a) Forbearance to others - Ephesians 4:2,6:9, Colossians 3:13

b) Endurance in trials - 1 Corinthians 13:7, James 1:12

- c) Compassion - 1 Thessalonians 2:7
- d) Peaceability - James 3:17

11. Humility was the primary characteristic of Christ - Isaiah 53:7, Matthew 11:29, 21:5

12. Promises to the humble - Psalm 22:26, 37:11, 147:6, Isaiah 29:19

CHRISTIAN LIFE – DATING

1. All sexual activity outside of the committed relationship of marriage is adultery. Refer ADULTERY. Matthew 5:27-32, 1 Corinthians 6:13-18, Colossians 3:5.

2. Jesus made it clear that lust is the enemy at the gate, and we are to deal with sexual lust before it becomes fully formed as adultery. Matthew 5.

3. Sexual arousal is normal, but it is to be identified as a danger if the person desired is not our right person. What do we “pay attention” to? If it is sin, we will be destroyed over time and our capacity to love will be gone.

4. Dating is a bone fide way to get to know people and identify the right person for you, but that is done by walk and talk, not by sexual experimentation. 1 Corinthians 11:7. The right person is the “glory” of the other partner when there is respect and admiration both ways.

5. Sexual activity within marriage is a sanctified activity, designed by God for pleasure and the close bonding of a couple in intimacy, trust and secure loving. That is the marriage concept. Ephesians 5:19-31.

6. We are to build spiritual capacity for love and Christian service, before we seek a mate. Immature believers cannot ever have the joy and stability within a marriage that God intended. Dating ought to be a pleasurable social time together without sexual foreplay and flirtation. It ought to be a time of growing to know each other and the Lord, with a deepening of love for both the partner and the Lord, with no conflict between the two. Ephesians 5:1-12.

SIN – ADULTERY

1. Definition – all Sexual activity outside of marriage. This includes fornication, homosexuality, incest, pornography.... Satanic religions and cults encourage sexual sins.

2. Adultery is prohibited by the Word of God (Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 4:3).

3. Mental adultery is also condemned (Matthew 5:27-28). We are to have eyes for our own partner alone.
4. Adultery destroys the capacity of the soul to relate to others in faithfulness (Proverbs 6:32).
5. Sexual immorality has a destructive effect on the human body and human mind/soul of both male and female (cf. 1Corinthians 6:13-18).
 - a) Male - impotence and inability to copulate, plus sexual obsession, manic behaviours.
 - b) Female - breakdown of response and pleasure in the sex act. Often frigidity or nymphomania, both are frustrating and a source of female misery.
 - c) Increased chance of sexually transmitted diseases.
6. Any sexual immorality ultimately leads to further frustration and an unfulfillable search for happiness which cannot be found in ever new partners (Ephesians 4:19,5:3).
7. Adultery is a bona fide basis for divorce (Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Luke 16:18). Adultery has a huge impact between husband and wife in both mental (trust) and physical ("one flesh") areas. However, forgiveness and the grace of God can overcome the effects of all sins.
8. Adultery or fornication is often used in the Bible to describe apostasy and unfaithfulness to God (Jeremiah 3:8-10, Ezekiel 16:23-43, 23:24-28; Revelation 17:1-5).

Notes

Our Third Tough-Topic - Hell or Heaven? Only Two Paths.

As we close in on this third topic, let us reflect upon our own days, as we rapidly approach the time the bible refers to as the “last days” before the Lord’s return. Even unbelievers are identifying that all the “signs” of the end times are present, and AI alone is making most reflect deeply about what Daniel, the Lord and John the Apostle have said.

We have referred to the signs in previous books so wont stray too far this time, but let’s begin with the doctrines below and then read through the Lord’s words on Hell and Hades. As we see things advancing rapidly towards the culmination of world history it has caught us all by surprise, things have simply happened far faster than most of us expected. Let’s reflect upon the key doctrines and then see where this places us today.

LAST DAYS – CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LAST DAYS

Just as world conditions just before the flood indicated judgement was overdue so conditions now show that we are certainly at the end of the “beginning of sorrows” approaching the final “last days”. Matthew 24:1-8. Note the fifteen factors below.

1. Preoccupation with physical appetites - Luke 17:27
2. Rapid advances in technology - Genesis 4:22
3. Grossly materialistic attitudes and interests - Luke 17:28
4. Uniformitarian attitudes and interests - Hebrews 11:7
5. Inordinate devotion to pleasure and comfort - Genesis 4:21
6. No concern for God in either belief or conduct - 2 Peter 2:5, Jude 15
7. Disregard for the sacredness of the marriage relation. - Matthew 24:38
8. Rejection of the inspired Word of God - 1 Peter 3:19
9. Population explosion - Genesis 6:1,11
10. Widespread violence - Genesis 6:11, 13
11. Corruption throughout society - Genesis 6:12
12. Preoccupation with illicit sexual activity - Genesis 4:19; 6:2

13. Widespread words and thoughts of blasphemy - Jude 15
14. Organised Satanic activity - Genesis 6:1-4
15. Promotion of systems and movements of abnormal depravity - Genesis 6:5, 12

LAST DAYS – DENIALS THAT CHARACTERISE THE END TIME CHURCH

(This is the false church that finally enters the Tribulation Period and supports the world ruler, and he initially uses them, but kills them all at the mid-point and the Great Tribulation Period begins with his establishment of self-worship from the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem.)

1. Denial of God. (Luke 17:26; 2 Timothy. 3:4-5)
2. Denial of Christ. (1 John. 2:18, 4:3; 2 Peter. 2:1)
3. Denial of Christ's return. (2 Peter 3:3-4)
4. Denial of the Faith. (1 Timothy. 4:1-2; Jude 3)
5. Denial of Sound Doctrine. (2 Timothy. 4:3-4)
6. Denial of Separated Life (Practical Sanctification. 2 Timothy 3:1-7)
7. Denial of Christian Liberty. (1 Timothy 4:3-4)
8. Denial of Spirituality. (2 Timothy 3:1-8; Jude 18)
9. Denial of Authority. (2 Timothy 3:4)

HEAVEN AND HELL

SIMILARITIES

They are both real places. The Lord Jesus is very specific about Hell by using the word “topos” from which we get “topography” meaning a detailed description of a specific place. (Luke 16:28).

PURPOSE: Hell as the waiting place for final judgment shows the glory of God’s Eternal Plan.

Hell shows His glory by His perfect judgement and punishment upon evil. Satan, demons and evil people finally get what they deserve in Hell and later the Lake of Fire – but at the heart of this judgment, the ones who select evil or are just “too busy” to think about Jesus claim’s on their life, get what they have chosen – eternal separation from God.

God punishes justly, man cannot. That is what so many people, even the unsaved, find so frustrating about today, an unjust legal system.

DIFFERENCES

HEAVEN

1. Heaven is where Jesus is. (Acts 1:1-11; Acts 7:55)

HELL

Hell is complete separation from God, everlasting destruction. (Matthew 25:46)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>2. We will be reunited with loved ones in perfect happiness. We will also meet all the saints and the great names of the Bible. (2 Samuel 12:23; Luke 16:22,23; Matthew 19:14; John 14:2)</p> | <p>People are with Satan, demons, murderers, the immoral and perverted, liars, boasters, haters of God etc. (Rev 21:8, Romans 1:26-31).</p> |
| <p>3. No sin. (Rev 21:27)</p> | <p>Sin is unlimited and gets worse and worse (Rev 22:11).</p> |
| <p>4. You have a special, spacious dwelling place (mansion) personally prepared by LJC perfectly customized to your personality and character. (John 14:2)</p> | <p>Shared accommodation in the Lake of Fire. (Rev 22:15)</p> |
| <p>5. A pure and clean and perfectly peaceful environment. (Rev 21:27)</p> | <p>Burns with intolerable heat and brimstone which is sulphur that gives off a foul smelling, highly toxic gas. (Rev 14:10; 21:8)</p> |
| <p>6. God wipes away every tear. (Rev 21:4)</p> | <p>Weeping (intense, body shaking, uncontrollable crying) that never stops. (Matthew 8:12) ! A place of sorrows, Ps 18:5</p> |
| <p>7. No pain, sickness or suffering in a glorious body that never tires. (Perfect health!) Rev 21:4.</p> | <p>Pain of the whole body on fire but not consumed by it, gnashing of teeth in blind rage at yourself, your sins, other people and at God. Their torment never stops.</p> |
| <p>8. A place of light radiating from God's glory. No darkness. (Rev 21:23)</p> | <p>Complete darkness, despite the flames, which are never put out. (Matthew 25:30)</p> |
| <p>9. Can eat and drink, but not necessary for life. (Luke 24:42,43; Rev 22:1,2)</p> | <p>They scream for water and mercy. (Luke 16:24). They will drink the wine of God's righteous anger (Rev 14:10).</p> |
| <p>10. Will spend eternity worshipping and serving God. (Rev 5:10, Rev 22:3-6)</p> | <p>A bottomless pit of eternal burning and punishment and torture. (Rev 20:1)</p> |
| <p>You can do study and learn and explore all things and places, yet</p> | <p>Torture added to by watching the activities and happiness of the saved in</p> |

never reach full knowledge. There is Heaven. (Luke 16: 23-26)
no boredom in Heaven!

HELL AND HADES

1. HELL is from the Greek GEHENNA. This was a place where under paganism in Israel children were burned alive as offerings to Molech. (2 Chronicles 33:6, Jeremiah 7:31). Molech was a huge idol with outstretched paws on which the children were tied prior to being burnt to death.
2. HELL is the waiting place before the final judgment that sees all the lost (demon and man) be cast into the "Lake of Fire" where the lost spend eternity. (Revelation 19:20, 20:10)
3. Hades (Gk) in the New Testament is often translated HELL. SHEOL (Heb) is the Old Testament equivalent. Hades and Sheol are in the centre of the earth, cf. Saul, Samuel (from Paradise or Abraham's Bosom) and the Witch of Endor. (1 Samuel 28:7-19) Hades or Sheol is the place of the souls and spirits of people who died while awaiting the resurrection. Hades is also the place of imprisonment of a certain group of angels - TARTARUS.
4. HADES was divided (before the Cross/Resurrection) into three sections, one section being divided from the other two by a "Great Gulf Fixed". (Luke 16:19-31)
It should be noted that the story of Lazarus is a true story, and not a parable, because it mentions proper names (Lazarus) and a geographical location - Hades.
 - a) Abraham's Bosom or Paradise - The abode of the saved until the ascension of Jesus Christ. The Lord said to the repentant thief - "This day shall thou be with me in Paradise". (Luke 23:43)
 - b) Torments - The abode of the unsaved, reserved until the last judgement at the end of the millennium. This is a place of great sorrow, regret, and suffering. (Revelation 20:13)
 - c) Tartarus - The prison of fallen angels who "kept not their first estate". These are fallen angels from Genesis 6. This is a place of imprisonment (2 Peter 2:4)
5. Since the ascension of Christ - Paradise has been empty, with the saved being transferred to the Third Heaven. (2 Corinthians 12:1-4, Ephesians 4:7-10)
6. Those who die now as believers go directly to the Third Heaven ("at home with the Lord"), with soul and spirit but no final resurrection body. (2 Corinthians 5:8)
7. Those in Hades (Torments) will be brought before the Great White Throne after which they will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. (Revelation 20:13-15). This is the Last Judgement.
8. Hades is in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:40; 1 Samuel 28:7-15)
9. There are no degrees of punishment in the Lake of Fire.

- a) Degrees of punishment tend to deny the literal lake of fire. Nothing to indicate the temperature of the lake of fire is not constant.
- b) Degrees of punishment is contrary to the doctrine of unlimited atonement. Christ died for every sin that has ever been committed. Man is not judged on the basis of his/her sins but human good. (Revelation 20:11-15). It is rejection of the Plan of God that makes all the lost “equal”, for their sins are not mentioned at all – its unbelief that condemns them.
- c) Degrees of punishment destroys the principle of salvation. Its concept is that one rejecter of grace gets less fire than another rejecter of grace. The unsaved are unsaved because they rejected grace.
- d) Degrees of punishment is based on the theory that for a thesis there is an antithesis and when they come together you have synthesis (the Hegelian fallacy).
- e) False concept:- One person commits a bad sin, one person performs a marvellous good work. Obviously, to fallen mankind there must be different degrees of punishment in eternity, but the real issue is not quantity of sins, it is the unifying fact of rejection of God’s policy in favour of their own/Satan’s.

Our Lord’s Words on our final Topic

Third Tough-Topic Hell and Hades (Eternal Judgment of the Lost)

Let us just walk through the Word and explore each passage below and see what the Lord is saying about hell and eternal judgment. This ought to be every person’s focus yet most ignore the fact of the “end” of their earthly life. How foolish to get on a railway line and not ask about the “last station”! We were born into space-time and it ends for us at death or the rapture, and so as intelligent beings we need to “sit with” this truth. Our Lord speaks very directly to his audience and there is no doubt about the words he uses. Hell is real and it is awaiting those who ignore eternal realities.

Matthew 5:22-29. *“22. But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.*

23. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24. Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

25. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

27. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

Observations

1. By our life "fruit" we are known. Our life-style and actions indicate where we are going, because they are 'fruit' of where our heart is. As we think in our heart – so we are. Proverbs 23:7.
2. If we have the fruit of "contempt" for others we indicate we are not children of God, for to hate or feel contempt for those for whom Christ died is an indication that our heart is far from the Lord. 2 Peter 3:9.
3. Our life "fruit" demonstrates our family relationships, and these are eternal.
4. Jesus ends this section noting again that by our "fruit" we are known, and that this needs to be confronted as the results of family relationship are eternal.
5. We join the Lord's eternal royal family by his grace through faith, Ephesians 2:1-12, and we join Satan's family simply by doing nothing.... Hell is very real, and the enemy's focus is deceiving the lazy and foolish into ignoring the fact that their life will end one day.

Matthew 10:28, 11:23. *"28. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. 11:23. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.*

24. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

25. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."

Observations

1. There is a common saying in the world, "Be very scared..." It applies to our subject of Hell and eternity in the Lake of Fire with Satan and his demons.
2. All mankind needs to confront this, and very "very scared" of avoiding this issue until it's too late.
3. Satanic deception is the Lord's warning. All Satan needs to do, as we saw above, is have the unbeliever simply remain unbelieving and disinterested in eternal things.
4. The Holy Spirit will convict of the sin of unbelief, John 16:8-11, and we have the Lord's words on that.
5. Whole-hearted Response to the Lord's Word is a sure sign of a person having a relationship with the Lord Jesus, and that family relationship, where we respond to our

Saviour, Lord and King indicates we have eternal security and no need to fear Hell, for we are truly “built upon the rock that is Christ.

6. However, all who lack that assurance should be scared, for they are ignoring their eternal destination until too late to change it, and Hell is very real.

Matthew 16:18, 18:9. *“18. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
18:9. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.”*

Matthew 23:15-23. *“15. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.*

16. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

17. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18. And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

19. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

20. Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

21. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

22. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

23. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

Observations

1. There are only two paths through this life, and only two alternative eternal destinations.
2. There is Heaven, and it is real and permanent.
3. There is Hell and it is the waiting place for the Last Judgment of the Lost, from where they are sent to the Lake of Fire with the one who deceived them to their eternal death – Satan himself.
4. The biggest danger in the journey through space-time is play-acting – hypocrisy. This is the danger of the religious unbelievers who opposed our Lord and will form our main opposition also if we serve the Lord.
5. Our Lord’s challenge to us is to be honest, straight forward, transparent, faithful and truthful in all our work and words. No play-acting for life is simply too short for any nonsense.

Mark 9:43-47. *“43. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:*

44. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:

46. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.”

Luke 10:15. *“15. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.”*

Luke 12:5, 16:23. *“5. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.*

16:22. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

23. And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

Observations

1. Hell, and the eternal state that follows it, the “Lake of Fire”, are eternal in their torment for all who end up there.
2. As noted above, all the unbeliever need do to end up there is “nothing at all”. simply ignoring eternal realities is enough to end up tormented forever by what “might have been”.
3. Choices have consequences and the bible is clear, that there are no sociological excuses.
4. We decide our eternal destiny and must confront that responsibility.
5. Eternal torment is the price paid for ignoring eternal realities.
6. The shock of this must galvanize our evangelistic efforts.

If you are an unbeliever in the Lord Jesus Christ, you need to address that matter as soon as you close this book. You need to know very clearly from the Lord that the end of your life is final for you, and to enter eternity without Christ is to enter eternity without hope, without future eternal life to enjoy and without any fellowship with God. It is to face eternity with the fallen angels and all of mankind who rejected the gospel message.

If you are a believer in the Lord, re-read His words above and remind yourself of the lost state of your unsaved friends and find new drivenness to give the gospel message, and then re-read our recent book, “Let’s Talk about Heaven” to encourage yourself about your eternal destiny.