

Basic Bible Doctrine 2

A Study in Basic Systematic Theology

The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit

The Doctrine of Angels, Satan, and Demons

The Doctrine of Man

The Doctrine of Sin

18 – 30 Minute Lessons (9 Hours)

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The Doctrine the Holy Spirit

There is a lot of confusion regarding the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, which has led to a number of doctrinal errors within certain Christian denominations. The three main problem areas are: (1) Holy Spirit Baptism, (2) The Pentecost Birthday of “The Church” theory, and (3) Spiritual Gifts. Each of these topics will be covered in this section of the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit.

The Personality of the Holy Spirit

Most Christians believe the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Trinity and therefore, has personality. But there are groups like the Jehovah’s Witnesses that teach the Holy Spirit is an “impersonal force”. Is the Holy Spirit an “impersonal force” or does He have personality? As usual, we look to the Bible for the answer. First, we see the Bible uses personal names for the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:10 – “But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

Luke 11:13 – “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

John 14:26 – “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

The “S” on Spirit and the “H” and “S” on Holy Spirit means they are personal names. Second, the personality of the Holy Spirit is seen through the use of personal pronouns.

John 14:26 – “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

Jn 14:16-17 – “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you”

In this passage, Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit (Comforter) with the personal pronouns of “he”, “whom”, and “him” meaning that the Holy Spirit is personal and NOT an impersonal force. He is never referred to as “it”.

Third, the Holy Spirit has intellect, feelings, and a will which are all marks of personality. Note the words know, will, mind, and love in the verses below.

1 Corinthians 2:11 – “... even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.”

1 Corinthians 12:11 – “But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”

Romans 8:27 – “And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

Romans 15:30 – “Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;”

Fourth, the Holy Spirit's personality is shown by what He does. An impersonal force is unable to do any of the following acts.

1. He teaches. ***Luke 12:12 – “For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour ...”***
2. He reproves. ***John 16:8 – “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, ...”***
3. He commands. ***Acts 8:29 – “Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, ...”***
4. He helps. ***Romans 8:26-27 – “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities ...”***
5. He speaks. ***Revelation 2:7 – “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; ...”***
6. He leads. ***Romans 8:14 – “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, ...”***

Finally, the Holy Spirit can be affected like a person showing that He has personality.

1. He can be lied to. ***Acts 5:3 – “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?”***
2. He can be resisted. ***Acts 7:51 – “Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”***
3. He can be grieved. ***Ephesians 4:30 – “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”***

There is an abundance of Biblical evidence demonstrating the personality of the Holy Spirit and that He is not an “impersonal force”.

The Deity of the Holy Ghost

The Bible teaches God the Holy Spirit to be the third Person of the Trinity and is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Son. We refer to the Holy Spirit as the third Person because the Scriptures place Him in the third position. For example,

Matthew 28:19 – “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:”

Below, are two of many Biblical texts that declare the deity of the Holy Spirit.

1. Carefully compare these two verses regarding Ananias and Sapphira out of Acts 5.

Acts 5:3 – “...why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost ...”

Acts 5:4 – “... thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.”

Verse 3 states that Ananias lied to the Holy Ghost and then in verse 4 was told that he lied to God. That makes the Holy Spirit to be God.

2. The teaching of the Trinity shows the Holy Spirit to be God.

1 John 5:7 – “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.”

The Holy Ghost is co-equal with God the Father and God the Son, thereby, making the Holy Spirit to be God.

The Bible also shows that the Holy Spirit has the characteristics of God. If you remember from the doctrine of God, God has 8 natural attributes that only belong to God. The Bible states that the Holy Spirit demonstrates these attributes, thereby showing He is part of the Godhead.

1. He is Life.

Romans 8:2 – “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free ...”

2. He is Eternal.

Hebrews 9:14 – “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, ...”

3. He is present everywhere at the same time.

Psalms 139:7 – “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?”

4. He has all-power.

Luke 1:35 – “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee:...”

5. He has all-knowledge.

John 14:26 – “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, ...”

John 16:13 – “... when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:...”

6. He is Truth.

John 16:13 – “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, ...”

1 John 5:6 – “...And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.”

7. He is Holy.

Ephesians 4:30 – “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, ...”

Not only does the Bible declare the Holy Spirit to be God, but based on these attributes of the Holy Spirit, we can only come to one conclusion that the Holy Spirit is God.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

There are several areas of the work of the Holy Spirit.

1. The work of the Holy Spirit was active with the Father and the Son in the creation.

Genesis 1:1-2 – “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

2. The work of the Holy Spirit in the giving of the Scriptures.

2 Peter 1:20-21 – “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”

3. The work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

A. Jesus Christ was led by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 4:1 – “Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness ...”

B. Jesus Christ was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke 4:1 – “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, ...”

C. Jesus Christ was raised from the Dead by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:11 – “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead ...”

4. The work of the Holy Spirit in relation to mankind in general.

A. He convicts men.

John 16:7-8 – “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:”

The word “reprove” means “to bring to light”. The Holy Spirit brings into the light the sins of men. This in turn results in conviction. The Holy Spirit convicts men of their sin.

B. He points men to Jesus Christ.

John 15:26 – “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:”

C. He invites men to receive Jesus Christ.

Revelation 22:17 – “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come... And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

5. The work of the Holy Spirit in relation to the believer.

A. In regards to the believer’s salvation.

1. He liberates the believer from the power of sin.

Romans 8:2 – “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

2. He indwells the believer.

Romans 8:9 – “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

3. He seals the believer so he cannot lose his salvation.

Eph 1:13 – “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,”

4. He gives the believer the assurance of his salvation.

Romans 8:16 – “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:”

B. In regards to the believer’s works

1. He empowers the believer to do the work of God.

Acts 1:8 – “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

2. He calls specific believers to serve God full-time.

Acts 13:4 – “So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.”

3. He guides the life of each believer.

Acts 16:6-7 – “Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.”

C. In regards to the believer’s life

1. He comforts the believer.

John 16:7 – “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.”

2. He makes intercession on behalf of the believer to God.

Romans 8:26-27 – “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

3. He produces a Christ-likeness in the life of the believer.

Galatians 5:22-23 – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

4. He enables the believer to:

a. Pray in the power in the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 6:18 – “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

b. Worship in the power of the Holy Spirit

Philippians 3:3 – “For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

c. Praise God in the power of the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 5:18-20 – “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”

Holy Spirit Baptism

The subject of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a cause of controversy within Christianity. Many people believe it is an experience to be sought after salvation resulting in “speaking in tongues”. This is the position of the Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements.

Others believe that at salvation, each believer is baptized by the Holy Spirit into the “body of Christ” which goes along with the “universal, invisible church theory”. As always, we need to ask, “What does the Bible teach about this subject?” There are only six Bible verses that refer to the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Let us look at each one and see what they teach.

1. ***Matthew 3:11 – “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:”***

2. ***Mark 1:8 – “I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.”***

3. ***Luke 3:16 – “John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire:”***

Matthew, Mark, and Luke record the same account of what John the Baptist said while he was preaching and baptizing. According to these verses,

1. Who will do the baptizing? The word “he” is speaking of Jesus Christ. It is NOT the H.S.
2. Who is Jesus Christ going to baptize? The answer is the “you” in these verses.
3. Who are the “you” in these verses? It is the believers that John the Baptist was baptizing.
4. Who is Jesus Christ going to baptize with? The answer is the Holy Ghost.
5. At the time John the Baptist made this statement, is the baptism of the Holy Spirit a past, present or future event? We know it is a future event by the use of the word “shall”.

So, a careful reading of this passage makes it clear that at some point in the future, Jesus Christ will baptize those he is talking to in these verses with the Holy Spirit. It is important to note that the Holy Spirit will NOT do the baptizing, but is the medium by which the people are baptized.

4. John 1:33 – “And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.”

In this verse, John the Baptist reveals how he will know who the coming Savior would be. According to this verse,

1. Who will do the baptizing? The word “he” is speaking of Jesus Christ.
2. Who is Jesus Christ going to baptize with? The answer is the Holy Ghost.

So, a careful reading of this passage makes it clear that Jesus Christ will baptize with the Holy Ghost. It is important to note that the Holy Spirit will NOT do the baptizing, but is the medium by which the people are baptized.

5. Acts 1:5 – “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

In this chapter, Luke is summarizing the events following the resurrection of Jesus Christ just before He returns to Heaven. In verse four, Jesus told his disciples to wait in Jerusalem. Wait for what? Verse 5 answers that question.

1. Who was to be baptized? The “ye” in this verse refers specifically to the members of the church Jesus Christ started.
2. With what will they be baptized with? The answer is the Holy Ghost.
3. When will this take place? The answer in this verse is, “not many days hence”.

Therefore, a careful reading of this passage makes it clear that they, the church, will be baptized with the Holy Spirit in a few days. It is important to note that the Holy Spirit will NOT do the baptizing, but is the medium by which the people are baptized.

6. Acts 11:16 – “Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.”

In this passage, Peter remembers what Jesus said in the past regarding Holy Spirit baptism and a careful reading of this passage reveals that the baptism of the Holy Spirit has ALREADY taken place.

We see from these verses that the Holy Spirit does not baptize anyone. It is Jesus Christ who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. This makes Jesus Christ the baptizer with the Holy Spirit as the medium, just as John the Baptist was the baptizer with water as the medium.

By understanding that the Holy Spirit does not baptize, it shows the error of those who believe that at salvation the Holy Spirit puts the believer in to the “universal, invisible church”. No where is scripture is a believer commanded to ask for or pray for it.

A careful study of these verses shows that the “Baptism of the Holy Spirit” was a one-time event that was never repeated. The verses in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John show that the Baptism of the Holy

Spirit to be a future event, but does not indicate when it would be. The verse in Acts 1:5 actually gives the timing of the event by saying “not many days hence” which happened in Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost. Furthermore, by the wording of Acts 11:16, we learn that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit already occurred.

Therefore, we see that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit was a one-time event that occurred on the Day of Pentecost. So, what actually occurred on the Day of Pentecost?

1. Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit to authenticate His church that was already in existence and established by Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry.
2. On the Day of Pentecost, believers began to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:4 – “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

3. The apostles in the church at Jerusalem began speaking in many foreign languages.

Acts 2:4 – “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

As we shall shortly learn, this was a temporary gift to be done away once the Word of God was completed (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

4. The church was empowered to witness boldly.

Acts 4:31 – “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

5. People were saved, baptized and added to the church.

Acts 2:41 – “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

What about 1 Corinthians 12:13?

Many people wrongly believe that at salvation, the Holy Spirit baptizes the new believer into a so-called Universal, Invisible church – Body of Christ. They rely on a misinterpretation of 1 Corinthians 12:13.

1 Corinthians 12:13 – “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”

The Universal Church people point to this verse and say “See, the Holy Spirit baptizes believers into one body - a universal church!” Before we interpret this verse correctly we need to review what we have learned so far regarding the “Baptism of the Holy Spirit”.

1. Does the Holy Spirit baptize anyone? No. As we have seen, Jesus Christ baptized with the Holy Ghost when He and the Father sent the Holy Spirit to administrate over the church.
2. Is “Baptism of the Holy Ghost” a continuing event? No. As we have seen, the baptism of the Holy Spirit was a one-time event that occurred on the Day of Pentecost.

3. Is the “Body of Christ” a universal, invisible thing? As we shall study in a future lesson, it is not. Churches (bodies of Christ) are always local, visible assemblies of baptized believers.

4. How many types of baptism are there? In other words, does Scripture allow for a water baptism and a Holy Spirit baptism?

Ephesians 4:4-6 – “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

Clearly, there is only one kind of baptism. If this “one baptism” is Spirit baptism, as many people think, what becomes of believer’s baptism in water? Therefore, we surely believe that there is only one kind of baptism – water baptism – that of the believer immersed in water upon their profession of faith by the authority of a New Testament Church.

So, how do we interpret 1 Corinthians 12:13? It simply means that the Holy Spirit leads a believer to obey Christ’s command to be baptized (immersion in water) which places them into the membership of the local church where they were baptized.

This supports Acts 2:41 where it says, ***“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”*** The phrase, “added unto them”, means that the newly baptized believers became a part of the church that was already in existence.

But some may say that the phrase “we are all baptized into one body” in 1 Corinthians 12:13 means that every believer is baptized into numerically one universal, invisible body of Christ. Paul’s use of the word “we” does not mean everyone is baptized into the same body.

If I said, “We all took a bus to the store”, it does not mean that everyone rode the same bus, but rather each person rode a bus to the store. If I said, “We all caught one fish”, it does not mean we caught the same fish, over and over again, but that each person caught their own fish.

If I said, “We all bought one bottle of water”, it doesn’t mean that each person bought the same bottle, but that each person bought their own bottle.

When Paul wrote, “we all are baptized into one body,” he did not mean that all believers are baptized into the same body. What he meant was just as he was baptized into one body (in the city of Damascus - Acts 9) so those at Corinth were baptized into one body. This is easily shown in verse 27 of the same chapter.

1 Corinthians 12:27 – “Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

Paul says that the church at Corinth is the body of Christ, but the Universal Church people believe the body of Christ is all believers. If they are correct, then by using the word “ye”, which excludes himself, Paul would have admitted he was not a part of the body of Christ and therefore, not saved.

If the Universal Church people are correct, Paul should have said, “we are the body of Christ.”, but He did not, he said “ye are the body of Christ”. Obviously, Paul was saved and so by the use of the word “ye”, it would indicate that there are multiple bodies of Christ present on the earth. As we shall see in a future lesson, each church is a body of Christ. The church in Jerusalem was a body of Christ, the church in Antioch (Acts 13) was a body of Christ, the church in Corinth was a body of Christ, etc.

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit

The Pentecostal Movement began in the early 1900's. The Charismatic Movement started in the early 1970's and grew rapidly. Although similar, there is a difference. The Pentecostal Movement turned into a denomination of Christianity whereas, the Charismatic Movement sprung up within churches among several denominations.

Both these movements are characterized by the "gift" of tongues and healing. Therefore, there is a great focus on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the area of Spiritual Gifts today. Every believer needs to study and understand exactly what the gifts of the Holy Spirit are so they are not led away into false doctrine.

What are spiritual gifts? They are abilities given by God to profit the churches. Every church member has a spiritual gift.

1 Corinthians 12:7 – "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal."

However, not every member has the same gift.

1 Corinthians 12:4 – "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

1 Corinthians 12:29-30 – "Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?"

The sole purpose of a spiritual gift is to build up the local church. They are to be used in the church for God's glory. There are actually three biblical lists of the "gifts of the Spirit," also known as spiritual gifts. The three main passages describing the spiritual gifts are Romans 12:6–8; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11; and 1 Corinthians 12:28. There is some overlap with these three lists, but together these lists total 16 spiritual gifts.

Prophecy – The Greek word translated "prophecy" in both passages properly means "a speaking forth." The ministry of prophecy in the Bible has two aspects. First, there is a fore-telling, which is the telling of events that will take place in the future. It is this aspect of prophecy that has ceased when the Bible was completed. The second aspect of this ministry is forth-telling. Today, we call it preaching and is the proclamation of the Word of God.

Ministry – Also referred to as "serving." The gift of ministry is the motivation to demonstrate love by helping and serving others through meeting physical needs. It is a God-given ability to detect needs within a congregation and to do something positive to meet them.

Teaching – The gift of teaching is the motivation to present the truth of God's Word clearly and precisely. It is the God-given ability to engage in research and detailed study of God's Word. The gifted teacher is one who has the unique ability to clearly instruct and communicate knowledge, specifically the doctrines of the faith.

Exhortation – Also called "encouraging". The gift of exhortation is the motivation to encourage others in the church to grow spiritually. It is the God-given ability to come alongside other Christians with the Word of God and encourage them to pursue spiritual growth

Giving – Gifted givers are those who joyfully share what they have with others, whether it is financial, material, or the giving of personal time and attention. The giver is concerned for the needs of others and seeks opportunities to share goods, money, and time with them as needs arise.

Ruling (Government) - Leadership – The gifted leader is one who rules, presides over, or has the management of other people in the church. The word literally means “guide” and carries with it the idea of one who steers a ship. One with the gift of leadership rules with wisdom and grace and exhibits the fruit of the Spirit in his life as he leads by example.

Mercy – The gift of mercy is the motivation to identify with and share in the sufferings and joys of others as a comforter. They are compassionate toward others who are in distress, showing sympathy and sensitivity coupled with a desire and the resources to lessen their suffering in a kind manner.

Word of wisdom – The fact that this gift is described as the “word” of wisdom indicates that it is one of the speaking gifts. This gift describes someone who can understand and speak forth biblical truth in such a way as to skillfully apply it to life situations with all discernment.

Word of knowledge – This is another speaking gift that involves understanding truth with an insight that only comes by revelation from God. Those with the gift of knowledge understand the deep things of God and the mysteries of His Word.

Faith – All believers possess faith in some measure because it is one of the gifts of the Spirit bestowed on all who come to Christ in faith (Galatians 5:22-23). The spiritual gift of faith is exhibited by one with a strong and unshakeable confidence in God, His Word, His promises, and the power of prayer to effect miracles.

Healing – Although God does still heal today, the ability of men to produce miraculous healings belonged to the apostles of the first century church to affirm that their message was from God. Christians today do not have the power to heal the sick or resurrect the dead. If they did, the hospitals and morgues would be full of these “gifted” people emptying beds and coffins everywhere.

Miracles – Also known as the working of miracles, this is another temporary sign gift which involved performing supernatural events that could only be attributed to the power of God (Acts 2:22). This gift was exhibited by Paul (Acts 19:11-12), Peter (Acts 3:6), Stephen (Acts 6:8), and Phillip (Acts 8:6-7), among others.

Discerning of spirits – Certain individuals possess the unique ability to determine the true message of God from that of the deceiver, Satan, whose methods include purveying deceptive and erroneous doctrine. Jesus said many would come in His name and would deceive many (Matthew 24:4-5), but the gift of discerning spirits is given to the Church to protect it from such as these.

Speaking in tongues – The gift of tongues is another one of the temporary “sign gifts” given to the churches to enable the gospel to be preached throughout the world to all nations and in all known languages. It involved the divine ability to speak in languages previously unknown to the speaker. The phrase “diversity of tongues” effectively eliminates the idea of a “personal prayer language” as a spiritual gift.

Interpretation of tongues – A person with the gift of interpreting tongues could understand what a tongues-speaker was saying even though he did not know the language that was being spoken. The interpreter would then communicate the message of the speaker to everyone could understand.

Helps – Those with the gift of helps are those who can aid or render assistance to others in the church with compassion and grace. This has a broad range of possibilities for application. Most importantly, this is the unique ability to identify those who are struggling with doubt, fears, and other spiritual battles; to move toward those in spiritual need with a kind word, an understanding and compassionate demeanor; and to speak scriptural truth that is both convicting and loving.

At the center of the “Charismatic and Pentecostal debate” stands the question of whether all of the spiritual gifts found in the New Testament are available for today. The Bible clearly teaches that at least some spiritual gifts were temporary and ceased when the Bible was completed.

1 Corinthians 13:8-10 – “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

Spiritual gifts are grouped into two categories: 1) Sign Gifts that were temporary and are now ceased, and 2) Serving Gifts that are permanent and operational today.

Sign Gifts

The sign gifts refer to the miraculous gifts in the New Testament, including speaking in tongues, the interpretation of tongues, healing, working miracles, and prophesying. These activities clearly existed in the New Testament period. But what was their purpose? This question is important to answer as it impacts how we determine whether these gifts continue to operate today.

Jesus clearly performed many miracles that were recorded in the gospels. His followers likewise performed signs that authenticated that their power came from Jesus Christ. For example, on the Day of Pentecost, people from at least 15 different cultures heard the believers speak and could understand their words in their own language (Acts 2:4-13) which led to many people coming to faith in Christ (Acts 2:41).

There are two reasons for these sign gifts. First, sign gifts confirmed the message was from God and second, affirmed the messenger was from God.

Mark 16:20 – “And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.”

Hebrews 2:4 – “God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”

The apostles often worked miracles as a sign that their message was truly from God. But to who? The Sign Gifts were a sign to unbelieving Jews.

1 Corinthians 1:22 – “For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:”

A thorough study of the demonstration of “Sign Gifts” in the New Testament reveal that, 1) Jews were always present, 2) At least one Apostle was present, 3) Moved the Gospel forward, and 4) They were temporary.

Peter healed a man disabled from birth (Acts 3:1-8) that resulted in Peter preaching the gospel and thousands were saved (Acts 4:4). Another example is found in Acts 19:11-12. The result of these miracles was that, "the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily" (Acts 19:20).

Gift of “Speaking in Tongues”

The Bible clearly states that speaking in tongues will cease, meaning it was a temporary Sign Gift.

1 Corinthians 13:8-10 – “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

How do we know when speaking in tongues will cease? The verse says, “when that which is perfect is come”. Some people believe the word “perfect” refers to Jesus Christ and therefore the Gift of Tongues is still valid until the return of Jesus Christ. However, we know that is not true, because the Greek word “perfect” is not in the masculine form, but in the neuter form. If it meant Jesus Christ, it would be the masculine form.

Therefore, we surely believe this word “perfect” to mean the Bible. It fits the context of the time. The Bible was not complete but still being written at the time the “Sign Gifts” were used. As the Bible neared completion, we find that the “sign gifts” ceased and no longer were being practiced in the Lord’s churches.

Today, the “gift of tongues” is one of the trademarks of the Charismatic movement. However, the tongues spoken of in the Bible are very different from tongues spoken in Charismatic and Pentecostal churches. We need to understand what the Bible has to say about tongues:

1. Tongues in the Bible always meant a known language. You will not find a Bible verse that refers to tongues as anything but a known language. On the Day of Pentecost, when the Apostles first spoke in tongues, you will find a list of the languages spoken. Acts 2:7-11

If you happen to hear someone speak in tongues today, you will hear that it is not a known language and more gibberish than anything else.

2. The Bible declares tongues to be a sign to unbelieving Jews.

1 Corinthians 14:22 – “Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.”

This verse clearly states that the sign gifts were for the Jews that were not saved. Look up Acts 2:1-13, Acts 10:44-48, and Acts 19:6 and see for yourself that in these three recorded instances of the gift of tongues being manifested, you will see both Jews and at least one Apostle were present.

3. The Bible clearly says that tongues shall cease.

1 Corinthians 13:8 – “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease;...”

About the time of the destruction of the Jewish temple in 70 A.D. and the completion of the Word of God, tongues ceased to be practiced in New Testament churches.

4. The Bible actually places little emphasis upon speaking in tongues. There are only three recorded instances of the gift actually being manifested.

5. If the “Gift of Tongues” were for today, there are strict rules that one must adhere to before speaking in a foreign language.

1. Only up to three people can speak. (1 Corinthians 14:27)
2. Each person takes a turn; they are not to speak at once. (1 Corinthians 14:27)
3. One person must interpret. (1 Corinthians 14:27)
4. If there is no interpreter present, there is to be NO speaking in foreign languages in a church service. (1 Corinthians 14:28)
5. Women are not allowed to speak in tongues in a church service. (1 Corinthians 14:34)

If you were to attend a Charismatic or Pentecostal church service today, you would find that all the biblical rules are broken in every service. At the appointed time, nearly everyone speaks at once, there is no interpreter, and you find women speaking in tongues.

Gift of “Healing”

The Gift of Healing is another trademark of the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements. The Word of God teaches that God does heal if it is His will. However, we oppose the practice of modern-day divine healers.

They are people who “claim” to have the ability to heal others but are either “fakes” to steal people’s money or are satanically empowered to give the appearance of healing. Ask yourself, if they have the genuine gift of healing, why don’t they go from hospital to hospital to cure people.

God is all-powerful and He can heal the physical body. He can heal anyone at any time in any way He wills. The issue is not, “Can God heal?” but rather, “Is the gift of healing operational today?”

The Bible records 18 specific miracles of healing by the Lord Jesus Christ. He healed people where he found them. He had no “special healing meeting”. He healed all sicknesses. He did not interview people to be included in the healing meeting to reject those people that may be too difficult to heal like modern day “healers”.

His healings were free of charge and for the most part they were unsaved at the time of the healing or saved at the time of healing. This is unlike modern-day “healers” who claim that a person was not healed because he did not have the “faith” to be healed.

The Bible also records four specific miracles of healing by the Apostles. The healings were a minor part of their ministry and were always accompanied by gospel preaching (see Acts 3:13-26; Acts 4:4). Healing is one of the sign gifts mentioned in Mark 16:16-17.

It was a gift to confirm God’s message and messenger. Since healing is a sign gift, it has ceased and not available for today. God does heal the physical bodies of people today, but only if it is His will. In the Bible, God records many Christians who were not healed, such as:

1. Paul prayed three times for God for healing, but it was not God’s will.

2 Corinthians 12:8-9 – “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities...”

2. Epaphroditus was sick and near death.

Philippians 2:25-27 – “Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, ... that he had been sick... nigh unto death...”

3. Timothy was sick often.

1 Timothy 5:23 – “Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.”

4. Trophimus was sick.

2 Timothy 4:20 – “Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.”

It is important to remember that it is not always God's will to heal!

The “Indwelling” and the “Filling” of the Holy Spirit

There are two areas in the Christian's life where the Holy Spirit does an important work: 1) He indwells believers at salvation, and 2) He fills believers for service.

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Since the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), the Holy Spirit of God indwells believers from the moment of their salvation.

Romans 8:9 – “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

1 Corinthians 6:19 – “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”

2 Timothy 1:14 – “That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.”

People in the Old Testament did not have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, although, the Holy Spirit would come upon them at times for a particular task. It was not permanent.

Judges 13:24-25 – “And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. And the Spirit of the LORD began to move him at times in the camp of Dan between Zorah and Eshtaol.”

1 Samuel 16:13-14 – “Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah. But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, ...”

The Filling of the Holy Spirit

The filling of the Holy Spirit is different from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. There is ONE indwelling of the Spirit at salvation, but there are MANY fillings throughout the life of the believer. What is the “Filling of the Holy Spirit”? The best explanation comes from God’s command to every Christian to:

***Ephesians 5:18 – “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*”**

A man filled with alcohol is controlled and affected by that drink. It affects the way he walks, the way he talks, and the way he thinks. In the same way, being filled with the Holy Spirit is to be totally under the control of the Holy Spirit. He is to control and affect every aspect of our lives – our walk, our talk, our eyes, our dress, our thoughts, everything.

The filling of the Holy Spirit is essential for ONE purpose – service and witness for Christ. If we are to effectively serve the Lord, we need the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. However, when a believer does not yield to the Holy Spirit, he stifles the workings of the Holy Spirit in his life.

1 Thessalonians 5:19 – “Quench not the Spirit.”

When there is sin in a believer’s life, the Holy Spirit can be grieved and thereby quench the working of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 4:30 – “And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.”

He will not fill an unclean vessel. When a believer allows known sin to remain unconfessed, the Spirit cannot fill him.

So, how can we be filled with the Spirit?

First, confess and forsake all known sin.

Second, yield to the Holy Spirit.

Third, ask God to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Doctrine of Angels, Demons and Satan

God created many kinds of spirit beings generally called angels.

Psalm 148:2, 5 – “Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts... Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.”

When were the angels created? In Job 38, God speaks to Job and speaks of His creation of the earth.

Job 38:4-7 – “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? Or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

So, evidently ALL the spirit beings, or angels, were already created before the six days of Creation because they “shouted for joy”. God created so many angels that there are too many to number.

Hebrews 12:22 – “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,”

Angels are spirit beings - **Hebrews 1:13-14; Psalm 104:4**

Because they are spirit beings, they do not have a physical body like man and therefore do not have the same physical needs that man does like hunger, thirst, sleep, etc.

Since they do not have a physical body, they cannot die. Therefore, the number of angels cannot decrease. Likewise, the number of angels cannot increase since angels are not able to give birth to more angels and the Bible teaches that man does not become an angel after death.

Since God created every angel, they are under His authority, even Satan himself.

Jude 9 – “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”

Angels are more intelligent than man, but they are not all-knowing like God. They are also much stronger than man, but they are not all-powerful like God. **2 Kings 19:35 – 185,000 dead**

Although there are many pictures that portray angels in a female appearance with wings, there is no biblical evidence to support such a claim. In fact, when angels have appeared to people, they have appeared in a masculine form every time. For example, in

Genesis 19:1 – two angels, vs 5 – the men

Acts 1:10 – “And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;”

We know the names of at least 3 angels – Michael, Gabriel, and Lucifer whose name was changed to Satan. All three names are male names.

It is evident in the world today that there are good angels and there are evil angels also called evil spirits. Since God created all the angels, did He create some angels good and some evil? NO! In the beginning, all the angels were good.

How is it then that we have evil spirits today? The Bible tells us the answer. God created all the angels with the freedom to obey or disobey. Speaking of Lucifer who became Satan,

Ezekiel 28:15 – “Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.”

2 Peter 2:4 – “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;”

God created the angels so they could be with Him, to praise Him, and to serve Him. He did not create all the angels the same. Some were wiser and had more power than others.

The Bible tells us that when God created the angels, Lucifer was the most beautiful, the most powerful, and the wisest of them all. Lucifer was superior to all the other angels in knowledge, in power and in authority.

Sometime after God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and before they sinned in Genesis 3, Lucifer became proud of his beauty, intelligence, and position. You can read about it in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. He became jealous of God getting all the glory.

We believe that he convinced one-third of the angels to follow him in rebellion and make war against God to take over God's position. There is no specific verse that tells us 1/3 of the angels followed Lucifer in rebellion.

However, the passage that best supports the idea that Satan took one third of the angels with him in rebellion is **Revelation 12:3–4. In verse 9**, the dragon is not thrown to earth alone, “his angels” were cast out with him”. The angels that are ejected from heaven with Satan we associate with the “third of the stars” that the dragon’s tail swept from heaven to earth in verse 4.

If the “stars” of Revelation 12:4 are indeed a symbolic reference to Satan’s “angels” in verse 9, then what we have is a reference to the fall of a portion of the angels (the heavenly hosts) who followed Satan in his rebellion.

Two thirds of the angels remained loyal to God and are called the “holy angels” in Scripture (e.g., **Mark 8:38**); one third of the original angels joined Satan and are called “unclean spirits”, “devils” or “demons” today (e.g., **Matthew 8:16**).

God who is all-powerful and all-knowing removed these angels from their position and cast them to earth. Lucifer's name was changed to Satan and is sometimes called the Devil.

Although the final destination for Satan and the evil spirits will be the Lake of Fire, for now they live on Earth in the spiritual realm fighting against God and against everything God loves. They often manifest themselves in the physical realm. That is why sometimes people see “ghosts” or see objects thrown across a room by an “invisible” force.

Since God has great love for man, Satan hates mankind and will do everything he can to prevent man from coming to God for salvation. One of his greatest weapons is deception. Many people believe that there are good spirits on the earth that help people. Those people are deceived!

Although some evil spirits will appear to be “good” and “help” people, they do not point people to Jesus Christ leaving them still in bondage to their sin. Do you know how to tell a good spirit from a bad spirit? The Bible gives the answer.

1 John 4:1-3 – “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.”

When a spirit does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, that spirit is an evil spirit. He may look like he is “good”, he may sound nice, he may do something nice for you, but he will keep you from coming to Jesus Christ.

Some cultures practice the religion of their ancestors. This is especially true in Asia and Africa but is found world-wide. In most cases, the tribal religious leader can be referred to as a spirit doctor or a traditional “healer”.

For example, there are people who go to “spirit doctors” or a traditional “healer” to get healing or look to the spirits for help. Satan is the master deceiver. Suppose an evil spirit is causing a physical problem in your friend.

He goes to the spirit doctor who performs a “ceremony” to “heal” your friend. The evil spirit willingly leaves your friend making it “appear” he has been healed by the spirit doctor.

Your friend is more convinced that the spirit doctor has the right religion and now the evil spirits have made sure your friend will not look to Jesus Christ but go back to the spirit doctor, who also does not point people to Jesus Christ. So, your friend is in greater darkness and deception than he was in to begin with.

You will find spirit religions all over the world and in every country, there are people who “seem” to have special powers to interact with the spirit world. You must understand that they do not interact with the “good” angels because they are in Heaven with God the Father.

Although some spirits may appear to be “good”, they are deceiving people and are truly the evil spirits that sided with Lucifer to overthrow God the Father in Heaven. Their job on earth is to deceive people and make sure they do not look to Jesus Christ and come to Him for salvation.

From this point forward, I will use the word angels to designate the good spirits and the word demons and devils to designate the evil spirits. The ministry of angels is interesting because very little of their work is mentioned in the Bible.

The Angelic Ranks

The Word of God teaches there are several ranks, like an army, within the spirit kingdom.

1. The Archangel. Michael is the only archangel mentioned by name in the Bible.

Jude 1:9 – “Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.”

The title of “archangel” suggests he is the highest ranking angel, the “commander-in-chief” of the angels... more than 1? The Bible is silent on this. Michael—which means “Who is like God?”—first appears in Daniel appears to be the protector of the Jewish people Daniel 12:1.

In the New Testament, Michael appears as the leader of the angelic army who fights and defeats the dragon (Satan) and his angels in Rev 12:7–9.

COMMENT on JUDE 9

2. The Cherubim. Cherubim are described in Ezekiel 1:4-28 and 10:8-22. They have four wings and four faces. The Cherubim seem to have a ministry of defense. They guarded the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:24 – “So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

The Cherubim also guard the throne of Heaven.

Psalm 99:1 – “The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved.”

They are guardians of the glory of God (**Ezekiel 10:4, 18, 19**).

The Bible reveals that Lucifer was one of the Cherubim (**Ezekiel 28:14**).

3. The Seraphim. The only mention of the Seraphim is found in **Isaiah 6:1-3**. They are similar to the Cherubim, but they have six wings and are associated with the worship of God by His throne in Heaven. They have a ministry of proclaiming the holiness of God. The Cherubim are by the throne of God, the Seraphim are above it. Contrary to what you see in most art, the Cherubim and Seraphim are the only spirit beings specifically said to have wings.

4. The Angels. The angels of God are spirits whose ministry is directed toward mankind. Angels help protect the physical life of believers.

Psalm 34:7 – “The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.”

Daniel 6:22 – “My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: ...”

Angels attend to the needs of believers.

Hebrews 1:14 – “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”

Angels also carry the soul of a deceased Christian to glory.

Luke 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;”

The Person and Nature of Satan

After Lucifer sinned, his name was changed to Satan/Devil. Details of his time before sinning is given in Ezekiel 28:11-19. From these verses we learn Satan was a created being. **Ezekiel 28:15**.

This is of great comfort to believers, because we know that he is not all-powerful like God. We also learn that because he was one of the Cherubim guarding the throne of God. Verse 15 that Satan was **created perfect**, free from sin, with the freedom to choose to obey God or disobey Him.

Lucifer chose to sin. His intentions are revealed in **Isaiah 14:13-14**.

In verse 14, he says, “I will be like the Most High”. Lucifer was not content with God’s purpose for his life but became jealous of God and desired God’s position. Although, he is a powerful spirit being, he is only a created being, limited in his power, and not all-powerful like God.

1. Satan promotes wickedness and sin in the world.

2. Satan is a deceiver.

2 Corinthians 2:11 – *“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”*

2 Corinthians 4:4 – *“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”*

3. Satan traps men in sin.

2 Timothy 2:26 – *“And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”*

4. Satan pretends to be a “good angel”, an angel of God.

2 Corinthians 11:14-15 – *“And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”*

Satan works hard to prevent unsaved people from coming to God through Jesus Christ for salvation. However, after someone is saved, Satan becomes his enemy. He works hard to steal the believer’s joy, attempts to get the believer to sin, and tries to destroy the believer’s Christian testimony and character. Notice what God told Satan regarding Job:

Job 1:12; 2:6 – *“And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD... And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life.”*

Satan cannot do anything towards a believer without first getting permission from God. There are several areas of weakness in the believer where Satan may gain an advantage.

1. The area of the mind. The believer’s thought-life is the major battleground in spiritual warfare with Satan. I.E. Me and covetousness. **2 Corinthians 10:5 & Philippians 4:8**

2. The area of health. Satan continually attacked Paul through his health (**2 Corinthians 12:7-10**). I’ve had chronic migraines that lasted for years, cancer, etc. Otto Koenig – wife had a fake pain. **Luke 13:11-16** – woman who had a spirit of infirmity 18 years.

3. The area of physical strength. The disciples’ strength failed them when they fell asleep in the garden as the Lord was praying (**Matthew 26:40, 41**). **Elijah** – prophets of Baal, prayed, ran 14-20 miles (22-32 KM), Jezebel wanted him dead, scared, ran away to Beersheba where he wished to die. Then in 1 Kings 19, he slept and God fed him twice... then went an additional 40 days. Depressed.

4. The area of emotions. Peter showed an angry temper when he tried to cut off the ear shortly before Jesus was arrested – **Matthew 26:51**. Also Sarah felt disrespected by Hagar in **Genesis 16**

5. The area of morals. Samson, David, and Solomon had problems in this area. What the parents do in moderation, the children will do in excess. Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11). Money – Gehazi **2 Kings 5** – Naaman, Elisha refused money, but Gehazi coveted it – became a leper. Pastors and servants of God must be very careful in the area of money and women.

Attacks in these areas are designed to bring doubt, discouragement, and spiritual weakening into the life of the Christian. This in turn leads to a neglect of prayer, Bible study, church attendance, and soul winning. The good news is that for a true believer, there can be victory over Satan in this life.

Revelation 12:11 – “And they overcame him (Satan) by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.”

1 John 4:4 – “Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

Although Satan is more powerful than man, believers must remember that he is a defeated enemy. Jesus Christ destroyed the works of Satan on the cross.

1 John 3:8 – “... For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.”

In Christ, the believer can overcome Satan and live fruitful, meaningful lives for God. We are on the winning side! Although Satan is defeated, he is not yet destroyed.

He is still trying to defeat God and steal the hearts of men away from God. However, no one can fight against God and win. The final home of Satan is the Lake of Fire.

Rev. 20:10 – “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

Demons or Evil Spirits

There are approximately 80 verses of Scripture that refer to demons or evil spirits. Some people believe that the demons are the spirits of wicked men who died. There is no biblical evidence to support that theory.

As we learned, the demons were created “good” spirit beings that joined with Lucifer in his rebellion against God and became “evil”.

They are powerful beings that can cause...

blindness (Matthew 12:22)

dumbness (Matthew 9:32,33)

personal injury (Mark 9:18)

deformities (Luke 13:11)

insanity (Luke 8:26-36)

suicides (Mark 9:22)

The demons are subject to Satan and help in his cause to fight against God by the following:

1. They distract man to prevent his salvation. **Luke 8:5,12**. At the door-TV, sports-church
2. They can possess the bodies of humans and animals (**Mark 5:8, 11-13**).
3. They can bring physical and mental disease upon men.
4. They produce moral impurity.

Can a True Christian be “Demon Possessed”?

There is debate on whether a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ can be demon possessed or not. What does it mean to be demon possessed?

According to the Scriptures we already looked at, demon possession means that a devil or devils inhabit the body of a human being, controlling the physical and mental functions such as speech, movement of the body, strength, etc.

The Holy Spirit indwells the believer and He would NOT allow a demon to possess the same person He is indwelling.

We strongly believe that a TRUE Christian cannot be possessed by a demon. We believe there is a difference between being **possessed by a demon** and **being influenced by a demon**.

Demon possession involves a demon having direct control over the thoughts and/or actions of a person from inside the body.

Demon influence involves a demon attacking a person spiritually from outside the body (**1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7**). Could be connected to an object brought home or open yourself up through pornography, alcohol, drugs, music, read, etc. Get too interested in occult – ouja board.

The Bible never tells us to cast a demon out of a believer (**Ephesians 6:10-18**).

Believers are told to resist the devil (**1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7**), not to cast him out.

According to **1 John 4:4**, believers have “overcome” Satan and his demons.

Therefore, the case for demon possession of a believer cannot be made scripturally.

If someone who claims to be a Christian can be demon possessed (controls speech, body movements, strength, etc.), it shows to me that person is not a true believer in Jesus Christ and therefore, not saved.

WARNING: Do NOT get in too interested in Satan. Counterfeit – study the real thing

The Doctrine Man

The three areas of study are: 1) Creation of Man, 2) Nature of Man, and 3) Fall of Man.

Creation of Man

Science teaches that the Earth is billions of years old and over this time man evolved into what he is today. However, the Bible teaches that God created the physical universe in 6 literal 24-hour days. The creation of man was a desired and designed act of God.

Genesis 1:26-27 – “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”

Why was man created? First, man was created for the glory of God.

Isaiah 43:7 – “Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.”

Second, man was created for personal fellowship.

Genesis 3:8 – “And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.”

Although God’s creation of the earth and animal kingdom was great, He could not fellowship with it, nor set His love upon it. As covered in a previous lesson, Satan hates God and hates everything God loves. Therefore, He hates man and will do whatever he can to blind men’s hearts to the truth.

Satan used unsaved, non-Christian scientists to come up with a way to explain away God. What they came up with is called the “Theory of Evolution”. The “Theory of Evolution” is exactly that – a theory! It has no basis in fact. It is Satan’s answer to the fact of God’s creation.

Much of this theory comes from the writings of Charles Darwin (1809-1882). It is a theory on the development of more complex organisms over millions of years, from one cell so small you need a microscope to see it all the way to a fully formed human being.

Cell → Jellyfish → Fish → Crocodile → Lizard → Dog → Monkey → Ape → Man

Evolution is completely opposite to the biblical account of Creation as the following chart shows.

<u>Biblical Creationism</u>	<u>Evolution</u>
Matter created by God	Matter existed in the beginning
Earth before sun and stars	Sun and stars before earth
Oceans before land	Land before oceans
Light before the sun	Sun the earth’s first light
Plants and trees before fish	Fish before plants and trees

Birds before insects	Insects before birds
Plants before sun	Sun before plants
Whales before reptiles	Reptiles before whales
Birds before reptiles	Reptiles before birds
Man before woman	Woman before man
Man before rain	Rain before man
Creation complete	Process is continuing

In order to accept Evolution as fact, you must deny the Bible's account of Creation and therefore, call Jesus Christ a liar!

Some "Christian" scientists try to fit the Bible into evolution... Gap Theory... Between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 was billions of years where the evolutionary process took place. As a Bible believer, we reject that idea... because if true then you have death before man fell into sin whereas the Bible teaches that God created everything good and that death is the result of man's sin.

Today, more and more scientists are moving away from the theories of evolution for the simple fact that they cannot be proven. There is no evidence to show one specie changing into another. For example, evolution says a fish became a frog. There are fossils of fish and fossils of frogs, but there are no fossils that are part fish and part frog

Spontaneous Generation – appeared fully formed AND Life was planted are gaining traction.

Scientists who deny God and the Bible will say that their instruments have measured the earth to be billions of years old. It has been shown that these instruments are very inaccurate. There are many cases where a "scientist" dated an object to be millions of years old that has been proven to be less than 100 years old.

According to God's Word, the Bible, we believe the earth to be around 6,000 years old. The question is, who are you going to believe – a scientist who denies God's existence or God's Word? What is the Bible answer to the "Theory of Evolution"?

1. Man was created. He did not evolve.

Genesis 1:26-27 – "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

2. Man and animals were created separately (Genesis 1, 2).

3. Animals were created to reproduce after their kind.

Genesis 1:25 – "And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good."

4. Plants were made to reproduce and bear fruit after their kind.

Genesis 1:11-12 – “And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.”

According to evolutionary thinking, life begins at birth and therefore has been the main reason for the acceptance of abortion. However, the question must be asked, “When does human LIFE begin?” At conception? At birth? Or some point in between?

Those people who are for abortion argue that an embryo is just a mass of cells and tissue, just a part of the mother’s body. Therefore, to them, abortion is nothing different than an operation to remove a part of the body. However, we need to ask, “What does the Bible teach?” The Bible is very clear as to when life begins – at conception. Consider these verses.

1. God knew David while he was being formed in his mother’s womb.

Psalm 139:13-16 – “For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.”

2. David received his sin nature at conception.

Psalm 51:5 – “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

3. God knew Jeremiah when he was just one cell.

Jeremiah 1:5 – “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”

4. John the Baptist expressed emotion inside his mother’s womb.

Luke 1:44 – “For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.”

5. Esau and Jacob fought before birth.

Genesis 25:22-23 – “And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.”

6. The Law of Moses protected the life of the unborn.

Exodus 21:22 – “If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.”

The Nature of Man

Man is different from any animal because he possesses “God-Consciousness”. Just as God is a Trinity - God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, so man was created in God’s image and has a 3-part being: body, soul and spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 – “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

1. The body of man.

The body is the physical part of man. The body is like a “hotel room” where your spirit and soul is temporarily “checked-in” until the day of death. Physical death is the separation of the soul and spirit of man from his body.

James 2:26 – “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

Genesis 35:18 – “And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.”

2. The soul of man.

The word soul means self-conscious life as opposed to plants which have unconscious life. The soul is the “real you”. It is the place you think, you feel (emotions), and make decisions. Sometimes the Bible uses other words for the soul like the heart, mind, and will.

3. The spirit of man.

The spirit is that unique part of man which shows “God-consciousness”.

Proverbs 20:27 – “The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward parts of the belly.”

Romans 8:16 – “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:”

Bible teachers differ on whether the soul and spirit of man are the same or separable. This difference arises because the soul and spirit must manifest themselves through the same body and sometimes the Bible does not distinguish the two. However, Heb. 4:12 states the soul and spirit are separate.

Hebrews 4:12 – “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

According to **Genesis 1:26**, man was created in the image of God. It does not refer to physical likeness, but to the nature and character of man.

1. Man has a will.

Like God, man has a will. He can choose and decide things for himself. The will may be defined as the power to choose and the means to attain that choice. Although God desires our will to be controlled by the Holy Spirit, the fact is our will may also be controlled by our sinful nature that the Bible calls the “flesh” (**Romans 8:1; Galatians 5:16**).

The believer experiences a warfare in his mind for the control of the will. One who is saved, but controlled by the flesh is described as being “carnal” (**Romans 7:14**). One who is saved, but controlled by the world may be described as being “worldly” (**1 John 2:15-16**). One who is saved and controlled by the Holy Spirit is described as being “spiritual” (**1 Corinthians 3:1**).

2. Man has an intellect.

Like God, man has intelligence. Adam, the first man, possessed great intelligence to name all the animals (**Genesis 2:19, 20**), to rule over God’s creation (**Genesis 1:27-28**), and to work in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 2:15**).

3. Man has a moral likeness to God. Man can discern the difference between right and wrong.

4. Man has a social likeness to God. As God wanted human fellowship, so man was designed to have human fellowship.

Genesis 2:18 – “And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”

There are some people that believe when an unsaved person dies, he ceases to exist. However, according to the Bible, the spirit and soul are eternal. Physical death does not mean the end of an existence, but simply means “separation”. There are three areas regarding this separation.

1. Physical Death. This is the physical separation of the soul and spirit from the body.

Genesis 35:18 – “And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.”

2. Spiritual Death. This is the spiritual separation between the sinner and God.

Ephesians 2:5 – “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)”

3. Eternal Death. This is the eternal separation of the sinner from God.

Revelation 20:14, 15 – “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

The Fall of Man

The fall of man into sin is one of the most rejected Bible truths by mankind. No one naturally admits to being a sinner. Satan desires to have men reject the first few chapters of the book of Genesis. After all, the simplest way to keep people from being saved is to convince them they don’t need to be saved. If man believes he is not a sinner, then there is no need to be saved from the punishment of sin.

Man was created in a state of innocence, but he had a will, the ability to choose between God and sin. It was needful for God to place a simple test before Adam. God desires to fellowship with man. He wants man to choose Him over sin, but He is not going to force anyone to fellowship with Him. Adam needed to be given the opportunity to choose God or choose sin. It was a simple test.

Genesis 2:16-17 – “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

God's test for Adam was simple: either obey or disobey. However, God clearly stated beforehand the consequences of either action. Adam had experienced direct fellowship with God. He had received all the blessing of this fellowship. He knew the benefits of obeying.

Adam was told what the result of disobedience would be. God told him that he would die. First, this death would be a "spiritual death" – separation between God and Adam (the sinner). Second, this death would lead to "physical death" and then eventually, "eternal death" – separated forever from God if there was no Savior. We read about the fall of man in Genesis 3 where Satan tempted man to disobey God.

Genesis 3:1 – "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

Satan's temptation was subtle. It was not a direct attack, but rather it was indirect through the woman. He created doubt in God's Word in the mind of the woman by saying "hath God said?"

Genesis 3:6-7 – "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

Although Eve was deceived by Satan, it was Adam who sinned willfully and deliberately. Adam and Eve's sin brought an awakened conscience to know good and evil.

Genesis 3:7 – "And the eyes of them both were opened, ..."

Genesis 3:22 – "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: ..."

Their sin brought shame and guilt. They knew they were naked and tried to cover themselves.

Genesis 3:7 – "... and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

Their sin brought separation from God.

Genesis 3:8 – "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden."

Their sin brought selfishness. They each blamed other people.

Genesis 3:12-13 – "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

Their sin brought the sentence of spiritual death that would eventually lead to physical death. Their sin also brought sorrow and suffering.

Genesis 3:16-19 – "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and

hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”

As a result of Adam willfully choosing sin over God:

1. All people are born with a sin nature.

Romans 5:12 – “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”

Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

2. All unsaved people are the children of Satan.

John 8:44 – “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do...”

3. The whole human race is in captivity to sin and Satan.

John 8:34 – “Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.”

4. All people are subjected to physical death.

Romans 5:12 – “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”

The Doctrine of Sin

Understanding the Biblical Doctrine of Sin is important because a correct understanding of sin is necessary to the right understanding of salvation. Unfortunately, certain “Christian Groups” compromise and do not preach God’s view of sin. They do this so that they can have more people in their churches, which leave many church members unsaved. The Bible declares the fact of sin.

Romans 3:10 – “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:”

Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

Romans 5:12 – “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”

Furthermore, many men in the Bible have admitted they were a sinner.

1. Jacob said in Genesis 32:10, “I am not worthy”
2. Job said in Job 40:4, “I am vile”
3. Isaiah said in Isaiah 6:5, “I am a man of unclean lips”
4. Peter said in Luke 5:8, “I am a sinful man”
5. Paul said in 1 Timothy 1:15, “I am the chief of sinners”

There are a number of words found in the Bible that refer to “Sin”.

1. Sin. ***Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”***

The word “sin” means to “miss the mark”. According to God, everything that is not absolutely perfect is sin. It takes only one sin to make a man a sinner. A man may live a really good life, but he will always fall short of God’s standard, because he is a sinner.

2. Transgression. ***1 John 3:4 – “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”***

The word “transgression” means “to go beyond” or “to exceed the limits”. It means a violation of the law. It is a failure to conform to the will of God.

3. Iniquity. ***Isaiah 59:2 – “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”***

The word “iniquity” means “wickedness”. It is a distortion of what is right.

4. Unrighteousness. ***1 John 5:17 – “All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death.”***
5. Trespasses. ***Matthew 6:14-15 – “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”***

6. Offenses. ***Romans 4:25 – “Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”***

7. Faults. *James 5:16* – “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
8. Ungodliness. *Romans 1:18* – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;”
9. Unlawfulness. *2 Peter 2:8* – “(For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)”
10. Indebtedness. *Matthew 6:12* – “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

In conclusion, sin is willful disobedience to God. It is rebellion against God. It is refusing to allow God to have His way in our lives. It is every indulgence to the lusts of the flesh. It is a departure from God. It is selfish exaltation of self above God.

The Effects of Sin

The fact of sin cannot be denied. The result of Adam’s sin in the Garden of Eden is evident in our world today. As a result of sin, God cursed the ground.

Genesis 3:18 – “Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; ...”

It is because of sin that animals are often wild and dangerous.

Genesis 9:2 – “And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, ...”

The fact is, all of God’s creation groans and travails under the weight of sin.

Romans 8:22 – “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”

As a result of sin, all men are sinners.

Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”

We are not sinners because we sin, but we sin because we are sinners! That is, all men are born with a sin nature, an inherent tendency to sin. We are sinners from birth.

Psalms 51:5 – “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

We are sinners by nature.

Jeremiah 17:9 – “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

We are sinners by choice.

John 3:19 – “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

We are sinners by our actions.

James 4:17 – “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

From the very beginning, sin has carried with it a penalty – death!

Genesis 2:16-17 – “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

James 1:15 – “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death; ...”

At this very moment, according to the Word of God, the unbelieving sinner is:

1. Condemned already – *John 3:18 – “... he that believeth not is condemned already ...”*
2. Under the wrath of God – *John 3:36 – “... he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”*
3. Without eternal life – *1 John 5:12 – “... he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”*
4. Lost – *Matthew 18:11 – “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.”*
5. Spiritual dead – *Ephesians 2:1 – “... who were dead in trespasses and sins;”*
6. Guilty – *James 2:10 – “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”*

According to the Bible, the penalty for the unbelieving sinner is an eternal death in the Lake of Fire.

Revelation 20:15 – “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

The Catholic Church teaches that those who die without Christ go to a place called Purgatory where they will suffer for the sins they have committed and then have a second chance to be saved and go to Heaven. Is that true? As always, we need to look to the Bible for the answer. What does the Bible say how long the sinner will be punished for his sins.

Matthew 25:46 – “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

The penalty for the unbelieving sinner is an everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire.

The Age of Accountability

All that I have stated concerning the effects of sin upon mankind applies to every human being – including new-born babies, young children, and those that are mentally handicapped. However, many people believe the Bible teaches that a Just God does not hold infants personally accountable for their sins.

If that is true, then there comes a time when a person does become accountable for their sin – hence the term, the “Age of Accountability”. The concept of the “age of accountability” is that children are not held accountable by God for their sins until they reach a certain age.

If a child dies before reaching the “age of accountability,” that child will, by the grace and mercy of God, be granted entrance into heaven. Is the concept of an age of accountability biblical? Let’s establish some facts. First, all children have a sin nature.

Psalm 51:5 – “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

Second, all children manifest their sin nature immediately.

Psalm 58:3 – “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.”

When was the last time you had to teach your child to lie or steal a cookie or his sister’s favorite toy? You don’t have to teach a child to sin. They do it by nature.

Each person, infant or adult, stands guilty before God; each person has offended the holiness of God. The only way God can be just and at the same time declare a person righteous is for that person to have received forgiveness by faith in Christ. Salvation is an individual choice. But we also learn about something about God with those who cannot make choices between good and evil.

Deuteronomy 1:39 – “Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.”

Jonah 4:11 – “And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?”

So, the age of accountability is the belief that God saves all those who die never having possessed the ability to make a decision for or against Christ. This would not only include little children but those who are mentally handicapped as well. They believe that they are “safe” in Jesus.

The one passage that seems to identify with this topic more than any other is 2 Samuel 12:21–23. The context of these verses is that King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, with a resulting pregnancy. The prophet Nathan was sent by the Lord to inform David that, because of his sin, the Lord would take the child in death. David responded to this by grieving and praying for the child.

But once the child was taken, David’s mourning ended. David’s servants were surprised to hear this. They said to King David, “What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food.” David’s response was, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.’ Then we read, ...

2 Samuel 12:23 – “But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.”

David’s response indicates that those who cannot believe are safe in the Lord. David said that he could go to the child but could not bring the child back to him. David seemed to be comforted by this knowledge. In other words, David seemed to be saying that he would see his baby son (in heaven), though he could not bring him back.

The Bible does not say when a child reaches the “Age of Accountability”. Some people try to put a specific age like 4 years old, 8 years old, or 12 years old. Thirteen is the most common age suggested for the age of accountability, based on the Jewish custom that a child becomes an adult at the age of 13. However, the Bible gives no direct support to the age of 13 always being the age of accountability. It likely varies from child to child.

A child has passed the age of accountability once he or she can make a faith decision for or against Christ. Charles Spurgeon’s opinion was that “a child of five can as truly be saved and regenerated as an adult.”. In some godly homes, where the Bible is taught, it may be at an early age and in other homes with ungodly parents, it may later.

We readily admit that you won’t find the phrase “age of accountability” in the Bible. However, by piecing together Bible verses we looked at, we can say that most likely God applies Christ’s payment for sin to those who cannot believe. God applying Christ’s death to those who cannot believe would seem consistent with His love and mercy.

While good people can disagree about this subject, because there is no specific Bible verse that says infants that die go to directly to Heaven. Of this we are certain: God is loving, holy, merciful, just, and gracious. Whatever God does is always right and good, and He loves children even more than we do.

It is our position that God applies Christ’s payment for sin to babies, young children, and those who are mentally handicapped since they are not mentally capable of understanding their sinful state and their need for the Savior.