



FIRST PRINCIPLES

TABLE of CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	5
TEACHER TIPS	6-7
FIRST PRINCIPLES STUDIES	
TIMELINE <i>Seeking God</i>	9
WORD	10-11
DISCIPLESHIP	12-13
SIN <i>Darkness</i>	14-15
CROSS	16-17
SALVATION <i>Light</i>	18-19
CHURCH	20-21
COST <i>Lordship</i>	22-23
ADDITIONAL STUDIES	
KINGDOM	24-25
PREPARED TO ANSWER <i>Sound Doctrine</i>	26-27
HOLY SPIRIT	28-29
RESTORATION	30
APPENDICES	
A. DEFINITION OF SINS	31-32
B. MEDICAL ACCOUNT OF THE CROSS	33-38
C. HISTORY OF THE SINNER'S PRAYER	39-45

INTRODUCTION

The good news of Jesus has been taught from generation to generation since his life, ministry & message first went public 2000 years ago.

As his followers, we are commissioned to carry on the legacy of our Lord & teach others the truth about him. For this task there is only one source we can trust completely, the Word of God.

This “First Principles” Bible study booklet is a compilation of several other evangelistic series.

The goal: to lead the lost to Jesus. **Luke 19:10**

While any Bible study series is constructed by people, & therefore imperfect, the Scriptures are authored by God, & perfect. **2 Timothy 3:16**

No one can ever change the Word of God, but these studies might need to be edited in order to help someone in the conversion process.

Proceed carefully & courageously: teaching the Word of God is no trivial task. Christians teaching the Bible cannot just rely on a study series to do the work of conversion. They must pray for wisdom, search the Scriptures & consider the needs of the friends they are helping.

However, those same Christians must not shrink back from boldly proclaiming the truth of God’s Word to their friends. **Hebrews 10:39**

Teachers make mistakes! It’s a good thing love covers over a multitude of sins.
1 Peter 4:8

Remember the love shown you as you studied the Bible to follow Christ. Go & do likewise. **Luke 10:37**

TEACHER TIPS

1.PRAYER

We pray about the things most important to us. Helping someone know God is as important as it gets. As teachers of scripture, we pray for wisdom so we may correctly handle the Word of truth. Pray for God's Spirit to guide you. Pray to treat your friend with compassion & conviction like Jesus would. Pray for hearts to be open toward God's Word. Pray continually. **1 Thessalonians 5:17.**

2.PARTNERSHIP

1 Thessalonians 2:8 *"We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us."*

Be Friends. People need to know you care about them. Get to know your friends and let them get to know you as well. Have them into your home. Have them spend time with your family/roommates as well as getting time in their home with theirs. If meeting in a home isn't possible for a Bible study, make sure to choose a place where you are able to speak freely & safely.

3.POWER

Remember The Power Source. Let the Word of God speak. You don't have to force anything unnaturally. Speak the truth in love, but remember God has the power to make it grow! **1 Corinthians 3:5-9.** Keep in mind that different people learn at different paces. **Mark 4:33.** Before moving to another study make sure they are putting into practice what they have learned. **Matt 7:24-27**

4.PERSONAL Example

1 Timothy 4:16 *"Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers."*

Teaching scriptures to others inspires **us** to live a life worthy of imitation.

- * **On Time.** Integrity. **Matthew 5:37** Let your yes be yes. Not only starting on time but finishing. Try to keep each study under 90 minutes.
- * **Organized.** Planning ahead. **1 Peter 3:15** Be prepared to answer.
- * **Open** with your life because you expect them to be the same.
- * **Opportunity** to serve [rides to church, help at home, etc.] **1 Peter 4:10** Use your gift to serve others.
- * **On Task,** willing to answer questions but focused on what matters & avoiding strong emotion. **Titus 3:9** No quarreling.

5.PROPER Tools

Make sure your friend has a Bible with a good translation they can readily understand. If not, a great gesture would be to buy your friend a Bible.

- * Use a translation that will be the **MOST CLEAR** & reduce confusion.
- * Teaching the Bible doesn't mean having all the answers but it does mean correctly handling the truth. **2 Tim 2:15**
- * Prepare to teach the Bible by understanding the context of the passages ahead of time & knowing the purpose of each study.
- * Try **NOT** to bring this booklet to the bible study. Instead, use this resource to prepare ahead of time [make your own notes].

6. PULL PEOPLE In

Get Help. Ask advice *[with discretion]* from mature Christians who can help you lead the studies. Connect your friend with other brothers & sisters in the fellowship. Invite them to join the bible studies.

- * They can take notes.
- * Where two or more are gathered. **Matthew 18:20**
- * Relatable Factor: Different life experiences.
- * Blind Spots: We don't see everything or forget.
- * If one can't make a study, others can continue

John 4:37. What one sows, another reaps.

DEFER & REFER: Teachers must have the humility to defer a question to someone with more experience/knowledge on a subject & be willing to refer if an issue arises that demands expert &/or professional help. *[Substance abuse, sexual addiction, mental illness, legal trouble...]*

7. POSE Questions

Jesus was a “master-asker,” always probing deeper into hearts with insightful questions. More often than not, asking a question will help someone find an answer on their own [deep], rather than having it told to them [shallow]. **Proverbs 20:5.** Be the teacher of understanding who can draw out the deepest of thoughts & emotions.

This study series is geared specifically for questions & answers. Most scriptures will have questions accompanying them to promote deeper teaching & discussion. Create a question-friendly environment for friends to feel safe to clarify, re-visit or even disagree with something. This is not an assembly line. The goal is not just to pass on information, but to plant & water the seed of faith deeply into the soil of searching souls.

TIMELINE SEEKING GOD

PURPOSE

Understand their spiritual journey up to now & work towards studying the Bible regularly.

TEACHER TIPS

It is a good idea to start this study with a good discussion about each other's spiritual or religious background. The more you get to know about their personal background, the more you will be able to help them apply the Scriptures to their life.

This is a conversation, not an interrogation. Perhaps you can start by saying something like this: "Before studying the Bible together, it helps to share about our spiritual journeys - where we come from & what we believe..."

A Spiritual Timeline:

This is a helpful exercise to mark significant spiritual events.

[After filling this in, the person leading the bible study will hold onto it for future studies]

Draw a horizontal line from their birth day [0] to current age.

As questions are answered, label them on the timeline:



What are some significant spiritual events you'd put on this timeline?

- * Would you say you are a Christian? If so, when did you become one?
- * What church(es) did you go to?
- * Have you personally studied the bible?
- * Were you saved? How did that happen?
- * Do you believe your sins were forgiven? If so, when?
- * Were you baptized?
- * Did you receive the Holy Spirit?

* How would you teach someone else to become a Christian?

Acts 17:24-27

Why does He set up times & places for us?

Why do you think God led us to each other today?

Jeremiah 29:11-13

What's a practical way we can seek God with all our hearts?

CLOSING INSTRUCTION

- * Those leading the study can **share** how they started seeking God.
- * **Explain** there are some great Bible Studies you would love to do together.
- * **Set up** next study. Extend an invitation to church or small group.

WORD

REVIEW

Summarize their timeline & ask if they'd like to add anything major.

PURPOSE

Establish the Bible as the standard for our lives

TEACHING TIPS

The Bible isn't boring. Without being overbearing, teach the scriptures with enthusiasm!

John 1:1-2, 14

Who is the Word? Jesus

If someone doesn't know the Word, they don't know Jesus

Same in relationships: we know a person by their 'words.'

Good relationships are 2-way streets of communication:

How do we speak to God? Prayer

How does God primarily speak to us? His Word

2 Timothy 3:14-17

What is "Scripture?" The Bible.

What is "God-breathed?" God spoke the words.

In life, what kind of training have you gone through? *Sports, Job...*

* We must be trained with the Word to be spiritually equipped.

* Like going on football field with 'equipment.' Protects us.

Hebrews 4:12-13

What does "living & active" mean? Still relevant.

Why is the Bible "sharper than a double-edged sword?"

It is the only tool precise enough to accurately analyze ourselves.

Doctor's scalpel sharp enough to get cancer out:

Better to let Him [*Great Physician*] operate on you now than wait for judgment.

2 Peter 1:20-21

According to this passage, who wrote the Bible?

Draw a line on paper, then ask...

"What made the line, the pen or the person?"

Both! But the Author could've used a different pen.

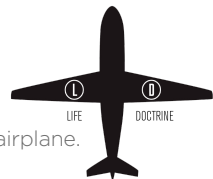
God used 40 different 'pens' to write the Bible, but He is the sole author.

1 Timothy 4:16

What is Life? What you do.

What is Doctrine? What you believe.

Which is more important? Both equal: like the wings of an airplane.



Obeying the Word means doing our best to practice what we preach.

What happens if we 'persevere' at this? Save ourselves & our hearers.

John 8:31-32

Is believing in Jesus enough? No, we must **HOLD** to the teaching. James 2:26

Some people live according to how they 'feel' in the moment:

What does Jesus say we should live by? His teaching

Are you willing to put the Word over your feelings?

Mark 7:1-13

Why was Jesus' response so intense? Their tradition nullified the Word.

Is there such a thing as a 'good' tradition? Yes.

Tradition becomes 'bad' when it is valued more than the Word.

Are you willing to put the Word over your traditions?

John 12:47-50

What is the ultimate judge?

B.I.B.L.E [Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth]

Like the teacher giving you the answers for the final exam on 1st day of class: Learn it now & you'll be ready then.

Are you ready to make the Bible your standard for making decisions?

Acts 17:10-12

3E's: 1. Eager 2. Examined 3. Everyday

CHALLENGE:

Commit to Reading the Word of God like a Berean [3E's]

Start reading the gospel of John.

Write down questions/comments as you go.

Set up to have a quiet time together & schedule the next study.

WORD: FURTHER STUDY [CAN BE GIVEN AS HOMEWORK]

2 Samuel 22:31 The Word of God is flawless.

Psalms 119:97-104 The Bible gives us tremendous wisdom.

Isaiah 66:1-2 The Bible is worthy of deep respect.

Matthew 7:24-27 Obedience to the Word is our solid foundation.

Romans 10:17 Faith is developed by reading the Word of God.

1 Peter 1:22-25 We are born again through the Word of God.

DISCIPLESHIP

REVIEW

Last time we ended with a challenge to start reading the book of John: how is that going? Questions? Comments? [Review any homework]

PURPOSE

Establish the standard of following Jesus.

TEACHING TIPS

Questions are geared for them to “get it.” Help them wrestle for the answers in Scripture without giving them away.

Matthew 28:18-20

What does Jesus want everyone to become? Disciples

How would you define “disciple”? Follower, apprentice, student

Acts 11:19-26

What’s the difference between disciple & Christian?

“Christ-ian” The “ian” suffix means “like” or belonging to.

Biblically, a Christian & a disciple are the same!

How many times do you think the word Christian is in the Bible? 3x

How many times do you think the word disciple is in the Bible? over 270x

*The rest of this Bible study will focus on what a **disciple** is so we can clearly understand what a **Christian** is.*

Mark 1:16-18

How do these fisherman react to Jesus?

Why were they so urgent?

What does Jesus promise them if they follow?

What is a “fisher of men”?

Jesus gave them a new purpose: What is your purpose in life right now?

Luke 9:23-26

Who is Jesus speaking to? “If anyone...” Invitation to discipleship is for all.

What does “deny yourself” mean? Deny sinful desire. God’s will vs. My will.

What’s an example of something you could deny yourself of?

What does “carry your cross mean? Crucify sin

Can you think of any examples of people who may have “gained the whole world but lost their very self?”

What do you think “ashamed of his words” means?

Luke 14:25-27

Love Christ more than any person

What is your favorite food? Do you love that food & your [Mom] equally?

Of course not! We love our [Mom] so much that, in comparison, it looks like we HATE that food. **That's how much God wants us to love Him.

Luke 14:28-30

What does building a tower have to do with becoming a disciple?
Disciples must 'count the cost' to finish what they start.

Luke 14:31-33

What happens when you fight someone 2x as strong as you?
We never win when we fight against God.
What's one thing you might need to surrender to God?

John 13:34-35

What's the difference between the Old & New Command? Jesus is the standard.
Why will others be able to tell a true disciple of Jesus by this kind of love?

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

ROAD MAP: must know the starting point before you can reach destination.
Are you a disciple?
Do you want to be one?
Are you willing to come to a church that believes in making disciples?

We have a few more Bible studies that we believe will equip you to make the decision be a disciple of Jesus.

DISCIPLESHIP: FURTHER STUDY [CAN BE GIVEN AS HOMEWORK]

Matthew 7:21-23 We must do the will of God to go to heaven.
Luke 5:1-11 Simon Peter being called to be a disciple.
Luke 11:1-4 We learn to live our spiritual life from imitating Jesus.
1 Corinthians 11:1 We imitate Christ-like characteristics in others.
1 John 2:3-6 We must walk as Jesus did.
Matthew 22:35-38 Two greatest commands: Relationship with God & others.

SIN DARKNESS

REVIEW
How is your prayer life & daily Bible reading going?
Any questions? [Review any homework]

PURPOSE
Understanding sin & its consequences.

TEACHING TIPS
Discussing sin may trigger defensiveness, cause sadness or might not be taken seriously at all. It's crucial to create a "safe place" for your friend; be humble by being open & vulnerable yourself.

1 Peter 2:9-10

Which description words in this Scripture would you put in the Light column?
Darkness column?

DARKNESS	LIGHT
Not People of God	Chosen
No Mercy	Royal Priesthood
-	Holy Nation
Not a Disciple	People of God
	Mercy
	-
	A Disciple

Everyone is either in the darkness or in the light.
From what we've studied so far, where are you?

Isaiah 59:1-3

What is verse 1 saying about God's arms & ears?
God can save/hear anyone, anytime.
But sin separates us from God, like a wall separating two people in a relationship.

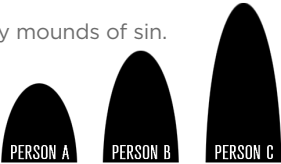


Can you remove the wall by yourself? By not sinning further?

You are only reconciled to God if HE removes the wall. HE must forgive you.
The point in time sin is forgiven is the point a person is saved.

Romans 3:22-24

3 people represented by mounds of sin.



Who is furthest away from God? All equal. All lost.

How much sin makes you a sinner? Just one.
Can good deeds cancel sin out? No, only God's grace can do that.

1 John 1:5-10

God is light. We are in darkness because of sin.

What does "walk in the light" mean? It doesn't mean being perfect, but being perfectly honest & open through confession.

James 5:16

Who should we confess to? Why?

Healing comes from God through prayer & confession with one another.

Proverbs 28:13

Besides confessing, what else must we do to find mercy?

What does "renounce" mean? To turn away from, give up.

Galatians 5:19-21

This list of behaviors are just some of the symptoms that show up in our lives when we live according to our sinful nature.

What is the eternal destiny of the person that continues to live like this? We cannot go to heaven if we live according to our sinful nature.

Define each sin: **Appendix A**

TEACHING TIP:

Openness breeds openness: have each disciple briefly share one of their sins from this list.

The person you're studying with might want to start confessing their sins at this point - if so, go with it. Others might not - if so, encourage them to share which one sin seems the most difficult to overcome. Everyone reacts differently & those leading the study should be ready to assess & adjust accordingly.

CHALLENGE

Write complete list of sins [based on Galatians 5:19-21]

SIN: FURTHER STUDY [CAN BE GIVEN AS HOMEWORK]

James 4:17 Sins of omission.

Mark 7:20-22 All sin starts in our heart. No one to blame.

2 Timothy 3:1-5 Sins of the heart are equally damaging.

Ephesians 5:11-14 Exposing sin sets us free from sin's slavery.

Colossians 3:5-10 Get rid of the old life, put on the new.

John 3:19-21 Walk in the light. Expose 'cockroaches'.

CROSS

REVIEW

How has your mindset about sin changed since our last study?
Was it difficult to write a sin list? Is there anything else you want to confess?
Any questions? [Review any homework]

PURPOSE

Personalizing Jesus' sacrifice on the cross.

TEACHING TIPS

They can confess sins from their sin list if there hasn't been a chance to do this yet. You may want to ask questions along the way to clarify or help them with something specific.

You can transition into the Cross study by saying something like "There are deep spiritual consequences to our sins & we're going to study how those sins are connected to Jesus & the cross."

Jesus went through 3 types of PAIN leading up to, & during, his death on the cross:
Emotional, Physical & Spiritual.

EMOTIONAL PAIN

Matthew 26 *[take turns reading each section]*

26:31-35 What does Jesus predict?

How do Peter & the other disciples respond?

26:36-46 How is Jesus feeling?

What does he ask friends? How do they respond?

Why did he pray 3x?

26:47-56 Have you ever been betrayed? Ever been deserted?

26:57-68 Have you ever been spit on? Ultimate gesture of humiliation & disrespect.

Now we'll look at 3 men & their different responses to Jesus

26:69-75 How did **Peter** respond? He took responsibility & wept bitterly.

Has anyone ever broken a promise to you? How does that feel?

27:1-10 How did **Judas** respond? He took responsibility but committed suicide.

Guilt can turn us toward God or farther away from Him.

27:11-26 How did **Pilate** respond? He avoided responsibility.

Could Pilate have stopped Jesus' death? Yes. He is still responsible.

PHYSICAL PAIN

27:27-44 2000 years ago everyone knew exactly what crucifixion meant. To help us understand it, we're going to read through an expert medical account of what happened:

Read **Appendix 2** *[take turns reading: you can rotate every paragraph]*

How do you feel about what Jesus went through?

SPIRITUAL PAIN

Matthew 27:46 What does "forsaken" mean? Forgotten, abandoned.

This would have been the worst pain of all.

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made Jesus become “sin” so that we could become “righteous.” Our sin separated Jesus from his Father for the first time in all eternity.

Isaiah 53:4-6

Isaiah wrote these words about Jesus’ death over 700 years before he was born!
Why did Jesus have to die? Because of “my” sin. It’s “my” responsibility.

Let’s read the passage again but now we’ll personalize it.

Replace “we/our/us” with the name of person studying the bible.

Do you understand that your sin put Jesus on the cross?

How can you repay him?

You can’t; but you can dedicate your life to him & what he did for you.

Are you ready to make that decision?

Romans 6:23

What are wages?

What does sin earn us?

Can you earn a gift?

The proper response is to be humble & accept His gift of grace.

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

How does learning about Jesus dying for you on the cross make you feel?

How does His grace change your mindset about sin?

CHALLENGE

Write a letter to God. Be expressive. Bring it to the next study.

The next time we get together we will study Salvation.

CROSS: FURTHER STUDY [CAN BE GIVEN AS HOMEWORK]

1 Peter 2:21-24 Jesus suffered for our sins. He is our example.

Romans 3:23-25 His death is the ultimate atoning sacrifice.

Romans 5:6-8 Christ’s compassion for sinners is just in time.

Ephesians 1:7-8 The blood of Jesus gives us forgiveness.

Ephesians 2:1-10 We deserve wrath, but God’s grace saves us.

SALVATION LIGHT

REVIEW

Any questions? [Review any homework]
How was writing your letter to God? Can we hear it?

PURPOSE

To understand & commit to God's biblical plan of salvation.

TEACHING TIPS

Be sure to have their original spiritual Timeline for this study to deal with any discrepancies.
There is much confusion in the religious world on how to be saved but the Bible is crystal clear.
[Consult "Prepared to Answer" in the following pages for more resources]

Acts 2:22-23

What is Peter accusing the crowd of? Murdering Jesus.
How might you react if you were accused of murdering a stranger?

Acts 2:36-37

Sin (past, present & future) killed Jesus. We should add "murder" to our list of sins.
What is the right response to being accused of Jesus' murder?

1. "Cut to the Heart" Convicted, Humbled
2. "What shall we do?" Called to action.

Acts 2:38-40

What 'call-to-action' did Peter give them? Repent & be baptized.
What happens to us when we repent & are baptized?

- v.38 Forgiven of sins (saved from what our sins have earned us).
- v.38 Receive the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit.
- v.41 Added to the membership of Christ's church.

According to v.39, who is this promise for?

- "you" Those in the crowd that day.
- "your children" Next generation of the families represented there.
- "who are far off" Those who lived far away.
- "God will call" The future. Us Today!

To summarize, how does the Bible teach someone to be saved?
Repent & be Baptized.

What is REPENTANCE?

Metanoia [Greek] Mind Change
Repentance transforms the way we think which leads to change in action.

Romans 12:2

How can we know God's will? By repenting: transforming the way we think.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11

What is the difference between Godly sorrow & worldly sorrow?

Qualities of Godly sorrow:

Earnestness: Strong determination to get right with God.

Eagerness to clear yourself: Desire to be transparent.

Indignation: Righteous anger directed at Satan/Sin.

Alarm: Urgent fear of sin's consequences.

Longing: Crave reconciliation with God.

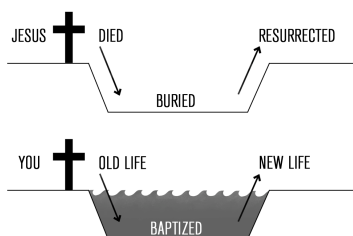
Concern: For who our sin hurts: God & Others.

Readiness for Justice: Taking responsibility for sin & their consequences.

As you think about the sins you've committed & confessed, how can you put ONE of these qualities of Godly sorrow into practice today?

What is BAPTISM?

Baptizo [Greek] Immerse, dip or plunge in water.



Romans 6:1-5

How do these verses explain what baptism is?

Participation in Jesus' death & resurrection.

1 Peter 3:18-22

What cleansed the wickedness from the earth in Noah's day? Water of the flood.

What's the vehicle that saved Noah's family? The ark.

What cleanses wickedness from our lives today? Water of baptism.

What's the vehicle that saves us? The Cross [Jesus' resurrection].

Baptism is the pledge [or response] of a convicted conscience toward God.

Acts 22:16

Do you want to get baptized? Why?

CHALLENGE

Pick a baptism date on the calendar.

Explain there a couple more Bible studies to help prepare them for baptism.

SALVATION: FURTHER STUDY [CAN BE GIVEN AS HOMEWORK]

REPENTANCE

Acts 3:19 Repentance brings forgiveness of sin & refreshing.

Mark 9:43-48 Repentance calls for radical action.

Acts 26:20 A repentant life is obvious.

Titus 2:11-14 Jesus' death motivates us to repent.

Romans 2:4 God's kindness leads us to repentance.

Galatians 5:19-26 Life by the Spirit is the opposite of life in Sin.

BAPTISM

Colossians 2:11-14 Raised through your faith - personal decision.

Titus 3:4-6 Baptism is not a work we do to save ourselves, it's God's work through his Spirit.

Ephesians 4:4-6 Only 1 baptism. Just like only 1 birthday. [John 3:1-7]

CHURCH

REVIEW

Any questions? [Review any homework]
If someone asked you “how can I be saved?” How would you answer?

PURPOSE

To understand God’s one church & our role in it.

TEACHING TIPS

Depending on religious background, this study has potential to trigger defensive emotions. Avoid using accusatory language. The Scriptures speak on their own about church doctrine & the dangers of division.

What does the word “church” mean to you?
Church means a lot of different things to different people today, but it was very clear to the 1st Century Christians.

Acts 2:41

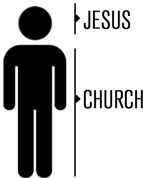
What were those 3000 people “added” to when they were baptized? The Church! Ekklesia [Greek] gathering of people for a specific reason.

Acts 2:42-47

What characteristics of the church stand out to you in this description?
Have you noticed these qualities in our church fellowship? How?
Any church of true disciples of Jesus should be described this way.

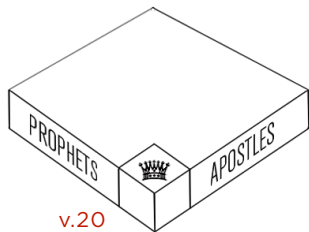
Colossians 1:15-18

Who is the head? Who is the body?
If someone wants a relationship with Jesus, they must be a part of his body.
What happens if you Cut off the Head? Cut off Body?



Ephesians 2:19-22

Can you be both God’s citizen & a citizen of the world? No. Only one.
If God is the father, what do the members of his household call each other?
Children call each other brother or sister.



v.20
Prophets (OT)
Apostles (NT)
+ Jesus
Bible (Foundation)

v.21 “JOINED TOGETHER”
Put name of person studying the bible in middle & disciples’ names in the surrounding bricks.



Different Readers for following 3 passages: “Look for recurring theme”

Ephesians 4:4-6 1 body, 1 faith, 1 baptism

Romans 12:4-5 1 body, each part belongs

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 1 body, all parts baptized into 1

What’s the reoccurring theme in all 3 passages? One.

Why is “1” so important? Unity.

1 Corinthians 12:14-27

What stands out to you about the body of Christ here?

What will you add to the church? [Talents, Serving, Time, Money...]

What is 1 thing you can start doing immediately?

1 Corinthians 1:10-13

What does this scripture warn against?

Who were some of the Corinthians following? Can that still happen today?

Hebrews 10:24-25

What does “spur one another on” mean?

Spur: Device with a small spike worn on a rider’s heel used to urge a horse forward.

What was the bad “habit” [v.25] they needed help with?

Why is meeting together regularly such an important thing to God?

CHALLENGE

Prioritize the Body of Christ by committing to the Church’s meetings: *[Sunday Worship, Midweek Service & Small Group]*.

* If they are meeting this challenge already, focus the challenge on meeting & building relationships with more disciples.

Choose a discipling partner(s) together: *Someone they feel safe around, can pray with, confess to, learn from, etc. Set up a time to meet.*

CHURCH: FURTHER STUDY [CAN BE GIVEN AS HOMEWORK]

Matthew 6:33 Seek first his Kingdom.

Hebrews 3:12-13 Encourage one another daily.

Acts 5:1-11 Like an actual body, sin in one part affects the whole.

Matthew 18:15-17 The church is involved with conflict resolution.

COST LORDSHIP

REVIEW

Any questions? [Review any homework]

Are you ready to make the decision to become a Christian?

PURPOSE

Solidify final decision to make Jesus Lord of their life & be baptized.

TEACHING TIPS

- * Seek Help. Be sure to have a mature Christian & their future discipling partner(s) present.
- * Be Thorough. This is a cumulative review. It may not be necessary to read all the passages.
- * Look for Attitudes, not just Answers. Do you sense and see this person's life really changing? Are they joyfully entering the Kingdom or is it a burden?
- * It's common to get to this point & find newly realized fears, unexposed sin or other issues that haven't surfaced already. Patiently work through any questions or concerns they have.

Why do you want to become a disciple of Jesus?

2 Corinthians 5:14

Jesus' love compels us. Jesus died for me & I want to give him my life in return.

Luke 14:25-33

We count the cost so we can finish what we start.

Philippians 2:5-11

God raised Jesus up from death to resurrection. His rightful position is "Lord" of all.

1. JESUS is LORD of our HEART

Jeremiah 17:9

Why does the Bible say our hearts are deceitful? Emotion can blind us spiritually. What if your "heart" doesn't feel like it wants to follow God anymore? Loving God means obeying his Word. [John 14:23-24]

What does your family think about your decision to be a disciple? Friends?

2 Timothy 3:12

Who will be persecuted? Anyone who "wants" to live a godly life. [also John 15:18-25]
What are examples of persecution you might face as a Christian?

2. JESUS is LORD of our POSSESSIONS

Matthew 6:19-24

Are possessions & money evil? No, they are tools. But they can become idols. What do you think it means to store up treasure in heaven? How will becoming a disciple change your financial focus?

1 Corinthians 15:58-16:2

Church contribution should be regular & proportional to what we make. Are you committed to give regularly to the work of the Lord?
[also 2 Corinthians 9:6-13, 1 Timothy 6:10, 17-19, Malachi 3:8-10, Proverbs 3:9]

3. JESUS is LORD of our RELATIONSHIPS

Romans 15:14

"Discipling" relationships in the church instruct us in life & help us grow spiritually.

1 Corinthians 15:33

Are there any relationships you have now that could pull you away from God?

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1

What is “yoked together?” Wooden harness binding two animals together for work.
Do not get harnessed in intimate relationships with unbelievers.

Who should we be pursuing close personal relationships with? Disciples.

Does that mean that all disciples are perfect & totally trustworthy? No. [Prov. 12:26]

Since disciples only marry other disciples [1 Corinthians 7:39], when it comes to romance, who should a disciple be going on dates with? Disciples.

God must be the center of our romantic life, marriage & family.

4. JESUS is LORD of our TIME

Matthew 6:33

What should we seek first? How do we do that?

Review Convictions from Church Study: Commitment to Body of Christ.

[also Psalm 90:12, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Acts 2:45-46, Acts 4:32-34, 36]

5. JESUS is LORD of our PURPOSE

Matthew 22:37-39 What is our purpose? Love God & Love People.

Are you ready to be an ambassador for Christ among your peers, coworkers, & family?

Review Convictions from Discipleship Study: Training to be a fisher of men.

[also Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 1:16-18, Philemon v6, Acts 8:4]

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

- * Are you ready to make Jesus Lord of every area of your life?
- * Which will be the most difficult area of your life to surrender to God?
- * Is there any particular person that you still need to forgive?
- * Are there sins you haven't had a chance to confess?

Galatians 2:20 Baptism marks the Rebirth of a New Person: Our old life with all its sin & shame is dead & gone. Our new life is resurrected with Christ. It doesn't mean we'll never sin again, but we will be saved.

Before baptism you'll be asked 2 questions:

1. Do you believe Jesus died for you & raised on the 3rd day?
2. What is your good confession?

As we've studied today in Philippians 2, your 'good confession' will be
“JESUS is LORD.” [also Romans 10:9-10]

Are you ready to answer these 2 questions & commit your life to Christ?

Talk through the details of the Baptism; when, where, who, etc...

*This is the **most important decision** anyone can make in a lifetime so make the moment as special as possible!*

KINGDOM

REVIEW

To define God's Kingdom biblically as the reign & rule of God & how it relates to us today.

TEACHING TIPS

The recurring analogy used here is that God's Kingdom crashes into our world like a 'wave' on the shores of human history. This is a helpful tool in understanding the Kingdom. Avoid getting too bogged down in the many prophecies by asking questions with brief answers.

How would you define the 'Kingdom of God'?

This Bible study is set up like a puzzle; we're going to look quickly at several clues & then put the whole thing together at the end.

Isaiah 2:1-4 [written -750BC]

When will it happen? Last Days

Who will be a part of it? All Nations

Where will it take place? Jerusalem

Isaiah 9:6-7

What kind of kingdom language do we find in this passage?

What is unusual about the names given to the one who is coming to establish his reign?

Daniel 2:25-28, 31-35 [written -550BC]

Most biblical scholars agree on the prophecy's meaning:

Gold - Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar

Silver Chest - Persia

Bronze belly & thigh - Greece, Alexander

Legs/feet Iron & Clay - Rome



What happens to all these kingdoms?

What is the difference between these kingdoms & the Kingdom of God?

Daniel 7:18

Who will the receive the Kingdom? Holy People of God (or Saints. Rom.1:7)

Matthew 3:1-6 [written -25AD]

400 years of prophetic silence is broken by John the Baptist.

This begins a new 'wave' of the Kingdom crashing on the earth.

Matthew 4:17

Jesus the King is a huge 'wave' of the Kingdom crashing into our world.

Mark 9:1

Some of his disciples will see the next 'wave' of Kingdom power in their lifetime. Some won't.

John 3:1-7

Being reborn spiritually is a prerequisite for entering the Kingdom.

Luke 17:20-21

Not a physical Kingdom. It is within you (also "among you" or "in your midst")

Matthew 16:13-19

Who gets the keys? Peter will play a big role in the next 'wave.'

Luke 23:50-51

Had the next wave of the Kingdom come yet? No. Joseph is still waiting.

Luke 24:44-49

All Kingdom prophecies will be fulfilled.

Repentance & forgiveness will be preached at the next big Kingdom wave.

"All nations" & "Jerusalem" reaffirm the prophecy from Isaiah 2.

Review all Prophecies then read **Acts 1 & 2:1-41**

Keeping the prophecies in mind, underline anything familiar as we read.

Go through what they underlined. Fill in any blanks with this chart.

Prophetic Scripture	Puzzle Piece	Fulfillment
Isaiah 2	Last Days	Acts 2:1 Temple Destroyed 70AD
	All Nations	Acts 1:8, 2:5, 9-12
	Jerusalem	Acts 1:4, 2:5
Daniel 2	Not Physical	Acts 2:39 Future Generations
Daniel 7	Saints	Acts 2:28
Matt.3,4 & Mark 9	Near	Acts 2:1
	Some not Taste death	Acts 1:18 Judas' suicide
	Power	Acts 1:8, 2:2-4
John 3	Reborn; water & spirit	Acts 1:5, 2:41
Luke 17	Don't know when	Acts 2:2
Matthew 16	Peter with the Keys	Acts 1:15, 2:14
Luke 23	Not at Christ's death	Acts 2:23
Luke 24	Not at Christ's resurrection	Acts 2:24
	Repentance & Forgiveness	Acts 2:38
	All Nations	Acts 1:8, 2:5, 9-12
	Jerusalem	Acts 1:4, 2:5
	Power	Acts 1:8, 2:2-4

What happened during this 'wave' of the Kingdom? The church is started.

REVIEW:

God's reign & rule has been establishing itself on earth since the beginning of time; through creation, Israel's history, the prophets, John the Baptist, Jesus & now the CHURCH!

Acts 2:42-47

This should describe any true Christian church today.

Matthew 13:34-35

Once someone finds the Kingdom, they leave everything else. The Jews did this after Pentecost by staying in Jerusalem rather than going home.

How can you value the Kingdom like this & begin leaving your old life behind?

Matthew 6:33

What does seeking the King & his Kingdom first look like? *Talk through examples of commitment; personal devotional life & public church life.*

PREPARED TO ANSWER SOUND DOCTRINE

Additional resources for the Salvation study

1 Peter 3:15-16

"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience..."

ANSWER TO: "Salvation comes from Faith Alone"

James 2:14-26 "Faith alone" is not sufficient for Salvation.

John 3:16 Faith is the basis of Christianity, but must be understood in context.

[also John 8:30-32, Hebrews 5:9, Romans 1:5, Romans 16:26]

ANSWER TO: "Salvation comes from Praying Jesus into your heart"

Revelation 3:20 Written to Christians - they were ALREADY saved [3:14, 22].

"Be earnest & repent" means to let Christ BACK into your life, not to be converted. The passage mentions nothing about faith, confession or baptism, as the readers were already converted.

Romans 10:9-10 A popular verse. Remember 4 chapters earlier [Romans 6:1-5] Paul teaches that baptism is necessary for Salvation. Scripture does not contradict itself. See [Appendix C](#) by Steve Statten

The false doctrine of "praying Jesus into your heart," "accepting Christ" or "receiving Christ" for Salvation takes Revelation 3:20 out of context. It was invented on the American frontier in the early nineteenth century from this verse.

ANSWER TO: "Once Saved Always Saved"

Hebrews 10:26-27 Salvation can be lost by continual & deliberate rebellion.

1 Peter 1:10 If the saved are locked into eternity, there would be no need to ensure our election.

ANSWER TO: "Infants Should be Baptized for Salvation"

Colossians 2:12 & Galatians 3:26-27 Personal, not proxy faith is key in baptism.

Can babies have faith? No. Neither do babies have the ability to repent.

Ezekiel 18:20 Each person is accountable for their own sin. Guilt is nontransferable ["original sin" is a false doctrine].

ANSWER TO: "The Thief on the Cross didn't get Baptized for Salvation"

Mark 2:10 Jesus had authority during his earthly ministry to forgive sins.

Romans 6:3-4 Baptism is a participation in Jesus' death, burial, & resurrection. The thief could not have been baptized, as Jesus had not yet died, been buried or resurrected.

Hebrews 9:17 The new covenant [New Testament] was not yet in effect, as Jesus had not yet died under the old covenant.

Acts 2:39 Salvation is prescribed for “all who the Lord our God will call” through repentance & baptism. Nowhere in the Bible does it say to imitate what the thief did in order to receive Salvation.

ACTS CONVERSIONS

Acts 2:36-47	First Christians in Jerusalem
Acts 8:26-39	Ethiopian Eunuch
Acts 9:1-22	Paul [also Acts 22:3-16]
Acts 16:13-15	Lydia & her household
Acts 16:22-34	Philippian jailer & his household
Acts 18:24-26	Apollos
Acts 19:1-5	Ephesians

EARLY CHURCH FATHERS “PATRISTICS”

Irenaeus 140AD

Elder in France / Disciple of Polycarp who was a disciple of John

“Baptism is regeneration to God”

Justin 150AD

Converted Philosopher / Martyred with his students for their faith

“There can be no other way than this - to become acquainted with Christ [and] to be washed in the fountain...for the remission of sins”

Tertullian 180AD

Converted Lawyer / Evangelist in Africa

“Christians are made, not born”

“We are plunged in water, but the effect is spiritual, in that we are freed from sins.”

Cyprian 200AD

Elder of Carthage North Africa / Executed by Romans

“Be revived to a new life in the bath of saving water”

HOLY SPIRIT

PURPOSE

Biblically define the Holy Spirit. Make clear how the Holy Spirit is still alive & active today.

THE HOLY SPIRIT [HS] IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis 1:2 What was the HS's role in creation? Agent of Transformation

Exodus 31:3 God decides to fill the Son of Hur with the HS.

Judges 3:10, 6:34, 11:29 God gives all 3 the HS. They don't control it.

Numbers 11:17 God partitions the HS from Moses to elders.

1 Samuel 16:14 The HS departs from Saul [1 Samuel 15:26 Saul rejects God]

THE HOLY SPIRIT [HS] BEFORE PENTECOST

John 14:15-27

v.17 Why do you think the "S" in Spirit is capitalized?

Proper Noun [person] "him"

He is 1 part of the Trinity: Father, Son, HS.

On Earth, Jesus has discretion to give HS

v.26 What is the role of the HS?

HS will "remind" (replace) Jesus & "will teach you"

SUMMARY:

The HS is an agent of transformation.

The HS = JESUS = GOD.

The HS teaches/convicts us.

The HS is NOT earned by us.

The HS is NOT controlled by us.

God gives & takes his HS

[sometimes taken because of rejecting God]



THE HOLY SPIRIT [HS] AFTER PENTECOST

3 Biblical Manifestations of the HS Post-Pentecost

1. IMMERSION

Immersion: When a group of people are blanketed/immersed in the HS.

Acts 2:2-4, 2:33, 10:44

FUNCTION? Usher in Kingdom.

2 main stages: Jews [Acts2] then Gentiles [Acts10]

DO WE HAVE CONTROL OVER IT?

No warning; not praying for it.

It's a promise, not a command [Acts 1:4-5]

STILL EXIST TODAY?

No Biblical or early church record after 2 mass immersions of Acts 2 & 10.

Work of mass immersion was done after Jews/Gentiles entered Kingdom.

Apostles present in Immersions of Acts 2 & 10. No surviving apostles now.

2. INDWELLING

Indwelling: When the HS dwells inside an individual.

Ephesians 2:22

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Acts 2:38

FUNCTION? Personal Salvation.

DO WE HAVE CONTROL OVER IT?

Command: Repent & be Baptized.

Pattern of Acts (Eunuch, Lydia, Jailer, Paul, etc.)

Different from Immersion: Acts 2 & 10 record water baptisms after HS.

STILL EXIST TODAY?

Yes. **Acts 2:39** "will call" is a promise for the future.

[also 1 Peter 3:18-22 & 1 John 5:6-8]

3. INCREDIBLE

Gifted with supernatural powers through the HS. Also "miraculous gifts."

Acts 2:43, 5:12, 6:8, 8:6, 8:13, 14:3, 15:12

FUNCTION? Confirm the Word.

DO WE HAVE CONTROL OVER IT?

Not over gaining/giving it...only over executing it.

Not commanded.

STILL EXIST TODAY?

No, not in the same way. GOD can do incredible miracles anytime, anyplace & through anyone. But that is His choice, not ours.

Transfer of the Incredible Gift of the HS:

Jesus > Apostles > Others [Laying on of hands]

Acts 8:18 Apostles > Philip [stopped there]

2 Timothy 1:6 Paul > Timothy [stopped there]



No more Apostles. **Ephesians 2:20** [past tense, already built].

No need for function. We have the Bible. **1 Corinthians 13:8.**

Potential abuse of power: **1 Corinthians 14.**

Healing gift fades: **Philippians 2:27** Almost dies. **1 Timothy 5:23** Health issue.

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS & CHALLENGE

Do you have the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?

Galatians 5:19-23

Just like sins are obvious, the fruits of the HS are obvious.

Identify which 1 of the 9 you are weakest in & which you are strongest in.

How can you serve someone else with your strength?

How can you work on your weakness?

RESTORATION

PURPOSE

Begin guiding someone who has left God &/or the church to be restored. This should not be the only bible study.

TEACHING TIPS

Each restoration is different. It is important first to listen to their story with these questions in mind; how did they become a disciple? What led to the decision to leave? Why are they coming back? Constructing a written, spiritual timeline is very helpful.

This Bible study focuses on Peter, a disciple who fell away & then was restored.

Luke 5:1-11

How did Peter react when Jesus suggested fishing in deep water? Reluctant. Annoyed.

How did Peter respond to Jesus after the miracle? Didn't want to be near Jesus. Jesus reassures him & then Peter becomes his disciple.

What was it about Jesus that inspired you to follow him at first?

Matthew 26:69-75

After 3 years with Jesus, Peter falls away by disowning him 3 times in shame. Describe how you felt when you left?

John 21:3-14

What are the similarities between this fishing story & Luke 5?

Peter is fishing with his crew.

They catch nothing.

Jesus shows up & gives fishing advice.

The fishermen take the advice.

Jesus produces a miraculous catch.

How is Peter's reaction different than in Luke 5? Peter wants to be with him.

Jesus pursues a relationship with us the same way he did with Peter.

He never gives up. How have you noticed Jesus not giving up on you?

John 21:15-22

3 times Jesus asks Peter if he loves him, the same amount of times Peter disowned him.

The first 2 times, Jesus asks "do you agape me?" Agape [Greek] = sacrificial love.

Peter answers "yes, I phileo you." Phileo [Greek] = friendship love.

The third time, Jesus asks Peter "do you phileo me?"

Jesus meets Peter where he's at. Then he challenges Peter to follow him.

Jesus is the perfect balance of grace & truth.

CHALLENGE

* Have a personal devotional time reviewing Peter's life through these scriptures & write down ways you can relate to his spiritual journey.

* Decide to come consistently to church meetings & a small group.

Appendix A

DEFINITION OF SINS Galatians 5:19-21

1. **Sexual Immorality** (fornication KJV), Greek – n(porneia) – sex outside of the marriage relationship. Includes: adultery, homosexuality, masturbation, pre-marital sex, etc.

2. **Impurity** (uncleanness KJV), Greek – n(akatharsia) – denotes those things that make us impure in a moral sense. It means to be dirty and filthy; to be infested with every kind of unclean, immoral, dirty, and polluted behavior. It is the most immoral behavior imaginable. It is unbridled lust turned loose. (i.e. lust, sexual fantasies, pornography, etc.)

3. **Debauchery** (sensuality NAS, licentiousness RSV, lasciviousness KJV), Greek – n(aselgeia) – denotes absence of moral restraint, lewdness, indecency. Used to describe the lifestyle of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Webster: “to corrupt by sensuality of intemperance, to pervert. A period of excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures, esp. in drinking.” Dirty dancing, immodesty, gluttony, overindulgence. Debauchery; sensuality; lust; running wild; licentiousness; wantonness; homosexuality; lasciviousness; living a wild, partying, and immoral life.

4. **Idolatry** (worship of idols, false gods TEV Phillips), Greek – n(eidololatria) [lit. – service to idols] – putting something or someone other than God as number one in your life. Both the worship of false gods and the failure to have a right relationship with God. Any person who does not worship God is worshipping some idol, and almost everything upon earth can become an idol and consume the heart and passion of a man.

a. What do we idolize? Job, school, family, money, popularity, self, etc.

b. How can you tell who or what someone’s idol is? What their life revolves around.

5. **Witchcraft/Sorcery** (spiritism LB), Greek – n(pharmakia) – denotes the use of drugs to produce an unnatural state of mind, sometimes accompanied by incantations and spells appealing to the occult powers. In the present context, it would include all forms of sorcery including astrology, palm reading, seances, fortune telling, crystals, and other forms of witchcraft.

6. **Hatred** (quarrels NEB, feuds JB), Greek – n(echtra) – denotes attitudes and actions pertaining to enemies. The opposite of love (agape). It is the hatred that lingers and is held for a long, long time; a hatred that is deep within.

7. **Discord** (strife RSV, a contentious temper NEB), Greek – n(eris) – the expression of hatred or enmity toward another, bad temper. Slander. It means that a person fights against another person in order to get something: position, promotion, property, honor, recognition. He deceives, doing whatever has to be done to get what he is after.

8. Jealousy - Greek - n(zelos) - Webster: “mental uneasiness due to suspicion of fear of rivalry; envious resentment against a successful rival or the possessor of any coveted advantage.” Wanting and desiring to have what someone else has. It may be material things, recognition, honor, or position.

9. Fits of rage (bad temper Phillips), Greek - n(thumos) - denotes an outburst of hot anger, wrath, very similar to discord, but focusing more on the heart condition that produces the outburst. Angry tempers; fiery anger; intense fits of anger.

10. Selfish ambition - Greek - n(epitheiai) - denotes a person who, being so consumed with self interest, always ends up in disputes and arguments; being consumed with self, pride, defensiveness.

11. Dissensions - Greek - n(dichostasia) - denotes racism, a prejudiced attitude, bigotry, etc.; deciding that you or your group is better than another. Disputes, divisions, rebellion, standing against others, splitting off from others.

12. Factions (heresies KJV), Greek - n(hairesis) - denotes the forming of a group of sect based on false teaching, with no regard to the “the truth” usually a doctrinal issue. Self-righteousness.

13. Envy - Greek - n(phthonos) - denotes the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others, resentment, malice, etc. The word means that a person covets what someone else has, covets it so much that he wants it even if it means that it has to be taken away from the other person. He may even wish that the other person did not have it or had not received it.

14. Drunkenness - Greek - n(methe) - denotes drunkenness, habitual intoxication, either getting drunk or the habitual use of alcohol or drugs. Getting drunk (methais) is to take intoxicating drink or drugs to affect the senses and faculties; to become intoxicated for the purpose of lust or pleasure; to seek to be tipsy or intoxicated; to seek to loosen moral restraint for the sake of bodily pleasure.

15. Orgies (wild parties LB, carousing NASB), Greek - n(komos) - a drunken, licentious revelry; any uncontrolled indulgence, also carousing, a drinking bout or party. This word graphically describes a life of uncontrolled license, indulgence, and pleasure; taking part in wild parties or in drinking parties; lying around indulging in feeding the lusts of the flesh; orgies.

16. And the like... (other things like these TEV), Greek - adj(homoios) - involves anything else that resembles or is any way “like” the above mentioned things, including all variations of the sins listed. Deceit, pride, independence, hypocrisy, stubbornness.

Appendix B

THE PASSION OF CHRIST FROM A MEDICAL POINT OF VIEW

Dr. C. Truman Davis

Originally published in Arizona Medicine, March 1965

About a decade ago, reading Jim Bishop's *The Day Christ Died*, I realized that I had for years taken the Crucifixion more or less for granted -- that I had grown callous to its horror by a too easy familiarity with the grim details and a too distant friendship with our Lord. It finally occurred to me that, though a physician, I didn't even know the actual immediate cause of death. The Gospel writers don't help us much on this point, because crucifixion and scourging were so common during their lifetime that they apparently considered a detailed description unnecessary. So we have only the concise words of the Evangelists: "Pilate, having scourged Jesus, delivered Him to them to be crucified -- and they crucified Him."

I have no competence to discuss the infinite psychic and spiritual suffering of the Incarnate God atoning for the sins of fallen man. But it seemed to me that as a physician I might pursue the physiological and anatomical aspects of our Lord's passion in some detail. What did the body of Jesus of Nazareth actually endure during those hours of torture?

This led me first to a study of the practice of crucifixion itself; that is, torture and execution by fixation to a cross. I am indebted to many who have studied this subject in the past, and especially to a contemporary colleague, Dr. Pierre Barbet, a French surgeon who has done exhaustive historical and experimental research and has written extensively on the subject.

Apparently, the first known practice of crucifixion was by the Persians. Alexander and his generals brought it back to the Mediterranean world -- to Egypt and to Carthage. The Romans apparently learned the practice from the Carthaginians and (as with almost everything the Romans did) rapidly developed a very high degree of efficiency and skill at it. A number of Roman authors (Livy, Cicero, Tacitus) comment on crucifixion, and several innovations, modifications, and variations are described in the ancient literature.

For instance, the upright portion of the cross (or stipes) could have the cross-arm (or patibulum) attached two or three feet below its top in what we commonly think of as the Latin cross. The most common form used in our Lord's day, however, was the Tau cross, shaped like our T. In this cross the patibulum was placed in a notch at the top of the stipes. There is archeological evidence that it was on this type of cross that Jesus was crucified.

Without any historical or biblical proof, Medieval and Renaissance painters have given us our picture of Christ carrying the entire cross. But the upright post, or stipes, was generally fixed permanently in the ground at the site of execution and

the condemned man was forced to carry the patibulum, weighing about 110 pounds, from the prison to the place of execution.

Many of the painters and most of the sculptors of crucifixion, also show the nails through the palms. Historical Roman accounts and experimental work have established that the nails were driven between the small bones of the wrists (radial and ulna) and not through the palms. Nails driven through the palms will strip out between the fingers when made to support the weight of the human body. The misconception may have come about through a misunderstanding of Jesus' words to Thomas, "Observe my hands." Anatomists, both modern and ancient, have always considered the wrist as part of the hand.

A titulus, or small sign, stating the victim's crime was usually placed on a staff, carried at the front of the procession from the prison, and later nailed to the cross so that it extended above the head. This sign with its staff nailed to the top of the cross would have given it somewhat the characteristic form of the Latin cross.

Gethsemane

But, of course, the physical passion of the Christ began in Gethsemane. Of the many aspects of this initial suffering, the one of greatest physiological interest is the bloody sweat. It is interesting that St. Luke, the physician, is the only one to mention this. He says, "And being in Agony, He prayed the longer. And His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground."

Every ruse imaginable has been used by modern scholars to explain away this description, apparently under the mistaken impression that this just doesn't happen. A great deal of effort could have been saved had the doubters consulted the medical literature. Though very rare, the phenomenon of Hematidrosis, or bloody sweat, is well documented. Under great emotional stress of the kind our Lord suffered, tiny capillaries in the sweat glands can break, thus mixing blood with sweat. This process might well have produced marked weakness and possible shock.

After the arrest in the middle of the night, Jesus was next brought before the Sanhedrin and Caiphus, the High Priest; it is here that the first physical trauma was inflicted. A soldier struck Jesus across the face for remaining silent when questioned by Caiphus. The palace guards then blind-folded Him and mockingly taunted Him to identify them as they each passed by, spat upon Him, and struck Him in the face.

Before Pilate

In the early morning, battered and bruised, dehydrated, and exhausted from a sleepless night, Jesus is taken across the Praetorium of the Fortress Antonia, the seat of government of the Procurator of Judea, Pontius Pilate. You are, of course, familiar with Pilate's action in attempting to pass responsibility to Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch of Judea. Jesus apparently suffered no physical mistreatment at the

hands of Herod and was returned to Pilate. It was then, in response to the cries of the mob, that Pilate ordered Bar-Abbas released and condemned Jesus to scourging and crucifixion.

There is much disagreement among authorities about the unusual scourging as a prelude to crucifixion. Most Roman writers from this period do not associate the two. Many scholars believe that Pilate originally ordered Jesus scourged as his full punishment and that the death sentence by crucifixion came only in response to the taunt by the mob that the Procurator was not properly defending Caesar against this pretender who allegedly claimed to be the King of the Jews.

The Scourging

Preparations for the scourging were carried out when the Prisoner was stripped of His clothing and His hands tied to a post above His head. It is doubtful the Romans would have made any attempt to follow the Jewish law in this matter, but the Jews had an ancient law prohibiting more than forty lashes.

The Roman legionnaire steps forward with the flagrum (or flagellum) in his hand. This is a short whip consisting of several heavy, leather thongs with two small balls of lead attached near the ends of each. The heavy whip is brought down with full force again and again across Jesus' shoulders, back, and legs. At first the thongs cut through the skin only. Then, as the blows continue, they cut deeper into the subcutaneous tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles.

The small balls of lead first produce large, deep bruises which are broken open by subsequent blows. Finally the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. When it is determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner is near death, the beating is finally stopped.

The half-fainting Jesus is then untied and allowed to slump to the stone pavement, wet with His own blood. The Roman soldiers see a great joke in this provincial Jew claiming to be king. They throw a robe across His shoulders and place a stick in His hand for a scepter. They still need a crown to make their travesty complete. Flexible branches covered with long thorns (commonly used in bundles for firewood) are plaited into the shape of a crown and this is pressed into His scalp. Again there is copious bleeding, the scalp being one of the most vascular areas of the body.

After mocking Him and striking Him across the face, the soldiers take the stick from His hand and strike Him across the head, driving the thorns deeper into His scalp. Finally, they tire of their sadistic sport and the robe is torn from His back. Already having adhered to the clots of blood and serum in the wounds, its removal causes excruciating pain just as in the careless removal of a surgical bandage, and

almost as though He were again being whipped the wounds once more begin to bleed.

In deference to Jewish custom, the Romans return His garments. The heavy patibulum of the cross is tied across His shoulders, and the procession of the condemned Christ, two thieves, and the execution detail of Roman soldiers headed by a centurion begins its slow journey along the Via Dolorosa. In spite of His efforts to walk erect, the weight of the heavy wooden beam, together with the shock produced by copious blood loss, is too much. He stumbles and falls. The rough wood of the beam gouges into the lacerated skin and muscles of the shoulders. He tries to rise, but human muscles have been pushed beyond their endurance.

The centurion, anxious to get on with the crucifixion, selects a stalwart North African onlooker, Simon of Cyrene, to carry the cross. Jesus follows, still bleeding and sweating the cold, clammy sweat of shock, until the 650 yard journey from the fortress Antonia to Golgotha is finally completed.

The Crucifixion

The crucifixion begins, Jesus is offered wine mixed with myrrh, a mild analgesic mixture. He refuses to drink. Simon is ordered to place the patibulum on the ground and Jesus quickly thrown backward with His shoulders against the wood. The legionnaire feels for the depression at the front of the wrist. He drives a heavy, square, wrought-iron nail through the wrist and deep into the wood. Quickly, he moves to the other side and repeats the action being careful not to pull the arms too tightly, but to allow some flexion and movement. The patibulum is then lifted in place at the top of the stipes and the titulus reading "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" is nailed in place.

The left foot is now pressed backward against the right foot, and with both feet extended, toes down, a nail is driven through the arch of each, leaving the knees moderately flexed. The Victim is now crucified. As He slowly sags down with more weight on the nails in the wrists excruciating pain shoots along the fingers and up the arms to explode in the brain -- the nails in the wrists are putting pressure on the median nerves. As He pushes Himself upward to avoid this stretching torment, He places His full weight on the nail through His feet. Again there is the searing agony of the nail tearing through the nerves between the metatarsal bones of the feet.

At this point, as the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain. With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward. Hanging by his arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed and the intercostal muscles are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled. Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath. Finally, carbon dioxide builds up in the lungs and in the blood stream and the cramps partially subside. Spasmodically, he is able to push Himself upward

to exhale and bring in the life-giving oxygen. It was undoubtedly during these periods that He uttered the seven short sentences recorded:

The first, looking down at the Roman soldiers throwing dice for His seamless garment, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

The second, to the penitent thief, "Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise."

The third, looking down at the terrified, grief-stricken adolescent John -- the beloved Apostle -- he said, "Behold thy mother." Then, looking to His mother Mary, "Woman behold thy son."

The fourth cry is from the beginning of the 22nd Psalm, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?"

Hours of limitless pain, cycles of twisting, joint-rending cramps, intermittent partial asphyxiation, searing pain where tissue is torn from His lacerated back as He moves up and down against the rough timber. Then another agony begins...A terrible crushing pain deep in the chest as the pericardium slowly fills with serum and begins to compress the heart.

One remembers again the 22nd Psalm, the 14th verse: "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels."

It is now almost over. The loss of tissue fluids has reached a critical level; the compressed heart is struggling to pump heavy, thick, sluggish blood into the tissue; the tortured lungs are making a frantic effort to gasp in small gulps of air. The markedly dehydrated tissues send their flood of stimuli to the brain.

Jesus gasps His fifth cry, "I thirst." One remembers another verse from the prophetic 22nd Psalm: "My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou has brought me into the dust of death."

A sponge soaked in posca, the cheap, sour wine which is the staple drink of the Roman legionaries, is lifted to His lips. He apparently doesn't take any of the liquid. The body of Jesus is now in extremes, and He can feel the chill of death creeping through His tissues. This realization brings out His sixth words, possibly little more than a tortured whisper, "It is finished." His mission of atonement has completed. Finally He can allow his body to die.

With one last surge of strength, he once again presses His torn feet against the nail, straightens His legs, takes a deeper breath, and utters His seventh and last cry, "Father! Into thy hands I commit my spirit."

The rest you know. In order that the Sabbath not be profaned, the Jews asked that the condemned men be dispatched and removed from the crosses. The common method of ending a crucifixion was by crucifracture, the breaking of the bones of the legs. This prevented the victim from pushing himself upward; thus the tension could not be relieved from the muscles of the chest and rapid suffocation occurred. The legs of the two thieves were broken, but when the soldiers came to Jesus they saw that this was unnecessary.

Apparently to make doubly sure of death, the legionnaire drove his lance through the fifth interspace between the ribs, upward through the pericardium and into the heart. The 34th verse of the 19th chapter of the Gospel according to St. John reports: "And immediately there came out blood and water." That is, there was an escape of water fluid from the sac surrounding the heart, giving postmortem evidence that Our Lord died not the usual crucifixion death by suffocation, but of heart failure (a broken heart) due to shock and constriction of the heart by fluid in the pericardium.

Thus we have had our glimpse -- including the medical evidence -- of that epitome of evil which man has exhibited toward Man and toward God. It has been a terrible sight, and more than enough to leave us despondent and depressed. How grateful we can be that we have the great sequel in the infinite mercy of God toward man -- at once the miracle of the atonement (at one ment) and the expectation of the triumphant Easter morning.

Appendix C

THE SINNER'S PRAYER: A BRIEF HISTORY OF A NOVEL PRACTICE

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C.S. Lewis used the term “a great cataract of nonsense” to describe how people use a modern idea to construe Bible theology. One such example, perhaps the best example, is a conversion method called the Sinner’s Prayer. It is more popularly known as the Four Spiritual Laws.

Lewis used this term to describe what happens when someone looks backward at the Bible based only on what he or she has known. Instead, an evangelical should first discern conversion practices from Scriptures and then consider the topic in light of two thousand years of other thinkers. As it is, a novel technique popularized through recent revivals has replaced the biblically sound practice.

Today, hundreds of millions hold to a belief system and salvation practice that no one had ever held until relatively recently. The notions that one can pray Jesus into his or her heart and that baptism is merely an outward sign are actually late developments. The prayer itself dates to the Billy Sunday era; however, the basis for talking in prayer for salvation goes back a few hundred years.

Consider the following appeal:

“Just accept Christ into your heart through prayer and he’ll receive you. It doesn’t matter what church you belong to or if you ever do good works. You’ll be born again at the moment you receive Christ. He’s at the door knocking. You don’t even have to change bad habits, just trust Christ as Savior. God loves you and forgives you unconditionally. Anyone out there can be saved if they ... Accept Christ, now! Let us pray for Christ to now come into your heart.”

Sound familiar? This method of conversion has had far-reaching effects worldwide as many have claimed this as the basis for their salvation. Yet, what is the historical significance of this conversion? How did the process of rebirth, which Jesus spoke of in John 3, evolve into praying him into one’s heart? I believe it was an error germinating shortly after the Reformation, which eventually caused great ruin and dismay in Christendom. By supplying a brief documentation of its short, historical development, I hope to show how this error has served as “a great cataract of nonsense”.

The Reformation

Although things weren’t ideal after the Reformation, for the first time in over a thousand years the general populace was reading the Scriptures. By the early 1600s, one hundred years after the Reformation was initiated, there were various branches of European Christendom that followed national lines. For instance, Germans followed Martin Luther. There were also Calvinists (Presbyterian), the

Church of England (Episcopalian), various branches of Anabaptists and, of course, the Roman church (Catholics). Most of these groups were trying to revive the waning faith of their already traditionalized denominations. However, a consensus had not been reached on issues like rebirth, baptism or salvation--even between Protestants.

The majority still held to the validity of infant baptism even though they disagreed on its significance. Preachers tended to minimize baptism because people hid their lack of commitment behind sayings like "I am a baptized Lutheran and that's that." The influence of the preachers eventually led to the popular notion that one was forgiven at infant baptism but not yet reborn. Most Protestants were confused or ambivalent about the connection between rebirth and forgiveness.

The Great Awakening

The Great Awakening was the result of fantastic preaching occurring in Europe and the eastern colonies during the early to mid 1700s. Though ambivalent on the practice of baptism, Great Awakening preachers created an environment that made man aware of his need for an adult confession experience. The experiences that people sought were varied. Jonathan Edwards, George Whitfield and John Wesley furthered ideas of radical repentance and revival. Although there is much to be learned from their messages, they did not solve the problems of the practices associated with baptism and conversion.

Eventually, the following biblical passage written to and inspired for lukewarm Christians became a popular tool for the conversion of non-Christians:

"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation.Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." (Revelation 3:14-20)

This passage was written explicitly for lukewarm Christians. Now consider how a lecturer named John Webb misused this passage in the mid 1700s as a basis of evangelizing non-Christians:

"Here is a promise of Union to Christ; in these words, I will come in to him. i.e. If any Sinner will but hear my Voice and open the Door, and receive me by Faith, I will come into his Soul, and unite him to me, and make him a living member of that my mystical body of which I am the Head." (Christ's Suit to the Sinner, 14)

Preachers heavily relied on Revelation 3:20. By using the first-person tense while looking into the sinner's eyes, preachers began to speak for Jesus as they exhorted, "If you would just let me come in and dine with you, I would accept you." Even heathens who had never been baptized responded with the same or even greater sorrow than churchgoers. As a result, more and more preachers of Christendom concluded that baptism was merely an external matter--only an outward sign of an inward grace. In fact, Huldreich Zwingli put this idea forth for the very first time. Nowhere in church history was such a belief recorded. It only

appears in Scripture when one begins with a great cataract of nonsense. In other words, it only appears in the New Testament through the imagination of readers influenced by this phenomenon.

Mourner's Seat

A method originated during the 1730s or '40s, which was practically forgotten for about a hundred years. It is documented that in 1741 a minister named Eleazar Wheelock had utilized a technique called the Mourner's Seat. As far as one can tell, he would target sinners by having them sit in the front bench (pew). During the course of his sermon "salvation was looming over their heads." Afterwards, the sinners were typically quite open to counsel and exhortation. In fact, as it turns out they were susceptible to whatever prescription the preaching doctor gave to them. According to eyewitnesses, false conversions were multiplied. Charles Wesley had some experience with this practice, but it took nearly a hundred years for this tactic to take hold.

Cane Ridge

In 1801 there was a sensational revival in Cane Ridge, Kentucky that lasted for weeks. Allegedly, people barked, rolled over in the aisles and became delirious because there were long periods without food in the intense heat. It resulted in the extreme use and abuse of emotions as thousands left Kentucky with wild notions about rebirth. Today it is generally viewed as a mockery to Christianity.

The excesses in Cane Ridge produced expectations for preachers and those seeking religious experience. A Second Great Awakening, inferior to the first, was beginning in America. Preachers were enamored with the idea that they could cause (manipulate) people into conversion. One who witnessed such nineteenth century hysteria was J. V. Coombs who complained of the technique:

"The appeals, songs, prayers and the suggestion from the preacher drive many into the trance state. I can remember in my boyhood days seeing ten or twenty people laying unconscious upon the floor in the old country church. People called that conversion. Science knows it is mesmeric influence, self-hypnotism ... It is sad that Christianity is compelled to bear the folly of such movements." (J.V. Coombs, *Religious Delusions*, 92ff).

The Cane Ridge Meeting became the paradigm for revivalists for decades. A lawyer named Charles Finney came along a generation later to systemize the Cane Ridge experience through the use of Wheelock's Mourner's Seat and Scripture.

Charles Finney

It wasn't until about 1835 that Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875) emerged to champion the system utilized by Eleazar Wheelock. Shortly after his own conversion he left his law practice and would become a minister, a lecturer, a professor, and a traveling revivalist. He took the Mourner's Seat practice, which he called the Anxious Seat, and developed a theological system around it. Finney was

straightforward about his purpose for this technique and wrote the following comment near the end of his life:

"The church has always felt it necessary to have something of this kind to answer this very purpose. In the days of the apostles, baptism answered this purpose. The gospel was preached to the people, and then all those who were willing to be on the side of Christ, were called out to be baptized. It held the place that the anxious seat does now as a public manifestation of their determination to be Christians."

Finney made many enemies because of this innovation. The Anxious Seat practice was considered to be a psychological technique that manipulated people to make a premature profession of faith. It was considered to be an emotional conversion influenced by some of the preachers' animal magnetism. Certainly it was a precursor to the techniques used by many twentieth century televangelists.

In opposition to Finney's movement, John Nevin, a Protestant minister, wrote a book called *The Anxious Bench*. He intended to protect the denominations from this novel deviation. He called Finney's New Measures "heresy", a "Babel of extravagance", "fanaticism", and "quackery". He also said, "With a whirlwind in full view, we may be exhorted reasonably to consider and stand back from its destructive path." It turns out that Nevin was somewhat prophetic. The system that Finney admitted had replaced biblical baptism, is the vertebrae for the popular plan of salvation that was made normative in the twentieth century by the three Bills --- Billy Sunday, Billy Graham and Bill Bright.

Dwight Moody and R. A. Torrey

However, it wasn't until the end of Finney's life that it became evident to everyone and himself that the Anxious Bench approach led to a high fallout rate. By the 1860s Dwight Moody (1837-1899) was the new apostle in American evangelicalism. He took Finney's system and modified it. Instead of calling for a public decision, which tended to be a response under pressure, he asked people to join him and his trained counselors in a room called the Inquiry Room. Though Moody's approach avoided some of the errors encountered in Finneyism, it was still a derivative or stepchild of the Anxious Bench system.

In the Inquiry Room the counselors asked the possible convert some questions, taught him from Scripture and then prayed with him. The idea that prayer was at the end of the process had been loosely associated with conversion in the 1700s. By the late 1800s it was standard technique for 'receiving Christ' as Moody's influence spread across both the United States and the United Kingdom. This was where a systematic Sinner's Prayer began, but was not called as such until the time of Billy Sunday.

R. A. Torrey succeeded Moody's Chicago-based ministry after his death in 1899. He modified Moody's approach to include "on the spot" street conversions. Torrey popularized the idea of instant salvation with no strings attached, even though he never intended as much. Nonetheless, "Receive Christ, now, right here" became

part of the norm. From that time on it became more common to think of salvation outside of church or a life of Lordship.

Billy Sunday and the Pacific Garden Mission

Meanwhile in Chicago, Billy Sunday, a well-known baseball player from Iowa, had been converted in the Pacific Garden Mission. The Mission was Chicago's most successful implementation of Moody's scheme. Eventually, Sunday left baseball to preach. He had great public charm and was one of the first to mix ideas of entertainment with ministry. By the early 1900s he had become a great well-known crusade leader. In his crusades he popularized the Finney-Moody method and included a bit of a circus touch. After fire and brimstone sermons, heavy moralistic messages with political overtones, and humorous if not outlandish behavior, salvation was offered. Often it was associated with a prayer, and at other times a person was told they were saved because they simply walked down his tabernacle's "sawdust trail" to the front where he was standing. In time people were told they were saved because they publicly shook Sunday's hand, acknowledging that they would follow Christ.

Billy Sunday died in 1935 leaving behind hundreds of his imitators. More than anything else, Billy Sunday helped crusades become acceptable to all denominations, which eventually led to a change in their theology. Large religious bodies sold out on their reservations toward these new conversion practices to reap the benefits of potential converts from the crusades because of the allure of success. Both Dwight Moody and Billy Sunday admitted they were somewhat ignorant of church history by the time they had already latched on to their perspectives. This is highly significant because the Anxious Seat phenomenon and offshoot practices were not rooted in Scripture nor in the early church.

Billy Graham, Bill Bright

Billy Graham and his crusades were the next step in the evolution of things. Billy Graham was converted in 1936 at a Sunday-styled crusade. By the late 1940s it was evident to many that Graham would be the champion of evangelicalism. His crusades summed up everything that had been done from the times of Charles Finney through Billy Sunday except that he added respectability that some of the others lacked. In the 1950s Graham's crusade counselors were using a prayer that had been sporadically used for some time. It began with a prayer from his Four Steps to Peace with God. The original four-step formula came during Billy Sunday's era called in a tract called Four Things God Wants you to Know. The altar call system of Graham had been refined by a precise protocol of music, trained counselors and a speaking technique all geared to help people 'accept Christ as Savior.'

In the late 1950s Bill Bright came up with the exact form of the currently popular Four Spiritual Laws so that the average believer could take the crusade experience into the living room of their neighbor. Of course, this method ended with the

Sinner's Prayer. Those who responded to crusades and sermons could have the crusade experience at home when they prayed,

"Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Take control of the throne of my life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be."

Later, in 1977 Billy Graham published a now famous work entitled, *How to Be Born Again*. For all the Scripture he used, he never once uses the hallmark rebirth event in the second chapter of the book of Acts. The cataract (blind spot) kept him away from the most powerful conversion event in all Scripture. It is my guess that it's emphasis on baptism and repentance for the forgiveness of sins was incompatible with his approach.

The Living Bible and Beyond

By the late 1960s it seemed that nearly every evangelical was printing some form of the Four Spiritual Laws in the last chapter of their books. Even a Bible was printed with this theology inserted into God's Word. Thus, in the 1960s, the Living Bible's translation became the translation of choice for the crusades as follows:

"Even in his own land and among his own people, the Jews, he was not accepted. Only a few welcome and received him. But to all who received him, he gave the right to become children of God. *All they needed to do was to trust him to save them. All those who believe this are reborn!* --not a physical rebirth resulting from human passion or plan--but from the will of God."(John 1:11-13, Living Bible, italics mine)

The italicized words have no support at all in the original Greek. They are a blatant insertion placed by presuppositions of the translator, Kenneth Taylor. I'm not sure that even the Jehovah's Witnesses have authored such a barefaced insertion in their corrupt Scriptures. In defense of Taylor's original motives, the Living Bible was created primarily with children in mind. However, the publishers should have corrected the misleading verse in the 1960s. They somewhat cleared it up in the newer LB in the 1990s, only after the damage has been done. For decades mainstream evangelicals were using the LB and circular reasoning to justify such a strong 'trusting moment' as salvation, never knowing their Bible was corrupted.

A whole international enterprise of publishers, universities and evangelistic associations were captivated by this method. The phrases, "Receive Christ," and "Trust Jesus as your personal savior," filled airwaves, sermons, and books. James Kennedy's Evangelism Explosion counselor-training program helped make this concept of conversion an international success. Missionaries everywhere were trained with Sinner's Prayer theology. Evangelicalism had the numbers, the money, the television personas of Graham and Kennedy and any attempt to purport a different plan of salvation would be decried as cultic and "heresy."

Most evangelicals are ignorant of where their practice came from or how Christians from other periods viewed biblical conversion.

C.S. Lewis regarded it as chronological snobbery when we don't review our beliefs against the conclusions of others:

"Most of all, perhaps, we need intimate knowledge of the past. Not that the past has any magic about it, but because we cannot study the future, and yet need something to set against the present, to remind us that the basic assumptions have been quite different in different periods and that much which seems certain to the uneducated is merely temporary fashion. A man who has lived in many places is not likely to be deceived by the local errors of his native village; the scholar has lived in many times and is therefore in some degree immune from the great cataract of nonsense that pours from the press and the microphone of his own age." (Learning in Wartime, 1939)

While most do this unknowingly, evangelicals are skewing church auditoriums all over the world from a clear picture of conversion with a nonsensical practice.

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