

REJOICE! YOU ARE GOD'S CHILD!

By David E. Steele

A Quarterly For New Converts

PREFACE

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This series of lessons has been written with the hope that they can be used in teaching new converts in a "special" Sunday School class. The lessons are designed to cover a regular quarter in place of the regular Sunday School literature.

The subjects of the lessons were chosen to instruct new believers in some fundamental Bible doctrines that born again Christians have believed and taught down through the years. The lessons should bless, encourage, and strengthen each one in becoming a more productive child of God. The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 4:4, "*Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice*". We should be glad to tell every new believer...**Rejoice! you are God's Child!**

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LESSON 1

LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU!

Lesson Text: *John 3:1-13*

Key Verse: *John 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

Our text is one that is familiar to anyone who has studied the Bible for any length of time. Many questions have been raised concerning why Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. Some say he came at night so that his friends would not see him. Others say he was a busy man by day and only had time during the evening hours. While we may not know the reason for his coming, we do know something about Nicodemus. Since

he was a Pharisee, he was a good man. In other words, he believed in keeping the Ten Commandments. We also know he was a ruler of the Jews; therefore, he was a man of power that was looked up to by those about him. In spite of his goodness and authority, Nicodemus realized there was something missing in his life.

It becomes evident that the time of his coming is not as important as the purpose of his coming or the One to whom he came. He came to Jesus because he realized his need for eternal life. He recognized that Jesus was one "come from God" and that God was with Him. We don't know what Nicodemus expected to hear, but he was certainly surprised at what he heard! In verses 3 and 5, Jesus said if a man wanted to "see" and "enter" the kingdom of God, he must be born again. Imagine the astonishment! In verse 4 Nicodemus ask the question "*How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born*". Jesus then explained in verses 5 and 6 that there are two births.

In verse 5 Jesus explains, "*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, He cannot enter into the kingdom of God.*" It is easy to understand Who and What is the "of the Spirit." That is the Holy Spirit of God, (see Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18-19; Rev. 1:5). There has been questions raised over what Jesus ment about the phase in verse 5, "Except a man be born of water." While some believe this phase refers to the water breaking during the physical birth, a better explanation would be that it refers to the Word of God. This would be true for two reasons: #1 In verse 5 Jesus is answering Nicodemus's question about "How can a man be born (again) when he is old." Jesus does not address the first birth (flesh) until verse 6, after He had explained the second birth by the Spirit. #2 It is clear from many verses in the Bible that water (when used in a context about 'washing', 'cleansing', 'salvation') is a picture of the very **WORD OF GOD**. John Chapter 3 is the greatest of all verses about 'salvation', that is the NEW BIRTH. Please see these verses on the subject of the WORD OF GOD in salvation, that is the NEW BIRTH (Psalm 119:9; John 15:3; John 19:34; Romans 10:13-17; Ephesians 5: 26; I Peter 1:23-25; I John 5:6-8. In verse 6 Jesus made a statement that summarized the two births. The "flesh" birth is the natural birth from the mother's womb. However, there is another birth! Jesus said to be born again is to be born of "water" (Word of God) and of "Spirit" and you are borned into the 'spiritual' family of God. We enter into this earthly life through the first birth, but for eternal life the new (or second) birth is required. The purpose of this lesson is to "Look What Happened to You" when you were born again!

I. The New Birth: Just What Is It?

To see what the new birth is, we must first see what it is not. To be born again is not to try self-reform or to turn over a new leaf. (One can turn over a new leaf, but it is

still the same filthy leaf, only a new side is shown.) It is not joining a Church or being baptized. The new birth is a miraculous work of Christ!

- When a baby is born, we call it generation.
- When the child becomes lost it is called degeneration.
- To be born again is called regeneration.

The generation of a new life and the regeneration of a soul are both creative works of God. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17, *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new"*. To be born again is to be made alive in Christ after being spiritually dead, *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins"* (Ephesians 2:1). Just as we were born into our earthly families by the natural birth, we are now born into the family of God by faith in Jesus Christ (also read John 1:11-13). Thus, the new birth is totally the work of God on our behalf!

II. The New Birth Results In the Loss Of Some Things.

For God to treat us as His own, certain things have to be removed from us. (We are much better off without these things anyway!) In reality, God takes away burdens that He might be able to give us blessings. Some of these burdens will be discussed here.

A. Old nature - The Apostle Paul looked back on his life before his salvation and, by the inspiration of God, penned these words in Ephesians 2:3, *"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others."* The nature of a saved person is different from the lost. This different nature doesn't mean a Christian will be perfect or that he will never have a bad thought. It does mean that God is within us, changing our nature, leading us to do His will (Romans 6:6-10; Ephesians 2:10).

B. Sin - The reason we have a new nature is because God has taken our sins and placed them on His Son, *"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed"* (1 Peter 2:24). (In a later study we will see how God deals with the daily sins of a saved person.)

C. Satan as father - The lost are the children of Satan, pleasing only Satan with their lives, *"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of the world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now*

worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2). Jesus accused the lost Pharisees of being Satan's sons in John 8:44.

D. Love for the world - The new birth doesn't mean we no longer enjoy living or having material things. It does mean we should love God more than these things and be willing to give them up if they hinder our service for Him, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in Him"* (1 John 2:15).

III. The New Birth Results In Gains.

To list all of the things one gains upon being born again is impossible. Only eternity will reveal all the great things God has for those who trust Him. However, we are aware of some glorious things we have received through our salvation in Jesus Christ.

A. Righteousness - Wherein we were sinners, filthy in the sight of God, He took the cleanness and goodness of His Son and applied that to us, washing us in His blood. By faith we receive the righteousness of Christ, *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him"* (2 Corinthians 5:21). Also in Romans 4:5, *"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."*

B. Peace - God took away the burden of sin that we might have peace with Him, *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1). (Also read Philippians 4:7 and Ephesians 2:13.) As we become stronger Christians, our peace will even be greater as we learn to accept His will in all things. Truly, He doeth all things well!

C. Love for others and love for God's work - A Christian just has to love others, *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death"* (1 John 3:14). (Also read 1 John 4:7,8,11.) To truly love others means that we are concerned over their souls and want them to serve the Lord with us.

D. New Father - God is our new Father. In Romans 8:15 and Gal. 4:6 we are reminded that we can look to God and cry out *"Abba, Father,"* or "Father, Father," since Abba is the Aramaic word meaning Father. Since God is our Father, we are His children, *"Beloved, now are we the sons of God."* (1 John 3:2a). (Also read 1 John 3:1; Romans 8:16.)

E. New Guide and Comforter - The third Person of the Godhead is the Holy Spirit, sometimes referred to as the Holy Ghost or Spirit. The work of the Holy Spirit is to convict the lost and lead to Christ for salvation. After salvation the Holy Spirit lives within the saved to comfort and guide (John 14:17; Psalm 32:8; John 14:16; 16:13).

F. Riches of Heaven - As children of God, we are heirs of all that Heaven affords, *"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together"* (Romans 8:17). (Also read John 14:1-3.)

IV. The New Birth Gives A New Destiny.

A new destiny usually is the first thing we think of when a person is saved. It certainly deserves our consideration when we think of the dreadful fate of spending eternity in a devil's hell. The Word of God informs us of two destinations after death, *"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 and in hell he lift up his eyes being in torments"* (Luke 16:22, 23). Hell is a place of torment and eternal suffering prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10,15). Heaven is a place of joy, peace, and eternal contentment which God has prepared for those who have been born again (Revelation 21:1-4, 27). Therefore, when an individual is truly born again, he not only escapes hell, but also lays claim to an eternal home in heaven!

In conclusion, the new birth is the work of God in saving a person when faith is placed in Christ by calling upon Jesus for forgiveness of sins, *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Romans 10:13). Every saved person has reason to shout to the world, "Look What Happened To Me!" In coming studies, we will continue to look at what God is doing for His people.

LESSON 2

SANCTIFICATION AND JUSTIFICATION

Lesson Text: *1 Corinthians 6:9-12*

Key Verse: *1 Corinthians 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Many things happen when a person is saved. The moment an individual is born again, he suddenly is a possessor of justification, sanctification, redemption, imputation, forgiveness and glorification, plus many more things. This study deals with sanctification and justification which will be tied in with the other acts listed above.

Before we begin a study of these two redemptive acts of God, these terms need to be defined. The word "sanctified" is translated from the Hebrew word QADESH and Greek word HAGIAZO. Both of these words mean "to separate or set apart for God's service." The word "justified" is translated from TSADAQ in Hebrew and DIKAIOS in Greek. Again, these words have identical meanings "to make or declare right." To be "sanctified" carries with it the meaning of holiness, or being made holy. To be "justified" means to be made 'just-as-if-I'd' never sinned.

The purpose of this lesson is to give a better understanding of just what takes place when God sanctifies and justifies a sinner. In our lesson text, we are reminded that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. Then the writer lists a number of sinners and states that none of these will inherit the kingdom of God. Upon examining the list of sinners, we are made aware that all of us are guilty of at least some of these sins. If we stopped there, then none of us would be able to inherit the kingdom of God! However, God went further and said some of us were (past tense) that type of sinner, but now (present tense) we have been washed, sanctified, and justified. Jesus has made the difference! As we go into this study, we will try to reveal what God does for us so that we can inherit the kingdom of God.

I. Sanctified By God's Power.

A. Old Testament teachings - In the Old Testament not only people but also days, places, and things were sanctified. After the creation of the 6 days, the Bible says in Genesis 2:3, "*And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.*" Concerning various articles, we read from Exodus 40:10-11, "*And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all his vessels and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy. And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it.*" Aaron was considered sanctified as God's priest, "*And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office*" (Exodus 40:13). After the children of Israel were delivered from Egyptian bondage, every first born was considered "set apart" for God, "*Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine*" (Exodus 13:2).

Regardless of whether it was a day, an item, or a person, any thing that was sanctified in the Old Testament was considered separated from the world to be used totally for God as a holy thing.

B. New Testament teachings - Many different beliefs concerning the teaching of sanctification are found in the New Testament. For the purpose of our study, we will mention three basic beliefs:

1. Sanctification will never be perfect as long as we live on earth.
2. Man can continue to improve himself until he reaches a condition of being sanctified or perfect.
3. Inner sanctification is the work of God when an individual is born again.

This third view holds the belief that the saved are sanctified instantaneously when they are "in Christ" and He is "in them." The Bible teaches that all believers are "saints" and are sanctified, *"Jude the servant of Jesus Christ and brother of James to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in in Jesus Christ and called"* (Jude 1:1). We reject the first two in favor of this teaching. (Also read Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 1:2)

C. Source of sanctification - Sanctification is not based on man's goodness or what he might deserve, but totally on God's love and mercy, *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost"* (Titus 3:5). Many of the members of the Church at Corinth were carnal and weak as revealed in 1Corinthians 5:1,2; 6:1-8, but in verse 11 of our text we are told that they are considered washed and sanctified.

D. Way of sanctification - Man can ONLY be sanctified in God's sight when he has been washed in the blood of Jesus, *"By the which we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.--For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified"* (Hebrews 10:10, 14).

II. Justification In God's Sight.

A. Condemned by the Law - Man could never be saved by trying to live by the Ten Commandments The law was given, not to save, but to show the need of salvation, *"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified"*

in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20). The Ten Commandments can be compared to a mirror that reveals that the face is dirty, but it does not have the ability to wash the face. So it is with the law that reveals sin but does not have the ability to justify the sinner. Jesus said in John 3:18, *"...he that believeth not is condemned already."* (Also read Galatians 2:16)

B. Substitution of Christ - How could anyone justify himself "just-as-if-he'd" never sinned? We know self-justification is impossible! However, God in His infinite wisdom and great mercy made provision for justification. Imagine a court of law before God's throne where each sinner is declared guilty and is being condemned. Suddenly, Jesus steps forth and offers to be the substitute for each sinner who will accept Him. As the Substitute, He will bear all the guilt and condemnation that came in the law, *"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross"* (Colossians 2:14). Jesus literally became sin for us, *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"* (2 Corinthians 5:21). He not only was made sin, but He bore all the guilt and penalty that should have been ours! The moment we were saved, He became our substitute. We thus see that God could not just ignore our sins; He demanded full payment.

C. Justification by grace - Justification is completely by faith in Christ, *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Romans 5:1). Faith is sufficient for salvation ONLY because of God's amazing grace, *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God"* (Ephesians 2:8). All of this is made possible by the blood of Christ, *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him"* (Romans 5:9). The Apostle summed it all up when he wrote in Romans 3:24, *"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."* What a loving God He is to accept us as sinners and then look upon us as sons who are justified in his sight by the blood of his innocent Son!

III. Fulfilling Sanctification and Justification.

We have noted that inner sanctification and justification are the works of God when an individual is saved. However, we who are saved have a part in really fulfilling these in this earthly life.

A. Sanctified from the world - Upon sanctifying a sinner, God considers him a "holy" thing to be separated from the world to do the will of God. It is up to

each saved person to love the Lord enough to separate himself from the world, *"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you"* (2 Corinthians 6:17). A Christian will never be able to really serve God, as long as he loves the world more than he loves God (2 Timothy 2:20,21). May we all be willing to "set ourselves apart" for God's service to do the work He has called us to do.

B. Justified to the world - God justifies the sinner when He sees the sinner's faith. Since the world cannot see into each heart, faith is seen only by the good works that follow salvation. As an example, Abraham was justified by God when he believed God's promises, (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:1-3). The world that Abraham lived in could only see his faith by the works he did. As James states, *"Yea a man may say, Thou hast faith and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works"* (James 2:18). Abraham showed his faith by being willing to kill his son Isaac and thus was considered justified by all the world that knew him, (Genesis 22:10-12; James 2:21-24). Notice that Abraham was justified by God in Genesis 15, but he was justified to the world in Genesis 22. The world can only see that we are justified by the way we live!

In concluding this lesson, we see that several acts of God take place at the same time of sanctification and justification. While all these acts are part of His great gift of salvation, yet each act is separate as they describe the various facets of our great salvation. Thus, we can see that when a sinner is justified and sanctified:

1. He is redeemed (Redemption) by the blood of Jesus,
2. The righteousness of Christ is imputed (imputation is to place on one's account)
to the sinner,
3. All sins are forgiven (Forgiveness) , and
4. Christ living within gives glory (Glorification).

After receiving so many benefits as a gift from God, how can we refuse to separate ourselves from sinful things and show the world that we have been justified by the grace of God?

LESSON 3

THE LORD'S CHURCH

Lesson Text: *Matthew 16:13-20*

Key Verse: *Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

In our text we find the word "Church" used for the first time in the Bible. Jesus had just asked the question, *"Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?"* Peter had answered with his own belief, *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."* In our key verse, Jesus said, *"That thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church."* Jesus uses a comparison of words in this verse. The word "Peter" in Greek is PETROS and means "a little stone," whereas the word "rock" that Jesus used is PETRA and means "a huge rock." Therefore, Jesus was NOT promising to build His Church upon Peter, but... UPON THE SOLID FOUNDATION OF THE TRUTH THAT JESUS WAS THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD! We understand that the PETRA 'a huge rock' is Jesus Himself. I Corinthians 3:11 makes that clear: (*"For other foundation can no man lay that that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."*)

In a day when it is common for many to be against all Churches and so-called "organized religion" this lesson is intended to show the importance of serving the Lord in a Church. In order to be an effective Church member, you must understand exactly what a Church is and realize what God wants your Church to be. The Lord will receive glory from our lives as we serve Him in the Church, *"Unto him be glory in the Church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages, world without end. Amen"* (Ephesians 3:21).

I. What Is A Church?

The modern conception of the Church is not based on scripture. When someone uses the word "church", various ideas are often meant. The real Biblical teaching of the Church is not a popular one today. For the purpose of this study, three different beliefs will be presented.

A. The building - Often we speak of "going to the Church" or "the Church House" and we are speaking only of the building where we meet to worship. Even though we use this manner of speaking, the building is NOT the Church but only the place where the Church meets to worship, *"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God,*

which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15).

B. Universal Church - The popular belief today is that a person is a member of an "invisible" Church at the moment of salvation. Since this Church would contain all the saved, the word "universal" is commonly used. Those who hold this belief have confused the "family of God" with the Church. The moment a person is saved, he is born again into the family of God, "*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*" (John 1:12). (Also read Romans 8:16; Galatians 3:26.) Many who are saved into God's family never unite with the Lord's Church. Being saved and being saved AND a member of a scriptural Church are vastly different. The "universal Church" belief is wrong.

C. Local Church - The Bible teaches that a Church is a congregation of people who are saved and have been scripturally baptized into the fellowship of the Church. In this fellowship, the members have willingly agreed to associate themselves together under a covenant to worship together, to carry forth the gospel, to observe the Church ordinances, and to obey all the commandments that Christ has given to the Church. The Greek word for Church is EKKLESIA and means a "called-out assembly". Out of the 112 times EKKLESIA is translated Church, over 90 times it is referring to a Church in a local sense. For example: "*the Church which was at Jerusalem*" (Acts 8:1); "*As in all the Churches of the saints*" (1 Corinthians 14:33); and "*John to the seven churches which are in Asia*" (Revelation 1:4); are verses that definitely are speaking of local Churches. When the word EKKLESIA is used and it cannot definitely be tied down to a local congregation, the word is used in a general sense speaking of all Churches. As an example of this, when someone says the automobile has revolutionized travel, we understand that a particular car is not meant, but all cars in general. When we hear the word Church we should think of "an assembly of people who have been saved and baptized and are now serving God together."

II. The History Of the Church.

A. When did the Church begin? - Most people today believe that the Church started on the day of Pentecost. This belief is erroneous. In Jesus' ministry, He talked about the problems among the brethren and told them in Matthew 18:17, "*tell it unto the Church.*" On the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:41 tells us, "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them three thousand souls.*" You cannot add to

something that doesn't exist, thus the Church was organized before the day of Pentecost.

Proof of the origin is given by a prophecy made by David in Psalms 22:22b, *"...in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee."* The writer of Hebrews states this prophecy was fulfilled by Christ, *"...in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee"* (Hebrews 2:12b). You will notice that the word "congregation" was replaced by "church." For Jesus to sing in the Church, it had to be organized during His ministry, *"And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives"* (Matthew 26:30). There is no doubt that the first Church was organized during the personal ministry of Christ when He called out the first disciples that had been baptized by John. And He saith unto them, "Follow me." And I will make you fishers of men Matthew 4:19 The disciples at that time were saved, baptized, and called out to an assembly by Jesus.

B. Who Founded The First Church? - Many proudly boast of the man who founded their particular denominations. The John Calvin's, Martin Luther's, John Wesley's, Alexander Campbell's, and Constantine's surely have their followings. However, Jesus Christ is the founder of the true Church that began in His ministry. There is no place in the Bible where He ever gave anyone else the right to start another Church. From the first Church in Jerusalem, missionaries have gone out into all the world organizing new Churches. Each of these Churches has as its Founder none other than Jesus Christ.

C. Church perpetuity - Since the days of Christ, there have always been people who believed and taught the same doctrines that Jesus taught. Jesus promised that His Church would endure forever, *"And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"* (Matthew 28:20), and, *"Unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end"* (Ephesians 3:21). As Baptists, we claim to believe the same as the Apostles taught. Furthermore, our Churches have been traced back to the time of Christ proving that we descend from His Church. The following statements were made by men of other denominations. Alexander Campbell, founder of the Church of Christ, said, "From the Apostolic age until the present time, the sentiments of Baptists, and their practice of baptism, have had a continued chain of advocates, and public monuments of their existence in every century can be produced." Sir Isaac Newton said, "The Baptists are the only body of Christians that have not symbolized with the Church of Rome." Drs. Yepij and Dermont were appointed by the King of the Netherlands to write a history of the denominations, and partly said about the Baptists, "The Baptists may be considered as the only Christian community which has stood since the days of the Apostles." These

statements were taken from the book *"Baptist Faith and Martyr's Fire,"* by W. J. Burgess.

At times Baptists have gone by the name of Anabaptists, Waldenses, Novations, etc. But their continuity is certain from the Founder, Jesus Christ, until this day. Due to this, Baptists are not Protestants and should never be considered as such.

III. The Government of the Church

The local Church is to be a pure democracy. Every member is to have equal privileges and representation. No association, convention, group of men or any individual should dictate any matter to the Lord's Church. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ and no one else, is the Head of the Church, *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church: and he is the Saviour of the body"* (Ephesians 5:23). As Head of the Church, He instituted two offices in the Church.

A. Pastor - God has called men to preach and then placed them in a Church as Pastor. The Pastor is likened to a shepherd over a flock or an overseer, *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood"* (Acts 20:28). The Pastor doesn't "run" the Church, but leads and cares for each soul as God's shepherd.

B. Deacon - The Deacons were not ordained to run the Church or to tell the Pastor what to do. The word "deacon" means "to serve," and a true Deacon will be found serving God by being a servant to the members of his church. The first deacons were ordained to wait on the physical needs of the Church so that the Apostles could give themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word (Acts 6:1-4).

IV. The Work of the Church.

The Lord has given the greatest work on earth to His people who serve him in the Church. Just a few of these responsibilities will be mentioned here.

A. Place to worship - A place of worship is furnished for the members to study, sing, worship, and pray together. Through these services, the members are to grow in grace as they grow together in unity and fellowship.

B. Ordinances - The Church carries out the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These will be studied in detail in the next lesson.

C. Lighthouse - The Church is to shed the light of the gospel of Christ, "...*the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven Churches*" (Revelation 1:20). Each time a sinner passes by a Church, he is reminded by the light that someone cares for his soul.

D. Guardian of the Truth - In 1 Timothy 3:15, Paul called the Church "*the pillar and ground of the truth.*" The Church cannot afford to compromise, but must teach "Thus saith the Lord"!

E. Missions - The Church is to support missions on local, state, interstate and foreign fields, (Matthew 28:19, Acts 1:8). When the opportunity comes, and the Lord is leading, we should always be ready to "extend an arm" to help other New Testament Churches be organized.

V. The Ultimate Blessings of The Church.

Proof has been given in this lesson showing the difference between the "family of God" and the "Church." All who are in the family of God are going to Heaven to be with Christ. However, God has special blessings for those who are members of a New Testament Church! Those who are members of Churches that still hold to the truth and are from a chain of Churches that date back to Christ can be members of the Bride of Christ. (Read Ephesians 5:27; 2 Corinthians 11:1,2; Revelation 19:6,7.) The saved who are not members of a scriptural Church will be guests at the marriage of the Lamb, (Revelation 19:9). For the ultimate blessings for the Bride (or Church) read Revelation 21:9,10.

This lesson is intended to show new converts the importance of following the Lord in scriptural baptism. What Church you join is important! In conclusion of the lesson, we should make it clear how you can become members of a Church and how your name can be removed from a Church roll.

One can join a Church in one of three ways: (1) being baptized into the Church after being saved, (2) transferring by letter from another Church of like faith and order, and (3) if the Church letter has been lost, the Church can be joined on the Statement of having been saved and baptized. One's membership can also be removed from the Church in three different ways: (1) one can transfer letter to another Church, (2) one living a life that brings shame to himself/herself, the Lord and the Church can be excluded by a vote of the members, (I Corinthians 5:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6), and (3) dying removes one from the church roll. Treasure your relationship with the Lord's Church! It is important to the Lord and it should be important to you! Lesson 4

LESSON 4

THE CHURCH ORDINANCES

Lesson Text: *Matthew 3:13-17, 26:26-30; 1 Corinthians 11:12; Acts 5:29;*

Key Verses: *1 Corinthians 11:2 Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.*

Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

In the previous lesson, the Lord's Church was defined as being local and visible. Part of the responsibility of the Church is to carry out the ordinances that Christ gave it during His ministry. These ordinances are Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These are called ordinances - not sacraments. A sacrament normally carries the meaning of "bestowing grace on the partaker," whereas an ordinance is "something that is ordained of God." It will be shown in this lesson that these ordinances have nothing to do with receiving God's grace but should be observed after God's grace is bestowed. The Lord ordained these ordinances, and it is very important that we observe them exactly as they are taught in the Bible (see key verses). In this lesson, the ordinances will be described and the question of who can partake will be answered.

I. Who Can Be Baptized?

It is important that we observe the ordinances of baptism according to the teachings of the Bible. What seems okay to us is not really important. Therefore, we will look at some of the modern ideas of baptism and let the Bible speak concerning which way is scriptural.

A. Infants - During Jesus' life on earth, He revealed that He had a special love for children, *"And they brought unto Him also infants, that he would touch them; but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God"* (Luke 18:15, 16). However, Jesus never made any statement that would even infer that children should be baptized. On the other hand, John would not baptize anyone that didn't show repentance. Can an infant repent? Neither can an infant be scripturally baptized!

B. For the dead - Some believe that when a man dies, a member of his family can be baptized in his place so that he can go to Heaven. This belief taken from 1 Corinthians 15:29, "*Else what shall they do which are baptized from the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?*" In every generation since Christ, faithful Church members have died while others have been saved and baptized to replace them in serving the Lord in His Church. This explains the phrase "*baptized for the dead.*" According to the Bible, there are no substitutes for baptism. Each person must obey God's commandment for himself.

C. Saved - Only a person who has the assurance of salvation should follow the Lord in baptism. In Acts 8, Philip was witnessing to an Ethiopian eunuch. This eunuch asked the question in verse 36, "*What doth hinder me to be baptized?*" Philip answered, "*If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.*" It is obvious that Philip wanted the eunuch to be saved before he was baptized. On the day of Pentecost, those who were saved followed the Lord's commandments and were baptized, "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized*" (Acts 2:41a). During the ministry of John the Baptist, a multitude came to be baptized of him, but he refused because they had shown no signs of repentance, (Luke 3:7,8). For other examples of people being baptized after being saved, read Acts 10:47; 16:30-33. In addition, we find record of some who had been baptized, but after being truly saved they were scripturally baptized in Acts 19:1-5.

II. What Is Scriptural Baptism?

Since every believer should want to have a baptism that will please God, it is important that we study what the Bible has to say about it. When the Bible gives details about something, it is impossible to follow it too closely.

A. Mode of baptism - The world thinks of baptism as either sprinkling, pouring, or immersion. However, the Bible says in Ephesians 4:5, "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism,*" so two of the modes mentioned above are wrong. The word "baptize" is an anglicized form of the Greek word BAPTIZO which means "to dip or immerse." As we study the Bible, there is no doubt about what mode of baptism was used in the Apostolic age. In Matthew 3:16, "*And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up*