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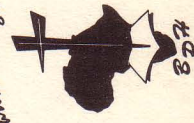
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Baptist Sunday School Lessons



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THE CHURCH THE BODY OF
CHRIST
HELPERS OF JESUS

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THE CHURCH - THE BODY OF CHRIST

Writer: Zeb V. Moss

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 Every Baptist church should some day help begin another Baptist church.
- 2 The new church that is begun should be encouraged to develop its own leadership as soon as possible.
- 3 There are many places in our country that need a Baptist church.

-ooOoo-

HOW SHOULD ONE CHURCH BEGIN ANOTHER CHURCH?

- 1 Carefully select the area where a new church is to be started. There are many areas of great population that need a Baptist church. There are other areas of lesser population that have no churches at all. One should consider the needs of the areas near the church and then decide where to begin another witness.
- 2 One way of beginning a new church would be to start a Sunday School class or a preaching service. A school or other public building might be available as a place to meet. If the church is started in the rural area, the people could be asked to put up some kind of shelter under which to meet.
- 3 The church that wants to begin a new church should be ready to lend some of its leaders to help in the beginning. These should be persons who are strong Christians and well trained members. The church should be encouraged to pray often for these leaders as they start the new church.
- 4 There are some things that should not be done in starting a new church. Do not send out so many from the mother church that it will be hurt in its own leadership and growth. It would not be wise to try to begin a new church and find that the older church was left crippled. Also, the new church group that is started should be given the responsibilities for its own teaching and preaching and financial support as soon as possible so that it will not become dependent upon the older church.

There are many blessings and joys for the church and its members that help begin a new church for our Lord.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LESSON	Page
INTRODUCTION TO THIS QUARTER'S LESSONS.....	1
THE MEANING OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH	
1 THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH	
- CHRIST	2
2 THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH..	5
3 THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.....	8
4 THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH .	12
SOME IMPORTANT TEACHINGS OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH	
5 THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD.....	16
6 EVERY PERSON CAN PRAY DIRECTLY TO GOD	19
7 THE MEANING OF BAPTISM	22
8 THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER	26
9 THE MEANING OF STEWARDSHIP	29
THE WORK OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH	
10 THE WORK OF THE CHURCH	
- TO WORSHIP GOD	33
11 THE WORK OF THE CHURCH	
- TO WIN SOULS.....	37
12 THE WORK OF THE CHURCH	
- TO ENCOURAGE SPIRITUAL GROWTH	40
13 THE WORK OF THE CHURCH	
- TO START ANOTHER CHURCH.....	44

- a) We read that Barnabas and Paul were selected by the Holy Spirit to do this work. It is the Holy Spirit of God who works in the lives and hearts of the believers. Therefore, any special work that is to be done by the church should be led by the Holy Spirit.
- b) We also learn that these men who were called to go out to start new churches were busy working in their own church. Barnabas and Paul were busy as teachers and leaders already in the church at Antioch. Those who can be most helpful in doing the work of establishing other churches are ones who have already been serving God well in their own church and have proved that they are good leaders.
- c) The church was used by God to send these men on their way to do the work of establishing other churches. The church felt the importance of this task so much that they fasted and prayed, then set them apart for this work by laying their hands on them.

2

One church should help begin another church because it is the best way of spreading the kingdom. The nature of the local church leads itself to this kind of work. It is the nature of the local church that it is spiritual in its leadership, depending upon God. Many more churches could be started if each Baptist church would seek to begin another Baptist church. In this way the number of new churches begun would not have to wait until more missionaries could arrive to start them. Also, each new church would be encouraged to grow like the church that has helped to begin it and later on it too could help to start another church.

LESSON 13

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH - TO START ANOTHER CHURCH

SCRIPTURE: Acts 13:1-4; Romans 15:19-20

MEMORY VERSE:

"And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region."

Acts 13:49

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important things that a church can ever do is to help begin a new church. Just as each Christian should seek to win someone to Christ, so every church should seek to establish another church. There is a proper time to do this and a proper way for it to be done. In this lesson we shall study two great questions concerning the beginning of a new church.

WHY SHOULD ONE CHURCH HELP BEGIN ANOTHER?

- 1 One church should help begin another church because it is God's way of spreading His kingdom. When Jesus established the church on earth He gave to it the task of preaching the Gospel. His command to go and make disciples of all nations is carried out by His disciples in every age through the churches. This was the way the New Testament churches spread in that day. In Acts 13:2, we read about the call of Barnabas and Saul (later called Paul) by the Holy Spirit. These men were the first missionaries sent out by the early church. Let us notice several things about this incident.

INTRODUCTION. TO THIS QUARTER'S LESSONS

For three months we shall be studying the Bible concerning its teachings about the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is our hope and prayer that at the end of the study of these lessons we shall know much about the nature of the church, some of its important teachings, and something about the work of the New Testament church.

The first four lessons of this quarter deal with the meaning of a New Testament church. In these lessons we shall study about the true nature of the church and how it is to be organized.

The second set of five lessons will be about some important teachings of the New Testament regarding the church. These are not all the teachings of important truth, but these will help us understand the work of the church much better.

The last four lessons to be studied this quarter concern the work of the church. We will learn how the church is to carry out the commands of Jesus and what the place of each Christian is in this important work.

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LESSON 1

THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH - CHRIST

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 1:11; 4:15; 5:23

MEMORY VERSE:

"And he is the head of the body, the church who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence."

Colossians 1:18

INTRODUCTION

This month we shall be studying about the meaning of the New Testament church. First of all, let us give a definition of the church. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ, in its largest meaning, is the whole company of truly saved persons in all times and ages, in heaven and on earth. In this sense, the church is identical with the spiritual kingdom of God. This is what might be called the "invisible church" because it does not refer to any organized church or group of churches on the earth at any one particular time.

In these lessons we will be concerned with the "visible" church on the earth. Therefore our definition of a church would be: A body of baptized believers who have joined together to carry out the commands of Jesus. Most of the references to the church in the New Testament refer to the local congregation of believers. In no case is there any reference to an organization of churches as a "Church" such as "The Roman Catholic Church" or "The Methodist Church". We should never speak of "The Baptist Church" unless we mean a

the worship services, the prayer meetings and other meetings all draw us closer to God.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 Every Christian needs to grow in his spiritual life.
- 2 Each Christian can pray directly to God.
- 3 Attendance at the church meetings is very helpful to the Christian's spiritual growth.

-ooOoo-

SOME SUGGESTIONS

Now let us consider some practical guides for encouraging spiritual growth in each church member. The following habits will help each person to grow spiritually in Christ:

- 1 Set aside a time for Bible reading and prayer each day. It would not be a good thing if we only had food to eat every seven days. Even so, it is not good that the Christian wait only for the Sunday church services before he is spiritually fed. If you do not have your own Bible, then buy one. Then every day read some verses or a chapter and try to understand the message to your heart. Read the Scripture verse listed at the top of each Sunday School lesson and study your lesson during the week so that you will learn much more from the class study on Sunday.
- 2 If you are married and have a family, then you should set aside a time when you can read the Bible together as a family. Family worship brings peace and harmony to the home and spiritual growth for each one in the family.
- 3 Another act of worship which brings spiritual growth at home is the giving of thanks in prayer to God for food when we are ready to eat. This small act of worship reminds us that we depend upon God for everything that we have. In this way we acknowledge God as the one who has given us the blessings of food and other good things.
- 4 By attending all the church meetings we can have a plan for building our spiritual lives.

particular Baptist church located at a particular place. There are no New Testament references to a national church such as "The Church of England" or "The Church of Zambia". When the reference is not to a local church then it refers to the body of true believers as found in any church. An organized church in the New Testament sense is always a local congregation of true believers at a particular place. Besides these two meanings of the term "church" there are properly no others in the New Testament. It is the local church only which has existence at any one time in any one place.

THE CHURCH WAS BEGUN BY CHRIST

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus responded to Simon Peter's confession that He was the Son of God by declaring, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church". What was the rock on which Christ was to build His church? Certainly it was not upon the man Peter. God would never build His church upon a mere human. Further, the New Testament does not give Peter the place of highest honour among the apostles. In the same chapter in which Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church", He also said to Peter, "Get thee behind me Satan: thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men" Matthew 16:23. Peter was also severely rebuked by Paul for his conduct in the church at Antioch. Galatians 1:11-12. Peter made no claim of honour for himself, but declared himself a fellow elder: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder" 1 Peter 5:1.

The rock on which Jesus declared He would build His church was the rock of belief or confession such as Peter made that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Therefore, all who repent of their sins

and confess Christ as Lord and Saviour become like "living stones" in a spiritual house. 1 Peter 2:5,6.

CHRIST IS THE ONLY HEAD OF THE CHURCH

In the book of Ephesians, Paul calls Christ the "Head" of the church three times. Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23. What does the Bible mean when it calls Christ the "Head of the church"? It means the following things:

- 1 Christ is the only one who can be the leader of the church. No man or group of men can ever take the place that Christ occupies for the church. He is the head and there can be no other.
- 2 As head of the church, Christ controls and gives direction to the church. As the head of the body directs and controls the physical body, so Christ controls and directs the church. By careful study of the Bible and through prayer, we can know what Jesus' teachings for the church are.
- 3 The place of honour in the church must always be given to Christ. No person, even Mary, who was the earthly mother of Jesus, should ever be given the place of honour that Christ has in the church.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 A new Testament church is a body of baptized believers joined together to carry out the commands of Christ.
- 2 Christ is the only head of the church.
- 3 By careful study of the Bible we can know what Christ would have done in His church.

Sunday School will bring great blessings to each one who attends regularly.

The worship services are very important meetings of the church. In these meetings, the church members can participate as they sing in the choir or with the congregation. The singing of hymns offers praise to God and makes the heart of the believer glad. Also, the preaching of the sermon gives each person a wonderful opportunity to understand the Bible better. The Bible is the source book for all instructions for the church and therefore from it come messages to be preached. In Baptist churches, the preacher stands behind the pulpit which is in the center of the church showing that the preaching of the Bible is central in the worship of the church. This also shows that the Bible and the explanation of its truths occupies a very important place in the church.

Another important meeting of the church is the prayer meeting. This is a time when the church people can meet to pray for the sick, the lost, and those who may otherwise be troubled. It is a great privilege to pray and the church meeting for prayer is a very important meeting for the Christian.

BAPTIST TEACHINGS ENCOURAGE SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The Baptist doctrine of the priesthood of believers (see Lesson 6 about this) encourages every church member to grow spiritually. Every believer can pray directly to God without going through a priest or any other person. He can also study his Bible and interpret its truths as the Holy Spirit leads him. Jesus said that no one who comes to Him would be turned away. John 6:37.

LESSON 12

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH - TO ENCOURAGE SPIRITUAL GROWTH

SCRIPTURE: John 15:1-8

MEMORY VERSE:

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."

2 Peter 3:18

INTRODUCTION

Another important part of the work of the church is to encourage spiritual growth in the lives of the church members. What do we mean by spiritual growth? Spiritual growth is the experience of maturing in ones personal relationship to God. Just as the new born baby grows physically, so should the one who is born again in Christ grow spiritually. The believer has been given a new spiritual life within, and this new life needs spiritual nurture. Spiritual growth involves Bible reading, prayer and worship. We shall study in this lesson some ways the church can encourage the spiritual growth of it members.

CHURCH SERVICES HELP SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The regular worship services of the church encourage spiritual growth in its members. The Sunday School is the great teaching agency of the church. Adults as well as young people and children should be faithful in attending Sunday School. One of the greatest helps to spiritual life development is the study of God's Word, the Bible. Sunday after Sunday of Bible study in the

LESSON 2

THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHURCH

SCRIPTURE: Acts 2:47; 5:14

MEMORY VERSE:

"And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."

Acts 2:47

INTRODUCTION

Last week we studied about the nature of the church. We also learned that Jesus Christ is the only head of the church. This week we are going to study about the members of the church. Here are some of the questions we will seek to answer about church membership. How do you become a member of the church? What are the privileges of a church member? What are the responsibilities of a church member.

HOW TO BECOME A CHURCH MEMBER

The church is made up of people who are saved from their sins. Only those who are born again believers should be church members. We know that this is true because of the nature of the church. The church is a spiritual organization. It is made up of those who have had a spiritual experience of salvation. In the New Testament we learn that only those who had first united with Christ could unite with the church. In our memory verse we read that it was the Lord who added people to the church. Those who were added were those who had already experienced forgiveness of sins through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus. This spiritual experience is an experience of salvation. Salvation is

provided by the grace of God. "for by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" Ephesians 2:8. Church membership is confined to those who are saved. Only those who are old enough to repent of their sins and believe in Christ can be members of a church. A baby or very young child can not have church membership given to him because he has parents who are church members. There is no record in the Bible anywhere regarding babies being made church members. This salvation is provided by God through Jesus Christ and His death on the Cross. Salvation is received by the individual when he repents of his sins and accepts Jesus as his personal Saviour. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1:9.

BAPTISM IS REQUIRED FOR CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

After one has repented of his sins and accepted Christ as His Saviour, he becomes a "new creature" in Christ. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 about this. This means that he is a Christian, but he is not yet a member of a local church. Membership in a local church comes after a person is baptized. This is his way of showing that he is following the commands of Christ. The church has the responsibility to see that the believer is truly a Christian. When many people came to John the Baptist to be baptized by him in the River Jordan, John said that they must first show that they had repented of their sins. Read Matthew 3:7,8. Because the local church is a voluntary group of believers, those who join that local group must accept the doctrines and practices of that church. Also, the person seeking membership must be accepted by vote of the church congregation.

e) By believing in and accepting Christ we become God's children. John 1:12.

2 Begin witnessing to those you know. It will be difficult for you to witness to a lost friend. However, you should be one who could witness most effectively to him because he is your friend. Also, because he is your friend, he will believe that you want to share with him something very good that he needs.

3 Ask the pastor or some other faithful Christian to go with you to witness. Jesus sent seventy of His followers out two by two to bear witness of Him. Luke 10:1. By going with another Christian you can help each other to become better soul winners.

GOD WILL BLESS THOSE WHO WITNESS FOR HIM

Those who go out to win others to Christ will know that they are obeying the commands of Jesus. There is great joy in the heart of the one who goes out to do what Christ has commanded. Jesus also promised to be with those who go out in His name. Matthew 28:20. The Bible says that those who win souls are wise (Proverbs 11:30), and they shall shine as the stars forever (Daniel 12:3). God has promised that His word will not return unto Him without accomplishing the purpose for which He gave it. Isaiah 55:11. Therefore let us each determine that we will seek to win someone to Christ soon.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 Soul winning is the work of every Christian.
- 2 Jesus commands us to be soul winners.
- 3 Every Christian should seek to win a lost person to Christ.

Samaritans, a people hated by the Jews, Jesus told His disciples, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" John 4:35. The last command given by Jesus to His followers before His return to heaven was a command to witness to all people everywhere. Acts 1:8.

- 2 Because of the lost condition of the sinner. The Bible is very clear regarding the terrible end of those who do not believe in Jesus Christ. We are told that the sinner is condemned as long as he refuses to believe in Christ. John 3:18. Jesus in Matthew 25:41-46, describes the judgment which shall come upon the unbelievers. A further description of the sinner's punishment is found in Revelation 20:15.

HOW SHOULD WE SEEK TO WIN OTHERS TO CHRIST?

- 1 Learn some Bible truths about salvation. Study your Bible and memorize some of the verses in order that you may show the one who does not believe how he might become a believer in Jesus. Here is a simple list of Bible truths which you should memorize. Study each verse until you know what it means and then you will have a plan with which you can lead someone to faith in Christ.
 - a) Every one is a sinner. Romans 3:23.
 - b) The result of sin is spiritual death. Romans 6:23.
 - c) But God loves the sinner. Romans 5:8.
 - d) In Christ we have deliverance from sin John 3:36

WHAT ARE THE PRIVILEGES OF A CHURCH MEMBER?

Some of the privileges of a church member are these:

- 1 He feels a part of the local congregation. Before this time he may have visited the church, but now he is a full member and he feels that all that the church does affects him now.

- 2 He can vote in the church business meetings. Every member of the church is equal in power to each of the other members. The pastor, the deacons, and the other church officers are spiritual leaders and they have only the same voting power as any other member of the church.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CHURCH MEMBER?

- 1 Every church member is responsible to see that he conducts himself as a true Christian and believer in Christ. Any thing that he might do that would bring shame upon him, brings shame on all the church members for they are all "one body".
- 2 It is the church member's responsibility to support the church. This is done by bringing his tithe each month to the church. He also supports the church when he seeks to bring others to Christ by witnessing to them.
- 3 Attendance at the meetings of the church for worship, prayer, and study is an important responsibility of each member.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 Only born again believers should be church members.
- 2 Every church member has the same power for voting in the local church.
- 3 Church membership carries with it great privileges and also great responsibilities.

LESSON 3

THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

SCRIPTURE: 1 Timothy 3:1-13

MEMORY VERSE:

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work."
1 Timothy 3:1

INTRODUCTION

The organization of the early New Testament churches developed slowly. We do not have any record of specific directions given by Jesus concerning these matters. He promised that the Holy Spirit would be present to guide the new church. John 16:13. We see an example of this in Acts 13:2. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." In the first church at Jerusalem the apostles were recognized as the leaders. As the church grew and the needs arose, the Holy Spirit gave direction to the young churches. As the church developed, two offices became definite and permanent - that of pastor and that of deacon.

THE PASTOR

Three names are used in the New Testament for this same office in the church. These names are:

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1 | Elder |
| 2 | Bishop |
| 3 | Pastor |

LESSON 11

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH - TO WIN SOULS

SCRIPTURE: Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20

MEMORY VERSE:

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Matthew 28:19

INTRODUCTION

Evangelism is the bringing of the lost to Jesus Christ that they might be saved. It is not enough to tell others of Christ and then leave them. It is the responsibility of the church and the individual Christians to tell others of Jesus, lead them to accept Christ as their personal Saviour, and then to train them to become effective soul winners of other lost people.

WHY SHOULD WE SEEK TO WIN OTHERS TO CHRIST?

There are two very important reasons why we should seek to win others to Jesus Christ.

- 1 Because Jesus commanded us to do so. There should be no more compelling motive in our lives than that of trying to carry out the commands of Jesus our Saviour. While Jesus was still teaching the disciples, He instructed them in winning others. When Jesus called the disciples James and John, He asked them to follow Him so that He could make them "fishers of men" Matthew 4:19. Again, in the country of the

THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP

- 1 The first purpose of worship is to glorify God. He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the giver of all good things and to Him we owe our first allegiance.
- 2 The winning of the lost to Christ. In 1 Corinthians 14:23-25, Paul tells the church members at Corinth that they should conduct themselves in such a way that if an unbeliever enters the church to worship, he may be converted. This is a high and holy purpose of worship for our churches today.

- 3 The spiritual growth of the worshipper. Peter exhorted all followers of Christ to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 True worship always honours God.
- 2 Prayer is an important part of all worship.
- 3 Bringing an offering is worshipping God.

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An "elder", as the name shows, originally referred to the older men who were honoured because of their wisdom and age. It came to mean those who had experience in the things of God and were worthy of respect. The literal meaning of "bishop" is "overseer" or one who looks over and therefore cares for something. The third term "pastor" means "shepherd". This was a very natural use for a people who were used to caring for sheep. To them a pastor was like a shepherd who lovingly cared for his sheep. Even so today, the pastor is one who cares for his flock. In this care it means who looks after the church members, the flock of God.

That these three names refer to the same church office is clear when we examine two passages of Scripture. The first verses are found in Acts 20. In verse 17 we read, "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church". Speaking of these same men in verse 28, Paul says, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers (bishops), to feed (act as shepherd or pastor) the church of God." Here we see that the same church officers are spoken of as elders, bishops, and pastors.

Another verse in 1 Peter 5:2. "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; feed (pastor) the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight (bishop) thereof." Again in this verse the same officers are referred to as elder, bishops, and pastors.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE PASTOR

The qualifications for a pastor are high. There are two passages of Scripture which give these qualifications. In both of these passages he is called a

bishop. These passages are: 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Read these verses carefully. These two passages are very similar. Paul makes it clear that the one who would be a pastor must have a good reputation and be of good character. He must have qualities of leadership and be able to teach. Most of all, no one should ever attempt to fill the place of a pastor unless he has been called by God. Everyone who is called should seek to prepare himself through study and training to be the best pastor he possibly can be.

THE DEACON

The word "deacon" means servant, or one who serves. In this sense, all Christians are "deacons" because we are to serve our Lord Jesus Christ. But in a special way, deacons are selected to serve the church. Though the name deacon does not occur in these verses, it is generally agreed that the helpers chosen by the church at Jerusalem were the first deacons. We read about this in Acts 6:1-7. The apostles had been unable to do all the work of serving the church and some problems were arising because of this. After these helpers were chosen, the work of the church went forward in a great way (verse 7). Paul addresses the church deacons in Verse 1 of his letter to the Philippians. In 1 Timothy 3:8-13, Paul gives the qualification for a deacon. The deacon must be of good character, sincere in speech, temperate in habits, liberal in giving, sound in doctrine, and a good example in his family life. In Acts we read that the deacons were elected by the church and then set apart or "ordained". It is the work of the church to select the deacon, and the work of the deacon to serve the church and his Lord.

Gethsemane, they sang a hymn. Mark 14:26. It was natural that the New Testament churches should have singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs as a part of their worship. Colossians 3:16.

3 Reading the Scriptures. This occupied an important place in the worship of the early churches. The only Scriptures they had were the books of the Old Testament. Paul told the young preacher Timothy to "give attendance to reading" 1 Timothy 4:13. And again Paul emphasized the great importance of the Bible when he said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 2 Timothy 3:16.

4 Teaching or preaching. Along with the reading of the Scriptures, there was usually an explanation of the meaning of what had been read. This was what Jesus did in the synagogue at Nazareth Luke 1:16-21. He read from the Old Testament book of Isaiah and then explained the meaning of this prophecy to the people assembled there. Paul made much of preaching on his missionary journeys and instructed Timothy to preach the Word of God. 2 Timothy 4:2.

5 Offering. This is to be an act of worship as well as other parts of the service. We give because the Bible commands us to do so. Paul puts emphasis upon the spirit in which the offering is to be made: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" 2 Corinthians 9:7. The giving of an offering is an expression of love and gratitude on the part of the worshipper to God, the great Giver of all things.

worship God at home or at the church. We should do both. If one does not worship privately, he is unlikely to worship publicly. There is much to be gained from worshipping with others at the appointed times. In Hebrews 10:25, we are told that we should not forsake, or leave off, the assembling of ourselves together.

THE FORM OF WORSHIP

There seems to have been no set form for worship in the New Testament churches. We are not given any commands as to the form our worship should take. We can learn something about the worship of the early Christians from a study of the New Testament church meetings. There were five distinct elements in the worship in the New Testament churches. These elements should also be present in our church services today.

1 Prayer. The first thing we are told about the company of believers Jesus left on earth is that they prayed. Acts 1:14. They were together for worship on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon them. Acts 2:1. They were praying when the angel came and released Peter from prison. Acts 12:5. So we see that prayer was a very important part of the worship times in the early churches.

2 Praise. Praise may be expressed in different ways, but it is usually associated with singing. Singing has always been important in the worship of God. In the Old Testament we are told of great choirs assembled with instruments of music to praise God. 2 Samuel 6:5. Many of the Psalms were also sung in worship services such as in the temple. Just before Jesus and His disciples left the upper room to go to

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 The two New Testament officers of a church are pastor and deacon.
- 2 Elder, bishop and pastor all refer to the same office in the church.
- 3 Deacons are elected by the church to serve the church and its members.

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LESSON 4

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

SCRIPTURE: Acts 6:1-7

MEMORY VERSE:

"And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch."

Acts 6:5

INTRODUCTION

There are four kinds of church government in the world today.

1 The "autocratic". This form is represented by the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches. In the Roman Church the Pope stands at the head of a worldwide organization. Under him there are various grades of ministry. The local congregation has little voice in the affairs of the church. They are told what to do and what to believe and there are sometimes severe penalties if the individual church member does not follow these commands.

2 The "episcopal". This is represented by the Anglican Church. A group of bishops make up the "superior clergy" and rule the "inferior clergy" and the churches. The local churches have very little power in governing themselves.

LESSON 10

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH - TO WORSHIP GOD

SCRIPTURE: John 4:19-26

MEMORY VERSE:

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
John 4:24

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important functions of the church is to plan and carry out worship services. What is worship? Worship is the recognition of God by man by appropriate actions and thoughts. Worship includes prayer, preaching, giving, singing and other appropriate actions.

THE NATURE OF WORSHIP

1 True worship is loving God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" Luke 10:27. The form of worship may take many different shapes, but worshipping God is recognizing Him as God. Worship is both an inward experience and an outward expression.

2 True worship comes from the heart. It is expressed in our praying, in our singing and in other activities.

3 Worship can be private or public. One may

- 2 We are stewards and therefore must give an account to God of all that we possess.
- 3 God wants us to be faithful to Him as stewards of our time and talents as well as our money.

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3 The "presbyterian". This form is represented by the Presbyterian Church. This form of church government is known as the rule by "elders". Two classes of elders are recognized - teaching elders and ruling elders. The church session with the pastor and ruling elders have charge of the local congregation. Above the session is the prebytery and higher than this is the synod with the general assembly holding the highest power. The local congregation is subject to the wishes of these higher authorities.

4 The "congregational". The Baptist churches are of this type of government. According to this form, each church is an independent, self-governing body. These churches may form associations or conventions for fellowship and mutual help, but none of these organizations ever has power over the local church body.

Which of these forms of church government are most nearly like that of the New Testament churches? Some churches do no claim authority from the Scriptures. Some, like the Roman Catholic Church, claim that the church has equal power and authority with the Scriptures and can work out its own systems and even new doctrines which are not found in the Bible. Organization of New Testament churches was a gradual process. The churches were guided by the Holy Spirit working through the apostles. There are two main characteristics of the New Testament churches which should guide us today in our church government.

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES WERE DEMOCRATIC

A democratic church is one in which the affairs of the church are controlled by the congregation of church members. This means several things for the church.

1 A democratic church has voluntary membership. No one became a church member in New Testament times when he was born. Neither was anyone forced to accept certain beliefs which were not taught by Jesus or the disciples. Jesus described Himself as standing at the door and knocking. Revelation 3:20. The door to the believer's heart can be opened only by permission of the owner - the believer himself. In a democratic church each member has the same privileges. The young and the old, the rich and the poor, the educated and the non-educated all stand equal. Some may have talents and special training and these may be church leaders, but they are never bosses.

2 A democratic church is also a self-governing church. The synagogues of the Jews had rulers, but the New Testament churches did not. The apostles did not attempt to rule the churches. When there was a need in the churches the apostles called on the congregation to settle it. In our Scripture for today we see how the apostles called on the church to express themselves in the dispute which arose about the supply of food to the widows.

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES WERE INDEPENDENT

Every church was an independent unit. It could seek advice from other churches and from leaders from other churches, but it had no authority over it except that of Christ.

1 These churches were independent in their relationship with other churches. One church did not interfere in the affairs of another church nor seek to control it in any way. There were

The tithe is one unit of every ten units that we receive. Out of every pound, two shillings belong to God. Out of every 10 pounds, 1 pound belongs to God. The Bible tells us that the tithe belongs to God in a special way. "And all the tithe of the land, whether the seed of the land, or the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord" Leviticus 27:30. One tenth of all we receive belongs to God and should be given to Him through the church. God's plan is fair to all. Those who have much are required to give one tenth of what they have. Those who have only a little can give one tenth of what they have received. God's plan is fair to all and all can take part in God's plan of stewardship.

GOD'S PLAN IN ACTION

In the Old Testament, the tithe was used to support the temple and the priests who served God and the nation of Israel. In the New Testament, the tithe was used to support the churches and those who served God in them. God's plan of stewardship brings blessing in two ways.

1 It blesses those who receive it because it is used to further the work of God.

2 It blesses the one who gives it because he is being faithful to what God has commanded. God has promised, "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" Malachi 3:10.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

1 Everything we have has been given to us by God.

the earth can use its wealth. When God created man and put him on the earth, He commanded him to subdue, or control it. Genesis 1:28. But with the gifts and privileges God gave, there was also given a responsibility. This responsibility we call our "stewardship". Everyone then is a "steward" of God.

WHO IS A STEWARD?

The word steward is used many times in the Bible. It is used concerning a person placed in charge of goods or possessions by the owner. The steward was trusted by the owner and was accountable to the owner. The steward was an important person as seen by the following reference. Abraham had a steward whose name was Eliezer (Genesis 15:2) who would have inherited all of Abraham's property if a child had not been born to Abraham. So a steward is one who is trusted with what really belongs to another.

EVERYONE IS A STEWARD TO GOD

Since God owns everything and has entrusted it to people on the earth, then we know that all of us are God's stewards. Our stewardship must be acknowledged before God. How can we show good stewardship? God has provided a way for everyone to show that he is a good steward. One who uses the property of another must show it in some way. The renter pays rent to the owner of the property and so shows his stewardship. As stewards before God we must acknowledge Him as owner in a way pleasing to God.

GOD'S PLAN OF STEWARDSHIP

The Bible teaches us about God's plan of stewardship. God's plan is that we should give one tenth, or a tithe, of our income to God's work. Malachi 3:10.

some individual who tried to control the church at Antioch. Read Acts 15:1 about this. The church at Antioch sent Barnabas and Paul to Jerusalem to discuss this matter and to seek advice from the church there. The answer was a letter recorded for us in Acts 15:22-29 in which these men who had caused the trouble were rejected. The Jerusalem church then offered advice, not commands, to their fellow Christians at Antioch.

2 New Testament churches were also independent in their relationship with the government. Jesus gave us this principle of separation when He said, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" Matthew 22:21. There are certain things which the individual Christian must do in relation to his government. He must obey its laws and he must pay his taxes. These are honourable actions in recognition of the power of the government which is ordained by God. See Romans 13:1. A Christian is a citizen of two worlds - the kingdom of God and his own country. A good Christian will be a good citizen of both. He will give to his country the things that belong to it and to God the things that belong to God.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 The New Testament form of church government was congregational.
- 2 Every member has equal standing in a Baptist church.
- 3 New Testament churches were independent of each other and of the government.

LESSON 5

THE BIBLE IS THE WORD OF GOD

SCRIPTURE: 2 Peter 1:12-21; 2 Timothy 3:15-17

MEMORY VERSE:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

2 Timothy 3:16

INTRODUCTION

There are three main attitudes toward the Bible among the people of the world today.

1 There are some who say that the Bible is just like any other book that has been written. They do not believe that it is the Word of God. They read it as they would read any kind of book or newspaper. We know that this thought concerning the Bible is not a right one.

2 There are others who believe that the Bible is true, but they do not believe that the Bible is the final or best authority for actions and beliefs in the church. These people believe that a person, a group of persons, or a certain church can decide what must be believed by the church members. These people would say the Bible is not complete. They would say that the church or the church leaders have power to decide what the church members should believe. We know that the Bible warns us not to take away from nor add to this book. Read Revelation 22:18, 19 about this.

16

LESSON 9

THE MEANING OF STEWARDSHIP

SCRIPTURE: Malachi 3:8-10

MEMORY VERSE:

"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

1 Peter 4:10

INTRODUCTION

Every day there are many things about us which remind us of the goodness of God. God created all things and continues to sustain life on the earth. In the book of Genesis we read that God made all things good. Genesis 1:31. In the New Testament we read, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" James 1:17. God has created and provided every good thing for us on the earth. Our response to God in using what we have is our stewardship.

GOD IS THE OWNER OF ALL THINGS

First of all, we need to remember that whatever we have on the earth is ours by permission from God. It was God who created the world and all that is in it. He is therefore the owner by right of creation. Even we who live on the earth are His. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" Psalm 24:1. However, in the wisdom of God, He has ordained the people who live upon

29

remembering Christ in this way we should remember the terrible death He died in order to save us. Also, we are told that the observance of the Lord's Supper should continue to be observed by the church until the return of Christ.

ABUSES OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

The church at Corinth was rebuked by Paul for their abuses of this public church activity. See 1 Corinthians 11:18-22 about this. The Lord's Supper is not meant as a time of eating and drinking for the sake of the bread and juice used. However, even today there are abuses of the Lord's Supper. Some churches teach that special grace or favour is given to those who partake of the Lord's Supper. They make this feast of remembrance a sacrament, saying that special favour can be gained from God by taking the Lord's Supper. The New Testament teaches us that this is a "feast of remembrance" for born again believers.

The New Testament does not tell us how often the Lord's Supper should be held. It is left for the local church to decide this. A good rule to follow is that it should be observed often enough to keep us reminded of the sacrificial death of Christ, but not too often so that its observance becomes commonplace and meaningless. Many Baptist churches observe the Lord's Supper every three months.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 The Lord's Supper was given to the church by Jesus.
- 2 The Lord's Supper reminds us of the death of Christ.
- 3 Only true believers who are baptized should participate in the observance of the Lord's Supper.

- 3 The third attitude toward the Bible is that the Bible is the Word of God and is sufficient and complete guide book for all teachings concerning the church. This is the right attitude toward the Bible, the Word of God.

THE BIBLE WAS GIVEN BY GOD

In this lesson we want to study carefully the words of our memory verse. We read that all Scripture has been given by God. 2 Timothy 3:16. This means that God used people to write down His teachings for us in the Bible and that all of the Bible is from God. Also, we read how God did this. This memory verse says that God "inspired" the writers. God was the One who gave directions through the Holy Spirit to those who wrote the words of the Bible. God used many different people to write the Bible over a long period of time, but it was always God who was speaking through them.

THE BIBLE IS THE SOURCE OF OUR DOCTRINES

Paul, the apostle, said in this verse we are studying, that the Bible was given in order to teach us. Therefore, we must study the Bible carefully in order to learn the doctrines that are found in it. It is always good to remember several things when you read and study the Bible.

- 1 Read more than one or two verses so that you will know why the writer wrote in that way.
- 2 Try to learn to whom the writer of the book in the Bible was writing, and his purpose in writing.
- 3 Ask God to help you understand the words and what they mean to you. The Holy Spirit of God who inspired the writers of the Bible will help you to understand it.

THE BIBLE IS TO GUIDE US

We also see in our memory verse that the Bible is to be used for reproof and correction. This means that the Bible is to be our guide book in all that we do. Whenever we need help in our personal lives, or guidance in our churches, then we must always turn to the Bible for help. In every problem or difficulty we may find help from the Bible. The Bible is such a wonderful and complete book that we may find words to guide us in every situation that arises. Great truths, or principles are taught in the Bible so that we may see what God would have us to do by studying the Bible carefully.

THE BIBLE INSTRUCTS US IN RIGHTEOUSNESS

Everyone who has ever lived on the earth has done wrong and committed sin of some kind, except Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore it is necessary for us to know how we can be saved because no one with sin can enter heaven. The Bible tells us how we can be saved. It tells us that we are not righteous or good. Our kind of goodness or righteousness is like dirty rags Isaiah 64:6. The Bible tells us that we can be forgiven of our sins through repentance and faith. Then our own righteousness which is like filthy rags is replaced by the robe of righteousness which God gives to all who trust in Jesus. See Isaiah 61:10.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 All the Bible is the Word of God.
- 2 The Bible is a complete guide book in matters of faith and practice in our churches.
- 3 The Bible gives us God's plan of salvation which replaces our sins with His righteousness.

forefathers from Egypt many years before. Jesus took this feast of remembering the Egyptian deliverance and changed it and made it a memorial feast remembering His sacrifice on the Cross.

The Passover feast reminded the people of how God had saved them from the Egyptians long ago. At that time the blood of a lamb was placed on the door posts of their house so that the angel of death would pass over them. The Lord's Supper reminds us of how Christ the "Lamb of God" poured out His blood on the Cross to save sinners.

The Lord's Supper is symbolic in nature. That is, the elements used in the Supper have spiritual meaning. The bread stands for the body of Christ. Jesus said it was given for the disciples, and therefore for all who believe in Him. The bread used in the Lord's Supper simply stands for the body of Christ which was crucified that He might save all who believe in Him. The wine, or the "fruit of the vine" as Jesus called it in Luke 22:18, stands for the blood of Christ which was shed for the remission of sins. The body of Jesus is not actually present in the bread. The fruit of the vine used does not actually become the blood of Jesus. These elements remind us of what Jesus did for us when He died on the Cross.

PARTICIPATION IN THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Lord's Supper was given by Jesus to the disciples and to all true believers in order that we might remember His sacrifice. He said, "This do in remembrance of me" 1 Corinthians 11:24. Paul in writing to teach the Christians at Corinth said that the Lord's Supper showed the death of Christ "till He come" 1 Corinthians 11:26. The death of Christ is very meaningful to the one who has become a Christian. In

LESSON 8

THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

SCRIPTURE: Luke 22:7-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

MEMORY VERSE:

"And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."

1 Corinthians 11:24

INTRODUCTION

The Lord's Supper is the second public activity of the church with deep spiritual meaning. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are very closely related. These two activities are commanded by Jesus for the church to carry on. Baptism always comes before participation in the Lord's Supper by the believer. Baptism shows repentance and faith. The Lord's Supper shows fellowship of the believers with one another and with Christ. Therefore, those who take part in the Lord's Supper must always be those who are baptized believers. The Lord's Supper was given to the church and therefore is to be carried out by the church for church members.

THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Jesus Himself began the Lord's Supper. Luke tells us that on the night in which Jesus was betrayed He met with His disciples in an upper room. This was during the Passover Week when the lamb was killed and prepared in a feast. It was the custom of the Jews to remember every year how God had delivered their

LESSON 6

EVERY PERSON CAN PRAY DIRECTLY TO GOD

SCRIPTURE: 1 Peter 2:1-10; Revelation 1:5,6;
Ephesians 2:17,18

MEMORY VERSE:

"And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Revelation 1:6

INTRODUCTION

An important, but often neglected, teaching of the Bible is that each Christian, every born again believer, is a priest unto God. This doctrine is taught in the New Testament and should be known by all church members. It is an important doctrine because of the truth it teaches. It has been neglected perhaps because of the demands and responsibilities it places on each born again Christian. In this lesson we shall consider what it means and also how we can put it into practice in our lives.

WHO IS A PRIEST?

Some would answer this question in this way. They would say that a priest is one who has been ordained by the church and has been given the authority to do certain things in the church. They would say that the priest can administer the church sacraments and grant absolution for sins. By the granting of absolution they mean that the priest has been given the power by the church to forgive sins. They would say that a priest and only a priest could do this.

According to the Bible, a priest is one, anyone, everyone who has believed on and accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. When a person comes into this relationship, he becomes a representative of God through Christ for the Christian group. He is one who goes to God for the people and comes to the people for God. He has been given this privilege and responsibility because he has accepted Christ as his Saviour. As a Christian, he is a part of the body of Christ. He has just as much authority as his brother in Christ, any brother in Christ, every brother in Christ.

THE OLD TESTAMENT PRIESTS

In Old Testament times there were many priests connected with the worship services in the temple. All the people could come into the outer court of the temple, but only the priests could enter the holy place. Then there was the holy of holies where only one priest, the high priest, could go and that only once a year. Then Jesus came and at His death on the Cross the veil separating the holy of holies from the rest of the temple was torn from the top to the bottom. Matthew 27:51. This was God's way of showing that all could now come to Him directly.

HOW WE BECOME "PRIESTS"

In Revelation 1:5, 6 we learn how a person can become a "priest". Verse 5 tells us that it was Christ who loved us and washed us from our sins in His blood. This is the work of salvation which changes our condition before God. We are changed from unsaved to saved persons by the blood of Christ through faith. Not only is our condition changed, but our position has been changed too. We who were at one time afar off because of our sins are now brought close to God. Our sins separated us from God, but God's forgiveness in Christ

3 The nature of the church demands that its members be born again believers. The church is the body of Christ made up of believers who have repented of their sins and have followed Christ in baptism.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 New Testament baptism is always by immersion.
- 2 Baptism is a living picture of repentance of sins and faith in Jesus.
- 3 Only those who have repented of their sins and believed in Jesus should be baptized.

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the dead because one who was dead in sins now has new life in Christ. So baptism shows in a living picture that the believer has accepted Christ, that his old sinful nature has died, and that he has now been raised to new life in Christ Jesus.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

Let us go back to the last question to help us answer this one. The Bible tells us the baptism shows death, burial and resurrection. Romans 6:3. This living picture tells us that the one being baptized has repented of his sins and believed in Christ as his Saviour. This means that only the one who has already accepted Jesus as his Saviour should be baptized. The one who is being baptized is showing a living picture of his resurrection to new life in Christ when he was born again. He can not truthfully do so unless he has already experienced salvation in Christ. This is shown in several ways in the New Testament.

1 Only those who have become disciples of Jesus are to be baptized. In the Great Commission Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." To "teach" means to "make disciples". Those who are disciples are the subjects for baptism.

2 We learn from studying the passages where baptism is mentioned in the New Testament that baptism always follows repentance and faith. "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" Acts 8:12. Other verses which show this are: Acts 2:37, 38; Acts 18:8; and Acts 19:4.

can bring us to Him again. Then as born again believers we have a new position in Christ. We have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Ephesians 2:17, 18.

OUR DUTIES AS "PRIESTS"

Every privileged brings with it responsibility. What responsibilities do we have as Christians who have been made "priests" unto God? First, there is the responsibility to live as a true Christian. The one who is a believer in Christ must not do anything that would bring shame on Him. Next, the "priest" should bring others to God. This can be done through witnessing to unsaved persons and also by praying for them.

The veil of the temple was torn apart by God. Let us not try to patch it together again. We have access to God in prayer and worship. Let us thank God for this privileged and let us seek to bring others to Christ so that they too may have this relationship.

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER

- 1 Every born again believer is a "priest" before God.
- 2 As a priest before God, we must fulfill our responsibilities.
- 3 Let no one seek to place a barrier between you and direct access to God in prayer.

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LESSON 7

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:1-6

MEMORY VERSE:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?"

Romans 6:3

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson concerning baptism we will be asking several questions which we want to have answered about baptism. In this lesson about baptism, and in the next lesson about the Lord's Supper, we will be studying about the two public activities of the church which have great spiritual meaning. These are two commands or ordinances of the church which have special meaning for Baptists.

HOW IS BAPTISM CARRIED OUT?

Let us look to the New Testament, which is our complete guide in matters of faith, to determine what method of baptism was used in Jesus' day. Baptism means to immerse, that is, to put the baptized person completely under the water. Let us look at the following reasons for believing this.

- 1 The word "baptize" as found in the New Testament always means to immerse or put under the water. This word was used from Old Testament times to describe the action of putting under

the water. Naaman the leper dipped or "baptized" himself in the River Jordan at Elisha's command for healing of his leprosy. Read about this in 2 Kings 5:14. So we see that the word was used to mean to put under the water many years before the coming of Christ.

2 Also, it would be impossible to understand the meaning of Paul's words in Romans 6:4 unless we understand that baptism means putting the believer completely under the water. Paul says that the believer is "buried" with Christ. How can one be buried unless he is covered completely? How then can the believer be truly baptized unless he is put completely under the water?

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

We have seen that baptism involves putting the believer completely under the water. This method of baptism is very important if we are to retain the picture that it is intended to give. Baptism is like the actions of a living picture. Let us look at this picture very carefully.

The Bible tells us that all have sinned and fallen short of God's glorious plan for us. Romans 3:23. We also read in Colossians 2:13 that all sinners are "dead" in their sins. There is no way that a dead man can help himself. There is no way the unbeliever can save himself because he is dead in his sins. But Christ can give life to those who repent and believe and are then forgiven. Baptism shows that the one who is being baptized has repented of his sins. He is now being baptized to show that he is a new person in Jesus Christ. Believing in Jesus is like being born again. In fact that is just what happens in the spiritual life of a person - he is born again. Salvation is like rising from