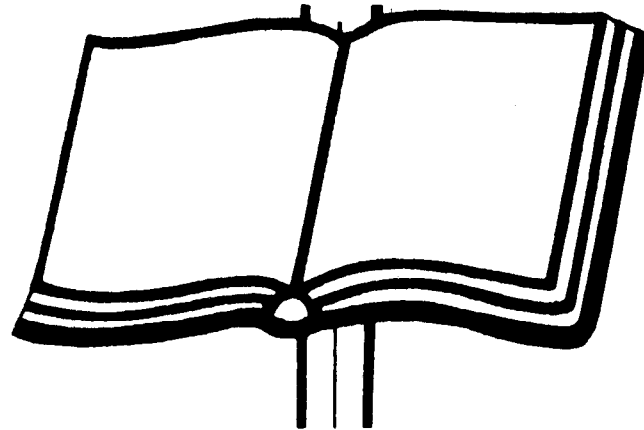


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# The **ABC's** of Christian Growth



an A to Z guide  
to  
Christian maturity



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# A message to pastors . . . . .

This series of discipleship lessons has been born out of a need experienced by so many pastors—the need for material that “*says what we want to say*” in the “*way we want to say it.*” While there is an abundance of this kind of material available, most of us can relate to the frustrations of finding it to be either too skimpy, too shallow, too weak, or just not in line with the fundamental doctrines and convictions of Bible-believing Baptist churches.

This particular **ABC's Of Christian Growth** discipleship program in no way claims to be the apogee of perfection. It does, however, present you with some distinct advantages:

- **It Is Workable:**

The Program has been tried, and it works! It was first used at the Willetton Bible Baptist Church in Western Australia in April 1986, then by the Bible Baptist Church at Oak Harbor, Washington, from 1989. Since that time, numerous churches in the United States of America and around the world have used this particular publication. It has provided new converts (and older Christians) with a sound doctrinal basis for rapid Christian growth.

- **It Is Flexible:**

You will find that this program can be used in a number of different ways:

It can be used in a “one-on-one” situation, where you or a mature, loyal church member is assigned to meet with the new Christian for one hour once a week.

It can be used in a group Bible study setting, where a suitable leader can disciple several people on a regular basis. The checking of answers will often provide further most helpful discussion.

It can be used in a New Members Class, or as a refresher course for all church members in a Sunday School class or a midweek meeting for prayer and Bible study. Every major doctrine is covered.

It can be used with teens, older students in a Christian School, and in Jail Bible studies.

It also offers value to the preacher. The outline style structure will provide you with many suggestions for sermon outlines and helps.

- **It Is Practical:**

Each of the 28 lessons is self-contained, and may be used in any sequence. However, experience has already shown a remarkable continuity with the alphabetical plan. A lot of the stronger meat is found towards the end of the series.

We pray that these lessons will be used of the Lord through your shepherding to build strong, Bible-believing, God-fearing Baptists. There is so much wind of doctrine blowing through the corridors of Christendom — the need is so great!

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Yours because His,

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# TIPS FOR DISCIPLERS

The following is a list of very practical ideas which will help you be more effective when discipling another individual:

1. Major on being an encourager. As you listen, ask yourself what you could encourage him about (*Hebrews 10:24,25*).
2. Realize that you are entering into a life-long relationship. Your relationship together will be foundational to all you hope to do (*Proverbs 17:17*).
3. Set the pace. You can't lead someone farther than you have gone yourself. You can't build solidly into someone else what is weak or unfamiliar to your own life (*Philippians 4:9*).
4. Modeling is the key to reproducing your life. More things are caught than taught. Be transparent with those you are helping. Share your weaknesses and struggles as well as your victories (*II Timothy 3:10-11*).
5. Repeat all things. Repeat all things. Repeat all things. Make no apologies for going over familiar ground. The basics are basic; keep hitting the basics (*Philippians 3:1*).
6. Take him with you as much as possible. Many lasting impressions are made during discussions in the car or during recreation together (*Mark 3:14*).
7. Use illustrations. Try to create a picture for the concepts you want to impart. One picture is worth a thousand words (*Mark 4:26,30,31*)!
8. Fit your follow-up plans to the person, not the person to the program. Be flexible. Meet his needs as well as build his life. Don't spend all your time "putting out fires." Think structured building into another's life, but beware of the "assembly-line mentality" (*I Corinthians 3:9,10*).
9. Always focus on Christ and relate all you do together to knowing Him or making Him known. Point to Jesus (*Hebrews 12:2*).
10. Spend a good amount of time praying together; this will help him catch your heart. If you meet in a restaurant or other public place, think about praying in a car afterwards.
11. Keep sharing the vision of disciple-making. Be a disciple; make disciples; develop disciple-makers. Help him think spiritual reproduction (*II Timothy 2:2*).

# A PERSONAL WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE PASTOR

My Dear Friend,

You have made the most important decision of your life! You have received the most wonderful **Person** — the Lord Jesus Christ! By trusting Him as your Saviour you have become a CHRISTIAN in the true, Bible sense of the word.

I rejoice with you in your salvation, and want you to know that there are many people praying for you. All who by faith have received the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour belong to what the Bible calls the **Family of God**. (Look up *Galatians 3:26* and *Ephesians 3:15*.) You now have many brothers and sisters in Christ.

The Bible teaches us that becoming a Christian is the **beginning** of your new life in Christ. In order to help you be the kind of Christian GOD wants you to be, I have made available to you these Bible lessons. By personally studying the Bible, which is the Word of God, backed up by the prayer and encouragement of other Christians, I know you will be helped and blessed of God.

It is my prayer for you that you will take these lessons and:

Read them CAREFULLY

Read them COMPLETELY

Study them THOROUGHLY

MEMORIZE the key verses

KEEP them for future reference

ASK questions, and always seek BIBLE answers

Much of what you will study in these lessons was used of the LORD to teach me when I was a new Christian. I know from personal experience that if you will be willing to believe and practice what is taught by this material, you will experience a wonderful life of peace, joy, and contentment.

# HELP FROM AN OLDER BROTHER

The "ABC's Of Christian Growth" program is a Scriptural means of helping new Christians get on their feet and begin walking with the Lord in the light of His Word.

With your consent, a member of our Church has been assigned the responsibility of being available to help you as you proceed through these lessons.

Your older brother (or sister) will endeavor to get together with you at an acceptable time on a regular basis for the purpose of helping you with these lessons, praying with you and for you, and answering any questions you may have.

**As a record for the future, you may wish to fill out the following:**

<p><b>NAME:</b> _____</p> <p><b>MY SALVATION:</b> I received Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour – on: _____ at: _____</p> <p><b>MY BAPTISM:</b> I was Scripturally baptized – into the: _____ Baptist Church on: _____</p> <p><b>MY PASTOR:</b> The man that God has placed over me to watch for my soul is: _____</p> <p><b>MY OLDER BROTHER / SISTER:</b> The one who will help me learn to grow spiritually and become a fruitful and mature Christian is: _____</p>
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## POINTS TO REMEMBER BEFORE YOU BEGIN STUDYING THESE LESSONS:

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1. Find a quiet place away from noise and distractions, so that you may be able to think and concentrate on the lesson.
2. Pray — before you commence the lesson; ask the LORD to help you understand His Word.
3. Determine in your heart that you will not allow Satan to hinder you from completing these lessons. Make it a personal goal to finish the entire course.
4. By faith, believe that you will grow spiritually as you study this material.
5. When you learn a new truth, immediately put it into practice in your life.
6. Write down any questions you may have to ask your “older brother” or the pastor.
7. Remember — the **Bible** has the answer, not always your “older brother”! If your older brother cannot answer the question immediately, be assured — an answer will be forthcoming.



# What Does Salvation Mean For Me?

Lesson Commenced: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Checked: \_\_\_\_\_

Look up the Scripture references and answer the questions by filling in the actual words from the Bible. (All the references in this lesson are found in the New Testament – use the index in the front of the Bible if you have difficulty in locating them.)

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## WHAT I WAS:

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- A. I was spiritually \_ \_ \_ \_ in trespasses and sins. *Ephesians 2:1*
- B. I was \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ already. *John 3:18*
- C. I had the \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ of God abiding on me. *John 3:36*
- D. I was a \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ of sin. *Romans 6:17*
- E. I was headed for the \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ of \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ . *Revelation 20:15*
- F. I was \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ , yet sought by Jesus. *Luke 19:10*

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## WHAT GOD PROMISED ME:

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- A. The gift of \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ . *Romans 6:23*
- B. The \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ of sins. *Colossians 1:14*
- C. \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ through His grace. *Titus 2:11*
- D. To \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ in my heart. *Ephesians 3:17 (John 14:23)*
- E. The \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ of \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ which passeth knowledge. *Ephesians 3:19*
- F. The \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ of Jesus Christ. *John 15:11*
- G. The \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ of God, which passeth all understanding. *Philippians 4:7*

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## WHAT I DID:

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- A. I \_\_\_\_\_ upon the Name of the Lord. *Romans 10:13*
- B. I \_\_\_\_\_ E D in mine heart. *Romans 10:9*
- C. I \_\_\_\_\_ Him. *John 1:12*
- D. I \_\_\_\_\_ E D of my sins. *Acts 17:30*

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## WHAT GOD DID:

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- A. \_\_\_\_\_ me freely. *Romans 3:24*
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ me from my sins. *Revelation 1:5*
- C. Recorded my name in the Lamb's \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. *Revelation 21:27*
- D. Adopted me as a \_\_\_\_\_ (child) of \_\_\_\_\_. *Romans 8:14,15*
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ me in the Beloved. *Ephesians 1:6*
- F. S \_\_\_\_\_ me. *I Corinthians 6:11*
- G. Made me a \_\_\_\_\_ . *II Corinthians 5:17*

### Some Words to Explain

Repent = *change one's mind, a change of attitude toward sin.*

Justification = *to be declared "as not guilty" (just-if-I'd never sinned).*

Sanctification = *to be "set apart" by God and for God.*

Grace = *undeserved favor.*

### READING ASSIGNMENT:

Commence reading through the Gospel according to John. Read at your own comfortable pace, perhaps up to a chapter a day. Do not stop until you have completely read this Book. (The Gospel of John is the *fourth* Book of the New Testament.)

**MEMORIZATION:** Try to memorize: *John 1:12.*

# What Does God Expect Of Me?

Lesson Commenced: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Checked: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. Carefully read:** *John 3:1-8.*

According to the Bible, another term for becoming a Christian is to be

B \_ \_ \_ A \_ \_ \_ .

(*John 3:6* teaches TWO births – a physical birth, and a spiritual birth.)

**B. Look up:** *I Peter 2:2.*

As a new Christian, to what does this Scripture liken you?

A \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

**C. Look up:** *II Peter 3:18.*

You cannot do much as a spiritual “baby,” but what does God expect you to do?

To \_ \_ \_ \_ in grace.

**D. Carefully read:** *I Corinthians 3:1-3.*

What does the Lord call a Christian who doesn't grow spiritually?

C \_ \_ \_ \_ .

**E. Carefully read:** *Ephesians 4:13-15.*

Into what does the Lord want His children to grow? (Use your own words.)

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# Six Steps to Christian Growth

The following acrostic will give you SIX basic steps to begin growing spiritually.

**G** **GO**—TO A *BIBLE-BELIEVING* BAPTIST CHURCH — *Hebrews 10:25*

**R** **READ**—YOUR BIBLE DAILY — *I Peter 2:2; Acts 17:11*

**O** **OBEY**—CHRIST and BE BAPTIZED — *Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:41*

**W** **WITNESS**—TO OTHERS OF CHRIST — *Acts 1:8; John 4:28,29*

**T** **THANK**—GOD DAILY IN PRAYER — *Philippians 4:6; Matthew 7:7*

**H** **HONOR**—GOD WITH THE TITHE — *Malachi 3:10; I Corinthians 16:2*

*(All of these steps will be covered in greater detail in the lesson series)*

# A Assurance of Salvation

Lesson Commenced: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Checked: \_\_\_\_\_

Satan may try to get you to doubt your salvation. He may cause you to wonder if you really are a Christian, and tell you that because you do not **feel** any different than before, nothing really happened.

And then, you might sin. You might slip back into your old ways. Satan is quick to sow the seeds of doubt by telling you that Christians don't sin.

When doubts come, **what will your answer be?**

The purpose of this study is to teach you that by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, you are saved now and forever — and you can **KNOW** it for certain!

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## WHAT IS MEANT BY “ASSURANCE”?

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By “assurance of salvation” we mean the intellectual and spiritual certainty that you belong to God, that you possess eternal salvation.

A. Look up: *II Timothy 1:12*.

The “key words” in this verse are K \_ \_ \_ and P \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

B. Look up: *I John 5:13*.

1. On the basis of this verse of Scripture, would you say God wants you to have assurance of salvation? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What word in this verse indicates this? \_ \_ \_ \_

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## WHY DO I NEED ASSURANCE OF SALVATION?

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A. Assurance brings us \_ \_ \_ . *I John 1:4*

B. Assurance brings us C \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ before God. *I John 3:19,21*

C. Assurance brings us C \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ of Heart. *Colossians 2:2*

D. Assurance brings us \_\_\_\_\_ . *James 1:8 (Use your own words.)*

E. Assurance enables us to O \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ the World. *I John 5:4,5*

F. Assurance enables us to effectively serve the Lord by telling others about Jesus.  
Read the following Scriptures: *John 1:40,41; John 4:28,29; and Acts 16:10.*

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## WHAT IS THE BASIS OF ASSURANCE OF SALVATION?

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Many Christians base their assurance of salvation upon personal FEELINGS.

The problem with this is that feelings change. One day you may feel saved; the next day, through circumstances, you may not feel saved.

You have something *MORE* than feelings to go by – the UNCHANGING WORD OF GOD.

Look up: *I John 5:11,12.* Write this Scripture out in full.

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Circle the following two words in the above verses: “RECORD” and “HATH”

There are three grounds for your assurance:

A. The PERSON Of God.

According to *Titus 1:2*, God cannot \_ \_ \_ .

### **GOD SAID IT – THAT SETTLES IT!!**

B. The PROMISES Of God.

1. According to *John 5:24*, God says I \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ everlasting life, I  
\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ come into condemnation.

2. According to *John 6:37*, because I came to Jesus Christ, He will in  
\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ cast me out.

3. According to *Romans 10:13*, those who call upon the Name of the Lord  
\_ \_ \_ \_ \_ be saved.

These are just a sample of the positive statements, put in writing, by the God Who cannot lie!

C. The PRESENCE Of God.

1. According to *Romans 5:5*, when we are saved, God gives us His \_\_\_\_\_, Who dwells in our hearts.
2. According to *Romans 8:16*, the Spirit of God bears \_\_\_\_\_ with our spirit that we are in fact God's children. See also the first part of *I John 5:10*.

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## HOW MAY I KNOW I AM SAVED?

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Here is a Bible checklist:

- A. I **KNOW** I Am Saved Because I \_\_\_\_\_ E D On The Lord Jesus Christ. *Acts 16:31*
- B. I **KNOW** I am saved because I \_\_\_\_\_ the Son. *I John 5:12*
- C. I **KNOW** I am saved because I have a love for the \_\_\_\_\_ .  
*I John 3:14*
- D. I **KNOW** I am saved because I desire to keep:  
God's \_\_\_\_\_ . *I John 2:3*
- E. I **KNOW** I am saved because I desire to turn from the W \_\_\_\_\_ and all its sin. *I John 2:15*
- F. I **KNOW** I am saved because I am \_\_\_\_\_ ing the world.  
*I John 5:4*
- G. I **KNOW** I am saved because I have the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Spirit within.  
*I John 5:10*

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# WHAT BRINGS ASSURANCE OF SALVATION INTO MY LIFE?

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It is possible you may have doubts from time to time. Just remember that Satan is a LIAR (*John 8:44*), and his first recorded words in the Bible were casting doubt upon God's Word (*Genesis 3:1*).

Here are some ways you can get assurance, or deepen your assurance in what God has done for you:

A. Learn The Word Of God.

Your salvation is based upon what God has said — not upon how you think or feel. Thus it is important for you to read and study the Bible.

Read: *II Timothy 3:14,15*.

B. Thank God For His Gift Of Salvation.

According to *Romans 6:23*, you have received the GIFT of \_\_\_\_\_ . Have you thanked God for this gift yet? Thanksgiving is evidence of faith. Read: *II Corinthians 9:15*.

C. Make A Public Testimony Before Others.

1. Have you told someone that you have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ? Look at *I John 4:15* and see the relationship between confessing Christ and assurance.

2. Read: *Matthew 10:32* and *Romans 10:9,10*.

One way you can confess Christ publicly is to come forward at the "invitation" in one of our Church services. The pastor will gladly introduce you to the Church.

D. Attend Church Services As Much As Possible.

Fellowshipping with your brothers and sisters in Christ will encourage you. Many of them have experienced the same doubts you may have. *Hebrews 10:25* commands this, while *Hebrews 10:22* talks about assurance.

E. Live A Righteous Life.

Sometimes a full assurance does not come until God sees we mean business for Him.

According to *Isaiah 32:17*, the effect of \_\_\_\_\_ is quietness and \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_. See: *Proverbs 10:9*.

Remember, your peace and assurance is based upon believing God's promises and **not** on your feelings.



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## WHAT HAPPENS IF I SIN?

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- A. Look up: *I John 1:8* . Is it possible for a Christian to sin? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Look up: *I John 2:1*. Does God want a Christian to sin? \_\_\_\_\_
- C. Look up: *I John 1:9*. If a Christian sins, what is the one thing we are to do about it? C \_\_\_\_\_ it to God.
- D. Look up: *I John 2:1* again. When I sin, Who appears before God the Father in heaven on my behalf? \_\_\_\_\_ the Righteous.
- E. Look up: *I John 1:6,7* . In your own words, what does a Christian lose if he sins?  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## CAN I EVER LOSE MY SALVATION?

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- A. *John 10:28* says we shall \_\_\_\_\_ perish.
- B. *John 10:29* says no man is \_\_\_\_\_ to remove us from God's hand.
- C. *John 6:37* says God will in \_\_\_\_\_ cast out those who come to Christ.
- D. *John 6:39* says the responsibility of keeping us saved is the Lord's, not ours, and that Christ can \_\_\_\_\_ nothing.
- E. *John 5:24* says the kind of life I now have is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- F. *Romans 8:38,39* says that nothing can \_\_\_\_\_ us from the love of Christ.
- G. *I Peter 1:5* says we are \_\_\_\_\_ by the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.
- H. *Jude 24* says Christ is able to \_\_\_\_\_ us from \_\_\_\_\_ .
- I. *Philippians 1:6* says that Christ will continue His good \_\_\_\_\_ in us until the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ.
- J. *Ephesians 1:13* says our salvation has been \_\_\_\_\_ with the Holy Spirit.

- K. *Ephesians 2:8* says that our salvation is the \_ \_ \_ \_ of God. A gift taken back by the giver is **no** gift.
- L. *Ephesians 2:9* says that we have done nothing to gain salvation. If we have done nothing to gain it – we can do nothing to lose it!
- M. According to *Ephesians 2:2,3* and *I John 3:10*, before we were saved we were in the control of Satan. Now that we are saved, we have a new relationship with God.

God is our heavenly \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ . *Romans 8:15*

Christians are the \_ \_ \_ \_ of God. *I John 3:1*

In our earthly family, when a child does wrong, his parents do not cast him out of the family and disown him. They will correct and chasten their son – but he is still their son and a member of that family.

When a Christian sins, he is not cast out of God’s family, thus losing his salvation. However, like any loving father, God may \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ the erring Christian. *Hebrews 12:6*.

*“Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine,  
O, what a fore-taste of glory divine.  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.”*

**READING ASSIGNMENT:**

If you have finished reading the Gospel of John, now read through the first epistle of John (*I John*). This Book is found towards the end of the New Testament.

**MEMORIZATION:**

Try to memorize: *I John 5:11,12*.

# B The Bible

Lesson Commenced: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Checked: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the “authority” in your life? Those who believe something must have a reason for their beliefs. Just as there are standards in the business world, in government, and in education – the Christian needs an **absolute standard** for his beliefs, his duties – indeed, his whole conduct.

Many people have as their authority their inner *CONSCIENCE*. “Let your conscience be your guide!” they say. This sounds good, but according to *Titus 1:15* the conscience may be \_\_\_\_\_; according to *I Timothy 4:2*, \_\_\_\_\_ and according to *I Corinthians 8:7*, \_\_\_\_\_.

Other people, especially religious folk, have the ‘*CHURCH*’ or man-made *CREEDS* as their authority. Again, such standards are unreliable – because man is involved. *Colossians 2:8* warns us against P \_\_\_\_\_ and T \_\_\_\_\_. (Look up and read: *Matthew 15:3, 6, 9*.)

***For the Christian, only the BIBLE, the Word of God, is the unchanging authority for faith and practice.***

This study will teach you what the Bible is, why you can take it as your authority, and how to use it as a child of God.

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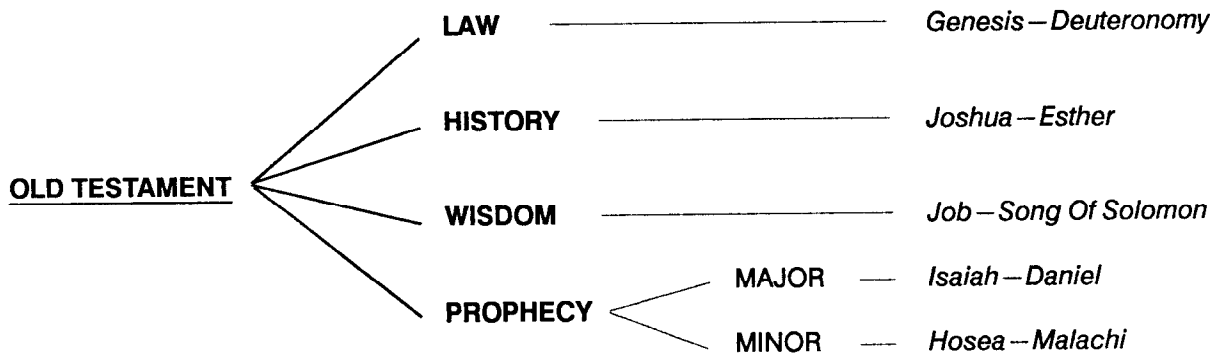
## WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

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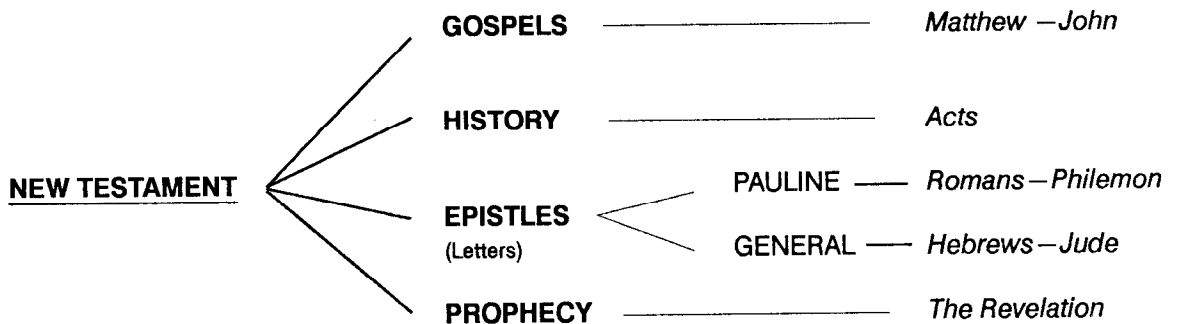
- A. The Bible is a collection of \_\_\_\_ books, divided into two major sections known as the OLD and NEW \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. Other names given to the Bible are:
1. The \_\_\_\_\_ . *Romans 10:17*
  2. The \_\_\_\_\_ . *II Timothy 3:15*
- C. The Books of the Bible are not arranged chronologically, but rather “topically.” Both the Testaments have their Books set in groups, as shown on the next page.

*(All new Christians experience difficulty at the first in finding the Books of the Bible, especially during a preaching service. Don't be embarrassed to use the index in the front*

of your Bible or to accept the assistance of another Christian. The more you use your Bible, the sooner you will become familiar with the location of its Books.)



From the close of the Old Testament (*Malachi*) to the birth of Jesus Christ (*Matthew*), over 400 years transpired. These years are called the “Silent Years.”




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## HOW DID WE RECEIVE THE BIBLE ?

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The Bible is not just a book, it is **THE BOOK** – different from any other book that has or will be written. The Bible is a **SUPERNATURAL** Book because of the way in which God gave it to mankind.

A . Look up and write out: *II Peter 1:21*.

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This verse of Scripture teaches us three vital facts concerning how we got the Bible:

1. It wasn't made up by men. ". . . came not by the will of man. . ."
2. Men of God wrote the Bible. ". . . holy men of God spake . . ."
3. God authored the Bible. ". . . as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

B. God used human writers to pen His Words.

1. God used about 40 different men from all walks of life to write down the Bible. This was accomplished over a period of some 1,600 years.
2. Most of the Old Testament was originally written in *HEBREW*. The New Testament was originally written in *GREEK*.

C. God authored the Bible.

A good way to illustrate this miracle is to consider how you would write things down on paper. First, it is the *PEN* which actually does the writing – but it only writes as you move it. Second, the characteristics of the script will depend on the kind of pen or writing instrument you use. Write your name down on paper using a “fine ball-point pen,” a “felt marking pen,” and a paint brush – note there will be the **same** words, but a **different** appearance!

1. The Holy Spirit moved the human writers of the Bible in such a way that they recorded the very words and sense of God, though couched in their own literary style.
2. The way in which God gave us the Bible is called **INSPIRATION**.
  - a. Because the Bible is the *INSPIRED* Word of God, we can take it as **the** authority for all we believe and do.

BEWARE of men who say, “*The Bible BECOMES the Word of God*” when it speaks to you personally. Look up *Matthew 24:35* and *I Corinthians 2:13*. According to these passages, God has inspired the \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ (not just the ideas & thoughts).

BEWARE of men who say, “*The Bible CONTAINS the Word of God*,” meaning there are parts of it which are not God’s Word. Look up *II Timothy 3:16*. According to this Scripture verse, how much of the Bible is inspired? \_ \_ \_ .

- b. Because the Bible is inspired of God, it is \_ \_ \_ \_ from beginning to end . *Psalms 119:160*

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# DO WE HAVE THE BIBLE TODAY?

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The original manuscripts of the Bible have long been lost. Does this mean we no longer have the pure Word of God?

A. Look up: *Psalm 12:6,7* and *Matthew 24:35*.

Not only did God give us His Word, but He also promised to

Preserve it until the end of the world.

B. How has God preserved His Word ?

God has providentially kept His Word from destruction and corruption in two ways:

1. Down through the centuries, the Lord has raised up men with a love for His Word to keep it from harm.

Zealous Jewish patriots, then simple Bible-loving Christians (in particular, our Baptist forefathers), have kept the Scriptures available to all generations.

Satan has on numerous occasions attempted to remove the Bible from the face of the earth. Hellish decrees have seen the Bible **banned, burned, banished, and battered** by scornful men.

2. The Hebrew text of the Old Testament has been faithfully preserved by fastidious Jewish scribes — it is called the **Masoretic Text**. The Greek text of the New Testament has been faithfully preserved in what is called the **Textus Receptus**, or Received Text.

Over 3,000 ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, along with some 2,000 lectionaries (selected readings) still exist today—the majority of them attesting to the Received Text.

C. Do we need to understand Hebrew And Greek to know the Bible?

NO! The preservation of God's Word extends to our English Bible.

**The ONLY version of the Bible  
translated from the Masoretic  
Text and the Textus Receptus  
is the KING JAMES VERSION of  
1611 A.D., also known as the  
Authorized Version.**

1. When you hold a copy of the King James Version (KJV), you hold in your hands the Word of God.

2. BEWARE of **all** other translations such as the Revised Standard Version (RSV), the New International Version (NIV), the New American Standard Version (NASB), Good News Bible, the New English Bible – they are all based upon corrupt manuscripts and contain serious errors.

If you don't already possess a Bible, your pastor recommends you purchase a plain KJV without added notes or comments. Make sure the type is readable. Bibles range in price from about \$2 to \$100 – the difference is due to the covers and quality of the binding.

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## WHY DO WE NEED THE BIBLE?

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- A. Look up: *I Peter 2:2; Matthew 4:4; I Corinthians 3:2; Hebrews 5:12,13; Psalm 19:10; and Jeremiah 15:16.*

According to these Scriptures, the Bible is our spiritual \_ \_ \_ \_ .

- B. Look up: *Hebrews 4:12 and Ephesians 6:17.*

The Bible is our spiritual \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

- C. Look up: *Psalm 119:11.* This verse says the Bible keeps us from \_ \_ \_ \_ .

- D. Look up: *Psalm 119:105* . According to this Scripture, the Bible is life's:

\_\_\_\_\_ . (Use your words.)

- E. Look up: *II Timothy 3:16* again. The Bible is profitable for:

\_\_\_\_\_ , (what is right)

\_\_\_\_\_ , (what is *not* right)

\_\_\_\_\_ , (how to get it right)

and \_\_\_\_\_ . (how to keep it right)

- F. Look up: *I Thessalonians 4:18* and *Psalm 119:50* .

The Word of God is for our \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

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# WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THE BIBLE?

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- A. *John 5:39* \_\_\_\_\_ *Acts 17:11*
- B. *II Timothy 2:15* \_\_\_\_\_
- C. *James 1:22* \_\_\_\_\_
- D. *I Corinthians 2:13d*    C \_\_\_\_\_
- E. *II Timothy 4:2* \_\_\_\_\_
- F. *Psalms 1:2* \_\_\_\_\_ *Joshua 1:8*
- G. *Colossians 3:16a* \_\_\_\_\_
- H. *Psalms 119:11* \_\_\_\_\_

You may wish to write the following statement in your Bible as a wise reminder:

**“THIS BOOK WILL KEEP YOU FROM SIN –  
OR SIN WILL KEEP YOU FROM THIS BOOK.”**

## **READING ASSIGNMENT:**

Read through *Psalms 119* (24 verses per day). This is called the “Word of God Chapter,” and is the longest chapter in the Bible.

## **MEMORIZATION:**

Try to memorize *Psalms 119:9,11*.



# C The Church

Lesson Commenced: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Checked: \_\_\_\_\_

This study looks at one of the most confusing and misunderstood doctrines of the Bible. People have all kinds of ideas as to what a church really is. Some people think it is a **building** (a cathedral, or some place of worship). Others think of a church as a **denomination** (a human organization) and speak of the “Catholic Church,” the “Presbyterian Church,” the “Baptist Church,” etc. Many Christians conceive the “Church” as consisting of all born-again believers in the world, a kind of “**invisible, universal**” church.

Our task is to put aside these notions and determine what **God** says a church is in His Word.

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## THE CHURCH IS A NEW TESTAMENT INSTITUTION.

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Look up: *Matthew 16:18*. This is the *FIRST* mention of the Church in the Bible.

- A. Who founded (built) the Church? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Look up: *John 1:42*. What is the meaning of Peter’s name? \_\_\_\_\_

**Note** : Peter’s full name is *Simon Peter bar Jona*.

- C. Look up: *I Peter 2:3,4,6-8*. Who did Peter identify as the “Rock” upon which the Church would be built? \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** The Old Testament is primarily addressed to the **nation** of Israel. The New Testament is mainly addressed to **churches**. DO NOT CONFUSE THE TWO. The Bible makes the distinction in *I Corinthians 10:32*.

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## THE CHURCH IS AN ASSEMBLY.

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The word “*church*” (or “*churches*”) is found 114 times in the New Testament, and is rendered from the Greek word “*EKKLESIA*.”

This word 'ekklesia' has only one meaning — “a company of people called out for a specific purpose.” It has its roots in the democracies of the Greek city-states, when the Town Crier would call out the citizens to a meeting to conduct business.

In *Matthew 16:18*, the Lord Jesus did not change the meaning of ekklesia, but He distinguished it from other assemblies of the day with the personal pronoun “MY.”

Thus a New Testament church is the “Lord’s Assembly.”

## **THERE ARE FOUR IMPORTANT FACTS CONCERNING AN “ASSEMBLY.”**

### **A. An assembly must be LOCAL.**

1. People cannot “come together” and yet be all over the world! For example, an automobile is an “assembly” of many and various parts: How absurd to think of it as being everywhere — a “universal car”!!!
2. In all but about 15 instances, where it is used in a “generic” or “institutional” sense (that is, any church in general, no church in particular), the word “church” or “churches” is **always** used in connection with definite, geographic localities.
3. Look up the following Bible references and write down the actual cities or regions where some **real** churches were located:

*Romans 16:1; I Corinthians 1:2 ; I Corinthians 16:1,19 ; II Corinthians 8:1; Colossians 4:16 ; I Thessalonians 1:1; I Peter 5:13 ; Revelation 2:1,8,12,18 ; Revelation 3:1,7.*

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4. For these reasons, the Bible knows nothing of a universal (catholic), world-wide “church.” The New Testament speaks of many churches which were all meeting in different localities.

### **B. An assembly must be VISIBLE.**

1. People cannot “come together” and not be seen! Many like to talk about the “invisible church” (which allows them to move around in Christian circles) — but all the churches mentioned in the New Testament were “see-able.”
2. Look up *Philippians 1:27* and *I Thessalonians 2:17* and *3:6*. The Apostle Paul, writing to the churches at Philippi and Thessalonica, desired to come and \_ \_ \_ these assemblies.

C. An assembly must be ORGANIZED.

1. An assembly is not a rabble (disorderly mob). The word “assembly” implies organization.
  - a. Look up: *Colossians 1:18*. A church is likened figuratively to a  
- - - - .  
The human body is an “assembly” of many parts; but does a pile of skin, flesh, organs, bones, etc., constitute a body? Of course not! They must be put together according to a plan. (See : *Psalm 139:14*.)
  - b. Look up: *I Timothy 3:15* . Here, a church is likened figuratively to a \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ . The house you live in is also an “assembly”; but does a pile of bricks, timber, plaster, nails, etc., constitute a house? Of course not! These things must be put together according to a plan or blueprint. Study *I Corinthians 3:9-11,16*, where the Church at Corinth was likened to a temple.
2. A New Testament Church is to be organized – the blueprint is found in the New Testament.

D. An assembly must be CONSTITUTED.

1. By this we mean it must be made out of the right components. How absurd to assemble a motor vehicle out of milk, leaves, and uranium!! How foolish to build a house out of paper, bandages, and meat!!
2. So too, a New Testament Church is not to be made up of just anything—or anyone. God specifies the correct components in the New Testament.
3. Write out *Acts 2:41*.

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(Circle the following words: *RECEIVED, BAPTIZED, ADDED*.)

This verse gives God’s order and qualifications for church membership:

- a. *Receive* the Word of God = \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. *Baptism*.
  - c. *Added* to the church. (See also: *Acts 2:47; 5:14*.)
4. This is the **only** Scriptural way by which people become members of a Baptist church – salvation first, then baptism.

## DEFINITION

**A New Testament Baptist Church is  
an organized assembly of baptized believers.**

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## THE CHURCH HAS A “HEAD.”

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Man-made religious organizations have their heads — presidents, popes, moderators, superintendents, etc. Each New Testament Baptist church also has a Head — but One vastly different from any of the above.

Look up: *Colossians 1:18* and *Ephesians 5:23,24*.

- A. Who is the Head of each New Testament Baptist church?

\_\_\_\_\_

- B. Each church is to be S \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ to its Head.

- C. Look up: *Galatians 3:1* and *5:7*. In what way is a church subject to its Head?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** Jesus Christ is not a “figure-head.” Any “church” which is not subject to Him and His laws is out of control.

No church has the right to make laws — it may only obey the laws already given by the Head through His Word.

***A church without a living Head is dead!!***

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## THE CHURCH HAS OFFICERS.

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- A. Look up: *Philippians 1:1*. What are the 2 offices in a church?

\_\_\_\_\_ , (elders, pastors) and \_\_\_\_\_ .

- B. Look up: *I Timothy 3 :1-13*. This reference gives the qualifications required for these two offices.

**Note :** The terms “bishop,” “elder,” and “pastor” are used interchangeably in the New Testament. We prefer to use the term “pastor” because the other two have been given unBiblical ecclesiastical connotations.

C. MY PASTOR :

1. Look up: *I Peter 2:25* and *5:4*. Who is the Chief Pastor of my Church ?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. The word “pastor” means **shepherd** . Look up *I Peter 5:2* and *Acts 20:28*. What does the Bible call the church in relation to its pastor?  
The F \_\_\_\_ .
3. According to *I Peter 5:2*, what is the duty of the pastor?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. According to *Ephesians 4:12-14*, why has the Lord given my Church a Pastor?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. According to *Acts 20:17,28-31*, how will my Pastor protect me?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. According to *Hebrews 13:7*, I am to R \_\_\_\_\_ my Pastor and F \_\_\_\_\_ him.
7. According to *Hebrews 13:17*, I am to O \_\_\_\_\_ my Pastor and S \_\_\_\_\_ to his leadership in the Church.

***How Should I Address My Pastor?***

Many feel unsure as to what they should call their Pastor in conversation. There is no God-given title for a pastor, and it is unwise to refer to him as “Reverend” or “Father.” (See: *Psalm 111:9* ; *Matthew 23:9*.)

However, just as we train children not to call their parents by first names out of respect for their place and authority, and thus with their teachers and policemen, etc., it is right to show similar respect to the man God puts over you in your Church.

My Pastor prefers to be addressed as:  
\_\_\_\_\_

***You And Your Pastor.***

Give your pastor your confidence, love, encouragement, and constant prayers. Be his co-worker. Go to him in your difficulties; call him when in need. He is best able to help you with counsel from the Word of God. **Never** make him your idol — keep your eyes on the Lord, but neither harshly criticize your pastor or be a party to scheming against him.

Read: *I Thessalonians 5:12,13* and *I Timothy 5:17-19* .

Love and appreciate the wife of your pastor also. She holds no office in the Church and has no authority — yet she is so important to her husband’s ministry.

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## THE CHURCH MAKES DECISIONS.

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A true New Testament Baptist Church never **makes** laws — it simply follows its Lord’s commands as set forth in His Word. In a practical sense, a church often needs to make decisions in keeping with this principle. Unlike the hierarchical systems of many religious bodies, Baptist churches practice what is known as *Congregational* church government, where the congregation decides.

A. Look up: *Acts 6:1-5*. Who chose the seven deacons?

\_\_\_\_\_

B. Look up: *Acts 1:15-26*. What preceded the vote of the whole church in electing a successor to Judas? P \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

C. According to *Matthew 18:17*, what is the highest decision-making body in spiritual affairs?

The C \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

D. According to *Matthew 18:18*, the decisions of a church congregation are ratified in H \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

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## THE CHURCH IS AN INDEPENDENT INSTITUTION.

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A. Each New Testament Baptist Church Is Independent.

In *Acts Chapter 15*, men from the Church at Antioch came to the Church at Jerusalem to consider a matter of extreme doctrinal importance. After they determined the teaching of God’s Word on the matter (*verses 15-18*), the issue was resolved. Even then, the Church at Jerusalem HAD NO AUTHORITY over the Church at Antioch. Their sentence was that “...we trouble not them...”; and they simply wrote a letter making a request. See: *verse 19*.

This is a far cry from the hierarchical religious systems of man — where the various congregations within a denomination are controlled and dictated to by “higher authorities.”

B. Churches Are To Be Separate From Governments.

1. The Word of God teaches a **complete** separation between the spiritual and the secular. See: *Matthew 22:21b*.
  - a. Christians are to be law-abiding citizens. *Romans 13:1-7*
  - b. Christians may disobey a civil law **only** in the case where they are compelled to disobey God's law. *Acts 5:29*
2. Governments should not involve themselves with the establishment or support of any particular religious group, except to offer security and protection as it would for all citizens of the land.

C. Churches May Scripturally Co-operate With Other Churches.

Independence does not mean isolationism. Baptist churches may Scripturally co-operate in certain areas with other Baptist churches of like faith and order — provided such co-operation is voluntary, and does not violate the sovereignty, independence, and autonomy of each church.

1. New Testament churches worked together to support missionaries. See: *I Corinthians 16:1-3 ; Acts 11: 22-26 ; II Corinthians 8:9 .*
2. New Testament churches worked together in social relief. *Acts 11:27-30; Romans 15:25,26 .* This financial assistance was a gift, not a loan.
3. New Testament churches were involved in regional fellowship.

*Galatians 1:2*

Churches (pl.) of

*I Corinthians 16:19*

Churches (pl.) of

*Galatians 1:22*

Churches (pl.) of

See also: *Colossians 4:16* , where two churches were and other apostolic writings.

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**THE CHURCH IS A  
ORGANIZATION**

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A. The I  
F

There are 187 pages  
in this useful book.