

DISCIPLES' & MINISTERS' PERSONAL EXPOSITORY STUDY OF THE BIBLE
DOCTRINE

DOCTRINE 1: THE HOLY BIBLE

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

*That the Holy Bible, consisting of 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament, is the inspired Word of God. We take the Bible as final authority in all matters concerning Christian conduct and work2
TIMOTHY 3:16,17; PROVERBS 30:5,6; REVELATION 22:18,19.(KJV).*

The Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and is the only source of knowledge of the Almighty God to all mankind. It is the contact point between finite man with the infinite God; and its prime purpose is to give mankind the revelation of God (2 Timothy 3:15-17). The Bible is severally referred to as the Holy Scriptures (Romans 1:2; 2 Timothy 3:15), the oracles of God (Romans 3:2; Hebrews 5:12), the Book of the Lord (Isaiah 34:16), the word of God (Mark 7:13), the word of Christ (Colossians 3:16) and the word of life (Philippians 2:16). It is in two major parts: the Old and the New Testaments. It consists of 66 books: 39 of which are in the Old Testament, 27 in the New Testament. The Bible was originally written predominantly in Hebrew and Greek. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic, while the New Testament was written in Greek language. Over 40 authors drawn from disparate generations spanning a period of over 1600 years, were used by God to write the Bible. Even though their occupations, education and social classes were divergent, their theme was the same as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:20).

PRE-EMINENCE OF THE BIBLE: The pre-eminence of the Bible (Isaiah 8:20; Psalms 119:89) makes it indispensable to all men today. While other books have limited influence on man, because they are products of finite minds, the Bible which is God's revelation to man has solution to every problem today. Therefore, no man's education is complete if he is ignorant of the provisions of the Bible. No Christian can live successfully without an adequate grasp of the Bible, and no Christian minister is really qualified for the ministry of the church of Christ without a thorough knowledge of the Bible (2 Timothy 2:15). Without a ready knowledge of the Bible, the Christian worker cannot be effective.

PURPOSE OF THE BIBLE: The Bible is God's inspired revelation of the origin and destiny of all things. It is the power of God unto eternal salvation and it is the source of present help for the body, soul and spirit (Romans 1:16; John 15:7). It is God's will and testament to man in all ages, revealing the plan of God for man here and now, and in the next life. It is the record of God's dealing with men; past, present and future. It contains God's message of eternal salvation to all who believe in Christ and of eternal damnation to those who rebel against the gospel (John 3:18,36).

The purpose of the Bible then is to reveal God to man, reveal man's need of God and show man the way to God. Man, by searching, cannot find God except God makes Himself known to him (Job 11:7). The Bible also reveals to man how to live, and through the fulfillment of its prophecies, all human needs are met. We receive salvation, sanctification, Holy Ghost baptism, healing, deliverance, protection, etc.

PROFITING MAXIMALLY FROM THE BIBLE: To profit maximally from the study of the Bible, we must remove all hindrances to spiritual receptivity, such as hardened heart (Matthew 13:3-6, 18-21), double mindedness (James 1:8; Mark 4:15-17), pride

(Deuteronomy 8:11-14; Psalm 101:5; Proverbs 18:12), carnality (I Corinthians 3:1-5), and unbelief (Matthew 13:58).

Every believer in the church today can benefit from the hidden treasures in the Bible. But this would require sacrifices on our part. Treasures are not found except by searching or digging earnestly. Likewise, deep Bible truths need be sought for, and in doing this, we will discover Christ the more (Colossians 2:3; John 5:39). Certain spiritual preparations are required from believers in order to discover these treasures that would make them develop into the fullness of the stature of Christ. There must be earnest love for the truth for its own sake (Psalm 119:40,47,54,72,103); supreme love for God (Matthew 22:37; Deuteronomy 30:6; Psalm 73:25); and an intense desire to know more of Him (Psalm 42:1,2; 63:1). Also, there should be a strong desire to make Him known to others (Proverbs 11:24-26; Romans 9:1-3), willingness to make personal sacrifice to study (Matthew 13:44-46; 12:42), a fixed purpose to know, and a willingness to practice the whole truth you have learnt (Psalm 119:60,101,106; James 1:22-25; Ezra 7:10; Psalms 119:63; 57:7; 108:1), and cultivating a state of mind that will not be diverted to make provision for the flesh (Romans 13:14; Matthew 26:41).

Above all, you need too, a regular habit of prayer, resignation to the whole will of God and His word that will make you discover the treasures hidden in the Bible.

DOCTRINE 2:THE GOD HEAD

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

*That the Godhead consists of three separate, distinct, and recognisable personalities and qualities, perfectly united in one. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are different Persons in the Godhead, not merely three names for one Person*MATTHEW 3:16,17; 2 CORINTHIANS 13:14; MATTHEW 28:19,20.(KJV).

PERSONALITIES IN THE GODHEAD: The Godhead consists of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Bible clearly teaches that each member of the Godhead is God; separate, distinct and recognisable personalities and qualities perfectly united in one. The Father is called God (I Corinthians 8:6; Psalm 89:26; I Chronicles 29:10; Matthew 6:9), the Son, Jesus Christ, is called God (Isaiah 9:6,7; John 20:28), and the Holy Ghost is called God (Acts 5:3,4; I Corinthians 3:16,17; 6:19,20; Hebrews 3:7-9; 10:15,16). From the foregoing scripture references, it is clear that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three distinct Persons, co-eternal, co-existent and co-equal in power and divine attributes. The word "GOD" in Genesis 1:1 means Elohim and in Hebrew language this is the plural of El (The Strong One). "Elohim" (The Strong Ones) appear more than 2,700 times in the Old Testament and this plurality is seen in: "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness " "The LORD said ... let US go down, and there confound their language " (Genesis 1:26; 3:22; 11:6,7). The Godhead (Romans 1:20) is also referred to as the Holy Trinity.

PERFECT UNITY IN THE GODHEAD: The unity of the Godhead is scripturally evidenced in the execution of all divine plans and purposes. At creation, a significant fact about the Godhead emerged with the use of the plural noun "us", by God Himself (Genesis 1:26). Elementarily, this implies the involvement of more than one personality in the creation of man. The same word continued to recur first, after the fall of man (Genesis 3:22), and on the threshold of God's perfect desire to curb the foolish excesses of man, by wisely confounding him with diverse languages (Genesis 11:7).

The testimony of scriptures on the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ reveals the perfect unity of the Godhead. It was God's anointing and the power of the Holy Ghost that enabled Jesus to fulfil His ministry (Acts 10:38).

The divine-human relationship also confirms God in three persons perfecting the relationship of man with the Triune God (Ephesians 2:18). The complementary functions of the Trinity are referred to in almost all books of the New Testament (Matthew 3:16,17; 28:19; Mark 1:10; John 16:7-15; 6:37,44; Romans 8:16; I Thessalonians 5:23; Ephesians 5:25; I Peter 1:2; Acts 10:38).

The three personalities in the Godhead acted together in the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father did not just make His Son available to assume the garb of human flesh preparatory for His vicarious mission (John 3:16). This was a supernatural work made possible by the power of the Holy Ghost (Luke 1:35).

PROOF OF THE TRUTH ABOUT THE GODHEAD: Further proof of the truth about the Godhead became clear at the baptism of Jesus Christ, when the Father sent the Holy Ghost in bodily form as a dove upon Christ, and God Almighty Himself made a public proclamation of Jesus as His beloved Son (Matthew 3:16,17). Even at the outset of His ministry, Jesus affirmed the companionship of God the Father and the Holy Ghost with Him. It was only by their combined workings that He was to fulfil His multi-pronged

ministry of preaching the gospel, healing the sick, delivering the captives, etc. (Luke 4:18).

Truly, the work of redemption which Jesus Christ completed by submitting Himself to die on the cross, was a joint venture with the Father and the Holy Ghost (Hebrews 9:14), as was the second work of grace, sanctification or holiness, by which man is cleansed from his in-bred depravity, the fallen nature he inherited from Adam (Romans 15:16). Also, the Godhead is at work in empowering believers through the baptism in the Holy Spirit, to discharge the duties handed them by God (John 15:26; 16:7-15; Luke 11:13).

DOCTRINE 3: THE VIRGIN BIRTH OF JESUS

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

The virgin birth of Jesus, the only begotten Son of God as well as His crucifixion, death, burial and bodily resurrection. ISAIAH 7:14; MATTHEW 1:18-25; ROMANS 1:4; I CORINTHIANS 15:3,4.(KJV). One of the most important facts concerning Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is that He was born of a virgin. The virgin birth confirms Christ's Deity and clearly distinguishes Him as the only sinless man conceived without Adamic depravity.

THE CONFIRMATION OF THE DEITY OF CHRIST THROUGH HIS VIRGIN BIRTH:

The virgin birth is thus an essential doctrinal truth which must be upheld for its fact and significance. Disputing this cardinal doctrine is by implication, denying Christ's Deity and His distinctive nature. It was this distinctive spotlessness that disqualified every other man from satisfying God's demand for substitutionary death. He therefore became the spotless Lamb of God found in fashion as a man. Men say - can there be such things as miracles? Is there not an antecedent improbability that the order of nature, as we know it, should ever be changed? To receive and believe the record of Christ's birth by a virgin-mother is to settle the whole question of the miraculous.

God was the first to unveil the virgin birth of Christ, when He referred to Him as the "seed of the woman" (Genesis 3:15). This was God's allusion to the fact that Christ would be conceived by a woman who had never known a man. The prophet Isaiah proclaimed, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son..." (Isaiah 7:14). The word 'virgin' as used in this reference has obvious meaning and can be nothing else but a woman that has not known a man. Luke, in his gospel narrative, recorded that the angel Gabriel was sent to Mary, a virgin betrothed to a man (Luke 1:26,27). Matthew, in his gospel, narrated that after Mary had been espoused to Joseph, she was found with a child of the Holy Ghost before they came together (Matthew 1:18). He further recorded that Joseph knew her not till she had brought forth her first born son, and he called his name JESUS.

THE CRUCIFIXION, DEATH AND BURIAL OF CHRIST AS BLESSINGS FOR MAN:

Jesus Christ, the Pascal Lamb of God hanged on the cross of Calvary until His life expired. His death became a reference point of events, time and date for the past, present and future. The soldiers on guard certified Him dead to Pilate before His body was released to Simon of Arimathea for burial. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus witnessed His burial in a sepulchre (Mark 15:43-47). The event on the cross is important to every man (Hebrews 2:9). Broadly stated, there are seven things Christ purchased for us through His death at the cross: forgiveness and full salvation (Luke 23:33,34), sanctification and holiness (Hebrews 13:12), a home in heaven (Luke 23:43), healing for all (Isaiah 53:5), deliverance from, and defeat of principalities and powers (Colossians 2:14,15), cancellation of every curse (Galatians 3:13), full and perfect redemption (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14).

CHRIST BODILY RESURRECTION THE PROOF THAT HE IS THE SAVIOR OF THE

WORLD: The bodily resurrection of Christ is mentioned 104 times in the New Testament. But did Jesus rise from the grave? First, the soldiers who were detailed to watch the tomb following the fear that the disciples might "come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead" (Matthew 27:64), knew that Christ's resurrection was a physical reality. Second, the Jews knew that the resurrection was not a concocted story. It cost them a great deal of money, in their attempt to stop soldiers

from spreading the news (Matthew 28:11-15). Third, for years, the apostles proclaimed the resurrection in Jerusalem, the very city where Jesus was crucified and where three days after, He rose from the dead. The story of the resurrection has since the historic event spread unchallenged. Speaking to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, Peter said, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:32) and nobody rose up to challenge him. Fourth, in Mark's gospel, Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene, who went and told Peter and other disciples "as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not" (Mark 16:10,11). Again, Jesus appeared to two of the disciples (on their way to Emmaus). Yet, when "they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them" (Mark 16:13). In fact, their fear and unbelief was such that Jesus, on one occasion, upbraided them (Luke 24:25-27). By far, the greatest proof of Christ's resurrection is His bodily appearance to His disciples at different times. It puts to rest the erroneous doctrine of spiritual resurrection.

Jesus is incomparably greater than any other prophet either before or after Him. Why? Because He (Jesus) was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). If teaching was the only thing that made Jesus the Son of God, He would not be different. Founders of other religions taught good human principles as well. If ascetic life, miracles, wonders and signs were the only things that made Thomas to call Jesus, "My Lord and my God," founders of other religions would also be qualified to be called "God" because they too lived ascetic lives and worked signs and wonders. But, no, it is the resurrection that made all the difference. Because of the resurrection, Jesus has been declared to be, not only the Son of God but also, the Saviour and Judge of the whole world, of the living and the dead, the Jews and the Gentiles, the Barbarians and the Greeks, the Hindus and the traditional worshippers. Whoever therefore shall call upon Him today shall be saved.

DOCTRINE 4: TOTAL DEPRAVITY, SINFULNESS AND GUILT OF ALL MEN

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

The total depravity, sinfulness and guilt of all men since the Fall, rendering them subject to God's wrath and condemnation. PSALM 51:5; JOB 14:4; ROMANS 3:23; 5:12-17; MARK 7:21-23; EPHESIANS 2:1.(KJV).

DEPRAVITY OF HUMAN NATURE: The total depravity, sinfulness and guilt of all men since the Fall render all sinners subject to God's wrath and condemnation (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-6; Romans 5:17,19; Psalm 51:1-5). Man was created in the image of God, and he was righteous and holy. Man was the crown of God's creation (Genesis 1:26,27; Psalm 8:4-8). Through voluntary disobedience and transgression, man fell into the depths of sin. As a consequence, everyone born through our first parents (Adam and Eve) became sinners, shapened in iniquity and utterly void of the holiness of God. Every man became totally inclined to evil (Psalm 51:1-5; Romans 3:10-18,23; 7:14-21; 5:12-17; Job 14:4; Isaiah 48:8). As a result of the fall of man (Adam and Eve), all men born through man and woman became sinners through inheritance. By inheriting the nature of sin, man became depraved. There is nothing in the natural man that has not been affected by the power of sin.

The entire nature of man, mentally, physically, morally and spiritually, has been affected by sin. The testimony of the scriptures is that the image of God in man has been seriously marred by this great fall. As a result of the fall, and the nature of sin inherited, man became separated from God, totally alienated from the perfect, holy and pure God. This separation is the cause of man's sorrow, shame, fear, heartaches and manifold problems, spiritually and mentally. Man became a transgressor (Romans 1:32; 6:23). All these have brought man under the wrath and condemnation of God, "for the soul that sinneth it shall die." There is nothing we can do for ourselves to commend us to a righteous and holy God. There is nothing the natural man (fallen away from grace) can offer to appease God in order to escape His righteous judgement.

DOMINATING INFLUENCE OF SIN IN DEPRAVED MAN: The Bible describes the fallen nature of man in various terms. Jesus Christ referred to sinners outside the Kingdom of God as swine and dogs. "Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you" (Matthew 7:6). He also referred to them as goats (Matthew 25:33). Paul in his epistle to the Philippian church warned them to beware of evil workers as dogs (Philippians 3:2). Also, in his epistle to the Romans, he referred to the fallen nature of man as "there is none righteous, no, not one", "they are together become unprofitable", "their throat is an open sepulchre", "whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness", "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:10-18,23). Jesus and John the Baptist described men as vipers (Matthew 3:7;12:34). Variousy, the unregenerate man is characterised with reprobate mind filled with all unrighteousness - immorality, covetousness, envy, murder; man is defiled and polluted (Romans 1:28-32; Mark 7:21-23), treacherous, violent and destructive (Isaiah 48:8; 59:5-8), cunning and crafty, full of wickedness, blind, foolish, with darkened understanding, children of wrath, (Ephesians 2:3; 4:14). The Bible says that the whole man is sick. The heart devises wicked imaginations, and has come far short of the glory of God. All men have become enslaved to sin: conceived in sin, born in sin, and lives in sin. By nature and habit, he is a sinner. The natural man cannot resist sin.

The consequence of the Fall is that man became totally depraved, and the immediate effect was his separation from the Holy God, and the coming into effect of a curse upon

Adam and his descendants (Genesis 3:1-6,14-19,23,24; Romans 5:12; 8:22). God's judgement also came upon all men: "The soul that sinneth it shall die," "for the wages of sin is death" (Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23). The human race has rebelled against God and broken His law, but the love of God constrained the holy God to plan for man's redemption to fulfil the law that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). Therefore, God undertook the redemption work for man by sending Jesus Christ to die for him. Jesus Christ became the divine provision of a Perfect Substitute and Sin-bearer (Genesis 22:7,8,14; Hebrews 9:22; Matthew 1:21). By the perfect sacrifice of His blood (I Corinthians 5:7) and through His blood, man has complete protection from the eternal consequence of the Fall, from the curse of the broken law (Exodus 12:13; Galatians 3:13); complete removal of the guilt and condemnation of sin, and full redemption by faith in Him (Isaiah 53:4-8; Acts 8:32-35; I Peter 1:18-21; 2:24).

DEATH OF CHRIST FOR REDEMPTION OF FALLEN MANKIND: The atonement is the reconciliation of sinful, fallen man to God made possible through the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The vicarious death of Jesus Christ is the substitution of the sufferings of Christ for the punishment of all sinners in the world. The prime purpose of this is the full redemption of fallen mankind. Through this "mercy-seat", sinners are reconciled to God. The power of sin over the natural man can only be broken by the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:12; Romans 5:17-19): "For as by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one man shall many be made righteous."

God demands repentance from all sinners to avail themselves of the provision of redemption (Isaiah 53:5-7; Matthew 20:28; 26:28; John 3:14,15; I Corinthians 5:7; John 1:12; 3:18,36) made in Jesus Christ. Repentance is the change which takes place in the penitent's attitude towards sin. It is turning away from sin to God. Sincere and total repentance and godly sorrow for sin through the agency of the Holy Spirit are important pre-requisites for salvation. Repentance is the deep inward experience which makes the sinner turn from sin to God. Therefore, God demands repentance from all men (Mark 1:15; Matthew 4:17; Luke 13:3,5; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30). When a sinner hears the gospel empowered by the Holy Spirit, the sinner will have deep, godly sorrow for his sins and acknowledge them by confessing all manner of sins. He goes before God on the merit of the atonement made by Jesus Christ through His vicarious death and accepts the sacrifice as a substitute for the punishment of his own personal sins. On the basis of this genuine repentance, the sinner asks for forgiveness and pardon based on the promises of God in the scriptures (Proverbs 28:13; Isaiah 55:6,7; I John 1:9; Ezekiel 18:21,22). As the sinner repents genuinely through the agency of the Holy Spirit he receives pardon (Luke 24:47; John 2:23).

DOCTRINE 5: REPENTANCE

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That Repentance is a complete turning away from all sins and its deceitful pleasures and that it is required from every sinner before he can truly and effectively believe in Jesus with saving faith. PROVERBS 28:13; ISAIAH 55:7; EZEKIEL 18:21-23; MARK 1:15; LUKE 24:46,47; ACTS 2:38; 3:19; 20:20,21; 2 CORINTHIANS 7:10; HEBREWS 6:1-3.(KJV).

Repentance is a conscious turning away from evil, disobedience, sin or idolatry (Jonah 3:8-10; Proverbs 28:13; Mathew 12:41). It is also turning from Satan unto the Living God. Repentance evokes a change from one's mind and purpose in life. It elicits a form of godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10) which makes an erstwhile sinner regard sin with utter revulsion. Godly sorrow makes the sinner or backslider to turn away from sin. It also causes an abhorrence or hatred for sin. The need for repentance is the heartbeat of a deeply compassionate God (2 Peter 3:9). Repentance is the genesis of the process of restoration for backsliders and salvation of sinners. It differs from tearful remorse which is merely an expression of sorrow over an embarrassing outcome of sin. It is a universal command by God to all people (Ezekiel 14:6; 18:30; Acts 17:30,31).

Repentance is the central theme of the gospel. The doctrine and teaching of repentance is fundamental to the propagation of the gospel. It is a foundation stone in the cardinal doctrines of the New Testament Church. Its vital place in Scripture, particularly in the New Testament, is underscored by the regularity of its usage. "Repentance", "repent" or "repenting" occurs over sixty times in the New Testament alone.

THE PREACHING OF REPENTANCE: It was the key note of Christ's preaching as well as the sum and substance of evangelistic, apostolic message. He repeatedly emphasised that His mission was providing repentance for the sinner (Matthew 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32; Acts 3:18,19,26; 11:18). Also, John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Lord, anchored his fiery messages in the wilderness on repentance (Luke 3:3-8).

At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus preached repentance (Matthew 4:17). His valedictory message to His disciples shortly before He was taken to heaven, was hinged upon repentance (Luke 24:45-47). This was principally because repentance is cardinal to the sinner's reconciliation with God. From His eminent position in glory, the Lord yet admonished the backslidden church to repent (Revelation 2:4,5; 3:3). Peter and other Apostles took a cue from the Lord and made the doctrine of repentance the fundamental theme of their gospel homilies (Acts 2:38; 3:19). Paul the Apostle, sent to preach to the Gentiles, did not differ from either the Lord or the other Apostles on the necessity of repentance for the sinner or backslider to gain the mercy of God (Acts 17:30,31; 20:20,21).

THE PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARDS REPENTANCE: Repentance, however, does not exist in isolation of faith. Saving faith is taken as implying the change of mind which is repentance (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 20:21). Both are a response to grace, creating a completely different orientation for the erstwhile sinner. Works do not elicit repentance (2 Timothy 1:9; Romans 3:27,28; 4:1-8; Ephesians 2:8). Paradoxically, repentance must necessarily produce works otherwise it is unreal (James 2:14-26; Ephesians 2:9,10; Titus 3:8).

True repentance manifests in a proper attitude towards sin (2 Corinthians 7:10,11; Psalm 38:18; 51:17; 2 Samuel 12:13). The repentant heart henceforth treats sin with disdain. No sinner or backslider can be said to have genuinely repented if he still

condones sin. This is because essentially, sin is exceedingly abominable. Consequently, the need for repentance by the sinner must be the pivot around which redemption messages must be woven.

The practical side of repentance is restitution, which is the act of correcting all past wrongs and having a conscience void of offence towards God and man. God expects the repentant sinner or backslider to correct every wrong committed against others. Restitution is incontrovertibly an integral part of true repentance (Genesis 20:1-18; Numbers 5:6-8; Ezekiel 33:14-16; Matthew 5:23,24; Acts 24:16). Through repentance, self-centredness gives way to God or Christ-centredness. The forgiveness of sin is available only to those who repent, for they alone are worthy of God's mercy.

THE PROFIT OF REPENTANCE: Repentance opens the way and makes us to receive the grace of God. It provides pardon and remission of sins (Isaiah 55:7; Proverbs 28:13; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19). Through it, sinners receive justification and acceptance (John 1:12,13; Galatians 3:8; 2:16; Romans 8:1; 5:12). Above all, there is joy in heaven, joy to God, Christ and heavenly hosts when a sinner repents (Luke 15:7,10). Repentance is a profitable doctrine that makes inward change and life a reality while activating a life of faith.

DOCTRINE 6: RESTITUTION

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That Restitution is making amends for wrongs done against our fellow-men, restoring stolen things to their rightful owners, paying debts, giving back where one has defrauded, making confessions to the offended and apologizing to those slandered so as to have a conscience void of offence toward God and man. GENESIS 20:1-8,14-18; EXODUS 22:1-7; LEVITICUS 6:1-7; NUMBERS 5:6-8; 2 SAMUEL 12:1-6; PROVERBS 6:30,31; EZEKIEL 33:14-16; MATTHEW 5:23,24; LUKE 19:8,9; ACTS 23:1-5; 24:16; JAMES 4:17.(KJV).

BASIS FOR PREACHING AND PRACTICING RESTITUTION: Restitution is an act of making amends for wrongs done against our fellowmen; restoring stolen or misappropriated things, properties or persons to their rightful owners; paying back just debts, giving back where one has defrauded, making confessions to the offended and apologizing to those slandered so as to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men. This is done whether the person injured knew or not, for God knows (Hebrews 4:13).

We receive forgiveness when we confess and forsake our sins. Then, we are cleansed by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ (Proverbs 28:13; I John 1:9). When a man sins against God, we often find that other people suffer as a result of that sin. It is also true that when a man sins against his neighbour, he sins against God in the same act, because one of God's commandments has been broken. God willingly forgives the sins committed against Him when there is repentance and forsaking of sin. However, God requires that a man make amends to any person he has injured or wronged as a mark among other things, that the repentance is genuine. We need to bear fruit that signify to all that we have become new creatures indeed (Luke 3:8-14; Romans 8:1,2; Acts 24:16; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Making restitutions ensures that we have right relationship with our fellowmen after we are reconciled with God.

BIBLE PRECEPTS AND PRACTICE OF RESTITUTION: The Bible doctrine on restitution in precept and practice spans virtually all the dispensations of God's dealings with men till the present day. The revelation of God's will and word before the Mosaic laws demands that we make restitution (Romans 1:19-20). Therefore, this teaching or doctrine of God's word which had been established many years before the law cannot be abolished by the law.

Restitution is part of the moral law. Most sins committed by men are against God as well as their neighbours. So, repentance toward God for the children of Israel included restoration to man of all properties gained by fraud, lying or pretence of whatever kind (Exodus 21:18,19,22,26-36; 22:1-15; Leviticus 6:2-5; Numbers 5:6-8).

Rulers in Israel reflected and embraced this teaching on restitution. It is vital today for rulers-temporal and spiritual- to reflect on this commitment to God's moral requirement for all men (2 Samuel 16:5-8 with 19:16-23; Proverbs 6:30,31; I Kings 20:34).

The prophets in Israel also preached, explained and emphasised the need to make restitution by every backslidden Israelite who is returning to God (Nehemiah 5:6-13). The prophets proclaimed and prophesied much of the coming of Christ and the atoning sacrifice. They were quick to recognise the need for the blood of the lamb to cleanse sins; yet, they did not lessen God's requirement of the necessity of restitution. The ministry of preachers today is akin to that of the Old Testament prophets.

Restitution is a doctrine of Christ, confirming His Word that “till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled”. Every believer must earnestly and whole-heartedly contend for, and practice all that Christ taught (Matthew 18:15-17; Luke 17:3-4; Luke 19:8-10).

Zacchaeus’ encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ is an object lesson. Zacchaeus wanted nothing to stand between himself and his salvation - not even his wealth, especially the ill-gotten part of it. Though the people murmured that Jesus was going to be a sinner’s guest, Jesus pronounced that salvation has come to Zacchaeus’ house since he, as a son of Abraham, not only by birth but now also by faith, is ready to make right his life and wholly follow the Lord. The salvation experience makes a person feel like returning all possessions that rightfully belong to another.

The Apostles in the early church also practised and taught restitution. In fact, the whole church of God lived by this teaching (Matthew 28:19,20; John 14:26; Acts 2:42; 16:4,5; Philemon 7-21). The rules of righteous living are just as high (or even higher) under the dispensation of grace as those in the Old Testament. Restitution is as much a part of the Gospel as conversion or water baptism. It is not a self-righteous act to merit pardon. When a man is saved, he will not only make right matters of money such as theft, dishonest gains and unpaid bills; he will also confess his lies, slanderous reports, unjust criticisms, hatred, malice - those things in which one may have injured others in word or deed. One may say, “my brother or sister does not know that I talked evil of him.” But what about the person to whom you talked? Without doubt, you have harmed him, and perhaps he repeated it to others. You should go to the one to whom you talked and confess it. It is better that we make right all previous wrongs here and now than face it in eternity (I Timothy 5:24).

Making restitution can be likened to a spiritual warfare in which we need God’s help and wisdom to undertake for us and quench all the fiery darts of the wicked (Ephesians 6:10-12,16). Some restitutions are delicate. These are restitutions that may implicate or bring injuries or harm to others that may be unsaved; or the need to settle issues with individuals or organisations that may affect other people in an adverse way. It also includes cases in which we don’t have clear leading from God’s word as to what steps to take. For delicate restitutions, we need fervent prayerfulness, wisdom and counselling from Spirit-filled preachers of God’s word who believe and teach the whole counsel of God (Proverbs 11:14; 15:22; 24:6).

The civil laws in a country may not always govern in matters of restitution. For example, the law may provide a time limit for certain classes of debts and obligations, after which they become lapse; but no debts are outlawed with God. Time cannot cancel moral obligations.

Restitution is usually considered at the time of salvation because God will only forgive when a man is willing, so far as it lies within his power, to make right every wrong that he has committed against others. There would be need however throughout life as a Christian to be ready to make restitution where need be when others are offended, for example, out of human error of judgment (Acts 23:1-5, Matthew 5:23,24).

BENEFITS OF PRACTICING THE PRINCIPLES OF RESTITUTION: God demands that restitutions be made. A far reaching benefit in God’s plan as regards restitution is that an undeniable testimony is directed to people who otherwise might never seriously hear the story of the gospel. A religion that compels a man to pay his just debts, restore back the things he has stolen, and uncover his crimes demands confidence from men of the world.

When restitutions are made, and past wrongs are settled, the peace of God floods the believer's heart. There is confidence towards God in prayer and the believer makes progress in the Christian life as sense of guilt is removed (Romans 8:1,2).

DOCTRINE 7: JUSTIFICATION

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That Justification is God's grace through which one receives forgiveness and remission of sins and is counted righteous before God, through faith in the atoning blood of Jesus. Having thus been cleared of every guilt of sin, the regenerated stands before God as though he had never sinned, not on the basis of any personal merit but in the light of what Christ had accomplished for mankind by His substitutionary death on the cross at Calvary. PSALM 32:1,2; ISAIAH 1:18; MICAH 7:19; ACTS 13:38.(KJV).

MEANING OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH THROUGH THE FINISHED WORK OF

CHRIST: Justification is the act of God's grace through which one receives forgiveness and remission of sins and is counted righteous before God, through faith in the atoning blood of Jesus. Having thus been cleared of every guilt of sin, the regenerated stands before God as though he had never sinned, not on the basis of any personal merit but in the light of what Christ had accomplished for mankind by His substitutionary death on the cross at Calvary (Psalm 32:1,2; Isaiah 1:18; Micah 7:19; Acts 13:38).

In order to fully appreciate the benefits of salvation in Christ Jesus, the utter helplessness and hopelessness of man should be noted. The need for justification becomes necessary as man is incapable of personally providing a solution to his problem of sin or change his eternal destiny of damnation (Isaiah 59:8).

To meet the standard of divine justice, due price needed to be paid. Man lacked both the capacity and purity to afford this. It therefore required the sacrifice of the spotless Lamb of God, to pay the necessary ransom with His blood for the expiation of man's sins.

MANIFESTATION OF FAITH IN JUSTIFIED BELIEVERS BY THE QUICKENING

SPIRIT OF GOD: It is instructive here to note that the nature of sin is not such that man could handle on his own or by the merit of his works (Ephesians 2:8,9). Just as circumcision cannot justify the Jew nor water baptism the Gentile, so can church membership or confirmation not justify anyone by the standards of God's righteousness and holiness. Only faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross can assure a penitent soul of full justification. Three aspects of the doctrinal question need be examined closely namely, redemption by the blood of Christ, necessity of faith, and evidence of justification.

Though physically present in the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve died spiritually and became alienated from God and from the commonwealth of His kingdom, after eating the forbidden fruit. Christ therefore became the sin-Bearer, based on the fact of God's provision and promises of the Scripture (Romans 3:24,25). And He is "the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:2; Acts 4:12). By Christ's finished work of grace, solution was provided to the problem of sin to ensure man's reconciliation with God (Isaiah 44:22; Romans 5:9).

Although Christ's atonement on the cross guarantees universal provision of salvation for all mankind, this could only be appropriated on personal basis through faith in Christ Jesus. The sinner who seeks salvation must take the necessary step of exercising faith in the blood of Jesus. Apostle Paul gives proof of it in his Epistle to the Romans 5:1. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ". And to the Jewish Christians he writes "For unto us was the gospel preached,

as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Hebrews 4:2).

Having been saved through faith in our Lord Jesus, the redeemed should have evidence to show for his justification (2 Corinthians 5:17). Before he was justified, the sinner was plagued by the works of the flesh as catalogued in Galatians 5:19-21. But in those that have been made a new creature, the fruits of the Spirit become manifest (Galatians 5:22,23). Therefore, in life- style, speech, conduct and disposition, the redeemed is more like Christ, hav- ing been quickened by the Spirit of God.

MISCONCEPTION ABOUT JUSTIFICATION AS AN ARTICLE OF MAN'S RELIGION:

The misleading conception of justification by works as an article of man’s religion is opposed to justification by faith because it denies the grace of God and dishonours the blood of Christ.

The reference in the General Epistle of James 2:14-26 may be interpreted amiss by a cursory reader of Scriptures, where it asks: “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without work is dead?”

The underlying point being stressed by James is that ‘works’ as referred to, in this context are a complement of justification by faith. Whereas Apostle Paul’s epistle to the Romans, chapter 4, is essentially doctrinal, and the prac- tice is based upon the doctrine; that of James is essentially practical, the doctrinal element being purely incidental.

So, though in one sense a man is justified by faith without works, in an- other sense, we see “how by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” Justification is by faith before God but by works before men. Properly understood, none is really mutually exclusive.

DOCTRINE 8: WATER BAPTISM

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That water Baptism is essential to our obedience after reconciliation with God. Water Baptism is one immersion (not three) "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost", as Jesus commanded. MATTHEW 28:19; 3:13-17; MARK 16:15,16; ACTS 2:38;8:38,39; 19:1-5; ROMANS 6:4,5.(KJV).

THE MISCONCEPTION ON WATER BAPTISM: Water baptism is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet one of the most misunderstood teachings by contemporary teachers and preachers. Some, at one extreme, believe that it is not necessary because of its abuse by nominal Christians while on the other extreme, others believe that without water baptism, one cannot be saved. In the middle is yet another group that believes that, though it is necessary, it must be administered in the name of Jesus only.

All of them are wrong because Jesus Christ commanded that water baptism should be administered in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19). Doing otherwise, therefore, is to disobey Jesus Christ.

THE MEANING OF WATER BAPTISM: The word 'baptize' is a Greek word 'baptiso' which means to immerse, 'dip inside liquid'. This shows the proper form of baptism by immersion inside water. The immersion signifies identification with the burial of Christ in His death and rising up in newness of life with Him at His resurrection (Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12). In baptism, the believer shows his faith that Christ died for his sins and rose again for his justification: that if he dies he will be raised again in the resurrection; and that he dies to his old life and rises to walk in the new life with Christ.

The immersion is done only ONCE and not THRICE. Jesus Christ was dipped inside River Jordan only once (Matthew 3:16); the Eunuch of Ethiopia was immersed in water once (Acts 8:38). When we submit for water baptism, it is an acknowledgment of Christ in a public way. Therefore, it is a public ceremony which witnesses to all that one has put on Christ (Galatians 3:27).

Jesus commanded that sinners be preached to, and as they repent and believe the gospel, they should be baptized. This confirms that water baptism is for those who fully repent of their sins (Acts 2:38). This also confirms that it is only adults who can exercise faith to believe that can be baptized (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Romans 10:9,10; Acts 20:20,21; Mark 1:14,15). It is fundamentally wrong to baptize infants who have not reached the stage of accountability, as it's being practised by some orthodox churches.

THE MANDATE FOR WATER BAPTISM BIBLE DOCTRINE: Jesus has laid down the standard for water baptism and it is to be carried out in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19). Every believer, in obedience to Christ's command, should therefore submit to this ordinance of water baptism. The importance of water baptism was expressed by Jesus Christ in His parting words. He said, "**He that believeth and is BAPTIZED shall be saved**".

The opinion of men cannot contradict the stand of the Scripture (Matthew 28:19). Once a person repents of his sin, it is mandatory that he submits himself for water baptism as provided for in the scriptures (Romans 6:3,4). The practice was upheld in the early church. Converts were baptized in water soon after their salvation experience (Acts 2:41; 8:37,38; 16:30,31,33). Every convert is therefore enjoined to yield to this important

injunction. God-ordained church leaders must do their utmost best to encourage their flocks to attach great importance to this practice (Acts 20:28). Like Peter did, church leaders must encourage their hearers to "**repent and be BAPTISED ... for the remission of sin ...**".

DOCTRINE 9: THE LORD'S SUPPER

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That the Lord's supper was instituted by Jesus Christ so that all believers (all members of the family of God) might partake thereof regularly, to "shew the Lord's death till he come". The emblems used are "unleavened bread" and the juice of "fruit of the vine". Anyone who eats and drinks unworthily brings "damnation", punishment and chastisement upon himself. MATTHEW 26:29; LUKE 22:17-20; I CORINTHIANS 11:23-30.(KJV).

THE INSTITUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER: The institution of the Lord's Supper is clearly shown in the gospels (Matthew 26:17-30; Luke 22:1,7-20). Paul amplified the doctrine in I Corinthians 11:20-30. In the gospel according to Saint Luke, we see the links between the Feast of Passover or Unleavened Bread and the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:15-20).

The Lord's Supper in the New Testament is a type of the Feast of the Passover or Unleavened Bread in the Old Testament (Exodus 12:1-28,40-51). This implies that just as the vicarious death of the Lord Jesus Christ replaced the sacrifice of the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood for atonement of sin, for us Christians, the Lord's Supper has replaced the Feast of the Passover, as an ordinance.

Some churches refer to the Lord's Supper as the "SACRAMENT" (Latin - sacramentum, meaning Holy Ordinance (I Corinthians 11:2). The Theologians call it the "EUCCHARIST" (Greek - GIVING OF THANKS), still others name it "THE LORD'S TABLE" or the "HOLY COMMUNION" (I Corinthians 10:16). Those who participate in eating of the Lord's Supper are called the "Communicants". The universal name is the Lord's Supper as used by our Lord.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER: In spite of the fact that the Lord's Supper has replaced the Feast of the Passover, if we apply the LAW OF FIRST MENTION as a means of studying the doctrine at hand, vital lessons and inspiration can be drawn from critically looking at the pattern of the celebration of the Feast of Passover in Exodus 12:1-51; Deuteronomy 16:1-8 and 2 Chronicles 30:1-27.

This can be accomplished if we ask ourselves and answer the following questions: (i) When and why was the Passover instituted? (ii) Who was qualified to partake in the ordinance? (iii) What were the tokens or emblems employed in the service? (iv) Who officiated in the service and how did they prepare for the ordinance i.e. place, provision, cost and personal sacrifices? (v) What was the spiritual impact and how often was it done? Parallel questions and answers apply to the Lord's Supper.

The PASSOVER (Hebrew 'Pesah') means "to pass over" i.e. "to spare" (Exodus 12:13,27). The Israelites were in bondage in Egypt (Exodus 2:11). They cried unto the Lord for deliverance (Exodus 3:7-10). Pharaoh did not set them free until God sent vicious plagues upon Egypt. The Passover ordinance was instituted the night when the destroyer killed Egyptians' first born but "passed over" or spared the Jews because of the blood on the lintel and side posts of their doors (a type of Calvary's Cross). The Feast of Unleavened Bread was co-joined with that of the Passover. The two then became known as "The Passover" (Deuteronomy 16:1-8). Sanctified elders and the priests handled the emblems (the blood of pure lamb and unleavened bread). The lamb was to be roasted and not eaten raw. No bone of the lamb was broken (Exodus 12:46; John 1:29; 19:36). This typifies Christ. The defiled, uncircumcised strangers and Gentiles did not participate (Exodus 12:43-49).

However, a qualified person would be cut off from among the Israelites if he refused to eat the Passover (Numbers 9:13). The Jews who did not observe it in the first month because they were not levitically pure, a second chance of eating the Passover was offered in the second month, if they were clean (Deuteronomy 16:1- 8; 2 Chronicles 30:1-27).

The preparations made in terms of personal and corporate cleansing, provision of the emblems and the place for the ordinance were elaborate and thorough. History tells us that in the New Testament, a candle light search was made to root out any trace of leaven (impurity) from the location of the Passover. The HALLEL, Psalm 113 to 118 was sung (Matthew 26:30) and the story of Exodus 12:1-14 recounted, bringing to remembrance the deliverance from Egypt. Prayers were also offered. It was a holy convocation. For the Jews, the dates for the Passover now became the beginning of months. It is to be observed forever as a memorial. It brought joy and renewed strength to God's people (2 Chronicles 30:25,26).

However, by the deeds of the law no man shall be justified. By the time of Christ, the Passover activities had been commercialised (John 2:13-17).

THE INHERENT DANGER OF PARTAKING UNWORTHILY TO THE LORD'S SUPPER:

Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper at the last Passover, for New Testament believers, thus signifying the end of the latter (Luke 22:1-20). Our Lord Jesus Christ is our Paschal Lamb or Passover (I Corinthians 5:7). He has delivered us from all bondages, sin, sickness and Satan.

In I Corinthians 11:27-32, no unbeliever, fornicator, polygamist or drunkard could join in the breaking of bread. The syncretic and the occultic did not have part in it. Some become unworthy because of fighting, keeping malice, divisive attitude, and having unforgiving spirit. Any restitution should be settled before the hour of the ordinance (Matthew 5:23,24).

The Lord's Supper is not the common love feast or marriage reception food (I Corinthians 11:20-22). We DISCERN the Lord's Body during participation in the Lord's supper (I Corinthians 11:29). This implies we recognise that the emblems, "the fruit of the vine" **and the "unleavened Bread" REPRESENT or SYMBOLISE the Lord's broken body and His blood that was shed respectively. They are not the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ. This calls for holiness of life and solemnity on our part as we come to the Lord's table. We take the emblems to SHEW FORTH the Lord's death. We call to remembrance His love and passion on Calvary's Cross. The Lord's Supper is to be taken as often as practicable, in remembrance of our Lord till He comes (Matthew 26:17-21,26-30; Luke 22:7-13; I Corinthians 11:26). We look forward to the Rapture and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9). Adequate preparations should be made by the leadership of the church to secure the emblems and a location for the ordinance. More importantly, we must keep our total being worthy for it.**

In a Bible-believing church, grave consequences can befall those who eat it unworthily. Weakness, sickness or even death could ensue (I Corinthians 11:30). If you always feel disqualified, it is not certain that you will be qualified for the Rapture and the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7,8). Adults, youths and children who have current testimony of salvation and holy living can partake of it.

DOCTRINE 10: ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That Entire Sanctification is a definite act of God's grace, subsequent to the New Birth, by which the believer's heart is purified and made holy. It cannot be attained progressively by works, struggle or suppression, but it is obtained by faith in the sanctifying blood of Jesus Christ. Holiness of life and purity of heart are central to Christian living. LUKE 1:74,75; JOHN 17:15-17; I THESSALONIANS 4:3,7,8; 5:22-24; EPHESIANS 5:25-27; HEBREWS 2:11; 10:10,14; 13:11,12; TITUS 2:11-14; I JOHN 1:7; HEBREWS 12:14; I PETER 1:14-16.(KJV).

PRIMARY PURPOSE OF ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION: The doctrine of entire sanctification is central in the mind of the God-head. The doctrine is at the hub or nucleus of Christian teaching. What then is the meaning of the word, Sanctification? Sanctification is an English word which means: to make sacred or holy; to set apart for a holy or religious use; to make free from sin; to cleanse from moral corruption and pollution; the act of God's grace by which the affections of men are purified or alienated from sin and the world, and exalted to supreme love to God; to purify in order to prepare for divine service and for partaking of holy things; to free from the power of sin; being set free from the power of cancelled sin. It is a gracious work of the Holy Spirit - not of works, not of growth, not of death, not of purgatory - in those who are already in Christ. Sanctification is an operation of the Spirit of God. Those who have been regenerated and recreated in Christ, must of necessity be sanctified through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, and by His Word and His Spirit.

Sanctification is an instantaneous experience given to a believer to enable him cleave to God without the tendency to want to go astray or go away from the Lord. It is not a protracted or tedious process of growth. You do not grow INTO sanctification, but you can grow IN sanctification. We can never grow into what God must of necessity do for us. Again, sanctification is not brought about by death: to assume that is to say that death is no longer our last enemy to be destroyed (I Corinthians 15:26). Neither are we cleansed from the original stain (the nature we brought into the world) through Water Baptism. Entire sanctification is not of works, but it is the work of God, divinely wrought by the Holy Spirit.

'Holiness', 'Perfection' and 'Sanctification' are the definitive terms used interchangeably. Holiness means entire freedom from sin; wholeness, spiritual health, moral integrity and purity. Therefore, holiness means the absence of sin (Luke 1:74,75; Psalm 93:5; I Peter 1:16; Hebrews 12:14). 'Perfection' means that which is not lacking in that which it ought to have. The perfection which God requires and accomplishes in those who earnestly ask in faith is the purifying of our hearts to love every believer as Christ loves us, and to love our neighbours as ourselves. Nothing less than this is desirable and nothing more is required (Colossians 1:28). Entire sanctification is described as 'clean heart' or 'pure heart'. This descriptive term shows the experience in a way one can understand when it takes place in his heart (Psalm 24:3,4; Matthew 5:8). The Bible teaches that all of God's children can be like Jesus in separation from the world, in purity and in love. We must be inwardly pure and peaceful in order not to suffer defeat in our Christian life. A blameless life is a life in which God sees nothing to condemn. We may not be blameless to our contemporaries, but we can be blameless before God. God examines a sanctified heart and expects to always find all that it possesses to be in harmony with

Himself. The heart of the sanctified is a throne on which God reigns without a rival; an empire wherein He exercises unchecked, undisputed dominion and authority.

PROVISION FOR POSSESSING THE ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION: How does the earnest seeker get sanctified? There must first be a definite separation and withdrawal from all sins and appearance of evil, immorality and all unclean things (I Thessalonians 5:22; 2 Corinthians 6:17; 2 Timothy 2:21). There must, second, be entire consecration. This is giving ourselves unto God in a vivid manner. First, we give ALL we are to God. Here, we no longer lay any claim to ourselves (Luke 9:60; Romans 12:1-2). Second, we give our body unto the glory of God, not for any selfish motive or purpose in view, but with the consideration and knowledge that we are bought by the precious blood of Jesus. Third, we give ourselves for service (John 13:12-17). We should not only stress our being priests and kings unto God but also as being servants. Here, Jesus shows us how to consecrate and dedicate ourselves for service. Washing the feet was the work of a slave. So, we must learn to do the meanest job in the midst of believers and not waiting for compliments. Fourth, we must die to self. **“Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit”** (John 12:24,25). To consecrate is to come before God with our past, present, future personality, possession, wisdom, talent, intellect, money, influence, position in the family and in the church and dedicate all to Him. When we separate and dedicate ourselves unto God, He is readily willing to do His part and give us the definite experience of Entire Sanctification. This is the operation of God, a definite act of God’s grace in believers’ hearts (Hebrews 2:11; 13:12,13).

PARTAKING AND PRESERVING THE ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION: By what means of grace does the believer get into this experience? The means of sanctification includes: (a) the word of God (John 15:3); (b) the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 13:12,13); (c) Faith in the Lord (Acts 26:18); (d) the Spirit of God, and (e) God Himself (I Thessalonians 2:23). We do not get sanctified by studying the Word alone. We need to pray in faith for the experience. We must believe in its possibility before we can ask in faith. Also, we must realise that it is the will of God that we are made holy (I Thessalonians 4:3-8; I John 5:14,15). Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord. Holiness here is not just the judicial kind of holiness, but the practical holiness of which believers are partakers because they have surrendered their entire life unto God through Christ. This holiness does something in our hearts and it makes us live right. We must desire it (Mark 11:24), and ask with a genuine burning desire.

What should be our response to this doctrine? The Bible teaches that all believers can be wholly sanctified (I Thessalonians 5:23). We should not be guilty of taking away from the Word. This teaching places a great and solemn responsibility upon all preachers of the Word to teach this doctrine; be a partaker of the experience (I Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:6); endeavour to understand and know it through diligent study (2 Timothy 2:15; Titus 1:9); faithfully and effectively teach all believers without fear or compromise, for in all things of the Spirit, we should not withhold or withdraw the truth from our congregation (2 Timothy 2:2). Let us encourage all believers to partake of the blessing. This gracious Christian experience could be kept all through life provided that the recipient keeps abiding in Christ, watching and praying (John 15:4; Mark 13:32-35). Thus, believer must not grieve the Holy Spirit, or relapse into bitterness and harshness of spirit (Ephesians 4:30,31). He must not allow or engage in unprofitable conversation (Ephesians 5:3,4), unkind criticisms, evil speaking and fault finding, self-indulgence, prejudice, impatience, indolence, negligence, uncontrolled temperament, self-

dependence and self-management. He must avoid developing or showing interest in objects of temptation.

Why should any Christian doubt the possibility of complete deliverance from sin? Jesus should not be limited as a Saviour. Complete deliverance from sin is Christ's purpose (Titus 2:11-15). The white lily grows up from a mire, but with no dust on it. Christians can grow up in this dirty world yet without spot on their lives (Romans 12:1,2). It is our privilege to be totally separated from this evil of the world. It is a promise from God that we should be purged and sanctified. **“Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it”** (I Thessalonians 5:24).

DOCTRINE 11: HOLY GHOST BAPTISM

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That the Baptism in the Holy Ghost is the enduement of power from on High upon the sanctified believer. It is "the promise of the Father" and when one receives this "gift of the Holy Ghost", it is accompanied by the initial evidence of speaking a language unlearned previously, referred to as speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. We do not teach or instruct people how to speak in tongues: the Holy Spirit gives utterance. We also stress the necessity of purity before power. The Gifts of the Spirit are for believers today. MATTHEW 3:11; ACTS 1:8; LUKE 3:16; 24:49; JOHN 1:30-33; 7:37-39; 14:16,17,26; 15:26; 16:12-15; ACTS 1:5-8; MARK 16:17; ACTS 2:1-18; 10:44-46; ACTS 19:1-6; I CORINTHIANS 12:1-31; 14:1-40.(KJV).

THE POWER OF HOLY GHOST BAPTISM: The baptism in the Holy Ghost is the enduement of power from on High upon the sanctified believer. It is the promise of the Father. When one receives this gift of the Holy Ghost, it is accompanied by the initial evidence of speaking a language unlearned previously, referred to as speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:30-33; 7:37).

We do not teach or instruct people how to speak in tongues; the Holy Spirit gives utterance (Acts 2:4). Jesus Christ the great Teacher preached it and promised it (John 7:37-39; Luke 24:49; and Acts 1:4-8).

The Baptism in the Holy Ghost is not the new birth, salvation, conversion or regeneration (John 7:37-39; 14:17; 17:6-9,14-16; Luke 10:19-24; 24:49). It is not the sanctification experience (John 17:9; 17:21-23; Acts 2:1-4). Jesus prayed for the sanctification of His disciples and yet commanded them to wait for the enduement of power, the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. Moreover, sanctification is for purity whereas the Baptism with the Holy Spirit is for power.

It is also for illumination, feeling of joy, liberty and victory in prayer, self-denial or zeal (Luke 24:27,31-32,44,45; Acts 8:8,14-17).

THE PERSONALITY OF HOLY GHOST BAPTISM: The Holy Spirit is not a mere impersonal force. He is not a mere power that we can get hold of and use. He is not a mere influence that we feel. He is a person who seeks to get hold of us and use us. The Holy Spirit is a Divine Personality who we must honour, worship, fellowship with and listen to. He is called the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, the Spirit of the Living God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of Holiness, the Spirit of Life, the Spirit of wisdom, the Spirit of your Father, the Comforter, the Eternal Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Luke 11:13; Hebrews 9:14; I Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 3:3; I Peter 1:11; 4:14; Romans 1:4; 8:2). The Holy Ghost is eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, and holy. He is the Inspirer of the Holy Scriptures, the General Overseer of the militant Church, the Great Teacher, Helper and Guide of all the saints, the character Builder of all members of the Body of Christ (Hebrews 9:14; Psalm 139:7-10; Acts 10:38; Matthew 12:28; I Corinthians 2:10,11; John 14:17-26; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:22,23). The Holy Ghost is the third Person in the Trinity (I Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 4:3- 6; Matthew 28:19).

The Holy Spirit:

1. Searches all hearts (John 16:8-11; I Corinthians 2:10,11).

2. Convicts of sin (John 16:7-11).
3. Regenerates (Titus 3:5).
4. Bears witness with us (Romans 8:14-16).
5. Adopts into God's family (Romans 8:15).
6. Helps and gives victory in temptation (Romans 8:2,26-27).
7. Helps in prayer (Romans 8:26,27; Zechariah 12:10).
8. Fills believers with joy, peace and boldness (Acts 13:49-52).
9. Sanctifies (Romans 1:4; 5:5).
10. Quickens and heals our body (Romans 8:11).
11. Comforts, counsels and commands (Isaiah 11:1,2).
12. Intercedes for saints (Romans 8:26,27).
13. Illuminates and inspires (2 Peter 1:21).
14. Searches and reveals the deep things of God (1 Corinthians 2:9-12).
15. Teaches (John 14:26).
16. Guides into all truth (John 16:13).
17. Creates (Psalm 104:30).
18. Empowers (Acts 1:8).
19. Directs gospel work (Acts 8:26-29).
20. Confirms the gospel (Hebrews 2:3,4).

THE PROMISE OF HOLY GHOST BAPTISM: The mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit is promised to all flesh; and those who meet God's conditions can receive God's abundance (Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 36:25-27; Joel 2:28,29; John 7:37-39). Few (very few) of the Old Testament saints had the bulk of the Spirit upon them for some special tasks that the Lord gave them to do. The rest majority of the Israelites lived all their lives without the "special privilege" of having "the Spirit upon" them. Even those who had this privilege did not all enjoy His continuous abiding presence (Numbers 11:25; 24:2; Judges 3:10; 6:34; 14:6; I Samuel 10:9,10; 16:13; 2 Peter 1:21).

There were great expectations and a "diligent searching" by the Old Testament prophets. They looked forward to the glorious Gospel days in which we live. Even the angels dared to look into these things.

In as much as Christ's incarnation, birth, life, dominion, rejection, suffering, meekness, death and resurrection were all foretold, and the messianic prophecies were fulfilled in every detail, so also, will all prophecies concerning the outpouring of the Holy Spirit must be fulfilled.

Today, we can all receive the Spirit in baptismal measure. We can be baptized in the Holy Spirit if:

1. We thirst - have strong desire (Isaiah 44:3; John 7:37,39).
2. We receive "a new heart", "an heart of flesh", renewal of "the stony heart", "circumcision of heart" (Ezekiel 36:26,27).
3. We have "faith" to "receive" (Galatians 3:2,14; Mark 11:22,24).
4. We pray to receive (Luke 11:13).

DOCTRINE 12: REDEMPTION, HEALING AND HEALTH

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That Redemption from the curse of the law, Healing of sickness and disease as well as continued Health are provided for all people through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. – Galatians 3:13,14; Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 7:15 ; Psalm 103:1-5 Redemption is a release or liberation from captivity or death by paying a price called a ransom. It simply connotes buying back unto freedom someone in servitude, slavery or captivity.

THE COST OF BELIEVERS REDEMPTION: Jesus not only bore our sins, He also bore our sickness and diseases. He became our sickness-Bearer in exactly the same way He became our sin-Bearer. Christ was scourged and striped for our healing; nailed to the cross for our sin (John 3:14; 12:22- 23; Isaiah 53:4,5; Matthew 8:16,17; Psalm 103:2,4).

The Holy Spirit concluded by saying, **“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law ”** (sickness - pestilence, fever, cancer, ulcer, boils, as well as nameless sicknesses found in people's life today and other infirmities recorded or not recorded in scriptures) Christ has been made manifest to destroy the works of the devil (I John 3:8; Acts 10:38; Hebrews 13:8).

THE CONSEQUENCES OF BELIEVERS REDEMPTION: Man's redemption is not limited to removal of guilt; it covers all consequences of the broken law which are sickness, disease and satanic oppression. Healing of sickness and disease as well as continued health are provided for all men through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, there was a divine plan by which God heals all those who were in covenant relationship with Him. It is not everyone that can enjoy this unfailing healing and health plan made by God for all mankind based on the fact that not all men are in covenant relationship with Him.

THE CORNERSTONE OF BELIEVERS REDEMPTION: The Bible sets forth the conditional precedence to enjoying the benefits and blessings of our relationship with God, which are our redemptive rights:

1. Genuine conversion (Psalm 103:2-5; Matthew 13:15; Mark 9:23; Matthew 21:21,22; Mark 11:22-24; John 14:12; James 1:6-8),
2. Obedience to God and His Word (Exodus 15:26; 23:25,26; Proverbs 4:20-22);
3. Abiding in Him (Psalm 91:1-7; John 15:1-7);
4. Making peace with fellow men (Mark 11:22-26; James 5:14-16; Genesis 20:14),
5. Serving God in holiness (Exo 23:25,26; Colo 2:6,7; John 5:14; I John 3:21-22),
6. Appropriating the benefits of Calvary through prayer of faith (2 Peter 1:3,4; Hebrews 6:18; I Peter 2:24; James 1:16,17; Hebrews 13:8; Matthew 8:17).

From the foregoing, God heals those who are under His healing covenant (Psalm 105:37; 2 Chr. 30:18-20)

1. By His Word (Psalm 107:20; Hebrews 4:12; Matthew 8:8),
2. Through His Mercy (Matthew 20:30-34),
3. By His Power (Matthew 28:18; Colossians 1:16,17; Luke 5:17),
4. By His Spirit (Acts 10:38; Isaiah 61:1,2; Luke 10:18,19; Rom 8:2,11; Matt 12:28),
5. In His Name (Acts 3:6; Luke 10:17,18; Mark 16:17,18; Proverbs 18:10; Philippians 2:9-11),
6. By His Will (I John 5:14,15; John 5:30; 3 John 2).

DOCTRINES 13: PERSONAL EVANGELISM

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That Personal Evangelism is a God-given and God-ordained ministry for every believer. Jesus commanded and God requires every believer to be a compassionate and fruitful soul-winner, bringing others to Christ. – Matthew 28:19,20; Daniel 12:3

Personal Evangelism is a God-given and God-ordained ministry for every believer. It is good news from a loving God to a lost world that, through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, there is salvation. Personal evangelism is the person-to-person sharing of this good news of salvation with the aim of soul-winning - leading the sinner to repent and turn wholly to God through Jesus Christ, the Saviour

PRIORITY OF PERSONAL EVANGELISM

Personal evangelism is essential and mandatory because

- i. Jesus commanded it (Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19,20);
- ii. Jesus did it (John 4:21-30; Matthew 4:19);
- iii. Jesus prayed for the believers' sanctification to make personal evangelism effective (John 17:17,18);
- iv. The Holy Spirit is given because of it (Acts 1:8);
- v. It is the heart desire of God (Ezekiel 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9);
- vi. The early apostolic church practised it (Acts 8:30-37; Mark 16:20; Acts 8:4);
- vii. It is the primary purpose for our salvation (John 15:16; 20:21);
- viii. There is great reward for those who carry it out (Daniel 12:3);
- ix. The harvest is plenteous but labourers are few (Matthew 9:36,37; John 4:35-38);
- x. Souls are precious to God (Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:36,37; Psalm 49:6-9);
- xi. Hell is the end of all who die in sin (Mark 9:43-48; Psalm 9:17; Rev. 20:10-15);
- xii. Powers of darkness and cults are growing (2 Timothy 3:13; 1 Timothy 4:1);

POWERFUL INCREASE AND PROGRESS THROUGH PERSONAL EVANGELISM

For instance, if a church of 100 dedicated and witnessing members will share the gospel with the unsaved, each member with effective follow-up will, within a period of four months, disciple a new convert till he becomes a soul winner.

If each convert were in turn to win one person to Christ, for example, spending four months helping him to grow in faith, and then each of them in turn were to win another soul, there would be in one year four hundred Christians.

Precisely, if there were only one Christian in the world and he worked a year, and won a friend to Christ, and if these two continued each year to win another, and if every man they led into the kingdom of God continued to win another, then, in thirty years, every person in the world would be won for Christ.

PREREQUISITE OF A SUCCESSFUL PERSONAL EVANGELISM.

To be involved in personal evangelism, personal experience of conversion is indispensable (2 Cor. 5:17).

- o Also, the soul-winner must live a holy life (2 Timothy 2:4; Isaiah 52:11).

- The true soul-winner must have a strong, unshakable conviction (John 9:4; He must, therefore, see himself as an ambassador of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19,20) and
- Must thus devote his time, talents, strength and money to the furtherance of the Gospel. The world will never see Christ again until He comes back in judgment, except as it sees Him in us.
- There should therefore be a strong conviction about God, the Bible, salvation, Christ's death, resurrection and His second coming.
- The soul winner must accept that the responsibility of preaching the gospel is not optional but a debt (Romans 1:14;). Furthermore, there is need for a deep, burning Christ-like compassion (Matthew 9:36; Romans 9:1-3; 10:1). This should be the basis for the sacrifices we make, effectual fervent prayers we offer, tears we shed and hardship that we endure for the souls of men to be won to the Lord.

DOCTRINES 14: MARRIAGE

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That Marriage is binding for life. Monogamy is the uniform teaching of the Bible. Polygamy is contrary to God's perfect will and institution. Also, under the New Testament dispensation, no one has a right to divorce and remarry while the first companion lives. When a person becomes converted, necessary restitution, on this line, must be done without delay if he has married wrongly.

THE BIBLICAL BASIS OF MARRIAGE AS A GIFT FROM GOD.

Marriage is a holy union, a living symbol, a precious relationship that needs tender self-sacrificing care. It is God's idea and not a derivative of any culture.

It is a gift from God to man and it has three basic aspects:

- (i) The man leaves his parents, and in a public act, pledges himself to his wife;
- (ii) The man and woman are joined together by taking responsibility for each other's welfare and by loving the partner above all others;
- (iii) The two become one flesh in the intimacy and commitment to the wonderful union which is reserved for marriage.

By so doing, marriage provides the needed fellowship, comfort, companionship and partnership. It is one of God's methods to keep men and women free from fornication and immorality.

With very few exceptions, most men and women are to marry. These few exceptions are to receive God's guidance and are not to be the product of infantile decisions, misguided imitations, faithless consecration or frivolous religious compassion

THE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES FOR MARRIAGE IN THE CHURCH.

- (i) It is ungodly for any believer to elope with a woman or man no matter the divergent and unyielding stance of their parents (Genesis 31:20-51).
- (ii) Payment of bride price or dowry shall be executed in line with the Scripture. It is an ungodly practice to borrow money or go into debt to impress the woman's parents or invitees.
- (iii) It is also considered sinful for two people to live together without meeting the requisite obligations to their parents (Exodus 22:17);
- (iv) The parents' consent will lead, naturally, to a period of courtship to be determined by the church leadership but preferably not longer than nine months.
- (v) Purity must be maintained before, during and after the courtship (I Thessalonians 4:3-7; 5:22). Visitations and exchange of gifts at this stage are not acceptable, before the wedding.
- (vi) The Christian wedding is preceded by 'filing in of notice' at the Marriage Registry. This is to enable the public inform the Magistrate should there be any objection to the proposed marriage.

The church wedding will take place after the Pastor had received a certificate from the magistrate.

THE BIBLICAL PATTERN OF RELATIONSHIP FOR SPOUSES IN GODLY MARRIAGE.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it ... So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself ” (Ephesians 5:25,28). Christ is the model of love. The husband can never love his wife too much; yet, that love is inconsequential when compared to his love for the Lord. The husband’s love makes him to be considerate, understanding and is able to bear with his wife.

The husband is also the head of the family. This headship has the idea of authority, an authority after the analogy of Christ’s headship. In that sense, the husband is the spiritual head of the family and his wife goes along with his leadership. A wise and Christ-honouring husband will not take advantage of his role, and a wise and Christ-honouring wife will not try to undermine her husband’s leadership.

“Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband ” (Ephesians 5:33).

From the doctrine of Rapture – It a study of Eschatology. When we teach Eschatology, some people just think that we are trying to frighten people or excite people.

DOCTRINE 15: THE RAPTURE

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That the Rapture (commonly referred to as the first phase or stage of the SECOND COMING OF CHRIST) is the catching away from the earth, of all living saints and all who died in the Lord. The Rapture will take place before the Great Tribulation and can happen any time from now. "In a twinkling of an eye" without a moment's warning, "the trumpet shall sound" "and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." John 14:1-3; Luke 21:34-36; I Corinthians 15:51-58; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; 5:4-9; 2 Thessalonians 2:5-7; Philippians 3:11,20,21; I John 3:1-3.

The Rapture will happen, nothing will hinder it, no government can stop it. In God's timetable, believers must be ready because it will happen. It can happen today or tomorrow. We must be prepared. The Rapture is a trigger for other events to follow in quick succession and in their sequences until the termination of the world.

THE RAPTURE: THE GREATEST EVENT OF ALL TIMES. So many great events in the world but the rapture will be the greatest. John 14:1-3

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

After the rapture, a lot of things will happen in the world and the Lord does not want us to partake in those things. The time of the rapture is unknown. Rapture is not spiritual but physical.

THE RAPTURE: A MYSTERY TO OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS.

The Rapture was a mystery, unknown to the Old Testament saints and prophets. God had underlined this great event in two different ways in the Scripture to assure us of its certainty.

First, it was illustrated in Enoch and Elijah, the two living saints who did not taste death but were translated in a moment of time and caught up in the air (Genesis 5:24, 2 Kings 2:11,12).

Second, it was illustrated in Christ in the New Testament. He died, was buried and resurrected. While He talked with His disciples on Mount Olivet, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight (Acts 1:9-11).

Genesis 5:24 And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. 2 Kings 2:11 And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 2 Kings 2:12 And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces.

THE RAPTURE IS EMINENT:

Christ, answering a pertinent question asked by His disciples on "...What shall be the sign of thy coming..." (Matthew 24:3), gave in details what would be happening on earth shortly before His coming (Matthew 24:5-12,30-39).

He highlighted the following as what to expect:

1. Many false Christ's will arise to deceive many unsuspecting believers.
2. There will be wars and rumours of war.
3. There will be international wars.
4. Famines (global economic recession)
5. Pestilences
6. Earthquakes in divers places
7. There will be persecution of Christ's followers and some cases of martyrdom.
8. The emergence of many false prophets.
9. Backsliding from the faith on the increase
10. More people given to pleasure and merry-making than those seeking the Lord.

DOCTRINE 16: THE RESSURECTION OF THE DEAD

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That the Resurrection of the dead is taught in the Bible as clearly as the immortality of the soul. Every individual who has ever lived will be resurrected, some to honour and glory and others to everlasting shame and contempt.

The resurrection of the dead is a cardinal and an important doctrine of the Bible. As a fact, all who die in this world will undergo physical resurrection before the Great White Throne Judgement. This doctrine shows that there will be a resurrection of the body, joined with the soul to meet the LORD either in peace and joy, or meet Him (as a Judge) in condemnation, eternal punishment and torment of hell fire.

John 5:25, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."

Daniel 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE SAINTS

The resurrection of the saints of God also variously described in scriptures as resurrection of life (John 5:28,29), resurrection of the just (Luke 14:13,14), a better resurrection (Hebrews 11:35) and the first resurrection (Revelation 20:4-6), has four phases:

- The resurrection of Christ, the first fruit (I Corinthians 15:3,4,12,20,23).
- The resurrection of the Church-age saints at the rapture (I Thessalonians 4:13-16).
- The resurrection of the tribulation period saints (Revelation 20:3-5).
- The resurrection of Old Testament saints at the second advent of Christ to the earth (Daniel 12:2; Isaiah 26:19).

All the saints of God that ever died would resurrect in the first resurrection. Not a soul will be left behind. What joy! What triumph!! "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Revelation 20:6).

THE RESURRECTION OF THE SINNERS

The second resurrection is still part of God's programme but deals with the unsaved dead. There is a difference in time of one thousand years between the first and second resurrection (Revelation 20:5-15). The second resurrection is also described as the resurrection to damnation (John 5:29). There will be everlasting punishment and torment in the lake of fire for all who partake in the second resurrection who have missed the first resurrection and whose names are not found in the Book of Life (Daniel 12:2; Revelation 20:11-15).

THE READINESS FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE SAINTS

To partake in the first resurrection, the resurrection of the saved, there must of necessity first be a spiritual resurrection in the present life, whereby the spirit is quickened from death in trespasses and sins, and the whole being renewed in the glorious likeness of God to a life of righteousness and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord (Ephesians 2:1,2,4-6; 1Thessalonians 4:14,16; 2 Corinthians 5:17- 19; Hebrews 12:14).

DOCTRINES 17: THE GREAT TRIBULATION

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That the Great Tribulation will occur after the Rapture and will be a time of terrible suffering on earth. It is also referred to as the time of "Jacob's trouble". During this time, the Antichrist will take possession of this world for a reign of terror. He will not be a system or organization but a person - a supernatural, diabolical being, in the form of a man who will blaspheme and proclaim himself to be God. The Marriage Supper of the Lamb will take place above while the Tribulation continues on earth.

The Great Tribulation is described as the "**... time of Jacob's trouble**" (**Jeremiah 30:7**); "... great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21). "**... the day of the Lord**" (Joel 1:15). "**... a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness**", (Joel 2: 2). "**... a day of wasteness and desolation**" (Zephaniah 1:14,15). "**... a time of trouble**" (Daniel 12:1)

PURPOSE AND PUNISHMENT OF SINNERS DURING THE GREAT TRIBULATIONS.

The purpose of the great tribulation is to make Israel suffer so that they can be ready to cry to the Messiah (the Lord Jesus Christ whom they, at present, reject) to come back to them. It is also to judge the unbelieving men and women of all ages (Zechariah 12:10,11; 13:1-9; 14:12-13).

PERIOD AND POWER AT WORK DURING THE GREAT TRIBULATIONS

The Bible shows that the great tribulation will take off after the rapture of the church (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 4:1) and will last for seven years. It will end at the second Advent of Jesus Christ when He alights on Mount Olives (Zechariah 14:4; Matthew 25:31; Revelation 19:11,12; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Jude 14,15; Acts 1:11) and settles on earth (Jerusalem) for a thousand-year reign called the Millennial Reign. The great tribulation reaches its peak of destructions, judgements, terrors, frightening wars and desolation from the middle of the seven-year duration and ends with Christ's second advent. This is when the anti-Christ breaks his seven-year peace covenant with Israel and attacks Jerusalem (Revelation 19:15-19,21)

PROFIT (REWARDS) FOR SAINTS AND PREPARATION FOR JESUS RETURN AFTER THE GREAT TRIBULATIONS.

While terrors are unleashed on the earth, saints will be

- (a) receiving rewards: crowns, mansions, new names, white stones, etc, at the judgement seat of Christ (Bema) (I Corinthians 3:11-15; Luke 14:14; The believers' time of judgement and reward only means the evaluation of believers' works for which they may receive rewards or loss of reward. All raptured believers will be eternally saved.
- (b) Rejoicing and feasting at the marriage supper in heaven (Revelation 19:6-9)
- (c) Worshipping God with the angels (Revelation 7:9-17; 14:1-5; 4:5,7) and
- (d) preparing for the second Advent with Christ upon white horses (Jude 14,15; Revelation 19:11- 14; Matthew 25:31).

The great tribulation ends when Jerusalem is ravished by the Anti-Christ with two thirds of it captured at the end of the seventh year, and the children of Israel will repent in great mourning and tears, calling for the Messiah, Jesus Christ to come back to the earth and establish the millennial reign all over humanity (Zechariah 14:4-8).

DOCTRINE 18: THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That the Second Coming of Christ will be just as literal and visible as His going away, and He is coming to execute judgement upon the ungodly. He will also, then, set up His Kingdom and reign on this present earth for a thousand years Zechariah 14:3,4; Matthew 25:31-46; 26:64

CERTAINTY OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING:

The Scriptures abound with evidence that speaks of the certainty of Christ's Second Coming. Our Lord Jesus spoke of His return several times, once leading the disciples to enquire about the signs that would herald that certain event. A study of the scriptures indicates that certain prophecies concerning Christ, and some future programme of God are not yet fulfilled and would only be, after the second advent of Christ. However, all the signs preceding the second advent are being fulfilled daily.

CONFIRMATION OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING:

The Holy Spirit, through the apostles, confirmed that Christ shall appear **"the second time"** (Hebrews 9:28) and would then reward His faithful servants with crowns of glory, praise and honour and His adversaries with fiery indignation (I Peter 5:4; 1:7; Hebrews 10:27). James the apostle also encouraged believers: **"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth near"**. The angel of God confirmed that, **"this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"** (Acts 1:11).

CHRIST'S REIGN AT HIS SECOND COMING:

In His Second Coming, Christ will reign on the earth for one thousand years with the saints. Christened the Millennial Reign, Christ's rule would be characterized by unprecedented peace, prosperity and blessings on the earth (Isaiah 11:1-9). Satan, the author of heartache, strife and contention would be bound for the duration of Christ's Millennial Reign (Revelation 20:2,3).

The world and the church are called to prepare for this great event. The world is admonished to repent and come to Christ before the day of the Lord (John 3:1- 8). The Church as a bride is called to be ready, holy, spotless, watchful, prayerful and busy preaching His word until He comes (Hebrews 12:14; 1 John 3:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:1,2; Ephesians 5:25-27). **"Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him"** (Revelation 1:7).

DOCTRINE 19: CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That Christ's Millennial Reign is the 1,000 years literal reign of Jesus on earth, which will be ushered in by the coming of Jesus back to earth with ten thousands of His saints. At this time He will judge the nations that dwell upon the face of the earth. During this time, the devil will be bound. It will be a reign of peace and blessing. Jude 14,15;

MEANING OF CHRIST MILLENNIAL REIGN.

The word millennium, is a compound derivative from Latin which simply translates into a thousand years. Thus, Christ's millennial reign is a thousand years of the full manifestation of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is sequel to the Great Tribulation period which is a period of intense suffering for everyone on earth.

MANIFESTATION OF CHRIST MILLENNIAL REIGN

Christ's millennial reign will be a manifestation of the promise God gave David, that his throne shall have no end. Christ, as David's "son", will thus establish a glorious house and throne, over an equally glorious kingdom (2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 72; Isaiah 11:10). Divine mercy, goodness and truth will be displayed through Christ even as the glory associated with His deity, omniscience, omnipotence and righteousness will be fully made manifest. The Gentile world system (humanity without Christ) as it is at present, organised under the direct influence of Satan, will thus become an out-moded set-up.

In its stead comes Christ's millennial reign, void of sin and all forms of unrighteousness. Satan, having been defeated and bound, will lack the power to induce people to sin (Revelation 20:1-6; Matthew 19:28; Ephesians 5:25-27).

MANIFOLD BENEFITS OF CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN.

What are the components of the millennium? (1) The millennium shall witness an unprecedented era of national and individual peace. There will be a complete cessation of the scourge of wars, as the kingdoms of the world will be fused together under the reign of Christ. The ensuing peace will herald an era of economic boom and prosperity. The beauty of this age is that hitherto antagonistic and irreconcilable foes will henceforth co-habit as "sheep and lambs". (2) There will be joy unspeakable (Isaiah 9:3,4; Jeremiah 30:18,19). (3) There will be holiness (Ezekiel 43:7-12; Isaiah 1:26,27). (4) Glory (Isaiah 24:23,60:1-9). (5) Comfort (Isaiah 12:1-2; Jeremiah 33:23-25). (6) Justice (Isaiah 9:7; 11:5; 42:1-4). (7) Full knowledge (Isaiah 11:1-2,9; 41:19-20; 54:13; Habakkuk 2:14).

Additionally, the following benefits will also accrue to the inhabitants of the age (a) The original curse placed upon mankind at creation will be removed, resulting in abundant productivity of the earth (Isaiah 11:6-9; 35:9; 65:25). (b) Sickness will become a thing of the past (Isaiah 33:24; Jeremiah 30:17; Ezekiel 34:16). (c) Healing will be naturally available to the deformed (Isaiah 29:17-19).

DOCTRINE 20: THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That the Great White Throne Judgement is when God finally judges all (the living and the dead, small and great) who have ever lived on the face of the earth, according to their works. This is after the Millennium. At this time, the final Judgement known as the Great White Throne Judgement will be held. All those, from all ages, who have not yet been judged (believers' judgement for sin, borne and accomplished by Christ on the Cross will stand before God at this time. The devil and his angels are judged at this time also and sent to the lake of fire forever.

ORDER OF EVENTS PRECEDING THE GWTJ

The Bible clearly presents the order of events preceding the Great White Throne Judgement and constantly enjoins **“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches”** (Revelation 2:7).

1. At the close of the millennium, the devil will be released from **“the bottomless pit”** (Revelation 20:3) and he will deceive thousands of people and will gather them to fight against the King (Jesus Christ) and His Saints. This will be the battle of Gog and Magog; but at the end of the battle, when the rebellious have been killed, and destroyed by the fire of His indignation which comes down from heaven, the devil will be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:7-10).
2. After this, the Great White Throne Judgement will be set. God will sit on a throne so white, magnificent and terrible at sight that the whole face of the earth and heaven

OMNIBUS (COLLECTION) OF PEOPLE FACING THE GWTJ: In righteousness He will judge:

- (a) **All unrighteous deeds of men** (I John 5:17; Romans 11:28-32). Every unrighteous act, feeling or imagination that was not cleansed by the blood of the Lamb will be condemned at the GWT Judgment.
- (b) **The secret deeds of men** (Matthew 10:26; Romans 2:16; Hebrews 4:13; 2 Chronicle 16:9). Every secret bribery, immorality, pornography, drunkenness, abortion, etc, will be revealed. **“...Books (books of records) were opened...and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works”** Revelation 20:10. There is a record in heaven for everything done under the sun **“...whether it be good or bad”** (2 Corinthians 5:10b).
- (c) **The words of men** (Matthew 12:36,37). **“Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment”**. Every gossip, backbiting and slander against our neighbours, fellow believers or church leaders will be judged. All foolish unedifying words, corrupt, graceless words, defamatory and abusive words against others will be accounted for at the Great White Throne Judgment. **“For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned”** (Matthew 12:37). God will judge every unrepentant sinner or backslider according to His divine will and righteousness (Proverbs 11:21).

OBJECTIVITY (IMPARTIALITY) OF GOD DURING THE GWTJ

1. God's judgement will be fair, without partiality or respect of persons (Romans 2:2-12; Job 34:18-22).
2. He will judge the small and the great, the rich and the poor, the educated and the illiterate, the highly respected and the most despised. **“For the Lord your God is**

God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh rewards [bribe]” (Deut. 10:17).

3. The righteous Judge of the universe will receive no bribe to pervert judgement on the great day of His wrath. But “... **in righteousness he doth judge and make war**” (Revelation 19:11). Without partiality “**WHOSOEVER was NOT found WRITTEN in the BOOK OF LIFE was cast into the lake of fire**” (Revelation 20:15).

DOCTRINE 21: THE NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That the New Heaven and the New Earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness" will be made by God and the redeemed shall dwell therein with God forever. This present earth which has been polluted by sin will pass away after the Great White Throne Judgement. No unclean thing will be there. There, we shall know each other, our knowledge having been perfected. There will be no more curse upon anything. There will be no more night; the glory of the Lord will be the light thereof. Psalm 102:25,26;

THE PRECARIOUS STATE OF THE PRESENT EARTH AND HEAVEN.

The present age in which we live is referred to in scriptures as the "last days" (Hebrews 1:1,2). This age is very significant in the plan of God as it ushers us into another important series of events often called in theology as "eschatology". Also called the church age, our present age is marked by evil, the dominion of Satan, darkness, ungodliness, lust, murder, lying and all manner of sin (Ephesians 6:12; Galatians 1:4). The church is not left out. There is, and there will be a denial of God, Christ, faith, sound doctrine and Christian living (1 Timothy 4:1-4; 2 Timothy 4:3,4; 3:1-8). The land is under a curse (Genesis 3:17). The devil and all his fallen angels walk to and fro the whole earth. The atmospheric heavens are polluted by the activities of Satan.

THE PURE STATE OF THE NEW EARTH AND NEW HEAVENS

The Holy City, New Jerusalem, is a material city not a mystical one. Its beauty is beyond human description. About 15,000 miles in length and a breadth and height of about 15,000 miles, the streets are made of pure gold, as clear as glass. With walls of jasper and its twelve foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones, it has twelve gates of twelve pearls. The entire city wall is pure gold, as clear as glass. This is a city without any temple. The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. **"And the city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof"** (Revelation 21:23). The redeemed of all the earth shall bring their glory and honour into the city. This is a city whose gates are never shut (Revelation 21:16-26). The pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb. The tree of life by the sides of this river bears twelve manner of fruits monthly. The fruits and leaves are for the healing of the nations. **"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever"** (Revelation 22:5). Words are insufficient to describe this new creation. But what will it take to partake in this inheritance?

THE PARTAKERS OF THE NEW EARTH AND NEW HEAVEN.

In order to partake in this new inheritance, sinners must repent and believers must overcome. **"He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son"** (Revelation 21:7). We must overcome the world (1 John 5:4,5; 2:15-17) and Satan (Revelation 12:11). False prophets, sin and evil must not have dominion over us. We must flee from all appearances of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22; Romans 12:17-21). Whether there be persecutions or temptations, we must overcome to be part of this great inheritance (Revelation 2:10,26-28). The overcomer is the one that prevails and triumphs over all the works of the devil.

The sinner must be thirsty for righteousness and salvation because it will be costly to miss this glorious experience in the new heavens and the new earth. Christ promises

to... **“give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of water of life freely”** (Revelation 21:6). Sinners must repent today. Backsliders must return to the Saviour immediately!

The life of the redeemed in this eternal city will be glorious. It will be a life of fellowship (1 Corinthians 13:12), rest (Revelation 14:13), full knowledge (1 Corinthians 13:12), holiness (Revelation 21:27), joy (Revelation 21:4), service (Revelation 22:3), abundance (Revelation 21:6), glory (2 Corinthians 4:17) and worship

DOCTRINE 22: HELL

God's infallible WORD teaches and we believe:

That Hell fire is a place of everlasting punishment where sinners (all who do not have their names in the book of life) will suffer torments for ever and ever. It was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41) but God has decreed that the wicked and those who forget Him and reject Christ will also be cast there because of their sin and neglect of His salvation. Psalm 9:17; Matthew 25:46;

The essence of the teaching of the doctrine of hell is not to scare or frighten hearers but to get them adequately prepared to avert the danger that is inherent in being in that terrible place throughout eternity.

ERRONEOUS BELIEFS ABOUT HELL: Psalm 9:17; I Cor 2:14; 1:18,21,23

1. **Doctrines of purgatory** - there is an intermediate state between death and appearance before God in judgment where the unrighteous dead stays for a while to suffer during which his concerned saviors can atone for his sins and qualify him for heaven.
2. **Doctrines of annihilation** – states that sinners will be burnt up in hell at once.

These doctrines are as false as they are unbiblical. The future punishment of the wicked is eternal while the sinner at death automatically receives an express translation into hell – where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched – Mark 9:48

ETERNAL REALITY OF HELL: Matt 7:15-19, 5:22,29

Our commonsense tells us that if there be a paradise for virtues, there must be a hell for crimes. When a sinner dies, his soul immediately proceeds to hell where, with full consciousness, he tastes the excruciating pain that hell offers. Every part of Scripture makes it clear that hell is a place of everlasting torment in unquenchable fire.

The Lord Jesus Christ spent considerable time talking about this reality:

1. He warned the city of Capernaum that it would be turned into hell because of its iniquities – Matthew 11:23,24
2. He warned repeatedly on the danger of hell and the need for His listeners to steer clear of it – Matt 5:22,29,30; 10:28
3. He made it clear that there was everlasting punishment and an eternal abode for all sinners who die unsaved – Matt 7:15-19; 18:9; Rev 14:10,11
4. He also repeated three times the fact that in hell ‘their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched – Mark 9:43-48
5. The Apostles were also united in their warning against the danger of hell as an eternal place of doom for sinners – Romans 2:5-9, Heb 10:26,27, 2 Peter 3:7
6. John the Baptist was very clear on the issue and made it plain – Matt 3:7-10

Therefore, the church cannot take a less specific position on the teaching of Hell. The church workers and ministers should know that God is no respecter of persons and that ‘the soul that sinneth it shall die’ –Ezekiel 18:20

ESCAPING THE DANGER OF HELL: Matt 7:14; Isaiah 52:11; 2 Cor 6:14-18

Everyone – within and outside the church must live with the consciousness that the wicked shall be turned into hell irrespective of age, sex, social status, educational background, nationality or tribe.

Those who are not on the highway of holiness are on the broad way to hell.

The way to hell is broad because it has a lot of latitude – All kinds of sins are allowed.

Everyone who seeks to escape from hell must:

1. Be free from every sin.
2. Have a definite change of life, character and aspirations.
3. Come over from the broad way to the narrow way where they can serve God in holiness.
4. Remain uncompromising and follow the totality of God's word the rest days of their lives.

God wants us to be clean, holy and righteously to be able to get to heaven.

Continuity in the narrow way requires:

1. Complete separation from unbelievers and their lifestyles.
2. Come out of defilement and sin into the highway of holiness.
3. The sinner must repent of his sins and exercise faith in Christ's blood for cleansing.
4. Pray for sustaining grace to continue on the path of holiness and righteousness that leads to the heavenly city.
5. Help others also to come into this narrow path.