

**YE DO ERR, NOT KNOWING THE SCRIPTURES: PART I**

Matthew 22:29

**I. INTRODUCTION:**

1. **2** Several weeks ago we began a series of lessons with the general theme of “grow[ing] in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.” (2 Pet. 3:18)
  - A. These lessons are designed to help Christians grow and be strong in the Lord (1 Pet. 2:2).
  - B. We cannot remain “babes” in Christ (1 Cor. 14:20); and even if we’ve been Christians for many years, we need to be reminded of these first principles (2 Pet. 3:1)
    - (1) **Lesson #1: ALL** Christians **must** put “first things first” (Matt. 6:33).
    - (2) **Lesson #2: ALL** Christians **must** diligently strive for spiritual maturity (2 Pet. 1:5-11).
    - (3) **Lesson #3: ALL** Christians **must** turn away from “worldliness” and “keep oneself unspotted from the world” (Jas. 1:27; 4:4).
    - (4) **Lesson #4: ALL** Christians **must** remain faithful after baptism (Rev. 2:10; e.g., worshiping, moral purity, and bearing fruit).
    - (5) **3 Lesson #5: ALL** Christians **must** be diligent students of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15; Hos. 4:6).
    - (6) **Lesson #6: ALL** Christians **must** strive to meet their responsibilities (God, others, self; Rom. 14:12).
    - (7) **Lesson #7: ALL** Christians **must** discharge their duties in the family (Psa. 128:3-4).
2. **4** If you were to take a religious survey, you would quickly find that many people have a lot of wrong impressions concerning what the Bible teaches on a wide variety of subjects.
  - A. **\*\*** Jesus cited the reason for religious error in Matthew 22:29 (“Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.” KJV).
    - (1) **\*\*** Religious error is nothing new (sects of the Jews; Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes).
    - (2) Even religious leaders can be wrong!
    - (3) Jesus condemned both those that taught religious error and those that followed religious error (**Matt. 15:7-9, 14**: “Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 8 ‘These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ 14 ‘Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.’”).
  - B. **\*\*** To recognize religious error we must diligently study God’s word! 2 Tim. 2:15
    - 1 Jn. 4:1**: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”
    - 1 Jn. 4:6**: “We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.” (cf. Jn. 16:13; Gal. 1:6-9)
    - (1) If we don’t diligently & faithfully study & learn God’s word, we are easy prey for false teachers (**Eph. 4:14**: “that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.”).
    - (2) False teaching comes from without the church and from within the church (**Acts 20:28-31**: “Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31

Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.”).

- (3) **\*\*** We must realize this is an important aspect of our spiritual warfare: **2 Cor. 10:3-5**: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, 5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,”

**Rom. 16:17-18**: “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”

(a) We must come to grips with the fact this spiritual war will not end in our lifetime.

(b) Every generation must fight this battle! **Judges 2:10-12**: “When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel. 11 Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; 12 and they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them, and they bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger.”

(c) There is only one way to make our battle against error end in our lifetime: compromise with it! **Eph. 5:11**: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.”

3. **\*\*** The Bible is our only standard of truth: **Psa. 119:105**: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

**2 Tim. 3:16-17**: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

**1 Pet. 4:11**: “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God.”

**Col. 3:17**: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” (KJV)

4. **5** Let us look briefly at several common religious errors.

## II. DISCUSSION:

### One very common religious error is that...

#### 1. **6** Children are born sinners:

- A. Many denominations (although their members may be unaware) believe that sins are passed from parents to children, so that children are born sinners.

**\*\*** “By his disobedience of God’s law, before man had exercised his power to bring children into the earth, not only Adam lost everything for himself, but his children were born as sinners, imperfect, and without the right to live.”

—Joseph Franklin Rutherford (aka Judge Rutherford, Jehovah’s Witness)

“Original sin, therefore, appears to be a hereditary, depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused through all the parts of our soul, rendering us obnoxious to the divine...”

—John Calvin (Protestant Reformationist)

- B. **\*\*** In fact, whether they know it or not, every parent that ever has their baby “baptized” (as an infant) is consenting to this false doctrine known as “Adamic sin,” “original sin,” “total hereditary depravity” (briefly explain; “There are babies but a span long in hell.” —John Calvin).

- C. **\*\*** The doctrine that “children are born sinners” is not true; those that believe it “do err, not knowing the scriptures.”
- D. **7** The Scriptures teach: “What saith the Scriptures?”
- (1) **\*\*** Children are “safe” in God’s sight, they are not sinners (**Matt. 18:1-6**: “At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, ‘Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ 2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.’ 6 ‘Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.’”).
  - (2) **\*\*** Children do not inherit the sins of their parents (**Ezek. 18:2-3**: “What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying: ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge?’ 3 ‘As I live,’ says the LORD God, ‘you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel.’” **Ezek. 18:19-20**: “Yet you say, ‘Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?’ Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and observed them, he shall surely live. 20 **The soul who sins shall die.** The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.”).
  - (3) **\*\*** Every person is responsible for his own conduct (**Ezek. 18:30**: “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways,” says the LORD God. ‘Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin.’”; **Matt. 16:27**: “For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.”; **Col. 3:25**: “But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.”).
  - (4) **\*\*** Baptism is for consenting persons who understand that baptism’s purpose is to wash away their sins! Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; **Acts 8:12**: “But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, **both men and women** were baptized.”; **Acts 18:8**: “Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.”; **1 Pet. 3:21**: “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:” (KJV)
    - (i) When an infant is “baptized” does he believe? NO!
    - (ii) When an infant is “baptized” does he understand baptism’s purpose? NO!
    - (iii) When an infant is “baptized” is it because his/her good conscience is answering God? NO!
    - (iv) We can read of men and women being baptized (Acts 8:12), but never children!

### Another very common religious error is...

#### 2. **8** Predestination:

- A. Predestination is the idea that God has already specifically chosen those that are going to be lost and those that are going to be saved.
- (1) **\*\*** Calvinism: false doctrinal system formulated by the Swiss reformer John Calvin.
  - (2) This false doctrinal system can be remembered with the acronym: **T-U-L-I-P**:
    - ☛ **T**otal depravity: original sin, we’ve all inherited the Adamic guilt of sin; we couldn’t respond to the gospel even if we wanted to do so.

- ☛ **U**nconditional election: You (specifically by name!) are one of two lists (1) those who will be saved, or (2) those who won't be saved (no free will!).
- ☛ **L**imited atonement: Jesus only died for the "elect" (i.e., those on the saved "list").
- ☛ **I**rresistible grace: If you're predestined for salvation, the Holy Spirit will operate directly on your heart to make you into a believer; absolutely required since you are "totally depraved"!
- ☛ **P**erseverance of the saints: once saved, always saved, impossibility of apostasy.

B. Here is how the Calvinists say it works:

- (1) The specific choice of who would and who wouldn't be saved was made by God before time began.
- (2) The choice of whether a person is on the "saved" list or the "lost" list was a sovereign choice of God; man cannot choose!
- (3) This choice was made before we were born (before time began).
- (4) The eternally lost person has no choice in the matter; they cannot obey even if they wanted to! (see graphic on slide #8)
- (5) The eternally saved person has no choice in the matter either! They cannot refuse to obey and be saved even if they wanted to! Neither can they ever sin so as to be lost!

C. Today, almost all Protestant denominations practice Calvinism; however, the typical member hasn't the first clue of their own doctrine and would likely be totally ignorant of T-U-L-I-P.

D. **9** The Calvinistic doctrine of predestination (as outlined above) is not true; those that believe it "do err, not knowing the scriptures." **\*\*“What saith the scriptures?”**

- (1) **\*\* Salvation is available to all!**

**Jn. 3:16:** "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (KJV)

**Acts 2:21:** "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved." (KJV)

**1 Tim. 2:3-4:** "...God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

**2 Pet. 3:9:** "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

**Rev. 22:17:** "And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let him that heareth say, 'Come.' And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (KJV)

- (2) **\*\* God shows no partiality!** This doctrine makes God partial to some, but not to others!

**Acts 10:34-35:** "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.'"

**Col. 3:25:** "But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality."

**Rom. 2:6, 11:** "who 'will render to each one according to his deeds'" 11 For there is no partiality with God."

- (3) **\*\* God chooses us when we choose Him!** God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:3-4)

**Rom. 10:12-17:** "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are

sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!' 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'LORD, who has believed our report' 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

**2 Thess. 2:13-14:** "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, 14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

E. \*\* The Bible DOES teach predestination, but not the Calvinistic-type of predestination!

(1) God predetermined that only those "in Christ" would be saved:

**Eph. 1:4-6:** "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,"; cf. 2 Tim. 2:10

(2) How does one get "in Christ"?

**Gal. 3:26-27:** "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ"

(3) The choice to be "in Christ" is entirely a **voluntary choice** made by each individual person! **Acts 2:41:** "Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."

**Another very common religious error is...**

3. **10** Direct operation of the Holy Spirit:

A. Many misunderstand how the Holy Spirit works today.

- (1) Some expect the Holy Spirit to come into their heart and overwhelm them directly, apart from the Bible (Total depravity, unconditional election or predestination require this!).
- (2) "Direct operation of the Holy Spirit" is the "I" of Calvin's T-U-L-I-P (i.e., irresistible grace).

B. \*\* The doctrine of "direct operation of the Holy Spirit" is not true; those that believe it "do err, not knowing the scriptures." **"What saith the scriptures?"**

- (1) \*\* God's word is the Holy Spirit's instrument: The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit works only through the medium of God's word **Eph. 6:17:** "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,"; **Heb. 4:12:** "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,"; cf. Acts 2:37: "pierced to the heart"

- (2) \*\* The Holy Spirit revealed God's mind: The Holy Spirit searched God's mind and revealed God's word to inspired men.

**1 Cor. 2:4-5:** "And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."

**1 Cor. 2:9-13:** "But as it is written: 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. 11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. 12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches..." (cf. Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:13)



**Gal. 1:11-12:** “But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

**Eph. 3:3-4:** “how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets...”

**1 Tim. 4:1:** “Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons,”

C. \*\* Salvation does not come through some mystical, “better felt than told,” experience.

(1) God calls men to salvation through the words revealed by the Spirit: Rom. 10:17

**2 Thess. 2:13-14:** “But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, 14 to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”; cf. Acts 18:8: heard→believed→obeyed

(2) As a person believes and obeys the Word of God, the Spirit leads and dwells within him:

**2 Cor. 1:22:** “set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.” (NIV)

**Eph. 3:17:** “so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith”; Rom. 10:17

**Gal. 2:20:** “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

**Rom 8:1:** “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” (cf. 8:9: “if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you”)

**Rom. 8:13-14:** “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.”

**Rom. 8:16:** “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,” (“For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God’s children.”; NLT)

(3) **11** How the Holy Spirit “bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God”: **Jas. 1:25:** “But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”

Holy Spirit says...	Our spirit says...
Repent and be baptized (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; etc.)	Yes or No?
Put to death the deeds of the flesh (Col. 3:5; Gal. 5:22-25; etc.)	Yes or No?
Remain faithful, steadfast (Col. 1:22; 1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10; etc.)	Yes or No?

**Another very common religious error is...**

4. **12** Once saved, always saved:

A. Sometimes called the “impossibility of apostasy” or “perseverance of the saints.”

(1) This doctrine holds one can’t lose his salvation. Sam Morris, “Pastor” of the *First Baptist Church*, Stamford, Texas, expressed the doctrine in its most extreme form as follows:

\*\*“We take the position that a Christian’s sins do not damn his soul! The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul. ... All the prayers a man may pray,

all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger. ... The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul.” (Sam Morris, *A Discussion Which Involves a Subject Pertinent to All Men*, pp. 1,2; via *Handbook of Religious Quotations*, p. 24)

- (2) This doctrine is a natural consequence of the unconditional election (Calvinistic predestination) and direct operation and miraculous indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

B. \*\* The doctrine of “once saved – always saved” is not true; those that believe it “do err, not knowing the scriptures.” **“What saith the scriptures?”**

- (1) \*\* A Christian can be eternally lost! The Bible unequivocally and repeatedly teaches that a person can be eternally lost after being saved! (Address quibble: “If they’re lost, they were never saved in the first place!”)

**Gal. 5:4:** “Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace.” (ASV)

**Jn. 15:6:** “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” (KJV)

**Heb. 10:35-39:** “Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 ‘For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.’ 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.”

- (2) \*\* It’s not a question of God’s faithfulness (**Titus 1:2:** “in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,”), God’s promise is conditioned upon our obedience (Heb. 5:8-9).
- (3) \*\* It’s a question of our faithfulness (Rev. 2:10; **Heb. 3:12:** “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;”).

### Another very common religious error is the use of...

#### 5. **13** Instrumental music in worship:

- A. Most “churches” use a piano, organ, or other instruments of music in their worship to God
- (1) The musical portion of worship in many denominational churches is a grand extravaganza involving a myriad of instruments and specialized singers and entertainers.
- (2) They’ve turned worship into entertainment and worshipers into spectators!

B. \*\* The doctrine of using “instrumental music in worship” is not true; those that believe it “do err, not knowing the scriptures.” **“What saith the scriptures?”**

- (1) \*\* Our worship “must” be “in spirit and truth” (Jn. 4:24).
- (a) Since we are under the NT, our worship must conform to its teachings (Heb. 10:9-10).
- (b) We can only know how to worship acceptably by NT teachings (Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11).
- (c) It is not a matter we can take lightly! Matt. 15:9
- (2) \*\* There are only two “kinds” of music: vocal (singing) and instrumental (playing): What does God specify in New Testament worship?

**Eph. 5:19:** “speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,”

**Col. 3:16:** “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing** with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

- (a) When God specifies a way or kind, we can’t substitute our preferences.
  - (i) When God told Noah to build an ark of “gopher wood,” His command of a specific “kind” of wood automatically eliminated every other “kind” of wood (cf. Gen. 6:14).
  - (ii) The specification of unleavened bread and grape juice for the Lord’s supper automatically eliminates every other kind of food and drink (1 Cor. 11:23-25).
  - (iii) **\*\*** To substitute when God has specified is prohibited by several scriptures (2 Jn. 9; 1 Pet. 4:11; Lev. 10:1-3).
- (b) When God specified the “kind” of music He wanted in worship (singing) that automatically eliminates any other “kind” of music (i.e., instrumental music; use restaurant example).

### **Another very common religious error is...**

#### **6. 14** One church is as good as another:

- A. Depending on who’s estimate you believe, there are anywhere from a few hundred to over 30,000 different “Christian” denominations in the world.
  - (1) Most “religious” people believe it doesn’t make any difference which one you belong to; their credo is “Worship at the church of your choice.”
  - (2) People who believe “one church is as good as another” do not really believe that “one church is as good as another.” For example,
    - (a) If a Catholic (Baptist, Methodist, Episcopalian) believed that “one church is as good as another”; he/she could hold “joint membership” in the Greek Orthodox Church, or the Jehovah’s Witnesses, or the Baptist Church. Would that be acceptable to the “ruling” powers of those “churches”?
    - (b) If “one church is as good as another” then what about...
      - (i) *People’s Temple* (Jim Jones and the 900 “suicides” in Guyana)?
      - (ii) *Heaven’s Gate* (Marshall Applewhite, castration, 39 suicides)?
      - (iii) *SDA Branch Davidian* (David Koresh, the “whacko from Waco”, need I say more?)?
- B. **\*\*** So, the doctrine that “one church is as good as another” is not true; those that believe such “do err, not knowing the scriptures.” **“What saith the scriptures?”**
- C. The Bible plainly, clearly, and unequivocally teaches that there is but one church.
  - (1) **\*\*** In the New Testament the “church” and the “body of Christ” are synonyms (**Col. 1:18:** “And He is the head of the body, the church,”).
    - (a) There is only “one body” (**Eph. 4:4-6:** “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all...”).
    - (b) Jesus is the “head of the church” (**Eph. 5:23:** “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.”).
    - (c) Have you ever seen a head with multiple bodies? A body with multiple heads? Maybe in a “sci-fi flick” but such is not possible in the real world.
  - (2) **\*\*** Jesus is the “Savior of the body [church]” (Eph. 5:23; what “body”? The “one body”; Eph. 4:4).



(3) \*\* Jesus built only one church (**Matt. 16:18**: “upon this rock I will build My church”).

- ✓ If Jesus built only one church,
- ✓ If Jesus is the head of only one body (i.e., “church”),
- ✓ If Jesus is the savior of only one body (i.e., “church”),
- ✓ What “body” do you want to be a member in? Is “one church as good as another”?

D. To be the one body of Christ, a church must follow the Bible and the Bible only. Any church (even this one!) that does not follow the Bible alone is not the Lord’s church!

**Another very common religious error is that there is...**

**7. 15** No eternal punishment:

A. It may surprise you to know that many people don’t believe in “hell” (i.e., eternal punishment):

- (1) Skeptics: e.g., Albert Einstein: “I cannot imagine a God who rewards and punishes the objects of his creation.” (*Free Inquiry*, 1996/97, p. 31); Bertrand Russell said that no person “who is really profoundly humane can believe in everlasting punishment.”
- (2) Religionists:
  - (a) Jehovah’s Witnesses & Seventh Day Adventists replace the biblical hell with annihilation.
  - (b) Church of Christ: amazingly some claiming to be members of the Lord’s church teach and believe annihilation (e.g., Edward Fudge, F. LaGard Smith, Homer Hailey)
    - (i) Fudge, in his book *The Fire that Consumes*, denies what he calls the “traditionalist view” of eternal punishment and asserts that unrighteous people will be raised to judgment, punished for a while, and then banished to “total, everlasting extinction” (Fudge, 1982, 435-36). Sounds like the Catholic’s doctrine of purgatory!
    - (ii) During the Apr. 1988 Pepperdine Univ. Lectureship, F. LaGard Smith argued God “will destroy [soul]. Not punish it. Not dangle it. Not torture it. Destroy it.”
    - (iii) Homer Hailey: Near the end of his life (last book) wrote a book (*God’s Judgements & Punishments*) “in which half of the book was dedicated specifically to defending the position that hell is not eternal...” (*The Eternality of Hell*, Apologetics Press).

B. \*\* So, the doctrine that “there is no eternal punishment” is not true; those that believe such “do err, not knowing the scriptures.” **“What saith the scriptures?”**

C. The New Testament clearly and unequivocally teaches that hell is eternal!

(1) \*\* Matthew 18:8-9:

**Matt. 18:8-9**: “If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the **everlasting fire**. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into **hell fire**.”

- (a) Were you paying attention? Did you notice Jesus equates two things in this passage?
- (b) Jesus equated “hell fire” (v. 9) with “everlasting fire” (v. 8).
- (c) Thus, the pain and suffering of hell is **eternal**.

(2) \*\* Matthew 25:31-46: **Matt. 25:46**: “And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- (a) Were you paying attention? Jesus contrasts “everlasting punishment” with “eternal life”:

- (b) Note Jesus says the righteous will go “into eternal life”; while the wicked “will go away into everlasting punishment” (i.e., hell, gehenna).
  - (c) So, eternal punishment (hell) is described as being “everlasting” and “life” (heaven) is described as being “eternal.”
  - (d) Remember, Jesus the Son of God said this, and He knows what He’s talking about!
  - (e) The word “everlasting” in reference to “punishment” (hell) and the word “eternal” in reference to “life” are both translated from the **very same** Greek word: *ainios*.
  - (f) “*ainios*” means “ 1. without beginning or end, that which always has been and always will be: Theos; Rom 16:26; 2. without beginning Rom 16:25; 3. without end, never to cease, everlasting: 2 Cor 4:18.” (from Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, Electronic Database. Copyright © 2000, 2003, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)
  - (g) Other *ainios* things:
    - ☛ God: “the everlasting God” (Rom. 16:26),
    - ☛ Holy Spirit: “the eternal Spirit” (Heb. 9:14),
    - ☛ Heaven: “the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Pet. 1:11),
    - ☛ Jesus: “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” (Rev. 1:18).
  - (h) If hell is not eternal, F-O-R-E-V-E-R, then neither is God, the Holy Spirit, heaven, or Jesus!
  - (i) So, Jesus unequivocally tells us both hell and heaven are for the exact same duration: F-O-R-E-V-E-R!
- (3) **\*\* Mark 9:43-48:** where Jesus says hell is a place where “the fire that shall never be quenched — 44 where ‘Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched.’” (vv. 43 & 44)
- (a) The English word describing the fires of hell as “not quenched” comes from the Greek word *asbestos*.
  - (b) So, the “fire” of “hell” differs from normal flames in that it is perpetual.
  - (c) Greek lexicographers Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich defined *asbestos* as “inextinguishable” fire, and then list “eternal” (*aionios*; Matthew 18:8; 25:41) as its closest synonym (2000, p. 141).
    - (i) If the wicked are annihilated in hell, one is forced to ask what possible purpose does “unquenchable fire” serve?
    - (ii) Why have an “inextinguishable” fire for “extinguishable” souls?
    - (iii) Why should the fire burn forever if its purpose comes to an end?

### III. CONCLUSION: 16

1. Don’t swallow everything some preacher or church says (1 Jn. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:11).
  - A. If we follow religious error, we will be lost by disobeying God! 2 Thess. 2:10-12
  - B. Let’s always examine everyone’s teaching to make sure it agrees with God’s book (Acts 17:11).
2. Let us diligently study God’s word so we are able to discern truth from error (2 Tim. 2:15; Eph. 4:14).