

YOUTH



LEVEL 9

BIBLE

LESSONS



LESSON 1



The New Testament Church

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

We have just finished studying the life of Jesus. He was the Creator, the Lord, God of the Old Testament, and He is the living Christ or Anointed One of the New Testament. We also learned that He died on Passover in A.D. 31, crucified on a stake.

This year we will find out how God's Church was founded. Included will be some experiences of the first Church leaders. We will also study the life and writings of the apostle Paul. We will learn about the basic doctrines and history of God's Church and finally take a step into the near future through prophecy.

You will need your Bible to look up scriptures and a pen or pencil to answer questions throughout the lesson.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

When did the New Testament Church begin? Did Christ's death mark the beginning of the New Testament Church? The answer is *no*.

The book of Acts records the beginning of the New Testament Church. The momentous event that established the Church took place on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31. It was the disciples' receiving of the Holy Spirit on this day.

To understand why the Holy Spirit was so vitally important to the New Testament Church, we must understand something about how man's mind works.

What is it that gives man intellect — the ability to think and reason? Physically, there is little difference between human brain and animal brain. Yet man can think and reason while an animal cannot.

Why?

Science does not have the answer. Scientists have compared the brains of some of the larger mammals with human brains and found very little difference. Though most scientists will not admit it, they recognize there must be a non-physical ingredient that makes the difference between human mind and animal brain.

What does the Bible say about this special ingredient? Turn to Job 32:8 and fill in the missing words: "But there is a _____: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

God has put a special spirit essence in each human at birth. This "spirit in man," or human spirit, gives the brain the *power to think*. Man is made in the image of God and, on a physical plane, has a mind that is very much like God's.

With this spirit in man, he is able to think and reason as God does. But he is limited to the knowledge of the physical realm. He cannot understand the *spiritual* things of God without the addition of another ingredient.

What is that other ingredient? Turn to I Corinthians 2:11 for the answer: "For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the _____ of _____ knoweth no man, but the _____ of _____."

So the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit, is that missing ingredient that makes possible the understanding of the spiritual things of God.

Throughout the Old Testament and even during Christ's life, God's Holy Spirit was not available in the way it is today. Today, all the people God calls can be begotten into God's Family by His



Staff



H. Armstrong Roberts

A caterpillar undergoes a series of changes to become a butterfly. A Christian also must be changed.

Spirit entering into them. God's Spirit combined with man's spirit enables a Christian to understand and live God's spiritual way of life. God's Spirit was made available to the disciples on the Pentecost following the death of Christ. So Pentecost, A.D. 31, marks the beginning of the New Testament Church of God.

SPIRITUAL BEGETTAL AND BIRTH

Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit in His well-known conversation with Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a highly respected leader among the Jews. He came to Jesus secretly, by night, for fear of the other Pharisees.

Turn to John 3, verses 1-9, and read the story of Nicodemus.

Jesus' first words had Nicodemus stumped. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Nicodemus could not understand. Was Jesus talking about a physical rebirth? "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" he asked Christ.

But Jesus spoke of a spiritual birth — of being born of God into His spiritual family — when man

will be made entirely of spirit in God's Kingdom.

You will understand more fully as you grow older, but the analogy between human birth and spiritual birth will help you.

To be born, each of you had to be begotten by your human father. In the same way, spiritual birth requires spiritual begettal by God, the spiritual Father.

Spiritual begettal is the impregnation of man's mind by the Holy Spirit. This produces a new spiritual life, a new creation. But this new spiritual creation — a Christian — is only begotten — not yet born. Just as a human embryo must grow in its mother's womb, a Christian must grow and develop godly character before being born into God's family.

Sometimes a lesson from nature can give us a better understanding of a spiritual process. For instance, let's look at the analogy of a caterpillar.

Before a caterpillar becomes a butterfly it must undergo a series of changes or metamorphoses. We are familiar with the stages of growth — eggs, larva, pupa and adult. Given the right conditions and the proper food, the egg hatches and the larva, the caterpillar, develops

and then goes through the pupa stage until finally, a beautiful butterfly emerges!

In a similar fashion, human beings must go through a metamorphosis to become spiritual beings. But, the proper spiritual food and the right spiritual conditions are necessary for these changes to take place. Only after baptism can a person receive God's Holy Spirit and begin to grow spiritually as a Christian until finally that person is born of God as a spirit being.

BEGINNING OF GOD'S PLAN

It is clear then that receiving God's Holy Spirit is a begettal — on the spiritual level. Our study of the Holy Spirit now takes us to the historic event that occurred on Pentecost: Sunday, June 17, A.D. 31. But let's lead up to it by reviewing God's Holy Days starting with Passover.

The Passover is the first of God's seven annual festivals which outline His master plan. The peoples of the world have rejected and forgotten God's festivals. If we, like the world, reject these days we will also forget His plan — we will forget the knowledge of the purpose of



A Memorial Day parade.

life. We can know why we were born and what our purpose is because we understand and keep God's festivals. Part of God's plan helps us understand how God's Church today is different from pre-Christian times. As we learned last year, the Passover reminds us that Jesus, the Son of God, died as a sacrifice for our sins. I Corinthians 5:7 calls Christ our what? _____ Right, Jesus is our Passover.

Jesus lived a perfect life — one without sin — then gave that life as a sacrifice for our sins. Why did He have to sacrifice Himself for us? (Rom. 3:23) (Please write out the scripture when you see this type of reference with a line following.)
"_____

_____."

That explains it all. You, I, everybody has done what? _____. What happens as a result? (Rom. 6:23) "For the _____ of _____ is _____" That explains it well. The bad works (the sinful activities) we have done will earn us our wages or reward, which is eternal death. Except that Christ gave His perfect human life for us, as a sacrifice, we would all die with no chance to ever live again. As it is, Jesus is our Passover who was sacrificed for us, that we might have eternal life.

The Passover began in Egypt as part of the 10th plague God poured out upon the Egyptians. (You can read the full story of how the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread were instituted in Exodus 12:1-29.)

The Israelites were told to take a male lamb without blemish (Ex. 12:5) to use as a sacrifice. It had to be without blemish because it represented Christ who would lead a perfect life — one without physical or spiritual sin. They were to kill it on the evening of the 14th of the first month in the spring. It was killed just after sunset of the 13th and before dark — in the twilight of the evening of the 14th. (Remember in God's calendar the days go from sunset to sunset just as we keep God's Sabbath today.) They were told to eat the lamb in haste and be

prepared to flee. The lamb is the Lord's Passover — it represents Christ.

The Israelites were told to keep the Passover as a memorial — to observe it yearly. What is a *memorial*? Look it up in your dictionary and write the definition: _____

_____.

May 30 is Memorial Day in the United States — a legal holiday to help Americans remember the servicemen who fought and died in all the country's wars. How many times a year is Memorial Day observed? _____. A memorial for any event is usually kept on a given day each year — *once yearly*. So it is with Passover.

God wanted the story of the Passover to be passed on, from generation to generation. What were the parents to say if their children should ask, "What mean ye by this service?" (Ex. 12:26-27) "That ye shall say, _____

_____.

_____." Did that include even the firstborn of animals? (Ex. 12:29) When God says such words as *all* He means what He says. (See Exodus 11:5.)

Later Moses summarized and explained the festivals of God in the book of Leviticus. In chapter 23, verses 1-4, all the festivals (including the weekly Sabbath) are proclaimed to be commanded assemblies. The Passover is kept on the 14th day of the first month (Lev. 23:5). Those who would become Christians will accept the Passover sacrifice and then embark on the process of ridding themselves of all sin. This putting out of sin is pictured by the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Please read verses 6-8 of Leviticus 23, where the observance of this Feast is explained. Also read I Corinthians 5, verses 7-8. You will find leavening used as a symbol for sin, and seven days symbolizing totality or completeness. God uses the number *seven* to

mean completeness. This means that we must strive on a daily basis to give up *all* sin. This is a very difficult process — an impossible process for man. However, as we shall see later, God has provided a way that man can totally overcome or come out of all sin.

The next step in God's plan is symbolized by the day of Pentecost. To a true Christian, Pentecost has a great deal of significance. As you learn of Pentecost by reading or studying your Bible, or by being taught in services on the day of Pentecost, you will see that this Holy Day has many meanings. In this lesson we will stress one important meaning of the day — the receipt of God's Holy Spirit by Christ's disciples, which marked the beginning of the New Testament Church.

RECEIVING GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples before He died. Read John 14:16 and complete the quote: "And I will pray the _____, and he shall _____ you another _____, that he may abide with you for ever."

Verse 26 tells us what that Comforter is: "But the Comforter, which is _____, whom the Father will send in my name." (Comment: The writers of the King James version use the word *ghost* when, in reality, the word would much better have been translated "spirit." When the phrase "Holy Ghost" appears in an answer in our lessons please use the word *spirit* in place of ghost.)

But how did the disciples receive the Holy Spirit?

After Jesus' resurrection, He appeared to the assembled disciples. He told them not to leave Jerusalem but to "... wait for the promise of the Father," which had been given in John 14.

So the disciples "... continued with one accord in prayer and supplication..." (Acts 1:14).

This was just before the day of Pentecost, Sunday, June 17, A.D. 31. The story of the historic event that occurred on that day begins in Acts 2:1:



Warren Watson

Members of God's Church being taught at Sabbath services.

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with _____ in _____. And suddenly there came a _____ from _____ as of a _____, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them _____ like as of _____, and it _____ upon each of them. And they were all _____ with the Holy (Spirit), and began to speak with other tongues, as the _____ gave them utterance.”

The receipt of the Holy Spirit came as a result of, among other things, obedience. Jesus told the disciples *to remain* at Jerusalem until they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4). Had they left and not kept Pentecost there, they would not have been blessed.

To mark this first arrival of the Holy Spirit and the commencement of the New Testament Church, God caused the Holy Spirit to appear as cloven (two-pronged) tongues of fire. It sat upon each of the disciples, some of whom immediately

began doing miracles. As they spoke in their language, people of foreign languages were able to hear and understand what was said in *their own* language (verse 4). The word *tongues* here simply means foreign languages.

Peter, now begotten of God and filled with the Holy Spirit, preached a simple but inspired message. As a result of what took place that day, how many people were baptized? (Acts 2:38-41) _____. Peter explained the first two steps necessary to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38-39) What are they? _____ and be _____.

STEP ONE — REPENTANCE

The first step to receiving God's Holy Spirit is repentance. Look up “repent” in your dictionary and write the definition:

Remember how hard it is to have to say “I’m wrong,” “I’m sorry,” or “It’s all my fault?”

Did Christ teach repentance? The answer is

yes. Repentance was the beginning of Christ's message. In Luke 24:47 Christ said that repentance should be taught among nations. Why? (Luke 13:3, 5) “. . . except ye _____, ye shall all likewise _____.” This is quite inclusive, isn't it? Eventually everyone must repent.

STEP TWO — BAPTISM

The second step Peter gave for receiving the Holy Spirit was baptism (Acts 2:38). The meaning of the word *baptism* is “to immerse,” to plunge into something that covers or surrounds. Baptism symbolizes the immersion or burial of the old, unrepentant, carnal self. Coming up out of the watery grave pictures the emergence of a new repentant self — one that is now going to begin putting away sin from his life and begin living God's way.

John baptized in the wilderness. Write down why John preached the baptism of repentance. (Mark 1:4) “. . . for the _____.” Remission of sins means forgiveness of sins. The people John baptized had their sins forgiven, but they did not receive (were not begotten by) God's Holy Spirit. A person needs God's Holy Spirit if he is to overcome himself, which primarily means the pulls and direct influences of the world and Satan. As we know, the Holy Spirit was not available the way it is today until Christ died and was resurrected. What, then, was John's baptism missing? _____

John was sent to give *knowledge* of salvation. John was merely preparing a people, a repentant and believing people, for Christ, who would soon appear to begin His ministry.

Was John's baptism enough? (Acts 19:1-6) _____. Did those baptized by John have to be rebaptized in the *name* of Jesus? _____. Recall that the Holy Spirit did not become available until the day of Pentecost following Christ's death (Acts 2:1-4).

STEP THREE — “THE LAYING ON OF HANDS”

The third step for receiving the Holy Spirit is the laying on of hands. Look at Hebrews 6:2.

Here Paul includes “laying on of hands” in the basic doctrines of God's Church.

You have probably seen a minister or a deacon ordained by the laying on of hands. Or maybe you have had one of God's ministers anoint you when you were sick. He placed his hands on your head and prayed that God would forgive you and remove the penalty you were suffering. In the same way there must be a laying on of hands for the receipt of the Holy Spirit following baptism.

In the verses we read about rebaptism (Acts 19:1-6) we found that the laying on of hands was necessary to receive the Holy Spirit. And so three steps are required: *repentance*, *baptism* and the *laying on of hands* by one of God's ministers with an accompanying prayer.

USING THE HOLY SPIRIT

Having God's Holy Spirit made a real difference in the lives of the disciples. For example, we read in Acts 2:4 that the apostles spoke in “tongues” or foreign languages after receiving the Holy Spirit. What was the miracle performed through Peter and John in Acts 3:1-8? _____

_____.

God's Holy Spirit enabled the early Church leaders to perform many other miracles. Some of them are listed here. Make a short summary of the miracles found in:

Acts 5:1-11 _____

Acts 5:17-23 _____

Acts 13:6-12 _____

Acts 28:1-6 _____

Many more examples of the power of the Holy Spirit are described in Acts. One interesting account involves a Church member named Stephen. His story is found in Acts 6.

STEPHEN

Stephen was one of the Church's first deacons. In Acts 6:1-6, we read of the ordination of some deacons. How many were chosen?

Stephen was a man filled with what two things? (Acts 6:5) "Stephen, a man full of _____ and of the _____" When these seven men were set before the apostles, the apostles ordained them as deacons. How did the apostles ordain them? (Acts 6:6) "Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had _____, they _____ their _____ on them." This is another example of the doctrine of the laying on of hands.

Did Stephen allow the Holy Spirit to work through him? Notice verse 8 of Acts 6. "And Stephen, full of _____ and _____, did _____ and _____ among the people." Stephen was able to perform miracles as he did God's Work — even though *he was not* a minister. The same is true today. We do not have to be ordained a minister in order to allow God's Holy Spirit to help us to live a more godly life.

In fact, you don't even have to be an adult to live uprightly before God and to seek after His way. Read I Samuel 16:7-13. David was a youth, not an adult, when God selected him. We tend to look at a person and judge him by his looks, his brains or his athletic ability. But on what basis does God judge? (I Sam. 16:7) "For the Lord _____ not as _____; for _____ on the _____, but the Lord looketh on the _____." God judges on our attitude, or "heart." Even as a youth, while shepherding his flocks, David thought on — meditated on — God's law and how to apply it to his daily life. The more we do the same thing, the more God

can work with and use us.

Stephen gave himself so completely to God that God used him to do great miracles and wonders. But the leaders of that day felt threatened by this and plotted to silence Stephen. They put Stephen on trial before the high priest. Several witnesses were paid to lie about Stephen. They accused him of speaking against God.

The entire seventh chapter of Acts is Stephen's reply to their false accusations. He summarized the history of God's people from Abraham to Jesus, then ended by condemning the Jewish leaders for killing Jesus. (Read the story for yourself. It starts in Acts 6:9 and goes through Acts 7:53.)

Did the Jewish leaders like what they heard? Read their reaction in verse 54 of Acts 7: "When they _____ these things, they were _____ to the _____, and they gnashed on him with their teeth."

They knew Stephen was right, and it made them angry. They took Stephen outside the city and stoned him to death.



Staff

God calls people of all races and nations.

Stephen was so filled with God's Holy Spirit that he was able, even while being stoned, to kneel down and pray to God. What did he ask for? (Acts 7:60) "And he kneeled down, and _____ with a _____ voice, Lord, _____ this _____ to their charge." The key to Stephen's strength was the power of the Holy Spirit.

PHILIP

Another deacon, ordained at the same time as Stephen, was a man named Philip (Acts 6:5-6). When Stephen was martyred (killed for his beliefs) a man named Saul, as well as others, was persecuting the followers of Jesus. Because of this persecution, the Church was scattered (Acts 8:1-4).

During this time, Philip was preaching Christ in various cities. In the city of Samaria, for example, when Philip preached, the whole city heard and believed.

Complete the quote from Acts 8:6: "And the people with _____ gave _____ unto those things which Philip _____, hearing and seeing the _____ which he did."

Through God's Holy Spirit, Philip, a deacon in God's Church, was able to perform miracles that captured the people's attention so that he might do God's Work better. For Philip, God's Spirit was truly a powerful tool, which he used to do God's will.

Later, Philip was guided by an angel to an Ethiopian man reading Isaiah (Acts 8:26-28). But the man could not understand what he was reading (Acts 8:27-30). When asked if he understood, what did the man say that shows he had a great deal of wisdom? (Verses 30-31)

"_____?"

This Ethiopian eunuch had the wisdom to understand that everyone needs spiritual teachers (we usually call them ministers). That is one reason we attend Sabbath services, Bible studies and the feasts of God — to be taught by those whom God has appointed to give us better

understanding. Because Philip had God's Holy Spirit within him, he was able to teach this man from the Bible. Later, Philip baptized this man (Acts 8:32-38).

Following the baptism, "... when they were come up out of the water," what happened to Philip? (Acts 8:39) "... the Spirit of the Lord _____ Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more. ..." God supernaturally intervened and removed Philip to the area of Azotus. What did Philip do in all the cities of this area? (Acts 8:40) _____

The last we hear of Philip — the deacon through whom God performed miracles and great wonders — is in Acts 21:8. Philip is, at this time, no longer a deacon. What office does he now hold? _____

Philip was so filled with God's Spirit — the mind and faith of Christ — that he was able to understand and explain the Bible. He was able to do great wonders and miracles, and he preached in all the cities of Caesarea. God's Holy Spirit made all the difference between being just a man and being a mighty man of God.



Hal Finch

Children learning cooperation rather than competition.

CORNELIUS

Another man whom God specially used, but who was not an ordained minister, was Cornelius. We find his story in Acts 10.

Cornelius was a Roman centurion — a Roman officer in charge of 100 soldiers. He was not an Israelite. While he was praying, an angel appeared to Cornelius. The angel told Cornelius to send for Peter, who was in the neighboring city of Joppa (Acts 10:2-8).

While Cornelius' men were on their way, Peter went up on the roof to pray. There, in a vision, Peter saw all manner of unclean animals. He was told to kill and eat them. This happened three times (verses 9-16).

Many people use these verses to try to show that it is all right to eat pork, shellfish and all other unclean foods. However, Peter was not so unwise. He was not sure at that time what the vision meant, but he realized that God would not tell him to break the Biblical health laws. As it turned out, Peter was right. The purpose of the dream was not to show that we can eat pork or other unclean foods.

While Peter thought about the vision, an angel spoke to him and explained that three men were seeking him and he was to go with them. These three men were *not* Israelites. Jews of that day would have nothing to do with gentiles. So, unless the angel had spoken to him, Peter would not have gone with them (Acts 10:19-20). When the men arrived, Peter went down to meet them. He agreed to go with them to Caesarea (Acts 10:18-27).

After hearing their story, Peter realized what the three visions meant, and he explained the meaning to Cornelius. In verse 28 of Acts 10, Peter said, "... God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean." Before this time, there were no gentile members of God's Church. But now Peter knew that gentiles were not to be excluded.

When Cornelius described the events that led up to his meeting with Peter, his attitude was evident (Acts 10:30-33). See how teachable he was! When God instructed him, he didn't argue or ask needless questions. What word

describes how long it took Cornelius to do what he had been told? (Acts 10:33) _____ . Peter showed that God judges differently than we do. God has respect for those who fear Him and have a right attitude. He is not concerned with such things as race, status or wealth. Rather, God looks at a person's attitude (Acts 10:35-43).

While Peter was speaking, God demonstrated that these men were to be baptized. How did God show this? God's Holy Spirit fell on the gentiles just as it had on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 31. The three men began speaking in a foreign language, and it was understood by those who were traveling with Peter (verses 44-46).

Normally, God does not give His Holy Spirit before baptism. But God did give these gentiles the Holy Spirit before baptism as a sign. Peter then ordered them to be baptized.

The story of Cornelius is the first example of God giving the Holy Spirit to people other than Israelites. God showed the apostles and other followers of Christ that God is not calling just Israelites, but also gentiles. God gives His Holy Spirit to those who respond to His calling by repenting, being baptized and having the laying on of hands by God's servants. After these steps, a person is spiritually begotten by God. Then that person must grow spiritually and develop the character of God to be born into God's Kingdom as spirit beings when Christ returns.

SATAN'S ALTERNATIVE PLAN

Our success, then, is based on the divine character we develop in this life. God created man and gave him a way of living based on His law — the way of giving and cooperation. Satan thought he had a better way — the idea of experimentation instead of simple obedience. He caused Eve to conduct the first experiment. In essence, Satan said: "Try the forbidden fruit and see what happens. Maybe your way is better than God's way."

He also came up with the idea of competition as an alternative to God's way of cooperation.

Cooperation is the way of "give," where we

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BIBLE MEMORY

Books of the
Old and New
Testaments

BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

P	B	A	B	Y	S	U	T	I	T	S	L	I	H	S	E	K	U	L	L
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WORD SEARCH

**All of the books of
the New Testament are hidden
here. How many can you find?**