
THE FIELDS ARE WHITE

DISCUSSING DOCTRINE AND
CONTEMPLATING CONVERSION

Sunday: Prepared to Give an Answer



Prepared by Jonathan Caldwell

2nd Quarter 2022

www.wearesimplychristians.com

INTRODUCTION

“Each day I’ll shine!” As we think about evangelism, our minds typically go to conversations about doctrine – baptism, instrumental music, once-saved-always-saved, and so on. Are we ready for these conversations? Do we have a handle on the scriptures that others will use in support of these false doctrines? And today, it goes beyond religious doctrine. How will we respond to questions about abortion, homosexual marriage, and transgenderism?

On Sundays this quarter, we will exam and respond to a number of different false doctrines and practices. *First*, we want to make sure we understand what the Bible teaches. *Second*, we want to accurately understand the position that others hold (we don’t want to argue with straw men). And *third*, we want to use scripture to answer their arguments and teach the truth. I suspect this will be a challenging quarter, especially as I play “devil’s advocate” throughout the class. We want to be **Prepared to Give an Answer**.

But what is our goal? Our goal is not to win an argument. Our goal is to lead others to Christ. That may involve tearing down some barriers and misconceptions. But in the end, our desire for them is a relationship with the Lord. This is conversion. Maybe it is conversion from false doctrine, conversion from the world, or conversion from self, but it is a turning from anything and everything to the Lord.

On Wednesdays, we will use the stories of **Conversion in the Book of Acts** as case studies. What does conversion look like? What happens in conversion? What is preached? How do people respond? What are barriers to accepting and obeying the Gospel? A few lessons will look at the culture of conversion in the first century.

Jesus Himself said, “The fields are white unto harvest” and again, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, pray earnestly to the Lord of harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” You! You are the laborers! Let’s get to work!

Jonathan Caldwell

The Fields Are White: Discussing Doctrine and Contemplating Conversion

Sundays: Prepared to Give an Answer

Date	Topic
Sunday, April 3	1. Inherited Depravity
Sunday, April 10	2. Once Saved, Always Saved
Sunday, April 17	3. Faith Only
Sunday, April 24	4. Baptism
Sunday, May 1	WORKSHOP with Sewell Hall, Bill Sanchez, and Phillip Shumake
Sunday, May 8	5. Instrumental Music
Sunday, May 15	6. Denominational Practices: Pastors, Organizations, and Creeds
Sunday, May 22	7. Women Preachers and Pastors
Sunday, May 29	8. How the Church Uses Money
Sunday, June 5	9. Premillennialism
Sunday, June 12	10. The Holy Spirit
Sunday, June 19	11. Miracles Today
Sunday, June 26	12. Social Issues: Abortion, Homosexuality, Transgenderism

INHERITED DEPRAVITY

Much of Calvinism stems from a false understanding of Romans 5. In what has come to be known as 5-point Calvinism, inherited (or total) depravity stands at the beginning. This is also known as the doctrine of original sin.

- Use a bible dictionary or the internet to define original sin or inherited depravity.
- Read Romans 5 and consider why one might come away thinking that this passage teaches inherited depravity.
- Consider Romans 5:12:
 - How did sin enter the world?
 - How did death enter the world?
 - How did death spread to all men?
 - What does Romans 3:23 say about all men?
- If all men are born sinners, what does that mean for Jesus? And what doctrine was created to deal with this problem?
- Consider Ezekiel 18:1-4, 19-20.
 - What does the proverb of v. 2 imply?
 - Why are they no longer to use this proverb?
 - What is God's summary on the matter?
- What is the difference between bearing the sins of our fathers versus bearing the consequences of our father? How can we illustrate the difference?

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED

This is one of the most common false doctrines Christians will encounter. In Calvinism, it is referred to as the “perseverance of the saints.”

- What would one who holds this view HAVE to believe about someone who, at one point, claimed to be a Christian but now lived as the world?
- Can Christians have confidence in their salvation? Consider Romans 8:35-39 and 1 Peter 1:5.
- But consider these passages:
 - John 15:2, 6
 - 1 Corinthians 9:27; 10:12
 - Colossians 1:21-23
 - Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-31, 38
 - 2 Peter 2:20-22
 - James 5:19-20
 - Read the letters to the 7 churches in Revelation 2-3 and note admonitions to persevere through trials and temptations.
- Consider Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8:
 - What does v. 13 say about Simon?
 - What does Simon try to do?
 - Of what does Peter accuse him and tell him to do?
 - What does this imply about Simon’s condition?

FAITH ONLY

- The main text for most who hold this position would be Ephesians 2:4-9. But other passages include Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:28; 11:6; John 3:16.
- But what is Paul usually talking about when he uses the term “works”?
- Martin Luther drew a line from the word “works” in Paul to the Hail Marys, indulgences, confessions, etc. of the Catholic church. What is the problem with this?
- What does James say about faith and works?
- What did Luther have to say about the Epistle of James?
- Consider these passages and write down what each one says saves us:
 - Acts 11:18
 - Romans 10:10
 - 1 Peter 3:21
 - 1 Corinthians 15:2; James 1:21
 - Romans 10:13
 - James 2:24
 - Romans 5:9
 - Hebrews 5:9
 - Ephesians 2:8
 - 1 Peter 1:9
 - Acts 2:40

BAPTISM

- List all the passages in the New Testament that connect baptism and salvation.
- According to these passages, what happens in baptism?
- Without these things, how could we be saved?
- What would you say to someone who argues that baptism is a “work”?
- What about the “thief on the cross”?
- What about all the hypothetical situations people come up with that prevent someone from being baptized?
- What about infant baptism?
- As we—rightly—emphasize the necessity of baptism, what might we accidentally de-emphasize?
- Why was Jesus baptized?
- What does the Bible say about the “age of accountability”?

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

When discussing worship, obedience to God and acting with authority are extremely important. However, maybe this shouldn't be our rallying cry. This is a secondary issue when compared to baptism and salvation.

- What are some common defenses provided for using instruments of music?
- Were instruments used in the Old Testament? When? Where?
- What do we read of instruments of music in the New Testament?
- If we go to the Old Testament to defend instruments of music, what other Old Testament practices would we have to continue?
- Consider Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament:
 - The Passover → John 1:29
 - High Priest → Hebrews 7:11-16
 - King → Acts 2:36
 - Tabernacle → John 1:14; 2:19-21
- Consider Christians as fulfillment of much in the Old Testament:
 - Priesthood → 1 Peter 2:9
 - Temple → 1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19
 - Sacrifices → Romans 12:1-2
 - Instruments → Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 13:15

DENOMINATIONAL PRACTICES

The religious culture in America is in shambles right now. Regular reports of sexual abuse, emotional abuse, fraud, and power struggles have become the norm. Much of this can be blamed on the unbiblical way churches have grouped themselves together and appoint one man (or woman) to govern the local church.

- Use a dictionary to define the term “pastor”.
- How do we see denominational churches organized and led in our culture?
- What is the pattern of local church organization and leadership in the New Testament?
- Use a dictionary to define the term “denominational”.
- What is “church autonomy” and how is it different from what we see in denominationalism?
- Use a dictionary to define the term “creed”.
- What is the problem with the “more numbers” approach of many churches?
- According to the New Testament, what are the main functions of the local church?

THE CHURCH AND MONEY

Freewill offerings, bake sales, raffles, tithing – how is the church to raise money for its needs?

- First, we need to consider what needs the church may have for money. Provide scripture:
- Second, we need to consider the commands and approved examples for raising money for these specific needs. Provide scripture:
- Third, we need to consider who can receive the money the church has raised. Provide scripture:
- Does any church in the New Testament ever send money to an institution?
- Are there needs that an individual might meet when the local church cannot?
- Is the local church authorized to buy a building, song books, bible class material, unleavened bread, grape juice, and seats?
- How are these purchases different from a dining room, day care, playground equipment, etc.?
- Do we have to pass a plate? Could we do automatic bank drafts? Can we give on another day than Sunday? How much do we have to give?
- Is giving an act of worship?

PREMILLENNIALISM

Text: Revelation 20:1-10. Much of the Premillennial doctrine(s) is assumed rather than argued and taught in detail. Everyone knows about the rapture and the 1,000 year reign of Christ but very few (including those of the premillennial persuasion) know the ins and outs of this false doctrine.

- Premillennialism has a few foundational points:
 - Jesus did not intend to die when He came to earth to establish the kingdom. What did He set up instead?
 - What is the “rapture”?
 - What is the “tribulation”?
 - What is “Armageddon”?
 - What is the “millennium”?

- Consider these passages and questions against the foundational points of premillennialism:
 - Acts 2:23
 - Daniel 2:44
 - Matthew 16:28
 - What kind of literature is the book of Revelation? How does this impact how we read and interpret it?
 - This implies that Jesus’ death was not planned and that He did not die for our sins. Consider Romans 5:6-11.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

I enter this lesson with a lot of trepidation. ONE LESSON ON THE HOLY SPIRIT? Books have been written on this subject and I'm going to cover all of this in 40-45 minutes?!?!

- Where is the first mention of the Holy Spirit in the Bible?
- What is the Godhead or trinity? What is the relationship between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?
- What is the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2 and 10?
- What is the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38?
- What are the various gifts of the Holy Spirit according to 1 Corinthians 12-14?
- What is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit?
- What are the main works of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament?

MIRACLES TODAY

There are not many in our religious world who believe in modern day miracle workers. About the most we will encounter are those who claim to speak in tongues. For the most part, this is confined to Pentecostals and/or the Church of God.

- What was the point of miracles and signs?

- What does 1 Corinthians 13:8 says about miracles?
 - What is Paul talking about when he mentions that which is “perfect”?

 - Just as faith and hope will eventually pass away, what else will?

- What are some differences between the miracles we see in scripture and supposed miracles today?

- Consider some questions for those who claim to speak in tongues:
 - Do you speak a language known to others in the world?

 - Are your tongues used as a sign to unbelievers?

 - In your assembly, do several speak in tongues at once?

 - In your assembly, do you only speak in tongues with an interpreter?

 - Are your assemblies conducted in an orderly fashion?

SOCIAL ISSUES

In this lesson we will consider a number of different social issues that are directly related to scripture. Some of these are difficult because they are new issues, but some are ancient and the world is still trying to defend them.

- What passages could you use to argue against abortion?
- What passages could you use to argue against homosexuality?
- How would you argue the need for modesty in an increasingly immodest world?
- What about dancing?
- What about gambling?
- What about drinking?
- What about marriage, divorce, and remarriage?
- What are some biblical issues that arise in the transgenderism movement?

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Wednesday: Conversions in Acts



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Wednesdays: Conversions in Acts

Date	Topic	Teacher
Wednesday, April 6	1. Some Applicable Parables	Jonathan
Wednesday, April 13	2. Jesus, Sinners, Tax Collectors, and Gentiles	Jonathan
Wednesday, April 20	3. The Day of Pentecost – Acts 2	Jonathan
Wednesday, April 27	4. The Sermon in the Temple – Acts 3-4	Justin
Wednesday, May 4	5. Philip and the Samaritans – Acts 8	Justin
Wednesday, May 11	6. The Ethiopian Eunuch – Acts 8	Justin
Wednesday, May 18	7. Saul of Tarsus – Acts 9, 22, and 26	Richard
Wednesday, May 25	8. Cornelius – Acts 10-11	Richard
Wednesday, June 1	9. The Church in Antioch – Acts 11:19-26	Richard
Wednesday, June 8	10. Paul's First Missionary Journey – Acts 13-14	John
Wednesday, June 15	11. Lydia and the Philippian Jailor – Acts 16	John
Wednesday, June 22	12. The Thessalonians and Bereans – Acts 17	John
Wednesday, June 29	13. Felix, Festus, and Agrippa – Acts 24-26	Jonathan

**The introduction to this study is on the Sunday side of the Book.*

SOME APPLICABLE PARABLES

- The Parable of the Sower – Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
 - Who is the sower?
 - What is the seed?
 - What is the wayside?
 - What is the rocky ground?
 - What is the thorny ground?
 - What is the good ground?
 - What is the purpose of this parable?
 - What are we to be doing?

- The Parable of the Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, and Lost Son – Luke 15
 - What is the purpose of these parables?
 - Who is the one sheep, coin, and son?
 - Who are the 99 sheep, 9 coins, and older son?
 - What does the shepherd do for the one sheep?
 - What does the woman do for the one coin?
 - What does the father do for the one son?

JESUS, SINNERS, TAX COLLECTORS, AND GENTILES

- Why did Jews hate tax collectors?
- Who are some of the sinners Jesus spends time with?
- What was Jesus doing with these people?
- How did the Scribes and Pharisees treat these people?
- Can you convert a sinner while keeping them at arm's length?
- The Old Testament teaches that impurity was contagious. Not so with Jesus. He could touch the leper and heal him. He could touch the woman with the flow of blood and heal her. Some refer to this as contagious holiness. How does this apply to Jesus spending time with these reprobates?
- What was the problem with how the Pharisees saw these people?
- List some sinners with whom Jesus spent time:

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

ACTS 2

- Who is present on the Day of Pentecost? Where do all these people live?
- What were the purposes of the apostles speaking in tongues?
- What passages does Peter use in his sermon?
- What was the main barrier to overcome in teaching this crowd the gospel? (This is an important question that we will ask every lesson)
- What is the flow of Peter's sermon?
- How were the people "cut to the heart"? How is this important in conversion?
- What did repentance look like for this specific group?
- How many people were saved? How many people were present?
- What happened after they were baptized? Was the instruction and teaching over?

THE SERMON IN THE TEMPLE

ACTS 3-4

- Who did Peter and John encounter at the temple?
- What could the Law do for this man?
- What could Jesus do for this man?
- Peter, again, accuses the Jews of killing the Messiah. And yet, what did the Messiah just do for the man in front of them?
- What is the appropriate response for this group?
- List the various ways Peter identifies Jesus in chapter 3.
- The leaders rejected and killed Jesus, but what did God do?
- By whom else can man be saved?
- What was the main barrier to overcome in teaching this crowd the gospel?

PHILIP AND THE SAMARITANS

ACTS 8

- Who were the Samaritans?
- Why was this area of evangelism important?
- What did the people do when persecuted?
- What signs did Philip do in Samaria?
- Which Philip is discussed in Acts 8? How do we know?
- What did Philip preach? See vv. 5 and 12.
- Why emphasize these things?
- Why is Simon's inclusion in those converted such a surprise?
- Does belief in Christ and baptism immediately end all temptation and old habits? How does Simon help us to understand this?
- What was the main barrier to overcome in teaching this crowd the gospel?

THE ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH

ACTS 8

- Who was the Ethiopian Eunuch?
- Was he a Jew, Gentile, proselyte, or God-fearer?
- What would have kept him from full inclusion in temple worship and Judaism?
- Why didn't the angel of the Lord preach the gospel to the Eunuch?
- How could we begin with Isaiah 53 and teach someone the good news about Jesus Christ?
- How does the good news of Jesus Christ lead to the need to be baptized?
- What do the details of this baptism imply? What does the term "baptism" mean?
- Think through the various things the religious world says we must do to be saved. If these things are true, then why stop the chariot?
- What was the main barrier to overcome in teaching this man the gospel?

SAUL OF TARSUS

ACTS 9, 22, 26

- Who is Saul?
- Where was Saul headed and why?
- Why did God send Ananias to Saul? Why not just send an angel like He sends to Peter in Acts 10?
- Why is Ananias fearful to go to Saul?
- What does Ananias mean when he calls Saul “brother”?
- What does Ananias tell Saul to do?
- What does baptism do?
- Why is this story told 3 times?
- What was the main barrier to overcome in teaching this man the gospel?

CORNELIUS

ACTS 10-11

- Who was Cornelius?
- What good things was Cornelius doing?
- What was missing?
- Why was Peter, specifically, sent to Cornelius?
- Why didn't the angel of God teach Cornelius the gospel?
- What does Cornelius do in preparation for Peter's arrival?
- What is the purpose of the Holy Spirit falling on this crowd?
- What was expected of this group (just like everyone else)?
- What was the main barrier to overcome in teaching this man (and crowd) the gospel?

THE CHURCH IN ANTIOCH

ACTS 11:19-26; 13:1-3

- What did the people do when persecuted?
- Where do many of these people end up?
- Who is Barnabas?
- Where does Barnabas go and why?
- What happened in Antioch first?
- What was happening in Antioch? What had it become?
- Why is an evangelistic culture—like what we see in Antioch—so important?
- How can local churches today be more like the church in Antioch?

PAUL'S FIRST JOURNEY

ACTS 13-14

- Who all goes on this first missionary journey?
- What happened as they tried to teach Sergius Paulus? How did Paul respond?
- What happened with the proconsul?
- What was the main barrier to overcome in teaching this man the gospel?
- Why did John Mark leave? How did Paul feel about this? What happens later with them?
- Where does Paul begin with the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia?
- What happened on the first day in the synagogue?
- What happened the next week?
- What was the main barrier to overcome in teaching this crowd the gospel?
- What was the general reaction of the cities to Paul's teaching?

LYDIA AND THE JAILOR

ACTS 16

- At the beginning of this chapter, what two places does Paul plan to go but is forbidden by the Holy Spirit?
- Who is Lydia?
- The Holy Spirit directs Paul to Lydia and v. 14 says “the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.” Is God playing favorites? What point should we take from this?
- How did Paul and Silas end up in prison?
- What were they doing in prison?
- What did the jailer mean when he asked “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”
- Is Paul’s response in v. 31 the end of Paul’s teaching?
- When did the jailer rejoice “that he had believed in the gospel”? What did he have to do first?
- What is the main barrier to overcome in teaching these individuals the gospel?

THESSALONICA AND BEREIA

ACTS 17

- What was Paul's pattern upon entering a new town?
- What specific points did Paul make about Jesus?
- Why would these points be an issue to Jews?
- Who believed the Gospel?
- How did the majority of Jews respond?
- What do we know about these Thessalonian Christians?
- What did Paul do when he entered Berea?
- What was different with these Jews?
- Who believed the Gospel?
- What is the main barrier to overcome in teaching these crowds the gospel?

FELIX, FESTUS, AND AGRIPPA

ACTS 24-26

- Who were Felix and Drusilla?
- What does Paul preach to them? Why?
- Why is it dangerous to wait for a convenient time?
- Who is Festus?
- Why does Festus bring Agrippa in on the trial?
- Why does Paul use his conversion as a starting place with others?
- At what point in Paul's teaching does Festus accuse Paul of being out of his mind?
- If Agrippa knows the prophets and he honestly compares their teaching with the gospel of Christ, what should be his conclusion?
- What is his response to Paul?
- What is the main barrier to overcome in teaching these men the gospel?