

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

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## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

Mike Morgan

[Streamsofsalvation@gmail.com](mailto:Streamsofsalvation@gmail.com)

[www.streamsofsalvationministry.com](http://www.streamsofsalvationministry.com)

PO Box 621

Council Bluffs, Iowa 51502-0621

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At this point I need to express a very special thanks to all of the people who have contributed to my series of books, both directly and indirectly: First and foremost, His most wondrous of gifts--my wife Janet and the incredible blessings from the Lord as I continue to write this series of books. Next, all of the help and spiritual growth I received from attending and ministering in the Lord's non-instrumental churches: McPherson Church of Christ, Council Bluffs; Redline Church of Christ, Harlan, Iowa and Harlan Church of Christ. Also the instrumental churches: First Christian Church, Council Bluffs, Iowa; my home congregation--East Side Christian Church, Council Bluffs. And finally: my family, Kathleen Kachulas, and many other wonderful friends and brethren, and my nephew David West who offered his professional web design services. I truly appreciate all of their help and encouragement.

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord. For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought no cease to yield fruit.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

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### Statement of Purpose

In mid-nineteen nineties I set out to research what took place when I first decided to obey the Gospel. The interest reaches back to 1978. This is when I first heard the gospel message from a preacher who served in a Council Bluffs, Iowa, Church of Christ – noninstrumental. My wife Janet had quietly and very effectively led me to attend this church and respond to the Lord’s call. Throughout our dating and engagement she consistently modeled a Christian woman, greatly influencing my interest in the Lord. She never stopped.

The minister taught me the basics of salvation and I chose to answer the Lord’s call. From this moment I became increasingly interested in learning what took place and began a systematic study of salvation. As I accumulated more knowledge and research information the thought occurred to me to share what I have learned. Thus my book began to take shape from a rough outline to a manuscript.

Through many years of writing I included other books and ending up with a series of books in various stages of completion. They speak about salvation, sin, the Lord’s work of salvation, the covenant, and an overview book.

The books include the integration of many different types of theology: theology – information about God, Christology – the work of Jesus, pneumatology – what the Holy Spirit is doing, ecclesiatology – about the Lord’s church, anthropology – mankind’s response and accountability to God, soteriology – the process of salvation, and eschatology – concerning the end of time and eternal life in the body of Christ.

This book is the overview. I have organized the chapters to briefly look at many differing aspects of salvation. It has nine chapters which include basic steps of information leading to a greater insight about God, what takes place when responding to His free offer of salvation in Christ, and spiritual confidence.

The parts of each chapter are like stepping stones, one of many crossing a stream of spiritual water. As the reader progresses from one step to another he will begin to grow in a better understanding concerning his present fellowship with Jesus and knowledge of what lies ahead. Once he reaches the other side he is able to look back across the stream and see the wonders of God’s grace. He is better equipped to recognize his participation and partnership in the Lord’s eternal plan.

I sincerely hope this information becomes as useful to the reader as it is for me the writer. May God richly bless your efforts to understand the blessings of salvation which the Lord so lovingly gave to all humanity. I pray God will give you the confidence and faith to witness the wondrous grace of God to the lost and fellow servant’s in the Lord.

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#### Holy Spirit--Prayer Intercessor

Even though a child of God the Father may continually pray to Him through Jesus Christ, it does not mean he has an intimate and true understanding of his heart. He may think he knows, but often he is only fooling himself. His past experiences in sin and its corruption, along with daily confrontations with the lust of his flesh and temptation will often cloud the reality of the true state of his mind. God has given him a new heart, self, and conscience, but the lust of his flesh for sin, old self, and old heart with its memories, work diligently to cloud and corrupt any perception of spiritual need.

However, these influences cannot affect the Holy Spirit. He is continually communicating with the servant's recreated spirit and intimately understands his needs, heart, and true desires. Paul offered insight into this very special blessing of God in *Romans*: "And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" (8:26).

With this intimate knowledge the Spirit is able to pray to God directly on the servant's behalf, communicating his true needs to God the Father. The Spirit is one with Jesus--God, "And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (*Romans* 8:27). Both the Holy Spirit and Jesus are working in and with God's child to intercede on his behalf. Nothing escapes God notice. There is nothing Jesus misses. Thus God is able to personally care for His children in ways inconceivable to the human mind.

#### Questions

No believer fully understands his heart and spiritual needs.

- 1) Do you think you understand everything in your heart?
- 2) Are you able to pray for your true spiritual needs?
- 3) What do you think the Spirit is praying about?

The Spirit intimately understands the personal weaknesses the Lord's servant.  
*Romans* 8:26; *1 Corinthians* 2:16

- 1) How do you know if He is praying for you?

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#### Holy Spirit--Prayer Intercessor

- 2) Does it make a difference to you if whether or not you are able to feel His presence and work in your life?
- 3) Does the knowledge of what the Spirit is doing help motivate you to learn His counsel?
- 4) How is the knowledge of what the Spirit is doing in your life linked to faith?
- 5) How are feelings of what the Spirit is doing in your life linked to faith?
- 6) How do you learn how to serve Jesus according to the Spirit's counsel?

The Spirit is able to pray to God the Father for needs which are very misunderstood.  
Romans 8:26

- 1) Why do you think your heart is so difficult to understand?
- 2) Is there a reason why you should be very careful about listening to your heart's counsel?

The prayers of the Spirit cannot be physically sensed; they are understood to take place by faith in the word of God.  
Romans 8:26

- 1) Are you able to feel the Spirit praying for you?
- 2) How does faith connect with the unseen work of the Spirit?

Both the Spirit and Jesus are working together to intercede, pleading to God the Father on the servant's behalf.  
Romans 8:27

- 1) Why do you think Spirit involvement is so important?
- 2) Are you still inclined to sin even though you are justified and innocent?

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#### Holy Spirit--Prayer Intercessor

3) How do you decrease your inclination to sin? Is it possible to decrease your desire to sin?

Jesus cares for His people in ways which are inconceivable.

1) Can you think of any other ways Jesus cares for you which are often misunderstood?

2) Why is faith so important in your life?

3) Does faith need to fulfill dramatic expectations in order to build confidence in its reality in your life?

4) Why is often unnoticed and subtle faith so important in everyday life?

5) Is your spiritual confidence in the Lord's care dependent upon the outcome of expectations of perceived faith?

6) What happens to your faith when expectations of your perceived faith led decisions fail?

7) How do failed expectations of faith affect your faith?

8) Why are the unseen and unfelt works of the Lord often the most important guides to confident and assured faith in His care for you?

9) How important is Spirit led counsel and prayer to you?

10) Are you willing to express your confidence and faith in the Spirit's counsel and prayers when you make lifestyle decisions?

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#### In Jesus

Unity begins the moment of redemption. In the name of Jesus Christ the servant is spiritually “united with Him in the likeness of His death” (*Romans* 6:5a). He is then “buried with Him” (6:4a). After this he is resurrected with Him “in the likeness of His resurrection” (6:5b). At this point in spiritual time the newly recreated naked babe is “clothed” with Christ (*Galatians* 5:27b). He is also spiritually “circumcised with a circumcision made without hands” by the Holy Spirit (*Colossians* 2:11a).

When Jesus purchases a slave of sin, he is not just another purchased bond-servant among countless others; he becomes one with Christ in spirit. Paul revealed this spiritual fact in his *first* letter to the *Corinthians*, “But the one who joins himself with Christ is one spirit with Him” (6:17). Not only this, he becomes one with all the Lord’s other bond-servants because all are equally united in Christ.

In his letter to the *Romans*, Paul described this unique unity as a living olive tree whose root is Jesus. Its branches are all believers, both natural--Jewish and unnatural--Gentile. All of the branches are one single spiritual organism ending the distinction between Jew and Gentile. All are equal fruit bearing branches. Each is equally sustained by the same root—Jesus.

Speaking about believing Gentiles he revealed, “you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree” (11:24a). The pruning process begins when an unbelieving Gentile--a wild branch, hears the gospel message and chooses to believe and apply his newfound faith in Jesus through obedience to the gospel. It is described as pruning the Gentile from his wild tree--the world and sin, and grafting it into the Lord’s holy tree—His kingdom, to begin his new life. As a result he is one with Christ and with the tree as a whole. He is completely separated from the wild tree and its root of the world and Satan.

Paul also mentioned how the Jewish people are restored to God the Father through Jesus. Many refused to believe in Jesus and their unbelief caused God to prune them off of the tree separating them from the life giving presence of Christ and the Father, “some of the branches were broken off ... they were broken off for their unbelief” (11:17a, 20a). But if any choose to believe in God the Father through Jesus Christ; He promises to graft them back into the tree, “how much more shall these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree” (11:24b).

The Jews severed from the Lord’s tree are piled up in a spiritual brush heap. They along with the unbelieving Gentiles all await judgment for unbelief in Jesus, “And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed” (*Acts* 3:23).

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#### In Jesus

Both groups are grafted into one tree whose life is sustained through its singular root system which is Christ, “it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you” (11:18b).

Paul also spoke of the unique unity between Jew, Gentile, and Jesus in his letter to the *Ephesians*. He revealed: “but now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one ... and might reconcile them both in one body through the cross” (2:13-14, 16a). Concerning this spiritual fact, Paul also noted in his first letter to the *Corinthians*, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, and we were made to drink of one Spirit” (12:13).

With these statements Paul helped bring into focus the unique connection between people in Christ. Jewish and Gentile people do not change their ethnic, racial, geographic, social status, and cultural identity; yet spiritually they are the same. Jesus introduced a spiritual reality completely foreign to both parties. He revolutionized faith in God with the uniqueness of salvation and His unified body of believers.

In his letter to the *Ephesians*, Paul spoke about the restoration experience made available to all of mankind through God’s plan of salvation in Christ Jesus, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all” (4:4-6). Not only is the body of Christ one with itself and Jesus, but also with the Lord’s work of salvation, the Holy Spirit, and God the Father. Every part of the body is intimately connected with the Lord’s identity and purpose for His creation.

In this one statement the Spirit revealed how everything holy is in God. Jesus owns only the servants whom He has purchased the same way, under the same conditions, and covenant stipulations. The singular body of Christ is collectively all individual assembles of believer’s. The Holy Spirit lives in the assembly, “Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you” (1 *Corinthians* 3:16). And He dwells in each individual member of the body as well, “do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you” (6:19a).

The believer directs his belief, faith, and obedience to the Father through one Master, the Lord Jesus who owns them by virtue of both creation and redemption. Even though his work is an individual endeavor to glorify God, he is also working in unison with all of his fellow servants both locally and worldwide to accomplish the Lord’s will on earth and in His kingdom.

Redemption takes place when the slave of sin is immersed in “one baptism”. Within which his recreation with Jesus by the power of the Spirit according to His covenant takes place.

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#### In Jesus

The servant's belief and faith in the unseen work of the Spirit by the authority of one God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, becomes his motivation for continued repentance in order to submit to the Lord's expectations for his ultimate redemption and sanctification. Neither outcome is sealed until physical death; he is free to choose to return to his old master. The new bond-servant of Christ emerges into his new world in Christ, His body of believers, God His Father, and the Holy Spirit. All work together to assure the outcome of life.

Unlike the world, which thrives on its division, the work of Christ is unified in all respects. There is but one body of believers and only they are in Christ Jesus. All of His believers are sealed in the Lord's body by a single Spirit who is one with Jesus and God the Father. The plan of redemption does not offer multitudes of differing ways to reach heaven; it offers only one expectation of faith and hope exclusively through Jesus.

Jesus is the one Lord, the one Master, and the one King. There are no other ways to serve God the Father. Jesus died just once in order to redeem anyone who chooses to desire to serve God the Father through Him. The faith is singular; there are not multiple paths to heaven. There is only one way for redemption to take place--through Jesus according to the guidelines of the faith He established in His new covenant.

There are not multiple reasons for baptism or multiple ways by which it is administered. Belief, faith, confession, repentance, obedience, baptism, and a life of continual committed faith motivated obedience to the will of God through Jesus Christ work together. They assure the believer's finalization of redemption upon death. These are all facets of oneness in God the Father and the servant must serve Jesus in order to serve the Father. All have different functions in the process of salvation but all are one.

Jesus is also unified with His believers in marriage. Paul mentioned this in his letter to the *Ephesians*. In marriage a spiritual unity takes place when a man and woman covenant in marriage. The Spirit inspired Paul to use human marriage as a physical example of the Lord's spiritual marriage with His body of believers, the church--the "members of His body" (5:30b). In marriage individuals are one even as they retain their individuality.

Jesus "is the head of the church ... Savior of the body ... the church is subject to Christ ... Christ also loved the church ... gave Himself up for her that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory ... that she should be holy and blameless ... nourishes and cherishes it ... because we are members of His body" (5:22-30). Jesus and His body of believers, the true church, is a spiritual marriage; just as the prophet Moses stated in a prophetic vision: "the two shall become one flesh" (5:31b).

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#### In Jesus

In one of His final recorded prayers Jesus mentioned the importance of being one with Himself. In doing so He described the complete unity He has with His Father including those who belong to Him, "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me" (*John 17:20-21*).

With this statement Jesus revealed insight about the mystery of restored fellowship with His children. He also revealed how the oneness of His body is a vital part of evangelism to the world:

1) A common undivided love within the body is a witness of His body, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (*John 13:34-35*).

2) The common bond within the body of Christ is a witness of Jesus. This affects both individual congregations and the body as a whole worldwide, "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me" (*John 17:20-21*). The single and most powerful witness the church has in the world is the unique nature of love in a singular body of very diverse individuals. No other physical witness is as powerful as this.

Body unity and evangelism work hand in hand with Christ. Jesus revealed the vast power of His body and its subtle ability to penetrate the darkness of the world when it is witnessed in the human experience by the children of the Lord. With the gospel message and the grace of Christ the children of God witness to the world His mercy in an understandable way. The Lord's body is in itself a fundamental part of witnessing the gospel message.

When the world witnesses the church it sees Jesus in the flesh. The body of Christ is the glory of God on earth. God designed it to glorify Jesus to all of mankind. The church is the Lord's physical presence on earth.

In *Colossians*, Paul described how the body of Christ works on a spiritual level, "the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God" (2:19b). The human body is made up of countless individual parts, each having its own particular work. Together they work as one functioning body. The body of Christ works the same way.

From a physical point of view many may look at the body of Christ and see a sickly diseased entity hardly functioning let alone glorifying God. It is however, far different than what the perceptions of deception lead the world to believe. Even though

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#### In Jesus

the body is made up of imperfect human beings who often loose personal battles with sin, spiritually it is holy, pure, and perfect in God's eyes, they are His children. They are Jesus. And the world often perceives Jesus as weak.

However, the greater the imperfections the greater the witness of why the unity of imperfect human beings exist in the first place – Jesus Christ. And when they do function as one despite their often time radical differences, the uniqueness of their unity is enough to draw attention; God is in control and the body of Christ functions as one because of His grace. The uniqueness of the body is in how it glorifies God in physical weakness.

Body unity and its witness is much like what Paul spoke of in his *second* letter to the *Corinthians*. He asked God for relief from a physical hindrance which he assumed severely affected his ministry. But as is often the case, what one perceives as right in the physical sense often is counterproductive spiritually in Christ. Jesus personally answered Paul's prayer, "and He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness'" (12:9a). After this Paul quickly realized how his physical point of view incorrectly motivated his prayer. He needed to refocus to the Lord's will instead of his, "most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weakness, that the power of Christ may dwell in me" (12:9b).

The power of the body of Christ is found in its apparent weakness, even though the Lord's body is holy and one in the eyes of God the world often perceives it entirely different. However, the power of weakness lies in its ability to glorify Jesus. A strong self sufficient and efficient body may easily be perceived from a worldly point of view as well run human organization – it's strong and able to get things done on its own.

Yet, as is often the case, what is seen is often not the true picture. Perceived strength does not necessarily give God the glory. But if in obvious weakness the body of Christ works together as one to further His kingdom it witnesses an extraordinary work which is obviously Spirit led and glorifies Jesus.

A well functioning body of believers in various degrees of maturity glorifies God. The focus of its witness is Christ, not themselves and what they have accomplished. They realize they are only servants. In which case, a successful assembly of believers may be perceived as weak, but in spiritual reality exceptionally strong in God's eyes.

It is expected for the world to misunderstand the strengths and weaknesses of the church. But sometime the church misunderstands its self in Christ as well. When John wrote about the seven churches in his *Revelation* chapters *two* and *three* he revealed how perceptions of strength and attitude towards Jesus often collide with spiritual reality.

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#### In Jesus

From a spiritual point of view God sees inner perfection expressed through the weakness of sin damaged flesh. Weakness glorifies God in the darkness of the world for its witness is not in its own strength or in the collective strength of the body of believers, but in the strength of God through Jesus Christ. The world may try to copy it but it cannot achieve it on its own. It cannot fool God.

The power of the Lord's church lies in the love and unity of imperfect people serving Jesus, not wealth, status, grandiose buildings, or the perception of a great human endeavor. Weakness glorifies Jesus, not greatness. Love and oneness within the body of Christ is its greatest witness to the world, not strength. Regardless of the size of the congregation, the power of its weakness is what glorifies God.

The broken and damaged people who are the body of Christ are the strength of Christ. Size, wealth, and strength, are never mentioned as witnesses to the world of God's grace within the body of Christ. They are only prized by the world. They do not shift spiritual focus upon Christ. The purpose of the body and its individual members is to glorify Jesus. All of its work falls within this singular focus.

Everything concerning the body of Christ, from the words of the gospel to His return to earth has one purpose in Christ, God the Father, and the Holy Spirit. The body of Christ glorifies God through the witness of restored fellowship. The church is a restored Garden of Eden where death no longer exists and all personally fellowship with God.

In *1 Corinthians* Paul wrote about the uniqueness of the Lord's body as he introduced his letter: "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours" (1:2). These are the people whom God recognizes as belonging exclusively to Him. They are the Lord's body, the Father's assembly, and temples within which the Holy Spirit dwells. God is fellowshiping with His people once again.

#### Questions

Unity with Jesus begins the moment a servant is "united with Him in the likeness of His death", burial, and "resurrection".

Romans 6:4-5

- 1) What do you think "united with Him" means?
- 2) Do you feel like a newly emerged plant?

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#### Questions

##### In Jesus

3) What does this newness mean to you?

4) Do you feel renewed and reborn?

Unity begins when the naked spiritual babe is “clothed with Christ”.  
Galatians 5:27b

1) Do you feel “clothed with Christ”?

2) How do you know you are covered with Jesus?

3) Do you feel less vulnerable?

4) How do you feel as one with Jesus?

Unity begins when the babe is spiritually circumcised from his old flesh and self.  
Colossians 2:11

1) Why do you think it is so important for spiritual circumcision to take place?

2) How does circumcision help unite you to Jesus?

3) Do you feel circumcised?

4) Do you act circumcised?

5) Unity begins the moment you receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit?  
Acts 2:38; Ephesians 1:13-14, 3:14-19

6) How does the indwelling presence of the Spirit affect your attitude of unity with Jesus?

7) If you are unified with Jesus, how are you unified with your brothers and sisters in Christ who worship in different congregations?

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#### Questions

##### In Jesus

Unity with Jesus means the servant is one with Jesus.

1 Corinthians 6:17

- 1) Do you feel one with Jesus?
- 2) How do you know your feelings are correct?
- 3) How do you become one with Jesus?
- 4) What is unity with Jesus?
- 5) Are you sure you are one with Jesus?
- 6) How do you know for sure you are one with Jesus?

Unity with Jesus means all servants are united with each other as one body.

Ephesians 5:23-27, 30

- 1) Is your brother or sister in Christ closer to you than your own relatives in the flesh?
- 2) If your family, relatives, or close friends are not in Christ, where are they?
- 3) Do you act like they are more important than Christ?
- 4) Are your lost loved ones a ministry field for you?
- 5) What happens to your fellowship with Jesus if you cannot get along with your brothers or sisters in Christ?
- 6) Is fellowship with brethren the same as fellowship with Jesus?
- 7) Can you think of any other ways to build a relationship with Jesus other than through His body?
- 8) What is a spiritual relationship with Jesus?

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##### In Jesus

- 9) How important is fellowship amongst brethren?
- 10) How do you fellowship with God?
- 11) Is your unity with the Lord's body sustainable if you refuse to personally fellowship and express one another love?
- 12) Is going to church without personal fellowship possible?
- 13) Is skipping Sunday fellowship of the assembly spiritually healthy?
- 14) What is your responsibility to those who are physically unable to fellowship when the body of Christ is gathered together?
- 15) How do you practice one another love if you do not fellowship?
- 16) Do you think skipping fellowship on purpose encourages disunity among the Lord's brethren in your assembly?
- 17) How is one another love connected to fellowship with one another unity and unity with Jesus?

The Lord's body is a living spiritual organism fed by Jesus.

Romans 11:17, 20, 24, 18b; Colossians 1:18, 2:19b; Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:16

- 1) If each servant is a part of a living body how important is your service to the body?
- 2) Do you think the human body is a physical example of how the body of Christ functions?
- 3) What happens with your body if one part begins to fight another?
- 4) What does your body focus on when one part of your body hurts or is hurt?

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#### Questions

##### In Jesus

- 5) What does your body focus on when any part of your body experiences a positive moment?
- 6) What happens when every part works in harmony with each other?
- 7) If the body is Jesus what part of the body is He?

The Lord's body united in fellowship both Jews and Gentiles.  
Ephesians 2:13-14, 16a; 1 Corinthians 12:13

- 1) How important is fellowship to you?
- 2) How do prejudices affect your fellowship?
- 3) Are there certain people whom you will not fellowship with?
- 4) If you do not like a certain person in the Lord's body what are you saying to Jesus?
- 5) If you ask God for help in your prayers and a brother or sister offers to help, is God answering your prayers?
- 6) How do you react, even if you think their help is unreasonable?
- 7) How do fellowship, mutual respect, and love affect unity?
- 8) How does one another love and unity affect the Lord's witness to the world?
- 9) Does the Lord think you are better, more important, or more human, than any other part of His body of believers?

The unity found within the Lord's body is uniquely like the oneness of God.  
Ephesians 4:4-6

- 1) How do you think the unity of the Lord's body is like the unity of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

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##### In Jesus

- 2) Do you feel as close to God as God is to Himself?
- 3) How do you know you are close to God?
- 4) If you are one with Jesus does this mean you are one with God the Father and the Holy Spirit?

Marriage between a man and wife is a physical likeness of the spiritual marriage between Jesus and His servant's.

Ephesians 5:22-31

- 1) How does marriage offer a physical example of the unity which takes place on a spiritual level?
- 2) How is a man and wife one?
- 3) If you are married do you feel one with your spouse? Why? What influences help or hinder the unity?
- 4) How are the influences which affect marriage unity similar to the influences which affect unity in the Lord's body?

The unity between Jesus and His servant's serves to witness Jesus.

John 17:20-21

- 1) How is your fellowship with Jesus witnessing Jesus?
- 2) How does your fellowship with other brethren witnessing Jesus?
- 3) How does your participation in body unity and one another love affect body unity and its unity with Jesus?
- 4) How does unity with Jesus affect your lifestyle motivations?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### In Jesus

The unity of love within His body serves to witness Jesus.  
John 13:34-35

- 1) How does love help to unify fellowship?
- 2) How does love witness Jesus?
- 3) Do you practice love towards all of your brothers and sisters equally and without prejudice? Do you have a tendency to practice cliquishness?
- 4) How does your practice of one another love affect body unity in your assembly?
- 5) Even though every assembly is autonomous how should they practice one another love and unity in the Lord's universal body?
- 6) If you are not striving to build unity what is your excuse?
- 7) If you do not serve Jesus with love what is your excuse?

Body unity and love are the most powerful witnesses of the Lord within the world.  
John 17:15-21, 13:34-35

- 1) Why do you think love and unity are such important witnesses?
- 2) Does your practice of one another love witness your unity with Jesus?
- 3) Does the unity of your assembly witness the love of God the Father and Jesus to the world?
- 4) How does one another love affect assembly unity?
- 5) How does assembly unity affect your one another love?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### In Jesus

6) What kind of love is God referring to: primarily emotion motivated heartfelt love or unconditional care and heartfelt motivated love which consider the needs of another brother or sister more important than yours?

The body of Christ is Christ, what the body witnesses about Jesus is what the world will perceive about Jesus.

- 1) How does the world see your assembly?
- 2) Does it matter how the world sees you?
- 3) What is more important: the ritual of church or how you choose to live church?
- 4) Is church a Sunday activity or every moment of your life?
- 5) Does your worship reflect who you are in Christ?
- 6) Why is it so important to assemble together like the Christians did in the first century?
- 7) Why is it so important to follow first century examples of assembly?
- 8) Why did the first century Christians find assembly so important?

Unity glorifies Jesus and the power of God in the lives of broken people made perfect as one people.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10; 1 Corinthians 12:14-27, 6:17-20, 2:16-17

- 1) How does the love and unity of a diverse and broken people glorify Jesus to the world?
- 2) How does human weakness glorify God?
- 3) How do you love your fellow broken servant in Christ?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### In Jesus

- 4) Do you recognize the service which Jesus is leading you into?
- 5) Do you prioritize the practice of one another love?
- 6) Are you allowing the Spirit to lead you?
- 7) Do you keep asking for the Spirit to come to you for leadership even though He is already in you waiting for you to accept His leadership?
- 8) Why do you keep asking for the Spirit to come to your assembly when He is already in your assembly?
- 9) What is your asking of the Spirit communicating to God?
- 10) Are you asking yourself how to follow the Spirit's counsel to love one another despite your differences?

The uniqueness of unity in Christ is made apparent by the diversity of strong, weak, and greatly differing body parts.

Isaiah 11:1-10

- 1) What do you think one another love and unity among highly diverse members of an assembly communicates to the world?
- 2) Are there more effective ways for the body of Christ to witness Jesus to the world than one another love and body unity?
- 3) What is more important: taking care of the needs of the world or the immediate assembly and the church as a whole then others?
- 4) What did the first century Christians do to help each other?
- 5) How did their unity witness Jesus?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### A Temple of Saints

Upon redemption every newly born creation in Christ is given the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Even though the physical body is still corrupted in sin, continues to lust for sin, and will die, the Spirit of God fellowships with the recreated spirit and new self.

Paul noted this important spiritual reality in his letter to the *Romans*: “However you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness” (8:9-10). It may seem hard to believe that a holy God is able to live in a body still corrupted with sin. But it’s not the body that God is unified with; it is the newly created spirit and the new self with its clean conscience.

All saints are holy living temples of God. He has restored fellowship with His people, the remnant, thus fulfilling prophecy of restoration with His people. *Ezekiel* foretold of this time when he wrote, “I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant with them. And I will place them and multiply them, and will set My sanctuary in their midst forever. My dwelling place also will be with them; and I will be their God, and they will be My people. And the nations will now that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst” (37:26-28).

Jesus also foretold of the coming Holy Spirit during His last days with His disciples, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him” (*John* 14:23). He referred to any person choosing to love Him enough to serve God the Father through Him rather than himself, sin, and Satan. Jesus also explained how love according to God’s definition concerned ones expression of heart through his commitment to a lifelong service to Him as His servant. Jesus defined love towards God as spiritual service to God the Father through Him.

When a servant of sin chooses to receive God’s grace of redemption through Jesus then and only then will he receive God’s indwelling presence--the Holy Spirit, uniting him with God in holy fellowship. Jesus spoke of this new spiritual reality when He promised His eleven disciples the indwelling presence of the Spirit: “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you” (*John* 14:16-17).

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### A Temple of Saints

Later, after His resurrection He fulfilled the second part of this promise when He personally gave His then eleven apostles the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, "He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (*John 20:22b*). As a result they became the very first building blocks in His spiritual temple.

It is most important for God's children to understand the significance of their new lives in Christ as holy living temples of a holy God. In *1 Corinthians* Paul explained why a righteous lifestyle is so essential. He stated: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body" (6:19-20).

Paul reminded his readers why they have the Spirit living within their bodies; Jesus redeemed them with His death, burial, and resurrection. God considered His people righteous as a result of their response and the Spirit's power to recreate them in Christ. God seals the newly created child by giving him the "gift of the Holy Spirit" (*Acts 2:38b*).

The Lord is trying to communicate to His children their incomprehensible value. When God gives His newly purchased servant the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit He is restoring personal fellowship with His new child of faith. He walks with His children, He talks to them, the Holy Spirit prays to God the Father on their behalf, the Spirit teaches His children the meaning of scripture, and counsels how to live a righteous life. He aids the Lord's servants in countless unknown ways until death brings them face to face with Jesus. God's children are, in a spiritual sense, walking hand in hand with Jesus, one another, the Spirit, and God the Father.

The believer is the fulfillment of the Lord's prophetic look at the coming restoration of the temple. Early in His ministry as He spoke to a woman in Samaria, places of worship came into the conversation. With this Jesus told her about a coming time when worship would no longer be confined to a specific location such as the mountain which she referred to or Jerusalem. He said, Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father. But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth" (*John 4:21, 23a*).

Upon the resurrection of Jesus the hour arrived. The reestablishment of the Lord's temple began with Peter's first sermon during Pentecost. The individual believer's body is a temple. The Lord's body is a temple. The Holy Spirit indwells each believer; therefore God dwells in His temple.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### A Temple of Saints

Every born again servant has received the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.  
Romans 8:9-10, 1 John 5:4-5, 8, 10a

- 1) What does the description: born again mean?
- 2) How does a servant receive the indwelling presence of the Spirit?
- 3) Why is the indwelling presence of the Spirit so important?
- 4) Are you able to feel His presence?

Prophecy foretold of God living in His "sanctuary" amongst His people.  
Ezekiel 37:26-28, 2 Corinthians 6:16b-18

- 1) Is a servant who has received the indwelling presence of the Spirit a living "sanctuary" of God?
- 2) How does God live among His people?
- 3) Are you living your life with the ever present knowledge of being a personal house of God?
- 4) If you need to change or repent, how do you begin?

Jesus foretold how God will live with those who choose to love Him.  
John 14:23

- 1) How do you love God?
- 2) How do you have a relationship with your Master?
- 3) How do you define and practice a relationship with God?
- 4) Are you trying to conform to the expectations of God's standard of righteousness?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### A Temple of Saints

- 5) How do you learn how to live according to the Lord's will?
- 6) How do you learn how to love Jesus?
- 7) Do you love Jesus the same way as you have learned how to love?
- 8) What do love and relationship have to do with being a living temple of God?

Jesus promised the initial fulfillment of His prophecy to His eleven disciples.  
John 14:16-17

- 1) Is any person able to receive the indwelling presence of the Spirit if he is still serving sin?
- 2) What is one of the purposes for which the Spirit would accomplish in the lives and ministry of the Lord's eleven disciples?
- 3) How is the Spirit leading you?

After His resurrection Jesus gave His promised gift to the eleven apostles.  
John 20:22

- 1) How did the eleven apostles receive the indwelling presence of the Spirit?
- 2) Can the Spirit be given in this manner again?

The gift of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is a promise to every servant who is faithful to Jesus.

Galatians 3:14b; Ephesians 1:13-14; John 7:38-39

- 1) Why is faith so important when the indwelling presence of the Spirit is involved?
- 2) Are you able to feel His presence?
- 3) If you could sense His presence would it be by faith?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### A Temple of Saints

4) Do you trust the integrity of God's word enough to never doubt His promise to give the Spirit?

Every servant who submits to baptism in order to experience his rebirth is given the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:38, 2216

1) Why do you think the Spirit is a gift received only after sin is forgiven within the water of baptism?

2) Who is baptized for forgiveness: a servant of sin or a servant of Jesus?

3) What does the "gift of the Holy Spirit" have to do with the forgiveness of sins?

4) When are sins forgiven?

5) How are sins forgiven?

6) Why does the Spirit say sins are forgiven within the water of baptism?

Every servant who is indwelled with the Holy Spirit is a "temple of the Holy Spirit".

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

1) What is your first reaction concerning the spiritual reality of being a personal house of God?

2) Does this mean Christians do not need to assemble and worship together on Sundays?

3) Do you live your life in honor of His presence?

4) Are your thoughts honoring His presence?

5) Has the fact of God dwelling in you lost its significance because of life?

6) If you need to search for the Spirit who is missing: the Spirit or you?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### A Temple of Saints

7) Is there a reason why you ask for the Spirit when He is living in you?

8) Is proof of His presence compatible with faith and hope?

The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit unifies the Lord's child with God the Father in personal fellowship.

John 14:23; Galatians 2:20

1) What does fellowship with God mean to you?

2) How does working with God to fulfill His will on earth feel?

3) Do you ever feel as if you are just wandering and looking for something which you cannot find?

4) How does the Spirit help you find your missing purpose?

All saints are temples of God fulfilling the Lord's prophecy concerning the location of the restored temple of God.

John 4:21

1) Do you feel like a holy temple of God?

2) Do you visualize the temple in physical terms or spiritual?

3) How do you visualize a living temple which involves the entire earth and all of its nations?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Priest's of God through Christ

Every temple of God must have a priest and the human temple of the Holy Spirit is no exception. Every redeemed saint in Christ Jesus is a priest of the Lord's temple and works as one with all of the Lord's body of priests. All serve the one high priest, Jesus Christ. John wrote in his *Revelation*: "to Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood, and He made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father" (1:5b-6a).

In his *first* letter, *Peter* offered more insight into the spiritual blessings and responsibilities Jesus gives to His saints: "You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (2:5). A few verses later he continues to describe the greatness of a child of God: "you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (2:9a).

The spiritual picture Peter paints is of a holy people chosen by God through Jesus Christ. They are individual temples serving together in God's presence, but they are also part of a much larger spiritual structure. All are individual spiritual building blocks set in place by Jesus as He builds His own greater temple. The individual temples of the greater temple of Christ are also the spiritual nation of Israel as well, and a holy race set apart from the world and its ruler. The priests, their temple, and Israel, are all sanctified. Because of their righteousness and holy state His saints are separate from the darkness of the world which is in bondage to sin and the leadership of Satan.

The priests of God the Father are a very special people to Him. Each one of His servants offers spiritual sacrifices to Him through Jesus Christ. Paul described their unique sacrificial system: "present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice to God, which is your spiritual service to God" (*Romans* 12:1). The sacrifices rising up to the throne room of God are heartfelt works of faith offered up every moment by countless saints striving to give glory to the God who saved them from certain spiritual death.

New covenant worship is fundamentally different from any prior way of worshipping God. The nature of spiritual worship helps to fulfill and clarifies prophecy concerning the emergence of a restored king, kingdom, Israel, Jerusalem, temple, priesthood, high priest, and fellowship with God. The church completes everything foreshadowed before the Lord's resurrection.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Priest's of God through Christ

Every saint is a priest in the Lord's temple.

Revelation 1:5b-6a; 1 Peter 2:5, 9a

- 1) Do you feel like a priest?
- 2) What is a priest?
- 3) Does the Lord's priest the same way as many religious priests in the world?

Every priest sacrifices his own self to God.

Romans 12:1

- 1) Are you trying to offer sacrifices?
- 2) How do you offer sacrifices to God?
- 3) How do you intercede for others who are not the Lord's priests?
- 4) Are you able to identify your sacrifices?

The sacrifice offered by each priest imitates the sacrifices of their High Priest – Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 5:1-2

- 1) How is Jesus your model for sacrifice?
- 2) Do you study Jesus in order to understand what and why He did what He did?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### A Very Special Cornerstone in the Temple Of God

The Lord began rebuilding His temple the moment the Spirit resurrected Him from the grave. During His ministry He foretold of building two temple structures. Both required His quickly approaching death, burial, and resurrection:

- 1) The resurrection of His own body, “destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (*John 2:19*).
- 2) Jesus quoted a prophecy written by David: “The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief cornerstone; this came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes” (*Luke 20:17*). The cornerstone describes His position in the new temple of the new spiritual state of Israel within the new spiritual kingdom of Christ. The temple is in the process of being built around Him.

Jesus described Himself as being the main building block upon which every block – the “living stones” of God, receive their structural support (*1 Peter 2:5a*). God is in heaven as well as on earth living in each one of His individual holy temples, all of whom are individual building blocks built around and supported by the main cornerstone.

The temple of God is on earth while at the same time reaching into heaven itself. It’s physical, yet spiritual. It’s on earth and in heaven. For God the Father is sitting in His throne room in heaven with Jesus at His right side, while at the same time God is living in each of His saints in the temple Jesus is building which is His body of saints.

Paul further described the spiritual process of building God’s temple in his letter to the *Ephesians*: “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow-citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom also you are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit” (2:19-22).

Paul tried to describe how God is rebuilding His new spiritual temple. The temple of God will never be a physical building again; it is spiritual just as the new covenant church is spiritual. Its foundation is “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets”, the word which the Spirit inspired them to preach and write (*Ephesians 2:20a*).

The most important structural stone is the resurrected Christ. The structure is in the process of being built. As more slaves of sin are redeemed by Christ the more living building blocks are added to the walls of the temple. The structure is inhabited by the living God. The temple lives for Him, He lives in it, intimately knows every part every part of it, and He is unified with every part, it is the body of Christ – the church.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### A Very Special Cornerstone in the Temple Of God

In *First Corinthians* Paul stated every believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? You have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body” (6:19-20). And the church as a whole is a temple of the Holy Spirit, “Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are” (3:16-17). Both temples are the same even though different. One is the human body while the other is the body of Christ. All of the Lord’s saints are one yet individual parts of the whole.

In *Revelation*, John also revealed insight about this wondrous new temple: “behold the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them” (21:3b). How? It’s spiritual, just as Jesus foretold. All of the saints are living temples of God, living building blocks in the larger temple in which God dwells. Thus the temple includes earth and heaven in one spiritual structure being built by Jesus.

The writer of *Hebrews* noted this about the cornerstone—Jesus: “But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation” (9:11). This is the “true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man” (8:2b). The restored temple of God is not a physical structure nor will it ever be it is spiritual in every way just as Jesus foretold.

Paul added some more insight into the structure in his *second* letter to the *Corinthians* when he quoted from the prophets: “for we are the temple of the living God; ... I will dwell in them ... walk among them ... be their God ... they shall be My people ... separate ... I will be a Father to you ... you shall be sons daughters to Me” (6:16a, 16b, 17a, 18a). Paul described a spiritual structure with these quotations of prophecy written by Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Hosea.

The body of Christ in the new covenant is the fulfillment of these prophetic visions of the restoration of the temple. The saints are all indwelt with the presence of God--the Holy Spirit, and are pictured as building blocks in God’s greater temple dwelling with the Lord in personal fellowship. Heaven is truly reaching to earth.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### The Very Special Cornerstone in the Temple of God

Jesus foretold of rebuilding the temple of His body.

John 2:19

- 1) Why do you think Jesus referred to His body as a temple?
- 2) Did the Spirit live in Jesus?

Jesus foretold of rebuilding the temple of God.

Luke 20:17

- 1) What is the temple of God?
- 2) Did Jesus build it spiritually or is it a future physical dwelling place on earth?
- 3) If Jesus built the temple of God, what does it look like?

Jesus is the cornerstone in the restored and rebuilt spiritual temple of God.

Ephesians 2:19-22

- 1) What is a cornerstone?
- 2) Is Jesus a cornerstone in a spiritual structure?
- 3) If His temple is spiritual then how is it built?
- 4) If He is the cornerstone what are the other stones of the structure?
- 5) How is its foundation built?
- 6) Are you a part of His temple?
- 7) Do you feel like you are an important part of something very big and grand beyond imagination?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### The Very Special Cornerstone in the Temple of God

Jesus foretold of His position in the restored temple of God.

Matthew 21:42

- 1) How did the builders reject the stone?
- 2) Why do you think Jesus referred to Himself as a “chief corner stone”?

Jesus also said the new temple will be located in the Lord’s restored kingdom which will no longer include the physical nation of Israel.

Matthew 21:43; John 4:21-24

- 1) Is the physical state of Israel still in the Lord’s kingdom?
- 2) Who did Jesus refer to if not the physical state of Israel?
- 3) Is there another Israel in which the temple rests?
- 4) Where is the kingdom where the temple rests?
- 5) Who lives in His kingdom?
- 6) Are His kingdom, Israel, Jerusalem, temple, and saints united as one in Christ?
- 7) What is the purpose of His spiritual temple and kingdom?

There is only one way to become a part of the Lord’s temple— through Jesus.

Acts 4:11-12; John 14:6

- 1) Can you worship God and yet be excluded from His temple?
- 2) How do you become a part of the Lord’s temple?
- 3) What is the connection between the gospel, the Holy Spirit, and the temple?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### The Very Special Cornerstone in the Temple of God

4) What do belief, faith, repentance, confession, and baptism have in common with the temple?

The temple is a “spiritual house” for a “holy priesthood”.

1 Peter 2:4-8

1) How is a Christian a temple of the Spirit and part of a greater temple which the Lord is building?

2) What are the construction blocks of the Lord’s new temple?

3) Do you feel you are a part of the Lord’s temple?

4) Do you live life as if you are a part of the Lord’s temple?

5) Does your purpose in life connect to the temple purpose?

The foundation of the temple is the Spirit inspired teachings of the Apostles.

Ephesians 2:20a

1) What is the purpose of a strong foundation?

2) Is the foundation completed?

3) How is the new covenant word of God connected with the foundation?

Every stone in the new temple is a saint.

Ephesians 2:22; 1 Peter 2:5

1) Do you feel like a part of the Lord’s greater temple?

2) What is the Lord’s temple?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### The Very Special Cornerstone in the Temple of God

- 3) If every saint is a building block in the Lord's temple, how does this knowledge affect your attitude towards fellow brothers and sisters?
- 4) How does your practice of love and unity affect the structural integrity of the Lord's temple?
- 5) How hard of rock are you?
- 6) Is your surface smooth, polished and gleaming as the Son?
- 7) What does your surface and interior feel and look like?
- 8) Is the integrity of your stone important to the structure?

Every individual saint is a temple.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

- 1) Are you able to visualize how each stone in the Lord's temple is also a temple?
- 2) How clean do you keep your temple?
- 3) How do you practice righteousness and sacrificial services in your temple?

All of the saints together are the "temple of God".

1 Corinthians 3:16-17

- 1) Who is a saint?
- 2) Are only saints in His temple?
- 3) How is the temple of God manifested on earth?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### The Very Special Cornerstone in the Temple of God

The temple of God is the church – the body of Christ.

Ephesians 5:23-27, 29

- 1) If you are the physical manifestation of the Lord's temple how do you live out your position?
- 2) Do you think the temple is the church?
- 3) How does the church connect with the temple?
- 4) Who is the Lord's church?
- 5) Do you think Satan tries to imitate the Lord's Church with a pseudo version of the Lord's church?
- 6) Who is the world's church?

Just as Jesus foretold during His ministry the temple is entirely spiritual.

Hebrews 9:11, 8:2b; John 4:21-24

- 1) Is the Lord's temple spiritual or physical?

The church is "the temple of the living God" just as prophesied hundreds of years earlier.

2 Corinthians 6:16b-18

- 1) When you assemble together as a body of believers – the church, do you think temple?
- 2) Does knowing who and what you are in Christ make a difference when sharing in the Lord's Supper, expressing one another love, and the pursuit of unity?
- 3) How does the knowledge of being the Lord's temple affect your daily worship with fellow temple stones and builders and interrelationships in the world?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus--High Priest

The temple of God must have a high priest who intercedes to God the Father on behalf of all of the other priests and this is what Jesus does. He is the high priest of His temple--His body of faithful believers, His church. The writer of *Hebrews* revealed: "But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, He entered through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (9:11-12).

God the Father gave this position to Jesus because He offered His human body as a sacrifice for human sin. He will hold this position forever. The *Hebrews* writer also stated: "So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him, 'Thou art My Son, today I have begotten Thee.'" God designated Him "a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek" (5:5-6b). After His ascension God the Father made Him the High priest of His temple. Just like Melchizedek, He is also a king of a kingdom, His throne is located in Jerusalem, and He is the High Priest. But the Lord's kingdom is spiritual. He is a spiritual king. His Israel is spiritual. His Jerusalem is spiritual. His temple is spiritual. His work as High Priest is spiritual. His servants are spiritual.

The writer of *Hebrews* also offered insight into how the temple is on the earth while at the same time in heaven, "we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, not man" (8:1b-2). Jesus the high priest of His body of believers, His church--His temple, is now sitting at His Father's right hand side in heaven. He is the one high priest through whom all of the priests of the temple serve God the Father. But since His temple is made up of the saints, even though His throne is pictured as being in heaven, heaven includes the body of Christ which is physically located on earth. In a spiritual sense all believers are already in heaven.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--High Priest

The sacrifice which Jesus offered is "once for all".

Hebrews 9:12b, 7:27

- 1) Do you think He will need to come again in order to repeat what He has done before?
- 2) What do you think "once for all" means?
- 3) Does "all" mean all or are some people predestined to go to Hell?
- 4) Does "all" include you?
- 5) Does "all" mean the Lord will forgive your sin regardless of intensity?

After His resurrection God His Father made Him the high priest over His people.

Hebrews 5:5-6; Psalms 110:4

- 1) What do you think a high priest does?
- 2) Why is it important to recognize Jesus as your high priest if you are a Christian?

Jesus is both high priest and king "according to the order of Melchizedek".

Hebrews 6:20, 7:1; Genesis 14:18-20

- 3) Does this information help you to understand how God fulfilled His promise through the ages?
- 4) What is Jesus a high priest over?
- 5) What does Jesus rule over?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

#### Jesus--High Priest

Melchizedek reigned as the king of Salem, later known as Jerusalem.

Psalms 76:1-2; Hebrews 7:1

6) Why do you think Salem and Jerusalem are significant in connection with Jesus?

7) How is the Lord's temple, the spiritual state of Israel, Jerusalem, His church, His kingdom, and you His saint, connected?

The Lord's temple is His church, but it also includes heaven and God's throne.

Hebrews 8:1b-2; 2 Corinthians 6:16b

1) How do you feel about experiencing the blessings of heaven as a saint on earth?

2) Have you ever thought about the church as a whole as part of the throne room of God?

3) Does this information change your attitude towards the church?

4) Even though there are countless numbers of congregations of saints known as churches, how do you regard each individual assembly in light of the whole body of Christ? How are they connected together?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus--Prophet who is Above all Prophets

All of the prophets, before and after Jesus returned to heaven, spoke of Jesus and His mission. In *Acts* Luke recorded Peter proclaiming, "But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled" (3:18).

Jesus foretold of His own future and mission as well. Throughout His ministry He spoke many times about His upcoming death and resurrection: "Saying, 'The son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day'" (*Luke* 9:22).

He foretold of Israel's coming judgment because of their unrelenting rejection of their Lord God up to and including His own ministry and life: "Jesus said to them, 'Did you never read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief cornerstone; this came about from the Lord, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and given to a nation producing the fruit of it'" (*Matthew* 21:42-43).

He foretold how the restoration of worship in Jerusalem and the temple would involve the spiritual realm instead of the physical, "Jesus said to her, 'an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father'" (*John* 4:21).

He gave insight about Satan's judgment and the destruction of his house—his worldly dominion: "Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world shall be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself" (*John* 12:31-32).

He spoke about the coming new age when worship would dramatically change from physical to purely spiritual as a result of the changing of the covenant at the time of His death: "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (*John* 4:23-24).

Jesus spoke of a time when God would no longer consider the Jewish people automatically included in His kingdom because of birthright, circumcision, and the covenant given to Moses. Effectively ending Jewish exclusiveness, the theocracy of Israel, and opening the door of salvation to the Gentiles: "Jesus answered and said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'" (*John* 3:3).

He foretold of the coming of the Holy Spirit and His work in an entirely new way of salvation: "Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven'" (*John* 3:5).

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus--Prophet who is Above all Prophets

He foretold of the coming of the Holy Spirit and His indwelling presence in the lives of the faithful. For the first time since Adam and Eves sinned God will personally fellowship with His restored people: "He who believes in Me, as the Scriptures said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke of the Spirit, who those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (*John 7:38-39*).

He spoke of the Spirit's conviction of the world: "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper shall not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment" (*John 16:7-8*).

He foretold of the upcoming work of the Holy Spirit in the new age of the New Covenant which began at Pentecost: "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness of Me" (*John 15:26*).

He foretold of His complete sovereignty over the earth, heaven, hell, and all of the forces of darkness: "And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth'" (*Matthew 28:18*).

Jesus is also the source of all prophecy both before His birth, during His ministry, and after His ascension: "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ" (*Romans 10:17*).

Jesus fulfilled the prophecy concerning the "prophet like Me" written by Moses thousands of years earlier: "Moses said, 'The Lord God shall raise up for you a prophet like me from your brethren; to Him you shall give heed in everything He says to you. And it shall be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people'" (*Acts 3:22-23*).

Everything spoken by Jesus during His ministry originated from His Father in heaven, "My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me" (*John 7:16b*). Through Jesus, God the Father drew a line in the sand warning all of mankind they have only two choices of eternal destiny. One involves eternal life in the presence of God exclusively through Jesus Christ – the prophet, priest, and king, and the other eternal destruction, which is existence outside of the presence of God.

The quote which Luke wrote in Acts originated in Deuteronomy and reads a little differently but with more emphasis: "I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which He shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him" (*18:18-19*).

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus--Prophet who is Above all Prophets

During the Lord's ministry a great judgment took place among the Jewish people. The sole determining factor of faithfulness depended and continues to depend upon recognizing Jesus and worshipping Him as the Son of God. God assures all people of all time He will personally take every person into account for his thoughts, motivation, spiritual decisions, and life.

Everything Jesus taught during His ministry came from His Father in heaven. If anyone refuses to listen to Jesus – the prophet, he is refusing to listen to God His Father. Thus accountability in judgment will be with the one who has made the decision to either listen to or ignore Jesus. The judgment will be righteous because it will be based entirely on the choices and decisions made by the person being judged. And Jesus does indeed have the final say: "On that day when, according to My gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Jesus Christ" (*Romans 2:16*).

#### Questions

Jesus fulfilled every prophecy concerning His life, ministry, death, burial, resurrection, kingdom, and church.

Acts 3:18

1) Have you ever thought about Jesus the prophet?

2) What do His prophecies mean to you?

He described His entire ministry.

Luke 9:22

1) Imagine yourself in this crowd, what would you think after hearing this prophecy?

2) Is this prophecy relevant today?

He described Himself as the rejected cornerstone of His restored temple.

Matthew 21:42

1) Are you able to see this very old prophecy in a new light concerning the temple He is building?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--Prophet who is Above all Prophets

He spoke about Israel's upcoming judgment.

Matthew 21:42-43; Romans 11:26-28

- 1) What happened to Israel when Jesus died?
- 2) What is their place in the Lord's will today?
- 3) Who is the new covenant Israel?

He foretold who would receive His restored kingdom: "a nation producing the fruit of it".

Matthew 21:43b; 1 Peter 2:9a

- 1) What nation is Jesus speaking about?
- 2) What kind of fruit is Jesus expecting?
- 3) Why couldn't the physical nation of Israel produce this fruit?

He revealed how the restored temple will be built; spiritual instead of physical.

John 4:21

- 1) Where did Jesus build His new temple?
- 2) Is it already started or is it something to happen in the future?

He revealed a soon to come judgment of the world.

John 12:31a; Acts 17:30-31

- 1) What judgment happened to the physical nation of Israel?
- 2) What judgment took place in the world?
- 3) Does the judgment still affect people today?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--Prophet who is Above all Prophets

4) What do you think about when it comes to accountability to God the Father through Jesus Christ?

He gave insight about the destruction of Satan.

John 12:31b; Matthew 12:25-29; Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13

- 1) How is Satan destroyed when He is still around?
- 2) What is being plundered from His house?
- 3) What is his house?
- 4) What influence does Satan have in the world today?
- 5) Who is under his authority in his dominion?
- 6) What is he trying to do with Christians?
- 7) How do you fight off his deceptions in your life?

He revealed the beginning point of His new covenant church.

John 12:32; Hebrews 8:13, 9:16-32

- 1) Do you think Jesus will exclude anyone from His body because His Father predetermined his destiny?
- 2) Have you sinned too much for Jesus to save you?
- 3) What is the new covenant church?

He spoke of His resurrection.

John 12:32

- 1) What does His resurrection mean to you?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--Prophet who is Above all Prophets

2) Does His resurrection have anything to do with how you are redeemed?

He offered insight into the dramatic changes in worship style.  
John 4:23-24; Hebrews 10:1-10

1) What are some of the differences between pre-Christian worship and new covenant worship?

2) Which do you prefer?

3) How are sacrifices offered in your life?

4) How do you serve as a priest?

5) Do you feel led by law, the freedom of the Spirit, or maybe a little of both?

He spoke of ending Jewish exclusiveness and Law.  
John 3:3, 4:21; Hebrews 7:11-22; Romans 2:28-29, 4:13-16

1) What happened to the Law of Moses?

2) Does the Law still apply in your Christian life?

3) How does the law of "good and evil" affect your daily life and practice of righteousness?

4) What part does the physical nation of Israel play in the new covenant?

5) What is the spiritual state of Israel in the new covenant?

6) Who are the children of Abraham in the new covenant?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

#### Jesus--Prophet who is Above all Prophets

He revealed how a believer will be allowed into His future kingdom.  
John 3:3, 5; Colossians 1:13-14; Revelation 1:6

- 1) What is being "born again"?
- 2) How is the Spirit connected with being "born again"?
- 3) What is the kingdom belonging to Jesus?
- 4) Is His kingdom now or in the future?  
He revealed to whom, why, and how the Holy Spirit will be given.  
John 7:38-39; Acts 2:38; Ephesians 1:13-14

- 1) To whom is the indwelling presence of the Spirit given?
- 2) How does God give the Spirit?
- 3) What does it mean when a servant is given the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit?

He revealed a second major work by the Holy Spirit, "He will bear witness of Me".  
John 15:26

- 1) Do you think there is a difference between the Spirit's special ministry to help establish the church in the first century and His indwelling presence?
- 2) Why did the Spirit give special gift to first century Christians?
- 3) Did the Spirit ever give gifts to people before their redemption?

He spoke of His absolute authority over all of creation.  
Matthew 28:18

- 1) What does Jesus rule over?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--Prophet who is Above all Prophets

- 2) Does Jesus have authority over you?
- 3) Do you live and think in light of Jesus having authority over your life?

Jesus is the source of Scripture and its prophecies.  
Romans 10:17

- 1) Where do you think Scripture came from?
- 2) If you believe God wrote Scripture do you live it as such?
- 3) Where does faith come from?

Everything spoken by Jesus during His ministry came from His Father.  
John 7:16b

- 1) Why do you think God the Father had such an influence in Jesus' life?
- 2) Do you think God the Father restricted Jesus during His ministry?
- 3) Is Jesus your example of how to exercise faith in God the Father?

Anyone who refuses to listen to Jesus will be "utterly destroyed".  
Acts 3:22-23; Romans 2:16

- 1) Is judgment an idle threat to weak people?
- 2) Do you think Jesus really has the authority and power to back up His word?
- 3) What do you think is the most deadly sin a person can commit?
- 4) Who is the person who listens to Jesus?
- 6) How does a person listen to Jesus according to His will?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus – Mediator

Jesus Christ, the believer's high priest, is now in heaven at the right hand of God the Father. As high priest in His temple which is His body of faithful servant/priests, He serves as a mediator to His Father. In his *first* letter to *Timothy* Paul wrote, "For there is one God and one mediator also between God and men, the man Jesus Christ" (2:5). Jesus is mankind's only representative to God and He is in this position because of the sacrifice of His human body, offered to satisfy the requirement of redemption. In this way He provides a continuing ransom for all of mankind as the new covenant age moves onward through history. As a result of His physical life He is able to mediate on the behalf of God's children since He knows exactly what a person needs from firsthand experience. Jesus is the first human being to have received His resurrected body and He lives forever, He is God. He clearly understands the human experience in its entirety.

Jesus fully understands the many weaknesses people must suffer. He can empathize with those who choose to serve God's will in the hostile environment of the world and the lust which leads to endless temptations. Jesus experienced lust and temptations, the desires of the flesh common to all mankind. He understands what His servants are going through as they encounter their daily battles against sin. He understands the desires of personal lust and a body which is openly hostile against God's standard of righteousness. The writer of *Hebrews* said, "Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted" (2:17-18).

Jesus knows each of His servants on a very intimate level; He lives in His children, because He is one with the Holy Spirit. As a result of this He is able to explain to God the Father why His servant fails and sins. He knows what is in his heart, his mind, what motivates him, and his level of faith. Jesus knows how difficult it is to consistently serve God to ones full potential. He knows His servants will often give in to the constant barrage of temptations hurled their way. As a result of His humanity Jesus is indeed the perfect high priest able to aid His children through His work of mediation with God His Father.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus – Mediator

Paul told Timothy there is but “one mediator ... between God and men, the man Jesus Christ”.

1 Timothy 2:5

- 1) What does a mediator do between two people?
- 2) Why do you think Jesus needs to mediate for a Christian?
- 3) What is Jesus mediating about?

Because Jesus is a man He is able to understand the needs and feelings of His people.  
Hebrews 2:17, 4:15

- 1) Do you think Jesus understands what you are going through in life?
- 2) Are you willing to put your life in His care?
- 3) How is Jesus able to help you change your life in order to better serve Him?

Jesus knows His people because He lives within them, in of their temples.  
John 14:23

- 1) How does Jesus live in you?
- 2) Is there a connection between Jesus and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit?
- 3) Do you live and think with the knowledge of Jesus living within your body?
- 4) Do you ever think about how much Jesus knows about what is in your heart and mind?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus – Advocate

As the high priest of His chosen people Jesus also serves as a legal advocate. Jesus knows His servants will sin, some on purpose, some without purpose, others out of spiritual ignorance, and a small number simply from apathy and neglect to do the right thing. But regardless of reason why, Jesus is assuring His children they have legal counsel before God the Father. In his *first* letter *John* wrote: “My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (2:1).

Jesus personally pleads on the behalf of each one of His servants when they fail and sin. He intimately knows about the sin and what motivated it to take place.

Jesus is able to approach His Father, who is sitting right next to Him in His temple which is also His body of believers. He is having a Father-Son conversation on behalf of each one of His children who are also His body. The sin is forgiven without record and God the Father determines the necessary discipline if any. Even though the grace of God and the bloody sacrifice of Christ will cover all sin before and after redemption, the Lord’s servant is not immune to God’s discipline.

#### Questions

Jesus personally pleads to God the Father on the behalf of any servant who sins.  
1 John 2:1, 1:8-10, 3:6-10

- 1) Are you a sinner?
- 2) Does God account sin to you causing guilt?
- 3) How does a servant who is free from sin accountability accountable to sin?
- 4) Are you free from the guilt of sin?
- 5) How does repentance connect to sin?
- 6) How does the Spirit help you live closer to the Lord’s standard of righteousness?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus – Advocate

When sin is forgiven for the Lord's servant, no record exists.

1 John 2:12, 3:5-6, 9

- 1) Do you think all of your sins are forgiven?
- 2) What is confessing your sins?
- 3) Do you think revealing your personal weaknesses to trustworthy fellow servants is a good thing to do?
- 4) What do you think Jesus is asking of the Father on your behalf?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus – Intercessor

Another blessing of the work of Jesus, the high priest of His church, is His ability to personally intercede to God on the behalf of His children. In a way very similar to a mediator and advocate Jesus intercedes on the behalf of His servants to His Father as well.

As high priest, Jesus approaches His Father on the behalf of the individual priests in His temple, His church. If anyone or anything goes so far as to try and accuse any servant belonging to Jesus, Jesus will personally intervene on his behalf. In *Romans* Paul wrote, “Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us” (8:33-34).

The believer in Christ is in a very special spiritual position. His Lord is his Savior and his Savior is God’s Son. Only God has the authority to save or to destroy and He gave all of this authority to Jesus His Son who is the Lord of His children. Jesus is not interceding on the behalf of a separated servant of sin whose lord is Satan. He is speaking to God His Father on the behalf of His child as a result of having redeemed him from the bondage of sin. A child adopted by Jesus at the cost of His life. As a result God considers His children the “elect” among men. God’s children are a very special chosen people.

Only God has the authority to condemn, and He has given this right to Jesus Christ. Who has any power to condemn His children? The answer is obviously no one.

Paul also wrote this very reassuring verse: “who shall separate us from the love of Christ” (*Romans* 8:35). The answer is simple, no one or any spiritual force is powerful enough to force a child of God away from His loving embrace. Only one force is an exception--freedom of choice. A bond-servant may choose to return to his old slave master, sin, thus separating himself from His Lord and Savior. God doesn’t like it, but He is not going to interfere with anyone’s basic freedom of choosing who he wants to serve: Jesus, obedience, and righteousness, or Satan and sin.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus – Intercessor

If anyone or anything brings a charge against one of the Lord's children, Jesus personally pleads on his behalf to God the Father.

Romans 8:33-34

- 1) What does an intercessor do between two parties?
- 2) What do you think Jesus is pleading about?

Only God is able to justify His servant.

Romans 8:33

- 3) What does it mean for God to consider you justified?
- 4) Why can't someone or something make a spiritual charge against you?
- 5) How does justification protect you spiritually?

Only Jesus has the authority to judge.

Romans 8:34, 2:16

- 1) Why does Jesus have this authority?
- 2) What does this authority to judge mean to you?
- 3) Are Christians Judged?

No one is able to forcibly separate a child of God from Jesus.

Romans 3:35

- 1) Can the Lord's servant return to serving sin and Satan?
- 2) Is it possible for a Christian to lose his salvation?
- 3) How does a servant's freedom of choice connect with eternal assurance?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus – Intercessor

The only way for a child of God to separate from the Lord's love is by his own choice to return to serving sin.

Hebrews 6:4-6

1) Who is allowed by God to separate from the Lord's body?

Jesus is not speaking to God the Father on the behalf of just any servant but only His servant and child of God the Father.

1) Does the Lord's spiritual protection extend to those who are serving sin and Satan?

2) What type of spiritual protection does Jesus offer to those who are serving sin and Satan?

3) Do you think the Lord's spiritual protection is too exclusive and narrow minded?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus – Master

Even though a believer is a freed child of God he is still a bond-servant of Christ. Paul wrote in his letter to the *Romans*: “do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves of obedience, you are slaves of the one who you obey” (6:16a). The moment a person sins and acquires a debt to sin he becomes a slave of sin. He also is given the grace of freely choosing to return to God the Father through righteousness in Christ. Either way he will never cease from being a slave until his death.

God is telling everyone there are only two spiritual options to choose, each one with a destiny of its own. He is either a servant of sin or a bond-servant of Christ. That’s it; there are no alternate ways to serve God. For as long as a person is a slave of sin he is a servant of sin and lives under the authority of Satan, “the dominion of Satan” (*Acts* 26:18a). If he is purchased by Jesus he is “delivered ... from the domain of darkness, and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (*Colossians* 1:13).

All who are willing to express their confession of belief in the deity of Jesus by faithfully responding to His will fulfill redemptive repentance. They will experience rebirth when the Holy Spirit unites their spirit with the death, burial, and resurrection with Christ in baptism resulting in freedom--“freed from sin” (*Romans* 6:18a) becoming slaves “of obedience” (6:16b) and “of righteousness” (6:18b).

Once redeemed by Jesus the servant becomes one with “a people for God’s own possession” (*1 Peter* 2:9a). And as a result he serves God the Father through Jesus. His ownership has changed from sin and Satan to Jesus. In his *first* letter *Peter* encouraged his brethren to carefully consider their freedom in Christ by not abusing it with sin. He wrote, “Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bond-slaves of God” (2:16). He highlighted the spiritual reality of newfound freedom in Christ and the need to constantly keep in mind their new identity--servants of Christ. Their status had changed from a slave in bondage to a bond-servant of God through Jesus their new Master and Lord. They may be free, but they are still servants.

Paul also mentioned the importance of lifestyle changes as a bond-servant of God through his Lord Jesus Christ. He explained why as well. The reason is fairly simple, “he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work” (*2 Timothy* 2:21b). The “good work” is in service to Jesus Christ his new Master – his Lord. This is what all servants of sin agree to upon purchase by Jesus; they will honor the new covenant in Christ and allow the Spirit to lead him through life in order to give God glory. Thus, to honor service to Jesus is to honor the confession of Jesus as Lord and Master.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus – Master

There are no gray areas which encourage compromise. One's spiritual master is either sin and Satan or the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a major reason why the counsel of the Holy Spirit is so important for the servant. His counsel through Scripture is the servant's new covenant how-to-instruction manual.

#### Questions

All servants of Christ are His slaves.

Romans 6:16a

- 1) Are you a spiritual servant?
- 2) How do you make the change from serving sin to serving righteousness and obedience?
- 3) What is involved in the change?
- 4) Do you see yourself as the Lord's servant?
- 5) Do you act like the Lord's servant?
- 6) Do you think like the Lord's servant?

Everyone is born innocent, but once they choose to transgress a law sin becomes their master. From then on they serve sin within the domain of Satan as slaves of sin.

John 8:34; Romans 7:7-13; Acts 26:18

- 1) How did you become a spiritual servant?
- 2) Did you become a servant of sin the moment of your birth?
- 3) Do you think anyone knows when they commit their first sin?
- 4) How many sins does it take to become a servant of sin?
- 5) Who serves sin and Satan?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus – Master

6) How do you know the difference between the Lord's servant and a servant of sin?

When a slave of sin chooses to repent in order to serve Jesus He is freed from sin, law, and Satan's dominion.

John 8:36; Romans 7:1-4; Galatians 3:10-14; James 2:10; Colossians 1:13-14

- 1) How are you freed from sin?
- 2) How are you freed from accountability to law?
- 3) How are you freed from Satan's dominion?
- 4) Do you feel free?
- 5) Do you live free?
- 6) Do you think free?

Every servant who chooses to confess Jesus as Lord and Master is separated from sin by death and becomes a slave "of obedience" and "of righteousness".

Romans 6:18a, 6:16b; 6:18b

- 1) How can you be free while remaining the Lord's servant?
- 2) What does freedom mean to you?
- 3) What does serving obedience mean to you?
- 4) What does serving righteousness mean to you?
- 5) How do you serve righteousness if you are already righteous?
- 6) Does serving righteousness mean you are progressively becoming more holy?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus – Master

7) How do you learn how to serve God the Father according to His standard of righteousness?

All servants of the Lord are God's "possession".

1 Peter 2:9a

1) Does being a "possession" bother you?

2) What does "possession" mean to you?

All bond-slaves of God are free.

1 Peter 2:16

1) How does freedom connect with your position as a servant, slave, and possession of God?

2) Do you feel free?

3) How do you express your freedom as a "possession"?

All bond-slaves must learn their new life, its lifestyle, and responsibilities to their new Master.

1 Peter 2:16; 2 Timothy 2:21b

1) Why is it so important to learn how to serve Jesus?

2) Is serving Jesus very different from serving sin and Satan?

3) How do you learn how to serve Jesus?

4) How does the Holy Spirit help you?

5) How does freedom help you?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus – Master

- 6) What is the difference between learning spiritual milk and meat?
- 7) Are you making an effort to relearn life?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus--Shepherd

Jesus tenderly and carefully cares for each one of His lambs belonging to His flock, personally protecting each and every individual. Everything His lambs need, both physically and spiritually is determined and provided by the Shepherd. In his gospel letter *John* quoted Jesus: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand" (10:27-29).

God may consider people as similar to sheep simply because of their utter lack of spiritual understanding. Without a spiritual Shepherd they are lost, clueless of what to do next. *Peter* stated in his *first* letter: "For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls" (2:25). If not for the willing sacrifice of Jesus Christ the entire human race would simply walk over the cliff of sin and tumble into the certain death of the curse of sin. No one even knows what is happening until it is too late.

*Peter* reminded his brethren of the great cost of their spiritual ignorance: "And He Himself bore our sins on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed" (2:24). Humanities perceived remedy for a worthy life through rationalizations of being, wisdom, philosophy, created religion and idolatry, tradition, ritual, and moral behavior, is rooted in the spiritual ignorance Jesus exposed. He alone has provided the only alternative – "grace and truth" (*John* 1:14b). *John* quoted Jesus, stating: "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep ... if anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture ... I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep" (10:7b, 9a, 11).

Jesus exposed sin and all of the associated spiritual and physical destruction left in its path. He let His people know their perceptions of religion did not come from God's will but their own will and imaginations, developed from their experiences in a corrupted world. He came to enlighten the spiritually ignorant sheep of the world. There is only one way to avoid the danger of aimlessly walking about spiritually naked and without any protection, unmindful of the certain death patiently waiting. He will always be the one and only Shepherd.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--Shepherd

Jesus only considers those who “hear My voice” as His lambs.

John 10:27a

- 1) Do you believe Jesus hears those who are serving sin and Satan?
- 2) What type of prayers by the lost gain God’s attention?
- 3) Does knowledge of how attentive God is to His children help your prayer life?

His lambs are the only servant’s He knows.

John 10:27a

- 1) What about those who do not serve Him?
- 2) What is required of a servant to serve Jesus?
- 3) Does Jesus know you?

His lambs are those who choose to “follow” Him.

John 10:27b

- 1) Do you follow Jesus?
- 2) Are you straying out of the fold?
- 3) How much of your servant life do you focus on serving your Master?
- 4) In what proportion does serving your own self contrast with serving Jesus?
- 5) When do you focus on serving Jesus?
- 6) How much of your life do you focus on serving Jesus?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--Shepherd

Jesus gives “eternal life” only to His lambs.

John 10:28a

- 1) What is your attitude towards eternal assurance?
- 2) Do you feel the necessity to constantly reassure your faith?
- 3) Why do you need to reassure your faith?
- 4) What builds assurance and confidence?

Jesus gives absolute protection and assurance to His lambs.

John 10:28, 15:18-19, 17:14-20

- 1) Do you feel protected by Jesus even though life is terrible?
- 2) Is spiritual protection and assurance connected with physical life?
- 3) What does the world think of you as a servant of Christ?
- 4) If your closest friends and relatives are not Christian, how do they feel about your faith in Jesus?
- 5) Do you feel assured when everything seems to go wrong in life?
- 6) What is assurance based upon?
- 7) Can you trust your feelings concerning God’s care for you?

Jesus and God the Father “are one”; assurance is assured by God the Father as well.

John 10:29-30; Romans 8:26-39

- 1) How assured do you feel right now?
- 2) How confident do you feel your faith is right now?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--Shepherd

- 3) Do you think finding ways to test your faith will help build assurance and confidence in God's protection?
- 4) Are you one with Jesus?
- 5) If you are one with Jesus are you one with God the Father?
- 6) Do you feel united with God or is it all by faith in His the integrity of His Word?
- 7) What are some ways to grow in assured and confident faith?

Jesus has always referred to people as sheep mainly because of their spiritual ignorance and inability to protect themselves from spiritual harm.

1 Peter 2:25a

- 1) Have you ever considered your spiritual intelligence is on the level of sheep?
- 2) What do you think God is trying to communicate to people?
- 3) Do you see people who are willing to follow other sheep as they quietly fall off the steep cliff of life into darkness and death?
- 4) How do you teach spiritual insight to a sheep person?

The Lord's sheep "have returned" which means they once belonged to Him before they chose to stray out of His fold.

1 Peter 2:25b

- 1) Does returned mean once being with Jesus and then experiencing a separation?
- 2) Do you believe in babies being sinful from the moment of birth?
- 3) Why do you believe in this doctrine?
- 4) How does a young child become accountable to law in order to sin?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

#### Jesus--Shepherd

- 5) Does a child need to become accountable to law in order to sin?
- 6) What causes separation?
- 7) How does a separated person return to Jesus?

As the Shepherd Jesus is the "guardian of your souls".

1 Peter 2:25b

- 1) Does the Lord's promise offer assurance?
- 2) How do you feel about His promise during physical distress?
- 3) How does an easy and comfortable life affect your confidence and assurance?

Jesus had to allow the sacrifice of his human body in order to enable His sheep to return to Him.

1 Peter 2:24

- 1) Why do you think Jesus had to die?
- 2) What does Jesus require of sheep in order to protect them?
- 3) Is returning to Jesus a onetime event or service to a different Master?

Jesus laid "down His life for His sheep".

John 10:7b, 9a, 11

- 1) What does His death mean to you right now?
- 2) Is His death as important to you now as it did the moment of your choice to return to Him?
- 3) How does His death impact the small moments of your life?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus--Husband

One may think a physical master or shepherd is a loving caretaker, yet he must consider his own wellbeing as well. His interests are divided. Not so with Jesus. The loving care of the believers by the Lord Jesus is so intimate He is married to His people. Jesus is the husband of His bride—the church. His body is the church; His faithful believers are His bride forever. He is one with His bride.

Marriage takes place when a man and a woman agree to covenant with God. The covenant begins a sacred union in which the two become one entity. *Mark* recorded Jesus reminding His people about the sacred nature of the covenant of marriage: “But from the beginning of creation, God made from them male and female. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh; consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh” (10:6-8). The same sacred union holds true spiritually between a believer in Christ and His position in Christ. In his *first* letter to the *Corinthians*, Paul wrote: “Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? ... But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him” (6:14, 15a, 17).

The spiritual oneness all believers have in Christ is their marriage covenant with Christ. In his letter to the *Ephesians* Paul said the unity of marriage will always remain a bit of a mystery. However, a closer look at the unification of a saint with Christ and his fellow saints God reveals insight: “Because we are members of His body. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church” (5:30-32).

Marriage between a man and a woman is a physical and living revelation of many of the spiritual realities taking place within the Lord’s body. Spiritually the body of Christ is one with Him even though both are separate entities. When God instituted marriage He designed it to physically illustrate the spiritual fellowship which He desires for His restored people. Sin may have caused a marriage separation between God and His people but Jesus restored the marriage, “In that day I will also make a covenant for them ... and I will betroth you to Me forever ... then you will know Me ... and I will say to those who were not My people, ‘You are My people!’ and they will say, ‘Thou art my God!’ (Hosea 2:18a, 19a, 20b, 23b).

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

#### Jesus--Husband

In marriage a man and woman are spiritually connected by covenant as “one flesh”.  
Mark 10:6-8; Genesis 2:24

- 1) What do you think Jesus meant when He said two distinctly different people merge into one entity?
- 2) What do you think about the spiritual side of the covenant of marriage?
- 3) How does physical marriage mirror spiritual marriage in the church?
- 4) Is the covenant of marriage important to God?

Marriage is a physical and spiritual example of what take place when a servant is connected by covenant with Jesus.

- 1) How does a covenant affect your service to Jesus?
- 2) Is the Lord’s covenant of marriage important to you?
- 3) Do you understand His covenant of marriage?
- 4) What are His vows for the marriage covenant? What are yours?
- 5) Why do you think Jesus created a new covenant to follow instead of simply saying all salvation is by the freedom of grace without conditions?
- 6) Why doesn’t God just allow people to live with Him without any formal covenant?
- 7) Do you think God is discerning about who chooses to covenant with Him?
- 8) What is a covenant?
- 9) Why is a covenant important?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--Husband

In Christ when the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is received the servant becomes "one spirit with Him".

1 Corinthians 6:17

- 1) Do you feel united as one with Jesus?
- 2) How do you determine what your relationship with Jesus means? By what standard are you measuring your relationship?
- 3) What is a relationship with Jesus? Is it a feeling of heart, or is it more?
- 4) Can you describe your relationship to Jesus?
- 5) Is your marriage relationship with Jesus guided by His covenant of marriage?

Every servant is a member of Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:15a

- 1) How do you know if you are partnered with God the Father?
- 2) What is fellowship?
- 3) Is fellowship with God the same as a relationship?
- 4) Why do you think God uses the word fellowship to describe your relationship with Him?
- 5) Do you feel as if you are a functioning part of the Lord's spiritual body?
- 6) What is His body?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--Husband

Jesus uses the covenant of marriage to physically illustrate His union with His saints.  
Ephesians 5:30-32

- 1) What kind of covenant did you agree to obey when you became one with Jesus?
- 2) When you covenanted with Jesus in marriage does this mean you covenanted as one bride – His entire body of saints?
- 3) How long will the covenant last?
- 4) Can you default the covenant with adultery causing a divorce?
- 5) According to Scripture how can you default your covenant to serve God the Father through Jesus Christ?

The natural hierarchy of spiritual authority is included in marriage, “Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ”.  
1 Corinthians 11:3

- 1) Is Jesus your “head”?
- 2) What is more important in your life: your self and its desires or the ways of righteousness and obedience to Jesus?
- 3) Do you agree with God about His spiritual hierarchy?
- 4) How would you describe your part in the Lord’s marriage – independent, wage earner, leader, apathetic, ect?

Speaking about His bride – the church, Jesus “is the head of the church”.  
Ephesians 5:22-23

- 1) What does “head” mean to you?
- 2) What is the Lord’s church?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--Husband

- 3) Why is understanding the nature of His church important?
- 4) Is the church the same as His body?
- 5) What is Jesus trying to communicate about His authority?
- 6) What is Jesus trying to communicate about interrelationships among His bride, one another love, and unity?

The church "is subject to Christ" in the marriage.  
Ephesians 5:24a

- 1) Who do you serve?
- 2) Try to explain the meaning of Lord and Master?
- 3) If Jesus is your Master than what are you?
- 4) Even though you are a holy married son of God, are you still a servant?
- 5) What is the basic responsibility of a servant?
- 6) When do you serve Jesus?
- 7) Is Sunday the only time you are willing to serve Jesus?
- 8) How do you balance serving Jesus and living in the world?
- 9) Do you ever find yourself compromising your commitment to serve Jesus?
- 10) When you see your Master coming do you try to hide?
- 11) When you see your Master coming do you suddenly begin to do your work for Him?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--Husband

- 12) How does a Christian compromise his service to Jesus?
- 13) How does a Christian keep from compromising his covenant promise to Jesus?
- 14) How does the world influence your service to Jesus?
- 15) How does the normalcy of life distract your service?
- 16) How does your service to Jesus affect your normal way of life?

Jesus deeply loves His bride.

Ephesians 5:25b

- 1) How does Jesus love His body of believers?
- 2) How does Jesus define love?
- 3) How does Jesus expect his bride to express her love to Him?
- 4) What is sacrificial love?
- 5) By what standard are you measuring your sacrificial love?
- 6) Are you practicing love towards Jesus?
- 7) How do you love spiritually?
- 8) How are one another love, relationships, and fellowship with Jesus and His body connected in your life?

Jesus sets His bride apart from sin and the world.

Ephesians 5:26a; 2 Corinthians 6:16b-18

- 1) How does Jesus set you apart from sin?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--Husband

- 2) Why does Jesus want you to separate yourself from the influence of the world?
- 3) How does Jesus set you apart from the world?
- 4) Are you trying your best to keep yourself separated from the spiritual influences of the world?
- 5) How does the world affect your faith?
- 6) How do you remain separated from the world when so many important things take place within its environment?

Jesus presented His bride to Himself by having “cleansed her”, making her “holy and blameless”.

Ephesians 5:26-27

- 1) What does Jesus mean when He spoke of cleansing?
- 2) What is holiness?
- 3) Are you holy?
- 4) Do you act like you are holy?
- 5) Do you feel holy?
- 6) Can you sin and still remain holy before God?
- 7) How does holiness set you apart from the world?
- 8) Why are you so different?
- 9) Why do you think holiness is often a fragile state of being?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

#### Jesus--Husband

The prophet Hosea spoke of the Lord's marriage union many hundreds of years before His birth:

- 1) The marriage will only involve those who choose to covenant with God.
- 2) The marriage will last forever.
- 3) His bride will "know Him".
- 4) His bride will include both Jewish and Gentile people.
- 6) His bride will be "My people".
- 7) His bride will declare, "'Thou art my God'".

Hosea 2:18a, 19a, 20b, 23b

- 1) What is the covenant you agreed to with Jesus?
- 2) What does forever mean to you?
- 3) What do you think "know" means?
- 4) Do you "know" Jesus?
- 5) Who is (are) His bride?
- 6) Who does the Lord's bride belong to?
- 7) How do you declare "thou art my God" in your life?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus – King

Jesus is King; He never lost His authority and rule over His kingdom even though His people twice rejected Him. First, when they desired to live like their heathen neighbors choosing a physical king rather than God their creator. Second, after most of the leadership desired the retention of their perceived power and received support from the common people. Many of whom unquestioningly followed their leadership, sending Jesus to His death on a Roman cross. His death, burial, and resurrection restored His rightful position as King. He is the king over those committing their worship to God the Father through Him. He is also king over all of His creation, both spiritual and physical, “King of kings and Lord of lords” (*Revelation 19:16*).

In his gospel letter, *John* quoted Jesus answering a question asked by Pilate: “Pilate therefore said to Him, ‘So you are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness of the truth’” (*18:37*). Pilate most likely didn’t understand what Jesus said. But the Lord professed a most profound truth; He identified Himself as the rejected King. His life, ministry, God the Father, and the Spirit, witnessed the spiritual reality of His true identity--the King of Israel.

When the chosen people rejected their spiritual king, they could not reject the fact Jesus remained their king. He ruled His kingdom before His birth, He entered the world a king, He lived life as a king, He died a king, and the Spirit resurrected him a king. There is simply no greater king than Jesus other than in the imaginations of mankind. One’s rejection of Jesus cannot diminish the fact: He is the King.

He is a King of a spiritual kingdom as always, but now His Kingdom only includes those who worship God the Father through Himself. Israel began with Him as their king but they soon rejected Him in order to conform to many of the contemporary standards of the world and refused to worship God their creator according to His will. Because of their unrelenting unfaithfulness Jesus removed the physical nation of Israel from His kingdom: “Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it” (*Matthew 21:43*). After His resurrection He gave His kingdom to His chosen faithful believers: “He has made us to be a kingdom, priest to His God and Father” (*Revelation 1:6a*). His kingdom and believers are one in Christ the King.

The “us” are those whom He has “released ... from our sins by His blood” (*Revelation 1:5b*). And “those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful” (*Revelation 17:14b*). His kingdom and His throne are exclusively spiritual and only those who are spiritually serving God the Father through Him serve within His kingdom. *John* quoted Jesus clearly stating: “My kingdom is not of this world” (*18:36a*).

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus – King

Upon the resurrection of Jesus a new spiritual age and covenant began to take effect, ending the covenant given to Moses, “He has made the first obsolete ... is ready to disappear” (*Hebrews* 8:13). The physical nation of Israel is no longer within His kingdom even though the Jewish people are still blessed on behalf of the fathers of Israel, “From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but from the standpoint of God’s choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers” (*Romans* 11:28).

Not only is Jesus King of His spiritual kingdom, He is King over the entire earth. God His Father has given Him complete authority over the entire creation, both seen and unseen, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (*Matthew* 28:18b). Even though Satan is allowed to rule over those who serve him and sin in the world, “the dominion of Satan” he is only able to do what Jesus allows (*Acts* 26:18a). Heaven is under His authority as well as Hell and ultimately “the lake of fire” (*Revelation* 20:14b). The world belongs to Jesus and He governs the nations, Satan, the world, and the universe. He determines future blessings and judgments, “Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth” (*Revelation* 1:5a).

#### Questions

Jesus is King – He has complete authority over His creation.  
*Matthew* 28:18b

- 1) Do you think this means everything?
- 2) What do you think authority means?
- 3) Does Jesus have authority over you?
- 4) Do you practice your life in light of your Lord’s authority?

Jesus is Lord – He is the one true Master to serve.

- 1) Are you a spiritual servant?
- 2) Who are you presently serving?
- 3) How do you balance service to Jesus while living in the world?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

#### Jesus – King

- 4) If Jesus is your Master how are you serving Him?
- 5) If Jesus is your Master when do you serve Him?
- 6) How often should you serve Jesus?

Jesus is “King of kings and Lord of lords.

Revelation 19:16

- 1) What does Jesus reign over?
- 2) Does His authority as King reach into the lost world?
- 3) Who does Jesus reign over?

Jesus needed to come to enter into His creation in order to witness the truth about the identity Israel’s rejected king.

John 18:37; 1 Samuel 8:7

- 1) Who do you think Israel rejected as king?
- 3) Who is your king?
- 4) Do you ever find yourself repeating some of the same patterns of rebellion against King Jesus as Israel did?
- 5) What does the Lord’s witness mean to you?
- 6) Does His witness help you to understand Jesus and His work with Israel?
- 7) What does a servant do in relation to his king?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

#### Jesus – King

Jesus has complete authority over Satan, his dominion, servants of sin, Hell, and “the lake of fire”.

Revelation 19:16; Matthew 28:18b; Acts 26:18a; Revelation 1:5a, 20:14b

- 1) What kind of authority do you think Jesus asserts over the eternal destiny of Hell?
- 2) Do you think Jesus has complete control over those who choose to rebel against His righteousness?

Jesus has complete authority over Heaven.

- 1) When you enter into heaven will Jesus still be your king?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus – His Israel

For many hundreds of years the kingdom of God included the physical nation of Israel. But after continual rejection and spiritual adultery, God chose to give His kingdom to another people – the holy saints in Christ. A people governed by a new and very different covenant through Christ when they accept His offer of redemption. The writer of *Hebrews* quoted a prophecy written by Jeremiah, “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah ... I will put My laws into their minds ... I will be their God, and they shall be My people ... all shall know Me ... I will remember their sins no more” (8:8-12). He concluded his quote with this observation: “When he said, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete” (8:13a).

The Israel of the new covenant is not the Israel of the old. The Israel of the new covenant is united with one purpose, to spiritually serve God the Father exclusively through Jesus Christ. Jeremiah foretold: “I will be their God,” which Jesus fulfilled and witnessed: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me” (*John* 14:6).

In *Acts* Peter wrote: “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey Him” (5:30-32). Peter’s Spirit inspired insight included the following facts:

- 1) God is granting repentance to the people who are Israel only through Jesus Christ.
- 2) Only the people of Israel are receiving repentance.
- 3) Only the people of Israel are receiving the forgiveness of sins.
- 4) Those who are Israel are considered repentant because they have had their sins forgiven and considered by God as obedient to their faith in Christ Jesus.
- 5) The people who are Israel are not only sinless, but also blessed with the gift of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.
- 6) Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the prophets, and the apostles are witnesses to the truth of Peter’s statement. Even though Israel may exist as a physical nation and is blessed by God on account of the fathers of Israel, the restored Israel of the new covenant is no longer a physical nation. The Lord’s covenanted Israel is a spiritual nation with a spiritual capital in a spiritual kingdom governed by a spiritual King--Jesus Christ, according to His new covenant. It is the Israel of promise, the restored Promised Land.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

#### Jesus – His Israel

The kingdom which Jesus rules is spiritual, it will never be physical.  
Hebrews 1:8; John 18:36; Luke 17:20b-21

1) Why do you think the Lord's kingdom will never be in His physical realm?

Every servant who chooses to serve Jesus is transferred from Satan's dominion to His kingdom.  
Colossians 1:13-14; Acts 26:18

1) What is Satan's dominion?

2) What is the Lord's kingdom?

3) Does Jesus have authority over Satan's dominion?

4) Who do unrepentant sinners serve?

The old covenant given to Moses ended when Jesus died and with it the theocracy and inclusion of the physical nation of Israel in the new covenant unless they chose to repent.  
Hebrews 8:7-13, 10:4-9:16-17; Romans 11

1) Why do you think God severed fellowship with the physical nation of Israel?

2) Will the physical state of Israel ever become the Lord's Israel?

3) Is the physical nation of Israel a nation of saints in Christ?

Even though the physical nation of Israel is not included in the new covenant kingdom it is still "beloved for the sake of the fathers".  
Romans 11:28

1) Why do you think God still loves His nation Israel?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--His Kingdom

2) Is the physical state of Israel saved by Jesus?

The Israel which Jesus rules within His kingdom is His new covenant church, His body of faithful saints.

Matthew 21:43; Revelation 1:6a; Isaiah 56:1-8; Jeremiah 31:1-15, 27-34; Acts 5:29-32, 28:20b; Romans 9:6-33, 11:25-33; Galatians 6:15-16; Hebrews 8:7-13; revelation 21:1-14, 22-27, 22:3-6

1) What is the difference between the physical nation of Israel and the spiritual nation of Israel?

2) Is there a difference between the two states?

3) How is the Lord's church connected to Israel?

4) Are you a part of His church or body of saints?

##### Jesus--His Kingdom

5) Are all saints citizens of Israel?

6) Is Jesus king of His spiritual state of Israel right now?

7) What is the spiritual state of Israel?

His kingdom is His body of "the called and chosen and faithful.

Matthew 9:35, 10:7, 12:28, 16:28, 21:43, 26:26-29; John 18:37-37; Revelation 1:5b; Colossians 1:13-14; 2 Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 1:8, 12:22-24, 28; 2 Peter 1:10-11; Revelation 5:9-10, 13

1) Is the Lord's kingdom right now?

2) Is the spiritual state of Israel within His kingdom?

3) Is the physical state of Israel in His kingdom?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus--His Kingdom

- 4) Are all saints in His kingdom?
- 5) How does Jesus manifest His kingdom on earth?

His kingdom and throne are spiritual.  
John 18:36a

- 1) Will the Lord's kingdom ever be in the physical creation?
- 2) If you are physical how are you living in a spiritual kingdom?

The Lord's servant's – His body the church, is His kingdom.  
Revelation 1:6

- 1) Who do the Lord's servants serve?
- 2) How does Jesus identify His servants?
- 3) Have you ever considered yourself as part of the Lord's body?
- 4) Are you a part of His church?
- 5) Are you a citizen of His kingdom?
- 6) Are you a citizen of His spiritual state of Israel?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus – His Israel

For many hundreds of years the kingdom of God included the physical nation of Israel. But after continual rejection and spiritual adultery, God chose to give His kingdom to another people – the holy saints in Christ. A people governed by a new and very different covenant through Christ when they accept His offer of redemption. The writer of *Hebrews* quoted a prophecy written by Jeremiah, “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord when I will effect a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah ... I will put My laws into their minds ... I will be their God, and they shall be My people ... all shall know Me ... I will remember their sins no more” (8:8-12). He concluded his quote with this observation: “When he said, ‘A new covenant,’ He has made the first obsolete” (8:13a).

The Israel of the new covenant is not the Israel of the old. The Israel of the new covenant is united with one purpose, to spiritually serve God the Father exclusively through Jesus Christ. Jeremiah foretold: “I will be their God,” which Jesus fulfilled and witnessed: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me” (*John* 14:6).

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- 3) Only the people of Israel are receiving the forgiveness of sins.
- 4) Those who are Israel are considered repentant because they have had their sins forgiven and considered by God as obedient to their faith in Christ Jesus.
- 5) The people who are Israel are not only sinless, but also blessed with the gift of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.
- 6) Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the prophets, and the apostles are witnesses to the truth of Peter’s statement. Even though Israel may exist as a physical nation and is blessed by God on account of the fathers of Israel, the restored Israel of the new covenant is no longer a physical nation. The Lord’s covenanted Israel is a spiritual nation with a spiritual capital in a spiritual kingdom governed by a spiritual King--Jesus Christ, according to His new covenant. It is the Israel of promise, the restored Promised Land.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus – His Israel

The new covenant is specifically for the spiritual nation of Israel in the Lord's spiritual kingdom.

Hebrews 8:8-13

- 1) How do you think the new covenant is connected to the Lord's Israel?
- 2) Are you covenanted to Jesus?
- 3) What is a covenant?
- 4) As the Lord's servant what does the covenant agreement you made with Jesus mean to you?
- 5) Do you consider yourself as a citizen of the Lord's Israel?

Jeremiah foretold of the spiritual restoration of Israel many hundreds of years before its fulfillment by Jesus.

Jeremiah 31:31-34, 32:37-40, 33:6-8, 14-18

- 1) Do you think Jeremiah spoke of a restored physical state of Israel or a newly created spiritual nation of saints?
- 2) If Jeremiah spoke of a newly created spiritual Israel and you are a citizen of this new nation, how do you envision your spiritual state of being?

Jesus noted the very exclusive nature of His new kingdom and Israel.

John 14:6

- 1) Does the Lord's Israel include anyone who chooses any other gospel or religion?
- 2) Does Jesus restrict citizenship to His nation strictly to His saints?
- 3) If someone goes to church does this mean he is a citizen of the Lord's Israel?
- 4) If someone calls Jesus Lord does this mean he belongs to Him?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

#### Jesus – His Israel

The new nation of Israel is clearly identified by its citizens, those who have received “forgiveness of sins” and are thus repentant.

Acts 5:30-32

- 1) Who are the Lord’s forgiven?
- 2) Are only the forgiven allowed entrance into His kingdom and nation of Israel?
- 3) How is a servant of sin forgiven?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus – His Jerusalem

All nations have a capitol city where the government is located and the kingdom and nation Jesus rules over is no exception. Just as the restored nation of Israel is spiritual, so is Jerusalem. This is where God dwells. The Spirit inspired the writer of *Hebrews* to assure his readers: “you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven ... and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant” (12:22, 23a, 24a).

The author is spiritually connecting “Mount Zion” which is Jerusalem with the “church of the first-born”, the new covenant, and salvation in Christ Jesus. Other connections are mentioned in *Revelation*: John “saw” the unity of the “holy city, New Jerusalem” and the “bride adorned for her husband” --the church.

He also revealed the new location of the new spiritual temple of God; God will “dwell among” His people and the church of Jesus Christ – His temple, “shall be His people” (21:2, 3b). Remember what Paul said in his *first* letter to the *Corinthians*: Each individual believer is a temple as well as the church as a whole, “your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit” and “you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you” (6:19a, 3:16b).

Later in his *second* letter to the *Corinthians* he quoted prophecy confirming the believer’s restored fellowship with God and its connection with His restored temple, “For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, ‘I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,’ says the Lord Almighty” (6:16b, 18)

Everything is one in Christ, the temple is Christ, God the Father and the Holy Spirit are one with Jesus; all are one even though manifested as three. Jerusalem is one with Christ. The spiritual nation of Israel is one with Christ. The church is one with Christ. Every faithful believer is one with Christ. All are in each other as one, yet all are manifested with different identities. In the new covenant kingdom of the Lord there will never be a stranger who is not a citizen living in His new Jerusalem.

In his *Revelation* John saw this very thing taking place within the spiritual realities of the Lord’s spiritual realm and kingdom, “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He shall dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be among them’” (21:1-3).

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Jesus – His Jerusalem

The Lord's new covenant kingdom, Israel, and Jerusalem are spiritual realities in the present. They are manifested physically as the body of Christ – His church.

Hebrews 12:22-23

- 1) Who is the Lord's church?
- 2) Are you a part of the Lord's body of believers?
- 3) Are you able to envision being a part of New Jerusalem?
- 4) Does this spiritual reality change in any way how you consider your position in life?
- 5) In the restored spiritual "New Jerusalem" God will dwell with His people in His holy temple – His people, His church.  
Revelation 21:2, 36
- 6) Is Jesus speaking only of the time when Christians are assembled or all Christians at all times and circumstances?
- 7) Does God's internal presence change your worldview in any way?
- 8) How does God's personal presence affect your daily life choices and decisions?
- 9) Do you live with the presence of God in your daily lifestyle?
- 10) Do your relationships: marriage, dating, friends, work associates, etcetera, reflect the closeness of God's presence?
- 11) When a non-Christian witnesses your life and words do they see "New Jerusalem" and all it represents?

Each individual Christian is a temple and the church as a whole is a temple of God.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 3:16

- 1) Does knowing God is personally in your presence affect you spiritually?
- 2) Does His presence motivate you to engage your faith?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Eight: With God

#### Questions

##### Jesus – His Jerusalem

3) Do you act like God is living in your body?

Through Isaiah and Hosea, God foretold of the restoration of His temple and personal presence amongst His people.

2 Corinthians 6:16-18

1) Do you believe the prophets?

2) When the prophets spoke of a restored idyllic nation, what do you think they spoke about?

3) What do you think about your personal connection with the Lord's new covenant Israel, New Jerusalem, and God's temple?

Jesus connects His restored Jerusalem with His bride and God's personal presence amongst His people.

Revelation 21:1-3

1) Is church important in your life?

2) What does church mean to you?

3) Does the connection between the church and "New Jerusalem" change your feelings towards the church in any way?