

- c. **Establishing Congregations vs. Establishing New Religious Organizations:** It is crucial to differentiate between establishing a new congregation and founding a new religious organization. Initially, Jesus established His church on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-47). He was adding the saved to this church daily (Acts 2:47). At that time, there was only one congregation – in Jerusalem. However, as the gospel spread throughout Judea, Samaria, and beyond, new congregations were established. These were not new religious organizations or denominations but simply new congregations within the same church. New congregations established in various locations:
- 1) **Antioch:** A significant center for early Christianity, where believers were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). The church in Antioch played a crucial role in sending out Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journeys (Acts 13:1-3).
 - 2) **Philippi:** The church established by Paul and Silas during their second missionary journey (Acts 16:12-40). Notable events include the conversion of Lydia and the Philippian jailer.
 - 3) **Thessalonica:** Paul and Silas preached in the synagogue, leading to the establishment of a church (Acts 17:1-4).
 - 4) **Berea:** Known for its noble-minded believers who examined the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:10-12).
 - 5) **Athens:** While not a church per se, Paul preached at the Areopagus, leading to some converts who likely formed the nucleus of a church (Acts 17:22-34).
 - 6) **Corinth:** Paul established a church here during his second missionary journey and stayed for 18 months (Acts 18:1-11).
 - 7) **Ephesus:** Paul spent significant time here, and the church became a major center for early Christianity (Acts 19:1-41).
 - 8) **Caesarea:** Mentioned as a location where Philip the evangelist lived, and where Paul stayed with him (Acts 21:8-9).
 - 9) **Rome:** While Acts ends with Paul in Rome under house arrest, he was able to meet with the local Christians (Acts 28:15-31).

Conclusion:

This section aims to demonstrate that Jesus intended to establish one church, which He did on the Day of Pentecost (A.D. 33). As a result of the gospel's spread, many new congregations were established throughout the world. It is important to understand that these churches were not new religious organizations or new denominations but simply new congregations of Christians. These foundational facts should be a point of agreement for all believers.

2. How Many Beliefs Does The Bible Teach?

In a world with thousands of religious organizations, each often holding distinct and sometimes contradictory doctrines supposedly based on the Bible, it is easy to question whether the Bible itself is clear and understandable. However, this diversity does not imply that the Bible teaches conflicting doctrines. The Bible consistently emphasizes the concept of *one* faith or unified system of belief. Key New Testament passages affirm that there is *one* body of doctrine that believers are called to uphold and for which they are to contend. Furthermore, scripture assures us that God's will is accessible and comprehensible, highlighting that the faith has been clearly revealed to and through the apostles and prophets. This section will explore these scriptural affirmations and address the perceived contradictions.

- a. Although many religious organizations share similar beliefs, each often has its own distinct doctrines, supposedly based on the Bible. This diversity can give the impression that the Bible teaches contradictory doctrines and is incomprehensible. But is this really the case?
- b. Several New Testament verses emphasize the concept of there being *one* faith, or a unified system of belief or body of doctrine. Here are some key passages:
 - 1) **There Is Only One Faith Or System Of Belief:** “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, **one faith**, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:4-6).

- 2) **There Is Only One Faith That Was Delivered To The Saints:** “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for **the faith** which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3).
- 3) **The Spirit Warned That Some Would Depart From The Faith:** “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from **the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils” (1 Timothy 4:1).
- 4) **Christians Must Strive Together For The Faith:** “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for **the faith** of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).



- c. Consider this: if the Bible were truly too difficult to understand, as some claim, then the responsibility for the resulting religious confusion would lie with God Himself. However, it is unreasonable to attribute such confusion to God, who desires clear and effective communication with humanity (1 Corinthians 14:33). Who would genuinely want to place such blame on God?

Conclusion:

Despite the myriad of religious organizations and their varying doctrines, the Bible remains consistent in teaching a unified system of belief, often referred to as “one faith.” Key scriptural passages affirm that there is one cohesive body of doctrine, clearly revealed through the apostles and prophets, and intended to be understood by all believers. This unified message underscores that the perceived contradictions among different denominations are not a result of the Bible's teachings but rather interpretations and human traditions. God's will is accessible and comprehensible, inviting all believers to adhere to the singular faith delivered to the saints, ensuring unity in doctrine and practice.

3. Can The Bible Be Understood?

Despite the proliferation of religious organizations with varying doctrines, the Bible assures us that it can be understood. Paul emphasizes this in his letters, explaining that the mystery of Christ has been revealed and can be comprehended by readers (Ephesians 3:3-4; 5:17). The very instructions to “contend for the faith,” “stand fast in the faith,” and adhere to “sound doctrine” imply that God’s word is clear and accessible (Jude 1:3; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Timothy 1:10). It is unreasonable to believe that God would reveal His will only to make it incomprehensible. Instead, the Scriptures are designed to be understood by all believers, ensuring that the core message of the faith is accessible and comprehensible (Ephesians 3:1-5; 2 Peter 3:14-16).

- a. **The Bible Can Be Understood:** Paul, writing to the Ephesians, said, “How that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)” (Ephesians 3:3-4). He later wrote, “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17).
- b. **The Importance Of Understanding:** If the Holy Spirit knew His revealed word could not be understood, then it would be pointless and even nonsensical to insist that we “contend for the faith” (Jude 1:3), “stand fast in the faith” (1 Corinthians 16:13), “striving together for the faith” (Philippians 1:27), “continue in the faith” (Colossians 1:23). Other terms like “sound doctrine” would be meaningless (1 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1). Furthermore, if one could not discern the faith, then how could one “depart from the faith” (1 Timothy 4:1). These instructions and concepts assume that the faith is understandable and accessible to all believers.
- c. **Is God The Author Of Confusion?** It would be unreasonable to suppose that God would reveal **the faith** only to make it too difficult to understand. In fact, Paul clarifies this, saying, “For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation He made known unto me the mystery (as I wrote afore in few words, **whereby, when ye read, ye may understand** my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit...” (Ephesians 3:1-5). While not everything is easy to understand, as Peter acknowledges that Paul wrote some things that are “hard to understand” (2 Peter 3:14-16), the core message of the faith is intended to be accessible and comprehensible.

Conclusion:

There are thousands of different religious organizations, each with their own distinct and often contradictory doctrines, despite some common beliefs. To accuse God of revealing His word but making it too difficult to understand is to question His wisdom and intention to communicate clearly and effectively with humanity. The Bible teaches that there is **one faith**, or system of belief, that has been once delivered to the saints (**Jude 1:3**). Moreover, it assures us that we can read and understand God's will (**Ephesians 3:1-5; 5:17**).

The Three Main Takeaways From This First Part Of The Lesson:

1. **Jesus Promised To Build One Church:** Jesus declared His intent to establish a single, unified church, as evidenced by His words in Matthew 16:18. This is reinforced by New Testament verses that emphasize the singular nature of the church as one body under Christ.
2. **The Bible Teaches One Faith:** Despite the existence of numerous religious organizations with varying doctrines, the Bible clearly teaches the concept of one faith or unified system of belief. Verses such as Ephesians 4:4-6 and Jude 1:3 underscore that there is a single, cohesive body of doctrine delivered to the saints.
3. **God's Will Is Understandable:** The Bible assures us that God's revelation is meant to be understood. Paul's writings in Ephesians 3:1-5 highlight that the mystery of Christ has been revealed and is accessible to all believers. While some teachings may be challenging, the core message is intended to be clear and comprehensible.

Conclusion Of Part 1 – The Question Of Truth In A Sea Of Religious Confusion

In this first part of the lesson, we explored the complex landscape of "Christianity", marked by the existence of thousands of denominations, each claiming to adhere to biblical truth. This proliferation of differing doctrines can lead to confusion and doubt about the possibility of knowing absolute truth. However, the Bible provides clarity on this issue.

Jesus promised to build one church, emphasizing its singularity in Matthew 16:18. The New Testament reiterates this concept through verses like Ephesians 4:4-6, underscoring that there is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. Despite the multitude of religious organizations, the Bible teaches that there is only one true faith.

Moreover, the Bible assures us that God's word is understandable. Passages such as Ephesians 3:3-4 and 5:17 emphasize that the mystery of Christ has been revealed and can be comprehended by believers. Instructions to "contend for the faith" and "stand fast in the faith" further indicate that God's message is meant to be clear and accessible to all.

Despite the confusion caused by the numerous denominations, the Bible offers a path to truth that is unified and understandable. By seeking unity among believers, evaluating doctrines against Scripture, and promoting biblical literacy, we can navigate this sea of religious confusion and find the truth as revealed in God's word.

Applications:

1. **Seek Unity In Christ's Church:** Reflect on the biblical teaching that Jesus intended to establish a single, unified church. In your personal Christian life and interactions with those who belong to a denomination, strive to promote unity based on the scriptures rather than division. Focus on common beliefs and core doctrines that align with the teachings of the New Testament, and work towards exposing error through respectful dialogue and a shared commitment to biblical truth.
2. **Evaluate Doctrines Against Scripture:** When encountering various doctrines and teachings within different denominations, use the Bible as your ultimate authority and guide. Study passages like Ephesians 4:4-6 and Colossians 1:18 to understand the concept of *one* faith and *one* body. Compare teachings and practices you encounter with what is clearly outlined in Scripture, and be discerning about which doctrines align with the unified message of the Bible.



- 3. Promote Biblical Literacy And Understanding:** Encourage yourself and others to engage deeply with the Bible to counteract confusion and misinformation. Participate in or organize Bible study groups that focus on understanding the core message of the faith as presented in the New Testament. Emphasize the importance of passages like Acts 17:11, where the Bereans were commended for diligently examining the Scriptures daily. By fostering a culture of biblical literacy, you can help others see that the Bible is accessible and comprehensible, and that it provides a clear foundation for faith and practice.

Questions:

1. Why do many people question whether there is such a thing as absolute truth in Christianity?
2. How many Christian denominations are estimated to exist globally, according to the Center for the Study of Global Christianity?
3. What did Jesus promise regarding the establishment of His church in Matthew 16:18?
4. How does the New Testament emphasize the singularity of the church?
5. What is the difference between establishing new congregations and founding new religious organizations?
6. Can you name three locations where new congregations of the early church were established?
7. According to Ephesians 4:4-6, how many faiths and baptisms are there?
8. Why is it important to understand that new congregations in the early church were not new denominations?
9. What role did the church in Antioch play in early Christianity?
10. What is the main goal of Part 1 of this lesson?

PART 2 - Identifying And Understanding Christ's Church And Teachings

Introduction:

1. There can be only one!
 - a. One Church Established By Christ: Despite the fact that there are literally thousands of religious organisations that identify themselves as Christian, we know that there is, in fact, only **one church**. Jesus Himself said, “I will build My Church” (Matthew 16:18).
 - b. One Faith Revealed In Scripture: The multitude of religious organizations has led to a plethora of conflicting doctrines, yet the Bible clearly reveals and affirms that there is only **one faith**. Paul wrote, “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Ephesians 4:4-5). This underscores the unity and consistency of the true Christian faith as intended by God.
 - c. The Challenge Of Conflicting Doctrines: The existence of thousands of religious organizations teaching conflicting and contradictory doctrines can lead people to believe that the Bible is impossible to understand and that “truth is relative.” However, if the Bible truly is God’s inspired word, as stated in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, then there is only **one correct interpretation and understanding**. The confusion does not lie in the Bible itself but in the human tendency to misinterpret and distort its teachings. The Bible’s divine inspiration guarantees that it communicates a consistent and singular truth, accessible to those who diligently seek to understand it.
2. Many may agree that there is only one church, one faith, and that the Bible can be read and understood. However, some might say, “This is all very well, but you have not told us which church is Christ’s church, and you have not said what doctrines are true and false!” This is a crucial question and one that requires careful examination of the Scriptures.
3. Objectives for this lesson: In this part of the lesson, our goal is to help the reader determine three key things:
 - a. Identifying The Lord’s Church: Understanding the distinguishing characteristics of the church that Jesus established.
 - b. Identifying The One Faith: Recognizing the singular body of doctrine, the one faith, as taught in the Bible.
 - c. Properly Interpreting The Bible: Learning effective methods for interpreting and understanding the Bible to ensure accurate comprehension of its teachings.

Main Body:

1. Finding Christ’s Church

Finding Christ’s church can be a challenging endeavor amid the vast array of religious institutions and denominations. Many people mistakenly believe that Christ’s church is either the Catholic Church or one of the thousands of Protestant denominations, and some even consider various cults. However, to accurately identify Christ’s church, one must turn to the Scriptures. The establishment of the Lord’s church on the Day of Pentecost, around A.D. 33, is a pivotal event documented in Acts 2. By carefully examining this chapter, we can gain a clear understanding of the true nature and identity of Christ’s church.

- a. Many people mistakenly believe that Christ’s church is either the Catholic Church or one of the thousands of Protestant denominations. Some even think it might be one of the various cults that exist.
- b. The true place to find Christ’s church is in the Scriptures. The establishment of the Lord’s church on the Day of Pentecost around A.D. 33 is undisputed and documented in Acts 2. Therefore, to identify Christ’s church, we must carefully examine this pivotal chapter:

1) The Day Of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4):

- ☞ The apostles were gathered together.
- ☞ The Holy Spirit descended on them, manifested as tongues of fire.
- ☞ They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages.

2) **The Multitude's Reaction (Acts 2:5-13):**

- ☞ Devout Jews from every nation were in Jerusalem for Pentecost.
- ☞ They were amazed to hear the apostles speaking in their native languages.
- ☞ Some were perplexed, while others mocked, accusing the apostles of being drunk.

3) **Peter's Sermon (Acts 2:14-36):**

- ☞ Peter stood up with the eleven and addressed the crowd.
- ☞ He explained that the apostles were not drunk but filled with the Holy Spirit, as prophesied by Joel.
- ☞ He proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth, His miracles, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension.
- ☞ Peter declared that Jesus, whom they crucified, is both Lord and Christ.

4) **The Response To Peter's Sermon (Acts 2:37-41):**

- ☞ Those who believed were deeply moved and asked, "What shall we do?"
- ☞ Peter instructed these believers to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sins.
- ☞ About three thousand people accepted his message and were baptized.

5) **The Early Church (Acts 2:42-47):**

- ☞ The new believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers.
- ☞ The apostles performed signs and wonders, and all the believers were together, sharing everything in common.
- ☞ They sold their possessions and distributed to anyone in need.
- ☞ They met daily in the temple courts and homes, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.
- ☞ The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

c. Becoming a Christian:

- 1) In this chapter, we witness the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to build His church (**Matthew 16:18**). Peter preached the first gospel sermon to the many thousands of Jews gathered in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. After hearing the gospel, which included the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, those who believed asked, "What must we do?" (**Acts 2:37**). Peter did not say, "Well, now that you believe you are saved," nor did he instruct them to say the sinner's prayer. Instead, he told them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ *for* the forgiveness of your sins..." (**Acts 2:38**).
- 2) Having believed, repented, and been baptized for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38**), these individuals were saved and added to Christ's church by the Lord Himself. This addition continues daily: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church *daily* such as should be saved" (**Acts 2:47**). This process aligns with Jesus' directive in the Great Commission: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (**Mark 16:15-16**).
- 3) Where to meet and worship: The Lord adds the saved to His church, not to a denomination (**Acts 2:47**). Someone might ask, "If I am baptized and added to Christ's church by the Lord Himself, with what group should I meet? Should I join a Baptist group, a Methodist group, or another denomination?" If you have been baptized for the remission of sins and added to the Lord's church, you should assemble with others who have undergone the same process. The Christians who meet here at King's Cross have all been baptized for the remission of sins and have been added to Christ's church. We are not members of the Catholic Church, a denomination, or a cult; we are simply Christians. You, too, can be a Christian only!

Conclusion:

The search for Christ's church leads us back to the foundational events described in Acts 2. Here, we witness the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to build His church, marked by the preaching of Peter, the repentance and baptism of believers, and the daily addition of the saved to the church by the Lord Himself. Understanding that the true church is not found in denominational affiliations but in adherence to the teachings and practices outlined in the Scriptures, Christians are called to meet and worship with others who have been similarly baptized for the remission of sins and added to the Lord's church. This approach ensures that we align ourselves with the original, undivided body of Christ, as intended from the beginning.

2. Finding The True Teachings Of Christ

In a world filled with a multitude of religious organizations and denominations, each claiming to base their doctrines on the Bible, it can be challenging to discern the true teachings of Christ. The diversity and often contradictory nature of these teachings suggest that not all claims can be accurate. This section will explore the necessity of personal Bible study to uncover the genuine teachings of Christ, beyond the potentially misleading claims of various religious leaders.

- a. We have already observed that amidst the vast array of religious organizations and denominations worldwide, there exists a multitude of differing and often contradictory doctrines. Each organization typically claims that its teachings are based on the Bible. However, since these teachings frequently contradict each other, it is evident that not all of these claims can be true.
- b. If someone were to ask a religious leader from any organization, "Which of all the teachings of the many churches are true?" It would hardly be surprising if they replied, "The doctrines we teach are true." This illustrates that relying on religious leaders to discern the truth can be futile. So, how can we know what the Bible truly teaches? The straightforward answer is to read and study the scriptures for yourself, allowing you to form your own convictions based on personal understanding.
- c. Suggesting that one must read and study the scriptures for themselves is often where many falter because studying requires significant time and effort. Many prefer to be spoon-fed doctrine from the pulpit rather than actively seeking the truth for themselves:
 - 1) This does not mean we should not listen to sermons, attend Bible classes, or read religious articles and books. However, we need to heed John's warning: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).
 - 2) An example of discerning truth is found in Acts: "And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:10-11). Trying the spirits involves diligently searching the scriptures to verify the truth of what is being taught.
 - 3) If we fail to "try the spirits," we risk being "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Ephesians 4:11-14). Without personal study of the scriptures, our beliefs are not truly our own but are based on someone else's interpretation.
- d. One might ask, "How do I study the Bible?" While it is beyond the scope of this lesson to provide a detailed answer, this is a critical question that warrants its own study. For those seeking guidance on how to begin, I recommend visiting this website: [Intro To Bible Study](#)

Conclusion:

To truly understand the teachings of Christ, it is imperative to engage in personal Bible study. Relying solely on religious leaders or preachers can lead to confusion and misdirection, as their interpretations may not always align with the scriptures. By diligently studying the Bible, as exemplified by the Bereans in Acts, we can develop our own convictions based on the truth of God's word. This approach ensures that our faith is firmly grounded in scripture, rather than being influenced by the varying doctrines of others. For those seeking guidance on how to begin their study, resources such as the "[Intro To Bible Study](#)" website can be invaluable.

3. Can I Really Understand The Bible?

Understanding the Bible can sometimes seem daunting, but the scriptures themselves affirm that God's word is accessible and meant to be comprehended by all who earnestly seek it. The Bible provides guidance, wisdom, and truth, ensuring that anyone who approaches it with a sincere heart can grasp its teachings. This section explores various verses from both the Old and New Testaments that highlight the clarity and approachability of God's word, reinforcing the idea that divine wisdom is within reach for all believers.

- a. The following verses collectively affirm that God's word is meant to be understood and that it provides guidance, wisdom, and truth accessible to those who seek it earnestly:

Old Testament

1. Deuteronomy 30:11-14:

“For this commandment that I command you today is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.”

2. Psalms 19:7:

“The Law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.”

3. Psalms 119:10:

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

4. Proverbs 2:1-6:

“My son, if you receive my words and treasure up my commandments with you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.”

New Testament

1. John 8:31-32:

“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’”

2. Acts 17:11:

“Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.”

3. Ephesians 3:3-4:

“How the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ.”

4. 2 Timothy 3:15-17:

“And how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

5. James 1:5:

“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.”

6. 1 John 2:27:

“But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.”

- b. It is possible to misinterpret scripture, which is why there are established principles to guide us in understanding the Bible. This field of study is known as *hermeneutics*. Hermeneutics is the study and practice of interpreting texts, especially the Bible, and involves understanding the text's meaning in its original context and applying that understanding to contemporary situations. For further study, I recommend “[Hermeneutics: How To Study The Bible](#)” by Gene Taylor.
- c. While some parts of scripture may be challenging to understand (2 Peter 3:16), we can still read and comprehend the will of God (Ephesians 5:17). Even when we follow all the rules of interpretation, we may still make mistakes. However, these errors can be corrected through continuous study and prayer. As we grow in our understanding, we become better equipped to discern and apply the truths of scripture more accurately. This process requires humility and a willingness to learn and be corrected.

Conclusion:

While interpreting the Bible can present challenges, the foundational principles of hermeneutics offer valuable guidance to ensure accurate understanding. By diligently studying the scriptures, seeking wisdom through prayer, and remaining open to correction, believers can deepen their comprehension of God's will. The Bible's message is intended to be understood and applied, and with continuous effort and a humble heart, anyone can grow in their ability to discern and live out its truths.

The Three Main Takeaways From This Second Part Of The Lesson:

- 1. Identifying Christ's True Church:** Despite the existence of numerous religious organizations, the Bible reveals that Jesus established only one true church. By examining scriptural accounts, particularly the events described in Acts 2, believers can identify the distinguishing characteristics of this church. The early church's formation, practices, and teachings provide a clear blueprint for recognizing Christ's authentic church today.
- 2. Recognizing The One Faith:** The Bible emphasizes the existence of a single, unified faith. Amidst the multitude of conflicting doctrines, scriptures like Ephesians 4:4-5 affirm that there is only one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. Understanding and adhering to this singular body of doctrine, as taught in the Bible, is crucial for maintaining the unity and consistency of the Christian faith.
- 3. Properly Interpreting The Bible:** Interpreting the Bible accurately requires diligent study and the application of established hermeneutical principles. While some parts of scripture may be challenging, continuous effort, prayer, and a willingness to be corrected enhance our comprehension of God's will. By personally engaging with the scriptures and verifying teachings against the Bible, believers can avoid misinterpretation and align their faith with the true teachings of Christ.

**Conclusion Of Part 2 - Identifying And Understanding Christ's Church And Teachings**

Part two of this lesson underscores the importance of distinguishing Christ's true church and understanding the singular faith revealed in the scriptures. Amidst the confusion of numerous denominations and conflicting doctrines, the Bible provides a clear and consistent guide. By examining foundational events such as those in Acts 2, believers can identify the characteristics of the church Jesus established. Additionally, understanding the one faith and applying proper hermeneutical principles ensures accurate interpretation of the Bible. Through diligent study and a sincere quest for truth, believers can align their faith and practices with the divine intentions laid out in scripture, fostering unity and clarity in their spiritual journey.

Applications:

1. **Examine Your Church's Alignment with Scripture:** If you attend a denomination, evaluate their teachings and practices against the biblical accounts of the early church, particularly the events described in Acts 2 to see if their teachings and practices align with the principles and characteristics of the church that Jesus established. This includes doctrines, worship practices, and the overall approach to faith and community life.
2. **Engage In Personal Bible Study:** Dedicate time to personal Bible study to understand the one true faith as revealed in scripture. Use hermeneutical principles to interpret passages accurately, seeking to uncover the original meaning and context. This personal engagement with the scriptures will help you develop a deeper, more informed faith that is grounded in God's word rather than human traditions or interpretations.
3. **Verify Doctrines Through Scriptural Comparison:** When encountering various teachings and doctrines, whether in sermons, books, or discussions, compare them against the Bible. Like the Bereans in Acts 17:11, receive teachings with eagerness but verify their accuracy by diligently searching the scriptures. This practice helps to avoid being swayed by false doctrines and ensures that your beliefs are firmly rooted in the truth of God's word.

Questions:

1. How can we identify Christ's true church amidst the multitude of religious organizations?
2. According to Ephesians 4:4-5, how many faiths are there?
3. Why is it important to personally study the scriptures?
4. How can we ensure accurate interpretation of the Bible?
5. What is the significance of Acts 2 in understanding Christ's church?
6. How did the early believers respond to Peter's preaching in Acts 2?
7. What caution does John provide regarding spiritual teachings?
8. What example of discerning truth is found in the book of Acts?
9. How does Mark 16:15-16 relate to becoming a part of Christ's church?
10. What assurance do believers have regarding the growth of Christ's church?