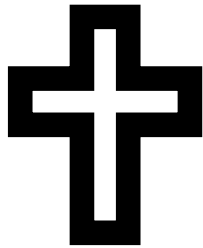


**Twelve Lessons**  
*on*  
***The Church Covenant***

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## **THE BASIS OF THE CHURCH COVENANT – LESSON 1**

Text: Ephesians 2:1-10

Covenant: “Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the LORD Jesus Christ as our Saviour...” (This refutes Calvin’s doctrine of “irresistible grace”.)

**Introduction:** The church covenant used in most Baptist churches was adopted by the Baptist of New Hampshire in 1834. Aside from the Bible, it is the nearest thing Baptists have to a common faith and intent. It is not a creed for formulation of Church law. It is a simple statement of Christian conduct, based upon Bible teaching which is expected of each person who joins a Baptist Church.

1. The movement toward writing a church covenant for Baptist Churches began on June 24, 1830 at the session of the New Hampshire Baptist State Convention. A committee of three was selected to prepare a systematic statement of Baptist doctrines to be issued under the title “A Declaration of Faith”. Their draft of the doctrinal statement was approved in 1831. The committee was dismissed and Brother I. Pearson was left in charge to complete the work. He reported back in 1834. His report was approved; the doctrinal statement was placed under the study of a committee of four men who made some slight alterations in wording. It was completed in October 1834 and sent out to the churches as a recommended statement of Baptist faith.
2. The church covenant was written by Dr. J. Newton Brown as an appendage to that “New Hampshire Declaration of Faith”. The covenant was intended to be the practical application of what Baptists believe and how Baptists behave. It sets out how Baptists must live to be consistent with the doctrine they profess to believe. “It was never intended to be an iron-clad creed and covenant to be binding upon any Baptist Church, as Baptists believe and teach the Bible alone to be their authoritative standard of faith and practice.” Dr. D.N. Jackson.
3. Today’s lesson deals with the opening statement of the church covenant. “Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Saviour ...”. Its aim is to emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit in salvation. Without the ministry of the Holy Spirit, salvation would be impossible.

### **Lesson Goals:**

1. To verify that one must be convicted by the Holy Spirit to be saved.
2. To confirm that one must be given life by the Holy Spirit to be saved.
3. To vindicate that the Holy Spirit works in conjunction with the Work of Christ to save sinners.

### **Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:**

1. Trespass – The violation of a law. The Hebrew word translated as trespass means "a stepping aside from the (correct) path" (Gen 31:36; Ex 22:9). In the New Testament trespass is often a translation of a Greek word which means "a falling aside" (Mark 11:25-26; Eph 2:1,5). The apostle Paul wrote: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them" (2 Cor 5:19). Also see SIN. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).
2. Quicken – Translates in the King James Version four different words: (1) *chayah*, (2) *miyah*, (3) *ruach*, and (4) *zao*. Of these words (1) and (4) had simply the sense of life, and this idea was in 1611 adequately given, by the word "quick," although this sense of the word has long been somewhat obscured. As the translation of *ruach* (Isa 11:3) "quick" as found in the King James Version signified "acute." To quicken also means a reviving, a refreshing, an increasing of life (Ps 71:20; 85:6; 119:37,40,88; Isa 57:10). It often has reference to the resurrection from the dead (1 Cor 15:36) and is so used in many places in the King James Version. (International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia).
3. Grace – Favor or kindness shown without regard to the worth or merit of the one who receives it and in spite of what that same person deserves. Grace is one of the key attributes of God. The Lord God is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth" (Ex 34:6). Therefore, grace is almost always associated with mercy, love, compassion, and patience as the source of help and with deliverance from distress. (Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary).

## **I. ENLIGHTENMENT BY THE SPIRIT**

**A. Jesus said,** “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him...” – John 6:44

1. That statement is absolute truth. The sinner is “...*dead in trespasses and sins*” (Ephesians 2:1). How

can one who is dead be alive again, unless some power outside himself effect new life? This has nothing to do with “unconditional election”.

2. The work of the Holy Spirit is enlightenment, causing the sinner to see his true condition and God’s offer of mercy, and is absolutely essential to salvation.
3. Acts 16:14 – *“And a certain woman named Lydia ... heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”*
4. We must not conclude that because God opened Lydia’s heart, Lydia’s part in her conversion was entirely passive. *“She attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.”* It is the Word of God to the Spirit enlightened heart that brings salvation (John 5:24).

## **II. LIFE BY THE SPIRIT**

**A. Ephesians 2:1** – *“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”*

1. The word “quicken” means “to restore to life; to raise from the dead.” The essence of salvation is receiving the life of God through Jesus Christ.
2. Salvation is a resurrection out of spiritual death into spiritual life. The unsaved person is not just merely sick, he is spiritually dead.
  - a. The Bible refers to unbelievers as being dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:12).
  - b. Conversion is spoken of as a birth (John 3:3,7).
  - c. One is saved when the Spirit of God imparts the life of God to him (John 3:5; I Corinthians 12:13).

## **III. WITHOUT THE SPIRIT**

**A. The person who has not trusted Jesus as personal Saviour is in a condition of spiritual death** – *“dead in trespasses and sin.”*

1. He is in a condition of spiritual bondage “walking” *“...according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.”*
2. He is in a condition of spiritual depravity – being *“...by nature the children of wrath”* (Ephesians 2:1-3).

**B. Man’s spiritual plight is in the result of his “having not the Spirit”.**

1. See Jude 19
2. Romans 8:9 – *“Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”*

**C. After one is saved, the Holy Spirit of God lives within him and works the will of God through him.**

Romans 6:18 – *“Being ... made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”*

## **IV. CHRIST AND THE SPIRIT**

**A. No one can be saved apart from Jesus Christ.** The Holy Spirit of God effects salvation by raising from spiritual death and imparting spiritual life, but He saves in respect of what Jesus has done and is doing for sinners.

1. Salvation is all of God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:5 – *“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)”*.
2. The sinner saved by the grace of God sits *“...in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* (Ephesians 2:6).

**B. Salvation is based solely upon the finished work of Jesus Christ.** Acts 4:12 – *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

1. Salvation is wholly of grace. Ephesians 2:8 – *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”*
2. G-R-A-C-E means “God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense”. Ephesians 2:9 – *“Not of works,....”*
3. Salvation is all God’s doing. John 1:13 – *“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God”*. (One is not saved by physical birth, by his own will, or by the desire or preference of another, but only of God).
4. Salvation is a work of the Holy Spirit. He enlightens, convicts, calls, reveals Christ, grants power to believe, effects regeneration through a spiritual birth, seals unto redemption, places the believer in Christ, and takes up permanent indwelling in each who is saved. **AMEN!**

## **CONCLUSION: Manifestation of the Spirit**

1. The Holy Spirit brings the sinner to a conscious need of Christ.
  - a. The Holy Spirit affects the New Birth in the sinner, and abides within him to enable him to live the Christian life.

- b. If one is saved, it is because the Holy Spirit brought him to God and effected regeneration upon his faith in Jesus Christ.
- 2. As one began in the Spirit, so he is to continue in Him (Galatians 3:1-3).
  - a. Be sure you are filled – controlled and empowered by the Spirit who brought you to Christ. Ephesians 5:18