

THE

MASTER'S MOUNTAIN

66,000 FEET!



HOW HIGH
CAN YOU CLIMB?

Climb the Mountain!

There are 66 books in the Bible, so The Master's Mountain offers you 66,000 feet to climb, by far the greatest mountain on earth! This is a great opportunity to grow closer to God through a deeper understanding of his words. Most people never even read the Bible through, much less study and learn it, but you can please God by being different and special. You can take his words seriously, learn them well, and apply them in your life!

Climbing the mountain is simple. If you are under 18, just start reading through the following pages and answering the questions in your workbook as you discover the answers. Let others help you, if needed. Every question answered takes you 500 feet further up the mountain. Once you have completed your climb, have someone review your work, or you may mail it to the address below for review and an achievement certificate. This is a **BIG DEAL** in the eyes of God, even if you have friends who don't care and aren't interested in God's word. God does care, and he takes special notice when you care . . .

"My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt

thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the
knowledge of God." (Proverbs 2:1-5)

"...but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor
and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."
(Isaiah 66:2)

Bible Baptist Church
P.O. Box 383
Martin, TN 38237

How Do We Know God Exists?

One of the amazing things about the Bible is that it never attempts to prove the existence of God. His existence is just taken for granted. The first verse in the Bible simply says, "**In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.**" In fact, His existence is so obvious that He considers anyone a fool who doesn't believe in Him. Psalm 14:1 says, "**The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God...**" This may seem like an unfair action on God's part until one considers some of the obvious proofs for God's existence. The fool said "in his heart" that there is no God. He didn't say it in his head because he hasn't really thought it through. When a man claims to be an atheist, he is simply rebelling in his heart. A thinking person can easily see that God does exist:

I. THE SCRIPTURAL PROOF

This is the fact that the Bible professes to be GOD'S revelation of Himself and that no one has ever proven otherwise. You say, "Well, I

don't believe the Bible, so it isn't proof to me." You're wrong. Sooner or later, you will have to realize that you can't discard the Bible that easily. There are some stubborn facts that you must face if you're an honest person. It's only fair to allow the Bible to stand as a witness to God's existence if the Bible itself is proven to be a reliable source. So the issue is trust. Can we trust the Bible?

Well, there are millions and millions of Christians who *have* placed their trust in it and have found that it never let them down. There are millions who have found great joy and fulfillment by claiming its promises and obeying its commandments. Isn't that worth something? When you say, "I don't believe the Bible", you are saying that millions of Christians have lived a lie." Isn't it true that they found more joy and purpose in the Bible than you've found in anything else? Isn't that worth something?

A person who doesn't believe the Bible doesn't know enough about it to realize the foolishness of his unbelief. Suppose I said, "I don't believe George Washington ever lived." Wouldn't that be rather foolish? The record of history proves that He did live, so I would be expressing my ignorance of American history. If you don't believe the Bible, please don't tell anyone, for you'll only be expressing your ignorance.

What do I mean by this? Friend, do you realize how accurate the Bible has been in the past? Take the life of Jesus Christ alone. Did you know that Genesis 3:15 prophesied the birth of Jesus Christ 4,000 years in advance? Did you know that Isaiah 7:14 prophesied His virgin birth 700 years in advance? Did you know that His nationality, His family, and the city of His birth were all foretold hundreds of years in advance? Did you know that His agony and death on Calvary was prophesied hundreds of years in advance? Did you know that Psalm 22:1 (1,000 B.C.) actually told us what Christ would say while on the cross? If you take all the prophecies about the life and death of Christ, and then figure the statistical probability of them all coming to pass, do you know what the chances are? Have you ever thought about it? One scientist stated that

the chances are about 1 out of 10 to the 157th power! (10 followed by 157 zeros).

I'd say the Bible is a pretty reliable source. Wouldn't you? If the Bible proclaims the existence of God, then we should give it some serious consideration. After all, it has been right about everything else it has claimed.

II. THE PROOF OF NATURE

Romans 1:20 says, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse".

Psalms 19:1-6 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. *There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.*"

Simply stated, these verses tell us that you can know that God exists by observing His creation. Since the universe is here, someone must have put it here. If there's a creation, then there must be a Creator.

Romans 1:20 says that you can see the invisible Creator by observing the visible creation. It says even His eternal power and Godhead. The Bible speaks of God being a Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Did you know that God has given us many pictures of the Trinity in nature? Take the sun for instance. It has three rays: alpha, beta, and gamma. Those are chemical rays, heat rays, and light rays, yet

they're all from one sun. Take water for example. It can be a liquid, a frozen solid, or a vapor. Consider human beings. We have a spirit, a soul, and a body (I Ths. 5:23). Our soul pictures God the Father. Our body pictures Jesus Christ, Who was here in the flesh. Our spirit pictures the Holy Spirit. Three parts. The whole universe is laid out in threes. In fact, the universe has three parts: time, space, and matter. Time has past, present, and future. Space has length, breadth, and height. Matter has energy, motion, and phenomena.

Friend, the whole universe is made in God's image! There must be a designer behind every design. If you have a car that works, then it is because someone designed that car. Someone designed the engine. Someone designed the transmission. Someone designed the body style. Someone designed the brake system. Someone designed the air conditioning system. Someone designed the tires. It would be foolish to think that no one designed it, but that all the parts just came together from nowhere and work together accidentally. If there's a design, (and there are billions of them in this universe) then there must be a designer.

III. THE PROOF OF CONSCIENCE

This is the undeniable fact that man has a moral conscience, unlike other life forms. Romans 2:15 says, "**Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)**" There is a law written upon the heart of man which tells him that certain things are evil. There isn't any place on earth where people do not have a conscience about murder, theft, and rape. Anywhere you go, you will find laws that men have established to deal with such crimes. Man knows instinctively in his heart that certain things are wrong and worthy of punishment. The law is written in his heart. Well, who wrote

the law in his heart? If there's no God, who told man that it's wrong to steal, murder, rape, and commit adultery?

A good example of this can be found in *Genesis 20:1-5*. A heathen king named Abimelech takes Sarah, the wife of Abraham, to be his own wife. God appears to Abimelech in a dream at night and sharply rebukes him for this sin. Abimelech then tells the Lord that he didn't know she was Abraham's wife. He then repents of this sin.

Now think about that. Abimelech was a heathen who had no Bible, and no understanding of God and God's laws. Yet, he knew that adultery was evil. He didn't say, "Well, I don't understand. What's wrong with me having her for a wife?" He **KNEW** in his heart that he had sinned. He knew because of conscience. The law was written on his heart. Who wrote it there, if there is no God?

IV. THE LIFE FROM LIFE PROOF

Psalm 36:9 says, "**For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.**" Today, there are no new life forms being formed. All life comes from previous existing life. You came from your parents, and they came from their parents. No scientist has been able to produce life without getting it from other life. It just can't be done. Apple trees come from apple seeds, which come from apples, which come from apple trees. There is no question about which came first, the chicken or the egg. The chicken came first. Life comes from life. Dogs come from dogs. Cats come from cats. Rats come from rats, and bats come from bats. Since no one today can produce life without previous life, would it not stand to reason that life originally came from one all-powerful and all-living Life Source?

V. THE PROOF OF CONGRUITY

Congruity is the relation of agreement between things. Congruity is what you have when all the pieces of your puzzle fit together and give you one complete picture. In a 1000 piece puzzle, you may have 999 pieces together, but it isn't complete without the last piece. When you pick up the last piece, and you can see that it fits, you are glad and satisfied that your project is complete. You have congruity. It all fits together.

Well, the acceptance of God as Creator works much the same way. Without God, nothing really makes sense. Evolution has too many problems to have congruity. It's only when we accept God's existence that things start adding up and making sense. When we accept God's existence and His revelation of Himself (the written word), the picture starts becoming clear. Evolution can't explain why people suffer, but God can. Evolution can't explain why men can't have peace, but God can. Evolution can't give you inner peace and promise you eternal joy, but God can. Evolution can't "even the score" and grant fairness to all men in the end, but God can.

When you really think about it, the existence of God is the most logical thing you could imagine. He has all the answers. He can solve all the problems. He can meet every need. God is the "missing link" that brings everything together and gives meaning to life. As the wise King Solomon so rightly said, **"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."** (Ecc. 12:13-14)

The Inspiration and Preservation of Scripture

In this lesson we will be dealing with the inspiration and preservation of scripture. This is an important lesson because it establishes a final authority for future studies. From where did the Bible come? How long has it been around? How do we know it's the word of God? Such questions must be answered if we are to really appreciate and understand the Bible.

The word "Bible" is from the Greek word "biblos", which means "book". When we say "the Bible", we are simply saying "the Book". That is, not just any book, but THE Book - the Book of all books - God's Book.

I. THE INSPIRED WORD

The Apostle Paul tells us the following in II Timothy 3:16-17: "**All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**"

Notice in our text that Paul said all scripture is GIVEN by INSPIRATION OF GOD. The scriptures aren't the work of men, as some suppose, but are rather given by inspiration of God. The pagan writings of such people as Plato, Aristotle, Buddha, and Mohammed are not given by inspiration of God. In fact, very few of them even *profess* to be inspired.

The word inspired means "God breathed". The scriptures are given by the breath of God. This means that the Bible is a LIVING book, because the first time God *breathed* in the Bible He created a LIVING SOUL (Gen. 2:7). Jesus said, "**...the words that I speak unto you,**

they are spirit, and they are life." (John 6:63) You may also consider Job 33:4, Ezk. 37:9, and John 20:22.

II. THE SPOKEN WORD

Notice that Paul said the scripture is "*given*" by inspiration. He didn't say they were "*written*" by inspiration, but rather "*given*" by inspiration. That is, the words were inspired by God BEFORE they were reduced to writing.

II Peter 1:20-21 says, "**Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**"

This is called *Verbal Inspiration*. That is, the man of God would *speak by the Spirit of God*. This makes God the real Author. He was the GIVER of the spoken words. The inspiration occurred in the speaking, not in the writing. David once said, "**The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.**" (II Sam. 23:2) God inspired the words! God only used David to pass His words on to others. God was the real Author. Notice Jeremiah's comments: "**Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth.**" (Jer. 1:9) See that? They were GOD'S words, not Jeremiah's. God put the words into the prophet's mouth so others could hear, but they were not Jeremiah's words. Luke 1:70 says that, "**... he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:**"

You may also want to check Exodus 20:1, 25:1, Isaiah 1:2, Ezekiel 1:3, 3:4, Amos 1:1, Matthew 1:22, 2:15, and Mark 12:36.

III. THE WRITTEN WORD

These inspired words that were spoken by the prophets were actually written down by *scribes* (II Sam. 8:17; 20:25; II Kings 19:2; 22:3; I Chr. 24:6; Ezra 7:6; Jer. 36:10, 12, 32; 37:15; Mat. 18:19; 15:1; 17:10; Luke 5:30; 11:44; Acts 23:9). It was the actual inspired words themselves that were written down, not just the general message. In Matthew 5:18, Jesus said, **"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."** Quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3, Jesus says in Matthew 4:4 that "... **Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**" How could we live by every word if the scribe only recorded the general message? Friend, God said that every word was inspired and recorded for you and I to read.

A fine example of this is found in Jeremiah chapter thirty-six. In this chapter the word of the Lord comes to Jeremiah, and Jeremiah speaks the words. Then Jeremiah's scribe, Baruch, writes down the words (vs. 4). Later, in verse eighteen, Baruch is questioned about the manner in which he produced this written copy of God's word. In no uncertain terms, he says, "...**He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book.**" Now that's clear! Some of the Bible may be hard to understand, but that's clear as crystal. The prophet spoke God's words, and the scribe wrote them down. That's what the Bible says about its own inspiration.

IV. OTHER PROOFS OF INSPIRATION

Christians generally believe that the Bible is inspired, but very few are capable of offering any convincing proofs. It is important to not only know what we believe, but also to know *why* we believe. The following

are some of the reasons why we believe the Bible to be God's inspired word.

The Bible Is a Negative Book

Why would man write a book to condemn his own race? From cover to cover the Bible is **NEGATIVE** toward man. It utterly condemns man (Psa 39:5; Isa 64:6; Rom 3:10-18; John 3:18; Jer 17:9; Psa 51:5). Men everywhere speak highly of themselves, yet the Author of the Bible speaks of man as being a hopeless sinner. The Bible *HAD* to be inspired by someone other than man.

The Bible Is an Authoritative Book

Most ancient writings do not even profess inspiration, but the Bible professes not only to be inspired, but to be the **ONLY** inspired writing (Isa. 8:20). The central character of the Bible, the Lord Jesus Christ, professes to be the **ONLY** way to Heaven. Unlike the ancient philosophers, the men of the Bible are men who speak with great power, certainty, and authority. Wouldn't you expect God to speak with power and authority?

The Bible Is an Infallible Book

Although many have tried, and are still trying, no one has ever proven that there are mistakes in the Bible (KJV). All apparent errors and contradictions can be explained Scripture with Scripture and by closely studying the context.

The Bible Is a Prophetic Book

While other ancient writings do not even attempt prophecy, the Bible attempts it and fulfills it. One only has to consider a few Old

Testament prophecies about the life of Christ to see this (Num. 24:17-19; Gen. 49:10; Mic. 5:2; Isa. 7:14; Dan. 9:25; Hos. 11:1; Isa. 53; Zec. 9:9; Psa. 69:21; Psa. 34:20; Psa. 16:10; Psa. 41:9; Zec 11:12; Psa. 35:11; Psa. 22). How could man write such a book?

The Bible Is a Unified Book

The sixty-six books of the Bible were written by some thirty-five or forty different authors, on three continents, over a period of 1,900 years. These men came from all walks of life, differing greatly from one another, but their writings never contradict. These books *compliment* one another. Such an accomplishment would be impossible if the Holy Spirit were not the Divine Author.

The Bible Is an Interesting Book

Unlike other books, the Bible is read by all classes of people. A small remnant of people from all walks of life share an interest in the Bible. It is read by the educated and the uneducated. It is read by the rich and the poor, by the old and the young, by males and females, by all races, and in all places. What man-written book has such wide appeal to people?

The Bible Is a Best-Selling Book

The Bible is by far the best-selling book ever published. The King James Bible alone has been selling for the past 400 years! Only God knows how many total copies have sold during that time, but no other book in the world would come close to the number. Just think for a moment. It's probably true that most people purchase a Bible at least once in life, or at least in developed, English-speaking nations, and some people purchase several Bibles in a lifetime. Yet, do they purchase several copies of other books? No. Is any other book as common among

people as the Bible? No. You could walk up to the average American home and ask if the family owns a Bible, and you would usually hear a "Yes." Yet, if you asked if they owned a copy of Darwin's *Origin of the Species* or Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, they would likely say, "Of course not!" That would be the case not only in America, but in many nations, and for hundreds of years. There's just no comparison. The Bible is the best-seller because the Bible is God's word.

The Bible Is a Blessed Book

It has changed more lives than any other book in world history. Eighty-eight percent of the colleges in America were founded for the purpose of teaching God's word and training missionaries. Many literary countries are the product of Bible-believing Christianity. Nations and individuals always prosper when Bible principles are followed. Is this a coincidence, or is this an indication that God blesses those who obey His word? If the Bible is only *man's* words, then why do so many prosper through obeying it?

The Bible Is a Preserved Book

If the Bible is only a man-written book, then why does it still exist? Satan has fought endlessly to rid the world of the Bible, yet it still exists today. Everything that man accomplishes eventually falls apart (the wonders of the ancient world, educational systems, governments, families, organizations, etc.), but the Bible lives on (Psa. 12:6-7; Mat. 24:35). How did the Old Testament survive the Babylonian captivity when God's people spent seventy years in a foreign land? How did the Bible survive the Dark Ages when Rome ruled the religious world with pagan tradition? The Bible must be a supernatural book, else man would have destroyed it long ago. We will consider this point further in the next section of the lesson.

V. THE PRESERVATION OF SCRIPTURE

When the dust of the battle dies down we shall hear all sixty-six books declare with the Apostle Paul, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here!" (W.H. Griffith Thomas)

God lives forever, so His Book shall live forever. In Ecclesiastes 3:14 Solomon said **"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it that man should fear before him."** We've learned about the *inspiration* of Scripture. Now let's study the reasons and methods concerning the *preservation* of Scripture.

Reasons for Preservation

The first reason for the preservation of Scripture is the *logical* reason. Just as it makes no sense that you would fool around and lose your birth certificate, your high school diploma, or your marriage license, it makes no sense that God would inspire and record His words and then lose them. This is totally against His nature. As much effort as God has put into giving man His words, it would be foolish to lose them.

From the very beginning God has delighted in preserving various people, places, and things for His own glory. God preserved man through the fall in Eden. God preserved Noah and his family through the flood. God has preserved the Jewish people until this very day, in spite of their many captivities, servitudes and persecutions. God has preserved Jerusalem, in spite of the many aggressive attacks against her. It is *logical* to assume that God would preserve the Book that He inspired.

Another argument for the preservation of Scripture is the fact that preservation is *needful*. Jesus said, **"...if a man love me, he will keep my words."** (John 14:26) How can you keep His words if God didn't preserve them for you? In II Timothy 4:2 Paul exhorts Timothy to **"Preach the word..."** How could young Timothy preach the word if

the word hasn't been preserved? The Lord Jesus prayed in John 17:17 and said, "**Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.**" Friend, you can't even be sanctified if God didn't preserve His word, because it is *the word* which sanctifies!

God's word can keep us from sinning (Psa. 119:11). God's word gives us wisdom and spiritual discernment (Pro. 22:17-21; I Cor. 2:12-14). The word brings success (Jsh. 1:8), and gives us light for the path of life (Psa. 119:105). Most of all, God's word is essential for a person to be born again! I Peter 1:23 says, "**Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.**" Friend, it has been *needful* for God to preserve His words.

Finally, the best reason for believing that God would preserve His words is *promise*. GOD SAID HE WOULD PRESERVE HIS WORDS. Note the following:

"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever." (Psa. 12:6-7)

"For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations." (Psa. 100:5)

"As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever." (Isa. 59:21)

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." (Mat. 24:35)

"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." (I Pet. 1:24-25)

God never said once that man would preserve His words, but that HE would preserve them. Our responsibility is to be faithful and believe what God has said and ignore what the skeptics are saying. God promised to preserve His words, so He has preserved them.

Method of Preservation

The Bible is GOD'S Book, so God can preserve it in any way He chooses. Since the very beginning, God has used MEN to carry out His work on this earth. It should surprise no one that God uses *His people* to preserve His words.

Many scholars agree that since Christians still have a sin nature (the flesh) that God cannot rely on them in matters of preserving His holy words. Well, God doesn't *rely* on anyone for anything. God, in His sovereign authority, chooses to *use* certain individuals to accomplish His will.

For example, Moses and David had a sin nature just like you and I, but Jesus Christ still considered their writings to be Scripture (Mat. 4:4; 19:4; Luke 24:44; 20:42). God wouldn't allow Moses to enter the promised land (Deut. 32:48-52; 34:4), but He still used him to write the first five books of the Bible. David committed adultery (II Sam. 11), sinned by numbering Israel (I Chr. 21), and acted like an idiot before the king of Gath (I Sam. 21), but God still used him to write over half of the Psalms. Peter denied Christ three times and then went on to write two epistles. The one who penned the words of Romans 7:18 also penned a third of the New Testament (Paul). *If God could use only sinless people, then He would have to do everything Himself!*

The preservation of Scripture is GOD'S responsibility, and He is quite capable of overruling man's faults and sins in order to get the job done. Since most scholars worship their education rather than God, they'll never understand or accept this important truth.

God's method of preservation is to use His people. Before the time of Christ the Scriptures were given to the Jews (Acts 7:38; Rom. 3:2).

It was the priestly tribe of Levi that was responsible for the actual handling and copying of the Scriptures (Deut. 17:18; 21:5; Ezra 7:11; Neh. 8:7-13; II Chr. 29:30). Today (until our Lord returns) the Levites have been replaced with Christians, a *spiritual* priesthood (I Pet. 2:4-10). So the church now has the responsibility of handling and copying the Scriptures faithfully. In fact, we are given severe warnings about handling the Scriptures *unfaithfully* (Rev. 22:18-19). God's method of preservation is to use Spirit-filled believers in the body of Christ to faithfully copy and pass His words on to future generations.

In lesson four we will see why the King James Authorized Version is the product of faithful preservation, while modern versions are the product of Satan's attempts to destroy God's word.

Understanding God's Salvation Plan

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12) "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8) "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23) "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9-10) "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13)

Only God knows how many dear souls have been led to the Lord Jesus Christ by the above verses of Scripture. These verses, commonly

referred to as the "Roman's Road," are used worldwide by Christian workers in an effort to present God's Salvation Plan to the lost in a step by step fashion. The Roman's Road is wonderful for getting straight to the point and dealing with the primary issues of sin and salvation. Millions have come to know Christ after reading these verses (including myself), and it is our prayer that millions more will come to know Him in the future.

But there is a problem. Because of the habitual use of such quick and easy portions of Scripture, more and more Christians are developing a very shallow concept of New Testament salvation. Time and time again I find myself speaking with people who profess to be saved, and yet they aren't sure about their eternal destiny. Many of these people can tell of a specific time in their life when they prayed and asked the Lord to come into their heart and save them, but still today they live in a state of uncertainty. This should not be happening.

Then there are others who have never been saved and really do not understand the need to be saved. Someone says, "Well, they probably just don't care." Yes, that's often the case, but not always. I believe there are many people who would like to have a better understanding of Jesus Christ and the Salvation that He offers, and I believe that many such people will receive Christ once they truly understand their need for Him.

Friend, if you fit into one of these categories, this lesson is for you. This lesson will help you to UNDERSTAND New Testament salvation. Whether you're saved or lost, this lesson can help you, so please aside a little time and read the following pages, prayerfully and carefully. You will not be disappointed (Lk. 11:9-10).

I. GOD'S PERSONALITY

There are many things that can be said about God in this study, but the one thing that must be said is that God is a HOLY God. So often

we hear of God's love for US, and we very seldom think of God standing alone without man in the picture. Let's first consider God Himself, without even thinking of mankind. Let's take a look at the personality of God Almighty.

Exodus 15:11 says, **"Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"** The seraphims of Isaiah 6 praised God, crying **"Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."** If something is holy, then it is whole or complete. God is holy. He lacks nothing, for he is complete. God simply cannot be improved upon.

Someone has said, "God without man is God, but man without God is nothing." How true these words are. One who wishes to know God must IGNORE himself. It was God who created man. God existed first, without man in the picture. So, in order to really understand New Testament salvation, we must first focus totally upon the eternal God of Glory. We must know something of God's personality.

We must realize that God never has and never will do anything wrong for any reason. God has always been holy, and He always will be. He says in Malachi 3:6, **"For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed."** God never has and never will make one single adjustment within His person. His state of sinless perfection is eternal. If the entire universe were to turn against God, including all the hosts of Heaven, it would not change God. He would still be the eternal God of Glory. Consider these strong portions of Scripture from the Book of Isaiah:

"All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity. To whom will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" Isa. 40:17-18.

"I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." (Isa. 42:8)
". . . Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no god; I know not any." (Isa. 44:8) **"I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no god beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known**

me." (Isa. 45:5) **"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."** (Isa. 46:10)

So let's first understand one great truth: with or without us, **GOD IS GOD**. He is the unchangeable, holy, and eternal God of Glory. Regardless of what else happens, this will always be true.

II. GOD IN RELATION TO MAN

Genesis chapter one gives to us the account of the creation, including the creation of man. We read in Genesis 1:27, **"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."** Man was created in the image of God. That image, as we have already seen, was a **HOLY** image. God did not create man in a sinful condition. God created a sinless man in **HIS OWN IMAGE**. Luke 3:38 tells us that this first man, Adam, was actually **"the son of God."** No other man after Adam is called a son of God. But Adam was called this, because he was made in **GOD'S IMAGE**.

Being absolutely sinless, Adam was now ready to carry out God's plan. God is a **SPIRIT** (John 4:24), but He created a **PHYSICAL** earth. So He needed a physical being to rule over the earth. Genesis 1:28 tells us that God gave Adam **DOMINION** over the earth and over all of its inhabitants. "Why?" you may ask. Couldn't God manage to run things for Himself? Sure He could, but He wanted something more. God had a very special reason for creating man. Notice how clearly the reason is given in Isaiah 43:7: **"Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him."** Why did God create man? He did it to bring **GLORY** to Himself! All through the Bible we find that God wants to be **GLORIFIED** (Psa. 22:23; 50:15; Mt. 5:16; John 12:28; Rom. 15:6; I Cor. 6:20; etc.), and the beginning was certainly no exception. God wanted to form a living being out of the ground and have that being live in close fellowship with Him.

God wanted His human creation to live in **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. God wanted to see His children prosper! He didn't want them to fail; He wanted them to prosper. This would bring honor and glory to His name. Just as any respectable father delights in watching his own children live right and succeed in life, God wanted the same for His children. Like any responsible father, God knew what was best, and He had a wonderful plan for His children.

So God created man and placed him in a perfect environment. Would man be obedient and fulfill God's will, or would he become disobedient? God had to put man to the test. He had to give man a choice. God could have **FORCED** Adam and Eve to always obey Him, but that would be against His nature. God wanted man to **LOVE** Him and **ENJOY** serving Him, so a choice was given.

Rather than populate the entire universe at once with newly created humans, God, in His infinite wisdom, placed one man and his wife in a garden and gave them a choice. You know the story. Adam and Eve chose to disobey God by eating of the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:1-6). Satan's way seemed more pleasant at the moment, so man fell into sin by disobeying God.

Worst of all, *man lost the image of God*. God was still holy, but man was now **UNHOLY**. Man was now a transgressor against God. Man had failed the test. In his sinful condition, Adam could not carry out God's divine plan. He was no longer qualified, for he was now a sinner.

At this point, God could have chosen to destroy His creation and start with a new one, or He could **REDEEM** the fallen creation. He chose to redeem fallen man. He chose to set forth a master plan that would allow man to become **RIGHTEOUS** once again. Being the merciful God that He is, God chose to work out a wonderful redemption plan for fallen man.

But wait! This will be no easy plan, because Adam and his wife aren't the only sinners. Every child born after Genesis chapter three has been born in Adam's **SINFUL** image (Gen. 5:3). All men are natural sinners upon being born into the world: **"Wherefore, as by one man sin**

entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. 5:12) "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psa. 51:5) "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10)

Men are no longer made in God's image. In fact, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself said "**Ye are of your father, the devil...**" in John 8:44. God is not a sinner, so sinners are not God's children. Sinners are natural-born children of the Devil. Paul writes in Ephesians 2:2 that lost sinners are "**children of disobedience.**" Why? Because we naturally receive a SIN NATURE at birth.

In addition to this, we must also realize that we cannot rid ourselves of this corrupt sin nature. We are "stuck" with a fallen image of unrighteousness. Unless God works a miracle in our lives, we are absolutely hopeless--forever doomed to the eternal fires of Hell. We cannot earn our Salvation by performing righteous works, because our righteousness is no good. Isaiah 64:6 tells us that our righteousness is like "**filthy rags!**" Instead of being clean in the eyes of God, men are FILTHY, because of the sin nature in us all. God is holy, but we are unholy. He is Godly, but we are ungodly. He is righteous, but we are unrighteous. Our sin nature stands like a brick wall between us and God, separating us from His dear fellowship.

Now try comparing a HOLY God with unholy men. Contrast the two in your mind. You see, there must be a separation. Just as you keep your clean laundry separate from your dirty laundry, God must keep Himself separate from ungodly man. God is not a sinner, so He cannot fellowship with sinners. Unless sin is somehow removed from man, there is no hope. Unless man is somehow redeemed from his fallen nature, God has no choice but to sentence him to Hell forever. The sin debt must be paid so that man can regain his original righteous image and his fellowship with God. Someone must pay the price.

III. GOD'S PLAN OF REDEMPTION

There once was a king who had a very strong reputation for enforcing the law in his kingdom. He never compromised for anyone. If someone broke the law, a penalty was always required.

Then one day this king sat upon his throne hearing case after case, when suddenly a very shocking thing happened. A young man was brought in for judgment. He had been caught red-handed in theft. The whole kingdom stood in silence to hear the king's judgment. You see, this was no ordinary case: the young man was the king's son!

Being as broken hearted as he was, the king knew that he still must give judgment. Justice must be served. One hand would have to be severed. Then suddenly the king surprised everyone by ordering HIS OWN HAND to be cut off! He chose to pay the penalty himself.

This is precisely what God did for you and I. Notice these important words from Isaiah 53:5-6: **"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."**

Just as the king suffered and fulfilled the law for his son, God came to this earth and fulfilled the law for us. Jesus Christ was God manifested in the flesh (I Tim. 3:16), He came to FULFILL the law (Mt. 5:17). The law demanded a payment for sin. Either man could spend eternity in Hell, paying for his sins, or God could make the payment Himself. God, because of His love for lost man, chose to make the necessary payment Himself. He gave His only begotten Son as a payment for our sins: **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."** (John 3:16) **"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree."** (Gal. 3:13) **"For he**

hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (II Cor. 5:21)

All men are born under "**the law of sin and death**" (Rom. 8:2). We are under a curse. But the Lord Jesus Christ came to our rescue by dying and paying for our sins. Hebrews 10:14 says, "**For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.**" It took only one offering to pay for our sins. Now that the payment has been made, all men can be "perfected" through Jesus Christ! Through Christ we can be set FREE from the law of sin and death! Through Christ, and Him alone, we can escape the curse! Through Christ, we can be saved!

After Jesus paid for the sins of the world and returned to Heaven, a very special gospel (good news) message is preached by the Apostles and early Christians: "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.**" (Acts 16:31) "**That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.**" (Rom. 10:9) "**For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.**" (Eph. 2:8-9)

As lost and doomed sinners, we must take God at His word and believe that Jesus Christ is our only hope for salvation. We must trust that His payment for our sins is sufficient. We must STOP trying to "do good" that we might go to Heaven. Our good works cannot save us, as the above verses reveal. Only the good work of the Lord Jesus can save us. We are hopeless without Him. As a criminal sits upon death row awaiting the electric chair, we sit upon the death row of eternity awaiting hell fire.

IV. GOD'S IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

While sitting upon the "death row" of eternity, our only hope is for God to *make us righteous*, for we cannot establish righteousness for

ourselves (Rom. 10:3). We read in Romans 4:5 the following words: **"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."**

God's desire is to make us righteous by giving us *HIS* **RIGHTEOUSNESS!** This Scripture goes on to say: **". . . .Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."** (Romans 4:7-8)

God has a way of cleansing us from our sins and giving to us *HIS* righteousness so that we may have eternal life. Referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, Colossians 1:14 says, **"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. . ."** The "blood" spoken of here is *God's* blood (Acts 20:28). The blood of the Lord Jesus was not natural human blood; it was **PURE** blood from the Father above. Remember, Mary was a Virgin; so the blood of Jesus Christ came from His heavenly Father. This blood was shed at Calvary to be an **ATONEMENT** for our sins. The atonement can make us "at one" with God, just as Adam was in the very beginning. Through the blood atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can have our sins washed away (Rev. 1:5), thus being placed back into God's righteous image.

All throughout the Old Testament, God required a blood sacrifice from His people. This blood was obtained from various animals such as bulls, goats, and lambs. Sacrifices were made daily, because people would sin daily. By offering to God a sacrifice, men were showing God that they were aware of their sin nature and desired forgiveness. Upon seeing this, God would then accept their sacrifice and forgive their sins. This is called *remission*. Hebrews 9:22 says, **". . . .without shedding of blood there is no remission."** These many animal sacrifices served as a foreshadow or a *type* of the blood of the Lord Jesus that would eventually be shed at Calvary.

However, *forgiveness* of sin isn't enough. A penalty still must be paid. The law must be fulfilled. The record must be cleared. God could cleanse His people *temporarily* from their sins with animal sacrifices, but

only the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ could *clear* their sin record forever. The Old Testament sacrifices were for forgiveness, but not for making a person *clear* from sin (Ex. 34:6-7). This is why Jesus had to come and clear the record forever. He came to wipe the slate clean for all eternity. When you receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, you receive a **CLEAN RECORD!** You receive **HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS**, and since you are trusting Him alone for your salvation, God will not impute sin to you.

Suppose you receive Him as your Saviour. What then? Then you become a "son of God. " John 1:12 says, **"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."** You **RECEIVE** Christ by **BELIEVING** on Christ. You can be "born again" **SPIRITUALLY** (John 3:3) by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Once you truly turn to Christ alone, asking Him to wash away your sins, you are **FORGIVEN** and your sin record is **CLEARED** forever. Your soul has been made **RIGHTEOUS** through the blood of Jesus Christ. That's precisely why He came and died. Once you have been born again you will be in God's family for the first time in your life! God's human creation was lost in Genesis chapter three, but you, a part of that growing creation, can be **FOUND** and **REDEEMED** to God this very moment!

There once was a little boy who made for himself a toy sailboat. While playing in the stream one day, the boat drifted away. A few days later another boy found the boat. The first boy said, "Hey! That's my boat! I made it myself, and I want it back!" The second boy would not hand over the boat, but instead he offered to **SELL** it to the boy. So the original owner and maker of the toy boat reached into his pocket and gave all his money to pay for the boat. As he walked away, he held the boat to his chest and said, "You're mine! You're mine! You're mine **TWICE!** I **MADE** you, and then I **BOUGHT** you: **YOU'RE MINE!**"

Upon receiving Christ as Lord and Saviour, you will become God's property (I Cor. 6:19-20). You will become His child, His responsibility.

You will become the property of God, for he BOUGHT you with his own blood (Acts 20:28). Nothing can ever change that.

Friend, if you've never really been born again, please repent of your sins right now and place your total trust in Jesus Christ to save you. Tell Him that you're sorry for your sins and that you want to live for Him. Tell Him that you want to have a new life in Christ (II Cor. 5:17). Aren't you tired of sin? Do you not want to please God? Repent of your sins right now and ask the Lord to save you. He said that He would save you, if you will call upon Him (Rom. 10:13). Why not call upon Him right now?

V. GOD'S PROMISE OF ETERNAL SECURITY

Lord Palmerston, Queen Victoria's Prime Minister, was crossing Westminster Bridge one day when he came upon a little girl who had just dropped a jug of milk. The girl broke into tears as the glass jug shattered into pieces. Palmerston had no money with him at the time, but he was able to stop her crying by promising her that he'd return at the same time the next day and pay her for the jug and the milk. The following morning he was in the midst of a cabinet meeting when he suddenly remembered his promise to the girl. He stood up and rushed out to the bridge and paid the girl the money. You see, to him, a promise was a promise, and he had to keep it. Nothing was more important.

With or without us, God will always be God. He will carry out His wonderful plan, regardless of our actions. He never had to promise us eternal security, just as Lord Palmerston never had to make the promise to the little girl. But God CHOSE to promise us eternal security. It was a pure act of grace on His part. He chose to comfort and strengthen us by making the promise: **"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."** (John 10:27-28) **"Being confident of the very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."** (Philip. 1:6) **"Verily, verily I say unto you, He**

that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." (John 5:24) "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37)

We are told in Romans 8:38-39 that NOTHING can separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus Christ, and the Lord tells us in Hebrews 13:5 that He will NEVER leave us or forsake us. Eternal Life is a PRESENT POSSESSION for the Christian. If you've received Jesus Christ as your Saviour, then you HAVE eternal life. You will not go to Hell, for you have been saved by believing on the record that God gave of His Son (I John 5:11-13, which see.). If you have received Christ as your Saviour, then you have received eternal life, because Jesus Christ IS eternal life (John 14:6; Col. 3:4; Rom. 6:23). He placed His Spirit within you to keep you and to preserve you (John 14:16-17; II Cor. 1:22); so you should be REJOICING in Christ, not WORRYING about losing Him.

You say, "But what if I sin after I've been saved? Won't I lose my salvation?" No, because it really isn't yours to lose. You are totally God's property. You didn't earn salvation by any good work of your own, and you can't lose salvation by any bad work of your own. Your salvation is based entirely upon the FINISHED work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Your conduct can affect your FELLOWSHIP with God, but not your RELATIONSHIP with Him. You're His son, if you're saved, and that's the way it's going to stay.

VI. GOD'S TREATMENT OF DISOBEDIENT CHRISTIANS

What happens when a Christian sins? If God doesn't send us to Hell, then how does He deal with us about our sins after we've been saved? This subject becomes rather easy to understand when we fully realize that we are now God's CHILDREN. We have entered into a

Father/son relationship with God. He will deal with us as a Father deals with a child, NOT as a judge deals with a criminal.

Christians need to understand that their BODIES have not been born again. Only our SOULS have been saved. Our flesh is still corrupt, and it will die one day. Paul said that in the flesh dwells no good thing (Rom. 8:18). Since the soul has been made righteous through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, God has found it necessary to separate the soul from the body. This is called *spiritual circumcision*. Notice these important words from Colossians 2:11: **"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ."**

Instead of being physically circumcised as the Old Testament Jews were, we have been spiritually by the Holy Spirit. Our flesh has been cut loose from our righteous soul. When you received Jesus Christ as your Saviour, your soul was SET FREE! The burden of sin was LIFTED, and the Holy Spirit of God came to live within your soul (not in your flesh). A Christian's flesh is still corrupt and sinful, so we are to live in the SPIRIT, not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh (Rom. 8:1-9; Gal. 5:16). In Matthew 26:41, Jesus Himself said, **"....the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."**

Since the soul has been made righteous, God sees us as righteous individuals. He does not see our sins, because Jesus PAID for our sins. Our souls are FOREVER PERFECT (Heb. 10:14). So, if I sin, I do so in the flesh, and God will deal with me in the flesh about it. He will NOT judge my soul, for it is sinless.

Let's take an example of a Christian who sins against God. For stronger emphasis, let's take an extreme case where the sin committed is a most horrible sin. Such a case is found in I Corinthians chapter five, where a man is charged with having his father's wife. That's pretty bad, is it not? Some would think that this man should go to Hell for this sin, but that's not what happens to him. Paul tells the Corinthians to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the FLESH, so that the spirit might be saved. What happened? God dealt with this man just as a

Father would deal with a child. God did not disown the man, but He DID chasten him in order to get him back in fellowship.

To "chasten" is to punish or discipline. Revelation 3:19 tells us that God rebukes and chastens his children. He does NOT forsake them, but He does correct and instruct them. Hebrews 12:4-8 explains how that all of God's children are chastened of the Lord. In fact, Hebrews 12:8 actually says that you're a "bastard" if you're not chastened! So there are two kinds of people in God's sight: sons and bastards. He corrects His sons, but He doesn't worry so much about the bastards, because they're going to get their punishment in Hell. Notice these inspired words from I Corinthians 11:31-32: **"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."**

You wouldn't send YOUR children to Hell, and God doesn't send HIS there. But He does discipline Christians in order to keep them in tune with His will. No one gets away with sin. No one has a "license to sin."

If you are a Christian, then you should always be conscious of the fact that YOU are not your body; you are INSIDE your body. Your soul has already been redeemed, but you are still waiting for the redemption of your body (Rom. 8:23). Your body is no good, for it is still under the law of sin and death. But remember, your SOUL has been made perfect by the blood of Christ.

Being a Christian, you are like a prisoner chained up in his cell. He is lonely and miserable. Then one day someone comes in and cuts his chains loose, allowing him to begin moving freely in his cell. He's no longer chained to the wall, but he is still in the cell until someone comes and frees him completely. Do you get the picture? You are no longer "chained" to your sins. You're free from them. Geographically speaking, you are still stuck in your corruptible flesh until the Lord calls you home to Heaven, but SPIRITUALLY speaking, you are IN THE BODY OF CHRIST. If you slip and fall, you'll do so IN CHRIST. You see, there is a difference between falling IN Christ and falling OUT of Christ, just

as there is a difference between falling down **IN** an airplane and falling **OUT OF** an airplane. Spiritually, we are seated in Heavenly places **IN CHRIST**, according to Ephesians 2:6, and that's where we'll stay - **FOREVER!**

VII. GOD'S WILL FOR ALL NEW BELIEVERS

In a future lesson we will deal with this subject in more detail, but for starters, the following are some of the more important duties of every new believer:

Get baptized. Find a Bible-believing church and tell the Pastor that you're a new believer in Christ and you need to be baptized. Baptism doesn't save your soul, but it is an ordinance commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ (Mat. 28:19) and observed by the early Christians (Acts 8:35-39).

Join a Bible-believing church and be a faithful member (Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25). Start looking for a fundamental church that stands on the King James Bible, supports missionaries, preaches salvation by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-9), and believes in the Deity of Christ, the Virgin Birth, the Blood Atonement, the Bodily Resurrection, and the literal Second Coming of Christ. Start having private devotions with God. Read your Bible, confess your sins, and pray on a daily basis (John 17:17; Psa. 119:11; Eph. 6:17-18; I Thes. 5:17; I John 1:9). Make a special time for your devotions, and remain faithful to them.

Be a Christian witness (Acts 1:8-9). Tell others what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for you. Ask God to direct you to those who are most needful of your witness, and then begin telling them how Christ can save them just as He saved you. Get some gospel tracts and give them to family members and friends. Work toward winning lost souls to the Lord (Prov. 11:30).

Live a holy life for God (I Pet. 1:16). You are a Christian now, which means you are supposed to be "Christ-like". You belong to God (I Cor.

6:19-20), so yield yourself to Him and serve Him by putting Him first in everything (Mat. 6:33; Rom. 12:1-3).

Expose yourself to as much sound Bible teaching and preaching as possible. Pay close attention to your pastor and teachers. At church services, sit close to the front, take notes, and mark your Bible. Saturate your home with good Christian literature and tapes. Seize every opportunity to grow in your knowledge of God's word. The more you know about God's word, the more useful you will be in His service, and *nothing* is more important in your Christian life than *GOD'S SERVICE*.

How We Know the King James Bible Is God's Word

Many preachers and teachers across our land talk about "preferring" and "using" the KJV, but not near enough of them speak about BELIEVING it. Many prefer it and use it because that's what their congregations prefer and use, but they do not BELIEVE it to be the infallible words of God. Many of them are taught in college to use, prefer, and recommend the KJV, but they are not taught to believe it. Most "Christian colleges" teach that the King James Bible is only a translation, and that NO translation is infallible. Consequently, the average minister today uses a Book which he doesn't even believe.

Now, I thank God that I don't have that problem. I don't have to play make-believe with anyone about the word of God. I believe it. I believe the King James Bible is the preserved and infallible words of God. It doesn't merely "contain" the word of God: *it IS the word of God*. This lesson has been prepared to teach you WHY we believe and use only the King James Bible.

I. GOD PROMISED TO PRESERVE HIS WORDS

Psalm 12:6-7 says, "*The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.*" We read in Psalm 100:5 that ". . . *his truth endureth to all generations,*" and Jesus said in John 17:17 that God's WORD is truth.

These words state very clearly that God's preserved word **MUST** be available to us today, because God **PROMISED** to preserve it for us. There **MUST** be an infallible Book somewhere.

You say, "But **ALL** translations are God's word, not just one." That's impossible, because the various translations contain different readings, and God is not the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33). Besides, if all of the versions are the word of God, then where are the "corrupt" and "perverted" versions that we are warned about in II Corinthians 2:17 and Jeremiah 23:36? If everyone is innocent, then where are those who are said to be **GUILTY** of subtracting from and adding to the word of God (Rev. 22:18-19)? God wouldn't have warned us about Bible perversion if it wasn't going to be a reality. According to the scriptures, there must be a single Book that is the word of God, and there must be **MANY** which are involved in **CORRUPTING** the word of God.

Now, if the Authorized Version isn't the infallible word of God, then **WHAT IS?** There has to be a Book somewhere in "***all generations***" which is God's word; so what book is it? Those who "use" the new versions believe that these are good and reliable translations, but they do not believe these to be **INFALLIBLE** translations. However, I know many people who believe the King James Bible to be an infallible Book. Why? Because they know that the One True God has **ONE TRUE BOOK**. He promised to preserve His words, and we believe that He has done just that. Jesus said, "***Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away***" (Matthew 24:35). If His words didn't pass away, then where are they? I want to read them. There has to be

a perfect volume somewhere. I know the King James Bible is the word of God because God promised to preserve His words.

II. TRANSLATED UNDER A KING

The main subject of the Bible is the kingdom which God intends to give to His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will be crowned "**KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS,**" according to Revelation 19:16. Ecclesiastes 8:4 says, *"Where the word of a king is, there is power: and who may say unto him, What doest thou?"* Unlike the modern versions, the KJV was translated under a king. In fact, the king's name was "James," which is the English word for "Jacob," the man whom God renamed "Israel" because he had power with God and with men (Gen. 32:28).

The new versions have been translated in America, which is not a monarchy. God's form of government is a theocratic monarchy, not a democracy. Therefore, it makes sense that His word would be translated for the English speaking people under a monarchy with an English king. I know the King James Bible is the word of God because it was translated under a king.

III. NO COPYRIGHT

The original crown copyright of 1611 does not forbid anyone today from reprinting the Authorized Version. It was only copyrighted then for the purpose of allowing the printer to finance the publication. Millions, perhaps even billions, of copies of KJV's have been published without requesting permission from anyone and without paying royalties to anyone. This cannot be said of any of the new translations.

The new "bibles" are the work of MEN, but the KJV is a divine work of the Holy Spirit. The term "Authorized" has traditionally been applied to the King James Version alone, for this is the one Book which the Holy

Spirit has blessed and used for so long. The fact that it bears no copyright allows printing ministries throughout the world to print millions of copies each year for the mission field. I know the King James Bible is the word of God because it has no copyright.

IV. GOD TRANSLATES PERFECTLY

The words "translate" and "translated" occur three times in the Bible, and GOD is the Translator each time. The scholars insist that the KJV cannot be infallible, because it is "only a translation." Do you suppose that such scholars have checked II Samuel 3:10, Colossians 1:13, and Hebrews 11:5 to see what GOD has to say about translating?

In II Samuel 3:10 we are told that it was God Who translated Saul's kingdom to David. We are told in Colossians 1:13 that Christians have been translated into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and Hebrews 11:5 tells us that God translated Enoch that he should not see death. God was the One doing the translating each time! What's the point? The point is that a translation CAN be perfect, if God is involved in the translating.

When the New Testament writers would quote the Old Testament (Mt. 1:23; Mk. 1:2; Lk. 4:4; Jn. 15:25; Acts 1:20; 7:42; I Cor. 2:9; Gal. 3:13, etc.), they had to TRANSLATE from Hebrew to Greek, because the Old Testament was written in Hebrew, but THEY wrote in Greek. So, if a translation cannot be infallible, then EVEN THE NEW TESTAMENT IN THE "ORIGINAL GREEK" ISN'T INFALLIBLE, because it contains translations from the Hebrew text.

Obviously God assisted them in their translating by the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and He assisted the King James translators as well. The scholars will never understand this, for most of them have quenched the Holy Spirit in their own lives by looking to higher education for truth, rather than seeking the Lord's leadership (John 16:13).

The Holy Spirit Who inspired the word of God through "*holy men of God*" (II Pet. 1:21) is quite capable of guiding His servants to keep the words which Jesus told us to keep (John 14:23). In essence, the KJV translators were merely *instruments* which God used in translating and preserving His word. In fact, they said this themselves in the Dedicatory to the Authorized Version: ". . . *because we are poor instruments to make God's holy truth to be yet more and more known to the people.* . . . "

I know the King James Bible is the word of God because God is very capable of using anyone He pleases as His very own instruments of righteousness in order to preserve His word.

V. THE KJV IS FRUITFUL

The Lord Jesus said that every good tree will bring forth good fruit, and we can know them by their fruits (Mt. 7:17-20).

God had the KJV translated for the purpose of bringing forth fruit, and it has been very obedient to the call. The greatest preachers of the past four centuries have been King James Bible believers. Billy Sunday is said to have led over one million people to Christ, and he was a KJV believer. Spurgeon, Moody, Whitfield, and Wesley were all KJV men, and the list goes on. God has richly blessed the ministries of such men as these because they stayed busy OBEYING His word rather than questioning its authority.

The KJV produces good fruit. I was led to Christ with a King James Bible. Nearly every Christian I know was led to Christ with a KJV. Why? Because it produces good fruit.

The new translations produce EVIL fruit. The modern perversions of scripture are producing infidels who do not even know what the word of God is, much less where to find it. The new translations produce spiritual babies who are totally incapable of discussing Bible doctrine. The new versions produce newer versions, which produce *money* for the

publishers, and I Timothy 6:10 tells us that the love of money is the root of all EVIL.

The Holy Spirit doesn't bear witness to the modern translations, but He DOES bear witness to the King James. I've always believed the KJV to be God's word, even before I was saved. No one ever told me to believe this, but the Holy Spirit just bore witness to the King James--not the others. After being saved, I spent several years of my Christian life not being aware of the big debate going on these days between King James Bible believers and New Age Version believers. The whole time I believed only ONE BOOK to be God's word, and even then I was suspicious of the new versions, although no one had told me to be. When I discovered that most "Christian" schools in our nation do not believe the KJV to be the word of God, I was shocked.

How is it that one comes to believe the KJV naturally, but must be *educated out* of his belief in it? Why is it that King James believers are accused of following men when GOD is the One Who led them to believe it? Why do opponents of the KJV accuse us of following men, when THEY are the ones who allowed MEN to talk them out of believing the KJV?

The KJV produces good fruit because the Holy Spirit bears witness to it like no other book in the world. It's easier to memorize than any new version, and the beautiful old English language gives the reader the impression that he is reading a Book very different and far superior to the rest. It reads different because it *is* different, and it *is* different because it has a different Author. We shall know them "**by their fruit**", and I know the King James Bible is the word of God because it produces GOOD fruit.

VI. THE KJV TRANSLATORS BELIEVED THEY WERE HANDLING THE VERY WORDS OF GOD

One can see this truth by reading the Prefatory and Dedicatory remarks in the Authorized Version. These men didn't believe they were handling "God's message" or "reliable manuscripts." They believed they were handling the very words of God Himself. As the Bible says in I Thessalonians 2:13, they "*. . . received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*"

Like the serpent of Genesis 3:1, modern translators approach the scriptures in skepticism, saying, "*Yea, hath God said?*" This was the first recorded sin in the Bible, and it is still prevalent in the hearts and minds of most scholars and new version promoters.

God has always allowed such people to be DECEIVED because of the IDOLS in their hearts (Ezek. 14:1-9; II Ths. 2:10-12; I Kings 22). A man who lacks faith in God's word is in no condition to translate it. This eliminates every revision committee in the past one hundred years, because these committees have consisted mostly of highly educated men who were heady, high-minded, and proud, thinking that their intelligence qualified them to tamper with the pure words of God.

The KJV translators were not like this. Their scholarship *far exceeded* that of modern translators, yet they remained humble and allowed God to use them in order to produce an infallible masterpiece. They didn't set out to "judge" and "correct" the word of God. Their purpose was to translate God's word for the English speaking people, as they were told to do by their king. I know the King James Bible is the word of God because the KJV translators believed it themselves.

VII. THE TRANSLATORS WORKED HONESTLY

The critics of the KJV enjoy making a fuss about the words in italics, which were added by the translators, but the argument is entirely unnecessary and unfair.

The italic words in the KJV actually prove that the translators were honest in their work. When translating from one language to another, the idioms change, thus making it necessary to add certain words to help the reader grasp the full meaning of the text. When the KJV translators added such words they set them in italics so that we'd know these words were added, *unlike* we find it in so many new versions today, which do not use the italics.

Besides, no one has ever PROVEN that the italic words are not the words of God because no one has "the originals" to check them with. In fact, we know for sure that the translators were led by the Holy Spirit to add at least some of the italicized words.

One good example of this is found in II Samuel 21:19. When the translators came to this verse in the Hebrew text, they noticed that an exact translation would give Elhanan credit for slaying Goliath, but we know from I Chronicles 20:5 that he actually slew *the brother of* Goliath. So the KJV translators added the words "***the brother of***" to II Samuel 21:19. If the Lord had not led them to do so, then II Samuel 21:19 would contradict I Chronicles 20:5 (as it DOES in the New World Translation!).

Another fine example is I John 2:23. The last half of the verse was missing at the time, but the KJV translators inserted it anyway (in italics), feeling that it was necessary. This naturally disturbed many people, but since that time new manuscripts have been found which CONTAIN the last half of I John 2:23. The translators were right in adding the italicized words.

One last example of the Holy Spirit's guiding influence on the KJV translators is found in Psalm 16:8, which says, "***I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.***" As you can see, the words "*he is*" are in italics. According to

many scholars they should be omitted, but according to the Apostle Peter they should *not* be omitted. Peter quotes Psalm 16:8 in Acts 2:25 and he **USES** the italicized words! How did the translators know this if the Lord didn't lead them?

The italics in the King James Bible are the marks of an *honest* translation for no one added these words to mislead us or to change the word of God. They added the words to help us, and they set the words in italics so we'd know they were added. That's honesty. I know the KJV is the word of God, because the translators were more honest in their work than any of the modern Bible translators.

VIII. THE NEW PERVERSIONS COMPARE THEMSELVES TO THE KING JAMES BIBLE

The new versions do not compare themselves to one another near as much as they compare themselves to one Book: the King James Bible. This fact alone proves that there is something very special and unique about the KJV.

Why does everyone line up in opposition **AGAINST** the King James Bible? Why not attack one another? That's easy: Satan has no desire to divide his own kingdom (Mt. 12:26). His desire is to discredit the word of *GOD*, not himself; so he attacks only one Book, God's Book, the KJV.

Those who oppose the KJV are unsure of themselves, for they have no Final Authority; so they despise those of us who **DO** have an Authority. They're unstable, insecure, dishonest, and very inconsistent. They're all terrified of One Book, the KJV, and they'll stop short of nothing in their efforts to rid the Body of Christ of that Book.

I know the KJV is the word of God, because it's the standard which all others use for comparison.

IX. THE TIME OF ITS TRANSLATION

The King James Bible was not translated during the apostate and lukewarm Laodicean church period, like the new translations. The Laodicean period is the last church period before the Second Coming of Christ. It is the last of the seven church periods in Revelation chapters two and three. One can clearly see that we are living in the Laodicean period today by simply comparing modern churches to the church of Revelation 3:14-22. This lukewarm period began toward the end of the 1800's and will continue until Christ returns. The new versions fit well into the lukewarm churches because they are lukewarm "bibles."

The Authorized Version, however, was translated long *before* the Laodicean churches appeared. It was translated during the Philadelphia church period, which is the best church period of all. In fact, it was this church that the Lord Jesus commended for *keeping His word* (Rev. 3:8-10)!

In 1611, when the King James Bible was completed, the scourge of lukewarm Laodicea had not yet swept over the world. There was no "scientific" crowd around in 1611 to put pressure on the translators. There was no civil rights movement going on at this time to influence the work of these men. The women were not screaming for "equal rights," and the humanists and socialists had not yet taken control. The "politically correct" crowd would not appear for another four centuries. The massive army of liberal and modernistic preachers had not yet been assembled. The open public denial of God's word and the Deity of Christ was practically unheard of among ministers. It wasn't until the twentieth century that professing Christianity became flooded with lukewarm preachers who would be willing to compromise the word of God for self gain.

The greatest missionary work in church history occurred between 1700 and 1900, so it makes sense that God would have a Bible ready for this great work, and He did - the KJV. Unfortunately, the new translations appeared a bit LATE on the scene! Think about that. ALL

NEW BIBLE TRANSLATIONS COMPLETELY MISSED THE GREAT MISSIONARY WORKS OF THE 1700'S AND 1800'S! I know the KJV is the word of God because of the time in history in which it was translated.

X. NO ONE HAS PROVED THAT THE KJV IS NOT GOD'S WORD

Has any scholar actually PROVED that there are errors in the King James Bible? No. Enemies of the KJV delight in *ignoring* the facts about the Authorized Version, while never *proving* anything. All apparent "errors" in the KJV can be explained through prayer and a careful study of the scriptures, but the opponents of the KJV aren't interested in looking for truth; they're interested attacking God's word, while never proving anything. I know the KJV is the word of God because, after four hundred years, no one has proven otherwise.

XI. THE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

Only a very deceived individual could believe that the new versions are equal to the King James Bible. Ninety-five percent of all evidence *supports* the text of the King James Authorized Version. The new versions are supported by the remaining five percent evidence.

The new "bibles" are supported by two very corrupt fourth century manuscripts, known as "Vaticanus" and "Siniaticus." These manuscripts are filled with many text alterations to meet the demands of Roman Catholic tradition. They also include the Apocrypha, which the Lord Jesus Christ *excluded* from the Old Testament in Luke 24:44. All new versions contain readings from these corrupt manuscripts, and all new versions use their tiny five percent evidence to attack the ninety-five percent majority text of the King James Bible.

The Textus Receptus (received text) from which the King James Bible came can be traced clear back to Antioch, Syria, where the

disciples were first called Christians and where Paul and Barnabas taught the word of God for a whole year (Acts 11:26). The other "bibles" do not come from Antioch. They come from Alexandria, Egypt, and from Rome. We don't need an Egyptian version, for Egypt is a type of the *world* in the Bible. God called His people out of Egypt (Exod. 3-14), and God called His Son out of Egypt (Hos. 11:1 with Matt. 2:13-15). Why, the Bible says that **"every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians"** in Gen. 46:34, and the Lord Jesus Christ is called a SHEPHERD in John chapter ten. Alexandria, Egypt, is associated with *superstition* in Acts 28:11, and Aquilla and Pricilla had to set an Egyptian straight on his doctrine in Acts chapter 18. Alexandrians are also found *disputing with Stephen* in Acts 6:9. So we don't need a "bible" from Alexandria, Egypt.

Then there's the Roman text, also called the "Western Text." We can also do without a Roman "bible", because it was *Roman* soldiers who nailed our Lord to the cross. The harlot of Revelation 17 is a near perfect description of the Roman Catholic Church, which has persecuted true Christians throughout church history. Romans persecuted the Christians in Acts 18:2, and in 70 A.D. the Romans destroyed Jerusalem. Rome is the "dreadful and terrible" beast of Daniel chapter seven, and Christ will destroy the "Revised Roman Empire" at the Second Coming (Dan. 2; 7; Rev. 13). It has been estimated that Rome is guilty of the blood of some 200 million people who have rejected her corrupt system. A "bible" from Rome is another thing we can live without.

There's only one line of manuscripts that we can trust, and this is the line from Antioch, called the "Syrian" or "Byzantine" type text. The word of God speaks *positively* of Antioch, and *negatively* of Rome and Egypt. We should take the best and dump the rest! I know the King James Bible is the word of God because of the manuscript evidence.

XII. THE KJV EXALTS THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Jesus said, "*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: And they are they which testify of me.*" (John 5:39)

A real Bible will testify of the Lord Jesus Christ. The true word of God will always exalt Jesus Christ, and it will never attack His Deity, His Virgin Birth, His Blood Atonement, His Bodily Resurrection, His Glorious Second Coming, or any other doctrines concerning His Person. However, the new versions attack all of the fundamental doctrines concerning the Lord Jesus Christ at one time or another.

By perverting the many important verses of scripture which deal with the fundamental doctrines of Christ, the new "bibles" have a continuous attack launched against our beloved Saviour, and this is *not* an overstatement! His Virgin Birth is under attack in Isaiah 7:14, Luke 1:34, and Luke 2:33. His Blood Atonement is under attack in Colossians 1:14, Acts 20:28, Ephesians 1:7, and Revelation 1:5. The Bodily Resurrection is under attack in Acts 1:3, Luke chapter 24, and the last twelve verses of Mark. His Deity is under attack in Acts 10:28, John 9:35, and I Timothy 3:16. The new versions attack the Second Coming in Revelation 11:15, and Titus 2:13, and the list goes on because the new versions have an extreme bitter *hatred* toward the Authorized Version and the way it gives the Lord Jesus Christ the preeminent place.

If the reader doubts this, we challenge you to take whatever version you want and compare the above verses in it to the same verses in the King James Bible. The new "bibles" have a very consistent record of attacking the Lord Jesus Christ; so they cannot possibly be "the scriptures" that He said would testify of Him in John 5:39. They testify **AGAINST** him.

The King James Bible never attacks our Lord. More than any book in the world, the Authorized Version of the Protestant Reformation **EXALTS** the Lord Jesus Christ. If we had no other reason for receiving the Authorized Version as the word of God, this reason alone should be enough to convince any true believer, for how could we not become

suspicious of the new versions for making such changes? I know the King James Bible is the word of God because it always exalts the Lord Jesus Christ.

Your Spirit, Your Soul, and Your Body

In this lesson we will be studying a subject that modern-day psychiatrists and psychologists know nothing about, yet these very people profess to be authorities on human nature and human behavior. Imagine going to a doctor so he can help you get well and *he doesn't even know what you are!*

The Bible says that you are a SPIRIT, a SOUL, and a BODY. Before you can understand who you are and how you are supposed to get anywhere in life, you must get acquainted with the doctrine of spirit, soul, and body. This lesson is written from the standpoint that God knows more about us than we do (since He created us) and that God's word can shed more light on human behavior than any man has ever written. You won't be very popular or very recognized for believing the forthcoming pages, but you will be *right*.

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (I Ths. 5:23)

Now, there it is. Paul said that you have a spirit, a soul, and a body. You are a three-part being. You do not have just a body, and you do not have just a body and a soul. You have spirit, a soul, and a body. As we shall learn in a later lesson, God is a trinity consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So, He has made man a trinity also. In fact, your soul pictures God the Father, your body pictures Jesus Christ Who was once here in the flesh, and your spirit pictures the Holy Spirit. God is a trinity, so He has made man a trinity.

Think of the sun for a moment. The sun gives off light rays, chemical rays, and heat rays, yet it is still just one sun. Three rays, but one sun. You are three parts, but one person.

A football is also a good example. It has the outward leather which you see. Then there's an inner tube which you cannot see. Then there's the air inside the inner tube. A football is three parts, but one football. You are three parts, but one person. You are a spirit, a soul, and a body.

Notice how it all began in Genesis: **"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."** (Gen. 2:7) First, God formed a BODY from dirt. Then He breathed a SPIRIT into the body, and then man became a living SOUL. That "breath of life" is the spirit. Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, **"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."** He gave it in Genesis 2:7. That word for "spirit" in the New Testament is "pneuma", which can be translated "breath", "breeze", "a current of air", "life", "mind", "ghost", or "spirit." When God breathed into Adam's lifeless body a LIFE was formed. A complete man was made, which had a spirit, a soul, and a body.

I. YOUR SPIRIT

What good is a football without air? It's no good, for it's just a dead ball. What good is man without God's Spirit? He is NO GOOD. So, God made man in his own image *with a spirit*, a soul, and a body. Notice Genesis 1:26: **"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."** He said "in our image." That's the Trinity: *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*.

God made man in a perfectly sinless image and placed him in a perfect paradise with a simple command: **"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou**

mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen. 2:16-17) Man was told that he would DIE for eating of the forbidden fruit, but this cannot be *physical* death, because Genesis chapter five tells us that Adam lived hundreds of years beyond the day of his sin. Man was made a "living soul" when he received God's Spirit, so man "died" spiritually when he sinned and *lost* God's Spirit. When Satan said, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:1), he was being very deceitful. Man DIDN'T die physically, but he DID die spiritually. When Adam sinned he lost God's Spirit, and he lost God's IMAGE. Adam was made in God's image, but when he had children they were born in ADAM'S image with a sin nature. Notice Genesis 5:3: **"And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth:"** Adam was the only man in the Old Testament to have the image of God, and he had it only for a short time. It isn't until Jesus Christ comes and pays for the sin of the world that we read again about a man having God's image. Colossians 3:10 says, **"And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:"** Notice Hebrews 1:3: **"Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"** Jesus Christ is the image of God, and no one can be born in God's image until they are BORN AGAIN (John 3:3). Then, and only then, can a person have God's image. **"And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."** (I Cor. 15:49)

Since life produces life, it takes life for someone to receive God's image through Christ. The new birth is a supernatural birth where the eternal life in Christ gives spiritual birth to a fallen man. First, one must hear the living word. Hebrews 4:12 says, **"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and**

marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The word of God is ALIVE (quick). Jesus said, **"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."** (John 6:63) The word of God is a living book with living words, which has the power to bring about a new birth. Notice I Peter 1:23: **"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."** If you've been saved, then it's because you once had a dead spirit, and then upon receiving Christ as your Saviour you received a new nature, a new image, and a new Spirit. Ephesians 4:30 says you are *sealed* with the Holy Spirit. You were DEAD spiritually, but God raised you up. Ephesians 2:1 says, **"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins:"** Why were you dead? You lost God's image and God's Spirit in Genesis, and you had to wait for Jesus Christ to give it back to you.

Think of this. Everyone on earth is either in Adam or in Christ. **"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."** (I Cor. 15:22) There is no third dwelling. Either you are a sinner in Adam, or you are a saint in Christ. There are no other options. If you're in Adam, then your spirit is dead because it was made in Adam's image which was also dead. If you're in Christ, then you've been born again and sealed with God's Spirit, in God's image. Everyone has a spirit, but not everyone has a *living* spirit in the eyes of God.

II. YOUR SOUL

Your soul is the real you which dwells inside your body until the moment you die. When you die, your soul *departs* from your body and goes to be with the Lord or goes to suffer in Hell. In Genesis 35:18, we read about the death of Rachel: **"And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin."** When was her soul in departing? It departed when she died. In II Timothy 4:6, Paul said, **"For I am now**

ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." Did his *body* depart when he died? No, his body was buried. His *soul* departed. In II Corinthians 5:8 Paul says, "**We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.**" According to God's word, when a person dies their soul departs from their body and moves to its eternal home.

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:" (Rev. 6:9) So then a soul has a *bodily shape* which can be seen. You and I cannot see it today, but it *can* be seen, if we are to believe Revelation 6:9. John said he *saw* the souls. Now consider Luke 16:23-25: "**And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.**" There's a man who has died and went to Hell. His body was buried, and then he lifted up his eyes in Hell and asked for water to cool his tongue. This man's original eyes were still in his dead body in the grave, as well as his tongue, but his soul, which had a bodily shape, was now in Hell. His soul had eyes, a tongue, and a brain to make them function. While his body lay dead in the grave, this man's soul suffered in Hell with all of his senses, a central nervous system, and a memory.

Some teach that Hell is the grave and that the soul only goes to the grave at death. This just won't do. In fact, there are three very good reasons why this cannot be true:

1. There is no FIRE in the grave, but the Bible declares that there is fire in Hell (Deu. 32:22; Mat. 5:22; Mark 9:43-48; Jas. 3:6)
2. Hell must be much worse than the grave because Jesus said it's better to enter the kingdom blind or crippled than to go to Hell (Mat. 18:8-9). Hell, unlike the grave, must be a place of suffering.
3. In Genesis 49:33-50:5, Jacob dies and is "gathered unto his people" (49:33). However, his body isn't buried until seventy days later (50:3-5). What was gathered unto his people? It was his *soul*. Like Rachel, Jacob's soul departed when he died. His soul went to be with his people while his body awaited burial.

When you received Jesus Christ as your Saviour, it was your *soul* that was saved. This soul is in invisible bodily shape which dwells inside of you until the day you die, or until the Lord returns. When your soul leaves your body, it will be either present with the Lord or tormented in Hell fire.

III. YOUR BODY

Paul said that if any man be in Christ he is a new creature (II Cor. 5:17), but there is certainly nothing new about your body. Your old dead spirit has been regenerated, and your soul has been washed in the blood of the Lamb, but your flesh is still just as vile as ever. You may think much of your flesh, but the Bible comment is that your flesh is one of your worst enemies: **"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."** (Mat. 26:41) **"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."** (Rom. 8:13) **"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as**

the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:" (I Pet. 1:24)

Your flesh is still just as carnal and corrupt as ever. Your salvation hasn't changed your flesh. You have *two natures* now, and the one you feed will win the battle in your life. Notice Galatians 6:8: **"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."** As a Christian, you can sow grass seed and reap worthless grass, or you can sow good seed and reap a good harvest. You can pile up junk on this earth, or you can lay up treasure in Heaven.

Suppose you own two big dogs, a black one and a white one. For thirty days you feed the black dog the best possible diet, but you barely give the white dog enough food to stay alive. Then one day the two dogs engage in a fight. Which dog do you suppose will win? Naturally, the winner will be the one you've been feeding.

How much should we feed the flesh? As little as possible. Paul says in I Timothy 6:8, **"And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."** Paul writes in Philippians 4:11, **"Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."** Your flesh will *never* be content. God knows this to be true. God knows that your flesh is corrupt and that it is capable of doing great damage to your testimony. For this reason He says, **"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."** (Rom. 8:13) To "mortify" is to KILL. What does God say about your flesh? He says KILL, OR BE KILLED! If you live after the flesh ye shall die spiritually, so MORTIFY (kill) the flesh before it kills you.

No, we aren't advocating suicide, or at least not *physical* suicide. We are dealing with a *spiritual* battle in a spiritual war that must be fought with spiritual weapons. Jesus said, **"...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."** (Luke 9:23) Your flesh isn't going to follow Christ. Your flesh wants to eat, drink, and be merry. Your flesh wants to go to the

movies, go shopping for the latest styles, read dirty books and magazines, listen to worldly music, and hang out with worldly people. Your flesh wants to keep Jesus Christ in the closet about ninety-five percent of the time. Jesus Christ wants to keep your flesh mortified (dead) most of the time.

How can this be done? How can a person stay spiritual when they are trapped in a physical body? Paul gives some good advice in Ephesians 6:10-18:

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;"

Did you notice Paul's emphasis on the word *STAND*? We live in a weak and compromising generation when people do not have the guts to *STAND* for anything because everyone lives in the flesh, which is *weak*. God's people are supposed to be different. We have an infallible printed authority which tells us right from wrong, and God expects us to read His word, establish convictions, and *STAND* on it! Like it or not, friend, you are on the battlefield of good and evil, and there is no neutral ground.

Apart from the protective armour that Paul mentions, there are two items that we can classify as *offensive weapons*: the word of God

and prayer. Through the written word God speaks to you, and you speak to God through prayer. That's communication. The more you commune with God the more like God you will become. You will grow spiritually. By contrast, the less you commune with God the less like Him you will be. You will *shrink* spiritually.

David said in Psalm 119:11, "**Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.**" Psalm 119:9 says, "**Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.**" In John 15:3 the Lord Jesus Christ says, "**Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.**" Friend, if you plan to stay clean for God, then you *must* feed on His word. As John Bunyan said, "*This Book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this Book.*"

In Matthew 26:41, Jesus said, "**Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.**" Notice the contrast. The flesh is opposed to prayer. You've spent more time eating today than you have praying. Why? The flesh is weak. It is weak and it will quench your spiritual power unless you *STAND* against it with God's word and prayer. When you don't want to pray, just pray anyway, because that's when you need prayer the most.

In I Corinthians 15:33, Paul said, "**Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.**" If evil communications corrupt good manners, then *GOOD* communications corrupt evil manners! If you want to see the Holy Spirit mortify (kill) the influence of your flesh, just stay in close communion with God. Pray and read God's word daily. The Spirit will stay "stirred up" and the flesh will be over-powered.

In your flesh dwells no good thing (Rom. 7:18). Your flesh is your enemy, and it will remain your enemy for the rest of your life. *Don't let the enemy win. STAND and FIGHT.*

Will the flesh ever be righteous? Will the flesh ever be saved like the soul? Yes, it certainly will. There is coming a day when the saints of God will be given new glorified bodies. We will be given immortal

bodies that can never sin and never die. Speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, Paul says, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Philip. 3:21) Jesus Christ is now in a glorified body (Rev. 1), and those who follow Him will receive one as well. Romans 8:23 says that we are waiting for "the redemption of our body." The Christian's soul has been redeemed, but his body still awaits redemption.

Notice these words of comfort from I Corinthians 15: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.....In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.....Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." (I Cor. 15:42-44, 52-53, 58)

In closing, think of it this way. The subject of spirit, soul, and body has to do with the *penalty*, the *power*, and the *presence* of sin. In the PAST, my SOUL was saved from the PENALTY of sin. In the PRESENT, (day by day) my SPIRIT is saved from the POWER of sin, because I have God's Spirit to be my guide and comfort. In the FUTURE, my BODY will be saved from the PRESENCE of sin.

What Does God Expect of Me?

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23) "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (I Cor. 6:19-20)

Technically, God expects *nothing* of you. Jesus said in John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. He said, "*nothing*." A branch is no good without the vine. A branch by itself will die and become useless. God expects all believers to *deny* themselves and acknowledge their need to allow Jesus Christ to work *through* them, just as a vine produces fruit through its branches. By simply obeying God's word a Christian serves God and glorifies Him. Jesus said, "...**I do always those things that please him.**" (John 8:29) Every Christian is supposed to be a FULL TIME SERVANT. Our Christian duty is to follow Jesus and please our Heavenly Father. God's word gives us all the instructions we need to live a Christ-honoring life and to lay up great treasures in Heaven. This lesson presents some of the more important duties of every Christian.

I. SUBMIT TO BELIEVERS' BAPTISM

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into

the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing." (Acts 8:35-39)

Notice the proper order of events: (1) The eunuch heard the Gospel. (2) He was told that he must BELIEVE with all his heart before he could be baptized. (3) He confessed Jesus Christ openly. (4) Phillip baptized the man by immersion in water. (5) The eunuch then rejoiced.

Scriptural New Testament baptism is for believers only, and the only mode of baptism is total immersion. Baptism saves no one, but it does serve as a perfect opportunity to be openly identified with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. If baptism were for salvation then Jesus would not have been baptized, because He needed no salvation. Baptism pictures the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Christ. Jesus said in Matthew 28:19, "**Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:**" A sinner is saved by grace through faith in Christ (Eph. 2:8-9), but an obedient Christian will submit to our Lord's will and be baptized. God expects you to be baptized.

II. FEAR GOD

Psalms 111:10 says, "**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.**" Solomon said, "**Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.**" (Ecc. 12:13-14)

To fear God is to simply reverence Him--to highly respect His power and authority over you. A person who fears God is a person who always considers God's word and God's will. This is something that modern America knows very little about. As Paul wrote in Romans 3:18,

"There is no fear of God before their eyes." A person who fears God is a person who lives a humble and obedient life before God, always being mindful of the fact that God is HOLY and He will not overlook sin. According to Proverbs 15:16, **"Better is little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble therewith."** No matter how educated or wealthy a man may be, if he doesn't fear God he is FOOLISH and POOR.

In Matthew 10:28, Jesus said, **"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."** A man who fears God has no one else to fear, but a man who fears not God has everyone to fear. Putting God first and fearing Him above all is the key to a happy and fulfilling life. Also see Psalm 118:6 and Proverbs 29:25.

III. READ AND STUDY GOD'S WORD

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (II Tim 2:15) Paul tells us here to STUDY God's word that we might be APPROVED by God. A Christian who doesn't spend adequate time in God's word is a disobedient Christian. This world is filled with sin and ungodly elements, and only through God's word can we find true spiritual refreshment to keep us clean and set apart for God's service. David said, **"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."** (Psa 119:11) God's word will keep a Christian clean! God's word is like a spiritual bar of soap which the Christian uses DAILY to be a sweet smelling savor to God. Speaking of the church in Ephesians 5:26, the Apostle Paul said, **"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."** Psalm 119:9 says, **"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."** Jesus said, **"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."** (John 15:3) It's all through the Bible, friend, a Christian CANNOT stay clean without God's word!

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." (Jsh. 1:8-9) That's God's promise. A DAILY habit of spending time in God's word will guarantee a prosperous and successful life. David said, "**O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day.**" (Psa 119:97) Is this true in your life? It should be. Every Christian should love God's word and meditate on it often.

IV. PRAY ALWAYS

Jesus said that , "**...men ought always to pray, and not to faint.**" (Luke 18:1) God speaks to us through Bible reading, but we speak to Him through prayer. Every Christian needs a special time each day (perhaps more than once per day) when he gets alone with God in prayer. Mark 1:35 says, "**And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.**" Jesus realized the need to pull away for a while and get alone with His Father in prayer. In our fast-paced society this is sometimes hard, but it's very necessary and well worth the effort.

If you're really trusting God for your daily needs and the needs of others, then you will naturally go to Him in prayer to make your requests known. When a child is really depending on a father to do something, he won't quit talking to the father about it until it's done. In fact, that's one thing that moves the father to get it done sooner! God expects us to come to Him on a regular basis to simply "empty" ourselves by laying all our wants and needs in His hands.

Paul said, "**Pray without ceasing**" in I Thessalonians 5:17. Prayer is to be continual, because our relationship with God is continual. Many

Christians wait until they've become loaded down with sins and many burdens before they pray, but this isn't God's will. God commands us to pray **ALWAYS** so we'll never become over-loaded with problems. He wants us to carry a **LIGHT** load. Jesus said, "**For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.**" (Mat. 11:30).

The subjects of prayer are many. *Thanksgiving* is an important part of prayer (Mark 8:6; John 6:11; I Tim. 4:4-5). We are told to pray for *forgiveness* (I John 1:9), for *personal needs* (Mat. 6:9-13; Philip. 4:6, 19), and for *wisdom* (Jas. 1:5-7). We are told to remember *others* in prayer (Rom. 1:9; Jas. 5:13-16), to remember our *government leaders* (I Tim. 2:1-2), and to pray for our *pastors, churches, and missionaries* (I Ths. 5:25; II Ths. 3:1; Jas. 5:16).

Everyone needs to take timeout each day for such physical needs as bathing, eating, and sleeping. Likewise, every Christian needs a special time each day for Bible reading and *prayer*.

V. PRAISE GOD

The word "praise" is found 248 times in the Bible. God desires to be praised by His people! Psalm 22:3 says, "**But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.**" God **INHABITS** the praises of His people! Psalm 150:6 says, "**Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.**"

Hebrews 13:15 instructs us on *how* to praise our God: "**By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.**" The key words here are "LIPS" and "THANKS". It is your Christian duty to use your *LIPS* to let God know and to let others know that God is a great God and that you are **THANKFUL** for His blessings.

This can be done in normal conversation or by singing. In Acts 16:25, Paul and Silas were in jail, yet they *sang praises unto God* in the presence of others. Romans 10:11 says, "...**Who-soever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.**" God expects us to praise Him. When you

love someone you speak highly of them. If you love God, you'll speak highly of Him by praising Him.

VI. BE AN INVOLVED CHURCH MEMBER

Just as a soldier belongs in the military service, a Christian belongs in a Bible-believing church. It is your Christian duty to be an active member of a local New Testament church. Hebrews 10:25 says, **"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."** I Corinthians 16:2 and Acts 20:7 designate the first day of the week (Sunday) as the proper day for Christians to meet together for preaching and fellowship.

God expects Christians to assemble together on a regular basis to worship Him and to exhort one another. A true Christian will get tired of this world and its ways throughout the week, so God has established the local church for our exhortation and edification.

Actually, the local church has three functions: (1) the *salvation* of sinners, (2) the *edification* of saints, and (3) the *glorification* of the Saviour. NEVER join a church that isn't striving for these three goals (*and plenty of them aren't!*). The church is God's army on this earth, and God expects every Christian to be a *good soldier*. II Timothy 2:3-4 says, **"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."** Friend, a soldier is a man who has been disciplined and trained to work together with other soldiers in a fight against an enemy. The local church is not your enemy. *Satan is your enemy (I Peter 5:8)*, so God wants you on *HIS* team so you can fight the good fight against the Devil (II Tim. 4:7). Paul fought a good fight, and he did so by being *involved with and helping* local churches all of his Christian life.

Read your New Testament. The whole thing is about churches. Even the last book of the Bible is written to *seven churches*. The words

"church" and "churches" are found over one hundred times in the New Testament. Friend, God is very interested in the work of the church. In fact, the church is the *BRIDE* of Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 21:2, 9). How could you really be close to Jesus Christ and not care for His bride? Friend, God wants *YOU* involved in a *local Bible-believing church*. Television and radio evangelism may have some good to offer, but that isn't a church. A church is a *called-out group of believers* in Jesus Christ.

You say, "*Well, there are too many hypocrites down there.*" That's *THEIR* problem, and God will deal with *THEM* about their sins, but *YOU* will give account for yourself (Rom. 14:12). God's word never gives us a good reason for not being involved in a local church ministry. Even with all their problems, Paul never advised the Corinthian Christians to get out of church. He taught them to deal with their problems and grow as Christians (Read I and II Corinthians). Our Lord loved the church and gave Himself for it (Eph. 5:25), and in Matthew 16:18 He said, "**...I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**" The church is God's winning team. If you want to be a winning Christian for your Saviour, then join a good church, and support the pastor and members.

VII. GIVE TO GOD

In Luke 6:38 Jesus said, "**Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.**" This world is packed full of wicked and selfish people. God expects His people to be different. Anyone can be a *TAKER*, but it takes self discipline to be a good *GIVER*.

II Corinthians 9:7 says, "**...so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.**" Just giving isn't enough to please God. He expects us to give *cheerfully*. There are basically

three ways to give to God. You should give of your *time*, give of your *talents*, and give of your *treasures*.

Give of Your Time

Since you are bought with a price (I Cor. 6:19-20), you really have no time of your own. You have 168 hours per week, and God owns them all. You will give account for every wasted minute, and you will be rewarded for every minute that was well spent. Notice Paul's instruction from Ephesians 5: **"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."** (Eph. 5:15-17) We are told to REDEEM the time. Make the most of every minute. Someone once said, *"You cannot kill time without injuring eternity."*

Give of Your Talents

I Peter 4:11 says, **"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."**

When I was in grammar school my teachers often conversed with my parents about my progress. I had the idea that I was doing well enough as long as I passed. My teachers would tell my parents, *"James is doing okay, but he is ABLE to do a lot better."* God isn't just monitoring our Christian service: He is also comparing our service to our ABILITY. You may very well be living a much more honorable Christian life than your neighbor, but *are you doing your BEST?* Are you using all of your God-given talents for His honor and glory? If you have a special talent, start praying that God will show you how to use it for Him. Bob Jones Sr. once said, *"It's always a sin to do less than your best."*

Give of Your Treasure

A common practice among Christians is *tithing*. To *tithe* is to give a *tenth*. The first occurrence of tithing in the Bible is in Genesis 14:20 where Abraham gives God a tenth of his possessions. Jacob also vows to tithe in Genesis 28:22. Tithing was also a requirement under the Mosaic law (Lev. 27:30-32; Num. 18:21-28; Deu. 14:22). A tenth of all income was to be given over to the Levitical priesthood for their living and for the maintenance of the Lord's service. The blessings of God were promised to those who were obedient to His laws of tithing. Malachi 3:8-10 says, **"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."**

Today, although we are no longer under the Mosaic law, Bible-believing Christians still practice tithing because God accepted tithes even *before* the law of Moses. If an Old Testament Jew, whose sins had not yet been cleansed, can give a tenth of his income to the Lord, how much more should we be willing to give, whose sins *have* been washed away in the blood of Christ?

Most Bible-believing churches consider tithing a *minimum* gift, which goes into a general fund to finance the basic expenses of the church, while special love offerings and missions are considered separate offerings altogether.

VIII. LIVE A HOLY LIFE

God is holy, so He expects His children to be holy. I Peter 1:16 says, **"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."** To be "holy" is to be *whole*, to be pure and blameless before God. It is to lack nothing

in God's sight. A Christian is not just a "sinner saved by grace," as some teach. A Christian in the Bible is a *disciple*. "...**And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.**" (Acts 11:26) A disciple of Jesus Christ is one who has been *disciplined to FOLLOW Jesus Christ*. We have been called to live *HOLY LIVES*, just as our Lord lived a holy life. Notice these instructive words from II Corinthians chapter six:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." (Vss. 14-17)

God demands HOLINESS. He is glorified when we live above sin and His light of holiness shines through us. We cannot be too careful. Paul said that we should **"Abstain from all appearance of evil."** (I Thes. 5:22) Even things that may LOOK evil can scar our Christian testimony, so God expects us to be watchful and live holy lives. He expects us to stay unspotted by this wicked world.

IX. ESTABLISH GOOD CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIPS

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (II Cor. 5:17)

The last thing you need as a Christian is a bunch of worldly friends to hinder your spiritual growth. Amos 3:3 says, **"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"** There's no point in having close friends who aren't spiritual. Acquaintances and distant friends are fine, but your closest friends should be God-fearing Christians. Keep praying for your

old friends and witnessing to them, but make some new friends who are God's friends. A Christian's friends should be saved people who love God and understand His purpose and plan in life. They'll be a great encouragement and comfort to you in life.

X. LEARN TO GET ALONG WITH GOD'S PEOPLE

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. 4:1-3)

The best way to get along with people is to *want* to get along with them. Satan delights in reaching our hearts through our old nature and causing us to look for sins and faults among God's people. Remember, it is Satan who accuses the brethren, not you (Rev. 12:10). A sensitive and touchy spirit that is easily offended by others is *not* the Holy Spirit. **"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."** (Gal. 5:22-23) We need to work hard and really try to get along with the brethren. Consider these fourteen items from God's word:

1. Love one another - John 15:12, 17
2. Confess faults to one another - Jas 5:16
3. Pray for one another - Jas 5:16
4. Prefer one another - Rom 12:10
5. Receive one another - Rom 5:7
6. Admonish one another - Rom 15:14
7. Serve one another - Gal. 1:3
8. Forbear one another - Eph. 4:2
9. Forgive one another - Eph. 4:32
10. Edify one another - I Ths. 5:11

11. Consider one another - Heb. 10:24
12. Exhort one another - Heb. 3:13
13. Care for one another - I Cor. 12:25
14. Comfort one another - I Ths. 4:18

As someone has said, "You're going to live forever with God's people; so you may as well learn to get along with them!" I have learned that I can get along with anyone whom I want to get along with.

XI. SUBMIT TO AUTHORITIES

The Bible is filled with instruction on how Christians are to respect and obey their appointed authorities. These authorities fall into four general categories: the home, the government, the employer, and the church.

In the home, wives are told to submit to their husbands (Eph. 5:22-25), and children are told to obey their parents (Eph. 6:1-3). The "times" may have changed, but God and His words have not changed. The ideal Christian home is a home where everyone fears God under the leadership of a God-honoring Christian man.

The government is also an appointed authority of God. Romans 13:1-4 says, **"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."**

Governments were ordained of God, and He often deals with men through governments. It is our Christian duty to respect those who

lead our local, state, and national governments. Sometimes we cannot honestly respect the people in office, but we can still respect the *position* that they hold and we can pray for them. Paul writes these words to Timothy: **"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."** (I Tim. 2:1-2) Christians need to behave themselves by obeying their leaders and praying for them (Tit. 3:1; Jude 1:8; II Pet. 2:10-11; I Pet. 2:13-17), because it was *GOD* Who made them leaders. We honor *God* by honoring our leaders.

God also expects us to submit to our employers and not be trouble makers. I Timothy 6:1-2 even commands servants to submit to their masters. John the Baptist preached that the Roman soldiers should be content with their wages (Luke 3:14). Unless an employer requires an employee to violate *God's* law, he is to be content, remain humble, and submit. If he isn't willing to submit, then he can always look for a new job.

Then there are authorities within the church. Hebrews 13:17 says, **"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."** We are to honor *God* by showing true respect for our spiritual leaders. Your pastor, your deacons, and elders are men whom *God* has ordained to serve as church leaders. Remember to honor *God* by praying for them and respecting their authority. If you cannot honestly respect your church leaders, then find a new church. **NEVER** rebel against *God's* authorities! Don't start trouble. Just quietly behave yourself and find a new church. *God* always blesses those who submit to authority, because *all authority comes from God*.

XII. BE A CHRISTIAN WITNESS

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

A *witness* is a person who tells what he knows. Our job is to tell lost people what we know about the Lord Jesus Christ and His saving grace. A religion worth having is a religion worth propagating. If you are saved, it's because someone took the time to witness to you. Well, **YOU** should witness to others. Tell others what Jesus has done for you, and what He can do for them. Learn some good salvation verses from your Bible and tell others!

We will deal with this subject in much greater detail in our next lesson, *Leading Others to Christ*.

Leading Others to Christ

Proverbs 11:30 says, **"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."** It is the duty of every Christian to work toward winning others to Christ. In Acts 1:8, our Lord Jesus Christ told His followers, **"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."** It is our duty to witness to the lost about Jesus Christ and His saving grace. This lesson has been prepared to help you be more equipped to deal with lost people with the word of God.

Unfortunately, most of the witnessing that you do in your Christian life will not lead a person to Christ. Most witnessing will simply be a matter of you letting someone know that they are a sinner, Christ died

for them, and He wants to save them. You may do this verbally, or you may simply leave someone a tract or write a letter. Either way, most people will ignore you for the most part and reject Christ. Regardless, it is still our duty to be a WITNESS. A witness is not a person who wins others, but simply a person who TELLS WHAT HE KNOWS. That's our duty--to tell the lost what we know about Jesus Christ and His saving grace. This point is well made in Ezekiel 3:17-19: **"Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."** It is not our duty to win everyone, but it is our duty to WARN them. Paul said in Acts 20:26-27 that he was pure from the blood of all men because he had declared unto them the whole counsel of God. That's our job--to tell the world about *Jesus Christ*.

Jesus compared this to fishing in Matthew 4:19 when He said, **"Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."** Now immediately we learn three things from this command: (1) Most men will never "bite", (2) some will "get away," and (3) we will "catch" some.

If I choose to go fishing, I surely know that most of the fish in the lake will never bite my hook. I'd be a fool to think that every fish is out there just waiting for my hook and bait to hit the water. I just accept the fact that most won't care to "bite."

Now some will bite, and I can expect that. But I cannot expect to catch each fish that bites. Some, perhaps even most, will get away. They will steal my bait, and I'll have to bait my hook again and keep trying. I'd be foolish to get discouraged and quit fishing just because some fish got away.

A fisherman *will* catch some fish. A quitter may never catch any, but a person who fishes regularly *will* catch some fish. There is simply no way you can fish every day and never catch a fish. You say, "I haven't caught a fish all year." That's because you haven't been fishing every day. You've went a few times, perhaps several times, but not every day. If you fish every day you *will* catch fish.

The same is true in witnessing. If you consistently witness and pray, you *will* lead people to Christ. You may not always be the person to open the Bible and deal with them from the Scriptures, but you will see souls saved through your continual witness. Sometimes you may be the person to tell them about Christ, show them the Scriptures, and pray with them as they call upon the Lord for salvation. It is at these moments that Satan fights the hardest, so a good knowledge of God's word will do wonders. There's nothing like taking a Bible and seeing a person's eyes light up as they begin to really understand what you show them about salvation.

I. CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE WITNESSING

Take your Bible and read Acts 8:26-40. This is the story of the Ethiopian eunuch who became a Christian after Phillip witnessed to him about Christ. This story offers several good points about effective witnessing. First, we'll consider some points from the standpoint of Phillip, the Christian witness. Then we'll consider three points from the eunuch's standpoint. Thirdly, we'll examine this event from the standpoint of the Holy Spirit. When all is considered, we will have studied an ideal situation for effective witnessing.

From Phillip's Standpoint

He responded to the Holy Spirit's leadership

In verse 26, the Holy Spirit told Phillip to "**arise and go.**" Then in verse 27 Phillip "**arose and went.**" Rather than wiggle out of the

opportunity, Phillip simply obeyed God's lead. He asked no questions, and he made no excuses. He "arose and went."

When God speaks to your heart about witnessing to a person, then **ARISE** and **GO**. You say, "Well, how do I know it's God speaking to me?" Well, who else would it be? Do you think *Satan* wants you to witness to someone about Christ? Follow God's lead!

He proceeded tactfully

Notice the wisdom that Phillip used in verse 30. He didn't run up to the chariot and yell "You're going to Hell if you don't repent!" This wasn't the time and place for that. Phillip used some godly wisdom by taking advantage of the moment. The eunuch was already reading his Bible, so Phillip stepped in real casual and smooth and simply said, "**Understandest thou what thou readest?**" Now a conversation had been opened.

He used the Scriptures

In verses 32 through 35 we see that the eunuch was reading Isaiah 53, so Phillip used Isaiah 53 to teach this man about Christ. He didn't go into long-winded stories about his own "religious experience." Phillip simply took God's word and gave this man the answer he was seeking. No man-made method can beat the Scriptures. Just learn the Book and use it (Heb. 4:12).

He presented the Lord Jesus Christ

Verse 35 says that Phillip "**preached unto him Jesus.**" Phillip stuck to the subject at hand, Jesus Christ, and avoided discussions that weren't relevant to this man getting saved. Jesus told us to be witnesses *unto Him* (Acts 1:8). We should always stick to the subject and preach Jesus.

He followed through to completion

In verses 36 through 39 we see that Phillip stayed there until the Holy Spirit led him away. He didn't just witness and then leave. Phillip wanted RESULTS. He wanted to see this man trust Christ as Saviour, so he stayed right on through the end.

If you find yourself making some real progress with a lost person, STAY THERE and keep giving them the word! Stick with the subjects of sin and the Saviour, and watch God soften that heart and bring them to a genuine conversion.

From the Eunuch's Standpoint

He was open to the truth

This man had come to Jerusalem to worship (vs. 27). From this we can see that he was *looking for truth*. Why didn't he stay home and worship the gods of North Africa? He knew there was more. He knew there was a true God, and he sought to know more about Him. To really be effective with a person, that person must be seeking for the truth. Jesus said *seek and ye shall find* (Mat. 7:7).

He needed to understand the word

In verses 30 and 31, Phillip wants to make sure that this man understands the Scripture. Just reading a few verses isn't enough. We need to do our best to help the lost *understand* New Testament salvation. Too many "soul-winners" have a neat little system of selected Bible verses that they use on people without ever making sure that these verses are really understood. The "Roman's Road" is fine, but make sure the lost person *understands* it. It may be necessary to present many other portions of Scripture just to properly explain the Roman's Road.

He had to believe

Notice in verse 36 the eunuch desired to be baptized. No doubt, many preachers today would have went right ahead and baptized him without asking any questions, but not Phillip. Phillip knew that mere baptism couldn't save anyone, so in verse 37 he made sure that this man BELIEVED. He had just preached to him from Isaiah 53 (the crucifixion), and now he wanted to know if the eunuch believed, if he accepted his message. The eunuch confessed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God.

We need to make sure that the lost believe on Christ, and *mental* belief isn't enough (James 2:19). Before a man can be saved, he must believe FROM THE HEART. Romans 6:17 says, **"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."** We need to make sure a person really means business. We need to make sure they *really* believe (Acts 16:30-31; John 1:12; Rom. 10:9-10; I Cor. 1:21).

From the Holy Spirit's Standpoint

He led Phillip to the right place

Notice in verse 29 that God knew exactly *where* Phillip needed to be. God didn't tell him why, but He did command Phillip to go to the chariot. Phillip had no idea that a man was about to be saved, but he still obeyed God and trusted His leadership.

He led Phillip to the right man

God made arrangements for Phillip and the eunuch to have this conversation. He knew that the eunuch needed the Gospel and that he

was ready to receive it. We need to pray that God will lead us to those who are most ready. Some are already being dealt with by the Holy Spirit, and these are often the best people to speak to about Christ.

He led Phillip to the right Scripture

Certainly, it was God's plan for Isaiah 53 to be already opened right there in the chariot. Phillip didn't have to plan everything and rehearse all of his words. The Holy Spirit led the way, and Phillip followed His lead.

He led Phillip to the right result

In verse 39, we have a man saved and rejoicing. That's the work of God. Only God can give true inner joy. Romans 14:17 says, **"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."** When a man is really saved, he has joy because he has peace with God.

II. AN IDEAL CONVERSION

In this section we're going to "listen in" on an ideal conversation between a lost person and an experienced Christian witness. Tim is a lost man, while Don is an experienced student of the word. Pay close attention to how Don uses God's word in piercing Tim's heart.

DON: Tim, let me give you something to read when you get a chance.

TIM: What is it?

DON: It's a Gospel tract. It tells you about Jesus Christ and how He paid for your sins on Calvary. By the way, are you a Christian?

TIM: Yeah, I guess so.

DON: Well, let me ask you this. *If you died right now, are you 100% sure that you wouldn't go to Hell?*

TIM: Well, of course not! No one can be 100% sure of that!

DON: Let me show you something from God's word. Do you believe God's word?

TIM: Sure, I believe the Bible.

DON: Ok, this is I John 5:13--already highlighted for you. Would you read it out loud?

TIM: It says, **"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."**

DON: Did it say you can KNOW that you have eternal life?

TIM: Well, I don't think anyone can KNOW.

DON: What did the verse say?

TIM: But, how can you KNOW before you die? That's impossible!

DON: I thought you *believed the Bible, Tim?*

TIM: Well, I do, but...

DON: What do you mean "BUT"? Either you believe it or you don't. Here, read II Timothy 1:12.

TIM: "...I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

DON: Did Paul say that no one could know for sure?

TIM: Well...uh...no.

DON: Then why do you say that? God never told you to say it, so why do you say it?

TIM: I just don't see how....

DON: That's the trouble, Tim. You're trying to understand God without God's word. It cannot be done. God's word reveals God's will and His plan for you and I. That plan includes knowing Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour. Tim, has there ever been a time when you really received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?

TIM: Yeah, I've been a church member for years, since I was a kid.

DON: That's not what I'm asking. Here, read this verse, John 3:3.

TIM: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

DON: Did Jesus say anything about joining a church or being a good person?

TIM: Well, no.

DON: Tim, salvation is a NEW BIRTH. It's a SPIRITUAL birth in Jesus Christ. Just as you were once born physically, you must also be born *spiritually*.

TIM: But why? Why is that even necessary?

DON: Well, let me show you why from God's word. Here, read Romans 5:12.

TIM: **"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"**

DON: You see, because of Adam's sin in Eden (Gen. 3) he received a sin nature. He lost fellowship with God. In fact, since that day, every human being born into this world has been born with a sin nature (except for Jesus Christ), because everyone is a child of Adam (Genesis 5:3; I Cor. 1:22).

TIM: So, everyone is born a sinner because of Adam's sin?

DON: Exactly! What does Romans 3:10 tell you?

TIM: **"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:"**

DON: That's right. Now read verse 23.

TIM: **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"**

DON: Sin has separated man from God. Because of sin we are not children of God (John 8:44; I John 3:10). Our righteousness is no good. Romans 10:3 says, **"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not**

submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.” Isaiah 64:6 says that your righteousness is as **“filthy rags.”** Tim, God isn't wanting you to establish *your own* righteousness! He wants you to FORSAKE your own righteousness and turn to Jesus Christ!

TIM: But what about good people like Ghandi or the Pope?

DON: What did Romans 3:23 say? Did it not say that ALL have sinned and come short of God's glory?

TIM: Yes.

DON: Then even these men must be born again. There are no exceptions. Jesus said ye **MUST** be born again. But here is the good news. Read Romans 5:8-9.

TIM: **“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”**

DON: God knew your hopeless condition, so He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to shed His sinless blood to **PAY** for your sins. **YOUR SIN DEBT HAS BEEN PAID!** You couldn't pay it, so Christ paid it for you! All you have to do is **REPENT** of your sins (Luke 13:3) and trust Christ to save you.

TIM: But, still, I don't see how that can happen. I mean, you're still the same person no matter what you do.

DON: No, you're still the same **PHYSICALLY**, but spiritually, a Christian is a “new creature” in Christ (II Cor. 5:17). Here, read John 1:12.

TIM: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"

DON: See, when you really BELIEVE on Christ you RECEIVE Him. That is, in your heart, you totally trust Him alone to save you. You reject everyone else, and you reject yourself. Only Christ can save you (John 14:6). Once you believe on Christ you become a son of God, a member of God's family. Here, this is I John 3:2. Read it, please.

TIM: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

DON: You see, those who have RECEIVED Jesus Christ by BELIEVING on Him have been BORN AGAIN into God's family as God's SONS.

TIM: Well, what about baptism? Don't you have to be baptized too?

DON: Jesus commanded baptism (Mat. 28:18-19), but not for salvation. Baptism is for BELIEVERS only (Acts 8:37). What does Paul say in Ephesians 2:8-9?

TIM: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

DON: Many important things should follow one's salvation, such as baptism, church membership, Bible reading, prayer, and clean living, but none of these can SAVE you. You are saved by FAITH in the finished work of Christ.

TIM: That's it, just FAITH in what Jesus has already done?

DON: That's it! You're saved just like the dying thief was saved. He simply called upon the Lord for salvation, and Jesus saved him (Luke 23:39-43). Here, read Romans 10:9-10:

TIM: **"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."**

DON: Earlier in the book of Romans, in chapter 4, verse 25, Paul said that Jesus was **"...was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.** He was RAISED for our justification, so in 10:9-10 Paul speaks of BELIEVING that God raised Him. Why? Because He can JUSTIFY you if you will believe. Would you like to receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour right now?

TIM: Right now? Shouldn't I wait till Sunday and do it at church?

DON: No, II Corinthians 6:2 says, **"...now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)** The fact that God is showing you the truth TODAY is proof that He wants to save you today. Besides, you could be dead before Sunday! You could be in Hell before sundown, Tim, so RIGHT NOW is the time to turn from sin and turn TO Jesus Christ! How about it? Would you like to pray right now, and receive Christ as your Saviour?

TIM: Well, I don't want to go to Hell!

DON: Jesus doesn't want you to go to Hell either (II Peter 3:9), so why not call upon Him right now. Here, read Romans 10:13.

TIM: **"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."** Well, how do I call upon Him? What do I say?

DON: You simply pray in your own words and tell God that you know you are a sinner, you know you can't save yourself, and you believe that Jesus Christ is your only hope for Salvation. Then ask him to cleanse you from all sin, and make you one of His own.

TIM: Will I be saved then?

DON: If you really mean it. You have God's promise that if your really BELIEVE in your heart you will be saved. Would you like to be saved?

TIM: Yes, for the first time in my life, this really makes sense. Yes, I want to be saved.

DON: Ok, let's pray. Father, I thank you for the opportunity to present the Gospel to Tim. We've read your word and we your promises. Lord, I thank you for opening Tim's eyes that he might understand the simplicity of true salvation, and I thank you that he realizes his lost condition and that he wants to be saved--he wants to be a child of God and live for you. Tim, while we pray, do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that he shed His blood on Calvary's cross to pay for your sins?

TIM: Yes.

DON: Do you believe that He rose from the grave and that He sits in Heaven right now, and that He can save your soul?

TIM: Yes

DON: Do you believe that anyone in this world can save you other than Jesus Christ?

TIM: No.

DON: Then, in your own words, tell the Lord right now that you know you're a sinner, and ask Him to come into your heart and wash away all your sins. Ask Him to give you the new birth and make you a new creature in Christ.

TIM: Lord, I know I'm a sinner, and I know that Jesus alone can save me. Lord, come into my heart and wash away all my sin. Make me a child of God. Make me a part of your family--a new creature in Christ. Help me to be a good Christian and serve you faithfully. In Jesus name, Amen.

DON: Did you really mean that?

TIM: Yes, I really meant it.

DON: Then you are now a member of God's family. You've done what God told you to do, and God has done what He promised. He just washed your sins away. He no longer sees you as a sinner, but as His own child, in fellowship with Him.

TIM: That's amazing. I feel all different inside!

DON: That's because YOUR SINS ARE GONE, and God's Spirit has moved in to stay (Eph. 4:30). Let me ask you something. *If you died right now, are you 100% sure that you wouldn't go to Hell?*

TIM: Absolutely!

III. SOME SCRIPTURE "TOOLS"

Every Christian should be familiar with a good many verses of Scripture that deal with sin and salvation. Some of these you should be

able to quote from memory to anyone at anytime, while others you should at least be able to find in the Bible to show someone.

The Roman's Road

Romans 3:10: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:"

Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"

Romans 5:8: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 10:13: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Romans 10:9-10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Believing

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

Acts 16:31: "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

John 1:12: "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:"

John 11:25-26: "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"

John 3:36: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

John 3:18: "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Works Can't Save

Romans 4:5: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"

Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;"

Romans 11:6: "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work."

Galatians 2:16: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Repentance

Luke 13:3: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:"

II Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Mark 6:12: "And they went out, and preached that men should repent."

Hell

Luke 16:23: "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."

Mark 9:44: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:"

Revelation 20:15: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Matthew 13:42: "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Eternal Security

Ephesians 4:30: "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

John 10:28-29: "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

Philippians 1:6: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"

John 6:37: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

Romans 8:38-39: "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The Blood of Christ

Revelation 1:5: "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"

Revelation 5:9: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;"

Colossians 1:14: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:"

Romans 3:25: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;"

Hebrews 9:14: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

The Five Facts of Life

In closing, always remember that there are *five basic truths* that a sinner needs to realize, and the Scripture already presented can be used to get these truths across. No matter how you do it, make sure the following facts are well understood:

1. You are a sinner.
2. You will die a sinner.
3. You will be judged a sinner.
4. You will be condemned a sinner.
5. Your only hope is the Lord Jesus Christ.

IV. Following Salvation

Once a person has received Christ as Saviour, they should be encouraged to follow God's commands. The material covered in Lesson VI should be used to show the new Christian what God expects of them. Baptism, church membership, Bible reading and prayer should be highly emphasized.

A good way to interest a new Christian in God's word is to encourage them to take a good Bible course, such as this one!

The Doctrines of Heaven and Hell

In this lesson we will take up the subjects of Heaven and Hell. Due to the fact that most Christians have their roots in this world, there is a sad ignorance about both of these subjects among God's people. Both Heaven and Hell are *literal* and *physical* places, both are *eternal* places, and both are spoken of by the Lord Jesus Christ. These two words combined are found over 600 times in God's word, and such language as

"a furnace of fire," "everlasting fire," and "affections on things above" is found a great many more. Heaven and Hell are very REAL in the Bible. Every Christian should be firmly grounded in these doctrines.

For a change of pace, we shall cover these two subjects in a question/answer format.

I. THE DOCTRINE OF HEAVEN

Technically speaking, there are THREE Heavens in Scripture. The first heaven is the earth's atmosphere where birds fly (Gen. 1:20). The second heaven is what we call space, where the sun, moon, and stars are located (Gen. 1:17). Then we have the third Heaven, the actual abode of God Himself, the "Most Holy Place" in all of God's creation. Paul states in II Corinthians 12:2 that he was once caught UP to the third Heaven: "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." (II Cor. 12:2-4) It is this place, the THIRD Heaven, that we are discussing in this lesson.

Where is Heaven?

We know Heaven is "up" for Paul said so in II Corinthians 12:2. This will make more sense as we see how God's word establishes an absolute direction for the location of Heaven. Isaiah 14:13 records the intentions of the evil Lucifer in the very beginning: "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:" (Isa. 14:13) He planned to take over God's kingdom, and he planned to do so by going NORTH.

Notice these interesting words in Psalm 75:6-7: **" For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another."** Notice how "God" is used as a substitute for "North." The verses said East...West...South....God! Why? Because Heaven is in the NORTH. Santa Claus isn't in the North; HEAVEN is in the North!

Psalm 48:2 says, **"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."** Where's the city of the great King? On the "sides of the north." Where did Lucifer want to go? To the "sides of the north." The Bible is very clear about the direction of Heaven. It is in, or beyond, the Northern regions of this universe.

How Do We Know Heaven Is A Literal Place?

Simply because God's word never speaks of Heaven as being anything but literal. The notion that Heaven is a figurative expression is man's foolish philosophy. Paul said he WENT there. How could he go there if it isn't literal? Revelation chapters 21 and 22 speak of New Jerusalem being in Heaven. How could this be true if Heaven were not literal? Jesus said He was going to prepare a PLACE for us (John 14:1-3). If Heaven isn't literal, then what is it? The Bible always speaks of Heaven as a LITERAL PLACE. We have no authority to change it.

Who and What Is in Heaven?

God the Father is in Heaven, according to the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:9: **"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."** God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is currently sitting in Heaven on the right hand of God the Father: **"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God."** (Heb. 10:12; also see Mark 16:19, Acts 2:33, and Col. 3:1) God the Holy Spirit is EVERYWHERE

(Psa. 139:7-10), so He too is in Heaven. In fact, I John 5:7 says, **"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."** So the Holy Trinity is in Heaven.

In addition to this, Matthew 22:30 tells us that God's angels are "in Heaven". Ezekiel chapters 1 and 10 speak of the Cherubim creatures surrounding God's throne, as does Revelation chapter 4. Then Isaiah chapter 6 speaks of the Seraphim creatures being there.

The souls of God's saints are in Heaven. II Corinthians 5:8 says, **"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."**

Our "treasure" for serving God is in Heaven. Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-20, **"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."** Colossians 3:2 tells us to set our affections on THINGS ABOVE, not on the things of earth.

According to Revelation 21:2, New Jerusalem is in Heaven, and will one day come down to be inhabited in Eternity. Heaven is a real place prepared for a real people.

Will We Recognize One Another in Heaven?

Yes we will. Notice Paul's words from I Corinthians 13:10-12: **"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."** Our knowledge and wisdom will be greatly increased in Heaven. Our present knowledge is only partial, but will one day be complete.

In Matthew 17, Moses and Elijah were recognized by the disciples. David found comfort in the fact that he would one day go to be with his son (II Sam. 12:23). How could this be of any comfort if he wouldn't recognize him? We recognize one another today, so Heaven's knowledge will be far better.

Do People in Heaven Know about Present Earthly Affairs?

The words of Revelation 6:10 seem to indicate that people in Heaven do have access to some of the affairs of this world. **"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"** They knew that God's wrath had not yet been poured out on the earth, and they knew about the prayers of the saints on the earth. Verse 11 goes on to inform these souls that they must wait until more saints are killed. So they had at least SOME knowledge of earthly affairs.

Will There Be Marriages and Families in Heaven?

No. In Matthew chapter 22 the Sadducees question Jesus about this very subject. In verse 30 Jesus answers by saying, **"For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."** The angels in Heaven do not marry and have families, so we will not marry and have families. Marriage and family is a passing scene. God has much greater things in store for those who love Him (I Cor. 2:9).

What Will Our New Bodies Be Like?

There are two keys to answering this question. One is found in the above portion of Scripture: **"...but are as the angels of God in heaven."** The second key to understanding our resurrection body is

found in I John 3:1-2: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

These two texts give us an idea of what our new bodies will be like. We will be LIKE the angels and we will be LIKE Jesus in his glorified body. Since all angels are young adults in the Bible, we will have young bodies, bodies that never grow old, and since Jesus lives forever in his resurrection body, we will have incorruptible bodies like his. I Corinthians 15:52-53 says, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Jesus lives forever in His resurrection body, so we shall live forever in ours.

What Will We Do in Heaven?

I believe the answer is well stated in Revelation 5:8-10: "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."

This passage speaks of three distinct things that we will do in Heaven. We will WORSHIP GOD, we will PRAISE GOD, and we will REIGN IN GOD'S KINGDOM.

In the very beginning, on creation's morning, we find that God was worshiped and praised by His creation. Job 38:4-7 says that "...**the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.**"

Lucifer desired to take over God's kingdom, but was unsuccessful. God has always maintained His power and authority, and we who serve Him today will have the honor of being on His side and in His kingdom in eternity!

Notice Revelation 11:15-18: **"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth."**

When Jesus returns we will be rewarded and then we will REIGN with Him in His kingdom. Revelation 22:5 says, **"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."** On this side of glory we must submit to the wicked powers that be. We often find ourselves troubled with the actions of our leaders and with the general condition of our country. In Heaven, everything will change. Things will be done **GOD'S WAY**, and we will assist Him in ruling in His kingdom. We will worship, praise, and reign forever!

II. THE DOCTRINE OF HELL

In God's word, hell is a literal and physical place which burns with a fire which shall never be quenched. It is not a "state of mind," as some teach, nor is it a "parable," as others teach. Hell is just as real as Heaven. Hell is just as literal and physical as the ground that we walk upon and the houses that we inhabit. Yet, more and more preachers are leaving hell out of their preaching and teaching. Cartoonists draw silly little comic pictures from their shallow minds about hell, never really believing that such a place exists, and certainly never realizing how their foolish illustration doesn't even begin to accurately depict the hell of the Bible. People use "hell" as a curse word, not realizing that it is their very HOME that they are speaking of! Friend, hell is no joke. Hell is real, and we really have a duty to warn people about it while we still can. Jesus preached more about hell than about Heaven for He knew very well that such a place exists, and that billions more would end up there if not for His own sacrifice on Calvary.

Why Did God Create Hell?

Hell was not originally created for man. **"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."** (Mat. 25:41) Revelation 20:10 says, **" And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."** Hell was originally created for the devil and his angels, not man. Man was sinless when God first made him, so hell was not for him. Then man chose to follow Satan and sin against God, so God had no choice but to sentence disobedient man to the fires of hell. Satan will find his eternal home in the fires of hell, as will those who follow him. God is not

willing that any should perish (II Peter 3:9), but He will allow a person to burn in hell for rejecting Christ.

Where Is Hell?

Just as Heaven is a literal and physical place, so is hell. The Bible teaches that hell is in the core of the earth. Note the following: **"For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains."** (Deut 32:22) Amos 9:2 says, **"Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down."** Where is hell? It is *straight down* under your feet! In Numbers chapter 16, when God wanted to judge the followers of Korah, the ground open up and they all went *down* alive in the pit. Friend, hell is not in some far away dimension of some sort. Hell is a literal and physical place under your feet. Currently, your physical feet walk upon a physical earth, thus preventing you from gravitating downward to hell. But one day your soul, which is not physical, will leave your body, and that soul will drop straight into hell unless it has been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

What Is Hell Like?

Many today are trying to "air condition" hell so it doesn't seem so bad, but the Bible paints a very clear picture for all to see. Hell is a horrible place!

"...the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." (Luke 16:22-24) If you go to Hell, you will suffer. That's what Hell is for. Just as the rich man of Luke 16, you'll be **TORMENTED IN**

FLAMES. A sinner closes his eyes in death, and the Devil has his soul to torment in Hell forever.

Many claim that the Luke 16 story of Lazarus and the rich man is only a parable, and does not speak of a literal hell. This is a very shallow argument for three reasons:

- (1) Parables in the Bible do not use names, yet this one does.
- (2) Jesus didn't say it was a parable. He said there was a CERTAIN rich man and a beggar named Lazarus.
- (3) Even if this were a parable there are still many other portions of Scripture which speak of hell as a literal burning place. There's no way around it. Hell is real, and people suffer there all the time.

You say, "God wouldn't allow such a thing to happen." Sure He will! God allows people to suffer all the time. God allowed Hitler to murder 6,000,000 Jews, did He not? God allowed Herod to kill the children under two years old, did He not (Matthew 2)? If God will allow innocent babies to be murdered, then why wouldn't He allow a Christ rejecting sinner to burn in Hell? Did God not allow Jesus Christ, an innocent and sinless man, to be beaten and murdered? If God will allow His only begotten Son to suffer and be murdered, then why should God save a sinner from Hell when he chooses not to trust Christ as Saviour? Listen, friend, **GOD WILL ALLOW YOU TO GO TO HELL AND BURN IF YOU ARE NOT BORN AGAIN.** It happens all the time. **"And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the**

kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:43-48)

The suffering of Hell is horrible. Not only is there physical suffering, but there is also a great deal of *mental* suffering. You'll always remember your earthly life. You'll remember your family and your friends. You'll remember your spouse and your children. Just as the rich man in Luke 16, you'll remember it all! You'll also remember the chances that you had to be saved. You'll remember reading these words, and you'll remember your thoughts and comments about these words. In Hell, you will always remember the moment that you rejected Jesus Christ as your Saviour. All sinners go to Hell, and they go there to suffer.

Isn't Hell Really the Grave?

The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Hell is only the grave that everyone goes to at death. They believe that the saved ones in the graves will be given eternal life on earth after the White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15, while the unsaved in the graves will be *annihilated* once and for all in the Lake of Fire. These people refuse to believe that God will punish the wicked forever in the Lake of Fire. Of course, the Scriptures say something entirely different:

- (1) There is no FIRE in the grave, but there certainly is fire in the "hell" of the Bible (Luke 16:23; Deu. 32:22; Mat. 5:22; 18:9; Jas. 3:6).
- (2) No one PRAYS from the grave, but Hell has prayer (Luke 16:24; Jon. 2:2).
- (3) Hell was originally made for the Devil and his angels (Mat. 25:41), but the grave was not.

- (4) A Christian's SOUL does not go to the grave at death (Phi. 1:21-23; 2 Cor. 5:1-10; 1 Ths. 5:10). Only the BODY goes to the grave. An unsaved man's body also goes to the grave at death, but his SOUL goes to a place of TORMENT and FLAMES (Luke 16:22-23).
- (5) The grave cannot possibly be Hell because Jesus said it would be better to enter into life (eternal life) without a hand, a foot, or an eye, than to go to Hell (Mat. 18:8-9). How could it be "better" if Hell is only the grave where there is no suffering at all? According to Jesus Christ, Hell is a lot WORSE than losing a hand, a foot, or an eye forever.
- (6) Annihilation cannot be true because the Bible uses such terms as "shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2) and "torment . . . forever" (Rev. 14:11). Shame and torment are sufferings that are experienced by a LIVING BEING--*not an annihilated corpse.*

God is an ETERNAL Being, therefore, an eternal payment is required for sin (Mar. 9:44-48; Isa. 66:22-23). You can have a FAIR TRIAL at the White Throne Judgment, or you can have a FREE PARDON right now by receiving Jesus Christ as your Saviour. In a fair trial before God, you will be eternally damned to Hell because you are a sinner against a Holy God. God will have no choice but to sentence you to Hell forever. Friend, what is your choice?

The Fundamentals of Jesus Christ

In this lesson we will be dealing with the *fundamental* doctrines of our Lord Jesus Christ. No doubt, there are a great many doctrines that we could study concerning Christ, but here we are dealing primarily with the "five fundamentals" of the Christian faith. Namely, the Deity of

Christ, the Virgin Birth, the Bodily Resurrection, the Blood Atonement, and the Second Coming. We will be doing a brief study of each doctrine, looking at some of the more important portions of Scripture which cover these subjects.

I. THE DEITY OF CHRIST

As our society rapidly approaches the end-time events of the book of Revelation, Satan and his evil forces are doing everything within their power to deceive humanity and to condition men to worship an individual known as "the beast" or "the Antichrist" (Rev. 13:1-18). Satan has always had a desire to be worshipped as *God* (Isa. 14:12; Luke 4:7), and he *will* be worshipped as *God* in the coming Tribulation Period (II Ths. 2:3-4). In order to bring this about, Satan realizes that he must first dethrone the true *God* in the hearts and minds of people. That is, he must attack the Deity of Jesus Christ.

This attack on the Lord Jesus Christ is being executed in many ways by many different groups. Various cult groups, New Age groups, and even modern Bible translators have their own methods of robbing Jesus Christ of His Deity. Many young men today enter Bible colleges and seminaries believing in the Deity of Christ, and then graduate four years later with less faith than when they enrolled!

What about you, friend? What do you believe about Jesus Christ? Can you support your beliefs with God's word? That's the real issue: what saith the Scripture?

We challenge you to get your Bible (KJV) and check all the references that we are about to give. We are going to offer twelve Scriptural proofs for the Deity of Jesus Christ. That is, you are going to see twelve Bible proofs that Jesus Christ is *God*. Please do NOT take our word for anything. Our world is filled with deception because too many people believe what they hear without checking the facts. We urge you to search the Scriptures for yourself, and form your own convictions with God's word.

Jesus Christ Is God Incarnate

Quoting from Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23 says, **"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."** According to both of these verses, Jesus was "God with us" when He walked upon this earth. He wasn't merely "God's chosen one with us" or "God's Son with us." As I Timothy 3:16 states, **"God** was manifest in the flesh." John 1:14 tells us that **"the Word** was made flesh, and dwelt among us..." In Zechariah 12:10, GOD said that HE (God) would be "pierced" by sinners, and Revelation 1:7 states that Jesus Christ Himself fulfilled this prophecy! Friend, the Bible presents Jesus Christ as much more than a great prophet and teacher. God's word presents Jesus Christ as *God incarnate*.

Jesus Christ Is Eternal

In John 10:28, Jesus said, **"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."** If Jesus Christ isn't eternal, then how does He have the power to give "eternal life"?

Micah 5:2 states that Jesus Christ is "from everlasting", which is exactly what Psalm 93:2 and Isaiah 63:16 say about God!

In John 8:58, Jesus said to the Pharisees, **"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."** The term "I am" is the exact term that God used in Exodus 3:14 in reference to Himself! Jesus professed to be the eternal God of the Bible.

Jesus Christ Has Divine Names

Check these references for yourself. In Matthew 22:42-45, Jesus claims to be the "Lord" of Psalm 110:1. He allows Thomas to address Him as "My Lord and my God" in John 20:28. He is the "everlasting Father"

and "The mighty God" of Isaiah 9:6. According to His own words in John 10:11-14, He is the "shepherd" of Psalm 23:1, Psalm 80:1, and Ezekiel 34:12. God is the "saviour" in Isaiah 43:3, 43:11, 45:15, 45:21, Hosea 13:4, Luke 1:47, and I Timothy 4:10, yet this same title is given to Jesus Christ in Luke 2:11, Philippians 3:20, II Timothy 1:10, and II Peter 2:20. God is the "Rock" of Deuteronomy 32:4, 32:15, 32:18, 32:30-31, I Samuel 2:2, and Psalm 18:31, yet this title is given to the Lord Jesus Christ in I Corinthians 10:1-4, I Peter 2:7-8, and Romans 9:33. God is "light" in Psalm 27:1 and Micah 7:8, and then Jesus is "light" in John 1:4-9 and in John 8:12. In Isaiah 44:6 God says, "...I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me *there is no God.*" In Revelation 1:17 Jesus Christ says, "...Fear not; I am the first and the last." The Scriptures are clear: Jesus Christ is the God of the Old Testament.

Jesus Claimed Equality with God

Jesus says in Matthew 28:19, **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"** If Jesus Christ isn't Deity, then why did He include Himself in the Holy Trinity?

Jesus says in John 14:9, **"...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?"** Is the Father someone other than Jesus Christ? No, not according to Jesus Christ.

In John 10:30, Jesus says, **"I and my Father are one."** Isn't that clear enough?

Philippians 2:6 says that Jesus was in the "form of God", and that he thought it not robbery to be "equal with God"!

The Jesus Christ of the New Testament claimed to be "one" with God and "equal" with God.

Jesus Christ is Omnipresent

Only God has the ability to be everywhere at once, yet Jesus Christ claims this ability.

In Matthew 18:20, He says, **"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."** How could this be possible if Jesus were not Deity?

The same is true in Matthew 28:20 where Jesus says, **"...lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."** How could He be with each individual Christian always and be in Heaven at the same time? He is God, for only God has such attributes!

Jesus Christ Is Omnipotent

That is, He is all powerful. He has all power. Revelation 19:6 states, **"...the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."** Then I Timothy 6:15 says that Jesus Christ Himself is **"...the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;"** If Jesus is the ONLY Potentate, then He must be the One of Revelation 19:6, God Almighty! Also see Colossians 2:9-10, Revelation 2:26, and Matthew 28:18.

Jesus Christ Is Omniscient

To be omniscient is to have *all knowledge*, unlike normal men. The Bible declares that Jesus was indeed omniscient.

Unlike normal men, Jesus Christ had knowledge of specific details about His own death. In Matthew 16:21, Jesus said that He would go to Jerusalem, suffer many things at the hands of the scribes and the elders, be killed, and then be resurrected the third day. He repeats this prophecy in Matthew 20:19. Matthew 17:27 offers the account of Jesus knowing of a certain coin in a fish's mouth before the fish is caught! He knew specific details about a woman's life whom He had never met (John

4:16-19). He also had all knowledge about Nathaniel in John 1:47-49. Friend, Jesus Christ is Deity because He is omniscient.

Jesus Christ Has Creative Powers

John 1:1-3 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." The "Word" is the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:14; I John 1:1-3; 5:7), and John 1:3 says that all things were made by Him.

Colossians 1:16 says, "...by him were all things created..." Consider Hebrews 1:1-3: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" You see, by Jesus Christ the worlds were made, and by Jesus Christ all things are upheld. He has the power to create and sustain the universe.

Jesus Christ Has Power Over the Elements of Nature

In Matthew 14:25, Jesus literally walks upon the sea, and in Luke 8:24, He rebukes the wind and it obeys Him. How could He perform such tasks if He weren't God? It must be understood that Jesus didn't pray for God to calm the sea; He calmed the sea Himself.

Jesus Christ Received Worship

If we're wrong in teaching that the Lord Jesus Christ is God, then He must have been wrong in allowing people to worship him. Jesus

Himself said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Mat. 4:10) Why would He say this at the beginning of His ministry and then spend His ministry allowing people to worship *HIMSELF*? Obviously, it's because Jesus is God. In Acts 10:25-26 and in Revelation 19:10, worship of anyone other than God Himself is forbidden, yet Jesus willingly received worship throughout His public ministry (John 20:28; Mat. 8:2; 9:18; 15:25; 28:9; John 9:38). If He isn't Deity, then why didn't He correct those who worshipped Him?

Jesus Christ Forgave Sins

"And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:34) According to these words, it is *GOD* Who has the power and right to forgive sins. However, the New Testament says that Jesus Christ has this power.

Please notice Mark 2:5-11: "When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house."

Jesus Christ is God, because only God can forgive sins. It's true that He took on the form of a man for thirty-three years on this earth, but He was still God. He was *God manifest in the flesh* (I Tim. 3:16).

Jesus Christ Had Power Over His Own Life and Death

How many people do you know who have the ability to lay down their own life and then take it up again? Jesus had this power. Consider John 10:17-18: **"Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."**

Jesus had the power over His own life and death! When He died, He willingly gave up His own spirit (Luke 23:46).

According to His own words in Revelation 1:18, Jesus Christ has "the keys of hell and of death." How could He possibly have such power if He were not God?

Friend, make no mistake about it: the Lord Jesus Christ is Deity. He came to this earth and suffered in human flesh for thirty-three years. He lived a perfectly sinless life, and then laid that life down as an eternal payment for your sins. Mohammed didn't pay for your sins because Mohammed wasn't God. Buddha didn't pay for your sins because Buddha wasn't God. You can't pay for your sins because you aren't God. Only Jesus Christ is sinless because only Jesus Christ is God. He Alone can save your soul from the eternal fires of Hell.

II. THE VIRGIN BIRTH

The doctrine of the Virgin Birth is the doctrine that the Lord Jesus Christ was miraculously conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of a virgin without a man being involved. The original prophecy of the Virgin Birth was given in Isaiah 7:14, over seven hundred years before Jesus was born: **"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."** Matthew quotes this verse in stating that the birth of

Jesus fulfills this prophecy: **"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."** (Mat. 1:22-23)

Luke 1:34-35 and Matthew 1:24-25 tell us that Joseph took Mary to be his wife, but that he "knew her not" until after Jesus was born.

It was needful for Jesus to be conceived of the Holy Ghost, because had He been conceived of a man, He would have had a sin nature (Psa. 51:5; Rom. 5:12), which would have disqualified Him from being the perfect Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. The Virgin Birth is absolutely essential for New Testament salvation.

Many new Bible translations deliberately change the wording of Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:25, and Luke 2:33 in an attempt to downgrade the Virgin Birth of our Lord, but thanks be to God, the King James Bible can be trusted to preserve this doctrine without compromise.

III. THE BODILY RESURRECTION

This is the doctrine that **". . . that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."** (I Cor. 15:3-4). The resurrection of Christ was foretold some one thousand years in advance (Psa. 16:10; Acts 2:24-32). Our risen Saviour is currently seated at the right hand of God as our High Priest (Heb. 10:12-13). The resurrection makes Christianity different from all other religions, because our Founder is **STILL ALIVE**.

The resurrection of Christ is also *pictured* in the Old Testament on different occasions. The butler who was restored to his butlership after three days (Gen. 40) and Jonah spending three days in the whale's belly (Jon. 2; Mat. 12:40) are both great types of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

It is important to note that the Bible speaks of a *literal* and *physical* resurrection of Jesus, although some teach that He only rose from the grave *spiritually*.

According to the words of Jesus Christ Himself, He is NOT merely a spirit being. He is a literal and physical risen Saviour. In Luke chapter twenty-four, beginning at verse thirty-six, the disciples see the risen Christ and they suppose they had seen a spirit (vs. 37). Then Jesus cleared the matter up for everyone when He said, ". . . **Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.**" (Luke 24:38-39) He then SHOWED them His hands and feet, and they believed.

When Jesus appeared to Thomas He said, ". . . **Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.**" (John 20:27) The risen Christ had the crucifixion scars in His body to PROVE that He had been physically resurrected from the dead.

If Jesus didn't rise physically, then He lied in John 2:18-22 when He said that His "body" would rise in three days. He didn't say His spirit would rise. He said that His BODY would rise. When He arose His disciples actually remembered this prophecy and believed.

The bodily resurrection of Christ is a fundamental Bible doctrine. The salvation of a person's soul rests upon this doctrine, because if Jesus didn't physically rise from the dead, AS HE SAID HE WOULD, then we're all lost and going to Hell according to 1 Corinthians 15:12-19.

IV. THE BLOOD ATONEMENT

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." (Lev. 17:11)

The Blood Atonement is the doctrine that the blood of Jesus Christ, the sacrificial Lamb of God, was shed to atone for the sins of

lost mankind (John. 1:29; Heb. 9:22) and that this sinless blood was applied to the mercy seat of God the Father in Heaven. Hebrews 9:11-12 says, **"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."**

All of the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament foreshadowed the Blood Atonement of Christ. The innocent animal that was slain in Eden for Adam and Eve's covering (Gen. 3:21) pictured the slaying of our Lord Jesus Christ for our sins. Abel's accepted offering, the firstlings of his flock (Gen. 4:4), was also a type of the Blood Atonement of Christ. There are many pictures of the Blood Atonement in the Bible, but probably the greatest is found in Exodus chapter twelve, where God REDEEMS His people by the blood of the Passover lamb.

Today, with the completed Blood Atonement behind us, all sinners have access to God through Jesus Christ and through Him alone. Acts 20:28 says that God purchased the church *"with his own blood."* Revelation 1:5 assures us that Christ can wash us from our sins in His blood. Romans 5:8-9 says that we are justified by His blood, and we can have peace through His blood, according to Colossians 1:20. Salvation was made possible, not by the death of Christ alone, but by His Blood Atonement which takes away our sins.

V. THE SECOND COMING

Lesson XII will deal with the Second Coming in more detail, so a few essential truths will suffice for now.

"Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (I Pet. 1:10-11)

This First Coming of Christ emphasized Christ as a suffering and dying Lamb, whereas the Second Coming portrays Him as the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah" and the "KING OF KINGS" Who takes the kingdoms of this world to Himself. To rob Jesus of His Second Coming (by teaching that He isn't coming again literally) is an attempt to deny Him the glory promised to Him by His Heavenly Father. According to the Bible, Jesus is coming again LITERALLY, PHYSICALLY, and VISIBLY. Notice Acts 1:10-11: **"And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."** Jesus is coming back in the same MANNER in which He left. He left LITERALLY, so He'll return literally. He left PHYSICALLY, so He'll return physically. He left VISIBLY, so He'll return visibly. The true Bible believer believes in the literal Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

We know this is true, for the Apostles themselves confirm this in their writings. Paul said we are to LOOK for the Saviour (Phil. 3:20-21; Tit. 2:13). Jude spoke of Christ's return (Jude 14-15), as did Peter (II Pet. 1:16) and John (Rev. 1:7; 19:11-21). The writer of Hebrews states that Christ will APPEAR the SECOND TIME without sin unto salvation. One verse in every thirty New Testament verses speaks of Christ's Second Coming. The Bible record is clear: Jesus is coming again just as literally as He came the first time.

False Theories about the Second Coming

Those who reject the literal Second Coming have a number of "substitute" Second Comings with which we need to be familiar:

Some teach that His Second Coming was "spiritually" fulfilled at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came. This cannot be for Jesus said, **"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you;**

but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” (John 16:7) The Holy Spirit isn’t Jesus! Jesus went away so he could SEND the Holy Spirit, and He couldn’t send Him until He first went away.

The conversion of the sinner is taught by some to be a “personal” Second Coming of Christ. This would mean that Jesus comes every time a soul is saved, and it would mean that He is NOT returning in the same MANNER as he went away.

Others believe that death is the Second Coming. That is, the Lord returns every time someone dies. Since people die at the rate of several per second, this would mean that Christ must remain on the earth all the time! Furthermore, Jesus is currently fulfilling His heavenly office as our High Priest (Heb. 9-10), which would be impossible if He had to remain on earth all the time. When a saint dies, he goes to be with the Lord (II Cor. 5:6-8; II Sam. 12:23) The Lord does not come to get him. John 21:21-23 also makes a clear distinction between death and the Second Coming.

The Destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.) is also taught by some to be the Second Coming. This is a pretty far stretch, because Christ was not present at the Destruction of Jerusalem and when Jesus returns He RESTORES Jerusalem; *he doesn’t destroy it!*

Comparing the First and Second Coming

One way to get a better understanding of the Second Coming of Christ is to compare it to the First Coming of Christ. Note the following:

First Coming	Second Coming
Jesus first appeared secretly to believers only (at His birth). He later appeared publicly (Mat. 2:1-11; John 1:29; Mat. 21:4-9)	Jesus first appears secretly to believers only (Rapture). He later appears publicly (I Cor. 15:51-52; I Ths. 4:13-18; Rev. 19:11-21).

Had been 400 years since God's last revelation - the close of the Old Testament. During that time the world became flooded with pagan philosophy, education, and tradition (Plato, Socrates, Aristotle)	Has been 400 years since God's last revelation - King James 1611 Bible. During this time the world became flooded with pagan philosophy, education, and tradition. (Darwin, Engles, Marx, Huxley, Freud, Westcott & Hort)
God had just spent 2000 years dealing with the Jews	God had just spent 2000 years dealing with the Gentiles (Church Age)
God's people in apostasy	God's people in apostasy
Rome in power	Rome in power (Dan. 2; Dan. 7; Rev. 13)
A universal language - Greek	A universal language - English
Jesus had a satanic opponent - Judas	Jesus has a satanic opponent - Antichrist
God's word had been corrupted (Mat. 15:1-9; Mat. 23; II Cor. 2:17; Jer. 23:36)	God's word has been corrupted with new versions, traditions - Amos 8:11-12; Col. 2:8)
Jesus fulfilled much scripture	Jesus will fulfill much scripture
Jesus had a forerunner - John	Jesus has a forerunner - Elijah (Mal. 4:5-6; Rev. 11:3-11; Mat. 17:1-13)
There was a resurrection (Mat. 27:52-53)	There will be a resurrection (I Ths. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:51-52).

Contrasting the First and Second Coming of Christ

Although there are many similarities between Christ's first and second coming, there are also many contrasts. Note the following:

First Coming	Second Coming
Christ comes to save sinners (John 3:17; I Tim. 1:15)	Christ comes to condemn sinners (II Ths. 1:7-9; Rev. 14:18-21)
Christ shed His blood	Christ sheds His enemies' blood (Rev. 14:18-21; Isa. 63:1-6)
Christ rides a humble donkey (Mat. 21:4-9)	Christ rides a glorious white horse (Rev. 19:11)
The devil has Jesus bound (Mat. 27:2)	Jesus has the devil bound (Rev. 20:2)
Jerusalem destroyed (70 A.D.)	Babylon destroyed (Rev. 17)
Jesus is a servant	Jesus is a king
Jesus is a lamb (John 1:29)	Jesus is a Lion (Rev. 5:5)
Jesus is rejected by the Jews, but received by the Gentiles (John 1:11-12)	Jesus is rejected by the Gentiles, but received by the Jews (Isa. 66:7-8; Rom. 11:25-28; Rev. 7)
Jesus turned down the kingdoms of this world (Luke 4:5-8)	Jesus rules the kingdoms of this world (Rev. 11:15-17)
Jesus established a spiritual kingdom (Rom. 14:17; Col. 1:13)	Jesus establishes a physical kingdom (Rev. 20:1-7; Dan. 2:44)

The "king of the Jews" is crucified (Mat. 27:37)	The 'KING OF KINGS" reigns (Rev. 19:16)
Christ receives a crown of thorns (Mat. 27:29)	Christ receives many crowns (Rev. 19:12)
Jesus lies in a manger (Luke 2:7)	Jesus sits on a throne (Luke 1:32; Rev. 6:16-17)

The Judgments of the Saved and the Lost

When the average person thinks of God's judgment of man, he automatically thinks of a particular DAY in the future when God will settle his accounts with man. The fact that the Bible doesn't teach this doesn't seem to matter. This *general judgment* thinking is rooted in the assumption that "all men are equal" so God will have to judge all men at the same time. As we will see in this lesson, nothing could be further from the truth. **"The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour . . ."** (Pro. 12:26), so the righteous have a more excellent judgment than the wicked.

Obviously, any future judgment must be preceded by a resurrection, for a man can't be judged if he's still dead and buried. Is there ONE future resurrection, or are there two? The Bible says there are two. Notice Revelation 20:4-6: **"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and**

shall reign with him a thousand years." Now, read it carefully. **SOME** people are **BEHEADED** for the witness of Jesus Christ. That is, they are killed. They are dead. Then these same people **REIGN** with Christ for 1,000 years. Well, a man can't reign if he's dead, so there must be a resurrection. The passage goes on to say that these people have part in the **FIRST RESURRECTION**. The term "first resurrection" itself implies that there is also a future resurrection, does it not? If the general resurrection myth was true, then the Bible would say, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in **THE** resurrection." But that isn't the case because there is no such event as **THE** resurrection. The saints of God have part in the **FIRST** resurrection, and then the wicked live not until the thousand years are finished (20:5). For example, compare Revelation 20:5 with Revelation 20:14:

20:5 - This is the first resurrection. (saved)

20:14 - This is the second death. (lost)

The same is well illustrated in the story of Lazarus in John chapter eleven. Here Lazarus is dead, and Jesus is going to raise him, but Martha believes that Lazarus won't rise again until "the last day." That is, she is a *general judgment* believer. But Jesus is about to inform her that **HIS CHILDREN** don't have to wait till the "last day" to come up. Note the text: **"Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"** (John 11:23-26). Jesus then goes and **RAISES** Lazarus from the dead in verses 43-44. He didn't raise everyone. He didn't say, "Everyone, come forth." He specifically commanded **LAZARUS** to come forth, while everyone else lay dead in their graves. Well, one day Jesus will call all his saints out of their graves in the **FIRST RESURRECTION** (Rev. 20:4-5; I Ths. 4:13-18; I

Cor. 15:51-52), but the REST OF THE DEAD will remain in their graves until the SECOND DEATH (Rev. 20:14). The second death is not called the second resurrection because there is no eternal life imparted to anyone, only eternal damnation.

Now, having established the fact that saved people and lost people are raised at two separate times, let's consider the judgments which follow each event.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." (Rom. 14:10)

" For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (II Cor. 5:10)

These are the two places in the Bible where we read the term "judgment seat of Christ." As you can see, neither passage speaks of hell or destruction. The later plainly states that the Judgment Seat of Christ is for receiving the things done in our *body*. Our body belongs to God (I Cor. 6:19-20), and we are to glorify Him in our bodies. We are to *yield* our bodies to Him (Rom. 12:1-2). We are to *deny ourselves* and be *His* disciples (Luke 9:23). So the Judgment Seat of Christ will *try* us and determine whether or not we have done our duty.

A fine companion passage for this is I Corinthians 3:11-15: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

A Christian's foundation is his salvation in Jesus Christ (Mat. 7:24). Then after being saved, the Christian is expected to yield himself to the leadership of the Holy Spirit so he can be useful to Christ. If he does this, he will bear the *fruit* of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23) and please his Saviour. This fruit, or good work, is likened unto gold, silver, and precious stones, things of great value. Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-20, **"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."** Godly Christian service produces *treasure* in Heaven for the Christian. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, we (Christians) will receive our rewards. II John 8 says, **"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."** Most people are only concerned with going to Heaven or Hell, if even that, but the Bible instructs us to be concerned about our *rewards*. My eternal RESIDENCE was settled when I trusted Jesus Christ as my Saviour, but my eternal REWARDS are only settled when I deny myself and serve God in the Spirit.

Notice that no one goes to Hell at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Some people lose rewards, but they are still saved (I Cor 3:15). This is like Lot, the righteous man who lost all he had, yet he himself was saved from the fiery destruction. (Gen. 20; II Pet. 2:6-8). Jesus said there would be two kinds of saints in the last days. Those like Noah (faithful) and those like Lot (slothful) (Luke 17:26, 28). Just as **"one star differeth from another star in glory"** (I Cor. 15:41), one Christian will differ from another in Heaven, at least in regards to earned rewards.

In Revelation 3:11, the Lord Jesus says, **"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."** Revelation 4:10 has the elders casting their crowns at the Saviour's feet. Most Christians will have no crown to cast at the Lord's feet in that day, for they forfeited their heavenly rewards in order to live comfortable

and convenient lives in this present evil world. Also see I Corinthians 9:25, I Thessalonians 2:19, II Timothy 4:8, James 1:12, and I Peter 5:4.

The believer's judgment is threefold. At Calvary I was judged as a SINNER, with Jesus taking my place and bearing my punishment. Today I am judged as a SON, being chastened by my heavenly Father when I am disobedient (Heb. 12:4-8; I Cor. 11:30-31). At the Judgment Seat of Christ I will be judged as a SERVANT, giving full account to my Master for my Christian service. II John 8 says, **"Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."**

The White Throne Judgment

This is the final judgment of the wicked. Christians are judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ BEFORE the 1000-year reign of Christ, but the unsaved are judged AFTER the 1000-year reign. This final judgment is called the "White Throne Judgment" because of the following passage: **"And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."** (Rev. 20:11-15)

This judgment evidently occurs in open space, since **"the earth and the heaven fled away."** This is likely the same event spoken of by Peter in II Peter 3:10: **"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great**

noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."

Man will have no place to hide. The human race began hiding from God in Genesis 3:8, but all hiding places will vanish and man will be forced to face his Maker in judgment.

The **"books"** will be opened and the **"book of life"** will be opened. Men will be shown that their good works could not save them, and they will see that all of their evil words, thoughts, and actions have been recorded. Every secret thing will be brought to light: **"For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."** (Ecc. 12:14) Lost men will see that their condition is hopeless, and then they will see that their name is not in the **"book of life."** Their deeds will be in the record book, but their names will not be in the *redemption* book, the book of life.

It is important to notice that John never says that anyone at this judgment goes to Heaven. In fact, he earlier wrote in Revelation 20:6, **"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."** Those who have part in the FIRST RESURRECTION are not subject unto the SECOND DEATH. This is not a general judgment day for everyone, but rather **"the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."** (II Peter 3:7) This is the judgment where the wicked dead will be judged for their "works" since they chose to not place their FAITH in Jesus Christ for their salvation. They chose to "work" their way into eternity, so this will be their big "pay day." Literally billions are going to be shocked to see that their good intentions and good deeds cannot save them.

Lest someone think that the White Throne Judgment is for everyone, not just lost people, let us notice that John said, "And I saw the **dead**, small and great, stand before God" (20:12) The verse doesn't say "the dead in Christ" (I Thss. 4:16), only "the dead." Jesus said, **"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."** (Mat. 22:23) So, those standing before the Great White Throne do not belong to God. They

are the ones to whom God will pronounce the dreadful words, **"I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."** (Mat. 7:23)

Paul even writes that we (Christians) will judge the world (I Cor. 6:2). Christians are not being judged at the Great White Throne, because they've already been judged, yet they will be assisting the Lord in the judgment of others.

This will undoubtedly be a very sad day, because millions of Christians will see their lost loved ones cast alive into a burning lake of fire, never to see them again. Now is the time to do our best in bringing the lost to Christ. It will be too late at the White Throne Judgment.

The Holy Trinity

According the Bible, God is a Triune Being. As all humans are a trinity (soul, body, and spirit--1 Ths. 5:23), God is also a Trinity. In Genesis 1:26, God said, *"Let us make man in our image. . ."* In Genesis 11:7, God said, *". . .let us go down, and there confound their language. . ."* The terms *"us"* and *"our"* obviously refer to the Holy Trinity. So the Trinity is found in the very early chapters of the Bible.

The Trinity is present at the incarnation of Jesus in Luke 1:35, and we can see all three members of the Trinity at the Baptism of Jesus in Matthew chapter three. God the Father is speaking from Heaven, God the Son is being baptized, and God the Holy Ghost is descending like a dove. When Jesus gave the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, He said in verse 19, *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."* 1 John 5:7 tells us that there are THREE that bear record in Heaven: *". . . the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."* (The "Word" is Christ according to John 1:1-3, 14, and 1 John 1:1-3.)

God is a Trinity. He isn't three Gods, like the some accuse Christians of believing, but He is ONE Triune God. The pagans who

worshiped three gods did so because they knew from observing the creation that God must be in some way associated with the number three. They never fully understood the Holy Trinity, but they came much closer than people like the Jehovah's Witnesses who deny the Trinity altogether.

As a man is a soul, a body, and a spirit, God the Father is the Soul of the Trinity, God the Son is the Body, and God the Holy Ghost is the Spirit.

According to Psalm 19:1 and Romans 1:20, God's creation actually declares the Trinity doctrine. One can see proof of the Trinity everywhere in the universe. The universe consists of three parts: time, space, and matter. Time consists of three parts: past, present, and future. Space consists of three parts: length, width, and height. Matter consists of three parts: energy, motion, and phenomena. There are three heavens in 2 Corinthians 12:2, and on earth there are three forms of life: man, plant, and animal. These forms of life are found in three places: land, sea, and air. God is continually showing us through His creation that He is a Trinity.

A perfect example of this is the sun. The sun has three kinds of rays: chemical rays, light rays, and heat rays. Chemical rays cannot be seen or felt, but they can be very powerful. When one receives a sun burn, it is from the sun's chemical rays. This is a type of God the Father. Light rays are sometimes visible to the human eye. This is a type of Jesus Christ, the "light of the world" (John 8:12) and the "Sun of righteousness" (Mal.4:2). Heat rays are a type of the Holy Ghost for they bring comfort to us by warming our bodies, just as the Holy Ghost, the Comforter (John 16:7) brings comfort to us.

The term "godhead" is found THREE times in the Bible (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9), because God is a Trinity.

So one can clearly see that God's word and God's creation both testify to the fact that He is a Trinity.

Paul writes in II Corinthians 13:14, *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be*

with you all. Amen." There's all three, a *Trinity*. Hebrews 9:14 says, *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, (there's God the Son) who through the eternal Spirit (there's God the Holy Spirit) offered himself without spot to God (there's God the Father) purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"*

In Exodus you will find that there are three items in the tabernacle which are topped with a gold crown, picturing the Trinity. The Ark pictures God the Father (Exodus 25:10-11); the table pictures God the Son (Exodus 25:23-24); and the altar of incense pictures God the Holy Spirit (Exodus 30:1-3). The Bible certainly testifies that God is a Trinity.

Those who do not understand the Trinity usually condemn the Trinity doctrine. They fail to realize that it is not our job to tell God WHAT HE IS or to even FULLY UNDERSTAND how He can exist. Our responsibility is to BELIEVE WHAT HE SAYS, AS HE SAYS IT, WHERE HE SAYS IT, WITHOUT CHANGING A SINGLE WORD! The Scriptures already presented in this study clearly show that God is a Trinity. Many believe that Jehovah is God the Father, and that Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are not God. They're wrong. The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are both Deity.

Jesus Christ Is Deity

As the Second Member of the Trinity, Jesus Christ stands co-existent in Eternity with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. There are many proofs in the scriptures for the Deity of Christ. We shall now list several of them:

(1) In Zechariah 12:10, Jehovah speaks of the future return of Christ and says, *" . . . They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son"* This is spoken again in Revelation 1:7, which is clearly a reference to Christ Himself, but in Zechariah 12:10 **GOD** said, *" . . . They shall look upon **me** whom they have pierced"* The One that they pierced was

Jesus Christ! So, in Zechariah 12:10, God is saying that He is Jesus Christ.

(2) In John 1:1, John 1:14, 1 John 1:1, and in 1 John 5:7, Jesus is called "*the Word*," and John 1:1 says that "*the Word was God*."

(3) Thomas referred to Jesus as "*My Lord and my God*" in John 20:28, and Jesus did not see the need to correct him.

(4) Isaiah 7:14 gives us the prophecy of the Virgin Birth of Christ and states that His name would be "*Immanuel*." Matthew 1:23 tells us that this word means "*God with us*."

(5) In Isaiah 9:6, Jesus is called "*Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace*." The Bible certainly would not say this about anyone less than God.

(6) In John 10:30, Jesus says, "*I and my Father are one*." Jesus is not a lesser god; He is ONE with the Father.

(7) Micah 5:2 tells us that Jesus is "*from everlasting*."

(8) In John 8:58, Jesus tells the Pharisees, "*Before Abraham was, I am*." He claimed to be the "*I AM*" of Exodus 3:14, which is God Almighty.

(9) Jesus allowed others to worship Him (John 9:38; Matt. 14:33; and Luke 24:52), which was forbidden, unless He was God (Rev. 22:9).

(10) Jesus forgave sins (Mark 2:5), which only God can do (Mark 2:7).

(11) The Lord Jesus Christ is omnipresent (Matt. 18:20; 28:20; II Cor. 13:14; I John 5:7). We know He is God because He is capable of being everywhere at once.

(12) Jesus is omniscient (Mark 11:2-6; Matt. 12:40). He is God because He knows all things.

(13) The Lord Jesus is also omnipotent (Rev. 19:6; Matt. 28:18). He has all power.

(14) According to John 1, 1 John 1, Colossians 1, and Hebrews 1, Jesus Christ is the Creator of Genesis 1!

(15) Jesus never sinned! Romans 3:23 says that ALL HAVE SINNED and come short of the glory of God, but Jesus did not sin (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18). So Jesus had to be God.

The Holy Ghost Is Deity

Some teach that the Holy Spirit of the Bible is only a "force," and not a person. Please notice that the Holy Ghost has attributes that only a PERSON can have. For example:

(1) Only a person could SPEAK, which the Holy Spirit does (Acts 2:11; 13:2; Rev. 2:7).

(2) Only a person could TEACH and COMFORT (Jhn. 16:7, 13).

(3) Only a person could have a MIND (Rom. 8:27).

(4) Only a person could possess the POWER that the Holy Spirit possesses (Rom. 15:19).

(5) Only a person could be INSULTED and GRIEVED (Heb. 10:29; Eph. 4:30).

So the Holy Ghost certainly IS a Person, but more than that, He is GOD, the Third Member of the Holy Trinity. There are several scriptural proofs for the Deity of the Holy Ghost:

(1) In Acts 15:3 Peter accuses Ananias of lying to the Holy Ghost, and then in verse four Peter tells him that he had lied unto GOD. The Holy Ghost is God.

(2) The Holy Ghost says in Acts 13:2, *"Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."* GOD is the one who calls men to do His work (Rom. 8:28; Gal. 1:6; 1 Ths. 2:12; 4:7; 2 Ths. 2:13-14); so, the Holy Ghost is God.

(3) Only God could perform all the great wonders that the Holy Ghost performs (Psa. 104:30; Jhn. 14:16, 26; 16:8-14; Job 33:4; 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 1:13; 4:30).

(4) The Holy Ghost is God because blasphemy against Him shall not be forgiven (Mat. 12:31).

(5) The Holy Ghost is God because He is ETERNAL (Heb. 9:14).

(6) The Holy Ghost is God because He is OMNIPRESENT (Psa. 139:7-8).

(7) The Holy Ghost is God because He has the power to give life (John 3:6; 6:63).

(9) The Scriptures are God's word, and 2 Peter 1:21 says that the Holy Ghost INSPIRED the Scriptures. Therefore the Holy Ghost is God.

The Bible clearly reveals to us that the Holy Ghost is a Member of the Holy Trinity. To deny this truth is to openly deny God's word. The Trinity doctrine is a BIBLE doctrine. It is true that Satan has counterfeited the Trinity doctrine for many centuries in many pagan religions, but that doesn't change the truth. God's word declares that He is a Trinity, and it is our responsibility to believe it.

Basic Bible Prophecy

One only has to read a newspaper or listen to a newscast in order to see Bible prophecy being fulfilled. There have been more prophecies fulfilled in the twentieth century than in any other time in church history. We believe there is a great reason for this. We believe that the time is rapidly approaching for the Lord Jesus Christ to return to this earth and establish His kingdom.

In this lesson, we will attempt to show you from God's word the chronological order of future prophetic events. That is, we will attempt to teach you some basic Bible doctrine about the Second Coming. It is our prayer that you will read carefully through these pages, asking the Holy Spirit of God to lead and guide you through the truths in His word (John. 16:13). May God richly bless your study.

I. The Coming Righteous Kingdom

One of the main subjects of the Bible is the Kingdom that God the Father has promised to Jesus Christ. There are many Bible prophecies that speak of this coming King and Kingdom. Some are as follows:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. 49:10)

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Psa. 2:1-8)

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion

and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." (Isa. 11:1-6)

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." (Jer. 23:5)

Such Old Testament verses as these state very clearly that God intends to set the Lord Jesus Christ up as King over the earth. There have been many kings to rise and fall throughout history, but God has in mind a *perfect* King for His promised Kingdom.

Coming to the New Testament, we find that God still has this Kingdom very much in mind. In Luke chapter one, verses thirty-one through thirty-three, the angel says to Mary: **"And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."** John the Baptist came preaching that this Kingdom was at hand in Matthew 3:2, and Jesus also preached this message when He began to preach (Mat. 4:17).

During the actual ministry of Christ, He preached mostly to His people, the Jews (Mat. 10:5-6; 15:24), because Israel is the one nation that God chose long ago to be a shining light to this lost and dying world. In Isaiah 62:1 God says, **"For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."** God will not rest until His chosen nation is established in the earth as a burning lamp (Gen. 15:17) to this lost and dying world. Starting with Abraham in Genesis chapter twelve, God begins to focus on *one chosen people* to bring forth His King for the coming Kingdom. All of the promises that God made to Abraham and his descendants are still in effect today, and they will soon reach their fulfillment. The Kingdom **WILL** come.

Many teach that the Kingdom promises are no longer valid, because the Jews rejected Christ, but this is a false teaching. In Acts 1:6-7, before Jesus ascended into Heaven, the apostles asked Him about this Kingdom, saying, " . . . **Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?**" If the Kingdom promises were no longer valid, then Jesus would have told them so, but instead He said, "...**It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.**" So Israel's rejection of Christ doesn't make void the promises of God. God will chastise the Jews for their sin, and then He will restore the Kingdom to Israel (Psa. 89:29-36).

Someone says, *"If the Jews won't receive their King, then how can God restore the Kingdom? Doesn't this put God in some sort of a jam?"* No, God has a master plan. He knows exactly what He will do. In Hebrews 8:8-10, we read some interesting words quoted from Jeremiah chapter 31: **"For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:"**

The words "after those days" clearly refer to a future time when Israel will be converted to the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul tells us in Romans 11:25-27 that Israel has been *blinded* for this present age, but that "all Israel shall be saved" because God will "take away their sins." God promised Israel a Kingdom, so there WILL be a Kingdom.

Since this Kingdom wasn't established at the First Coming of Christ, it must be established at the Second Coming. God knew that the Jews would reject His Son, so He predetermined that Christ's shed Blood on Calvary would serve as an atonement for the sin of the world.

This was God's plan all along--to come into the world and pay for the sins of all men (John. 1:29; Rev. 13:8). So, the First Coming was one of suffering and shame, but the Second Coming will be one of glory, honor, and praise (1 Pet. 1:10-12). The first time Jesus received a crown of thorns, but when He comes again He will have *many* crowns (Rev. 19:12). He was the "*lamb of God*" when He came the first time, but He will be the "*lion of the tribe of Judah*" the second time (Rev. 5:5). The First Coming gave Jesus Christ to the world, but the Second Coming will give the world to Jesus Christ! Just as David was chosen to be the king of Israel many years before he actually received the kingdom (1 Sam. 16), the Lord Jesus Christ has been chosen to take over the kingdoms of this world and rule as God's "KING OF KINGS" (Rev. 11:15; 19:16).

Christianity without a Second Coming is a very selfish religion, for it robs Jesus Christ of all God's precious promises to Him. The teaching and preaching of the Second Coming is very essential, because it speaks of God's righteous King returning to this earth and taking what rightfully belongs to Him. Christians should be rejoicing! The Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of your Salvation (if you're saved), will soon return to this earth and set things in order and YOU can be on the winning side!

II. The Pre-Millennial View

The first few verses of Revelation chapter twenty speak of this coming Kingdom being one thousand years long. Verse six says that the saints will reign with Christ for a thousand years. That is, we will reign with Him for a thousand literal years in a literal, physical, and visible earthly Kingdom, and then we will reign forever in the New Heavens and the New Earth (Rev. 5:10; 22:5; 11:15; chapters 21 and 22).

Many these days are teaching false doctrines about the Millennium (the one thousand-year reign). Some teach the "Post-Millennial" view, believing that mankind will become good enough to usher in this righteous Kingdom *without* Jesus Christ. Post-Millennialism teaches that the

Church's influence on the world will become stronger and stronger, and the world will become better and better until we all enter a happy golden age of peace and prosperity. At the end of this coming utopian age, the Lord Jesus Christ will supposedly return and reward the Church for a job well done.

A more popular view is the "A-millennial" view. This is the false teaching that there will be no Millennium, only a "general judgment" someday and that's all.

Both of the above views are incorrect for the Bible teaches that there WILL be a Millennium, and it teaches that it will not begin until the Lord Jesus Christ returns and establishes it and rules over it Himself. This means that only the *pre-millennial* view is correct. This is the doctrine that Christ will return *before* the Millennium to destroy the wicked, take over the kingdoms of this world, and set up the Kingdom that His Father has promised Him. Pre-Millennialism correctly says that there will be no world peace until the Prince of Peace returns (Isa. 9:6). Pre-Millennialism has a very NEGATIVE outlook toward this present world system, as does the Bible, but a very POSITIVE outlook toward the soon appearing of the King of Kings. A Christian who holds the Pre-Millennial view is a Christian who believes exactly what God says about giving His beloved Son the kingdoms of this world.

Now, before the Millennium can begin, there are many prophecies that must be fulfilled. These prophecies must be rightly divided (2 Tim. 2:15) or confusion and heresy will prevail. We must study Bible prophecy Scripture with Scripture, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth (John 16:13). Now let's look at some more significant events in Bible prophecy.

III. The Restoration of Israel

God cannot establish His Son in Israel as King of the Jews unless the Jews are living in Palestine, their promised homeland, so it is God's

plan to restore the Jews to Palestine before the Second Coming of Christ:

"But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them: and I will bring them again into their land that I gave unto their fathers." (Jer. 16:15)

"And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God." (Amos 9:14-15)

Since Israel rejected Christ, God allowed the Romans to destroy Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and the Jews were dispersed among the Gentile nations of the world. Since then they have wandered from nation to nation suffering bitter persecution. However, in the late 1800's a remarkable thing started happening. In large numbers, the Jews began returning to Palestine, and in 1887 they made formal statements that they intended to REPOSSESS THEIR HOMELAND!

When World War I began in 1914, there were 80,000 Jews living in Palestine. England's Balfour Declaration of 1917 gave strong approval for the Jews to establish a national homeland, but England reneged due to Arab pressure. Nevertheless, 400,000 Jews had settled in the homeland by 1939.

Satan saw what was happening. He knew that the Lord was regathering the Jews for a reason, and he knew the reason: *the Second Coming of Christ*. So Satan raised up Adolph Hitler to murder six million of God's chosen people as an outright act of hate and revenge. This massive slaughter created enough sympathy for the Jews that the United Nations granted 5000 square miles of Palestinian land to them after World War II. Then in 1948 Israel became an independent and free nation for the first time in over 2,500 years! The Arabs have fought viciously to destroy Israel, but with no success. God wants His

people IN PALESTINE (Amos 9:14-15), because the Lord Jesus Christ is coming very soon. During the Six Day War of 1967, Israel even gained possession of the ancient temple sight, and plans are currently underway to rebuild the temple.

Jesus likens Israel unto a "fig tree" in Matthew 24:32-34, and He likens the *restoration* of Israel unto a fig tree putting forth leaves. He said that He would return during the same generation which witnesses Israel putting forth leaves as a nation. We are living in that generation! There are some four million Jews living in Palestine today. We have seen the Jews return to Palestine, and we have seen the nation of Israel prosper. Friend, there's a reason for all of this: *the Lord Jesus Christ is coming soon!*

IV. The Rapture of the Church

Up until now, we've said very little about the Church, because Bible prophecy deals mainly with Israel, but the Church is also very important. In fact, the Church has a very special relationship with Christ: she is His BRIDE (Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 19:7-9).

Before God can swing His full attention back to Israel, He must fulfill certain promises that He has made to the Church. While He has spent the last two thousand years chastising Israel for her disobedience, He has also been calling out a Gentile bride for the Lord Jesus Christ. Just as Joseph found a Gentile bride while he was separated from his brethren (Gen. 41:45), Jesus finds a Gentile bride while He is separated from the Jews. It is true that many Jews have been saved by receiving Christ, but most have not. The Church consists mostly of converted Gentiles. God is taking out from among the Gentiles a people for His name, and then He will once again take up His dealings with Israel as a nation. Notice what the Bible says in Acts 15:14-16: **"Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, After this I will return, and**

will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:"

In the near future God will put Israel through a very troublesome period of time known as the "great tribulation" (Mat. 24:21), but Christians will not have to endure the Tribulation. Paul tells us in 1 Thessalonians 1:10 that the Church is waiting for the Lord from Heaven, not for the Great Tribulation, because He has delivered us from the wrath to come. 1 Thessalonians 5:9 says that God has not appointed us (Christians) to wrath, but to obtain salvation through Christ. Those who have been "born again" (John 3:3) will soon be "caught up" to Heaven without dying. Notice what the word of God says: **"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."** (1 Cor. 15:51-52) **"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."** (1 Ths. 4:16-18)

It is a "comfort" for Christians to have this blessed promise. It would *not* be a comfort if Christians had to endure the Great Tribulation. Our merciful Lord will call the Church out of this world *before* the Tribulation starts. After all, the Church was never really a part of this evil world system anyway (Jas. 4:4; Rom. 12:2; Col. 3:2). We're just passing through this world to a much better place (Gal. 4:26), and we will be leaving very soon. What about you?

This great departure of the saints is pictured on various occasions in the Bible. Just as God took Enoch out of the world *before the flood* (Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5), He will take His Church out of the world before the Tribulation. Just as God delivered Lot and his family from the violent judgment upon Sodom (Gen. 19:22-24), He will deliver His saints

from the coming judgment of the Great Tribulation. Like any responsible Father, God will take proper care of His children. He will destroy the Devil's children (John 8:44; 1 John 3:10), but His own children are safe and secure. As Psalm 145:20 assures us, **"The LORD preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy."**

This calling-out of the Church is commonly referred to as the "Rapture" because of the quick and surprising nature in which it occurs. The world will stand in shock when millions of Christians suddenly vanish from the face of the earth! The freeways, the subways, the airports and streets will be in a total shambles as thousands and thousands of drivers suddenly vanish from their seats. No doubt, millions of people will be killed immediately.

Those remaining alive will be in shock as they search for their loved ones among all the demolished cars and buildings. Communications will also be greatly disrupted, because many key communications people will be caught up in the Rapture.

Opportunists will add to the confusion by looting and killing. They'll feel that during such an emergency they can get away with anything. There will be worldwide chaos.

Authorities may attempt to explain the millions of missing people, but make no mistake about it: **GOD TOOK THEM!** He promised that He would call out His people, so He will call them out. That's all there is to it.

Many people laugh and make jokes about this Bible doctrine, but there's coming a day when the laughing will end. Noah was a preacher of righteousness who probably received a great deal of mocking and ridicule from the world as he built the ark upon dry ground, but the mocking stopped when the flood waters began to rise. God was true to His word then, and God will be true to His word today. Jesus is coming soon, and you will either be caught up to meet Him, or you will be left behind to enter the Great Tribulation. The choice is yours.

V. The Judgment Seat of Christ

Once Christians have been caught up to Heaven, we will appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ to be judged by the Lord for our Christian service. We've covered this already in a previous lesson, but we'll touch on it again since it is a part of God's prophetic program. Paul wrote about this judgment to the Romans and to the Corinthians: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." (Rom. 14:10) "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." (1 Cor. 3:11-15) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." (2 Cor. 5:10)

As these verses reveal, a Christian isn't judged to determine his eternal destiny. A Christian's eternal destiny is established the moment he receives Jesus Christ as Saviour. The Judgment Seat of Christ is for judging the Christian's SERVICE while on this earth. Rewards will be given to some, while others will lose rewards (2 John 8), but no one goes to Hell at this judgment.

After the Judgment Seat of Christ, we (Christians) will wait with the Lord in Heaven until the Great Tribulation is over on earth. We will then take part in the Marriage of the Lamb and in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9). This is when the Lord Jesus Christ and His Bride, the Church, are officially united.

We will then return with the Lord to the earth, and He will destroy the wicked and establish the Millennial Kingdom, and His saints will reign with Him on earth for one thousand years (Rev. 20:1-7).

VI. The Great Tribulation

Jesus said in Matthew 24:21, **"For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be."**

It will be during this short time period that the wicked Antichrist will rise to power and dictate the world. He will have nearly everyone deceived into believing that he is the answer to their many troubles (Rev. 13:3). Those who reject the truth today will fall for his lies in the Tribulation, because God will send them "strong delusion," causing them to believe a lie (2 Ths. 2:11-12). The Antichrist will have supernatural powers and great charisma. People will gladly follow after him (Rev. 13:5, 13-14; 2 Ths. 2:7-10).

All of the horrible events in Revelation chapters six through nineteen will occur during the Tribulation. In fact, most of these events will occur during a forty-two month time period, which is the last half of the Tribulation (Rev. 11:2; 13:5). There will be war, famine, and death (Rev. 6:2-8). Satan will have power to kill one fourth of the earth's population (Rev. 6:8), and many who choose to follow Christ at this time will be killed (Rev. 6:9; 20:4). There will be great earthquakes (Rev. 6:12), awesome changes in the skies (Rev. 6:13-14; 8:8, 12), and men will be tormented five months by the horrible locust creatures of Revelation chapter nine. In addition to all of this, Satan and his angels will be cast out into the earth (Rev. 12:9)!

Once Satan has been cast down to the earth, he will incarnate himself into a man and become the Antichrist. Just as Jesus was "God manifest in the flesh," Antichrist will be Satan manifest in the flesh. According to Revelation 13:16-18, this "beast" (Antichrist) will cause everyone to receive a mark in their right hand or in their forehead. This

mark will allow people to buy and sell, and no one will be permitted to buy and sell without it. The number "666" will be connected with the mark, and cash, credit cards, checks, and debit cards will become useless, while computerized scanning devices in the stores will likely keep track of bank account debits and credits. Everyone **MUST** take the Mark of the Beast or be killed, and Hell awaits those who take it (Rev. 14:11).

United States sovereignty will continue to be eroded by our globally-minded leaders, and the eastern powers like China will continue to grow as world powers (Rev. 16:12). The European nations will eventually form their own "united states" of Europe (Rev. 17:12-13), at least for a short time, and the Islamic states will form their confederacy with Russia (Ezk. 38-39). The world will think that its global government has finally established universal peace. The Antichrist will head up the "New World Order" that so many are talking about today. He will even confirm a seven year peace treaty with the nation of Israel (Dan. 9:27). Everyone will think that peace and safety has arrived at last, but the Bible says, **"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."** (1 Ths. 5:3) Satan, the "god of this world" is leading this world into a trap that will damn billions to Hell forever (Rev. 12:9).

In the middle of the Tribulation the Antichrist will turn against Israel (Dan. 9:27). He will enter the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem and sit down in the Holy Place and demand to be worshipped as God (2 Ths. 2:3-4). Satan desired to have Jesus worship him in Matthew 4:9, and he **WILL** have the world worshipping him in the Tribulation. Those who refuse will be killed (Rev. 6:9; 20:4).

However, God will preserve a faithful remnant of Jews throughout this period (Rev. 12:6; Hos. 2:14-17) because He still plans to send Jesus back to establish the promised Kingdom. The Antichrist will think that he has taken full control and that nothing can stop him. The humanists, communists and socialists will think that they've finally won and conquered the world. While Satan is laughing in the face of God, thinking

that he has won and that the kingdoms of this world will never belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, all the hosts of Heaven will be *rejoicing*, because *THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH IS JUST BEGINNING!*

VII. Christ's Second Advent

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword

proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." (Rev. 19:11-21)

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Mat. 24:29-30)

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isa. 2:2-4)

"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." (Rev 11:15)

These are just a few of the many prophecies to be fulfilled when Jesus returns to this earth to take over the kingdoms of this world. This will be a time of JUSTICE and JUDGMENT on the earth. The Antichrist and the False Prophet will be cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20), and Satan himself will be chained in the "bottomless pit" for the duration of the Millennial Kingdom (Rev. 20:1-7). The nations of the earth will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ, and some will be admitted into the Kingdom, while others will not (Mat. 25:31-46; Joel. 3:1-2).

Once all wickedness has been defeated, the Lord Jesus Christ will rule over the earth in righteousness from the Throne of His Glory in Jerusalem. He will be the King of all kings, and all nations will be subject unto Him. Friend, the Kingdom will come and the King of kings will reign.

VIII. The Millennial Reign of Christ

This will be the great "golden age" which the ancient philosophers only dreamed about. This will be GOD'S New World Order, rather than man's. This will be a time of world peace, for the Prince of Peace will be ruling the world in righteousness (Isa. 9:6; Luk. 1:32; Isa. 2:2-4).

There will be only ONE RELIGION during the Millennium. Those who refuse to worship Christ will be punished (Zch. 14:16-19).

People will be happy during this time, because Satan will no longer be around to tempt them. The curse of Genesis chapter three will be lifted, and men will once again live long lives as they did in the days of Adam, Noah, and Methuselah (Isa. 33:24; 65:20).

There will be better farming and weather conditions (Isa. 30:23-26; Amos 9:13-15; Joel 2:19-24; Ezk. 36:29-30), and wild animals will become tame (Isa. 11:6-9; Rom. 8:20-21).

The so-called "lost tribes" of Israel will be fully restored to their proper land divisions (Ezk. 36-48). Jerusalem will be the capital city of the world (Jer. 3:17; Mic. 4:8), and the violent acts of Arab terrorism will not be tolerated. Justice will be executed in the earth like never before. Good will overcome evil. Things will be done on earth as they are in Heaven (Mat. 6:10). Christ and His saints will reign over the earth for one thousand years!

The Seven Dispensations

A dispensation in the Bible is a period of time in which God *dispenses* to men and nations their responsibility to Him concerning obedience and disobedience. Since these laws differ throughout the Bible, it becomes necessary to respect certain divisions. For example, God didn't command Christians today to offer a lamb for sacrifice, so this places us in a different dispensation than the Old Testament Jews who did offer sacrifice. Likewise, God didn't command the Jews under the law of Moses to not eat of the Tree of Life, as He did Adam and Eve, so Adam and Eve were in yet another dispensation. So the study of dispensations is simply a study to better understand how God has dealt with man differently through the ages.

The word itself is found four times in the Bible: I Corinthians 9:17, Ephesians 1:10, Ephesians 3:2, and Colossians 1:25. Each time the word has to do with either a period of time or a responsibility which has been given to someone.

One good reason for dispensations is to reveal or emphasize an attribute of God. For example, under the law His *holiness* was emphasized. Today, during the church age, we see that His *grace* is the highlighted attribute. This doesn't mean that God is no longer holy. He is just as holy as ever, but He has chosen to emphasize His *grace* for this present age. For instance, a preacher doesn't preach a message to fathers on Father's Day because he doesn't appreciate mothers. He does so because the day places an emphasis on fathers. The mothers had their day a month earlier.

Another reason for dispensations is for God to give man every possible opportunity to be reconciled to Himself. At the final White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15), man will have no excuse because God will have tried him under seven distinct dispensations and man failed under each one. For example, no one will be able to say, "*Well, if I hadn't been born a sinner I could have stayed clean and holy.*" There was

a time when two clean and holy people lived in a perfect paradise, yet they chose to sin against God. For example, no one can say, "Well, if I could have just seen Jesus for myself I would have believed." In the Millennium people will see Him on the throne in Jerusalem, yet there is a massive rebellion by Gog and Magog at the close of the 1000-year reign (Rev. 20:8-10). The seven dispensations prove that (1) God is holy and just and (2) that man is utterly hopeless.

A third reason for dispensations is to reveal the approved and the heretics. II Timothy 2:15 says, **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."** A heretic does not rightly divide God's word, so he is not "approved." Notice the words of I Corinthians 11:19: **"For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."** Those who refuse to rightly divide the truth will eventually teach heresy. This casts a "blacklight" upon them while the approved teachers of truth shine even brighter in the light of God's word. So, each dispensation allows for a very definite contrast to be made between the approved and the heretics.

The following chart shows the seven main dispensations with their beginning and their end:

DISPENSATION	BEGINNING	END
INNOCENCE	MAN'S CREATION	MAN'S FIRST SIN
CONSCIENCE	MAN'S FIRST SIN	FLOOD
HUMAN GOVERNMENT	AFTER FLOOD	TOWER OF BABEL
PROMISE (FAMILY)	CALL OF ABRAHAM	EGYPTIAN BONDAGE
LAW	MOSES AT MT. SINAI	CALVARY

GRACE	CALVARY	SECOND COMING
KINGDOM	SECOND COMING	WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

We will now study through each dispensation individually, considering five different factors for each dispensation: its beginning, man's responsibility, God's attribute, man's test and failure, and, finally, the closing judgment.

I. THE DISPENSATION OF INNOCENCE

Beginning

This dispensation began in *Genesis 1:26* when man was created in God's image and placed under God's authority in a perfect setting.

Man's Responsibility

Man was given "dominion" over God's creation as God's very own "son" (Luke 3:38). He was given perfect weather, perfect health, a perfect paradise to live in, and even a perfect wife! His primary responsibility is given in *Genesis 2:8-15*: "**And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. . . . And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.**" Adam's duty was to simply "dress" and "keep" the garden of God. There was no curse yet placed upon the earth, so thorns and thistles were not a factor. Adam's job was apparently an easy one and also a pleasant one.

He was also permitted to eat from the trees of this garden, as we see from Genesis 2:16-17: " And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

God's Attribute

The attribute of God which is most manifest in this dispensation is God's goodness. This is quite evident from what we read just before God creates man and places him in the garden. We are reminded several times in chapter one that what God created was "good" (see 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). God is a good God, and He provided man with a good environment and a good opportunity to live and prosper for God's glory.

Man's Test and Failure

God Himself didn't tempt man with sin, but He did test man by allowing the devil to tempt him. Man was forbidden to eat of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:17), yet he had liberty to sin and do so if he chose. It was God's will that man love Him enough to be obedient and remain holy, yet man failed his first test. We read in Genesis 3:1-6, "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree

to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."

Notice the elements of the first temptation:

- (1) Satan questions God's word (verse 2)
- (2) The woman changes God's word by omitting the word "freely." (verse 2. See God's statement in 2:16).
- (3) Satan's outright lie (verse 4)
- (4) Satan's suggestion that God was withholding certain knowledge from Eve (verse 5)
- (5) The woman's reasoning that the tree was good for food" (verse 6). That is, "after all, I do have to eat! I must have food to live, and here is good food!)
She justified her sin.
- (6) The woman's reasoning that the tree *looked* good (verse 6). The tree was good for food and it even looked good, so she figured it just couldn't hurt her.
- (7) The woman's reasoning that the tree could make her wise (verse 6). Eve was a secondary creation (made from Adam's rib, not from the ground itself) so she was a weaker vessel. She wasn't equal to Adam, but was rather a help meet for him. The devil's temptation appealed to this "weakness" in Eve and caused her to want to "better" herself. Instead of ERA, this was EVE, the original "liberated woman." She liberated the human race from the kingdom of God to a fallen state called sin, all because she ignored God's simple order. Adam then ate of the tree himself, although he was not deceived as was Eve (I Tim. 2:14).

The Closing Judgment

The dispensation of innocence ends with a curse placed upon the serpent, the woman, the ground, the man, and even an innocent lamb (Gen. 3:15-19).

First the serpent is cursed. We can't be certain of what the serpent looked like at first, but he was forced to crawl upon his belly from this day forth, in full contact with the cursed ground. He is also told that a promised seed (Christ) will defeat him one day.

Then the woman is cursed by having to suffer in childbearing.

The ground is then cursed and the man is told that he will have to till the cursed ground rather than work in a perfect paradise as he had been doing in the garden. Thorns, thistles and sweat would be his lot in life.

Almost unnoticed is the innocent lamb which has to be slain to provide a skin for their covering (3:21). Adam and Eve tried covering themselves with fig leaves (verse 7), but God required that BLOOD be shed to cover sin (Heb. 9:22; Lev. 17:11). So, an innocent lamb had to shed its blood and die that they might have a covering. We know this from a couple places in Scripture: “. . . **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**” (Rev. 13:8) and **“The lambs are for thy clothing, and the goats are the price of the field.”** (Prov. 27:26)

So, the first dispensation closed with man being expelled from Eden to enter a life of hard work and suffering. Yet he left Eden with the promise of a coming seed (Christ) Who would redeem fallen man from the bondage of the devil (3:15).

II. THE DISPENSATION OF CONSCIENCE

Beginning

The dispensation of conscience begins when man is expelled from the garden of Eden in Genesis 3:23. He was now a fallen creature, and

he was conscious of it (Gen. 3:7, 10-11). He now had an awareness of good and evil. He also knew that God expected a blood sacrifice from man since the lamb skin was required in Eden instead of the fig leaves.

Man's Responsibility

Man's responsibility at this point was to be faithful to the three witnesses which he now had:

- (1) An internal witness (Rom. 2:14-15; Jer. 17:1).
His conscience was his internal witness concerning good and evil.
- (2) An external witness (Rom. 1:19-20). God's creation itself stood as an outward witness that God is the sovereign Creator, and all are accountable to Him.
- (3) History (Gen. 3). Man knew from the events in Genesis chapter three that God was holy and would not overlook sin. He also finds confirmation in Genesis chapter four (Cain and Abel) that God rejects anything short of a blood atonement for sin.

In this dispensation, man has no written authority, no Bible, so he is judged in regards to his faithfulness to these three witnesses.

God's Attribute

The attribute which God seems to display the most during this time is His *longsuffering*. This dispensation is 1,700 years in length, and man's life span was eight and nine hundred years (Gen. 5). This allowed man ample time to become very good or very evil. He chose to become very evil, yet God's grace abounded even more and His spirit "strove" with man on through the days of Noah (Gen. 6:3). We read in I Peter 3:20 that "... the LONGSUFFERING of God waited in the days of Noah, while

the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.” (emphasis added) God was longsuffering with man in spite of the prevailing wickedness upon the earth.

Man's Test and Failure

A redemptive seed had been promised in Genesis 3:15, so man's great test was to keep his generations clean and undefiled. We know this from God's comments about Noah, the one man who found grace in God's eyes: **“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD. These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.”** (Gen. 6:8-9) Noah had kept himself and his family unspotted from the wicked world. The gross sexual perversion of that day had not affected him, yet it did affect the rest of the world. Many had even given themselves over to sexual relations with fallen angels (Gen. 6:2-4; Jude 6-7; II Pet. 2:4). Even the animals were perverse, for they too ended up drowning in the flood. “All flesh” had corrupted his way upon the earth (Gen. 6:12). If God had not intervened when He did, the entire plan would have eventually been corrupted and His redemption plan would have been destroyed. Man failed his test miserably.

The Closing Judgment

The judgment which ended this dispensation was the universal flood (Gen. 7:15-24). All flesh died except for eight souls (I Pet. 3:20).

III. THE DISPENSATION OF HUMAN GOVERNMENT

Beginning

This dispensation begins in *Genesis 8:20* with Noah and his family coming out of the Ark and making a new beginning. He offers sacrifice in 8:20, and God accepts it, so the new dispensation is under way.

Notice how conscience is still a factor. With no written revelation, Noah still knows to offer sacrifice.

Noah and his family are the first people to be "blessed" since the fall of man in *Genesis 3*.

Up to this point, God has not shown man how to govern *nations*, for He has only dealt with man on an individual basis. Now, after men have populated and corrupted the earth so much that God had to destroy them all, He chooses to reveal to man certain national duties.

Man's Responsibility

In this dispensation God demands that men properly govern society. They are to still follow their conscience, since there is no written revelation, but they do have the lessons of their ancestors.

Man can eat animals now (9:3), whereas before he only ate vegetation. This factor coupled with the fact that man's sins caused the animal population to be drowned puts a fear of man in the animals (9:2).

Notice that the blood of animals is not to be eaten (9:4). This also hold true throughout future dispensations (*Lev. 17:11; Acts 15:29*).

The highest responsibility of any government is that of protecting and taking human life. Innocent people are to be protected, and those worthy of death are to be executed. Therefore, we find God commanding man to carry out the death penalty (*Gen. 9:5-6*). This wasn't the case in the previous dispensation when Cain murdered Able (*Gen. 4*), but with human governments forming God saw the need to install the

death penalty. He will hold nations accountable for not obeying this law (I Kgs. 20:42).

God's Attribute

God's most prominent attribute during this dispensation is justice. God is a just God, and He expects society to be governed His way. Righteous people are to be appreciated and blessed, while wicked people are to be punished. This is explained quite well in Ecclesiastes 8:11: **"Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil."**

Man's Test and Failure

The dispensation of human government offered man a perfect opportunity to make a fresh new start and fulfill God's will by governing himself responsibly, but he failed.

Three distinct races with three distinct characteristics (Gen. 9:24-27) had no business integrating and pretending that they were all equal, but they did. This led to the breakdown in society which promoted unity and humanism while downgrading God.

Notice how no one prayed about building the tower of Babel (Gen. 11). They all got together with one speech in one place (Shinar-Babylon), and they used man-made materials to build a tower in honor of man and progress. God isn't mentioned in Genesis 11:1-4, but man says plenty about himself ("one another . . .us . . .us . . .we . . .etc. - 11:3-4).

The Closing Judgment

God, in His wisdom, ends this dispensation simply by confounding man's language so he can't communicate (Gen. 11:5-9). So this turns out to be a curse, causing national differences in regards to speech,

geography, environment and culture (see Acts 17:24-27). After this event, God is practically finished with *nations* (plural), and He picks out ONE nation to be His own, but even then it must begin with one *family*.

IV. THE DISPENSATION OF PROMISE (Family or Patriarchal)

Beginning

Our next dispensation begins in Genesis chapter 12 with God calling Abraham (Abram) to begin a chosen people for Himself, the Jews: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12:1-3) In this text and in later texts, God makes several promises to Abraham:

- (1) He promises to make him a great nation (12:1-3). Israel became a great nation.
- (2) God promised to make his name great (12:2). He did, for Abraham is a highly regarded name among Jews, Christians, and even Moslems.
- (3) God promised that Abraham would be a blessing and that nations would be blessed in him (12:2-3). Reading the next few chapters in Genesis clearly reveals that Abraham was a blessing as an individual (especially to Lot), and the record of history reveals that nations have been blessed in him as well—through Israel and through Jesus Christ (see Gal. 3:8-14).

- (4) God promise him a physical seed in Isaac (Gen. 12:7), and a spiritual seed in Christ (Gen. 22:17-18).
- (5) God promised Abraham a land grant (Gen. 15:18-21).
- (6) God promised that kings would come from Abraham and many nations (Gen. 17:4-6).
- (7) God promised that Abraham's circumcision and that of his descendants would serve as a token of the Abramic covenant (Gen. 17:9-14). Those not circumcised were excluded from the covenant.

Man's Responsibility

By "man" we mean "men under the covenant, Abraham's descendants." The Gentiles are still judged as in previous dispensations, primarily according to their conscience (Romans chapter 1), but now we have a peculiar people whom God has chosen for His own. They have special duties like no one else:

- (1) They must continue to offer sacrifice (Gen. 12:7-8; 13:4; 13:18; 22:13, etc.)
- (2) They must remain in the land of promise. When they leave the land the blessings cease (example - Gen. 12:6-20).
- (3) They must be circumcised (Gen. 17:9-14).

God's Attribute

The attribute of God which is most manifest in this dispensation is His faithfulness. God is faithful in keeping His promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve tribes of Israel.

Man's Test and Failure

The real test was whether or not man would remain in the promised land and trust God by continually offering sacrifice and obeying God's law of circumcision. Man does not pass the test for he ends up going down to Egypt. He also ceases to offer sacrifice and practice circumcision (Exo. 3:18; 4:26).

The Closing Judgment

The dispensation of promise ends up with the entire nation of Israel under Egyptian bondage for 400 years. In God's wisdom, this would be a time of building up a strong nation of over 2,000,000 people who would bring honor and glory to the true God, unlike all the other nations.

V. THE DISPENSATION OF LAW

Beginning

The law dispensation begins in Exodus chapter twenty when God gave the written law to Moses at Mt. Sinai.

The law consisted of three basic divisions: command-ments, judgments, and ordinances. The commandments (Exo. 20:1-26) are moral, the judgments (Exo. 21:1-24:11) are civil, and the ordinances (Exo. 24:12-31:18 & Lev. 1-8) are religious.

The law was not to save man, but rather to show man his lost condition and his need for Christ (Rom. 3:19-21; Gal. 3:24-25). In fact it is called a curse (Gal. 3:13). Yet, the Jews were so zealous about their new law(s) that they committed themselves to keep it before the religious (redemptive) section of the law was given. That is, they made the bold commitment of Exodus 19:8 and 24:3-8 before God had given

them the redemption section of Exodus 24:12-31:18. Only a few weeks later, in Exodus chapter 32, they are worshiping a golden calf! By Exodus 40 they have the tabernacle, the offerings by Leviticus 6, and the priests by Leviticus 8, so they now have a redemption plan which allows them to be reconciled to God if they violate the law.

Man's Responsibility

Under the law man was to keep God's commandments in a right spirit without becoming conceited and self-righteous. He was expected to keep all of God's law without adding to or diminishing from it (Deu. 4:2). Outside influences such as the Babylonian Talmud and various traditions were strictly forbidden. God wanted man to clearly see the wide gap that existed between Himself and man.

God's Attribute

God's most manifest attribute under the law is His holiness, which is obvious with the word "holy" occurring over sixty times in Exodus alone, the first mention being Exodus 3:5 when God calls Moses to launch the new dispensation.

Man's Test and Failure

Would man live by God's word alone? Would he live by "every word" (Deu. 8:3) or would he give place to the deceitfulness of sin and fail in yet another dispensation?

As we know, Israel rejected the written law and went after false gods and was eventually carried away into foreign captivity. Later they rejected the incarnate law, Jesus Christ. So, those who had been entrusted to keep and honor the law actually killed the Lawgiver!

The Closing Judgment

The closing judgment is twofold:

- (1) Christ is judged on Calvary as a payment for sin. His statement "It is finished" (John 19:30) brings the law dispensation to an end.
- (2) Israel is judged for the next 2,000 years for murdering her Messiah. The temple is destroyed, along with Jerusalem, and Israel is dispersed among the nations. This is Israel's present condition, although God will soon resume His dealings with his chosen people in the coming tribulation period (Rev. 6-19).

VI. THE DISPENSATION OF GRACE

Unlike with previous dispensations, there is a definite period of transition between law and grace. The law and the prophets were until John the Baptist (Luke 16:16), yet it isn't correct to say that the dispensation of grace began immediately after John's death. John dies in Matthew 14:10, yet five chapters later Jesus is still speaking of keeping the law in order to have eternal life (Matthew 19:17-18), although He is clearly speaking of the *moral* law, not all the law. Others are saved by faith with no mention of the commandments (Luke 7:48-50). Conversions differ as one reads through the ministry of Christ and through the book of Acts, so it's not possible to select a definite starting place where the law stops and grace begins. God uses this transition period to slowly usher in the day of grace. Remember, the promised kingdom is being offered to Israel clear through Acts chapter 7, so we are in Acts chapter 8 before we see a clear-cut faith conversion to Christ based on His redemptive work at Calvary.

The reason for the gospel of John emphasizing grace more than the other three gospels is that John was written around 85 A.D., which was *after Paul's revelation*. The others were written earlier.

Beginning

It is my personal belief that the dispensation of grace began at Calvary, *but no one knew it* (John 1:17). God used about the first fifteen chapters of Acts to reveal this to man. Hebrews 9:15-17 tells us that the new covenant was in effect after Jesus died, but who knew it? Peter didn't know it in Acts 2, because it is in Acts 10 that God gives him this special revelation (Acts 10:9-28). This is why so many cults like the book of Acts: it's a *transitional book of progressive revelation*. If one establishes his doctrine in Acts 2, then he errs greatly, because God reveals more to man in later chapters. The dispensation of grace began at Calvary, but it takes until about Acts 15 to get everyone to understand this (Acts 15:11). This dispensation is especially given to Paul (Eph. 3:2).

Man's Responsibility

In Ephesians 2:8-10, Paul sums up man's responsibility in the age of grace: **"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."**

Today, men are expected to receive Christ by faith and walk in good works to glorify Christ. We are to be SAVED and SERVING. Our service includes glorifying the Saviour, evangelizing the sinners, and edifying the saints.

God's Attribute

God's main attribute in this dispensation is grace. The word "grace" is found 170 times in the Bible, about half of which are found in Paul's writings alone. God is gracious to those who exercise faith in Jesus Christ, because Christ is "full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). God's grace in this age accomplishes three great things:

- (1) Saves sinners (Eph. 2:8-9)
- (2) Places Jews and Gentiles into one body (Eph. 2:11-14)
- (3) Establishes glory for God in ages to come (Eph. 2:7)

Man's Test and Failure

Rather than stick to the primary duties of the church, God's people have given way to gross apostasy, and the church age will end in apostasy like all other dispensations. Paul said in II Timothy 3:1-7: **"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."** He tells the Thessaloians that there will be a "falling away" in the last days. The church has left the three simple duties which we've just mentioned, and she has gone lusting after worldliness and selfish gain. Everything has been modernized, and the old-time gospel is seldom heard. Preachers have quit preaching against sin and have resorted to "counseling" and tickling ears. False Bible translations have been invited into our

churches, and genuine revival is a thing of the past. Performance has replaced praise, and worldliness has replaced godliness. God's people have grown to fear men, and they've forgotten to fear God.

The Closing Judgment

Most of professing Christianity is FAKE, so such people will not be taken to Heaven in the Rapture. Instead, professing Christians will enter into the Great Tribulation period with the world to suffer the wrath of God (Revelation chapters 6 through 19). The world will worship the Antichrist (Rev. 13), and they will end up in Hell. Many will be saved in the Tribulation (Rev. 7:14), but most will not (II Ths. 2:3-12).

VII. THE DISPENSATION OF THE KINGDOM

After the Tribulation Christ will return from heaven with His saints to establish the 1000-year kingdom, commonly referred to as "the Millennium." This is a literal and physical kingdom with Jesus Christ Himself sitting in Jerusalem as the King, a subject which we've covered in a previous lesson.

Beginning

The Millennium begins in Revelation 20:4-6 after Jesus has destroyed the wicked, the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and after Satan has been "bound" in the bottomless pit for 1000 years.

Man's Responsibility

The duty of man in the coming kingdom will be to obey and worship Christ. Zechariah 14:8-21 says, "And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter

shall it be. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited. And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from the LORD shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. And Judah also shall fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance. And so shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the beasts that shall be in these tents, as this plague. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles. In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the LORD'S house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem

and in Judah shall be holiness unto the LORD of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts."

The saints from the Tribulation and the Church Age will reign with Christ in the Kingdom (II Tim. 2:11-13; Luke 19:11-27; Rev. 20:4), but the rest of the world will be in subjection to Christ's authority, with Israel as the head of all nations (Acts 15:13-17).

Apparently, immediate judgment awaits those who disobey the Lord during the millennium, for Christ rules with a "rod of iron" (Rev. 2:27, 12:5, 19:15). A good example of this is found in Matthew 5:22 where Jesus speaks of a person being in danger of "hell fire" for calling his brother a fool. Paul wasn't worried about this (I Cor. 15:36), but a person in the kingdom needs to be. The millennial kingdom will be a moral and righteous dictatorship.

God's Attribute

Since this will be a righteous kingdom, God's primary attribute will be righteousness. Hebrews 1:8 says, " **But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.**" (Also see Isaiah 11:1-9) Man will be shown the RIGHT way to live and the RIGHT way to govern himself. This will produce 1000 years of world peace, something man has never known.

Man's Test and Failure

Surely men could honor God if they SEE him sitting on the throne in Jerusalem! Surely no one would rebel against the Lord after He has destroyed the wicked and established himself as King of Kings! However, we read in Revelation 20:7-9: " **And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog**

and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Man, after 1000 years of peace and prosperity, chooses to rebel against the Lord, proving beyond any shadow of a doubt that Psalm 39:5 is absolutely correct: " . . . verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah. " Rather than obey and worship Christ, men ATTACK Him! But this time He doesn't turn the other cheek.

The Closing Judgment:

First, the fire falls from Heaven and devours those who rebel against the Lord, then the world stands before the Lord at the White Throne Judgment to be judged and condemned (I Cor. 11:32; Rev. 20:11-15). This will be the final judgment on all of the wicked from all ages. Those not recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life will be cast into the Lake of Fire.

Like all other dispensations, the Millennium ends in apostasy. Man had his seventh chance to prove himself, and he failed. He is a hopeless creature without Christ, so he ends up in a hopeless place forever.

Rightly Dividing the Word

II Timothy 2:15 tells us, "**Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**" There are proper divisions to be made when reading and studying the Bible. When these divisions are ignored, a serious and well intended Bible study can result in heresy. In lesson thirteen, we saw a good example of this when studying the dispensations. The same holds true in all Bible study. One must learn to rightly divide.

The Bible presents different resurrections, different judgments, different baptisms, different places to spend eternity, different gospels, different spirits, different spiritual fathers, different kinds of people (just to mention a few examples), yet many people fail to make the necessary distinctions and divisions.

Some Questions to Ask

When reading or studying your Bible, there are some good wise questions to always ask. We will present some of these questions in this final lesson. Hopefully, this will keep you within the boundaries of good and healthy Bible study.

I. WHO IS SPEAKING?

Speech comes from three sources in the Bible. God often speaks and He is *always right*. Man also speaks, and is *sometimes misleading*. Satan sometimes speaks and is *often misleading*. Read the first five verses of Genesis chapter three to see this truth illustrated on all three counts.

The point here is that just because the Bible says something, this doesn't mean GOD said it. It was Satan who said, "Ye shall not surely die." God wanted this information recorded for you to know about, but it wasn't God Himself who said it.

II. TO WHOM IS THIS SCRIPTURE DIRECTED?

There are three classes of people in the Bible (I Corinthians 10:32), so scripture may be directed to either or all of these classes. Scripture may be directed toward Jews, Gentiles, the Church, or even all three. It is wrong to apply something to yourself which God directed to someone else. For example, a Christian could easily start a "no hair"

cult with Jeremiah 48:37 if he just ignored the fact that this verse deals with God's judgment on a *Gentile nation*.

III. DOES THIS CONCERN INDIVIDUALS OR NATIONS?

God says things to nations in the Bible that He never says to individuals, and visa versa. For example, God promises to save any *individual* who calls upon his name for salvation in Romans 10:9-13, but this is not a promise to save any nation. If the U.S President and Congress passed a resolution to have an official day of salvation prayer for our nation on the basis of Romans 10:9-13 it wouldn't mean anything. Many things in our nation will have to change before God can shower His blessings upon us as in years past. However, any individual American can call upon the Lord for personal salvation in spite of the sad condition of the country at large.

By contrast, Romans 11:17-25 deals with the salvation of the *nation* of Israel in the coming Tribulation. This will happen in spite of the fact that many *individual* Jews are lost and will not be saved. One must rightly divide between nations and individuals.

IV. WHAT IS THE CONTEXT?

Sometimes it will be necessary to rightly divide God's word from your own opinion or tradition. Many false teachings have been derived from the Bible by people who pull texts from their context. I grew up thinking it was a sin to *sell a dog* because of a family member who used Deuteronomy 23:18 out of its proper context. Many people think they are saved today because their blind leaders have stolen Acts 2:38 from its context and have failed to properly expound this verse to their followers.

Remember, always ask, "*What is the context?*" Read verses, not just phrases, and read chapters, not just verses.

V. DOES THIS CONCERN SPIRITUAL OR PHYSICAL MATTERS?

The Bible speaks of spiritual matters and of physical matters. Much confusion can erupt when one fails to distinguish between the two.

Many people, for example, like to read God's many Old Testament promises to the nation of Israel and then spiritualize them for the church. The idea here is that God did not physically mean what He said to Israel about a future kingdom and the promised land, so He must have been making spiritual references to the church. The promised "land" would actually be a "place of blessing" for the Christian. This leaves the *physical* nation of Israel out in the cold, robbed of her precious promises. There is no reason to assume that God didn't mean exactly what He said about Israel and her glorious days ahead. Many err in spiritualizing God's physical promises. The same is done with the doctrines of the Second Coming, the First Resurrection, the Millennium, etc.

Then again, some things in the Bible are spiritual. The chariots and horses of fire in II Kings 2:11 are obviously not physical horses and chariots because the fire would consume them. These are spiritual (supernatural) horses and chariots, just like the ones in II Kings 6:17.

Always ask, "*Does this concern spiritual or physical matters?*"

VI. IS THIS SCRIPTURE LITERAL OR FIGURATIVE?

Please do not confuse this question with the previous one. When something is *literal* it is *real*. When something is *figurative*, it only *represents* something that is real and isn't real itself.

For example, Genesis tells us that God made man from the dust of the earth. That's literal. The dirt doesn't represent anything, and the man doesn't represent anything. God took literal dirt and made a literal man.

So what is figurative? In John 10:9 Jesus said, "**I am the door.**" Obviously, Jesus isn't a literal door with hinges, so He was speaking figuratively. The same is true of His claims of being a shepherd, the lily

of the valleys, the rose of Sharon, the bright and morning star, and the lion of the tribe of Judah. These are figurative terms used to describe His person, not literal terms.

VII. DOES THIS DEAL WITH ETERNAL OR TEMPORAL MATTERS?

Don't make the assumption that a word or group of words are always used the same way in the Bible. Sometimes the Bible speaks of eternal things while at other times it speaks of temporal things.

For example, the word "damnation" is used in both ways. John 5:29 speaks of eternal damnation for the unsaved, yet I Corinthians 11:29-32 speaks of temporal damnation for those who are saved so that they will *not* be condemned with the world. These are two different kinds of damnation for two different kinds of people. Always bear in mind that some things in the Bible are eternal while others are temporal.

VIII. IS THIS CONDITIONAL OR UNCONDITIONAL?

Some statements in the Bible have conditions attached to them, while others do not. II Timothy 2:11-12 place a condition upon our reigning with Christ in his kingdom: we must "suffer" for him today. That's the condition. No suffering means no reigning. No cross means no crown. That's a conditional promise which disqualifies many people.

The next chapter, however, presents an unconditional promise about the apostasy of the last days (II Tim. 3:1-7). There is no condition placed upon this promise. God didn't say, "*If my people don't do such and such, then perilous times shall come.*" He plainly declared that perilous times "shall" come. It's a definite and unconditional promise.

IX. DOES THIS AGREE WITH PAUL'S WRITINGS?

As we've already seen, the Bible is written to different classes of people. Well, to be more specific at this point, Paul himself had a special calling of God which other New Testament writers did not have. Paul was called of God to minister to the Gentiles (non Jews). This is evident from reading Acts 28:25-31, Romans 15:8, 15:16, and Galatians 2:7-8. We should never use another portion of scripture to overrule what God has given us through Paul. Some reason that "it's better to obey Jesus than Paul," but the fact is that Jesus handpicked Paul to minister to you.

A good example of this is the issue of whether or not the church has to endure the Great Tribulation Period which is coming upon the earth. Paul's writings state clearly that Christians are:

1. Not waiting for the Tribulation - I Thes 1:10
2. Delivered from the wrath to come - I Ths 5:9
3. Going to be caught up - I Ths 4
4. Not condemned with the world - I Cor 11

It would be foolish to ignore Paul's instruction by going to some other place in the Bible, like Matthew or Hebrews, and using passages out of context to teach that Christians must go through the Tribulation. Paul's writings to the church do not teach this, so the other passages cannot mean what many are using them to teach. There will be people in the Tribulation, but not Christians who are presently in the body of Christ.

X. DOES THIS CONCERN MY STANDING OR MY STATE?

A Christian's *standing* has to do with his *position* in Christ, but his *state* has to do with his practice or his circumstance. Ephesians 2:1-6 says that we are seated in heavenly places in Christ. That's our standing.

I am a son of God, sealed and kept by the power of God until Jesus returns.

My state is different and subject to change (Philip. 4:11; Col. 4:7) because I am still in this world in the flesh. My flesh isn't born again, so it does not have a perfect standing and it is not "seated in heavenly places." When Jesus returns, Christians will receive incorruptible bodies (I Cor. 15:51-52), and these new bodies will enjoy the same standing as our spirits, but until then we have to discern between standing and state. Our standing concerns our *relationship to God*, but our state concerns our *fellowship with God*.

XI. DOES THIS CONCERN CHRIST'S FIRST OR SECOND COMING?

I Peter 1:11 divides the First and Second Coming by using two words: suffering and glory. The First Coming is largely associated with the sufferings of Christ, while the Second Coming emphasizes his glory. Notice a few simple comparisons:

First Coming:

Suffering

Lamb

Prophet

Rides Donkey

Killed by enemies

Rejected by Israel

Second Coming:

Glory

Lion

King

Rides White Horse

Kills Enemies

Received by Israel

A good example of the kind of mistakes which one can make with this issue is found in Isaiah 2:4: ". . . and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." This passage is used by many (including the United Nations) to promote

world peace, but it will not be fulfilled until the Second Coming of Christ, which is evident to anyone who takes the time to read the entire verse and the preceding verses.

XII. WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

Paul asked this question in Romans 4:3. *What does the rest of the Bible say about this subject?* It is seldom that God addresses an issue in only one place, so learn to look carefully through the Bible to see *all* that God says, not just one or two places.

A concordance will prove very helpful in this. Find the key words or phrases in a passage and then search out those words and phrases in the rest of the Bible. For example, if you read about the "image of God" in Genesis, you would be very limited in your understanding of the phrase until you studied the phrase in the New Testament. Then you would complete your understanding by learning that the image of God is Jesus Christ. Don't privately interpret the scripture. Allow the scripture to interpret itself.

Dispensational Discernment

**"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
(II Tim. 2:15)**

While this verse is certainly well known in our Bible-believing circles, the word "rightly" is far too often under-appreciated or ignored altogether. In fact, while proudly flying the banner of II Timothy 2:15, many of the brethren spend more time *wrongly* dividing the word of truth than with rightly dividing it. Though they might make technically right divisions, they often do so with a wrong emphasis or a wrong spirit, and many make wrong divisions altogether. This usually happens due to

an under-appreciation and an under-application of two portions of scripture: James 1:5-8 and Hebrews 5:11-14:

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." (James 1:5-8)

"Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Heb. 5:11-14)

There are other verses that we could consider, but those two passages pretty much make the case. A third witness might be Luke 9:55: **"But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of."**

After having spent the better part of four decades around preachers and teachers of the word of God, this preacher can state very emphatically that most men who teach the Bible are somewhat flawed with either their understanding of Bible doctrine, their ability to wisely communicate it to others, their motive for communicating it, or all three.

Some lack the spiritual maturity to rightly divide because they lack the wisdom and spiritual discernment that come with humble prayer, age and experience. One might pray for wisdom, as James 1:5 says, but then not meet the qualifications for obtaining it. One might also have age and experience, as required by Hebrews 5:11-14, but then not be humble enough to balance it by seeking the heavenly wisdom of James 1:5. In such cases, rather than getting sound dispensational teaching, one is

often treated to an awkward "Sibboleth," instead of a sound "Shibboleth" (Jgs. 12:6), and sometimes all he gets is a parable in the mouth of a fool (Pro. 26:7, 9). Sound dispensational teaching doesn't come easy, and the able men who truly fulfil this calling are few and far between. Thank God for them.

As a preacher and teacher of God's word, I should always want to help people to be able to read anything and everything in the Bible and not be troubled or confused. I should want people to feel "at home" in the Bible. If I can accomplish that goal, then believers will be stronger and will not need a preacher for as many little detailed things as they otherwise would. Sure, they should obey God and still be an active part of a good church with a good preacher, but they should also grow and learn to stand their own ground and fight their own battles.

Correct dispensational teaching plays a vital role in reaching the above goal, whereas incorrect teaching frustrates the purpose and often leaves believers worse than it finds them. The purpose of this booklet is to encourage a responsible approach to rightly dividing the word of truth by helping brethren to see the need to slow down, pray for wisdom, think for themselves, and to prove all things with scripture. I have chosen a question/answer format as this seems the best way to keep the information simple, progressive, and the most digestible.

For the sake of clarity, I should add the fact that this booklet is being written for the purpose of helping hungry believers, not for the purpose of impressing anyone or debating anyone. I care about helping people to open and read their Bibles today without being confused or deceived by irresponsible or false teachers.

WHAT IS A DISPENSATION?

A dispensation in the Bible is the manner in which God DISPENSES, or reveals, to men their responsibilities to Him and certain truths about Himself and His will. Since these truths progress and differ throughout the Bible, it becomes necessary to respect certain divisions and time

periods. For example, God didn't command Christians today to offer a lamb for sacrifice, so this places us in a different dispensation than the Old Testament Jews who did offer sacrifice. Likewise, God didn't command the Jews under the law of Moses to not eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, as He did Adam and Eve, so Adam and Eve were in yet another dispensation. So, the study of dispensations is simply a study to better understand how God has dealt with man differently and progressively through the ages.

The word itself is found four times in the Bible: I Corinthians 9:17, Ephesians 1:10, Ephesians 3:2, and Colossians 1:25. Each time the word has to do with either a period of time or a responsibility which has been given to someone at a particular time. Ephesians 2:7 uses the phrase "ages to come," while Ephesians 3:5 speaks of "other ages" when the mystery of Gentiles being saved in one body with Jews was "not made known." Clearly, God's revelation has progressed through different "ages."

IS A DISPENSATION A TIME PERIOD?

Some of the brethren delight in pointing out that a dispensation is "not a period of time." That can be misleading. While it's true that a dispensation is a "dispensing," it DOES happen in time, and to some degree, in time periods. The dispensation of law, for instance, had a beginning. It began when God gave Moses and the Israelites the written law at Sinai, and it ended when Christ blotted out the handwriting of ordinances at Calvary (Col. 2:14). Sure, the moral law of God is still in effect today, but the numerous "ordinances," such as feasts days and animal sacrifices, did come to an end. In fact, this is called "the fullness of the time" (Gal. 4:4). What some of the brethren are trying to accomplish by removing the time factor from dispensational teaching I do not know, but the ones I have read or heard have only muddied the waters.

Should we be so technical that we feel the need to chop and slice God's word to pieces with numerous hyper-dispensational time periods? Of course not, but we shouldn't throw out the baby with the bath water either. Understanding that dispensations *do* generally concern periods of time is very helpful to new students of the word. Adam and Eve were innocent until a certain time when they knew that they were naked. That's a fact, and it's a very helpful fact when explaining basic dispensational truth. The Millennial Kingdom is "a thousand years" in length (Rev. 20:1-7). That's *time*, and it *is* a dispensation, because the law of the land that is *dispensed* by God at that *time* differs from any other *time* before or after. The time factor is certainly not the main point and purpose of any dispensation, but it is a factor, and I fail to see how downplaying it helps anyone. We should all do a better job when explaining dispensational truth, but this isn't done by eliminating the time factor.

WHY DOES GOD USE DISPENSATIONS?

One good reason for dispensations is to reveal or emphasize an attribute of God. For example, under the law, God's holiness was emphasized. Today, during the church age, we see that His grace is the highlighted attribute. This doesn't mean that God is no longer holy. He is just as holy as ever, but He has chosen to emphasize His grace for this present age. For instance, a preacher doesn't preach a message to fathers on Father's Day just because he doesn't appreciate mothers. He does so because the day places an emphasis on fathers. The mothers had their day a month earlier. By emphasizing his various attributes at different times, God progressively reveals his character to man over thousands of years. In the end, after thousands of years of divine revelation through various dispensations, any serious student of scripture can learn a great deal about God and His will for man.

Another reason for dispensations is for God to give man every possible opportunity to be reconciled to Himself. At the final White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15), man will have no excuse because God

will have tried him under seven distinct dispensations and man will have failed under each one. For example, no one will be able to say, *"Well, if I hadn't been born a sinner, I could have stayed clean and holy."* There was a time when two clean and holy people lived in a perfect paradise, yet they chose to sin against God. For example, no one can say, *"Well, if I could have just seen Jesus for myself, I would have believed."* In the Millennium, people will see Him on the throne in Jerusalem, yet there is a massive rebellion by Gog and Magog at the close of the 1000-year reign (Rev. 20:8-10). The seven dispensations prove that (1) God is holy and just and (2) that man is utterly hopeless.

A third reason for dispensations is to reveal the approved and the heretics. II Timothy 2:15 says, **"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."** A heretic does not rightly divide God's word, so he is not "approved." Notice the words of I Corinthians 11:19: **"For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."** Those who refuse to rightly divide the truth will usually end up teaching heresy. This casts a "blacklight" upon them while the approved teachers of truth shine even brighter in the light of God's word. So, each dispensation allows for a very definite contrast to be made between the approved and the heretics.

WHY NOT JUST IGNORE DISPENSATIONS AND LET THE BIBLE SPEAK FOR ITSELF?

First of all, that's impossible, and no one does it. Even people who claim to not believe in dispensations make it a regular habit to respect dispensational divisions in the Bible. No Christian reads Genesis 2:25 and then concludes that it's acceptable to walk around naked. No Christian reads Exodus chapter twelve and then concludes that he must offer a Passover lamb. No Christian reads Zechariah 14:16-19 and then concludes that he must travel to Jerusalem every October to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. It is commonly understood that certain parts of

the Bible do not apply to us doctrinally. This is basic dispensational truth, whether one acknowledges it or not. To completely ignore dispensational divisions and "let the Bible speak for itself" would be disastrous because the Holy Spirit would be quenched while people misapply scripture and resort to gross, private interpretations. EVERYONE is a dispensationalist, whether they know it or not.

Secondly, the Bible commands us to "rightly divide" the word of truth in II Timothy 2:15, and, as already pointed out, "dispensation" is a Bible word with a meaning and a purpose. Everything has its proper place in the Bible. To ignore this is to invite problems. No responsible driver ignores the road signs and then drives by his own rules. There are Speed Limit signs, One Way signs, Stop signs, Yield signs, Wrong Way signs, and many other signs. A man who ignores the rules of the road is a dangerous man. So it is with the man who ignores the rules of sound Bible study, especially the rule of "rightly dividing" as commanded in II Timothy 2:15.

DIDN'T GOD DISPENSE HIS GRACE BEFORE THE CHURCH AGE?

To some degree, yes, but not in same manner as today in the church age. Man has not always been in the dispensation of grace, which is why the term "dispensation of the grace of God" isn't used anywhere in the Old Testament or anywhere in the four gospels. This isn't to say that God wasn't gracious in the Old Testament, for He certainly was at times (Gen. 6:8; Exo. 34:6), but grace was not His most pronounced attribute at that time. The word "grace" is found only 39 times in the Old Testament, which averages only one occurrence per book. Yet, it is found 131 times in the New Testament, averaging nearly five occurrences per book, and since the New Testament books are much shorter, this makes the grace emphasis per book even stronger. God has always been gracious, but never more than today. A few verses of scripture will make this abundantly clear:

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17)

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:" (Rom. 5:20)

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." (Rom. 6:14)

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work." (Rom. 11:6)

HOW MANY DISPENSATIONS ARE THERE AND WHAT ARE THEY?

Most sound teachers teach that there are seven basic dispensations that cover man's history from Genesis 1 through Revelation 20. Some go beyond the basic seven dispensations by calling the gospel ministry of Jesus and the tribulation period dispensations, but this preacher has always viewed these times as *transitions between dispensations* rather than dispensations themselves. Others sometimes include the "ages to come" of Ephesians 2:7 along with Revelation 21-22 to suggest additional dispensations, which could be, but for our present existence and experience on earth, there are seven general dispensations through which God dispenses to man His attributes and will. They are as follows:

1. Innocence - from the creation till the first sin
2. Conscience - from the first sin till the flood
3. Human Government - from the flood till the judgment at Babel
4. Patriarch or Family - from Abraham till Moses received the commandments at Mt. Sinai
5. Law - from Mt. Sinai to the crucifixion of Jesus
6. Grace - from the crucifixion till the Second Coming

7. Kingdom - from the Second Coming till the final Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15

There is a greater dispensing of the various attributes of God in each respective dispensation, so the names differ. The church age is called the "dispensation of the grace of God" by Paul in Ephesians 3:2, not because there was no grace in other dispensations, but simply because there's *more* of it in the church age. The word "grace" is found 170 times in the Bible, yet 91 times in just the small church age books of Romans through Philemon. The major prophets (Isaiah through Daniel) mention the word only once, and the minor prophets mention it only three times. That's only four occurrences from Isaiah 1 through Malachi 4, yet Paul uses the word 24 times in the book of Romans alone. Clearly, God dispenses a heavier dosage of grace in the church age than in other dispensations, so it's called the dispensation of grace.

The word "holy," on the other hand, enjoys a heavier emphasis in the Old Testament, especially in the detailed law books of Exodus and Leviticus (149 occurrences in those two books alone, with only 611 in the entire Bible). This is because God used the law to reveal His holiness while revealing man's UNholiness.

Each dispensation has its own emphasis and purpose, so each dispensation has a name to help identify that emphasis and purpose. But this has never meant that such attributes as grace, holiness, longsuffering and justice aren't present to some degree in ALL dispensations, for they certainly are.

WHAT IF WE'RE WRONG ABOUT DISPENSATIONS?

Personally, I question the intelligence of anyone who rejects dispensational teaching. The reality of some level of Biblical dispensationalism is so obvious that one must have a few theological screws loose in order to deny it. Any child can see that Adam and Eve

lived differently than we live today. Any sound-minded adult, saved or lost, can see that Christians living today do not offer animal sacrifices at a temple or a tabernacle, and most any Christian living today knows perfectly well that Noah and Abraham didn't preach, **"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."** (Acts 16:31) We can argue all day about *how many* dispensations there are and just *how sharp* the divisions need to be, but to categorically deny dispensations altogether just isn't very bright.

I have believed in basic dispensational truth since the early 1980's, and I believe it more today than I did then, as do most of my brethren who continually study the matter seriously. But what if we're wrong? What if somehow we've all just gone too far with this thing and there is no dispensation of conscience, no dispensation of human government, no patriarchal dispensation and no kingdom dispensation. What if the lightweights are correct in saying that it's all the dispensation of grace? I think that's insane, but for sake of argument, what if that's true?

Well, if that's true, then we have still managed to get a whole lot of people interested in the Book, and we've helped a great many people to make some sense out of apparent errors and contradictions in the word of God. How can that be a bad thing? We've given more people faith in more Scripture than the dispensational doubters could ever hope to give. The passages that they skim over or ignore completely are expounded on by us, and many have an increased faith in the word of God because of it. By teaching a sensible and balanced dispensational approach to the Scriptures, we have awakened thousands who had been put to sleep by the limited revelations of people like Matthew Henry and Adam Clarke. If not for the dispensational teaching of Larkin, Scofield and Ruckman, this preacher and writer may very well have remained in spiritual darkness believing that naïve and childish "soul winning" was all that really mattered in Christianity since that's about the only thing that I was taught for the first few years of my new life in Christ.

I thank God for steering me in the right direction. When I prayed the second most important prayer of my life by asking God to teach me

the Bible, I'm sure glad that He didn't send me to Bob Jones University, Tennessee Temple or Hyles-Anderson. God answered my prayer by bringing me in touch with *one man*, a rock-solid KJV dispensationalist who was a real man, unlike the sissies I had been hearing, and he could teach more Bible in an hour than most could teach in a week. If my connection to Dr. Ruckman had never been made, I'd likely have lost interest in spiritual things and became a Sunday morning Christian at best. Dispensational teaching and rightly dividing hasn't hurt me one bit. To the contrary, it has made *all* the Bible user-friendly to me and allowed me to feel at home in any of its 1,189 chapters, and there are thousands of other believers who will echo the same sentiment. If we are wrong, it has been largely for the better, and we have no regrets.

But if our anti-dispensational critics are wrong, then they will one day give account to God for keeping millions of people in spiritual darkness, often believing the entire Old Testament to be a "dead Book" that isn't worth reading, believing that the book of Revelation is too complex for common people to understand, and then spiritualizing everything else in the Bible that they can't comprehend.

If we're wrong, then at least we played it safe and erred on the side of caution. If they're wrong, then they have blundered terribly and have caused tremendous damage to the cause of Christ and to the souls of men.

DID ANYONE BELIEVE IN DISPENSATIONS BEFORE JOHN DARBY?

John Nelson Darby was a nineteenth century Irish Bible teacher who is considered the "father of modern dispensationalism." But this can be misleading, since "modern" dispensationalism can be defined in different ways. As already shown, the word "dispensation" originates with the Bible itself, not with John Darby or any other man, so Darby certainly cannot be the father of dispensationalism in general. To Darby's credit, he did rekindle an interest in "rightly dividing" the word of God after many centuries of Roman Catholic "Dark Age" rule and the Protestant Reformation, so perhaps it is proper to call him the father of "modern" dispensationalism, but in reality, "the father of *rescued* dispensationalism" is probably more fitting, since others taught basic dispensational truth, to some degree, centuries before John Darby was born.

Both Justin Martyr and Ireneaus taught dispensations in the second century, and Clement of Alexandria taught several separate ages in the third century. Even during the Dark Ages, a twelfth century monk named Joachim of Flore taught three dispensations with the latter being the coming kingdom of God on earth. Then during the years of the Protestant Reformation, "dispensations" were often spoken of by the likes of Isaac Watts, John Gill, Increase Mather, John Smith, Thomas Brightman, William Penn and others. As William Watson documents in his "Dispensationalism Before Darby," some teachers even published charts showing their dispensational views, two being Joseph Mede and Henry More. The notion that dispensational teaching was the brainchild of John Darby just is not true. Dispensations were clearly taught in the Bible, as we've already seen, and they were often taught in church history when Rome had little to say about it. Darby was not the first dispensational teacher. Like Scofield and Larkin who came later, he simply helped to revive an ancient truth that the devil had largely hidden.

ARE ALL DISPENSATIONALISTS GOOD TEACHERS?

No. Many dispensationalists are not good teachers at all. Learning that a man is a "dispensationalist" does not guarantee good Bible teaching, and some teachers are hyper-dispensationalists who teach outright heresy.

As for those who do not teach hyper-dispensationalism, very few teach Biblical dispensationalism responsibly. Far too many preachers are mere "copycat" preachers who know only how to repeat the talking/teaching points that have been given to them by their choice school or preacher. This franchised theology is often sprinkled with error and causes much damage as it spreads like a cancer into churches and homes.

But even when the basic doctrine is correct, one's inability to communicate it wisely can still result in a compromised or exaggerated doctrine. This is why heavenly wisdom, spiritual discernment and moderation are so crucial (James 1:5; Heb. 5:14; Philip. 4:5). Yet, the carnal pride that often comes with knowledge (I Cor. 8:1) has a tendency to quench the Holy Spirit in one's teaching, thus making him an awkward Bible teacher at best, and sometimes even proud, arrogant, rude and mean-spirited. Every man should teach as he would want to be taught (Mat. 7:12), yet this rule is often neglected and we find ourselves subjected to weak and flawed Bible teaching instead of sound Bible teaching.

IS IT TRUE THAT SOME PARTS OF THE BIBLE ARE NOT FOR US?

No, that's incorrect and it's a very irresponsible thing for anyone to say. For instance, claiming that James and Hebrews are "not for us" because these books are written to Jews is on par with claiming that most of the Old Testament is not for us since it was also written to

Jews. That, of course, is absurd. ALL Scripture is "for" us, even though much of it is not written "to" us. Consider the following (block CAPS added for emphasis):

"ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God, and IS PROFITABLE FOR DOCTRINE, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (II Tim. 3:16)

"For WHATSOEVER THINGS were written aforetime were written for OUR learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." (Rom. 15:4)

"Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (I Cor. 10:11)

We will always benefit more from the scriptures by asking *how* a text applies rather than claiming that it *doesn't* apply. Beware of anyone who disregards the book of James just because it is written "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad" (James 1:1). Pointing out this fact in order to help someone understand the Jewish emphasis and possibly some tribulation content is one thing, but using James 1:1 as an excuse to ignore challenging verses is quite another. James is just as much for us as any other book of the Bible, as long as it is applied scripturally.

After all, no one says that Acts should be disregarded since it was written to "Theophilus" (Acts 1:1) and not to anyone living today. No one says that Romans is not for us, since we aren't Romans. No one says that we need to disregard Genesis through Deuteronomy, since these books were given to Jews under the law of Moses. The "not for us" excuse has caused untold damage to the cause of Christ as it has been carelessly used by Bible novices who only *think* they know the word. ALL scripture is FOR us as long as we apply it correctly, which is why the word "for" is used several times in the three above quotations. There isn't a single verse in all the Bible that isn't "for" us.

DOESN'T DISPENSATIONALISM AMOUNT TO CHOPPING THE WORD OF GOD TO PIECES?

No, we must remember that dispensations were mentioned, respected and taught in the word of God. It makes no sense that the word of God would advocate "chopping" itself to pieces. Those who make this absurd claim have either been exposed to bad dispensational teaching or they have just been misled about its qualities.

II Timothy 2:15 says to "rightly" divide the word of truth, which, if obeyed, will ensure that no one makes unnecessary divisions and that the divisions that are made will make good sense and promote Biblical understanding.

For example, no intelligent observer would accuse a chef of carelessly chopping his food to pieces. It is generally understood that the cleaver is a cooking tool with a distinct purpose and the chef is a trained professional who uses it wisely and safely with much experience and discernment. For various reasons, the food must be divided. Only an ignorant spectator would conclude that the chef is being careless, wild or wasteful. To the contrary, most observers would be impressed with the chef's skill and with the speed and smoothness in which he performs his work. So should it be with anyone who observes a good Bible teacher rightly dividing the word of truth.

Explaining the difference between Jew, Gentile and Church is a matter of rightly dividing (I Cor. 10:32), not careless chopping. Explaining the difference between law and grace is a matter of rightly dividing (Rom. 6:14), not careless chopping. Explaining the difference between the church age and the great tribulation is a matter of rightly dividing (Mat. 24:21), not careless chopping. Serious students of scripture always come to a point where they understand the need for making right divisions in scripture. It is the lazy and lukewarm Laodiceans and the outright heretics who never come to this realization. People who approach the word of God with a preconceived agenda will

always find their agenda challenged by serious, honest study, so such people are natural enemies of dispensational truth. It's no more complicated than that. The "spirit of error" is always at war with the "spirit of truth" (I John 4:6), so non-dispensationalists often misrepresent and mischaracterize those who teach dispensational truth.

WHAT IS A TRIBULATION EPISTLE?

The General Epistles are the seven books that immediately follow the book of Hebrews. They are James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, and Jude. Some teachers like to label the General Epistles and the book of Hebrews "Tribulation Epistles," suggesting that these books are written to Jews in the coming Tribulation Period and are not for the church. This is a mistake.

The word "tribulation" is not found in any of these books, yet the word "church" occurs seven times, so claiming that these books are not for the church is just too much. Sound church doctrine is emphasized throughout Hebrews and the General Epistles, as the following sampling shows:

Deity of Christ, Hebrews 1:1-3

Virgin Birth, Hebrews 1:5-6

Salvation preached, Hebrews 2:3

Singing in church, Hebrews 2:12

Priesthood of Christ, Hebrews 3:1

Word of God alive, powerful, Hebrews 4:12

Access to throne of grace, Hebrews 4:16

Spiritual growth through the word, Hebrews 5:12-14

Baptism, Hebrews 6:2

Righteousness and Peace through Christ, Hebrews 7:2

Sins forgotten, Hebrews 8:12

Blood atonement, Hebrews 9:14

Second Coming of Christ, Hebrews 9:28

Perfect standing in Christ, Hebrews 10:14
Church assembly, Hebrews 10:25
Living by faith, Hebrews 11:6
Chastening of wayward sons, Hebrews 12:4-12
Heirs of eternal kingdom, Hebrews 12:28
Brotherly love, Hebrews 13:1
Eternal security, Hebrews 13:5
Pastoral authority, Hebrews 13:7, 17
Cross bearing, Hebrews 13:13-14
Faith tried, James 1:3
Heavenly wisdom offered, James 1:5
Enduring temptation, James 1:12
Word of God applied, James 1:22-24
Religious hypocrisy exposed, James 1:26-27
Righteous judgment encouraged, James 2:1-4
Works as evidence of faith, James 2:14-26
Warnings regarding sins of the tongue, James 3
Worldliness discouraged, James 4:4
Power of humility, James 4:10
Brevity of life, James 4:14
Sins of omission, James 4:17
Vanity in trusting riches, James 5:3
Praying in faith and fervency, James 5:16-17
Conversion of sinners, James 5:20
Eternal security, I Peter 1:5
Faith tried, I Peter 1:7
Holy living, I Peter 1:16
Blood atonement, I Peter 1:19
New birth, I Peter 1:23
Spiritual priesthood, I Peter 2:5
Civil submission, I Peter 2:13
Female submission and modesty, I Peter 3:1-5
Armed with truth, I Peter 3:15

Patient and joyful in suffering, I Peter 4:12-16
Pastoral leadership, I Peter 5:1-4
Christian humility, I Peter 5:6
Vigilant walk, I Peter 5:8
Elements of divine nature, II Peter 1:4-8
Beware of false teachers, II Peter 2:1-22
Beware of last day skeptics, II Peter 3:3-4
Blood atonement, I John 1:7
Confession of sins, I John 1:9
Brotherly love, I John 2:7-11
Warning against worldliness, I John 2:15-17
Indwelling Holy Spirit, I John 2:27
Sonship of believers, I John 3:2
Resurrection body, I John 3:2
Deity and Incarnation of Christ, I John 4:2-3
New birth, I John 4:7
Holy Trinity, I John 5:7
Assurance of salvation, I John 5:13
Christian rewards, II John 8
Walking in truth, III John 4
Warnings against false teachers, Jude 4-19
Praying in the Holy Ghost, Jude 20
Eternal security, Jude 24

That's a lot of church doctrine there, yet, by contrast, in those eight books, not one time do we read anything about the mark of the beast, the abomination of desolation, the great tribulation, the tribulation vials, seals or plagues, the destruction of Babylon, Armageddon, the false prophet, or any details about the forty-two month reign of the antichrist. So, the notion that these are "tribulation epistles" is false and harmful. It's harmful because it often encourages believers to make light of the words found in these writings, and some believers disregard them altogether. While it's true that some of the

content of these books can have application to the tribulation ("the end" of Hebrews 3:6 and 3:14, the "three years and six months" of James 5:17, or the "last days" of James 5:3, for instance), that does not necessarily classify the books as "tribulation epistles." In fact, the warning of the COMING antichrist in I John 2:18 is a clear indication that the book is a church age epistle that PRECEDES the tribulation.

It is not uncommon to hear brethren say, *"You can find church doctrine in the general epistles."* That's an incredible understatement, much like saying, *"You can find pizza at Pizza Hut."* The truth is that most of the general epistles and Hebrews ARE church doctrine! What you can also "find" is SOME tribulation content in these church age epistles. To dismiss books like James and Hebrews just because they are addressed to Jews is very foolish, since the content of these books clearly deals with church age truth and the need for Jews to embrace it. Understanding how a book's content can have multiple applications is always good, but it's not good to over-emphasize that which God hardly emphasizes at all. Rightly dividing requires a right balance, else it becomes WRONGLY dividing and a FALSE balance (Prov. 11:1). Much of the Bible contains tribulation content, but there are no "tribulation epistles," except maybe the book of Revelation itself.

DOES DISPENSATIONALISM TEACH DIFFERENT PLANS OF SALVATION?

No, not really. It is very common throughout fundamentalism to hear people say that so-and-so teaches different plans of salvation without taking the time to explain or even discuss the subject. This is typical of the average Bible college graduate who didn't learn enough Bible in school to properly teach even a youth group, much less a church. But words come cheap and easy, so the silly accusations will continue.

God's salvation plan is centered around a man, Jesus Christ, who wasn't born until 4,000 years of human history had transpired. So, no

one in the Old Testament knowingly believed on Jesus Christ for salvation, nor did anyone tell them to do so. The hall of faith in Hebrews chapter eleven is very clear in emphasizing what was required of the Old Testament saints throughout three different dispensations: FAITH. They were expected to believe and obey the words that God gave to them, and they received a "good report" in doing so (Heb. 11:2, 39). They did NOT receive a new birth since it was not available until after Christ's death, burial and resurrection. So, before one asks the question of HOW the Old Testament saints were saved, he should probably ask IF they were saved at all, because they weren't, at least not as we are today. The Old Testament saints bore witness to, inquired of, searched for and prophesied of Christ's salvation (Acts 10:43; I Pet. 1:10), but they did not experience it, nor did they understand it. By their faithfulness to God's revealed words and will, they obtained a "good report," but not a new birth after God's image that would make them sons of God. That came AFTER Calvary.

So, that makes Christ's atoning work on the cross the focal point of ALL salvation, from Genesis to Revelation, regardless of who understood it or who didn't. Speaking of salvation apart from Calvary is unscriptural and foolish since no one will enjoy the blessings of eternity without being covered by the blood of Christ. Blood redemption is thematic from Genesis 3:21 clear through Revelation 22:3, and Calvary is the doctrinal anchor that secures everyone's salvation. The fact that the Old Testament saints didn't "see" or know about the anchor is irrelevant. Anchors are for securing, not seeing.

Did Abel consciously believe on Christ? Of course not, but according to Jesus, he was still "righteous Abel" (Mat. 23:35) because he offered an acceptable blood sacrifice that foreshadowed Christ's atoning work on the cross (Gen. 4:4; Heb. 11:4). He was "anchored" to Calvary by virtue of his righteous act of faith. The same is true with ALL Old Testament saints, regardless of the various ways in which they fulfilled the revealed will of God in their separate lives. So, rather than saying that they were "saved in different ways," it is better to say that

they became anchored to Calvary in different ways, yet each way required faith in God's word. No one is saved apart from Christ's work on the cross (Gal. 2:16; John 1:29; Rev. 5:9; 7:14, etc.), so it is unscriptural and foolish to speak of "different plans of salvation." It has always been God's "plan" for Jesus to be the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29), and that's what He did at Calvary. ALL the prophets bear witness to this (Acts 10:43), so there is no salvation plan that doesn't anchor to the cross.

WHAT IS PROGRESSIVE REVELATION?

Our entry on Hyper-Dispensationalism should be consulted for a more thorough explanation, but progressive revelation is the common sense understanding that God works in time and reveals truth to men gradually, rather than all at once. The law of Moses, for instance, was a "schoolmaster" to bring men to Christ (Gal. 3:24), but it took over fourteen centuries to do it. Before the written law, man went through over twenty-four centuries of gradually learning of God's ways through four dispensations: Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, and Patriarch. God sanctified the Sabbath in Genesis 2, yet He didn't reveal it to man until centuries later in Exodus 20 (Neh. 9:14). Christ ended the law at Calvary, but it took years for many to understand this, which is why we have instances in the New Testament of converted Jews having to be schooled in the doctrine of grace (Acts 15; Gal. 5:2). Again, see the entry on Hyper-Dispensationalism for further explanation, but Progressive Revelation is a good, common sense approach to understanding how truth is revealed gradually and gracefully, allowing men time to learn and grow.

HOW IS ONE SAVED IN THE TRIBULATION PERIOD?

Since the tribulation is the final seven years of Daniel's Seventy Weeks (Dan. 9:24-27), it would be foolish to assume that this period is a mere continuation of the day of grace. No Christian today is told to "endure unto the end" (Mat. 24:13), and no Christian today is trying to avoid the mark of the beast (Rev. 13:15-18). Revelation is quite clear in stating that tribulation salvation consists of two central components: Obeying God and believing on Christ:

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Rev. 12:17)

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (Rev. 14:12)

At this point in time, the Jewish temple has been rebuilt at Jerusalem (Rev. 11:1-2; II Ths. 2:3-4) and the sacrifices have been restored. It is here that the antichrist commits the Abomination of Desolation (Mat. 24:15) and begins his reign of terror for forty-two months, the time in which many Jews will flee Jerusalem and come to know Christ in the wilderness (Hos. 2:14-16; Rev. 12:14-16; Lam. 5:9; Mic. 7:14; Psa. 27:2; Mat. 24:16, etc.). Obviously, in context, the commandments of God are the commandments to follow Christ and endure unto the end (Mat. 24:13) instead of following the Antichrist by taking the mark of the beast (Rev. 14:7, 9-11). Investing faith in Christ is still required, and the keeping of God's commandments is a natural evidence or fruit of one having done so. So, simply "not taking the mark" is not the salvation plan. One doesn't take the mark because it is the mark of "a man" (Rev. 13:18), and that man is not Jesus Christ. One's faith in Christ is still the means of salvation, even in the Great Tribulation.

As for enduring unto the end (Mat. 24:13), the "shall be saved" is not specifically a reference to eternal "new birth" salvation anyway, but rather a reference to tribulation overcomers being granted entrance

into the kingdom when Christ returns. That is, the "shall be saved" of Matthew 24:13 has more to do with NOT BEING DECEIVED and NOT BEING KILLED than anything else (Mat. 24:10-25:46). I'm not suggesting that the overcomers are lost, just that the statement in Matthew 24:13 deals with people enduring a very trying period of time, not with people having to wait till "the end" to receive Christ. The tribulation martyrs of Revelation 7:14 do NOT endure unto the end, since they are beheaded, yet their souls are saved, as are the ones in Revelation 6:9-11, even though the Great Tribulation isn't over until chapter 19.

So, people DO believe on Christ in the tribulation. It's just that the time factor in regards to "the end" involves people also having to literally "endure" until the Lord's Second Coming when their greatest enemy, the Antichrist, is destroyed (Rev. 19).

The question of one LOSING his salvation is often asked, since taking the mark of the beast is an option throughout the forty-two month period, but, in light of I John 2:19, it is probably more correct to say that such people were never true believers at all than to say that they were saved and then lost their salvation: ***"They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."***

WERE THE OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS SAVED BY WORKS?

Old Testament salvation was not complete until Calvary, so speaking of Old Testament saints being "saved" AT ALL is not wise. By obeying God in their respective dispensations, the Old Testament saints proved their faith and obtained a "good report" (Heb. 11:3, 39), but they did not obtain a new birth or eternal security as we know it today. Their faithful obedience, IN TYPE, pointed to Calvary (Noah's Ark, the Passover Lamb, water from the Rock, etc.), but, as far as we know, they

didn't know this, so they "looked forward to the cross" IN TYPE without consciously knowing it (II Cor. 3:15-16; I Pet. 1:11-12), just as Abraham looked for a city without knowing it (Heb. 11:8-10) and saw Christ's day without knowing it (John 8:56). Although they weren't saved by being born again as we are, they were at least SAFE with a "good report," which is why they went to Paradise in the underworld when they died (Luke 23:42-43; 16:22-23), awaiting the final price of redemption to be paid by Christ on Calvary. That price was paid and their sins were cleared (Rom. 10:3-4), sins which could not be cleared by the law of Moses (Gal. 2:16). Old Testament saints were saved on credit, so to speak, and the credit card was paid off at Calvary.

The earning of this "good report" did require works, since faith without works is dead (James 2:26), but it cannot be rightly said that these works "saved" anyone in the sense of a new birth. All salvation from Genesis through Revelation is anchored in the work of Christ on the cross, and no one will enjoy the blessings of eternity without being covered by His blood. No Old Testament saint was saved by works (Gal. 2:16), since it is the work of Christ alone which completes salvation. Their work earned them a good report card, if you will, one that would eventually be signed in the blood of Christ.

ARE NON-DISPENSATIONALISTS HERETICS?

Not necessarily, but they are immature in their understanding of the scriptures, and that makes them prime candidates for possibly *becoming* heretics. When a Christian lacks dispensational understanding, he will not know how to apply numerous portions of scripture when called upon to do so.

If a charismatic, for instance, uses I Corinthians 14 and Mark 16 to claim that that speaking in unknown tongues is the initial evidence of being baptized in the Holy Ghost, then the non-dispensationalist might

not know how to scripturally refute this heresy, so he could be deceived by it.

Suppose someone tells a non-dispensationalist that the Sabbath has been God's sanctified day since *Genesis* chapter 2 and that all true worshipers of God observe the Sabbath. Due to his inability to rightly divide God's word, the non-dispensationalist will likely think that the argument makes sense and that he should keep the Sabbath, thus he becomes easy prey for false teachers like the Seventh Day Adventists and the Armstrong cultists.

But probably the greatest disadvantage to not believing in dispensational teaching is the elementary understanding of the scriptures that one never seems to outgrow. Our churches are filled people who have been saved for decades, yet their comprehension of God's word is little more than that of Sunday school children.

I recall a certain couple once listening to this preacher's audio studies on the book of Romans when they heard it stated that the scriptures speak of more than one gospel. They were very stunned by this and did not continue the study much longer. The fact that this truth was proved and explained with scripture didn't matter to them. It was a new truth that they had never heard before, so they rejected it. Not long afterwards, they became involved with a church that taught false doctrine. They had their chance to strengthen and protect themselves by learning the basic principles of rightly dividing, yet it was a new challenge that crossed the grain of their Laodicean minds, so they rejected the truth and embraced false teaching instead.

Dispensational teaching, when properly done, is not radical or sensational in any way. It is common sense Bible doctrine that can build up and safeguard the believer. Those who reject sound dispensational teaching are only hurting themselves by remaining weak and defenseless against false teachers. They're like naïve little children playing in the wild: it's only a matter of time before someone gets injured, sick or bit.

WHAT IS COVENANT OR REPLACEMENT THEOLOGY?

Generally speaking, covenant theology is the belief that the church is the fulfillment of God's Old Testament covenant promises to Israel. Covenant theology is often called "replacement" theology, because it promotes the belief that God's national promises to Israel are no longer valid since the gentiles have been grafted in with the Jews into the one body of the church (Rom. 11:17-36; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11-22). The problem with this is a simple failure to distinguish between what is national, what is spiritual, what is individual, and what is corporate. Jews, as individuals, may receive Christ and be born again today and become members of Christ's body, the church. Paul is a good example. But Israel is also still a NATION corporately and will experience the new birth upon receiving Christ in the Great Tribulation (Isa. 66:7-8; Rom. 11:26). Isaiah 66:8 specifically says that a NATION will be BORN at once. Ezekiel 37:1-14 says this will happen after a time of apparent death, yet before the Gog/Magog invasion of Ezekiel 38. In other words, God's promise to Abraham does have a spiritual fulfillment in the church (Gal. 3:28-29), but it also has a fulfillment with Israel as a NATION, since God promised to make Abraham "a great nation" (Gen. 12:2).

Sound dispensational teaching acknowledges the spiritual application of Jews being blessed individually today by receiving Christ, but it also respects God's literal promises to Israel as a nation. That is, not all of God's Jewish promises have been fulfilled in the church. Some are national promises that concern Israel reforming as a nation in 1948 and then growing and prospering as a nation over the past several decades and then eventually being reconciled to God in the great tribulation (Hos. 2:14-16; Rev. 12:6, 14-16). Finally, Israel becomes "the head" of all nations in Christ's coming kingdom (Deu. 28:13; Isa. 2:1-4; Mat. 19:28). Covenant theology adherents generally replace Israel with the church by spiritualizing these national promises. They argue that their views are more "fulfillment" theology than replacement theology,

but in the end, Israel is robbed of many of her literal, national promises, so the "replacement" label is largely correct.

SHOULD WE STILL KEEP THE LAW?

Christians often say things like, "*We're under grace, so we don't have to keep the law.*" While we are certainly under grace, it's not entirely true that we don't have to keep the law.

First, the entire Old Testament does not fall under the written law of Moses. The fifty chapters of *Genesis*, the forty-two chapters of *Job* and the first nineteen chapters of *Exodus* are BEFORE the law of Moses. So some of the established laws from these scriptures stand true even today, since they were true even before the law of Moses. The death penalty for murder and the forbidding of blood drinking, for instance, were established laws clear back in *Genesis 9*, and they are still divine laws today (*Acts 25:11; 15:29*). They are not limited to the written law of Moses.

Secondly, even within the written law of Moses itself, it is the ceremonial and ritualistic ordinances that were abolished at Calvary (*Col. 2:14*), not the moral law. We no longer offer animal sacrifices and keep the various feast days, but we still believe in *Thou Shalt Not Steal*, *Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery*, *Thou Shalt Not Covet*, etc. It is for this reason that Paul said, "the law is good" in *I Timothy 1:8*, and this is why he recommends half of the Ten Commandments in *Romans 13:9*.

So, claiming that "we don't keep the law" is not wise and is very misleading. We don't keep the law in the strict dispensational sense that the Jews were told to keep it for over fourteen centuries, but we do keep the *moral* law of God, just as saints of God have done from the very beginning. We must rightly divide between the moral law of God, which is binding on everyone from *Genesis* through *Revelation*, and the ceremonial law which was in effect only during the Mosaic law dispensation that ran from *Exodus 20* till *John 19:30*.

WHAT IS HYPER-DISPENSATIONALISM?

Hyper-Dispensationalism is basically an extreme form of dispensationalism where some teachers go "too far" with their rightly dividing and end up wrongly dividing. As with anything else, there are varying degrees of this, so not all HD people are the same. If on a dispensational scale of 1 to 10, we would consider the #5 spot to be a well-balanced position, the HD people would land at about positions 8, 9 or 10. That is, they make unnecessary divisions that cause doctrinal problems.

One HD position is that water baptism is not required after Acts 28, which is why HD's are sometimes nicknamed "dry cleaners." Other HD views sometimes include the belief that the church didn't exist before Paul, the Lord's Supper is not for today, only Paul's prison epistles are for today's church, the four gospels are only for Israel, and so on. The gist of the whole HD movement is that Paul is the apostle to the gentiles, so the church receives her instruction only from Paul. The only question is where to draw the dividing line: Mid Acts, Acts 28, prison epistles only, etc.

It is this preacher's view that progressive revelation is a wiser approach to the New Testament scriptures than hyper-dispensationalism. That is, God gradually reveals his truth as time progresses through the New Testament. Things change because of the gradual revelation of truth more than because of sharp dividing lines. There are some obvious dividing lines, but not quite to the degree that the HD people would have us believe.

Unlike with previous dispensations, there is a definite period of transition between law and grace. The law and the prophets were until John the Baptist (Luke 16:16), yet it isn't correct to say that the dispensation of grace began immediately after John's death. John dies in Matthew 14:10, yet five chapters later Jesus is still speaking of keeping the law in order to have eternal life (Matthew 19:17-18), although He is clearly speaking of the moral law, not all the law. Others

are saved by faith with no mention of the commandments (Luke 7:48-50). Conversions differ as one reads through the ministry of Christ and through the book of Acts, so it's not possible to select a definite starting place where the law stops and grace begins, at least not in practice and understanding. God uses this transition period to slowly usher in the day of grace. Remember, the promised kingdom is being offered to Israel clear through Acts chapter 7, so we are in Acts chapter 8 before we see a clear-cut faith conversion to Christ based on Calvary's work.

John's gospel emphasizes grace more than the other three gospels because John was written around 85 A.D., which was after Paul's revelation. The others were written earlier.

It is this preacher's personal belief that the dispensation of grace began at Calvary, but no one knew it (John 1:17). God used about the first fifteen chapters of Acts to reveal this to man. Hebrews 9:15-17 tells us that the new covenant was in effect after Jesus died, but who knew it? Peter didn't know it in Acts 2, because it is in Acts 10 that God gives him this special revelation (Acts 10:9-28). This is why so many cults like the book of Acts: it's a transitional book of progressive revelation. If one establishes his doctrine in Acts 2, then he errs greatly, because God reveals more to man in later chapters. The dispensation of grace began at Calvary, but it takes until about Acts 15 to get everyone to understand this (Acts 15:11). The key to understanding all of this is progressive revelation, not hyper-dispensationalism.

This completes the reading material for *The Master's Mountain*. If you are under 18 and have completed your workbook, please double check your work for accuracy and then either give it to your instructor or mail it to the address below for grading.

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH
P.O. BOX 383
MARTIN, TN 38237