

## Lesson VIII

# 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.”** What are the angels like? Some have supposed that all angels are “sexless” since they do not marry, but the Scriptures declare otherwise. God the Father is MALE, and God the Son is MALE, and God the Holy Spirit is MALE. The first human being God created was MALE (Gen. 2:7), so why would angels not be male?

All through the Bible angels are spoken of in the masculine gender (Jud. 13:3, 6, 8, 15; Gen. 18:2, 16, 22; 19:1, 5, 12; Luke 24:4; Acts 1:10; Rev. 21:17). Nowhere do we read of female angels or sexless angels. The angels of the Bible always have a manly appearance.

Another little known fact is that angels do not have wings. Every angel in the Bible appears as a man. Hebrews 13:2 says that

**“some have entertained angels unawares.”** That is, some were in the presence of angels and did not know it. How would this be possible if angels had large stork wings as we so often see them drawn? It would be impossible. Angels in the Bible appear as normal looking men, usually in white apparel. Jesus said we will be as the angels.

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.”** Notice that we are SONS of God, not “daughters and sons.” We are SONS of God, and verse two says that we shall be like HIM. We shall be LIKE JESUS CHRIST. He is THE Son of God, and His followers are “sons” of God (John 1:12). Jesus came forth with a new glorified and incorruptible body, so we will do likewise. 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.

Now, getting this all together, we can get a pretty good glimpse at our new glorified bodies:

1. Our bodies will be INCORRUPTIBLE. We will never be sick or die again (Rev. 21:4).

2. Our bodies will be MALE. No need for two sexes in Heaven since we cannot marry in Heaven (Mat. 22:30).

3. Our bodies will be young in appearance, probably 33 years old, the age of our Lord’s resurrection body. How “old” do you suppose Adam looked when God first created Him? Maybe he appeared as a man of 33 years.

4. Our bodies will have NO BLOOD. Jesus’ resurrection body consisted of FLESH and BONE (Luke 24:39), because all of His blood was shed at Calvary. Our blood is corruptible, so it cannot go to Heaven (I Cor. 15:50).

5. Our new bodies will evidently have the ability to fly faster than the speed of light. In His resurrection body, Jesus went

all the way to the Third Heaven and back in just a few hours (John 20:17; Mat. 28:9).

6. Our new bodies will allow us to APPEAR and DISAPPEAR at will, and to move through solid objects (John 20:26; Luke 24:31).

If the Bible means what it says (and I believe it does), then the above statements are not at all far-fetched. Men today dream about such abilities, and God will grant these abilities to those who come to Him through His Son Jesus Christ.

### **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 they certainly do in Hell (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?

## **Lesson Review**

1. Paul was caught up to the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Give two references to prove that Heaven is north.
  - 1.
  - 2.
3. Where does the Bible command us to set our affection on things above?
4. Will we recognize one another in heaven?
5. Will there be marriages in heaven?
6. Give Scripture to prove above answer:

7. Which of the following will not be an attribute of our new resurrection bodies:

- a. incorruptible
- b. male
- c. appear and disappear at will
- d. wings
- e. no blood

8. What three things will we do in Heaven?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

9. Why did God create hell? (Give scripture)

10. Where is Hell? (Give Scripture)

11. Explain why Luke 16 is not a parable:

12. Give at least two reasons why hell is not the grave:

**Suggested Memory Verses:** Mat. 6:19-20, I Cor. 15:52-53, Luke 16:23-24, Rev 20:15

## Lesson IX

# 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 always, 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 steadfastly 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:

<b>First Coming</b>	<b>Second Coming</b>
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:

<b>First Coming</b>	<b>Second Coming</b>
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)

We will study the Second Coming further when we reach Lesson XII.

## Lesson Review

1. Micah 5:2 says that Jesus is “from \_\_\_\_\_.”
2. True or False? Jesus said, "**And my Father giveth unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.**"
3. Did Jesus ever claim to be equal with God?
4. Give Scripture, if your above answer is yes:
5. Jesus is omniscient, which means what?
6. Name one place where the New Testament speaks of Jesus Christ as the Creator:

7. Matthew 1:22-23 is a quotation of what Old Testament verse?

8. I Corinthians 15:3-4 speaks about:

- a. The Second Coming
- b. The Resurrection of Christ
- c. The Blood Atonement
- d. The Virgin Birth

9. How do we know that Jesus didn't rise *spiritually*?

10. Where does the Bible speak of God's own Blood?

11. Where does the Bible say that the blood makes atonement for the soul?

12. True or false? Innocent blood was shed in Eden for the sins of man.

13. Could Jesus have had sinless blood without the Virgin Birth?

14. Where does the Bible say that Jesus will return in the same manner in which He left?

15. The First Coming deals with Christ's sufferings, but the Second Coming deals with His \_\_\_\_\_.

**Suggested Memory Verses:** Isa 7:14, Rev 1:5, Heb 9:22, I Cor. 15:3-4, Tit 2:13

## Lesson X

### 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.

## Lesson Review

1. Where does the Bible mention the “judgment seat of Christ?”

Two places:

2. Revelation 20 contrasts the “first resurrection” with the \_\_\_\_\_?

3. True or False? There is a 1000 period between the first resurrection and the second death?

4. Does the Second Death have any power over those who come up from the dead in the First Resurrection?

5. Where does Paul liken Christian rewards to gold, silver, and precious stones?

6. At the Judgment Seat of Christ we will give account for the things done in our \_\_\_\_\_.

7. At the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Christian is judged as

A. a Sinner      B. a Son      C. a Servant

8 Those judged at the White Throne Judgment are judged according to their \_\_\_\_\_.

**Suggested Memory Verses:** II Cor. 5:10, Rom. 14:10, Ecc. 12:14



## Lesson XI

# The Holy Trinity

According to 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.

## Lesson Review

1. Human beings consist of three parts. What are they?

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

2. Apart from the written word of God, name one other way that God has chosen to reveal the fact that He is a Trinity.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Name the "three" which bear record in Heaven:

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

4. The term "godhead" is found how many times in the Bible?

5. What three furnishings in the tabernacle picture the Trinity?

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

6. Name two ways the trinity is revealed in the universe:

**Suggested Memory Verses:** I John 5:7, Matthew 28:19, Hebrews 9:14

## Lesson XII

# 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!

### **Lesson Review**

1. True or False? The Old Testament Kingdom promises are no longer in effect because Israel rejected Jesus Christ, her messiah.

2. "The sceptre shall not depart from \_\_\_\_\_ . . ."

3. Please write "F" or "S" beside the following items to designate the "First" or "Second" Coming of Christ:

\_\_\_\_ Many crowns

\_\_\_\_ Lamb of God

\_\_\_\_ Suffering

\_\_\_\_ Glory

\_\_\_\_ Crown of Thorns

\_\_\_\_ Lion of Judah

4. Where does the Bible say that the Kingdom of Christ will last 1000 years? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Our view that Jesus will return BEFORE the 1000 year reign is known as the \_\_\_\_\_ view.

6. Before Jesus returns to establish His kingdom, Israel and the lost world will go through: (pick one)

- a. The Rapture   b. The Great Tribulation   C. The Millennium

7. Please give two New Testament references on the Rapture:

8. Christians will be judged at which of the following judgments:

- a. The White Throne Judgment
- b. The General Judgment
- c. The Judgment Seat of Christ
- d. The Judgment of Nations

9. Please place the following events in the proper scriptural order:

- The Tribulation
- The Millennial Kingdom
- The Judgment Seat of Christ
- The Rapture
- The Church Age

10. True or False. The Antichrist is not a man, but rather a system.

11. Where does the Bible speak about the “Mark of the Beast?”

**Suggested Memory Verses:** I Corinthians 15:51-52,  
I Thessalonians 4:16-18, Genesis 49:10

## Lesson XIII

# 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:

<b>DISPENSATION</b>	<b>BEGINNING</b>	<b>END</b>
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 responsibility, 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: commandments, 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 worshipping 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 seethe 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.

## **Lesson Review**

1. Please name the seven dispensations in their proper order:
2. Does the word “dispensation” actually occur in the Bible?
3. Should God's word be divided?
4. When was the first lamb slain upon the earth?
5. How do we know that Adam and Eve had a conscience after they sinned?
6. Under the dispensation of conscience, what three witnesses did man have to guide him?
7. When did the dispensation of conscience end?

8. Capital punishment was first instituted under:

- a. conscience
- b. human government
- c. law

9. True or false? Men were permitted to eat animals before Noah's day.

10. How did the dispensation of human government end?

11. Who is the main character in the dispensation of promise?

12. True or false? God's promises to Abraham were all conditional.

13. True or false? The Israelites continued their sacrifices in Egypt.

14. When did the dispensation of law begin?

15. What are the three sections of the law?

16. Which three words best describe these three sections of the law?

- |             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| instructive | civil     |
| moral       | mandatory |
| good        | religious |

17. Paul told the Galatians that the law was our \_\_\_\_\_.

18. When did the law dispensation end?

19. The dispensation of grace begins where?

20. True or false? Each disciple understood salvation by grace through faith in the blood atonement of Christ from the very beginning of Acts.

21. What are the three basic functions of the church?

22. The church age will end in:

- a. revival
- b. apostasy

23. Where does the Bible say that people will have to travel to Jerusalem in the Millennial kingdom to worship the King?

24. Where in the Bible do we learn that the Kingdom of Christ will last for 1000 years?

**Suggested Memory Verse:** II Tim. 2:15

## Lesson XIV

### 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 Thes 5:9
3. Going to be caught up - I Thes 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:

<b>First Coming:</b>	<b>Second Coming:</b>
Suffering	Glory
Lamb	Lion
Prophet	King
Rides Donkey	Rides White Horse
Killed by enemies	Kills Enemies
Rejected by Israel	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.

### **Lesson Review**

1. What are the three sources of speech in the Bible?
2. What are the three classes of people to whom the Bible is written?
3. Some parts of the Bible are addressed to individuals, while other parts are addressed to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. True or False? Reading entire chapters of the Bible can be confusing, so it’s best to read just a few verses at a time.
5. True or False? Since God is a Spirit, it is always best to make spiritual applications when reading the Bible?
6. Please explain the difference between literal and figurative.
7. Who was the Apostle to the Gentiles?

8. The First Coming of Christ deals with the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus, while the Second Coming deals with His \_\_\_\_\_.

9. Please describe the difference between standing and state.

10. True or False? It takes much spiritual growth and wisdom to be able to interpret the Bible.

# The Sound Doctrine Bible Course

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## Book II: Lessons VIII - XIV

Lesson VIII:

*The Doctrines of Heaven and Hell*

Lesson IX:

*The Fundamentals of Jesus Christ*

Lesson X:

*The Judgments of the Saved and the Lost*

Lesson XI:

*The Holy Trinity*

Lesson XII:

*Basic Bible Prophecy*

Lesson XIII:

*The Seven Dispensations*

Lesson XIV:

*Rightly Dividing the Word*

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