

Bible Key Lessons



The Bible Key Lessons

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KEY Lesson One - THE BIBLE: WHAT IT IS

Is God's purpose to please us, or is it our purpose to please God? This is one of the key questions to keep in mind as you study the Bible:

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (2 Timothy 4:3-4) "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1) "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." (Acts 20:30) "And their word will eat as doth a canker..." (2 Timothy 2:17) "... ALL nations deceived." (Revelations 18:23)

The above verses, quoted from the Bible, the Word of God, stand as a warning to all people that the majority of the religious world claiming to be "Christian" would depart from the Truth of God. We are cautioned also that we cannot leave our instruction concerning the will of God to a separate class called the "Clergy": ministers, priests and pastors. The only safe and scriptural course is for us to apply ourselves individually to the examination and study of God's Word, as the "noble" highly-commended believers at Berea examined the Scriptures to check Paul's words - "They searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

During the present times, the Bible makes no distinction between a priestly class and the common people. That ended when the Law ended. The responsibility of searching the Scriptures rests with each individual. A humble, prayerful, consistent study of the Bible itself is the best - the only - way to arrive at a firm conviction of its truth. We grow closer to God and Christ by this exercise; realizing as we read that the natural mind of man, without this Divine direction, is lawless and unruly.

In studying the Bible, we should always seek the assistance of God in prayer. It is important that we understand that it is God Who gives us wisdom in these things and can open our minds to see the beauties of His Word, if we seek it humbly. We will realize that the final Purpose of all things is to fill the earth with the glory of God, and that we are the very highly privileged means He is using to accomplish that Purpose, if we work with Him, and submit completely to Him. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it" (Psalms 127: 11).

But Paul assures us that: "Our labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

When we study the Bible, we should read it very carefully, keeping our minds centered on each word and phrase, and endeavoring to understand the relation of one verse to another. We must, in approaching the study of God's Word, want to know AND OBEY the truth. We can develop a strong desire on our part to investigate its pages so as to become very familiar with its loving message of instruction to us concerning the Way of Life.

To begin with, we must recognize and accept the Bible as the Divinely-inspired, infallible message of God to man. We must believe assuredly that - "God IS, and is a Rewarder of all who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

Further evidence will strengthen our conviction of the truth of these propositions, as we advance into a study of the Bible as we see the internal and external evidence of its truth and Divinity, the sureness of its prophetic words. From what God has done, we will gain confidence that what He has yet to accomplish in the earth is man's only means of salvation from himself and his natural end.

By our investigation of this matter with an open mind, we will learn that this book, the Bible, does not speak like other books, but speaks with absolute authority, in such phrases as: "Thus saith the Lord" and "It SHALL come to pass . . ."

The Bible is a compilation of a number of books, written by many different men over a long period of time: approximately 1500 years. The times and circumstances of its being written - periods of prosperity, and captivity and servitude - combine, under God's guiding hand, to bring forth a united message from book to book: unfolding a consistent plan of salvation, and illustrating mankind's need of Divine mercy and salvation, unattainable by its own efforts. Although penned by many, God is the single Author of this work we call The Bible.

GENESIS TO DEUTERONOMY

The first five books (Genesis to Deuteronomy) were written by Moses, the great lawgiver of Israel. They are of first importance because they form the basis of all that follows. Herein we learn of the creation of the earth, and of its populating by animals and mankind. We learn of man's sad fall, and his punishment, and God's loving provision for his redemption; and again of man's failure at the time of Noah.

We see the beginning of the Jewish race, in Abraham, and the appointing of them as a "Peculiar People" to God's service and use -

"For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto Himself above all the nations that are upon the earth" (Deuteronomy 14:2).

We find in these books of Moses the laws which God gave Israel to regulate their national existence, yet which throughout beautifully teach higher lessons of the coming of a Savior for all mankind, and which make constantly clear the exceeding sinfulness of sin in the eyes of God. The modern world, in its assumed "wisdom" generally questions the writings of Moses. But we will learn that we cannot have Christ without Moses -

"If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." (Luke 16:31).

"Beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he (Christ) expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).
"Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me (said Jesus), for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5 :46-47).

If Moses is not true, then Christ is not true. They stand or fall together.

JOSHUA TO ESTHER - The next 12 books (Joshua to Esther) show Israel's history for 1000 years. And they are much more than just history. They reveal God's attitude, His desires and principles of action in dealing with people and nations. We learn to love God and reverence Him for all He has done and is doing.

JOB - The book of Job illustrates the way God chastens and corrects His true sons and daughters; He does not forsake them, but will purify and refine them as gold.

PSALMS TO THE SONG OF SOLOMON - Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon are messages of Divinely-inspired wisdom, portraying acceptable conduct, character, and disposition.

ISAIAH TO MALACHI - The prophetic books, 17 in number (Isaiah to Malachi), contain the Divine message for Israel nationally, being warnings of coming judgment because of disobedience to God; but also joyfully revealing a day when Israel and the world shall rejoice in universal

blessings and peace. The fulfillment of the prophecies on Israel in their scattering throughout the earth assures us of the bright side of these same messages, which tell us the day is very near when Christ will return to bless all nations, in the earth.

MATTHEW TO JOHN - Turning the pages to the New Testament, we find first the 4 Gospel records of the life of Christ (Matthew to John), revealing the manifestation of God in His Son, showing us a Way, or manner, of Life, to develop the Divine character: "BE YE THEREFORE PERFECT, EVEN AS YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN IS PERFECT" (Matthew 5:48).

ACTS - The book of Acts illustrates the practical application of Jesus' command - "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (Mark 16:15-16).

We learn from this book what it really means to devote our lives in all that we do to serve God and His Truth - and not ourselves and our pleasures.

ROMANS TO JUDE - The 21 epistles (Romans to Jude), which consist of letters to various ecclesias and individuals by the apostles of Jesus, expound the basic truths of the Gospel, the Divine purpose with mankind; and show us the way to a godly life, instructing and directing us in daily activities and associations in relation to each other and to God.

REVELATION - The final book, the Revelation of Jesus Christ, gives a panoramic view of nearly 2,000 years of world history, from the days of the Apostles to the establishing of God's Kingdom on the earth. It is shown in signs and symbols, whose meaning and application is learned from other parts of the Bible, and is designed to instruct God's servants concerning world events, so they may discern the Signs of the Times.

A CONSISTENT MESSAGE - The Bible is nothing less than a literary miracle! Although it is composed of 66 books, written over a period of many centuries, by different authors from kings to shepherds, it speaks one theme throughout, unfolding over the ages the eternal Purpose of God. Its very character and unity show it to be not possibly of human origin, and confirm the truth that - "All Scripture is given by the inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16).

Many of the writers sealed their testimony for God with their blood

being shed by their enemies. The only way to account for the Bible is to see - in its composition, and its preservation to our time through the centuries - a supreme guiding hand inspiring and controlling the statements of its authors, causing them to be in complete agreement in all their records. It is impossible to account for the Bible in any other way.

The Bible can be understood by the person who seeks God in humble faith without the need of theological or churchly training in colleges or seminaries. Such institutions only produce priests or ministers educated or trained to preach the particular doctrines of their sects; whose textbooks are the products of generations of traditions, rather than the Bible message.

We must not leave - we dare not leave - our understanding of Bible principles of salvation to such religious leaders. We must apply ourselves to its pages in prayerful, humble petition to God to open our understanding. Personal investigation in this manner will open our minds to the beauties of God's Word and Purpose. Read the Bible daily and thoughtfully. Use the course of daily Bible readings suggested in the booklet, The Bible Companion. Stick to it faithfully, and you will read the Old Testament once each year, and the New Testament twice yearly. The Bible Companion plan can be found at <http://readings.bereans.org>

If there is a book containing the revealed will of God and the plan of eternal blessing for man, IT IS THE BIBLE. It has no rivals. If it does not reveal a Way of life, there is none. The Bible makes all who sincerely study it better, happier, and wiser. God calls people out of the world to be part of His family. With each bit of knowledge you gain from the Bible, you gain more responsibility to God. The offer He makes to people is great. It requires a response from the person who learns from Him.

* The only safe and scriptural course is for us to apply ourselves individually to the examination and study of God's Word.

* "Dispensation" is an arrangement of world affairs and order

* The final Purpose of all things is to fill the earth with the glory of God.

* To begin with we must recognize and accept the Bible as the Divinely-Inspired, infallible message of God to Man.

* Infallible means incapable of erring or failing; certain.

* Salvation means deliverance from the power or penalty of sin; redemption.

* The Bible is a compilation of a number of books, written by many different people over a long period of time: about 1500 years.

* "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead. (Luke 16:31)

* The final book, the Revelation of Jesus Christ, gives a panoramic view of nearly 2,000 years of world history.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 1

1. What is the final and most important purpose in Creation, and in God's revelation in the Bible?
2. What frame of mind should we be in as we approach a study of the Bible?
3. What is our duty once we come to a knowledge of God's purpose?
4. In what way is the Bible different from books of the world?
5. By whom were the first 5 books written?
6. State 3 things we learn from these first five books of the Bible.
7. What New Testament evidence do we have for believing the words of Moses?
8. What do the books of Joshua to Esther illustrate?
9. What is the theme of the prophetic books?
10. Of what do the Gospel records speak?
11. What is shown in the book of Revelation?
12. What do we learn concerning the Bible from the fact that it was written over many years by different writers, yet telling a consistent and unchanging purpose?
13. Why can we not leave our religious instruction to church ministers or priests?

KEY Lesson 2: THE BIBLE, HOW IT CAME TO US

As indicated in the previous lesson, the Bible is THE most unique book in existence. From whatever point of view we consider it, whether it be in regards to its message, and the consistency and dependability of it throughout, or whether it be simply in regards to its literary and historical value, the antiquity of its writings and the vast span of time which it covers, it is truly a wonderful and remarkable book. When embarking upon serious Bible study, it is important to understand the background, history and sources of the English Bible. The original Divinely inspired Bible manuscripts were not written in the English language, but in Hebrew and Greek. The further a version is removed from the original, both in time and in language, the greater the potential for the human element to enter in, because the work of transmitting the Bible down to our times and into our language depended upon the efforts of men who were not inspired. Inasmuch as the human element is a significant factor in this great work, we must realize that the English versions of the Bible are, unfortunately, not the purest form of the Word of God, although certain versions do have a remarkably high degree of accuracy.

PURPOSE OF LESSONS 2 - 4

1. To outline the long and tedious process by which the Bible has been handed down to us its present form, so that we may be better equipped to understand it;
2. To provide basic background information regarding its history and its structure;
3. To help recognize the many forms and versions in which it appears, and to know how to identify those versions that have the highest degree of accuracy relative to the original source; and to understand the need to occasionally refer to other versions for comparison;
4. To understand the importance of consulting Hebrew and Greek lexicons, concordances and dictionaries, etc., in order to get past the barriers of the English language to the meanings of the original words and phrases as intended by the Divinely inspired writers.

WHEN AND HOW DID THE BIBLE BEGIN?

A major portion of the Old Testament is occupied by the first five books. Moses is credited with the writing of these, as well as the book of Job. This fixes a starting date for the writing of the Bible, for, although the events recorded by Moses date back as much as 4000 B.C., he lived in the time period dating from about 1570 to 1450 B.C.;

and, at some point during those 120 years (most likely towards the end, perhaps about 1500 B.C.), marks the commencement of God's message to us in written form.

The knowledge of writing may have been a rare possession in those days. All evidence seems to indicate that the development of Hebrew writing did not occur until about 1000 B.C. or about the time of Samuel and King David. Other forms of writing prevailed however, and evidence of early forms of Babylonian, Chaldean, and Egyptian writing have been discovered. Moses doubtless learned how to write in Egypt.

The first Biblical reference to writing after the time of Moses occurs in Judges 5:14 (margin), where the Song of Deborah speaks of "the staff of the scribe" (1250 B.C.). Samuel, David, Nathan the prophet, Gad the seer, and many others are said to have made records in writing. But it was not until about the time of the exile (Nehemiah - Ezra period or about 500 B.C.) that the concerted effort was put forth, not only to record events, but also to compile history, arrange prophetic writings, and to select songs and Psalms for their own use as well as succeeding generations. The result of this effort was a collection of writings which soon became valued and treasured as God's message. It was this collection that Christ and the apostles referred to as "the scriptures", or, "Moses and the prophets".

PRESERVING THE BIBLE

Many dangers threatened the existence of those first manuscripts. Any document written upon papyrus or skin was always in danger of being lost or destroyed or succumbing to the ravages of time. We well know what effect a mere 10 or 20 years of use has upon books such as our Bibles; we can easily surmise what happens after the passage of 100 years - the book simply becomes old and brittle, and as soon as a hand is laid upon it, it falls apart. Therefore, in order to preserve the manuscript and increase its usefulness, it was copied laboriously by hand many, many times.

The original manuscripts have long ago disappeared. None are known to be in existence today, although there is always hope that someday some fragments of them may be found. When the tribes of Israel were carried off into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar (king of Babylon) and Antiochus Epiphanes (king of Egypt) in the 6th century B.C., they brought with them their copies of the scriptures into Babylonia and into Egypt. These copies particularly those that found their way into Egypt - became the sources for future manuscripts and versions.

MAINTAINING BIBLICAL ACCURACY and INTEGRITY

In addition to the dangers of destruction, there were also the dangers of error creeping into the text, on account of all the copying and reprinting taking place. Most of these errors were unintentional and occurred simply by accident. To illustrate, let any one of us try to make exact copies of just a very few pages of printed material, and see how many simple but aggravating mistakes we will make. Most textual errors that have occurred have been of this type - that is, accidental and unintentional. A few, however, have occurred as a result of the copyists' desire to make a correction to a statement, or to use more colorful wording, or - and this is the most common - to bring a statement into harmony with the theological ideas either of the copyist and of the age in which he lives.

Thus by such means a few textual variations have occurred over the hundreds of years that copies have been made. But this problem is not near as great as one might think it could be, because conscientious minds soon became aware of what was happening, and, as a result, whenever a copy was made, or a version printed, there was a concerted effort to preserve and use for the source the oldest and most original manuscripts in existence.

Many of these manuscripts are in existence today, some having been preserved for over 2000 years. While they are not the autographed originals of the Biblical authors themselves, they have brought to us the Bible in the most highly accurate and readable form.

THE PROBLEMS OF TRANSLATION

The Hebrew language is a particularly difficult language to translate. It has no vowels. These have to be supplied by the reader or the translator, as the case may be. The Hebrew alphabet consists of 22 consonants. For instance, we could have a Hebrew word consisting of the consonants b d. It could be bud, bad, bed, or bid. The vowel would have to be supplied by the reader so as to make up the word which the context required. Also (and this applied to most of the Greek New Testament as well as Hebrew Old Testament manuscripts), there were no spaces to separate one word from another; no punctuation, no verses or chapters. Let us take an example direct from the Hebrew and translate it into English. The first task is the easiest and it has already been done - simply supplying English lettering for the Hebrew. Thus it appears: "Yvhthstsrchandnndknwnm"; or, (with vowels and word spacing) "Yahveh thou hast searched me and known me".

The Jews were well aware of this problem, especially in the period following the captivity, as the people became less practiced in the Hebrew language because of the increasing prominence and influence of the Greek language. Of particular concern was it to a group of Jews called the MASSORITES ("keepers" or "guardians" of the tradition) whose sacred duty it was to preserve the text and guard against the least alteration not only in lettering but in pronunciation. To preserve pronunciation without vowels is next to impossible, so they invented a series of vowel signs to be interspaced between the consonants at the appropriate places, also adding signs for punctuation. Their work began about 500 A.D. and continued with painstaking study and unspeakable devotion for many generations. The sign system was finally fully developed by 900 A.D. - a period of four hundred years! Surely this is something that must impress us as much as anything in this study the incredible amounts of time occupied in the preservation, copying, and translation of the BIBLE!

There were various manuscripts and versions that were used by the translators as the translation sources for the Bibles in our possession today. In the following sections we will go down the line and comment briefly upon each one of them.

THE HEBREW MANUSCRIPTS These are the original manuscripts containing the Old Testament scriptures as written by Divinely inspired writers. None are in existence today.

THE SAMARITAN VERSION While commonly termed a "version", that is, a translation from one language to another, it is actually more in the nature of a "revision" of the original Hebrew text. A revision is the reproduction of a version using the earliest manuscripts available to update the translation of the text in accordance with an established revision guideline. It was written by the Samaritans, a people who were brought into the land of Palestine in the 7th century B.C. by the King of Assyria to fill the population vacuum which occurred when the Kingdom of Israel fell and its people were exiled. (II Kings 17:24) The Samaritan people consisted of a blend of several nationalities taken from the areas surrounding Assyria. They had an intensive hatred for the Jews (which was mutual on both sides), and yet claimed the right to worship the God of the Jews. The Jewish Bible contained some writings which they did not accept, therefore they copied from the Jewish Bible only that part which they did accept - the five books of Moses. Owing to the similarity of the Samaritan language and writing with that of the Hebrew, the copy was almost identical to that of the original.

The Samaritan Version was written about 400 B.C., only 100 years after the Hebrew Bible was in circulation. The Samaritans' hatred of the Jews caused them to zealously guard their scriptures against Jewish interference; and the Jews did likewise with the Hebrew manuscripts - all of which contributed very highly to accuracy. As in the case of all manuscripts, new copies had to be made from the old in order to guard against extinction either through aging and decay, or from complete destruction at enemy hands. The oldest manuscript of the Samaritan version in existence today is dated about 1000 A.D. It became lost to the western world for a time but was discovered in 1600 A.D.

THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION At the time of the Jewish exile, when the land was occupied by the Assyrians and the Medes and Persians, many Jews fled into Egypt, and no doubt carried with them copies of their Hebrew scriptures. The passing of several hundred years witnessed the conquests by the Greeks led by Alexander the Great, the result of which was the introduction and rapid growth of the Greek language in all conquered lands including Egypt, until it became the universal language of the time. About the year 250 B.C. Egypt had a Greek king who desired to have a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Greek language. His request appealed to the Jewish colony in Alexandria, Egypt for they too could see the benefits of a Greek version, as the Greek language was having a smothering effect upon the Hebrew.

As the story goes, committee was made up of 72 Jews, expert in both the Hebrew and Greek languages. They began the arduous task but others had to complete it. The entire process took about 200 years, being completed about 50 B.C. The result of their work came to be known as the Septuagint Version. It quickly became a standard fixture in Greek Speaking synagogues. "Septuagint" means "seventy". Although it is assumed that Christ spoke and studied in the actual Hebrew Bible, it is worthwhile to have this early Greek translation for a comparison to determine accuracy of other copies and translations of the Bible from early times. The Septuagint was so-called in honour of the seventy-two Jews who began the work. The name is often expressed in Roman numerals - LXX - 70.

THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

These were the original Divinely inspired writings of the apostles which circulated among the early Christian believers in the first and second century A.D. They, like the Hebrew manuscripts, are not in existence today except in the form of copies which have been made of them. They were also quickly and widely translated into other tongues - Egyptian, Ethiopian, Armenian, Latin, and Syrian - in other words, into those languages and dialects of the outlying regions where Greek

was little known.

EGYPTIAN VERSIONS

These became necessary as the gospel spread up the Nile from Alexandria. The first of these was the SAHIDIC version, made about 200 A.D. The second was the COPTIC version made about 250 A.D. and is still in use today by Coptic Christians, of the upper Nile and costal regions of the middle east.

The reason God has give us His word is because He wants people to become a part of Himself. The way to do that has been revealed - through Jesus - the Messiah - the Son of God. Learning these things will enable you to become immortal and to rule over the earth when the Messiah returns to save Israel and become Israel's King. Then God will set up the Kingdom of God on earth and rule the world through His Son for a thousand years. To prepare for this, we must do these type of Studies and must believe and get baptised. Please keep that in mind as you study these lessons.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 2

1. In what two languages were the original Bible manuscripts written?
2. Name four things we hope to accomplish with lessons 2-4.
3. What does "manuscript" mean?
4. What date appears to mark the beginning of the Word of God in written form?
5. What were the physical dangers threatening the existence of God's Word?
6. What 2 dangers threatened the accuracy of God's Word?
7. Are any of the original inspired manuscripts in existence today?
8. What problems confronted the translators of the Hebrew scriptures?
9. What part of the Bible does the Samaritan Version include?
10. When was the Samaritan Version written?
11. What prompted the writing of the Septuagint Version?
12. Why is the Septuagint Version significant to us today?
13. What is meant by "revision"?

KEY Lesson 3 THE BIBLE: HOW IT CAME TO US - Part 2

MANUSCRIPTS CONTAINING BOTH TESTAMENTS

SYRIAC VERSION The Syriac Version was a translation for those early Christians in the mountain districts of Syria. This was one of the earliest New Testament versions, translated about 150 A.D., almost contemporary with the writings of the apostles. It contained both the Old and New Testament, being translated from the Greek Septuagint. Copies of the Syriac version are in existence today, preserved at Leningrad in Russia, and at a monastery in Sinai. This version, like the Septuagint itself, is of inestimable worth to translators of the Bible, not to mention students of the Bible.

LATIN VERSIONS Latin Versions were necessary for the regions of North Africa, particularly around the area of Carthage where Latin became the predominant language. This manuscript was called the African Latin, written about 300 A.D. About this time many other Latin versions were coming into existence as Latin gradually superseded Greek. These versions included both the Old and New Testaments, translated from the Greek. But there was a problem; with all the versions appearing, there were so many deviations and variations and outright mistakes occurring in these copies that a complete revision became necessary. The work of this revision fell upon the shoulders of a very capable and learned scholar of the third century A.D. called Jerome.

The sources he used for the translation of the Old Testament were the Hebrew manuscripts, the Septuagint, and the Syriac Old Testament manuscripts. The New Testament was mainly a revision of earlier Latin manuscripts, with the help of the Greek and Syriac manuscript. His work was completed in 386 A.D., and is termed the **LATIN VULGATE**. Some 30,000 copies of it were made and circulated. For hundreds of years it was regarded (and still is by the Roman Church) as the only correct text, and has had tremendous influence upon our modern versions as we shall presently observe.

SINAITIC MANUSCRIPT This is so called because of its fairly recent Discovery at the monastery at Sinai. It was written about 300 A.D., contained both the Old and New Testaments in Greek. It was lost to the world at a very early date, and was discovered at Sinai in 1853. It was first removed to Leningrad, but was purchased by the British museum in 1933.

VATICAN MANUSCRIPT Originally copied from the Septuagint Version and New Testament Greek manuscripts about 370 A.D., and contained the entire Greek Bible, though parts of it are now missing due to age. This manuscript is now in the Vatican Library, although when or how

it came to the Vatican is not known. It was not made available to translators until 1867.

ALEXANDRIAN MANUSCRIPT A Greek manuscript of the whole Bible written about 400 A.D., now lacking in certain parts. It was handed over to Britain in 1624 and is now located in the British Museum. It is an important witness to the manuscripts both of the Septuagint and the New Testament Greek.

All during the time that these copies were being written, great and sweeping changes were taking place in the literary and religious world. Latin was becoming the predominant language. As time went on, Greek and Hebrew were all but forgotten except by serious scholars of the day. This is the reason that important manuscripts such as we have just looked at were consigned to obscurity almost as soon as they were written. The **LATIN VULGATE** was promoted by the Roman Church as being the only true version of the Bible. They forgot that it was simply a translation of Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Of the Vulgate they said, "It is the version of the Church, in her own language (Latin); why should it yield to Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, which have been for all these hundreds of years in the hands of Jewish unbelievers and Greek schismatics?"

This attitude set the stage for a display of violent resistance and persecution in those times against anyone who should undertake the work of translating scripture into the common language of the people. The Roman Church came to consider itself custodian of the Bible and made every effort to keep it out of the hands of the public. They were successful in locking up the Vulgate manuscripts; however, due to a large initial circulation (30,000) the Vulgate continued to be a widely read Bible, but decreasingly so as once more the passing of centuries witnessed a gradual shift in the predominance of the language. By natural means the "church" was getting its way, for as less and less people in the passing of generations understood Latin, the Bible became less and less available to the public.

ANGLO-SAXON VERSIONS A few of these appeared on the scene about the ninth century A.D. They did not flourish because only a few copies were made, and the Anglo-Saxon language was very unstable at that time, being in a stage of rapid change.

These versions were direct translations from the Latin Vulgate into the Anglo-Saxon tongue. Succeeding copies endeavored to keep pace with the changing of the language, hence there were scores of revisions and alterations produced during this period of history.

THE WYCLIFFE BIBLE About 1350 A.D. an Englishman named John Wycliffe translated the Latin Vulgate into the English language. For the first time the British people now had a Bible that they could read and understand in their own language. However, this accomplishment aroused the fury and wrath of the Roman Church, whose attitude towards Wycliffe was expressed by a bishop as "That pestilent wretch, the son of the old serpent, the forerunner of anti-christ, who had completed his iniquity by inventing a new translation of the Scriptures." Before they were able to pour out their vicious vengeance upon him, however, Wycliffe died a quiet and peaceful natural death.

But the fires of the wrath of the frustrated priesthood had been fanned, and many of Wycliffe's followers suffered death by persecution. Readers of the Bible were burned alive with copies of the Bible tied around their necks. Parents were executed for teaching their children the Lord's prayer and the Ten Commandments in English; husbands and wives were made to witness against each other; children were forced to light the fires that would burn their parents to death while they looked on. Possessors of the Wycliffe Bible were hunted down and killed. At the same time that all this was going on, however, several things were developing which was destined to turn the tide and render the Church's warfare against the translation of the Bible into common languages a losing one. Wycliffe's translation of the Bible was among the last to be handwritten, for soon afterwards came the invention of the printing press. Secondly, there was renewed interest in Greek and Hebrew languages which resulted in their revival insofar as Bible translation was concerned. New copies > from old manuscripts of Hebrew and Greek had been made in the 12th century. When these literary advances were coupled with the desire for church reformation, it resulted in the period which brought forth men like Erasmus and William Tyndale.

BIBLES PRINTED BY PRINTING PRESS

ERASMUS Erasmus was a scholar of the Greek language, and his work focused mainly upon the New Testament. His was the first New Testament to be printed on a printing press. It was printed in Greek, copied from the 10th and 12th century Greek manuscripts. Another scholar, XIMENES, also had a Greek New Testament about to be printed. Erasmus apparently came under some pressure from his publisher to have his work printed first. This pressure did not bode well for accuracy. Erasmus succeeded in having his text printed first, but later he admitted that it was at the expense of accuracy in certain instances. Fortunately, however, these inaccuracies are quite obvious and easily identified by the serious Bible student.

One obvious example is the passage in I John 5:6,7 (King James Version).

It was translated from the Vulgate and forged into one of Erasmus' Greek manuscripts. He discerned the forgery, but in the haste and pressure for printing he decided to overlook it. The passage is not contained in any other manuscript, and the Revised Version correctly leaves it out.

WILLIAM TYNDALE William Tyndale was contemporary with Erasmus. Both lived in the time period around 1500 A.D. Tyndale was a very determined man with a remarkable knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. His version of the Bible was a translation direct from the most original Hebrew and Greek sources available to him, with some influence from the Latin Vulgate and the work of Erasmus. Thousands of copies of the complete Bible in the English language rolled off the press to be distributed to the eager and waiting hands of his fellowman. His life soon came to be in peril in England and he fled to Germany where the printing continued and Bibles were smuggled into England in bales of cloth and sacks of flour. The success was overwhelming, for there were far too many Bibles coming in to be destroyed by burning. But even in Germany, Tyndale was at last betrayed. He was taken to a miserable dungeon near Brussels, where he barely existed for some time at the hands of men devoid of mercy and compassion. Afterwards he was taken to the stake where he was strangled and burnt. His work, however, lived on.

THE KING JAMES VERSION About the time of Tyndale's death, Henry VIII had a quarrel with the pope, the result of which was the establishment of the Church of England. Henry, and the Church of England, were favorable to the idea of a Bible for the people. The bishops of the English church were still offended by the stigma of Tyndale's name, and therefore his work was not sanctioned by them. The other Bibles which followed, however, were little more than editions of Tyndale's Bible. Then, in 1611, King James I issued the command which resulted in the translation and publishing of The King James Version. It differs little from the Bible of Tyndale, having as its base much the same sources -- the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts of the 12th century A.D., and, to a lesser degree, the Latin Vulgate. Approximately 80% of the Old Testament and 90% of the New Testament appear to be directly transferred from Tyndale's Bible.

The translation known as the King James Version has had a profound effect upon the life and literature particularly of Western civilization. It is now been over 3 centuries since it was first printed. It is still the most commonly accepted; however, due to the changing English language, many words used therein are changed in meaning or have become obsolete entirely.

REVISED VERSION New discoveries of many old manuscripts since the publishing of the King James Version - such as the Samaritan revision manuscript., the Greek Septuagint, the Syriac version, the Sinaitic manuscript, the Vatican manuscript, the Alexandrian manuscripts, and others - prompted the writing of the Revised Version which was undertaken in 1870 and completed in 1885. A further revision some years later produced the REVISED STANDARD VERSION. We can rest assured that with the combination of the King James Version and the Revised Standard Version we have the original word of God as much as one language can express another. The reasons for the value of the combination of the two versions we will explain later.

RECENT DISCOVERIES In the 1940s two remarkable discoveries occurred. The Egyptian Manuscripts commented upon in Lesson 2 were unearthed in 1941, and have provided an excellent source for checking New Testament accuracy of modern versions. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 are equally valuable for the Old Testament. They are in Hebrew and date back in time about 2000 years - to about the time of Christ or just before. They are almost contemporary with the completion of the Greek Septuagint. They were copied by members of the Qumran community, a religious order of that time. Again, like the Egyptian manuscripts they provide an excellent means of cross-checking for accuracy of text. Much work is still going on concerning these finds and as time progresses we may have a full translation of them in English.

One thing is to be noted, the Egyptian Manuscripts and the Dead Sea Scrolls corroborate and support most of the translations currently in existence, particularly the King James Version and the Revised Standard Version. Surely this is a tribute to the hundreds of translators and copiers through the centuries of time; for in the Dead Sea Scrolls we have a treasure of manuscripts at least 1000 years older than any formerly in existence, and yet the variation is negligible. Even more so, however, does this indicate to us a guiding power throughout the translation and copying of scripture that is stronger and more consistent and accurate than merely the hand or will of man. It speaks to us of a power that works by natural means and in natural ways, but ultimately accomplishes that which is exactly as it was designed to be from the beginning.

AFTERTHOUGHTS

Have you ever wondered what it is that God really wants from you? And in all this studying, do you wonder - "What's in it for me?". The Bible plainly tells us what God offers to us, and what is in it for us.

His plan is to fill the Earth with His glory. It's to fill it with people who are part of Himself. What is needed from us is to start serving him Now. Now is the time to become a son or a daughter of God. We do this by believing in Him, in the things that he says, and in His Son Jesus. Then we must repent of our sins - admit we sin and then get Baptised believing in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. Then we need to live a life that puts God First - that respects His commands - which all told are love. They are ways of love, kindness, happiness and fairness. They involve helping others and helping each other. Think about it. Please keep all this in mind as you do the lessons.

Daily Bible Reading Plan at <http://readings.bereans.org>

Please paste the following questions into an email to me lmorrell@nmsu.edu, add your answers and send them back to me.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 3

1. What is the primary importance of the Syriac Version?
2. What prompted the writing of the Latin Vulgate?
3. Is the policy of the Roman Church concerning the Latin Vulgate consistent with historical facts?
4. Was the Latin Vulgate readily available to the general public?
5. What made the Wycliffe Bible different from all others before it?
6. What happened to those who possessed the Wycliffe Bible?
7. What was the first Bible to be printed on the printing press?
8. What was the problem with this Bible?
9. What were the sources of the Tyndale Bible?
10. What was the reaction of the authorities to the publication of the Tyndale Bible?
11. What was the reaction of the people to the publication of the Tyndale Bible?
12. What circumstances prompted King James I to issue a command to translate and publish the King James Version?
13. Which were the sources used for the publishing of the King James Version?
14. Was the majority of the King James version translated or transferred?
15. Why might this distinction be important for us to understand?
16. What prompted the writing of the Revised Version?
17. Are the King James Version and the Revised Version considered to be reliable transmissions of the original word of God?
18. Why are the Egyptian manuscripts and the Dead Sea Scrolls important?

KEY Lesson 4: THE BIBLE: CHOOSING A VERSION

REVIEW

Lessons 2 & 3 provided a brief overview of the entire subject of Bible transmission down to the printing of the Revised Version and the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Only the manuscripts and versions of the greatest renown have been mentioned. Actually, there are today more than 700 in existence, and much more which were known to have at one time been in existence. Since the turn of the century, numerous English versions and translations of the Bible have been made available for us. Shopping for a Bible today can be an overwhelming and almost frustrating experience for the sincere and conscientious Bible student intent on making a correct choice. The big question is, which translation or version is best? Which one represents most accurately the original Word of God?

To begin with, we must sadly realize that there is no perfect English version. English is not the language in which the Bible was originally written. The "perfect" Bible would be the original manuscript written in the original language - Hebrew (Old Testament) or Greek (New Testament). Bibles in our possession today are quite removed from that, although, as we have seen, the preservation of accuracy down to our time has been generally remarkable.

HOW TO EVALUATE BIBLE VERSIONS

There are three basic criteria that must be applied in order to make an intelligent and enlightened choice:

1. The type of translation.
2. The translator's beliefs - particularly regarding inspiration.
3. The underlying text on which the translation is based.

We will proceed in this lesson to examine these criteria one at a time so that you will be able to apply them in your personal choice of a bible version.

TYPE OF TRANSLATION

All English Bibles are translated according to one of four methods:

1. Formal Correspondence method
2. Dynamic Equivalence method
3. Paraphrase method

4. Translational Compromise method

Each of these methods have very distinct characteristics of translation that we need to be aware of when choosing a Bible version:

FORMAL CORRESPONDENCE METHOD

a) Characteristics of the Formal Correspondence method

i. word-for-word translation (as accurately as receptor language will allow)

ii. closely follows the syntax of original language - most objective type of translation - best type for serious Bible study, when one desires to know the exact message of inspired scripture - should also be best type for devotional purposes, since it most closely follows the original language.

EXAMPLES

Examples of Bible versions based on the Formal Correspondence method:
King James Version (KJV)

Revised Version (RV)

American Standard Version (ASV)

Revised Standard Version (RSV)

New American Study Bible (NASB)

New King James Version (NKJV)

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

(note - copyrights are held on most Bible translations, including the names of the Translations)

DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE METHOD

b) Characteristics of Dynamic Equivalence method - meaning-for-meaning translation (meaning of original text is translated into what translator feels is an equivalent thought in the receptor language) - leaves room for translator to transfer his or her own biases into the translated text - many important inspired thoughts, teachings, terms, and phrases

are lost in this process - used extensively by the Bible Societies in non-English translations

EXAMPLES

Examples of Bible versions based on the Dynamic Equivalence method:
Good News Bible (GNB) (also called Today's English Version (TEV);
New English Bible (NEB)

PARAPHRASE METHOD

c) Characteristics of the Paraphrase method

- not a true translation, but merely putting something into different words

- paraphraser does not use the original language as a base, but paraphrases from a translation - no systematic methodology, therefore very subjective to what paraphraser thinks and believes - reproduces, not God's words, but what man thinks or wishes they were - e.g. John 1:1-2 (Living Bible) "Before anything else existed, there was Christ, with God. He has always been alive and is himself God." This is a distortion of the original phrasing of this passage. (Compare with KJV, RSV, & NKJV) A story goes that the Living Bible was written each day on a train, as a man rewrote the King James Version Bible so his children would understand it. Those notes supposedly have become the Living Bible today.

EXAMPLES

Examples of Bible versions based on the Paraphrase method:

New Testament in Modern Speech;

Living Bible (LB)

TRANSLATIONAL COMPROMISE METHOD

d) Characteristics of the Translational Compromise method

- compromise between Formal Correspondence method and Dynamic Equivalence method - resulting versions are very literal in their translations in some places, but in other places are very much paraphrased (from the original text) - very difficult for the Bible student to discern when a rendering is literal and when it is not - e.g. Phil 2:8 - (NIV)

"Who, being in very nature God..." - is a paraphrase; "...did not consider equality with God something to be grasped..." - is a literal translation (i.e. there is no consistency of method)

EXAMPLES

Examples of Bible versions based on the Translational Compromise method:
New International Version (NIV)

New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)

Revised English Bible (REB)

TRANSLATOR'S PERSONAL BELIEFS

2. TRANSLATOR'S PERSONAL BELIEFS Another element which can seriously affect the accuracy of a version is the beliefs of the translators regarding the doctrine of inspiration. If translators do not firmly believe that ALL the Bible was given by Divine inspiration, the door is opened for them to be influenced by "higher criticism" - which can result in passages or sections of the Bible being left out. There may also be tendencies in the translation to undermine the doctrine of inspiration, or a tendency to include spurious readings which contradict other parts of the Bible.

Translators may also have other personal biases. Certainly a concerted effort was made to keep such biases, of whatever type they may be, from influencing the outcome of the text; but we must be aware of the possibility that the presence of biases in the mind of the translators could be a factor in influencing a decision between two or three possible renderings in a passage. Some versions include in the preface a statement with regard to the beliefs of the translator; most, however, do not. It is helpful to have such information, because if we are aware of the religious background of the translators of a text, we will be better prepared to look out for and identify places where translators may have been influenced by a religious bias..

There has been, in certain versions, an obvious trend towards "liberalism"; that is, expressing scriptural concepts and principles in a much more liberal or "currently popular", or "politically correct" manner than in the original language.

The latest trend in some modern Bible translations is called "inclusive gender", which effectively changes the gender of the original to include female gender in roles that the original language had clearly indicated

for male gender. (e.g. 1 Tim. 3:2,12 NRSV) Sometimes this is correct, othertimes it is not. It would be better to explain to the Bible student that sometimes "he" or "they" refers to both genders and leave the student to make up one's own mind.

UNDERLYING TEXT

3. UNDERLYING TEXT

The source text from which a version is translated should ideally be the most close to the original, pure, and accurate that is possible to obtain. This principle is not always followed with the translation of some modern versions. In certain cases the source used is that of a modern Greek and/or Hebrew manuscript.

It is therefore important to understand what is the underlying source text for whatever version you select for study or even casual reading. Look for the phrase "Textus Receptus" or "Received Text" in the introductory notes of a Bible. If it is indicated that the translation has used this text as its source, you can be more confident the translation was derived from the best possible source.

WHAT DO WE RECOMMEND?

Recommended Choices (listed in order of preference):

1. King James Version (for serious study)*
2. New King James Version*
3. Revised Standard Version
4. Revised Version
5. New American Standard Bible

*1, 2 and 5 are about even as to recommendation, each having individual advantages and disadvantages as discussed below. The final choice in selecting between these two versions will ultimately have to come down to personal preference.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Other suggestions and advice

- look for a Bible with marginal notes or footnotes giving various readings where applicable. A wide margin or interleaved Bible is desirable if you want to make personal study notes.

- the King James Version continues to be widely used for serious study purposes because almost all of the major Scripture reference books

such as Strong's Concordance, Englishman's Hebrew and Greek Concordance, Thayer's Lexicon, Vine's Expository Dictionary, etc., are based on the text of the King James Version.

- the New American Standard Bible is by far the most accurate as far as correct translation of Greek or Hebrew words into current English. There is an excellent complete exhaustive concordance and lexicon available for this Bible also.

- the New King James Version is simply the King James Version in current English, and with most of the obvious textual errors corrected. Because of the changes, however, it may be more difficult to use some of the concordances and lexicons based upon the older text of the KJV. Some of these concordances and lexicons have been revised for use with the NKJV. Try to obtain these if you feel more comfortable using the NKJV version.

- the New International Version is showing signs of fast becoming the most popular version almost to the exclusion of the King James Version. While this is unfortunate, it is not hopeless; it simply means that the serious Bible student will have to become familiar with the shortcomings of the NIV and understand and mark those passages where the renderings are questionable. Also, the recent publishing of the standard dictionaries and lexicons for use with the NIV will be of great assistance.

- in addition to a Bible based upon the Formal Correspondence method of translation (e.g. the King James Version), it is a good idea to have one of the less literal versions for comparative purposes, but not for serious study. Alternatively one might obtain a version that has alternate renderings in footnotes or in the margins.

- do not rely heavily on "study Bibles" (filled with notes) except perhaps for reference purposes. The "study" is accomplished by professional clergymen and heavily slanted toward the ideas of orthodox religion. It is "canned" study, and as such tends to discourage personal study.

- just as one must compare scripture with scripture to arrive at the correct meaning of a passage, one must also be prepared to compare version with version to arrive at a correct conclusion as to the best Bible to suit our needs.

More intensive study of this subject is recommended to those who are so inclined. Such study has been made easier by the numerous works and writings of very capable and learned men; and the student will be benefited by acquiring the knowledge necessary to make the best

use of the many scripture sources available to us.

To summarize all that has been discussed on this subject, it is interesting to observe a quote from the former director of the British museum which contains several of the most important ancient manuscripts; "The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries."

AFTERTHOUGHTS

Choosing a Bible is an important step in learning about God. Your Bible will become a good friend. I have had my "main Bible" (King James Version) for thirty years. It is published by Cambridge University Press, has wide margins for my notes, and is leather bound. I have reglued it several times, it has been with me through many journeys, emotional ups and downs, and through much, much study. I have a number of other Bibles, but this one is still my favorite.

But more importantly than having a great Bible, is knowing those who it is about. Jesus was the "word made flesh". To know him is to know the bible, and the only way to know Jesus is by studying the Bible and practicing the things taught in it. This means giving your life to God, learning, believing, obeying -- getting baptised. Please keep this in mind as you study and as you choose a Bible.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 4

1. What is the first of three basic criteria that must be applied when selecting a Bible Version?
2. What is the second of three basic criteria that must be applied when selecting a Bible Version?
3. What is the third of three basic criteria that must be applied when selecting a Bible Version?
4. List the four methods of Bible Translation:
5. Which method results in a Bible version which is considered the best for serious Bible study?
6. Which method should be considered the least desirable? Why?
7. How might the beliefs of translators regarding inspiration of scripture affect the outcome of a translation?
8. What should we look for as the basic characteristics of the underlying text of a version?
9. Which versions are considered in this lesson to be "recommended choices"?
10. If circumstances dictate the range of choices are restricted to the NIV, what should one be prepared to do?
11. Why is it desirable for the Bible student not to rely heavily on "study Bibles"?

LESSON 5: PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE INTERPRETATION

"The Holy Scriptures... are able to make thee wise unto salvation"
- 2 Timothy 3:15.

The Bible conveys ideas to our minds in various ways. It means exactly what it says. When you believe that the Bible is God's revelation to man, you need to believe that it must be capable of being understood by man.

And it is addressed to all men: not just a favored class, or a learned few. Nor that it is an unrevealed and unlearnable mystery as many of the clergy would have us believe. The Bible speaks to each one of us, directly and personally. It is meant to be understood by ordinary people. No special scholarly training is necessary. Its words convey certain ideas, using words and phrases with their ordinary, natural, common significance. Literal language is the basis of the Bible.

PROPHECY: LITERAL EXPRESSIONS PREDICTING LITERAL EVENTS

Let us compare the literal expressions of the Bible with the literal events to which they refer. For instance, in Deuteronomy 28:37 (addressed to Israel), we read -

"Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee."

The actual literal fulfillment of this prophecy by God through Moses is witnessed throughout the world in all nations and by all people. It is just as true today as it has been for centuries, since the Jewish nation was first dispersed throughout the world.

No one, then, will question the despised and wandering condition to which the Jewish nation has been subjected, whether they accept the Word of God or not. We see that a literal prophecy - simple, easy words meaning just what they say - has been literally fulfilled. Now let us look at another simple, easy - to - understand prophecy about this same people, this time from Ezekiel 37:21, 22 -

"Behold, I (God) will take the children of Israel from among the heathen whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel: and one king shall be king to them all. And they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all."

Here is another literal prophecy from the Word of God, about the same

people. As the above words of God through Moses referred to a literal people and literal events which literally came to pass, so we must accept this statement from Ezekiel in just as real and literal a manner. Actually, we today see the beginnings of the literal fulfillment of the latter prophecy, as the Jews return to the land of Palestine and with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

Again, take a prophecy from Micah (5:2), and its New Testament fulfillment - "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel."

"Now Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea" (Matthew 2:1).

Here again is a simple literal prophecy with a fulfillment in a literal manner. The whole so-called "Christian" world accepts this fact. The same rule of literal interpretation must prevail in all the Word of God, and will be found to do so.

FIGURES OF SPEECH

Of course, this simple, reasonable literal rule of understanding does not exclude the normal use of figures of speech - a well-understood aspect of any language. We constantly use figures of speech in our everyday conversation, and are understood without confusing the literal basis of our speech; and so we naturally find the same in the Bible. These do not confuse us in our daily communications together so it should be no problem when we find them in God's Word. Many figures of speech were well known and used in Bible times, and the Greeks and Romans used hundreds of them also. The Companion Bible enumerates 181 figures of speech used in the Bible. For the purpose of this lesson we will look at several which are most important to Bible interpretation.

METAPHOR

1. Metaphor

For example, we find Jesus Christ referred to as a Stone, a Branch, a Lamb, a Shepherd, and the Bread of Life. Such metaphor beautifies and broadens our understanding of the literal subjects which are discussed. When we speak of tyrants "trampling the rights of their subjects under their feet," we mix literal language with metaphorical language. But all can understand us, and the literal part is not lost. No one is in danger of supposing that "rights" are literal substances that can be crushed to pieces under the mechanical action of the feet. And the literal tyrants and their literal subjects remain quite clear

to our hearers. Similarly, a "black look" has nothing to do with color, but rather a mood is meant.

This may sound like over-simplification, and very elementary. It is important, nonetheless, because these simple and obvious rules of common metaphorical use, when appearing in the Bible, have been misused to distort the basic truth of God's Word, and the literal has been denied simply because there is a metaphorical element.

Here are a few illustrations of the use of metaphor in the Scriptures, and we note that, interpreted reasonably as we would any book, the literal is quite clear -

"The Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 4:20).

The land of Egypt was not an actual furnace, but the circumstances of Israel's sufferings there are likened to being in a furnace. Again -

"Behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river .. . even the king of Assyria . . he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks" (Isaiah 8:7).

"The Lord shall make thee (Israel) the head, and not the tail" (Deuteronomy 28).

By the principle of metaphorical speech a beast is put for an empire, horns for kings, waters for people, rivers for nations, a woman for world government, etc. A vivid illustration of this can be found in Daniel 7:2-7, when God revealed to Daniel and to us the long panorama of history from the days that Judah went into Babylonian captivity to the time when God will establish His Kingdom on this earth -

"and four great beasts came up from the Sea, diverse one from another: the first was like a lion... a second, like to a bear... and lo another like to a leopard . . . and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible" (vs. 2-7).

Then Daniel was told in literal language what these beasts represented - "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings" (world empires), "which shall arise out of the earth... " (the populations of the inhabited world) Daniel 7:17, 18, 27.

By the ordinary laws of language, there should not be the slightest

difficulty here in determining what is meant, what is literal, and what is figurative.

2. Parables and Allegories

Parables are often used in the Bible to illustrate the meaning of an important lesson or teaching..Jesus many times used parables to augment his teachings for the purpose of developing the understanding of those who had "ears to hear". When asked by the disciples on one occasion as to why he spoke in parables, he replied -

"Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." (Matthew 13:11)

Allegories are similar to parables, and the terms can sometimes even be used interchangeably. The difference is that often in an allegory there is a wider divergence between the illustration and its object. An obvious example of an allegory may be found in Galatians 4:22-31 where certain personalities from the Old Testament are used allegorically to illustrate the advantages of being under the system of the grace of God in Christ compared to the disadvantages of remaining under the system of the Law of Moses. The metaphors and representations employed are very colorful, and can only be fully appreciated when one understands the characters of the personalities named; but the context of the passage clearly explains the meaning, which points to a very clear and basic literal teaching as stated above.

3. Types or Shadows

The Bible makes great use of types and shadows - usually in some manner pointing forward to Christ and his work. Again, the literal cannot be ignored. Wherever there is type or shadow there must be substance. A person's shadow could not exist without the presence of the literal person which is greater than the shadow.

An example of the use of the word "shadow" in the Bible occurs in Hebrews 10:1 -

"For the law (the Law of Moses) having a shadow of good things to come (Jesus Christ), and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."

Much of the book of Hebrews is dedicated to illustrating how the sacrifices and regulations of the Law of Moses served as shadows pointing forward

to the reality - the work of Jesus Christ. This will be explained in greater detail in future lessons.

Again in Colossians 2:16-17 (RSV) -

"Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath (i.e., ordinances belonging to the Law of Moses) These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ."

These examples also indicate how well the context explains the meaning of the type so that we are not left to guess at it.

Jesus also often employed the use of types to teach literal lessons, and again, often did not leave any doubt as to the meaning. For example

-

"As it was in the days of Noah (the shadow), so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man (the reality, or 'anti-type')." Luke 17:26
"As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:" John 3:14

4. Personification

We often use this figure of speech in our casual day-to-day conversation. For example, we often refer to objects such as cars, ships, houses, etc., as "she" or "her". Likewise, personification is a common figure of speech employed by scripture to communicate ideas, concepts and lessons. The following examples serve to illustrate:

RICHES are personified -

"No man can serve two masters... Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
Matthew 6:24

SIN is personified (represented as a master to whom we are servants)

-

"Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." John 8:34

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."
Romans 6:6

WISDOM is personified -

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom... She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her." Proverbs 3:13-15

"Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars:" Proverbs 9:1 (see also vv. 2-3)

Other examples could be cited, but the above is sufficient to make the point. This scriptural usage of personification is extremely important to remember as we come to consider important Bible doctrines later in this course.

METONYMY

5. Metonymy

Metonymy is another figure of speech that is constantly used in everyday speech without even thinking about it. For instance we speak sometimes of "boiling the kettle" when what we really mean is boiling the water in the kettle. So in this case the term "kettle" is put in place of the "water" that is inside of it.

The following are some instances of places where scripture makes use of this figure of speech:

"So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof." 2 Kings 4:40

Here "death" is put for the poison in the pot which was the cause of death. Therefore, by "death" we are to understand "poison".

"The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see." Isaiah 13:1

"Burden" is put for the message which foretold the coming burden. "And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him." Mark 14:35
Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." John 12:27

Here "hour" is put for the sufferings that he was to endure when that

"hour" came. Therefore, by "hour" we are to understand "sufferings". That is metonymy, and it important to recognize it when it occurs in scripture.

6. Symbolism

We also find the use of symbolic language throughout the Bible; but again there is no cause for confusion or confounding the basic, literal foundation of the Word of God. Symbols are simply another colorful method of conveying literal messages of God's truth to our minds. For example -

Isaiah 22:22 And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder...

"Key" conveys to our minds the literal message of delegated authority. Galatians 2:9 ... James, Cephas, and John...gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship...

"Right hands of fellowship" carries a meaning of unity, agreement. These examples briefly illustrate the Biblical use of symbols, and shows there is no difficulty in distinguishing the symbols from the literal message. We must treat the Bible as literal when by the ordinary rules of language it obviously is literal. We cannot, like many, deny the literalness of those clear statements that do not correspond with traditional views.

Figures of speech such as we have considered are simply employed to expand and illustrate the literal foundation. As the alphabet must be known and understood before we can learn words, so the literal basis of Scripture must be understood before we can grasp the metaphoric and symbolic, etc.

REMEMBER A FEW ADDITIONAL SIMPLE RULES

1. Do not ignore the CONTEXT !

One of the fundamental principles of Bible study and interpretation is that of observing the context. Most of the problems associated with understanding the Bible could be overcome by simply reading the verses before and/or after the passage in question. Be sure there is consistency of interpretation and application throughout a passage. For instance, if an interpretation of a symbol seems to fit well in one verse of a passage but not in another verse of the passage where the context is the same, it may indicate an error in the interpretation

and application of the symbol.

2. Let the Bible be its own interpreter.

Practice the cross-referencing of passages, remembering that the Bible never contradicts itself. Always carefully consider the subject and circumstances and time periods. Many passages will supply the key that will unlock the door to the understanding of them. The Bible is a logical book; when everything fits and makes sense, you will be on the right track! Remember this principle as it will be referred to and illustrated often in future lessons. Apply it well in your own reading of scripture.

3. Use ALL of the Bible!

The entirety of the Bible from cover to cover is essential to comprehend the divine plan of salvation. The Old Testament and the New are an inseparable unit, in perfect harmony. All is the revelation of God for our necessary instruction. Both have been preserved by God's providence to our times to provide the necessary information for our intelligent understanding, and obedient walk before God.

Some have questioned the present need and usefulness of the Old Testament. No more fatal error could be made. The Old forms the heart and explanation of the New. They are inseparable. If we take away the Old, we completely destroy the usefulness of the New. They stand or fall together. We cannot possibly understand the New without the Old. Paul wrote to Timothy (2 Timothy 3:15) -

"The SCRIPTURES are able to make thee wise unto salvation."

When Paul wrote this, the SCRIPTURES he was referring to was the Old Testament! The New was not written at that time. Throughout the New Testament, the importance of the Old Testament, and an understanding of it, are constantly emphasized, as in the following -

"I (Paul) continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles" (Acts 26:22-23).

"So worship I the God of my fathers, believing ALL things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets" (Acts 24:14).

"Paul reasoned with them... .out of the Testament!] Scriptures" (Acts 17:2).

"That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets" (2 Peter 3:2).

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place... Knowing this first, that no prophecy is of any private interpretation. For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved the the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:19-21). Jesus himself emphasized the same principle (John 5:46-47) -

"Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" Of the Old Testament, he said:

"The Scriptures cannot be broken" (John 10:35).

The basis which Paul, Peter and Jesus here set forth should also be our approach to the Word of God - the use and study of the entire Bible. This basis will form the foundation of the lessons which will follow, God willing.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 5

1. What is the definition of "prophecy"?
2. Give one example of a prophecy which had a literal fulfilment.
3. Is the use of figures of speech in the Bible inconsistent with the principle that literal language is the basis of its communication?
4. What is the definition of a "metaphor"?
5. Can you think of an example in the Bible where a metaphor is used?
6. What is the definition of a "parable"?
7. Why did Jesus use parables to teach the people?
8. What is the definition of a "type" or "shadow"?
9. What book of the Bible devotes a large portion of its text to the use of types and shadows for the purpose of expounding upon the work of Christ?
10. What is the definition of "personification"?
11. What 3 things are examples of personification in the Bible?
12. What is the definition of "metonymy"?
13. Give an example of where metonymy is used in the Bible.
14. Explain what symbolism is as used in the Bible.
15. What is the most important principle of Bible study and interpretation? Explain why.
16. What is meant by "Let the Bible be its own interpreter"?
17. Is it necessary to use both Old and New Testaments?
18. What part of the Bible did the apostles use as the basis for their teachings? Why is that?

KEY Lesson 6: HUMAN NATURE ESSENTIALLY MORTAL

We observed in Lesson #5 that the Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation by means of communicating to the human mind the wisdom and expression of the Divine mind - Matthew 22:31-32 "have ye not READ that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?"

Christ was telling people that they must READ the Scriptures (that is, what we call the Old Testament, which was all they had at that time) to find out about God's purpose and what it involved.

As we begin a study of the great teachings of the Bible, it is fundamental that we make the effort to first obtain a general concept of the central theme of its message. So many have made the sad mistake of opening its pages with preconceived notions about its doctrines, and end up trying to mould and shape its teachings to those preconceptions.

If we simply go to the Bible with an open mind, it will communicate to us the Divine conceptions and program.

The basic outline of God's grand purpose with His creation is in fact stated very simply but forcefully in scripture:

1. The ascription of glory and honour to God by His creation gives God pleasure, and it was for this purpose that all things were created. Creation is supposed to please God, not God pleasing the created: Revelation 4:11 "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

2. The purpose of God involves that the earth is to ultimately be filled with His glory: Numbers 14:21 "But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD."

3. The way it will be filled with His glory is that it will be full of the knowledge of God and His ways: (notice that knowledge and glory are used interchangeably in describing what the earth is to be full of)

Isaiah 11:9 "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

4. The way to honor and glorify God, therefore, is to know and do His will as a matter of voluntary choice - this choice is our free will:

Psalm 50:23 "He who brings thanksgiving as his sacrifice honors me; to him who orders his way aright I will show the salvation of God."
5. Those who know and voluntarily choose to perform his will become, at first in prospect and finally in wonderful glorious reality, a part of the Divine family and are called His sons and daughters and take on His name -

Isaiah 43:5-7 "Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is CALLED BY MY NAME: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him."

This is the simple but clear scriptural teaching of God's purpose; to ultimately fill the earth with people who voluntarily perform his will and glorify his name. All teachings and interpretations everywhere must be tested against this grand central theme of the Bible. Everything else revolves around it. This is the reason for our very existence - of our free will to give glory and honor to God. This the only real way of achieving true happiness and well being.

As we go through the pages of the Bible from beginning to end, we will find that its message is oriented not only around the how and the why, but also the circumstances under which the great Divine Purpose will be fulfilled. It is our intent that these lessons will serve as a guide to tour us through the Word of God and illustrate these things in sufficient detail to give each a thorough understanding of how these things will come about, and what it means to us.

As we begin this journey, we will begin to see a very consistent and straight-forward message displayed before us - one which declares and expands upon the Divine central theme and motivation of filling the earth with those who glorify His Name through a voluntary obedience and service to His will.

We will see this plan beginning to unfold in the first few chapters of Genesis, the very first book of the Bible. When sin entered the world through the disobedience of the first human pair, we find that with the punishment of mortality and banishment from the Garden of Eden there came also a promise of hope:

God's promise in the Garden of Eden:

Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and

between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

The promise contained in this passage is that of redemption from the POWER of sin and death through the SEED of the woman.

God's promises to ABRAHAM:

Genesis 13:14-15 "And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."

Note the comment of the apostle Paul regarding this promise:

Galatians 3:16 "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

From this it is clear that the "seed" is Christ; but note what that means for us if we are IN Christ:

Galatians 3:28-29 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

We understand, of course, that a promise of living for ever on this earth is not much of a future to look forward to unless there are some major changes made in relation to the current wicked and volatile forms of government, as well as the declining quality of the earth's environment. We will find, however, that these concerns have not been left unanswered as Gods promises continued to be made to righteous people of the "woman's seed". Each promise added, as it were, to the features of the previous one - illustrating a developing revelation to man of the Divine purpose. Note what is contained in the next phase of promises made to David and expounded upon by Isaiah the prophet: God's promises to DAVID:

2 Samuel 7:12-13, 16 "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom FOR EVER. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established

for ever before thee (in David's presence): thy throne shall be established for ever."

Note that these promises indicated to David three things:

- 1) That David's offspring would be the one to establish and rule over God's kingdom for ever;
- 2) That the event promised would take place after David's death;
- 3) That David would be literally present and participate in that kingdom; in effect, David would be resurrected from the dead.

The apostle Peter comments upon this promise concerning the "seed" promised to David -

Acts 2:30 "Therefore (David) being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;"

It is truly wonderful how the inspired scripture does not leave us guessing as to who these things refer to! The next key passage that builds upon this theme is -

Isaiah 9:6-7 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."

This passage from the book of Isaiah amplifies the promise made to David; and in doing so makes it very clear that, in addition to the revealed fact that this kingdom is to have no end, it will be administered by the Son of God who acts as the representative of God, and that it will be accompanied by peace, righteousness, and justice. A very similar statement was made by the angel who appeared to Mary. It is interesting to note the similarity of wording and meaning, and the continuity of God's message as it applies to Jesus Christ -

Luke 1:32-33 "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."

It is important to notice that not once in the life of Christ as recorded in the gospels can it be said that this promise was ever fulfilled. Many times in the life of Christ did he and his disciples preach the same message (or, "gospel" - "good news") of the Kingdom of God. The disciples expected him many times to assume the role of King over the nation of Israel, but much to their disappointment, it never happened. Instead, at the age of 33 years, he was crucified. However, he rose from the dead on the third day after his death, and spent time with his disciples, as recorded in -

Acts 1:3 "To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:"

We note that although Christ had not assumed the role of King, he continued to speak of it. Again, the disciples questioned him as to the TIMING of this event. His reply -

v.7 "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power."

Then -

v. 9-11 "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, SHALL so come IN LIKE MANNER as ye have seen him go into heaven."

We must never underestimate the significance of this statement as it relates to the purpose of God in the ultimate performance of His will. This event has also never yet been fulfilled, and stands as something we must look forward to with earnest anticipation, preparation and watchfulness. The physical and literal return of Christ to this earth became the basis of the apostles teaching -

Acts 3:19-21 "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive UNTIL the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of

all his holy prophets since the world began."

Note how this passage demonstrates the constancy of God's purpose throughout - from the beginning ("since the world began") - and also that it has been foretold. We must also recognize that nothing in God's plan happens haphazardly or at random. God has a "time line" appointed for the unfolding pattern of Divine events -

Acts 17:30-31 "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because HE HATH APPOINTED A DAY, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

It is natural to think that nothing will change and that all things will continue as before; but we must recognize the message of scripture that there is a Divine time factor, that God's plan is on course and will happen as He has planned and foretold.

The Bible contains this message of God's purpose literally from cover to cover. Consider this message and warning from the very last chapter of the last book of the Bible -

Revelation 22:12,20 "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen."

QUESTIONS for Lesson 6

1. What is the main purpose for God's creation?
2. According to the Bible, where is this to happen?
3. How will God's purpose be accomplished?
4. Genesis 3 informs us that with the punishment of the first human pair, there came also a promise of hope. What was the punishment?
5. Why was mankind punished?
6. What was the promise?
7. What is the definition of "redemption"?
8. What was promised to Abraham?
9. What three things are indicated by God's promises to David?
10. What two additional things are revealed in the book of Isaiah about the promises to David?
11. What was God's promise to Mary concerning Jesus?
12. Has it ever been fulfilled?
13. What was the promise of the angels to the disciples at the event of Christ's ascension?
14. What is the message of scripture concerning the course of God's plan?

LESSON 7 - BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT HUMAN NATURE

"He remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof is known no more" Psalm 103:14-16.

The next "key" to unlocking the true teachings of scripture is to understand what it reveals to us concerning human nature. If we do not grasp the proper scripture fundamentals relating to human nature, we will never understand the truth concerning the work and teaching of Christ, who came to open and show the way to attain to immortality, which is a promised gift of God.

The universal opinion and concept of human nature is that there is in it something that is undying - something that will live on after the death of the body. The common term for this "something" is "soul", or "immortal soul". In this lesson we will see that while the words "immortal" and "soul" are both found in the Bible, they are never once used together, or even in the same verse or chapter. In fact, "immortal" is found only once in all of scripture, and that is in relation to God (1 Timothy 1:17).

What, then, DOES the Bible say about the "soul"? What is the scriptural definition of "soul"?

Please recall Lesson #4 where we learned about the various helps that are available to help us with understanding the Bible, because English was not its original language. It is interesting in this regard to look up the word "soul" in Strong's Concordance, where we will find that the original words from which it was translated was the Hebrew "nephesh" and the Greek "psuche".

Armed with this knowledge we can trace the terms "nephesh" and "psuche" in Englishman's Hebrew and Greek concordances, which list together every occurrence of the original words in order. What is the point of such an exercise? We will confirm that nowhere in the whole of the Bible do we ever find such expressions as: "never-dying soul", "immortal soul", or "immortality of the soul". Rather we will find that what is said about souls is always the very opposite. We will find that the scriptures abound with references to the absolute mortality and brief existence of humankind.

Bible usages of the word "soul," indisputably determine its basic meaning. We find the word "soul" (Hebrew nephesh; Greek psuche) simply means a breathing creature, without any reference to how long it will exist.

In Genesis 1 and 2, the original Hebrew words describing animals and humans are the SAME (chay nephesh). What is said of one is said also of the other. For example "God created ... every living creature (chay nephesh) that moveth" (Genesis 1:21). "Let the earth bring forth the living creature (chay nephesh)" (Genesis 1:24).

These verses are speaking exclusively of the animals, before man was created. The first 4 occurrences of nephesh (translated "creature" and "life") are applied to the animals (Genesis 1:20, 21, 24, 30). Now please notice what is said concerning the creation of man - "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed (neshamah) into his nostrils the breath of life (neshamah chay), and man became a living soul (chay nephesh)." (Genesis 2:7). We see that exactly the same words are used to describe both animals and mankind - though translated respectively "living creature" and "living soul." Both are living creatures, creatures of life. But nothing in the original Hebrew carries the idea of a creature of everlasting life. If it did, we would have to agree to the same condition for both men and animals. They are identical in basic physical constitution.

In Genesis 2:7, we are shown that Adam was formed of the dust of the ground; and when the breath of life entered his nostrils, HE (the inanimate dust form) "became a living creature," a creature of life. The dust-formed object itself became (not received) a living soul or creature, just like all the rest of the animals.

The Bible tells us souls can be hungry, and can be satisfied with food -

"An idle soul (nephesh) shall suffer hunger" (Proverbs 19:15).

"They gave their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul (nephesh)" (Lamentations. 1:11).

Souls can go to the grave, and come up from the grave -

"His soul (nephesh) draweth near unto the grave" (Job 33:22).

"He will deliver his soul (nephesh) from going into the pit (sheol is grave)" Job 33:28.

"Thou hast brought up my soul (nephesh) from the grave" (Psalm 30:3). This word nephesh occurs about 750 times. It is rendered "soul" 470 times, "life" 120 times, "person" 30 times. It is applied to animals alone 22 times, and of men and animals together 7 times. It is also

translated: man, person, self, beast, fish, creature, body, heart, appetite, etcXX--183--XX

It is never said to be immortal: always the very opposite. It is over 300 times spoken of as being able to die, naturally liable to death, being killed (32 times), actually dead (13 times), and going to the grave (13 times). For example - "None can keep alive his own soul (nephesh)" (Psalm 22:29). "Shall he deliver his soul (nephesh) from the hand of the grave?" (Psalm 89:48). "He spared not their soul (nephesh) from death" (Psalm 78:50).

Ezekiel says conclusively: "The soul (nephesh) that sinneth, it shall die" (18:4).

Leviticus 24:17-18 is very striking and revealing -

"And he that killeth any man (nephesh) shall surely be put to death. And he that killeth a beast (nephesh) shall make it good; beast (nephesh) for beast (nephesh)."

And finally, the Bible speaks of souls as actually dead -

"He shall come at no dead body (nephesh)" (Numbers 6:6).

"Neither go in to any dead body (nephesh)" (Leviticus 21:11).

And the New Testament picture is the same (where the Greek equivalent for "soul" is "psuche").

"The third part of the creatures that were in the sea and had life (psuche), died" (Revelation 8:9).

"Every living soul (psuche) died in the sea" (Revelation 16:3).

"Men that hazarded their lives (psuche) for the Name of Jesus" (Acts 15:25).

"Neither count I my life (psuche) dear to myself" (Acts 20:24).

"For the work of Christ he was nigh to death, not regarding his life (psuche) (Philippians 2:30).

To translate "psuche" by "immortal soul" in any of the above places would create an absurdity. Paul makes it inescapably clear that a "living soul" is a "natural body" when he says

"There is a natural (psuchikon < psuche: soulish) body, and there is a spiritual (pneumatikon) body. And so it is written, "The first man Adam was made a living soul (psuche); the last Adam was made a quickening spirit (pneuma)" (1 Corinthians 15:44).

The Scriptures show us clearly that, far from the common conceit of his being an everliving portion of the divine essence, natural animal man unguided by the commandments of God, is as absolutely nothing "All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing" (Daniel 4:35). "Man is like to vanity: his days are as a shadow that passeth away" (Psalm 144:4).

"What is your life? It is even a vapor that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14).

There is nothing anywhere in the Bible that makes a difference between a man and his body, or indicates that a man can exist apart from his body. We have seen that God made man (himself) of the dust of the ground, and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and "HE (the man) became a living soul" or creature. The dust-formed being itself became a living creature.

This certainly refers to the body formed out of the dust. God did not breathe into it a "living soul." That is not what it says. It says the breath of life - breathed in - made the dust-formed man a living soul. Because of disobedience to God's law, Adam (this dust-formed man) was sentenced to return to the earth (Genesis 3:17-19) - "Till thou return to the ground: for out of it wast thou taken: for dust THOU art, and unto dust shalt THOU return" (v.19).

The man himself was referred to as "thou" the conscious, guilty "thou". Similarly Abraham said of himself - "I am but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27). Mankind dies as the animals of the field. In constitution they are both alike. As we have seen that they were created alike, so we find they die in the same manner -

"I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy ALL flesh wherein is the breath of life (ruach chaiyim)" Genesis 6:17.

"ALL flesh died that moved upon the earth: of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing, and every man. All in whose nostrils was the breath of life on the dry land, died" (Genesis 7:21-22). Solomon adds the conclusive statement of God -

"That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts: even one thing

befalleth them. As the one dieth, so dieth the other: yea, they HAVE ALL ONE BREATH (ruach: spirit, same word). So that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast . . . all go to one place: all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again" (Ecclesiastes 3:18-20).

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit (ruach, breath, animating power, that which was breathed in to make the dust-formed soul live) shall return to God Who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

That this is God's Own universal spirit, and not a personal conscious entity that ascends to God at death, is positively proven by exactly the same being said of the animals in Psa. 104 (see the whole context)

"Things creeping innumerable, small and great beasts . . . all wait on Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season Thou takest away their breath (ruach: spirit), they die and return to their dust" (vs. 25-29).

And in the book of Job we read -

"If God set His heart upon man, if He gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh shall perish together, and MAN shall return again unto his dust" (Job 34:14-15).

Here again, it is clear that the spirit withdrawn is God's, and it is man himself who in consequence returns to dust. If it were true that man has an immortal soul that, at death, ascends up to be with God for ever, this statement would lose all its force; because it would then mean that when God withdraws His Spirit, all flesh would not totally perish, and man would not totally return to dust in the absolute and final sense that the context of the passage requires. Solomon, we saw, said that "man hath no pre-eminence above a beast" (as to his natural life and physical constitution). Similarly David says - "Man, being in honour, abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish" (Psalm 49:12).

"Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish" (Psalm 49:20).

It is vitally important that we understand the truth of the Bible on this subject. This is the foundation. Without having clearly in our minds what we are by nature and what our natural destiny is we cannot understand God's plan of salvation. The popular theory of the

"Immortality of the Soul" blinds peopleXX--226--XXs eyes to the only means of attaining to the true Eternal Life, which is not a present possession, but the GIFT of God (Romans.6:23) to those who serve Him faithfully. Once having clearly perceived and accepted the Bible truth that man is a mortal, dying creature, a brief passing vapor, then we can go on to see the beautiful love and mercy of God in the scriptural plan of human redemption.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 7

1. What is the basic meaning of the word "soul" as used in the Bible?
2. What terms are used in Genesis 1:20 & 24 to describe animals as created?
3. What terms are used in Genesis 2:7 to describe man as created?
4. What are the Hebrew words used in Genesis 1:20, 21, 24, 30; 2:7 for "living soul" and "living creature"?
5. Are men and animals described (physically) by God in the same way?
6. Is there anything in the original words which carries the idea of never dying immortality when the Bible mentions "living soul" and "living creature"?
7. From what was Adam created?
8. Is a soul capable of dying? Give two scriptural verses to prove your answer.
9. How does God value all who are not guided by His commandments?
10. Does the Bible show any difference between a man and his body?
11. In the creation of man, what was it that "became a living creature"?
12. What happens to man when he dies?
13. In what manner did Abraham describe himself in Gen. 18:27?
14. Quote verses to prove that animals and man all have the same breath of life.
15. Is there any difference between man and animals with regard to their physical nature? Try to use a passage of scripture to prove your answer.
16. What effect does the theory of the "Immortality of the Soul" have upon an understanding of God's plan of salvation?

KEY Lesson 8 - 8 BIBLE TEACHING CONCERNING DEATH

"The living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything; neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten; also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, are now perished: neither have they any more a portion for ever in anything that is done under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6).

THE clear, unmistakable teaching of Scripture concerning the death state is in perfect harmony with the subject matter of the previous lesson concerning the absolute mortality and frailty of mankind, and the "soul". Here again we must understand the Bible teaching to comprehend the principles and necessity of God's plan of salvation. Unfortunately, the teaching of the Bible continues to part company with the teachings of mainstream Christianity on this vital subject. It is unfortunate because without the proper understanding of what the Bible actually teaches about the death state, it is not possible to appreciate the love of God in establishing a method of deliverance from death by means of a resurrection to newness of life. In fact, the traditional and popular conception of proceeding immediately to either heaven or hell at death, as reward or punishment, removes the need for resurrection at all, and makes void and meaningless all Bible references to this important subject.

"Death" has lost all its meaning if the dead are not really dead, but "gone before" and "praising God now in heaven." There is entire lack of scriptural evidence that the dead are anywhere except the grave, or are existing in some state of consciousness. But there is abundant proof to show they have gone to the grave, and are totally unconscious, and have become as though they never existed. For example

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"Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish. " (Psalm 49:12, 20).

Death is the opposite of life. We know what life is by actual experience. "Death" is the word by which we describe the interruption or stopping of life. Life is manifested by the activities of breathing, circulation of blood, digestion. The heart, lungs, brain, and stomach provide activity which is called "life" in our bodies. Without these organs, this life is not present.

If we shock our brain, we become insensible, and if we restrict our air supply, we suffocate. If we stop our food supply, starvation follows, and life ends. This process proves life depends on the organized arrangement of the functions of our bodies.

When we speak of animals, this is exactly how we use the terms "life" and "death". In reference to them we have no difficulty with the clear obvious meanings of these words. The Scriptures say that in physical constitution, men and animals are the same: both are "living souls", "living creatures".

We must recognize that there was a time in the past when each one of us did not exist at all, when the organization of our bodies did not prevail: it therefore follows that a disorganization of our bodies will bring about a condition when again we will cease to exist:

"Dust thou art: to dust thou shalt return." (Genesis 3:19)

Death comes and reverses what began at our birth. Birth gave existence, death takes it away. How clearly we can see this in relation to the animals. We are just the same.

When the Bible speaks of the death of any of God's people, it NEVER says they have "gone to their reward", or "winged their way to glory", or any such idea. The Bible teaches a different doctrine, directly opposed to this. For instance, it records the deaths of the faithful fathers of the Jewish race in a manner that is clear and unmistakable- Abraham: (Genesis 25:8) "Abraham gave up the ghost (gava: expired, breathed out), and died, and was gathered to his people"

Isaac: (Genesis 35: 29). "Isaac gave up the ghost (gava) and died, and was gathered to his people"

Jacob: (Genesis 49:33) "Jacob . . yielded up the ghost (gava), and was gathered to his people"

Joseph: (Genesis 50:26) "Joseph died . . and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin"

Moses: (Deuteronomy 34: 5) "Moses died . and He (God) buried him in the land of Moab"

Of all those whose deaths are recorded in the Scriptures, they are never said to have gone away anywhere; but are always spoken of as dying, giving up their life, and returning to the ground, just as God said to Adam. Notice what is said of all the faithful by Paul: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off" (Hebrews 11:13).

When Jesus spoke of the death of Lazarus, he was equally clear -

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death . . Then said Jesus plainly, Lazarus is dead" (John 11:14).

How could Jesus possibly speak of Lazarus as being asleep, and needing to be awakened, if all the time he was wide awake in heaven, praising God?

Of Stephen, the Bible states similarly, when he died -

"He fell asleep" (Acts 7:60).

And when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians concerning the righteous who had died, to comfort them (surely one time above all others to tell them they were alive and happy in heaven!), he referred to their death as a sleep, and that they would be raised from the dead at the return of Christ (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) -

"I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others who have no hope The Lord shall descend from heaven, and the dead shall rise"

There are no exceptions to these cases in the Bible record. The Bible always speaks of death as the ending of life, never as commencement of another state. The dead are always represented as unconscious, knowing nothing (except in two places: one a poetic figure - Isaiah 14:14; the other a parable using the Pharisees' own superstitions to teach an important lesson - Luke 16:19-31). In the plain, literal descriptions of Scripture, the dead are always spoken of as being in the "land of forgetfulness", "land of darkness", "silence", "destruction" and unconsciousness". Solomon said -

"Whatsoever thy hand findest to do, do it with thy might: for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, in the grave whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

The patient man Job, in his distress of trial, said of the grave (Job 3:13-19) -

"There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. There the prisoners rest together: they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master"

He had just before expressed the wish that he had died when he was an infant. He had said that he would have "lain still and been quiet" - no reference to being in heaven as is popularly taught. He said he should have - "Slept, been at rest with kings and counselors, with infants that never saw light."

He further added, a little later on in his trial -

"Wherefore hast Thou brought me forth out of the womb? O that I had given up the ghost (gava: expired) and no eye had seen me: I should have been as though I had not been" (Job 10:18).

The inspired Psalmist David is equally plain (Psalm 88:10-12) -

"Shall the dead arise and praise Thee? Shall Thy loving kindness be declared in the grave, or Thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall "Thy wonders be know in the dark, and "Thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?" The emphatic negative answer is provided by the same inspired pen (Psalm 115:17) - "The dead praise not the Lord; neither any that go down into silence." He stated that life is the time to serve the Lord, to do His will, to learn His Word and to sing His praises: "While I live I will praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being" (Psalm 146:2). - clearly indicating that in David's mind, his being would cease with the event of death. Consider what Solomon with divine wisdom declared (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6) - "The living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything: neither have they any more a reward, for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, (i.e. capacity for thought) are now perished neither have they any more a portion forever in anything under the sun."

This had been previously emphasized by his father David-

"Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. For his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth: in that very day his thoughts perish" (Psalm 146:3-4).

"In death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave, who shall give Thee thanks?" (Psalm 6:5).

This leaves no doubt as to the state of the dead. The whole purpose of an immortal soul is to have an existence with God; but this states that after death there is no remembrance of God!

Hezekiah, righteous king of Judah, who was sick "nigh unto death,"

and had recovered, praised God in the following manner - "The grave cannot praise Thee; death cannot celebrate Thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for Thy truth: the living, he shall praise Thee, as I do this day" (Isaiah 38:18-19).

The Bible teaches that death is the total eclipse of being, a complete stopping of our consciousness, a dreamless sleep in the "dust of the earth."

These things establish the absolute necessity of the resurrection, for in view of the preceding scriptures, the only reasonable conclusion that we can arrive at is that a future life is attainable ONLY by resurrection from the dead. In every instance, popular belief with reference to the dead is exactly contrary to the clear statements of the Bible. There is not a single promise of heaven at death in the whole Bible; not a single hint that man has an "immortal soul", or anything else that lives on after death. The basic truth emphasized over and over is: "THE DEAD KNOW NOT ANYTHING."

QUESTIONS for Lesson 8

1. What effect does a belief in the conception of proceeding immediately to either heaven or hell at death have on the doctrine of resurrection?
2. What is the definition of "life"?
3. What do we understand about the meaning of death?
4. What began at our birth which is terminated at our death?
5. Does the Bible teach that we get a reward at the moment of our death?
6. What does the Bible say happened to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when they died?
7. How is the death of anyone described in the Bible?
8. What does Hebrews chapter 11 say concerning the faithful and their reward?
9. In what two ways did Jesus describe the death of Lazarus of Bethany?
10. How was the death of Stephen described in Acts 7:60?
11. The Bible speaks of the dead as being found in what locations or conditions?

KEY Lesson 9: BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT HEAVEN & HELL

"Evil-doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord shall inherit the earth . . . The meek shall inherit the earth" - Psalm 37:9-11. "HELL" in the Bible means no more and no less than the grave. Heaven is God's throne. "No man hath ascended to Heaven." The EARTH is the reward promised to man: "The meek shall inherit the EARTH ". The scripture passages quoted in Lesson 8 showed us beyond any doubt that the dead are really dead, and in such a condition have obviously not experienced any state of reward or punishment, because they do not exist in any form of life or living. They simply sleep in the grave, awaiting the resurrection.

There is also not a single promise throughout the whole of Scripture of anyone going to heaven at any time. The promise is always a rejuvenated earth, filled with the glory of God. It is true that Peter speaks of -

"An inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4).

This may sound as if our reward will be in heaven. Likewise Jesus said -

"Great is your reward in heaven . . . Lay up treasure in heaven" (Matthew 5:12; 6: 20).

Truly our reward is now "reserved in heaven," awaiting its bestowal at a time yet in the future. When a thing is reserved, it is kept in safety in a specified place until it is required, and then it is brought forth: like the Federal Reserve Banks which keep in reserve sufficient funds to insure local bank deposits, to be brought forth on demand. Thus Peter goes on to say a few verses later that the reserved reward is a -

"Salvation to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (v.13).

And Jesus says exactly the same - "I come quickly, and my reward is WITH ME" (Revelation 22:12).

"Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection" (Luke 14:14).

And Paul gives the identical picture of reward when Christ comes - "Jesus shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and Kingdom . . . a crown of righteousness is laid up for me which the righteous Judge shall give me in that day. . . and to all who love his appearing"

(2 Timothy 4:1-8).

Certainly this reward doesn't come before judgment. The Bible indicates otherwise, as seen in the scriptures quoted so far.

By the fact that Christ brings the reward with him, and that he is now in heaven, it can be rightly stated that the reward is at present reserved in heaven. One aspect of the reward is rulership of the earth with Christ, as we shall see. That no man has been so rewarded at present is abundantly clear.

Consider the judgment scene in Matthew 25: 31-46 -

"When the Son of Man shall come in his glory"

- he then invites the righteous into his Kingdom. And consider also what he said in John 5:28-29, that the dead shall come forth from the graves to receive their reward of life or condemnation. How could that possibly be, if they are already recompensed in heaven or hell, ages before?

No descendant of Adam (except Christ himself) has ever been given, or even promised, entry into God's residence in "the heaven of heavens". Jesus said to Nicodemus -

"NO MAN hath ascended up to heaven" (John.3:13).

Of faithful David, the "sweet Psalmist of Israel," (referred to as a "man after God's Own heart"), it is specifically declared that even he did not go to heaven. Certainly if any would have attained to such an honor, it would have been David. What does the Bible say?

"The patriarch David is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day . . . David is not ascended into the heavens" (Acts 2:29-34).

The passage points to the fact of Christ's ascension to heaven as the proof that he is the Messiah.

In full support of this is the long list of the faithful in Hebrews 11, which includes Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, etc. -

"These ALL, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us that they without us should not be made perfect" (Hebrews 11:39-40).

Here is an explicit statement that David and the others of the faithful have not yet received the promises, nor been "made perfect" and will not till all the later faithful with them receive it together (at the resurrection at the Last Day).

There are two individuals we know of who did not appear to experience death. Of Enoch, it is stated: "Enoch was translated that he should not see death" (Hebrews 11:5). And of Elijah: "He went up by a whirl wind into heaven" (2 Kings 2:11). "Heaven" is used in various senses ("birds of heaven," "rain > from heaven"), and this "heaven" Elijah ascended to is clearly not the "heaven of heavens" of God's throne, for no man has ascended there, as we have seen. Where these two are we do not know. We are not told.

They were exceptions: it appears from the Divine record that they did not die. What special provision God made for them, He has not revealed. But these two are the exception, not the rule. Because their's are exceptional cases, they tell us nothing about the rest of us who do die.

When Jesus was comforting Martha about Lazarus (who had died), he did not tell her, as some would do today, that he was happy in heavenly glory; rather he encouraged her by saying, in true scriptural fashion: "Thy brother shall rise again" (John 11:23).

Paul taught as comfort the same doctrine of the resurrection. He did not teach that the dead had gone to instant bliss or condemnation. To the sorrowing believers at Thessalonica, he said (2 Thessalonians 4:13-18) -

"I would not have you ignorant concerning them which are asleep well!] . . . For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven . . . and the dead in Christ shall rise . . . Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

This would be an impossible thing to say, if they were awake in bliss in heaven.

The second coming of Christ, and the resurrection from the dead at the Last Day, comprise man's only hope of life and reward. The EARTH is the destined place in which God's great salvation will be manifested. This is the entire and unique theme of the Scripture message. David, Solomon and Jesus unite to emphasize it

"Evil-doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord shall

inherit the earth . . The meek shall inherit the EARTH" (Psalm 37:9-11).
"The righteous shall be recompensed in the EARTH" (Proverbs 11:21).
"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the EARTH" (Matthew 5:5).

Surely no statements could be simpler, plainer or more positive! We need to be so careful that our beliefs are based on scripture teaching and not simply on tradition. God's promise to Christ is (when his people shall be fellowheirs with him) -

"I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Psalm 2:8).

And Jesus likewise promises to those who obey him -

"To him that overcometh will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron" (Revelation 2:26-27).

And therefore they are symbolically shown as singing to him (Revelation 5:10) -

"Thou hast made us kings and priests, and we shall reign on the EARTH."
The Future Age of earth's glory is shown in Revelation 11:15 - "The kingdoms of THIS WORLD are become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever"

-corresponding with what Daniel recorded by Divine inspiration -

"The kingdom and dominion UNDER the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, Whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (Daniel 7:27).
The result of Christ's coming the second time is summed up in the angelic announcement at his birth:

"Glory to God in the highest, and ON EARTH peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).

Therefore Jesus taught his disciples to pray:

"Thy will be done ON EARTH as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

Would he teach them to pray for something that God had no intention of doing? Certainly not! It is absolutely sure and determined. God swore (Numbers 14:21) -

"AS truly as I live, all the earth SHALL be filled with the glory of the Lord!"

How far it is from that today! But it will come because God has sworn it. The destiny of the wicked is to be destroyed from God's universe; not forever preserved in writhing torment, as taught by the mainstream denominations of Christendom. David said (Psalm 37:20) "The wicked shall PERISH."

And Paul declares (Rom. 6:23) that "The wages of sin is DEATH"

Death - the extinction of all being - is the Divinely determined result of a sinful life: a life not devoted to God - "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:8).

But we observe that the righteous die as well as the wicked. The answer is that the death that all men die now is not a judicial death: not the final death to be dealt to those who are responsible to the judgment of the Last Day. Ordinary death just closes a man's mortal career. For the righteous, it is but a sleep in Christ, awaiting the Day of resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:14-16) - "Them that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him . . for the Lord shall descend from heaven . . and the dead in Christ shall rise."

Note: The "Responsible" is a term used to describe those who have studied and come to a knowledge of God's plan and purpose, whether or not they decide to obey God's requirements through baptism.

"Many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake " (Daniel 12:2). There is a "Second Death": final and destructive (Revelation 20:6, 14; 21:8). The unjust are to be brought forth, at Christ's coming, for judgment. And their sentence is that, after the infliction of such punishment as may be merited (many or few stripes: Luke 12:47-48), they shall the second time, by violent and divinely inflicted means, be destroyed by death. As God said through Malachi (4:1)

"Behold, the Day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the Day that cometh shall burn them up that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." Again we read:

"They shall be punished with everlasting destruction (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

-that is, permanent annihilation: they shall be destroyed for ever

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"As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked NO MORE" (Proverbs 10:25).

"The wicked shall be cut off from the earth" (Proverbs 2:22).

"Yet a little while, and the wicked shall NOT BE" (Psalm 37:10).

"All the wicked will God DESTROY" (Psalm 145:20).

BibleKey Word Search:

"Hell" is the frequent King James Version translation of the Hebrew word Sheol and the Greek word Hades. The English word "hell" simply means "a covered place: and comes from the Old English "helan" which means "to cover or conceal." It was used when speaking of putting a roof on a house, or a cover on a book. Its modern ecclesiastical meaning has come to mean a place of punishment for the dead. This is not Biblically sound doctrine.

"Hades" and "Sheol" are Greek and Hebrew equivalents, each having the same meaning as the other. In the same meaning as the other. In the Septuagint, which is the Greek version of Hebrew Old Testament, "hades" was always used as the Greek equivalent for "sheol". It also appears in the same context in NT quotations from the Old Testament. (Acts 2:27, 1 Corinthians 15:55). Like "sheol" the translators have rendered it "hell" or "grave" according to their fancy.

"SHEOL" ("a hollow place?") occurs in the Hebrew Old Testament 65 times, and in the King James Version is translated "grave" and "hell" 31 times each, and "pit" 3 times. This varied translation is misleading and self-serving, according to the translators theology.

Both righteous and wicked lie there together (Jacob, Job, Shimei, Joab, "the wicked, etc. - Genesis 37:35, Job 3:17-19, 1Ki 2:6-9, Psa 31:17) It is a place of silence, darkness, corruption, forgetfulness, in the dust, no work, no knowledge, no love, no hate, no remembrance (Psalms 31:17, Job 17:13, Eccl 9:10, Psalms 6:5, Psalms 88:11-12). The mixture of pagan doctrines with the teachings of Christ and the apostles in the early centuries resulted in the current Church doctrines of Hell Fire and Eternal Torture as punishment for the wicked.

Many verses of Scripture - when translated with the understanding of the meaning of the original words used by God - are thereby clearly understood, and are stripped of their popular teaching, as -

"Let the wicked be silent in the grave (sheol)" -Psalm 31:17.

"I (Jacob) will go down to the grave (sheol) mourning" (Genesis 37:35).
 "Like sheep are they laid in the grave (sheol)" -Psalm 49:14.

"There is no work, knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave (sheol)" -Ecclesiastes 9:10.

"In death, there is no remembrance of Thee; in the grave (sheol), who shall give Thee thanks?" (Psalm 6:5).

"The grave (sheol)..darkness..corruption..rest in the dust" (Job 17:13-16).
 "GEHENNA" is another NT Greek word the translators render "hell." Literally, it means "Valley of Hinnom" (Gai Hinnom), referring to a valley outside Jerusalem, into whose continuous fires the rubbish of the city and criminal bodies were thrown. No one was tortured there alive: but all the dead were utterly destroyed there. Figuratively, it refers to the fiery divine judgments of the terrible Last Day soon to come on the earth -

"The Lord shall be revealed from heaven . . in flaming fire taking vengeance on them . . that obey not . . who shall be punished with EVERLASTING DESTRUCTION when he shall come" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).
 "The heaven and earth which are now (the present human constitution) . . . are reserved unto fire against the Day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:7).

"The Lord will come with fire . . for by fire and by sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many" (Isaiah 66:15-16).

The latter (Isaiah 66) is at a time when God shall "extend peace and the glory of the Gentiles" to Jerusalem; when He will "make new heavens and new earth"; when "all flesh shall come to worship before Him" (vs. 12, 22, 23).

We are given a preview of this final fiery, purifying judgment upon the earth in the dreadful Gehenna judgment upon Israel in AD 70, when the Israelitish "heaven and earth" were swept away by divine wrath. But this time it will be worldwide, and will be followed by the establishment of universal peace and righteousness under Jesus Christ. He said:
 "I am he that liveth and was dead: and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell (hades, grave), and of death" (Revelation 1:18).

This shows us that Christ is our reward, and it is he who - when he returns to the earth - has power to open the grave, and to bring to life those who have died in him. As the angel said to Daniel (12:2,13) "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake: some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt .. But thou (Daniel), go thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

SUMMARY:

- a) Resurrection from the dead awaits all the "responsible" who have died.
- b) Resurrection at the Last Day is the only way to life beyond the grave.
- c) Endless life after resurrection is the reward of all the faithful.
- d) Complete destruction is the end of all who have been disobedient.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 9

1. In what way is our reward "reserved in heaven" at the present time?
2. When is the "reserved" reward to be brought to us?
3. How was David, King of Israel, esteemed by God? Did he go to heaven?
4. What class of people are those spoken of in Hebrews 11 by Paul, when he said they had not been made perfect?
5. Where will God's great salvation for the righteous be manifested?
6. What is the destiny of the wicked?
7. What is the root meaning of our English word "Hell"?
8. What is the meaning of the Hebrew word "Sheol"?
9. What is the meaning of the Greek word "Hades"?
10. What is the meaning of the Greek word "Gehenna"?
11. Who has the keys to unlock the grave? When will he do so?
12. What is the meaning of the term "responsible" as used in this lesson?
13. What will happen to all the "responsible" who have died?
14. What is the reward for all who have been faithful and obedient to God?
15. What is the destiny of all who have been disobedient to God's will?

KEY Lesson 10 BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT IMMORTALITY (Part 1)

"The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, & shall come forth: they that have done good to the resurrection of life, & they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation"
- John. 5:28-29

THE PURPOSE OF THIS LESSON is to go to the pages of the Bible to find out what it teaches about immortality relative to mankind. We already know from the subject matter of Lessons 7, 8 and 9 that nowhere does it indicate that we are now immortal; nor does it give us reason to believe that when we die we are not really dead but simply pass on to another existence. This lesson will further reinforce these conclusions and additionally focus on what the Bible DOES say about immortality in relation to us; when we can expect it, what we have to do to get it.

Traditionally many people speculate that simply because man desires immortality is proof that he has it. Rather it proves the very opposite: that he doesn't have it. Simply because a man is very hungry & craves desperately for food certainly does not prove he has food. Anyone can perceive that fact in this case. It is the same with immortality. Just as without food, man dies in short order, even so with immortality: without it man soon dies and returns to the dust of the ground.

Throughout the Scriptures mankind is constantly referred to as mortal, and of brief, perishing existence: never as immortal and imperishable, or any words with that idea. "Mortality" comes from the Latin word "mors" (death), and signifies "deathfulness." Anything that is "mortal", therefore, is subject to death, limited in power to continue in life, because of the inherent tendency to decay and dissolution.

The Spirit of God is the life-power that sustains man, and there is no doubt of the fact that it is indestructible - but that fact is no proof that man himself is immortal, or has any "immortal spark" in him. If it were, it would prove the immortality of beasts, for they too are "living creatures": just like man, sustained by this same universal life-power. The Spirit life-power itself belongs to, and is controlled by, God, Who gives it, and takes it away.

Men and animals both being "living creatures" alike, God has stated
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"That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts. Even one thing befalleth them. As the one dieth, so dieth the other: yea, THEY HAVE ALL ONE BREATH (ruach, spirit); so that a man hath no pre-eminence (in this respect) above a beast" (Ecclesiastes 3:19).

Moses also stated the same fundamental truth, speaking of the Flood

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"All flesh died that moved upon the earth: both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: ALL in whose nostrils was the breath of life, died" (Genesis 7:21-22).

Here again, men and animals are all linked together in a common life-principle. They all breathe the same "breath of lives" (literally translated in this passage it would read, "breath of the spirit of lives": neshamah ruach chay). The righteous man Job said -

"The spirit (ruach*, breath) of God is in my nostrils" (Job 27:3).
"Cease ye from man, whose breath (neshamah*) is in his nostrils" (Isaiah 2:22).

"If God set His heart upon man, if He gather to Himself His spirit (ruach) and His breath (neshamah), ALL flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (Job 34:14).

Note that it is God's spirit. Man, like the animals, is the dependent, receiving creature; the possessor for a short time of this animating life-power from God. As is said here of man, exactly so the Psalmist says of animals (104:29-30) -

"Thou takest away their breath ('ruach'), they die, and return to their dust. Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit ('ruach': same word), they are created."

It was sent forth at the creation of all creatures to give life to them; it remains the animals' spirit or breath while they possess it, but it returns to God when they die.

It is vital to the understanding of this subject to be very clear in our minds about the true "origin of species", as recorded in Genesis BY GOD through Moses. We need not be frightened away from this divine account by the impossible "evolution" speculation. It is an unprovable "scientific" guess: ever changing and unstable. The more men delve into and discover the infinitely intricate detail and delicate balance of all Creation - evidence screaming out of wisdom and power and design and purpose - mathematically impossible a million times over to be the random purposeless product of blind chance - the more utterly absurd and inadequate the strange evolution theory appears.

The theory of evolution very conveniently provides mankind with a means to escape the authority of God and obedience to His holy, flesh-crucifying laws. Why else would intelligent, mature men and women believe that which under any other circumstances would be regarded as absolute impossibilities? Mankind has always had his fantasies, and has ever been quick to believe anything that releases him from responsibility to a Divine Being greater than himself. An intelligent person can see a million faces of God everywhere he looks in this glorious Creation: from the infinitely large to the infinitely small. What a leap of faith to believe that all this beauty and wisdom and power came witlessly and purposely and spontaneously from nothing! How can such absurdity be called "science"?

If we accept Christ, and that which he spoke as the direct words of God spoken through him (John 14:24), then we must accept Moses' writings, for Christ endorsed Moses, and accepted his statements as true and divinely inspired. Note the words of Jesus:

"Moses wrote of me: if ye believe not his writings how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:46-47)

That is conclusive. And the New Testament Scriptures tie Adam and Christ inseparably together as the two poles in the divine plan. They stand or fall together as historic realities.

So we see Adam and Eve as keepers of the beautiful Garden of Eden, and existing in a condition termed a "very good" state (Genesis 1:31). They were placed under law which required their submission, obedience and affection to divine requirements. And this condition prevailed with the purpose of showing that this way alone would produce eternal happiness for mankind, and the pleasure and glory of God.

Adam was prohibited from eating of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil -

"But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

Here was the simplest and most convenient mode of teaching and training him in regard to his position before God. How long Adam continued obedient we are not told, but we are informed that in process of time he disobeyed (Genesis 3:6) -

"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 to her husband, and he did eat."

The result of this disobedience was exactly as God declared -

"Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake : in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken. For dust THOU ART, and unto dust shalt THOU return" (Genesis 3:17-19).

Adam, who had had opportunity of attaining immortality, was now doomed to return to his original nothingness: a condition which through physical inheritance has been passed on to all his descendants. We all possess the same corrupt, dying natures, on the principle that:

"The clean cannot come of the unclean" (Job 14:4).

Thus we are all mortal, dying creatures. After the disobedience of Adam and Eve, and their sentencing by God, they were driven outside the Garden of Eden, and excluded from access to the Tree of Life, for this reason -

"Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live for ever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden to till the ground from whence he was taken" (Genesis 3:22-23).

Thus Adam's descendants, innumerable, sin-stricken and wretched, are mercifully swept away, generation after generation, like grass before the mower.

The message of the Bible, remember, follows a logical pattern. At this point we need to question the logic and reason for restraining access to the Tree of Life, if they were already immortal - if they were "immortal souls", already destined to "live for ever", either in heaven or hell. If such a theory were true, there should have been no question as to whether or not they would live for ever: rather it should have been a simple matter of where and under what conditions they would be living for ever. How could eating - or not eating - of the Tree of Life have anything to do with that?

The Bible does provide us with the true, simple, and only logical account of man's present mortal condition. Likewise it is from this source alone that his future destiny is revealed. Job asked:

"If a man die, shall he LIVE AGAIN?" (Job 14:14).

The Bible alone answers this question. A seed placed in the ground "dies", to spring to life again: that power being inherent in the seed. Or a tree cut down may sprout again, as Job says (vs. 7-9). But not so with man, for he makes the contrast (v.10):

"But man dieth, and wasteth away. Yea, man giveth up the spirit (gava: expires), and where is he?"

He is nowhere. He has returned to the dust of the ground, to remingle with all other dust. If he is to live again, it will be by a new effort on the part of God.

The hope that people may live again under certain conditions is the good news of the Bible message (1 Corinthians 15:21):

"Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead"

Christ declared himself the Resurrection and the Life, adding -

"He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."
(John 11:25)

Paul said that Christ, at his return to earth, would -

"Change our vile (low, base: Gr - tapeinos) BODIES, and fashion them like unto his own glorious BODY" (Philippians 3:21).

And to Timothy he wrote -

"Jesus Christ . . hath abolished death (as the ultimate destiny of those who obey God), and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Timothy 1:10)

The following verses teach the same thing (note that such statements are logically unnecessary, if man already has immortality inherent within him):

"I am come that they might have life, and have it more abundantly"

(John 10:10).

"My sheep hear my voice . . . I give them eternal life" (John 10:28).

"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:23).

"God gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

"Perishing" is the alternative to receiving the gift of eternal life. As to the meaning of "perishing", Paul uses exactly the same word, saying that if Christ be not risen, those who have fallen asleep (died) in Christ have "perished" (1 Corinthians 15:18) - Certainly not gone to eternal torments, but as the word simply means: "perished" - gone to nothing, ceased to exist. Look up "perish" (Greek: *apolumi*) in Strong's Hebrew Dictionary. The idea of this word meaning "eternal torments" would be an obvious and utter absurdity in practically every occurrence.

If we accept the traditional "immortal soul" theory, this is what we must make ourselves believe: "death" doesn't mean death, but an unpleasant form of existence; "perish" doesn't mean perish; "destroy" doesn't mean destroy.

From the above passages the teaching of the Bible is clear: eternal life is not a present possession of every human being, but a restricted, future gift of God to a selected few who conform to His will and purpose. All these passages, and many more, show that immortality, or everlasting life, is a thing to be diligently sought after, a reward, something to be given to those who by... "Patient well-doing, SEEK for . . . immortality" (Romans 2:7).

QUESTIONS for Lesson 10

1. Where does the life power come from?
2. What is the similarity in the death of men and of animals?
3. What book of the Bible presents the TRUE 'origin of species'?
4. If we accept Christ, why must we also accept the Bible record of Creation?
5. What words describe the physical condition of Adam before he sinned?
6. What event brought about the mortality of Adam?
7. In what way did the sentencing of Adam affect all mankind? What scripture proves this?
8. How do we know that Adam was not immortal?
9. Does man naturally spring to life again once he has died?
10. Through what man is resurrection made possible?
11. To what class will everlasting life be given?

KEY Lesson 11: BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT IMMORTALITY (Part 2)

"The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, & shall come forth: they that have done good to the resurrection of life, & they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation"
- John. 5:28-29

IN THE PREVIOUS LESSON we reviewed the definitions and Bible applications of the terms "mortal" and "immortality". We saw how that the same terms are used for animals as are used in connection with humans when referring to the life principle. We went back to the beginning where the Bible narrates the very incidents connected with the origin of death, and illustrates that that which is the cause of death has been inherited by all generations. The lesson ended on the observation that it is ONLY the good news of the Bible message that contains the hope that people may live again under certain conditions. Any concept that theorizes about an automatic transition to an existence of any kind after death for all people that have ever lived is totally inconsistent with this scriptural fact.

This lesson will focus on immortality - NOT OF THE SOUL BUT OF THE WHOLE PERSON; and on what the Bible says about what we must do in order to be granted it.

We learn what immortality is by our daily association with mortality, which is deathfulness in relation to existence. A "mortal" is a creature capable of death, and whose natural end is death; dying; destined to death. We see it daily all around us. The Scriptures (and we also) speak of an animal "dying" just as they speak of a mortal man dying. We have no difficulty accepting the plain clear meaning as to the animal. But under the "immortal-soul, eternal torture" theory, when we come to the mortal man, we must give "dying" an entirely different meaning.

Immortality is just the reverse of mortality: deathlessness, endless existence. To be immortal, we require to be incorruptible in substance, just as now we are corruptible. Paul, speaking of the body of the righteous, present and future, in death and resurrection, says -

"It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption . . . it is sown a natural BODY, it is raised a spiritual BODY" (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

And further in verses 51-53 -

"We shall not all sleep (die), but we shall all be changed . . . this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on

immortality."

This is the only way the Scriptures ever say we can attain to eternal life: by bodily change at the resurrection at the last day. Till then the dead "sleep." Note the ScriptureXX--226--XXs constant emphasis on the BODY.

It knows nothing of existence without a body. And this "spiritual BODY" the righteous will be changed to is a real substantial body which can be handled and felt. Our bodies, we are told, will be made like unto Christ's "glorious BODY." We learn what this is like by events which happened right after his resurrection. He said to his disciples -

"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I MYSELF: handle me, and see: for a spirit (such as they imagined, an apparition) hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39).

The risen, immortal Christ had "flesh and bones." "It is I myself." The disciples handled Jesus, and he ate with them (v. 43). To Thomas he said later (John 20:27) -

"Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands: and reach hither thy hand, and throughst it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." This same body was to continue forever -

"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" (Acts 1:11). What "same Jesus"? The very one with "flesh and bones" - "I myself" - whom they had handled a few days before. Such is the body like unto which our bodies will be fashioned at Christ's return, if we are accepted of him.

Animal, or natural, bodies are sustained by the blood coursing through their veins:

"The life of all flesh is in the BLOOD thereof" (Leviticus 17:14). NOT, we note, in some imaginary, abstract, immortal spark that is just using the body. Present animal life is not inherent and self-sustaining. It depends on all the continuing, uninterrupted, orderly functions of this animal system - breathing, digestion, blood circulation, etc., - and is at the total mercy of the environment: heat, cold, pressure, lack of air, poison, disease, violence, accident, all these can destroy it. And it is inherently, of itself, steadily tending to death. The cleverest doctor cannot cure this condition: he may merely postpone

briefly death's victory.

Jesus is the only true doctor who can heal eternally. He offers resurrection to a spirit-body existence, independent of environment, and free from any possibility of accident, dissolution, disease or decay -

"That which is born of the Spirit IS spirit " (John 3:6).

- for the "mortal and corruptible" has "put on" - been transformed to - "immortality and incorruption" (1 Corinthians 15:53).

Paul told the Roman ecclesia (Romans 8:11) -

"He that raised up Christ from the dead (the Example and Forerunner) shall also quicken your MORTAL bodies by His Spirit which dwelleth in you."

Note well that eternal life comes only by a mortal BODY being "quicken" - not by the flying off somewhere of some supposed "immortal essence" in man.

This "quicken" (which means "being made alive") is the second birth into literal life. (Scripturally, it is the 3rd "birth": The 1st birth refers to birth from the womb; the 2nd birth refers to birth from water at baptism into Christ; the 3rd birth refers to birth from the grave by Spirit-transformation at the resurrection - John 3:5).

Daniel was shown that the righteous would have glorious, shining bodies, radiating the Spirit of God (Daniel 12:3) -

"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

And Isaiah describes their tireless strength and vigor, a glorious gift of God to be like Himself (Isaiah 40:28-31) -

"The everlasting God, the Lord, Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary . . . They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles. They shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint".

This gift, so freely offered by God (for no man could possibly earn or merit it), is still conditional upon man's TOTAL submission to God and diligent obedience to His will. What God expects from us we

may compare to what we expect of our children. We do not expect them to be perfect; but we do expect them - if we do our part properly (as God always does) - to submit and obey in love to the best of their ability.

God alone is the Judge and Prescriber of what is right and required in the way of obedience, as we have seen from Romans 2:7 -

"To them (and to them only) who by patient continuance in well doing seek for . . . immortality, (God will render) eternal life."

"Patient continuance" is the key - a steady, consistent course in the right spirit -

"He that DOETH God's will shall enter into the Kingdom" (Matthew 7:21).
"He that OVERCOMETH shall eat of the Tree of Life" (Revelation 2:7).
"They that DO His commandments shall have right to the Tree of Life" (Revelation 22:14).

"Eternal salvation unto all them that OBEY him" (Hebrews 5:9).

"If thou wilt enter into life, KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS" (Matthew 19:17). Such passages show that only certain ones who follow a specific course of life will be given immortality. Note that, unfortunately, this goes contrary to the flesh-pleasing theory (termed "Universalism") that all at last will be forced to be saved, in spite of themselves. God desires love and freewill obedience. As we have seen, the principle of free-will is at the very root of God's purpose with His creation. In direct connection with those who will be saved, the Scriptures speak of those who will be destroyed. The next verse in Romans 2, for example, says of the same final "day of wrath and revelation"

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"But to them who do not obey the Truth, (God will render) indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man that doeth evil."

Contrary to Universalism, the Bible's message is that only a few will be saved -

"Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and FEW there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

"Cast him into outer darkness . . . many are called, but few chosen" (Matthew. 22:13).

Universalism is a gross over-exaltation of the importance of man. And it is an understandable, humane revulsion against the dreadful orthodox theory of hopeless, purposeless, never-ending torture for the great bulk of mankind.

God's purpose, as revealed by the Scriptures, is not to perpetuate forever every human being that ever lived. The divine plan is the development of a select, spiritually-minded, heavenly-charactered family for God's Glory and Name. The world's vast and teeming passing populations are merely incidental to that Plan. God graciously invites all, but He forces none. Let not dust-and-ashes animal man exaggerate his fictitious importance. God is -

"Taking OUT OF the nations a people for His Name" (Acts 15:14).

Jesus says, clearly defining the two FINAL destinies (John 5:28-29)

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"The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

To many, indoctrinated in the theories of the religious establishment, "damnation" inescapably carries the picture of eternal hell flames. But it simply means "condemnation, rejection, judgment against"; and the judgment is total destruction -

"Punished with everlasting DESTRUCTION" (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

Some again argue that if it is "destruction", then it is not "punishment" - that one must be conscious to be "punished". Have they never heard of "capital punishment"? Deprivation of life - especially where perfect, endless life is at issue is the supreme and ultimate punishment. It completely rids God's beautiful universe of the wicked without leaving billions screaming hopelessly in hell to all eternity. Any who can believe in eternal hell tortures is no fit material for the family of a loving God. God is just and stern, but He is not a fiend, as the superstitions of Christendom make Him to be. He is truly, to the wicked, a "consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29) - but, remember, it is a "consuming" fire: not an ever-torturing one.

"He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption" (Galatians 6:8).

- which ends in the triumph of death. The wicked are finally overcome and swallowed up by the "Second Death". Being of no use in the divine economy, they are put out of the way:

"Where the wicked cease from troubling" (Job 3:17).

Beside the accepted and the condemned, a third class of people are those who never knew the will of God, never having seen the light of His Word. These will not be saved, as is commonly supposed. If such were saved, it would be wiser to remain in darkness. Knowledge would merely endanger their salvation. Preaching the Gospel would be the height of cruelty, if ignorance assures salvation. Catholicism is more logical than Protestantism in this respect, for it has its "limbo" for problem cases. But both are wrong. The Bible reveals that- "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law." (Romans 2:12)

Perfectly just, perfectly reasonable: no obedience or disobedience; therefore no reward or punishment. In God's plan, all those without knowledge of His law are not responsible to His law. Resurrection does not take place in their case. As Isaiah says, speaking of the heathen who had afflicted Israel -

"They are dead: they shall not live. They are deceased: they shall not rise: Thou hast visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish." (Isaiah 26:14)

And of the same class, Jeremiah says -

"They shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake" (Jeremiah 51:39).
"The man that wandereth out of the way of understanding shall remain in the congregation of the dead" (Proverbs 21:16).

"Man that is in honor and understandeth not is like the beasts that perish" (Psalm 49:20).

(Does "perish" here, applied to beasts, mean eternal life in torture? Who would say so? If not, neither can it mean that for man, who is "like" them).

"Alienated (separated) from the life of God through ignorance" (Ephesians 4:18).

"Having no hope, and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12).

All men are sinners in their natural state, though most are ignorant and non-responsible:

"The whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John 5:19).

"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23).

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:25).

"Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:15).

Christendom's theories of saving these ignorant sinners en masse (they dare not send them to eternal torments) puts a premium on ignorance, and makes knowledge a thing to be avoided at all costs. But God is just, and herein is His justice shown. God could not with justice punish those who were not obedient to a Law they did not know. Neither could He in justice reward them for that they did not do. Therefore He puts them aside. The true doctrine of the mortal, perishing nature of man, just like the beasts, solves the horrible orthodox nightmare of billions writhing in endless torture as the ultimate result of God's purpose. What a travesty of a loving God! What a colossal divine failure that would be!

Everlasting Life is not a present, universal possession. It is a future reward to be bestowed upon the righteous and obedient, through the mercy of God, at the last day judgment seat of Christ, when he returns to the earth to reign.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 11

1. Through what message is life and immortality possible to mankind?
2. Of what significance is this to theories about existence after death?
3. What is the meaning of immortality?
4. What happens to the righteous who are alive when Christ comes?
5. What is the nature of the spiritual body? and how do we know this?
6. How are natural bodies sustained in life?
7. What class of people will be rejected at the judgment seat?
8. To what belief or doctrine does the term "Universalism" refer?
9. What will happen to the enlightened rejectors, and those who are disobedient to the will of God?
10. What will happen to those who die without knowing God or His will?
11. Why is God just in letting the ignorant remain in their graves to live no more?

KEY Lesson 12 RESPONSIBILITY & JUDGMENT

"As many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law... in THE DAY when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel"
Romans 2:12-16

TRADITIONAL CHRISTIANITY HAS TAUGHT - and continues to teach - the concept that all mankind are rewarded (or punished) immediately at death by being sent either to heaven or hell; and then, thousands of years later, being brought back to re-enter mortal bodies and stand before Christ for judgment to see what their reward (or punishment) should be!

These lessons have illustrated many times that the Divine message contained in the Bible is logical and consistent; the challenge, therefore, is for anyone to show the logic or consistency in the above theory of traditional Christianity. If death is actually a continuation of life, and the reward is settled and received as that portal is passed through, then where is the logic for the scriptural doctrine of last day resurrection and last day judgment?

However, the Scriptures do give a clear simple picture, telling us that the dead know nothing, but sleep unconsciously in the grave, awaiting ChristXX--226--XXs call back to life by bodily resurrection to be judged, and THEN rewarded. This is beautiful, harmonious and fitting.

NOT ALL WILL RISE FROM THE DEAD

God will not bring every human being to individual account. The vast majority of mankind fall into the group described in Psalm 49 -- "Man being in honor abideth not; he is like the beasts that PERISH . . Like sheep are they laid in the grave . . Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away . . He shall go to the generation of his fathers . . They shall never see light . . Man that is in honor and understandeth not is like the beasts that PERISH." This is reasonable and just. To bring the helplessly ignorant to judgment by a law they did not know is not reasonable.
JUDGMENT IS BASED ON RESPONSIBILITY

Judgment has its basis in responsibility. Our responsibility to God comes from our having come in contact with His law, our ability to understand good and evil, and our power to control our actions according to this understanding. The Bible is the only source of sound knowledge regarding the principles and conditions of responsibility to God. Philosophy and human theory are useless.

ADAM FELL -- GOD'S PLAN FOR REDEMPTION

Adam was made responsible for his acts because his actions were under his control and he was instructed what to do. He knowingly disobeyed, and God's law of condemnation took hold of him. He and all his descendants have been under the power of sin and death since that time. But God did not intend that His purpose of filling the earth with His glory should terminate with mankind's failure. In God's great mercy and benevolence He conceived and is working out a plan of salvation for mankind, while preserving and maintaining His honor and holiness and righteousness and justice; a law involving Glory to God in the highest: as well as good will toward men. This plan of redemption, outlined in the Bible through various promises, precepts and commandments, re-opened a relationship between God and man, and brought man under moral responsibility to God again.

It is a divine principle that this result is only for those who come within the sphere of the law of God. Those who do NOT are in the class referred to in Psalm 49 (quoted above).

LIGHT (KNOWLEDGE) BRINGS RESPONSIBILITY

The apostle Paul said in his letter to the Romans - "Where no law is there is no transgression." (Romans 4:15) And he told the Athenians -- "The times of ignorance God winked at" (Acts 17:30).

Christ informed Nicodemus - "This is the (basis of) condemnation (krisis, judgment), that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light." (John 3:19)

To the Jews who rejected him, he said - "If ye were blind (that is, ignorant), ye should have no sin." (John 9:41)

The Scriptures uniformly represent 'light' as the ground of responsibility and resurrectional judgment - "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17)

"Better not to have known the way of righteousness than, after they have known, to turn from the holy commandment" (2 Peter 2: 21).

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin. But now they have no cloak (RV: excuse) for their sin" (John 15:22).

Under the Law of Moses, which Paul quotes as an example - "Every disobedience received a just recompense of reward" (Hebrews 2:2).

Those to whom this command was given were not asked if they were willing to become subject to MosesXX--226--XX Law. They were told, commanded. Similarly in the beginning with Adam: he was not asked if he wanted to make an agreement: he was commanded: put under law at GodXX--226--XXs decision; and held accountable for disobedience. This command is now to 'all men everywhere' (Acts 17:30); and every disobedience will likewise receive a just recompense of reward. We can be certain that when the Scriptures make a statement such as this, it will happen; and we know it does not happen in this life: we see it does not, and we are told it does not (Ecclesiastes 7:15; Job 21:7,13,30)

When people are in a state of ignorance, they are not held personally accountable for their actions, and are therefore not liable to personal condemnation. God ignores ('winks at') their doings, just as He does that of the beasts of the field. They are without light (knowledge) and without law. They are on a par with the beasts: through ignorance sunk beneath the level of light and responsibility. That is the state of most of natural mankind, as stated by Paul to the Romans -- "As many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law." (Romans 2:12)

If it is true (as the Scriptures state) that from those to whom much is given much is required, then logically it should also be true that from him to whom nothing is given shall nothing be required. Christ said that if he had not come and spoken to his generation, they had not had sin, for they would have been in helpless ignorance (John 15:22). The same would apply to any to any generation called through the Gospel message. Therefore he said (John 12:48)-

"He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him: the Word I have spoken shall judge him IN THE LAST DAY."

People cannot be judged by a 'word' they have not heard. Responsibility to God is created only by contact with divine law. NoahXX--226--XXs descendants are an example of this sort. His immediate family received a law, knew it and understood it. Yet as one generation of their descendants succeeded another they wandered farther away from the way of knowledge and understanding, gradually sinking below moral responsibility, to the level of the beasts, bringing about those conditions Paul said God 'winked at.'

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM - A NEW RELATIONSHIP

Abraham - the father of the Jewish race - was called directly and openly by God to come out of the prevailing world darkness. This invitation

made the direction of his life much more important than while he lived in the Chaldean darkness. Faith and obedience to God constituted him the "heir of the worldXX--228--XX (Romans 4:13) conditional upon resurrection to immortality. And, being called, unbelief and disobedience would have made him subject to a more severe and far-reaching extension of God's displeasure than fell upon Adam.

Paul told the Ephesians that in their former ignorance they were - "Without God or hope in the world... strangers from the Covenants of Promise... aliens from the life of God through the ignorance in them." (Ephesians 2:12)

When one is called from this godless condition by the preaching of the Gospel, they cease to be 'their own' (1 Corinthians 6:19). All their activities come under God's supervision, and become the basis of future accountability.

As in the case of Abraham, all who become enlightened to the same truth come under the same responsibility as he. The Law of Faith had its origin in Eden, as stated in Hebrews 11:4 -- "By faith Abel offered sacrifice, and obtained witness he was righteous."

But the full and official initiation of the Law of Faith as a rule of salvation, occurred in the life of Abraham. This was the basis of resurrectional responsibility. Of course, there are evidences of it in the lives of God's people before the time of Abraham: Abel, Enoch, Noah, etc.

THE LAW OF MOSES SECONDARY; IT'S PURPOSES:

The Law of Moses was a national code for the nation of Israel. It was entirely subordinate to, and did not replace or override, the Law of Faith through Abraham (which really goes back to the beginning in Abel). The Law of Moses was an interim administration, added for various divine reasons, including -

1. To manifest all mankind as guilty before God;
2. To testify to GodXX--226--XXs supremacy and unapproachable holiness;
3. To be a schoolmaster and guide to lead to Christ;
4. To be a foreshadowing, educational pattern and type of heavenly things;
5. To provisionally cover sins and provide for their forgiveness on

the basis of obedience to the sacrificial ordinances, and faith in what they represented.

Also it was a national code to organize and regulate Israel as a nation while they were the channel of God's manifestation to the world. It provided a foundation upon which the Abrahamic Law of Faith could have its perfect work.

THE LAW OF FAITH NOT SUPERSEDED; OLD TESTAMENT TESTIMONY ON RESURRECTION
While the Mosaic Law was in operation - from Moses to Christ - it is clear that the principle of resurrectional responsibility was in operation also.

This principle runs through all that God did by His faithful servants from Abel to Paul. God's purpose from the beginning had reference to the mission of the Christ as the 'Resurrection and the Life.'

Christ stated that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets are to appear in the Kingdom of God (Matthew 8:11). God revealed Himself to Moses through the use of the Memorial Name which indicated the principle of resurrection, calling Himself the God of men already dead (Exodus 3:6). Christ used this passage to silence the Sadducees (who did not believe in resurrection) showing that God would raise these men to life again (Luke 20:37). Thus we read -- "God shall judge the righteous and the wicked, for there is A TIME there for every purpose and every work" (Ecclesiastes 3:17). "God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing" (Ecclesiastes 12:14). "Judge nothing before THE TIME, till the Lord come ...who will make manifest the counsels of the heart: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Corinthians 4:5).

"They that feared the Lord spake often one to another . . . And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in the DAY when I make up My jewels then shall ye discern between the righteous and the wicked" (Malachi 3 :16-18)

And there are many similar passages throughout the O.T. Scriptures (as Psalm 37; 49:14; 58:10; 62:12; Proverbs 11:18-31; Ecclesiastes 5:8; 11:9; 12:14; Isaiah 3:10; 26:19-21; 35:4; 66:4-5,14; Malachi 4:1-3, etc.).

JEWISH NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Jewish responsibility was greater than the cast-off descendants of

Noah, because of their close association with God as His chosen race, as He said -

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2).

Again the clear principle of responsibility through knowledge. The national punishment of the Jews by the Assyrians, Babylonians, Romans and Gentiles through the centuries is a full discharge of their responsibilities as a result of their national election. Yet it is very evident that there were varying degrees of individual responsibility here also, as when Christ said that certain of his generation would manifest weeping and gnashing of teeth when they witnessed the patriarchs being accepted for his Kingdom and "they themselves thrust out" (Luke 13:28)

OTHER NATIONS RESPONSIBLE TO A DEGREE

As there was a degree of responsibility with Israel in relation to God, so we see also that as other nations came into contact with Israel and Israel's God, so their responsibility rose. The nations of Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistines and Tyrians all were in this class, as were others, and have all been subjected to God's wrath because of their responsibility to Him. This we understand from such testimonies as Ezekiel chapters 25-33, Amos chapters 1-2, etc.

But resurrectional responsibility is limited to those who have a knowledge of the Word of God. His promises and precepts confer privileges and impose responsibilities with reference to resurrection. They form a basis for that awakening from the dust to everlasting life, or to shame and everlasting contempt (Daniel 12:2). But how can we make any sense out of these long ages of God-permitted heathen darkness that God "winked at" if every human being that ever lives is a precious "immortal soul" that has to be either "saved" by conversion or allowed to suffer eternally in hell torture? By this absurd and unscriptural theory, every human being that has ever lived, even for a mere moment, must exist somewhere consciously for all eternity. If such are confined to hell because of ignorance (Eph. 2:12; 4:18) - what divine injustice! But if such are allowed to go to heaven in ignorance because of helplessness, what cruelty then is the preaching of the Gospel, creating the very strong possibility of rejection (Matthew 7:21; 2 Corinthians 2:14-16), while undisturbed ignorance guarantees salvation! Thus the traditional Christian theory of an "immortal soul" creates a dreadful dilemma!

The true, consistent, logical Bible message is very clear: natural ignorant mankind has no more to do with the future state prepared

for GodXX--226--XXs children that the decaying vegetation that passes away each year with the winter.

CHRIST THE "RESURRECTION" - AND THE JUDGE

Christ reveals himself as the only means of Resurrection and Life, the Judge of all the responsible, and the Giver of rewards or punishment when he returns to the earth. He said: "the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22). And further, John 12:48, as quoted already - "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him: the word I have spoken shall judge him IN THE LAST DAY."

This is a first principle of the faith of the Gospel. Paul (Hebrews 6:1-2) linked eternal judgment with baptism, resurrection, etc., as the principles ("the beginning") of the doctrine of Christ. Peter said Christ commanded them to preach that he was -- "Ordained by God to judge the quick (living) and the dead" (Acts 10:42). And Paul told the Romans God had appointed a Day when He will (Romans 2:16)- "Judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel."

The following verses illustrate the Bible picture concerning judgment to come --

"It is appointed unto men once to die: after that the Judgment" (Hebrews 9: 27).

"As many as have sinned under law shall be judged by law... in THE DAY when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel " (Romans 2:12-16).

"Every man's work shall be manifest for THE DAY shall declare it" (1 Corinthians 3: 13).

"God will render to every man according to his deeds" (Romans 2:5-6).
"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ . . every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:10-12).

"We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things in body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

"The Lord Jesus Christ shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:1)

MANY CALLED, FEW CHOSEN

God, by the method of preaching, is "taking OUT of the world" a people to honor His Name (Acts 15:14), "purifying to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). While this invitation has gone out to all kindreds, nations, and peoples, and the number who have answered the call over the centuries is a great number, all those who have been called will not be chosen -- "Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). This is because many who accept the Word of God are not influenced sufficiently by it to present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God (Romans 11:1). Or as Paul told the Hebrews (4:2) -- "The Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith." This is clearly shown in Christ's parable of the Sower. The seed falls in various kinds of soil. As a result, it brings forth varying amounts of fruit, acceptable or unacceptable to God, or no fruit at all (Matthew 13:23). Thus we find a great multitude, living and dead, each with an individual responsibility to God, according to His knowledge of them. We cannot judge anyone in this regard. We may think certain ones are sure of entry into the Kingdom; others, of rejection; but God alone knows. The decision rests with the true judgment of God, manifested by Christ when he appears.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 12

1. What is the basis for divine judgment of an individual?
2. What made Adam responsible to God's judgment?
3. What was the result of Adam's disregard of the consequences of his acts:
 4. In relation to himself?
 5. In relation to his descendants?
6. What was the primary purpose of God in Creation?
5. What method did He provide to this end after the fall of Adam?
7. Are people in ignorance of God's laws and commands answerable to judgment?
8. What scripture supports your answer?
9. How does a person become responsible to do God's will?
10. How did Abraham become responsible to God?
11. What feature of the Creator was impressed by the Law of Moses?
12. What made Israel as a nation responsible to the will of God?
13. In what way were other nations responsible to God?
14. What class of people are related to resurrectional responsibility?
15. Is the subject of resurrection and judgment a first principle doctrine?
 16. What scripture supports your answer?
14. Give 2 passages to prove that the responsible will answer for their deeds at the judgment seat of Christ.
15. Will all those who have received the call of God be accepted by Christ at the judgment seat?
16. When will the judgment take place?

KEY Lesson 13 THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

"The Kingdom is as a man . . . After a long time the lord cometh, and reckoneth with those servants . . . 'Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness'."

THE previous lesson showed there is a great community from the ages, most of them resting in death, who await the divine verdict of approval or rejection. When and how will this verdict be given?

Some reply, 'The Lord knoweth them that are His' (2 Timothy 2:19), implying therefrom that there is no necessity of standing at a judgment seat to answer; that the destiny of all is already settled in God's mind. It is true that God knows, but this does not exclude a set time and place of open, official inquiry and declaration, before the entire host of the "responsible" class who are assembled for this purpose.
GOD'S WAYS MANIFEST HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

God does not presume on His foreknowledge to bypass arrangements that reveal to mankind His justice and His reasons. All His operations with mankind are designed to manifest and declare and teach. He knows the end from the beginning, and could leapfrog right to that end if He chose, but this would not accomplish His purpose as far as mankind is concerned.

Why, for example, did He allow a faithless generation of Israelites to escape Egypt under Moses' leadership, and had long patience with their wickedness and rebellion, before destroying them in the wilderness? Why didn't He just get rid of them summarily? He knew from the beginning they would be wicked and useless. We see much accomplished by the procedure He followed, both as to contemporary people and later generations. So it is with the judgment seat.

And why did He so long forbear with the Jews in their constant obstinacy - foreknowing their rejection of all His messengers, and at last His Own Son? And why were such as Ananias and Sapphira brought into the presence of the apostles, and their guilt brought out by their own testimony, before they were destroyed? (Acts 5:1-11). Surely the reasonableness of the process is obvious: so with judgment.

There is also in operation here the very important Divine principle of free will and free choice. While God, through His foreknowledge, knows the end from the beginning, He does not interfere with operation of each person's free will and the ability to choose according to his or her conscience. Each person is responsible for their actions, good or evil; and it is essential to God's purpose that this principle is not restricted in its operation. When we become familiar with God's

purpose, and know what pleases Him and what displeases him, we are RESPONSIBLE; and every responsible person will be judged upon the basis of how they have each exercised their free will in the choices which they have made in this life.

THE FAITHFUL WILL REJOICE THAT IT IS SO

It is true God knows, but is it not necessary that it should be openly demonstrated to responsible people the basis on which they were approved or rejected? Even apart from the intrinsic reasonableness of the matter, it is dangerous to argue otherwise, because it involves the rejection of a declared first principle of truth: the last day judgment by Christ at his return -- as was shown in the previous lesson.

To those who have, in this life, labored faithfully and patiently in the face of injustice and misrepresentation, it is comforting to know there will be at last an open, public, infallible tribunal to right all wrongs before all.

And it is comforting to know that between this unjust, sin triumphant, evil dispensation, and the glorious, just perfection of the Kingdom, there stands an ordeal and a scrutiny that will, to the vindication of God, prevent the entrance of anything that defiles, whatever its pretensions or claims of human prestige. Wrongful suffering will be avenged before all, unseen faithfulness will be openly acknowledged, unappreciated worth will be at last manifested, and all secret evil exposed and punished and held up to merited execration.

The object of the judgment is to mete out to each, whether good or bad, their just desert --

"Many will say in that Day, Lord, Lord, etc. . . I will profess, I never knew you: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity" (Matthew 7:22-23).

"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment" (Matthew. 12:36).

"Every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12).
MANY PARABLES PORTRAY THE JUDGMENT SEAT

Another important line of evidence is in the parables of Christ. In many of them, he illustrates the relationship between himself and his servants, in connection with his departure for a period > from the earth, and later return. Some examples will suffice to make the

point:

1) The parable of the nobleman who went away to receive the authority of a kingdom --

"When he was returned, having received the kingdom, he commanded his servants to be called . . . that he might know how much every man had gained by trading" (Luke 19:15).

Note carefully that it was not just a matter of 'degrees of reward' (as so many contend, striving to get away from the divine truth of that searching tribunal). Rather it was a matter of acceptance or rejection: two servants were commended and rewarded; the third had what he already possessed taken from him (Luke 19:26).

2) The parable of the 'gathering of the servants to give an account': Two are again rewarded, and the third - the 'unprofitable servant' - is 'cast into outer darkness' (Matthew 25:30): no possibility here of misrepresenting it as mere 'degrees of reward.'

3) The parable of a king inviting guests to the wedding of his son (the 'marriage supper of the Lamb' -- Revelation 19:9): When the guests were assembled, the king inspects them to make sure they are acceptably attired. One is found without a wedding garment, and is 'bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness' (Matthew 22:14). Again, no mere 'degree of reward' but total rejection.

4) The parable of the net cast into the sea: When it was full (the total calling completed), they drew it to shore and sorted the fish into good and bad -- 'casting the bad AWAY' (Matthew 13:48) -- not just giving them a smaller reward.

5) The parable of the servants waiting for their Lord's return: The Lord came suddenly (as Christ so often warns he will), and found one unfaithful, and 'cut him in sunder' (Luke 12:46) -- hardly interpretable as just rewarding him less.

6) The parable of the Ten Virgins awaiting the bridegroom: The bridegroom came; the wise go in with him to the marriage; the foolish are excluded and the door is shut; the bridegroom says to them through the shut door, 'I know you not' (Matthew 25:12).

'Many are called' says Jesus, 'but few are chosen.' (Matthew 20:16). When and in what way are the "chosen" separated from the "called" ? These parables all answer --

"He shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and Kingdom"
(2 Timothy 4:1)

GOOD AND BAD RISE AND ARE JUDGED TOGETHER

Some say it is just the living wicked who are called to the judgment seat and punished: just the generation alive at Christ's coming. But Daniel and Christ are in specific agreement in testifying that when he comes the dead shall rise, some to glory, some to shame; some to life, some to condemnation (Daniel 12:2: John 5:29).

Paul says:

"Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness . . then shall every man have praise of God." (1 Corinthians 4:5).

The 'things of darkness' and the 'praise of God' are both made manifest at the same time -- when the 'Lord comes.' Paul says further (2 Corinthians 5:10) that at the judgment seat of Christ (where we 'all' must stand) they are to receive in body 'good or BAD'. In his letter to the Romans he says (2:6,9,16) that 'well doing' will be rewarded with 'eternal life' and failure to obey will be rewarded with 'tribulation and anguish' at the same time --

"In the Day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my Gospel."

It is clear that the judgment seat of Christ is the great natural boundary line between probation and exaltation; the appointed time of revealing who is who, and separating the righteous from the wicked. Christ's words, both at the beginning of his ministry (Matthew 7:22) and at the end (Matthew 25:37-44) show the issue is not known till then: the righteous are not assured of their acceptance till then, and the wicked are surprised at their rejection.

All, therefore, must stand at the judgment seat together in a physical condition susceptible of receiving eternal life or eternal death. They cannot be immortal until after having appeared at the judgment seat.

The idea, then, that the righteous dead spring from the grave immediately into an immortal existence (based solely on a misinterpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:52, 'raised incorruptible') is out of harmony with the entire, oft repeated scriptural picture. Both good and bad are

received 'in body' (2 Corinthians 5:10, omitting incorrect italics) at the judgment seat. The 'raising incorruptible' is clearly a process -- INCLUDING the judgment.

SOME "DIFFICULT" PASSAGES?

Not all passages will be as direct and straightforward as those we have just considered. When we encounter a passage that does not appear to be saying the same thing, before we jump to conclusions we must be careful to consider the context and subject matter of the passage. Recall the principles of Bible interpretation which we studied in a previous lesson. Let's look at a few examples:

Example #1: 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: (1 Thessalonians 4:16)

"The dead in Christ shall rise FIRST" appears to support the concept that the righteous dead rise before the unrighteous dead, the latter being raised at a later time. We have already seen, however, that they rise and stand before the judgment seat together. The 'rising first' here mentioned is in relation to the taking away of the living, as the context makes clear. Paul is concerned with the relationship between the righteous dead and the righteous living. He is not thinking of the wicked at all, who are very unimportant in the eternal divine scheme. He is assuring his mourning readers that the dead are at no disadvantage; they rise before the living are taken away. The wicked are ignored in many passages, as all throughout 1 Corinthians 15. This is reasonable, but they are mentioned enough to give the true picture, and their simultaneous rising and being judged with the righteous is clearly shown elsewhere.

Example #2: 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. (Revelation 20:6)

This may appear to be saying that if those who have part in the first resurrection are "blessed and holy", then the "wicked" do not rise. But there is nothing here to contradict the resurrection and judgment of the wicked. 'Having part' means to receive a reward and a portion in that resurrection, i.e., to be not turned away by Christ. The Bible teaches that there are two resurrections. The 'first' is the resurrection that occurs at Christ's return. The second resurrection takes place at the end of the 1000 years. Note verse 5 - The 'rest of the dead'

who 'live not again till the 1000 years are finished' refers to all who die after the return of Christ during the 1000 year Kingdom age: that is, there is no further resurrection until the Millennium's end.
WE MUST HARMONIZE ALL THE TESTIMONY

Example #3: ...the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. (1 Corinthians 15:52)

When Paul says that the 'dead shall be raised incorruptible,' he is obviously not contradicting his own divinely inspired teaching elsewhere in scripture, and the words of Christ, that the dead shall be raised, assembled for judgment, judged and then (if worthy) rewarded with eternal life. It is important to note that he does not mention the judgment in this chapter at all.

Is he presenting us with a different concept here than elsewhere? Of course not. We must harmonize all together, and make room for all aspects, though some are not mentioned here. To fill in the details, we must put the judgment into the place where he elsewhere says it belongs. Note v.45 (the "context") --

"The first man Adam was made a living soul: The last Adam (Christ) was made a quickening spirit."

If we did not have information from other sections of scripture, supplying us with the whole history of the process of Christ's birth and growth and life and death, following which the glorification into a 'quickenning spirit' took place, we would naturally assume > from this passage that he began as a 'quickenning spirit,' just as Adam began as a 'living soul.'

However, when we observe the complete picture as supplied through the harmonizing of passages, we will not fall into that mistake, because we pay attention to those details given elsewhere.

Neither should we fall into the mistake of thinking 'raised incorruptible' is an instantaneous event right out of the grave, bypassing the judgment seat of Christ. A brief, general statement does not ignore or exclude the involved particulars that are supplied elsewhere in scripture.
NO "RESPONSIBLE" PERSON CAN ESCAPE THE JUDGMENT

Let us ever remember: There IS a 'Day' appointed when 'God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ' (Romans 2:16). None who possess the knowledge of God's purpose can escape it. All will be there whom God considers to have sufficient understanding of His will to be responsible

and answerable and that is a determination only God can make in any individual case. Nothing then will be hidden. All the 'secrets of men' will then be exposed to searching publicity and light -- except, of course, what has been truly repented of, and struggled against, and forgiven, and in mercy 'blotted out'.

This is a continual comfort to those constantly striving to be faithful and righteous and well pleasing to God. It should be a continual warning to those who have not put, and maintained, themselves in the position of faithfulness and righteousness. Total devotion and service in this so very brief day of probation will mean escape from the cold grave, escape from the terrible last day punishments of the disobedient, and glory and joy with God for ever and ever. Who could possibly be so foolish as to hesitate to make the choice? Tomorrow may be too late.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 13

1. What principle of God's operation shows the reasonableness and necessity of Christ's open judging and rewarding of the assembled responsible?
2. Why did God not destroy the wicked generation in Egypt without explanation?
3. What case in the New Testament illustrates the principle of calling to account?
4. What sayings of Christ show that the verdict is not known to the recipients until after examination and judgment?
5. When shall we give an account of every idle word which we speak?
6. In what scripture passage does Daniel say the dead shall rise together, some to eternal life and some to shame?
7. In what passage does Christ say the dead shall rise together, some to life and some to condemnation?
8. In what scripture passage does Paul say we must all stand before Christ's judgment seat?
9. What 2 chapters in Luke, and 2 chapters in Matthew give parables representing Christ's return, judging the responsible and rejecting the wicked (nobleman, waiting servants, son's marriage, 10 virgins, talents)?
10. In what passage does Paul say, 'Judge nothing before THE TIME' (when Christ will come to bring to light both 'darkness' and 'praise')?
11. 'The dead in Christ shall rise FIRST' in relation to what others?
12. a) What does it mean to 'have part' in the first resurrection?
b) Can one be raised at the 'first resurrection' without attaining a 'part' or reward in it?
13. Who are the 'rest of the dead' who do not live till the end of the 1000 years?
14. What is the reasonable principle of interpretation that prevents one from making the error of assuming that the dead emerge from the grave incorruptible?
15. a) When was Christ made a 'quickenning spirit'?

b) Would we learn this from 1 Cor. 15 alone?

KEY Lesson 14 - BIBLE TEACHING CONCERNING GOD

"This is Life Eternal, that they might know Thee, the Only True God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" -- John 17:3.

THE NEXT SEVERAL LESSONS will dwell upon what the Bible reveals concerning God, the Holy Spirit, the angels, and Jesus Christ. Each of these topics are vitally important, and none more so than that with which this lesson is concerned - GOD.

Why is it important to have a sound knowledge about God? Firstly, we are told that our very salvation is dependent upon us becoming sons and daughters of God - "...for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people....And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty".(2 Cor 6:16-18)

- which in turn is dependent upon us being knowledgeable about God
- "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". (1 John 3:1)

"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word". (John 17:6)

In the language of scripture, to manifest a name means to express everything about the history, character and purpose of the individual who bears the name.

Clearly, then, knowledge of God is essential. Without it, we cannot enter into the divine family. Furthermore, knowledge of God can be found only where He has placed it - in His inspired word. It is true that nature witnesses to the fact that all things are arranged with wisdom and understanding, and conform to laws of exceeding accuracy and regularity. It certainly forces upon any reasonable intelligence the fact that God really exists - that there must be a great central Source of wisdom and power. However, nature tells us nothing of God's being, character, purpose, or will concerning man. For that vital information there is only one source - God's Word, the Bible.

Blind human speculation, past and present, leads only to the monstrosities of ancient and modern heathen superstition. How deeply impressed, thankful and joyful we should be, to know that God, Who has created and controls the vast universe in all its splendor and magnificence, has condescended to reveal Himself to us, telling us of His glorious

Purpose and His loving requirements. It means present peace, and future eternal joy.

Unfortunately, in the consideration of this subject we will find that once again Bible teaching parts company with traditional Christianity. While the knowledge of the Creator is clearly set forth in the Bible, and is beautiful in its profound simplicity and reasonableness, sadly the mixture of pagan theories with the original true apostolic teaching has resulted in confusion and darkness throughout Christendom on this subject; and this condition has so long held sway that the masses thoughtlessly and without question accept the concept of three gods in one - the "Trinity" - (an adopted pagan Greek speculation) as the God of the Bible.

To help us to understand the origins of this unfortunate doctrine, the Encyclopedia Britannica, 9th ed., article XX--206--XXTheism by a Trinitarian', says - "The propositions constitutive of the dogma of the Trinity were only formed through centuries of effort, only elaborated by the aid of conceptions, and formulated in the terms, of Greek and Roman metaphysics. The evolution of the doctrine of the Trinity was the most important doctrinal fact in the history of the Church in the first 5 centuries. The fusion of theology and philosophy was the distinctive feature of medieval Christendom."

Such is the TrinitariansXX--226--XX own explanation of the origin of the doctrine of the Trinity. Thus traditional theology, admittedly derived from Platonic Greek philosophy, teaches that there are three gods, or three eternal parts of their god: all equally eternal, equally powerful, equally self sustaining: and yet all parts of a single personal unity. ChristendomXX--226--XXs three gods are referred to as The Trinity (an expression that cannot be found in the Bible): XX--206--XXGod the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; each very God, each without a beginning, each omnipotent, each separate from the others, and yet all one.' The confusion of this doctrine describes itself as not understandable: 'incomprehensible' which indeed is true.

Contrary to such traditional teaching, we find that the Scriptures constantly emphasize the Unity, the Oneness of God, as the most fundamental thing about Him - as if to warn us against any theories or concepts involving a plurality of Gods - such as the Trinity: for mankind has always multiplied his gods. Moses said - "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is ONE Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4) Jesus, when asked what was the FIRST commandment of all, referred to these inspired words of Moses: "The first of all commandments is, Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is One Lord" (Mark 12:29). Paul taught exactly the same to

the Corinthians - "There is but One God, the Father, of Whom are all things, and we in Him -- AND one Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians. 8:6)

Note especially that, first, he says there is one God; and that, besides that One God, there is the Lord Jesus Christ. Clearly this shows that Jesus is not part of the One supreme God. Jesus himself constantly addresses God as "Father"; prays to Him, says he himself can do nothing: Jesus can only say and do as the Father instructs him.

Paul says again - "There is One God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:6.)

"There is One God, AND one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5)

Note again the clear and careful distinction Paul makes between the "One God" and "the MAN Christ Jesus". Christ is the mediator between the One God and mankind. He is not part of the One God. He is spoken of as something other than the One God. He is spoken of, even in his present glorified immortalized state, as a man.

Again, we find God Himself specifically and repeatedly emphasizing His Oneness through Isaiah, such as appears in the following verses - "I am the Lord, and there is none else: there is no God beside Me" (Isaiah 45:5)

"I am the First and I am the Last, and beside Me there is no God... Is there a God beside Me? There is no God: I know not any" (Isaiah 44:6-8)

"I am God, and there is none else . . . there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things not yet done" (Isaiah 46:9)

The only passage in our Bibles which seems to support the doctrine of the Trinity is 1 John 5:7. These words have been inserted by man, obviously with the purpose of supporting the popular doctrine (an example of the "human element" that occasionally creeps into the translation of the Bible from one language to another). This passage has for over 200 years been known to be spurious (though some still use it, hoping their hearers will not know it is false). All honest Trinitarians with any knowledge of the facts admit it is spurious. It is not found in any Greek manuscript of the Bible before the 16th century, and only in 4 since then, none of which have any textual value. This passage

has not been found to be quoted by any writer earlier than the end of the 5th century. It was never mentioned by anyone on either side of the question all through the fierce Trinitarian controversy that raged throughout the whole 4th century, when Trinitarianism was finally established as the state religion by the sword.

The Scriptures declare that all things are out of the Father (1 Corinthians 8:6; 11:16; Romans 6:36, etc.). This very name, "Father", indicates He is the Source. As the Source, He must be the Center. The Scriptures clearly teach that God has a located central existence (again in opposition to human religious philosophy), though He is everywhere present by His Spirit that fills heaven and earth. Paul says - "God dwells in light which no man can approach unto" (1 Timothy 6:16)

If God dwells in unapproachable light, He must have a localized existence in some specific place, in a different and more personal sense than His universal presence being manifested everywhere (including here where human beings are) by His Spirit. Thus Solomon says: "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few" (Ecclesiastes 5:2)

And Christ told his disciples to pray: "Our Father which art in heaven" (Matthew 6:9)

David in the Psalms makes the same distinction of location, as-- "He hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary: from Heaven did the Lord behold the earth" (Psalm 102:19,20), "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; but the earth hath He given to the children of men" (Psalm 117:16)

Repeatedly Solomon in prayer illustrates this truth - "Hear Thou in heaven, Thy dwelling place." (1 Kings 8:30)

When Jesus rose from the dead, it is recorded that... "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." (Mark 16:19)

These statements have meaning - and can be understood - only on the principle that God has a personal manifested existence in the heavens. It is impossible to fairly evade the testimony of these verses that God is a Person Who exists in the "Heaven of heavens" as He exists nowhere else.

Again, this clear Bible teaching is at odds with popular traditional religious teaching concerning God, which attempts to make out that He is merely a principle or energy diffused throughout the universe,

without bodily existence, without local concentration, "without body and without parts," as the creed goes. But this is human philosophy as to what mankind thinks ought to be, rather than the true factual declarations of scripture. The verses given up to this point indicate the direct opposite of traditional teaching, when applied in their simple, natural sense.

There are yet other scriptural evidences of the bodily existence of the Creator, as we shall see. God revealed Himself personally to Moses as He has to no other human being except the Lord Jesus. In response to MosesXX--226--XX pleading to see His glory, He said:

"Thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock. And it shall come to pass, while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by. And I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts, but My face shall not be seen" (Exodus 33:20-23)

We further read the following concerning God's manifestation to Moses - "And the Lord said unto Moses, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven" (Exodus 20:22)

"With Moses will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches: and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold" (Numbers 12:8). (The word "similitude" here refers to a visual appearance). "And the Lord spake to Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Exodus 23:11)

"And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deuteronomy 34:10)

While these references apply to an angelic manifestation of God, that which is thereby manifested is higher and far greater than the manifestation. They are meaningless as 'manifestation': except as they bear testimony to the reality and existence of that which was being manifested. The power and the pre-eminence of the Creator are often declared - "He inhabiteth eternity" (Isaiah 57:15).

"He is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29)

"From everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 90:2)

"He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13).

"He is the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth; Who fainteth not, neither is weary; and there is no searching of His understanding" (Isaiah 40:28)

"All nations before Him are as nothing" (Isaiah 40:17)

God alone has underived and self sustaining existence. All other life, including that of the glorified Jesus, is but a part of His power, issuing as a stream from the one Great Fountain Head. Thus we read of Him - "King of kings, and Lord of lords, Who only hath immortality" (1 Timothy 6:15)

"IN HIM we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28)

"OUT OF HIM, and through Him, and to Him, are all things" (Romans 11:36)

"There is but One God, the Father, out of Whom are all things" (1 Corinthians 8:6)

"Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they (all creatures) are created... Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust" (Psalm 104:30, 29)

Popular theology teaches that God made all things out of nothing. The Bible teaches that all things are made out of God Himself through the operation of His Spirit power, as the above passages declare. God's Spirit power, issuing forth from Him in radiant effulgence, under the direction of His will, has developed all things in the material Creation which we behold.

The more deeply an analysis is made of the universe - the material objects of our daily existence and the distant galaxies - the closer man comes to the realization that all "material" things are concretions in a myriad of different forms, of one original common Power. An atom of any particular element (according to man's present state of knowledge) is seen as simply a certain arrangement of common building blocks that men term protons, neutrons, electrons, etc., which in their essence are power charges. The theoretical picture is constantly being refined as new facts emerge. And the deeper they dig, the more complex and infinite, and yet more basically unified and harmonious, the marvelous relations of Creation and Existence are seen to be. Yet with all this, they can still believe, or slavishly profess to believe, that all came out of an original nothing: and that all the infinite and endless variety of inter balanced intricacies just "happened"

without power, plan or purpose. How unscientific can supposed "science" be!

The Spirit power of God is the basis of all creation and existence; the very essence and first cause of everything. In this way, God is always present (omnipresent). He is, therefore, aware of all that happens in any part of the universe, knowing thereby our thoughts and desires and inclinations at all times. In a word, He is all-knowing (omniscient) and all-powerful (omnipotent). To Him Who has mercifully revealed Himself so fully and gloriously to those who desire to know and be with Him for ever, belongs all our worship, all our service and all our thanksgiving; What a wonderful blessing! What a tremendous responsibility!

QUESTIONS for Lesson 14

1. Whom must we know to obtain eternal life?
2. Is a verbal confession of God and Jesus enough to assure salvation?
3. Where alone can we find the knowledge of God and of Jesus?
4. What has caused the knowledge of God to become confused in men's minds?
5. What is the popular church heathen doctrine about 3 gods called?
6. Give 3 scriptural statements which prove that there is only One God, and that the church doctrine of 3 gods is false.
7. Has God a localized existence, though He is everywhere present?
8. Give 2 proofs to support your answer.
9. Where is the throne of God?
10. Who is at His right hand there?
11. Does God have a bodily existence?
12. Give scriptural proofs to support.
13. In what way has God revealed Himself to mankind?
14. In what way do all parts of Creation receive their energy?
15. From what have all things been created?
16. How can God be everywhere, and know all things, if He dwells in heaven?
17. What effect should a knowledge of God and His Son Jesus Christ have on our lives?

KEY Lesson 15 - BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF GOD

"Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created; and Thou renewest the face of the earth"--Psalm 104:30

The Spirit of God is very frequently mentioned throughout the Bible, from the first chapter of Genesis to the last of Revelation. It is clear that it fulfils an important function in Divine operations; therefore we must have true views concerning it if we are to fully grasp the fundamentals of the Bible message. Jesus said,

"God is a Spirit -- John 4:24

-- more correctly, "God is Spirit" This is His fundamental nature; perfect, unchangeable, indestructible existence.

The Scriptures, however, in describing God's workings, speak of 'the SpiritXX--226--XX as that by which God works and manifests Himself. The Bible speaks of it as 'GodXX--226--XXs Spirit', 'Thy Spirit', 'the Spirit of the Lord', etc., as --

"Thou testifiedst against them (our fathers) by Thy Spirit IN Thy prophets." -- Nehemiah. 9:30

GOD AND HIS SPIRIT ARE ONE -- CREATION AND INSPIRATION

God and His Spirit are one, like the sun and its light, a fire and its heat, a magnet and its power. God. as we have seen, has a localized dwelling: He dwells in heaven 'in unapproachable light': By His Spirit He is everywhere present --

"Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence?" -- Psalm 139:7.

The Spirit is the agency of GodXX--226--XXs working. It was very active in the work of Creation, at the very beginning--

"The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" -- Genesis 1:2.
"By His Spirit He hath garnished (made beautiful) the heavens" -- Job 26:13.

"Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit: they (all creatures) are created"
-- Psalm 104:30.

Very often throughout the Bible we read that the 'Spirit of the Lord' came upon the prophets and wonderful works were thereby accomplished. It was in this manner that all prophecies came to be uttered and the

whole of Scripture written --

"I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord" -- Micah 3:8.

Peter declares -- "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." -- 2 Peter 1:21

THE SPIRIT AND ELECTRICAL ENERGY

If the Spirit is the basis of all Creation, of all 'materialXX--226--XX things, then should we not find some natural evidence of this in all man's delving? The discoveries concerning electrical energy in modern times constitute a tremendous confirmation of the divinity of the Word.

Until recently, mankind has always thought that material substances and energy were two entirely separate things, and that the various material substances themselves were immutably different from each other. In contrast, the Bible has always taught that all things are made by and out of the force, energy, power or "Spirit" of God.

Man has now discovered that electrical energy is a major component in the formation and substance of all material things: that all 'material' things are simply intensely concentrated energy in various arrangements and patterns. The Spirit of God is of infinite power, unlimited energy. It created the universe, and set the myriads of galaxies in motion. It could freeze the mightiest stellar explosion at the peak of its force. It could stop and reverse a nuclear blast, and in a moment restore everything as it was before the blast. It is infinitely greater than 'electricity' as we know it. Man could never use it or control it: it would destroy him to approach it.

But the picture of Creation has been shown to be exactly as the Bible has said, as to its basis of pure power, and the very opposite of what man has always imagined.

'FREE' SPIRIT AND 'HOLY' SPIRIT

The Bible makes reference to two aspects or modes of operation of the Spirit of God:

1. Spirit in general ("free spirit") at the root of everything, operating in the domain of fixed law: the movements of the spheres, the chemical activities of the elements, the life cycle of plants and living creatures.
2. Holy Spirit: God's power specifically operating, focused toward

the accomplishment of a specific Divine purpose, over-riding natural laws -- in words of wisdom or works of power.

Only a few among mankind have experienced the latter, at certain crisis periods in the working out of the Divine Plan. It is given to none today, though there are multitudes of pretenders (many doubtless sincerely self deceived) who mistake animal mesmerism and excited feelings for a Holy Spirit "experience" -- but which is utterly unrelated to the true and holy operation of the Holy Spirit as revealed in scripture.

POSSESSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The apostles were made possessors of the Spirit of God on the day of Pentecost. When it came upon them, the house they were in was greatly shaken. By it they were enabled to perform acts above natural laws. They could immediately be heard in foreign tongues which they had never learned. The hearers said--

"Are not all these which speak, Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue wherein we were born? . . . We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God"--Acts 2:7 11.

The Spirit opened the understanding of the apostles to things they did not know naturally, as Jesus had promised them --

"When he, the Spirit of Truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak, and he shall show you things to come."
-- John 16:13

By the Spirit, the apostles could cure diseases, heal the sick, even raise the dead. Peter's shadow had the power to cure (Acts 5:15). Jesus had this same power without measure. A diseased woman came secretly in a crowd of people and touched his garment, and was instantly healed. Jesus immediately realized that the Spirit of God had issued from him and healed the woman (Luke 8:43-46). And not only the woman, but -- "As many as touched his garments were made perfectly whole" --
Matthew 14:36

LAYING THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIANITY -- THE SPIRIT WITNESS

This power of the Spirit in the hands of the apostles was necessary to the accomplishment of the great work they had to do in witnessing to the resurrection of Jesus, establishing the ecclesial foundation, and completing the Scriptures. While the disciples were natural witnesses for the resurrection, upon which the Faith was to be built, their

words would have seemed as the ravings of the mentally deranged, if God had not assisted them by endowing them with power to work miracles by their own hands. It was God's purpose at that time that their work should have a worldwide effect upon society --

"They went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming their words with signs following" -- Mark 16:20.

"The Great Salvation . . . first spoken by the Lord . . . was confirmed to us by them that heard him: God bearing them witness with signs, wonders, divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit" -- Hebrews 2:4.

Peter declared in his defense before the Jewish Council --

"The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree . . . and we are His witnesses of these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit." -- Acts 5:30-32

THE APOSTLES COULD CONFER IT ON OTHERS

The original apostles (including Paul - 2 Timothy 1:6) were given the power of imparting the Spirit to others. It was their duty to develop and organize the Christian community, and establish it on a sound basis. There is no evidence of any others ever having the power to pass the Spirit on. This distinction is clear in the incident of Philip at Samaria (Acts 8). Philip was one of the 7 helpers chosen as recorded in Acts 6, who had received the Holy Spirit from the apostles. When he had preached to those in Samaria, and they had accepted the truth of the words he spoke, we do not find that he could pass the Holy Spirit on to them. Rather we find the apostles Peter and John sent from Jerusalem to do this -- "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent to them Peter and John; who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized into the Name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit" -- Acts 8:14-15.

There is NO record in Scripture of the Holy Spirit being transmitted from the second person to another person. The gift of the Holy Spirit, as we have seen, was to establish the Word of God in the foundation preaching of the apostles, until the Christian community was a living, organized entity well established, and the Scriptures were completed to guide it. Any pretension on the part of a wide and conflicting

variety of people today (all ignorant of the Gospel of the Kingdom) to possession of the Holy Spirit is completely unscriptural. If any have the Spirit, they will be able to give incontrovertible proof. And not just supposed 'cures' based on excitement, emotion, mass hysteria and, often, downright deception. Most importantly, they will have the TRUTH--

"To the Law and to the Testimony: if they speak not according to this Word (the Word of God), it is because there is no light in them" -- Isaiah 8:20.

If they do not have the Truth, they most certainly do not have the Spirit. Many 'wonderful' things can be done by strong personalities and animal magnetism. Many conflicting groups today claim to have the 'Spirit.' They cannot all have it, for they are in conflict with one another, and the Spirit is unity and truth. So it is incumbent on any who make any such claims to give positive proofs, like the apostles. Without this, such claims should not be given a moment's consideration. It will be noticed that we have throughout changed the word 'ghost' (as it appears in the AV) to 'spirit' (as in the RSV). In the New Testament the original word is 'pneuma', and should in all cases be rendered 'spirit.' 'Ghost' is an obsolete Saxon term the churches use to conceal and mystify the idea expressed by the simple Greek word 'pneuma' and Hebrew 'ruach' -- both meaning 'breath, wind or spirit.'

NOT A PERSON BUT THE POWER OF GOD

A simple reading of the way 'Spirit' is used throughout the Bible shows it to be not a co-equal Person of a supposed 'Trinity' (an idea foreign to Scripture, as observed in a previous lesson), but the limitless power and energy issuing forth from God by which He is everywhere present, and by which He does all things. Personification is frequently used in the Scriptures, and so naturally we find some expressions concerning the Spirit which could be taken to indicate actual personality, as is true of wisdom, mammon, sin, etc.

Paul personifies Sin--

"Let not Sin reign . . Sin shall not have dominion . . His servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether Sin unto death . . Ye were servants of Sin . . Sin deceived me and slew me . . That Sin might become an exceeding great Sinner (literal translation)" -- Romans 6:12, 14, 16, 20; 7:13.

The power of God is personified in like manner, as the doer of His will: it is Himself in extension. But the Spirit never appears as an actual person in any scriptural record. God has used His Spirit through the angels, through men, through Christ Jesus. But manifestations of the Spirit have never been in human form. When it came upon Christ, it was in the form of a dove (John 1:32). On Pentecost, it was as cloven tongues of fire (Acts 2:3). This would be a very strange way to manifest a person, but it is a very fitting way to manifest the power of God in its working.

PERSONIFICATION -- THE USE OF 'HE' AND 'IT'.

The following is an interesting comparison as to translations of John 14:16 17--

AV: "The Father shall give you another Comforter (parakleetos: masc.) that he may abide with you . . . even the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him, for he * dwelleth with you."

DIAG: "The Father shall give you another Helper, that he may be with you . . . the Spirit of Truth which the world cannot receive, because it beholds it not, nor knows it: but you know it, because it* abides with you.

NESTLE: "The Father will give you another Comforter, that he may be with you . . . the Spirit of Truth which the world cannot receive, because it beholds it not, nor knows: ye know it, because he*remains with you."

This is instructive. All three passages have 'he' for the first pronoun, because the word "parakleetos" is grammatically masculine in Greek. But, as is clear from the correct rendering in the Diaglott and Nestle translations, the Authorised Version falsely and unjustifiably translates the next 4 pronouns as 'whom, he, he, he.' The original Greek is specifically in the neuter gender -- 'which' and 'it'. The last (asterisked) pronoun can be either 'he' or 'it', and the translators have consequently rendered according to their own judgment and beliefs. This is very often the case where 'he' ('him') or 'it' occur in AV, as when it is the implied but unwritten subject of a verb, or in some cases (not nominative) of the Greek word "autos" ('him 'it') or "ekeinos" ('that one'). In these cases it can be translated 'he' ('him') or 'it', optionally. Sometimes the Scriptures use 'it' and sometimes 'he' for the Holy Spirit.

This is perfectly understandable of the occasional personification of something that is not inherently personal, but it is incomprehensible in speaking of an actual person -- especially of a divine Person, a Person of the Trinity -- as the Holy Spirit is deemed to be by traditional Christianity! Would we ever call God 'it'? It is unthinkable. We speak of a ship or a country as 'she' or 'it' interchangeably, but we never use such terms interchangeably when speaking of a woman. Jesus said, (and it is a very important, foundation statement of Scripture) -- "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, AND Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent" --John 17:3

If the Holy Spirit were the third co-equal Person of a Triune Godhead, it would be incomprehensible for it to be omitted from this statement. Obviously the Holy Spirit is not a person in a Trinity. The Bible never mentions such a thing. It does say, however . . .

"There is but ONE God, the Father. . AND one Lord Jesus Christ" -- 1 Corinthians 8:6.

Here again, inexplicably, according to the Trinity theory, no mention of the just as important, co-equal third Person. And even more explicitly to Timothy --

"There is ONLY God, AND one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus" -- 1 Timothy 2:5.

-- still no mention of that mysterious third Person who certainly would not be left out of these enumerations, if he existed. Consider the parallelism of the announcement to Mary:

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee" -- Luke 1:35.

Note: "the Holy Spirit . . . the power of the Highest". This is the consistent picture of Scripture: the Holy Spirit is God's power.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 15

1. Are God and His Spirit separate and distinct?
2. Give illustrations of the use of the Spirit of God in Creation.
3. By what means did the Bible come to be written?
4. Define the two aspects or manifestations of the spirit of God.
5. Is the spirit of God as 'Holy Spirit' under the power of any man today?
6. In what way was the Spirit of God used by the apostles in the first century?
7. To whom was the spirit of God given?
8. Could the apostles pass the Holy Spirit on to other people?
9. Could the second person to receive the Holy Spirit pass it on to others?
10. Is the Holy Spirit a separate and distinct person?
11. Has the Spirit of God ever appeared as a person in the Bible?
12. Mention 2 forms or shapes in which the Spirit of God has appeared.

KEY Lesson 16 BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE ANGELS

"If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord." -- Hebrews 2:2

ANGELS are prominent in both the Old and New Testaments. They are the messengers of God, as the name implies (Hebrew: malak; Greek: angellos -- both words also being translated "messenger", and applied to ordinary men). We must bear in mind that the basic Divine purpose is "God manifestation": the manifestation of God in a glorified multitude of perfected, purified and immortal beings. Man was made in the beginning in the physical image, or form, of God; and it is God's purpose to perfect that image or likeness in every respect -- mental, moral, spiritual, corporeal, in character and in substance -- in the host of the Redeemed, so that each will be a perfect manifestation of God, and will bear God's Name (Revelation 3:12).

The angels -- perfect, holy, immortal beings -- are the medium of Divine manifestation throughout the Old Testament (and also in the New Testament, although there the supreme manifestation of God among men is Jesus Christ). The angels often speak as God, and bear the Name of God. John said,

"No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18).

Yet Jacob says,

"I have seen God (Elohim) face to face" (Genesis 32:30).

The explanation of this apparent contradiction introduces the subject of the angels, those glorious beings through whom God has from the beginning manifested Himself and given His messages and commands to man. There are other places where God is said to have been seen. The explanation lies partly in the subject of God manifestation, and partly in being aware of the loose and inaccurate translations of the names of God in the AV. The Divine Creator expresses His name in the Old Testament through the use of three basic Hebrew terms: 1) El, Eloah and Elohim; 2) Shaddai; and 3) Yahweh. There is also the title Adon or Adonai which appears in the KJV as "Lord." It is important that we understand the meaning of these terms and how they are used in scripture:

1) El (or Ail), Eloah and Elohim mean power or Powerful One(s). El and Eloah are singular, Elohim is plural in form (though always used with singular adjectives and verbs, except where speaking of 1) false

"elohim" or gods or 2) the rulers of Israel.)

All 3 words are used occasionally of false "gods", but overwhelmingly of the One True God and His manifestations.

"El" is a few times translated "power" (as in Nehemiah 5:5). Elohim is by far the most common of the 3 (about 2500 times); El about 200; Eloah about 50. In the O.T., where the word "God" (not "GOD") occurs in the AV, the original Hebrew term is almost invariably El, Eloah, or Elohim. "Elohim" is used in application both of angels, and of mortal men who represent God and stand in relation to Him. In Hebrews (N.T.),

Paul quotes a statement from Psalms (O.T.) in which this Hebrew term "Elohim" occurs:

"Worship him, all ye gods (elohim)." (Psalm 97:7)

Paul records the passage thus:

"Let all the angels of God worship him." (Hebrews 1:6)

Obviously, to Paul's mind, "elohim" in this passage represented angels. Here is an excellent example of scripture interpreting itself, and providing us with Divinely inspired illustrations of some of the ways by which this term may be correctly applied.

"Elohim" is also used in scripture in application to mankind:

"God judgeth among the gods (elohim) . . I have said, Ye are gods." (Psalm 82:1,6)

In the gospel of John, Jesus quotes this passage, and calls the Jews' attention to the fact that the term "gods" (elohim) applies to the people of Israel (those "to whom the Word of God came"):

"Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken . . ." (John 10:34,35)

Jesus used this passage in justification of his own claim to be the Son of God, and in disproof of their charges of blasphemy -

". . . Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"

(John 10:34,35)

2) Shaddai occurs about 50 times (mostly in Job, but also in 8 other books) and is always translated "Almighty". It is applied only to God. It carries the idea "with power", also of overawing, totally controlling, productive of reverence and fear.

3) Yahweh is the personal Name of God, meaning "He Who Will Be". It is the "Memorial Name" -- the Name of Purpose: the Purpose of manifestation in a glorious multitude. It occurs about 7000 times. It is translated "LORD" (all capitals) except in translating the expression Adonai Yahweh, which is rendered "Lord GOD" (the "GOD" in capitals for Yahweh. Thus "LORD" or "GOD" in capitals indicates Yahweh in the original. Yahweh Elohim (a very frequent combination rendered "LORD God") means "He Who Will Be Mighty Ones."

Exodus 3 records that the "angel of Yahweh" appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and said, "I am the God (Elohim) of Abraham", etc., and throughout the conversation we frequently find "Yahweh said" and "Elohim said"-- the angel speaking just as if he were God Himself. This is God manifestation, which finds its supreme fulfillment in Christ, who said the words he spoke were God's words, and the works were God's works, and that God was "in him" (John 14:10). And so we read --

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19).

"God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16).

"He that hath seen me (said Jesus) hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). So we see how men can "see" God, and yet "No man hath seen God at any time."

Not always do angels appear in brightness and glory. Sometimes they appear outwardly as mere human beings. Thus men have sometimes "seen" God without realizing it at the time.

For example, three angels came to Abraham (Genesis 18), and he at first mistook them for ordinary men. They are called "men" and "angels" interchangeably in the narrative. Two of them went on to Sodom. The 3rd stayed with Abraham for a while, and throughout their conversation he is uniformly called "Yahweh" and at the

end it says "Yahweh went his way." Here again is an angel representing

and manifesting God, and speaking directly as God in God's Name.

An "angel of Elohim" spoke to Jacob, and said,

"I am the God (Elohim) of Bethel" (Genesis 31:13).

A "man" wrestled with Jacob (Genesis 32:24), called elsewhere an "angel" (Hosea 12:4). Of him, Jacob said (Genesis 32:30),

"I have seen God (Elohim) face to face."

The angel who appeared to Gideon is spoken of as "Yahweh" (Judges 6:14, 16, 23).

An angel appeared to Manoah, father of Samson, and he too, like Abraham and Lot, at first mistook him for a man. Later, when he realized it was an angel, he said,

"We shall surely die, because we have seen God (Elohim)" Judges 13:21. He knew it was not God Himself, for we are told in the previous verse, "Manoah knew he was an angel of the Lord (Yahweh)."

But he knew that God was manifested in the angel, so he said he had seen God. In Hebrews 2:2, the Law of Moses is described as "the word spoken by angels," though in the record Moses gives, it appears that God is giving it directly. Paul is making a comparison between the means of manifestation used: the angelic to Israel, and the higher and more intimate manifestation through Christ in New Testament times. The angels are not only messengers, but they are the guiders and protectors of God's people; they control the courses of nations, and generally direct and supervise the events of the world, in the development of God's purpose.

"The angel of the Lord encampeth around them that fear Him" (Psalm 43:7).

"He shall give His angels charge concerning thee: they shall bear thee up" (Psalm 91:11-12).

"They are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation" (Hebrews 1:14).

Abraham naturally and clearly recognized and depended upon angelic care and supervision of his affairs, and the record proves him to be correct --

"The Lord (Yahweh) shall send His angel before thee" (Genesis 24:7).

Likewise Jacob, at his life's end:

"The angel which redeemed me from all evil" (Genesis 48:16).

Angels cared for Elijah; destroyed the army of Assyria; ministered unto Christ; released Peter from prison; smote Herod with a fatal disease; appeared at times to Paul; invisibly led the armies of Israel (I Kings 19:5; 2 Kings 19; Luke 22; Acts 12, 27; Joshua 5) Angels excel in strength. They are holy, pure, perfectly doing the will of God, in perfect, eternal harmony with the mind of God. The theory of traditional Christianity (in connection with the "personal devil" theory) that the holy angels of God could sin and fall from grace and become evil demons is a travesty inherited from the dark mythologies of paganism. It fits the pagan gods of Greece and Rome perfectly, from which it is derived, but not the immortal angels of God.

Immortality and sin are utterly incompatible. The orthodox theory gives us no assurance of eternal safety and joy. If holy, immortal angels can sin and fall, there is no assurance of God's eternal promise contained in Luke 20:35 --

"But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection." What a debased conception of God's dwelling place, that it could be at any time the scene of rebellion and civil war! No, the angels are totally, eternally, immutably in perfect harmony with God. They are presented in scripture as being deeply interested spectators of God's works. They shouted and sang with joy at the creation (Job 38:7), and they "desire to look into" the glories that God has in store for the future of mankind (I Peter 1:12). Angels rejoice over every repentant sinner (Luke 15:10).

The angelic population is spoken of as "ten thousand times ten thousand" (Daniel 7:10), which would be 100 million, and the actual number could hardly with appropriateness be less than the typical figure used for them. There is distinction of rank, for we read of the "archangel" We are given the names of 2 angels: Michael (Daniel 10:13, 21; Judges 9), and Gabriel (Daniel 8:16; Luke 1:19, 21). It was the latter who appeared to Daniel, Zacharias and Mary.

The traditional orthodox picture of angels as baby cherubs with wings is another dark relic of benighted paganism, utterly devoid of scriptural support. As we have seen, the angels uniformly appear as strong, mature, intelligent creatures, in form exactly like men, as naturally they would be, for all in God's family are created in His likeness. The promise is that the Redeemed will be equal to them (Luke 20:36).

The traditional representation of angels with wings is due to confusing angels with the cherubim and seraphim. These are purely symbolic figures, representative of the glorious host of the Redeemed -- those taken from among men who in the Age to Come will manifest and glorify God in the perfection of immortal splendor. This identity is clear when the whole representation of them throughout Scripture is studied, and from the fact that in Revelation 5:9 the Four Living Creatures (elsewhere called Cherubim) sing to the Lamb (Christ) --

"Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred."

QUESTIONS for Lesson 16

1. In what way did God speak to people in Old Testament times?
2. Did God speak directly to men?
3. How can we understand John saying "No man hath seen God", yet others said they had "seen God face to face"?
4. What are the 3 Hebrew names given for God, and what do they mean?
5. What is the meaning of "Yahweh Elohim" and what does it signify?
6. What is "angel" in Hebrew and Greek, and what is the meaning?
7. Give an example of the term "elohim" being applied to men.
8. What description does the Bible provide of angels?
9. Is there any scriptural justification for showing them as babies, and with wings?
10. Is it possible to mistake angels for men? Give 3 instances.
11. Have angels always appeared as glorious and bright in appearance?
12. What similarity will the righteous in the Age to Come have to the angels?
13. Is it possible for angels to sin?
14. What would this mean as to the security and assurance of the permanence of our salvation?
15. From where do the orthodox churches get these debased ideas?
16. Which 2 angels are named?
17. What was the name of the angel that appeared to Daniel and Mary?
18. On what principle can angels speak just as if they were God Himself?
19. Who was the supreme manifestation of God, through whom God spoke?

KEY Lesson 17 THE NATURE AND WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

"Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise partook of the same" -- Hebrews 2:14.

THERE are two extremes of belief concerning Jesus in the world of traditional Christianity. One extreme places him equal to the Father in all respects from all eternity. The other holds him to have been a mere man, simply a good and godly example. The Truth of the Scriptures lies between these two extremes of error.

The traditional concept of the "Trinity", placing Jesus on an eternal equality with God, is opposed to the whole tenor of Scripture. This is illustrated by the following quotations, which show the Son completely separate from, and dependent upon, the Father --

"I (Jesus) can of mine own self do nothing. As I hear I judge, and my judgment is just because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father Who sent me"(John 5:30)

If Jesus were (as according to the Trinity theory) an integral part of the "One God" there could not possibly be two different wills - his will and that of the Father. The scriptures are very clear that there were two separate wills:

"And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matthew 26: 39)

"My doctrine is NOT MINE, but HIS that SENT me" (John 7:16).

"This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the ONLY true God, AND Jesus Christ, whom THOU hast SENT" (John 17:3).

"There is but ONE God, the Father . . . AND one Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 8:6).

"There is ONE God, AND one mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

Note that this last quotation, specifically distinguishing Jesus from the "One God" and calling him a "MAN" was written long after Jesus arose and was glorified.

The Bible clearly teaches that - The Father is eternal and underived. The Son is a manifestation of the Father in a man begotten by the SpiritXX--226--XXs operation upon Mary, born a babe and growing up

and developing and learning as all other men.

The Holy Spirit is the concentration of God's power, His "free spiritXX--228--XX which fills heaven and earth. "HolyXX--228--XX simply means separated for a special divine use. God is supreme above all, even above Christ - "The Head of Christ is God" (1 Corinthians 11:3).

"Then (eternally) shall the Son be subject unto Him (the Father) Who put all things under him, that God may be ALL IN ALL" (1 Corinthians 15:28).

The man Christ Jesus subject to God, that God may be over all: that is the final picture that we are given in the Scriptures.

Again, God statedly knows ALL things - "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." (Acts 15:18).

Contrast this with Jesus, who in the days of his mortal flesh taught that he would one day return to the earth in glory, but clearly states that NO PERSON, not even HE HIMSELF, knew the time of his return, and that such time was known only by the One true God - "but of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, NEITHER THE SON, but the Father" (Mark 13:32).

This is fatal to those who subscribe to the Trinity theory. They try to evade its force by inventing two different Christs: one who is God and knows all things, and at the very same time does not know some things that the other does! This is an absurdity of which the Scriptures are totally ignorant and innocent.

The "Unitarian" theory - the other extreme to the "Trinity" theory - is that Joseph was the actual father of Jesus. But God indicated to Joseph himself that he (Joseph) was not Jesus' father. Joseph intended to put away Mary, to whom he was betrothed, when she was "found with child", but was otherwise directed by the angel -

"Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20)

Mary had previously been shown that God was to be the Father of Jesus- "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

Unitarians are even less reasonable than Trinitarians. While Trinitarians ignore passages, or try to explain them away, the Unitarians deny altogether the authenticity of any passages that conflict with their theory. Because of the present faithless attitude in the churches toward the Bible as the infallibly inspired Word of God, this cavalier method of blue penciling and re-writing Scripture is growing.

The Truth lies in a balance between the Trinitarian and Unitarian errors. The Truth is that Christ was a special man, begotten directly in Mary by God through the power of the Holy Spirit; especially strengthened by God for a special purpose - a man in whom God dwelt and manifested Himself to mankind - a perfect man who perfectly obeyed, and perfectly overcame the "motions of Sin", "Sin in the flesh", the "diabolos that has the power of death". This was a work that no mere, unaided, will of the flesh born man could accomplish. Christ's perfect life and death sacrificial work was God's work in him - to which he perfectly submitted, even unto a horrible death, totally emptying himself of his own will, never for a moment ever allowing the flesh to have its way. The declared purpose of God in bringing Jesus into the world was for the removal of sin from the world:

NOTE "Sin in the flesh"

"Sin-in-the-flesh" is a difficult term for many to understand, in that they feel that somehow it is saying that there is a literal act of transgression in the flesh, or that the mere possession of sin in the flesh is a transgression. Not so. This phrase employs the secondary use of the word sin, by the use of the figure of speech called "metonymy." Perhaps the best illustration of how we are to understand the term comes from the pages of the Bible itself, as in 2 Kings 4:40. "... and it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they (the sons of the prophets) cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot. And they could not eat thereof" Now, this did not mean that somehow there was a literal dead corpse in the pot. It simply meant that there was something contained in the pot that would inevitably make a corpse of any living man. "Death" meant literally "that which would lead to death". The same principle of interpretation applies to the saying that there is "sin in the flesh". It does not mean that the flesh contains literal acts of transgression. "Sin", used in that sense means literally "that which would lead to sin". It means simply that there is contained in the makeup of our nature that which will inevitably cause or lead every possessor of it to commit acts of transgression (the only exception to this rule being Christ, who flawlessly and consistently counteracted it's impulses by the constant application of the Scriptures in loving obedience

to his Father's will throughout his life).

"Sin in the flesh" is synonymous with other terms found in Scripture such as "motions of sin", "law of sin in my members", "devil", "the old man", "the flesh", "body of sin", etc. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). And how was this accomplished? - "He taketh away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews. 9:26).

Here is the Divine key to the meaning and purpose and efficacy of his death -- he PUT AWAY sin BY sacrificing himself. He totally and perfectly during his entire life resisted, overcame, subdued, conquered, immobilized the "Sin-in-the-flesh," "motions of sin," "law of Sin in the members" he shared with all mankind -- with the entire Adamic race of which he was a part and which he himself embodied as the One True Representative Man -- the Perfect, Ideal Man.

And then, in his voluntary death, lovingly submitting to the Father's will, he nailed that Sin-defiled, Sin-cursed flesh, that "Body of Sin", to the tree -- in total condemnation and repudiation of Sin's Flesh, and in total justification and glorification of God's righteousness and holiness in requiring the moral and physical crucifying of that flesh as the only narrow doorway -- through the Death that has been brought on the race by Sin -- into Eternal Life beyond, free from Sin and Death.

He, in himself, and first for himself (but for the sake of his brethren) -- by offering the divinely required cleansing sacrifice for the race -- broke the iron grip of Sin upon the race, shattered the gates of Death, and rose to triumphant sin-free immortality -- no longer oppressed by the motions of Sin's flesh.

And, in God's mercy and love, all who repudiate themselves and become entirely and wholly one with him, and faithfully remain so unto death, share in his victory, his sacrifice-bought redemption and cleansing, his resurrection, and his glorious life for evermore.

Biblekey Definition - "repudiate" means to refuse to accept as valid or true, to not have any part of. And "sacrifice" and "sacrificial" means as an English word it means simply a "sacred work" or "holy work". However, in Biblical Hebrew and Greek it has actually two meanings.

1. Causing to ascend, offering up to God, bringing near to God.

2. Slaughter, put to death.

Jesus said: "I lay down my life for my sheep" (John 10:15).

Paul wrote: "Jesus Christ hath abolished Death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10).

And Peter: "There is NO OTHER NAME whereby we can be saved" (Acts 4:12).

In effect, there is absolutely no possibility of life outside of Christ -- "He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath NOT life" (1 John 5:12). "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man . . . ye have NO LIFE in you" (John 6:53).

"No man cometh unto the Father, BUT BY ME" (John 14:6).

Salvation is directly connected with the first appearing of Jesus. And this is not just a "moral example" which Jesus set for all men to follow, but on the basis of his once-for-all actions and accomplishments in relation to Sin and the Sin-nature -- "Sin in the flesh" -- "the law of Sin in the members" -- by the course of his life and death, and the resurrection and glorification that followed.

The very use of the word "Son" as applied to Jesus -- so frequent and so strongly emphasized -- indicates that his existence was obtained from somewhere, and that he was not from eternity. The expression "Son of God" indicates the source of his life and existence. God declared to him prophetically -- "Thou art My Son: THIS DAY have I begotten thee" (Psalm 2:7).

Here is a specific beginning. Though Jesus now has inherent, endless life, it has been given to him by God:

"As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He GIVEN THE SON to have life in himself" (John 5:26).

It was GIVEN to him -- so clearly there was a time he did not have it. Jesus was not born of the will of the flesh, but directly of the will and operation of God.

Mary gave birth to Jesus through the begetting of the Holy Spirit. This is how he was "Son of God", as we read in Luke 1:35-

"The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

But though he was Son of God by begettal, he was flesh and blood of Adam's race. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same . . . He took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren" (Hebrews. 2:14 17).

"He was MADE SIN (of the Sin nature) for us, who knew no sin" (2 Corinthians 6:21).

In character and action he was absolutely sinless: therefore this could only apply to his mortal, sin cursed constitution, which from Mary was the Sin-nature of Adam. Therefore Paul could say of Jesus -- "God sent His Son in the likeness (identicalness) of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3).

"He was sent forth made of a woman" (Galatians 4:4).

"Of the seed of David, according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3).

Christ's great work and task was to deliver mankind from sin by a perfect, total victory over the Sin nature: a holy, sacrificial life culminating in a divinely ordained sacrificial death to purge and cleanse that nature he bore in common with all mankind, and which made him one with us all. This is God's beautiful provision whereby Christ, as one of us - our Representative and embodiment- achieves in himself for the whole race the victory over, and cleansing from, Sin: so that we -- totally obliterated of "self" personally, and totally absorbed into him -- can in God's wisdom, mercy and love, share that eternal life giving victory over Sin.

If we lose this concept, we have lost a fundamental key to understanding God's message and purpose. Jesus is repeatedly and consistently referred to as a "man" --

"A man approved of God... by miracles which GOD did BY him" (Acts 2:22).

"The man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5) there distinguished from the 'One God': "God will judge the world in righteousness by that man HE hath ordained" (Acts 17:30).

Note that all these statements wherein he is called a "man" were made after his resurrection, glorification and ascension to heaven. He is always called a man -- even in his present condition and position

-- NEVER is he called God: though, as we have observed in Lesson 16, in answering the Jews who objected to him calling himself the "Son of God" he pointed out to them that ALL who are related to God and who in any way represent Him are given the name "god" (Hebrews: elohim, Mighty Ones) in a derived sense - "Is it not written in your Law, 'I (God) said, Ye are GODS'? If He called them 'gods' unto whom the Word of God came . . ." (John 10:34 35).

And he promises to bestow the Name of God upon all who are faithful - "Him that overcometh . . . will write upon him the Name of my God" (Revelation 3:12).

But this is quite different from saying that Jesus is one of three co-eternal co-equals in a three part so-called "Trinity," and it must be carefully distinguished from it. Jesus was tried and disciplined as was Adam, succeeding where Adam failed - "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things he suffered" (Hebrews. 5:8). Consider that long and deeply - he LEARNED obedience through suffering. It fits beautifully into the true Bible picture: it is an absurdity in the Trinity view. Jesus was the manifestation of God by the power of the Holy Spirit, but was not God Himself. The Holy Spirit descended from God upon Jesus in the bodily shape of a dove when John baptized him in Jordan. Thus we read (Acts 10:38) - "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power."

Again, this quotation shows...

- 1) that God is above Jesus: He is the Decider and Giver; Jesus is the receiver and obeyer;
- 2) that Jesus is dependent on the Father, and is not part of a co-equal "Trinity"; and
- 3) that the Holy Spirit is not a Person and is not co-equal with God, but is a power with which God can anoint others in various measures and degrees (see John 3:34).

Jesus did no miracles before he was anointed with the Spirit power. He had no power of himself. He said --

"I can of mine own self do NOTHING" (John 5:30).

"The Father that dwelleth in me, HE doeth the works" (John 14:10).
And his own expression of helplessness on the cross -

"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).

Again, a dreadful, insoluble enigma for the traditional Trinity theory: but a clear, simple, beautiful facet of Divine Truth. God both bestowed the Holy Spirit, and, as it suited His Divine purpose, God withdrew the Holy Spirit from the man Jesus.

Jesus was the "body prepared" for the Divine anointing, and for the fore-ordained Divine work of salvation by overcoming, destroying and publicly crucifying the Diabolos, "Sin in the flesh" (Hebrews 10:5-7)

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"Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body hast Thou prepared me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do THY will, O God:"

This is the "man Christ Jesus" addressing the One Eternal Uncreated God Who had created him, and in obedience to Whom he repudiated his own will, and lovingly submitted to the Father's will.

His own natural human will was to not suffer and die on the cross

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"Abba, Father! All things are possible unto Thee! Take away this cup from me! Nevertheless, not what I will, but what THOU wilt" (Mark 14:36).

"My soul is troubled: what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour! But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name!" (John 12:27-28).

After Jesus was anointed, he was the full manifestation of God in flesh -

"ALL THINGS are of God . . . God was IN Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

When Jesus was glorified, his human nature was changed to immortal nature: the flesh and blood nature was changed to Spirit nature. Thus, as he now exists -

"In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead (divinity, divine nature) bodily" (Colossians 2:9)

But he has not lost his identity with his brethren and sisters, his memory and feeling of the probationary trials of learning and overcoming. He is still a MAN -- though now a glorified, immortalized man -- as all his brethren hope to be --

"We have not a high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities." (Hebrews. 4:15)

Therefore we can approach God through our mediatorial High Priest who knows our weaknesses and infirmities:

"For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Hebrews. 2:18).

We know, of course, that God cannot be tempted -

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:" (James 1:13). Therefore, simply on the strength of that one verse, Jesus is not God.

During the days of his first advent, as testified in the Gospel records, he always did the things which pleased his Father. He always manifested the Father's character and holiness and perfection. He was Immanuel, "God with us", i.e. --

"God manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16).

Therefore he could say to Philip --

"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9).

Paul declared:

"Christ is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15).

"He is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His Person" (Hebrews. 1:3).

Those who saw the Anointed Jesus saw a perfect representation of God, open to human sight. And Christ is the embodiment of the Divine Purpose, the manifestation among men of the Divine Spirit and Power-

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and

truth" (John 1:14).

"God gave not to him the Spirit by measure" (John 3:24).

"In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead (divinity) bodily"
(Colossians 2: 9)

The basic facts concerning Jesus Christ are these. He --

-Was a man, of the Adamic race, begotten in Mary of the Holy Spirit,
a helpless babe, born in Bethlehem.

- Grew up to manhood, increasing in wisdom, learning obedience.

- Remained a private individual, a carpenter, until anointed with
the Spirit by God at his baptism by John the Baptist.

- Was put to death in weakness, after performing the things recorded
in the Gospels (God's works in him, reconciling the world).

- Was deserted of God's power when on the cross. - Was raised > from
the dead by the Father, and is now alive for evermore a glorified
and immortal man, as his brethren hope to be.

These are the consistent teachings of Scripture concerning Jesus.
Such passages as . . .

"Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8:58) . . . are in full harmony with
the overall revelation. Jesus was the pivot point of the Purpose of
God. He was "before Abraham" in the Plan. Furthermore, God spoke through
him; he spoke God's words as the Divine manifestation and mouthpiece,
as he said. God, Who was in him and spoke by him, was the Everlasting
Yahweh: the "I Am," or more correctly, the "I Shall Be."

Abraham, realizing the need of the race, and that God would "provide
a Lamb" to take away the sin of the world (Genesis 22:8), could look
forward to the coming of Jesus, and "was glad" at seeing Christ's
Day (John 8:56).

Biblekey Definition

"subordinate" - secondary, lesser, inferior

"Multitudinous Christ" - a term used to describe the multitude of
those who are redeemed through Christ and stand with him after resurrection

and judgement.

This is the sense in which Jesus had "glory with the Father before the world was" (John 15:7); even as, in a subordinate sense, his Body, the Redeemed, the Multitudinous Christ, had similar "glory" with God "before the world began" - "God hath CHOSEN US in Christ before the foundation of the world... having predestinated us unto the adoption of children" (Ephesians 1:4 5).

"His grace which was given us in Christ before the world began" (2 Timothy 1:9).

Similarly, God said to Jeremiah: "Before I formed thee in the belly, I KNEW THEE... and sanctified thee" (1:5).

And He called Cyrus by name, as if he existed, over 100 years before his birth (leading bemused and confused commentators to divide the book of Isaiah into 2 parts) -- "Thus saith the Lord to His anointed, to Cyrus, whose hand I have holden" (Isaiah 45:1).

Truly he said, and it is a glorious fact: "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).

Christ and the Father were always in perfect unity and harmony. He could not have been "God manifest among men" if they were not; nor could he have been the perfect sacrifice required for the cleansing of the race from Sin in all its ramifications and aspects.

He is now even more so "one with God" than when he made that statement, for he is now one with Him in glorious Divine nature.

Oneness with God is the goal and prize set before all. He himself prayed concerning his brethren and sisters of all ages of the world --

"That they all may be one, AS Thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be ONE IN US" (John 17:21).

Jesus did not exist before his literal birth of Mary. We must accept the plain, literal, recorded facts of his conception and birth and growth to knowledge. But he was, from the beginning, the fore-ordained means of salvation to be provided by God, as manifested in the Garden of Eden, and through all the Scriptures. The deep and symbolic sayings, based upon his central place in the Divine Purpose, and God's dwelling in him and speaking through him, must be understood in the light of

the undoubted, literal, revealed FACTS of his birth as a babe, gradual growth to manhood, "increasing in wisdom," "learning obedience," being "made perfect," overcoming", etc. (Luke 2:52; Hebrews 5:8 9; 2:10; John 16:33).

And he will return to earth in the Second Advent, soon to come, when he will subdue all nations to righteousness and the will of his Father. And when the work is completely accomplished, at the end of the Millennium, he will submit himself unto the Father, that God may be "All in All"

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"When all things shall be subdued unto him (Christ), then shall the son himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be ALL IN ALL." (1 Corinthians 15:28)

QUESTIONS for Lesson 17

1. What two unscriptural theories are commonly held about the position of Jesus in relation to God?
2. Was it possible for Jesus to do the works and miracles of himself, without God's power?
3. Who was the Father of Jesus?
4. Was Jesus born with total knowledge, as he would have had if he had been part of an everlasting, co equal, omniscient 'Trinity'?
5. What scriptural passages indicate that Joseph was not the father of Jesus?
6. What was God's purpose in bringing Jesus into the world?
7. In what way did the putting to death of a perfectly righteous and obedient man declare and manifest the righteousness and justice of God, and give God glory?
8. What had to be sacrificially condemned and publicly put to death before Christ could attain to immortal life and become an Ark of Safety for his people to enter?
9. How do we share the cleansing and redemption Christ accomplished for himself?
10. Is salvation attainable simply by following the good moral life of Jesus, without his sacrificial death and resurrection? (Give passages)
11. What does the description 'Son of God' teach about Jesus' existence?
12. Did Jesus have the same sin defiled flesh and blood nature as we do?
13. Was Jesus lineally descended from David, Abraham and Adam?
14. Was Jesus a man? (Give passages).
15. Is he still a man?
16. How did Jesus 'learn obedience'?
17. How was he 'made perfect'?

18. When, and from whom, did Jesus obtain power to perform miracles?

19. How did Jesus come to have possession of the Holy Spirit?

20. In what way could Jesus say, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father'?

21. In what way was Jesus 'before Abraham'?

22. How was he 'one with the Father'?

23. For what does he pray for his brethren concerning this?

24. What will be the position of Jesus in relation to God after the Millennium?

KEY Lesson 18 BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE DEVIL (Part I)

"As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14). THE 'Devil' is a very prominent personality in the religions of Christendom. He is perceived to be a god of evil, and of necessity one who is far more successful than God Himself, on the basis of 'souls' captured and eternally ruled over. Jesus tells us (Matthew 7:13) that - "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and MANY there be which go in thereat:"

According to the theory of traditional Christianity, this means eternal hell torture for billions of people, under the control of the Devil, with never any hope of escape; while (v. 14)...

"Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and FEW there be that find it."

.... are those few that God is able to persuade to follow His Way. Remember, 'hell' as taught by traditional Christianity is for ever, therefore the 'Devil' of their teaching is also for ever. This is the dismal pattern now being set for all eternity for this beautiful universe: that the vast majority of mankind are hopeless slaves of the Devil in eternal tortures: billions and billions of people tortured forever for 70 years of sins!

Is this theory scriptural? Does the Bible actually teach such a dreadful and frightful concept? Is it possible that God has created the vast majority of people to the end that, after a brief unhappy life, they may scream in torture for ever after?

While it may be true that this teaching does not receive the focus and emphasis it once did, it is just as much as ever an inescapable part of the official doctrine of traditional religion. This picture cannot be avoided. It must be faced as the inseparable consequence of the 'immortal soul', 'burning hell', 'personal devil' theories. Dislike it as they may, orthodox 'Christians' must face up to this hideous eternal nightmare as the inevitable outcome of the theories they promote and endorse.

Again, the most important question: Is it scriptural? This lesson, and the lesson following, will carefully consider what the Bible actually has to say about this subject. THERE IS A BIBLE DEVIL To be fair, there are some points upon which the Bible is in agreement with traditional Christianity. Truly the Bible does speak of a 'devil'. Both represent the Devil as the Great Enemy of mankind: subtle, evil and powerful--who

must be faced and attacked and overcome to attain to salvation and escape eternal punishment. However, Bible teaching parts company with traditional Christianity regarding the type and duration of the 'eternal punishment' as we will observe in this lesson.

Who or what is the Bible devil? Does it even matter? Very much so. The briefest consideration reveals that it is essential that we know who (or what) the Devil is, and how to successfully combat and overcome him (or it).

The Devil is to all practical purposes commonly perceived to be omnipotent and omniscient, for while supervising the eternal torture of billions already in hell, he is at the same time capable of simultaneously tempting the entire population currently in existence on the earth. Anyone who will be ruling increasing billions to all eternity is obviously very close to God in power.

The Devil is also commonly regarded as being immortal. Some Christian denominations actively teach this, some do not - but all logically necessitate it, for if hell and eternal torture is for ever, then the Devil has to be for ever also. Obviously hell cannot just run itself: and to think of the Devil being destroyed, and hell running right on for ever without him makes the traditional picture seem even more absurd.

But what does the Bible say? AN IMMORTAL SINNER IS A SCRIPTURAL IMPOSSIBILITY. If there is one thing the Scriptures make plain, it is the inseparability of Sin and Death -- "The wages of Sin is Death" (Romans 6:23).

"The soul that sinneth, it shall DIE" (Ezekiel 18:4).

"By one man Sin entered the world, and Death by Sin" (Romans 5:12).

"Lust bringeth forth sin: sin bringeth forth Death" (James 1:15).

This is God's immutable law. He is righteous and holy, and this universe is His. It has no place for immortal sinners. Immortality is related only to holiness. Immortal sinners are a pagan superstition. The myths of the heathen are full of them. Similarly, and on the same premise, a sinning immortal is a scriptural impossibility.

The common conception that the Devil is a 'fallen angel cast out of God's holy heaven for rebellion' is a terrible, fleshly travesty of the true, beautiful Divine picture of the perfect relationship between God and the holy angels. If this conception were true (which we fervently thank God it is not!), and if rebellion of holy immortals is possible, then the present heavenly condition among the angels, and the future

promised immortal condition of the Redeemed, who are to be 'equal to the angels' (Luke 20:36), is no improvement on this present vale of evil, uncertainty and tears. If sin is possible in the eternal, immortal state, then what is it all worth? What is the purpose of striving for it?

THE BIBLE DEVIL IS SIN PERSONIFIED

The Bible Devil is SIN: Sin in every aspect and manifestation - particularly the very root of Sin: 'Sin in the flesh', the 'law of Sin in the members', the inherent tendency of all human flesh (since Adam's fall and sentence) toward evil, unholiness and opposition to God and His wise, holy, life giving commands.

The Scriptures tell us that Jesus partook of human nature, and died, for the express purpose of DESTROYING THE DEVIL -- "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14). He partook of weak, mortal, human flesh so that by dying he could 'destroy the devil' Ponder this scriptural fact long and well. Be sure it fits your conception of what the devil is, and how the devil was destroyed by Christ. This passage contains the key to the understanding of this subject.

What DID Christ overcome? What DID he nail to the cross in repudiation and condemnation? - "...that by death he might destroy the devil" (Hebrews 2:14). "...that he might take away the Sin of the world" (John 1: 29).

"He put away Sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26).

"That the body of Sin might be destroyed" (Romans 6:6).

It is inescapably clear from these passages that the Bible devil is not the supernatural monster of Christendom. It would be an utter absurdity to say that Christ was made of weak human nature so that 'by death' he could destroy such a powerful, immortal creature. But, by his perfect life and his voluntary, sacrificial death, he did destroy in himself the Bible 'devil' and his works. He totally overcame and held powerless the innate 'motions of Sin' -- the 'law of Sin in the members' or the 'Sin in the flesh' of which Paul speaks -- finally in triumph nailing it to the cross in total defeat and condemnation of Sin and vindication of God.

By this process he totally, eternally freed himself from the Bible devil who has all mankind in hopeless bondage, as far as their own efforts are concerned. This freedom he has personally achieved, he now offers to all who repudiate and crucify the Bible devil -- 'Sin in the flesh' -- in themselves and make themselves part of him by baptism and total loving devotion and obedience thereafter.

THE DEVIL HAS THE POWER OF DEATH

We also learn here (Hebrews 2:14) that the devil has the power of death. This is a further positive proof that the devil is not a person. The power of death is manifestly the ultimate power. As a Person, only God has the power of death, as He has all power.

The debased orthodox conception that God would give the supreme ultimate power of death to an evil creature like the orthodox Devil is an absurd and monstrous idea. But the Bible says the devil has the power of death. Yes, that is true. SIN does have the power of death -- not in the sense of possessing an authority that only God controls, but in the sense that Sin inevitably brings Death, and all who serve Sin receive Death as his (Sin's) wages.

And, apart from this deliverance provided in Christ, Sin-in-the-flesh, the 'law of Sin in the members' inexorably takes every human being into eternal death. Here indeed is something possessing the 'power of death' that is still in full harmony with God's eternal, exclusive possession of all power.

JesusXX--226--XX mission was, by death, to destroy that which has the power of death: that is, SIN. Jesus' mission is to totally destroy Sin from the earth, first in himself and then universally, and -- with Sin -- also Death -- "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the world" (John 1:29).

"He put away Sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26).

SIN IS PERSONIFIED

We find that Sin is vividly personified as a master, a destroyer, a deceiver

"Sin hath reigned unto Death" (Romans 5 21).

"Sin wrought in me" (Romans 7:8).

"Sin deceived me.. Sin slew me" (Romans 7:11).

"To whom ye yield yourselves to obey, his servants ye are, whether of Sin ..." (Romans 6:16).

"Let not Sin reign in your body, that ye should obey it" (Romans 6:12).
The Bible devil is this personification of Sin. Many things are personified in Scripture, with impressive effect and interest --

Riches: "Ye cannot serve 2 masters: God and Mammon" (Matthew 6:24).
Wisdom: "Wisdom hath builded her house . . hewn out her 7 pillars" (Proverbs 9 :1).

Israel: "I will build thee, O Virgin of Israel" (Jeremiah 31:4).

Jerusalem: "Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem" (Isaiah 52 :1).

The Redeemed: "The marriage of the Lamb ... his wife hath made herself ready" (Revelation 19:7).

The elements of nature: "Floods clap their hands, hills are joyful," (Psalm 98:8)

"waste places sing", (Isaiah 52:9) etc.

The devil, or the 'motions of Sin', 'Sin in the flesh' is also personified under the name of the 'Old Man' - "Put off the OLD MAN with his deeds" (Colossians 3:9). "Put off the OLD MAN . . put on the New Man" (Ephesians 4:22 24). "Our OLD MAN is crucified with him" (Romans 6:6).

This last quotation is especially notable. Christ is the Pattern and the Example. He crucified the 'Old Man' the 'Devil' in both his life and his death. So must we -- "Crucify the FLESH with its affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24). "If ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13). Jesus tells us to 'take up the cross' and follow him (Matthew 10:38). And so we find Paul saying that (by his self disciplined and sacrificial life) he was -- "Crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20).

WHY SO MUCH PERSONIFICATION?

Why do the Scriptures use so much personification? Is there not a danger of it being confusing and misleading, as with the common idea of the Devil and the Holy Spirit? Not for the right people. Not for

the diligent, loving student of the Word. And these are the only ones who matter to God. God deliberately confuses the shallow, the fleshly minded and the wicked --

"God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned that believe not the Truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:11 12).

These are very strong words, from a loving and merciful God. We do well to heed them. God is indeed a loving Father to those who totally seek Him, but to no others.

These proofs and examples of personification furnish an answer to the question why Sin in the abstract should be personified. They show, first, that principles and things are personified in the Bible; and, second, that this is done with great advantage. There is a warmth in such style of speech, which is wanting in expressions that conform to the strict proprieties of grammar and fact. This warmth and expressiveness are characteristic of the Bible in every part of it, and belong to the oriental languages generally.

Of course it is open to abuse, like every other good, but its effectiveness is beyond question. The subject of the devil and sin is an excellent illustration. Sin is the great slanderer of God in virtually denying His supremacy, wisdom and goodness, and it is the great ground of accusation against human beings, even unto death. How appropriate, then, to style it the 'ACCUSER, SLANDERER, LIAR.' This is accomplished with great effectiveness by the use of the term 'devil.' But through the word not being translated but merely Anglicized, the English reader -- reared with English theological prejudices -- is prevented from seeing it.

NO DEVIL IN 4000 YEARS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is a record of God's intimate dealings with people for nearly 4000 years. Nowhere throughout it does the popular doctrine of a personal devil appear. The Law of Moses is a very detailed system of ordinances and religious instruction. Nowhere in it is there the slightest hint of any such thing as the orthodox Devil.

God is always represented as supreme and alone in power, Himself holding the power of death. The relationship is solely between an individual and God, and it is individuals themselves that are held directly responsible by God for their own actions. It is typical behavior of human nature to try to shift the responsibility for one's actions to someone or

something else. In the Old Testament, however, there is never a mention of any external, personal, supernatural tempter. Yet according to orthodoxy, this is the greatest danger people should be warned about. If there were such a thing as this Devil of orthodoxy, constantly seeking to trap people in his coils, it is impossible that God should not have constantly, urgently warned people against him.

The Bible -- Old Testament and New -- does constantly warn mankind over and over against the evil and deceptiveness of his own heart, which is the true Bible devil. There are a very few scattered items in the Old Testament that are twisted into some kind of support for the orthodox idea, which we plan to look at in this article or later, as the serpent in Eden, 'Azazel' (to do with the scapegoat), Job's 'satan'; the parables of the kings of Tyre (Ezekiel 28) and of Babylon (Isaiah 14), the contention for the 'body of Moses' (Zechariah 2; Jude 9). It will be seen that none of these give any support to the orthodox Devil theory, but rather against it.

REVELATION 12: DRAGON CAST FROM HEAVEN

Revelation 12 is quoted to support the orthodox theory of the Devil. This, when looked at in detail and in context, is clearly seen to be part of the 'things which must be hereafter' (that is, relative to John's day, Revelation 4:1).

With regard to the time frame of the prophecies of Revelation, some point to Revelation 1:19 which indicates that the subject matter references 'things which ARE' rather than 'things which shall be hereafter'. True. John does speak of 'things which ARE' as well as of 'things which SHALL BE'. The 'things which are' are dealt with in chapters 2 and 3, i.e. the messages to the Ecclesias (churches) then existing in Asia Minor concerning conditions then existent. But when we come to chapter 4, we are told that NOW John is to be speaking henceforth of 'things which must be HEREAFTER' (v 1).

The Revelation is a book of symbol. It is stated to be in signs (Revelation 1:1), and it obviously is so: 7 headed beasts, composite leopard / bear / lion beasts, 6 winged creatures covered with eyes, burning mountains cast into the sea, crowned locusts with men's faces and women's hair and scorpion's tails, etc.

Revelation 12, which speaks of the Dragon cast from heaven, begins with a woman in heaven, clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet and crowned with 12 stars. The Dragon which opposes her has 7 heads and 10 crowned horns. This Dragon casts a flood after the Woman. The

earth opens her mouth and swallows the flood. All this is obviously (and, when looked into, is seen to be) a part of the 'signification' of the political events on earth between John's day and Christ's return. This chapter is, like most of the rest of the book, an animated political cartoon, prophesying in symbol the events to do with Europe and the Catholic Church, especially as related to the well-being of the true people of God, whom both the pagans and the Catholic Church persecuted. The chapter represents the rise of the Emperor Constantine and the Catholic Church to political power in the Roman Empire, and the consequent casting of the pagan Dragon power out of the political heavens. A study of the whole book, in the light of a true understanding of the Gospel of the Kingdom, makes this quite clear and convincing.

THE SERPENT IN EDEN

The Eden narrative speaks of the serpent as the most intelligent of the 'beasts of the field,' endowed with the power of speech to accomplish God's purpose. (For a similar example of this phenomenon see Numbers 22:21-34) There is not the slightest hint of any Devil in the background motivating and manipulating the serpent. Its actions are attributed by Scripture entirely to its own 'subtlety': and IT - not the Devil of orthodoxy - is sentenced for its presumption, while the one commonly assumed to be the real offender is not even mentioned, let alone condemned as the true source of the evil.

'ANGELS THAT SINNED'

For 'proof' of the Devil, we are referred to the 'angels that sinned' -- "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (Tartarus) and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 Peter 2:4). "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness to the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6)

This is all we are ever told about these sinning angels or 'messengers' They are clearly not of the holy 'elect' angels of God, for such cannot sin. The idea that they can is derived from pagan mythology, wherein 'gods' continually sin. God's holy angels are immortal, and sin and immortality are totally impossible associates in the pure Bible picture. Note well that these sinning angels (whoever they are) are 'reserved in chains of darkness' (obviously death) UNTO a (future) judgment.' They certainly therefore cannot be the Devil's angels of orthodoxy that roam at will doing the Devil's bidding.

Whoever they are, they give no support to the Devil theory. Who they

are we are not told. It is clear from the way Paul refers to them in that passage that at that time more was known about whoever it was that was referred to by this term 'angels' - information we do not have. But seeing God has not seen fit to tell us any more about them than He has, it is wisest not to speculate. Certainly 'angels' bound in chains waiting judgment give no support to the orthodox doctrine.

ISAIAH 14: LUCIFER, SON OF THE MORNING

Orthodoxy takes us to Isaiah 14:12 - "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! "

Orthodoxy tells us this is their Devil, now a mighty victorious power, simultaneously tempting billions and torturing billions, eternally ruling over far more of the human race that God is at present or ever will be. But the Bible says this Lucifer is a 'man' (v.16), become weak (v.10), the King of Babylon (v.4), in the grave and covered with worms (v.11).

EZEKIEL 28: THE ANOINTED CHERUB

Then we are taken to Ezekiel 28:12-14 - "The anointed cherub . . in the garden of God . . perfect in beauty".

But what are the facts? Who does the Bible say it is? The Bible states that it is the 'prince of Tyre,' a 'man' (v. 2), to die, be slain, and be brought to the pit (vs. 8-10). It is all but incredulous that traditional organized Christianity finds it necessary to seize on such wording -- plainly referring in both cases to men whom God specifically identifies and is condemning -- to try to put together a supposed teaching of a Devil! Why? Simply because there is no legitimate scriptural support for this pagan idea adopted from the heathen mythology of Egypt, Greece, Rome, etc. When we look into the checkerwork of passages stitched together to give a picture of the Devil as presented by traditional Christianity, we find there is nothing there but assumption and misapplication.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 18

1. According to popular doctrine, who is more successful in securing men's lives, God or the 'Devil'?
2. Is it important that we understand who or what the Bible devil is?
3. What was the purpose and mission of Jesus in relation to the devil?
4. Why did Jesus have the same nature as we have?
5. How did this enable him to 'destroy the devil'?
6. Would being of flesh and blood, and dying, enable him to destroy the Devil as taught by orthodoxy?
7. Is an immortal sinner, or a sinning immortal, a scriptural possibility?
8. What is the Bible devil?
9. Can any person but God have the 'power of death'?
10. How does Sin have the 'power of death' ?
11. What is Jesus' ultimate mission in relation to Sin and Death?
12. What was the first step in fulfilling this mission?
13. Why does the Bible use personification so much?
14. What about the danger of it being misunderstood (as orthodoxy misunderstands the personification of the Holy Spirit and of the Devil)?
15. To whom does God send a 'strong delusion that they may believe a lie'?
16. Did God ever warn Israel about a personal, supernatural Devil?
17. Did He ever warn them about their own evil hearts and tendency to sin?
18. What is Rev. 12 all about?
19. How do we know it does not refer to supposed fall from heaven of the 'Devil' of orthodoxy?
20. Is there any mention of the Devil in connection with the events in Eden?

21. How can we be sure the 'angels that sinned' had nothing to do with orthodoxy's Devil?

22. Who is 'Lucifer' in Isaiah 14?

23. Who is the 'anointed cherub' of Ezekiel 28?

KEY Lesson 19 BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE DEVIL (Part 2)

"The angel of the Lord stood in the way for a satan against Balaam"
Numbers 22:22.

"Jesus said to Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan; thou savorest the things that be of men" Matthew 16:23.

'SATAN' is the common Hebrew word meaning 'Adversary' and is so translated in most of its occurrences in the Old Testament. In some places the translators, for some reason, chose arbitrarily to transfer the word rather than translate it properly. If they had been consistent, the result would have been a severe blow to the 'supernatural personal Devil' theory.

It is beneficial to study all the occurrences of the word 'Satan' in the Old Testament. There is much to be learned from a careful review of these passages. It will be noted, in every case but one (1 Chronicles 21:1) that when it is translated 'Satan' the margin always shows 'adversary' (The margin only occurs for the first reference in Job, but applies all through). If the passages are fairly and honestly examined, any apparent support for the traditional theory of a personal Devil based on the word 'Satan' completely disappears. Note that in Numbers 22:22,32 an angel of God is termed a 'satan'; also in I Samuel 29:4 note that the Philistines considered David a 'satan' to them. David spoke of his own nephews (sons of Zeruah) as 'satans' (2 Samuel 19:22). In two cases God stirred up human 'satans' to punish Solomon (1 Kings 11:14, 23, 25), though earlier, when he was obedient, there were no 'satans' to trouble him (1 Kings 4:5).

GOD IS TERMED A 'SATAN' TO WICKED ISRAEL In one case God himself was termed a 'satan' to Israel because of their disobedience. If an angel of God could be a satan (adversary) to a wicked man (Balaam), then it is quite appropriate for God Himself to be a satan (adversary) to wicked men. Compare the two parallel accounts of the same incident --

"The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He (the Lord) moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah..." (2 Samuel 24:1)

"Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel" (1 Chronicles 21:1)

God does not cause people to sin. The sinful tendencies of human nature we possess result in evil actions that have very negative consequences, not only for the individual involved, but also for many in his or

her circle of influence. David recognized his own guilt, and was punished for this act. God is always perfectly righteous and just, but He has a perfect right - as Creator of all - to enforce His law and punish sin in any way He wishes. If we deliberately entertain sinful ideas, He may arrange that we be moved to put them into action, so they may be brought out into the open and punished, for sinful ideas are themselves sin, and merit punishment (Matthew 5:28). God often punishes with kindness and love, to correct us and save us from worse sin, and ultimate rejection.

Why, when they knew from the parallel passage who the 'adversary' was, did the AV translators use 'Satan' here, rather than properly translating it, as elsewhere where they had no choice, where 'Satan' would have been absurd?

It will be noted that in Psalm 109:6 and Zechariah 3 :1-2, where they have 'Satan' in the text, they have 'adversary' in the margin, dissolving any support for the personal Devil theory. In fact, in three other places in the same Psalm, they have rendered the same word correctly as 'adversary' And even in v. 6 where they have 'Satan: the universal principle of parallelism in Hebrew poetry - (saying the same thing twice in different words: see Psalm 105 all through for a striking example) - confirms the true meaning -

"Set a wicked man over him; and let Satan (an adversary) stand at his right hand."

THE 'SATAN' OF ZECHARIAH 3:1,2

The 'Satan' of Zechariah 3:1,2 who resists Joshua in symbolic vision is clearly illustrated by the literal history of the same period

"Then stood up Joshua . . and builded the altar . . for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries . Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that they builded the Temple . . then they came . . Then the people of the land weakened them, and troubled them, and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose . . and wrote an accusation against them:' (Ezra 3:2,3; 4:1)

Here is a clear example of scriptural satanism. 'Accuser' is one of the meanings of the Hebrew word 'satan'.

THE 'SATAN' OF JOB

This leaves only the record in Job where the word 'Satan' occurs (but

there again, the AV has the revealing term 'adversary' in the margin). The introduction of the orthodox personal Devil theory into the Job picture is totally incongruous. This 'Satan' or 'adversary' was 'among the sons of God' (the worshipers) who came to 'present themselves before the Lord' (Job 1:6). To picture the traditional Devil in such a situation is an absurdity, and betrays a very low concept of God. To see it for what it really says - an adversary of Job, a professed worshiper of God who was jealous and envious of Job's favor with God - is perfectly natural and reasonable, and is the picture anyone would get if it were translated correctly. To suppose that God would negotiate and argue with a supernatural personage almost as powerful as Himself - as traditional theology would have us think - and give him power to bring God's faithful servant Job to the very gate of death, illustrates the depth of confusion to which popular religion has sunk.

As to the power used to bring all the calamities upon Job, a careful reading of the narrative will show that all the superhuman power manifested was entirely of God, and under God's control - "Thou movest Me (God) against him (Job), to destroy him" (Job 2:3). "The hand of God hath touched me" (Job speaking) - Job 19:21.

"His brethren comforted him over all the evil the Lord brought on him" (Job 42:11).

This last statement is by the inspired narrator, and confirms Job's own words. True, it does say that -

"So went Satan forth . . . and smote Job with sore boils:" (Job 2:7)
The other passages above clearly show that this power was of God. We often find ordinary men being given power to do superhuman things, as it suited the purpose of God. And we find such cases spoken of as both God doing what was done, and the human agent doing it.

Speaking of the plagues of Egypt (which included the infliction of boils), we are told:

"The Lord spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand and cause frogs to come up" . . .

"Moses and Aaron did all these wonders:" (Exodus 8:5; 11:10)

And yet in the same context (as here in Job), it is described as God doing it.

MAN'S GREAT ADVERSARY IS SIN

The great Adversary of all mankind is Sin in the flesh: the evil, rebellious 'motions of sin' within all human flesh; the 'mind of the flesh' which, says Paul, is -

"Enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can be" (Romans 8:7).

This ingrained evil principle of human nature led Paul to further say...

"I am carnal (fleshly), sold under Sin . . Sin dwelleth in me . . . In my flesh dwelleth no good thing . . Sin dwelleth in me . . . I see a law in my members . . the law of Sin in my members . . . They that are in the flesh cannot please God . . If ye live after the flesh ye shall die . . The flesh lusteth against the Spirit" (Romans 7:14,23; 8:8; Galatians 5:17).

Such could be multiplied many fold, illustrating the Bible Satan. Here are a few...

"Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, thefts, etc." (Matthew 15:19).

"The works of the flesh are: adultery, hatred, wrath, strife, murders, etc." (Galatians 5:19 21).

"ALL that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father, but of the world" (I John 2:16).

So we find that in the New Testament, the term 'Satan, or 'adversary, is applied to this evil principle in human flesh, in its various manifestations: personal and political.

The word 'satan' was carried over from the Hebrew language into the Greek of the New Testament. LetXX--226--XXs consider the occurrences of the word 'satan' in the New Testament... If these passages are examined, they will all be seen to fit into the pattern of standing for the Sin principle, or for individuals or organizations serving and motivated by those principles (except in one case where Christ, speaking to the Pharisees 'in parables' (Mark 3:22 26 Matthew 12:24,27), adopts their own superstitious nomenclature - Beelzebub, Satan - and confounds them with it.

PETER WAS A 'SATAN'

Peter, in love, misguided by the natural inclinations of the flesh (the Satan), remonstrated with Christ about the latter's coming sacrificial death. Jesus said - "Get thee behind me, Satan, thou savorest of the things of men" (Matthew 16:23; Mark 8:33).

Peter was motivated by natural fleshly feelings that in natural blindness were contrary to the will and purpose of God, and contrary to true wisdom and goodness. There was certainly no supernatural force of Evil involved. To call him a 'satan' in the scriptural sense was quite appropriate, and in harmony with his 'good, but misguided, intentions. But to call him 'Satan' under these circumstances if it signified the evil, orthodox, God hating Devil, would be an impossible thing for Christ to say to him in rebuke of his flesh misguided love for his Master. Peter was certainly an 'adversary' to the purpose of God in his objection to the sacrificial death of Christ, but the traditional, popular view requires us to believe that Christ identified him with a supernatural force which is the total epitome and embodiment of the utmost and most extreme depth of viciousness and evil.

There's a similar illustration of what the Bible 'Satan' really is in Acts 5. Peter said:

"Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" (v. 3).

Then expressing the same thing more literally, he said (v.4)

"Why hast THOU conceived this thing in thine heart?"

And a little later to Ananias' wife Sapphira, he said (v. 9)

"How is it ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?"
PAUL'S 'MESSENGER OF SATAN'

These parallelisms are given us to show us the use and meaning of 'satan'. Paul said that, because of his unique and high privileges in divine revelations -

"There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (2 Corinthians 12:7).

Here again, the traditional orthodox view necessitates the idea that Christ was allied with and using an evil fiend, the arch enemy of God, to torment Paul. This cooperative service by the Devil was for

Paul's eternal benefit. Therefore we are presented here with Christ and the Devil as being allied together for Paul's good!

Such are the results of the viewpoint of traditional Christianity. To any who have a scriptural conception of the relationship between Christ and Paul, this monstrous view that introduces the God of Evil into their relationship is impossible. But it is reasonable and harmonious that Christ, in love, laid upon Paul a bodily affliction - part of the general, present, passing Sin constitution that afflicts the world (in hope - Romans 8:20) - so he would be constantly reminded of his fleshly weakness and total dependence upon divine support.

It is true that according to the traditional orthodox theory, God and 'Satan' are in a partnership, and Satan faithfully does God's bidding in gleefully torturing forever to all eternity those who have not pleased God in this present brief life. But while Satan is thus represented in this theory as allied with God, and used by God to torture the wicked, they are at the same time represented as being in deadly conflict and competition, struggling for the 'immortal soul' of each individual.

'DELIVERING UNTO SATAN'

Paul said (1 Timothy 1:20) that he had delivered Hymeneus and Alexander to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme. And similarly, he instructs the Corinthian brethren, concerning offenders against the Truth who were in the Body -

"Deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:5).

The meaning of 'delivering to Satan' is clear from the context...
 "That he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you."
 (v.2)

"PUT AWAY from among you that wicked person" (v.13).

And the stated purpose of removing such from the Body -

"For the destruction of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (v.5)

- is similarly explained in the context -

"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? PURGE OUT therefore the old leaven (the ungodly members) that ye may be a new lump." (v. 7)

The 'spirit to be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus' is the spirit and purity of the Body, purged and preserved by removing from it the sinful and fleshly elements which, if not removed, would 'leaven' and corrupt the whole lump. For the Body's self protection from the leaven of sin, to 'deliver someone to Satan' is to put them out into the world of Sin, where they belong as sinners, but with the hope of their awakening and reformation. But to give them to the orthodox Devil is to consign them to the hopeless, endless tortures of hell. Unless one were determining a man's final judgment the last thing to do would be to give him to the orthodox Devil. That's clearly not the purpose of disfellowship.

Other plain, literal commands concerning 'delivering to Satan' are - "A heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject" (Titus 3:10).

"Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly .. . If any man obey not our word . . have no company with him" (2 Thessalonians 3:6,14).

"Mark them which cause offenses . . and avoid them" (Romans 16:17). But the purpose is correctional, in hope, not consignment to the monster of traditional Christianity -

"Have no company with him, that he may be ashamed Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him AS A BROTHER" (2 Thessalonians 3:14 15).

Paul says to the believers at Thessalonica:

"I would have come to you, but Satan hindered" (I Thessalonians 2:18). When we look into the history of the case, we find that that which hindered Paul was the opposition and evil designs of wicked men, men who lived and operated according to the sinful motions of the flesh. There were plenty of these in the record, but no appearance of the orthodox Devil.

'SATAN' IN REVELATION OBVIOUSLY REFERS TO MEN

When the general meaning of the Revelation is understood (and it must be understood in order to obtain a complete understanding of the Gospel),

the references in Revelation 12 and Revelation 20 will be seen to be conclusive against the orthodox personal Devil theory; and that under the terms 'Dragon', 'Serpent', 'Devil' and 'Satan': the political power and dominion of the flesh- Sin's Flesh (Romans 8:3) - is being represented.

This Dragon / Serpent / Devil / Satan power has 7 heads and 10 horns (Revelation 12:3), and we are told in literal explanation of these symbols (Revelation 17:12 14) that these 10 horns are 10 kings who, at the time of the end, make war against Christ when he returns to subdue the earth and set up his Kingdom. And these kings are related (Revelation 17:18) to the 'Great City which ruleth over the kings of the EARTH'. This is a very earthly picture throughout.

The Great City that ruled the earth in John's day, and for ages afterward, and for centuries beyond that in a different (but very real) form, was ROME. So the Revelation establishes the Dragon / Devil / Satan power as the political embodiment of Sin's Flesh in its world ruling manifestation.

WHAT ENTICES MAN TO SIN? The traditional view is that every person is tempted when he or she is enticed by Satan. This is true - if we understand what is meant by 'Satan' The Scripture says--

"Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin" (James 1:14 15).

It will be noted that there is absolutely no mention of any 'Satan' in the process. THIS is the Bible Satan, in its tempting and enticing activity: the 'lust of the flesh"; the 'law of Sin in the members'. Let us be sure we recognize and fight the real enemy - SIN - in all its forms! A fundamental and thorough knowledge of God's revealed scripture message will enable us to do that.

SATAN'S' SEAT' IN PERGAMOS

The identification of Satan with the Sin motivated opposition of wicked men to the things of God is further illustrated by Revelation 2:13, where the apostle John is conveying a message from Christ to the faithful believers who lived in Pergamos -

"I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my Name . . even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth."

According to the concept of traditional organized Christianity, Satan's 'seat' - or headquarters - was never in Pergamos in Asia Minor, but in a fiery burning Hell. But Pergamos was at that time a center and stronghold of men who opposed the Truth of God, and persecuted His people. The simple picture is clear. Man's great Enemy and Adversary is the fleshly mind: both his own from within, and the individual or organized opposition and antagonism from without. The Enemy of the Truth and the people of God is Sin in all its world filling, world ruling forms. And this is how the Scriptures present it.

STUDY ROMANS 7 FOR THE TRUE BIBLE PICTURE

Read Romans 7, where it is analyzed most deeply. There is absolutely no hint or mention of any supernatural evil creature, nor any room in the argument for him. But we do find Sin - the Sin principle in the flesh - very vividly personified as the great Enemy and source of evil. Introduce the sulfurous hoofed and horned Fiend of popular superstition, and the whole picture is confused and contradictory. He is of necessity an accepted partner of God, and at the same time immeasurably more successful in the snaring of 'immortal souls' than God.

A personal Satan, a monster of evil, torturing the vast majority of mankind forever without end, makes the Divine purpose with man a hideous, monstrous failure; a terrible, tragic, monumental multiplication of suffering and evil, world without end. It would seem impossible to really believe that this is the eventual, eternal culmination of the Divine Purpose with mankind! But the traditional theory and teaching of a supernatural personal Devil, eternal Hell theory necessitates it.

Fortunately, the Scriptures do not. To this point we have focused largely upon what the 'devil' and 'satan' are not. In the third and final lesson regarding this vital subject we will explore in greater depth exactly what the Bible indicates the devil to be. This exercise will cover some very important Gospel fundamentals that are key to understanding how God's righteousness has been demonstrated and declared in the process of bringing salvation to us. *

QUESTIONS for Lesson 19

1. From what language has the word 'Satan' been derived?
2. What is the basic meaning of the word 'Satan'?
3. Have righteous individuals been called 'satans'? Give illustrations.
4. What other word appears in the AV for 'satan'?
5. Have wicked men been classed as 'satans'? Give illustrations.
6. In what way have the translators not been entirely faithful in rendering 'satan'?
7. Who constituted the 'Satan' of Zechariah 3?
8. Who brought all the evil upon Job? Give Scripture in proof.
9. In what way was Job's adversary able to bring affliction on Job?
10. Has God ever been a 'Satan, or adversary? When?
11. Was any righteous person in the New Testament ever called a 'satan'?
12. How did the Hebrew word 'satan' happen to be used in the NT, which is in Greek?
13. Who was the 'satan' that opposed Paul visiting the believers at Thessalonica?
14. Can we be 'satans' in opposing the will of God, if we are sincerely trying (in ignorance) to do what is right? Give a scriptural example.
15. What is meant by 'being delivered to Satan, to learn not to blaspheme'?
16. How do we know the 'Satan' of Revelation is a symbol of human organizations?
17. What was the 'satan' that influenced Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5?
18. What is the tempting and enticing force in the lives of all people?
19. From what source does all the evil of the world proceed?
20. What is the great 'Satan' we must all fear and oppose and overcome?
21. What force alone is able to assist us to overcome this great Adversary?

KEY Lesson 20 BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE DEVIL (Part 3)

"Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil (diabolos)?"
John 6:70

"Even so must their wives be grave, not devils (diabolos)" 1 Timothy
3:11

We have seen that 'satan' is the common Hebrew word meaning 'adversary', and is so used throughout Scripture; angels and even God Himself being 'satans' or adversaries, as circumstances required. The word 'devil' is used interchangeably with satan in many places in the Bible. But it should be noted that the term 'devil', while applied, like 'satan', to different people, is never used in a good sense, while 'satan' (adversary) sometimes is.

DIABOLOS - A COMMON NOUN MEANING FALSE ACCUSER OR SLANDERER

The word 'devil' is a translation of (and is derived from) the Greek word 'diabolos', a common noun meaning 'false accuser, slanderer'. It is a compound of dia, 'thru', and ballo, 'to cast'. It therefore means 'to strike through'. In a figurative sense it means 'to stab with an accusation or evil report'. Parkhurst's Lexicon defines diabolos as 'an accuser or slanderer'. Strong gives 'traducer,' which means 'false accuser'.

We note that diabolos, like satan, is a common noun, and not a proper name. As Jesus applied 'satan' to Peter, so he applied 'devil' to Judas (see John 6:70 above). Judas was a liar, a betrayer and a false accuser. Therefore he was a 'devil'. Paul used exactly the same word (diabolos in the Greek) to describe both men and women who would not be led by godly characteristics

"Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers (diabolous)" -
1 Timothy 3:11.

"Men shall be.. without natural affection, false accusers (diabolo)"
- 2 Timothy 3:2-3.

"Aged women, likewise.. as becometh holiness, not false accusers (diabolous)"
- Titus 2:3.

The word 'devil' in these 3 places does not so appear in the common versions of the Bible, but has been translated properly in a manner to convey the right meaning. But the translators have not been so faithful in other places, and have thus caused confusion. If they had translated the Greek word 'diabolos' consistently, the Bible could

have been its own interpreter, as it should be, and as it is -- when read and studied in the form of its original language.

POLITICAL SYMBOL: TEN HORNS equals TEN KINGS

This is clear by what Christ said to his faithful followers about the Pagan Roman authorities persecuting and afflicting them- "The devil (diabolos) shall cast some of you into prison" (Revelation 2:10). It was certainly the political authorities who put the disciples in prison. We know how the Roman government persecuted the early Christians. This world power, politically organized as the Pagan or Papal authorities, is in the same book called - "The Dragon, that old serpent, the devil (diabolos) and satan" (Revelation 20:2). This was the 'Dragon' that had 10 Horns, which were explained to be '10 kings' (Revelation 17:12): obviously a political symbol. These are the political-religious forces of the sinful world, made up by the aggregation of sinning men and women, which are the basis of the separation between God and man. As an entity, they are collectively the slanderer of God and destroyer of mankind.

IN GENERAL, THE 'DIABOLOS' IS THE SIN-PRINCIPLE IN ALL MANKIND

In its general use, the term 'devil' (diabolos) is applied to the sin-tending principle in each individual of Adam's race, as the root of all organized and manifested diabolism. This is illustrated in its application to Christ in Hebrews 2:14

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he (Jesus) also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil".

POPULAR DEVILS The traditional supposition that the 'devil' is a super-human, age-living, practically all-powerful monster, able to tempt and harass millions all around the earth simultaneously, and at the same time presiding over the torture of billions in hell, results in at least four absurdities --

1. That the Son of God had to take on the weakness of human flesh to be able to destroy the devil. Paul here emphasizes this necessity, and expressly says that he did not for this purpose take on the powerful immortal angel-nature (v. 16).
2. That such a mighty, super-human, all-powerful devil could possibly be destroyed by the death of a weak human creature!

3. That if, by the above method, Christ 'by death destroyed the devil,' the devil should now be dead, destroyed. But he is admittedly more active than ever, indeed, 'old-time religion' would be nothing without him. actual fact, the Bible 'devil' was destroyed in Christ's death, and - as applies to Christ himself - is now eternally dead and destroyed. The true Bible 'devil' is nothing more or less than 'sinful flesh' (Romans 8:3) with its 'law of sin' (Romans 7:23) and, as such, is forever destroyed for him personally (that was his victory), and it will at last also be destroyed for all who become part of him.]

4. That the devil, as a supernatural individual being, has the 'power of death'. In contrast, the Bible declares that the sin-principle in mankind - personified as 'the devil' - has the power of death. This is reasonable. The Scriptures tell us that until Jesus broke its prison gates, it held every descendant of Adam in its inescapable iron grasp: 'The wages of sin is death', and all without exception sinned. But to think of an immortal monster - the arch-enemy of God and man - as having the power of death is both dreadful and impossible. God, and God alone, has the power of death. Certainly the 'power of death' is the ultimate and supreme power, as far as man is concerned. Or are we to believe that this fiend, who tortures billions eternally for his own amusement, is God's agent, and that God has given him the power of death over mankind? This indeed fits the Greek and Roman gods and superstitions from which orthodoxy's picture is taken, but not the holy God of Scripture and of Truth. He says:

"I kill, and I make alive" (Deuteronomy 32:39).

THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST'S DEATH WAS TO DESTROY SIN

Similarly to Paul's statement in Hebrews 2, John states that Jesus

-

"Was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil" (John 3:8).

The devil which Christ came to destroy is Sin -

"He was manifested to take away our sins" (John 3:5).

"He put away Sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26).

"Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the Sin of the world" (John 1:29).

"His own self bare our sins IN his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24).

This last quotation is especially significant. It was done 'IN his own body', whatever it was that was accomplished in his life and death. This ties in closely with the necessity of his being 'flesh and blood' and of 'sinful flesh' for the purpose of destroying the devil by and in his death.

Christ, through death, destroyed 'the sin of the world' - the Bible 'devil' (Hebrews 2:14). In his own person, as the representative man (a man with the same sinful flesh as the rest of human kind), a man representatively incorporating the whole race within himself, he destroyed the power of sin by:

1. perfect submission to the will of God all his life (completely resisting and overcoming the tendency to sin);
2. the nailing of the death-body to the 'tree' (cross);
3. escaping from death through resurrection as a result of his perfect righteousness in all his ways;
4. living for evermore, henceforth eternally free from the diabolos sin-motions and the power of death.

This victory over the power of sin (the 'devil') is Biblically described as -

"God sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3).

IT IS SIN THAT HAS THE POWER OF DEATH

'Sin in the flesh' is the 'devil' that was destroyed by Jesus in his death. This is the devil having the power of death; for it is sin, and nothing else but sin, that causes death to men. Thus we read - "By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin" (Romans 5:12). "By MAN came death" (1 Corinthians 15:21). "The wages of Sin is death" (Romans 6:23). "Sin bath reigned unto death" (Romans 5:21). "Sin bringeth forth death" (James 1:15). "The sting of death is sin" (1 Corinthians 15:56).

Of course, literally, it is God Who has the 'power of death', as He has all power. No other person (certainly not an evil one) could possess

or control that power. But inasmuch as sin brought death in the first place, and sin inevitably (in the natural course) produces death, and sin is that deadly, evil principle that inevitably (in the natural course) causes a holy God to inflict death - it is perfectly correct and understandable to speak of sin as 'having the power of death'

'THE LAW OF SIN IN MY MEMBERS'

But who or what prompts men and women to sin against God? What causes sin? James answers this very clearly and specifically -- "Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust bath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:14-15) Paul refers to this as: "A LAW IN MY MEMBERS, warring against the law of my mind" (Romans 7.23). The whole world obeys or serves this law, and therefore it 'lieth in wickedness' (1 John 5:19). John thus describes this condition of the world - "ALL that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (1 John 2:16). This law can be overcome only by the power of God's Word. Thus Jesus said- "The words I speak unto you, they are Spirit and they are life" (John 6:23). The enlightenment of God's Truth, coming from without, introduces a new law into the mind: the holy, life-giving law of the Spirit of God. This creates an inner conflict: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are CONTRARY the one to the other" (Galatians 5:17).

The successful battle against this fleshly law, or ingrained principle of disobedience, throughout Christ's entire life, was how he overcame 'sin in the flesh', or the 'devil' (diabolos). So also we must constantly strive to overcome this law of sin in our members. Thus we are repeatedly warned and commanded -

"Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Romans 6:12).

"Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

"To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Romans 6:16).

"If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die. But if ye through the Spirit do mortify (put to death) the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:13).

There is no external, personal devil, with fiery breath and horns and hooves. But there is a devil, a BIBLE devil. The devil is mankind's own flesh-rooted inclinations, the 'law of sin in his members" which pulls toward disobedience to God's holy, righteous and reasonable commands -

"He that committeth sin is of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

PERSONIFICATION A COMMON BIBLICAL FIGURE OF SPEECH

There should be no difficulty with the concept of the Bible 'devil' being personified. Many things and ideas are colorfully and very effectively personified in Scripture:

Wisdom: "Wisdom.. she is more precious than rubies.. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honor" (Proverbs 3:13-15). Riches: "Ye cannot serve 2 masters: God and Mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

Our character: "Ye have put off the Old Man with his deeds" (Colossians 3:9). "Put off the Old Man.. put on the New Man" (Ephesians. 4:22-24). "Our Old Man is crucified with him" (Romans 6:6).

Nature: Trees, the sun, floods, hills, waste places, etc. are spoken of as singing, clapping, rejoicing, dancing, skipping, and other human actions.

And, above all, Sin itself - the Bible Devil - is so strikingly personified - "SIN bath reigned unto death" (Romans 5: 21). "SIN wrought in me .. SIN slew me.. SIN deceived me" (Romans 7: 8-11). "Whom ye obey, his servants ye are, whether of SIN. ." (Romans 6:16). "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of SIN" (John 8:34). "Let not SIN reign in your bodies, that ye should obey it" (Romans 6:12).

In the light of this, we should expect the 'diabolos', 'sin-nature', the 'law of sin in the members,' to be personified, and should be surprised if it were not.

THE SERPENT-ORIGIN OF SIN

Sin is the great Slanderer of God, in denying His supremacy, wisdom, goodness, and the Truth of His Word. Thus Sin is termed the 'accuser, slanderer, liar; and these thoughts are carried in the Bible word 'devil,' properly understood.

The Biblical account of the origin of Sin shows the fitness of the terms used concerning it. Adam's original transgression did not arise from within. It was suggested by Eve; and hers suggested by the serpent: "The serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made" (Genesis 3: 1).

The serpent, given temporarily the power of speech by God, reasoned falsely concerning the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil; i.e., that by eating of it Adam and Eve would not die but live forever, because (he assumed) they would 'become like the angels'; and the angels do live for ever. Therefore the serpent said, 'Ye shall not surely die'. It is true that eating of the Tree did make them like the angels in some respects (Genesis 3:22).

The serpent therefore was a slanderer and a liar in declaring that God's statement 'Ye shall surely die' was not true. The serpent thus became the symbol and 'father' of all that resulted from that lie: the ingrained principle of disobedience, and all attendant sin.

Arising from man's serpent-caused fall, God said (Genesis 3:15) there would henceforth be enmity between the serpent's seed (wicked men, the liars and disobedient) and the Woman's seed (righteous men, centered and embodied in Christ) till the Woman's seed finally should destroy the serpent's seed. Like produces like. That is why the whole world of human nature is spoken of as the serpent and devil.

The thought of disobedience implanted in the minds of our first parents by the serpent, and which became a law of their nature (Romans 7:23), has developed a world of men and women whose natural, fleshly tendencies are to disobey God. Thus they are by nature and natural conduct a 'generation of serpents' (Matthew 23:33), even as Christ said: "Ye are of your father the devil (slanderer), and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44).

ALL ARE BY NATURE THE 'CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL'

All who are Adam's descendants are by nature 'children of the devil'. Their mortality illustrates this, because mortality is the fruit of the serpent (devil, slanderer) lie, causing Adam to disobey. But all who become related to the 'second Adam' (Christ) are released from the family of the 'devil' (sin), and become sons of God.

The destruction of the 'devil' by the work of Christ is the overcoming and final removal of the sinning human nature. This was accomplished first in Christ himself - as a prototype - by perfect obedience to

his Father, and by submission to the death of the cross: the obedient, voluntary, public crucifixion and repudiation of the sin-cursed nature in justification of God's law and God's holiness; and by his resurrection to unending life: and so -

"Death hath NO MORE dominion over him" (Romans 6:9).

THE AGES-LONG PROCESS OF 'DEVIL' DESTRUCTION

Thereafter, the process of devil-destruction is going on through the centuries, as those who have become related to Christ's sacrifice in the appointed way of belief, baptism and lifelong obedience have set their whole course of life to overcome the sinning nature by the strength of God's Word operating on their minds and in their lives. To such who have, with their whole energies, endeavored to please God, will be given unending life at Christ's judgment seat when he returns to earth. They will have faithfully and successfully (though admittedly never perfectly) labored to subdue or 'keep under' (1 Corinthians 9:27) their sinning impulses (the 'devil' within them) all of their lives. Their change to immortality and the 'divine nature' (2 Peter 1:4) will be the final destruction of the devil for them, just as it was for Christ many centuries before.

The responsible wicked of this and past dispensations (the dead raised, the living assembled) will also at Christ's return be judged, and then punished in measure, in accord with their deeds (Luke 12:47), and finally completely destroyed - removing forever this aspect of the devil-nature from the earth.

Then, during the 1000-year reign of Christ over the earth, the nations will be taught righteousness, and all will come to know God (Jeremiah 31:34), and will be called on - through faith and love of God - to overcome the impulses of their fleshly bodies, and live in holiness. At the end of the 1000 years there will be another judgment of all who have lived during the 1000 years. All who have died in that period will be raised, and all - living and dead - will be judged. Those who have been obedient will be given eternal life (as those of this present dispensation will be at Christ's return), and those who have been disobedient will be destroyed.

Thus, all who are then left alive will be immortal. Sin and death will have been eliminated from the earth. The present sinning, dying, mortal nature of mankind - brought upon the world by Adam's sin - will be for ever gone. The 'devil' will thus have been destroyed completely, in every aspect and manifestation. The great work of Christ will thus

have been triumphantly completed, and he will turn all things over to God, that God Himself may henceforth be 'All in All' (1 Corinthians 15:24-28).

CHRIST'S TEMPTATION - 'OPPRESSED OF THE DIABOLOS'

It will be noted that a fair proportion of the appearances of the word diabolos occur in the record of the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, immediately after his baptism and the descent of the Spirit upon him. The orthodox idea that he was 'led by the Spirit' (Matthew 4:1) to be tempted by the orthodox Devil, God's archenemy, is an unconscionable debasing of the whole divine picture, like its war in God's holy heaven between loyal and rebellious angels.

That it would be any real temptation to Christ - with his knowledge of, and closeness to, God - to receive a proposition from God's avowed enemy, is impossible to perceive. It is deeper and more reasonable than that. It had to be a credible temptation, in harmony with Christ's character and knowledge. Just who provided the external aspect of the temptation we are not told. The Roman authorities have been suggested as the most likely possibility, and they fill the requirements. Certainly they were the then current political embodiment of the diabolos.

'Oppressed of the diabolos' (Acts 10:38) is used generally of all illness, because Sin, and the curse and evils that came on the race by Sin (Genesis 3:17-19) is the root cause of all disabilities and diseases.

DAIMONS: ILLNESSES AND AFFLICTIONS

The word 'devil' occurs many more times in the KJV New Testament (usually in the plural), but the original in these cases is not 'diabolos', but 'daimon', and it is used in reference to illnesses, physical and mental. This is mainly due to the peculiarity of the Greek language, and of the conceptions that lay in the origins of the speech of the period.

It was customary in Bible times -- when a sufferer spoke or acted under the influence of the malady -- to refer to it as the 'daimon' speaking or acting; such as when we say 'The drink is speaking' when we wish to indicate that a drunken man's statements are the result of intoxication and not of rational thought. Those who used this form of speech recognized that the words and actions were actually those of the sufferer himself, but were indicating that he was caused to so speak or act by the malady. The maladies were referred to as 'daimons'

because the phraseology arose from a superstitious belief in creatures called 'daimons' causing illnesses. But anyone using the common phraseology would not necessarily be endorsing its origin. We could trace the origins of a host of English words to the most bizarre and superstitious origins, but we use them without any thought for -- or even knowledge of-- those origins.

It will be noted that there is no such phraseology in discussing illness all through the Old Testament, which is in Hebrew. In English we have similar expressions describing certain maladies that we use freely without the slightest endorsement of their literal origin or connotation, as 'lunacy' (struck by the moon), 'St. Vitus' Dance' (curable by worship of its patron saint), and such other physical afflictions as 'Devils Grip', etc.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 20

1. Is the word 'devil' ever used in a good sense in the Scriptures?
2. What is the basic meaning of the original Greek word 'diabolos'?
3. What is the meaning of the Greek root words from which 'diabolos' has been derived?
4. In what ways, other than 'devil' has the word 'diabolos' been translated?
5. What was the 'devil' that would cast the faithful into prison?
6. In what way is the sinning principle in each person personified?
7. Why did Christ have the weak, sin-cursed nature common to all mankind?
8. In what way did Christ destroy the devil?
9. What is the cause of death in all men?
10. What tempts men to sin and to do those things that are opposed to God?
11. Do righteous people have the same 'law' or tendency to do evil in their members (or bodies) as do the wicked? Quote scripture to prove.
12. Was Christ successful in overcoming this tendency to sin?
13. Why did the serpent become the symbol of all who sin against God?
14. Give illustrations of things which are not living, being represented as alive, or personified.
15. If Christ destroyed the devil, or sin in the flesh, by his death, why are we still subject to this law in our members?
16. When shall the 'law of sin' in the flesh of the righteous be destroyed?
17. What is required of men and women to have the law of sin destroyed from their bodies?
18. When will this 'devil,' or law of sin, finally be removed from the earth?

KEY Lesson 21 - BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF GOD

"Jesus went about all Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God" -- Matthew 4:23

THE Kingdom of God - the 'earth filled with God's glory' (Numbers 14:21; Psalm 72:19; Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14, etc.) - is the joyous theme of the whole Bible, the very heart and backbone of the Divine Purpose, from Genesis to Revelation. It was the basis of the preaching of Christ and the Apostles. This is incontrovertible, from the above quotation and many others, as these - "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God" (Mark 1:14) "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom" (Matthew 9:35) "I must preach the Kingdom of God, for therefore am I sent" (Luke 4:43) "Then he called his 12 disciples together, and he sent them to preach the Kingdom of God" (Luke 9:1-2).

DISCIPLES PREACHED GOSPEL NOT KNOWING ABOUT CHRIST'S DEATH

The Kingdom of God (God's coming Kingdom on earth) IS the Gospel message, without which we have no Gospel at all. This Gospel preached by Christ all through his ministry did not include the facts concerning his death. This is positively proved by the fact that his disciples, who preached the Kingdom with him during his ministry, did not realize that Christ had to die until after his resurrection, and even then it was very hard to convince them of the resurrection, being that his death shocked them so severely and unexpectedly. This is clear from the following words that Jesus spoke to them - "The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day. But they UNDERSTOOD NOT THIS SAYING, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not" (Luke 9:22,44-45).

Note that this is after they had been sent throughout the land preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom (see Luke 9:1-2 above). Again, after his resurrection, Jesus spoke to two disciples, asking them why they were sad. They replied - "Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people... The chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:19-21).

We find that even when his resurrection was reported to them by dependable eyewitnesses, they still did not believe it (Luke 24:11). When even the other 10 apostles were convinced by Jesus' actual appearance, and told Thomas, he still would not believe them (John 20:25). Yet they had all been preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom for up to 3

years. Their preaching, long before Christ's death, comprised the Gospel of the Kingdom. So their Gospel must have been far different > from that preached by churches today, which only speaks of the death of Christ as their 'gospel' message.

SAME GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM PREACHED AFTER CHRIST ROSE

The preaching of the Apostles after Christ ascended to the Father continued to be the Gospel of the Kingdom, which had now added thereto the things concerning the death and resurrection of Christ. Therefore it is vitally important that the Gospel they preached be ours, if we would attain to salvation and life - "When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, AND the Name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized" (Acts 8:12).

"He (Paul) expounded and testified the Kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses and out of the Prophets, from morning till evening" (Acts 28:23).

The Gospel did not begin with Christ. It was preached to Abraham - "The Scriptures preached before (RV: beforehand) the Gospel to Abraham." (Galatians 3:8)

The Gospel was preached to Israel in the wilderness by Moses - "To us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them (Israel under Moses: see context). But the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Hebrews 4:2).

FALSE GOSPELS - AND A CURSE ON ANY WHO ALTER THE ONE TRUE GOSPEL

That we must maintain this original Gospel of the Kingdom unadulterated and unchanged, was vehemently insisted on by Paul in writing to the Galatians. He said that even if an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel than that which he (Paul) preached, he should be accursed. (Galatians 1:8-9). Where does this leave those who have abandoned the true Gospel of God's Kingdom upon earth, and preach 'another gospel'? Paul said that the Gospel was the 'power of God unto salvation' for everyone that believes it (Romans 1:16). How vital then that we know and keep this Gospel clear and unconfused! It means our eternal salvation.

Various conflicting interpretations of the 'Kingdom' are held in Christendom denying that it will be a real literal Kingdom on the earth. Some define the Kingdom as the state of the heart, and doing good works for men. Truly this is necessary, but it is not the Kingdom. Others

claim that the religious organizations of the world are the Kingdom of God, and that they will at last convert the whole world to righteousness and holiness. But what an increasingly corrupt Babel they are themselves! And they have been at it for nearly 2000 years, and the world is obviously further from peace and righteousness and holiness than ever.

CANNOT EXIST AT PRESENT: FLESH & BLOOD CANNOT INHERIT KINGDOM

The Kingdom of God cannot be in existence at present. Paul said - "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God: neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1 Corinthians 15:50).

He goes on to explain that, at the 'last trumpet', when the dead shall be raised, the righteous shall be changed from corruption to incorruption, so as to be able to inherit the Kingdom. This is positive proof that it is no present condition or possession. Referring to the same bodily change from flesh and blood to spirit nature, Jesus said...

"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. . Except a man be born of water (baptism), and of the Spirit the 'last trumpet,' as Paul explains], he cannot enter the Kingdom of God:" (John 3:5-6)

Likewise again Jesus tells us the Kingdom is when he comes - "When the Son of man shall come in his glory . . then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations:" (Matthew 25:31)

And in the judgment scene that follows (vs. 32 - 46) he says to the accepted - "Come, ye blessed of my Father, INHERIT THE KINGDOM." (v. 34)

Again, positive proof that the Kingdom is not inherited or possessed until Christ returns, raises the dead, judges them, and THEN gives inheritance in the Kingdom to the immortalized righteous, as their reward. Paul similarly told Timothy - Jesus Christ shall judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:1).
'THY KINGDOM COME': THIS WILL BE FULFILLED

The Kingdom is the world filled with God's glory, ruled over in righteousness by Christ and his raised and glorified brethren and sisters from this present age of probation. Obviously NO ONE can inherit it or possess it until it is established on the crushed ruins of the present kingdoms of men. it does not yet exist. It is 'to come,' as Christ instructed his disciples to pray. And when it 'comes,' then will be fulfilled

the parallel and necessary part of the same prayer

"Thy Kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth as in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

Are we to say Christ would teach his disciples to pray for 2000 years for something that's never going to happen? Impossible! That is to make a mockery of him and of them. Gods will must be done on earth as in heaven. And it will!

The whole theme and promise and hope of the Scriptures is based on a literal Kingdom of God on earth, ruled by Christ and the saints, over a people who will be taught to worship God in the way He has appointed.

The 'Kingdom of God' is a Bible expression, and it appears in contrast with the 'Kingdom of men': The expression 'kingdom of men' refers to the whole rule of all the nations of the earth, in whatever age. It is called the kingdom of men because the basis of all its laws and decisions and power is rooted in man's natural desires and impulses, in the will of man, and the arm and strength of the flesh.

Though some parts of it give God lip-service, they are not directed in their thinking and doing by any desire to learn God's will, or to serve Him. God permits this condition for the present, while maintaining an over-all control to gradually bring to pass His gracious plan of blessing the earth through Christ and the faithful who have been, and are being, called out of this fleshly Kingdom of Men which has existed for 6000 years. God declared to the mighty king Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled the Babylonian world empire, 2500 years ago - "The Most High ruleth in the Kingdom of Men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Daniel 4:32).

NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM - FOUR WORLD EMPIRES

In Daniel 2, we learn of the dream this king of Babylon had, which was both described and explained by the prophet Daniel at God's instruction. By this means, the king (and all the faithful, which is more important) are informed of the purpose of God with the earth. We learn here that there were to be 4 great world empires upon the earth (as it was known in the time of each). The fourth was to be broken up in small divisions. Then, in the 'latter days' (v. 28), these remnant-nations were to stand up together as a great image against Christ. Thereupon God, through Christ, would totally destroy their power, and establish a divine Kingdom filling the earth.

These nations of the image were real, literal nations, which have taken their places upon the world's stage of human events: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome; and then the divided state of Europe since the fall of Rome. History confirms that these nations ruled over the earth as then known, as revealed by God.

Babylon existed from 606 to 536 BC, and was destroyed by Cyrus the Persian. Medo-Persia existed from 536 to 330 BC, and was destroyed by Alexander the Greek. The Greek empire existed from 330 to about 150 BC, being then gradually destroyed and absorbed by the Roman Empire. Rome existed as a world power from about 150 BC to 476 AD, and was destroyed by the barbarian kingdoms that finally developed into modern Europe. There was to be no fifth empire.

It is notable that the Roman Empire, though broken up, has never been superseded. The present political, social, legal, and religious constitution of Europe, and all the lands developed by Europeans, are a prolongation of Rome. The Pope of Rome, who inherited the Imperial Power for centuries (as divinely predicted), still officially claims jurisdiction over the lives of all mankind. All 'Christendom' is composed of offshoots of the Roman Church and hold its doctrines. Latin is still the official language of the Roman Church.

'LATTER DAYS' - THE IMAGE STANDS AGAIN

The divided state of Roman Europe has existed from 476 AD to the present. We now see them being drawn together into a world confederation. Eastern and Western European powers are rising rapidly to world prominence and might. Russia is predicted by the Bible to be the power that will lead this confederacy of nations. What did the prophet Daniel say would happen when this condition was upon the earth in the 'latter days'? (Daniel 2:44) - "In the days of these kings (the divided state) shall the God of heaven set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed. And the Kingdom shall not be left to other people be superseded, as previous powers] , but it shall break in pieces and consume ALL these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

This is the literal interpretation and explanation by Daniel of the symbolic vision the king saw, so it cannot be dismissed as symbolic, or spiritualized away.

Here, then, is a Kingdom - 1) to be set up on the earth by God, 2) taking the place and power of ALL other kingdoms of the world, and 3) lasting for ever. The world conditions today tell us that this is soon to happen. It is a warning for us to be prepared for the return

of Christ, and to be sure to be on God's side when He 'shakes terribly' the nations of the earth.

Daniel elsewhere gives us much more evidence identifying these world powers, and showing us in prophecy the details of their history, telling us that God knew in advance what the nations would do, and that He controls them - "Surely the Lord God will do nothing but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets" (Amos 3:7).

ALL PRESENT GOVERNMENTS TO BE DESTROYED

That the real literal world powers are to be destroyed is often testified - "Ask of Me (God), and I will give thee (Christ) the heathen (goyim: nations) for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the EARTH for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron: thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psalms 2:8-9). "The Lord at thy (Christ's) right hand shall strike through kings in the day of His wrath. He shall judge among the nations. He shall fill the places with the dead bodies. He shall wound the heads over many countries" (Psalms 110:5-6). "I will shake the heavens and the earth. And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms. And I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the nations. (Haggai 2:21-22). "He that overcometh, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron. As the vessels of a potter shall they be BROKEN TO SHIVERS" (Revelation 2:26-27). "To execute vengeance upon the nations, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains and their nobles with fetters of iron to execute upon them the judgment written - this honor have all His saints" (Psalms 149:7-9). "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit THE EARTH, and dwell therein for ever" (Psalms 37:9, 11, 22, 29; Matthew 5:5). This Kingdom of God over the earth, established on the ruins of all present world powers, is to be given to the servants of God - "And the Kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, Whose Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and ALL dominions shall serve and obey Him" (Daniel 7:27) These 'saints of the Most High,' together with Christ their Head, are shown to be rulers in the Kingdom - "Thou (Christ) hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, tongue, people and nation: and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign ON THE EARTH" (Revelation 5:9-10) "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 1000 years" (Revelation 20:6).

THE 'SUBJECTS' ARE THE MORTAL NATIONS THAT REMAIN

The subjects of the Kingdom are the peoples of the nations of the world, subdued and humbled by God's judgments upon them, and then purified and blessed. The Jewish nation, brought back to Palestine and cleansed of their present wickedness, will be the world's leading dominion, or first kingdom, under the glorified saints. And all nations shall journey to Jerusalem yearly to worship God - "Many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. In those days it shall come to pass that 10 men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you" (Zechariah 8:2 2-23). "In the last days... I will gather her that is driven out... and make her a strong nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mt. Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion. The Kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem" (Micah 4:1-8).

"The Day of the Lord cometh . . all nations gathered against Jerusalem to battle... the Lord shall smite them .. and every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and keep the Feast of Tabernacles" (Zechariah 14:1-16).

"Come, behold the works of the Lord: what desolations He hath made in earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth . . I will be exalted among the nations. I will be exalted IN THE EARTH" (Psalms 46:8-10).

"By fire and sword will the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be many . . I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see My glory... from one new moon to another shall ALL FLESH come to worship before Me, saith the Lord" (Isaiah 66:16-23).

PALESTINE THE CENTER - JERUSALEM THE CAPITAL

The central territory of God's Kingdom over the earth is the land of Palestine, the Holy Land, the Promised Land; and its capital is Jerusalem, the Holy City, the 'City of the Great King' (Matthew 5:35). We are told that this land is - "A land which the Lord thy God careth for. The eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end " (Deuteronomy 11:12).

"The glory of all lands" (Ezekiel 20:6, 15).

This is the land promised to Abraham for an everlasting possession - "Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, southward, eastward and westward. All the land which thou seest, to THEE will I give it, AND to thy Seed FOR EVER" (Genesis 13-14).

This is the land to be bestowed when all the nations of the world are blessed in Abraham and his Seed, which is Christ. The Jews occupied this land many years ago: not under the eternal Abrahamic Covenant, but under the temporary Mosaic, conditional upon obedience. But they were driven out for disobedience, as Moses foretold from the beginning they would be.

JEWS TO BE GATHERED, PURGED, PURIFIED, AND BLESSED

The land has for centuries lain desolate, again exactly as foretold. But there are many promises and prophecies of a final regathering. The Eternal Promise to Abraham and his Seed requires this land to again be the scene of God's restored Kingdom, and the center of the world-dominion promised to Abraham

"...that he should be heir of the world..." (Romans 4:13).

"In the day that I (God) shall have cleansed you (Israel) from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded... And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the Garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are inhabited.

"I will make them one nation upon the mountains of Israel, and one King shall be King to them all... They shall walk in My judgments and observe My statutes - . they shall dwell in the land I have given unto Jacob, where your fathers have dwelt... I will set My Sanctuary in the midst of them... and the nations shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when My Sanctuary shall be in the midst of them FOR EVERMORE" (Ezekiel 36:33-35; 37:22-28).

This land will become the center of world government and laws - "It shall come to pass in the LAST DAYS that the Lord's House shall be established in the top of the mountains... and ALL NATIONS shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the House of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us of His ways... For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from

Jerusalem.

"And lie shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares . . . nation shall not lift up sword against nation: neither shall they learn war any more." (Isaiah 2:24)

What a tremendous, glorious change is in store for this war-torn old earth!

The Jews are to return to Palestine, and there to become the first dominion of the world, under the rule of Christ and the immortalized servants of God - those who have believed the Gospel of the Kingdom, and have striven to obey God in all things in this present day.

WE SEE SIGNS THAT IT IS NEAR

We see these things coming about by world events in our days. The image as visualized by Nebuchadnezzar is quickly coming together, and being prepared for Christ and the Saints to destroy it with divine power. Christ is now at God's right hand, awaiting the time appointed by God when, as the Stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he returns to strike the Image on its latter-day feet, and completely break it up, grinding it to a powder that the wind blows away. Then - "The kingdoms of THIS WORLD are become the Kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ, and He shall reign FOR EVER AND EVER." (Revelation 11:15)

It is clear again from this, as from such passages as Daniel 2 and 7, that the Kingdom of God does not yet exist; for when it does, all the present kingdoms of men will have been completely destroyed and ceased to exist. God's Kingdom, when it is established, is to utterly destroy all present governments, and wholly fill the earth.

Then will be brought about that glorious reign of Christ for 1000 years, teaching all nations righteousness and leading them to God, at last eliminating all sin and death. The government will be firm, just, equal, and all wise: the very opposite of today's blind, stumbling, erring fleshly Powers. All will know God, and serve Him with one consent. And at last will be brought about the fulfillment of the angelic prophecy - "Glory to God in the highest: on earth peace, goodwill toward men." This glorious promised condition formed the basis of the Gospel. Without it, there is no true Gospel. Jesus commanded his disciples to preach this Kingdom as the Gospel message, and this is what all must believe to be saved - "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he

that believeth not shall be damned:' (Mark 16:15-16)

A belief in these Divine Promises is necessary to have part in this blessed and happy world condition to come. Do we believe them? Are we ready?

QUESTIONS for Lesson 21

1. What was the theme of the preaching of Christ and the disciples before the death of Jesus?
2. Did Jesus' disciples realize their Master had to die and be raised? Give quotations to prove your answer.
3. What feature was added to the preaching of the Apostles after Christ ascended to the right hand of God?
4. What was the source of Paul's information when preaching about the Kingdom of God and about Jesus Christ? (To what did he refer?)
5. What did Paul say of any who presume to change the Gospel message?
6. Where will the Kingdom of God be established?
7. Who will rule over the Kingdom of God?
8. What is the 'Kingdom of Men'?
9. What is the natural directing force behind the Kingdom of Men?
10. What was God's purpose in causing the King of Babylon to dream of the Great Image of various metals?
11. What 4 world nations ruled as world empires? (Give in order).
12. What happened to the 4th world empire?
13. What is to happen when the present world powers are destroyed?
14. How long will the Kingdom of God last?
15. What is the purpose of its first preliminary 1000 years?
16. Has God told us what He intends to do in the earth, and to its people?
17. Will the Kingdom be established with persuasion or with force?
18. What position will the Jewish nation hold in God's Kingdom?
19. From what center will world laws be issued?
20. What will all people be required to do each year?
21. Can we believe the Gospel without understanding and believing the things concerning the Kingdom?

22. Can we be saved without knowing and believing the true Gospel?

LESSON 22 - BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

"...The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. 4 Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child." (Acts 7:2-5)

The promises made by God to Abraham are, quite literally, the foundation of the Gospel message; yet at the same time they are probably the least understood and acknowledged by Christendom in general as a significant part of God's purpose.

In Lesson 21 (page 1) it was clear that the disciples of Christ, when sent forth to preach the GOSPEL, did so quite successfully without an understanding of the redemptive work of Christ. What did they teach? Paul speaks of his ministry as being centered upon the HOPE OF ISRAEL

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"For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. (Acts 28:20)

- and the HOPE OF THE PROMISE MADE UNTO THE FATHERS -

"And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:" (Acts 26:6)

The promises to Abraham are to the purpose of God as the hub is to a wheel; it is the center and all else revolves around it and emanates > from it. We cannot fully comprehend God's purpose unless and until we fully and fundamentally understand the promises to Abraham.

To obtain the full benefit of this lesson, a review of Lesson 6 is recommended before proceeding further.

ABRAHAM: WHO HE WAS, WHERE HE CAME FROM

Who was Abraham? The Bible outlines a brief history of his life before his call by God; at this time he was known as "Abram" ...

"Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah

in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no child. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran." (Genesis 11:27-32)

We are told that he was an idolator when he lived in Ur of the Chaldees, before God appeared to him...

"And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD." (Joshua 24:2,14)

Refer to the map on the side-bar; it is interesting to trace the journey of Abram. Note the distance travelled - a considerable journey judged even according to the current standards of modern travel! They were on foot or camel, and leaving a place of familiarity, comfort and beauty to go to "uncharted" territory - not knowing what was in store for them! Paul comments on this in Hebrews...

"By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise;" (Hebrews 11:8-9) - NKJ

DETAILS OF THE PROMISE (refer to map)

God did not reveal to Abram the entirety of the promise all at once. It was given over a long period of time, and in a variety of places and circumstances of Abram's life. Each further revelation expanded upon the previous one, until ultimately the entire purpose of God through Abram and his seed was clear.

1) AT UR AND HARAN

This was the first recorded communication by God to Abram - occurring first in the land of Ur (Acts 7:2-4), then at Haran (Genesis 12:4)... "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." (Genesis 12:1-3)

This initial communication contained the following promises:

- i) that Abram would become a great nation and a great name;
- ii) To bless him that blessed him, and to curse him that cursed him;
- iii) that through him all nations would be blessed.

2) AT SHECHEM ("Sichem")

This promise was made after entering the land.

"And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him." (Genesis 12:6-7)

In this passage we are informed that Abram, in spite of the fact that "the Canaanite was then in the land", continued on his journey to a place called Shechem (refer to map). By doing so, he continued to manifest great faith and trust in God. Consequently, God again appeared to him, and revealed additional details of the promise:

- i) that Abram would have offspring who would inherit the land - "Unto thy seed will I give this land". Note the exclusive reference in this passage to Abram's SEED - not Abram himself.
- ii) that what he was promised was a gift - "...will I GIVE this land". There were no conditions, i.e. IF you do this, THEN I will promise...etc.
- iii) that this promise, in order to be fulfilled, required a miraculous intervention, because we are informed that not only was Sarah barren, but that Abram and Sarah were at this time beyond childbearing age. There is in this passage also a significant change of wording: no longer is it "a" land as in the promise at Haran and Ur, but "this" land, indicating that Abram had reached the area where God wanted

him to be.

3) AT BETHEL

The possessions of Abram and Lot increased to the point where they had to make a decision to separate and each choose an area in which to settle. In the process of making this choice, Abram demonstrated a very unselfish attitude towards Lot by allowing him to be first to make a choice. It was after this that God again appeared to Abram with a further elaboration on the details of the promise --

"And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD." (Genesis 13:14-18)

This phase of the promise involves the following features:

i) Bethel is located in the approximate center of Palestine. It is important to recognize the literality of this promise. Abram was standing upon the soil of Palestine near its center, and told to look in the four directions of the globe, that all the land that he could SEE "to thee will I give it, and to thy seed".

ii) For the first time, Abram is mentioned and personally named in the promise, along with his seed.

iii) His seed is to inherit the land FOREVER.

iv) His seed is to be (a) the Messiah (Galations 3:16), and (b) a great multitude

4) AT HEBRON

when he believed God's promise that his seed would be multitudinous "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out

with great substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full. And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:" (Genesis 15:13-18)

The promise given on this occasion concerned events that would occur and affect the natural and physical descendants of Abraham - natural Israel - after his death. This promise is quite literally a prophecy, a forecast quite accurately outlining the things that befell them in Egypt, the events of the Exodus, and the 40 years wilderness trek to Canaan.

The final part of the passage provides a description of the boundaries of the land promised to him. Never in the checkered history of Israel - even at the zenith of their glory under king David - have these boundary limits, as described here, ever been realized! This part of the promise is yet future, awaiting fulfillment

5) AT THE OCCASION OF A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE OF NAME

A further development of the divine promise occurred while at Hebron. The time had come for God to emphasize an important point by changing the name Abram to Abraham...

"And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. (Genesis 17:2-5)

The purpose of this was to call attention to the fact that Abram (meaning Lofty Father) was to be not only the father of a single nation of people, but a father of many nations (Abraham means "father of a multitude of nations"). While this has a literal, national application to the nations of the earth's mortal population in the Kingdom Age, there is reference to this in the New Testament as applying to Gentile believers in Christ...

"For not through the law was the promise to Abraham or to his seed that he should be heir of the world, but through the righteousness

of faith. For this cause (it is) of faith, that (it may be) according to grace; to the end that the promise may be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, A father of many nations have I made thee) before him whom he believed, (even) God, who giveth life to the dead, and calleth the things that are not, as though they were. Who in hope believed against hope, to the end that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, So shall thy seed be. (Romans 4:13-18)(ASV)
6) AT MOUNT MORIAH

This part of the promise was given to Abraham after he had been put to the ultimate test of his belief and trust in God. It is important to consult your Bible and read the entire passage that relates to this event. After this great display of his faith, Abraham received this additional phase of the promise:

"And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Genesis 22:15-18)

From this the following additional hilites emerge:

i) Abraham's seed is to "possess the gate of his enemies" i.e. be victorious. This has a twofold application:

a) Literally, the seed of Abraham - Israel in the future kingdom age in cooperation with Christ and his spiritual brethren (the saints) - are to be victorious over all world empires and political systems. This must be yet future because to this day there has been no fulfillment of this part of the promise.

b) Spiritually, in conjunction with the above and as a consequence of it, there will be an ultimate triumph of righteousness over wickedness; the victory of Divine goodness over the evil manifested in human nature.

This will be the final settlement in the incessant struggle between these two forces that has been ongoing since creation - from the time of the sin of Adam and Eve onward. Refer to observation box at right.

ii) In his seed all nations are to be blessed. There is reference here to the final effect of the victory of righteousness over wickedness.

Recall the Divine purpose of creation as stated in Numbers 14:21 -
(Consult Lesson #6)

iii) The final thing to be noted in this promise given at Moriah is that God has confirmed it by an oath - "By myself have I sworn..." The writer to the Hebrews comments on this in the New Testament - "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us..." (Hebrews 6:13-18)

The two "immutable" things are:

a) The word of the Covenant given at Hebron (Genesis 15:17,18) -

And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:"

b) The Divine oath given at Moriah (Genesis 22:16) -

By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD

The promises to Abraham were so critical to God's purpose that He confirmed them by both a Covenant and an Oath - which involved God's very existence!

HOW DOES ALL THIS AFFECT OUR HOPE AND SALVATION?

First, we must understand that ABRAHAM AND HIS SEED HAVE NEVER RECEIVED THAT WHICH WAS PROMISED TO THEM.

Traditionally, most of modern Christianity are of the opposite opinion; i.e. that the long history of intermittent possession of the land of Palestine by the nation of Israel - Abraham's offspring - was in effect the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham.

The Bible, however, has no support for such a perception. It is vital that we understand the scriptural viewpoint, which is clearly indicated in none else but the NEW TESTAMENT...

"...The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, HE PROMISED to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him." (Acts 7:2-5)

This is plain, simple language, very direct and to the point. Abraham did NOT inherit what he had been promised, not even an area large enough for his foot! He had to buy enough land for a burial site for members of his family...

"So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers. And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem." (Acts 7:15-16)

If the land was his, why would it be necessary to purchase a parcel of property in a land he already owned?

The following comment from Hebrews relates to many of the faithful ones from Abel to Sarah, including Abraham himself...

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Hebrews 11:13) Abraham's grandson, Jacob, recognized the fact that they were transients in a land that had been promised to them but of which they were not yet in possession, and made reference to this fact when, speaking to Pharaoh king of Egypt, he stated...

"...The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. (Genesis 47:9)

In view of all the above, two very important points emerge:

1) Abraham is now dead, and has not inherited the promise. Therefore, resurrection from the dead is the prerequisite to obtaining the promise! Resurrection is, in fact, the basic doctrine of the covenant. It is taught here to Abraham and those of his time by promising something which necessitates it.

2) Only two people actually have title deeds to this land -- Abraham and Jesus Christ...

"Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Galatians 3:16)

JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONE through whom the blessing comes (Gal. 3:16; Matt. 1:1).

"...the covenant...was confirmed before of God in Christ..." (Gal 3:16-18)

, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise." (Gal 3:16-18)

The fact that only these two people, Christ and Abraham, have the "title deeds" presents an interesting and logical question: How can others share the promise? The answer is provided in Galatians 3:26-29 quoted below, i.e., by Baptism "into" Christ enlightened men and women join the "body of Christ" and become Abraham's "seed" and "heirs" according to the promise. By belief and baptism one is constituted "IN CHRIST" who is in turn Abraham's seed, and the terms of the promise are that "IN THY SEED shall all nations be blessed". Abraham's seed has firstly a singular aspect, CHRIST; and also a multitudinous aspect, His followers - as "sand and stars" for multitude.

The title deeds to the land and the promised inheritance are the exclusive property of Abraham and his SEED - Christ, and those who are Christ's spiritual family.

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Galatians 3:26-29)

Physical descent from Abraham does not confer a title to the land. In fact the Jews, even when they had fully inhabited the land, were specifically advised by God that they did not possess title deed to the land...

"The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me." (Leviticus 25:23)

From this it is clear that the SEED referred to in the promise was not the nation of Israel (the Jews), but rather ONE PERSON - Jesus Christ!

"He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." (Galatians 3:16)

"...Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." (Matthew 1:1)

The purpose of Christ was to confirm and establish the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The record of scripture throughout compliments and supports this important gospel fact, e.g. -

"...Jesus Christ was.....to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:" (Romans 15:8)

Faith and obedience are the only family characteristics God recognizes, linking Abraham with his children...

"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." (Galatians 3:7-8)

Take the time to think long and hard about how these Biblical facts impact upon the traditional perception of the "gospel". Traditional Christianity has long overlooked the significance of these promises which form the very foundation of God's purpose and message.

These promises were repeated by God several times afterwards to Abraham's immediate descendants.

First to his son Isaac (Genesis 26:3,4) -

"Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee;

for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;"

Then to his grandson Jacob (Genesis 28:13,14) -

"And, behold, the LORD... said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Concerning all of these faithful people of God, and many who came afterwards, we are told by the writer to the Hebrews (11:13,39,40)

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"These all DIED in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."
"And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

The promises will be inherited by all the faithful TOGETHER, when Christ returns to the earth to resurrect the dead and set up the Kingdom of God his Father ON THE EARTH - the very location of the promised inheritance. There is no other hope or promise contained in scripture. All scripture coordinates and synergizes with the promises to Abraham. This is the essence of the Gospel. This is the COVENANT established by Christ in his life, death and resurrection. This is the GOSPEL taught by the disciples even BEFORE Christ's death, when they yet denied that he must die. This is the gospel concerning which Paul warned -

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."
(Gal 1:8-9)

QUESTIONS for Lesson 22

1. What did the Disciples teach when they were sent forth in pairs by Christ to preach "the gospel"?
2. Was Abraham always a believer in the one true God?
3. Give a brief summary of Abraham's background and travels.
4. How were the promises communicated to Abraham?
5. Briefly state the particular details unique to each occasion (phase) of the promises to Abraham -
6. At Ur and Haran
7. At Shechem
8. At Bethel
9. At Hebron (1)
10. At Hebron (2)
11. Mount Moriah
12. What is the common perception of traditional Christianity concerning the promises to Abraham?
13. What particular passage of scripture provides us with proof that Abraham did not receive that which was promised to him?
14. What passage of scripture shows us that resurrection of the dead was implicitly taught in the promises to Abraham?
15. How?
16. Which two people have title deeds to the land?
17. Who is the true "seed" of Abraham according to the promise?
18. By what means might we become a part of Abraham's "seed"?
19. What was the purpose of Christ's mission relative to the promise to Abraham?

20. To whom were the promises repeated?

21. Is it important that the gospel be properly understood and taught?

22. How do we know?

LESSON 23. BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT THE PROMISES TO DAVID

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; (Acts 2:29-32) The above passage records the words of the apostle Peter speaking to a large assembly of Jews gathered in Jerusalem from all parts of the world as it was known at that time, for the observance of Pentecost. The date was about A.D. 33 - just after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. Peter used the opportunity to remind the Jews about a promise made to one of the most popular and well-known kings that had ever existed in their 2000 year history - King David.

This passage of scripture is highly significant. Why? It is a New Testament passage expounding upon an Old Testament occurrence that relates directly to the gospel message about the work and position of Jesus Christ. This reinforces the value of the Old Testament as it relates to our salvation.

Who was King David? To what was Peter referring? Where in the Old Testament did God make a promise to King David about Jesus Christ? What did it mean?

The purpose of this lesson is to provide answers to these questions and show the value of the Old Testament Davidic promises as one more key to the true understanding of the Divine plan as revealed in the Gospel message.

WHO WAS KING DAVID AND WHEN DID HE EXIST?

David was a descendant of Abraham. He was born about 600 years after the death of Abraham, and 370 years after the exodus of Israel from Egypt (approximately).

David became the second king (succeeding King Saul) to reign over the nation of Israel. David ruled during a very fragile and volatile time in Israel's history, and succeeded in uniting the tribal factions into a relatively cohesive whole as one nation in the land of Palestine. David's was a troubled existence, but through it all he placed implicit reliance on God and was regarded by God as "a man after mine own heart" (Acts 13:22). The Kingdom of Israel as it existed under King David's monarchy was the first instance of the Kingdom of God on earth, a shadowy glimpse of the promised but yet future Kingdom of God on earth on a much grandeur and glorified scale.

THE RECORD OF THE PROMISE TO DAVID

There is only one recorded instance in scripture about God making a promise to King David, and it appears in 2 Samuel 7 as follows - Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar? Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheeppcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." - 2 Sam 7:5-16

DETAILS AND FEATURES OF THE PROMISE

1) Israel to become a permanent and established nation upon the earth (Verse 10)

"Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime," - 2 Samuel 7:10

Never in the volatile history of the nation of Israel has this ever

been the situation. This is a sign to students of the Bible that this promise is yet future. To confirm this fact, the prophet Ezekiel some 600 years later received similar assurances regarding the nation...
 "And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid.

And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more." - Ezekiel 34:28,29

Indeed, this message of the restoration of Israel as an integral part of the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham and to David is a common theme throughout the prophets (see side-bar for examples).
 2) Promised seed to be a descendant of David (Verse 12)

"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom." - 2 Samuel 7:12

The question that naturally arises from this is, to whom does the term "thy seed" refer?

Was it Solomon, David's son? In many ways, Solomon fulfilled the requirements of the prophecy. He was David's son. He sat upon David's throne. He built a house of worship. Solomon regarded himself as the fulfillment of the promise -

"And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built an house for the name of the LORD God of Israel." - I Kings 8:20

His father David also referred to Solomon on occasion in the context of at least a preliminary fulfillment of the promise; e.g., -

"And also thus said the king (David), Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, which hath given one (Solomon) to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it." - I Kings 1:48

It is characteristic for Divine predictions and promises to often have a preliminary fulfillment which acts as a microcosm of the ultimate and final application. To some extent, Solomon could be regarded in this context of a preliminary or incipient fulfillment.

However, there are several characteristics of Solomon and of Solomon's kingdom that do not fit all the parameters of the divine promise in the ultimate and fullest sense of its application.

The Spirit-guided writings of David point forward to a period when the divine promise to him would find its ultimate fulfillment in the rule of one who should rise upon the world like a morning without clouds; and when "all David's salvation and all his desire" would be accomplished in connection with that great event.

"The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." - 2 Sam 23:2-5

This predicted state of affairs did not occur in David's lifetime, nor was it expected to occur. The spirit-inspired words leave no doubt that David's house was not at that time in the position guaranteed by the promise: "Although my house BE NOT SO WITH GOD, yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant."

Solomon's reign was doubtless the meridian of Israel's glory; but it was not a morning without cloud - it was not the realization of the covenant.

God presented Solomon with a choice; he was given a wonderful opportunity to be a very powerful preliminary fulfillment of the promised "seed"

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"And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel. But if ye shall at all turn from following me, ye or your children, and will not keep my commandments and my statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them: Then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all

people:" - I Kings 9:4-7

Solomon, however, did not choose wisely, and the Bible documents the sad consequences of that choice. He started well, gaining a reputation for great wisdom; but the final verdict of scripture is that Solomon sinned and led Israel astray, and ultimately dealt injustice to the nation. David's salvation was not in any sense secured in Solomon's achievements. Contrariwise, his crown was tarnished and his kingdom rent, through the perversion of a son who departed from God, multiplied wives, and turned aside to the worship of heathen gods. His very name was brought into abhorrence with the bulk of the nation, through the oppressions of one who falsified the expectations created by the commencement of his royal career as the wisest of men.

The words of the promise had reference, not to the time of Solomon, but to a time in the dim distance, far beyond the days of Solomon, the form of one whose name should endure for ever; who should descend like the gentle rain upon the new mown grass, diffusing life and fragrance, in whom men should be blest all the world over -

"He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also > from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him. His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed." - Psalm 72:6-17

The prophet Isaiah also refers to the qualities of the promised seed

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"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken."
- Isaiah 32:1-3

Study carefully the characteristics of the promised seed in the above passages. None of them can be applied to Solomon or any other king that reigned on that throne at that time.

But the most convincing testimony comes from the New Testament, which directly links Jesus Christ to the "seed" promised to King David - "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh;" - Romans 1:3

"Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;" - Acts 2:29,30

Note that the last phrase of the above verse is a direct quote from Psalm 132:11 in the Old Testament, thereby emphasizing the linkage and application of the promise to David with the person of Jesus Christ... "The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." - Psalm 132:11 Finally, Jesus himself understood that HE was the "seed" who had the "right" to the throne of David...

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world..." - John 18:36-37

3) Promised seed to build a "house for God's name" (Verse 13)

"He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever." - 2 Samuel 7:13

Again, we do not want to be confused about this. Firstly, we know that David's son Solomon did build a temple of worship. Solomon thought he was the one indicated in the promise to do this work -

"And, behold, I (Solomon) purpose to build an house unto the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name." - I Kings 5:5

The question is - was Solomon's temple the "house" God was referring to in this part of the promise, or is it something yet future?

The Bible gives two applications to this term "house" and other related

terms such as "temple", "building", etc.

a) A "spiritual" house - referring to the collection of individuals who choose to obey God and glorify His name...

But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." - Hebrews 3:6

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." - Ephesians 2:19-22

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." - 1 Peter 2:5

16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
- 2 Corinthians 6:16

In no sense did Solomon build for God a "house" of worshippers to glorify His name. Rather, the Bible record narrates how he deviated > from the Divine standard and led people away from God. Again, this feature of the promise - that of building a house of worship for the glorification of God's name - belongs to Jesus Christ.

b) A literal building - having reference to a physical grand structure yet to be erected, similar to nothing this world has ever yet seen... 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.
- Isaiah 2:2,3

And he (Jesus) taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer? but ye have made

it a den of thieves. - Mark 11:17

Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both. - Zechariah 6:12,13

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. - Zechariah 14:16

The message of scripture is obvious; a literal building is to be established as the center of Divine administration AND worship. This has never been done in the history of this world as we know it. Therefore, it is yet future. Solomon's temple is currently in ruins as is David's throne. As with Abraham, David rests in the grave, awaiting the fulfillment of the promise God made to him.

4) The seed to be David's, but God to be his Father (Verse 14)

"I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:" - 2 Samuel 7:14

There can be no doubt as to the meaning of this part of the promise. At no time was Solomon ever referred to as the son of God. The Bible establishes beyond doubt that this refers to none other than Jesus Christ. While Joseph was the "official" father of record, and the "seed" connection to David was provided through his mother Mary, the REAL father of Jesus was God...

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."
- Isaiah 7:14

"Then the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end. Then Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I do not know a man? And

the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God."
- Luke 1:30-35 (NKJ)

"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." - Matt 3:17

"Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel." - John 1:49

5) David's seed to remain in God's favour (Verse 15)

"But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee." - 2 Samuel 7:15

"My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him." - Psalm 89:28-33

"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." - Isaiah 9:7

The covenant made with David expressly guarantees the perpetual continuance of David's throne and kingdom, under that son of his who was to be the firstborn of God. The words of the prophets are unequivocal:

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast. And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict; so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the LORD." - Jeremiah 31:27,28

The angel that spoke to Mary confirmed this application of the promise, and indicated that her yet unborn son, Jesus Christ, was to be the specific person indicated in the Old Testament prophecies:

"And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God...And he (Jesus) shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." - Luke 1:30,33
Jesus must return at some future time, and reestablish the kingdom of David, and preside therein for God, as David did. Even Christ's disciples finally understood his mission, after he had been resurrected.

Their question was not IF, WHERE, WHAT or WHOM. They knew that. The only question in their minds was WHEN...

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?
- Acts 1:6

When Jesus Christ returns and reestablishes the throne of David in the earth, it will be secure and unassailable by the greed and corruption and selfishness of human nature, which has been the root cause of the fall of every monarchy and empire documented in history. It is to be righteous in its foundation and righteous in its administration and will not end until its mission is accomplished and is phased into the next order of things -

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. -1 Cor 15:24-28

6) All features of the promise are to be accomplished in David's presence ! (Verse 16)

He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. - 2 Samuel 7:13,16

We come now to what may be regarded as the most significant part of the promise. God said that all these features of the promise were to be accomplished in David's presence! We saw in the previous lesson that the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham required the resurrection of Abraham; likewise the fulfillment of the promises to David require the resurrection of David. Therefore, the doctrine of the resurrection is clearly established and taught in the Old Testament! The writers of the New Testament recognized this fact and commented upon it in several passages:

Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day...David is not ascended into the heavens... - Acts 2:29,34
What applied to Abraham also applies to David and all the faithful...

These all died in faith, NOT HAVING RECEIVED THE PROMISES, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them - Hebrews 11:13

The Bible invites everyone to share in this wonderful Divine plan by allowing its message to transform natural self-centered characters into reflections of the Divine character, and thereby become eligible candidates for resurrection along with all the faithful worthies of old, such as Abraham and David -

"And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us"

- Hebrews 11:39-12:1 (NAS)

QUESTIONS for Lesson 23

1. What is it about the words and meaning of Acts 2:29-30 that makes it a highly significant passage of scripture?
2. What comment did God make regarding David that tells us much about David's relationship with God?
3. What passage of scripture contains the full narrative of God's promise to David?
4. What are the six features of God's promise to David?
5. What is the theme of the prophets?
6. How do we know that the seed promised to David was Christ, and not his son Solomon?
7. What are the 2 applications that the Bible gives to the term "house" as it occurs in 2 Samuel 7:13?
8. What does the covenant made with David guarantee concerning the existence of Israel as a nation?
9. What does the promises to David tell us regarding the mission of Christ in the future?
10. After the resurrection of Christ, what was the only question in the disciples minds about this mission?
11. What does the Bible say about the current status of David's existence?
12. How do the promises to David preach to us about the gospel (good news) of the resurrection?

LESSON 24 - BIBLE TEACHING ABOUT JESUS CHRIST AS THE KING OF THE WORLD
"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" - Luke 1:31,33.

"He shall have DOMINION also FROM SEA TO SEA, and from the river unto the ends of the earth...Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him" - Psalm 122:8,11.

The above quotations very effectively link the scriptural doctrine of the KINGSHIP of Jesus Christ to the promises made to Abraham and David. (If necessary, review lessons 22 & 23 re Abraham & David)

The Bible clearly teaches that the time is coming when the Son of God, now in the heavens, shall literally and visibly return to the earth in person, to dispossess all human governments of their power, and establish himself in their stead on the earth as the universal ruler of mankind. Lesson 21 touched on this subject, and the purpose of this lesson will be to go into greater detail and illustrate how that the most prominent element of the character of Jesus Christ, as portrayed in all the Scriptures, is his KINGSHIP

The kingship of Christ is a subject that has been downplayed by traditional Christianity. It has been given "lip service", but the theory of heaven as the ultimate place of reward has virtually eliminated the importance and impact of what it means to recognize Christ as the King of the world. If a person say that Jesus is the Christ, or anointed one, while having an entirely erroneous idea of what the statement means, the words are an empty sound. The traditional recognition of the kingship of Christ is generally understood to be the present exercise by him of a spiritual authority in heaven. This ignores the view presented in the Scriptures.

The Jewish expectation of the Messiah was that he should appear upon the earth in person, and visibly exercise the power of a king over all nations. The disciples themselves shared the same view. The real controversy is as to whether this view is right. Traditional theology generally passes it off as a mistaken view of a gross and carnal nature, and condemns the idea of a visible kingdom on earth as opposed to the very spirit of Christianity.

What does the Bible actually teach? Were the expectations of the disciples erroneous and carnal? If they were, we are faced with some serious problems.

Firstly, Christ himself did not term the disciple's view of the Messiah and his kingdom as erroneous and carnal.

Secondly, when some of these same disciples later penned the letters that now form part of the New Testament, no retraction of those beliefs ever appeared therein. In fact, all Scriptural testimony is directly in favor of the doctrine which it is so common to condemn.

Jesus said to those who heard him, "I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil" - Matthew 5:17.

No statement can be more clear as to the mission of Christ. But what, exactly, did the prophets say concerning him?

THE PROPHETIC VIEW OF THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST

"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be RULER IN ISRAEL." - Micah 5:2

Who came out of Bethlehem? Jesus of Nazareth. This is a prophetic basis for regarding him as the future "ruler in Israel". This theme is supported by the words of Jeremiah ... "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: in his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely" - Jeremiah 23:5,6.

What could be more calculated to inspire the Jewish national hope of a literal king and a literal kingdom? Who is the "Righteous Branch of David"? None other than Jesus: for he himself claims the designation - "I am the root and the offspring (or BRANCH: 'offspring' being that which grows out of the 'root') of David ..." - Revelation 22:16.

If Christ be the Righteous Branch raised up unto David, and is come to fulfil the law and the prophets, he must "reign and prosper, and execute judgment and justice IN THE EARTH": for so the prophet has declared the Righteous Branch shall do. The idea is not confined to one or two statements, but appears in many prophetic testimonies, as noted in the side-bar ...

SIDEBAR: OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETIC TESTIMONIES CONCERNING THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel, and to the house of Judah. In those days and at that time, I will cause

the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David, and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land." - Jeremiah 33:14,15. "UNTO US a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, UPON THE THRONE OF DAVID, AND UPON HIS KINGDOM, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this" - Isaiah 9:6,7. "Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place... and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne" - Zechariah 6:12,13. "He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" - Isaiah 2:4. "And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name One" - Zechariah 14:9. "Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment" - Isaiah 32:1. "The Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously" - Isaiah 24:23. "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious" - Isaiah 11:9,10. "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee" - Isaiah 12:6. "I will make them (the Jews) one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one King shall be King to them all" - Ezekiel 37:22. "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; He will not turn from it: Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne" - Psalm 132:11. "The Lord said unto my lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion. Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies" - Psalm 110:1, 2. "I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" - Psalm 2:8. "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth....Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him" - Psalm 72:8,11. (See also Dan. 7: 14). (END OF SIDEBAR)

These are but a few out of many statements the Bible makes regarding this subject. Obviously, the expectations of the Jews and the disciples were well founded. The prophets clearly expressed the one idea of Christ's visible future appearance on the earth as a king; and if the Jews were wrong in looking for such a manifestation, it was no fault of theirs. It was not because they were carnally minded; but because the language of the holy men of old, who spoke as they were

moved by the Holy Spirit, was so framed as to preclude every other but the one idea which they derived from it.

NEW TESTAMENT SUPPORT

But what about the New Testament? Does it throw another light upon the statements of the Old Testament, thus weakening the support for the Jewish doctrine of the Messiah's kingship? It is customary to assume that this is the case; but the result of an unbiased examination will prove that the New Testament unmistakably corroborates the teaching of the prophets on the subject. At the very outset there is the message delivered by the angel Gabriel to Mary, in announcing the birth of Christ: "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" - Luke 1:31,33.

Here is a distinct New Testament declaration that it is the purpose of God to give to Jesus "the throne of his father David." We have considered David and the promises of God to him in Lesson 23. We know that David was the most renowned of Israel's God-anointed kings, holding sway over the twelve tribes of Israel in the Holy Land, and ruling many tributary nations. He was a mighty warrior, a distinguished prophet, and a poet of the highest type. He was the progenitor of Christ, through Mary, who was descended from the royal house. But WHAT IS MEANT BY "THE THRONE OF DAVID"?

Peter said, in his address to the Jews on the day of Pentecost: "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his (David's) loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ TO SIT ON HIS THRONE" - Acts 2:30.

There is, therefore, a connection between Christ's mission and David's throne. Had David a throne? He had. In what did it consist? Obviously the literal regal chair upon which he sat has long ago crumbled into dust. The throne of a kingdom is much more than simply the literal decorated chair occupied by royalty on state occasions. When we speak of the throne of England, we mean the office, function or position of the monarch in that country. Likewise with the throne of David. A popular view is that Christ is now on David's throne. But where is the current location of Christ? Christ is in heaven, sitting with his Father in His Father's throne, but not on David's throne. Nothing that David ever possessed is in heaven, therefore it is impossible

that Christ is now sitting on that throne. David himself is not in heaven; for Peter said in his address on the day of Pentecost ... "David IS NOT ASCENDED INTO THE HEAVENS." - Acts 2:34

The Bible teaches that at a future time appointed by God, the throne of David will be reestablished in the earth; and Jesus will share it with his faithful ones... "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen" - Amos 9.11. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." - Revelation 3:21.

Jesus spoke of that time when he was on earth. He said ... "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, THEN shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." - Matthew 25:31

Hence, before Jesus sits upon David's throne, he will return to earth, appear in Palestine, and assume the position which David occupied when he swayed the sceptre of Israel; that is, he will become king of the Jews.

In order to fully understand the angelic announcement to Mary, it is important to realize that it must be linked in context to a Divine prophecy uttered and recorded by Ezekiel more than 600 years earlier. The prophet was sent to the last monarch to occupy David's throne - King Zedekiah. He was an unworthy prince, and Ezekiel was sent to tell him of coming retribution. In the course of his prophecy, he uttered the following words: "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord God: Remove the diadem and take off the crown; this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more UNTIL HE COMES WHOSE RIGHT IT IS; and I will give it him." - Ezekiel 21:25-27 This was a declaration of the end of the Kingdom of God as it had existed in the past. The diadem was to be removed, the crown taken off, and the national political organization known as the Kingdom of Israel was to be completely abolished, as indicated in the triple repetition of the verb, "overturn," and as expressed by the phrase, "it shall be no more."

The prediction related to things Jewish, even to the things which constitute the throne of David; and its fulfillment is notorious to every reader of Jewish history. About a year after this prediction was delivered, the first of three invasions (occurring BC 606, 598 & 587 respectively) by the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar occurred. The outcome was utter disaster and chaos for the nation of Israel.

Zedekiah was uncrowned, the nobles were put to death, the nation was partly massacred, and partly carried away captive, and the land given over to desolation. Seventy years after, a partial restoration took place under Ezra and Nehemiah, but not of the throne of David. The Jews existed as a vassal people thenceforward; and after varied political fortunes, were overtaken by the Roman storm in AD 70 which swept away every vestige of their national existence.

But is this condition of David's throne to be perpetual? The prophecy is very clear: desolation shall only continue "Until HE COME whose right it is." Who is the "HE"? None other than the subject of all the other Old Testament prophecies - i.e., Jesus Christ, to whom the throne pertains of right, both by lineal descent, and special divine bequest. Note carefully that it is the things overturned (the diadem, crown, throne, and Kingdom of David) which are the things to be given to Christ at his coming. At that point of time he will become King of the Jews, and Lord of the whole earth. In this context and setting there is a striking significance in the words of the angel: "The Lord God shall give unto Jesus 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."

Going a step farther in our New Testament enquiry, we come to the birth of Christ, and we note the following incident: "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born KING OF THE JEWS" - Matthew 2:1.

There is no doubt that the wise men understood the significance of this event in the same context of all that the prophets had foretold of him who was to be ruler in Israel. They understood that he would be KING OF THE JEWS. The traditional teaching of organized Christianity is that Christ is only the spiritual Saviour of mankind, in the general sense of a broad universal spiritual relationship to the human race as a whole; and that he is king of those to whom he brings salvation - spiritual Jews, who are not Jews outwardly, but in the heart. But Christ has never claimed to be king of his spiritual flock. Of them he says, "I call you not servants, but friends." They are his brethren, "joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17), destined to reign with him a thousand years (Revelation 20:6). They are not his subjects, but aggregately his bride, "the Lamb's wife" - signifying the closest communion and identity of relational interest. Christ, therefore, cannot be king of the Jews in any spiritual sense. He is king of those Jews of whom David was king; for he is heir to his throne. That this was the nature of his claim, as understood by his contemporaries,

is obvious from the response of King Herod: "When Herod the king had heard these things he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, and thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel . . . And (Herod) sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men" - Matthew 2:2,3,6,16. It is obvious that Herod understood this announcement as a direct threat and challenge to his office and position as king - even though that position was little more than administrating a Roman colony as "King of the Jews" in the name of the Roman Caesar. It would have been of little significance to Herod if Christ was merely to be a spiritual ruler exercising power from heaven in the hearts of men. Such would not in any way have conflicted with Herod's jurisdiction as a king. However, his inhuman reaction serves as a proof that in Christ he recognised a prospective claimant of the literal kingship of Israel.

If we trace the career and note the sayings of Christ, as further recorded, we shall find constant indications of the correctness of the view entertained by the apostles concerning his kingship. For instance, in the course of his sermon on the mount, he said: "Swear not by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King." - Matthew 5:35.

Here Christ makes a connection between him and the city which witnessed his humiliation, and accounts that connection so sacred that he prohibits us > from using the name of the city on oath. He is "the Great King". - the "greater than Solomon." Jerusalem is the city. It existed at the time that Christ uttered the words under consideration. At that time it was a great, prosperous and magnificent centre of royalty and learning. Soon afterwards, in AD 70, it was plundered into insignificance by the Romans, and has remained in desolation until recent times. This was predicted by the Lord Jesus. He said: "They (the Jews) shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, UNTIL the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" - Luke 21:24.

He also said (with great sadness): "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth

her brood under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" - Matthew 23:37-39; Luke 13:34,35

Here was a treading down and a desolating foretold. This prediction by Christ parallels the prophecy by Ezekiel considered on page 3. Note that there is a limit imposed in the desolation of Jerusalem, and that limit forms a timeline by which to measure the extent of Gentile domination of world affairs. According to this prediction, Jerusalem will recover from her fall when the period indicated by the word "until" arrives. Christ said that two events mark that time: 1) the ending of Gentile times and, 2) the Jewish nation will recognise the crucified Jesus as the namebearer of God. Both events are certain, and we are informed, in the following testimony, that the day is coming when Christ will yet be received by his penitent nation the Jews: "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for an only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn" - Zechariah 12:10 When these have been accomplished, what then for Jerusalem? Again, the Old Testament prophetic testimonies provide a convincing answer (see side-bar) ...

SIDEBAR: OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE DESTINY OF JERUSALEM
 "The Lord shall inherit Judah, his portion in the Holy Land, and shall choose Jerusalem again" -Zechariah2:12 "The Lord shall comfort Zion: He will comfort all her waste places and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody" - Isaiah 51:3 "Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of His fury. Thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.... Therefore hear now this thou afflicted, and drunken, but not with wine: Thus saith thy Lord the Lord, and thy God that pleadeth the cause of His people. Behold I have taken out of thine hand the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury. Thou shalt no more drink it again" - Isaiah 51:17,21,22 "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean . . . Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem, for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem" - Isaiah 52:1,9 "The Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously" - Isaiah 24:23 "At

that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem: neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart" - Jeremiah 3:17 "For the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" - Micah 4:2,3 (END OF SIDEBAR)

Hence we realize that the city of Jerusalem has an important place in the purpose of God. It is destined to be the seat of that divine government which is to bless the world in the future age. It will, in fact, be the capital of the coming universal kingdom, constituting the centre of power, of law, of enlightenment, for appreciative nations who will visit there for instruction in that glorious time: "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" - Isaiah 2:3.

The Lord Jesus was fully aware of this glorious destiny in store for the city of Jerusalem. With this in his mind, and with an appropriateness which can only be appreciated by those who understand the purposes of God, he could say, "Swear not by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King." Thus we are enabled to extract from the words of Christ in his "sermon on the mount", powerful evidence of the reality of his kingship in relation to the earth.

Furthermore, Nathanael (the "Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile") adds to the evidence in his recognition of Christ: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" - John 1:49 That the conviction expressed in these words was generally impressed on the minds of the people by the teaching of Christ, is evident from the fact that "they wanted to take him by force, to make him a king" - John 6:15

Their language, on the occasion of his triumphant entry into Jerusalem, is evidence to the same point: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Blessed be the kingdom of our Father David that cometh in the name of the Lord" - Mark 11:10

However, the leaders of Jews plotted his destruction, and succeeded in their vicious plans. They brought him before Pilate, who finding

no fault in him, was willing to release him (Luke 23:13-16). This inflamed their animosity, and brought to light the real reason for their hatred of Jesus. They cried out saying - "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself A KING speaketh against Caesar" - John 19:12

This had the desired effect: Pilate gave judgment; and Christ was crucified, and according to the Roman custom, the nature of the charge against him was specified in writing over the cross: "Jesus of Nazareth THE KING OF THE JEWS" - John 19:9

Here again the kingship of Christ was front and center. He was crucified because he "made himself a king" (Matthew 27:11). This is the declaration of the superscription. That superscription was not sufficiently definite for the chief priests ... "This title then read many of the Jews.....Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, write not, The King of the Jews, but that HE SAID, I am King of the Jews." - John 19:20,21 Here is an important testimony from the chief priests as to Christ's own assertion of his royalty. In fact the closing scenes of our Lord's life on earth are perhaps the most decisive proof that prospective Jewish royalty was the essential feature of his character as the Messiah - a feature which is entirely omitted in popular preaching. The teaching of the Apostles after the ascension of Christ was the same on this important point. We read that the Jews of Thessalonica made accusation concerning them to the rulers of the city after this fashion: "These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also whom Jason hath received; and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying THAT THERE IS ANOTHER KING, ONE JESUS" - Acts 17:6,7

Paul made the same proclamation to the Athenians, in his address on Mars Hill ... "And the time of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because He hath appointed a day in which He will judge (which, in its political application, means rule) the world in righteousness BY THAT MAN WHOM HE HATH ORDAINED; whereof He hath given assurance to all men in that He hath raised him from the dead." - Acts 17:30,31

In fact, the great THEME of the New Testament teaching concerning Jesus is that he is "the Christ," that is, the "Anointed" One foretold by the prophets as the future king of the world. To deny him this kingship is to deny that he is the Christ - for the "anointing" refers, not only to his character as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," but to his future development as God's appointed KING on earth. His title "Christ" is prospective, culminating in "the glory that shall be revealed," which shall "cover the earth as the

waters cover the sea." It is scripturally impossible to acceptably confess that he is the Christ, on one hand, and to be ignorant of this great Bible truth, and deny the future manifested Christship of Jesus, on the other.

That Christ is the future king of the world is one of the most awesome and joyful truths of Bible revelation. What hope else is there for this sin afflicted world? It has groaned under ages of misrule. The riches of the earth are hoarded away in the halls of a surfeited few, and the great mass of humanity are left to welter out a degraded existence of poverty, ignorance, and misery. God's goodness has been fraudulently squandered.

Where shall we find comfort for the future? The world is incurable by human agency. Its only hope lies in the truth that a great Deliverer is waiting the appointed time of blessing; Christ at God's right hand is the future king of the world; he who endured the shame of a criminal's cross is coming to wear the honor of a universal crown; and though dark be the clouds that usher in his majestic advent, and fierce the convulsions that will attend the earth's deliverance, great will be the glory of the day he will bring, and everlasting the peace that will settle on the everlasting hills.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 24

1. What is meant by the term "Kingship of Christ"?
2. What was the Jewish expectation of the "Messiah"?
3. What were the disciples expectations of the Messiah?
4. If the disciples were wrong in their expectations, what are some of the serious problems we are faced with?
5. What was the clear expression of the Old Testament prophets regarding the Kingship of the Messiah (Christ)?
6. When the Bible speaks of the "throne" of David, what is it of David's that is indicated?
7. Why is it impossible that Christ could now be sitting on David's throne in heaven?
8. The prophecy uttered by the prophet Ezekiel indicated what concerning the Kingdom of God as it existed then?
9. Who is the "He" indicated by the prophetic utterance referred to in question #8 above?
10. What is Christ's relationship to his spiritual followers?
11. What was King Herod's understanding of the announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ?
12. What is the scripturally predicted future of Jerusalem?
13. Why did the Jews crucify Christ?
14. The term "Christ" is a Greek word. a) What is it's English equivalent?
b) To what does it refer?

Key Bible Lessons - Number 25 - God's Purposes with the Jews

"They which were scattered abroad . . . travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to NONE BUT UNTO THE JEWS ONLY." - Acts 11:19

"FOR THE HOPE OF ISRAEL I am bound with this chain." - Acts 28:20

"For if the casting away of them (the Jews) be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" - Rom 11:15

The idea that the gospel hope is inseparably linked to the modern Jewish people and the reestablishment of the nation of Israel in the land of Palestine is completely foreign to the thinking of traditional Christianity. Nevertheless, the Bible is clear that such a connection does exist, and it is up to us to carefully heed the words of scripture and understand why this is so and what it means to us.

The interest taken by "Christians," as a body, in the Jews, is purely sentimental in character, and relates more to historical rather than future significance. It arises from the history of the Jews - from their national relation to the Deity in former times; from God's use of them as the channel of Divine revelation; and from their flesh-and-blood connection with the Messiah in that Jesus was himself a Jew. It does not stretch into the future, except in the form of professed concern for the spiritual interests of the Jews, in common with those of mankind in general. It does not recognise that the salvation of mankind is directly dependant upon the future of the Jewish people.

GOSPEL MESSAGE HAS NATIONAL RESTRICTIONS!

The salvation of the world is bound up in the destiny of the Jews. In this lesson we will learn that without the literal national glorification of the Jews, there will be no salvation for individuals or nations in any shape or form. Anyone who is either ignorant or skeptical of this coming future development with regard to the Jews, is lacking one of the major and essential features of Bible teaching. Consider the evidence. Jesus said to his disciples -

"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" - Matthew 15:24

That the phrase "lost sheep" refers to the Jews specifically is evident > from another similar statement which excludes all but the Jews -
"Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."
- Matthew 10:5,6

Jesus further declared to the woman of Samaria, at Jacob's well -
 "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22).

These passages show that the salvation proclaimed by Jesus and his apostles had a national restriction. Jesus was a Jew, born to the house of David as the God-appointed heir of David's throne. The apostles who laboured with him were also Jews. They proclaimed a message which came > from the God of the Jews, and which according to the original instructions of Christ was only intended for the Jews. Therefore, Paul could emphatically characterize the gospel as "THE HOPE OF ISRAEL," which he did when he declared ...

"FOR THE HOPE OF ISRAEL I am bound with this chain." - Acts 28:20
 He also made the following statement with very pointed emphasis, in defending himself before king Agrippa ...

"And now I stand and am judged for THE HOPE OF THE PROMISE made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, HOPE TO COME; FOR WHICH HOPE'S SAKE KING AGRIPPA, I AM ACCUSED OF THE JEWS" - Acts 26:6,7

He could also say with a truthfulness not generally appreciated: "My kinsmen, according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the ADOPTION, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, AND THE PROMISES" - Romans 9:3-4
 Thus it is evident that the gospel of salvation proclaimed for acceptance is intensely Jewish in its origin, its application, and its future bearing. It is equally evident that this was the context in which it was regarded by the disciples immediately after the day of Pentecost ...

"They which were scattered abroad . . . travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to NONE BUT UNTO THE JEWS ONLY." - Acts 11:19

GENTILES NOT ORIGINALLY CALLED TO THE GOSPEL

Peter required a special revelation to convince him as to God's proposed admission of the Gentiles into the blessings of Israel, and even then he threw the onus of it upon God. He did not attempt to justify it himself, but apologised to his brethren for preaching to the Gentiles, saying,

"What was I, that I could withstand God?" - Acts 11:17

The fact is, the admission of the Gentiles to the hope of the gospel was one of the "mysteries" of the gospel referred to by Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians:

"Ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be FELLOW-HEIRS, and of the SAME BODY, and PARTAKERS of his promise in Christ by the Gospel." - Ephesians 3:4-6

But this opening of the way for the admission of the Gentiles did not destroy the Israelitish character of "THE HOPE." In fact, the effect was just the other way. Instead of the Gentiles converting the hope into Gentilism by their reception of it, the hope converted Gentiles into Jews, conforming them to its essentially Israelitish character. Hence the statements of Paul to Gentile believers...

"Ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise... Now therefore ye are NO MORE STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God" - Ephesians 2:12,19

"HE IS A JEW which is one inwardly" - Romans 2: 29

...that is, any person who is not a Jew by birth, but who understands and accepts the Jewish character of the hope (i.e., that redemption and salvation is linked to the promises that God made to Abraham the father of the Jews) is more a real Jew than the natural descendant of Abraham who is without understanding. Referring to the admission of the Gentiles, he speaks of it as a cutting out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and a grafting contrary to nature, into the good olive tree (Romans 11:24). Hence the Gentiles are "wild olive branches," without hope - without birthright - without promises - without a future portion of any kind; and if they would become heirs of the inheritance to come, they must cast off "the old man" of their Gentilism, and put on "the new man" of true Judaism ...

"...which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him" - Colossians 3:10

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL

Paul states that he was bound "for the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20), which is equivalent to saying that he preached "the hope of Israel", seeing that it was for his preaching that he was put in bonds. In

what sense can the set of ideas Paul preached be termed "the hope of Israel"? There is very little if anything taught by traditional Christianity that would cause it to be termed "the hope of Israel". How did Paul's preaching differ?

The essential feature of Paul's preaching recognized a Jewish national hope, based upon certain promises made by God to the fathers of the nation. Those promises on which that hope was based, constitute "glad tidings", or the "gospel" proclaimed by Jesus and the apostles; and those who believed it derived from it a very specific hope of redemption and salvation. From this it becomes readily apparent that there is an intimate connection between the Christian hope and the hope of Israel, because they are both based upon a reception of the doctrine of the Gospel. It is the purpose of this lesson to explore that connection.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE JEWS

The origin and history of the Jews is well documented in the Bible. Abraham, the member of a Chaldean family, was commanded to separate himself from his people, and go into a land "which he should after receive for an inheritance" (Hebrews 11:8). He obeyed, and went out, "not knowing whither he went." He was afterwards informed that his descendants would become a great nation, with whom God should have special dealings, and who should be the special objects of His care. In due time Abraham's household went down into Egypt, and settled in that country as a friendly colony. In the course of events, the Pharaohs enslaved them, and subjected them to a bitter rule for more than two centuries. At the end of that time, they were delivered through divine intervention by the hand of Moses; and after various wanderings and experiences, they settled in the land of promise as a kingdom under a divine constitution, i.e., the first and original Kingdom of God on the earth. This Divine constitution provided that so long as the nation was obedient to its requirements, they would remain in the land in prosperity, but that so soon as they departed from the statutes of God who had called and constituted them, adversity would overtake them. The subsequent part of their history is summed up in a sentence; they failed to observe the conditions of this national covenant, became divided into two kingdoms in the land (Israel and Judah), and thereafter were expelled from the national territory in disgrace, and scattered among the nations as fugitives, where they remain through the centuries until their recent re-establishment in the land of Palestine. Traditional Christian teaching does not go much beyond this general outline of the history of the Jews. That the Jews have any kind of a special future in the Divine plan is not a popular concept. Jewish national history is regarded as consummated, and the national destiny irrevocably sealed.

God, however, thinks differently, and the Bible, His word, speaks differently. Consider the following testimonies regarding the national standing of the Jews before God :--

"I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be MINE" - Leviticus 20:26

"Thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God. The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a SPECIAL PEOPLE UNTO HIMSELF, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" - Deuteronomy 7:6

"Thou art a holy people unto the Lord thy God; and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a PECULIAR PEOPLE UNTO HIMSELF, above all nations that are upon the earth" - Deuteronomy 14:2

"The Lord hath avouched thee this day to be HIS PECULIAR PEOPLE, as He hath promised thee; and that thou shouldest keep all His commandments, and to make thee high above all nations which He hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour: and that thou mayest be a holy people unto the Lord thy God" - Deuteronomy 26:18,19

It would be difficult to give more emphatic expression to the idea of a special, deliberate, and unconditional selection by God of the Jews as a people to Himself. Who are we to question it? "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" Hath not the Eternal Creator, in His infinite wisdom, the right to develop His own plans in His own way? The selection of the Jews is one feature of the great master plan which He has conceived in relation to this world. This is incontestably proved by scripture testimony.

WHY THE JEW?

The Bible is very clear that the selection of the Jew as the chosen nation is not really about the Jew. It has nothing to do with their worthiness or unworthiness. If it were, they would long ago have been destroyed - not only as a nation, but as a race. The selection of the Jew, and everything that happens to the Jew, is really about God. God has elected to select them irrespective of their moral condition, FOR HIS SAKE AND FOR HIS GLORY...

"I do not this for YOUR SAKES, O house of Israel, but FOR MINE HOLY NAME'S SAKE, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went." - Ezekiel 36:22

Nothing can undo the divine selection. "The gifts and calling of God

are without repentance (i.e. change)." The Jews themselves cannot nullify the decree. They may bring upon themselves, as they have done, the divine displeasure and the divine affliction by their sins, but they cannot alter their position before God as His chosen nation. The very punishments which they have endured for many generations are proof of the divine speciality of their national character. The language of God toward them is specific...

"You only have I known of all the families of the earth; THEREFORE I will punish you for all your iniquities." - Amos 3:2 Likewise, the calamities which have befallen them are proofs of divine supervision and control. They were scattered because of their iniquities, but not for ever cast off, as the common idea is:-

"God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew." - Romans 11:2
The Divine message through Jeremiah is even more to the point ...
"Though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee yet will I not make a full end of thee; but I will CORRECT thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished." - Jeremiah 30:11

The national sufferings of Israel are but the measured correction to which God is subjecting them; but nowhere does God indicate that He has finally rejected them. The Divine language of Jeremiah 33:24-26 would imply that some, in ancient times, took a contrary view, and contended, as many now do, that God had for ever disowned His people, and intended their destruction. The answer is emphatic and without doubt ...

"Considerest thou not what this people have spoken, saying, The two families which the Lord hath chosen He hath even cast them off. Thus they have despised my people, that they should be no more a nation before them. Thus saith the Lord, if my covenant be NOT with day and night, and if I have NOT appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, THEN will I cast away the seed of Jacob and David my servant." - Jeremiah 33:24-26

JEWISH RESTORATION

Currently, the Jews are suffering as a consequence of their spiritual stubbornness. This was foretold by all the prophets. The predictions are well documented. The evidence of their truthfulness is before our eyes. We see it in the wide-spread dispersion of the nation which was once the sovereign people of the word; we behold it in the manner by which they have been treated by their host nations (i.e. the holocaust).

But all this is to change:-

"Thus saith the Lord, like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people so will I bring upon them ALL THE GOOD THAT I HAVE PROMISED THEM" - Jeremiah 32:42

Here is a complete answer to the question. Its affirmation is that good will succeed the evil which has been their experience. This implies that the present time of national adversity will come to an end. Note carefully, that the good predicted is declared to have been "promised": What good has been promised them?

"Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform THAT GOOD THING which I have PROMISED unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of Righteousness to grow up unto David: and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely." - Jeremiah 33:14,16

Here the "good thing promised" is briefly summarised. Its two main features are: (1) a king to execute judgment and righteousness in the land and (2) the salvation of Judah and Jerusalem in his day. This is neither more nor less than a promise of the Messiah to rescue them from their enemies, and to recover them from the oppressions to which they have been subject for ages, a promise which is repeated in the following words:-

"I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations." - Ezekiel 37:22

Furthermore, the message of scripture is that not only will the Jews be restored, but that they are destined to subdue all kingdoms under heaven. Even powerful nations like the USA and Britain, with all their national sensitiveness and pride, will have to submit to them or be crushed by the stone which shall then be made the head of the corner:-
 "Thou art my battle-axe and weapons of war; for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms." - Jeremiah 51:20

It is important to note the second element in the good thing promised: "In these days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely." Obviously these days are yet to come; for, at present there is no Messiah executing judgment in the promised land, and no dwelling safely of Judah and Jerusalem, and never has there been such a state of things.

Yet the promise is that this "good thing" shall "come to pass," with all the certainty of the evil which has overtaken the nation...

"It shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict, so will I watch over them, to build and to plant, saith the Lord."

- Jeremiah 31:28

This is to be in the days of the "Righteous Branch", i.e., the kingdom age, when "he shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth". Consider the following statements:

"At that time, they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it; to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem, neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart. IN THOSE DAYS, the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel; and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers." - Jeremiah 3:17,18

"Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, AND BRING THEM INTO THEIR OWN LAND." - Ezekiel 37:21

"I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will BRING YOU INTO YOUR OWN LAND." - Ezekiel 34:24
There is no evading this language. It is too definitely worded to be vaguely spiritualised or misunderstood:-

"Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off. He that scattered Israel will GATHER him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock." - Jeremiah 31:10

As surely as the fact that the Jews were scattered, they are to be gathered again. On this the Bible message is clear; and when that happens, the Jews will be supremely honoured in like proportion as they are now despised...

"Behold, at that time...will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you; for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord." - Zephaniah 3:19,20

"Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, In those days it shall come to pass that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We

will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you." - Zechariah 8:23
 JEWS TO BE THE "FIRST NATION" IN THE WORLD

This honour is connected with political supremacy. The Jews are to become the most powerful and renowned among the nations, having all people in subjection...

"The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising: . . . and the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee; for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Therefore, thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day or night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee SHALL PERISH; yea, those nations SHALL BE UTTERLY WASTED The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call the city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations" - Isaiah 60:3,10-12,14-15.
 When this shall come to pass, the enemies of Israel will be confounded. Those who now deride them, and mock at their national hope, will be overtaken by the retribution to which they are rendering themselves liable. The approaching noontide of Jewish prosperity will be the catalyst to their destruction. The preliminary symptoms of the change will fill them with panic. This is the message of the following Scripture...
 "The nations shall see and be confounded at all their might; they shall lay their hand upon their mouth; their ears shall be deaf. They shall lick the dust like a serpent; they shall move out of their holes like worms of the earth; they shall be afraid of the Lord our God, and shall fear because of thee - Micah 7:16,17

The dreaded fate will overtake them...

"I will contend with him that contendeth with thee and I will save thy children: and I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood as with sweet wine; and all flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob." - Isaiah 49:25-26

"Behold all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded. THEY SHALL BE AS NOTHING; and they that strive with thee SHALL PERISH. Thou shalt seek them and shall not find them, even them that contended with thee. They that war against thee shall be

as nothing, and as a thing of nought." - Isaiah 41:11,12

Here, then, is certain doom for all who now take part against Israel; but there is a blessing in store for those who befriend them. "Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee." This was the decree pronounced by Balaam under the influence of the spirit, and declared to Abraham centuries before. It is both individual and national in its application.

THE JEWISH NATION TO BE PURGED

National restoration as a purpose of God is not conditional upon national reformation. Thus there will be an initial indiscriminate national restoration resulting in thousands of Jews being gathered from the countries of their dispersion who will never enter the land. Yet this will not destroy their national relationship. Being Jews, whom God has specially chosen as a nation, with a view to the development of His ultimate purpose, they will every one be gathered in the preliminary restoration.

"He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble THE OUTCASTS of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" - Isaiah 11:12.

However, although they will be gathered from the countries irrespectively of moral condition, admission to the land will be based upon the faith and moral integrity of every individual of the nation:-- "I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered, with a mighty hand, and with stretched-out arm, and with fury poured out; and I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you, saith the Lord God, And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant, and I WILL PURGE OUT FROM AMONG YOU THE REBELS AND THEM THAT TRANSGRESS AGAINST ME. I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall NOT enter into the land of Israel." - Ezekiel 20:34-38

In this we recognise a parallel to what occurred to them after leaving Egypt under Moses. They were then a rabble of untutored, unbelieving slaves; and a whole generation, with the exception of two persons--Caleb and Joshua--perished in the wilderness. They "entered not in because of unbelief," says Paul (Hebrews 4:6). Likewise most of the Jews contemporary with the return of Christ will also be unfit to enter the land; and

the Bible informs us that a similar purging will take place in the wilderness, as in the days of Moses, and may occupy the same period and / or be of the same character for its accomplishment: - "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things." - Micah 8:15

"Thy people also shall be ALL RIGHTEOUS the purging]; they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified" - Isaiah 60: 21.

Thus, even in the future national restoration of the Jews, the same conditions of Divine acceptance apply to the Jew as to the Gentile; but the hope of the Gentiles is pivotal upon Jewish national restoration. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, UNTIL the fulness of the Gentiles be come in; and so all Israel SHALL BE SAVED ... If the fall of them be the riches of the world and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more THEIR FULNESS? If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, WHAT SHALL THE RECEIVING OF THEM BE, but life from the dead?" - Romans 11:25,26,28,12,15.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 25

1. What do the traditional beliefs and concepts of Christians in general not recognize concerning the Jewish nations?
2. What was the national restriction of the original message of salvation preached by Christ and the apostles?
3. What was one of the "mysteries" of the Gospel?
4. What effect does the admission of the Gentiles into the hope of Israel have upon the Gentiles?
5. What is it that makes a person more of a real Jew than the natural descendant of Abraham?
6. What is the connection between the Christian hope and the hope of Israel?
7. Why has God selected the Jewish nation to be His chosen people?
8. The calamities and punishments that the Jewish people have endured are proof of what?
9. Has God rejected the Jews as His chosen nation?
10. When is the restoration of the Jewish nation to take place?
11. Will all Jews enter the promised land during the period of their restoration?
12. Will a different standard be applied to Jews for salvation than to Gentiles?
13. On what is the salvation of Gentiles based?

LESSON 26 - WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED

In this lesson, we will be reviewing much of what you have studied in the previous lessons. There is a point to all this study. God wants you to become a follower of His son. He wants you to be part of the covenants and promises He has for us. Please read through this very important lesson carefully and thoughtfully...

If it is true that God created this world in 6 days. If its true that all people have descended from one set of common human parents, if its true that Jesus of Nazareth is the Anointed one, the Messiah, the Christ, and the Son of God and he is coming to rule the earth, what then must we do to prepare?.

If it is true that the end of the world is coming soon, and that would mean then end of our job, the end of our country, the end of our schools, families, friends, sports and community, maybe we need to stop for a minute and think, what can we do to prepare?

If its true that God has a plan for the earth and for anyone who believe his plan, and there is information readily available in great detail about this plan, then should we be asking questions about getting ready for that time when the last day will arrive?

I have to tell you today, all of the "ifs" that I mentioned are true. And how can I be so certain these things are true? Because I decided to read the Bible, only the Bible, see what it had to say, and decide for myself whether it was true or not. Here is what I learned, there are many predictions and promises in the Bible. Most of these predictions are about one particular nation - the nation consisting of both the people and the actual country of Israel. Now it is true that strange words and weird imagery cloud many of the predictions and it is difficult to understand right away exactly what is being said. But, many of those predictions are clear enough and plain enough to understand, and many of those predictions written thousands of years ago have come true. The most amazing is the rebirth of the nation of Israel in 1948. A second prophecy come true is the regaining of the city of Jerusalem in 1967 by the Jews. The city being fought over and divided is another prophecy come true. And, if most of the easily understandable predictions have come true already then isn't logical that the other things are true too? Coincidence? Do you really think so? Isn't it worth a few hours of your time for a closer look? Couldn't you just think for a moment that there is a greater purpose and a greater being that we will call "God" and then, just for the purpose of investigation, ask the question, "What is it that God wants from me?"

What is it that God wants?

We will try to provide an answer to that question in 8 parts.

The parts are as follows

1. Learn and Believe what it is that God Wants from People
2. Learn and Believe God's Plan for Rewarding those who Seek Him
3. Learn and Believe that the man Jesus the Messiah Did Not Fail
4. Decide that You Will Follow God's Requirements.
5. Decide to start a new life, giving it to God.
6. Admit that you have failed to obey God's Laws
7. Seal that Decision: Get Baptized into God's Name
8. Live your New Life by Obeying the Teachings of Jesus

Notice that these involve certain activities on your part. Learning, believing, deciding, following, giving, admitting and obeying.

We'll look at each of these 8 steps in detail today, showing that the Bible teaches that each of these 8 steps are important, and together define what it is that God wants from you.

1. Learn and Believe what it is that God Wants from People

Our first Bible reference for this step is

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

Anything worthwhile takes hard work in the form of lots of thought, study and diligence to achieve. It usually takes some hard studying, learning, and finally believing what you learn. Many people recognize this and readily apply it to things like their jobs, their education, their health, their diet, their physique and all the other goals and wants that people pursue. The one thing though, and its something that matters most, they don't apply diligence to, and that is to religion. Many people do not apply diligence to seeking God.

There is a popular misconception throughout churches that God just

gives eternal life like some type of party favor to anyone who asks. That is not what the Bible teaches. The gift of God, eternal life, will only be given to those become the people that God wants. God says: "But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." (Deuteronomy 4:29)

God wants us to seek Him with diligence, with all of our heart. We must give ourselves wholeheartedly to that task. It can't be for a few minutes a week, or one weekend per year. It has to be all the time, everyday, in a manner that shows that we truly want to find God. This is demonstrated in the most important commandment of God, from Deuteronomy Chapter 6:4-5 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

Diligence, seeking with all our heart, giving ourselves wholly to Him is what God wants.

Christ taught this clearly. Not only did he reiterate that this is indeed the most important of all commandments, but he said other things along these lines too.

John 8:32 "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Knowing what God wants is the most important first step. You can't settle for just searching for this Truth with all your heart. You must search until you find the Truth. You must make it your main goal in life, more important than all your other goals. When you do this, you will find God. Until you are ready to do that, you will not be doing what God wants.

You not only have to learn what He wants, once you find it; you have to believe it. The beauty of the Truth that concerns Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God is that it makes sense. It's not like other religions where you have to make gigantic leaps far past logic. It's not like superstition where you keep guessing and hoping it's right. The Bible, the Word of the God of Israel, contains teachings that can be validated by looking at history. History gives a great deal of proof that the Bible is True. In the first reference we quoted from Hebrews, we also find a reference in the same chapter that tells us faith involves evidence of things that can't be seen. God offers us lots of evidence of His reality. We live in a time where this evidence becomes more apparent each day. But again, it involves diligence and

thought, it involves opening our eyes and minds so that we won't be blind to all the evidence that the Bible offers.

The importance of believing what we learn cannot be stressed enough. This is so even in everyday things. How often I have looked for some lost item, and merely continued to overlook it in a certain location such as a drawer, because I didn't really believe it was there. This even happens with large items like the car in a parking lot, or looking right at someone and not recognizing them because we didn't believe it might be them. How true this is with Bible things. Once we begin to understand what God is teaching us, we must believe it in order to build on that belief and add more. We must proceed carefully and make sure we understand what we read.

I would advise you all today, if you have not yet begun, from this moment forward, learn and believe what it is that God Wants from People. You can only learn this in the Bible, which is the Word of God, and the only source of Truth extant on the Earth today. Any one of us who has been baptized can help you with that goal, but it's important to start right away because soon it may be too late.

2. Learn and Believe God's Plan for Rewarding those who Seek Him

Remember God said: "You will find me in the day you seek me with all your heart." (Deu 4:29)

God created everything we can see. He didn't create it without a reason or purpose. He made the Earth for a reason and he made people for a reason. He has a plan, which involves filling the Earth with people forever. But, this plan involves a number of steps, and we must learn what those steps are.

Abraham was a man who lived around 4,000 years ago. We are told in the book of Galatians that the gospel was preached to Abraham. Jesus Christ was born only about 2,000 years ago, 2,000 years after his ancestor Abraham lived. The fact that the gospel had been preached 2,000 years before Christ was born may come as a surprise to those not familiar with Abraham himself. Most churches teach that the gospel was never taught or preached until Jesus Christ started preaching. But, the Bible teaches the promises of God to Abraham are what comprise the gospel, especially the promise of a "seed" or descendant of his who would bring blessings to the nations of the world. We can tell you now that as it says in Galatians, the seed refers to a person - Jesus Christ. It is critical that each person learns these very kinds of things from the Bible in order to understand God's plan for

rewarding those who seek him.

The fact that God will reward people is a critical piece of the learning God wants you to gain. We have to believe that God will reward those who serve Him. This is faith; this is what we must each do as a step to pleasing God. The rewards God will bestow on His children include the following. Immortality in His kingdom, the right to become a king or a priest in that Kingdom, the right to rule and judge the whole earth in that Kingdom, the right to become part of God Himself in a way that you must study the Bible to really understand. Super-human powers await those who serve him. Wonderful other blessings that we can't imagine await also. Best of all, the opportunity to fix the earth's problems, the opportunity to make earth into the Paradise God set out to establish at Creation, and other wonderful things are the kind of rewards that await those who server God now. We must not only learn about these things, but we must believe them and base our lives on them.

God has fully demonstrated this plan in the Bible. He has revealed it all to his various servants, the prophets, and they wrote it down and we have it today. He started right in the Garden of Eden, revealing pieces of his Plan to Eve and Adam. He added more pieces of it with events involving Adam and Eve's children, and then Noah and his family. He called Abraham and revealed much more of His plan in great detail, giving him promises involving Land, eternal life, and a special descendant who would bring it all to pass. He went on to expand his plan and promises to Abraham's descendants and Moses, and other prophets. Many pieces were laid out and can be studied throughout what we call the Old Testament in the Bible. Finally, God revealed Himself fully and his plan in the Man Jesus Christ. Jesus fulfilled the details of this plan and explained them to his disciples. You and every person here can read and study all about this plan. Everybody can understand the purpose of God. In this plan you will see that there is a place for you in it. You can begin today to learn the rewards that can be yours. I have to tell you, that it is foolish to ignore this study, its more important than anything else you can learn. You can start today; you can begin right now. The bottom line of this point number 2 is Learn and Believe God's Plan for Rewarding those who Seek Him.

3. Learn and Believe that the Man Jesus the Messiah Did Not Fail

It is obvious to most people that central to being a follower of Christ is belief in Jesus Christ. The problems start when we forget that he isn't just some idea or name, but that he is a real person. Just because we live 2,000 years after he was born, doesn't make him any

less real. The things they believed in the first century to get baptized were "the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ". It would seem obvious to me and I hope to you, that Jesus Christ himself is a very important part of being able to claim to be a "Christian", but we know that so many people don't believe in Jesus Christ at all. This is nothing new. We are told in the Bible that even in the first century, within mere decades of Jesus preaching, didn't believe that Jesus Christ ever came in the flesh - in other words, they did not believe that Jesus Christ had been a real man. It is the same today. Churches teach that Jesus Christ was not a real man but rather some kind of God, not a real person. The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is a man. It teaches that he was a man on earth, just like you and I, but that he obeyed the Law of God perfectly. He did not sin when he was tempted. He succeeded in obeying God and fulfilling God's righteous requirements.

But there is more to it too. There are other things about Jesus we must believe if we are to obey God. We have to believe that Jesus is the seed or descendant that was promised to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and Eve. We have to believe that he is the promised Jewish Messiah. The things I am mentioning here are facts that must be learned, understood, and believed in. Jesus Christ is the "Hope of Israel". He is the only means by which a person, Jew or non-Jew can be saved. Without Him, God's purpose would not continue because he is central to God's plan and purpose. What God wants > from you is to Learn about Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, and to believe in him.

We have many examples of this in the Bible. The apostle Paul said, "For the hope of Israel am I bound with this chain." Paul said this when being cross-examined. The hope of Israel is Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah who would save them, and save all that come to him. The apostle Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Others throughout the New Testament times believed in Jesus. We have to learn about Jesus and the various facts pertaining to him. The gospel believed in the first century were "The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the Name of Jesus Christ". We need to learn what is so important about Jesus and believe the facts concerning his accomplishment. He was born to fulfill a requirement designed for him from the beginning of God's plan. We need to learn what the requirement is and believe with all our heart that he met that requirement completely. Because he fully met that requirement of God, he lives today, resurrected and now sitting at the right hand of God.

Jesus was spoken of in the following manner in the writings of the New Testament:

"You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God"

"Tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin"

"Son of God"

"Son of Man"

We have to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was a man like we are men and women. He had the same needs, the same flesh, the same temptations and desires. But, he did not sin. Instead, he obeyed God each day of his life, and whenever he was tempted, he chose the correct way to proceed instead of sinning.

"Second Adam"

Jesus is likened by Paul to being a kind of Second Adam. We see that the first Adam, and the rest of mankind with him before Christ, all failed at meeting the righteous requirements of God. Jesus came along, 4000 years after the first Adam, and he did fulfill the righteous requirements of God. Jesus, unlike Adam, obeyed. He obeyed all his life and obeyed right up into death. He conquered sin and overcame it and won the battle over it, in his own body, obeying into death. Therefore, God resurrected him, brought him back to life and he now has become an immortal being and went up to heaven working with God, as a high priest for his followers, and preparing to return soon to earth to establish the Kingdom of God for a thousand years.

The Bible also speaks of Jesus in these terms:

"Sits at the right hand of God"

"The grave could not hold him"

4. Decide that You Will Now Follow God's Requirements for you

Making a decision of any kind is difficult for many people. Some people can't decide what they want to eat. Some people can't decide between two girlfriends or boyfriends. Some people can't decide whether to accept a job offer or go to college. People can't decide what clothes to wear in the morning. There are lots of decisions to make every moment of our lives. Some people let others make all their decisions for them. They can't stand or understand commitment. Some people make decisions by flipping a coin or asking for advice. Making a decision to become a disciple of Jesus Christ involves all the things we mentioned

and the following:

"Repent and be baptized". When we study the activities of our original parents, Adam and Eve, we see that their actions caused Sin to enter the world. God set up a law, and the punishment for disobeying it would be death. So, of course they disobeyed, and sin and death entered the world. At that time, God also began to reveal his plan to still fill the earth with people who would be part of Himself. That plan involved what it is that God wants from you today. It is very important, as we have mentioned already, to learn with lots of diligence what that Plan of God's is. We have to study the Bible carefully to learn what he wants from us. But, then, we must decide that whatever God wants from us, we will do. It is the decision that is very important in this step. It means that you understand what God requires of you, and that you are willing to alter your lifestyle in order to obey Him.

We all sin, we all disobey God's law. God requires each of us to realize, understand and admit that we want to follow God's requirements of us. We are talking about those requirements tonight. The things God wants from us could be outlined in great detail at this point. After realizing God's plan for earth and wanting to be part of it, many times a conscious decision can be made at this point in your studies that you want to be part of it. This decision means deciding that you buy into the things that Jesus taught. Things like loving your neighbor, things like forgiveness and mercy, things like teaching people the ways of peace, love, and kindness. They are good things, and if we truly believe in those things, then we can decide something like "Yes Jesus Christ, I believe in the things you demonstrated and taught, and I have decided that I want to be part of those things". It will be important soon after this to state this decision to other people, but first you must state it to yourself, and to Christ. If you truly want to become a disciple of Jesus, and a child of God, then you will have learned about the Truth, and therefore will be fully aware that Jesus is alive right now. So, you will have no problem admitting to him that he is right in what he has taught. You will readily admit to yourself, to Jesus and to God that the ways taught by God in the Bible are better than any ways that mankind has offered and that you want to be part of it. It is important to understand that it is a decision that you make in your mind first, and with your body and actions later. We are told in Romans 7 and 8 that it is with our mind that we serve the Law of God. The Bible, the Word of God works on our minds, and changes our minds in time. Making a decision, a conscious decision, is the changing of our mind and thinking that must take place in order for us to turn to God.

5. Decide to Start a New Life, giving it to God

Once we decide that we want the things that God offers us through Christ, we next must decide to start a New Life, one that we give in Service as an offering to God. This would seem obvious, but is neglected by millions of people. Most people on earth are born into some religion that they will follow until the day they die. They go to a church meeting on Saturday or Sunday, or maybe on a Friday. They might follow a couple of holidays. Nothing ever really changes in their life, they believe they always were in their religion and just stick with it, kind of like a sometimes hobby that is fun for socializing and meeting people.

That is just hypocrisy.

We realize that Jesus wants all of us. He will not settle for just little bits and pieces. Let's face the reality that a disciple of Christ is being trained to be a ruler in the Kingdom of God. They are being chosen to become warriors in God's Army. This can't be a sometimes effort. Training to rule the World is a full-time job. Jesus wants us completely, just like a spouse wants his or her spouse completely, not to be shared with anybody else. The relationship between a follower of Christ and God and Christ, is one that is complete and very satisfying. But, God, like a husband or wife, gets very jealous if we have allegiances elsewhere. We are told this in Exodus 20:5 and Exodus 34:14. He even says that his Name is jealous. Some people think they avoid his jealousy by avoiding idolatry. True, avoiding idolatry is essential. But it's more than that. God wants your total devotion, love and allegiance. This means starting a new life, one where you decide that God is to become your chief pursuit and joy. A careful study of the Bible will show you that this does not mean excluding all people and activities from your life, it means that your mind begins putting God first of all in every future move you make.

We will talk about baptism in a minute, but let's just think for a minute about what baptism demonstrates. When a person is baptized, they are put under water. Their whole body goes under the water. They are not merely sprinkled, they are not merely anointed. Water Baptism is Scriptural Baptism and it's the only way to become a brother or sister in Christ. It demonstrates literally, in a physical and spiritual way that we die and start a new life. The Greek word "baptizo" means "to dye a cloth by dipping it under water in a dye". The cloth goes down one color and comes up another. It is as if we die to our old life and are raised to a new one. We become something new when we are baptized into Christ. God is building a new creation and you are

part of that process when you give you life to Christ. There is a hymn that says: "Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to thee". In different parts of the Bible you will read about how Jesus Christ himself demonstrated how we can fulfil righteousness, by getting baptized, how various people got baptized at different times, and how we too must be baptized if we ever want to be saved. Matthew 3:13-17 tells of Christ's baptism in the Jordan River, and that God said that Christ did the right thing when he got baptized. Notice in verse 16, that Christ was down in the water because it says that immediately he came up "out of the water". Mark 1:9-11 speaks of the same incident, giving us two separate witnesses to this baptism of Christ, as an adult, in water. Mark 16:16 tells us that Christ says that only the baptized can be saved. Finally, in Luke 3:21 we read again about Jesus being baptized. How awful it is when churches teach that we should ignore, change or disobey Christ's example! We must follow his example and get baptized, once we believe the Truth and repent of our sins. Acts 2:38, 2:41, 8:12, 8:16, 8:38, and Acts 16:33 all show people continuously got baptized to become Christians. Gal 3:27 says if we are baptized into Christ, then we are in Christ.

Romans chapter 6 explains baptism even more fully. Please read that chapter. In it we see that we die with Christ when we are baptized, and that once we come up, OUT OF the water, we start a new life, showing that as Christ was resurrected, we too believe that we shall be resurrected and judged one day. Romans 6:5-10 clearly shows that the only way for us to be dead to our sins we committed is by being baptized in water, believing the Truth concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.

On a personal note, I'll tell you here and now, there is no better decision you can make than to start a new Life with Jesus Christ. You can leave behind mistakes, sins, and all the ideas that didn't work out. You can begin again and have a real solid goal, the coming Kingdom of God.

6. Admit that you have failed to obey God's Laws

We are told of mankind that they "have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Repenting is to gain a new perception, a new understanding and knowledge. Repenting is to change our way of thinking. God wants each one of you, each one of us, to reach a point into our lives where we admit our abject failure in the matter of obeying what God has demanded of us. In other words, we have to admit that we are sinners. Until we can admit that, we are continuing to block ourselves from the journey to the Kingdom of God that God has prepared for us.

We are told that "the soul that sinneth it must die." The Bible clearly teaches that God's Law is strict. If a person sins then they must die. Fortunately a way has been provided for us to be saved from that punishment. But, we have to completely understand, believe and admit that we are worthy of death. There is no other way to admit that we failed to obey God's Laws. Admitting that we must die, and really believing it and understanding why, is the step for coming to God we all have to make.

We are told in the Word of God that "whoever says he does not sin is a liar." It is not easy to admit such a thing. Many people believe that they are very good because they compare themselves with others who they see as very bad. I have to tell you, if you cannot admit that you sin, then you are lying to yourself, to others and to God. Those who say they do not sin are liars. The mark of a person who is doing what God wants of them readily admits that he or she sins and can only survive by God forgiving them. Then they must ask God to forgive them, and they must change their way of thinking, resolving to try to put that sin into the past and get beyond it.

7. Seal that Decision: Get Baptized into God's Name

It says Israel "were all baptized into Moses." Long ago, God entered into a covenant with Abram. It was a type of Contract between God and Abram, God sealed that covenant with an ancient ritual involving the killing of certain animals, laying the pieces of the animals in two lines opposite each other, and then passing through those pieces in the shape of a burning furnace. The pieces were on each side and great darkness was over and all around. Later, we are told that all of Israel entered into a covenant with God when they passed through the Red Sea with Moses. The walls of water were high up on each side of them and the cloud was over them. They passed through that and became the nation of God. We are told in the Bible and in history that many people entered into covenants with each other in the way described concerning Abraham and the animals. Likewise we must enter into that same exact Abrahamic covenant through baptism.

It's like this. When Abraham was called out of his home by God, God had said to him, Lek Lek, the Hebrew verb which in English means, "Get thee out". It means, "get going", it means "get up and go." We have that same call from God made to us. We are told to get thee out. We have to get out of the world in a sense of leaving behind the evils that we may have been involved in. We have to get up and move towards a new place. That new place is a spiritual life that begins right now, and ends up in the destination of the Kingdom of God. We pass

through the waters of baptism. Romans chapter 6 explains that we are baptized into Christ's death when we get baptized. We are buried with him in baptism so that we can be raised again to have a new life with him forever. It's a covenant that we enter into at baptism. We know this from Galatians 3:26-29 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. We take on the Name when we get baptized. Its not just the name of Jesus, its the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus got baptized "to fulfill all righteousness"

We are told how important baptism is when it says "whereas Baptism does now save us."

Under the old Law established at the Time of Moses, there were numerous washing instituted to cleanse people who sinned. But, the washings never really accomplished it completely. Because, in their minds and hearts they still were not cleansed. It's different now. The way to change our mind is to do these things we have mentioned here to prepare and then to get baptized. This baptism changes us, but not by washing away any filth or uncleanness. Instead it's the answer of a good conscience. Baptism saves us because we enter into covenant relationship with God. We are prepared at that point by having studied the Bible, and having come to understand and accept its Truths. These are mental activities that take place in our mind. We at that point have become conscious of our sins, we become conscious of God's requirements for us, we become conscious that there is a world much larger than the one we can see, we become conscious of what God is offering us. What we do with all that consciousness we achieve is to answer it by getting baptized. 1 Peter 3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

8. Live your New Life by Obeying the Teachings of Jesus

The life in Jesus Christ involves obeying special commandments such as "walk in the Light." We live by a code of spiritual growth, always moving forward. God forgives us because He can be depended on to do so, we are told this in 1 John 1 where it says "faithful and just to forgive us."

This final part of what God wants from you are really when the true excitement begins. There is a place that tells us to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling". I think it would also be fair to translate this passage as "fear and excitement".

Jesus Christ said he came so that people might have life and have it more abundantly. This idea of abundant life should fill our thoughts all the time once we have been baptized into Christ. There are so many paths we might each follow in life. There are so many variations on our walk to the Kingdom of God. Each of us works out our own salvation - our life in Christ, in different ways. Some of us get married whereas some were already married. Some get various jobs, maybe move away, others stay put. What I would like to point to through is a method of living our new life by obeying the teachings of Christ - a method that will apply to everybody.

We all realize that a day is coming when Jesus will return and will judge his followers. A very good way to live our life by obeying the teachings of Christ is to learn about what he will judge us for and always focus on those things as much as possible. So viewing our lifestyle in Christ lets think about that judgment. It's spoken of in several places. I want to keep it simple today and look at Matthew. Jesus begins in Matthew 19:27-30 to promise all who forsake their old life and follow him properly will be rewarded. A few chapters later. See Matthew 24:42 to Matthew 25:46. We see what type of things we will be judged for.

Things that are important to God, with the notation of what is rewarded and what is condemned:

Watching the house.

A. Give fellow servants meat in due season - rewarded.

B. Smiting fellow servants - condemned.

C. Eating and drinking with drunkards - condemned.

Example of Ten Virgins with Oil and Lamps

A. 5 Wise - keep extra oil ready, rewarded.

B. 5 Foolish - no extra oil, condemned

Note: Both groups, the wise and the foolish, fell asleep. But one

group was prepared BEFORE falling asleep, the other was not prepared. It is not the falling asleep that is condemned, rather it is the lack of preparedness by the foolish women that condemned them.

Talents - entrusted with the Lord's "Money"

A. Get out and do work - take risks - no fear, rather trust in the Lord.

B. Don't sit on it.

C. Don't Hide it.

Tasks We Should Do

A. Believe God and be baptized

B. Feed the hungry and give drinks to the thirsty - actual food and drink and spiritual food and drink

C. Clothe the naked

D. Visit the sick

E. Visit Prisoners

We do all these things for Christ, or to Christ, for good or bad, when we do it to the people around us.

Are you helping other believers in Christ, or are you abusing and hurting them? Are you keeping your personal faith strong, or are you letting it slip and get weaker.

We will be judged in all these categories. We need to look at our lives and determine how each area applies to us. But we are very fortunate that Christ has given us these categories beforehand.

Friends, this eight-point lesson briefly describes what God wants from you. You can begin now. Open your Bible, read your Bible, and let it have the effect in you that God wants. We will be glad to help you in this journey, just ask.

QUESTIONS for Lesson 26

1. Who will be given the gift of eternal life?
2. Who is the promised Messiah?
3. After "learning" about the Bible what then must we do?
4. What is the most important first step in learning what God wants from us?
5. Describe what happens at a biblical baptism.
6. What is the punishment for disobedience to God's law?
7. What must "admit" after we have decided to live the way God wishes us to live?
8. Are there proofs to what the Bible says? If so, name one or two.
9. Did the Messiah fail in his first mission?
10. What is the only true and trustworthy source of learning what it is God wants from us?
11. How do you "seal" the decision to begin a new life and be forgiven for you disobedience?

Lesson 27

Times And Signs: Or The Evidence That The End Is Near

THERE ARE many signs abroad indicative of the near approach of that interference of God in the affairs of men, which will result in changing the kingdoms of this world into " the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ " (Rev. xi, 15). To discern them, history and prophecy must be known and understood to some considerable extent. These are the two great lights which reveal the bearing of current events. Without them, a man will neither recognise nor be interested in " the signs of the times. "

Our first inquiry must be in reference to " times and seasons. " This is the key to the whole subject, for if we have no clue to our whereabouts in the Gentile era, and no knowledge of the length to which that era will run, it is obvious we have no reason for believing ourselves in the neighbourhood of the end, and nothing to justify us in seeking to find in contemporaneous events the signs that attend and usher in that end. On one point there can be no difference of opinion, and that is, that whether understood or not, there are in the Scriptures distinct specifications of time in relation to the events of the future. The best proof of this is to be found in the following quotations:

--

" Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favour her, yea THE SET TIME is come " (Psa. cii, 13).

" The vision is yet for an APPOINTED time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie " (Hab. ii, 3).

" AT THE TIME APPOINTED the end shall be " (Dan. viii, 19).

" He (the little horn) shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times, and the dividing of time " (Dan. vii, 25).

" How long shall be the vision? . . . And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed " (Dan. viii, 13, 14).

" From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days " (Dan. xii, 11).

" The holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months "

(Rev. xi, 2).

" To the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place where she is nourished, for a time and times and half a time, from the face of the serpent " (Rev. xii, 14).

These passages prove two things: first, that " a set time " exists in the mind of the Deity for the consummation of His purpose--a conclusion which must commend itself to every mind realising the fact that God knows all things from the end to the beginning; and, second, that He has given a revelation of " times and seasons. " This revelation may at first sight be obscure, but the fact of its having been given cannot be denied in view of the before-cited quotations. This being so, there arises the presumption that they are capable of being understood, since, as a matter of revelation, they could be given for no other purpose.

We have, however, to notice the qualifications with which this conclusion is divinely associated. We refer to the words addressed to Daniel: " None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand " (Dan. xii, 10). This would imply not only that uprightness is necessary, but also that the matter is not communicated in such a form as to be apprehended on the surface of it, but requires the qualification of " wisdom " to elucidate the hidden meaning.

We would also quote words of similar purport occurring in the Apocalypse: " Here is wisdom; let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast " ; showing that the matter as presented was an enigma requiring to be unlocked by the keys of knowledge. In view of this, we need not be surprised at the mistakes that have from time to time been made in the interpretation of the times and seasons. Numberless and outrageously absurd theories have, in all ages of the world, been put forward on the strength of what is written on times and seasons. Dates have been fixed, and events predicted which time has falsified. This fact has staggered weak minds, and induced contempt and scepticism in reference to the whole subject. Even many of the devout have become disgusted, and refuse to give credence to anything advanced on the subject; but this must surely be admitted to be evidence of short-sightedness rather than of wisdom.

There is a great difference between incompetent interpretation and essential absurdity in the nature of the matter interpreted. No devout mind, receiving the word of God in all sincerity, as the manifestation of His mind for the enlightenment of His servants, will be content

to accept -the fooleries of the past as a disproof of the intelligibility of what God has made known; but under the conviction that underneath the misunderstood enigmas of His word, there lie important facts which He would have us understand, will anxiously endeavour to penetrate the obscurity which has baffled others, and get at the mind of God in a matter so important in its bearings on our mental relation to the purposes of God.

Some people imagine that the New Testament bars the way against all enquiry on the subject of times and seasons; but on examination this will appear to be a mistake. It is true that Jesus said to his disciples, " It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power " (Acts i, 7); but this had a special bearing on the time and the persons in reference to whom the words were uttered, in no way conflicting with the present enquiry.

They were spoken to the disciples on the eve of his ascension at a time when they needed such words. Their minds were filled with solicitude for the manifestation of the kingdom. They had asked, " Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? " They did not know that the time for the kingdom was yet afar off. They were apparently ignorant that a great interval had to elapse, even " the times of the Gentiles. " They did not know that the hard work of preaching the Gospel had to be done; and the harder work of developing a people for God by the faith preached involving much suffering for His name, much long and weary waiting through a long night of centuries, for his coming.

The idea that the kingdom was then to be established was an obstacle in the way of the work on which they were about to enter, and therefore Jesus dispels it by telling them it was not for them in their circumstances, to be thinking of times and seasons, but to return to Jerusalem, and there await the effusion of the Spirit which was to qualify them to give testimony for him as his witnesses throughout all Judea and Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth. This was reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances; but to construe what was said appropriately to the time and circumstances, into a discountenance and prohibition of all subsequent research on the subject would evince a short-sighted judgment, and introduce an element of discord into the Word, which would thus be made to discourage in one place the study of that which it revealed in another.

Reliance is also placed on I Thess. v, 1, by those who disparage the study of prophetic times. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians:--

" Of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you, for yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 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. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of the light, and the children of the day. We are not of the night, nor of darkness " (I Thess. v, 1-5).

But so far from answering the intended purpose, these words of Paul show that the subject of " the times and seasons " was not a proscribed one. Paul intimates that he would have written on the subject to them, but he says, " YE HAVE NO NEED that I do so, and the reason is yourselves know that when the day comes, it will come as a thief--unexpected and undesired --upon the world, but not upon you, for ye are all the children of the light and of the day. " The sense in which they were the children of light may be understood in two ways. It may mean " You, Thessalonians, are ready for the day of the Lord; therefore it does not matter when the day comes; it is needless to speak of times and seasons when you are prepared for the event. "

This is, evidently, the view the Thessalonians took of it; for Paul's second letter to them found them expecting the immediate manifestation of Christ. But that this was the wrong construction of his words, appears in what he said in his second letter to the same church. He says (ch. ii, 1), " We beseech you. brethren... that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: FOR THAT DAY SHALL NOT COME, EXCEPT THERE COME A FALLING AWAY FIRST. " From this it is evident that the second way of construing Paul's words, in the 1st Epistle, is the correct one, viz., " It is not necessary for me to write about times and seasons, for ye are the children of the light, and ought to know about them. " Why should Paul assume they knew all about it? He gives us his reason in the 2nd Epistle: " Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I TOLD YOU THESE THINGS? " (verse 5). If they were ignorant, it was because they had forgotten what Paul told them; for Paul had told them that Christ could not be manifested until certain events foretold in the prophets had transpired.

At the same time, it cannot be denied, that their ideas of the times and seasons would, necessarily, be more imperfect and confused than ours: first because of the great distance of time which divided them from the end; and, second, because of the then impending visitation of divine judgment upon Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, foretold

by Jesus, which had the effect of concentrating their interest to some extent upon their own generation, and in many cases, of creating the expectation that as God was about to come on the scene in judgment, He would not leave it without effecting their deliverance, the more especially as Jesus associated the latter with the former, as regards the succession of events, though, as time has shown, not as regards chronological sequence.

A statement in Daniel (xii, 4), seems to indicate that it is in our own times more particularly that the prophetic visions are to be understood, both as regards their events and times: " But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. " There is a reason why the words may be understood at the time of the end. In " the words " are prophetically delineated historical events extending over centuries, and at the time of the end, we have the facts of accomplished history as the infallible interpreters of these words. By the aid of those facts, we are enabled to comprehend the prophetic scheme, both as regards its events and times, and so to gauge our position as to determine where we stand in relation to the wonderful consummation of the end itself.

Coming to the question of " How long? " it will be observed that in the passages quoted, the times defined are measured for the most part by " days. " The first question to be considered therefore, is, what are we to understand by the word so used? Are we to read it as a representative of so many days of 24 hours' duration? A class has arisen and multiplied considerably, who say " Yes, " with all confidence. But we ask them if that is so, how it is that Daniel did not understand; " I heard, but understood not " (Dan. xii, 8), when informed of the duration of the vision in days. And how is it that the wise alone are to understand? If it mean literal days, there is no wisdom required. To read it as literal days is a simple method of interpretation, which may be accepted with relief by minds incapable from disuse of going below the surface of things, and of rising to heights of knowledge through stepping-stone indications on the level; but the fallacy of the principle becomes apparent on the merest attempt to interpret the statements in question in accordance with it.

For instance, Daniel saw a vision (chap. viii,) in which the following events are comprehended; the beginning and rise of the Persian empire, its overthrow by Alexander the Great, the partition of the Grecian empire, at that monarch's death, into four parts, and the appearance of the Roman power in the southern section of the divided empire, resulting in the death of Jesus, the disruption of the Jewish commonwealth,

and the final casting down of the destroying enemy. The vision having passed before Daniel, he hears the question asked, " How LONG shall be the vision? " in. answer to which, the statement was made, " Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed (or avenged). "

Now, if we interpret this to mean that the events represented in the vision should only occupy 2,300 natural days, we turn the vision into absurdity. We make it compress into little more than six years, events, the first of which, viz., the rise and development of the Persian empire alone took nearly 250 years! The literal-day theorists attempt to get out of the difficulty by applying the period mentioned in the vision to the ravages of Antiochus Epiphanes, who suppressed the daily sacrifice for something like seven years, at the end of which it was restored by the Maccabees; but this suggestion is entirely set aside by the statement of the angel (verse 17), that " AT THE TIME OF THE END shall be the vision. " Even if we had not this distinct intimation, the suggestion would be negatived by the improbability of such a minor event being made the subject of prophecy for the wise of all time; but it is effectually precluded by the scope of the events, represented in the vision to which the statement of time applies, and by the further declaration of the angel that the vision should be " for many days " (verse 26).

In the 11th chap. we have a prophetic message angelically communicated to Daniel, " in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia. " This message commences with the date given, and, bridging all subsequent history, goes down to the destruction of " the king of the north, " on the mountains of Israel, at the manifestation of Jesus when the resurrection takes place. As in the other case, Daniel hears the question asked, " How long shall it be to the end of these wonders? " The answer is, " For a time, times, and an half. " Daniel says, " I heard, but I understood not. " A time was a Jewish period made up of 360 days. " Time, times, and an half " were, therefore, equivalent to " one time, two times, and half a time, " or " three times and a half, " or 1,260 days. It was, therefore, no wonder that Daniel failed to understand, because the events he had witnessed in vision were on such a scale as required centuries for development. The measure of such events by days might well baffle his understanding.

This mode of measurement is repeated in answer to Daniel's beseeching question, " O, my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? " (Dan. xii, 8). " From the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth,

and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days (45 days more). But go thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days. " It is evident that literal days are not meant in these expressions. Centuries have elapsed since the events to which they apply commenced to transpire; and the period defined, taken literally, has multiplied itself hundreds of times, and yet there is no arrival of the end foretold.

The question then is, what is meant by these prophetic days? We affirm, on the strength of the following evidence, that each day represents a year.

Moses sent spies to search the land of Canaan, in the second year after the children of Israel came out of Egypt. The spies were away forty days, and returned, at the end of that time, with a discouraging report as to the probabilities of a successful invasion of the country, and advised a rejection of Moses, and a return of the whole congregation into Egypt. The people, ever prone to distrust God, hearkened to the counsel of the spies, and were about to put it into execution, when God interfered, and vindicating Moses, gave sentence against the whole congregation, in the following words:--

" Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness, and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upwards, which have murmured against me, doubtless ye shall not come into the land... and your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness. After the number of days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, EACH DAY FOR A YEAR, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years " (Numbers xiv, 29, 30, 33, 34).

This is an historical transaction, in which a literal day was made the basis of a literal year. We now cite a case of prophecy.

Ezekiel was commanded to make a miniature representation of Jerusalem, and conduct a mimic siege against it, for the purpose of signifying to the people of Jerusalem that God intended to punish them for their iniquity. He was then instructed to signify the times in relation to the events represented:--

" Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it; according to the number of days that thou shalt lie upon it, thou shalt bear their iniquity; for I have laid upon thee THE YEARS of their inquiry ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF THE DAYS, 390 days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when

thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed these EACH DAY FOR A YEAR " (Ezek. iv, 4-6).

Here was a symbolical transaction, in which " times and seasons " were to be represented; and it is expressly directed that the symbolisation of time should be on the scale of a day for a year.

That this is the scale on which the prophetic periods of Daniel are fixed, is evident from a well-known case in which his prediction of time has been historically verified. " Seventy weeks " are employed to define the period that was to elapse from the issue of the final Persian edict for the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem, to the accomplishment of the following objects in the death of Messiah: 1st, to finish the transgression; 2nd, to make an end of sin; 3rd, to make reconciliation for iniquity; 4th, to bring in everlasting righteousness; 5th, to seal up the vision and the prophecy; and 6th, to anoint the Most Holy. Seventy weeks are 490 days: hence, " seventy weeks " is but another way of expressing 490 days. In view of this, how significant is the fact that from the edict in question (Artaxerxes, B.C. 456), to the crucifixion of Christ, there elapsed a period of exactly 490 years. A dispute among chronologists, as to whether the period reached exactly to the 490th year, does not detract from the weight of the evidence furnished in the fulfilment of this prophecy of the truth of the day-for-a-year principle, as applied to the solution of the prophetic periods; the fact that there is a dispute, only illustrates the obscurity of ancient history where precise dates are involved. Adopting the year-day principle, we shall proceed to point out the evidences which show that we have now reached nearly the utmost limit of the times of the Gentiles, and stand upon the verge of the future foretold by the prophets. There are four or five distinct methods of demonstrating this conclusion; four or five independent modes of computation, which lead to an identical result; four or five separate chronological lines which converge on a single epoch in the world's history, uniting to tell us the grand and awful tidings that the moment is nearly on us when the Most High, inhabiting eternity, having long holden His peace, is, in the person of Jesus, about to stir Himself up like a mighty man of war, and to enter into controversy with the nations of the earth, breaking their ungodly power, bringing down their strength to the earth, teaching them righteousness by angry judgments, and subduing them to the sceptre of the kingdom of David, under the yoke of which they will taste the blessedness that all the generations of Adam for a weary 6,000 years, have yearned and sighed after, but which they cannot have and never will realise until " that man whom God hath ordained " is manifested in the earth as a " hiding

place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land " (Isa. xxxii, 1).

The first is not in itself a conclusive mode of reckoning; but its coincidence with those that are certain, shows there is truth in it. We refer to the tradition, which is of very ancient origin, that as God effected the reorganisation of the world physical in six natural days, and consecrated the seventh as a day of rest and blessing, so will he occupy six days, of a thousand years each, in setting in order the political heaven and earth of human affairs, and set apart the seventh millennium, or period of a thousand years, as a Sabbatical era, in which righteousness and peace will prevail, as the waters cover the sea.

This theory is not expressly affirmed in the Word, but it is not altogether without countenance. The duration of the kingdom, for instance, happens to be the exact length of the supposed Sabbatical era; and this period--the kingdom prepared of God for them that love Him--is expressly spoken of by Paul as a Sabbatical rest, and, therefore, in some sense a seventh period (Heb. iv, 9). Peter's expression, " One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day) " (II Pet. iii, 8)--is quoted by some writers in favour of the tradition in question, but much stress cannot be laid on it. The theory rests on other grounds; and the strongest of these is its chronological agreement with the minor prophetic periods.

Assuming it to be a correct method of reckoning, how far are we on this principle from the end of the human era? The answer to this question depends upon the age of the world (not geologically, but since the Adamic creation). The process by which this point is ascertained, is necessarily a long and laborious one. We must refer to the results achieved by those who have gone through the process, and who have demonstrated every link in the chronological chain. We rely particularly on the deductions of Dr. Thomas, who has given a great deal of attention to the subject, and who has placed the results of his research in such a form before the general reader--(see Chronikon Hebraikon)--that the process which has cost him much time and labour can, in a moment, be verified or impugned.

The general result is to show that the world was 4,090 years old at the birth of Christ, instead of 4,004, as commonly supposed. Add to 4,090 the present A.D. 1905, and we get 5,995 as the real age of the world at the present time. If this be so, there wants only about five years to complete the 6,000 years of the great world-week, and therefore

we are that number of years from the time when the blessing of Abraham shall prevail over the whole world through Christ. But we are not, therefore, that number of years > from the advent. The coming of Christ is one event; the setting up of > the kingdom another. The former event must necessarily precede the latter by a considerable period. The constitution of human society cannot be broken up in judgment and reorganised in righteousness in a day. This is a work which will take time. It is natural to suppose that there must be years of divine operation in the earth before the final inauguration of the Sabbatical millennium, and this, therefore, admits of Christ coming before the end of the 6,000 years.

The next period is the one known as " The Seven Times of Daniel, " which arises in connection with a brief and familiar history recorded in Daniel iv. Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, saw in a dream a stately tree affording shelter to the beasts of the field and the fowls of heaven; and while he beheld, an angel descended, and gave orders that the tree should be hewn down, but that the stump should be left in the earth and banded with iron and brass, and that seven times should pass over it. Daniel interpreted this to mean that Nebuchadnezzar should be driven from his kingdom, and should herd with the beasts of the field, for a literal period of seven times, or nearly seven years, in accordance with which, it came so to pass, and at the end of the period, Nebuchadnezzar's reason returned, and he blessed the Most High.

On a superficial view of the case, it would appear as if there was nothing but the literal in this narrative, and as if the import of the vision terminated with the restoration of Nebuchadnezzar, at the end of seven literal times; but a deeper insight will reveal a splendid political allegory on the face of the literal narrative. In political symbolism, a tree represents a kingdom (see Ezek. xxxi, and Matt. xiii, 32). The tree of Nebuchadnezzar's dream would, therefore, represent Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom, though standing primarily for himself. On this principle, we can understand the banding of the tree stump with iron and brass; because when the Babylonian dominion was shorn away, the kingdoms that succeeded it were but a political bandaging of the power of Babylon with the brazen and iron or Greek and Roman elements. Furthermore, in standing for Nebuchadnezzar personally, the tree necessarily stood for the kingdom of Babylon, for Nebuchadnezzar was himself but the representative of the kingdom. This is apparent from the second chapter. Nebuchadnezzar is there addressed by Daniel (verse 38) as the dynastic representative of the golden dominion. " Thou art this head of gold; and after thee shall arise ANOTHER kingdom, " as if Nebuchadnezzar were a kingdom. So he was, representatively, in the

second chapter; and so we may presume he was in the fourth chapter, and went through the transactions therein narrated, as the dramatic personator of the fortunes of his kingdom.

At any rate, the narrative bears an extraordinary allegorical correspondence to the historical sequel. The seven times allegorically computed would commence with Nebuchadnezzar's ascension to the throne of Babylon. This was in 610 B.C. Now, by adding seven times of years 360×7 ---- 2,520 years to that date, we come to the ending of the 6,000 years of the world's age. Thus:--

SEVEN TIMES---commencing Nebuchadnezzar's reign, 610 B.C. 2,520. To find the conclusion of this period, A.D., deduct the years that elapsed before Christ 610.

Giving as the expiry of the seven times 1910.

World, 6,000 years old A.D. 1910.

has shown this calculation to be incorrect]

This result is remarkable, and confirms the supposition arising on a close consideration of Dan. iv, viz., that the seven times that literally measured Nebuchadnezzar's banishment from the empire, are also intended symbolically to measure the era of the world's alienation from God, from the time of the vision. At the end of the seven literal times, Nebuchadnezzar says, " Mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the Most High, and I praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever. " How strikingly this represents the change that will come over the kingdoms of the world at the close of the symbolic seven times, when:--

" The Gentiles shall come unto thee from the ends of the earth, and shall say, Surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit " (Jer. xvi, 19).

" All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord, and shall glorify Thy name " (Psa. lxxxvi, 9).

" Neither shall they walk any more after the imagination of their evil heart " (Jer. iii, 17).

" 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 " (Isa. ii, 3).

" When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms to serve the Lord " (Psa. cii, 22).

" From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles " (Mal. i, 11).

" So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and His glory from the rising of the sun " (Isa. lix, 19).

The next period is one mentioned in connection with a vision recorded in Dan. viii. The vision was communicated in symbol, and the features of it were these:--A ram with two unequal horns was seen prevailing in a western, northern, and southern direction, when having " become great, " its career was interrupted by the advent of a he-goat from the west, with a great horn between its eyes. A collision between the two symbolic animals resulted in the utter discomfiture and down-trampling of the ram, and the aggrandisement of the goat. The goat's notable horn, however was broken immediately afterwards, and in its place, there sprang four horns, out of one of which came a fifth horn, which prospered to the destroying of all things Jewish.

The interpretation is supplied along with the vision itself, so that the symbols become highly interesting. The ram with two horns is stated (verse 20), to be the joint dynasty of Media and Persia; and the goat the kingdom of Greece, under the leadership of its " first (imperial) king " or Alexander the Great. This being so, the fight between the animals represents the war between the two powers, which resulted in the subjugation of the Persian empire, and the establishment of Grecian rule over the civilised habitable. The breaking of the notable horn is the death of Alexander, just as he completed his military triumphs; and the up-growth of four horns, the division of Alexander's empire among his four generals Ptolemy, Seleucus, Cassander, and Lysimachus. Out of one of these was to appear a power which should " destroy the mighty and the holy people, " or the Jews. This identifies it as the Roman power, which, in relation to the Jewish state, made its first appearance in the territory allotted to Seleucus, and afterwards completely uprooted the Jewish power in a series of campaigns culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem, and the nearly total extermination of the race of Jews. The vision closes with this triumph, and leaves the future in darkness, with the exception of a general intimation that the power thus destroying the mighty and the holy people should be " broken without hand. "

In the vision itself, there was nothing to represent to Daniel the length of time during which this little-horn power of the goat (described

as of fierce countenance) should prevail over the kingdom of Jehovah. In a word, the length of " the times of the Gentiles " was not indicated in the symbols. This defect, however, was supplied before the vision finally closed:--

" Then I heard one saint speaking, and another saint said unto that certain saint which spake, How long shall be the vision concerning the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden underfoot? And he said unto me, UNTO TWO THOUSAND AND THREE HUNDRED DAYS; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed" (verses 13, 14).

Now it happens that the Vatican MS. of the Septuagint reads, " 2,400 days, " which, it is said, agrees with certain MSS in possession of the Jews of Bokhara. And it is to be noticed that an " evening morning " is 24 and not 23 hours, which seems to favour the " 2,400. " We have, therefore, to choose between the two. Five hundred years ago, it would have been difficult to make an election, except in so far as other (con-terminous) dates, with which this must have been made to agree, might have assisted us in the choice. Now, however, we are enabled to decide, for the simple reason that the first reading is negatived by historic failure in the date. " 2,300 " days expired over 100 years ago, and no avenging of the sanctuary took place. But it may be said, How do you know that " 2,300 " ended over a hundred years ago? The answer is very simple. Find the commencement of any term of years, and the termination follows of itself.

Now the commencement of the period in question, is identical with the commencement of the vision itself. The question is " How long shall be THE VISION, " etc., that is, over what time will the vision just witnessed extend? This being so, we have only to ascertain the date of the first event seen in the vision, and from that date reckon the currency of the period defined as the duration of the events represented. By consulting the vision, the reader will perceive that the first event is the appearance of the Medo-Persian empire, in that particular aspect of it signified by the greater altitude of one horn of the ram over the other. The two horns are expressly declared to be representative of the two elements of the ram kingdom--the Median and the Persian. This being so, it follows that the increase of the second horn over the first in size (for it is said " the higher came up last ") represents the more prolonged ascendancy of the Persian element, which was the last to come to the throne. Darius, the Mede, reigned two years, and, dying without issue, he was succeeded by his nephew, Cyrus, the Persian, whose family retained power till the empire was overthrown by Greece 200 years later.

When Daniel saw the ram, it would appear at first, that both horns were on its head, from which it might be argued that the date of the vision's commencement would be indefinitely somewhere at the beginning of the Persian monarchy; but the supplementary statement that " the higher came up last " would suggest that Daniel was a witness of the first shooting out of the second or over-topping horn. If this is a correct deduction, " the times of the vision " would commence with the ascension of Cyrus to the throne; he being the inception of the higher horn that came up last. This would be 540 B.C. as the beginning of the days. Certainly the days did not begin earlier. They may have begun later. If the statement " the higher came up last " is an explanation, and not a description of what Daniel actually saw, the date of commencement would have to be sought for at the time when Cyrus had reigned long enough to constitute the Persian horn, as a matter of fact, the higher of the two.

Adopting 540 B.C. as the date of commencement, the erroneousness of the 2,300 reading is at once apparent; for it would give A.D. 1760 as the termination of the vision, and the time for the avenging of the sanctuary. Adopting 2,400 we get 1860 as the date of the expiry. Some may think that this must be equally a mistake with the other, as no steps, such as are contemplated in the predicted " avengement, " have yet been taken. To this it can only be remarked that supposing this to be the case, it does not show the " 2,400 days " to be wrong, but only that they have been commenced too early in fixing upon the first year of Cyrus's sole reign as the commencement, which would favour the suggestion already thrown out, that the commencement ought to be dated later on in Persian annals, when the second horn had, as a matter of history, waxed greater than the Median horn, with which the Empire commenced.

But it is not certain that nothing marks the epoch commencing 1860, as affecting the land and interests of " the holy people. " On the contrary, it is a fact of the greatest notoriety, that this is a period of great activity in connection with Palestine and the Jews.

In France, in 1860, was established " The Universal Alliance of Israelites, " a society now numbering many thousands of subscribers. In England, in 1871, " The Anglo-Jewish Association " was established in connection with the older society. And in Vienna another branch was established. Thus began that international strengthening of the bonds of brotherhood in Israel that is so notable a phenomenon of our times.

These things arose out of the earlier necessities of the Jews. In Damascus, in 1840, there was considerable robbery and persecution

of the Jews by the Turkish officials, culminating in massacre. Sir Moses Montefiore went out to the East in connection with this, and received the personal thanks of Queen Victoria and a knighthood for so doing.

There are other evidences of revival in relation to Jewish affairs, which it would occupy much space to notice. Whether 1860 or a later date be the true termination of the 2,400 period, there is no doubt about the epochal ending of the period falling in the lifetime of the present generation. This is the broad fact to which we desire special attention. The period must end on this side of the marginal period already mentioned, for the simple reason that that period witnesses the process by which the result mentioned in the 2,400 vision is accomplished, viz., the cleansing or avengement of the sanctuary.

The next period can be demonstrated with greater certainty and exactitude, and coincides with the result to which the 2,400 vision leads us, thereby affording powerful collateral evidence of the correctness of the millenary-week theory, and the " seven times " method of computing the duration of the kingdom of men, and, at the same tune, establishing, with a strength that is almost irresistible, the general conclusion that in 1905 we stand in close proximity to that wonder of historic wonders, the advent of Jesus in power and great glory, to destroy them that destroy the earth, and establish " glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will toward men. "

We refer to the four-beasts vision of Daniel. The four beasts, like the four-metals of the image, are explained to mean the four great imperial dynasties, under which mankind should successively be ruled with something like universal dominion (Dan. vii, 17, 23). Attention is specially directed to the fourth beast, as it is in connection with it more particularly that the chronological considerations of the vision arise. This is universally admitted to be representative of the Roman empire, which, in relation to the Babylonish, was " the fourth kingdom " (verse 23).

On the head of the fourth beast were ten horns. This number was augmented by the appearance of an eleventh, which, however, by its aggressive acts, speedily diminished the whole number to eight. The eleventh horn was distinguished from its neighbours in having eyes and mouth, a " stout look, " and a hostile propensity about it, which displaced three of the first horns to make way for itself. It employed its mouth in " speaking great words against the Most High " and used its power against the Almighty, ultimately bringing about the perdition of the whole body corporate of which it formed a part. This, however, was

not an instantaneous result; the horn prevailed for a period before retribution came. The testimony is:--

" He shall speak great words against the Most High and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand UNTIL A TIME AND TIMES, AND THE DIVIDING OF TIME " (Dan. vii, 25).

The conclusion of this period is marked by an event as follows:--
 " I beheld, then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame " (verse 11). " The same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of Days came, and Judgment was given to the saints of the Most High, and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom " (verses 21, 22). " The Judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end " (verse 26).

Now the import of this symbolism is evident enough. The body of the beast being the Roman empire, it follows that the Roman empire (notwithstanding historical vicissitudes) was in some form to continue till the arrival of " the Ancient of Days " to destroy it, an event still in the future: but as an undivided kingdom it was not to continue: the ten horns on the head of the beast show this. The interpretation is: " the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise. " Kings represent dominions, and hence the appearance of ten kings in the head of the beast shows that, ultimately, the Roman empire of undivided magnitude, instead of continuing to be controlled by a single imperial will, as the body of a beast is by its head, was to be broken up into ten separate royalties or kingdoms, obeying so many separate political wills, and sustaining independent political existence, though forming part and parcel of the Roman system of nations.

This fact is not less clearly apparent in Nebuchadnezzar's vision of the image. The legs of iron represent the autonomy of the empire in its prosperous days; the feet, a mixture of iron and clay, and divided into ten toes, symbolise the later stage of Roman history--a stage embracing the " modern " era up to the present time, and a little beyond--a stage in which the power and territory of the Roman empire are distributed among rival states and monarchs who have sprung out of her political embers.

The chronology of the fourth-beast symbol is determinable by the career of the little horn. The fourth-beast system was to continue, at least, a time, times, and a half, from the time the little horn made its

appearance, after the end of which, it was to be destroyed by divine judgment, and the dominion transferred to the saints. Hence, if we can identify the little horn in history, and fix the date of its appearance, we shall be enabled to arrive at a correct conclusion as to the arrival of the time of the fourth-beast destroying judgment to take effect in the coming of the Ancient of Days, in the person of Jesus to put an end to the arrogant blasphemies which prevail for time, times, and a half. To do this, we must give a little attention to the appearance of the ten horns of the fourth beast, as the ten horns precede the advent of the little horn power. This takes us back to what is called " the fall of the Roman empire, " when " the fourth kingdom " passed from its imperial to its divided and multiregal phase.

Here we contemplate a protracted period of bloody revolution. The Roman arms, after centuries of resistless prowess, had lost their terror through the effeminacy of a race accustomed to victory and luxury, and the misgovernment of emperors, who ruled for private advantage instead of the public weal. The consequence was, that the rapacious hordes of Northern Europe and Asia, attracted to the tottering empire, like birds of prey to a rotting carcass, came down in clouds upon the fertile and cultivated countries of the south, and though held back for a time, ultimately broke through every barrier, and defeating the Roman armies, capturing the Roman fortresses, and ultimately sacking the proud empire City herself, put an end to the mightiest dominion that ever ruled the civilised habitable. This, however (which took more than a century to accomplish), though a destruction of what was considered the Roman empire, was but the introduction of the clay amongst the iron, not the displacing of the iron by the clay.

The northern nations were too lacking in genius, either social or political, to substitute a new order of society for that which they found among the civilised peoples of Rome. They were a vigorous, but an uncivilised race, and substantially fell in with the Roman order of things. True, there was an attempt by the Vandals, to abolish everything Roman and assimilate the conquered empire to the institutions of its barbarian conquerors; but this movement soon gave way before a reaction, which demanded and hastened the restoration of Roman civilisation. The clay intermingled itself with the iron, and was, ultimately moulded into shape by the stronger element. This is the time at which we are to look for the ten horns; for the ten horns in the beast vision represent the same aspect of the fourth kingdom, as the clay and iron ten-toed feet of the image vision. It is reasonable to assume that as soon as the Roman beast ceased to be controlled by its own head it passed into the ten-horned state of government; that is, as soon as imperial Rome fell, as soon as the central government of the empire was destroyed,

the empire passed into the dismembered state represented by the ten horns. If this be a reasonable assumption, we ought to find in her dismemberment a number of political divisions answering to the number of the horns.

In considering this matter, we are met with the fact that the barbarian nations, on overturning the Roman Empire, did not unite themselves under one government, and set up a new empire. They scattered themselves among the provinces of Roman Europe, and settled in such countries as were according to their liking, each nation setting up its own government independently of all the rest. In this way there sprang up a number of separate kingdoms in the territory formerly ruled by the undivided Roman sceptre; that is, several distinct horns sprang out of the head of the beast. The question is how many? Daniel says ten, and history says ten.

Sir Isaac Newton gives the following enumeration of the states that sprang up under the barbarian nations after the overthrow of Rome: 1--Vandals and Alans (under one government, occupying Spain and Africa); 2--Suevians (another part of Spain); 3--Visigoths; 4--Alans (France); 5--Burgundians; 6--Franks (separate from the Alans); 7--Britons; 8--Huns; 9--Lombards; 10--Ravenna. This enumeration is broadly taken and confined to Roman territory. It takes no account of minor divisions, such as the dukedoms (dignified by the name of kingdoms) into which Britain was divided, or the petty factions that were here and there to be found in connection with other States. It only takes note of the conspicuous and great divisions of political power, properly considered " kingdoms, " that followed the downfall of Rome, in Roman territory. It takes no cognisance of Asiatic dominion, or of any political phenomenon beyond the limits of the fourth-beast territory; and in this the discerning reader will say Sir Isaac Newton only adhered to the necessities imposed upon all interpreters of the vision itself.

Dr. Brewster, in his " Life of Sir Isaac Newton " (pp. 227, 228), paraphrasing Sir Isaac's views on the subject, observes: " Some of these kingdoms at length fell, and new ones sprang up; but, whatever was their subsequent number, they still retain the name of the ten kings from their first number. "

Machiavelli, in his history of Florence, enumerates ten kingdoms, into which the Roman empire was dismembered by the incursions of the northern nations. This list* is as follows: 1--Ostrogoths (in Moesia); 2--the Visigoths (in Pannonia); 3--Suevis and Alans (in Gascoigne and Spain); 4--The Vandals (in Africa); 5--the Franks (in France); 6--the Burgundians (in Burgundy); 7--the Herlui and Turingi (in Italy);

8--the Saxons and Angles (in Britain); 9--the Huns (in Hungary); 10--the Lombards (at first upon the Danube, and afterwards in Italy). This enumeration appears to differ a little from that adopted by Sir Isaac Newton, but a close comparison will reveal a resemblance between the two, amounting to identity.

* This list does not appear as a list in Machiavelli's book, but has the form of an account, extending over several pages, of which this is a condensation.--Author.

The only substantial difference is the exclusion of the Ostro-goths in Moesia (answering to the southern border of the empire of Austria) from the list of Sir Isaac Newton; but this difference is more a difference in the way of reckoning than in the actual enumeration of the ten kingdoms. Machiavelli's may be the true list, and Newton's may be reconcilable with it, by reckoning the nations of the Alans one kingdom instead of two, as Sir Isaac counts them, which would make room for the Ostrogoths as one of the ten. On the other hand, it is possible, though less likely, that the Ostrogoths may have been part and parcel of the adjoining Visigoth state of Pannonia, on the eastern shore of the Adriatic, answering to the Mediterranean seaboard of Austria. In any case, the identification of the ten horns is complete. The process is not circumvented by minor difficulties, arising from the obscurities of ancient records, which can never overthrow the broad fact that the territory of the Roman empire, after the overthrow of the Roman Imperial power, was divided into a number of political sections, more or less answering to the number ten. The diversity of race and tribe existing in Europe at the time, in no way interferes with the fact of a decimal division of political power. There were, no doubt, many more nationalities than ten; but this no more disproves their political division into ten parts, than does the existence of the English, Scotch, and Irish in Great Britain disprove the political unity of the three kingdoms.

The vision predicts the uprising of ten kingdoms in the territory of the Roman Empire. We would, therefore, argue a priori, that there must have been that number in the States that made their appearance when the unity of the empire was dissolved, whatever the obscurity of history might indicate to the contrary. But, fortunately, we do no violence to history in believing that the vision was realised. History shows us a number of kingdoms, so nearly approximating to the prophetic number, that two independent historical writers give us the exact number; and it must be remembered that one of these two--Machiavelli--was not writing for the illustration of prophecy--of which there is no reason to believe he knew anything--but simply in exercise of his

function as an impartial recorder of historical facts.

The ten horns appeared about the fifth and sixth centuries, but were afterwards reduced and multiplied in number by the revolutions of war. It is evident, however, that they reappear at the time that the fourth-beast system as a whole is destroyed by divine judgment. This is apparent by the later visions, seen by John in the Isle of Patmos, in which the fourth beast of Daniel is divided up into several beasts, for the purpose of illustrating subordinate and internal features of the system represented. According to these, we find that ten horns figure conspicuously at the end, as well as the beginning, of the little horn (time, times, and a half) era (Rev. xvii, 12, 14). " The ten horns which thou sawest (on the head of the scarlet-coloured beast, verse 3) are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast. These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them. "

Here there is no mention of an eleventh horn plucking up three of the ten by the roots, because it refers to an entirely different period of history from that represented by the ten horns on the head of Daniel's fourth beast. It shows us the constitution and attitude of the beast at the time the Lamb, as the Ancient of Days, comes to give its body to the burning flame of destroying war, from which it appears that the original ten-horned phase of Daniel's fourth beast is to be resuscitated, at the era of its destruction, and not only resuscitated, but established on the basis of corporate unity. That is to say the ten kingdoms into which the fourth beast system is to be divided at the end, are to unite in a unanimous policy, under a single head. They are to give their power and strength to the little horn blaspheming power (separately symbolised as a scarlet-coloured beast), for the purpose of carrying on war against Jesus when he has manifested himself in the earth as the Lion of the tribe of Judah.

The beast will thus act once more as a living unity, but this time, a ten-horned unity--a confederacy of the kings of the Roman territory, formed for the purpose of mutual self-defence against the power which will have threateningly appeared in the east, and of whose real nature they will be entirely ignorant, until overwhelmed in the fearful whirlwind of His destroying anger (Jer. xxx, 23, 24).

These facts enable us not only to reconcile Daniel's fourth beast with the visions of John, but to make use of all together, in forming a complete picture of the purpose of God, as unfolded in the past, and yet remaining to be fulfilled in " the end afore determined. "

They teach us that the ten-horned phase of the Roman system of nations has relation to two epochs in its existence; first, when its imperial unity disappeared in the " fall of the Roman Empire, " and the second, when that unity is restored, for the purpose of a united effort against " that determined, " which is to be " poured upon the desolate. "

We have now to enquire if history affords any parallel to the uprising of an eleventh political power in the Roman system, subsequent to the appearance of the ten, and of the uprooting by it of three of its predecessors, and the assumption by it of an arrogant dictatorial attitude toward the other powers, as symbolised by the eleventh horn, having a stout look and a mouth speaking great words of blasphemy. The merest retrospective glance affords the answer. The eye falls upon a power answering all the requirements of the prophecy; and the eye has not to search for it. It is not a second-rate object in the historical retrospect. It looms up in the past with over-shadowing breadth; it fills the whole picture with its imposing figure; which though no longer a recognised power in the political system of Europe, by reason of the termination of its allotted " time, times, and an half, " is still conspicuous as a religious element. Do we require to mention the power to which these remarks apply? Its name will instinctively spring to the reader's lips--THE PAPACY.

The Papacy appeared in the territory of the Roman or fourth beast, after the division of the empire by the barbarians of the north--that is (symbolically), after the ten horns had appeared. It was not till the beginning of the seventh century, that the Bishop of Rome--till that time a mere diocesan, an ecclesiastic among other ecclesiastics--was constituted by imperial edict, universal bishop or pope--the supreme pontiff of the State religion. The decree which finally elevated him to this position was issued by the emperor Phocas, from Constantinople (the mouth of the Dragon which gave the Papistical beast his power, and his seat, and his great authority: Rev. xiii, 2).

The date of the decree is given by one as A.D. 606, and another A.D. 608, which gives two years' uncertainty as to the beginning, and, therefore, ending of the period. But the date is sufficiently definite and exact for all practical purposes. The appearance of the eleventh horn is, doubtless, to be reckoned from the date of the edict which constituted it a power in Europe. It is true it was at first merely an ecclesiastical power, but history shows that it very soon became a political power, exercising secular authority in the territory provided for it by the displacement of three of the original ten horns, and, in addition to that, claiming and exercising imperial jurisdiction over contemporary " crowned heads. "

The plucking up of the three horns did not precede the advent of the eleventh horn, but followed as the consequence of it. An interval would elapse between the one thing and the other. The eleventh horn would be some time erect before the three fell: how long is not stated. It would necessarily be very short in the symbol; but then the events and times represented by the symbol were on the historical scale; and, therefore, a momentary interval on the head of the beast, would represent an interval of years in the course of history. It is not stated that the three horns were plucked up before the commencement of the time, times and a half; it is stated the eleventh horn prevailed for that time; but this does not exclude the self-evident conclusion that the plucking up of the three horns would be within the period of the eleventh horn's prevalence. The plucking up of the three horns was, in fact, part of its "prevalence" and, therefore, would necessarily transpire within the period of its ascendancy. Hence, we do not find that three kingdoms were given to the Pope the moment he appeared, but we do find that he received them about a century afterwards.

In a work published in 1782 entitled, "The History of Modern Europe, with an account of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, and a view of the progress of Society, from the rise of the Modern Kingdoms to the Peace of Paris, in 1763," there occurs the following statement, on page 47: --

"Before Pepin returned to France, he renewed his donation to St. Peter, yielding to Stephen and his successors the Exarchate; AEmelia, now Romagna; and Pentapolis, now Marca d'Ancona, with all the cities therein, to be held by them for ever; the kings of France, as patricians, retaining only an ideal superiority, which was soon forgotten. THUS WAS THE SCEPTRE ADDED TO THE

KEYS, THE SOVEREIGNTY TO THE PRIESTHOOD, AND THE POPES ENRICHED WITH THE SPOILS OF THE LOMBARD KINGS AND THE ROMAN EMPERORS. In the three states here mentioned, the reader will recognise three of the ten kingdoms that appeared on the declension of the empire, viz.:--1--Ravenna (the Exarchate); 2--Heruli and Turingi (AEmelia, now Romagna); and 3--Lombardy (Pentapolis). "

Dr. Keith's version of the matter is as follows: --

" The Exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the State of Rome, were subject to the secular dominion of the church of Rome, and mainly form, to this hour, 'the States of the Church,' over which the Pope, as a temporal sovereign, exercises sovereignty, and wears the 'TRIPLE CROWN,' as if in obvious token that three of the first kingdoms were rooted up before him. " ---Signs of the Times, page 22.

The eleventh horn had eyes: it could, therefore, see the other horns; while the other horns being without eyes, could not see it. What political peculiarity of the Papacy corresponds with this symbol? Obviously its priesthood. The institution exists in the territory of all the other horns, and by means of it Rome is made privy to the concerns of every power in Europe; while these powers are unable to penetrate the secrets of Rome, on account of the fidelity which the priesthood have always maintained to their ecclesiastical chief. History affords perpetually-recurring illustrations of the political power which Papal Rome was enabled to exert in all the realms of Europe, through this system of espionage, which she was enabled to maintain through her priests. It is remarkable that the Papal Power should be known in diplomatic language as " The HOLY SEE. "

The eleventh king was to be " diverse from the first (ten) " (Dan. vii, 24). It required no ingenuity to make out the diversity between the Pope and the crowned heads of Europe. The Pope does not belong to the order of kings. His appearance in Europe was a new political phenomenon. Such a personage had never appeared before as a sacerdotal imperial despot, claiming not only the actual sovereignty of the three territories transferred to his secular dominion, but divinely-conferred jurisdiction over every sovereign in Europe. This character was not assumed by the Roman Pontiffs all at once, but it had grown to full development before the Papacy was more than two centuries old.

In the days of Pope Gregory VII it ripened to maturity. Of this Pope it is recorded that " he engaged the Church in an open war with the sovereigns of all nations. " He formed a purpose to " engage in the

bond of fidelity and allegiance, to the Vicar of Christ, as king of kings, and lord of lords, all the potentates of the earth, and to establish at Rome an annual assembly of bishops, by whom the contests which might arise between kingdoms and sovereign states were to be decided--the pretensions of princes to be examined, and the fate of nations and empires to be determined. " So far did he succeed in his scheme of supremacy, that Henry IV., Emperor of Germany whom he had summoned to his presence as a delinquent, applied for absolution at the Gates of Canosa, a fortress in the Appenines, where Gregory happened to be resident at the time, " and being stripped of his robes, and, wrapt in sackcloth, he was obliged to remain in an outer court three days, in the month of January, bare-footed and fasting, before he was permitted to kiss the feet of His Holiness. The haughty pontiff condescended to grant him absolution, after he had sworn obedience to His Holiness in all things. "

Gregory, elated by his triumph, and now looking upon himself, not altogether without reason, as the lord and master of all the crowned heads in Christendom, said in several of his letters which were written at the time, that it was his duty to " pull down the pride of kings. " In accordance with this sentiment, he wrote to Solomon, a refractory king of Hungary, " You ought to know the kingdom of Hungary belongs to the Roman Church; and learn that you will incur the indignation of the Holy See, if you do not acknowledge that you hold your dominions of the Pope, and not of the Emperor. " He subsequently deposed Henry IV., in the words " In the name of Almighty God, and by your (the council's) authority, I prohibit Henry, the son of our Emperor Henry, from governing the Teutonic

Kingdom, and Italy; I release all Christians from their oath of allegiance to him, and I strictly forbid all persons from serving or attending him as king. "

He appointed a successor to Henry, one Rodolph, and sent him a golden crown, with an address, in which, after depriving Henry of strength in combat, and condemning him never to be victorious, he delivers himself of the following apostrophe to Peter and Paul, in which the nature of his pretensions as their pretended successor becomes apparent: " Make all men sensible that as you can bind and loose everything in heaven, you can also upon earth TAKE > FROM OR GIVE to every one, according to his deserts, empires, kingdoms, principalities. Let the kings and princes of the age then instantly feel your power, that they may not dare to despise the orders of your church. "

These sentiments Gregory VII left as an heritage to his successors,

and they have continued to be the animating spirit of the Roman See to the present day, illustrating the statement of the vision that the eleventh horn, with eyes, should be " diverse from the first (ten), " and should have a " look more stout than his fellows. "

The horn had a mouth. This indicates that it would in some sense presume to speak to the others, and the speaking could not be for the purpose of mutual deliberation, because the others had no mouths, and, therefore, no conversation could take place; the speaking, therefore, could only take the form of legislative dictation: the eleventh horn would presume to make law to the others. The applicability of this to the Papacy is abundantly manifested in the last paragraph.

The words it spoke were " great words against the Most High, " not words in the verbal sense: " words " here has a more comprehensive signification than the dictionary meaning. It imports the policy of the power spoken of, as represented and expressed by its utterances .over the whole period of its existence. These are " the words " by which the indignation that destroys the beast is evoked. Now these words, in order to be " against the Most High, " need not to be verbally directed against Him. They need not take the form of denunciations of the Almighty.

In the Scriptural sense, everything uttered against the truth is uttered against the Almighty, though it may be couched in the language of allegiance. Hence, for the Papacy to " speak great words against the Most High, " it is not necessary for her to have formally fulminated her denunciations against the Deity. If her ecclesiastical creed and her ecclesiastical policy have practically involved the repudiation of His truth, and His people, her " words " have been none the less, but all the more, " against the most High " for being framed in the language of sanctimonious pretence.

We have only to enquire whether the policy of Rome has or has not been one of arrogant presumption and destructive opposition to everything in which the name and honour of God are involved; and we have not to go far for the answer. No one having any knowledge of history, and any understanding of the truth, can be ignorant that Papal Rome has, from the beginning of its days, " spoken great words against the Most High, " and " made war with, and prevailed against, the saints. " Her career, since the day her bishop was crowned universal Dictator-ecclesiastical,

has been an unbroken chapter of enormities perpetrated against God and man. During the long period of her ascendancy, she has well merited the designation bestowed upon her by the Spirit in vision to John, in the Isle of Patmos. She has been the sum of all abomination--the

hold of every foul spirit--the " MOTHER of harlots and ABOMINATIONS of the EARTH " (Rev. xvii, 5).

She is well-styled " MYSTERY, " and more appropriately still, the MYSTERY OF INIQUITY " (2 Thess, ii, 7). She has been iniquity mystified--iniquity veiled--iniquity dressed in a robe of religious pretence--iniquity tricked out in the splendid paraphernalia of regal pomp and civil authority--iniquity of the deepest dye, draped in holy garments--a whited sepulchre of mystified iniquity, showing a beautiful exterior, and inviting all nations to worship at its cursed shrine of " rottenness and dead men's bones " ; and all nations have gone and bowed the knee, and garnished this grave of the saints with costly things, proving themselves the seed of the accursed rejecters of Jesus, who honoured the tombs of the prophets, and thereby were held by Jesus to be proved accomplices of those who killed them, and put them in their graves. The LITTLE HORN imposture--this proud, wilful, stout-looking pretentious, audacious, blasphemous, saint-killing power, which has prevailed against all divine things for twelve centuries, in accordance with the words of Daniel--this depraved, hypocritical, corrupt, iniquitous, tyrannical, and murderous Church of Rome, with which it is now becoming fashionable at religious meetings to bandy compliments, and speak respectfully of, and which blinded and becrazed " charity " would make room for, and deal liberally with, as an institution " doing good " in its own way, and " advancing the cause of Christ under the banners of the Catholic religion " ; this execrable mistress of witchery, whose cunning arts of simulated kindness, and ornaments of learning and fascinations of venerable pedigree, are, in England, entrapping thousands upon thousands into the bondage which it was the boast of this country to have escaped three hundred years ago--this system of unmixed iniquity is further introduced to our notice in Rev. xvii, 3, 4, as a gaudy, be-trinketed, whorish woman, drunk with the blood of saints, and having in her hand a cup of abominable liquor, with which she intoxicates kings.

The appropriateness of this figure will be seen at a glance. The Church of Rome pretends to be the faithful spouse of the absent bridegroom; whereas she acts the part of a prostitute of the most profligate and abandoned type. She coquets with the kings of the earth, and administers to them free libations of her bemuddling doctrines, with which " all nations are drunk. " She commits fornication with them, for her loves and her aims are confined to the worldly objects she can accomplish in her ecclesiastical dealings with them. She revels in lust and lucre, and is drenched in all her garments with the reeking blood of the righteous slain, whom she has put to death for their testimony.

This LITTLE-HORN blaspheming prevailing power, is further spoken of as a " king doing according to his will " (Dan. xi, 36), exalting and magnifying himself above every power (Heb., ail), and speaking marvellous things against the God of gods; which is an exact description of the Pope's presumption, as historically illustrated. It is said he should not regard the God of his fathers nor the desire of women. This is also descriptive of him. The emperors of Rome--the " fathers " or predecessors of the Pope--were Pagans, and worshipped the deities of Pagan mythology. The Pope disregarded these, and set up a god which the emperors " knew not, " viz., the triune God of their superstition, and the Virgin Mary, whom they " honoured with gold and silver, and precious stones, " in erecting begemmed and garnished temples to their worship. He was to " disregard the desire of women. " He should be a celibate, " forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats. " (1 Tim. iv, 3). How signally this has been fulfilled, history testifies. The whole hierarchy of Rome, from the Pope in " the chair of St. Peter " to the mendicant friar, are under a bond to remain in bachelorhood, and thus they set at naught the " desire of women, " and fulfil the prophecy. " He shall magnify himself above every God, " and " shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished. " His existence and supremacy will, therefore, continue till the return of Christ; for the indignation is not accomplished until he come to " tread the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God " (Rev. xix, 15), and to pour out the wine of HIS wrath into the cup of His indignation, without mixture (Rev. xiv, 10).

These prophecies are reproduced by Paul in 2 Thess. ii, 3-10. The church at Thessalonica had been agitated with ideas of the imminence of Christ's appearing. Paul writes to quiet their apprehensions on the subject, and reminds them of what he had told them while he was with them (verse 5), namely, that before that day of Christ would come, there should be a widespread departure from the truth, and a subsequent and consequent development of " that Man of Sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and EXALTETH HIMSELF ABOVE ALL THAT IS CALLED GOD, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. "

These words of Paul amount to a paraphrase of the words of Daniel. There is, however, a feature in them which is lacking in Daniel's representation of the matter. Paul connects the development of the " Man of Sin " with the " falling away " that was to come, and intimates by the concatenation of his words, that the one was to result from the other--that the revelation of the " Man of Sin " was to be the result of the falling away from the truth. This is an important addition to the information communicated by Daniel, without which, the identification

of the power represented would not have been so complete as it is. There is nothing in Daniel to indicate that the appearance of the little horn of the fourth beast was to be connected with God's operations among men by the truth. For anything there is in Daniel to the contrary, the little horn might have represented a heathen power, like Babylon, or like the original ten horns, having no germinal connection with anything pertaining to God; but, by Paul's words, we are enabled to see that this little horn was to be the political offspring of an apostasy which was to take place among those professing the truth of Christ.

This leads us straight to the Papacy, for the fact is notorious that the Papacy which has ruled the political and ecclesiastical destinies of Europe for twelve centuries, is nothing more nor less than the political incorporation of the principles developed as the result of a departure from the truth on the part of the early professing Christians. In the Papacy, therefore, we behold the MAN OF SIN predicted by Paul, and the system which is to be "consumed with the spirit of his (Christ's) mouth, and destroyed with the brightness of his coming." So long as the brethren, as a whole, were faithful to the truth, it was impossible for this Man of Sin to be revealed, and, therefore, it was impossible for Christ's coming to take place, because the coming of Christ was to occur for the destruction of the Man of Sin.

There was another obstacle in the way at the time that Paul wrote. "Ye know," says he, "what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time." The "Man of Sin" was to be the supreme power in the state. Before this could be accomplished, Paganism in high places had to be abolished. The Pope, as the professed "Vicar of Jesus Christ," claiming to be "King of Kings and Lords of Lords," could never be politically developed in Europe until the Roman empire was revolutionised, and changed from a Pagan to a professed Christian power. The paganism of Rome was, therefore, an obstruction. It was that "withholding" the revelation of "the Man of Sin." But the hindrance was to be "taken out of the way," and "THEN shall that Wicked be revealed," etc. We know, as a matter of history, that Paganism, in due time, was taken out of the way, and that the way was thereby opened for the uprising of the Little Horn on the head of the fourth or Roman (symbolic) beast, which, as "a Man of Sin," should prevail against the saints for 1,260 years, and exalt himself in the earth above every object of worship.

There are some who hold that this "Man of Sin" is a particular person--an individual of extraordinary audacity and impiety, who has yet to appear

and theoretically abjure the existence of the Almighty, and offer himself to all the world as the object of worship. But such take an extremely narrow and utterly untenable view of the matter. All they rely upon is the phrase " Man of Sin " ; but this no more proves the personality of the power referred to, than do Paul's other words, " THE OLD MAN, " prove that he meant a literal octogenarian, whose company we were to avoid, in " putting off the old man with his deeds. " If the " he " applied to the Man of Sin, prove the personality of the power referred to, what is to be made of the " he " applied to the " what withholdeth " ? " HE who now letteth (or hindereth) will let (or hinder) until HE be taken out of the way. " There was a " HE " existing in Paul's days, obstructing the development of the " Man of Sin, " and who was in due time to be removed to make way for his impious successor. Who was this? Let the individualists answer. Was there a particular man living in Paul's day, whose death or deposition was necessary to the appearance of the " Man of Sin " ? If the answer is " Yea, " who was it? and how is it that eighteen hundred years have elapsed since his death, and yet the " Man of Sin " of the individualist has never made his appearance? A full confrontation of this difficulty will demolish the individual theory.

The obstruction in the way of Paul's Man of Sin was the faithfulness of the brotherhood, and the political supremacy of Paganism. Both these barriers vanished in course of time, and up rose, in the historical arena, that monstrosity which has overshadowed the historic page with records of transcendent cruelty and iniquity. Historically, the Pope is absolutely THE MAN OF SIN; for throughout all the generations of the Papacy, the Pope has been the only man in the earth in his position. The system of the Papacy is essentially a ONE-MAN system. The theory of the system does not admit of more than a single head. It has happened once or twice that there have been rival Popes, but this was an anomaly never sanctioned by the system. Politically the Pope is the " MAN OF SIN, " whoever the Pope may happen to be. The individuality of the man is entirely absorbed in the position. No individual man is essential to constitute the Popeship. The Popeship has always found a man to fill it, whoever has lived or died, which shows that it is the office or position which Paul contemplated when he spoke of the revelation of the " Man of Sin. " One man filled the " MAN-OF-SIN " OFFICE when that which hindered was taken out of the way; and another entirely different man will be in it when Jesus is manifested to destroy the whole system.

Those who individualise and futurise the " Man of Sin " are in the habit of literalising the period of the Little Horn's prevalence. " Time, times, and an half, " to them are literal three-and-a-half

years, at some undiscoverable time in the future, during which " the ANTI-CHRIST " of their theory will appear on the scene, rise to the summit of universal power, and come to his end by divine interposition. How this theory can be entertained by an intelligent mind on a full review of the bearings of the case, it is difficult to conceive. It involves several anomalies of the most palpable kind. In the first place, if the time, times, and a half of Daniel's fourth beast are literal and future, of course the little horn represents a power yet to appear; and, in that case, the political visions shown to Daniel and John take no notice of the greatest political phenomenon of the fourth-beast period of the world's history. Daniel is shown the fourth-beast, and told about the fourth-beast kingdom, and put in possession of details respecting it, but is withheld all information of the most prominent, extraordinary, and longest-lived feature of the system, viz., the PAPACY. The most astounding phase of the fourth-beast history is left out of the symbolism of the fourth-beast period! He receives no information of a persecuting regal imposture, which should lift its head and voice over all the kings of the Continent, for more than 1,260 years, and trample under foot the truth and the friends of the truth all that time; but he is particularly enlightened with reference to an insignificant three-years-and-a-half, during which a daring man is only to equal (for he could not surpass) the impiety and cruelty exhibited by the Roman Pontiffs for more than a half-score centuries! The suggestion has only to be stated to be condemned. How utterly incongruous, that in a symbol, confessedly extending over a chronological period of 2,000 years, an incident of only three-and-a-half literal years' duration should receive a place as its most conspicuous feature--a period of utter insignificance as history goes. Again, such an assumption would make the vision teach that the saints were not to be prevailed against in the course of history, EXCEPT DURING THREE-AND-A-HALF YEARS AT ITS CLOSE, and would place in a curious position the fact, that as a matter of history, the Papacy has spoken great words against the Most High, and prevailed against the saints for a PERIOD OF UPWARDS OF 1,200 YEARS. Besides, of what service would the vision be, if its applicability were confined to a single oppressor, and a period of three-years-and-a-half at the close of history? Especially as it is denied by those who maintain this theory, that there is any clue to the time when the Man of Sin may be expected to appear. As it could in that case only interest those contemporary with that epoch, it would throw the vision into the corner, as a thing destitute of spiritual utility for all time, and only possessing the kind of interest attaching to any prodigy--a view of the matter eminently derogatory to God, in view of the fact that it was communicated by Him for enlightenment, encouragement, and guidance.

The literal theory is puerile and untenable. It is utterly unworthy of consideration, and can never be entertained where a broad and competent view of the facts is taken. The historical view of the matter, which is " the truth of the matter, " gives utility and importance to the vision. We read in it the consoling assurance that " the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, " and that the " practising and prospering " of human wickedness and presumption in the earth, has a determined end--that the triumphing of the wicked, like the waves of the sea, has an appointed bound that it cannot pass--that the times of the Gentiles are fixed and defined, and that standing where we are, we can look forward with intelligent expectation to their early expiry, and the glorious manifestation of the Ancient of Days, in righteousness to judge and make war, and destroy them that destroy the earth.

With righteous triumph may we hail the day of Rome's perdition. Her history shows a dark and dreadful retrospect. No language can adequately depict the enormity of her crimes. The Pagan murderer of the apostles, the Papal blasphemer of the truth, and destroyer of the saints, " Great Babylon, " has heaped to herself wrath against the day of wrath. Her crimes are without number and without measure. For a long period of centuries, she has prevailed against everything divine. She has waged open war against the word of God. She has done her utmost to extirpate it from-among mankind. She has made the study of it a crime, and the possession of it a capital offence. She has trampled the truth under her feet, and drenched the earth with the blood of unresisting victims, who loved it, and counted not their lives dear unto them in defence of it. She has invented and established every kind of abomination in doctrine and practice. For ages, she has held up a mortal man as an object of universal adoration, above all on earth called God, or worshipped. To this living idol, she has commanded the ascription of more than mortal honours, and ordered all who would not bow down to the image to be cast into the furnace of fiery affliction, of persecution, bonds, imprisonments and death.

She has deified the ghost of a dead woman, and commanded the world to worship " the Queen of heaven, " under the blasphemous title of " the Mother of God. " She has burlesqued and brought to mockery the truth of the miraculous conception. She has enjoined prayer to dead men, and taught men to look to them for guardianship. The world, drunk with the wine of her abomination, has responded to the injunction, and elected their " patron saints, " to whom they address their ignorant devotions, and whose guardianship they invoke upon the temples of their superstition by calling them after their names.

She has changed the memorials of Christ's death into objects of worship,

telling her dupes that the touch of her lying priests transmutes the emblematic bread and wine into the veritable essence of Christ's nature; and she has degraded the intelligent observance of the institution, commanded for the affectionate participation of all the members of Christ's household, into a scene of superstitious and meaningless mummeries, enacted by her foul-handed priests. She holds up as objects of faith and acts of obedience, dead men's bones, musty relics, crosses, genuflexions, bodily penances; and exacts money from the pockets of her dupes on the iniquitous pretence of imparting spiritual benefit. She has descended to the unutterable infamy of selling licentiousness for gain--pretending to give liberty to sin with impunity, for money--blasphemously professing to avert the course of eternal justice for a consideration in cash! She has invented the chimera of purgatory, and befooled the deluded masses of mankind into the belief that she had power, for money, to liberate " departed souls " from its custody.

There is no religious folly of which she has not been guilty. She has arrogated the power to forgive sins, and by her priests in " the Confessional, " has enforced the most execrable inquisition into the private affairs of her devotees, especially women, in whose " spiritual interests " her celibate scoundrels have professed a solicitude which has only been the cloak of their lust. She has established nests of infamy throughout the world, in the name of spiritual purity and seclusion; and in convents and nunneries, carries on secret abominations and cruelties, of which the unutterable heinousness will only be fully known .when " Great Babylon comes into remembrance before God, " and the time arrives to give unto her " double for all her sins. " She has decreed the heathen fiction of the immortality of the soul to be the cardinal point of the Christian faith, and has exalted the Pagan dreams of Hell and Elysian Fields, to the same eminence. She has turned away from the truth, and given heed to fables. She has made lies her refuge.

From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, she is one mass of spiritual putrefaction; and when to this is added her great swelling words of vanity, her proud looks, and rapacious deeds, her wicked principles and cruel acts, her malignant hostility to the truth in every shape and form, and her implacable persecution by rack torture, fire and death, of all who professed it, whom she could get into her power, the picture of her enormities is complete. Yet, like the adulterous woman, " she wipeth her mouth, and saith, I am innocent. " In the language imputed to her in the Apocalypse, she says, " I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow " (Rev. xviii, 7).

Well might the servants of God be represented as crying, " How long,

O Lord, holy and true? " Such a triumph of iniquity in the earth is well-nigh beyond the capacity of human forbearance; but our patience is strengthened by the word which God has sent, " that His servants might know the things which must shortly come to pass. " Through it, as through a telescope, we see the coming retribution, and we hear the murmuring echoes of that mighty paeon of triumph, which will ascend from countless tongues, like the noise of a tumult of waters: " Alleluia! Salvation, and glory and honour, and power unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are His judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of His servants at her hand. " (Rev. xix, 1, 2). The sound of this song of triumph is very near, even at the door. In all probability, another generation will not pass before its joyous peals will burst upon the world. " Time, times, and a half " of years are up. 1866-70 (a margin covered by the French occupation of Rome) saw the end of the 1,260 years which commenced in 606-8, and with the end of her allotted time comes the swift and decisive sword of divine justice. " Her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. . . Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her " (Rev. xviii, 5-8). " The Lord shall consume her with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy her with the brightness of HIS COMING " (2 Thess. ii, 8). CONFIRMATORY SIGNS

Being at the end of the prophetic periods, are there any events extant in the world at the present moment indicative of the fact? In answering this question, we desire to draw attention to what has been revealed in reference to the events attendant upon " the latter days. " We begin by quoting Rev. xvi, 12, 16, where this matter is the subject of symbol:-

" And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet; for they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. (Behold, I come as a thief: blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.) And he gathered them together into a place called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon. "

The main feature of this testimony is a predicted gathering of nations

to a war in which God Almighty (through the Lord Jesus Christ, who arrives on earth like a thief, before the conflict commences), is to take a part.

There are, however, certain signs preceding the gathering, which demand our attention. There is, first the drying up of the river Euphrates, " that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. " Now, we cannot take this to mean the literal evaporation of the river known by that name; because there would be no connection between such an event and the preparation of " the way of the kings of the east, " or sunrising, whoever we take these to be.

There are only two classes that answer to the designation. viz.-- the saints and the Jews: the first being the kings of a future age--having their origin and constitution in Christ, the great rising sun of righteousness, who is to reappear in the east, and subjugate the world from that quarter; and the second, being the royal eastern nation, or lords of the east. If we suppose that " the kings of the east " of the testimony are the saints, we are at once precluded from the literal view of " the river Euphrates, " for how should the drying up of a river be necessary to make way for those who shall be caught (or snatched) away to meet the Lord in the air? If, on the other hand, we assume that it is the Jews who are meant (and the truth is, it means both, for they are part and parcel of the same system of things), the idea of literality of the river is equally untenable; because the Jews are principally scattered in Europe and America, and in their restoration will come in " the ships of Tarshish first " (Isaiah lx, 9), and be brought " on horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts: for an offering, to the holy mountain of the Lord at Jerusalem " (Isaiah lxvi, 20).

The question is, what does the statement of the prophecy mean? Turning to the prophets, we find rivers frequently chosen to represent nations, powers, armies, etc. We read in Isaiah viii, 7, for instance:-- " Behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, EVEN THE KING OF ASSYRIA, AND ALL HIS GLORY. " In this case, the Assyrian power is figuratively represented by the river which irrigated the territory on which it was established, viz., the Euphrates, which was designated " the river. " Again, in Isaiah xviii, where the Jews are the subject of discourse, we find the following phrase, " whose land the rivers have spoiled, " referring to the repeated military invasions of Palestine; for we never heard of watery inundations in that part of the world. Hence also, " many waters " are explained to mean " peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues " (Rev. xvii, 15).

Now, in view of these considerations, it is legitimate to argue that " the river Euphrates " dried up by the sixth vial, is intended to signify that power which is located on the territory to which it pertains, at the time contemporary with the pouring out of the sixth vial. If this is admitted, the interpretation would at once fix upon Turkey as the power represented; because she occupies the territory in question at the present time, when the events of the prophecy are near their fulfilment. If so, the meaning of the symbol is that the political life of the Turkish empire will die out as a necessary preparation for the way of the kings of the east. The fitness of this interpretation is at once apparent, when we remember that Turkey had held the land of the Jew in servile possession, precluding him from possessing soil in his own land, and refusing to guarantee him the ordinary privileges of his heathen denizens; because, until the Turkish power is removed out of the way--until this political Euphrates is dried up, the restoration of the Jews, in the complete sense required by other parts of the prophetic word, is not possible. Hence, the necessity for its evaporation predicted in the vision.

The next sign connected with the development of the end, was seen by John in the issuing of " three unclean spirits like frogs out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. " The three sources of issue first demand attention. The beast is said to have had " seven heads and ten horns, and ten crowns upon his horns " (Rev. xiii, 1). This is interpreted in chapter xvii, 9, as follows: " The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth (the woman being explained as that great city which reigneth over the kings of the earth--verse 18), and there are seven kings . . . And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet, " etc. (verse 12).

Here it is evident that " the beast " is representative of a political organisation, and not descriptive of the reptilious monstrosity suggested by a literal construction of the symbol. This being so, " the mouth of the beast " must also be political; and we must seek for its equivalent in the beast-system, as politically manifested. By this rule, we select the capital city as being the mouth of the state, both as to the exposition of its policy, and as to its corporate nourishment. Now on this principle of interpretation, which is suggested by the explanation contained in the vision itself, the mouths of the dragon, beast, and false prophet signify the capital cities of the political systems severally represented by these symbols; and all that is necessary to identify them is, to ascertain what systems are symbolised by " the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. "

This cannot be done without going largely into history, which is impossible within the short limits of a lecture. The dragon is demonstrably the Eastern Roman Empire, having Constantinople as its capital: the beast, the Holy Roman Empire of the middle ages, having Vienna as its representative mouth; and the false prophet, that absurdity in Christendom, the ecclesiastical tyrant of Rome, from which, as " his mouth, " he fulminates his blasphemous " bulls " and gives forth his false pretensions to spiritual unction and infallibility.

The mouths, then, from which the unclean spirits issue, are Constantinople, Vienna and Rome. What are those spirits? They are like frogs. This cannot mean a resemblance to the little mud reptiles which inhabit marshes; because these creatures are devoid of intelligent quality; hence, a policy issuing > from a political mouth could never be said to resemble them. The mouths being political, the frog-likeness must have a political significance likewise; but where shall we seek for anything political connected with three frogs?

Well, it is a fact that the original arms of France consisted of three frogs, of which anyone may satisfy himself by consulting early French history. Here is a clue. If the Spirit has selected the dragon--the first heraldic symbol of the Eastern Roman Empire--to represent the modern phase of that empire, does it not seem appropriate that the original national symbol of France should be selected to represent her, when the occasion occurred to introduce her into the scene? Only one answer can be given, and that answer brings a moral certainty with it, that France is brought before us in the three frogs seen by John. This being so, the explanation of the phenomenon seen by John is this--that a French inspired policy should issue > from Constantinople, Vienna, and Rome, causing a gathering of nations > to the final war of the great day of God Almighty.

Here, then, are two notable signs to be looked for, as indicative of the approach of the end. First--The decadence of the Turkish Empire, and second--the predominance of French influence at the great political council board of Europe. Who can fail to see that these two signs have been conspicuous for many years on the Continent? Turkey is rapidly falling to pieces; and Louis Napoleon, the French Emperor, was next to all-powerful during the principal part of his reign. He was instrumental in bringing about the wars that have led to the present development of the military system of Europe.

In the confidence inspired by French assurance of support, the Sultan of Turkey declared war against Russia; thus the unclean frog-like spirit proceeded out of the mouth of the dragon. Provoked by the belligerent

attitude of the French Government as the instigator of Sardinia, Austria declared war against the latter; and thus the unclean spirit was caused to issue from the mouth of the beast. Supported by the French Emperor, the Pope made war upon the Revolutionists, who rose against him under Garibaldi, in 1866-7, when the French evacuated Rome, under the Franco-Italian Convention, and thus the unclean spirit went out of the mouth of the False Prophet. The general effect of all three operations has been to give politics an eastern direction. The Holy Land is now the centre of interest, and will become more and more so as the time for the gathering at Armageddon draws near. Russia must appear upon the scene as conqueror of Turkey. This appears from Daniel xi, 40, 41, 44, 45: xii, 1:--

" At the time of the end... the king of the north shall come against him (viz., against the power mentioned in the previous verse, as occupying and dividing the Holy Land for gain, which is Turkey), like a whirlwind, with chariots, and with horsemen, and with many ships, and He shall enter into the COUNTRIES, and shall overflow and pass over. He shall enter also into the glorious land, and MANY COUNTRIES shall be overthrown... He shall go forth with great fury to destroy, and utterly to take away many. He shall plant the tabernacles of his palace between the seas, in the glorious holy mountain; yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him: (for) AT THAT TIME shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time. "

In proof that the victorious invading power described in this testimony as " the king of the north, " is Russia, let it be observed that it comes against another power that is in occupation of the Holy Land. That power is Turkey, as must be obvious to everyone from the facts of the case. Now the king of the north, in relation to Turkey, and to every other country in the world, is the Emperor of Russia. In a peculiar and absolute sense, that potentate answers to the description of the prophecy; for his empire girdles the northern zone, almost of both hemispheres, constituting him, in an exclusive sense, " the king of the north. " This is still more evident from Ezekiel xxxviii, where we read, commencing first verse:-

" And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of Man, set they face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal: and I will turn thee back, and put hooks into thy jaws; and I will bring thee forth and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all

of them clothed with all sorts of armour, even a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords: Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer and all his bands, the house of Togarmah, of the north quarters, and all his bands; and MANY PEOPLE with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare for thyself thou and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them.

" After many days thou shalt be visited: IN THE LATTER YEARS thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many people AGAINST THE MOUNTAINS OF ISRAEL, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely, all of them. Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands and many people with thee (verse 9)... In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it. And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses--a great company and a mighty army; and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land: IT SHALL BE IN THE LATTER DAYS; and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes. "

The evidence that the potentate addressed in this prophecy is the Emperor of Russia is overwhelming. First, there is something in the use of the phrase, " Gog, the land of Magog. " If you turn to any map of the ancient world you will find that the land of Magog--taking its name from Magog, the son of Japheth, who was the first settler--lies in the northern part of Europe, and is now embraced in the modern Russian Empire. Secondly, the phrase, " the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal " ; you will find those ancient territorial names to be descriptive of countries now incorporated with Russia, and now modified in the names Muscovy and Tobolski. Thirdly, the remark, " Thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, " shows that the land of Magog, and the provinces of Meshech and Tubal, are geographically situated in the realms of the Emperor of Russia.

The points of coincidence between Ezekiel's " Gog, the land of Magog, " and Daniel's " king of the north, " are striking. The one appears " at the time of the end " ; the other " in the latter days. " The one is " the king of the north " ; the other comes out of his place " in the north parts. " The one " overflows many countries, and enters into the glorious land " ; the other, " with many people at his steps, comes against the mountains of Israel like a cloud to cover the land " ; the one " comes to his end with none to help him " : the other

meets with retribution described in the following words:--

" I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains: saith the Lord God; every man's sword shall be against his brother, and I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him and upon his bands and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone " (Ezek. xxxviii, 21, 22).

In both cases, the contemporary supremacy of Russia is foretold; in both, is the smiting of her power supernatural. She is to vanquish many countries, and hold a protectorate over them, as indicated by the words, " Be thou a guard unto them. " Those countries include all the nations of the Continent. " Gomer and all his bands, the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, " will be found, on reference to ancient geography, to embrace nearly every country in Europe; and, in addition to these, there are " Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them, " showing that at the time, Russia will have attained to something like universal dominion.

Previous to this full development of her power, the Jews will have been the subjects of partial restoration. They are represented as having been " brought forth out of the nations, " and as having gotten cattle and goods and " dwelling safely all of them without bars and gates. " This is a state of things existing before the coming of Christ. Consequently it is to be brought about by natural means. What those natural means are may be inferred > from the allusion, in verse 13, to " the merchants of Tarshish, with > all the young lions thereof, " and from Isaiah xviii. The probability is that the beginning of the return of Jewish prosperity is connected with British efforts to checkmate Russia in her designs upon India.

By establishing a Jewish colony in Palestine, the British Government will secure her communications with India--always vital to her safety. The motive of this northern Caesar, in his advance upon the " mountains of Israel, which have been always waste, " is apparent. In the attempt to sever British communications, he goes forth, " with great fury to destroy and utterly to make away many " (Dan. xi, 44). He comes " like a cloud to cover the land, " with nations at his steps. But his course is suddenly interrupted. While his forces are encamped at Bozrah, in Edom, the lion of the tribe of Judah breaks in upon them, and a great carnage takes place. The event is described in Isaiah lxiii, 3, 4, 6:--

" I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and

their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment; for the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come... I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth. "

The complete discomfiture of Gog is predicted by Zechariah in the following language:-

" Then shall the Lord go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle; AND HIS FEET SHALL STAND IN THAT DAY UPON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof " (Zech. xiv, 3, 4).

Ezekiel describes what follows (chapter xxxviii, 18-22):--

" And it shall come to pass, at the same time... that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy, and in the fire of my wrath, have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my PRESENCE; and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground; and I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains; saith the Lord God: every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood, and I will rain upon him and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him, an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. "

Zechariah adds to this:--

" This shall be the plague wherewith the Lord shall smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem. Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet; 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 " (Zech. xiv, 12, 13).

The result of the conflict is the destruction of the assembled armies. A remnant escapes in flight (Ezek. xxxix, 2), and carries the report

of the supernatural defeat to the nations that " have not heard of His fame, nor seen His glory " (Isa. lxvi, 19).

At this juncture, a manifesto, or imperial summons, issues from Jerusalem, calling upon the nations to submit to the God-appointed king of all the earth. This is represented in Rev. xiv, 6, as " an angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel " (or glad tidings of the age), to preach unto them that dwell on the earth . . . saying " Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come. " The summons is unheeded; " the beast of the earth and his armies assemble to make war with the Lamb, " and them " who are with him, " who are called, and chosen, and faithful. The Lamb allows the gathering hosts to proceed to conflict. He could disperse them with a word, but there is a purpose to be served by their attempts to overthrow him. In the war that ensues, " The Lamb shall overcome, " and afterwards the world will see the following prediction fulfilled:--

" And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day and forward. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies... Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel; . . . neither will I hide my face any more from them, for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God " (Ezek. xxxix, 21, 23, 25, 29).

Current events indicate the proximity of the crisis. The Papacy has wonderfully lost its power. Felled from its position of supremacy by the shock of the French Revolution, over seventy years ago, it has been steadily declining ever since that time. It was deprived of its last prop by the defeat of the Austrian forces, in the Austro-Prussian war, and the incorporation of the greater part of the States of the Church by the young kingdom of Italy. With the overthrow of France by Germany, the Pope's temporal dominion crumbled to the ground, and the Pope now complains on every suitable occasion that he is a prisoner in the Vatican, and that in the loss of the temporal power he has lost the dignity and independence necessary for the exercise of the Pontificate. Doubtless the final scene is at the door.

The attitude of Russia points to an early probable attainment to the position assigned to her by the prophets in the time of the end. Her recovery from the disasters of the Crimean War is notorious to all

the world. Her territorial extension has never for a moment been suspended. During the last twenty years she has added large provinces in Central Asia, and conquered the great barrier that lay between her and Asia Minor, in the Caucasus, while as the result of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8, she has penetrated to the heart of the Turkish empire. Her dark shadow is now looming ominously behind the Eastern question. As to Turkey, as already said, she is rapidly falling to pieces. Herzegovina and Bosnia are annexed to Austria. Servia, Roumania, and Montenegro have been erected into independent kingdoms. Bulgaria is all but a Russian province. East Roumelia has become an autonomous province, ruled by a Christian governor. Egypt is in English occupation. The Christian populations throughout the whole of the dominions of the Sultan are in a seething ferment of rebellion, preparing to rise against him and throw off his yoke. The " sick man " is given up by the diplomatic doctors as incurable, and the papers are teeming with prognostications of the early downfall of the Turkish empire.

In the scramble for the spoil, Russia will come in for the lion's share; Britain will doubtless lay her hand on Syria, to protect the highway to her Eastern possessions. This will be the time for the Jews to realise the partial restoration which takes place before the invasion of the land by Gog. They have already begun to carry it out to a partial extent. Schemes for the colonisation of the land are in vogue among the Jews, and are received with increasing favour. Several societies exist to promote their return, and several colonies have actually been formed and are now in operation in the Holy Land. They have sprung into existence within the last twenty years, and have received a powerful impetus from the sentiment of nationality, which now prevails on the Continent, and regulates European politics:- Italy for the Italians; Palestine for the Jews; these are political corollaries, and are on the eve of being placed side by side on the same basis of accomplished fact. The land of Palestine has come much under notice of late; and, as is well known, a society, with the Prince of Wales at its head, has made a complete ordnance survey of the country. This helps to pave the way for the political sequel, in which Britain, mistress and protector of the Jews, not from any love of them, but from her own political exigencies having reference to India, will be the enemy of Russia when she comes like a cloud to cover the land. England once in possession of the country, the restoration of the Jews will be the development of a day. The Jews are ready, in great wealth, and with prompt disposition, to return to the land of their fathers when the political obstacle presented by Turkey is finally removed.

As to the state of the world generally, the temper of the nations

is highly significant of the predicted crisis. The Scriptures inform us that in the epoch of the end, the word will become highly belligerent. This is intimated in such statements as the following: --

" Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weak say, I am strong " (Joel iii, 9-10).

" Evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth " (Jer. xxv, 32).

" Upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear " (Luke xxi, 25, 26).

" The nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come " (Rev. xi, 18).

Now, it is notorious that the present state of the world is one of preparation for war. Never was there a time of such military preparation. Universal military service by conscription has become the order of the day. Europe, in the language of a British statesman, has been turned into a vast entrenched camp. The war fever is universal. Peace is on the lips of rulers, but war in their hearts. The war-cloud that darkens will spread over all the sky and burst in terrible violence. A time of trouble, such as never was, is in store for the world. The worst experiences of antiquity, when blood ran like water, and famine waited in the train of war, to kill its millions, will be repeated on a scale of magnitude that will strike the world with terror, and thin down its over-stocked and corrupt population to a purified remnant in sympathy with Christ. The storm of divine vengeance will relieve the atmosphere of the foetid and oppressive elements with which it is charged. The relentless arm of righteous retribution--for " in righteousness he doth judge and make war, " will lay the foundation for peace on earth, and goodwill to men.

When the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of Jehovah and of His Christ, His glory shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The smoke and carnage of judgment will pass, and the peaceful morning of righteousness and happiness will open with a smile upon the world. Jerusalem, at first the scene of destroying judgment, will become the centre of blessing for all nations. The king will reign, who shall " come down like rain upon the mown grass, as showers that water the earth. " The sun will break through the quick-dispersing clouds of judgment storm, and fill the world with healing and gladness. After the thunderstorm of judgment, the sun

of righteousness will rise with healing in his wings. Earth's troubles will be hushed in the calm of universal peace. There will be glory to God in the highest heaven, over the earth peace and good-will among men.

LESSON 28 - Developing a Character Please to God

There is a necessity disclosed in the Scriptures, of believers continuing in "the daily practice of all things commanded by Christ." The worldly churches, which has gone astray from the doctrines, has also forsaken the commandments of Christ, if ever it made them a rule of life. It has probably left the commandments as the result of losing the doctrines; for the force of the commandments can only be felt by those who recognise that salvation is dependent on their obedience. Popular theology has reduced them to a practical nullity. It has totally obscured the principle of obedience as the basis of our acceptance with God in Christ, by its doctrine of "justification by faith alone."

It is part of the modern restitution of primitive apostolic ways, to recognise distinctly, that while faith turns a sinner into a saint, obedience only will secure a saint's acceptance at the judgment seat of Christ; and that a disobedient saint will be rejected more decisively than even an unjustified sinner.

The rule or standard of obedience is to be found in the commandments of Christ. Christ speaks very plainly on this subject:-

"Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants but I have called you friends" (John xv, 14).
"Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded" (Matt. xxviii, 20).

"If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them " John xiii, 17).

"Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom, but he that doeth the will of my Father" (Matt. vu, 21).
"Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James i, 22).

"He that saith 'I know him,' and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar" (1 John ii, 4).

These statements are summed up in the saying of Christ, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love" (John xv, 10).

We shall look at these commandments with the result of seeing that they are neutralised by the traditions and practices of so-called Christians of the modern era. But let us first realise that the commandments of the Apostles are included in the commandments of Christ. It is common to make a distinction. You will hear it said sometimes that while the commandments of Christ are all that is estimable and binding,

the commandments of the apostles are marred by the weaknesses of the men who communicated them, and are by no means to be placed on a level with the precepts of their Master, who was without flaw. This plausible distinction is not founded on truth. The commandments delivered by the apostles were not of their authorship. They were as definitely divine as those that came from the mouth of the Lord. Paul distinctly claims this:-

"If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you ARE THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD" (1 Cor. xiv, 37).

This claim is only in harmony with what the Lord Jesus himself said on the subject. In sending his apostles forth to teach his doctrine after he should have departed from the earth, he did not leave them to their own resources as natural men for the execution of the work. He made specific promise of supernatural wisdom and guidance. This promise occurs in various forms, e.g.:-

"I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist" (Luke xxi, 15).

"If I depart, I will send him the comforter, . . . which is the HOLY SPIRIT, whom the Father will send in my name. He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you" John xvi, 7: xiv 26).

"When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. x, 19, 20).

The promise of Christ that he should send the Spirit to the apostles was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus told them not to begin their apostolic labours until the Spirit should come (Luke xxiv, 49; Acts i, 4). They were to "tarry at Jerusalem" till the promised "power from on high" came, by which they were enabled to give an effective testimony to the word. They had not long to wait. In ten days, while they were all assembled (the apostles and disciples to the number of 120), the Spirit came with sound of a rushing mighty wind, and filled all the place where they were, crowning each apostle with a visible wreath of flame, and manifesting its intelligent power in imparting to the apostles the power of extemporising the word in all the spoken languages of the day (Acts ii, 1-13).

When the commotion caused by this wonderful occurrence had come to a head, Peter explained the nature of it to the bewildered spectators. He reminded the assembled multitude of the recent crucifixion of Jesus, which they were aware of. He then declared his resurrection as a fact within the personal eyewitness of the apostles, and added, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, HE HATH SHED FORTH THIS WHICH YE NOW SEE AND HEAR" (Acts ii, 33).

The spirit which was thus bestowed upon them remained with them as a guiding teaching presence to the end. It was this that justified Paul's claim to divine authority for the things he wrote, as above quoted; for although Paul was not among the apostles at that time, he was added to their number shortly afterwards, and in every way supernaturally endowed as the other apostles were. It was this that enabled John the apostle to take the same strong ground in his first epistle: "We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us: he that is not of God, heareth not us. HEREBY KNOW WE THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR" (1 John iv, 6). When John said this he said no more in substance than Jesus said himself concerning John and his fellow apostles: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John xx, 21). "He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me" (Luke x, 16).

Here is Christ's own authority for placing the word of his apostles on a level with his own. He said concerning his own teaching, "The word which ye hear is not mine but the Father's which sent me" (John xiv, 24). On the same principle, the apostles could say with Paul, "The things which we write (and speak) are (not ours but) Christ's who sent us." The principle is this: the Holy Spirit was upon the Lord from the Father without measure, making him one with the Father, who is the eternal and universefilling Spirit, through which he was enabled to give commandments that were as truly divine as if proclaimed direct from heaven in the hearing of all the world. (Luke iii, 22; John iii, 35; Acts i, 2). So the Holy Spirit was upon the Apostles from Christ, who is one with the Father, imparting to their words a divine authority equal to that which attached to his own words. Hence, it is a perfectly natural relation of things that Christ exhibits when he says, "He that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth Him that sent me."

It must be evident in the light of these considerations how grievously mistaken is the view which would treat with small respect the apostolic precepts, while according a high sentimental regard for those which come out of the actual mouth of Christ. The commandments of the apostles

are the commandments of Christ, and the commandments of Christ are the commandments of God. And the keeping of the commandments of God is of an importance that cannot be represented in too extreme a light, in view of what is written in the Apocalypse: "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. xxii, 14). When Jesus sent forth his apostles, he not only commanded them to preach the gospel, but he said, "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii, 20). It must be obvious that this extends the obligatoriness of the commandments delivered to the apostles, to all believers as well and this not merely in the sense of seemliness or suitability, but in the sense of imperative obligation. That is, the obedience of these commandments is essential to the believers. Christ said this plainly in concluding what is called his "sermon on the mount," which is nothing else than a long series of these very commandments - in fact, the most methodical and extensive collection of them to be found in the whole course of his recorded teaching. He said, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto A WISE MAN which built his house upon a rock; and every one that heareth these sayings of mine and DOETH THEM NOT, shall be likened unto A FOOLISH MAN which built his house upon the sand, and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it" (Matt. viii, 24-26).

In no plainer way could Christ tell us that our ultimate acceptance with him will depend upon our doing of the things he has commanded. If he did say it more plainly, it was when he said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but HE THAT DOETH THE WILL OF MY FATHER, which is in heaven (Matt. vii, 21).

The idea thus explicitly enunciated is of very frequent occurrence in the Lord's teaching. It comes out in various connections and forms, but always with the same pointedness and vigour. There is never room for misconception. Once as he stood in the midst of a listening crowd, one said, "Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee." His rejoinder was, "Who is my mother and who are my brethren? . . . WHOSOEVER SHALL DO THE WILL OF MY FATHER which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Matt. xii, 47, 50). On another occasion, a woman in the crowd exclaimed, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." His response was, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and KEEP IT" (Luke xi, 27, 28). On another occasion he said, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I

say?" (Luke vi, 46); and on another, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v, 20); and, again, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you" (John xv, 14). Now, as to the relation of the churches to these commandments, it is well described in the words which Jesus applied to the religious leaders of the Jewish nation: "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition" (Matt. xv, 6). There is scarcely a commandment of Christ but what is systematically disregarded in the practice of the Christian world so-called. It is not merely that the commandments are not obeyed; they are not recognised. They have been explained away and nullified through the influence of human opinion and precept, traditionally received. We have seen how entirely the command to believe the gospel has been set aside; to what a nonentity the command to be baptised has been reduced; and into what neglect has fallen the command to break bread from week to week in remembrance of him. It is not of these we would now speak.

Our illusion is to a class of commandments that run much more directly counter to human bias and inclination. By reason of their very aim to try, and purify, and chasten and discipline the mind into subjection to the divine will, there is a universal predilection in favour of that way of understanding these commandments that takes away their inconvenience for men called to serve Christ in the present world, and inclined perhaps to do so, though with no great amount of faith, or its resultant enthusiasm. Because of this "consensus of opinion," as it is the modern fashion to phrase it, the common run of men are afraid to think as the commandments, without sophistication, would lead men to think. But the commandments are not altered by the "consensus" They remain as the expression of Christ's will, however successfully they may be nullified by tradition: and it will be a poor apology for disobedience, in the day of judgment to say that we did not dare to comply with them because they were not currently understood to have any practical bearing in modern times. The inclinations and traditions of the multitude have always been in antagonism to the will of God. The divinely recorded history of the world is proof of this. It is, therefore, the part of men who believe in God, to hearken to the voice of His word, and not to the opinions of the people and their leaders. Of those commandments that are recognised though not acted on, it will not be in place here to speak. That God should be loved and served; that men should be true, just and kind; that our neighbour's interests should have as high a consideration at our hands as our own, no man considering himself a member of the churches would deny, however little able he might be to give practical effect to these commandments in his life. These commandments are such as are beautiful in themselves,

and commend themselves to the moral instincts of all men (not degraded to the very level of the brute) as the dictates of the highest wisdom. It is of the commandments whose excellence is not so selfevident that there is need to speak; commandments whose aim is not to make the present life agreeable, but to subject obedient believers to a discipline that will subdue and mould them to the divine pattern in preparation for the perfectly agreeable state of existence to be established by Christ upon the earth in the day of His coming.

1. Be not conformed to this world (Rom. xii, 2). There is not much danger of mistaking the meaning of this. The world is the people, as distinguished from the earth which they inhabit. Peter puts this beyond doubt in calling it "the world OF THE UNGODLY" (2 Peter ii, 5). Jesus also makes it plain in speaking of the world as a lover and a hater, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own" (John xv, 18). This could only apply to the people. The command is to be not conformed to the world of people upon the earth as it now is. Jesus plainly laid it down that he did not belong to such a world, and commanded his disciples to accept a similar position in relation to it. "The world to come" is the world of their citizenship. Of their position in the present world, Jesus said in prayer, "They are not of the world even as I am not of the world" (John xvii, 16). By John he commanded them, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father, but of the world" (1 John ii, 15). By Peter, he indicates their position in the world as that of "strangers and pilgrims" (1 Peter ii, 11), and their life in it as a "time of sojourning" (i, 17), to be passed in holiness and fear (verses 14 and 17).

The world that hated Jesus was the Jewish world. Consequently, we are saved from the mistake of supposing that by the world is meant the extremely vile and immoral of mankind. The Jews were far from being such: they were a very religious and ostentatiously professing and ceremonially punctilious people, among whom the standard of respectability was high in a religious sense. All their conversations with Christ shew this. That which led to the complete separation indicated in Christ's words and precepts, is indicated by Jesus himself, in his prayer to the Father, so wonderfully recorded in John xvi: "O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee" (verse 25). It is the world's relation to God that cuts off the friends of God from the world (if the friends of God are faithful). The world neither loves, nor knows, nor considers God. They care for Him in no sense. His expressed will

- His declared purpose - His intrinsically sovereign claims, are either expressly rejected or treated with entire indifference. His great and dreadful and eternal reality is ignored. Daniel's indictment against Belshazzar is chargeable against them all. "The God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified" (Dan. v, 23).

This is an allsufficient explanation of the matter we are considering. If the world is God's enemy, how can the friends of God be friends with it? It is not without the profoundest reason in the nature of things, that it is written, "The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God" (James iv, 4). "NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS.... YE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON" (Matt. vi, 24).

The force of this reasoning increases tenfold when we contemplate the present situation in the light of its divine explanation and the divine purpose concerning it. We must seek for this explanation in the beginning of things - the beginning as Mosaically exhibited (an exhibition endorsed by Christ, and therefore to be trusted in the face of all modern theories and speculations). This beginning shows us man in harmony with God, and things "very good." Then it shews us disobedience (the setting aside of the divine will as the rule of human action - alias, sin), and as the result of this, the divine fellowship withdrawn, and men driven off to exile and to death, permitted only, thereafter, to approach in sacrifice, in token of the final way of return. The present world is the continuance and enlargement of the evil state of man, resulting from man's alienation from God in the beginning. It is enlarged and aggravated. "The whole world lieth in wickedness" (1 John v, 19), "dead in trespasses and sins . . . by nature children of wrath" (Eph. ii, 13), "without Christ, having no hope, and without God." (Eph. ii, 12).

Now, what is the purpose concerning this state of things? We have seen it in previous lectures. It is briefly summarised in 2 Thes. i, 7, and Rev. xix, 11-16, "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." "In righteousness doth he judge and make war . . . treading the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." When this work of judgment and destruction is done, the kingdom of God prevails on earth for a thousand years, leading the nations in ways of righteousness and peace; and after a brief renewal of conflict with the diabolism of human nature, there comes at last the day of complete restoration, the ungodly consumed off the earth; the servants of God saved. "No

more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads" (Rev. xxii 3).

Here, then, we have harmony with God at the beginning of things, and harmony with Him at the end of things, and the dark and dreadful interval of "the present evil world" between, in which God is not obeyed nor recognised, but the pleasures, gratifications, and interests of mere natural existence made the objects of universal pursuit. In this dark interval, however, the divine work goes on of separating a family from the evil, in preparation for the day of recovery and blessing. It is not easy, in view of these things, to realise the reasonableness of the divine command to His servants meanwhile, not to be conformed to an evil world, in which God is disowned, and to which they do not belong?

Now, how do the churches look in this light? Is it not evident at a glance that this elementary axiom of the law of Christ is totally disregarded? The idea of a Christian of the ordinary type being "not of the world" is an anomaly only calculated to excite the sarcastic smile of the cynic. If the ordinary "Christian" is not "of the world," where are we to find the people that are? To call a man "a man of the world," has, in fact, become one of the highest compliments that can be paid to a man's judgement and culture: as a man at home everywhere, who sees good in everything; and nothing very wrong in anything. In the ears of such a man, the distinctions and scrupulosities enjoined by Christ and his apostles have an antiquated sound: and worse - a sound of uncharity, of harshness, of narrow-minded and bigoted sectarianism. The earnest recognition and observance of right and wrong, as arising out of the law of Christ, are in his eyes the symptoms of an odious fanaticism, disqualifying the subject of them for society or the commonest good fellowship.

Yet "the man of the world," with his kindly unconcern about all things, is a good Christian by the popular standard. He is "of the world" essentially; and though Christ proclaimed himself as "not of the world" and commanded his disciples to accept a similar position, this man's being of the world, is held to be no drawback to his Christian standing in the eyes of the churches. No wonder! The church is the world. What is there in and of the world that the church does not mix with? (and by "the church" we may understand the dissenting bodies as well as the State establishment).

Take the political sphere. If there is anything characteristically "of the world," it is politics, whether in the exercise or the discussion

of temporal power, and its forms. It is written: "The KINGDOMS of this world are to become (at Christ's return) the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ." Consequently, the kingdoms are meanwhile "of this world." In modern usage "kingdom" has become "State," because the political form of the State varies. Where is the church in relation to the State? The alliance of the church with the State is of itself a sufficient illustration of the departure of the churches from the commandments of Christ. It is a proof that the modern church is "of this world," even if the private practice of its members were in harmony with the mind of Christ.

The common private practice of those who consider themselves "Christians," removes any doubt that the public form of things might leave. That common private practice may be summed up as an earnest discharge of all the parts and functions that belong, or could possibly belong, to citizens of the present world. There is no point, part or feature of the present evil world, in which they are not found incorporate. The bishops are part of the world-system in Britain, as they sit in their lawn sleeves in the House of Lords, to supervise the laws made for this world by the much jangling that goes on in "the lower house." The clergy are "gentlemen," eligible for the society of the world, and welcome in the drawing-rooms of the aristocracy and on the huntingfield with the squires. Her churchwardens and minor officials have the management of the world in hand in their several departments, whether exacting the tithes with the sword of the law in hand, or refusing a resting place in the parish churchyard to dead heretics. Her laity look on riches, place, and power as legitimate objects - with all of them - the most successful in attaining which, are the most honourable. In minuter details, they are voters (the discerning blood vessels of the political system); they are patriots and political spouters at public meetings (the thew and muscle of the system); they burn gunpowder on the battlefield, or compete for the civic or Parliamentary honours of the State in the boroughs (and become the organs of the system). They run in crowds to the public amusements, or in private indulge their liking without the least restraint or reference to the New Testament injunctions of sobriety, self-denial and holiness.

What is to be done in such a state of things by the man earnestly seeking to be the servant of Christ, and desiring to be found of him at his coming, in the attitude of a chaste and loyal bride, preparing for marriage? Common sense would supply the answer if it were not plainly given to us by God Himself: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi, 17-18). The questions with which Paul prefaces this quotation

strike home the reasonableness of this command at a blow: "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial: or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

The believer of the gospel has no alternative but to step aside from the world. He cannot otherwise carry out the will of Christ concerning those whom he asks for his own. What this stepping aside from the world means, there need be no difficulty in the earnest man determining for himself. Christ and the apostles have in themselves furnished an example which we are invited to imitate (1 Peter ii, 21; John xiii, 15; xv, 18-20; 1 Cor. xi, 1: iv, 17).

It does not mean seclusion: for they lived an open daily public life. It does not mean isolation: for they are always seen among men. It means abstinence from the aims and principles of the world, and from the movements and enterprises in which these find expression. The activities of Christ and the apostles were all in connection with and on behalf of, the work of God among men. They never appear in connection with the enterprises of the world. Their temporal avocations are all private. Christ was a carpenter; Paul a tent maker; but at these, both worked as the sons of God. Disciples of Christ may follow any occupation of good repute; (they are expressly prohibited from having to do with anything of an evil appearance or giving occasion of reproach to the adversary - Rom. xii. 9; 1 Thess. v, 22). But in all they do, they are to remember they are the Lord's servants, and to act as if the matter they have in hand were performed directly to him (Col. iii, 23-24). Even servants are to do their part to a bad master faithfully as "to the Lord" (1 Peter, ii, 18-20).

The sense in which they stand apart from the world is in the objects for which they work, and in the use to which they put the time and means which they call "their own." They are to "follow after (works of) righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. ii, 22). They are to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts," and "live soberly and righteously and godly" (Tit. ii, 12). They are not to live in pleasure (Tit. iii, 3; 1 Tim. v, 6). They are to live to give God pleasure, in which, as they grow, they will find their own highest pleasure. They are to be "holy in all manner of conversation," cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and walking as those who are the temple of God among men (1 Pet. i, 15; 2 Cor. xiii, 7; 2 Cor. vi, 16).

Guided by these apostolic principles, they will abstain from the defiling habits that are common to ungodly churches, amongst which smoking

and drinking stand prominent. And as men waiting and preparing for the kingdom of God (whose citizenship is in heaven, and not upon the earth) they accept the position of "strangers and pilgrims" among men. They are not at home; they are passing on. They take no part with Caesar. They pay his taxes and obey his laws where they do not conflict with the laws of Christ; but they take no part in his affairs. They do not vote; they do not ask the suffrages of his supporters; they do not aspire to Caesar's honours or emoluments; they do not bear arms. They are sojourners in Caesar's realms during the short time God may appoint for their probation; and as such, they sustain a passive and non-resisting attitude, bent only upon earning Christ's approbation at his coming, by their obedience to his commandments during his absence. They are not of the world, even as he was not of the world; and therefore they refuse to be conformed to it. The way is narrow and full of self-denial - too much so for those who would like to perform the impossible feat of "making the best of both worlds." But the destination is so attractive, and the results of the cross-bearing so glorious, that the enlightened pilgrim deliberately chooses the journey, and resolutely endures its hardships.

2. "They that are great (among the Gentiles) exercise authority upon them. BUT IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG YOU. But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matt. xx, 25-27). "BE NOT YE CALLED RABBI, for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." Nothing is more natural than for men to seek honour and deference among their fellow men. It is the universal habit, of society "to receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only" (John v, 44). Men everywhere "love the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John xii, 43). It is considered the right thing to nurse "ambition" - to indulge the desire for "fame" - which is the same thing in modern times. Jesus condemns it without qualification. He forbids men to aim at human approbation. It is his express commandment in almsgiving, for example, to "let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" (Matt. vi, 3); and in prayer, to "pray to thy Father which is in secret" (verse 6), and in the exercises of divine sorrow, "to appear not unto men to fast" (verse 18). The object is that "thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." For the same reason, he forbids us to accept honourable titles and honourable places, and enjoins us to take a low and serving place. In illustration of his meaning, he himself washed the feet of his disciples, remarking, "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you" (John xiii, 15). He expressly said, "Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased" (Luke xiv, 11). His command by the apostles is, "All of you be clothed with humility "; put away pride:

"mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate" (Rom. xii, 3, 16; Phil. ii, 3; 1 Pet. v, 56).

The object of these commandments must be apparent to every reflecting mind that realises Christ's object in the preaching of the gospel. It is to "purify unto himself a peculiar people" (Tit. ii, 14), to show forth "the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light" (1 Pet. ii, 9). The celebration of this praise is not finally and effectually rendered until the summons comes forth from the throne, to the immortal multitude of the saints in the day of His appearing: "praise our God all ye His servants" (Rev. xix, 5); who respond to the thrilling mandate in a tempest of enthusiastic acclamation, "as the voice of many waters and as the voice of mighty thunderings" (verse 6). How could a people be prepared for such a part except by the command to crucify the propensity that seeks the honour of men in this evil age?

The acceptance of that honour necessarily engenders self-absorption, and unfits the heart for that self-abasement which is the first ingredient of true glory to God. We can see what the cultivation of ambition does for its poor worshippers. Take the elegant crowd at a levee - the haughty, quick-glancing, susceptible sons and daughters of fashion: how would they be qualified to praise God in the heart-felt way required? It is the praise of men that fills and controls them - visible in their arrogance, and impatience and pride. They are eaten up with it as with a fever. The commandments of Christ have no acceptability to them. Their motto is "Who is Lord over us?" When the commandments of Christ obtain an entrance, they allay this fever, and bring the mind into a frame in harmony with true reason in the ennobling recognition that all things are derived, and that the glory and credit of everything is ultimately due to God alone, and not safe to be accepted, in however small a measure, at the hands of man in the present age of godlessness. How is it with the churches? Are names of honour repudiated? Are good deeds done in private? Is the praise of men deprecated? Is it not notoriously the reverse in all particulars? Have we not "Rev.", "Right Rev." , "Most Rev.", "Very Rev.", and "Fathers in God," and a legion of plain revs.? - a stupendous lying title in its plainest form. Have we not "Masters " and "Doctors " of all sorts - M.A's and B.A's and D.D's, and the M.P's and T.C's, of Parliamentary and municipal dignities, impressing the crowd all the more as an abstraction reduced to what are to them mysterious monograms? And in more private ways, do we not see the same aping after greatness, the same fawning to greatness, in all sorts of complimentary titles exacted and accorded by the millions who call themselves "Christian"?

And are the leaders better than the people? Are not the leaders first in the offence? Who so quick as they to resent the omission of conventional honours, which they call "courtesies," and who so irresponsible to the claims of benevolence and right when out of human sight? There may be, and doubtless are, exceptions; but as a rule, it is now, as Jesus said it was with the Scribes and Pharisees of his day, "All their works they do to be seen of men. They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments. And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men 'Rabbi, Rabbi' " (Matt. xxiii, 57).

Look at the public subscription lists: where would the contributions be if the names and amounts were not published? Is it not a fact that the contributors of the churches as a class, aim to get their contributions advertised, and that those who ask them, pander to the popular weakness, in the certain knowledge that, if they do not soothe the unholy ambitions with public acknowledgements, the donations would stay in the pockets of the donors?

And as for the "praise of men," it is the inspiration of all public life, the incense of public worship, and the peculiar fragrance of all public proceedings. Who can read the report of a public meeting without having his senses sickened with fulsome eulogy, uncalled for presentations and testimonials, and the cheap, but indispensable vote of thanks? The motives of men are corrupted by breathing such an atmosphere. There is no remedy but the remedy of destruction and of reconstruction which is waiting to be applied at the coming of Christ. The individual remedy lies in "coming out," and doing the will of God in privacy and obscurity, in patient waiting for the glorious day of rectification and recompense which God will assuredly bring at the time of His purpose in fulfilment of His promise.

3. " Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth " (Matt. vi, 19). This is plainly expressed in another part of the word of wisdom thus: "Labour not to be rich" (Prov. xxiii, 4). Nothing in the whole range of language could be plainer than this. Christ, who surely knew better than all, states a fact which constitutes a powerful reason for the commandment not to aim at riches. "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God" (Luke xviii, 24). Riches he calls "the mammon of unrighteousness." He does not say their possession is absolutely inconsistent with divine favour and inheritance of life eternal. But He gives us to understand that the danger of their "choking the word" is extreme (Matt. xiii, 22), and that the only safety of those who have them, lies in turning them by use into friends and

safeguards. His advice is: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness" (Luke xvi, 9). How this is to be done, he indicates: "Give alms: provide yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not" (Luke xii, 33). This advice is repeated by the apostles "Charge them that are rich in this world . . . that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come" (1 Tim. vi, 17). "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Peter iv, 10).

The rich in the churches do not conform to these divine prescriptions. On the contrary, they lavish their superabundance on themselves in a thousand ways that minister to "the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." If they get more, their plan is to enlarge the basis of their own individual aggrandisement. They would be considered fools if they did otherwise. How Christ regards the matter (that, in fact, he considers them fools for doing that which the world considers them wise for doing), they may learn beforehand from Luke xii, 16:-

"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do; I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, THOU FOOL, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then, whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God."

Here we have the law of Christ forbidding the poor to labour to be rich, and commanding the rich to use their abundance in the alleviation of the want around them. What is the practice of the churches with regard to these institutes? Is not "laying up treasure upon earth" the one thing aimed at, the one thing commended, the one thing needful and respectable on all hands? and do not the rich resent the suggestion of liberality to the poor as an impertinence, entitling them to fling the suggestor into the gutters? These things are true. But the commandment calmly remains, and we shall have to face it one day, as Jesus says: "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you at the last day." We may prosper in our diligent laying by, or pleasantly enjoy ourselves inside the ring-fence we set up for our unrighteous mammon - justifying our course on the social economic theories yielded by the experience of a sinful generation; but where will both be in the

day when we emerge empty-handed from the grave, to appear before Him who will "judge the living and the dead," and who will open our eyes to the fact that what we had in the day of our probation, was His? He will decide the issue on His own principles alone, and not on the principle that sinners have rendered popular among themselves.

4. Resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Of him that taketh thy goods ask them not again. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain (Matt. v, 39-41; Luke vi, 30). Of all the commandments of Christ, this of unresisting submission to legal and personal wrong is the one that most severely tests the allegiance of his disciples, and which accordingly is most decisively neglected in all the churches. It would not be too much to say that it is deliberately refused and formally set aside by the mass of professing Christians, as an impracticable rule of life. That it stands there as the plainest of Christ's commandments, cannot be denied; and that it was re-echoed by the apostles and carried out in the practice of the early Christians, is equally beyond contradiction. Yet, by all classes, it is ignored as much as if it had never been written. To what are we to attribute this deliberate disobedience of all ranks and classes of men, nominally professing subjection to Christ?

Something of it is doubtless due to a wrong conception of the object of the commandments. It is commonly imagined that the commandments of Christ apply, and are intended to supply, the best modes of life among men - that is, those modes that are best adapted to secure a beneficial adaptation of man to man in the present state of life upon earth. Doubtless they would prove such if all men acted on them. But in a world where the majority ignore them and act out their selfish instincts without scruple, it is otherwise. They expose the obedient to personal disadvantage. They were never intended to have any other effect. They were intended to develop "a peculiar people," whose peculiarity should consist in the restraint of natural impulse in submission to the will of God. They were designed to chasten and discipline and purify such a people by the exercise of patient submission to wrong in preparation for another time when such commandments will be no longer in force, but when it will be given to the developed and obedient saints to "execute judgment" upon the ungodly, and "break in pieces the oppressor" as a preliminary to the blessing of all people (Rev. ii, 26; Dan. vii, 22; Psa. cxlix, 9).

Men say society could not be carried on if these principles were acted on. Such a speech is not the speech of a disciple. Christ is not aiming

at carrying on society on its present footing, but at "taking out a people" to carry it on rightly - that is, on divine principles - in the age to come. His own case illustrates the position. The people wanted to take him by force and make him a king, but he withdrew (John vi, 15). A man wanted him to interfere in a will dispute. He declined, saying, "Who made me a judge and a divider?" (Luke xii, 14). His part was to testify the truth, to do the will of the Father, to do all the good he could on divine grounds, and as for the world, to "testify of it that the works thereof are evil" (John vii, 7). In this course he created hatred for himself, which finally took the form of personal violence. This violence he did not resist. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, his life was taken from the earth. And he said with regard to his whole experience. "The servant is not greater than his Lord. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John xv, 18, 20).

The church resists evil; sues at law; resents injury, brandishes the constable's truncheon, and fights in the army, even if the men it is called upon to shoot are fellow Christians. If pointed to the law of Christ, it shakes its head. It speaks of "duty to society," the "protection of life and property," and the certain chaos that would set in if the law of Christ were in force. In this, the churches speak as the world, and not as "the church," because it is not the church, but the world. The true church is composed of the brethren of Christ, and he tells us that his brethren are those who obey his commandments, and do the will of the Father, as expressed by his mouth (Matt. xii, 50; John xii, 49, 50). The question for such has no difficulties. The question is: "Does the law of Christ allow them to employ violence under any circumstances?" If not, the loss of life itself would not be a consequence to be considered by them. Thoughts of expediency or philanthropy are out of place when urged in defence of doing that which the law of Christ forbids. If riots must rage unless we disobey Christ, let riots rage. If life and property must be exposed to the ravages of wicked men, unless we do that which Christ tells us we are not to do, let all houses and all lives be unprotected. If we must incur and pay heavy penalties, unless we choose to break the law of God, let the penalties be paid. If we must be killed, and all our families with us, unless we forfeit the approbation of the Lord and Master, and lose eternal life at his coming, let us die at once. It is a mistake to hamper the question of duty with any secondary consideration whatever. The time has not come for the saints to keep the world right. It has to be made right before even keeping it right can be in question. The position of the saints is that of sojourners on trial for eternal life. God will take care that their probation is not interfered with by murder and violence before the time. The

matter is His. We are in His hands: so is all the world. We need not therefore be distressed by thoughts of what will be the effect of any course required by Christ. He will take care that His work comes out right at last. The simple and only question for us, is that which Paul put near Damascus: "Lord, what wouldst Thou have me do?" We may not do what involves disobedience to Him. A special constable, for example, is required if need be, to break a man's head with a truncheon. The question in such a case is, therefore, best put thus: "Does Christ allow his servants to break people's heads with truncheons?" It is not a proper answer to this question to say that being commanded to obey magistrates (Titus iii, 1), we are bound to act as special constables if the magistrates order us; because no one will deny that this exhortation is governed by the larger precept, that we are to "obey God rather than man" (Acts iv, 19). No candid person will contend that Paul meant we were to obey magistrates when their order might be to disobey God. If any such contention is made, it is a sufficient answer to cite the practice of the apostles, who must be allowed to be reliable interpreters of their own exhortations.

They were constantly disobeying magistrates in the particular matter of preaching the gospel, and brought themselves to prison and death by this disobedience. There was no inconsistency between this course of theirs, and their exhortation to "obey magistrates"; for in the matters referred to in this exhortation, they were themselves obedient to magistrates. They paid tribute, honoured the ruling powers, and recognised the authority of the law, in all matters not affecting their allegiance to the law of God. This is a duty required of all saints, and cheerfully rendered by them, notwithstanding that they expect all such orders and institutions to be abolished in due time. That time is the Lord's time; and for this they patiently wait. The work is the Lord's work, and for Him they wait.

But are they to be induced or coerced by human law to do what Christ has expressly forbidden? The only question is, has he forbidden what is in question in this case? Has he forbidden violence? As to this, nothing is clearer, "He hath left us an example that we should follow his steps" (1 Pet. ii, 21). This is what Christ himself said to his disciples: "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you" (John xiii 15). Now what is the example of Christ as to the matter in hand? The testimony is that he did no violence, neither was deceit found in his mouth (Isaiah liiii, 9). As Peter tells us. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter ii, 23).

But some say, this refers only to circumstances of persecution: that when he said: "Resist not evil," he meant that his friends were not to fight against those who persecuted them for their faith, but patiently and unresistingly allow them to do their will. It will be found, upon investigation, that this is a mistake. Christ was not speaking of persecution at all. He was speaking of the legal maxims and practices of the Jewish nation. He says: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." By whom - to whom, for what purpose had this been said? It was said by Moses to Israel, as the principle that was to regulate proceedings at law. This will be apparent by referring to Exodus xxi, 22-24. " He (the offender) shall pay as THE JUDGES determine, and if any mischief follow, thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth," etc. When, therefore, Jesus enjoins non-resistance of evil, it is not with reference to persecutors, but with reference to legal proceedings, and the ordinary relations of man with man.

This is perhaps more evident in the next verse (Matt. v, 40). "If any man will sue thee at law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also." Here is no persecutor but a man who simply wants your property and tries to dispossess you by legal process. "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." A persecutor would not be likely to want your company on the road. It is the case of a wayfarer who wants your comfort and protection on a lonely road, and to whom you are commanded to be liberal beyond his desires. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." Surely this is no persecutor, who would take without your leave.

The suggestion that these precepts apply only to circumstances of persecution, is the thought of a combative nature which rebels against Christ's flesh-crucifying precepts, but is not prepared to go the length of openly denying Christ. It is a suggestion that is absurd in itself; for why should we be allowed to fight for ourselves, and be forbidden to fight for the Lord? One would imagine that the distinction, if it existed, would lie in the other direction, viz., that we would be allowed to repel and retaliate when it was the authority of the Lord that was in question, but that we should be submissive when it was a mere question of taking our purse. But the fact is, no such distinction is made. The suggestion that it exists is gratuitous. It is a distinction that cannot, in fact, be made; for how are you to know when a man hurts you for your faith, and when from his own cupidity?

The command of the Lord is absolute, that we are to act the part of

sheep in the midst of wolves; wise as serpents, but harmless as doves. The faithful of the first century recognised this as involving non-resistance. This is evident from James's incidental remark to the wanton rich men of the twelve tribes: "Ye have condemned and killed the just, and he doth not resist you" (James v, 6). It is also distinctly evident from Paul's claim in 2nd Epistle Corinthians xi, 20, to be heard on this ground: "For ye suffer, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face."

As much as to say, "It is a usual thing with you to submit without resistance, to personal injury; how much more may you endure my words." He had expressly enjoined: "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath, for it is written: Vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. xii, 19-21). Again, he says, "See that none render evil for evil" (1 Thess. v, 15). Again, "Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (1 Cor. vi, 7).

These principles exclude a resort to law on the part of those who obey the commandments of Christ. Going to law is inconsistent with submission to precepts requiring us to accept evil, and to refrain from vindicating ourselves. What is going to law but resorting to the utmost extremity of personal violence and coercion? Those who look on the surface may not see this, but they feel it readily enough when directed against themselves. They may imagine it is doing a very gentle deed to pay a visit to a quiet lawyer's office, and ask him to set the law in motion in a "legitimate" way, protesting you want only justice, etc., etc.

But follow the matter to its upshot; see what it means, and then judge whether, as a friend of Christ, you are at liberty to do such a bloody and forbidden thing. You get the judgment of the law in your favour: and let us suppose the debtor is unable to pay. What happens? Your servants (for the agents of the law are your servants, for the time being, and would not act a moment after your authority was withdrawn) enter his house and sell his bed, and cast him homeless on the street. But suppose he is able to pay and won't, and takes it into his head to resist, enlisting, let us suppose, a band of bold spirits to his aid. The myrmidons of the law arrive at the house; the door is locked, admission demanded in vain. Your agents knock the door down, but they find the passage barricaded. They demolish the barricades, but find the occupants of the house in an attitude of defiance. Your servants

of the law push them; the debtor's friends smite your servants of the law. Your servants smite in return, but seeing they are over-matched, they withdraw.

The debtor exults and fearing a return of the myrmidons, he sends for and obtains a reinforcement of roughs. The bailiffs return with assistance. A melee ensues: heads are broken and property destroyed, and the bailiffs are repulsed. What next? A riot. Part of the people take sides with the debtor and part with the bailiffs. What next? The soldiers are sent for. The soldiers are now your servants. If the men in the house don't give in brains will be blown out and lives taken, and all this will be done because you have set the law in motion. In fact, this is the law in motion. What is commonly called "the law," is but the smooth end of the bludgeon. It is the fear of the other end that makes people cower at the sight of the handle. A bailiff goes and shews the handle, and this is generally sufficient, but the fact remains, that what is called the law is a terrible instrument of destruction, which will break skulls if there is any resistance. A battered house and blood-covered corpses, are elements in the picture to be considered. The fact that it is rarely needful to push matters to this length does not alter the nature of the transaction, or weaken the conclusion that saints are not at liberty to employ such an engine of offence.

The fact that a man does not personally employ the violence only makes the matter worse, so far as the nature of his act is concerned; for which is worse: to do the deed honestly and bravely yourself, or to stand behind a curtain and whisper the words that set a lot of heartless ruffians to do it? If you were the personal actor, your debtor might have some chance of mercy by personal appeal; but when you set the law in motion you hand him over to the tender mercies of men with hearts of stone, and without the power to be merciful even if they had the mind.

It is generally conceded that a brother has no right to resort to law against a brother, because of Paul's express words in 1 Cor. vi, 1-4; but some conceive they may do so against a stranger. The first thought upon such a proposition is, that it is contrary to the entire spirit of Christ's teaching to suppose we are at liberty to apply any process of hurt to strangers which we are not to apply to brethren. His command to be absolutely harmless, extends even to any enemy, still more to a debtor, who may not necessarily be an enemy. The supposed distinction in favour of brethren in this matter would be a return to the spirit of things which said "Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy," which Christ expressly superseded.

How comes it that Paul mentions a "brother," in connection with law-going at all in 1 Cor vi.? Is it to intimate that a brother may go to law with a stranger, while not at liberty to do so with, a brother? There is no such hint in the context. It is rather to illustrate the great extent to which the Corinthians had gone in their disobedience. "Brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers." He commands the brethren to judge if there is anything wrong between brother and brother; but does he recommend a resort to even this judicature? On the contrary, he says, "Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"

The command to be passive in relation to evil, is an ordinance for the present probation merely. In due time, the saints will trample the wicked as ashes under the soles of their feet, if they prove themselves worthy of the honour by a faithful submission to what God requires of them now. "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations." (Rev. ii, 26). In this view, it is of paramount importance that the saints remain true to the commandments of Christ; and do not suffer themselves to be led into the path of disobedience by glosses on his word, which while making the way smoother to the flesh will have the effect of depriving us of the crown in the day of glory to be revealed.

5. There are other commands to which the everyday practice of the churches is totally opposed, but to which, after the great length to which this lecture has already gone, we cannot do more than merely refer. Christ:-

a. Forbids all manner of oaths (Matt. v, 34; James v, 12). b. Prohibits the taking of the sword (Matt. xxvi, 52; Rev. xiii, 10). c. Condemns retaliation and rough speech, and all evil speaking (Matt. v, 44; 1 Pet. iii, 9; Rom. xii, 14). d. Insists on peace-making and personal private communication with the offended with this view (Matt. v, 24: xviii, 15; Col. iii, 13) e. Commands kindness to even the undeserving and the evil (Matt. v, 44; Luke vi, 35). f. Allows marriage with believers only (1 Cor. vii, 39). g. Enjoins modesty of dress and deportment even to shamefacedness and sobriety (1 Tim. ii, 9; 1 Pet. iii, 34). It is notorious that the churches habitually violates all these commandments, without the violation of them being supposed to unchristianise the violators in the least degree, although Christ has plainly declared that it is vain for men to call him Lord who do not obey his commandments. Oaths are regularly administered in public courts (not to speak of the profanities of private intercourse).

The military profession is cultivated as a fitting sphere for the

Christian sons of Christian men. The countenance of the "church "is extended to the army in the appointment of chaplains, involving this fearful anomaly that when two so-called Christian nations go to war, Christians on one side cut the throats of Christians on the other side, as a perfectly legitimate business, and Christian "chaplains" on one side pray to the God of all Christians so considered, to prosper the deadly measures of one set of Christians against the prayer of Christian chaplains and the deadly efforts of another set of Christians, that the latter set may strew the field of strife with their corpses while the others march victoriously over their dead bodies, singing Te Deums to God for enabling them to butcher their Christian brethren! Retaliation is both preached and practised among the masses of the churches as the right and the noble and manly thing to do; and arrogant and resentful speech is excused on the score of necessity, while speaking evil and gloating on the frailties of your neighbours, is the daintiest luxury of common life.

Peace-loving and peace-making are looked upon as signs of effeminacy, and the man who should advocate and practice the duty of seeking a private interview with an enemy, with a view to reconciliation, would be regarded as a demented nuisance.

Kindness to the evil is almost unheard of. Ingratitude and unworthiness are invariably seized on as a reason for not helping anyone in distress. It is the rule to consider yourself justified in withholding help in such a case. It is only excellence (and that too, carried to the heroic point) that propitiates the grace of the churches in favour of private distress.

The idea of restricting matrimony to discipleship is scouted as the prejudice of fanaticism.

And as for dress, so far is the churches astray from the apostolic standard that the mass of so-called Christian women (especially in the upper walks of society), consider it an honourable thing to enter into mutual rivalry in the style and magnificence of their attire. "Fashion" is a goddess whose sway is undisputed. No one owns to be a worshipper, but everyone acts the part of one. Ambition, the love of display, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are not acknowledged as the ruling motives, though there is scarcely another at work. All is justified on the score of "taste."

This state of things is grievous to every mind in sympathy with divine aims in human life, as revealed in the Scriptures. There is no alternative but to fight the prevailing corruption. It is for earnest men, in

private practice and in public inculcation, so far as there may be opportunity, to uphold the ideal exhibited in the apostolic writings. By no other course can we save ourselves from a generation which is as "untoward" as the one that listened to a similar exhortation from Peter. The fight may be hard, but the objects are supreme.

We can afford to shut our ears to cavils of the adversary. It is not true that the commandments of Christ enfeeble and deteriorate the character. What is considered enfeeblement and deterioration is only the discipline and restraint of the lower propensities, which re-act in the invigoration of all that is noble and pure. While excluding the animal energies and activities that go to make up what is popularly considered "manliness," the commandments of Christ draw us into the channel of higher and ennobling obligations in the direction of goodness and duty, activities unknown to the mere man of natural feelings. They give us the fear of God for deference to public-opinion; the enterprise of benevolence for the energy of self-assertion, the enlightening stimulus of a clear philosophy for the muddied impulse of self-gratification; the guidance of rectitude for the slavish and uncertain law of expediency, the virtue of self-restraint for the action of resentment, the power of motive for the caprice of feeling; principle for whim; knowledge for feeling; godliness for manliness; life for death.

The unpopularity of the commandments of Christ is due to their opposition to natural impulse; and their opposition to natural impulse constitutes their very power to educate men in obedience of God, that they may be disciplined and prepared for the great glory He has in store for those who please Him. Let us not make the great mistake of following popular doctrines. If we are to continue in the disobedience which the world practices - (though called the churches) - we had better hold on to their superstitious and theological monstrosities; for the abandonment of the latter, while holding on to the former, will only expose us to all the inconveniences of the faith of Christ, while securing for us none of its glorious benefits.

These lectures must now be brought to a close. Where they may be instrumental in shewing the truth in contrast to prevalent error, the merit lies not with him who has delivered them, but with another - (John Thomas, M.D., of America; died, 1871) - who, under God, has been the means of opening the Scriptures in our generation, and removing from them the veil thrown over them by popular theology.

These lectures constitute a feeble attempt on the part of the author to render the service to others which has been rendered to himself; and if any mind be exorcised of error - if any taste attracted to

the study of the Word of God - any judgment matured to the comprehension, belief, and obedience of the truth, the effort will have received a perfect recompense in that which shall have been accomplished for THE AGES BEYOND.

The only thing deserving a man's earnest attention in this state of existence, is the truth revealed in the Bible. It makes him free for the present, and safe for the future. Time devoted to anything else in preference, is wasted. The truth does that for a man which no other study can do: it sets him at ease with reference to the many questions which perplex the unenlightened; it gives a key for all the problems of life; it inspires him with confidence amid the uncertainties which distract other mortals; it guides him into a simple, one-hearted, peaceful direction of his affairs; it fills his mind with comforting assurance concerning the future, illuminating his prospect with a well-founded expectation of attaining the perfection which the yearning heart finds not in all the present; it subdues his propensities, corrects his natural tendency to moral obliquity, awakes his holiest affections, develops lagging interest, and improves and elevates and sanctifies his whole nature, while giving him a guarantee of, and making him meet for "the inheritance of the saints in light."

"It hath promise of the life that now is, and also of that which is to come." Its pursuit is more worthy than that of any secular object. Labour spent in its acquirement, or put forth in its dissemination, will develop results that will gloriously flourish when the fruits of mere worldly effort will have perished in irrecoverable oblivion. "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away; but the WORD OF THE LORD ENDURETH FOR EVER; and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter i, 24, 25).

KEY Lessons 29 Fellowship and Association

Man In Society

MAN, in the history of his race, presents himself to our notice in two states—the social and the savage. The social is his original condition; the savage, that into which he has sunk as a consequence of licentiousness. At his formation, Man, who was made male and female, was pronounced "very good;" and appointed to live in society, because it was "not good for him to be alone." The primeval society of Eden was constituted of divine and human elements—of God, the Elohim, man and woman: of God, "whom no man hath seen;" of the Elohim, whom he hath often seen; and of man and woman, the perfection of flesh and blood.

This social state was free and devoid of evil; yet was its liberty not absolute, but restrained and regulated by law. Though "very good" and undefiled by sin, man was not permitted to do as he pleased without restriction. A law was given to him by his Creator, expressive of the divine sovereignty over society, and his position in the social state. Hence, society is a divine institution, originally characterized by intelligence, goodness, law and liberty. Woman belonged to man, because she was his own flesh and bone, and given to him of God; and they both belonged to God, because He had formed them for himself. Society, therefore, belongs to God; so that whosoever hath the honor of membership therein is free to do whatever he pleases that is not contrary to the letter and spirit of His law. This is the liberty God permits in society, which is his. Beyond this man must not go if he would continue in the divine favor. Law is the boundary line between liberty and licentiousness. He that crosses it diabolizes, and takes the first step in the descent, which terminates in the anarchy of the savage state.

From the constitution of society, then, at the foundation of the world, we see that law was an essential element of the social state; and that social liberty is freedom restrained by law. Absolute liberty, or freedom unrestrained by law which defines "order" and "decency," has no place in the divine plan. Man aimed at this. He virtually asserted, that he had a right to do what he pleased with the Tree of Knowledge as with all other trees; but experience at length proved to him that he had no unconditional rights; but a right only to do according to the law. He did as he pleased, and in consequence lost the favor of God, as will all others who pursue a similar course.

The existence of society depending upon the maintenance of law, it behoves all intelligent and wise people to cooperate to that end. If flesh were not sinful, or if all men were wise and good, the knowledge of the requirements of the divine law would be sufficient. They would

know and do. But flesh is sinful, very sinful; and all men in society have not intelligence, nor faith sufficient to walk by, nor wisdom, nor a love of order, nor a sense of decency; therefore, a simple knowledge of what God requires in society, or a simple reference to what the law says, is not enough to answer the necessities of the case. Law cannot apply itself, it must, therefore, be placed in the hands of an administration, that lawlessness may be restrained, and decency and order maintained in society.

The savage state is the opposite to the social in every particular. The "philosophy" of the Gentiles, "falsely so called," teaches that the savage is the original condition of man; and that society has grown up out of it as a result of necessity. One who believes the Bible, however, discards this as mere foolishness. Divinely constituted society is the primeval state; and savage life the extreme consequence of a departure from its laws. It originated in transgression of God's law, or sin, which, before the flood, acquired such force as entirely to corrupt the way of the Lord, and to fill the whole earth with violence. Its career was similar after that catastrophe; and where it was not antagonized by divine interference, but allowed in its fleshly inworking and manifestation to acquire absolute sway in portions of the human race, it reduced them to the condition of the natives of New Holland and the Feejees. The "liberty" of these aborigines is absolute. They do what is right in their own eyes upon the principles of "liberty and equality" in the abstract. They are without law to God, and know no rule but the necessity of their own lasts. They are nature's freemen, democrats of the largest liberty, who, under the impulse of desire, edify themselves without regard to the sensibilities and wishes of the unfortunates who fall into their hands.

This is the extremity arrived at by the uncontrolled working of that principle called "sin in the flesh." Cannibalism, however, is but the extreme manifestation of that "liberty" contended for by some, which impels them to a gratification of their own selfishness and vanity at the expense of the order and decency of the social state. The latter is sin modified in its display by circumstances, which restrain it by present consequences from murder and theft; but leave it rampant in the manifestation of "hatred, variance, jealousies, wraths, strifes, divisions, sects, envyings," which, though thought little of by the carnally-minded, as effectually exclude from the Kingdom of God. (Gal. v. 19-21)

Now, by comparing the savage and social conditions of man, it will be perceived that, in his transition from the savage to the social state, he sacrifices, as he ascends the scale of being, more and more

of what the natural man calls "his liberty." The nearer his approximation to primeval excellence, the more is the liberty of the flesh restrained, and reduced to a minimum. Between society divinely constituted, and the purely savage state, there are many intermediate social conditions. Greek, Mohammedan, Papal, and Protestant Socialisms, are sin, or the flesh, variously displayed-incorporations, in other words, of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," in which the works of the flesh are manifested with little rebuke. It is for this cause that they are glorified by the multitude which is religiously tolerant only of that which condemns "what they have no mind to." Still we see in these barbarisms the liberty, or rather licentiousness of the savage state considerably retrenched. Law and legal administration are recognized and obeyed; for experience has proved that without these, human society cannot exist.

The practices tolerated in the ecclesiastical organizations of the world, cannot be permitted in a society constituted of God. Variance, jealousies, strifes, envyings, and so forth, must be abstained from. No member of such a society is at liberty to indulge in these, or in any thing tending to them. The law of love that proceeds forth of Zion positively and absolutely forbids them. The savage, the barbarian, the Papist, the Protestant, are free to serve sin; but not so the Christian; he is free Only to serve righteousness, as a humble and faithful servant to God, who esteems that man most highly who is the least subservient to the lusts, passions, and instincts of the flesh. Therefore it is written: "Mortify put to death] your members which are upon the earth;" "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service". "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another." "Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil." "Be ready to every good work; speak evil of no man; be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness with all men;" and "Let all things be done unto edifying."

Absolute liberty, which is licentiousness, does not belong to God's society. The members of it surrender some of their individuality for the benefit of the whole, of which each person is a very small part. This is a first principle, and there can be no society without it. Now, that portion of individuality which each foregoes, he transfers from himself to the functionaries of society in assenting to their appointment, or in applying for admission, and in being received, into a community where they exist; so that he consents that he has no right to do individually what pertains to them officially. Functionaries,

then, are the acting members of the body, administering to its social requirements-its eyes, ears, mouth, hands, and feet; while the body in which they are placed itself is constituted of the generality of its constituents. These things being understood, there will be no difficulty in comprehending those which more especially pertain to what is commonly termed "a church."

A church is a society constituted upon principles divinely revealed. It is a company of believers organized for the worship of God, the support of the truth, and their mutual benefit. Union is strength; but there must be union in fact, or association is incorporate weakness. It is not good for Christians to be alone; therefore it is a privilege and a blessing for those who are partakers of the divine nature to be together in society. They afford the truth a local standing; they give it utterance, minister to its necessities, encourage one another, and assist the poor. Baptism organizes believers of the gospel of the kingdom into the One Body of the Lord. In the beginning, this consisted of 120 persons, with the twelve apostles as their eyes, ears, mouth, hands and feet; their eldership, in short, which comprehended all their office-bearers, who attended to the ministry of the Word, and to the serving of tables. When the 3,000 were added to this Church, they continued under the apostles' sole administration of things spiritual and temporal, until the seven assistants were added to the twelve, to relieve them of the secular concerns. Deacons, therefore, were not essential to primitive church organization, seeing that they were only added to meet the exigences of the case which arose some time after the day of Pentecost. The apostolic eldership was infallible, having been imbued with the Spirit from on high, which guided them into all truth, and made them what they were. Their administration was, therefore, the "ministration of the Spirit," by which each of them was endowed with the "word of wisdom," "the word of knowledge," "faith," "the gifts of healing," "the working of miracles," "prophecy," "discerning of spirits," "kinds of tongues," and "the interpretations of tongues." This was the Model Church, which was of one heart and one soul, and great grace was upon them all.

The churches among the Gentiles were formed after this model; that is, with an eldership or presbytery embodying the spiritual gifts. These gifts were not common to all the baptized, but to those only which constituted the eldership; and, perhaps, the deacons, who may be indicated as the "helps." Those who had the spiritual gifts were the spiritual men, or "members" of the body "in particular." The elderships of the churches, however, differed > from the Jerusalem church, in that each particular elder did not > possess all the nine gifts, as did each apostle; but only some of them. The gifts were distributed

among several for the profit of the whole body. These supernaturally endowed persons, by the particular gifts they had received, were constituted "apostles" of churches, "prophets," "evangelists," "pastors," and "teachers." They were all elders, but of different orders. Apostles ranked first; the prophets next; then the teachers; and after them the helps and governors; so that the ruling elders occupied the lowest rank in the eldership, and acting, therefore, under the direction of the ministers of the word; yet, though these diversities obtained, they were exhorted to have the same care one for another.

It was the function of these elderships to edify the body of Christ. In other words, the body edified itself through these "members in particular," who constituted in each society the branched candlestick of the church. The unction of the Spirit burned in them, shining as lights, holding forth the "word of truth." All these gifts worked that one and the self-same Spirit, "dividing to every man severally as He willed." The gift most to be desired was that of "prophecy," or the faculty of speaking by inspiration to the edification, exhortation, and comfort of the hearers. The eldership had a plurality of prophets, who might all prophesy in the meeting, provided they did so without confusion. The Corinthians were desirous of "spirits," that is, of spiritual gifts, by which they might be distinguished. They appeared to have desired the gift of tongues above all others; but the Apostle exhorts them to desire that of prophecy: and whatever they acquired, to seek the acquisition of it, that they might excel to the edifying of the church.

From this brief outline, it is evident that democracy had no place in the apostolic churches of the saints. The Holy Spirit constituted certain of the saints overseers, that they might feed the flock of God, and minister to all its necessities, as the pillar and support of the truth. As the prophets and teachers were ministering in the church at Antioch, the Holy Spirit said to them: "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." In this way the rulers and instructors of the body were appointed by the Spirit, and not by the brethren at large. The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, the eldership, and the brethren in general, were the elements of God's society in apostolic times. The Father and the Son, by the Holy Spirit, through the eldership, was the authority established in the church. Democratic republicanism would have been subversive of this; and, if tolerated, would have produced confusion and every evil work. The authority of the people and the authority of God cannot coexist. All things of God, and as little as possible of man, is a principle characteristic of the social state originating

from heaven, in Eden, in Israel, and in the church. Decency and order can only be maintained by the authority divinely appointed and sustained by the wise and good. This cooperation suppressed turbulence, and put to silence the foolish talking of the wise in their own conceits, who thought more highly of themselves than they were entitled to. The respect and consideration that was due to the elders is clearly set forth in the Epistles. "We beseech you, brethren," says Paul, "that ye know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and that ye esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine." Again: "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God. Obey them, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you. Salute them all."

On the other hand, the elders are exhorted to "feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly; nor for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind neither as being lords over the heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder; yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." After the manner of these exhortations were decency and order maintained in the churches of the saints; yet even with this divinely constituted authority, the heady and highminded could scarcely be restrained. It was the ministration of the Spirit, not in word only, but in power; yet evil found admission, and became "the Mystery of Iniquity, secretly working." The power could punish, and did punish, even unto the infliction of disease and death, and could also pardon and heal the penitent. It was evidently, however, not exercised to the full, but with considerable longsuffering, and forbearance; though, in many instances, it was pushed to extremities, as a terror to the evilly disposed.

Now, to this point I have endeavored to show:

First, that the social was the original condition of man, on the principle that it is not good for him to be alone.

Second, that in this state he was free, yet subject to law, which is an essential element of society.

Third, that social liberty is defined by law, by which it is prevented

from degenerating into licentiousness, which is liberty unrestrained by law.

Fourth, that as law cannot apply itself, an administration must necessarily exist.

Fifth, that man in society must needs surrender some of his natural or individual liberty for social protection from those who may be stronger than he, and for the general good.

Sixth, that office-bearers constituting the administration are representative of that portion of each member's individuality surrendered for social need.

Seventh, that these principles were incorporated in the churches of the saints established by the apostles.

Eighth, that the churches of the primitive age were constituted by the apostles and evangelists, who, having gathered the baptized believers of the kingdom's gospel into distinct societies, ordained elders in them, who being qualified for the discharge of their several duties of teaching, feeding, ruling, and serving, by spiritual gifts, were therefore constituted by the Holy Spirit.

Ninth, that the elderships were the many branched lamps in which the holy oil, or spirit, burned for the illumination and wellbeing of the generality.

Tenth, that the existence of these spiritual elderships necessarily excluded from the church what, in modern times, is styled democratic republicanism.

Eleventh, that the principle upon which all church affairs were conducted is expressed in the sayings, "let all things be done to edifying;" and, "let all things be done decently and in order;" and "let all your things be done with love," And,

Twelfth, that the churches edified themselves through their elderships, which were composed of "members in particular;" that is, of members selected from the "multitude," according to specified conditions. One thing, then, is evident, from a review of the premises before as, and that is, that there is no ecclesiastical organization extant like that which we see existed in the apostolic age, and that of the elders who outlived the apostles. And, furthermore, that however intelligent and excellent of purpose and character certain Christian professors

may be, they could not by any unanimity establish one. The reason of this is, that the gift of the Holy Spirit is a wanting: then, the Spirit called believers, and qualified them for the eldership, and through it instructed and ruled the body; but now, the Holy Spirit is neither in elderships nor people; at all events, neither of them afford any evidence of the fact, being more conspicuous for want of wisdom, and knowledge, and understanding, than for the possession of them.

But, because we cannot have the ancient order which existed in the infancy and childhood of Christianity, (for which, indeed, it was specially designed,) is that any reason why, when "a measure of an age of the fulness of Christ" has been attained, and the ancient order discontinued, believers in society should have no order at all; but that A. B. and C., however incompetent in the estimation of all but themselves, should be at unrestrained liberty to violate all the principles embodied in that ancient order, and to set all the rules of courtesy and good breeding at defiance? Certainly not. This is anarchy, and utterly disruptive and subversive of the social state. Men cannot live in society, literary, political, domestic, or Christian, where such licentiousness prevails. There must be system, and such an one, too, as shall be a restraint upon the presumptuous, and a praise to them that do well.

Seeing, then, that the divinely constituted order of things is not attainable, and some organization must be established if believers are to cooperate in society, it evidently follows, that the God of wisdom, knowledge and love, has left it to the most intelligent, wisest, and best dispositioned of His sons, to devise a system embodying the principles of His ancient order, through which may be carried out most effectually His benevolence to His children and the world. The case of Moses and his father-in-law establishes this. God had said nothing to Moses respecting the daily judging of the people, which all rested upon his shoulders, to the certain injury of his health. Jethro perceived this, and, though not an Israelite, suggested a division of labor, in the appointment of "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness," who should be rulers with him, to judge the people at all seasons. "If thou do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure." Moses took the advice; and though it is not written that God approved it, yet, as Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, we are justified in concluding that he did; for Moses would have established nothing contrary to His will, nor, if established, would it have been permitted to continue. We are in the wilderness state, and in a somewhat similar position. God has removed the divinely constituted elderships, or branched candlesticks,

and permitted his heritages to be despoiled and scattered. We are endeavoring to gather the dispersed together in divers places; but, in doing so, we find the times vastly changed. We are here and there companies, who profess to believe the same gospel as Paul preached, and, like him and his associates, to have obeyed it. We desire to be organized, but the Holy Spirit neither calls any of us to office, nor bestows on us any special gifts. If he prescribe to us no organization for modern times, and he have cut us off from access to the ancient one, it is manifest that, if we are to organize at all, we must do as Moses did at Jethro's suggestion, and organize ourselves, if God command us so; and we infer he does, as he has not told us how to organize, yet exhorts through the apostle "not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is."

It might be objected here that this reasoning would sanctify all the ecclesiastical organizations of Christendom. But I say, no; because, in the first place, they are not organizations of Christians, their members never having obeyed the gospel, so that they are not Christian organizations; and, in the next place, the organizations do not embody the principles of the apostolic one. No organization can be acceptable to God which is not comprehensive of his children; while, on the other hand, I believe he would not be displeased at any system of rule and order they might devise promotive of their own improvement of heart and understanding and growth in faith, humbleness of mind, brotherly kindness and love; and which would enable them to support the truth, and sound it out effectively in the world; all of which premises that their system embody the principles inculcated in the Word.

Who then should initiate the organization of unassociated believers? I should answer, in view of Paul's instructions to Titus, He or they who have been instrumental in opening their eyes, and in turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. It is reasonable that he who has been able to do this, is more competent to "set in order the things that are not done, and to ordain elders," than any one or all of the proselytes put together. He has in the nature of things more scriptural intelligence than they, seeing that they had been blind until he happily enabled them to see. The democratic mode of setting things in order, and ordaining elders, has been abundantly tried, and found wanting. It results in every evil work, and in all presumption and confusion. The vote of the majority puts men into office who are unqualified in every particular; and history shows that wherever this principle has rule in church or world, it invariably introduces turbulence, contempt of authority, and corruption; so that at length reaction necessarily supervenes for the prevention of the disruption of society which would otherwise certainly ensue.

The things Titus had to "set in order" were the prophets, teachers, helps, governments, &c., which "God had set in the churches" according to a certain order. See 1 Cor. xii. 28. In doing this he constituted an eldership for the edifying of the body in love. If it were necessary that these men should have certain natural, social, domestic, logical, and doctrinal prerequisite qualifications, in addition to the gifts of the Spirit, to enable them to rule well, and to edify the body; how much more, important in the absence of those gifts, as in these times, that the office-bearers now should be men of wisdom, knowledge, holiness of life and disposition, courteous, and well bred! Timothy was ordered "not to lay hands suddenly upon any man;" and to let the deacons be tried before they were made permanent. This must be attended to now. The best men and the wisest must form the Wittenagemot of the church; which indeed ought itself to be as a whole an assembly of wise men; but experience unhappily proves that such a condition is the rare exception to the rule. If all the members of a church were intelligent, wise, disinterested, and wholly devoted to the truth, the elder, overseer, or bishop's office would be a ruling and teaching sinecure; but this was not the case in the apostles' day, and it is much farther from being the case now. Men are more knowing than wise and prudent in all ages; and in proportion to their untempered knowledge and self-esteem, disposed to glorify and exalt themselves. The folly and turbulence and conceit of this class, which abounds in all communities, makes it particularly necessary that the very best men a church can afford should be appointed to its oversight.

As all things, then, must have a beginning, it appears to me that the names of brethren of the class indicated by Paul might be unanimously inscribed on a list by the members of the church, and be handed to him who called them out of darkness, that he might acquaint himself with them, and see which of them it would be advisable to leave upon the list for election. If two elders were needed, four or more good, apostolically characterized men might be inscribed on the list presented, which might be reduced, or not, according to the judgment formed of their eligibility by the scrutator who enlightened them. He might perhaps reduce the list to three. Two pieces of paper might then be each labelled, "For Elder," and put into a receiver with a third piece which should be blank. The three brethren should then successively put in the hand, and take one, upon which they of course who drew the lables would be elected, not by the people, nor by the scrutator, but by the lot. This appears to me to be as near as we can come to a scriptural election; and I cannot but think, that "able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness," so elected, would be approved by the Lord himself if present; and would certainly be deserving of all that respect and consideration the Scriptures claim

for those who supervise the church. Brethren who would not submit to such men in the Lord should seek society elsewhere. A congregation's spiritual affairs might be safely confided to them, for all their endeavors would be to promote the welfare of their brethren, to diffuse the knowledge of the truth, to maintain order and decency, and to glorify the Father who is in heaven. But, if any better mode could be devised, all reasonable and truthful men would be ready to adopt it.

In some churches there are few that can speak; in others, there are many. As a general rule, brethren should be "swift to hear, and slow to speak;" for there are very few who can speak to the edification of any besides themselves. Some mistake talking for prophesying or speaking to edification, exhortation, and comfort. They talk at their brethren, to the greatest annoyance of those who listen to them, who, after they have done, are thankful, and feel no disposition to say, "Amen." These are "unruly talkers, whose mouths must be stopped," and it is the duty of the elders to do it; and to see that the time and patience of their brethren and the public are not unprofitably consumed by such. There is no worship in talking; and it should be remembered that a church convenes for worship and instruction, not to listen to unprofitable and random talk. James says, "be not many teachers, knowing that we shall receive a severer scrutiny. For we the whole miss many things. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body." Let then those who desire to hear their own voices, read the exhortations of the apostles, and add few words, if any, of their own, unless they have prepared themselves as workmen rightly to divide the word of truth when they who rejoice in the truth will hear them gladly. He is a wise man who, with a small intellectual and scriptural capital, speaks few words; but shallow waters make a great noise; and so it too often comes to pass that they who have the least depth are the most prolific of wordiness and volubility. Speech seasoned with salt is excellent; but if it have no savor, it is fit only to be cast away as unprofitable and vain.

In a word, then, decency and order must be maintained; and, as far as I am individually concerned, I will identify myself with no organization of believers in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints that does not purge itself from the licentiousness which maintains the right of every man doing what is right in his own eyes, to the gratification of himself, at the expense of the inoffensive, and to the injury of the truth.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS.

IN the preceding article I have shown, in the first place, what was the divine order of things in the heritages of God planted by the apostles, and ordained by them and the evangelists; and in the next place, how nearly this might be approximated in the Nineteenth Century. But it is much more easy to sketch out the plan of a solid, and substantial, and elegant fabric, than to build it; much depends upon the nature of the foundation, and the materials to be used. If the edifice be not laid in rock, and the materials be more effluent of the flesh than of the spirit, however admirable may be the plan, the structure will prove like the apples in Milton's hell, beautiful to the eye, but ashes between the teeth.

No organization, not even an apostolic one, can work well, that is, scripturally, which is not composed of elements more zealous for the advancement of the truth, and the promotion of the glory of its divine Author, than of their own notions and exaltation. The first necessary thing is, that the members shall have become as little children, having their old Adam subdued by faith, and Christ substituted in his place by the same principle. Without this disposition, which is "peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy," no organization could work harmoniously and efficaciously, though framed and administered by the apostles themselves. Even a bad organization with good materials would work better than a good one with a self-willed, heady, factious, and self-glorifying people. The members must all respect the apostolic teaching if they would have an organization that would be scriptural and satisfactory to all good men. This teaching says, "By love serve one another." "Be not desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another." "Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God." "Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel," "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let his mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." "Let your moderation be known unto all men." "Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a complaint against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which (peace) also ye are called in one body; and be thankful." "Be at peace among yourselves." "Be all of one mind, having compassion one of another: love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." "Let love be without dissimulation. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another.

"And the great teacher, even Christ, who, though the Lord of all, humbled himself and became the servant of the least, enstamps this doctrine with the seal of his authority, saying, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." A people imbued with such doctrine as this would make work well; and indeed would get along peaceably together without any written constitution at all; because peace, and righteousness, and the law of the spirit of life, would be written in their hearts and minds. A people so disposed is the great want of our age - a people who not only believe the gospel of the kingdom, but manifest the fruit of it in their walk and conversation, to wit, "righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." It is the extreme scarcity of such that make it almost impossible to plant heritages in the land with administrations even remotely approximating to the apostolic. An association of believers is better without an eldership, than to have one made up of persons destitute of the qualifications indicated in Paul's letters to Timothy and Titus. All who have obeyed the gospel are not "blameless," "watchful," "decorous," "given to hospitality," "apt to teach," "of a well regulated mind," "judicious rulers of their own house", and of good external report. These qualifications are as necessary as faith and obedience to the gospel; and in order that their aptness to teach may be beneficially exercised, it is necessary that "the word of Christ dwell in them richly in all wisdom." Persons thus qualified would preside over an association of believers with great advantage all to concerned. These were the sort of persons the apostles exhort us to obey; but before we can do what they require in the premises, the right persons must be manifested. They do not exhort us to obey the incarnations of accident, or of majorities, or of party feeling; but only such as the Holy Spirit makes overseers-"able men, such as fear God; men of truth, hating covetousness." They should be wise, not in their own conceits; this the apostle forbids: but wise in the estimation of those that be wise, and disposed to avail themselves of their services. The greatest amount of the knowledge of divine things possessed in these days is but little at best. How very minute, then, that which is little compared with this! and how little ability is there to use this small amount aright! A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. It puffs up, and "lifts up with pride," or inordinate self-esteem. It is expedient, therefore, that a newly-formed ecclesiastical association should enter upon such an arrangement as would give expression probationally to the principles set forth; that being taught by experience they may be the better able to judge of measures and of the fitness of individuals to carry them into effect with permanence.

Now, a necessity, forced by circumstances upon certain believers of

the gospel, has compelled them to initiate an organization which shall favor, as they believe, the congregational worship of God in spirit and in truth, and the dissemination of "the word of the kingdom" in the city of New York. They have entered upon this arduous enterprise without conference with flesh and blood. They have seen and felt the necessity that exists, and have responded to it in the fearlessness of faith, the love of peace, the admonition of the truth, and the fear of God. It is an olive branch to all who love the truth better than themselves, but affords no scope for the unhallowed ambitions of the flesh. Approbating the principles set forth in the article entitled "Man In Society" and these "Additional Remark", they have agreed to the following constitution, as meeting the demands of the probational situation in which they are placed. It is published here for the benefit of all who may be interested in the subject of "Church Organization," which has been for many years a cause of much trouble to the professed friends of truth both in Britain and America. Unhappily, in modern times, about the first thing neophytes begin to do is to join battle with somebody about church government, instead of adding to their faith "goodness, and knowledge" of the divine testimony, that they may grow thereby, and become men, able to contend earnestly and valiantly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Infinitely more scriptural would it be for such to do this, than to consume their time and energies in striving against each other about place and power. A man thoroughly imbued with the truth would rather avoid these in this age than seek them. The least intrinsically deserving and qualified are, for the in most part, those who aspire after the petty distinction of place, being rarely capable of illustrating their position by the fruit of faith. They forget that we are placed here to learn obedience by the things we are called to suffer; not to "learn how to rule;" though to obey with a good grace is the first step to the commanding righteously the obedience of others.

Taken from: The Herald Of The Kingdom and Age To Come, Jan. 1854 "Man in Society, Dr. John Thomas"

Introduction

Thank you for signing up for our Bible study series offered by request only via our web site.

You have now completed all the lessons. You have learned that God has a purpose with the earth. It is to fill the earth with His glory. It is to fill the earth with people like himself. These people are being prepared now, so that when Jesus the Christ returns to earth, and sets up the Kingdom of God, they can rule in that Kingdom.

If you are reading this lesson, then you have already finished the complete Key Lesson course and want to know more about how you can obey the call to the kingdom of God. As the Bible teaches, this means believing in the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Israel and obeying the commandments set forth by God through the gospel. You must seek out a group of people who believe the truth and join them in the covenant through baptism.

The Christadelphians are such a group. You have learned the gospel if you have studied all of the Lessons. If you agree with these lessons, and are willing to admit that you are in need of forgiveness from God and want to become a brother or sisters in Christ, then you are ready for baptism. Baptism means that you will enter into a covenant with God. It means that you accept and believe in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.

The procedure we follow to baptise someone is to continue to study with you until you are ready for us to meet with you and discuss the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. That discussion usually lasts under two hours. In that discussion you show that you understand and believe these things, and have a sound knowledge of what you are doing and make sure you understand what an important step baptism is. Once you and we are satisfied that you do believe those things and want to be baptised, then we will make the arrangements to do so. The arrangements needed are mainly finding a place with water to put you underneath. Usually there are several people in attendance at that time to witness that happy event. After that, we will welcome you into our fellowship in Christ, shaking your hand and then we will break bread and drink wine together to commemorate our Lord Jesus' death.

If you do want to become a Berean Christadelphian, then please eMail us today. We will then proceed with the arrangements to get you baptised. If you still aren't sure and wish to study further, please contact us with your specific questions and concerns. We will be happy to work with you.

God be with you and keep you safe on your continued journey.

All the best,

Leslie Morrell

QUESTIONS for Lesson 30

INTRODUCTORY

1. Do you believe that the Christadelphians hold the true teachings of the Bible?
2. Do you know of any other religious body than the Christadelphians who teach the true Gospel?
3. What is the basis of all your beliefs in this matter?
4. What is the Bible?
5. Does the Bible give sufficient guidance to obtain eternal life?
6. Can we get such guidance from any other source?
7. Do you believe that the entire Bible is the infallible and inspired Word of God in all its parts?
8. Why do you desire to be baptized?
9. What is baptism? What does the original word mean?
10. Is sprinkling an acceptable substitute in the sight of God?
11. What two things will baptism do for you?
12. Will it do this without knowledge and belief on your part?
13. Can you have eternal life without being united with Christ?
14. Can you be united to Christ without baptism?
15. Is there any actual value in the act itself, or does its value lie in the fact that it is an act of intelligent obedience to divine command?

THINGS OF THE KINGDOM

16. What is it necessary to believe to make baptism scriptural and effective?
17. What is the Gospel?

18. Would it be true to say you believe the Gospel if you do not believe the truth concerning the kingdom?
19. Could you obtain eternal life without believing the Gospel?
20. Could you believe the Gospel without first knowing it?
21. Is this kingdom something present or future?
22. Where is it to be?
23. What will be its extent?
24. What is it to be?
25. When is it to be established?
26. Has this kingdom any relation to anything in the past?
27. To what?
28. With whom does the history of this kingdom begin?
29. How did it begin with him?
30. Who was he?
31. What were the religious beliefs of the people among whom he lived?
32. What happened to Abraham to begin the history of the kingdom of God?
33. What promises were made to him?
34. Were they fulfilled to him?
35. Did the apostles think they had been fulfilled?
36. Will they be fulfilled?
37. When will they be fulfilled?
38. To whom were these promises repeated?
39. What was Jacob's name changed to?

40. How many sons did he have?
41. Tell their history briefly up to their assembly under Moses at Sinai.
42. What happened at Sinai?
43. Then this was the formation of the Kingdom of God over Israel?
44. Was this the fulfillment of the promises?
45. Why not?
46. Was the covenant through Moses conditional or unconditional? (Could its blessings be terminated?)
47. Did the covenant through Moses do away with the covenant to Abraham?
48. Was the covenant to Abraham conditional or unconditional? (Could its blessings ever be terminated, or were they everlasting, once they were inherited?)
49. When did the covenant made with Israel through Moses come to an end?
50. By whom does Paul say the covenant to Abraham and the promises to the fathers were ratified and confirmed and brought into force?
51. Did the Israelites immediately enter Palestine when they left Sinai?
52. Why not?
53. How long did they wander in the wilderness?
54. How many of the adults who left Egypt entered the land?
55. What happened to the rest?
56. Did they remain obedient to God, as they had promised?
57. How did God punish them?
58. How did He deliver them when they repented?
59. This went on for several hundred years -- then what did they ask for?

60. Who was really their king all the time?
61. Were they satisfied to be different from the rest of the world and have God as their king?
62. Who was the last judge in whose time this happened?
63. Did God grant them their request?
64. Did He say it would be good for them, or bring them trouble?
65. Who was the first king? Was he a good king?
66. Who was the next king? Was he a good king?
67. What further step in the revelation of God's plan occurred during David's reign?
68. Did this refer to David's immediate son, Solomon?
69. Did David think it did?
70. Did the writers of the New Testament think it did?
71. To whom did they apply it?
72. How long was this son of David to reign?
73. What does this necessarily imply as regards his nature?
74. Has this promise to David been fulfilled?
75. What was the Hebrew nation waiting for throughout its entire history?
76. Did David realize that the promise made to him referred to this Messiah?
77. Following the reign of David's son, Solomon, what happened to the kingdom?
78. What finally happened to these two kingdoms?
79. Which one was the true continuation of the original kingdom established by God?
80. Did the succession of kings of Judah remain all through in the

line of David?

81. Who was the last king of this line?

82. What was told him at the time of the destruction of the kingdom?

83. To whom did this refer?

84. What did the angel tell Mary in this connection when he announced the birth of Christ to her?

85. Was Mary of the direct line of David?

86. Did Mary connect this event with the promise made to Abraham?

87. Did the father of John the Baptist connect the birth of Christ with the promises to Abraham and David?

88. What was the superscription over the cross?

89. When Pilate asked Jesus if he were the king of the Jews, what did Jesus say?

90. Has Abraham yet inherited the world, as Paul says he was promised?

91. Have all nations been blessed?

92. Has Christ sat on David's throne, ruling the house of Jacob for ever?

93. Will these things ever happen?

94. Are any signs given us to indicate when the time of their fulfillment is approaching?

95. What are some of these signs?

96. What is the reward promised to those who accept the Truth and are faithful to it?

97. What must happen to them before the Kingdom can be established?

98. What must happen to the Jews?

99. What position will the mortal nation of the Jews hold in this Kingdom?

99a. What will be the governing center of the Kingdom?

100. What will be the general conditions in this Kingdom?
101. What is the purpose of this Kingdom, in its first stage?
102. How long is this first stage?
103. What will be the events at the end of this stage?
104. What will be the final consummation?

THINGS OF THE NAME

These are things which concern the nature and position of man, and the Purpose of God in Christ as affecting man.

1. What was the purpose of Christ's first advent? (Take away sin)
2. What is sin?
3. How did sin begin?
4. What did God say would happen if Adam disobeyed?
5. What the was result of sin in relation to man's nature?
6. What was the result of sin in relation to man's position before God?
7. What is death?
8. Does any part of man live on after death?
9. Of what was man created? In whose image?
10. What caused the body of dust to live?
11. What was the result called? (What did man become?)
12. Is the term "soul" applied to other creatures than man?
- 12a. Is there an "immortal" soul?
13. Do other creatures have the breath or spirit of life?
14. Is there any consciousness in death?

15. Apart from a direct act of recreation by God, then, man would at death forever cease to exist, exactly as an animal?
16. Is there any physical difference between men and animals?
17. Does the Bible teach anything about men going to heaven or to a place of torment at death?
18. Does the Bible teach that men ever go to heaven?
19. What is the hell of the Bible? who goes to hell?
20. What was the difference in Adam's nature before and after the fall?
21. Who is the devil of the Bible?
22. When did sin in the flesh begin?
23. What was the mission of Christ in relation of the devil?
24. How did Christ destroy the devil?
25. Is the destruction of the devil completed?
27. In what two ways do we suffer the consequences of Adam's transgression?
28. Apart from our inheritance of a condemned nature, what other claim has death on us?
29. How do we escape from death? (By whom?)
30. Who was Christ?
31. What was the manner of his birth?
32. Was Joseph his father?
33. Did he exist as a person before his birth?
34. What was it that DID exist that was made flesh in the person of Christ?
35. How many Gods are there?
36. What is the Holy Spirit?

37. Is it a separate person?
38. Was Christ a man?
39. Was his nature any different from ours?
40. Did he ever sin?
41. Could he have sinned?
42. Was he born of the same sinful flesh as we are?
43. Could he have destroyed the devil in his death if he had not been of our nature?
44. Could he justly have suffered the condemnation due to human nature, if he had not been himself of human nature under condemnation?
45. Therefore you see the necessity of understanding and believing that Christ -- though personally sinless -- was a man possessing the same sinful flesh that we inherit from Adam?
46. And you see that Christ did not suffer as a substitute FOR us, but as a representative OF us?

It is very important to understand that the death of Christ was not to appease God's wrath or to pay some debt instead of it, it was:

- A. To demonstrate the penalty that was justly due to the whole race,
- B. To provide a basis for reconciliation in which the requirements of God's righteousness were fully recognized and brought into prominence
- C. To provide the greatest possible demonstration of God's love in giving His own Son, that we might be drawn to love Him in return, and

D. To illustrate what a hateful and deadly thing sin is in the sight of God, that such a terrible price was necessary to atone for it.

47. Did Christ himself benefit from his own death?
48. In what way?
49. What happened to him after he died?
50. What is his nature now?
51. Where is he?

52. What does he do In heaven?
53. Does he mediate for the whole world?
54. For whom does he mediate?
55. Who are his people?
56. What is the purpose of his mediation?
57. What must we do to get him to mediate for us?
58. Besides confession and asking forgiveness, what other things form the subject of prayer?
59. Would it be possible to get eternal life without continual recourse to prayer?
60. Would it be possible to get eternal life without regular study and meditation upon God's Word?
61. Will all be saved who believe and are baptized?
62. What else is necessary?
63. When will the separation between the accepted and the rejected occur? (Return of Christ.)
64. How will the two classes be dealt with?
65. What must happen to the dead before the judgment can take place?
66. Will the righteous be immortal when they come out of the grave?
67. Why couldn't they be?
68. Will all the dead who have ever lived stand before Christ for judgment?
69. Who will?
70. What makes a person responsible?
71. Will the wicked be tormented forever?
72. What happens to those who die without becoming responsible to God?

73. When and how will the world be converted to righteousness?
74. Do the Scriptures give us any reason to expect that any large numbers will accept the Truth at the present?
75. When you take on the Name of Christ in baptism, what responsibilities devolve on you as to your time and efforts and attentions?
76. After baptism, does your life belong to you?
77. What percentage of your life does God require?
78. Besides baptism, what other ordinance are we commanded to keep?
79. On what day, and how often, was it the apostles' custom to keep this ordinance?
80. What originally happened on that day of the week to make it the most appropriate time for the ordinance?
81. What is our duty in relation to any among us who deny first principles of the Truth, or who persist in conduct contrary to the commands of Christ?
82. What is our duty as to association with the world?
83. You realize, then, that Christ's brethren and sisters are entirely separate from the world and must keep this position clear at all times as their first duty?
84. Have you fully considered all the present disadvantages -- from a natural point of view -- that the Truth will bring upon you?
83. You realize that it is not just a religion as the world considers religions, but an entirely different way of life in all things?
84. And you are convinced that what is to be gained far outweighs anything that may have to be suffered or foregone at the present time?
85. And you are prepared to the best of your ability to follow the course that faithfulness may require, whatever the present consequences may be?

MISCELLANEOUS

1. What is the Scriptural position in relation to clubs, lodges, secret societies, etc.?

2. Unions? (activity -- membership).
3. What do the Scriptures say concerning whom we may marry?
4. Is divorce permissible?
5. If one breaks God's law and gets a divorce, can he remarry?
6. What teachings of Scripture bear on the use of tobacco?

Worldly

1. Unclean-offensive
2. Bondage-habit
3. Drug-impairs the mind
4. Poison-injures the body
5. Waste-unfaithful stewardship
6. Appearance of evil
7. What teachings of Scripture bear on going to theatres, dance halls, sport exhibitions, baseball games, etc.?
8. Is it Scriptural to go to law against another?
9. What is the position of the wife in relation to her husband?
10. What is the positions of sisters in meetings?
11. What is she required to do as a sign of subjection?
12. What is the Scriptural teaching concerning dress, personal adornment, cosmetics, painted nails and faces?
13. What is our position concerning seeking the citizenship of any worldly country?
14. Is the "Evolution" Theory in harmony with Scripture Truth?
15. Is baby sprinkling Scriptural?

16. Who are the angels, and what is their purpose?
17. What is their nature?
18. Does anyone possess the power of the Holy Spirit today?
19. What Is the teaching of Scripture concerning oaths? (Matt. 5:34-37, Jm. 5:12).
20. What will happen to the Jews when Christ returns?
21. What position will the mortal Jewish nation hold during the Millennium?
22. Once you have put on the Name of Christ, is it possible after that to lose salvation and be rejected?
23. What is necessary to make our "calling and election sure"?

Please email your answers back to us. Thanks.

