

tongue and people and nation . . ." Rev. 5:9. Then the angels joined the elders in glorifying the Son of God: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessings." Rev. 5:12. Then the whole creation sang together the anthem of praise: "To Him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever. Rev. 5:13. Men, angels, and the whole universe, praise the second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, for having been willing to become the Lamb of God," who was sacrificed for man's sins.

QUESTION 6: What will be the reward of the Redeemer for His infinite sacrifice?

ANSWER: Isaiah 53:10-12. -----

3. A. It is a mystery how Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, would concede to stoop so low for our sake. It is amazing that He was willing to become so small and insignificant, born and raised in poverty, suffering untold shame and sorrow for us. It is a profound mystery that He voluntarily gave up His inconceivable greatness and majesty and infinite power. Such a contrast embarrasses us because we forget that true greatness is willing to bear every humiliation and condescension. This two-fold aspect of Christ, the union of divinity and humanity in One Person, is and remains a mystery. We cannot possibly reconcile in our own minds His very high and very low position. We stand in awe before a God who is willing to stoop down to our level.

B. "Who are You?", asked the Jews in Christ's time, and this question is repeated by many today. "If you are almighty God, why did you permit men to treat You in such a shameful manner? Why did You allow men to drag You to the slaughter house like a helpless lamb?" Just as many are shocked and repulsed today by the lowliness and shame the second Person of the Trinity took upon Himself, in the same way Lucifer and some angels did not accept the fact that the Son of God was equal with the Father and was the Creator and Upholder of the whole universe. Because of his unwillingness to accept the Son of God as equal with God the Father, Lucifer became Christ's fiercest rival, His worst enemy.

Jesus said, "It is the Father's will that all should pay the same honor to the Son as to the Father. To deny honor to the Son is to deny it to the Father who sent Him," John 5:23. (New English Bible) Christ also said, "My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all . . . I and the Father are one." John 10: 29, 30. These expressions point to their equality. How then shall we understand Paul's statement: "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. 15:28. It means that after the plan of salvation has been carried out in its fullness, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit will again be equal as before creation, each one being subject to the Godhead.

C. We urge you to elevate Jesus Christ to the throne of your heart, that the Lord of glory may become in reality your King, the Sovereign Lord of your life. After His resurrection, Christ appeared to the unbelieving Thomas and asked the doubting disciple to put his finger in Christ's wound. Thomas dropped to his knees and exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" At that moment, Jesus became his King of glory. What is Jesus to you?

QUESTION 7: Is Christ your Lord and King? If yes, what must you do?

ANSWER: Acts. 2:36. Colossians 1:27. Luke 6:46. -----

* The texts referred to in this lesson are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible unless otherwise indicated.

Offset in U.S.A.

CHRIST
OUR LIFE™

BIBLE STUDIES

STUDY 1

Jesus, The Lord of Glory

Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of mankind. To know Him personally means eternal life. John 17:3. Unfortunately, few people know Christ from experience. Most of us think and speak only of His first coming when He entered our world in disguise through the back door. They know Him as a helpless, poor child born in a stable. They know Him as a carpenter living in a wicked village and then laboring as an itinerant teacher, preacher, and healer who was never acknowledged by the leaders of His nation. They know Him as one who was ridiculed, despised, rejected by His family, by His people, and finally by His own disciples, as one who finished His life's career on the gallows in shame. But this is only one aspect of the life of Jesus Christ. This is only His human side. Few people today realize who Jesus Christ really is, namely, the Lord of Glory.

After suffering a shameful death, Jesus Christ became the King of Glory. "None of the rulers of this age understood this: for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." 1 Cor. 2:8.* "They killed the Author of life . . ." Acts 3:15. What a shocking example of human blindness! Man rejected the Author of life but heaven received Him back jubilantly. "Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up O ancient doors! That the King of Glory may come in . . ." Psalms 24:7-10.

QUESTION 1: How do you explain that the King of glory died as a criminal on the cross?

ANSWER: Hebrews 2:10. -----

Before the creation of the universe, the Trinity had been existing without a beginning. The three divine Persons were not only of one mind but also equal in every respect. Every member of the Godhead is omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and eternal. The concept of one of them being superior to the others is false. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." John 1:1-2. The "Word" refers to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father." John 1:14.

The Holy Scriptures frequently refer to the equality the Son of God had with His Father. "Though He was in the form of God, He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped . . ." Phil. 2:6. The members of the Godhead were so closely united that they used the same name interchangeably. "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called 'Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'" Isa. 9:6. In this passage, the Son of God is called "Mighty God and Everlasting Father," proving that both Father and Son have the same attributes. In II Cor. 1:3-4, God the Father is called the "God of all comfort," while in John 14:16, Jesus promises that He will send us the Holy Spirit who is also called a "Comforter." An even more staggering revelation of the divinity of Jesus Christ and His equality with His Father is found in the following text: "For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily . . ."

Col. 2:9. This statement points to the equality, the union, and the interchangeability of the Trinity which is beyond human understanding. God the Father spoke to the angels regarding His Son in these words, "Let all God's angels worship Him . . ." But to the Son He says, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." Heb. 1: 6, 8. At the last supper, Phillip said to the Master: "Lord show us the Father and we shall be satisfied." Jesus replied to Him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Phillip? He who has seen me has seen the Father." John 14: 8, 9.

QUESTION 2: How can you show that the Son of God is equal with His Father? Why did He humble Himself to such a low degree?

ANSWER: Philippians 2: 6-8. -----

Let us investigate one of the most astonishing texts found in the Bible. In Mathew 11:25, Christ calls His Father, "Lord of heaven and earth." But in Matthew 28:18, Jesus claims "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." This could only be true if the Father and the Son are equals. Christ continued to pray, "I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou has hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes." Luke 10:21. "Blessed are the meek." Matthew 5:3. This last statement means that God reveals these great spiritual truths only to the humble. "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 18:3. All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him." Matthew 11:27. These words again point to the fact that God the Father and God the Son are equals.

When the Holy Trinity planned creation of the universe and the world, they foresaw the rebellion and apostasy of Lucifer. Lucifer was the name of Satan before his rebellion against God. He had been the prince of the angels of God and he led one-third of them in a revolution against the government of God. The Godhead prepared the solution to this crisis in advance. An emergency plan was worked out among them in which they distributed the role each one would play in creation and in the redemption of man. Zech. 6:13. It was decided that the Son of God would become a Priest according to the order of Melchizedec, a Mediator and Reconciler between the Godhead and man. "You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your fathers, not with perishable things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was destined before the foundation of the world but was made manifest at the end of the times for your sake." 1 Peter 1: 18-20. "To make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things." Eph. 3:9. These texts show that the salvation of fallen mankind and the incarnation of the Son of God were predestined from eternity. 2 Tim. 1:9, 10; Rom. 16: 25, 26.

QUESTION 3: What plan was prepared before the creation of the universe to solve the problem of rebellion and save the lost?

ANSWER: 1. Peter 1:18-20. Ephesians 1:9-10. -----

The Holy Trinity resolved before creation that in case of rebellion and apostasy the first Person of the Trinity would represent the Godhead, while the second Person would represent those beings who fell away from God. This second Person would make reconciliation between the Godhead and the rebels in an attempt to bring back as many as possible to God. The third Person of the Trinity, on the other hand, would draw men to Jesus Christ by enlightening their minds. It was also resolved that in order to execute the plan of redemption, the second Person of the Trinity would have to give up His equality with the other two Persons of the Godhead and voluntarily step down, empty-

ing and humiliating Himself in order to reach those whom He desired to redeem. This step-by-step descension happened as follows:

1. The second Person of the Trinity had been equal with the Father before creation.
2. After creation, the second Person of the Trinity appeared as the Son of God, in a position that was dependent on God the Father.
3. When one-third of God's angels turned against God, the Son of God became the Archangel, Michael, who fought against the rebellious host of angels and defeated it.
4. When man rebelled, the second Person of the Trinity stepped down once more and became man taking on the name of Jesus Christ, the second Adam, and lived a totally sinless life among us.
5. The second Person of the Trinity stepped down even lower by going to the cross and paying the death penalty for sin on our behalf. By doing this, He entered second death which is the lowest point of the universe. "Christ emptied Himself, taking a form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man. And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death on a cross." Phil. 2:7, 8.

Jesus Christ is the only Person in the universe who touched the highest and lowest points in the universe, the two extremes, the throne of God and second death. He is the only Being who ever entered second death and returned alive from that experience.

QUESTION 4: How far did the Creator go to save all who were lost?

ANSWER: Luke 15:4-7. Ephesians 4:9-10. -----

By decreasing in position, through self-humiliation, the second Person of the Trinity became voluntarily less and less than the first Person, God, the Father. He willingly accepted a dependent relationship to God the Father, the same kind of relationship man has with God. This was an unspeakable sacrifice for Jesus Christ. Because of His lower position and humble appearance, Lucifer and other created beings never accepted Christ as God equal with the Father. By becoming an angel, and later on a human being, the second Person of the Trinity made it impossible for a fallen angel or a fallen man to say to God, "It is easy for You to live on the highest moral standard since You do not understand our situation, and are not familiar with the difficulties we experience on our level." The Bible states that Christ has been tempted in every respect as we are and yet never sinned." Heb. 4:15.

There are three great mysteries connected with the plan of redemption:

1. The incarnation of Christ.
2. The sufferings and death of Christ.
3. The resurrection of Christ.

QUESTION 5: Can we solve the mysteries of the plan of salvation?

ANSWER: Deuteronomy 29:29. Proverbs 3:32. Daniel 12:10. -----

"Great and important, we confess is the hidden truth, the mystic secret of Godliness. God was made visible in human flesh, justified in the Holy Spirit, was seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world and taken up in glory." 1 Tim. 3:16 (The Amplified Bible.) As deep as was Christ's humiliation, so high is His exaltation. "Therefore, God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Phil. 2: 9-11. After Christ's ascension, after having paid with His life the penalty of our sins, He was crowned while the 24 representatives of mankind exalted Him in these words "Worthy art Thou to take the scroll and to open its seals, for Thou wast slain and by Thy blood didst ransom men for God from every tribe and

continue in selfishness and coldness of heart in the face of such an outpouring of mercy and love.

What is your personal reaction to the love of God?

QUESTION 5: What decisive change happened in created beings on earth and in the universe when Christ died on the cross?

ANSWER: God was justified as love drew them. John 12:32. (Write) _____

WE SERVE GOD BECAUSE WE LOVE HIM

Many misunderstand God's love and kindness and confuse it with sentimentality. They forget that His is a genuine love backed up by justice and righteousness. God loves the sinner, but hates selfishness. He is not only the lover of mankind, but also our judge.

Remember, no unrepentant sinner will enter heaven. As certain as there is love, forgiveness, grace, and mercy for a repenting sinner, so certain there is also judgment, condemnation, and destruction for those who despise His grace and reject His love.

Some of us think that the greatest sin we could commit is the transgression of one of His commandments (stealing, murder, etc.). This is not so. The unforgivable sin is the rejection of God's Holy Spirit as He endeavors to woo us to Christ. We cannot commit a worse sin than to decline the offer of forgiveness as expressed in Christ's death upon the cross. God is willing to forgive any sin, but His righteous indignation is poured out when we reject the sacrifice of His Son on the cross and the continual pleadings of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTION 6: What is the greatest sin man can commit?

ANSWER: Rejection of God's love and grace. John 3:19. (Write) _____

God never compels us in this life to return His love and to do His will. He does not strike us dead because we reject Christ's sacrifice. We are allowed to live our lives, if we so desire, in complete independence of God. There is no coercion. He accepts our answer of "Leave me alone; do not interfere in my life."

He desires voluntary love and affection. He accepts worship only when it comes from the heart. When we give Him our hearts and surrender ourselves wholly to Him, He accepts us with a feeling of joy and gratitude.

If you do not know the love of God, come and contemplate Him. Ephesians 3:18, 19. No one can separate us from the love of God. Romans 8:38, 39.

QUESTION 7: What prompts us to love God voluntarily?

ANSWER: Seeing and experiencing His love in our lives. 1 John 4:9. (Write) _____

*Smith and Goodspeed, The Complete Bible: An American Translation. Used by permission of the University of Chicago Press.

STUDY 2

God's Love for Mankind

Love and hatred, with the resultant life or death, have been waging a bitter warfare in man's soul ever since sin entered this world. By our own actions and decisions we decide which one of the two opposing forces will dominate us.

GOD IS LOVE

God—Creator, Lawgiver, Redeemer, and Wonder of wonders, is the eternal Lover. Love is His nature. Love is the ruling principle behind all His actions. Love is the basis of His relationship with us. God is a loving God. The Godhead consists of more than one Person; namely, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. If He were only one single person, He could love only Himself and would have no object of love. 1 John 4:8. Love is the supreme attribute of God. Jeremiah 31:3.

When God made peace with mankind and forgave our sins, He chose a way that would express His infinite love for us without violating His righteous nature. Romans 3:25, 26.

He was forced by His righteous law to expel the rebellious pair from Eden, and cut them off from partaking of the tree of life. However, He followed man into exile, made possible the way back to God, bore the burden of man's sins, and suffered with him from generation to generation as mankind struggled under the consequences of sin. Isaiah 63:9.

Because of His great love for man, He purposed to become man and live on earth with us. John 3:16. Love prompted the Son of God to become poor, to be cursed, in order that we might become rich and blessed. He became like we are in order that we might become as He is. 2 Corinthians 8:9; Galatians 3:13.

QUESTION 1: How did our sin and plight affect God?

ANSWER: Isaiah 63:9. (Write) _____

WHAT WAS THE MOTIVE BEHIND GOD'S REDEMPTIVE ACT?

When men became sinful and became the slaves of Satan, God had three choices:

1. To condemn man to death in accordance with God's law. If He had chosen this alternative, Satan would have triumphed.
2. To change His moral law, and so suspend the sentence of death. ("Where there is no law, there is no sin.") If He had chosen this solution, the entire universe would have been plunged into anarchy.
3. To allow His Son to pay the penalty for our sin. Only divine love and wisdom could have found this alternative; namely, one that would respect His law, and still save mankind.

Christ Himself paid for the consequences of our sin. Satan pictured God before all creation as being a tyrant, a severe ruler, and a cold-hearted judge. He maintained that God was righteous, but unloving.

Satan robbed God of His children by tempting them to rebel, but God did not give up. He promised that He would pay the consequences of sin Himself. Christ hanging on a cross to pay a penalty that everyone of us rightfully deserves has a drawing power that is not excelled by anything in this world. If our eyes fill with tears when we read of the hero who lays down his life for his comrades, what should our reaction be when we behold what God has done for us on Calvary?

GOD RECONCILED US TO HIMSELF

Sinful man did not seek after God, but instead God came after us, seeking to save that which was lost. Man did not attempt to reconcile an angry God, but God, like a father, took the initiative and reconciled us with Himself. 2 Corinthians 5:19.

QUESTION 2: What did Christ the Son of God do to bridge the terrible cleavage and repair the awful havoc?

ANSWER: Paid the penalty of our transgression, reconciled us with God. Romans 3:24, 25. (Write) _____

From Nazareth to the Mount of Olives, Jesus Christ demonstrated God's undying love for the sinner. The love of God is the central theme of the Bible. Let us see a number of examples to prove this:

1. The highest goal of man is his love for God and his fellowmen. Matthew 22:37-39.
2. Love your enemies. Matthew 5:44, 45. (Remember, we were also enemies, and God loved us.)
3. Love as intensely as Christ loved us. John 13:34, 35.
4. It was Christ who taught us to call God "Father." Our Father is waiting for His prodigal son to return. Luke 15:20, 24.
5. The Son of God is the Good Shepherd who went to seek the one lost sheep. Luke 15:4-6.

Love paid the ransom price. "Love is as mighty as death, as strong as Sheol; as for passion, its bolts are bolts of fire, furious flames." Song of Solomon 8:6, Goodspeed.* Only perfect love could devise and carry out the plan of salvation which cost Jesus Christ His own life. Philippians 2:6-11. The Son of God who was equal with the Father became like one of us and gave His life as a ransom for all.

The punishment for our sins fell on Him. Isaiah 53:5, 6.

While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8.

Through this love we are made again sons of God. 1 John 3:1; Romans 5:5.

We know and believe that God is love. 1 John 4:10, 16.

QUESTION 3: What is the central theme of the Bible? What did Christ accomplish by His actions of love?

ANSWER: The love of God and the plan of salvation. Made us sons of God.

John 3:16; 1:12. (Write) _____

LOVE PROMPTED GOD TO CREATE AND REDEEM MANKIND

God's great love for us prompted Him to send Christ into the world to die for our sins. Ephesians 2:4, 5. His love for us did not begin after we separated ourselves from Him, but He loved us even before creation. 1 Peter 1:18-20.

It was love that prompted Him to create us in the first place; it is love that makes Him give us all the necessities of life. He built a whole creation around us to ensure our happiness; the beauty of nature and the animal kingdom testify to the fact that He did not spare anything to make our lives full and pleasant.

Because He loved us, He devised ways and means to show us the way back to Heaven. First He revealed His will, His commandments, to us, and then He promised to give us the strength to obey. He knew that sinful men have no power to live according to the will of God.

Through faith and surrender to Jesus Christ, the power of the Holy Spirit enables us to live a life that is pleasing to Him. This is the relation between the law of God and the gospel of salvation. Romans 1:16; 13:10.

QUESTION 4: For what purpose did God create men?

ANSWER: For happiness, which comes to us when we find God. Acts 17:24, 25, 27. ("Haply" means "perchance.") (Write) _____

QUESTION: What is the power of God?

ANSWER: The Gospel and love. 1 Corinthians 1:23, 24.

Jesus Christ allowed man to execute Him like a criminal. He could have called a legion of angels to deliver Him from that death, but He knew that this was the only way that our sins could be forgiven. He voluntarily laid down His life for us. This is the greatest testimony to God's love.

The love of God most clearly expressed on Calvary will draw all hearts to Him. John 12:32. On the cross sacrificial love and cold selfishness met face to face, and love gained the victory. As we behold our Creator dying on the cross for us, love awakens in our hearts and subdues our selfishness.

We do not worship God because of fear, or in the hope of receiving a reward. Only when we love Him with all our heart and strength (a deep personal affection), will He accept us. God became man in order to implant this selfless love in our hearts.

When we with our spiritual eyes contemplate God's love, we are changed into the likeness of Jesus Christ. Love begets love. Contrary to many opinions, even God's law expresses His love for us. His law is the transcript of His character. It expresses the principle of love. Matthew 22:37-39. If we do not have this principle of love in us, we are unfit for heaven. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. Satan is doing everything to prevent us from discerning and understanding the love of God. He knows that if man can grasp the love of God, he will repent of his sins and turn to God for forgiveness. Romans 2:4; 2 Corinthians 4:4.

How should we respond to this infinite love? The beings in heaven are appalled at the shallowness of man's response to the love of God. They are indignant as they see us

CHRIST'S DEATH ON THE CROSS WAS A PERFECT SACRIFICE, ACCEPTABLE TO GOD

The Son of God, through His life and death, finished the work of redemption for mankind. We cannot add anything to it or take away anything from it. Nevertheless, one thing has to be understood. We must cooperate with God or His sacrifice and victory will have no effect on us.

Complacency, indifference, and unbelief counteract the infinite grace of God and make void the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our lives.

MAN'S STEPS TO RECEIVE DELIVERANCE FROM THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN

We must approach Jesus Christ as we are. Isaiah 1:18; Matthew 11:28.
We must believe in the Lord Jesus. Acts 16:31.
We must confess and forsake our sins. 1 John 1:9.

MAN'S STEPS TO RECEIVE DELIVERANCE FROM THE POWER OF SIN

We must ask God for a pure heart and a clean conscience. Psalm 51:10, 11.
We must be willing to keep the law of God. Romans 6:15, 16.
We must at all times maintain intimate communication with God through prayer. Luke 18:1; Daniel 6:10.
We must feed our souls daily with the Word of God. Matthew 4:4.
We must keep our thoughts on the things of God and avoid all negative, sinful thoughts. Philippians 4:8.
We must keep looking continually to Christ and not to men. Hebrews 12:1, 2.

QUESTION 6: What is man's part in receiving deliverance from the punishment of sin?

ANSWER: Acts 16:31. (Write)

QUESTION 7: What is man's part in receiving deliverance from the power of sin?

ANSWER: Psalm 51:10, 11. (Write)

STUDY 3

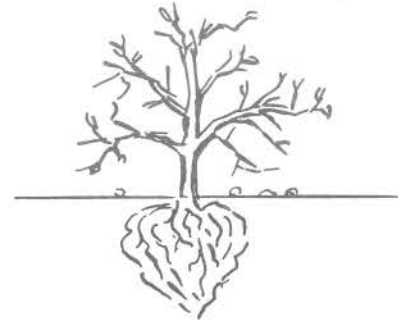
Sin and Deliverance

Sin is the cancer of the soul. Its cause is unseen and mysterious. The effect of sin is lethal even in the smallest quantity. It kills spirit, soul, and body.

Originally man was made perfect. He was sinless and innocent. He chose of his own free will to transgress the law of God.

THE NATURE OF SIN

What is sin? It is rebellion against God, separation from Him, and joining with Satan. It is transgression of the law. 1 John 3:4. And the law is the expression of God's character. Where there is no law, there is no sin. Romans 5:12, 13.



Sinful deeds are the fruits of a carnal life. 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10. They must be confessed and forgiven.

Our sinful nature is the root of a carnal life. Mark 7:20-23.

Effect of sin. As a drop of poison can spoil a whole barrel of water, so one small sin can affect the whole human family or system. As the poison of a snake quickly spreads through the body and brings about death, so sin spreads throughout the whole human race and brings about spiritual and physical death. Sinful nature cannot be tamed or ennobled. Adam's sin consisted in listening to the voice of Eve (1 Timothy 2:14), and in taking the forbidden fruit. This apparently small transgression developed into murder in the second generation (Cain). 1 John 3:12, 15; Galatians 6:7.

The power of sin. Sin never allows its prey to escape. We do not have the necessary strength to set ourselves free from the power of sin. From the day we are born, we are its captives. Romans 3:10-12; 7:15, 18-21, 24; 8:6-8.

As we continue to practice sin, we form a habit. We begin losing our sensitiveness to sin, considering it harmless, even desirable; and finally we cannot live without it. The parallel to this condition is the addict who cannot live without his narcotics. Civilized society abhors crude, open sinfulness, but tolerates and accepts the more subtle practices, the more so-called refined sins which man has perfected to an artistic level. The Bible says that mankind is living in darkness, in the shadow of death. Matthew 4:16.

QUESTION 1: What is the difference between sinful deeds and sinful nature?

ANSWER: The old nature must die, then man can cease to practice sin.
Romans 8:13; 1 John 1:9. (Write) _____

SIN'S CONSEQUENCES AND PUNISHMENT

There is no difference in result between small and big sins, since the small sins will soon become big sins. "The sting of death is sin." 1 Corinthians 15:56. "Lust brings forth sin, and sin brings forth death." James 1:14, 15. "The wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23. This refers to the second death, which is annihilation. Revelation 20:14, 15.

The consequences of sin are: Loss of communion with God; loss of the noble powers streaming from Him into our minds and hearts; loss of confidence and happiness; sickness and suffering, hate and war; and physical death.

The punishment of sin: Unrepentant sinners are punished after the second resurrection (resurrection of the lost). They will be judged during the millennium. The verdict or penalty is the second death, which is complete and everlasting destruction.

QUESTION 2: What is the difference between the consequences and the punishment of sin?

ANSWER: James 1:14, 15; Revelation 20:14, 15. (Write) _____

OUR CHOICE OF ETERNAL LIFE OR ETERNAL DEATH

The Bible describes the moral condition of mankind as resembling a man whose body is covered with wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores. Isaiah 1:5, 6. God, through Jesus Christ, is willing to forgive repentant sinners all their sinful deeds, but He does not allow us to keep our sinful nature. He demands that we let it die. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Corinthians 15:50. We must choose between the disease and the cure.

The old man must die, and the new man must be spiritually created. Ephesians 4:22-24. For this reason the Son of God had to become man. Hebrews 2:14, 15.

As long as man loves himself and approves his sinful deeds and way of life, nobody can deliver him. God is able to help only the one who recognizes the deadly nature of sin and abhors it. Psalm 32:2-5.

An unregenerate man must be saved from two things: (1) punishment (second death). Romans 6:23; (2) the controlling power of sin—the rebellious, selfish heart. Romans 8:7, 8.

MAN CAN NEVER SAVE HIMSELF—Romans 7:24

We cannot save ourselves by keeping the law of God. Galatians 2:16. The heathen religions are based on self-redemption. Their idea is that man, by doing something good or by suffering, can merit God's favor, His forgiveness, and His salvation.

The Word of God, however, teaches us clearly that salvation is not a matter of approval by a church, holding to a creed, or leading a godly life. None of these can save us from the power of sin.

How, then, are we saved? Through Jesus Christ alone. Romans 7:24, 25; Acts 4:12.

QUESTION 3: Who alone can save us from the punishment and power of sin?

ANSWER: Acts 4:12. (Write) _____

THE SON OF GOD WROUGHT A COMPLETE REDEMPTION ON THE CROSS FOR ALL MANKIND

It must be pointed out here that redemption belongs to those only who accept it by faith. It is not automatically applied to every being.

Jesus Christ offers to us individually *deliverance from the punishment of sin*. God gave His only Son forever to lost mankind. John 3:16.

Because God cannot die, He became man that He might die the second death for the repentant sinner who sincerely believes, loves, and obeys Him. 1 Timothy 1:15, 16; Romans 5:8.

The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sins of the past if we confess them with a contrite heart. 1 John 1:7, 9. In place of our sinful life He imputes to us His own pure, sinless life and gives us His righteousness, provided we accept it by faith. Romans 3:22.

Jesus Christ offers us deliverance from the power of sin. Repentance for our sins as well as forgiveness of them is a gift of God, to be accepted by faith. Acts 5:31.

The new birth is a gift of God also. John 3:5; 1:13.

The Spirit of God dwells in the newly created man. John 14:17.

The Spirit of God writes God's laws in the mind of man (the seat of intellect and emotion) and gives him the power to live up to them. Hebrews 8:10; Romans 8:3, 4.

Christ is the only High Priest of humanity and the only Mediator and Advocate of the redeemed. Hebrews 7:25, 26.

The Holy Spirit educates and molds the character of all who obey Him. He is to be the guide of their lives. John 16:13.

The angels of God are sent to help the redeemed in their struggle for endurance and victory. Hebrews 1:13, 14.

The redeemed have free and direct access to God's throne of grace. Hebrews 4:16.

QUESTION 4: How does Christ deliver us from the punishment of sin?

ANSWER: Romans 5:8. (Write) _____

QUESTION 5: How does Christ deliver us from the power of sin?

ANSWER: Romans 8:3, 4. (Write) _____

their own choice. Christ gave His own blood to cleanse our polluted souls. 1 John 1:7; 2 Corinthians 5:15.

He paid the penalty of our sins, which is the second death. Romans 6:23. Instead of destroying Adam after he sinned, He died in his stead. Romans 5:6, 7. He justified God, His government and laws, before the whole universe. John 17:3, 4. He demonstrated that the Godhead is humble and willing to serve. Philippians 2:6-8. He proved that God is willing to suffer and endure the most degrading treatment to save those He loves. Isaiah 53:1-5. He demonstrated His obedience to the point of death. Hebrews 5:8. He showed that He loves His creatures more than Himself. John 13:1. Through the ages, as a result of Christ's stupendous demonstration of justice and love, a great multitude of people have chosen Him to be their God, their Lord, their King, and their Redeemer. Revelation 5:8, 9; 7:9.

QUESTION 7: What were some of the accomplishments of Jesus on the cross?

ANSWER: Hebrews 2:14; Romans 6:23; John 17:3, 4. (Write) -----

REFLECTIONS OF THE CROSS

The One who represented the essence of love (Jesus) and the one who represented the essence of selfishness (Satan) stood face to face at Calvary. The evil nature of Satan was unmasked before the entire universe when he killed the Son of God.

The infinite value of one human being was revealed on the cross. God paid with His own life the penalty of sin for every individual. If you were the only human being on earth, He would have died for you. In the face of this event we have to discard once and for all the notion that man could appease an angry God. There is nothing we can do to earn salvation. Salvation comes by only one way, through the gift of Jesus Christ who died on the cross for the sins of the whole world. 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19.

The cross also demonstrates what God will do with sinners at the time of judgment: hell (destruction, or second death) awaits every unrepentant sinner.

Jesus Christ, through His death, rather than abolishing the moral law of God, established it forever and proved its changeless character. Matthew 5:17, 18. On the cross He satisfied the demand of the law, the second death. Since He was sinless Himself, He was resurrected and obtained the right to grant mercy to every repentant human being. God's righteousness and mercy were demonstrated on the cross. Psalm 85:10.

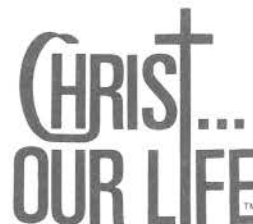
The ceremonial practices and symbols of the Jewish religion were illustrations of the death of Jesus Christ (lambs sacrificed daily, the serpent uplifted by Moses in the wilderness, etc. John 3:14, 15). The cross is the center of the gospel message revealed in the Old and New Testaments.

The universe was regained forever. Revelation 5:11, 12. Together with the angels, sinless worlds sang the hallelujah chorus. Revelation 5:13. Through the cross, the Son of God brought unity and harmony to the universe and made it possible for all who choose Him to live in His presence forever.

QUESTION 8: What did Christ vindicate by His death?

ANSWER: The character and law of God. Matthew 5:17, 18; Isaiah 42:21. (Write) -----

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STUDY 4

The Mystery of the Cross

Christ's execution on a cross as a common criminal brought mankind face to face with the profoundest mystery. It was a unique event that will never occur again in the history of the world. All creation gazed upon this scene in horror. Many have inquired: Why did the Creator allow men to treat Him in this manner? The cross is a sign of victory, for on it Christ triumphed over Satan, sin, and death.

THE CONSPIRACY AND REBELLION IN HEAVEN

In order to understand fully the meaning of the cross, we must investigate the events that led to this tremendous event; namely, the controversy between Jesus Christ and Lucifer. The latter rebelled against God and His government and thus became Satan. Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-17.

Lucifer accused God of being the exact opposite of what God claimed to be. He pictured Him as an unjust tyrant, a God who was quick to destroy and slow to forgive. He accused God of being incapable of love, forcefully demanding to be served, always receiving but never giving. (Compare with Absalom's rebellion against his father David in 2 Samuel 13-18.)

The purpose of his slanderous accusations was to create a spiritual crisis in the cosmos that would bring about an alienation between God and His created beings. He had hoped to win the latter's sympathy and, together with their help, unseat God. Thus he hoped God would be forced to give him a share in the government of the universe.

God is on trial before His created universe.

Jesus Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of the cosmos. John 1:1-3, 10; Colossians 1:15-17. Lucifer was created by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He became the highest and most powerful angel in heaven, the prince of all the created beings. However, Satan was never given creative or sustaining power. He did not have immortality. At the time of Lucifer's rebellion, God could have chosen to withdraw life from him. Instead God embarked on a different plan. Satan was given a time and a place to reveal his true character and to show that his accusations were false. In this dramatic controversy God is the accused and Satan the accuser. Romans 3:4. In the end, everyone would be able to judge for himself who was right and who was wrong. The theater of operations was to be this world. Calvary was chosen as the stage for the decisive battle. The human race as a whole, and the Jewish nation in particular, was to be the cast.

QUESTION 1: What was at issue in the rebellion in heaven?

ANSWER: Romans 3:4. (Write) -----

CHRIST AND THE CROSS

When Adam rebelled, God had three choices: (1) Punish the transgressor, (2) suspend His law and overlook the transgression (which would lead to lawlessness, anarchy), or (3) pay the price of redemption Himself and give man another opportunity. Because God is love, He chose the last alternative. John 3:16.

Since God cannot die, He had to transform Himself first into a human being. Only in this form could He lay down His life as a ransom for us. Hebrews 2:14, 15. But there is more to the cross than the redemption of humanity. Its implications are much deeper. The conflict between Jesus Christ and Satan which is being resolved on this planet is being watched by all the angels and the sinless beings inhabiting other worlds. Everyone living on the earth, on the other hand, is participating in this controversy since he must side with either truth (Jesus Christ) or error (Satan). 1 Corinthians 4:9.

Jesus Christ died hanging between heaven and earth. This is symbolic of the fact that His death not only was significant for humanity, but involved all the other beings inhabiting the universe. John 12:32 states: "I will draw all unto me." (The word *men* is supplied, and its inclusion limits the application of the verse to members of the human family. It could be omitted, for not only were members of the human race drawn to Christ by the sacrifice of Himself, but angels and the inhabitants of other worlds were drawn to Him anew by the demonstration of the sacrificial love of God.) This means that when Jesus Christ laid down His life for sinful humanity, He won the sympathy, love, and allegiance of all created beings in the entire universe. This is more expressly stated in Colossians 1:20 where it speaks of a reconciliation made with those "in earth and in heaven."

We may rightly ask the question: What did God have to reconcile in heaven? The answer is that on the cross Jesus Christ justified God's character before the whole universe. He showed that God is both just and merciful, facts which were questioned by Satan. Romans 3:26. Jesus Christ died outside the walls of Jerusalem, thereby showing that He did not come to redeem only Israel but all mankind. Hebrews 13:11-13.

QUESTION 2: What was God's choice when man rebelled?

ANSWER: John 3:16. (Write)

QUESTION 3: Has the cross significance only for the earth?

ANSWER: Colossians 1:20. (Write)

SATAN'S CHANGE OF TACTICS

Indecision is one of Satan's characteristics. While dealing with Jesus Christ, he played a double game. He first attempted to divert Him from His path leading to death by tempting Him three times in the wilderness. Satan meant to entice Jesus Christ to worship him. Luke 4:5-7. Since he did not succeed, he persecuted Christ until he drove Him to the cross.

At this point, Satan realized that the cross was his own undoing, but it was too late. Luke 23:31. Satan thought that if the innocent Son of God, who was like a green tree, was treated in this awful manner what will happen to himself, who was like a dry tree, for all the wickedness he had committed? He realized that one day he would be utterly destroyed. Genesis 3:15. In a desperate attempt to prevent Christ from laying down His life for the sins of mankind, he tried to persuade Him to step down from the cross. Speaking through the rulers and the people present, he urged Him to save Himself. Luke 23:35, 37.

From noon until 3 P.M. a deep darkness surrounded Calvary and Jerusalem. It looked indeed as if everyone had forsaken Him. Both Jews and Gentiles had rejected Him, while His own disciples were in hiding. Satan's last temptation was most severe. Christ's sufferings were not primarily physical pain or loneliness, but our sins, which He was paying for in our stead, had separated Him from His Father. The sins of the whole world were weighing upon His heart. 2 Corinthians 5:21.

QUESTION 4: Why did Satan attempt to entice Jesus to step down from the cross?

ANSWER: Colossians 2:15; 1 John 3:8. (Write)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CROSS

When Christ made Himself an offering for sin by becoming our Sin Bearer, the Father separated Himself from His Son. When this fellowship was broken, Jesus cried, Father, why have You forsaken Me? Matthew 27:46. The mental agony was foretold in Psalm 22:1, 19-21. It was this separation that broke His heart.

What is the second death? The second death is symbolized in Scripture by "outer darkness," a place where there is no light or life. Matthew 22:13. When Christ took upon Himself the sins of humanity (note the experience in the Garden of Gethsemane). He entered in our stead into this "outer darkness" from which no created being can return. He experienced this also on the cross during the dark period. Thus He tasted second death for all. Hebrews 2:9.

Satan's temptations of Jesus Christ while He was in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross were intense, but our Lord conquered through faith. Isaiah 53:10, 11. He saw by faith the multitudes of men and women who would believe in Him and accept His sacrifice as a propitiation for their sins. He saw those who had been redeemed through His blood, from the first generation to the end of history. He became victor through faith. Luke 23:46. He died as a conqueror, for He conquered death.

When Jesus died, Satan realized that his power over men had been broken and that one day he would be destroyed. The death of Jesus Christ was his own death knell. Revelation 1:18.

The victory which Jesus Christ wrought over sin and death was attained in a unique way; namely, by entering death itself. He conquered death through death. The cross is the most mysterious weapon of the universe. The greatest moral victory ever won was achieved through it. In this light we can better understand what Paul meant in Colossians 2:15.

The last cry of the dying Saviour, "It is finished," was a triumphant cry addressed to all the sinless beings living in the universe. It was also addressed to the Father: I have finished the work for which I have covenanted Myself. Zechariah 6:13; John 17:4.

QUESTION 5: What is the second death?

ANSWER: Matthew 22:13. (Write)

QUESTION 6: How did Jesus defeat His foe?

ANSWER: Hebrews 2:14. (Write)

WHAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED ON THE CROSS?

Jesus Christ reconciled man to God by taking the penalty of our sins upon Himself. Romans 5:10. Thus He brought humanity back to His Father's house. Hebrews 2:13.

God the Father showed that He deeply loved the sinner but abhorred his sins. He condemned sin in the flesh of His Son. Christ obtained the authority to forgive the sins of anyone who comes to Him with a contrite heart confessing his sins. Micah 7:18; Mark 2:10. He died for all men. Every man may be saved if he will accept what rightly and legally belongs to him. No man is condemned to hell. Those who go there do so by

The Holy Spirit, speaking through the Bible, never leads a man into extremes of indifference or fanaticism. A true Christian is a balanced individual. The Holy Scripture is the test for all doctrines and teachings. Isaiah 8:20.

In the great confusion caused by Satan today, the Word of God alone is to be the sure foundation for our faith and conduct. If our beliefs are anchored in the Bible, the last awful deceptions of Satan will not overthrow us and cause us to make shipwreck of our faith. Matthew 24:24; Revelation 12:17.

QUESTION 6: What is the supreme test for all moral and spiritual teachings and doctrines?

ANSWER: Isaiah 8:20. (Write) _____

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BIBLE STUDIES

STUDY 5

The Wonderful and Inspired Word of God

SOURCES OF RELIGIONS AND PHILOSOPHIES

The sources of human religions and philosophies are the following: traditions, false sciences, occult sources, human wisdom and doctrines, the equating of God with the powers of nature, mysticism.

Man seeks to know God chiefly in two ways:

1. Through his intellect and his imagination. He makes his own image of God and worships it. This is the case of the primitive religions as well as many of the sophisticated concepts of God today. These have produced many gods and idols, and much spiritual blindness and moral decadence.

2. Through revelation or knowledge that has come directly from God. This is the only true way. We must find God's way of manifesting Himself to man. He has revealed to us how we can approach Him and how we should worship Him. This is true religion. The Bible teaches the Jewish and the Christian faith. They are one in substance, since they proclaim the same God, the same gospel, the same Redeemer, and the same plan of salvation for all humanity.

God manifests Himself in different ways: in nature, in the soul and mind of man, in life and history, in the Holy Scriptures, and in Jesus Christ.

God will manifest Himself to all who seek Him and wish to worship Him. And none is so blind as he who refuses to see God. Romans 1:19, 20.

God uses the weak things of this world to bring about great results: a cross, a book, a man. He chose to give us a Book that would capture the mind of every thinking man and conquer the world. A small group of men, armed with the gospel of salvation, permeated the Roman Empire; before Christ returns, He will bring about a similar revival before our very eyes.

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Matthew 24:35. He also said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63.

QUESTION 1: What are the sources of the religions of men?

ANSWER: John 17:17; Colossians 2:8. (Write) _____

THE BIBLE, AN INDESTRUCTIBLE BOOK

The Bible, the Book of books, still stands unchanged since Moses wrote the first passages. Although the language has been modernized, no other changes have been made. The Book still stands unchanged and unrefuted. Changing times, passing ages,

the rise and fall of nations, have not influenced the Bible. On the contrary, the Bible predicts the events of history, and these predictions happen at the appointed time and place. No wonder there is no other book in the world so controversial as the Bible. It is beloved because it reveals a way of escape from destruction; it teaches righteousness, and it throws light on the narrow way that leads to heaven. It is hated because it condemns sin, falsehood, and hypocrisy, and praises humility, honesty, and godliness. It reflects justice by taking sides with the oppressed, the poor, the persecuted, and it promises judgment on the exploiters and tyrants.

The Bible was condemned not only by pagan emperors, but also by the medieval church rulers. Thousands were condemned to death for reading it. Until Wycliffe translated it into English and Luther translated it into German, the Bible was not widely read in the language of the people for nearly a thousand years.

Wycliffe was persecuted for his crime of translating the Bible. Tyndale's translation of the Bible was also condemned, and the manuscripts were gathered and burned, while he himself suffered a martyr's death.

The possession of the Bible meant torture and death. But God did not allow Satan and man to eliminate the revelation of Himself; through the influence of the Bible, truth spread throughout all nations and played a great part in the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the liberation of the European nations.

Critics have tried to discredit God's Word by ridiculing it, declaring it to be a collection of folklore, fables, and myths. But some modern scientists involuntarily supported the claims of the Scriptures and refuted these vicious attacks. The findings of astronomers, archaeologists, geologists, and astronauts confirmed the statements contained therein as true. The slabs of stone unearthed by archaeologists cry out and certify the prophecies contained in the Bible. (See Tell-el-Amarna letters, the Ras Shamra Texts, the Gezer Tablet, etc.)

QUESTION 2: Why is the Bible indestructible?

ANSWER: 2 Peter 1:21. (Write) _____

GOD'S INSPIRED WORD

Let us see the historical background of the Bible. For the first 2,500 years of this world's history there was no written revelation of God. The patriarchs communicated their knowledge of God to the succeeding generations by word of mouth. God's revelations were expressed for the first time in written form by Moses.

The Holy Scriptures were written in the period from 1500 B.C. to A.D. 100, in sixty-six sections, by a variety of writers living at different periods under different circumstances. Yet the Bible shows an unusual unity and harmony. Through the sixty-six books runs a common theme. It is the plan of redemption which God has devised for man. All these books speak of one Person, the Saviour of mankind, the Messiah. There are no contradictions among the writers. This unity testifies to a divine inspiration. It witnesses to the fact that the Bible has been prepared under divine direction.

QUESTION 3: How long did the preparation of the Bible take?

ANSWER: 1,600 years.

The Bible itself claims to be inspired by God. All Scripture is inspired by God. 2 Timothy 3:16. No prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation. 2 Peter 1:20. Holy men were moved by the Holy Spirit in writing the Scriptures. 2 Peter 1:21. "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me." 2 Samuel 23:2. The inspiration of the Almighty gives understanding. Job 32:8. The Holy Spirit teaches. 1 Corinthians 2:13. The Lord says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8, 9.

Our finite minds can never fully comprehend the expressions and works of the infinite God. To the most intellectual and educated minds, God and His words are still veiled in mystery. Romans 11:33.

QUESTION 4: What do you mean by inspiration?

ANSWER: 2 Samuel 23:2. (Write) _____

We cannot penetrate God's secrets by human wisdom. Deuteronomy 29:29. The Sacred Scriptures contain revelations that extend beyond the times of human history. They reach into eternity. God does not always give us a full explanation. He expects us to trust Him, to exercise faith in Him, to realize that He is prompted in everything by love and justice. He is Truth itself.

Skeptics reject the Word of God because they cannot comprehend it. How can our small intellects fathom the most complex mind in the universe? By making us sinful, Satan has succeeded in weakening and perverting our power of reasoning and our imagination. Without the aid of the Spirit of God, our minds remain eternally frustrated. The cross, which deals with the deep humiliation of the Son of God, is a total mystery and unexplainable to the man who relies only on logic; its meaning is so deep that angels do not fully understand it. Even they desire to know more about it.

In God are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And throughout eternity, saved men, living in the presence of God, will learn and be taught by Him. They will never exhaust the wisdom of God, because His is infinite.

We are the pupils; He is the Teacher. Job 36:22. We should be willing for the Lord to teach us while we listen. We are to sit at His feet with a childlike, thirsting spirit. The only way we will ever understand the Holy Scriptures is to allow the same Holy Spirit who inspired them to illumine our own minds. John 14:26.

Seek God's wisdom to understand the Bible. When we are perplexed by events in our lives or by statements in the Bible, we should turn to Christ by faith and ask for an explanation. He promised to reveal His will for us when we are united with Him, the Source of all wisdom. On the other hand, many questions will be resolved only when He comes to take to heaven those who believe and trust in Him. In the meantime, let the Word of God stand as it is. Let us not tamper with it. It is inspired by Him.

Perverted minds turn the truth of God into a lie. Many give twisted explanations to Bible texts. The only safe way to study the Bible is to allow a number of related texts to explain themselves. 1 Corinthians 2:13; Isaiah 28:13. The Bible explains itself. If we take all the texts on a particular subject, we are bound to find the meaning God intended; then we will understand what God means.

QUESTION 5: What is the only way we can understand the Bible? Whose aid do we need to understand the Bible?

ANSWER: John 14:26. (Write) _____

THE WORD OF GOD ALONE IS THE FOUNDATION FOR FAITH AND CONDUCT

Our daily food and inspiration. Matthew 4:4. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." John 1:14. This is said of Jesus Christ, but it also may be said of the Holy Scriptures. In Christ the divine and human were united. This unity also exists in the Bible; it was not dictated word by word, but the truths and principles explained therein are recorded in the language of men who were chosen by God. The Bible contains all the information that is necessary for salvation.

STUDY 6

The Mystery of the Trinity

There are as many concepts of God in this world as there are religions and philosophies. Investigations to find an understanding of God using mere human methods are futile. God cannot be found through scientific and philosophical reasoning alone. These can give only a distorted picture of Him. Our search for Him will be successful only when we approach Him through the revelation of Himself which He has given to us through the Bible. We can find God through our spiritual faculties. We can come to Him by faith. When we yearn for Him, we will find Him. Our souls will be united with Him, and He will become the supreme experience of our lives.

THE NATURE OF THE GODHEAD

Recognized in the Old Testament. The fact that God is a triune God is reflected in the Old Testament (sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly, as at creation, Genesis 1:26, 2). The distinguishing mark of God is that He is able to create something out of nothing by His Word. Psalm 33:9. God revealed Himself to Isaiah. Isaiah 6:3; 48:16, 17. In the Hebrew language, the word *El* is singular, while *Elohim* is the plural form. The latter alludes to the trinitarian concept of God. Deuteronomy 6:4. In the second century B.C., *Elohim* was substituted by *El*. The Godhead consists of three divine Persons who are of one mind and one heart in everything they do.

The concept of a Trinity is repeated in the New Testament. For instance, at the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:15-17), Jesus' commission to His disciples (Matthew 28:19), and Paul's blessings (2 Corinthians 13:14), each member of the Godhead is mentioned.

QUESTION 1: How can we have one God, yet three divine Persons (one in mind, heart, will, and execution)?

ANSWER: 2 Corinthians 13:14. (Write) _____

THE THREE PERSONS OF THE GODHEAD

God, the Father. "One God and Father of all." Ephesians 4:6. "Every . . . perfect gift is from above . . . from the Father of lights." James 1:17. No one has seen God (Father). John 1:18. "Our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:29. "God is love." 1 John 4:16.

QUESTION 2: Has anybody ever seen the Father?

ANSWER: John 1:18. (Write) _____

God, the Son. "I and my Father are one." John 10:30. "Let all the angels of God worship him." Hebrews 1:6. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever." Hebrews 1:8. Jesus Christ

has been living since eternity together with the Father. John 1:2. "And the Word became flesh." John 1:14. Christ has equality with the Father. Philippians 2:6. He has existed from eternity, before the creation of the cosmos. John 17:5; Micah 5:2. He has life in Himself. John 5:26.

By commission of the Father, He is Creator of the whole universe. "Let us make man in our image." Genesis 1:26. "The Word was God." John 1:1-3, 10. All things were created by Him, and He upholds all things. Colossians 1:15-17. "By whom also he made the worlds." Hebrews 1:1-3.

He became man. He became the Son of man that He might die for us. Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23. He became fully man to save fallen mankind. Hebrews 2:14. He is the second Adam. 1 Corinthians 15:45-47. Yet He fully retained His deity and divine nature, which were hidden in His humanity.

He was without sin. By this He proved that all sinful men (morally fallen) can avail themselves of the power of God to keep the laws and principles of God, thus overcoming sin. "I have kept my Father's commandments." John 15:10. Satan has "nothing in me." John 14:30. He was tempted, yet without sin. Hebrews 4:15.

He died as the Son of man for our sins. "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8. "This is my blood which is shed . . . for the remission of sins." Matthew 26:28.

He arose from the dead as victor over Satan and death. "Him God raised up the third day." Acts 10:40, 41. "I . . . have the keys of hell and of death." Revelation 1:18.

He ascended into heaven to serve as our only High Priest, Mediator, Advocate, and, finally, Judge of all mankind.

"There is . . . one mediator between God and men." 1 Timothy 2:5. "We have such an high priest." Hebrews 8:1, 2. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him." Hebrews 7:25, 26. "For the Father judgeth no man." John 5:22, 27.

At the end of the ages He will come again. He comes in glory as King of kings, to judge the living and the dead and save the redeemed of all ages. "I will come again." John 14:1-3. You shall see "the Son of man . . . coming in the clouds of heaven." Matthew 26:64.

QUESTION 3: How great is the Son of God?

ANSWER: Philippians 2:6. (Write) _____

God, the Holy Spirit. "He will give you another Comforter." John 14:16, 17, 26. The Holy Spirit is Regent for Christ on earth (Vicar of Jesus Christ). The office and authority of the Son of God can be held only by another Person of the Trinity. "Whom I will send unto you from the Father." John 15:26. "He will reprove the world of sin." John 16:7, 8. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. Romans 8:9.

OFFICE AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THE REDEEMED

He lives in surrendered persons and controls them. John 14:17; Colossians 1:27. He has the power to re-create; He brings about the new birth. John 1:12, 13; 3:5. He makes intercession for us. Romans 8:26. He gives us the power to live the Christian life and enables us to be witnesses. Acts 1:8. He is always the Master while we are His servants; He is leading us. Romans 8:14. He seals redeemed men for salvation. Ephesians 4:30. He strives with men, wooing them to God. Genesis 6:3. He reproves the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. John 16:8-11. The Holy Spirit lives in the new believer and accomplishes his personal redemption, provided the person is utterly sur-

rendered to Him. Without the Holy Spirit, no one can be saved. Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:18.

A continuous opposition or indifference toward the Holy Spirit will lead to the unpardonable sin. This can happen to a believing as well as to an unbelieving person. This is done when he rejects light from the Holy Spirit; when he clings to his old nature and refuses to be transformed by the Holy Spirit; when he retains sinful habits rather than giving them up. Matthew 12:30-32. In such a person there has been no change in the way he lives, and he does not fear, revere, or worship God. Psalm 55:19, Amplified Bible. Presumptuous and willful sinning grieves the Holy Ghost. Hebrews 10:26, 29, 30. Examples: Esau, King Saul, Judas; Hebrews 12:16, 17.

QUESTION 4: Is the Holy Spirit a divine power or a person?

ANSWER: John 14:26; 16:13; Ephesians 4:30. (Write) _____

The Godhead (Trinity) has existed from eternity, before time, space, matter, energy, or living beings existed. God is the Creator of the animate as well as the inanimate universe. He is infinitely greater than the whole universe. He is immortal, infallible, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent. God's wisdom is unsearchable, and His ways are unfathomable. He can be known only through His revelations. This fact prompted God to manifest Himself to man.

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God." John 17:3. "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." 1 Corinthians 2:10, 11. Jesus Christ became man in order to make known the Father to us. John 17:6, 8. "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me." As Moses showed godly respect when approaching the burning bush, so let us show reverence as we draw near to God. Let us go to Him in a spirit of humility and admiration, with hearts full of gratitude, love, and adoration. Let us be willing to obey His words. For to know God is the highest goal of every human being. "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" Psalm 42:2, 3. "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee." "They go from strength to strength." Psalm 84:5, 7.

QUESTION 5: Why must we know the triune God?

ANSWER: John 17:3. (Write) _____

ANSWER: 2 Corinthians 4:4. (Write) _____

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BIBLE STUDIES

THE GREAT CONTROVERSY ENDS

It appears that Satan has been ruling man in all periods of world history. Practically all human life was wiped out in the Flood because of the wickedness and violence of man. At the Tower of Babel man chose Satan again and embraced paganism. Israel, God's own nation, failed in Egypt, then forsook God in Canaan, was driven into the Babylonian captivity, and finally rejected Christ in Palestine when He appeared in human form. Men have always corrupted their own ways. 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16; Matthew 23:37, 38.

Christianity, after a wonderful beginning, traveled the same tragic road. The great beginning ended in apostasy. 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 6, 7. Paganism and apostasy wiped out Biblical faith. The Dark Ages practically buried true Christianity. Then came the God-inspired Reformation. The Bible was rediscovered, and the faith of the early Christians was revived. But the Reformation was arrested after the reformers died.

We are approaching the last struggle between light and darkness. The final showdown will take place in what the Bible calls the modern, mysterious "Babylon," described in Revelation 17:1-6 and 18:2-5. Soon the last call of God to all believers will be "Come out of her, my people."

Why has God permitted the controversy to last so long? Why did God not cut Satan's activities short? If God had done this, sympathy for Satan would have been aroused in the hearts of all unfallen beings. They would have felt that God had acted too severely with this rebellious angel. God was obliged to let the rebellion run its full course. He had to permit Satan to demonstrate what he would do if he were given the freedom to rule over the universe.

In this way God succeeds in making the universe safe against another rebellion. Satan's reign of terror on this earth has been long enough and awful enough to be remembered by everyone who witnessed it. The marks of the cross on the hands of Jesus Christ are the reminder of the terrible conflict between God and Satan and of the tremendous price God had to pay to save a remnant of humanity. This saved human remnant will be the safeguard of the universe, forever testifying to it of the horror of rebellion, of the penalty of sin, of the grace and justice of God, and of the supreme love of Jesus Christ.

God has dealt with sin and sinners in such a wonderful way that the unfallen beings have become convinced of His absolute justice and love. Revelation 15:3; 19:2. Throughout eternity the redeemed of Jesus Christ will tell their spellbound audiences on every inhabited planet of the great victories that Jesus wrought in their lives. They have lived on the planet where God gave His Son for His people. They can describe the nature of sin and convince everyone that rebellion against God is foolish. The redeemed are like brands plucked from the fire.

Through the cross the tide of love returns to God. When the leaders of the Jewish nation chose to free Barabbas and executed Jesus Christ on the cross like a criminal, the hearts of all beings in the universe were filled with love and adoration for Jesus Christ. Calvary revealed to the universe who was the true lover of man. Colossians 1:19, 20.

QUESTION 7: At the end of the controversy what will be crystal clear before the universe?

ANSWER: Revelation 15:3. (Write) _____

STUDY 7

The Controversy Between Christ and Satan

Most people do not have a clear understanding of why God permits tragedy, sickness, vice, sin, and death to exist. They ask themselves: Why does God allow men to contract crippling diseases? Why do multitudes die of starvation? Why does God allow nations to be oppressed? Why does God allow the selfish, the dishonest, and the godless to prosper? Why does a just God allow honest, humble, and dedicated believers to struggle all their lives?

WHY DID GOD CREATE THE UNIVERSE AND ITS INTELLIGENT BEINGS?

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in cooperation with the Father created the whole universe. John 1:1-3. Our world, the constellations, the island universes appeared at His command. Psalm 33:9.

Some of the heavenly bodies serve as sources of light, heat, and power, while others serve as dwelling places for created beings. God created angels, seraphim, and cherubim to live with Him in heaven as His ministers, while on the earth He put intelligent beings to enjoy life, to serve Him, and to minister to one another.

God endowed all of His created beings with a free will, with a power of moral judgment and free choice; He desired spontaneous, voluntary love and not coerced worship. If people are faithful only because they have no other choice, of what value is that to God? None, whatsoever. By granting liberty to all, God took the fearful risk that some would rebel against Him, select another lord, and follow other moral principles. Such a rebellion would undermine His authority, upset the balance of the universe, and break its unity and harmony. But God was willing to take this risk, and He gave every one of His beings free choice. Free choice involves men with full responsibility for their decisions. Man's choices are limited to two alternatives: God or Satan, good or evil, life or death.

Among all created angels the wisest and most perfect one was Lucifer. He was perfect until he chose to sin. Because of his wisdom and beauty he became self-confident and proud. Slowly and cunningly he separated himself from God and launched in the whole universe a full-scale rebellion against Him. Ezekiel 28:12-18.

QUESTION 1: What was the reason for the fall of Lucifer?

ANSWER: Ezekiel 28:17. This way Lucifer revealed the spirit of antichrist, and retains such till the end. (Write) _____

GOD STANDS ACCUSED BEFORE THE UNIVERSE

Satan claimed that his system of government and his moral principles were superior to those of God. In the heavenly council it was decided that Satan would be given the

opportunity, the time, and the place to work out his plans and demonstrate to the whole universe whether he was able to build a better and happier world than the one envisioned by God.

Satan misrepresented the character of God. He challenged God's laws as being too severe. He endeavored to prove that God is selfish, that He has no love toward His children, that He expects love from everyone, that He is ruling with an iron hand, demanding service from everyone, that He kills His subjects for the smallest transgression, and that He does not keep His promises. God stood accused of these things before the whole universe. "And mightest prevail when thou comest into judgment." Romans 3:4, A.R.V. God had to demonstrate before His creatures that He was not what Satan accused Him to be. He had to unmask the liar, the slanderer of God. Satan, on the other hand, was allowed to attempt to undermine the confidence of all beings in the righteous character and government of God.

QUESTION 2: How does God stand before the universe?

ANSWER: Romans 3:4. (Write) _____

THE WHOLE UNIVERSE WAS TESTED

Satan demanded access to the whole universe. It was granted to him, for God desired to test every being. As a result of this test every being created by God was asked to take sides and to reveal openly whom he chose as his master.

Satan received permission to test and tempt the whole angelic host and all beings living in the universe. He approached his task in the same cunning way as Absalom who turned away the hearts of the people from his father, David. In fact, the rebellion of Absalom against his father is a parallel to the rebellion of Satan against God in heaven. 2 Samuel 15:1-6.

One third of the angelic host were deceived by Satan and lured away from their allegiance to Jesus Christ. Revelation 12:3, 4. In spite of Satan's strong temptations, all other intelligent beings outside of the angelic host resisted him and remained faithful to Christ. Satan and the fallen angels received a time of mercy. They were entreated by Christ to repent and receive forgiveness, to return to God, but they declined. After their time of grace expired, war broke out between them and the Son of God, and the satanic host was driven out of heaven and assigned to the newly created earth. Revelation 12:7-9. Their doom was sealed forever.

As a result of this struggle for power in the heavens, there developed in the hearts of all the other angels and unfallen beings a certain fear of God and a doubt of His goodness and love. Since that time there has been a crisis in the universe—a lack of confidence in God. If God had destroyed Satan and his host, the relationship between God and the inhabitants of the universe could have become severely strained, leading to grave results.

The unfallen beings living on the unnumbered planets of the universe could not yet clearly perceive the true character of the rebel and the real issues in the controversy. God still stood accused before the inhabitants of the universe, and He had to find a way to demonstrate to them the real character of the rebel and of his purposes. Only if He accomplished this could He overcome this lack of confidence in His goodness and love. Romans 3:4, Weymouth; Colossians 1:20.

QUESTION 3: How many angels were lured away from God?

ANSWER: Revelation 12:3, 4. (Write) _____

THE GREAT CONTROVERSY IS DECIDED ON THIS EARTH

The triune God decided to create this earth and inhabit it with men who were similar to Him in personality and character. Genesis 1:26, 27. He created everything perfect. Genesis 1:31. Since man had free will, Satan demanded that he be tested. He was allowed to test man at a particular location, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. There Satan succeeded in turning man's allegiance away from God, and, as a result, man lost his righteousness. After Satan became the lord of this earth, he brought catastrophes, sickness, vice, sin, and death on man.

Satan knew nothing of the plan of salvation for man. It came to him as a great surprise that Jesus Christ, the Creator, would someday appear on the world scene in the form of man and, as man's representative, take up the fight against him. He had expected that God would destroy man after he sinned. This would have given him the opportunity of accusing God of being a merciless executioner. Instead of destroying man, Christ declared to Adam and Eve that He would become a human being Himself and die in their stead. Genesis 3:15, 21. (The Lamb of God.)

QUESTION 4: Instead of killing rebellious man, what did God do?

ANSWER: Genesis 3:15, 21. (Write) _____

The Son of God cheered the hearts of lost men with the good news that He would save us from our bondage to sin and death. He declared that He would conquer Satan. The great news was that Christ, through His death, would pay the penalty for our sins. Furthermore, through His perfect life, He would demonstrate that with divine help man was able to keep the law of God, remain loyal to God's principles, and become conqueror over the world, sin, and Satan.

God knew that man could not liberate himself from the rule of Satan. One stronger than Satan must carry out the redemption of man. Christ voluntarily took upon Himself this difficult assignment. He came to this earth as our Liberator. Isaiah 49:24, 25; Luke 11:21, 22.

QUESTION 5: Who only could rescue lost mankind?

ANSWER: Isaiah 49:24. (Write) _____

Through Jesus Christ, man has a second chance. Legally speaking, all men were set free from the penalty of death through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Now, as before the rebellion, every man is given an opportunity to make a choice between two lords, between Jesus Christ and Satan, between truth and falsehood. Deuteronomy 30:19.

It is lamentable that only a few people know of this great controversy between God and Satan. The enemy of God has so successfully conditioned men's minds that most people do not know that a decision for or against Christ is required of them in this life. They traditionally choose the ways of their forefathers without further investigating the facts. Hosea 4:6.

QUESTION 6: What is the reason that only few people know about the great controversy?

us the victory over all temptations and sinful desires. 1 Corinthians 15:57. We must be willing to die daily to our old nature (ego) in order to enable Him to give us the victory. Romans 6:2; 1 Corinthians 15:31.

Only if we deny ourselves daily can the Holy Spirit take us in complete possession. Only then are we one (unit) with Jesus Christ. This is the meaning of Christ's words, "Abide in me, and I in you." John 15:4, 16; Romans 6:11; 8:9; 1 John 4:4, 12. God the Holy Spirit is actually living in our frame. Galatians 2:20.

The converted and justified sinner can still fall into sin, but it is usually done unintentionally. He immediately repents again and asks Christ for forgiveness. Proverbs 24:16. Justification is the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, while sanctification is His imparted righteousness. The Lord lives and works in us through the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ imparts to us gradually His own nature.

Jesus Christ paid the price of redemption for all mankind on the cross, but only those receive eternal life who individually have received Jesus Christ and are led by the Holy Spirit. Based on your faith and obedience to the Holy Spirit, He works out in you your personal salvation. He applies Christ's atonement to your life. Romans 8:1, 4. The work of the Holy Spirit in you is a process lasting a lifetime. It is called sanctification. 2 Peter 1:3, 4; 1 Peter 1:4-6

QUESTION 6: How do we experience sanctification?

ANSWER: John 15:4, 16. (Write) _____

QUESTION 7: How long does it go on?

ANSWER: Lifelong.

GLORIFICATION—Romans 8:30

Glorification means release from the punishment of sin (second death) and entrance into the presence of God. At this point the redeemed person receives a new and immortal body resembling the body of our Lord Jesus Christ. This event will occur at Christ's second coming. Philippians 3:20, 21; 1 John 3:2. This glorious experience is described in 1 Corinthians 15:40, 44, 48-53 and Revelation 21:4, 5.

SUMMARY OF STEPS

This covers the five steps of the stairway to heaven. Every individual's conversion and development is different, varying in type, length, and intensity in accordance with his disposition and nature as the providence of God sees fit. Jacob, for example, had to go through a long, drawn-out struggle before he was fully converted. Paul, on the other hand, experienced a sudden conversion. The criminal dying on the cross beside Jesus Christ went through this amazing experience in a few hours. The story of Peter shows us that a Christian can fall into great sin and recover with the help of Jesus Christ.

Whatever our experience is, it is certain that we reach the final step, glorification, only when we surrender our whole life to Jesus Christ. Only He can lead us from one successive step to another. Make Him your guide.

QUESTION 8: What does glorification mean?

ANSWER: Philippians 3:20, 21. (Write) _____

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BIBLE STUDIES

STUDY 8

Stairway to Heaven

God is close to us when we are surrounded by trouble, loneliness, and darkness. When Jacob was running away from his brother, Esau, he met God in the wilderness. God revealed Himself to Jacob in a dream. In it Jacob saw a ladder reaching to heaven. At the top of the stairway stood God. The ladder connecting heaven with earth symbolized Jesus Christ who alone connects fallen mankind with the throne of God. Through victory in Jesus Christ, Jacob became Israel (overcomer). A deceiver was turned into a victor.

STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN IS COMPOSED OF FIVE STEPS



Every soul must ascend this stairway. There are no shortcuts. Every step symbolizes a different stage of spiritual development and growth. God helps man through this experience. It requires the full trust and obedience of man. The task is enormous, since the rebellious, morally ruined man must be re-created in the image of Jesus Christ. He must be made into a new creation, morally clean, free from a sinful nature and made fit for the holy presence of God and the angels.

QUESTION 1: How do we start climbing the stairway to heaven?

ANSWER: Cooperate. 1 Peter 1:3-5, 8, 9. (Write) _____

THE CALL—Romans 8:29, 30

Everyone is called. We are all invited to enter heaven. 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9. God has not predestined some persons to be saved and some to be lost. But He did predestinate the conditions under which a sinner is to be saved. All who accept His conditions will be saved. Ephesians 1:4, 5.

Although Jesus Christ died for all humanity, only those who individually receive Him and His teaching will be saved. Matthew 22:14.

"I am . . . come to call . . . sinners to repentance." Matthew 9:13. "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back to the things behind is fit for the kingdom of God." Luke 9:61, 62, Amplified Bible.

God is calling every man, but in different ways: through the reading of the Holy Scriptures, through His providence, through wonderful experiences and tragic experiences, through the voice of conscience, etc. In these and other ways the Holy Spirit speaks, woos, appeals to us. It is fatal to resist this call, but it is a blessing to follow it. Revelation 19:9; Matthew 22:2-4, 8, 9; Luke 14:22-24.

What happens to those who reject the call of God? Proverbs 1:24-28. What is the result of answering it? Matthew 19:27-29. Everyone who loves truth listens to the voice of Jesus. John 18:37. The chosen of God are those who voluntarily follow Him. Proverbs 8:17; 2 Peter 1:10.

QUESTION 2: How many are called?

ANSWER: All. Proverbs 8:17; Luke 14:23. (Write) -----

QUESTION 3: What happens to the rejecters of God's call?

ANSWER: Proverbs 1:28; Luke 14:24. (Write) -----

CONVERSION AND NEW BIRTH

Conversion:

Jesus Christ calls sinners to repentance. Mark 1:15. Conversion implies a submission to a drastic change of life by the Holy Spirit. It happens when a person who has been living independently of God turns to Him and walks with Him. The decision to abandon sin and to seek God and His forgiveness is for man to make. Matthew 16:24. Conversion and new birth are the two sides of one and the same experience. Conversion is man's side, while the new birth is God's side.

In the Old Testament, people were also called to repentance. Conversion was as essential to salvation as in the New Testament. A nation—2 Chronicles 7:14. An individual—Ezekiel 18:23, 31, 32. A prayer of David—Psalm 51:11, 12, 17.

The Lord Jesus Christ and His disciples called people to repentance. Acts 17:30; Luke 13:4, 5. The publican asked for mercy. Luke 18:11-14. Zaccheus, the materialist, experienced a complete change in his life. Luke 19:5-10. The prodigal son resolved to ask his father for forgiveness. Luke 15:17-19.

Conversion does not simply involve good resolutions but requires their faithful execution. Sin abounds in and around us, but the grace of God is infinitely greater than sin. Therefore, be of good courage and bring forth good fruit. Matthew 3:8, 10.

The New Birth:

It is the Holy Spirit who woos sinners to Christ. When, after hearing the message of salvation, the sinner draws close to the cross of Jesus Christ, asking forgiveness for his sins, the Holy Spirit performs a miracle in this person. He re-creates him, which is a powerful and drastic change, such as when a substance is changed into another through transmutation. John 3:5, 7. He receives the Spirit of Christ as a gift. John 1:12, 13. King David's greatest desire was to receive this gift. Psalm 51:2, 10-12.

Such a man becomes a new creation. The old, Adamic nature has been subdued by the Holy Spirit, and the mind, heart, and body of that person are now in control of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. He has indeed become a new man, as if he had been born a second time. 2 Corinthians 5:17.

QUESTION 4: What is the essence of conversion and new birth?

ANSWER: Turning to God, repentance. Luke 15:18; **God's doings.** John 1:12.

(Write) -----

JUSTIFICATION—Romans 8:29, 30



If, as in the above example, a man has been converted at the age of thirty, Jesus Christ forgives him every sin committed in the past. (Sin is transgression of the moral law, and the penalty is second death.)

Imagine a vagabond knocking at your door, asking for food and help. You have compassion on him and invite him into your home. Of course, first you ask him to take a bath and shave before he can sit with your family at the table.

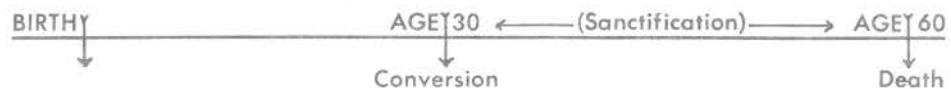
While he is bathing, you take away his dirty rags and discard them. After a while the vagabond is shaved and clean, but he still cannot enter your company. He needs a new set of clothing. You have to furnish that for him. And now a well-dressed, clean man steps into your dining room.

The sinner must go through the same experience before he can enter heaven and live with the angels. We must be cleansed from our sins by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. But sinlessness is not enough. We must also take His righteousness (character) to be blameless and just. Revelation 16:15; Zechariah 3:4. Jesus Christ clothes you with His righteousness. This represents His sinless life, His just character. He imputes His own faultless life to the sinner. By this we are justified. *Now we can stand before the throne of God as though we had never sinned.* Ephesians 4:22-24. As a result, a sinner is reconciled to God and has peace in his soul. Romans 5:1. Justification is a gift. Romans 5:18, 19; 8:33, 34. The imputed righteousness received from Christ involves freedom from our past sins. It is the beginning of a new life in Christ.

QUESTION 5: Describe the miracle of justification.

ANSWER: Ephesians 4:22-24. (Write) -----

SANCTIFICATION



Although the sinner has been forgiven and has received the righteousness of Jesus Christ, he continues to live in his old body. Although his old, Adamic nature has died, it has the ability of becoming alive again at any time. As a matter of fact, it will become alive again unless we avail ourselves of the power of the Holy Spirit given to us at the time of our conversion.

Jesus Christ makes available to us at the time of conversion a power infinitely greater than that of Satan to prevent us from falling into our former sins and reverting to our old life. Romans 8:37. If we abide in Jesus Christ and trust in Him, He will give

case for their faith before the world; they may profoundly believe in the triumph of God's last message, and still lose their souls.

Christ is waiting to be asked to dwell in you. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." "And the Word was made flesh." John 1:12, 14. Jesus wants to become flesh in you. Ask Him to invade your heart, live His life in you, and give you His goodness, purity, and love for others. "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." Isaiah 45:15. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." 2 Peter 1:3, 4.

Originally Christ created man in His own image, but we have lost this divine likeness. The purpose of salvation is to restore this image in us, "to be conformed to the image of his Son." Romans 8:29.

QUESTION 7: What is the danger that comes from losing a living connection with Christ?

ANSWER: Revelation 3:17. (Write) _____

THERE IS A GREAT HUNGER IN THE HEARTS OF MEN TODAY; THEY WANT TO SEE JESUS

Today, just prior to Christ's return, large numbers of people have a secret longing to know Jesus Christ. They are seeking the true believers, those who have a living relationship with the Lord and are faithful to His teachings. There are men and women in our age in whom Jesus is fully dwelling. Seekers after God come to them saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." Please tell us what Jesus has done for you. Does He really live in you through the Holy Spirit? Show us the results in your life."

Can you say to such a person, "Yes, Jesus Christ is living in me. He has changed my life completely. He rules over my mind, heart, soul, and body. I can do all things through Him. I love Him with all my heart and mind and strength. I am happy to help you find Jesus."

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Those who still wear the image of the earthly Adam will not be allowed to enter heaven. We must put on the image of the heavenly Adam, Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:49, 50. This divine work of transformation is presently taking place in men and women all around the world. If we do not experience it, we lose our souls. Is it happening to you? "How camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? . . . Cast him into outer darkness." Matthew 22:12, 13.

When Jesus Christ comes to earth the second time "to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe" (2 Thessalonians 1:10), on whom will He bestow immortality? Whom will He take with Him to heaven? Those who by the power of the Holy Spirit have become like Jesus in character.

When the redeemed of God appear in heaven, the angels and sinless beings inhabiting the universe will gaze with amazement at them. As they behold the redeemed host, they will recognize in each one of them the image of Jesus Christ. "Sir, we would see Jesus," is demanded of each one of us. For that purpose we were born.

QUESTION 8: In order to be saved, whose image must we bear?

ANSWER: 1 Corinthians 15:49. (Write) _____

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BIBLE STUDIES

STUDY 9

Christ in You, the Hope of Glory

God created man for Himself. In a spiritual sense, He desires to have an intimate love relationship with us and share with us the joy and happiness of life.

Through the institution of marriage God gave us a symbol of the intimate union He desires to have with us.

For a time, God's wonderful plans for mankind were frustrated by the rebellion of Satan and the unfaithfulness of man.

In spite of these tragic events, God did not forsake His long-range plan for mankind. He was willing to take drastic steps in order to prevent the alienation of man from Himself. He loved us more than His own life. "In all their affliction he was afflicted: . . . in his love and in his pity he redeemed them." Isaiah 63:9. Christ, our Creator, was willing to become the Son of man and take the curse of our rebellion upon Himself. This meant His own death. Thus He reconciled a stubborn and antagonistic humanity with the Godhead. He bridged the gulf between God and man by conquering sin and death through the cross.

Through the death and resurrection of Christ we are brought nearer to God than if we had never sinned. God the Father gave His Son forever to mankind. Christ will always remain the Son of man and live in human form throughout eternity.

Some day in the future this terrible era of sin and death will end, and sin and sinners will be no more. Then the whole universe will be composed of beings living together in unselfish love and harmony. In that new world God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit will share a blissful life with the redeemed. God will dwell forever with the family He bought with the blood of His own Son. The righteous will see God face to face. John gives a wonderful insight into the new world in the Book of Revelation. He tells us that God's original purpose will finally be accomplished, in spite of long delay. The new earth will be populated with the believers of the Old and New Testament eras. The history of this world will be to them as a bad dream. When we are finally united with God on the new earth, nothing will ever separate us from Him again. There will never be another rebellion.

Jesus Christ was not satisfied to wait until His return before having an intimate love relationship with the believer. He did not wish to wait until the end of earth's history before effecting this union with man. In His infinite love Jesus Christ designed a plan which makes it possible for us to enter into this wonderful relationship with Him even now. Colossians 1:27; John 6:56.

Christ made a way to the heart of fallen man; He enabled him to break away from the power of Satan and the dominion of sin and become united with Him through the Holy Spirit.

QUESTION 1: What is Christ's plan concerning His redeemed?

ANSWER: John 6:56; 14:23. (Write) _____

WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE JESUS

Christ is the secret desire of every human heart. When Christ was on earth, a number of Greeks desired to see Him. They were believers in the true God and were seeking for more knowledge of Him. They heard that Jesus was teaching in the temple and that He was regarded as the expected Messiah. They approached Philip, a disciple of Christ's, with the words, "Sir, we would see Jesus." John 12:20, 21.

Since the beginning of time, the highest aspiration of the human heart has been to see God face to face; the restless heart longs for such an experience. Moses cried out, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." Exodus 33:18. Job prayed, "Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!" Job 23:3. David exclaimed, "One thing have I desired of the Lord; . . . that I may . . . behold the beauty of the Lord." Psalm 27:4. Solomon sang, "I found him whom my soul loveth." Song of Solomon 3:4.

Jesus Christ promised the redeemed the privilege of seeing God face to face when He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8. The Apostle John speaks of the same experience in Revelation 22:4, when he says, "And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."

QUESTION 2: What is the all-absorbing desire of many?

ANSWER: To see the Lord. Psalm 27:4. (Write) _____

Christians are to reflect Jesus Christ. Jesus wants to become flesh through us. He expressed this desire in His prayer before His death: "I in them, and thou in me." John 17:23. If only the world could see Jesus in the lives of His followers!

When Jesus lives in the human soul, the love of God radiates out of that person. John 17:26. The love of God has an enormous power of transformation. This is what Paul was thinking when he said, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Romans 8:29. The indwelling Christ, through the Holy Spirit, changes the face and character of every true believer in such a drastic way that people around him become aware of it.

QUESTION 3: Who is changing lives and how?

ANSWER: 2 Corinthians 3:18. (Write) _____

CHRIST IN YOU IS THE HOPE OF GLORY

How is the miracle of transformation possible? No doctor, no psychologist is in a position to transform our nature so drastically as the indwelling Christ. When Mary the mother of Jesus was faced with a similar miracle, the virgin birth, she said to the angel Gabriel, "How can this be?" Gabriel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." Luke 1:34, 35, R.S.V.

"The rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." Numbers 17:8. God will do this in a spiritually dead person. The budding rod of Aaron is a picture of a spiritual resurrection, a new birth. To be "in Christ" literally means to have the life of God in us. Too many Christians interpret "believing" to mean an intellectual assent to a set of doctrines. Christians can be orthodox, believing everything the Bible says, yet lose their souls. In the parable of the ten virgins, Jesus Christ spoke of five foolish virgins who believed that the bridegroom was coming, but they were not ready for him. When he came they were rejected. Matthew 25:10-12. These five foolish virgins stand for orthodox, Bible-believing Christians who lack the Spirit of the indwelling Christ.

QUESTION 4: Which parable shows dramatically the necessity of the indwelling Christ?

ANSWER: Matthew 25:12. (Write) _____

Christ in you is the crowning evidence of conversion. People can attack the divine inspiration of the Bible; they can deny the existence of God; but they cannot deny the evidence that Christ lives in a person. When Jesus Christ radiates His love through the life of a surrendered Christian, people are attracted to Christ. Paul called this experience the essence of Christianity. "The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory." Colossians 1:27. At the last supper Jesus Christ promised this experience to His followers. John 14:23. When we allow the Holy Spirit to kill our selfish nature, Jesus Christ is able to reign in our lives. Galatians 2:20. This miracle of re-creation is brought about by the Holy Spirit. It is awe-inspiring to think that God Himself is willing to dwell in us. Body and soul become His living temple; He transforms us into the glorious image of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 3:18. When Christ is living in a newborn soul, His unconscious influence and behavior betray the presence of a divine power and being. 2 Corinthians 4:6.

QUESTION 5: What is the crowning mystery of Christianity?

ANSWER: Colossians 1:27. (Write) _____

INTELLECTUAL CONSENT VERSUS SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

Believing is loving Jesus Christ. Worldly pleasure, materialism, skepticism, false philosophies, the theory of evolution, etc., have defaced the image of Christ in many believers. Often churchgoing Christians are lukewarm toward Jesus Christ. When unbelievers approach these Christians, they cannot see Jesus in them. These people comprehend the teaching of Christ, but they do not know Him personally. Many turn away from such professing Christians and never investigate the claims of Christ again; they are repulsed by their cold, legalistic nature.

When Moses returned from Mount Sinai his face shone. Exodus 34:35. Jesus Christ was beaming out of him. As Nebuchadnezzar looked upon Daniel he said, "I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in thee." Daniel 4:9. It was Christ shining out of Daniel. When Stephen stood before the council of the Sanhedrin they saw that his face was illuminated like that of an angel. Acts 6:15. It was Christ flashing through Stephen. The Apostle Paul spoke of a divine treasure which radiates its power through us. This treasure is Jesus Christ living in the believer.

QUESTION 6: What does the "treasure in earthen vessels" mean?

ANSWER: 2 Corinthians 4:7. (Write) _____

Believers can easily lose this power. Samson was a chosen vessel, a prophet of God. He was given enormous strength, but spiritually he was feeble. He had chosen a sensuous life and refused the power of God to give him victory. Finally he lost his physical strength, without being aware of it. Judges 16:20. This was the tragic experience of a great man of God, but it can happen to any Christian. Christ is saying to Christians today: "Thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Revelation 3:17. Christians may be intellectual giants, leaders of churches, great orators, and ardent defenders of their faith, unswerving in loyalty to the Biblical doctrines, fascinated by wonderful prophecies; they may work hard, always presenting the best possible

all are, can become now completely righteous by accepting the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Surrender your life to Christ today, and His righteousness will completely cover you. His life and righteousness are attributed to you. Isn't this the most superb gift of God? To make this indescribable gift available to you, Jesus Christ had to die on Calvary."

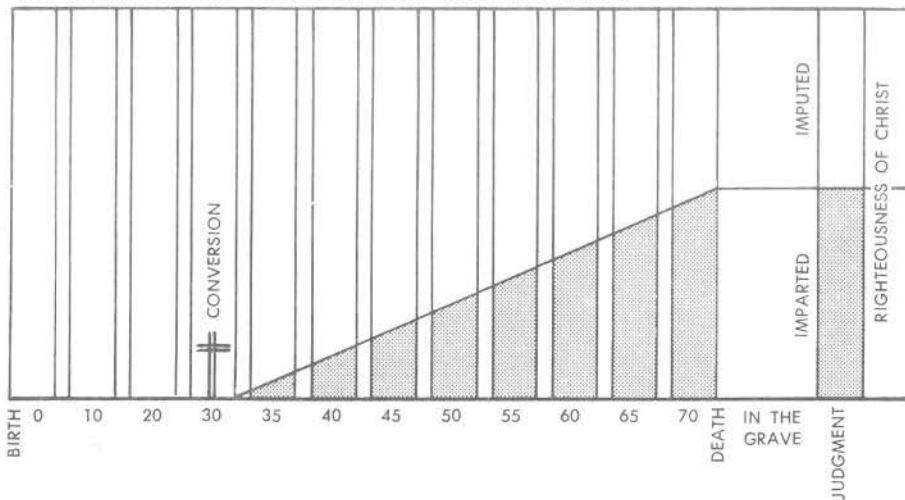
How is the life of a believer measured on the day of judgment? Although he may have developed a Christian character by allowing the Holy Spirit to control his life, he still falls short of the standard of God. No one can attain that high ideal in this life. The righteousness he is lacking is imputed to him by Jesus Christ. Through his acceptance of Christ as his Saviour and Lord, he stands before God as if he had never sinned. Philipians 3:12-14; Revelation 14:5; 2 Peter 3:14; Ephesians 5:27.

QUESTION 6: How can a sinner stand before God perfect and righteous?

ANSWER: Ephesians 5:27. (Write) _____

The pattern of the plan of salvation in the shape of a church organ. Christ is All in all! This shows how the imputed and imparted righteousness of Christ affects our lives and our cases in the judgment.

THE STANDARD OF GOD'S PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS!



- Imputed righteousness of Christ by faith
- Imparted righteousness of Christ by the Holy Spirit

QUESTION 7: Do we need one or both kinds of Christ's righteousness?

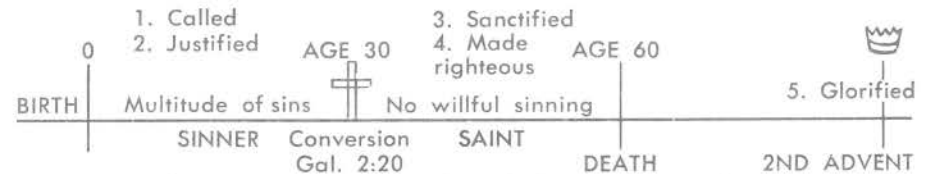
ANSWER: Romans 5:1; Colossians 1:27. (Write) _____

STUDY 10

The Imputed and Imparted Righteousness of Jesus Christ

Many people wonder how God can allow sinful men to enter heaven. It seems impossible that people who have been sinners and children of wrath and rebellion will one day become as spotless and perfect in character as though they never had sinned. Is it realistic to think that we will be allowed to come before the presence of God and His holy angels in spite of our sinful record? Let us behold one of the greatest mysteries and marvels of God. We can be cleansed if we truly so desire. All are given this opportunity, since God is not a respecter of persons.

HOW GOD TOTALLY SAVES A SINNER—(diagram Romans 8:29, 30)

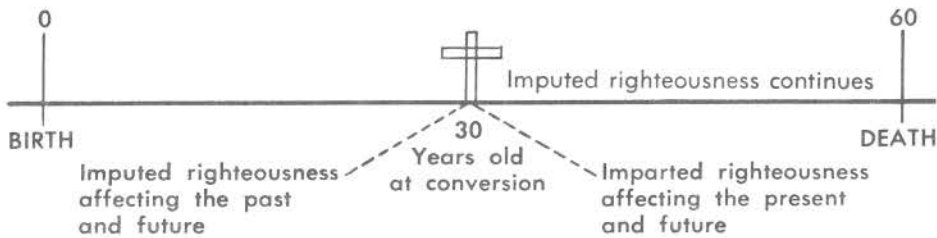


The law of God states that one unforgiven sin deserves the second death. Remember the fall of man in Eden. Romans 6:23. It is not sufficient to be sinless in order to be admitted to heaven; man must also be righteous. God has made it possible for man to become righteous through His Son Jesus Christ.

QUESTION 1: Is it enough to be sinless to go to heaven?

ANSWER: Romans 3:23-26. (Write) _____

What is Jesus able to do for the sinner? How is He able to help a man change his course of action and understand his sinful condition? How can He lead him to repentance, confession, and conversion, blot out all his past sins through His shed blood, and apply His death on the cross (second death) to the sinner? Christ attributes to the sinner His own righteous, pure life. The sinner gives up his unrighteous nature for the spotless one of Jesus Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ empowers the sinner to resist Satan's temptations. Christ offers to keep the old nature dead and to nourish the life of the "new man" from day to day. As long as the sinner abides in Christ, the Lord will bring about spiritual growth in him. Through the Holy Spirit, this person is intimately attached to the Saviour.



In Zechariah 3:1-5 we find a unique picture given in vision by the Lord to His people. Joshua, the high priest, is standing before the Lord clad in dirty rags. Satan is also at Joshua's side pouring condemnation upon him. Jesus, the Son of God, is Lord and Advocate. First, He reproaches Satan, saying, "The Lord shall rebuke thee who has accepted Jerusalem; is this not a brand plucked out of the fire?" Then Jesus commands His angels to remove Joshua's filthy garments; He gives orders that Joshua now be clothed in festive clothing. This wonderful event portrays the miraculous change in human beings, taking off the old man, putting on the new man, that is, Jesus Christ and His righteousness, as a white garment. Joshua had nothing to do with the transition. He stood there and permitted that which God desired to happen. Even so, we must consent to the change of our being and character. Cleansing from sin is not enough, as we see from this vision; we must acquire the righteousness of Christ. Only just men will see heaven and live in the society of divine beings. By the grace of God, the converted sinner is given the "white garment," the righteous life of Jesus Christ. Revelation 19:8; Ephesians 5:27. In other words, we are saved both by the death and the life of Jesus Christ. Romans 5:9, 10.

QUESTION 2: Are we saved only by the death of Christ, or is something else necessary?

ANSWER: Romans 5:9, 10. (Write) _____

JUSTIFICATION (imputed righteousness of Christ)

Justification means all our sins are washed away and Christ's righteousness is imputed to us. It is a free gift. Romans 3:24; 5:16, 18. It is ours by faith. Philippians 3:9; Romans 4:5. We receive it by the grace of God. Romans 11:6. It was imputed to Abraham. Romans 4:20-22. It is imputed to us. Romans 4:23, 24.

QUESTION 3: How does the righteous life of Christ become ours?

ANSWER: Romans 4:23, 24. (Write) _____

Righteousness through Christ was announced by the Old Testament prophets. Isaiah 45:25; 53:11; Jeremiah 23:5, 6. The blessing received through the righteousness of Jesus Christ is peace with God. Romans 5:1. The redeemed have a right to stand blameless before the throne of God. Revelation 14:5. We do not attain this righteousness by our

own efforts. Galatians 2:21. The Jews at the time of Christ rejected this concept and thought that justification was attainable through the keeping of the law. Romans 9:31, 32. We are shown the right relationship between faith and works. Romans 3:28, 31. "The great exchange" through divine grace imputes Christ's righteousness to us. 2 Corinthians 5:21. The sins of the converted person pass onto Jesus Christ, and the righteousness of Jesus Christ passes onto the repentant sinner.

QUESTION 4: What transaction takes place at the surrender of our ego?

ANSWER: 2 Corinthians 5:21. (Write) _____

SANCTIFICATION (imparted righteousness of Christ)

While justification is an act of God, and concerns the past, present, and future life, sanctification is a process affecting the present and future life of the convert. Sanctification means that Jesus Christ lives in the believer through the Holy Spirit and imparts to him His righteousness, His own life, nature, and power. Galatians 2:20.

The power of God is infinitely greater than the power of sin. Romans 5:20, 21; 1:16, 17; 8:1-4. The Holy Spirit transforms the nature of the believer into the likeness of Jesus Christ. 2 Corinthians 3:18; Philippians 2:13. The believer dies daily to sin. 1 Corinthians 15:31. The believer partakes of the life of Christ daily. John 6:55, 56, 63. The fact that the believer was justified and has faith in Christ does not give him an excuse to continue living in known sin. Romans 6:1, 2; James 2:20, 24. Can a justified and sanctified man fall again into sin? The answer is "yes." It is due to the cunning temptations of Satan and the weakness of the flesh. We must also bear in mind that there are differences between sins. There are willful, premeditated transgressions. Hebrews 10:26. There are also sins done in ignorance or carelessness. 1 John 3:6-10; 2:1, 2. Although a redeemed and sanctified man is still a sinner, he is saved and pardoned. 1 John 1:8; 1 Timothy 1:15. Through carelessness he can fall away from Christ. The unconverted man loves sin and self, while the regenerated man hates his sinful nature and shuns evil. When the believer falls into sin, he confesses his sin to the Lord in deep repentance. The center of his life is Jesus Christ, not his ego. Sanctification is the work of a lifetime.

QUESTION 5: How can we understand Biblical sanctification?

ANSWER: 1 Corinthians 15:31; Galatians 2:20. (Write) _____

CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS IS ATTRIBUTED TO THE REPENTANT SINNER

When an apple is rotten, we throw it away because it has lost its usefulness. Man deteriorated through sin and rebellion, but God did not discard him. Instead, He devised a way to save man, to reclaim him. All those who desire to be saved can avail themselves of His mercy. Jesus Christ is the only Person through whom we can approach God the Father. He is All in all. 1 Corinthians 1:30; Colossians 3:10, 11; 1 John 3:2; Ephesians 3:19, 20.

During morning worship, an elderly lady tearfully said to her minister, "The older I become, the more and more sins do I find in me. When will I ever be perfect and righteous before God?" The minister answered, "If you lived a thousand years you would say the same thing. You would find innumerable faults and sins in your heart over which you would long to obtain victory. One of the greatest marvels of God is that we, sinful as we

QUESTION 6: What are the aims of Christ's first coming and His second coming?

ANSWER: To save, to take home His people. Hebrews 9:27, 28. (Write) -----

The Jews made a tragic mistake. The Jews were expecting the appearance of the Messiah, but they expected Him as a mighty king who would sit on the throne of David. They desired Him to drive out the Romans, subdue the heathen nations, and make Israel a great and powerful people. Their fatal mistake consisted in the fact that they did not recognize in the lowly Nazarene the fulfillment of the prophecies about the Messiah. They were greatly disturbed by His lack of political action. They resented His preaching of the gospel to the poor and to the sinners. They became very indignant when He exposed the hypocrisy of the "religionists." The humble resignation of Jesus and His willingness to suffer repulsed them, and they finally despised, ridiculed, rejected, and condemned Him to death in the name of God.

The Jews were very devoted, religious people, eager to serve God. Their teachers were well educated in matters of religion, yet Satan succeeded in blinding their eyes to the identity of the Lord of glory.

Satan is using a similar strategy against Christians. The successful deceiver of Israel is applying the same strategy in the Christian era. He is successfully deceiving the whole world. Revelation 12:9. He has succeeded in discrediting the promise of the second coming of Christ in the minds of many Christians. Although they rejoice over Christ's first coming as the Saviour, and believe in His death and resurrection, they give no importance to the teaching of His second coming. They are vague regarding the purpose of His second coming and are not preparing their lives for the day when they will be standing before the Son of man. "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:36.

The Jewish leaders and the nation expected the Messiah to come in glory; they were not aware of the fact that first He had to come as the suffering servant of God to die for the sins of mankind. They misinterpreted Biblical prophecies regarding His second coming and applied them to His first coming. They were ignorant of the two separate events in God's plan of redemption. Many Christians make a similar error. They are concerned only with Christ's first coming and are not preparing for His second coming. Revelation 6:15-17.

We pray that you are among that small minority who are aware of the imminence of the Messiah's return, and that you are eagerly expecting Him. Continuous preparedness for this event is a matter of life and death for all of us. 1 Thessalonians 5:4, 5; 2 Timothy 4:8.

QUESTION 7: What terrible mistake did the Jews commit, and what is the danger to Christians?

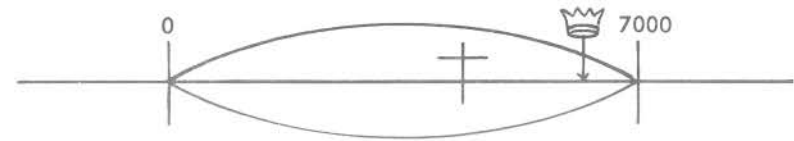
ANSWER: Matthew 26:63-65; 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 9; Luke 13:25-27. (Write) -----

Offset in U.S.A.

STUDY 11

The Glorious Climax of the Plan of Redemption

The planets and stars in our universe are not following a course in the shape of a circle, but of an ellipse; an ellipse has two centers. The same mastermind who created the universe is the architect of the plan of redemption for mankind which also has two centers: the first and second coming of Jesus Christ.



THE LORD JESUS DEFINITELY PROMISED TO RETURN TO THIS EARTH AGAIN

Christ's return is delayed. Why is there such a great delay in His return? Jesus promised at the last supper, "I will come again." See John 14:1-3. A great deal of time has elapsed since He ascended to heaven, and many Christians have lost their faith in His second coming, much in the same way as the Jews had lost their faith in the first appearance of the Messiah.

There is a reason behind Christ's delay. It is meant to test our faith. Jesus did not give us a date for His second coming. Why? Many would have been discouraged by the prospect of having to wait such a long time. Others would have postponed their conversion until the end of their lives. Jesus intended that every generation should wait for Him as fervently as possible and prepare for His coming as if this event would happen in their lifetime. Our character cannot be changed after death.

QUESTION 1: Why did Jesus not tell us the exact date of His coming?

ANSWER: To encourage us to be ready always. Matthew 24:42, 44; Acts 1:7. (Write) -----

His tarrying will not last indefinitely. His glorious return is not to be postponed indefinitely. In the next lesson we will study significant world events predicted by Jesus and His apostles which show us the conditions that will prevail on the earth at the time of His coming. The Jewish nation did not expect the Messiah when Jesus came to this earth

2,000 years ago. It is strange that today a similar condition exists in the Christian church. The majority of Christians are repeating the same error by remaining ignorant and unprepared for the second appearing of Jesus. When we lose faith in His second coming, we also lose the joy of looking forward to that great event. We lose spiritual power and alertness which are most needed in the last battles with the forces of evil. Such Christians become like the five foolish virgins in the parable told by Christ. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8.

The Christian today is to remain vigilant, waiting faithfully for the return of his Master. Luke 12:37, 38.

The second coming is the great transition. The second coming of Christ means the end of sin and death for the believers. It means that all His followers will obtain the glorious promise of eternal life on a new earth. It is the great transition to which believers of all ages have been looking forward, praying, "Thy kingdom come." It is the moment to which all other beings in the unnumbered galaxies of the universe have been looking with joyful expectancy. It will be the time when the redeemed sons of God of this earth will join the family of heaven.

The disciples of Jesus Christ were rejoicing in the expectation of this great day. Matthew 24:2, 3; Romans 8:19.

QUESTION 2: What is the great expectation of the whole creation?

ANSWER: Romans 8:19. (Write) _____

Jesus comes to execute judgment. The second coming of Jesus Christ as King of kings is an integral part of God's plan of redemption for mankind made before creation. At His first coming Jesus atoned for every man's sins through His death on the cross, thus making those who accept Him righteous. Every man is offered this great salvation from sin and death. By receiving Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour, a man passes from death to life. Jesus Christ leads us to forsake sin, to hate our sinful nature, and to obey from the heart the commandments of God.

Men are now being invited to follow Christ until His return. When He comes, they will receive either reward or punishment, depending on their decisions. The great question for us is this: Are we allowing Jesus Christ to dwell in us? 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10. Christ will finish His plan of salvation by destroying sin and unrepentant sinners and by taking all those who have followed Him to the new earth.

QUESTION 3: How does our decision affect our destiny?

ANSWER: 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10. (Write) _____

THE GREAT HOPE OF THE SCRIPTURES IS CHRIST'S RETURN

How is Jesus coming the second time? He will come in the same way as He went to heaven. Acts 1:9-11. Everyone will see Him. Revelation 1:7. As lightning. Matthew 24:27. He will be heard by everyone. Matthew 24:31. He will come in indescribable glory. Matthew 25:31. He will come suddenly, surprising us all. Matthew 24:42, 44.

What will He do at that time? He will raise the righteous dead and take them to heaven. 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. He will transform the living righteous and take them

to heaven. 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52. He will destroy the unrighteous. Jude 14, 15; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8.

QUESTION 4: What three things will Jesus do at His coming?

ANSWER: Refer to the last three points in answer.

We must be ready for His second coming. After he has given himself to Jesus, the believer abides in Him. 1 John 2:27, 28. He has fellowship with the Holy Spirit every moment of the day. He is in touch with God through prayer and Bible study. John 14:17, 26; Matthew 5:6. He dies daily to sin. He is willing to die to his selfish nature and allows Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, to reign in him. 2 Corinthians 5:15; Galatians 5:16, 18. He asks Jesus to change him into His likeness. 1 John 3:2, 3. He expects Jesus to return any time. Titus 2:12, 13. He loves Jesus and looks forward to His return. 2 Timothy 4:8.

Satan's aim is to keep men in ignorance and unpreparedness, not expecting Jesus Christ to return.

Satan does everything in his power to discourage man's hope in the imminent return of Jesus Christ. His aim is to make the idea of Christ's return look absurd and ridiculous. Thereby he hopes that people will not believe in this great event and will not be waiting for Him.

Those who are eagerly expecting Jesus also have to expect difficulties from Satan, since he attempts to prevent them from being ready at Christ's coming. Men can give mental assent to the doctrine of Christ's return and not be spiritually ready for His coming. Christ mentioned this possibility by telling the parable of the ten virgins. Matthew 25:10-12. All ten virgins believed that the bridegroom would come, but only five were received by Him. Why? Because only five were prepared; only five had the indwelling Christ. What would be your fate if Jesus Christ were to return tonight? Are you prepared? The expectation of the imminent return of Jesus Christ should be a great encouragement to everyone to surrender himself to Christ every day, to make certain that there is spiritual growth in his life, and that by Christ's power he is overcoming his evil nature.

QUESTION 5: How can you be ready when Christ appears?

ANSWER: Acts 3:19, 20; Revelation 3:18. (Write) _____

SIGNIFICANT PARALLELS BETWEEN JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN HISTORY

Both the first and the second coming of Jesus were prophesied in the Holy Scriptures. The Jewish nation expected the promised Messiah but made a fatal error in its interpretation of prophecy. It failed to see that these are two separate events.

The Bible speaks of Christ's first coming in humility and poverty to suffer and to die as the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world. He came to pay the penalty of sin, which is the second death (or hell), and to establish His spiritual kingdom of grace. He came to enlist men as His disciples and to call subjects to His kingdom. All those who voluntarily accept Him as their Saviour and are willing to accept His principles as their standard of life receive forgiveness of their sins and obtain His righteousness. They will enter the kingdom of God. Isaiah 53:5, 7; John 1:29; 18:37.

His second coming in great power and glory as the Kings of kings, to execute judgment. He will take to heaven His redeemed people, and make forever an end to the dominion of sin and death. 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.

self can change man's corrupt nature. Doctrines have no power to do it. Gal: 3:10, 21. God certainly is capable of keeping His own commandments in the surrendered soul.

There is a marvelous balance between the Person and the teachings of Jesus Christ. A godly life is the result of a union of the soul with Christ and testifies to man's love for Jesus. James 2:20, John 14:15. To achieve this intimate spiritual union with man, Jesus Christ had to lay down His life. John 17:23. This union with Christ is reached through a moment by moment surrender of our will to His leading. Then Christ is truly our Lord and Saviour. Acts 2:36. Christ's statement, "Abide in Me and I in you." (John 15:4-5) points to a very personal and intimate relationship. The person who has accepted such a relationship with Christ is saved and eagerly asks: "What may I do for You, my Saviour?"

Why is it that at Christ's return many Christians will hear these awful words from the lips of the Saviour: "I do not know where you come from: depart from me . . ." Luke 13:25, 27. They are rejected because they never learned to know Christ from experience: they only had a knowledge of His doctrines and His commandments. They said "yes" to His theology but "no" to His Person. By their unchanged character they proved that the knowledge acquired of Jesus Christ never led them to make a total surrender to His Person. Christ must enter our innermost being, direct our very thoughts and lives; this Jesus cannot do from the outside. Let us open the door of our hearts and let Him in. Rev. 3:20.

QUESTION 5: What is the result of the rejection of the Person of Christ or His teachings?

ANSWER: John 3:36. John 12: 47-48. _____

The texts referred to in this lesson are from the Revised Standard Version unless otherwise indicated.



STUDY 12

Christ the Incarnation of His Teachings

The triune God is the center of true religion. The essence of true religion is a spiritual union with God. If the Person of God is missing in our religion, or if He is not the center of our lives, the human ego takes His place and our religion becomes nothing more than a round of ceremonies and an adherence to a set of doctrines.

There are religious systems which do exalt the Person of God, Jesus Christ, and His gospel but have no place for His teachings. A genuine love relationship with Jesus Christ inevitably leads a man to honor and accept all of Christ's teachings and commandments. Our salvation not only depends on our relationship with the Person of Christ but also on our acceptance of His words. Some neglect the Person while others neglect His teachings; both of these errors make a Christian lopsided and out of balance.

In Old Testament times the Israelites were led and taught by Jesus Christ who was known then as Jehovah. 1 Cor. 10:4. The Jews possessed the same gospel as the Christians. Heb. 4:2, 6. Jesus Christ redeemed the Jews from Egyptian slavery. He led them through the wilderness and gave them His greatest revelation at Mt. Horeb. There Christ gave them the law and the gospel, He gave them the Ten Commandments, and the ceremonies which prefigured Christ's redemptive act on the cross. In the course of their history, most Israelites unfortunately shifted their emphasis of worship from the Person of God to the ceremonies and symbols. With the influx of heathenism, many Israelites gradually apostatized from God. Instead of making the Person of God the center of their religion they emphasized the glorious temple and its forms of worship. Jer. 7:4, 2. The worship service to them became more important than repentance of their sins. Jer. 7:9, 10, 3. They brought numerous sacrifices but refused God who desired to change their hearts and ways of life. Isa. 1:11. They carefully observed religious feasts and holidays but refused to be converted from their sins. Isa. 1:13-16.

QUESTION 1: What is the primary object of true religion? What must we possess to be saved?

ANSWER: John 17:3. 1. John 5:12. _____

The majority of Israelites based their salvation on their own accomplishments. They put the emphasis on their good works through which they tried to earn salvation. They attempted to be saved by their own righteousness. Exodus 19:8. They proudly said, "We are Abraham's descendants." John 8:33. They made a terrible mistake and totally misinterpreted God's way of salvation. Rom. 10:3.

Many Christians have committed the same error as the Israelites. In the beginning of the Christian era, the believers were great lovers of Christ and worshipped Him in spirit and in truth. They proclaimed His cross and His resurrection with power and

adored Him as the Lord of glory. They also obeyed all of His teachings and fervently spread the gospel in all the world. Christ was primary in their lives while His teachings were secondary.

With the influx of heathenism with its pagan philosophies, the pure faith of the Christian church became diluted and the church repeated the tragic mistake of Israel. The Christian church made doctrines and ceremonies, the commandments and the prophecies the center of their religion, while the Person of Jesus Christ and His gospel became secondary. To this day, there are Christians who believe erroneously that they must earn their own salvation through the keeping of the commandments of God, or by making sacrifices, pilgrimages, through penitence, fasting etc. . . . Only then do they believe, will Christ give them His righteousness as a reward. They fail to realize that salvation was accomplished through Jesus Christ without our assistance; that salvation is received as a free gift by faith in Christ. Such Christians neglect the majestic Person of Christ and do not have a spiritual love relationship with Him, Rev. 2: 3, 4.

On the other hand, there are Christians who are willing to accept Him as Saviour, accept His grace and forgiveness, but they refuse Him as Lord of their lives; they do not permit Him to change their nature and spoiled character. They feel that Christ has already done that for them. Matt. 7:21. In this manner, the Israelites in Old Testament times and many Christians in New Testament times have put the teachings and commandments of Christ in opposition to His Person and have made shipwreck of their faith.

QUESTION 2: What fateful mistake did the Jews and the Christians make?

ANSWER: Romans 10:3. 2. Timothy 3.5. -----

The Bible teaches that an experiential knowledge of the Trinity, to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, is the first prerequisite for man's salvation. John 17:3. The foundation of true religion is a living union between the Redeemer and the redeemed. Col. 1:27. Outside of Christ there is no salvation. Neither the church, nor the Bible, nor the commandments of God, nor the teachings of Christ, nor religious ceremonies, nor good works, nor knowledge, have any power to save a soul. Only the Person of Jesus Christ and His Spirit are capable of saving a person from eternal death. This is clear from the following scripture text, "There is salvation in no one else . . ." Acts. 4:12.

"I am the Lord, and besides Me there is no Saviour." Isa. 43:11.
"In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory." Isa. 45:25.
"You will die in your sins unless you believe that I am He." John 8:24.
"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that who so ever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life . . ." "He who believes in Him is not condemned: He who does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God."

John 3:16, 18.

However Jesus Christ not only gave Himself as a sacrifice for our sins to be accepted by repenting sinners, but He also expects His followers to absorb His nature. This is what He meant when He said, "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in Him." John 6:56. Jesus gave us a wonderful example of how to live the Christian life. John 13:15, 1 Peter 2:21.

It is the express desire of Jesus that all who love Him shall in turn become in a limited sense:

1. Incarnations of His Person. Gal. 2:20, 1 John 5:12.
2. Incarnations of His words. Matt. 4:4, John 17:17, John 18:37.
3. Incarnations of His commandments and teachings. John 14:15, 21, John 12:47, 48, Matt. 15:8, 9.

Only the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is able to save sinners by His grace. After a person receives Christ as Saviour and Lord, Christ expects Him to obey immediately all His teachings and commandments by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. Phil. 4:13. Deliberate disobedience to Christ's teachings and commandments reveals man's disloyalty to God, accuses him in the judgment, and brings about his condemnation. John 12:48.

QUESTION 3: Can the teachings of Jesus save sinners?

ANSWER: Acts 4:12. James 4:12. -----

Jesus Christ often emphasized that His Person is the incarnation of every truth and teaching contained in the Bible, and that apart from His Person we cannot keep His commandments:

- "I am the way, and the truth, and the life . . ." John 14.6.
- "I am the light of the world." John 8:12.
- "I am the door." John 10:9.
- "I am the good Shepherd." John 10:11.
- "I am the resurrection and the life." John 11:25.
- "I am the bread of life." John 6:48.
- "I am the true vine." John 15:1.
- "I am Alpha and Omega," the beginning and the end. Rev. 1:8.
- "Before Abraham was I am." John 8:58.
- "I have the keys of hell and of death." Rev. 1:18.
- "I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star." Rev. 22:16.
- "He who has the Son has life, he who has not the Son has not life." I John 5:12.

Jesus is in reality the creative Word incarnate. John 1:1, 14, John 6:63. Paul made Christ the prominent figure in all his preaching. 1 Cor. 2:21. Eph. 3:17, 19. Nevertheless Paul also stressed the importance of obeying Christ's teachings. Acts 20:27.

QUESTION 4: Why do we need Christ the Person in order to be saved?

ANSWER: John 1:12-13. Galatians 2:20. -----

When men exalt the beautiful teachings of Christ without having an experiential knowledge of His Person then they never abdicate from self, never allow the ego to die. They are not in love with Christ, never surrender themselves to Him, never accept everything Christ is and offers them. Luke 6:46, 1 Tim. 3:16. Titus 1:16. Such persons may have strong convictions but no conversions. Their fate will be tragic. Luke 13:25, 27, Matt. 3:10. They are very much like the son in Christ's parable who said he would carry out his father's request but in reality never did. Matt. 21:28-31.

In order to be saved we need to receive Christ's Spirit. John 1:12. Only God Him-

CHRIST WARNS THE LAST GENERATION

Jesus requires readiness and preparation. These are the words of Jesus Christ to us who live in the time of His return, "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is." Mark 13:33. This means that we are not to be spiritually asleep, lest Christ find us unprepared. Matthew 24:37-41, 36, 32-35.

Jesus did not give us the exact time of His second coming. He merely described the conditions on earth during the last period of the world's history. He instructs us to be prepared at all times, to live every day as if He were to arrive suddenly. This spirit of readiness keeps us spiritually alert. Only then will we be prepared for His return. Matthew 24:42.

QUESTION 5: How can I be ready when Christ comes?

ANSWER: Matthew 24:42, 44. (Write) _____

Christians face the same dangers as did the Jews. Christ warned this last generation in the same manner as He warned His contemporaries of the destruction of Jerusalem. Unfortunately most of us today have the same reaction to these warnings as the Jews had in their time. Few of us recognize the time of our visitation. Few see these events in the light of prophetic statements. As a result, we do not obey these warnings and think we are not responsible for our unpreparedness. Only a few Christians are aware of the imminence of His return. 1 Thessalonians 5:4-6.

Do not postpone the date of your conversion. Feeble resistance against your sinful habits is not sufficient. You need the divine power of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit in overcoming your sinful nature. In the parable of the ten virgins all were waiting for the bridegroom, but only five were ready. The other five were lost. "And they that were ready went in with him." Matthew 25:10. Do not tolerate any hindrance in your life which has a tendency to postpone your preparation. Readiness means this: being justified by the life and death of Jesus Christ and being born anew by His Holy Spirit; being transformed by the indwelling Holy Spirit into the image of Jesus Christ. Only when you have evidence that these things have taken place in your life will you have the assurance that you will stand before the Judge of all men robed in the white garments of Christ's righteousness. Isaiah 26:8, 9.

We live in a grand and awful time. Signs of the greatest magnitude are telling with unmistakable voice of the coming of the Lord of glory. He who has eyes shall see, and he who has ears shall listen to what these portentous signs are telling. Sin is riding high. Demon-possessed men are making life on earth unsafe and unbearable. The Spirit of God is gradually withdrawing from earth. It is a great privilege to be aware of the coming events. Shall we who know the plans of God from the Holy Scriptures and understand the significance of the signs in the world keep silent? Impossible! With loving hearts and with great compassion for our fellowmen we must urge them to wake up and ask Christ to save their lives. Luke 12:37.

QUESTION 6: Are you willing to make changes to be prepared for this coming drama of the ages?

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STUDY 13

Significant World Events of Great Magnitude

We consider ourselves to be primarily physical beings; we often speak of having five senses. The Holy Scriptures, however, claim that we also have a spiritual nature. We have been endowed with a sensitiveness for things that are spiritual. But we can be so carnally minded that our spiritual senses are dulled or out of order. Jesus Christ referred to this state in man. See Matthew 13:15.

The Pharisees had keen minds, but they were spiritually blind. Their thorough theological education did not help them correct this situation. From early morning until late at night they followed Jesus Christ, watching and studying Him carefully. They witnessed His miracles and were astonished at the way He healed the sick and raised the dead. Nevertheless, they asked Him: "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." Matthew 12:38, R.S.V. "What sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you? What work do you perform?" John 6:30, R.S.V.

The many miracles Jesus performed were not acceptable to them as signs of divine authority; they demanded a special sign, one that should be done according to their own liking. This reminds us of Satan approaching Christ in the wilderness. He knew well with whom he was confronted, but he asked Jesus nevertheless: "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Matthew 4:3.

The Pharisees demanded of Jesus a spectacular sign like the one Joshua received when the sun stood still over Beth-horon. The humble shepherds of Bethlehem and the wise men from the East received such a spectacular sign without having asked for it. They beheld the star of Bethlehem in the heavens, but the proud rabbis were not given this privilege.

The greatest sign of all was Jesus Christ Himself, His wonderful character, His mighty words and deeds. Luke 2:34. When Jesus saw that the religious leaders of the nation refused to accept His signs, He answered: "This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet." Luke 11:29.

QUESTION 1: God gives signs; what must we do?

ANSWER: Watch, understand. Matthew 24:42; Mark 13:33. (Write) _____

SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS HAS TERRIBLE RESULTS

None are so blind as those who refuse to see. Many people are spiritually blind; they cannot understand spiritual lessons. It is not sufficient to see the signs God gives us; we must also understand their significance. The Word of God explains clearly the significance of world events and signs given to us by God. The Holy Scripture provides us with a divine exegesis of past history, of present events, and of earth-shattering happen-

ings in the future which should make men's hearts tremble. But do we understand what we read?

Stubbornness can lead to spiritual blindness. Jesus reproached the rabbis in these words: "O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?" Matthew 16:3. These men were not able to perceive the significance of the times they were living in; they did not know that certain events taking place then contained deep spiritual significance. Someone brought to Jesus the news of the slaughter of a number of Galilean men. They were killed in the temple, and Pilate's soldiers mixed their blood with the blood of animal sacrifices. When hearing of this tragedy, Jesus told them, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Luke 13:2, 3. In other words, Jesus called their attention to the fact that this event was a sign of much greater calamities to come. He gave His listeners a prophetic glance into the future when Jerusalem should be besieged and captured by the Roman armies. He knew that hundreds of thousands of people would perish, and their blood flow freely in the temple courts. However, the people did not understand; they did not know the time of their visitation. They did not perceive in Christ's words a warning, a call to repent, and they did not take refuge in Jesus Christ. One and one-quarter million people perished in the siege of Jerusalem. Luke 19:41-44.

QUESTION 2: Where does spiritual blindness lead?

ANSWER: Destruction. Luke 19:41-44. (Write) _____

The disciples were greatly perplexed when Jesus told them of the coming destruction of the temple. Matthew 23:38; 24:1. 2. They could not believe that this magnificent temple would be leveled to the ground. They asked Him to give them some sure sign pointing to this event. In reply Jesus pointed to several great future events: the destruction of Jerusalem and of the temple, the end of the world, and His glorious second coming. Matthew 24:3. The destruction of Jerusalem was an example and a prophetic symbol of the destruction of the world, which would occur at the time of Christ's second coming.

"Everything in the world is in agitation. The signs of the times are ominous. . . . There are those who are waiting and watching and working for our Lord's appearing. Another class are falling into line under the generalship of the first great apostate. Few believe with heart and soul that we have a hell to shun and a heaven to win.

"The crisis is stealing gradually upon us. . . . The highest excitement prevails, yet probation's hour is fast closing, and every case is about to be eternally decided."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 636.

OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST'S SIGNS MEANS DELIVERANCE

In Matthew 24:4-44, Jesus Christ gave a prophetic proclamation which contained signs of His second coming. In this prophecy He spoke both of the destruction of the Jewish nation and of the destruction of the world; the deliverance of the first Christians during the great massacre in Jerusalem and the deliverance of Christ's remnant people at the end of the world. These signs were of great importance to the Christians living in the first century since many of them experienced the destruction of Jerusalem; the same

chapter is speaking today to this generation which is faced with the stupendous climax of world history: the return of Jesus Christ.

Many religious people in the time of Christ mistook the signs of their impending judgment as an indication of the approach of great national prosperity; in the same way, multitudes of Christians today interpret the prophecies regarding the return of Jesus Christ as tokens of unprecedented progress and peace on earth.

The true Christians living in the first century, on the other hand, heeded Christ's warning. When Cestius Gallus, the Roman general, temporarily withdrew his army from the walls of Jerusalem, the Christians immediately took flight to Perea. Shortly afterward the Roman armies under Titus returned to besiege and capture the city. Not one of these Christians perished, because they heeded Christ's warning. The same principle applies to believers today. The signs of Christ's coming are to lead us out of impending danger.

QUESTION 3: Why are people today repeating the mistake of the Jewish nation?

ANSWER: They do not heed the warning. Matthew 13:14, 15. (Write) _____

THESE SIGNS APPEAR IN OUR TIMES

Signs appear in the political world: Distress, fear, and perplexity. Luke 21:25-27. World wars, widespread famines, pestilences, and earthquakes. The prophecies refer to the magnitude of these catastrophes rather than to their frequency. Matthew 24:5-7; Revelation 11:18. The failure of all efforts to establish world peace. In spite of the "Palais de Paix" in The Hague, the League of Nations in Geneva, the United Nations in New York, there is no prospect of world peace. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3.

Signs seen in our social life: Nineteen hundred years ago, the Apostle Paul foresaw the numerous characteristics of the social life of our time with startling clarity and exactness. 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Signs found in the economic world: Struggles between capital and labor, loss of personal holdings. James 5:1-9.

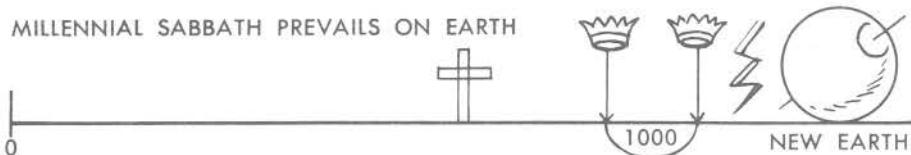
Signs found in the field of science: Staggering achievements in science, technology, and industry follow in quick succession. While scientific developments surpass expectations, man is becoming spiritually and morally decadent. Daniel 12:4.

Signs found in the religious and spiritual spheres of our time: Men ridicule the teaching of Christ's second coming. 2 Peter 3:3, 4. People are outwardly religious but inwardly empty of genuine spiritual power. 2 Timothy 3:1, 5. The love of pleasure and entertainment is more sought after than is the love of God. 2 Timothy 3:4. There is little Biblical faith left on earth. Luke 18:8. Sin and selfishness pervade the hearts of men. Genuine love and affection is rare. Matthew 24:12. The everlasting gospel and the message of Christ's return are proclaimed for a witness on a worldwide scale. No man can honestly say that he has never been confronted with the gospel message. Matthew 24:14, 29, 30; Joel 3:15. The dark day (not due to a sun eclipse) occurred on May 19, 1780. The darkening of the moon and change of color (not due to a moon eclipse) happened on May 20, 1780. The falling of the stars in great quantity (meteors) took place on November 13, 1833.

QUESTION 4: Which of these signs makes the greatest impression on you? Which is not yet fulfilled?

ANSWER: Matthew 24:42-44. (Write) _____

MILLENNIAL SABBATH PREVAILS ON EARTH



Jesus Christ is the Creator of the earth and of the Sabbath. God created our world in six days; He rested on the seventh day, a day He blessed and sanctified. Genesis 2:1-3. By commission of the Father, Jesus Christ is the Creator of the cosmos. Colossians 1:15-17. Jesus Christ, by resting, blessing, and sanctifying the seventh-day Sabbath, made it to be a seal and a sign of His creatorship. Therefore, by keeping and hallowing the Sabbath, we acknowledge the Son of God as the Creator of the world. From the days of Cain the majority of the world's inhabitants have disregarded and desecrated God's chosen day. After thousands of years of universal Sabbathbreaking, the earth will rest for a thousand years during the millennium and will commemorate the neglected Sabbath. Leviticus 26:34, 35.

This is the breathtaking plan of God for mankind. It should change our whole outlook on life. With absolute precision the plan is being carried out by God, in spite of satanic and human hindrances. The authority, the honor, and glory of God are committed to its accomplishment.

To conform to God's plan means life; to reject or oppose it means death.

QUESTION 7: How will everybody keep the Sabbath during the millennium?

ANSWER: In heaven living with Christ, or dead on the earth.

**CHRIST...
OUR LIFE™**

BIBLE STUDIES

STUDY 14

God's Schedule of Events

Jesus Christ is the center of our salvation. The plan of salvation was conceived in detail in the secret council of the Godhead before creation. 1 Peter 1:20. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has been carrying out this glorious plan of salvation for mankind in a most wonderful and victorious way. The whole universe is watching the progress of His divine plan.

When mankind became rebellious and morally decadent, God destroyed them through a flood. He saved Noah and his family who had been faithful to Him. Through them He populated the earth again. The salvation of Noah's family during that great catastrophe was a symbol of the miraculous redemption of mankind through the mercy of God.

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He saved all mankind from sin; He made a final atonement for all men who had faith in Him. Our salvation from sin was finished on the cross of Calvary, while other phases of God's plan of salvation are still waiting to be fulfilled. When both sin and sinner do not exist any longer in the universe, God's overall plan of salvation will be completely fulfilled.

QUESTION 1: When will peace rule in the universe?

ANSWER: When sin and sinner are no more. Revelation 21:4; Isaiah 35:1, 5, 10; 65:17, 21-25. (Write)

THE ALPHA AND OMEGA OF GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION IS JESUS CHRIST

"I have trodden the winepress alone; . . . there was none with me." Isaiah 63:3. In this lesson we will dwell on a phase of God's plan of salvation that remains yet to be fulfilled. The center and chief figure in God's plan of redemption is the Son of God, our Saviour. He has begun the redemption of mankind and will also finish it victoriously. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of our faith, the very center of attraction. Revelation 1:8.

Salvation is the greatest of all sciences. The science of salvation is the deepest study man can undertake in this world; even angels desire to understand it more fully. It will be the theme of study for the redeemed throughout eternity when the secrets of God

will be opened before their eyes. The far-reaching consequences of this plan of salvation will be felt by all.

Every man on this earth should be familiar with this plan and should be able to give an intelligent explanation of it. This science should have priority in the education of all young people. This science is the most important subject—not only for theologians but also for all other sinners. It is as much a “must” as is the knowledge of reading and writing.

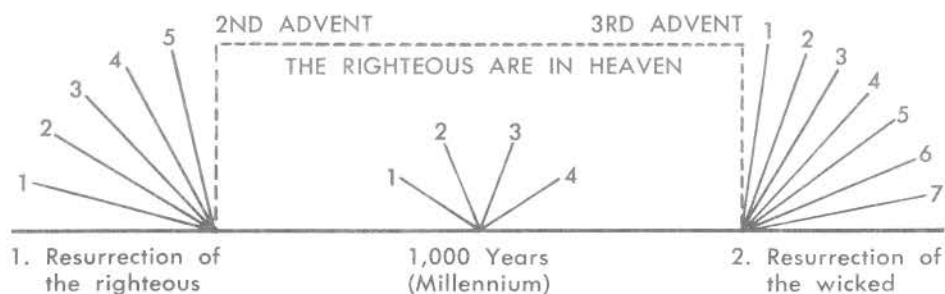
Several phases of the plan of salvation are still to be fulfilled. The phases to be fulfilled deal with the second coming of Jesus Christ to take the redeemed to heaven, and with our return with Him to earth after the millennium. Let us study God’s schedule for these events and familiarize ourselves with His course of action as explained in the Holy Scriptures.

QUESTION 2: What shall we do with the plan of salvation?

ANSWER: We should know and accept it. 1 Timothy 2:4. (Write) _____

A THOUSAND YEARS OF CHAOS AND RUIN

A Sketch of the Millennium



Mistaken ideas about the millennium are widespread. “Millennium” means 1,000 years. Theologians have advanced a number of erroneous concepts regarding this period of time. Many sincere Christians mistakenly believe that the second coming of Christ will initiate the Golden Age of mankind on earth, a time when all men will be converted to God, when nations will not wage war, when everlasting peace and happiness will prevail. This is not based on sound Scriptural exegesis.

There are theologians who expect the second coming of Christ to occur before the millennium. These are called premillennialists. Those who expect Him to come after the millennium are called postmillennialists. Believers in the “secret rapture” teach that Jesus Christ will come secretly for His chosen ones seven years before the millennium. This premise also lacks Biblical foundation. Read Revelation 20:1-9 where we find God’s explanation of the chief events concerning the millennium.

QUESTION 3: Why is the schedule of events unknown or falsely explained?

ANSWER: To mislead people. 2 Corinthians 4:4. (Write) _____

These events occur at the beginning of the millennium:

1. Jesus Christ returns the second time. His return is visible to all men; He will not come down to the earth, but will remain visible in the sky as described by Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18.

2. All the righteous dead since the time of Adam are resurrected. Revelation 20:6. This is called the first resurrection.

3. Those (the unrighteous) who have rejected Jesus Christ will be destroyed. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

4. The resurrected righteous dead and the righteous living at that time receive new bodies and go to heaven with Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.

5. Satan is bound by inactivity. Revelation 20:2, 3.

QUESTION 4: What are the great issues of the first and second resurrections?

ANSWER: Life, death. Revelation 20:5. (Write) _____

These events take place during the millennium:

1. The earth is in a chaotic condition resembling its state on the first day of creation. Revelation 20:2, 3; Isaiah 24:3, 19, 20.

2. All the unrighteous people are dead. Revelation 6:15-17; 19:17-19, 21.

3. Satan is inactive for 1,000 years because there are no living human beings on earth. Revelation 20:2.

4. The righteous people are in heaven; together with Christ they are judging fallen angels and the unrighteous dead. Revelation 20:4; 1 Corinthians 6:1-3.

QUESTION 5: How will Satan be chained?

ANSWER: By circumstances.

These events take place at the end of the millennium:

1. Jesus Christ descends upon the Mount of Olives. Zechariah 14:4, 5.

2. The New Jerusalem, with the redeemed righteous, descends from heaven. Revelation 21:2.

3. All the unrighteous since the time of Cain are resurrected. Revelation 20:5. This is called the second resurrection.

4. Satan is released from his inactivity. Having regained his subjects, he continues his work of deception among the unrighteous. Revelation 20:7.

5. Satan organizes the unrighteous to attack the New Jerusalem, the Holy City, in order to make it their own. Revelation 20:8, 9.

6. Fire descends from heaven and utterly destroys Satan, the fallen angels, and the unrighteous. Revelation 20:9; Malachi 4:1.

7. Jesus Christ creates a new earth and a new heaven for the righteous. Revelation 21:1-5.

QUESTION 6: How long will hellfire burn?

ANSWER: Malachi 4:1. (Write) _____

It is clear that He desired to make sure that we did not misunderstand the meaning of this particular prophecy. Many theologians, historians, Bible students, and church leaders throughout the ages have concluded that this time prophecy began in A.D. 538 and ended in A.D. 1798. According to them, the little horn personifies the characteristics of antichrist.

The little horn will be judged and punished by God. The religio-political power symbolized by the little horn is prophesied to rise again to prominence shortly before Christ's return. 2 Thessalonians 2:8. A second time it will be responsible for the persecution of God's people. God will judge it, take away its power, and finally destroy it. Daniel 7:26. Jesus Christ will then establish His kingdom on the new earth and give it to His redeemed people. Daniel 7:27. This corrupt power, when it emerges again at the end of world history, is called "Babylon." Revelation 18:2, 5, 6.

QUESTION 6: Give the beginning and the end of the time allotted to the little horn.

ANSWER: -----

THE CONTROVERSY BETWEEN CHRIST AND THE NATIONS COMES TO AN END

Divine and human wrath clash. Since the beginning of the world, kings and rulers have rebelled, raged, and counseled against God and His Messiah. They made every attempt to cast away His restraint and break His control over them. Psalm 2:1-4. The last generation on earth will carry this antagonism toward God to an extreme, not realizing that by so doing they are invoking God's wrath upon themselves. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Psalm 76:10.

On which side are you? After the time of probation closes, two great armies will face each other. One will belong to Satan. It will be a human army arrayed against Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. Revelation 16:14, 16; 17:12-14. The other army will belong to Jesus Christ. He will come to rescue His faithful followers who are being threatened by the satanic force. Revelation 19:11, 16, 15; Joel 3:12, 14, 16.

Rapidly the great mass of humanity, inspired by Satan and led by the antichrist, will prepare for war against the returning Christ. This war will be terrible and devastating. Revelation 14:18-20; 19:17-19, 21. This is called the great supper of God. It will mean the end of the futile war of Satan and evil men against God which began in the Garden of Eden. It is the end of the great human tragedy. Revelation 6:15-17; Isaiah 26:8, 9.

QUESTION 7: To what great clash is humanity driven?

ANSWER: The war between Christ and the antichrist. Revelation 16:14.
(Write) -----

STUDY 15

World History Foretold by Symbolic Beasts

Few people realize that behind the great historical developments of the world is a sharp controversy between God and His Messiah and the nations of the earth. This spiritual battle has been raging since the time of Cain and Abel and will not end until Jesus returns. It will actually become more intensified and more violent as time goes on.

NATIONS, PEOPLE, AND KINGS ARE ARRAYED AGAINST JESUS CHRIST, THE MESSIAH

The Bible contains the key to the understanding of history. The mysterious antagonism of heathen and Christian nations toward God throughout the course of history is illuminated by a statement of David in Psalm 2:1-4. The same thought is expressed in Psalm 59:8. These texts reveal the opposition of heathen nations, Israel, and Christian nations throughout world history to the Almighty, His Anointed, His commandments, His plans, and His principles. Acts 4:25-27. Of Jesus it is said, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." John 1:11. This statement gives us an idea of the enmity in the heart of the Israelites against the Messiah. Jesus was well aware of it and referred to it in a parable. Luke 19:14.

QUESTION 1: How do the nations feel toward God and Christ?

ANSWER: Psalm 2:1-4. (Write) -----

Nation after nation turned against God. God rules over the seas; He also rules over the nations of earth. As He calms the stormy waves of the sea, so He also calms the angry agitations of nations. Psalm 65:7. He brings their counsel to naught. Psalm 33: 10, 11. The nations are not aware of the activities of God in their affairs. They believe that it is human power, ambition, fortune, and the whim of rulers that determine the fate of nations and empires. They do not perceive the hand of God in the affairs of men. God once revealed His presence very dramatically when He wrote on the walls of a king's temple the words, "Mene, tekel, upharsin." Daniel 5:25-31.

In every generation God permits nations to make their choice for or against Him. As with individuals, He respects their free will and gives them the opportunity to make their own choice. God does not coerce people to follow Him or to live according to His principles, even if the course they choose leads them to destruction. "In past generations He allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways." Acts 14:16, R.S.V.

QUESTION 2: How did God intervene in the course of history?

ANSWER: Daniel 5:25-31. (Write) _____

tried in vain to unite these nations. According to prophecy, God will not allow this to happen. We know from history that a horn denotes power. Many aristocratic families in Europe had seven, nine, or eleven horns on their crowns.

QUESTION 4: What do the ten horns and the little horn represent?

ANSWER: Daniel 7:20, 24. (Write) _____

GOD FORECASTS SUCCEEDING WORLD EMPIRES

Daniel revealed the history of mankind as God sees it. Jesus Christ stressed the importance of Daniel's prophecy. Matthew 24:15. In the second chapter of the Book of Daniel, the symbol used was a human statue. In the seventh chapter of Daniel a startling new vision is recorded. It deals with the same succession of empires. This time their tyrannical nature is expressed in symbols of wild beasts. God was concerned that His followers should understand the nature of these world empires. For the sake of clarity He used two sets of symbols: a human statue and a group of wild beasts.

It is still a custom today for nations to choose an animal as a symbol of their national character. England chose a lion, Russia a bear, the United States an eagle, France a rooster, China a dragon, etc.

The prophecy mentions four empires and ten kingdoms. Daniel's vision is described in Daniel 7:2-8, 13, 14, 26, 27. The symbolic language used in these verses is explained elsewhere in Scripture, for the Bible always interprets itself. Seas and water represent people and nations. Revelation 17:15. Tornadoes and winds denote wars. Jeremiah 25: 32, 33. The four wild beasts represent four great empires. Daniel 7:17. The lion with eagle's wings stands for Babylon. The bear symbolizes Media-Persia. The three ribs denote the three countries that were annexed by her: Egypt, Palestine, and Syria. The four-headed leopard represents the Greek empire, which was divided into four parts after the death of Alexander the Great. These four parts are: Egypt, ruled by Ptolemy; Syria and Persia under Seleucus; Thrace and Asia Minor ruled by Lysimachus; and Macedon and Greece under Cassander. The fourth beast, resembling a monster, stands for heathen Rome. With its rapacious character, it is the worst power of all.

QUESTION 3: What do the four beasts represent?

ANSWER: Daniel 7:2-8, 17. (Write) _____

The mysterious "little horn" appeared when heathen Rome was dissolved into ten kingdoms. According to prophecy, the power called "little horn" could not emerge before the breakup of the Roman Empire. Once this took place, the little horn filled the political vacuum. In order to determine what is meant by the little horn, we must study its characteristics as revealed in different parts of Scripture. We find that it is a political power, conquering three Arian kingdoms: the Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths. Daniel 7:24. The little horn is said to have human eyes and a mouth uttering statements of great import. It is described as being farsighted, establishing rules and laws. Its stature was to be mightier than its contemporaries. Daniel 7:8, 20. It is also a religious power; it makes important statements against the Most High. Daniel 7:25; 2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4. The little horn makes war against the saints of the Most High; it persecutes them bitterly, destroys and conquers them. It does this all in the name of God. Daniel 7:21, 25; John 16:2. It thinks that it can change times and laws (the only law that deals with time is the fourth commandment). The people of God are given into its hand for a certain period of time: A time, two times, and a half time. Daniel 7:25. A time means a calendar year of 360 days. One prophetic day stands for a calendar year. Ezekiel 4:6. The time prophecy refers to 1260 years, which is arrived at as follows: 1 time, 360 days, equals 360 years; 2 times, 720 days, equals 720 years; ½ time, or 180 days, equals 180 years. Total: 1260 years.

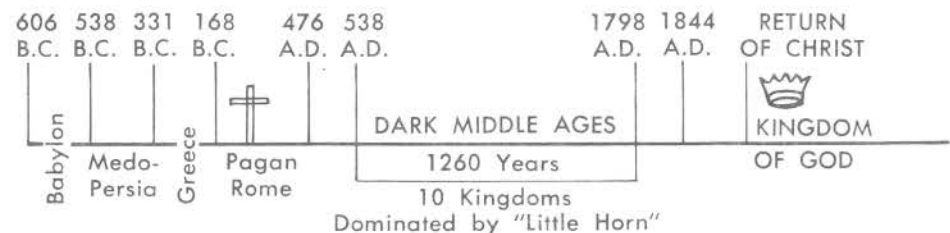
QUESTION 5: Give certain characteristics of the antichrist.

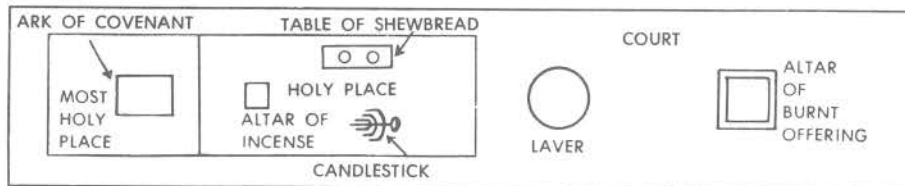
ANSWER: Daniel 7:24 (political); verse 25 (religious). (Write) _____

The most astounding time prophecy in Scripture. This prophecy was given seven times by God and is contained in two prophetic books of the Bible, Daniel and Revelation. God expressed it three times in years: Daniel 7:25; 12:7; and Revelation 12:14; twice in months: Revelation 11:2 and 13:5; and twice in days: Revelation 11:3 and 12:6.

The ten horns of the beast represent the ten kingdoms into which the Roman Empire was divided in the fifth century A.D. Seven nations are still with us today. The Heruli, the Vandals, and the Ostrogoths, however, were conquered by Rome. Daniel 7:24.

Descendants of the seven remaining kingdoms can be found in England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, and Italy. Daniel 7:24. Kings and dictators have





STUDY 16

Law, Grace, and the Gospel Are Partners

The altar of burnt offering symbolized the death of Christ on the cross. The water basin represented the new birth and baptism. The light of the Holy Spirit was pictured by the candelabra. The table of shewbread and the wine typified the Lord's life to be lived in us. The altar of incense portrayed Christ's merits, His worthiness, His mediatorial prayers. The judgment of God was depicted by the ark of the covenant (law and mercy).

The services in the court stood for the redemption of man. The services in the holy place depicted the sanctification of man. The glorification of man was illustrated by the service in the most holy place.

QUESTION 7: What was the ceremonial law?

ANSWER: Hebrews 10:1. (Write) _____

When Moses was in the presence of God on Mount Sinai, he not only received the Ten Commandments but also the gospel in the form of the ceremonial law and the Tabernacle services. It was the gospel in shadow form. Exodus 24:12, 18; 25:8, 9. God knew that no man could keep His holy law by his own strength; He provided a way by which He Himself could satisfy its requirements. If man would consent that God live in him, God Himself would keep His law in the surrendered believer. The ceremonial law, therefore, was a visual demonstration of the plan of salvation. It showed how a sinner could become a saint by the grace of God.

As time passed, the purpose of the Tabernacle services and the meaning of the ceremonial laws were lost by Israel. They could no longer understand their deep significance: the redemption and sanctification of both body and soul. Colossians 2:14 and Deuteronomy 31:24, 26.

EVERY MAN NEEDS THE LAW OF GOD, HIS GRACE, AND HIS GOSPEL

Jesus Christ is the embodiment of the gospel. Salvation can be accomplished only by one who is more powerful than the law, namely God Himself. He paid the price of sin. He is willing to live, through His Holy Spirit, in every surrendered man to help him live up to every moral requirement of the law. In the judgment Jesus Christ imputes to every saved man His matchless life, His own righteousness. Philippians 1:6; Romans 3:22.

Love is the basis of the law and the gospel. The grace of God and the gospel have no purpose if there is no law and no condemnation. Romans 4:15. For this reason law and grace balance one another. Both have the same basis: the love of God. Both have the same goal: the salvation of man. God is love. 1 John 4:16. God's law is love. Romans 13:10; Matthew 22:37-40. Grace is love. Ephesians 2:8; John 3:16. The gospel is love. Ephesians 3:19. At the cross of Calvary law and grace were perfectly blended. Psalm 85:10. "Mercy and truth are met together."

QUESTION 8: How will the saved stand in the judgment?

ANSWER: Romans 3:22; Ephesians 5:27. (Write) _____

The law of life is written with indelible letters on every cell, every fiber, and every crystal. These laws regulate life, matter, and energy. Violation of these laws means destruction. The entire universe obeys the will of the Creator. Only man, tempted by Satan, has transgressed the laws of his Creator by sinning. Romans 5:12; 8:20.

Since the fall of man, there is an enmity in the human heart against God and His perfect law. Romans 8:7. Since men became sinners, they have been trying to live separate from God and His law. Many suppose they will never be judged for this attitude and that God has no ground on which to condemn them. This is presumption and deceptive thinking.

QUESTION 1: Does everything, even faith, have its law?

ANSWER: Romans 3:27. (Write) _____

THE RELATION OF THE MORAL LAW TO THE SINNER

What is the moral law? What are the Ten Commandments? The law is the expressed will of God. It is the transcript of His character. It is holy, just, and good; it is spiritual. Romans 7:12, 14. It is the everlasting and unchangeable rule of conduct. Psalm 119:89, 152. Sinners find divine help in Jesus Christ. No sinner can keep God's moral law (the Ten Commandments) by his own strength, since through sin he has become morally too weak. He is ruled by his sinful nature. Only by Jesus Christ living continuously in him can the surrendered believer keep the commandments through the Holy Spirit. Philippians 4:13.

Jesus Christ will not force Himself on the believer; it is a matter of our decision, of our willingness to allow Him to have His way in us. The reception of the life of Jesus Christ in substitution for our own life and constant surrender to His guidance is the way of obtaining victory. Galatians 2:20.

QUESTION 2: Can fallen man keep the moral law?

ANSWER: Romans 8:7. (Write) _____

Some theologians say, "Christ has nailed the Ten Commandments to the cross; therefore they do not bind us any more." See Colossians 2:14. Some men affirm that the newly born Christian is free from the responsibility of keeping the moral law of God since he is under grace. This assertion has no Biblical basis.

In order better to understand this false reasoning, we wish to give an example. Why are men imprisoned? They are in prison because they have broken the law. Having violated the law, they are "under the law." But if the governor pardons a man, he is

therefore free from condemnation. Christ paid the penalty of the broken law, and He extends grace to those who believe in Him and surrender themselves to Him.

QUESTION 3: Who are under the law?

ANSWER: Those who break it. Romans 3:23; 6:15. (Write) _____

BOTH LAW AND GRACE ARE NEEDED

Why is grace needed for the sinner? Grace is needed only when a law has been transgressed or when someone has been condemned. If there were no law, there would be no sin. Romans 5:13. If sin does not exist, why do we need grace?

Grace, God's unmerited favor, is moral and spiritual power to lead a new life. 2 Corinthians 12:9. This indwelling divine power is strong enough to enable us to keep His laws. Romans 8:4. God had given mankind a moral law; when man violated it, he became too weak to live according to its precepts. God then gave man His grace whereby he could again conform to God's law.

Law and grace are precious gifts of God; they are not at war against one another, but rather they are complementary to one another. The grace of God was not given to do away with the law; on the contrary, it was given to fulfill His law. This can be seen from the following words of Paul: "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." Romans 6:1, 2. "Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." Romans 6:15.

Not to sin means to observe the moral law of God by divine grace. To walk after the Holy Spirit means by the grace of God to live in harmony with the principles of God's law.

What are these sublime principles? We are to love God and our fellowman. Love toward God is expressed by our keeping of the first four commandments of the Decalogue, while love toward our fellowman is expressed by keeping the last six commandments of the Decalogue. A man who by the grace of God, through the power of the indwelling Christ, lives according to these commandments is free of condemnation. There is harmony and peace in his soul.

A Christian does not keep the law in order to earn God's grace and salvation. On the contrary, he keeps the law because he has received grace. He has been saved by faith in Jesus Christ and by the grace of God has received power to live according to the commandments of God. He desires to do the whole will of God because he loves Him with all his heart. Law and grace are perfectly blended in him; we can truly say that law and grace are partners.

QUESTION 4: What is the purpose of law? What is the purpose of grace?

ANSWER: Romans 7:7; 2 Corinthians 12:9. (Write) _____

BOTH LAW AND THE GOSPEL ARE NEEDED

The gospel is God's answer to the demands of the law. What is the relationship between the law and the gospel? The law is the divine standard of righteousness; it is God's requirement for those who wish to live in harmony with Him throughout eternity. Revelation 22:14; Matthew 19:17.

After man fell into sin, he became morally weak and unable to keep this divine law in his own strength. He was lost. God in His love and mercy for us devised the plan of

salvation which is called the gospel. The gospel implies more than the forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ; it also means conversion, the creation of a new man, the giving of divine power enabling this man to conquer his own nature through a power strong enough to overcome sin and temptation. For the first time in his life such a man is empowered to live up to the requirements of God's holy law; this power is the indwelling Christ who lives in him through the Holy Spirit.

The plan of creation and the plan of redemption are related. The plan of redemption is an auxiliary plan to the plan of creation. It is easier to create matter than to redeem a people who are lost through sin. Redemption is much more costly to God than creation, since it involves the suffering, the sacrifice, and the death of the Son of God; through Him the whole Godhead suffered. The purpose of the gospel is to restore fallen man to his former state and give him a divine nature that enables him to live according to God's law. The gospel has never done away with this divine law. This perfect salvation of man was planned by God before the creation of the earth. 1 Peter 1:18-20. Redemption of mankind has never been an afterthought.

QUESTION 5: How old is the plan of redemption?

ANSWER: 1 Peter 1:18-20. (Write) _____

God's plan of salvation leads the sinner from conversion to justification, to sanctification, and finally to glorification. Romans 8:29. In a mysterious way God changes the nature of the sinner and turns him into a saint. He becomes righteous by the grace of Jesus Christ. The very nature of Christ becomes ours, and the law of God is perfectly satisfied with the goodness, the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which has become our possession by faith.

Jesus Christ is the Representative of redeemed man. According to the gospel, the Son of God became the Son of man. He lived in full harmony with God's law, never committing a sin, but living a righteous life in a wicked and sinful world. Christ offers His righteous life to every man; He gives it to all who accept Him by faith. He laid down His life for us, taking upon Himself the second death to rescue man from it. With His blood we are cleansed from all confessed sin. 1 Timothy 1:15, 16.

Jesus Christ is now our Mediator and High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary. Hebrews 9:24. He is also the Judge of mankind. John 5:22, 27. After the judgment in heaven is finished, Jesus will return the second time and take the righteous to heaven. Hebrews 9:27, 28; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17.

The gospel was known from the earliest times. Adam, Abel, Seth, Noah, all sacrificed lambs as a symbol of the coming "Lamb of God," Jesus Christ. Enoch understood God's plan of redemption and proclaimed the glorious return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jude 14, 15.

QUESTION 6: Since when are the gospel and grace known to men?

ANSWER: Genesis 3:15; Hebrews 4:2, 6. (Write) _____

The gospel was visibly portrayed in the Tabernacle service in the wilderness. The meaning of it was this:

The three angels' messages meet with opposition and contempt. The remnant people of God who proclaim the three angels' messages are regarded by many as alarmists. Since this movement is predicting that a wave of religious intolerance will soon sweep the United States and the rest of the world, it is considered extreme and pessimistic, making foundless and absurd predictions. Many cannot possibly envision that people will be persecuted in this freedom-loving land for their desire to keep the Commandments of God. Unfortunately, a large segment of Christendom refuses to study the Bible carefully, which predicts these events. 2 Timothy 4:3. Sad to say, God's last message of mercy will generally go unheeded, as did the warning of Noah before the Flood.

The proof of prophecy is in its fulfillment. When sincere Christians become aware that church and state are uniting in this country and abroad and that Sunday observance will be enforced by civil law on a worldwide basis, they will become convinced of the divine origin of the three angels' messages. At that time, the message will produce a revolutionary effect which no one can anticipate today.

Some Christians think that the greatest sin man can commit is the transgression of God's moral law. This is not so. Through the blood of Christ, God is willing to forgive every violation of His commandments. The greatest sin is refusal of God's grace, mercy, and light offered through the Holy Spirit.

QUESTION 7: Does prophecy speak about the changed attitude of the world toward Christ's disciples?

ANSWER: Revelation 13:16, 17. (Write) _____

God's first message to man after his fall was not a message of death, condemnation, or destruction, but a message of life and forgiveness. Genesis 3:15. "Have I any desire for the death of the wicked? . . . If he gives up his evil life, shall he not live?" Ezekiel 18:23, Moffatt.* A message of hope, grace, and mercy is what God sends.

God's last message to mankind is the same as the first. It is a message of love and mercy. Revelation 3:18, 19. The Bible continuously speaks of God's unfathomable love for a sinful people. John 12:32; Isaiah 55:1; John 6:37. God's plan of redemption will come to a glorious climax accompanied by great manifestations of His power, more impressive even than Pentecost. God's last message of grace will not be characterized by endless theological argument and debate, but by an overwhelming outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon all flesh. It will arrest the attention of all men, small and great, who fear the Lord. Zechariah 4:6.

God is aware of the fact that today neither the world in general nor His professed followers are prepared for His second coming. In mercy He sends a message of warning to arouse us from our spiritual slumber and prepare us for His glorious appearing. Luke 21:36. When the last call of the three angels' messages has accomplished its task and gathered the genuine believers together, the world will be ready for the great harvest. Matthew 13:39; Revelation 3:22. What shall be our answer to the last call of our Saviour?

QUESTION 8: What is the purpose of these three warnings?

ANSWER: Luke 21:36. (Write) _____

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STUDY 17

God Sends a Last Message of Mercy to Mankind

The last message of a dying father to his children, the last appeal from a commander to a besieged city, the last chance offered by a physician to a dying patient, are always very meaningful to those who receive them. However, no warning is as urgent and sincere as God's last call to man to repent and return to Him, for no one loves man as God does.

GOD ALWAYS WARNS MAN BEFORE HE SENDS JUDGMENTS

God gave messages of mercy to peoples and nations in the past. The history of man contains many examples of God's merciful warnings to people who were in great peril.

QUESTION 1: How did God warn men before disaster struck?

ANSWER: Amos 3:7. (Write) _____

Before God destroyed the earth with the Flood, He pleaded with humanity for 120 years. Noah, a preacher of righteousness, urged his contemporaries to accept the saving message of God and come into the ark. The day came when Noah gave his last message, the last call. Then the Deluge overcame unrepentant humanity. Genesis 6:3; 7:16.

Before God destroyed the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, He sent a last message of mercy to Lot and his family. Lot's family considered him an alarmist and did not believe God's message. Genesis 19:12-14.

Nineveh was the capital of a most wicked and bloodthirsty nation. Its people were a threat to every other people. When the cup of their iniquity was full, God's protection would be removed. But first He gave them a last message of mercy, calling them to repentance and reformation. The miracle happened. The whole city responded in a most remarkable way. Jonah 3:4, 6-8.

In a similar manner, for decades God entreated and warned the kings and inhabitants of Jerusalem of their impending doom, but to no avail. Just before Jerusalem was conquered and destroyed by the Roman armies in A.D. 70, Jesus Christ Himself gave His people a merciful warning. Luke 19:41-44; Matthew 23:37, 38.

Jesus Christ has given us startling prophecies of the signs before His return. Revelation 14:6-11; Matthew 24:14. Christ is now giving humanity three messages of warning. It is His last appeal to mankind. It is given by three symbolic angels representing a people, a movement. They proclaim these messages to all the world and warn men of the things to come.

When the three messages have gone to all the world, there will be no more calls, no more entreaties from God. The event following these messages will be the end of the world. The glorious appearing of the King of kings, Jesus Christ, will be its climax. Revelation 14:6-12; Luke 21:25-28; Revelation 14:14-16.

No man can accuse God of not warning mankind of coming events, for He has spoken to us clearly through the Bible.

QUESTION 2: Give examples of God's warnings.

ANSWER: Genesis 6:3; Luke 19:41-44. (Write)

THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES ARE FOR ALL THE WORLD

The first angel's message is the everlasting gospel. Revelation 14:6, 7. It was conceived in the council of the Trinity before the foundation of the world. This message must be proclaimed to all the people of the world. It contains the following components: Jesus Christ is the only preexistent Son of God, the second Member of the Holy Trinity, equal with the Father. Christ became man, the second Adam, while retaining His divine nature. Through His sinless life, vicarious death on the cross, and victorious resurrection, He reconciled mankind to God. Christ justified God's righteousness while saving the sinner. All who accept Jesus by faith as Lord and Saviour are justified, sanctified, and glorified.

The second part of the first angel's message is: "The hour of his judgment is come." For the proper understanding of this statement refer to Lesson 21. There we learn that the message of the first angel began in the 1830's and continued until 1844, when the examination of the lives of the believers began in heaven. It is called the investigative judgment, and occurred at the end of Daniel's 2300-year prophecy. Daniel 8:14.

The angel also says, "Fear God and give glory to him." Paul points out in 1 Corinthians 6:20, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." The first angel's message goes on to declare: "Worship him that made heaven and earth." Men should worship their Creator, who made the universe as well as the atom. They should honor the Sabbath day, which the Creator asks all men to set aside as a sign of their allegiance to Him. Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Mark 2:27, 28.

QUESTION 3: What is the essence of the first angel's message?

ANSWER: Revelation 14:6. (Write)

The second angel's message is to fallen Christendom. Revelation 14:8. The ancient city of Babel was known for its confusion of tongues. Modern Babylon, which is a term used in the Bible to describe apostate Christendom, is responsible for the spiritual confusion today. Modern Babylon is also a descriptive term for the enemy of God which, according to Revelation 11:3, opposed God for 1260 years during the Dark Ages. It hindered the expansion of His kingdom on earth and will continue to do so until the end of time. The Apostle John described its domain in the religious field using the symbol of an adulterous woman. Revelation 17:4-6. Its domain in the political field is symbolized by a red beast. Revelation 17:3. History attests that in 1798 a deadly wound was inflicted on the beast. Revelation 13:3, 8.

God loathes spiritual adultery. He calls it the "wine of fornication." When a person drinks of the "wine of fornication," he accepts and believes doctrines that are opposed to the teachings and practices of Jesus Christ. Then, just as wine causes drunkenness, these false doctrines cause him to become spiritually confused. In this state it is impossible for him to grasp the teachings of Jesus Christ. Revelation 14:8.

QUESTION 4: What is the "wine of fornication"?

ANSWER: Revelation 17:2; 18:3; Jeremiah 51:7. (Write)

The message of the third angel is a warning against accepting the mark and image of the beast. Revelation 14:9-11. The fourth commandment of the Decalogue contains all the components of a seal that carries full legal authority, namely, the name, the nature of the office, and the territorial jurisdiction. Exodus 20:11. The ruler is God, He holds the office of Creator, and the territory under His authority is heaven and earth.

Observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is the seal of God. This seal of allegiance is not printed visibly on our foreheads, but is indelibly impressed upon our minds as we remember the Creator. Exodus 31:17; Revelation 7:2, 3; Colossians 1:15, 16. Observing the Sabbath does not save a man. It merely expresses the desire to obey Jesus Christ, the Saviour, according to the commandment. It is the seal of identification.

We stated earlier that many Christians observe Sunday in memory of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. However, if we go back far enough in history and analyze the origins of Sunday-keeping, we are shocked to discover that, to a great extent, this day entered with the heathen who flocked to Christianity. Ecclesiastical authorities felt that Christianity would be more palatable to the pagans if they changed the day of worship to Sunday. Strangely enough, the power which the Bible calls the beast chose to identify itself by that day. Furthermore, this false Lord's day will one day become the "mark of the beast." Then, that same religio-political power will regain prominence. It will receive the aid of the state to enforce Sunday as the official day of rest. All men will be compelled through legislation to observe Sunday. Revelation 13:16. The message of the third angel is a most dramatic warning against accepting this mark.

QUESTION 5: What is the fateful decision everyone must face?

ANSWER: Revelation 14:9. (Write)

God will not put an end to the age of grace before solemnly warning all mankind of the impending judgment. The everlasting gospel must be preached to the ends of the earth before Christ returns. Matthew 24:14.

The center of the three messages is the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. The three angels' messages are in verity the message of the righteousness of Christ. This righteousness becomes ours when we receive Christ by faith; man can only enter heaven if he is clothed in the spotless character of Jesus Christ, symbolized by the white robe. These messages will enlighten the whole earth with glory before Christ's return. Revelation 18:1.

HOW WILL MANKIND REACT TO THE LAST MESSAGE OF GOD?

The world will be split into two camps. The message will meet with ridicule and unbelief among the Godless. On the other hand, multitudes will surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit and embrace the message with grateful hearts. The ranks of God's followers will swell, and the remnant will be ready to welcome Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom.

QUESTION 6: Will Christianity accept the last call of God?

ANSWER: 2 Timothy 4:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. (Write)

QUESTION 6: What is the loud cry, and what is its result?

ANSWER: Revelation 18:1, 4. (Write) _____

The remnant church militant will become the remnant church triumphant. When the Spirit of God revives His last church, it will grow and conquer. Not even the powers of hell will prevail against it. Matthew 16:18.

The three angels' messages are proclaimed by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Her members do not consider themselves better than Christians of other denominations. The difference is that they believe and proclaim the messages entrusted to them by God. Being a member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church does not entitle a person to salvation. Unless an Adventist claims the blood of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of his sins and allows the love of Christ to control him, his great knowledge of God's Word is of no avail to him. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.

The Lord Jesus is leading His church and will make her spotless and beautiful before His appearing. Ephesians 5:27.

QUESTION 7: What two camps will stand on earth before the second advent?

ANSWER: Babylon, and God's remnant church.

STUDY 18

God's Last Church on Earth: Laodicea

GOD HAS ALWAYS HAD A CHURCH ON EARTH

In spite of satanic and human opposition, God has always maintained a church on earth. This church is the successor of the long line of patriarchs, the Israelites after the flesh; it is spiritual Israel. Galatians 3:28, 29. "So all Israel shall be saved." Romans 11:26. A born-again Jew of the Old Testament corresponds to a born-again Christian of New Testament times. They are spiritual brethren. Romans 2:28, 29.

QUESTION 1: How did Peter describe the church?

ANSWER: 1 Peter 4:17. (Write) _____



There are seven successive churches of Christ in the Christian era. The first Christian church began when Christ called twelve disciples. It was the continuance of His Old Testament church.

Christian church history is divided by Jesus Christ into seven periods. They span the time between Christ's birth and the end of the world, Revelation 2 and 3. The seven churches are the following: Ephesus, meaning desirable: A.D. 1-100. Smyrna, meaning myrrh or sweet smelling: A.D. 100-321. Pergamos, meaning elevated fortress: A.D. 321-538. Thyatira, meaning the church of sacrifice: A.D. 538-1517. Sardis, meaning renewal: A.D. 1517-1798. Philadelphia, meaning brotherly love: A.D. 1798-1844. Laodicea, meaning the judgment of the people: 1844 to the return of Christ.

QUESTION 2: How closely is Christ related to the seven churches?

ANSWER: Revelation 2:1. (Write) _____

When a denomination lost its fervor, its first love, and became stagnant, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, removed its lampstand and gave it to another. Revelation 2:4, 5.

LAODICEA IS THE BIBLICAL NAME FOR THE LAST CHURCH PERIOD OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA

No man can prevent prophesied events from occurring at the exact time foretold. If God could not find a man to proclaim the message of the hour, He would make the stones cry out. Luke 19:40.

When the time on earth reached A.D. 1844, two significant events occurred: one in
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heaven and one on earth. The judgment of believers began in heaven according to Daniel's prophecy of 2300 years. Daniel 8:13, 14. The last church began to proclaim the message of the third angel to mankind. Revelation 14:6-12. These two events happened simultaneously by divine coordination. Read the message of Jesus Christ, called the faithful and true Witness, to His last church, Laodicea, in Revelation 3:14-21.

QUESTION 3: When were the three angels' messages due?

ANSWER: Revelation 14:7. (Write) _____

The condition of the Laodicean church is dangerous in spite of her high calling. Jesus Christ has grave objection against Laodicea. Her spiritual state is precarious. She seems to repeat the error of the first church, Ephesus, which was commended for her faithfulness and diligence, but reproved for the loss of her first love. Revelation 2:4, 5. Jesus Christ pleads with Laodicea to repent and to reform. Ministers and laymen, having the deepest spiritual insight, can become lifeless formalists and can lose their zeal, devotion, and love. Men can perform certain religious practices as a routine and yet have no living connection with Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. No set of doctrines, no church organization, can save a man from such danger.

Not all the members of the Laodicean church live up to their calling as true followers of Jesus Christ and His gospel. Many have only a superficial acquaintance with Jesus and have experienced only an intellectual conversion to His wonderful truths. They have lost their first love for the Saviour. Revelation 3:1. They profess the greatest spiritual truths ever entrusted to man, but because they refuse to let Christ live and rule in them thereby changing their character and habits, they remain unconverted.

The knowledge of truth without spiritual life has deplorable results. Lukewarm believers profess to be followers of Christ, but they have no zeal. Revelation 3:17. Jesus hates spiritual lukewarmness. A man who is spiritually blind is not aware of his own deplorable condition.

In the parable of the ten virgins Jesus gives a description of His Laodicean people, waiting for His return. Five virgins were wise, while five virgins were foolish. They were alike in all points except one: the five foolish virgins did not have oil in their vessels. The light of their lamps was going out at the most critical time, when the bridegroom was about to arrive. While the maidens went to purchase new oil, the five wise virgins whose lamps were burning brightly were received by the bridegroom. The door of the house was shut forever, and the five foolish virgins were found standing outside. Matthew 25:1-12.

The five wise virgins stand for Christians who not only accept the knowledge of divine truth, but also are filled with the Holy Spirit because of their intimate connection with Jesus Christ. They wear the wedding garment, which stands for the spotless character of Jesus Christ. Revelation 7:14.

The five foolish virgins represent Christians who do not love Jesus sufficiently. They believe the teachings and prophecies of the Bible, but have no vital communion with Christ through His Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 10:12.

QUESTION 4: How did the Lord show His interest in His tempted followers?

ANSWER: Luke 22:31, 32. (Write) _____

Christ's little group of followers was shaken and sifted through the crisis accompanying His trial, condemnation, and crucifixion. One of His disciples denied Him, another left and betrayed Him. Luke 22:31-34. In the same manner, Christ's last church on earth will also be shaken through a succession of crises. Only those remain who have a genuine faith in Christ and are truly united with Him through the Holy Spirit. They behave like Jesus in difficult situations. Such people are not spewed out of His mouth; on the contrary, they are engraved on the palms of His hands. Revelation 3:5. But all who decide to remain lukewarm toward Jesus and refuse to be reformed in their ways will be spewed out by the Lord.

In spite of its weaknesses, Christ does not give up Laodicea for He has promised to walk with His church. Christ promised to shake, sift, and revive her to make her ready to meet Him. There will not be an eighth church. Christ, who controls the stars of the firmament in their courses, also guides the "seven stars" which symbolize the leaders of His church. He gives them gold tried in fire, depicting faith and love; white garments, illustrating His righteous character, His spotless life; ointment for the eyes, portraying the graces of the Holy Spirit.

This is Christ's message to His people everywhere. Some will humbly accept it while others will reject it. It is a solemn message of decision and reformation. Revelation 3:19, 20.

QUESTION 5: What remedies does the heavenly merchant offer to Laodicea?

ANSWER: Revelation 3:18, 19. (Write) _____

When Jesus purifies Laodicea as gold and silver are purified by fire, Malachi 3:2, 3, its members will be clad with the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

GOD'S REMNANT CHURCH PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE DURING THE LAST EVENTS OF WORLD HISTORY

The Laodicean message is primarily sent to arouse those Christians who eagerly expect the return of Jesus Christ, but who have backslidden. Many will repent, become zealous, and return to their first love, Jesus Christ. This message is not meant just for the remnant church but for Christians in all denominations and for non-Christians as well. Every denomination contains sincere believers who will recognize the urgent call of God for a revival. They will humble themselves and allow the Holy Spirit to revive their faith in Jesus.

When His last message of mercy will swell to a loud cry and will fill the earth with spiritual light and glory, Revelation 18:1, then many sincere believers will overcome all obstacles to follow this call and join the remnant church. No family ties, no worldly considerations, can hold them back. They are no longer afraid of unpopularity and persecution. Their only desire is to follow Jesus. Truth will become more precious to them than life itself.

When God's people heed the counsel of Jesus Christ and symbolically put on white garments (the righteousness of Jesus Christ), Isaiah 53:1, 2, 8, 10, 11, then the remnant church will become the fold where all those who love the Lord will gather and find shelter. She has been prepared for this special purpose by the providence of God. Christians who were formerly lukewarm will reflect the light and glory of Jesus Christ. Isaiah 60:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

STUDY 19

**The Gift of the Spirit of Christ
in the Spirit of Prophecy**

Since eternity, God the Holy Spirit, who is equal in every respect with God the Father and with God the Son, is the third Person of the Trinity. He was the co-worker of Christ in both creation and redemption. As Christ is the express image of the Father, so the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. In all true prophets of the past, the Spirit of Christ was manifested. 1 Peter 1:10, 11. The prophets of God were inspired by the Holy Spirit. 2 Peter 1:21. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. Romans 8:9.

QUESTION 1: Who has spoken through the prophets of God?

ANSWER: 1 Peter 1:10, 11. (Write) _____

**THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN EVERY AGE GAVE SPIRITUAL
GIFTS TO MEN—1 Corinthians 12:1, 10, 11; 14:1**

In Old Testament times we find men who had the gift of the Spirit of prophecy: Enoch, Jude 14; Noah, 2 Peter 2:5; Abraham and his descendants, Psalm 105:15; Moses, Numbers 11:17, 29; David, 2 Samuel 23:2. But God's people often despised and ridiculed the messengers of God. 2 Chronicles 36:16.

QUESTION 2: Whom did the people despise when they rejected the prophets of God?

ANSWER: 1 Samuel 8:7. (Write) _____

In New Testament times, the Spirit of prophecy was working through His chosen agents: in Jesus, the King of the prophets, Luke 4:18; the apostles; Agabus, Acts 21:10; the four virgin daughters of Philip, Acts 21:9; Simeon and Anna, Luke 2:25, 36.

Jesus promised that He would remain with His disciples till the end of time. Matthew 28:20; John 14:16. He told them that it was more expedient for them that He go away so that the Holy Spirit could come to them. John 16:7. In Revelation 2 and 3, Christ speaks to the seven churches, but the Spirit of God also has spoken to everyone. Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.

QUESTION 3: Why was this help given to the church of God?

ANSWER: Ephesians 6:11, 12. (Write) _____

In the period of the last church, Laodicea, there is the remnant of the seed of the woman who have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Revelation 12:17. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10.

THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY IN THE TWO EXODUS MOVEMENTS

According to Daniel 7:9, 10, the investigative judgment began in the most holy place of the heavenly temple at the end of the 2300 years, in A.D. 1844. Daniel 8:13, 14. On the earth exactly at that time, a movement which proclaimed the three angels' messages came into being. The hour of His judgment is come! Keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Revelation 14:6-12.

As we have seen, this remnant church must have the gift of the Spirit of prophecy. The last prophet in the Old Testament pointed to this. "I will send you Elijah!" Malachi 4:5, 6. As in Jesus' time, it will come in the spirit and power of Elijah. Luke 1:17.

In the Bible we have two great exodus movements going parallel: The one going from Egypt through the Red Sea and the River Jordan to the earthly Canaan; the other, at the end of time, the Advent Movement, going from spiritual Babylon through the early and latter rain to the heavenly Canaan!

QUESTION 4: What two parallel movements stand out conspicuously in the Bible?

ANSWER: 1. Exodus; 2. The Advent Movement.

Special times and difficulties demand special help and providences. The desert wanderers received manna, water, protection, clothing, guidance, etc. They received all these through the Spirit of prophecy working through Moses. Hosea 12:13. The Advent Movement needed the same divine leadership and providences.

QUESTION 5: Would the Advent Movement survive and triumph without prophetic help?

ANSWER: Revelation 12:17; Hosea 12:13. (Write) _____

Israel never accepted Moses as its leader, but rebelled against him. It killed its prophets, Jesus lamented. Matthew 23:34, 35. Christians did not treat the messengers of Christ any better.

THE LAST APPEARANCE OF THE SPIRIT OF PROPHECY

The gift of the Spirit of prophecy was given to a number of women, among them being Miriam, Huldah, Deborah, Anna, and the four virgin daughters of Philip. In A.D.

1844 Hazen Foss, a member of the early Seventh-day Adventist Church, had a vision, but he did not accept the commission to tell it to the church. He was afraid of being ridiculed. Then Ellen G. Harmon, later to become Mrs. James White, received the charge to tell the same vision she had seen. A sick and weak girl of seventeen, she trepidly obeyed and became a messenger of the Lord for seventy years. She has written more than sixty books. Christ has said: "By their fruits ye shall know them." Matthew 7:20. We have to examine her life and her writings. The test is by the moral law and the Bible. Isaiah 8:20. She was modest, glorifying Christ in everything. Through her writings God has educated, guided, and protected the Advent people.

QUESTION 6: Who is the humble person to whom the Spirit of prophecy was given in the Advent Movement?

ANSWER: Mrs. Ellen G. White.

Satan has in every age stirred up rebellion against the Spirit of prophecy. This happened when the ten spies discouraged Israel, when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram rebelled against Moses and Aaron. In the Christian churches also, there were false brethren, unruly members. Acts 20:29. "The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God."—*Selected Messages*, Book Two, p. 78. "Where there is no vision the people perish." Proverbs 29:18. There are some today who reject or ridicule this gift of the Spirit of Christ.

CHRIST STAYS WITH HIS CHILDREN TILL THE END OF TIME

There are false Christs and false prophets; therefore we have this admonition: 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21. The counsel of the Spirit of prophecy protected the Advent Movement from apostasy and divisions. Some left us, but the movement remained intact. Hosea 12:13.

The Spirit of prophecy was one of Christ's choicest gifts to His people. Through this gift this church received counsels, warnings; became strong in organization, united in teaching. The writings of the Spirit of prophecy are an inspired Bible exposition but not another Bible. They are a smaller light leading us to the great light. John 16:13, 14.

After we have read the letters of Christ to the seven churches and especially to Laodicea, we shall listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. Christ and His Spirit will always agree. 2 Chronicles 20:20.

QUESTION 7: What is the danger in rejecting the gift of the Spirit of Christ?

ANSWER: Matthew 23:37, 38; John 9:40, 41. (Write) _____

Most men have lost their faith in a personal God and believe only what they see. They walk by sight instead of faith, and, for this reason, few of them receive the precious gifts of God. Satan, the god of this world, has blinded men's minds, the eyes of their souls, the eyes of faith. 2 Corinthians 4:4. The Holy Spirit opens blind spiritual eyes that they may see unseen realities. Ephesians 1:17, 18; Acts 26:18.

Believe in Jesus Christ, surrender your life to Him, and regain your faith. Open your spiritual eyes, and see Him whom to know and love is life eternal. Although unseen, God is a reality. All heroes of faith have trusted in Him. Hebrews 11. Doubt, unbelief, and anxiety destroy faith and make men incapable of receiving the gifts of God. James 1:6, 7.

Let us pray together: "Lord, forgive our unbelief and give us faith. Cleanse our doubting hearts, and open our spiritual eyes that we may behold the invisible, believe the seemingly impossible, and choose rather to suffer for the sake of following Jesus Christ than to worship the temporal advantages offered by the world."

QUESTION 7: Whom does Jesus call blessed?

ANSWER: John 20:29. (Write) _____

STUDY 20

The Cable of Faith

Air is the animating element man needs for survival. The diver descending to the bottom of the sea depends on air pumped to him from the surface through an air hose. If the hose breaks, it means death to the diver. The water surrounding him is not the natural element in which he lives; on the contrary, it will suffocate him. In a similar manner a converted person who has been born anew by the Holy Spirit (John 3:5) does, in a sense, begin to live in an unnatural element, namely, the sin-infested world which threatens his survival. John 17:15, 16. He can survive only if spiritual life is supplied to him daily by God. If the connection with heaven is broken, the sin-infested atmosphere of this world, like a strange element, suffocates his soul.

CABLE OF FAITH CONNECTS THE BELIEVER WITH GOD

We can compare this connection with Heaven to a telephone cable crossing the Atlantic Ocean and containing a large number of wires. When that cable is broken, the connection between the two continents is severed. The same is true in the case of the believer whose intimate connection with heaven is severed when the cable of faith is broken. All the gifts of God are conveyed to our souls through a spiritual cable. This cable is *faith*. Without faith we cannot receive the gifts of God. Faith is one of the greatest faculties we are endowed with. It is greater than knowledge, for knowledge has a limit. But God-inspired faith is limitless.

What are some of God's great gifts? Jesus Christ. John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 9:15. The Holy Spirit. Acts 8:19, 20. Eternal life. Romans 6:23. Mercy and righteousness. Romans 5:15-17. Physical welfare and fitness. Ecclesiastes 3:13.

QUESTION 1: How did we receive everything we have and are?

ANSWER: Ephesians 4:8; Romans 5:17. (Write) _____

God lavishes on us a great variety of spiritual gifts which we should desire. 1 Corinthians 12:4, 11, 31. The church in Corinth possessed all the gifts of God. 1 Corinthians 1:7. The living faith which expresses itself in actions (James 2:17, 18) is the cable through which all the gracious gifts of God are flowing into our souls. Again and again we find in Scripture this statement: "Through faith." What is faith? Hebrews 11:1. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Hebrews 11:6.

QUESTION 2: Who gives all spiritual gifts to the believer?

ANSWER: 1 Corinthians 12:11. (Write) _____

How do we obtain faith? Faith is awakened by hearing the Word of God, and the message that awakens it is the word of Jesus Christ. Romans 10:17. Let us examine ourselves whether we really believe in God and whether we live according to our faith. 2 Corinthians 13:5. If we desire to have more faith and ask God for it, we will receive it. Matthew 7:7, 11. God will give you faith in measureless quantities provided you are willing to empty your heart of "self." 1 Corinthians 12:4, 11; John 3:34.

QUESTION 3: In what spiritual condition must we be to receive the gifts of God?

ANSWER: 2 Corinthians 13:5. (Write) _____

THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH—Romans 1:17

Everything is possible to those who believe. Mark 9:23. Before the Lord Jesus healed a sick person, He usually asked him, "Do you believe that I can do this?" After having received an affirmative answer, Jesus said, "According to your faith it shall be done to you." As a result the person was healed.

On one occasion Jesus said to a woman, "Your faith has saved you." Faith was the cable which connected this woman with God and His power.

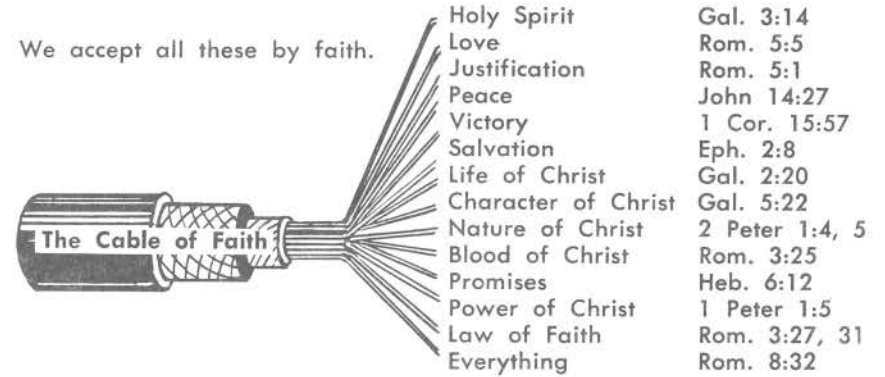
Other examples: "Woman, great is your faith, your daughter shall be made whole." Marveling over the faith of the Roman centurion, Jesus said, "I have not found such faith in all of Israel."

Often He reprimanded His disciples, saying, "You have little faith." Many Christians fail today because their cable of faith is broken, and they find themselves cut off from God's power. Often we try to accomplish things by our own strength and attempt to conquer temptation and discouragement by our own power. This is an impossible undertaking and can lead only to failure. The power to lead a victorious life is given to us by God only through a living and active faith in Him. 1 John 5:4.

QUESTION 4: How strong was Abraham's faith?

ANSWER: Romans 4:18, 20, 21. (Write) _____

Just as a cable is made up of innumerable wires, so the cable of faith is composed of a vast number of individual components, each one emanating from God:



QUESTION 5: How much do we receive through faith in Christ?

ANSWER: Romans 8:32. (Write) _____

BELIEVE WHAT GOD HAS PROMISED

Appropriate His gifts through faith. God never abandons a person who trusts Him. He would rather allow the firmament to collapse than to break one of His promises. Your faith, however, should not be based on pleasant feelings, emotions, signs, etc., but on the promise, the Word of the Creator.

We are to accept these gifts as a child accepts a gift from a parent. Skepticism and doubt short-circuit our relations with God, and darkness takes possession of our souls. Never ask God how and when He will fulfill His promises. That is His prerogative. We are to believe and trust in Him and patiently wait for the fulfillment.

All who possess a living and active faith in God do two things:

1. They receive Jesus Christ. They open their souls to the Holy Spirit and accept all His gifts. John 1:12.
2. They give themselves to Christ. They surrender everything: their minds, emotions, wills, bodies, possessions, to the Holy Spirit. John 15:4; Proverbs 23:26.

These two steps bring about a personal attachment, a close union with God, which bears rich fruit in our lives and brings perfect peace to our minds. Philippians 4:7.

QUESTION 6: How is active faith perceived?

ANSWER: James 2:17, 18. (Write) _____

STUDY 21

Christ in the Sabbath

All truth and teachings of the Bible must be studied in the brilliant light streaming from the cross. Then our concept of Christ will be like a steadily enlarging horizon. He will become All in all. Colossians 3:11; Ephesians 1:23.

CHRIST IS GREATER THAN WE THINK

Christ is the Creator and Upholder of the universe. Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-3. He is also the Creator of the Sabbath, and He observed it as our example. Genesis 2:1-3.

QUESTION 1: Who is the Creator of the world and the Sabbath?

ANSWER: John 1:1-3. (Write) _____

The moral law is the transcript of the character of God. It is eternal and unchangeable, its essence is love. Romans 13:10; Matthew 22:37-40. God gave it to Adam in the Garden of Eden, where it was written in the mind of man; He gave it again on Mount Sinai, written on two tables of stone. James 4:12. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus explained how we can fulfill the moral law. Matthew 5:17, 18.

QUESTION 2: Who gave the law which includes the Sabbath?

ANSWER: James 4:12. (Write) _____

Christ included His day of rest in the Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:8-11. These are the weekly Sabbaths, which are called by God "My sabbaths." There are also the ceremonial or symbolical sabbaths. Colossians 2:16, 17. Jehovah and Jesus are the same divine Person. He is the Creator and Redeemer of men. He calls Himself the Lord of the Sabbath! Mark 2:27, 28. He always kept His own Sabbath. Luke 4:16.

QUESTION 3: Which day did Jesus keep and why?

ANSWER: Luke 4:16; Matthew 5:17, 18. (Write) _____

In Genesis 2:1-3 we read that God blessed and sanctified the Sabbath. Blessing and sanctification is the very purpose of the gospel. In Ezekiel 20:12 God says, "I am the Lord that sanctify them." In verse 20 He says, "Hallow my sabbaths." The Lord sanctifies His people as the people sanctify His Sabbath.

The Sabbath commandment contains the characteristics of God's seal: God (His title), Creator (His office), heaven and earth (His dominion). After finishing our redemption, Jesus rested in His grave, keeping the Sabbath as our Example, even in His death. Revelation 7:1-3 portrays the sealing of His redeemed before His coming.

QUESTION 4: Of what is the Sabbath a sign?

ANSWER: Exodus 31:17; Ezekiel 20:12. (Write) _____

The Sabbath, first, is a sign of loyalty. Revelation 12:17; 14:12; 22:14. Second, it is a time of rest. Matthew 11:28, 29. It means rest from sinning, peace of soul. Third, it is a symbol and a prophecy of the new earth where there will be perfect rest and an absence of sin and sinners. Hebrews 4:7-11; Isaiah 66:22, 23. Fourth, the Sabbath is a prophetic reference to the millennium, or one thousand years, during which time the earth, being in a chaotic and lifeless state, will rest and make up her neglected Sabbaths, just as the land of Canaan rested for seventy years during the captivity of the Jews in Babylon. Revelation 20:3, 5; Leviticus 26:34.

QUESTION 5: How long will the Sabbath be celebrated?

ANSWER: Isaiah 66:22, 23. (Write) _____

The Sabbath-day celebration was given in the Garden of Eden to the whole family of mankind. Had it been kept faithfully, men would never have forgotten their Creator. They would have understood that the Sabbath belongs to the Gentiles, too, and not only to the Jews. Isaiah 56:2, 6. Jesus confirmed this in Mark 2:27.

The Sabbath day was celebrated by Abraham, the father of all true believers, and his descendants. Genesis 26:5. The Sabbath day should be celebrated from sunset to sunset. Leviticus 23:32. Isaiah tells about the restoration of the Sabbath and gives instructions about the keeping of the Lord's day. Isaiah 58:12, 13. Nothing should be allowed to disturb the sacred communion of our soul with God at any time, especially on the Sabbath.

Newborn men do not keep the Sabbath in order to earn salvation but because they are saved by Christ's grace. They celebrate Christ's day out of joy, as a living expression of their love, loyalty, and gratitude toward their glorious Saviour.

QUESTION 6: What is the noble reason for keeping the Sabbath?

ANSWER: John 14:21. (Write) _____

THE DEEP SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SABBATH IN THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION

Sabbathkeeping is an act of love and not a legal duty. John 14:21, 23; 15:10. The ordinances of Christ have a double significance. Baptism, for instance, means the death of our old man—of our past life. With regard to our future life, it means the birth of a new man and the beginning of a new life. The Lord's Supper points back to the cross of Christ and forward to the second coming of our Lord Jesus.

The first marriage celebration in the Garden of Eden meant the union of husband and wife, but it was also a prophecy (Genesis 2:24) which referred to Jesus, who left the Father and became man, that by His life and death He may redeem for Himself a wife, His church. Ephesians 5:32.

In the same manner, the Sabbath has a double significance. First, it means spiritual and bodily rest. Second, the Sabbath has a prophetic meaning which points to the new earth, where there will be union with the Trinity, eternal rest and harmony!

Jesus, the Creator, knew before creation concerning man's fall, of the great apostasy of mankind, the destruction of this earth, and the creation of a new earth where the Sabbath rest will be respected. This is the plan, this is the goal toward which the whole creation hastens. Hebrews 4:9, 11; Isaiah 26:2, 3. You must be there!

QUESTION 7: What is the double meaning of the Sabbath?

ANSWER: Hebrews 4:9, 11; Isaiah 66:22, 23; Revelation 22:14. (Write) _____

certain basic truth. 2 Peter 1:12. Noah's message was concerned with moral corruption and the impending judgment, the Flood. Elijah warned Israel of the worship of Baal, and his message turned them back to Jehovah. John the Baptist preached the necessity of a genuine conversion experience. Luther emphasized the teaching of salvation by faith. The Baptists taught the world the importance of adult baptism. Wesley urged mankind to accept the righteousness of Christ. The Sabbath-Sunday controversy was not an issue at any early time. No light was ever shed on this dormant truth. It was to become a dominant issue only at the time of the end of the world. Isaiah 58:12, 13; Revelation 14:6-12.

God will not condemn Christians who have kept Sunday in good faith. If they lacked knowledge of the facts regarding the authentic Lord's day, God will take that into consideration. We are responsible only for the light which we have received or could have received if we desired it. Luke 12:47, 48; Romans 2:12, 13; Acts 17:30. In past generations, many Christians worshiped the Lord on Sunday and did so in good faith; even today there are many people in every Christian denomination who are convinced that Sunday is the Lord's day. God accepts their worship since it stems from a sincere motive.

QUESTION 6: What will be the issue in the last days?

ANSWER: Whether we shall keep God's commandments or the commandments of men.

This is the last act in the drama of history. According to the prophetic Word, the time will soon come when the laws of men will be preferred over the laws of God. Laws enforcing the observance of Sunday will be passed by our government, and the issue will be clearly seen by all. Revelation 12:17; Psalm 119:126. Everyone will have to take sides either with God or with man.

The institution of the Sabbath was Christ's first act after creation; the enforcement of Sunday as the official day of rest in place of God's holy day will be the last act in the drama of the ages. It will occur shortly before the end of the time of probation.

QUESTION 7: What will be the last act in the drama of history?

ANSWER: Federal and universal legislation of the Sunday law. Revelation 13:16, 17.

A GREAT DECISION WITH ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES REQUIRES PRAYERFUL CONSIDERATION

Without any doubt, Sunday observers wish with all their hearts to serve God. Now that we have called attention to this misinterpretation, we urge you to test your belief on this point by studying the Holy Scriptures. If you come to the conclusion that the seventh-day Sabbath is the Lord's day, do not hesitate to worship God on this day. Do not reject God's light on this commandment. Matthew 15:13; Luke 6:46.

Jesus tested the faithfulness and obedience of man in the Garden of Eden; He asked man not to touch the forbidden fruit. Today a similar test applies to the followers of Christ. He asks us not to work on the Sabbath day but to spend it in intimate fellowship with Him, for it is His day. Great principles of loyalty and integrity are at stake in this controversy, principles upon which depends the destiny of our souls.



STUDY 22

Why Does Christendom Keep Sunday?

Why does Christendom celebrate Sunday? Why do most Christians worship God on the first day of the week? The answer is that Christians have been taught to honor this day for centuries as a day of rest and worship. Sincere Christians through the centuries desired to obey and honor God in this manner; they were convinced that this was God's holy day. On the other hand, a minority of Christians maintain that the seventh day of the week is the Lord's day.

Whether to observe Sabbath or Sunday is a controversial issue. We need the grace of God and His wisdom to help us deal with this problem. We must be careful to avoid emotionalism and prejudice. This issue involves every human being; we must guide men to the Holy Scriptures, the place of final authority on all matters of faith.

We must not condemn one another but prayerfully seek the truth in the light of the Holy Spirit. This issue is not to be regarded as a rivalry between men; it is a matter between God and man. Let us investigate the origin of Sunday observance in the spirit of kindness.

A TRANSITION IS MADE FROM SABBATH TO SUNDAY

The Lord Jesus and the apostles did not change the Sabbath. Jesus Christ instituted the Sabbath at the end of creation week, for He is the Creator. John 1:1-3. He gave the Ten Commandments to Moses on two tables of stone (Exodus 24:12; James 4:12) although they had been known by man since creation and passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth. These commandments were repeated on Mount Sinai and later on confirmed by Jesus Christ. Jesus honored His own law and kept it. John 15:10. After finishing the work of redemption, He rested on the Sabbath day in the grave. Luke 23:54-56.

The apostles made no changes in the law. Romans 3:28, 31; 1 John 5:2, 3; Revelation 22:14; James 2:10.

Christians of the first century observed the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week. Paul obeyed this commandment and taught it in Corinth. Acts 18:4, 11. Jesus indicated that the Sabbath would be observed by Christians after His resurrection and ascension. He spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Matthew 24:20.

QUESTION 1: On which day did the Christians worship in the first century?

ANSWER: Acts 18:4, 11. (Write) _____

The emergence of Sunday observance begins in the early centuries. The transition

from Sabbath to Sunday observance took place gradually over a period of three hundred years, starting about A.D. 150. The epistle of Barnabas, and Justin Martyr's "First Apology," written about A.D. 150, refer for the first time to the observance of Sunday by Christians.

Clement of Alexandria and the apocryphal Gospel of Peter mention Sunday as the Lord's day. During the Jewish revolution, A.D. 132-135, under the leadership of Bar-cochba, Christians were in an awkward position. Many regarded them as a Jewish sect. When persecution against the Jews broke out, Christian leaders decided to make a clear differentiation between Judaism and Christianity. Those who kept the Sabbath day were called "Judaizers"; they were discouraged from observing this day any longer. Christians were to keep Sunday instead.

The churches in Rome and Alexandria were known for their early transition from Sabbath to Sunday. Alexandria was the seat of Gnosticism. The churches in Jerusalem and Antioch opposed them on this issue. For several centuries Christians observed both the Sabbath and Sunday. In the beginning of the third century, Tertullian remarked that Jesus Christ had not rescinded the Sabbath.

In the beginning of the fourth century, Sunday-keeping became more popular. Eusebius, in his Commentary on Psalm 92, wrote, "All things whatsoever it was the duty to do on the Sabbath we have transferred to the Lord's day since this day is more honorable than the Jewish Sabbath."

QUESTION 2: How and why was the Sabbath changed to Sunday?

ANSWER: 1. Gradually. 2. To separate Christians from Judaism. Acts 20:30.

Official confirmation given for Sunday. On March 7, A.D. 321, the Emperor Constantine issued a decree by which he made Sunday a day of worship for all his subjects. "Let all judges, and all city people, and all tradesmen, rest upon the venerable day of the sun."

The Council of Elvira, in A.D. 305, resolved as follows: "If anyone in the city neglects to come to church for three Sundays, let him be excommunicated for a short time so that he may be corrected."—Charles J. Hefele, *History of the Church Councils*, Vol. 1, Canon 21, pp. 145, 146.

About A.D. 354, the Council of Laodicea adopted a canon officially changing the Sabbath to Sunday: "Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday, but shall work on that day; but the Lord's day they shall especially honour, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing [observing the Bible Sabbath], they shall be shut out from Christ."—*Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 316.

QUESTION 3: When was Sunday officially installed?

ANSWER: A.D. 321, 354.

The Lord's day and what it means. Some interpreters point to Revelation 1:10 to prove that Sunday is the Lord's day. Others explain that this refers to the "great day of the Lord" as found in Joel 2:11, 31 and Zephaniah 1:14. The only way to decide this matter is by allowing the Holy Bible to explain itself. The Scriptures refer to the seventh-day Sabbath as the Lord's day. Genesis 2:3; Isaiah 58:13; Mark 2:28.

Many sincere Christians believe that Sunday is a divinely ordained memorial of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is not true. The motives are good, but the facts are wrong. If it were left to us to choose a day of worship outside the Sabbath, we might prefer to select Friday, for, after all, it is on this day Christ died and redeemed mankind. However, we are not asked to choose a day of our own. Jesus decided this matter for us. Just before going to Calvary, Jesus established a memorial of His death to be observed by all Christians: the Lord's Supper which reminds us of His atoning death. In

the same manner He established another memorial, baptism, which points to His death and resurrection. Romans 6:3-5. He did not ask us to establish a further memorial to His resurrection by shifting the Sabbath to Sunday. The Sabbath is a memorial of His act of creation. Exodus 20:8-11.

QUESTION 4: What is the Biblical reminder of the resurrection?

ANSWER: Romans 6:3-5. (Write) _____

WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE WHETHER WE OBSERVE THE SEVENTH OR THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK?

What is the significance of Sunday-keeping? Jesus Christ, our Creator, instituted the universal Sabbath day to be observed on the seventh day of the week. He commanded that every man work for six days, then worship Him and rest from his labors on the seventh day. Exodus 20:8-11.

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If we decide to do the opposite, namely, first rest for a day and then work six days, we honor another lord, the one who is responsible for the substitution.

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If we keep the seventh-day Sabbath, we declare that we accept this day as the sign of our allegiance to our Creator and Redeemer. Exodus 31:16, 17. This passage refers to spiritual Israel. Romans 2:28, 29. On the other hand, if we decide to observe the first day of the week, we indicate that we prefer to give our allegiance to the power that established the observance of this day.

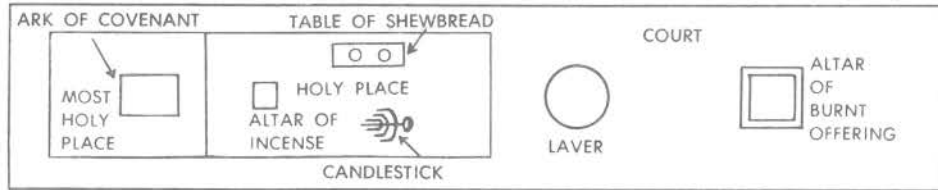
John speaks of the sealing of those who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. Revelation 12:17; 14:12. At the same time God warns us not to accept the sign of allegiance of the other power. The fact is that our choice of the day of worship determines to which lawmaker we are being loyal. Which of these two lords are you worshiping and obeying? That is the question. Revelation 14:9-11.

QUESTION 5: How did Christ rebuke orthodox Jews?

ANSWER: Luke 6:46. (Write) _____

Why is this issue important today? Every age has had a revelation from God of a

It is an interesting fact that the letter to the Hebrews carries the whole sanctuary service over to the New Testament. The cross is the center of it, and the priestly services continue in the heavenly temple. Hebrews 9:23, 24; 7:25; 8:1, 2. The Holy Spirit is working together with the Saviour. Hebrews 10:14-16; Ezekiel 36:27. In order to be saved, men's characters must be changed by the grace of God. Zechariah 3:2-5.



QUESTION 2: What did the Tabernacle represent?

ANSWER: Hebrews 4:2, 6; 10:1; 9:9. (Write) _____

Only the high priest could enter into the most holy place of the earthly Tabernacle once a year. Now every believer can boldly enter into the most holy place of the heavenly temple and stand, clad in the righteousness of Christ, before the throne of mercy. Hebrews 4:16.

The same plan of salvation was manifested through the yearly sacred feasts: the Paschal Feast, sometimes called Easter, pointed to the cross, the atonement, and *justification*. Pentecost pointed to the work of the Holy Spirit. The Feast of Unleavened Bread symbolized the separation from sins and sinful nature, *sanctification*. The firstfruits, or waving the sheaf, represented the giving of ourselves to God, surrender. The trumpets were blown as a call to prepare for the coming judgment day. The Day of Atonement symbolized the blotting out of sins in heaven, the time of judgment. The Feast of Tabernacles pointed to the new earth, where peace and harmony will reign. This pointed to the *glorification*.

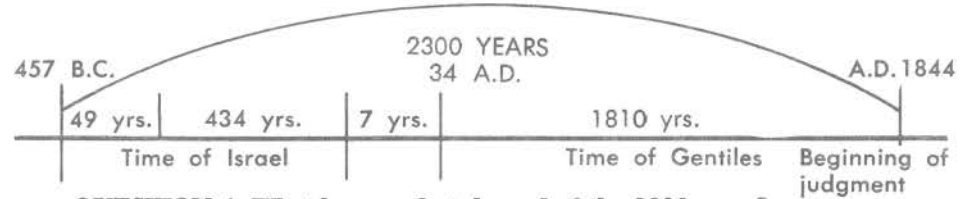
QUESTION 3: What steps must every saved soul take?

ANSWER: Romans 8:30. (Write) _____

CHRIST REVEALS THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT IN THE HEAVENLY TEMPLE

Daniel the prophet received a vision of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, which will be shown to be the investigative judgment. It was explained by Gabriel. Dan-

iel 8:13, 14; 9:24-27. These texts speak of two time prophecies: the 2300 days (years) and the seventy weeks, or 490 days (years). Ezekiel 4:6. Both began at the same time in 457 B.C. Ezra 7:7. In the middle of the seventieth week the Messiah was cut off, in A.D. 31. The 2300 years ended in A.D. 1844. Since then we have lived in probationary time. Revelation 10:6. Since then the investigative judgment has been going on in the most holy place in heaven. At the same time on earth the Laodicean church began to proclaim the three angels' messages according to Revelation 14:6-12. This text gives the timing of the beginning of the judgment: "The hour of his judgment is come!" This message will develop into a worldwide proclamation. Revelation 18:1, 4.



QUESTION 4: What happened at the end of the 2300 years?

ANSWER: Daniel 8:13, 14; Revelation 14:7. (Write) _____

In Daniel 7:9, 10 we have an astounding description of the investigative judgment in heaven. The Father acts as President, the angels as witnesses, and men whose names are written in the book of life are the defendants. The book of deeds is opened and read. Jesus Christ is the Advocate of the redeemed, but the Judge of the lost. 1 John 2:1; John 5:22, 27. In the Old Testament times, the sins of Israel were forgiven daily, but the accumulated sins were blotted out only on the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement, when the sanctuary was cleansed from all registered sins. Leviticus 16:20, 29, 33. In the same manner, the sins will be blotted out in heaven during the investigative judgment. Acts 3:19, 20.

Jesus completely reconciled men to God on the cross, but only those who accept Him and surrender themselves to Him will be saved. In the judgment it will be decided whether the sins or the names of the judged will be blotted out. Revelation 3:5; John 5:24.

QUESTION 5: Whose name will be blotted out?

ANSWER: Exodus 32:33; Deuteronomy 29:20. (Write) _____

STUDY 24

Christ Solves the Problem of Death

For six thousand years Christ and Satan have been waging a fight for every man. Christ created man for eternal life and happiness, but Satan, the merciless nihilist, planned the ruin and eternal death of mankind. The principle of life is divine love and sacrifice. The principle of death is hate and selfishness.

Christ came as a man into this dark world wrapped in the shadow of eternal death, to conquer death through death, to redeem the slaves and prisoners of death, and to destroy the devil. Hebrews 2:14, 15; Isaiah 49:24, 25; 1 John 3:8.

QUESTION 1: What was the gigantic task set before the Saviour?

ANSWER: Isaiah 49:24, 25; Genesis 3:15. (Write) _____

The devil can fish best in troubled waters. He can deceive mankind best through the ignorance concerning the state of man in death. Only God knows the truth about it. If man does not believe God and His Word, he is lost and is at the mercy of a merciless foe.

QUESTION 2: In what condition has mankind been for ages?

ANSWER: Matthew 4:16. (Write) _____

Christ, the Son of God, is the Creator of the universe and of this earth. John 1:1-3, 14. He did not create man with an immortal soul, otherwise He could never destroy him in case of rebellion. He stated this in these words: "Thou shalt surely die." Genesis 2:17. The first lie originated with Satan: "Ye shall not surely die." Genesis 3:4. He sustained this lie even after man died, telling man that only the body dies while the immortal soul lives on as a spirit. In this way he cleverly prepared the way for all kinds of phenomena.

QUESTION 3: Why did nations and people believe this lie?

ANSWER: 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. (Write) _____

QUESTION: What is the soul?

ANSWER: Deuteronomy 12:23 _____

Thus the earth became a huge cemetery for every living being. If Christ cannot bring forth His saved people from the prison grave, He died in vain, He has no people! Isaiah 9:2; 26:19; Matthew 22:32.

FALSE PREMISES AND DISTORTED HOPES

While truth progresses slowly, it is unbelievable how rapidly lies spread around the world. All heathen nations, primitive and civilized, and nearly all Christians believe today in the immortality of the human soul. Christianity acquired this false belief in the great influx of Gentiles into the church.

QUESTION 4: By what were Jews and Christians misled?

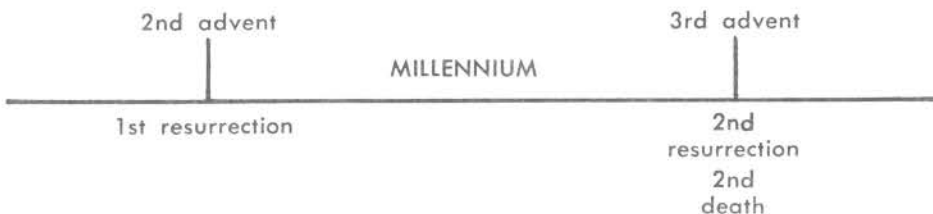
ANSWER: John 8:44; Colossians 2:8. (Write) _____

The Word of God denies the immortality of the soul. Ecclesiastes 9:4-6, 10; 3:19-21. Christ breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, or life power. It is impersonal and goes back to God at death. Ecclesiastes 12:7. The Bible tells us that there are two deaths.

The first death is an unconscious sleep, which is not eternal. John 11:11-14; Job 14:10-14. There is a resurrection from the first death for the redeemed, when the sting of death will be destroyed at the second advent of Christ. John 11:25, 26; 1 Corinthians 15:54, 55.

The second death is the wage or punishment of sin. Romans 6:23. Those who suffer it are conscious; it is final and eternal destruction by fire, called hell. Revelation 20:14, 15. Originally it was prepared only for Satan and the rebellious angels. Matthew 25:41.

There are two deaths and two resurrections revealed in the Bible. John 5:28, 29.



QUESTION 5: Why is the second death final?

ANSWER: Malachi 4:1; Ezekiel 28:19. (Write) _____

IMMORTALITY VERSUS RESURRECTION

Either the soul is immortal and must not be resurrected, or it is mortal and must be resurrected. If man received his reward or punishment at death, why is a later judgment or a resurrection necessary? According to the Bible, there is no purgatory; salvation cannot be obtained after death. David and the saints are all in their graves. Acts 2:29, 34; Isaiah 57:1, 2.

LIFE IS A TIME OF SOLEMN PRIVILEGE TO MAKE A DECISION FOR ETERNAL LIFE OR DEATH

Man has conditional immortality only through Jesus Christ. He gave man the choice of life or death in the Garden of Eden, and unfortunately, man chose death. Proverbs 8:36. Only Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, could conquer death and Satan. Thus He became our only Redeemer and hope for eternal life. John 10:10; 14:19; Revelation 1:18.

God alone has immortality. 1 Timothy 6:16. We can only seek it. Romans 2:7. Jesus Christ brought it to light. 2 Timothy 1:10; Romans 6:23.

QUESTION 6: What solemn appeal is given to us?

ANSWER: Deuteronomy 30:19. (Write) _____

Satan has no power to resurrect. He is the author of pleasing fables believed around the world; they prepare the way for spiritism, which is expressly forbidden by God. 1 Corinthians 10:20; Deuteronomy 18:10-12. Immortality of the soul is the cornerstone of heathenism; out of it grew witchcraft, sorcery, spiritism, and all occult cults. Man dies, but his influence does not die. Isaiah 38:18, 19. The Bible calls the man blessed who has part in the first resurrection. 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Revelation 20:6.

QUESTION 7: What happens to the redeemed sinners at the glorious second advent of Christ?

ANSWER: 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10. (Write) _____

"Christ solved the problem of sin on the cross. He also solved the problem of death for all mankind collectively when He arose from the grave. But sin and death are still ruling over men. Now Christ must solve each of these problems in our individual lives since He is the God of the living and not of the dead. Christ solved the collective problems in a superb manner, but the individual solution is now our choice."

are not for the followers of Christ because of the moral filth presented there. We may see and hear a decent film or concert in a decent hall. Revelation 21:27. Carefully select the things to which you expose your mind, and reject everything that is not in harmony with the Holy Spirit within you. 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:31; Philippians 4:8.

We are asked to be careful in our choice of friends and are encouraged to choose those who are of the same mind as we are, namely, those who love and worship Jesus Christ. Christ wants to enter your social life. Honor Him there, too. 1 Corinthians 15:33. Whenever you are in doubt as to what you should say, read, watch, eat, or drink, ask yourself this question: What would Jesus do if He were in my place?

QUESTION 7: What shall we avoid?

ANSWER: Everything that corrupts the mind and the body. Philippians 4:8.

(Write) _____



STUDY 25

The Reformed Life

Our God is a God of health, happiness, joy, and radiant life. All unhappiness, sickness, and death were brought into this world by Satan. Ezekiel 33:11. God is aware that in order to have a happy nature we need a healthy constitution. God can heal and restore both our minds and our bodies. Psalm 103:2, 3; 3 John 2. Much sickness in this world is because of sinful living. After healing a sick person, Jesus frequently said, "Go and sin no more."

QUESTION 1: What is the wish of God?

ANSWER: 3 John 2. (Write) _____

TRANSGRESSION OF LAW BRINGS SICKNESS AND UNHAPPINESS

Sin is the result of breaking the moral law of God. Illness is frequently the result of breaking the physical laws of health. Satan is able to bring illness into man's life, but he can also withdraw his scourge if he can thus accomplish his ends. The test of a healer is the Word of God. Isaiah 8:20. Today God can heal the sick in the same miraculous manner as the dramatic healing acts performed by Jesus. The benefits of medical science are His gracious gifts to us.

If we continuously violate the laws of health, we may forfeit both our happiness and our well-being. Even if we repent of our sinful behavior and receive forgiveness from God, our bodies may have to suffer the consequences of our unhealthful habits for years to come.

It is a fatal mistake to assume that our bodies belong to us. They are the property of God. We are only tenants. If we abuse His property, we may be evicted to the cemetery. The Bible states that whoever abuses his body will suffer destruction by God. 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. The Word of God throws light on a most beautiful concept involving our bodies. It states that they are the living temples of the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20. God asks us to consecrate our living bodies to Him so that He may live in us. Romans 12:1.

If our aim is to live a happy and healthy life, we must return to the principles of health given to us by God for this purpose, which are the use of fresh air, sunshine, adequate food, water, daily exercise, rest, relaxation, a peaceful and cheerful mind, and obedience to all the laws of the body.

QUESTION 2: What is the fatal result of the misuse of the body?

ANSWER: 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17. (Write) _____

STUDY 26

The Steward of God's Treasure

The man of God says, "What I am and what I own belong to God. I am only His steward." The majority of us, however, do not embrace this philosophy. We do not wish to recognize our stewardship. We consider ourselves the sole proprietors of our bodies and possessions. We do with them whatever we please. Such a view has grave consequences. God expressly states that He is the proprietor of all things and we are only tenants and stewards. 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2. God expects interest from His investment in us, and He is entitled to it. Matthew 25:15-21.

QUESTION 1: What is man called to be?

ANSWER: 1 Corinthians 4:1, 2. (Write) _____

EVERYTHING BELONGS TO GOD

The earth and its fullness. Psalm 24:1. All the gold and silver in the world. Haggai 2:8. The human race because:

1. He created us. Psalm 100:3.
2. He sustains us. Acts 17:25, 28.
3. He redeemed us. 1 Peter 1:18, 19.

QUESTION 2: How much belongs to God?

ANSWER: Psalm 24:1. (Write) _____

ALL OUR PROPERTY BELONGS TO GOD

The Sabbath should be reserved for Him. Exodus 20:8-10. The tenth part of our income belongs to Him. Leviticus 27:30, 32. If we truly love Jesus Christ, we will express it by making voluntary love offerings; in other words, we will give more than He asks. Deuteronomy 16:16, 17. Always remember that all gifts and even life itself emanate from God. Deuteronomy 8:17, 18.

QUESTION 3: What do we owe to God?

ANSWER: Leviticus 27:30, 32. (Write) _____

JESUS CHRIST CONFIRMED THE OLD TESTAMENT SYSTEM OF TITHING

In a discussion with the Pharisees, He confirmed the payment of tithes. Matthew 23: 23. Abraham, the spiritual father of all believers, offered tithes to Melchizedek five hundred years before the law was given to Moses. Genesis 14:18-20. Jesus Christ is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Therefore, the tithing system applies to all man kind in every generation. Hebrews 6:20; 7:8-10. The ministry is supported by the tithe. Offerings are also given to send missionaries throughout the world. 1 Corinthians 9: 13, 14.

QUESTION 4: Is the tithing system valid for the New Testament church?

ANSWER: 1 Corinthians 9:13, 14. (Write) _____

HOW DO WE GIVE OUR TITHE TO GOD?

The tithe is not intended to be distributed to the poor. Numbers 18:21, 26. It is meant to be given to those who preach the gospel. God asks us to tithe our entire income. Proverbs 3:9, 10. It is unfortunate when Christians withhold from God the tenth part of their income because they think it too high a sacrifice to make. But it is not to be considered a sacrifice; it is an obligation. This lack of understanding and dedication is responsible for the poor financial condition of many churches that cannot function properly on the income received from voluntary offerings. They are obliged to use worldly methods, unworthy of their high calling, to earn the money necessary to cover their operating expenses. While millions of people withhold tithe from God, they have no compunction in spending a much larger portion of their income on luxuries. As soon as Jacob left his father's house, poor as he was, he pledged his tithe to God. Genesis 28:20-22.

The system of tithing has proved to be the most equitable system for the support of the work of God. It gives both rich and poor an equal right and responsibility in spreading the gospel. It shows that in God's eyes the contributions of the poor are as precious as the gifts of the rich. Read Christ's remarks regarding the gift of the poor widow in Luke 21:3, 4. Tithing is one of the tests of our faithfulness. Luke 16:10.

QUESTION 5: How does God test man's faithfulness in finances?

ANSWER: Luke 16:10. (Write) _____

THE UNFAITHFULNESS OF ISRAEL

We are actually robbing God when we withhold His tithes and offerings. Malachi 3:8; 1 Corinthians 6:10. Israel was cursed because of its unfaithfulness. Malachi 3:9. The result of our faithfulness, on the other hand, means blessings from God. Malachi 3:10.

QUESTION 6: What are the results of unfaithful stewardship?

ANSWER: Malachi 3:8, 9. (Write) _____

THERE IS A CONNECTION BETWEEN RELIGION AND MONEY

Our relationship to God greatly influences the way we manage our money. God and you are life partners. Be faithful as He is faithful. Do not touch what belongs to God, as did Adam in the Garden of Eden. Your faith and character are continuously being tested. Do not withhold from Him your tithe and the seventh day of the week. These are two ways by which you can demonstrate your love and faithfulness to Him. One day Jesus will say to you, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Matthew 25:21.

Read Christ's parable regarding the talents in Matthew 25:14-19, 26-28. Money can do much good and be a blessing; but if loved and worshiped, it becomes an idol and tyrant. 1 Timothy 6:9, 10. When Christ possesses the heart, it becomes immune to the fascination of money and fortune. Money becomes the servant, not the lord. Lay up treasures in heaven; for where your treasure is there will your heart be also. Matthew 6: 20, 21.

QUESTION 7: Can money influence our character and salvation?

ANSWER: Matthew 25:28, 29; 6:20, 21. (Write) _____

HOLY COMMUNION

The unleavened bread and unfermented wine used in the Holy Communion are the symbols of the sinless body and blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Luke 22:19, 20. The Lord's Supper symbolizes our spiritual union with Christ. It looks back to His death and forward to His second appearing. 1 Corinthians 11:26.

Spiritual preparation for the Lord's Supper. Without proper spiritual preparation for the Lord's Supper, we incur condemnation from the Lord instead of blessing. Furthermore, we are to repent of our sins and freely forgive all men for the sins committed against us. 1 Corinthians 11:27-29; John 13:4, 5, 13-17.

Foot washing, preceding the Lord's Supper, is not only a symbol of self-humbling but also a memorial of the humble life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Foot washing and the Lord's Supper is a time of introspection, of being reconciled to any with whom we may have had conflict. We ought to have the same humble spirit as He had. Follow His example in all these things, and your joy will be full. John 13:17.

QUESTION 7: What does it mean to take the Lord's Supper?

ANSWER: 1 Corinthians 10:16. (Write) _____

CHRIST...
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BIBLE STUDIES

STUDY 27

The Holiest Covenant on Earth

The Holy Spirit is a gift of God. At the same time, all of God's gifts come to us through the Holy Spirit, as the Vicar of Christ on earth. We obtain these gifts provided we believe in Him and surrender to Him body and soul. Some of the gifts referred to are salvation, righteousness, repentance, forgiveness, love, faith, spiritual understanding, and hope. All these are ours through faith in God. 1 Corinthians 12:4, 11; Hebrews 11:1, 6.

Through the eyes of faith we may look to the things that are unseen. 2 Corinthians 4:18.

QUESTION 1: How can you prove that the Holy Spirit dwells on earth and controls everything?

ANSWER: John 14:17; Psalm 139:7-10. (Write) _____

CONVERSION AND NEW BIRTH ARE TWO SIDES OF THE SAME EXPERIENCE

Conversion. Conversion is a willing turning aside from sin and Satan and grasping the outstretched hand of God. This is the part we must do. Luke 13:1-3; Matthew 3:2, 8, 10.

Sinful man has no way of changing his nature by his own efforts. He cannot escape the power of sin. However, when he realizes his desperate need for salvation and cries to God for help, He will answer and deliver him.

The new birth. This is God's part. He brings about the new birth of the individual. Only God has the creative power to change the nature of man. He is willing to create a new heart and a new mind within us. This is regeneration.

A man who is changed by God in this manner is capable of abhorring his own sins and is enabled, through the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit, to live a life of obedience to God. This transformation is so profound that our sinful desires will no longer be our master. 2 Corinthians 5:17; 4:6, 7; Ephesians 4:22-24.

QUESTION 2: What is the difference between conversion and the new birth?

ANSWER: Luke 13:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 3:5. (Write) _____

THE HOLIEST COVENANT ON EARTH

The man thus liberated makes a holy and everlasting covenant with the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a more sacred covenant than any other he can enter on earth, because God Himself is his Partner. Hebrews 8:8-10; John 3:5.

Born of water and the spirit. "Born of water" means that a man is willing to have his sinful nature crucified and buried by God. Galatians 2:20. "I am crucified with Christ," as Christ was crucified and buried in the waters of baptism. "Born of the Spirit," on the other hand, means that God resurrects that man into a new life by the Holy Spirit. The task of the Holy Spirit, who now resides in this man, is to give him a new nature, the character of Jesus Christ. Our part has to be done with complete consecration and a pure motive. If not, baptism becomes a meaningless ceremony. The best wedding cannot bring happiness if the bride does not love her husband.

QUESTION 3: What is the holiest covenant on earth?

ANSWER: Genesis 17:13, 14; Hebrews 8:10. (Write) _____

THE COMMANDMENT AND THE MANNER OF BAPTISM

Our Lord Jesus Christ gave us the example in His own baptism. Matthew 3:13-16. Jesus Christ, after the ceremony of baptism, came up out of the water. He commanded that all His followers should be baptized in this same manner. Matthew 28:19, 20. John the Baptist baptized where there was much water. John 3:23. Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch descended together into the water. Acts 8:36-39. The Greek word *baptismos* means total immersion.

QUESTION 4: Which is the only Biblical way of baptism?

ANSWER: Immersion. Acts 8:36-39. (Write) _____

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF IMMERSION

Immersion commemorates the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Romans 6:3-5. It implies that the baptismal candidate believes in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It expresses the inner experience of the person being baptized: the old nature has died, has been buried, and, with Christ, has been resurrected to a new life. Romans 6:6-8. Immersion is a symbol of the washing away of all our past sins.

QUESTION 5: What is the deep significance of immersion?

ANSWER: Romans 6:3-5. (Write) _____

PREPARATION FOR BAPTISM

It is essential that the person who is to be baptized should be acquainted with the plan of salvation and has counted the cost of following Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:19, 20. He who believes and is baptized will be saved. Mark 16:16. Repent, and forsake your sins, and be baptized. Acts 2:38. Break away from the sinful influences in this world, and consecrate your life to God. Romans 6:8, 11, 13. The Holy Spirit unites all members of the church through baptism. 1 Corinthians 12:13. Jesus Christ is the Head of the church; the new member lives, grows, and works through Him. Ephesians 4:15, 16.

The Holy Scriptures teach only one kind of baptism, and that is by the immersion of a person who is fully aware of its meaning. It is obvious that this is possible only if the person to be baptized has reached a certain degree of maturity. Babies and little children cannot possibly have a clear understanding of its meaning. Child baptism is, therefore, not grounded in Scripture.

Important: Baptism in itself does not save a person. It symbolizes only the spiritual union with Jesus Christ. A person must be baptized with water and the Holy Spirit.

QUESTION 6: How shall a soul be prepared for this covenant?

ANSWER: Hosea 2:19, 20. (Write) _____

QUESTION 5: How much truth should be known in the end of time?

ANSWER: As in the apostolic church! John 16:13. (Write) -----

The third group of basic beliefs. The third category embraces truths predicted in the Scripture for last-day emphasis. Although neither due nor applicable in past generations, they are now due and imperative and being given their designated emphasis today. Adventists believe they have a definite part in the proclamation of these truths. They believe:

1. That there are two distinct phases to Christ's postascension High Priestly ministry in the sanctuary—declared by the Apostle Paul to be in heaven—the second and final phase of such ministry, in these latter times, being the prophesied judgment phase in which the destinies of all mankind are forever settled before Christ returns in power and glory. They believe that we are now in that predicted "hour" of God's judgment.

2. That the seal of God and the mark of the "beast" are respectively symbols of contrasting last-day loyalty to God and truth, or subservience to apostasy and error. These issues become predominant in the great final conflict between the forces of good and evil climaxing just before Christ comes the second time and probationary time closes forever for all mankind.

3. That the symbolic flying "angels" of Revelation 14 represent the cumulative heralding of God's last threefold message to the world to prepare its inhabitants for the soon-returning King of glory, Jesus Christ, from heaven.

4. That these respective messages announce the hour of God's judgment as now here, warn against the dominance of apostasy in the church at large, and proclaim the dreadful punishment of those who willfully accept the mark of apostasy in the world's crisis hour when mankind makes its ultimate choice between revealed right and wrong, truth and error.

5. That the Spirit of prophecy is one of the abiding gifts of the Spirit in the remnant or final segment of the Christian Church of the centuries. It would be specially manifested for guidance and counsel and to draw men back to the all-sufficient standard of Bible truth. They believe that this gift has appeared in the witness of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

QUESTION 6: What did the Advent people do with the long-forgotten and lost gems of truth?

ANSWER: Daniel 12:9, 4; Isaiah 58:12; 1 Peter 2:9. (Write) -----

CONCLUSION

Adventists consider themselves part of the vast body of born-again Christians. Adventists do not consider themselves to be superior Christians because they have been chosen to proclaim God's closing message. They do not claim that membership in the Church saves a man or that every Adventist is a born-again Christian. They are quick to point out that quite a number of Adventists have a superficial knowledge of Jesus Christ, have never surrendered their lives to Him, are not wearing Christ's robe of righteousness, and that before Jesus returns many lukewarm Adventists will apostatize and leave the Church. Adventists state that other Christian denominations contain many born-again persons who will be saved. 2 Timothy 4:8.

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STUDY 28

Who Are the Seventh-day Adventists, and What Do They Believe?

Sincere Christian ministers and laymen have made statements regarding the Adventist Church that are incorrect. In order to be able to make an objective judgment of this denomination, a person should communicate with competent Adventist spokesmen, and study Adventist books that have been approved by the official denominational authorities.

An inquirer in the time of Jesus who went to the Pharisees and Sadducees to find out what Jesus taught would have received misleading information from these sources. The Adventist Church is a movement born out of Bible prophecy. In Revelation 14:6-12, God points to a movement symbolized by three angels carrying a distinct message to all mankind. The Adventist Church is the fulfillment of this prophecy. This does not mean that genuine Christians are to be found only among the members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

QUESTION 1: How should every person and movement be judged?

ANSWER: Matthew 7:16, 18; Isaiah 8:20. (Write) -----

SUMMARY OF THE BELIEFS OF THE ADVENTIST CHURCH

Adventists have preferred not to have a creed but rather the whole Bible as the basis of their beliefs. In order to learn what Adventists believe, it is necessary to give a lengthy description of their doctrinal position. Recently this was compiled by one of their outstanding leaders and theologians, Dr. LeRoy Froom, Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology of Andrews University.

The first group of basic doctrines. The first group of doctrines described by him are shared with all evangelical Protestants. They believe:

1. That the true and living God, our heavenly Father, the First Person of the Godhead, is revealed in the Old and New Testaments as the Sovereign Maker, Upholder, and Ruler of the universe, and is eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent.

2. That the Godhead, the three Persons of the heavenly Trio, or Trinity, is comprised of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

3. That the Holy Scriptures are the inspired revelation of the will of God and His way for man, and that the Bible is the full, sufficient, and sole rule of faith and practice for the Christian.

4. That Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Godhead, the instrument in the creation and upholding of all things, is God in the highest sense, eternally preexistent and coexistent with the Father from all eternity; that He was neither created nor derived, His life being original, unborrowed, and underived.

5. That the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Godhead, is likewise a Personal Being, sharing all the divine attributes of both Father and Son. He is Christ's representative on earth, leading sinners to repentance and obedience.

QUESTION 2: Why is the right knowledge of the Trinity important?

ANSWER: John 17:3. (Write) _____

6. That the Second Person of the Godhead became incarnate in the person Jesus Christ through a miraculous conception and virgin birth and lived an absolutely sinless life during the period of His incarnation here among men. Thus He could die as our sinless Sacrifice and Saviour and is man's only Saviour from sin.

7. That the vicarious, sacrificial, atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross, once for all and all-sufficient for the redemption of a lost race, was potentially and provisionally for all but is actually and experimentally only for those who avail themselves of its provisions.

8. That Jesus Christ, after His death and burial, rose literally and bodily from the grave and gave His final instruction for His church to His disciples before His ascension.

9. That Jesus Christ ascended literally and bodily into heaven as foretold in Old Testament prophecy and attested by the Gospel records.

10. That Christ our Sacrifice now serves as our ministering Priest and Mediator before the Father, applying the benefits of the atonement He completed on the cross, which ministry will culminate in His transcendent work as Judge.

11. That Jesus Christ will return in a personal, literal, premillennial second advent as King of kings and Lord of lords, which coming they believe to be imminent, but without setting any time. They hold His second advent to be the sole hope of a disintegrating world that is hastening on to self-destruction.

12. That man was originally created sinless, but by his subsequent fall he entered into a state of alienation, depravity, and mortality from which he must be redeemed in order to be saved.

13. That such salvation for man is effected solely through Christ, by grace alone, through faith in His atoning blood, works and obedience following as the inevitable result, not the cause or means, of salvation.

QUESTION 3: Why is an intimate knowledge of Christ and His work vital?

ANSWER: John 14:6. (Write) _____

14. That entrance upon the new life in Christ is by regeneration, or the new birth, effected by the creative work of the Holy Spirit.

15. That through faith man is justified and is delivered from the guilt and penalty of sins that are past.

16. That the justified believer is sanctified by the indwelling of Christ through the Holy Spirit and is thus emancipated from the power and dominion of sin in this present life.

17. That the justified and sanctified believer will be glorified at the second coming of Christ and the attendant resurrection or translation of the saints, and thus be freed forever from the very presence and possibility of sin at our Lord's return.

18. That there will be a judgment of all men with its just and righteous decisions irrevocable for all eternity, and that the hour of that judgment has now come.

19. That the everlasting gospel of the impending kingdom is to be preached as a

witness to all the world, this to be followed by the cataclysmic end of the world or age at the second advent.

QUESTION 4: Who is effecting these changes in the repentant soul?

ANSWER: John 3:15; 2 Corinthians 3:18. (Write) _____

The second group of basic doctrines. The second category embraces twelve additional doctrines held in varying forms by conservative Christians, one of which alternative views they hold. Of these additional doctrines, they believe:

1. That man is free to choose or reject the offer of salvation through Christ. They are Arminians, not Calvinistic predestinarians; they do not believe that God has predetermined that some men shall arbitrarily be saved, and others arbitrarily lost.

2. That the moral law of the Ten Commandments, or Decalogue, is the unchanging standard of life and conduct for men in all ages, or dispensations; they do not believe that the Decalogue has been either changed or abolished. They are not antinomians.

3. That baptism should be administered by single immersion; they do not believe it to be rightly administered, that is Biblically, by sprinkling, pouring, or even triune immersion.

4. That at creation man was made a candidate for immortality and placed on test; they do not believe in universal, natural, innate, indefeasible immortality. They believe in conditional immortality and eternal life only in and through Christ for the saved.

5. That the wicked, in the execution of the irrevocable sentences of the judgment, will after due punishment be ultimately and utterly destroyed in the lake of fire; they do not believe in an eternally burning hell in which the wicked will be tormented throughout ages without end. The execution of the judgment will eventuate in a clean universe forever undefiled by Satan, sin, or sinners.

6. That the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath for all men of all dispensations. They do not believe that the Sabbath has been abolished, changed to the first day, is merely a seventh part of time, or that all days are alike.

7. That the principle of tithing is for all men as God's plan for the support of the ministry of His church in all ages; they do not believe that tithing was simply for the Jews.

8. That God brought the world into its finished form in six literal days by fiat creation at creation week. They do not believe that creation was accomplished by a vast evolutionary process, extending over endless ages.

9. That the true and correct view of prophetic interpretation is that of the continuous-fulfillment Historical School; they do not accept either the Counter-Reformation Futurist (gap theory) or Preterist (all past) schools of interpretation. They believe in the premillennialist view of the Apostolic Church, not amillennial postulates.

10. That church and state should operate in entirely separate spheres; they do not believe that the church should dominate the state, or that the state should govern the church in attempting the control of man's conscience or his religious views or activities.

11. That the preparatory ordinance of feet washing celebrated at the time of the Lord's Supper, and instituted by Christ Himself, is to be practiced by all Christians. They do not believe that this rite was limited to apostolic times or was designated for mere token performance.

12. That they should abstain from alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and narcotics, and Biblically "unclean" foods. They do not believe that such indulgences are compatible with the principles and practices enunciated by Christ and the apostles. They believe that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost and as such should not be so defiled.

STUDY 29

Saved to Serve

Every true Christian is to be an ambassador of Jesus Christ. He is to do all that he can in bringing truth, goodness, and the love of his Lord to his fellowmen. As the moon reflects the rays of the sun and illumines our earth at night, so in the same manner a true follower of Christ disburses the light of God. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." John 8:12. But He also said, "Ye are the light of the world. . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:14, 16. We are to reflect Him.

QUESTION 1: What must every consecrated Christian do for others?

ANSWER: James 2:17, 22; John 9:4; Galatians 5:6. (Write) _____

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

Although the love of Jesus Christ for His Father was supreme, His love for mankind was so great that He willingly left the presence of His Father to lay down His life for us. He loved us with utter selflessness. During His lifetime on earth, He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. Love, mercy, and compassion for mankind were evident constantly. He was like a stream of water flowing through a desert land causing life to burst forth along its shores.

The love of Christ in us will create a desire to be saved. This is not self-love. Self-love is satanic. The second great commandment says, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Matthew 22:39. A true child of God always follows the Golden Rule, stated thus in the Bible: "Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Matthew 7:12. When a person has been born anew by the Spirit of God, he does not live for himself any longer but for the glory of God and the service of man. He does all that is in his power to ease the burdens of his fellowmen—not by his own strength, but by the power of God.

In order to do good, we must be good. Only good trees can bear good fruit. Only God can make us good, as there is no inherent goodness in us. Romans 7:18. Fruitless trees will eventually be destroyed. Matthew 3:10; Luke 13:7-9.

property or money? Are you willing to stand with those who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus? Revelation 14:12.

QUESTION 6: Whom shall we obey in a crisis?

ANSWER: Acts 5:28, 29. (Write) -----

Christ's redemptive act on the cross is of no avail if we allow others to influence us against Him. We must not listen to them. We must base our decision on the Word of God. We must join the faithful believers who are willing to suffer great loss because of their decision to follow Christ and His teachings. Some lose their families, wealth, popularity, or business associates. Christ is worth paying any price. We must not allow this world to use a bribe to hold us from a sincere allegiance to Jesus Christ.

Before the time of probation for man closes, mankind will be divided into two camps which will be opposed to each other. On the one hand will be Christ with all those who bear His seal and His sign. Revelation 14:12. The number of the people in this camp will be comparatively small. On the other side will be the anti-God, the counterfeit christ, with a great throng of people who have chosen him as lord. Babylon, with her great religious leaders and influential men, will be on the side of the apostate. Revelation 17:12, 13.

The destiny of each man is fixed by his own decision. It cannot be altered even by God. Christ saves no man against his own will. We all have a soul to save and a heaven to gain. In the end, every man makes his choice between the true Christ and the false christ.

Through His life, death, and resurrection, Christ has made it possible for every man to go to heaven. Only Satan and his demons are irrevocably condemned to hell. Humanity has been offered a second chance. When the time of probation closes, many will have missed taking their second chance.

Who are the chosen people of God? Matthew 22:14; Mark 13:20; Revelation 17:14. Some have interpreted these texts to mean that God arbitrarily chooses some to be saved and some to be lost. Nothing could be further from the truth. Christ chose every man to live forever with Him in heaven. 2 Peter 3:9. Rejecting Christ and His teachings is equivalent to rejecting a pardon from a death sentence. God saves those who choose Him. Proverbs 8:17.

GOD'S HEAVENLY AND EARTHLY FAMILIES WILL SOON BE UNITED

Soon there will be a great homecoming of earth's ex-rebels. When the blood-stained history of man is over, those who have chosen Christ and His principles will be gathered around the Saviour as He appears in the clouds. 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. All saints who have died will be resurrected, and all saints who are alive will be changed in an instant. Both will receive an indestructible, immortal body. Together they will be taken to heaven. What a procession that will be! They will go from a world of shame, cruelty, and death to a new world of life and glory. By the grace of Jesus Christ we can be among the redeemed on that day, provided we make the right choice now. Revelation 7:14.

QUESTION 7: How do we make this life-and-death decision?

ANSWER: Matthew 6:24; Romans 6:16. (Write) -----

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BIBLE STUDIES

STUDY 30

No One Can Escape This Decision

God planted two trees in the Garden of Eden, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. These two trees forced man to choose between God and Satan as lord. Man decided whether to live or to die. Man chose death and became a lifelong slave of Satan. He knew God's verdict before he made his fateful choice. His punishment is hell, eternal separation from God, also called the second death. Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:14, 15.

As a second Adam, the head of a new human race, Jesus paid the cost of man's redemption. As a result, we are again as free to choose our Lord as Adam was before he sinned. Every man is given the opportunity to choose to obey or to disobey God. Everyone is given a second chance. When we die we have lost forever the opportunity to change our minds. Death seals our fate forever. No one is given a third chance. No man can reverse his decision after death.

QUESTION 1: How many men are called by God to eternal life?

ANSWER: 1 Timothy 2:4. (Write) -----

Is every man able to make the right moral decisions? Every man is endowed with free will. Every man is given a conscience by God. "For when the Gentiles . . . do by nature the things contained in the law, these . . . show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." Romans 2:14, 15. The most primitive men know the difference between right and wrong. If they follow the decrees of their consciences, they will be accepted by God in the same way as the Christian. Salvation is not based on the amount of knowledge we have, but on how we react to the light God has given us. There will be people in heaven who never heard of Christ, but have faithfully and obediently acted upon the directions God gave them through their consciences. Romans 2:11-13, 27.

Wrong opinions make wrong decisions. It is good to remind ourselves from time to time of these facts: Although churches do much good in this world, they cannot save a man. Only Christ can save. This means that without a personal, spiritual love relationship with Him, the best churchgoer is lost.

We can be very religious and still not be saved. If we refuse to give up a single sinful habit which the Holy Spirit has shown us, we can lose our salvation.

Man cannot pay for his sins with good deeds. The law of God does not barter. Only the blood of Christ cleanses from sin.

True religion is a deep spiritual love relationship with Christ, a spiritual communion with Him. If we lack this union with Christ, we are in spiritual union with the counterfeit god and remain cold, hard, and loveless.

The conditions of salvation are set down by God and not by us. In a trial it is not

the accused who determines the terms of the trial, but the judge. We cannot come to God on our terms. His terms are set down clearly in the Bible.

We not only make decisions with our lips but also with our thoughts and behavior. All these affect our character. Those who pride themselves on being independent of God are fooling themselves. No man is independent. We consecrate ourselves either to God or to Satan.

QUESTION 2: Can we lose our eternal life, even if we are church members in good standing?

ANSWER: Luke 13:23-25. (Write) -----

A DECEIVED MANKIND MAKES CHOICES WITHOUT KNOWING THE FACTS

Since the history of man began, every human being, knowingly or unknowingly, has had to decide to whom he gives his allegiance. It is not possible for man to remain neutral in this matter or to give his allegiance to both Christ and Satan. Matthew 6:24.

By a wrong decision, Adam and Eve led all humanity to Satan's side. Later, humanity confirmed their allegiance to God's archenemy again by building the Tower of Babel. Israel made a wrong choice while Moses was communing with God on Mount Sinai. They turned to idol worship, and Satan became their master. A thousand years later, Israel was deceived again and suffered the Babylonian captivity for its wrong decision about the most important issues of life. They were simply not able to recognize when they were on Satan's side and when they were on God's side.

In the time of Noah every man had to decide whether or not to enter the ark. Naaman, the leprous Syrian general, had to decide whether or not to follow the instructions of Elisha and dip seven times into the Jordan. Moses had to decide whether to become the wealthy successor of King Pharaoh and live in sin, or become the leader of a slave nation. Hebrews 11:25, 26.

All who met Jesus personally were obliged to take their stand for or against Him. The rich young ruler desired to be saved but turned his back on Christ and made the wrong choice because of his love of money. Even the seventy disciples decided to forsake Christ in the time of crisis. John 6:60, 66. Some prominent socialites in Jerusalem believed in Christ but did not dare to demonstrate their allegiance to Him for fear of criticism by religious leaders. John 12:42, 43. Annas and Caiaphas had to decide for or against Christ, and they did so recklessly. Pilate, as the supreme Roman judge, had to decide the fate of Jesus, but he failed to make the right choice. The people of Jerusalem had to decide for or against Christ but made the wrong choice by asking for the release of Barabbas. All these fateful mistakes were made by deceived men and women. They followed the decrees of their passions and weak characters rather than the light of the Holy Spirit and Word of God.

QUESTION 3: Why did leaders make tragic mistakes by wrong decisions?

ANSWER: 1 Corinthians 2:8. (Write) -----

The last opportunity to take a stand for Christ will come. We live today in a confused world in which men are rushing to an unknown destiny. 1 John 5:19. Babylon has fallen away from Biblical truth and has misled the nations. Revelation 18:2, 3.

Today Satan rules the whole world but carefully covers up his actions. He is operating in disguise. In a crisis as serious as this, God's last call is heard. He asks all who desire to be saved to make a decision for Him. "Come out of her, my people." Revelation 18:4. You are included in this call!

The great controversy between Christ and Satan was decided at the cross of Calvary, and the victory belongs to Christ. But the controversy is continuing on an individual basis. Christ must become the victor in man's heart, for everyone must decide whether to take sides with the victor or the vanquished. We must make a choice of whether to accept Jesus Christ and His principles, or reject them. This is the decision no one can escape. In order to make an intelligent choice, we must familiarize ourselves with the facts. The revelation of God's will, God's conditions of salvation, are contained in the Bible. Study it. If you have made the wrong decision or no decision at all, hasten to correct it, because it is a matter of life and death.

QUESTION 4: What must we decide again and again?

ANSWER: Deuteronomy 30:19. (Write) -----

Before Christ returns, the last generation will be faced with a tremendous crisis in which man will have to make the final decision. Millions upon millions of persons are making their final decision for either eternal life or eternal death and do not know it.

When Christ returns, no one can say to Him, "Why did you not warn us? Why did you not call our attention to the decision we had to make?" Before the time of probation for mankind closes, the eternal gospel will be proclaimed to men everywhere. Revelation 14:6. Its light and glory will shine in every corner of the earth. Revelation 18:1. Modern channels of communication will make it possible for all to understand the last issue between Christ and Satan and to make an intelligent decision.

QUESTION 5: Can anybody excuse himself, not having heard the warnings?

ANSWER: Matthew 24:14; Romans 1:20. (Write) -----

As soon as the mark of the beast is enforced, and when the image of the beast will be brought about in our country, sincere seekers after truth will know that they are faced with a grave decision, namely, either to follow Christ or to follow His rival, the false christ. Revelation 13:16, 17.

The gospel of Christ has always been an explosive force. Romans 1:16. The Reformation caused a religious revolution engulfing the whole world. The teachings of Christ have always set the whole world aflame. Acts 17:6. The everlasting gospel is a message that has an aroma of life for those who receive it, and an aroma of death for those who reject it. 2 Corinthians 2:15, 16.

"WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY"

Small decisions form a pattern of thinking. These in turn determine our habits, which form our character. In a sudden crisis we make decisions according to our character. Sometimes it takes a lifetime to undo a wrong decision. By walking steadfastly under the leadership of the Holy Spirit whom we permit to develop a divine character in us, we will make the right decision in the hour of crisis.

In order to counteract Adam's wrong decision, God has had to shed His own blood. For 6,000 years Christ has been working to recover that which was lost in a moment's time by Adam's wrong choice.

In the great hour of decision we must choose whether to obey God or men. Acts 5:28, 29. Are you prepared to stand firm on your convictions? Have you resolutely decided to follow Jesus Christ regardless of the loss of popularity, family or friends,