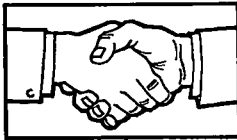


WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

INTRODUCTORY LESSON

Important: This introductory lesson must be studied and its questions answered before lesson 1 is studied.

It is a pleasure to join hands with you in the study of the Bible. The Bible is the world's most important and best-selling book. Its truths have withstood the test of time and its influence for good is felt the world over. For these reasons, we commend you for your wisdom in deciding to study What the Bible says.



Through this Bible correspondence course you can study privately what the Bible says about some important subjects. The lessons survey the entire scope of human history, emphasizing God's will for man.

I. TITLES OF THE LESSONS

In addition to this introductory lesson, the course consists of eleven lessons whose titles are listed below.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

- Lesson 1 The Origin of the Bible
- Lesson 2 The General Contents of the Bible
- Lesson 3 Religious Authority
- Lesson 4 God's Gift of Salvation
- Lesson 5 Man's Acceptance of Salvation
- Lesson 6 The Importance of the Church
- Lesson 7 Establishment of the Church
- Lesson 8 The Unity of the Church
- Lesson 9 The Restoration of the Church
- Lesson 10 The Second Coming of Christ
- Lesson 11 God's Will for You (A Review)

II. HOW TO STUDY EACH LESSON

If the student follows the suggestions below, he will save himself much time and gain more benefit from the lessons.

- (1) Read the entire lesson without looking up any Scripture in the Bible. This enables

you to see the lesson's over-all scope. Mark with a pencil any statement concerning which you have a question.

- (2) Read the lesson a second time, studying all the listed Scriptures.
- (3) While studying the lesson and the Scriptures, answer the questions, which appear in the same order as the material in the lesson. Always read carefully the instructions to each group of questions.
- (4) If you have time, read the context of each passage of Scripture (the surrounding verses that give the setting and thought).

III. HOW TO UNDERSTAND SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

The Bible is composed of 66 separate books, each having a different name. Each book is divided into chapters and each chapter is further divided into verses. The system used in this course to list the Scripture references is explained in the following examples. A careful study of these examples will prevent confusion and loss of time while studying the lessons.

Matthew 5. This refers to chapter 5 of the book of Matthew. Since no verse is listed, all the verses in the chapter would be included in this reference.

Matthew 5, 8. This means that the passage includes all the verses of two chapters of Matthew, chapter 5 and chapter 8. Note that the comma (,) signifies "and."

Matthew 5-8. This refers to all the verses from chapter 5 through chapter 8. Note that the hyphen (-) signifies "through."

Matthew 5:1. This refers to the book of Matthew, chapter 5, verse 1. Notice that a colon (:) divides the chapter number from the verse number.

Matthew 5:1, 4. This means the same as the reference above with one addition: verse 4 of chapter 5 is included along with verse 1. Note that the comma (,) again signifies "and," thus verses 1 and 4 of the same chapter.

Matthew 5:1-4. Here, all the verses from 1 through 4 in chapter 5 are included. Note that hyphen again signifies the preposition, "through" or "to."

Matthew 5:1-4; 6:1; 8:5-10. The first part of the reference is the same as the one above (Matthew 5:1-4). The semi-colons (;) divide the references in different chapters of the same book. 6:1 means the first verse of the sixth chapter of Matthew; 8:5-10 means verses 5 through 10 of the eighth chapter of the same book.

Matthew 5:1-4; 6:1; 8:5-10; Romans 6:1-3,9,11. Notice that all the references in Matthew are the same as in the reference above. However, the semi-colon (;) after 8:5-10 divides the references in Matthew from the references in the different book of Romans. The references in the book of Romans are chapter 6, verses 1 through 3, and verses 9 and 11.

IV. HOW TO FIND SCRIPTURE REFERENCES IN THE BIBLE

The best method to find Scripture references rapidly is first to memorize the books of the Bible in their proper order, especially the books of the New Testament, the second major division of the Bible. If the student does not have time to do this memory work, the second best method is to use the index in the front of the Bible. Here the books of the Old and New Testaments are listed in the order they appear in the Bible with the corresponding page number where the books can be found.

V. WHICH VERSION OF THE BIBLE TO USE

The course is designed so that the student can use any version of the Bible in his study. The version used in this course is the King James Version. The American Standard Version, the Revised Standard Version and the Catholic Versions may also be used.

If the Catholic Version is used, the only difference that needs to be noted here is in the book of Psalms. The contents are the same but the numbering of the chapters and verses is different.

VI. WHERE TO SEND THE QUESTIONS

Enclosed with the lessons you receive will be a self-addressed envelope which you can use to return the questions to us. We will grade your answers and return them to you with the next lessons. We will pay for all postage on material we send to you, but you will pay all postage on the questions you send to us. You should not return the lesson; return only the question sheet, which will be on a separate sheet from the lesson proper.

VII. BENEFITS YOU RECEIVE BY FINISHING THE COURSE

If you finish the entire eleven-lesson Bible course, you will receive the following benefits:

1. You will have a better knowledge of the world's most important and best-selling book.
2. You will have a better understanding of how to improve your present life and of how to receive eternal life.

3. You will have completed a course that is equivalent to some college Bible courses.

4. You will receive a diploma stating your accomplishment.

CONCLUSION

As you begin your study of What the Bible Says, we pray that this course will inspire you to a better life and a closer walk with God. Determine now that you are going to complete all eleven lessons of the course. We are looking forward to a friendly correspondence with you in the weeks to come.

Important: Please answer the questions and send the question sheet only to us in the enclosed envelope. We will grade the answers and return them with the next lessons.

QUESTIONS

INTRODUCTORY LESSON

Grade:

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE Zip Code

STUDY AND SELECT

Instructions: Place an X over the number of the correct choice, as in number 1.

1. The name of this course is (1) What Churches Say (2) What Man Says (X) What the Bible Says.
2. What must be done before studying Lesson One? (1) Nothing (2) Study and answer the questions on the Introductory Lesson (3) Study the Introductory Lesson but don't answer the questions.
3. Your study of What the Bible Says is important because the Bible is (1) the most important and worst-selling book (2) the least important and best-selling book (3) the most important and best-selling book.
4. This study is designed to help you (1) to be ignorant of the Bible (2) to disregard what the Bible says (3) to study what the Bible says about some important subjects.
5. The lessons survey (1) only the last part of man's history (2) the entire scope of human history (3) only the beginning of man's history.
6. The lessons emphasize (1) God's will for all men (2) God's will for ancient men only (3) man's will for himself.
7. In addition to the Introductory Lesson, the course has (1) 5 lessons (2) 11 lessons (3) 15 lessons.
8. Which of the following is not a lesson in this course? (1) Religious Authority (2) Man's Acceptance of Salvation (3) The Church's Role in Politics (4) The Importance of the Church.
9. In order to gain the most benefit from the lessons you should first (1) answer the questions (2) read the entire lesson without looking up Scriptures in the Bible (3) read the lesson through, looking up every Scripture.
10. The second thing one should do to gain the most benefit from the lesson is (1) answer the questions only (2) re-read the lesson only (3) re-read the lesson, looking up the Scriptures and answering the questions.
11. As one comes to each group of questions he should first (1) carefully read the instructions

- (2) ignore the instructions (3) answer the questions without reading the instructions.
12. While studying the listed passages of Scriptures it is good to (1) read the surrounding verses of each passage (2) ignore the surrounding verses of each passage (3) read only the listed verses.

THINK AND CHOOSE

Instructions: Place the letter of the correct choice in the parenthesis as in number 1.

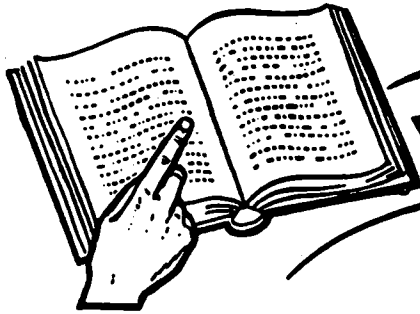
- (b) 1. In this Bible correspondence course understanding Scripture references is (a) unimportant (b) important (c) irrelative
- () 2. Which of the following references means chapters 4 through 6 of the book of Ephesians? (a) Ephesians 4:6 (b) Ephesians 4-6 (c) Ephesians 4, 6.
- () 3. Which of the following references means the fourth chapter of the Gospel of John, verses 23 through 25? (a) John 4:23-25 (b) John 4:23,25 (c) John 4:23;25.
- () 4. Which of the following references means the eighth chapter of Acts, verses 36 and 38? (a) Acts 8:36-38 (b) Acts 8:36;38 (c) Acts 8:36,38.
- () 5. Which of the following references means the twentieth chapter of Acts, verse 7, and the sixteenth chapter of I Corinthians, verses one through three; (a) Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-3 (b) Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-3 (c) Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1,3.
- () 6. I Peter 1:23-25; 3:15,21 means the book of I Peter (a) chapter 1, verses 23 and 25, and verses 3,15 and 21 (b) chapter 1, verses 23 and 25, and chapter 3, verses 15 and 21 (c) chapter 1, verses 23 through 25, and chapter 3, verses 15 and 21.
- () 7. The best method to find Scripture references is to (a) look in the index (b) search through the pages of the Bible until you find the book (c) memorize the books of the Bible in their proper order.

- () 8. The second best method to find Scripture references is to (a) look in the index for the page number (b) look through the pages of the Bible until you find the book (c) memorize the books of the Bible in their proper order.
- () 9. This Bible course is designed so that students can use (a) only one version of the Bible (b) only the Catholic version of the Bible (c) any version of the Bible.
- () 10. What should you return to us after you have studied the lesson and answered the questions? (a) The lesson sheet and the question sheet (b) Only the lesson sheet (c) Only the question sheet.
- () 11. After you have sent us the answered question sheet, we will grade the answers and return them (a) alone (b) with the next lessons (c) with the previous lesson.
- () 12. If you finish the eleven lessons you will receive a diploma noting that you have completed (a) nothing (b) the equivalent of some college courses (c) the equivalent of a grade school course.

SUMMING UP THE FACTS

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer, as in number 1.

- ~~Yes~~ No 1. Does this Bible course survey the entire scope of human history, emphasizing God's will for modern man?
- Yes No 2. In addition to this introductory lesson does this course have 10 lessons?
- Yes No 3. Is it best to read the lesson through the first time without looking up the Scriptures in the Bible?
- Yes No 4. Is it best to read the lesson a second time, looking up and studying the Scriptures and answering the questions at the same time?
- Yes No 5. Is it important to know how to find Scripture references in the Bible?
- Yes No 6. Should one memorize the books of the Bible in their order or, next best, use the index of the Bible, to find Scripture references rapidly?
- Yes No 7. Should one keep the lesson sheet but return the questions and answers?
- Yes No 8. If you finish the entire eleven-lesson course will you receive some valuable benefits?
- Yes No 9. Is this course designed to inspire you to a better life and a closer walk with God?
- Yes No 10. Are you going to determine to complete all eleven lessons of the course?



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

LESSON I

THE ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

You are beginning a study of the world's greatest book, the Bible. This lesson discusses the Bible's (1) divine authorship and (2) preservation.

I. THE BIBLE'S DIVINE AUTHORSHIP

The Bible contains sixty-six books written by about forty men. Yet over 3800 statements of the Old Testament boldly claim that the Bible came from God (Leviticus 19:1; Isaiah 1:10; Ezekiel 1:3, etc.). The New Testament also asserts the Old Testament's divine inspiration and claims the same for its own writings (II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21; I Thessalonians 2:13). God inspired the Bible, not by actually penning or dictating its words, but by uniquely guiding its writers so as to guarantee the truthfulness of their teaching (John 14:26; 16:13). But how do we know that these exalted claims are true? Some of the evidences appear below.

A. THE BIBLE'S TRUE REVELATION OF CREATION

Modern scientists agree that our present universe had a beginning because it is having an ending; the earth's resources are depleting; the sun is burning out; stars are disappearing. What, then, was the great power that gave the universe its initial start? The first verse of the Bible reveals the most plausible explanation: "God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). But atheists often retort, "And from where did God come?" The answer is the same that atheists must give to another question: "From where did material come?" Obviously, something could not appear from nothing; therefore, something always existed; Christians believe the Bible affirmation that mind (God) always existed and the universe was created (Hebrews 11:3). Atheists may ridicule such faith, but they also walk by faith. Their faith is that matter always existed and our universe exists by mere chance. The question is, "Whose faith is the most reasonable?" Below appear some of the evidences that support the Biblical account of creation.



The Universe's Intelligent Design. What if someone were to find a clock in the forest and then exclaim, "Look what accidentally fell together from material!"? Obviously, the conclusion would be absurd. It is equally unreasonable to conclude that our universe just happened by chance. The earth and other planets that circle the sun form a complex mechanism that has greater usefulness, efficiency, precision and duration than anything man can create. The universe functions with such precision that the earth's days, seasons and atmosphere have remained unchanged throughout man's history; even eclipses of the moon can be calculated to the exact minute. Thus, just as a clock indicates an intelligent creator, so the universe's intricate and intelligent design indicates a Divine Architect (Psalms 19:1; Romans 1:18-20).

The Appearance of Life. The Bible reveals both the order and manner of life's appearance on the earth.

(1) Genesis 1:1-31 records that life appeared in this order: plants, water life, birds, land animals and man. The science of paleontology has discovered that during 500 million years life gradually appeared in the same general order of the Bible account.

The Bible pictures creation in six days. Certainly, our omnipotent God could have created the universe in six, twenty-four hour days, making the earth to appear millions of years old. One day-old trees, created full-grown, perhaps had rings indicating great age. Adam probably had the appearance of a 30 year old man on his first birthday. By speeding up nature's cycle, God could have

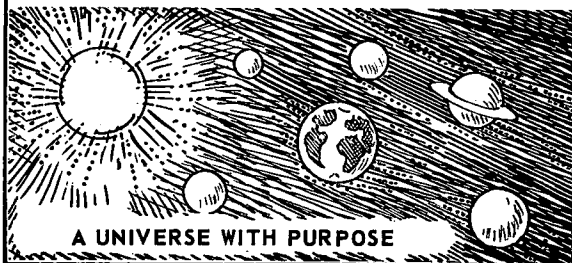
formed the earth's layers and fossils at great rapidity, thus providing the coal, oil and other resources that would benefit mankind.

However, these six days possibly were six periods of time. The Hebrew word translated "day" can mean an indefinite time period (see Genesis 2:4). Since the sun did not function normally until the "fourth day" (Genesis 1:14-19), there is no reason why the days had to be twenty-four hour periods. The Bible says, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years" (II Peter 3:8). Therefore, each creative day could have involved millions of years, harmonizing with science's view of the earth's age.

Regardless of the meaning of the creative "days," the order in which life appeared according to the Bible is verified by scientific findings.

(2) Genesis 1:1-31 says that the manner in which life appeared was sudden, creative acts. Geological findings reveal that during the Cambrian period, 500 million years ago, all of the phyla (main divisions) (of invertebrate animals suddenly appear already divided into classes and orders. Significantly, the most advanced animals appear at the same time as the simplest. Yet, before the Cambrian period, no positive evidence of life exists. In later periods the same sudden appearance of many phyla of the higher animals occurs, without the evidence of transitional fossils. These sudden appearances of the basic phyla completely contradict the theory of evolution, but they do confirm the Bible revelation of creation during various historical stages.

The Complexity of Life. The Bible says that God created life to produce "after its kind" (Genesis 1:11,21,25). Observation of life certainly confirms this natural law. Variations do occur within certain species of animals, but the basic phyla, classes, orders, and families always remain the same. The unusual instinct of certain animals, the marvel of the human body, and even recent discoveries of the DNA molecule demonstrate the fantastic complexity of life. Modern science has been unable to show how mutations (changes) can evolve a higher form of life. In fact, past experiments show that mutations usually harm life rather than improve it. Julian Huxley, the famous evolutionist, has admitted that the odds against getting several favorable evolutionary changes by pure chance is one with 3 million noughts after it (enough to fill 3 volumes of 500 pages each). Yet, billions of these changes are necessary if evolution is true. These incredible odds show the utter improbability of evolution and the strong probability of creation.



A UNIVERSE WITH PURPOSE

Also, the complexity of man's intellect and personality, his aesthetic sense to appreciate beauty, and his conscience to sense right and wrong indicate the creation of man "in the image of God" (Genesis 1:26). Is it reasonable to believe that man's intellect and personality accidentally evolved from matter? Is it not more reasonable to agree with the Bible that a Supreme Personal Mind created the human mind?

Yes, the universe's intelligent design, life's appearance on earth, and the complexity of life itself testify to the Bible's truthfulness about creation. Considering that the Bible was written 3,000 years ago in the midst of an ignorant and superstitious world, its truth that God created the universe strongly indicates that the same Divine Power revealed the fact of creation in the Bible.

B. THE BIBLE'S EXALTED TRUTHS

The Bible has been found to be accurate and in conformity with the best principles in every field of modern study. The Bible is the world's greatest moral guide, man having been unable to improve on it. Psychology, a modern science, has only recently "discovered" principles of mental health that the Bible has taught for centuries. A library of books is available analyzing the Bible's description of Jesus's methods as the Master Teacher and Sociologist. Archaeological discoveries continue to prove the Bible's historical accuracy concerning hundreds of ancient cities, nations, kings, and incidents. Even the story of the flood (Genesis 6) was found recorded in ancient Babylonian writings. Every geographical fact mentioned in the book of Acts has been recently proven true by a man who was seeking to disprove its truthfulness. Then, the Bible's theology, especially the doctrine of Christ's sacrifice for sinners, is considered the most profound religious thought ever written.

How could men living 1900 to 3400 years ago write such exalted and profound truths in all of the above areas of modern study? How could the uneducated carpenter and fishermen of Galilee surpass the most educated men of their day in revealing the most profound theological truths of man's history? Is it possible that the Bible is true in so many areas, yet a lie concerning its own nature as God's word? Is it conceivable that the world's greatest moral guide could also be the world's greatest deceiver. Indeed the Bible's exalted truths testify to its divine inspiration.

C. THE BIBLE'S UNITY

Though written by about forty men over a period of 1500 years, the Bible contains an amazing unity and consistency, the Old Testament even predicting the coming of the New Testament (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-13). Kings, prophets, shepherds, farmers, fishermen, tax collectors, physicians, rich, poor, learned and unlearned wrote the sixty-six books of the Bible on the grand themes of God, man, morality, and

salvation. Yet, their writings are all completely harmonious, an impossibility without God's unifying guidance.

THE BIBLE IS TRUE

D. THE BIBLE'S INDESTRUCTIBILITY

Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Mark 13:31). The Bible has suffered more attacks than any other work the world has known. A Roman Emperor, Diocletian (301-304 A.D.), while persecuting Christians, made a determined effort to destroy the Bible. Ironically, his huge tomb has been used for a church building for over 1000 years! The great French agnostic, Voltaire, said in the eighteenth century that the Bible would be a forgotten book in one hundred years. Today, the Geneva Bible Society is occupying his former home, and the Bible is the world's best-seller. In 1861 the French Academy of Science put forward fifty-one "facts" that supposedly refuted the Bible. Not one of those "facts" is considered true today.

Many other attempts have been made to destroy the Bible. It has been sifted, criticized, and severely attacked from every direction; but time and new discoveries continue to prove each attack unjust, untrue, and unavailing. "The word of the Lord endureth forever" (1 Peter 1:25).

E. THE BIBLE'S ACCURATE PROPHECIES

The prophecies of the Bible primarily predict the coming of Christ. The accompanying chart lists a few of these. Note that nearly every aspect of Christ's life was foretold centuries before He arrived.

For example, the prophecy of Isaiah 53 foretells in verse three Jesus's rejection, in verses four through six His sacrifice for the sins of others, in verses seven and eight His trial, in verses eight and nine His death with the wicked (the two thieves) and His burial with the rich (in the tomb of the rich man, Joseph), and in the remaining verses of the chapter the prophecy is further expanded. How did Isaiah write such a beautiful and complete picture of Jesus in 700 B.C.?

This is just one example from the chart. These remarkable predictions can be explained only by the power of divine revelation. And of course, the Bible contains many other prophecies concerning other subjects.

PROPHECIES CONCERNING CHRIST*

*All of the prophecies mentioned below were made between 1400 and 400 B.C. and were all fulfilled during the first century A.D.

Where Predicted	The Prophecy	Where Fulfilled
HIS ANCESTRY:		
Gen. 49:10	Of tribe of Judah	Matt. 1:1-3
Jer. 23:5	Of lineage of David	Matt. 1:1,6; Luke 3:31
HIS BIRTH		
Mic. 5:2	In Bethlehem	Matt. 2:1,5-6
Isa. 7:14	Of a virgin	Matt. 1:18-23
Isa. 9:6-7	Divinity and authority	John 1:1; Eph. 1:20-22
Zec. 9:9	HIS TRIUMPHANT ENTRY	Matt. 21:1-9
Isa. 53:3	HIS REJECTION	John 19:14-15
HIS DEATH:		
Psa. 22:16	By crucifixion	John 19:16-19
Isa. 53:9,12	With wicked	Luke 22:37 Matt. 27:38
Isa. 53:9	Buried with rich	Matt. 27:57-60
Psa. 22:18	Cast lots for clothes	John 19:23-24
Psa. 22:6-8	Reviled	I Pet. 2:21-23
Isa. 53:4-6,10,12	To be a sacrifice for sins of others	I Pet. 2:24-25 II Cor. 5:21
Psa. 16:10	HIS RESURRECTION	Acts 2:24-32
HIS ASCENSION TO GOD'S THRONE		
Psa. 110:1-4		Acts 2:33-36

There are many other evidences for the Bible's divine authorship, such as the Bible's universal appeal and influence, its description of Jesus' perfect character and work, and the fact that its message concerning Christ is the only adequate solution to the problem of sin. The cumulative weight of all the evidence for the Bible's divine authorship is overwhelming.

II. THE PRESERVATION OF THE BIBLE

We shall now study how the Bible has come down to us carefully preserved through the centuries. The writing of the Old Testament was begun about 1400 B.C. in ancient Hebrew. The last portion of the Bible, the New Testament, was written in the first century A.D. in ancient Greek. Yet centuries later you have in your possession an accurate copy of the Bible in your own language translated by competent scholars of these ancient languages. How can we be sure that the Bible we have today is the same message of God that the inspired writers penned over 1900 years ago?

A. ANCIENT MANUSCRIPTS

We know that we have the Bible accurately preserved today because we have manuscript copies of it in the original languages that are over 1000 years old. Three of the most famous are: The Sinaitic Manuscript, written about 340 A.D., located today in London; the Vatican Manuscript, written

about 350 A.D., located in Rome; and the Alexandrian Manuscript, written in the fifth century, located now in London. Three other manuscripts written in the fifth century are named the Ephraemi, Beza, and Washington Manuscripts. In addition, literally thousands of other ancient manuscripts and papyri of the Bible in the original Hebrew and Greek languages witness to the accuracy of our Bible.

B. ANCIENT TRANSLATIONS

Also many ancient translations of the Bible substantiate the accuracy of the above mentioned manuscripts and of the text of the Bible today. Included are the Vulgate, the official Roman Catholic Version, which is a translation into Latin by Jerome in 405 A.D., and other translations into Syriac, Egyptian, Ethiopic, and Armenian, all made between the third and sixth centuries. There are other translations as well, and hundreds of ancient copies of them. The Bible could be reproduced today just from these translations.

C. ANCIENT QUOTATIONS

Writings of many church leaders of the first, second and third centuries are available today. They quote freely from the Bible, some of them possibly from the original writings of the New Testament. Informed men say that if the New Testament were utterly destroyed or lost, it could be completely reproduced from quotations made by these early writers.

Due to the ancient manuscripts, translations, and quotations, there is more evidence for the text of the Bible than for any other ancient work. Consequently, the Bible has remained substantially unchanged through the centuries. As proof of this fact, a copy of the book of Isaiah was found recently near the Dead Sea in Palestine. It dates back to the first century B.C.; yet when compared with the book of Isaiah in our Bible today, it is virtually identical. Thus, through the providence of God, "the word of the Lord endureth forever" (I Peter 1:25).

CONCLUSION

The study of the origin of the Bible is a thrilling experience. The Bible's divine authorship is evidenced by its true revelation of creation, its truthful teachings, its unity, its indestructibility, and its prophecies. It is God's inspired message carefully preserved for all generations in thousands of ancient manuscripts, translations, and quotations. As you proceed in your study of the Bible, you will find its contents even more thrilling and enriching than the study of its origin.

QUESTIONS

LESSON I

Grade:.....

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY..... STATE..... Zip Code.....

STUDY AND SELECT

Instructions: Place an X over the number of the correct choice, as in Number 1.

1. The subject of Lesson I is the Bible's (1) authority (X) origin (3) contents.
2. The Bible claims that its writings were (1) not inspired by God (2) no more inspired than writings of great men (3) inspired by God. (II Timothy 3:16-17)
3. God inspired the Bible by (1) writing it Himself (2) dictating each word (3) guiding its writers to teach only the truth. (John 16:13; II Peter 1:20-21)
4. The Bible says that the universe (1) was created by God (2) happened by chance (3) always existed. (Genesis 1:1)
5. The order, precision, efficiency, and duration of the universe's design strongly indicates that the universe (1) fell together by chance (2) was designed by a Divine Architect. (Psalms 19:1)
6. The general order in which life appeared, according to the Bible, is (1) contradictory to science (2) confirmed by science. (Genesis 1:1-31)
7. The scientific evidence that indicates life gradually appeared during 500 million years (1) definitely contradicts the Bible (2) can be harmonized with several possible interpretations of the Bible. (Genesis 1:1-31; 2:4; II Peter 3:8)
8. In the Cambrian Period, scientists say that life first appears as (1) only one phylum (main division) of the simplest animals (2) all of the phyla of the invertebrate animals (the most advanced appearing simultaneously with the most primitive).
9. This sudden emergence of life on earth confirms (1) the theory of evolution (2) the Bible revelation that God suddenly created these animals.
10. Physical life is so complex that the odds against getting several favorable evolutionary changes through pure chance alone is (1) 3 to

- 1 (2) 100 to 1 (3) 1, with 3 million noughts after it, to 1.
11. The most reasonable explanation for the origin of man's mind, conscience, and personality is that they (1) evolved from impersonal matter (2) were created "in the image" of a Superior, Personal Mind. (Genesis 1:26)
12. The universe's intelligent design, the order and manner in which appeared on earth, and the complexity of life and intelligence make it more reasonable (1) that a Divine Mind (God) created the universe and life (2) that matter always existed and accidentally formed our universe and life by chance.
13. Considering that the Bible was written 3,000 years ago, its true revelation about creation is strong evidence that the Bible (1) was inspired by God (2) is contradictory to science (3) was written without inspiration.
14. The Bible's exalted truths in the modern fields of psychology, education, history, geography, and especially morality and theology strongly indicate that the Bible (1) lies in claiming to be God's word (2) is no better than other books written 1900 to 3000 years ago (3) is the inspired word of God.
15. The unity and consistency of the Bible's writings, though penned by a variety of men during 1500 years of time, is evidence that the Bible (1) is no better than the other religious and philosophical writings penned during the last 1500 years (2) had the unifying guidance of God (3) is not inspired.
16. The Bible's continued existence and popularity in spite of the many attacks against it and the many attempts to destroy it indicate (1) the Bible's weakness (2) God's providential protection of the Bible (3) that the Bible is no different than other books. (Mark 13:31)
17. The prophecy that Christ would be born in Bethlehem was made in what Old Testament book? (1) Genesis 49:10 (2) Zechariah 9:9 (3) Micah 5:2.
18. The prophecy in Isaiah 53:4-6 that Christ would die as a sacrifice for the sins of others is fulfilled in what scripture? (1) Matthew 1:18-23 (2) John 19:23-24 (3) I Peter 2:24-25.

19. The prophecy in Psalms 110:1-4 that Christ would sit at God's right hand is fulfilled in what Scripture? (1) Acts 2:24-32 (2) Matthew 21:1-9 (3) Acts 2:33-36.
20. The many prophecies of Jesus written centuries before He came indicate that the Bible's writers were (1) simple guessing (2) divinely inspired (3) without God's help.
21. The Bible's truthful revelation about the earth's origin, its exalted truths and remarkable unity, its indestructibility, and accurate prophecies — all — confirm (1) the non-Christian view that the Bible is not from God (2) the atheist's view that there is no God (3) the Bible's claim as God's inspired word.

THINK AND CHOOSE

Instructions: Place the number of the correct answer in the parentheses, as in Number 1.

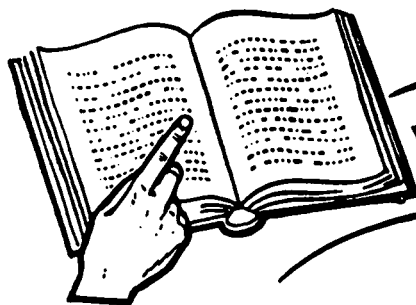
- (a) 1. The Bible has been preserved (a) accurately (b) inaccurately (c) incompletely
- () 2. The writing of the Bible was completed by (a) 1400 B.C. (b) 400 B.C. (c) the first century A.D.
- () 3. The Old Testament was written in (a) Greek (b) Egyptian (c) Hebrew.
- () 4. The New Testament was written in (a) Greek (b) Egyptian (c) Hebrew.
- () 5. Translations of the Bible are made by (a) an angel (b) a council of churches (c) scholars of the ancient languages in which the Bible was written (d) inspired men of God today.
- () 6. A strong evidence for the Bible's accurate preservation is that we have (a) one ancient manuscript (b) the promise of modern church leaders (c) many ancient manuscripts.
- () 7. We know we have the Bible accurately preserved because we have (a) one ancient translation (b) three ancient translations (c) many ancient translations.
- () 8. The Vulgate, the officially recognized translation of the Roman Catholic Church, is: (a) an inspired translation of the Bible (b) a translation into Latin by a man named Jerome in 405 A.D. (c) a translation by the Apostle Peter.
- () 9. Scholars say that from the quotations of early church writers almost the entire Bible has been (a) preserved (b) lost (c) changed.
- () 10. In comparison to the evidence for the text of other ancient works, the evidence for the text of the Bible is (a) inferior (b) equal (c) much superior.
- () 11. The overwhelming evidence from ancient manuscripts, translations, and quotations assures us that the Bible has been (a) changed (b) inaccurately preserved (c) completely and accurately preserved.

SUMMING UP THE TRUTH

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer as in number 1.

- | | | |
|-----|----|--|
| Yes | No | 1. Does the Bible boldly claim to be inspired? |
| Yes | No | 2. Does the evidence from the universe and life confirm the Bible's revelation of God's creation? |
| Yes | No | 3. Does the Bible prophesy accurately? |
| Yes | No | 4. Is the evidence given in this lesson sufficient for faith in the Bible as the inspired word of God? |
| Yes | No | 5. Is the Bible accurately and completely preserved for us today? |

IMPORTANT: Keep the lesson but return the question sheet. We will grade your answers and return them to you with the next lessons.



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

LESSON II

THE GENERAL CONTENTS OF THE BIBLE

The previous lesson showed that the Bible is God's inspired word. This lesson introduces the reader to the Bible's general contents: (1) its literary divisions and (2) its time divisions.

I. THE LITERARY DIVISIONS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is many books yet one. The book we call the Bible is actually a library of sixty-six books written by about forty different men. Yet, in a real sense these sixty-six books are one book. Why? Because the Bible's contents were inspired by one person, God, and it has one central theme, "Salvation for Sinful Man."

The Bible has two main literary divisions. The Bible's two principal divisions are: (1) the Old Testament and (2) the New Testament. The word, testament, means a covenant, pact, or will. Each testament fulfills a definite purpose in explaining the history of God's dealings with man.



A. THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament has thirty-nine books and contains God's covenant or will for the Jewish nation (Deuteronomy 5:3). These books are divided into five major divisions:

DIVISIONS AND BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Law (5)	History (12)	Poetry (5)
Genesis	Joshua	I Kings
Exodus	Judges	II Kings
Leviticus	Ruth	I Chronicles
Numbers	I Samuel	II Chronicles
Deuteronomy	II Samuel	Ezra
	Nehemiah	Song of Solomon
	Esther	

Major Prophets (5)

Isaiah	Ezekiel
Jeremiah	Daniel
Lamentations	

Minor Prophets (12)

Hosea	Obadiah	Nahum	Haggai
Joel	Jonah	Habakkuk	Zechariah
Amos	Micah	Zephaniah	Malachi

Law

The first five books are called "Law" because they contain God's law to the Jews given through Moses (Deuteronomy 5:1-3). They are sometimes called "the law of the Lord" or "the law of Moses" (Joshua 23:6-8; II Chronicles 31:3). **Genesis**, which means "beginning", records the world's creation and the beginning of the Jewish nation through whom Christ was to come. **Exodus** records the "exodus" (departure) of the Israelites from Egyptian slavery and tells how they received God's law through their leader, Moses. **Leviticus** contains God's law for the "Levites", the tribe of Israel from which the priests were chosen. **Numbers** records Israel's history while they wandered forty years in the wilderness and tells of the "numbering" (census) of the people. **Deuteronomy**, which means "second law," is Moses' final address to the people in which he repeats the law and exhorts the people to obedience.

History

These twelve books relate 900 years of Jewish history. The book of Joshua tells how Joshua, after Moses' death, led Israel to conquer the nations of Canaan (Palestine) and to possess the land. Judges and Ruth show how God ruled the Jews through judges. The books of I and II Samuel, I and II Kings, and I and II Chronicles record the Jews' history from the time they became a kingdom until the kingdom was divided and finally fell into Assyrian and Babylonian captivity. The books of Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther tell of the Jews' life while in Babylonian slavery and how they later returned to Palestine and rebuilt Jerusalem.

Poetry

The five books of poetry are primarily books of devotion and wisdom. They also contain many

prophecies of Jesus Christ. Job is a description of the suffering of a faithful man of God of Abraham's day. Psalms is the hymn and devotional book of the ancient Jews. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon contain Solomon's wise sayings and experience.

Prophecy

During the years from about 900 B.C. to about 350 B.C., the Old Testament prophets warned the Jews to repent of sin and foretold important events, especially the coming of Christ and His kingdom. The terms, "Major" and "Minor" that appear in the above chart do not refer to the books' importance but to their relative size. The "major" prophets simply wrote more than the "minor" prophets.

B. THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament is the name of the Bible's second main division. Its twenty-seven books contain the new covenant or testament that God made through Christ for all men (Matthew 28:18-20). Its contents deal mainly with Christ's coming to save sinful man, the establishment of His Church, and the revelation of His will for all mankind. The twenty-seven books are also divided into five major divisions:

DIVISIONS AND BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Life of Christ (4) (Gospels)

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

History of the early Church (1)

Acts of the Apostles

Letters by Paul (14)

Romans
I Corinthians
II Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians

Philippians
Colossians
I Thessalonians
II Thessalonians
I Timothy

II Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews

General Letters (7)

James II Peter II John Jude
I Peter I John III John

Prophecy (1)

Revelation

Life of Christ

The four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) record the life of Christ. They tell of His birth, teaching, work, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection from the dead. They also record His instructions to His apostles for their future work. These books were written principally "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).

History of the Early Church

The Acts of the Apostles records the establishment, organization and spread of the church Jesus promised to build (Matthew 16:18). The Acts specifically show what the apostles preached and how people were saved and added to the church.

Paul's Letters

These fourteen letters were written by Paul to various individuals and congregations. They contain instructions for the organization, doctrine, work and life of the church.

General Letters

James, Peter, John and Jude wrote seven other letters to congregations in general. They contain the same kind of instructions as found in Paul's epistles.

Prophecy

The apostle John wrote the book of Revelation, recording visions of things to come. This highly symbolical book contains many figures that require great care in study.

II. THE TIME DIVISIONS OF THE BIBLE

Having studied the literary divisions of the Bible, notice the Bible's three main ages: (1) The Patriarchal Age, (2) the Jewish Age (Mosaic Age) and (3) the Christian Age. Each age is named after those to whom God revealed His will.

A. THE PATRIARCHAL AGE

In this first age, which dates from creation, God revealed Himself to the heads of families known as patriarchs, thus the name "Patriarchal Age." The first book, Genesis, covers this age. (For a brief survey of this age and the Jewish Age, read the seventh chapter of Acts).

The Patriarchal Age covers such important events as man's creation (Genesis 1), Adam's sin and punishment (Genesis 3), the world's destruction by the flood (Genesis 6), etc. These events emphasize the importance of exact obedience to God's commands. The obedient were richly rewarded; the disobedient were severely punished. Mankind became extremely wicked during this age. Yet God gave a glimpse of a Savior who would later conquer Satan and sin (Genesis 3:15).

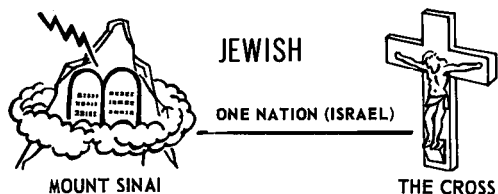
Later, God made a three-fold promise to the godly man, Abraham. Abraham's descendants were to (1) become a great nation, (2) receive a land, and (3) bless all the nations of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3; 22:17-18). Abraham's son, Isaac, had a son named Jacob, who was later named Israel. Israel had twelve



sons whose descendants became the twelve tribes of Israel (the Jewish nation). Famine later forced the Israelites to move to Egypt (Genesis 45-46) and the Egyptians eventually made them slaves (Exodus 1:7-11). Finally God raised up Moses to deliver the people and to lead them to the land of Canaan (Exodus 3:1-10), where they became a great nation, fulfilling the first two parts of Abraham's promise (Joshua 21:43-45).

The third part of the promise, that all nations would be blessed through Abraham's descendants, was fulfilled with Christ's coming. Jesus Christ, a descendant of Abraham, died for all mankind and thus made salvation possible for men of every nation (Galatians 3:13-14, 16, 19, 24-29).

B. THE JEWISH AGE



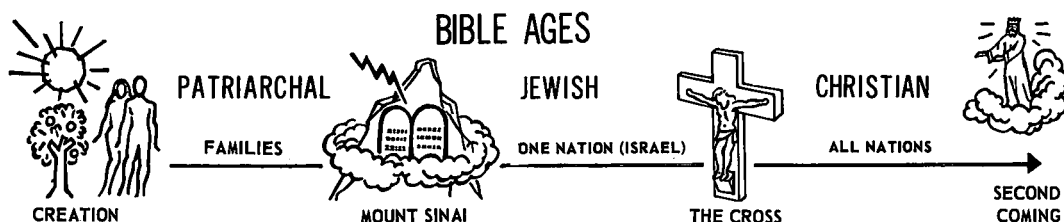
The Jewish Age covers approximately 1500 years: from the time of Moses to Jesus' death on the cross. Except for the book of Genesis, this age includes all of the Old Testament and also the life of Christ in the New Testament. The Old Testament is specifically addressed to the Jewish nation (Deuteronomy 4:8; 5:1-3); thus the name, "Jewish Age."

After Moses led the people out of Egyptian bondage, God gave Moses His law at Mount Sinai (Exodus 20-31). This law governed the people both religiously and politically. The basis of their law was engraven in stones and called the ten commandments (Deuteronomy 5:1-22). The ten commandments and the other moral, ceremonial and civil laws formed one covenant or law (Leviticus 24:22; Joshua 1:7-8). The Jews were punished severely when they disobeyed any part of it (Deuteronomy 19:21; 28:58-68). Death was the sentence for sins like adultery (Deuteronomy 22:22-24), sabbath breaking (Numbers 15:32-36) and even for changing God's law of worship (Leviticus 10:1-2). The law was designed primarily to prepare the people for Christ's coming (Galatians 3:24-25).



After 450 years of being ruled by judges the Jews pleaded for a king and God finally gave them their request. Under kings, Saul, David and Solomon, Israel advanced to power, wealth and glory. The nation received this greatness because they were faithful to God (I Kings 3-4). However, Solomon and the people later fell into idolatry, and God punished the Jews by dividing their kingdom and diminishing their greatness (I Kings 11:1-13). The ten tribes of the North were called "Israel" and the two tribes of the South were called "Judah." God allowed Judah and Israel to be carried into captivity several times (II Kings 17; 24:10-17; II Chronicles 36:17-20). The ten tribes of "Israel" were finally so dispersed in the world that they completely lost their identity. Only Judah remained, keeping her identity. Why? Because of the providence of God. Christ, the Messiah, came through the lineage of the tribe of Judah and specifically of King David (Acts 13:22-23).

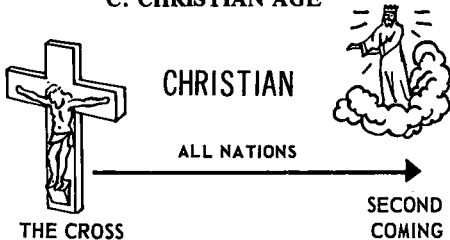
The prophets' work became more prominent as the time approached for the coming Savior. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the other



prophets admonished the people to be faithful to God while prophesying of the coming Christ. Many of these prophecies of Christ are noted in Lesson I.

Before the Jewish Age came to an end, Jeremiah prophesied that in the last days God would replace the old covenant with a new and different covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The age of the Messiah and the new covenant is a prominent theme of all the prophets. Indeed, the Jewish Age was in constant preparation for a new and better age to come.

C. CHRISTIAN AGE



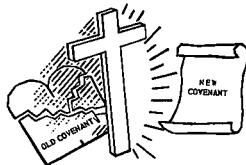
"When the fulness of time was come" God began this new age through His Son, Jesus Christ (Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:9-10). We will study more in future lessons about Christ's work to fulfill God's plan. Suffice it to say that Christ, through His teachings, life, death and resurrection became "the mediator of the new testament" and began the new age prophesied by Jeremiah (Hebrews 8:6-13; 9:15).

THE END OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Actually, the Jewish Age and the Christian Age overlap in Christ. He is the end of one and the beginning of the other. Jesus was born a Jew and lived under the Old Testament law (Galatians 4:4-5), but He came to usher in a new covenant (Hebrews 9:15).

God never intended to make the Old Testament a permanent covenant; otherwise Jeremiah would not have prophesied of a new covenant (Hebrews 8:6-9). The first covenant was only a "shadow of good things to come" (Hebrews 10:1) and a "school master to bring us to Christ" (Galatians 3:24). "But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Galatians 3:25) and, therefore, no longer under the Old Testament law.

Christ had to die in order to institute His new covenant or testament just as today one must die before his will or testament legally goes into effect (Hebrews 9:15-17). But Christ's death not only instituted the New Testament covenant; it also removed the Old



Testament covenant. When Christ died He blotted out "the handwriting of ordinances" (Old Testament Law) and "took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross" (Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:14-15). Therefore, the Christian is not bound to keep the sabbath (Saturday, the seventh day, Exodus 20:10), new moons, etc., which were a part of the old law (Colossians 2:16-17). Paul says that those who teach the necessity of part of the old law are obligated to keep the whole law and in so doing "are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:3-4). Thus, one binding the sabbath should also bind circumcision, animal sacrifices, etc. But Christ's death has done away with the whole law. His cross is the dividing line between the Jewish and Christian Ages. Of course, the Old Testament still has value as God's word and should be studied for examples and admonitions (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11).

THE LAW OF THE NEW COVENANT

Although we are not bound to keep the Mosaic law today, this does not free us to steal, kill, etc. These principles of morality are taught even more strongly in the new covenant (John 13:34; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:19-25). In fact, all of the ten commandments, except the sabbath law, are included in the new covenant. The early church worshipped on the first day of the week (Sunday), not the sabbath, the seventh day. (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2).

Thus, we who live in the Christian Age should give our allegiance to Christ and His new covenant recorded in the New Testament. The writer of Hebrews warns that wilful disobedience to Christ's new covenant will be punished even more severely than the strict punishment given to the transgressors of the Old Testament law (Hebrews 10:26-31). Christ is the "author of eternal salvation to all that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9). "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Therefore, we must study the New Testament to know God's will for us today.

Christ revealed His new covenant through the teachings of His apostles. He promised to give them the Holy Spirit to remind them of His teachings and to guide them into all truth (John 14:26; 16:13). Fifty days after Christ's death the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles and they went forth preaching the Lord's will (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2:1-47). Every person of that generation had an opportunity to hear and obey the gospel (Colossians 1:23). As people obeyed the gospel of Christ, God added them to the church (Acts 2:47) and thus the church was spread over the world.

The church is to last throughout the Christian Age (Ephesians 3:21; Matthew 16:18). This age has already lasted 1900 years and will continue until Christ comes again (Hebrews 9:27-28).

QUESTIONS

LESSON II

Grade:

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY STATE Zip Code

REVIEW TO REMEMBER

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer as in number 1.

- ~~True~~ False 1. God created the world.
True False 2. The Bible was written by men inspired by God.
True False 3. The Bible has been accurately and completely preserved for us today.
True False 4. The Bible is not the word of God.
True False 5. Everything the Bible teaches is true.

STUDY AND SELECT

Instructions: Place an X over the number of the correct answer as in number 1.

1. The Bible is a library of how many books? (1) 27 (2) 39 (X) 66.
2. The Bible is one book because (1) one person wrote it (2) one person translated it (3) one person inspired it and it has one central theme.
3. The two main literary divisions of the Bible are (1) Psalms and Gospels (2) Prophets and Epistles (3) Old Testament and New Testament.
4. The word, testament, means a (1) covenant, pact or will (2) bound book (3) book of religious ideas.
5. The Old Testament has how many books? (1) 27 (2) 39 (3) 66.
6. The Old Testament contains God's covenant with (1) the Jewish nation (2) the Lord's church (3) all nations. (Deuteronomy 4:8; 5:1-3).
7. The book of Genesis records (1) the ten commandments (2) the life of Christ (3) the beginning of God's chosen people, the Jews.
8. The twelve books of History record the Jew's history (1) during the time of Moses (2) from the Jews' entrance into Canaan until their captivity and return to Palestine (3) from Moses to the time of Jesus.

9. The Major and Minor Prophets foretold of (1) Moses (2) Jesus Christ (3) Peter
10. The New Testament contains how many books? (1) 27 (2) 39 (3) 66.
11. The New Testament was written for (1) the Jewish nation only (2) the Romans only (3) all nations of the world. (Matthew 28:18-20)
12. The four gospels primarily record (1) Christ's life (2) the apostles' teachings (3) the church's history.
13. Which book in the New Testament tells of the spread of the early church and how people were saved and added to it? (1) 1 Corinthians (2) Ephesians (3) Acts of the Apostles.
14. The Letters of Paul and the other letters primarily contain (1) the life of the apostles (2) Christ's life (3) instructions for the Church's life, work and organization.

MAKE THEM MATCH

Instructions: Put the letter of the correct matching phrase in the blank as in number 1.

- ___ c 1. The three main ages of the Bible
___ 2. The period from creation to Moses
___ 3. The Old Testament book that covers the Patriarchal Age
___ 4. The patriarch to whom God first promised: "In thy seed all of the nations of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3).
___ 5. The 1500 years of time from Moses to the death of Jesus.
___ 6. The patriarch whose twelve sons later became the heads of the nation of Israel.
___ 7. The nation through which Christ descended.
___ 8. The Jewish tribe through which Christ descended.
___ 9. A Jewish king through whom Christ descended (Acts 13:22-23)
___ 10. The group of men who especially pointed to Christ's coming.
___ 11. The reason Nadab and Abihu were punished with a fiery death. (Leviticus 10:1-2).

- a. David
- b. Jacob
- c. Patriarchal Age, Jewish Age and Christian Age
- d. The Patriarchal Age
- e. The prophets
- f. The Jewish Age
- g. Genesis
- h. Strange worship (fire)
- i. The Jewish nation
- j. Judah
- k. Abraham

THINK AND CHOOSE

Instructions: Place the letter of the correct answer in the blank as in number 1.

- ___ c 1. God's promise to Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his seed was fulfilled in (a) Mary, Jesus' mother (b) Peter, the apostle (c) Jesus Christ.
- ___ 2. Jeremiah prophesied that in the last days God would replace the Old Covenant with (a) an older covenant (b) a new covenant (c) an inferior covenant. (Jeremiah 31:31-34).
- ___ 3. God began the new age through (a) John the Baptist (b) Jesus Christ (c) Peter, the apostle. (Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:9-10).
- ___ 4. The new covenant predicted by Jeremiah was fulfilled in (a) Christ's new testament (b) the ten commandments (c) the continuation of the old testament. (Hebrews 8:6-13).
- ___ 5. In relation to the New Testament law, the Old Testament law (a) was superior (b) is equally binding today (c) was faulty and a temporary shadow. (Hebrews 8:6-7; 10:1).
- ___ 6. One of the main purposes of the Old Testament law was to (a) confuse those who read it (b) act as God's final law for all nations (c) lead people to Christ. (Galatians 3:23-25).
- ___ 7. In order for Christ's new testament to go into effect, Christ had (a) only to be born (b) to die (c) only to teach. (Hebrews 9:15-17).
- ___ 8. When Christ died on the cross the Old Testament law (handwriting of ordinances) was (a) nailed to the cross in its entirety and taken away as a binding covenant (b) partially nailed to the cross (c) to continue as a binding covenant. (Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 2:14-15).
- ___ 9. Today, Christians (a) must keep the sabbath, new moons, etc. (b) obey Christ when they observe the sabbath,

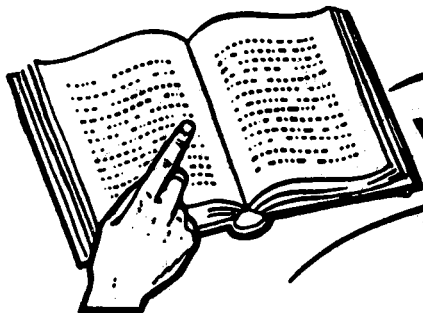
new moons, etc. (c) are not obligated to keep the sabbath, new moons, etc. (Colossians 2:16-17; Galatians 5:3-4).

- ___ 10. Which of the ten commandments are also included in the New Testament law? (a) All except the sabbath law (b) None (c) All. (Colossians 2:16-17; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:19-25).
- ___ 11. The early church assembled to worship on (a) the sabbath (seventh day) (b) Sunday (the first day). (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2).
- ___ 12. Christ's will or covenant for Christians is found in the (a) Ten commandments (b) Old Testament (c) Old and New Testaments (d) New Testament. (John 1:17; Hebrews 8:6-13).
- ___ 13. Those who continually violate Christ's new covenant will be punished (a) never (b) more severely than transgressors of the Old Testament (c) less severely than transgressors of the Old Testament (Hebrews 5:9; 10:26-31).
- ___ 14. The church was spread over the earth by (a) preaching Christ's will to all (b) constructing church buildings everywhere (c) personal appearances of Jesus over the world. (Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 1:23).
- ___ 15. The Christian Age will last until (a) all are Christians (b) all are ready (c) Christ comes again. (Hebrews 9:27-28).

SUMMING UP THE TRUTH

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer as in number 1.

- | | | |
|-----|----|--|
| Yes | No | 1. Though many books, does the Bible have one theme inspired by one person, God? |
| Yes | No | 2. Are the Bible's two main divisions the Old and New Testaments? |
| Yes | No | 3. Was the Old Testament primarily addressed to the Jewish nation? |
| Yes | No | 4. Does the Old Testament contain God's law for Christians? |
| Yes | No | 5. Was the Old Testament written to prepare people for Christ and His New Testament? |
| Yes | No | 6. Does the New Testament contain Christ's will for those living in the Christian Age? |
| Yes | No | 7. Must we obey Christ's new covenant in order to be saved? |



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

LESSON III

RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

Lesson One showed that the Bible comes from God, that its message is the word of God, and that its words have been safely guarded from error throughout the centuries. Lesson Two surveyed the general contents of God's marvelous book, the Bible. It traced through the ages God's plan to save sinful man through Christ. This lesson will present what the Bible, God's word, says about religious authority.

I. THE NEED FOR RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

Authority, as used in this lesson, means a standard, rule or guide which determines what is right or wrong in religious matters.

For example, men recognize the ruler as final authority for determining right or wrong in measurements. How long is this line? _____

Joe may say one-quarter inch; Jim may say one inch. But when the ruler reads one-half inch, Joe and Jim both give up their personal opinions. Were it not for the ruler, questions involving measurements could never be settled. All agree that this authority is essential in its field.

In the religious realm, an authority to assist man in determining what is right and wrong spiritually is even more important. Many churches, all claiming to be within the Christian faith, teach conflicting doctrines. The result is religious chaos and division. Seeing his need for a final authority in religious matters, man cries out: "Who is qualified to be my authority in religion?"

II. JESUS IS OUR RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY

Jesus is the only person qualified to be man's religious guide. He said, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). God Himself testified to Jesus Christ's authority when He spoke from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5). When Jesus speaks, His words are to be honored as God's words (John 3:34; 7:17; 14:10). In religious

matters, man's authority must be Jesus Christ, for He and He alone has all authority in heaven and on earth.

But still a question remains: how can man know the will of Christ? After Christ's resurrection and ascension to heaven, how did men learn His teaching?

III. JESUS REVEALED HIS WILL THROUGH HIS APOSTLES

Having received all authority, Jesus commanded His apostles to teach every nation "all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). These nations, then, would hear the commands of Jesus through His apostles. In order to guarantee that the apostles and other inspired men would teach the truth, Jesus promised them the special guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). The apostles in turn taught men what the Spirit taught (1 Corinthians 2:12-13). The church then accepted the apostles' teaching "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Thus, an apostle's teaching was as authoritative as Jesus' own words. Jesus spoke through the Spirit, Who spoke through the apostles, who spoke Christ's will to men.

Further, Christ's apostles taught all the will of Jesus. Christ promised that the Holy Spirit would guide them into "all the truth" (John 16:13). Paul later announced, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

In the first century
the apostles taught



ALL
THE
TRUTH

(See also II Peter 1:3). Men — yes, even angels — who rejected the apostles' teachings as final religious authority, were accursed of God (Galatians 1:6-9).

If 20th Century man could just have access to the apostles' teaching, then he would have

access to all the revealed will of Jesus Christ, who has all authority. But how can man know their teaching?

IV. THE APOSTLES RECORDED THEIR TEACHING IN THE BIBLE

Fortunately, the apostles and other inspired men recorded their teachings in written form for future generations. For example, Peter wrote so that after his death the church might have a permanent record of his teachings (II Peter 1:12-15). Luke wrote so that his readers might know accurately the teaching they had already received orally (Luke 1:3-4). John wrote his gospel so that men might believe in Christ and have eternal life (John 20:30-31) and he wrote his epistles to keep Christians from sinning (I John 2:1). Paul said he wrote that the church might "understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:3-4). Consequently, what these inspired men wrote was to be regarded as "the commandments of God" (I Corinthians 14:37).

Inspired men obviously recorded Christ's will in the New Testament. But how do we know whether or not the Scriptures contain all of Christ's will?

V. THE BIBLE CONTAINS ALL OF CHRIST'S WILL

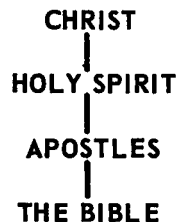
Paul, writing during the time that these Scriptures were almost completed, said, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:16-17). Notice! The Bible contains everything necessary to furnish man "unto all good works" and to make him "perfect".

Since the Scriptures furnish man unto every good work, no other source of information is necessary. Any work furnished from another source which cannot be found in the Scriptures is not a good work for the Scriptures furnish "unto all good works."

Also, II Timothy 3:16-17 says that the Scriptures contain sufficient knowledge to make man "perfect." Obviously, one becomes perfect only "in all the will of God" (Colossians 4:12); therefore, we must conclude that the Scriptures contain "all the will of God." Since man can be perfect through knowledge of the Bible, he needs no religious knowledge from any other source.

Since the Bible contains all of Christ's will, the church was not to "think" or "go" beyond "that which is written" (I Corinthians 4:6). Those who added to, or subtracted from, the apostles' writings were to suffer eternal punishment (Revelation 22:18-19). The church was to dis-fellowship (excommunicate) anyone who failed to obey the written word (II Thessalonians 3:14). Consequently, neither man, nor angels, have the right to change what the apostles have bound in their writings (Galatians 1:8-9).

The Bible's completeness and authority makes it the final rule of faith in religion. But, can everyone understand the Bible?



VI. THE BIBLE IS AN UNDERSTANDABLE AUTHORITY

Some people have attempted to prove that the Bible is not understandable. They sometimes cite II Peter 3:15-16, where Peter says that Paul's writings contain "some things hard to be understood". However, the passage does not say all Scripture is difficult to understand but "some things", implying that most Scripture is easy to understand. Further, the verse does not say that these "some things" cannot be understood, but that they are difficult to understand, implying that they can be understood. In fact, the verse says that God condemns the "unlearned and unstable" who twist and misunderstand Scripture, inferring that everyone should understand Scripture. And verses 17 and 18 go on to encourage the readers to grow in the knowledge of Scripture.

The very purpose of the Scriptures prove they can be understood since they were written (1) to be read and obeyed by all, and (2) to enlighten all.

(1) The Scriptures were written to be read and obeyed by all. John wrote for all unbelievers to read (John 20:30-31). Paul addressed his epistles to every church member (Romans 1:7; II Corinthians 1:1-2; Philippians 1:1). He instructed that these epistles be read to the whole church (I Thessalonians 5:27; Colossians 4:16). Strict obedience was demanded of all readers or hearers of Scripture (Deuteronomy 31:12; II Thessalonians 3:14).

Thus, the Scriptures were written to be read by all and obeyed by all. Why write to those who cannot understand? Why demand obedience to

that which cannot be comprehended? Certainly God does not demand the impossible; therefore, everyone can understand the Scriptures.

(2) The Scriptures were written to enlighten all, not to confuse. John wrote that his readers might believe, not that they might be confounded in unbelief (John 20:30-31). Paul specifically told all the church members at Ephesus "when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Ephesians 3:4).

Actually, the Scriptures were sometimes written to clarify or confirm oral teaching. For example, Luke wrote his gospel that his reader might know the certainty of the things in which he had been instructed orally (Luke 1:4). The Bereans read the written word to see if Paul's oral word was true (Acts 17:11). Paul wrote to clarify what he had taught orally about the church's apostasy (II Thessalonians 2:1-5). The written word can be more carefully examined and studied, and consequently is often better understood than oral teaching.

Thus, the Scriptures **THE ONLY AUTHORITY** forcefully declare that they enlighten rather than confuse, and can be understood by all. Every man that can read or hear the Bible has the opportunity of learning **Complete and Sufficient** all the will of Christ. The Bible is truly a complete and all-sufficient authority. But why is it that many people misunderstand the Bible?



VII. WHY IS THE BIBLE MISUNDERSTOOD?

In the first place, many people misunderstand the Bible because of improper attitudes. Some do not love the truth (II Thessalonians 2:10-12) and thus willfully resist it (II Timothy 3:8). Others wrest difficult passages, making them teach things which easier passages show to be untrue (II Peter 3:16).

Secondly, some persons misunderstand the Bible by failing to distinguish between covenants. Lesson Two pointed out that Christians are not under the Old Testament law but rather are under the law of the New Testament (Jeremiah 31:31; Hebrews 8:6-13; Hebrews 9:15; Colossians 2:14-16).

Thirdly, some people do not accumulate all the evidence on a given subject before formulating a conclusion. One should study the passage in its context and historical setting, and the parallel passages on the subject. For example, the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to His disciples is found in three different places: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; and Luke 24:46-48. If the account

in Luke 24 is taken by itself, one can conclude that faith is not necessary to salvation since faith is not mentioned by name in that passage. If Mark 16:15-16 is taken by itself, one can conclude that repentance is not necessary since repentance does not appear there. The fact is that faith, repentance, and baptism are all necessary to salvation. To learn this full truth, one must consider all three passages and not just one of the accounts.

Fourthly, some people misunderstand the Bible because they do not study or read the Bible as they would any other book. They consider the Bible as mysterious when in reality it teaches and conveys information just as does any other literature. The Bible teaches or authorizes in three ways.

(1) The Bible conveys God's will to man through direct command or statement. If you received a letter from your employer telling you to go to Europe, you would know that you should go to Europe. Why? Because you received a direct command or statement. Likewise, God conveys His will for man through direct commands or statements.

(2) The Bible conveys God's will to man through necessary inference. If you received a letter from a friend telling you that he would be in New York on January 1 at 5:30 p.m., by necessary inference you would conclude that he would not be in Miami at the same time. You would conclude this even though he did not expressly say that he would not be in Miami. Likewise, the Bible uses this method in its teachings. Jesus used a necessary inference from the Old Testament to conclude that man lives on after death (Matthew 22:31-32).

(3) The Bible instructs through approved example. If a wife reads in a magazine that a certain woman had success with a particular cake recipe, that wife can conclude that she can have the same success by following the same example. Likewise, the Bible tells us what we should do to please God by relating to us certain approved examples of things that have pleased Him in the past. That the church assembled to partake of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Sunday) is shown in an approved example (Acts 20:7). If we follow the approved apostolic example in Acts 20:7, we too will please God.

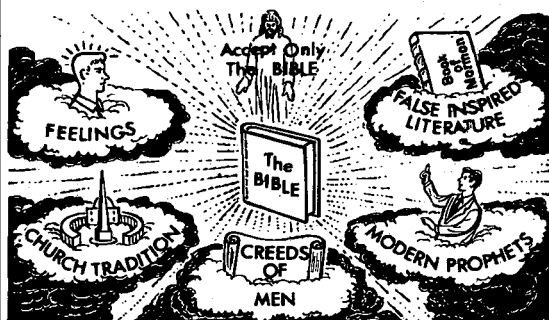
Our guiding principle as we study the Bible should be to speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent (I Peter 4:11). We can only teach as doctrine that which the Bible authorizes by direct commands or statements, approved apostolic examples, or necessary inferences.

As yet we have not discussed what is probably the chief reason for error in Bible study: reliance on authorities other than the Bible.

VIII. WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT OTHER AUTHORITIES

In spite of the forceful Scriptural teachings concerning the complete authority of the Bible, many other "authorities" exist today among professed Christians. The result has been a misunderstanding about what the Bible teaches and consequent religious division.

The Clouds of Authority that obscure the Truths of the Bible



Conscience or Feelings

Many religious people claim to submit to Christ's will in the Bible but in reality submit to a feeling in their hearts or consciences. Some identify this feeling as the "inner witness of the Holy Spirit". In following this "inner witness", which is really the conscience, their actions and teachings often vary from the Bible.

The Bible, however, says to "try the spirits whether they be of God" (I John 4:1) and warns that what seems right to man often leads to death (Proverbs 14:12). Man should not trust his own heart (Proverbs 28:26) or direct his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23). In good conscience Paul persecuted Christians (Acts 23:1; 26:9). Certainly the inner witness of the conscience is not a safe guide.

Church Tradition

A large body of church tradition (teaching not found in the Bible) has developed since the first century. Many earnest people place greater reliance upon the "authority" of this tradition than upon the Bible. Jesus condemned such traditionalism among the Jews as a rejection of God's word: "Full well ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9).

Paul predicted that the church would fall away (II Thessalonians 2:1-12; I Timothy 4:1-3).

He further warned against any one man that might speak in the church in the place of God (II Thessalonians 2:3-4). Those who rely on church tradition should thus realize that this "living voice of the church" (as it is called) may be nothing more than the voice of an apostate church.

These words of Jesus and His apostles stand as a clear warning to all who take church tradition as their authority. Only the Scriptures can reveal God's will with certainty.

Latter-Day Revelation

Other religious people rely on so-called latter-day revelations or on the teaching of some "modern prophet". To do so, however, is to discredit the Scriptures which contain all the truth. Since "all the truth" was revealed in the first century (John 16:13), new revelations can only add to Christ's complete will in the Bible and thus sinfully create another gospel (Galatians 1:8-9).

CONCLUSION

God gave Christ all authority in heaven and earth. Christ through the Holy Spirit revealed all His will to the apostles. By inspiration these men recorded Christ's will for all men to read, understand, and have eternal life. No rule of faith exists for Christians other than the Bible. This makes your continued study of the Bible all the more important.

QUESTIONS

LESSON III

Grade:.....

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY..... STATE..... Zip Code.....

REVIEW TO REMEMBER

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer as in number 1.

- ☒ True ☐ False 1. The Bible is God's inspired word.
- ☐ True ☐ False 2. The Bible's two main divisions are the Old Testament and the New Testament.
- ☐ True ☐ False 3. The Old Testament contains God's covenant for the Jewish nation before Jesus' death.
- ☐ True ☐ False 4. The New Testament contains God's covenant for all nations after Christ's death.

STUDY AND SELECT

Instructions: Place an X over the number of the right answer, as in number 1.

1. Religious authority means a standard or rule to determine truth on (1) political issues (2) scientific matters ☒ (3) moral and religious questions.
2. What characteristic of the present religious world shows the need for a common authority? (1) Unity (2) Peace (3) Confusion and disunity
3. The final authority for determining religious truth is (1) Moses (2) Christ (3) The Church. (Matthew 28:18).
4. How much authority does Jesus have? (1) Some (2) All (3) None. (Matthew 28:18).
5. After Jesus' return to heaven, He revealed His will through (1) the apostles (2) Mary, His mother (3) only Peter. (Matthew 28:18-20).
6. God guaranteed the truth of the apostles' teaching through guidance of (1) the Holy Spirit (2) an angel (3) the church. (John 16:13).
7. The apostles taught what the Spirit taught, as Paul says in (1) Matthew 28:18-20 (2) Matthew 17:5 (3) I Corinthians 2:13.
8. The early church considered the apostles' teaching as (1) men's word (2) God's word (3) just good literature. (I Thessalonians 2:13).

9. How much of the truth of God's will did the apostles teach? (1) All (2) Most (3) Some. (John 16:13; Acts 20:27; II Peter 1:3).
10. What will men and/or angels receive if they change the apostles' gospel? (1) God's approval (2) God's curse (3) Nothing. (Galatians 1:8-9).
11. What did the apostles do to preserve their teaching after their deaths? (1) Appointed an infallible church leader (2) Recorded their teachings in writing (3) Did nothing. (II Peter 1:12-15; John 20:30-31).
12. The apostles knew they were writing (1) false Doctrine (2) useless teaching (3) authoritative Scripture. (II Peter 3:15-16).
13. The church should regard the apostles' writings as (1) God's commandments (2) man's commandments (3) merely good religious ideas. (I Corinthians 14:37).
14. The apostles commanded churches (1) to go beyond what is written (2) to pay no attention to what is written (3) not to go beyond what is written. (Revelation 22:18-20; I Corinthians 4:6).
15. The Scriptures furnish man unto (1) most good works (2) every good work (3) no good works. (II Timothy 3:16-17).
16. How much of God's will is necessary to make one perfect? (1) Part (2) None (3) All. (Colossians 4:12).
17. The Scriptures are sufficient to make man (1) perfect (2) imperfect (3) partially good. (II Timothy 3:16-17).
18. Since one becomes perfect in all of God's will, and since the Scriptures can also make one perfect, we must conclude that the Scriptures contain (1) none of God's will (2) all of God's will (3) part of God's will.
19. Since the Scriptures contain all of God's will, the Scriptures (Bible) are (1) the complete authority (2) an incomplete authority (3) an inadequate authority.
20. The Scriptures were written so (1) some could read and obey (2) only church leaders could read, then command others to obey (3) every one could read (or hear) and obey. (I Thessalonians 5:27; II Thessalonians 3:14).

21. Everyone's being able to read (or hear) and obey Scripture indicates that everyone (1) can understand Scripture (2) cannot understand Scripture (3) will understand Scripture. (II Peter 3:16; Ephesians 3:4).
22. The Scriptures were written to (1) confuse (2) mislead (3) enlighten. (John 20:30-31; Psalms 119:105).
23. How does the Bible describe one who searches the Scriptures to test the truthfulness of another's teaching? (1) Heretical or evil (2) Noble (3) Ignorant. (Acts 17:11).
24. Since the Scriptures contain all of Christ's will and can be understood, the Bible is (1) an insufficient authority (2) a partially sufficient authority (3) an all-sufficient authority.

THINK AND CHOOSE

Instructions: Place the number of the correct choice in the blanks.

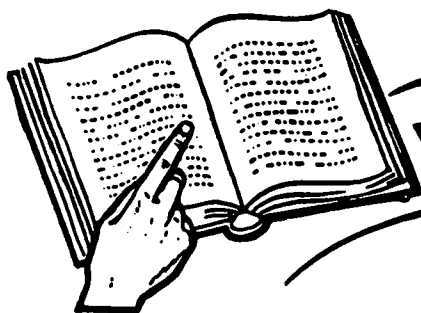
- ___ 3. 1. The Bible is a (1) city (2) song (3) book.
- ___ 2. In order to understand the Bible it is important to have (1) determination to prove one's religion (2) desire to justify one's life (3) love for truth. (II Thessalonians 2:10-12).
- ___ 3. In Bible study one should recognize that God's covenant or law for today is recorded in (1) the Old Testament (2) The Old and New Testament (3) The New Testament. (Hebrews 8:6-13; 9:15-17).
- ___ 4. One should formulate a conclusion on a Bible subject only after (1) reading one verse on the subject (2) reading several verses on the subject (3) reading all related verses on the subject.
- ___ 5. When studying a passage of Scripture the student should consider (1) only historical background (2) only context (3) both historical background and context.
- ___ 6. The Bible does not authorize by (1) direct command or statement (2) approved example (3) possible implication (4) necessary inference.
- ___ 7. One who makes a law not taught in the Bible by direct command or statement, necessary inference, or approved example makes a commandment of (1) God (2) man (3) God and man. (Matthew 15:6-9; Colossians 2:20-23).
- ___ 8. To speak where the Bible speaks and to be silent where the Bible is silent is (1) a good rule to follow (2) a bad rule to follow (3) a doubtful rule to follow. (I Peter 4:11).

- ___ 9. Divisions in the religious world largely result from (1) the Bible (2) Christ's plan (3) accepting authorities other than the Bible. (Matthew 15:6-9).
- ___ 10. Paul once did wrong even while his conscience was (1) good (2) bad (3) indifferent. (Acts 23:1; 26:9).
- ___ 11. Conscience or an inner witness is not a safe religious guide because (1) man can trust his own heart (2) what seems right to man often leads to death (3) man can direct his own steps. (Proverbs 14:12; Jeremiah 10:23).
- ___ 12. What was Jesus' attitude toward the practice of regarding religious tradition as an authority equal to the Scriptures? (1) Approval (2) Disapproval (3) Indifference. (Mark 7:6-9).
- ___ 13. Since an uninspired church leader can teach false doctrine, a church leader without divine inspiration should (1) be an infallible religious authority (2) not be an infallible religious authority (3) be the only religious authority. (I Timothy 4:1-3; II Thessalonians 2:3-12).
- ___ 14. The so-called "new revelations" of modern "prophets" (1) reveal more of God's will (2) sinfully add to God's will (3) should be man's religious authority. (Galations 1:6-8; Revelation 22:18-20; II Timothy 3:16-17).
- ___ 15. Which of the following is the only, **true** rule of faith? (1) a religious leader (2) conscience or feelings (3) church tradition (4) latter-day revelation (5) Christ's will in the Bible.

SUMMING UP THE TRUTH

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer as in number 1.

- | | | | |
|------------|----------|----|---|
| Yes | X | No | 1. Authority is needed in religion? |
| Yes | No | No | 2. Does Christ have all authority in heaven and earth? |
| Yes | No | No | 3. Did the Holy Spirit reveal all the truth to the apostles? |
| Yes | No | No | 4. By inspiration, did Christ's apostles record all of His will in the Bible? |
| Yes | No | No | 5. Did the apostles write the Bible so that everyone can understand it? |
| Yes | No | No | 6. Should the Bible be our only rule of faith in religion? |



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

LESSON IV

GOD'S GIFT OF SALVATION

The first three lessons showed that the Bible is God's inspired word and our all-sufficient religious authority. We learned also how the Bible's theme centers around God's plan to save sinful man. Let us now study what the Bible says about God's part in the gift of salvation.

I. MAN'S NEED FOR SALVATION

Man's need for salvation can be expressed in one word: SIN. This need is better understood when one realizes (1) the meaning of sin, (2) the universal presence of sin and (3) the serious consequences of sin.

A. THE MEANING OF SIN

Sin is transgression of God's law (I John 3:4). The word literally means "missing the mark." The "mark" is the perfect will of God. Whoever fails to live perfectly according to God's will, misses the "mark" and sins.

The basic cause of sin is man's selfishness, or lack of love for God and others. Perfect love for God and fellow-man results in perfect obedience to God's law (John 14:15,21,23,24) and in the doing of good, not evil, to one's neighbor (Romans 13:10). Thus, man sins when he selfishly seeks to satisfy his own desires without regard to God's will or his neighbor's good (James 1:14-15).

All sin begins in the heart of man as an evil thought (Matthew 15:18-19). The moment man yields to this thought in his mind, though he may not have put the thought into action, he has sinned. Thus, Jesus says, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

From evil hearts proceed two main kinds of sin: (1) active sins and (2) passive sins. (1) Active sins; man sins actively when he does what God forbids. For example, when Adam and Eve ate the fruit which God commanded them not

to eat (Genesis 3), they actively sinned. God's New Testament law through Christ forbids such things as cursing, adultery, idolatry, hatred, wrath, strife, envy, murder, drunkenness, lying, stealing, etc. (See Galatians 5:19-21; Romans 1:29-32; I Corinthians 6:9-10). Consequently one who practices these things actively sins.

(2) Passive sins: one sins passively when he neglects to do what God commands. For example, a good moral man who does not obey the gospel sins passively because he fails to obey God's will (Hebrews 2:3; II Thessalonians 1:7-8). God also commands us to rear our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4), to obey laws of civil government (Romans 13:1-7), to add to our lives faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, love, etc. (II Peter 1:5-10). Failure to obey these commands is sin, for James says, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).



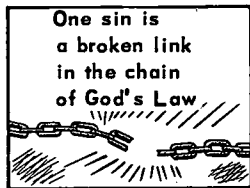
Thus, any transgression of God's law, active or passive, is sin. But who has committed sin?

B. THE UNIVERSAL PRESENCE OF SIN

Who can say that he never committed an evil act, never failed to do good, never had an evil thought, and never served his own selfish interests in violation of God's will? The Scriptures answer in thundering tones: "There is none righteous, no, not one . . . there is none that doeth good, no

not so much as one . . . for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:10, 12,23). "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). Truly, no accountable person has escaped sin's tragic influence. Sin has stained the life of every individual.

But, does God consider good moral men as sinners when they have committed only a few sins? The Bible answers, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10-11). If we keep all of God's laws except one, we are guilty of the whole law. One sin is a broken link in the chain of God's law. If we have coveted one time, or lied one time, or even had one evil thought, we are sinners before God. The Bible does not classify certain sins as mortal and other sins as venial. He that is dishonest in a little is also dishonest in much (Luke 16:10). Any sin makes one guilty before God, and becomes "mortal" if not repented of and confessed. (I John 5:16-17; 1:9).



"But what about the ignorant?" someone asks. God once overlooked ignorance, the Scriptures say, "but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). Those ignorant of God's will have the responsibility to "seek the Lord" (Acts 17:27). They that passively remain in ignorance will be judged accordingly (Luke 12:47-48).

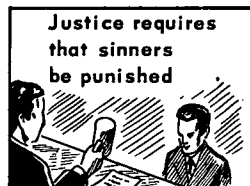
Thus, neither the ignorant nor the best moral man stands blameless before God. No one has perfectly obeyed God's laws; at some point in his life he has sinned, and this sin stains his soul. No matter how many good deeds he may perform afterwards, his works cannot save him from his sin. (Ephesians 2:8; Titus 3:5).

So then, everyone is a sinner. But is this bad? How serious is the fact that all have sinned?

C. THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

The fact that all men have sinned is extremely important because of the serious consequences of sin.

Sin brings punishment. God, being just, must punish the disobedient. Justice in every land demands punishment for transgressors of law. A judge who fails to sentence law-breakers is not considered just. In the same way the principle of justice demands that God punish transgressors



of divine law. In the day of the "righteous judgment of God" He will "render to every man according to his deeds" (Romans 2:5-8).

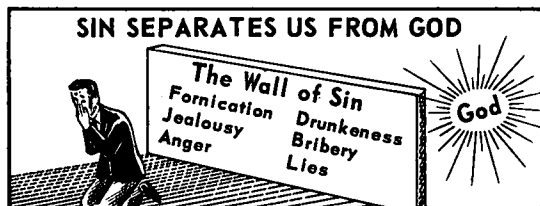
The Consequences of Adam's Sin. Physical death, including many of life's hardships, resulted from Adam's sin. God punished this first sin by giving labor in childbirth to the woman and hard work to the man. He drove them from the beautiful garden and passed death's sentence upon them and future generations (Genesis 3). "Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). Paul says that "in Adam all die" (I Corinthians 15:21-22). Thus all men bear not the guilt, but the consequences, of Adam's sin: physical death and hardships of life. In a similar way some children suffer the consequences, not the guilt, of a drunken father.

The Consequences of Personal Sin. While every man dies physically because of Adam's sin, every man dies spiritually because of his own sin. Thus the Bible says, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son" (Ezekiel 18:20). Notice that this spiritual death comes not from the sin of Adam or of parents, but from one's own personal sin. Consequently, little children are not subject to spiritual death because they are not capable of sinning. Jesus says that children are safe, being of the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:2-5,10; Luke 18:16).

Physical death occurs when the body is separated from the spirit (James 2:26). Spiritual death occurs when one is spiritually separated from God, the source of spiritual life. Thus, Isaiah says, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you" (Isaiah 59:2).

(1) In this life, personal sin makes one "dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1), "alienated from the life of God" (Ephesians 4:18), and thus separated from God's spiritual blessings. In this state of spiritual death, sin darkens the understanding (Ephesians 4:18), dulls the conscience (Ephesians 4:19), paralyzes the will (Romans 7:14-23) and enslaves the body (II Peter 2:19). Alcoholism and dope addiction are examples of the terrible, captivating power of sin over man's body and mind.

Fruits of personal sin, and the spiritual death it brings, are clearly seen in the misery of this



life. Personal sin causes wars and persecutions, graft and bribery in business and government, racial prejudice and social injustice, starvation wages on the part of employers, and cheating, lying and insufficient work by employees. Personal sin causes fatherless children, broken homes, unhappiness, abandoned old folks, poverty and ignorance. These evil fruits stem not from a particular political system, but from personal sin. If man perfectly followed God's will, these miseries would disappear. But man continues to sin, and sin's terrible consequences continue to plague mankind.

(2) In the life to come personal sin has even more serious consequences: it brings eternal separation from God. Paul said that the wicked "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord" (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). This state of separation thus results in eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46) sometimes called the second death: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Revelation 21:8).

Thus we see the serious consequences of sin. Because of Adam's sin, we suffer physical death and many of life's hardships. Because of personal sins, we suffer spiritual death and the miseries of this life; in the life to come we suffer eternal punishment and separation from God. Since all have sinned, all stand under the terrible consequences of sin.

A great gulf separates sinners from God. Drowning in the depths of sin, man cannot save himself. He can only cry out to God for a savior. What will the answer be?



II. GOD GIVES SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST

God, being just, has no obligation to save sinners. As transgressors of law, they are justly condemned. Only the innocent, who obeyed God's law perfectly, deserve salvation's blessings. From this standpoint, everyone stands condemned, for all have sinned. However, God is not only just, but also loving and merciful (Romans 11:22; 1 John 4:8). Thus, God is "not willing that any should perish" (II Peter 3:9) and "would have all men to be saved" (I Timothy 2:4). How then can God be just in demanding perfect obedi-

ence and punishment of sin, and also be merciful by offering the sinner salvation?

God gives the answer through Jesus Christ. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Only Christ is qualified to be man's mediator for salvation's blessings (I Timothy 2:4-6). Only through Jesus can man approach God acceptably (John 14:6; Colossians 3:17). His one sacrifice is sufficient to save man from all of his sins (Hebrews 7:27; 10:14). But how does God give salvation through Christ?

A. THROUGH CHRIST GOD GIVES FORGIVENESS

God can forgive the sinner because Jesus met the law's demand for both perfect obedience and punishment for sin. All sinners deserve punishment, but Jesus Christ lived the perfect life man could not live (I Peter 2:22), and thus became the first man who did not deserve sin's penalty. Yet, Christ died on the cross as a common criminal and thus really suffered the punishment of sin. Why?

Christ's perfect life and undeserving death enable God to accept His Son's death as the penalty that justice requires for the sins of others. (I Timothy 2:5-6). Christ suffered, not for His own sins, but for ours. Christ "bare our sins in his own body" (I Peter 2:24) and "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (I Peter 3:18). God made Christ "to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21). Therefore, in Christ "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Ephesians 1:7). What a wonderful gift! God offers to sinful man the righteousness that Christ earned. Jesus suffered in this life that we might escape suffering in the life to come.

Jesus thus fulfills God's justice and mercy. He is "just and the justifier" (Romans 3:26). He is "just" because Christ met the demands of justice for a perfect life and punishment of sin. He is merciful as "the justifier" by accepting Christ's death as punishment for our sins in order to forgive and make us righteous (Romans 3:23-26).

B. THROUGH CHRIST GOD GIVES POWER TO CONQUER SIN

God also gives man the desire and power to conquer sin in this life. Jesus' willing death on the cross demonstrates God's great love in permitting His only Son to suffer and die for sinners (Romans 5:8). Indeed, few men will give their life for friends, much less for enemies. The love exhibited in Christ's sacrifice draws man to God (John 12:32), giving him the desire to love God in return: "We love him, because he first loved

us" (I John 4:19).

Besides giving man the desire to live above sin, God also shows man the way to live. Christ's sinless life gives man a perfect, living example that inspires godly living (I Peter 2:21-22). God has given man the Bible to reveal this perfect way of life (II Timothy 3:16-17). God also sends His Spirit to strengthen and help Christians to live right (Romans 8:26-27; Ephesians 3:16), and He promises to provide a way of escape in every temptation (I Corinthians 10:13).

C. THROUGH CHRIST GOD GIVES BLESSINGS IN THIS LIFE

By following the way of truth as revealed in the Bible man will find that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (I Timothy 4:8). Salvation has both earthly and heavenly value. In this life, God gives the saved not only spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3), but also physical blessings. The saved experience true happiness (Matthew 5:3-11). They are promised a sufficient supply of food, clothing, and shelter (Matthew 6:25-33). God assures that the fruit of their godly lives will make the world a better place (Galatians 5:22-23), producing those characteristics which will end all hate, bitterness, and oppression. He thus promises that righteous people will be a blessing to the nations of the world (Proverbs 14:34).

D. THROUGH CHRIST GOD GIVES ETERNAL LIFE

The blessings of salvation are even greater in the life to come. Through Christ's resurrection saved people thrill with the blessed assurance of an endless life in heaven (I Peter 1:3-5; John 5:28-29). Had Jesus remained in the grave, had He succumbed to the enemy of death, the Christian hope would have died with Him (I Corinthians 15:17-19). But because Christ was raised, Christians will also be raised to immortal glory (I Corinthians 15:51-54). Paul assures us that "the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory" of the life to come. (Romans 8:18).

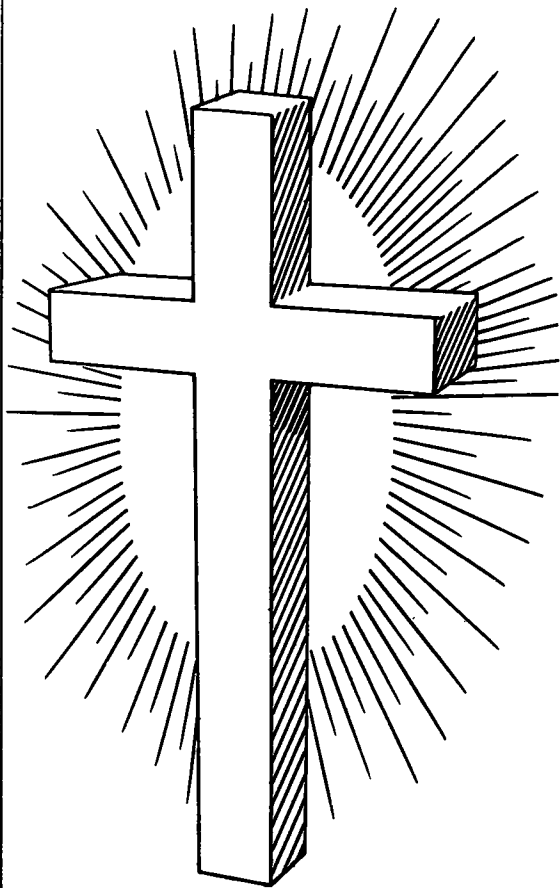
Through Jesus Christ salvation is complete. In Him God gives forgiveness, power to conquer sin, manifold blessings in this life and eternal life in the world to come. What a wonderful gift! Salvation is truly more valuable than all this world's riches, glories and pleasures. (Matthew 16:26; Hebrews 11:25-26).

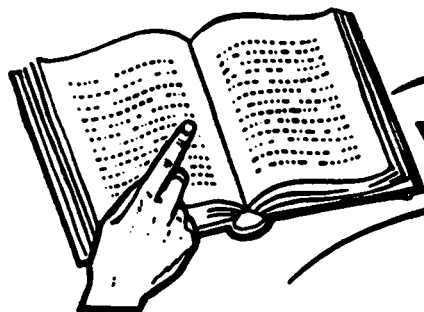
CONCLUSION

All men need salvation because all have sinned,

and without a savior stand under sin's dreadful consequences. God, in love for helpless sinners, provides salvation through Jesus Christ. Jesus lived the perfect life we could not live, died to pay the penalty we could not pay, and was resurrected to give a hope we could not merit. In Christ man finds salvation full and free; forgiveness of sins, power to conquer sin, and wonderful blessings on earth and in heaven, now and forever. Salvation is truly "the gift of God" through Christ our Lord (Ephesians 2:8). Such salvation is of immeasurable value.

The sacred Scriptures tell of Christ's invitation for all men to accept salvation (Matthew 11:28-30). The next lesson shows how man can accept God's wonderful gift.





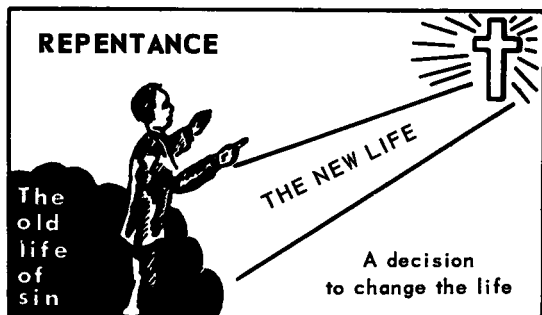
WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

LESSON V

MAN'S ACCEPTANCE OF SALVATION

Earlier, we learned that man is lost in sin but can receive God's priceless gift of salvation through Christ.

The Bible says that Christ died for all men (I John 2:2) and that God desires all to be saved (I Timothy 2:4). Are all men saved then? Jesus answers, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father . . ." (Matthew 7:21). Though God freely offers salvation, man obviously must do something to accept God's gift. Man's greatest concern should be, "What must I do to be saved?"



I. MAN'S ACCEPTANCE INVOLVES A SURRENDER

The Bible teaches that salvation costs man unconditional surrender: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Unable to save himself, man must surrender to the Savior. Surrender requires man to place Christ above family ties, friendships, financial gain, everything (Luke 14:26). Paul "suffered the loss of all things" to "win Christ" (Philippians 3:8). Modern man's surrender to Jesus must be just

that complete. Jesus warns man to count the cost of salvation. (Luke 14:25-33). Yet, one who considers salvation's great value will feel that man's part in salvation is very small. (Romans 8:18). The question is, "How can one surrender his life to the Master?"

II. HOW MAN SURRENDERS TO CHRIST

The New Testament contains many examples of people who were confronted by this question and received a divine answer. The following chart reveals that answer.

EXAMPLES OF BIBLE CONVERSION*

Example	Faith	Repentance	Confession	Baptism	Salvation
Jews		Acts 2:38		Acts 2:38-41	Acts 2:38, 47
Samaritans	Acts 8:12			Acts 8:12	
The Eunuch				Acts 8:36-39	
Cornelius		Acts 11:18		Acts 10:48	Acts 11:13, 14
The jailor	Acts 16:31-34			Acts 16:33	Acts 16:31, 33
Paul (Saul)	Acts 22:7-16			Acts 22:16	Acts 22:16
Corinthians	Acts 18:8			Acts 18:8	
Romans	Romans 10:9-10		Romans 10:9-10	Romans 6:3-4	Romans 10:9-10

*No one example shows all the conditions of salvation, but all of the examples together form a complete picture of everything man needs to do in order to be saved.

A. Man Surrenders Through Faith

Notice in the chart of conversions that man begins his surrender by faith.

The basic meaning of faith. "Faith" primarily means belief, conviction or assurance, of the

truth of anything (Hebrews 11:1). In this sense, faith includes belief in the existence of God and in His Son, Jesus, who died for our sins and was raised from the dead (John 3:16; Romans 10:9-10). Without conviction of these truths no one can please God (Hebrews 11:6). Jesus said, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

Man should accept these truths not by a blind, gullible faith, but by a faith based on the evidence of trustworthy eyewitnesses who recorded Jesus' life, miracles and teachings in Holy Scripture (John 20:31; Romans 10:17).

The meaning of saving faith. However, saving faith is more than mere intellectual belief in God and in His Son, Jesus. The devils believe these truths (James 2:19; Matthew 8:28-29), yet are lost. What, then, is saving faith?

Faith, in its complete sense, means trust or reliance. Paul wrote, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). As Lesson IV showed, sinful man cannot save himself by a life of perfect works (Titus 3:5); rather, he must trust and rely on God's grace as seen in Christ's perfect life and sacrificial death (Romans 4:22-25; 5:8-9). The kind of faith necessary for salvation is described by Paul as the "faith which worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6). Saving faith thus includes true love for, and active trust in, Christ as Savior. A faith without works "is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). The works mentioned in James 2:17,24 are not the meritorious works of a perfect life, but an active manifestation of one's trust in Christ. Thus, Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father" (Matthew 7:21).

Saving faith thus includes belief of truth, love for God and active trust in Christ for salvation. How, then, can man actively manifest his faith in Christ and receive salvation?

B. Man Surrenders through Repentance

The above chart shows also that man's surrender includes repentance.

Necessity of repentance. Jesus commissioned His apostles to preach "repentance and remission of sins" (Luke 24:47). The apostles in turn taught that repentance must precede forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 3:19). Without repentance man is lost and will perish (Luke 13:3; Matthew 11:20-24). However, God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). He thus commands "all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). But what is repentance?

Meaning of repentance. Greek dictionaries define repentance as "a change of mind". This change of mind is not simply faith, for many Jews who believed in Christ still needed to repent (Acts 2:36-38). Yet, faith in God's love and goodness can move one to repent (Romans 2:4).

Also repentance is not mere sorrow for sin. Judas was sorrowful for betraying Jesus but afterwards hanged himself instead of truly repenting. However, "godly sorrow worketh repentance" (II Corinthians 7:9-10). What change, then, does repentance involve?

Repentance is that act of faith by which man changes his mind about his past, sinful life, resolving to live for Christ in the future (Acts 26:20). Negatively, one repents by deciding to cease a sinful life, as did the Ninevites "at the preaching of Jonah" (Matthew 12:41; Jonah 3:8-10). One who is stealing from his employer repents by resolving to quit stealing (Revelation 9:21); one committing fornication decides to quit committing fornication (II Corinthians 12:21). Positively, one repents by turning to Christ and by deciding to do His will, accepting Christian responsibility, whatever it may be (Matthew 21:28-32). Repentance, then, is a decision to leave sin and follow wherever Christ may lead. In repentance, one decides to pay the cost of unconditional surrender to Christ.

A NEW CREATURE



Effects of repentance. Repentance produces "works of repentance" (Acts 26:20; Matthew 3:8), making a better person: a better employer or employee, a better husband or wife, a better son or daughter, a better neighbor, a better citizen of the nation. Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of life.

C. Man Surrenders through Confession

After deciding to surrender to Christ in faith and repentance, man pledges his surrender in two acts of faith. As the above chart indicates,

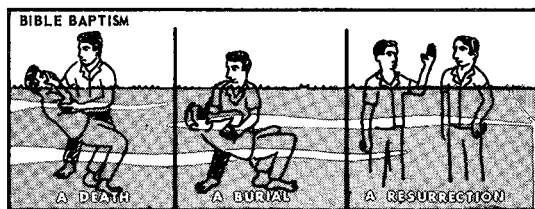
the first of these acts is confession of faith in Jesus Christ. Paul says, "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). Thus confession comes before salvation. In confession one publicly pledges his faith in Christ. Paul tells of the "good confession" that Timothy made "before many witnesses" (I Timothy 6:12-13).

Men confessed Christ at great cost during the first century. Some people who believed in Jesus would not confess Him because of fear of persecution (John 12:42-43; 9:22). In some modern day countries those who confess Jesus still suffer social and financial loss and sometimes bodily harm. But one cannot surrender to Christ by being a secret disciple. On the judgment day Jesus will deny those who refused to confess Him publicly. (Matthew 10:32-35).

Thus, in confession one openly pledges his faith and allegiance to Christ. After confession man must make one more step to complete his initial surrender and receive salvation.

D. Man Surrenders Through Baptism

The examples of conversions indicate that believers were baptized immediately. One family was baptized "the same hour of the night" (Acts 16:33). Another man, upon hearing Jesus preached the first time, immediately wanted to be baptized (Acts 8:35-38). These examples show that believers felt a strong urgency to be baptized. Why?



Essentiality of baptism. The Bible clearly shows baptism's relation to salvation.

(1) To receive forgiveness of sins one must be baptized. Peter taught, "Repent and be baptized . . . for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). Saul (Paul the apostle) was told, "Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16).

(2) To be saved from punishment for past sins, one must be baptized Jesus says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Peter teaches, "Baptism doth also now save us" in the way that the flood saved Noah (I Peter 3:20-21). As the flood separated

Noah from the sinful world's destruction, so baptism separates one from sin and its destruction. This does not mean the water saves. God's grace is the saving power. Peter says, "Baptism doth also now save us . . . by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21). Baptism saves through what it symbolizes: Christ's death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4). Baptism expresses man's faith in God's work, for in baptism one is raised with Christ "through the faith of the operation of God" (Colossians 2:12). Baptism saves sinners the way bathing in water gave sight to the blind man (John 9:1-7). Jesus required the blind man to wash in water to receive his sight. By washing he expressed faith in Jesus; then God, not the water, restored his sight. By being baptized, man proves his faith; then God, not the water, saves.

(3) To enter Christ one must be baptized. Salvation is "in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 2:10). Man must thus enter Christ to obtain salvation. But one is "baptized into Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:3) and into His "body", the church (I Corinthians 12:13), and thereby "puts on Christ" (Galatians 3:27).

(4) To become God's child one must be baptized. Paul says one becomes God's child through faith and baptism (Galatians 3:26-27). God's children must have His Spirit (Romans 8:9-11, 15-16). One receives God's Spirit at baptism (Acts 2:38; 5:32), completing the new birth "of water and of the Spirit" (John 3:5).

(5) To begin the new life one must be baptized. Christians must not live in sin, because in baptism one is united with Christ's death, dies to sin and crucifies his old sinful self (Romans 6:1-6). Further, in baptism one rises to a new life in the likeness of Christ's resurrection (Romans 6:4-5). Baptism thus divides the Christian's past sinful life from his new life in Christ.

Therefore, whether salvation be described as forgiveness of sins, salvation from sin's punishment, entering Christ, becoming God's child, or beginning the new life, baptism is essential.

Mode of baptism. Greek dictionaries define the verb, to baptize, as "to dip, submerge." The mode of baptism is, therefore, immersion. The Bible also teaches that baptism requires a burial and a rising (Colossians 2:12), symbolizing Jesus' burial and resurrection (Romans 6:3-4). Since neither sprinkling nor pouring involves a burial and resurrection, baptism must be immersion. Bible examples confirm the same. John's baptism required "much water" (John 3:23). In Jesus' baptism, He came "up out of the water" (Matthew 3:16). When Philip baptized the eunuch, "they went both down into the water" and afterwards came "up out of the water" (Acts 8:38-39). Only immersion fits the

picture of baptism in these examples.

Subjects of baptism. A subject of baptism must first meet certain requirements. (1) Faith must precede baptism (Mark 16:16). Baptism is an act of faith (Colossians 2:12), springing from a good conscience (I Peter 3:21). Thus, disbelievers and infants, who are incapable of faith, cannot qualify for baptism. There are no New Testament examples of infant baptism. (2) Repentance must precede baptism (Acts 2:38). Those unwilling to leave sin or incapable of repentance should not be baptized. Infants have no sin (Ezekiel 18:20), will not perish (Matthew 18:3, 10; 19:14), have nothing of which to repent, and, therefore, have no need for baptism. (3) One must first understand baptism's purpose and mode. Baptism is immersion in water for salvation through Christ (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). One not understanding this purpose and mode has the wrong baptism and should be re-baptized (Acts 19:1-5). (4) Willing surrender to Christ must precede baptism. Since salvation is to "whosoever will" (Revelation 22:17), one must willingly submit to baptism. One cannot be baptized for another, nor force another to be baptized (Acts 2:41). Baptism is a decision each must make for himself.

Thus we learn how man surrenders to Christ. One surrenders in true faith, repentance, confession and baptism, thereby fulfilling man's part to receive salvation.

III. HOW ONE SURRENDERS AFTER SALVATION IS RECEIVED

Upon completing one's initial surrender to Christ in baptism, man is added to the church by God (Acts 2:47; I Corinthians 12:13), and rises to a "new life" (Romans 6:4). Thus, as a new creature (II Corinthians 5:17), the Christian has a new Lord, Christ, and a new relationship, the church. He begins the new life by taking up "his cross daily" and following Jesus (Luke 9:23).

Church members surrender daily to Christ by growing in Christian character and knowledge (II Peter 1:5-10), worshipping God "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24), and producing good works (John 15:2; Romans 12:1-2). Unless the Christian continues to grow spiritually his faith will fail (Hebrews 3:12) and he will fall away, losing his salvation (I Corinthians 10:12; Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-31). Some Christians actually fell from grace and lost salvation in New Testament times (Galatians 5:4; II Peter 2:20-22).

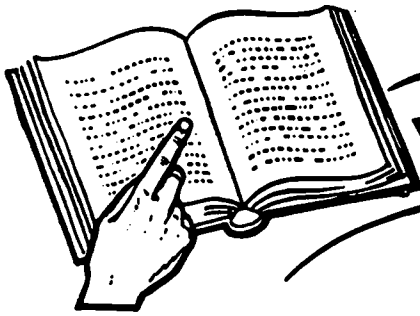
These warnings against falling do not mean that Christ demands sinless perfection to remain saved, for no one can say he has no sin (I John 1:8). However, church members must fight a

continual battle against sin (Ephesians 6:10-18). When Christians do sin, they must not continue in sin (Romans 6:1-2), but go to their advocate, Christ (I John 2:1-2), who gives complete forgiveness after confession of sin (I John 1:9), repentance (Acts 8:22) and prayer to God (Acts 8:22).

Thus, a saved person will regard Christ and the church as the most important thing in his life (Ephesians 3:21; 5:25-27). With the joy of God's salvation he will continue to surrender to Christ in the church awaiting the Lord's glorious coming and the reward of eternal life. (Revelation 2:10).

CONCLUSION

To accept God's gift of salvation, man must surrender himself to Christ in the way Jesus has declared. He must have saving faith in Jesus as the Son of God, repenting of all sins, confessing faith in Christ, and being immersed in water for the remission of sins. Having become a Christian, he must continue faithful unto death, in the church of Christ. Future lessons will discuss in detail the Christian's life in the church.



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

LESSON VI

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

In the last lesson we studied that man begins a new life in the church of Christ when he receives God's gift of salvation. This lesson presents what the Bible says about the church's establishment: (1) God's plan to establish it and (2) God's purpose for establishing it.

I. GOD'S PLAN TO ESTABLISH THE CHURCH

The Bible says that "from the beginning of the world" God, according to His "eternal purpose," planned the coming of Christ and the establishment of His church (Ephesians 3:9-11). The time and effort spent in planning anything shows its importance. To be a medical doctor, for example, one must prepare about twelve years because of the profession's importance. God considered the church so important that He not only purposed it from the beginning, but also promised it in the Patriarchal Age, prophesied it in the Jewish Age, prepared it in the days of Christ, and presented it as an established reality in the Christian Age.

THE CHURCH PROMISED IN THE PATRIARCHAL AGE

During the Patriarchal Age, the first period of human history, God gradually began unfolding His "eternal purpose" to establish the church. For example, God promised to make a great nation of Abraham's descendants, through whom Christ would come and bless all nations of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3). Paul later taught that people of every nation receive that promised blessing as members of Christ's body, the church (Galatians 3:7-9, 14, 26-29).

THE CHURCH PROPHESED IN THE JEWISH AGE

We have already studied how God chose the Jewish nation (Abraham's descendants) to bring

Christ into the world. To preserve Israel for this purpose, God separated them from other nations by giving them a law which prohibited them from intermingling with other races (Deuteronomy 5:1-3; Acts 10:28). However, the Jewish prophets predicted that one day God would establish a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34) and a new kingdom in which men of all nations would unite to serve God (Psalms 22:27-31; 110:1-7). Christ and the church fulfilled these prophecies. Christ established the new covenant (Hebrews 8:6-13) and began reigning over His kingdom, the church (Acts 2:30-36; Ephesians 1:19-23; I Corinthians 15:23-26). The church is often described as a kingdom (Matthew 13:11, 18-19; 16:18-19; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:6,9; etc.).

The prophets also predicted the time and place of the church's establishment. For example, Isaiah prophesied that "the Lord's house" would be established during "the last days" in "Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:1-3). The church is often described as "God's house" (I Timothy 3:15; Hebrews 3:6).

God more specifically predicted the time of the church's establishment in Daniel 2:1-45. Read this chapter carefully before noticing the illustration and following comments.

The Image of Daniel 2:36-44

- 1st Kingdom
Babylonian
- 2nd Kingdom
Medo-Persian
- 3rd Kingdom
Grecian
- 4th Kingdom
Roman



The image Daniel described represents four world kingdoms (Daniel 2:36-40). In the days of the fourth kingdom God was to establish His kingdom or church (Daniel 2:44). Daniel himself identified the first three kingdoms. (1) The first kingdom of gold is king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Daniel 2:36-38; 1:1). (2) The second kingdom of silver (Daniel 2:32,39) is named in Daniel 5:25-31 as the Medo-Persian empire.

(3) The third kingdom of brass (Daniel 2:32,39) is predicted in Daniel 8:1-21 (see especially verses 20,21) as the Grecian empire. History books verify the historical succession of these kingdoms as here taught.

But what about the fourth kingdom? Its description in Daniel 2:40-43 fits exactly what both history and the Bible (Luke 2:1-2; 3:1) claim as the Roman empire. "In the days of these kings" God was to establish His kingdom (Daniel 2:44). Several facts stand out in these prophecies: the church was to begin in Jerusalem during the last days, and specifically in the days of the Roman empire.

These prophecies show that God considered the church so important that He prophesied it centuries beforehand.

THE CHURCH PREPARED IN THE DAYS OF CHRIST

God further prepared for the church by sending Christ to establish it. Jesus lived during the days of the Roman empire (Luke 3:1). Did Jesus confirm the prophet's predictions that the church or kingdom would be established during His time?

Notice first that John the Baptist, Christ's forerunner, came preaching that the kingdom was "at hand" (Matthew 3:2). Afterwards, Jesus preached the same, adding, "The time is fulfilled" (Mark 1:15). Jesus also instructed His apostles to preach that the kingdom was "at hand" (Matthew 10:7). He also promised them that He would build His church or kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19). Obviously, John and Jesus believed the time for the kingdom had arrived.

The Bible later explains that Christ "loved the church and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25), purchasing it "with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Imagine! The church is so important that God sent His only Son to establish it, and Christ paid His life's blood to purchase it.

However, even after Jesus' death, people were still waiting for the kingdom (Luke 23:51). When, then, was the church established? Jesus taught earlier that the kingdom would come "with power" before some of His apostles would "taste of death" (Mark 9:1). Jesus also told the apostles to remain in Jerusalem until they received this power, which would come with the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:47-49; Acts 1:8).

Reviewing, we see that the Old Testament and Jesus predicted that the kingdom or church would be established (1) in Jerusalem, (2) in the last days, (3) during the days of the Roman kings, (4) while the apostles were living, (5) with power, and (6) with the Holy Spirit. Were these predictions fulfilled?

THE CHURCH PRESENTED IN THE CHRISTIAN AGE

The apostles waited in Jerusalem for the fulfillment of the promised kingdom (Acts 1:4,12). On the day of Pentecost, a Jewish feast day about fifty days after Christ's resurrection, God miraculously fulfilled all the predictions of the church's establishment.

That day God filled the apostles with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) and manifested miraculous power (Acts 2:1-11). God's word went forth from Jerusalem as Peter announced that the last days had arrived (Acts 2:16-17). He also declared that Jesus' resurrection and ascension to God's throne fulfilled the prophecies that taught Christ would reign on David's throne (Acts 2:29-36). Many Jews believed and, after repentance and baptism, 3,000 were added to the church (Acts 2:37-47).

On this day the church became a reality. The accompanying diagram and the above facts show that everything necessary to the church's establishment was present on this day: Jerusalem, latter days, days of Roman kings, life of apostles, power, and the Holy Spirit. The time and place of the church's beginning clearly stand out: the place, Jerusalem; the time, Day of Pentecost, about A.D. 30.

After that day the church or kingdom was spoken of as present. All references to the church before Pentecost were future. Afterwards Pentecost was called "the beginning" (Acts 11:15) and the church or kingdom was considered established (Acts 5:11; 8:1). The apostles identified the church as the kingdom by describing church members as "translated into the kingdom" (Colossians 1:13), "called" into the kingdom (I Thessalonians 2:12), "in the kingdom" (Revelation 1:6,9), and sitting with Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6; Revelation 5:9-10). They said Jesus was reigning at God's right hand (Hebrews 1:3,13; I Corinthians 15:22-26) over the church (Ephesians 1:19-23). God's plan to establish the church was thus fulfilled.

God went to great lengths to establish the church. He planned it from the beginning, promised it, prophesied it, prepared it and finally fulfilled it in presence. The church also exists in performance as it does the will of God and one day will exist in perfection in the heavenly state (Ephesians 5:25-26; II Peter 1:11). If God thought enough of the church to do all this, surely man should esteem the church as of great importance.

THE CHURCH (KINGDOM)

PURPOSED
Ephesians 3:9-11

PROMISED
Genesis 12:1-3

PROPHESIED
Isaiah 2:1-3

PREPARED
Mark 1:15; 8:7
Matthew 16:18-19

PRESENT
Acts 2:1-47; 5:11
Colossians 1:13

Day of Pentecost, 30 A.D.
Acts 11:15

II. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH

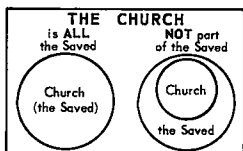
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH on the day of Pentecost, 30 A.D.

Acts 2:1-4F

Prediction	Event	Fulfillment
Isaiah 2:3 →	Jerusalem ←	Luke 24:47 Acts 1:2,12; 2:1-47
Isaiah 2:3 →	Last Days ←	Acts 2:16-17
Daniel 2:44 →	Days of Roman Kings ←	Mark 1:15; Luke 3:7
Mark 9:7 →	Life of Apostles ←	Acts 1:8; 2:14
Mark 9:7 →	With Power ←	Acts 1:8; 2:1-47
Luke 24:49 →		
Acts 1:8 →	With the Holy Spirit ←	Acts 2:1-5

The word, church, comes from the Greek word, *ekklesia*, which means "the called out." The "called out" fitly describes the church because God has called it out of a sinful world to fulfill His "eternal purpose" (Ephesians 3:9-11; II Timothy 1:9). The Bible compares the church to such figures as a body, a family, a kingdom, a temple and a nation. A study of these figures will reveal the nature of the church and thus show how and why the church fulfills God's purpose.

THE CHURCH IS THE BODY OF THE SAVED



The Bible describes the church as the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23) and describes Christ as the "saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). Thus the church is the body of the saved.

During the Jewish Age the Old Testament law separated the Gentiles (all other nations) from enjoying God's special blessings for the Jewish nation (Ephesians 2:11-12). But when Christ died on the cross, He "broke down the middle wall of partition" by removing the old law (Ephesians 2:14-15), and uniting the saved of all nations in "one body," the church (Ephesians 2:16). God thus established the church for the purpose of providing a common union in which the saved people of all nations could partake together of Christ's spiritual blessings (Ephesians 3:4-6; 1:3), in fulfillment of God's eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:9-11).

People of every nation who obey the gospel

of salvation are thus added to the church by God (Acts 2:41,47). Consequently, faith and baptism are not only conditions for salvation (Mark 16:16) but are also the requirements for membership in Christ's body, the church (I Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:26-27). Indeed the church is the body of all the saved of all nations.

THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY OF FELLOWSHIP

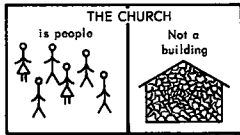
The church is "called unto the fellowship" of Christ (I Corinthians 1:9). The church enjoys fellowship as the family of God. God is the Father (Matthew 23:9); Christ is the "first-born" Son (Romans 8:29); and all church members are God's children (Romans 8:14-16). One becomes a member of God's family through faith and baptism (Galatians 3:26-27). As a family, Christians freely pray to God as their Father (Matthew 6:8-13) and love each other as brothers in the flesh (I John 4:20-5:2). Together, church members enjoy each other's presence and supply each other's physical needs (Acts 2:44-47). Also they bear one another's spiritual burdens, strengthening the weak and restoring the fallen (Galatians 6:1-2; James 5:16, 19-20). Indeed, God had a good purpose in establishing the church as a family of fellowship.

THE CHURCH IS A KINGDOM OF SERVICE

As we studied earlier, the church is also Christ's kingdom (Colossians 1:13). Christ's kingdom is spiritual rather than worldly (John 18:36; Luke 17:21) and thus is composed of the saved of "every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9-10). Thus, one enters the kingdom, like the church, by being "born of water and the Spirit" (John 3:5).

Since Jesus is king (Revelation 1:5; 17:14), Christians, as servants in the kingdom, must let Christ rule their lives (Matthew 6:33). Church members serve Christ by serving their fellowmen. Thus, each Christian must be a good citizen of his country, obeying civil rulers (Romans 13:1-7). The church, both collectively and individually, must help the needy (Matthew 25:35-40), "do good to all men" (Galatians 6:10), and teach the gospel of salvation to everyone (Mark 16:15; Acts 8:1,4). As a kingdom of service, God planned the church to be a blessing to the whole world (Matthew 5:14-16).

THE CHURCH IS A TEMPLE OF WORSHIP



The church is also described as God's spiritual temple or sanctuary (Ephesians 2:19-22). In Old Testament times the temple was a material building in Jerusalem where God's Spirit dwelt with those who went there to worship Him

(I Kings 8). However, God established the church not to be a building of stones (as many consider the church today), but rather to be a "spiritual house" of people (I Peter 2:5; Acts 5:11; 14:27). God's Spirit inhabits this temple by dwelling in individual Christians (I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). God planned the church so that people could worship Him, not only in Jerusalem, but everywhere "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:20-24). Thus, as a church or temple all Christians are priests (Revelation 1:6) and offer "spiritual sacrifices" in worship to God (I Peter 2:5,9). Each Christian has direct access to God's presence through Christ, the only high priest (Hebrews 4:15,16; I Timothy 2:5).

THE CHURCH IS A NATION OF HOLINESS

The church is also called "a holy nation" (I Peter 2:9). Since God is holy, His children must also be holy (I Peter 1:15). Holiness, sometimes translated sanctification, means "separation from that which is sinful or unclean." Thus, the Bible says that every church member is a saint (one who is holy and pure) and must abstain from sinful practices (I Corinthians 1:2; 6:9-10; Philippians 1:1). Church members who refuse to repent of sin must be disfellowshipped by the rest of the church (I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Thessalonians 3:14). God planned the church to be "holy" and "without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27) and to be a shining light of truth, honesty and purity in the midst of an evil world (Philippians 2:15).

Thus God's purpose in establishing the church was to form a body of all the saved who could unite in enjoying a blessed fellowship, serving Christ, worshipping God, and living holy lives.

CONCLUSION

God's plan to establish the church of Christ is indeed marvelous. He purposed it from the beginning, promised it, prophesied it, sent His Son, who died to purchase it, and sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles in establishing it

and spreading it over the earth. But God's purpose for establishing the church makes the church worthy of even higher esteem. Only in the church can all the saved unite in one body to fulfill God's eternal purpose for mankind: to enjoy the spiritual blessings of salvation and fellowship and to serve, worship and live holy lives for God. No wonder that the Bible says, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Ephesians 3:21).

God's great plan and noble purpose for establishing the church truly make it the most important institution on earth. The church is therefore worthy of your careful consideration. Future lessons will present more about God's will for the church of Christ.

QUESTIONS

NAME.....

LESSON VI

ADDRESS.....

Grade:.....

CITY STATE Zip Code.....

REVIEW TO REMEMBER

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer as in number 1.

- ~~True~~ False 1. The Bible is God's inspired word.
True False 2. Man's final religious authority is the Bible.
True False 3. The Old Testament contains God's covenant for modern man.
True False 4. All men need Christ as Savior.
True False 5. To receive salvation man must surrender to Christ in faith, repentance, confession and baptism.
True False 6. Christians must continue to surrender to Christ to remain saved.

STUDY AND SELECT

Instructions: Place an X over the letter of the correct answer as in number 1.

1. This lesson is about the church's (1) organization (X) establishment (3) unity.
2. God purposed the church in (1) Christ's day (2) Moses' day (3) the beginning of time. (Ephesians 3:9-11).
3. God's promised blessing to all nations through Abraham is received by all (1) members of Christ's church (2) good citizens (3) sinners. (Galatians 3:7-9, 14, 26-29).
4. Isaiah 2:1-3 predicted that the church would be first established in (1) Jerusalem (2) Rome (3) North America.
5. How many world empires does the image in Daniel 2:31-45 represent? (1) five (2) four (3) thirteen.
6. Daniel 2:40-42 says that the images's ten toes represent (1) ten kingdoms (2) ten kings (3) the fourth kingdom's broken condition.
7. During the days of the fourth kingdom, God

- was to establish (1) the Jewish nation (2) His kingdom (3) nothing. (Daniel 2:44).
8. The Bible and history interpret the kingdoms to be Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and (1) Rome (2) Russia (3) North America. (Daniel 2:36-38; 5:25-31; 8:20-21; Luke 2:1-2; 3:1).
 9. Jesus and John the Baptist, living under Rome's rule, said the time for the kingdom was (1) fulfilled or near (2) past (3) centuries in the future. (Mark 1:15; Matthew 3:2).
 10. Christ died to (1) show the church was already established (2) purchase the church (3) grieve the church. (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25-26).
 11. The church and the kingdom on earth are (1) identical (2) different (3) similar. (Matthew 16:18-19; Colossians 1:13,18; Revelation 1:4,9).
 12. Christ predicted that His kingdom or church would be established with power (1) after His second coming (2) in the lifetime of His apostles (3) in 1914. (Mark 9:1).
 13. Jesus said that this "power" would come in Jerusalem (1) during war time (2) at Christ's second coming (3) with the Holy Spirit. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).
 14. When were the predictions concerning the kingdom's establishment fulfilled? (1) Day of Pentecost, c. A.D. 30 (2) 1914 (3) Not yet (4) Jesus's earthly ministry. (Acts 2:1-36).
 15. Christ's reign on David's throne lasts (1) from His second coming to the day of judgment (2) from 1914 to the day of judgment (3) from His resurrection and ascension until the day of judgment. (Acts 2:29-36; Hebrews 1:3,13; I Corinthians 15:22-26).
 16. After Pentecost the kingdom or church was considered (1) non-existent (2) present and established (3) only future. (Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:6,9; Acts 5:11).
 17. God's great plan to establish the church shows that the church is (1) unimportant (2) useless (3) of great importance.

THINK AND CHOOSE

Instructions: Place the letter of the correct answer in the blank as in number 1.

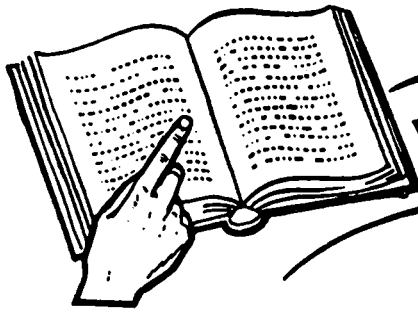
- c 1. The church fulfills (a) Satan's desire (b) man's pride (c) God's eternal purpose.
2. The word, church, literally means (a) a worship building (b) an organization (c) the called out.
3. The church is called out of sin to (a) fulfill God's purpose (b) enter monasteries (c) be sad. (Ephesians 3:9-11; II Timothy 1:9).
4. The church is described as (a) Peter's body (b) Christ's body (c) John the Baptist's body. (Ephesians 1:22-23).
5. Christ's death removed the Old Testament law so that the saved among both Jews and Gentiles (other nations) might be united in (a) error (b) one body, the church (c) many bodies or churches. (Ephesians 2:11-16).
6. To become a member of Christ's body, the church, one must (a) be voted on by the church (b) obey the gospel and be added by God (c) have an unusual religious experience (d) be sprinkled. (Acts 2:41,47; I Corinthians 12:13).
7. Since God adds each saved person to the church, and since conditions for salvation are the same as for church membership, how many of the saved are in the church? (a) Some (b) Many (c) All. (Acts 2:41,47; Mark 16:16; I Corinthians 12:13).
8. As children in God's family, church members should (a) be unkind to each other (b) worship together but not associate together (c) love, fellowship and help each other in physical and spiritual needs. (I John 4:20-5:2; Acts 2:44-47; Galatians 6:1-2).
9. As a kingdom the church serves Christ the king by (a) disobeying civil authorities but preaching the gospel (b) merely going to church services (c) obeying civil rulers and doing good to, and teaching, all men. (Romans 13:1-7; Galatians 6:10; Acts 8:4).
10. As a kingdom of service the church is (a) a curse to the world (b) a blessing to the world (c) useless to the world. (Matthew 5:14-16).
11. Christ's temple or church is a (a) cathedral (b) church building (c) spiritual house of individual Christians. (I Peter 2:5).

12. God's Spirit inhabits this temple by dwelling in (a) an altar (b) church buildings (c) individual Christians. (I Corinthians 3:16; 6:19).
13. The priests of this temple who offer God spiritual sacrifices are (a) only the clergy (b) the Levites (c) all Christians. (I Peter 2:5,9; Revelation 1:6).
14. The church's high priest is (a) the Pope (b) Mary (c) Christ. (Hebrews 4:15; I Timothy 2:5).
15. The church should be a (a) political power (b) corrupt body (c) holy nation. (I Peter 2:9).
16. According to the Bible the church's saints are (a) martyrs (b) special Christians canonized by the church (c) all Christians. (I Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 1:1).
17. As a nation of holiness, every church member (a) may continue to sin (b) can commit "lesser" or venial sins (c) should abstain from all sin. (I Corinthians 6:9-10).
18. Christians who refuse to repent of sin must be (a) ignored (b) given the church's blessings (c) disfellowshipped by the whole church. (I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Thessalonians 3:14).
19. God's purpose for the church to unite all the saved in fellowship, service, worship, and holy conduct makes it an institution of (a) unimportance (b) some importance (c) the greatest importance. (Ephesians 3:21).

SUMMING UP THE TRUTH

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer as in number 1.

- ☒ ~~Yes~~ No 1. Did God plan to establish the church?
- Yes ☐ No 2. Did God purpose, promise, prophecy and prepare the church's establishment?
- Yes ☐ No 3. Are the church and kingdom identical institutions?
- Yes ☐ No 4. Were the predictions of the church's establishment fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, about 30 A.D.?
- Yes ☐ No 5. Did Jesus Christ purchase the church with His blood?
- Yes ☐ No 6. Does the church contain only a part of the saved?
- Yes ☐ No 7. Did God establish the church for a high and noble purpose?
- Yes ☐ No 8. Is the church's importance worthy of your careful consideration?



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

LESSON VII

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

Lesson VI taught that the church is important because it fulfills God's eternal purpose and has a high calling. In this lesson we will study the organization of the church both universally and locally.

I. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

The Bible often speaks of the church in a universal, world-wide sense (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 3:10; 5:23). Lesson VI showed that the universal church is composed of all saved people who serve, worship and live according to God's law in the New Testament.

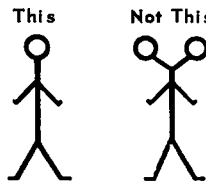
A. CHRIST IS THE ONLY HEAD OF THE CHURCH

Every organization needs a central authority to give unity, purpose, and direction to the whole. Does the church have such an authority or head?

God has seen fit to make Jesus Christ "the head over all things to the church, which is his body" (Ephesians 1:22-23). As the function of the physical body is to obey the dictates of its head, so also the universal church, as Christ's body, must obediently serve its head, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:24).

The Bible says "There is one body, and . . . one Lord" (Ephesians 4:4-5). More than one head or Lord for Christ's body would be as confusing as a physical body with more than one head.

Christ and the Church "One head and one body"



Further, the church needs only one head. Christ supplies His church, or body, with all things necessary for life (II Peter 1:3). He knows the joys and sorrows of His church (Revelation 2:1,2,9), hears its prayers (Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25), perfects and spiritually matures it (Ephesians 4:13-16). Christ, the

head, provided the church with an infallible and complete religious guide, not in another head, but in the Scriptures (II Timothy 3:16-17). Since Christ was given "to be the head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22), no one else can be head over anything to the church.

Although the Bible explicitly states that Jesus is the only head, some claim that Christ founded His church upon the apostle, Peter, and that this same apostle has a living successor today who continues to be the head of the church on earth. Jesus' statement to Peter in Matthew 16:18-19 is often cited to support this doctrine: "Upon this rock I will build my church . . . and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom" to "bind" and "loose". However, a close examination of the biblical and historical evidence does not confirm such a conclusion.

The Biblical Evidence

The "rock" upon which Christ built His church is not petros, the Greek word from which the apostle's name is derived, but petra, another word. Petros is masculine and means "a detached stone or boulder;" petra is feminine and means "a mass of live rock." Christ's reference is not

to Peter (Petros), but to *petra*, something far more substantial. In the context of Matthew 16:13-18, the primary subject under discussion is Christ's identity as the Son of God. Thus, the rock is not Peter, but more likely the confession of Peter, the bedrock of faith in Jesus as the "Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter himself confirmed this conclusion later by stating plainly that Christ is the "stone . . . which is become the head of the corner" (Acts 4:11) and the "chief corner stone" (I Peter 2:6-8). Paul agrees: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Corinthians 3:11).

While no Scripture refers to Peter as the rock upon which the church is built, Peter, along with all Christians, became one of the many "living stones" of God's spiritual house (I Peter 2:5). Of course, as an apostle, Peter helped to found the church and in this sense shares in the church's foundation equally with all of the "apostles and prophets" (Ephesians 2:19-20).

Further, Christ's promise to give Peter the keys to bind and loose what Christ already had bound or loosed in Heaven (Matthew 16:19) was given also to the other disciples (Matthew 18:18). By preaching the gospel, the disciples loosed and bound Christ's will, opening the doors of the kingdom to the world (Acts 2:14-41; 8:4). That Peter had no more authority than any other apostle is confirmed by the emphatic affirmation that Paul was inferior to no other apostle (II Corinthians 12:11-12). In fact, Jesus directed Peter's apostleship not to the whole church but specifically to the Jews or "circumcised" (Galatians 2:7-8). Thus, the Bible negates rather than affirms that Peter was the head of the church. And as to Peter's successors, and the office of Pope the Bible is significantly silent.

The Historical Evidence

Although the biblical evidence is final and conclusive, it is interesting to compare the historical evidence. Surely, if Peter were the "rock" of Matthew 16:18, the early church would have universally taught it. Yet, many outstanding leaders of the early church taught just the opposite. For example in the East, Origen, an outstanding church scholar from Alexandria (182 to 251 A.D.), declared in his commentary on Matthew, "But if you suppose that upon that one Peter only the whole church was built by God, what would you say about John, the son of thunder, or each one of the apostles?" The famous Chrysostom of Constantinople. (c. 370-430 A.D.) said in his homily on Matthew 16:13-19 that the rock is "the faith of his confession."

In the West, Hilary of Poitiers (France) (died c. 367 A.D.), wrote in his *De Trinitate* (Book

VI), "This is the rock of confession whereon the church is built . . . This faith it is which is the foundation of the church." Augustine (354-430 A.D.), considered one of the greatest Catholic minds, declares in his homily on Matthew 14:25 that Christ said: "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock, which thou hast confessed, upon this Rock which thou hast recognized, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' I will build my church. Upon me I will build thee, not me upon thee. For men who wished to be built upon men said, 'I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas,' who is Peter. But others who did not wish to be built upon Peter, but upon the Rock, said, 'But I am of Christ.' And when the apostle Paul ascertained that he was chosen and Christ despised, he said, 'Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?' And, as not in the name of Paul, so neither in the name of Peter; but in the name of Christ, that Peter might be built upon the Rock, not the Rock upon Peter."

Therefore, both biblical and historical evidence maintain that Christ is the only head of the church. But how does He exercise His authority?

B. THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS OF THE CHURCH

Christ exercises His authority in His church through His divinely empowered apostles and prophets. Among the listed officers of the New Testament church the apostles and prophets figure prominently (I Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11). In fact, the "household of God," or the church, is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:19-20).

In order to reveal Christ's will and help to found His church (Ephesians 4:11-15), the apostles and prophets were given the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and other miraculous powers. Miracles confirmed or gave divine evidence that their preaching was from God (Mark 16:20; Acts 1:8; Hebrews 2:4). The prophets could reveal God's will by inspiration (II Peter 1:20-21), but the apostles were the only men who could transmit miraculous powers to other men (Acts 8:18; II Timothy 1:16; Romans 1:11). Philip performed great miracles in Samaria, but the apostles had to

Only Apostles



come down from Jerusalem to give his converts miraculous gifts (Acts 8:5-18).

After the apostles died, therefore, men no longer received miraculous gifts. This cessation of miracles in the church is in accord with Paul's prediction, "prophecies . . . shall fail," "tongues . . . shall cease" (I Corinthians 13:8-10). Nor are modern day miracles necessary since the early apostles and prophets by their God-given powers revealed, recorded, confirmed and delivered the complete knowledge of faith once and for all (Jude 3; Hebrews 2:4; II Timothy 3:16-17). The original apostles, prophets and miracle workers completed their purpose, leaving no need for new apostles, new prophets, or new miracle workers.

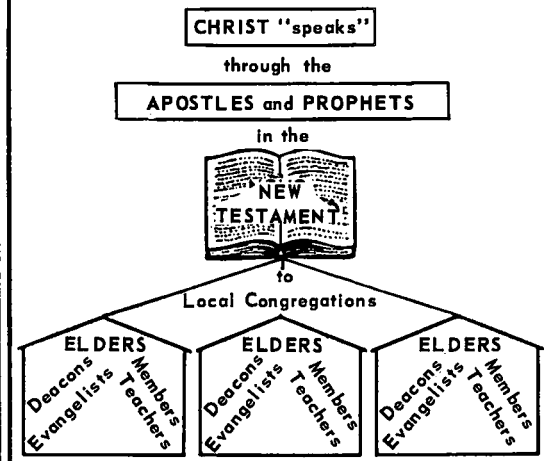
Consequently, the apostles made no effort to appoint successors except for Judas, and only then because they were specifically authorized by Scripture in that one case (Acts 1:20; Psalms 69:25). After their day no one could meet the qualification requiring that an apostle be an eye witness to Christ's resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). Mindful of their approaching death, the apostles commended Christians, not to apostolic successors, but to the authority of the written word (Acts 20:32; II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:12-21).

Thus, just as Christ is head of the universal church, though present only in spirit (Ephesians 1:22-23; Matthew 18:20), so also Matthew, John, Peter and the others occupy the office of the apostles and prophets though they passed away long ago. Through the living word of God, the Scriptures, they still hold their position in the very foundation of the church just as Christ holds His as the chief corner stone (Revelation 21:14). The apostles still sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of spiritual "Israel" (Matthew 19:28). Today's universal church has the same prophets, the same apostles and the same head as the first century church. The Bible speaks of no other church offices that function on a universal, or even area-wide basis.

II. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

The universal church is sub-divided into many local churches or congregations. For instance, it is in the local, limited, congregational sense that Paul mentioned "the churches of Christ salute you" (Romans 16:16), referring to many local congregations in a particular area. Paul addressed the group of Christians in Corinth as "the church of God" (I Corinthians 1:2).

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH



Each local church is autonomous, or self-ruling, and is subject only to the one authority of Christ through His divinely inspired apostles and prophets by following their infallible guide, the Scriptures (II Timothy 3:16-17). No other organization exists which binds the churches together, or exercises any authority over them. No central earthly headquarters or super-organization rules local churches.

However, all of the local churches composing the universal church are bound together by unity of faith, love and cooperation (Ephesians 4:1-6; II Corinthians 8:24; Romans 15:26). They are identical in name, doctrine and practice; division among them is sinful (I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3). This perfect unity and cooperation is possible without an earthly headquarters because each local church follows the same head, Christ (Colossians 1:18), is founded upon the same foundation, Christ (I Corinthians 3:11), and adheres to the same standard of authority, the will of Christ revealed in the New Testament (II Timothy 3:16-17).

The wisdom of God is seen in such an arrangement. For example, if one church becomes corrupted in doctrine or evil practices, other churches will not be so affected. If a window is made of one large pane, a break damages the entire pane; but if it be made of several panes, a break does not spread and weaken the entire window. Thus each local church is protected by being independent in government from other local churches.

Within the local church there is a divinely authorized organization, composed of elders or bishops, deacons, evangelists, teachers and

members. We shall now briefly study each of these offices, noting their functions, names and qualifications.

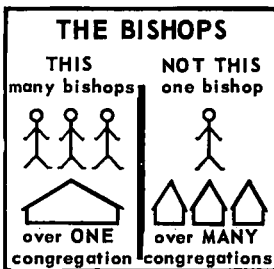
The Elders. — In New Testament times each local congregation selected its own leaders, who were called elders (Acts 14:23) or bishops (Philippians 1:1) or pastors (Ephesians 4:11). All of these names referred to the same office. For example, Paul addresses the leaders of the church at Ephesus as “elders” (Acts 20:17), as “bishops” (Acts 20:28), and as those who “pastor” or shepherd the church (Acts 20:28). See also Titus 1:5-7 and I Peter 5:1-4. The word, elder, means “older man” referring to the older age and maturity required of these leaders (I Timothy 3:6). Bishop, means “an overseer or supervisor”, indicating the leaders’ work of ruling and caring for the church, not as “lords” but as examples (I Timothy 3:5; I Peter 5:2-3). The term, pastor, means “a shepherd” and describes the work of feeding the church spiritually and guarding it from error (Acts 20:28-31; I Peter 5:1-2). Thus, as one man may be called father, husband and son to denote different phases of his responsibilities, so the names elder, bishop, and pastor refer to the same church office but denote different phases of the work.

Elders must meet strict qualifications before taking office. (Read carefully I Timothy 3:2-7; Titus 1:6-9). Each must be spiritually mature and of blameless conduct, able teachers, and a husband of one wife (I Timothy 3:1-3). To prove he can govern the church, he must first demonstrate his ability to rule his own wife and children (I Timothy 3:4-5).

In the Bible each local church had more than one elder or bishop (Acts 14:23; 20:17; Titus 1:5; Philippians 1:1). Never does the Bible mention one bishop over many churches but always many bishops over one church. Bishops had authority only in the church where they were appointed (I Peter 5:2).

Thus, the Bible never speaks of “degrees” or “levels” of bishops, such as “archbishop”. The only reference to a higher bishop is to Christ, the “chief Shepherd” (I Peter 5:4).

The Deacons. Working under the elders are “deacons”, who must first fulfill certain qualifications (I Timothy 3:8-13). Deacon means “servant”. These men perform special services for the church such as that in Acts 6:1-6. That the early church had a plurality of deacons in each congregation is evidenced by Paul’s greet-



ing, “To all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (Philippians 1:1).

The Evangelists. The name evangelist means “proclaimer of good news”. These men publicly and privately preach the gospel of Christ (II Timothy 4:2-5). Sometimes people erroneously call every evangelist “pastor”, but we have already learned that the word “pastor” refers to the elders. An evangelist must live an exemplary life (I Timothy 5:22 and II Timothy 2:15-16; 2:22-26; 3:14-17).

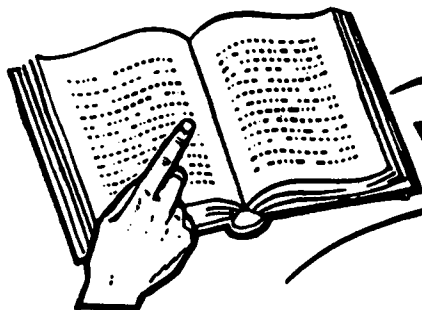
The Teachers. The final office listed by Paul in Ephesians 4:11 is the office of teacher. Although explicit qualifications are not laid down in any one passage of the New Testament, it is clearly implied that the teacher must have a deep knowledge of scripture and a good character (James 3:1,13-18) (Hebrews 5:12).

Members. All Christians become members of a local church and a part of its organization by obeying the gospel (Acts 2:38,47; I Corinthians 12:12-22). Every member should obey the elders (Hebrews 13:17), diligently grow and work in the local church (Ephesians 4:15-16), and remain faithful to Christ throughout life (Revelation 2:10).

CONCLUSION

We have studied the organization of Christ’s church as it existed in the first century and should exist today. All Christians in local churches around the world make up the universal church, or body of Christ. Jesus Christ is the only head of this universal body. The apostles and prophets fulfilled their earthly office before their death, but through their inspired, miraculously confirmed writings they still proclaim Christ and guide His people. No further organization of the universal church is authorized by the New Testament. Instead each local congregation, organized with elders, deacons, evangelists, teachers, and members, works autonomously without extending itself beyond its own authorized organization.

In the following lesson entitled “The Unity of the Church” we will study in detail how the many independent congregations form one united body without a hierarchical structure or central headquarters.



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

LESSON VIII

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

Having studied the church's organization in Lesson VII, we now study the unity of the first century church. Today, religious unity is a common topic among both Catholics and Protestants. This desire for unity is noble. In fact, it is essential. In His divine wisdom, God planned only one church united in "one body . . . one spirit . . . one hope . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:3-5; 1:22-23). Jesus desired unity so much that he prayed earnestly for it (John 17:20-21). Jesus' prayer shows his utter distaste for religious division. In fact, division, in and of itself, is sin (I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3-4). Today, no doubt, the Lord's heart aches at the sight of a divided Christendom with many churches, many faiths and many baptisms.

However, mere unity is not enough. Jesus prayed for a unity based, not on human opinion, but on the will of God as revealed in the word of truth (John 17:17-20; Ephesians 4:3). Christ's true disciples were to continue in His word (John 8:31-32). Thus, after warning the Ephesian elders about the danger of division, Paul said, "And now brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up" (Acts 20:32).

Since God's word is the basis of unity, by studying the Bible, God's word, we can observe how Christ's church in the first century was united. Then, by seeking to obtain the same kind of unity that the original church had, we can please God in the same way the Christians of the first century pleased Him.

In New Testament days, if one journeyed from Jerusalem to Rome, visiting all the churches en route, he would have found the same characteristics in each church. Why? Because in the first

century the various churches were not different denominations, but rather, local congregations of the one universal church of Christ. The New Testament reveals that the original church was united in points such as: doctrine, love, names, membership requirements, organization and worship.

I. DOCTRINE

Christ's message to the early churches was always the same. Whether Paul was talking to Jews or Gentiles, he preached one gospel to all (Romans 1:16). He told the Corinthian church ". . . Timotheus . . . shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church." (I Corinthians 4:17). He further ordained "in all the churches" a particular teaching about marriage (I Corinthians 7:17). Thus, Paul wrote that the one body (universal church) was to be united in "one faith" (Ephesians 4:5), that is, one body of doctrine.

Oneness in the church's doctrine is also evidenced in II Peter 3:15-16 in which Peter indicated that he and Paul taught the same message. Paul stated in Galatians 1:6-9 that any man or angel who tampered with God's universal message to the churches was accursed. Faith in a common doctrine, the word of God, was the absolute basis for unity.

II. LOVE

Doctrine apart from love is repulsive, but strong doctrine within the framework of love is divine. For example, Christ-filled churches of the first century put doctrine into practice as they came to the rescue of their needy brothers in Christ. The Jerusalem church was suffering from famine. So great was the love which bound early Christians together that churches a thousand miles away responded to

ONE CHURCH

"There is only one body"
Ephesians 4:4



This



Not This

Jerusalem's need for help. The church in Antioch sent an offering (Acts 11:27-29). Far off churches in Macedonia rallied to Jerusalem's aid and gave in spite of their own deep poverty (II Corinthians 8). Churches in Achaia sent a contribution (Romans 15:25-27) as apparently the Galatian churches also did (I Corinthians 16:1-2).

Yes, love was a unifying force in the early church. A church, rich with lands and gold which has a great portion of its subjects suffering from sickness, illiteracy, and malnutrition cannot be the church which Jesus built. John says in I John 3:17 that "whoso hath this world's goods and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?"

III. NAMES

Human names have always been a source of division. Even in the Corinthian church, members divided under the names of Peter, Paul, and Apollos. Paul sternly rebuked them for this, saying, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" (I Corinthians 1:13). Paul was opposed to such division.

The first century church was not known by denominational names of human origin. Since there was but one church in that day (Ephesians 4:4), Christians sometimes referred to themselves merely as "the church." It was called the church in Jerusalem (Acts 5:11), Asia Minor (Acts 14:23), and Rome (Romans 16:5).

The church was also called the church of Christ (Romans 16:16) and church of God. The name church of God was not used in just one locality but in Corinth (I Corinthians 1:2), Thessalonica (I Thessalonians 2:14), and Ephesus (I Timothy 3:5). The early church was known by names which glorified God, not man.

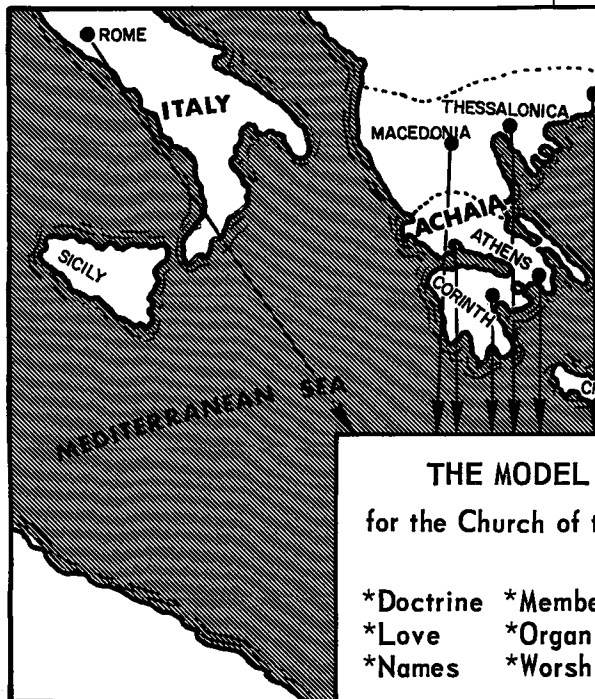
The individual members of the church were called Christians in Asia Minor (Acts 11:26) and among the Jews of the Dispersion in various parts of the world (I Peter 4:16). They were called disciples in all of Asia Minor (Acts 11:26; 20:7) and also children of God (I John 3:1; Galatians 3:26). These were religious names which glorified God.

Religious leaders then were not exalted or called by high-sounding titles as they are today. Jesus plainly condemned such practices in Matthew 23:9-10: "And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ." The great apostle Peter refused to let Cornelius bow down, and honor him, but rather said, "Stand up; I myself also am a man" (Acts 10:26).

Titles such as Father, Reverend, Most Holy Reverend were certainly not used by Christians of the first century.

IV. MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

Jesus gave the membership requirements for His church in the Great Commission where He specified faith (Matthew 28:19-20), repentance (Luke 24:47), and baptism (Mark 16:15-16). Thus, the membership requirements for the different congregations of the one church were the same everywhere. A study of the church in Jerusalem, Ephesus, Philippi, and Rome will bear out this truth. Without telephones, telegraph, air mail letters, these churches, some of them separated by a thousand miles, obeyed the same commands in order to become members of the one church. The following chart illustrates in a graphic way what people in the different congregations did to be saved and become members of the church of Christ.

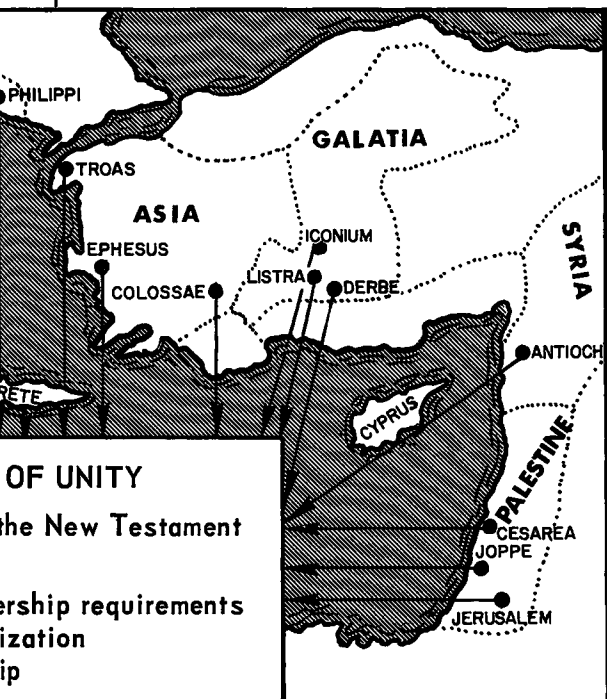


Congregation	Believed	Repented	Confessed	Baptized
Jerusalem		Acts 2:38		Acts 2:38
Ephesus	Acts 19:4-5	Acts 19:4		Acts 19:5
Philippi	Acts 16:31			Acts 16:33
Rome	Romans 10:9-10		Romans 10:9-10	Romans 6:3-4

People today who desire to be Christians only can become members of the church of Christ in the same way that people in the first century became members. Conditions for membership in Christ's church were always, and ever should be, the same.

V. CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Since the last lesson devoted itself to showing the organization of the New Testament church, this lesson will show that this organization was a unifying characteristic of the church everywhere. There was elders (bishops, pastors, overseers) in Jerusalem (Acts 15:2), in Ephesus (Acts 20:17), in Crete (Titus 1:5), in Philippi (Philippians 1:1), among the twelve tribes of the Jews who were scattered among the nations (James 5:14), and in the churches of Asia Minor (Acts 14:19-23).



A characteristic of the eldership in all the churches was that there was a plurality in each church. This was true in the churches of Asia Minor (Acts 14:23), in Crete (Titus 1:5), in

Jerusalem (Acts 15:2), in Ephesus (Acts 20:17), and in Philippi (Philippians 1:1).

That the qualifications of elders in the different places were the same is evident from a comparison of the qualifications which Paul wrote to Timothy in Ephesus (I Timothy 3:1-7) and to Titus in Crete (Titus 1:5-9).

Deacons also were a part of the early church's organization. Consequently, there were deacons in Ephesus (I Timothy 3:8-10, 12-13) and in Philippi (Philippians 1:1). Acts 6 records the appointment of those who were probably the first deacons of the church in Jerusalem.

This organization did not extend beyond the local congregation, and it was not hierarchical. Neither was it authoritarian. Peter, himself an elder, said, "The elders which are among you I exhort . . . feed the flock of God which is among you . . . neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock" (I Peter 5:1-3).

VI. WORSHIP

Worship played a vital part in the lives of early Christians. If one had left Jerusalem on his way to Rome and had stopped to visit each congregation over the 1400 mile trip, he would have found a common worship among them all.

DAY OF MEETING

All the New Testament churches observed every week a common day of meeting, apparently called the "Lord's day" (Revelation 1:10). The writer of Hebrews commanded his readers, Jewish believers in various parts of the world, to observe this day of assembly (Hebrews 10:25). A failure to assemble with the saints was a sin (Hebrews 10:25-26). Other biblical passages show when the day of assembly was. Thus, on the journey to Rome, one would have found the churches in the whole region of Galatia and in Corinth (Greece) meeting on the first day of each week (I Corinthians 16:1-2). The church in Troas, though many miles away, met on the same day (Acts 20:7).

THE LORD'S SUPPER

One of the main purposes of the first day of the week assembly was to "break bread" or partake of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:17-34). As instituted by Christ, the supper consisted of bread and fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:26-29). In the early church all Christians partook of both elements in a reverent manner (I Corinthians 11:17-29).

Early disciples never considered that the observance of the Lord's Supper caused Christ to be sacrificed anew. They believed that Christ offered, in contrast to the daily sacrifices

of the Jews, "one sacrifice for sins for ever" and that "by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Hebrews 10:11-12, 14).

Thus, the Lord's Supper was not a re-occurrence of His death each week but a remembrance of Christ's one death (I Corinthians 11:24-26). Consequently, the early church did not think that the bread and fruit of the vine changed into the literal flesh and blood of Jesus. The expression, "This is my body . . . and blood," meant that these elements represented or symbolized His flesh and blood. Paul instructed Christians to eat bread (not flesh), to drink fruit of the vine (not blood) and to "discern" or mentally meditate about Christ's body and blood while eating and drinking (Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 11:26-29).

The church's observance of the Lord's Supper proclaims the Lord's death until He comes again (I Corinthians 11:26).

CHURCH MUSIC

Christ's church all over the world practiced vocal music in its worship. James commanded the Christians of various nations to sing (James 5:13). Paul instructed the Corinthians to sing "with the spirit and the understanding" (I Corinthians 14:15). The churches at Colossae (Colossians 3:16) and at Ephesus (Ephesians 5:19) were told to sing by "making melody in your heart to the Lord."

The use of musical instruments in church worship is not mentioned in the New Testament and therefore is not authorized by Christ (II John 9). Adding a different kind of music (instrumental) to church worship would be as bad as adding a different kind of food to the Lord's Supper. Also, the church is no longer ruled by the Old Testament (Hebrews 8:6-13) and so the Jews' worship with instruments is no more authoritative for the church than their worship with animal sacrifices and burnt incense. Christ instituted the spiritual worship of vocal, rather than instrumental, music.

PRAYER

Fervent prayer always characterized the early church. Jesus had promised, "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John 16:23). Paul, calling attention to the fact that "there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," commanded men "everywhere" to pray (I Timothy 2:5,8). Consequently, in Jerusalem (Acts 12:5), in

Rome (Romans 8:26), in Macedonia (I Thessalonians 5:17), yes, "everywhere" Christians were praying to God in the name of Christ.

GIVING

Early Christians gave liberally of their money. The church in Jerusalem was so liberal that many far exceeded the tithe which the Jewish religion had required, giving everything they had to the church to meet a special emergency (Acts 4:32-35). As mentioned earlier, the churches in Macedonia gave out of deep poverty to help suffering saints in Jerusalem (II Corinthians 8:1-5). Paul commanded the churches of Galatia and the church of Corinth to contribute their money each first day of the week according as God has prospered them (I Corinthians 16:1-2).

PUBLIC PREACHING AND TEACHING

Preaching and teaching was a universal practice in the church's worship as seen in the churches of Troas (Acts 20:7), Corinth (I Corinthians 14:23-26) and Rome (Romans 1:15). The purpose of preaching was to give spiritual instruction to people in order that they might be saved (II Timothy 4:1-4).

Public preaching and teaching was to be done by men and not by women. Paul said, "As in all the churches of the saints, let your women keep silence in the churches . . ." (I Corinthians 14:33-34). He added in I Timothy 2:11-12, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Of course, a woman could teach children and other women in Bible classes (Titus 2:3-5) and she could teach a man in private situations (Acts 18:26; 21:9). Indeed, women had a grand part in the victorious march of the early church, but their part was not in the public assemblies.

SUMMARY

We have seen that Jesus wanted His followers to be united in one church. Consequently, that one church with many congregations scattered over the Roman Empire believed a common doctrine, practiced a mutual love, called themselves by heaven-approved names, had the same membership requirements, set up a common system of organization, and had identical characteristics of worship. Whether one had been in Jerusalem or Rome, in Crete or in Troas, in Antioch or in Macedonia, he would have found the characteristics of the one church to be the same in each congregation.

Had the people calling themselves Christ's disciples always maintained unity based on God's word, there would never have been denominations.

The next lesson will show how false teachers caused division in the church of Christ and led many of the faithful into religious error, thus giving birth to religious division.

WORSHIP of the Church of the New Testament

1. Assembly on the first day of the week
2. Lord's Supper
3. Prayer
4. Singing (vocal)
5. Contribution
6. Preaching

QUESTIONS

LESSON VIII

Grade:.....

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY STATE Zip Code

REVIEW TO REMEMBER

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer.

- True False 1. God gives salvation only through Christ.
- True False 2. Man accepts salvation by surrendering to God through faith, repentance, confession, and baptism.
- True False 3. The only head of the universal church is Jesus Christ.

STUDY AND SELECT

Instructions: Place an X over the number of the correct answer.

1. Jesus wants all Christians to (1) unite (2) divide (3) tolerate division. (John 17:20-21).
2. Religious division is (1) acceptable to God (2) good for mankind (3) sinful. (I Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:3-4).
3. Every man who loves the Lord should (1) not strive for unity (2) strive for unity. (Ephesians 4:1-3).
4. Christ prayed for unity based on (1) man's ideas (2) an infallible church leader (3) God's word. (John 8:31-32; 17:17-22).
5. To protect the church from error and division Paul commended the elders of Ephesus to (1) their infallible superior, the pope (2) their own judgment (3) the word of God. (Acts 20:32).
6. Followers of Christ can be united today and please God by (1) accepting a man-made creed (2) submitting to a man who claims infallibility (3) practicing the same things that characterized the unity of the first century church. (Ephesians 4:1-6).
7. In New Testament days there existed (1) one church composed of many denominations (2) one church composed of many congregations (3) many churches and many denominations. (Ephesians 4:4; 1:22-23).

8. Paul's message to the different congregations was (1) contradictory (2) usually the same (3) always the same. (I Corinthians 4:17; 7:17).
9. Paul's gospel to the Gentiles and Peter's gospel to the Jews were (1) different (2) the same (3) similar. (II Peter 3:15-16; Romans 1:16).
10. Anyone who changed God's universal message to the churches was (1) accursed (2) blessed (3) saved. (Galatians 1:6-9).
11. The true church of Christ should help (1) all of its poor and afflicted (2) none of its poor and afflicted (3) some of its poor and afflicted. (Acts 11:29; I John 3:17).
12. The wearing of human names in religion (1) pleases God (2) does not matter (3) displeases God and causes division. (I Corinthians 1:11-13).
13. By which of the following names was the church known in the first century? (1) Roman Catholic (2) Lutheran (3) Baptist (4) church of Christ or church of God (5) Seventh Day Adventists (6) church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon). (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 1:2).
14. By which of the following names were individual members of the church called? (1) Christians or disciples (2) Presbyterians (3) Methodists (4) Catholics (5) Baptists. (I Peter 4:16; Acts 11:26; 20:7).
15. The Bible teaches that religious leaders should be called (1) Father (2) Reverend (3) neither Father nor Reverend. (Matthew 23:9-10; Acts 10:6).

THINK AND CHOOSE

Instructions: Place the number of the correct answer in the space on the left.

- _____ 1. The membership requirements for all churches in the first century were (1) the same (2) different (3) similar.
- _____ 2. These membership requirements were (1) faith only (2) baptism only (3) faith,

repentance, confession and baptism. (Mark 16:16; Luke 24:47; Romans 10:9-10).

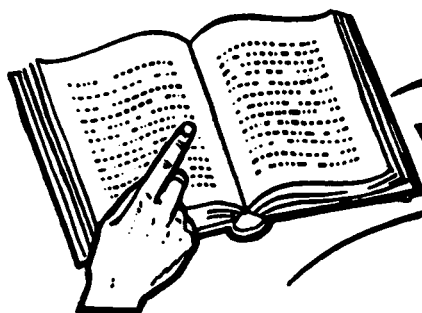
- _____ 3. One should become a Christian today by fulfilling the membership requirements of (1) the first century church (2) some man (3) some denomination.
- _____ 4. In New Testament times elders or bishops were appointed (1) only in the church of Rome and other large cities (2) only in Rome (3) in all of the churches scattered over the world. (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; James 5:14).
- _____ 5. A characteristic of the organization of all the churches was (1) one bishop in each congregation (2) many congregations under one bishop (3) many bishops (elders) in each congregation. (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5; Philippians 1:1).
- _____ 6. Which of the following special offices also existed in the early churches? (1) Cardinals (2) Priests (3) Deacons (4) Archbishops. (Philippians 1:1; I Timothy 3:8-10).
- _____ 7. In the first century the many congregations throughout the world practiced (1) different worship (2) common worship (3) conflicting worship.
- _____ 8. The early church assembled for worship on (1) every Saturday (2) every first day of the week (3) one Sunday a year. (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2).
- _____ 9. To forsake the Sunday assembly of the church was (1) permitted (2) sinful (3) not sinful. (Hebrews 10:25-26).
- _____ 10. One of the main purposes of the weekly assembly was to (1) watch the priests say mass in Latin (2) "break bread" or partake of the Lord's supper (3) worship Mary. (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:17-34).
- _____ 11. In the early church every Christian partook of (1) bread only (2) bread and fruit of the vine (3) bread and water (4) Christ's flesh and blood. (Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 11:26-29).
- _____ 12. The purpose of the Lord's Supper was to (1) sacrifice Christ anew (2) remember the Lord's death (3) change bread and wine into flesh and blood. (Hebrews 7:27; 9:28; 10:11-12; I Corinthians 11:24-26).
- _____ 13. Which kind of music did Jesus authorize in the New Testament for the church to use in worship to God? (1) Instrumental (mechanical) (2) Vocal (singing) (3) Instrumental and vocal. (Ephesians 5:19).

- _____ 14. Christ commanded the church to pray through (1) Mary (2) saints (3) Jesus. (John 16:23; I Timothy 2:5).
- _____ 15. New Testament Christians gave (1) just a tithe (a tenth) (2) as little as possible (3) a liberal portion of their prosperity. (I Corinthians 16:1-2).
- _____ 16. Who are permitted to preach and teach in public worship services? (1) Men or women (2) Men only (3) Women only. (I Corinthians 14:33-34; I Timothy 2:11-12).

SUMMING UP THE TRUTH

Instructions: Mark an X over the correct answer.

- Yes No 1. Does Jesus want all His followers to be united in one church?
- Yes No 2. Is true unity based on God's word rather than man's opinion?
- Yes No 3. Did only one church, composed of many congregations, exist in the first century?
- Yes No 4. Was that one church united in doctrine, love, names, membership requirements, organization and worship?
- Yes No 5. Should the church teach doctrines today that were not taught in the first century?
- Yes No 6. Must the church today practice the same love practiced by the early church?
- Yes No 7. Should churches use names other than the names used by the early church?
- Yes No 8. Should churches today change the membership requirements used by the early church?
- Yes No 9. Should the church have the same worship today as it had in the first century?
- Yes No 10. Should the church change God's plan of organization?
- Yes No 11. Can churches today have the same unity that the first century church had by adopting the same characteristics of unity?



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

LESSON IX

RESTORING THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Lesson VIII pictured the perfect pattern of unity followed by the early church. Unfortunately, a falling away from the truth (apostasy) was predicted for the future. Jesus said that "many false prophets" would arise and "deceive many" (Matthew 24:11). Paul later warned, "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith" (I Timothy 4:1). He predicted that this apostasy would be ultimately manifested by one sitting "in the temple of God" and speaking in God's place (II Thessalonians 2:3-4). Paul also warned that the apostasy would begin among the church's bishops (Acts 20:28-30). At the end of the first century, evil forces were already working to produce the apostasy (II Thessalonians 2:7).

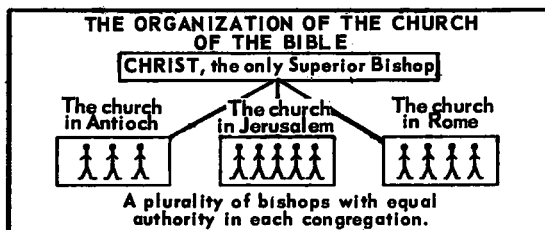
I. THE APPEARANCE OF THE APOSTATE CHURCH

The apostate church developed through gradual changes in the original church's (1) organization, (2) doctrine and worship, and (3) conduct. Below are a few examples of these changes.

A. APOSTASY IN ORGANIZATION

As pictured in the chart below, New Testament churches each had a plurality of bishops (elders) of equal rank whose authority did not extend beyond the limits of the local congregation (Acts 14:23; 20:17,28; Philippians 1:1). Christ was the only chief bishop over all churches (I Peter 5:1-4).

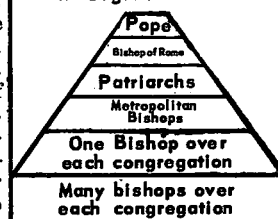
However, during the second and third centuries, the bishop presiding over the bishops' meetings was elevated to a higher office and called "the bishop." Gradually the others ceased to be called bishops, retaining only the designation, elders (presbyters). Thus in the chart below, only one bishop oversaw each congregation whereas originally there was a plurality of bishops. Still, all "The Bishops" were equal in authority.



The church's organization was changed again during the third and fourth centuries. Some bishops became the chief officer of several churches in an area. Later the bishops of the more important areas (Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople) grew in power and were exalted to "patriarchs", later called arch-bishops. The Catholic Encyclopedia (II,583; IV,44) admits that this newly acquired power originated during the fourth and fifth centuries.

As in the following chart, these arch-bishops were still equal in power. The bishop of Rome had no more power than the bishop of Antioch. This equality existed even in the sixth century. Gregory I, bishop of Rome, 590 AD, and later declared Pope, Saint, and doctor, wrote Eulogius, Bishop of Alexandria, that the See of Peter "in three places is the See of one . . . over which three bishops actually preside by Divine authority." He named the three places as Alexandria, Antioch and Rome. Later, when John the Faster, bishop of Constantinople, called himself "universal bishop," Gregory I

The Development of the Apostasy in Organization



denounced the title as profane, proud and wicked. However, Gregory's successor in Rome, Boniface III, did not object to the title, and assumed it for himself in 607 A.D.

THE FIRST CHANGE IN THE ORGANIZATION



One bishop is exalted over the others.

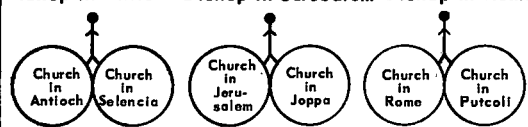
Papal authority continued to grow through the ages, however, as late as 1837, John B. Purcell, bishop of Cincinnati, declared in a formal debate (Debate on the Roman Catholic Religion, p. 23): "No enlightened Catholic holds the pope's infallibility to be an article of faith." Yet, forty-three years later (1870) the Vatican Council declared the very opposite. Now complete submission to the Pope is demanded "as unto God Himself". He is said to hold "the place of God Almighty." (Great Encyclical Letters, pages 193 and 304). Thus was fulfilled the prophecy that one would sit in God's temple and speak as if God (II Thessalonians 2:3-4). The hierarchy and papacy are the result of centuries of gradual departures from the New Testament plan of organization.

B. APOSTASY IN DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP

The church's exaltation of uninspired men led to many changes in doctrine and worship, a few of which are noted below.

ANOTHER CHANGE IN THE ORGANIZATION

Bishop in Antioch Bishop in Jerusalem Bishop in Rome



Some bishops acquire authority over other churches

The Priesthood. The Bible says that all Christians are priests (I Peter 2:5,9; Revelation 1:6) and subject to Jesus, the only high priest (Hebrews 4:14-16). Later the presbyters claimed to be a special priesthood separate from the rest of the church. Patterned after the Jewish priesthood, the newly exalted bishop became the high priest, the elders (presbytery) became priests, and the deacons, Levites.

The Lord's Supper. The change in priesthood caused also a change in worship. The simplicity of New Testament worship was replaced with ritualistic ceremony conducted only by "priests." The primary function of the Jewish priest was to offer sacrifices for sin (Hebrews 5:1). Accord-

ingly, the Lord's Supper (Eucharist) was changed from a memorial of Christ's death (I Corinthians 11:23-26) to an actual sacrifice. Although the Bible says that Christ's one sacrifice was offered for sins once for all time (Hebrews 9:25-26; 10:10-12), the church began to say that Christ's sacrifice was offered continually by changing the bread and wine into Jesus' literal body and blood. Later the "priests" refused the wine to the other members though all Christians are commanded to drink it (I Corinthians 11:26,28).

Jesus' Mother, Mary. All true Christians acknowledge the wonderful blessing Mary received as mother of the Divine Jesus (Luke 1:48). However, such influences as pagan worship of goddesses resulted in Mary's being exalted above her rightful position. The Bible references to Mary (See below) do not mention her name even once after the establishment of the church (Matthew 1:16-25; 2:11-21; 12:46-50; 13:55-56; Mark 3:31-35; 6:3; Luke 1:27-56; 2:5-7; 16-22,27,33-51; 8:19-21; 11:27-28; John 2:1-12; 6:42; 19:25-27; Acts 1:14.) Concerning Mary's exaltation, the Catholic Encyclopedia admits, "Evidence regarding the popular practice of the early centuries is almost entirely lacking" (XV,460). Doctrines such as Mary's Immaculate Conception, Perpetual Virginity, Bodily Assumption, and Mediatorship, all appeared in later centuries without any Scriptural or historical basis.

Mary's Perpetual Virginity was developed because of the later exaltation of celibacy. Matthew 1:25 says that Joseph "knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son". Later, Christ's brothers and sisters are named with Mary (Matthew 12:46-50; 13:55-56). The Bible says that a good wife should always practice normal marriage relations (I Corinthians 7:3-5; I Timothy 2:15). Mary's having other children is normal, noble and pure, for "marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled" (Hebrews 13:4).

Jesus expressly denies that Mary is exalted above other Christians. When a certain woman told Jesus, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked," Jesus answered, "Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it" (Luke 11:27-28). Also, Mary's being a Mediator through whom Christians pray is plainly opposed to I Timothy 2:5: "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Christians are commanded to do everything in Christ's name (Colossians 3:17) and promised that all prayers in His name will be answered (John 14:13-14). Thus Christians need no other name, or mediator, but Jesus.

C. APOSTASY IN CONDUCT

Concerning false teachers, Jesus predicted, "Ye shall know them by their fruits . . . Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt

tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 7:16-17). Jesus told the churches of Asia that they would be removed as true churches if they did not repent of their negligence and wicked words (Revelation 2:4-5, 14-16; 3:2-3, 15-17). The Roman church was to be cut off if they did not "continue in His goodness" (Romans 11:22).

It was thus natural that the church's apostasy in doctrine would also be seen in its conduct. During the second and third centuries celibacy (the unmarried state) and abstinence from food was exalted. The spread of monasteries in the fourth century exalted these ascetic practices even more and in 385 A.D. the Western church prohibited its presbyters from marrying. This directly contradicted the Bible requirement that a Bishop "must be the husband of one wife" (I Timothy 3:2). But fulfilled the prophecy, "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith . . . forbidding to marry and commanding to abstain from meats" (I Timothy 4:1-3).

Forbidding marriage led to the opposite extreme of immorality. Whereas in New Testament times bishops were to be "blameless" (I Timothy 3:2-7), the church later permitted scandalous men to continue as bishops and even Popes. The following Popes are branded by the *Catholic Encyclopedia* as wicked, immoral men: Popes John XII (son), Benedict IX, Innocent VIII, Alexander VI, Julius II, etc. (I,289; II,429; VIII,20,426,562). Teenagers sometimes occupied the office of Pope, Cardinal and bishop. (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, VIII,426). Selling the office of bishop to the highest bidder was the common practice of this day (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, VIII,20). The Pope's bad examples led to widespread immorality among the bishops, priests and "lay members." This picture of habitual immorality is in complete contrast to the early church's purity (I Jn. 2:4-10) and disfellowship (excommunication) of any immoral members (I Corinthians 5:1-13).

While immorality was overlooked, opposition to the Pope's authority was literally exterminated. For example, Pope Innocent III's declaration in 1206 resulted in the massacre of two thirds of the population in Southern France: "We exhort you wholly to destroy this wicked heresy of the Albigenses . . . Persecute them with a strong hand; deprive them of their lands and possessions; utterly banish them, and put Roman Catholics in their room." The Inquisition soon followed in Italy, France and Spain. Hundreds

of thousands were tried and delivered by the Roman church to be killed by the secular authorities as heretics. The Pope granted indulgences to all participating in this "pious work" (*Inquisition*, page 43). Innocent III's action and the Inquisition are defended by modern Catholic works (*The Catholic Encyclopedia*, VII,262; VIII,31). What a contrast to true Christianity: "Recompense to no man evil for evil . . . If thine enemy hunger, feed him . . . Overcome evil with good . . . love worketh no ill to his neighbor" (Romans 12:17,20-21; 13:10). The lack of love proves that one is not God's true child (I John 3:10-15). Jesus had said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

These changes in the church's organization, worship, doctrine and conduct demonstrate that the prophecies of the apostate church were fulfilled.

II. EFFORTS TO REFORM THE APOSTATE CHURCH

Through the centuries many groups tried to reform the apostate church, but their efforts usually formed another apostasy. However, history does not record the characteristic teaching of a number of groups and undoubtedly some of them were the true church, for God promised a kingdom that would never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 16:18). Historical recognition is not necessary to the existence of Christ's true church. Jesus warned that the faithful would be very few (Matthew 7:14). Remember that only eight were faithful in Noah's day (I Peter 3:20) and only 7,000 in Elijah's day (Romans 11:2-5). God's true people have always been few and persecuted by the majority (II Timothy 3:12), but God has ever known "them that are His" (II Timothy 2:19).

However, by the 1500's the apostate church had grown so bad that the Roman Catholic Church was clamoring for its own reform. In various parts of Europe, Martin Luther, John Knox, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, etc. attempted to reform the apostate church. Unfortunately, what began as a just protest against a corrupt church resulted in a mass of churches divided by denominational creeds and names. Some of the apostate doctrines and practices of the Roman Church carried over into each of the denominations. Calvin, for example, began an Inquisition against Catholics in Switzerland. Later

THE REFORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE DENOMINATIONS

30 A.D. Church of Christ 606 A.D. 1500 A.D.

Roman Catholic Church

Lutheran-1530

Presbyterian 1536

Anglican-1536 (Episcopal)

Baptist-1550

Methodist-1738

Mormon-1830

Seventh Day Adventist-1844

Jehovah's Witnesses-1884

Pentecostal Movement-1885

their followers accepted as final their leader's conclusions: Luther's followers became Lutherans; Calvin's followers, Presbyterians; later John Wesley's followers became Methodists, etc., and such has been the history of Christendom as every year there are more churches. (See Chart Below)

While Protestantism corrected many evils of the apostate church, it also created a sinful state of division with many bodies, faiths, baptisms and names . . . all in violation of Christ's will (John 17:20-21; Ephesians 4:4-5; I Corinthians 1:10-14; 3:3). Consequently, most modern men feel they are faced with a puzzling dilemma: either return to the apostate church, or join one of the sects of divided Protestantism. Is there a solution to this perplexing problem?

III. RESTORATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Yes, we have a choice other than the apostate church or divided Protestantism. We can restore the original church. But how? The solution is two-fold: (1) leave that which causes error and disunity, and (2) return to that which produces truth and unity.

The cause of both divided Protestantism and the original apostasy is the same: departure from God's word (I Timothy 4:1). All churches claim to follow the Bible, but they also follow church traditions, creeds, manuals, councils, etc. Religious tradition caused the Jews of Jesus' day to apostatize (Matthew 15:3-9). These added sources of religious authority also cause error within Christianity. We must leave human tradition and authority if the original church is to be restored. (II Timothy 2:19; II Corinthians 6:17).

Next, we must return to the source of all truth and unity: the word of God. In the first century God's word produced man's salvation (James 1:21), church membership (Acts 2:31,47), doctrine and growth (Ephesians 4:14-15). By God's word the local church was governed (Titus 1:9), and protected from error (Acts 20:28-32). God's word thus produced and preserved the unity of the early church.

Jesus promised, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31). We thus prove that we are Christ's true disciples or church, not by tracing from the beginning a line of succession of bishops, but by continuing in the same word of God revealed in the beginning. God's word is living seed "and endures forever." (I Peter 1:23-25). Regardless of its age, seed always reproduces after its kind. Wheat seed stored in an Egyptian pyramid thousands of years ago will produce today the same plant it produced then: wheat. Likewise

the same seed of God's word will produce the same church in the twentieth century that it produced in the first century.

As we previously studied, the Bible contains all of God's will (II Timothy 3:16-17). Thus, by planting only the seed of God's word in the Bible, we will produce the same church, united in the same doctrine, love, name, organization, worship, etc. In the times of King Josiah, the Jewish Bible had been lost in the temple. Consequently God's law was forgotten and the Jewish religion corrupted. But when the Bible was found, read and obeyed, the true religion was restored as it was originally (II Kings 22:3-23:25). Even so today, when the Bible is obscured by human tradition, corrupt religion results. But when the Bible alone is followed, then the pure, non-denominational church of Christ is restored. The Bible only makes Christians only.

Wheat seed produces



(Only
Wheat)

Apple seed produces



(Only
apples)

**The seed of the
Word of God produces**



(Only
Christians)

CONCLUSION

Past history shows that the predictions of an apostasy were true. The Reformation Movement of the 1500's contributed toward a return to the Bible but failed to restore the unity of the early church. By following the Bible pattern of unity, we can restore the Lord's church as it was in New Testament times. Every year many thousands of people leave divided Christendom and return to the Bible alone in order to restore the original church. As a result, members of the churches of Christ now number over 2 million in the United States and are multiplying in the rest of the world. You also dear reader, may have part in this "restoration movement". Leave the doctrines and churches of men. Cling to the word of God alone. Join in the effort to restore the New Testament church in your community.

QUESTIONS

LESSON IX

Grade:.....

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY..... STATE..... Zip Code.....

REVIEW TO REMEMBER

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer.

- True False 1. Man's final religious authority should be the Bible.
- True False 2. The church's only universal organization is: Christ, its head, and the first century apostles and prophets.
- True False 3. The early churches were not united in doctrine, love, names, organization, worship, etc.

STUDY AND SELECT

Instructions: Place an X over the number of the correct answer.

1. Inspired writers said that the early church would (1) never fall into error (2) later fall into error (3) remain infallibly true. (I Timothy 4:1; II Thessalonians 2:3).
2. Paul predicted that bishops could (1) never err (2) lead the church into error (3) not lead the church into error. (Acts 20:28-32).
3. The rise of the apostate church began (1) during Paul's lifetime (2) with Martin Luther (3) because the apostles died. (II Thessalonians 2:7).
4. In New Testament Churches, each congregation had (1) one bishop (2) more than one bishop (elder) (3) one priest. (Philippians 1:1; Acts 14:23).
5. In the local church each bishop of the New Testament had (1) equal rank with the other bishops (2) superiority over the other elders (3) authority over several churches. (I Peter 5:1-4).
6. When one bishop was elevated over the other bishops in a local church, the Bible plan of organization was (1) followed (2) changed (3) fulfilled.
7. In later centuries when some bishops assumed authority over several churches, they (1) obeyed Christ (2) further changed God's plan of organization (3) followed the Bible.
8. Later the various bishops fell into ranks according to (1) the New Testament organization (2) their character (3) the importance of the areas.

9. The higher ranked bishops later assumed the title of (1) servants (2) prophets (3) patriarchs (arch-bishops).
10. During the sixth century these patriarchs (arch-bishops) were (1) still of equal rank (2) of unequal rank (3) all subject to one patriarch.
11. Gregory I, bishop of Rome in 590 A.D. taught that Peter's See was presided over by (1) only the Roman Bishop (2) no bishop (3) three bishops (Alexandria, Antioch, and Rome).
12. When John, Patriarch of Constantinople, claimed to be "Universal Bishop," Gregory I denounced the title as (1) humble (2) profane, proud and wicked (3) appropriate only for Rome's bishop.
13. In what year did Boniface III of Rome assume the title of "universal bishop" (1) 33 (2) 1870 (3) 606.
14. The Pope of Rome was officially pronounced infallible in what century? (1) First (2) Seventh (3) Nineteenth.
15. Which Scripture predicted that the apostasy would produce one speaking in the church in God's place? (1) II John 7 (2) Matthew 24:11 (3) II Thessalonians 2:2-7.
16. The hierarchy and papacy is the result of centuries of (1) obedience to God (2) departures from the New Testament plan of organization (3) revelation from God.
17. I Peter 2:5,9 says that all Christians are (1) priests (2) not priests (3) elders.
18. The church's later claim that presbyters are the only priests is (1) taught by Christ (2) a Bible truth (3) a change in New Testament Doctrine.
19. The purpose of the Lord's Supper is to (1) remember Christ's death (2) change bread and wine into flesh and blood (3) offer Christ's sacrifice continually. (I Corinthians 11:23-26; Hebrews 9:24-28; 10:10-12).
20. The Bible says that Mary (1) was a perpetual virgin (2) ascended bodily into heaven (3) was immaculately conceived (4) had other children than Jesus. (Matthew 1:25; 13:55-56).
21. The Bible says that Mary is (1) Queen of Heaven (2) a Mediator (3) more blessed than all other Christians (4) no more blessed than other faithful Christians. (Luke

- 11:27-28; I Timothy 2:5; Colossians 3:17).
22. The church's later teachings about the purpose of the Lord's Supper and the exaltation of Mary are (1) departures from the truth (2) first century teachings (3) revelations from God.
 23. The Bible teaches that wicked conduct (1) indicates truthful teaching (2) does not endanger a church's relation with God (3) cuts off a church spiritually and is a sign of false teaching. (Matthew 7:16-17; Romans 11:22).
 24. Later church regulations requiring bishops not to marry fulfilled (1) Bible qualifications for bishops (2) Christ's will (3) the prophecy of an apostasy. (I Timothy 3:2; 4:1-3).
 25. During the middle ages the Roman church was characterized by (1) purity of life (2) love for fellowman (3) immorality and hateful destruction of fellowman.
 26. The Inquisition as practiced by the Roman church and some Protestant churches (1) pleases God (2) is commanded by God (3) contradicts God's will in the Bible. (Romans 12:17, 20-21; 13:10; I John 3:10-15).

THINK AND CHOOSE

Instructions: Place the letter of the correct answer in the blank.

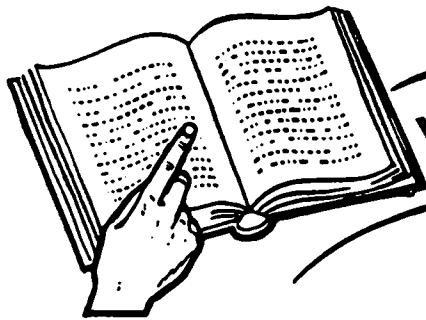
- _____ 1. Who attempted to reform the apostate church? (a) Only the reformers of the 1500's (b) Many groups through the centuries (c) Martin Luther alone.
- _____ 2. God's faithful people have always been (a) in the majority (b) given prominent recognition by historians (c) few and persecuted but not destroyed. (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 7:14; 16:18; I Peter 3:20; II Timothy 3:12).
- _____ 3. The followers of the reformers of the 1500's (a) formed denominations based on the Bible and their leaders' ideas and Names (b) made the Bible their only authority (c) restored completely the New Testament church.
- _____ 4. The religious division and error brought about by Protestantism (a) pleases Christ (b) harmonizes with the Bible (c) is sinful. (I Corinthians 1:10-14; 3:3; John 17:20-21; Ephesians 4:4-5).
- _____ 5. A principal cause of error and disunity is (a) the Bible (b) God's word (c) departure from God's word through tradition, creeds, manuals, etc. (Matthew 15:3-9; I Timothy 4:1).
- _____ 6. What must we leave to restore the early church? (a) God's word (b) the Bible (c) doctrine and churches of men. (II Corinthians 6:17; II Timothy 2:19).

- _____ 7. What produced and preserved the unity of the early church? (a) The Roman Pope (b) only the bishops (c) God's word. (John 8:31; Acts 20:32).
- _____ 8. In the first century God's word produced (a) denominations (b) Mormons (c) Jehovah's Witnesses (d) the Baptist Church (e) Seventh Day Adventists (f) churches of Christ composed of Christians only (g) Roman Catholics. (Romans 16:16; Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16)
- _____ 9. To prove we are the same church that existed in the first century we must (a) trace a line of bishops back to the apostles (b) have modern day revelation (c) continue in the same word of God. (John 8:31-32).
- _____ 10. How much of God's word does the Bible contain? (a) All (b) None (c) Some. (II Timothy 3:16-17).
- _____ 11. When the Bible is lost or obscured, religion (a) remains pure through oral tradition (b) becomes corrupt (c) is not changed. (II Kings 22-23; Matthew 15:3-9).
- _____ 12. God's word is (a) always living seed (b) dead after a few centuries (c) useless without an infallible interpreter. (I Peter 1:23-25).
- _____ 13. By planting only the seed of God's word in the Bible we will produce (a) a church different from the early church (b) a denomination (c) A Roman Catholic church (d) the same church of the first century. (Galatians 6:7).
- _____ 14. By returning to the Bible alone we will (a) not restore the original church (b) restore the original church (c) be Roman Catholics. (John 8:31).

SUMMING UP THE TRUTH

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer.

- Yes No 1. Does the Bible say the church would later depart from the truth?
- Yes No 2. Did the church later change God's plan of church organization?
- Yes No 3. Was the doctrine and worship of the church later changed?
- Yes No 4. Did the conduct of the church later indicate the presence of false teachers?
- Yes No 5. Did Luther, Calvin, and the other reformers restore the original church?
- Yes No 6. Will the seed of God's word in the Bible produce the same church today that it produced in the first century?
- Yes No 7. Should every Christian seek to restore the original church?



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

LESSON X

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

Jesus has already appeared once to bring salvation, establish His church and reveal His will through the Scriptures. The Bible also says that Christ will yet "appear a second time" (Hebrews 9:28). But when will He come? How will He come? Why is He coming? This lesson presents Bible answers to these important questions.

I. WHEN WILL CHRIST COME AGAIN?

The Bible teaches two things concerning the time of Christ's second coming: (1) the certainty that He may come at any moment and (2) the uncertainty of the time of His coming.

A. THE CERTAINTY THAT CHRIST MAY COME AT ANY MOMENT

The church of every century should expect Christ to come at any moment. Why? Because even in the first century Christ's second coming was considered near. "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh . . . behold the judge standeth before the door" (James 5:8,9). "The Lord is at hand" (Philippians 4:5). "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Hebrews 10:37). To John, Jesus said, "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be" (Revelation 22:12). Obviously, the church of the first century thought that Christ could have appeared at any moment. Since Christ's coming was considered near in the first century, it must be considered even nearer in our modern age.

But how has the Lord's coming been near in all of the last nineteen centuries? Peter, answering the objections of scoffers who mocked the delay of the Lord's return (II Peter 3:3-4), gives an adequate explanation: "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Peter 3:8). Time is nothing with God. The two thousand years since Christ's

promise to return are only two days on God's calendar. As, under the clear western sky, a distant range of lofty mountains seems almost at hand, so in the atmosphere of faith, the great towering event of the future, the Lord's coming, dwarfs all else and appears always very near. Whether in the first century or the twentieth century, nothing is more vivid and thoroughly in the spirit of Jesus than the exciting exclamation, "The Lord is at hand."



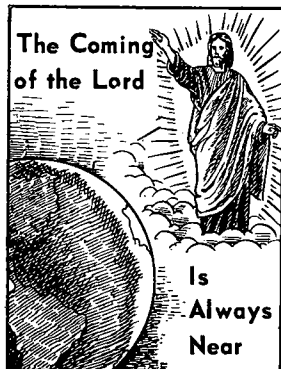
B. THE UNCERTAINTY OF THE TIME OF CHRIST'S COMING

Although Christ may come at any moment, no one knows exactly when He will arrive. Jesus emphatically declared: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36). Jesus told His closest disciples, "For in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:44). Paul taught that it was unnecessary to discuss the time or seasons of Christ's return because His coming would be like a "thief in the night", thus suddenly and unexpectedly (I Thessalonians 5:1-3).

In spite of these clear warnings against setting a date for the Lord's coming, men of every age

have boldly predicted the exact time. For instance, William Miller, one of the fore-runners of the Seventh Day Adventists, predicted that Christ would return in 1844. In 1844 he changed the date to 1845; then finally gave up in humiliation. Later, C. T. Russell, one of the founders of the Jehovah's Witnesses, predicted that Christ would come in 1914; when Christ did not appear, he changed the date to 1918. J. F. Rutherford, Russell's successor, predicted in his book, *Millions Now Living Shall Never Die*, that the Lord would return in his life time. Rutherford is now dead, but his book remains to testify to the folly of setting a date for the Lord's coming.

Matthew 24:1-36 is often used by religious teachers to predict the time of Christ's coming. The wars, famines, earthquakes, etc. mentioned in this passage are thought to apply only to these modern days. However, a careful examination of the passage shows that these signs refer primarily to the time preceding the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (see especially Matthew 24:1-2, 16, 20 and the parallel passage in Luke 21:20-24). Jesus emphatically asserted that these signs would be fulfilled in the first century generation (Matthew 24:34). Jesus did not say that He would come in that generation but that He would come "immediately after the signs and tribulation of Jerusalem's destruction (Matthew 24:29-31). The expression, "immediately after" is explained in verse 33 as meaning "near, even at the doors." As we learned above, the Lord's coming has always been near, even "before the door" (James 5:9). Thus, immediately after Jerusalem's destruction in 70 A.D. (which in God's mind may be two days or two thousand years, II Peter 3:8), Christ's second coming was to be, and still is, the next great event to occur. But as to exactly when it will occur, no one knows.



This suspenseful "uncertainty," and the constant "nearness," of the Lord's coming encourages the church of every century to be in a continual state of watchfulness: "Watch therefore . . . be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:42-44). This type of watchfulness does not spend time eyeing the heavens or trying to discover the number of days, months or years before

the Lord comes (I Thessalonians 5:1-8). Rather, Christians must patiently, diligently and constantly practice the will of God in preparation for the Lord's return (Matthew 24:44-51; 25:1-13; II Peter 3:10-14). But how will we know when He has come?

II. HOW WILL CHRIST COME AGAIN?

Some men teach that Christ's coming will be secret. For instance, the Jehovah's Witnesses, after setting 1914 and later 1918 as the date of Christ's coming, later decided that Christ came in 1914 after all, but appeared secretly to only a few people. However, the Bible says not to believe in secret appearances (Matthew 24:26). Jesus further explained, "For as the lightning cometh of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:27). Everyone can see lightning from all directions; so will everyone see Christ's coming.

A few religious groups teach that when the Lord first returns, He will gather only the righteous in a secret rapture which the wicked will not witness. But the Bible says "all tribes", "all nations", both righteous and wicked, shall see the Lord coming to gather His elect (Matthew 24:30-31). John emphatically exclaimed, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." (Revelation 1:7).

When Christ returns, He "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God" (I Thessalonians 4:16). The stars of heaven shall fall; the powers of the universe will be shaken. Surrounded by His mighty angels He will come "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:29-31). All nations will be gathered to witness His glorious return. But why is He coming?

III. WHY WILL CHRIST COME AGAIN?

The Bible says that Christ is coming to (1) deliver up His kingdom to God, (2) resurrect all the dead, and (3) execute the final judgment.

A. CHRIST IS COMING TO DELIVER THE KINGDOM TO GOD

Concerning Jesus' return, Paul explained, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (I Corinthians 15:24). Thus, Christ is coming, not to establish His kingdom, but to deliver it up to God. Many passages teach that Christ is already reigning in His kingdom.

As noted in lesson 6, the church and the kingdom are identical. Christ established His kingdom in the first century (Mark 1:15; 9:1; Acts 2:30-36; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:6,9).

Consequently, Christ began reigning on Pentecost when His church or kingdom was established (Acts 2:30-36).

Secondly, Paul taught that Christ must reign before death is destroyed (I Cor. 15:25-26). Paul also says that death is destroyed when Christ comes to resurrect the righteous (I Cor. 15:52-57). Therefore, Christ must reign before His coming, not afterwards as some religious groups teach.

After Christ's resurrection, God set Him "at his right hand, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named" (Ephesians 1:20-21). He will remain there until all His enemies are destroyed, at which time He will also cease His reign (Hebrews 1:13). Therefore, in this present age, Christ "rules in the midst of his enemies" (Psalm 110:2) as "prince of the kings of the earth" (Revelation 1:5). He is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (I Timothy 6:15). He has made the citizens of His kingdom (church members) to be "kings and priests unto God" (Revelation 1:6; I Peter 2:9). Paul said, He "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:6). In this sense, Christians sit and spiritually reign with Him now for a complete period of time (represented in Revelation 20:4 by a "thousand years"). Jesus said His kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36) but a spiritual kingdom which dwells in men (Luke 17:21). When He delivers the kingdom to God at His coming, then the faithful shall reign with Him in glory, not for a thousand years, but "for ever and ever" (Revelation 11:15; 22:5; II Timothy 2:12).

B. CHRIST IS COMING TO RAISE THE DEAD

Remember that everyone, including the wicked who have already died, will witness Christ's glorious return (Revelation 1:7). This will be possible because "the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29). Notice that all the dead, both righteous and wicked, will be raised in the same "hour". Even the wicked who were punished physically in ancient times will be present on that day (Matthew 11:21-24). Those who repented in Old Testament days will be raised face to face with the wicked Jews who rejected Christ (Luke 11:32). Paul said, "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust", (Acts 24:15). Note the phrase, "a" resurrection, not "two" resurrections. Religious theories that use highly figurative passages to teach two resurrections (the resurrection of the righteous separated from that of the wicked by a thousand years), do not agree with these plain statements of Scriptures.

The resurrection of the wicked dead is vividly described in Revelation 20:12-15. Concerning the righteous, the Bible teaches that dead Christians will rise first and that afterwards the Christians still living will be "caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (I Thessalonians 4:15-17). Elsewhere Paul explains that the resurrected bodies of the righteous will not be natural, physical bodies, but spiritual, heavenly bodies (I Corinthians 15:42-53). Paul strongly declares that the resurrected bodies will not be composed of "flesh and blood" (I Corinthians 15:50). We must say with the apostle John, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him" (I John 3:2).

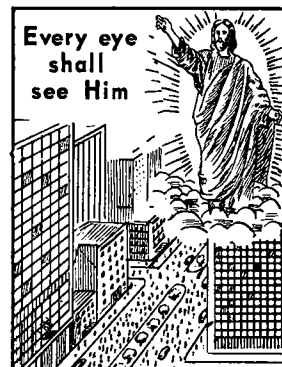
But why is Christ coming to raise the dead?

C. CHRIST WILL FINALLY COME TO JUDGE ALL MEN

Christ is coming to raise the dead that He might execute final judgment upon all men. "We shall all stand before the judgment seat . . . every knee shall bow . . . everyone . . . shall give account . . . to God" (Romans 14:9-12).

The basis of Christ's judgment will be man's actions in this life. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that every one may receive the things done in his body" (II Corinthians 5:10). Man will be judged by his deeds in the body, not out of the body, nor after death. Also man will be judged by what he personally does. Revelation 20:13 describes judgment as follows: "the dead . . . were judged every man according to their works." The Bible never mentions anything about a person being blessed at judgment for the works of another.

Since man is judged by the deeds of his own personal life, no one still living can perform deeds that affect the destiny of the dead. Nor can the dead suffer a brief purging in a temporary state of torment and later change their destiny. In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus described Hades, the



realm of departed spirits awaiting the resurrection, as a fixed state which cannot be changed. In the story of Lazarus he died and went to that part of Hades called "Abraham's bosom", (Luke 16:22) or paradise, where Christ Himself went at death (Luke 23:43,46; Acts 2:31). The rich man also died and went to another part of Hades called "torment", tartarus (Luke 16:23; II Peter 2:4,9). This place of torment was separated from Abraham's bosom by a great gulf fixed to prevent passage from one to the other (Luke 16:26). After death, man's spirit does live on (Matthew 10:28), but his destiny is forever sealed. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

In the final judgment Christ will separate the righteous and the wicked "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:31,32). To the unrighteous Christ will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (Matthew 25:41). This state of final hell (Matthew 5:22; 10:28) will be a place of punishment comparable to the most painful affliction of this life - fire. There "shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30).

The hell of the wicked will be just as eternal as the heaven granted the righteous. The unrighteous shall be punished with "everlasting destruction" (II Thessalonians 1:9), "everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46), where "the fire . . . never shall be quenched" (Mark 9:43-44). Those in the lake of fire and brimstone "shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 20:10).

Christ will bid His followers to enter into heaven and receive their eternal reward. Some say that only a few of the righteous have hope of this heaven and that all the rest have hope only in a new existence on this material, renovated earth where they will continue to marry and live as we do today, only more blessed. However, the Bible says that this material universe will be destroyed: "all these things shall be dissolved" (II Peter 3:10-11). Heaven itself is described as "a new heaven and a new earth", a new habitation (II Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1), but not in the sense that it is two entirely different homes. The Bible never describes the reward of the righteous as being two different destinations or hopes. Paul says, "There is . . . one hope of your calling" (Ephesians 4:4). Christ will not even set His foot on the earth, much less establish His throne there. All the righteous shall "meet the Lord in the air; and so shall . . . ever be with the Lord" (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). The faith of Abraham and the great patriarchs was not in a home on the earth. They desired "a better country, that is, an heavenly" (Hebrews 11:13-16). In addition, Christ emphatically denied that there will be

marriages after the resurrection (Matthew 22:30; Luke 20:34-36). There is but one home, one hope, for all the righteous: "Heaven" (I Peter 1:3-4).

Christ will tell the righteous, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). At this time, the saved shall enter heaven; God shall wipe away all tears; there shall be no more death, sorrow or pain (Revelation 21:4). The Bible describes this new home with the most precious riches of life



(Revelation 21:16-21). Its beauty, glory, purity, and eternity in the immediate presence of God and Christ is the blessing for which the people of God patiently wait and serve (Revelation 21:23).

CONCLUSION

Though no man can set the date, Christ's return is more certain than the rising of tomorrow's sun. That great event could occur tomorrow, or within the next five minutes. Whatever the time may be, we must live prepared, vigilant lives.

Today God offers salvation to all. Later, when Christ comes, He will offer heaven only to the saved. Today the gospel of Christ is free for all to obey. Tomorrow when heaven's portals open to the obedient, those who obeyed not the gospel will see those portals close in their very faces (II Thessalonians 1:8; Matthew 25:10). Are you prepared to see Christ return?

QUESTIONS

NAME.....

LESSON X

ADDRESS.....

Grade:.....

CITY STATE Zip Code.....

REVIEW TO REMEMBER

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer.

- True False 1. The Bible is man's final rule of faith.
- True False 2. Man must believe, repent, confess and be baptized to be saved.
- True False 3. We can restore the original church by returning to the Bible alone.

THINK AND SELECT

Instructions: Place an X over the number of the correct answer.

1. The early church thought that Christ's second coming (1) could not occur in their time (2) was near and could occur at any moment of their lives (3) would never occur. (Philippians 4:5; James 5:8-9; Revelation 22:12).
2. The "nearness" of the Lord's coming from the first to the twentieth century is explained by Peter's statement that (1) God is slack concerning His promises (2) The Lord's coming was not "near" in the first century (3) a thousand years are as one day with the Lord. (II Peter 3:8-9).
3. Jesus said that He would return at a time (1) known by His disciples (2) unknown only to the wicked (3) unknown by all men. (Matthew 24:36,44).
4. The signs and the destruction of Jerusalem mentioned in Matthew 24 indicate that Christ's coming (1) is near only in these modern days (2) was not near in the first century (3) was near in the first century and is still near. (James 5:8-9; Matthew 24:33,34).
5. The constant "nearness" of Christ's coming ensures that the church will be continually watching and preparing (1) only in the first century (2) only in the twentieth century (3) in every century. (Matthew 24:42-44).
6. The type of watchfulness that Christ desires is to (1) eye the heavens constantly to the

neglect of family and work (2) spend time seeking to know the times and seasons of Christ's return (3) spend time diligently living the Christian life in preparation for his return. (Matthew 24:44-51; 25:1-13; I Thessalonians 5:1-8).

7. The Bible says that man (1) should believe in secret comings of Christ (2) should not believe in secret comings of Christ. (Matthew 24:23-28).
8. Christ's coming to gather His elect people (1) was in secret in 1914 (2) is to be seen only by the righteous in a secret rapture (3) is to be seen by everyone, all nations, both the righteous and the wicked. (Matthew 24:27,30,31; Revelation 1:7).
9. Christ is returning to (1) establish His kingdom on the earth (2) deliver the kingdom to God (3) do nothing about His kingdom. (I Corinthians 15:24).
10. The kingdom of Christ (1) was established in the first century (2) has not been established (3) was established in 1914. (Mark 1:15; 9:1; Acts 2:30-36; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:6,9).
11. Christ's reign is to endure until the last enemy is destroyed, which is (1) life (2) sin (3) death. (I Corinthians 15:25-26).
12. Death, the last enemy, will be destroyed (1) 1000 years after the righteous are raised (2) at His second coming, when the righteous are raised (3) before the righteous are raised. (I Corinthians 15:52-57).
13. Since Christ will reign until (or before) the last enemy is destroyed, we must conclude that Christ (1) is reigning now before He comes again (2) will not reign until after He comes again (3) has already completed His reign.
14. In this present age, Christ (1) rules as King of kings and Lord of lords (2) does not rule as king. (Revelation 1:5; Ephesians 1:20-22; I Timothy 6:15).
15. Jesus said that His kingdom on earth was to be (1) a material kingdom of display and power (2) a spiritual kingdom, not of this world, but of the world of righteousness.

dwelling within man. (Luke 17:21; John 18:36).

16. After Christ delivers the kingdom to God, Christians will reign with God and Christ for (1) 1000 years (2) for ever and ever (3) some limited period of time. (Revelation 22:5; II Timothy 2:12).

THINK AND CHOOSE

Instructions: Place the letter of the correct answer on the blank.

- _____ 1. The wicked dead who were punished physically in ancient days will (a) not be resurrected (b) be resurrected. (Matthew 11:21-24).
- _____ 2. All the dead, both the righteous and the wicked, will be raised (a) at the same hour in one resurrection (b) in two resurrections a thousand years apart (c) never. (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
- _____ 3. In the resurrection the righteous will have (a) natural, physical bodies of flesh and blood (b) no bodies (c) supernatural bodies of flesh and blood (d) spiritual, heavenly bodies without flesh and blood. (I Corinthians 15:42-53).
- _____ 4. Christ will execute judgment upon (a) some of the wicked (b) all the wicked only (c) all men, the wicked and the righteous. (Romans 14:9-12).
- _____ 5. Every man, whether wicked or righteous, will be judged according to the deeds done (a) only in his own body before death (b) by others on his behalf after death (c) in his spirit after death. (II Corinthians 5:10).
- _____ 6. After death, the spirit of a wicked man (a) can be purged after temporary suffering (b) can be helped by priests saying mass (c) enters a state of torment from which there is no escape to comfort. (Luke 16:19-26; II Peter 2:4-9).
- _____ 7. Therefore, after death man's final destiny (a) can be changed by friends still living (b) can be changed by a second chance before judgment (c) is forever sealed with only the judgment to look forward to. (Hebrews 9:27).
- _____ 8. After Christ separates the wicked from the righteous He will send the wicked (a) to their graves in peace (b) to heaven (c) to hell, a place of punishment in fire. (Matthew 5:22; 25:30,46).
- _____ 9. The punishment of the wicked in hell will be (a) temporary pain (b) mere physical death (c) everlasting torment for ever and ever. (Revelation 20:10; Mark 9:43-44; Matthew 25:46; II Thes-

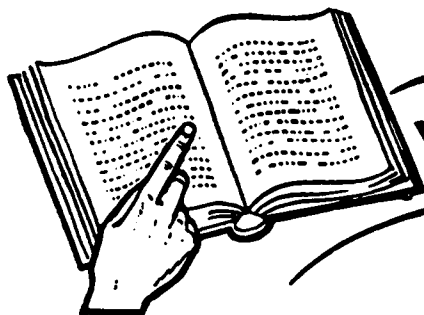
salonians 1:9).

- _____ 10. When Christ returns the present material universe will (a) continue as it is now (b) be burned up and dissolved (c) be purged with fire but not dissolved. (II Peter 3:10-11).
- _____ 11. The Bible describes the reward of the righteous as (a) two hopes: one in heaven for a few of the righteous and the other on earth for the rest (b) one hope; the heavenly, spiritual habitation of a "new heaven and new earth" reserved in Heaven forever (c) one hope; a blessed life on the earth for a thousand years. (Ephesians 4:4; II Peter 3:13; Hebrews 11:13-16; I Peter 1:3-4).
- _____ 12. When Christ comes again, He will (a) establish His throne on the earth (b) meet the righteous in the air and so ever be with them (c) meet His saints on earth. (I Thessalonians 4:16-17).
- _____ 13. In the resurrected state men will (a) continue to marry and have children (b) not marry, but be as angels in heaven (c) live just as people do today. (Matthew 22:30; Luke 20:34-36).
- _____ 14. When Christ returns, the righteous will be rewarded with (a) the inheritance of the kingdom and the beauty, glory, purity and eternity of heaven (b) the torment of Hell (c) eternal nothingness. (Matthew 25:34; Revelation 21:4; 16-23).

SUMMING UP THE TRUTH

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer.

- Yes No 1. Can the time of the Lord's coming be known by man?
- Yes No 2. Should the church of every century expect Christ's coming at any moment of their lives and constantly watch and prepare for it?
- Yes No 3. Will Christ first appear in secret to only a few people instead of to all people of all nations.
- Yes No 4. Is Christ coming to deliver the kingdom to God instead of to establish the kingdom?
- Yes No 5. Will all the dead, both righteous and wicked be raised in one resurrection?
- Yes No 6. Can man's destiny be changed or improved by himself or others after death?
- Yes No 7. Will the punishment in Hell be everlasting torment for ever and ever?
- Yes No 8. Will all the righteous be rewarded with the beauty and glory of eternal life in Heaven?
- Yes No 9. Should man prepare now for Christ's second coming?



WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

LESSON XI GOD'S WILL FOR YOU (A Review)

You have completed ten lessons on "What the Bible Says". This last lesson reviews the course, helping you apply Bible truths to your own life.

I. GOD PROVIDES HIS WRITTEN WORD FOR YOU

Lesson 1—God Inspired and Preserved the Bible for You

Through inspired men God has recorded His word in the Bible (II Timothy 3:16-17). Yes, God speaks to you through the Bible. The creator revealed in the universe is also the God who revealed His will in Scripture. As evidence of the Bible's divine authorship, you have seen that the Bible is truthful, indestructible, and marvelously united and consistent though it was written by about forty authors during 1500 years of time. The Bible's prophecies, written hundreds of years before their fulfillment, demonstrate that God is its author.

You have God's own promise that He has entirely preserved His word. (I Peter 1:23-25). Yet even without His promise, you can be assured that the Bible has been preserved in its entirety throughout the centuries. Scholars agree that the evidence for the accuracy of the Bible from ancient manuscripts, translations, and quotations surpasses that of any other ancient work. By God's providence you are greatly blessed to have God's accurate message in your own tongue.

Lesson 2—God Recorded His Workings Throughout History for You

The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament contain God's covenant with the Jews (Deuteronomy 5:3). The New Testament's twenty-seven books contain God's covenant with Christians (Matthew 28:19-20). Bible history divides into three periods. The Patriarchal Age covers Adam's fall, man's increasing sinfulness, God's punishment of man through the flood, and the beginning of God's plan to save man (Genesis 1-12). In the Jewish Age God gave Abraham's descendants (the Jewish nation) the law of Moses to prepare the people for the coming of Christ (Galatians 3:24-25). However,

Jeremiah prophesied that God would later make a new covenant or law (Jeremiah 31:31).

Finally Christ came to terminate the Jewish Age and inaugurate the Christian Age. Fulfilling God's promises to Abraham (Galatians 3:29), Jesus brought salvation to the sinful world and became the mediator of a better covenant (Hebrews 8:6-12). He nailed the old covenant to the cross, taking it out of the way (Colossians 2:14-17). Of course, the Old Testament still has value as God's word, for examples and admonitions (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11). In the Christian Age, the last period, God speaks to all men through Christ, who has revealed His will in the New Testament (Hebrews 1:1-2; 9:15).

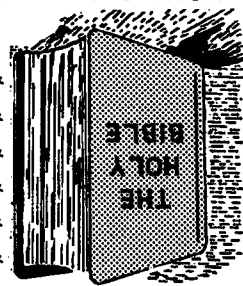
Lesson 3—God Gave the Bible to Be Your Final Religious Authority

Only Christ can claim "all power in heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18). Christ commissioned His disciples to reveal His teachings to the world (Matthew 28:19-20). To guarantee the accuracy of their teachings, God sent the Holy Spirit who guided them into all the truth (John 16:13). All the will of God having been revealed (Jude 3; Acts 20:27), any man, apostle, or angel who dared to change that original message was condemned (Galatians 1:6-9).

In order to preserve the heavenly message for future generations, they recorded all of God's will in writing (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:12-15; John 20:30-31). The inspired writers wrote the New Testament so that everyone can understand and obey it (Ephesians 3:4; Colossians 4:16; II Thessalonians 3:14). The Scriptures alone can make man perfect and furnish him completely to every good work (II Timothy 3:16-17). Therefore, authorities other than the New Testament are unnecessary. Only the New Testament contains Christ's complete message; it is therefore your ultimate source of religious authority.

II. GOD PROVIDES THE GIFT OF SALVATION FOR YOU

Lesson 4—God Fulfilled His Part in Providing You Salvation



Lesson 7—God Reveals to You the Plan of Organization for the Church

The church is sometimes referred to in a universal sense (Matthew 16:18) and sometimes in a local sense (I Corinthians 1:2). The organization of the universal church has three basic components: a head, spokesman, and a body. Jesus Christ is the only head, and therefore the only one with the right to give commands to the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). Apostles and prophets are Christ's spokesmen (Ephesians 2:19-20). The Holy Spirit miraculously inspired them to reveal and confirm Christ's message (John 16:13; Hebrews 2:3-4). Having fully revealed and confirmed the word (Jude 3), miraculous powers ceased. But the same apostles and prophets of the first century continue to guide the church through their writings in the Bible (II Timothy 3:16-17). The body (the church) is composed of all of its members throughout the world (Romans 12:4-5). Just as the physical body obeys its head, so the church must obey Christ.

The universal church is divided into local congregations or churches. Each congregation is autonomous (independent of the others). A group of men called elders (bishops or pastors), who meet certain qualifications (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), oversee the work and spiritual welfare of the members in their local congregation (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:28). Never does the Bible mention one bishop over many churches but always many bishops over one church. Serving under the elders in each local church are deacons, evangelists, teachers, and members (Philippians 1:1; Ephesians 4:8-12). As a member of the church, you will be a part of the universal church and a member of a local congregation where you will find abundant opportunities to serve.

Lesson 8—God Provides You the Pattern of Unity for the Church

Although believers in Christ are divided by denominationalism and religious confusion, Jesus prayed and planned that His church be united (John 17:17-22; I Corinthians 1:10-15; Ephesians 4:1-6). The churches scattered over the world in the first century, far from being divided, had common characteristics. They all followed the same doctrine as now revealed in the New Testament (Galatians 1:6-8). United in love, churches helped destitute saints in another congregation a thousand miles away (II Corinthians 8). They used only those names that gave glory, not to man, but to God and Christ: the church of God, the Churches of Christ, Christians, etc. (I Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:16; Acts 11:26). Churches in every place had the same membership requirements — those discussed in Lesson 5. People did not receive salvation first and then join a church; they were saved and God immediately placed them in His church (Acts 2:41,47; I Corinthians 12:13). Each congregation had the same organization as studied in Lesson 7. Their

worship services were all characterized by singing without accompaniment of instruments (Ephesians 5:19), prayer (I Timothy 2:8), liberal giving (I Corinthians 16:1-2), study of God's word, and the Lord's Supper each first day of the week (Acts 20:7).

By being obedient to God's pattern of unity, the many local congregations composing the one church pleased God without being Roman Catholic, Protestant or Jew. What a beautiful picture of unity!

Does your Church have the same characteristics of unity that the Church of the New Testament had?



- * Doctrine
- * Love
- * Names
- * Membership requirements
- * Organization
- * Love

Lesson 9—God Wants You To Restore the New Testament Church

Unfortunately, the church later fell away from the truth, even as Jesus and the apostles predicted (Matthew 24:11; II Thessalonians 2:3; I Timothy 4:1-5). God's plan of organization was gradually changed from many bishops over one church to one bishop over many churches (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1). The church's doctrine and worship was corrupted in such things as the priesthood (I Peter 2:5), the purpose of the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11:23-28; Hebrews 10:10-12), and the exaltation of Mary (Luke 11:27-28; I Timothy 2:5). The church's conduct was corrupted by forbidding bishops to marry (I Timothy 3:2; 4:1-3) and open immorality. Attempts to reform the apostate church resulted in divided Protestantism: many churches, differing from the early church in name, organization, doctrine and worship. Such division is contrary to God's will (Ephesians 4:4-5; I Corinthians 1:10-14).

But you have a choice other than the apostate church or divided Protestantism. You can restore the true church as it existed originally. Remember that the word of God is living seed (I Peter 1:23) and that by continuing in His word you will be His true disciple (John 8:31). Consequently by planting, and continuing in, the same word of God which produced the church of the first century, you can restore the same, non-sectarian, undenominational church of Christ, composed of

Christians and Christians only. Yes, you can be a member of the true, original church of Christ.

First, you must become a member of Christ's church by obeying God's requirements for salvation (see Lesson 5). Second, you will want to worship regularly with other members of the church of Christ. If no church has yet been established in your community, you will want to set aside time each first day of the week to worship God in song, Lord's Supper, prayer, study of God's word and giving of one's money to support the church's work (see Lesson 8). Third, you should teach other people in your community. A true Christian will seek to share his salvation with others (Philippians 2:15-16). Fourth, you must regularly study the Bible and obey its precepts, living righteously before your fellow-citizens. Fifth, as you and fellow-Christians develop the qualifications of elders and deacons, you should organize the church according to God's plan. Sixth, you must remain faithful until death to receive the blessing of eternity (Hebrews 3:14).

IV. JESUS IS COMING AGAIN FOR YOU

Lesson 10—You Must Prepare for Christ's Return

While the time of Christ's second coming is uncertain, it is certain that He may come at any moment (Matthew 24:36,44). The early church rightly felt that His coming was "near" in their generation (James 5:8-9). Such faith inspired them, as it should us now, to live in a state of watchful preparation. Everyone will one day see the Lord coming with His mighty angels in flaming fire. (Matthew 24:30-31; 25:31). Both the wicked and the righteous will be raised in that day (John 5:28-29). Each shall be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body (II Corinthians 5:10). A second chance after death will not be given; your destiny is sealed eternally at death (Luke 16:19-31). Perhaps you have not considered that you personally will give account to God for your life. Jesus is coming again for you. Will you be ready?

CONCLUSION

Your faithful study of these profound Bible subjects is worthy of high praise. However, a knowledge of God's word is not sufficient (James 1:22-25). You must also do the will of God exactly as it is found in the Bible. Jesus warned, "Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father" (Matthew 7:21). The real test of what you have learned will be seen in a practical application of your knowledge. May God bless you even now as you plan what to do with your life. To accept Jesus Christ and

follow Him is the most noble step you will ever take. It will mean the guarantee of joys both here and hereafter. Jesus left the glories of heaven to make your salvation possible. He died that you might live. Surrender to Him by obeying His gospel, and He will add you to His church. Live faithfully until the end, and He will give you a home in heaven. What a glorious thought! You, a sinner saved by grace, will receive the glories of heaven and live there throughout the endless ages of eternity. For this is WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS.

QUESTIONS

LESSON XI

Grade:.....

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

Zip Code

STUDY AND SELECT

Instructions: Place an X over the number of the correct answer.

LESSON I

1. The Bible was written (1) directly by God (2) by God through inspired men (3) by men without the supernatural help of God. (II Timothy 3:16-17).
2. The Creator that is evidenced in the universe is (1) inadequately described in the Bible (2) not described in the Bible (3) adequately described in the Bible.
3. Which of the following are evidences of the Bible's divine authorship? (1) The infallibility of the church (2) The Bible's false teachings (3) The Bible's truthfulness and indestructibility.
4. Although the Bible was written by about forty authors during 1500 years of time, the Bible is (1) marvelously united and consistent (2) hopelessly contradictory (3) a mass of confusion.
5. The Bible's prophecies, written hundreds of years before their fulfillment, prove that the Bible (1) is just like any other book (2) was a human work (3) has been supernaturally inspired by God.
6. God promised to preserve His word in the Bible (1) partially (2) only during the first century (3) in its entirety forever. (I Peter 23-25).
7. Evidence for the textual accuracy of the Bible from ancient manuscripts, translations and quotations (1) is inferior to that of other books (2) does not exist (3) is superior to any other ancient work.

LESSON II

8. The Old Testament contains God's covenant with (1) the Jews only (2) Christians of all nations (3) the church of Christ. (Deuteronomy 5:1-3).
9. The New Testament contains God's covenant with (1) the Jews only (2) Christians of all nations in all ages (3) only the Christians of the first century. (Matthew 28:18-20).

10. The three periods of Bible history are (1) the Jewish, Christian, and Latter day ages (2) the Patriarchal, Jewish and Christian ages (3) the Christian, Latter Day and Millennial ages.
11. God's promise to Abraham that his seed would one day bless all nations was fulfilled in (1) the Jewish nation (2) Jesus Christ (3) the ten commandments. (Galatians 3:16).
12. God gave the Jews (Abraham's descendants) the law of Moses to (1) make them perfect (2) prepare them for Christ's coming (3) be binding over all nations. (Galatians 3:24-25).
13. During the Jewish Age, Jeremiah prophesied (1) two new covenants (2) no new covenant (3) one new covenant. (Jeremiah 31:31).
14. In fulfilling the Old Testament law, what did Jesus do? (1) He included all of it in His new covenant (2) He included only the 10 commandments in his new covenant (3) He nailed all of the old covenant to the cross and established a new, better covenant. (Colossians 2:14-17; Hebrews 8:6-13).
15. Although the old covenant has been fulfilled (1) its covenant is still binding upon man (2) it still serves man with profitable learning, examples and admonitions (3) it is destroyed and worthless. (Romans 15:4; I Corinthians 10:11).
16. God's specific law or covenant for you and for all living in the Christian age is found in (1) the Old Testament (2) the New Testament. (Hebrews 9:15).

LESSON III

17. Who has all authority in heaven and on earth? (1) The church (2) Peter and His successors (3) Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:18).
18. Whom did Christ inspire to reveal His will to the world? (1) Peter only (2) Modern prophets (3) The apostles. (John 14:26; 16:13; Matthew 28:19-20).
19. How much of God's will did the apostles reveal? (1) Part (2) All (3) None. (Jude 3; Acts 20:27).
20. Who has the right to change the original message the apostles preached? (1) An angel (2) An apostle (3) The successor of Peter (4) No one. (Galatians 1:6-9).
21. In order to preserve their message for future generations the apostles (1) told certain men

- to memorize completely their words (2) taught that the church would always have inspired men to teach them God's word (3) recorded all of God's will in writing. (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:12-15; John 20:30-31; Luke 1:1-4).
22. The New Testament was written so that (1) everyone can be confused and ignorant (2) you and everyone can understand and obey it (3) no one, except priests, can understand it. (John 20:30-31; Ephesians 3:4; II Thessalonians 3:14).
23. Your final religious authority should be (1) the Bible (2) modern day revelations (3) church tradition (4) man's own conscience. (II Timothy 3:16-17; Matthew 15:7-9).

LESSON IV

24. How many men have sinned? (1) None (2) All (3) Some. (Romans 3:23).
25. As transgressors, all sinners are justly (1) saved (2) condemned to punishment (3) without condemnation. (Romans 6:23; 11:22).
26. Because God is also merciful He desires to (1) condemn man (2) save man (3) destroy man. (II Peter 3:9).
27. Jesus' perfect life and sacrificial death satisfy God's (1) mercy only (2) justice only (3) justice and mercy. (Romans 3:25-26).
28. God will accept Christ's perfect life and undeserving death as the penalty that justice requires for (1) Christ's sins (2) the sins of good people (3) your sins and the sins of all mankind. (I Peter 2:24; I John 2:2).
29. God offers to you and all men the righteousness which (1) you and others must earn (2) no one can earn (3) Christ earned. (II Corinthians 5:21).

LESSON V

30. In order to receive God's gift of salvation you must (1) do nothing (2) only believe that Christ died for your sins (3) surrender your life completely to Christ. (Luke 14:25-33; Philippians 3:8).
31. To surrender to Christ you must first (1) acknowledge the Pope as the church's head (2) believe in Jesus as the Son of God (3) study the doctrines of a denomination. (John 3:16).
32. After faith, you must repent of your sins by (1) only being sorrowful for your sins (2) deciding to leave most of your sins (3) deciding to leave all sin and follow Jesus wherever He goes. (Acts 17:30-31).
33. After faith and repentance you must (1) confess Him before men (2) deny Him before men (3) keep secret your faith in Him. (Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 10:32-33).
34. You must complete your initial surrender to Christ by (1) joining a denomination (2) being baptized by immersion in water (3) being

sprinkled with oil and water. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:36-39).

35. You must be baptized (1) to save another (2) in order to be saved (3) to show you were saved before baptism. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Peter 3:21).
36. A correct subject for baptism is one who (1) is an infant without faith (2) has first believed, repented and confessed (3) believes but has not repented. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:9).
37. If you were not a proper subject for baptism or if you were baptized for the wrong purpose or with the wrong mode, you have had the wrong baptism and should (1) not be baptized again (2) be baptized again. (Acts 19:1-5).
38. After baptism, Christians (1) cannot lose their salvation (2) must daily surrender to Christ or lose their salvation (3) can live the way they please and remain saved. (Luke 9:23; Galatians 5:4; Hebrews 10:26-31).

THINK AND CHOOSE

Instructions: Place the letter of the correct answer in the blank.

LESSON VI

- _____ 1. After surrendering to Christ in faith, repentance, confession and baptism, (a) you should join a denomination (b) God will add you to His church (c) you have no obligation to be part of any church. (Acts 2:41,47; I Corinthians 12:13).
- _____ 2. Since the church fulfills God's eternal purpose you should consider the church as (a) unimportant (b) good but not necessary (c) supremely important. (Ephesians 3:10-11,21).
- _____ 3. The church is so important that God (a) purposed it after Christ died (b) allowed man to plan it (c) purposed it in the beginning and promised, prophesied and prepared it for centuries before establishing it on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-47; Ephesians 3:9-11).
- _____ 4. The church is so important that (a) Christ purchased it with His blood (b) John the Baptist established it (c) mere humans planned it. (Acts 20:28).
- _____ 5. The church is composed of (a) all saved people (b) part of the saved people (c) none of the saved people. (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23).
- _____ 6. The church's calling to salvation, service, worship, holiness, and fellowship is (a) inferior in comparison to the callings of other institutions (b) is more noble than that of any other institution.

LESSON VII

7. Who is the only head of the universal church? (a) The successor of Peter (b) Jesus Christ (c) Mary. (Ephesians 1:22-23).
8. Who are the spokesmen that miraculously revealed and confirmed Christ's message to the world? (a) Only the apostles and prophets of the first century (b) Only Peter (c) Peter's Successors. (John 16:13; Ephesians 2:19-20; I Corinthians 12:28).
9. Since the original apostles fully revealed and confirmed the written word, miraculous powers (a) continue on (b) have ceased. (Hebrews 2:3-4; I Corinthians 13:8-10).
10. The same apostles and prophets of the first century live on in their same capacity today by speaking to us through (a) angels (b) other inspired men (c) their writings, the Bible. (II Timothy 3:16-17).
11. The universal church is divided into (a) denominations (b) dioceses (c) synods (d) local churches or congregations. (Romans 16:16; I Corinthians 1:2).
12. What group of men oversees the work and spiritual welfare of a local church? (a) Archbishops (b) Bishops (elders or pastors) (c) Priests (d) Deacons. (Acts 20:28; Titus 1:5-9).
13. How many bishops (elders) did each local congregation have in the first century? (a) One (b) None (c) More than one. (Acts 14:23; Philippians 1:1).
14. Which of the following are not mentioned in the New Testament as a church office? (a) Pope, cardinals and archbishops (b) Deacons, evangelists, teachers and members (c) Bishops (elders or pastors).
15. As a member of the true church of Christ you will be a member of a local church where you will find (a) no work (b) abundant opportunities to serve.

LESSON VIII

16. Christ prayed and planned that His church be (a) divided into denominations (b) united on His words (c) united on error. (John 17:17-22; 15:10,14; Ephesians 4:1-6).
17. The many congregations scattered over the world in the first century were united in (a) papal authority, the Latin language and the sacraments (b) ritual, infant baptism, faith in an infallible church (c) doctrine, love, names, membership requirements, and worship.

18. The church of the first century used (a) man-made names (b) names of men (c) names that gave glory to God and Christ. (I Corinthians 1:10-15; Romans 16:16; Acts 11:26).
19. Which of the following acts of worship were not a part of the worship of the churches of the first century? (a) Singing and praying (b) Instrumental music and incense (c) Giving and the Lord's Supper (d) Preaching of God's word.
20. By being obedient to God's pattern of unity for the church the many local congregations composing the original church (a) pleased God in being united (b) displeased God by being united (c) were hopelessly divided into denominations.
21. All local congregations of the first century worshipped on (a) Saturday (b) the first day of each week (c) the first Sunday of each month. (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2).

LESSON IX

22. The Bible predicted that the church would later (a) remain in perfect accord with God's word (b) fall away from the truth into error (c) develop more perfect unity. (Matthew 24:11; I Timothy 4:1-5; II Thessalonians 2:3).
23. The church fell away from the truth by (a) keeping God's plan for unity in the Bible (b) changing the organization, worship, doctrine, etc. as prescribed by the New Testament (c) following the Bible too closely. (I Timothy 4:1-3).
24. What did the word of God produce when it was planted in honest hearts in the first century? (a) Denominations (b) The Roman Catholic Church (c) A non-sectarian, undenominational church of Christ composed of only Christians. (I Peter 1:22-25).
25. Since seed always produces after its kind you can restore the church just as it was in the first century by (a) preaching different doctrines (b) teaching the Bible and the creed of your denomination (c) planting the same seed, Christ's word in the New Testament. (John 8:31).

LESSON X

26. God wants us to do His will now because Jesus (a) is not coming for many years (b) has already come (c) may come at any moment. (Matthew 24:36,44).
27. When Christ returns He will raise (a) only the righteous (b) only the

wicked (c) both the wicked and the righteous. (John 5:28-29).

- ____28. Everyone of us will be judged according to (a) the deeds done by the priest (b) the deeds done by our friends and relatives (c) the deeds we have done in this life. (II Corinthians 5:10).
- ____29. After death your destiny (a) can be changed by being given a second chance (b) can be changed by the prayers of friends (c) cannot be changed. (Luke 16:19-31).
- ____30. Who are the only ones who will be blessed at His coming? (a) Everyone who calls Jesus, Lord (b) All who have been baptized (c) All who do the will of God. (Matthew 7:21).

SUMMING UP THE TRUTH

Instructions: Place an X over the correct answer: answer what you really believe, regardless of what this course says.

- Yes No 1. Do you believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God?
- Yes No 2. Does the Bible contain all of God's will for you?
- Yes No 3. Do you believe that you personally have sinned and will be condemned unless you accept God's salvation?
- Yes No 4. Has God been working out His plans through the centuries to save you through Christ?
- Yes No 5. Did Jesus die on the cross to save you from your sins?
- Yes No 6. Can you receive salvation without surrendering your life completely to Christ?
- Yes No 7. Must man first believe that Jesus is the Son of God before he can be saved?
- Yes No 8. Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God?
- Yes No 9. In order to be saved, must man repent, be deciding to turn from every sin and to follow Jesus completely?
- Yes No 10. Have you decided to turn from every sin and to follow Jesus the rest of your life?
- Yes No 11. Must man confess with his mouth that Jesus is the Christ in order to be saved?
- Yes No 12. Have you confessed that Jesus is the Christ?
- Yes No 13. Have you been baptized?
- Yes No 14. Must man be baptized before he can be saved (in order to receive salvation)?
- Yes No 15. Were you baptized before you were saved (in order to be saved)?

- Yes No 16. Must man be baptized by being immersed in water?
- Yes No 17. Were you baptized by being immersed in water?
- Yes No 18. Must man first believe, confess and repent before being baptized?
- Yes No 19. Did you believe, confess and repent before being baptized?
- Yes No 20. Should man be rebaptized if his first baptism had the wrong mode, purpose or subject?
- Yes No 21. Does God add man to the church of Christ when he obeys the conditions for salvation?
- Yes No 22. Has God added you to the true church of Christ?
- Yes No 23. Does the true church of Christ offer man the greatest opportunity for service to humanity and to God of all the institutions on earth?
- Yes No 24. Can modern churches please God if they neglect to follow God's pattern of unity for the church's doctrine, worship, love, names, membership requirements, organization, etc.?
- Yes No 25. Does the church that you are a member of follow completely God's pattern of unity revealed by God in the Bible?
- Yes No 26. Are you willing to help restore the original church by joining with other Christians who are practicing the same pattern of unity revealed in the Bible?
- Yes No 27. If Christ were to come today, would you be prepared to meet him?
- Yes No 28. Would you like to obey God's will as you have learned in the Bible through this course?
- Yes No 29. Would you like more information or assistance from others concerning what you have learned from the Bible in this course?