

Mini Bible Lessons

By

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Lesson 1—Christians and The Bible, Part 1

1. Why do Christians accept the Hebrew Scriptures as their own Old Testament Scriptures?

Answer: **First**, Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Hebrew Scriptures, and the earliest Christians were Jews. Thus, they saw themselves as the true continuation of the Jewish religion. **Second**, Jesus referred to the 3 divisions of the Hebrew Bible in **Luke 24:44-45** and called them the Scriptures. Furthermore, in **Luke 11:50-51**, He speaks of the martyrs from Abel to Zechariah, which is the correct first and last martyr in the Jewish Scriptures only in the Hebrew Bible, not the Septuagint (Greek translation already present in Jesus' day).

2. What are the Apocrypha that two Christian churches include as part of their Old Testament, and why do Protestants reject them as not part of inspired Scripture?

Answer: The word **Apocrypha** means **hidden** and are sometimes also called the deuterocanonical books (meaning "second canon"). They range from 12-14 different books, although sometimes some of them are combined with other Old Testament books so as to appear as only 7 additional books. Protestants reject all of them for a variety of reasons. But the most important one is that Jesus accepted the Hebrew Bible (see Q. #1 above), which never included any of the Apocrypha in their manuscripts. Mainstream Judaism also rejected them because nearly all of them were originally written in Greek, not Hebrew or Aramaic.

3. Why do Christians have a collection of New Testament books in our Scriptures?

Answer: Jesus prepared His followers for a New Testament to be included in the Christian Scriptures because He eventually ordained His closest disciples as **apostles**, a word that means **the sent out ones** (see **Luke 6:13**). In doing so, He followed the pattern of the Jewish Sanhedrin (the highest religious body in Judaism in Jesus' day), who also sent out apostles. Jews who heard these apostles were to accept their spiritual teachings as if the entire Sanhedrin were present and teaching the same thing. Therefore, Jesus' use of the word **apostles** strongly implies that Christians were to accept their spiritual teachings as if Jesus Himself were present and teaching the same thing. It follows, then, that whatever spiritual teachings these apostles wrote down in letters or other books would be accepted as part of the Christian Scriptures.

4. What 3 characteristics marked a special apostle of Jesus?

Answer: **First**, a special apostle must have been personally called to be an apostle by Jesus Himself (see **Mark 3:13-14**). **Second**, a special apostle must have been personally taught by Jesus Himself (see **Mark 3:14**). **Finally**, a special apostle must have seen the resurrected Jesus (see **Acts 1:21-22**).

5. How did Paul meet all of the characteristics of an apostle since he was not part of the original twelve?

Answer: **First**, in the version of Paul's conversion recorded in **Acts 26:17**, Jesus is quoted as telling Saul (Paul) "I now send you", which means "I now apostle you"—so that Jesus personally called him to be an apostle. **Second**, Paul asserted in **Galatians 1:11-12, 17** that Jesus Himself taught him the gospel, apparently when he spent time in Arabia shortly after his conversion. Paul used the word **revelation** in **v. 12** to describe how Jesus taught him. That word can refer to a vision, but it can also mean "an appearing". A normal vision, in which no one other than the one receiving the vision sees or hears anything would not qualify as being personally taught by Jesus nor as Paul having seen the resurrected Lord. A study of Paul's conversion accounts (see **Acts 9; 22; 26**) shows that everyone near Paul saw and heard something, although they did not hear the actual words of Jesus. Apparently, then, like his conversion event, Jesus spoke directly from heaven to Paul, thus qualifying him as a special apostle of Jesus. In any case, the apostle Peter accepted Paul as an apostle because he stated that Paul wrote Scriptures (see **II Peter 3:15-16**).

Lesson 2—Christians and the Bible, Part 2

1. How was the canon of the New Testament eventually adopted by Christians?

Answer: The New Testament canon was accepted in the same way as the canon of the Old Testament had been accepted by Jews. That is, Hebrew literature was collected over time and gradually was accepted by the Jewish people as a whole. The first Jewish council that is often touted as creating the Hebrew Scriptures was the Council of Jamnia in about A.D. 90. But there is considerable doubt about how much discussion there was about their Scriptures, except for the book of Esther, which was still doubted by some authorities since it's the only Hebrew Bible book that does not mention the name of God. However, as illustrated by Jesus' words in Lesson 1, the Hebrew canon of Scripture had already been set prior to the Council of Jamnia. The collection and evaluation of the various early Christian literature took considerable time because Christians quickly scattered over the Roman Empire, and there was none of the modern means of communication. We also know from many early Christian sources that believers were quite picky in accepting a letter or book only after they were convinced it had been written by an apostle of Jesus or a close associate of an apostle. For these reasons, the same 27 New Testament books now accepted were accepted as Scripture before the end of the 4th century A.D. The first church council (of bishops) dealing with this issue was a local one in Hippo, North Africa in A.D. 393, although its record has been lost. In A.D. 397, the Third Council of Carthage (also in North Africa) confirmed the 27 books of the New Testament, as did the Sixth Council of Carthage in A.D. 419, which was sent to other bishops around the whole church. But the fact was that those same 27 books were already widely accepted among individual believers before any of those church councils.

2. Why were books like the Gospel of Thomas and others excluded from the New Testament?

Answer: Some modern skeptics of Christianity suggest there was a conspiracy to exclude any books that deviated from what the official church leaders viewed as orthodox teaching. However, there is simply no historical evidence for that at all. Such extra books were excluded because Christians knew most of them were written after the end of the 1st century, which made them forgeries and thus untrustworthy. Modern methods of dating manuscripts have demonstrated this truth.

3. If the Church created the Bible, then isn't the Church above the Bible?

Answer: If the Church had created the Bible, then yes, it would be above the Bible. But we reject that notion altogether. As stated under Q. #1 above, church councils met only after there was widespread consensus on the 27 books of the New Testament. Therefore, the church councils did not create the Bible. Some church scholars maintain that since the Bible writers were part of the church, in that way the church created the Bible. But the Bible itself says that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God..." (II Timothy 3:16). Divinely-inspired books naturally derive their spiritual authority from God, not the writers of those books. Thus, like Jesus is the Head of the Church (see Ephesians 5:23; Colossians 1:13-18), then the Bible is above the Church. The Church's job, then, was to simply recognize the divine authority of books and collect such books into a canon of Scripture. Before any church councils declared which books belonged in the New Testament, the Church at-large had already settled the matter. Therefore, the Church did not create the Bible, meaning that the Church must be subject to the Bible!

4. Do Church bishops have a guarantee to never teach spiritual error?

Answer: **First**, no bishop could have the same teaching authority of Jesus and His apostles because none of them has had the same experience as those apostles. **Second**, the idea that the bishops receive this authority through the ordination by the Holy Spirit doesn't work either because bishops have frequently differed with each other, even over important theological points. **Third**, to say that this guarantee works only through councils of bishops is illogical because individual bishops are ordained, not groups of bishops. Moreover, church councils have also differed with each other even on important theological issues. Therefore, Church Tradition derived from bishops must be subject to the Bible.

Lesson 3—Is the Bible Myth or History?

1. Does it really make any difference whether the Bible contains many myths rather than literal history?

Answer: Yes. Christianity (and much of Judaism as well) rests upon alleged historical facts. Among these are that God took personal care in the creation of mankind, that he has frequently intervened in human history, that he has called individuals to speak for Him, that He has had a covenant relationship with the descendants of Abraham and now with Christians, that He came in human flesh, lived a perfect life, died the death penalty we all deserve, rose again, still intervenes at times on behalf of His people, and so on. If these events did not actually occur, then the spiritual lessons derived from these as myths would not be worth much because they would be based on lies. Thus, if you strip Christianity of its history, then you, in effect, rob it of all value.

2. Does the Bible story resemble mythology, or does it read like straightforward history?

Answer: Mythological stories are the kinds of things one reads in stories of the gods of ancient Greece, to take one example. They are fanciful, contain really bizarre elements, and have little to no real spiritual principle behind them. Certainly, the Bible contains stories of miracles, but its miracles do not seem to be for show; rather, they all seem to have principle and purpose behind them and are not of the same quality as Greek or other religious mythology. Instead, the Bible stories read as straightforward history.

3. Did Jesus believe the Old Testament to be historical in nature?

Answer: Yes. In **Mark 10:6-8**, Jesus validates the creation of mankind and the first marriage. In **Matthew 23:35-36**, Jesus shows he believed that Abel was a real person and makes a sweeping statement about Israel's often killing of righteous people, obviously believing those events to have actually happened. Jesus shows His belief in the literal global Flood and in Noah in **Matthew 24:37-39** & **Luke 17:26-27**. Contrary to modern critics of Daniel, Jesus testified that He believed Daniel and his book to be valid history and prophecy in **Matthew 24:15**. And since Daniel's book claims to have been written in the 6th century B.C., we know that Jesus accepted that date as historically reliable as well. Jesus even shows belief in the literal story of Jonah's experience in the belly of a great fish (see **Matthew 12:39-41**).

4. Does the New Testament rely on myth or on history to give its message?

Answer: Everything we said about the Old Testament under Q. #2 is also true of the New Testament. Moreover, secular historians almost universally declare that it takes at least 100-200 years before legendary, mythological materials will creep into purportedly historical writings. And even critics who are up-to-date on the published findings of manuscript evidence for New Testament documents now acknowledge that all of the New Testament books must have been written in the 1st century A.D., which is far too short a time for legendary and mythological elements to creep in to those documents. While the earliest New Testament fragment, a passage in John's gospel, is dated to about A.D. 130, the numerous references in very early Christian writings to many of the New Testament books, and the quotations of large segments of the New Testament by the Early Church Fathers testify that those documents must have existed in the 1st century A.D.

5. Is there additional evidence for the historical validity of the Bible?

Answer: Some details differ from Bible writer to writer, which trained historians say is a good sign that there was no collusion among authors, which would be expected if the stories were invented. Over and over again the Bible does not gloss over the sins of its heroes but freely discusses them, even though they are often embarrassing to those heroes. Finally, archaeology has confirmed the validity of numerous references in the Bible that critics once condemned as fiction. Therefore, all of the evidence referred to in this Lesson overwhelmingly points to the Bible as historical, not mythological.

Lesson 4—Christians and Evolution

1. Can the 6 days of Creation Week in Genesis 1 be symbolic of millions of years each?

Answer: Theistic evolutionists usually say this in order to accommodate Christianity with evolution, but it simply cannot be true. **First**, whenever the Hebrew word for day (*yom*) is modified by a number, it refers to a literal 24-hr. day, unless the context requires a non-literal interpretation. Here the context absolutely requires a literal interpretation because each day is also referred to by the expression, “the evening and the morning were the first day” (v. 5), and so on. **Second**, the Sabbath Commandment of **Exodus 20:8-11** plainly refers to each 7th day as a memorial to Creation and declares that man must work on 6 days and keep the 7th day holy. All Old Testament evidence declares that God expected His people to work for 6 literal 24-hr. days and then to keep each 7th day as a literal 24-hr. Sabbath day. Since this Commandment is based on Creation Week, then the Creation days must also each be a literal 24-hr. day. **Finally**, the carbon dioxide-oxygen cycle requires that these be 24-hr. days. If each were millions of years long, then the plants said to be created on the 3rd day (vv. 11-13) would have died out for lack of carbon dioxide from animals and humans if the latter weren’t created until the 6th day (vv. 24-31), representing millions of years later.

2. If Genesis 1 were an allegory, it would contradict the 2 major principles of all evolutionary theory.

Answer: **First**, all evolutionary thought says that evolution is based on the principle of randomness and chance. But the chart below, based on Genesis 1, illustrates deliberate planning:

	Form	Fill	
Day 1	Light (1:3-5)	Specific Lights (1:14-19)	Day 4
Day 2	Sky & Sea (1:6-8)	Birds & Fish (1:20-23)	Day 5
Day 3	Land & Vegetation (1:9-13)	Land Animals & Humans (1:24-31)	Day 6

Second, Genesis 1 repeatedly states that everything would reproduce “according to its (their) kind” (vv. 11, 12, 21, 24, 25). Although the Bible does not define the word *kind*, it certainly means that every living thing came into existence as separate and distinct from all other kinds. However, evolutionary thought says that all life forms had a common ancestor.

3. Are evolution and the Bible consistent with its views of the origin of death?

Answer: No. **Romans 5:12** declares that “death [came] through sin”, just as **Romans 6:23** states that “...the wages of sin is death...” and **I Corinthians 15:21** says that “by man came death”. But evolution declares that death is an ongoing natural part of the evolution of life, as only the fittest survive and the weak die out; moreover, death originated long before man evolved into existence. So if a Christian believes in evolution, **(a)** he cannot believe the Bible’s view of the origin of death; **(b)** he cannot believe that “God is love” (**I John 4:8**), for such a God would never use the repeated deaths of living things as a means to “create” more advanced life forms; and **(c)** he cannot believe in a Savior from sin and death, a Savior who calls death an “enemy” (see **I Corinthians 15:26**); for then salvation would be a meaningless word.

4. What does the Bible predict that Christian skeptics in the last days would “willfully forget...”?

Answer: The apostle Peter declared, in context, that Christian skeptics would “willfully forget...that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water...” (**II Peter 3:5**). This reference is to the description in **Genesis 1:7** of God dividing the waters under the firmament [air in the sky] from the waters above the firmament on the 2nd day of Creation Week. In other words, they would deny the Creation account in Genesis 1. Therefore, all theories of evolution are incompatible with the Bible and cannot be reconciled to it.

Lesson 5—What the Nature of God Tells Us

1. How long has God existed?

Answer: **Psalm 90:2** declares that God is “from everlasting to everlasting....” And in **Exodus 3:14**, God told Moses at the burning bush that He was the “...I AM....” I AM is a form of the verb “to be”, which is the same as saying that God is the self-existent One. In other words, God is eternal or timeless, unlimited by time and space. See also **I Timothy 1:17**. Theologians refer to this as the transcendence of God in that He transcends the physical universe of matter, energy, time, and space. Almost everything about God’s nature is connected to His transcendence, as we shall briefly see in this Lesson.

2. Is God everywhere at once?

Answer: The Bible states that “all things are...open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account” (**Hebrews 4:13**). He also declared, “Do I not fill heaven and earth?” (See **Jeremiah 23:24**). Since no one can hide from God’s presence, theologians say that God is omnipresent, that is “everywhere present”. Note that His omnipresence is not pantheism, the view that God’s very nature inhabits every aspect of the physical universe—that He is in every blade of grass, every fiber of carpet and clothes, and so on. Remember that God must transcend the physical universe if He is eternal (see Q. #1 above). Besides, **Romans 1:25** makes a clear distinction between the creature and the Creator, and pantheism blurs that distinction so as to confuse the God of nature with nature itself.

3. What kind of body does God have?

Answer: “God is Spirit...” (**John 4:24**). Paul calls God “invisible” in **I Timothy 1:17**. God is a spiritual Being whose essential nature is invisible to His creation. Thus, He does not possess a physical body, which if He did, would mean that He is not transcendent. Theologians call this part of God’s nature His incorporeal nature. At the same time, the Bible is filled with examples in which God shows Himself in some kind of form or brilliant light and refers to His hands, arms, and so on. Therefore, we must conclude that He does, and must, project some kind of physical form in order for His creation to relate to Him. But that does not subtract from the reality that He is incorporeal or spiritual in his essential nature.

4. How much does God know?

Answer: God is said to be “perfect in knowledge” (**Job 37:16**) and that “His understanding is infinite” (**Psalms 147:5**). He Himself announced that He can “[Declare] the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done...” (**Isaiah 46:10**). Yet again, it is said that God “...knows all things” (**I John 3:20**). Again, if God transcends time, then He would have to see the future with the same clarity as He sees the present and the past.

5. How powerful is God?

Answer: **Jeremiah 32:17** states that “There is nothing too hard for You [God].” Scripture also states that “...You [God] can do everything...” (**Job 42:1**). In the New Testament, Jesus is quoted as declaring that “...with God all things are possible” (**Matthew 19:26**). Finally, **Revelation 19:6** calls God **omnipotent**: “For the Lord God Omnipotent reigns!” The word **omnipotent** means “all powerful”. Again, how could a transcendent God, who is unlimited by anything, not be all-powerful! Of course, there are some things He cannot do because they would be contrary to His character—and an infinite God would also possess character traits to the infinite degree; thus He could not act contrary to His character.

Lesson 6—What the Character of God Tells Us

1. What are some of the major character traits that God possesses?

Answer: The following are only a representative sample of God's character traits, but nevertheless they are some of the most important ones seen in Bible history. **First**, "...God is love" (1 John 4:8). He is not just loving, as many theistic religions state; but He is love personified. And the Greek word to describe God as love means a purely selfless love. This has implications for the doctrine of the Trinity, the willingness of God to become human flesh and die for mankind's sins, the judgment, and a host of other Bible teachings. **Second**, God is just (Revelation 15:3). **Third**, God is holy (Psalm 99:9). **Fourth**, God is "the truth..." (John 14:6). **Fifth**, according to Isaiah 55:7, God is merciful. **Finally**, Malachi 3:6 declares: "For I am the Lord, I do not change...." This last character trait theologians call the immutability of God.

2. What is the relationship between love and justice?

Answer: In the Middle Ages, the Church so emphasized God's justice that Christians generally were in abject terror of God. In the post-modern era, the Church so emphasizes God's love that many believers think they can live what they deem as reasonably moral lives, and God's love for them will bring them salvation regardless of ignoring certain parts of God's will. Both extremes are not only wrong and dangerous, but they grossly misunderstand God's love and justice. Since God is Ultimate Reality, He is also Ultimate Truth, for what is real is true, and what is true is real. As selfless Love personified, God must hate evil. And if He hates evil, He must be a God of justice. Even more to the point, love without justice is not love at all, and vice versa. A God who is Love must eventually put an end to all evil; and this will be an act of love as well as justice because His love motivates God to restore the universe to its original moral perfection. In the meantime, any punishment that God sends or allows occurs in order to wake people up spiritually and be saved. So you see, God's love without justice is not really love at all. As for justice, if love did not motivate God's justice, then His infinite power would lead to His actions against wickedness as simply acts of selfish, cruel punishments, which would go well beyond the boundaries of what is just. Therefore, justice without love is not really justice at all.

3. Does it really matter what we believe as long as we live a moral and ethical life?

Answer: Jesus once said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it" (Matthew 7:13). Jesus taught that there are only 2 spiritual roads, and most people will be lost because they will choose the "easy" road. Therefore, all roads do not lead to heaven—not even all Christian roads—because the context in Matthew 7 indicates that Jesus was talking about Christians (see vv. 15-23). Thus, we need to seek with all our might to understand God's Word and what He wants us specifically to do.

4. Surely if I do wonderful things in Jesus' name, I will be safe with Him, won't I?

Answer: Jesus declared in Matthew 7:21-23 that he who enters the kingdom of heaven is the one "who does the will of My Father in heaven." Then He adds that many will protest that they should be allowed to enter the Kingdom because they cast out demons and did many wonderful things in His name, but that He will "...declare to them, 'I never knew you....'" Thus, be a good church member and living a wonderful life in Jesus' name is not sufficient if you are ignoring God's will.

5. But if God is love, how can He be so picky?

Answer: The word *picky* implies a selfish, capricious human quality. God is not picky, but He is particular in that He says what He means and means what He says. The story of Cain and Abel illustrates this well. Both brothers (in Genesis 4) came to worship the same God one day. But Cain brought the wrong offerings, and God didn't honor his worship. Cain worshiped God on Cain's terms, not on God's terms. What a powerful lesson this should be for us!

Lesson 7—The Triune God

1. Why do most Christians teach that 3 Divine Beings exist as the one Triune God?

Answer: They do so because there is good Bible evidence for this position. For example, in **Matthew 28:19**, Jesus told His disciples to make disciples and baptize people "...in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." Note that the word **name** is singular and modifies "the Father", "the Son", and "the Holy Spirit", indicating the equality of all 3 Beings. Paul names all 3 Beings as if they were equal to each other also: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (**II Corinthians 13:14**).

2. Doesn't the term "Holy Spirit" imply a spiritual influence coming from God rather than a personal Being?

Answer: No, not when we remember that "God is Spirit..." (**John 4:24**; see Lesson 5). Besides, some texts make it clear that the Holy Spirit can **teach** (**John 14:26**), **interprets** our prayers and is referred to as **Himself** (**Romans 8:26**), and can be **grieved** (**Ephesians 4:30**). A spiritual influence cannot reasonably do any of these things, but a personal Being can. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is an equal part of the Triune God as a personal Being like the Father and the Son.

3. But I thought the Bible teaches that there is only 1 God.

Answer: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!" (see **Deuteronomy 6:4**). Yes, God is one. But the Hebrew word translated as **one** here doesn't necessarily mean a **singular** one but **unity**. Scholars sometimes call this a composite one. For example, when **Genesis 2:24** refers to a married couple as "one flesh", it's the same Hebrew word as in **Deuteronomy 6:4**. Therefore, a composite one God does not prohibit us from understanding the one God as consisting of 3 Beings.

4. Actually, the fact that "God is love" illustrates that the 1 God consists of 3 co-equal Beings.

Answer: We have already seen that "God is love" (**I John 4:8**). Selfless love cannot exist in isolation but only in relationship because it cannot be expressed except in relationship. Since God is Ultimate Reality, He must exist in the ultimate intimate relationship. We generally think of an intimate relationship as consisting of 2 persons married to each other. But actually, 3 is the number of relationship. In a human marriage, there is the husband, the wife, and the relationship itself. We speak of the relationship that they have and that the relationship determines how they view and treat each other. In the human example, the relationship is an abstract third entity. However, there was a time when nothing existed except for God, for He alone is eternal. Therefore, if the relationship itself has eternally existed, then it must be part of the God family as another eternal Being. Therefore, God must exist as the composite one God consisting of 3 co-equal and co-eternal Divine Beings.

5. How again is the Christian concept of the Triune God a monotheistic belief and not a polytheistic one?

Answer: **First**, you have the concept in Hebrew thought and language of a composite one. **Second**, the 3 Beings in the Triune God are one in a similar way as a man and his wife are one. **Finally**, each member of the Triune God has the same mind, personality, character, and will so as to make it impossible that they should ever have even the slightest disagreement with each other. In other words, they are 1 in mind, personality, character, and will. Although all illustrations are inadequate, think of it this way: Take a rope with 3 strands of fiber. If you separate the 3 strands of fiber, you then have 3 ropes. But when the 3 fiber strands are tightly wrapped around each other, it is 1 rope. The Triune God is so very close (intimate) with themselves that they constitute 1 God. But avoid the error of thinking that each Being is one-third God so that it takes all 3-thirds to make 1 God. Each one is God, but each one exists in a very intimate relationship with the other 2 so that they constitute 1 God.

Lesson 8—The Origin of Sin

1. Where did sin originate and by whom?

Answer: **Ezekiel 28** describes “the anointed cherub who covers” (v. 14) as the being in heaven in whom sin began (see v. 15). A cherub seems to be an order of angels, supernatural but created beings (see **Ezekiel 28:13**), who were often, but not exclusively, associated with God’s throne (see **Exodus 25:17-22**; **Psalms 99:1**; **Ezekiel 10:1-2ff.**) Reference to “the cherub who covers” is to one of the 2 angels surrounding God’s throne as represented by the mercy seat on the Ark of the Covenant in **Exodus 25**. Indeed, this angel must have been very special to be one of the covering cherubs. He was also adorned in all kinds of jewels (v. 13) and apparently could sing multiple parts at once since “timbrels and pipes” (v. 13) was part of his anatomy. According to **Ezekiel 28:17**, pride in his own beauty corrupted him. Although that chapter is immediately addressed to the king of Tyre, God obviously spoke beyond a mere human king who was a type of a once-perfect being in heaven.

2. What was this cherub’s name, and what did he desire for himself?

Answer: **Isaiah 14:12-16** speaks about Lucifer, a being in heaven who was cast out of heaven because he desired worship for himself. Lucifer is a name that means “son of the morning”, “morning star”, “light bearer”, and “day star”. In **II Peter 1:19**, Jesus is called “the morning star”, and in **Revelation 22:16**, Jesus calls Himself “the Bright and Morning Star”. This close association of Lucifer’s meaning to one of Jesus’ titles indicates that Lucifer was a very close angel to Jesus in heaven until his pride erupted. Clearly, then, Lucifer is the same cherub described in **Ezekiel 28**.

3. What names does Lucifer have now, and how many angels in heaven were cast out of heaven with him?

Answer: According to **Revelation 12:9**, the symbol of a red dragon is used to represent a being called “the Devil and Satan, who...was cast to the earth, and his angels with him.” In fact, he was cast to the earth because he began a war in heaven that he lost (vv. 7-8). Of all the places in the universe for sin and war to begin! His “violence within” (**Ezekiel 28:16**) spilled out into war in heaven, making it clear that this Satan or the Devil is the same being as Lucifer. Satan means **adversary**, and he certainly became the great adversary of God and mankind. The parallel of “His tail drew a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth” (v. 4) with “his angels were cast out with him” (v. 9) tells us that Satan convinced one-third of heaven’s angels to take his side in this rebellion against God. Amazing!

4. Why did God create the Devil?

Answer: He didn’t create the Devil. Because “...God is love...” (**I John 4:8**), all of His intelligent creatures must have been given free will. Without free will, beings who serve God would simply do so because they were programmed to do so. But that kind of service is not love, which is obviously what a God of love desires. Therefore, God created a beautiful angel who exercised his free will to turn himself into the Devil.

5. When Lucifer first sinned, why didn’t God simply destroy him on the spot?

Answer: Having done so would undoubtedly have left most of the other angels with grave doubts about God, even perhaps wondering if Lucifer had been right about Him. These doubts would have led to serving God out of fear rather than from love. Although God knows the end from the beginning (see Lesson 5), and could have just declined to create Lucifer in the first place, God would have known that He had chosen not to create Lucifer because the latter would wrongly exercise his free will. And even though no one else in the universe would have known, God must be consistent with His own character. From God’s frame of reference, He would have been, in effect, denying Lucifer’s free will. And a God of love would not do this.

Lesson 9—Sin Comes to Planet Earth

1. When Satan was cast to the earth, where specifically did he go and what happened there?

Answer: Revelation 12:9's reference to Satan as "that serpent of old" takes us back to **Genesis 3**, where a talking serpent deceived Eve, the first woman, to eat the fruit of the one tree in the Garden of Eden that Adam and Eve were prohibited from eating (see **Genesis 2:16-17; 3:2-3, 6**). The fact that Satan channeled a serpent from the one forbidden tree suggests that God limited his presence in Eden to that one tree. This strongly suggests that God gave Adam and Eve the easiest test of loyalty that He could. Apparently, Satan's angels were barred from entering the Garden of Eden at all. Unfortunately, after Eve ate the forbidden fruit, she enticed Adam, who also ate of it (**Genesis 3:6**); thus they both failed the loyalty test.

2. Why did Adam and Eve have to face a test of loyalty in the first place?

Answer: **First**, although Adam and Eve were created with physical, mental, and moral perfection, no beings with free will are born with a character. Character is formed from our thoughts, words, actions, and habits and describes what a being is in terms of how he relates to others, including God, other intelligent beings, and even to animals. **Second**, the formation of character requires choices so that one can develop good habits and thus a good character. It doesn't require any actual experience in evil thoughts, words, or actions, but it does require choices. So while our first parents were perfect in nature, they had to develop a perfect character to demonstrate they were going to permanently side with God.

3. Whose sin was worse, and why was it worse?

Answer: Although sin is sin, the Bible does make a distinction between Adam's sin and Eve's sin in Eden. **1 Timothy 2:14** states that "...Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression." Indeed, according to **Genesis 3:1**, Satan **first** planted doubt about whether God had really denied them the fruit of this one tree (the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, **Genesis 2:17**). **Second**, he told her that God had lied to them about dying if they ate of this fruit and implied that God was depriving them of great wisdom or insight and that they would be like God Himself if they ate it (**Genesis 3:4-5**). Therefore, according to Paul, Adam's sin was worse in that he sinned with his eyes wide open! This is the reason that theologians refer to Adam's sin as "original sin" even though his sin was not chronologically first.

4. What was the significance of Adam's willful sin?

Answer: Paul teaches in **Romans 5:16** that "...the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation..." (cf. also **v. 18**). In **v. 19** he plainly declares "For as by one man's [Adam's] disobedience many were made sinners..." **Romans 5:14** makes clear he is referring to Adam. The words **judgment** and **condemnation** are courtroom terms. What Paul is saying is that Adam's willful sin brought a judgment and condemnation upon all mankind who came after him.

5. How is it just that all of us have been judged and condemned when we were not even born yet?

Answer: Hebrews 7:9-10 says that Levi paid tithes through Abraham even though Levi, as Abraham's great-grandson, had not even been born when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek. This is sometimes called corporate personality, when someone in another person's lineage is credited for having done what his ancestor did. Since Ephesians 2:12, 19 use the citizenship metaphor, we can illustrate this Biblical concept: A childless Russian couple emigrates to the United States, eventually become U.S. citizens and then have a child. Their child is automatically a U.S. citizen even though he's a full-blooded Russian because of the earlier decision of his parents. That child is credited with having changed his citizenship through his parents even though he had not yet been born. Likewise, Ephesians 2 implies that we are all born into Satan's kingdom—because of the decision Adam made—even though we had not yet been born. So it's not a matter of fairness or justice, but simply one of legal reality.

Lesson 10—The Nature of Sin

1. What is sinful mankind condemned to have as a result of Adam's sin?

Answer: We naturally go astray spiritually (**Isaiah 53:6**) because our “heart is deceitful above all things...” (**Jeremiah 17:9**). Therefore, “...the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God...nor can he know them...” (**I Corinthians 2:14**), “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh...” (**Galatians 5:17**). In other words, our very spiritual nature that we are born with is naturally inclined to go our own way, so much so that we cannot even understand spiritual things. This is what is called the sinful nature or sin nature. Since we have it due to Adam's sin, it can be said that we have been condemned to possess a sinful nature. Even though our conversion brings us the Holy Spirit, and we then become a *spiritual* person (**I Corinthians 2:15**), both natures remain inside us so that a Christian is like a walking civil war.

2. But are sinful tendencies themselves sin even if you don't act upon them?

Answer: According to **Exodus 20:17**, the 10th Commandment calls coveting itself a sin, and to covet means to desire something that you should not have or to desire something innocent to the point that you are at least willing in your heart to commit another sin to possess it. Furthermore, Jesus declared “that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (**Matthew 5:28**; cf. also **vv. 21-22**). Therefore, yes, sinful tendencies are desires to sin, and as such, make a person as guilty as if he had committed the sin outwardly. Thus sinful desires are sins, and the sinful nature makes a person a sinner in God's eyes.

3. Does the Bible teach that people are born sinners? Even innocent babies?

Answer: King David wrote, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me” (**Psalms 51:5**). We know the circumstances of David's birth, and David was not an illegitimate child. Thus, this Scripture confirms our earlier conclusion that all people are born (even conceived) as sinners. Although babies are innocent from a human perspective, and God does not hold them accountable for sin, nevertheless babies are born sinners. Every mother can tell when their baby's cry is simply a cry to have a physical need met and when it is a cry of a temper tantrum. In other words, sin is more than we do or not do; it is also what we are!

4. What effect does our sinful nature have on even the good things we think, speak, or do?

Answer: Paul says that “...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (**Romans 3:23**). The verb tense in the 2nd part of this text is literally translated as, “...and *continue* to fall short of the glory of God.” This means that anything that falls short of God's glory is sin, and by that standard, everything the best person does is sin. This is because our sinful nature contaminates the otherwise good things we think, speak, or do so that they do not meet God's standard of perfection. Without a divine plan of salvation, all that we do would be considered as sin. This is the reason that **Isaiah 64:6** declares that even “...all our righteousnesses [righteous actions] are like filthy rags...”

5. In what other way is sinful mankind condemned by Adam's sin?

Answer: **Romans 5:12** says that “...through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin...” And **Romans 6:23** states that “...the wages of sin is death...” In addition to being condemned to have a sinful nature, we are also condemned to die. One can argue that since sin separates us from God the Life-Giver, we will eventually automatically die. While true, sinful mankind has been condemned to die as a result of God's judgment against sin (see Lesson 9).

Lesson 11—Jesus Saves

1. What 2 things does sinful mankind owe to God?

Answer: **First**, we owe God a debt of perfect righteousness. When Jesus said that we should pray that God would “forgive us our **debts**” (**Matthew 6:12**), the parallel passage in **Luke 11:4** has Jesus saying, “forgive us our **sins**.” Sin makes us indebted to God precisely because we owe Him the opposite of sin, which is righteousness. And since God is perfectly righteous, we owe Him perfect righteousness. **Second**, we owe God the death penalty for our sinful condition and actions, as stated in Lesson 10. The debt of perfect righteousness we cannot possibly pay because we are born with this debt and cannot undo the spiritual condition we were born into even if we could somehow learn to produce perfect righteousness later in life. The debt of the death penalty we can pay, but it would not bring us salvation, just death.

2. With our impossible debt, how can God possibly offer us salvation?

Answer: God must provide us a Savior, a Substitute who enters the world without sin, who lives a perfectly righteous life, who pays our death penalty, and who rises from the dead in order to somehow offer us His perfect righteousness as a gift. We Christians believe this Savior is Jesus.

3. Given mankind’s sinful condition, what kind of Savior must this Jesus be?

Answer: **First**, He must be human because it’s human beings who owe these debts to God. **Second**, He must be a man rather than a woman because He needs to take Adam’s place since it was Adam’s willful sin who specifically changed the world’s citizenship from God’s Kingdom to Satan’s kingdom. **Third**, He must also be God because **(a)** a man would need all of his righteousness just to keep himself right with God, and **(b)** only God has righteousness (like life) intrinsically within Him and can thus afford to give righteousness as a gift to others. Therefore, the Savior must be fully and really man and fully and really God.

4. With what kind of human nature must Jesus have been born in order to be our Savior?

Answer: In taking Adam’s place, Jesus must be conceived without having corporately participated in Adam’s sin and thus be born without a sinful nature, which is itself sin (see Lesson 10). If Jesus had been born with either of these conditions, He would have needed a Savior Himself! The fact that the New Testament teaches that Jesus got hungry (**Matthew 4:2**; **Mark 11:11-12**), thirsty (**John 4:7**; **19:28**), needed rest (**Matthew 8:20, 24-25**; **Luke 9:58**), and could die (**Matthew 28:50, 63**; **Mark 15:37**; **Luke 23:46**) indicates that He was **affected** by the results of human sin but was not **infected** with sin. Thus, Jesus had Adam’s **physical** nature **after** the human fall into sin, but He had Adam’s **spiritual** nature **before** the human fall into sin!

5. Did Jesus actually take Adam’s place, live a perfectly righteous life, and pay the death penalty for us?

Answer: **First**, **Romans 5:12-19** contrasts Adam and Jesus, and **I Corinthians 15:45** calls Jesus “The last Adam...” (cf. **vv. 20-22**). **Second**, we are told that God “...made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for us...” (**II Corinthians 5:21**), that Jesus “...was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (**Hebrews 4:15**), and that He was like “...a lamb without blemish or spot” (**I Peter 1:19**). **Third**, it is clearly taught that “...Christ died for us” (**Romans 5:8**), “...that Christ died for our sins...” (**I Corinthians 15:3**), and that He did “...taste death for everyone” (**Hebrews 2:9**). Since crucifixion was always a slow death, taking at least a few days, and Jesus died within hours (**Matthew 27**; **Mark 15**; **Luke 23**; **John 19**), surely it was the spiritual weight of all mankind’s sins that actually killed Him. Yet it was also the death penalty, for Jesus felt forsaken by God the Father (**Matthew 27:46**; **Mark 15:34**) in fulfillment of another prophecy: “Yet it pleased the Lord [Father] to bruise Him [Jesus]” (**Isaiah 53:10**). **Finally**, Jesus rose from the dead (**Matthew 28**; **Mark 16**; **Luke 24**; **John 20-21**).

Lesson 12—The Moral Influence View of the Atonement

The moral influence view of the atonement constitutes a major falsehood to the previous Lesson, which we will address.

1. It is not just that anyone die as a substitute for anyone else.

Answer: Normally, that's true. But it can be just if you adopt the view that Adam's willful sin made him the official representative of the human race in transferring citizenship from God's Kingdom to Satan's kingdom. Through corporate personality, there is such a thing as corporate guilt. Not only could Jesus, as the Last Adam, give His perfect righteousness as a gift to all who sincerely accept Him, but He can also justly pay the death penalty for our sins. It's only when you ignore the ideas of representatives of humanity and corporate personality that one can reject the death of Jesus as our Substitute.

2. The view that Jesus died for the sins of others is a pagan notion that God's anger must be appeased.

Answer: God's anger against sin is based on His just and holy character, while the pagan notion of appeasing an angry god is based on a god who is capricious and whose anger represents a loss of self-control. To compare the true God to pagan gods is an absolute travesty! Besides, one Member of the Triune God doesn't need to convince the others to save anyone, for "...God is love..." (I John 4:8) and "...God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." (John 3:16). God is one in mind, character, purpose, and will, making the concept of appeasement completely absurd.

3. God's wrath is simply His sorrowfully turning away and allowing people to suffer the natural consequences of their sinful choices. His justice is seen in His willingness to do this.

Answer: **First**, God's willingness to sorrowfully turn away reflects part of His justice because it shows His respect for people's choices. It's also true that God often allows people to suffer the natural consequences of their own actions. But it's not the whole story. **Second**, a just and holy God naturally recoils at all evil, for a God of love must also hate evil. By any standard of justice, this must mean that God has direct, active wrath against evil and will exercise righteous indignation against those who insist on clinging to sin. **Third**, His wrath is not the same as human wrath, for our anger at best is mixed with selfishness that people will finally get what they deserve. But a God of love must mingle heartbreak and tears with His wrath because He is completely selfless. **Finally**, this view ignores the plain Bible teachings that God's wrath is often a direct, active wrath (see **Genesis 6:5-7; Revelation 14:10; 15:1; 19:15, 21; 20:9**), which cannot be reinterpreted away.

4. God transferred the sins of the world to Jesus so that He could starkly demonstrate that sin leads to death.

Answer: **First**, this is an acknowledgment this must have been a **legal** transfer so that all mankind's sins were **imputed** to Jesus. The irony of this view is that these proponents are famous for denying legal principles and language in the story of salvation. **Second**, each generation of humans has seen close up and personal what sin has done to humanity. Jesus' death would not be necessary to prove to them that sin leads to death.

5. Jesus' death demonstrated God's great love for mankind in order for people to allow Him to transform our characters and become safe to save. But it was not a death as the Substitute for sinful mankind.

Answer: **First**, willingly dying to demonstrate God's love for us is not the act of a rational being if you insist that there was no other necessity for that death. It would be equivalent of a husband telling his wife that he loved her and then "proving" it by rushing into the ocean and intentionally drowning himself. That's not love but the height of foolishness! **Second**, yes, God wants to change our character, which will make us safe to save in the sense that we will learn to trust God and thus never choose to return to sin. But **third**, any suggestion that His moral influence in changing our character saves us is dangerous. He wants us to be transformed, but our transformation does not save us, but rather is the fruit of our salvation.

Lesson 13—Justified by Grace

1. Does God have to make us perfectly righteous on the inside before He can declare us righteous?

Answer: Some Christians argue that God must make us internally and perfectly righteous before He can declare us righteous, or otherwise God would be a liar. But remember that God lives as much in the future as He does in the present and past because He transcends time and is thus timeless or eternal (see Lesson 5). So He knows that as long as we remain faithful to Him, He will give us thoroughly perfect righteousness at His Second Coming (see **Philippians 3:20-21**; the context of **vv. 12-14** is on spiritual growth, so while God will change our physical bodies then, this passage also means that He will remove our sinful natures at the same event). **Romans 4:17** declares that "...God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did..." Therefore, at any moment in time, for a faithful Christian, he is as good as already perfectly righteous in God's sight. **NOTE:** The argument that God cannot call anyone righteous until He first makes him internally righteous gave rise to belief in purgatory, where allegedly the souls of those not wicked enough to go to hell are eventually purged from their remaining sins and thus made perfectly righteous, at which time they enter heaven. But there's no need for purgatory when you consider God's reckoning of things.

2. How does a Christian actually receive the perfect righteousness of Jesus now?

Answer: Scripture teaches that "...the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (**Romans 6:23**) and "...that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law" (**Romans 3:28**). And in **Romans 5**, "...the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's [Adam's] offense death reigned through one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ..." (**vv. 16-17**). These passages make it clear that righteousness is a free gift, as it would have to be since we are incapable of providing perfect righteousness. The word **justification** means "to declare righteous" and is a courtroom term that declares the accused as "not guilty". According to **I Corinthians 15:1-4**, this is the verdict one receives when he sincerely accepts by faith the gospel (**good news**), defined as Jesus dying for our sins and rising again.

3. Does a person's faith rob the glory from God by making the believer's faith part of the reason he's saved?

Answer: No. "For by grace [**gift**] you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). This text makes it clear that faith is not works or any other basis on which to claim even partial credit for your gift of salvation. Faith, therefore, is simply the means by which one accepts the gift. As with any human gift, using your hands to accept the gift never means that you thereby partly earned the right to it.

4. Can a person lose his salvation once he has received it?

Answer: Some believers teach a doctrine of eternal security, better known as "once saved, always saved". But since salvation is a gift, a gift can be thrown away later. Moreover, **I John 1:7** speaks of the need to continuously "...walk in the light..." so that "...the blood of Jesus...cleanses us from all sin." The continual cleansing is dependent upon the continuous walking in the light. But one can choose to stop walking in the light and start walking in spiritual darkness. According to **I John 5:12**, eternal life is found in a relationship with Jesus: "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." This relationship metaphor means that we can always choose to end that relationship and thus lose that eternal life. Therefore, "once saved, always saved" is not a Biblical teaching. Besides, it doesn't really give the believer assurance of his salvation anyway because those who teach this doctrine also say that one who turns his back on Jesus simply proves that he was never saved in the first place. Since a person can never know with certainty that he will not someday turn his back on Jesus, he cannot know that he is saved at any time! Thus, a doctrine that professes to give Christians assurance of their salvation actually robs them of it! The answer is simple: a believer should indeed have assurance of his salvation, for at any time in his life, he can know whether he has a relationship with Jesus or not!

Lesson 14—Called to be Holy

1. What is the larger purpose of salvation beyond giving the saved an endless life with God?

Answer: "...you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (**Matthew 1:21**). "For by grace you have been saved through faith.... For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works..." (**Ephesians 2:8-10**). **First**, note that Jesus will save His people **from** their sins, not **in** their sins. **Second**, the second text declares that the saved were created to do good works. Thus, salvation's larger purpose beyond a perfect, endless life with God is to change people's character in this life as well...to make them better people. That's logical because if Jesus came to earth to live a perfectly righteous life on our behalf, then we ought to live more like Him even though we can never equal His performance.

2. Can a person be saved while willfully disobeying God's Word?

Answer: No. James commanded to "...be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (**James 1:22**). And Jesus Himself declared that many will cast out demons and do other wonderful works in His name, but that He would reject them because they practiced lawlessness (see **Matthew 7:21-23**). Those who hear the word but do not practice it are only deceiving themselves into thinking they are saved when they are actually lost. And even the working of miracles in Jesus' name means nothing if one is practicing lawlessness—that is, if one is living apart from God's Law.

3. What is God's will for our lives, and what does it mean?

Answer: Paul stated that "...this is the will of God, your sanctification..." (**I Thessalonians 4:3**). And Peter put it this way: "...but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy..." (**I Peter 1:15**). So God wants us to be sanctified or holy. The words **sanctified**, **sanctification**, **saint**, and **holy** all stem from the same Greek root, which means to be "set apart" from the world and to God. Thus, saints are not super-good Christians who have more righteousness than they need so that they can mediate some of it for you with Jesus. Saints include all who are committed to Jesus. There are 2 aspects to sanctification: **(a) positional sanctification**—being set apart in order to act in a different way, and **(b) progressive sanctification**—the work of becoming more like Jesus in your character.

4. How do we obtain positional sanctification?

Answer: Jesus said that "...unless one is born of the water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (**John 3:5**). "Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized...and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'" (**Acts 2:38**). Thus, we become part of God's Kingdom—receive a new **position**—by being baptized by water and the Holy Spirit. Although there are a few exceptions in the New Testament, ordinarily one is baptized with the Holy Spirit at his water baptism, just as Jesus did (see **Matthew 3:16**). There is 1 caveat, however. **Acts 5:32** tells us that "...the Holy Spirit whom God has given [is] to those who obey Him." Not that our obedience earns us the right to the Spirit; but that our willful disobedience will cause us to forfeit the Holy Spirit. Again, we cannot be saved while willfully and habitually doing wrong.

5. What is our new position with God, and how does this change our attitude toward sin and righteousness?

Answer: Paul declares that when we belong to Jesus, our "...body is the temple of the Holy Spirit..." (**I Corinthians 6:19**) and that we become "...a new creation..." (**I Corinthians 5:17**). Moreover, we become adopted as children of God (**Romans 8:14-15**), are "...joint heirs with Christ..." (**Romans 8:17**), and have been made to "...sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus..." (**Ephesians 2:6**). What a standing with God! In turn, we ought to consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God. In other words, when we realize our new position in Jesus, it gives us great psychological power to actually act on that new position. Practically speaking, it means we should expect God to successfully help us live a holy life. And even in secular pursuits, attitude takes a person most of the way to his goals!

Lesson 15—How to Live a Holy Life

1. Where does the power to live a holy life come from?

Answer: Paul emphatically declares that “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (**Philippians 4:13**) and that a Christian is “...to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man...” (**Ephesians 3:16**). But not only does Divinity provide the **power** to live a holy life, He also gives us the **desire** to do so, “...for it is God who works in you **both to will** [desire] and to **do** for His good pleasure” (**Philippians 2:13**). In Lesson 10, we learned that a believer is a walking civil war, with a sinful and a spiritual nature. Thus, we should expect that God will have to supply us the power to live a successful holy life. But that means that we must learn to starve our sinful nature and feed our spiritual nature.

2. How does a Christian feed his spiritual nature?

Answer: **First**, we must recognize that the mind is the real spiritual battlefield. Thus, we must “...be transformed by the renewing of your mind...” (**Romans 12:2**), which is the opposite of being conformed to this world (see **Romans 12:1**). In practical terms, we must focus on spiritual things as often as we can while not neglecting our secular duties. In fact, it greatly helps to view our secular duties in life as being done with, to, and for the Lord. **Second**, this also means that we should focus on things that are true, noble, just, pure, lovely, and of a good report (see **Philippians 4:8**), which means these things must replace our natural, sinful focus on music, reading material, visual material, conversations, and environments that unduly expose us to worldly influences. **Third**, we should spend some time each day focused on the character of Jesus, for it is a human, as well as spiritual, principle that we gradually become what we habitually behold (see **II Corinthians 3:18**). **Finally**, we must study the Bible at least a few minutes each day because the Psalmist testified that “Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You” (**Psalms 119:11**), and Jesus prayed for His disciples, “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth” (**John 17:17**).

3. Is progressive sanctification passive or active? Who actually does the obeying?

Answer: One popular view teaches that the only fight of faith is to fight against the sinful tendency to put ourselves in charge and then allow God to obey in and for us. Moreover, since God makes no mistakes, this theology states that it's possible to reach perfection of performance by keeping God in charge. This passive sanctification view is often defended with **Galatians 2:20**: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” But **first**, the point of this text is that the believer lives a holy life by faith in focusing on the cross of Jesus as His greatest demonstration of love for us. That is **how** Jesus lives in us! **Second**, passive sanctification makes Jesus our puppeteer and us His puppets, an idea that violates both the character of God as the lover and giver of free will **and** the Christian experience with temptation that tells us this never works. If you wait for Jesus to do your obeying for you, then you will yield to temptation every time. Therefore, this passive sanctification view is surely a doctrine of demons!

4. What specifically should the believer do in order to resist temptation and live the holy life?

Answer: We must be in a state of submission to God and then we can successfully resist the devil (see **James 4:7**). **First**, we cannot exercise our own willpower because God supplies the power. **Second**, according to **I Timothy 6:9, 11-12**, we must exercise our free will **(a) to flee from temptations** as soon as we recognize them, and **(b) to pursue the righteous course** of action. And when we exercise our free will, God supplies the power to do the right thing. This exercise of free will is an act of faith that God's power will supply our success. In **Joshua 3:13-17**, when the priests believed God and put their faith into action by stepping into the Jordan River, then God parted the raging river so the people could cross into Canaan. **Finally**, we should implement the **Replacement Principle**—that overcoming a bad habit is much more successful when you replace it with a good habit. (See Jesus' story of the woman who swept her house clean in **Luke 11:24-26**.)

Lesson 16—God’s Ten Commandments

1. Who wrote the Ten Commandments, on what substance, and what is the significance of these facts?

Answer: “...He [God] gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God” (**Exodus 31:18**). The only other time in Scripture that God wrote anything was when Jesus wrote something in the dirt to the accusers of the woman caught in adultery (see **John 8:6**). So when God writes something down, we should pay very close attention. And the fact that He wrote the Ten Commandments on stone is significant, because of all the ancient materials used to write on—papyrus, leather, parchment, clay, & stone—stone was the most enduring. Even today, we sometimes say that “It’s written stone”, meaning that it is **permanent**.

2. What is the relationship of the Ten Commandments to God’s character?

<u>God</u>	<u>Character Trait</u>	<u>God’s Law</u>
Isaiah 5:16	Holy	Romans 7:7, 12
Deuteronomy 32:4	Just	Romans 7:7, 12
Luke 18:19	Good	Romans 7:7, 12
I John 4:8, 16	Love	Romans 13:8-10
Matthew 5:48	Perfect	Psalms 19:7
I John 3:3	Pure	Psalms 19:8
Deuteronomy 32:4	Truth	Psalms 119:142, 151
John 4:24	Spiritual	Romans 7:7, 14
Malachi 3:6	Unchangeable	Matthew 5:18
Genesis 21:33	Eternal	Psalms 111:7-8

Every character trait that describes God also describes His Law. Since God’s character never changes (see **Malachi 3:6**; **Hebrews 13:8**; **James 1:17**), His Ten Commandments—as a transcription of His character—cannot change either.

3. How did Jesus relate to the Ten Commandments?

Answer: In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared, “...till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law...” (**Matthew 5:18**). Then He illustrated with 2 of the Ten Commandments (**vv. 21-22**; **27-28**) that He meant the **Ten Commandments** when He referred to the **law**. In fact, in His references to both of those Ten Commandments, Jesus **amplified** their meaning rather than reduced their meaning.

4. How does the New Testament teach us that the Ten Commandments are still valid for everyone today?

Answer: **First**, Paul said that he “...would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet’” (**Romans 7:7**), which proves he was talking about the Ten Commandments. Thus, the Ten Commandments shows us what sin is. The fact that we all agree there is still **sin** in the world means that the Ten Commandments are still valid. **Second**, in Lesson 11 we learned that Jesus became our Substitute, lived a perfect life for us and died the death we deserve to die. This is the heart of the gospel. He had to do this in order to save us precisely because God’s character and Law are immutable (i.e. cannot be changed). Thus, the existence of the **gospel** proves that the Ten Commandments are still valid. **Finally**, in Lesson 11 we learned that salvation is by grace—which is a gift that we don’t deserve and cannot earn. When a traffic judge dismisses a violation against you, he gives you grace...but he doesn’t abolish the traffic law that you violated. In fact, you would not need grace if the law were abolished! Therefore, the existence of **grace** also proves that the Ten Commandments are still valid.

Lesson 17—Objections to the Ten Commandments, Part 1

1. Weren't the Ten Commandments given only to the nation of Israel in the Old Testament?

Answer: God made a covenant with Israel (see Exodus 20) because He was making them a nation for the first time. But note that the principles of all Ten Commandments were known to God's people long before Israel, in the book of Genesis:

First Commandment	Genesis 35:1-4 (cf. Joshua 24:2)
Second Commandment	Genesis 31:19-35; 35:1-4
Third Commandment	Genesis 12:3 (cf. Hebrews 12:14-17)
Fourth Commandment	Genesis 2:1-3
Fifth Commandment	Genesis 9:20-27
Sixth Commandment	Genesis 4:8-11, 23-24; 9:5-6
Seventh Commandment	Genesis 20:5-9; 34:1-2, 31; 38:24; 39:7-9
Eighth Commandment	Genesis 27:35-36; 30:33; 31:19, 30, 32, 39; 44:8
Ninth Commandment	Genesis 27:12, 17-24
Tenth Commandment	Genesis 3:6 (must be broken before the 8 th one can be broken)

2. Doesn't Ephesians 2:15 teach that the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross?

Answer: “[Jesus]...abolished in His flesh...the law of commandments contained in ordinances...” (Ephesians 2:15). **First**, the context of vv. 11-22 is about creating 1 new people by reconciling Jews & Gentiles into 1 body-temple, the Christian Church (vv. 19-22). To do this, Jesus “...has broken down the middle wall of separation” (v. 14), defined in v. 15 as “the law of commandments contained in ordinances...” **Second**, the literal **middle wall of separation** was the wall in the Court of the Gentiles, beyond which Gentiles couldn't go in Herod's Temple (a wall God never instructed to be built). So the Jews had used **the law of commandments** to separate themselves from Gentiles to erect an **unbiblical** barrier to God, something God never intended. Therefore, we must conclude that it was the Sanctuary Law that Jesus nailed to the cross.

3. Doesn't Colossians 2:14 teach that the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross?

Answer: “...He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us... And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (Colossians 2:13-14). **First**, the context of the chapter is a warning against **philosophy, empty deceit, the tradition of men, the commandments and doctrines of men**, and **the basic principles of the world** (see vv. 8, 20, 22). So whatever Paul means, he certainly cannot be including any part of **God's Law**. **Second**, the immediate context just before the phrase **having wiped out the handwriting** is how God forgives. Abolishing any law is never the means to forgive someone! **Finally**, the Greek word for **handwriting** was often used in Jewish literature of that day to describe either **(a)** a certificate of indebtedness (an IOU), or **(b)** a record book of sins. But removing the evidence against someone is not the means of forgiving them anymore than abolishing a law forgives someone. Therefore, what Jesus nailed to the cross here must be our IOU for the debt of perfect righteousness, which because the Law points out sin, we owe God. Jesus could do this because He paid our debt at the cross. Thus, this is a beautiful example of the gospel, not the abolishing of God's Law!

4. Weren't the Ten Commandments nailed to the cross as a unit, and only those individual Commandments that were repeated in the New Testament are still valid for Christians?

Answer: Of course, we have just demonstrated that the Ten Commandments were **not** nailed to the cross. Besides, all of the Ten Commandments **are** repeated in the New Testament, including the Sabbath Commandment (see Acts 16:13; 17:2; Hebrews 4:9-10)—the 1 Commandment that most Christians object to keeping. More on this one in a later Lesson.

Lesson 18—Objections to the Ten Commandments, Part 2

1. If Christians are “under grace”, and not “under the law”, why do we have to keep the Ten Commandments?

Answer: “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace...” (Romans 6:14). Christians are indeed *under grace* and not *under law*. But that doesn’t mean we don’t have to keep the Ten Commandments. Paul also wrote that “You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.... But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law” (Galatians 5:4, 18). The passage in Galatians 5 makes clear that being “under the law” is attempting to be “justified by law”, which is the opposite of being under grace. Since the Law points out sin, it condemns us. Being under grace, then, means allowing Jesus to save you by His life and death. Paul teaches that when we were under the law, we were slaves to sin (Romans 6:17). But now being under grace makes us slaves to righteousness (Romans 6:18). We wouldn’t even need grace if there was no Law!

2. If we have been “delivered from the law”, then why should we keep the Ten Commandments?

Answer: Paul moves from the *slavery* metaphor in Romans 6 to the *marriage* metaphor in Romans 7:1-6. Since he states that we have become “dead to the law...that you may be married...to Him who was raised from the dead [Christ]” (v. 4), then when we were slaves to sin, we were married to sin. Being married to sin meant that we served in “the oldness of the letter” (v. 6). “But now we have been delivered from the law [that bound us in marriage to sin], we are married to Jesus and serve “in the newness of the Spirit...” (v. 6). Since in the same context, he also declares that the Ten Commandments (v. 7) are “holy and just and good” (v. 12), Paul is saying that the Law was a drudgery when we were married to sin, but it is now a delight when we are married to Jesus. It’s the same Ten Commandments, but our attitude is different!

3. Since Christians are part of the new covenant, haven’t the Ten Commandments been abolished?

Answer: II Corinthians 3 certainly contrasts “tablets of stone” (v. 3) and “tablets of...the heart” (v. 3) as representing the old and new covenants, respectively (v. 6), and calls the former “the ministry of death...” (v. 7). Then Paul refers to the fact that Moses’ time with God on Mt. Sinai caused his face to shine with the reflected glory of God that he had to cover it with a veil (v. 7). He then figuratively applies the Israelites as having been blinded ever since to the gospel (vv. 14-15; 4:3-4). In other words, Paul teaches that the old covenant is the Jewish misunderstanding of the one covenant that God intended for Israel all along—that the Ten Commandments would lead them to recognize their need of a Substitute. But since it didn’t do that, it killed them spiritually because of their insistence upon seeing only the letter of the law and thus keeping it in an external way. The new covenant experience, however, allows God’s true people to have the Holy Spirit write the same Ten Commandments on their hearts, where it’s internalized as an expression of love for God. It’s the same Ten Commandments, but the issue concerns where they are written. Thus, this chapter uplifts the Ten Commandments!

4. Doesn’t Galatians 3 tell us that since we are justified in Jesus, we no longer need the Ten Commandments?

Answer: “Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (Galatians 3:24-25). The Greek word for *tutor* here refers to a family servant who, among other things, was responsible for taking the children to school. So Paul’s point is that the Law was partly designed to take us to Jesus, where we would be justified by faith in Him. Once justified, we no longer need the Law to function in *that* way. But the Law leads us to a Savior precisely because it condemns our violations of it as sin and worthy of death. By condemning our violations of the Law’s demands, the Ten Commandments are thereby shown to still be valid as showing us the way to live.

Lesson 19—Objections to the Ten Commandments, Part 3

1. If the Ten Commandments are associated with bondage, why do we need to keep them?

Answer: In **Galatians 4:21-31**, Paul associates Mt. Sinai with the old covenant, bondage, Jerusalem, and the bondwoman (Sarah's Egyptian servant with whom Abraham conceived a child). In contrast, he praises the free woman (Sarah), the new covenant, and Jerusalem above (in heaven). **First**, we agree that true Christians are not in **bondage** to the Ten Commandments. Note that Paul begins his allegory by referring to those "who desire to be under the law..." (v. 21). We learned in Lesson 18 that being under the law is to attempt to be justified by your law-keeping; but when you do that, you are condemned by the Ten Commandments into being in bondage (slavery) to it. **Second**, here he argues that his own people—"Jerusalem which now is..." (v. 25)—are in this state, as is anyone who seeks salvation by his own works. **Finally**, however, when we accept the gospel promise that Jesus saves us, we are both the spiritual children of the promise and the free woman. Once again, this passage says nothing about ignoring the Ten Commandments as the standard of conduct.

2. Doesn't the law of love replace the Ten Commandments for the Christian?

Answer: **First**, when Jesus advocated that love is the great commandment in **Matthew 22:37-40**, He was quoting **Deuteronomy 6:5** and **Leviticus 19:18**. So there was nothing new about His command to love, except that it was new to most of the people, who had little love in their hearts. **Second**, since the command to love in the Old Testament obviously didn't abolish the Law then, why would it do so now? **Finally**, the New Testament never teaches that love replaces obedience to the Ten Commandments, but rather that love leads to genuine obedience. This truth is stated clearly in **John 14:15**, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" and in **1 John 5:2-3**: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." See also **Romans 13:8-10**.

3. But isn't Jesus the end of the law for the Christian?

Answer: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (**Romans 10:4**). Although the Greek word for **end** can mean "goal" in the sense that the Law points to Christ as the goal for righteousness, this is qualified by the phrase "to everyone who believes." But the Law leads **unbelievers** to Christ, not believers. Therefore, Paul is saying that Jesus is the end of the believers' attempts to use the Law as a means to gain righteousness. Thus, the text says nothing about the Ten Commandments being abolished as the standard of right and wrong for the Christian.

4. Doesn't Christian freedom mean freedom from having to keep the Ten Commandments?

Answer: In **John 8:34-36**, Jesus declared that "...whoever commits sin [habitually & willingly] is a slave of sin.... Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." In the context, Jesus plainly teaches that He can make us free from bondage to sin—which then enables the believer to freely serve—and obey—Him.

5. Isn't it far more important to keep the spirit of the Ten Commandments than the actual letter of that Law?

Answer: **First**, it is certainly possible to keep the **letter** of the Law—any law—without keeping the spirit of the Law. That's the case when a person goes through the external motions of keeping the law, not because he loves the Law-giver, but largely because he views it as his duty to keep it. **Second**, just a little thought will tell you that the opposite is not true. That is, you cannot keep the spirit of the Law if you ignore the letter of the Law. In fact, loving the Law-giver will cause the person to go beyond the mere letter of the law and obey it with both pleasure and in a deeper, loving sense, not limiting his obedience to the actual words of the Law.

Lesson 20—God’s Holy Day

1. How are the Creation story and the Sabbath Commandment connected, and what does this tell us?

Answer: On the 7th day of Creation Week, **Genesis 2:2-3** says that God did 3 things: **(a)** rested; **(b)** blessed the 7th day; and **(c)** sanctified the 7th day. **First**, God doesn’t need to rest because He is the source of all strength; so He must have rested as an example to mankind. **Second**, He didn’t bless the day for Himself because He’s the source of all blessings; so He must have blessed it for mankind in some way. **Third**, He didn’t need to sanctify (“make holy”, “set apart”) the day for Himself because He’s the source of all holiness; so He must have set the day apart for mankind to use. The Sabbath Commandment cites the same 3 things God did on the 7th day of Creation Week (**Exodus 20:11**) as the reason His people should keep the day “holy” (**Exodus 20:8**). It’s unreasonable to believe that God set mankind an example to rest, placed a spiritual blessing in that day, and set it apart for man to use and yet not expect people to keep the Sabbath until millennia later at Mt. Sinai. Therefore, we must conclude that the Sabbath was created at Creation Week for people to rest from their ordinary labors in order to receive a special blessing from God and use that day to focus on their relationship with Him. No wonder Jesus said that “The Sabbath was made for man [**anthropos**; mankind]” (**Mark 2:27**). Thus, it is not a Jewish Sabbath, but “...the Sabbath of the Lord your God” (**Exodus 20:10**) for all mankind in all eras.

2. How does Luke’s burial story of Jesus demonstrate that the 7th-day Sabbath is valid for Christians?

Answer: Almost everyone agrees that Jesus was crucified on Friday, which indeed the Jews called the **Preparation** (**Luke 23:54**), and that He rose again on Sunday morning (**Luke 24:1**). Luke calls the day between Friday and Sunday “...the Sabbath according to the commandment” (**Luke 23:56**)—that day is called Saturday. The significance of Luke’s account is that **(a)** he was a Greek physician (Gentile), and **(b)** he wrote his gospel many years after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. This would have been the perfect time for him to call this day the Jewish Sabbath or the former Sabbath. Instead, this non-Jewish writer upholds the Sabbath Commandment well after the cross!

3. Does the writer of Hebrews really teach the continued validity of the 7th-day Sabbath for Christians?

Answer: After recalling the story that unbelieving Israelites delayed Israel’s entering the rest they were supposed to enjoy in Canaan (**Hebrews 3:7-19**), the writer of Hebrews uses that story as a symbol of entering the rest in the gospel (**4:2-3**). Then he used God’s resting on the Creation Sabbath as a symbol of His believers entering that gospel rest (**4:4**). Finally, he clearly stated that “There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His” (**4:9-10**). **First**, the Greek word for **rest** in **v. 9** is actually a compound word meaning “Sabbath-rest”, as some modern translations reflect. **Second**, **v. 10** cannot possibly mean that we should stop trying to work our way to heaven because we are to do what God did—and such a statement concerning God is completely absurd. Thus, it simply means that Christians should stop our ordinary work on the 7th-day Sabbath as God did at Creation Week in order to enter the “Sabbath-rest”, which is equivalent to the **gospel** rest. **Finally**, this testimony is remarkable in that it was written in a book obviously designed to wean Jewish Christians off exclusively Jewish things (e.g. temple in Jerusalem, animal sacrifices, earthly priests, and so on)!

4. Does linguistic and historical evidence support the continued validity of the 7th-day Sabbath?

Answer: In at least 108 modern languages, the English sound of the word for the 7th day of the week (Saturday) is **Sabbath**. This means that Christians long after the cross understood that day to be the Sabbath, because Jewish influence would never have been so strong as to cause this to be the case. Also, the 4th-century A.D. Council of Laodicea very strongly urged Christians to work on the Sabbath but still provided for Sabbath-morning worship services. This shows that even in the 4th century, the Church understood Saturday to be the Sabbath and Sunday to be “the Lord’s day”. Its tone also shows that many believers were still keeping the 7th-day Sabbath holy—a fact that church leaders wanted to change.

Lesson 21—Is There No Christian Sabbath?

1. Since the Jerusalem Council didn't require Gentile Christians to keep the Sabbath, why should we keep it?

Answer: At the Jerusalem Council in **Acts 15**, certain Jewish believers insisted that Gentile converts be circumcised and "...keep the law of Moses" (v. 5). The decision of the Council exempted Gentile converts from having to be circumcised and required only 4 things that Moses required of Gentiles living among the Israelites (v. 29; cf. **Leviticus 17-18**), thus plainly being a diplomatic decision just to keep the peace. **First**, circumcision and Sabbath-keeping were 2 distinctive practices among Jews even in pre-Christian times. Thus, it is inconceivable that some were pushing circumcision on the Gentile converts without also insisting they keep the Sabbath—which is strong evidence that Gentile converts were already keeping the Sabbath. **Second**, Peter called the Jewish demands here "putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear" (v. 10). Since circumcision was not a burden, he must be referring to **the law of Moses**. But God gave Moses the law, and He never put an unbearable yoke on anyone. Therefore, Peter must be referring to the Oral Law—Jewish Tradition they identified with **the law of Moses**, which God never gave and which was a burden on the people. Thus, any silence about Sabbath-keeping doesn't mean the Gentile converts didn't have to keep the Sabbath.

2. Doesn't Romans 14 teach that it doesn't make any difference which day a Christian keeps holy?

Answer: "One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind" (**Romans 14:5**). **First**, note that the whole discussion here is about "doubtful things" (v. 1), not established truths. **Second**, v. 2 mentions that weak members ate only vegetables. So this is not about Moses' health laws since he never commanded vegetarianism. Thus, it's likely that the controversy over days was not about which one to keep holy, but about which days were better for fasting or eating only vegetables—a controversy we know existed in the early church from sources outside Scripture. Whether this was indeed the actual controversy or not, the context in both points above clearly mean that this is not discussing the Sabbath and cannot be used to teach that there is no Christian Sabbath.

3. Doesn't Galatians 4 teach that there is no Christian Sabbath?

Answer: In **Galatians 4**, Paul refers to their observing of "days and months and seasons and years" (v. 10) as their returning "...to the weak and beggarly elements..." (v. 9), which brings them into **bondage** (v. 9). The Greek word for **elements** refers to astrological superstitions, which he states represents a return to their pre-Christian pagan lives (see v. 8). Therefore, this passage says nothing at all about the Sabbath or any other Christian observances.

4. But doesn't Colossians 2 suggest there is no Christian Sabbath of any kind?

Answer: The key texts in this argument are **vv. 16-17**: "So let no one judge you...regarding a festival or a new moon, or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ." As we learned in Lesson 17, the context of this chapter is **philosophy, empty deceit, the tradition of men, the basic principles of the world** (v. 8) and **regulations, false humility and worship of angels, and the commandments and doctrines of men** (vv. 18, 20, 22). So even if you assume the word **sabbaths** refers to the weekly Sabbath, Paul would be denouncing false human regulations about how to keep the Sabbath rather than the Sabbath itself. Apparently, their regulations were shadows in contrast to the real Jesus.

5. With all of the calendar changes, how can we know which day is the 7th day of the week anymore?

Answer: **First**, all scholars of time agree that our Saturday was the 7th day of the week in Jesus' day, and Christians believe that Jesus would never be mistaken about this. **Second**, the only permanent change to the calendar since Jesus' day was the Gregorian calendar, which corrected for too many leap years by deleting 10 days from the year. In 1582, Thursday, October 4 was followed by Friday, October 15, thus not affecting the days in the weekly cycle at all.

Lesson 22—Is Sunday the Christian Sabbath?

1. How many times does the New Testament refer to Sunday, and what do those texts tell us?

Answer: 6 New Testament texts explicitly refer to the 1st day of the week as the day on which Jesus was resurrected: **(a) Matthew 28:1; (b) Mark 16:2; (c) Mark 16:9; (d) Luke 24:1; (e) John 20:1; and (f) John 20:19.** **John 20:19** mentions this Sunday as a day “...the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews...” They were afraid that after the Jewish leaders executed Jesus, they would come after them next. So they certainly were not initiating a new Sabbath for Christians.

2. Wasn't the meeting with Paul on the first day of the week evidence of a regular worship service on Sunday?

Answer: This argument is based on a meeting described in **Acts 20**, which states in part, “Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...” (v. 7). **First**, note that this was an evening meeting because of the reference to “many lamps” (v. 8). Whether Luke used the Biblical (sunset to sunset) or the Roman reckoning (midnight to midnight), it was either a Saturday night or a Sunday night meeting, respectively—with neither one being a normal time for a regular worship service. **Second**, while the breaking of bread would later in history clearly refer to a communion service, the verb “to break” in connection with the word “bread” refers to a communion service only twice in the entire New Testament (with this one being in dispute). So it appears to be describing a fellowship meal here. **Finally**, the context of Paul speaking all night (vv. 8, 11) because he was leaving the next day (v. 7) strongly suggests this was a special farewell meeting for Paul. Therefore, this is hardly a good passage to show a change in the Sabbath from the 7th day to the 1st day.

3. What does the 8th (and last) New Testament Sunday text tell us?

Answer: **I Corinthians 16:2** reads, “On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.” Note that each believer was to lay funds **aside** (for an offering to help the saints suffering from drought in Jerusalem). The Greek text adds that he is to do this “by himself”. Thus, it's clear that the storing up was to be done in each believer's house. If Christians were meeting on Sunday for worship, then Paul probably would have instructed them to bring their funds to church each Sunday so that the church treasurer could coordinate the collection each week. Therefore, this passage is actually evidence that the early church was not worshipping on Sundays!

4. Doesn't “the Lord's Day” reference in Revelation 1:10 prove that Christians were worshipping on Sundays?

Answer: John merely says that he “...was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day....” Then he proceeds to describe a vision; thus, he said he had a vision on **the Lord's Day**. The 1st unmistakable use of “the Lord's [day]” to refer to Sunday is in the false *Gospel According to Peter* (vv. 35, 50), dated near the end of the 2nd century A.D., far too late for the real apostle Peter to have written it. The only 2 other such references to “the Lord's [day]” were written earlier than Revelation, but the context in one suggests the word that should have been supplied by the translator was “doctrine” or “commandment” (*Didache 14:1*), and the context in the other suggests it should have been “life” (*Epistle to the Magnesians 9:1*)—not “day”. This evidence points to “the Lord's [day]” or “the Lord's day” as having become a designation for Sunday probably by the middle of the 2nd century A.D. The New Testament consistently refers to Sunday only as “the first day of the week”, including John in his gospel (thought to be written about the same time as Revelation). Therefore, his use of “the Lord's Day” in **Revelation 1:10** is probably a play on words since Christian tradition says that John was exiled on the island of Patmos for refusing to declare that the Roman emperor was “lord”. Furthermore, the Bible consistently refers to only 1 day as His day—and that's the 7th-day Sabbath, which is called “...the Sabbath of the Lord your God” (**Exodus 20:10**) and “...The holy day of the Lord...” (**Isaiah 58:13**). Also, Jesus declared that “...the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath” (**Mark 2:28**). Therefore, “the Lord's day” in **Revelation 1:10** must be a reference to the 7th-day Sabbath, and not to Sunday.

Lesson 23—How Sunday Observance Came into the Church

1. Early History of Sunday Observance

Answer: During the 1st half of the 2nd century A.D., churches in Rome, Italy and Alexandria, Egypt made a sudden departure from Sabbath to Sunday observance. Historical evidence suggests that anti-Semitism was rising at that time, boosted by the famous Jewish Bar Kochba Revolt (A.D. 132-135) that resulted in Roman prohibition of Sabbath-keeping. The church in Rome was under the nose of the emperor, and Alexandria had a major Jewish population. It was an advantage for those churches in particular not to be associated with the Jews. Specifically, we know that the church at Rome immediately began pressuring both the weekly Sunday and the annual Easter Sunday on the rest of the Church.

2. Gradual Adoption of Sunday Worship

Answer: In Lesson 22 we learned that a weekly Sunday worship service was added by the large majority of Christian churches outside Rome and Alexandria sometime during the 2nd half of the 2nd century A.D., as reflected in “the Lord’s [day]” having become a designation for Sunday by that time. We also know that as late as the 5th century A.D., most Christians were worshiping on both Sabbath and on Sunday: “The people of Constantinople, and almost everywhere, assemble together on the Sabbath, as well as on the first day of the week, which custom is never observed at Rome or at Alexandria” (The Fathers of the Church, www.newadvent.org/fathers, “Sozomen,” “Ecclesiastical History,” bk. 7, ch. 19.)

3. The Pivotal 4th Century A.D.

Answer: When Roman Emperor Constantine was “converted” to Christianity in A.D. 312, he made it a legal religion in A.D. 313 by the Edict of Milan. Knowing the Roman Empire was in danger of falling, he sought for a religious glue that would hold the Empire together. The 2 chief religions were Mithraism, a sun-worshipping cult whose special day was Sunday (the day of the sun), and Christianity, which worshiped the Son (Jesus). Thus, in A.D. 321, Constantine issued world history’s 1st Sunday Law, prohibiting unnecessary work on Sundays. Ironically, his strategy didn’t save the Roman Empire. With government pressure to not work on Sundays, the church Council of Laodicea (later in the 4th century) commanded Christians to work on the Sabbath (Saturday) and thus not Judaize (see the anti-Semitism here). At the same time, that same Council provided for Sabbath worship services, after which believers should work and ignore the holiness of the day.

NOTE: It was inevitable that competition between 2 worship days would eventually result in 1 of them falling away. Although the Sabbath was more respected in the Eastern half of the Church (though it was not then being kept as a holy day), this was the day that eventually fell away. However, Christian history suggests that 7th-day Sabbath-keeping never completely disappeared, although it was sublimated and persecuted as a rank heresy against the Church.

4. The Theological Role of Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274)

Answer: Not until the 13th century do we find a systematic theological defense of what the Church had already done centuries earlier, which is amazing itself! Italian scholar Thomas Aquinas divided the Sabbath Commandment into 2 parts: **First**, he said there was a **Ceremonial** part that God always designated to be temporary, which was the idea of the literal 7th-day part, which he stated God gave only to the Israelites/Jews. **Second**, there was the **Moral** part that was to be permanent, which was that 1 day in 7 be set aside in some way for God, but not necessarily as a holy Sabbath day. This argument became the foundation for both (a) the idea that there’s no Christian Sabbath because Jesus fulfilled its spiritual meaning in His life, death, and resurrection (called the **Abrogation View**), and (b) the idea that the Sabbath was transferred from the 7th day to the 1st day of the week so that Sunday is the Christian Sabbath (called the **Transference View**). However, the very reason for the Sabbath in **Exodus 20** is based on the 3 things God did on “**the 7th day**” of Creation Week. Therefore, it is entirely arbitrary and without logic or merit to divide the Sabbath Commandment into these 2 parts. This means that the Sabbath Commandment must stand as God originally gave it!

Lesson 24—How to Keep the Sabbath Holy

1. Exactly when does the Sabbath begin and end?

Answer: "...the evening and the morning were the first day" (**Genesis 1:5**), and so on. According to the Genesis 1, the night portion is the 1st part of each 24-hr. day. Since we've learned in our previous Lessons that Saturday is the Sabbath, then each Sabbath begins at Friday **sunset** and ends at Saturday **sunset**.

2. What Sabbath-keeping principles can we learn from the 3 things God did at the end of Creation Week?

Answer: **First**, God **rested** as an example for us to rest (see Lesson 20). Since His rest came at the end of Creation Week, it's certainly appropriate for us to rest in order to admire God's **Creation**. Each Sabbath is a kind of weekly birthday for the earth. In that same Lesson, we learned that resting on the Sabbath is a special time in which Christians enter the spiritual rest in the **gospel**—a day to dwell on our salvation by grace through faith. **Second**, God put a special **blessing** into each Sabbath. The only way someone can place a benefit in time for someone else is to give of his time to that person. Therefore, as "Lord of the Sabbath" (**Mark 2:28**), Jesus makes each Sabbath a kind of **spiritual date** with Him. **Finally**, God **set apart each Sabbath for holy use**. Thus, the Sabbath is 24 hours of time set apart to contemplate and serve God without the distractions of our ordinary work, recreation, and so on.

3. Why is the day before the Sabbath called the Preparation, and what does that tell us?

Answer: "That day was the Preparation [Friday], and the Sabbath drew near" (**Luke 23:54**). In the wilderness wandering, manna fell from heaven every day except on Sabbath. Only on Friday were they to gather twice the normal amount, which didn't spoil and was eaten on Sabbath (**Exodus 16:22-26**). This illustrates that we should use part of Friday to prepare for the Sabbath by shining our shoes, taking out the trash, dusting, vacuuming, and cooking ahead what can be safely cooked early. Would you really do any less for a royal visitor to your house?

4. What event should be the highlight of each Sabbath, whenever possible?

Answer: "...the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation" (**Leviticus 23:3**). A **holy convocation** refers to a holy meeting of people coming together to worship God. While you can worship God at any time and place, the Sabbath is the special time that God calls us to public worship. Among other things, public worship encourages individual believers and helps keep the spiritual coals of fire burning. Those whose health doesn't permit regular attendance should have regular contact with the congregation, and tapes, CDs, or DVDs of worship services should be provided to them.

5. What other practical advice can you give in order to keep the Sabbath holy?

Answer: Because the Sabbath is 24 hours of holy time, and not just a day of worship, other practical principles should be observed. **First**, as already mentioned, we should avoid ordinary, everyday work, including our job but also chores around the house. **Second**, because our own pleasure and conversation should be replaced with God's pleasure and conversation, we should avoid secular reading, conversation, music, recreation, and entertainment in order to spend time delighting ourselves in the Lord (see **Isaiah 58:13-14**). **Third**, except for real emergencies, we should avoid shopping or other business transactions on the Sabbath, having made certain to have what we reasonably expect to need by Friday. **Finally**, being out in nature or reading nature books/watching nature videos, viewing Bible-based videos, doing acts of mercy to help others in emergency situations, and engaging in any spiritual activities that help ourselves or others are all certainly appropriate Sabbath activities. For those with children, special desserts or other appropriate activities reserved for Sabbaths only can help feed their positive attitudes toward the Sabbath as a special day and not a day when they can't do this or can't do that. And keep **rules** to the **minimum** as you **maximize principles** of Sabbath-keeping!

Lesson 25—Christian Baptism, Part 1

1. How important is baptism, and what is its spiritual significance?

Answer: **First**, Jesus told a Pharisee called Nicodemus that “...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (**John 3:5**). So it must be very important. Some argue that the **water** here is a symbol of the Holy Spirit so that the text should read, “...one is born of water, even the Spirit...” (**John 3:5**). However, reference in **v. 22** to Jesus Himself baptizing with water in the immediate context of His conversation with Nicodemus surely means that **water** in **John 3:5** refers to water baptism. **Second**, Peter associates water baptism with “...the remission [forgiveness] of sins...” and reception of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:38**). There are a few examples in the New Testament of someone receiving the Holy Spirit before his baptism and some well after their baptism. But these texts indicate the norm is baptism by the Holy Spirit at one’s water baptism.

2. Why was Jesus baptized when He had no sins to be forgiven or cleansed from?

Answer: Jesus Himself answered that question when He told John the Baptist to “...‘Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness’” (**Matthew 3:15**). In other words, Jesus was baptized as an example for others, which again shows how important baptism is.

3. Is there anything in the waters of baptism that actually saves a person?

Answer: According to Paul, confession in the saving grace of Jesus and His resurrection is actually what saves you (see **Romans 10:9**). Water baptism is the official ceremony that literally occurs after you have first believed. On the cross, Jesus promised salvation to one of the criminals next to Him; yet that criminal was not baptized before he died (see **Luke 23:42-43**). Therefore, while baptism is important, if circumstances prevent one from being baptized, he can still be saved. If the baptism waters **literally** saved you, then there could be absolutely no salvation without it. So there’s nothing miraculous about the water.

4. When and why did infant baptism come into the Church?

Answer: Infant baptism had a controversial beginning probably during the 2nd century A.D. It became more widely accepted by a number of bishops in the 3rd century; and it was officially sanctioned by church councils early in the 5th century. While we don’t know the earliest arguments made in its defense, by the time of Bishop Augustine (d. 430) its necessity was argued in order to erase the stain of Adam’s original sin, without which no one could be saved. Nevertheless, adult baptism was the prevailing practice of the Church for the first several centuries of the Christian Era.

5. What must a person do before he is eligible for baptism, and does this exclude infant baptism?

Answer: Peter was quite clear when he preached, “...‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized...’” (**Acts 2:38**). Thus, one must be able to repent, that is, to turn away from his sins, before he should be baptized. Obviously, babies cannot do this. Therefore, babies should never be baptized because they cannot meet the requirement for baptism. While there is no Biblical age given when baptism is acceptable, it clearly requires a person to understand his sinful condition and need for a Savior before he is ready. This is different for different people, but it’s unlikely that any child under the age of 8-10 years has reached that point in his life. Nevertheless, maturity of understanding, not chronological age, will determine the matter for each person.

Lesson 26—Christian Baptism, Part 2

1. Does it make any difference by what method you are baptized—sprinkling, pouring, or immersion?

Answer: **First**, according to **Romans 6:3-4**, when a person is immersed under the water, it symbolizes his own spiritual death to sin as an intentional way of life and his spiritual burial. Then by being raised up from the water, this symbolizes his spiritual resurrection to "...walk in newness of life" (v. 4). Only baptism by immersion correctly symbolizes the believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. **Second**, the Greek word for **baptism** means "to immerse" or "to dip" and was used to describe the process of dyeing cloth by immersing it completely under the dyed water. Therefore, sprinkling and pouring neither match the meaning of the word for baptism, nor the symbolism of the death, burial, and resurrection. **Finally**, the apostle Paul declared there is only "...one baptism" (**Ephesians 4:5**), not many kinds.

2. When and why were sprinkling and pouring introduced into the Church?

Answer: Sprinkling and pouring were introduced by the end of the 3rd century as a kind of clinical baptism since it was first used on sick believers who could not be physically immersed. Nevertheless, baptism by immersion was the standard practice of the Church until the Council of Ravenna (1311) voted that sprinkling and pouring were equally valid as immersion. Numerous excavated early churches have been found with baptisteries that testify to the truth that baptism by immersion was the standard practice of the Church for many centuries.

3. What is trine immersion, and is it Biblical?

Answer: Trine immersion, based on **Matthew 28:19**'s statement to baptize "...in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit", is the immersion of a believer 3 times, once each for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This practice can be dated in some churches back to the early 2nd century A.D. **First**, note that people are to be baptized in the **name** (singular) "of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". This means that all 3 Persons of the Triune God are included in the singular **name**. **Second**, trine immersion distorts the theological meaning of the **one** death to sin and spiritual resurrection to walk in newness of life. Thus, trine immersion constitutes 3 different baptisms of the same person. Therefore, this practice is not sanctioned by the Bible and should not be done.

4. Does baptism have anything to do with becoming a member of a church?

Answer: Yes. Some have expressed interest in baptism without having to join a church. But Scripture states that "...by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...", defined as "...the body of Christ...the church" (**I Corinthians 12:13, 27-28**). Moreover, "...He [Jesus] is the head of the body, the church..." (**Colossians 1:18**). Therefore, to request baptism without simultaneously joining a church would be like asking to be part of the Head (Jesus) without also being part of His body. If you want to belong to Jesus, you must belong to His body, the church.

5. May a person Biblically be re-baptized under any circumstances?

Answer: Yes. **First**, in **Acts 19:2-5**, there was a group of disciples of John the Baptist who had just learned about Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and as a result, they were re-baptized. So for those believers who learn new significant truths, re-baptism may be allowed. **Second**, baptism cements an intimate spiritual relationship with Jesus, which can be compared to a marriage relationship. Based on this metaphor, if a person backslides far away from Jesus, it amounts to a spiritual divorce. Under this circumstance, a re-marriage ceremony (that is, a re-baptism) is appropriate. But we should be careful not to use re-baptism simply as a rededication to Jesus, for then it can become too frequent and meaningless.

Lesson 27—The Church of Jesus

1. Who founded the Christian Church, and upon whom was it established?

Answer: "...you are Peter, and on this rock I [Jesus] will build My church..." (**Matthew 16:18**). Jesus Himself founded the Christian Church and established it on "this rock". Some believe that Jesus built it on Peter since the Greek word for **Peter** (**Petros**) means **rock**. However, that word refers to a small rock that could be picked up and thrown. And "this rock" upon which Jesus would build His Church is a translation of the Greek **Petra**, which refers to a massive rock, as the foundation for a house (see **Matthew 7:24-25**), where **Petra** is also used. So Jesus contrasts Peter the relatively small rock with a gigantic foundation rock, which means He couldn't possibly mean Peter was the rock on which He would build His Church. Besides, Peter never shows us in his later writings that he thought Jesus meant He built the Church on him! Indeed, the New Testament consistently refers to Jesus as the foundation Rock or chief cornerstone (of the foundation) of the Church (see **I Corinthians 3:11**; **Ephesians 2:20**; **I Peter 2:4-8**).

2. But didn't Jesus give Peter "the keys of the kingdom of heaven"?

Answer: In **Matthew 16:19**, Jesus gave Peter "...the keys of the kingdom of heaven...", but these are defined as "...the key of knowledge" (**Luke 11:52**) and further as Jesus' words as giving eternal life (**John 6:63, 68**). While Peter did open the door to heaven's kingdom on the Day of Pentecost (see **Acts 2**), **any** believer who preaches Jesus' words possesses and uses the keys of the kingdom of heaven. As to the authority that comes with those keys, the best Greek translation of **Matthew 16:19** is: "...I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth **will have been bound** in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth **will have been loosed** in heaven." In other words, the Church's authority is limited to what heaven's will already is. Thus, Jesus gave the keys and the authority that goes with them, not only to Peter, but to the whole Church. But that authority is defined by heaven's will as defined in Scripture.

3. How is the New Testament Church pictured, and what does that tell us?

Answer: **First**, the Church is the Body of Christ (see **I Corinthians 12:27**), who is its Head (see **Ephesians 5:23**). Thus, all members are under Jesus the Head and equally vital to the success of the Church. And when one member hurts, they should all hurt; and when one member rejoices, they should all rejoice. **Second**, it's the Bride of Christ (see **Ephesians 5:22-23**), which means that every member should enjoy an intimate spiritual relationship with Jesus, who is also our Protector. **Third**, it's the Family of God (see **Ephesians 2:19; 3:15**), so that its members are privileged to call God our heavenly "Father" (**Romans 8:15**) and fellow believers "brother" and "sister" (**I Corinthians 8:11**). **Fourth**, it's the Temple of God (see **I Corinthians 3:16-17**). Among other things, members should respect each other as also holy to God and respect the place of worship as holy ground. **Fifth**, it's the Pillar and Ground of the Truth (see **I Timothy 3:15**), meaning that it should be a spiritual fortress protecting and defending the truth of God's Word. **Sixth**, it's the New Jerusalem (see **Hebrews 12:22-23**), which makes Christians citizens of heaven (see **Philippians 3:20**) and expected to obey Heaven's Law while rejecting worldly principles. **Finally**, it's a Spiritual Army (see **Ephesians 6:10-17**), in which its members are engaged in spiritual warfare against the forces of darkness. This requires real commitment and discipline to be effective.

4. For what primary purposes does the Church exist?

Answer: **First**, it's To Reflect God's Grace as Christians constitute a "holy priesthood", a "royal priesthood", a "holy nation", and God's "special people" (**I Peter 2:5, 9**). **Second**, it's To Proclaim God's Grace, for **I Peter 2:9** says the very reason Christians are part of this special group is so they "...may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness..." **Third**, it's To Teach and Baptize (see **Matthew 28:19-20**). Specific truths must be shared since grace without doctrine is empty. **Fourth**, it's To Worship (see **Revelation 14:7**). **Finally**, it's also To Fellowship with each other (see **Acts 2:42**), for fellowship helps bond members together in unity.

Lesson 28—The Holy Communion Service

1. What is the Holy Communion Service, and where did it come from?

Answer: During the last Passover Jesus celebrated, **Luke 22:20** says that it was at or near the end of the actual supper that Jesus took bread and the cup, blessed each, and gave it to His disciples. Jesus gave this as an ordinance to the Church because He talked about "...as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup..." (**I Corinthians 11:24-25**). This Communion service replaces the Passover because the Passover supper involved the eating of a lamb, a symbol of Jesus (see **John 1:29**). And now the bread replaced the lamb as representing the body of Jesus in the Communion service (see **I Corinthians 11:23-24**). Also, Paul spoke of keeping the Passover in a spiritual sense (see **I Corinthians 5:7-8**).

2. What kind of bread and wine should be used in the Holy Communion service?

Answer: Since this service replaces Passover, & unleavened bread [without yeast] was to be eaten at Passover (see **Exodus 12:8**), unleavened bread should be used in the Communion service. Consistency requires that the wine also be unleavened (unfermented). In the context of the 1st Communion service, Jesus promised that He would not "...drink of this fruit of the vine..." (**Matthew 26:29**). And the fruit of the vine is fresh, not fermented. Moreover, fermenting is a type of spoiling process, and how could such a process be associated with the body & blood of Jesus?

3. Does the bread and wine (pure grape juice) mystically become Jesus' body and blood?

Answer: **First**, it's significant that the words **sacrifice** and **offering** don't appear in any New Testament discussion of the Communion service, and for those who believe that the body & blood mystically become the body & blood of Jesus teach that this service is a reenactment of Jesus' crucifixion, as in a new sacrificial offering. **Second**, when Jesus declared that the bread was His body (see **Matthew 26:26**) and the cup was His blood (see **Matthew 26:27-28**), He was literally alive and present with His disciples. Thus, He could not at the same time be dead and His body & blood be actual bread & wine, for His human nature cannot be in more than 1 place at a time. **Third**, if the bread actually became Jesus, then Christians would be cannibals by eating Jesus' body. **Fourth**, Paul declares that "...as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (**I Corinthians 11:26**). Thus, this service **proclaims** rather than **reenacts** Jesus' death. **Finally**, **I Corinthians 11:24-25** quotes Jesus as saying that we do these things "...in remembrance of Me." So this is a memorial of something that happened "once for all" (**Heb. 7:27; 10:10; cf. 9:12, 26, 28**).

4. Is it necessary to practice a foot-washing ceremony before the actual Holy Communion service?

Answer: This idea is based on **John 13**, the only chapter that mentions when Jesus washed the feet of His disciples at the 1st Communion service. 3 times in that chapter Jesus specifically tells us to follow His example and wash each other's feet. This foot-washing should be done before the actual Communion service, because **(a)** it's an act of humility to stoop down and wash someone else's feet; and **(b)** the willingness to allow someone to wash your feet shows your willingness to allow Jesus to cleanse you from sin (a kind of mini-baptism). Thus, it prepares people to experience communion with Jesus.

5. How often should this service be conducted, and who may participate?

Answer: The Bible doesn't specify how many times this service should be conducted; the text simply says that "...as often as you [do so]..." (**I Corinthians 11:26**). Many churches, believing it will retain its special solemnity, celebrate it twice a year or quarterly. As for who should participate, all baptized Christians of any denomination should be allowed to participate (called Open Communion) because **I Corinthians 11:27-28** says that each person should examine himself as to his readiness to participate. But only baptized Christians should participate because the mini-baptism of the foot-washing service is only appropriate for one who has already been baptized.

Lesson 29—The Priesthood of All Believers

1. When did the concept of priests come into the Church?

Answer: In the early 2nd century A.D., there developed the idea of the “3-fold order of ministry”, with 1 bishop and several elders and deacons under his authority. Sometime late in the 2nd century, the idea developed that bishops and elders were priests and that the bread & wine of Communion constituted a sacrificial offering that only priests could make.

2. How is the Greek word for “priest” and its related words used in the New Testament?

Answer: In the Christian context, the New Testament uses the Greek word for *priest* and its root only to refer to Jesus as our high priest (e.g. **Hebrews 7:17**) or to **all** church members (see **I Peter 2:5, 9**; **Revelation 1:6**). Significantly, it is never used to refer to any human leader within the Church in distinction from all other members. This suggests the Church shouldn't have a special priesthood at all. In other words, **none** of its ministers or pastors should be priests.

3. What is the Christian equivalent of the Temple on earth, and what kinds of sacrifices are made there?

Answer: Under the Old Testament system, special priests offered animal sacrifices at the Jerusalem Temple. But in the Church, its **members** “...are the temple of God...” (**I Corinthians 3:16**) who “...offer up **spiritual** sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus...” (**I Peter 2:5**). Christian members' bodies, their reasonable service, and their praise & thanks to God are all called living sacrifices (see **Romans 12:1**; **Hebrews 13:15**). Since every member functions in principle similarly to an Old Testament priest, there is no place for a special priesthood that performs sacrifices **for** the rest of the Church. In the Church, the special priesthood consists of just 1 priest, our High Priest Jesus, in the **heavenly sanctuary** (see **Hebrews 4:14-16**; **5:5**; **7:24-26**; **8:1-2**; **9:11**). Therefore, we Protestant Christians refer to “The Priesthood of All Believers”.

4. Does the New Testament make a major distinction between Christian clergy and its laity?

Answer: **I Peter 2:9** calls members of the Church God's “...own special **people**...” The Greek word for *people* is *laos*, from which the English words *laity* and *laymen* are derived. It appears in the New Testament more than 140 times and almost always in the singular. Therefore, it's a collective singular since it refers to all of God's people as a singular, unified group. Moreover, *laos* is never used to contrast some of God's people with other parts of His Church. To put it another way, every church member—including pastors and other leaders—is a layman. This strongly suggests that every member of the Church as a work of ministry to do for the Lord, not just the pastors and evangelists.

5. Are some common titles given to clergy in many churches really appropriate to use?

Answer: **First**, given what we just learned under Question #4 above, we should be careful not to elevate church leaders with titles that rightly belong only to God. While respecting our leaders, we should stick with the New Testament titles, such as *pastor*, *elder*, *bishop*, *deacon*, and so on. **Second**, speaking of God Himself, **Psalm 111:9** calls Him “...Holy and awesome [reverend] is His name.” The King James' Version has *reverend* where the New King James' Version has *awesome*. *Reverend* or *Awesome* are titles given to One who is worthy of our worship and should thus not be used for any leader in the Church. **Third**, Jesus admonished that we should “...not call anyone on earth your **father**; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven” (**Matthew 23:9**). Obviously, Jesus was not talking about your biological father. Rather, He was talking about a spiritual title that shouldn't be given to any leader in the Church. **Finally**, Jesus also said that we shouldn't call anyone *Rabbi* (see **Matthew 23:8**). While Christian churches per se do not use that title, Messianic Jewish congregations often retain that Jewish title for their leader.

Lesson 30—Christians and Tithing

1. What is “tithe”, and on what principle is it based?

Answer: The word for *tithe* literally means **one-tenth** or **10 percent**. **Deuteronomy 14:22** teaches that we should “tithe all the increase of your grain....” **Increase** should be translated as **profit** in our modern English. The principle of tithing is to “...remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth...” (**Deuteronomy 8:18**). So if you own your own business (farm or otherwise), you would tithe on the **profit** you made, not on your gross receipts. If you are a wage-earner or salaried person, you should return tithe on the **gross income** because any taxes withheld from your paycheck does help the government to provide services to the general public, such as road construction and repair, and so on (regardless of your personal feelings about government waste of money).

2. Does the New Testament endorse the return of tithe for Christians?

Answer: **First**, while Jesus criticized the Pharisees for ignoring justice and God’s love, He commended them for tithing on the increase of even the smallest items, such as **mint** and “...all manner of herbs...” (**Luke 11:42**). **Second**, Paul declared that “...those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel” (**I Corinthians 9:14**), comparing that practice to the practice of those who ministered at the Jerusalem Temple (see **I Corinthians 9:13**). Since those who ministered at the Temple received their income as tithe from the people, so Paul implies that Christians should return tithe, which should be the source of income for those who labor in the gospel ministry. Thus, tithing is endorsed for Christians and the Church.

3. Where should tithe be returned?

Answer: In the Old Testament, the tithe was turned into “...the storehouse...” (**Malachi 3:10**), which were literal rooms at the Jerusalem Temple where animals, grain, and garden & orchard produce were stored for use by the Levites (see **II Chronicles 31:11-12; Nehemiah 10:38-39; 12:44; 13:12**). Obviously, the Christian **storehouse** is the Church. But most of us, at least in modern nations, live in a money-based economy. Thus, the practical thing to do is to return our tithe in the form of cash, check, or money order so that the local church treasurer can secure it.

4. If a Christian returns his tithe to the Church, is that the end of his financial giving to the Church?

Answer: No. Since the tithe is restricted for paying the salaries of pastors and other full-time gospel workers, it follows that all other needs of the church must be supplied by offerings of an unspecified amount. That’s the reason that **Malachi 3:8** states there is a need for freewill offerings in addition to the tithe. The local church has electric, water, phone, and sometimes gas or oil bills that simply keep the lights, heat, and air conditioning running. But all the expenses for outreach ministries of the local church, as well as supplies for children’s and adult Bible classes, must be paid for by offerings as well. Finally, the local church should be privileged to be part of a global church movement, so that missions, education, health work, and so on should be funded through offerings rather than tithe. And the best system is to be part of a global church in which all the tithe moneys are transferred to a more central place, where it can be distributed to full-time pastors and evangelists in a way that wealthier churches don’t have wealthier pastors. This is more equitable and avoids greater temptation to preach what others want to hear in order for a pastor to keep his more lucrative salary.

5. But what if a member is unhappy with how tithes and offerings are used? What is his remedy?

Answer: The Bible never addresses this scenario. It only tells us that God’s will is for the members to do their part in returning an honest tithe and in giving of freewill offerings, and in return, He will bless them (see **Malachi 3:8-10**). God will take care of the rest, for ultimately it’s His Church. Thus, we need to be patient and focus on our responsibilities and leave the rest with God.

Lesson 31—Spiritual Gifts

1. What are the spiritual gifts, and where are they found in the New Testament?

Answer: There are 4 lists of spiritual gifts in the New Testament, with some of them repeated in more than 1 list. **First**, **Romans 12:3-8** lists prophecy, ministry (service), teaching, exhortation, giving, leadership, and mercy. **Second**, **I Corinthians 12:4-11** lists wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. **Third**, **I Corinthians 12:28-30** lists apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healing, helps, administration, and tongues. **Finally**, **Ephesians 4:7-8, 11** lists apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers. **NOTE:** In **Ephesians 4:11**, the Greek text does not have the word for **some** preceding the word **teacher**. This shows it's connected with pastors in a hyphenated single gift of pastor-teachers.

2. What is the purpose of spiritual gifts in the Church?

Answer: There are 3 principal purposes for spiritual gifts. The spiritual gifts that come from the Holy Spirit are **(a)** to empower believers to witness for Jesus (see **Acts 1:8**). Then after listing 4 spiritual gifts, **Ephesians 4:11-12** tells us that they are **(b)** to equip the members for ministry work and **(c)** to edify (build up) the church. It's important to note here that the Bible never says that spiritual gifts are given for the individual believer who has them. They are to be used **unselfishly**.

3. Does every believer have a spiritual gift?

Answer: Yes. After referring to gifts of the Spirit (**I Corinthians 12:4**), the apostle Paul wrote that "...the manifestation [gift] of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all..." (**I Corinthians 12:7**). Also, Peter wrote that "...each one has received a gift..." (**I Peter 4:10**). Therefore, every believer has at least 1 spiritual gift.

4. From whom and when does a believer usually receive one or more spiritual gifts?

Answer: The fact that "...the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills..." (**I Corinthians 12:11**) tells us that spiritual gifts come from God the Holy Spirit (see also **vv. 4, 7**). This implies that spiritual gifts are given with the gift of the Holy Spirit and upon entrance into the body of Christ (the Church—see Lesson 27), which is usually at a person's water baptism (see Lesson 25).

5. How can a believer know what spiritual gifts he has, and can they be developed?

Answer: **First**, the same Holy Spirit who gave you one or more spiritual gifts can give you strong impressions about which gift or gifts you might have. **Second**, even without strong impressions, volunteer to work in several different ministries (probably not all at once), and you and those who work with you will provide feedback if you seem to have an ability to do certain ministries well or not. **Finally**, you might take a spiritual gifts test, which can be obtained from your pastor or by googling "spiritual gifts tests" on the Internet. Remember that tests are not as good as real experience. So don't lock yourself into a particular ministry based on the results of a spiritual gifts test. **Yes**, spiritual gifts can be developed just like muscles are developed by exercising them. Some spiritual gifts might also be natural talents you were born with, but which the Holy Spirit later sanctifies as a spiritual gift. But they come from Him, and you cannot create by your own willpower a spiritual gift from nothing.

Lesson 32—The Sign Gifts

1. What are the “sign gifts”, and didn’t they end with the New Testament Era?

Answer: The so-called “sign gifts” are the gifts of prophecy, miracles, healing, tongues, and interpretation of tongues. These are more spectacular and thus more controversial. Most Christians believed they ended with the New Testament Era, but that’s partly because the post-New Testament Church played them down and instituted the “3-fold order of ministry” upon which members were told to rely upon for spiritual interpretations as early as the 2nd century A.D. (see Lesson 29). However, Paul believed that believers should “...come short in no gift, eagerly awaiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (**I Corinthians 1:7**). Thus, we should not have expected them to completely disappear from the Church.

2. So why does it seem that the “sign gifts” have been absent during most of Christian history?

Answer: Part of the answer is that if the Church didn’t expect them (see under Question #1 above), then why would the Holy Spirit continue to give such gifts? Such members would simply be ignored, or their “sign gifts” would have been attributed to Satan. But there is probably also another reason, one based on Bible history. There were 3 great waves of miracles in Biblical history: **(a)** in connection with Moses & the exodus of Israel from Egypt; **(b)** in connection with the prophets Elijah & Elisha amid the great apostasy in Israel; and **(c)** in connection with Jesus and His apostles in the 1st century A.D. Although no spiritual gift will be withheld if the Holy Spirit deems it necessary, Bible history suggests that the “sign gifts” come in waves in connection with extremely important times.

3. What does the historical pattern of the “sign gifts” suggest about a final wave of these spiritual gifts?

Answer: **Joel 2:28-29, 31** declares that “...it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days...Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.” The historical pattern of “sign gifts” waves in Biblical history suggests that we should expect a final great wave of these gifts very shortly before the Second Coming of Jesus, and that’s what Joel seems to indicate. Such an outpouring of the Spirit will help validate God’s final warning message to the world to get ready for Jesus to come!

4. Shouldn’t we expect to see a satanic counterfeit of “sign gifts” just before Jesus returns in glory?

Answer: Yes. Jesus warns of “...false christs and false prophets [who] will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive...” (**Matthew 24:24**). The Antichrist will work with “...all power, signs, and lying wonders...” (**II Thessalonians 2:9**). And **Revelation 16:14** warns that the “...spirits of demons, performing signs, [will] go out to the kings of the earth...” at the end-time. Of course, Satan’s counterfeit signs will have to come **before** the majority of the heaven-based signs if they are going to deceive most people and cause them to ignore the true heavenly end-time message.

5. How will we know whether the “sign gifts” are from God or from Satan?

Answer: “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (**Isaiah 8:20**). The phrase “the law and the testimony” refers to the Bible, **law** representing the 1st 5 books of Moses and **testimony** referring to the testimony of the prophets. Even if a miraculous event is proven to be genuine, the person’s teaching must be rejected if it is not consistent with Bible teaching. Therefore, we cannot trust our senses, especially as we draw nearer to Jesus’ return. Seeing is not believing; rather, believing the Word of God is seeing the truth!

Lesson 33—Speaking in Tongues

1. Is speaking in tongues the sign that you have been baptized by the Holy Spirit?

Answer: No. In **I Corinthians 12**, the apostle Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit distributes “to each one individually as He wills” (v. 11). Then he added in v. 30, “Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?” Nothing could be plainer that not every believer possesses any one particular gift, including the gift of tongues. Instead, the Bible-based evidence that one has received the Holy Spirit is that he will reflect the **fruit** of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (see **Galatians 5:22-23**).

2. What have linguists and other scholars learned about the global phenomenon of glossolalia?

Answer: Christian glossolalia, or speaking in tongues, began about 1900 among Pentecostals. Since the 1960s, it has spread rapidly among Christians globally, affecting nearly every denomination. Since the 1960s, linguists & others have done extensive research in glossolalia as practiced among Christians & non-Christians. Their major conclusions follow: **First**, it exists among many non-Christians and even among some non-religious people. **Second**, there is no linguistic or structural difference between Christian & non-Christian, Western & Eastern, or religious & non-religious glossolalia. **Third**, it’s definitely not a human language of any kind, living or dead. **Finally**, it can be learned, subconsciously or consciously.

3. What should this linguistic evidence lead Bible-believing Christians to conclude?

Answer: **First**, would the Holy Spirit give the same gift to non-Christians, like shamans and spirit mediums? Certainly not! **Second**, if glossolalia can be taught and learned, then how can it be a supernatural gift from the Holy Spirit? Spiritual gifts can be improved upon by using them. But the Bible is too clear that all spiritual gifts are initially given by the Holy Spirit, not learned. **Third**, Scripture tells us to “Test all things...” (**I Thessalonians 5:21**). But experiments have been conducted in which several Christians were each separately asked to interpret the meaning of a recorded message in “tongues”. No single interpretation came close to being the same. When told that news, they just replied that God had given different messages through the 1 message. Of course, **(a)** then it cannot be a language—of the Holy Spirit or of angels—if the same “language” message can have multiple meanings; and **(b)** there’s no legitimate way to test it. All of this should lead the honest Bible-believing Christian to conclude that glossolalia is just what it sounds like—gibberish!

4. So what is the real New Testament gift of tongues?

Answer: Even most modern Christian tongues-speakers agree that the gift of tongues in **Acts 2** (& elsewhere, i.e. **Acts 10, 19, & Mark 16:17**) was the supernatural ability to speak in a foreign human language that the speakers had not learned. It’s the gift of tongues in **I Corinthians 14** that they believe is different—the language of angels or of the Holy Spirit. Understanding what Paul meant in this chapter is made difficult by different translations adding words not in the Greek text and in translating the same Greek word in different ways within the chapter. However, in the Greek text Paul’s use of the words for “tongue(s)” and “to speak”, when used together **and** separately, is fully consistent with usages elsewhere in the New Testament, which always refer to human language. This is confirmed by **14:21**’s quote from **Isaiah 28:11-12**, which in context, means that since God’s people didn’t listen to prophets who spoke their own Hebrew language, God will speak to them through foreign languages (i.e. Assyrian & Babylonian) in judgments on Israel & Judah. Also, in harmony with the sound principle of interpreting the more obscure by the clear and plain, we conclude that there is only 1 spiritual gift of speaking in tongues, and that is the same as throughout **Acts & Mark 16:17**—the supernatural gift of speaking in a foreign language that the speaker had not learned.

Lesson 34—Christian Worship

1. What is Christian worship?

Answer: The word for **worship**, and its related words, in both the Biblical Hebrew & Greek have the following meanings: (a) “to prostrate”; (b) “to kiss”; (c) “reverence”; (d) “fear” or “awe”; (e) “glory”; (f) “honor”; & (g) “respect”. By combining these key words, we may define Christian worship as “the giving of extravagant honor, respect, and devotion to God with a sense of awe (humility) that one is in the presence of Almighty God.”

2. Who does not really need our worship?

Answer: First, God doesn’t actually need worship because He is complete in Himself, that is, He is self-sufficient. If He needed anything from any creature, He would not be self-sufficient, which is to say that He wouldn’t be God. So while He desires our worship, He doesn’t really **need** it. **Second**, if God wanted worship for His own sake, He would be the greatest egomaniac in the universe. Instead, “...God is love” personified (I John 4:8), the opposite of an egomaniac.

3. Why should we worship God if He does not really need our worship?

Answer: First, worshiping God brings the worshiper joy, faith, & peace because he is in the very presence of God, who is the Source of joy, faith, & peace. **Second**, it ennobles the character of the worshiper, for Scripture declares that by “...beholding...the glory of the Lord, [we] are changed into the same image from glory to glory...” (II Corinthians 3:18). In other words, we need to worship God because it transforms us to be more like Him in character.

4. Is God concerned with how we worship Him?

Answer: “...the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.... God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24). **First**, if there are true worshipers, then there must also be false worshipers, even of the same God. Let this point sink in, for many Christians think the enemy of God are those who openly ignore or hate Him. But the enemy of false worshipers is also inside the Christian Church. **Second**, this must mean that God does care how we worship Him. In our text, Jesus emphasizes the necessary balance between one’s heartfelt worship (emotions, **spirit**) and one’s intellect (mind, **truth**). We need both, but not one without the other. There should be an atmosphere of awe and humility but also joy, for “...In Your presence is fullness of joy...” (Psalm 16:11).

5. Toward Whom is true worship directed?

Answer: In Revelation 4:10-11 & 5:11-12, worship in heaven itself is definitely directed toward God. It’s God-centered, not believer-centered. In other words, worship is about God, not about us and how we feel. But the use of worldly music and the make-over of the platform into a stage is more about entertainment than worship—appealing to the comfort zone of people rather than to their consciences. Instead of the Church influencing the world’s culture, worldly culture has influenced the Church in more recent decades. We will address some specifics in our next Lesson.

Lesson 35—Worldly Worship Practices

1. Should the Church borrow worship practices from its surrounding culture to worship the true God?

Answer: Deuteronomy 12:29-31 is explicit in warning God's people not to adopt the worship practices of the culture around them even when it's used to worship the one true God. This means that it's **God** who determines how we should worship Him. If we go to others to adopt their practices from their cultures in order to attract people to the Church, for example, then **man** is actually dictating how we worship, not God. Yet some churches openly declare they have the right to adopt pagan practices & customs and "baptize" them & use them in the Church. And even other churches that don't make that claim have succumbed to the temptation to attract members by offering them non-Christian elements from the world.

2. Is there an appropriate place for applause in public Christian worship?

Answer: "Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph!" (**Psalm 47:1**). This is the only place in Scripture that mentions clapping in a worship context. This was a psalm (song) to the triumphant God who rules over all the earth. But it was a song to be sung, not a literal command to clap & shout. In our day, applause is identified with entertainment across cultural lines, and as already mentioned in Lesson 34, entertainment in worship is a false, believer-centered worship rather than a true God-centered worship. Say a hearty "Amen" or "Hallelujah" when you appreciate something you hear in worship. That tells the person or persons speaking, praying, or singing that you appreciate them while at the same time putting the emphasis on praise to God.

3. Is it appropriate to raise one's hands toward heaven in great enthusiasm during worship?

Answer: All of the Biblical references to raising hands are associated with prayer. Thus, none of them is equivalent to the modern charismatic practice of raising hands with the fingertips pointing up in an attempt to get a tingling feeling as part of an "excitement" style of worship. In fact, the charismatic hand-raising practice is exactly what you would see at a rock concert—hardly conducive to true worship. Moreover, this form of hand-raising is also related to what sun-worshippers do, a pagan practice that we should avoid even the appearance of. At best, this practice is a believer-centered kind of worship in which the focus is on how worship makes the worshiper **feel**. As such, it's out of place in the Christian worship of God.

4. Is the use of drama appropriate in a public Christian worship service?

Answer: A dramatic production, from a skit to a more elaborate play, can be a very good teaching tool. However, it's difficult to see how the worshipers would not view it as a **performance** by actors, who would naturally get the attention of the worshipers. But true Christian worship should always point upward to **God alone** and not allow those leading out to distract from that God-centered approach. As a performance, the use of drama in a public Christian worship service is actually entertainment. And while even Christian entertainment can lead people to a better understanding of Biblical stories & truths, the format itself is not appropriate for public worship per se. Such dramatic presentations would be appropriate in non-worship settings, where we would find no objections to it, as long as it were faithful to the Bible stories and truths. Since Christian worship, as defined in Lesson 34, is "the giving of extravagant honor, respect, and devotion to God with a sense of awe (humility) that one is in the presence of Almighty God", dramatic presentations—even overly dramatic preaching—tends to focus people's attention on the performance and is thus inappropriate for public Christian worship services.

Lesson 36—Music in Worship

1. Does it make any difference what kind of music is used in Christian worship as long as the lyrics are good?

Answer: Pagan Greek philosopher **Aristotle** (d. 322 B.C.) wrote: “Music directly imitates the passions or state of the soul...and if over a long time he habitually listens to the kind of music that rouses ignoble [base, inferior] passions, his whole character will be shaped to an ignoble form” (*The Politics*). We all know that different kinds of music promote different moods or atmospheres, and Hollywood has become expert in using different kinds of music to promote the mood it desires for a particular scene in a movie. So how can Christians say that, when it comes to worship of Almighty God, any kind of music is acceptable? The music itself should be carefully selected to elicit the right mental frame of mind for worship.

2. Is the use of musical instruments a worldly worship practice that should be avoided in Christian worship?

Answer: In the worship scene in heaven, recorded in **Revelation 5:8-9**, each had a **harp**, “And they sang a new song...” This indicates that their singing to God was accompanied by a playing of harps. In this scene, the **Lamb** [Jesus] is being worshiped—which certainly makes it Christian worship. Therefore, the use of musical instruments per se should not be forbidden in public Christian worship. Besides, modern Christians who deny the use of musical instruments in Christian worship discount the Old Testament in general, even though it was the 1st Bible of the early Church—and the Old Testament plainly gives much instruction for the use of singers and players of instruments in public worship of the true God (see **I Chronicles 25**, which mentions **harps**, other **stringed instruments**, & **cymbals**; cf. **Nehemiah 12:41-42, 46-47**).

3. What elements of music besides volume and tone are necessary for good music?

Answer: **First**, there is **melody**. The part of the brain that listens to melody is concerned with the **emotional** & spiritual side of a person. **Second**, there is **harmony**. The part of the brain that listens to harmony is the **intellectual** part because harmony creates a more complex structure than melody alone. **Finally**, there is **rhythm (beat)**. People respond to this on a physical & emotional level when the rhythm or beat is strong & dominant. Rhythm is important, however, because it binds a piece of music together by giving it real structure. In Lesson 34 we emphasized true worshipers worship God in “spirit and truth” (**John 4:24**), that true worship must balance the emotional and intellectual elements.

4. Is syncopation inherently bad and out of place in Christian worship?

Answer: Syncopation exists when a beat is on the off-beat, which is not bad in itself. But repetitious syncopation creates confusion between the left & right hemispheres of the brain. Heavy, dominant beats (syncopation only heightens this effect) eventually put people into at least a partial trance-like state in which the senses are numbed. This kind of music also **(a)** loosens up the hips so they begin moving in a sensual way, and **(b)** attacks the nervous system in which blood pressure & heart rate are increased. All pagan worship all over the world, historically and today, emphasizes beat. But Christian music should instead emphasize melody & harmony, which affect the emotional and intellectual parts of the brain.

5. Would you summarize the principles of good Christian worship music?

Answer: **First**, the characteristics of good music in general are that **(a)** melody & harmony exist, not a clashing of sounds; **(b)** rhythm (beat) is subordinate to the melody & harmony; and **(c)** there is no monotonous repetition of sound patterns, which have the potential to place the listeners in a trance-like state (like Eastern mantras). **Second**, worship music should **(a)** be joyous & reverent, and **(b)** not easily identifiable with secular music or themes (see **Ezekiel 44:23** about the need for God’s people to know “the difference between the holy and the unholy...”). **Finally**, worship music lyrics, if any, should **(a)** reflect accurate Biblical truth; **(b)** be more God-centered than believer-centered; and **(c)** avoid a monotonous repetition of phrases (no mantras).

Lesson 37—Entertainment, Gambling, and Sexuality

1. What kind of music should Christians listen to?

Answer: In Lesson 36, we covered the general music principles that make good music. It must have its rhythm (beat) subordinate to the melody & harmony, and any syncopation should be occasional & not excessively repetitive. Both the music & the lyrics (if any) should avoid a repetitive nature that has a tendency to become a mantra that could even partially alter one's state of consciousness. Finally, any lyrics must be not violate Christian values.

2. What's wrong with a little dancing between friends?

Answer: **First**, note that Scripture never speaks approvingly of dancing between the two sexes. The reason is obvious that such dancing encourages sexual feelings & thoughts, whether it's slow dancing or more modern styles of hip-moving dancing that accentuate sexual body parts. **Second**, even dancing with the same sex in Scripture is always a celebratory dance. **Finally**, we acknowledge that ballet dancing is more an art form that we can't object to.

3. What principles should guide Christians' choices of entertainment?

Answer: **Philippians 4:8** is the premier text in this area, which recommends only those things that are noble, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. If we are honest with ourselves, this leaves very little room for most forms of entertainment today. Specifically, sex, sexual innuendos, foul language, explicit violence, anti-authority sentiments, anti-Christian messages, and anything that undermines the Christian lifestyle should be avoided. Attendance at carnivals & theme parks may occasionally relieve stress. But care should be given that one doesn't get addicted to sheer physical pleasure, for that would undermine the spiritual soberness that every believer should possess.

4. Is gambling a sin? And what constitutes gambling?

Answer: "A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished" (**Proverbs 28:20**). The Bible also says that "...You shall love your neighbor as yourself..." (**Mark 12:31**). Gambling always involves a chance in which the player pays for the long shot of winning at the expense of others. This includes, but is not limited to, poker & other betting games, betting on sporting events (including office pools), casino gambling, lotteries, children betting with marbles, and so on. **First**, gambling tends to undermine the work ethic in an attempt to "get rich quick". **Second**, it violates the spirit of loving your neighbor as yourself, for you are attempting to take something of value from your neighbor on the basis of luck. **Third**, gambling is highly addictive to many people, so the Christian shouldn't engage in any activity which is addictive or might encourage others, who might become addicted. **Finally**, the use of playing cards, because of their much association with gambling, should be avoided lest you inadvertently influence others to engage in gambling.

5. Is there a spiritual dimension to sex, and if so, what are the major implications?

Answer: "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (**Genesis 2:24**). "...he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her?But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him" (**I Corinthians 6:16-17**). These texts make it clear that the sexual act between married couples represent the spiritual union that each one should have with God. Thus, any sexual activity outside of marriage breaks the spiritual union with God and is thus sin. On this basis alone, we must conclude that casual sex, sex with a prostitute, adultery, incest, rape, homosexual practice, bestiality, and masturbation are all sinful behaviors. See also **I Corinthians 7:2; 6:15-16; Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 20:10-12; Deuteronomy 22:23-29; and Leviticus 18:22-23**. **NOTE:** One may be born with homosexual feelings, but that doesn't excuse yielding to that temptation any more than someone born addicted to alcohol is justified in yielding to the practice of drinking. By God's grace, the Christian can resist temptation and live a godly life.

Lesson 38—Holidays, Secret Societies, and Eastern Influences

1. May Christians safely observe certain Christian holidays?

Answer: **Regarding Christmas**, we know that Jesus wasn't born on December 25 because shepherds in Judea are not in the hills with their flocks during the winter. That date was selected in the 4th century because it was the holiest day in the pagan sun-worshipping world at the time. But celebration of the Incarnation of God in human flesh is certainly an event worth celebrating. If it's observed without over-commercializing, we find no objection to Christmas, because observing it doesn't cause a person to break any of God's Law or other Bible standards. **Regarding Easter**, its very name is derived from the ancient Babylonian fertility goddess (Ishtar). While it celebrates the resurrection of Jesus, an event worth celebrating, its observance was pushed by the Roman Church in association with its pushing of weekly Sunday observance. Thus, this holiday is connected with anti-Sabbath practices and should best not be observed in any explicit religious service. Moreover, the use of hot cross buns & Easter eggs both originated as sacred food in various ancient pagan religions. **Regarding Halloween**, the very name refers to the evening before All Saints' Day, set up in the Medieval Church to honor the saints of the Church. But in Lesson 14 we learned that all believers are called **saints** and that the whole theology of Catholic & Orthodox saints distracts from the glory due Jesus, who alone has the righteousness to save us. Then there is the unbiblical teaching about ghosts & goblins. Finally, the "trick or treat" mentality, when you stop to think about it, teaches our children to extort things on threat of mischief. We suggest using Halloween time to have children collect canned goods for the needy, followed by a spiritually-safe party back home or at the church.

2. Should Christians join secret societies like the Freemasons?

Answer: "Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers..." (II **Corinthians 6:14**). Many falsely believe that secret societies are harmless, charitable organizations. **First**, many of them (including Freemasons) are actually religious groups who recognize an unknown deity to whom they pray & conduct forms of worship. **Second**, they all have different levels of membership, & their members' activities are hidden to members below them. They are so shrouded in secrecy that an ordinary member has no idea what the higher levels are doing. **Third**, many oaths are required in most of these societies, oaths that usually promise blind obedience to higher members. **Finally**, the trappings like secret hand signals & passwords violate the spirit of humility by tending to puff up the members who have knowledge that others don't yet possess. Therefore, it's certainly contrary to Christian principles to be a part of a secret society.

3. Aren't Eastern meditation, astrology, tarot cards, palm readers, séances, and Ouija boards innocent fun?

Answer: All Eastern meditation techniques are designed to alter one's state of consciousness so that he can feel a oneness with himself and/or some god. This means that the mind is eventually emptied of all conscious thought. Jesus told the story of a man whose demon left him, & when he returned, he found the man's house empty & swept clean. So the demon found 7 other demons, & they all entered the man so that he was worse off than before (see **Matthew 12:43-45**). The Bible teaches that demons are real supernatural, evil beings who are out to deceive the world (see **Revelation 16:14**). Thus, engaging in the activities mentioned in the question above, or in other related activities, is literally playing with the Devil, which no Christian should ever do (see **Deuteronomy 18:10-12**). Therefore, these things are not innocent fun at all. Instead, Christians should avoid any occult practices and those who practice them at all costs! The problem is that too many Christians today act like they don't believe that Satan & his demons are actually real spiritually evil beings. Therein lies the danger, for that's exactly what Satan wants us to think so he can more easily deceive us!

Lesson 39—Dietary Lifestyle

1. Can't Christians eat anything they want to as long as they eat in moderation?

Answer: The Bible makes clear that God is just as concerned about our physical health as He is about our spiritual health (see **III John 2**) and that the Christian's "...body is the temple of the Holy Spirit..." (**I Corinthians 6:19**). As such, our bodies belong to Him, not to us. So if His Word says something is not fit for food, then we ought to pay close attention since He was also the One who made our bodies in the 1st place.

2. What was mankind's original diet, and how did things change?

Answer: The original diet consisted of fruits, nuts, & grains (see **Genesis 1:29**). Vegetables were added only after sin entered the world (see **Genesis 3:18**); we know this to be the correct interpretation because botanically speaking, a vegetable is any plant food in which the plant itself dies if you eat the vegetable (& there was no death before sin). Finally, after the global Flood, meat was permitted (**Genesis 9:3**), although that was in the context of Noah already knowing the distinction between clean & unclean animals (**Genesis 7:2**). Additionally, **Leviticus 3:17** tells us to avoid eating the blood or fat of any animal (even the clean ones).

3. How does the Bible distinguish between clean and unclean animals?

Answer: For **land animals**, a clean animal must meet 2 criteria: **(a)** have split hooves, and **(b)** chews the cud (see **Leviticus 11:3**). Meat typically eaten in modern nations considered clean include the cow, lamb, goat, & deer. Those typically eaten that are unclean include the pig and rabbit. For **water creatures**, whether saltwater or freshwater, a clean creature must meet 2 criteria: **(a)** has fins, and **(b)** has scales (see **Leviticus 11:9**). Clean creatures typically eaten include perch, trout, haddock, & halibut. Those considered unclean include catfish, lobster, shrimp, crab, clam, scallop, oysters, & all mammals that live in the water. For fowl (birds), there are no rules. But the long list of unclean birds given in **Leviticus 11:13-19** are all scavengers or birds of prey. This means that chicken, turkey, quail, & duck are considered clean.

4. How is the issue of clean and unclean meats relevant to modern Christians?

Answer: Many mistakenly believe that the ancients didn't have the means to adequately cook their meat, but that since we do, the distinction between clean & unclean meats is no longer relevant. Unfortunately, that's just not true. Furthermore, even cooking meat very well done, while that's certainly a good practice, does not avoid some of the important dangers in eating unclean meat. Common to almost all categories of unclean animals is that they are either scavengers that will eat anything, or that they routinely eat their own dung. They provide a positive service of cleaning up garbage & chemical pollutants. But that is precisely why we shouldn't eat them. Even non-religious researchers have confirmed that what the Bible calls unclean meat is toxic to humans. Modern science also confirms that harmful viruses & bacteria especially tend to congregate in the blood & fat of animals, so there's good reason to avoid eating those parts of an animal. All of this evidence confirms that God had His people's physical health in mind when He classified animals as clean & unclean. And since there's no difference in the digestive system of Israelites, Jews, & Gentiles, these health laws were meant for all people at all times. This might not be popular, as most people use their taste buds to determine what they will eat. But God's Word ought to be taken seriously by those who are called by His name! After all, He knows what's best for us.

Lesson 40—Objections to God's Dietary Laws

1. Didn't Jesus declare all meat clean somewhere in the New Testament?

Answer: Jesus did say "...that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?" (**Mark 7:18-19**). Some scholars believe that the phrase thus purifying all foods was added as Mark's comment rather than something Jesus said. But that really is beside the point, for the context is not about what foods were clean and unclean in the 1st place. Instead, Jesus' critics accused His disciples of not washing their hands "...according to the tradition of the elders..." (**v. 5**) "...in a special way" (**v. 3**), which had nothing to do with hygiene but of ceremonial washings contained in the Oral Law, a law that God never gave to Israel. Therefore, Jesus accused them of "...Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (**v. 7**). In this context, what Jesus meant was that not following their man-made traditions of ceremonial washings didn't make the food defile them. Since the subject was not food at all, it's not proper to draw any conclusions about clean & unclean foods.

2. But didn't Peter have a vision in which God told him to eat all kinds of unclean animals?

Answer: In **Acts 10:9-16**, Peter had a vision of a sheet with all kinds of unclean animals on the sheet in which he was told to "...kill and eat" (**v. 13**) three times. However, Peter protested that "...I have never eaten anything common or unclean" (**v. 14**), to which God responded by declaring, "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (**v. 15**). While contemplating this vision, certain Gentiles came from a centurion named Cornelius, telling Peter that Cornelius wanted him to come to his house and talk to him. So Peter did, and when he arrived he referred to the fact that Jews didn't enter a Gentile's house, & then declared: "But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (**v. 28**). To conclude that God was **also** cleansing all meat is to ignore the context. The vision had nothing to do with food, but with people that Peter (& other Jews) thought were common & unclean. In fact, Peter's vigorous protest that he didn't eat unclean animals proves well after the cross that this apostle certainly didn't understand Jesus as having cleansed all meat. Thus, this is a strong passage affirming that what Leviticus 11 calls unclean is still unclean for Christians!

3. Didn't Paul teach that every meat is good if you receive it with thanksgiving?

Answer: Paul did write that "...some will depart from the faith,...commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For every creature is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (**I Timothy 4:1-5**). **First**, note that the context concerns food that can be received with thanksgiving "...by those who believe and know the truth." **Second**, that truth concerns food that is sanctified by God's Word and prayer. Do we really believe that prayer alone can make a glass of poison clean & acceptable to drink, for example? Therefore, this passage is not speaking of clean versus unclean meat, but about food that "...God created to be received with thanksgiving...." And it's **God's Word** that tells us the **truth** about which foods have been **sanctified** to eat and can be received with thanksgiving.

Lesson 41—Christians and Alcohol

1. May Christians drink alcoholic beverages in moderation as long as they do not get drunk?

Answer: “Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly; At the last it bite like a serpent, And stings like a viper” (**Proverbs 23:31-32**). **First**, both the Old Testament Hebrew & New Testament Greek words for “wine” can refer to either unfermented wine (grape juice) or fermented wine (alcohol content). Sometimes the context is not clear as to which form of wine is being discussed. Here in Proverbs the context is clear that it’s fermented wine. **Second**, please note that it’s the **very nature** of this kind of wine which is condemned, not just its abuse. **Finally**, modern science tells us that even small amounts of alcohol 1st begins to affect the frontal lobes of the brain—that part where our conscience & moral judgments are made. How can a Christian advocate anything that even in small amounts affects that part of our brain?

2. But didn’t Jesus make wine as His first miracle?

Answer: Jesus’ 1st recorded miracle was to turn water into wine at a wedding feast He attended in **John 2**. The question is what kind of wine it was. John tells us that there were 6 stone water pots each containing 20-30 gallons. When they ran out of wine, Jesus told them to fill the pots with water and take it to the master of the feast. When the master of the feast tasted it, he said: “Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!” (v. 10). It’s often assumed that the Greek for **well drunk** means that the guests were already drunk. Thus, when Jesus made water into wine, He must have made the same kind of wine—fermented wine. However, that Greek word is sometimes used in the Bible with the sense of “freely drinking” without reference to intoxication. Here it could **not** have been fermented wine for 2 reasons: **First**, if the guests were already drunk, their taste buds would have been dulled so that no one could taste that Jesus’ wine was of better quality. **Second**, if the guests were already drunk, then Jesus would have enabled them to become even drunker; and all Christians agree that Jesus would never contribute to anyone’s drunkenness. Therefore, the wine that Jesus made was unfermented, that is, pure grape juice.

3. Didn’t the apostle Paul tell Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach’s sake?

Answer: “No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for our stomach’s sake and your frequent infirmities” (**I Timothy 5:23**). Even if the wine here were fermented wine, it is advocated only in **little** doses for medicinal purposes. However, the testimony in ancient times was that unfermented wine was better for stomach ailments. Thus, it could well be that Paul told Timothy to use a little [unfermented] wine because the local water may have not been of the best quality.

4. Are there other substances that Christians should avoid in addition to alcohol?

Answer: Yes. Any substance that is inherently addictive should be avoided because such a substance tends to control the person. But a Christian should only be controlled by the Holy Spirit, although He doesn’t control in the same stifling way that addictive substances control people. Among other things, this means that Christians should avoid tobacco & caffeine—in addition to all the medical problems now known to be caused by these substances. And naturally, the use of recreational drugs and the abuse of medications should be avoided.

Lesson 42—Christian Dress Standards

1. How is what we put on our bodies a spiritual issue?

Answer: It was only after Adam & Eve sinned that they knew they were naked (**Genesis 3:7**). Therefore, spiritual nakedness was the issue. The same text says that they made clothes out of fig leaves sewn together. But this was not sufficient because God Himself "...made tunics of skin, and clothed them" (**Genesis 3:21**), implying that an animal must have been sacrificed. Since this was a spiritual issue, that animal must have represented Jesus, the Lamb of God who would one day die for the sins of the whole world (see **John 1:29**; **I Peter 1:19**). Therefore, the fig leaves Adam & Eve made for themselves represented righteousness by works, and the animal skins that God clothed them with represented righteousness by grace through faith in Jesus. Thus, ever since that day, physical clothing has been a spiritual metaphor (see **Job 29:14**; **Isaiah 61:10**; **Revelation 3:5**; **7:14**).

2. How does God view the issue of jewelry and ornamentation of the body?

Answer: **Ezekiel 23** condemns Samaria & Jerusalem for being spiritual harlots for serving other gods. So God described them as painting their eyes & adorning themselves with ornaments (see **v. 40**). On the other hand, in **Ezekiel 16**, God figuratively adorned His people with ornaments, bracelets, chains, jewels, earrings, & fancy clothes (see **vv. 11-14**). He then proclaimed that their beauty "...was perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you" (**v. 14**). Other Old Testament passages make the same point: that when God's people put on jewels & paint (ornamentation), God reckons such behavior as reflecting their desire to beautify themselves to attract other lovers (gods) in order that they might save them. On the other hand, when God Himself figuratively adorns His own people like a bride, it's a positive thing that reflects **His** righteousness & glory. We conclude that while God loves jewelry, when we adorn **ourselves**, it's a symbol & reflection of our own self-righteousness. Like the issue of clothing, adorning ourselves represents self-righteousness; but when we allow God to adorn us figuratively, it represents His righteousness!

3. What does the New Testament teach regarding God's people's dress and adornment?

Answer: Paul states "...that the women [should] adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works" (**I Timothy 2:9-10**). And Peter writes: "Do not let your adornment be [merely] outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit..." (**I Peter 3:3-4**). The word **merely** is not in the Greek text of **I Peter 3:3** but supplied by the translators. So Paul & Peter are saying the same thing. **First**, modesty, propriety, & moderation all imply that Christians wear appropriate clothing and such that don't call attention to themselves or accentuate their sexuality. **Second**, fancy & highly decorated hairstyles should be avoided, as well as all ornaments—pretty things that either have no functional purpose, or, even if they do, serve to call attention to the person's body. Instead, Christian adornment should be a good character; in other words, Christian ornaments should be figurative of the righteousness of Jesus rather than a literal calling of attention to the outward body. **Finally**, in harmony with this principle, painting the eyes, lips, & nails simply makes those things living ornaments, which Christians should avoid. Of course, a fancy well-jeweled watch or a fancy pin on a dress can be just as much an ornament as a necklace, bracelet, or ring. Remember: Ornaments are for Christmas trees, not people!

4. Does that mean a married Christian should also not wear a wedding ring because it's jewelry?

Answer: No. Men may call it jewelry, but the real issue is ornamentation, the wearing of items that call attention to the person or accentuate his or her sexuality. A simple wedding ring is a cultural imperative in many cultures today and would thus not be considered an ornament. But it should not be an excuse for opening the door to wearing ornaments.

Lesson 43—Which of God's Laws are still Valid?

1. Should Christians keep God's Moral Law?

Answer: The heart of God's Moral Law is the Ten Commandments. In Lesson 16 we outlined several reasons that they are still valid for all people in all times, including the facts that they were written by God Himself, were written on the most permanent material (stone) in the ancient world, and are a reflection of God's own unchangeable character. The Moral Law also includes other laws based on the Ten Commandments that also reflect God's will for all people in all times. One example is the prohibition against homosexual relations (see **Leviticus 18:22**), which is related to the Commandment against adultery (see **Exodus 20:14**) because both concern sexual sins.

2. Should Christians keep God's Civil Law?

Answer: No. God's Civil Law existed when He had a political nation—Israel, then Israel & Judah. But Peter wrote that when Jesus warned He would give the kingdom of God “to a **nation** bearing the fruits of it” (**Matthew 21:43**), He was speaking of the Christian Church (see **1 Peter 2:9**), whose members are scattered all over the world. Since God only has a spiritual nation now, not a political one, His Civil Law cannot be applied. One example is the command in **Exodus 35:2-3** that anyone who works on the Sabbath should be stoned to death. Of course, that doesn't mean the Sabbath, as part of God's Moral Law, is no longer valid!

3. Should Christians keep God's Health Law?

Answer: In Lesson 39 we outlined that God is just as interested in our physical health as He is in our spiritual health, and that He gave His Health Law based on what modern science has proven to be true concerning physical health. Just because Jesus died on the cross, or that most of us are not Israelites or Jews, doesn't change these facts. Therefore, the Health Law was given for all people in all times, for we also remember from Lesson 39 that at least the general outline of that Health Law was known by Noah even before the Flood—long before there was an Israelite or a Jew.

4. Should Christians keep God's Sanctuary Law?

Answer: No. Even if a Third Temple were built, it would have no significance for Christians because the Sanctuary Law, with its rules for animal sacrifices, priests, & Temple, was **typical** ceremonial law—meaning that it concerned ceremonies or rituals which pointed forward to the 1st coming of the Messiah, who would be the Ultimate Sacrifice and then become the **only** priest (our High Priest) in the heavenly sanctuary (see Lesson 29). Thus, when Jesus fulfilled all of those things—when Type meant Antitype—the Sanctuary Law was no longer necessary; it had been designed originally to be temporary. This is the reason that when Jesus died, the veil in the Jerusalem Temple was torn in 2 from top to bottom by unseen hands (see **Matthew 27:50-51**), signifying that all now have open access to the Father through Jesus.

5. Should Christians keep the Law of Mixtures and other similar laws?

Answer: No. This category of God's Law is **untypical** ceremonial law, laws that point to spiritual truths but have no antitype per se. For example, the Law of Mixtures prohibited Israelites from wearing clothing made of different materials (see **Deuteronomy 22:11**). Yet curtains in the Old Testament tabernacle were made of linen (which is made from flax) & threads, indicating at least 2 types of materials (see **Exodus 26:1, 31**). The oil & incense recipes for the tabernacle were not to be used by anyone for anything else; they were unique & holy (see **Exodus 30:32, 37**). Thus, the Law of Mixtures was given to impress upon people the uniqueness & holiness of the tabernacle and later Temple. Without a Temple, those rules cannot apply. The same is true for laws that required the going to the priest for a ritual cleansing ceremony (see **Leviticus 13-14**) because we have no earthly priests today.

Lesson 44—The Law of the Annual Festivals

1. Did the annual festivals originate at Creation Week so that Christians should keep them?

Answer: “Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and **seasons**, and for days and years...’” (**Genesis 1:14**). The Hebrew word for **seasons** in this text is derived from a word for **appointment** & is variously translated as “appointed time(s)” or “appointed season(s)”, often used in reference to the annual festivals. However, **first**, this word is also used in connection with natural cycles of time involving when animals know when to migrate, and so on, without regard to the annual festivals. **Second**, **Genesis 1:14** forms part of the 4th day of Creation Week, where the natural way to understand **seasons** is to the climatic seasons, which are determined by earth’s movement in relationship to the sun. **Finally**, no one could have observed Passover before the historical night involving the Israelites leaving Egypt had occurred (see **Exodus 12:1-14**). Therefore, we reject the idea that the annual festivals originated at Creation and were thus given for all people to celebrate in all times.

2. What is the origin of the annual festivals, and what does this tell us about whether or not to keep them?

Answer: The annual festivals were given to the nation of Israel, beginning with Passover, the night of their exodus from Egypt (see **Exodus 12:43-51**), & the other festivals shortly thereafter (see **Leviticus 23** for details). They were given to teach salvation truths & events to Israel. Although these truths are still valid for Christians, the festivals were given in the context of ancient Israel’s unique history, national identity, & agricultural economy so that the timing of each festival was tied to the agricultural season in the Middle East. In this context, Christians cannot be required to observe these festivals.

3. Does the absence of the earthly sanctuary system say anything about observing the annual festivals?

Answer: Each of the annual feasts required an animal sacrifice and often also involved priests & the tabernacle (or Temple). This is shown in **Leviticus 23:4-36**, which after a description of the annual feasts—Passover, Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of First Fruits, Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), Feast of Trumpets, Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), and the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths)—**v. 37** summarizes by stating that “These are the feasts of the Lord which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering...a burnt offering...a sacrifice...everything on its day....” In other words, the Bible gives us no indication how to keep the festivals apart from the sacrificial system, earthly priesthood, & earthly sanctuary, none of which exists today nor shall have any valid reason to ever exist in the future. Therefore, we would have to invent a non-Biblical way of observing these feasts, thus placing the Church in the position of having to enforce a manner of observance which lacks the authority of Scripture.

4. Doesn’t the Holy Communion service inform us that the annual festivals no longer need to be observed?

Answer: In Lesson 28 we learned that the Communion service replaced the Passover for Christians. Therefore, when Paul commanded that believers to “...keep the feast [Passover]...” and to do so “...not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (**I Corinthians 5:8**), he obviously referred to a **spiritual** and **continuous** observance rather than to a **literal** and **annual** observance of Passover. And if Passover isn’t to be kept literally by Christians, then none of the other festivals need be kept either.

5. But isn’t there any spiritual value for Christians in the annual festivals?

Answer: They do illustrate spiritual lessons & events in salvation history that ultimately are even more important for Christians. We suggest that the Church might promote spiritual renewal by creating an annual calendar & preparing Bible lessons & sermons that focus on these salvation themes at the special festival times throughout the year. However, that is not the same as actually keeping the annual festivals!

Lesson 45—Are the Dead Really Alive?

1. What happens when a person dies?

Answer: “Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, And the spirit will return to God who gave it” (**Ecclesiastes 12:7**). When a person dies, the 2 elements God used to create him return to their original sources—the dust to the earth & the spirit to God. This *spirit* is the breath of life, as a check of the parallel phrases in **Isaiah 42:5** tells us. Since it’s the spark of life, it doesn’t contain the essence of the person, nor is it immortal. When you turn off an electric light, the electricity returns to its circuit; it’s not the essence of that light bulb. Besides, animals possess the same spirit as people (see **Ecclesiastes 3:19**), and no Christian argues that animals have an immortal spirit or soul.

2. But didn’t Adam and Eve have immortality before they sinned since death came as a result of sin?

Answer: Yes, but according to **Genesis 3:22-24**, God expelled them from the Garden of Eden so they wouldn’t have access to the Tree of Life and live forever. This is called **conditional immortality**—conditional upon their passing the loyalty test & continuing to have access to the Tree of Life. But when they failed their test, they lost their immortality. This means that God did not create them with **innate immortality**, that is, with immortality as a **permanent** part of their nature.

3. Do the righteous dead praise God or know anything at all?

Answer: The Bible teaches that “...the dead know nothing...” (**Ecclesiastes 9:5**), that they don’t remember God (see **Psalms 6:5**), that they “...do not praise the Lord...” (**Psalms 115:17**), and when they die their “...plans perish” (**Psalms 146:4**).

4. What are the two choices for mankind’s ultimate destiny?

Answer: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (**Romans 6:23**). If death were the separation of the body & soul, then Paul would be a liar because death is not life somewhere else. Rather, he contrasts death with life. Note that he didn’t say that the choice was between eternal life in hell or eternal life with Jesus. Note also that eternal life is a gift from God, not something humans possess inherently in their nature.

5. What is the Bible’s favorite metaphor for death, and what does that suggest about the subject?

Answer: Death is described as sleep at least 66 times in 17 books of the Bible (both Old & New Testaments). Those who teach the immortality of the soul insist that the body sleeps but not the soul. **First**, it’s never appropriate to say that the body, apart from the mind, is unconscious because the issue of consciousness especially concerns the mind. Thus, it’s the whole person who sleeps in death, although it’s a dreamless sleep since there are no brain waves. **Second**, sleep implies a later awakening in a resurrection. But what is the purpose of the resurrection if a person’s soul has already gone to its eternal destiny? **Finally**, if there is **no** resurrection, the apostle Paul wrote: “And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished” (**I Corinthians 15:17-18**). If he understood that man has an immortal soul, we would have expected him to say that they would remain alive in hell forever. Instead, he says that without the resurrection, they would “have perished”, which means “to destroy fully”.

6. What is one of the important reasons for the Second Coming of Jesus?

Answer: Jesus said, “...I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (**John 14:3**). If people’s souls go to be with Jesus in heaven immediately after death, then there would be no need for Jesus to return to get them. Therefore, this text proves that God’s saved people don’t go to be with Jesus immediately after death. Instead, they are still in their graves awaiting the resurrection at the Second Coming of Jesus.

Lesson 46—Objections to the Truth about Death, Part 1

1. Don't near-death experiences indicate that people have an immortal soul that survives the body's death?

Answer: While there's still much we don't know about the brain, we do know that when it's partially deprived of oxygen, during some traumatic circumstances such as surgery, a person can hallucinate. Therefore, near-death experiences prove nothing about the state of the dead. More importantly, **John 11** tells the story of Jesus' resurrecting His friend Lazarus after he had been dead for 4 days. Not only did Lazarus say nothing about heaven, neither did he complain about being brought back from the glories of heaven to the relatively dark earth. And that speaks volumes!

2. Isn't there a text that says Jesus brings the dead with Him at His Second Coming?

Answer: "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus" (**I Thessalonians 4:14**). **First**, the Greek word for **so** means "in the same way or manner", thus indicating that just as God raised Jesus from the dead & took Him to heaven, so He will raise the dead in Christ & take them to heaven. This is confirmed by the subsequent verses (**vv. 16-18**) that declare the resurrection occurs 1st and is then followed by the bringing of the saints into the presence of Jesus. **Second**, these facts are used by Paul to comfort the saints (see **v. 18**). If God's people's souls went immediately to heaven upon the death of the body, we should have expected Paul to comfort them by telling them so. Instead, the comfort is in the knowledge that our loved ones are awaiting the resurrection.

3. But doesn't I Thessalonians 3:13 say plainly that all the saints come with Jesus at His 2nd Coming?

Answer: "...He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His **saints**" (**I Thessalonians 3:13**). Note also Jesus' words: "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy **angels** with Him..." (**Matthew 24:31**). **First**, this text in **I Thessalonians 3** would clearly contradict what Paul wrote just 1 chapter later (see Question #2 above) if the interpretation in Question #3 were correct. **Second**, the Greek word for **saints** can also be translated as **holy ones**. Matthew's gospel above tells us that all the holy angels will come with Jesus at His return. Therefore, the **saints** in **I Thessalonians 3** must be the **angels** that accompany Jesus.

4. Didn't King Saul speak with the prophet Samuel after the latter had died?

Answer: According to the story in **I Samuel 28:3-25**, Saul had been rejected by God as king in Israel & was facing a major battle against the Philistines. Since Samuel was dead, Saul desperately went to a witch to see if he could get advice from Samuel. But it wasn't Samuel he spoke to for several reasons. **First**, God had been emphatic in commanding that all witches & other mediums be executed in Israel (see **Leviticus 20:27**). A merciful God wouldn't place a death sentence on anyone attempting to communicate with the dead if it were actually possible to do so. Therefore, any spirits called up would be evil spirits. **Second**, **I Samuel 28:6** states that God had stopped answering Saul by any means. Yet are we supposed to believe that God then used a means which He had condemned in order to speak to Saul? **Third**, we're told that "...Saul perceived that it was Samuel..." (**v. 14**). Since demons can certainly change their appearance, the fact that Saul **perceived** the apparition to be Samuel means nothing. **Finally**, the text says that "Samuel's" spirit ascended "...out of the earth...is coming up..." (**vv. 13-14**). But if the faithful Samuel had an immortal soul, it would have come **down** from heaven, not **up** from the earth. Therefore, the only viable conclusion is that Saul spoke with an evil spirit, and not the prophet Samuel.

Lesson 47—Objections to the Truth about Death, Part 2

1. Doesn't the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus prove that the dead are really alive?

Answer: This story is recorded in **Luke 16:19-31**. If it isn't a parable, as most scholars insist, then its details must be interpreted literally except where an obvious figure of speech is used, such as the use of Abraham's bosom as a Jewish metaphor for heaven. But if it **is** a parable, then we should focus on the 1 or 2 main spiritual points & ignore the details—in which case, this story says nothing about the state of the dead. It **is** a parable, despite the fact the word **parable** is not used in the text, for several good reasons. **First**, neither man is a disembodied spirit or soul because the Rich Man in Hades has **eyes** & a **tongue**, and Lazarus as having a **finger** (see **vv. 22-24**). In fact, the text says that the Rich Man was buried, yet his body was in a place of torment. A body cannot be in the grave & in the traditional concept of hell at the same time! **Second**, the Rich Man pleads for Lazarus to come to him & cool his tongue by dipping the tip of his finger in water first (see **v. 24**). It's absurd to assert that any water obtained by dipping the tip of the finger in water could possibly cool the tongue of anyone being tormented in the flames of hell! **Finally**, the story pictures the gulf between heaven & hell as sufficiently narrow for conversations to occur between people in both places. The obvious figurative language, along with contradictory language if this story were literal, makes this story a parable whether the word **parable** is present or not.

2. So what is the spiritual point of the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus?

Answer: This parable has 2 main spiritual points. **First**, it's in this lifetime that a person determines his eternal destiny; there is no second chance at salvation after death (see **vv. 25-26**). **Second**, when the Rich Man begs for Lazarus to be sent to his brothers so they may avoid hell, Jesus has "Abraham" tell him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (**v. 29**). The Rich Man protests by saying that "...if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent" (**v. 30**). Then Jesus delivers His punchline to this sobering story: "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (**v. 31**). Indeed, the Jewish leaders didn't believe when the literal Lazarus was raised from the dead. More importantly, they didn't believe when **Jesus** rose from the dead! So you see that this parable is not addressing the subject of death or hell. Therefore, we cannot draw any conclusions about either from this story.

3. Didn't Jesus promise one of the thieves on a cross next to Him that he'd be in Paradise with Him that day?

Answer: Jesus said to one of the thieves, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise'" (**Luke 23:42-43**). **First**, note there was **no** punctuation at all in any of the Greek texts; they were added centuries later by scholars. **Second**, we know that the second comma in Jesus' reply to the thief belongs **after** the word **today** rather than before it, because Jesus made His promise on Friday, but Jesus told Mary Magdalene on Sunday morning after His resurrection, "I have not yet ascended to My Father..." (**John 20:17**). Thus, if Jesus had not gone to Paradise even as early as Sunday morning, then He couldn't have been in heaven with the thief on Friday!

4. But didn't Jesus preach to certain people in hell between His crucifixion and His resurrection?

Answer: The text in question is **I Peter 3:18-20**, which reads in part, "...being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison...in the days of Noah...." Did Jesus' spirit, when His body was in the tomb, go & preach to certain spirits in hell? **First**, we know that the word **Spirit** is the Holy Spirit because "made alive" is a clear reference to His resurrection; thus, it doesn't refer to Jesus' spirit. In other words, the text simply says that Jesus preached by the Holy Spirit through Noah to the people in Noah's day. This is confirmed by Peter's statement in **II Peter 2:4-9**, in reference to Noah's day, that the wicked who lost their lives in the Flood are reserved "...under punishment for the day of judgment..." (**v. 9**). Since their fate is sealed, it would have been pointless for anyone to have preached to them in hell. Therefore, "...the spirits in prison..." refer to real flesh-and-blood people in Noah's day who were spiritual prisoners of Satan.

Lesson 48—Objections to the Truth about Death, Part 3

1. Doesn't II Corinthians 5:1-8 teach that the righteous go to heaven immediately after death?

Answer: Read the passage referred to in the question above. It's outlined in terms of its parallel & contrasting terms:

We Groan

earthly house
this tent
mortality
in the body
absent from the Lord

We Desire

building from God
house not made with hands (in heaven)
life (immortal life)
absent from the body
present with the Lord

We Don't Want

Naked
Unclothed

The phrase "absent from the body" (see 2nd column) means to be absent from the sin-affected body (represented by the 1st column) because it cannot be equal to "naked" or "unclothed" since those are things we don't want. Since the 1st column represents this life on earth, and the 2nd column represents what we desire, then the 3rd column, representing what we don't want worst of all, must refer to the condition in death. This means, then, that death doesn't place the believer in the presence of the Lord. This is confirmed by comparing **II Corinthians 5:1-8** with **Romans 8:22-23**:

II Corinthians 5:1-8

we groan
the Spirit as a guarantee
earnestly desiring
further clothed

Romans 8:22-23

groan within ourselves
firstfruits of the Spirit
waiting for
redemption of our body

The "further clothed" experience associated with our future presence with the Lord is equated with the "redemption of our body". So being present with the Lord occurs only after we have received glorified bodies at the Second Coming of Jesus.

2. Can you explain the related text of Philippians 1:23?

Answer: "For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ..." **First**, the Greek word for **depart** is the same as the word **departure** in **II Timothy 4:6**, where both refer to Paul's imminent death. **Second**, in **II Timothy 4:8**, Paul's use of **that Day** and **His appearing** plainly refer to the 2nd Coming of Jesus. So Paul understood that his death would not result in his immediate presence with the Lord, for the latter would occur at the 2nd Coming. So why does Paul refer in Philippians 1:23 to his death (**depart**) and being **with Christ** as if the 1st event led immediately to the 2nd event? We learned in Lesson 45 that death is like a dreamless sleep. Thus, there is no consciousness of the passing of time for the one who dies. Instead, one moment he dies, & as far as he is concerned, the very next moment he's awake!

3. Doesn't the souls under the altar in Revelation show that we have immortal souls?

Answer: This reference is found in **Revelation 6:9-10**. **First**, confinement of the alleged souls of martyrs at the base of an altar is hardly a literal picture. **Second**, the symbolism is explained by the Old Testament sanctuary system, in which the blood of sacrificial animals was partly poured out at the base of the Altar of Sacrifice (see **Leviticus 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34**). **Leviticus 17:11** says that the **soul** (or **life**) of a sacrificial animal is in its blood. So when the blood was poured at the base of the altar, it was the same thing as its **soul** (or **life**) being poured there. Therefore, this language symbolically points to Christian martyrs as having been "sacrificed" to God and says nothing about the state of the dead.

Lesson 49—The Pre-Advent Judgment

1. Does the Bible actually teach that a pre-advent judgment will take place in heaven?

Answer: **Matthew 16:27** & **Revelation 22:12** teach that at His 2nd Coming, Jesus will bring His reward to give to each “...according to his work(s).” Paul states that each person’s reception “...according to what he has done...” (**II Corinthians 5:10**) is the result of a process of judgment in a courtroom setting (“...before the judgment seat of Christ...”). And **Daniel 7:9-10** & **Revelation 20:12** demonstrate that some kind of records are used in a divine court process of judgment. Of course, God doesn’t need this for Himself because He knows all things. So He must do it for the angels and possible other intelligent life in the universe because “...God is love...” (**I John 4:8**), & love does more than it has to. In any case, this evidence indicates that there is a Pre-Advent Investigative Judgment that takes place in heaven before the 2nd Coming.

2. Whose names come up in the Pre-Advent Judgment?

Answer: **First**, we know that those who have never claimed to follow God or the light (truth) they were born with (see **John 1:9**) will not come up in this particular judgment because one “...who does not believe is condemned already...” (**John 3:18**). Such people are like those who plead “guilty”; there is no investigative trial phase necessary—just the sentencing & execution of sentence. **Second**, Paul referred particularly to Christians when he wrote that we will all stand “...before the judgment seat of Christ...” (**Romans 14:10**; **II Corinthians 5:10**). This judgment would also include those who have professed to follow the light (truth) they have, even if it’s very little light.

3. If salvation is by grace through faith, why is judgment according to works? Isn’t that legalism?

Answer: Salvation is indeed by grace through faith; but talk is cheap. Anyone can claim to have faith in Jesus, but if his life is not significantly changed, he’s lying or fooling himself. As James declared, “...faith without works is dead” (**James 2:26**), which means that it’s not real faith. It’s not about having a certain level of good works or being perfect. Rather, it’s that your works are the **fruit** of your faith to show whether or not one’s claim of saving faith is valid. So this isn’t legalism at all!

4. Is there a parallel to the Pre-Advent Judgment in the Bible?

Answer: Yes. It’s called the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), discussed in **Leviticus 16** & **23:26-32**. Even today, Yom Kippur is considered a solemn Judgment Day. Note that this Judgment Day only applied to those who lived in Israel, to those who were professed followers of God. If it were determined that someone had not respected the sanctuary system, they were to be “cut off” from the people of God. In other words, this judgment separated the pretenders from the genuine people of God. As the spring festivals in Israel pointed to events surrounding the 1st coming of Jesus (Passover to the cross; Firstfruits to Jesus’ resurrection; Pentecost to the Christian Pentecost in **Acts 2**), so the fall festivals seem to point to events surrounding the 2nd coming of Jesus. Thus, the Pre-Advent Judgment time is the antitypical Day of Atonement.

5. In this heavenly courtroom drama, who is the judge, the prosecutor, and the defense attorney?

Answer: **First**, Jesus is the Judge (see **John 5:22**). **Second**, Satan, whose name means “adversary”, and is called “...the accuser of our brethren...” (**Revelation 12:10**), is thus the prosecutor. **Finally**, Jesus is called the “...Advocate...” (**I John 2:1**), which means He is the defense attorney. What a marvelous thought! If you really belong to Jesus, He is both your defense attorney **and** judge. How can you lose the case with that combination on your side?

Lesson 50—Time of the Pre-Advent Judgment, Part 1

1. Is it possible to determine when the Pre-Advent Judgment begins in heaven?

Answer: Yes. The parallels between the prophecies of **Daniel 7 & 8** show where to start the time calculation. In both chapters, sequential symbolic kingdoms enter the scene that can be traced in history in our day. They are kingdoms because **Daniel 7:3, 23 & 8:20-22** say so; they are sequential because of the language in both chapters (**7:4-7 & 8:3-12**).

Daniel 7

Daniel 8

Interpretation

Lion	_____	Neo-Babylon (power before Medo-Persia)
Bear	Ram	Medo-Persia (8:20)
Leopard	Male Goat	Greece (8:21)
Non-Descript Beast	Little Horn (vv. 9-10)	Rome*
10 Horns on Non-Descript Beast	_____	Divided Western Roman Empire (7:7, 20, 24)
Little Horn	Little Horn (vv. 11-12)	Papal Rome (7:24b-25; 8:11-12, 25 show it to also be a religious power)
Pre-Advent Judgment (7:21-22, 26; cf. vv. 9-10, 13-14, 22, 27)	Cleansing of Sanctuary (8:14)	See under Daniel 7 column

* The popular view that this power is Antiochus IV doesn't fit **8:9's** statement that it "...grew exceedingly great...", which makes it at least as powerful as Medo-Persia ("...became great", **v. 4**) & Greece ("...grew very great...", **v. 8**). Only Rome was comparably as great or greater than those 2 previous kingdoms when it succeeded Greece. Therefore, given all of the content of **Daniel 7 & 8** and well-known history, the interpretations above have to be correct.

2. To what does the 2,300 days in Daniel 8:14 refer?

Answer: First, note that the cleansing of the sanctuary in **Daniel 8:14** is parallel with the Pre-Advent Judgment in Daniel 7, making them both refer to the Pre-Advent Judgment. This is confirmed as Day of Atonement judgment language by the fact that the prophecies move from unclean beasts in **Daniel 7** to clean beasts in **Daniel 8**—and by the fact that the only time in a sanctuary context where both a ram and a male goat appear is on the Day of Atonement (see **Leviticus 16**). **Second**, note that the 2,300 days is literally 2,300 **evenings-mornings**. Since the morning & evening sacrifices in the Temple are always referred to as "morning and evening", this time period must be based on the 24-hour Creation days (see **Genesis 1**), where each day began with the evening portion. Thus, the literal view of the 2,300 days is that they are 2,300 literal days. However, this time period answers the question about the termination of the **vision** in **v. 13**, which literally reads, "Until when the vision, the daily and the transgressions of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?" Translators supply extra words that make it sound like the time only concerns the activities of the little horn. But the Hebrew text makes the question include the **entire** vision, including the work of the little horn. Thus, the 2,300 days begins where the entire vision began, sometime during Medo-Persia's dominance (539-331 B.C.). And **v. 17** states that the vision extends to "...the time of the end", an unspecified period of time that includes several events, including a great time of trouble & a resurrection (see **11:40-12:3**). We conclude, therefore, that the time period must be **symbolic** of a much longer period than less than 6 ½ literal years.

3. What do symbolic days concerning a specific period of time represent in the Bible?

Answer: A symbolic day concerning a specific period of time is used in the Bible to represent one thing—1 literal year, as illustrated in **Numbers 14:34 & Ezekiel 4:6**. This is called the year-day principle. Given the evidence in this Lesson, we must understand the 2,300 days as actually a period of 2,300 literal **years**.

Lesson 51—Time of the Pre-Advent Judgment, Part 2

1. Is there a connection between the 2,300 days of Daniel 8:14 and the 70 weeks of Daniel 9?

Answer: Yes. **First**, most of the time elements in Daniel's prophecies appear near the end of the prophecy (see **Daniel 7:25; 8:14; 12:7, 11-12**). But in Daniel 9, it appears at the beginning. Note the literary pattern between **Daniel 8 & 9**:

A The Prophecy (8:3-12)—**B** Time Element (8:13-14)—**B¹** Time Element (9:24)—**A¹** The Prophecy (9:25-27)

This literary pattern suggests that the 2,300 days in Daniel 8 are related to the 70 weeks of Daniel 9.

Second, the use of 2 Hebrew words, **hazon** (refers to an entire vision) and **mareh** (refers to an "appearance" but which is often translated as **vision**) offers a clue. **Hazon** is used in **Daniel 8:1-2, 13, 15, 17, 26b**, while **mareh** is used in **vv. 16, 26a, & 27**, where it's specifically identified as "...the vision [**mareh**] of the evenings and mornings..." (**v. 26a**)—which **v. 27** says Daniel didn't understand. Then in **Daniel 9:23**, when Daniel had not seen either a **hazon** or a **mareh** since **Daniel 8**, Gabriel tells him he has come to explain **the mareh**, which would have to mean the appearance of the 2 heavenly beings in **Daniel 8:13-14** discussing the 2,300 days. Then the angel proceeds to talk about time (see **v. 24**). Therefore, the 2,300 days of **Daniel 8** is definitely linked with the 70 weeks of **Daniel 9**.

2. What is the meaning of "Seventy weeks are determined..." in Daniel 9:24?

Answer: The verb **are determined** literally means **are cut off**. We know that several centuries later, that verb also had an extended meaning of **are determined**. However, in the Jewish Mishnah, written about 750 years after Daniel, the verb's primary meaning was still **to cut off**. Moreover, there existed other Hebrew words for **are determined**, 1 of which is used twice in **Daniel 9 (vv. 26-27)**. We conclude that whether a double meaning is meant here or not, at least the primary meaning was **to cut off**. Time can only be cut off from another, longer period of time. Given the evidence in Question #1 above, the 70 weeks must be cut off from the longer 2,300 days.

3. But should the 70 weeks be cut off from the beginning or the end of the 2,300 days?

Answer: **Daniel 9:25** states that the beginning of the 70 weeks was "...from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem...." Since this command was given by a Persian king, and we saw in our previous Lesson that the prophecy in **Daniel 8** began during the period of Medo-Persian dominance, then the 70 weeks must be cut off from the **beginning** of the 2,300 days. Therefore, the beginning date for the 70 weeks is also the beginning date for the 2,300 days!

4. What Persian king's command fits the prophecy, and when was it issued?

Answer: The decrees of Cyrus (c. 537 B.C.) and Darius I (c. 519 B.C.) only gave permission for the Jews to rebuild the Temple. **Artaxerxes I** issued a decree in **457 B.C.** that gave the Jews authority to rebuild the entire city of Jerusalem & to establish a civil government under the umbrella of the Persian Empire. In 444 B.C., the same king gave permission for Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem, where his work consisted of repairing the city walls in just 52 days (see **Nehemiah 6:15**). Therefore, the decree that fits the specifications of **Daniel 9:25** is the one issued in **457 B.C.**

5. So when did the Pre-Advent Judgment in heaven begin?

Answer: To determine a date when moving from B.C. into A.D. time, one takes the total number of years, subtracts the B.C. date from it, and adds 1 because there was no zero year between 1 B.C. and A.D. 1. Thus, 2,300 – 457 = A.D. 1843 + 1 = A.D. 1844. The Pre-Advent Judgment has been going on in heaven since **A.D. 1844!**

Lesson 52—How Will Jesus Come Again?

1. Why is it important to know how Jesus will return?

Answer: It's important because Jesus warned against "...false christs and false prophets [who] will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive..." (**Matthew 24:24**). Then when the real Jesus returns, it will be too late.

2. Will Jesus' return be literal or spiritual in nature?

Answer: Some have spiritualized the 2nd Coming of Jesus by teaching that He will come into people's hearts in a powerful way & change the world through them. But when Jesus returned to heaven after His resurrection, 2 angels told His disciples that "This **same** Jesus...will so come **in like manner** as you saw Him go into heaven" (**Acts 1:11**). Thus, His return will be both **personal** ("This same Jesus...") & **literal**—that is, Jesus will come down from heaven in the sky.

3. Will Jesus' return be visible, audible, and glorious or invisible and secret?

Answer: **First**, it will be visible because Revelation 1:7 declares, "Behold, He [Jesus] is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him..." And Jesus Himself said He will "...appear in heaven..." (**Matthew 24:30**), which will be "...as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west..." (**Matthew 24:27**). **Second**, the sound of a **trumpet** is mentioned as accompanying Jesus' return (**Matthew 24:31**; **I Thessalonians 4:16**), as is the fact that Jesus will **shout** & have **the voice of an archangel** (**I Thessalonians 4:16**). Thus it will be audible, even very noisy. **Third**, it will be glorious, for this event is described as being "...with power and great glory" (**Matthew 24:30**) and is called the "...glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ..." (**Titus 2:13**). There will be nothing secret about the 2nd Coming of Jesus!

4. But if Jesus' coming is like a thief in the night, won't it be a secret event?

Answer: All Christians acknowledge that Jesus will return visibly, audibly, & gloriously. However, a modern popular view is that **1st** He will return secretly like a thief in the night. But after warning that "...the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night" (**I Thessalonians 5:2**), Paul says, "...then sudden destruction comes upon them..." (**v. 3**). And Peter wrote, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (**II Peter 3:10**). In other words, Jesus' return will be like a thief to those who aren't expecting & aren't ready for Him. But it certainly won't be a secret event!

5. But don't the "one taken and the other left" texts suggest a secret rapture of the saints at Jesus' return?

Answer: These texts are **Matthew 24:40-41** & **Luke 17:34-36**, which talk about 2 persons being somewhere together, & 1 is taken & the other left. The popular view teaches that the 1 taken is taken to heaven, while the 1 left is left behind to have a 2nd chance at salvation. Note that in this view both are still living after the rapture. But this view is contrary to Scripture. **First**, the context in both chapters is on a very visible return of Jesus (see Question #2 above for the **Matthew 24** context); and **Luke 17:24** repeats Jesus' statement in **Matthew 24:27** about His coming being like the flash of lightning. So what follows about 1 taken & the other left cannot suddenly be talking about a secret event. **Second**, both chapters compare Jesus' return to the days of Noah, & there was nothing secret about the Flood either! Furthermore, a few were saved in Noah's ark while others were destroyed in the Flood—it wasn't a case where both survived the event. **Third**, where Matthew's account says "...the flood came and took them all away..." (**v. 39**), Luke's account has, "...the flood came and destroyed them all" (**v. 27**). Thus, the 1 taken is taken in destruction, and the 1 left survives & is taken to heaven! This is confirmed in **Luke 17:37**: Just after Jesus said 1 is taken & 1 is left, the disciples asked Him, "Where, Lord?" They knew where the 1 left was (bed, grinding mill, & field), so they were asking where the 1 taken went. Jesus replied, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together." In other words, vultures are eating their corpses!

Lesson 53—What Happens at the Second Coming?

1. What happens to the wicked when Jesus returns?

Answer: In Lesson 52 we learned that the wicked are destroyed, even in “sudden destruction” (**I Thessalonians 5:3**). This is confirmed by Paul’s testimony that Jesus will destroy the wicked “...in flaming fire...” (**II Thessalonians 1:8**) and in both **Revelation 14 & 19**, which in part refer to “...the great winepress of the wrath of God” (**14:19**) & “...the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God” (**19:15**) in which the wicked are destroyed at His 2nd Coming (cf. **14:14; 19:11-16**). If the living wicked are destroyed, certainly Jesus isn’t going to resurrect the wicked who have already died at this occasion.

2. What happens to the righteous dead when Jesus returns?

Answer: Paul tells us that “...in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming” (**I Corinthians 15:22-23**). He teaches the same thing in **I Thessalonians 4:16**: “For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.” So the righteous who have ever died will be resurrected at the 2nd Coming of Jesus.

3. What do all of the righteous experience at the Second Coming of Jesus?

Answer: The righteous, both the living & the resurrected, will be given incorruptible and immortal bodies (see **I Corinthians 15:52-53**). In **Philippians 3:21**, the same author refers to it as the transformation of our bodies “...that it may be conformed to His [Jesus’] glorious body...” In other words, all of the saved at Jesus’ return will experience what scholars call **glorification**—that is, their mortal & sin-affected bodies will be replaced with immortal bodies uncorrupted with a sinful nature. Thus, the saved will be restored to the physical & spiritual perfection of Adam & Eve before they sinned.

4. What happens to the saved after glorification?

Answer: After speaking of Jesus’ visible, audible, & glorious Second Coming and the resurrection of the saints, Paul next declares in **I Thessalonians 4:17** that “Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up [raptured] together with them [resurrected saints] in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” Jesus had earlier declared that “In My Father’s house are many mansions.... I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (**John 14:2-3**). Therefore, the saints go to heaven at the 2nd Coming of Jesus. This information provides us with another powerful fact: that at His Second Coming, Jesus’ feet will **not** actually touch the earth. Instead, His saints rise up to meet Him in the air. Therefore, you can be certain that if some being appears, no matter how majestic or how many genuine miracles he performs, he will **not** be Jesus! You cannot trust your senses; instead, trust only what the Bible teaches about **how** Jesus will return!

Lesson 54—Signs of the End, Part 1

1. Can we know when Jesus is coming again?

Answer: Jesus said that no one knows the day or the hour when He's coming back (see **Matthew 24:36, 42**). However, one can know that it's near by reading the signs, just as you know that summer is near when the fig tree puts on leaves (see **Matthew 24:32-33**). Although we can't predict the day, week, year, or even decade, we can tell from the signs that the 2nd Coming of Jesus must be near!

2. What signs reveal to us that Jesus' return must be near?

Answer: There are at least **6 general signs** that Jesus' return must be near: **First, the Frequency & Intensity of Wars & Natural Disasters.** In **Matthew 24:6-8**, Jesus mentioned wars, rumors of wars, famines, pestilences, & earthquakes, and said that "All these are the beginning of **sorrows**." The Greek word for **sorrows** means "birth pangs" or "labor pains". His point was not that these things of themselves are signs of His soon coming, for we have always experienced these things. But just as a pregnant woman knows that her baby will soon be born because of the increasing frequency & intensity of her labor pains, so the increasing frequency & intensity of manmade & natural disasters tell us that Jesus is about to come. Surely, no one needs to review the statistics to know that these disasters have been occurring with much greater frequency & intensity just in the last couple of decades. See also **Luke 21:25** on global weather running amuck. **Second, Increasing Moral Degeneracy.** Paul says that in the last days self-lovers, greedy people, braggarts, blasphemers, slanderers, those with lack of self-control, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, and so on will become perilous (see **II Timothy 3:1-5**). We certainly see this in our day, and it's in the Church as well as the world. **Third,** Peter predicted that in the last days Christians & former Christians will be included among those who "willfully forget" & **deny the Creation & global Flood** accounts of the Bible (see **II Peter 3:3-6**). This has been true for more than a century, and it's getting worse. **Fourth, the Rise of Spiritualism.** This is based on the 1st lie that Satan told Eve, that she would not die if she ate the forbidden fruit (see **Genesis 3:4**). It's also called New Age, & its foundation is that the dead are not really dead. Modern Western spiritualism began in 1848 with the Fox sisters in the U.S., and we continue to see an upsurge in occultism—even in our television sit-coms; it's everywhere now! Indeed, the spirits of demons are gathering the whole world for a great deception. The only antidote is to know that the dead are really dead in their graves awaiting one of the resurrections (see Lesson 45). **Fifth, the Increased Knowledge of Daniel's Prophecies.** **Daniel 12:4** predicted that Daniel's book would be sealed until "the time of the end", during which knowledge about its prophecies would be increasingly understood. This began to be fulfilled in the Advent Awakening of the early 19th century and has only increased in the 20th & 21st centuries. **Finally,** Jesus foretold that when the **gospel** was **preached in all the world**, the end will come (see **Matthew 24:14**). Today's communication revolution makes it possible for people to hear the gospel globally via the Internet, satellite television, shortwave radio, phone apps, & other means. It's now possible to reach the entire planet for Jesus!

3. What are believers warned against as Jesus' return draws nearer?

Answer: "But take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that Day [Second Coming] come on you unexpectedly" (**Luke 21:34**). Most Christians who are really seeking the Lord and anxiously awaiting His return are not likely to carouse or become drunkards. However, the everyday cares of this increasingly busy life can often lead even the serious-minded believer to get off the right path. So please earnestly seek & ask the Lord every single day to keep your mind on His coming so that you remain on the spiritual path to heaven.

Lesson 55—Signs of the End, Part 2

1. Did Jesus refer to the final tribulation in Matthew 24:15-22?

Answer: No. Jesus warned that when the “abomination of desolation” spoken by Daniel was standing in the holy place, His followers should flee to the mountains (see **Matthew 24:15-16**). **First**, the parallel passage in **Luke 21:20-21** plainly refers to [Roman] armies surrounding Jerusalem, which occurred in the A.D. 66-70 time period. This makes the reference to **Daniel 9:26-27**. **Second**, Jesus is quoted in **Matthew 24:21-22** & **Mark 13:19-20** as saying the tribulation there would be shortened in order to save the *elect*. But the tribulation over Jerusalem was aimed at the Jewish nation, not Christians, & it wasn’t shortened; Jerusalem was utterly destroyed in A.D. 70. This is strong evidence that Jesus suddenly telescoped to a future tribulation sometime after the one in 1st century Jerusalem. **Third**, concerning this tribulation, the **Matthew** text mentioned above & **Daniel 12:1** both contain similar language about a time of trouble such as never was. But Daniel’s tribulation is directed against the wicked forces & results in deliverance of God’s people; it’s not aimed at the *elect*. **Finally**, **Daniel 12:2**’s reference to a resurrection sometime during “the time of the end” (**Daniel 11:40-12:3**) clearly points to the final tribulation, which all agree cannot last very long. Therefore, Jesus’ tribulation in **Matthew 24:21-22** must be a time of trouble such as never was because of its great length of time. Historically, this must refer to the time of great persecution in the Middle Ages, where conservatively 50 million Christians were executed as “heretics” by the Roman Church.

2. Are the heavenly signs associated with the Second Coming literal events or metaphors of God’s judgment?

Answer: Both **Matthew 24:29** & **Mark 13:24-25** mention signs with the sun, moon, & stars in that identical order in loose connection with what we learned above was the tribulation of the Middle Ages. Heavenly signs in the Old Testament do appear to be symbolic of general judgments of God. However, the immediate context in the gospels is the 2nd Coming of Jesus, a very literal, visible event in the sky. Therefore, these heavenly signs must also be literal events in the sky.

3. How does Mark’s gospel relate the heavenly signs to the tribulation of the Middle Ages?

Answer: Mark’s gospel makes it clear that the heavenly signs would at least begin “...in those days, after that tribulation...” (**13:24**). Jesus’ words mean that they would begin in the general time frame but after actual persecution had ended. **Revelation 6:12-13** mentions signs with the sun, moon, & stars in the same order but adds “...a great earthquake...” just preceding the heavenly signs. All of the parallel passages (**Revelation 6:14-17**; **Matthew 24:29-30**; **Mark 13:25-26**) suggest that these signs flow immediately into the 2nd Coming. But if they did so, that would violate the truth that we can’t predict the time of the 2nd Coming. So we should probably expect some interval of time between each sign, with at least the great earthquake & the sign with the sun occurring closer to the end of the Middle Ages persecution.

4. What else can we logically conclude about these signs of Jesus’ return?

Answer: Logically, each sign must meet 4 criteria: (a) it must be a very significant event that would attract attention to it; (b) it must occur in the exact order the Bible says it will; (c) it must occur in lands where many Christians live & could discern it as a sign of Jesus’ return; and (d) it must have a spiritual impact, positive in some & negative in others. Finally, none would have to be supernatural events, because earthquakes are natural disasters, & God can use natural events as signs.

5. Have these signs already occurred, and can we identify them?

Answer: Yes. And we identify them in the next lesson, Lesson 56.

Lesson 56—Signs of the End, Part 3

1. The Lisbon Earthquake

Information: It occurred on Nov. 1, 1755 & was called the Lisbon Earthquake because Lisbon, Portugal was near the epicenter. Even though it wasn't the most devastating earthquake in history, it's still viewed as one of the most important ones, for its effects were felt as far as 1,100 miles away. Many devout Christians viewed this as a judgment warning to be ready for Jesus' return. And many religious skeptics scoffed at those who saw it as a judgment warning & were thus confirmed in their skepticism. In general, Europeans moved into a new period of pessimism as a result.

2. The Dark Day

Information: This event occurred on May 19, 1780 & was a very unusual thick darkness covering an area of about 25,000 square miles in parts of New York, New Jersey, and most of New England in the English colonies. Farm animals behaved as if nightfall had arrived, and people could not see well enough to continue their daily routines. Many went to their churches as thoughts of judgment day were on the minds of large numbers of believers.

3. Moon Turned Blood Red

Information: This occurred on the night of May 19, 1780, following the Dark Day. At first the moon could not be seen at all, despite the fact that it had become a full moon the day before. Then after midnight, the moon appeared, but it was unusually blood red in color until sunrise. More remarkable is the fact that the Greek text of **Revelation 6:12** actually reads, "the whole moon", which fits the fact that the moon had become full just the previous evening. It also seemed to reinforce the spiritual significance of the Dark Day earlier in the same day.

4. Falling of the Stars

Information: This event occurred between midnight and dawn in the early morning hours of Nov. 13, 1833. It was one of the most spectacular meteor showers ever witnessed, and it seemed to cover most of North America. It was so bright at times that people were awakened from their sleep. In harmony with **Revelation 6:13**, this meteor shower gave the optical illusion that "stars" were falling in whatever direction a person was standing—just like a fig tree when shaken by a great wind. It was so significant that it gave birth to our modern scientific study of meteor showers. The religious impact was also quite significant, as many believers viewed it as a fulfillment of the Bible's prediction as a sign of Jesus' return.

5. How could any of these events be signs of Jesus' soon return when they happened so long ago?

Answer: **First**, God reckons time far differently from the way we do. Nevertheless, in the context of world history and however much time preceded that in pre-historic times, even the last sign in 1833 is relatively close to our day. **Second**, remember that these signs were **linguistically** (in **Mark**) connected more with the end of the great time of persecution of the Middle Ages ("...in those days, after that tribulation...") even as they were signs designed to spiritually awaken people to get ready for Jesus' return. **Finally**, they all occurred in the same order that Scripture said they would, & they attracted great attention and had significant spiritual impact on many people. Therefore, they qualify as the signs foretold by Jesus and John the Revelator. That means that we are currently between **Revelation 6:13 & 14**, and the next great "sign" is the Second Coming of Jesus. Given these great signs, and the fact that the Pre-Advent Judgment began in 1844 (see Lessons 50-51), planet earth is on borrowed time. So "...be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (**Matthew 24:44**).

Lesson 57—What Happens at the Beginning and During the Millennium?

1. What event is described in Revelation 19:11-21?

Answer: **First**, a leader on a white horse said to be making war (see v. 11) is Jesus because **(a)** He's called "...The Word of God" (v. 13; cf. **John 1:1, 14**) & **(b)** "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (v. 16). **Second**, v. 15 says that He "will rule them [nations] with a rod of iron", which is a reference to a shepherd's iron end of his rod that he uses to attack wild animals that attack his flock (see **Psalms 2:9**). So this isn't ruling them as a king reigns over a nation. Besides, v. 15's reference to treading a winepress of God's wrath points back to **Revelation 14:14-20**, that refers to Jesus reaping the harvest of the saved & the lost at the 2nd Coming of Jesus. Therefore, the event here is the 2nd Coming of Jesus.

2. What is the relationship between the Second Coming and the millennium?

Answer: At the event described in Question #1 above, the beast & the false prophet are both captured (see **Revelation 19:20**). But **Revelation 16:13** speaks of the unholy trinity of the **dragon**, beast, & false prophet. **Revelation 20:1-2** says the dragon (Satan, see **Revelation 12:9**) is bound for 1,000 years (**millennium** means 1,000 years). Thus, the millennium described in **Revelation 20** continues the story from the 2nd Coming. Therefore, the millennium begins at the 2nd Coming. This is called **pre-millennialism**, the idea that the 2nd Coming precedes & begins the millennium

3. How and where is Satan bound by a great chain at the beginning of the millennium?

Answer: **First**, note that Satan is bound with a chain "...so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished" (**Revelation 20:1-3**). Since the wicked are all dead (see Lesson 53; **Revelation 19:21**), then Satan is bound by a figurative chain of circumstances because he has no one to tempt. **Second**, he is on the earth, not in some cavernous pit deep under the earth, because the Greek word for **bottomless pit** (**Revelation 20:1, 3**) is the same word the Greek Septuagint uses in **Genesis 1:2** for the word **deep**—and it described the earth before God began to create things on it. Thus, **the bottomless pit** aptly describes the entire earth after the destruction of the planet at the 2nd Coming of Jesus.

4. During the millennium, where are the saints and what are they doing?

Answer: **First**, we learned in Lesson 53 that the saints go to heaven at the 2nd Coming of Jesus. So contrary to what most pre-millennialists teach, they aren't ruling with Jesus on the earth during this time. **Second**, **Revelation 20:4** tells us they are engaged in some kind of judgment during the millennium. It can't be the judgment to determine who is saved & lost because that was already determined in the Pre-Advent Judgment (see Lesson 49). Also, it can't be the judgment of the final punishment of the wicked because that will occur **after** the millennium (see **Revelation 20:7, 9**). Therefore, the saints must be given 1,000 years to look at the records in heaven (see v. 12 for the existence of such records). They would naturally have questions about why certain people are in heaven, & why other people aren't there. Since "...God is love..." (**I John 4:8**), He does more than He has to, & opens the records for inspection by the saved. Thus, there will be absolutely no question about the justice & fairness of God throughout eternity!

Lesson 58—What Happens After the Millennium?

1. How is Satan released from his prison at the end of the millennium?

Answer: Revelation 20:7-8 tells us that at the end of the millennium, Satan is released from his prison & attempts to “...deceive the nations...” In other words, he’s released from prison in the sense that all of the wicked dead have just been resurrected in the second resurrection (see v. 5). NOTE: If the **first** resurrection were of the righteous at the 2nd Coming (see Lesson 53 & Revelation 20:6a), and there is a **second death** (see vv. 6, 14), then the resurrection of the wicked must be the second resurrection.

2. What do the wicked attempt to do at the end of the millennium?

Answer: They “...surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city...” in order to attempt to destroy the saints and capture the city (Revelation 20:9). God’s only **beloved** or **holy city** in Revelation is the New Jerusalem (see Revelation 3:12; 21:2). This episode shows that God’s people come back to earth with Him at the end of the millennium with, and probably inside, the New Jerusalem. The wicked attempt to take this city proves that they will never change their minds about God, and that His decision to destroy them is a just one.

3. For whom is the Great White Throne Judgment, and when does it happen?

Answer: Revelation 20:11-13 describes the Great White Throne Judgment as a judgment against the wicked that obviously interrupts them in their attempt to take the New Jerusalem. The description indicates that the wicked will see their own records so that they will fulfill the prediction that eventually every living being will bow before Jesus & admit that He has been correct all along (see Philippians 2:10-11). This isn’t repentance (since they had just attempted to take God’s city), but only an acknowledgment that Jesus is right and, by implication, that they all deserve to die.

4. What happens to the wicked after the Great White Throne Judgment?

Answer: “And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them” (Revelation 20:9). “Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14-15). The wicked receive their final punishment, which Revelation calls the **second death**.

5. Where will the righteous spend eternity?

Answer: Jesus once said, “Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the **earth**” (Matthew 5:5). And immediately following the destruction of the wicked in Revelation 20:14-15, in which death & the grave (Hades) themselves are figuratively destroyed, the very next verse (Revelation 21:1) says that the apostle John “...saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.” Therefore, at the very end of the millennium, God will completely re-create the earth & make it the new capital of the universe (because His city, the New Jerusalem comes from heaven to earth). Then God’s faithful people will live on this New Earth with the Triune God throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. What a glorious thought!

Lesson 59—What Hell is Really Like

1. What do the Biblical words for *hell* tell us about its nature?

Answer: There are 4 words from which *hell* is translated. *Sheol* is the Old Testament Hebrew word, although it's translated as *grave* as often as *hell*. In fact, *grave* would be the accurate translation in every single instance. It's also not a place of punishment since both the righteous & the wicked go there at death (see **Ecclesiastes 9:2-10**). *Hades* is the New Testament Greek word that appears 11 times there. Most scholars recognize this word as the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Sheol*, making it the grave. *Gehenna* is a Greek word that appears 12 times in the New Testament, where it's a transliteration of the Hebrew word for "the valley of Hinnom", a garbage dump outside ancient Jerusalem. A fire was always burning because new garbage was continually being dumped there—including the corpses of the worst criminals. Finally, there is *Tartaroo*, a Greek word that appears only in **II Peter 2:4**, where it's said that the angels who sinned were cast "down to *hell* [*Tartarus*, the noun form of *Tartaroo*] and delivered into chains [better reading, *pits*] of darkness, to be reserved for judgment..." In Greek mythology, Tartarus was a very deep pit that was both a place of torment & also a prison for the Titans. The parallel text in **Jude 6** sheds more light. The Greek text there says that the angels who didn't keep their *first* [domain], but left their own abode, He [God] has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day..." **First**, both texts say that these angels are not now being punished but are being reserved for judgment. **Second**, the first domain of evil angels was heaven (see **Revelation 12:8**), from which they were cast to the earth (see **v. 9**). Therefore, they weren't thrown into any literal pit but to this earth, which in contrast to the brilliance of heaven, must seem like a pit of darkness. We conclude that only *gehenna* is a place of fire & punishment, but the fire didn't go out only because new garbage was always being added—strong evidence that hell is not a place of eternal torment.

2. When will the punishment of the wicked occur?

Answer: **II Peter 3:7** confirms that "...the heavens and the earth...are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition [destruction] of ungodly men." We learned that all the wicked will be resurrected at the end of the millennium & die the second death in the lake of fire (see Lesson 58). Thus, the punishment of the wicked is **future** to our day.

3. What does the Bible mean when it refers to everlasting, or eternal, fire?

Answer: In **Jude 7** & **II Peter 2:6**, what happened to Sodom & Gomorrah is used as an example of what the wicked will later suffer. Jude says those cities are "...suffering the vengeance of eternal fire", while Peter says they were burned to ashes. Thus, **eternal fire** must refer to the fact that the **consequences** of the fire are eternal—not the **duration** of the fire.

4. What is meant by the term "unquenchable fire"?

Answer: Biblical words for **unquenchable** mean the same as in English—that no one can put it out. However, once the fuel has been exhausted, the fire naturally goes out. The Babylonians fulfilled the prediction of Jerusalem's being burned with unquenchable fire (see **Jeremiah 17:27**) in 586 B.C. But Jerusalem isn't still burning today.

5. What does the language of smoke ascending forever and ever mean?

Answer: **Revelation 14:11** & **20:10** speak of torment & smoke of the wicked's torment ascending forever. This language comes from **Isaiah 34**. **First**, it's important to note that **Isaiah 34** is written in Hebrew poetry, which is designed to paint word pictures, with its details not necessarily being taken literally. **Second**, we know they shouldn't be taken literally there because much of that chapter speaks about various animals & plants living in the very place whose smoke ascends forever & ever—which would be literally impossible if fire & smoke were still present. So we must conclude that this poetic language of smoke ascending forever & ever is an idiom that refers to complete destruction.

Lesson 60—The Final Punishment of the Wicked

1. What do the plain, unambiguous Bible texts tell us about the final punishment of the wicked?

Answer: The following are merely represented samples of many similar texts: "...the wicked shall be no more.... The wicked shall perish.... Into smoke they shall vanish away" (**Psalm 37:10, 20**). "May sinners be consumed from the earth, And the wicked be no more..." (**Psalm 104:35**). "...those who forsake the Lord shall be consumed" (**Isaiah 1:28**). "...all who do wickedly will be stubble.... the day which is coming shall burn them up.... they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet..." (**Malachi 4:1, 3**). "...He will burn up the chaff [wicked] with unquenchable fire" (**Matthew 3:12**). "...the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction..." (**Philippians 3:18-19**). "...[the wicked] will utterly perish in their own corruption..." (**II Peter 2:12**). "...And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them" (**Revelation 20:9**).

2. How will God finally punish Satan himself?

Answer: In **Ezekiel 28**, God declares of Satan that He "destroyed you, O covering cherub..." (**v. 16**), "...devoured you..." (**v. 18**), "...turned you to ashes..." (**v. 18**), and promised that "You...shall be no more forever" (**v. 19**). The past tense in the 1st 3 verses is an example of the prophetic past, in which a future event is so certain that God refers to it as having already occurred. If anyone deserves to burn in hell forever & ever, it's Satan, the originator of evil in heaven & earth. But if he isn't going to burn eternally in hell, then neither will any of the human wicked!

3. Is the traditional view of hell compatible with God's justice and with His love?

Answer: By any standard of justice, justice requires that the punishment fit the crime. This is reflected in the Old Testament's Civil Law as well as in every decent human society today. Clearly, the sentencing of a finite sinner to any kind of punishment of infinite duration would violate this principle of justice. For God to cast anyone into a hell of eternal duration would make Him far worse a tyrannical monster than all the human monsters who've ever lived! And we do have the right to reason this way, because God Himself has declared that He is just (see **John 5:30 & Revelation 15:3**). Furthermore, miraculously keeping someone conscious in order that he can feel intense pain whose duration is into the eternal future is definitely not love. Although He won't compel people to choose Him, neither would He inflict any kind of suffering that would endure eternally.

4. What does the cross tell us about the nature of hell?

Answer: We learned in Lesson 11 that Jesus took the punishment that we deserve. And **Revelation 20:10** calls this the "second death", or hell death. But note that Jesus' punishment was **finite in duration**, for He was resurrected & returned to heaven. Yet teachers of an eternal hell would have us believe that it takes an eternity to punish each individual wicked being for his own sins! If that were true, then Jesus should still be on that cross, where He should remain for an eternity. What a preposterous perversion of the gospel the doctrine of an eternal hell is!

5. Will there be degrees of punishment in the lake of fire?

Answer: Jesus told a parable in which a servant who knew his master's will would be beaten with many stripes, while a servant who deserved punishment but didn't know his master's will would be beaten with few stripes (see **Luke 12:47-48**). This parable is in the very context of being prepared for the 2nd Coming of Jesus (see **vv. 35-40**). Therefore, this parable suggests that some will burn longer in the lake of fire than others, depending upon their degree of knowledge about God. But that doesn't negate the truth that eventually every being in the lake of fire will be burned up.

Lesson 61—The Rapture Theory

1. Does the word **Rapture** and/or its concept appear anywhere in Scripture?

Answer: The word itself doesn't appear in Scripture, but the concept does. **Rapture** simply means to be "caught up in the air", & the concept appears explicitly in **I Thessalonians 4:16-17**. After referring to Jesus coming from heaven, Paul states that at that time "...the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up [**raptured**] together with them to meet the Lord in the air...."

2. What's the relationship between **Matthew 24:30-31** and **I Thessalonians 4:16-17**?

Answer: Secret rapture supporters teach that **Matthew 24** concerns the visible, audible, glorious return of Jesus, but teach that **I Thessalonians 4:16-17** concerns the secret rapture when faithful Christians will suddenly disappear instantly to meet the invisible Lord in the air & return to heaven with Him. However, both passages refer to Jesus' coming from **heaven**, with **clouds**, with a **trumpet**, & the **gathering** of His people. **First**, this language strongly suggests they're talking about the same event. **Second**, Paul's passage uses 3 loud words—**shout**, **voice** of an archangel, & **trumpet**. How can he therefore be talking about an alleged secret or invisible event? It defies the obvious meaning of plain words.

3. What do the Greek words tell us about the Second Coming of Jesus?

Answer: The New Testament uses 3 Greek words in connection with Jesus' return: **(a) Parousia**, which means "an arrival & a resulting presence"; **(b) Epiphaneia**, which means "an appearance or a shining forth"; & **(c) Apokalupsis**, which means "a revelation or unveiling". **First**, note that all 3 words refer to a visible event. **Second**, a comparison of **Matthew 24** & **Luke 17** (with *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance*) reveals that all 3 words are used interchangeably to describe the 2nd Coming of Jesus. **Finally**, 25 of 27 times any of these Greek words are used in connection with the 2nd Coming, the word has the definite article (**the**), which means there is 1 Second Coming—not 2 comings or 2 stages of His 2nd Coming. Therefore, the rapture of God's people will occur at the 1 2nd Coming, which will be a visible, audible, & glorious event.

4. What does **I Corinthians 15:51-53** have to do with the Rapture?

Answer: Nothing. Supporters of the popular Rapture theory state that when Paul wrote, "We shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet", the change refers to an instantaneous change in **location** from earth to the sky (invisibly). They base this idea on Paul's reference to **the last trumpet**. Apparently, when the last trumpet was sounded in the wilderness, the Israelites knew that was their signal to begin to move. However, the passage makes its meaning quite clear: "For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (**vv. 52-53**). Thus, the instantaneous change is not a change in location but of **nature**—from mortal to immortal bodies.

5. Won't God's faithful Christians escape having to go through the final tribulation?

Answer: Their favorite text for this is **Revelation 3:10**, which reads in part, "...I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world...." However, the word for **keep** here means "to watch over, preserve, watch". It's the same Greek word Jesus used in **John 17:15** when He prayed, "I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should **keep** them from the evil one." Therefore, the true meaning of **Revelation 3:10** is that Jesus will **watch** & **preserve** His people **during** the tribulation; He will be with them in it & get them through it safely.

NOTE: Please review Lesson 52 for other Biblical reasons that the Rapture won't be secret or invisible.

Lesson 62—Israel and the Church, Part 1

1. What does the Secret Rapture Theory teach about the relationship between Israel and the Church?

Answer: It teaches that all of the blessings promised to Old Testament Israel are unconditional & thus will be fulfilled literally someday. But now God has given the Gospel Commission to the Church, & because He won't have 2 peoples with the same mission operating at the same time, the Church will have to go to heaven before Israel will be restored to God's special people. Also, because the New Testament clearly teaches a visible, audible, & glorious return of Jesus, the Church must be raptured in a secret, invisible coming of Jesus before literal Israel can resume its divine mission & standing.

2. What kind of covenant did God enter into with Israel? And does it support the popular theory of Israel?

Answer: The basic meaning of the word **covenant** is that of a **promise**, which may be one-way (unconditional) or two-way (conditional). At the formal covenant ceremony with the nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai, "...the people answered with one voice and said, 'All the words which the Lord has said we will do'" (**Exodus 24:3**). This was the equivalent of a bride saying, "I do" at her wedding. Indeed, several Old Testament passages quote God as viewing His covenant with Israel like a marriage, with Him as the groom & Israel as the bride. Thus, when Israel strayed far from God, He accused them of spiritual adultery—as in **Isaiah 1:21; 49:18; 62:5; Jeremiah 2:32; 3:1-10; Ezekiel 16:15, 20-22, 27-28, 32-34, Hosea 1:2; 3:1; 4:11-12; & 5:4**. Obviously, then, **God's covenant with Israel was a 2-way covenant**, which meant it was **conditional**.

3. Is the conditionality of God's covenant with Israel made explicit anywhere in the Old Testament?

Answer: The following texts are merely representative samples of such statements: **(a) Exodus 19:5**: "...if you indeed obey My voice & keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people..."; **(b) Isaiah 1:19**: "If you are willing & obedient, You shall eat the good of the land..."; **(c) Jeremiah 17:24-25**: "...if you heed Me carefully...this city [Jerusalem] shall remain forever."; **(d) Zechariah 1:3**: "...Return to Me,' says the Lord of hosts, 'and I will return to you..."; & **(e) Zechariah 6:15**: "...And this [the glories of a restored Temple] shall to come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the Lord your God." Thus, Israel's blessings were always conditional upon her faithfulness to God.

4. Who is the Ultimate Israel?

Answer: In **Galatians 3:16**, Paul really emphasizes God's promises were made to "...Abraham and his Seed...who is called Christ..." Then in **v. 29**, he declares that "...if you are Christ's, then you are Abrahams' seed, and heirs according to the promise." In other words, anyone who belongs to Jesus is included in the expression **Abraham's seed** & thus recipients of the promises made to Abraham & his seed. And since he also emphasized that Jesus was **the** (singular) **Seed** of Abraham, then he is saying that Jesus is the Ultimate Israel all along.

5. What does this truth that Jesus is the Ultimate Israel confirm?

Answer: It confirms & is fully consistent with the Biblical teaching that Israel is primarily a **spiritual** name, originally given to Jacob after he wrestled with the Lord all night: "And He [God] said, 'Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed'" (**Genesis 32:28**). Thus, the name **Israel** means "he contends & prevails with God". This is the equivalent of saying that someone is an **overcomer**. And surely, Jesus overcame Satan in His life on earth & is thus the Ultimate Overcomer (or Ultimate Israel). This is also the reason that Paul declares that not everyone is a Jew or of Israel, but only those who are the **spiritual** children of God, regardless of their ethnicity (see **Romans 2:28-29; 9:6-8**).

Lesson 63—Israel and the Church, Part 2

1. What is the Christian Church called and why?

Answer: After Jesus prophesied that "...the kingdom of God will be taken from you [Jewish people] and given to a **nation** bearing the fruits of it" (**Matthew 21:43**), Peter identified that new **nation** as the Christian Church (see **I Peter 2:9**). The Church isn't a political nation, but a spiritual nation of people scattered around the world among all political nations. Thus, the Church can correctly be called **New Israel**.

2. How does the New Testament apply the Old Testament prophecy of the restored dynasty of King David?

Answer: The prophet Amos predicted that God would "...raise up The tabernacle of David..." (**Amos 9:11**). Note that David's son Solomon built the First Temple, not David. So the word **tabernacle** doesn't refer to the Temple but to the dynasty of David. In **Acts 15:13-16**, the apostle James agreed that God had accepted Gentiles who believed in Jesus & uses that fact to declare that Amos' prophecy about the rebuilding of David's tabernacle had been fulfilled. Therefore, the **Christian Church** is the restored Davidic Kingdom.

3. Who is the King of the Christian Church, and what kind of Kingdom is it?

Answer: Obviously, Jesus is the King of the Church, because when Jesus began His public ministry on earth, He declared that "...the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (**Matthew 4:17**). In other words, the kingdom of heaven is near because **Jesus** was near. Of course, this is His **spiritual** Kingdom that still lives in our hearts (see **Luke 17:21**) or among us because Jesus' presence is among us (alternate Greek textual reading). In another sense, the Kingdom of heaven is yet **future** when Jesus comes as "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (**Revelation 19:16**) at His 2nd Coming. Thus, we speak of the **Kingdom of grace** (spiritual kingdom) & the **Kingdom of glory** (literal kingdom).

4. Is there room for a literal Jewish Davidic kingdom during Jesus' literal Kingdom of Glory in heaven?

Answer: God wouldn't reestablish the Jewish political Davidic kingdom in the Middle East during the time that Jesus' Kingdom of Glory is reigning in heaven because when Jesus establishes His Davidic Kingdom, it will exist for an eternity (see **Daniel 2:44**)—even if there were such a thing as the secret rapture! If Jesus is the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom, which He is, there can only be 1 legitimate Davidic Kingdom ruling at any given time. And if Jesus is ruling in His Davidic Kingdom of Grace now & will rule in His Kingdom of Glory in heaven shortly after His 2nd Coming, there would be no prophetic significance even if an earthly Davidic kingdom were restored on earth, for it couldn't be God's Kingdom.

5. But won't a Third Temple be rebuilt in Jerusalem before the 2nd Coming of Jesus?

Answer: Even if it were, it would have no spiritual significance & couldn't be properly called "the Temple of **God**", because all earthly temples lost their significance when Jesus died as the Lamb of God, & the veil between the Holy & Most Holy Place was torn by an unseen hand from top to bottom (see **Matthew 27:50-51**). Therefore, the question of any rebuilt Third Temple is a mute one because it won't have any standing with God.

Lesson 64—Israel and the Church, Part 3

1. Have “the times of the Gentiles” been fulfilled?

Answer: The question refers to **Luke 21:24**, which reads in part, “...Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.” Supporters of the Secret Rapture Theory often believe that when modern Israel began occupying **all** of **Jerusalem** after the **1967 war**, the times of the Gentiles were fulfilled. However, the Greek text literally reads, “...until times of Gentiles are fulfilled”, without the definite article (**the**) before either the word **times** or **Gentiles**. The significance of this is that this period of time is not a definite one. It has a beginning, in A.D. 70, but it has no end until the 2nd Coming of Jesus, which is the ultimate event in Jesus’ prophecy here in **Luke 21:25-28**. Besides, the entire context of the text includes a general persecution of Jewish people even outside Jerusalem itself (see **vv. 21-23**). Can anyone truly say that Gentile harassment and/or persecution of the Jewish people ended in 1967?

2. Doesn’t Romans 11:26 teach that Israel will be restored to God’s “Most-Favored Nation” status one day?

Answer: That text states, “And so all Israel will be saved...” & is often viewed as a prediction that modern literal Israel will be restored to its previous top status with God before Jesus returns. But **v. 24** tells us that both Gentiles & Jews will be grafted onto the 1 olive tree. Paul is thus saying that together Gentiles & Jews constitute the olive tree as representing the whole people of God—Gentile & Jewish Christians. So while **Romans 11:26** does imply that the major portion of Jews will eventually accept Jesus as Messiah-Savior at the end-time, it says nothing about the restoration of the political nation of Israel as God’s holy nation.

3. Who is the great multitude pictured in Revelation 7:9?

Answer: **Revelation 7:9** speaks of a great multitude associated with Jesus & all of whom are clothed in white robes. An elder who lives in heaven (see **Revelation 4:4, 10; 5:6, 8, 11, 14**) told John in vision that these “...are the ones who come out of the great tribulation...” (**7:14**). The Greek text has the definite article (**the**) before **tribulation**, which can only refer in Revelation to the final tribulation at the end-time. Therefore, the great multitude are all of the living saved at the end-time.

4. How does the great multitude relate to the 144,000 in Revelation 7 and 14?

Answer: **Revelation 6:16-17** refers to Jesus coming in the “...great day of His wrath...” (**v. 17**) & then asks the question, “...who is able to stand?” (**v. 17**). Chapter 7 answers that question by telling us that the 144,000 are sealed to protect them from His wrath (see **7:2-4**). Thus, the 144,000 are the living saved when Jesus returns in glory. This tells us 2 things: **(a)** the 144,000 are the **same** as the great multitude (note that John only **heard** the number sealed, but when he looked, he **saw** a great multitude of untold numbers—see **7:4, 9**); & **(b)** 144,000 is a **symbolic** number, not literal. This symbolic nature of the number is confirmed by **Revelation 14:1, 4**, which call the 144,000 male virgins. It’s highly improbable that only 144,000 male virgins—exactly & only 12,000 from each literal tribe of Israel (see **Revelation 7:5-8**)—will constitute the living saved when Jesus returns. Furthermore, 10 of those 12 tribes no longer exist! Therefore, the 144,000 can’t be literal 144,000 Jewish evangelists who convert some during the final tribulation, as the Secret Rapture Theory interprets.

5. Will the literal nation of Israel ever be God’s chosen people again?

Answer: In **Ephesians 2:11-16**, Paul speaks of both Jews & Gentiles as being made “...one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross...” (**v. 16**). Here Paul plainly teaches that Jews & Gentiles are now 1 people in 1 body, the Christian Church (see **vv. 19-22**). So to assert that God will once again treat Jews & Gentiles as distinct & different peoples—by teaching that literal Israel will again be His special people—is to violate 1 of the purposes of the cross of Jesus!

Lesson 65—The Antichrist Unmasked, Part 1

1. What do the four beasts in Daniel's dream recorded in Daniel 7 represent?

Answer: The 4 beasts represent **4 successive kingdoms**. **Daniel 7:2, 23** call them **kingdoms**, & **vv. 4-7** show that they arise successively one after the other. They are traceable in secular history, & we did so in Lesson 50: **(a)** Lion = **Neo-Babylon**; **(b)** Bear = **Medo-Persia** (cf. **Daniel 8:20**); **(c)** Leopard = **Greece**; & **(d)** Non-Descript Beast = **Rome**.

2. What do the ten horns on the fourth beast represent?

Answer: The mostly parallel prophecy in **Daniel 8** identifies symbolic horns as either kings or kingdoms. **8:22** reads, "The large horn that is between its eyes is the first king. As for the broken horn and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation." **Daniel 7:8**'s description that 3 of the fourth beast's 10 horns "...were plucked up by the roots" is applicable language for a kingdom but not for an individual king. Therefore, the 10 horns were **10 kingdoms**.

3. At what time in history do the ten horns belong?

Answer: The popular Rapture theorists apply the 10 horns to the 10 kings or kingdoms that will rule for a brief time at the end-time with the beast that the woman Babylon rides in **Revelation 17:12**. But **first**, since **Daniel 7**'s 4 beasts arise in succession, this implies that the 10 horns would arise around the time of the Roman Empire's fall. **Second**, the fact that the little horn destroys 3 horns/kingdoms (**7:8**) before it begins its official rule (**7:24b-25**) reflects division & forced cooperation, whereas **Revelation 17:13** emphasizes voluntary unity of all 10 kings/kingdoms: "These [the 10 kings] are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast." Therefore, we conclude that the 10 horns on the 4th beast represent the division of the Roman Empire in Western Europe around the time of Rome's fall.

4. After uprooting 3 kingdoms, what does the little horn do, and what kind of power does this make it?

Answer: Note the parallelisms in the Aramaic poetry of **Daniel 7:25**:

- A** He [little horn] shall speak pompous words against the Most High,
- B** Shall persecute the saints of the Most High,
- A¹** And shall intend to change times and law.
- B¹** Then the saints shall be given into his hand For a time and times and half a time.

The parallel thoughts indicate the little horn will **(a)** intend to change God's times & law, telling us **how** he will **speak pompous words against the Most High**; & **(b)** persecute God's faithful people for a specific period of 3 ½ times. As a symbolic horn, it's a **political kingdom** (see Question #2 above). Because it tries to change God's times & law, it's also a **religious power**. So the Antichrist, as all conservative scholars agree the little horn is, is both a political & religious power. Furthermore, note that it will **intend to change** (not abolish) God's law, meaning that it thinks it has the authority to do so. But this is the prerogative of God alone. And the New Testament teaches that claiming to possess God's authority is the sin of **blasphemy** (see **Matthew 9:2-3; 26:63-65; Luke 5:21; & John 10:33, 36**), which is thus a further description of the little horn's speaking **pompous words against the Most High**. All this means that the Antichrist is **not** openly hostile against God, but is a traitor within God's movement!

Lesson 66—The Antichrist Unmasked, Part 2

1. Is the sea monster in Revelation 13 the same power as the little horn in Daniel 7?

Answer: Yes. The description of the sea monster in **Revelation 13** gives him 7 heads, 10 horns, & certain characteristics of a leopard, bear, & a lion (see **13:1-2**). This beast is thus a composite of the separate beasts in **Daniel 7**, including the fact there are a total of 7 heads & 10 horns. In addition, the sea monster is guilty of blasphemy (see **13:1**) & persecution of God's faithful people (see **13:7**)—see Lesson 65. The sea monster is a **political** power because it's a symbolic beast & also a **religious** power because it's guilty of blasphemy & desires worship (see **13:8**)—again see Lesson 65.

2. What kind of religious power is the Antichrist?

Answer: A 2nd, a lamb-like beast, is pictured in **Revelation 13:11-18** as eventually enforcing the mark of the sea monster in the end-time (over the mark of the beast issue). This lamb-like beast must be a **political** power because it's a symbolic **beast**. But it's only a political power because it doesn't demand worship for itself, nor is it guilty of other explicitly religious crimes. However, the word **Lamb** or **Lamb's** appears 29 times in **Revelation**, where everywhere but here it refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God. Here, it's a nation that gives the single greatest support to the Antichrist at the end-time, & it must therefore have a majority population that at least claims Christianity. Thus, the **Antichrist** must be a **Christian religious power** in order for such a nation to give it such strong support.

3. Who is the dragon in Revelation 13:2, and what does he give the Antichrist?

Answer: "...The dragon gave him [sea monster] his power, his throne, and great authority." Ultimately, the dragon is Satan (see **Revelation 12:9**). But here it must be a **political** power that Satan uses because the dragon gave the Antichrist his **throne & great authority**. Satan can directly give **power** to people or institutions, but he can't directly give anyone a capital city (a **throne** is in a capital city) or legal **authority**. Note that the only beast not represented from **Daniel 7** is the non-descript (4th beast, which was the Roman Empire—see Lesson 65). The word **dragon** is an apt name for that non-descript beast. Therefore, we conclude that the Roman Empire gave the Antichrist **his power, his throne, and great authority**.

4. From what we learned in Lessons 65 & 66, what is the **only** power that fits the characteristics of Antichrist?

Answer: The only political-religious Christian power that fits all of the characteristics of the Antichrist is the Roman Catholic Church. Note that it's the **Papal System**, **not** its individual **members**, which the Bible condemns. **First**, it's a political power because Vatican City is a recognized nation. **Second**, it's also a religious power & Christian. **Third**, it arose from the ashes of the Western Roman Empire. **Fourth**, Eastern Roman Emperor **Justinian** gave the Pope the city of Rome as its capital (**throne**), some of his soldiers to enforce its religious decrees (**power**), & its **authority** by designating the Pope as the "head of all the holy churches" & "the corrector of heretics" in A.D. 533. **Fifth**, it claims the authority to change God's Law, to forgive sins, & to speak personally for God as Christ's substitute on earth. **Finally**, it has often persecuted Christians who refused to accept its doctrines & practices, with perhaps at least 50 million killed during the Middle Ages.

Lesson 67—The Reign of the Antichrist

1. How many phases will Papal Rome have to do its greatest work of persecution?

Answer: In Lesson 66, we learned that the Roman Empire gave the Papacy its power & authority in the beginning, and that the lamb-like beast will enforce its decrees in the end-time. Therefore, the Papal Antichrist will have **2 phases** of its greatest persecution.

2. Are the time expressions associated with the Papal Antichrist literal or symbolic?

Answer: **Daniel 7:25** speaks of its period of domination as **3 ½ times** (see Lesson 65). **Revelation 13:5** tells us that it will last for **42 months**. Note that **Revelation 12** identifies a period of 1,260 days (see v. 6) with a period of 3 ½ times (see v. 14), & the parallel thoughts there show that they both speak about the same time period. When you include the 42 months, here's how all 3 time expressions are the same period of time: **First**, in order for 3 ½ times to be equal to 1,260 days, each **time** must represent a 360-day year, for $360 \times 3.5 = 1,260$ days. **Second**, since the 42 months of **Revelation 13** is linked with the 3 ½ times of **Daniel 7**, the only way they could be equal is if each of the 42 months consisted of a 30-day-only month; $42 \times 30 = 1,260$ days. Thus, all 3 time elements are equal to each other. But are they 1,260 literal days or 1,260 symbolic days? **First**, we should note that since there are 3 different time elements that are associated with a period of persecution, it must be a real period of time, not some Bible numerology here, for the odds are strongly against all 3 time expressions conveying the same numerological thought. **Second**, the fact that 3 different expressions are used suggests that this is symbolic, not literal; otherwise, why not speak of it with 1 time expression? **Third**, the words for **time** and **months** are used for **non-literal time periods**, for while ancient Israel pictured the ideal year as 360 days, or of 12 months with 30 days-only, they knew that a literal year was a little longer than that & thus compensated by adding several extra days before 3 ½ solar years had passed. Therefore, we conclude that the time period is expressed in **symbolic** terms.

3. What are the time expressions symbolic of in literal time, and to which phase does it apply?

Answer: The only literal part of these time expressions is the word or concept of **days**. And when the word **day** refers to a specific period of time & is used symbolically in the Bible, it always refers to 1 **literal year**. This is called the **year-day principle**, examples of which include **Numbers 14:34** & **Ezekiel 4:6**. See also Lesson 50, where it is applied to the 2,300 days of **Daniel 8:14**. Therefore, these time expressions all refer to a period of 1,260 literal years. All agree that the end-time domination of the Antichrist can't last for 1,260 years. Therefore, they must apply to **Phase 1** of the Papal Antichrist.

4. What event marked the end of the Papacy's first phase? And what are the dates for Phase 1?

Answer: According to **Revelation 13**, the Papacy's 1st phase ended with a deadly wound that was inflicted by a sword (see **vv. 3, 10, 12, 14**). A good Bible concordance reveals that the word **sword** is used most often in the context of a soldier or army as the principal weapon. The deadly wound was inflicted by a sword & associated with being led into captivity (see v. 10). That means we should look to history to see if the Pope (representing the entire Papacy) was taken captive against his will by an army. Indeed, there was only 1 such occasion—when Napoleon's General Berthier forcibly took the Pope captive in 1798. $1798 - 1260 = \text{A.D. } 538$. Remember that the little horn wouldn't begin his dominance until it ridded itself of 3 enemies. 3 barbarian kingdoms opposed the Church's position upholding the full divine nature of Jesus & were defeated, the Heruli (in A.D. 493), the Vandals (in A.D. 534), & the Ostrogoths (in (A.D. 538), although some historians debate what the best year for the Ostrogoth's end should be selected. **NOTE:** It's not uncommon for historians to use different dates to mark the beginning or ending year of some movement, but that doesn't mean that all but 1 date is wrong.

Regarding the Ostrogoths, 538 was 1 of the important dates marking the end of their lasting power. And given the precision of the year 1798 marking the end of the Papacy's 1st phase, the correct dates for that phase must be **A.D. 538-1798**.

Lesson 68—The Mark of the Beast, Part 1

1. Is the mark of the beast a literal mark or a symbol of something non-physical?

Answer: The mark of the beast can't be a literal mark, because if it were, then people could be forced to receive it against their will. But since all who receive that mark will be eternally lost (see **Revelation 14:9-11**), God would then be condemning people for something they couldn't avoid. So literal marks, computer chips planted under the skin, etc. might well be used to enforce the mark of the beast—but none of these things can possibly be the actual mark. Therefore, the mark of the beast must be **symbolic** of voluntarily giving your religious allegiance to the Papal Antichrist in some way.

2. What does the end-time issue concern, and how does that apply to the Papal Antichrist?

Answer: **First**, the key word in the end-time crisis is **worship**, for it & its related forms appear 8 times in **Revelation 13 & 14**. **Second**, the worship issue is confirmed by references to 2 different Old Testament stories in **Revelation 13: (a)** the worship showdown on Mt. Carmel with Elijah (see **v. 13**), when fire came down from heaven & consumed Elijah's sacrifice (see **1 Kings 18**); & **(b)** the story of the fiery furnace (see **Daniel 3**), referenced by the "image to [of] the beast" (vv. **14-15**). Note the parallels between the latter story & **Revelation 13: (a)** both have a world leader/power enforce a religious decree; **(b)** both have a command to worship; **(c)** one concerns a literal image, & the other a figurative image; & **(d)** both have death as the penalty (or ultimate penalty—see **Revelation 13:15**). One can't worship a Church-State power in the traditional sense of the word **worship**. Therefore, the final worship issue must be the attempt to compel religious allegiance to some aspect of Papal Rome's teaching.

3. In addition to worship, what is the more specific context in this part of Revelation?

Answer: Note that **Revelation 12-14** forms a specific section in the book. **First**, the time elements connect **chapters 12 & 13** (see Lesson 67). **Second**, references to worship & the mark of the beast connect **chapters 13** (vv. **4, 8, 12, 15-17**) & **14** (vv. **7, 9-11**). Chapter 15 starts another topic altogether. As with most sections in the book, **chapters 12-14** are introduced by a scene of the heavenly sanctuary (**11:19**), which shows the Ark of the Covenant, which anyone familiar with it would think of the Ten Commandments. Furthermore, this section of the book contains the only **undisputed references** to "the commandments of God" (**12:17 & 14:12**), which form the bookends for a discussion of the beast, false vs. true worship, & the mark of the beast. Therefore, the mark of the beast issue must have something to do with the **Ten Commandments**.

4. Which of the Ten Commandments are concerned, either directly or indirectly, with worship?

Answer: **Exodus 20:3-11** identify the 1st 4 Commandments, which concern worship or devotion to God. So 1 of those 1st 4 Commandments must be the focus of attention in the final showdown over true vs. false worship.

5. Does this section of Revelation contain any clues about which Commandment is at issue in the end-time?

Answer: The most direct clue is found in **14:7**, which command people to worship the Creator. Its very words are a paraphrase of part of the Sabbath Commandment: "...and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of waters" (see **Exodus 20:11**). We explore this possibility that the mark of the beast issue concerns the Sabbath Commandment in Lesson 69.

Lesson 69—The Mark of the Beast, Part 2

1. To what does the number 666 point?

Answer: In part, **Revelation 13:18** reads, "...calculate the number of the beast, for it is the number of a man: His number is 666." Most scholars assume that this refers to the numerical value of the letters in a man's name. We already know the Antichrist is Papal Rome (see Lesson 66), so the man would be the Pope. But it's the Pope as the generic head of the Papal Antichrist, not just 1 particular Pope. So some of those who believe it's the Papacy choose the **title** he has that adds up to 666. But **first**, the text doesn't say anything about a title. **Second**, he has numerous titles, so it seems rather odd to simply select the 1 title that fits. A better methodology is suggested in **v. 17**, which emphasizes the word **name**: "...the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." In Scripture, **name** is often associated with **character**. For example, when Moses asked God to show him His glory, God said He would proclaim "...the name of the Lord", which He did by listing several of His character attributes (see **Exodus 33:18-23**). In this way, the number 666 points to the character of the beast, & the text should be translated, "...the number of man [mankind]...", a translation allowed by the Greek.

2. What is mankind's number, and how does it relate to the mark of the beast?

Answer: Mankind's number is 6 because he was created on the 6th day of Creation. To the objection that the text uses **words** to say 666, so you can't isolate the number 6, we would reply **(a)** that numbers are nowhere in Scripture written as numerals, & **(b)** when you convert it to numerals you have 3 sixes, which fits the context much better. In other words, 666 represents sinful mankind attempting to reach the perfect number 7, that everyone agrees represents **God**. But he can't because the creature can never equal the Creator. And it's the **Sabbath Commandment** (remember it must be 1 of the 1st 4 Commandments—Lesson 68) that reminds us that the creature can never equal the Creator.

3. What else is the Father's name in His people's foreheads called in Revelation?

Answer: **Revelation 14:1** says that the counterpart to those who receive the mark of the beast is that the **Father's name** is in His loyal people's foreheads—confirming our conclusion that the issue concerns the **character** of the beast rather than the numerical value of someone's name or title. But in **Revelation 7:2-3**, God's people are **sealed** on their foreheads. In the ancient world, a king's seal was usually connected with his law as the way to validate that law as belonging to that king. Such a seal contained 3 main parts: **(a)** the name of the ruler; **(b)** the title or position of the ruler; & **(c)** the territory ruled by the king. It's very noteworthy that the Sabbath Commandment is the **only** Commandment that contains God's Seal as recorded in **Exodus 20:8-11**: **(a)** God's name is **the Lord your God** (**v. 10**); **(b)** His title or position is Creator (**the Lord made the heavens and the earth...** (**v. 11**)); & **(c)** His territory is identified as **heaven and earth** (**v. 11**).

4. What is the mark of the beast, and why will some have it in their forehead and others in their right hand?

Answer: The cumulative weight of the evidence points to the Sabbath Commandment as the focus in the final worship showdown. Therefore, the mark of the beast is a **false Sabbath**. With Papal Rome, there's no doubt but that is the honoring of **Sunday** in direct violation of the 7th-day Sabbath (see Lesson 23 for Rome's role in trashing the Sabbath). Some will receive the mark in their forehead because the forehead represents the frontal lobe, that part of the brain that is the will, conscience, & reasoning ability. Such persons will believe that Sunday is the correct day to honor. Those who will receive it on their right hand represent those who go along to get along, as the right hand represents people's activities.

5. Does anyone have the mark of the beast right now?

Answer: No. Only when the issue has been made a global one, & people are forced to choose, will anyone receive the mark of the beast. Thus, Sunday-keepers today don't have the mark of the beast.

Lesson 70—End-Time Babylon Identified

1. Is Babylon in the book of Revelation literal or symbolic?

Answer: **First**, speaking of literal Babylon, Isaiah states that it will be destroyed like Sodom & Gomorrah, & that it will never be inhabited once the Medes destroy it (see **Isaiah 13:17, 19-20**), which happened at the hands of the Medes & Persians in 539 B.C. **Second**, **Revelation 17:5** calls Babylon there “Mystery, Babylon the Great...” If Babylon in Revelation were literal Babylon, it wouldn’t be a **mystery** to anyone. Therefore, we conclude that if literal Babylon won’t rise again after its destruction in 539 B.C., & it’s called **mystery** in Revelation, then it’s a **symbolic** power rather than a literal one.

2. What is the significance of a symbolic harlot?

Answer: Babylon is called “THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS...” (**Revelation 17:5**). The large majority of references to a **symbolic** harlot in the Old Testament are to the professed people of God who had gone spiritually astray seeking other **lovers**, referring to the other gods of the heathen around them (see **Jeremiah 3:6; Ezekiel 16:1, 15** as examples). Since Babylon was originally the name of a city & an empire, end-time Babylon must be an organized professed people of God, but 1 who has apostatized & led others spiritually astray along with her.

3. What else is Babylon, and who are her daughters?

Answer: **Revelation 17:3** pictures Babylon as “...sitting on a scarlet beast which was full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.” Thus, Babylon is associated with the 1st beast of Revelation 13, the Antichrist, which we determined was a **false Christian power** (see Lesson 66). “And the woman you saw is that great **city** which reigns over the kings of the earth” (**Revelation 17:18**). She is also called “...THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS...” (**Revelation 17:5**). A literal Greek translation of **17:18** reads, “And the woman whom you saw is that great city having a kingdom which reigns over the kings of the earth.” Since Babylon is both a woman & a “city having a kingdom...”, it must be a false Christian institution & a political power. The only entity which meets this description is the Papal Antichrist based in Rome. Indeed, Babylon was a cryptic name many believers used to describe Rome in the 1st century. Finally, Rome is called the “Mother Church” because many Protestant churches came out of the Roman Catholic Church. They are the “daughters” to the extent of their origins & their following of certain teachings & practices. In a broader sense, however, there will be only 2 sides in the end-time worship showdown. Therefore, although Babylon is primarily Papal Rome, she will be encompassing secularism & all false religions, with most of them presumably going along to get along. In this way, Babylon & her daughters should be seen in the broader context of all false religions & not merely false Christianity.

4. Why is Babylon pictured as sitting on the beast **and** on many waters?

Answer: Babylon is pictured as sitting on the beast (see **Revelation 17:3**) & on “...many waters...” (**v. 1**). As noted in Lessons 50 & 65, symbolic beasts represent political kingdoms. Babylon is sitting on the beast to indicate that she controls this beast as a rider controls a horse. But she also sits on the multitudes of people & tongues who make up those kingdoms (see **Revelation 17:15**). Thus, there’s no real contradiction here; she controls the people through their governments.

Lesson 71—When False Religion Becomes Unpopular

1. What do the seven heads on the beast in Revelation 17 represent?

Answer: "...The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must continue for a short time" (**Revelation 17:9-10**). **First**, the 7 heads are also 7 mountains and 7 kings, which the context reveals & the Greek allows. Many identify the 7 mountains as the 7 hills on which the city of Rome sat. But that can't be true here because the 7 heads, 7 mountains, & 7 kings are identical. **Second**, the only way for these 3 items to be equal is to understand **(a)** the mountains as symbols of kingdoms (see **Isaiah 2:2-3; Jeremiah 17:1-3**) & **(b)** the kings as symbolic of representing their kingdoms (see **Daniel 7:17, 23**). So we conclude that the 7 heads represent 7 kingdoms who have or will be known for their opposition to God. Most scholars assume that the explanation must be given to the apostle John from the perspective of **his** day, & thus identify them as **(a)** Egypt, **(b)** Assyria, **(c)** Babylon, **(d)** Medo-Persia, **(e)** Greece, **(f)** Rome, & **(g)** Antichrist.

2. What is your analysis of these 7 kingdoms?

Answer: From the perspective of John's day, the 5 kingdoms that had fallen were Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, & Greece; the 1 that exists would be Rome; & the last kingdom would be of Antichrist. But this assumption ignores the relationship between the 7 heads & the entire beast, as shown by the verb tenses below:

	<u>Verse 8</u>	<u>Verse 10</u>
PAST	"The beast...was..."	"Five [kingdoms] have fallen..."
PRESENT	"The beast...is not..."	"...one [kingdom] is..."
FUTURE	"The beast...will ascend..."	"...the other [kingdom] has not yet come."

Viewing Rome as the 6th head, "one is", makes it equivalent to the period in which the entire beast "is not". But the Roman Empire in John's day **was** a major persecutor of God's people. This insurmountable problem is resolved when the prophecy is viewed in light of the pre-wound & post-wound phases of Papal Rome, as follows: **(a)** Babylon, **(b)** Medo-Persia, **(c)** Greece, **(d)** Rome, **(e)** Pre-wound Papal Rome, **(f)** Papal Rome during its deadly wound, & **(g)** Post-wound final phase of Papal Rome. Thus, the perspective is given from our own day, when the beast "is not" persecuting but "is" (exists).

3. Does the beast of Revelation 17 really have an eighth head?

Answer: **First**, note that there's no word for **head** in the verse that refers to the 8th (**17:11**). **Second**, the Greek for **eighth** is **masculine** & thus can't refer to a head, which is **feminine** in gender. **Finally**, note that the verse declares the **entire beast** itself to be the 8th & part of the 7. When you add 7 numbers, the total sum is the 8th number. So when this verse calls the whole beast the 8th, it's stating the entire beast will be destroyed once & for all. Thus, there's no 8th head.

4. Can we identify the ten horns on the beast in Revelation 17?

Answer: **Vv. 12-14** calls these 10 horns 10 kings/kingdoms who represent an international alliance that will give support to the Papal Antichrist in the end-time. Beyond that, we can't yet identify them until they exist.

5. When will this confederacy of false religion finally become unpopular?

Answer: According to **Revelation 17:16-17**, at some point the nations of the earth & their populations will see they have been deceived & will turn their wrath on the false Christian-led confederacy against God's people—probably sometime late in the 7 Last Plagues (the full wrath of God; **Revelation 15:1**)—see Lesson 72, although too late for their salvation.

Lesson 72—The Battle at Armageddon, Part 1

1. Where is Armageddon in the Bible, and how do most scholars understand the Battle at Armageddon?

Answer: The word **Armageddon** appears only in **Revelation 16:16** as part of the 6th plague discussion. Most take a **literal** approach to it, understanding that God will miraculously dry up the Euphrates River (**v. 12**) so that a confederacy of Eastern nations called **the kings from the east** (**v. 12**) can reach the area of Palestine, where most scholars think they're going to attack modern Israel. Eventually, many Western nations defend Israel by fighting in the Plain of Megiddo. When the war gets out of hand, God directly intervenes in the 7th plague against both sides, who end up fighting Jesus at the 2nd Coming (see **Revelation 19:11-21**), a battle in which Jesus is victorious.

2. Are the events described in Revelation 16:12-16 actually literal military events?

Answer: Although not explicitly mentioned, clearly Babylon is in mind in this passage, because the old literal city of Babylon sat over the Euphrates River, which was its major life support. In Lesson 70 we learned that end-time Babylon is symbolic of false religions led by the Papal Antichrist. Thus, the Euphrates River here must also be symbolic of the waters that **Revelation 17:15** states represents the nations & multitudes who support end-time Babylon. Moreover, if we were to interpret this passage literally, why is there no mention of the Tigris River, which literal Eastern armies would have to cross before they reached the Euphrates River? Therefore, the evidence doesn't support the position that this passage describes literal military events.

3. So who are the kings from the east in this prophecy, and what is their purpose for coming?

Answer: **First, the kings from the east** are named in contrast to **the kings of the earth and of the whole world** (**v. 14**). Surely, the former would be part of the latter if they were human forces from 1 or more nations. This is evidence that the kings from the east aren't earthly kings at all. **Second**, the direction of **east** is often associated with heaven & its glory (see **Ezekiel 43:1-2; Revelation 7:2**). **Finally, Revelation 16:12** calls our attention to the defeat of ancient Babylon by the Medes & Persians in 539 B.C., when Cyrus the Great dammed up the Euphrates north of the city so that soldiers could walk on the river bed under the river gates & take the city in 1 night. Cyrus then allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem, thus freeing them from the Babylonian Captivity. Therefore, the kings from the east, like Cyrus & his armies, represent the Holy Trinity coming at the 2nd Coming of Jesus to free His people from captivity to Satan & his evil human forces.

4. When do the events of Revelation 16:13-16 take place?

Answer: Those verses describe demonic forces rallying the whole world to gather its forces to fight in **the battle of that great day of God Almighty**. Though not mentioned here, end-time spiritual Babylon is clearly the object of this 6th plague, in which God takes some unknown action that causes Babylon to lose her political & popular support. Therefore, the events described in the gathering of the world's forces must take place **before Babylon loses her support**.

5. Where is Armageddon located?

Answer: **First**, the unusual manner that **Revelation 16:16** introduces **Armageddon**—"...the place called in Hebrew..."—suggests its true meaning is found in the compound Hebrew word. Textual evidence indicates the word is **Harmageddon**, which literally means "Mount of Megiddo". **Second**, a problem is that Megiddo was a city in northern Palestine, not a mountain. In fact, the city is located in the Plain of Megiddo; there's no Mount Megiddo anywhere in the world. In any case, since other places, Euphrates & the implied Babylon are symbolic, we should expect **Harmageddon** to also be symbolic. Since spiritual Babylon will be gathered against God's people, then we conclude that Armageddon is wherever God's faithful saints are, which is virtually everywhere in the world.

Lesson 73—The Battle at Armageddon, Part 2

1. What does the word “Megiddo” mean?

Answer: The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) translates “...the plain of Megiddo” (**Zechariah 12:11**) as the “...plain of slaughter [destruction]”. In turn, the Greek word for **slaughter** has language connections to “assembly, rendezvous, to crowd as to gash, cut, or attack”.

2. To what famous Old Testament story does the meaning of the word **slaughter** point?

Answer: The elements of a worship showdown & the Greek word for **slaughter** & its related words point us unmistakably to the story of Elijah on Mount Carmel against the prophets of Baal in Israel (see **I Kings 18**). Mt. Carmel is even the closest mountain to the Plain of Megiddo. Elijah called Israel back to the worship of the true God by having both sides build an altar to see whose God would send fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice. The prophets of Baal spent most of the day frantically dancing, yelling, & **cutting themselves** until they gave up. Elijah barely finished his prayer, when God sent fire that consumed his sacrifice, the stone altar, & the water poured all over it & filling up a trench around the altar. Then he ordered the **slaughter** of the prophets of Baal.

3. To what spiritual lessons does the Mount Carmel story point?

Answer: **First**, the false prophets & their political allies on Mt. Carmel were all Israelites, the professed organized people of God. So too, spiritual Babylon professes to belong to God. **Second**, King Ahab had married Queen Jezebel, a pagan queen who brought paganism into the organized people of God. Likewise, spiritual Babylon even boasts that it has the authority to bring in pagan customs & practices into Christianity & cloak them as “Christian”. **Finally**, like at Mt. Carmel, the final crisis will separate the faithful of God from the pretenders over the issue of worship. This the reason that so many Christians will be lost, because most are looking for the Antichrist to be a pagan, atheistic individual who will be openly hostile to God & those who claim to belong to Him. How tragic that most will thus be lost!

4. When will the Battle at Armageddon finally be over?

Answer: Besides the final destruction of the wicked in the lake of fire after the end of the millennium (see Lesson 58), the Battle at Armageddon is finished at the Second Coming of Jesus, when He wages war against the living wicked (see **Revelation 19:11, 16, 19, 21**). The description there partially mirrors the Mt. Carmel story in that after the final worship showdown has ended, & the 7 Last Plagues fall on the wicked, Jesus’ return in glory finishes the living wicked off in a great slaughter in which the vultures are pictured as having their fill. Praise the Lord. Jesus wins!

Lesson 74—The Three Angels' Messages, Part 1

1. How many, to whom, and when are the messages in Revelation 14:6-11 proclaimed?

Answer: Each of 3 angels give a message "...to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people..." (v. 6)—as testified as **another angel** (v. 6), **another angel followed** (v. 8), & **a third angel followed them** (v. 9). Because they are warnings against Babylon & receiving the mark of the beast (see vv. 8-11), they must be the last 3 warning messages given to the earth at the end-time. Although they will have their fullest intensity during the mark of the beast crisis, these 3 messages can be given as soon as the Pre-Advent Judgment begins in heaven. This is because "...the hour of His [God's] judgment has come..." (v. 7). This isn't God's against the wicked at the 2nd Coming because the everlasting gospel is preached at the same time (see v. 6), which means people still have a chance to be saved. Therefore, this must be the Pre-Advent Judgment in heaven, which we learned in Lesson 51 began in 1844.

2. Are the angels that proclaim these 3 last messages to the earth literal or symbolic?

Answer: **First**, the Greek word for **angel** actually means **messenger**, here they are obviously God's messengers. Most of the time the Hebrew & Greek words for **angel** refer to beings of an angelic order. At least 1 time, it's used to refer to Jesus as the Messiah (see **Malachi 3:3**) & once to John the Baptist (see **Malachi 3:1; Matthew 11:10-11**). **Second**, Jesus gave the mission of preaching the gospel to Christians (see **Mark 16:15; I Corinthians 15:1; Colossians 1:23**). Since these 3 messages are connected by their sequence, then all 3 messages will be proclaimed by God's last-day Christian movement.

3. What is the relationship between the everlasting gospel and the Pre-Advent Judgment?

Answer: Review Lesson 49 for the basic facts of the Pre-Advent Judgment. Paul makes it very clear in **I Corinthians 15:1-2** that the gospel is what saves people, based on what Jesus did (see vv. 3-4). Understood correctly, the Pre-Advent Judgment is good news because, by their lives, the saved testify that they belong to Jesus & have truly accepted His perfect righteousness in place of their sins. Their lives confirm this, **not** because they are **perfect**, but because the spiritual **direction** of their lives points to **Jesus**, Who is **their perfection!** No wonder Daniel exclaimed that the Pre-Advent Judgment "...was made in favor of the saints of the Most High..." (**Daniel 7:22**). So the 1st Angel's Message ties the 2 together because it's the gospel that allows people to pass the judgment safely.

4. What do the expressions "fear God" and "give glory to Him" in the 1st Angel's Message mean?

Answer: For those who love God, to fear Him is to be in awe of Him or to revere Him. It's a form of worship. In connection with judgment, it always results in obedience to God's commandments, as in Ecclesiastes 12:13-14. Giving glory to God is yet another form of worship, & is more often in Scripture associated with recognition of your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we especially give God glory by avoiding immorality & by living a healthy lifestyle. Mentioned in the 1st Angel's Message suggests that God's last-day movement will emphasize reasonable health reform, as good religion includes good health.

5. To whom is worship due, and why is it so important in the end-time?

Answer: **Revelation 14:7**, part of the 1st Angel's Message, paraphrases part of the Sabbath Commandment by way of reminding us that we ought to worship our Creator. In an age when evolution rules our culture, God will have a people who keep the memorial of His Creation—the 7th-day Sabbath. Of course, we learned in Lessons 68 & 69 that the Sabbath issue will be the focus of the end-time worship showdown just before Jesus returns in glory.

Lesson 75—The Three Angels' Messages, Part 2

1. What does Babylon's wine represent in the Second Angel's Message?

Answer: In Lesson 70 we learned that Babylon is the symbolic name of the Papal Antichrist that also includes all false religions in its extended family at the end-time. Babylon is a good name for her because the Hebrew word means **confusion** & the Chaldean word means **gate of the gods**. In other words, Babylon claims that her teachings lead to God. But when people drink her wine, they become spiritually drunk & confused (see **Revelation 14:8** & **17:1-2**). Therefore, Babylon's wine must represent **Babylon's false teachings**.

2. To what does the term **fornication** refer in the Second Angel's Message?

Answer: That message says that "Babylon is fallen...because she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication" (**Revelation 14:8**; cf. **17:1-2**). Note the element of coercion in **14:8**, "...she has **made** all nations drink..." Fornication or adultery is committed when 2 people not married to each other engage in sexual conduct. This is, of course, **spiritual fornication**—which will occur when the world's nations & people spiritually unite with spiritual Babylon. Such fornication will bring upon those people the wrath of God.

3. In the Third Angel's Message, how is God's wrath poured out on those who receive the mark of the beast?

Answer: "...the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete" (**Revelation 15:1**). The 7 Last Plagues are intended for spiritual Babylon (see **Revelation 18:2, 4**). So that's how God's wrath is poured out on those who receive the mark of the beast.

4. Does Revelation 14:10-11 teach the eternal torment of the wicked?

Answer: These verses are part of the Third Angel's Message & speak of **the smoke of their torment ascend[ing] forever and ever** (v. 11). In Lesson 59 we learned that this language is borrowed from the Hebrew poetry of Isaiah 34, in which eventually certain animals & plants will live—which means this language can't be literal. It's simply figurative language for complete destruction.

5. What is God's end-time movement that proclaims the Three Angels' Messages?

Answer: **First**, this movement will be organized because God is a God of order, not chaos (see **I Corinthians 14:33**); this would also be required for it to effectively deliver a global 3-fold message. **Second**, it's global in nature, for its mission as Christians is global (see **Acts 1:8**), & its end-time 3-fold message is also global (see **Revelation 14:6**). **Third**, it teaches the gospel that Jesus saves us by His perfect life, sacrificial death as our Substitute, & resurrection, but that our part is to respond to that salvation by showing the fruit of our faith in our good character. **Fourth**, it teaches reasonable health reform & advocates a healthy lifestyle. **Fifth**, it teaches the fact that a Pre-Advent Judgment in heaven is Biblical, & that it began in 1844. **Sixth**, it not only teaches the observance of the 7th-day Sabbath but does so in the context of it being the focus of the final worship showdown before Jesus returns. **Seventh**, it views itself as representing God's end-time movement that is the only Christian movement preaching the 3 Angels' Messages. **Finally**, it views the Bible as the ultimate authority in spiritual doctrines & practices and endeavors to be faithful to its teachings even when they're not convenient or popular. The only movement that teaches or practices most of these characteristics, & certainly the only one that meets all of these criteria, is the **Seventh-day Adventist Church**. It has its problems as a human organization. But it's still God's prophetic movement that shall prevail even if many of its members drop by the way as end-time persecution develops.