

The background of the cover is a dark blue, cloudy sky. In the center, a silhouette of a person stands with their arms raised, holding a bright, glowing orb. A large, faint question mark watermark is visible in the upper half of the image.

**CAN WE
KNOW
GOD**

R. E. Harlow

CAN WE KNOW GOD?

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CAN WE KNOW GOD?

Is There a God?

1. Many people say they do not believe in God. Some live as if there were no God. Others say maybe there is a God, but He has not made Himself known to men. We will first of all answer the question, “Is there a God?”

When we look at all the things around us, we ask, “Where did they come from?” How did the trees and mountains and lakes and animals and all the other things come to be? They all came to be through that Being who is called God. He must have great power. In the Bible the word used for God means The Powerful One.

When we look more closely at the things around us, we see that each one was made for a certain purpose and is part of a great plan.

Who planned it? Who thought it all out? It must have been someone very wise. No man is wise enough for that. Only God could do it. There must be a God who created or made everything.

2. This all seems very clear. Yet there are people who do not believe in God. They say that there is no God. These people are called atheists. How do they know there is no God? When a man says there is no God, he is saying that he himself knows everything.

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He is also saying that he has been everywhere in the world. If not, how could he be sure there is no God? God might be on a star far away from the earth, or in some other place.

It does not make sense to say there is no God. To be sure that there is no God you would have to know everything and be everywhere at the same time! This means that you yourself would have to be God! So the Bible calls the atheist a fool. The fool says in his heart, "There is no God", Psalm 14:1.

It is therefore much wiser to say, "I do not know if there is a God or not." A person who says he does not know may also say that no one can know. I think it is a great honor to know God.

Some people think that evolution proves that the Bible is not true. Evolution teaches that in the beginning millions of years ago there was only a little bit of something. This gradually grew and became a fish, later an animal and finally a man. But where did that first little bit of something come from? It must have had a beginning. Who started it and keeps it going? The answer is, God started the world and keeps it going.

If you have a watch, you may have looked at the little wheels inside it. If someone told you there is a man in another town who makes watches by shaking the different pieces around in a cup, would you believe him? You know only a very wise person can put all the many pieces of a watch together so that it will work. They will never come together by themselves by just being shaken around in a cup! In the same way we cannot believe that this wonderful world just came into being alone without God.

Can We Know God?

If there is a God, we can ask four questions about Him.

1. COULD He make Himself known?

The word God means The Powerful One. As men we can talk to one another. I can tell you what I am thinking. God can do the same. He would not create beings who can do what He Himself cannot do. What would be God's reason for creating people if He cannot make Himself known to them?

2. SHOULD He make Himself known?

God made man able to know right and wrong. God Himself knows what is right and what is wrong and He expects man to do the right and not do the wrong. Therefore He must tell us what IS right and what is evil. He would certainly not punish men for doing evil unless He told us what IS evil.

3. Would God WANT to make Himself known?

We have seen that God CAN reveal Himself if He wants to. But why would He want to? First of all, so that man would know what is good, and secondly, so that many would know and love God. He created man so that He could show us His love and righteousness.

4. DID God make Himself known?

If He did, HOW did He do it and WHERE? What is God like? What does He want me to do? These are very important questions.

The answer is, God has made Himself known in the Bible. The Bible tells us that it is the Word of God. There are also other books, some old, some new, that say the same thing, but there is nothing to prove that these other books are really the Word of God.

How can we know that the Bible, and only the Bible, is the true revelation from God? There are many things which show this:

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1) The oneness of the Bible. This one Book is really made up of 66 different books. These were written by about 40 men. Some of them were kings, keepers of sheep, preachers, farmers, or priests. They wrote at different times. The last one wrote his book about 1500 years after the first one. And yet all these 66 books which were written at different times by different people tell about one great Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament we read that He would come and that He would be the Savior. In the New Testament we read that He has come and died on the cross in order to become our Savior. So we see a wonderful oneness in the Bible.

2) Old books written hundreds of years ago show that the Bible is true. In old times people lived in great cities which are now just a pile of earth. Today some men's work is to dig in these old piles. They often find writings and other things which help to show that the Bible is true.

You do not have to wait until you understand everything in the Bible before you believe it. Some things in it are very difficult to understand, but still we can believe what it tells us.

Some people say the Bible is not true because they have never seen a miracle and do not believe miracles are possible. But let me ask you, If there is a God, why cannot He do something that man cannot do? A great act of God which no man could do is called a miracle. God is all-powerful. A book about God should tell of His powerful acts. Miracles do not show that the Bible is untrue. They show that the Bible really tells us about God.

3) Another thing which shows that God has made Himself known in the Bible is fulfilled prophecy. When a man of God says that something will happen in the future, his saying is called a prophecy. When this saying actually takes place, it is called a fulfilled prophecy. Many years before Jesus was born, God's servants wrote in the Bible that Christ was coming. They told when and where and how He would be born. They told other things as well. In the New Testament we read that these things really happened. How could these men know what would happen many years later? Only God could tell them.

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4) The Bible makes you feel that you are a sinner. In the Old Testament we read God's holy law, so holy that no man has ever obeyed it completely. In the New Testament we read of the life of a perfect Man, the Lord Jesus Christ. If you suppose you can keep God's law, think about the perfect life of the Lord Jesus. Thousands when they read the Bible see that they themselves are not as perfect as God wants them to be. They read what God wants them to be like and know that God will judge them.

5) If this were the only thing the Bible tells us, we would never have any peace or joy. However this is not all. The Bible tells us also the story of a Savior. This story is more wonderful than anything else ever written in any other book.

Every religion tells men what they should DO. Only the Bible tells us that everything needed for our salvation has been DONE. The Lord Jesus Christ bore God's punishment for our sins.

No man could have thought of such a wonderful and beautiful plan of salvation. Only God could think it up. This shows that the Bible came from God.

6) And the message of the Bible really works. Thousands of people have been completely changed through the gospel of Christ. Rich and poor, religious people and atheists, many have found peace in Christ.

7) Some people do not believe the Bible because it is so old. They want something new and modern. And yet the very fact that the Bible is so old shows that it is a very special book. God has kept it from being destroyed for many hundreds of years. Of course there are other books which are very old too. But although men have tried to destroy the Bible many times, God has kept it for us until now—it is His Word.

8) And what about today? If the Bible is so old and out-of-date, if men have really shown that it is full of mistakes, you would think that people do not want it any more. Is that true? No. Each year more Bibles are sold than ever before. Parts of the Bible or all of it have been translated or written again in 1,200 different languages. Probably nine-tenths of all the people in the world can understand one of these

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languages. Every year millions of Bibles or parts of Bibles are printed and sold.

Yes, the Bible is the most wonderful book in the world. It is altogether different from any other book. Men could never have thought up by themselves the things that are written in it. Truly it is the Word of God. Truly God makes Himself known in the Bible.

TRUTH IS WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT A THING.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH ABOUT ITSELF?

We have seen that the Bible is God's great revelation of Himself. That means that He has made Himself known in the Bible. Parts of the Bible are a direct revelation from God to the writer. For example, Adam could not have known how the world was made unless God told him. Other parts of the Bible tell of what the writer saw or did or learned from others. These writers were guided by God to write certain things that happened and leave out other things. Why were they led to write only certain things? The Holy Spirit has given us in the Bible just what we need and no more. "All Scripture . . . is profitable", 2 Timothy 3:16.

The Bible Says It is Inspired of God

The Old Testament

Often in the Old Testament we read, "Thus saith the Lord" or "God spoke unto Joshua." These sentences and others like them are found thousands of times in the Old Testament. For example, Moses said that God spoke to him:

"God called to him . . . 'Moses, Moses'", Exodus 3:4.

"And the Lord said unto me", Deuteronomy 1:42.

"And the Lord commanded me", Deuteronomy 4:14.

All sixteen of the prophets who wrote books of the Bible, Isaiah to Malachi, said that God spoke to them.

The Lord Jesus Christ also taught that the Old Testament was inspired. This means that God by the Holy Spirit led men to write what He wanted them to write.

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The Law: Matthew 5:18; Mark 7:8.

The Prophets: John 6:45.

Old Testament: Luke 16:29-31; John 17:17.

The apostles believed that the Old Testament was inspired.

Peter: The Holy Spirit spoke by the mouth of David, Acts 1:16. Men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, 2 Peter 1:21.

Paul: The Holy Spirit spoke by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers, Acts 28:25. All scripture is inspired by God, 2 Timothy 3:16.

The New Testament

While Christ was still here on earth, He promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would come. The Holy Spirit would bring all things to remembrance that He had said to them, John 14:26. This would make it possible for them to write the gospels.

Jesus also said that when the Spirit of truth would come, He would guide them into all truth, John 16:13. This would make it possible for them to write the letters of the New Testament, which give us the full truth.

Christ also said that the Holy Spirit would show them things to come, John 16:13. This promise was fulfilled; John wrote the book of Revelation and others also wrote about the future.

So we see Jesus prepared the disciples for writing the New Testament. It would be just as truly inspired as the Old Testament.

The New Testament writers understood that they were being controlled by the Spirit of God in what they wrote.

Paul said that God had revealed them unto them by His Spirit, 1 Corinthians 2:10. What he wrote was the commandment of the Lord, 1 Corinthians 14:37. By revelation God made known to him the mystery, Ephesians 3:3,5. The Spirit spoke to him, 1 Timothy 4:1.

John : See Revelation 1:1; 14:13; 19:9.

Both Peter and Paul knew that the gospel was from God. See 1 Peter 1:12; Galatians 1:12.

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All these men were quite sure that the Old Testament was inspired of God. The Holy Spirit showed them that the New Testament was equally inspired. For example the gospels are joined with the Old Testament Scriptures. In 1 Corinthians 15:3,4 we read about the death, burial and resurrection of Christ as according to the Scriptures. In 1 Timothy 5:18 Paul repeats sentences from both Deuteronomy and Luke and calls these two books “the Scripture.” In 1 Peter 1:24,25 Peter calls the gospel “the word of the Lord”, the same as the verse from Isaiah. The apostles are named together with the prophets, 2 Peter 3:2. Again Paul's letters are joined with “the other scriptures” in 2 Peter 3:16.

So we see that all parts of the Bible are inspired. This is called “Plenary or Full Inspiration.” Furthermore the very words are inspired: Paul wrote not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, 1 Corinthians 2:13. This is called “Verbal Inspiration.”

THE WRITERS OF SCRIPTURE: But even though the very words are inspired, you can see by the way the writers wrote, what kind of men they were. For example, the writings of Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, are quite different from those of Isaiah or Ezekiel.

THE WRITTEN BOOKS: The old books actually written by Moses or Paul have all been lost long ago. No doubt God in His wisdom allowed this so that people would not worship them. However we have very good copies of the actual books which are almost exactly the same as first written. Beyond all doubt they give us everything we need.

TRANSLATIONS: It is not possible to have a perfect translation from one language to another. However the translations we have are more than good enough to guide us in this world and for the world to come.

Sometimes the New Testament writers would have liked to write more, but the Holy Spirit would not let them. They were led to write so much and no more. For example :

In the book of Revelation John wanted to write down the message

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of the seven thunders, but was told not to do so, Revelation 10:4. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews wanted to write about Melchisedec, Hebrews 5:11, but was held back. Jude wanted to write about salvation, but instead had to warn and encourage the saints to stand up for the truth, Jude 3.

In what they wrote and in what they did not write, all these Bible writers were guided or held back by the Spirit of God. We can now go on and learn what God says to us in the Bible.

TEST 1 - Is There a God? Can We Know God? What Does the Bible Teach About Itself?

Enter the letter of the correct answer

1. The Word "God" means

- a) the All-knowing One.
- b) the Powerful One.
- c) the Unending One.

2. God

- a) tells man what is right and wrong.
- b) makes man do what is right.
- c) makes man do what is wrong.

3. Through the Bible, God

- a) makes you realise that you are a sinner.
- b) says you are not a sinner.
- c) says you may sin a little bit.

4. God makes Himself known

- a) through all the religions of the world.
- b) through education.
- c) through the Bible.

5. God wants you to

- a) be more religious.
- b) know more about Himself through the Bible.
- c) understand everything in the Bible before you believe it.

Enter TRUE or FALSE for each statement.

- 6. God has made Himself known through the Bible.
- 7. God created all things for a certain purpose.
- 8. Some people live as if there were no God.
- 9. You can know God personally.
- 10. Psalm 14.1 teaches there is no God.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What do you think is the strongest evidence for the existence of God?

What Is God Like?

How wonderful it would be to know God! We have seen that God has made Himself known in the Bible. What is He like? What does the Bible say about God?

The Bible tells us many things about God. In this chapter we will see twelve words which show us what God is. These are called attributes. There are seven attributes which tell us about God's nature and five which tell us about His character.

1. The attributes which tell about God's nature

God is SPIRIT, John 4:24. He is not man. He does not have a body of any kind. In some verses in the Bible we read about God's arm, the eye of the Lord, etc. This may be simply a picture of God's power which can do anything and know everything. But since the Son of God became a man, it is now true that God the Son has a body.

God is INVISIBLE, 1 Timothy 1:17. This means that we cannot see Him with our eyes. Of course, we cannot see a spirit. Even though no man has seen God in glory at any time, He has been made known to man by Jesus Christ, John 1:18. Jesus said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father", John 14:9. Although people cannot see God with their eyes, they can get to know Him in other ways. Because He is invisible, He has commanded man not to make any image or idol of God.

God is ETERNAL, Deuteronomy 33:27; Romans 16:26. This means that God had no beginning and will never have any end. He always was and will always be. He was before anything else came into being. We cannot understand this, but still it must be so. God who made everything else was never made Himself. He who had no beginning started everything else.

God is OVER EVERYTHING, Psalm 95:3. He created many

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beings, some of them very powerful. Some have not obeyed God. But God has never created any beings who could become more powerful than He Himself. Nor has God created enough beings so that all together they could keep Him from doing what He has always planned to do. God will always be over everything and at the end will finish what He wants to do.

God is ALL-POWERFUL, Job 42:2. All things are possible with God, Mark 10:27. God who made all things can do whatever He pleases with the things and beings He has made. Surely God can do what the beings He has made cannot do. If God does something like that, it is called a miracle.

God is ALL-KNOWING, Psalm 139:1-4. He knows everything, even people's thoughts. We can hide nothing from Him.

God is EVERYWHERE, Jeremiah 23:24. This means that God can know and see everything that goes on in the world at any time. At the same time He is said to dwell in heaven, Deuteronomy 26:15, Psalm 113:5. Saying God is present at all times does not mean that He is pleased with all that is being done. God is holy and hates sin.

2. The attributes which tell about God's character

God MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN, Acts 7:2. This is the same as saying that God is Light, 1 John 1:5. Since man cannot find out God by his own efforts, Job 11:7, it is gracious of God to reveal Himself.

God is ALWAYS THE SAME, 1 Samuel 15:29, Malachi 3:6, Hebrews 6:18. He cannot act differently from what He is. He cannot lie or change.

Some verses in the Bible tell of God repenting, Jeremiah 18:8. This does not mean that He Himself has changed, but that His thoughts about men have changed because of the way they have acted.

God is RIGHTEOUS, Psalms 7:11, 11:7; Revelation 16:7. God cannot pass over sin. He must judge it no matter who has done it.

God is the Ruler of the universe, this world and all the other worlds and stars. He must judge righteously. He always has and always will.

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“Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?” Genesis 18:25.

God is HOLY, Isaiah 6:3. He hates sin and cannot stand it before Him. “Thou Who are of purer eyes than to behold evil”, Habakkuk 1:13. This does not mean God cannot see the evil deeds of men. It means He cannot look at evil without anger.

Finally, most wonderful of all God is GRACIOUS, Exodus 33:19, 1 John 4:8. Grace is favor that we have not earned. It is favor toward one who should be punished. “The God of all grace . . .”, 1 Peter 5:10. This includes the goodness, kindness, mercy and love of God.

Apart from the grace and love of God, all His other attributes would be against us. He knows all about us and because He is righteous, He would have to drive us away from His face. But because He is gracious and loves us, He has found a way to forgive our sins and make us sons. We can know the most wonderful Person in the world, and know that all He is is for us.

TEST 2 - What is God Like?

Enter the letter of the correct answer.

1. Which verses show that the Old Testament is true?

- a) John 14.26
- b) Ephesians 3.3, 5
- c) Luke 24.25-27, 44-49

2. Which verses show that the Holy Spirit would inspire the writings of the New Testament?

- a) John 14.26; 16.13
- b) Acts 1.16
- c) 2 Peter 2.21

3. When we say that ALL PARTS of the Bible are inspired, we call it

- a) Verbal Inspiration.
- b) Plenary or Full Inspiration.
- c) Mechanical Inspiration.

4. If God is gracious,

- a) He cannot forgive sin.
- b) He cannot judge sin.
- c) He has a way to forgive sin.

5. If God is righteous,

- a) He must judge sin.
- b) He must pass over sin.
- c) He must not think about sin.

Enter TRUE or FALSE for each statement.

- 6. The Bible is complete. Nothing needs to be added.
- 7. The writers wrote down their own ideas.
- 8. Some parts of the Bible are more inspired than others.
- 9. Jesus said that the Old Testament is true.
- 10. "Verbal Inspiration" means that God spoke out loud to men.

What Do You Say?

Is it important to believe the Bible is God's inspired book? Why?

God — Father, Son and Holy Spirit

The Bible teaches us three important truths:

1. There is one God.
2. Christ is different from the Father, yet He is God.
3. The Holy Spirit is not the same as God the Father, yet also is God.

For example: “The Word was with God”; “The Word was God”, John 1:1. This verse teaches that the Word was not the same as God, although even in the beginning the Word was with (in the presence of) God. But the verse also says, the Word was God. Verse 14 in the same chapter explains that this Word is Christ. But how can Christ, the Word of God, be God, yet at the same time different from God?

In John 10:28 Jesus speaks of His own hand and in verse 29 He speaks of His Father's hand. His Father gave the sheep to Christ. Yet in verse 30 He says, “I and the Father are one.”

The writer of Hebrews in chapter one gives a verse from Psalm 45. In Hebrews 1:8 the Son is called God: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” But in verse nine God anoints the Son with the oil of gladness. How can the Son be God and yet not the same as God?

Other verses in the Bible use almost the same words when speaking about the Spirit. Later we shall see that the Holy Spirit is God. Yet He is sent by the Father and by the Son into this world. So, although there is only one God, He is really three in one, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. How do you explain these things? We know they are true even though we cannot explain or even understand them.

Sometimes Christians try to explain these verses by saying God is three Persons. The trouble with this is that we think of persons as

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human beings. There are not three Gods, but only One. If we use the word person in speaking about God we must remember it does not mean the same as a human person.

Many years ago someone wrote an article about ten mysteries of science. For example man still does not understand everything about electricity, light, life, etc. If today we cannot even understand the things God has made, we must not be surprised that we cannot understand everything about God Himself.

It is better to know and believe what the Bible says about God than to try and explain everything. Let us wonder and worship. We can be sure some day we shall understand all these things better.

God The Father

The word “Father” is used of God in five different ways in Scripture.

He is called the Father of Christ

Jesus often spoke of or to His Father: 20 times in Matthew, twice in Mark, 11 times in Luke, 62 times in John, three times in Revelation. Paul spoke six times of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peter used the same words in his first letter and John used almost the same words four times.

God called Christ His Son. At two different times He spoke from heaven, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” Matthew 3:17; 17:5.

This does not mean that God had a wife or created the Son. In the next chapter we shall see verses which show plainly that the Son is eternal and was never created. He had no beginning. But there are two words in the Bible we can look at here:

(1) ONLY SON, John 1:14. These words are used of Christ five times in John's Gospel and in his first letter.

(2) FIRST BORN, Colossians 1:18. These words are used seven times of Christ. Except where we read about His birth by Mary, the words first born mean first in POSITION, not first in TIME. In Colossians 1:15 He is called, “the firstborn of all creation”; in Colossians 1:18, “the firstborn from the dead”; in Romans 8:29, “the firstborn among many brethren”.

In Old Testament times the firstborn son was usually given a greater blessing than the other sons. However sometimes this blessing was given to another son, not the one who was born first into the family. For example Shem, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Solomon, all were given this blessing although they were not the firstborn in their families.

When used of Christ, the word “firstborn” refers to His position, not His beginning. He never did come into being—He always was.

God is called the Father of Man

(1) As Creator, God is called the Father of all men, Luke 3:38; Acts 17:29. But, sad to say, men by sin have lost the right to call God their Father. God might say to man, “If then I am a father, where is my honor?” Malachi 1:6.

(2) The people of Israel were often called children of God, Exodus 4:22, Deuteronomy 14:1, Isaiah 1:2. God is called their Father, 1 Chronicles 29:10, Isaiah 63:16, Jeremiah 3:19. But this is of Israel as a nation and not of a single Israelite.

(3) In a very few verses in the Old Testament God is called the Father of single sons. He is called the Father of orphans in Psalm 68:5. God called Himself Solomon's Father in 1 Chronicles 28:6.

(4) But most often God is called the Father of believers today. This is very important to us and makes us ask:

How do you get into the Family of God?

In everyday life there are three ways to get into a family. Each of these ways is a picture of the believer.

BY BIRTH. Every child is born into a family. In a spiritual way you receive power to become a child of God and are born into His family when you believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, John 1:12,13.

BY ADOPTION. You may bring a child into your family according to the law by adopting him. For example, Pharaoh's daughter took Moses and brought him up as if he were her own child. The word “adoption” is used in the New Testament, but the meaning is a little different, Galatians 4.5,6.

BY MARRIAGE one becomes a son-in-law or daughter-in-law. Ruth's mother-in-law called her “my daughter”, Ruth 3:1. David's father-in-law called him “my son David”, 1 Samuel 24:16. In the New

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Testament the Church is the Bride of Christ, Ephesians 5:25. We are in the family of God, Ephesians 3:15.

Why is it a Good Thing to be in God's Family?

There are many blessings for those who are born again into God's family.

Some children are sad because they do not know a father. In this great big world, what a joy it is to have God as my Father! John 20:17.

Every son of God has a home. He has a perfect right to enter God's home. Here on earth we are strangers, but we are on our way to our heavenly home. Christ has gone on ahead to prepare it, John 14:2.

God is love. If God is my Father, I can be sure He loves me, John 16:27. Certainly He will see to it that I have everything I need, Matthew 6:32,33.

Because I know the Father's love and power I do not need to worry about the future. Jesus said, No man is able to take them out of the Father's hand, John 10:29. I can be sure that I will never be lost!

God the Father gives every son the assurance that he has eternal life even now while still on this earth. He also promises him an inheritance in the future. A person without life would not get an inheritance. Only sons are heirs, Romans 8:17.

There are many more great blessings for those who are in the family of God.

What Happens if a Child of God Falls Into Sin?

Perhaps it would be better to ask, "What happens WHEN a child of God falls into sin?" Now no true child of God wants to sin. But no one can say he has no sin.

If he sins against his Father, does God put him out of the family?

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No, but He will punish him because he is His child. God loves His children. He will neither put them out of His family for sin, nor let them go on in sin. Read Hebrews 12:5-11. Every true child is punished so that he can share in the Father's holiness and peace.

When a child of God is punished, he should repent, that is, he should be sorry for his sin and try to leave it. If he does not repent, the Father may take him home to heaven. This would be better than leaving him here on earth to bring shame on the Father's name. Because of bad behavior, many in Corinth fell asleep, which means they died, 1 Corinthians 11:30. John said we should pray for a brother who has sinned or is sinning, unless it is a sin unto death, 1 John 5:16. The fact that God will not let us go on in sin shows us again that He loves us. When we get to the Father's house, we will thank Him for that too.

TEST 3 God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God the Father

Enter the letter of the correct answer.

1. In Malachi 1.6 we read

- a. “I and the Father are one.”
- b. “No man is able to take them out of the Father’s hand.”
- c. “If then I am a Father, where is my honour?”

2. In Colossians 1.15, the word “first born” means

- a) first in position (importance).
- b) special physical birth.
- c) that Christ was created.

3. I can get into the family of God

- a) by marrying a Christian.
- b) by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- c) by joining a church.

4. In Hebrews 12.5-11 every child of God is punished so that he may

- a) learn that God does not really love him.
- b) repent and become born again.
- c) share in God’s holiness and peace.

5. If a Christian sins

- a. They will lose their salvation.
- b. God will forgive them if they confess.
- c. They will need to be saved again.

Enter TRUE or FALSE for each statement.

- 6. As Creator, God is called the Father of all men.
- 7. The Son is God, but He is different from God the Father.
- 8. A child of God can be lost if he disobeys his Father.
- 9. We should believe what the Bible says about God even if we cannot explain everything.
- 10. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are one but different.

What Do You Say?

How does a person enter the family of God?

Christ (1)

We now come to the most precious subject, the Person and work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ makes known to us all that God is, and all blessings reach us through Him. His cross divides all the years of all time into two. Everything that happened before Christ's death on the cross pointed forward to Him. All the blessings that we will receive in the future will be ours because of His death on the cross.

We will divide what the Bible teaches about Christ into eight parts.

1. His deity (He is God).
2. His work before He became Man.
3. His incarnation (He became Man).
4. His humanity (what He was like as a Man).
5. His work here on earth.
6. His death, resurrection, and ascension.
7. His work now in heaven.
8. His second coming.

1. Is Christ the Son of God?

This is the most important question of all. "What do you think of the Christ? Whose Son is He?" Matthew 22:42.

If Christ is a creature, even the first and greatest creature, then there is no salvation. Why?

- (a) because either He or His followers were liars;
- (b) because the death of a creature could not pay for the sins of men.

Does the Bible really teach that Christ is God the Son? Is the Son equal in every way to the Father? Has the Son lived from all eternity just as the Father has?

We have read twelve words which tell what God is like. Ten of these also tell us what Christ, the Son of God, is like. The first two

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attributes of God, He is Spirit and invisible, are no longer true of the Son. The Son became a Man, the God-Man. He could be seen and so was no longer only Spirit.

THE SON IS ETERNAL, John 1:1. The Word was in the beginning. The Word did not have any beginning. The Word always was. No matter how many thousands of years ago the beginning was, the Word was at that time. In John 1:14 we see that the “Word” is Christ. Christ shared the Father's glory before the world was created, John 17:5.

THE SON IS OVER EVERYTHING, Colossians 1:18. He is equal to God. He Himself said that He was equal to the Father. “I and the Father are one”, John 10:30. Only God and Christ can forgive sins, Mark 2:5,7. Christ allowed people to worship Him as they would worship God, Matthew 14:33; even after He had risen from the dead, Luke 24:52. Christ has the right to raise the dead and judge all men, John 5:26-29. All people shall bend the knee before Him, Philippians 2:10. His throne is for ever and ever, Hebrews 1:8.

THE SON IS ALL POWERFUL. In the Old Testament we see that God created the heavens and the earth. In the New Testament we see that it was God the Son who created all things, John 1:3, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:10.

When He was here on earth, the Son had power over the wind and the sea, Mark 4:39; over spirits, Mark 5:8; over death, Mark 5:41. He was declared to be the Son of God with power, Romans 1:4.

THE SON KNOWS ALL THINGS, John 16:30; 21:17. He knows men's thoughts, Matthew 9:4, even when not actually with them in the same place, John 1:48. He knows the future, John 6:64; 13:3.

God knows all things that are going to happen and can remember all things that have happened. If He wants to, He can also forget. For example, He has promised to forget the sins of those who believe in Christ, Hebrews 8:12.

THE SON CAN BE IN ALL PLACES AT ONCE. Christ's human body is now at the right hand of God, Ephesians 1:20, but wherever two or three believers gather together in His name He is with them in

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spirit, Matthew 18:20. He has also promised to be every day with those who go into all the world to preach the Gospel as He commanded, Matthew 28:19,20.

THE SON MAKES HIMSELF KNOWN, John 2:11. God is Light, 1 John 1.5; Christ is the Light of the World, John 8:12. The Son came into this world in order to make God known to us, Hebrews 1:3.

THE SON IS UNCHANGING, Hebrews 1:12. “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever,” Hebrews 13:8. The greatest thing that ever happened was when God the Son became a Man, the God-Man. Even then He did not and could not stop being God. Also His character did not and could not change.

THE SON IS RIGHTEOUS, 2 Timothy 4:8. He loves righteousness and hates sin, Hebrews 1:9.

THE SON IS HOLY. Mary was told, “The child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God”, Luke 1:35. The early Christians who lived during the first hundred years after Christ's death prayed to God in the name of His holy servant, Jesus, Acts 4:30.

THE SON IS FULL OF GRACE, 2 Corinthians 8:9. He was moved with compassion, Matthew 9:36. He loved the church and gave Himself for it, Ephesians 5:25. We look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ when He comes for us, Jude 21.

So we see that everything that God is, Christ is. It is not enough to say that Christ is divine or God-like. It is not right to say that Christ is the son of God just as we all are sons of God. Anyone who believes the Scripture verses in this chapter (and many more) must see that the Bible teaches Jesus Christ is not only the Son of God, but God the Son.

2. The work of the Son before He became Man

We have seen that the Son of God never had any beginning. He always was. What does the Bible tell us about His work before He was born in this world?

One thing that shows clearly that Christ is God is His power in creating everything. “In Him was life”, John 1:4. Through the Son God

created the world, Hebrews 1:2. In addition to that the Son upholds everything by the word of His power, Hebrews 1:3. By Him all things consist, or hold together, Colossians 1:17.

The second great work of the Son before He became man was to make God known. “No man has ever seen God. The only Son . . . has made Him known”, John 1:18. From this verse we see that when God appeared to people in Old Testament times, it was really God the Son. Sometimes He appeared in the form of a man, sometimes of an angel, sometimes of fire. We read that God appeared to Abraham, Genesis 12:7; Isaac, Genesis 26:2; Jacob, Genesis 35:9; Moses, Exodus 3:2; Israel, Leviticus 9:4; Joshua, Joshua 5:13-15; Gideon, Judges 6:12; Samuel, 1 Samuel 3:21; David, 2 Chronicles 3:1; Solomon, 1 Kings 9:2; Isaiah, Isaiah 6:1; and Ezekiel, Ezekiel 1:28.

The wonderful thing is, God has made Himself known through the Son. What a glorious God He is!

3. The Son of God became Man

The Son of God has a perfect right to be in heaven. He was always equal with the Father. It was right for Him to remain with God forever. But if He had, no men would ever be with Him.

“Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit”, John 12:24.

THE INCARNATION.

We have seen that the “Word” in John 1 is the Son of God.

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father”, John 1:14.

In the Old Testament God gave many promises that some day a Deliverer, a King, would come.

When Adam and Eve were deceived by Satan, God had to judge them. But in Genesis 3:15 He promised that someone born through the woman would destroy Satan. The Deliverer would be a man born to a human mother.

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God gave a special promise to Abraham, Genesis 22:18. The Deliverer, who would bring blessing to all men, would be someone born through Abraham many years later. This promise was passed on to Isaac, Genesis 26:4, and to Jacob, Genesis 28:14. God promised Judah that the King would be born of his tribe, Genesis 49:10.

Other promises told that the Coming One would be a Prophet like Moses, Deuteronomy 18:15; a Priest like Melchizedek, Psalm 110:4; and a King, born through David, 2 Samuel 7:16.

It was quite clear that the coming Deliverer would not be an angel or some other being. He would be a man.

Other promises said that God Himself would come to earth.

“And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation”, Isaiah 25:9.

“Behold, the Lord God comes”, Isaiah 40:10.

John the Baptist was told to “prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God”, Isaiah 40:3 and John 1:23.

Malachi prophesied,

“The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple”, 3:1.

Isaiah tells us some of the names of the coming King:

“Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” 9:6,7.

Another name is Immanuel, which means, “God with us.” He was to be born of a virgin, an unmarried woman, Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23. The Lord Jesus Christ was born without a human father.

How could the promised King and Savior be both God and a man? The New Testament answer is: Only if God became Man. This is called the Incarnation.

In Matthew 1 and Luke 2 we read how Christ was born of a virgin.

In the letters of Paul there are verses that show very clearly indeed that the Son of God became Man.

“Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever”, Romans 9:5.

“The second Man is from heaven”, 1 Corinthians 15:47.

“God was manifest in the flesh”, 1 Timothy 3:16.

Also read and think about the following verses: Galatians 4:4, Philippians 2:6-8, and Hebrews 2:14.

The eternal, uncreated Son of God did not and could not stop being God when He became man. It is wonderful that God should want to become a man. If He should want to, surely He could do so. He wanted to because He loves us, and He was able to because He can do everything.

4. The Humanity of Christ

Christ was just like any other man, except that He did not have a sinful nature.

(1) The Lord Jesus had no human father. The Holy Spirit came on Mary, Matthew 1:20. After that His birth was like that of any other child. Think carefully about Luke 1:31,35; 2:5,6,7,16,21,28.

(2) His youth was like that of other children, Luke 2:40-52. He asked questions, and obeyed His parents. As He grew taller He also grew in wisdom, and in favor with God and man.

(3) Just like other men He became hungry, Matthew 4:2; tired, John 4:6; thirsty, John 19:28. He never looked after His own needs by using His power as Son of God.

(4) He had the same feelings as other men: love, Mark 10:21; anger, Mark 3:5; sorrow, Luke 13:34. But Jesus never showed any fear. Even when He was in great danger, He trusted in God and was not afraid, Luke 4:29,30; John 10:31,32.

(5) His death was like a man's death, except that He did not die of weakness. He cried with a loud voice, then gave up His spirit. “I lay down my life . . . no man takes it from me”, John 10:17,18. Human death

is the separation of body and spirit.

(6) Just like man He had a soul, Matthew 26:38; a spirit, Luke 23:46; and a body, John 19:40.

Christ, the Perfect Man

Jesus Christ was just like all men in every important point, except sin.

(1) Sin is doing what God does not want you to do and refusing to do what He does want you to do. God must act according to His own character, and so must Christ.

(2) Only Christ could say,

“As my Father hath taught me, I speak these things . . . I do always those things that please Him”, John 8:28,29.

(3) Even His enemies had to agree that He had not done anything wrong:

“Which of you convinces me of sin? John 8:46. Pilate said, “I find no crime in him”, John 19:4,6.

(4) God showed that He was pleased with Christ:

“This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased”, Matthew 3:17; 17:5.

More than that, God raised Him from the dead. This shows more than anything else that God found His Son to be a perfect Man. He did no sin, 1 Peter 2:22. He knew no sin, 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Why is the Perfect Humanity of Christ Important?

We have seen that Christ was a man, a perfect man. Why is this truth important?

Only a Man could make God fully known to men. Only a man can die. We need the God-Man to pray for us, 1 Timothy 2:5.

Only a sinless Man could die for others. If there was one sin on Jesus, He would have had to die for His own sin. The Lamb of God was perfect. The Son of God was a complete Man, a sinless Man.

TEST 4 - Christ (1)

The statements below are taken from the lesson. Enter the ONE MISSING WORD.

1. "The Word did not have any"
2. "Only God and can forgive sins."
3. "Jesus Christ is not only the Son of God, but God the"
4. "Christ is the same yesterday and and forever."
5. "..... was manifest in the flesh."

6. One of these statements is not true of the Son. Which one?

- a) He is eternal and unchanging.
- b) He is just and holy.
- c) He is impatient and without mercy.
- d) He is all-powerful and all-knowing.

7. Which is true?

- a) Christ is man only.
- b) Christ is God only.
- c) Christ is the God-Man.

8. The name Immanuel means

- a) God is love.
- b) God with us.
- c) God will save.

9. According to Deuteronomy 18.15, Christ would be a

- a) Prophet.
- b) Priest.
- c) King.

10. According to Romans 1.4, Jesus is declared "Son of God"

- a) without sin.
- b) with power.
- c) with all knowledge.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Why do you think it is important that Jesus Christ was perfect in every way?

Christ (2)

5. The Work of the Son here on Earth

The Son of God became the God-Man. Here on earth He was still God the Son. He showed forth the glory of God, but did not use His power for His own needs. The four gospels tell the story of the Lord Jesus' life and death.

The Lord lived about 33 years on earth. Much was written about His birth. The only thing we are told about Him from the time He was a baby until He was 30 years old is found in Luke 2:41-52. The gospels tell us mostly about the last three years of His life, and more space is given to the last week of His life than to any other week in the Bible.

HIS ANOINTING, Matthew 3:13-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21,22.

When Jesus was about 30 years old, He was baptized by John, in the river Jordan. John always told people to repent before he would baptize them. Jesus had no sins to confess. He was willing to be baptized because the godly men of Israel were baptized and He wanted to be one with them, Matthew 3:15.

So that no one could think that Jesus was confessing sins, God at once called Him “my beloved Son.” Also the Holy Spirit came upon Him in the form of a dove. The Spirit was given to Christ without measure, John 3:34.

In the Old Testament we read about priests (Exodus 28:41) and kings (2 Samuel 2:3) being anointed with oil. They were anointed at the beginning of their life's work. The oil is a picture of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. He was the “anointed One.” Both Messiah and Christ mean “anointed.”

HIS TEMPTATION, Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13.

God showed that He was pleased with Jesus as a Man by calling Him, “my beloved Son.” Satan tried to show that Jesus could not remain a man without sinning. God knew that Jesus the Son of God would not and could not sin against Him. Satan used all his tricks to try and spoil God's plans, but failed. Jesus did not sin.

HIS MIRACLES.

Jesus in the power of the Spirit healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, made the blind to see, raised the dead, cast out spirits, Luke 4:18, Matthew 12:28.

Christ did these miracles because He loved the people and wanted to help them. He also showed by these miracles that God was with Him. When the people came to Him, He taught them about God.

HIS TEACHING.

Jesus did not write a book. His teaching is found in the four gospels. He taught the people about God His Father, about the kingdom of heaven and about His own death, resurrection and return. He preached the gospel very simply, but often taught deeper truth by parables. He gave special teaching to His own disciples.

6. His Death and Resurrection

HIS DEATH. Jesus did good to all men. Why did the Jewish leaders want to kill Him? For one thing, they thought a glorious king was coming. Jesus hid His glory and served others, Mark 10:45. When He comes again, He will come as King in glory, but first He had to suffer.

Also Jesus accused the people of their sin and unbelief. He said their religious leaders were worse still and they did not like it. So the whole nation turned against Him and asked that He should be killed.

There were two unlawful trials, one before the Sanhedrin of Jewish elders, the other before the Roman governor, Pilate. Jesus was condemned to be crucified with two robbers. His friends ran away, the Jews mocked Him, the soldiers struck Him. But what caused Him more sorrow than anything else was shown when He cried, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46.

The answer to this is, "For our sake (God) made him to be sin who knew no sin", 2 Corinthians 5:21. By raising Him from the dead God showed that He was satisfied with Christ's sacrifice for sin.

HIS RESURRECTION. When Jesus died, those who loved Him put Him in a grave, a hole in a rock. Pilate and the Jews put Roman

soldiers in front of the grave so that the disciples would not be able to steal His body.

Even though the soldiers guarded the grave, on the first day of the week it was found open and empty. Jesus was alive again! He showed Himself to Mary, some other women, Peter, two disciples at the village of Emmaus, the ten disciples at Jerusalem, Thomas, 500 believers all at once, James, seven disciples at Galilee, all the apostles, and to Saul near Damascus, 1 Corinthians 15:5-8.

His body was the same body which He had when He was crucified. They could see the wounds in His hands and feet. He ate and talked with His disciples. But when He wanted to, He made Himself so people could not see Him and passed through closed doors. He did not use these powers before His resurrection.

HIS ASCENSION. After He arose from among the dead, Jesus was with His disciples at different times for forty days. He explained to them more about the Old Testament and the Kingdom of God. He commanded them to preach the gospel in the whole world. He promised to be with them at all times and to send the Holy Spirit in a few days. Then, while they were watching Him, He went up to heaven.

HIS GLORY. He had come from the Father. He returned to the Father, John 16:28. He took on Himself the form of man, and became obedient to death. Therefore God highly exalted Him, and gave Him a name above every name, Philippians 2:6-11. God also set Him at His own right hand in heaven and put all things under His feet, Ephesians 1:20-22.

7. The Present Work of Christ

When Jesus Christ had finished bearing God's punishment for our sins on the cross, He cried with a loud voice, "It is finished", John 19:30. Then He died. For the sinner it is good to believe in the finished work of Christ. If he does not, he would want to trust in his own good works.

For the sinner and the believer, it is good to know of Christ's UNFINISHED work. Although His sufferings are forever over, Christ

is busy today on our account.

As the God-Man, Christ knows perfectly the heart of God and the heart of man. He is just the kind of person we need to stand between us and God. He has three main titles which tell us about His work at the present time: Mediator, Priest, Advocate.

MEDIATOR, 1 Timothy 2.5. When Job was in trouble, he felt the need of someone to stand between God and himself, Job 9:33. Christ is the perfect Mediator or middle man. He took on Himself the righteous wrath of God which we deserved. When we accept Christ and His death for us, we are brought back to God and are no longer His enemies.

Christ is the Mediator of a new and better covenant or agreement, Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; 12:24. By grace we are brought into the benefits of this covenant. As Mediator Christ brings to God unsaved men who have faith.

There is only one God, only one God-Man, only one Mediator. To say we need another, man or woman, saint or angel, is to say Christ is not good enough. We do not even need anyone to go between us and Christ. He is a Man and knows our hearts. Yet He is God and God is love.

PRIEST. The Old Testament said the coming Savior would be a Priest. Christ is a High Priest greater than Aaron. Aaron and his sons all died. Christ is a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. He is the only one called the Great High Priest, Hebrews 4:14.

The High Priest leads the people in worship and prays for them, Hebrews 5:1,2. Christ as our High Priest leads our worship and makes our praise acceptable to God, Hebrews 10:19-22. As Priest, He always lives to pray for His own, and so is able to save for all time those who draw near to God through Him, Hebrews 7:25.

ADVOCATE. As Mediator Christ brings sinners to God. As Priest He keeps believers in the place of blessing. But if we fall into sin we need Christ the Advocate, or Comforter.

“My little children, these things write I unto you, so that you

may not sin. And if any man does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”, 1 John 2:1.

From this verse I learn:

- (1) God does not want me to sin at all. But I must not think that I am sinless or perfect.
- (2) When I do sin, God has provided an Advocate for me, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Just as a lawyer tries to help a person in time of need, so Christ acts to bring back the sinning believer to fellowship with God.

Christ has two other titles in the New Testament which tell about His present work, 1 Peter 2:25.

SHEPHERD. As the Good Shepherd Jesus laid down His life for the sheep, John 10:11. This is past. As the Great Shepherd He is now working in us to make us perfect in everything good according to the will of God, Hebrews 13:20,21. Soon, as the Chief Shepherd, He will appear in glory to give rewards to those who serve Him faithfully, 1 Peter 5:4.

BISHOP. This word means “overseer” and tells about Christ as the One who watches over believers and churches. He has the right to expect us to serve Him well. He calls to account those who are careless. He knows what is going on in the churches, Revelation 2 and 3. He promises rewards for faithful service even now, and still greater rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ. On the other hand, He is ready to set aside any church if the people will not repent, Revelation 2.5.

8. His Second Coming

We have already seen God's promises in the Old Testament that a Deliverer, a Prophet, Priest and King would come. Here on earth the Lord Jesus Christ as Prophet made known the mind of God. Now in heaven, as Priest He prays for us. Soon He will return as King of Israel.

When He comes in glory, His bride, the church, will be with Him. Before this happens, the church must go to meet Him. The Rapture

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takes place when the church rises to meet the Lord in the air, 1 Thessalonians 4:17. This will be followed by the judgment seat of Christ, His return to earth in glory, and the Kingdom which will last for a thousand years. The Man of Galilee is now glorified in heaven. Soon He will be glorified on earth among men. These things will be studied in the final chapters of this book.

TEST 5 – Christ (2)

The statements below are taken from the lesson. Enter the ONE MISSING WORD.

1. “There is only one God, only one God-Man, only one”
2. “Now in heaven, as Priest, He for us.”
3. “Jesus did not
4. “As the, Christ knows perfectly the heart of God and the heart of man.”
5. “Jesus was again!”

Enter the correct answer.

6. The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Jesus because

- a) He wanted to be king over Israel.
- b) He accused people of their sin and unbelief.
- c) He did so many miracles.
- d) He did bad things.

7. When Jesus was crucified, what caused Him more sorrow than anything else?

- a) His friends ran away.
- b) The soldiers struck Him.
- c) The Jews mocked Him.
- d) God forsook Him.

8. When Jesus rose from the dead,

- a) He had the same body.
- b) He had a completely different body.
- c) He had no body.

9. Jesus used His power

- a) for His own needs.
- b) for the glory of God.
- c) to boast.

10. Jesus was baptized

- a) confessing His sins.
- b) to be saved.
- c) to show He stood with the godly men of Israel.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What is meant by the FINISHED and the UNFINISHED work of Christ?

The Holy Spirit

His Person

We have very briefly looked at some of the main Bible verses on God the Father and God the Son. We will now think of the Person and work of God the Holy Spirit.

1. Is the Holy Spirit a Person?

In the Bible the Holy Spirit has no title like the Father or name like the Lord Jesus Christ. Some people think that the Holy Spirit is just a force or power for good. Is the Holy Spirit really a Person? Think about these verses:

A person can speak, act, and tell what is in his mind. The Holy Spirit said, “I have sent” . . . “I have called”, Acts 10:20; 13:2.

A person has a will of his own. So has the Holy Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:11. He guides the sons of God, Romans 8:14.

A person has feelings. The Holy Spirit may be troubled and made sorrowful, Isaiah 63:10, Ephesians 4:30.

A person has a mind. The Holy Spirit also has a mind, Romans 8:27. He searches the deep things of God. He knows the mind of God, 1 Corinthians 2:10,11.

A power or a force could not have a will, a mind, feelings, nor speak of itself as “I”. The Holy Spirit is a Person. We should never talk of Him as “it”.

2. His Deity

Is the Holy Spirit really God? In the Bible angels are called spirits, and some of them are “holy” spirits. It is plain, however, that the Holy Spirit has the characteristics of God just as the Son has.

The very words “Holy Spirit”, Luke 11:13, teach us three things: He is SPIRIT, and He is HOLY. Since a spirit is INVISIBLE, we have

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at once three of the attributes of God.

He is ETERNAL, Hebrews 9:14. Every creature has a beginning. Only God is eternal.

He is OVER EVERYTHING, linked in an equal way with God the Father and God the Son, Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14. It would be very wrong to link up a creature with God in an equal way.

The Holy Spirit comes from the Father and is sent by the Son, John 15:26; 16:7. Yet if a person speaks against Christ, he shall be forgiven, but if he speaks against the Holy Spirit he shall not be forgiven, Matthew 12:32. These verses might by themselves seem to show that the Holy Spirit is more or less important than God the Son. But taking all Scriptures together, we see that the Holy Spirit is equal to God. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit work perfectly together.

He is ALL POWERFUL. The Spirit also had a part in the work of creation. Christ did miracles by the Spirit of God, John 3:34, Matthew 12:28.

He KNOWS ALL THINGS. See 1 Corinthians 2:10.

He is EVERYWHERE AT ONCE. In Psalm 139:7-10 we see that it is not possible to go anywhere and get away from the Spirit of God.

He is RIGHTEOUS. He proves all who do not believe in Christ are sinners, John 16:8-11.

He is GRACIOUS. He is called the Spirit of grace, Hebrews 10:29.

These verses show that ten of the twelve attributes of God are attributes of the Holy Spirit. They are more than enough to prove the Spirit is God. The Spirit also reveals Himself. Actually, all we know about God is revealed through the Spirit. He is called the Spirit of Truth, John 14:17. He does reveal Himself (through Scripture), but His main work is to glorify Christ, John 16:13,14. The Spirit is also like God, always the same.

So we see the Holy Spirit is a Person equal in every way to God. The Bible teaches the Spirit of God is God.

The Holy Spirit

His Work

Now we want to think of the work of God's Spirit. There is one God, but He works in different ways. The Spirit never acts differently from the Father or the Son. The Bible teaches seven things that are especially the work of the Holy Spirit.

1. Creation: His Work in Relation to the Earth

While the Son created all things, the Holy Spirit also had a part in the creation of man, Job 33:4, and animals, Psalm 104:30. He took part in renewing the earth, Genesis 1:2.

2. Inspiration: His Work in Relation to the Bible

The Bible tells about Christ, but it was inspired by the Holy Spirit, 2 Peter 1:21.

3. His Work in Relation to Christ

We can see the close relation of the Son of God and the Spirit of God when we read about the life of the Lord Jesus Christ here on earth.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST. The Holy Spirit came on the virgin Mary, Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:35.

THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST. The Spirit anointed Christ after the baptism by coming on Him and abiding on Him. This act fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. It proved to John and other men that Jesus Christ was the true Messiah. It showed that God accepted Him, Matthew 3:16,17, Mark 1:10,11, Luke 3:22.

THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST. After the baptism, Jesus was led by the Spirit into wild country to be tested by Satan, Matthew 4:1, Mark 1:12, Luke 4:1.

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THE SERVICE OF CHRIST. After Satan's temptations, the Lord Jesus Christ started three very busy years. He healed the sick and preached the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, Luke 4:14,18.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST. The Lord Jesus had power to lay down His life for the sheep, and to take it again. This command He received from His Father, John 10:18. Yet we also read it was through the Eternal Spirit that Christ offered Himself without spot to God, Hebrews 9:14.

THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. In Acts 3:15, etc., it is said God raised up Christ from the dead. In 1 Peter 3:18 He was made alive by the Spirit.

THE RETURN OF CHRIST. The Spirit causes the bride (the church) to have a great desire for Christ's return, Revelation 22:17.

4. His Work in Relation to the World

It is the Spirit's work to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment, John 16:8-11. It is only as the Spirit works that we can hope to see men come to know that they are sinners.

(1) God has given to men the right of free choice. He will never go back on this, nor force man to do what is right against his will. So the Spirit of God is held back in part by man's evil heart. This may lead a man to the unforgivable sin, speaking evil against the Holy Spirit, Matthew 12:32. Men can (but should not) work against the Holy Spirit, Acts 7:51. They may even make "the Spirit of grace" angry, Hebrews 10:29.

(2) On the other hand, the Spirit holds back the senseless rebellion of man. He will continue to hold back until He is taken away from this world, 2 Thessalonians 2:7.

5. The New Birth:

His Work in Relation to Those Who Repent

By a wonderful act of the Spirit, everyone who repents, receives Christ and believes on His name, is given the life of God, John 3:5,6. You are at that moment born again. Once you have received this life

you can never lose it again.

6. Sanctification: His Work in Relation to the Believer

When you are born again you are sanctified, or set apart, for God. But you also need to be sanctified or made holy every day for the rest of your life. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, 1 Peter 1:2, as well as of Christ, Ephesians 5:26.

The Spirit remains in each believer forever, 1 John 2:27; causes us to bear fruit, Galatians 5:22. He baptized us into the body of Christ, 1 Corinthians 12:13; desires to fill each one of us, Ephesians 5:18; and marks us as the property of God, Ephesians 1:13.

Sad to say, it is possible for a true child of God to work against the Spirit. We can (but should not) make the Spirit sad, Ephesians 4:30, or put out the flame of the Spirit, 1 Thessalonians 5:19. The churches should hear His voice, Revelation 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22.

7. His Work in Relation to the Church

Just think! Men from different nations and faiths both rich and poor, are all brought together in the body of Christ. God the Spirit dwells in all these people. The Spirit gives them life and makes them one in Christ Jesus, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.

TEST 6 - The Holy Spirit: His Person – The Holy Spirit: His Work

The statements below are taken from the lesson. Enter the ONE MISSING word.

1. “So we see the Holy Spirit is a equal in every way to God.”
2. The main work of the Holy Spirit “is to Christ.”
3. “Actually, all we know about God is through the Spirit.”
4. “The Spirit remains in each believer”
5. “Sad to say, it is possible for a true child of God to work the Spirit.”

Enter the letter of the correct answer.

6. In the words “the Holy Spirit”, we

- a) have all we need to know about Him.
- b) learn He has the same character as God.
- c) have proof that the Spirit does not have a will, a mind, or feelings.

7. What does John 15.26 teach about the Spirit?

- a) He is equal with God the Father.
- b) He never changes.
- c) He comes from the Father and is sent by the Son.

8. Which of these verses teaches that the Spirit has a will?

- a) 1 Corinthians 2.11
- b) Acts 13.2
- c) Galatians 5.22,23
- d) Ephesians 4.30
- e) 1 Corinthians 12.11,12

9. In which verse do you read that it is possible to resist the Holy Spirit?

- a) 1 John 2.27
- b) 1 Peter 3.18
- c) Ephesians 5.18
- d) Galatians 5.16
- e) Acts 7.51

10. When you have the life of God through the Holy Spirit

- a) you can never lose it.
- b) you will lose it if you disobey God.
- c) you will always be victorious

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

In what way has the Holy Spirit affected your life?

About Angels

So far we have seen that all truth comes from the Bible. We have found what the Bible teaches about God the Father, Christ, the Spirit. Now we must turn to God's creation. Apart from the world of animals, God created two kinds of beings: angels and men.

First, let us think about angels, their creation, fall, work, and end.

1. The Creation of Angels

Where did angels come from? What are they like? Are all angels the same?

We have seen that “all things were made by Him,” the Word of God, John 1:3. Paul is still clearer. He said that in Christ all things were created, in heaven and on earth, seen and unseen, angels and authorities. All things were created by Christ and for Christ, Colossians 1:16.

The Son of God created all angels. This was before He created the worlds or any man. As far as we know, God has never created any more angels since that time.

THEIR CONDITION. The word “angel” means one who brings a message in both the Hebrew language of the Old Testament and the Greek language of the New Testament.

Angels are called “spirits,” Hebrews 1:14, and some are called “holy”, Mark 8:38. They do not have a human body and usually cannot be seen. “A spirit has not flesh and bones,” Luke 24:39. Sometimes angels have appeared to men in the form of a man to do God's will, Genesis 19:1,5. So we see angels are spirits, created sinless by God, to serve Him.

KINDS OF ANGELS. In the Bible we see that there are different kinds of angels:

(1) The Archangel, or chief angel, whose name is Michael, Daniel 10:21, Jude 9. The only other angels who are called by name in the Bible are: Gabriel, Daniel 8:16, Luke 1:19,26, and Lucifer.

(2) The Seraphim or “burning ones.” We read of them only in Isaiah 6, where they are the guardians of the holy throne of God.

(3) The Cherubim are first seen in Genesis 3:24, keeping the way of the tree of life. Likenesses of Cherubim are seen in the tabernacle, Exodus 25:18; the temple of Solomon, 1 Kings 6:23; and the future temple, Ezekiel 41:18.

(4) The words “principalities, authorities, dominions, powers, thrones” mean different levels of angels, Romans 8:38, Ephesians 1:21; 3:10, Colossians 1:16; 2:10,15.

(5) The demons are evil spirits, Ephesians 6:12, and no doubt the same as fallen angels, 2 Peter 2:4. Jude says some of the fallen angels are in chains (verse 6). Demons or “devils” are very busy. They like to live in men, Matthew 12:43-45.

2. The Fall of Angels

Where did these evil spirits come from? God created everything for His glory. Some of His creatures have free will. Angels and men can choose to do what is right or what is wrong.

Some of these free beings used their freedom to disobey their Creator. We know this because there are creatures such as Satan, fallen angels and sinful men. God did not create them that way.

There are two important passages in the Old Testament which seem to speak of the fall of Satan. Isaiah 14:12-20 is written first of all against the King of Babylon, verse 4. Ezekiel 28:11-19 was said to the King of Tyre. But in 28:2, the Spirit through Ezekiel speaks to the prince of Tyre. So the words in verses 11-19 are for the power behind the throne, Satan himself.

No doubt the enemies of Israel (Babylon and Tyre) were controlled by Satan. In these two passages the kings of Babylon and Tyre are seen as pictures of Satan. Many points could not refer to any man. (This is often true in other passages also which first tell about the godly man,

but on closer study are seen to be speaking about Christ.)

We learn the following things about Satan: He was called Lucifer, or Day Star, Isaiah 14:12. He had a high position of trust, and was filled with beauty and wisdom, Ezekiel 28:12-15. Satan was given charge of part of the creation.

Sin entered God's creation for the first time when pride filled Lucifer's heart. He said, "I will go up, I will set my throne on high, I will sit, I will make myself like the Most High," like God Himself, Isaiah 14:13,14.

Many angels sided with Satan and fell with him. They were at once driven from the presence of God who cannot allow sin in His presence for a moment. Their final judgment is still future, but certain, Isaiah 14:12,15, Revelation 12:4,9.

3. What are the Angels Doing and What Will Happen to Them at the End?

We have seen from the Bible that angels were created by God, but some of them, led by Lucifer, rebelled against God. Let us now think of what angels are doing, both good and bad, and what will come upon them later on.

1) WHAT ARE FALLEN ANGELS DOING?

The Bible tells us much about Satan, and a little about demons (devils) and the holy angels.

SATAN. Let us note the names of Satan.

(1) Lucifer or Day Star was the name of Satan before he fell. See again the chapter you have just read.

(2) Serpent. In Genesis 3:1 the Serpent or snake lied to Eve. In Genesis 4 Cain who was "of that evil one," 1 John 3:12, murdered his brother. No wonder the Lord Jesus Christ called Satan a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies, John 8:44. In the Serpent we see falsehood and hate.

(3) Satan. This means adversary or enemy, as in Zechariah 3:1. Satan is always the enemy of God and His people. Sometimes Satan

goes around like a wild animal, 1 Peter 5:8. Sometimes he appears as an angel of light, 2 Corinthians 11:14. His hate for Jesus Christ never changes.

(4) The Wicked One takes away the good seed, Matthew 13:19, and sows the bad, 13:28,38. His flaming attacks can be put out by faith, Ephesians 6:16. Even young believers can overcome him and keep themselves so he cannot harm them, 1 John 2:13.

(5) Devil. This comes from a word meaning to accuse or bring a charge against someone. Satan acts as accuser in four ways:

He accuses man to God. For example he accused Job of being selfish by saying that Job did not serve God for nothing, Job 1:9. He accuses the brethren before God day and night, Revelation 12:10.

He accuses God before the angels of heaven, Job 1:10. He said God showed more kindness to Job than to other men. This is very important. You see, God had put Satan and many other angels out of heaven, because of their sin. Satan says that this was not right. He also says God is unfair because He does not judge man's sins at once. One of God's great purposes in creating and redeeming man is that God may stop forever Satan's accusations that God is not righteous.

The Devil also accuses God to man. In Genesis 3:5 he means that God is selfish. The devil suggested this is why God did not want Adam and Eve to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The Devil wants us to doubt God's love. Men blame God for allowing people to suffer. It is the Devil who puts these thoughts in their minds.

The Devil accuses us one to another. For instance he tried to cause trouble between Paul and the Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 2:11, but Paul knew Satan's designs.

(6) Tempter, Matthew 4:3. As tempter Satan tries to make us sin. He succeeded very well in getting Adam and Eve to sin because in them was the desire of the flesh (good for food), the desire of the eye (pleasant), and the pride of life (desired to make one wise), Genesis 3:6. No wonder John says these three desires are "not of the Father," 1 John 2:16.

Adam and Eve fell into sin. So the Tempter used the same plan with Christ—and failed, Luke 4:1-13. He said to Jesus, “Command this stone to become bread” (desire of the flesh). Next he said, “All this glory will I give you” (desire of the eye). Then finally, “If you are the Son of God,” (pride of life). The Tempter's greatest effort resulted in his greatest failure.

EVIL SPIRITS. Some people talk about Satan as if he knew everything and were all powerful like God. Satan cannot be everywhere at once. He must work through many demons who obey his will. These are the gods of the Gentiles, 1 Corinthians 10:20. These are the spirits of false prophets. In many ways their power is greater than man's, Deuteronomy 13:1-3, Matthew 24:24, Revelation 13:13-15.

2) WHAT ARE THE HOLY ANGELS DOING?

What is the work of the unfallen angels?

IN THE PAST, they guarded the throne of God, Genesis 3:24, Isaiah 6:2. As God's servants they were often sent to make known God's love or carry out His judgment, Genesis 19:1,13. The angels helped in giving the Law, Galatians 3:19, Hebrews 2:2.

IN THE PRESENT, they are ministering spirits . . . for them who shall obtain salvation, Hebrews 1:14. For example the angel of the Lord brought Peter out of prison, Acts 5:19; 12:7. More wonderful, they watch with interest God's dealings in grace toward us, Ephesians 3:10, 1 Peter 1:12.

IN THE FUTURE God will send angels to pour out His anger on wicked men, 2 Thessalonians 1:7, Revelation 8:2; 16:1.

3) WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE ANGELS AT THE END?

Some of the fallen angels are now in chains waiting for the day of judgment. All the others will be judged and punished when God's time comes.

As in Job 1, Satan at present may still appear before the throne of God, Revelation 12:10. He is today the greatest of the rulers...in heavenly places, Ephesians 6:12, margin. He and his angels will be cast

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down to the earth, Revelation 12:9, during the time of great trouble called the Tribulation. For a thousand years he will be chained in the great deep while Christ rules, Revelation 20:2,3, then loosed for a short time. He will lead the final great rebellion of men against God. Then he will be thrown into the lake of fire prepared for him and his angels. There he will be punished forever and ever, Revelation 20:7-10.

The holy angels will serve God, Revelation 21:12, and enjoy the revelation of His grace forever, Ephesians 2:7.

TEST 7 - About Angels

The statements below are taken from the lesson. Enter the ONE MISSING WORD.

1. "He must work through many ___ who obey his will." ___
2. " ___ and men can choose to do what is right or what is wrong." ___
3. "The Son of God ___ all angels." ___
4. "The Bible tells us much about ___ and a little about demons (devils) and the holy angels."

Enter the letter of the correct answer.

5. In Hebrews 1.14, we are told that the holy angels are

- a) spirits that minister to the believers.
- b) enjoying the grace and wisdom of God.
- c) beings that carry out the judgments of God.

6. The guardians of God's throne (Isaiah 6) are called the

- a) Cherubim.
- b) Seraphim.
- c) Angels.

7. Sin first came when

- a) the first man sinned in the garden of Eden.
- b) Satan was cast out of heaven.
- c) pride filled the heart of the angel Lucifer.

8. What does the word "Devil" mean?

- a) an adversary or enemy.
- b) an accuser or one who brings a charge against someone.
- c) Son of the morning.

9. What does the word "Satan" mean?

- a) a wicked person.
- b) a person who is false and who hates.
- c) a person who is an enemy.

10. In Job 1.9 the Devil accuses

- a) a man before God.
- b) God to the angels.
- c) God before men.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Name four actions of the holy angels in the New Testament.

What Is Man?

The second great group of beings created by God is man. Angels were created first and are greater than man. What does the Bible teach about man in God's plan?

1. His Beginning

Man could not know where he came from unless God told him. Because God is gracious, He has made known to us the most important facts in Genesis 2:7.

How did God create man? God formed a body out of the dust of the ground. Man's body is made of the same things that animals and the other things in this world are made of. God breathed into man the breath of life and he became alive. Even today science does not understand what life is and cannot make a lifeless thing become alive.

Although some people think the idea of evolution is true, it has three great problems after the creation of the world:

1. the beginning of plant life,
2. the beginning of animal life,
3. the beginning of human life.

There are great differences between stones, plants, animals and human beings. It seems that some people overlook these problems because they want to leave God out.

When did man come into being? The Bible teaches that Adam was the first true man. God created him about six or eight thousand years ago. Some people say they have found men's bones or things made by men going back tens of thousands of years. The Bible does not tell us what happened in this world before Adam was created. There may have been creatures that looked like man. But Adam was created with a spirit. There is no way to prove that these beings (if there really were any) had a spirit. Therefore these old bones cannot prove that the Bible dates are wrong. We believe the Bible is true no matter what men may say about it.

2. His Position

Man was created lower than angels, Hebrews 2:7, and higher than animals, Psalm 8:6-8. Among men there are differences also: The head of every man is Christ and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God, 1 Corinthians 11:3. Men are to obey kings and governors, 1 Peter 2:13,14, Romans 13:1. The Lord Jesus is over all creation, Hebrews 2:6-9, Revelation 3:14.

3. His Nature

Man has three parts: body, soul and spirit, 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

The body is made up of flesh, bones, blood. Angels do not have bodies. At present our bodies can become sick and die. When Christ comes, Christians will receive a new body which will be like His body, 1 Corinthians 15:53, 1 John 3:2.

Because God raised the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, we can be sure that all men will also be raised from the dead, 1 Corinthians 15:22. Sad to say, the wicked will rise from the dead only to be judged for their sins, John 5:28,29.

Man also has a soul. With this he thinks, feels, and decides what he wants. "My soul is sorrowful", Matthew 26:38. Sometimes the word "soul" is used for the whole man, or for the part of man that is not his body. But there are some verses in the Bible which show clearly that the soul and spirit are not the same thing. See Hebrews 4:12.

What is the spirit of man? The spirit of man allows him to know God who is Spirit. This makes men different from animals. Animals are said to have a body and a soul, but not a spirit. An animal cannot know God.

Man's conscience is part of his spirit. An animal may be afraid of punishment, but it does not know what is right and what is wrong. The conscience is an inner guide which acts according to what a person knows to be right and wrong. If the person gets this knowledge from the Bible, a good conscience is a wonderful thing to have. But if a person does not obey his conscience, it may stop warning him altogether.

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When a man is redeemed, his whole being is redeemed—his body, Romans 8:23, his soul, 1 Peter 1:9, and his spirit, Hebrews 12:23. Right now our bodies belong to God, but the effects of sin will not be taken away until the Lord comes.

4. His Free Will

God has made man in His own image and has given him a free will. That means that man can choose to do what is right or what is wrong. God commands us to do what is right. We must also keep the laws of the land in which we live.

In the things of God, man is free to choose right or wrong, to do good or evil. This was seen in the Garden of Eden. God said, “You shall not.” Adam knew at once what was right and wrong. God demands that we do the right.

5. Why Did God Create Man?

God is love, 1 John 4:8. He created man so that He could love him, and be loved by him.

Satan led man into sin to spoil God's plan. He may well have thought that man would only hate God for punishing him for his sin. Often this is true. Many men hate God. However sin made it possible for God to show His love to man even more than before. So Satan's accusations of God will be stopped forever. Christ will have a great number of redeemed people with Him in eternity. They will love Him because He first loved them, 1 John 4:19. Will you be one of them?

6. What Does God Want Man to Do?

God's great plan is to glorify His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He created man for a special part in this plan. He wants man to learn God's will and do it. He also wants man to use his free will for the glory of God and to bring glory and honor to the Son of God.

7. Man's Fall

See in the next chapter “THE BEGINNING OF SIN.”

The Need of Salvation

This is the first of six chapters on what the Bible teaches about salvation. The other five chapters teach about

The ground of salvation: What did Christ do to save us?

The way of salvation: What is God's part in salvation and what is our part?

The nature of salvation: What happens to a man when he is saved?

The results of salvation: What happens to a man after he is saved?

The benefits of salvation: What can a man do after he is saved which he could not do before?

Only one word is needed to show us our need of salvation: SIN. If there were no such thing as sin, there would be no need for salvation. Let us see what the Bible says about sin, how it came into the world, what it is like and what its results are.

1. The Beginning of Sin

When and where and how did sin enter God's universe? Did God create sin? Did He create sinful beings?

SATAN. God created beings that can love Him and serve Him because they want to. This is the same as saying He created beings that can hate Him and disobey Him, beings that are able to sin. For if these beings CANNOT sin, they would not be able to do anything else but obey. If they can choose to sin or to obey, some would choose to sin. And some did sin. The first one was Lucifer, or Satan.

MAN. You can read the story of Adam's sin in Genesis 3. Perhaps you know it quite well, but you should think about the following points:

(1) In the Garden of Eden everything was planned to make man happy. He could eat the fruit of trees that had already been planted. He

was ruler over all the animals. On the other hand, the Lord Jesus Christ who is also called the last Adam, was tempted after He had been in the wilderness for forty days without any food.

Adam talked as a friend with God every day. There was only one thing he was told not to do. He was told not to eat any fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

(2) Adam was warned. God told him plainly that the very day he broke this command he would die. Adam knew what the results would be.

(3) When Satan wanted to tempt Adam to sin, he first went to Eve. He started by saying something that made her doubt God's goodness. Eve told the first lie. She told Satan that they could not touch the tree. God had only said not to EAT any of its fruit. If they ate it, they would die.

Then Satan came right out and said they would not die. He promised Eve they would be like God and know good and evil. Eve was deceived and believed. Adam's sin was worse because he was not deceived, 1 Timothy 2:14.

(4) Was Satan's promise fulfilled? Of course Adam and Eve already knew the difference between good and evil. They knew this difference the moment God said to them, "You shall not." Now they knew evil because they themselves had done evil. There was some truth in what Satan said. God knows in His mind the difference between good and evil. He does not know evil by doing it, because everything He does is good.

(5) What about God's warning? God had said they would die the same day. Did this really happen?

Adam was separated from God that very day. In a real sense this is death. Also no doubt Adam's body STARTED to die that very day when he refused to obey God. "The wages of sin is death." But what is sin?

2. The Nature of Sin

To some people I know, sin is the same as good fun. To others it is like sickness; they say there is no such thing, it is just like a dream in

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your mind. Some know that sin is doing what is not right, but think that you cannot help doing it.

What does God say about sin?

God has a right to tell me what to do and what not to do. And He has told me. If I do what God says I should not do, it is sin. If I refuse or forget to do what God tells me to do, that is sin. Sin is lawlessness, 1 John 3:4. Even if I do not know God's law, I sin if I break it. But if I know to do good and do not do it, this is also sin, James 4:17.

“All unrighteousness is sin”, 1 John 5:17.

To think of foolishness is sin, Proverbs 24:9.

Whatever is not of faith is sin, Romans 14:23.

In one word, sin is rebellion against God. Sin is saying, “I will do whatever I please, and I don't care what God wants me to do.”

Sin is a cruel slave driver.

Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin, John 8:34.

Sin deceives people, Hebrews 3:13.

Sin causes death, James 1:15.

GOD HATES SIN, Jeremiah 44:4. He is angry with the wicked every day, Psalm 7:11.

Which is the worst sin? There are lists of different sins in several places in the Bible. In Matthew 15:19 “evil thoughts” is the first on the list. In Galatians 5:19, adultery. In Mark 7:22, pride and foolishness are at the end. Talking about other people in an unkind way and not obeying parents are included in Romans 1:29,30.

In some ways pride is the worst sin. In a list of seven things which the Lord hates, pride is the first, Proverbs 6:16-19. It is the sin that keeps many people from coming to God, because they are too proud to confess their sins. But God saves only sinners, not those who think they are good and righteous, Luke 5:32. He can help man only through Christ. To refuse to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord is the sin which cannot be forgiven. It is the result of pride and rebellion against God.

3. The Effects of Sin

When man rebels against God, this is called SIN. What effect has sin had on God, Satan and man?

THE EFFECT ON GOD.

Because man has sinned against God, God must punish him. God is righteous. He cannot have in His presence people who rebel against Him. If the rebel does not repent, he must go away forever.

On the other hand, God is love. His love for man cannot change. He wants those whom He loves to be with Him. So we see that God's righteousness drives man away and His love draws him close. What is the result?

Do not think this was a problem to God. He knew from the beginning what would happen. His plan for bringing man back to Himself is the most wonderful plan ever made. Sin did enter the world, but that did not mean that God could no longer be righteous or loving. Nowhere do we see the love AND righteousness of God as clearly as at the cross of Christ.

THE EFFECT ON SATAN.

Because of man's sin Satan can now accuse both God and man. Man has opened the way for God's enemy to accuse Him of unfairness. All these accusations will be silenced forever through the work of Christ.

THE EFFECT ON MAN.

The first effect on man was fear of God. At the beginning Adam and Eve had talked with God every day, but after they had sinned they tried to hide from God. They were ashamed because their bodies were not covered and they felt they were no longer fit to be in God's presence, Genesis 3:8.

Because they had sinned, God could not allow them to be near Him any more. So the second effect was that they had to be sent away from God. Men are dead in trespasses and sins, Ephesians 2:1.

When man sinned he put himself into the power of Satan. Because he is afraid of death, he is a slave, Hebrews 2:14,15. He thought he

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would be like God and know. Instead of that, his mind was blinded by Satan, 2 Corinthians 4:4.

Because Adam became a sinner, all his children and descendants are born with a sinful nature and are likely to sin. But every man must answer to God for what he does.

TEST 8 What is Man? The Need of Salvation

Enter **TRUE** or **FALSE** after each statement.

1. Adam was the first man.
2. When a man is redeemed, only his spirit is redeemed.
3. God created man to bring glory to His Son.
4. Christ is called the “last Adam”.
5. God has every right to tell me what I should and what I should not do in my life.

Enter the letter of the correct answer.

6. Which statement is true?

- a) Evolution is completely proven.
- b) Man can create living things.
- c) Man still does not understand what life is.

7. Man’s place in God’s creation is

- a) a little above the angels.
- b) equal with that of animals.
- c) between that of angels and animals.

8. According to the Bible, man

- a) does not have to keep the laws of the land where he lives.
- b) can choose to do what is right or what is wrong.
- c) does not know right from wrong.

9. God

- a) forces man to do His will.
- b) wants man to learn His will and choose to do it.
- c) does not care what man does.

10. Which statement is true?

- a) Both people and animals can know God.
- b) People were made of different things than animals.
- c) People have a spirit; animals do not.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Why did God create Man?

The Ground of Salvation

God wanted to save man from the effects of sin. Man surely needed to be saved. But how could God do it?

In a word, God can save man only because of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. To understand better the importance of this event, we must think about four words: Propitiation, Substitution, Atonement, and Redemption. These words sum up a great deal of the teaching of the Bible on the meaning of Christ's death.

1. Propitiation

God hates sin and as a judge He shows His righteous wrath against the sinner. This cannot mean that He does not love him. A father loves his son even when he is punishing him for not obeying. A judge in a court might have to give a sentence against his own son. God as Judge cannot show favor to anyone. He cannot be kinder to one person than to another.

The first thing we want to think about is propitiation. What is propitiation? It means the turning away of wrath by an offering. The Lord Jesus Christ bore the punishment for our sins when on the cross He offered Himself as a sacrifice to God. God no longer has to be angry with the rebel-sinner. He can now show Himself as a merciful God.

“God sent His Son to be the propitiation (or expiation) for our sins”, 1 John 4:10.

“Not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world”,
1 John 2:2.

“Christ Jesus is a propitiation through faith in His blood”,
Romans 3:25.

2. Substitution

To substitute means to put a thing in the place of another. Even though God is love, His righteousness says, The soul that sins shall

die, Ezekiel 18:20. God cannot set aside His own laws. To save man, seven things are necessary.

- (1) There must be a substitute, one who will die in the place of the guilty man. If there is none, the guilty must die for his own sins. There would be no salvation for him.
- (2) The substitute must be acceptable to God. Some other plan might seem very good to me, but that is not important. God is the Judge and He must be satisfied.
- (3) The substitute must be equal. In other words, he must be a man. An animal would not do, Hebrews 10:4. An angel is pure spirit and cannot die. The substitute for a man must be a man.
- (4) He must be innocent, without sin. If he were guilty, he would have to die for his own sins and would not do as a substitute for another.
- (5) He must be willing to die. It would not be right for God to force some innocent person to die for another.
- (6) He must have an infinite life, without any limit. If not, his death would be sufficient for only one man. God's law is, "Life for life," Deuteronomy 19:21.
- (7) The Perfect Substitute must be God Himself. Plainly only the God-Man could fulfill the conditions listed above. But even apart from this, only Christ would do. If a creature died for men, the Accuser (Satan) could say God allowed another to do what He Himself would not do. More still, God wants our thanks and worship and love for Himself, Exodus 20.5. Love desires love.

Throughout the Bible we learn that a Substitute must die for man. At first God accepted animal sacrifices. These were not sufficient in themselves to take away sin, but were pictures of Christ. When an animal died, blood was shed.

(a) For example, God accepted Abel's lamb, but refused Cain's bloodless offering, Genesis 4:4,5.

(b) God provided a sheep to die in the place of Isaac, Genesis

22:13.

(c) The people of Israel offered thousands of animals to God to pay for their sins, Leviticus 1:4.

(d) The truth of substitution is brought out in Isaiah 53—

“for our transgressions”, verse 5;

“for our iniquities”, verse 5;

“for the transgressions of my people”, verse 8;

“an offering for sin”, verse 10;

“for the transgressors”, verse 12.

(e) The Lord Jesus spoke of His body given for us, and of His blood shed for us, 1 Corinthians 11:24, Mark 14:24.

(f) Paul taught this truth, Romans 5:8, Galatians 3:13.

(g) So did Peter, 1 Peter 3:18.

How wonderful! Christ died for sinners, that is, for their benefit. He died for sins, and took on Himself the punishment which the sinners should have borne. Christ, the Son of God, the Perfect Man, the sufficient and only Substitute!

3. Atonement

In the Old Testament “atonement” is often used to interpret the word “to cover”. No real atonement could be made until Christ died. But sins were “covered” or forgiven for that time by the sacrifices. God passed over sins knowing that Christ was going to die for them, Romans 3:25, Hebrews 9:15.

The word “atone” is used by students of the Bible and means to cause enemies to become friends again, to settle a quarrel, or to pay for the harm that has been done.

What is the difference between atonement and reconciliation? Christ atoned for our sins on the cross. Reconciliation is the work of the Holy Spirit when the sinner believes. It means to restore to friendship and happy fellowship again.

“When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by

the death of His Son,” Romans 5:10.

The Bible never speaks of God being reconciled. He has always loved man. But WE need to be reconciled to God, that is to have fear and hatred of God taken away.

God reconciled us to Himself, 2 Corinthians 5:18.

Reconciling the world to Himself, 2 Corinthians 5:19.

Be reconciled to God, 2 Corinthians 5:20.

4. Redemption

To redeem means to buy or to buy again. For example, a man in Israel might become sick or poor and have to sell his property. According to the law of Moses, his brother had the right to buy it back at any time. In this way he could keep the property in the family, Leviticus 25:23-25. The stories of Ruth (Ruth 4:1-10) and Jeremiah (Jeremiah 32:6-12) are interesting.

In the New Testament there are two words for redeem.

(1) One means to buy. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, Galatians 3:13.

(2) The other word means to set free on payment of a ransom price. Christ gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all sin, Titus 2:14. We are redeemed from the old ways, not with silver or gold, but with the blood of Christ, 1 Peter 1:18,19. He gave His life a ransom for many, Mark 10:45, and got eternal redemption for us, Hebrews 9:12.

Man belonged to God who created him. Through sin man got under the control of another, Satan. Christ paid the ransom, in fact sold all that He had to buy us at great price, Matthew 13:46. So we see that we are not our own, but have been bought with a price, the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We ought to glorify God in our bodies, in all that we do and say, 1 Corinthians 6:19,20.

The Way of Salvation

Christ's death on the cross is the ground of God's wonderful plan of salvation. It was completely necessary and at the same time perfectly sufficient.

There are four words in the Bible which further tell about God's work in saving men. These are: Election, Predestination, Calling, and Adoption. We will also in this chapter think of two words which tell about man's part in God's plan of salvation.

1. Election

In an earlier chapter we found that God knows everything. He can know what will happen in the future better than I can know what has happened in the past. Does God control what will happen in the future? To say that God KNOWS the future is not the same as to say that He CONTROLS it.

Of course in a way, God fully controls the universe and all things that have happened and will happen. There is no doubt that what He has planned will come to pass. However He has also given to each person the right and duty to choose what he wants to do.

To elect means to choose. The word is used of angels, 1 Timothy 5:21. Israel is called the chosen of Jehovah in Isaiah 45:4, and part of Israel is chosen by grace, Romans 11:5. Christ is called God's chosen, Isaiah 42:1, 1 Peter 2:6. New Testament saints are called the elect, Romans 8:33, Colossians 3:12.

Election does not mean that God chooses certain people for salvation and all others to be lost. Every man must choose salvation for himself. It is God's plan that Christ should be glorified with all possible glory. God made Christ the Head of the church which is also called His body and His bride. In order to glorify His Son, God makes His bride beautiful and gives her many blessings. This is the purpose of predestination.

2. Predestination

God knew long ago those who would be chosen, 1 Peter 1:2. Those whom God knew before, He predestinated to be like His Son, Romans 8:29.

To predestinate means to mark out ahead of time. According to the purpose of God we are predestinated to be declared to be sons of God, Ephesians 1.5,11.

Do election and predestination mean that men no longer have to give account to God for what they do? No. All men must give account. The Gospel must go out to all, and whoever believes shall be saved. But it is good to see that God knew all about me, loved me even when I did not love Him, and planned great blessings for me in Christ. Election and predestination show very plainly God's greatness, His love and power.

3. Calling

Those whom God predestined, them He also called, Romans 8:30. This is the gospel call, God's way of bringing sinners back to Himself. To some the gospel seems foolish; to others who believe it shows plainly the love of God. No man can come to Christ except the Father draw him. All that the Father gives to Christ will come, and he that comes will never be cast out, John 6:37,44.

Election took place long ago before any man was called. However many more are called than have been elected. "Many are called, but few chosen", Matthew 22:14.

4. Adoption

Another work of God is to predestine us unto adoption, as sons, Ephesians 1.5. In the Bible this word means to declare a person is a son. We were MADE sons the moment we were born again by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior. It will be shown openly to the world that we ARE sons when the Lord Jesus Christ comes in glory. Thus we have now received the Spirit of sonship or adoption, but still wait for this to be shown openly to the world, Romans 8:15,23. This will take place when the Lord Jesus comes and our bod-

ies are redeemed.

The true Israelites will also be shown openly to be sons of God, Romans 9:4. Adoption is the work of the Father, Ephesians 1.5; the Son, Galatians 4.5, and the Holy Spirit, Romans 8:15.

Salvation is entirely of God. He planned it, accomplished it and offers it freely to sinners. The propitiation of Christ is for the whole world. Does this mean all will be saved? No. Only those who repent and have faith receive the blessings of God's salvation. Neither faith nor repentance is a good work. No man can glory in himself before God because of his good works.

5. Repentance

In the Old Testament to repent means to be sorry for what you have done. In the New Testament it means to change your mind. Sometimes we read that God repented. This means that He changed His thoughts toward man.

When I repent, I change my thoughts:

- (a) about sin. I see that it is hatred and rebellion against God.
- (b) about God. I now understand that He is a Friend.
- (c) about Christ. I now see Him as altogether lovely, the chiefest of ten thousand, Song of Solomon 5:10,16.

God commands all men to repent, Acts 17:30.

He gives repentance, Acts 11:18.

His goodness leads us to repentance, Romans 2:4.

The Lord Jesus Christ calls men to repent, Luke 5:32.

Repentance leads to:

- (a) forgiveness, Luke 24:47, Acts 5:31;
- (b) good works, Luke 3:8;
- (c) baptism, Luke 3:3.

6. Faith

Faith is to believe what someone else says. Thus God makes known to man His love, and a Christian tells the gospel story. A man

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who hears it and believes it is a man who has faith.

The word faith is also used for what we can trust in: Christian truth as a whole. “Contend for the faith”, Jude 3.

We also read of the faithfulness of God, Romans 3:3. This means that we can trust Him and know that He will never fail us. Thus we believe that the Gospel message is true and that God is faithful. We commit ourselves to Him. This is faith.

What a person does and how he acts shows if he has true faith or not. Just to agree in your mind that something is true is not the kind of faith God wants us to have. Demons believe that there is one God and are afraid, but this does not save them. Faith that does not show itself by actions that are pleasing to God is dead faith, and a person with that kind of faith does not have eternal life at all, James 2:14-26.

Election, predestination, calling and adoption all show that God is in control over all. Man's part is to repent and have faith.

TEST 9 The Ground of Salvation The Way of Salvation

The statements below are taken from the lesson. Enter the ONE MISSING WORD.

1. “God can save men only because of the _____ of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
2. “Throughout the Bible we learn that a _____ MUST DIE FOR MAN.”
3. “No real _____ could be made until Christ died.”
4. “It was completely _____ and at the same time perfectly sufficient.”
5. “Man’s part is to repent and have _____.”

Enter TRUE or FALSE for each of the following

6. Atonement and reconciliation are the same.
7. In the Old Testament, the word *atonement* means “to cover”.
8. According to John 1.12,13, you can become a son of God by **adoption**.

Enter the letter of the correct answer.

9. “To mark out ahead of time” is called
 - a) election.
 - b) adoption.
 - c) predestination.
10. Which verse tells **how** you can “please God”?
 - a) Ephesians 2.8,9
 - b) Hebrews 11.6
 - c) Titus 3.5

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Explain your part in God’s plan of salvation.

The Nature of Salvation

God has given us salvation at very great cost to Himself. By repentance and faith man can accept this salvation. Just what happens then? What is this salvation which he receives? Four words show some of the wonderful things that become ours when we receive God's salvation.

1. Forgiveness

Our sins are forgiven! Some people say they have no sin. Others say their sins are not as bad as someone else's. Surely it is far better to confess my sins to God and receive His forgiveness.

The word "forgive" is found many times in the Old and New Testaments.

"Forgive us our debts", Matthew 6:12.

Sin is a debt against God. We owe to God our life, love and obedience. Because we did not give these to God, we became like the man in Matthew 18:24. This man owed the king ten thousand talents, but had nothing with which to pay his debt. In the parable the king felt sorry for the man and forgave him the whole debt. The man did not have to pay anything at all.

But God as JUDGE does not and cannot forgive sins that way. He can and does forgive sins only because the debt has been paid. The Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, paid it all. Now God not only forgives our sins; He also forgets them. God is able to know all things that are going to happen and to forget what has already happened in the past.

"Their sins will I remember no more", Hebrews 8:12.

The forgiven sinner is filled with joy, Matthew 9:2.

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven", Romans 4:7.

God as a FATHER forgives His children for a different reason. It

would not be love to let me go on in sin. If I fall into sin I lose my joy. My Father will forgive me IF I confess my sin.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”, 1 John 1:9.

Because I have believed in Christ, I am now a child of God, a member of His family. If another Christian, my brother in Christ, sins against me, I forgive him because my own sins have been forgiven, Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13. I do not wait until he pays me for it. If I want to enjoy the Father's forgiveness I must forgive my brethren, Matthew 6:14,15; 18:35.

2. Justification

Forgiveness is taught in the Old Testament, but justification is taught mostly by Paul in the New Testament. What is the difference between forgiveness and justification?

When we receive forgiveness, the debt which we had because of our sins is taken away. When we are justified, we have a new standing before God. In the Old Testament a person might need to be forgiven many times, but in the New Testament a person is justified only once. He will never need to be justified again.

What does it mean to be justified?

(1) It does NOT mean TO BE JUST. Man is not in himself just or righteous, although he can be justified. There is none righteous, no, not one, Romans 3:10.

(2) It does NOT mean TO MAKE JUST. God is said to be justified, Luke 7:29, Romans 3:4, but He always was just and so does not need to be made just.

(3) When a person is justified, he is declared to be just. God says he is justified because he is now in Christ. In the court of heaven the man who is in Christ is no longer guilty of sin and does not have to pay for his sins, 2 Corinthians 5:21. This is not because he is without sin, but because the Lord Jesus Christ paid the penalty for his sins. So God's law cannot condemn him any more:

Who shall lay any charge against God's elect? It is God that justifies, Romans 8:33.

In Romans justification is:

- (1) by grace, 3:24;
- (2) by righteousness, 5:18,19, the obedience of Christ on the cross;
- (3) by blood, 5:9, which the Lord Jesus Christ shed on Calvary;
- (4) by resurrection, 4:25, which proved that God accepted the sacrifice of Christ on the cross;
- (5) by faith, 5:1, which shows that man has accepted Christ's sacrifice for him.

Justification is also said to be by works, James 2:21,25. This means that by his good works a man shows to others that he has been justified. Those who have been justified have peace in their hearts, Romans 5:1.

3. Reconciliation

God is love, and He never changes. He has always loved man, but because man did not know this, he was afraid of God and hated Him. God showed and proved His love to man perfectly at Calvary. When a man really believes that God loves him, he no longer fears and hates Him. He now loves and trusts God. He has been reconciled to Him.

“When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son”, Romans 5:10.

“You that were once aliens and enemies in your mind by evil works, He has now reconciled,” Colossians 1:21,22.

4. The New Birth

We can think of death as the separation of body and soul. The separation of a man from his God is also called death, spiritual death. It is the result of sin.

“Dead in trespasses and sins”, Ephesians 2:1.

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Every person on earth is born with the life of Adam. This life is good enough for this earth, but would be no good at all in heaven.

Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, John 3:3.

The Bible tells us how to be born again. We are born again by the Spirit of God and the Word of God, John 3.5, 1 Peter 1:23. You are NOT born a son of God by

- (1) blood (blood sacrifice, or because your father and mother are Christians),
- (2) the will of the flesh (because you yourself make up your mind you are going to be born again),
- (3) the will of man (through someone else's help or prayers).

Those who are born sons of God are those who receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior, by believing in His Name, John 1:12,13.

When I am born again, I become a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old things are passed away, all things are new, 2 Corinthians 5:17. I put on the new nature, Colossians 3:10. I can and should walk in newness of life.

As a son of God I am also an heir, a fellow heir with the Son of God, Romans 8:17, Galatians 4:7. The Father will also chasten me if I do not obey Him. He does not do this to everybody but only to His sons whom He loves, Hebrews 12:6.

Results of Salvation

People who are “saved” have received salvation. The word salvation tells of many wonderful things that God supplies for those who accept Christ. Some of these are past and can never be changed again. Some are in the present time, going on day by day, 1 Peter 1:9. Others will come to pass in the future.

“Salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”, 1 Peter 1.5.

In this chapter and the next we will think about the present side of salvation; in another later chapter, future salvation.

The word sanctify means to set apart for God. Since God is holy, sanctify can mean to make someone holy, or to make a person a saint. All believers are saints, Romans 1:7. They have been made holy, have been set apart for God by the Holy Spirit. But sanctification is something that goes on day by day as well. The Lord who sanctifies and they who are being sanctified are all of one, Hebrews 2:11.

Sanctification is not only a thing of the present time. It is past, 1 Corinthians 6:11, and also will continue until Christ makes us perfect, Ephesians 5:26,27.

1. Victory

Salvation in the PAST saved me from the PUNISHMENT of sin.

Salvation at PRESENT saves me from the POWER of sin.

Salvation in the FUTURE will save me from the PRESENCE of sin.

Salvation day by day means I have victory over sin. The believer has three enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil, Ephesians 2:2, 3. These three try to lead him into sin.

The flesh is the desire of the natural man to sin, Galatians 5:17. Even when a person has been born again, he still has the flesh and will continue to have it as long as he remains in this world. It tries to make him sin through evil habits which he had before he was saved, Romans 7.5, and through desires, 1 Peter 2:11.

The world is also an enemy of the believer. By the world we mean the evil men who surround him day by day. All men, but especially young people, think they must do the same things their friends do. Thus the world tempts by its example, 1 Peter 4:4.

Many people who sin try to make it look better by blaming Satan for tempting them to sin. Of course Satan cannot be everywhere at once and his main work is not trying to make believers fall into sin. If you want to know the reason for most of your sins, just look within your own heart.

Satan may keep busy mostly with false religion, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15. He has armies of demons to do his will. His main plan is to put doubt and evil thoughts into men's minds, as seen in Genesis 3:1-5.

How can the weak believer meet such powerful enemies and gain the victory? The Bible tells us how:

(1) As to the world, we should not love it, but love the Father instead, 1 John 2:15, Colossians 3:2.

“The world is crucified unto me and I unto the world”,
Galatians 6:14.

(2) They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, Galatians 5:24, and should not give it any opening to act, Romans 13:14. If we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the desires of the flesh, Galatians 5:16.

(3) Fight back against the devil, and he will run away from you, James 4:7. Christ saw Satan fall from heaven, Luke 10:18. He will certainly be destroyed, Hebrews 2:14.

2. Fruit

If a man has victory in his life every day over the world, the flesh and the devil, this shows that he is really saved. Another way by which he can prove that he has been born again is by bearing fruit day by day. But what is fruit?

(1) Good deeds are called fruit, Matthew 3:8. They prove that a person has truly repented and is really a child of God. You can tell a false prophet from a prophet of God by his fruits, Matthew 7:16.

(2) A person who walks in the Spirit will bear the fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22,23: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

(3) Paul says the gospel brought forth fruit in the whole world, Colossians 1:6. He hoped that he might have fruit when he got to Rome as he had had in other places, Romans 1:13. The desire to witness to others about Christ shows that one is saved. It is a wonderful thing to win someone else to the Lord Jesus Christ. However the Bible teaches that LIVING for God is more important than witnessing.

How do you bear fruit for God? Jesus said, "He that abides in me and I in him brings forth much fruit...By this is my Father glorified", John 15.5,8.

If a branch (a Christian) bears some fruit, the Father (God) purifies it so it will bear more. If it does not bear fruit, it is removed from the vine. This means that if a believer does not bear fruit, the Father will take him to heaven so that he will not bring shame to God here on earth, 1 Corinthians 11:30.

3. Assurance

Part of the fruit of the Spirit is peace, Galatians 5:22. But how can I have peace in my heart if I am afraid I may lose my salvation? God never wanted it to be so. In giving salvation, He wants us to know we are saved, and to have peace. One great result of salvation is assurance.

It is possible to be saved and not know it. The Bible teaches that my salvation depends completely on the work of the Lord Jesus Christ when He died on the cross for my sins. If my salvation depends on my works, I can never know for sure that I am saved. But because Christ did all that is necessary, I can know I am saved. In fact to doubt it is sinful unbelief.

"These things I write to you that believe on the name of the Son of God THAT YOU MAY KNOW that you have eternal life," 1 John 5:13.

Because of the work of Christ we are completely safe for eternity.

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As we read this in the Bible, the Word of God, and believe it, we receive peace in our minds and the assurance of salvation.

A Christian who is not sure that he is really saved keeps on worrying and working. But his works are for himself, to keep himself “saved”, and do not please God. Only works done for the glory of God alone can bring Him pleasure.

The Bible teaches that the real believer can never be lost again. Some people do not believe this. They think this means that therefore you can do as you please. We have already seen that the Father will punish His children if they do not obey Him.

But these people think they can prove from the Bible that a believer may fall away and be lost again. In order to prove this they use the following verses:

(1) “He that shall endure to the end shall be saved”, Matthew 24:13. But this verse speaks of the Jew in the years of tribulation, not of a Christian who is being tempted to sin.

(2) “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”, Philippians 2:12. But this does not say, work FOR your own salvation. In fact the next verse shows that it is God that works in us.

(3) It is impossible . . . if they shall fall away, to restore them again unto repentance, Hebrews 6:4-6. This refers to Jews who go back to their old religion. If it meant Christians who have gone into sin and no longer follow the Lord, this verse says they could never be restored!

(4) “Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand”, John 10:28. But what happens if I pluck myself out by going into sin? Even if I sin I am not lost, for the Lord Jesus says in the same verse, “They shall never perish.”

There are many verses which teach that the believer is perfectly safe and secure. He should know it and rejoice in it.

Him that comes to me I will not cast out, John 6:37.

Whoever lives and believes in me shall never die, John 11:26.

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Sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, Ephesians 1:13; 4:30.

The full assurance of understanding, Colossians 2:2.

I know whom I have believed and am sure, 2 Timothy 1:12.

He is able also to save them for all time, Hebrews 7:25.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, 1 John 3:2.

To say I must work to be saved or to keep myself saved is to say Christ's work is not good enough. This does not give honor to Christ. The wonderful Son of God is

“Mighty to save”, Isaiah 63:1.

“Able to keep” Jude 24.

TEST 10 The Nature of Salvation Results of Salvation

The statements below are taken from the lesson. Enter the ONE MISSING WORD.

1. “The word ___ means to set apart for God.”
2. “In giving salvation, He wants us to ___ we are saved, and to have peace.”
3. “People who are ___ have received salvation.”
4. “Salvation day by day means I have ___ over sin.”
5. “If we walk in the Spirit, we shall not ___ the desires of the flesh.”

Enter the letter of the correct answer.

1. Justification means

- a) to be just.
- b) to make just.
- c) to be declared just.

2. Which verses teach how you can have “forgiveness”?

- a) Romans 3.19-31
- b) Ephesians 1.7; 1 John 1.9; Ephesians 4.32
- c) Galatians 3.10-14

3. Which verses teach that you can “know” you are saved?

- a) Galatians 5.16-26
- b) 2 Corinthians 11.13-15; 1 John 2.15
- c) 1 John 5.13; John 5.24

4. You can have the “assurance” of salvation if you

- a) live a good life.
- b) do not sin after you are saved.
- c) know and accept God’s promise.

5. A sinner is born again by

- a) being born into a Christian family.
- b) being raised in a Christian church or school.
- c) being repentant and accepting Jesus Christ.

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

How do you think we can achieve victory over sin in our life?

Benefits of Salvation

We are reconciled by the blood of Jesus. All fear is taken away. We are now free to come into God's presence. We also have a High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ. So we can “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith”, Hebrews 10:19-22.

1. Prayer

Prayer is one precious benefit which is ours through salvation. It is also a great help as we try to live for Christ day by day. What does the Bible teach about prayer? There are two laws of prayer.

1. The first one depends on God's love and power: God will give you everything you ask for in Jesus' name. Did Christ really teach this? Think about these verses:

Everyone who asks receives, Matthew 7:7, 8.

If you ask anything in my name, I will do it, John 14:14.

If you ask anything of the Father in my name, He will give it you, John 16:23.

2. These wonderful verses and many more show us the first law of prayer. But the second law limits the first. It is based on the wisdom and holiness of God. His love and power must work with His wisdom and holiness. The second law says that: God will only give His children what is best for them.

Your Father will give good things to them that ask Him, not a stone or a serpent, Matthew 7:9-11.

That the Father may be glorified in the Son, John 14:13.

If my prayer does not glorify the Father, I should not ask. If I do ask, the Son will not give me what I asked for.

That your joy may be full, John 16:24.

I may pray for something I think will bring me pleasure. But instead of giving me what I asked for, God will give me something

else that will bring me full joy now and for eternity as well.

The great problem about prayer is: If I pray for something I want, will God give it? The answer is: Yes, unless it is not according to His will. These two laws show why this is so.

God answered prayer for many people in Bible times. He still does. He also sometimes refused. He still does. For example:

Moses prayed that he might lead the people of Israel into the promised land, but God refused, Deuteronomy 3:23-26.

David prayed that his child might live, but God refused, 2 Samuel 12:16,19.

Paul prayed that his thorn in the flesh might be taken away, but God refused, 2 Corinthians 12:8,9.

Sometimes God answered a prayer later on and so received more glory than He would have if He had answered it right away.

The ruler of the synagogue prayed that his daughter might be healed. She died, but Christ raised her again from the dead, Mark 5:23,35-42.

Mary and Martha told Jesus that their brother was sick. Jesus arrived after Lazarus had died—and raised him to life, John 11:3,14,44.

There is great power in prayer. Even when the Lord Jesus prayed, He added, “Not my will but thine be done”, Luke 22:42. Sometimes God does answer prayer that is not according to His will. For example:

The people of Israel grumbled about the food God had given them and asked for meat to eat. God gave it to them, but punished them too, Psalm 106:15.

The men of Gadara asked Jesus to go away—and He did! Mark 5:17.

Prayer is a wonderful benefit, but we must be careful what we pray for. Whenever we bow in prayer, Christ asks, as it were,

What do you want me to do for you? Matthew 20:32.

And: Do you believe that I am able to do this? Matthew 9:28.

The two laws of prayer may be summed up in the words of James:

CAN WE KNOW GOD?

1. You do not have because you do not ask, James 4:2.
2. You ask and do not receive because you ask wrongly, James 4:3.

2. Worship

Why did God give us these promises of prayer? Was it so that we can share in the government of the world? No, so that we will praise Him when He answers our prayers. It is more important to give thanks than to pray. And this brings us to the subject of worship. It is God's wish that we should be for the praise of His glory, Ephesians 1:12.

Worship is thinking about God's greatness and telling Him how much we love Him and how wonderful we think He is. It is greater than thanksgiving.

What did Jesus teach us about worship? The most important verses are in John 4. From this chapter we learn:

(1) We do not need to go to a certain place or building in order to worship, v. 21.

(2) We must worship God with our spirits because God is Spirit, v. 24; Philippians 3:3. Outward religious forms are not worship.

(3) Worship must be according to the truth, v. 24. Some people think they can worship God according to the traditions or practices of men. This worship is "in vain", Matthew 15:19.

(4) Worship is important to the Father. He seeks for those who worship in spirit and in truth, v. 23.

(5) Only those who know God as their Father can worship Him. This can only be through Christ, John 14:6.

When the saints or true believers come together to remember the Lord, they may really worship. But a believer can lift up his heart to God and worship at any time and in any place. He is

Blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places,
Ephesians 1:3.

CAN WE KNOW GOD?

One sin of the heathen is that they do not give thanks to God, Romans 1:21. Yet His kindness to all can be plainly seen, Acts 14:17; 17:25.

PRAISE includes the thought of thanksgiving, but is greater. When I praise God I tell Him I love Him and think He is wonderful in all His ways. I may praise Him for what He does, or for what He is in Himself. To praise Him for what He is is more important because God is greater than His gifts.

ADORATION is about the same as praising God just for what He is in Himself. We can adore God without saying a word, or going to any special place or kneeling or anything of that sort. All we need is a heart full of love to God, and a mind that thinks about all the wonderful things about Him.

In some ways COMMUNION is the greatest of all. Communion means sharing. To have communion with God means to share His thoughts and desires. Does God think highly of Christ? I can share these thoughts and thus have communion with God. Does Christ love the church? When I share in this love, I have communion with the Son of God.

Let us never become unthankful. The nine lepers were cleansed but did not return to thank the Lord, and the Lord was grieved, Luke 17:17. But when we really know God, there are activities which are higher than thanksgiving: worship, adoration, and communion. There is nothing more wonderful for the human heart, alone with God!

The Church

Which is the right church? Many people ask why there are so many different churches in the world today. We have looked at some of the great truths about God and His salvation. Now let us see what the Bible says about the church.

People have many different thoughts about the church today. But men who study the Bible agree as to what the church was like in the beginning. The New Testament was first written not long after Christ's death and resurrection. What kind of a church did Paul build up? It should be easy to build up a church today that would be like the early church. But many Christians do not see the need of following the example that we have in the New Testament. In fact they say that it will not work today.

1. What is the Church?

The word translated church in the New Testament means a called-out group or an assembly. It is used of all true believers from the day of Pentecost until Christ's return. In the New Testament it is never used of a building where Christians can meet together.

The church is called the **BODY** of Christ, Ephesians 1:22,23. Christ is the Head in heaven. Christians are like the different parts of the body, 1 Corinthians 12:12,13. Each part has an important task to do.

The church is like a **BUILDING**, Ephesians 2:20-22. Christ is now the chief corner stone of the building. This is like a temple for God to live in. God's Spirit lives in all believers.

The church is also like the **BRIDE** of Christ, Ephesians 5:25-27. This makes us think of the great love that Christ has for the church. He is caring for His church here on earth. Some day He will come and take the church to Himself to heaven forever.

The word church is also used of a group of believers in one place, 1 Corinthians 1:2. There may be only two or three, Matthew 18:20.

The important thing is that Christ is with them.

It is also important that each church (the believers in one place) should be a good picture of the church as a whole. Is Christ the Head of the whole church? Then the believers in each little church should give Him the chief place also. Does the Holy Spirit dwell in the church as a whole? Then the believers as they meet together should be led by the Spirit. Are all Christians members of Christ's body? Then all should be received by the church. But if they come and teach things that are not in the Bible or are living a sinful life, they should not be received. The Holy Spirit is grieved if believers in any church are living in sin, or holding false doctrine.

2. What are the Main Activities of a Church?

We have seen that God is looking for those who will worship in spirit and in truth. Of course it is possible to worship God when all alone. It is also possible to pray alone, to preach the gospel alone, or to teach someone without other Christians being present. Why then should we meet together as a church?

It is clearly God's will that we work and worship together.

Not failing to meet together, as is the habit of some, Hebrews 10:25.

In the book of Acts we read the story of the church in its early days. There we see the churches meeting together regularly. The new Christians continued in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayer, Acts 2:42.

(1) DOCTRINE. The church met together to hear the Word of God. The Scripture is able to make us wise unto salvation, 2 Timothy 3:15. God uses it to sanctify us, John 17:17. The Bible is also able to build us up in the faith, Acts 20:32.

In 1 Corinthians 12 we learn that all members of Christ's body should help one another. In 1 Corinthians 14 we see how a meeting of the church was carried on. There might be several teachers, v. 26, but all spoke as led by the Holy Spirit and so there was perfect order.

(2) **BREAKING OF BREAD.** Before He died, Jesus asked His disciples to do a simple thing to remember Him. He asked them to break the bread and drink the cup until He comes again.

It is important that we should remember Him. No one wants to be unthankful or forgetful. The bread speaks of His body given for us. The cup is a picture of His blood shed for us. His death is the greatest proof of His love to us.

Peter says all believers are priests, 1 Peter 2:5,9. We can now enter right into the presence of God, Hebrews 10:19-22.

We can also offer sacrifices:

Our bodies, Romans 12:1;

Our praise, Hebrews 13:15;

Our gifts, Hebrews 13:16.

The best time for Christians to worship together is when they meet together to break the bread and drink the cup to remember their Lord. How often should we remember the Lord in this way? There is no command about this. But it seems that the early Christians did it the first day of every week, Acts 20:7. The offering of the saints was also taken on Sunday the first day of the week, 1 Corinthians 16:2.

(3) **PRAYER.** There is a special promise for two or three or more people who pray about anything together, Matthew 18:19.

(4) The **BUSINESS MEETING** of a church is seen in Acts 6.

3. What is the Scriptural Order of a Church?

God is a God of order. Nature and the whole world show order, 1 Corinthians 14:33.

In the church, too, there should be order, God's order. Everything should be done according to God's plan. This plan is found only in the New Testament.

There were three classes of people in the church at Philippi: saints, bishops, and deacons, Philippians 1:1. All the saints were also priests.

Who were the bishops? Today we see one bishop ruling over sev-

eral churches. But in Philippi there were several bishops in the same church. Bishops are overseers. They are also called elders, Titus 1.5,7. In 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9 we see what kind of a person an elder has to be. The most important work of the elders is to care for the sheep of God's flock, that is, the Christians in the church. They should not be looking for money, for they will receive their reward from the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ when He comes again, 1 Peter 5:4. Believers should remember these leaders and should obey them, Hebrews 13:7,17.

The word deacon means a servant. The deacons serve the church in different ways, for example, a Sunday School leader. Almost as many things are expected of a deacon as of an elder, see 1 Timothy 3:8-13. In Acts 6, deacons were chosen by the church to look after money matters, but elders are chosen by the Lord to look after His beloved church.

Christ also gives gifts to the church: shepherds, teachers, gospel preachers, Ephesians 4:11. These are to prepare the saints so that they can teach others, unto the building up of the body of Christ, Ephesians 4:12.

These gifts are for the whole body of Christ. But there is nothing said in the New Testament about uniting any group of churches under the control of one man or a group of men. In fact, the word "church" is used only of the whole body of Christ or of a single church in one city. Each of these churches had to give account to the risen Head, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ. There was fellowship among them, but no one church was over any other church to tell the believers in that church what they must do.

TEST 11 Benefits of Salvation The Church

The statements below are taken from the lesson. Enter the ONE MISSING WORD.

1. “God will only give His children what is ___ for them.”
2. “The Spirit is ___ if believers in any church are living in sin.”
3. “The word translated ___ in the New Testament means a called out group or an assembly.”
4. “In the church, too, there should be ___, ___ God’s order.”
5. “God will give you ___ you ask for in Jesus’ name.”

Enter TRUE or FALSE after each statement.

6. Any person can worship God acceptably.
7. All born again Christians are members of the true Church.
8. Which verses tell of things which can **hurt** your prayer life?
 - a) 1 John 5.13-17; James 5.13-18
 - b) James 4.1-5; 1 Peter 3.1-12
 - c) Jeremiah 33.1-3; Psalm 138.1-8
9. The word “church” in the New Testament usually refers to
 - a) all people everywhere.
 - b) Old Testament believers.
 - c) the nation of Israel.
 - d) believers in Christ since the day of Pentecost.
10. According to Acts 1.8, which **activity** will show that a local church has **active** spiritual life?
 - a) meeting for prayer and business
 - b) meeting for worship
 - c) seeking to win people to Christ

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Explain the church as a BODY, a BUILDING and a BRIDE.

What Comes Next?

We have seen that salvation is a large subject. In one sense salvation is mine now. But although I have already received salvation, I am still being saved today. I still have a sinful nature. Even a saint who has known the Lord for many years can still be tempted by sin. This old nature will be forever taken away when Jesus comes.

The Old Testament teaches that Christ would come. Some verses say that He would suffer, for example, in Psalms 22 and 69. Others tell of His glory, like Psalms 2 and 72. The prophets did not understand how both could be true, 1 Peter 1:10,11. The answer is: Christ has come and suffered. He will come again in glory.

Many Old Testament verses tell of Christ's return. Jesus Himself said,

If I go, I will come again, John 14:3.

As we study verses about the Lord's coming more closely, we see another difference. When telling of Christ's first coming, one prophet said He would come to Bethlehem, Micah 5:2. Another said that He would come to Jerusalem riding on an ass, Zechariah 9:9. Which way did He really come? In both ways. As a baby He first came into the world at Bethlehem, Matthew 2:1. Thirty years later He presented Himself openly to the people as King, Matthew 21:1-11.

In the same way when reading about the second coming of Christ, we see that some verses speak of Christ coming FOR His saints, John 14:3, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; others of His coming WITH His saints, 1 Thessalonians 3:13. How can He come FOR them and WITH them at the same time? This is of course impossible. We saw that thirty years passed between the two parts of His first coming. In the same way Christ will come WITH His saints a few years after His coming FOR them.

1. The Rapture

When Christ comes FOR His saints, to take them to heaven, they will be caught up into the air. This is called the rapture.

“We shall be caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air”,
1 Thessalonians 4:17.

This is not the same as Christ's coming in glory. In the Old Testament we often read of His coming as King, but Paul speaks of the rapture as a “mystery”, 1 Corinthians 15:51. A mystery is a truth not revealed in earlier times. The Lord Himself made this truth known to Paul, 1 Thessalonians 4:15. So we know that the rapture is not taught in the Old Testament.

The teaching about this first part of Christ's second coming is found in 1 Corinthians 15:51-56 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. Here we see that:

The Lord will descend with a shout.

Believers already dead will rise first from the dead.

Living believers will be changed, and given a new body.

They will be caught up into the air.

All this will happen very quickly, “in the twinkling of an eye.”

Then they will be forever with the Lord.

This is a glad and wonderful hope for every believer, the blessed hope, Titus 2:13. But let us remember that everyone of us shall give account of himself to God, Romans 14:12.

“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ”,
2 Corinthians 5:10.

Do not think that believers will be judged for their sins at the judgment seat of Christ. The Bible tells us plainly that

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus”, Romans 8:1.

What then will take place there? Christ will give us rewards for whatever we have done for His glory. Some will with sorrow see their

works go up in the fire. Why will they be burnt? They were good works, but the Christian did them not to please and glorify God, but in order to get honor and profit for himself. They themselves shall be saved, 1 Corinthians 3:13-15. Those who receive crowns will throw them at the feet of the Savior. They will add still a little more to the glory that will be His, Revelation 4:10.

After the judgment seat of Christ, we read of the marriage supper of the Lamb, Revelation 19:1-8. This will be a time of great joy, both for the saints and the Savior, the beginning of an eternity of happiness in heaven.

2. The Great Tribulation

Ever since sin came into the world, there has been much sorrow and trouble. The earth often shakes and storms are common in the world. Famine and sickness are well known all over the world. Wars have caused the death of millions throughout history.

But the Bible speaks of the great tribulation, Revelation 7:14. We can read about it in Matthew 24:4-29. In verse 21 of this chapter it is called the greatest tribulation since the beginning of the world. In Revelation chapters 6-18 we find out more about it in picture form. It will be a time of trouble greater than people have ever seen before. Perhaps it will begin with an attack on faithful Jews who will not bow down before any image. Then it could spread to all Jews. God allows them to be persecuted because as a nation the Jews rejected His Son. Then, as has so often happened in the past, Jew-hating Gentiles will go too far and God will pour out His wrath upon the nations as well.

Will this suffering cause men to repent? Not at all. At first they will be filled with fear, Revelation 6:15-17. Later they will actually curse God.

“They repented not . . . they blasphemed the God of heaven”,
Revelation 9:20,21; 16:9,11.

Perhaps we have here the main reason for the tribulation. God has always been gracious to man, yet man goes on in sin. Someone might say, “If God would punish man for his sin while he is still living, he

would know God is angry, and turn to God and repent.” Even when God shows His wrath in the fullest way, man does not repent. The great tribulation proves this.

When will this take place? The great tribulation comes after the church is taken away to heaven, Revelation 3:10, and before Christ returns in glory. How long will it last? It will not last long, Matthew 24:22. Daniel the prophet spoke of a week of seven years of desolation, Daniel 9:27. The first three and one-half years may be rather quiet. But the last half or three and one-half years will be terrible tribulation. Where will true Christians be during this time? Safe with Jesus in heaven.

3. The Second Coming

The great tribulation will end suddenly when Christ appears on earth.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days . . . they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory”, Matthew 24:29,30.

What will take place then? Christ will appear first to Israel, God's people of long ago. They will be filled with sorrow as they remember how their nation rejected their own Messiah, Zechariah 12:10.

Then will come the judgment of the living nations, Matthew 25:31-46. Gentiles who have shown their faith in God by helping His people, the Jews, will be received into Christ's earthly kingdom. Others will be led away to eternal punishment. After this Christ will set up His earthly kingdom.

The hope of the Lord's return has always been a great comfort to the people of God. However there have always been some people who made fun of it. In the last days their attacks on this truth will become worse, 2 Peter 3:3,4.

Some people have other wrong ideas as well:

1. Some believe that the “coming of Christ” means that He comes into the heart of a man when he believes. Or, that He comes for the

soul when a child of God dies. These things are true, but the Bible teaches plainly that Christ will return Himself, in person, in the body.

“This Jesus will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven”, Acts 1:11.

2. Some people teach that the church must go through the tribulation in order to be cleansed of its sins. However let us remember that a believer is not punished for his sins. He is chastened by the Father to keep him from sinning any more. The great tribulation is to punish men for their sins.

3. Others say that part of the church must go through the tribulation, that is, those believers who are not obeying the Lord in this world. If so, we would have part of the body of Christ enjoying the blessings of heaven while at the same time the other part of the body would be going through great suffering here on earth. This is not what the Bible teaches. Christ will not be satisfied until all His own are with Him where He is.

4. is made the mistake of saying just when Christ will come again.

It should be enough for us to remember that the Son of Man on earth said that He Himself did not know the day nor the hour, Mark 13:32.

When you really think about it, it is better that we should not know the time of Jesus' return. The thought that He might come today will make me want to be prepared and will keep me from doing things which I would not want Him to find me doing when He comes.

“Every one that has this hope in him purifies himself as He is pure”, 1 John 3:3.

The Future World

Men have always had a story of a golden age in the past, or a dream of one in the future. More important, God's inspired prophets told of a wonderful time to come when all men will be blessed. From the Bible, we know that all blessings come through God the Son. So the "Golden Age" is really the Kingdom of Christ.

1. The Millennium

In Revelation 20:4 we read of Christ's reigning for a thousand years. This period is called the Millennium. What will it be like?

(1) The earth was put under a curse because of Adam's sin, Genesis 3:17,18. Instead of a garden, the ground now brings forth many ugly and useless plants. But God's garden will be restored, Revelation 2:7. The desert will bring forth flowers, Isaiah 35:1. Wild animals will no longer kill others, Isaiah 65:25. The whole animal world will not have to suffer any more, Romans 8:19-22.

(2) The nations of the world will be richer than they have ever been before. There will be no more war, no end to peace, Isaiah 9:7. Think of the money needed for police forces and armies even in times of peace! With Christ on the throne, these things will be no longer needed.

Also today very much money is spent by people who follow false religions. In Revelation 18 and 19 we see that this will also come to an end.

Very few people will be sick or die. People will become very old, Isaiah 65:20. There will be many more people in the world than there are now. Yet Christ the King will see to it that there is plenty for all.

All who enter the Kingdom will be sons of God. Yet their children will need to be born again. Perhaps most will believe. Even those who

do not believe will have to act righteously or be punished, Isaiah 11:4,5. Satan will be bound for a thousand years, Revelation 20:2.

(3) Israel will be the leading nation of the world, Isaiah 60:12. This place will be given to her by the King of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostles will join Him in ruling Israel, Matthew 19:28. Others will also share in ruling Israel, but will have less important jobs to do, Luke 19:17,19. These rulers will be Jews who have been faithful to Christ when He was rejected. Christians are members of Christ's body. As His bride, they will go wherever He goes. His desire is that where He is, there they may be also, John 14:3.

No doubt when Christ comes to reign, things in this world will be wonderful. Will everything be perfect? Outwardly, yes. But there will be many who do not really love the Lord. They will be forced to obey. But when they get a chance, they will rebel.

At the end of the thousand years Satan will be loosed for a short time. He will go out and gather these men who in their hearts have not accepted Christ. They will make one last great effort to attack the saints—and fail. They will be destroyed by fire from heaven. Satan and his helpers will be thrown into the lake of fire, Revelation 20:7-10.

Then will come the second resurrection. We have seen that the dead in Christ rise from among the dead when the Lord returns. This is before the Tribulation or the Kingdom. At the end of the Kingdom age there is the resurrection of the wicked, John 5:28,29. Do not think that only the saints will arise from the dead. Because Christ rose from the dead, all men will rise again, 1 Corinthians 15:22.

At the great white throne, the books will be opened. Every man will be judged according to his works. The Son of God will sit on this throne, John 5:22. He knows all. He judges fairly. The God-Man also can understand human problems and weakness. Yet there is no salvation for those who did not accept Christ as their Savior in this world. Their names are not found in the Lamb's book of life, Revelation 20:11-15. They are led away to the lake of fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels.

What and where is hell? The Lord Jesus Himself gave a terrible

picture of the condition of those who are lost: fear, sorrow, and anger, Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 25:30.

Jude says the wicked will be like wandering stars in the blackness of darkness forever, Jude 13. We do not know where hell is except that it is far from God. "Where Jesus is, 'tis heaven there!"

The Bible does not say much about heaven either. We do read of things that will not be in heaven: sorrow, crying, pain, curse, death. There will be light and life and love and glory, Revelation 21:22 to 22.5.

2. Eternity

Time is like a little stone with a mountain on each side of it. We do not know how long time will last. Before the creation of the world, there was a measureless age called eternity. When time ceases to be measured, we will come to the eternity of the future.

"From eternity to eternity thou art God", Psalm 90:2.

The word "eternity" means an endless age of "time." Paul and Peter and John speak of "the ages of the ages." We cannot say how long it will last. We can only say it will never end.

This world has been defiled by sin. God plans to destroy it by fire and create a new one, 2 Peter 3:10-13. He will also create a new heaven. Isaiah said that the old will not be remembered, Isaiah 65:17. John had a vision of the new heaven and the new earth, Revelation 21:1. In the new earth righteousness shall dwell, 2 Peter 3:13.

During the ages of history, God revealed Himself in different ways. For example we have the age of law, the age of grace, the kingdom age. In the ages of the future we will go on to learn more of God, Ephesians 2:7. We will no doubt find the answers to all the mysteries of the Bible, of history, and of nature. Of course, only God can know everything. But man will not be as limited as he is now.

Some people would like to think that the wicked will cease to be. But the Bible uses the same word for eternal punishment, and the eternal God, Revelation 14:11; 15:7. Sad but true, men who reject Christ will be separated from God forever.

CAN WE KNOW GOD?

The same word is used for the joy of believers, Revelation 22:5. We will be with Christ, John 17:24. We will be fellow heirs with Christ, Romans 8:17. We will be like Christ, 1 John 3:2. We will share the pleasures at His right hand for evermore, Psalm 16:11.

TO HIM BE ALL THE PRAISE!

TEST 12 What Comes Next? - The Future World

The statements below are taken from the lesson. Enter the ONE MISSING WORD.

1. "Some will with ___ see their works go up in fire."
2. "Still others have made the ___ of saying just when Christ will come again."
3. "So the ___ is really the Kingdom of Christ."
4. "Do not think that only the ___ will arise from the dead."
5. "Yet there is no ___ for those who did not accept Christ as their Saviour in this world."

Enter the letter of the correct answer.

6. Which verses clearly say that Christ will return to earth after the Tribulation?

- a) Luke 21.8-28
- b) Matthew 24.15-31
- c) Revelation 19.11-21

7. Do any of these verses teach that the believer must be responsible for the evil things in his life? If so, which ones?

- a) John 10.28-30; Romans 8.38-39
- b) 1 John 5.11-13; John 6.37-40
- c) Romans 14.1-13; 2 Corinthians 5.1-10

8. At the Rapture, Christ will call up

- a) the nation of Israel.
- b) the true Church.
- c) the nations of the world.

9. Which verses describe the eternal condition of people who do not trust Jesus Christ?

- a) Romans 8.17; 1 John 3.2
- b) 2 Peter 3.1-14
- c) Revelation 20.11-15; 14.9-11

10. Which verses describe the eternal condition of people who have trusted Christ?

- a) Revelation 19.11-21
- b) John 5.28,29; 6.37-40; Revelation 22.1-5
- c) Matthew 8.12; 22.13; 25.30

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Are you ready for Christ's return?