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**Cornerstones
of Truth**

Cornerstones of Truth

A STUDY OF BIBLE DOCTRINE

by **Floyd C. Woodworth, Jr.**
with **David D. Duncan**

AN INDEPENDENT-STUDY TEXTBOOK

*Developed in Cooperation With
the Global University Staff*

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First Edition 1986
Second Edition 1995
Third Edition 1997

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S3131E-90
PN 03.00.06
ISBN 978-0-7617-0726-4

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THE ICI CHRISTIAN SERVICE PROGRAM



This is one of 18 courses (subjects) that make up the ICI Christian Service Program. The symbol at the left is a guide for order of study in the series, which is divided into three units of six courses each. *Cornerstones of Truth* is Course 3 in Unit 1. You will benefit by studying the courses in the proper order.

Study materials in the Christian Service Program have been prepared in a self-teaching format especially for Christian workers. These courses provide a student with Bible knowledge and skills needed for practical Christian service. You may study this course in order to receive a certificate, or for personal enrichment.

ATTENTION

Please read the course introduction very carefully. It is important that you follow these instructions so you can achieve the goals of the course, and be prepared for the student reports.

Address all correspondence concerning the course to your ICI instructor at the address stamped on the copyright page of this study guide.

COURSE INTRODUCTION

What is a Study of Doctrine?

What did Mahatma Gandhi, the father of modern India, believe to be the ills of the twentieth century? Why did Benito Juarez choose to separate the church from the state in the country of Mexico?

In order to find out what these and other great men taught about any subject, we would ordinarily have to read through all their works. In the case of Gandhi, this would require reading 80 books! Just think how much easier it would be for us if we could find one book that classified everything he taught by topics.

We encounter this same problem in trying to study the many subjects covered in the Bible. As you probably have discovered, the teachings in the Scriptures are not presented according to topics. For example, the book of Genesis does not give us a complete explanation of the Godhead, nor does any other one book.

A most important way to study the Bible, therefore, is to go through it to find all the teachings related to a certain topic. This helps us to see quickly the whole idea, as well as to organize the details in a logical way. It is a practical method for orienting our thinking and getting our life into line with biblical principles.

A technical name for this kind of Bible study is *systematic theology*. In this course we will follow such a plan as we search the Scriptures to see what they teach about the universe, its ruler, the subjects, and the structure God has chosen for their development. We will also discover what the Bible says about the future.

A systematic examination of what the Bible says about important issues will help us to know what we can expect from God and what He expects from us. As a result, we will grow spiritually.

Course Description

Cornerstones of Truth: A Study of Bible Doctrine is an introductory systematic study of basic Bible doctrines. Major topics include the nature of God, the acts of God, the activities and limitations of angels, the Creation, the fall of man, God's redemptive plan, the origin of Scriptures, the church, and God's ultimate plan for mankind. The course is a practical, basic study of biblical teaching and its application in the life of the believer. The great themes of the Bible are explored and supported by many Scripture references.

Course Objectives

When you finish this course you should be able to:

1. List the divine and personal attributes of the members of the Godhead.
2. Describe the creation of man, the fall of man, and the solution God provided to restore man's fellowship with Him.
3. State what we can know about good and evil angels and their activities.
4. Explain the purposes and activities of the church and God's plan for its eternal future.
5. Determine to be guided in all areas of your life by a standard of faith and conduct based on biblical truth.

Textbooks

You will use *Cornerstones of Truth* by Floyd C. Woodworth, Jr., and David D. Duncan as both the textbook and study guide for this course. The Bible is the only other textbook required. Scripture quotations are from the *New International Version (NIV)*, 1978 edition, unless otherwise noted.

Study Time

How much time you actually need to study each lesson depends in part on your knowledge of the subject and the strength of your study skills before you begin the course. The

time you spend also depends on the extent to which you follow directions and develop skills necessary for independent study. Plan your study schedule so that you spend enough time to reach the objectives stated by the author of the course and your personal objectives as well.

Lesson Organization and Study Pattern

Each lesson includes: 1) lesson title, 2) opening statement, 3) lesson outline, 4) lesson objectives, 5) learning activities, 6) key words, 7) lesson development including study questions, 8) self-test (at the end of the lesson development), 9) answers to the study questions.

The lesson outline and objectives will give you an overview of the subject, help you to focus your attention on the most important points as you study, and tell you what you should learn.

Most of the study questions in the lesson development can be answered in spaces provided in this study guide. Longer answers should be written in a notebook. As you write the answers in your notebook, be sure to record the number and title of the lesson. This will help you in your review for the unit student report.

Do not look ahead at the answers until you have given your answer. If you give your own answers, you will remember what you study much better. After you have answered the study questions, check your answers with those given at the end of the lesson. Then correct those you did not answer correctly. The answers are not given in the usual numerical order so that you will not accidentally see the answer to the next question.

These study questions are very important. They will help you to remember the main ideas presented in the lesson and to apply the principles you have learned.

How to Answer Questions

There are different kinds of study questions and self-test questions in this study guide. Below are samples of several types

and how to answer them. Specific instructions will be given for other types of questions that may occur.

A *MULTIPLE-CHOICE* question or item asks you to choose an answer from the ones that are given.

Example

1 The Bible has a total of

- a) 100 books.
- b) 66 books.
- c) 27 books.

The correct answer is *b) 66 books*. In your study guide, make a circle around *b)* as shown here:

1 The Bible has a total of a

- a) 100 books.
- b) 66 books.
- c) 27 books.

(For some multiple-choice items, more than one answer will be correct. In that case, you would circle the letter in front of each correct answer.)

A *TRUE-FALSE* question or item asks you to choose which of several statements are TRUE.

Example

2 Which statements below are TRUE?

- a The Bible has a total of 120 books.
- b The Bible is a message for believers today.
- c All of the Bible authors wrote in the Hebrew language.
- d The Holy Spirit inspired the writers of the Bible.

Statements **b** and **d** are true. You would make a circle around these two letters to show your choices, as you see above.

A *MATCHING* question or item asks you to match things that go together, such as names with descriptions, or Bible books with their authors.

Example

3 Write the number for the leader's name in front of each phrase that describes something he did.

- | | | |
|------------------|---|-----------|
| ... ¹ | a Received the Law at Mt. Sinai | 1) Moses |
| ... ² | b Led the Israelites across Jordan | 2) Joshua |
| ... ² | c Marched around Jericho | |
| ... ¹ | d Lived in Pharaoh's court | |

Phrases **a** and **d** refer to Moses, and phrases **b** and **c** refer to Joshua. You would write **1** beside **a** and **d**, and **2** beside **b** and **c**, as you see above.

Ways to Study this Course

If you study this ICI course by yourself, all of your work can be completed by mail. Although ICI has designed this course for you to study on your own, you may also study it in a group or class. If you do this, the instructor may give you added instructions besides those in the course. If so, be sure to follow his instructions.

Possibly you are interested in using the course in a home Bible study group, in a class at church, or in a Bible school. You will find both the subject content and study methods excellent for these purposes.

Unit Student Reports

At the end of the book you will find the Unit Student Report and Answer Sheets. Follow the directions included in the course and in the unit student reports. You should complete and send your answer sheets to your instructor for his correction and suggestions regarding your work. If you are not studying with an ICI office you will still benefit by answering the questions in the Student Report.

Certificate

Upon the successful completion of the course and the final grading of the unit student reports by your ICI instructor, you will receive your Certificate of Award.

Authors of the Course

Floyd C. Woodworth, Jr., has been an ordained minister since 1951. Currently he is the editor of educational materials for the Christian Training Network and professor in the Latin American Advanced School of Theology. Mr. Woodworth served in Cuba until 1963. In 1964, he became director of the Central Bible School in Colombia, South America. In 1973, he transferred to Mexico, where he was involved in the development of Christian education materials through the Program of Advanced Christian Education, now known as the Christian Training Network.

Mr. Woodworth attended Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, and Bethany Peniel College in Bethany, Oklahoma, where he earned the A.B. degree. He received the M.A. degree in Spanish-American literature from the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. He writes from a rich and varied experience as a Bible school teacher, pastor, and evangelist. His teaching on a cross-cultural basis lends a special character and insight to his writing.

David Duncan has been a missionary since 1968. He served as teacher and principal of Calvary Bible Institute, Majuro, Marshall Islands, for eight years, has taught at Continental Bible College in Brussels, Belgium, and served as manager of manuscript preparation at ICI University from 1980 through 1983. He holds both a B.A. and an M.A. degree from California State University-Fullerton. He has also completed course requirements for the doctor of ministry degree at the California Graduate School of Theology.

Your ICI Instructor

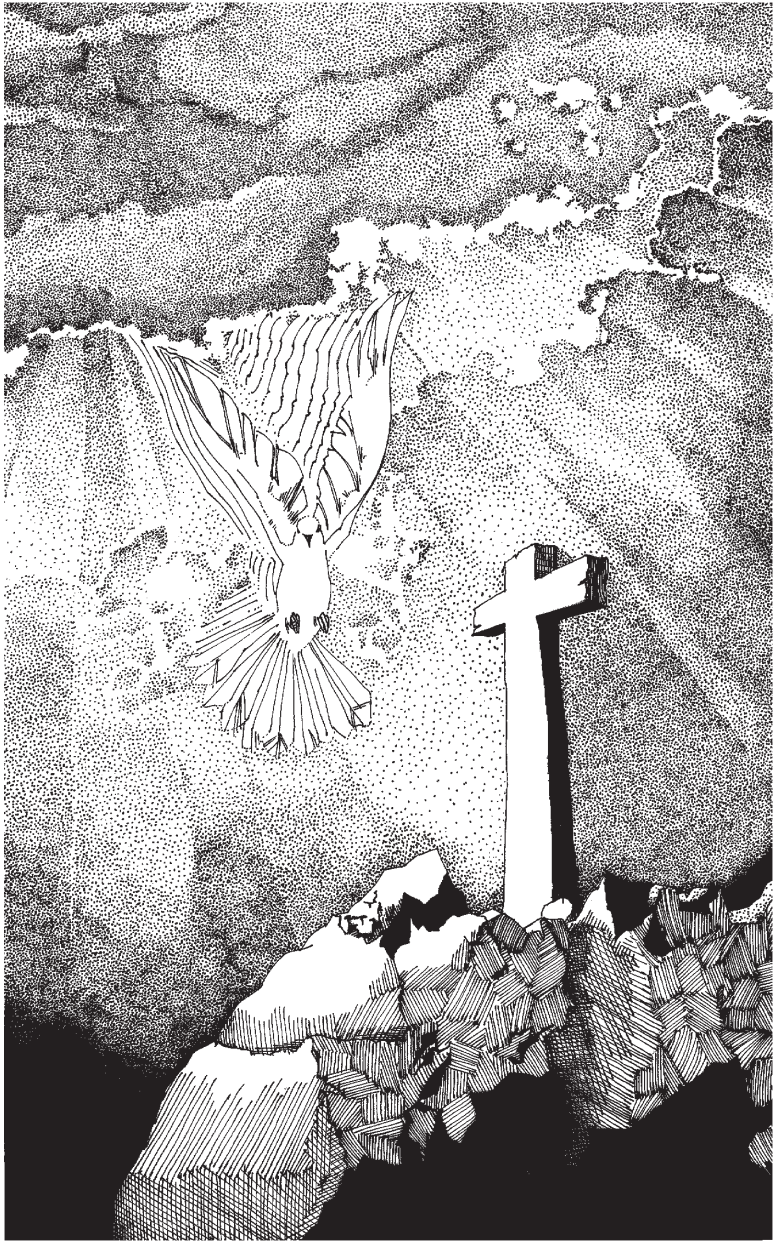
Your ICI instructor will be happy to help you in any way possible. If you have any questions about the course or the unit

student reports, please feel free to ask him. If several people want to study this course together, ask about special arrangements for group study.

God bless you as you begin to study *Cornerstones of Truth*. May it enrich your life and Christian service and help you fulfill more effectively your part in the body of Christ.

Unit 1

The Sovereign God



Lesson 1

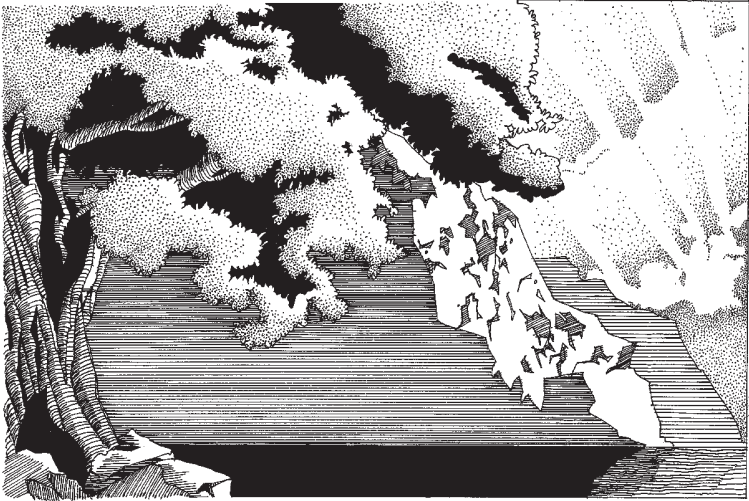
God: His Nature and Natural Characteristics

To the ancient questions, “Can you fathom the mysteries of God? Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?” (Job 11:7), we may respond, “No!” The great problem we face in our efforts to understand God is that finite man cannot comprehend the Infinite!

Apart from the revelation we have of God’s nature and characteristics or attributes, we have no way of knowing the Being of God. Only as He reveals Himself in His nature and characteristics may we have some knowledge of His divine Being. Thus, what He has revealed of Himself is an accurate but partial disclosure of His Being.

We may also know God as He enters into relationships with us. We gain our knowledge of Him by studying His nature and characteristics, for these reveal aspects of His Being. In order to gain completely trustworthy knowledge of the divine nature and characteristics, we must begin with the study of God’s revelation of Himself in the Scriptures. While we may gain some general knowledge of God as we behold His works in nature, we must turn to the Word to receive an understanding of His nature and characteristics.

As you study about our Creator, may you appreciate more fully that it was His concern for you which led to His progressive self-revelation through the ages. This self-revelation reached its fullness as He spoke with finality in His Son (Hebrews 1:2).



lesson outline

God's Nature

God's Natural Attributes

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Define and discuss qualities of God's nature and the natural attributes of God.
- Explain how knowledge of the natural attributes of God can increase a person's faith in God.
- Appreciate the qualities and attributes of God that make it possible for Him to know about and provide for our every need.

learning activities

1. Read carefully the course introduction and course objectives.
2. Study the lesson outline and lesson objectives. These will help you identify the things you should learn as you study the lesson.

3. Read the lesson and do the exercises in the lesson development. Check your answers with those given at the end of the lesson. It is very important that you find and read all Scripture texts given.
4. In this lesson there are many terms that may be new to you. Some of them are listed on this page as *key words*. Be sure to check the glossary at the end of this study guide for definitions of any key words you do not understand. Many are also defined within the lesson. Use your dictionary to find definitions for other words you may not know.
5. Take the self-test at the end of this lesson and check your answers carefully with those provided at the back of this study guide. Review any items you answer incorrectly.

key words

attributes	immutable	simplicity
distinct	manifestations	sovereign
distinctions	material	substance
essence	matter	substantial
eternal	omnipotence	Trinity
eternity	omnipresence	uniqueness
immaterial	omniscience	unity
immortal		

lesson development

GOD'S NATURE

As scientists study the composition of blood, they discover that it is made up of different substances and tiny particles that have separate functions in maintaining life. This complex liquid is pumped through an intricate network of tubes all day and all night by a sturdy machine (the heart) that rests after each movement. Blood is the life stream of the body. It carries oxygen and food to every part of the body, it fights germs that may enter the body, and it helps the

body get rid of wastes. To do these things requires the cooperation of the lungs, the kidneys, and other organs, in addition to the heart.

This is but one example of the many, highly organized, biological systems that make life possible. Surely, it took a Being of great power and intelligence to bring this about. What do we know about this Being? Let's look at some facts we know about our Creator, God.

God Is a Personal Being

Objective 1. *Choose a statement which gives qualities of personality that are seen in God.*

What would you say are the essential parts of a person? Arms? Voice? Eyes? If an individual loses any of these things, he is still a person. Probably we would agree that a *person* is something other than a *body*. A person is one who has the capacity to think, to feel, and to decide. Although God has no body, He certainly has intelligence and the ability to think, feel, and reason. The Bible reveals that He *communicates* with others (Psalm 25:14) and He is affected by their response to Him (Isaiah 1:14). He *thinks* (Isaiah 55:8) and He *makes decisions* (Genesis 2:18). These are all characteristics of a personal being. So, God is a personal Being.

We can learn something about the personality of God as we consider the personality of man, since man is created in the image of God. This approach has its limitations, of course. We must not consider man's personality as the standard by which we measure the personality of God. *For the original model of personality is found in God, not man.* Man's personality is but a pattern of the original. Man's personality is not identical with God's, but it contains traces of similarity to His. Thus, what appears as imperfect in man's personality exists in perfection in God's.

If you have an acquaintance who never lets you know what he feels, never shares his thoughts with you, and never shows any interest in you, you could say that he is *impersonal*. That is,

he does not express the characteristics of personality to you. But God is not this way. He is interested in you. He has feelings about people, and He communes with them. Moreover, He makes decisions concerning them.

Many people believe that the supreme Being who created the earth is far removed from human affairs; they believe that the spirits of ancestors or of nature have much more to do with people from day to day than God does. This, of course, is a misconception—God *is* concerned about human affairs, and He does relate to us in a personal way.

1 What concept of God is held by the people of your community?

.....
.....

2 If God is a Person, how do you suppose you can get to know Him in a personal way? Use your notebook for this answer.

- 3 (Choose the correct completion.) The qualities of God which demonstrate His personality are His
- a) physical, social, and spiritual attributes.
 - b) ability to think, feel, and make decisions.
 - c) ability to be approached, seen, and fully understood.

God Is Spirit

Objective 2. *Select statements which correctly explain the spiritual nature of God.*

Of what do you think when you close your eyes and try to imagine what God is like? If some kind of image forms in your mind, your thinking is not entirely as the Scriptures teach. God has no form whatsoever because He is *spirit* (John 4:24), and a spirit is invisible. John 1:18 tells us that “No one has ever seen God.”

God is spirit! Here in a word we have a statement telling us what God is. In order to understand this statement, we must consider what it is to be *spirit*. What does *spirituality*, or the quality of being *spirit*, involve? This is not an easy concept to explain. As we have said earlier, the Bible gives us a *partial* disclosure of the nature of God. As we endeavor to describe His spiritual nature, we may use terms that are new to you. We will make an effort to define each of these words as we come to them.

1. Our search in Scripture reveals first that God has a unique, substantial being which is distinct from the world (Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1: 15-17). To be *unique* means to be the only one. To be *substantial* means to have *substance*, or an *essential nature*, to have *essence*. The terms *substance* and *essence* are very similar when used about God. They refer to all the qualities or attributes which make up His nature and which are the basis of all His outward manifestations.

2. This substantial being which is God is *invisible*, *immaterial*, and is *composed of no parts*. We have already said that God has substance, but He is not a *material* substance—that is, He is not composed of matter, as we are. God is a *spiritual* substance. Jesus said, “A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have” (Luke 24:39). Since God is spirit in the purest sense of the word, He does not have the limitations that come to mind when we think of a human being. He has none of the properties or characteristics which belong to matter. Paul describes Him as “the King eternal, immortal, invisible” (1 Timothy 1:17), and as “the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see” (1 Timothy 6: 15-16).

If God is indeed spirit and invisible, then how do we understand the instances in the Bible, such as described in Exodus 33:19-23, in which we are told that Moses *saw* God? This really is not a contradiction of the fact that God is invisible and immaterial. In some of these instances, men saw the *reflections* of God’s glory, but they did not see His

essence. Other instances reveal that spirit can be manifested in visible form. God is perfectly capable of revealing Himself through a physical manifestation. This happened when the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus as a dove as He was baptized in water (John 1:32-34). When John the Baptist saw this visible sign, he was persuaded that Jesus was indeed the Son of God. The invisible Spirit of God revealed Himself in the form of a dove so that John could know with certainty the identity of the One (Jesus) who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. In the example from Exodus 33, Moses also needed divine assurance as he faced his God-given task of leadership; therefore, God gave him a physical sign.

Perhaps you are thinking, “If God is immaterial, why does the Bible speak of God’s hands, feet, ears, mouth, nose, or face? Why are there scriptural passages which speak about God doing something that a human being would do?” For example, Psalm 98 refers to God’s “right hand and his holy arm” (v. 1); Psalm 99:5 speaks of worshipping “at his footstool”; Psalm 91 speaks of “his feathers” and “his wings” (v. 4).

Because it is difficult for us really to understand the essence of God, He has inspired the writers of Scripture to use objects that are familiar to us and apply some characteristic of them to God. In this way we gain some understanding of the *unknown* by what is *known*. When this is done, we call it *figurative* language. In such cases, the idea is not taken *literally*, or as *fact*, but as a symbol to represent a certain concept. This can be illustrated in the following exercises.

- 4** Read Psalm 34:15 and circle the letter preceding the correct explanation of this Scripture.
 - a** The expression of God as having eyes, ears, and a face indicates that He literally sees, hears, and has visible form when He deals with people.
 - b** God knows and cares about the needs of the righteous, and He knows and cares about the sinfulness of those who do evil. This is expressed in a figurative way.

5 (Choose the one best answer.) When we read in Scripture that God is spirit, we understand that

- a) He has no physical body.
- b) God has no physical body form, but He is perfectly capable of revealing Himself through a physical form.
- c) references in Scripture which show God doing something a human would do use figurative language.
- d) all of the above, a), b), and c) are correct.
- e) only a) and c) above are correct.

God is One

Objective 3. *Match words used to describe the unity or oneness of God with definitions of each.*

When we say that God is *one*, we make reference to three concepts: 1) the numerical *unity* of God; 2) the *uniqueness* of God; and 3) the *simplicity* of God.

The Numerical Unity of God

First, when we speak of the unity of God, we refer to the fact that He is numerically one Being. Since there is but one Divine Being, all other beings exist through Him, of Him, and unto Him. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 8:6, “Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.” The second part of this verse may seem to contradict the concept that God is numerically one. This will be explained later in our discussion of the *Trinity*.

Solomon refers to the numerical unity of God in 1 kings 8:60 when he requests “that all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God and that there is no other.” Surrounded on all sides by nations who offered a great variety of gods from which to choose, the people of Israel sometimes found it difficult to keep the idea that the Divine Being was one. Often the prophets, at great personal risk cried out to the people to remind them that Jehovah was one God (Deuteronomy 4:35,39).

Is the belief that there are many gods a part of your society? Do you know of some teachings concerning these

supposed gods and their relationships to people? I’ve noted that in some countries people worship many gods, or what they consider to be gods. Sometimes gods *seem* to exist in their culture for each ethnic group and for each compartment of their lives, so that there is a plurality of gods. But the Bible teaches the *uniqueness* of God; there can only be *one God*.

The Uniqueness of God

Other verses in the Bible, such as Deuteronomy 6:4, refer to the uniqueness of God: “The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” The Hebrew word here translated *one* can also be translated *an only*, which appears to be a better translation. Thus, Jehovah alone is the only God that is entitled to be called Jehovah. This is the message of Zechariah 14:9: “On that day there will be one Lord, and his name the only name.” This same idea is expressed quite clearly in Exodus 15:11: “Who among the gods is like you, O Lord? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?” The answer, of course, is that there is none. He is the one and only God.

These verses certainly reject the possibility that God is one among many gods. He is the sovereign ruler of the universe, and beside Him there is no other god. Throughout the Old Testament record, God reminded His people that He was *the only God*.

6 Read the following Scriptures and state what God says about Himself.

- a** Genesis 17:1: “I am ”
- b** Exodus 20:2-3: “I am
You shall have ”
- c** Exodus 20:23: “Do not make ”
- d** Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6, 8; 45:5, 21. The message of each of these passages is that
.....

When I ask my students to make up an original definition of God, they often will begin by saying something like this: “God is a spirit that is eternal who created heaven and earth.” No matter what noun they use to define God, they almost always place the indefinite article in front of it. They say, “God is *a* spirit.” This gives the idea that there could be other spirits of equal rank. See how different the definition becomes when the definite article *the* is used in place of the indefinite article *a*: “God is *the* spirit that is eternal who created heaven and earth.” It has to be this way, since no other person or power fits into that category. God is *the only* God.

The Simplicity of God

In addition to numerical unity and uniqueness, the unity of God refers to the *inner* unity of the Divine Being. Often this aspect of unity is referred to as *simplicity*. By *simplicity* we mean the state of being free from division into parts. God is *spirit*, and as such He cannot be divided. Man’s being, by contrast, is compound: man is both material (body) and immaterial (spirit).

Everything about God is perfect. In other words, all of the characteristics of God are His *perfections*. The concept of inner unity or simplicity follows from some of God’s other perfections. For example, God’s existence is not dependent upon anything outside of Himself. He is *self-existent*, which means that eternal existence is part of His very nature. Thus, His self-existence excludes the idea that something preceded Him, as is the case with compound beings like man. The *simplicity* of God implies a number of things. One is that the three Persons of the Godhead are not just a number of parts which all together make up the Divine Essence. It also rules out the possibility of dividing God’s perfections from His essence or adding His characteristics to His essence. God’s essence and His perfections are one and the same thing. Thus, Scripture speaks of God as both light and life, righteousness and love, and in this way identifies Him with His perfections. In other words, we don’t say God *has* righteousness, but we say that He *is* righteousness. He *is* perfection!

7 Match the concepts used to describe the unity of God with the definitions of each concept.

- | | | |
|--------|--|--------------------|
| a | He is the only God, and beside Him there is no other god. | 1) Numerical unity |
| b | There is but one God, and all other beings exist through Him. | 2) Uniqueness |
| c | This rejects the possibility of a plurality of gods. | 3) Simplicity |
| d | God's existence does not depend on anything outside of Himself. | |
| e | This is another way of describing God's <i>inner</i> unity. | |
| f | Man is compound—that is, he is both body and spirit; in contrast, God is spirit. | |
| g | God is the eternal spirit. | |

God is Triune

Objective 4. *Select statements which give the biblical teaching on the Trinity.*

We have seen that God is spirit, that He is personal, and that He is one. Now we consider a fourth aspect of His nature: that of trinity. *God is triune*. This may seem confusing to you. How can God be *one* and also be *triune*? The words *triune* and *trinity* contain the concepts of oneness or *three* (tri) and oneness or being *three-in-one*. As we approach this important subject, we recognize that this truth can be known only by revelation. Thus, we turn to what God has revealed in Scripture as the basis for our study of the following questions concerning the Trinity.

1. *What is the Trinity?* As we have seen, there is only one essence in the Divine Being. However, this one Divine Being is tri-personal or a Trinity. In Him there are *three* persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Scholars who attempt to describe accurately these distinctions in the Godhead use different terms.

The variety of terms they use suggests that these scholars recognize how difficult it is to describe the Trinity. We have already defined the word person. A person is one who knows, feels, and decides.

Human experience teaches us that where there is a person, there is a distinct essence. Thus, every person is a distinct and separate individual who in himself expresses human nature. However, in the Triune God there are not three separate individuals who exist alongside of and separate from one another. Rather, there are only what we might refer to as *self-distinctions* within the Divine Essence. This term will be explained in the next paragraph.

2. *Who are the Persons?* As we have noted, there are three persons or subsistences in the Divine Essence: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Each of these persons is known by different *properties* (qualities or traits belonging to and especially peculiar to an individual). In Scripture these properties are made known by such titles, pronouns, qualities, and activities as are appropriate for reasoning, intelligent, and distinct persons. These personal properties are distinctive for each Person (they are *self-distinctions*) and they express the relationship of each to the others. Also, each in Himself expresses the Divine essence.

Thus, there are three persons in the Godhead: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They are of the same substance; they are equal in glory, power, majesty, and eternity; and they are one.

8 Read the following Scriptures and supply the correct answer to complete each sentence.

- a** In John 6:27 Jesus refers to God as
- b** In Hebrews 1:8 God the Father refers to the Son as
- c** Acts 5:3-4 declares that sin against the Holy Spirit is the same as sin against
- d** From these Scriptures we can make the conclusion that the Godhead has in it

3. *What is the evidence for the Trinity?* While the word *Trinity* is not found anywhere in the Bible, the doctrine of the Trinity is revealed in both the Old and New Testaments. Let's look at some of the evidences we find in Scripture.

The *Old Testament* was written in the Hebrew language. In Hebrew, one of the names of God, *Elohim*, is in the plural form—for example, in Genesis 1:26: “Then God said, Let us make man in our image, in our likeness.” This verse points to personal distinctions in God, to a plurality of persons in the Godhead. We find much clearer indications of personal distinctions in the Old Testament Scriptures which refer to the Angel of Jehovah. In some instances the Angel of the Lord could refer to a created being who was sent as a messenger of the Lord; in other instances He is believed to be the Son of God (see Genesis 16:7-13; 18:1-21; 19:1-28). As such, this *Angel* is identified with Jehovah, and on the other hand He is seen as separate or different from Jehovah.

Sometimes in the Old Testament more than one Person is mentioned (see Psalm 45:6-7; compare with Hebrews 1:8-9). At other times, God, who is clearly the speaker, mentions both the Messiah (Son) and the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 48:16; 61:1; 63:8-10).

The *New Testament* offers a clear revelation of God sending the Son into the world (John 3:16; Galatians 4:4; 1 John 4:9). It also reveals both the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7). In the New Testament we observe that the Father speaks to the Son (Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22); the Son communes with the Father (Matthew 11:25-26; John 11:41; 12:27-28); and the Holy Spirit prays to God in the hearts of believers (Romans 8:26-27). In the New Testament, therefore, the separate persons of the Trinity are set forth distinctly before us.

In some Scriptures, all three Persons of the Godhead are mentioned. At the baptism of the Son (Matthew 3:16-17), the Father speaks from heaven and the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove. In the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19), Jesus names three Persons: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son

and of the Holy Spirit” The three Persons are named alongside of each other in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 2 Corinthians 13:14, and 1 Peter 1:2. From these examples in the Scriptures, we can draw an abundance of evidence for the doctrine of the Trinity.

9 Match the completion (right) with the correct Scripture reference (left).

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| a Genesis 1:26 points to a | 1) Holy Spirit |
| b Isaiah 63:8-10 shows Jehovah in relation to the | 2) Redeemer or Savior |
| c John 3:16 reveals that God sent the Son to be our | 3) Savior and Holy Spirit |
| d John 14:26 and 15:26 indicate that both the Father and the Son sent to believers the indwelling | 4) Persons of the Trinity |
| e Matthew 3:16-17 and 28:19 reveal and name the | 5) Plurality of Persons |

4. *What are the difficulties in the doctrine?* Why is the teaching on the Trinity so difficult for us to understand? In our human experience we have nothing to compare to *trinity in unity* and *unity in trinity*. We know that no three human persons are structurally one person. No three human persons have complete knowledge of what each of the others is doing and thinking. Each person surrounds himself with a barrier of privacy. No human person has the distinct threesomeness such as is stated of God. People simply cannot comprehend the teaching concerning the Trinity based on their knowledge and human experience.

5. *How do we resolve the difficulties?* The basic problem in the attempt to explain the Trinity lies in the relation of the persons in the Godhead to the Divine Essence and to one another. This problem is one which the church can't remove. It can only try to reduce the problem by a proper definition of terms. Although the church has not tried to explain the *mystery* of the Trinity, it *has* tried to formulate a biblical doctrine of it, mainly to discourage errors which have threatened the church's

very life. By comparing Scripture with Scripture, we can see the doctrine of the Trinity to the degree that God has revealed it in His Word, even if we cannot understand it fully.

In our finite (limited) existence, we can never fully comprehend the infinite (that which is without limit). Paul describes this limitation of man in his first letter to the Corinthians:

Now we see but a poor reflection; then when we stand transformed in Christ's presence we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known (1 Corinthians 13:12).

10 From the following statements, select those that are TRUE in reference to the Trinity and our understanding of it.

- a** The Bible reveals that in the Divine Essence there are three persons.
- b** Each of the three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—has distinct properties, which are described by such titles, pronouns, qualities, and activities as apply to distinct persons.
- c** The Old Testament does not refer to a plurality of persons in the Godhead—it speaks only of Jehovah God.
- d** The New Testament reveals the persons of the Trinity more fully than the Old Testament.
- e** The New Testament gives us sufficient, scriptural basis for a doctrine of the Trinity.
- f** The main problem with our understanding of the tri-personality of God is that we have nothing in our experience to compare with the distinct threesomeness of the Divine Being.
- g** We can best resolve the problem of the Trinity by realizing that since it can't be fully explained, we should not try to make a doctrine concerning it.

Careful study of the Word reveals much about the tri-personality of God. Prayerful study of this doctrine enables us better to understand God's self-revelation, even if it is only partial. It also helps us to appreciate more fully the nature of God and the means He has provided for us to approach Him in love, worship, and dedicated service.

God is Eternal

Objective 5. Choose TRUE statements which express the implications for the Christian of the eternity of God.

Many people are interested in finding out where their ancestors came from. What would you say if I told you that I have no ancestors? You would not accept that as true, and you would be right. I do have ancestors, just as everyone does.

I say everyone does, but I cannot include God in that statement. He has no ancestors. So how did He come into being? That question has a very simple answer. He didn't! He has always existed, from eternity. That is why we can say *God is eternal*.

1. *What is eternity?* It is difficult for us to imagine the unknown future, but we might think back as far as our minds can go and try to imagine eternity. We refer to Genesis as the book of beginnings. In it we study about the beginning of creation, the beginning of man, and the beginning of nations. However, these distant beginnings were not *the beginning*.

We may go back even further to the time when the angels were created—those unique, celestial (heavenly) sons of God, who shouted for joy on that occasion when earth's foundations were laid—before the dawn of history (Job 38:4-7). Neither was that the beginning. In our minds we might see eternity as that infinite (unlimited) timelessness when all creation was present only in God's thoughts. Here our finite (limited) minds find it impossible to grasp the idea of infinity, or unlimited timelessness. The fact is that eternity is God's infinity in relation to time.

2. *Who inhabits eternity?* Men and angels are created beings, but God alone is without beginning. Thus, He is the only inhabitant of eternity. Man has a past, a present, and a future, but God dwells only in the present. Both the past and the future are the same as *now* to Him.

God is eternal in two ways: 1) He never began to be; He always was (Psalm 90:2). 2) His existence will never end (Deuteronomy 32:40; Psalm 102:27). Being eternal, God is free from all progression of time.

3. *How do we understand the concept of God's eternity?* Apart from the Scriptures, we can conclude that God always was because of the logic of the idea. Anybody knows that things do not just spring from nothing. A vacuum does not produce a thing. Therefore, if in the beginning of the universe nothing existed, and if there was just a vacuum, then it would have remained that way. But since we observe a vast universe all around us, we are forced by logic to accept the conclusion that something in the past never had a beginning—it always was. That *something* is God!

The eternity of God is revealed throughout Scripture. God is called the eternal God (Genesis 21:33); the Psalmist says, “From everlasting to everlasting you are God” (Psalm 90:2); and “You are the same and your years will never end” (Psalm 102:27). Isaiah’s inspired words declare that God is the one “who lives forever” (Isaiah 57:15), while Paul asserts to Timothy that God alone is the source of immortality (1 Timothy 6:16).

11 Circle the letters preceding statements that are TRUE.

- a** God’s eternity gives us confidence to know that the One in whom we trust will not disappear.
- b** God’s eternity encourages us when we have difficulties. We realize that God’s purposes, which have always stood, will stand forever. These purposes include those which concern our own lives.
- c** Knowledge of God’s infinity in relation to time makes us realize that our own decisions are not important because they are related only to time.

God is Immutable (Unchanging)

Objective 6. *State what the immutability of God means to you in your practical, Christian experience.*

We all have faults that need to be changed or corrected, but God does not. He is perfect. He doesn’t need anything to complement His character or attributes. He is perfect in every respect.

12 Read the following Scripture references and complete the sentences.

- a** In Psalm 102:25-27 our never-changing is contrasted with the ever-changing
- b** Isaiah 46:9-10, Psalm 33:11, and Psalm 119:160 reveal that God is unchanging in His and
- c** Malachi 3:6 indicates that because God is unchanging, He will have mercy on the descendants of Jacob so that they are not
- d** Psalm 103:17 speaks of God's unchanging and

The Scriptures which speak of God's *immutability*, or unchanging nature, teach us certain principles about the God we serve. Thiessen presents these principles (1979, p. 83), and we will list them to enable you to see them more clearly.

1. Since God is infinite, self-existent, and independent, He is above all the causes and possibilities of change.
2. God can neither increase nor decrease, and He is not subject to further development.
3. God's power can never become greater or less, and He can never be wiser or holier.
4. God cannot be more righteous, merciful, and loving than He has ever been or ever will be.
5. He cannot change in His relation to people. He operates according to eternal principles that do not vary with the change of the day.

Since God is unchangeable, we can commit ourselves completely to Him as we rely on His Word. We can face all of life's situations with confidence, knowing that in all things He works for our good (Romans 8:28).

You have probably noticed Scriptures such as Numbers 23:19 and 1 Samuel 15:29 which say that God does not change

His mind, and other Scriptures which say that He relented or was sorry that He had done a certain thing (1 Samuel 15:11; Jonah 3:9-10). This attitude of God does not refer to any fundamental change in His character or purpose. He always hates sin, and He always loves the sinner. This attitude is just as true before as after the sinner's repentance. However, God may change His dealings in view of people's change.

As an example of this, we see that God's attitude toward the sin of Israel did not change. He hated the nation's sin. Because His people insisted on continuing in sin, they quite naturally suffered the penalties of sin. However, when they repented and separated themselves from their sin, God's dealing with them changed as a result.

Someone has said that the sun shows no partiality or changeableness when it melts the wax and hardens clay, for the change is not in the sun but in the material upon which it shines. We can rely on the immutability or unchangeableness of God's purposes, His Word, and His nature. As the sun melts wax and hardens clay, God's unchangeableness works only for the good of those whose hearts are softened to respond favorably to Him, and for the destruction of those whose hearts do not respond favorably and become hardened.

13 To review the qualities of God's nature discussed in this section, match each quality (right) with its description (left).

- | | | |
|---------------|---|-----------------|
| a | Being of one substance and essence | 1) Personality |
| b | Timelessness, without beginning or end | 2) Spirituality |
| c | Being unlimited by form or material substance | 3) Unity |
| d | Plurality of persons | 4) Trinity |
| e | Sameness as concerns purpose, word, and character | 5) Eternity |
| f | Being able to think, feel, and decide | 6) Immutability |

GOD'S NATURAL ATTRIBUTES

Objective 7. Match the four attributes of God with definitions of each.

We call those who specialize in the study about God *theologians*. You and I may not be considered to be theologians, but we have every right to study and analyze the doctrines, or teachings, about God so that we may understand Him better and love Him more. It is important to consider not only His nature but also His characteristics in this adventure of knowing Him better. Theologians call these characteristics *attributes*. Attributes simply refer to those qualities which are associated with or describe someone or something—in this case God. The attributes of God explain, why He acts as He does, and so we know what to expect from Him. His attributes include *omnipotence*, *omnipresence*, *omniscience*, and *wisdom*. First, we will consider the *omnipotence* of God.

The Omnipotence of God

Abraham's wife, Sarah, had traveled a lot in her life. She had seen Jehovah do great and marvelous things for her husband and herself. She could have won a beauty contest as a bride, but now this wrinkled, old lady was bent with care. She laughed when she heard the visitor tell her husband that she would soon be pregnant. Impossible! Do you blame Sarah for smiling? Yet, the heavenly visitor asked, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:1-15).

Of what divine characteristic was the Lord reminding Abraham and Sarah? His omnipotence—the fact that He is almighty or all-powerful. He can do anything! This absolute power of God is shown to us in Scripture in relation to:

1. Creation (Genesis 1:1)
2. Sustaining all things by His powerful word (Hebrews 1:3)
3. The redemption of people (Luke 1:35, 37)
4. Miracles (Luke 9:43)
5. The salvation of sinners (1 Corinthians 2:5; 2 Corinthians 4:7)
6. The completion of His purpose for His kingdom (1 Peter 1:5)

We have to remember, though, that God cannot do things that are absurd (ridiculous or unreasonable), such as make dry water. Nor does He do things that are inconsistent with His own nature.

A reality very consistent with God’s nature is the fact that He can limit the operation of His power if He so desires. For example, God gives to each person the freedom to choose between Him and Satan. God does not force any person to be saved against his own will. He limits Himself to allow each individual to make his own decision.

Jeremiah 32:17 declares to the Lord, “You have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.” Later the Lord asked Jeremiah, “Is anything too hard for me?” (v. 27). When we understand the great power of our God, we should never again hesitate to ask His help in any circumstance that we face.

14 Read Exodus 3:11-12. What five words did God say to Moses to remind him of His omnipotence?.....
.....

The Omnipresence of God

A little boy wanted to do something bad, but he decided that he had better go under a roof to do it so that God, looking down from heaven, would not see him. What divine characteristic did the child not understand? The fact that God is omnipresent—He is everywhere present at all times. The Psalmist speaks of this in Psalm 139:7-10:

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.

The omnipresence of God does not mean that God has the same kind of relationship with everyone. He will reveal Himself,

bles, and encourage those who love and serve Him, but He will rebuke and punish those who oppose Him. He is in the storm, but not in the same way that He is with two of His children who sincerely pray for His guidance (Nahum 1:3; Matthew 18:20).

The knowledge that God is always present helps us to have courage in trials because we know that God is there to strengthen and guide us. It also serves to remind us to be very careful in how we live because God sees everything that we do, whether good or bad. We have a responsibility to serve God acceptably everywhere and at all times, for He is there.

We should also remind ourselves that we cannot use our own feelings as a measurement of God's presence with us. Regardless of how we feel, God is with us. Suppose a little girl was crying in the dark and her mother assured her that she was with her. The girl might think she had to see her mother to know she was there. Whether or not she could see her mother in no way would change the fact of her presence. And so it is with us. Whether we can *feel* God's presence or not, the Bible tells us He is everywhere. To know that is enough for us to maintain an attitude of praise and of courage at all times.

15 In your notebook, state two reasons why a recognition of the omnipresence of God should affect the way we live.

The Omniscience of God

It is just one step from the omnipresence of God to His omniscience—His knowledge of everything. Human beings often work hard to uncover facts. As we study to gain knowledge, we accumulate facts, but it seems that often the more we learn the more we realize how little we know.

God has no such problem. He knows everything. The Ruler of the universe has unlimited awareness. This fact is impossible for us to fully understand, yet it is essential to our faith in the perfection of God. Logically, He must know all that is actual and all that is possible. Otherwise, He would constantly learn things He did not know before, and He would need to adjust His plans and purposes accordingly.

Because God knows all things, He is able to tell ahead of time what is going to happen in the future. Therefore we find many events foretold in the Scriptures. This does not mean that the Eternal One makes the decisions about what is going to happen to us. He just knows what our decisions will be before we make them. Since He foresees, He can *foretell*, or tell what will take place in the future. His foretelling does not mean He *predetermined*, or decided in advance, what would take place.

The fact that God knows all things should strengthen our faith when we are in the middle of a very severe trial because He knows much more than we do about our problems. He knows the causes and what would happen with each of the solutions we might consider. We can draw great assurance from this fact as we seek His direction for the right solutions to our problems.

16 Read Psalm 139:1-19 and complete these statements.

- a** Verses speak of God's omniscience.
- b** Verses speak of His omnipotence.
- c** Verses speak of His omnipresence.

17 Which statements are TRUE in reference to God's omniscience?

- a** Since God knows what decisions I am going to make, all of my decisions are really His decisions.
- b** Knowing that God knows all things should lead me to turn to Him for guidance when I have a decision to make.
- c** To foretell means to predetermine.
- d** If God were not all-knowing, He would be less than perfect.
- e** Omniscience means to know everything there is to know, including perfect knowledge of the past, the present, and the future.

The Wisdom of God

Many scientists know an enormous amount of facts, but all the knowledge of this world has not solved society's problems. People just do not have the necessary wisdom to know how to apply their knowledge to problems in such a way that all can live together in peace and prosperity.

Wisdom is not the same as knowledge. It searches through the knowledge to find the highest purpose possible and then uses the best way to accomplish it. Since God is all-wise, He does all things well. In His perfect wisdom, He gave us His Word, the Bible, to guide us in all that we do. If we live according to His directions as recorded in His Word, we will benefit from His wisdom and be blessed by Him.

Sometimes we fail to see God's wisdom in permitting certain things to happen in our lives. First of all, we must remember that God allows us to make our own choices, and if those choices are not in accordance with His will, we can bring problems upon ourselves. Also, we must remember that we live in a sinful world, and Christians as well as non-Christians are sometimes the victims of natural disasters or evil actions of others in this sin-damaged world. God is not obligated to come to us and explain exactly why everything has happened the way it has. He may allow things to happen for reasons that we know nothing about. But as 1 John 4:8 says, "perfect love drives out fear." We can trust God fully in all kinds of circumstances, knowing that in His infinite wisdom He will work out all things for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28).

Scriptures such as Psalm 104:24-30 and Jeremiah 10:12 remind us that we can see God's wisdom through His creation. It took some very clever designing to accomplish the intricate designs of nature. I am left speechless when I examine the feather of a bird. Every tiny part is designed for a special function either in flight or for the protection of the bird from the elements. If I examine a bird's skeleton, I find that the larger bones are hollow and filled with air which holds the little creature in the air. The offspring of the bird will have the same design. This is but a small example of the great wisdom of our God.

I am blessed when I remember that God also makes His wisdom available to us as we need it. It matters not what we face today, tomorrow, next week, or next month. James 1:5 tells us not to doubt, but to ask for wisdom because God is generous and gracious in giving it to His people.

18 Based on our discussion of God’s wisdom, which of these do you consider are good examples of His wisdom?

- a** If I have unexpected expenses and don’t know how to plan so that I can take care of them, I can ask God for direction and know that He can give me the wisdom I need to work out the problem.
- b** A Christian girl who is a good example and testimony of the love of Christ dies unexpectedly in an accident. Because her death brings many in the community to the Lord, we know that in His wisdom He planned it for a higher good.
- c** God’s Word, the Bible, is a guide to show me how to live a good and fruitful life.
- d** God gives church leaders wisdom to conduct spiritual matters of the church in accordance with His will.
- e** The organization of the human body reveals the wisdom of God.
- f** God’s wisdom won’t permit Christians to make errors in judgment.

19 To review this section, match the four attributes of God with the definition of each.

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| a God’s quality of being everywhere present | 1) Omnipotence |
| | 2) Omniscience |
| b The way God works to bring about the highest purpose in the best way possible for His creatures and all creation | 3) Omnipresence |
| | 4) Wisdom |
| c God’s quality of knowing all things | |
| d God’s quality of being all powerful | |

In this lesson we have reviewed God’s nature and His natural attributes. In our next lesson we will look at the moral characteristics of God and His mighty works. This will prepare us for a study of God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. As you gain greater understanding of our Divine Creator and your relationship to Him, you will be better able to serve Him and witness to others about His great love.

self-test

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Choose the one best answer for each statement.

1 Christians worship as they do instead of worshiping places, forms, or other limitations because God is

- a) spirit.
- b) a unity.
- c) omnipotent.
- d) eternal.

2 If I truly realize that God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere present, I will

- a) conduct my life in a way that is pleasing to Him and trust Him to help me in every trial I face.
- b) also realize that no matter what choices I make, they are what He has chosen for me, and there is nothing I can do to change my life in any way.
- c) work out my daily problems and needs in my own way because God should be called upon only for the greater problems of life.

3 Because of the nature of God and His attributes, He not only has the ability to know what our needs are, but He also

- a) is too far away to get involved in solving them.
- b) realizes that because we do not have the same nature and attributes, He cannot truly communicate with us in a meaningful way.
- c) is able to provide for every need that we have.

4 When we are convinced that God works in all things for our good and His glory, we are recognizing His

- a) personality.
- b) infinity.
- c) wisdom.
- d) omniscience.

TRUE-FALSE. Place a **T** in front of the statements that are true and **F** in front of the statements that are false.

- **5** The quality of God which demonstrates that we can approach Him and that He is concerned about our human needs is unity.
 - **6** Christianity differs from the worship of many gods because God is spiritual.
 - **7** The Bible teaches that there are three persons in the Divine Essence: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We call this quality the Trinity of God.
 - **8** The qualities of God which describe His existence without beginning or end and His unchanging quality are His eternity and immutability.
 - **9** A person who may not be able to see the purpose in his trials may not be fully aware of the wisdom of God.
- 10** The largest amount of doctrinal evidence for the Trinity is found in the Old Testament.

answers to study questions

- 11 a** True.
b True.
c False.

1 Your answer.

- 12 a** God; world.
b purpose; Word.
c destroyed.
d love; righteousness.

2 Your answer. I've noted that we get to know others by talking to them, listening to them, and studying them. To know God, we must take time to do these things.

- 13 a** 3) Unity.
b 5) Eternity.
c 2) Spirituality.
d 4) Trinity.
e 6) Immutability.
f 1) Personality.

3 b) ability to think, feel, and make decisions.

14 "I will be with you."

4 b) God knows and cares This is expressed in a figurative way.

15 We know God is always there to strengthen and encourage us in our trials. We know that He sees everything we do, whether good or bad, and we have a responsibility to serve Him at all times.

5 d) all of the above, a), b), and c) are correct.

- 16 a** Verses 1-6
b Verses 13-19
c Verses 7-12

- 6 a** God Almighty.
b the Lord your God; no gods before me.
c any gods to be alongside me.
d the Lord our God is the only God, and apart from Him there is no God.

7 Of course, all of these concepts are related, as they describe the oneness or unity of God. We have matched them in this way:

- a** 2) Uniqueness.
b 1) Numerical unity.
c 2) Uniqueness.
d 3) Simplicity.
e 3) Simplicity.
f 3) Simplicity.
g 1) or 2) Numerical unity or uniqueness.

- 17 a** False.
b True.
c False.
d True.
e True.

- 8 a** God the Father.
b God.
c God.
d three distinct persons (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit).

18 Answers **a**, **c**, **d**, and **e** are good examples of God's wisdom. Answer **b** is not a good example because the girl's accident was the result of human error and not the direction of God. However, God did work for good in the situation by using it to bring people to Himself, and in this His wisdom is seen. Answer **f** is not a good example because God in His wisdom allows us to make our own choices. We can choose to ask Him to give us wisdom in making choices.

- 9 a** 5) Plurality of Persons.
b 3) Messiah and Holy Spirit.
c 2) Redeemer or Savior.
d 1) Holy Spirit.
e 4) Persons of the Trinity.
- 19 a** 3) Omnipresence.
b 4) Wisdom.
c 2) Omniscience.
d 1) Omnipotence.
- 10 a, b, d, e, and f** are true.

Lesson 2

God: His Moral Characteristics and Works

Are you sometimes filled with questions when you read in a newspaper of some great tragedy that has come into the life of a Christian? Have you seen an evil person achieve great success and riches through dishonest practices and wondered why God would permit such things to happen? Often our minds are troubled when we see what appears to be an injustice, and we question God.

When we understand more clearly the moral characteristics of God—His love and holiness—and how He works in the world today, we discover that there is purpose in everything that happens to us. God’s goal is to prepare us for His eternal kingdom, and He is active in our lives today to achieve that goal.

In this lesson we will study the moral characteristics of God, and we will see that God who created us is active in maintaining His creation and providing all that is needed to bring us into His kingdom. Yet, He allows us to make our own choices and bear the responsibility for the choices we make. Let us open our hearts to Him as we consider, in this part of our study, how much He loves us and how He rules His creation.



lesson outline

God's Moral Characteristics
God's Work of Creation God's
Work of Sovereign Rule

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Discuss the moral characteristics of God and their importance to His creatures.
- Describe God's activity in the creation, preservation, and sovereign rule of the universe.
- Explain reasons why Christians sometimes suffer in the providence of God while wickedness seems to go unpunished.
- Love and appreciate God more as a result of a better understanding of His characteristics and His works.

learning activities

1. Work through the lesson development, following the same procedures as you did in Lesson 1. As you answer the study questions, be sure to write your own responses before looking for answers at the end of the lesson.
2. When you have finished the lesson, take the self-test and check your answers carefully with those given in the back of this study guide. Review any items you answer incorrectly.

key words

atonement	holiness	preservation
compromise	intervene	providence
concurrency	justice	righteousness
create	maintenance	supreme
creative	merciful	uprightness
exalted	moral	

lesson development

GOD'S MORAL CHARACTERISTICS

In Lesson 1 we studied the characteristics of God's nature and His natural attributes. Now we want to consider God's *moral* characteristics. These are the characteristics that are revealed in God's dealings with men and women. They include *the holiness of God* and *the love of God*. First, we will look at the *holiness* of God.

The Holiness of God

Objective 1. *Identify true statements which explain the significance of God's holiness.*

By what characteristic would you like to be known in your neighborhood? A stingy person? A gossip? A good person? A friend? God was concerned that He be known among the nations by a specific characteristic. He wanted to be called *the Holy One* (Ezekiel 39:7).

We have learned that it is impossible for God to make an intellectual mistake because He is all-knowing. Because of His holiness, it is impossible for Him to make *moral* mistakes. Holiness is a characteristic of God which expresses the perfection of all He is. It is the basis for all of His actions. Thus, everything He does is right and good.

The word *holiness* contains the idea of *separation*. The perfect Divine Being is separated from and exalted (lifted up) above sinful people and evil. Yet, even though He is perfectly holy and separated from His creatures, He maintains a relationship with people in which He is very near to them. Later, we will see how this is possible.

We can observe God's holiness in His every attitude and action. Included in His holiness is love of what is good and hatred of what is evil. So God delights in uprightness and goodness, and He separates Himself from and condemns evil.

God's separation of Himself from people is necessary because of human sinfulness. This truth is pointed out many times in the Old Testament. God asked Moses to put a fence around Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:12-13, 21-25). He wanted the nation of Israel to realize that sinful people must be separated from the holy God.

The separation of God from sinful people is seen also in the symbolism of the tent, or tabernacle, that God asked Moses to construct in the desert. A very special part of it was closed off by curtains (see Exodus 26:33). Only one person was allowed in this part of the tabernacle, a sanctified priest, who was permitted to enter once each year to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat (see Leviticus 16). He did this to make atonement for the sins of the people in the presence of a holy God. In this way, God's people were made to see how much God hated their sin.

There are many other references in the Old Testament which emphasize God's holiness. Isaiah 59:2 and Habakkuk 1:13 teach that sin separates God from sinful people, and it separates sinful people from God. Job 40:3-5 and Isaiah 6:5-7 show us that if we have a true understanding of God's holiness, we will also realize how awful sin is. When we see the unlimited holiness of God, it

will produce sorrow for sin, confession of sin, and humility in each one of us.

- 1** Fill in the blank spaces based on the preceding Scriptures.
 - a** It is impossible for God to have contact with anything that is unclean because He is
 - b** Sin causes us to be from God.
 - c** A true understanding of God’s perfect holiness should cause us to realize

God’s holiness is the subject of many New Testament Scriptures also. We have already seen in Old Testament examples that people do not have direct access to God, nor can they get it through their own efforts. In the Old Testament a sanctified priest approached the presence of God to make atonement for the sins of the people. Now atonement is made through the sacrifice of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. According to Romans 5:2 and Ephesians 2:13-18, if we want to approach God it must be through the merits of Jesus Christ. First Peter 3:18 tells us that all of our uncleanness and unrighteousness is covered and atoned for by our righteous Savior, so that we can be brought into the presence of a holy God.

- 2** These Scriptures teach us that the only way we can come into God’s holy presence is through the atonement provided by
 - a) a sanctified priest.
 - b) our own efforts to be holy.
 - c) our Savior Jesus Christ.

We cannot speak about God’s holiness without also mentioning His righteousness and justice. Many Bible scholars classify these as separate attributes of the Godhead, but righteousness and justice are a direct result of God’s holiness. They are the aspect of His holiness which is seen in His treatment of people.

First, God’s holiness is expressed by *righteousness*. He has established a moral government in the world. This means He has given just (fair and right) laws under which people are to live. Second, His holiness is expressed by *justice*. He administers His laws fairly; He rewards those who obey His laws, and He punishes those who break these laws.

God’s righteousness is demonstrated by his love of holiness in people. Not only is He a holy God, but He requires that His people be holy. His justice is demonstrated by His judgment of sin. Because He cannot tolerate sin, He must punish those who sin.

3 Read Hebrews 12:10, 14 and answer this question: What does God require of me after I become a Christian and turn from my sinful ways?

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Holiness as a quality of the Christian life is more than *not doing what is wrong*. It is also *doing what is right*. In action it is expressed in right living and doing what the love of God leads us to do for others. It produces in us a feeling or concern for those around us.

We can, for example, maintain our obedience to God as we minister to people’s needs. We do not need to compromise Christian principles in order to serve others. The parable of Jesus recorded in Luke 10:29-37 illustrates the Christian *ideal* (standard of perfection) with which we should identify ourselves. At the same time, it demonstrates the kind of *activity* which expresses our ideals in a practical way to our fellowman.

4 Read Luke 10:29-37. In your notebook state which of the following expresses the Christian ideal of holiness in action and why: the Levite, the Samaritan, or the priest.

As we have seen in Hebrews 12:10 and 14, the Bible urges each of us to live a holy or separated life. A person can obey this command and at the same time involve himself in the life of the community as Jesus taught in Matthew 5:13-16. This Scripture teaches that we must not lose our holiness, but that we must be an example before others. Thus, a Christian will not involve himself in things that the New Testament does not permit. He will, however, do everything possible to serve his family and neighbors and show them that he cares about them.

5 As we consider God's righteousness and justice, we have a good example of how we should treat our children. Which of these will we do? (Choose the best answer.) We will

- a) punish our children often to remind them that they must always be good.
- b) be fair in our demands, reward them when they are obedient, and punish them when they are disobedient.
- c) warn them that they will be punished if they disobey, but never carry out any punishment, for that would make them doubt our love for them.

Question 5 reminds us that we need to know and understand the biblical principle concerning discipline. According to God's Word, one who does not consistently discipline his children contributes to their death (Proverbs 19:18). Hebrews 12:6 and Revelation 3:19 teach that God disciplines those He loves. If we truly love our children, we will discipline them for their own good (see Hebrews 12:5-11).

6 Circle the letters preceding TRUE statements concerning the significance of God's holiness.

- a Holiness is a characteristic of God which expresses His moral perfection.
- b Because of His infinite holiness, God cannot maintain a close relationship with His people.
- c The concept of holiness includes love of what is good and consistent with the laws of God and hatred of evil.
- d In Old Testament times, God made it clear that He would not separate Himself from His people even if they sinned.
- e The way God governs His people is a result of His moral character.
- f Because God is fair, He not only gives divine justice but He provides a way of atonement if people fail to obey Him.
- g The concept of holiness simply means not doing what is wrong.

The Love of God

Objective 2. *Choose a correct statement of what God's love means to us and how it is expressed.*

Suppose a young man told a young woman that he loved her. Yet after they were married, all he did was complain to her. He showed no interest in what was important to her, and he made no effort to be kind to her. How would you judge his love for her?

God is not like that. He dearly loves you and me, and He shows it not only in words and promises but also by what He does.

There is nothing we can do to merit or earn God’s love. Nothing we could say or do would obligate God to love us. It is just a part of His nature to love. He loves the world. He loves us.

God shows in practical ways how much He loves us. Some people list *goodness, mercy, patience, and faithfulness* as separate attributes of God, but I consider them to be a part of His love. You will probably think of other aspects of His love that could be added to the list. These attributes show us just how important we are to Him. They remind us of how much concern He has for us.

7 Read John 3:16; 17:24; 1 John 4:9-10; and Revelation 1:4-5. These verses show that God’s love is active. What kind of action expresses this love?

.....

8 Read John 13:34-35; 14:15; 15:13-14; and 1 John 5:2-3. In your own words state two ways we show our love for God.

.....

.....

In the Old Testament, God is often pictured as a great and powerful warrior. To see Him there also as a loving God overwhelms me. One of the most amazing examples of His love shows the Lord as an angry destroyer about to punish a wicked city, but He is reluctant—He holds back. Why doesn’t He go ahead with His plan? After all, the walls have already caved in, and nothing more is in the way. However, something does hold Him back—His love for those evil people. Here is what He says: “I looked for someone who could build a wall, who could stand in the places where the walls have crumbled and defend the

land” (Ezekiel 22:30). If some righteous person had been there to plead to Him for mercy, He would have spared the city. What love that shows!

David, Isaiah, and Jeremiah present God as *a father*. What concern of a good father for his children led them to make this comparison? David said that God is kind to His children. He remembers that they are helpless (Psalm 103:13-14). Isaiah thinks of God as the *merciful* father (Isaiah 63:16; 64:8). Jeremiah sees God as the father who, after punishing His disobedient children, gently leads them home (Jeremiah 31:7-9).

In the New Testament we have the supreme example of God’s love. When Jesus came to earth to pay the penalty for our sins, He revealed the terrible wages of sin (death). He provided our salvation at immeasurable cost—His own life (John 3:16-17). Since God loves us so much, we know that He will never allow anything to take place in our lives that cannot be worked out for our ultimate good if we love Him. We can rest assured of His love regardless of our circumstances. His love delivers us from fear and its torments (1 John 4:18; 2 Timothy 1:7).

9 In your notebook, list all the characteristics of God that you can find in Isaiah 43: 1-5. You should find three of His natural attributes and two moral attributes.

10 Do you have friends who do not realize that God loves them? Read Matthew 24:14; 28:19; and Acts 1:8. Based on these passages, write in your notebook what your responsibility is to those who do not know about God’s love.

Ezekiel 18:1-32 reveals the great love God has for His people. While they sometimes fail to recognize the reason for their hardships, God explains that what He wants from them is obedient service. Judgment is given to get their attention and to bring about restoration and healing in their relationship with God. Verses 31 and 32 indicate the degree of God’s love for Israel and His unending desire for the people’s salvation:

Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!

11 Choose the correct statement of what God's love means to us and how it is expressed. God's love

- a) reveals that no matter how people respond to Him, He will overlook their sin.
- b) reveals His goodness, mercy, longsuffering, and grace in His relations with people, and it is expressed in an active way as forgiving sin.
- c) results in punishment, and it is expressed in His refusal to hold back and give people another chance to obey Him.

GOD'S WORK OF CREATION

Objective 3. *Choose statements which explain God's creative acts and their significance for us.*

Now we will consider the works of God: 1) His *creative acts*, 2) His *sovereign rule* of the universe, which includes His *maintenance* or *preservation* of His creation, and 3) His *providence* which brings about His eternal purpose. First, we will look at what the Bible teaches about His creation of all things.

People often stand out in history not because of who they *are*, but because of what they have *done*. For example, Madame Marie Curie is not famous because she was a member of a royal family, but because she was the physicist and chemist who discovered radium and polonium.

By contrast, the Supreme Being of the universe is important to us because of who He is. At the same time, what He *does* (His works) is of great importance to us. The first work of God was the creation of the universe (Genesis 1 and 2).

By the exercise of His creative power, God brought into existence the whole visible and invisible universe. This includes the systems of the material universe (sun, moon, stars, planets, etc.) and

all orders of beings including all spiritual beings except Himself. This creation is clearly stated in Scripture, as we shall see.

The biblical account reveals a series of creative acts which, taken together, make up one great process of creation (Genesis 1, 2, and Psalm 33:6). The fact of creation has meaning for our lives in several ways:

1. Knowing that the Creator of the universe existed before all else should cause us to marvel at God's eternal greatness and majesty and should make us realize our own insignificance by comparison.

2. The Lord of all creation has a rightful claim on His creatures, that of obedient worship and service.

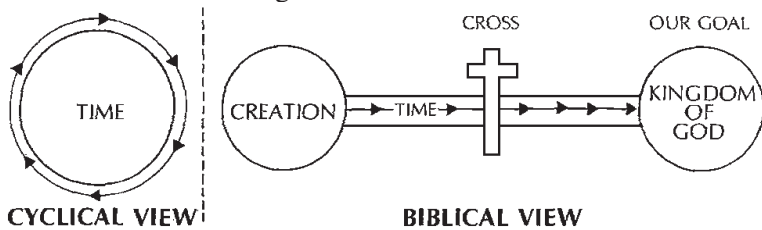
3. In creation we see a general revelation of the Creator in which His wisdom, power, and concern for His creation are seen (Romans 1:18-20).

4. The biblical teaching on creation is basic to our faith, for we could never fully commit ourselves for eternal salvation to anyone of lesser power than the Creator revealed in Scripture.

We do not have to wonder *why* God designed and produced all things. He did it for His glory (see Psalm 19:1; Isaiah 43:7; 48:11; Revelation 4:11). People go through life with the search for happiness as their only pursuit, but real happiness comes only as we seek to glorify God. We were made for that express purpose, and it is our key to happiness.

A friend of mine once complained to me that he was unhappy because he had not been able to do something great for God. I asked him, "Is your highest goal to glorify God in what you do? Are you willing to allow *anything* to happen in order to achieve that goal?" My friend realized that his own ambition to do something great had actually been the important goal in his life. He was just deceiving himself into thinking he wanted to do it for God. Jesus said, "For whoever wants to save his own life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it" (Mark 8:35). We are created to bring glory to God.

In some societies the universe is seen as everlasting, with its history moving through endless cycles of creation, destruction, and recreation. The only real goal of persons in these societies is to be set free from an existence filled with despair. The biblical concept of the universe has a beginning (the creation of all things), a purpose (the salvation of man through Jesus Christ), and the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God. These two views are illustrated in this diagram:



12 In your notebook, explain how these views compare with the one held by most people you know. How does the view of the society in which you live compare with the biblical view?

God's creative acts are not limited to what He has done in the past. John 3:3, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, and Psalm 51:10 state that God purifies the hearts of those who repent of their sins and come to Him in faith. These Scriptures also tell us that when a person turns to God for salvation, he is born again and becomes a new creature, or a new creation. Thus, (God's creative acts include the spiritual creation that takes place when a person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior.

13 Circle the letters preceding statements which are TRUE.

- a God's creative works reveal His characteristics in a general way to His creatures.
- b Creation makes us aware of God's eternal greatness and majesty and our unimportance in comparison to Him.
- c The revelation of God in His creative acts calls for no response from His creatures.
- d The knowledge of God's power and nature as revealed in His creation of all things should lead us to glorify Him.
- e God's creative acts are limited to the events recorded in Genesis 1 and 2.

GOD'S WORK OF SOVEREIGN RULE

Objective 4. *Apply principles to life situations and choose correct definitions of God's sovereign rule of the universe.*

The supreme Creator of the universe has sovereign rule over everything He has created. What does this mean? The word *supreme* means "highest in rank or authority, highest in degree or quality." God is superior in every way to everything else that exists. The word *sovereign* means "freedom from outside control, power to do as one pleases. "

Thus, the sovereignty of God describes His supreme rulership of the universe (1 Timothy 6:15). His sovereignty is manifested in His direction of the events of the universe according to His will (Ephesians 1:11). The Scriptures clearly teach the sovereignty of God: 1) as our Creator, He has the right to rule over us (1 Chronicles 29: 11; Matthew 20: 15; Ezekiel 18:4); 2) He does whatever He pleases (Psalm 115:3; Daniel 4:35); 3) there is purpose in all that He does (Romans 8:28; Isaiah 48:11).

The other day I read in the newspaper about the brutal murder of a beautiful, little, five-year-old girl. How could this happen if God is really good, really sovereign, and has all power to do what He pleases? Why does He allow things like this to happen? We will find some answers to these questions as we consider various aspects of God's sovereign rule of the universe. God's sovereignty involves *preservation* or *maintenance* of the universe, and *providence*. First, we will consider His preservation or maintenance of the universe.

Preservation (Maintenance) of the Universe

No architect, however brilliant, has been able to design a house that will never need repairs. No gardener carefully plants seeds for beautiful flowers without also maintaining them by pruning, weeding, and watering. The Bible teaches us that the universe also needs to be preserved or maintained (Acts 17:28; Hebrews 1:3).

God actively maintains, or cares for, the universe. The Scriptures show that, following His work of creation, God

continues His activity by caring for all things (Psalm 104). This includes people and animals (Psalm 36:6) and protection of those who are upright and just (Proverbs 2:8).

The apostle Paul declared, “For in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). God would not be sovereign if anything existed or took place in the universe apart from His will and power. Scriptures such as Nehemiah 9:6 and Psalm 145: 14-16 teach that God is actively involved in preserving all things. Other Scriptures declare that the Lord preserves His people (Deuteronomy 1:30-31; Psalm 31:20; 34:15,17,19; Isaiah 43:2).

We must recognize that divine preservation is necessary because everything God created is, in being and action, absolutely dependent on Him. The creature does not have the power within itself to continue to exist. It exists and continues because of the will of its Creator. It is by the word of His power that it and the entire universe is sustained or maintained (Hebrews 1:3).

While all things keep on existing by the continued exercise of God’s will, He has given to each part of His creation certain properties appropriate for its maintenance. In the physical world, He works through physical properties and laws, which we sometimes refer to as the “laws of nature.” In the intellectual world, He works through the properties or capacities of the mind; He has given us the ability to think, to feel, and to make choices. God works through these properties in His dealings with us. In preserving the world, God does not disturb what He established in Creation. He simply maintains what He has created.

14 (Choose the correct answers.) God’s maintenance of His creation means that

- a) He has limited power to replace anything that becomes damaged.
- b) He is actively involved in preserving all things.
- c) every part of His creation has the ability to maintain itself.
- d) He gives needed properties to each part of His creation, and He works through these properties in caring for all things.
- e) by God’s will all things in the universe continue to exist.
- f) He provides care and protection for His people.
- g) He is concerned only with the preservation of upright people.

Providence

Objective 5. *Identify examples of purposes, elements, and effects of God's providence.*

Another aspect of God's sovereign rule is His *providence*. While this includes the idea of preservation, it is much more than that. It also means God's ability to look ahead, to foresee, and to plan in advance. It refers to God's ability to fulfill His ultimate purpose in creation, which is the establishment of His kingdom under the rule of Jesus Christ. It speaks of the activity of God by which He maintains, cares for, and governs what He has created. How He does all this is a mystery, but there are some things about God's providence as it relates to us that we do know:

1. God is personally involved with the world He has created.
2. He causes everything in nature to move as He intended.
3. He enables and prompts people to function as responsible, moral agents with freedom to choose between right and wrong.
4. If man chooses to accept the salvation He has offered, God has provided for him eternal life with all the joy and splendor that His majesty affords.

Purposes of Providence

There are several purposes to God's providential rule which involve God's relationship with His creatures who love and obey Him:

1. *God's rule is characterized by concern for us.* Many Scriptures reveal that *God rules with a view to the happiness of His people.* Psalm 84:11 declares, "No good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless." Other Scriptures such as Acts 14:17 and Romans 8:28 also reveal God's concern for our happiness and well-being.

2. *God's rule is characterized by His concern for the mental and moral development of His people.* God's dealings with His people throughout history have involved educating them so they would realize 1) what He requires of them; 2) that His nature is holy; 3) that sin is an offense to Him; and 4) that He offers forgiveness for sin and reconciliation with Himself. In the early days He permitted such things as divorce because the people

were immature (lacked growth). Mark 10:5 speaks of this. The laws of the Old Testament and the levitical system of government were part of the developing process. They prepared the way for the revelation of the Lamb of God (Jesus) who takes away the sin of the world. All of God's providence in leading His people to spiritual maturity is for the purpose of preparing them to be His special possession.

3. *God's rule has as its primary goal His own glory* (Ephesians 1:11-14). All of His perfections are manifested through His rule. This means that His divine providence reveals to us the qualities of His being. For example, His *love is* revealed in His provision for His creatures, particularly in providing for their redemption through His Son. His *truth* is revealed both in the laws of nature and in His faithfulness in fulfilling the promises in His Word. His *holiness* and *righteousness* are revealed in His hatred of sin. His *power is* demonstrated in His work of creation, redemption, and providence. His *wisdom is* seen in the way He works to bring about His purposes. As we recognize the wonder of our great Creator, we give honor and glory to Him.

15 Which of these is a correct definition of the term *providence*? It is

- a) preservation of all things by which God gives each part of His creation the ability to care for its own needs without any dependence upon Him.
- b) God's rule by which He maintains, cares for, and governs His creation, preparing it for His eternal kingdom.

16 Match the purpose of providence (right) with its description (left).

- | | |
|---|--|
| a God works in all things with concern for people's well-being. | 1) The glory of God |
| b God provides for the education of people concerning Himself and His requirements, so that they become His special possession. | 2) People's mental and moral development |
| c God's demonstration of the qualities of His being reveals this. | 3) People's happiness |

Elements of Providence

What are the elements of providence? Many Bible scholars suggest that there are three aspects to God's providence. However, they do recognize that there is some overlapping and that the three are never separated in the work of God. They are *preservation, concurrence, and government.*

1. *Preservation.* We have already discussed God's preservation or maintenance of the universe as a part of His sovereign rule over all things. God is actively involved in preserving His creation. Everything God created is absolutely dependent on Him. Yet, He has given properties to each part of His creation to provide for its maintenance. Genesis 1:24-25 indicates that God has endowed each creature with certain natural characteristics that are unique to it. Each grows, develops, matures, and reproduces according to its kind.

2. *Concurrence.* The term *concurrence* means "agreement, cooperation, or consent" It gives the idea that no activity of matter or the mind can take place without God's consent, and that His power cooperates with powers that are under him. In Acts 17:28 and 1 Corinthians 12:6 the apostle Paul indicates that without God's *concurrence* no force or person can continue to exist or to act. Thus, God's power has a strong influence on man's power without destroying it or robbing man of his freedom. Man has, keeps, and uses his natural powers as God preserves his mind and body in their natural functions.

Since God is the basis of man's existence, we cannot say that man's part is equal to God's part. Here again, we see a profound mystery: God has given man natural powers which can be exercised for good or evil. When these natural powers are used in an evil way, man alone is responsible, for God does not cause man's evil acts (Jeremiah 44:4 and James 1:13-14). God *concurr*s in the acts of man in giving him natural powers, but the evil direction of these powers is caused by man. An example of concurrence is the case of Joseph (Genesis 45:5; 50:20). Here we see that while his brothers used their natural powers to do evil, God overruled the action for good. He consented to, or permitted, their action, but He worked through it according to His purposes.

Paul says that God “works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will” (Ephesians 1:11), and that God works in us “to will and to act according to his good purpose” (Philippians 2:13). He gives us insights into life situations and guides us by His Spirit. He warns us of the consequences of failure and woos us gently. Yet, He does not make a mockery of our freedom by forcing His will on us. In the salvation experience, He begins His beautiful work standing on the outside of our heart’s door knocking, but we must open the door (Revelation 3:20). Then, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us. He maintains control of our lives as long as we remain surrendered to His lordship. Our relationship with Him as our Lord continues on the basis of our love for Him and our choice to give Him control of our lives.

3. *Government.* This refers to the activity of God’s rule with the objective of accomplishing His divine purpose. As we have seen, God governs the physical world by means of laws He has established. He governs people through the laws and properties of the mind and by the operation of the Holy Spirit. In doing this He uses all kinds of influences, such as circumstances, motives, instruction, persuasion, and example. He works directly through the operation of the Holy Spirit to influence the intellect, the emotions, and the will of man.

God governs in at least four ways. Understanding these ways helps us to see the relationship between God’s absolutely sovereign will in working out His divine plan and the will of man in free activity.

- a. Sometimes God *does not do anything* to prevent man from doing what he has chosen to do. This does not mean God approves when a person sins, but He does not impose His power to prevent it. Examples of this are given in Acts 14:15-16 and Psalm 81:12-13.
- b. Sometimes God *does prevent* men from committing sin by influencing them not to sin. Examples are Genesis 20:6, 31:24, and Hosea 2:6. The Psalmist prayed for this kind of help in Psalm 19:13, “Keep your servant from willful sins”
- c. Sometimes, under divine *direction*, God *overrules* the acts of evil men, using them to accomplish good results.

We gave an example of this earlier in reference to Joseph. His brothers sinned, but God used it to accomplish something good.

- d. Finally, sometimes God *determines to limit* sin and wickedness. Scriptures such as Job 1:12 and 2:6 indicate that God has set limits on satanic activity. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10:13, declares that God has also put a limit on the tests and temptations which Christians must endure.

Providence gives us the idea that God rules over all things in love. This love reaches its highest expression in the words of the apostle, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

17 Match the elements of providence (right) with a description of each (left).

- **a** God’s power cooperates with powers that are under Him, but while He permits those powers to make their own choices, He does not Himself cause evil acts.
- **b** God rules in a way that will accomplish His divine purposes. This means that sometimes He does nothing, sometimes He prevents, other times He overrules, and at times He limits activities intended for evil.
- **c** God has given His creatures natural properties through which He works to provide for their maintenance; everything He created is absolutely dependent on Him for existence.
- 1) Preservation
2) Concurrence
3) Government

Effects of Providence

How does providence affect personal experience? Many Scriptures reveal God’s promise to prosper the righteous (see

Leviticus 26:3-13 and Deuteronomy 28:1-14). He does bless His own—His blessings are far too numerous to mention.

But the righteous often wonder, “Why do the wicked prosper also? Why do they go unpunished?” The Psalmist responds that 1) their prosperity is only temporary, and 2) God will eventually judge their wickedness (Psalm 37:16-22; 73:1-28; see also Malachi 3:13-4:3).

So when someone asks you, “Why doesn’t God put a stop to all this violence?” you can in all confidence reply, “Just wait and see the final act of this drama. God has already begun His plan to get rid of selfishness, despair, rebellion, and corruption. In His eternal plan there will be blessing and prosperity for all who love Him.” In the meantime, God delays judgment in order to give the wicked an opportunity to repent (Romans 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

Another question often asked by Christians is: “Why must the believer suffer so many trials if God is in absolute control of events of this life?” The Bible reveals several reasons:

1. Trials may be permitted for the believer’s spiritual development (Psalm 94:12; Hebrews 12:5-13).
2. Trials may represent testing in preparation for greater avenues of service (1 Corinthians 16:9; James 1:2-12).
3. Affliction will also bring glory to God if we respond to it in the right way (see Job 1, 2, and 42).
4. Trials are a part of the calling of the church (John 15:18; 16:33; Acts 14:22; 1 Peter 4:12-19).

Because of the fact that sometimes God does actively intervene in the affairs of people, we know that we can have an effective part in other people’s lives as we pray. Moses pleaded with God, and Israel was saved from destruction. Elijah prayed, and the palace was stirred. There are many examples in both the Old and New Testaments of God’s intervention when people prayed. God does some things as a direct answer to people’s prayers. He does other things without anyone’s praying about them. Sometimes He does things that seem to be the opposite of what we pray for because in His sovereignty He is working for our higher good. Henry C. Thiessen sums this up by saying, “If

we do not pray for the things that we might get by prayer, we do not get them. If He wants some things done for which no one prays, He will do them without anyone's praying. If we pray for things contrary to His will, He refuses to grant them. Thus, there is a perfect harmony between His purpose and providence and man's freedom." (1979, p. 129).

So as we have seen, Christians do sometimes suffer as a result of living in an evil world. God, who is in control, does not always prevent wicked people from doing evil deeds. Christians, as well as non-Christians, may suffer as the result of accidents or carelessness. God does not usually interfere with normal, physical laws or our own freedom of choice. Everyone lives in a world in which each person is subject to accidents and eventually death. Our goal is not to fulfill our ideas of life, but rather to live in a way that will bring glory to God. God's love for us never changes, and He has promised that if we love Him, He works for our good in all things. With this knowledge we may trust ourselves to our sovereign God, believing that the reasons for any circumstances He brings, permits, determines, or prevents will someday be as clear to us as they are to Him.

18 Now in your own words, answer the question given at the beginning of this section on sovereign rule: "How could God permit the murder of an innocent little child?" Use your notebook.

19 Read the following Scriptures and write 1 in the blank space if the statement is an example of the providence of God in dealing with people. Write 2 if it is an example of man's personal choice in which God did not intervene.

- ... **a** Judges 15:16-19: The provision of water for tired Samson
- ... **b** Acts 24:24-26: Felix postpones a decision to accept the gospel
- ... **c** Daniel 2:10-23: The revelation to Daniel
- ... **d** Genesis 22:13: The ram caught in the thicket
- ... **e** Judges 11:30-36: Jephthah makes a foolish vow to God

20 Explain the effects of God's sovereign and providential rule in each of the following circumstances. Base your response on principles taught in this lesson. Use your notebook.

- a** John was a minister in a neighborhood of rough gangs. He faithfully worked in the community until he was beaten to death by a gang. His death shook the community. As a result of his example, many young men and women of the streets came to know Christ.
- b** Robert was dying of cancer, but through the prayers of friends he was miraculously healed.
- c** James was climbing a dangerous mountain with his friends when he fell and broke both legs.
- d** Simone was attacked and badly beaten as she walked home from church. Through this experience she increased her efforts to lead people to Christ.
- e** Raymond, a gifted child, ran out of a roadside restaurant into the path of a speeding car and was killed.
- f** Henry lives for himself and is dishonest in his business dealings. Yet, he seems to prosper in all he does.
- g** A missionary has a flat tire on his way to the airport and misses his plane. Later he learns that the plane crashed and all on board were killed.

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Place a T in front of each true statement and an F in front of each false statement.

- **1** Holiness is a characteristic of God which expresses the perfection of all He is.
- **2** Because God is infinitely holy and man is sinful, the relationship between them is an impersonal orate.
- **3** While God's holiness demands separation from that which is sinful, He has in mercy and love made a way to end the separation by providing a sacrifice.
- **4** God's love is shown best by what He *says*.
- **5** The value of love is proved by what one does; that is, one's actions demonstrate love.
- **6** If a person truly loves God, he will show it by his obedience.
- **7** Creation as a work of God is significant only as it shows the majesty of God's power. This calls for no response in the creature.
- **8** God's sovereign rule means that He is free from external (outside) control and that He can do whatever He pleases.
- **9** When we speak of God's work of maintenance of the universe, we understand that He is actively preserving what He has created.
- **10** Providence refers to God's ability to foresee all things and to direct creation toward the end he has determined for it: the establishment of a kingdom under Jesus Christ.
- **11** God's *government* includes the idea that He sometimes sets limits on sin and wickedness and on trials that Christians must endure.

- **12** While prayer is an activity that brings us close to God, it cannot influence His sovereign acts.
- **13** While God has established natural laws and given people freedom of choice, He works through these means to bring about His purpose.
- **14** God's providence includes the principle that Christians must suffer in this world while sinful people can expect to prosper.

answers to study questions

10 In these passages of Scripture, Jesus instructed His disciples to take the news of God's love and salvation to every creature. God has chosen to use us to tell others of His love.

- 1 a** holy.
- b** separated
- c** how awful sin is.

11 b) reveals His goodness, mercy, longsuffering, and grace . . .

- 2 c)** our Savior Jesus Christ.

12 Your answer. (In many societies there is great uncertainty about creation, the meaning of life, death, and judgment. No other view is as reasonable and comforting as the biblical view.)

- 3** Your answer should be similar to this: He requires me to be holy. He wants me to share in His holiness.

13 a True.

b True.

c False.

d True.

e False. (His creative acts continue in the spiritual creation that takes place when a person accepts Jesus as Savior.)

- 4** You should have said "the Samaritan," because he demonstrated doing what is right. He applied to life the principles he held.

14 Answers b), d), e), and f) are correct.

- 5 b)** be fair in our demands

15 b) God's rule by which He maintains, cares for

- 6 a, c, e, and f** are true.

16 a 3) People's happiness.

b 2) People's mental and moral development.

c 1) The glory of God.

- 7** God's love is expressed in giving something to His people.

- 17 a** 2) Concurrence.
b Government.
c Preservation.

18 Your answer. I would point out that God has given man a freedom of choice; thus, he may choose to sin if he desires. When this happens, the innocent suffer as well as the wicked. The Bible tells us that eventually the wicked will be judged and punished by God for the evil they do.

8 We show our love for God by our obedience to Him and our love for other people. (We can clearly see here that love is an active force.)

- 19 a** 1) Providence of God.
b 2) Man's personal choice.
c 1) Providence of God.
d 1) Providence of God.
e 2) Man's personal choice.

9 Verse 1: wisdom and omnipotence (natural) and love (moral).

Verse 2: omnipotence and omnipresence (natural) and love (moral).

Verse 3: holiness (moral).

Verse 4: love (moral).

20 Example **a** reflects two principles: Suffering can result from living for God in an evil world; sometimes God uses the actions of evil men to accomplish good results. Example **b** illustrates that God does some things as a direct answer to prayer, and the purpose is to bring Him glory. Examples **c** and **e** reveal that all people are subject to natural laws and the dangers in life. Example **d** illustrates that sometimes trials prepare one for greater service to God and can bring glory to Him. Example **f** shows that even non-Christians may benefit from God's grace. However, if Henry does not surrender his life to God, He will spend eternity separated from God, and he will be judged for his evil actions. Example **g** illustrates that sometimes when our plans don't seem to work out, God is working in the circumstances for our good.

Lesson 3

Christ: The Visible Expression of the Invisible God

“He is the very image of his father.” Have you heard someone say this about a young boy? Sometimes we ask ourselves, “Just how are the two alike?” If a father and son *look* alike, we can see this easily, but sometimes the similarity is not so clear. For example, they may be alike in their actions or in their way of thinking, or their personalities may be much the same. By watching the child, you can see in many ways what his father is like.

Jesus came into the world to show us what God the Father is like. He is the visible representation of the Father, who is invisible. Jesus embodies the natural and moral characteristics of God. Through the miracle of the incarnation, He took upon Himself the nature and form of man. In doing this, He gave expression to the qualities of God and communicated these qualities to man. Jesus said, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

In this lesson we will consider the doctrine concerning Jesus Christ, who “is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being” (Hebrews 1:3). As we think of the time He spent on earth and how He reflected the Father, may we earnestly pray that, in the same way, we may reflect the beauty of the Son to others.



lesson outline

The Humanity of Christ
The Deity of Christ
The Union of Deity and Humanity in Christ
The Works of Christ

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Give biblical evidence for the deity and humanity of Christ.
- Discuss the nature and purpose of the incarnation.
- Identify the works of Christ and their significance.
- Love Christ more as a result of knowing more about Him.

learning activities

1. Study the lesson development according to the procedures outlined in Lessons 1 and 2.

2. Be sure to write your own responses to the study questions before looking ahead to the answers which are given at the end of the lesson. Review any exercises you answer incorrectly. Then take the self-test and check your answers.

key words

ancestry	humanity	penalty
ascension	incarnation	reconciliation
deity	intercessor	redemption
distinctive	lineage	representative
exaltation	mediator	subjected
extraordinary	mortal	supernatural

lesson development

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST

Objective 1. *Match evidences of Jesus' humanity with descriptions of each.*

Among all the distinctive elements of the Christian faith, the *incarnation* of our Lord Jesus Christ is without question the most basic. *Incarnation* refers to the union of deity with humanity in Jesus Christ. That He, the eternal Son of God, became man for the purpose of saving us is the clear teaching of Scripture. God acted in a completely new way in the world when His Son became "flesh." Jesus was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Virgin Mary. In this unique, creative act, God broke through the chain of human generation and brought forth a supernatural being.

The mystery which surrounds this miraculous event fades somewhat when we realize that it was part of a new activity of God. The Son of God came to deliver man, a flesh-and-blood creature, by Himself becoming flesh and blood. He did this in order to provide for man's salvation by His own death. With the incarnation God set in motion His plan of redemption on earth: "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman" (Galatians 4:4). There was no other way for Him to accomplish His saving purpose.

The incarnation, therefore, was a turning point for sinful man, for it made possible a reconciliation (bringing together again) between God and man. Since Jesus' humanity has such significance in God's plan of salvation, it is important that we consider some evidences of His humanity. They include His human ancestry, human development, human appearance, human limitations, and human names.

Human Ancestry and Development

Two Gospel writers, Matthew and Luke, trace the human ancestry of Christ. Matthew, in fact, traces His lineage all the way back to David, and even further, to Abraham the Patriarch (Matthew 1:1-17). His two objectives were:

1. To prove that Jesus was from the line of David, and therefore heir to the throne of Israel. Otherwise, no Jew would accept Him as his King or Messiah.

2. To prove that Jesus, as the seed of Abraham, was the child of promise through whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed (see Genesis 22:17-18).

Luke traces Jesus' lineage back to Adam, the first man (Luke 3:23-38). However, the purpose of both Matthew and Luke was to emphasize the fact of Jesus' human experience: He was born of a woman (Galatians 4:4).

While we say that Jesus had a human ancestry, we must be careful to point out that He did not have a natural human father. His birth was different from all other human births. Luke records the scene in which the angel told Mary that she would soon be pregnant. Her immediate reaction was: "How will this be...since I am a virgin?" (Luke 1:34). To her question concerning the miraculous birth of Jesus, which presented a seemingly impossible situation, the angel reminded Mary that "nothing is impossible with God" (vs. 37). Jesus' birth was wonderfully miraculous; yet it was a *human* birth.

Jesus developed physically and mentally according to ordinary laws of human growth. In fact, His growth and

development as a normal member of the community of Nazareth was accepted by His fellow townsmen (Matthew 13:55). Luke says that Jesus “grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him” (Luke 2:40). We know that His mental development was not the result of instruction He received in the schools of His day (John 7:15). Rather, it was the result of training He received from godly parents, regular attendance at the synagogue (Luke 4:16), faithful visits to the temple (Luke 2:41), faithful study and application of the Scriptures, and prayer (Mark 1:35, John 4:32-34).

1 Read Luke 2:52. This verse suggests that Jesus’ life developed

- a** intellectually.
- b** spiritually.
- c** physically.
- d** socially.

Human Appearance and Limitations

All the evidence indicates that Jesus’ physical appearance was similar to that of other men. In fact, He was so like other men in their daily activities that when He claimed to be one with the Father, His hearers became very angry. They responded hotly that He was “a mere man” and therefore had no right to claim to be God (John 10:33).

As the Roman governor, Pilate, presented Jesus to the Jews before pronouncing sentence upon Him. He declared, “Here is the man” (John 19:5). As Jesus stood condemned before the Roman judge, no one questioned His humanity. The apostle Paul later testified to the world of the first century that Christ Jesus was “found in appearance as a man” (Philippians 2:8).

None of Jesus’ close companions ever doubted that He was a man. More often they were impressed with the fact that He was an extraordinary man: “Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey him” (Mark 4:41).

When Jesus took the form of man, He willingly subjected Himself to the limitations of humanity. As a result, He, too, at times became physically tired (John 4:6), hungry (Mark 11:12), and thirsty (John 19:28). He underwent temptation (Matthew 4:1-11) and was strengthened by the Father as He prayed (Luke 22:42-44). He also experienced pain (1 Peter 4:1) and finally death (1 Corinthians 15:3). This was the greatest proof of the limitation which His humanity placed upon Him.

Human Names

The names given to Jesus indicate His humanity also. When the angel told Joseph about the coming child, he commanded Joseph to name the baby *Jesus*, which is simply the Greek form of the Old Testament name *Joshua* (Matthew 1:21) meaning “Savior.” He was also called the “son of David,” and the “son of Abraham” (Matthew 1:1). But the name often applied to Him in Scripture of which He seemed most fond, *Son of Man*, is the one which most clearly represents His humanity. Jesus used this name when speaking of Himself (Matthew 26:64-65). You will note, however, that He did not claim to be simply *a* son of man, but *the* Son of Man. This term not only implies that He is truly human, but also that He is the representative of all mankind.

2 Read Luke 2:40,51; 8:19-21; and John 7:1-8. Based upon these Scriptures, circle the letter preceding each TRUE statement.

- a** Jesus went through the normal childhood growth and development stages, showing progress physically, mentally, and spiritually.
- b** Although He displayed unusual qualities as a boy, Jesus was still under the leadership of His parents.
- c** When Jesus became the center of attention as He taught, His family fully understood His mission and made no demands on Him.
- d** Jesus’ brothers were convinced by His mighty works that He was more than an ordinary man, and they approved of His public ministry.

3 Match each evidence of Jesus' humanity (right) with its description (left).

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| a Jesus experienced weariness, hunger, thirst, pain, and finally death. | 1) Human ancestry |
| b Jesus was called by the Greek form of the Old Testament <i>Joshua</i> , as well as other titles. | 2) Human development |
| c Biblical writers trace Jesus' lineage to David, Abraham, and Adam. | 3) Human appearance |
| d The Roman governor who passed sentence on Jesus identified Him by saying, "Here is the man" (John 19:5). | 4) Human limitations |
| e Jesus demonstrated mental, physical, spiritual, and social progress. | 5) Human names |

THE DEITY OF CHRIST

Objective 2. *Select statements that support the deity of Jesus.*

We have examined scriptural evidence for the humanity of Christ, and we have seen that this evidence is conclusive. We now consider the biblical facts concerning the deity of Christ and the importance of this aspect of His Being.

Divine Rights

The first line of evidence we will consider for the deity of Christ is that *He exercised divine rights that only God has*. The divine rights include *receiving the worship of men, forgiving sin, raising the dead, and the right to judge*.

Since God had forbidden the worship of any other god in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:3-5), this would have been an act of blasphemy if Jesus were not truly divine. (*Blasphemy* is insulting God, or claiming wrongly to be divine.) When Jesus was tested by the devil, He reaffirmed the commandment to worship the Lord and serve Him only (Matthew 4:10). Yet He claimed His right to receive worship.

The Bible reveals that when people in ignorance tried to worship the apostles, these men of God strongly refused to accept their worship (Acts 10:25-26; 14:11-18). Even holy angels refuse worship which is misdirected to them (Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9). While the apostles, who were ordinary men, and mighty angels refused worship, Jesus accepted it as His right. He claimed that to honor Him was the obligation of all people (John 5:23).

Secondly, we see that Jesus exercised His right to forgive sin, a right reserved for God alone (Mark 2:7). Jesus did not hesitate to exercise this right, even though His enemies were very upset about it (Matthew 9:2-6).

Jesus also exercised the right of giving life (John 5:21; 10:10). On at least three occasions, Jesus raised dead people to life (Luke 7:11-17; 8:40-56; John 11:1-44). In the future, all those who have died will be raised to life by His powerful word (John 5:21-30). Obviously, the right to give life is something that mere man cannot do by his own power.

A fourth example of Jesus exercising divine rights is His right to judge: “Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22). The following Scriptures give more insight into the scope of His right of judgment: Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 10:42; 17:31; and 2 Corinthians 5:10.

Jesus exercised all of these rights, and others, with no hesitation. To have done so without being God would have been presumption (going beyond what is right) and blasphemy.

4 List from memory things Jesus did during His life on earth which show that He exercised divine rights. Use your notebook.

Divine Character

Objective 3. *List the moral and natural attributes that identified Jesus as God.*

Moral Attributes

Jesus’ character amazed people. They marveled at His behavior and attitude under all kinds of circumstances. His responses to

situations in life revealed clearly that He was different. He possessed the same moral and natural attributes as God the Father.

Jesus lived a life of such remarkable *holiness* that one of those closest to Him declared that “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth” (1 Peter 2:22). His enemies could not prove Him guilty of sin, because He was sinless (John 8:46). No mere human being is capable of this level of conduct, but Jesus was more than a human being.

His *love* also set Jesus apart from ordinary men. He proved His love in relationships with people from all walks of life and all levels of society (Luke 19:10; compare also Matthew 11:19 with Mark 10:17-22). He prayed for His followers and He prayed for His enemies also (John 17:9,20; Luke 23:34). This perfect quality of His love revealed that He was the Son of God.

Jesus’ love was demonstrated in many ways. He displayed genuine humility and meekness. When He entered His public ministry, He was motivated by the desire to serve (Matthew 20:28). As Master and Teacher, He illustrated the true meaning of service as He washed His students’ feet (John 13:14). He was gentle with the sinful (Luke 7:37-39, 44-50), the doubting (John 20:29), and those who had forsaken Him (Luke 22:61; John 21:15-23). In love He demonstrated the very principles He taught! No ordinary human being has lived a life so filled with love.

His love was most clearly revealed by His love for God the Father. He showed by His own example that the secret of an effective spiritual life depends on a close relationship with God. No ordinary human being could pray as He did. He prayed intensely (Luke 22:39-44), regularly, and for long periods of time. Sometimes He prayed all night. At other times He arose very early in the morning to pray (Mark 1:35). He left a perfect example of the pattern for maintaining and developing our spiritual lives (1 Peter 2:21).

No one who was close to Jesus could doubt His humanity. Neither could one compare His perfection with an ordinary man’s best efforts. The perfect example of holiness and love, Jesus was, in Peter’s words, “The Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).

5 In your notebook, state ways Jesus revealed His holiness and love.

Natural Attributes

Paul declares that Jesus Christ is the power and wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24) and that God is pleased to have all His fullness dwell in the Son (Colossians 1:19; 2:9). Matthew concludes his Gospel record with these words of Jesus: “All authority (power) in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Matthew 28:18). These Scriptures reveal that Jesus, the second Person of the Trinity, is *omnipotent*. All angels, authorities, and powers of the universe are subject to His power and authority (1 Peter 3:22).

The Bible also teaches that Jesus is *omnipresent* (everywhere-present). Paul says that God the Father has placed all things under the Son, and that the Son “fills everything in every way” (Ephesians 1:22-23). What an encouragement for us to remember that He will keep His promise to be with us when only a few of us meet to worship Him (Matthew 18:20). Even though sometimes we may not feel His presence, we can be sure He is with us at all times!

Jesus Christ is also *omniscient*—He knows everything (John 2:24-25; 16:30; 21:17). Paul refers to the mystery of God, which he says is *Christ*, “in whom are hidden *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*” (Colossians 2:2-3, italics mine). He knew of the sinful life of the Samaritan woman (John 4), the thoughts of the Pharisees (Luke 6:8), how and when He would leave the world (John 12:33; 13:1), and the nature and end of the present age (Matthew 24 and 25; Mark 13; Luke 21).

Some Scriptures cause us to examine His characteristic of omniscience more closely. For example, Matthew 24:36 indicates that He did not know the date of His return; and Mark records that Jesus went to the fig tree expecting to find fruit and was disappointed (Mark 11:13).

Here it is important to point out that in His days on earth, or the days of His *flesh*, Jesus gave up His right to the independent exercise of His divine characteristics. He purposely chose not to use His divine powers at that time. He had powers He could have drawn upon to deliver Himself, but He refused to use them

(Matthew 26:52-54). He did this of His own free will, for He knew that unless He submitted to suffering and death, He could not fulfill His mission to die in place of sinful man. Now that His mission is accomplished, He has resumed all of His divine characteristics, including His attribute of knowing all things.

Jesus is revealed in Scripture as the *eternal* Son of God (John 1:1; 1 John 1:1; Micah 5:2). He has always existed, and He shall exist forever (Hebrews 1:11-12; 13:8). These Scriptures also declare that Jesus Christ *does not change*. These characteristics that we have seen are the attributes of God. Thus, they give clear evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ.

6 In your notebook explain why Jesus did not exercise all of His divine characteristics while He was in the flesh.

7 In your notebook write the headings *Moral Attributes of Jesus* and *Natural Attributes of Jesus*. Make a list of the attributes which go with each heading. Then compare your list with the moral and natural attributes of God discussed in Lessons 1 and 2. What does this comparison reveal?

Claims to Deity

Jesus made certain definite claims that He was God. On the eve of His death, He appealed to the apostles to accept these claims on the basis of His miraculous works (John 14:11). What were His claims?

1. He stated to the Jews that He and the Father were one (John 10:30).
2. As He stood accused before the council of the elders, Jesus again declared that He was the Son of God (Luke 22:70-71, John 19:7).
3. He asserted that salvation could be obtained only through Him (John 10:9).
4. He said that He was the only access to the Father (John 14:6).
5. He stated that no one could do anything without His enablement (John 15:5).

6. During His teaching ministry, He testified to His pre-existence (John 8:58; 17:5).
7. He directed His disciples to pray in His name (John 16:23).
8. When He sent His disciples forth to minister, He gave them power to perform miracles (Luke 9:1-2).

All of these claims and statements, plus the miraculous works Jesus performed, provide solid evidence that verifies His claims to be God.

Names That Indicate Deity

Names that could only be used in reference to God are given to Jesus Christ throughout the New Testament. The inspired writers often refer to Him as the *Son of God*. A voice from heaven on two different occasions acclaimed Him as the Son of God (Matthew 3:17; 17:5). Jesus also used this title to refer to Himself (John 10:36).

Another name that indicates deity was foretold by the prophet Isaiah and repeated by the angel that talked to Joseph (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:22-23). The child would be called *Immanuel*, which means “*God with us*” (Matthew 1:23). Deity came to live for a while on earth with men and women (John 1:14).

John wrote that Jesus was the *Word* of God. To us it seems to be a rather strange title, but in those days philosophers had the idea that one could sum up the reason and power behind the universe in the concept of the word. So John says, “The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us” (John 1:14). A person’s word expresses what he is thinking. God’s Word is God’s thought expressed in such a way that man can understand it. God is not separated from His creation—He reveals Himself. John declares that the Word (Jesus) was God from eternity (John 1:1-2).

Jesus is also referred to as *God*. Paul wrote that “we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13).

The Hebrew name *Messiah* was often used in connection with Jesus. The same name in its Greek form is *Christ*. Another

translation of this name would be *Anointed*. What was an anointed one to the Hebrew people? In their culture, when God called a person to do a special work, that one was *anointed* by a religious leader who poured oil on the chosen person's head. This was a symbol of his separation for service. The Hebrew people were accustomed to the anointing of prophets, priests, and kings. Thus, when Peter declared that Jesus was both Lord and Christ, his hearers understood what he meant (Acts 2:36). The response of several thousand people indicates that they accepted Jesus as their *Messiah*, or *Anointed One*.

Jesus was also called *Lord*. Sometimes this name was used as a title of courtesy, but on many occasions it was used out of respect for His deity. (See Luke 1:43; 2:11; John 20:28; Acts 16:31; and 1 Corinthians 12:3.) This name, as it was often used of our Lord, comes from the translation of the Hebrew term *Jehovah*. Thus, Christ the Messiah is identified with the Old Testament Jehovah.

8 In your notebook, list the names given to Jesus that indicate His deity and an appropriate Scripture reference for each.

9 Circle the letter for each TRUE statement. The Deity of Jesus is revealed through

- a) His receiving the worship of men, forgiving sin, raising of the dead, and claiming the right to judge.
- b) His moral attributes of holiness and love.
- c) His natural attributes of omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, and eternity.
- d) the manner in which His own people received him.
- e) His personal claims to deity.
- f) His names that indicated His divinity.

THE UNION OF DEITY AND HUMANITY IN CHRIST

The doctrine of the incarnation was an issue that remained unresolved in the early days of the church. The doctrine of the Trinity was solidly grounded in the Old Testament Scriptures, the experience of the companions of Jesus, and the inspired writings of the New Testament. But the question which brought forth much speculation was this: How was it possible for the

eternal Son, who is equally God with the Father, and of the same substance or essence as the Father, to become human flesh, to become a man as we are men?

Some people who attempted to explain the incarnation so emphasized Jesus' humanity that they practically denied His deity. Others did just the opposite; they stressed His deity to the point of almost denying His humanity. Eventually, the early church leaders were able to arrive at a definition of the incarnation which is still considered basic to Christian belief about the person of Jesus.

Characteristics of the Incarnation

Objective 4. *Choose statements which represent biblical teaching concerning the incarnation.*

The definition of the incarnation given by the early church leaders (at a meeting called the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451) is this:

Our Lord Jesus Christ was truly God and truly man, of the same substance with the Father in all things as to His divinity, yet in His humanity like us in all things except sin. Thus, Jesus is known in two natures: divine and human. The two natures are distinct one from the other. This distinction is not destroyed by their union, but the unique features of each nature is maintained.

This definition certainly does not remove the mystery of the incarnation. To the contrary, all Christians share the apostle Paul's sense of wonder: "The mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body" (1 Timothy 3:16). We will understand this difficult concept better as we consider the union of the human and divine natures in Jesus and the significance of this unique event.

When we speak of the *human nature* and the *divine nature* of Christ, we refer to His essential being or reality. When we say that Jesus has a *divine nature*, we mean that all the qualities, properties, or attributes which a person might use to describe God apply to Him. Thus, He is God—not just *like* Him, but very God.

When we say that Jesus has a *human nature*, we mean that Jesus Christ is not God pretending to be a man—He is a man. He is not *only* a man or *only* God. He is God who "became flesh

and lived for a while among us” (John 1:14). He did not cease to be God when He became a man. He did not trade His deity for humanity. Instead, He *assumed* humanity. That is, He added a human nature to His divine nature. Therefore, because of the incarnation, He is both God and man, the God man.

Jesus as Christ had all the qualities which belong to human beings, including bodily, physical qualities. However, we cannot say that at the deepest level of His being He is a *human* person. He is a *divine* person with a human nature. That is, He did not add a man’s personality to His own nature; rather, He added a man’s nature to His own personality. His divine personality is that which is at the deepest level. If He were not a divine person, He could not be the object of our worship, for Christians are commanded to worship God only.

So we see that the incarnate Son unites true deity and true humanity in a personal self. Thus, there is such a communion of qualities in Him that we can speak of Him in any way that is appropriate to speak of God or of man.

10 Circle the letter preceding TRUE statements that represent biblical teaching concerning the incarnation.

- a) Jesus Christ is a divine Person who assumed our humanity.
- b) Christ is a human person who assumed deity.
- c) Since Jesus Christ is a divine Person, He is the appropriate object of our worship.
- d) As to His human nature, Jesus hungered, thirsted, was weary, and experienced pain and death. As to His divine nature, He wanted always to do His Father’s will, for He was truly God.

Reasons for the Incarnation

In our limited state we shall never be able to understand fully why our Lord became man. What could have motivated the Son of God to come to earth, to become part of a race which had fallen, and to become surrounded by jealousy and hate?

First of all, God could not die. It was necessary that there be a blameless sacrifice for sin. Since all mankind was sinful, God became flesh to provide the perfect sacrifice, paying the penalty

for sin (Hebrews 2:9). Second, through the incarnation, Jesus revealed the Father to mankind in all His matchless excellence and beauty (John 14:7-11). Third, by becoming man, our Lord provided us with an appropriate example (1 Peter 2:21-25). As we examine His responses to the human situation, we are able to identify with Him and recognize that the goal of Christian living is Christlikeness (Romans 8:29).

Jesus told His disciples that He was sending them into the world in the same way that the Father sent Him (John 17:18; 20:21). This commandment consists of announcing God's provision of salvation to all who will believe. It is part of the Great Commission to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). Jesus was God's provision for our salvation. We are to take this news to all people.

11 Write **1** in front of each statement if it is a valid or TRUE reason for the incarnation. Write **2** if it is not valid.

- a. Jesus had to take on a mortal body so that He could pay the death penalty for our sins.
- b. The incarnation was necessary because God needed to know what it was like to be a sinful man.
- c. Through the incarnation we have a revelation of the Father's love, concern, and provisions for man.
- d. The incarnation gave Christ firsthand experience of the limitations and weaknesses of humanity. This qualifies Him to intercede for us with the Father.
- e. As a result of the incarnation, man is no longer born in sin, for the sacrifice of God's Son in the flesh has made man blameless.

THE WORKS OF CHRIST

Objective 5. *Choose statements which explain why Christ's works are of importance for man.*

We turn now to the works of Christ. When we speak of His *works*, we refer to Christ's death, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation. We will consider these works in the order of their occurrence.

His Death

The death of Jesus Christ was different from that of any other man. First, His death was entirely voluntary. He said of His death, “No one takes it [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord” (John 10:18). At the point of death He dismissed His spirit (Matthew 27:50). Death was not forced upon Him by Satan or the overpowering might of Roman soldiers. Rather, He accepted it as the will of God for the salvation of mankind.

His death was a work, in that by His death Christ paid the penalty for our sin. The penalty for sin is separation from God. It was the price He had to pay for our salvation. As He was dying on the cross, He experienced this awful separation. He cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). In this work He appeased or calmed the anger of God which was aroused by our sin. He let the blow of God’s divine justice fall upon Himself. By His sacrifice, Christ made atonement for our sins, covering them by His death, which was a substitute for ours. He did this so that we could be forgiven and restored to a place of harmony with God.

Down through the ages men have tried to turn away the anger of their supposed gods. How pathetic their efforts have been! They have presented offerings and given blood sacrifices, but they have gone away without knowing if their sacrifice was accepted. The Aztec Indians, for example, had great fear of what they thought were their gods. They offered as many human sacrifices as they thought were required, but their generous, costly, and sincere efforts were always in vain. Their priests’ response was always the same: “Our god demands more blood!”

The Bible shows us that our heavenly Father is indeed angry because of our sin, but His anger is not like that of the Aztec idea of a god. We do not have to fear or be in doubt concerning what we must do to turn away His anger. He Himself did it. He offered His own sacrifice—His Son. Through His death, Jesus paid the penalty and made everything right. In so doing, God’s justice was maintained. Sin was covered, the penalty was paid, man was

forgiven, and he had access to a holy God. Paul explains it this way in Romans 3:25-26:

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies the man who has faith in Jesus.

The death of Christ also has a practical application in our daily lives. In his letter to the Galatian church, Paul says, “I have been put to death with Christ on his cross” (Galatians 2:19, TEV). “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have put to death their human nature with all its passions and desires” (5:24, TEV). This involves the crucifixion of *self*, which means giving up our own desires in order to do what pleases Him. Christ’s crucifixion must become our crucifixion. The salvation He provides gives us the possibility to live a holy life—one that truly pleases God. This must become *actual* as we surrender our lives to His lordship and the control of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:5-11).

12 Are you making progress in putting to death your sinful nature? List in your notebook things that others can see in you which show that you are crucifying self and giving this Christian responsibility the attention it should have.

13 Circle the letters preceding TRUE statements concerning the importance of Christ’s work for us.

- a** His death paid the penalty for sin and satisfied the anger of God.
- b** Christ’s death was the result of forces beyond His control; thus, it was an accident.
- c** The death of Christ restored full fellowship between God and man.
- d** His death satisfied the justice of God which is directed at the sin of man.
- e** Because of Christ’s death, we will not have to answer for our sins, even if we continue in sin.
- f** Christ’s death is an example of God’s desire to punish man for his weaknesses and human failures.

His Resurrection

The work of our Lord Jesus Christ would have been incomplete and our faith would be in vain if He had not risen to life again (1 Corinthians 15:14). This event marked the completion of His work on earth. Christ's resurrection, therefore, sets Christianity totally apart from all other religions and beliefs. No other religion can say that its founder's grave is empty. We Christians do not gather at the spot where our Lord's remains lie, because He did not remain in the grave! We exalt Him as the living Savior! He conquered death! Because He lives, we have inherited eternal life.

The resurrection of Christ is the keystone of the Christian faith. Without His resurrection, the death of Christ would have no meaning, for the resurrection proved the effectiveness of His death and gave it value. Of this Paul says, "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification" (Romans 4:25).

There are many reasons why the resurrection is of great importance to us. We shall note some of the more significant results of this great event:

1. The resurrection shows that Christ's work as the sinner's substitute has been accepted. We can have confidence that God has accepted Christ's substitutionary death, because *God has raised Him from the dead* (Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30).
2. The resurrection confirms the deity of our Lord. Paul declares in Romans 1:4, "Through the Spirit of holiness [He—Jesus] was declared with power to be the Son of God *by his resurrection from the dead*" (italics mine).
3. By virtue of His resurrection, Christ has become *our high priest* in the presence of God (Hebrews 9:24). He is our intercessor (Romans 8:34), our executive in the heavenly realm (Ephesians 1:20-22), our mediator (1 Timothy 2:5), and our advocate or lawyer (1 John 2:1). Thus, in addition to the deliverance from bondage which He

brought about by His death, Christ intercedes for us before the throne of grace.

4. The resurrection demonstrates God's great power in providing salvation for us. We can rest assured that He will supply the necessary power for us to live and serve Him effectively (Compare Philippians 3:10 with Philippians 1:6). He is all-powerful.
5. The resurrection is our guarantee that those who die in Christ will be raised from the dead (John 5:28; 6:40; Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:20-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:14).

The resurrection, therefore, brought to a fitting conclusion Christ's saving mission. It was planned in eternity past but carried out as God broke into the chain of human existence through the incarnation. Having lived a perfect life, Christ died as the sinner's perfect substitute, paying the penalty for his sin. In doing this, He calmed the anger of God, reconciled the sinner to God, and restored to him the ability to respond to the Holy Spirit. Then Christ's work on earth was completed, and the time arrived for Him to return to the Father. His mission was accomplished!

14 Circle the letter preceding statements which give TRUE results of the resurrection.

- a The resurrection made Christianity one of several religions whose founder returned to life.
- b The resurrection indicated God's acceptance of Christ's sacrifice as an atonement for the sins of man.
- c The deity of our Lord is confirmed by His resurrection.
- d Through His resurrection, Christ has become our high priest who intercedes in our behalf in the presence of God.
- e The resurrection guarantees that Christians can never again fall out of favor with God.
- f The resurrection is the believer's guarantee that those who die in Christ will be raised from the dead at the coming of Christ.

His Ascension and Exaltation

The New Testament record shows that after 40 days of ministry following His resurrection, Christ *ascended* or returned

to heaven: “He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight” (Acts 1:9). Christ’s resurrection and ascension are closely connected in the preaching of the apostles (Acts 2:32-35; Ephesians 1:20; 1 Peter 3:21-22). These two events are the beginning of the exaltation of our crucified Lord.

The word *ascension* speaks of the event in which Christ returned to heaven. The word *exaltation* speaks of His being “lifted up,” “raised to a higher level.” Jesus was raised to a position of honor and glory at the Father’s right hand. His ascension and exaltation are highly significant for us. In His exaltation, Christ received His proper place as Sovereign Lord (Acts 2:33-36; 5:31; Ephesians 1:19-23; Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:14-16). This exalted status has resulted in some wonderful benefits for His people, a few of which we shall note:

1. While He is now in heaven, Jesus is spiritually present everywhere, filling the entire universe (Ephesians 4:10). He is therefore the ideal object of worship for all people (1 Corinthians 1:2).
2. Jesus has entered into His priestly ministry in heaven, as we have already explained (Hebrews 4:14; 5:5-10).
3. He has bestowed gifts upon His people (Ephesians 4:8-11). This includes gifts for individuals (1 Corinthians 12:4-11) and for the church (Ephesians 4:8-13).
4. He has poured out the Holy Spirit upon His people (Acts 2:33).
5. As the exalted Prince and Savior, He is giving repentance and faith to people (Acts 5:31; 11:18; 2 Peter 1:1).
6. Our ascended and exalted Lord returned to heaven with His humanity (His glorified body). This idea is stressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the writer declares that since Jesus shared our human experiences, He is able to be a merciful and faithful High Priest (Hebrews 2:14-18; 4:14-16). This is a great source of strength and comfort.

15 In your notebook define the terms *ascension* and *exaltation*.

16 In this exercise, place a **1** in front of statements which correctly identify the results of Christ's works and **2** in front of those that do not correctly identify them.

- **a** Christ fills the universe and is therefore an ideal object of worship for all mankind.
- **b** Christ finished His work in behalf of people and is no longer involved in their spiritual lives.
- **c** Christ entered into His role as High Priest for the people of God.
- **d** Christ gives gifts to individual believers and to His church as a whole.
- **e** The Holy Spirit has been poured out upon believers.
- **f** Christ's death paid the penalty for sin and satisfied the anger of God.
- **g** The death of Christ restored full fellowship between God and man.
- **h** The believer has no further need to develop his spiritual life, since this is all done by Jesus.
- **i** The resurrection is the believer's guarantee that those who die in Christ will be raised from the dead.

We have seen that all of the works of Christ have great meaning for us. Through His death He has paid the penalty for our sin. His resurrection gives us assurance of eternal life with Him. Through His ascension and exaltation He was raised to His proper place as our Sovereign Lord. Now He builds up and cares for the church, providing everything necessary to bring us to spiritual maturity.

self-test

1 Which of these are evidences of Christ's humanity as presented in the Bible?

- a) Human limitations and human names
- b) Human ancestry
- c) Human sinfulness
- d) Human appearance and development

2 Biblical evidence for the deity of Jesus Christ reveals that

- a) He regularly exercised all of the rights of deity.
- b) His behavior, His claims, and His qualities proved that He was more than a mere man.
- c) the evidence is limited to His personal claims and the testimony of His friends.

3 Which statement most accurately reflects Christian doctrine concerning the nature of the incarnation? The Lord Jesus Christ

- a) was God pretending to be a man.
- b) had a human nature.
- c) had a divine nature.
- d) was truly God and truly man.

4 The Scriptures reveal to us that Jesus Christ

- a) is a human person who assumed divinity.
- b) is a divine person who assumed our humanity.
- c) had some of the qualities which belong to human beings.
- d) had some of the qualities which belong to divinity.

5 The main purpose of the incarnation was to

- a) set in motion God's plan of redemption for man.
- b) bring to an end the rule of the Old Testament Law.
- c) establish a moral example for mankind to follow.
- d) let people know what God was really like.

6 Christ's death is considered a work because it

- a) was a task He willingly undertook to pay the penalty for our sin.
- b) involved great physical effort, as well as abuse and death.
- c) was forced upon Him.

7 The incarnation was necessary because

- a) Christ had to take on a mortal body so that He could pay the penalty for our sins.
- b) it revealed the heavenly Father to people.
- c) in it God learned the depths of sin and what it is like to be a sinful man.
- d) in it Christ gave us a perfect example.

8 A practical significance of Christ's death involves our *crucifixion of self*. This means that those who belong to Christ must

- a) personally experience death for their own sins.
- b) put to death their sinful nature because salvation makes it possible to live a holy life.
- c) recognize that by His death Christ has done away with their sinful nature so that they are completely holy.

9 Christ's work of resurrection is significant because

- a) it demonstrated the Father's acceptance of Christ's sacrifice as an atonement for sin.
- b) it confirmed the deity of our Lord.
- c) it guarantees that the Christian cannot fall out of favor with God.
- d) Christ is now our High Priest who intercedes for us in the Father's presence.
- e) it is the believer's guarantee that he will be raised from the dead at Christ's coming.

10 The ascension and exaltation of our Lord are important because these events brought about

- a) a new part of Christ's ministry: as sovereign Lord He cares for and builds up the church, and His presence is everywhere.
- b) the end of Christ's work in behalf of man.
- c) the beginning of truly spiritual worship.

answers to study questions

- 9** All are true except d).
- 1** You should have said intellectually, physically, spiritually, and socially. Jesus developed in all of these ways.
- 10** a), c), and d) are TRUE.
- 2** a and b are TRUE.
- 11** a, c, and d are valid reasons.
- 3** a 4) Human limitations
 d 3) Human appearance.
 b 5) Human names.
 e 2) Human development.
 c 1) Human ancestry.
- 12** Your answer. We all need to do this on a daily basis.
- 4** He accepted the worship of men, He forgave sin, He raised the dead, and He was given the right to judge all things.
- 13** a, c, and d are TRUE statements.
- 5** He revealed His holiness by not sinning. He revealed His love by humility, meekness, service, and gentleness, by His close relationship with God the Father, and in many other ways.
- 14** All are TRUE except a and e.
- 6** He chose to subject Himself to human limitations so that He could fulfill His mission to die for sinful man.
- 15** *Ascension* refers to the event in which Christ returned to heaven in His glorified body. *Exaltation* refers to Jesus being raised to a position of honor and glory at the Father's right hand.
- 7** *Moral attributes of Jesus:* holiness and love. *Natural attributes of Jesus:* wisdom, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and eternity. A comparison reveals that these are the attributes of God.

16 All are correct statements except b and h.

- 8 a** the Word (John 1:14).
- b** Son of God (John 10:36).
- c** Messiah, Christ, Anointed One (Acts 2:36).
- d** Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14).
- e** Lord (Luke 2:11).

Your Notes

Lesson 4

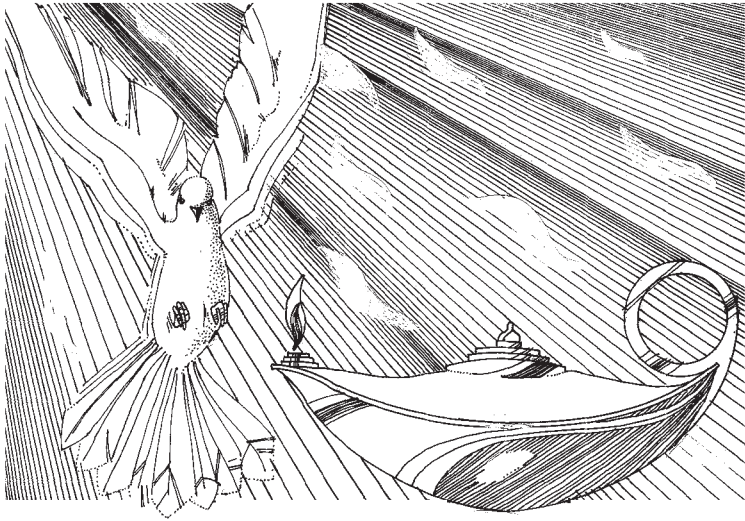
The Holy Spirit: A Wise Administrator

Have you ever wondered why Jesus said to His followers, “It is for your good that I am going away” (John 16:7)? It was because He was limited in His humanity and could be in only one place at a time. However, He knew that when the Holy Spirit came to replace Him, there would be no limitations on the time He could stay or in the work that He could do.

Thus, through the Holy Spirit, God not only commissions us with a job but also stays with us and enables us to get the job done. More than this, He takes up residence in us and gives us personal guidance, fellowship, comfort, and enablement for all of our spiritual needs.

In previous lessons we have seen God’s concern for the redemption of man. In our last lesson, we saw that Christ loved each man and woman so much that He stooped low to become a man. Now as we turn our attention to the Holy Spirit, we observe the same love for man and the same amazing qualities of personality.

As you study this lesson, I pray that the full impact of the Spirit’s person and work will come to you with greater meaning than ever before. As this happens, your personal relationship with Him will develop and be reflected in your ministry to others (2 Corinthians 3:18).



lesson outline

The Deity of the Holy Spirit
The Personality of the Holy Spirit
The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- State evidences of the deity of the Holy Spirit.
- List the basic elements of personality possessed by the Holy Spirit and explain their significance.
- Describe the ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation to nonbelievers, individual believers, and the church.
- Cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in your daily walk.

learning activities

1. Follow the lesson procedures indicated in Lesson 1. It is very important that you find in your Bible and read all Scripture texts given in the lesson content, as they are vital to a good understanding of the lesson

2. Take the self-test at the end of the lesson and check your answers.
3. Review Lessons 1 through 4. Then answer the questions in Unit Student Report 1.

key words

advocate	equality	potential
ascribed	illumination	prescribe
carnality	immersion	regeneration
components	interpreter	saturate
corporate	motivation	sensibility
enablement	origin	superficial
enlightening	plurality	

lesson development

THE DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

In our consideration of God's nature in Lesson 1, we discussed His essence and noted these things:

1. God is spirit.
2. He is one God.
3. He has personality.
4. He is the triune God.
5. He is eternal.
6. He is unchanging.

We also saw that these qualities of God refer equally to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The three Persons are equal in glory, and the majesty they share is co-eternal. Since the Persons in the Godhead share these features, we did not repeat them in our consideration of Christ, nor is there need to repeat them in full in our treatment of the Holy Spirit. However, we do want to reemphasize briefly the fact

that the Holy Spirit is truly God and that He has the distinguishing characteristics of personality. First we will discuss His deity.

The deity of the Holy Spirit is established by His characteristics, His relationships with the other Persons in the Trinity, the divine names that are given to Him, and the works which He performs.

His Characteristics of Divine Nature

Objective 1. *Identify correctly characteristics of deity that are ascribed to the Holy Spirit.*

The Holy Spirit possesses the characteristics of divine nature. For example, He is eternal. The word *eternal* means “infinite in duration: that which is without a beginning, or ending, or limitation.” It is thus a characteristic of God. The inspired writer to the Hebrews states that He is the *eternal Spirit* (Hebrews 9:14). *Eternal* as it is used here is the same word that is used elsewhere to describe the eternity of God the Father and of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The Holy Spirit also has the following characteristics:

1. He is everywhere-present (omnipresent). The Psalmist David declared, “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?” (Psalm 139:7-10).
2. He is all-knowing (omniscient). Paul, in describing this divine characteristic to Corinthian believers, observes that “no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:11). Moreover, He who knows the thoughts of God also knows the will of God, and He enables us to pray according to the will of God (Romans 8:26-27).
3. The Holy Spirit is all-powerful (omnipotent). That is, He has the power and ability to bring about everything God wills, without any limitations (Luke 1:35; Acts 1:8).

1 Identify each characteristic of deity ascribed to the Holy Spirit by matching the characteristic (right) with its appropriate definition (left).

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| a Absence of any limitation or bounds in relation to time | 1) Omnipotence |
| | 2) Omniscience |
| b Ability to so fill the universe that He is present everywhere | 3) Omnipresence |
| | 4) Eternity |
| c The quality of being that enables the Holy Spirit to do everything that God wills without limitation | |
| d Unlimited knowledge | |

His Titles of Divine Nature

It is interesting to note that when the apostle Peter addressed the deceitful Ananias, he said that when Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit he was lying to God (Acts 5:4). Thus the apostle Peter ascribes deity to the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul also affirms this fact by stating that we are being transformed into Christ's likeness by the Holy Spirit who is the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:17-18). In Paul's time only Deity was addressed as Lord. In fact, Roman emperors and Egyptian rulers of that period would not permit their subjects to use the term *Lord* when addressing them until they officially took for themselves the status of deity. This usage confirms the fact that when Paul speaks of the Holy Spirit as Lord, he recognizes His deity.

- 2** Which of the following scriptural references can be used as proof of the Holy Spirit's deity?
- Paul referred to the Holy Spirit as *Lord*.
 - Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit as the Counselor.
 - Isaiah referred to the *Spirit of the Lord* (Isaiah 11:2).
 - Peter claimed that lying to the Holy Spirit was lying to God.

His Associations of Divine Nature

Several Scripture verses reveal the deity of the Holy Spirit by His associations. In the first two examples listed below, the deity of the Holy Spirit is assumed through His association with

the other Persons of the Trinity. We see here an essential equality of persons as well as essential deity.

1. Matthew 28:19—the *baptismal formula*: “. . . baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

2. 2 Corinthians 13:14—the *apostolic benediction*: “. . . the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit”

3. 1 Corinthians 12. In this chapter, we see the church as the body of Christ (v. 27). Over this church God has appointed ministries to help in its development (v. 28). And it is the Holy Spirit who sovereignty (with highest power) dispenses gifts for this body (v. 11). The interrelationship we see here can only be explained on the basis of the full equality of each Person in the blessed Trinity. Only on this basis could the Holy Spirit exercise the rights of deity, distributing gifts sovereignly as He wills (1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 11).

4. Acts 28:25-28. Paul offers helpful insight into this matter when he says that the Holy Spirit spoke the words recorded in Isaiah 6:9-10, words that according to Isaiah were spoken by God. Compare these two Scriptures. This comparison reveals that since the Holy Spirit is the representative or agent of God the Father, He acts in behalf of the Father on earth. This is further shown in these examples: He draws men to Christ (John 6:44), He reveals truth (John 14:26; 16:13), and He guides (Romans 8:14).

5. Genesis 1. The combined effort of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is seen in Genesis 1:26, where God says, “Let us make man in our image.” The use of plural pronouns indicates the plurality of persons in the Godhead, as we have seen in Lesson 1. The implication is that all three were active in Creation.

These references which deal with the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the other Persons in the Trinity demonstrate scripturally that the Holy Spirit is God equally with the Father and the Son.

3 Match each Scripture (left) with the evidence it provides of the deity of the Holy Spirit (right).

- | | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|---|
| a | Acts 28:25-28 and
Isaiah 6:9-10 | 1) Plurality of Persons in the
Godhead at Creation |
| b | 1 Corinthians 12 | 2) Holy Spirit's work on
earth |
| c | 2 Corinthians 13:14 | 3) Divine sovereignty |
| d | Genesis 1 | 4) Divine equality of
Persons in the Godhead |
| e | Matthew 28:19 | |

THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Objective 2. *Identify essential components of the Holy Spirit's personality.*

Essential Components of Personality

We observed in Lesson 1 that there were three essential components of personality: 1) *intellect* (the ability to think); 2) *sensibility* (the ability to feel), and *will* (the ability to make decisions). Let's examine the Scriptures which refer to the Holy Spirit and see how these characteristics apply to Him.

The Bible clearly speaks to us concerning the personality of the Holy Spirit. In his masterful discourse on life through the Spirit, the apostle Paul concludes by referring to the "mind of the Spirit" (Romans 8:27), which identifies the *intellectual* faculty of the Spirit. The apostle also ascribes *sensibility* to the Spirit (Romans 15:30). That is, he refers to the Spirit's ability to *feel*—in this case, to feel *love*, and His ability to *express feeling*. Finally, the apostle speaks to Corinthian believers about the sovereign actions of the Holy Spirit as He demonstrates the faculty of *will*, giving gifts to believers as He determines or wills (1 Corinthians 12:11). These Scriptures show that the Holy Spirit possesses the essential qualities of personality.

4 In the following exercise match the essential components of personality (right) with the correct definition or description (left).

- | | | |
|--------------|--|----------------|
| ... a | Faculty that enables one to make decisions | 1) Intellect |
| ... b | Ability to think, to reason, to know | 2) Sensibility |
| ... c | Ability to feel, to express emotion | 3) Will |

Other Elements of Personality

In addition to these essential components of personality, some other elements exist which contribute to our understanding of personality. They are 1) personal associations, 2) personal acts, 3) personal names, 4) personal pronouns, and 5) personal treatment. All of these characteristics can be applied to the Holy Spirit, as we will see.

1. *Personal association.* We have already noted that in the baptismal formula and the apostolic benediction the Holy Spirit is identified with the Father and the Son. This association with other *persons* implies personality. Wouldn't it seem foolish to command someone to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the "force," "breath," "power," or "wind" (Matthew 28:19)? It certainly would, for only a personality can associate and act with other personalities.

This is most certainly the basis on which the apostles and elders at the Jerusalem Council wrote these words: "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements . . ." (Acts 15:28). The personality of the Holy Spirit is clearly implied by His association with the other Persons of the Trinity.

2. *Personal acts.* As we consider the activities of the Holy Spirit revealed in Scripture, we will see how they give a more complete meaning to His personality. Be sure to read each of these Scriptures.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Action of a Personal Nature</i>
2 Peter 1:21	The Holy Spirit reveals, motivates, and enables.
1 Corinthians 2:10	He searches.
Acts 13:2; Revelation 2:7	He speaks, calling people into service.
John 15:26	He testifies.
Acts 16:6-7	He directs His people in service, often forbidding or restraining them from some action.
Romans 8:26	He intercedes for us.
John 14:26	He teaches.
John 16:8-11	He reproves.
John 16:13	He guides us.
John 16:14	He glorifies Christ.
John 3:5	He regenerates us.

5 What do the above activities reveal about the nature of the Holy Spirit? Use your notebook for this response.

3. *Personal names.* On the eve of His crucifixion, Jesus disclosed to His disciples that He would be leaving them. Knowing that His departure would take from them His leadership, assurance, and counsel, Jesus said, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor” (John 14:16).

Jesus immediately identified the One who would take His place as the *Holy Spirit* (John 14:26). Also, Jesus affirmed that just as He had come to declare the Father, so the Holy Spirit would explain, reveal, and interpret Jesus’ nature and will to man. (Compare these Scriptures: John 14:15-18, 26; 15:26; and 16:13-15). We see, then, that the Holy Spirit was called the *Counselor*, and He was sent to take the place of Jesus and

perform Christ's ministry as *another* Counselor. This responsibility required a discerning, feeling, and sensitive personality, who could act on behalf of the Son of God.

The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father at the request of the Son (John 15:26) to glorify the Son and minister to the spiritual needs of believers. He is called the *Spirit of truth* (John 14:17), the *Spirit of life* (Romans 8:2), the *Spirit of grace* (Hebrews 10:29), the *Spirit of adoption* (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5-7), the *Spirit of promise* (Acts 1:5), the *Spirit of holiness* (Romans 1:4), and the *Advocate* (1 John 2:1, KJV) or *Counselor* (John 14:16, 26). The One who bears all these names is the same Holy Spirit who glorifies Jesus, makes Him real to us, and continues His work on earth.

The Counselor is also called the *Holy Spirit* (Ephesians 4:30), the *Spirit of Jesus* (Acts 16:7), the *Spirit of Christ* (Romans 8:9), the *Spirit of Jesus Christ* (Philippians 1:19), and the *Spirit of God* (1 John 4:2). Although the name may differ, the reference is to the same Person. The various names simply identify different aspects of His nature and work.

4. *Personal pronouns.* Possibly you have already noted the focus on the Holy Spirit in John 14, 15, and 16. It is significant that John uses *personal pronouns* to draw attention to the personality of the Holy Spirit. For example, the masculine pronoun *ekeinos* is used in John 16:13 to refer to the Holy Spirit, thus recognizing His personality. This is the same pronoun which is used in referring to Jesus in 1 John 2:6; 3:3,5,7, and 16.

5. *Personal treatment.* Finally, the fact that the Holy Spirit is subject to personal treatment also points to His personality. Scriptures demonstrate that He can be tested or tempted (Acts 5:9), grieved (Ephesians 4:30), lied to (Acts 5:3), blasphemed and spoken against (Matthew 12:31,32), resisted (Acts 7:51), and insulted (Hebrews 10:29). An impersonal force is not subject to such treatment and would not be capable of these responses in attitude.

6 Which of these terms can correctly be used to describe the Holy Spirit? Circle the letters preceding your choices.

- a** Counselor
- b** Guide
- c** Impersonal force
- d** He
- e** Deity
- f** Advocate
- g** It
- h** One who is tempted
- i** Person
- j** Teacher
- k** Intellectual
- l** Sovereign
- m** One who feels emotion
- n** One who can be insulted

Recognizing the personality of the Holy Spirit is significant. When we realize that He is a distinct personality of the Godhead, we see that He is worthy of our worship, our faith, our love, and our honor. Our concern should be to allow Him to possess us and use us for His honor and glory.

THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We have already seen one aspect of the Holy Spirit's ministry as He acted with the Father and the Son in Creation. In reference to this involvement the Psalmist says, "When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth" (Psalm 104:30). This reference, you will notice, also speaks of the Spirit's role in maintaining or caring for His creation.

When the prophet Isaiah discusses the infinite greatness of God's power in Creation and providence (divine guidance or care), he asks, "Who has understood the Spirit of the Lord, or instructed him as his counselor?" (Isaiah 40:13). In considering this question we begin to recognize the limitations of man's ability to know the mysteries of God. Therefore, we can only

respond to this question by saying that we can't understand much about the Holy Spirit, but we can be touched, blessed, and directed by His presence and enabled by His power. We can see the *effects* of His ministry, just as we can see the effects of the wind, even though we don't understand its mysteries (John 3:8).

While finite man cannot understand the full extent of the infinite Spirit's activities, he can examine some general areas of His activities that are revealed in Scripture. These scriptural disclosures give a fairly complete picture of the Holy Spirit's person and the broad range of His ministry. We shall consider His ministry in relation: 1) to the non-believing world, 2) to the individual believer, and 3) to the church as a whole.

In Relation to the Non-Believing World

Objective 3. *Select examples of ways the Holy Spirit ministers to the non-believing world, individual believers, and the church.*

Beyond His involvement in Creation and providence, the Holy Spirit is also involved in the non-believing world. According to John 16:8-11, He convicts men of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

1. *Convicts of sin.* Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes, "He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me . . ." (John 16:8-9). The Holy Spirit convicts men of the sinfulness of not believing in Jesus Christ.

2. *Convicts of righteousness.* "In regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer" (John 16:10). That is, the Holy Spirit reveals to men the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ and the unrighteousness of all others. He reminds them that it is because of Jesus' triumph over sin that God now declares sinners righteous and enables them to become righteous through faith in Him.

3. *Convicts of judgment.* "And in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned" (John 16:11). The Holy Spirit convicts unbelievers of judgment by

showing the relation between Christ's death and resurrection and the judgment of the world. Through His death and resurrection He became victor over the enemy, Satan, who is condemned to eternal death. Thus, the cross signifies the payment of a debt: the penalty for sin. It also signifies providing atonement for all who will receive it and the cancellation of the power of sin and Satan.

Jesus' teaching about the ministry of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:5-15) leads us to conclude that in the absence of our Lord Jesus from this earth and in behalf of the Father, the Holy Spirit is the one who witnesses to the unbeliever. The Spirit convicts him of sin and draws him to Christ (John 6:44). Then He enlightens the believer concerning his spiritual responsibilities (1 John 1:9).

7 Which of the following statements are TRUE examples of ways the Holy Spirit ministers to the non-believing world? Circle the letters preceding your choices.

- a** The Holy Spirit shows an unrighteous man that the only way he can be made righteous is by faith in Christ's atonement.
- b** The Holy Spirit by His presence in the world has won the final victory over Satan.
- c** It is by revealing that Christ has paid the penalty for sin once and for all that the Holy Spirit is able to convince unbelievers of divine judgment.
- d** The Holy Spirit convicts the unbeliever of sin.

In Relation to Individual Believers

His Help

Objective 4. *Explain six ways that the Holy Spirit helps believers.*

Let's consider the Holy Spirit's ministry to believers under two categories: 1) His help, and 2) His baptism. Jesus told the disciples that it was best for Him to leave them because the Holy Spirit would then help them (John 16:7). I am amazed to see how many different kinds of help believers can receive from Him.

1. *We become believers through the work of the Holy Spirit.*
As unbelievers, we were spiritually dead, but when we came to

God in repentance and faith we were born spiritually. We became a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). We were born again by the Spirit of God and we received a new nature. This experience is called *regeneration* by theologians. (John 3:5-7, Ephesians 2:5, and Titus 3 5.)

2. *We receive power from the Spirit for witnessing* (Acts 1:8). Problems arise when we make the decision to share the good news with others. Circumstances, people, and evil spirits try to hinder us. We must have special power to overcome all the obstacles. The Spirit of God is the power source we need to draw upon for effective witnessing.

3. *The Holy Spirit ministers to us as a teacher* (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:13). I may not belong to a privileged class, but when I come to the Spirit for help, He will teach me. He is just as willing to reveal God's truths to me as to anyone else (1 Corinthians 2:12-14).

4. *We also receive the Spirit's help through His intercession on our behalf.* This means He represents our needs before our heavenly Father. Have you not felt, as I have, that you just did not know how to pray in certain situations? Sometimes we feel as if we cannot pray at all. In such moments we can count on the Holy Spirit's prayer (Romans 8:26).

5. *The Spirit guides us day by day toward a victorious, Christlike life.* When we are regenerated and the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in our life, we discover that we have two natures: one concerned with the natural or physical, and one concerned with the spiritual. We discover that our body is still subject to the temptations of the flesh. The struggle we experience between the good and evil within us is described in detail in Romans chapter 7. In this Scripture Paul says, "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out" (Romans 7:18). Here the apostle has not taken into account the help of the Spirit, but in chapter 8, he mentions the Holy Spirit 19 times in connection with the victorious life. The Holy Spirit's rule in the life of the Christian is the secret of victory over sin.

The Spirit is committed to our spiritual development; He wants to show us how to overcome our selfish nature (Romans 8:1-14).

The place and importance we give to the Holy Spirit in our life will determine our character. Man is not born with fixed habits. Character results from the habits we develop by repeated actions. The character of the natural man who lives only to satisfy his body is a disgusting and pathetic spectacle. The character of the spiritual man who allows the Holy Spirit to guide his life is entirely different, as we shall see. The solution given by the apostle Paul is this: “Walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16, RSV).

6. *The Holy Spirit produces the blessed fruit of the Christian life.* A friend once asked me why a group of people who claimed to have a very close relationship with the Holy Spirit boasted to others about their own spirituality. He said that he could not imagine the Holy Spirit bragging about Himself. I thoroughly agreed with him. To avoid either carnality (yielding to the desires of the flesh) or superficial spirituality, we need to walk by the Spirit.

Walking by the Spirit implies that one depends constantly on Him and believes in His ability to provide deliverance in any area of a person’s life. While we are not promised a life of sinless perfection, we will be marvelously transformed as we are filled with and controlled by the Spirit. Instead of manifesting the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21), we will produce the fruit of the Spirit: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23). These qualities, or fruit, are characteristics of the Holy Spirit. We should take a close look at our attitudes, our relationships, and our actions to see if they portray these characteristics or if they show a lack of such fruit. (For an extended study of the fruit of the Spirit, see the ICI Christian Service course entitled *Abundant Living—A Study of Christian Character.*)

8 Explain six ways the Holy Spirit helps believers, based on the six words given below.

- a** Regeneration:
- b** Witness:
- c** Teaching:
- d** Intercession:
- e** Guidance:
- f** Fruit:

His Baptism

Objective 5. Identify terms related to Spirit baptism.

The intimate relationship of the Holy Spirit with the believer has been illustrated in the Bible with several descriptive terms. One is called a *baptism*, as we saw earlier, which means “an immersion” (Matthew 3:11; Acts 1:5). What happens when a person is immersed in water? He gets thoroughly wet! Water is all over him. How glorious to know that it is possible for us mere humans to have God completely *saturate us* (fill us completely) with Himself!

Another term used to describe the relationship of the believer with the Spirit is that of a *filling* (Acts 2:4; 4:31). When a bowl is full, it has no capacity to receive more. In the same way, the Spirit desires to give us so much of His power and glory that we will be unable to receive any more. Then we will have the power, wisdom, and anointing necessary to please God and to serve effectively within the body of Christ. We can be filled with the Spirit on repeated occasions, just as the early Christians were. As our capacity grows, He will continue to fill us to new levels with His divine fullness. Believers are admonished: “Be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). May we desire to stay full of the Spirit!

A third way of looking at this relationship is to say that the Spirit *is poured out* upon us (Joel 2:28-29). Joel talks about the

autumn rains the farmers in Israel anxiously looked for, so that their crops would develop fully in time for harvest. May we be just as desirous to have an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon our churches and our lives, so that we may develop all the potential we have for promoting the glory of God.

The New Testament indicates that for the special work of the Holy Spirit to be started in our lives, as indicated by the terms I have just presented, we must have an initial (first) experience. However, initial baptism should not be viewed as the climax of our walk with the Spirit.

From the experience of believers in the Acts record, we know that after the initial baptism (Acts 2), they experienced additional fillings (Acts 4:31). Having been introduced into life in the Spirit, they walked with Him and grew in spiritual stature. For example, compare 2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 8:29, and 2 Peter 3:18. This relationship should get more beautiful every day. We should see genuine spiritual growth as time passes. Having begun a good work in us, the Holy Spirit will carry it on to completion as we walk with Him (Philippians 1:6).

9 Complete the following statements by writing in the blank spaces one of these words which best fits the description being given: **baptism, filling, outpouring.**

- a** From the divine point of view, the baptism in the Spirit is seen as
- b** Unbaptized believers who seek the first step to life in the Spirit need a Spirit
- c** The element which refers to the believer’s capacity for the Spirit is

His Symbols

Objective 6. *State how you can apply the concept each symbol of the Spirit represents to your life so that you can serve the Lord better.*

We could not conclude this study on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit to believers without mentioning biblical symbols which

describe some aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit. Turn to each of the Scriptures on the next page to discover how the symbol is used.

<i>Verse</i>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Description</i>
1. Matthew 3:11	Fire	Fire burns away what is not pure.
2. Matthew 3:16	Dove	A dove represents gentleness.
3. 1 Kings 19:16; 1 John 2:20	Anointing oil Anointing by Holy Spirit	Old Testament kings and prophets were often anointed with oil as a sign of the Lord's approval of their service.
4. Luke 11:13	Gift	The Holy Spirit is the Father's gift to us.
5. John 7:37-39	Streams of living water	The Holy Spirit fills us to overflowing with new life.
6. 2 Corinthians 1:22; Ephesians 1:13-14	Seal or deposit	The Holy Spirit is given as a guarantee of our eternal life with the Father.
7. John 20:22; Ezekiel 37:9, 14	Breath Wind	The Holy Spirit is the breath of God which gives us life.

10 In your notebook make a list of the symbols. State how you can apply the concept each represents to your life so that you can serve the Lord better. This exercise will help you discover some truths about the work of the Holy Spirit in your life and the joy that comes through Him.

In Relation to the Church

Objective 7. *Match descriptions of the Holy Spirit's enablement for service to believer's responses to this enablement.*

Our discussion of ways the Holy Spirit ministers to the nonbelieving world and to believers gives us a basis for looking at His ministry to the body of Christ as a corporate or whole unit.

In the Old Testament period, the people of God benefited greatly from the ministry of the Holy Spirit as He anointed selected persons for special service. However, in the New Testament era this ministry is even more evident, for it is continual and unlimited to any specific group of believers. Let's see how and why the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament period differs from His activity in Old Testament times.

On the occasion of Jesus' baptism, John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus as the one who would be the baptizer in the Holy Spirit (John 1:33). As a result of His redemptive work, Jesus opened the way for His followers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit and to receive the Counselor. He was Jesus' own representative, who would abide with them forever (John 14:16). After His resurrection, Jesus announced to His disciples that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit within a few days, and that as a result they would receive power (Acts 1:5,8).

Unlike the special anointing for a specific task of Old Testament times, this new experience, the baptism in the Holy Spirit, was to be the believers' basic enablement for consistent and effective spiritual life and service. The Spirit's presence would not be limited to the achievement of a specific task or to a certain occasion, as it was in Old Testament times. Rather, He was to be a permanent resident in those who received Christ (John 7:38-39; 14:17). The result of this new indwelling and powerful presence was dramatic growth, as the followers of Jesus shared their faith and experience with others.

Thus, in New Testament experience believers may have the Holy Spirit residing within them, enabling them to live holy lives and to serve God acceptably. No longer do they have simply an external model (the Law) to live by, as in Old Testament times, with

no enablement to fulfill its requirements except their own good intentions. As the Spirit indwells the members of the church and directs their corporate activities, they have the ability to carry out the work and will of God on earth.

11 Match the time period (right) with the descriptions of the Spirit's activities in people's lives (left). This exercise will help you to see the difference between the Spirit's activities in Old and New Testament times.

- | | | |
|--------|---|------------------|
| a | Indwelling for certain ministries, then removed | 1) Old Testament |
| b | Indwelling all those who receive Christ | 2) New Testament |
| c | His presence internal and personal | |
| d | His presence external and impersonal | |
| e | People baptized in the Spirit simply by receiving Him | |
| f | Occasional anointing of certain people for specific reasons | |

Not only were followers of Jesus enabled to be effective *witnesses*, but they were also empowered successfully to *defend* the gospel. This was a direct fulfillment of Mark 13:9-11. On an earlier occasion, Peter had been powerless to defend his relationship to Jesus (Matthew 26:69-75). However, after several significant experiences, which included witnessing the resurrection and being filled with the Spirit at Pentecost, he received boldness to preach (Acts 2) and boldness to give a reasoned defense of his faith (Acts 4:8-20).

In addition, the Holy Spirit controls the *evangelistic mission* of the church, directing His servants where to go and where not to go (Acts 13:2; 16:6-7). Through His direction, early Christians reached important centers that became vital in the continued mission of the church, which was to preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15). In the first missionary evangelistic effort of the church, it was the Holy Spirit who set

apart Paul and Barnabas for service and ordained them for this ministry (Acts 13:2).

The Holy Spirit also directed in the proper *administration* of the church. As the church grew and crossed national, cultural, and religious boundaries, questions arose which required answers consistent with Scripture and Christian love. Natural human prejudice threatened to divide the body of Christ, but the leadership of the Holy Spirit enabled James and the apostles to resolve the difficulties and give wise counsel (Acts 15:28-29). This enabled the church to grow even more rapidly and develop a spirit of unity.

Through His continued direction, the Spirit led Paul and others to give encouragement, comfort, doctrinal teaching, warning, and to prescribe discipline to the church through the inspired Epistles. For example, Paul dealt with the specific question of conduct in the Corinthian church in terms of social responsibilities (1 Corinthians 7:40). The writer to the Hebrews explained discipline as a growth process by which God leads believers toward spiritual maturity (Hebrews 12:4-11).

In the maturing process, the Holy Spirit, as the all-wise administrator, equips each believer with the gifts that are necessary to carry out his function in the world and in the church, the body of Christ. Compare Romans 12:4-8, 1 Corinthians 12:1-28, and Ephesians 4:11-16. Paul says, "God gives ability to everyone for their particular service. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all" (1 Corinthians 12:6-7, TEV).

The Holy Spirit, thus, provides the church with these strengths:

1. Power to evangelize
2. Wisdom and courage necessary to defend the faith
3. Appropriate gifts for ministry to the entire body of Christ, as well as to individual members
4. Human leadership to direct the work
5. The vision and inspiration necessary to fulfill the Great Commission

12 Match the descriptions of the Spirit's ministries (right) with the believers' response which best fits each description (left).

- | | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| a | Believers become aware of and desire the opportunity to reach unbelievers. | 1) Imparts basic power for life and service |
| b | Believers in the church function as a unified body, each carrying out his specialized ministry. | 2) Gives gifts |
| c | Believers are baptized in the Holy Spirit. | 3) Gives vision and direction |
| d | Believers are enabled to defend the gospel. | 4) Resolves problems |
| e | Believers rely on Scripture and prayer as they face difficulties and decisions. | 5) Grants wisdom and boldness |

Do you see how much we must depend on the Holy Spirit for spiritual life, strength, vision, effectiveness in service, help in time of trials, and working for our personal victory and maturity? Worship the Holy Spirit. Love His presence in your life. Desire to grow and develop into the spiritual person He wants you to be. May you always be aware of this Person who has come to live in you. Be sensitive to His voice, His pleadings, His correction, and His admonitions. May your every thought, conversation, and deed reflect your awareness of His place of leadership in your life. Then your way will become spiritually prosperous and your life will be truly successful.

Before you begin your study of Lesson 5, be sure to complete your unit student report for Unit One and submit the answer sheet to your ICI instructor.

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. If the statement is TRUE, write **T** in the blank space. If it is FALSE, write **F**.

- **1** The characteristics of Deity—eternity, omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience—can be applied to the Holy Spirit.
- **2** The term *Lord* as used in the apostle Paul's writings, which referred to Deity only, is used of the Holy Spirit.
- **3** The apostolic benediction and the baptismal formula show an essential equality of persons in the Trinity.
- **4** By nature the Holy Spirit is an impersonal being with characteristics similar to the wind.
- **5** Personal acts, personal names, personal associations, personal pronouns, and personal treatment are elements which strongly imply that the Holy Spirit has personality.
- **6** Since we are finite and the Holy Spirit is infinite, we are unable to understand anything about His person and work.
- **7** The Holy Spirit does not deal with unholy, sinful people.
- **8** Believers receive the Spirit's special help through His intercession in their behalf.
- **9** Peter taught that one's personal experience is more reliable as a guide for faith and practice than is the Word of God.
- **10** One major difference between the ministry of the Spirit in Old Testament Israel and in the New Testament church is that He indwells New Testament believers.

- **11** The Spirit's ministry is limited to the taking of the gospel to the unreached and the defense of the gospel before government officials.
- **12** The Holy Spirit is a trustworthy administrator in problem situations.
- **13** As the Holy Spirit is allowed to lead the believer to victory over his sinful nature, the believer becomes more and more like his Lord.
- **14** Life in the Spirit begins when we are filled with the Spirit.
- **15** When the believer receives the baptism, in the Spirit, he has reached full spiritual maturity.
- **16** The baptism in the Spirit is the basis for further life and growth in the Spirit.
- **17** The Holy Spirit is given to us as a guarantee of eternal life with the Father.
- **18** Anointing with oil represents the purity of the Holy Spirit.
- **19** The baptism in the Spirit is compared to streams of living water in Scripture.
- **20** The indwelling Spirit is a guarantee that the believer will always be holy and fully effective.

answers to study questions

1 a 4) Eternity.

b 3) Omnipresence.

c 1) Omnipotence.

d 2) Omniscience.

7 Answers **a**, **c**, and **d** are true. Answer **b** is false. (Christ by His death and resurrection has won the victory over Satan.)

2 Answers a), c), and d) are proofs of the Holy Spirit's deity. Answer b) is not a proof of deity—the term Counselor is a description of one of the Holy Spirit's many functions.

8 Your answer. It should be similar to this:

a By regeneration the Holy Spirit brings us into the family of God.

b He gives us power to witness.

c He teaches us.

d He prays to the Father on our behalf (intercedes for us).

e As we allow Him, He guides us toward a victorious, Christlike life.

f He produces spiritual fruit (a Christlike character) in us as we yield control of our lives to Him.

3 a 2) Holy Spirit's work on earth.

b 3) Divine sovereignty.

c 4) Divine equality of Persons in the Godhead.

d 1) Plurality of Persons in the Godhead at creation.

e 4) Divine equality of Persons in the Godhead.

9 a outpouring.

b baptism.

c filling.

4 a 3) Will.

b 1) Intellect.

c 2) Sensibility.

10 Your answer may be similar to mine:

- Fire:* The Holy Spirit purifies me.
Dove: He gently guides me.
Anointing oil: The Spirit anoints me for effective service.
Gift: The Holy Spirit is the Father's good gift to me.
Living water: He fills me to overflowing, giving me life.
Seal or deposit: The Holy Spirit is God's guarantee to me that I will share in His eternal kingdom.
Breath, wind: The Holy Spirit gives me (breathes into me) life eternal.

5 They reveal that He performs activities that are possible only by a personal being, and which cannot be carried out by an impersonal force. Therefore, they point to *the personality* of the Holy Spirit.

- 11 a** 1) Old Testament.
b 2) New Testament.
c 2) New Testament.
d 1) Old Testament.
e 2) New Testament.
f 1) Old Testament.

6 You should have circled all of these EXCEPT **c** (Impersonal force), and **g** (It). Neither of these terms can be applied to the Holy Spirit.

- 12 a** 3) Gives vision.
b 2) Gives gifts.
c 1) Imparts basic power.
d 5) Grants wisdom and boldness.
e 4) Resolves problems.

Unit Two

The Subjects of God



Lesson 5

Angels: Armies of Darkness and Armies of Light

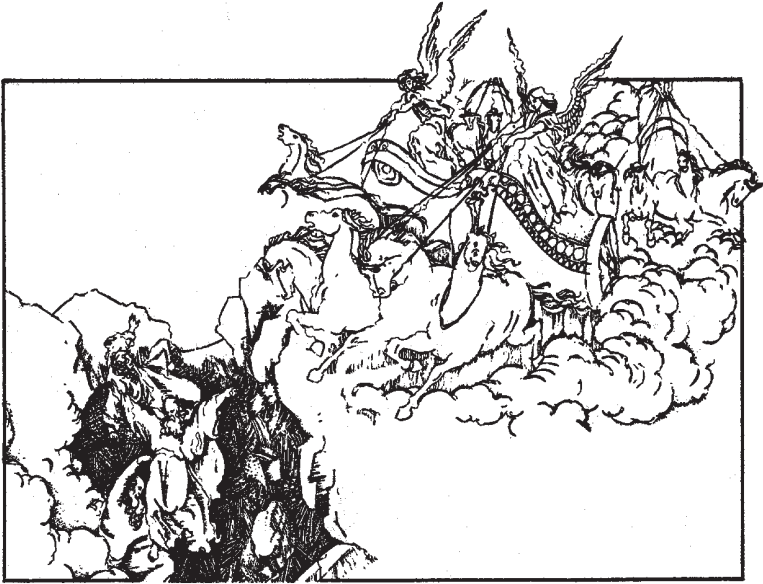
I have been awakened by the Sound of gunfire as troops of opposing armies clashed near my house. My wife and family have sought shelter as bombers flew Overhead. I have seen soldiers take food from innocent civilians. I hate war!

What should a good and wise ruler do when he is attacked by an enemy? If he truly cares for his people and the way of life they hold dear, then he *must* resist the enemy. He knows what will happen if the opposition takes over!

In a sense, this is the situation in the spiritual realm. Satan's diabolical spiritual forces seek to undermine our defenses and to kill us spiritually. We are secure as long as our trust is in God. His greater spiritual forces offer us assistance in resisting our enemy, the devil. Spiritual conflict thus forms the background against which we study angels.

In Unit I we learned about God and His sovereign rule of the universe. Now we turn to the subjects of His divine rule, angels and men, and the problem of sin. In the next three lessons, we shall see not only the cause of sin, but also its far-reaching consequences for all of the subjects of God.

As we study in this lesson about our King and the angelic forces at His disposal, I pray that you will appreciate Him more as you recognize that He is leading a host of redeemed people onward to final victory!



lesson outline

- The Nature of Angels
- The Moral Character of Angels
- The Number of Angels
- The Organization and Activity of Angels

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Describe the nature, attributes, number, organization, activities, and moral character of angels based on scriptural statements.
- Explain the origin and nature of Satan and his evil angels.
- Give scriptural evidence that the omnipotence of God guarantees the believer's final victory over the forces of evil.
- Appreciate more the help and ministry of angels.

learning activities

1. As background for this lesson, read Ephesians 6:10-18, 2 Peter 2:1-22, and the short Epistle of Jude.
2. Study the lesson according to the procedure given in Lesson 1. There are many Scripture references which are important to your understanding of this lesson. Be sure to read them all, and answer all study questions. Then take the self-test as usual.

key words

adversary	diabolical	rational
agents	disastrous	realm
assume	glorified	rebellion
celestial	impersonate	subjects
confirmed	intervention	superhuman
destiny	probation	

lesson development
THE NATURE OF ANGELS

The writer to the Hebrews gives this advice: “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2).

In this reference to angels we see something of their nature, for they are extraordinary. Because they are unusual, an air of mystery surrounds them. This fact is illustrated over and over again in both Old and New Testament Scriptures.

We cannot read the Scriptures without observing that they support the existence of angels. What can we learn from the Bible about angels? What is their origin? What are their characteristics? Finding answers to these questions will help us to understand more about the purpose of angels and their

significance in our lives. Let's examine some of the facts the Bible presents regarding the origin (beginning) and characteristics of angels.

Their Origin

Objective 1. *Complete and select statements regarding the origin and characteristics of angels.*

What are angels? Angels are a finite order or group of created beings who are God's messengers or ministers. They are greater in intelligence and power than man. Some angels serve God's purpose in a positive way through their holiness and by voluntarily carrying out God's will. Other angels, who have rebelled against God, are, as a result, forever separated from Him. This eternal separation from God illustrates clearly the special grace of God toward sinful man, who has been provided with salvation through Christ.

The term *angels* in the original Bible languages actually means *messengers*. Sometimes the word *messenger* refers to people (a priest in Malachi 2:7), or it is used in a figurative sense of impersonal agents (the winds in Psalm 104:4). Because the word is used in different ways, we must consider the context in each case to determine which is the correct meaning. Generally, however, when the Bible speaks of angels it refers to certain spiritual and supernatural beings who are shown to be special messengers of God.

Where did the angels come from? The Psalmist says that together with the celestial bodies—the sun, moon, and stars—angels and all the heavenly hosts were created by God (Psalm 148:2-5). John adds a more complete statement of Christ's creative acts: "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" (John 1:3). Since Scripture expressly ascribes the existence of everything to the Godhead, we know that angels are created beings. The following Scriptures make this clear to us.

- 1 Complete the following statements.
 - a Colossians 1:16 declares that our Lord Jesus Christ created (Angels are included.)
 - b In 1 Timothy 6:13-16 we read that God alone gives
..... to everything. (Angels are included.)

We don't know exactly when angels were created, for the Bible does not reveal the time. We do know it was before the events recorded in Genesis 3, for it was at this point that Satan, an angelic being, came into focus in relation to mankind. As with all rational (thinking) created beings, angels are given immortality; that is, they will never cease to exist (Luke 20:36).

- 2 From the biblical evidence concerning the origin of angels we can conclude that they are
 - a) immortal beings who have always existed.
 - b) immortal created beings who will never cease to exist.
 - c) mortal beings like man but with superior power and wisdom.
 - d) a race of beings similar to deity.

Their Characteristics

In discussing the origin of angels, we noted one characteristic: they are *created*. A number of other characteristics also come into focus as we examine the Scriptures.

Angels are *spirit beings*. Hebrews 1:14 says, "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" Men cannot be described as *spirits*, for they have a twofold nature: material (flesh) and immaterial (spirit). Since angels are *spirits*, we cannot regard them as having physical bodies. This is the implication of Ephesians 6:12: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against . . . the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms." This verse refers to evil angels who do the work of Satan.

Scriptures do indicate that angels have often revealed themselves in a human form (Judges 6:11-24; John 20:12), but these *unusual* appearances do not mean that they have material bodies as part of their necessary existence. Rather, they *assume*

material bodies on occasion as a means for them to communicate with human beings. Since they do not have physical bodies as part of their necessary existence, angels know nothing of growth, age, or death.

Angels are *personal beings*. They exhibit the basic aspects of personality: intellect, emotions, and will. Some insight into the *intellectual* ability of angels as viewed by people in the Old Testament is given in 2 Samuel 14:20. Luke 4:34 reveals that even evil angels possess a range of *knowledge* superior to that of man. Revelation 12:12 gives us an indication of an evil angel's capacity to express *emotion* (fury or anger). Jesus speaks of the very positive expression of feelings by holy angels (joy) in Luke 15:10. Paul refers to the capacity of the devil to trap people so that they will do his *will* (2 Timothy 2:26). These are but a few examples of many Scriptures which refer to the personal nature of angels.

Angels are *sexless*. They are not classified according to sex, although some have been given masculine names (Gabriel and Michael). The Bible says that angels neither marry nor are they given in marriage (Matthew 22:30). Since angels do not reproduce themselves, we describe them correctly as a company and not a *race*. You may have noticed that while the Scriptures refer to angels in the Old Testament as *sons of God*, never is there mention of *sons of angels* (see Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).

As we have already noted, angels possess superhuman intelligence. Jesus' statement implies that their wisdom is extensive: "No one knows about that day or hour, *not even* the angels in heaven" (Matthew 24:36). Yet their knowledge, while superhuman, is limited. Peter, in speaking of the glories which are to come, said, "Even angels long to look into these things" (1 Peter 1:12).

A close examination of the characteristics of angels leads us to the conclusion that it is their *power* which is emphasized more than any other characteristic. Peter observes that angels are more powerful than men (2 Peter 2:11). The Psalmist refers to angels as the "mighty ones who do his (the Lord's) bidding, who obey his word" (Psalm 103:20). Paul refers to them as "his powerful angels" (2 Thessalonians 1:7).

In the case of evil angels (which we will consider later), once again *power is* the characteristic which is emphasized: “prince of this world” (John 12:31), “strong man” (Luke 11:21), “the power of darkness” (Luke 22:53, KJV), “powers of this dark world” (Ephesians 6:12), “all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:19). When Satan was tempting Jesus, he showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, and said, “I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to” (Luke 4:6).

However, even though their wisdom and power are superhuman, *these characteristics of angels are limited*. It will take only one angel to bind Satan and cast him into the bottomless pit at the end of this age (Revelation 20:2-3). But before this period of confinement, Satan and his angels will fight against Michael, the archangel, and his angels. Satan will lose the war in the heavenlies and will be cast out (Revelation 12:7-9). According to Daniel 10, good and evil angels are in conflict concerning the affairs of people and nations. Neither Michael, the archangel (Jude 9), nor Satan (Job 1-2), has unlimited power.

Another evidence of the limitation of angels is seen in the fact that *they are not omnipresent*. Satan responded to God’s question concerning his activity, saying that he had been “. . . Roaming through the earth and going back and forth in it” (Job 1:7; 1 Peter 5:8). Angels of the Lord report that they “have gone throughout the earth” (Zechariah 1:11). These movements from place to place involve time and, occasionally, delays (Daniel 10:5, 12-14). This limitation accounts for the fact that spiritual battles in which God’s people are engaged often continue for extended periods of time.

Finally, we must understand that *angels are not glorified men*. The Bible distinguishes between the “thousands upon thousands of angels” and the “spirits of righteous men made perfect” in the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22-23). This distinction is seen also in Hebrews 2:16: “For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.”

In fact, man is for awhile “a little lower than the angels” (Psalm 8:4-5), but in the future man shall be higher (Hebrews 2:7). Paul says, “Do you not know that we will judge angels”

(1 Corinthians 6:3). In this act of judgment, then, we understand that those who are inferior, or of lesser importance, do not judge those who are superior.

3 State three ways in which the characteristics of angels are limited

4 Match the characteristics of angels (right) with the appropriate descriptions (left).

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| a Do not reproduce themselves or increase their number | 1) Created |
| b May be in only one place at a time | 2) Spirit |
| c Able to fulfill the will and purpose of their leader | 3) Personal |
| d Have knowledge of the affairs of man | 4) Sexless |
| e Have no bodily existence | 5) Intelligent |
| f Brought into existence at a certain point in time | 6) Powerful |
| g Clearly distinguished in Scripture from human beings | 7) Not omnipresent |
| h Have intellect, emotions, and will | 8) Not glorified men |

THE MORAL CHARACTER OF ANGELS

Angels Were Created Holy

Objective 2. *Choose true statements concerning the moral character of angels using Scripture as the basis.*

In previous pages we have referred both to holy angels and evil angels. Our study in this section will reveal that all angels were created holy, but some fell from their holy state, and the results of their fall have far-reaching consequences for the universe.

The Bible says very little about the original state of angels. However, we read that at the end of His creative activity, “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31).

Certainly this includes the perfection of angels in holiness when they were created. Yet Scripture does speak of their tragic fall. Let us consider the capability of angels for right and wrong action and their ability to recognize and conform to a standard of right conduct.

- 5** Read each Scripture reference and complete the statement.
- a** John 8:44. One of the sins which caused the devil’s fall was
.....
- b** 2 Peter 2:4. God did not spare angels when they
.....
- c** Jude, verse 6. Some angels did not keep their
Instead, they
- d** 1 Timothy 3:6. One of the main causes of the devil’s fall was
his sin of

Angels Made a Choice

As we have seen, all angels were created perfect. At first their affection or love was directed to their Creator, and they were inclined to do His will. While the Bible does not give us details, we believe that at this stage they had the ability either *to sin or not to sin*. Apparently they were conscious of their position and of their relationship to their Creator. They must have known, also, that their obedience or disobedience would determine their future destiny.

While the angels had the power of choice either to sin or not to sin, they were not *forced* to obey God and keep their position. Their choice was entirely voluntary. Unfortunately, we do not have the details of the events which surrounded the tragedy when part of the angelic company fell. However, Paul, by divine inspiration, implies that the devil’s failure came about because of his conceit (excessive pride) (1 Timothy 3:6).

Several portions of Scripture which refer primarily to earthly kings seem also to symbolize Satan. For example, in Ezekiel 28:12-19, the king of Tyre is said to have fallen because of

excessive pride in his beauty. This pride destroyed his ability to conduct himself in a right way or to exercise sound judgment.

The king of Babylon also was doomed to destruction because of excessive pride and ambition, according to Isaiah 14:12-15. Whether or not these examples refer symbolically to the fall of Satan, we do know that some of the angelic host, by an act of their own will, chose to leave their positions of authority and their own home (Jude 6).

It appears that the same attitude which caused the devil to sin also infected a large number of angels. Revelation 12:4 may refer to this occasion when one-third of the angels followed Satan in his rebellion against God. Regardless, we know that Satan was a spiritual master of deception (John 8:44). For Satan and all other angels who rebelled, it was a choice for self and its interests, rather than the choice for God and His interests. The result was disastrous, and judgment followed: “God did not spare the angels when they sinned” (2 Peter 2:4).

Salvation, which was planned to provide for the spiritual needs of man, is not available to the angels who fell. Unholy angels continue to exist in the realm of the “evil one” (Matthew 6:13, 13:9; 1 John 5:18-19). Their continued existence, which we shall discuss in the next section, is a constant warning to us of the danger of rejecting God or of neglecting the offer of grace which He extends to us.

Some angels sinned, were judged, and became part of “the devil’s angels” (Matthew 25:41). Others did not sin; they remained with the Father as His *holy angels* (Mark 8:38). Scripture does not indicate any further angelic rebellion and judgment. Thus, angels appear to be confirmed in their decisions; that is, those who chose to do the Father’s will are now forever holy, and those who chose their own interests are now forever evil.

Holy angels are those who have chosen to maintain their relationship to God, behold the Father in heaven (Matthew 18:10), and carry out His will (Matthew 6:10). They are regarded as angels of light (whom Satan tries to impersonate or represent—2 Corinthians 11:14).

6 Choose whether these statements are *clearly supported*, *implied* by context or symbolic language, or *not supported at all* by Scripture.

- | | | |
|---------------|---|-------------------------|
| a | The devil fell because of His conceit or excessive pride | 1) Clearly supported |
| b | Angels were created perfect. | 2) Implied |
| c | One-third of the angels chose to follow Satan. | 3) Not supported at all |
| d | All fallen angels will have a chance to repent. | |
| e | All angels made a voluntary choice either to sin or not to sin. | |
| f | God pronounced immediate judgment upon the angels who sinned. | |
| g | All angels are confirmed in the decision they made either to sin or not to sin. | |
| h | Satan is considered an angel of light. | |
| i | Just as holy angels carry out the will of God, evil angels carry out the will of Satan. | |
| j | From the moment he was created, Satan was evil. | |

THE NUMBER OF ANGELS

Objective 3. *Choose a statement which best summarizes biblical teaching concerning the number of angels.*

Before we look more closely at the organization and activity of both holy and unholy angels, let's find what the Bible says about how many angels there are. While Scripture does not give us a precise number of angels which exist, we know that they make up a great multitude or great number. We find these biblical references to great numbers of angels:

1. When Elisha the prophet and his servant were surrounded in the city of Dothan by a powerful Aramean army, God sent an even greater host of angels to protect His servants (2 Kings 6:14-17).

2. According to the Psalmist, “The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands” (Psalm 68:17).

3. In blessing Israel, Moses referred to the Lord who came with “myriads [too many to count] of holy ones” (Deuteronomy 33:2).

4. In prophetic preview, Daniel saw the Ancient of Days (God) taking the throne of judgment. Daniel describes the occasion: “Thousands upon thousands attended him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him” (Daniel 7:10).

5. The writer to the Hebrews reminds his readers of the glorious privilege of coming to the living God, in whose presence is a joyful assembly of “thousands upon thousands of angels” (Hebrews 12:22).

6. Finally, when God gave John the beloved disciple a majestic preview of His heavenly court, John reported: “Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne” (Revelation 5:11).

From this evidence, we see that the number of angelic hosts, or holy angels, is great indeed. In addition to these, we know that Satan’s legions of evil angels also exist and that their number is great (Revelation 12:7-12).

7 The Bible teaches what about the number of angels?

- a) Many more angels fell than remained loyal to God.
- b) Innumerable multitudes of angels, good and evil, exist.
- c) Many angels serve God; a few bad ones serve Satan.
- d) The angelic multitude is decreasing in number.

THE ORGANIZATION AND ACTIVITY OF ANGELS

Evidences of Organization

Objective 4. *Select statements which describe evidence of organized activity of holy angels.*

There are many scriptural evidences that there is an effective organization of spiritual forces to carry out specific tasks assigned to them. Some of these Scriptures are:

1. 1 Kings 22:19. The prophet Micaiah reveals something of the organization of angels: “I saw the Lord sitting on his throne with all the host of heaven standing around him on his right hand and on his left.” God is enthroned with all the host (angels) of heaven around him.

2. Matthew 26:53. Jesus spoke these words to Peter: “Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?” This suggests something similar to the organization of the Roman army. It also suggests that angels are always on the alert, ready to do the bidding of the heavenly Father.

3. Luke 2:8-14. The angelic messenger who appeared to the shepherds and announced the birth of Jesus was joined suddenly by “a great company of the heavenly host.” Together the special messenger and the special angelic choir raised an anthem of praise to God. The individual angel and the choir obviously responded to the will of the Father and carried out their respective assignments.

4. Revelation 19:10-14. John’s vision of a triumphant army of angels at the coming of the Lord also reveals precision, order, organization, authority, and purpose: “The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean.”

You may have noticed that the Scriptures cited concern the organization of holy angels. Later in the lesson, we’ll see that the forces of evil are organized also. Moreover, they are organized to oppose God.

Organized Activity of Holy Angels

Since we are dealing with two distinct groups of angels, the holy and the unholy or evil, we shall first examine the work of holy angels. As we discover the work they do, we shall understand more about how they are organized to do this work.

Angels worship God. Among the pictures of holy angels revealed in Scripture are those of angels standing in the presence of God, worshipping Him (Psalm 103:20; 148:2; Isaiah 6:1-7). They lift their voices in mighty anthems of praise, because He is worthy of the praise of His creatures. They worship God for what He is, what He has provided, and for the means He has used in accomplishing redemption. (Compare Revelation 5:9-12 with 5:13-14.)

Holy angels rejoice in the mighty creative acts of God in nature (Job 38:7) and in the beautiful miracle He works as He transforms sinners and brings them into His family (Luke 15:10). Heaven is unveiled as a glorious temple in which the angels appear as the *heavenly congregation*. There they worship and praise God, in whose presence they remain (Matthew 18:10).

Angels are ministering spirits. Not only do angels worship God and rejoice in His being and works, but they also carry out His will (Psalm 103:20). As ministering spirits, angels are sent to serve those who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14). Notice how this angelic service was provided in both Old and New Testament times:

1. Paul, as a prisoner in very dangerous circumstances, was *encouraged* by an angel (Acts 27:23-24).
2. Philip was *directed in ministry* by an angel (Acts 8:26).
3. Cornelius was *assisted* in his search for a more satisfying place in God by an angel (Acts 10:3-7).
4. Peter was miraculously *delivered* by an angel (Acts 12:7-10).
5. Jesus, on at least two recorded occasions, was *strengthened* by angels (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43).
6. Elisha was *protected* from a powerful Syrian army by a host of holy angels (2 Kings 6:8-23).

7. David acknowledged, after his escape from Abimelech (1 Samuel 21:10–22:1) that he had been *protected and delivered* by angels (see Psalm 34:7).

Angels are agents of judgment. In carrying out God’s will, angels have also been agents of judgment, punishing God’s enemies. One example of this is found in 2 Kings 19:35: “That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp.” Also, in Acts 12:23 we read: “Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.”

Many other Scriptures refer to the work of angels as agents of God’s Providence, agents of His judgment both past and in the future, and as special forces accompanying the Lord at His coming.

- 8** Holy angels are involved in which of these activities? They:
- a) worship and praise God and do His will.
 - b) serve the redeemed of the earth as ministering spirits.
 - c) convict men of sin and lead them to repentance.
 - d) protect, deliver, direct, encourage, and strengthen God’s people.
 - e) act as agents of judgment, punishing God’s enemies.

Angels appear to have influence in the affairs of nations. Daniel 10:13 and 20 reveals that evil princedoms exist over nations and that they are opposed by holy angels. From these references and from Daniel 10:21–11:1 we conclude that angels do appear to be entrusted with the affairs of nations. By comparing these references in Daniel with Ephesians 1:21; 6:12; and Colossians 1:16; 2:15, we see that spiritual battles go on at all times in the heavenly realms. These battles are staged by the forces of evil to entrap the minds and affections of men and women—in effect, their eternal souls.

On occasion, it appears that the conflict is so intense that the *archangel* himself is engaged in it. *Michael*, who is called the

archangel in Jude 9, is the *leader* of the holy angels. He is also referred to as the prince of the nation of Israel, and his task appears to include protecting and prospering the nation (Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1). He will raise his voice in exaltation as the events of the Lord's coming begin to take place (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Only two angels are mentioned by name in the Scriptures: *Michael*, the archangel, and *Gabriel*, who is revealed as a special messenger (Daniel 8:16; 9:21; Luke 1:19, 26). Many other unnamed messenger angels also serve the Lord in this capacity.

The Bible gives limited evidence concerning other orders of holy angels:

1. *Cherubim* (Genesis 3:24; 2 Kings 19:15; Ezekiel 10:1-22; 28:14-16). Cherubim are guardians of the throne of God. They also guarded the entrance to the Garden of Eden.
2. *Seraphim* (Isaiah 6:2, 6). Seraphim appear to be leaders in the worship of God. Their primary concern is the holiness and purification of the redeemed for acceptable worship and service.
3. *Watchmen* (Daniel 4:13, 17). They are apparently assigned to observe specific activities. They are faithful in their duties and are seen in this context bringing God's message to man.
4. *Living creatures* (Revelation 4:6-9; 6:1-7; 15:7). These angelic beings appear to be different from seraphim, cherubim, and ordinary angels. They appear to worship God, to direct His judgment, and to be active about His throne.

All in all, this body of holy angels serves God effectively and is ever ready to carry out His purposes for His people.

9 Match each name or classification (right) with its description (left).

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| a Special messengers who are assigned to observe specific activities | 1) Michael |
| b A special angelic messenger | 2) Gabriel |
| c Angels who are guardians of God's throne | 3) Holy angels |
| d Those who are busy about God's throne and who direct some judgments | 4) Cherubim |
| e General company of those who behold God's face, worship Him, and stand ready to do His bidding | 5) Seraphim |
| f Angelic beings concerned especially with holiness in God's presence and acceptable worship | 6) Watchmen |
| g The special prince of the nation of Israel | 7) Living creatures |

Scope of Holy Angelic Activity

Before leaving the subject of the activities of holy angels, we should mention several conclusions we draw from Scripture concerning the *scope* or *extent* of their activities.

First, holy angels are ministers of God's special providence in the affairs of His people and the church. Hebrews 1:7 states: "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire" (see also Psalm 104:4). In other words, God uses angels as His messengers not in His ordinary operation, but in special displays of power related to His law (Deuteronomy 33:2; Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19; and Hebrews 2:2). The *intervention* or involvement of angels in the normal course of human affairs appears to be occasional and exceptional. Angels do not

intervene by their own decision, but only as commanded by God. They do not come between God and His people.

Second, the power of angels, which is dependent upon and comes from God, appears to be employed in accordance with the laws of the spiritual and natural world. Unlike God, angels cannot create, act without another's authority (God's), search the heart, or change the laws of nature. They cannot influence the human mind directly, for this is the work of the Holy Spirit. Angels, plainly, work within limits.

Third, Scriptures indicate that angelic appearances generally precede and accompany important new turning points in the unfolding of God's plan. For example, we see angelic activity at the time of these events:

- At creation (Job 38:7)
- When the Law was given (Galatians 3:19)
- Just before and at the birth of Christ (Luke 1:11, 26; 2:13)
- During Jesus' temptation in the wilderness and in Gethsemane (Matthew 4:11; Luke 22:43)
- At the resurrection (Matthew 28:2)
- At the ascension (Acts 1:10-11)
- During the end-time activities before the second coming of Christ (see many references to the activity of angels in the book of Revelation and Matthew 25:31)

10 Circle the letter preceding each completion that describes an activity of holy angels. They

- a** intervene between God and His people.
- b** are special ministers of God's providence.
- c** displayed special power when the Law was given.
- d** were present at Creation.
- e** are instrumental in influencing man's mind.
- f** are responsible for directly tempting man.
- g** are involved especially in important turning points in God's plan of salvation.
- h** overrule laws of the spiritual and natural world.

Organized Activity of Unholy Angels

Objective 5. *Choose correct statements concerning the activity and fate of unholy angels and their leader.*

Just as the Bible indicates that God has His throne and attendants, so does it reveal that in the realm of spiritual darkness the devil has his organization. Someone has wryly observed that Satan is the “ape” (or “mimic”) of God. Satan has a throne (Revelation 2:13). He is referred to in Scripture as “the prince of this world” (John 14:30; 16:11) and “the ruler of the kingdom of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). He is the head of an evil organization. The Bible says that he has his angels (Matthew 25:41) and that they oppose God (Revelation 12:7-9).

Further evidences of this evil organization are referred to in Paul’s epistles. In Colossians 1:16 he refers to “thrones or powers or rulers or authorities” Ephesians 6:12 tells of “rulers. . . authorities. . . powers of this dark world. . . the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” These are the same “powers and authorities” which Christ overruled through the cross (Colossians 2:15). In each of these references we see evidence of organization by rank based on levels of authority. This evil organization is set in rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ, and these various elements of satanic power stand in opposition to God and His people. We learn much about unholy angels by examining their leader.

Their Leader

Unholy angels oppose God and try to defeat His will. We see evidence of this in the names given to their leader:

1. He is called *Satan*, which means *adversary* or *opponent*. He is primarily the adversary of *God*. He is also the adversary of *man* (Zechariah 3:1; Matthew 13:39; 1 Peter 5:8).

2. He is called the *devil*, which means *slanderer* (one who makes false charges against someone). He accuses God to man (Genesis 3:1-4) and man to God (Job 1:9, 16; Revelation 12:10).

3. Since he *entices* (tempts) man to sin, he is called the *tempter*. His method is to present the most logical excuses for sin, as well as the supposedly great advantages to be gained by it (Matthew 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 3:5).

Since he is limited and is not all-powerful, all-knowing, or everywhere-present, the devil uses different means to oppose God. Obviously, he can't attack God directly; therefore, he attacks man, the crown of God's creation, in various ways:

- He lies (John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3)
- He tempts (Matthew 4:1)
- He steals (Matthew 13:19)
- He torments (2 Corinthians 12:7)
- He hinders (1 Thessalonians 2:18)
- He sifts (separates, screens) (Luke 22:31)
- He impersonates (pretends to be something he is not) in order to deceive (2 Corinthians 11:14)
- He accuses (Revelation 12:10)
- He afflicts with disease (Luke 13:16)
- He possesses (John 13:27)
- He kills and devours (John 8:44; 1 Peter 5:8)

Satan, as we have seen, controls many other evil angels, who may have joined with him at the time that he rebelled against God. It appears that he was permitted to keep the authority he was given at his creation. The unholy angels, who chose to follow him instead of keeping their positions of authority and God-given home (Jude 6), and remaining faithful to their Creator, are confirmed in their rebellion. They have given full devotion to their leader who deceived them, and they willingly lend their services to help him achieve his wicked purposes.

11 Match the term or name (right) with its description (left).

- | | | |
|--------|---|---------------|
| a | The object of the devil's attacks; his way of getting back at God | 1) Satan |
| b | One of the devil's coworkers in the battle directed against God | 2) Devil |
| c | Gives the idea of <i>adversary</i> , or one who opposes | 3) Tempter |
| d | Name applied to one who entices another to sin | 4) Man |
| e | Name applied to one who slanders another | 5) Evil angel |

Their Activity

Unholy angels oppose God, His people, and His program as a militant (fighting) part of Satan's kingdom of darkness (Matthew 25:41; Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 12:7-12). Some attempt has been made to distinguish between unholy angelic spirits and demons; however, there is no evidence that they are not one and the same thing.

Angels try to separate the people of God from Him (Romans 8:38). They oppose holy angels (Daniel 10:12–11:1), afflict people with physical and mental illness (Matthew 9:33; 12:22; Mark 5:1-16; Luke 9:37-42), spread false doctrine (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:1), and possess people and even animals (Matthew 4:24; Mark 5:8-14; Luke 8:2; Acts 8:7; 16:16).

Occasionally God uses unholy angels, in spite of themselves, to accomplish His purposes of punishing the ungodly (Psalm 78:49; 1 Kings 22:23) and of chastening or disciplining the good (Job 1 and 2; 1 Corinthians 5:5).

Their fate

Unholy angels serve to illustrate what will happen to those who are morally evil. The following Scriptural evidence describes their fate:

- Demons who had possessed two men shouted at Jesus, “Have you come to torture us before the appointed time?” (Matthew 8:29).
- Jesus spoke of “Eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41).
- Paul tells us, “The lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow . . . and destroy by the splendor of his coming” (2 Thessalonians 2:8).
- James says, “The demons believe . . . and shudder” (James 2:19).
- John says, “The devil has gone down to you . . . ! He is filled with fury, because . . . this time is short” (Revelation 12:12).
- John says finally, “They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10).

12 Read the Scriptures and complete the statements.

- a** 2 Peter 2:4. God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to putting them into to be held for
- b** Jude 6. Angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their own home are bound with everlasting chains for
- c** Psalm 78:49. To carry out His judgment, God used a band of
- d** Matthew 8:16; Mark 9:25-26. Evil spirits people.
- e** Luke 13:10-16. Evil spirits can
- f** Revelation 12:7- 12; Ephesians 6:12. The place of activity for Satan and the unholy angels is both

From our study of the activity and fate of evil angels we can draw some important conclusions:

1. We must not be misled concerning the devil’s method, and permit him to outwit us (2 Corinthians 2:11). We must not allow him to gain a foothold in our lives (Ephesians 4:27). Rather, we should be prepared to resist him, using the full armor of God (James 4:7; Ephesians 6:10-18).

2. We should not speak lightly of the devil (Jude 8,9) nor underestimate the degree to which he is committed to destroy the believer’s spiritual life. On the other hand, we should never forget that Jesus defeated Satan at the cross (Hebrews 2:14) and that we live by faith on the basis of that victory!

3. The power of Satan and his unholy angels is limited in time and extent by the permissive will of God. They are *not* all-powerful, all-knowing, or everywhere-present.

4. We must not attribute disease and natural disasters to the devil and his angels unless this is specifically revealed. Their power for evil is real but limited.

5. Although they are opposed to God, He compels them to serve His purposes. While God uses their evil intent to accomplish His purposes, He *will* at the appointed time carry out His judgment and punishment upon them.

6. The power of evil spirits over man is not independent of the human will. Wicked spirits cannot exercise their power without at least initial consent of the human will. This means that the believer can resist their power through prayer and faith in God! We have this sure promise from God's Word: "You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them [evil spirits], because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

13 Circle the letter preceding each **TRUE** statement.

- a** We see evidence of Satan's purpose in the names given to him.
- b** Because he can't attack God directly, the devil attacks man to get back at God.
- c** The devil was created to be the leader of the evil angels that rebelled against God.
- d** Unholy angels were created evil by the act of God.
- e** Evil angels are unlimited and can therefore work against anyone at any time.
- f** God may use evil angels, in spite of themselves, in His purpose to punish the ungodly or chasten good people.
- g** Some evil angels are bound until their judgment, while others are free to carry out the will of the devil.
- h** Satan and his evil angels are limited in time and extent by the permissive will of God.
- i** The believer is fully equipped to resist the devil and his forces and is commanded to do so, according to Scripture.
- j** The devil can't possess believers against their will.

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Place an **F** in front of the statements that are false and **T** in front of the statements that are true.

- **1** Angels are created, spiritual beings.
- **2** All angels were created holy.
- **3** Angels can be called either a company or a race.
- **4** The angelic host shows evidence of organization which seems to be based on its tasks or assignments.
- **5** The angels who left their positions of authority and abandoned their own home did this by their own choice.
- **6** Angels have personality and superhuman intelligence and power.
- **7** Most angels are omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent.
- **8** The Bible implies that Satan's fall was a result of his conceit or pride.
- **9** Evidence is given to support the existence of an archangel, cherubim, seraphim, and many angels who have no special title.
- **10** Satan's power is limited in time and extent by the permissive will of God.
- **11** The Bible implies that at least half of the angels made the choice to follow Satan and therefore fell with him.
- **12** The devil can tempt us to fall, but he cannot make us fall.
- **13** People can be possessed by a demon against their will even if they resist him.
- **14** The Bible reveals that there is such a great multitude of angels that they make up an innumerable host.

. . . . **15** The term *angels* means “messengers” and describes a major task of angels.

answers to study questions

- 7** b) innumerable multitudes of angels, good and evil, exist.
- 1** a) all things, visible, invisible.
b) life.
- 8** a), b), d), and e) are activities of holy angels.
- 2** b) immortal created beings who will never cease to exist.
- 9** a) 6) Watchmen.
b) 2) Gabriel.
c) 4) Cherubim.
d) 7) Living creatures.
e) 3) Holy angels.
f) 5) Seraphim.
g) 1) Michael.
- 3** They are not all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere-present.
- 10** b), c), d), and g) are activities of holy angels.
- 4** a) 4) Sexless.
b) 7) Not omnipresent.
c) 6) Powerful.
d) 5) Intelligent.
e) 2) Spirit.
f) 1) Created.
g) 8) Not glorified men.
h) 3) Personal.
- 11** a) 4) Man.
b) 5) Evil angel.
c) 1) Satan.
d) 3) Tempter.
e) 2) Devil.
- 5** a) not holding to the truth.

- b** sinned.
 - c** positions of authority; abandoned their own home.
 - d** conceit (that is, excessive pride).
- 12 a** hell, gloomy dungeons, judgment.
- b** kept in darkness; judgment.
 - c** destroying angels.
 - d** possess people.
 - e** cripple people.
 - f** heavenly realms and earth.
- 6 a** 2) Implied.
- b** 1) Clearly supported.
 - c** 2) Implied.
 - d** 3) Not supported at all.
 - e** 2) Implied.
 - f** 1) Clearly supported.
 - g** 1) Clearly supported.
 - h** 3) Not supported at all.
 - i** 1) Clearly supported.
 - j** 3) Not supported at all.
- 13** c), d), and e) are false. The remainder are true.

Lesson 6

Mankind: Human Subjects of the Creator

People have a wide variety of answers to explain the origin of man. Philosophers reason; evolutionists present their case; social scientists speculate. The attempts of secular men to explain their origin and development somehow leave us empty, for they believe that man is merely an accident, without meaning or purpose. By contrast, the Psalmist reflects on his origin and says to God, “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made . . . All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalm 139:14,16).

We are made in the image of God. We were made by our Creator to rule the earth justly, creatively, and responsibly. He has given us intelligence, feeling, and the ability to make morally responsible choices. We have the capacity to accomplish so much, but we also have the possibility of wasting our natural gifts and denying the Giver of them all. The only way we can realize the great potential which God has given us is by obedience to His Word. Our disobedience, however, robs us of reaching our potential both now and for all eternity.

In our last lesson we examined the spirit realm. Now we look at another class of God’s subjects: the human race. The terms *man* and *mankind* in this lesson refer to both members of the human race, male and female. As you study the lesson, you should be able to understand yourself better and know more clearly what are the duties, as well as the rights, of those who accept the sovereignty of God.



lesson outline

Man's Origin
Man's Nature
Man's Immortality

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- State the biblical views of man's origin, his nature, and his immortality.
- Identify the elements which make up a human being.
- Describe the process by which a person makes a moral decision.
- Desire to reflect the image of God in your life.

learning activities

1. Read Genesis 1-3 as background for this lesson. In addition, be sure to find and read each Scripture reference given in the lesson as you come to it.

- 2. Study the lesson as usual. When you have finished, take the self-test and check your answers.

key words

conscience	immortality	resembles
conscientious	infallible	subordinate
consequences	monitor	
evolve	resemblance	

lesson development

MAN’S ORIGIN

A Special Creation

Objective 1. *Select statements that provide evidence that man is a special creation of God.*

The Bible speaks reasonably and directly to the question, “How did man come into existence?” It gives evidence of man’s origin, purpose, and destiny. It reveals to us that man is a *special creation* of God.

Man is unique. The Scriptures declare that he is the result of a special divine act: “This is what the Lord says . . . ‘It is I who made the earth and created mankind upon it’” (Isaiah 45:11-12). Other Scriptures give us the same testimony.

1 Read the Scriptures and state what each tells us about the origin of man:

- a** Genesis 1:27
- b** Genesis 5:1-2
- c** Genesis 6:7
- d** Genesis 9:6
- e** Deuteronomy 4:32
- f** Psalm 100:3
- g** James 3:9

The creation of all other creatures simply involved a divine command which was put into effect immediately (see Genesis 1:20, 24), but in creating man God performed a special act. First, He formed man out of the earthly elements; then He breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 2:7); and man became a living being. This *divine inbreathing* imparted to man a *spiritual nature* from God that gave him a position far above all other creatures mentioned in Genesis 1. Moreover, God's command to rule and subdue the earth indicates the great distance between man and all other earthly creatures in the created order (1:28).

We can also see God's special interest in man when God *blessed him* with fruitfulness (Genesis 1:28; 5:2) so that he could fill the earth with the human race, and *gave him dominion* (rulership) over all other creatures upon the earth and over all seedbearing plants.

The most important distinction between man and all other creatures is that *man was created in the image of God* (Genesis 1:26). No other creature was made in God's likeness; only man was given the image of the Creator. As we shall see later in this lesson, man's likeness to God is not *physical* but a *moral and spiritual* likeness.

We discover further evidence of the special nature of man in the great differences we see between man and animals. Let's consider some of these differences.

1. Man has the power of speech—the amazing ability to communicate both concrete (real) and abstract (theoretical) ideas in a dynamic and creative way. An example of a *concrete* (real) idea is this: *I live in a white house that has five rooms*. An example of an *abstract* (theoretical) idea is this: *It is better to love than to hate*. Both of these ideas can be communicated to other human beings because of man's ability to think, understand, and express his thoughts through speech. No animal can do this.

2. Man has the ability to enjoy beauty. Animals, however, appear to have no more appreciation for a beautiful garden than they do for an ugly weed patch.

3. Man has the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. Animals do not have this capacity. For example, a dog might show distaste for punishment because it has disobeyed, and it might be conditioned or trained to obey through repeated punishment, but it never learns that it is *morally* wrong to steal a hen's eggs or to eat her chicks.

4. Man has a deep sense of the need to worship a superior being, but animals have neither the capacity for worship nor the means to express reverence.

5. Man can plan ahead, anticipate future needs, and bring about changes of events. He delights in creating new styles of houses and new forms of art. He strives continually to modify his environment to make life easier and better. Animals, however, are incapable of creativity or foresight. Anything they do in preparation for what lies ahead is simply a response to their natural instincts. For example, while birds have the natural instinct to build a nest for their young, through the centuries they continue to build the very same type of nest that their ancestors built.

It seems obvious, then, that man is a special creation of God. He is not the product of chance—he did not “evolve” from a lower form of animal life. We have seen in an earlier lesson that the God who created the universe also sustains it. Nature left to itself tends to lose quality, rather than improve. Things wear out. Order begins to show signs of disorder. It takes an intelligence and energy outside of and superior to the system to maintain it and cause it to get better. It was by a special act of a sovereign God that this most marvelous creature, man, was created (Colossians 1:16-17).

2 Which of the following statements provide evidence that man is a special creation of God?

- a** The creation of man followed the same pattern as the creation of plant and animal life.
- b** Man alone received life as a result of God's inbreathing.
- c** Man was given dominion over plant and animal life.
- d** Man was created in the likeness of his Creator.
- e** Man is different from and superior to all other creatures on earth.
- f** Man alone is independent of any higher power.

Made in God's Image

Objective 2. Find in given Scripture texts the likeness of man to God which is implied or indicated.

The Bible teaches that man was made in the image, or likeness, of God (Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1; 9:6; 1 Corinthians 11:7; James 3:9). Like God, man can think in terms of design and purpose. Each of us, in his own way, can create things that are useful and beautiful. We can also discover through our own studies the principles in creation that give evidence of God's creative handiwork. What else does this "likeness to God" include? What does it *not* include?

The term "in the image of God" does not mean that man is an exact copy of God. The idea is that in some ways he resembles God. We saw in Lesson 1 that God is invisible, and He is Spirit. So we know that the image of God in man is *not* a *physical likeness*. If our likeness to God is not physical, what is it?

1. *Personality*. Even though God is Spirit, our human spirit can interact with His divine Spirit, for we, like God, are personal beings. We have the possibility of communion with Him in a personal relationship, and we also have the capacity, like Him, to have fellowship with other beings.

2. *Moral Likeness*. Man, like God, has the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. Originally, man's total personality—intellect, feelings, and will—was directed to God. Man's moral nature was a limited copy of God's unlimited moral nature. Man had freedom to choose and to act responsibly. He could be tested, exercise judgment, develop, and progress as he exercised his freedom to choose between good and evil. The fact is that man was conscious of the need to choose between right and wrong.

3. *Rational nature*. Man has a likeness to the rational being of God because of his rational nature or intellect, his ability to reason and to know God and others. This ability is also referred to as man's mental likeness to his Maker.

4. *Ability to rule.* Man is like God in his ability to exercise dominion, to take control. Man can tame animals that are stronger than he. He harnesses rivers with dams in order to generate electricity. He makes deserts blossom like naturally fertile areas. In a small way, this God-given ability reflects God’s dominion over the entire universe.

5. *Self-awareness.* As a personal being made in God’s image, man has a consciousness of self. Very early in life a child begins to sense that he is a being apart from everyone else in the family. He is an individual. No matter what is required of him by his family or his cultural surroundings, he knows that he is a separate person. He has his own dreams, ambitions, hopes, fears, and motives. He is unlike any other being. Other creatures do not have this self-awareness.

6. *Social nature.* The basis of the divine social nature is God’s affections, or His love. All through eternity God has found the objects of His love in the Trinity. Jesus said, “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love...Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:9,12). Since we have received a social nature, we seek fellowship with God and others, and organize our lives according to the basic social unit: our families. Our love and our interest in others flows directly from the social aspect of our nature.

3 Find the following Scriptures and state the likeness of man to God indicated in each:

- a** Genesis 2:18
- b** Ephesians 4:24
- c** Colossians 3:10
- d** Psalm 139:13-16
- e** Romans 10:8-11
- f** Genesis 1:26,28
- g** 1 Peter 1:15

The Bible gives us a reasonable account of the origin of man. It deals with his nature and the potential with which he was created. It reveals facts about man's likeness to his Creator. This helps us to see how very special man is and how superior he is to other creatures. The Bible also teaches us that, along with his superior position as a moral being, man has some very important responsibilities—responsibilities that affect his eternal destiny, as we shall see in our next lesson.

MAN'S NATURE

Objective 3. *Match Scriptures with and complete statements regarding the material and immaterial aspects of man.*

It will be easier for us to solve our problems and understand how and why we behave as we do if we have a more complete understanding of human nature. It is true that man is a complex creature—he has a marvelous body, a fertile mind, and the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. These are but a few of his more prominent characteristics. This description reveals to us that man has a *material* or *physical* aspect which can be seen, and *immaterial* or *nonphysical* aspects which cannot be seen, measured or analyzed in a laboratory. Let's consider now these various aspects or characteristics of man's nature.

The Material (Physical) Aspect

It is quite easy for us to identify the material or physical aspect of man. It is what we see of another person. It is what a doctor examines and performs surgery on. It can be weighed, measured, and analyzed in a laboratory. It is the human body.

The Scriptures speak of the body quite frequently and include it in our redemption (Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20). What value does the Bible place on the human body? While we are taught that the nonphysical aspect of man is more important than the physical (Matthew 10:28), we are not led to consider our bodies as something to be despised or as inherently evil. On the contrary, the apostle Paul taught that even though our bodies decay after death, they will be miraculously

resurrected some day: "... the Lord Jesus Christ ... will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body" (Philippians 3:20-21).

In writing to the Corinthian church, Paul states that believers' bodies are members of the body of Christ. Their bodies, he says, are the temples of the Holy Spirit. For this reason he charges Christians to honor God with their bodies (1 Corinthians 6:15, 19-20).

The Lord Jesus honored the human body to the highest degree when He took one for Himself. Luke records that Jesus grew in "stature" (Luke 2:40) as He grew to maturity. In fact, the writer to the Hebrews declares that it was *necessary* for our Lord to have a body so that He could be our sympathetic High Priest and atoning Savior (Hebrews 2:14-15, 17-18).

4 Match the Scripture reference (right) with the appropriate description (left).

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| a The human body is a wonderful creation of God which He proclaimed to be very good. | 1) Genesis 1:27,31 |
| b Because Jesus had a human body, He can be our sympathetic High Priest. | 2) Romans 12:1 |
| c Our human body and all its parts are used as a pattern to represent the body of Christ. | 3) 1 Corinthians 6:15, 19-20 |
| d The body is to be honored as the temple of the Holy Spirit. | 4) Psalm 139:13-16 |
| e Our human bodies have been included in our redemption. | 5) Hebrews 2:14-15, 17-18 |
| f Our bodies are to be used in holy, acceptable service to God. | 6) 1 Corinthians 6:14 |
| g Our human bodies will be resurrected and transformed to be like Jesus' glorious body. | 7) Philippians 3:20-21 |
| | 8) Romans 8:23 |
| | 9) 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 |

The Immaterial (Nonphysical) Aspects

While it is easy to identify our material aspect, it is more difficult to describe the immaterial (nonphysical) dimension of the human makeup. For example, the Bible speaks of the *soul* and the *spirit* in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, which together with the body represent the total person. However, in Matthew 10:28 the soul seems to represent our total nonphysical aspect. Are we twofold or threefold beings? Are the soul and the spirit the same thing, or are they different?

It is difficult to determine whether *soul* and *spirit* are two separate aspects of man's total being, or one and the same thing. Let's keep this in focus as we examine in greater detail the nonphysical elements of our being.

Some Bible scholars believe that when God created man, He breathed into man but one principle: the living soul. Other Bible scholars believe that there are two elements to the immaterial part of man's being. One of these is *soul*, which is the principle of *biological* life, or that which gives us breath and makes us living creatures. The other is *spirit*, which is the basis of *rational* life, or that which is related to reason or understanding.

5 Read the following passages and state whether a single or twofold immaterial aspect of man is implied:

- a** Genesis 2:7
- b** Psalm 42:6
- c** 1 Corinthians 5:3
- d** Hebrews 4:12
- e** 1 Thessalonians 5:23

There are several important elements of rational life. You will recognize that the first three are also the aspects of personality. They are:

1. *The intellectual element*: the ability to understand, to reason, to remember.

- 2. *The emotional element*: the ability to feel, to be affected by what one knows or experiences.
- 3. *The will*: the ability to choose, to decide, to act.
- 4. *The conscience*: the knowledge of self in relation to a known standard of right and wrong.

In our study of the nature of God (Lesson 1) we learned that we were created with the basic ingredients of personality: intellect, emotions, and will. These qualities enable us to communicate with God and with other people in a responsible and meaningful way. Together with our physical being, these nonphysical elements enable us to live as whole, complete beings. We subdue the environment, taking from it what is necessary to live. We learn to work with others in harmonious social settings. We try most of all to please our Creator, who has provided all that is necessary for a meaningful life and eternal salvation.

Our *will* and our *conscience* are important elements of the *moral aspect* of our nonphysical being, as we shall see in our next section of study.

6 Based upon the preceding discussion, we can know for sure that

- a) man is made up of three elements: body, soul, and spirit.
- b) the Bible clearly teaches that man is a threefold being.
- c) man is made up of two elements: body and soul.
- d) the Bible clearly teaches that man is a twofold being.
- e) Scripture speaks of body, soul, spirit, the breath of life, and other terms to describe man’s nature, but it does not clearly reveal whether man has a twofold or a threefold nature.

7 Four elements of rational life of man are

.....

The Moral Aspects

Objective 4. *Recognize true statements concerning the functions of the conscience and the will in making moral choices.*

The rational qualities of our immaterial being which we have just studied equip us for right or wrong action. Our intellect

enables us to know the issues of both right and wrong. Our emotions appeal to us to move in one direction or the other, and our will decides the matter. But without the fourth element, our conscience, there can be no moral action.

Our conscience might be described as an “inner voice” which applies God’s moral law to us in relation to specific courses of action and urges us to obey it. In order to understand more clearly the nature of this moral power, we shall now consider the *conscience* and the *will* as they relate to our actions.

The Conscience

We have seen briefly that our conscience is concerned with our attitudes and actions. It is the faculty that enables us to judge appropriately between courses of action or the formation of attitudes that may be either pleasing or displeasing to God. God has revealed in His Word an acceptable standard of living. The teaching and practical application of divine truth we receive helps us to understand how we ought to live. Thus, what we know of the will of God as revealed in His Word and what we have learned in the application of this truth in our own daily lives forms the basis upon which the conscience acts.

Conscience monitors (warns of or instructs about) the rightness or wrongness of attitudes that are taking shape or of actions that we are about to carry out. The apostle Paul gives an example of this when he speaks of those who “show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them” (Romans 2:15).

For example, consider a Christian businessman, Jerome, who is faced with a decision: “Shall I go to dinner with an important business contact in a place where wicked amusements are featured? Or should I stand on my convictions that this would be wrong even though I may lose a business transaction if I do not accept the invitation?”

Jerome’s standard is the Word of God. He knows what God has to say about wrong associations (2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Corinthians 15:33). His conscience *testifies* that it is wrong to

accept the invitation, because it is contrary to God’s standard. It also *reminds* him of his obligation to behave as God intends. Jerome’s conscience thus *discriminates* (notes the difference) between right and wrong action on the basis of God’s Word. Because Jerome is a Christian, his conscience speaks to him under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

If Jerome disregards the witness of his conscience and his moral responsibilities, he will feel shame and regret, and he will fear the consequences of his action. Yielding to temptation brings with it a sense of failure—failure to live according to God’s standard. The feelings associated with failure—shame, regret, and fear—are not elements of the conscience but of the emotions. Conscience, then, acts as the judge of our mental attitudes and our behavior.

8 For a Christian, disobeying the conscience results in the three feelings of

Since God has created us with this inward monitor or “voice,” we should understand more about what can be done to our conscience and what its limitations are. First, like the intellect, the conscience develops as we grow and mature. As we come to understand our responsibilities, we begin to understand the consequences of our actions. Second, the Bible teaches that the conscience can be defiled, corrupted, and seared:

Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat such food they think of it as having been sacrificed to an idol, and *since their conscience is weak, it is defiled* (1 Corinthians 8:7).

To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, *both their minds and consciences are corrupted* (Titus 1:15).

Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, *whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron* (1 Timothy 4:2).

These Scriptures indicate that carelessness in Christian living, ignoring the voice of conscience, and giving up one’s faith can make ineffective the God-given function of the

conscience. Nevertheless, the Bible does not indicate that the conscience can be destroyed.

Third, the conscience is not *infallible* (without error, perfect). That is, it is capable of misleading a person if the wrong standard is given to it. The apostle Paul, before his crisis on the Damascus Road, was very *conscientious* in his wrong conduct. *He thought he was doing the right thing*. His zealous spirit and flawless character were commendable, but his actions were shocking! Because his reason had adopted a wrong interpretation of the Old Testament, his conscience witnessed on the basis of that interpretation, and it led him astray. (See Acts 9.)

Our conscience, then, judges our actions and attitudes on the basis of:

1. our knowledge of God's existence;
2. God's revealed will;
3. the moral awareness He has given us;
4. what we have been taught (the input given to the conscience);
5. the social standards we have accepted.

We know that we are accountable to God. Social standards however, are not always the same, because of sin and rejection of God's standard. Therefore, *the only standard of conscience acceptable to God is that which is based upon His Word as it is interpreted by the Holy Spirit*.

9 Circle the letter in front of each **TRUE** statement.

- a** The conscience tells us if we are living responsibly in relation to an accepted standard.
- b** Christians can usually be guided by social standards in determining what is right or wrong.
- c** The conscience is always consistent with the standard upon which it is based.
- d** If the conscience is based upon the standard of the Word of God, it cannot become corrupted, defiled, or seared.
- e** A Christian's conscience is mainly shaped by his interpretation of right and wrong actions.
- f** The conscience can become corrupted, defiled, or seared if it is consistently ignored.

- g** A person's conscience can be destroyed if he continues to act in a way contrary to what his conscience is telling him.

The Will

The will is our faculty of choosing or deciding between possible courses of action. With regard to any possible action, we must know about it before we can express feelings about it. Then, on the basis of knowledge and feeling, we can by an act of the will choose a particular course of action. We can freely choose to do anything that is consistent with our nature. We can will to run, but we can't will to live under water like a fish. Running is consistent with man's nature; living under water is not. As we shall see in our next lesson, man is limited by sin so that he cannot change his moral state simply by *willing* to become righteous.

What, then, influences the will? Is it totally under man's control, or God's? What process is involved in our decision making? Let's examine these matters now as we study man's nature more fully.

When God created man, he gave man the power of choice: the power to sin or not to sin. God placed him in the Garden of Eden and stated the conditions under which he could continue in fellowship:

And the Lord commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die' (Genesis 2:16-17).

How did Adam respond to this instruction from the Lord? The decision-making process probably followed this pattern:

1. Adam's *intellect* accepted God's standard. He understood what God was telling him.
2. His *emotions* assented to the rightness of God's words. As his Creator and Sovereign Lord, God had the right to make this standard.
3. His *will* prepared to decide between acceptance and rejection of the temptation presented by the serpent (Genesis 3:4-6).

4. In this crucial time, Adam's *conscience* weighed the consequences of acting contrary to God's standard.
5. Adam yielded to temptation by *an act of his will*.

Thus, Adam deliberately disobeyed God's word and suffered immediate consequences. His conscience condemned him, causing him to recognize that he had failed to keep God's commandment. He felt shame, regret, and fear because his act of disobedience had robbed him of his innocence (Genesis 3:7-10). Now his nature was corrupt. He had fallen from a state of innocence to one of corruption. Since Adam's fall from God's favor, man has been limited by his sinful nature. He cannot *will* to be obedient to God's will without God's help. Paul says, "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out" (Romans 7:18).

God, however, is not content to leave man in his corruption. He extends grace to man in his lost condition, appealing to him to repent of his sins and to accept the salvation He offers (Titus 2:11). It is here that the Holy Spirit takes the initiative, influencing the will of man to turn to God (Philippians 2:13). Those who turn have the right to become children of God (John 1:12).

While God extends grace to fallen man and enables him to accept Christ as his Savior, He does not force man to do so. By an act of the will, man may accept the offer and become a child of God; or he may reject it and remain under the condemnation (judgment) of God. His will is free to decide this issue. In the process, both the will of God and the will of man are involved (Titus 2:11-12; John 7:17).

10 Match the Scripture (right) with the statements (left).

- | | | |
|---------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| a | The grace of God teaches us to say "no" to ungodliness and worldly passions. | 1) John 7:17
2) Philippians 2:13 |
| b | It is God who works in you to <i>will</i> and to act. | 3) Titus 2:11-12
4) Romans 7:18 |
| c | If anyone chooses to do God's <i>will</i> , he will find out if ... teaching comes from God. | |

. . . . **d** I have the desire to do good but cannot carry it out.

11 In the process which leads to action or decision-making, we see all of man’s rational faculties or powers at work. Complete the following sentences to explain the process.

- a** The intellect
- b** The emotions
- c** The conscience
- d** The will

While our rational faculties are involved in making moral decisions, the Holy Spirit exerts a positive influence for good as long as we have our minds set on what the Spirit desires (see Romans 8:5-9, 12-14), and He works in us to bring us to a desire for His will (Philippians 2:13). Learning to live in the Spirit and to keep in step with the Spirit represents a growing experience in each of our lives as we move progressively toward Christian maturity (Galatians 5:16-18, 25).

MAN’S IMMORTALITY

Objective 5. *Explain the idea of immortality and what happens to man following physical death.*

What happens to man at death? There are many things we do not know about life after death, but the Bible does teach us some things that reveal there is life after death.

Physical death is what happens when the body ceases to function. The body decays and returns to dust (see Genesis 3:19), but the immaterial part of man, which the Bible refers to as soul or spirit, continues to exist. Numerous Scripture passages confirm this:

Luke 23:43: “Jesus answered him, ‘I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.’”

2 Corinthians 5:8: “We . . . would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”

Philippians 1:22-23: “If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. . . . I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far.”

John 5:24: “Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life . . . he has crossed over from death to life.”

Man’s physical death was part of the curse which came upon him, when Adam sinned: “. . . for dust you are and to dust you will return” (Genesis 3:19). While at death the Christian ceases to exist as a complete material/immaterial being, he has the blessed hope of the second coming of Christ, when he will receive a glorified body. Jesus, by His death for our sins and by His resurrection, has assured our resurrection from the dead. This is explained in 1 Corinthians 15:42-49:

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written: ‘The first man Adam became a living being’; the last Adam [Christ], a life-giving spirit. . . . And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

By contrast, when an unrepentant sinner dies, his soul continues in a state of conscious existence in a place of intense suffering called Hades or hell. We are given a glimpse of this in Jesus’ story of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-24). In Hades, the rich man described by Jesus could think, remember, talk, and feel. He also kept his self-awareness.

Thus, we see that man was created by God as an immortal being. This is a blessed hope to those who have accepted the atoning work of Christ and who serve and obey Him. When believers die, their souls are immediately in the presence of the Lord. At His second coming, their mortal bodies will be

resurrected and will be changed into glorified bodies (1 Corinthians 15:50-57). What a glorious day that will be! However, the unbeliever faces eternal judgment and torment away from the presence of the Lord (see Revelation 20:7-10).

12 In your notebook, answer the following questions based on the preceding discussion:

- a** What happens to the body when it dies?
- b** What happens to the soul or spirit at the time of death?
- c** What will happen at the second coming of Christ for believers?
- d** What is the eternal destiny of those who do not accept Christ?
- e** Explain this statement: Man is an immortal being.

self-test

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Circle the letter in front of the correct answer.

- 1** The biblical view of the creation of man is that he
 - a) was simply one of many living beings that God created at a specific time.
 - b) was a unique creation of God, set above other creatures and blessed by God.
 - c) evolved over the course of time from a lower part of creation until he gradually assumed control over it.

- 2** When we say that man is made in the *likeness of God*, we mean that he is
 - a) exactly like God in every detail.
 - b) now a limited copy of God who will eventually become exactly like God with unlimited power and authority.
 - c) similar in his personality, moral and social awareness, and ability to rule.

- 3** Human beings are made up of
 - a) both material and immaterial aspects.
 - b) a body that wears out and decays after death, and a soul that dies until it is revived at the final judgment.
 - c) a body that is evil and an immaterial aspect that is good.

- 4** The immaterial aspect of man as the principle of biological life is seen by some scholars as the
 - a) body.
 - b) soul.
 - c) spirit.
 - d) breath of life.

- 5** *Soul, spirit, breath of life, and conscience* are all terms used in the Bible in reference to man's
 - a) material being.
 - b) immaterial being.
 - c) personality.
 - d) body.

6 Which of these statements are true concerning elements of man as a rational being?

- a) Intellect enables one to understand and reason.
- b) Emotions enable one to feel and be affected by what he knows.
- c) Conscience weighs courses of action or attitudes on the basis of a standard of right or wrong.
- d) Will is the faculty which enables one to choose and act.

7 When a matter is clearly understood, first the

- a) will immediately decides the issue.
- b) intellect points out the good and bad points as compared to a standard.
- c) emotions appeal to a person to act in one way or another.
- d) conscience causes guilt and regret.

8 In the process of making a decision, a person must first

- a) have an understanding of the facts of the matter in question.
- b) decide what to do based upon the standards of his society.
- c) consider his feelings and the consequences of his decision.

9 The conscience is that element which

- a) appeals for a decision based upon one's desires.
- b) weighs courses of action against one's standard of conduct.
- c) makes a decision to act.
- d) chooses a course of action.

10 Man's will functions in accordance to God's will because of

- a) the desire to do good.
- b) man's conscience which reveals to him God's will.
- c) God's grace that brings salvation and enablement to obey God.
- d) fear of the condemnation or judgment of God.

11 Which of these is true concerning man's immortality?

- a) Man's body and soul are immortal in their present condition.
- b) Man's physical body will decay and die, but his soul will live forever in a state of perfect peace.
- c) Man's body will die; the believer's soul/spirit will immediately be in the presence of the Lord and at the Second Coming he will receive a resurrected glorified body; the unbeliever will experience everlasting torment in Hades or hell.

answers to study questions

- 1 a** God created man in His own image.
b God created male and female, in His likeness.
c God created mankind.
d God made man in the image of God.
e God created man on the earth.
f It is the Lord who made us.
g Men have been made in God's likeness.
- 7** The intellectual element, the will, the emotional element, and the conscience.
- 2** b), c), d), and e) provide evidence.
- 8** shame, regret, and fear.
- 3 a** Social nature.
b Moral likeness.
c Rational nature.
d Self-awareness.
e Personality.
f Ability to rule.
g Moral likeness.
- 9 a** True.
b False.
c True.
d False.
e False. (It is shaped by God's Word as it is interpreted by the Holy Spirit.)
f True.
g False.
- 4 a** 1) and 4) Genesis 1:27,31; Psalm 139:13-16.
b 5) Hebrews 2:14-15, 17-18.
c 9) 1 Corinthians 12:12-27.
d 3) 1 Corinthians 6:15, 19-20.
e 8) and 6) Romans 8:23; 1 Corinthians 6:14.
f 2) Romans 12:1.
g 7) Philippians 3:20-21.

- 10 a** 3) Titus 2:11-12
b 2) Philippians 2:13
c 1) John 7:17
d 4) Romans 7:18
- 5** The New International Version gives these terms:
a The breath of life (one aspect).
b Soul (one aspect).
c Spirit (one aspect).
d Soul and spirit (two aspects).
e Soul and spirit (two aspects).
- 11** Your answer should be similar to this:
a understands what is involved or what needs to be decided.
b appeal for one course of action or another to be taken.
c weighs the proposed courses of action against one's moral standards.
d decides the matter.
- 6 e)** Scripture speaks of body, soul, spirit
- 12** Your answer should be similar to these:
a It decays and returns to dust.
b The Christian goes immediately to be in the presence of the Lord in paradise. The unbeliever suffers in Hades or hell.
c Their mortal bodies will be resurrected and changed to immortal glorified bodies.
d Everlasting judgment and torment away from the presence of God.
e Man was created by God as a material/immaterial being whose soul/spirit will never die. He will exist forever, either in the presence of the Lord, or in hell where there is eternal punishment.

Your Notes

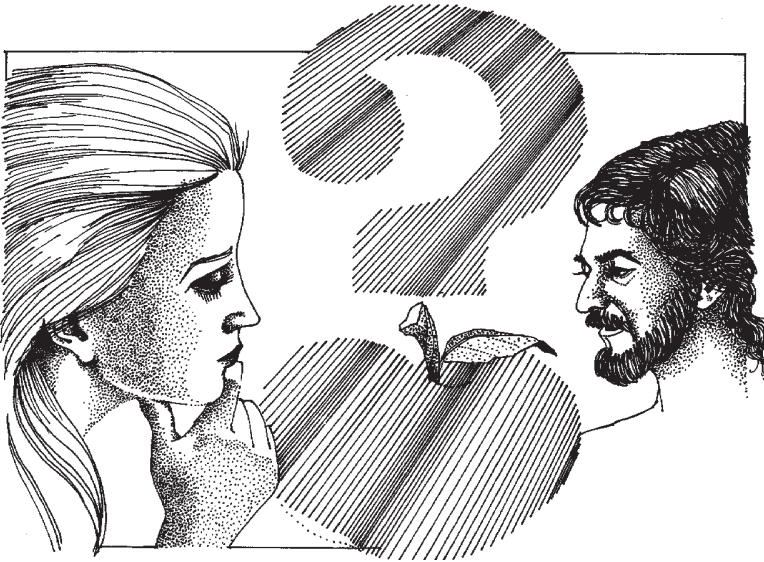
Lesson 7

Sin and Salvation: Problem and Solution

“Bob, the workers who are building the house next door are mixing concrete today, so don’t go near them. You have on a new shirt.”

My wife likes to tell this story about how annoyed her brother was with his mother’s warning. Presently, he stood to his full six-year height and marched defiantly over to the construction site. Just as he arrived, a butterfly landed in the concrete-mixing trough. Bob quickly leaned over to free the struggling creature, but in the process he lost his balance and fell into the concrete! Concrete poured from his hair and ran all over his face. The new shirt was ruined! Bob’s bold defiance had changed to fearful agony. How would he ever face his mother? What would be the consequences of his disobedience?

Humanity finds itself in a similar situation. This glorious creation of God that was the subject of Lesson 6 has been corrupted and marred by sin. In this lesson we shall learn what the Bible says about the origin and consequences of sin. But thank God, we do not have to stop the study at the point of despair. We shall also learn about the solution that Christ has provided. Let’s ask the Holy Spirit to help us as we study these important topics.



lesson outline

The Reality of Sin
The Origin of Sin
The Nature of Sin
The Consequences of Sin
The Restoration of the Sinner

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Give examples which provide evidence of the reality of sin.
- State what we can know from Scripture about the origin of sin.
- Describe the nature and consequences of sin.
- List steps that lead to the restoration of the sinner.

learning activities

1. As background for this lesson, read Genesis 2 and 3, and Romans 5 and 6, which relate to the problem of sin. Also read Isaiah 53 for the insights it gives into the solution God has provided for sin. Then work through the lesson development as usual.
2. After you have taken the self-test, review Lessons 5-7. Then answer the questions in Unit Student Report 2.

key words

atoned	deliberate	inclination
corrupt	frustrate	pollution
counterfeit	hostile	rebelliousness
deceptive	imitate	restoration

lesson development

THE REALITY OF SIN

Objective 1. *State a definition and two proofs of the reality of sin.*

Sin may be defined as disobedience and failure to conform to the laws God has given for the direction of His rational creatures. Since God's law is an expression of His moral nature, man must conform to that law in order to please God's holy nature. The Bible clearly reveals to us the reality of sin, as well as its origin, nature, consequences, and cure. All of these aspects of sin will be discussed as we progress through the lesson.

As we saw in our last lesson, man is a rational creature. Thus, he knows that he is guilty of sin if he 1) does what he should not do; 2) does not do what he should do; 3) is what he should not be; or 4) is not what he should be. There are many evidences of the reality of sin. The first of these is found in the Bible.

Seen in Biblical Evidence

Sin is one of the main topics of the Bible. Genesis 3 records the first time that man sinned. Chapter 4 continues the story, telling how the problem continued to affect the children of our first parents. At this point, God made a moving plea to Cain: “Sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it” (Genesis 4:7). Cain, however, submitted to his feelings of jealousy, hate, and rebellion and murdered his own brother.

1 In three words, what was the nature of Adam and Eve’s sin and the sin of Cain? (Genesis 3:11 and 4:7)

Time and again we see the problem of sin as we go through the Bible. God gave the written Law to guide His people early in their experience (Exodus 20:1-17). He further instructed Moses in all the laws for His people and stated clearly how sin could be atoned for, directing the people of Israel to offer proper sacrifices for the sins they committed (Leviticus 4-7). He even named one day each year when the entire nation of Israel must deal with sin (Leviticus 16). The first five books of the Old Testament are called the books of the Law, because they contain all of God’s commandments to His people for holy living and His instructions for receiving pardon for sin.

The historical books, Joshua through Esther, record the tragic failure of God’s people to obey His commandments. They reveal the backsliding, disobedience, stubbornness, and rebellion of Israel toward God and His laws.

2 Compare Judges 2:6-7 with 2:10-19. After Joshua’s death how did the people change?

.....

3 Read Judges 3:7, 9, 12, 15; 4:1; 6:1. What is the recurring theme of these verses?

.....

The Psalmist portrays sorrow over personal sin: “Have mercy on me, O God . . . wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin . . . Surely I have been a sinner from birth”

(Psalm 51:1-2, 5). The prophets cry out against sin that caused Israel's downfall (Ezekiel 23; Jeremiah 5; Daniel 9:1-23).

The New Testament records the treachery of Judas Iscariot (Matthew 26:14-16). It portrays the suffering of our Savior, who took upon Himself the sin of the world (Luke 22:39-44; John 19:1-3, 18). It describes the horrible plot of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). One of the most vivid evidences of the reality of sin is recorded in Romans 1:18-32. Here is the way sin is described:

Furthermore, since they [men] did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done. They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them (vs. 28-32).

4 Define sin as described in 1 John 5:17 and our discussion.

.....

Seen in the Need for Government

Not only does the Bible present us with many examples of the reality of sin, it also provides evidence through the unavoidable need for government in society. In Judges 21:25 we read: "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit." Up to that time God had used judges to lead the Israelites according to His directions, but in 1 Samuel 8 we find that the Israelites asked Samuel to appoint a king to lead them. They wanted to have the same type of government as all the nations around them (v. 5). Because the people were not willing to obey God, there was a need for government.

People sometimes dream of an environment called "Utopia," an idealistic place or state where perfect justice and social

harmony exist. In Utopia everyone minds his own business, gladly contributes to the welfare of the rest, and enjoys the good things of life to the fullest. However, a utopian society cannot exist on earth. Human beings are selfish and rebellious by nature. Sin is a reality of life that we face every day. No one escapes its effects. The tragic consequences of sin are reported in the newspapers and through the radio and other mass media, clearly indicating the need for governmental control in our society.

Sin is real. It is not the result of superstition or lack of education. It results from the nature of men and women who live contrary to the laws of God and according to their own evil desires.

5 In your notebook, state two proofs of the reality of sin, and give an example of each.

THE ORIGIN OF SIN

For many centuries philosophers have debated whether sin is eternal and has always existed alongside of good. Some have concluded that the struggle between right and wrong has always existed and will continue throughout eternity. Was there a time when only goodness existed? If so, when did sin make its appearance? To resolve these questions, we turn now to a study of the origin of sin in the universe and in the human race.

In the Universe

Objective 2. *Choose statements which describe correctly the origin of sin.*

In Lesson 5 we discussed the sin of angels that led to their fall and what the Scriptures say about the origin of sin in the universe. Let's review these facts briefly to see how they relate to the spread of sin to the human race. First, reread in Lesson 5 the section entitled *The Moral Character of Angels*. Here is a summary of that section:

1. Angels were created as a company of holy, perfect, and personal beings whose wills were inclined toward their Creator.
2. Angels apparently had the power of choice and understood the consequences of disobedience.

3. One among their number, Satan, occupied an exalted position (Ezekiel 28:12; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:2).
4. Satan was evidently the leader of rebellion from the beginning (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8).
5. From references to earthly kings which seem to symbolize Satan, we gather that his sin began with ambition and conceit (pride). (Compare Ezekiel 28:11-19 and Isaiah 14:13-14 with 1 Timothy 3:6).

The preceding Scripture passages help us to understand that Satan was discontented with his own position under God. He was more concerned with his own ambition than he was with serving God. He was so blinded by his own beauty that it appears he even thought he could surpass the Creator. He was, selfish, discontented, and covetous, desiring not only what his Creator had given to him but also what God had reserved for Himself. The symptoms of sin that we see in Satan were apparently the root causes of sin in the rest of the evil angels.

All of this is of great importance to us, because when Satan and his angels rebelled against God, sin became a principle of life to be faced in the universe. Their sin represented opposition to the rule of our loving heavenly Father. Satan's purpose now is to frustrate God's plan in every area of the universe. He heads a world system which stands in opposition to God and His rule.

6 Circle the letters in front of **TRUE** statements concerning the origin of sin in the universe.

- a** God introduced sin into the universe as a means of testing His creatures' loyalty to Him.
- b** Sin is an eternal principle designed to balance the principle of good.
- c** Sin began when responsible created beings chose to disobey their Creator and go their own way.
- d** Sin originated in the universe when Satan desired a higher position because of his own ambition and pride.
- e** The power of choice was necessary for angels as well as men, because God does not force anyone to worship Him.

In the Human Race

As we have seen, God created man without a sinful nature, placed him in an ideal environment, and provided for all his needs. God gave Adam a powerful mind and abundant challenges to occupy his time and energy. He also gave Adam a suitable helper and companion, Eve. Then the Creator gave some simple rules to be observed and warned Adam and Eve of the consequences of disobedience. He then entered into a very close relationship with this first couple.

God's warning to Adam and Eve served as a simple test. In the midst of abundant privileges and provisions, they were denied only one thing: the fruit of one tree. This test was designed to show their obedience or disobedience to His will. Adam and Eve were not created as robots to live for God's glory without any choice in this matter. Their wills were inclined toward God, but since they had the power either to accept or reject this inclination, they could exercise their free will and make a deliberate choice. This ability is a necessary condition of testing.

Satan had no tempter when he rebelled against God, but the first human beings did. Soon after Adam and Eve were placed in the Garden of Eden, Satan approached Eve and implied that God was withholding from her and Adam something that was good and beneficial. It is remarkable that Eve did not raise any objections to this serious charge against God. In fact, when Satan in effect said that God was a liar, stating, "You will *not* surely die," (Genesis 3:4), Eve neither protested nor sought to balance Satan's false claims against God's holy character. Rather, she thought only of the benefits *she* could gain from following the tempter's advice. It appealed to her senses, her appetite, and a newly-awakened ambition.

Thus, Eve, by an act of her will and because of Satan's deception, determined to do what she wanted rather than what God wanted. Genesis 3:1-5 indicates that she wanted to 1) have what God had forbidden; 2) know what God had not revealed; and 3) be what God had not intended for her to be.

Eve thus preferred self to God, which is sin. She considered what she was about to do. Looking at the fruit, she reasoned that

since it was good food, there could be no wrong in partaking of it. She also reasoned that, since it was beautiful and was said to bring knowledge, eating it could not be wrong. She thus forgot the most important fact: **GOD HAD FORBIDDEN THE EATING OF THE FRUIT!** Seeing only what she wanted to see, she and Adam ate the fruit in open disobedience of God's word. They did not question whether God would be glorified by their action, even though they had sufficient intelligence to understand the consequences. Why did they not consider more carefully what they were doing?

So our first ancestors deliberately chose to ignore God's warning. Even though they were tempted, nobody forced them to go against God's instructions. This act of disobedience produced sin in the human race (see Romans 5:12), and the attitude that led to it continues in human nature. I have felt it, and so have you. Thus sin entered the world and cast its evil influence on mankind, destroying man's blessed relationship with God. Sin continues its effects on each descendant of Adam. Every person inherits from Adam a sinful nature that, if not corrected, will lead to eventual spiritual death.

7 Read Genesis 3:22-23 and Romans 5:12, and answer these questions:

a What was the result of Adam's sin in relation to his own life?

.....

b What is the result for all of Adam's descendants?

.....

8 In your notebook, explain why God's punishment of Adam and Eve, and through them the entire human race, is justified.

THE NATURE OF SIN

Objective 3. *Identify aspects of sin.*

Wouldn't it be a help if sin were some physical substance that we could isolate? We could invite some researchers to find a chemical, drug, or serum to destroy it. Then teams of specialists could go from community to community giving

injections that would end forever its power and consequences. Before long society would be totally transformed and people could live to glorify God. We know that sin is neither a microbe nor a virus. What is the real nature of sin?

We saw a brief definition of sin in the first section of this lesson; it is disobedience and failure to conform to God's Word. It is all the things that people do wrong. It includes doing what we shouldn't do and not doing what we should do.

The Hebrew language of the Old Testament and the Greek dialect in which the New Testament was written employ expressive words to describe the act of sinning against God. Bible scholars who have studied word formation explain what ideas created them. Their word study gives us a grasp of the meaning of the word *sin*. Each of the terms in a different way expresses an act or attitude that provokes God's disapproval. Let's look at some of these terms. (The terms used in modern Bible translations may not be exactly the same as those we have given here, which are derived from the Hebrew or Greek expressions.)

1. *Trespass* (Romans 5:14-17). We often see signs that say *No Trespassing*. What does this mean? To trespass means to go across or to invade the property or rights of another. When people put up a sign like this, they do not want anyone to cross their property. To prevent trespassing they either enclose their property or mark its boundaries clearly. Often they include on their sign the penalty for trespassing. Similarly, God has established certain moral boundaries for man which we refer to as *laws*. When a person trespasses, or crosses over these boundary lines, he sins—he ignores God's law. Lawlessness is sin (1 John 3:4).

2. *Missing the mark* (Exodus 20:20). When a person sins, he fails to fulfill God's purpose for his life. In this sense, sin is *missing the mark*. He falls short of what God has planned for him. *Missing the mark* is a term related to archery when one fails to hit the center of a target at which he aims.

3. *Selfishness* (Psalm 119:36; Philippians 2:3). The first disobedience arose because of selfishness, for man wanted what he felt God had denied him. It appealed to his *vanity* or *pride*.

4. *Rebellion* (Exodus 23:21; 1 Samuel 24:11). To rebel is to disobey or go against the one in authority. It is a *departure* from the law of God. Isaiah illustrates this by saying, “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6). This is just what people are doing today. Each one wants to “do his own thing”—follow his own desires. The same is true of entire communities and nations. People do not want to follow the path God has marked out for them.

5. *Pollution* (James 1:27). When one intentionally sins, he is aware of his wrongdoing, for his conscience condemns him. The feeling of guilt awakened by sin makes him aware of his pollution (uncleanness). He feels dirty. That is why the Scriptures speak of the need for *cleansing* from the pollution of sin (Psalm 51:2, 7; 1 John 1:7).

To summarize briefly, sin is the failure of God’s reasonable creatures to obey His laws. Anything that does not have as its goal the glory of God is sin (Romans 3:23). Anything in man which does not express, or which is contrary to, the holy character of God is sin.

9 Match the terms which represent an aspect of sin to the definition which is best for each one.

- | | | |
|--------|---|---------------------|
| ... a | To want one’s own way rather than submitting to God’s way | 1) Trespass |
| b | Results in a need for cleansing | 2) Missing the mark |
| c | Falling short of fulfilling God’s purpose in life | 3) Selfishness |
| d | To cross over forbidden boundary lines set by God | 4) Rebellion |
| e | Going against God’s authority—a departure from the law of God | 5) Pollution |

THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

Objective 4. *Recognize true statements that describe the consequences of sin.*

Genesis 3 recounts the tragic consequences of the first sin. As surely as God said, “You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil,” He also warned, “for when you eat of it you will surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Having disregarded the divine warning and taken what was forbidden, man could expect nothing less than the promised consequences. Let’s look, briefly, at the major consequences of man’s original sin.

A Broken Relationship With God

The knowledge and awareness that they had deliberately disobeyed God brought an immediate sense of guilt to Adam and Eve. Their innocence was gone, and their consciences condemned their action. They sensed their nakedness before each other and before God, and in shame they tried to hide from God. When He confronted them with what they had done, each tried to blame another. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent (Genesis 3:12-13), and with this tragic confession, their beautiful, personal relationship with God ended. They experienced spiritual death (Genesis 2:17) and were sent out of the perfect Garden of Eden to a life much different than they had known up to that time.

A Sinful Nature

The sin of Adam and Eve corrupted not only their own hearts but also the hearts of all their descendants. The Bible declares that their one sin was a corrupting principle that was passed on to every one of their descendants, to every human being (Romans 5:12). The entire world thus came under the power of sin (Galatians 3:22), and with this bondage we became “objects of wrath” (Ephesians 2:3). This sinful nature makes it impossible for people to please God. Each person acts as he does because of his corrupt nature, because of what he is.

The Bible declares that we are born with this corrupt nature (Psalm 51:5). We would like to think that children are perfect and have no sinful nature. However, as we watch brothers and sisters fight with one another, we realize that selfishness is a part of human nature. A child’s tendency to disobey also comes from his sinful nature.

10 Match the Scriptures (left) with the part of man's being corrupted by sin (right).

- | | | |
|--------|---|-------------------------|
| a | 1 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:15 | 1) Intellect |
| b | Romans 1:28; 1 Corinthians 2:14;
2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 4:18 | 2) Emotions or feelings |
| c | Ephesians 2:1,5; Colossians 2:13,18 | 3) Will |
| d | Jeremiah 17:9-10; Ephesians 4:19 | 4) Conscience |
| e | Romans 1:28; 7:18-20 | 5) Spirit (it is dead) |

These texts show us that every part of man's being is corrupted by sin, and in this state he can do nothing that pleases God. This does not mean that a person without God cannot do or appreciate acts of goodness and kindness. It does mean that, until he is revived spiritually, he can do nothing that is worthy of God's approval. The likeness of God in him has been spoiled.

Not only do we suffer the consequences of Adam's sin and the effects of the sinful nature that we received from him, we also suffer the consequences of our own sins. If I am lazy and do not work, I will suffer the consequences (and so will my family).

We often have to suffer not only the results of our own sin, but also the consequences of the sins of another. The citizens of a country whose government officials are corrupt do not enjoy the blessing that a good government can provide. The children of a drunken father may suffer the abuse that can result from a mind drugged by alcohol. People die in automobile accidents because of drunken drivers. Society in general suffers abuse from criminals and then pays the cost of their confinement in prisons.

In Lesson 6 we saw that the good side of man is to be admired; now we look at the tragic side. Man without God is depraved. As we approach the last days, we can expect to see terrible conditions everywhere. Under prophetic inspiration, the apostle Paul wrote these words:

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving,

slandrous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—having a form of godliness but denying its power (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

11 Which statement best explains the consequences of sin?

- a) We suffer today not only because of Adam's sin and our inherited sinful nature but also as a consequence of the sin of others.
- b) Each person suffers the consequences of his own sin, but his sin does not have any effect on the lives of others.
- c) The consequences of sin will decrease during the last days as people become more enlightened.

A Physical Liability

Sickness and disease were unknown to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Germs, viruses, and diseases of all kinds appeared as a result of sin and are seen thereafter in connection with sin and judgment (Exodus 15:26; Deuteronomy 28:58-62). Pain, weariness, and physical breakdown are part of the process begun by sin which leads finally to physical death (Genesis 3:16-19). In fact, death stalks humanity as a result of the fall of man. The process of living is also marked by satanic opposition to man's efforts to approach, live for, and please God (Genesis 3:15).

A Hostile Environment

Because of the curse caused by sin, the whole universe suffers (Genesis 3:17-18). Animal life shows savage traits. Isaiah 11:6-9 indicates that in God's coming kingdom wild animals will be peaceful rather than savage. This leads us to believe that the present order of the jungle is the result of the curse of sin; the stronger preys on the weaker, and harmony in nature has been disrupted.

Plant life also reveals the effects of sin. Weeds and thorns choke out the good plants. Food does not grow without much effort on the part of man. Man's struggle to get food from the environment takes a heavy toll on his body. The apostle Paul describes it this way:

The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed . . . in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time (Romans 8:19-22).

An Eternal Separation and Punishment

The final result of sin that we are going to mention is the saddest of all. The Bible reveals that the unrepentant sinner will have to suffer eternal punishment. How I wish it were different, but I dare not close my eyes to clear language.

12 Find each of these texts and state what it indicates about eternal punishment:

- a Matthew 25:41
- b Mark 9:48
- c Romans 2:8-9
- d Jude 13
- e Revelation 14:10-11

While we find that biblical writers sometimes refer to this punishment as *destruction*, it will last forever (see Psalm 52:5; 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9). Notice in Matthew 25:46 that the same word *eternal* is used to describe both heaven and hell: eternal punishment (hell); eternal life (heaven). Unless people repent of their sins and resolve their sin problem, they will suffer eternal punishment apart from the presence of the Lord.

THE RESTORATION OF THE SINNER

Objective 5. *Select statements which explain how a sinner is restored and results of the restoration.*

In the midst of despair a light of hope shines forth. God, in His mercy, has provided an escape from the consequences of spiritual death. He has provided a way of eternal glory in His presence for all who will accept His gracious offer. You and I can be restored both spiritually and physically, and the effects of sin can be canceled.

Spiritual Restoration

God has provided for man's spiritual restoration through the death of His only Son Jesus, who became our substitute to make atonement for our sin. This is explained in John 3:16-17:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

You and I have the opportunity to receive spiritual restoration if we repent of our sins and make a decision to leave all sin behind. However, we must accept God's offer of salvation and claim His promise to help us. This requires an act of faith; the Bible states that "it is by grace we are saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8). A final requirement is that we confess that "Jesus is Lord" (Romans 10:9). When we believe in Him, confess and forsake our sins, and allow Jesus to be Lord of our lives, we are changed. We receive spiritual life (Ephesians 2:1-9; Colossians 2:13) and we become new creatures in Christ: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17). The apostle admonishes believers to put off the old nature and allow God to remake us into a new self that will glorify Him (Ephesians 4:17-28; Colossians 3:1-17).

Through His death, our Lord paid the penalty for sin and satisfied God's just anger against it. We become righteous through Him. He secures our pardon and provides a full and free redemption. He also gives us a new nature. Even though we have been born with such corrupted natures, He adopts us into the holy family of God. In addition, He gives us the status of sons of God and makes us heirs of God's riches (Romans 8:17). Our Lord not only makes all of these arrangements for our spiritual restoration but also acts as our lawyer, our intercessor who pleads to the Almighty Judge and asks Him to have mercy on us (Hebrews 7:25; 1 John 2:1).

With the gift of salvation are various responsibilities for the new believer. He must "walk in the light" (see 1 John 1:7; John 1:4-9). While the Christian never attains perfection in this life, he can walk in the *light* and be responsive to it. As he does this, two

things happen: 1) he has fellowship with other believers, and 2) he is cleansed. Cleansing takes place as the believer allows the Holy Spirit to reveal failures, wrong attitudes, or sins of any kind. He must continue to confess these sins and purpose to resist future temptations as he lives under the Spirit's control (Romans 8:5).

(For a more thorough study of the doctrine of salvation, see the ICI University course *Alive in Christ: A Study of Salvation*.)

13 Based on this section of study, state in your notebook three things Jesus accomplished for us by His sacrificial death.

Physical Restoration

Not only did Jesus provide for our *spiritual* restoration, but His death on the cross also made provision for our *physical* restoration as well. Sickness, which is part of the curse, lost its hold on mankind when Christ suffered on the cross. The Bible teaches that healing is a part of the restoration He effected. Some of the most beautiful poetry in Scripture was penned in reference to the healing He provides:

Surely he took up our infirmities
and carried our sorrows,
yet we considered him stricken by God,
smitten by him, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,
and by his wounds we are healed.

—Isaiah 53:4-5

14 Turn to the following Scriptures and state what each says about divine healing.

a Matthew 8:17

b 1 Peter 2:24

Jesus healed countless sick people throughout his public ministry on earth. He also instructed those He sent out in ministry to preach the message of the kingdom of God and heal the sick (see Matthew 10:7-8; Mark 16:18; Luke 9:1-2; 10:9).

After Jesus ascended into heaven, miracles of healing continued to be performed by His followers. The book of Acts is filled with miracles of healing. Moreover, James teaches that the church elders should pray for the sick and expect God to heal them (James 5:14). This is consistent with Jesus' statement that He had come so that we might have life "to the full" (John 10:10).

The world is not yet free of all sickness and suffering, yet the testimony throughout church history is that those who trust in Jesus can be healed in answer to the prayer of faith. Thus, we can experience spiritual, physical, and eternal benefits because of our Lord's provision on the cross of Calvary. Through Adam, sin entered the human race; through Jesus Christ, we have been set free from sin and its effects! Let us lift our hearts in praise to Him for His great gift of salvation!

15 Circle the letter preceding **TRUE** statements concerning our spiritual and physical restoration.

- a** The most important aspect of spiritual restoration is that it brings us back into fellowship with God.
- b** Because Jesus died on the cross as a substitute for our sins, mankind is now free from the penalty of sin.
- c** Spiritual restoration requires repentance, turning away from sin, and walking in the light.
- d** Sickness is a part of the curse that we must all accept as part of life.
- e** The requirement for divine healing is faith.
- f** Walking in the light results in cleansing from sin and fellowship with other believers.
- g** Divine healing has been experienced by countless people from New Testament times to the present.
- h** The only thing necessary for divine healing is the prayer of an elder in the church.
- i** Every consequence that Adam brought upon the human race has been overcome by the atoning death of Christ on the cross.

This is the final lesson in Unit Two. After you have completed the self-test, review Lessons 5, 6, and 7 and answer the questions in Unit Student Report 2. Follow the directions given in the unit student report booklet.

self-test

SHORT ANSWER. Complete these sentences.

- 1 The origin of sin in the human race can be traced back to the sin of
- 2 The origin of sin in the universe can be traced back to the rebellion of
- 3 Two proofs of the reality of sin are
- 4 The steps necessary for the restoration of a sinner are
- 5 The saddest and most serious consequence of sin is

TRUE-FALSE. Place a **T** in the blank space if the statement is true. Write **F** if it is false.

- ... **6** There would have been no possibility for man to sin if Satan had not sinned first.
- ... **7** Laws are necessary because man has a sinful nature.
- ... **8** The Bible gives many evidences that man cannot by his own nature please God.
- ... **9** According to biblical evidence, pride and selfishness contributed to Satan's downfall.
- ... **10** Satan's strategy in the world today is to have a program that is totally unlike God's program.
- ... **11** Eve's eating of the fruit was a sinful act only because it was forbidden by God.
- ... **12** Because sin entered the human race, man is born with a spiritual nature that is dead.

answers to study questions

- 8** Your answer should include these thoughts: God chose to give man the ability to choose for himself to serve God. This required a test so that a choice could be made. As our first parents, Adam and Eve chose to follow their own selfish desires rather than their inclination toward God. Because they sinned against God by disobeying His law, we have inherited their sinful nature. God's punishment is justified because Adam and Eve made a deliberate personal choice between good and evil, knowing that they would have to pay the consequences.
- 1** Disobedience to God.
- 9 a** 3) Selfishness.
b 5) Pollution.
c 2) Missing the mark.
d 1) Trespass.
e 4) Rebellion.
- 2** The new generation did evil in the eyes of the Lord (they sinned against God).
- 10 a** 4) His conscience.
b 1) His intellect.
c 5) His spirit.
d 2) His emotions or feelings.
e 3) His will.
- 3** The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the Lord over and over again.
- 11 a)** We suffer today not only because of Adam's sin . . .
- 4** Sin is disobedience and failure to conform to the laws of God. It is all the things that people do wrong.
- 12 a** Those who are cursed will share eternal fire with the devil and his angels.
b Those who are punished will be thrown into hell, where the worm does not die and the fire does not stop burning.
c For those who do evil there will be wrath and anger, trouble and distress.

- d Eternal punishment includes blackest darkness.
 - e Those who reject God will be tormented with burning sulphur; they will have no rest day or night.
- 5 Your answer might include these ideas: The Bible gives historical evidence of the reality of sin, beginning with the sin of Adam and Eve, Cain, and then the repeated sins of the nation of Israel. The New Testament is a record of God's provision for sin through Christ Jesus and gives many examples of sin. There is a need for government everywhere in the world, because people left to themselves are selfish and rebellious.
- 13 Any of these: He satisfied God's anger against sin; He paid the penalty for our sins; He makes us righteous, secures our pardon, provides full and free redemption. He gives us a new nature and makes us sons and heirs of God. He intercedes for us before God. He gives light for our daily walk.
- 6 a False.
 b False.
 c True.
 d True.
 e True.
- 14 From the New International Version (NIV):
 a He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases.
 b By his wounds you have been healed.
- 7 a He was condemned to die.
 b Death.
- 15 a True.
 b False.
 c True.
 d False.
 e True.
 f True.
 g True.
 h False.
 i True.

Your Notes

Unit Three

The System of God



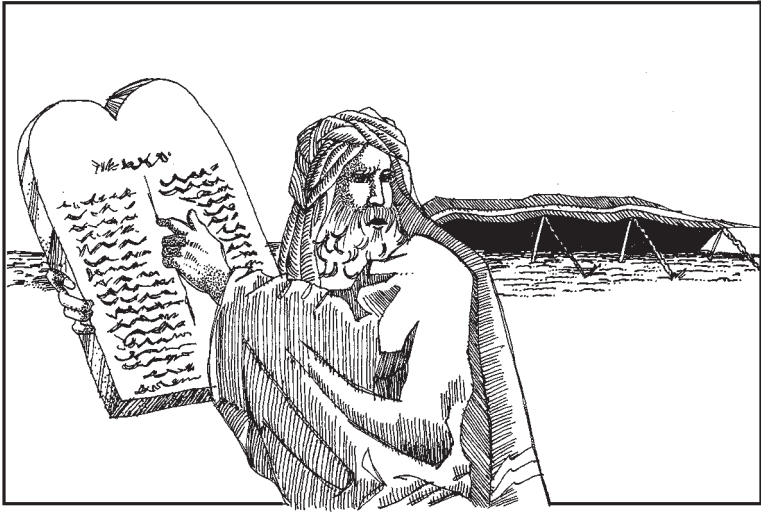
Lesson 8

The Scriptures: God's Written Revelation

In the preceding lessons we have learned many facts about the nature of God, the nature of man, the origin and nature of sin, angels and their activities, and God's plan for the redemption of fallen man. You have surely noticed that the major source for all of these doctrines has been the Bible, the Holy Scriptures. It is God's written revelation of Himself and of His creation.

It is reasonable to believe that a sovereign, loving, righteous, personal God would want to reveal Himself to His rational creatures through a written record. It is awesome to realize that He chose to use men who were in submission to His will as the human authors of the Scriptures. It is inspiring to study the facts about how the written records of more than 40 men over a period of some 1600 years were divinely preserved and are contained in our Bible.

As we begin our study of Unit 3, we shall first consider the revelation of God's redemptive purpose as recorded in the Scriptures. Second, we will review evidences which give us the assurance that the Bible is indeed God's holy Word. Then we shall examine the church, the structure God uses to call unsaved people to Himself, nurture them in the faith, and make them into effective witnesses. In the final lesson of this course, we shall study the goals of redemption as we consider the future.



lesson outline

The Need for a Written Revelation
The Inspiration of the Scriptures
The Exclusiveness of the Scriptures
The Interpreting of the Scriptures
The Authority of the Scriptures

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Define terms related to the inspiration of the Scriptures.
- State why a written revelation from God is needed.
- Explain what is meant by the *exclusiveness* and *authority* of the Scriptures.
- Discuss the place of authority that the Scriptures should have in the life of believers and in the church.
- Understand the importance of correctly interpreting the Scriptures.

learning activities

1. Study the lesson according to the procedure given in Lesson 1. Be sure to read all Scripture references included in the lesson development as you come to them, and answer all study questions carefully.
2. Find in the glossary any key words that are new to you, and study the definitions.
3. Take the self-test and check your answers.

key words

apocalyptic	doctrine	inspiration
authoritative	elevating	oral traditions
autographs	epistles	preserved
canon	exclusiveness	reliable
disclosure	illuminates	revelation
distorted	inconsistency	validate

lesson development

THE NEED FOR A WRITTEN REVELATION

Objective 1. *Identify statements that explain why it was necessary for God to provide a written revelation of Himself.*

Most of us have poor memories. If God were to reveal Himself to me face-to-face at a specific point in my life, I would soon be uncertain about some of the details of His revelation. Before long my memory of the event would fade. Perhaps I would be able to recall some parts of His revelation vividly, but I'm sure that the details would be unclear and unreliable. If I were to repeat all the details to one of my children immediately following the revelation, it is very unlikely that he would remember everything I said. If he were to pass the information on to his children years later, the passage of time would dim his memory and distort the story. You can see that this method of sharing God's revelation would not be very reliable.

The *oral traditions* of man, those stories which are passed from one generation to the next, may change greatly as they are handed down. Thus, it is clear that this method of learning about God and His purposes would not be reliable.

Our great and wise God shows His love for us through His provisions for us. He has provided for our physical survival in many ways, such as through His wonderful design of the water cycle which replenishes and purifies the earth's water supply. No less marvelous is His method for replenishing oxygen in the atmosphere. As we breathe, we exhale carbon dioxide, while plants release oxygen into the air. We inhale the oxygen released by the plants and they take in the carbon dioxide, with which they manufacture their food.

If God provided so carefully for our *physical* nature, He certainly would not expect us to work out our *spiritual* problems without help. Without a revelation from God, natural man would not even be aware of his hopeless condition and his need of help. In order to understand why a revelation from God is necessary, we need to know what the word *revelation* means in relation to God. It means that God *reveals* or *discloses* to people what they could not otherwise know about Him and His purposes. Be sure to remember this definition, as well as other key words we shall highlight in this lesson.

1 Write the definition of the term "revelation" as it relates to God. Use your notebook for this response.

Since God is great and loving, and since man needs help so desperately in order to resolve his sin problem, we would expect God to communicate clearly to man who He is and what He wants man to do. Furthermore, it would be most logical to ensure that this revelation would be protected so that people could have this knowledge without it being distorted in any way. Thus, as we could expect, God provided for His revelation to be preserved in written form for very good reasons.

- 2** Circle the letter in front of each **TRUE** statement.
- a** It was necessary for God to provide a written revelation of Himself so that people could know what He expects of them.
 - b** Oral tradition is the most reliable way to pass God's revelation from one generation to another.
 - c** Oral tradition is preferred over written records because it can be kept up-to-date and changed to suit man's needs.
 - d** Written records give us a certain standard that preserves accurately what happened so that we don't lose or forget what took place.

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

Inspiration Defined

Objective 2. *Define and list evidences of the inspiration of the Scriptures.*

We believe that the Scriptures are God's infallible (without error) revelation of Himself and His purposes in the lives of men. They were written by human authors under the *inspiration* of the Holy Spirit. They are God's written communication of divine truth that can be discovered only as God reveals them to man.

By *the Scriptures* we are referring to the writings we know as the Old and New Testaments, the 66 books of the Bible. (Some include the apocryphal books in the scriptural canon and thus recognize a larger body of sacred writings.)

By *inspiration* we mean an operation of the Holy Spirit in which He guided or supervised the authors of the Scriptures in the selection of the materials to be included and the words they wrote. It was a special enablement for a special task. God placed in the minds and hearts of the writers of Scripture what He wanted them to express. They wrote under the management or direction of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit kept the writers from all error and all omission in recording what God wanted them to say. Yet it is remarkable that God used the personality of the human authors in recording His revelation. The style or vocabulary of each book contained in the Scriptures is unique to its author and his human character.

The human authors were not necessarily conscious of the fact that what they were writing was to be a part of the recorded divine revelation. Nevertheless, as inspiration came, they wrote obediently, and they were not in doubt about what words to use. God impressed upon Luke, for example, the need to research and investigate all the eyewitness accounts of the life of Jesus so that he could write an orderly account (Luke 1:1-4). Paul often wrote to answer questions of the churches, to give teachings that were needed by the churches, and to send instructions to individuals (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 7:1; Galatians 1:6-7; 1 Timothy 1:3; Philemon 10). Yet everything He wrote was through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Two portions of Scripture in the New Testament give us valuable insight into the kind of inspiration the writers had. Paul says that "All Scripture is God-breathed" (2 Timothy 3:16). That is, it is inspired by God. Peter makes this statement:

No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21).

The authors themselves often speak of their own inspiration or the inspiration experienced by other writers of the Scriptures. They speak of this by saying that *God spoke to them*.

3 Find the Scriptures listed below and state what each says to indicate that God spoke through a human author:

- a** Exodus 17:14
- b** Exodus 24:4
- c** Isaiah 43:1
- d** Jeremiah 11:1
- e** Amos 1:3,6,9
- f** 1 Corinthians 14:37
- g** 2 Peter 3:15-16

Thus, we see that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit upon human authors in the writing of the Scriptures was a *special enablement for a specific task*.

- 4 Select the correct completions to this statement: *The inspiration of the Scriptures* refers to
- any kind of creative work based upon a biblical theme.
 - a specific enablement of the Holy Spirit for a specific task.
 - every idea and every act recorded in Scripture as being inspired of God.
 - the guidance of the Holy Spirit upon selected men chosen to record God's revelation of Himself and His plan.
 - the style and vocabulary of human authors of the Scriptures.
 - all of the content of the Scriptures, including the materials chosen to be included and the words selected.

Evidences of Inspiration

Let's turn now to an examination of the evidences of inspiration. We will consider Jesus' approval of Old Testament Scriptures, fulfillment of Bible prophecy, and the unity of biblical themes.

1. *Jesus demonstrated respect for and approval of the Old Testament.* Jesus indicated His feelings about the Old Testament in three ways. First, He affirmed that they are to stand forever (see Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 10:26; 21:22; John 10:35). Second, He said that the Scriptures speak about Him (Matthew 26:24; Mark 9:12; Luke 18:31; 24:44; John 5:39). Third, Jesus showed that He accepted the authority of the Old Testament by quoting from it (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; 21:13; 26:31).

Have you noticed that Jesus never pointed out any phrases or teachings of the Old Testament as being false or unworthy? Surely He would have said something about any part of the Old Testament that was not inspired. Rather, He demonstrated a total acceptance of the sacred writings which the Jews themselves accepted as inspired of God. The reverence and approval of Jesus for the Old Testament Scriptures, and His own use of them, are strong evidence of their supernatural inspiration.

2. *Bible prophecy has been fulfilled.* The Bible is more than a book written by gifted authors. The fulfillment of many of its predictions with such complete accuracy points to the involvement of the Holy Spirit. In no way could these events have been foreseen by the intelligent reasoning of man. Yet

many of them have already had a striking fulfillment, and the balance will be fulfilled in due time.

The place of Jesus' birth. The little town in which the Messiah was to be born was singled out by the prophet Micah about 700 years before the event: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times" (Micah 5:2). Just imagine all that took place to get Joseph and Mary to that town. From a purely human point of view, one might say that they almost didn't make it! Very shortly after they arrived, Jesus was born. The Holy Spirit in His omniscience knew that the divine King would not be born in Jerusalem, but in the small town of Bethlehem.

The betrayal of Jesus. I am amazed that the fact of Jesus' betrayal was predicted by the Psalmist more than 1000 years before Jesus' birth. Who could possibly have foreseen that the Anointed One many generations longed to see, the One who would bring salvation to Israel, the One designated by God to rule forever, would be betrayed by a friend and associate. Yet, there it is for all to read: "Even my close friend, whom I trusted, he who shared my bread, has lifted up his heel against me" (Psalm 41:9).

The manner of His death. A third prediction that astonishes me suggests a form of execution for the Chosen One that was not in use in Israel when David wrote Psalm 22. The Jews in David's time stoned criminals who were condemned to die. Psalm 22 predicted a different method: ". . . they have pierced my hands and my feet" (v. 16). This would sound very strange to Jewish ears, but it fits perfectly the picture of a Roman crucifixion.

Prophecy also provides details of the crucifixion. You may remember that God gave special instructions to Moses about the preparations of His people for their departure out of Egypt. The Passover lamb had to be killed and its blood sprinkled over the door. Also, the meat was to be specially prepared; it had to be roasted whole. God probably had a number of reasons for this instruction, but one was made perfectly clear; *no bones were to*

be broken. If they boiled the meat, bones would have to be broken so that the pieces would fit into their pots. The Holy Spirit knew that Israel's Passover lamb was a type of the perfect Passover Lamb. Thus, the prophetic word stated 1000 years before His birth that He would be bruised, pierced and maligned, but *not one of his bones would be broken* (compare Isaiah 52:13-15 and 53:1-12 with Psalm 34:20).

5 Read John 19:31-37 and state in your notebook what we learn about the prophecies we have just discussed.

Other prophecies. Many other prophecies have come to pass in ways that cannot be explained away as mere coincidence. Look at the large number that are beginning to come to pass before our eyes in the rebirth of Israel as a nation-state (see Isaiah 35:1-2; Ezekiel 37; Zechariah 8:7-8; 10:9). So many predictions from the book of Daniel have come to pass that liberal critics have tried to claim that it is really a historical record, and not a prophecy. They have been unsuccessful. Modern scholars continue to discover new evidence that Daniel lived in the time of the Babylonian captivity, and that the revelation he received of the future was recorded during those years.

3. *The Bible has a miraculous unity of themes.* Although written by about 40 authors over a period of some 1600 years, the books of the Bible present one overriding theme: *God's redemption of man through the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ.* In the Scriptures there is but one doctrinal system, one moral standard, one plan of salvation, and one divine plan of the ages. The books, instead of conflicting with one another and confusing the theme, serve to fill out and complete each other in a harmonious way. A marvelous series of unfolding revelations move along a dramatic course that reaches its breathtaking climax in the final triumph over Satan. Books of the Bible as different as Leviticus and John produce but one story, one theme, one work. The four Gospels give us details about the life of Christ, and each of them sheds light on a different aspect of His character and ministry. Yet together they are a unified whole.

- 6 Without referring to the preceding section, answer these questions in your notebook.
- a List three evidences of the inspiration of the Scriptures.
 - b How did Jesus show that He accepted the authority of the Old Testament?
 - c Give an example of a Bible prophecy that has been fulfilled.
 - d What is the major theme of the Bible that is carried through from Genesis to Revelation?

THE EXCLUSIVENESS OF THE SCRIPTURES

Objective 3. *State the criteria for the exclusiveness of Old and New Testament canons, and identify statements concerning the canon of Scriptures.*

When we speak of the *exclusiveness* of the Scriptures, we mean that the Bible is God's *complete* written revelation of divine truth. We have seen that God used a number of human authors to record His revelation. We have also discussed the time involved in the completion of the divine disclosure. We come quite naturally, then, to two important issues: 1) When was the revelation completed? 2) What does the divine revelation include? Let's turn now to an examination of these matters.

The Completion of Divine Revelation

We have considered Jesus' attitude toward the Old Testament—He showed His approval by quoting it extensively. However, as He neared the end of His earthly ministry, He indicated that He had much more truth to reveal to His disciples:

I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you (John 16:12-15).

In this passage we see that additional truth would be revealed by the Holy Spirit. This truth would include *future events* (“what is yet to come”), *guidance and illumination* (“taking from what is mine and making it known to you”), and further *doctrine* (“into all truth”) essential for living in a way *pleasing to God* (“He will bring glory to me”).

Included in Jesus’ statement are two things of great importance:

1. He promised that the Holy Spirit would complete the revelation by guiding His followers into all truth (v.13). He would enable them to understand and apply the teachings of Jesus.

2. He referred to the New Testament revelation before it was disclosed to the human writers and recorded. You might say that He *validated* it in advance. To *validate* means to declare as approved and authoritative. In this way, the work of the writers of the Gospels, the book of Acts, the Epistles, and the book of Revelation was predicted, explained, and approved.

Writers such as Paul indicate that what they wrote was received by revelation. Speaking of his experience in Ephesians 3:1-12, the apostle says that he and the other apostles and prophets received divine revelation of previously unknown truth. Peter also recognized the value of what the Holy Spirit revealed and inspired to be recorded (2 Peter 1:20-21). In 2 Peter 3:15-16 he referred to recorded doctrinal teaching of the apostle Paul as *the Scriptures*.

By A.D. 64 or 65, most of the Gospel accounts and the Epistles had been written and were in circulation among the churches. Then, some 25 or 30 years later, the apostle John received the Revelation. The Holy Spirit, having enabled the apostle to receive this revelation, then seems to have completed the divine revelation. Now that the Scriptures are complete, we are not to add to or take away from them. God progressively revealed His will and purpose over a period of some 1600 years. We need no more. God has said all that He wants to say to us concerning Himself and His plan for us.

This means that the special inspiration of the Holy Spirit that brought into being the Word of God in written form is not available to us today. It was exclusively for the writers of the

Scriptures. We can be inspired by God to contribute to the advancement of His kingdom, but not to His written revelation. Having read, studied, and applied the teaching of the Scriptures, we can say with certainty that truly God has spoken *clearly* and *consistently* to us. He has revealed *completely* what He wanted to communicate. Nothing more is needed or intended.

It is important for us to recognize that God continues to speak to His church today. Through the gift of prophecy, the Spirit continues to declare to believers the mind of God. However, all such prophecy, if it is to be received, must harmonize with the Word, edifying, exhorting, and comforting believers (1 Corinthians 14:3). It is no substitute for, nor can it be in contradiction with, the revelation given in the Apostolic Age as general direction for the church.

7 We have seen that Jesus validated the Old Testament Scriptures by quoting them often in His ministry. Answer these questions regarding the New Testament Scriptures in your notebook.

- a** What Scripture text reveals to us that Jesus validated the New Testament Scriptures in advance?
- b** What did Jesus tell us the additional truth to be revealed would include?
- c** State two texts which reveal that the apostles themselves recognized that what they were writing was divine revelation.

8 Why is it important for us to know that God's written revelation the Bible, is the complete revelation of God? Use your notebook for this response.

The Canon of Scriptures

Nearly 2000 years have passed since the last scriptural revelation. It included God's redemptive program as it was first revealed in the Old Testament and His final invitation to man in the New Testament.

You may ask, "How were the many records of revealed truth brought together to form one book? When was the task undertaken? What agency, institution, or individuals are responsible for the formation of the Bible?" We will now consider these questions.

The Formation of the Old Testament

We call the 39 books of the Old Testament a *canon*. The word comes from the Greek word *kanon* which originally meant “a reed or rod.” It later came to mean a “measuring rod, a rule or standard.” As it applies to the Scriptures, *canon* refers to books which have been measured according to certain criteria and found to satisfy all the requirements for them to be approved as God’s inspired revelation.

To review briefly, the beginning of God’s revelation was recorded by Moses around 1450 B.C. The final Old Testament disclosure was recorded around the end of the fifth century B.C. Moses is credited with authorship of the first five books of the Old Testament, which are often referred to as the books of *the Law*. Next in the Hebrew Bible were *the Prophets*. These included the books that were disclosed to men who occupied the prophetic office. The third division of books, called *the Writings*, includes three groups: 1) books written for specific occasions such as feasts (for example, *Esther* was read at the feast of Purim); 2) poetical books (Psalms, Proverbs, and Job); and 3) non-prophetical historical books (Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles, which were written by men who did not occupy the prophetic office, although Daniel did exercise the prophetic gift). The books which made up the Hebrew Bible are the same 39 which we recognize as the Old Testament.

Evidence from the Jewish historian Josephus (A.D. 95) indicates that the books of the Old Testament were brought together under the direction of Ezra and the members of the Great Synagogue in the fifth century before Christ. The 39 books which were included in the three categories we have mentioned—the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings—were held by the people of God to be divinely inspired and their only rule for faith and conduct. Records of discussions at the teaching house in Jamnia, Palestine, between A.D. 70 and 100 recognize the existence of the canon of 39 books which we call the Old Testament.

The Formation of the New Testament

In the last two centuries before Christ, Israel suffered terrible oppression and persecution at the hands of foreign nations.

People were wondering, "Why does God not intervene? Is there no hope that justice will be done?"

As if in response to these anxious inquiries, a body of literature emerged which we call *apocalyptic* (relating to the forecasting of world-shattering, violent events). Various books appeared which, it was claimed, were written by ancient biblical characters. These so called prophecies claimed that God would soon break into history in violent judgment, punishing the wicked and rewarding the righteous. While this literature had some historical value, it was never recognized as being on the same level as the Scriptures by either Jews or the early church. An example of this type of literature is a group of writings called the *Apocrypha*.

Against this background, Jesus came to minister, die, be resurrected, and ascend to the Father. He came to bring hope and light to sin-darkened people; however, He neither punished the wicked nor rewarded the righteous. Instead, He established the church and challenged the believers to preach the gospel everywhere. He stated in particular that His followers were to preach all the things He had said (Matthew 28:20). Obviously, some written record of what He had said was needed.

As the early church grew numerically and spread out geographically, believers matured through the ministry of preaching the gospel. This ministry was begun by those who had walked with the Lord during His time on earth. As believers grew spiritually, questions arose concerning the practical application of God's grace to everyday problems, to cultural differences, to the demands of society, and to heresy (opinions or doctrines contrary to the accepted beliefs). Apostolic leaders responded to this need, writing letters of instruction (called *epistles*) that were circulated among the churches. It was apparent that these writings were initiated by the Holy Spirit and were accepted as sacred Scripture (2 Peter 3:15-16). Then, as the apostles and first generation leaders and believers began to age, the Spirit moved certain writers to record the life of Christ (2 Peter 1:12-15). These records are called the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John).

We must remember that at the same time as the church was maturing, there were false "brethren," false "apostles," and

“antichrists” offering themselves and their doctrines to the church. (Read 2 Corinthians 11:12-15; Galatians 1:6-9; 3:1; Colossians 2; 1 Timothy 4:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 2; 2 Peter 2; 1 John 2:18-19; and Jude, which speak of this.) As the Scriptures circulated, so, too, did the various other kinds of literature. In the process of time, therefore, the church developed a means of recognizing divinely inspired Scripture and giving it the proper place in the church. This move, of course, set Scripture apart from all other literature.

The rule (or canon) for New Testament Scripture was this:

1. It must be either written or backed by an apostle.
2. Its contents must be of such spiritual character that it is recognized as divinely inspired.
3. It must be accepted universally by the church as divinely inspired.

Very early in the church’s existence the 27 books of the New Testament were measured by these criteria and informally judged to be inspired by God. This was made official when, on a formal basis, the Council of Carthage (a group of church leaders) announced in A.D. 397 that the New Testament canon of the Scriptures is the 27 books now included in the New Testament. Thus, the church council only verified at this later time what had already been evident to Spirit-directed believers.

9 State the approximate date and group responsible for canonizing the Old and New Testament Scriptures.

- a) Old Testament:
- b) New Testament:

10 State in your own words the three criteria for choosing the early church writings that were included in the New Testament canon. (Write your answer in your notebook.)

The Reliability of the Manuscripts

The special inspiration of the Holy Spirit under which the authors labored as they recorded God’s revelation applies to their original writings or manuscripts. We don’t have any of the original

manuscripts today; however, we do have many excellent copies of those documents. Since there are slight differences among the copies, we can't say correctly that God inspired every copy.

However, even in the matter of copying and passing on the sacred Scriptures, we see much evidence of God's protection and care. In fact, the preservation of the accurate text over so many generations is itself a miracle of divine providence. You might well ask, "How accurate *is* the text, since slight differences do occur from one copy to another?" To this question we can respond quite frankly and with great assurance, "It is entirely trustworthy! Such differences do not affect any doctrinal belief or teaching and do not change any of our understanding of God's revelation."

The fact is that many experts have spent years comparing the oldest manuscripts with each other and with other trustworthy ones. They have carried on extensive research. Recent discoveries of ancient copies of the biblical text near the Dead Sea have contributed a great deal to this work.

The results of all this scholarly investigation assure us that we have completely trustworthy texts. They indicate that the texts we now have in Hebrew and Greek are practically the same as the originals (called *autographs*), and that all of the important doctrines of both the Old and New Testaments are intact. God, who inspired the writing of His revelation to man, has preserved it over many generations. We can have confidence that our Bible is God's Word!

While the Bible indicates that a special inspiration of the Holy Spirit was required for the receiving of the divine revelation (2 Peter 1:20-21), we cannot conclude from the Bible that the same inspiration is available to those who translate, transmit, and copy the Scriptures. I do not wish to say by this that translations are unreliable. On the contrary, we do know that most translations today and historically have been and are subjected to the scrutiny of rigid scholarship. Most of them have been of an unusually high quality. However, I do want to make it clear that we cannot make any one translation our final authority in faith and conduct. We are wise to compare one version with another and consider the merits of each in the light of good scholarship.

- 11** Which of these statements are **TRUE** concerning the canon of Scriptures as discussed in this lesson?
- a** Since we no longer have the original manuscripts, we cannot be certain that the canon is the inspired Word of God.
 - b** The term *canon of Scripture* indicates that all of the books in the Bible have met this standard: they are divinely inspired.
 - c** We may accept with confidence the teachings of the Bible because God not only inspired its writing, but He has also preserved it through the centuries.
 - d** Not only did God inspire the writers of Scripture in a special way, but He also inspires scholars who translate the text into other languages, so that all translations are completely reliable.
 - e** Some apocalyptic literature, such as the Apocrypha, has been admitted into the canon of the Old Testament.
 - f** Our Old Testament is the same as the Hebrew Bible.
 - g** The Old Testament canon has 39 books, while the New Testament has 27.

THE INTERPRETING OF THE SCRIPTURES

Objective 4. *State the proper method for analyzing and interpreting Scripture.*

Perhaps as you have read the Scriptures, you have noticed that some particular verses and portions of Scripture do not appear to teach clearly the acts and purposes of God. Neither do they reveal what He expects of man. You may even have failed to find any mention of God. I often wondered, for example, what value the book of Ecclesiastes could have, and why it was included in God's Word. Many of its statements are in direct opposition to the teaching of other parts of the Scriptures. As you read this book, you will find that the theme "Everything is meaningless" (1:2) is woven through it.

When we come across these particular verses or portions of Scripture, we must analyze them carefully in order to interpret them correctly. We need to read what precedes and what follows these verses. In the case of Ecclesiastes, we are not to separate these statements from the rest of the book or the entire Bible and use them as the basis for our lives. We must read the book of

Ecclesiastes in its entirety in order to understand what is “meaningless.” When we come to the final chapter of this book, the message of the entire book becomes apparent. The author has pointed out quite clearly that *apart from God*, life is definitely useless and meaningless. Experience has taught him a lesson which he seeks to pass on to us in the form of helpful advice:

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth ...Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil (12:1, 13-14).

This example teaches us a valuable principle: *All individual Scriptures must be analyzed and interpreted in the light of the teaching of the whole Bible*. If we learn and apply this principle, we will build our Christian life on a sound foundation. We dare not base our life and actions on any one isolated verse or text. If we do not follow this principle, we can get into serious trouble.

God helps us to understand the teachings of His word. His Holy Spirit not only inspired the men who wrote the Scripture, but He *illuminates* the minds of those who read it. This means the Spirit *enlightens* the mind of the believer to understand what he reads. Without the Spirit's help, no one can understand the Scriptures properly, because sin has darkened the mind. When the Holy Spirit dwells within us, He makes clear to us the truths found in God's Word, and He helps us to interpret it correctly. (See Romans 1:21; Ephesians 1:18; 4:18; 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; and 1 John 2:20, 27).

We see, then, that the Bible is God's revelation to man. While some statements recorded in it appear to be contradictory, when interpreted in the light of the whole book or Bible, their meaning becomes clear. Moreover, the Holy Spirit enlightens our mind so that we may correctly interpret God's Word and understand the lessons God wants us to learn.

12 Complete the statement: All individual Scriptures must be analyzed and interpreted in the light and teachings of the

.....

THE AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES

Objective 5. *State what place of authority God's Word should have in our lives.*

A very important question arises when we study the Bible. What importance will we assign to it as far as our lives and wills are concerned? The Scriptures from beginning to end reveal God's feelings in this matter. *We learn that they are to be the final authority in all matters of faith and conduct* (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Early in His communications with people, God revealed His will and purpose. He also let His people know that He expected them to know His commandments and to act accordingly, "See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it" (Deuteronomy 12:32). He even said He would test them to see if they understood His word and would obey it (Deuteronomy 13:3).

What if a prophet or interpreter of dreams came to your area and performed a miracle or fulfilled a promise in a special way. Would that make him a true prophet? Not unless what he says is in accord with what God has already taught in His Word (see Deuteronomy 13:1-3).

This principle is repeated throughout the Scriptures. We are not to be led astray by wonders, signs, miracles, that which is mere entertainment, or anything that will draw us away from the truths of God's Word.

The way for us to continue our relationship with Jesus is to live by His Word: "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love" (John 15:10). We can demonstrate our love for Christ by our obedience to His revealed will: "You are my friends if you do what I command you" (John 15:14).

The Word of God is truth (John 17:17). We therefore must make it the highest authority of our personal and corporate church life. In many of our church buildings, we place the pulpit in the center of the platform because that is where the Word of God is preached. This illustrates what the Psalmist David said, "For you have exalted above all things your name and your word" (Psalm 138:2).

God's Word is to be foremost in every part of our lives. We are to place its teachings above that of family or friends. We are to pay attention to its warnings and its guidance. It must rule over our emotions.

How very important it is, therefore, to have sound Bible teaching in our churches. We must foster a love in the heart of the believer for the systematic study of God's Word. People should come together in God's house not because of programs or personalities, but because they love the Word of God.

*The grass withers and the flowers fall,
But the word of our God stands forever.*

—Isaiah 40:8

13 Based on what we have taught in this section, explain in your notebook what place of authority God's Word should have in our lives.

self-test**MATCHING.**

1 Match each term (right) with its definition (left).

- | | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| a | The passing down of unwritten stories from one generation to the next | 1) Apocalyptic literature |
| b | What happens when the Holy Spirit helps us to understand Scripture | 2) Autographs
3) Oral Tradition |
| c | The original manuscripts of Scripture | 4) Canon |
| d | A special act of the Holy Spirit in guiding human authors who wrote the books of the Bible | 5) Inspiration
6) Illumination
7) Revelation |
| e | God's self-disclosure and His acts that could not otherwise be known | |
| f | Writings characterized by the forecast of world-shattering, violent events | |
| g | The system of measurement according to certain criteria to determine which books were divinely inspired | |

TRUE-FALSE. Place a **T** in front of statements that are true and **F** in front of statements that are false.

- **2** The church is the final authority in matters of faith and conduct.
- **3** To understand the truths of God's Word we must carefully analyze and interpret what has been written in the light of the teachings of the whole Bible.
- **4** The inspiration of the Scriptures includes autographs, copies of autographs, translations, and versions.
- **5** We have assurance that our Bible is reliable as the inspired Word of God because we see evidence that God has preserved the accurate text over many generations.

- **6** All books accepted into the canon of Scriptures are recognized as divinely inspired.
- **7** The *exclusiveness* of the Scriptures means that in the 66 books of the Bible we have God's complete written revelation.

answers to study questions

- 7 a** John 16:12-15.
b Prophetic guidance and illumination and further doctrine.
c Ephesians 3:4-5, 9-10; 2 Peter 3:15-16; 2 Peter 1:20-21.
- 1** Revelation, as it relates to God, means that God reveals to people what they could not otherwise know about Him and His purposes.
- 8** Because we will know that we must reject any later so-called revelations, as they are not consistent with what God has already revealed, and they do not glorify Him.
- 2 a** True.
b False.
c False.
d True.
- 9 a)** About 500 B.C. by Ezra and members of the Great Synagogue.
b) A.D. 397 by the Council of Carthage.
- 3** (Quoting from the NIV):
a “Then the Lord said to Moses, ‘Write this on a scroll . . .’”
b “Moses then wrote down everything the Lord had said.”
c “But now, this is what the Lord says” (Isaiah is the writer).
d “This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord.”
e “This is what the Lord says.”
f “If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command.”
g “Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.” (Note in v. 16 that Peter recognizes what Paul wrote was *Scripture*.)
- 10** They must be written or backed by an apostle. The content must have spiritual character that shows it is divinely inspired. It must be accepted by the entire church as being divinely inspired.

- 4 b) a specific enablement
 - d) the guidance of the Holy Spirit
 - f) all of the content
- 11 a False.
- b True.
 - c True.
 - d False.
 - e False.
 - f True.
 - g True.
- 5 Although it was the custom to break the bones of those crucified to hasten their death, it was not necessary to break the bones of Jesus, as the soldiers found that He was already dead. So instead, they pierced His side with a spear.
- 12 whole or entire Bible.
- 6 a Jesus showed respect and approval for the Scriptures as God's Word; many Bible prophecies have already been fulfilled; there is a unity of themes in the Bible.
- b He quoted often from it.
 - c One example is the place of Jesus' birth which was foretold by Micah; another is the manner of His death, foretold by Isaiah and David.
 - d The redemption of man.
- 13 Your answer should be similar to this: The Bible, God's Word, should be our final authority in all matters of our faith (beliefs) and our conduct. It should guide our actions, thoughts, and emotions. We must study it faithfully and apply its teachings to our total lives.

Your Notes

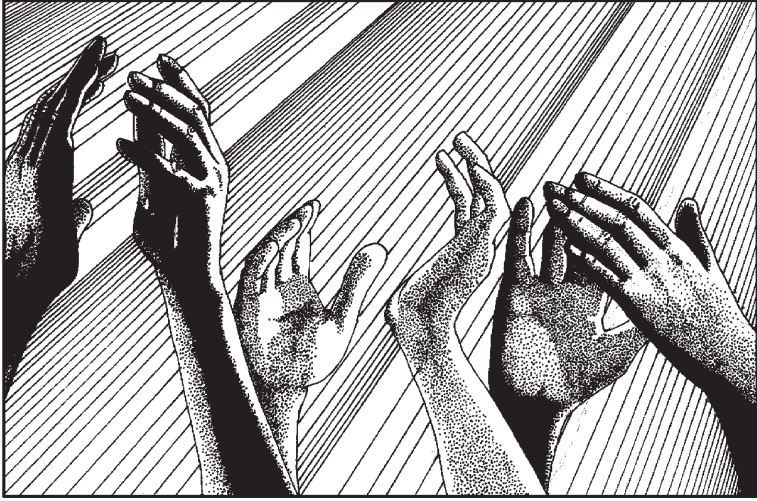
Lesson 9

The Church: The Community of God's People

Have you ever watched children playing together and noticed how they are quite naturally drawn to one another? This illustrates that man is a social creature—it is his nature to form relationships and have communion with other people who are like him. It is no wonder, then, that Jesus has established a community of like-minded people, His church, so that through it the will of God might be fulfilled. For the church is the community of God's people whose relationships with one another are based on their individual relationships with Jesus Christ.

Peter declared, "Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God" (1 Peter 2:10). We were on the outside; our sins kept us from God. However, when we accepted Jesus as our Savior, we were brought by faith into a new relationship with God through Christ. This new relationship also brought us into a new relationship with other believers. We became part of the family of God, His church.

In this lesson we will examine the instrument God has chosen to glorify Him, to nurture spiritual life, and to extend the good news to others. As we study about the church and understand its true meaning, we will be able to appreciate the value our Lord placed upon it that caused Him to give His life for it (Ephesians 5:25).



lesson outline

What the Church Is
When the Church Began
What the Church Is Like
What the Church Does

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- Define the term *church* and distinguish between biblical and non-biblical definitions.
- State when the church began and support your statement with biblical evidences.
- Explain the twofold nature of the church.
- List the three basic purposes of the church and methods by which each is accomplished.

learning activities

1. As background for this lesson, read Acts 2; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; Romans 12; Ephesians 4:1-16; 5:22-33.
2. Work through the lesson development according to the procedures stated in Lesson 1. Be sure to look up the meanings of any key words that are new to you.

key words

barriers	dynamic	relationship
challenge	edification	social
community	functions	universal
doctrinal	ordinances	

lesson development

WHAT THE CHURCH IS

Objective 1. *Identify definitions of the term **church** as it is used in the Scriptures.*

1 Let's assume you have mentioned the word *church* to someone who has never before heard the word, and he asks you, "What does *church* mean?" Based on your own experience, write a short response to this question in your notebook.

If you are like many people today, your response to the above question was probably something like this: "A church is a place where people gather for worship." If you wanted to be more precise, you might even have said, "The word *church* refers to an organization which is made up of groups of people in different places who hold the same doctrinal views, are guided by the same rules, and have similar goals."

Both of these answers give us some idea of how the term *church* is defined by many people, and both of them could be considered as correct according to the modern understanding of the term. However, when the Bible speaks of the *church*, there is far greater significance to the term than is seen in these answers.

In fact, the Bible does not refer to certain *buildings* as being churches, as we do today, but to certain *people* as comprising the

church. Nor does it speak of the church as an *organization*. People who identify the term *church* in this way today associate it with a denomination, such as Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, or others.

In the biblical sense, there are two definitions of the word church. The root words which make up the Greek word *ekklesia*, which is translated as “church” in the New Testament, give us the picture of people who have responded to God’s call. Having responded to His call, and having confessed Jesus as Lord, they become members of His family. They are committed to the task of sharing the gospel as their Lord has instructed them. They are a *community* of obedient people who are organized to do His will. On a broad scale, this community of believers who confess Jesus as Lord represents the *universal church*, which is also called the *invisible church*. This term includes all believers everywhere who have the same faith in and loyalty to Jesus Christ.

On a smaller scale, the church refers to a gathering or an assembly of people. These are believers from a given locality who share the same faith in and loyalty to Jesus Christ, and who meet together for corporate worship. They are referred to as a *local church* or the *visible church*. Examples of the local church are seen in the New Testament:

Romans 1:7: “To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints.”

1 Corinthians 1:2: “To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy”

Galatians 1:1: “To the churches in Galatia”

Philippians 1:1: “To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons”

Generally speaking, we can say that the church as it was referred to in the New Testament was the community of God’s people. The term *community* is important in describing the church, because it speaks of individual believers who join together for the purpose of fellowship and sharing as they worship God together. This community spirit is described in Acts 2:42-47:

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.

The Bible teaches that the church is the instrument God has chosen to fulfill these functions:

1. It provides for corporate worship (John 4:20-24; compare with Hebrews 10:25).
2. It provides for the spiritual growth of believers (Ephesians 4:13-16).
3. It extends the good news of salvation in Christ to other people (Matthew 16:18; 24:14; 28:18-20).

We shall look at each of these functions more fully later in the lesson.

Frequently we see the terms *church of God* or *church of Christ* in the Scriptures. These terms point out that the significant character of the assembly does not come from its members, but from its Head, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Thus, the church is a divinely created fellowship of redeemed sinners who have the same Savior. This fellowship of believers has unity because the members are one in each other and in Christ through a union brought about by the Holy Spirit.

The New Testament records that new believers were urged to follow their confession of Jesus as Lord with water baptism, which graphically signified their union with Christ (see Acts 2:38; 8:12-13; 9:1-19; 10:47-48). The new believers, who made up the local churches and who were part of the universal church, had these characteristics:

1. They were professing believers in Jesus.
2. They followed their confession of faith with baptism.
3. They were organized as a fellowshiping community as soon as possible (compare Acts 13:43 with 14:23).

4. They had a distinct purpose: to join together in corporate worship, and to do God's will.

2 Circle the letter in front of each correct completion of this statement: The biblical usage of the term *church* includes the idea of

- a) a building in which people meet to worship God.
- b) an assembly of God's people which meets together and shares a common faith in and loyalty to Jesus Christ.
- c) a divinely created fellowship of believers who trust the same Savior and who are in unity with each other because of their union in Him.
- d) any religious group, organization, or denomination of any size.
- e) the total worldwide community of believers who confess a common faith in God and acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

WHEN THE CHURCH BEGAN

Objective 2. *State two biblical evidences which reveal when the church began and list seven activities of the early believers.*

The idea of the community of God's people is first seen in the Old Testament in God's promise that Abraham's family would be the means of enriching the earth (Genesis 12:1-3). The promise was confirmed at the time of the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Then the concept of the community of God's people came into focus more clearly as the responsibilities and blessings of the agreement between God and Abraham were clearly spelled out (compare Exodus 19:4-6 with Genesis 22:17-18).

But Old Testament history declares that the nation of Israel failed in its mission to bless the earth by its testimony and example. Although a community of God's people existed in the Old Testament, it fell short of its intended purpose. Yet, God's purpose to call out of the world a people for Himself, to redeem them from sin, and to grant them His salvation did not fail. This purpose would be fulfilled through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the beloved Son of God.

Jesus introduced the idea of the *church* as the community of God's people during His earthly ministry. He said, speaking in the future tense, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). Paul indicates in Ephesians 1:19-23 that the resurrection and ascension of our Lord had to take place before the church could be established and Jesus installed as Head of the redeemed community:

. . . which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body (vs. 20, 22-23).

The resurrection and ascension of Christ also were necessary in order for Jesus to minister as an eternal High Priest in behalf of His own people (the church). Moreover, He could also give to the church the gifts required for its operation (see Hebrews 4:14-16; 7:25; Ephesians 4:7-12).

3 Based on the foregoing New Testament Scriptures, which of these statements is correct?

- a) The Bible indicates that the church was established by Jesus during His ministry on earth.
- b) The Scriptures give evidence that the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus had to take place before He could establish His church.

Traditionally it is accepted that the church "officially" began on the Day of Pentecost even though the believers were meeting before this time. Let's look at the evidence:

1. Just before He ascended into heaven, Jesus said to His disciples, "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:4-5; read also John 14:12; 16:7-8, 13-15).

2. Jesus then promised that, once they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, the disciples would be powerful witnesses of the gospel both near and afar off (Acts 1:8).

3. True to the words of Jesus, the disciples and believers who were praying in the upper room were baptized as the Holy Spirit

descended on the Day of Pentecost and set up His residence in their lives (Acts 2:1-4; compare John 7:37-39 with 14:17).

4. In addition, on that same day 3000 people responded to the gospel message and became part of the believing community. The *church* was thus established and began to function as a praising, nurturing, and evangelizing or witnessing community.

The coming of the Holy Spirit thus marked the beginning of a new era in which believers were given divine power to witness of God's saving grace and His universal call for salvation. The book of Acts declares that from this initial day onward, the believers acted as a family or corporate unit. Here are some of the characteristics of those believers and the early church:

1. They had a doctrinal standard, which was the teaching of the apostles (Acts 2:42).
2. They had fellowship with other believers (Acts 2:43).
3. They observed the ordinances of water baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:41-42, 47; see Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
4. They met for public worship and prayer (Acts 2:46; 4:23-31).
5. They helped those in need (Acts 2:41; 4:32-35; 6:1-7).
6. They appointed men to go into other places to preach the gospel and establish communities of believers (Acts 8:14-17; 11:22).
7. They examined certain aspects of the spread of the gospel, including the people reached and the practices of new Christians; and they established essential doctrinal standards for Christians (Acts 11:1-3, 18; 15:4-35).

4 State in your notebook two things which occurred on the Day of Pentecost that give evidence that the church had its beginning on that day shortly after Jesus ascended into heaven (see Acts 2).

5 List from memory seven activities of the early believers which gave them the characteristics of a church or corporate body. Write your answer in your notebook and then compare it with the list we have given in this section. Does this list resemble the activities of your local church body?

WHAT THE CHURCH IS LIKE

Objective 3. *Recognize the characteristics that describe the nature of the church.*

When a person accepts Christ as Lord, the Holy Spirit, who brings about his salvation, also joins him to all other believers in a community which we call the church, or the *body of Christ*. In the Bible the church has been likened to a body, a bride, a building, branches on a vine, and a flock. These same figures have been applied to the individual believer, the local church, and the universal church.

6 Match the term (right) with the Scripture which describes it (left).

- | | | |
|-------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ... a | Luke 15:4-10 (flock) | 1) An individual believer |
| ... b | 2 Corinthians 11:2 (bride) | 2) A local assembly |
| ... c | 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 (building) | 3) The universal church |
| ... d | Ephesians 1:22-23 (body) | |
| ... e | Hebrews 13:20 (flock) | |
| ... f | John 15:1-5 (branches) | |

This exercise illustrates something of the nature of the church. While an individual believer alone does not make a church, the church is a body made up of many individual believers. If we identify the church as an institution or organization, we quickly lose sight of it as a community of believers—believers who have come together in intimate relationship with one another as a result of their personal relationships with Christ. These believers minister to each other, love each other, and help each other in the Christian walk. So the nature of the church can be explained in two ways. First of all, it involves the relationships of believers to one another. Secondly, it is a visible manifestation of the believers' union with Christ.

1. *The church involves the relationships of believers to one another and to Christ.* When a sinner is faced with the gospel message, he stands alone before God. His choice to accept or

reject the gospel is a personal choice which he alone can make for himself. Whichever choice he makes, he will find that others have made the same choice. Therefore, while salvation is a very personal affair, it is not a private matter. It brings us into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and with other believers. Both are necessary for spiritual growth and the development of a Christlike nature in the individual believer.

Paul spoke of the relationship with Jesus Christ which the believer enters into at the time of salvation: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live . . . I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). He spoke of the relationship of believers with one another when he said "we are members one of another" (Ephesians 4:25, RSV). That is, all believers together make up the church.

Therefore, from one point of view each believer is an individual who lives in a personal relationship to Christ with personal responsibilities in his Christian life. From another point of view all believers blend together in a spiritual union which, likewise, has a relationship to Christ, together with *corporate* responsibilities to Him.

7 The Scriptures compare the relationship between Christ and the church to that between a head and its body. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:7-16, and Colossians 1:18. Based on these Scripture texts, circle the letter in front of each true statement concerning the body of Christ.

- a** There are many parts in the body of Christ.
- b** Some parts of the body are less important than other parts.
- c** An individual believer can grow to Christian maturity without being an active member of the body of Christ.
- d** Each believer is a part of Christ's body.
- e** Christ is head over everything for the church, His body.
- f** Each believer is responsible to Christ alone.
- g** If a member of the body is suffering, other members will feel his pain and suffer with him.
- h** The gifts Christ has given to the church are necessary so that each member can experience personal growth.

These Scripture passages teach us that it is no accident that in the New Testament the Christian life is a corporate experience. The new believers were quite naturally drawn together in worship, fellowship, and witness. Through the new birth their old, selfish, nature was thrown off, and they became part of a caring and sharing community.

The Bible makes it clear that being partners with other believers in a body that is responsive to the Head is a very demanding challenge. The fact is that each one of us has responsibilities that go beyond our own personal choices, our own relationship to the Head, or our own values. Now we are to function as a part of the body of Christ. That explains why Paul was concerned for the church at Corinth:

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought (1 Corinthians 1:10).

As part of the church, which as a corporate unit is related to Christ, I must be in accord with other partners in Christ if I am to be in accord with Him. The church, then, as portrayed in the Scriptures, is *people*. These people have a relationship to Christ and through Him to one another.

2. *The church is a visible manifestation of the believers' union with Christ.* God designed the church in such a way that its nature may be known through the relationships of believers. Since our relationship with Christ is a spiritual experience, the only way for it to become a visible reality is through our lives. We can, and do, tell others what we believe. If our lives are marked by kindness, selflessness, and true Christian love, people get the idea that our *invisible* association with Christ is real. However, if we don't live according to our spoken testimony, non-Christians may say, "Your actions speak so loudly that I can't hear what you say!"

This is also true in the corporate life of the community of believers. The reality of the relationship between the body (the church) and its Head (Christ Jesus) is to be seen in the life of the church. That is why Paul reminded the Ephesian believers to

“. . . be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:2-3).

In Paul's time, great social barriers existed which separated Jew from Gentile and the slave from the freeborn. Apart from the gospel, there was no way these barriers could be overcome, but Ephesians 2:11-22 explains that through the cross of Christ all this is changed. He has destroyed the barrier between Jew and Gentile, making them “fellow citizens and members of God's household.” A relationship to Christ does away with social distinctions and unites all people who become part of the family of God.

As members of the same body, these people with differing social backgrounds were to be united in spirit and purpose (see Philippians 2:2). They were to be kind and compassionate to one another. Jesus gave this requirement the status of a *new commandment*: “A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another” (John 13:34-35).

So we see that the believers' relationships are to be characterized by *love*. This principle is so important that it can be used as an accurate gauge for determining one's relationship to God: “Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness” (1 John 2:9). John continues:

If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother (1 John 4:19-21).

It is for this reason that Paul rebuked the jealousy and quarreling among Corinthian Christians which led them to divide into factions and say “I follow Paul,” or “I follow Apollos” (1 Corinthians 3:4). This is not Christian behavior, but it is the unspiritual conduct of unspiritual babes. These commands and examples help us to see that if we are out of harmony with each other, we are also out of harmony with God.

- 8** (Choose the best answer.) The nature of the church as a spiritual community can be defined as
- a) a group of people trying to have unity with one another.
 - b) all believers in union with Christ.
 - c) living out the Christian experience daily.

- 9** The nature of the church as a visible expression of the believer’s relationship with Christ can be defined as
- a) a spiritual bond of love for God.
 - b) a place where people join together in groups according to their own social background for the purpose of worship.
 - c) local assemblies of believers in a relationship of union with one another based upon love.

We see, therefore, that by nature the church is spiritual. However, it is also a practical community in which believers demonstrate their relationships to their Lord and to one another. It is thus a community of believers in which we see and experience true love. Since love is the chief characteristic of the spiritual relationship, this same love must be manifested in the local assembly:

Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might love through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:8-11).

10 Based on the information in this section, state two characteristics which describe the nature of the church.

.....

WHAT THE CHURCH DOES

What does the church do? What are its purposes for existing? From Paul’s letter to the Ephesian believers, we learn that God brought the community of believers into existence to bring glory to His name. His overall purpose in redeeming us is that we should be “to the praise of His glory” (Ephesians 1:6, 12, 14).

The manner in which the church glorifies God is three-directional:

1. *Upward*, as believers worship Him
2. *Inward*, as believers edify one another
3. *Outward*, as believers share the gospel with unbelievers

The Church Worships God

Objective 4. *Identify true statements concerning corporate worship, and explain what we give to God in worship.*

Worship is the act in which we recognize the worthiness of God to be given reverence and praise. In corporate worship, the believers direct praise and honor to God for His gracious gifts to His people in and through our Lord Jesus. The focus of true worship is not people, but it is *God*. We worship God because of who He is (His character) and what He does.

In Lessons 1-3 of this course of study we looked at many reasons why God is worthy of our worship. Psalm 107:1-3 tells us, “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say this—those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, those he gathered from the lands.”

Jesus declared that God seeks for people who will worship Him “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23). This means that our worship must be sincere and that it must be based upon a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It is our spirit in communion with His Spirit. Through the provision of salvation, God has removed forever the barriers that would prevent our communion with God (see Hebrews 4:16; 10:19-22). True Christian worship is not based on what we do for God, but it rests upon our knowledge and acceptance of what He has done for us in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Our worship is not like that of pagans who worship gods made of wood or stone. Their worship is intended to pacify the anger of their gods or to gain favor with them. However, when God's people worship Him, they recognize that He has freely offered mercy and grace to them (Psalm 118:1). Worship is a grateful expression of thanks to God for His grace. It includes both praise and adoration.

While we can and often do worship God privately, it is important to realize the value of corporate worship, which is a *symphony* of praise to God. As God's family gathers in His presence to glorify Him, each believer is able to realize the oneness of the people of God. There is a spiritual *dynamic* in corporate worship that a person cannot experience alone. This means that there is spiritual power as we join together in worship that benefits and strengthens each worshiper. I am helped in my worship of God as I experience worship with other believers. That is why the Scriptures urge us, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another" (Hebrews 10:24-25).

In corporate worship, the church, under the direction of the Holy Spirit and in accordance with the Word of God, seeks to glorify God through various means, such as song, prayer, and the ministry of the Word. It is important to note that simply going through the forms of worship does not mean that we have worshipped. We can enjoy the beauty of music, the ability of the preacher, or the pleasure of being with other people and yet fail to worship God. Remember that the primary purpose of all true worship is to glorify God. He must be the center of our worship.

Corporate worship is illustrated many times in the Bible. Let us look at a few examples:

Nehemiah 8:6: "Ezra praised the Lord, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, 'Amen! Amen!' Then they bowed down and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground."

2 Chronicles 29:28: "The whole assembly bowed in worship, while the singers sang and the trumpeters played."

Acts 2:46-47: "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God"

Revelation 5:13: "Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is

in them, singing: 'To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!'"

In addition to singing, praying, and praising God, the church also worships together in observing the two ordinances commanded by Jesus: water baptism and the Lord's Supper. In water baptism, new believers are baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as a sign of inner change. The Lord's Supper was to be observed, Jesus said, "in remembrance of me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." Obedience in observing these ordinances is an act of corporate worship. (See Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.)

11 Which of these are **TRUE** statements concerning corporate worship? Circle the letter in front of the answers you choose.

- a** The purpose of corporate worship is to satisfy God's anger and win His favor.
- b** Worship in spirit and truth requires sincerity and a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
- c** Corporate worship draws believers together in unity and power.
- d** Spiritual worship is always centered on God.
- e** Corporate worship is illustrated and commanded in the Scriptures.

12 Name three words that explain what we give to God in worship.

.....

The Church Edifies Itself

Objective 5. *Explain the meaning of the term **edify** and what relationship there is between the gifts and fruit of the Spirit and the church.*

One fact becomes apparent to us as we examine scriptural evidence concerning the functions of the church: God insists on dealing with believers in *community*. We understand this community function better when we associate the church with

the concept of the body. The Scriptures use the illustration of the body to explain the functions of the church, the spiritual body (see Romans 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31; and Ephesians 4:7-16). Every member and his contribution are important to the healthy functioning of the body.

The human body is a very complex organism. It has many parts, each of which has a different function. The body of Christ likewise has many members. Each member has one or more gifts or abilities that enable him to contribute to the well-being of the whole body. What are these gifts? A listing of them will show the great variety of gifts available to the members of the body of Christ.

1. Romans 12:4-8: Prophesying, serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing to the needs of others, leadership, showing mercy.
2. 1 Corinthians 12:8-10: The message of wisdom, the message of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, the ability to distinguish between spirits, the ability to speak in different kinds of tongues, the interpretation of tongues. (See also vs. 28-30.)

It is important to emphasize that gifted individuals are given to the *church*, the *community* of believers, “to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:12). This means that believers live in relationship with each other, dependent upon one another. Each member of Christ’s body has a service, a talent, or some special contribution to make; and each needs the contribution of the other members. For the collective members of the body God has given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11).

It is also important to note that the body of Christ is a *spiritual organism* which is united with Christ. This means that it is more than a collection of individuals. Those who believe in Christ are joined together in His body because they are joined with the Head. The unity, we should always remember, comes from Christ alone. *Because members belong to Christ, they also belong to each other.* The body lives to serve the Head. In the human body, when the brain is dead there is no need for the

body. If Christ is not given His place as our Head, there is no need for the body. Jesus said to the church in Sardis, "I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead" (Revelation 3:1). The church must maintain its relationship with the Head, Jesus Christ, in worship, so that it can edify itself. To *edify* means "to instruct or improve spiritually, to build up or establish."

God has provided for harmony in this spiritual organism, the church. As the parts of the human body respond to the needs of each part, so the spiritual body responds to the needs of individual believers. If one member suffers, the others share the pain; if one rejoices, the others share the joy (1 Corinthians 12:24-26). The reason is this: "The whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:16).

The process of building up the body sometimes means that the church must purify itself. This may require the discipline of a member who has sinned. Jesus talked about this (Matthew 18:15-20) and gave instructions for dealing with such persons in a spirit of love. However, if they refuse to listen and repent, they are to be expelled from the community of believers (see also 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 for an example).

It is in the believer's relationships with other members of the body of Christ that the Holy Spirit produces His fruit in the believer. The fruit of the Spirit, listed in Galatians 5:22-23, refers to the characteristics of Christ that develop as we form relationships with one another. They are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

13 Complete the following sentences:

a The church *edifies* itself. To *edify* means to

.....

b The relationship between the gifts of the Spirit and the church is that

c The relationship between the fruit of the Spirit and the church is that

Christianity is not a lonesome or solitary walk. A reading of the book of Acts reveals that the body of Christ is a busy, worshipping, sharing fellowship of believers united for the purpose of glorifying God, growing in His love, and bringing others into His kingdom. The church is for those who are committed to the growth, development, and maturing of the members of the body of Christ. When this happens, then it is ready to carry out its third function: sharing the gospel with unbelievers.

The Church Evangelizes the World

Objective 6. *Explain how the teachings of Jesus concerning the church's mission should be put into practice.*

Jesus' first command to needy people is "Come" (Matthew 11:28). Once they have experienced his forgiveness and acceptance they are challenged to "Go" (Matthew 28:19). As the community of involved believers in each locality is built up in the faith, it must turn its energies outward to the non-believing world. God uses *people* to win people! The church glorifies God as believers share the gospel with others; they engage in evangelism. The word *evangelism* literally means "the declaration of the gospel." The responsibility and the privilege of the church is to make known God's provision of salvation to all people.

Believers are called out of the world in the sense that they are no longer to be controlled by its values and loyalties. Nevertheless, they are challenged to *take* the gospel to the world of non-Christians. Jesus prayed to the Father, "They are not of the world, even as I am not of it As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world" (John 17:16, 18). Believers are to separate themselves from the non-Christian lifestyle and yet be involved in changing it. Because Christians are *sent*, we have the idea of *mission*.

The New Testament gives us the scope of evangelism in Matthew 13:38. Jesus declares that "the field is the world." He challenged His followers with these words: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them . . . and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded" (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15). The church is thus obligated to share the gospel with people everywhere.

The responsibility for evangelism is not a matter of choice with Christians. Jesus said that when believers received the power of the Holy Spirit, they would be dynamic witnesses “in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). God is glorified when people are saved and added to the body of Christ, for in this process Christians truly become the productive, fruit-bearing believers Christ intended for them to be (John 15:1-8).

14 The book of Acts gives us some insights as to how we should look at our responsibility of spreading the gospel. Read these verses and state what the apostles’ reaction was in each instance:

- a** Acts 4:16-20:
- b** Acts 4:31:
- c** Acts 5:40-42:

As of 1994, there were over 5.6 billion people on the earth. It is estimated that about two-thirds of them have not had an adequate witness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord of the harvest has challenged us to declare His good news to them. He is pouring out His Spirit upon His servants throughout the world, urging them to give themselves to the unfinished task of evangelism. He has equipped the church not only with the power of the Spirit but also with effective tools so that it may accomplish its mission: radio, television, literature, and mass evangelism meetings (in some cultures). The gospel is being declared on a broader scale than ever before through these means. Nevertheless, the greatest means of evangelizing the people of the world rests on the effective witnessing and the Christlike example of each believer in his respective place.

Our goal, then, should be to see that each person who is won to Christ and brought out of the world be challenged to return to the world as an ambassador for Christ. With new convictions and new standards, each believer is intended by God to reenter the world as His representative, offering salvation to all people. In this way, the church can carry out its mission obediently and effectively, bringing glory to God in the process.

15 Answer these questions briefly:

- a** What is Christ’s command to the sinner (one word)?
- b** What is Christ’s command to the believer (one word)?
- c** What is the most important thing Jesus has given to the church for carrying out its mission?
- d** Whom does God use to win the lost?.....
- e** Jesus said that believers are not *of* the world. What did He mean?
- f** What did He mean by saying that believers are *in* the world?
- g** Examples of the apostles in the book of Acts teach us that, in regard to its mission, the church should have what attitude?

self-test

MULTIPLE CHOICE. Select the one best answer to each question.

- 1** The biblical usage of the term *church* refers to
 - a) a group of people with similar beliefs.
 - b) a community of people who have responded to God's call.
 - c) a place where people meet together to worship.
 - d) groups of people who have the same doctrinal views.

- 2** The biblical example of the church as a body with many parts indicates that
 - a) people meeting together in God's name make up a church.
 - b) each person in relationship with Christ is His church.
 - c) the church includes many people in relationships with one another because of their individual relationships with Christ.
 - d) each assembly is organized in the same way as all others.

- 3** The local or visible church refers to
 - a) the entire body of Christ.
 - b) believers from a given place who share faith in Jesus Christ and who meet together for worship.
 - c) all believers from one denomination.
 - d) the universal church.

- 4** The term *community* gives the idea of
 - a) government.
 - b) an invisible church.
 - c) people with different ideas about doing things.
 - d) sharing and having fellowship together.

- 5** The Bible gives evidence that the church began
 - a) during the ministry of Jesus on earth.
 - b) at the time of the ascension of Jesus.
 - c) on the day of Pentecost.
 - d) after the conversion of Paul.

- 6** The spiritual nature of the church is visibly manifested in
- a) the believers’ demonstration of unity and love for one another.
 - b) Christ’s living in the hearts of believers.
 - c) the gifts of the Spirit.
 - d) singing, praying, and preaching.

- 7** What is the best proof that a person loves God?
- a) He loves other people.
 - b) He spends many hours in prayer and worship.
 - c) He becomes a member of a local church.
 - d) He witnesses to unbelievers.

- 8** The Bible teaches that the gifts of the Spirit are given to
- a) any individual who wants to have a personal ministry.
 - b) the church for its edification, operating through believers as they minister to one another.
 - c) help the church evangelize the world.
 - d) produce a Christlike character in gifted people.

- 9** In the example of the church as the body of Christ, we learn that the church’s character should come from its
- a) members.
 - b) works.
 - c) Head.
 - d) communion and fellowship.

10 SHORT ANSWER. Explain what the purpose of the church is in relation to each of these:

- a** In relation to God:
- b** In relation to itself:
- c** In relation to the world:

answers to study questions

- 8** b) all believers in union with Christ.
- 1** Your answer.
- 9** c) local assemblies of believers in a relationship of union with one another based on love.
- 2** You should have circled letters b), c), and e).
- 10** It is a love relationship between believers and Christ. It is a love relationship of believers for one another.
- 3** b) The Scriptures give evidence that the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus had to take place before He could establish His church.
- 11** All are true except **a**.
- 4** The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, just as Jesus had promised. About 3000 people accepted the message of the gospel and were added to the number of believers.
- 12** Any of these: Glory, honor, reverence, praise, thanks, obedience.
- 5** Compare your answer with our list in this section, and then compare it with the functions in your local church body.
- 13** Your answers should be similar to these:
- a** build up, establish, instruct, improve, strengthen, or discipline.
 - b** the gifts are given to the church, or for the benefit of the church as a whole. It is in corporate worship that the gifts are manifested.
 - c** the Spirit produces His fruit in us through our relationships with others. Spiritual fruit cannot grow apart from relationships.
- 6** **a** 1) An individual believer.
b 2) A local assembly.
c 2) A local assembly.
d 3) The universal church.
e 3) The universal church.

f 1) An individual believer.

14 a They could not help but speak about what they had seen and heard.

b They spoke the word of God boldly.

c They never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.

7 a, d, e, g, and h are true.

15 a Come.

b Go.

c The Holy Spirit.

d Believers (the church).

e That believers have separated themselves from the life-style of the world and are no longer controlled by it.

f Believers have a mission to save the world, or to evangelize it.

g An attitude that it must do everything possible to preach the gospel to all the world.

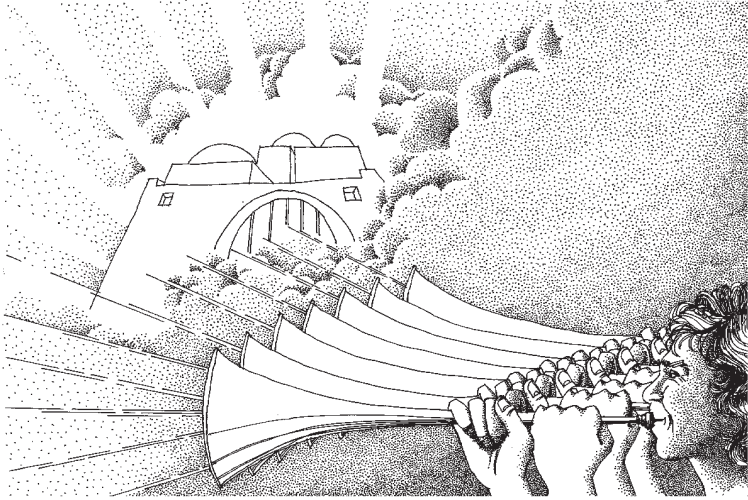
Lesson 10

The Future: Revelation, Reward and Rest

The Bible has much to say about the fulfillment of God's plan for His people. In his first message following Pentecost, Peter declared that in the future God would restore all things (Acts 3:21). Later, in very moving terms, the apostle Paul revealed the nature of what lies ahead for Christians (Romans 8:18-25). Creation, he stated, awaits the unveiling of God's redemptive program.

Ever since the fall of man, nature has been under the tragic effects of the curse. Man also has groaned beneath the burden of forcing a meager living from sin-cursed, stubborn earth. His body has suffered the effects of disease and decay. With ears attuned to the voice of his Maker, man (along with the rest of creation) awaits the blessed statement: "No longer will there be any curse" (Revelation 22:3). The time is coming when God will deal with the source of all these problems. The wicked, including Satan, will be judged, and Jesus will come to take the righteous to be with Him in heaven. That is the blessed hope of the believer!

In this lesson we will discuss the fulfillment of Bible prophecy and the future consummation of God's program. As you consider these important matters, may the hope imparted cause you to examine yourself closely and purify yourself from anything that would hinder you from being ready for our Lord's return.



lesson outline

The Blessed Hope
The Tribulation
The Revelation of Jesus Christ
The Millennium
The Judgment of Satan and the Wicked Dead
The New Creation

lesson objectives

When you finish this lesson you should be able to:

- State the order of the end-time events and the significance of each event.
- Explain the purpose and process of the Tribulation.
- Discuss the evidence for and purposes of the Millennium.
- Understand the importance of the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ for believers and non-believers alike.

learning activities

1. As background for this lesson, read Matthew 24, Mark 13, Luke 21, 1 Corinthians 15, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12, and Revelation 19. Be sure also to find and read other Scripture references as they are given in the lesson. Do the lesson and self-test as usual.
2. Review Lessons 8-10 carefully. Then answer the questions in Unit Student Report 3. When you have finished, send your answer sheet to your ICI University instructor.

key words

abominable	desolate	Sabbath Year
sacrilege	dispersion	(sabbatical year)
blasphemy	extinction	time frame
confrontation	imperishable	vindicated
consummation	perishable	
deify	renovation	

lesson development

THE BLESSED HOPE

Objective 1. Write short definitions of terms related to the blessed hope.

In his letter to Titus, the apostle Paul declares that the gospel of the grace of God has appeared to all people. It confronts them with a moral choice: whether or not they will say *No* to ungodliness and worldly passions and live self-controlled and godly lives in this present age, as they wait for the *blessed hope*. That *blessed hope*, he states, is the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11-14). His appearing shall also bring about the destruction of all authority that is opposed to God. As we begin our study of “last things,” or end-time events, we will first direct our attention to the *blessed hope* of the believer.

In the final hours before His death, our Lord revealed to the 12 disciples the basis for the believer’s hope. He spoke of His Father’s

house with its abundance of rooms. He told them He was leaving to prepare a place for them (and for all who believe in Him). Also, He assured them that as surely as He would leave them, so would He return to take them to live with Him (John 14:1-3).

This message of hope was confirmed by the angels who appeared following Jesus’ ascension. They said, “This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). The apostle Paul, by divine revelation, declared that believers eagerly await the “redemption” of their bodies (Romans 8:23), which will be changed at the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:20-21).

The Scriptures indicate that the coming of the Lord includes two aspects: 1) a coming *for* believers, and 2) a coming *with* them. His coming *for* believers is called the Rapture, and His coming *with* them is referred to as *the Revelation*. As we develop the theme of end-time events, we shall discuss these two events. Let’s consider first the Rapture and the reward of believers and then their relation to other events.

- 1 (Choose the best answer.) The *blessed-hope* refers to
 - a) the revelation of Christ when He comes *with* His own.
 - b) the rapture of believers when Christ comes *for* them.
 - c) all of the end-time events.

The Rapture of Believers

When God in His sovereign wisdom determines that the task of spreading the gospel has been completed, He will initiate the *consummation* (the point at which something is made complete or perfect) of His program.

- 2 Compare Matthew 24:14 with Matthew 24:36. According to these verses, what can we know about the time of Jesus’ return for those who belong to Him?

.....

In 1 Thessalonians 4:17 we read that believers will be “caught up” (raptured) to meet the Lord in the air and to be taken to the dwelling place promised in John 14:1-3. In

1 Corinthians 15:50-52 Paul indicates that the physical bodies of all believers will be changed as their mortal bodies are transformed instantly and made ready for heaven. This event will occur suddenly. Wherever a believer may be, he will be “caught up” suddenly. The Bible compares this sudden event to the coming of a thief in the night (1 Thessalonians 5:2).

The message for believers is clearly this: They must be alert and self-controlled as they live from day to day, realizing that the judgment of God will come upon those who reject God’s offer of salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:1-11). The hope of believers, then, is 1) deliverance from the coming wrath of God; 2) the privilege of seeing their Lord; and 3) being made like Him (1 John 3:2).

3 Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 and fill in the blanks to complete these statements:

- a** Two classes of believers will be raptured: the
and the
- b** The hope of believers in the return of the Lord is based upon
.....
- c** The apostle Paul indicates that unbelievers grieve because they have no in the resurrection of the body and eternal life.

A close examination of 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 indicates that at the Rapture certain changes will occur. At the moment of the Rapture, living believers will instantly be changed from “mortal” to “immortal.” This means they will never die. Those believers who have died in Christ will first be resurrected, and then they will be changed from “perishable” (capable of decay or destruction) to “imperishable” (that which will never decay). Since flesh and blood—that is, our present physical bodies—cannot inherit the kingdom of God, the indication is that they will be changed into some kind of *glorified* bodies. We don’t understand everything about these glorified bodies, but we do know they will never again experience pain, sickness, or death, and they will be eternal.

While the Rapture will take place suddenly, and no one but God the Father knows the exact time, we are given some hints as

to when it will occur. Jesus stated that there would be signs or disturbances in the heavens which would cause anguish and distress among the nations. In addition, there will be famine, disease, and war to accompany the heavenly signs (see Luke 21:10, 25-28). These events simply signal the approach of the end. Believers recognize from these that their union with Christ is nearing, as well as their *reunion* with beloved friends and relatives who have already gone to be with the Lord.

4 Briefly explain what will happen to the physical bodies of both living and dead believers at the moment of the Rapture.

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The Reward of Believers

Various biblical references indicate that believers will be rewarded on the basis of their Christian behavior (see Matthew 16:27; 2 John verse 8; Revelation 22:12). Paul, speaking to the members of the Corinthian church, said, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:10). The word translated *judgment seat is bema*, and is understood better as a *reward reviewing stand*. A good illustration of this stand was the kind on which judges of an Olympic contest stood to review the games so that they could reward the victors. The purpose of this *review* is for each believer to give an account of himself to God (Romans 14:10-12).

Our judgment by God is a review of our Christian service. It is not so much the *quantity* of works but the *quality* of what we’ve done for God that will be examined. What has been the motive for our service? Has it been selfless devotion to Him, or have we served simply to draw attention to our talents, abilities, and resources? The Bible clearly reveals that the quality of our work will be reviewed, and service that survives the test as *quality service* will be rewarded. Service that is motivated by selfishness and pride will not be rewarded (see 1 Corinthians 3:11-15).

Although the time of this review is not identified specifically, some Bible scholars believe that it will take place following the Rapture. While those who have rejected God’s salvation are undergoing a time of the greatest wickedness,

anguish, and chaos ever known on earth, faithful servants of the Lord will be honored in His presence.

5 (Choose the best answer.) Scripture teaches us that every believer will give account of his service to God and that each one will receive

- a) the same reward whether his service is great or small.
- b) a reward based on both the quantity and quality of his service.
- c) a reward based on the motives or quality of his service.
- d) either reward or punishment.

6 In your notebook, write a short explanation of each of these terms:

- a** The believer's glorified body
- b** The revelation of Jesus Christ
- c** The Rapture
- d** The *blessed hope*
- e** The judgment seat of Christ

THE TRIBULATION

In the Olivet discourse, which is recorded in Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21, Jesus responded to questions the disciples asked: 1) When will the present temple buildings be destroyed? and 2) What will be the signs of Your coming and the end of the age?

The answers Jesus gave to these two important questions are blended together so much that it is difficult to determine which part of his answers refers to the destruction of the temple and the dispersion (scattering) of the Jewish people, an event soon to take place, and which referred to the signs that will precede the return of Jesus at the "end of the age."

We are greatly helped in understanding Jesus' response by His reference to the prophecies of Daniel, which tell about certain end-time events (Matthew 24:15). In connection with this, we will benefit from a review of the history of the Jewish people and their relation to the events we are now considering. God has provided

us with a general outline of future events that concern the Jewish people and their capital city, Jerusalem (Daniel 9:24-27). This outline is based upon a time frame that included the past history of the Jews as well as their future. Read Daniel chapter 9 in preparation for our discussion of these events.

An Overview of the Jew in Bible History and Prophecy

Objective 2. *Given a list of prophetic events from Daniel 9 and Amos 9, select those which have already taken place.*

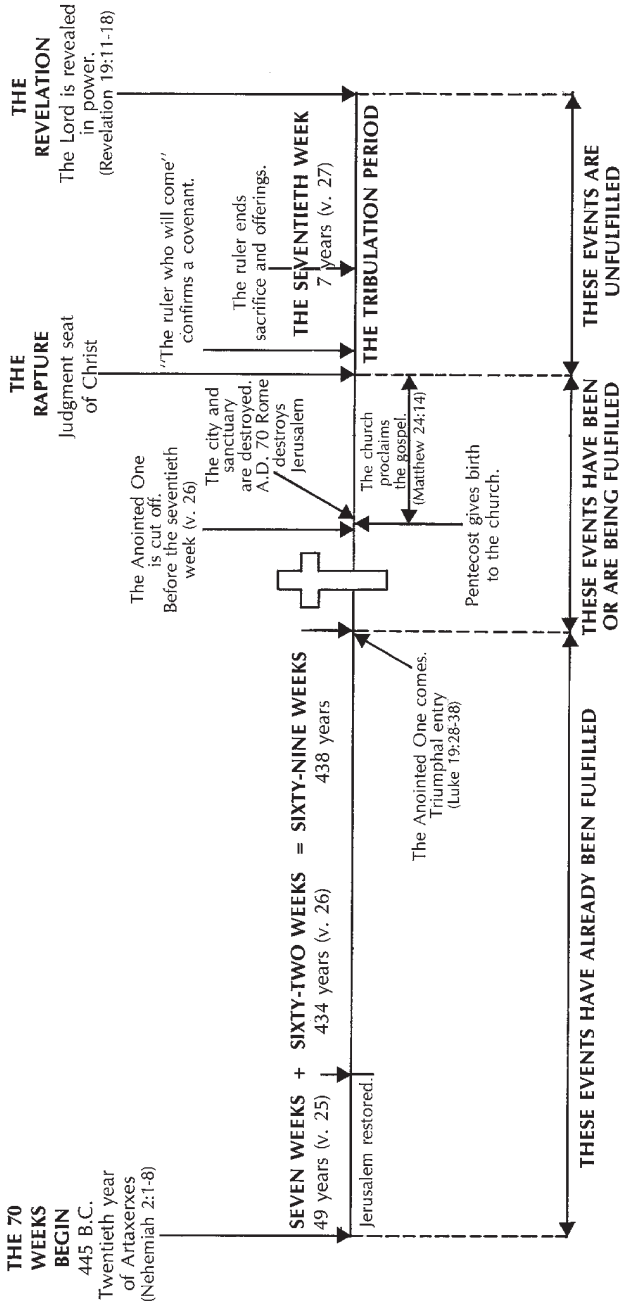
Daniel's Vision

The Scriptures tell us that, because of the Jewish people's failure to observe the Sabbath of the land every seven years, God had decreed that they would remain in the land of their enemies for seventy years. (Compare Leviticus 25:2-7 and 26:14-16, 31-35 with 2 Chronicles 36:21 for an explanation of the Sabbath Year and the results of not observing it.) The indication is that for 490 years the people had failed to keep the required Sabbath Years. The key to this short but highly significant prophecy of Daniel 9 revolves around a similar period of the seventy "sevens" or seventy "weeks" of years referred to in verses 24 to 27.

The nation of Israel was accustomed to "weeks" of years, for every *seventh* year was a *sabbatical* year of rest for the land (Leviticus 25:3-4). The great jubilee of social and economic adjustment which took place every fiftieth year was based upon a multiple of this important *week of years*—seven sevens, or weeks, of years (see Leviticus 25:8-9). During this fiftieth year all debts were canceled, slaves were set free, and land estates were returned to the original owners.

THE SEVENTY WEEKS IN PROPHETIC PERSPECTIVE

"Seventy 'sevens' (weeks) are decreed for your people (the Jews) and your holy city (Jerusalem)." **Daniel 9:24-29**



How unusual it was that when the 70 years of captivity were almost over, an angel should be sent to reveal through Daniel the beginning of a new period in God's dealing with the Jewish people. As you will see from Daniel's prophecy, this period would extend for the same number of years as the number covered by the violations of the sabbatical year, or *490 years* (that is, seventy sevens of years). Let us review briefly the facts that are given in Daniel's vision, and then we will look at the interpretation of the vision.

1. The prophecy concerns Daniel's people, the Jews, and his holy city, Jerusalem (v. 24).
2. The prophecy involves a time period of seventy sevens or weeks of years. This represents a time period of 490 years.
3. The activities to be completed in this time period include:
 - a. The finishing of transgression
 - b. The ending of sin
 - c. The atoning for wickedness
 - d. The anointing of the most holy (or *a* most holy One)
 - e. The bringing in of everlasting righteousness (v. 24)
4. The time period involved initially is seven sevens (49 years) and sixty-two sevens (434 years), making a total of sixty-nine sevens (483 years—see v. 25).
5. The time *begins* at a very precise point: the proclamation of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.
6. The initial time period ends with a very specific event: the coming of the Anointed One, and His being cut off soon thereafter (vs. 25-26).
7. Two rulers are in view: the *Anointed One* (Jesus) and the *ruler who will come* (the Antichrist), whose people will destroy the city and the sanctuary (vs. 25-26).
8. A final seven (or week of) years then comes into focus in which the *coming ruler* (Antichrist) will make a covenant with the Jewish people to cover the seven-year period. However, halfway through this time period, after three and one-half years, this coming ruler will break the covenant, stop Jewish religious activity, and desolate (ruin, make empty) the temple, before he meets his end.

7 Based upon the preceding information, we can conclude that the time periods covered in Daniel's vision are based upon the number of

- a) times Jewish people failed to observe their sabbatical year.
- b) rulers who would take control over the Jewish people.
- c) weeks in a year.

Interpretation of the Vision

Let's proceed with the interpretation of this remarkable vision, which begins with Daniel 9:25:

Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing (vs. 25-26).

Notice that the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was given in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 2:1-8). A careful review of historical records indicates the date of 445 B.C. for this decree. The city was indeed rebuilt in times of trouble. Then, after another 434 years the Anointed One appeared precisely as prophesied. Biblical scholars have calculated very carefully that exactly 483 years after the decree of Artaxerxes, Jesus, the Anointed One, made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem at the conclusion of His earthly ministry (Luke 19:28-38). Then, within a few days, He was *cut off* by the events of the crucifixion.

Next in Daniel's vision the angel told him that the people of the coming ruler would destroy the city and the sanctuary after the Anointed One was cut off (v. 26). This part of the prophecy was fulfilled very accurately in 70 A.D. when the Roman army destroyed the city of Jerusalem, broke down its walls, burned the sanctuary (temple), and then pried apart the very stones of which it was built (Matthew 24:2). It was at this time that the Jewish nation, Israel, ceased to exist as a sovereign (self-governing) nation. Its people were scattered to the ends of the earth, and the long-term purposes God had foretold (Daniel 9:24) were seemingly postponed.

The events of the last seven or the seventieth week of years in Daniel’s vision have not yet come to pass. It is this final period in God’s program for the Jewish nation that concerns us particularly in terms of the end-time. We must, therefore, examine what has happened to cause a break in the time frame that God established. We will start with the early days of the Jewish nation.

Briefly, God made it very clear to the nation of Israel as it entered into the Promised Land that *obedience* to His laws would bring benefits (see Deuteronomy 28:1-14). He also stated clearly the evil that would follow His peoples’ *disobedience* (Leviticus 26:14-45; Deuteronomy 28:15-68). The Bible indicates that, because of their disobedience and seemingly incurable sinfulness, God finally permitted His people to be dispersed (scattered or sent out) from their land. Then He made the land desolate (Isaiah 6:11-12; 17:9; 64:10). Earlier, 70 years of captivity had not served to turn the people back to God. Therefore, with the dispersion brought about by the Roman conquest, the Jewish people became “wanderers,” and they suffered untold misery as they sought for a place of refuge from hostile Gentile nations.

Thus, Israel, the *chosen nation*, was deprived of the Promised Land for a time. God in His love and mercy had indicated that He would not forsake His people completely (Leviticus 26:43-45), but that He would recall them from the very ends of the earth (Isaiah 11:11-12). He would use various means to gather them, to attract them from their adopted homes to the land He had given to their “father” Abraham for in everlasting possession (Jeremiah 16:14-16).

8 What event (a fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy) took place and marked the end of the Jewish nation, causing the people to be scattered to the ends of the earth?

.....

The Return to Israel

Interestingly enough, at the beginning of this present century, after centuries of horrible persecution, many Jewish people found that they were not now so detested. Therefore, they settled down in relative contentment in various parts of the

world. As a result, they tended to lose sight of their ancient attachment to the Promised Land.

However, one Jewish leader in Europe, Dr. Theodore Herzl, was uneasy as he witnessed the rise of persecution in Russia near the end of the nineteenth century. Believing that things might get much worse for his people, he attempted to interest them in the idea of establishing a national homeland in Palestine. His efforts to establish the modern “Zionist Movement,” however, met with little success. Jews in Germany, for example, said, “We know nothing of Zion. Germany is our Palestine and Munich is our Jerusalem.”

As the world moved toward war in Europe, Jews found life becoming more and more difficult. Then, during World War I, the Zionist Movement brought pressure upon the British government, which led to the eventual release of the *Balfour Declaration*. This document pledged British support for the establishment in Palestine of a homeland for the Jewish people. When the British took control of the Holy Land following the war, Jewish immigration to Palestine was encouraged. Many Jews returned to coexist alongside of the Arab people who had been living on the land for centuries.

Soon World War II threatened, and persecution of the Jews began in earnest. In Europe it became so intense that many Jews came to realize that their only hope of survival was to get out of Europe and return to their ancient land. Following the end of World War II, masses of Jews left their adopted homes for Palestine. By the middle of May, 1948, the returned Jews proclaimed the birth of the modern state of Israel. Soon the prophecy of Amos 9:14-15 began to be fulfilled literally:

I will bring back my exiled people Israel; they will rebuild the ruined cities and live in them. They will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will make gardens and eat their fruit. I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land that I have given them, says the Lord your God.

The land had been seemingly worthless for nearly 2000 years. God had said that it would blossom as a flower (Isaiah

35:1-2). Isaiah's prophecy has been fulfilled most accurately. The waste places have been reclaimed, and the ruined cities have been repopulated, rebuilt, and strengthened (Ezekiel 36:33-36; see also Isaiah 61:4).

One historian has noted that World War I prepared the Promised Land for the Jewish people; World War II prepared the Jewish people for their land; and a coming war will prepare the Jewish people for their God.

Those who keep up-to-date concerning problems in the Middle East are aware that, with the return of the Jews to their ancient land, many of the long-time inhabitants of the land, the Palestinians, have been displaced and have become refugees in large numbers to other Middle Eastern countries. This has been a cause of increased tensions and strife between the Jews and their Arab neighbors. As we will see later, this is a factor that will contribute to the eventual fulfillment of prophecy concerning the Middle East.

With this prophetic picture in mind, we now turn to the substance of Daniel 9:27, which concerns the "coming ruler" and the completion of the things God decreed in verse 24.

9 Circle the letter preceding the prophetic events which have already taken place, as explained in this section:

- a** The exile of the Jews for 70 years because of disobedience
- b** The restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem following the 70 years in captivity
- c** The coming of the Anointed One
- d** The coming of the Antichrist
- e** The cutting off of the Anointed One
- f** The people of the coming ruler destroy the Holy City and the temple
- g** The end of the Jewish nation as a sovereign nation
- h** The prophecy in Amos 9 that the nation of Israel would once again be restored and the people would return to make gardens and plant vineyards
- i** The covenant between the Jewish people and the *coming ruler* which is broken after three and one-half years

Daniel's Seventieth Week

Objective 3. *Select true statements concerning events of the period of the Antichrist and the battle of Armageddon.*

We have seen that, following the cutting off of the Anointed One, the nation of Israel came to an end. In this same time frame, the church was born and began its God-given mission. The apostle Paul declares in Romans chapters 9–11 that God did not reject Israel completely. However, in the meantime He has challenged the church to act as His instrument of evangelism as believers share the gospel with the people of the world. In the interval between the cutting off of the Anointed One and the future consummation (completion) of God's program as it concerns Israel, the church has continued to function.

Scriptural evidence points to the fact that the church is awaiting the coming of the Lord to catch it away (1 Corinthians 15:50-52, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17). It appears, however, that the coming ruler is being restrained or held back from his wicked plans by the Holy Spirit, who works through the church (2 Thessalonians 2:1-12). As soon as the church is raptured, or caught up, this man of lawlessness will be revealed. Then God will direct His attention to Israel once again, as the events of the seventieth week move forward toward fulfillment.

We have noted that Daniel 9:24-27 concerns the Jewish people. As Jeremiah previews this period of time, he compares Israel's experience to the anguish a mother endures as she gives birth to a child (Jeremiah 30:1-11). No other period in history will compare to this one in terms of suffering; it is the "time of trouble for Jacob" (v. 7). This means "the time of trouble for the nation of Israel." How will all of this trouble come about?

The Antichrist

Daniel 9:26, you may recall, speaks of the coming ruler, while verse 27 reveals his activities. Note carefully that he will confirm a covenant with many for "one seven" (seven years). Apparently Middle East tensions between the Jews and their Arab neighbors will continue until a major crisis develops, undoubtedly threatening world peace. At this point, the *coming-ruler* (the Antichrist) will

step forth to establish peace. His diplomatic achievement will be hailed as a major triumph, and the people of the world will acclaim him as one without equal (Revelation 13:4).

Israel will look to this peacemaker to guarantee her peace. Freed from the concern to maintain a high state of military preparedness, the Jewish people will be able to turn their money and energy toward peaceful purposes: developing the land, raising their living standard, and finding homes and jobs for the many displaced people. The making of the peace covenant will identify the *Peacemaker* as “the man of lawlessness” (2 Thessalonians 2:3).

For a time things will go well in the entire region, but in the middle of the covenant the ruler will break his word (Daniel 9:27). The biblical text says that he will ban Israel’s religious and civil rights. In place of their orthodox worship, he will set up an *abominable sacrilege* (a hateful and terrible violation of a place consecrated to God) in the temple. Since he will deify himself (claim to be God) and demand worship (see 2 Thessalonians 2:4, 8-11; Revelation 13:13-15), it appears that he will set up an image of himself in the temple and require Jews to worship it or die. He will be assisted by a special agent whom we might call his “minister of propaganda.” This false prophet will perform miracles and have a powerful, evil influence over people (Revelation 13:13; 16:13).

Jesus referred to this crowning act of blasphemy, calling it “the abomination that makes desolate.” He gave this warning: “So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel...Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains” (Matthew 24:15-16). In powerful, symbolic language we learn of the horror the Jews will experience as the evil systems of the end-time try to destroy the nation of Israel (see Revelation 12:13-17; Daniel 12:1, 6-7).

During this same time period there will also be much chaos and difficulty for non-Jews, for three series of judgments will be poured out upon the inhabitants of the earth. Revelation chapters 6, 8, 9, 15 and 16 describe the increasing wrath of God that will be visited upon the kingdom of the “coming ruler” as time progresses.

As this evil ruler seeks to strengthen his power, he will use a worldwide system of controls over finance and credit. Through this means, he will be able to force people to accept his leadership, because no one will be able to do business unless he accepts the mark of identity required by this ruler (Revelation 13:16-17). As he works toward the establishment of a worldwide government, he will meet with resistance. Thus, war is a characteristic of the last half of his seven-year rule.

Ezekiel, under prophetic inspiration, indicates that a northern confederation of nations will descend on the nation of Israel, which is enjoying the security provided by the “lawless one.” The godless multitude in this battle group expects to destroy Israel; however, it does not count on God’s concern for His people. As the attack occurs, God defends His people and almost totally destroys the invading force (Ezekiel 38 and 39). Other forces also stir themselves up, and the “lawless one” is forced to defend his claims to rule.

Armageddon

Daniel, too, notes that opposition will spring up in various places. This forces the “lawless one” to keep on the move to crush his opposition (Daniel 11:40-45). His one-world government will evidently be torn by dissension (disagreement) as the end approaches. As the time of the end draws near, God will call the armies of the world together to the greatest and final battle of history, at a place called *Armageddon* (Revelation 16:16).

However, at Armageddon the issue will not be decided by the sophisticated weapons of man, or the size of the armies, or the dedication of the warriors. *God will surprise the gathered armies as He invades from outside the planet.* The result will be awful beyond description (see Revelation 19:19-21).

Not only will arrogant men defy God at this battle, but they will also at this point be on the verge of destroying Israel. However, as our Lord Jesus Christ comes upon the scene, several things happen. As Israel beholds the destruction of her enemies, she suddenly experiences a change of heart (see Zechariah 14:4-5, 12-15). The One (Jesus) who is leading the battle is none other than the One their fathers rejected. Now this pierced One brings a mighty

deliverance. With His appearing the Jewish people who have survived are broken by a contrite spirit (Zechariah 12:10-13:1), and they welcome Him who comes in the name of the Lord. More of the elements of God's program noted in Daniel 9:24 are now brought into focus, as we shall see in the next section.

10 Which of these statements are **TRUE** concerning events of the period of the Antichrist and the battle of Armageddon?

- a** Other names for the Antichrist are *coming ruler* and *man of lawlessness*.
- b** The Anointed One referred to is Jesus Christ.
- c** When the church was born, God completely rejected the nation of Israel.
- d** Before the coming ruler appears, the church will be “caught away” or raptured.
- e** Israel will be spared the trials and tribulations of the end times.
- f** The Antichrist will fulfill a seven-year peace covenant with Israel; this will be a period of great peace and prosperity worldwide.
- g** The Scriptures indicate that the Antichrist will break his covenant with Israel and violate the holy temple.
- h** The Antichrist will gain control over the whole world and force his identity mark upon everyone who wishes to do business.
- i** The first ones to strike during the battle of Armageddon are the gathering armies with their powerful weapons.
- j** Jesus will eventually be revealed to the Jewish nation as their Lord.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Objective 4. *Explain what conditions will bring about the revelation of Christ, and describe the outcome of the two opposing leaders.*

The Conditions

While the events of the Tribulation Period are occurring, believers are with their Lord. As the tide of wickedness rises and the sinfulness of man reaches its peak, the second aspect of the Lord's coming will occur: His revelation to the peoples of the world and to the assembled armies of the earth (Revelation 1:7;

19:11-21). On this occasion, believers come *with* the Lord as He returns to the earth (Colossians 3:4).

At this time, then, two conditions will have reached unbearable levels. The first is *the godlessness and selfishness of man*. That is why two angels cry out that the harvest is ripe (Revelation 14:15). The time for the judicial harvest has come. God, who has given man the freedom to make choices, will no longer permit him to follow his twisted passions. The doubters and unbelievers who challenge the very idea of a holy God will be silenced. The sin problem must be resolved forever. In response to the declaration of the two angels, another angel will, figuratively speaking, swing his sickle on the earth, gather the grapes, and throw them into the great winepress of God's wrath (Revelation 14:19).

The second condition that God will not tolerate any longer is *the persecution of Israel*. As we have seen, the "lawless one" will have as his primary goal the extinction (total destruction) of the Lord's brethren. However, God will not stand by forever while this evil purpose is being carried out. The time will come for His intervention, which will help to bring about His return to earth.

11 (Choose one answer.) The figurative language in Revelation 14:19 means that a time is coming when God will

- a) destroy all plant life on earth.
- b) bring final judgment upon sinful people who reject Him.
- c) rapture the church.
- d) cause wicked men to destroy themselves.

The Event

At His first coming Jesus appeared as the suffering Servant. He arrived at a little-known village with no ceremony or special recognition. Only a few shepherds beheld the glory that appeared on a lonely Judean hillside when the heavenly multitudes welcomed His birth (Luke 2:8-15). However, at His second coming He will appear in the *same* country with glory and great honor. He will not plead with men this time. He will come to destroy, to conquer, and to impose His authority by force.

The heavenly armies will be visible to human sight as they accompany Jesus, their Leader. They will take part in the

confrontation (face-to-face meeting) between our Lord and the forces of the *lawless one*. Let us note briefly what will be accomplished at the revelation of our Lord:

1. The immediate goal will be to conclude the war of rebellion that has broken out on a worldwide scale (Revelation 16:12-21; 19:11-21).
2. Our Lord will reveal Himself as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Satan, who until now has laid claim to the Kingdoms of this world, will be removed, and Jesus, the rightful King, will assume His kingly office.
3. Jesus will cause the leaders of the satanic forces to be powerless as He speedily confines them in the fiery lake (Revelation 19:19-21).
4. Of course, as we have noted, the saving of Israel will be a high priority. The event of our Lord's return will result in the Jewish people turning to God in repentance and sorrow. A spiritual renewal will occur unlike anything in history: These spiritually blinded people will lose their stony hearts and receive hearts of flesh with the power of the Spirit to enable them to keep their Creator's laws (Ezekiel 36:26-27).
5. Finally, our Lord's coming in glory will result in the establishment of a worldwide kingdom of righteousness, the thousand-year Kingdom Age or Millennium. The clearest indication of the conditions upon which entrance into this kingdom are based is found in Matthew 25:31-46. It appears that the treatment accorded to the Jews, the Lord's brethren, will determine this (see Matthew 25:40, also Genesis 12:1-3). The Millennium will be our next subject to consider.

12 What two extreme conditions will bring about the revelation of Jesus Christ when the redeemed of the ages will return to earth with Him?

.....

13 What will be the outcome for the rulers of the two opposing forces when they meet face-to-face this final time?

.....

THE MILLENNIUM

Objective 5. *Recognize the purposes and describe the characteristics of the Millennial Kingdom.*

Purposes of the Millennial Kingdom

The Bible speaks of an age of righteousness and peace, justice and abundance, in connection with the second coming of our Lord (Isaiah 2:1-4; 65:20-22; Micah 4:1-5). In Revelation 20:1-7, the period of time is said to be 1000 years. We get the word *millennium* from the Latin *mille* (thousand) and *anum* (year), which means simply “one thousand years.” However, the Kingdom is referred to in the Bible in a number of ways. In the Lord’s prayer it is spoken of as the “coming kingdom” (Matthew 6:10), while in Luke 19:11 it is called the “kingdom of God.” Revelation 11:15 refers to the “kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ.” Daniel 7 calls it “an everlasting dominion and an indestructible kingdom” (v. 14).

What are the purposes of this kingdom? First, in the beginning God established a moral order on earth which was subjected to the temptation of Satan, and the earth fell under bondage to this same evil spirit. Therefore, it is necessary that God’s glory be vindicated (defended; proved to be true or right) through victory over this satanic dominion. With the effects of the curse lifted and Satan bound, man will be free to observe the love, justice, and care of the Lord as He rules in equity and truth. As a result, man will give loyalty to the Lord. In His kingdom of goodness, our Lord will demonstrate that men’s needs have been supplied, that justice does exist, and that peace and harmony are possible on earth.

Second, the Kingdom Age is necessary to fulfill prophecy. God promised David that his descendants would rule forever (2 Samuel 7:8-17; Psalm 89:3-4, 19-37; Jeremiah 33:14-26). As we have seen, there has been an interruption in this rule; the prophecy still awaits fulfillment. In the fullness of time Jesus was born of Mary of the family of David, but He has never ruled on the throne of David in Israel. This prophecy, therefore, awaits fulfillment in the future. (See also Daniel 2:34-35, 44-45; and Romans 8:18-25 for related prophecies.)

Characteristics of the Kingdom

Numerous Scripture references add to our knowledge of the government and spiritual conditions that will exist in the reign of the Anointed One. Let's review them carefully.

1. It will be a literal reign on earth (Zechariah 14:9)
2. It will include all people remaining on earth (Psalm 73:8-11; Daniel 7:14; Matthew 25:31-32).
3. With the effects of the curse removed, the land will be highly responsive to food production. There will be no famine or scarcity of food (Isaiah 35:1; Micah 4:1-4).
4. The law of the Lord will be obeyed by all people. This rule, while kindly and good, will also be firm. Perfect judgment and justice will be the result. Anyone who refuses to obey will be punished (Psalm 2:9; Isaiah 11:4; 65:20; Zechariah 14:16-19).
5. The *subjects* of the King in this earthly kingdom will apparently be those who survive the Tribulation, both Jews and Gentiles.
6. Peace will be a primary characteristic of this kingdom led by the Prince of Peace. Without Satan's evil influence, there will be no more war (Isaiah 11:6-7).
7. Apparently redeemed believers will help administer the affairs of the Kingdom. The apostles will rule over Israel, and it appears that David will be resurrected and will serve as a vice-regent under our Lord (1 Corinthians 6:2-3; Revelation 5:10; Matthew 19:28; 25:31; Jeremiah 30:9; Ezekiel 37:24-25).
8. The animal kingdom will undergo a very marvelous transformation. The savage animals will become tame, and the tame will be unafraid. They will live together peacefully (Isaiah 11:6-9).
9. People will have a desire for God and spiritual things. They will study the Word of God so that His knowledge will be apparent everywhere (Isaiah 2:3; 11:9; Zechariah 8:20-23).

14 Which of these are purposes of the Millennial Kingdom?

- a) To give Satan and the wicked dead a last chance to repent and come to God
- b) To fulfill prophecy concerning the descendants of David
- c) To defend God's glory and establish that His way is the only true and right way

15 In your notebook, state the condition of the following characteristics of the Millennial Kingdom.

- a** The animal kingdom
- b** The law of the Lord
- c** The place of the Kingdom
- d** Redeemed believers who return with Christ
- e** King David
- f** The Jews and Gentiles who survive the Tribulation
- g** The Word of God and spiritual things
- h** Food production

THE JUDGMENT OF SATAN AND THE WICKED DEAD

Objective 6. *Explain why Satan will be released briefly following the Millennium and the purpose of the Great White Throne Judgment.*

The Final Deception of Satan

At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be released from his confinement (Revelation 20:7-10). He will go immediately throughout the whole earth to deceive people once more, encouraging rebellion against the Lord. Multitudes, we are told, will join his ranks and prepare to fight against God's people in their capital city.

You might ask, "How is it that people who have lived under the kind rule of King Jesus could turn on Him and be made to believe they can succeed in opposing Him?" You must remember that, during the Millennium, Satan will be bound. People will be required to follow the Kingdom's laws. While they will be obedient to our Lord, many will not choose to accept His saving grace. God will not force them to receive the Savior. Thus, at the end of the Kingdom, many apparently will not have trusted Christ

for salvation. Then when Satan appears with further delusion—the big lie—they will have the opportunity to revolt. They will have the privilege of exercising their right to choose.

This rebellion will be worldwide and it will grow until Satan actually directs his forces against the camp of God’s people. However, God will send fiery judgment upon the rebels and they will be burned up. Their leader, Satan, will be bound forever and confined in the lake of fire with the beast and the false prophet, where they will suffer the consequences of their rebellious spirits.

The Great White Throne Judgment

Following this final satanic rebellion, the time for judgment will arrive. It will be an awesome moment as all creation is moved at the majesty of God’s presence. All of those who have died without accepting God’s salvation will be resurrected to stand before the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15). All those who died in Christ, you will recall, were resurrected when the church was raptured (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

Those who stand before the Great White Throne will be judged on the basis of their works and whether their names are in the book of life. As judgment proceeds, there is a review of each one’s works. Then examination is made to see if his name is in the book of life. Since these people died without accepting God’s salvation, their names will not be found in the book of life. On the basis of perfect justice, each unbeliever will then receive the sentence of eternal confinement in the lake of fire. The banishment is not only to eternal fire but also to a place of darkness and horror. Jesus spoke of this awful horror and indicated that it would cause people to weep and gnash their teeth (Matthew 8:12; 13:42; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30). In this way, then, God brings an end to evil and banishes it forever.

16 Complete these sentences.

- a** The reason Satan will be released briefly following the Millennium is to.....
- b** The purpose of the Great White Throne Judgment is to
.....

THE NEW CREATION

Objective 7. *State the basis upon which you expect to be a part of the new creation which God will establish.*

The apostle Peter, in writing about the present world order, says that it will be burned up. It appears that the earth will undergo a renovation (change or renewal) by fire (Isaiah 65:17; 2 Peter 3:7). However, the apostle says that, following this upheaval, we are looking for “a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness” (2 Peter 3:10-13). Thus, God will finally bring His loyal people to His glorious and eternal creation.

While the Millennium will be a truly Golden Age, the believer will move beyond this into the new age where God the Father becomes all in all. In this new creation, God will establish His residence on earth. The city He has prepared defies description (1 Corinthians 2:9-10); it is beautiful beyond anything we have yet seen (Revelation chapters 21-22).

Eternal life, someone has observed, is not something without change or variety, nor is God going to retire when His program is complete. He is the God of the living, and we are to be like Him! He created a vast universe which appears to be in a state of continual renewal. In the age to come, we who now see a poor reflection will have eternity to study the wonders of His ongoing creation (1 Corinthians 13:12). We can join the song of the elders around the throne as they ascribe praise to our God:

You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being.

—Revelation 4:11

We may look back over the history that has unrolled since the angels said that Jesus would come back again (Acts 1:11). So much has happened! So much prophecy has already been fulfilled. Events have pushed the world forward to the moment where we now stand: *we are at the edge of the last phase of*

God's program. We rejoice, for we are closer to the day of final redemption. We must always keep in mind that the new creation awaits us, with Jesus as King! "Behold, I am coming soon," says Jesus. "Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy in this book" (Revelation 22:7). Then we, the redeemed of the Lord, respond, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!"

17 Examine yourself as we conclude this lesson, and state in your notebook the basis upon which you expect to be a part of the new creation which God will establish (see Revelation 22:12-17).

As we come to the conclusion of this study, we must keep in mind that there is an ethical value in studying the Word of God, especially the prophetic Word:

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. *Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself as he [Christ] is pure* (1 John 3:2-3).

self-test

TRUE-FALSE. Write **T** in the blank space if the statement is TRUE. Write **F** if it is FALSE.

- **1** The events which will take place on earth following the Rapture are called “the blessed hope.”
- **2** The Rapture and the Revelation of Christ are two separate events; in the first He comes *for* His own, and in the second they return to earth *with* Him.
- **3** The day and hour when Jesus will return can be determined by studying the lists of “sevens” in Daniel 9.
- **4** Both dead and living believers will be included in the Rapture.
- **5** The Bible indicates that there will be degrees of reward for believers.
- **6** Most of the prophecies in Daniel 9 have already come to pass.
- **7** The *Anointed One who was cut off* refers to the Antichrist.
- **8** The Tribulation Period will last seven years, and half-way through that period the Antichrist will break his covenant with the Jews.
- **9** Israel was dispersed from the Promised Land because of disobedience.
- **10** The rebirth of the nation of Israel in May, 1948, is a fulfillment of prophecy.
- **11** The Antichrist will bring permanent peace to the world for 1000 years.
- **12** Only the Jewish people will be required to bear the mark of identity of the Antichrist in order to do business.
- **13** Armageddon will be a terrible battle between the Jewish nation and its enemies, in which Jerusalem and all its inhabitants will be destroyed.

. . . . **14** The revelation of Jesus Christ will occur when the persecution of the Jews and the godlessness of mankind reach an extreme condition.

. . . . **15** At the revelation of Jesus Christ, the lawless one and his armies will be defeated, and Jesus will be revealed as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

<p>Be sure to complete your unit student report for Unit Three and return Answer Sheet 3 to your ICI instructor.</p>
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answers to study questions

- 9** The events described in answers **a**, **b**, **c**, **e**, **f**, **g**, and **h** have already taken place. Answers **d** and **i** have not yet taken place.
- 1** b) the rapture of believers, when Christ comes for them.
- 10** a True.
 b True.
 c False.
 d True.
 e False.
 f False.
 g True.
 h True.
 i False.
 j True.
- 2** His return will take place as soon as the gospel has been preached in the whole world. No one knows the day or the hour.
- 11** b) bring final judgment upon sinful people who reject Him.
- 3** a dead, living.
 b the Lord's own word.
 c hope.
- 12** Extreme godlessness or sinfulness and selfishness of man; extreme persecution of the nation of Israel.
- 4** They will both receive new, glorified bodies, immortal and imperishable.
- 13** Satan and his forces will be removed from power and thrown into the lake of fire. Jesus will take His rightful place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
- 5** c) a reward based on the motives or quality of his service.

- 14** b) and c) are purposes of the Millennial Kingdom.
- 6** a An immortal, imperishable body which will replace the physical body at the moment of the Rapture.
b When Jesus returns *with* His own people to establish His kingdom.
c When Jesus returns *for* His own: the dead in Christ will be resurrected first; then the living believers will rise to meet Him in the air.
d The second coming of Christ (the Rapture).
e The “reviewing stand” where Jesus will judge the works of believers and rewards will be given based on the quality of their Christian life and service.
- 15** a All animals will live together in peace.
b Will be obeyed; there will be perfect judgment and justice.
c Earth.
d Will rule with Christ.
e Will serve as vice-regent under Christ.
f Will be the subjects of the heavenly King.
g Will be desired and studied.
h Will be plentiful.
- 7** a) times the Jewish people failed to observe their sabbatical year.
- 16** a give the inhabitants of the earth the opportunity to choose for or against God.
b provide for God’s judgment of the wicked based on whether their names are written in the book of life.
- 8** The destruction of the temple in A.D. 70.
- 17** Your answer. The new creation is for all who have acknowledged Jesus as Lord of their life, whose names are written in the book of life, and who look for His coming.

Your Notes

Glossary

The right-hand column lists the lesson in the independent-study textbook in which the word is first used.

		<i>Lesson</i>
abominable	— <i>abominable</i> : causing great dislike,	10
sacrilege	— <i>sacrilege</i> : disrespect for a holy thing; during the Tribulation, a hateful and terrible violation in the temple of God	
adversary	— enemy; one who opposes or resists another	5
advocate	— person who defends or pleads the cause of another	4
agents	— those who have the authority to act for or in place of another	5
ancestry	— the line of people from whom one has descended; forefathers	3
apocalyptic	— describes a class of literature which foretells world-shattering events	8
ascension	— the act of rising or moving upwards	3
ascribed	— considered as belonging to; thought of as coming from (someone or something)	4
assume	— take on; put on	5
atoned	— gave satisfaction for a wrong, loss, or injury	7

atonement	— the reconciliation of God with sinners through the sufferings and death of Christ	2
attributes	— qualities considered as belonging to a person or thing; characteristics	1
authoritative	— official; having the authority of expert knowledge; entitled to obedience or respect	8
autographs	— the original manuscripts of the biblical canon of literature	8
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barriers	— things that stand in the way, separating one thing from another	9
blasphemy	— disrespectful or bad language about God or holy things	10
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canon	— the official list of the books of the Bible accepted by the Christian church as genuine and inspired	8
carnality	— worldliness; related to the passions of the body; related to a lack of spirituality	4
celestial	— having to do with the heavens; of or belonging to heaven	5
challenge	— something that arouses competitive interest, thought, or action	9
community	— people with common interests or goals	9
components	— all of the parts that make up a whole	4
compromise	— to give up part of what one believes	2
concurrence	— agreement; the holding of the same opinion; a working together; a cooperation	2

confirmed	— firmly established; permanent	5
confrontation	— a face-to-face meeting of opposing forces	10
conscience	— a sense of right and wrong; ideas and feelings within a person that warn him of what is wrong	6
conscientious	— careful to do what one knows is right; done with care to make it right	6
consequences	— results or effects; outcomes	6
consummation	— the act of bringing to perfection or completion	10
corporate	— formed into a body; united; combined	4
corrupt	— morally bad; evil; wicked	7
counterfeit	— copy made to deceive; not genuine; pretended	7
create	— cause to be; bring into being	2
creative	— having the power to bring into being	2
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deceptive	— intended to mislead; describes something that is not what it appears to be	7
deify	— to make a god of; to make an object of worship	10
deity	— divine nature; God	3
deliberate	— carefully thought out beforehand; intended; done on purpose	7
desolate	— <i>verb</i> : to forsake, to lay waste; <i>adjective</i> : barren, lifeless	10

destiny	— power that is believed to determine the course of events; what will happen in spite of all efforts to prevent it	5
diabolical	— very cruel or wicked; evil; having to do with the devil and his evil works	5
disastrous	— causing much suffering and loss	5
disclosure	— that which is made known or revealed	8
dispersion	— the act or process of scattering, breaking up, or spreading out	10
distinct	— not the same; separate; different in quality or kind	1
distinctions	— special qualities or features; excellences	1
distinctive	— special; different from others	3
distorted	— misrepresented; twisted out of shape(such as distorted thoughts or ideas)	8
doctrinal	— relating to biblical truth or beliefs	9
doctrine	— what is taught as true; belief; a truth stated in the Bible	8
dynamic	— powerful, energetic; related to force or energy	9
<hr/>		
edification	— an act or process of instructing or improving spiritually; a building up	9
elevating	— raising above the usual position; raising in rank or station; raising in quality	8
enablement	— having the power, ability, or means(to do something)	4

enlightening	— informing; instructing; giving truth and knowledge to	4
epistles	— letters, usually long and instructive	8
equality	— sameness in amount, size, number, value, degree, rank	4
essence	— that which makes a thing what it is; necessary part or parts	1
eternal	— without beginning or ending; timeless	1
eternity	— time without beginning or ending; endlessness	1
evolve	— develop gradually; work out; unfold	6
exaltation	— being made high in rank, honor, power, character, or quality	3
exalted	— praised, honored, glorified, lifted up, elevated	2
exclusiveness	— state of not being divided or shared with others; very selective	8
extinction	— the act or process of ending or putting out of existence	10
extraordinary	— exceptional; very unusual or remarkable	3
<hr/>		
frustrate	— prevent from accomplishing; bring to nothing; make useless or worthless	7
functions	— fulfills a position or duty; carries out responsibilities	9
<hr/>		
glorified	— exalted to the glory of heaven	5
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holiness	— quality or condition of being pure in heart, spiritually perfect; condition of being specially set apart and devoted to God	2

hostile	— unfriendly; opposed	7
humanity	— people; mankind	3
<hr/>		
illumination	— a making clear; explanation; understanding	4
illumines	— makes bright or makes clear	8
imitate	— to follow the example of: try to be like	7
immaterial	— spiritual rather than physical	1
immersion	— baptism by dipping completely(as under water); being completely covered over	4
immortal	— living forever	1
immortality	— state of living forever	6
immutable	— never changing; unchangeable	1
imperishable	— not capable of or subject to decay	10
impersonate	— pretend to be; play the part of	5
incarnation	— a taking on of human form by a divine being; the union of divine nature and human nature in the person of Jesus	3
inclination	— a tending toward a certain character or condition; a leaning toward something	7
inconsistency	— a failure to keep to the same principles or course of action	8
infallible	— free from error; absolutely reliable	6
inspiration	— divine influence	8
intercessor	— a person who pleads or asks a favor for another	3

interpreter	— one who explains the meaning of something	4
intervene	— to come between; act as a go-between	2
intervention	— an intervening; a coming between or speaking in behalf of another	5
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justice	— fairness; rightness; lawfulness; deserved reward or punishment	2
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lineage	— descent in a direct line from a common ancestor; the descendants of a common ancestor; the family line	3
<hr/>		
maintenance	— a keeping in good repair; keeping in existence or continuance; a supporting or upholding	2
manifestations	— things that are plainly shown or revealed	1
material	— what a thing is made from; physical rather than spiritual	1
matter	— substance that occupies space, has weight, and can exist in solid, liquid, or gaseous form	1
mediator	— one who intervenes between others to bring about reconciliation	3
merciful	— showing more kindness than justice requires	2
monitor	— something that warns or instructs	6
moral	— right; good in character or conduct	2

mortal	— limited lifespan; certain to die eventually	3
motivation	— process of thought or feeling which makes one act	4
<hr/>		
omnipotence	— having all power	1
omnipresence	— present everywhere	1
omniscience	— having all knowledge	1
oral traditions	— the beliefs, opinions, customs, and doctrines, which are handed down by spoken form from parents to children	8
ordinances	— prescribed practices, ceremonies, or laws	9
origin	— source, beginning, thing from which anything comes	4
<hr/>		
penalty	— punishment imposed by law	3
perishable	— capable of or subject to decay	10
plurality	— the greater number; the majority; a large number	4
pollution	— uncleanness; that which is impure or dirty	7
potential	— possibility; capable of coming into being	4
prescribe	— lay down as a rule to be followed; order; direct; give advice	4
preservation	— keeping from decay or injury; keeping safe	2
preserved	— protected; kept safe from decay or injury	8

probation	— trial or testing of conduct, character, or qualifications	5
providence	— God's care and help	2
rational	— reasonable; able to think and reason clearly	5
realm	— kingdom	5
rebellion	— resistance or fight against a power or restriction; revolt	5
rebelliousness	— state or condition of resisting or revolting; disobedience	7
reconciliation	— bring together again in fellowship; settlement of differences or disagreements	3
redemption	— act of buying back or rescuing	3
regeneration	— rebirth of the spirit; receiving a new and better spiritual life	4
relationship	— the state or character of being connected; kinship	9
reliable	— worthy of trust; dependable	8
renovation	— a state of being brought back to life or restored to a better state	10
representative	— agent; one appointed to speak or act for another	3
resemblance	— likeness; similarity in appearance	6
resembles	— is like; is similar to in form, figure, or qualities	6
restoration	— a bringing back to a former condition	7
revelation	— God's disclosure of Himself and of	8

	His will to His creatures	
righteousness	— condition of doing right or behaving justly	2
Sabbath Year	— <i>or</i> , sabbatical year: a year of rest for the land observed every seventh year in ancient Judea	10
saturate	— to be filled to capacity	4
sensibility	— the ability to feel, exhibit emotion	4
simplicity	— quality of not being divided into parts	1
social	— tending to form cooperative and interdependent relationships with others	9
sovereign	— supreme ruler; greatest in rank or power	1
subjected	— brought under some power or influence	3
subjects	— those under the power, control, or influence of another	5
subordinate	— lower in rank or importance	6
substance	— what a thing consists of; the real, main, or important part of anything	1
substantial	— having substance or essence	1
superficial	— on the surface; not real or genuine	4
superhuman	— above or beyond ordinary human power or experience	5
supernatural	— above or beyond what is natural or normal	3
supreme	— greatest; highest in rank or authority	2

time frame	— a period marked by the beginning and ending of a specific event or events	10
Trinity	— the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one divine nature	1
<hr/>		
uniqueness	— quality of being very unusual, or one of a kind	1
unity	— oneness; singleness	1
universal	— for all people everywhere	9
uprightness	— state of goodness, honesty, righteousness	2
<hr/>		
validate	— to support as sound or true; give legal force to; confirm	8
vindicated	— avenged; proved to be true or right	10

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ANSWERS TO SELF-TESTS

Lesson 1

- 1 a) spirit.
- 2 a) conduct my life in a way that is pleasing to Him, and trust Him to help me in every trial I face.
- 3 c) is able to provide for every need that we have.
- 4 c) wisdom.
- 5 False.
- 6 False.
- 7 True.
- 8 True.
- 9 True.
- 10 False.

Lesson 2

- 1 True.
- 2 False.
- 3 True.
- 4 False.
- 5 True.
- 6 True.
- 7 False.
- 8 True.
- 9 True.

10 True.

11 True.

12 False.

13 True.

14 False.

Lesson 3

- 1 a), b), and d) are evidences of Christ's humanity.
- 2 b) His behavior, His claims, and His qualities proved that He was more than a mere man.
- 3 d) was truly God and truly man.
- 4 b) is a divine person who assumed our humanity.
- 5 a) set in motion God's plan of redemption for man.
- 6 a) was a task He willingly undertook to pay the penalty for our sin.
- 7 a), b), and d) are reasons the incarnation was necessary.

- 8** b) put to death their sinful nature because salvation makes it possible to live a holy life.
- 9** a), b), d), and e) are significant in Christ's work of resurrection.
- 10** a) a new part of Christ's ministry: as sovereign Lord He cares for and builds up the church, and His presence is everywhere.

Lesson 4

- 1** True.
- 2** True.
- 3** True.
- 4** False.
- 5** True.
- 6** False.
- 7** False.
- 8** True.
- 9** False.
- 10** True.
- 11** False.
- 12** True.
- 13** True.
- 14** True.
- 15** False.
- 16** True.
- 17** True.
- 18** False.
- 19** True.
- 20** False.

Lesson 5

- 1** True.
- 2** True.
- 3** False.
- 4** True.
- 5** True.
- 6** True.
- 7** False.
- 8** True.
- 9** True.
- 10** True.
- 11** False.
- 12** True.
- 13** False.
- 14** True.
- 15** True.

Lesson 6

- 1** b) was a unique creation God, set above of creatures and blessed by God.
- 2** c) similar in his personality, moral and social awareness, and ability to rule.

- 3** a) both material and immaterial aspects.
- 4** b) soul.
- 5** b) immaterial being.
- 6** a), b), c), and d) are all true.
- 7** c) emotions appeal to a person to act in one way or another.
- 8** a) have an understanding of the facts of the matter in question.
- 9** b) weighs the possible courses of action against one's standard of conduct.
- 10** c) God's grace that brings salvation and enablement to obey God.
- 11** c) Man's body will die; the believer's soul/spirit will immediately be in the presence of the Lord and at the Second Coming he will receive a resurrected glorified body; the unbeliever will experience everlasting torment in Hades or hell.
- 3** evidences given in the Bible and the need for government in society.
- 4** repenting of sin, forsaking sin, accepting God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ, and walking in the light.
- 5** eternal separation from God with eternal punishment .
- 6** False. (God purposed to give man the right to choose to have fellowship with Him.)
- 7** True.
- 8** True.
- 9** True.
- 10** False. (He imitates God's program.)
- 11** True.
- 12** True.

Lesson 8

Lesson 7

1 Adam and Eve.

2 Satan and his angels.

- 1** a) 3) Oral tradition.
 b) 6) Illumination.
 c) 2) Autographs.
 d) 5) Inspiration.
 e) 7) Revelation.
 f) 1) Apocalyptic literature.
 g) 4) Canon.

2 False.

3 True.

4 False.

5 True.

6 True.

7 True.

Lesson 9

1 b) a community of people who have responded to God's call.

2 c) the church includes many people in relationships with one another because of their individual relationships with Christ.

3 b) believers from a given place who share faith in Jesus Christ and who meet together for worship.

4 d) sharing and having fellowship together.

5 c) on the day of Pentecost.

6 a) the believers' demonstration of unity and love for one another.

7 a) He loves other people.

8 b) the church for its edification, operating through believers as they minister to one another.

9 c) Head.

10 a) The church worships God through praise, reverence, honor, and obedience.

b) The church edifies itself (strengthens, builds up, disciplines, trains, and cares for its members).

c) The church takes the message of the gospel to the world (evangelizes the world).

Lesson 10

1 False.

2 True.

3 False.

4 True.

5 True.

6 True.

7 False.

8 True.

9 True.

10 True.

11 False.

12 False.

13 False.

14 True.

15 True.

Cornerstones of Truth

Unit Student Reports
and
answer sheets

Student Report for Unit One

DIRECTIONS

When you have completed your study of each unit, fill out the unit student report answer sheet for that unit. The following are directions how to indicate your answer to each question. There are two kinds of questions: TRUE-FALSE and MULTIPLE-CHOICE.

TRUE-FALSE QUESTION EXAMPLE

The following statement is either true or false. If the statement is TRUE, blacken space A. FALSE, blacken space B.

1 The Bible is God's message for us.

The above statement, *The Bible is God's message for us*, is TRUE, so you would blacken space A like this:

1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> B	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D
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MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION EXAMPLE

There is one best answer for the following question. Blacken the space for the answer you have chosen.

2 To be born again means to

- a) be young in age.
- b) accept Jesus as Savior.
- c) start a new year.
- d) find a different church.

The correct answer is b) *accept Jesus as Savior*, so you would blacken space B like this:

2	<input type="checkbox"/> A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> C	<input type="checkbox"/> D
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STUDENT REPORT FOR UNIT ONE

*Answer all questions on Answer Sheet for Unit One. See the examples on the **DIRECTIONS** page which show you how to mark your answers.*

PART 1—TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

The following statements are either true or false. If the statement is TRUE, blacken space A. FALSE, blacken space B.

- 1 I have carefully read all of the lessons in Unit One.
- 2 God is an impersonal being.
- 3 God is invisible, immaterial, and composed of no parts.
- 4 God's moral characteristics are His wisdom and sovereignty.
- 5 The providence of God means that He will not allow Christians to suffer as long as they are obedient to Him.
- 6 Incarnation refers to the union of deity with humanity in Jesus Christ.
- 7 All of the divine qualities which describe God the Father and God the Son also describe the Holy Spirit.
- 8 The Holy Spirit's ministry is limited to believers.

PART 2—MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

There is one best answer for each of the following questions. Blacken the space on your answer sheet for the answer you have chosen.

- 9 In speaking of God's uniqueness, simplicity, and numerical unity we mean that He is
 - a) composed of many parts.
 - b) like His created beings.
 - c) one God.
 - d) a personal being.

Student Report for Unit One

10 Which of these is NOT a characteristic of God?

- a) Eternal
- b) Mortal
- c) Unchanging
- d) Omnipotent

11 Omniscience means

- a) having all power.
- b) being present everywhere.
- c) being unchangeable.
- d) knowing everything.

12 God's work of maintenance of the universe means that He

- a) actively preserves what He has created.
- b) sets no limits on sin and wickedness.
- c) controls every act of man.
- d) often overrules natural laws.

13 God's concurrence in the affairs of man means that

- a) He never interferes in the affairs of man.
- b) man's actions result from natural powers God gives him.
- c) nothing can take place without His consent.
- d) He puts man's freedom to act above all other considerations.

14 The ceremonial law which stated that an Israelite who touched a dead rat was unclean until sundown is an illustration of God's

- a) holiness.
- b) preservation of the universe.
- c) unlimited love.
- d) justice.

15 Which of these is an example of the deity of Christ?

- a) He forgave sin.
- b) He progressed mentally, physically, socially, and spiritually.
- c) He experienced the limitations of humanity.
- d) He was called by the Greek form of *Joshua*.

Cornerstones of Truth

- 16** Biblical teaching about the incarnation indicates that Jesus
- a) was truly divine but not truly human.
 - b) was truly human before His resurrection and truly divine after His resurrection.
 - c) had some of the characteristics of both divinity and humanity.
 - d) added a human nature to His divine nature.
- 17** The incarnation was necessary so that God could
- a) experience temptation and sin first-hand.
 - b) provide a sacrifice to pay the penalty for our sins.
 - c) be the object of our worship.
 - d) exalt the Son.
- 18** Which of these is NOT a characteristic of deity that is ascribed to the Holy Spirit?
- a) He is identified with the other Persons in the Trinity.
 - b) He has divine names.
 - c) He has limited knowledge.
 - d) He performs divine works.
- 19** Which of these is NOT a ministry of the Holy Spirit?
- a) Intercedes as our High Priest at the right hand of the Father
 - b) Works through non-believers to accomplish His purposes
 - c) Convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment
 - d) Enables for consistent and effective Christian life
- 20** The Holy Spirit produces fruit in believers which is also called
- a) spiritual gifts.
 - b) Christlike character.
 - c) the baptism in the Holy Spirit.
 - d) power to witness.

END OF REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIT ONE. Follow the remaining instructions on your answer sheet and return it to your ICI Instructor or office in your area, then begin your study of Unit Two.

Student Report for Unit Two

STUDENT REPORT FOR UNIT TWO

*Answer all questions on Answer Sheet for Unit Two. See the examples on the **DIRECTIONS** page which show you how to mark your answers.*

PART 1—TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

*The following statements are either true or false. If the statement is **TRUE**, blacken space A. **FALSE**, blacken space B.*

- 1** I have carefully read all of the lessons in Unit Two.
- 2** The Bible teaches that some angels were created good while others were created evil.
- 3** Angels are spirit beings and personal beings, but they are not omnipresent.
- 4** The Bible indicates that there is organized activity among angels, with some holding higher positions than others.
- 5** The creation of man followed the same pattern as for the rest of creation: God spoke the word, and it was done.
- 6** Man's nature includes both material and immaterial aspects which the Bible refers to as body, soul, and spirit.
- 7** The first sin occurred in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve disobeyed God.
- 8** Whatever does not conform to the law or will of God is sin.

PART 2—MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

There is one best answer for each of the following questions. Blacken the space on your answer sheet for the answer you have chosen.

- 9** It was necessary for God to forbid Adam and Eve to eat of the fruit of one tree because
- a) He did not want them to understand all things.
 - b) the fruit of the tree was evil.
 - c) they could only exercise their own free wills by making a deliberate choice for or against God's will.
 - d) He wanted them to realize that they were entirely at His mercy, without any personal freedom of choice.
- 10** Evil angels are confirmed in their willfulness and rebellion. This means they
- a) are going through a period of probation after which they will have a chance to repent.
 - b) were created as they now are and they cannot change.
 - c) have made their choice against God and have been judged for eternity.
 - d) had no choice in what they would become.
- 11** The leader of the holy angels has the title
- a) cherubim.
 - b) archangel.
 - c) watcher.
 - d) seraphim.
- 12** The Bible gives examples of the involvement of holy angels in
- a) overruling laws of the spiritual and natural world.
 - b) influencing men's minds.
 - c) interceding before God's throne on man's behalf.
 - d) important events related to God's plan of salvation.
- 13** Which of these is NOT true of Satan? He
- a) lies.
 - b) impersonates in order to deceive.
 - c) afflicts with disease.
 - d) is omnipresent.

Student Report for Unit Two

14 Man and other creatures differ in that man is

- a) made in the image of God.
- b) mortal.
- c) able to make decisions.
- d) able to speak.

15 The Bible teaches that the physical human body

- a) will be included in our eternal redemption.
- b) will eventually cease to exist.
- c) is more important than the nonphysical aspect of man.
- d) is evil.

16 Which of these is NOT an element of rational life?

- a) Intellect
- b) Emotions
- c) Breath
- d) Conscience

17 Which of these is NOT true of the conscience?

- a) It can be defiled.
- b) It develops as we grow and mature.
- c) It is infallible.
- d) It can be trained to warn us of the dangers of wrongdoing.

18 The origin of sin is found in

- a) God.
- b) Satan.
- c) Adam.
- d) Eve.

19 As related to sin, to *trespass* means to

- a) cross over forbidden boundary lines set by God.
- b) fall short of God's will.
- c) want one's own way.
- d) need cleansing.

20 The most important aspect of spiritual restoration is that it

- a) also restores our physical body.
- b) removes all the problems caused by sin.
- c) destroys our old nature.
- d) brings us back into fellowship with God.

Cornerstones of Truth

END OF REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIT TWO. Follow the remaining instructions on your answer sheet and return it to your ICI instructor or office in your area, then begin your study of Unit Three.

STUDENT REPORT FOR UNIT THREE

*Answer all questions on Answer Sheet for Unit Three. See the examples on the **DIRECTIONS** page which show you how to mark your answers.*

PART 1—TRUE-FALSE QUESTIONS

*The following statements are either true or false. If the statement is **TRUE**, blacken space A. **FALSE**, blacken space B.*

- 1** I have carefully read all of the lessons in Unit Three.
- 2** The inspiration of the Scriptures refers to a special anointing upon holy men who wrote as the Holy Spirit guided them.
- 3** The biblical meaning of the word *church* is “a place where people meet to worship God.”
- 4** The Scriptures came into being mainly as a result of the oral traditions passed from one generation to another.
- 5** The church involves the relationships of believers to God and to one another.
- 6** The revelation of Christ and the rapture of the church refer to the same event.
- 7** The most important test of a person’s love for God is this: “Does he truly love other people?”
- 8** Daniel 9 records the prophetic vision of Daniel concerning end-time events, centered around the nation of Israel.

PART 2—MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

There is one best answer for each of the following questions. Blacken the space on your answer sheet for the answer you have chosen.

- 9** The fact that Jesus approved of and quoted Old Testament Scriptures supports the
- a) value of oral traditions.
 - b) divine inspiration of the Scriptures.
 - c) view that the Bible was written by ordinary men under ordinary circumstances.
 - d) idea of the exclusiveness of the Old Testament as Scripture.
- 10** The theme most emphasized throughout the Bible is the
- a) triumph of God over Satan.
 - b) second coming of Christ.
 - c) redemption of man.
 - d) importance of the church.
- 11** The Bible speaks of the *church* as being
- a) the community of God's people.
 - b) a religious organization.
 - c) a building.
 - d) any of several denominations.
- 12** Which of these is NOT one of the three basic functions of the church?
- a) Shares the gospel with unbelievers
 - b) Worships God
 - c) Edifies believers
 - d) Conducts social programs
- 13** The *Apocrypha* refers to
- a) the Old Testament canon of Scripture.
 - b) the illumination of Scripture.
 - c) early church fathers who agreed upon the canon of Scriptures.
 - d) a type of apocalyptic literature which forecasts violent events.

Student Report for Unit Three

14 In the copying and preserving of Scriptures there is evidence of

- a) major doctrinal differences in various manuscripts.
- b) God's protection and care in keeping the manuscripts reliable.
- c) no differences at all in the various texts.
- d) many unreliable texts that have weakened the value of the Bible.

15 The concept that God deals with believers in *community* is best illustrated in Scripture by a description of

- a) a person walking down a pathway alone.
- b) water baptism.
- c) the way the various parts of the body contribute to the well-being of the whole body.
- d) children playing together.

16 Biblical evidence indicates that the church began

- a) the day Christ was born.
- b) on the day of Pentecost following Christ's ascension.
- c) when Christ began His public ministry.
- d) when John the Baptist began preaching about the coming Messiah.

17 The Bible tells us that the Second Coming will take place

- a) on a certain day at a certain hour.
- b) immediately after the Antichrist is revealed.
- c) as soon as the gospel has been preached in the whole world.
- d) half-way through the Tribulation Period.

18 Which of these terms does NOT describe the believers' physical body following the Rapture?

- a) Mortal
- b) Immortal
- c) Glorified
- d) Imperishable

Cornerstones of Truth

19 The *judgment seat of Christ* refers to

- a) the “reviewing stand” where believers will be rewarded according to the quality of their works.
- b) the place where Satan and the wicked dead will be judged.
- c) Armageddon.
- d) the revelation of Jesus Christ.

20 The “Anointed One” who will defeat the armies at Armageddon is

- a) the one referred to in prophecy as “the coming ruler.”
- b) the angel in Daniel’s vision.
- c) the chosen nation of Israel.
- d) Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

END OF REQUIREMENTS FOR UNIT THREE. Follow the remaining instructions on your answer sheet and return it to your ICI instructor or office in your area. This completes your study of this course. Ask your ICI instructor to recommend another course of study for you.

CORNERSTONES OF TRUTH

ANSWER SHEET FOR UNIT ONE

CS3131

Congratulations on finishing your study of the lessons in Unit One! Please fill in all the blanks below.

Your Name

Your ICI Student Number

(Leave blank if you do not know what it is.)

Your Mailing Address

City Province or State

Country

Age Sex Occupation

Are you married? How many members are in your family?

How many years have you studied in school?

Are you a member of a church?

If so, what is the name of the church?

What responsibility do you have in your church?

.....

How are you studying this course: Alone?

In a group?

What other ICI courses have you studied?

.....

.....

Cut this page and send to your ICI instructor.



ANSWER SHEET FOR UNIT ONE

Blacken the correct space for each numbered item. For all questions, be sure the number beside the spaces on the answer sheet is the same as the number of the question.

<p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>2 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>3 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>4 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>5 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>6 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>7 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p>	<p>8 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>9 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>10 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>11 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>12 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>13 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>14 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p>	<p>15 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>16 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>17 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>18 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>19 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p> <p>20 <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D</p>
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Write below any questions you would like to ask your instructor about the lessons.

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Now look over this student report answer sheet to be sure you have completed all the questions. Then return it to your ICI instructor or office in your area. The address should be stamped on the copyright page of your study guide.

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Date **Score**

Christian Service Program

CORNERSTONES OF TRUTH

ANSWER SHEET FOR UNIT TWO

CS3131

*We hope you have enjoyed your study of the lessons in Unit Two!
Please fill in all the blanks below.*

Your Name

Your ICI Student Number
(Leave blank if you do not know what it is.)

Your Mailing Address

City Province or State

Country

Cut this page and send to your ICI instructor.



ANSWER SHEET FOR UNIT TWO

Blacken the correct space for each numbered item. For all questions, be sure the number beside the spaces on the answer sheet is the same as the number of the question.

1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	15	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	16	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	17	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	18	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	13	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	14	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Write below any questions you would like to ask your instructor about the lessons.

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Now look over this student report answer sheet to be sure you have completed all the questions. Then return it to your ICI instructor or office in your area. The address should be stamped on the copyright page of your study guide.

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Christian Service Program

CORNERSTONES OF TRUTH

ANSWER SHEET FOR UNIT THREE

CS3131

We hope you have enjoyed your study of the lessons in Unit Three! Please fill in all the blanks below.

Your Name

Your ICI Student Number
(Leave blank if you do not know what it is.)

Your Mailing Address

City Province or State

Country

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The ICI office in your area will be happy to send you information about other ICI courses that are available and their cost. You may use the space below to ask for that information.

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Cut this page and send to your ICI instructor.



ANSWER SHEET FOR UNIT THREE

Blacken the correct space for each numbered item. For all questions, be sure the number beside the spaces on the answer sheet is the same as the number of the question.

1	A	B	C	D	8	A	B	C	D	15	A	B	C	D
2	A	B	C	D	9	A	B	C	D	16	A	B	C	D
3	A	B	C	D	10	A	B	C	D	17	A	B	C	D
4	A	B	C	D	11	A	B	C	D	18	A	B	C	D
5	A	B	C	D	12	A	B	C	D	19	A	B	C	D
6	A	B	C	D	13	A	B	C	D	20	A	B	C	D
7	A	B	C	D	14	A	B	C	D					

Please write below one specific comment about the unit:

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CONGRATULATIONS!

You have finished this Christian Service course. We have enjoyed having you as a student and hope you will study more courses with ICI. Return this unit student report answer sheet to your ICI instructor or office in your area. You will then receive your grade on a student score report form along with a certificate or seal for this course in your program of studies.

Please print your name below as you want it on your certificate.

Name

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Date	Score

Christian Service Program