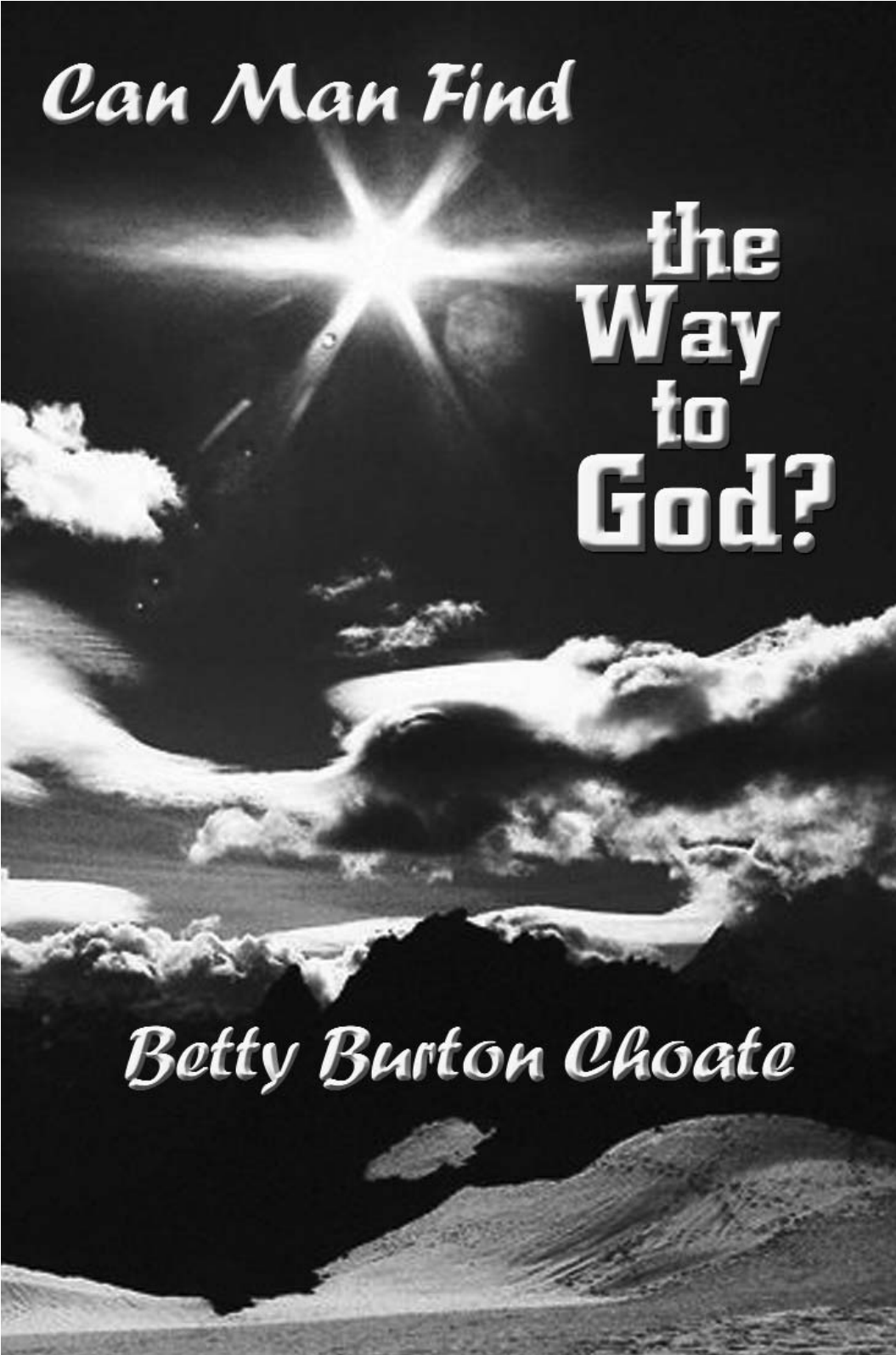


Can Man Find

**the
Way
to
God?**

Betty Burton Choate



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Dedication

**To Daddy and Mother, Clyde and Theola Burton
who brought me up in “the Way”;**

**to J.C. Choate, my husband of 52 years
who asked me to work by his side
to help others find “the way”;**

**to our children,
Sheila Lynn,
Steven Burton,
Bradley Shannon,
and
Darla Jane,
who have continued to live in “the Way”
and to teach their children;**

**and, last of all,
to those reading this book, who are looking for
“the Way”,**

**I dedicate these pages,
prayerful that they will prove to be
a clear presentation of Truth.**

Publisher's Statement

The first version of this study — **The Way to God** — was written a number of years ago, while we were living and working with the Lord's church in India. Seeing rampant idolatry and religious confusion on every hand, I longed to make a clear and understandable explanation of Jesus, as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The initial writing was printed and used there.

As time has passed, I have felt the need to rework the message and to print the book in the US, hoping that it will be useful here as well as in the numerous countries to which we annually ship thousands of books for distribution, both within the church and for its outreach among unbelievers.

With a new title — **Can a Man Find the Way to God?** — a new cover, and with much of the text enlarged and re-written, I am thankful that the completed work is finally ready for the printer. As with everything else of my life and my possessions, I commit the book to God, with the prayer that it will be of use in His greatest work — the saving of souls eternally.

Betty Burton Choate
Winona, MS
September 1, 2011

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Is There a God?

1

Is *there really a God?* Have you ever asked yourself that question? If honest admissions were made, every human soul — those who deeply believe in God, those who totally reject God, and those who believe in many gods — all of us have wrestled with this question and have reached some sort of conclusion in our own minds.

In the very secular world in which we live, probably many people have relegated the question of God to an unimportant shelf in their mind, an area called, “I’m too busy to get into all of that just now. I’ll go on believing as I was taught as a child,” or “I’ll take the word of the scientists until I have time to study for myself.”

Others, perhaps out of fear of what may be revealed by deep study, are also hesitant to examine the beliefs which they have followed all of their lives, and which define their “comfort zone”. If all of my family members and close friends are Christians or Hindus or Muslims or atheists, the idea of studying and perhaps concluding that all of those loved ones are wrong is frightening. Would there be enough courage to even begin such a study? And at the end of it, would there be enough strength to stand alone, if necessary, based on one’s convictions?

In life or in death, the question must be answered by every soul

Have you ever wondered why, of all the puzzles that confront the human mind, every one of us has had to deal with the question of the existence of God? People who believe in God are often characterized as superstitious and unedu-

cated. So, why, in this age of knowledge and of open ridicule of spirituality by many in the scientific and academic world, has the idea of God not been completely abandoned?

Look back to the earliest historical and archaeological records, and you **will find God at the core of man's existence**: worship of God, efforts to obey God, expectation of death and meeting God in judgment; you will even find defiance of God. And today? Humanity is divided into *two major camps*: those who spend their lives in some form of *acceptance of God*, and those who spend their lives *denying His existence* and trying to prove that He is only a fabrication of the human mind! But *God* — in **acceptance** or **rejection** — has been the centerpiece of every culture, in every age, throughout the world!

Isn't it ironic — and revealing — that there are people who have actually made it their life's work to deny, refute, and disprove the existence of God, declaring Him to be no more than a myth? Have you ever heard of anyone spending his life trying to disprove the existence of any other "myth"? Shouldn't that tell us something?

Denial of God in a secular "enlightened" world

Of course, many in the world today do scoff at the idea of God and religion. They insinuate, or openly declare, that, through the process of evolution, humanity has gone beyond the lowly state of needing "a god" and the crutch of "religion". **All answers to all questions concerning all things** that exist can be supplied by science — *they* say.

But wait! What is this "Theory of Evolution" anyway? *It is the belief that, in all of its divergent and complicated forms, and in its male/and/female pairs, life sprang from non-life and evolved over billions of years into the countless interdependent forms we see today.* But has anyone actually seen MACRO-EVOLUTION (the changing of one life form into a completely different life form) happen? Has science PROVED that it can happen? No, "evolution", with its entire body of

beliefs and doctrines, is simply *a religion of atheism*, parading under the name of *science*. Those who believe it do so by *choice* and by *faith*, trusting that it is true. Because the foundation is unproved, eventually it will be refuted as a farce, not by “religion” but by advancing *true science* itself.

Most people espousing the “Theory of Evolution” go back to “the Big Bang” (the idea that initially all matter was compressed to less than the size of a microscopic speck, and that it exploded to become the universe we see today) or to “cosmic dust” to explain how the process began. The only problem with these answers is that they begin with *something*, which raises other questions: Where did *the something* come from? Who or what created it? Or is matter *eternal*? Has it always existed?



This spiraling nebula is more than 50,000 light-years across and lies 72 million light-years away, containing millions of stars.

true that out of *nothing*, *everything* came into being? And that, without any outside *cause*?

Try this test: Create a perfect vacuum, sealed away from the outside

A theory to answer these questions is now being offered. Serious, learned scientists are suggesting that the entire universe sprang into existence spontaneously in a perfect vacuum! Are they right? Is it



Named the Pencil Nebula, this formation contains innumerable stars and galaxies.

world, with not a germ or a bacteria or an atom of any kind inside. Then watch to see how long it takes for the perfect vacuum to explode — without any *cause* — into a full-blown universe, perfectly balanced and intricately interwoven so that each interdependent part develops at just the right time to sustain all the other billions of interdependent parts! Is it possible to really believe that *an unknowing, non-existent nothing could accomplish this explosion of miracles?* Could nothing ever become something, **unless there was a Primal Cause?**

Such an idea defies every **known law** of science, but those who espouse evolution as the explanation for matter prefer this incredulous and unscientific doctrine rather than to consider the possibility that *the cause* behind everything is a power greater than the creation itself: The supreme Being we call **God**.

We can't see God

Some, *wanting* to believe in God and yet feeling that they can trust only what they can see with their own eyes, sincerely ask, “I have not *seen* God. How can I *know*, then, that He really exists?”

But stop and think. Can you see the *wind* with your eyes? Have you ever seen *gravity*? These are only two of the many things that our physical eyes simply CANNOT see, because they are of a “substance” which is invisible to us. Yet, they are *real*. No one denies that they exist. Why? Because we can see what they *do*. In the same way, we can KNOW that God exists because we see all the physical things that exist in the universe, through His creative power.

But the challenge comes: “Scientists say that those things *evolved* — that they had no creator. So how can the existence of a physical universe prove the existence of God?”

There is evidence of intelligent design

Suppose you are walking along a path and your eye spots something half-hidden in the grass. You stoop to pick

it up and realize that it is a broken porcelain plate with a beautiful floral design. Do you think, “I wonder how many millions of years it took for a lump of clay to gradually take this form, and how many more millions of years were required for the design, with these soft colors, to imprint itself as it has? And I wonder how it got from where it evolved, to this place, broken into two parts?”

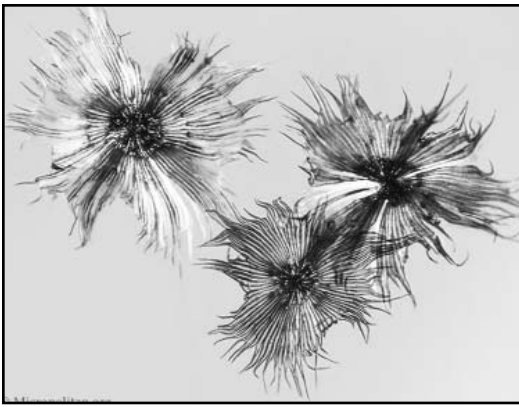
No; such thoughts would never enter anyone’s head. You know, because of the flatness and roundness — the *design*, even of a broken plate — that human intelligence was required for the making of it. And you know that some gifted artist — again, a human with capabilities of intelligence and design — was responsible for the floral pattern and the soft colors. And you know that some human dropped the broken pieces in your path.

Did you *see* the human making the plate? Does the fact that you did not see it being made take away from your certainty that human intelligence was required? Aren’t you *absolutely sure* that the plate could not have made itself, even in ten billion years?

Now, suppose you see, instead of a painting on a broken plate, *real* flowers — *living* things — at your feet, growing in a profusion of brilliant color and life. You stoop to look closer, to see the intricacy of detail, the symmetry of design; you feel the crispness of the texture of the petals, somehow tempered also with a soft velvet touch; a little breeze wafts the flowers’ sweet perfume to your nostrils; you marvel at the rich greens of the stems and leaves, and at the purples, yellows, blues, whites, oranges, or reds of the flowers — such differences in textures and colors, all on the same plant!



What is it? An expensive flower? No, just one of God's very intricately designed weeds!



Scaly hairs of *Elaeagnus*, illuminated with polarized light — and look at that design!

If we had microscopic eyes...

If your eyes were better, and you could see *into* the cells of the flowers, you would observe countless complete factories at work, transforming sunlight, and nutrients from the soil and water, into sub-

stances the flower can use, moving those substances throughout the plant, building new cells for continued growth — absorbing carbon dioxide and breathing out life-giving oxygen! Ah! *If these human eyes could only see better*, we could enter into those wondrous microscopic cell-worlds that make up every living thing!



Microscopic mosquito wing. Notice the very involved and intricate design!

But, we cannot see most things that exist, even in our physical world. Does the fact that we cannot see them with these eyes make them any less *real*? *No, of course not!*

Now, being absolutely honest, *which* shows a greater degree of design and intelligence in its making — the broken plate in our path, or the living flowers? Granted, we have never seen a flower being formed (but we didn't doubt that the plate had a maker, even though we never saw him,

either). The hands and the mind involved in the creation of the flowers are of a substance that these physical human eyes simply cannot see. But when everything in the universe shows intelligent design, isn't it wise to begin with the premise that there surely was a Designer of supreme intelligence who made these things? Isn't that conclusion in keeping with the automatic and **scientific** conclusion we reach when we see an artifact that was obviously made by human hands and intelligence?

To deny God's existence simply because of the inadequacy of these physical eyes is the greatest blindness of all!

Under attack...

Those of us who believe that there is a Creator are subtly and continuously the direct targets of the onslaught of unbelief. Can all of those scientists, educators, and scholars be wrong? Or am I, myself, living by a blind faith?

Attempting to be honest with myself concerning the existence of a God I cannot see, I have asked myself many hard questions. For the answers I try to place my mind in neutral territory, with no conclusion, no automatic clinging to faith in God.

Conclusion number one: I exist!

In that state, *consciousness of self-existence* is my first realization. I think, "Regardless of the logic and arguments and debates of scholars who think they know all the answers, the reality of *my own existence* has to be dealt with. I AM HERE. I EXIST. There's no getting around that fact."

"So how did I get here? Could evolution possibly be the answer?"

Did all matter come from non-matter? Did life develop from non-life? Everything in proved and observed science, and in our own human experience, denies that either of these can happen. Humans make marvelous things with their genius, talent, labor, and endurance — *but not one of*

these things has come into existence without a maker, and no human has been able to give life to any single thing he has made! But if we admit that even the simplest, lifeless creation of man must have had a maker, then basic logic insists that the human body — the most complicated and marvelous “machine” in existence — also had to have a Creator. There is no way around the fact. *My existence demands a Maker* — Whoever He is and whatever name He wears.

***Conclusion number two:
I owe my existence to some outside Force***

“So, I AM HERE. I WAS MADE BY SOMEONE.” These facts silence the haranguing of the evolutionists. I don’t have to know everything about their “doctrine” (and it IS a doctrine, a religion of atheism), and I don’t have to be able to answer all of their hypotheses, because the basic tenet itself does not hold water. My existence alone establishes the fact of my Maker.

Now, since I am here and Someone made me, “WHO WAS THAT SOMEONE?” It is known that humans — the most intelligent beings on earth — cannot create another human. So the Someone who made us is greater than we are and, therefore, *must not be of this world*. This Being is beyond our grasp, and any knowledge we have of Him must come from His mind to ours — not from our own minds. Therefore, we have no choice but to look to spiritual revelation for our answer.

Questions:

1. How have you dealt with the question, "Is there a God?"
2. What usually defines a person's "comfort zone" where religion is concerned?
3. Concerning the question of the existence of God, humanity is divided into what two major camps?
4. There are many things that _____ simply cannot _____ because they are of a substance which is _____ to us.
5. If these human eyes could see better, into what worlds could we enter?
6. Trying to be neutral about approaching the question of whether or not there is a god, what is the first realization the mind would have?
7. My _____ demands a _____ — _____ He is and _____ name He wears.
8. Since the most intelligent creatures on the earth cannot create another human, the Someone who made us _____ and, therefore, _____.

God Is Universal

2

If our own bodies and the physical universe are irrefutable evidence that there is a Creator, a God who has brought all things into existence, then surely there must be further evidence of His reality. What do we find when we look at humanity around the globe today? We realize that the greatest percentage of people believe in God! True, He is called by many different names, is represented in various forms, and is worshiped in widely divergent ways — but in spite of all of those differences, God is acknowledged.

When we turn to historical records, to archaeology, and even to evidences that pre-date written history, we are again impressed by the fact that those people, too, believed in God! Overwhelmingly, the population of the earth, throughout time, has lived and died with the firm conviction of God's reality.

Early religious beliefs concerning God

Andrew Lang, writing in **The Making of Religion**, affirmed that many of the early peoples of the world “worshiped only one High God”. Dr. A.C. Bouquet of Cambridge University said, “...that native animism, polydaemonism, polytheism, as well as their rejection by philosophic monists, pluralists, materialists and so on, are all instances of decline from **an original pure faith**, which it was the mission of Hebrews and Christians to restore to mankind.”

What sort of religious beliefs did people have in those dawning days of human existence? In India, according to early Vedic history, “we can perceive signs of a religion which perhaps commenced with **monotheism** (belief in one God) — touched with a dash of pantheism (equating things of nature

with God, and worshiping them) — and gradually relapsed into polytheism (belief in many gods), but there is nothing to show that **images** were worshiped, nor is any mention made of **transmigration of souls**, or of **caste** in its Brahmanized form.” (**Faiths, Fairs and Festivals of India** by C.H. Buck)

Egyptian

In Egypt, the pharaoh, Akhenaton (reigned, 1357-1350 BC), devoted his energies to the promotion of Aton as the one God. Representations of Aton were the rays of the sun. There is debate as to whether the sun was actually thought to be Aton, or whether the rays of the sun were used to portray the light emanating from God’s majesty. Akhenaton wrote in one hymn:

“How manifold are Thy works!
They are hidden from before us,
O Sole God, whose power no other possesseth.
Thou didst create the earth according to Thy heart
While Thou wast alone...”

Chinese

Going back in Chinese history to about 2,500 BC, there is the marked influence of the Babylonian/Assyrian culture. This date would place Chinese origins as simultaneous with the dispersion of mankind from Babel. Surprisingly — or, not so surprisingly — a study of ancient Chinese writing conveys many of the Biblical accounts and concepts. **The Discovery of Genesis** by C.H. Kang and Ethel R. Nelson illustrates various characters and their meanings.

These early settlers from Babel, historically, were monotheistic, calling their God “ShangTi”, the Heavenly. Even the sound is very similar to the Hebrew, “Shadai”. Their symbolism depicts a godhead of three persons. They worshiped no idols, and one of the earliest rites was called **The Border Sacrifice**. (**Genesis and the Mystery Confucius Couldn’t Solve** by Ethel R. Nelson and Richard E. Broadberry).

Zoroastrian

One of the oldest living religions is Zoroastrianism, founded by Zoroaster (628-551 BC). According to Kushwant Singh in his book, **India, an Introduction**, “Zoroaster did not profess to teach a new religion but to restore the ancient Mazda-yasni — the belief in **One, Omniscient God**, Mazda. ... According to Zoroastrian belief, Ahura Mazda is the good and all-wise God and Angra Mainyu, the evil spirit.” Zoroaster’s purpose was to cleanse people of evil and to stop them from worshipping devils. Hymns that were used in worship of God form the oldest part of their scripture, the Zend-Avesta.

The Biblical account of God

Earliest glimpses of man in his relationship with God, according to the Biblical record, have striking similarities to the other accounts we have seen. In Genesis we read of God creating all things, and then of Cain and Abel (the first sons of Adam and Eve) offering sacrifices to God. This period of earth-history is often referred to as “the Patriarchal Age” because it was in that time that **God dealt with the heads of families**, speaking directly to them or sending angelic beings to communicate His will. There was no priestly system, but the fathers provided the spiritual leadership for their families, offering the required sacrifices for sin, and teaching their children what God wanted them to do.

Throughout the book of Genesis we read of Lamech, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and others who believed in God, who talked with Him, worshiped Him, offered sacrifices in obedience to Him, and taught generations of their descendants to love and obey Him.

In the story of Job, we can visualize that godly father teaching his children about God, and worshipping with them. Verse one of chapter one says, “*There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who **feared God** and **shunned evil.***” Verse 5 explains Job’s concern about his

children's relationship with God: "...Job would send and sanctify them (his children), and he would rise early in the morning and offer **burnt offerings** according to the number of them all. For Job said, 'It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts.' Thus Job did regularly."



Threads of Truth

As you read the descriptions of the early forms of these wide-spread religions, did you notice what we might call **“the threads of truth”** in each one? Let's consider these more closely:

1. There was the belief in God, an all-powerful, all-knowing spirit.

2. Sacrifices were made to God. This practice is evidence of two further beliefs:

A. A knowledge of moral “right” and “wrong”, and the resulting realization that their choices to do wrong offended God. In other words, they knew that they were sinners.

B. Animal sacrifices were offered in worship to God and for appeasement for their offenses. These were man's attempts to atone for his sins.

3. From the earliest times, humans buried their dead, often with treasures, food, and other provisions for an expected after-life. This is evidence of belief that humans were different from animals, having **souls**, and that they looked toward a **resurrection from the grave**.

Universal beliefs in four invisible things

Think again of the basic beliefs we have seen to be common to ancient religions in their earliest forms:

- Belief in **God** — but we've never *seen* God!

- A consciousness of **sin** and, therefore, the need to be forgiven for offending God — but the conscience that accuses us is an *invisible* thing inside the human mind.

- Recognition of an **immortal soul** in man — yet no one has ever *seen* a soul!

- The expectation of **resurrection of the dead** — even though we don't have people *coming back from the grave* to assure us that there really is life after death!

So how were these foundational beliefs in *totally invisible things* conceived in each of those early forms of religion? To conclude that humans, by simple coincidence, and out of nothing but their own individual imaginations, developed such deep and profound beliefs is impossible. Rather, it is obvious that that early knowledge came from **one source!** *The first humans must have been taught of these invisible realities by the God who created them.*

Questions:

1. According to records of the most ancient religions, early peoples of the world _____ only _____
_____.
2. Pantheistic beliefs equate things of _____ with _____, worshipping them.
3. What is polytheism?
4. Was there a priestly system, and the belief in reincarnation in the earliest form of Hinduism?
5. What was the ancient Chinese name for God?
6. Summarize the Biblical account of God.
7. With whom did God deal during the “patriarchal age”?
8. List three “threads of truth” common to these early religions.
9. These ancient forms of religion showed belief in what four invisible things?
10. What is the only logical explanation for the similarities in the ancient forms of religion?

Accounts of the Creation

3

Though many people in this world today deny that there is a God and that He brought everything into existence by His supernatural power, every major religion has *a creation story!* In these, too, in spite of the mythological corruption and embellishments that have developed with the passing of time, distinct and recognizable **threads of truth** are common to all.

CREATION STORIES

Mayan

The Mayan Indians lived in the Western hemisphere from approximately 1800 BC. In their sacred writings, **Popul Vuh**, we read this very interesting account:

“Before the world was created, calm and silence were the great kings that ruled. **Nothing existed ... and the face of the earth was unseen.** There was only motionless sea, and a great emptiness of sky.... It was **night, silence stood in the dark.**

“Flatness and emptiness, only the sea, alone and breathless.... **In the darkness the Creators waited....** Then, ‘Let the emptiness fill!’ they said. ‘Let the **light** break on the ridges, let the sky fill up with the yellow light of dawn!’

“‘Let the **water weave its way downward so the earth can show its face.** Earth!’ the Creators called. They called only once, and it was there, from a mist, from a cloud of dust, the mountains appeared instantly.

“At this single **word** [from the Creators] the groves of cypresses and pines sent out shoots....

“The Creators often asked, ‘Will this silence reign under the trees forever?’ Suddenly there were the **animals:** deer, birds, jaguars, snakes....

“Let our glory be **a man walking on a path through the trees**’, the Creators called.” (**Popul Vuh**, as quoted in **Return to Sodom and Gomorrah** by Charles Pellegrino.)

Indian

In the **Rig Veda** of Hinduism we find a hymn of creation (from **Tradition of Indian Philosophy**, published by Radhakrishnan & Moore). The following excerpts contain familiar concepts, though the questioning format shows that the text was written from ancestral tradition rather than as a revelation from God:

“**Non-being** then existed not nor being.
There was **no air, nor sky** that is beyond it.
What was concealed? Wherein? In whose protection?
And was there **deep, unfathomable water**?

“**Death then existed not, nor life immortal.**
Of **neither night nor day** was there any token.
By its inherent force the **One** breathed windless.
No other thing than that beyond existed.

“**Darkness** there was at first by darkness hidden,
Without distinctive marks, this all was water
That which, becoming, by **void was covered.**
That One by force of heat came into being.

“Desire entered the One in the beginning.
It was the earliest seed, of thought the product.
The sages searching in their hearts with wisdom
Found out the bond of being and non-being.

“Their **ray extended light** across the darkness
But was the One above or was It under?
Creative force there was, and fertile power
Below was energy, above was impulse.

“Who knows for certain? Who shall declare it?
Whence was it born, and whence came this creation?
Gods were born after this world’s creation;
Then who can know from whence it has risen?

“No one knoweth whence creation has arisen
And whether He has or has not produced it,
He who surveys is in the highest heaven.
He only knows or haply He may know not.”

Mesopotamian, from Ebla

In the excavation of the Mesopotamian city of Ebla, 15,000 clay tablets and fragments were un-earthed. These lines concerning Creation were translated from one of the tablets:

“**Lord** of heaven and earth:
the earth was not, you created it,
the **light of the day** was not, you created it,
the morning light you had not [yet] made exist.

“These words, echoing the first chapter of Genesis, have not been taken from the Bible but rather from a literary text found in three copies in the royal library of Ebla of 2500 BC.

“The subject of religion could scarcely be introduced more fittingly, since these four lines synthesize the Ebalite concept of how the cosmos originated. A superior Being exists, the Lord of heaven and earth who created the earth, the light of day.” (**The Archives of Ebla** by Giovanni Pettinato)

Chinese

According to the rite of the ancient Border Sacrifice, these words were spoken:

“When Te [ShangTi], the Lord, had so decreed, He called into existence heaven, earth, and man. Between heaven and earth He separately placed in order men and all things, all overspread by the heavens” (**The Notions of the Chinese Concerning God and Spirits** by James Legge).

The Chinese characters show that in the beginning there was darkness and a great void everywhere, that ShangTi spoke man into existence from the dust, and that everything was created to reproduce after its own kind.

Again, the ancient Chinese characters, in their very make-up, tell the story of the creation, of Adam and Eve in the garden, and of the serpent tempting Eve. The symbol for “tempter” is made up of a combination of seven others: the symbols for “secret”, “man”, “garden”, [“alive”], “devil”, “trees”, and “cover”. Amazingly, these characters of the language have, imbedded within themselves, many of the stories we read in the Genesis record!

The Biblical creation account

The Biblical account of creation, as recorded in Genesis, opens with these words:

“In the beginning,
God....”

“...God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

“Then God said,
‘Let there be light’;
and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night.



“So the evening and the morning were the first day. Then God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.’ Thus God

made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

“Then God said, ‘Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and **let the dry land appear**’; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth’; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day.

“Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth’; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

“Then God said, ‘Let the waters abound with an abundance of **living creatures**, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.’ So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.’ So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

“Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth the **living creature** according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind’; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

“Then God said, ‘**Let Us make man in Our image**, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ **So God created man in His own image**; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’” (Genesis 1:1-28)

Threads of Truth in the creation accounts

Even though it is obvious that these various accounts of creation were not written by the same author, and even though questions and mythological elements are evident in some of the accounts, still there are striking similarities in each story. These ***threads of truth*** are evidence that **the true story of creation was handed down from the One Omniscient God to the first humans, from father to son and father to son, through the generations until finally the various traditions were put in written form.**

At those divergent points in time when the creation stories were written, what were ***the threads of truth*** that had survived, in spite of the mythological additions that had been made?

- 1. The Creator.**
- 2. Absolute darkness.**
- 3. A great depth of water everywhere.**
- 4. By God’s word, light came forth.**
- 5. By God’s word, the water was gathered together so that the dry land of earth appeared.**

6. All living things were called into being.

7. Humans were created.

Is it possible that humans, scattered here and there, could have simply imagined that **at one time there was total darkness, with no sun, moon, or stars**, and that **water entirely covered the earth**? And could so many people, in such diverse parts of the earth, have concluded alike that plant, animal, and human life came into existence instantly, simply because God commanded it? Looking at the earth and the heavens as they are today, no one would fabricate such a story as is told in Genesis!

But those elements are there in each of the creation stories! With so many identical and specific likenesses, it is obvious that, again, **there was one source for this information**. That source had to be God, because no one else witnessed the state of non-existence of physical things before He began the creation.

God, Himself, taught the first man and woman the true story of the beginning of all things, and then they taught their children and grandchildren. But with the passing of generations, many turned to the worship of things other than God — rivers, the sun, the moon, fire. They incorporated their superstitious beliefs and mythological inventions into the creation story. These are evident to any reader, but so, also, are ***the threads of truth*** that still survive.

Questions:

1. Every major religion has a _____ .
2. What does the Mayan “Popul Vuh” say about creation?
3. What does the Indian “Rig Veda” say about creation?
4. What do the Ebla tablets of Mesopotamia say about creation?
5. How is the story of creation preserved in the Chinese language?
6. List seven “threads of truth” in these accounts and in the Biblical account.
7. Who was there before the creation, to see what was done?
8. Could humans, scattered throughout the world, have “imagined” these distinct similarities in the creation accounts?
9. What was the source of the creation information?
10. How were these truths preserved and transmitted to us?

The Global Flood

4

As many as 500 accounts of a world-wide flood have also come down to us through ancient records (H.S. Bellamy). Contrary to evolutionists who prefer to think that “the past is seen in the present”, and that there was not a catastrophic flood, the water-laid surface of the entire earth is evidence to the contrary.

Babylonian flood stories

The Gilgamesh Epic was probably written about 2000 BC. There is a Sumerian version and a Semitic version. According to E.A. Wallace Budge, in his study entitled, “**The Babylonian Story of the Deluge and the Epic of Gilgamesh**”: “It is probable that both the Sumerians and the Semites, each in their own way, attempted to commemorate an appalling disaster of unparalleled magnitude, the knowledge of which, through tradition, was common to both peoples. It is, at all events, well known that the Sumerians regarded the Deluge as an historic event, which they were, practically, able to date, for some of their records contain lists of kings who reigned before the Deluge, though it must be confessed that the lengths assigned to their reigns are incredible.” [Note: These incredibly long reigns of kings before the flood concurs with the Genesis account of extreme longevity during that time.]

The legend of the deluge according to Berosus

“After the death of Ardates, his son Xisuthrus reigned eighteen sari. In his time happened a great Deluge; the history of which is thus described. The Deity, Cronus, appear-

ed to him in a vision, and warned him that upon the 15th day of the month Daesius there would be a flood, by which mankind would be destroyed. He therefore enjoined him to write a history of the beginning, procedure and conclusion of all things; and to bury it in the city of the Sun at Sippara; and to build a vessel, and take with him into it his friends and relations; and to convey on board everything necessary to sustain life, together with all the different animals, both birds and quadrupeds, and trust himself fearlessly to the deep.

“Having asked the Deity whither he was to sail, he was answered, ‘To the Gods’: upon which he offered up a prayer for the good of mankind. He then obeyed the divine admonition; and built a vessel 5 stadia in length, and 2 in breadth. Into this he put everything which he had prepared; and last of all conveyed into it his wife, his children, and his friends.

“After the flood had been upon the earth, and was in time abated, Xisuthrus sent out birds from the vessel; which, not finding any food nor any place whereupon they might rest their feet, returned to him again. After an interval of some days, he sent them forth a second time; and they now returned with their feet tinged with mud. He made a trial a third time with these birds; but they returned to him no more: from whence he judged that the surface of the earth had appeared above the waters.

“He therefore made an opening in the vessel, and upon looking out found that it was stranded upon the side of some mountain; upon which he immediately quitted it with his wife, his children, and the pilot. Xisuthrus then paid his adoration to the earth, and, having constructed an altar, offered sacrifices to the gods, and, with those who had come out of the vessel with him, disappeared.”

Quotes from the Popul Vuh of the Quiche Mayans

97. As soon as something of dawn shone in the sky

98. A black cloud from the foundation of heaven came up.

99. Inside it the god Adad thundered,

100. The gods Nabû and Sharru (i.e., Marduk) went before,
101. Marching as messengers over high land and plain,
106. The whirlwind (or, cyclone) of Adad swept up to heaven.
107. Every gleam of light was turned into darkness.
108. the land as if had laid it waste.
109. A whole day long [the flood descended] . . .
110. Swiftly it mounted up , [the water] reached to the mountains
111. [The water] attacked the people like a battle.
112. Brother saw not brother.
113. Men could not be known (or, recognized) in heaven. ...
128. For six days and nights
129. The wind, the storm raged, and the cyclone overwhelmed
the land.
130. When the seventh day came the cyclone ceased, the storm
and battle
131. which had fought like an army.
132. The sea became quiet, the grievous wind went down, the
cyclone ceased.
133. I looked on the day and voices were stilled,
134. And all mankind were turned into mud,
135. The land had been laid flat like a terrace.
136. I opened the air-hole and the light fell upon my cheek,
137. I bowed myself, I sat down, I cried,
138. My tears poured down over my cheeks.
139. I looked over the quarters of the world, (to] the limits of
ocean. ...
141. The ship grounded on the mountain of Nisir. ...
143. The first day, the second day, the mountain of Nisir held
the ship and let it not move.
144. The third day, the fourth day, the mountain of Nisir held
the ship and let it not move.
145. The fifth day, the sixth day, the mountain of Nisir held the
ship and let it not move.
146. When the seventh day had come
147. I brought out a dove and let her go free.
148. The dove flew away and [then] came back;

149. Because she had no place to alight on she came back.
150. I brought out a swallow and let her go free.
151. The swallow flew away and [then] came back;
152. Because she had no place to alight on she came back.
153. I brought out a raven and let her go free.
154. The raven flew away, she saw the sinking waters.
155. She ate, she waded (?), she rose (?), she came not back.
156. Then I brought out [everything] to the four winds and made a sacrifice;
157. I set out an offering on the peak of the mountain.
158. Seven by seven I set out the vessels,
159. Under them I piled reeds, cedarwood and myrtle (?).
160. The gods smelt the savour” (from Popul Vuh)

The Hindu account in the Rig Veda

The account that has come down through the Rig Veda (1.45; 2.33) of the Hindu religion tells of a man named Manu. “Manu was a very great rishi (a seer or shaman, similar to a prophet through whom the gods spoke). His father was the Sun and his grandfather was Brahma (the creator god of Hinduism), but he excelled them both in the length and fervour of his austerities. He stood on one leg for ten thousand years.” (**Myths and Legends of India** by J.M Macfie).

According to the legend, a fish told Manu that “the destruction of the universe was at hand.... If Manu would save his life he must build a great and powerful boat which would be able to endure the storm and tempest that were approaching.... In accordance with the instruction he received, Manu built an ark, stocked it with seeds of every kind,...and set sail upon the stormy sea.”

After many years, when the ship reeled to and fro “like a drunken harlot”, every living thing had been destroyed. When the waters began to abate, the fish towed the ark to the Himalayas and instructed Manu to anchor it to a tree.

Since everything had drowned in the flood, Manu was now the lone survivor of the human race. In order to secure

offspring, he cast clarified butter, sour milk, whey and curds into the water. In a year these materials hardened and became a woman, through whom a new race of humans was born. This, according to Hindu scriptures, is the remembrance of the world-wide flood and its aftermath.

The Chinese account

“The Chinese classic called the **Hihking** tells about ‘the family of Fuhi,’ that was saved from a great flood. This ancient story tells that the entire land was flooded; the mountains and everything, however one family survived in a boat. The Chinese consider this man the father of their civilization. This record indicates that Fuhi, his wife, three sons, and three daughters were the only people that escaped the great flood. It is claimed that he and his family were the only people alive on earth, and repopulated the world. **(Northwest Creation Network)**

As with the written characters used to tell the account of the creation, the most ancient Chinese characters also preserved the record of the worldwide flood. The symbol for “boat” is made up of three symbols: “vessel”, “eight” and “mouth”, which means “people”. How fitting that every time a Chinese person spoke or wrote the character for “boat”, he was reminded of the ark that had saved eight souls from the flood! **(The Discovery of Genesis)**

Aztec

“A man named Tapi lived a long time ago. Tapi was a very pious man. The creator told Tapi to build a boat that he would live in. He was told that he should take his wife, a pair of every animal that was alive into this boat. Naturally everyone thought he was crazy. Then the rain started and the flood came. The men and animals tried to climb the mountains but the mountains became flooded as well. Finally the rain ended. Tapi decided that the water had dried up when he let a dove loose that did not return.” **(Northwest Creation Network)**

Even though these writings in the scriptures of vari-

ous peoples, living in various parts of the world, and in various centuries following the actual occurrence of the events, are filled with mythological elements, still we find surviving **the threads of truth** that are striking parallels with the Biblical record as given in Genesis 6-9, which tells us that these accounts originated from one source: the survivors of the flood.

The Biblical account of the flood

“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (6:5)

In contrast to the great evil God saw in the hearts and lives of all people throughout the world, one man by the name of Noah is described as **“a just man, perfect (blameless, or having integrity) in his generations. Noah walked with God”** (v. 9).

“And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

“Make yourself **an ark** of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.

“And behold, I Myself am bringing **floodwaters on the earth**, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark — you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.

“And **of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark**, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the

earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive. And you shall take for yourself of **all food that is eaten**, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them.

“Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did” (Genesis 6:11-22).

Upon the completion of the building of the ark, God spoke again to Noah, telling him, “After seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made.”

“... In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark — they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. ...and the LORD shut him in.”

“And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days (Genesis 7).

“And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained. ... Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.

And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

“So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the

ground. But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself.

“And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.

“And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the



ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried. Then God spoke to Noah, saying, 'Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.'

"So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, and whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark. Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled a soothing aroma.

"Then the LORD said in His heart, 'I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

"While the earth remains,
Seedtime and harvest,
Cold and heat,
Winter and summer,
And day and night
Shall not cease.' (Genesis 8)

"Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: 'And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth.

"Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.'

"And God said: 'This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that is

with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

“The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”
(Genesis 9:8-16)



Every rainbow after every rain is a new affirmation of God's covenant with man.

Threads of truth

When we compare a sampling of the various flood stories that have survived through the centuries, we see many differences. Obvious mythological elements have been added to what must have been the original account. But, disregarding the corruptions, again we recognize basic ***threads of truth*** that could have come only from the survivors of the flood itself:

1. The warning was given about a **world-wide flood**.
2. A **man** was instructed to **build a boat** in order to save himself, his family, representatives of each kind of **animal**, and **food**.

3. The flood destroyed all life outside the ark.
4. The ark came to rest on **a mountain**.
5. **Birds** were sent out to test the condition of the earth.
6. The survivors made an altar and worshiped God.

Compounded corroboration

Through studying the ancient and Biblical accounts concerning God, concerning His creation of the world and all that is in it, and concerning the flood that covered the earth, we realize that a belief in God has permeated man's existence on the earth. It is impossible, also, to deny the necessity of a single source for the initial knowledge of God, of the creation, and of the flood, because of the striking likenesses that shine through the myths that have developed among the various peoples over the centuries. These facts further substantiate our conviction that there **MUST** be a God.

Questions:

- 1.** In spite of many different concepts, most of the people of the world, and of all time, have believed in _____.
- 2.** Do ancient writings indicate a general belief in one god or in many?
- 3.** List three ***threads of truth*** concerning beliefs in God.
- 4.** List the four things that have been accepted, universally.
- 5.** List ***threads of truth*** in the creation stories.
- 6.** List ***threads of truth*** in the flood stories.
- 7.** Since some of these stories pre-date the Biblical account, does this indicate or prove that Moses simply re-told the legends commonly believed among his contemporaries? Why not?
- 8.** How do these many creation and flood stories, in spite of their mythical corruptions, substantiate belief in God?

Who Is This God?

5

How can my finite mind understand God?

Walking again along that path in the garden of Chapter One, I look down at my feet, squinting closely, to identify the black moving speck on the ground as an ant. Though both of us are living beings, we are of such different kinds that I feel absolutely no identity with the little creature. And what awareness can he possibly have of me?

Are the ant's eyes able to "see" the hugeness of the human body, beginning at the foot in front of his face and reaching upward ten or twelve hundred times larger than himself — like me, trying to see a body a mile-and-a-half tall? Can the ant imagine the creative power or the destructive power in these two hands? Can the ant, unable to enter into my thought processes or to understand a word of my speech, have even a remote expectation of "knowing" my thoughts and mind? Can the heart of the ant, made from such different substance from my own, fathom how to even begin to reach out emotionally to me, to love me?



What ridiculous questions! The differences in “kind” create an insurmountable wall between the ant and my being, my mind, my spirit. There can be absolutely no crossing over, from me to him, or from him to me.

The insurmountable wall

Between the infinite Spirit that is God and the ant-sized mortal that is me lies another seemingly insurmountable wall. How can I, in my human smallness, even begin to “see” God, whose presence is everywhere? How can I, with my limited strength, comprehend the power that spoke into existence from nothing the vastness of the universe, with every particle of matter that exists? How can my mind fathom the MIND that conceived the monstrous gaseous stars that burn with an explosiveness and intensity that could engulf my world in one searing breath? the MIND that also conceived the worlds within our cells that are too small to be seen without the aid of electron microscopes? Truly, that which is seen is made up of that which is unseen!

“By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Hebrews 11:3).

How can my pathetically small mind, which cannot understand God’s language or enter into His thought process, any more than an ant can think my thoughts — how can I fathom GOD?

But we cry out for Him. There is a voice that will not be hushed, crying for His help, for His mercy, for His love. As small as we are, as impossible as it seems for the human spirit even to be aware of the great Spirit that is God, much less to identify in some mysterious way with His Spirit, *we do!* Why? Because we were made differently from everything else in creation. In the Bible, His letter to us, God told us that we were made in His image: *“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”* (Genesis 1:26,27; 2:7).

In His image...

Yes, we are actually less than ant-sized in comparison to God; our power and abilities are less than ant-sized — but God built into our minds and spirits a likeness to Himself, a bridge to Himself, that enables a breaching of the impossible wall. Incorporated in the “awareness of self” that is uniquely human is an undying awareness also of God. *He does not go away*, and the human spirit spends its little lifetime either in search of God or in denial of God — but always dealing with the God-question. The fact that there is not another single question which confronts every human being is itself a powerful affirmation of the existence of God!

Historical efforts to define and identify God

There are two warring sides in the quest of humans to know God: the conviction that there is one Supreme Being, contrasted with the tendency of humans to deify objects which they believe to be beneficial to themselves, or objects of which they are afraid. We will learn, as our study continues, that this is the result of an on-going spiritual warfare between God and Satan (and Satan’s angels), between the Eternal, Almighty One and the created spirit beings whose lust for power led them to rebel against God. Their rebellion has taken the form of leading humans to worship any and everything, *as God*. *But God says that He, alone, is worthy of being worshiped, so the exaltation of images, animals, humans, or the elements of the universe is nothing more than the worship of Satan through his deceit.*

Listen to what the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:20-25, concerning this human substitution of idols and false “gods” for reverence toward the God of Heaven:

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in

their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man — and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

“Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”

Following are corrupted concepts of God. Though the most ancient teachings were monotheistic, with the passing of the centuries, pantheism, polytheism, and idolatry permeated religious beliefs throughout the world.

The Hindu concept of God

The following Vedic excerpt is one description of “the birth of the gods” according to Hindu thought:

“Let us now speak with wonder of the births of the gods...The lord of sacred speech, like a smith, fanned them together. In the earliest ages of the gods, existence was born from non-existence....After this the quarters of the sky were born from her who crouched with legs spread. ... From Aditl, Daksa was born, and from Daksa Aditl was born. For Aditl was born as your daughter, O Daksa, and after her were born the blessed gods, the kinsmen of immortality...Eight sons are there of Aditl, who were born of her body. With seven she went forth among the gods, but she threw Martanda, the sun, aside. With seven sons Aditl went forth into the earliest age. But she bore Martanda so that he would in turn beget offspring and then soon die.” (**The Rig Veda**, Advisory Editor, Betty Radice)

Quoting from **Ramayan of Tulsidas**, p. 399, 400:

“Indra is like a dog in his ways. Though king of the gods, there is no limit to his deceitfulness and villainy. He loves another’s loss and his own gain. He is crafty and disreputable, and has no faith in anyone.”

The Babylonian concept of God

The name of the Babylonian god, Marduk, literally means “bull calf of the sun”. “The son of Ea, and leader of the gods. He was a fertility god, but originally a god of thunderstorms. His consort was Sarpanitu.

“According to Enuma Elish, an ancient epic poem of creation, Marduk defeated Tiamat and Kingu, the dragons of chaos, and thereby gained supreme power. Acknowledged as the creator of the universe and of humankind, the god of light and life, and the ruler of destinies, he rose to such eminence that he claimed 50 titles. Eventually, he was called simply Bel, meaning ‘Lord’ ” (Micha F. Lindemans).



The Chaldean concept of God

“The worship of the moon deity, Nannar, predominated at Ur and Harran, and he was portrayed as an old man with flowing beard, having the crescent as his symbol and 30 as his number. Called also by the name ‘Sin’, he was known as father of the gods, creator of all things; and some of the ancient nations held that the moon was parent of the sun, and that the moon in its turn was once eons ago a sun itself” (Theosophy Dictionary).

The Egyptian concept of God

“Ra is represented in a variety of forms. The most usual form was a man with the head of a hawk and a solar

disk on top, a man with the head of a beetle (in his form as Khepri), or a man with the head of a ram. Ra was also pictured as a full-bodied ram, beetle, phoenix, heron, serpent, bull, cat, or lion as well as other creatures.

“The chief cult centre of Ra was Heliopolis (called Iunu, ‘Place of Pillars’, in Egyptian), where he was identified with the local sun-god Atum. Through Atum, or as Atum-Ra he was also seen as the first being and the originator of the Ennead, consisting of Shu and Tefnut, Geb and Nut, Osiris, Set, Isis and Nephthys. His local cult began to grow from roughly the second dynasty, establishing Ra as a sun deity. By the fourth dynasty the pharaohs were seen to be Ra's manifestations on earth, referred to as "Sons of Ra" (Wikipedia).

The Buddhist concept of God

Buddha's search for enlightenment resulted from the abuses and corruptions he saw in the Brahmin priestly system of Hinduism. He rejected the doctrines of gods and goddesses, feeling that they had resulted only in superstition and witchcraft. But in the god-less void thus created, his disciples erected images of Buddha himself, building shrines to him and making him their god.

The Slavic concept of God

The Slavs worshiped a single heavenly God, but their concept was closely akin to the Hindu idea of an impersonal force that held itself aloof from the affairs of men, leaving such things to other lesser gods who were not even accountable to him.

The Chinese concept of God

“Confucianism is an Eastern religion/philosophy. Although it is more accurately referred to as a philosophy, books on world religions inevitably include it with other religions from Buddhism to Zoroastrianism. Confucianism originated in China but has spread to Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam. Most people who adhere to the teachings of Confucius follow Chinese traditional religion, which is a

blending of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and traditional local practices and beliefs” (Religious Tolerance).

Degradation of the concept of God

From these descriptions of the “gods” of various major religions of the world, we can see that, with the passing of time and generations, the concept God became totally corrupted. This is the result of the direct influence of Satan, as he has worked always to confuse humanity about its Creator.

The Biblical concept of God

The God of the Bible is unique. He is described in 1 John 4:8 as the essence of love, with all that the word means. His creation of humans, giving us the priceless treasures of reasoning brains and immortal souls, was the gift of love. We were made with the capability of loving God in return, in a personal relationship with Him. And He has promised that we will live with Him eternally, if we are faithful as His children.

From the time of Adam and Eve, knowledge of the creator God was passed down from generation to generation among those who chose to love and obey Him. As we read in the book of Genesis, God dealt with the fathers, the heads of households. Then, through Moses and the prophets who followed him, God caused His message to be preserved in what we call “the Old Testament” of the Bible. The “New Testament” completes the written revelation God has made of Himself to humanity.

What sort of God do we see in the Bible? Is He portrayed as fire or water, as sun or moon, as stone or wood?

“I am the Lord thy God...You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image — any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them” (Exodus 20:2-5).

Since God is not made of gold or silver or wood or flesh and blood, but is eternal in spirit, His presence is everywhere. He is not confined to the limited actions of a physical body.

“Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest? For all those things My hand has made, and all those things exist, says the Lord” (Isaiah 66:1,2).

One of the writers of the Bible reasoned:

“Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me.

“If I say, ‘Surely the darkness shall fall on me’, even the night shall be light about me; indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, but the night shines as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to You.

“I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows very well” (Psalm 139:7-12,14).

God is perfect

Gods and goddesses in religions of the past, as well as in those still being practiced today, often are portrayed as aloof from the affairs of humans; or as being very human-like in their passions, anger, and ambitions, and in their involvement in evil behavior; or as being super-human in their power but often thwarted or killed by other gods or goddesses.

Logically, we can understand how such ideas of gods could be developed in the human mind. Looking at themselves, humans could imagine gods as being like themselves, but larger and more powerful.

In contrast, the Scriptures portray a God who is beyond human comprehension, and certainly beyond anything that we might conceive in our imagination. As was illustrated at the beginning of this chapter, there are no human words to adequately describe God, there are no human thoughts that can actually understand Him.

With our limited capability we read what the Scriptures say: that God is perfect — holy, righteous, and just. It is inconceivable that there could be present in His nature anything impure or unholy.

“The Lord is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy. The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. The Lord upholds all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down.

“You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

“He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them ... My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh shall bless His holy name forever and ever” (Psalm 145:8,9,14,16,19,21).

“Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and hear O earth, the words of my mouth. For I proclaim the name of the Lord; ascribe greatness to our God. **He is the Rock. His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He**” (Deuteronomy 32:1,3,4).

God’s nature does not, and can not, change

God depends on no outside force for His existence. He is eternal in nature, His knowledge is perfect, His power is complete. He is everywhere, and the attributes of His character are without fault. God is as He is, and He cannot change. Whatever He says or does is done in perfect knowledge and understanding and therefore verbalizes absolute truth, which we define as an immutable “law”.

“For I am the Lord, **I do not change...**” (Malachi 3:6).

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, **with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning**” (James 1:17).

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

God's justice

Though God, in His nature, does not change, He is continually aware of our attitudes and responses toward Him, and He does act positively or negatively *in response* to our behavior. When we sin against Him, our sin separates us from God:

“Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But **your iniquities** have separated you from your God; And **your sins** have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

“For **your hands are defiled with blood**, And **your fingers with iniquity**; Your **lips have spoken lies**, Your **tongue has muttered perversity**. No one calls for **justice**, Nor does any plead for **truth**. They trust in empty words and speak lies; They **conceive evil and bring forth iniquity**” (Isaiah 59:1-4).

When humans do wrong, violating God's innate and unchanging holiness and justice, He has no choice but to condemn the sinner along with his sins. In our own judicial systems, in which unlawful actions have been identified, when a person violates one of those laws, we know that he must — in justice — be held responsible for his actions. Our human sense of right and justice is based on those attributes in God, which were implanted in humans, made “in His image”. Therefore it should not be difficult for us to understand that sin on our part demands punishment from a just God.

God is also the essence of love and mercy

With God being the possessor of every trait of perfection, and with man falling so far short of these characteristics, it would be impossible for God to reach downward to the lowliness that is man — because all of us sin — if it were not that He is also the essence of two other characteristics: **love and mercy**.

Why would God endure the disobedience, the unfaithfulness, and the blasphemy of His creation? Why would He provide a way to forgive our sins, based on the reality that we

are not in position to save ourselves? Why would He tell us what we can do to be saved from our own unrighteousness? He endures us because **He loves humanity**, and He directs us in spite of our smallness because **His mercy is great**.

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for **God is love**. In this **the love of God was manifested** toward us, that **God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him**. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:7-10).

“We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

Even in the human heart, **love produces a desire for mercy and forgiveness**. God, in His great love, is the *first source of mercy*. On one occasion He proclaimed,

“The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression of sin” (Exodus 34:6,7).

“...In **His love** and in **His pity** He **redeemed** them” (Isaiah 63:9).

“Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is **merciful**” (Luke 6:36).

Because God loves man in spite of his sin and disobedience, because He wants man to be drawn close to Him, He is willing to teach man the way to come back to Him. He is willing to forgive and to accept, as His children, all who will live by the simple plan He has given.

“...For I will **forgive** their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (Jeremiah 31:34).

Questions

1. What are some things about humans that are beyond the capacity of an ant to see and understand?
2. Discuss the seemingly insurmountable wall between humans and Deity.
3. Though we cannot see or understand God, what do our spirits do?
4. Incorporated in the “_____” that is uniquely human is an _____ also of _____.
5. God _____, and the human spirit spends its little lifetime either _____, or _____ — but always dealing with the _____.
6. What is one of the greatest evidences for the existence of God?
7. What conclusion do you reach from your analysis of these questions and thoughts?

There Is Evil in the World. Did God Create Evil?

6

Someone says. “If only, in all of this world, there was a good God above, and loving humans below, what a wonderful place this would be, what a wonderful life this would be!” But we know that this ideal picture of humans and life in this world is far from reality. On the one hand, we see evidence all around us of God’s love and blessings in our lives — but everywhere, also, we see evil, cruelty, injustice, sin, and death.

So where did evil come from? Did God create sin, too? Is God, Himself, both good and evil, light and dark, Creator and Destroyer? Some religions teach so, some people believe so.

There are many mythological explanations for evil. In pagan religions in which there was/is a pantheon of gods, those gods were portrayed as being very little different from humans, with all of our weaknesses, jealousies, competitiveness, and even betrayals. “Gods” in polytheistic religions were/are thought to do evil things, to be caught in their sin, and even to be punished.

These ideas of “god” conflict with the greatness and perfection of the One we have seen through creation and through Scripture. Yet, if God is the Creator of all that exists, how can the presence of evil be explained, if He is not its creator as well?

God created humans to be good

God’s description of man at the time of his creation was “very good” (Genesis 1:31). He was perfect, and there

was no evil in him. But embedded in the immortal soul, breathed into him by God, was also the power to choose to love God and obey Him, or to disobey Him (Genesis 2:16,17).

Genesis 3 relates the story of the Tempter, in the form of the serpent, who came to Eve (the first woman) and told her that disobedience to God would bring knowledge and good things, not the death about which He had warned. So Eve, and then Adam, her husband, chose to disobey God. Sin, *through their decision*, and the *subsequent decisions* of all adult humans, has plagued humanity since that day.

Did God create the evil in humans? No, **He simply gave them the power of choice.** They **chose** to disobey.

Who are angels?

Going a step further back in history, the spirit beings called “angels” (Genesis 3:24) were already in existence at the time Adam and Eve sinned, for we read that “cherubim” were placed at the gate of the garden of Eden so that no one could enter and partake of the tree of life. Since angels are not named in the creation story in Genesis 1,2, they must have been in existence, created by the power of God, prior to those six days of the creation of physical matter.

Are angels “gods”? Do they partake of the nature and substance of God? Can they be worshiped as God?

A brief history of sin among humans and spirit-beings

Just as the Bible does not set out to “prove” the existence of God (Genesis 1:1 simply begins with the statement, “*In the beginning God...*”), its presentation of the spirit world — of angels, of Satan, and of evil — *presumes* a recognition of their existence. Isn’t this a logical approach? Since physical eyes cannot see spirit beings, their existence must be accepted on the basis of believing what God says about them. If we don’t believe that God *is* God, and if we don’t accept *the Bible* as His word, then nothing He can say in that

book will enlighten us about the unseen spirit world, or about evil. If we do believe Him, then we will be appreciative of whatever windows of knowledge He opens for our view into that world.

Throughout both the Old and the New Testaments we read about “beings” who were not of a physical, material substance. Angels are mentioned in 34 of the 66 books of the Bible. Various spirit-beings are discussed over 300 times.

There are good angels

◆ **“Ordinary” angels, called the “host” of heaven;** 10,000 times 10,000, and thousands thousands of angels are described as worshipping God (Revelation 5:11). Even in today’s world, angels are sent forth by God to minister to those who will be heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14). They are not to be worshiped, because they are *created* beings (Colossians 2:18).



There are many instances in the Scriptures of angels being sent out to do a particular work. Usually they were/are invisible, so that their presence was not even realized by the people they were helping; but when they have made themselves visible to humans, they have usually appeared in the form of men — not apparent as spirit beings sent from God. However, the Scriptures relate instances in

which angels did appear to humans, with God identifying them in the inspired record as angels. In some of these cases, they revealed their heavenly identity at the time they were doing the service or delivering God's message (Genesis 24:7; 28:12; 2 Kings 6:14-17; Psalm 34:7; Luke 2:13,14; Matthew 4:11; Acts 12:7-9).

◆ **Cherubim, cherubs;** angelic beings, as mentioned in Genesis 3:24, Psalm 80:1; 99:1; Isaiah 37:16.

◆ **Seraphim;** another name given to angelic beings (Isaiah 6:2,6).

◆ **Archangel;** 1 Thessalonians 4:16 says that the Lord will descend from heaven, with the voice of an archangel, to herald the end of this world. Jude 9 says that the archangel contended with Satan about the body of Moses when he died.

◆ **Named angels;** Only two angels are named: Michael, called the archangel (Daniel 10:13-21 12:1; Jude 9; Revelation 12:7-9), and Gabriel, who was sent to Daniel the prophet (Daniel 8:16, 9:21), and who announced the conceptions of John the Baptist and of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:19,26).

When, how, and from where did Satan come?

Though the prophetic statements in Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:11-19 are spoken *as to oppressive kings*, much of the language lends itself to a two-fold meaning, and **particular parts of the descriptions seem to be of a being who was more than a man.** Isaiah addresses "*Lucifer, son of the morning*", and makes two strong statements concerning him: **(1)** He describes Lucifer as having **fallen from heaven.** **(2)** He quotes the boastful statements made by Lucifer in his pride and his desire to supercede even the God of heaven. It would seem that **Lucifer** is actually **a third angel who is named** but, in this case, he is **a rebellious, fallen angel:**

“How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, **son of the morning!** How you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: **‘I will ascend into heaven,** I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, **I will be like the Most High.**

“Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.”

In Ezekiel’s prophecy, the one addressed is described as “the seal of *perfection*” (no human can be called perfect); he was said to have been *in Eden*, the garden of God — yet, no humans except Adam and Eve were there; he was called “the anointed cherub who covers”, descriptive of the cherubs who presently surround the throne of God, yet this one seems to have been ‘anointed’ above others.

Again, this being is described as **“perfect”** from the day he was **“created”** (since Adam’s *creation*, humans are “born”, not created; again, an indication that the one described is not a human) — yet this created being **“became”** filled with **“violence, with pride, and with evil ambitions”**. Spirit beings had **the power of choice**, to faithfully serve their Creator, or to rebel and sin. This one chose to **sin** by a “multitude of iniquities”, so that he became a “horror”, “a profane thing”, and was cast out of the mountain of God:

“...Thus says the Lord GOD: `You were **the seal of perfection**, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God, Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you **on the day you were created.**

““You were the **anointed cherub** who covers; I established you; **You were on the holy mountain of God**, You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.

“You were **perfect in your ways** from the day you were **created**, till iniquity was found in you.

“By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, And **you sinned**; Therefore I cast you as **a profane thing** out of the mountain of God, And I destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the fiery stones.

In Revelation 12:7-12 the description is given of war in heaven:

“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heav-



en any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world, he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.

“And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

“Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”

When this war took place is not clearly shown, but we do know that the “dragon” — Satan — and his angels fought against Michael and the host of heaven. These were two armies of spirit beings, one army faithful to God and the other fighting Him in bitter rebellion. The war ended with Satan being cast to the earth where he and his angels — those who **chose** to disobey God, those who **chose** to be evil — are warring against the righteous, and are spreading evil throughout the world.

Evil fallen angels with Satan

◆ **Evil spirits or fallen angels;** 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6-9 say that the angels that sinned have been delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.

◆ **Demons;** spirit beings who do the bidding of Satan (Revelation 16:13,14; Isaiah 8:19; Deuteronomy 32:17).

Parallel between fallen angels and fallen man

In the New Testament book of Jude (verses 6-9), we are told that some of the angels of that spirit world which was created by God “*did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode.*” The parallel is drawn between those angels and the human inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah who were destroyed because of their wickedness (Genesis 19).

Jude 7 explains that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah had “***given themselves over to sexual immorality.***” They had **chosen** evil of their own accord, and with no constraints. In their determination to force their debauch-

ery on the two men (angels in the form of humans) who had come to Sodom, they were about to break down the door of the house when the angels, *“struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary trying to find the door”* (Genesis 19:11)..Today, even in the face of AIDS and other killer venereal diseases, there are multitudes in this world who have **“given themselves over to sexual immorality.”**

This description is much the same as of humanity before the world-wide flood of Genesis 6:5: *“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was **only evil continually.**”*

Did God create evil?

We come back to our original question. Did God create evil? The Scriptures say that everything God made was **very good** (Genesis 1:31). There was no evil in God or in anything He created. How, then, did evil come? By the exercising of the freedom of choice — the choice to love and obey the Creator, or to despise His will and to disobey Him.

Angels — created spirit beings — lived in God’s presence. They saw and experienced the reality of His existence and His love, continually. Yet, part of the heavenly host chose to rebel against God, led by the one who is called “Satan”, “Beelzebub”, “the dragon” and “the devil”.

As a result, Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven, away from the presence of God. **No provision has been made to redeem the angels** who sinned, because they are spirit and had lived in the actual presence of God. At the final day of judgment, we are told that the devil and his angels will be cast into the everlasting fire, which has been prepared for them (Matthew 25:41).

During this intervening time, as Satan and his minions plague the earth with evil and all of its consequences, deceiving those who will follow him, God warns:

“Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time” (Revelation 12:12). We are told also that *“your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Peter 5:8).

What is the fate of sinful humans?

Humans also chose to sin. Not one of us has lived and died without falling many times to the temptations and deceit of Satan. Are we doomed to the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41)? The choice, again, is ours. God knows that we have never *seen* His glory. If we love and obey Him, it is because we have **chosen to believe** that He exists and that He is God over all.

“The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

“As a father pities his children, So the LORD **pities** those who fear Him. **For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust”** (Psalm 103:8-14).

God has provided a way to deliver us from the evil in the world, and to save us with Him eternally after this life. His love and His mercy reach out to every human who has ever lived, and all of us may be saved — **if we choose Him...**

Questions:

1. What do we see in this world?
2. What do some religions teach about good and evil?
3. Did God create evil in humans? No, _____
_____. They _____ to dis
obey.
4. Name the types of angels mentioned in the Bible.
5. What was the attitude of Lucifer that brought about his
downfall?
6. When Lucifer was created, he was described as "*the*
_____ *who covers.*" He was on "_____
_____."
7. When war broke out in heaven, according to Revelation
12:7-12, who was fighting with whom?
8. When Satan was cast out of the presence of God, where
did he go?
9. What is he doing now?
10. In the book of Jude, what is said about some of the angels?
11. The parallel is drawn between those fallen angels and
what cities? What was wrong with those cities? What
did God do to them?
12. Why did God not make a way for angels to be forgiven for
rebellling against Him?
13. How many humans have listened to Satan's temptations
and sinned?
14. If we love and obey God, it is _____ we have
_____ to _____ that He exists and that He is
God over all.
15. How can the love and mercy of God reach out to us and
save us from the consequences of our sins?

Which Is God's Book?

7

Though the glimpses we have seen of ancient forms of various religions are only fragmentary, they consistently testify to remarkable likenesses between those beliefs and practices, and the more complete record preserved for us in the Bible. But, free of the obvious mythological figures and stories that came to be woven into other "holy" books, in the Bible we can read what has proved to be a concise and factual account of the history of man from the time of his creation.

The value of the historical Biblical record



This is a treasure within itself. If the Biblical record had never been given to mankind, we would not know how the Universe, our world, or humanity came into existence. We would not know how sin developed, with the resulting struggle between good and evil. Contrary to the ideas of evolutionists, that early humans were little more than brute beasts and that all people were naked nomads living in caves and other temporary shelters, the Bible says that Adam and Eve and their early descendants were not only fully human but that they were capable and intelligent. They built cities, were farmers and herdsmen, they developed musical instruments, they worked in bronze

and iron, and were even instructors in these skills (Genesis 4:16-22). Of course, the picture given in Genesis is actually only a very abbreviated outline of all that took place during those early centuries, because the *purpose* of the writing was not to give *a complete history* but to lay the foundation upon which God's *message to humanity* could be built.

As the record continues, the history of the rampant growth of sin with the resulting global flood and its effects on our physical earth are also vital parts of the story. Without this Biblical information, we would have no explanation for the great fossil beds that were formed by the rapid burial of human, animal, and plant life when the raging waters of the flood covered the earth. We would not know how fossils of sea life came to be on the tops of mountains, nor would there be an explanation for the water-laid strata that covers the surface of the earth.

Noah's sons — Shem, Ham and Japheth — became the ancestors of historical peoples. The descendants of Shem live today in the Middle East; Ham's children settled in Africa; Japheth populated what came to be called Europe.

The "List of Nations"

In Genesis 10 and 11, the genealogy of each of these people is given, with seventy nations named among their descendants. Doubters of the accuracy of the Bible have said that this list of nations is nothing but a fabrication of the writer of Genesis. Few records of these extremely ancient nations had been known; yet, as archaeologists have continued their search, they have uncovered evidence that each of these nations actually existed, exactly as the Biblical record had stated (**After the Flood**, Bill Cooper).

Again, *contrary* to the doctrine of evolutionists and *in corroboration* with the Biblical picture, remains of these earliest civilizations following the flood show advanced construction methods and capabilities — not the work of "cave men". Cities were often laid out according to planned sys-

tems, with water and sewerage for the homes. Great monuments were constructed, using quarried stones that would challenge engineers even today.

We are deeply indebted to the historical accuracy of the Biblical account for the information that tells us who we are, how we came to exist, and what our purpose is in the world today. Without this anchoring



information, we would be floundering in a sea of the unknown. The absence of mythological elements in the Bible is a striking contrast to the stories that have come down to us through other religious books.

Though the more ancient Hindu hymns of the Vedas, as mentioned earlier, make references to God and a creation story with similarities to the Biblical account, later Hindu scriptures and holy books incorporate many mythological stories, both about myriad gods and the “history” of the earth. One such story concerns the “churning of the ocean” with the expectation of obtaining a liquor called “*amrita*” which was believed to bestow immortality on all those who drank it. As told in J.M. Macfie’s, **The Myths and Legends of India:**

“In the golden age, when the world was young, neither the gods nor their half-brothers, the demons, were immortal. Like other creatures, they were subject to old age and death. This was a defect in their natures which they were resolved to

remove. A conference of the interested parties was accordingly held on the slopes of Mount Meru....

“Before operations could begin a churning pole was necessary, and for that purpose the gods and demons decided to use a mountain called Mandara. It was 77,000 miles high, with roots that went an equal distance into the earth. When they tried to uproot it, however, they found that their united efforts were of no avail...Vishnu, however, told them not to worry. The great snake, Ananta, would uproot the mountain for them....Another serpent, Vasuki, agreed to act in that capacity (as a churning cord). For more than a thousand years, gods and demons worked at their task....



“...as they pulled him (Vasuki) back and forward...he poured forth streams of venom from his angry fangs. The poison swept along the ground and finally over the whole earth like a mighty river, threatening to engulf the entire universe and carry to destruction gods and demons, animals and men. In their distress the toilers...prayed to Shiva, the god of destruction...who drank up the poison. Nor did this mighty draught do him the slightest harm.

But it was noted ever after, that it left a blue mark on his throat, and to this day his worshippers call him the blue-throated god....”

The contrast between such myths in pagan writings and the records in the Bible is profound testimony to its divine authorship.



How did we get the Bible?

Among all the books in the world, even among religious “scriptures”, the Bible is unique. Of most ancient writings, only one or two copies or fragments remain; sometimes our only knowledge of such writings is through quotations made by other writers. Yet, ancient copies of the Old and New Testaments are available to us, in the original languages, and many thousands of fragments of manuscripts survive. From quotations alone by early writers, the whole of the Bible could be reconstructed, evidence that even at the time of its initial writing, it was accepted and revered as God’s word.

When was the Bible written, and who wrote it? Critics accuse the writers of drawing from the myths of the religions around them, because those religions were dominant before the first books of the Bible were written. But if the writers had been drawing only from their own knowledge, combined with religious beliefs surrounding them, their message

would have been permeated with the same kinds of mythological and superstitious statements that filled those religious practices and writings.

In his book, **Discovery of God**, Rafiq Zakaria describes those ancient concepts of god: “These gods and goddesses are also depicted in pictures, paintings and sculptures by different sects in different ways, reminding us of the primitive ages when they flourished. Some are shown in orgies of eating, drinking and making love and some waging war and celebrating victories; sexual encounters are graphically depicted. Earlier they were conceived as inhabitants of a divine world which was almost a replica of the human world, with each god and goddess assigned a specific task. One was in charge of air, another of water, the third of the earth and so on. They were given not only human appearances but, like humans, they were shown as being endowed with intelligence, with the capacity to do good as well as bad.”

Neither the portrayal of God in the Bible, nor the record of mankind — from the time of his creation, through the calamity of the flood, and down to the historical years marking the actual penning of the Bible — takes up this mythological corruption that was rampant among peoples of that time and place. The reason is given in Scripture: repeatedly the statement was made, “*the word of the Lord came...*” (Jeremiah 1:2), and a fuller explanation was given in 2 Timothy 3:16: “*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God...*”

The writers of the Bible did not draw their historical information, or their concept of God, or their message, from the traditions and religions around them. Rather, they consistently declared that they were speaking and writing only what God was telling them to say. The Bible, therefore, stands uniquely alone among the ancient writings and among the ancient portrayals of God: It is free of gross

mythological corruption; it is accurate in its historical account, even containing history that had long been lost to humanity's knowledge; it is scientifically correct in those statements that touch on scientific truths, in spite of the fact that those truths were not known and understood at the time the Scriptures were written.

There are various books in the world today which were written to guide man religiously. Some claim to be inspired by a spirit greater than man. All religions, of course, claim to have divine authority for their existence, for the doctrines they teach, for the rules by which they say man should live.

But as we have observed, a look at the world around us and at ourselves should be enough to convince the thinking person that not all of these many gods and religions can be true. The things we see testify to the fact that there is one, not many creators. Since those books that claim divine authorship differ from each other, naturally they cannot all be of divine origin. Neither can they all come from the one perfect and divine Creator, since it is clear that one perfect and divine Creator would not make revelations to man that contradict other revelations He had made. *Truth does not contradict itself.* Our problem is to sift through the many books and see which one holds indisputable proof that its authorship is above man's ability.

Characteristics of God and His book

Any book which actually comes from God would have the characteristics of God throughout its pages.

- ◆ It would express complete **unity** — with no contradiction — from the beginning to the end.
- ◆ It would **reveal things that happened before man's existence and would be able to give a clear picture of what is to come after his death**, since God is eternal and has witnessed and will witness all things that come to pass.
- ◆ It would contain many **facts unknown to man** and would **foretell events of the future**, since the author knows all things.

It would express the unlimited power of God to do whatever He sees is best for His creation.

◆ **It would be above and beyond man's power to destroy it,** being protected by the One whose presence is everywhere and for all time.

◆ **It would be perfect** as its author is perfect, not subject to the need for constant or occasional revision as is true of every book written by men.

◆ **It would present throughout its pages only one God with one basic purpose** behind His dealings with man.

◆ It would reflect the **purity of God's love** and the **longing pity** that He feels toward erring mankind.

God's book

A careful study of the various religious books reveals that **only one measures up to all of these requirements** — the Bible.

● Some books must be revised on a regular basis and their adherents admit that the “old” form of the religion is not compatible with this modern age;

● some present a god very little above man, subject to the same desires and temptations and sins;

● some show many gods, grotesque and unreal in their attributes, whom educated people reject;

● some fail to inspire in man the desire to be better and do better, with no portrayal of a god who lives on a plane of holiness as an example before man;

● some claim miracles that make a mockery of the very word;

● some picture elaborate scenes of what happens to man after death.

Only one book offers man not only a plan for saving his soul, but also provides a Saviour to do for man what he cannot do for himself. All the books, except this one, fall far short of measuring up to the standard of the God we have studied about, and **since there is only one God, it is natural that there be only one book**

that qualifies indisputably as His work. Let us examine it for proofs of His authorship, for if He directed its writing He will shine through its pages unmistakably, even as a modern author's works are recognizable to those who know him well.

Unity

❖ **Unity in Make-up.** There is one book that is a miracle in its very existence. Its first section was penned almost **thirty-five hundred years ago by Moses, a man educated in all the wisdom of Egypt**, as a prince of Egypt. Its last section was written nearly **nineteen hundred years ago by a lowly fisherman**, exiled to a small island in the Aegean Sea. Between these two writers had passed **sixteen hundred years**, and **sixty-four other sections** of the great book, penned by **thirty-eight other writers!**

Some of these men were rich, some very poor; some were educated and some had no education at all; some lived in king's palaces and some wandered the wilderness with no place to call home. With their lives covering a period of sixteen hundred years, few of them were contemporary, and few had access to the writings of the others. Yet, **when the entire sixty-six books were brought together, they formed one unified story from the beginning of the first book until the end of the last one!** In the entire collection of materials recorded through the ages, **there is not another book written in such a wondrous and miraculous way!**

❖ **Unity in writing.** As one reads the pages of the Bible, he realizes that he is not reading the writings and thoughts of forty minds, but of one! Each man claimed inspiration by God, and the very unity of their writings is a great proof to a thinking person that their claims were not empty. Is there another case of such harmony, considering the number of men involved, the number of years during which the writing took place, and the varied backgrounds of each man?

❖ **Unity in Theme.** The Bible begins with man in a state of perfection, in paradise (Genesis 2)! It shows his fall

from that position, to become an enemy of the One who had made him (Genesis 3). The story continues with the unfolding of God's plan to bring man back to the bliss from which he had fallen (Genesis 22:15-18; Galatians 3:8,9), and closes with a clear picture of obedient man reconciled with God and enjoying the happiness of eternal life with Him (Revelation 22:1-5). **Throughout the entire sixty-six books, the theme of man's redemption shines as golden threads in the fabric.**

In addition to the fact that all of these books by the varied authors are in reality **sixty-six chapters of one story**, another amazing and miraculous fact stands out: **Nowhere in the entire story is there a contradiction.** Nowhere did one man write one thing, only to be corrected by a fellow-writer with superior knowledge a few hundred years later! Nowhere is an earlier book revised and brought up to date by a later one! Such a phenomenon has never happened before, or since, in the history of books!

Knowledge

❖ **Scientific revelation.** Since the writer of the Bible was, in reality, God, it is not surprising that scattered throughout its pages are glimpses of many things beyond man's knowledge at the time of the writing.

On one occasion, when a man dared to call God in question, God challenged him with these queries:

"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4-7).

At the time these words were penned there was a limited understanding of the universe, no comprehension of the orbit of the earth around the sun, of the gravitational pull that holds the earth in that orbit, or of the fact that the size and

weight of the earth are critical to maintaining that orbit. At that time, only the One who created the Universe would have had the knowledge to have challenged Job with such thoughts.

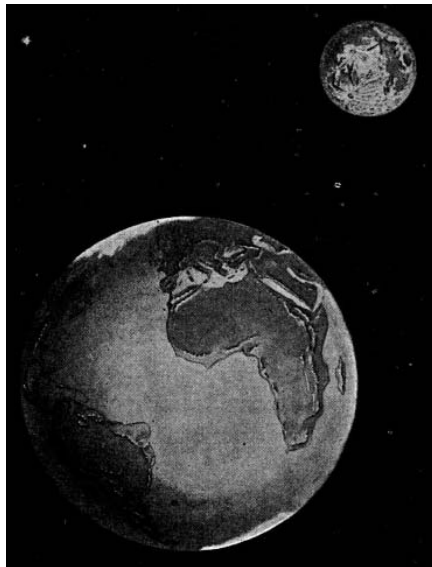
The questions continued, scientific questions for which Job had no answers:

“Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the doors of the shadow of death? Where is the way to the dwelling of light? And darkness, where is its place?” (Job 38:17,19).

Of the shadowy past before man inhabited the earth, we read:

“The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light” (Genesis 1:2,3).

Thus begins the story of the amazing creation of the world, an account that in the final analysis is the only reasonable answer to the existence of all things. Many secrets of that world lay hidden in God’s book until man grew in his wisdom and knowledge to the point that he learned these things through science. Then it was discovered that throughout the centuries the facts had been revealed in the Bible, waiting for man to see them.



For instance, as quoted above, scientists have only recently discovered that **stars make a sound** which can be picked up by highly technical instruments on the earth. Yet

many centuries ago God had mentioned in His description of the beginning of the creation that **the stars “sang”**.

Only in recent years, too, has it been known that **light travels through space in waves!** God knew this long before men, and He spoke of **the way where light dwelleth**, instead of *the place*, indicating **movement of light in space!** In another verse we read: “*It is He who sits above the circle of the earth*” (Isaiah 40:22). The amazing thing about these words is the fact that at the time they were written, men believed that the earth was flat. Yet, by revelation, God declared that it was **not flat but round!**

In further myths of men, it was believed that the earth was resting on the shoulders of a giant man named Atlas, or that it was supported by a great turtle, or that it rested on the back of an elephant. Such childish ideas, concocted and believed by even the wisest men of that time, show the unlimited knowledge of God when He inspired His writer to declare: “*He stretches out the north over the empty space; He hangs the earth on nothing*” (Job 26:7). Not for many hundreds more years did men learn that **the earth truly is hanging on nothing!**

And even to this day, it is not possible for scientists to explain **gravity** and **how it works**, how it is that *the earth is rotating at a speed of a thousand miles an hour, and yet we are not flung off into space*, or how we can be *revolving around the sun at 100 times that speed, while we feel none of that tremendous movement!* Many amazing things about the earth and its working in the universe are not yet even fully defined, much less understood. But the Supreme Intelligence who created the earth and designed its uncounted intricacies knew all these things. Some of them He revealed in the Bible.

Matthew Fontaine Maury (1806-73), a deeply devout student of God’s book, read in its pages that there are **paths in the sea** (Psalm 8:8). He declared that he would find those

paths, and he set out to do so, based on what he had read. Today the great ocean-liners follow the paths he charted, and Mr. Maury is known as the father of the science of Oceanography. But how did the writer of that information in the Psalms know such a thing, when no other man was aware of it? The answer could only be that the One who has all knowledge — **God** — revealed it to him.

There are many other verses containing information above and beyond man's knowledge at the time of the writing, and there are truths in the pages of the Bible which are still not understood by scientists.

Thus, we see that in addition to its amazing unity, the Bible also tells us of many things that men alone could not have known. None of its statements of scientific information have ever been shown to be in error. Rather, as men learn more in the realm of science, the correctness of this book is proved over and over again.

***Information before and during man's beginning,
and after death***

Not only does God's book tell us what the world was like before man inhabited it, but it is the one and only book which tells us a satisfactory explanation for our existence. The theory of evolution is exploded from the start for thinking people by the application of three simple rules:

1. In known science, accidents produce only chaos. This is an indisputable fact and never has there been an exception to the rule.

2. Also in known science, according to **the Second Law of Thermodynamics**, anything left alone will evolve, or deteriorate, to an **inferior state, a less orderly state**, rather than a **superior one; the clock on everything is indisputably running down.** Through years of careful and costly work, man may artificially improve a variety of wheat, but such a thing has never happened as a result of a mere acci-

dent or through the simple process of natural change; invariably, left to time and “nature”, all things deteriorate.

3. Never in the history of life has a lifeless thing imparted life. In order for life to exist in the world today, there had to be something already living, with the ability to implant that life in other things. Scientific law demands that this life must come from life. Therefore we must admit that God, the only One in whom life dwells inherently (John 5:26), brought man into existence, just as He said.

The Bible does not argue the point of **how** man came to be. It simply states the facts that man was formed from the dust of the earth and that God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul (Genesis 2:7). No other answer satisfies so well as the simple and beautiful revelation in God’s book which tells how man became a living being.

The Bible also informs us of what will become of man after he leaves this world. No other book has penetrated the door of death and described in believable language what lies beyond. The many stories which have come down through the various religions are easily recognizable as nothing more than myths and weird ideas propagated by men.

In contrast, the words of the Bible ring with the authority of divine knowledge. Of man at the time of death, it says: “...for **dust you are**, and to dust you shall return” — another scientific fact revealed by God. Though it looks entirely different, the human body is actually made up of the same elements as the dirt on which we walk! (Genesis 3:19)

“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...” (Hebrews 9:27).

The spirit of man, the immortal part that separates him from all other living things, is the supreme gift from God. Though the soul cannot be seen, or tasted, or touched,

all men are conscious of its presence, and of its immortal nature. Even the earliest men buried their dead with flowers and food and items they had treasured or used in life, showing their belief in life after death, their awareness that the soul itself would continue to live in spite of the death of the body. The Scriptures tell us that the soul returns to God who gave it, to await judgment for the deeds done in the body.

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.

“And **I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God**, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And **the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books**. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

“Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people.

“God Himself will be with them and be their God.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. There shall be no night there; they need no lamp nor light of the sun, for the Lord God gives them light. And they shall reign forever and ever” (Revelation 20:11-15; 21:1-4; 22:5).

Prophetic foreknowledge

God, knowing that man would fall from the state of perfection which he enjoyed in the beginning, and knowing that he would have nothing to offer which could atone for his sins, made preparation from the beginning for a way for man to be forgiven. *The book inspired by God shows clearly this foreknowledge and planning*, with descriptions and details concerning events that would happen hundreds of years after the time they were written. In not one instance was a prophecy erroneous, and in not one case did the promised event fail to come to pass.

By God's direction, the books of the prophets foretold, not **general** events of the future, but **specific details** that could not be misunderstood.

❖ The rise of **the Medo-Persian Empire**, with **Cyrus**, one of its significant rulers, called by name (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1-14) was foretold many years before its actual existence.

❖ A curse was placed by God upon **the country of Egypt**, declaring:

“I will bring back the captives of Egypt and cause them to return to the land of Pathros, to the land of their origin, and there they shall be a lowly kingdom. It shall be the lowliest of kingdoms; it shall never again exalt itself above the nations, for I will diminish them so that they will not rule over the nations anymore” (Ezekiel 29:14,15).

Since the time of this curse Egypt has been only a minor power among its neighbors. No explanation suffices for the fall of such a mighty nation, except that God who had the power to reduce her to that state also had the foreknowledge to tell of her fall and of her continued abasement throughout the centuries.

❖ Another instance of the foretelling of major world events occurs in the prophecy of **the rise of four world empires**. The four are so specifically described that any

casual student of history can readily identify them as he reads the prophetic text (Daniel 2:7-48), beginning with the **Babylonian Empire** (in existence at that time), replaced by the **Empire of the Medes and the Persians**, then the **Grecian Empire** (named in Daniel 8:20,21), and finally the **Roman Empire — followed by the establishment of the kingdom of God** (Daniel 2:44). Yet these prophecies were not fulfilled in the entirety for more than six hundred years after they were made. Who, but God, could have foreseen the future events and described them so clearly?

We can understand by the many prophetic statements, which were recorded and fulfilled, that God has an interest in the affairs of the entire world and that He directs much that happens in it. But He is also concerned about the individual man, and this concern is pointed out many times in the Bible.

God planned the way for man's soul to be saved

As mentioned earlier, in order to make a way for man to be saved from his sin, God planned before He laid the foundation of the world that a Saviour would be provided. The entire course of world events has revolved around this crucial point.

A nation was raised up through which God's teachings and worship could be kept extant, in contrast to the peoples all around who worshiped idols of every type and were steeped in superstitious beliefs. All things were prepared so that at the specific time that the Saviour should be born, the world would be in readiness.

All of these things were recorded in the Bible before their happening. They were written by God's direction and with His foreknowledge, for often the men through whom the prophecy was recorded did not understand what they were writing, and seldom did they live to see its fulfillment. But in every case, at the appointed time and in the described way, the prophecies unfolded in the reality of life, just as

had been described. The unlimited knowledge of the mind of Almighty God is the only explanation for the hundreds of proofs of foreknowledge in His book.

The Bible's existence shows God's power to preserve and protect it from its enemies

Not only did God have the *knowledge to write* His book, but He had the *power to prove it* and to *protect it* through the ages. Many miracles were performed by the inspired men of God who were used to pen the pages of the Bible. These were done to prove that the writers were directed by God. None of the miracles were successfully disputed at the time they happened. They were accepted as genuine by eye-witnesses, and could not even be disproved by the enemies of God who tried. If, in the day of their happening, opponents could not prove them spurious, people today are in no position to doubt them. They stand as recorded evidence that the men who claimed to speak from God were actually His instruments (Matthew 10:38; John 30:30,31).

“And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and **confirming the word through the accompanying signs**” (Mark 16:20).

Enemies of God's Book

But having the power to prove by miracles that the spoken word and the written word were actually from God was not enough. The book which resulted has had many enemies, men who spent their lives in vain efforts to destroy it. **Unbelieving scientists** have tried to heap ridicule upon it, but their theories have themselves been exposed as false, in the face of the true science revealed in its pages.

Archaeologists have been guilty of doubting the reality of certain places and peoples spoken of by the writers of the Bible. Yet as their doubts have, one by one, been proven wrong, many today take the information of the Bible as a guide in their search to unearth cities and relics of the past.

Skeptics have declared the book to be a compilation of myths that could not stand the test of time, but none of these assaults have damaged it.

The most dangerous enemies have sometimes been **men who claimed to be followers of the teachings of the Bible**. Some religious leaders, wanting to maintain power over people, have been so determined to keep the Bible from the masses that they have ordered every copy of it burned, and have tortured and killed those who would translate its message into the languages of the common people.

Others who claim to believe the Bible make statements and write books undermining its authority. While declaring themselves believers, scholars, and theologians, they deny basic truths in God's word. They would destroy its message if they could.

Yet, today:

- ❖ No book in all the world is as revered as the Bible.
- ❖ It sells more copies every year than any other book and is translated into more languages and dialects.
- ❖ It has had overwhelming influence in the shaping of moral laws in every nation under heaven. Every humane and good law that has ever been made can trace its beginning back to the laws that were first given by God through the writers He inspired.
- ❖ Where its teachings are widely followed, the people invariably prosper in every way; the further a nation gets from its concepts, the more degraded that nation becomes.

“Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34).

Thus, not only was there *a great demonstration of power at the time of the writing* of the book, but the Bible has been *protected* from destruction, by its enemies, through the continued exercise of God's power, and we are assured that it will never be destroyed.

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away” (Matthew 24:35).

The power that brought the book into existence, and preserved it, also continues to bless those who follow its teachings.

“Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways. When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you” (Psalm 128:1,2).

As the God who wrote it is **perfect**, so is His book **perfect**. As He is **indestructible** so is His book **indestructible**. As God **never changes**, so His book **needs no revision**, and is applicable to today’s needs as it was when the ink was still wet on its pages. It is a mirror reflecting not only the **divineness**, the **oneness**, the **greatness** of its God, showing not only **His love** for man and **His mercy**, but it also reflects man as he stands in his smallness and inadequacy before his Creator. We can look into this book and see beyond our weaknesses and failures to the sublime purity of Him whom we strive to follow.

The book is neither Eastern nor Western; it is a product of no religion. Rather it is the message of the one God of the universe, directed to each man of each nation, of all the world. To follow its teachings does not divide us into warring factions but will unite us in service to our eternal Father. We call this book — the book of books — **the Bible**.

Questions:

1. Any book which actually comes from God would have the _____ of God throughout its pages.
2. Does the Bible need to be “brought up to date” occasionally, to fit modern needs?
3. When was the first book of the Bible written? The last?
4. When the entire 66 books are read, they tell _____.
5. How did the writers know what to write?
6. The Bible tells of the _____ of man, of God’s plan to _____ man, and it closes with the picture of _____ reconciled with _____, and enjoying the happiness of _____ with him.
7. God described Himself, through the prophet Isaiah, as sitting _____.
8. What simple rules discount the theory of evolution as the explanation for the existence of all things?
9. What Medo-Persian ruler was prophetically named four hundred years before he was born?
10. During the writing of the Bible, miracles were used to prove what?
11. What did the enemies, who saw those miracles, have to admit?
12. Each year, more copies of which book are sold than any other?
13. Every humane and good law of mankind can trace _____ given by God.
14. How long will the Bible be preserved?
15. Is the Bible the product of Christianity? Whose message is it?

A Guide for Rightly Dividing and Studying the Bible

8

The Bible is divided into two major sections: the **Old** and the **New Testaments**.

The Old Testament, which consists of 39 individual books, tells us of God's law for the patriarchs and, later, for the people of Israel while God was preserving them as the nation through which His Son would be born. It is good for us to know this portion of Scripture, for the wealth of truths contained in it, for the history it gives, for the prophecies concerning Jesus, and for the examples of rewards for obedience and the punishment for disobedience.

The Old Testament tells of two lengthy periods of time, in which God dealt with humanity under two succeeding laws. The first period is covered in the book of Genesis, when God dealt individually with the fathers or heads of households. This is called the "**Patriarchal Age**". The Lord talked directly to those who were obedient to Him, giving them guidance and commands. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are examples of important patriarchs during that age. This period of time continued for about twenty-five hundred years.

With the book of Exodus, we see the beginning of the second major division in time: the promises God had made to Abraham were fulfilled with the development of the nation of Israel and the giving of the Israelite law through Moses. For fifteen hundred years this law was in force. God was working through the people of Israel to prepare the world for the coming of Christ. This was called the "**Mosaical Age**".

Many people do not rightly divide the Bible. They read the “Ten Commandments” and the law given through Moses, and they think that all people today are still supposed to live by that law. But those commands were not even given to *all the people* of that age! They were the *specific laws* given to the *chosen people*, the Israelites, and they were never bound on the entire world.



The Law of Moses is not the law by which Christians will be judged. We read in Colossians 2:14 that Christ, “...wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

Galatians 3:24,25 explains, *“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”* Christians live under the Law of Christ, in the last dispensation or period of time, called the **“Christian Age”**. This dispensation is in the second major division of the Bible, in the **New Testament**.

The New Testament, containing 27 books, is just what the name implies: the new agreement or covenant that God made with His people, **all the obedient people of the entire world**. God's special "nation" under the new testament is *a spiritual kingdom*, made up of all those who have been *born into His family* and have thus become **Christians**. As Christians, it is the New Testament section of the Bible by which we must live today, for it is by that testament or law that we will be judged (John 12:49).

* The first four books of the New Testament, **Matthew, Mark, Luke and John**, give four accounts of **the life of Christ**. These are commonly mis-called the "four Gospels", an incorrect terminology. There is only *one* Gospel — good news — of the life of Christ, given in four accounts by four of His disciples. *Study them to develop faith in Christ and in God.*



* The next book teaches many truths concerning **the body of Christ, His church** — the earthly spiritual family of God — and how we may become a part of it. This book, **the Acts of the Apostles**, is vital to those who would become Christians.

* The following **twenty-one books** were written to those who were already Christians, teaching **how to live and grow in their dedication to God**.

* The last book, **Revelation**, reveals **the final triumph of good over evil**, the triumph of Christ and Christians over Satan and all of his servants. It offers hope to those who follow Christ in the midst of persecution.

In studying the Bible, guard against trying to make it uphold some preconceived belief that you may have. If you see only what you want to see, but blind yourself to other teachings on the same subject, you will be in great danger of reaching wrong conclusions. Approach the study of God's word in this way:

- ◆ Search for all that is said on a particular subject.
- ◆ Use a concordance to help you locate the full range of verses on the topic.
- ◆ Consider each passage in the light of the verses around it, so that you will understand exactly what is being said.
- ◆ Let the various passages be a commentary on each other.
- ◆ When you have gathered all the information on the subject, and have understood the verses in such a manner that none contradicts the others, you have the proper understanding of that particular subject.
- ◆ Beware when there is a seeming contradiction between passages — you do not understand them properly, in such a case. You need to re-study the subject with great caution and a prayerful spirit, asking God's guidance in your search for the truth. Be patient, and allow time for your knowledge and understanding to grow.
- ◆ Remember the warning in 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12, concerning the dire consequences for those who do not have **a love of the truth**: *"...that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."* It is vital that we *love* the truth and want to understand it above all else.

As a limited example of such a study from the listing in a concordance, consider the following subject and Scripture references, for an understanding of what is being taught. In a complete concordance, there would be dozens or even hundreds of references on many of the subjects:

Obedience:

Genesis 49:10
Proverbs 30:17
Romans 1:5
Romans 5:19
Romans 6:16
Romans 16:19,26
2 Corinthians 7:15
2 Corinthians 9:13
2 Corinthians 10:5,6

As this sampling of verses shows, God has had numerous things to say on any particular subject, and these statements are scattered throughout the Scripture. In order to have the full picture on any subject, all that has been written must be taken into account. Then, in reaching an understanding on the teaching, remember that there must be no contradiction. If one verse seems to be contradicting another, it means that there is something wrong with the understanding of one or both verses, and further study must be done until they harmonize.

Sometimes people reach a wrong understanding of doctrines or passages because of applying to themselves verses that actually were written to others under other circumstances. These questions will help the student to rightly divide God's word:

- ◆ **Who was the speaker?** Was it God, Satan, a man, a prophet, or who?
- ◆ **To whom was he speaking?** To Adam, to Daniel, to an unbeliever, to humanity in general?
- ◆ **When was it spoken?** Was it in the Old Testament era or the New Testament? Was it to all people of a particular biblical "age", or to people of all dispensations of time?
- ◆ **Under what law was he speaking?** Under the Law of Moses, the Patriarchal Law, or the Law of Christ?

Always keep an open mind with regard to a study of the scriptures. It just might be that you have held false beliefs on various subjects in the past, and as you learn new truths regarding them, you must be willing to accept them. *“And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free”* (John 8:32).

Questions:

1. How many major sections are there in the Bible? What are they?
2. How many books are there in the Old Testament? In the New?
3. What were the two major laws in the Old Testament?
4. Most people do not _____ the Bible.
5. Which law did Christ nail to the cross, taking it out of the way?
6. Under the Law of Moses, who were God’s people? Who are God’s people under the Law of Christ?
7. Which book tells us about God’s relationship with man during the Patriarchal Age?
8. _____, _____, _____, and _____ tell us about the life of Christ.
9. Which book tells about the Lord’s family, the church?
10. How many books of the New Testament were written primarily for the growth of Christians?
11. List seven points to follow while studying the Bible:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.

- 6.
- 7.
12. List four questions that help us to “rightly divide” the word of God.
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
13. It is important to keep an _____ when studying the scriptures.
14. What must one do when new truths are learned?
15. “*And you shall know _____, and _____ shall make you _____*” (John 8:32).

The Plan of God

9

The book — **the Bible** — which we have shown could have come only from God, declares that in the beginning, when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters of the dark void that was to become the earth, He was not alone. With Him was the Word, the One through whom the work of creation was done, the One who would, in the fullness of time, be called the Son of God.

“In the beginning was **the Word**, and the Word was **with God**, and **the Word was God**. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:1-3).

“He is **the image of the invisible God**, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him” (Colossians 1:15-17).

Together, the one God in three Persons — God, the Word, and the Spirit — foresaw and fore-planned what would come to pass through the centuries. That plan was foretold in prophetic statements throughout the Old Testament. When the time came for its fulfillment, it was unfolded in the New Testament in beautiful clarity that is not equaled in any other book in all the world (Matthew 13:35).

Though the first man and woman were created without sin, they were given minds by which they could choose to do good or to do evil, to obey God or to disobey Him. Some religions teach that God Himself created evil, but this is not

so. Adam and Eve **chose** to disobey God; *it was their choice of disobedience which brought sin into the world.*

God had made provisions for their failure, even before they were created. He knew that no mortal could compensate for his own sins of disobedience, and that in His justice He could not have fellowship with those who sinned. Without some bridge to cross this void, God and man would be eternally separated by the sins that would be committed.

The only peace offering that was sufficient to erase sin was of a Being *without sin* — thus the plan for man’s salvation was laid from the foundation of the earth, and revealed through the writers of God’s book.

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, **to redeem those** who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Galatians 4:4,5).

“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, **so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.** To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation” (Hebrews 9:24-28).

Thus God’s love for His creation moved Him to make the terrible sacrifice of His own Son so that the sins of man might be erased. The death Christ died was for **all humanity**, and the blood He gave is ransom enough for the soul of every person who has ever lived. But it would not be in keeping with God’s justice if *all* people, regardless of their obedience or disobedience, could be saved through this sacrifice.

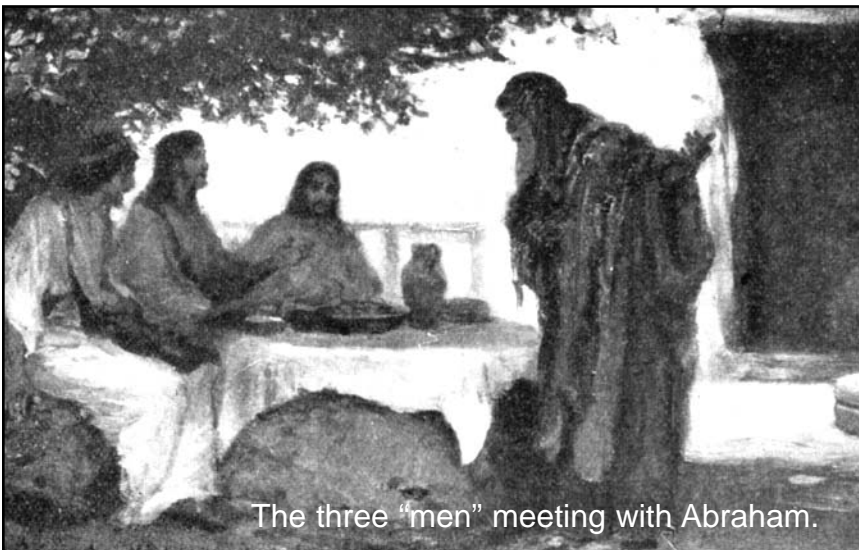
Though no human can live a life without sin, God knew that some would love and want to please Him, while many would curse and deny Him. So the plan was made before the world was ever begun that those who would follow God would be separated from the rest of humanity and be brought together in a group that would be called *the family of God*. The *individuals* who made up this group were *not*

chosen (each one decides for himself whether or not he will be in this family), but *the group* itself was chosen “in Him before the foundation of the world, **that we should be holy and without blame** before Him in love” (Ephesians 1:4).

From the time of the first sin, man continued to fall deeper into wrong. Humans multiplied to fill the earth, and many forgot the God who had made man. They began to make their own gods with their own hands and to worship nature and the universe. These many gods filled men’s minds and hearts, so that few even remembered anything about the one true God. Many of the ancient, pagan religions had their beginning in this era.

The Chosen Nation

Since God intended that one day His Son should be born into the world to die for the world and to save the obedient, He determined to make a nation of people through whom that Son might be born. He chose Abraham, a man who worshiped Him, one who refused to bow to the many “gods” around him — a believer in the one God, in the midst of rampant idolatry.



The three “men” meeting with Abraham.

Of Abraham's children God made the nation of Israel. He gave them a moral and civil law for government, so that there would be less temptation to follow the influences of the nations around them. He fought their battles and He blessed and protected them.

God also sent prophets to Israel, men who spoke by the direction of God's own Holy Spirit (Hebrews 1:1). These teachers taught the people, warned them of the consequences of sin and idolatry, and renewed their dedication to God when they were going astray. But most important of all, the messengers pointed the minds of the people to the coming of God's Son, and urged them to be prepared for Him.

While preserving the nation through which His Son was to be born, God was also preparing the world so that the message Christ would bring could spread everywhere. It had been foretold by Daniel, one of the prophets, that in the days of the last world empire, the Roman empire, the Lord would be born (Daniel 2:44).

Providential preparation for the coming of Christ

The Roman empire was used as an instrument of God. Never before had the world been so closely tied together by roads and commerce as in the days when Rome was in power. There was also a period of peace such as had not existed for many years, and men travelled freely from one country to another. Thus the stage was set for the rapid spread of the news of the Saviour when He came.

In addition to this, one language was spoken by the masses of the people. Prior to the era of Rome, the great Greek empire had spread its culture and its language throughout the known world. This international language was Koine Greek, and it is one of the clearest and most precise languages known to man. Through it, the message of Christ was taught to the world, and was written for the generations that were yet unborn. Then, to guarantee that the meaning of the message would never be subjected to change,

God caused Koine Greek to become a dead language — that is, it ceased to be a language of current usage. This ensured that the words would not gradually change in meaning, as do all living languages. As a result, today we have the language of God's book exactly as it was in the time in which it was written, and we can go back to the Greek to check the correctness of any translation of the Bible into modern languages.

Prophecies concerning Christ

Many centuries passed from the time the plan was made (before the foundation of the world was even laid), and during that time more than four hundred messages were given to man regarding the coming of the Saviour. These dated hundreds of years before His birth. Many details of His life, and especially of His death, were clearly described. And just as clearly, every detail was fulfilled. Our faith in Christ rests on these prophecies and their fulfillment, for it is obvious that only the One who was sent from God could fit the description made of Him hundreds of years before His birth. Such a thing has happened only once in the history of the world. A knowledge of these facts must be a great power for convicting the honest seeker.

Questions:

1. Name the three Persons who make up the Godhead.
2. *“In the beginning was _____, and the Word was _____, and _____ He was in the beginning with God. _____, and without Him nothing was made that was made”*
3. Through what process did sin come into the world?
4. Who was offered to bear the sins of humanity?
5. Will all humans be saved, because of the sacrifice of Christ?
6. Does God individually choose those who will be saved and those who will be lost?
7. Before the foundation of the world, God planned that those who would obey Him would be united in a _____, called _____.
8. Through what especially prepared nation of people was Christ born?
9. Through what two other nations did God prepare the way for the spread of Christianity?
10. Specific _____ concerning Christ, made hundreds of years before His birth, prove that He was sent from _____.

The Saviour

10

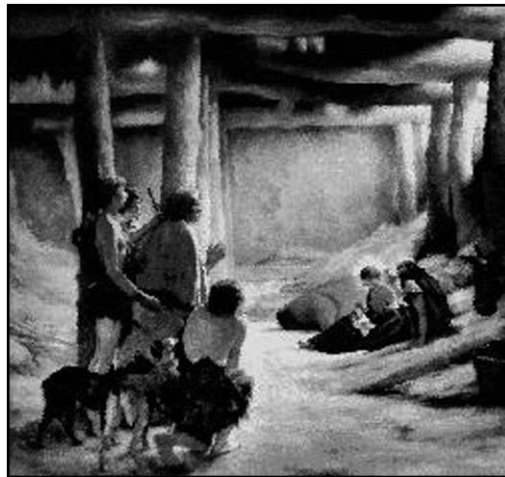
Christ, who pre-existed with God, as “the Word”, was born into the world as God’s Son, in a body of flesh. He had a human mother, but no human father, for His Father was God.

The messiah was to be born in the city of Bethlehem. Though His mother and Joseph (who was to be His adoptive father) lived in Nazareth, a law was made by Caesar requiring the people to register and pay taxes in their home city. Because of this law, they were in Bethlehem when Jesus was born.

Prophecies in the Old Testament of Jesus’ birth

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the one to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

In fulfillment of this promise, at the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, an angelic host announced:



“...‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. **For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord**’” (Luke 2:10-12).

Soon after Jesus' birth, Herod fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:15 by **killing all the new-born baby boys of Bethlehem** in an attempt to destroy the one he feared would grow up to become the promised King of Israel.

“Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.

“Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more” (Matthew 2:16-18; Jeremiah 31:15).

In order to save Jesus from death, **Joseph was told by God to take Him to Egypt.**

“When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt I called My Son” (Matthew 2:14,15).

This had been foretold in Hosea 11:1.

Psalms 2 tells of the plotting by both Jews and Gentiles to destroy the Son of God, when He grew to adulthood. The record of their rejection of Jesus, in spite of the many miracles He performed to prove His deity, is found in many verses, but John 11:47-53 provides a vivid description of their hatred for Him:

“Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, what shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation.

“And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that

it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish.

“Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

“Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death” (John 11:47-53).

The people responded to the teachings of Jesus and wanted to make Him their king. Their praise of Him was foretold and fulfilled:

“Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9).

“The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! The King of Israel!

“Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt” (John 12:12-15).

Jesus’ betrayal to the enemy by a friend was described in Psalm 4:9, and the fulfillment in Matthew 26:15. Even the betrayal price of thirty pieces of silver, and what was eventually done with the money, was recorded in Zechariah 11:12,13. Matthew 26:15 and Mark 14:10,21 show that each detail came to pass.

Prophecies concerning Jesus’ death

Jesus’ purpose in coming to this world was to give His life for the sins of men. Because this was such a crucial event, it was described in great detail by several of the

prophets. The following texts and their parallel texts of fulfillment stand as unshakable proof that Jesus was the Saviour.

The silence of Jesus before His accusers:



“He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth” (Isaiah 53:7).

The fulfillment:

“And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, Do you not hear how many things they testify against You? But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly” (Matthew 27:12-14).

His suffering:

“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:4-6).

The fulfillment:

“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit” (1 Peter 3:18).

His death with criminals:

“And they made His grave with the wicked — but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth....He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors” (Isaiah 53:9-12).

The fulfillment:

“Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us. But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong. Then he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom. And Jesus said to him, Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:39-43).

The piercing of His hands and feet:

“I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet...” (Psalm 22:14-16).



The fulfillment:

“Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, We have seen the Lord. So he said to them, Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe. Then He said to Thomas, Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing” (John 20:25,27).

The mockery by by-standers:

“All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him” (Psalm 22:7,8).

The fulfillment:

“And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross...He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God” (Matthew 27:39,43).

His clothes divided through gambling:

“They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots” (Psalm 22:18).

The fulfillment:

“Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be, that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says: They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots” (John 19:23,24).

Given gall and vinegar to drink:

“Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and

for comforters, but I found none. They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink” (Psalm 69:20,21).

The fulfillment:

“...they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink” (Matthew 27:34). “Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink, saying, Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down” (Mark 15:36).

To be buried with the rich:

“And they made His grave with the wicked — but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth” (Isaiah 53:9).

The fulfillment:

“Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed” (Matthew 27:57-60).

His resurrection:

“For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption” (Psalm 16:10).

The fulfillment:

“...saying, Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, After three days I will rise” (Matthew 27:63). “He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay” (Matthew 28:6).

His return to God:

“I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him.



Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:13,14).

The fulfillment:

“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9).

Reflect for a few minutes on the prophecies of Christ that we have read, and their exact fulfillment. Over how many of the events did He have control? Could He have chosen His birthplace, or caused Herod to send the murderous soldiers to Bethlehem, which then necessitated the flight to Egypt? In His adult life, as a teacher of righteousness, He did not deliberately arouse the hatred of the rulers. He did not cause the priests to offer Judas thirty pieces of silver for His betrayal. The many details of His trial, suffering and death were not pre-arranged by Him. After His death, He did not influence wealthy Joseph to bury Him in his own tomb.

But each of these things happened, and they happened exactly as they had been described in the Bible many hundreds of years before their occurrence. Common sense says that no ordinary man could have so controlled these events that each one would have become a reality in his life. Only through the foreknowledge of God could the prophecies have been made, as God looked down the centuries to see exactly what men would

do to Jesus while he was on the earth. No man can successfully deny that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Saviour who died for the sins of the world.

Questions:

1. Who existed in the beginning? He was ____ ____, and He was ____ ____, and He was ____.
2. It was through Him (the Word, one person of the Godhead) that all things were _____.
3. The Word was born into the world as ____ ____ ____, as recorded in Hebrews 1:5.
4. God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, to do what (Galatians 4:4,5)?
5. How did God prepare the physical world for the coming of His Son?
6. The prophet Micah had said _____ hundred years beforehand that Christ would be born in Bethlehem.
7. Did the religious leaders accept Jesus as the promised one of God?
8. Did they admit that he worked many signs which would convince people that He was from God?
9. Isaiah had said, "The Lord has laid on Him (Jesus) ____ _____ _____".
10. Jesus was crucified even though He had done no _____, nor was any _____ found in His mouth. He was innocent and sinless.
11. The criminal who was crucified with Jesus asked Him to do what?
12. What were some of the words used in the prophecy in Psalm 22 to describe the agony of death by crucifixion?
13. What did the witnesses of Jesus' crucifixion say?
14. What happened to Jesus' garments?
15. After Jesus' death and burial, what happened to His body?

God's Plan Revealed

11

We have studied the subject of God, His book, and His plan for redeeming the world through the birth of One of the Godhead, the Word, into the world as the Son of God and the Son of man. The next important thing is to understand how each of us can benefit from the death of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

It is inherent in man to search for the way to atone for his sins. Every religion, no matter how foreign it may be to the true religion, has its foundation in the fact that its followers are trying to make amends to God for their transgressions. Some people attempt to gain forgiveness through good works, some through self-punishment, some through denial of physical needs and desires, some even through self-destruction. **But just as man is not able to be his own saviour, neither can he plan his own remedy for sin.** *“O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps”* (Jeremiah 10:23).

Realizing that we can neither save ourselves, nor tell God how He is to save us, we must look to God for directions so that we may know how to gain for ourselves the benefits of the blood Jesus shed for us.

The family of God

There was a time, before the world was shaped, that God planned that all the righteous who followed Him would be brought together in **one family**, *“...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love...”* (Ephesians 1:4).

He planned that they would **be saved, forgiven of their sins**: “...*who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began...*” (2 Timothy 1:9).

And he also planned that they would have the hope of eternal life with Him, “...*in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began*” (Titus 1:2).

This group of righteous people was called a **kingdom** (Matthew 13), showing our subjection to our King, Jesus Christ.

It was called a **church**: “*praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved*” (Acts 2:47) (the word “church” means a group of people, called aside from the masses for a special purpose). The description, “church”, shows our mission, our service to Christ.

This group was also called a **family**, “*from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*” (Ephesians 3:15). This name – Christian – indicates our close relationship with each other and with our Father, God.

Today as God looks at the world, His plan has not changed. **His family**, that was chosen in Christ before the world began, **is still composed of those who love and obey Him. Those who refuse to follow Him, or those who make their own religion and rules for salvation, are not in that family.** Thus the population of the world is divided into only two groups: God’s family, and those **outside His family. Nowhere in all the pages of the New Testament can one read of more than one spiritual family or church or kingdom**, for there was never intended to be more than one, and in God’s sight there has never been more than one.

It is true that men have chosen to ignore the clear teachings of the Bible and, while creating their own opinions and doctrines, they have made a mockery of God’s original plan, starting hundreds of different churches which teach many doctrines that conflict with the Scriptures. But

because they call themselves “churches”, and they claim to follow God, Christ, and the Bible, it is difficult for people of the world to see the beauty and purity of God’s church. The corrupted forms of religion are so prevalent and so widely known that they thoroughly confuse the masses.

But we have been careful to search and prove each point of doctrine so far.

◆ **We know that the God we have found is the only God, for no other matches the requirements.**

◆ **We know that the book we have accepted as God’s book is the true one, for its internal proofs are indisputable.**

◆ **We know that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is the only one to whom we can turn for salvation, for the proofs of His divinity cannot be denied.**

So why should we settle for less than the proven truth concerning God’s family and the way God would require His children to live in this world?

We have studied the fact that the Bible is God’s message to man, and that the New Testament is the law He wants us to follow today. Reading the Scriptures, it should not be difficult for us to learn what He asks of us in this life. He would surely have stated clearly in that book just what He desires of us, and He would have left no doubt on any point of obedience. **We need look no further than the Bible, the New Testament, for our directions; indeed, we cannot look further than its pages for God’s plan, for no other book had Him for its author.** To rely on some other book for the rules by which we expect to be saved would only mean that we would be turning away from God to some system written by man. Man cannot save us.

*“That in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together **in one** all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him” (Ephesians 1:10).*

“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named” (Ephesians 3:14,15).

No lengthy discussion is necessary to see three major facts stated in these references to the family of God: (1) **There is one family**; (2) **It is God's family**; (3) **It is named after His Son, Jesus Christ**. If we remember these truths, much of the confusion in the religious world will melt away.

Identifying God's Family

We know now that God has one family, and that it is named after His Son. Some of the phrases used by God to identify this group are these:

◆ **The church of God.** *"To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints..."* (1 Corinthians 1:2).

◆ **The bride of Christ.** *"For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body"* (Ephesians 5:23). *"Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife"* (Revelation 21:9).

◆ **The church of the first-born (Christ).** *"...to the general assembly and church of the Firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect"* (Hebrews 12:23).

◆ **The kingdom of the Son of His love.** *"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love"* (Colossians 1:13).

◆ **The churches of Christ.** *"Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you"* (Romans 16:16).

◆ **The body of Christ.** *"Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually"* (1 Corinthians 12:27).

Regardless of which of these descriptions is used, they all show that the **group** of people that has left the ways of the world to live for God is **saved by Jesus Christ** and is **called by His name**.

Individuals of the group are to be "Christ-like", which is the meaning of the word "Christian". This name

is not to be worn lightly, for we are to do **all things** in this name, thus reflecting the glory to God. *“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him”* (Colossians 3:17). There are more than a thousand imitation “churches” in the world today. They wear many names and practice many different doctrines, claiming to be *of Christ*, but not wearing His name.

Because of the confusion created by these many churches, the Lord’s people usually are called “churches of Christ” so that they can be easily identified throughout the world. This does not mean that “the church of God”, “the church”, “the body of Christ”, etc., are not Scriptural designations, but “church of Christ” is used as the primary designation, for ease of identification. However, just wearing a Biblical name does not guarantee that a group is actually the Lord’s church; the doctrine and the practice of New Testament Christianity determine whether or not the name is being worn in truth.

Identification Questions:

Four simple questions can expose imitation churches and show which is the one begun by Christ:

1. **When** was this church begun? The church of Christ was begun on the day of Pentecost, just after Jesus’ ascension to heaven, in approximately A.D. 33. Read Acts 2. Any church which had its beginning later than this date cannot be the Lord’s church.

2. **Where** was this church begun? The church of Christ was begun in Jerusalem, according to prophecy and the fulfillment. (Isaiah 2:2,3; Daniel 2:44; Joel 2:28; Acts 2)

3. **Who** began this church? The church of Christ is the kingdom Christ Himself promised to build (Matthew 16:18). All other churches had human founders.

4. What **name** does this church wear? The church of Christ wears the name of Christ, and its members also wear only His name.

By checking these four facts concerning any church/denomination, we can learn which one is the true church. No other group can answer these questions Biblically.

A short history of apostasy

Within fifty years of the beginning of the church, men in its leadership began to lead congregations astray. The apostle Paul warned that doctrines, contrary to Scripture, would be taught and would lead people away from the truth. *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and **doctrines of demons**, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, **forbidding to marry**, and **commanding to abstain from foods** which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth”* (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

By 606 AD, this apostasy resulted in the naming of the first “Pope” over what came to be called “The Holy Roman Catholic Church”. The Catholic Church claims to be the original church and to date from Peter as the first Pope, but these claims are false. Nowhere in Scripture do we read of Peter or any other person, except Christ, being the head of the church (Colossians 1:18). And a comparison of Catholic doctrine and practice with what is taught in the New Testament will quickly reveal that this organization is far from being the true church. Two prominent Catholic doctrines were (1) forbidding the priests to marry, and (2) forbidding the eating of certain meats on certain days, in direct fulfillment of Paul’s warning.

In fact, the Catholic Church became so corrupt that in the 1500’s there was a spiritual rebellion. Martin Luther, a priest in the church, was the first to openly defy Rome’s teaching and authority. Others followed in subsequent years, and what is known as the “Reformation Movement” took place, with many men leaving the established religions and beginning new churches, or “denominations”. Some of these took the name of their founders (Luther); some were called after particular doctrines (Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals); some for their organization (Presbyterian).

In the years since that time, thousands of splinter groups have been begun, with headquarters, organizations, and heads. More recently, people are rejecting these centrally organized groups and are forming “community churches”. These are not necessarily identified with any larger organization or with particular doctrines. Most teach “faith only” as the way of salvation, and a social gospel that ignores the many doctrinal truths in Scripture. With no basic doctrine, anyone from any denomination can feel comfortable in the fellowship.

Do not confuse the Christianity of the New Testament with what is commonly accepted as Christianity in the world. **Denominations are not the church of Christ.** They are organizations begun by men, and Christ has nowhere in His word promised to save those who follow *men* — only those who follow *Him*.

ORIGIN OF SOME DENOMINATIONS			
<u>Name</u>	<u>Founder</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Date</u>
Roman Catholic	Boniface III	Rome	606
Lutheran Church	Martin Luther	Augsburg, Germany	1520
Presbyterian Church	John Calvin	Switzerland	1536
Anglican Church	King Henry VIII	England	1535
Baptist Church	John Smythe	Holland	1607
Methodist Church	John Wesley	London, England	1729
Evangelical Church	Jacob Albright	Pennsylvania, U.S.A.	1803
Mormon Church	Joseph Smith, Jr.	New York, U.S.A.	1830
Seventh Day Adventist	Wm. Miller	Massachusetts, U.S.A.	1830
Jehovah's Witnesses	Charles Russell	Pennsylvania, U.S.A.	1872
Pentecostal Holiness	Group	South Carolina, U.S.A.	1898
Assembly of God	Group	Arkansas, U.S.A.	1914
Christian Church	Group	Kansas City, MO., USA	1906
Community Churches			

Do not be deceived by an imitation — **settle for no less than the true church of the Bible.** If there is not a congregation of the Lord’s people near you, do what you learn from the New Testament that you must do to be a Christian. God Himself will add you to the church (Acts 2:47). Your responsibility, then, will be to teach those

around you. As you and others are baptized into the body of Christ, His church will grow and flourish in your area. You will be able to worship and fellowship together, and to work to bring the Gospel to your family and friends.

The promise had been made by Christ in Matthew 16:18-20 that once His church had been begun, it would never be destroyed. So what happened to the church when the error began to creep in? What happens today when error is taught? Some will fall for the false doctrine, and some will stand for truth. The same thing has happened through the centuries: Many — most — gradually left the truth, but throughout these 2000 years of history, there have always been faithful Christians and faithful churches in the world.

But because of the divisions and partyism and smallness of many who claim to be believers in Christ, shame has been brought on the very name, and those of other religions have been blinded to the greatness of the religion as God intended it to be. “Christianity” is blamed for the Catholic inquisitions, for the persecution and murder of those who were counted as “heretics” in the established religions of Europe, but this is a criminal maligning of the glorious name of Christ. True Christians had no part in those atrocities.

Let us now look beyond the errors of men, past the corrupted forms of Christianity which are not acceptable to God, and let us see for ourselves the unity and purity of the system God desires.

The Family

God, the Father of Jesus Christ, is also the Father of this great family of His followers. It is said that we are **adopted** as **His children**, and that **Christ becomes our elder brother**. As the family of God we are united in love for one another, and we want to live so that we please our Father. We look to His book to guide us in every part of our lives. There is no division among God’s true children, and there is no conflict. Our concern is to live righteous lives which will make the world a better place, and to influence

others to become a part of the family so that they can receive the blessings God rains upon His children.

How do we become children of God?

God begot only one Son, and all others in His family are His children by **adoption**, “*But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, **that we might receive the adoption as sons, and because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, Abba, Father!***” (Galatians 4:4-6).

It is of vital importance that people know the requirements made of them if they are to become children of God. Reading the Bible, one cannot misunderstand the simple truths relating to the **unity and the oneness of the body** of believers.

Neither can there be a misunderstanding in what one is to do **to become a part of that body**, if the reader is sincere in his search for the truth.

*“For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not **believed**? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not **heard**? And how shall they hear without a preacher? So then **faith** comes by **hearing, and hearing by the word of God**”* (Romans 10:13,14,17).

† “...**Believe** on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved...” (Acts 16:31).

† “I tell you, no; but **unless you repent you will all likewise perish**” (Luke 13:3).

† “Therefore whoever **confesses Me** before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 10:32).

† “Or do you not know that as many of us as were **baptized into Christ Jesus** were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from

the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:3,4).

These verses show that **one must hear the story of God’s will for man**, and that **faith must grow in the heart of the hearer** — **faith** in God as the Father, and faith in Christ as the Saviour. Faith in them leads the sincere searcher for the truth to **turn from the sins and wrongs of the world and of his own life** — to **repent** — and to determine to give his life to God as one of His children.

When we have thus committed ourselves to Him, we must **confess before those around us that we have faith in Jesus as our Saviour**, and that we truly believe He is the Son of God. Following the **confession**, we picture His death for us by being **buried in water, and being raised from it to walk (live) a new life**. In baptism, we have our sins washed away, and we are born into the family of God (Acts 22:16; John 3:3-5; Romans 6:3,4).

Some prominent religious groups have substituted the sprinkling or pouring of water on the believer’s head, calling it “baptism”, but these acts do not picture the burial of Christ, as the Greek word, “baptizo” requires — a burial in water, to wash our sins away.

Some denominations also teach that a person is saved by “faith only”, and that baptism is only “an outward sign of an inward grace” — that is, baptism is a visual declaration that the person has *already* been forgiven and saved. But the Scriptures state that salvation comes **in the culminating act of baptism**: “*He who believes and is baptized will be saved...*” (Mark 16:16). Galatians 3:26,27 shows “*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ*



Jesus. For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have **put on Christ.**” To say that one is saved *before* he is baptized is to say that he has been saved while **outside** Christ.

We must be on guard: Satan raises roadblocks to keep us from being born into God’s family, and thus being saved. Whatever contradicts the plainly written words of Scripture is simply Satan’s attempt to blind us from truth and to keep us spiritually lost.

As **baptized believers**, we are forgiven of our sins and are added to God’s family. We are no longer children of the world. We have been translated or **taken out** of the world, “...*giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins*” (Colossians 1:12-14).

We have been **born spiritually** into the family of God: “*Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been **born again**, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever*” (1 Peter 1:22,23).

All of our old life has passed away and has been forgotten by God. We begin afresh, as a new child in the world, shielded by God’s love and protection, and confident that He will keep the promises He has made to us. Most of all, we look forward to the day when we will hear Christ say, “...*Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*” (Matthew 25:34).

Questions:

1. What is the foundation of every religion?
2. When did God first make plans concerning the people who would become His “family”?
3. How many groups are in the world? What are they?
4. Where do we look for our directions in how to please God?
5. What are the three major facts concerning the Family of God?
6. Are there many “imitation” churches in the world?
7. List some phrases used by God to explain and identify His church.
8. In order to make it easy to identify throughout the world, what is the church usually called?
9. What are the four questions that will distinguish the true church from imitations?
10. What are the biblical answers to these questions?
11. Give the answers to these questions for the church of which you are a member. Where was it begun? When? Who started it? What is its name?
12. How do humans become children of God?
13. List the five acts of obedience to become Christians.
14. Which act of obedience puts a person into Christ?
15. Through this obedience we experience what?

Worship of God

12

“**A**nd Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, **Repent**, and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:37,38).

“But when they **believed** Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women **were baptized**” (Acts 8:12).

“...and many of the Corinthians, **hearing, believed** and **were baptized**” (Acts 18:8).

Those who have *heard* the story of Christ and who have *obeyed* Him so that they *have become a part of the great family of God* are the most joyful people on earth. They know that their sins have been washed away by the cleansing blood of Christ and that they have crossed the void of sin that separated them from God. Now **they are able to talk to God as their Father, to expect His care and help, to trust in Him that all is well. These people have been born again and are now a part of the church of Christ, or the family of Christ.**

This is an identifiable group of living human beings, not a spiritual idea which exists only in the Scriptures. If we want to locate the church of Christ in a community, we can begin our investigation by asking the four questions listed in the previous chapter: (1) When was this church begun? (2) Where was this church begun? (3) Who began this church? (4) What name does this church wear?

The questions are asked, not of a particular *congregation*, but of *the organized body as a whole*. For instance, a local denominational church might have been organized last year at that location by some local man; but **the greater organization** of which it is a part might have been begun in **Germany in 1765 by So-and-So**.

In the case of a local congregation of churches of Christ, it might have been begun last year, at that location by some local men; but **the greater organization** with which it is identified was begun in **Jerusalem, in AD 33, by Christ**.

In any of these investigations, usually the first identifying factor that exposes the error is in **the name** the group wears. Only if a church matches the Scriptures on all four of the specified points can it be the Scriptural church.

For further identification we must ask, "What does this church teach concerning salvation?" The Scriptures show five acts of obedience, to have our sins forgiven: (1) hear, (2) believe, (3) repent, (4) confess, and (5) baptism. When all of these commands have been obeyed, God forgives us of our sins and adds us to His church.

If a church does not teach these commands concerning salvation, it cannot be the true church.

The life of service

When a person loves someone, his heart overflows with a desire to express that love. So it is with the Christian. Not only does he realize the new bond which exists between himself and God, but he is able to see what a privilege it is to be allowed to worship One who is so much greater than man. To be permitted to actually **come to the throne** of the almighty God of the universe, and to be **heard by Him**, is an honour that no man deserves.

“Can a man be profitable to God, though he who is wise may be profitable to himself? If even the moon does not shine, and the stars are not pure in His sight, how much less man, who is a maggot, and a son of man, who is a worm?” (Job 22:2; 25:5,6).

“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then **I will hear from heaven**, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

How great is the contrast between this God, the God of heaven, and the gods that men make with their hands and then fall on their faces to worship before their own creation!

“Why should the Gentiles say, So where is their God? But **our God is in heaven**; He does whatever He pleases. **Their idols** are silver and gold, **the work of men’s hands**. They have **mouths**, but they **do not speak**; **eyes** they have, but they **do not see**; they have **ears**, but they **do not hear**; **noses** they have, but they **do not smell**; they have **hands**, but they **do not handle**; **feet** they have, but they **do not walk**; nor do they **mutter** through their **throat**. Those who make them are **like them**; so is **everyone** who **trusts** in them” (Psalm 115:2-8).



But before our God we can fall and pour out our praise and adoration of Him, and know that He will hear us and help us in time of need. Our prayer should be:

“Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is **forgiveness** with You, that You may be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope” (Psalm 130:1-5).

True worship

No man has the authority to decide **how** he will worship God. God, Himself, has spoken in the Bible, giving very clear instructions about worship. If we want to please Him, we must listen to what He says.

The church of Christ pleads with people, “Let’s go back to the pattern and instructions of the New Testament. Let’s worship God just as He teaches, without adding or taking away from His word.” Only this worship is acceptable to Him.

The day of worship

The week is divided into seven days. The first of these — Sunday, the Lord’s Day — belongs to God, and on that day Christians gather to worship (Acts 20:7). Their worship is simple, yet it comes from the heart. Contrary to the forms created by men, worship as directed by God is free from empty ritual and ceremony. Each part is deeply meaningful, full of praise to God, and uplifting to the one who is worshipping.

Five parts of worship

1. Worship must stem from a prayerful heart, since we talk directly to God through our Saviour, Jesus Christ, by means of prayer. “*For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil*” (1 Peter 3:12).

“Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him” (John 9:31).

“And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive” (Matthew 21:22).



2. With hearts drawn close to God through prayer, **the worshiper is ready to praise his Creator through song.** God does not desire praise through instruments of music which man has made, but rather He seeks the worship of the musical instrument made by His own hand — man’s vocal chords. We lift our voices in blended song, exalting our God and praising Him for His goodness to us. Not only do the songs go up before God as a pleasing sound, but they are a means of teaching those around us.

“Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name” (Hebrews 13:15).

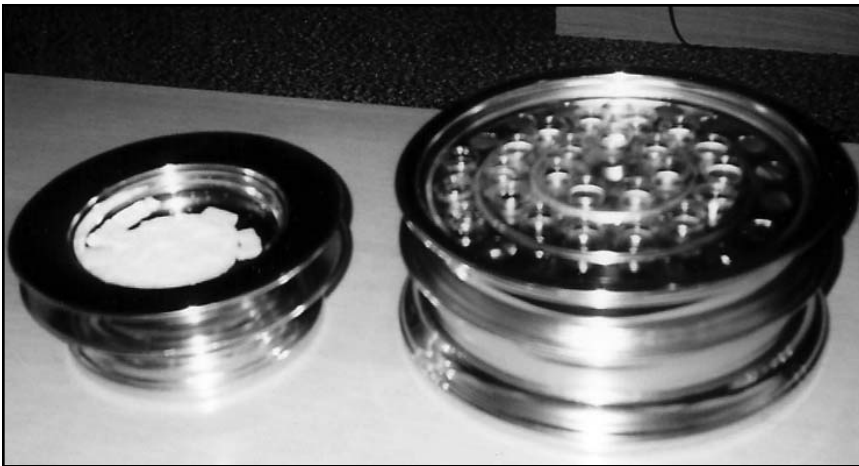
“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Colossians 3:16).

“...speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:19,20).

3. There is only one way in which God talks to man in these days: through the inspired word, the Bible. It is a vital part of worship that **the Christian allow God to teach him.** We hear His instructions as **His word is studied** and taught in public worship periods. *“...search the scriptures”* (John 5:39). *“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15). *“Preach the word!...”* (2 Timothy 4:2). *“...as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby”* (1 Peter 2:2). *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”* (Psalm 119:105).

4. Without the great love of God’s Son, without His willingness to die in our place for our sins, we would not be allowed to approach the throne of God in worship. It is for this reason that all we do — including our worship — is done in the **name** of Jesus. God does not want us to forget the love of His Son, and **a part of worship is the memorial God has made in honour of Jesus Christ.** It is not a memorial built of marble, or of brick and mortar, or of the costliest and most enduring of materials. It is a memorial built in the heart of each worshiper — a simple **supper of remembrance.**

Christ’s death cost the life of **His body.** His death cost **the pouring out of His blood.** By that death, by His body and His blood, we have the hope of salvation.



Each Sunday the true Christian approaches this supper with humility. We search our hearts to see if we have lived during the past week in harmony with the Gospel of Christ. After preparing our minds to take part in the memorial feast in a worthy manner, we bow before God to remember his Son.

“And He said to them, This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many. Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God” (Mark 14:22-24).

“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you; that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me. In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me” (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

5. Six days of the week are given to the Christian so that he may work and provide the needed money for his family. The money he earns represents his life.

God desires that we give Him our lives, and a part of that gift is to be made in the form of the money we have worked to earn. We give for a practical reason — the work that the church is to do requires money, and the only source for obtaining that money is from Christians.

The church has two works of major importance: teaching the world the message of Christ, and helping those in physical need who are not able to help themselves. Both of these require money.

The Christian is therefore to take first of his weekly earnings and give a generous portion to the work of God. He is not to give because he feels compelled, or with reluctance, but because he wants to share with others the good things he has received from the hand of God (2 Corinthians 9:6,7). We are promised in return, “...try me now in this, says the Lord of hosts, If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:10).

Questions:

1. Who was given all authority by God?
2. The passages quoted give instructions on what to do to be saved. What did Jesus say? _____ . What did Peter say? _____, _____ . What did the people do after Philip preached? _____, _____ .
3. Those who have obeyed God have become a part of what? _____ .
4. Can the church of Christ be located in a city or community?
5. Must the worship of Christians be according to God's word?
6. Unbelievers doubt the existence of God who is Spirit, because they cannot see Him. (They would ask, "Where is this God?") So what do they make with their own hands, in place of God? What does God say about these hand-made "gods"?
7. What does the church of Christ plead with people to do?
8. Which is the day of worship?
9. What are the five parts of worship?
10. Will God be pleased if we change His worship, or if we add something to it, or leave something off?
11. Does your church eat of Christ's memorial supper each week?
12. Does your church use a guitar or a piano or some other mechanical musical instrument in its worship?
13. Why is it so important for us to study God's word, and to understand how to "rightly divide it"?
14. What sacrifice does God require of the Christian?

The Worshipful Life

13

The Effect Of True Worship In Daily Life

When a Christian goes out from worship, his heart should glow with the happiness of closeness with God. He feels pure and cleansed, his eyes are raised to new heights of godliness, and he is inspired to live day by day the things he has learned.

Knowing the characteristics of God, the Christian longs to imitate them in his life by being loving, just, righteous, and at peace with all men. His daily existence becomes an offering of worship and service, a walking hand in hand with God.

Every religion demands sacrifices of some kind. Some require the lives of animals, some flowers, money, and other tokens of love; some even demand the offering of human life. God requires the Christian to give the greatest sacrifice a human can make — his own life. But a dead body cannot serve God, so what He has asked is “...that you present **your bodies** a **living** sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

To those outside the family of God, such denial of one’s own desires and interests may sound like an unbearable kind of life to live. Christians, though, who have done what God asks and have experienced the joy and contentment which result, are living proofs that no other kind of life can surpass it.

Happiness and peace

Is it not **happiness** that all men desire? God is the essence of happiness, so it is reasonable that the more we

strive to be **like Him**, the **happier** we will be. All who have indulged in lives of sin and evil are a testimony to the fact that these things will not bring real happiness.

The peace one feels in his heart, the glow of joy that dwells inside, come from doing good. To treat others **as one would be treated**, to bring **joy** to the lives of those around us, to do in all things **what we know is right**, to be able to search our consciences at the end of the day and to **be at peace** with ourselves — these are the attributes that distinguish the Christian from those around him.

There is no hypocrisy in his life; there is no ulterior motive in serving God; no attitude of putting God on trial for a while to see if all the problems in life will be instantly solved.

The Christian knows that there is no other God to serve; he knows that God loves him and has promised *“...that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose”* (Romans 8:28).

The Christian knows that as he gives his life to God, God has promised to care for that life and to share every heartache and every care. Each day, as he strives to bend his interests and desires to be more like God and less like self, he finds his life to be richer, and filled with greater blessings.

Some religions ask that their followers inflict on themselves physical punishment, abasement, denial of physical needs, cruel tortures, and the denial of self to the point of death.

Though Christians are to give themselves to God, no such physical abuse is asked.



Rather, we are made in the image of God, and as Christians we are told that our bodies become the temple of the Holy Spirit — that is, the Spirit of God lives within us. We are therefore warned:

“Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, which temple you are” (1 Corinthians 3:16,17).

“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

The height of Christianity is service, not beggary

Contrary to many religions in which the greatest devotees become literal beggars in the name of religion and do not work to supply their physical needs, Christians are required to work. *“For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat”* (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

“But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Timothy 5:8).

“...But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing” (1 Thessalonians 4:10-12).

God’s influence in our lives will change us

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

“And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

“Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

“And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 5:22-26; 6:8-10).

These instructions cover all facets of daily life. We live in a sea of humanity. All around us are situations and needs that require our attention and, often, our intervention and help. We see fellow-Christians who need counseling. In response, we are to take the time to reach out to them with kindness and wisdom, helping them through their trials.

We see physical needs, perhaps from natural disasters or from helplessness on the part of those who are suffering. To the degree that we are able, Christians will give of their money, their possessions, and their time to come to the aid of those who cannot help themselves.



We see an example of this open-heartedness in Acts 4:34-37. In that context, Jews had come to Jerusalem from many distant places for the feast day of Pentecost. They had heard the Gospel and had become the first Christians. Because of extending their stay in order to learn more of the new faith, they came to be in need of the daily necessities. In response, Christians sold land and possessions, dividing the funds with those who had nothing. Later, because of persecution and hardship, the apostle Paul collected funds from churches in Macedonia, Corinth, and other places, to come to the aid of the Jerusalem church (2 Corinthians 9; Romans 15:31).

In Matthew 25:34-46, Jesus taught,

“Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’

“Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’

“And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’

“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

“Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’

“Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’

“And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

God’s continuing gift to the world

Because these characteristics, required by God in the life of a Christian, permeate his behavior on a day-to-day basis, his very existence in the world is a power for good. He will speak the truth, and live the truth; integrity will govern his dealings with others; compassion will open his hands to the helpless and the needy; and love for the souls of men will motivate him to share the good news of the Gospel with those who are not a part of God’s family. In every way, the Christian’s life is blessed, and he in turn is a blessing to the world.

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).

Questions:

1. How does true worship, from the heart, affect the Christian?
2. In what ways does he long to imitate God?
3. His daily existence becomes _____
_____, a walking hand-in-hand with God.
4. Does a life of sin bring real happiness?
5. What are some attributes that distinguish the Christian from those around him?
6. Why is it important that the Christian not be hypocritical or have ulterior motives in his service to God?
7. God has promised that “ _____
_____, _____
_____.”
8. Our bodies are called what?
9. What is the height of Christianity?
10. Christians are required to _____, to mind our own
_____, to walk _____ toward those who are out
side.
11. What is the fruit, or result, of God’s Spirit in our lives?
12. What did Christians do for the needy ones in the church in Jerusalem?
13. Are Christians commanded to minister to those in prison?
14. Christianity is a _____ to the life of the Christian, and he
in turn is a _____ to the world.
15. Therefore, _____, let us do _____
to _____, especially to those who are of _____
_____.

After Death, What?

14

Every religion presents some picture of what its author believed would become of a man at the time of death. But no mere man has died and returned to tell of what lies beyond the grave.

In our study we have searched and found the true God. We have learned that the Bible contains indisputable internal proofs of His authorship, and that the New Testament is His will for the people of the Christian age. Therefore we know that whatever God says in the Bible on the subject of life after death is true. It cannot be ignored or disputed, because no human has personal knowledge of that spiritual world.

Whatever we believe must be based on doctrines of the religions we know. **When, through careful study, we search out and find the true God and true religion, we also find the true picture of what occurs at death.**

“And it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). “All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all return to dust” (Ecclesiastes 3:20).

“Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

That the body returns to dust is obvious to all men. That the living spirit of a man leaves his body at the time of his death is equally obvious. But what becomes of the man, how his spirit lives after the death of his body, what reward or punishment he receives for the way he has lived in this life — the answers to those questions bring many conflicting beliefs.

The purpose of the Bible

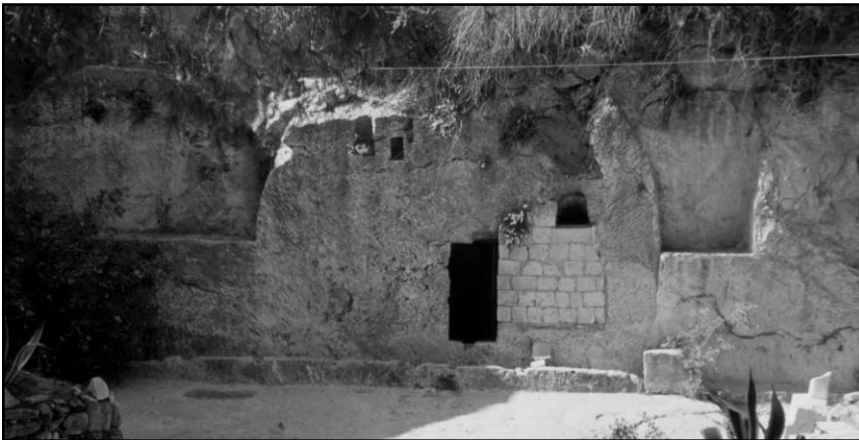
The entire purpose of the Bible is to prepare man for the important life: the life after death. If there is no such life, then all of our work to please God is vain and foolish.

If a man lives **many lives, as some religions teach**, and is not judged once and for all at the end of the one life he has lived, how hopeless it is to strive for rest from the cares of this world. Others believe in a doctrine of “**purgatory**”, which says that the soul will suffer for some time for its misdeeds, but that family or friends can give money to the church, to pray the person out of purgatory.

But these doctrines are not found in the book which was given by God. According to its truth, man **lives once**, he **dies once**, and then he awaits the resurrection and the judgment for the deeds he has done in this life.

The entire core of Christianity rests on this resurrection. Christ died for us, in order to become our Saviour, but a dead man can do nothing for anyone. **The power of Christ lies in the fact that He overcame the bonds of death to become our resurrected Saviour.**

For nineteen centuries, unbelievers have tried to prove that the Bible is untrue when it says that Christ was



The empty tomb in Jerusalem, Israel in which it is thought that the body of Christ might have been buried.

raised from the dead . But they could not shake the conviction in the hearts of those who saw Him after the resurrection in the first century, and they have never been able to disprove the testimony of those eye witnesses. Those men died for what they **knew** to be the truth. They died, **knowing** that they served a risen Lord and that He had promised that one day He would return to raise to life all those who follow Him.

“If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep...

“But someone will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?

“Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain — perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body...

“So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 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. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body...

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed” (1 Corinthians 15:19,20,35-38,42-44,50-52).

What about those who are still alive when Christ returns?

God’s family is called a kingdom, and His Son has been given the authority to reign over that kingdom. Some of the citizens of that kingdom have died, while some still live.

“But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him **those who sleep in Jesus**. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17).

“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to

God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death” (1 Corinthians 15:24-26).

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which



bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads”...

“The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).

“But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life” (Revelation 20:12-15; 22:1-4; 21:23-27).

How can we enlarge on these beautiful word pictures of that new heaven and new earth? Who could want more than God has promised — eternal life with Him?

All people must die, but all will also be resurrected. We face judgment before God, when each one will have to answer for the way we have lived this life.

In God’s message to man, the Bible, there is no doctrine of rebirth, reincarnation, or of a second chance after death. Instead, we are warned that when we die we will be judged by the words written in God’s book. Each one will be saved or condemned eternally, based on his life:

- * **While I lived, did I obey God?**
- * **Was I born into God’s family, the church?**
- * **Did I worship God regularly with the church?**
- * **Did I live a pure life, day by day?**

Even in this life we can know whether we are ready to face the judgment, because we already have the “exam”:

“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

“And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before

God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works...

“Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire...” (Revelation 20:12-15).

Those believers who have been baptized for the forgiveness of their sins, have been added to the church, and have been faithful to God until death are promised the resurrection of life: *“Then the King will say to those on His right hand, Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”* (Matthew 25:34).

How sad it will be for the many who had no concern about pleasing God in this life! They did not search to find Him, they did not study His word, they did not obey Him. They were not concerned about being in God’s family.

Searching for the true God and for His word was too much work. They chose, instead, to live life carelessly, following whatever religion came along, or no religion at all. Many worshiped idols, many denied God, cursing His name. They enjoyed sin and living however they chose to live, instead of trying to please God. As Jesus said, *“They served their father, the Devil.”* Their eternal place is *“the lake of fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.”*

With these passages from Revelation, we see the end of the story that was begun in Genesis. Man who sinned and was lost is eternally restored to fellowship and peace with God. Paradise that was lost through sin is regained through the sacrifice of Christ.



A montage of humanity's history, showing the Garden of Eden on the left; man's fall; sacrificial offerings of the Old Testament period; the Sacrifice of Christ for the sins of man; the institution of the memorial supper with the disciples; and the New Heaven and New Earth, promised as the eternal home for those who choose to obey God and to become a part of His spiritual family, the body of Christ.

Questions:

1. How can we know the truth about what will happen after we die?
2. The Bible says that the _____ returns to _____, but the _____ returns to _____ who gave it.
3. Are we promised rewards after death? Are we warned of punishment?
4. What is the purpose of the Bible?
5. The entire core of Christianity rest on what?
6. Who declared that Christ had been raised from the dead?
7. After death, what must all people face?
8. List four points each one will face in the judgment.
9. Whose words will judge us?
10. Can we read His words now and follow them in this life, so that we can **know** we will be approved in the judgment?
11. Those _____ who have been _____ for _____ of their sins, have been _____ to the _____, and have been _____ are promised the resurrection of life, according to Matthew 25.
12. Must Christians live, day-by-day, according to God's word in order to be saved eternally?
13. What will happen to those who don't know God and who don't obey the gospel (1 Thessalonians 1:7-9)?
14. When the dead stand before God, how will they be judged?
15. Based on the description given in Revelation of the new heaven and the new earth, write a paragraph to describe it.



Even so, come, Lord Jesus...

Answers

Chapter 1

1. _____.
2. Whatever his family or peers follow is what he also follows.
3. Those who believe in God and those who deny Him.
4. the human eye; see; invisible.
5. microscopic.
6. self-existence, and the demand to explain one's own existence.
7. existence; Creator; Whoever; Whatever.
8. is greater than we are; must not be of this world.

Chapter 2

1. worshiped; one High God.
2. nature; God.
3. The belief in many gods, worshiping idols as god.
4. No.
5. Shang Ti.
6. He is the one God, the Creator of all that exists.
7. the fathers, the heads of the families.
8.
 1. Belief in God, an all-powerful, all-knowing spirit.
 2. Sacrifices were made to God.
 3. humans buried their dead, in expectation of a resurrection from the grave.
9.
 1. God; 2. sin; 3. the immortal soul; 4. resurrection from the dead — all invisible things.
10. The first humans must have been taught of these invisible realities by the God who created them.

Chapter 3

1. Creation story.
2. That at the beginning nothing existed, there was darkness, then the Creators called for light to dawn; the water that covered the earth wove downward to let the earth appear; animals and then humans were created.
3. There was no air, no sky; only darkness, and water; light was created by the “Creative Force”.
4. The Lord of heaven and earth created light and all things.
5. In the beginning there was darkness and a great void every where; ShangTi spoke man into existence from the dust. These elements of the story of creation, and other Genesis accounts, are combined to form related words in Chinese.
6.
 1. The Creator.
 2. Absolute darkness.
 3. A great depth of water everywhere.
 4. By God’s word, light came forth.
 5. By God’s word, the water was gathered together so that the dry land of earth appeared.
 6. All living things were called into being.
 7. Humans were created.
7. Only the Creator.
8. No; no one could have “imagined” the scene as it was before the work of creation was begun; and such similarities could not have been repeated, through imagination, in all the major creation accounts.
9. The Creator, Himself.
10. Only as God revealed the account to humans, and they passed it down from generation to generation. With the scattering of humanity, and the passing of time, the original information became corrupted with myths and legends, but the threads of truth remain.

Chapter 4

1. God
2. Only one God
3.
 1. Belief in God, an all-powerful, all-knowing spirit.
 2. Sacrifices were made to God.
 3. humans buried their dead, in expectation of a resurrection from the grave.
4.
 1. God; 2. sin; 3. the immortal soul; 4. resurrection from the dead — all invisible things.
5.
 1. The Creator.
 2. Absolute darkness.
 3. A great depth of water everywhere.
 4. By God's word, light came forth.
 5. By God's word, the water was gathered together so that the dry land of earth appeared.
 6. All living things were called into being.
 7. Humans were created.
6.
 1. The warning was given about **a world-wide flood.**
 2. **A man** was instructed to **build a boat** in order to save himself, his family, representatives of each kind of **animal**, and **food.**
 3. The flood destroyed all life outside the ark.
 4. **Birds** were sent out to test the condition of the earth.
 5. The ark came to rest on **a mountain.**
 6. The survivors made an altar and worshiped God.
7. No; Because the Genesis account is free of the mythological additions common to other accounts.
8. Because of the details in each one that are so similar to the Biblical account, scenarios that would not have been imagined by diverse peoples, living at great distances from each other, and spanning centuries of time.

Chapter 5

1. Our thought process, our speech, our language, our emotions, our power to do things.
2. God is so much greater than humans, we would have no comprehension of Him, if He had not “made us in His image”, giving us the ability to think, to feel emotions, and to identify with His spirit.
3. Constantly reach out to seek God.
4. “awareness of self”; undying awareness; God.
5. does not go away; in search of God or in denial of God; God-question.
6. The fact that there is not another single question which confronts every human being is itself a powerful affirmation of the existence of God!
7. That there is no escape from the conclusion that there is a Creator God.

Chapter 6

1. Much that is good, but also much that is evil.
2. That there is a good and evil side to God, and that He created both.
3. **He simply gave them the power of choice; chose**
4. Cherubim, cherub; seraphim; archangel.
5. He wanted to exalt himself to the level of God.
6. *anointed cherub; on the holy mountain of God.*
7. Michael and his angels were fighting with the dragon (the serpent, the Devil, Satan) and his angels.
8. to the earth, among men.
9. He is going about as a roaring lion, seeking to destroy all who will obey him.
10. The angels that sinned have been delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.

11. Sodom and Gomorrah; they had ***“given themselves over to sexual immorality.”*** He totally destroyed them.
12. Because they had lived in His presence.
13. All.
14. Because; chosen to believe.
15. If we choose Him.

Chapter 7

1. Characteristics.
2. No.
3. About 3500 years ago; more than 1900 years ago.
4. one unified story.
5. They were inspired by the Holy Spirit.
6. Creation and fall; save; obedient man; God; eternal life.
7. Sitting above the circle of the earth.
8.
 1. Accidents produce only chaos.
 2. Everything is winding down and wearing out, not becoming newer and better.
 3. Non-life has never produced life.
9. Cyrus.
10. That the spokesman and the message were from God.
11. That they could not be disproved.
12. The Bible.
13. Its origin back to the laws given by God.
14. It is the authority that will be used to judge humanity in the final judgment, so it will not be destroyed in this world.
15. No. It is the divinely inspired word of God.

Chapter 8

1. Two. The Old Testament and the New Testament.
2. 39; 27.
3. The Patriarchal period and the Mosaical Law.
4. G
5. The Mosaical Law.
6. The Israelites; all who are born into His spiritual family through faith in Christ and baptism into His death.
7. Genesis.
8. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
9. The Acts of the Apostles.
10. 21
11.
 1. Search for all that is said on a particular subject.
 2. Use a concordance.
 3. Consider each passage in the light of the verses around it.
 4. Let the various passages be a commentary on each other.
 5. Be sure your conclusion holds no contradictions among the passages.
 6. Re-study all the passages if there is a contradiction.
 7. Study always with a love of the truth.
12.
 1. Who was the speaker?
 2. To whom was he speaking?
 3. When was it spoken?
 4. Under what law was he speaking?
13. Open mind.
14. Accept and obey them.
15. *the truth; the truth; free.*

Chapter 9

1. God, the Word, the Holy Spirit.
2. *The Word; with God; the Word was God; All things were made through Him.*
3. Man's choice to disobey God.
4. The Word, who was born into the world as the Son of God, Jesus Christ.
5. No; only those who choose to obey God.
6. No.
7. Spiritual family; the church of Christ.
8. Israel.
9. Greece and Rome.
10. Prophecies; God.

Chapter 10

1. Christ. The Word; with God; God.
2. Made or created.
3. The Son of God.
4. To redeem those that were under the law of sin and death.
5. Because of Caesar's law concerning the census, Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, according to the prophecy.
6. Bethlehem
7. No; they were the ones who plotted to kill Him.
8. Yes.
9. "the iniquity of us all."
10. Wrong; guile.
11. To remember him when He came into His kingdom.
12. *"I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. My*

strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death.”

13. *“You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross...He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, I am the Son of God”*
14. They were divided and lots were cast to see who would have them.
15. On the third day, He was resurrected from the grave.

Chapter 11

1. The search for a way to be forgiven for sins.
2. Before He began the creation.
3. God’s family, and those **outside His family**.
4. To His word, the Bible, particularly in the New Testament.
5.
 1. There is one family.
 2. It is God’s family.
 3. It is named after His Son, Jesus Christ.
6. Yes.
7. The church of God, the bride of Christ, the church of the First-born, the kingdom of the Son of His love, the churches of Christ, the body of Christ.
8. The church of Christ.
9.
 1. When was it begun?
 2. Where was it begun?
 3. Who began it?
 4. What name does it wear?
10.
 1. On the day of Pentecost, AD 33.
 2. In Jerusalem.
 3. Jesus Christ.
 4. The church of Christ.
11. _____
12. By being born spiritually into His family, which is the church.

13.
 1. Hear the message of salvation.
 2. Believe the message, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
 3. Repent, turn away from a sinful life.
 4. Confess faith in Christ.
 5. Be buried in the waters of baptism for the forgiveness of sins, and to experience the “new birth” into the Family of God.
14. The culminating act of baptism.
15. The “new birth”.

Chapter 12

1. Jesus Christ.
2. Believe and be baptized; repent and be baptized; those who believed were baptized.
3. The church of Christ.
4. Yes, because it is made up of people.
5. Yes.
6. They make images that they worship, as God. He says that they are lifeless and useless things.
7. To go back to the New Testament and to be just what it teaches us to be.
8. Sunday, the first day of the week; the Lord’s day.
9.
 1. Sing, without instrumental accompaniment.
 2. Pray, in the name of Christ.
 3. Study God’s word.
 4. Partake of the Lord’s Supper, in memorial of His death.
 5. Give a portion of our earnings, to spread the Gospel.
10. No, we are forbidden to do this.
11. _____
12. _____
13. Because it is our guide in all spiritual matters.
14. That he present his body as a living sacrifice for God’s use.

Chapter 13

1. It brings a sense of peace and happiness to his life.
2. By being loving, just, righteous, and at peace with all men.
3. becomes an offering of worship and service.
4. No.
5. To treat others **as one would be treated**, to bring **joy** to the lives of those around us, to do in all things **what we know to be right**, to be able to search our consciences at the end of the day and to **be at peace** with ourselves
6. Because Christianity demands purity and honesty.
7. All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.
8. The temple of the Holy Spirit.
9. Service, not beggary.
10. Work; business; properly.
11. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.
12. They sold their possessions and brought the money to the Apostles, to be shared with those in need.
13. Yes.
14. Blessing; blessing.
15. As we have opportunity; good; all; the household of faith.

Chapter 14

1. Only as we believe what is revealed in the Bible.
2. Body; dust; spirit; God.
3. Yes, if we have been obedient and faithful; Yes.
4. To prepare man for the important life: the life after death.
5. The promised resurrection from the dead.
6. The eyewitnesses who saw Him.
7. The judgment.

8.
 1. While I lived, did I obey God?
 2. Was I born into God's family, the church?
 3. Did I worship God regularly with the church?
 4. Did I live a pure life, day by day?
9. The words that Christ spoke; the Bible.
10. Yes.
11. Believers; baptized; forgiveness; added; church; faithful to God until death.
12. Yes.
13. Christ will return to take vengeance on them.
14. According to the way they have lived in this world.
15. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads"...

"The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there).

"But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life"

