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Truth vs. Error

Adult and Young People's Quarterly

INTRODUCTION

In John 8:31, 32, we read, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." According to this statement by the Master, it is possible to know the truth. To know the truth means that you have the ability to recognize error, at least on the point you know the truth on.

In this series of lessons it is not our purpose to cast any reflection on any honest heart. However, we cannot close our eyes to the fact that there is much false doctrine to be found in the religious world, and Jesus has warned us, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). Also, the Spirit has informed us, "In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1).

May each student "hunger and thirst after righteousness," and be willing to walk in the light as God allows it to shine on your pathway. Truth is precious! Seek after it as if you were hunting for hid treasures, for the truth of the Word of God is precious indeed. Your eternal destiny depends on what you do with truth.

May the Lord bless you as you study to show yourself approved unto God.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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PUBLISHERS OF CHURCH OF GOD LITERATURE

LESSON NUMBER ONE FOR OCTOBER 5

DOES MAN HAVE A SOUL?

Scriptures: John 4:24; Job 32:8; Micah 6:7; I Corinthians 6:20; John 3:6; II Corinthians 4:16; III John 2; Matthew 10:28; Genesis 35:18; Ecclesiastes 8:8; 12:7.

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.

Micah 6:7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

I Corinthians 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

II Corinthians 4:16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

III John 2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Genesis 35:18 And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

Ecclesiastes 8:8 There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it.

Ecclesiastes 12:7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

Memory Verse: 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 2:7.

Aim: To expose the false teaching of materialism and to show that man is a twofold being.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Micah 6
Tuesday John 1:1-13
Wednesday Philipians 1

Thursday III John
Friday II Corinthians 5
Saturday Ecclesiastes 12

INTRODUCTION

“Materialism, in a nutshell, denies that man possesses a spiritual, conscious entity, separate and distinct in substance from the body, and affirms that man is only a material being, composed of flesh and blood and breath and intellect. ...

“The doctrine of materialism is wrong, because it brings man on a level with the beasts that perish. This is contrary to all intelligent reason, and the uniform teaching of Scripture. The horse possesses all

that materialists claim for man. ... Man in his nature stands upon a much higher plane. HE IS A MORAL BEING, accountable to God.

“When God made man He made him only a little lower than the angels. ... What then, we may ask, is the nature of angels? Inspiration answers: ‘Who maketh his angels spirits.’ ‘Are they not all ministering spirits?’ Hebrews 1:7, 14. ...

“There is a spirit or soul in man ... which is not subject to physical death (Matthew 10:28); hence, immortal. Here then we have the nature of man’s being clearly defined. ... Angels are wholly spirit beings, wholly immortal; while man is both spirit and flesh, soul and body. ... This places him a little lower than the angels. ...

“The doctrine of materialism is wrong, because it denies spiritual birth in this life ... That part of man which is born again is not our physical fleshly being, but ‘IS SPIRIT.’ ... That which is born of the flesh is flesh; ... that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”—H. M. Riggle in *Man, His Present and Future*.

Materialists say the Greek word *geunao* simply means “begotten,” not really born. Matthew, in recording the birth of Jesus Christ, uses the same Greek word *geunao*. The same word is used in John 16:21 where Jesus speaks of a woman giving birth to a man child.

It is the soul that sins, the soul that dies (is separated from God, thus from life) and it is the soul that must be born again.

MEDITATIONS

GOD IS ETERNAL—John 4:24—God is a Spirit—We are placing this verse first in our lesson to show that the word *spirit* is not to be understood as a part of physical man, that is, not his fleshly body, for we know God is not physical.

MAN HAS A SPIRIT IN HIM—Job 32:8—There is a spirit in man—This verse of scripture clearly states there is a spirit in man; it does not say that man is the spirit or that the spirit is man, but that there is a spirit IN man. We are not to think this spirit is any more physical than God is physical.

THE SOUL SINS—Micah 6:7—The sin of my soul—We know that not all scriptures that use the word *soul* speak of the spirit in man, but it is the soul, or spirit, in man that sins; it is not his breath, and not his flesh (I Corinthians 6:18), but his soul, and it is the soul that dies, i.e., is separated from God. To deny man has a soul is to deny the present state of spiritual death, which is the condition of millions of souls right now.

BODY AND SOUL—I Corinthians 6:20—Ye are bought—Paul was here speaking of redeemed children of God and he told them they belonged to God, therefore they were to glorify God in body and in spirit. Man is a twofold being.

JESUS KNEW WHEREOF HE SPOKE—John 3:6—That which is born—Jesus knew what the “Greek” meant, and He knew the difference in flesh and spirit, thus He said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

SPIRIT DOES NOT GROW OLD—II Corinthians 4:16—Renewed—The inward man, as expressed here, is just another way Paul refers to “the spirit that is in man,” and it does not grow old.

GOD LOVES US—III John 2—I wish above all—God loves His children, and though these words were spoken by John they express God’s attitude toward His children. Please note their souls were prospering, which would not be the case if the soul was the physical man and he was not in good health.

FEAR NOT MAN—Matthew 10:28—Not able—Here is another clear statement showing that the soul and the body are not the same. Man can kill his fellowman, and many have through the ages, but Jesus says they cannot kill the soul. Sin brings death to the soul.

WHEN DEATH OCCURS—Genesis 35:18—As her soul was in departing—Jacob’s wife, Rachel, was giving birth to her second son; it brought physical death to her. Men today are not sure when physical death actually takes place, but the Bible informs us, “The body without the spirit is dead.” The spirit is not one’s breath. That is why a person can sometimes be revived even though he has stopped breathing, because the spirit has not yet left the body.

MAN IS POWERLESS—Ecclesiastes 8:8—No man hath power—We are not saying that man cannot do things to prolong physical life, but the time is coming when the spirit will depart and no man can stop it. If man was only physical it would be a simple thing to fix up a little pump that would enable him to breathe, but his breath is not his spirit!

MAN DUST AND SPIRIT—Ecclesiastes 12:7—Then shall—The physical was made from the dust of the earth; it shall return to the same. God gave the spirit and it shall return to Him. It was not made of the dust and it will not become dust. Let us so live that we can eternally be with Him.

CONCLUSION

“The Scripture agrees with reason in recognizing this twofoldness in man’s nature. This distinction is recognized in the account of man’s original creation. He is formed from the dust of the ground, but he became a living soul only when God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Biblical proof of man’s duality is found in those texts which indicate a distinction between spirit and body. ‘The Lord ... formeth the spirit of man in him’ (Zechariah 12:1). ‘For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?’

(I Corinthians 2:11). ... The spirit is not the body, but IN it. It is the knowing, volitional part of man. ... Such a definite duality in man's constitution is constantly recognized in the Bible."—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Do all scriptures that use the word *soul* speak of "the spirit in man"?
 2. Is the spirit in man going to exist eternally?
 3. When must a person be born again?
 4. What must be born again?
 5. What shall return to dust and what shall return to God?
 6. What is the spiritual state of your soul today?
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LESSON NUMBER TWO FOR OCTOBER 12 IS THE FIRST RESURRECTION PHYSICAL?

Scriptures: Romans 5:12; 6:23; Ezekiel 18:4; John 5:24, 25; Ephesians 2:1, 5, 6; Colossians 2:13; 3:1; I John 3:14; Romans 6:13.

Romans 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ezekiel 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

Ephesians 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath

quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

Colossians 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

I John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

Romans 6:13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Memory Verse: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.—John 5:24.

Aim: To show that the first resurrection is spiritual.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday **Genesis 2**
Tuesday **Ezekiel 18**
Wednesday **John 5**

Thursday **Ephesians 2**
Friday **Colossians 2**
Saturday **1 John 3**

INTRODUCTION

Millions of people today are led to believe that the Bible teaches two literal resurrections. The first literal resurrection, they say, will take place when Christ appears in the clouds and only the physical bodies of the righteous will be resurrected. Then about 1007 years later, more or less, the physical bodies of the wicked will be resurrected.

The Word of God does not teach any such doctrine!

One of the most familiar passages of scripture used to try to support such teachings is found in Revelation 20. However, a careful reading of the first few verses will show the error of such teachings—not support it!

“Here we have a resurrection to life that is called the ‘first resurrection’; but notice that in verse 5 this first resurrection takes place **AFTER** the one thousand years: ‘But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. *THIS is the first resurrection.*’ How utterly fatal this is to that millennial heresy which teaches that the first resurrection is the literal resurrection of the saints at Christ’s coming and that they *afterwards* reign with him a thousand years!”—F. G. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches*.

Let me add that these scriptures show that people had part in the “first resurrection” before this reign (which was not on earth and is already past) and that others had part in the “first resurrection” after the reign! So just what is the first resurrection?

MEDITATIONS

DEATH COMES FIRST—Romans 5:12—Death by sin—There can be no resurrection except there first be a death! In this verse of scripture Paul clearly states that death came as a result of sin. This is true physically and it is also true spiritually. When Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden they were deprived of the fruit of the tree of life. And without it they would, someday, die physically. But they “died” spiritually the very day they ate of the forbidden fruit.

SPIRITUAL DEATH A SEPARATION—Romans 6:23—Wages of sin—Imputed sin brings death to the soul. He that has the Son has

life; he that has not the Son has not life. You cannot have Christ as Lord and Savior while living a life of known sin. He that is guilty of imputed sin is dead.

ALL SOULS BELONG TO GOD—Ezekiel 18:4—All souls are mine—By right of creation all souls belong to God, but all souls are not His through redemption. Those who are living in sin have sold themselves under sin and are abiding in death.

THE GOSPEL—THE GOOD NEWS—John 5:24, 25—He that heareth my word—Yes, there has to be a death before there can be a resurrection, and the scriptures already given clearly show that sin produces death. Now we have the good news, from the Master Himself, that he who hears His Word and believes “hath everlasting life” and is “passed from death unto life.” A resurrection indeed! Now He was not speaking of a literal resurrection out in the future, for in verse 25 He says, “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead [spiritual dead] shall hear the voice of the Son of God” and they that hear—obey—“shall live.”

SALVATION—THE FIRST RESURRECTION—Ephesians 2:1, 5, 6—Quickened—The word *quickened*, as used here by Paul, means “to make alive.” Those who were quickened, resurrected, were those who were dead in trespasses and sins. The fifth verse clearly shows that quickened and being saved were one and the same thing, in the mind of Paul. Further, verse six shows that in being quickened one is “raised up” and made to sit together with Christ in heavenly places. Those who have had part in the “first resurrection”—been saved from sin—are reigning with Christ over sin now!

SAVED FROM ALL SIN—Colossians 2:13—Forgiven you—What a wonderful thought. Those who are dead in sin can be resurrected, and forgiven of all their trespasses. This the gospel offers to souls here and now. **Colossians 3:1—If ye then be risen**—Those who have had part in the first resurrection, been saved from sin, have a job to do. They are to seek the things of Christ, seek to do His will. Those who are alive in Christ will obey this verse.

A KNOW-SO SALVATION—I John 3:14—Passed from death unto life—Some would have us believe we cannot know we are saved from a life of sin. Does a person who goes to the table and eats, goes to his job, etc., know he is alive? O yes, Satan would tell us we are not saved and at times we will feel like we are not, but John says, “We know that we have passed from death unto life [been resurrected],” and the reason we know is because God has put that divine love in our resurrected souls for “the brethren.”

AFTER RESURRECTION—A LIFE TO LIVE—Romans 6:13—Yield yourselves unto God—While living in sin we were dead to God, but once we have been resurrected to life in Christ we are to live a life of righteousness. We do this by yielding our all over into the hands of the Lord and letting Him do with us as He pleases. This is the only way to retain the life we have obtained by being resurrected.

CONCLUSION

“Surely no one will deny that the spiritual work of God in our souls is a real and indeed very important resurrection. The loud blast from the trumpet of truth to fallen man in this dispensation is: ‘Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.’ Jesus said, ‘I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.’—John 11:25, 26. ... The first resurrection is spiritual. It is progressive, or a continuous operation throughout the gospel era. It was present, and yet to come. It was personal and conditional. ‘The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.’ Namely, they that hear with acceptance of the same. Again, they receiving this resurrection are justified from all their sins, and ‘shall not come into condemnation, but are passed from death unto life.’”

—H. M. Riggle, *The Kingdom of God*.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What brings spiritual death?
2. What is spiritual death?
3. What happens when a soul truly receives Christ as Savior?
4. What is the first resurrection?
5. Have you had part in the first resurrection?

LESSON NUMBER THREE FOR OCTOBER 19

PREDESTINATION—TRUTH OR ERROR?

Scriptures: John 3:16-18; Hebrews 2:9; I Timothy 2:4-6; Romans 8:29, 30; Ephesians 1:4, 5; I Peter 1:2.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

I Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to

be testified in due time.

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

30 Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

Ephesians 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

I Peter 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Memory Verse: In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.—John 7:37.

Aim: To show that salvation is offered unto all mankind.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday I Timothy 2
Tuesday Isaiah 55
Wednesday Romans 8

Thursday Hebrews 2
Friday Ephesians 1
Saturday I Peter 1

INTRODUCTION

In this lesson we wish to consider predestination as taught by Calvin and his followers.

“The Westminster Confession of Faith” says, “By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These men and angels, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so

certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished. ... As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ; are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by faith in his power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elected only. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own good will, whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, ... to ordain to dishonor and wrath for their sins, to the praise of his glorious justice.”

So what these people are saying is, Christ died for only certain ones, not all; that it is impossible for some not to be saved, even if they do not want to be, while others cannot be saved, regardless of how great their desire may be to be saved. Further, that it is impossible for any of these “predestinated” ones to be lost, regardless as to how they live or what they may do. Such teaching is error and contradicts the Word of God.

MEDITATIONS

ALL ARE INCLUDED—John 3:16-18—Whosoever believeth—Jesus declares that God loved the world, meaning all the people, so much that He gave His only begotten Son “that whosoever believeth in him should not perish”; further, that God did not send His Son to condemn the world—they were already condemned by sin—but to save them. He who believes, in his heart, is not condemned. How could anyone be condemned if God would not let him believe?

JESUS DIED FOR ALL—Hebrews 2:9—We see Jesus—The very purpose of Jesus Christ’s coming into the world, as far as man is concerned, was to die and thus pay the price for man’s redemption. This verse declares He tasted death for “every man.”

ALL MEN CAN BE SAVED—I Timothy 2:4-6—Our mediator—Paul declares that God’s will is that all men be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth. He further sets forth some precious truths by declaring there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. If God had already determined before He created the world who was going to be saved and who was going to be lost, and there was nothing anyone could do about it, why then a mediator? Jesus gave Himself a ransom “for all.”

GOD KNEW BEFOREHAND—Romans 8:29, 30—Whom he did foreknow—“In interpreting this 29th verse it is to be read forward, and not backward as the Calvinistic interpretation would require. ... The predestination mentioned in this text is because of the divine

foreknowledge. 'Foreknow' from (Proegno) means simply knowing beforehand. ... God foresaw that some would freely choose to love and serve Him. Therefore he predetermined and made provisions accordingly that they should be 'conformed to the image of his Son' through regeneration by the Spirit. ... No support whatever is given to Calvinistic election by this text. It is only when one's mind is previously filled with the Calvinistic view that he can suppose that theory is supported by this text."—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

A HOLY PEOPLE—Ephesians 1:4, 5—Holy and without blame—That God's knowledge is so great that He knew before the world began who would choose to serve Him we do not deny, but these verses do not prove that God determined who they should be. He did determine that those who choose to serve Him should be holy and live blameless before Him in love. "Again it can not be shown that this passage teaches personal election. The context shows clearly that it affirms, not a personal, but a collective election to the privileges of the gospel."—Byrum.

SAVED ARE THE ELECT—I Peter 1:2—Obedience—God knew man would fall and He also knew He would provide a way for man to be redeemed. In this verse election is said to be according to the divine foreknowledge, but that election consists in having the work of salvation effected in their hearts. None are ever said to be of the elect who are not saved. If the Calvinists were right, the unsaved would be among the elect as well as the redeemed.

CONCLUSION

Man first went into sin by choice. He did not have to sin. Those who become servants of God do so by choice. They are not forced to serve God. If man's life is predetermined by God, then he is not a free moral agent; he is only an instrument. If only an instrument, then he cannot be held responsible for his acts. If he commits murder, why should he be punished? The whole idea of predestination as taught by the Calvinists is contrary to the Word of God. God is no respecter of persons. Jesus tasted death for every man. Whosoever will may come. God sets before us two ways, life and death, and He tells us to choose life. (See Deuteronomy 30:19.) Therefore we are responsible for our choice. God has not predetermined that for us.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Is salvation offered to all?
2. What must one do to be saved?
3. Has God predetermined that any soul be lost?
4. Who are the elect?
5. Does God know who will be saved? If so, does that knowledge mean that He has predestinated them to be saved?

LESSON NUMBER FOUR FOR OCTOBER 26

CAN ONE LOSE SPIRITUAL LIFE?

Scriptures: I Corinthians 9:27; 10:12; Acts 1:25; John 15:2; Hebrews 4:11; 6:4-6; 10:26, 29; 12:15; II Peter 1:10; 2:21, 22.

I Corinthians 9:27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.

I Corinthians 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Acts 1:25 That he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

John 15:2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Hebrews 4:11 Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Hebrews 6:4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Hebrews 10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Hebrews 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.

II Peter 1:10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.

II Peter 2:21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

Memory Verse: Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

—Ezekiel 18:4.

Aim: To expose the error of the “eternal security” doctrine.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday **Revelation 2:1-7**
Tuesday **John 15**
Wednesday **I Corinthians 10:1-13**

Thursday **II Peter 1**
Friday **Hebrews 12**
Saturday **II Peter 2**

INTRODUCTION

To teach as some do that it is impossible for a person to lose spiritual life once he has been saved is to take away man's ability, and responsibility, of choice. Who can deny that Adam had spiritual life?

The Word of God informs us that he was a son of God (Luke 3:28). Who can deny that he sinned, thus losing spiritual life?

R. R. Byrum wrote: "One of the ablest advocates of this doctrine, A. H. Strong, states as follows: 'In view of the original purpose and continuous operation of God, all who are united to Christ by faith will infallibly continue in a state of grace and will finally attain to everlasting life.' This doctrine that all who are once converted will certainly be finally saved in heaven is a logically necessary part of the predestinarianism system. If God has decreed whatsoever comes to pass, including the election of a definite number to salvation and final blessedness; if Christ died only for these elect and in such a way that their salvation must inevitably follow, if the saving grace of God is irresistible by the elect—then it logically follows that when they have been saved they will certainly persevere in holiness. But with the proof that Christ died for all, that salvation is possible to all, that all have the power freely to accept it or reject it, it logically follows that perseverance in holiness, like entrance to it, is optional with the individual."—*Christian Theology*.

Such a doctrine not only takes away the responsibility of choice, but it would produce carelessness on the part of the believer. If he cannot lose his salvation, why watch? Why pray? Why resist the devil? What need would he have of the armor God has provided for each soldier of the cross?

We are not saying that Christians must sin. We are not saying they must backslide, that they must lose spiritual life, that they cannot help but return to a state of spiritual death, no! We are simply calling attention to the fact that such is possible and that it will happen if the Christian does not faithfully follow the teachings of the Word of God.

MEDITATIONS

PAUL SETS AN EXAMPLE—I Corinthians 9:27—I keep under—Paul is considered by many to be the greatest Christian soldier of the New Testament, yet we hear him saying, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." Why? Because he knew it was possible to return to the life of the flesh and he knew "they that live after the flesh shall die." Not wanting to be a castaway, he lived in obedience to the Spirit.

I Corinthians 10:12—A warning to all—Paul speaks in the earlier verses of this chapter of the children of Israel and how some of them fell. And he says these things were written for our admonition, therefore "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," even as the Israelites did.

THE WRONG CHOICE—Acts 1:25—Judas by transgression fell—Judas was one of the twelve; he was numbered with, and had obtained part of, the ministry along with Peter, John, and the others

(see verses 17 and 20), yet he fell. Some may try to say he was never saved, but such is not true. His name was in the book of life along with the others. You cannot fall from grace unless you first have it, and the Holy Spirit had Luke to write that “Judas by transgression fell.”

THE VOICE OF THE MASTER—John 15:2—Every branch—If a man be “in Christ” he is a new creature. To be a branch in Christ is to be connected to the source of life. Yet that is not enough! You must bear fruit. Please notice what Christ says He will do if you do not. Common sense tells us when a branch is broken off from the vine it dies, and when a Christian is separated from Christ—broken off—he dies.

PUT FORTH EFFORT—Hebrews 4:11—Let us labor—The writer of Hebrews refers to the literal Hebrews and their failure to enter into God’s “rest” because of their unbelief. Now some do admit that people in the Old Testament age backslide, but not in the New, they say. However, the point being made here is, just as they fell back there, so will it be today if proper effort is not put forth.

SOME FALL AWAY—Hebrews 6:4-6—If they fall away—These verses do not say that a person must fall away, but they clearly show that such is possible. Some people understand these verses to teach that a backslider cannot be reclaimed. However, these verses do not show that it is impossible for all backsliders to be reclaimed, only that it is impossible for some to be reclaimed. **Hebrews 10:26, 29—For if we sin wilfully—**Again, these verses of scripture are not teaching that no backslider can be reclaimed, but they are teaching it is possible for a person to be saved and then turn back on God. This is dealing especially with certain Hebrews who received Jesus as Lord and Savior and later returned to the law, counting the blood of the Son of God by which they had been cleansed, “an unholy thing” and by so doing did “despite unto the Spirit of grace.” **Hebrews 12:15—Looking diligently—**The grace of God will never fail, but man can “fail of the grace of God” if he doesn’t make “straight paths” for his feet (verse 13), and “follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (verse 14).

PETER SPEAKS—II Peter 1:10—Again, we are not saying a Christian must fail of the grace of God; we are pointing out the error of those who teach it is impossible for a person to lose spiritual life once he has received it. Peter is laying down instructions, which if followed, will enable a person to “never fall,” but if they are not followed a person will fall. **II Peter 2:21, 22—It had been better—**Peter speaks, in verse 21, of those who had escaped the pollution of the world, through Jesus Christ, and then are overcome. He says the latter end of such is worse than the beginning, and then he goes on to say it would have been better if they had not been saved at all. Some say such is not possible, but what did Peter say? “But it is happened,” and

he compares it to the dog that returns to his own vomit and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. It's not a pretty picture, and neither is returning to a life of sin after you have been "washed" in the blood of the Lamb, but some have done it. May God help each Christian reading this lesson NOT to be among that number.

CONCLUSION

No one need fall. God's grace is sufficient for every trusting soul and He has promised us He would never leave us nor forsake us, as long as we do His will. But there is a devil in the world, and he is called Satan (Adversary), because he opposes every child of God, and he works day and night in an effort to turn them away from the true and living God. Let us be warned by the Word of God and always be on our guard against his wicked devices.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Can a person have spiritual life outside of Christ?
 2. Can a person who has been saved return to a life of sin?
 3. Can a person return to a life of sin and still have life in Christ?
 4. Does the Bible teach we must choose whom we will serve?
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LESSON NUMBER FIVE FOR NOVEMBER 2

MUST CHRISTIANS SIN?

Scriptures: I John 3:4; Romans 5:13; 3:10; I John 1:8; John 8:34-36; I Corinthians 15:34; Romans 6:1, 2, 11, 12; I John 3:6, 8.

I John 3:4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

Romans 5:13 For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.

I John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.

36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

I Corinthians 15:34 Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your

shame.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

I John 3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Memory Verse: And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

—Matthew 1:21.

Aim: To expose the “sin-you-must” doctrine and to show that Christians live free from imputed sin.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday **Ezekiel 33**
Tuesday **Titus 2**
Wednesday **Romans 4**

Thursday **Romans 6**
Friday **I John 2**
Saturday **John 8**

INTRODUCTION

“That Christians should and do live lives free from sin is a clear truth of the Scriptures. This truth is declared by the different New Testament writers, and is represented by them in a variety of forms. They disallow sinning in any degree. If one is a Christian he commits no sin; if he sins he is not a Christian. The Bible not only exhorts men to holiness of life, but positively condemns those who do commit sin.

“The Bible command is to sin not. When Jesus had healed the impotent man at the Pool of Bethesda he said, ‘Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee’ (John 5:14). To the woman taken in adultery he said, ‘Go, and sin no more’ (John 8:11). If it had been impossible for them to refrain from sinning, such commands would have been unreasonable. Especially cruel and unjust would have been the threat of a worse affliction than the thirty-eight years of impotency if it were impossible for the impotent man to refrain from sinning.

“Not only do the Scriptures teach that the regenerated do not sin, but they definitely declare that all who sin are not children of God. ‘He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him’ (I John 2:4).”

—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

Please keep in mind as you study this lesson that we are speaking of Christians not committing “imputed” sin. Where there is no law, there is no sin. It is our understanding, based on the Word of God, that God does not impute sin when there is no knowledge of transgression.

MEDITATIONS

WHAT IS SIN?—I John 3:4—Transgression—John states in clear, simple terms that sin is the transgression of the law. He is not speaking of the Old Testament law, for it described a “sin of ignorance,” but of the law of the New Covenant. Imputed sin involves the will, that is, you knowingly do wrong or you fail to do what you know you should. Either way it involves the will.

NEED OF KNOWLEDGE—Romans 5:13—When there is no law—God has given us His Word to live by; He knows what is best for us. Therefore to be happy and to have His blessings, do not disobey

His Word. However, we do not know all the truth there is to know. When we live to all the truth we know, God will not impute sin to us. **Romans 3:10—As it is written—**We have included this verse in this lesson as many “sin-you-must” believers refer to it to try to prove all must sin, but if you will turn back to Psalm 14, and read, you will find who Paul was speaking of when he said, “It is written.” Then if you will read on in Romans three, verses 11 through 18, you will see he was NOT speaking of Christians.

WHAT ABOUT THIS VERSE?—I John 1:8—If we say—This verse is often misquoted and used as “proof” that we cannot live without sin, but this verse teaches no such doctrine. If a person grows up and insists he has no sin, that he has never sinned, he deceives himself, for the Bible declares that all have sinned. This verse DOES NOT teach that Christians must sin.

ABIDING IN THE HOUSE—John 8:34-36—The servant abideth not—This is a very straightforward statement by Jesus and is one hundred percent true. A person who commits sin is a servant of sin and not a servant of God. The house of God is the Church of God (I Timothy 3:15). If we desire to abide in the house then we must live free from sin, for the servant of sin abideth not in the house.

PAUL SPEAKS—I Corinthians 15:34—Sin not—Not only did Jesus teach that His followers should live free from sin, but so did His apostles, and here Paul says, “Awake to righteousness and sin not!” Righteousness is simply doing what is right—and sin is never right.

THE ETERNAL ONE SPEAKS—Romans 6:1, 2—God forbid—Paul asks two questions in the first verse and then He gives God’s answer: “Shall we continue in sin?” God forbid! Another question is asked—“How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” This is the reason so many church members continue to sin—because they have not died to sin! And since they have not died to sin, they have not been made alive to Christ. **Verses 11, 12—Alive unto God—**A person must die to sin to be made alive to God, and to be alive to God means you have fellowship with Him, you have His life-giving Word in your heart. Notice verse 12. So many say the old flesh just has to sin—the flesh does not sin; it is the soul that sins. But even so, Paul said, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body”; get it out of your soul and you will get it out of your body.

THE SECRET OF HOLY LIVING—I John 3:6, 8—Whosoever abideth in him—It is not enough to receive Jesus as Savior; we must let Him be Lord of our life and abide in Him. John says if we will, we will not sin. Surely, John should know, for he was taught directly by the Master. John also says the person who commits sin is of the devil. A strong statement indeed, but spoken by an apostle who was taught by Jesus and inspired by the Holy Spirit to record it for us. Jesus came

to destroy the works of the devil, and into every heart and life He is permitted to enter and to rule, He will do just that. Thank the Lord.

CONCLUSION

“A lack of clear definition of terms has often led to controversy and misunderstanding in doctrinal statements. Evidently this is the reason for much of the difference of views regarding the possibility of a sinless life. Some truly devout persons because of past teachings contend that all men sin, and yet there is reason to believe that they themselves keep their own consciences pure. Doubtless their attitude in this is due to a failure on their part clearly to distinguish between sin in the absolute sense and sin in the imputed sense.

“By sin in the absolute sense we mean the violation of God’s law. For ‘sin is the transgression of the law.’ It is in this sense a violation of God’s written commandments or of some moral principle, and the right or wrong of an action depends upon its relations to the will of God rather than upon the intention of him who performs it. God’s law disallows the making of false statements, yet through lack of knowledge of the facts any one but Omniscience may make a statement that may afterward be found to be false. ... Again, because of our human limitations we may fail to feed the starving, to encourage the distressed, to give money for the spreading of the gospel, or to point a lost soul to Christ. If we only knew, we would do better in many of these things. ... If sin is to be defined to mean only the violation of the absolute standard of moral right, then without doubt all sin every day. Because of thus regarding these mistakes and failings resulting from human limitations as sin, many true Christians have assumed that they sin more or less every day, while their hearts and motives are pure.

“But according to the New Testament this is not the full definition of sin. The Old Testament describes a sin of ignorance, but the New Testament teaches that when there is no law, there is no transgression (Romans 4:15). In other words, only as one knows he is doing sin against God, does God impute it to him as sin. ... One commits sin only as he acts intelligently and intentionally.”

—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is sin?
2. When is sin imputed?
3. What does Christ set one free from?
4. What does it mean to “abide in Him”?
5. Can one commit an imputed sin and remain in the house of God?

LESSON NUMBER SIX FOR NOVEMBER 9

IS THERE AN ETERNAL HELL?

Scriptures: Luke 12:4, 5; John 5:28, 29; Matthew 23:33; Mark 3:29; 9:43, 44; Psalm 9:17; Matthew 25:41, 46; Revelation 20:10; 21:8.

Luke 12:4 And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that hath no more that they can do.

5 But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

John 5:28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

Matthew 23:33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Mark 3:29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.

Mark 9:43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be

quenched:

44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

Psalm 9:17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

Matthew 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Memory Verse: And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.—Matthew 25:46.

Aim: To show that there is a hell and that it is eternal.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Mark 9:41-50
Tuesday Jude
Wednesday Daniel 12

Thursday Matthew 25:31-46
Friday Psalm 9
Saturday Revelation 20

INTRODUCTION

“There is now in the world a large amount of perverse teaching and sentimental talk against the Bible doctrine of the punishment of the wicked. Men have become so hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, that they imagine that God is altogether such a creature as they are—indifferent as to whether men do good or evil. When men get so far from the truth that sin does not look very bad, and righteousness does not look very good, it is time that they should take warning. Hear

the word of the Lord: 'And it shall come to pass at that time that I will ... punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil' (Zephaniah 1:12). This is the false doctrine spread broadcast today—that if the Lord does not do good to sinners, he will at least not do them evil; therefore men presume on his mercy and go forward in their sins, heaping up 'wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds' (Romans 2:5, 6).

"The argument that God is too good to punish men does not alter the matter. God is good, but his goodness is harmonious with his justice; and justice demands the execution of law against wrong-doers."—F. G. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches*.

"As certain as the Bible teaches a place and state of eternal rewards called 'heaven,' the abode of the righteous, it also teaches a place and state of punishment after death and beyond the judgment called 'hell,' the abode of the wicked."—H. M. Riddle, *Beyond the Tomb*.

In our King James Version the word *hell* is translated from the Hebrew *sheol*, the Greek words *hades*, *gehenna* and once from *tartaroo* or *tartarus*. These words do not all mean the same (though the Hebrew *sheol* and the Greek *hades* are generally held to be corresponding terms); the Greek word *gehenna* is understood to mean "The place of retribution for evil deeds" and it is this that we are studying in this lesson.

MEDITATIONS

HELL NOT THE GRAVE—Luke 12:4, 5—I say unto you—These are the words of Jesus and He knew whereof He spoke. Men can, and do, put the body in the grave, but Jesus knew the grave was not hell and therefore He exhorts us not to fear man who can only kill the body and do no more, but to fear God who can cast into hell.

AFTER THE RESURRECTION—John 5:28, 29—Marvel not—Again, we have the words of the Master. Earlier in this chapter He spoke of the "first resurrection," salvation from sin; now He is saying that all that are in the graves shall come forth, that is, the bodies of the righteous and the unrighteous, they that have done good to the resurrection of life and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. One is just as sure as the other!

A QUESTION—Matthew 23:33—How can ye escape—No one can escape death and some form of a grave (except those living when Christ comes the second time), so Jesus is not speaking of the grave. The word *hell* here is from the Greek *gehenna* and means "the place of eternal punishment beyond the resurrection and judgment." The only way to keep from going there is to be saved and live for God.

HELL IS ETERNAL—Mark 3:29—Eternal damnation—One who blasphemes the Holy Spirit can never be forgiven, therefore will be lost eternally. And in this verse we understand eternal to mean forever, having no end. **Mark 9:43, 44—The fire that shall never be quenched—**Jesus is not teaching us to cut off a hand or to pluck out an eye so we can escape the grave! He is teaching us to cut off—to stop—doing those things which are wrong, to get rid of that which would lead us astray, so that we can live right and escape the lake of fire. I might add He is not speaking of literal fire, but eternal fire as Jude speaks of in his little book. Hell is eternal so is filled with “eternal fire”—whatever that is!

A CERTAIN CLASS—Psalm 9:17—The wicked—The bodies of the righteous are laid in the grave just as the bodies of the wicked. Here the Psalmist is speaking of the wicked and all the nations that forget God being “cast into hell”; this is not the grave!

FOREVER AND EVER—Matthew 25:41, 46—Depart from me—Back in verse 31 we are told what will happen when the “Son of Man” comes. Here in verse 41 we are told that the sinners, who will be on the left-hand side at the judgment, will hear the awful words “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,” and in verse 46 we are told they shall go away into everlasting punishment. Some would have us believe they shall be burned up, but everlasting is just as long as eternal, and if hell is to come to an end, then so will eternal life in heaven. The Bible does not teach an end to eternal hell or to eternal life.

LET US UNDERSTAND—Revelation 20:10—Shall be tormented—Let us understand that this verse is speaking of the dragon, which symbolizes paganism, and the beast symbolizes Romanism, and the false prophet symbolizes Protestantism. Let us further understand that this verse is speaking of the followers of these false systems of religion and not buildings or temples. **Revelation 21:8—Shall have their part—**Here the Word of God lists a number of classes of people. There are others, of course, but notice the Word declares they shall have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone; “which is the second death,” or eternal separation from God.

CONCLUSION

We live in a temporal world and our minds are limited in understanding, therefore we do find some expressions used in regard to hell that must be understood in a symbolical way, but this in no way detracts from its awfulness or its eternal duration.

Byrum, commenting on this, said: “There appears to be no more ground for assuming the fire of future punishment is literal fire than for supposing the worm which does not die is a literal worm. The pur-

pose of the Scripture expressions is to represent the awfulness of future punishment.

“Future punishment is to be regarded in three aspects: (1) the loss of infinite good; (2) the suffering naturally resulting from sin; and (3) positive penal infliction. The loss of good includes the loss of all good things of the present life, exclusion from the presence of God and the possibility of His spiritual blessings now possible, the withdrawal of the Spirit of God, through whose agency alone salvation is possible, consequent utter reprobation and hopelessness of all good, and especially the loss of the eternal blessedness of heaven. If future punishment consisted only in this loss it would be infinite. But it also includes positive suffering. The finally lost will be the slave of his unrestrained sinful possessions, will be tormented by the malignity and selfishness of evil associates totally abandoned to wickedness, will suffer the remorse of a guilty conscience, and will be tormented by endless despair.”—*Christian Theology*.

Dear One, Christ died so that you could be saved and escape that awful fate. If you have not already done so, let us exhort you to receive Him now.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. The Scriptures teach an eternal hell! Do you believe them?
2. If a soul is eternally lost, who is to blame?
3. What kind of punishment do you think souls will suffer in hell?
4. Have you received Christ as your Lord and Savior?

LESSON NUMBER SEVEN FOR NOVEMBER 16

IS THERE A TRINITY IN THE GODHEAD?

Scriptures: Matthew 5:9; I Peter 3:21, 22; John 16:13, 14; Romans 16:26; Revelation 22:13; Hebrews 9:14; Matthew 3:16, 17; 28:19; Ephesians 4:4-6; II Corinthians 13:14.

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

I Peter 3:21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

John 16:13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

Romans 16:26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.

Revelation 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Hebrews 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Matthew 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Ephesians 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

II Corinthians 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

Memory Verse: But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.—Acts 7:55.

Aim: To expose the Jesus-only doctrine as error and to set forth the truth on the divine Trinity.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Matthew 3
Tuesday I Corinthians 12
Wednesday John 16

Thursday Hebrews 9
Friday Revelation 22
Saturday II Corinthians 13

INTRODUCTION

“In no place in the Scriptures does the word ‘trinity’ occur. This has sometimes been regarded as an evidence that Trinitarian proofs are not to be found there. But it might as properly be reasoned that

because the words ‘omniscience’ or ‘omnipresence’ do not occur there that therefore the Scriptures do not teach that God knows all things and is everywhere present; or that because ‘Decalog’ and ‘Pentateuch’ are not terms of the Bible therefore the Ten Commandments and five books of Moses are not to be found there. The absence of the term in the Bible is no evidence that the truth for which it stands is not found there under other terminology. Rather it is because the truth of the Trinity is taught there that theology has made use of this term so well adapted to the brief expression of that truth.

“Also it is true that the Bible does not formulate or directly state the doctrine. Therefore it is not expected that in giving Bible proof of the doctrine any single passage may be given that adequately affirms Trinitarianism. The most certain proof is to be found in the vast multitude of texts that imply it by affirming the constituent elements of the doctrine—that God is one, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct persons, and that each of them is divine. When these elements are shown to be contained in the Bible and are set in proper relation the doctrine of the Trinity is the result.”—R. R. Byrum.

MEDITATIONS

GOD IS A PERSON—Matthew 5:9—Children of God—This is only one of many verses that could be given to show that God, the Father, is a person—not a fleshly human being, but a spiritual Being.

CHRIST IS A PERSON—I Peter 3:21, 22—Who is gone into heaven—Jesus Christ is called *Emmanuel*, which means “God with us” (Matthew 1:23). God, the Word, did indeed come and dwell among men. He gave His life to redeem us from sin. He rose again and after certain days He returned to the Father. He was not, and is not, the Father, but He returned to the Father, and according to verse 22, “is on the right hand of God.” So the living Word, the one we know as Jesus Christ, is a Person separate and apart from the Father.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A PERSON—John 16:13, 14—When he, the Spirit of truth—Jesus was speaking! He was not speaking of Himself or the Father. He was speaking of ANOTHER Comforter whom the Father would send them, even the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of truth was to “guide” them; He was not to speak of Himself, but He was to “speak” what He “heard.” Further, He was to “glorify” Christ and He was to “receive” things from Christ and “show” them to the disciples. Who but a Person could do such things? So we see, God the Father is a Person; Jesus Christ the Word is a Person; and God the Spirit is a Person.

GOD IS ETERNAL—Romans 16:26—Everlasting God—God had no beginning; He shall have no ending. Our minds may not be able to grasp such, but thus declares the Word and we know it is true.

CHRIST THE WORD IS ETERNAL—Revelation 22:13—Alpha and Omega—Alpha was the first letter, and Omega was the last letter of the Greek alphabet, so what Christ was saying was, “I am from everlasting to everlasting.”

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS ETERNAL—Hebrews 9:14—Eternal Spirit—In this verse we have Christ the Word, the Spirit, and God the Father, but we ask you to note the fact that the writer of Hebrews declares the Spirit to be “eternal.” So God the Father is eternal; Christ the Word is eternal; and the Holy Spirit is eternal.

WHEN JESUS WAS BAPTIZED—Matthew 3:16, 17—Straight-way—Matthew tells us after Jesus was baptized the Holy Spirit descended upon Him and then a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” The Bible does not use the word *trinity*, but *trinity* means “three” and surely this gives us a picture of the divine Three.

THREE DIVINE BEINGS—Matthew 28:19—In the name of—“In his well-known injunction of Jesus the implication is clear, (1) that the Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct, because each one is named in the one passage; (2) that each is a person, because Christian baptism is to be in the name of each, which could be true only of persons; (3) that each is divine, because disciples can properly be baptized only in the name of the Divine Being.”—Byrum.

PAUL SPEAKS—Ephesians 4:4-6—There is—There is one Spirit, one Lord, one God; thus declares the apostle Paul. Again, the word *trinity* is not found in the Bible, but three is a trinity. Peter, James, and John are not called trinity, but who will deny that they were three of Jesus’ disciples?

DIVINE BENEDICTION—II Corinthians 13:14—Be with you all—How foolish would be the words of Paul if Jesus were the only one in the Godhead! In closing his second letter to the church at Corinth, Paul invokes the name of the divine Trinity as he bids them heaven’s blessings, i.e., the Lord Jesus Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION

“The principal objection urged against the doctrine of the Trinity is that it is an incomprehensible mystery. ... That the doctrine contains much mystery we readily admit, and if we insisted that men comprehend the idea exhaustively, we should indeed be unreasonable in our requirements. But all that is required for acceptance of the doctrine is belief of the truth of the Trinity as it is stated in the Bible.”—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Is the word *trinity* found in the Bible?
 2. What does the word *trinity* mean?
 3. Does the Bible speak of the divine Trinity as being eternal?
 4. How is a new convert to be baptized?
 5. Can a person be saved if he denies that the Holy Spirit exists?
 6. If Jesus were not divine, could He be our Savior?
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LESSON NUMBER EIGHT FOR NOVEMBER 23

MUST CHRISTIANS SPEAK IN TONGUES?

Scriptures: Acts 2:4, 7, 8; 10:44, 45; 11:17; 8:14, 17; I Corinthians 12:1, 8-10, 29, 30; 14:22.

Acts 2:4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Acts 10:44 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45 And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 11:17 Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?

Acts 8:14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John.

17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

I Corinthians 12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.

8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;

9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;

10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues.

29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles?

30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

I Corinthians 14:22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

Memory Verse: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.—Galatians 5:22, 23.

Aim: To show that a Christian DOES NOT have to speak in another language to receive the Holy Spirit.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Acts 2
Tuesday Acts 8
Wednesday Acts 9

Thursday Acts 10
Friday I Corinthians 12
Saturday I Corinthians 13

INTRODUCTION

“Two errors in doctrinal teaching have been characteristic of nearly all factions of the ‘modern tongues movement.’ First, they affirm that all who receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit will speak in tongues as the evidence. Second, it is held that the Scriptures make a difference between the gift of tongues and speaking in tongues, or that one may speak in tongues without possessing the gift. These two theories are fundamental to the ‘modern tongues movement’ and give it its character. If one believes these two doctrines and is conscientious, he will feel obligated to seek until he speaks in tongues, however long a time that may be. The belief of them tends to exalt speaking in tongues above everything else. We do not hesitate to say there is not a single text of scripture which teaches that speaking in tongues always follows the baptism by the Holy Spirit. Not one of the apostles or inspired writers ever taught it, and not one of the world’s great soul-winners ever taught it. ... The fact that speaking in tongues may result from demon possession or may be properly attributed to human cause is proof that it cannot be a certain evidence of the baptism by the Spirit. It may equally as well be evidence of mere religious frenzy or of one’s having a devil as of his having the Holy Spirit.

“It has been affirmed by one that ‘the manifestation of the Spirit’ (I Corinthians 12:7) is to be identified with the speaking of tongues at Pentecost, but not with the exercise of the gift of tongues. They say the ‘manifestation of the Spirit’ is for all who receive the Spirit, but that the gift of tongues is not given to all. But such a distinction has no support in the Scriptures and clearly bears the marks of having been invented to support the theory that speaking with tongues is the evidence of the baptism with the Spirit.”—R. R. Byrum.

MEDITATIONS

THE GIFT OF LANGUAGES—Acts 2:4, 7, 8—Began to speak—

There were around 120 disciples in the upper room. All were filled with the Holy Spirit. The modern tongues movements would have us believe that all 120 spoke in tongues, but the scriptures do not say that. Verse four tells us that they began to speak with other tongues “as the Spirit gave them utterance,” and only those that the Spirit gave the gift to spoke. Some have gone so far as to say all 120 spoke at one time, which would be great confusion, and the Bible tells us God is NOT the author of confusion, so we know that is not true. These that did speak in other languages spoke languages that were understood, according to verse eight. So we have here certain disciples being given the gift of languages, which is one of the gifts of the Spirit.

GENTILES GIVEN THE SPIRIT—Acts 10:44, 45—While Peter yet spake—Cornelius was a God-fearing man, but he was a Gentile.

Even so he was in line for the receiving of the Holy Spirit, and when Peter, along with certain other Jews, arrived at his home he was very desirous of learning all he could. While Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on Cornelius and others. The Jews who traveled with Peter did not believe the Gentiles could receive the Holy Spirit, therefore God gave the gift of languages at this time. They spoke an actual language, for these Jews heard them “magnify God.” **Acts 11:17—The like gift**—Peter explains to the church in Jerusalem that God had given the Gentiles the Holy Spirit just as He had given to them at the beginning. Along with the Holy Spirit God had also given the gift of languages. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the Spirit Himself. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are the various gifts listed elsewhere in the Scriptures.

PHILIP GOES TO SAMARIA—Acts 8:14, 17—When the apostles—Philip went to Samaria and preached Jesus Christ and things concerning the kingdom of God. Souls were saved, bodies healed, devils cast out and believers were baptized. The apostles at Jerusalem heard of this and sent Peter and John to the city. When they arrived they laid hands on those that had been saved and baptized for the receiving of the Holy Spirit. (For as yet He was fallen upon none of them.) Not one word is said about these speaking in another tongue.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS—I Corinthians 12:1, 8-10—I would not have you ignorant—The Holy Spirit is for every true believer—“this is the will of God, even your sanctification”—but the gifts of the Spirit are given as God sees fit. In these verses a number of gifts are listed. The gift of languages is one, so we do not deny there is a Bible gift of languages, but it is only one of the gifts of the Spirit and this gift is NOT an evidence to the believer that he has received the Spirit. **Verses 29, 30—Are all apostles?**—Paul asks “Are all apostles?” The answer is no! Then we come to the question, “Do all speak with tongues?” The answer is no. Here is where some try to separate the “gift” from the talking in tongues as an “evidence” of Holy Spirit baptism. They know all do not have the gift of languages, so they invent the idea of two different kinds of speaking in tongues. The Bible does not teach any such thing! Three places in the Bible refer to some speaking in other languages when they received the Holy Spirit. In all three places the “gift” of languages was given. The Holy Spirit gave them the ability to speak a language they did not know.

DO YOU BELIEVE THE BIBLE?—I Corinthians 14:22—Not to them that believe—How many people today make the claim that you must speak in tongues as an initial evidence of Holy Ghost baptism? Yet the Bible teaches the very opposite! This verse clearly states that tongues IS NOT an evidence to the believer. The gift of languages is no more an evidence to a believer that he has received the Holy Spirit than that he has received any other gift of the Spirit.

CONCLUSION

“People have preached and written much about the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. But to ask for our evidence that we have the Holy Ghost is like asking for an evidence of the existence of the sun overhead. The sun does not need a witness to testify for it: IT STANDS FOR ITSELF; and the work it performs— ... Likewise the Holy Ghost STANDS FOR HIMSELF AS THE WITNESS. ‘The Spirit ITSELF beareth witness with our spirit’ (Romans 8:16; Hebrews 10:14, 15); while the works which he performs—purifying the heart, teaching, comforting, guiding, unifying—show forth his power and glory.”—F. G. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches*.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Does the Bible teach that a Christian must speak in tongues to receive the Holy Spirit?
 2. Is there a difference in the gift of languages and the, supposed, initial speaking in tongues as an evidence of Holy Spirit baptism?
 3. Did all 120 speak in other languages on the day of Pentecost?
 4. What is the real evidence that a person has been filled with the Spirit?
 5. Can demons give people power to speak in “tongues”?
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LESSON NUMBER NINE FOR NOVEMBER 30

WHAT ABOUT THE ANTICHRIST?

Scriptures: Daniel 9:24, 27; II Thessalonians 2:3, 4; Revelation 13:1, 5; II John 7; I John 4:1-3; 2:18, 22.

Daniel 9:24 Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy.

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

II Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not

come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.

Revelation 13:1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.

5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.

II John 7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not

that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

I John 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether or not they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist,

whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

I John 2:18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

Memory Verse: For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.—II John 7.

Aim: To show that antichrist is a spirit that deceives men into denying Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Daniel 9	Thursday	I John 4
Tuesday	II Thessalonians 2	Friday	I John 2
Wednesday	Revelation 13	Saturday	II John

INTRODUCTION

In certain religious circles you hear much about great and terrible things that are going to occur in the very near future.

Some would like us to believe that very soon now there will appear a great religious-political leader that is going to become the world's ruler.

At first this great ruler will be friendly to the Jewish people, who will have, by that time, rebuilt their temple in Jerusalem and will be offering animal sacrifices.

Note this statement from the book *Israel and the Nations in Prophecy*, by Richard DeHaan, "This political genius will pose as a friend of the Jews for three and one-half years. He will apparently settle the Arab-Israeli controversy by granting Israel undisputed possession of Palestine, and the Jews in the land will be guaranteed protection from all foes. Thus the people of Israel will live in their land with a feeling of complete security.

"These conditions will suddenly change, however, when the leader turns against the Jews, abolishes their worship, and inaugurates a period of intense persecution."

Who is this "genius"? Why, it's "the antichrist"! So these teachers would have us believe! He is the one that shall be responsible for the "great tribulation" and the forcing of people to receive the mark of the beast.

The great tribulation was the suffering of the Jewish people at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem A.D. 70, and is past. The “mark of the beast” is the receiving of false teachings put out by sectarian religions who mark their subjects with their false doctrine and will not let you labor among them unless you receive their mark.

In this lesson we would like to study and see just what the Bible really says about antichrist.

MEDITATIONS

FOUR HUNDRED NINETY YEARS—Daniel 9:24, 27—Seventy weeks—In this prophecy Daniel speaks of a period of 490 years. This period started at the time the command was given to restore and build Jerusalem (verse 25). We understand this date was 457 B.C. Most literal-kingdom teachers admit the first “69 weeks” followed one right after the other, but they would have us believe that the last week, the seventieth, is yet out in the future. In other words, there is a great “gap” of nearly 2,000 years between the 69th and 70th week—which the Bible does not teach. Further, it is our understanding that the happening in the middle of the 70th week is not some great “antichrist” breaking his agreement with the Jews, but is the cutting off of the Lord Jesus—His being crucified—and it was through His death that the old covenant was brought to an end. The animal sacrifices were no longer required, and through His shed blood it was made possible for us to be saved from sin, to be reconciled to God and through Him everlasting righteousness was brought in. To “anoint the most Holy” is not speaking of anointing something in a restored temple in Jerusalem, but the anointing of Jesus by the Holy Ghost which took place at the time of His baptism (see Luke 3:21, 22; 4:18).

So these verses speak of great events that have already taken place in the life of Jesus Christ and the lives of the Jews of that day. They have no reference to some future antichrist, and a future literal nation of Jews.

WHO IS THIS MAN?—II Thessalonians 2:3, 4—That man—Paul clearly understood that there would be a falling away before the second coming of Christ. In this chapter he goes into some detail in regard to this, and a careful reading of these verses and a study of Bible history will show that Paul was speaking of the rise of Roman Catholicism and the man who heads that large religious system. The man of sin is not some “man-devil,” fathered by Satan, as some would have us believe, but a human being who usurps the place of Christ, claiming to be the head of “the church,” claiming to be the “Holy Father,” claiming to have power to forgive sins, thus making himself God. “The pope is, as it were, God on earth, the only prince of the faithful of Christ, the greatest king of all kings.”—*Ferrari’s Ecclesiastical Dictionary*, article 2.

A FALSE CHURCH—Revelation 13:1, 5—I stood—John saw, in a vision, the rise of Roman Catholicism, the power that took over from pagan Rome (same seat, power and authority mentioned in verse 2), and he describes here the work that this false system of religion would do. The 42 months is to be understood as representing 1260 days (years) and not 3½ years. This period of time was from A.D. 270 to A.D. 1530 and is thus past. The “beast” is not the “great antichrist,” as literal-kingdom teachers claim. Their claim is that the antichrist is to rule for seven years, not three and one-half.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?—II John 7—Many deceivers—John speaks in the present tense—of his day, nearly 1900 years ago—and he says those who “confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh” are deceivers and antichrists. If it were true in his day, it is in ours.

ANTICHRIST A SPIRIT—I John 4:1-3—Every spirit—We see from these verses of scripture that antichrist is a spirit, not some great political-religious leader. *Anti* means “against,” so the spirit of the devil is against Christ and he moves on people, deceives them, gets them to deny Christ, and let me say you can deny Him by your living, while professing to believe in Him with your mouth—so everyone who comes under the control of this antichrist spirit and thus denies Christ can properly be called an antichrist.

JOHN LIVED IN THE LAST TIME—I John 2:18, 22—Even now—John lived in the last age of time, and he knew there were many who opposed Christ. In fact that is one way he knew it was the last time, so he said “even now are there many antichrists”! How could any people be God’s chosen people and antichrists at the same time? **Verse 22—Who is a liar**—John speaks plainly and says they are antichrists. If you deny the Son, you deny the Father. If you have the Son, you have the Father.

CONCLUSION

Our study of this important subject has been brief. But I trust each student will be able to see that the Bible does not teach that there shall arise one man who will be a world dictator, as is falsely taught, but will be able to see that there are millions of antichrists, because they are under the influence and power of the spirit of antichrist.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Who is an antichrist?
2. Were there antichrists in John’s day? Are there in our day?
3. Did Christ make it possible for us to be delivered from sin?
4. Will God ever again require, or honor, animal sacrifices?
5. Who are God’s chosen people today?
6. Are you for or against Christ?

LESSON NUMBER TEN FOR DECEMBER 7

WILL THERE BE A SEVEN-YEAR RAPTURE?

Scriptures: Matthew 24:40-43; Revelation 12:14; I Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Matthew 24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

Revelation 12:14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

I Thessalonians 4:13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, con-

Memory Verse: Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.—Revelation 1:7.

Aim: To show there will be no seven-year rapture of the saints.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Matthew 24:1-28
Tuesday Matthew 24:29-51
Wednesday Revelation 12

Thursday I Thessalonians 4
Friday John 6:39-54
Saturday John 11:1-27

INTRODUCTION

What are religious people talking about when they speak of “the rapture”? When is this rapture supposed to take place? What is the purpose or the need for a rapture? Who is to have part in the rapture?

Religious people, in speaking of the rapture, refer to a time when they think the church will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord. They teach that this rapture is to take place just before the rule of the great antichrist starts. The purpose, so they would have us believe, is so that the saints will not have to pass through the great tribulation. The ones who have followed the Lord closely and really pleased Him will have part in it.

Not all agree that the church shall be taken out of the world; some teach they shall be protected in some secret place here on earth, but the

cerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.

14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.

15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.

16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

more common teaching is that they will be caught up in the clouds. Not all agree as to the length of time—some think for three and one-half years, but the more common idea is that it will be for seven years.

Those who teach such a doctrine, not only teach a future literal kingdom, but they teach at least two future “comings” of Christ and that the first of the two will be secret. They teach two literal resurrections, separated by the period of at least 1007 years.

We have already studied the subject of the first resurrection and found it to be a spiritual resurrection. Let us now look into the Word of God and see just what the Scriptures have to say, if anything, about a seven-year rapture.

MEDITATIONS

WHEN WAS THIS TO HAPPEN?—Matthew 24:40-43—One shall be taken—The disciples had called the Master’s attention to the beauty of the temple. He had told them the time would come when there would not be one stone left upon another. When they were alone, the disciples asked Him, (1) “When shall these things be?” (2) “What shall be the sign of thy coming?” (3) “And of the end of the world?” In reading Matthew 24 and 25, these three questions need to be kept in mind. So many literal-kingdom teachers take scriptures that speak of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the events leading up to it, and apply them to the future. But, they simply do not fit that way. Jesus told His followers to flee to the mountains when they saw the signs that meant the soon destruction of Jerusalem (see verses 15-25). Now those who teach the idea of a rapture would have us believe that the saints are up in the sky somewhere with Jesus while the tribulation is going on on earth; then, after the tribulation, Jesus will return—another coming—to the earth and will set up His 1,000-year kingdom.

But notice verse 21 wherein Jesus speaks of the “great tribulation”; then AFTER this tribulation is OVER Jesus says, “If any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; BELIEVE IT NOT” (verse 23). So the tribulation Jesus speaks of is the destruction of Jerusalem. Some obeyed His instructions and fled; others did not. Some did the very opposite of what He said; they went INTO the city. Those that fled were spared; those that disobeyed were killed, or at least many were. These verses, Matthew 24:40-43, have no reference to a secret rapture. If you were to apply them to the second coming of Christ, all you could get out of them would be a separation of the righteous and the wicked—not a seven-year rapture!

WHEN?—Revelation 12:14—The woman—Some who teach that the church will be protected here on earth during the “great tribulation” (and not caught up in the sky) use this verse to support their teaching. But this verse speaks of the early morning church; after compromise set in and she lost her exalted state, we see her fleeing into the wilderness. The time, times and half a time refers to a period of three years and six months and covers the same period of 1260 days

(1260 years) as referred to in Revelation 13:5. In other words, the true church was virtually lost sight of during the 1260 years that the church of Rome ruled supreme. This period of time was from A.D. 270 to A.D. 1530. So this verse has nothing to do with a future tribulation, or rapture.

PAUL WOULD HAVE US TO UNDERSTAND—I Thessalonians 4:13-18—Concerning them which are asleep—Jesus did promise His followers that He would come again. It seems that many expected Him to come just a few years after He returned to the Father. This He did not do. Some of the saints died and were buried. Those remaining began to worry; they were afraid that their loved ones would not be taken when the Lord came again. To allay their fears, and to explain the truth to them, Paul tells them they should not sorrow, or worry about them. For if we really believe that Jesus died and rose again, we should have faith to the end that God will take care of those who have died before the Master's return. Paul goes on to say, "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep." Why? "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout [How are you going to have a secret rapture with such an event as that?], with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."

Now Paul here says nothing about the wicked being left in the grave. He is simply saying, as he goes on to explain, that the resurrected ones shall be caught up with those that are living at the time of the second coming of the Lord. Nothing is said about a seven-year rapture; to the contrary, Paul says, "so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Other scriptures clearly show that ALL that are in the graves shall come forth at the same time and that the saved and the unsaved shall stand before Christ in judgment.

The reason the wicked are not mentioned in these scriptures is because Paul was placing special emphasis on the hope of the saints.

CONCLUSION

Those who teach the false idea of a rapture teach two literal resurrections. The Bible does not. They teach two or even three future comings of Jesus Christ. The Bible does not. They teach a great tribulation, yet future, of either three and one-half years, or seven. The Bible does not. They teach that a great religious-political dictator shall arise—they call him the antichrist—and shall rule the world. The Bible does not. They teach that after the saints are up in the sky somewhere for seven years then they shall return to this earth. The Bible does not.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. After the tribulation Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24:21, what was to happen—the setting up of a literal kingdom, or the rise of false prophets?

2. How many more “comings” of the Lord will there be?
 3. Where is there a scripture that says the physical bodies of the righteous shall be raised before the wicked?
 4. There are various scriptures that speak of Christ’s second coming; some teach it will be a great surprise, be unexpected, but where is one that teaches it will be secret?
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LESSON NUMBER ELEVEN FOR DECEMBER 14

WILL THERE BE A MILLENNIAL REIGN?

(Part I)

Scriptures: Daniel 2:44; Mark 1:14, 15; Romans 14:17; I Corinthians 10:11; 15:22-24; Hebrews 9:26; II Corinthians 6:1, 2; John 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24.

Daniel 2:44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Mark 1:14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

I Corinthians 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

I Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.

24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

Hebrews 9:26 For then must he often

have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

II Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

John 6:39 And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

44 No man can come to me, except the father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.

54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Memory Verse: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.—Romans 14:17.

Aim: To show that the kingdom of God is a present reality and that today is the day of salvation.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Daniel 2
Tuesday Mark 1:1-15
Wednesday Romans 14

Thursday I Corinthians 10:1-11
Friday Hebrews 9
Saturday John 5:1-29

INTRODUCTION

“When one reads millennial literature he is amazed at the many interpretations given to the theory. ... Some would make the millennial kingdom come to the American continent, others to Asia. Some would like to set the time (and have done so) for the second coming of Christ and the establishment of the millennial reign. Others deny such attempts but fix dates of their own.

“From the days of Nero till Adolph Hitler such teachers have labored earnestly to tag their man of sin! Every generation has its scholars who shout with glee that they have discovered the antichrist, or the superman who will lead the nations in a great dictatorship which will clash with the forces led by Christ. But just as surely as the years pass by, such teachers are exposed as false and every ‘man of sin’ and every humanly tagged antichrist passes from the scene of action to give way to some other spectacular person who commands the attention of prophetic speculators. Napoleon, Kaiser Wilhelm, Mussolini, Stalin, and ... Adolph Hitler form the characters who have, ... made the subjects of prophetic fulfillment.

“It is high time that men and women stop guessing and cling to the simple, plain beautiful truth about the kingdom of God as a present reality through the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ. ‘The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it’ (Luke 16:16).

“‘From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force’ (Matthew 11:12). This force is not carnal force made possible by the use of armaments, but is the force which every sincere, penitent soul manifests when he cries to God for mercy. Such earnestness brings the pardon of God through Jesus Christ, our Lord.”—A. J. Kempin, *Why the Millennial Doctrine Is Not Biblical*.

MEDITATIONS

FOUR WORLDLY KINGDOMS—Daniel 2:44—In the days of these kings—The literal-kingdom teachers admit that the vision pictured in Daniel 2 of a great image represents four world-ruling kingdoms. They admit the four kingdoms were Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, but they take the ten toes of this image, and make them ten kingdoms that are yet to be gathered under one body—the antichrist—and say that during that time the kingdom of God will be set up. The Bible teaches no such doctrine. Daniel was speaking of only the four world-ruling kingdoms. A proper understanding of verse 34 will show that Daniel spoke of the reign of the fourth, the Roman Empire, when he spoke of the “stone,” i.e., the kingdom of God, strik-

ing the image on its feet. Please note Daniel said the kingdom of God would stand “forever”—not for a mere thousand years.

CHRIST KNEW THE TIME—Mark 1:14, 15—The time is fulfilled—Jesus came preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. What was this good news—that the kingdom would be set up in two thousand or three thousand years? No! “The time is FULFILLED, and the kingdom of God is at hand.” How foolish to say it is at hand if it was thousands of years yet out in the future. No, it was at hand, and because it was, Jesus said, “Repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Why? So you can become a part of the kingdom!

KINGDOM NOT LITERAL—Romans 14:17—Not meat and drink—Paul said the kingdom of God is not literal, but IS (not going to be, but is) “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” It is true there are different phases to the kingdom of God, and this verse speaks of the experience phase, but it has to exist for one to have the experience phase of it. Further, Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:50, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Why not believe what divine inspiration has written? The kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom. Jesus Christ is NOW king over His kingdom.

THE LAST AGE—I Corinthians 10:11—Are come—This is the last age for mankind on this earth. Now is the time to get right with God. **I Corinthians 15:22-24—Every man**—Sin brought not only death to the soul, but physical death to the family of man. However, all the dead shall be resurrected, and these verses tell us it shall be at Christ’s coming. I repeat, all shall be resurrected—so today is the day of salvation; do not be deceived with the false hope that you can get saved in some future age. Note also that Christ is not coming to “set up” a kingdom, but to “deliver up” the kingdom that has already been set up.

THE END—Hebrews 9:26—Once—Christ has already come to put away sin—through His death on the cross—therefore every one who will can become a part of this spiritual kingdom of kings and priests, and reign over sin now.

NOW IS THE TIME—II Corinthians 6:1, 2—We then—Some teach that many Jews and Gentiles will turn to the Lord during “the great tribulation,” but Paul teaches today is the day of salvation, now is the accepted time. Who are you going to believe?

WHEN WILL THE RIGHTEOUS BE RAISED?—John 6:39, 40, 44, 54—Last day—The literal-kingdom teachers teach that the physical bodies of the saints will be raised at least 1007 years before the wicked. We have four verses here, and there are others, that clearly show that the bodies of the saints will be raised “at the last day.” How can you have 367,555 days after the last day?

MARTHA WAS TAUGHT BY THE MASTER—John 11:24—I know—Martha’s brother was dead. Jesus spoke to her of his resurrection. Martha said she knew that he would be raised in the last day.

Where did she learn that the righteous would be raised “in the last day”? We answer, from Jesus.

CONCLUSION

The doctrine of a millennial reign of Christ on this earth robs Jesus of His throne and crown now. It is centered in an earthly, literal Jerusalem, rather than the heavenly Jerusalem, His church. It is based on earthly people, where one race is set above another, which would rebuild the wall Jesus has already torn down. The idea of a literal kingdom ignores the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God. The millennial doctrine holds out a false hope to both Jews and Gentiles. It denies the saving grace of Jesus Christ to keep from sin in this present age. And it mutilates the Word of God, by misrepresenting verse after verse.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What would a future kingdom offer that is not now offered in the kingdom of God?
2. Is the kingdom of God a literal, earthly kingdom made up of flesh and blood?
3. Is the kingdom of God to last for only one thousand years?
4. Is salvation offered to all today?
5. Will there be a future age in which people can be saved?

LESSON NUMBER TWELVE FOR DECEMBER 21

WILL THERE BE A MILLENNIAL REIGN? (Part II)

Scriptures: Revelation 20:1-6; 6:9, 10; I Corinthians 3:17; Hebrews 10:10, 14; James 5:8; II Peter 3:10, 11.

Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were

beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Revelation 6:9 And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the

souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

I Corinthians 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

Hebrews 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

14 For by one offering he hath per-

Memory Verse: Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.—Matthew 25:34.

Aim: To show that this is the last age of time and that there is no need, time, nor place for a millennial reign.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday

Isaiah 35

Thursday

James 5

Tuesday

Revelation 6:1-11

Friday

Hebrews 10

Wednesday

I Corinthians 3

Saturday

II Peter 1

INTRODUCTION

What is looked upon as certain parts of “Christianity,” according to R. R. Byrum, “originally borrowed the idea of millennium from the Jews, but in its widest sense the idea was not original with the Jews. Various heathen nations—Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome—had an idea of a future golden age of the world when evil would be suppressed. Zoroastrianism expected a thousand-year period to follow the downfall of hostile powers, which period was connected with a resurrection of the dead. The later Jewish conception of such a period would naturally be colored by these views of a similar period held by the nations about them. The Jewish conception, however, was based principally upon the Messianic predictions of the Old Testament. There the Messiah was represented as executing judgment upon the enemies of Israel, as re-establishing the throne of David at Jerusalem in great splendor, as exalting Israel, and as ruling over the Gentiles. Then the wilderness would blossom as the rose, the soil would be very fertile and nature especially prolific, while wild beasts would become docile, and wars would cease among men. [Sounds like what various Protestant sects teach today, doesn't it?]

“Because of a literal interpretation of these prophecies, the Jews generally expected the Messiah to establish an earthly kingdom. Such was the common expectation of the Jews of the time of Christ. ... The

fectured for ever them that are sanctified.

James 5:8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

II Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness.

earth was to yield many thousandfold, and grain, fruit, and flesh were to be provided in immeasurable abundance.

“But Jesus disappointed those carnal hopes. He neither established nor promised to establish such an earthly kingdom.”

—*Christian Theology*, page 610.

The fact that Christ did not establish an earthly kingdom was one of the reasons the Jews said He was not the Messiah. Certain Protestant groups are now making the same mistake the Jews made, only they say this great millennial kingdom will be established at His second, or third, coming.

The teachings of Christ are not millenarian! The epistles of the New Testament are not millenarian. The apostles taught a present spiritual kingdom of Christ.

MEDITATIONS

FUTURE OR PAST—Revelation 20:1-6—I saw—It is commonly supposed, by the literal-kingdom teachers, that the events here described are to occur at the second advent; but such is not true. The vision John was given here takes us back to the early morning church time. So let us look at these verses, verse by verse. **Verse 1**—The angel in this verse symbolizes the early morning Church of God and especially the ministry (see Revelation 1:20). A bottomless pit could be that which has no foundation of truth. The great chain in his hand represents the Word of God presented, or used, under the direction of the Holy Spirit. **Verse 2**—The dragon in this verse is not the personal devil; the dragon here represents the same thing the dragon in Chapter 12 represented, i.e., Paganism, for it is one and the same dragon. The thousand years is to be understood as a long period of time. The early morning church fought the dragon and the dragon was “cast down” (12:9); after he was cast down then he was “bound.” To apply this as a literal chain would be foolish. How could a literal chain bind a spirit? **Verse 3**—Paganism was exposed for the error that it was, by the truth of the gospel; it was cast down and bound, so that it could not deceive the nations any more until it was “loosed.” **Verse 4**—Now we come to the thought of the reign for a thousand years, and I would ask you to please note that John saw “souls,” and these souls were “the souls of them that were beheaded, for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.” Nothing is said about human beings being here on this earth and reigning here on this earth for a thousand years. The early morning saints that were beheaded, or slain in some other way, are who John is talking about, and as soon as they died their souls were separated from their bodies, and it was the souls that John saw. In our comments on Revelation 6:9, 10, we will see where these souls were. **Verse 5**—Now here is a very important point, and exposes a great error of the millennial teachers: they teach that the first resurrection comes BEFORE the thousand years’ reign but that

is NOT what this verse says. This verse says the rest of the dead lived not again until after the thousand years were finished. And then the verse goes on to say: "This is the first resurrection." What is the truth of the matter? As explained in a previous lesson, the first resurrection is salvation, so the time the dragon was bound was the same time Papal Rome ruled the "world" and salvation was not taught openly, but when light was again brought to the people and the message of justification was taught openly, people were saved, resurrected! **Verse 6**—There is nothing about a literal resurrection that will make anyone holy. Salvation does! Of course, salvation was taught by the early morning church and people had part in the first resurrection then, and the souls that reigned with Christ were saved souls, thus they had part in the first resurrection also. After the long period of darkness symbolized by the thousand years was over, the gospel was preached openly and souls were saved, thus having part in the first resurrection.

HEAVENLY REIGN—Revelation 6:9, 10—Under the altar—While saints of God live in this time world they are ON the altar, the altar of sacrifice and service. After their earthly life is over they are UNDER the altar—their sacrifice is complete. Now in Revelation 20, John saw the souls of those who had been beheaded, so their earthly life had ended. Here these souls are at rest with Christ—but they are pictured as asking how long it would be until their blood would be avenged, and they are told to rest awhile longer. Why? Because there were others that would be slain, and these others were those that were slain during the rule of the "two-horned beast," Protestantism. So this "reign" is already past, and is not something yet out in the future.

TEMPLE OF GOD—I Corinthians 3:17—The literal-kingdom teachers talk about the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem. Whether the Jews ever rebuild their temple or not, God's temple is His saints, just as this verse tells us.

CHRIST OUR SACRIFICE—Hebrews 10:10, 14—Once for all—Again, the literal-kingdom teachers speak of literal sacrifices being made, the people coming up to Jerusalem for such purposes, but Jesus Christ is the Lamb the Old Testament sacrifices were pointing to. God will NEVER again honor animal sacrifices. There is no need for such, and nothing would be gained through such. The blood of Jesus Christ is all sufficient.

ONE FUTURE COMING—NOT COMINGS—James 5:8—The coming of the Lord—Some may laugh at James' statement, but Christ is coming again. When? I am not able to say; the all-important thing is to be ready, for today is the day of salvation.

NO PLACE FOR A MILLENNIAL REIGN—II Peter 3:10, 11—The day of the Lord—This is the last age of man on this earth. Today is the day of salvation. Jesus Christ gave Himself once and for

all. And now Peter informs us that when Christ comes, the starry heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the earth also shall be burned up. So there is no need, no time, no place for a millennial reign, and further, the Word of God does not teach there will be one.

CONCLUSION

“God has a purpose in all he does. ... No millennium is necessary to the salvation of men. Perfect conditions for probation of free moral beings now exist. ...

“No millennium is needed for man’s happiness. Surely the imaginary joys of a millennial age can not exceed the blessedness of heaven. ...

“The scriptural order of events at the advent of Christ allows no time for a millennium. ...

“Neither do the Scriptures allow any place for a millennium. The earth is to be destroyed on the occasion of his coming.”—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the origin of the millennial doctrine?
2. What kind of kingdom did the Jews expect the Messiah to set up?
3. Will Jesus Christ ever rule over a political kingdom?
4. How long shall the kingdom of God exist?
5. Are you in it today?

LESSON NUMBER THIRTEEN FOR DECEMBER 28

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE FOR CHRIST’S SECOND COMING?

Scriptures: John 14:3; II Peter 3:12; Acts 1:10, 11; 17:30, 31; II Timothy 4:1; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15; I Corinthians 15:24.

John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

II Peter 3:12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and elements shall melt with fervent heat?

Acts 1:10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel;

11 Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this

same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

II Timothy 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his

appearing and his kingdom.

II Thessalonians 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

Revelation 20:11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened,

which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

I Corinthians 15:24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.

Memory Verse: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.—Acts 17:31.

Aim: To set forth the truth that Christ is coming; how He will come; and the purpose of His coming.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday Daniel 7
Tuesday Acts 1
Wednesday II Peter 3

Thursday Acts 17
Friday II Thessalonians 1
Saturday I Corinthians 15:34–58

INTRODUCTION

“It is an undeniable fact that the church in her present condition is instructed to look for the return of Christ from heaven as the next great event. Nowhere are we instructed to look for a pre- or post-millennium. During his earthly ministry, Christ was careful to inform his disciples of his departure from them. But he also taught them, ‘I WILL COME AGAIN’ (John 14:3).

“That Christ promised his disciples that he would return to them in the person and presence of the Holy Spirit, we do not deny. He said, ‘I will not leave you comfortless. I will come to you.’ ... But this must not be confounded with his personal coming at the end of this age.

“In the face of all the confusing and contradictory pre-millennial doctrines, the plain testimony of Scripture stands out in clear teaching that the revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven will be the hour of the resurrection of the dead, the general judgment, the reward of the righteous in heaven, the punishment of the wicked in hell, and the burning up and passing away of the earth.”—H. M. Riggle, *Christ's Second Coming and What Will Follow*.

“In the New Testament much importance is attached to the second coming of Christ. The Scriptures uniformly point forward to that event as the time when the dead will be raised, when the general judgment will take place and final rewards be meted out to the righteous and to the wicked. ‘The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels, and THEN he shall reward every man according to his works’ (Matthew 16:27). ...

“It is a popular doctrine in the world that men and women receive their final rewards at death; but the Bible nowhere teaches this. The texts last quoted [II Thessalonians 1:7-11 along with Matthew 16:27], as well as scores of others, point forward to the second coming as the time when final rewards will be given.”—F. G. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches*.

MEDITATIONS

CHRIST HAS SPOKEN—John 14:3—I will come again—This is a clear, straightforward statement made by the Lord Himself. We can depend on His doing what He said!

THE DAY IS COMING—II Peter 3:12—Looking for—Yes, it is true; millions have looked for Him to come in their lifetime, and He hasn’t come yet. But, the day of God is coming. An infallible God has said so; therefore it HAS to come.

HIS COMING VISIBLE—Acts 1:10, 11—This same Jesus—It is true, Jesus lived in a physical body while here on earth; it is also true that He has a spiritual body as He sits beside the Father in His throne. But that does not change the fact that He is coming again, that it shall be visible and that multitudes will be surprised at the suddenness of His coming. And every eye shall behold Him; it will not be secret.

THE PURPOSE—Acts 17:30, 31—He hath appointed—This is the age in which God has commanded all men everywhere to repent—not during some future millennial age. So the purpose of Christ’s second coming is not to set up a literal kingdom, nor is it for the purpose of giving the Jewish people an opportunity to be saved; they can be saved now by accepting this Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not for the purpose of causing fields to bring forth great harvests, but for the purpose Paul has clearly stated in this 31st verse—to “judge the world.” This is just as sure as Jesus’ having been raised from the dead.

PAUL KNEW WHAT WOULD HAPPEN—II Timothy 4:1—This pinpoints the time of the judgment; it will not be a thousand years after Christ comes, but at His coming. How could words be plainer?

REST IN CHRIST NOW—II Thessalonians 1:7-9—Rest with us—Paul invites all who are troubled to come and rest with the saints. Christ, through salvation, gives soul rest now, and He gives hope of

eternal rest. Paul goes on to inform us that when Christ comes, He will come with His mighty angels, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These verses do not convey the idea of a seven-year rapture, or a literal kingdom of a thousand years, but they do convey the truth of what will happen at the second coming of the Lord.

ALL SHALL BE PRESENT—Revelation 20:11-15—A great white throne—We dealt with the first part of this chapter in the last lesson. Now we see in these verses the fact that at Christ's second coming He will sit upon His "throne," not to rule over a political kingdom, but to judge the world. He will use the Word of God, not the creeds of sectarian religion, to judge everyone by. All will be present: "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." All church books will be consumed in the fire; only the book of life, the church book of God's true church, which He keeps in heaven, will be there. Make sure your name is in it.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE KINGDOM!—I Corinthians 15:24—The kingdom of God is a present reality, it is a spiritual kingdom, and Christ is its ruling King now. What will happen to it at the end of this age? Paul tells us! "Then cometh the end, when he [Christ] shall have DELIVERED UP [not set up] the kingdom to God, even the Father." And so shall we ever be with the Lord. Hallelujah!

CONCLUSION

"We are living between two advents of Christ to this world. At the first he appeared incarnate to reveal the way of salvation and to make atonement for sin. He will come again at some future time in great power and glory to raise the dead, judge the world, and destroy the earth. ... That Christ will come again ... is the common belief of Christians of all schools of thought. Infidels may scoff and say, 'Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.' But those who believe the New Testament have abundant proof that Jesus will surely come again. ... That advent is represented in the Scriptures as necessary to the accomplishment of other important events, especially the resurrection, the judgment, and the end of the world."

—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

Are you ready for His coming?

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Do you believe in the second coming of Christ?
2. How will He come, openly or secretly?
3. What will happen when He comes?
4. What is the book of life and whose names are in it?
5. If the Lord were to return, on which side would you be placed?

Name _____

Class _____

Truth vs. Error

ADULT & YOUNG PEOPLE

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