

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a brown leather-bound Bible. The Bible is open, and the cover is visible. The words "HOLY BIBLE" are embossed on the cover in a serif font. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green and white. A semi-transparent dark brown banner is overlaid on the top half of the image, containing the title text.

KEYNOTES OF FAITH

AN EXPLORATION OF BIBLICAL TRUTHS

HOLY
BIBLE

Keynotes of Faith

AN EXPLORATION OF BIBLICAL TRUTH

The Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16–17), filled with wisdom to teach, reprove, and guide us. In fact, Jesus Himself said, *“Search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life.”* John 5:39 Anyone who sincerely seeks God’s will can discover our Heavenly Father’s character – His wisdom, justice, power, and love by examining His plan revealed throughout Scripture. We are assured that if we seek Him, we will find Him, if we seek with all our heart. Jeremiah 29:13; Psalm 89:14

The following studies are a compilation of insights from well-studied elders and devoted students of the Bible, carefully reviewed for accuracy. They are not offered in a dogmatic spirit but are intended to encourage you to personally explore the relevant Scriptures. (Acts 17:11) This resource is designed for everyone: teens, those new to the faith or anyone wishing to reaffirm or explore the foundational teachings of Scripture, covering God’s plan, His character, and His intentions for believers today as well as all mankind in the future.

It is our heartfelt prayer that these studies will be a blessing to each one of you who reads them, drawing you closer to our Heavenly Father and inspiring you to immerse yourself even deeper into His Word. May this journey illuminate the glorious truths of the Bible and fortify your faith in the One who guides us into all truth. John 16:13

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*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.
2 Timothy 2:15*

*All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching,
for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;
so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
2 Timothy 3:16*

Abbreviations used in this book:

ERV: EASY-TO-READ VERSION

ESV: ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION

KJV: KING JAMES VERSION

NASB: NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE

NASB20: NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE 2020

NIV: NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

NLT: NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

RVIC: REVISED VERSION, IMPROVED AND CORRECTED

NEW American STANDARD BIBLE (NASB 1995) is used unless otherwise stated.

WHY DOES GOD PERMIT EVIL?

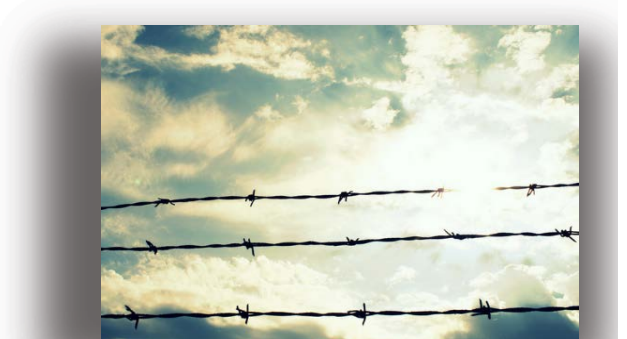
Goal of the study: **WHAT** is the purpose of God permitting evil?

WHY would a God of love allow His creation to experience this much suffering?

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol. 1, Chap. 7

Things we see in the world today which make us a why does God permit evil?

- Sickness, both physical and mental/emotional
- Wars, death, murder, abuse
- Injustice and suffering
- Natural disasters
- The wicked seemingly prosper



Mankind has asked this question for thousands of years.

There are at least four potential ways we can look at God and His involvement with our world:

1. God is NOT able to stop evil and does not care to.
2. God is NOT able to stop evil though He would stop it if He could.
3. God IS able to stop evil but He doesn't want to.
4. God IS able to stop evil and will absolutely stop it.

The Bible teaches #4: **God IS able to stop evil and will absolutely stop it—God has a plan.**

Not only does He have a plan; He is working His plan and it is all about the eradication of sin and death from this world and replacing them with the institution of righteousness and life. His plan is laid out for us in Scripture, and we need to observe and understand it. This time of sin, evil and death is **temporary** and for a **purpose**.

The purpose of the permission of evil is to show mankind an unforgettable firsthand experience with evil.

It is for the purpose of teaching mankind the disastrous results of life lived without God as its center and to teach the consequences of disobedience to God's direction. The permission of evil will show mankind the sinfulness of sin so that they may never ever wish to go back to such a way of life ever again.

The prophets knew God is powerful and hates evil:

- **Psalms 5:4–5** “For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; no evil dwells with You. The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity.”
- **Isaiah 14:27** “For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?”

Knowing these attributes, they still asked God these questions:

- **Job 10:3** “Is it right for You indeed to oppress, to reject the labor of Your hands, and to look favorably on the schemes of the wicked?”
- **Habakkuk 1:2** “How long, O LORD, will I call for help, and You will not hear? I cry out to You, Violence! Yet You do not save.”
- **Psalms 44:23** “Arouse Yourself, why do You sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not reject us forever.”

How can we find the truth regarding the permission of evil?

Through His word. We are promised that if we search the Scriptures, God will provide us the answers to our questions and spiritual desires of our hearts:

- **Isaiah 1:18** “Come now, and let us reason together, says the LORD.”
- **Isaiah 34:16** “Seek from the book of the LORD, and read: Not one of these will be missing; none will lack its mate. For His mouth has commanded, and His spirit has gathered them.”
- **Matthew 7:7** “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

Solomon explained God permits evil so that mankind can experience sin and learn the lessons they need from it, to be “exercised.”

- **Ecclesiastes 1:13** (KJV) “...this sore travail hath God given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith.”
- **Ecclesiastes 3:10** (KJV) “I have seen the travail which God has given to the sons of man to be exercised in it.”

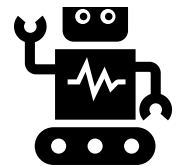
While painful now, these lessons will be beneficial in the span of eternity.



Why does this learning process require so much pain and suffering?

The ultimate goal of God’s plan regarding the human race is to live on a perfect earth for eternity and willingly and enthusiastically obey their Creator—not because they are forced to, but to be the most complete and happy.

- There are two main forces in the universe: good and evil. In the Garden of Eden was “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” **Genesis 2:17** The act of disobedience of eating the fruit of that tree launched the process of gaining understanding of both good and evil.
- God could have created mankind with the inability to do evil or experience sin; however, mankind would have been like a robot, rendering blind obedience to God without understanding why they should follow God’s principles of righteousness. God created mankind with **free will**, and this ability to understand and experience both good and evil, and subsequently make the right choices, will serve to be the **most beneficial to mankind**.
- **Job 34:4** “Let us choose for ourselves what is right; let us know among ourselves what is good.”



For mankind to make a clear and correct choice, they must have a clear understanding of these TWO PRINCIPLES, of good and evil, and their fruitage or results.

Isn't there an easier or less painful way to gain this knowledge of evil?

*“There are four ways of knowing things, namely, by **intuition**, by **observation**, by **experience** and by **information** received through sources accepted as positively truthful. An intuitive knowledge would be a direct apprehension, without the process of reasoning, or the necessity for proof. Such knowledge belongs only to the divine Jehovah, the eternal fountain of all wisdom and truth, who, of necessity and in the very nature of things, is superior to all his creatures. Therefore, man's knowledge of good and evil could not be intuitive. Man's knowledge might have come by observation, but in that event, there must needs have been some exhibition of evil and its results for man to observe. This would imply the permission of evil somewhere, among some beings, and why not as well among men, and upon the earth, as among others elsewhere?” Vol. 1, p.122*

- **INTUITION:** This is the direct understanding of all knowledge without the process of doing or experiencing it. It implies an automatic, complete and clear knowledge of all things. This is the way that God acquires His knowledge—God does NOT have to experience evil to know about and understand its results.
[Isaiah 40:14](#) “With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge and informed Him of the way of understanding?”
- **OBSERVATION:** This is the method of gaining knowledge by noting and observing the results and fruitage of matters taking place in others’ lives and actions. This is the way that angels in heaven are gaining their knowledge of evil and sin.
[1 Corinthians 4:9](#) “...we [speaking of the apostles] have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men.”
- **INFORMATION:** This is the method of gaining knowledge based on written or spoken record of the details of those matters and the potential dangers involved. This is the method God used in the Garden of Eden.
[Genesis 2:17](#) “but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat...”
BUT DID IT WORK? Was the information sufficient? No! This information was unable to prevent the sin.
- **EXPERIENCE:** This way of acquiring the knowledge of evil is bitter and painful, but **registers a stronger impression** on the minds and memory. This way will prove later to be a blessing for all mankind.
[Hebrews 12:11](#) “All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

Let us try to illustrate **what God is really doing** in this period of the permission of evil with an example of fire. It is bright, colorful and attractive to look at. A little child is attracted to it, not knowing the great dangers involved. Now what would a loving and wise father do when seeing the child’s attraction and fascination with the fire? He would give the child an experience with the fire by bringing the child’s hand close enough to feel the heat but far enough not to be burnt. Thus, the child learns strong lessons of the dangers of the fire and is not likely to forget them. **So it is with sin.** It seems attractive and pleasurable from the outside. All the ways of sin today seem very pleasurable to fallen man. But the “tasting” of it leads to the “bitter taste” of suffering, sorrow and death!

- [Proverbs 14:12](#) “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

Thus it is seen in [Romans 8:20, 21](#) that God’s “hope” in is that mankind will learn valuable lessons in this experience with the “heat” of sin. But God ensures that it is NOT to be a “burnt” experience, permanently destroying mankind. For we read of His mercy and grace as seen and recorded in:

- [Hosea 13:14](#) “I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death...”

The other methods of gaining knowledge such as intuition, observation or information are not enough to gain all knowledge of good and evil.

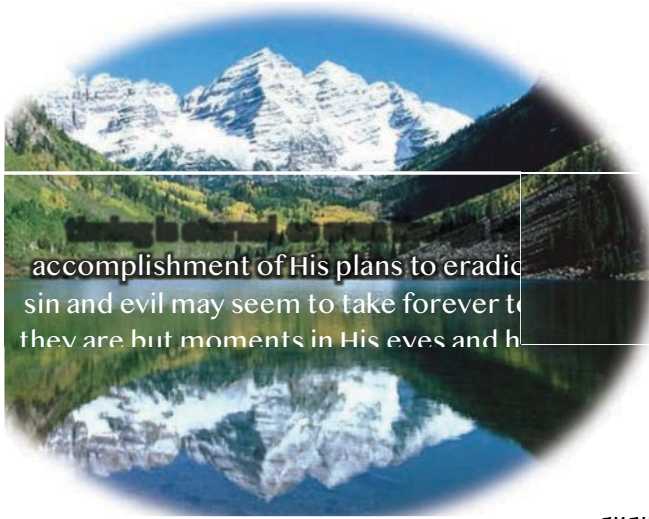
Our lives are short, so when will we experience the benefits of learning about good and evil?

This is where we come to the great Bible truth of the Divine Plan of God which is relatively unknown to the vast majority of mankind – **ALL mankind who have died and will die are to be made alive again!** This opportunity for all men to live again in the resurrection was obtained **through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus and his death on the cross.** This will provide an opportunity to ask forgiveness and reform.

- [1 Corinthians 15:22](#) “As in Adam ALL die, so also in Christ ALL will be made alive.”
- [Acts 24:15](#) (KJV) “...there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.”
- [John 5:28, 29](#) (KJV) “Marvel not at this...ALL that are in the graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth...”

We have a beautiful lesson of permission of evil in the life of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. Because of his pride, God humbled him for seven years.

- **Daniel 4:33** "...he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws." But after he went through this experience, he was restored and he, himself said...
- **Daniel 4:37** "Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."
- This is the exact process for the world of mankind. After they will be resurrected and restored, they will be able to fully see the **complete** plan of God and the purpose of all experiences and give all the glory and honor to God, the Creator.



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 again. Mankind was given free will in the beginning.

- We were created to make choices.
- God is not ever going to take away our free will.
- God is going to organize the environment in which free will can operate.

**"And there shall be no more death,
 neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain;
 for the former things are passed away." Revelation 21:4(KJV)**



A RANSOM FOR ALL

Goal of this Study: **WHAT** does it mean that Jesus gave himself a “Ransom for All”?

WHY did Jesus have to be a perfect man?

HOW will all benefit from Jesus' Sacrifice, especially those that lived before him?

WHEN is the “due time”?

Additional References: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol. 1, Chap. 9; Vol. 5, Chap. 15

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a RANSOM for all, to be testified in due time" **1 Timothy 2:5-6 (KJV)**

What does it mean that Jesus gave Himself a “Ransom for All”?

This is a fundamental doctrine of our faith. We all are “born in sin and shaped in iniquity.” **Psalm 51:5**

The only way to be released from this condemnation is through Jesus’ sacrifice. He, himself said:

- **Mark 10:45** “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

Some Christians use this scripture to prove their wrong beliefs that only those who accept Jesus today will be saved, while the rest will suffer for eternity. But that is not what the Bible says.

- **Romans 5:19** “For as through the one man’s disobedience THE MANY were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One THE MANY will be made righteous.”
- When we think of “many” we think of a large number, maybe even a majority, but not signifying ALL. But here “many” really means **ALL**. Note the equivalency:
 - ✦ “the many” who are sinners (ALL mankind)
 - ✦ that same “many” (ALL) will have an opportunity to be righteous

The angel that proclaimed Jesus’ birth said that this good news is for “all people.” **Luke 2:10**

Adam's sin brought death to all mankind. In Eden, Adam’s disobedience forfeited his perfect human life and plunged all his descendants into a state of sin and death. Every human born since inherits this fallen condition—not by choice, but by descent.

- ✦ **Genesis 2:17** “...in the day that thou eat from it you will surely die.”
- ✦ **Romans 5:12** “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all have sinned.”
- The term “ransom” (Greek: *antilutron*) implies a corresponding price—something equal to what was lost.

Jesus gave Himself as a Ransom for all, a deliberate, sacrificial act to pay a price that liberates humanity from the curse of sin and death. Jesus’ death on the cross serves as the exact counterbalance, a payment to divine justice that redeems not just a privileged few, but every single person ever born.

- ✦ **Romans 5:18** “So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.”



This Ransom is a legal and moral transaction under God’s justice. It’s not a vague gesture but a precise payment, ensuring that no one is excluded from the potential for redemption. The scope is breathtaking; every individual who ever lived is covered by this act of grace.

- **Hebrews 2:9 (KJV)** “...that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

It’s a promise of restoration that echoes through Scripture, affirming God’s intent to reconcile all creation to Himself.

Why did Jesus have to be a perfect man?

The necessity of Jesus being a perfect man hinges on God's unyielding law of equity—a life for a life, a perfect equivalent to what was lost. This Old Testament principle underscores the need for an exact match, not a lesser or higher substitute.

- **Exodus 21:23-24** "...you shall appoint as a penalty life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth,..."
- **Leviticus 24:20** "fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth..."

Adam was created a perfect human with the right to everlasting life. But his willful sin in Eden (**Genesis 2:17**) corrupted that perfection, passing imperfection and death to all.

- **Genesis 1:31** "God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good."
- **Romans 6:23** "For the wages of sin is death."
- **Psalms 49:7** "No man can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him."

To reverse this, the Ransom demanded a substitute of equal value: a perfect, sinless human life to stand in Adam's place before God's justice.

Adam was made "a little lower than the angels."

- **Psalms 8:5 (KJV)** "For thou hast made him [Adam] a little lower than the angels..."

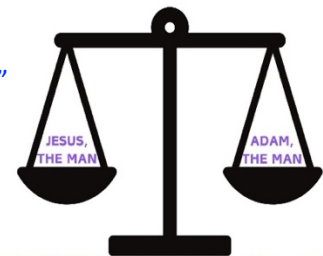
The exact same statement is made about Jesus.

- **Hebrews 2:9 (KJV)** "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels..."

Jesus took on human nature specifically to die as our substitute.

Jesus became the second Adam.

- **1 Corinthians 15:45** "The first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit."



The ONE MAN Jesus offered himself as a EQUAL, corresponding price for the ONE MAN Adam.

Jesus—a perfect, sinless human being.

Jesus was sinless.

- **Hebrews 7:26 (KJV)** "...who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners..."

Jesus wasn't a divine-human hybrid on earth, but a perfect man, mirroring Adam's original state.

- **Philippians 2:7-8** "He emptied Himself... being made in the likeness of men."

Jesus' perfection was proven by His obedience unto death and His resurrection sealed the Ransom's acceptance.

- **Romans 1:4** "Who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead."

Without Jesus' sinless humanity, the Ransom would fail to meet God's standard.

How will ALL benefit from Jesus' sacrifice, especially those who lived before Him?

The beauty of Jesus' Ransom lies in its universal reach—every human, including those who lived and died before His earthly ministry, will benefit through a promised resurrection.

Adam's sin condemned **all**.

- **Romans 5:18 (KJV)** "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation,..."

But Jesus' righteousness offers **life to all**.

- **Romans 5:18 (KJV)** "...even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."

This isn't limited to those who hear the gospel now; it extends backward and forward across time, ensuring no one is left out of the benefits of the Ransom for All.

- **John 5:28-29** "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth

This promises a universal awakening. Both the righteous and unrighteous will rise, covered by the Ransom.

- **Acts 24:15** "there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked."

The "all" match the "all" who die in Adam, **total inclusivity**. "Every man" leaves no exceptions, past or present.

- **1 Corinthians 15:22** "For as in Adam **all** die, so also in Christ **all** will be made alive."
- **Hebrews 2:9 (KJV)** "That he by the grace of God should taste death for **every man**."

Here, the parallelism is outstanding: just as death is universal through Adam, life is equally universal through Christ. And this points us back to our main scripture: "A Ransom for All."

Pre-Christian inclusion

For all those who lived before Christ, the Ransom applies retroactively. They died under Adam's curse but will rise in the earthly Kingdom Age, a time of restoration.

- **Isaiah 35:10** "And the ransomed of the Lord will return... with everlasting joy."

They'll learn righteousness under ideal conditions.

- **Isaiah 26:9** "when the earth experiences Your judgments the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness."

The elect church, resurrected first as "firstfruits" (**James 1:18**), will assist Christ in this work, teaching and judging mankind.

- **Revelation 5:10** "...and they will reign upon the earth."
- **1 Corinthians 6:2** "The saints will judge the world."

Even those who never heard of Jesus—like ancient pagans—will get an opportunity to accept the Ransom's benefits. Jesus included them all.

- **John 12:32** "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw **all men** unto myself."

A broad resurrection is foretold.

- **Daniel 12:2** "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake..."
- **Galatians 3:8 (KJV)** "The Scripture...preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." The Ransom fulfills this ancient promise.

This process ensures justice and mercy: no one is penalized for ignorance or timing, and all get a chance at everlasting life.



When is the "due time"?

The phrase "to be testified in due time" reveals that the Ransom's full impact unfolds in stages, not all at once. God's plan operates on a divine timetable, with distinct "times" for different groups to receive its testimony. The Bible outlines this as a present reality for the church and a future fulfillment for the world.

Present time for the Church:

The "due time" commenced with Jesus' sacrifice for the ungodly.

- **Romans 5:6 (KJV)** "In **due time** Christ died for the ungodly."

He initiated salvation for believers. The call is now limited to believers; forming the firstfruits.

- **1 John 4:9-10** "He sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."
- **Acts 2:39** "as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself."
- **James 1:18** "...He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures."
- **1 Corinthians 15:20** "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep."

The church's resurrection is the initial phase, happening now as the "firstfruits" are gathered.

- **1 Thessalonians 4:16** "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven... and the dead in Christ will rise first."
- **Revelation 20:6** "Blessed and holy is the one who has part in the first resurrection...and will reign with Him for a thousand years."

The Millennium is the "due time" for the world's blessing. These verses hint at both a present call (for the church) v.25; and a future awakening (for all the rest of mankind) v.28.

- **John 5:25** "An hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God: and those who hear will live."
- **John 5:28, 29** "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, and will come forth."

Future time for the world:

The general application awaits Christ's 1,000 year Kingdom.

- **2 Peter 3:8** "...that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day."
- **Revelation 20:6** "...but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years."



This will be a time of judgment.

- **John 5:29** "and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment."
- **Acts 17:31** "He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness."

Order of events:

1. **Church Completion:** This precedes the world's blessing.

- **1 Thessalonians 4:16** "The dead in Christ will rise first."
- **Revelation 3:21** "Sit down with Me in My throne."
- **1 Corinthians 6:2** "The saints will judge the world."

2. **World's Awakening:**

- **1 John 2:2** "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." Jesus' sacrifice isn't limited to believers today—it encompasses all mankind.
- **Romans 8:19-21** (KJV) "The creation waiteth...for the manifestation of the sons of God...[to] be delivered from the bondage of corruption." This deliverance comes after the church is complete.
- **John 5:28** "...all who are in the tombs will hear His voice."
- **Isaiah 11:9** "The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord..." initiating the resurrection process.
- **Ecclesiastes 12:14** "For God will bring every act to judgment..." ensuring a fair trial.

The Ransom does not excuse the sins committed by those in this lifetime – it does not suddenly count sinners as saints and usher them into everlasting bliss. It merely releases the sinner from the first condemnation and its results, and places him again on trial for life, in which his own willful obedience or willful disobedience will decide if he may or may not have life everlasting. They will have a "full knowledge of the truth" and only then they will have to prove their obedience.

3. **Culmination:**

- **Philippians 2:9-11** "At the name of Jesus every knee will bow."
- **Revelation 21:1** "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth..."

Purpose of the delay: The world learns the "lesson of sin" now.

- **Romans 8:22** "The whole creation groans..." preparing them for future blessings.
- **Romans 8:21** "The creation itself also will be set free..." timed perfectly by God's wisdom.
- **Job 33:29-30** "Behold, God does all these oftentimes with men, to bring back his soul from the pit, that he may be enlightened with the light of life."

The "due time" began with Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection, opening salvation to the church.

- **Romans 5:6** (KJV) "In due time Christ died for the ungodly."
- **2 Peter 3:9** "The Lord is not slow about His promise...but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

Yet, the full testimony awaits the church's glorification.

- **Revelation 14:4** (KJV) "These were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God."

Then, during Christ's millennial reign, all nations will be blessed (**Galatians 3:8**), and the non-elect will rise for judgment and opportunity. **John 5:29**

Conclusion

Jesus' Ransom, as declared in **1 Timothy 2:5-6**, is the anchor of God's redemptive plan—a perfect life sacrificed to reclaim a perfect life lost, opening the door to salvation for all.

- **1 Timothy 2:4** (KJV) "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

His sinless humanity satisfied God's exacting justice, making Him the sole mediator between God and man.

- **1 Timothy 2:5** (KJV) "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Through a two-phase resurrection—first the church, then the world—every soul, from antiquity to the future, will benefit, guided by Christ and His glorified saints.

- **Revelation 22:17** "Let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost."

The "due time" unfolds progressively: now for the elect, soon for all, in a Kingdom.

- **Revelation 21:4** "and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death."

This Ransom promises a restored creation,
reflecting God's love, wisdom, justice, and power in perfect harmony
—a hope so vast it staggers the imagination and exalts the Creator forever.

Amen.



THE SEED OF THE WOMAN

Goal of this Study: Understanding the hidden meaning and fulfilment of this first promise and prophecy from God.
WHAT does it mean? **WHO** is this seed? Is there more than one seed?
Has this been fulfilled yet? If not, **WHEN** and **HOW** will it be fulfilled?

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol. 6, pp.353–363; Reprints 2776, 3925 and 4451.

This prophecy appears in the beginning of the Bible. After Adam and Eve sinned, it was the first glimmer of hope of reconciliation between God and man.

Genesis 3:15 “And I will put enmity [meaning hostility or hatred] between you [Satan] and the woman [Eve], and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

- ✦ **seed:** One’s child or offspring; descendants.
- ✦ **your seed:** Satan and his followers who persecuted Jesus and crucified Him. Jesus directly accused the Pharisees of being “children of the devil.” **John 8:44**
- ✦ **her seed:** Descendant or offspring of Eve (and Adam); of the human race



God is telling Adam and Eve that He has the solution already in place for their deliverance from the sentence of death. Eve’s offspring (her seed) would be bruised on the heel (a painful injury but not fatal) by the serpent, but “her seed” would deliver a fatal blow to the serpent (Satan).

This was a great veiled promise of God to repair the damage done by disobedience in the Garden of Eden.

Who would be this “seed”?

Cain? Adam and Eve hoped their firstborn son, Cain, would be the seed that would deliver them, but **Genesis 4:1–16** sadly reveals he was not to be that deliverer.

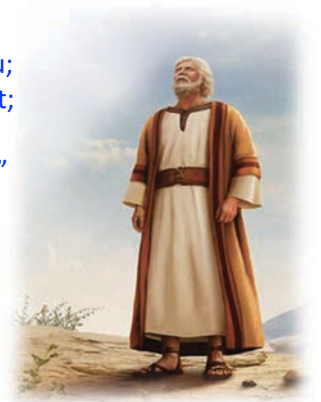
Abraham? God gave Abraham a wonderful promise:

- **Genesis 12:1–3** “Now the LORD said to Abram, Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you; **and I will make you a great nation**, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

But Abraham had no children at that time, so how could this promise be fulfilled? Abraham would need an heir!

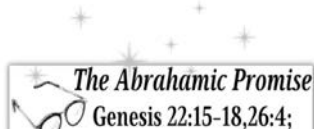
- **Genesis 15:4** “This man [Ishmael] will not be your heir; but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.”

Isaac? After Abraham and his wife Sarah were more than 90 years old, God finally blessed them with a son, Isaac. Would he be the “seed”? When Isaac was only a young lad, God tested Abraham by asking him to sacrifice that son **Genesis 22:1–14**. God stopped Abraham from harming Isaac. This test proved to God that Abraham could be trusted completely.



THE ABRAHAMIC PROMISE

With Abraham's steadfast faith fully proven, God made a special promise to make a great nation through him. Once again, God here mentions "the seed":



- **Genesis 22:15–18** "Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven and said, By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply **your seed as the stars of the heavens** and **as the sand which is on the seashore...** In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

So this seed would be as the stars **and** the sand. The seed would have **two** parts!

1. **Stars of heaven:** Faithful Christians (the Church, body of Christ) are to be the *spiritual* seed or *spiritual* children of Abraham. Their reward will be in heaven.

- **Galatians 3:7** (KJV) "Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children [or seed] of Abraham."
- **Galatians 3:29** (KJV) "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise."

2. **Sand upon the sea shore:** The other part of the "seed" are Abraham's earthly seed. Initially they included his natural descendants, the faithful of the nation of Israel. They were called a "house of servants."

- **Hebrews 3:5** (KJV) "And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant..."

However, the greater fulfilment of this part of the promise goes beyond Israel and will include all the families of the earth.

- **Luke 2:10** (KJV) "I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to ALL people."
- **Matthew 6:10** (KJV) "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth..."



Has this Abrahamic promise been fulfilled?

Since God cannot lie, God cannot break the Abrahamic promise. This promise is guaranteed and must be accomplished!

- **Hebrews 6:13–18** (KJV) "For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you. In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie..."

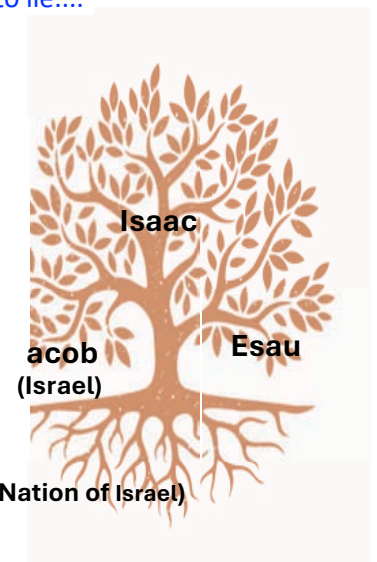
The Abrahamic Promise was repeated to Abraham's son, Isaac and his grandson, Jacob in **Genesis 26:4** and **28:14**. But, none of them received the fulfillment (the promised blessing).

- **Hebrews 11:13** "All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen and welcomed them from a distance..."

The promised blessing was passed on to Jacob's oldest son, Judah:

- **Genesis 49:9–10** "Judah is a lion's cub; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares to stir him up? The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."

A "scepter" shows the right to rule. A "ruler's staff" implies a lawgiver. This promise indicates that the promised seed would come from the **line of Judah**.



Years later, King David recalls the promise, but still no blessing has come from it:

- **Psalms 105:8–11** “He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant which He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac. Then he confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying, To you will I give the land of Canaan as the portion of your inheritance.”

All the prophets of old waited and waited, but never saw the promised blessing:

- **Hebrews 11:39** “And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised.”

And still we wait for the promise of “all the families of the earth” to be blessed. **Still the promise has not been fulfilled!**

So who is the “seed of the woman” that comes “from the line of Judah”?

JESUS CHRIST, the “seed of the woman”:

Jesus gave up his position in the heavens as an angel to be born of a human mother; He was fully a human being.

- Mary’s lineage in Luke extends all the way back to Adam and the Garden of Eden, where the promise that Eve’s seed would crush the head of the serpent was given. Through Mary, Jesus was a descendant or “seed of the woman.”
- **Galatians 4:4** “...God sent His son, born of a woman, born under the law.”
- **Phil 2:7** “[Jesus] emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men.”



JESUS CHRIST, from the “line of Judah”:

- Mary’s lineage is found in **Luke 3**. Her name is not mentioned, but it is assumed because the list is different than that of Joseph in Matthew 1, and other technical reasons. In **Luke 3:33** Mary’s lineage is shown to be from the tribe of Judah.
- Joseph’s lineage is found in **Matthew 1**. While Joseph’s lineage is also shown to be from the tribe of Judah, Jesus, however, was not the natural son of Joseph. **Matthew 1:2, 3; Hebrews 7:14**

Where do Jesus’ faithful followers fit in?

Jesus invites his followers to enter into a narrow way of sacrifice, by denying self and living for Him.

- **Matthew 7:14** “For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”
- **Luke 9:23** “If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me.”

First they must be called by God, then they must prove faithful throughout this narrow way of sacrifice.

- **Revelation 17:14** “...He is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and those who are with him are the called, and chosen and faithful.”

If faithful to that calling, they are promised to become joint-heirs of glory with Jesus.

- **Romans 8:16, 17** “...we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.”

Because both Jesus and his followers walk the same path, they are together considered one body, “THE Christ.” Few people understand this relationship, this oneness between them. The Bible calls it a “**mystery**.” THE Christ is not just one individual, but has many members.

- **Ephesians 5:32** “This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to **Christ and the church**.”
- **Colossians 1:27** “to whom God willed to make known...this mystery that is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory.”
- **Ephesians 1:22, 23** “...and made him **head** over all things to the church, which is **His body**...”

Putting this together, we see how both Jesus and the Church, Head and Body **together**, become **joint-heirs of the Abrahamic Promise**.

- **Galatians 3:7, 29** "...those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. ...And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."
- **Galatians 3:16** "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, 'And to seeds', as referring to many, but rather to one, And to your seed, that is, Christ."
- **Revelation 14:1** "Then I looked, and behold, the Lamb was standing on Mount Zion, and with him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads."

What is this enmity between Satan and "her seed"? Who is the "seed of the serpent"?

Returning again to that original glimmer of hope given to Adam and Eve...

- **Genesis 3:15** "And I will put enmity [hostility or hatred] between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed."

Hatred towards Jesus, the Head

When Jesus presented Himself to the people of Israel, some followed Him and some hated Him. Jesus could see those who hated Him were not following the spirit of God, but were instead following the spirit of the Adversary. They were, in fact, the "seed" or children of the devil. Their enmity or hatred towards Jesus, led them to crucify him on the cross.

- **John 8:38, 42, 44** "I speak the things which I have seen with my Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father. Jesus said to them, If God were your Father, you would love me... You are of **your father the devil**, and you want to do the desires of your father."
- **Matthew 27:23, 25** "...Crucify him! And all the people said, His blood shall be on us and on our children!"

Hatred towards the Body Members

Jesus gave a parable about the Wheat and Tares that would prepare his followers for the hatred they too would face.

The Parable of the Wheat and Tares

- **Matthew 13:24–26** "Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also."
- **Matthew 13:38–39** "and the field is the world; and as for the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels."

Parable of the Wheat and Tares
➤ The field is the world
➤ The good seed are the followers of Jesus
➤ The tares are the false Christians
➤ The enemy who sowed the tares is Satan
➤ The reapers are the messengers of Truth

Since Jesus' day there are two groups of Christians in the world (field), the good seed (true Christians) and the tare seed (imitation or false Christians). These false Christians have opposed and persecuted the true Christians. Thus, there is enmity (hostility and hatred) between Satan with his seed, and the "seed of the woman."

- **Matthew 24:9** "Then they will hand you over to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name."
- **Matthew 5:11, 12** "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in this same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

When and how will the seed crush the serpents head?

WHO? THE Christ (Head + Body) together, are the “seed of the woman” who will be instrumental in destroying Satan and his evil power.

- **Romans 16:20** “The God of peace [thru Christ and the Church] will soon crush Satan under your feet.”

WHEN? This work cannot begin until the seed is complete. All mankind are waiting for the completion of the Church, the 144,000. It must first be selected, developed and exalted to power.

- **Romans 8:22–23** “For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.”

HOW? Satan and his followers, as well as all sin in every shape and form will eventually be destroyed. After which, Christ turns over the Kingdom to the Heavenly Father.

- **Revelation 20:1–3** “Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed...”
- **Hebrews 2:14** “...that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.”
- **1 Corinthians 15:25** “For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet.”
- **1 Corinthians 15:24, 28** “then comes the end, when He hands over the kingdom to our God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.”

THE Christ (the seed) will finally deliver the final, fatal blow to the head of the serpent. Satan and all sin will finally be destroyed, and the everlasting Kingdom of peace and righteousness will be fully operational.



THIS will be the fulfillment of the prophecy made in the Garden of Eden!

THE THREE WAYS

Goal of this Study: Looking at the three ways mentioned in the Bible... **WHERE** do they lead?

WHO opened each way? **WHAT** is the reward of walking on each way? **WHEN** did each one of them open?

WHICH way is Jesus encouraging us to walk on? **WHAT** hope is there for all people?

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol. 1, pp.205–218

Matthew 7:13, 14 “Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

Many Christians understand these gates to be leading to either heaven or hell. Is that true?

THE BROAD WAY

What is the BROAD WAY? What does it mean that it leads to destruction?

“Many who enter through it”— the vast majority of the world are walking in this way.

- **Proverbs 14:12** “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”
- **Luke 13:24** “Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”

The life path or way of the world of mankind “seems right” to them now, but the end thereof is “the way of death” What kind of “way” would it be that would end “in the way of death”? The answer is in

- **Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin is death...”

Death is the **result of sin**, so this must be the way of sin; **death** is the “destruction” mentioned here.

First death in the Bible (Cain and Abel)



We read in **Genesis 4:3–12** how Cain killed his brother. We can assume Adam and Eve tried to wake him up, thinking he was asleep, but finally they realized this is what God meant in the Garden of Eden.

- **Genesis 2:17** “But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

They died from God’s divine favor and now they and their offspring literally began to die.

The original sin in the Garden of Eden brought death and destruction upon all the human race (and the earth itself). “Many who enter through it” refers to the world’s many billions of humanity who, without some kind of intervention, would continue to be born and die, generation after generation, without hope of anything different.

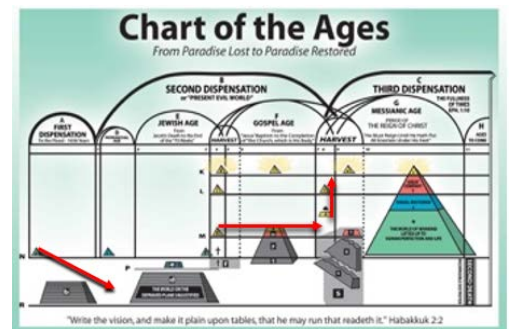
This BROAD WAY of sin has been AN INHERITED CONDITION

All people at birth are born on this broad way because of inherited sin.

- **Psalms 51:5** “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.”

Was David speaking only of himself? No, because the Apostle Paul says the same thing about us all.

- **Romans 5:12** “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all mankind, because all sinned.”



Sin has developed to such an extent, and mankind have so completely lost sight of righteousness that this “way seems right to a man.”

- **Proverbs 14:12** “There is a way which seems right to a person, But its end is the way of death.”
- **Isaiah 5:20** “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness”

Sins are normalized in today’s society. Lines are blurred between what is ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ making them subjective for each individual’s feelings.

The Time from Adam to Jesus

God gave Israel the Law through Moses.

- **Galatians 3:12** “...The Law is not of faith; on the contrary, he who practices them shall live by them.”

But NONE could gain life through the law for God’s perfect law could NOT ever be kept by fallen and imperfect man. **Galatians 2:16** Even with the Law, all of Israel continued dying like the rest of mankind. This then, was the BROAD WAY leading to “destruction” or death. This was the **only** way open until the coming of Jesus for both the World and Israel.

THE NARROW WAY

WHAT is the Narrow Way? WHERE is it pictured?

- **Hebrews 10:19, 20** “Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh.”

Through his death, resurrection and ascension, Jesus opened “a new and living way”—A WAY TO LIFE. This is the “way” Jesus referred to in our original verse **Matthew 7:14** “...the way is narrow that leads to life...” “Life” is a broad and comprehensive term, but here our Lord uses it in reference to that highest form of life, pertaining to the divine nature—immortality—the prize for which He invited us to run.

Even though the NARROW WAY leads to immortal life, it might be described as a path of self-denial and transformation, since its prize is gained through the death of the old creature and the sacrifice of the human nature even unto death. It is the NARROW WAY of dying to the old self in order to attain life. Being reckoned free from Adamic guilt and the death penalty, the consecrated voluntarily surrender or sacrifice the human rights they would have received with the rest of the world when raised from the dead. As “the man Christ Jesus” laid down or sacrificed his life for the world, so these become joint-sacrificers with him.



The tearing of the veil in the Temple leading into the MOST HOLY at the death of Jesus was a sign of the opening of this NARROW WAY.

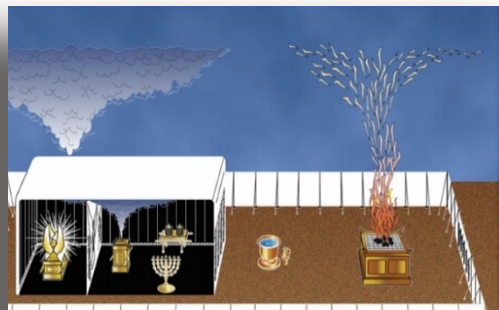
- **Matthew 27:51** (KJV) “And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.”

The MOST HOLY room of the Temple symbolized heaven, the place where God’s justice could be satisfied. When Jesus died, he paid the ransom price for sin and opened access to God through his blood for both the Church (his most faithful followers promised a heavenly reward) and the rest of the world (who will be raised from the dead, on earth). After his death, resurrection and ascension, believers could then be called with a heavenly calling to be resurrected in heaven.

- **Hebrews 10:19–20** (ESV) “Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh.”

The Apostle Paul makes a connection between the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the way Jesus opened.

- **Hebrews 9:8–9** “The Holy Spirit is signifying this, that the way into the holy place has not yet been disclosed while the outer tabernacle is still standing, which is a symbol for the present time. Accordingly, both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make the worshipper perfect in conscience.”
- **Hebrews 10:19–20** “Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh.”



This NARROW WAY leads to the HEAVENLY SALVATION.

- **Hebrews 2:3** “How will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?”
- **Philippians 3:14** “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

What “life” does the NARROW WAY lead to?

- MORTALS are beings who have life but can die. They are dependent on an outside source for life. All living creatures in heaven (spirit beings) and on earth (Adam and his descendants) were created as mortal.
- IMMORTALS have life within themselves. They are NOT dependent on an outside source for life. Immortality is the highest nature that can exist in the universe. Immortality means death is not a possibility.
 - **Romans 2:7** “To those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.”

What about the human race?

Perfect mortal living beings have a **right to life**.

All the children of Adam are imperfect and are not even referred to as mortal, but as already “dead.” Because of the fall in Eden, all are born to die, having no **right** to live at all.

- **Luke 9:60** “...Allow the dead to bury their own dead...”

What about Jesus?

Jesus died as a MORTAL, PERFECT human being on the cross.

- **Revelation 1:18** “the living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive.”

But after Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascension, he was given immortality, life within himself.

- **John 5:26** “For just as the Father has life in Himself, so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself”
- **Revelation 1:18** “...I am alive forevermore.”

What about Jesus’ followers?

Jesus’ faithful followers in this Gospel Age are promised the **divine nature** or **immortality**.

- **2 Peter 1:4** “... so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature...”
- **1 Corinthians 15:53** “For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.”
- **Revelation 20:6** “Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power...”

However, the gate is narrow, so very few enter this narrow way because the standard of following Jesus is very high.

- **Romans 12:1** “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”
- **Philippians 1:29** “For to you it has been granted for Christ’s sake, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake.”
- **2 Timothy 2:11,12** “It is a trustworthy statement: for if we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us.”

The Narrow way is not just believing in Jesus, but one must follow the master into **sacrifice and unto death**.

- **Matthew 16:24** "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."
- **Matthew 19:24** "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Jesus gives us an example of the great difficulty camels had to go through the narrow door after the sunset to enter Jerusalem. Similarly, all of us, including those that have more of the earthly goods, have to bow down, unload all our burdens, desires and go through. With **Him** all things are possible.

The Highway of Holiness

Who is the Highway for? Who will walk on it?

If the NARROW WAY is only for the most faithful Christians today, is there hope for the rest of the world? Yes!

The Bible teaches that God, through His mercy and grace, provides mankind with not one, but two paths to salvation; one present and one future. Both paths are made possible by the sacrifice Jesus made on behalf of mankind.

Isaiah 35:8–10 "A highway will be there, a roadway, and it will be called the **Highway of Holiness**. The unclean will not travel on it, but it will be for him who walks that way, and fools will not wander on it. No lion will be there, nor will any vicious beast go up on it; these will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."

- *"A highway will be there, ...called the Highway of Holiness."* This replaces the BROAD ROAD TO DESTRUCTION.
- *"The unclean will not travel on it, but ... for him who walks that way."* Sinners will be educated as they go.
- *"Fools will not wander on it."*
 - ✦ **Psalm 14:1** "The fool has said in his heart, There is no God."
- On this highway, they will not err in their understanding.
 - ✦ **Isaiah 29:24** "Those who err in mind will know the truth, and those who criticize will accept instruction."
- *"No lion will be there."* Satan will be bound at the beginning of the Kingdom, before the highway is opened.
 - ✦ **1 Peter 5:8** "Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour."
 - ✦ **Revelation 20:3** "and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer..."
- *"Nor will any vicious beast go up on it; these will not be found there."* These refer to all Satan's systems and sources of evil that take mankind away from God, leading to sin and destruction (death).
- *"But the redeemed will walk there, and the ransomed of the Lord will return."* The world of mankind that walked on the BROAD WAY, now by the grace of Jesus' ransom sacrifice, will return by the awakening of the dead. **Daniel 12:2**

How and when will this Kingdom work?

This second path to salvation will not open until the **future**, after all those who walked the NARROW WAY (the consecrated) have been given ample opportunity to prove their faithfulness. After the full number has been judged and gathered, the rest of mankind will begin to be raised from death and restored to perfect human life.

This time is the "restitution of all things" the Apostle Paul refers to in **Acts 3:21**. "Restitution" means restoring something to a previous, usually superior, state. Mankind will be restored to the perfect human state that Adam and Eve experienced prior to their disobedience.

However, even though people will be restored to life, they will start out with much the same minds and hearts that they had when they died. Just as in Adam and Eve's time, God cannot and will not tolerate sin. Mankind, will need to be "re-educated" after being raised from the dead. This future work will include all mankind.

There will be many aids to make the process easier; the chief of which will be Satan's binding. **Revelation 20:2** Satan's influence caused Adam and Eve's original disobedience (**Genesis 3:4**) and has been deceiving mankind to varying degrees ever since. With Satan bound, his influences will not be able to deceive and consume ("devour like a lion") people like they do today. Returning to God and following His ways will thus be much more straightforward during this future time than it is for those who strive "to walk by faith" in the present time.

This future period of all people returning to God is compared to a "Highway of Holiness." It will be like a "highway" because, in contrast to the NARROW WAY of "walking by faith and not by sight," it will be traveled by every person who ever lived, and not just a select few who hear and respond to God's calling today. The whole of mankind, redeemed from mankind's death penalty by Jesus, will have every advantage to return to God ("the redeemed shall walk there"). Mankind will live under a **new**, righteous and permanent world government.

- **1 Corinthians 15:22** "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive."
- **Acts 24:15** (KJV) "...that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."
- **1 John 2:2** "He himself [Jesus] is the propitiation for our sins [His faithful followers; the Church class]; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world [the 'everybody else']."
- **1 Timothy 2:6** "who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time."
- **1 Timothy 2:4** (KJV) "Who [God] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."
- **Isaiah 51:11** "And the redeemed of the Lord will return And come to Zion with joyful shouting, And everlasting joy will be on their heads. They will obtain gladness and joy, And sorrow and sighing will flee away."

What will be the steps to salvation?

Deliverance from death, from graves. Having risen from the dead, the person will retain the same body and characteristics, but in a perfected state. While their mental and physical traits will remain, any physical deficiencies or ailments, such as those caused by disease or injury, will be removed, ensuring a whole and restored condition.

- **Luke 13:29, 30** "And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last."
- **Job 19:26, 27** "Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another."

Deliverance from sin. The purification from the ways of sin and old habit is only possible through the power of the TRUTH! This will be possible because...

- **Habakkuk 2:14** "For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of...the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."

How will people come to a knowledge of the truth?

ALL the world's "eyes" and "ears" of understanding will be opened from Satan's blinding effects. Gradually, ignorance and blindness will be completely removed.

- **Isaiah 29:18** "On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see."
- **Isaiah 32:3** "Then the eyes of those who see will not be blinded, and the ears of those who hear will listen."
- **2 Corinthians 4:4** "...The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving..."
- **Habakkuk 2:14** "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."
- **Isaiah 25:7** (KJV) "And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the **covering** cast over all people, and the **veil** that is spread over all nations."
 - ✦ **Covering:** the inherited sin and death from Adam covering over ALL mankind.
 - ✦ **Veil:** the blinding of the eyes of understanding of all mankind. **Isaiah 60:2**

Human perfection will be restored gradually

People will then go day by day from the old condition to becoming young!

- **Job 33:25** "Let his flesh become fresher than in youth, Let him return to the days of his youthful vigor."
- **Isaiah 35:6** "Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness and streams in the Arabah."

There will be a generous trial period.

- **Isaiah 65:20** "No longer will there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not live out his days...and the one who does not reach the age of one hundred will be thought accursed."

Will there be any willfully disobedient people at that time?

We expect so, in spite of God's grace and mercy.

- **Isaiah 26:10** "Though the wicked is shown favor, he does not learn righteousness; he deals unjustly in the land of uprightness..."
- **Acts 3:23** "...Every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people."

Jesus gave the Parable of the Sheep and Goats which shows the final judgment process, pictured as a sorting of "sheep" and "goats."

- **Matthew 25:31–33** "But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him; and he will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and he will put the sheep on his right, and the goats on the left."
 - Verses 34–40: Jesus describes the king (a symbol of himself) talking to those on the right, the "sheep." He lists the positive services and acts performed by this class which made them worthy of being separated out onto the right.
 - Verses 41–46: Jesus describes the negative actions performed by the "goats" that caused them to be separated out onto the left. Those of mankind who, after being taught God's ways in perfect conditions, still choose to lapse into selfish or disobedient minds and hearts will be "cut off" or destroyed.
 - Once this judgment has been completed, only those of mankind in full harmony with God and His ways will remain, and mankind will enter into the unimaginable wonder of the untold ages to come.
- **Isaiah 11:9** "They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."
- **Psalms 22:27, 28** "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will worship before You. For the kingdom is the LORD's and He rules over the nations."
- **Revelation 21:4** "And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

	Broad Way	Narrow Way	Highway
When is it open?			
Who opened?			
Who walks on it?			
Where does it lead to?			
Main Bible Verse			

OUR LORD'S RETURN

The Object, Manner, and Timing of Jesus' Second Advent

Goal of this study: **WHY** did Jesus have to leave the earth and ascend to heaven?

WHAT is the purpose of Jesus' return to earth? **HOW** and in **WHAT** way will Jesus return to earth?

WHEN did Jesus return to earth? **WHY** is this important to us?

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol. 1, Chap. 6; and Vol. 2, Chap. 5

WHY did Jesus have to leave the earth and ascend to heaven?

It is important to understand the **purpose** of Jesus's first and second 'advent'. We use the word advent to describe the time periods Jesus is on earth. Oxford Dictionary definition: *the arrival of a notable person, thing or event.*

The First Advent: This period starts with Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and includes his baptism and ministry, his death on the cross, and his resurrection. The first advent ends with his ascension to the Father in heaven.

The purpose of the first advent was to **provide the ransom** for all mankind.

- **1 Timothy 2:5-6 (KJV)** "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

This scripture clearly states Jesus died as "a ransom for all." This was his mission while on earth as a man. This scripture also says this ransom would be "testified in due time," that the effect of paying the ransom price (the blessing of all the families of the earth) would not come immediately, but at a later fixed time.

On the night before his crucifixion, Jesus prepared his followers for his death.

- **John 14:19** "After a little while the world will no longer see me..."

But he left his followers with a promise that he would return.

- **John 14:3** "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also."

He then told them why he had to leave.

- **John 16:7** "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the helper [the "comforter" in KJV] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him [it] to you."

Helper/comforter = the Holy Spirit (God's power and influence) that has been working throughout the Gospel Age to call the Church or 'little flock.' Jesus had to leave so that through the influence of God's Holy Spirit, a '**bride**' could be selected for Jesus, who will share in the blessing of all families of the earth in the Kingdom!

Of course, Jesus assured his followers he would always be with them by his spirit and through the word of God to guide, comfort, and cheer them during their afflictions.

- **Matthew 28:20** "...lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

We are told to **watch for a personal presence**, because Jesus promised "I will come again." The Apostle John confirms this hope and ends the final book of the Bible with this statement:

- **Revelation 22:20** "He [Jesus] who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."



WHAT is the purpose of Jesus' return to earth?

The Second Advent: This period begins with Jesus' return as an invisible spirit being to earth to set up his Kingdom and reign as king. This period includes the time of trouble, the resurrection of the dead, and the restitution of mankind to perfection.

The purpose of the second advent is to **restore mankind**.

- **Acts 3:20–21** (KJV) "And He [God] shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: **Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things**, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

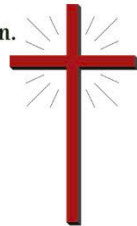
This scripture clearly states "heaven must receive" or retain Jesus until "the times of restitution of all things." This time was spoken of by "all His holy prophets." In the writings of the prophets, so many foretold of a wonderful time yet future—the Kingdom!

Here are just a few: **Isaiah 11:4–9, Isaiah 35, Jeremiah 31:34, Habakkuk 2:14, Micah 4:3**. Can you think of more?



First Advent

- Jesus came to **PAY** the ransom for Adam's sin.
- Jesus came to offer Israel deliverance.
- Jesus came to call out a people for his name from Jews first AND THEN Gentiles.
- Jesus came to convict Satan and declare the end of his reign of evil.
- Jesus came to heal and teach Israel so the people would recognize him as their Savior.



Second Advent

- Jesus returns to **APPLY** the ransom for Adam's sin.
- Jesus returns to restore and deliver Israel.
- Jesus returns to bring ALL people to his name through his called-out ones.
- Jesus returns to build a new heavens and a new earth without Satan's influence.
- Jesus returns to heal and teach ALL nations so they will recognize and follow him as their Redeemer and obey God as their sovereign ruler.

The Lord's return is the **dawn of hope for the world!** Once the selection of the little flock is finished, then the work of giving mankind the great blessings secured by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross will be due to start, and THE Christ (Jesus and his Church) will come forth to bless ALL the families of the earth!

HOW and in WHAT way will Jesus return to earth?

It is very important to understand the **way** or **manner** in which Jesus returns to earth. We know Jesus came to earth as a man, he died, and was then resurrected as a spirit being. Therefore, Jesus will return as a spirit being.

- **1 Peter 3:18** "...having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."

We are given a hint of **how** Jesus will return from when he ascended to heaven at the end of his first advent.

- **Acts 1:9–11** "And after he had said these things, he was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while he was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched him go into heaven."

At his first advent, Jesus ascended to heaven without great show and with only his closest followers observing his departure. At his second advent, in the same way, **only his closest followers** who are keenly watching **will perceive his return!**

Jesus returns to earth as an invisible spirit being at a time unknown by the world at large.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:2** “For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.”
- **Revelation 16:15** “Behold, I am coming like a thief..”

How does a thief act? Quietly, stealthily and without attracting attention—otherwise a thief’s plans would be foiled! Just so with Jesus’ return!

Jesus foretold that his return would go largely unnoticed, just like the flood in the time of Noah.

- **Matthew 24:37–39** “For the coming [Greek word *parousia* meaning “presence”] of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

In the same way, the world today goes about its business as usual, giving no heed to the seasons and signs until the time of trouble comes and the Kingdom of God is fully established.

Why is his return a secret?

- **Matthew 24:43** “But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.”
- The master of this present evil world is Satan. Jesus surprised him just like a thief in order to set up the Kingdom.

Other scriptures seem to indicate Jesus will literally be seen, but a closer understanding of the Greek words shows this ‘sight’ is actually a mental understanding. For example, someone might ask, “Can you see what I’m saying?” This means, “Do you understand my point?”

- **Revelation 1:7** (κν) “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see [discern] him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”

At this time the world can only understand “see” the clouds of trouble which hail Jesus’ presence. There will come a time when blindness will be removed and everyone will understand that Jesus reigns.

- **Matthew 24:27** “For just as the lightning [Greek word *astrapē* meaning “bright shining”] comes from the east and flashes even to the west, so will the coming [Greek word *parousia* meaning “presence”] of the Son of Man be.”

How beautiful the figure of a sunrise illustrates the **gradual** dawning of truth and blessing in the time of his presence.

- **Matthew 13:43** “Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father...”
- **Malachi 4:2** “...the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings...”

The dawning is gradual, but finally the full, clear brightness shall banish the darkness of evil, ignorance, superstition and sin.

WHEN does Jesus return to earth?

At Jesus’ first advent, there was no sudden and surprising event that marked his arrival and his presence. This is not God’s method in revealing His plans. Jesus’ first advent was manifested and proven to his followers by a **gradual fulfillment of prophecy**, showing thoughtful observers that the events which were expected were being fulfilled on time. The same method should be expected for his second advent.

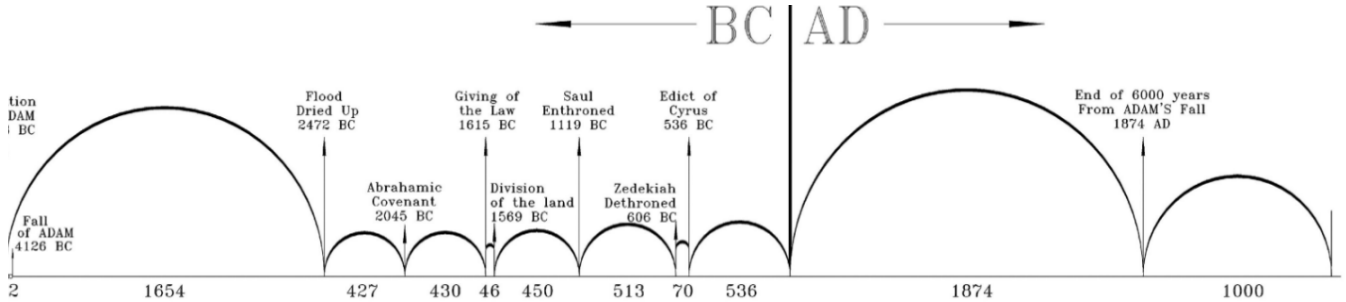
Jesus returned invisibly to set up the Kingdom in 1874.

- Three proofs point to 1874 as the exact year of Jesus’ return:
 - **Bible Chronology**
 - **Jubilee Cycles**
 - **Days of Daniel**

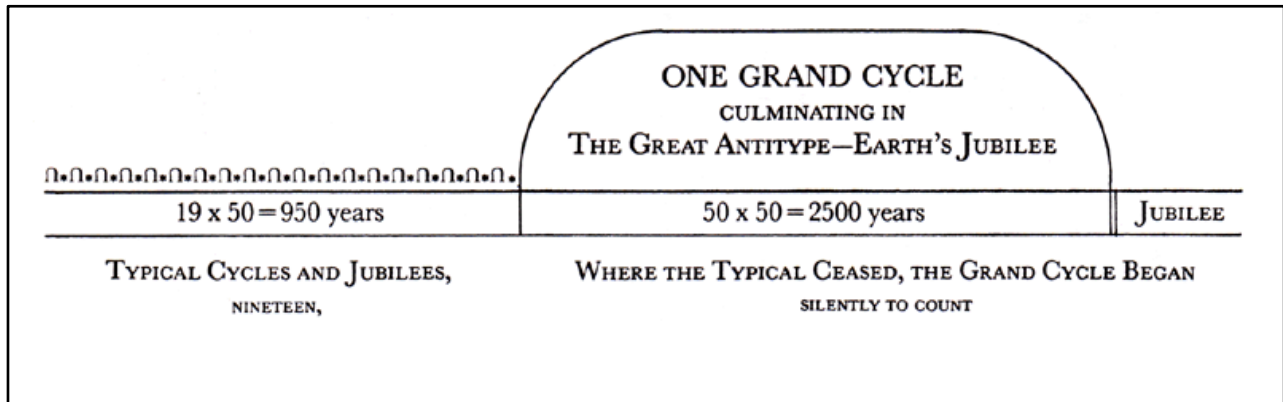
For more details see: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol. 2, Chap. 2 & 7; Vol. 3, Chap. 3.

Here's a brief explanation of all three!

Bible Chronology: By adding up the time periods in the Bible, we find that 6,000 years from Adam's creation ended in 1872AD. The Bible contains many examples of six periods of labor followed by a seventh sabbath period of rest and freedom. Jesus declared himself to be "Lord of the Sabbath" ([Matthew 12:8](#), [Luke 6:5](#)) and that he would reign for 1,000 years. [Revelation 20:6](#) Earth's great antitypical 1,000-year Sabbath began 6,000 years from Adam's fall, **which was exactly in the year in 1874AD.**



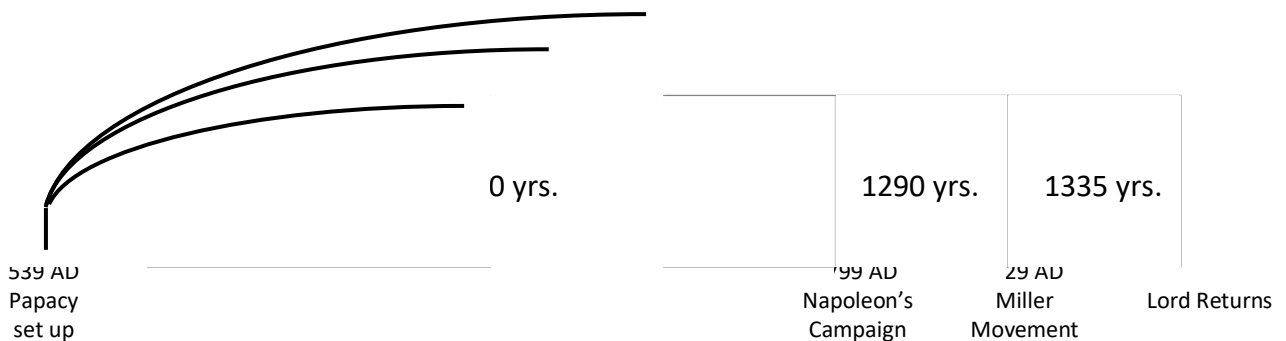
The Jubilee Cycles: The Jubilee ([Leviticus 25:10–15](#)) foreshadowed the great restitution and recovery of mankind from the fall, the "restitution of all things." [Acts 3:21 \(KJV\)](#) The observation of the typical Jubilee ended when Israel was taken captive to Babylon, and the last cycle ended in 626BC. At that time, a great antitypical Jubilee cycle (50 years x 50 cycles or 2,500 years) began to count towards the restitution of all things. **That Grand Jubilee cycle ended exactly in the year 1874AD.**



The Days of Daniel: In the book of Daniel, we are told Michael (Jesus) will **stand up** (assume control) at the **Time of the End**. Daniel 12 gives three time periods of prophetic days (literal years) to mark important events around that time: 1,260 days, 1,290 days and 1,335 days, the last of which is to **especially** looked forward to.

- [Daniel 12:12](#) "How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!"

These periods all start at the same point, when the abomination of desolation ([Daniel 11:31, 12:11–12](#)) was set up. This occurred in 539AD when Papacy was set up in temporal power. Adding 1,335 years to 539AD brings us **exactly to the year of our Lord's return in 1874AD.**



If Jesus did return to bless all mankind, then WHY is there still so much trouble in the world?

While the faithful followers have been waiting eagerly for the Kingdom, the Scriptures indicate that at the time of our Lord's return, the world would be a very tumultuous place.

Jesus must first **dismantle this present evil order** before the peaceable Kingdom can begin.

- **Daniel 12:1** (KJV) "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time..."

The reign of Christ will last 1,000 years. **Revelation 20:4** The first part of this reign in which God's Kingdom is being gradually set up is the same time in which the kingdoms of this world are passing away and Satan's power and influence over men are being bound. This transition period is described by the Apostle John.

- **Revelation 11:15, 18** "Then the seventh angel sounded; and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever. And the nations were enraged, and Your wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to reward Your bond-servants the prophets and the saints and those who fear Your name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth."

Christ, with royal title and power, is present on earth as God's representative, taking charge of all the affairs during this time of trouble so that he may order and establish the Kingdom.

Once Jesus has subdued all things, then as the Prince of Peace, He and the Church will bring blessings for all mankind.

- **Revelation 21:1, 4–5** (KJV) "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."

Why is understanding the object, manner and timing of Jesus's second advent important to us?

Understanding the object, manner and timing of Jesus' return should give us hope in the time of trouble and inspiration that the Kingdom so long waited for is right at the door!

- The Lord promised we would **not be ignorant of his return and of events to come**.
 - ✦ **1 Thessalonians 5:4** "But you, brethren, are not in darkness, that the day would overtake you like a thief."
- **Special blessings of present truth** are promised at the time of our Lord's return to those who are waiting.
 - ✦ **Luke 12:37** (KJV) "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."
- It gives us **comfort in the perilous times**.
 - ✦ **Luke 21:28** "But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."
- **Jesus' return marks the start of the Kingdom** and an end to sickness, sorrow, sin and death...forever!
 - ✦ **1 Corinthians 15:26–27** "The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For He has put all things in subjection under his feet. But when He says, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to him."

THE TRINITY

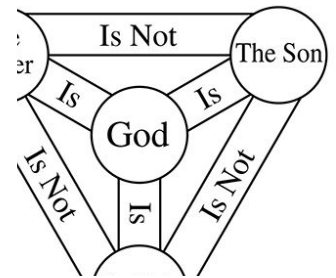
Goal of this Study: **WHAT** do the Scriptures teach about the relationship between God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit?
WHEN and **HOW** did this concept of a trinity begin?
WHAT are the scriptural implications of this belief?

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol. 5 pp.54–82; Reprints 1410 and 5747

What is the doctrine of the trinity?

Catholic Catechism (Wikipedia: Trinity): “The Christian doctrine of the Trinity (Latin: *Trinitas*, lit. 'triad', from Latin: *trinus* threefold') is the central doctrine concerning the nature of God in most Christian churches, which defines one God existing in three coequal, coeternal, consubstantial divine persons: God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ) and God the Holy Spirit, three distinct persons (*hypostases*) sharing one essence/substance/nature (*homoousion*).”

Christian website (GotQuestions.com): “The Trinity is Christianity’s most unique, defining, incomprehensible, and awesome mystery. It is the revelation of who our Almighty Creator actually is—not just a god, but an infinite Being existing in eternity as three co-equal, infinite Persons, consubstantial yet distinct. The origin of the doctrine of the Trinity is the Bible, although the word ‘Trinity’ is not used in the Bible. As all orthodox Christians agree, the doctrine of the Trinity holds that God is one essence but three Persons; God has one nature, but three centers of consciousness; God is only one What, but three Who’s. Some unbelievers mistakenly call this a contradiction. Rather, the doctrine of the Trinity is a mystery revealed by God in His Word. A contradiction would be to claim that God has only one nature but also three natures, or that He is only one Person but also three Persons.”



- Note: Trinitarians differ greatly on what they believe comprises the nature of God.

Where in the Bible is the word “trinity” found?

“Trinity” is not found in Scripture. However, a Trinitarian will quickly point to these verses:

- **1 John 5:7–8** Nearly all scholars agree this verse is not found in the oldest Greek manuscripts but was added after the 4th century AD. It is not found in most modern translations.
- **Isaiah 6:3** and **Revelation 4:8** These verses use the phrase “Holy, Holy, Holy” to describe God. Some Trinitarians would argue that this phrase points to the Trinity, describing God with the same three words repeated.
- **John 1:1** (This verse will be addressed later.)
- **John 10:30** (This verse will be addressed later.)

Did you know . . .

There is a well-known hymn sung in Christian churches entitled *Holy, Holy, Holy* which includes the lyrics:
*Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed*

We use the same hymn in our *Hymns of Dawn* book (#223) but have changed the lyrics:
*Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in The Highest, blessed Majesty!*



When was the trinity added to Christendom's beliefs?

- The term was coined by Theophilus of Antioch (died 183AD) a full 150 years after our Savior's crucifixion. "Trinity" according to Theophilus did not refer to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Theophilus himself puts it as "God, his Word (Logos) and his Wisdom." Arguments to define "trinity" took place over the next 200 years.
- The **First Council of Nicaea** was held in Nicaea, a city in Turkey, in 325AD. It was here the **Nicene Creed** was born. It wasn't until the Second Council met in 381AD, that the creed was amended to include the Holy Spirit, and thus the concept of a 'trinity' was established.
- At the first Council of Nicaea, Constantine the Great was the emperor of the Roman empire, and he wanted to define Christian beliefs. The council met from May through July 325AD. It was "historically significant as the first effort to attain consensus in the church through an assembly representing all of Christendom. [Constantine] invited all 1,800 bishops of the Christian church within the Roman Empire (about 1,000 in the East and 800 in the West). The Council was the first occasion where the technical aspects of Christology were discussed. Through it a precedent was set for subsequent general councils to adopt creeds **and canons...**" (*Wikipedia*)
- There were two famous leaders at the Nicene Council who argued opposing ideas about the definition of Christ:

Arius—believed God and Jesus were separate beings, that Jesus was the son of God who existed before becoming a man, and the very first thing God ever created was the Logos. Only God had no beginning. Jesus was created and begotten of God.

Athanasius—a very popular priest who believed Jesus "was begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father." (*Nicene Creed*)



"After almost three hundred years of persecution, Christianity made an astonishing breakthrough in 324 when Constantine the Great became the emperor of Rome. No longer fearing for their own survival, Christians turned to the question of how to define what beliefs identified a 'true' Christian. Led by two charismatic priests—Arius who preached that Jesus, though uniquely holy, is less than God, and Athanasius who argued that Jesus is God himself in human form—the debate over Jesus' degree of divinity escalated from heated argument to violence and bloodshed."

When Jesus Became God by Richard E. Rubenstein

Eusebius of Caesarea was an influential historian, theologian and powerful bishop who participated in the Council of Nicaea. Although he initially showed some sympathy for Arius' views, he eventually signed the Nicene Creed after modifications were made to address his concerns. He introduced the concept of *homoousios* [a Greek word that means "same in being, same in essence"] into the creed.

What are some scriptures that would seem to support the view of Arius?

- **1 Corinthians 8:6** "For us there is only one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through him."
- **Colossians 1:15–17** "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation: for by him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or rulers, or authorities—all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."
- **Proverbs 8:22–31** "The Lord created me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. From eternity I was established, from the beginning, from the earliest times of the earth. When there were no ocean depths, I was born, when there were no springs abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was born..."
- **John 14:28** "The Father is greater than I."
- **John 13:16** "Truly, truly I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him."
- **1 Corinthians 15:27–28** "For He has put all things in subjection under his feet. But when He says, All things are put in subjection, it is clear that this excludes the Father who put all things in subjection to him. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the son himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
- **Revelation 3:14** "To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Origin of the creation of God, says this..."

*"A sharp distinction should be drawn between a confession of faith in a Trinity, and a confession of faith in the Unity of the heavenly Father, Jehovah, and the heavenly Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Trinity holds that the Father, the Son and the holy Spirit "are one in person, equal in glory and in power," as stated in the church creeds. The Bible, while showing the absolute **Unity** between the Father and Son and holy Spirit in the various steps of the great plan of salvation, most positively contradicts the thought that the Father and Son are one in person, denies that they are equal in majesty and in power, except as before shown (Philippians 2:9), that the Father has glorified the Son, has highly exalted him and given him a name above all others except his own, making him his agent and representative in the exercise of "all power in heaven and in earth."*

Vol. 5, p.59

What are some scriptures that would seem to support the view of Athanasius?

- **John 10:30** "I and the Father are one." They are one in purpose. Jesus prophetically says:
- **Psalms 40:8** "I delight to do Your will, my God! Your Law is within my heart."
- **John 1:1** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

At first glance this Scripture causes some confusion, but what is the meaning in the Greek?

*"...where the word **Theos** is used twice in the same clause the Greek Prepositive Article is sometimes used, so as to give the effect of **the God** in contrast with **a God**. An illustration of this is found in John 1:1—"The Word was with **the** God [ho theos] and the Word was **a** God [theos]." Vol. 5, p.70*

*"[Jesus] was **a god** (Mighty One) before he came into the world; he also was a god from the time he received the begetting of the Holy Spirit at Jordan; and he is still a god, set down at the right hand of the Father. But he is not **THE** God; he never was and never will be. Note again his own words after his resurrection, when speaking to Mary Magdalene: John 20:17 "I ascend to my Father and your Father; to my God and your God." Reprint 5748*

- **Colossians 2:9** (KJV) "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead [Greek *theotes*] **bodily**." (NASB20) "For in him all the fullness of Deity [Greek *theotes*] **dwells in bodily form**."

In the NASB, "Deity" is the correct translation. **Deity** can simply mean "of divine status, quality or nature," but it has taken on the definition in Christianity of "the Creator or Supreme Being" and applied to the trinity. *Theotes* is rendered Godhead in Colossians 2:9; whereas it should be translated Deity. This is the only occurrence of this word in the New Testament. See Vol. 5, p.71

- **Philippians 2:5–7** “Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, as he already existed in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a bond-servant and being born in the likeness of men.”

The meaning of this verse “*is that when our Lord Jesus was a spirit being, when he had a God-like form and nature, he was not filled with an ambitious spirit, and a desire to usurp divine authority and power and glory and homage—he was not of the spirit of Satan, who strove to exalt himself, saying, ‘I will be as the Most High.’ Isaiah 14:14 On the contrary, although he occupied the highest position, next to the Heavenly Father, he was so humble minded that, in obedience to the Father's will, he divested himself of the glories and majesty of his spirit condition, exchanging that higher nature and glory for a lower condition, a human condition.*” Vol. 5, p.81 (See Vol. 5, pp.79–81)

- **John 14:7–9** “If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you know Him, and have seen Him. Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us. Jesus said to him, Have I been with you for so long a time, and yet you have not come to know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say, Show us the Father?”

We know the disciples were not literally beholding the Father when they looked at Jesus because:

- ✦ **Exodus 33:20** “You cannot see My face, for mankind shall not see Me and live!”
- ✦ **John 1:18** “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared Him.”

In other words, Jesus was showing us the Father with who he was, how he behaved, what he said.

“*God's mind, God's will, was **fully represented** in his Only Begotten Son, our Lord, when he was made flesh and dwelt amongst men. He therefore was the best, the closest, the most positive representation of God that it was or ever would be **possible to give to mankind.***” Vol. 5, p.77

Read Jesus’ prayer in John 17. Do these verses support the concept of a trinity?

John 17:9, 20–23 “I ask on their behalf. I do not ask on behalf of the world, but on the behalf of those whom You have given me, because they are Yours. ...I am not asking on behalf of these alone, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent me. The glory which You have given me I also have given to them, so that they may be one, just as We are one. I in them and You in me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent me, and You lovec

“*Here the oneness of the Church, for which the Lord prayed, is specially stated to be exactly the same as the oneness between the Father and the Son. That the oneness of the Church is **oneness of mind** and **not a personal oneness** needs no discussion. Evidently the thought in the Redeemer's mind was oneness of heart, oneness of purpose, oneness of will, amongst his followers; **and that oneness identical with the oneness between the Father and himself.** And this oneness was to be attained on the part of the Church in the same manner exactly as the oneness between the Father and the Son was attained. The Son was at one with the Father because he fully accepted as his own **the Father's will**, saying, “Not my will but thine be done.” So, each member of the Church is to come into perfect harmony with the Father, and with the Son, by doing not their own wills, but by setting aside their own wills and accepting the **will of Christ**, which is the **will of the Father.** Thus, and thus only, will the Church ever come into the **oneness** for which our Lord here prayed, and which he refers to as of the same kind as the **oneness** between the Father and himself. How strange that any should attempt to misuse and pervert these our Lord's words, to make them support the unreasonable and unscriptural doctrine of a Trinity—three Gods in **one person.** On the contrary, how beautiful and reasonable is the Scriptural **oneness** of the spirit of the Father and Son and Church.” Vol. 5, pp.75–76*



Who is the Great "I AM"? How is this a reference to the trinity in the Christian world?

- Unfortunately, some scriptures in the Old Testament that refer to Jehovah have been linked to Jesus' words in the Gospel of John to support a Trinitarian view. The most notable one is found in Exodus and is the basis for the thinking that Jesus is referring to himself as God in the New Testament.

"And God said to Moses, I AM WHO I AM, and He said,
This is what you shall say to the sons of Israel:
I AM has sent me to you."

Exodus 3:14

- "God's reply [to Moses] was the giving of his name, Jehovah, for the words, "I am that I am," signify the same as the name Jehovah—the self-existent one, the one who always exists." Reprint 3990
- Modern Christians have taken this verse in Exodus (and others notably from Isaiah) and have claimed that when Jesus says, "I am..." he is giving us a hint that he is God himself. These verses are found in John.

- ✦ **John 6:35** — [I am](#) the bread of life...
- ✦ **John 8:12** — [I am](#) the light of the world...
- ✦ **John 10:9** — [I am](#) the door...
- ✦ **John 10:1** — [I am](#) the good shepherd
- ✦ **John 11:25** — [I am](#) the resurrection and the life
- ✦ **John 14:6** — [I am](#) the way and the truth and the life...
- ✦ **John 15:1** — [I am](#) the true vine...

It's a clever link, but it is completely unmerited. The "I am" in the Greek of the New Testament has absolutely no correlation to the "I AM" referring to Jehovah in the Old Testament. It is a deceptive correlation and unfortunately is very popular in the Christian community.

Is the Holy Spirit a person?

God's Holy Spirit is His power and influence.

- **John 14:16** (KJV) "And I will pray the Father, and **he** shall give you another Comforter [Greek 'parakletos'], that **he** may abide with you for ever."
While there are passages that use the personal pronoun, "he" in reference to the Holy Spirit this is merely reflecting the fact that the Greek word *parakletos*, translated "Comforter" is masculine and so requires a masculine pronoun to identify it.
- **John 1:32** (KJV) "I saw the Spirit [Greek 'pneuma'] descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him."
When the Greek word, *pneuma*, translated "spirit" is used, then the translators appropriately used the neuter pronoun, "it."
- Many phrases from the New Testament use this same word, "spirit." They do not give the idea of a personality, but rather further describe characteristics that come from God. These examples do not describe a person. Rather, they describe the holy, transforming power emanating from God.
 - "the spirit of God" **Matthew 3:16**
 - "the spirit of holiness" **Romans 1:4**
 - "the spirit of a sound mind" **2 Timothy 1:7**
 - "the spirit of truth" **John 14:17**
 - "the spirit of promise" **Ephesians 1:13**
 - "the spirit of meekness" **Galatians 6:1**
 - "the spirit of grace" **Hebrews 10:29**

What about the Holy Spirit? How is this third entity to be understood?

*"The nominal churches, Protestant and Catholic, affirm that the holy spirit is a person, the third person of the trinity. They claim that all this is a "great mystery." Yes, truly it is a mystery, such as is characteristic of the confusion of man-made creeds held by Babylon. But to those who turn to the Word of God and let it speak, all is clear and plain. We suggest that whatever definition of the term "holy spirit" will meet all known conditions and harmonize all Scriptures bearing thereon may be understood to be the true meaning of the term. We will first give what we conceive to be such a definition, and then ask the reader to subject every Scripture where this term is used to this definition and see if it does not make harmony of all. We understand the Bible to teach that **the holy spirit is the Divine will, influence, power or disposition,***

exercised anywhere and for any purpose, at the Divine pleasure. God exercises His Spirit or energy in a variety of ways, using various agencies, and accomplishing various results. Whatever God does through agencies is as truly His work as though He were the direct actor, since all His agencies are His creation—created by His own Power; just as a contractor for building is said to build a house, though he may never have lifted a tool upon it. He does it with his materials and through his agents. Thus, when we read that Jehovah God created the heavens and the earth, we are not to suppose that He personally handled them. He used an Agent. "He spake and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast." His holy Power was exercised through His Only Begotten." Reprint 5749

For a thorough study on the Holy Spirit, see Vol. 5, Chap. 8–11.

Can you think of other references or inconsistencies that make the concept of the trinity hard to accept?

- The Scriptures refer to God as the Father and Jesus as his son implying a relationship that is one we can understand. And it is a beautiful relationship!
- If Jesus died on the cross, how is this consistent with our understanding of God, that He is immortal, divine, self-existing and cannot die? [1 John 4:3](#) and [2 John 1:7](#)
- Jesus' resurrection—how is this explained by a Trinitarian? Who resurrected him?
- When Jesus prayed, who was he praying to?
- [1 Corinthians 11:3](#) "I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ." How would a Trinitarian explain this verse?
- If Jesus was "exalted" after he was resurrected, how is this consistent with a Trinitarian view? If he was God Himself, he was already as exalted as he could be. [Philippians 2:9–11](#)
- [Matthew 28:18](#) "And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." If Jesus was God, then didn't he always have this authority?
- There are many more! See if you can think of any...

What are the implications to our understanding of the plan of God if we accept the trinity?

In short, believing in the trinity changes everything!

- Our fundamental understanding of God's plan rests squarely on the doctrine of the **RANSOM**. The main point of the ransom is a **PERFECT MAN paid the price for sin by dying as a PERFECT MAN as a corresponding price for Adam**. If Jesus were not fully human, he could not pay the ransom price. He had to be completely dead in the grave—and he was truly dead for parts of three days. A Trinitarian cannot say Jesus truly died, because it is inconsistent if they believe he was God. God cannot die. If they do claim that he truly died, then who resurrected him? [1 Corinthians 15:21–22](#); [1 Timothy 2:5–6](#); [Romans 5:18–19](#)
- Believing in the trinity changes the magnitude of the sacrifice that Jesus willingly made to lay down his life and do the Father's will in everything.
- Believing in the trinity changes the relationship of Christ with his body members. We trust him and believe him because he had the full human experience. He knows what it is like to walk the earth, to be treated with hatred and despised. If he were really God masquerading as a man, he would not have been able to understand us like he does.
 - ✦ [Hebrews 4:15](#) "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things just as we are, yet without sin."
- Believing in the trinity takes away the beauty of God's character and corrupts the beauty of his plan. God sent his only begotten Son who He loved with all his heart, and his son loving his Father with all his heart, freely and willingly came to the earth to pay the price for Adam's sin.

*"If there are three Gods, "equal in power and in glory," as the catechisms declare, then it is untrue to say there is only **one** God. If there is only "One God, the Father, of whom are all things" as St. Paul asserts; and if, as Jesus declared, the Father is **greater** than his honored son; and if the Father raised his Beloved Son from the dead, and **exalted him on high**, honored him, and has appointed for him a Kingdom; and if ultimately the Son will deliver up the Kingdom again to the Father, that the Father may be all in all; then it cannot be true that there are **several Gods of equal power.**" Vol. 5, p.55*

THE TRUTH ABOUT HELL

Goal of this Study: **WHAT** is 'hell'? It is a place of eternal torture? **WHERE** is it? **WHO** is in hell?
WHY was Jesus "in hell" parts of three days?
WHY are millions of good people in hell right now? **WHO** leaves hell and **HOW**?

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol 5, Chap. 12; Reprint 1498 and 2597

General understanding of the word "hell"

- In almost all Christian religions, "hell" is generally understood to be a **fiery place of punishment, where immortal, undying** souls are tormented forever because of sins committed in this life.
- Oxford Dictionary: "A place regarded in various religions as a spiritual realm of evil and suffering, often traditionally depicted as a place of perpetual fire beneath the earth where the wicked are punished after death."
- "In old English usage...the word "hell" simply meant to conceal, to hide, to cover; hence the concealed, hidden or covered place." Reprint 2598

Biblical use of the word 'hell'

- Hell is translated and used differently in various scriptures depending on the Bible translation. For this study, we will use the King James Version (KJV) unless otherwise indicated.
- The word appears **54 times** in the Bible: **31 times** in the Old Testament and **23 times** in the New Testament.
- Using Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, let's look at the original words (Greek/Hebrew) translated "hell":

HELL in the Bible	
SHEOL	HADES TARTAROO GEHENNA

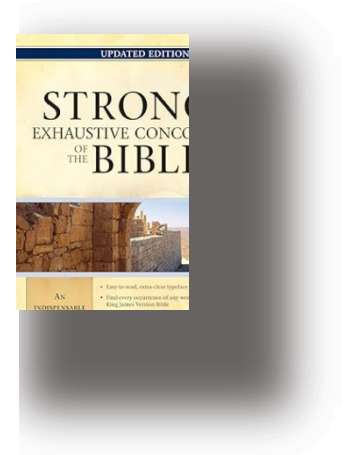
- Each Hebrew or Greek word might be interpreted differently within the same translation (for example, the KJV translating the same Hebrew word into multiple English words), depending on the context and bias of the translators. Of course, there are variations across different translations as well (the KJV might use a different English word compared to NASB).

"SHEOL" in the Old Testament

The Hebrew word *sheol* appears in the Old Testament **65 times**. It is translated into English as:

- **HELL:** 31 times
- **GRAVE:** 31 times
- **PIT:** 3 times (**Numbers 16:30, 33** and **Job 17:16**)

What is the real meaning of the word *sheol*? Bible translators have had difficulty with this word, especially depending on if a 'good' person or 'bad' person is described.



Describing Jacob: Here the word “grave” is the Hebrew word *sheol*. Jacob knew he would die and go to *sheol*.

- **Genesis 37:35** “And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him...and he [Jacob] said, For I will go down into the **grave** (*sheol*) unto my son mourning...”

Describing the good king of Judah, Hezekiah:

- **Isaiah 38:10** “I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the **grave** (*sheol*): I am deprived of the residue of my years.”

By a miracle, his life had been unexpectedly prolonged. He is describing his thoughts during the time of his sickness, when he expected that he would shortly die. The translators were careful not to use the word “hell” here as a translation of *sheol*, for to do so would have aroused questions in the minds of many readers as to why one so good as Hezekiah should be expecting to go to a place of torment when he died.

Describing the wicked:

- **Psalms 9:17** “The wicked shall be turned into **hell** (*sheol*), and all the nations that forget God.”

Translators often used “hell” when referring to a wicked person and “grave” or “pit” (or they leave *sheol* untranslated) when referring to a good, faithful person.

So, what is the real meaning of “SHEOL”?

Here’s a verse where we find the answer!

- **Isaiah 38:18** “For the **grave** (*sheol*) cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the **pit** (*bôr*) [meaning cistern, dungeon, well] cannot hope for Thy truth.”



These are the words of Hezekiah, still speaking of his severe illness, he expresses appreciation that he is still alive. He speaks of death as being synonymous with *sheol*, and says that while the living can praise the Lord, death and *sheol* cannot; meaning those who die and are in *sheol* cannot praise Him. Had the translators rendered *sheol* by the word “hell” in this text, many would have been led to wonder what kind of a place hell might be.

The word *sheol* here was interpreted and translated as the “grave.” From this verse, we see that “grave” is the same thing as the **state of death**, also described as the “pit.”

Hell = Grave or pit or the “hidden state” of burial

- **Job 14:13** (KJV) “O that thou wouldst hide me in the **grave** (*sheol*), that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me!” Here we see another righteous man of God, praying to go to *sheol* (hell, grave).
- **Psalms 115:17** “The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.” Instead of groans and shouting, the place where the dead are is described in a condition of “silence.”
- **Psalms 88:11, 12** “Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the **grave**? [a different Hebrew word, Strong’s #6913 *qeber*] or thy faithfulness in destruction? ...and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?” Instead of regret or suffering, the “grave” is described as a place or condition of “forgetfulness.”
- **Ecclesiastes 9:10** (KJV) “...for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the **grave** (*sheol*), wither thou goest.” This is not a state of being for live people.

Hell = the state of death

“HADES” in the New Testament

The first Greek word for hell (*hades*), appears in the New Testament **10 times**.

*“In the New Testament the Greek word **hades** is the exact equivalent of the Hebrew word **sheol**. We have the most absolute proof of this from the fact that the apostles, in quotations from the Old Testament, render **sheol** by the word **hades**.”* Vol. 5, p.375

An undeniable link between Old and New Testament definitions:

- **Acts 2:27** “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell (hades)**; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”
- **Psalms 16:10** “For thou wilt not leave my soul in **hell (sheol)**; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

When quoting the Old Testament in the New Testament, *hades* is the word for *sheol*, so we know *hades* = *sheol*.

Was Jesus really in hell?

Yes, Jesus was in the grave (*hades/sheol*) for parts of three days until he was resurrected by God.

- **Acts 2:31** “...that his [Jesus’] soul was not left in **hell (hades)**...”

Jesus received his resurrection within just three days. However, the rest of mankind must await the full **return of Jesus** to receive their raising from the dead.

- **Revelation 1:18** (KJV) “I [Jesus] am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, ...and have the keys of **hell (hades)** and of death.”
 - ✦ “keys of hell”: the authority over the prison of the grave; refers to those who Jesus will resurrect from their graves.
 - ✦ “keys of death”: the authority over the living “dead” people of the world; refers to those who are alive at the time when Jesus will start the resurrection work with mankind. From God’s standpoint, all mankind is dead. See **Luke 9:60** “let the dead bury their dead...”
- **Acts 10:42** “..that this is the One who has been appointed by God as Judge of the **living and the dead**.” This verse confirms to us that Jesus has this authority

How can a city be brought down to hell?

- **Matthew 11:23** “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to **hell (hades)**...”

The city of Capernaum was buried for hundreds of years in accordance with Jesus’ words of prophecy. In 1838, American explorer Edward Robinson discovered the ruins of this ancient city. Hell/*hades* simply means the “state of death” or “the condition of burial” as in the Hebrew word *sheol*.

- **Revelation 20:13, 14** “And the sea gave up the dead. death and **hell (hades)** delivered up the dead...And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.” This is the second death. And death and **hell (hades)** were cast into the lake of fire.”

This scripture teaches us that all who are in hell **will come out!** It speaks of the end or destruction of the “state of death.” That is how hell (the grave, or the condition of being dead) is to be **destroyed** when...

- **1 Corinthians 15:22** “...in Christ shall ALL be made alive.”



“TARTAROO” in the New Testament

The second Greek word for hell (*tartaroo*; sometimes rendered *tartarus*), appears in the New Testament only once:

- **2 Peter 2:4** “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to **hell** (*tartaroo*), and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.”



This verse speaks about the angels who sinned before the Flood and were cast into hell. What does hell mean for angels?

“These fallen spirits frequented the earth in the days of our Lord and the apostles. Hence they were not down in some place, but “down” in the sense of being degraded from former honor and liberty, and restrained under darkness, as by a chain.” Reprint 1498

These are the same angels referred to by the Apostle Paul.

- **Ephesians 6:12** “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

These “high places” refer to the **earth’s atmosphere**, where Satan is their leader.

- **Ephesians 2:2** “...according to the prince of the power of the air...”

Satan and the fallen angels are in a **condition of restraint** (“chains of darkness”) from the privileges that the other angels enjoy. Yes, they are powerful, but they exist out of the presence of God and in the presence of Satan so their power is restrained from what it once was.

“GEHENNA” in the New Testament

The third Greek word for hell (*gehenna*) appears in the New Testament **12 times**. (Jesus only refers to it four times.)

- **Mark 9:43–49** (KJV) “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** (*gehenna*), into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched...” (it goes on to suggest cutting off our feet and plucking out our eyes.)

Is this language in this passage literal or symbolic? Does God want us to literally follow these words and be blind and lame without hands? **DEFINITELY NOT!!** So, what **did** Jesus mean?

GEHENNA is a literal place in Israel outside of Jerusalem called the **Valley of Hinnom**.



What was the hell in the Valley of Hinnom?

- **Jeremiah 7:31** “And they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; **which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart.**”

The Israelites would worship other gods there and offer child sacrifices in the fire! (See also **Jeremiah 32:35**.) Later they repented and converted that very same place into the city’s garbage dump. Here garbage, dead animals, even bodies of criminals—but never anything alive—were thrown. The dead flesh **would bring forth worms** which in turn would consume the flesh. In order to control

the volume of the garbage, a fire was lit from time to time and that would reduce all the garbage to ashes.

Jesus used this example of Gehenna to illustrate **complete destruction**. The listeners were aware of this garbage dump, and they would have understood that *gehenna* was an illustration of **final and complete destruction**, not a place of torment of eternal preservation of the wicked. We know this as “second death” described in

Revelation 20:14. It will be the path for those in the Kingdom who, after having been given full knowledge and abilities to keep God’s laws of righteousness, remain willfully wicked.

This hell (*gehenna*) is different from *hades* and *sheol*, which mean the **state of death** or the **grave**. Here, hell (*gehenna*) represents **total destruction**, or second death, from which there is no resurrection.

At this time, only the true believers in Christ are liable to second death (**Revelation 2:11**) if they turn back and reject Christ’s sacrifice on their behalf. In the future, the world of mankind will be liable to second death if they ultimately stand against God and not hear “that prophet,” Christ. **Acts 3:22, 23**

“Strictly speaking, none could be in any danger of the second death while as yet under the first or Adamic death, and while as yet no ransom from it had been given. Consequently no one could have been liable to the second death before the coming of our Lord, who brought to light the plan of God (to be accomplished through Christ) for the resurrection of all from the first death, and a second trial of all men individually for the eternal continuance of that life, by obedience to the law of Christ. The penalty of failure to comply with those just and righteous conditions is to be the second death—condemnation a second time to death, for failure the second time, and this time individually. Nor is the world in general now liable to this penalty: none but consecrated believers could possibly incur it yet; because no others have escaped (even reckonedly) the condemnation that is on the world—the first death, for Adam’s sin. The consecrated have escaped it reckonedly, the sin of Adam being no longer imputed to them. Romans 8:1; 4:6–8.” Reprint 1498

- **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 (*gehenna*).”

Clearly, here is the idea of **destruction** in hell (*gehenna*) and **not** preservation in torment! The body and soul (the being) are destroyed by “Him” (God). All the **willfully** wicked are to be **destroyed in this way** as seen in **Revelation 21:8**.

The Rich Man and Lazarus Luke 16:19–31

Many use this parable to support the idea of a burning place where the wicked and sinful people go after this life. It is the 5th in a series of five parables in a row told by Jesus (Lost Sheep, Lost Coin, Prodigal Son, Unjust Steward).

The Rich Man and Lazarus is a parable about **role reversal**. We will not discuss this in detail, but just briefly mention that interpreting the story literally creates absurdities.

- It doesn’t say if the beggar was a good or bad person; simply, that he was poor. Same with the rich man—his only “crime” appears to be being rich.
- All wearing purple and fine linen who eat well each day are placed in a furnace of fire.
- It would mean unless we are poverty-stricken beggars and full of sores and hanging out with dogs who lick those sores, we would never be able to arrive—not in heaven—but in Abraham’s bosom (which makes no sense—how does everyone fit?) when we depart this life.
- (For those who think Abraham’s bosom means “heaven,” they are acknowledging at least part of the parable is symbolic. However, no one was able to go to heaven anyway before Jesus died to open the way, so Abraham could not be in heaven.)
- One drop of water can’t cool flames.

THE FIRST THREE PARABLES ARE ADDRESSED TO THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES FOR CRITICIZING JESUS SHOWING THE CONVERSION OF ONE DEEMED “LOST” IS AN OCCASION FOR GREAT REJOICING IN HEAVEN:

1. LOST SHEEP
2. LOST COIN
3. PRODIGAL SON

THEN JESUS TURNS TO HIS DISCIPLES WITH THE NEXT PARABLE, SHOWING THAT THE CURRENT STEWARDS, THE PHARISEES, WERE ABOUT TO BE DISPLACED. THEY PICKED UP ON THIS AND DERIDED HIM:

4. UNJUST STEWARD

FINALLY, JESUS PREDICTS THE TRANSITION OF FAVOR FROM THE JEWS TO THE GENTILES:

5. RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

- This parable starts with the sentence that is very similar in many other parables:
 - “There was a certain rich man” Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus [Luke 16:19–31](#)
 - “There was a certain rich man” Parable of Unrighteous Steward [Luke 16:1](#)
 - “A certain man had” Parable of the Prodigal Son [Luke 15:11](#)
 - “A certain nobleman” Parables of the Pounds [Luke 19:12](#)
 - “A certain man planted a vineyard” Parable of the Vine-growers [Luke 20:9](#)

Upon closer inspection, the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is a remarkable prophecy of the conditions relating to the **Jews and the Gentiles and their role reversals** of having God’s favor. Jesus, warning the Pharisees, predicted they and the nation of Israel being “rich” with God’s favor and looking down upon the Gentiles pictured by Lazarus, would soon have that favor removed as the Gentiles were given the opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel message. **Jesus was illustrating the suffering the nation of Israel would experience because of their hardened hearts.**

The **rich man** represents the nation of Israel, who were rich in God’s promises, since God chose them from all the families of the earth, ([Amos 3:2](#)) but because “[He came unto his own, and his own received him not.](#)” [John 1:11](#) However, this favor was taken from them and given to the Gentiles, who now could have access to God’s grace. This rich man (Israel) died from God’s favor; and Lazarus (Gentiles) receives God’s favor.

The **fire**, where the rich man went after his death, is a representation of the nation of Israel and its condition after 70AD and their dispersion into all nations.

- [Zechariah 7:13, 14](#) “And just as He called and they would not listen, so they called and I would not listen, says the LORD of hosts; but I scattered them with a storm wind among all the nations whom they have not known. Thus the land is desolated behind them so that no one went back and forth, for they made the pleasant land desolate.”

Fire is thus a symbol of the **judgments** that came upon the nation of Israel which began with Jesus speaking the words in [Matthew 23:38](#) “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.”

Consider this...

- As the Scriptures assure us Satan will eventually be destroyed, who will be in charge of a hell of eternal torment?
- If Satan is *not* destroyed, why would God give him and his minions their ‘dream job’ of torturing humans for eternity?
- The Scriptures do not provide for a ‘free pass to heaven’ for all those who died before Jesus died on the cross, including millions and millions in pagan countries and God’s chosen nation of Israel. What about the billions who have died, through no fault of their own, without ever hearing the name of Jesus?
- If we were to believe in a burning hell of eternal torment, those babies sacrificed to the pagan god, Molech in [Jeremiah 7:31](#) and [32:35](#) are still screaming in agony, thousands of years later, and will continue to be tortured without end, without hope and without purpose. Does this make sense?
- There absolutely are future consequences for what we do, say and think in this lifetime, but absolutely **NOT** eternal torture with no hope of learning, growing, forgiving or reconciliation.

How does this true understanding of HELL and its meaning help us in our lives

Understanding that hell is not a place where people will be burning forever gives us a better understanding of God's character. He is righteous, just and loving.

- **Galatians 6:7** "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."
- **Romans 6:23** "For the wages of sin is death." **Not** eternal torment!

It gives us a much better understanding of God's love for mankind.

- **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."

It gives us a sincere desire to serve our Creator for who He is and for what He has done for us.

We are not serving Him out of fear of eternal torment.

- **1 John 4:18** (KJV) "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

It gives us hope that our relatives, friends, parents, and the entire world will be raised from the dead back on this earth. We can have peace, knowing they are asleep in the grave, awaiting that exciting time.

- **Acts 24:15** "having a hope in God, which these men cherish themselves, that there shall certainly be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked."

It gives us joy in seeing the harmony of the entire Bible of the Old and New Testament.

It motivates us to share the **Good News** with those that don't know or don't understand it.

There is a HELL in the Bible,
but it is completely different from what many Christians believe.

The Bible teaches HELL is the GRAVE,
where all the dead go, awaiting the future resurrection.

God takes NO PLEASURE in the death of the wicked (**Ezekiel 33:11**),
but hopes for their repentance and turning unto life and righteousness.

THE HUMAN SOUL

Goal of this Study: **WHAT** is the world’s view of the “soul”? **WHAT** is the biblical teaching of the “soul”?

HOW do we know a “soul” is not an invisible and immortal part of a human being?

WHAT are some scriptures that teach a soul is a combination of a body and the “breath of life”?

WHAT are some scriptures that seem to support a soul being an invisible and immortal part of a human?

WHY is it important for Jesus’ followers to have an accurate understanding of what a “soul” is?

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 5 Chap. 12

What is a “soul” according to the world’s major religions?

Hindu	Believes in an “atma” or soul that is invisible and immortal which at death leaves the body and enters into a new body.
Muslim	Believes that Allah created many souls (called “rooh” in Urdu) and put them into flesh bodies and sent them to earth to test whether they would remember and honor Allah. These souls are invisible and immortal and cannot be destroyed.
Buddhist	Believes in “atma” or the soul being invisible and immortal and the goal of life is “Nirvana” or “Moksha” (the release from the process of rebirth of the soul in other bodies, or reincarnation).
Roman Catholic	Believes the soul to be invisible and immortal and that it leaves the body at death to face immediate judgment before God’s throne for its life.
Protestant	Believes the soul to be invisible and immortal and that the soul is said to “sleep” at death only to rise to life for a day of judgment where all who had accepted Jesus will be saved and go to heaven and all others will go to hell with fire and eternal torment.

Two basic concepts are common across all of these beliefs:

- The soul is somehow tied to a person, but is **invisible**.
- The soul is **immortal**, meaning it carries on in some fashion after the body dies.

The concept of the immortality of the soul comes from Pagan thinking. The Egyptians had elaborate afterlife stories, and the ancient Greeks influenced beliefs, mostly through the philosophy of Plato. He said, “*Death is merely the separation of the soul from the body.*” One of his main arguments for a soul that does not die is the necessity of a future existence for an appropriate reward of the good and punishment of the wicked. This shows a lack of understanding of the purpose of resurrection and judgment.

What is the scriptural concept of a soul?

- Old Testament: The word “soul” is used extensively.
Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance Hebrew #5315, *nephesh*, meaning “a breathing creature.”
- New Testament: The word “soul” is translated from
Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance Greek #5590, *psuchē*, meaning “breath.”

	ORIGINAL WORD	MEANING
OLD TESTAMENT	Nephesh Hebrew #5315	a breathing creature
NEW TESTAMENT	Psuchē Greek #5590	breath

The first use of the word “soul” is found early in the Bible:

- **Genesis 2:7** (KJV) “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.”

The creation of Adam required two parts:

1. First, his body was formed from “the dust of the ground.”
2. Second, the “breath of life” had to be added to the body.

From this scripture, a simple equation can be pictured, defining what a “soul” is:

**BODY +
THE BREATH OF LIFE =
A LIVE CREATURE CALLED A “SOUL”** |  **Man BECAME a living soul.
He was not GIVEN a soul.**

- Scripturally, humans were not created **with** a soul; they were created to **be** souls.
- Humans and animals are all referred to as souls, *nephesh*, creatures—the same word. **Genesis 1:20–21**. Based on this definition, even animals can be considered “souls,” as they have bodies and the “breath of life.”
- However, only man was created in God’s image. Of course, humans and animals aren’t the same, for God created man to “rule over” His animal creation
 - ✦ **Genesis 1:26** “Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

The Apostle Paul also makes note of the distinctiveness of humans.

- ✦ **Hebrews 2:7** (KJV) “Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands.”

For more on this topic, see *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol. 1 Chap. 10 “Spiritual and Human Natures Separate and Distinct.”

- Sometimes, “soul” can also take on a further shade of meaning, to refer to the totality of one’s being. For example, Jesus talks with a man about what one must do to obtain salvation. The man’s answer indicates that one must love God with all one’s being—heart, mind and body/life (soul):
 - ✦ **Luke 10:27** “And he answered, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul [*psuchē*—one’s whole being; living, thinking body], and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.”
- The New Testament word for “soul” is shown to mean our life as a human creature and capable of dying.
 - ✦ **Acts 27:21–22** “When they had gone a long time without food, then Paul stood up in their midst and said, Men, you ought to have followed my advice and not to have set sail from Crete and incurred this damage and loss. Yet now I urge you to keep up your courage, for there will be no loss of life [*psuchē*—one’s whole being; living, thinking body] among you, but only of the ship.”

Translating *psuchē* as “life” here is appropriate because a shipwreck might very well cause your sentient being to die. It makes perfect sense.

But this is the same Greek word that is used for “soul” as well. “No loss of life among you” means the loss of life was a possibility.

That means your “soul” **can die**.

	ORIGINAL WORD	TRANSLATED
OLD TESTAMENT	Nephesh Hebrew #5315	soul being creature
NEW TESTAMENT	Psuchē Greek #5590	soul life mind heart

- ✦ **Acts 15:25–27** “It seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their **lives** [*psuchē*—one’s whole being; living, thinking body] for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we have sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will also report the same things by word of mouth.”

Barnabas and Paul risked their lives in these verses—but did they risk their “eternal souls” from traditional Christian belief? No, of course not. They risked their physical lives, but it is the same Greek word. These brothers had risked their human life, NOT their ultimate reward. If anything, such dangerous service would have enhanced their grasp of that reward, not put it at risk! If they had risked their lives for the sake of the gospel, God would have rewarded that.

- If the translators had put the word “soul” in these verses, it would have confused their traditional understanding of an immortal soul. “Life” and “soul” are scripturally interchangeable.
- The Scriptures are emphatic about the definitions of these words. *Psuchē* in the New Testament, *nephesh* in the Old Testament—both mean **the breathing creature**. The New Testament is in complete harmony with the Old Testament teaching regarding human beings **BEING** souls and not **HAVING** them.

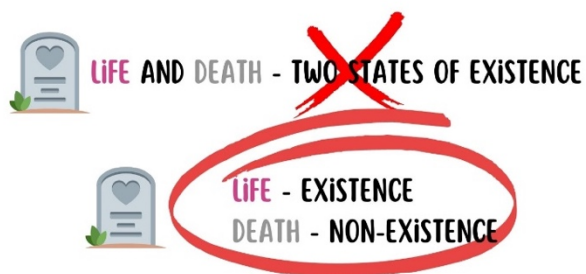
What is death?

Some people are confused by the concept of death, saying life and death are two states of existence, rather than **existence** and **non-existence**.

Simply put, death is the **absence of life**; simple **oblivion** with no awareness or perceptions. This definition fundamentally contradicts the idea of an “immortal soul.”

If mankind was immortal through their souls, then death itself, at least by this definition, is not possible.

Death is the consequence for disobedience committed by Adam and Eve. This punishment has been handed down through them to all of the generations of their descendants.



- **Genesis 2:17** “But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”
- **Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6** “For the living know they will die; but the dead do not know anything, nor have they any longer a reward, for their memory is forgotten. Indeed their love, their hate and their zeal have already perished, and they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun.”
The phrase “they will no longer have a share in all that is done under the sun” may seem poetic, but it is also very straightforward. It should not be interpreted as the dead are observing the living but cannot interact with them, which would be in direct contradiction with the previous verse that tells us that “the dead do not know anything.”
- **Ecclesiastes 9:10** “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might; for there is no activity, planning, knowledge, or wisdom in Sheol where you are going.”
The Hebrew word *sheol* is also translated as “the grave.” This verse brings out the lack of any activity for those who are dead.
- **Job 7:9–10** “When a cloud vanishes, it is gone, so he who goes down to sheol does not come up. He will not return again to his house, nor will his place know him anymore.”
This simple yet poetic observation compares life to a cloud, in that once it “vanishes, it is gone.” Those who “go into the grave” (die) have no awareness and no ability to interact with the world.

Through these scriptures, death is understood to be a condition of oblivion. The “breath of life” is gone, and the body and mind cease to function. The concept of “resurrection” or “restitution” through God’s grace and Jesus’ sacrifice is that mankind will be restored from this condition of oblivion. This is fundamentally at odds with the concept of an existence beyond death as “an immortal soul.”

What are some scriptural arguments that support the biblical definition of a soul?

The Apostle Paul, reflecting on Genesis 2:7, compares Adam to Jesus, who he refers to as “the last Adam.”

- **1 Corinthians 15:45** “So also it is written, The first man, Adam, became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”

Note Paul’s words here that Adam became a “living soul.” God first created Adam’s body, then “breathed” life into that body, and thus Adam BECAME a living, thinking being.

Note Paul’s words that “the last Adam,” Jesus, became a life-giving spirit;

- ✦ **became:** This word is critically important here. He wasn’t already an immortal, invisible being; he had to become one.
- ✦ **life-giving:** because Jesus’ sacrifice provides the means for the resurrection of mankind from the oblivion of death.
- ✦ **a spirit:** speaking of Jesus’ elevation from the physical plane of being to the divine plane of existence.

The Scriptures declare that a soul will die as a consequence of sin. This thought is in harmony with the previously examined account of Adam and Eve incurring the penalty of death for their disobedience to God’s commandment.

- **Ezekiel 18:4** “Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.”

“All souls are Mine” should not be interpreted as God declaring His possession of the immortal, invisible soul of the father and the son, or all people. God is declaring His power over mankind and their very existence. This is in harmony with the last sentence of the verse. If a soul were immortal, it could not be said “to die.”

The question is raised about whether a man will live again, or be resurrected/restored, after he dies.

- **Job 14:14** “If a man dies, will he live again? All the days of my struggle I will wait until my change comes.”

Job’s question clearly defines a difference between death and life. If man possessed an immortal soul that lives on after death, there would not be a need for this question.

The phrase “I will wait until my change comes” demonstrates Job’s understanding that the only recovery from death is resurrection. He speaks of “waiting” in the condition of death for a “change,” namely, the hope of a resurrection from death.

What are some scriptures often cited in attempts to support the concept of an immortal soul? How do these scriptures harmonize with the thought of a soul as we have just learned?

Saul and the witch of Endor—1 Samuel 28:7–19

Saul, the King of Israel was looking for advice. He visited a woman who was labeled as a witch. During the exchange, Saul asks the woman to contact Samuel, a prophet of God who, at this point, had been dead for some time (verse 11). Subsequently, the woman claims to not only see Samuel’s spirit, but purports to then serve as a “medium” for Samuel’s spirit. In so doing, she delivers a message “from Samuel” to Saul (verses 13–19). Saul believes the woman and the words spoken to him (verse 20).

- Many believe this account is scriptural proof that Samuel’s “spirit” or “soul” spoke to the woman after his death to deliver a message to Saul. This account is therefore sometimes cited as scriptural proof that humans possess an immortal, invisible soul that lives on after death.
- The key to understanding this account is in verse 14. Saul asks the woman about the form of the “vision” she claimed to see. The woman, understanding that Saul is looking for Samuel, responds with a description of him. Saul does not see anything.
- She gives a vague description of “an old man wrapped with a robe” and Saul makes an assumption. Verse 15 indicates that Saul “perceived” that the vision was Samuel, but perception is often not reality.

An alternative interpretation is that as he is dying on the cross, the criminal notices the sign that had been nailed above Jesus' head "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." In his despair, perhaps, the criminal asks Jesus to remember him when Jesus arrives at his Kingdom. (There is no indication that the criminal expected Jesus' Kingdom to be a heavenly Kingdom.)

Punctuation was added by the various translators, not the original writers or the Divine Author, God Himself. Translations, such as Wilson's Diaglott show the comma in a different place:

- **Luke 23:43 (DIAGLOTT)** "And said to him, Indeed I say to thee this day, thou shalt be with me in Paradise."



Jesus knew his death would soon provide the ransom price for mankind, opening the way for all—including the criminal—to one day be resurrected to human perfection. By any definition, this would be a "paradise."

The change of the comma's position puts the emphasis on the first phrase of Jesus' sentence, indicating that Jesus is telling these words to the criminal today. Jesus has been terribly disgraced by the Jewish leadership. He has been tried and convicted of a capital offense by the Roman government. He has been crucified. It certainly does not look promising that he would be a king or have a kingdom, because in a few hours he will be dead. He's saying, in other words, "Look, no matter what it looks like, no matter how bleak the circumstances are, I am assuring you I am a King and will have a Kingdom. Today it looks dark; it looks hopeless. Put these outward circumstances aside—don't focus on them. Focus on my Kingdom."

This is the day ("today") Jesus would complete the sacrifice he agreed to make which was absolutely critical for human salvation, including the salvation of the thief. We know Jesus did not go to heaven, as he was in the tomb for parts of three days.

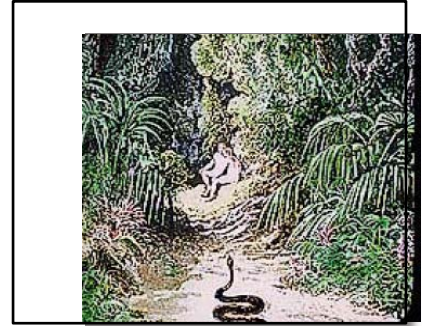
Why is it important for God's followers to have an accurate understanding of what a soul is?

An "immortal soul" invalidates some of the most fundamental aspects of God's plan.

- Adam was created in a perfect human condition with the opportunity to live forever. However, this condition was dependent on obedience to God. Disobedience to God is sin, and the punishment for disobedience and sin is death. This was clearly communicated to Adam and Eve, the first man and woman.
 - ✦ **Genesis 2:16–17** "The LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.'"
- Before ancient Egypt with their elaborate afterlife ideas, and ancient Greek philosophy and myths, where did this false concept of death NOT actually being the end of existence come from? It came from Scripture! The serpent (Satan) tells Eve the first and **greatest lie ever told!**
 - ✦ **Genesis 3:4** "The serpent [Satan] said to the woman, 'You surely will not die!'"
 - ✦ **John 8:44** "He [Satan] was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he tells a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, because he is a liar and the father of lies."
- In one exchange, God tells Adam that disobedience results in death, removal from life. In a second exchange, Satan tells Eve that disobedience will NOT result in death, which the concept of an immortal soul supports. Satan twisted God's command by telling Eve she would NOT die, the complete opposite of what God said would happen. *Listen to me instead of God!* He took something true and **changed the fundamental consequences**. How many world religions, including a majority of Christianity, support this lie that people really do not die?

The concept of an “immortal soul,” therefore, supports Satan’s lie, not God’s commandment!

- God permitted Adam and Eve’s disobedience so they, and through them all mankind, could learn that obedience to God’s ways is best, and the only way to life. If mankind possesses an immortal soul that cannot die, this entire lesson becomes impossible.
- The fundamental theme of the Bible is mankind’s disobedience to God, followed by the restitution from that condition, as enabled by the ransom price paid by Jesus. “Paradise lost to paradise found.” An immortal soul implies that God’s penalty against sin did NOT go into effect because a part of you never actually dies. Death, far from being the sentence or curse upon our race, is just a temporary door you pass through. If our souls already have eternal life, what was the purpose of Jesus dying on our behalf? There would be no need for salvation from death. This casts confusion and contradiction upon an understanding of the Bible by calling into question the need for its fundamental theme.



- ✦ **1 Corinthians 15:22** “As in Adam all die [actually die in the grave, a cessation of existence], also in Christ will all be made alive.”

? WHAT USE WOULD AN IMMORTAL SOUL HAVE FOR A RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD?

The ideas of hauntings and “life after death” are widespread in modern culture. How should God’s followers react to these ideas, even if we know them to be fiction?

Scriptures (such as **Job 7:9–10**—previously examined) clearly teach that the dead cannot communicate with the living or return to the places in which they once lived. However, popular culture and society frequently feature stories or “accounts” of hauntings and other “communications with the dead.” When considering what reaction to take regarding these types of media, consider the following:

- Jesus clearly taught that in order to please God, one’s actions alone are not enough. In **Matthew 5:27–28**, Jesus points out that the intentions of one’s thoughts are just as important as one’s actions. To truly please God, one must love God’s ways, and not just follow His laws out of a sense of duty.
 - **Matthew 6:21** “for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
- Paul stresses the importance for Jesus’ followers to constantly focus their minds on themes pleasing to God.
 - **Philippians 4:8** “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”
- **Psalm 1** stresses the importance of focusing our minds and thoughts on God’s truth to the best of our abilities. Those who do so will “bear fruit,” meaning, produce works and conditions pleasing to God.
- Thoughts have a direct impact on our actions, hearts, and overall outlook. When we choose to focus our attention on ideas or stories that are not rooted in truth, and even if we recognize them as false and seemingly harmless, we still place our minds in a vulnerable position. Over time, these influences can subtly shift our thinking and draw our hearts away from God.
- Brother Russell considered this topic to be so important for Jesus’ followers that he included wordings regarding it in the Daily Vow: “I vow to still more carefully, if possible, **scrutinize my thoughts and words and doings, to the intent that I may be the better enabled to serve Thee, and Thy dear flock. I vow to Thee that I will be on the alert to resist everything akin to Spiritism and Occultism, and, remembering that there are but the two masters, I shall resist these snares in all reasonable ways as being of the adversary.**”

Concluding Summary

Although it has been widely accepted throughout mankind's history, the concept of human beings possessing an invisible and immortal soul that survives on after death is not scripturally supported. In fact, such a teaching undermines the basic foundation truth of the Bible regarding mankind's disobedience to God and need for restitution. The claim that mankind has an immortal soul further invalidates the need for a ransom and brings an unacceptable diminishing of the magnitude of the great price Jesus paid to redeem mankind. Through the Scriptures and through God's grace, we are able to discern the truth of God's word. In so doing, we can see the harmony of all parts of the Scriptures. In the fullness of God's plan, all mankind will be given this opportunity as well and be able to finally appreciate the magnitude of God's justice, power, wisdom and love; and have a correct and full appreciation of the salvation work enabled by Jesus.

“And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes;
and there will no longer be any death;
there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain;
the first things have passed away.”

Revelation 21:4

THE HARVESTS OF THE BIBLE

Goal of this Study: Examine three ages of God’s plan for mankind and the transitional times between them.

WHY are some of these transitional periods referred to as “harvests?” **WHO** does each age, and each transitional period between the ages, focus on? **WHAT** is the goal of each age and each harvest?

WHERE does the Bible discuss the ages and the harvests? **WHEN** do each of the ages and harvests occur?

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol. 3 Chap. 5 & 6

Why is it important to understand the meaning of Bible symbols and how to recognize them?

The Bible is a mixture of symbols and facts. Having biblical messages revealed through symbolic language is just one way the Bible’s mysteries can be uncovered. Through the use of symbols, concepts can be conveyed that are too vast or too far in the future to adequately express in exact words at the time the words were written.

God also uses symbols as a mechanism to reveal key features of His plan at the appropriate times.

- Jesus talks about this concept in [Matthew 24:45](#). The “servant who delivers meat in due season” indicates that certain truths would only be due to be understood and explained at certain times.
- Symbols are a mechanism through which God enables those who are following Jesus to “walk by faith, not by sight.” [2 Corinthians 5:7](#)

If the Bible provided precise dates and explanations, there would be no need for faith. Everyone could pick up the Bible and understand God’s purposes and plans.

- [Matthew 13:11](#) “Jesus answered them, ‘To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.’” At a future time, everyone will understand, as promised. See [Zephaniah 3:9](#), [Habakkuk 2:14](#), [1 Timothy 2:4](#).

Examples of biblical symbolism

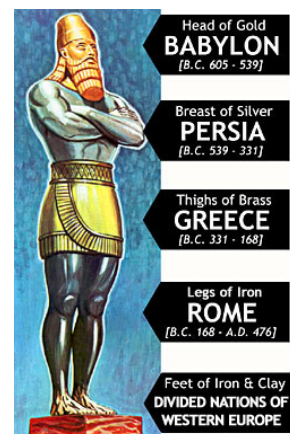
- [Micah 4:1–2](#) “And it will come about in the last days that the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains. It will be raised above the hills, and the peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, ‘Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD and to the house of the God of Jacob, that He may teach us about His ways and that we may walk in His paths. For from Zion will go forth the law, even the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.’”

Mountains are large, controlling natural structures that impose their presence on man. They dictate how we live. This symbol gives us a sense of governments that impose upon us and dictate how people will live. Scripturally, “mountains” are used to represent both the government of God and the governments of mankind.

- [Daniel 2](#) – Symbols used in Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a Statue

We are told about Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of a statue where each part of the construction was symbolic of a particular government empire.

Any symbolic interpretation should be in harmony with the overall scriptural message. Misinterpreting a symbol, or interpreting a symbol as literal, can lead to a misunderstanding of God’s plan. One of the best methods of identifying symbols and their potential interpretations is attending studies, discourses and interacting with others of like precious faith, especially elders.



What is a literal harvest? What are the outcomes of a harvest?

In agriculture, a crop is planted, cared for and allowed to grow. When the crop has matured, the products of the crop are harvested.

- The good, valuable parts of the crop are separated from the waste or otherwise not valuable products of the crop.
- The valuable products are collected and cared for, while the waste is discarded and sometimes destroyed.



Wheat was a common crop planted and harvested in biblical times, as it is today.



- Like a lot of fruits, wheat must be 'peeled' from which products can be made.
- The thin skin that needs to be peeled away is called "chaff." Chaff is often used as a term for something worthless that is separated from something valuable.
- Weeds are a common problem with any agricultural effort. A "tare" was a particular nuisance to wheat farmers. Because tares and wheat look so similar when they are young, farmers let wheat and tares grow until they were mature enough to tell apart.

What events mark the start and end of the JEWISH AGE in God's plan?

What was the main purpose of the Jewish Age?

At the time of the death of Jacob, all of his family (his descendants) were living in Egypt. God renamed Jacob as "Israel." During this time in Egypt, Israel's descendants had grown to be a significant number of people:

- **Genesis 35:10** "God said to him 'Your name is Jacob; you shall no longer be called Jacob. But Israel shall be your name. Thus He called him Israel.'"
- **Exodus 1:7** "But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly and multiplied and became exceedingly mighty so that the land was filled with them."

At God's command, Moses led this group of people out of Egypt, bound for the land God had promised to Israel's grandfather, Abraham **Genesis 12:5-10**.

God asked Israel's descendants to become His people and to accept His law and ways.

The people chose to accept these laws. By worshipping God and keeping His laws, these people began to be known as the **Jewish people**. During this period of time, God chose to deal with only the Jewish people, who eventually became the nation of Israel.

- **Exodus 19:8** "All the people answered together and said, 'All that the LORD has spoken we will do!' And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD."
- **Amos 3:2** "You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth..."

Because of this, this period of time or age is referred to as "**The Jewish Age**." Through the keeping of God's Law, the Jewish people were expected over the generations to develop hearts and minds that were pleasing to God.

During this period, God began to deliver prophecies of a Messiah.

The word "Messiah" is found in the Old Testament only twice in **Daniel 9:25, 26 (KJV)** The same Hebrew word is more often translated into English as "anointed."

- **Isaiah 7:14** "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold a virgin will be with child and bear a son and she will call his name Immanuel."
- **Micah 5:2** "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you one will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."

What was the Jewish Age “HARVEST” period and what was its goal? Why was this harvest period important to the age that followed it?

The time for development was over. Jesus as King had arrived to judge the results. Jesus was the Jewish people’s long-foretold king. He assumed this role by fulfilling prophecy when he rode into Jerusalem.

Original Prophecy:

- **Zechariah 9:9** “Rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt the foal of a donkey.”

The Fulfillment:

Matthew 21:5–9 (KJV) “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, ‘Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.’ And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, and brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon... And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, ‘Hosanna to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.’”



Entrée du Christ à Jérusalem by Pierre-Paul Rubens

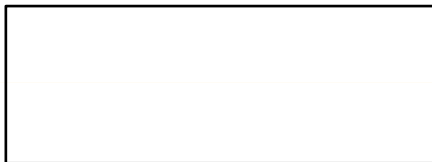
Just as God’s Law had only been to the Jewish people, Jesus made it clear and gather (“harvest”) the Jewish people at that time.

- **Matthew 15:24** “But he answered and said, ‘I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.’”

Jesus searched for those Jewish people who, after living under God’s Law, were ready to make a complete consecration to God.

This is exemplified in Jesus’ interaction with the rich young ruler in **Matthew 19:16–23**. Although the rich young ruler had, by his words, obeyed the Mosaic Law, he still approached Jesus and asked what more he must do. Jesus indicated a full consecration to God was necessary.

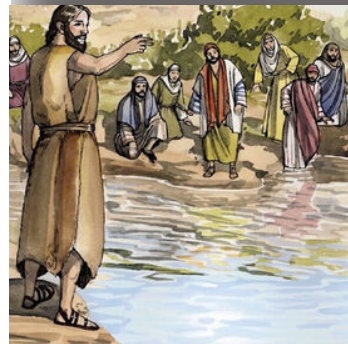
- **Matthew 19:21** “Jesus said to him, ‘If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me.’”



Thus, the purpose of the Jewish Age harvest period when Jesus was on the earth was to **gather those of the Jewish people who had developed a proper heart and the faithful followers of Jesus.**

Jesus’ selection process, or “harvesting” of the Jewish people was symbolically referred to by John the Baptist. John the Baptist’s purpose was to proclaim the Messiah and prepare people to receive Jesus into their hearts.

There were 400 years between the last words of the Old Testament in the book of Malachi and when the New Testament begins. No prophets were sent to Israel during this time and Greek influence began to corrupt Judaism. John had a lot of work to do in order to get the people ready to receive their Messiah!



John the Baptist’s words concisely summarize the important points of the Jewish Age harvest:

- **Matthew 3:11–12** “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove his sandals; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand and he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor; and he will gather his wheat into the barn but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

he who is coming after me	Jesus, the “harvester” of the Jewish Age harvest
his winnowing fork is in his hand	Chaff, the dry and lightweight outer husk of wheat, was separated from the grain through a process called winnowing. After threshing, the winnower would toss the mixture of chaff and wheat into the air with a winnowing fork. The wind would blow away the lighter chaff, while the heavier wheat kernels would fall back to the ground.
he will thoroughly clear his threshing floor	Jesus’ purpose was to find those of the Jewish people who had acceptably developed under God’s Law. He would “keep” these, just like a wheat harvester would keep the heavier wheat kernels.
gather his wheat into the barn	Those who accepted Christ and devote themselves to God would be called to be part of the Church class and if they continue to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, will become a part of Christ’s heavenly Church class.
burn up the chaff	The remainder of the Jewish people would be rejected, and for at least a period of time, experience God’s disfavor, including the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD.
with unquenchable fire	A symbolic fire, meaning burning <i>until</i> its destruction is complete. (Today we use this word in the same way, i.e., ‘I have an unquenchable thirst’ means I am thirsty <i>until</i> I drink something and am no longer thirsty.)

The Jewish Age harvest ended without a sufficient number of the Jewish people being found worthy. Because of this, God’s calling would extend to the rest of mankind, the Gentiles, and exclusive favor to the Jewish people would end.

What events mark the start and end of the GOSPEL AGE in God’s plan?

What is the main purpose of the Gospel Age?

God sent the Apostle Peter a vision.

- **Acts 10:15** “Again a voice came to him a second time, ‘What God has cleansed no longer consider unholy.’”

God was informing Peter through a symbolic vision that a fundamental change was taking place in God’s interactions with mankind. The Gentile people, previously considered “unclean,” were now acceptable to God. They would be eligible for a relationship with God and potential inclusion in Christ’s heavenly Church class.



GENTILES FELLOW-HEIRS

This vision was soon followed by God’s calling opening up to the first Gentile convert. He was a Roman centurion named Cornelius who had been faithful to the God of Israel for years. He was followed by a significant number of other Gentiles.

- **Acts 10:44–45** “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.”

Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance #G2098 for “gospel” means “a good message.” Certainly, the opening of God’s calling to include all mankind, Jew and Gentile alike, qualifies as a good message! This is sometimes expressed as “the good news of the gospel.” Because of this time of the gospel message going forth, this new age (following the Jewish Age harvest) is called the “**Gospel Age**.”

Just like the Jewish people had generations to develop a sufficient heart, mind and number to fill Christ's Church class, the Gentile people would also be granted such a time period.

The purpose of this harvest period was to select the "little flock."

Thus, the goal of the Gospel Age is to allow any of mankind, Jew or Gentile, the opportunity to consecrate to God with the hope of being eligible for inclusion in Christ's Church, the "little flock."

- **Romans 8:22–23** "For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this but also we ourselves having the first fruits of the spirit even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."

What is the Gospel Age "HARVEST" period and what is its goal?

- **Matthew 22:14** "For many are called, but few are chosen."

Throughout the Gospel Age, many have responded to God's calling. Some have responded acceptably by devoting, or consecrating, their whole hearts and minds to serving God. Others, through misunderstandings, misleading or any number of other reasons, may have responded to God's calling but not in an acceptable manner.

Thus, once a sufficient number have responded (bringing the Gospel Age to close), there will need to be another period of judgment and sorting, just like at the end of the Jewish Age. This period of time is generally known as the Gospel Age "harvest," again applying the symbol of the agricultural act of harvesting to this time of judgment and sorting.

This act of sorting those who have truly developed hearts and minds consecrated to God from those who have not during the Gospel Age harvest period is pictured in

The Parable of the Wheat and Tares

- **Matthew 13:24–30** "Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.'"



Bundling and burning tares

a man who	Jesus. His sacrifice provides the means for all to respond to God's calling and have any hope of being acceptable to God.
sowed good seed	Spreading the gospel of the Kingdom from the word of God. This "seed" will take hold in certain people's hearts and draw them to God and His calling.
While his men were sleeping	After the apostles "fell asleep" in death, many errors crept into the simple truths of God's word, causing many people to be led into error.
His enemy	The enemy of God's plan is, of course, Satan. He does not want to see the Church class completed and the Gospel Age end because he knows once this time comes, he will soon after lose his influence and be destroyed.
sowed tares among the wheat	Throughout the centuries, there have been many who have called themselves Christian and claimed to be "answering God's calling." However, their actions, hearts and lives demonstrate their lack of understanding God's true requirements. These types of individuals are the "tares" in the parable.

Allow both to grow together until the harvest	Those who have the type of hearts God is looking for will see through the errors and misinterpretations that the adversary perpetuates. Through faith and God's grace, they will correctly respond to God's calling.
First gather up the tares and bind them	By associating themselves with institutions, systems and beliefs that are contrary to God's true word, "tares" group themselves together. This process makes them easier to identify and, eventually destroy (as systems, not as people).
To burn them	It is important to remember that this is a parable. This does not mean that "tares" will be submitted to an everlasting, literal burning and torture. It means the systems, beliefs and attitudes that make a "tare" a "tare" will be "burned" or destroyed.
gather the wheat into my barn	The truly consecrated who have been judged worthy of becoming members of Christ's Church, the "little flock."

Once all of those truly consecrated to God and His calling have been gathered together to form the Church class or "little flock," the Gospel Age harvest will end and the next age of God's plan will begin in earnest.

What do we expect will happen in the Millennial (or Messianic) Age?

- **Ephesians 1:10 (KJV)** "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him."

After the Church has been completed, God's Kingdom will be setup in all its power and glory. Mankind will be raised from the dead and taught how to live in harmony with God. After a sufficient period for instruction, mankind will be tested. Those who choose to be obedient to God will be granted everlasting life. Those who choose disobedience will be destroyed.

- **Acts 3:23** "And it will be that every soul that does not heed that prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people."

Parable of the Sheep and Goats This judgment process is pictured as a sorting of "sheep" and "goats" by Jesus.

- **Matthew 25:31–33** "But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him; and he will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and he will put the sheep on his right, and the goats on the left."
- **Matthew 25:34–40:** Jesus describes the king (a symbol of himself) talking to those on the right, the "sheep." He lists the positive services and acts performed by this class which made them worthy of being separated out onto the right.
- **Matthew 25:41–46:** Jesus describes the negative actions performed by the "goats" that caused them to be separated out onto the left. Those of mankind who, after being taught God's ways in perfect conditions, still choose to lapse into selfish or disobedient minds and hearts will be "cut off" or destroyed. Once this judgment has been completed, only those of mankind in full harmony with God and His ways will remain, and mankind will enter into the wonder of the untold ages to come.
- **Isaiah 11:9** "They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

The Bible is the chronicle of God's plan to bless mankind, as members of the Church class, or as members of the restored and perfected human race. When this is truly understood, the marvelous true character of God's loving and just spirit are abundantly made evident.

"Then you will say on that day, 'I will give thanks to You, O Lord; for although You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me. Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord God is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation. Therefore you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation.' And in that day, you will say, 'Give thanks to the Lord, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; make them remember that His name is exalted. Praise the Lord in song, for He has done excellent things; let this be known throughout the earth. Cry aloud and shout for joy, O inhabitant of Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.'" **Isaiah 12:1–6**

THE STUDY OF BIBLE CHRONOLOGY

God's Great Time Clock for Mankind

Goal of this Study: Our God is a God of **order** and of **time**. He does everything according to His Plan of the Ages and the appointed times and seasons are an important part of this plan. **WHY** is chronology important? **WHERE** are we in the stream of time? **HOW** does chronology point to the Lord's return and the establishment of his Kingdom?

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol.2, Chap. 1 and 2

What is Chronology and what is its purpose?

Chronology comes from two different Greek words – *chronos* meaning 'time' and *logos* meaning 'word'. For example, the word *chronometer* is the technical term for a watch.

Purpose of Chronology: Chronology establishes how long mankind has been on the earth and where we are in the stream of time.



What are the different types of chronology?

There are two types of chronology: Bible Chronology and Secular Chronology.

- **Bible Chronology** is the study of time according to the biblical record. Since God gave us His word, it is reasonable to assume He would furnish proof to those who search the Scriptures.
 - ✦ According to Bible chronology, 6,000 years from the creation of Adam was complete in 1872AD.
 - ✦ Since that time, we are chronologically in **the seventh 1,000-year period, or the Millennium.**
- **Secular Chronology** is the study of time according to written histories (authors outside the Bible, like Herodotus), archeological findings, or scientific data.
 - ✦ These sources vary widely—saying man has been on the earth for thousands, tens of thousands or hundreds of thousands of years.
 - ✦ These chronologies are often unreliable and inconsistent, especially as they reach further back in time, rarely offering a clear or unified answer.

Why is Bible Chronology important?

Bible Chronology is a gift to those in the right heart condition and who are truly seeking to know God.

- **Daniel 12:10** "But ...none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand."

Time prophecies **help us to recognize foretold events when due.**

- **Luke 21:34** "Be on guard...and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap."

At the end of the age, **much truth is due to be uncovered** that God did not make known in the past.

- **Habakkuk 2:2-3** (KJV) "And the LORD answered me, and said, 'Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.'"
- **Daniel 12:4, 9** "'But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.' And he said, 'Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.'"

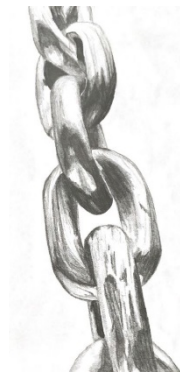
We should want to know whatever God reveals concerning its times and seasons. Faithful followers have long prayed "Thy Kingdom come..." and they should want to know when this will happen!

- **Deuteronomy 29:29** "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law."
- **John 15:15** (NIV) "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you."

How is Bible Chronology like seven links in a chain?

Each link is scripturally strong, and all **the links together form a chain** of testimony of God's times and seasons. There are **seven links** or periods in the chain of Bible Chronology. It starts with the creation of Adam and ends in 536BC, the first year of the reign of Cyrus. This latter date is well-authenticated and generally accepted by scholars.

Bible Chronology meets with secular history at 536BC.



SEVEN PERIODS OF BIBLE CHRONOLOGY

Link #1: From Creation of Adam to the end of the Flood: 1,656 Years

In this period of Bible Chronology, God kept time by recording the age of a father when his son was born.

Adam lived 130 years and begat a son and called his name Seth.	Genesis 5:3	130 years
Seth lived 105 years and begat Enos.	Genesis 5:6	105 years
Enos lived 90 years and begat Cainan.	Genesis 5:9	90 years
Cainan lived 70 years and begat Mahalaleel.	Genesis 5:12	70 years
Mahalaleel lived 65 years and begat Jared.	Genesis 5:15	65 years
Jared lived 162 years and begat Enoch.	Genesis 5:18	162 years
Enoch lived 65 years and begat Methuselah.	Genesis 5:21	65 years
Methuselah lived 187 years and begat Lamech.	Genesis 5:25	187 years
Lamech lived 182 years and begat a son and called his name Noah.	Genesis 5:28	182 years
Noah was 600 years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.	Genesis 7:6	600 years
<hr/>		
Total from the creation of Adam to the day the Flood dried up.	Genesis 8:13	1656 years

Link #2: From the Flood to the Covenant with Abraham: 427 Years

Just as in the last time period, God kept time by recording the age of a father when his son was born.

Shem begat Arphaxad 2 years after the flood.	Genesis 11:10	2 years
Arphaxad lived 35 years and begat Salah.	Genesis 11:12	35 years
Salah lived 30 years and begat Eber.	Genesis 11:14	30 years
Eber lived 34 years and begat Peleg.	Genesis 11:16	34 years
Peleg lived 30 years and begat Reu.	Genesis 11:18	30 years
Reu lived 32 years and begat Serug.	Genesis 11:20	32 years
Serug lived 30 years and begat Nahor.	Genesis 11:22	30 years
Nahor lived 29 years and begat Terah.	Genesis 11:24	29 years
The days of Terah were 205 years and he died.	Genesis 11:32	205 years
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Total from the flood to the death of Terah		427 years

Link #3: From the Covenant with Abraham to the Giving of the Law: 430 Years

God hid the answer for this link in the chronological chain not in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament.

- [Galatians 3:17](#) "The law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." This means that **the Law came 430 years after the Promise to Abraham.**
 - ✦ **Promise:** God gave the promise to Abraham when his father Terah died. [Genesis 11:32, 33; 12:1-4](#)
 - ✦ **The Law:** The first feature of God's law for Israel was the Passover. This was the night before the Exodus when all the first born of Israel were saved because of the lamb's blood on their doorposts.

Link #4: From the Law to the Division of the Land: 46 Years

After the Israelites left Egypt, they journeyed towards the promised land. **One year, one month and five days** passed from leaving Sinai for Paran. **Numbers 33:3; 10:11–13** And it was from Kadesh-barnea, in the wilderness of Paran, that the spies were sent. **Numbers 13:3–26; 32:8–13**

The spies came back with a terrible report, they said the promised land was filled with giants! **Numbers 13:32** This displeased God, who had delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh and was ready to give them the land. God punished Israel by letting them wander in the wilderness.

After Moses's death the wandering ended and Israel returned to the promised land under the leadership of Joshua and conquered the Canaanites, and divided the land among the tribe for their inheritance. **Joshua 11:23**

Caleb was one of the original spies and when asking for his portion of the land said...

- **Joshua 14:7,10** "I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought word back to him as it was in my heart. Now behold, the Lord has let me live, just as He spoke, these **forty-five years**, from the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses, when Israel walked in the wilderness; and now behold, I am eighty-five years old today."

So, it was **1 year** from the exodus to the sending of the spies and **45 years** from spying the land to its division among the tribes, a total of **46 years from the Exodus to the division of the land**.

Link #5: Period of the Judges: 450 Years

Like link #3 (Promise to the Law), God hid a time period in the Old Testament and revealed it in the New Testament.

- The period from the division of the land to the anointing of Saul as King is called the **Period of the Judges**, though the Judges did not fill the office continuously.
- **This record of time is difficult to trace** so God gave us a simple answer in the words of Apostle Paul.
- Apostle Paul states that after God divided their land into lots...
 - **Acts 13:19–21** "...He gave unto them Judges about [during] the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the Prophet. And afterward they desired a king, and God gave unto them Saul."

Link #6: Period of the Kings: 513 Years

The **Period of the Kings** started when Saul was anointed and ended when wicked King Zedekiah was removed from the throne by King Nebuchadnezzar. The record of the Kings can be found in the books of Kings and Chronicles, and the length of this period is measured by adding up the years each king was on the throne (reigned).

God hid another important link in the chain in the New Testament in **Acts 13:21**—the length of the reign of King Saul—found nowhere else in the Bible.

Saul's "space"	(Acts 13:21)	40 years	Amaziah reigned	(2 Chr. 25:1)	29 years
David reigned	(1 Chr. 29:27)	40 years	Uzziah reigned	(2 Chr. 26:3)	52 years
Solomon reigned	(2 Chr. 9:30)	40 years	Jotham reigned	(2 Chr. 27:1)	16 years
Rehoboam reigned	(2 Chr. 12:13)	17 years	Ahaz reigned	(2 Chr. 28:1)	16 years
Abijah reigned	(2 Chr. 13:2)	3 years	Hezekiah reigned	(2 Chr. 29:1)	29 years
Asa reigned	(2 Chr. 16:13)	41 years	Manasseh reigned	(2 Chr. 33:1)	55 years
Jehoshaphat reigned	(2 Chr. 20:31)	25 years	Amon reigned	(2 Chr. 33:21)	2 years
Jehoram reigned	(2 Chr. 21:20)	8 years	Josiah reigned	(2 Chr. 34:1)	31 years
Ahaziah reigned	(2 Chr. 22:2)	1 years	Jehoiakim reigned	(2 Chr. 36:5)	11 years
Athaliah reigned	(2 Chr. 22:12)	6 years	Zedekiah reigned	(2 Chr. 36:11)	11 years
Jehoash reigned	(2 Chr. 24:1)	40 years			
				Total Period of the Kings	513 years

Link #7: Period of Desolation of the Land: 70 Years

When Israel was conquered by Babylon and King Zedekiah (Israel) was removed from the throne by Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon) this began the Period of the Desolation of the Land.

- This is called “**the desolation of the land**” because all the Israelites, both younger and old, rich and poor were removed from the promised land.
- Even before Nebuchadnezzar conquered the Israelites, God foretold the length of this period through the prophet Jeremiah, that it would be **70 years**. [Jeremiah 25:11](#); [Jeremiah 29:10](#); [2 Chronicles 36:21](#)
- **After 70 years passed**, King Cyrus (Persia) issued a decree to let the Israelites return to their land. [2 Chronicles 36:22–23](#); [Ezra 1:1–4](#) This happened in 536BC and is a date well established in secular history. Here Bible Chronology ends.

How do we know that 6,000 years since the creation of Adam ended in 1872AD?

Now that we have established all the links in our chronological chain, let’s see where 6,000 years since the creation of Adam ends:

From the Creation of Adam to the end of the flood	1656 years
From there to the Covenant with Abraham	427 years
From there to the Exodus and the Giving of the Law	430 years
From there to the Division of the Land	46 years
The period of the Judges	450 years
The period of the Kings	513 years
The period of the Desolation	70 years
From there to 1AD	536 years
From there to the end of 1872 and beginning of 1873AD	1872 years

Total of all Bible Chronology links	6000 years

Why is 6,000 years important, and what does it have to do with the Kingdom?

Though the Bible contains no direct statement that the seventh thousand-year period from the creation of Adam will be the epoch of Christ's reign, the Bible contains many examples of six periods of labor followed by a seventh period of rest and freedom.

Biblical examples of 6 periods labor + 1 period rest and freedom

- **Rest from Creation:** God created the earth in six epochs and on the seventh epoch God rested. [Genesis 2:1–3](#)
- **Rest from Work:** God told Israel that they were to have six days of labor followed by a seventh day of rest from work. The seventh day of rest was called the Sabbath. [Exodus 20:8–11](#)
- **Rest for the Land:** The Israelites were allowed to sow the land for crops for six years, but on the seventh year the land was to rest. [Exodus 23:10–11](#)
- **Freedom for Servants:** If a fellow Hebrew was sold as a servant to pay off a debt, they could work for six years, but on the seventh they had to go free. [Exodus 21:2](#); [Deuteronomy 15:12](#)

How much greater and grander will this be for mankind, who has labored under sin and death for 6,000 years to be followed by the seventh 1,000-year great Sabbath (Millennial) Day of restitution for the world!

The Millennial Kingdom under Jesus Christ

During his first advent, Jesus told his followers that He was to inherit the Kingdom from his Father and to show the beautiful character of this Kingdom, Jesus performed miracles to heal suffering and disease—many times on the Sabbath!

- Healing the lame man: [John 5:6–9](#)
- Man with the withered hand: [Matthew 12:10–13](#)
- Woman with infirmity: [Luke 13:11–16](#)
- Man with dropsy (swelling/edema): [Luke 14:1–4](#)

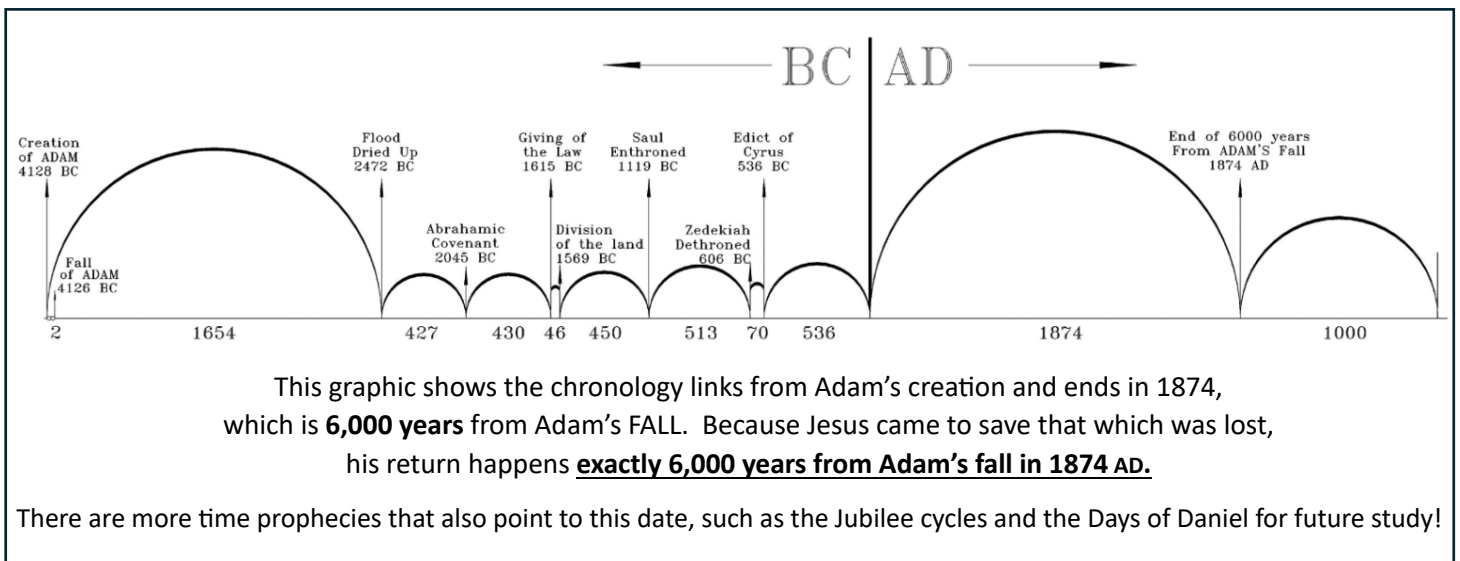
To show that Jesus was to rule in God’s Kingdom and that it would be a time of rest and freedom, Jesus referred to himself as the “Lord of the Sabbath.”

- [Matthew 12:8](#) “For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”
- [Mark 2:27–28](#) “Jesus said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.’”
- [Luke 6:5](#) “And He was saying to them, ‘The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.’”

So, during the Greater (antitypical) Sabbath, the Millennium (the seventh 1,000-year day), it will be declared to all the world that all can have everlasting life and health eternal, if they take the steps of faith and obedience through Jesus and the Church who will reign in this Kingdom for **1,000 years**.

- [Revelation 20:6](#) “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.”

Now we know where we are in the stream of time! We have traced 6,000 years from the creation of man and find ourselves in the seventh 1,000-year period. In this Millennial Age, Jesus has returned invisibly as the “Lord of the Sabbath.” He is tearing down the old order to make way for the Kingdom in power and glory, where the dead will be raised and sorrow and sighing will flee away forever! **Praise be to God for His plan for everyone!**



The framework of Bible chronology in this keynote follows that presented in the Studies in the Scriptures. The fact that the Scriptures contain numerous time markers, genealogies, and dates invites careful study for a deeper insight into God’s unfolding plan. Together with 2 Tim. 2:15, we urge every reader to “study to show yourself approved unto God... rightly dividing the word of truth.” Becoming familiar with the biblical time features can ground our faith and help us understand where we are on the stream of time.

THE PROPHECY OF THE SEVENTY WEEKS

Goal of this Study: **WHAT** is the meaning of this prophecy? **WHY** is this prophecy so important to Jesus' followers? We will examine the meanings behind the time prophecy of Daniel 9:25-27.

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol. 2, Chap. 3

What is Bible time prophecy?

- **Prophecy** is the foretelling of future events. The Bible describes certain events before they transpire and includes indicators to help determine the dates they will occur. Studying the Bible's time prophecies has been particularly interesting to many people throughout the centuries.
- Interpreting time prophecies requires study and research. Sincere and honest research can help one understand the prophecies and gain insights into the plan of God.

Why is the time prophecy of Daniel 9:25-27 significant?

- This prophecy specifically says it leads to "Messiah the Prince." It prophesies the time leading to Jesus' First Advent. (verse 25)
- Three important time periods are revealed in this prophecy:
 - ✦ The year of Jesus' baptism—when he assumed the role of Messiah
 - ✦ Jesus' death—when the Messiah would be "cut off"
 - ✦ The length of time of his ministry—suggested by the above time periods
- There is no other Bible prophecy that provides this information in such detail. Thus, this prophecy is critical in identifying the specific time of Jesus' ministry.

What was troubling Daniel in the chapters preceding the 70-weeks prophecy? Daniel 9:1-9

The prophet Daniel was deeply troubled by Israel's captivity in Babylon. He asked God to forgive Israel for their sins of idolatry and restore them to their homeland. The angel Gabriel was sent to comfort Daniel. He also came to give Daniel "skill and understanding." (**Daniel 9:22**) The 70-weeks prophecy was Gabriel's answer to Daniel's heartfelt concern for Israel.

However, his explanation went far beyond the immediate circumstances of Israel's captivity. The prophecy describes things that would affect not only Israel's release from bondage but also mankind's greater release from their servitude to sin and death.



Gabriel's answer to Daniel regarding Israel.

- **Daniel 9:24 (KJV)** "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."

The first statement in verse 24 indicates that the prophecy would affect Daniel's people and the holy city of Jerusalem. So, it is important to see how the prophecy affected the Jews. We will examine each of the six details mentioned by Gabriel and see how they applied first to Daniel's people and then to the larger work of the Messiah.

“Finish the Transgression”

REGARDING ISRAEL

- The word transgression can also be translated as “rebellion.” Israel’s rebellion against God ended when they were cast off from favor in 29AD. **Matthew 23:38**.

REGARDING SALVATION

- Like Israel, mankind also rebelled against God. **Genesis 3:1-6** Adam’s choice to disobey was an act of rebellion that continues today. But the Kingdom of Christ will bring an end to man’s rebellion. **Revelation 22:3**

“To Make an End of Sins”

REGARDING ISRAEL

- For believing Jews, this meant that Jesus would remove their sins under the Law, nailing the Law to the cross. **Colossians 2:1**

REGARDING SALVATION

- The death of Jesus paid the ransom and will also eventually remove sin from the hearts of all people. **Jude 1:3**



“To Make Reconciliation for Iniquity”

REGARDING ISRAEL

- After Jesus’ death, believing Jews could be fully reconciled with God. **Romans 11:23**

REGARDING SALVATION

- Unbelieving Jews will be reconciled to God with the rest of mankind during the Kingdom, in fulfillment of the Abrahamic Promise. **Galatians 3:8; Hebrews 2:17**

Angel Gabriel

“To Bring in Everlasting Righteousness”

REGARDING ISRAEL

- The death of Jesus would allow believing Jews to receive justification (righteousness) under the blood of Jesus. They would no longer be under the typical justification provided by the Law, a condition that could not fully justify them in the eyes of God. **Acts 13:39**

REGARDING SALVATION

- This is a precious promise regarding the future blessing of mankind. It points to a time when justice and truth will prevail everywhere. **Luke 18:30**

“To Seal up the Vision and Prophecy “

FULFILLMENT OF THE 70-WEEKS PROPHECY HAS IMPORTANT IMPLICATIONS

- The word prophecy should be translated as “prophet.” The fulfillment of this prophecy confirms Daniel as a true prophet of God. The prophecies given through Daniel also establish the inspiration of the Bible. **Daniel 9:22**

“To Anoint the Most Holy”

REGARDING ISRAEL

- Jews who accepted Jesus as their Messiah were anointed with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. **Acts 2:1-4** The Apostle Paul described these as “a remnant according to the election of grace.” By accepting Jesus, they came under God’s grace. **Romans 11:3**

REGARDING SALVATION

- In a larger application, this refers to the Day of Atonement when Israel’s high priest entered the Most Holy with the blood of the bullock, followed by the blood of the goat. **Leviticus 16** This represents the sacrificial blood of Christ and the Church being applied to the Mercy Seat, satisfying divine justice. **Hebrews 13:11-13**

How long is 70 weeks, and how can we know it is a prophetic time period?

- **Daniel 9:25** “So you are to know and discern that from the issuing of a decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Prince there will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; it will be built again, with plaza and moat, even in times of distress.”

70 weeks is slightly more than 16 months. The fulfillment of this prophecy could never be accomplished in such a short time. To properly interpret the meaning of Daniel’s prophecy, one must understand that one day represents one year. Below are some scriptural examples of this important approach when interpreting time prophecy.

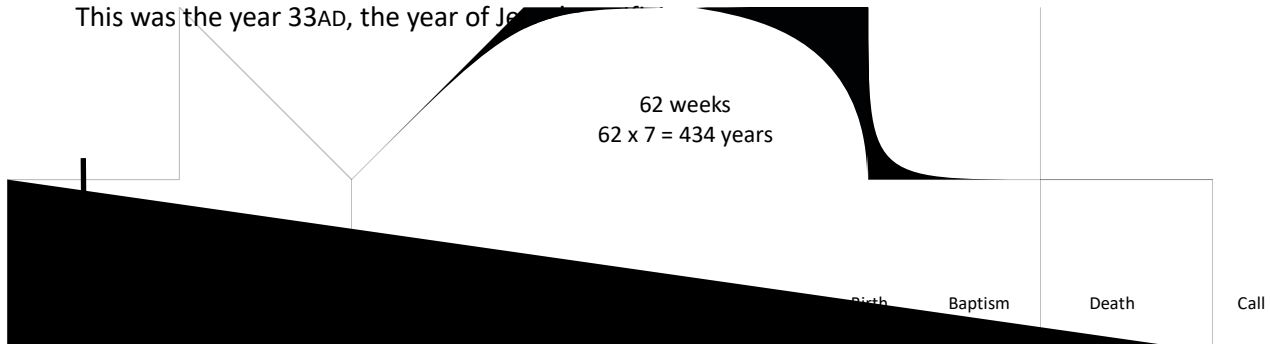
- **Numbers 13:25-33** The twelve spies returned from spying out the Promised Land and were gone for 40 days. Ten spies gave an “evil report” (verse 32) saying they could not conquer the land because the people were too strong. Because of their lack of faith, Israel was required to wander in the wilderness for 40 years, a year for each day the spies were in the land. See also **Numbers 14:33, 34**.
- **Ezekiel 4:4-6** “I have appointed thee each day for a year.” The prophet was instructed to lie on his side for 430 days. This was to correspond to the number of years that Israel had committed iniquity. This is a direct usage of 1 day = 1 year.
- **Exodus 20:8-11; 23:10-11** The Law of Moses commands that the seventh day be a day of rest and the seventh year be a year of rest. This also suggests that a day is equivalent to a year and sets a pattern for Daniel's prophecy of seventy weeks.

How did Gabriel divide the 70 weeks?

Daniel 9:25 states that the 70 weeks prophecy would be comprised of various periods extending to “Messiah the Prince.” Examine the chart below and see how those time periods were fulfilled. Verse 25 states that the prophecy’s fulfillment would begin “from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem.” Keep in mind that one week (7 days) represents seven years.

PROPHETIC RECKONING
1 DAY = 1 YEAR

- **1st period—7 weeks (49 years)** This began in 454BC in the 20th year of the reign of Darius the Great. In the 7th year of the reign of Artaxerxes I, Nehemiah was permitted to return to Israel and rebuild Jerusalem. **Nehemiah 2:1-8** (See Vol. 2, p.67) This first period predicted 49 years for the rebuilding of the city.
- **2nd period—62 weeks (434 years)** This began in 405BC and extends to 29AD—the baptism of Jesus. The word “Messiah” means “anointed.” Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit at his baptism. **Matthew 3:16** After (sometime after the 62 weeks), Messiah would be cut off. This now takes us to the 70th week.
- **3rd period—70th week (7 years)** “...in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease.” In the midst, or middle, of the 70th week, Messiah’s sacrifice would end. This was the year 33AD, the year of Jesus’ death.



What “covenant” was confirmed?

- **Daniel 9:27** (KJV) “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.”

Although Israel was cast off from favor as a nation in 33AD, the remainder of the 70th week was reserved for continued favor to individual Jews. The Gospel message was initially confined to a “remnant” of Jews. Thus, the covenant was “confirmed with many.” This exclusive favor continued for 3½ years until 36AD, when Cornelius, the first Gentile believer, came to Christ. **Acts 10**



iel 9:27 “...And for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate.”

As a result of Israel’s rejection of their Messiah and their ongoing disobedience, their nation and temple were destroyed by the Romans in 70AD.

However, Israel was not cast off forever. The Apostle Paul explains in **Acts 13:46-47** that after their punishment time expired, they would be restored.

Acts 11:2 This is another thrilling prophecy that can now be easily identified.

In Conclusion

This wonderful prophecy points directly to Jesus as the true Messiah. Under divine inspiration, Daniel provided a faith-strengthening insight that proves the Lord’s death was not tragic, but a vital part of God’s plan of salvation. It also reveals important historical evidence that Biblical time prophecy uses one day to represent one year. This key allows us to study other important time prophecies. We are deeply grateful that God has given so much truth on which our faith can firmly stand. We look forward to the time when all creation will honor the heavenly Father, the giver of all good things, and our great Savior.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life;
no one comes to the Father but through Me."

JOHN 14:6

THE TIMES OF THE GENTILES

Goal of this study: **WHAT** are the “Times of the Gentiles”? **WHEN** do they begin and end? **WHAT** will it accomplish?

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 2. Chap 4

“And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the **times of the Gentiles** be fulfilled.”
Luke 21:24 (KJV)

What does “trodden down” mean?

The expression implies that it would be an “oppressive” subjection, as when a captive in war is trodden down under the feet of the conqueror.

Why was Jerusalem trodden down by the Gentile nations?

Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. When Israel rejected Jesus, he pronounced, “Your house is being left to you desolate!” **Matthew 23:38**. That means God removed His protection from Israel and they lost their special relationship with Him for a period of time.



How long will Israel would be trodden down?

The word “times” suggests a period of certain length with both a beginning word “fulfilled.” When something is fulfilled, it ends. This means that we can know how long Israel would be trodden down under Gentile dominion.

What does it mean to have dominion of the earth?



Dominion means to have control and authority over something. The dominion of earth was originally given to Adam. After he sinned, the dominion of earth was removed.

- **Genesis 1:28** “God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”

Who had dominion of earth after Adam lost it?

Before the flood of Noah’s day, the **angels** who came down to earth were permitted to have dominion for a time. However, after they too, sinned, dominion was removed.

How will God’s promise to Abraham relate to the dominion of earth?

After exhibiting great faith, God made a promise that would affect not only Abraham, but also his descendants.

- **Genesis 12:7** “The Lord appeared to Abram and said, To your descendants I will give this land.”

This passage tells us that the descendants of Abraham (the nation of Israel) would be given the land. So, after leaving Egypt and wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, Israel possessed the land of Israel and had a legal right to it.



King Zekekiel

When and why did Israel lose dominion of the land?

- **Ezekiel 21:25–27** (KJV) “And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, Thus saith the Lord God, ‘Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will **overturn, overturn, overturn**, it: and it shall be no more, until **he come whose right it is**; and I will give it him.”

Over time, Israel became so wicked that God took away their dominion of the land. God would “**overturn, overturn, overturn**” control of the land of Israel. This statement was made when Babylon first took away Israel’s dominion. The first overturning was to the Medo-Persian Empire which overthrew Babylon and was the next universal power. Greece then followed as the next world power that controlled the land of Israel. Greece was then overthrown by Rome.

Three “Overturnings”

1. Babylon overturned to Medo-Persia
2. Medo-Persia overturned to Greece
3. Greece overturned to Rome.

God’s pronouncement said that Israel would not be restored until “**he come whose right it is and I will give it [to] him.**”

This is a direct reference to Jesus as the Messiah. By his sacrificial death he purchased not only mankind, but also dominion of earth, which included the land of Israel. But in the intervening period Israel would be under the control of the Gentile powers.



Jesus’ right to earth was prophetically confirmed to the prophet Daniel. In a vision the son of man (Jesus) appeared and the Ancient of Days (God) gave **him** “dominion, glory and a kingdom.” His would be an “everlasting dominion” because he sacrificed his human life to purchase it. He is also righteous and worthy of such an honor. It will be a great blessing for mankind when Jesus is fully in control of this world.



- **Daniel 7:13, 14:** “I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven one like a Son of Man [Jesus] was coming, and he came up to the Ancient of Days [God] and was presented before Him. And to him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an **everlasting dominion** which will not pass away; and his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”

How long is the “Times of the Gentiles”

The Lord had told Israel what the consequences would be if they disobeyed Him.

- **Leviticus 26:28** “Then I will act with wrathful hostility against you, and I, even I, will punish you **seven times** for your sins.”

The “seven times” described in Leviticus is a prophetic indication of how long Israel would be subjected to Gentile rule.

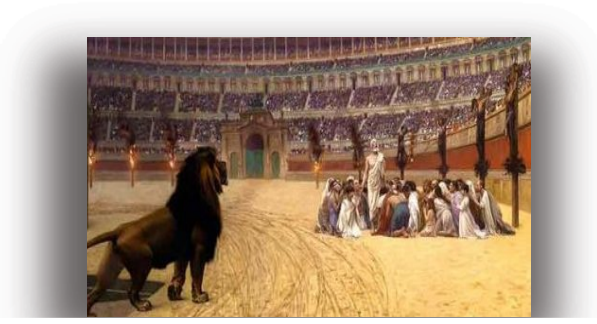
“The term “Times of the Gentiles” was applied by our Lord to that interval of earth’s history between the removal of the typical Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Israel (Ezekiel 21:25–27), and the introduction and establishment of its antitype, the true Kingdom of God.” Vol. 2, p.73

Determining Biblical Time

In Scripture, the words “time” and “times” can be used to measure years. For example, when Papacy was in power, we are told “the woman,” representing faithful Christ

- **Revelation 12:6** “Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by God, so that there she would be nourished for **one thousand two hundred and sixty days.**”

Using the formula of **1 day = 1 year**, 1,260 days represents 1,260 years and corresponds to the years from 539AD, when Papacy came to power, to 1799 AD, when Napoleon took the Pope captive and broke the iron rule of Papacy.



This is confirmed in another description of this same time period.

- **Revelation 12:14** “But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for **a time and times and half a time**, from the presence of the serpent.”

This same woman, representing faithful Christians during the Gospel Age, is here described as fleeing from Satan’s attempts to destroy her. She is fed for a “time [1 time] and times [2 times] and half a time.” The word “time” here represents a year. A prophetic year is 360 days. This is describing 3½ years, or 1,260 days, each day represents one year.

1 time =	360 years
2 times =	720 years
½ time =	180 years
3 ½ times =	1,260 years

Another proof that a day represents a year

When God was going to punish the tribe of Judah for 40 years, He told the prophet Ezekiel to lie on his side for 40 days. This is direct evidence that when studying biblical time, one day often represents one year.

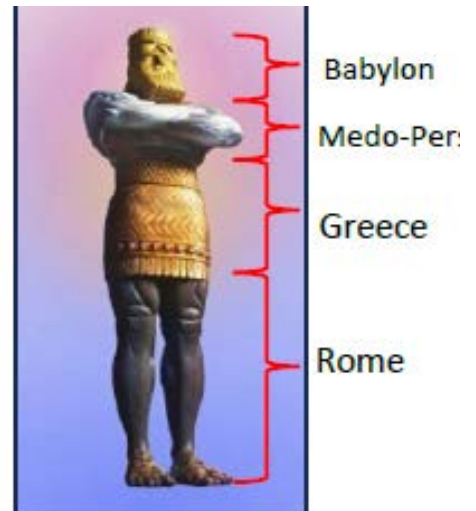
- **Ezekiel 4:6** “I have assigned it to you for forty days, **a day for each year.**”

The Seven Times of Gentile Rule

- **Leviticus 26:28** “Even I, will punish you **seven times** for your sins.”

Since 1 time = 360 years, then 7 times = **2,520 years.**

Israel was first taken captive by Babylon in 606BC. 2,520 years later means that Gentile rule over Israel should end in 1914AD.



The King Nebuchadnezzar in a dream of a giant statue. Daniel said to the king:

- **Daniel 2:38** “You are the head of gold.”

How did the Times of the Gentiles end in 1914 if they are still around today?

Although permission to have dominion was taken away from the Gentiles in 1914, the process continues to remove them and establish God's Kingdom. This is shown in Nebuchadnezzar's dream when a rock struck the image and ground it to powder. Today, we are witnessing the nations being "ground to powder." See [Daniel 2:44, 45](#)

The ending of the Gentile Times contributed to the process of reestablishing Israel and removing Gentile dominion over their land, which began in 1878.

In 1878, the Berlin Congress of Nations established of the first Jewish colony at Petach Tikvah, and the onset of the first wave of immigration

In 1896, Theodor Herzl of Vienna called the First Zionist Congress to issue a call to Jewry everywhere to return to their ancestral homeland.

In 1917, the government of Great Britain, through the intervention of the Jewish chemist, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, issued the Balfour Declaration, placing His Majesty's government of England on record as favoring the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.

In 1948, following the passage of a United Nations' resolution, the State of Israel was formally proclaimed.

Thus, in steady progressive steps, Israel has slowly regained her place among the nations which was promised to her by God.

Daniel 2:44 "In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever."

"The dream is true and its interpretation is trustworthy."

Daniel 2:45



THE FIFTH UNIVERSAL KINGDOM

Goal of this Study: **WHAT** is the fifth universal kingdom “that will endure forever”? **WHEN** will it come? **HOW** is it established? **WHAT** and **WHEN** were the previous four universal kingdoms?

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol. 1 Chap. 13

Is the “Kingdom of God” the same as the “Kingdom of heaven”? If so, why?

The “Kingdom of God” and the “Kingdom of heaven” are used **interchangeably** and mean the same thing. The phrase is used interchangeably in the Matthew and Luke accounts of the parable of the mustard seed.

Matthew 13:31; Luke 13:18–19

John the Baptist’s first words were about this Kingdom.

- **Matthew 3:1–2** “Now in those days John the Baptist came ...saying, Repent, for the **kingdom of heaven** is at hand.”

Jesus began his preaching with the message of the Kingdom.

- **Matthew 4:17** “From that time Jesus began to preach and say, Repent, for the **kingdom of heaven** is at hand.”
- **Matthew 9:35** “Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the **gospel of the kingdom**, and healing every disease and every sickness.”
 - ✦ Many of Jesus’ parables were about the Kingdom of God.
 - ✦ Jesus encouraged us to pray for it. “Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth...” **Matt. 6:10**

The **disciples** also preached the Kingdom.

- **Matthew 10:7** “And as you go, preach, saying, The **kingdom of heaven** is at hand.”

Why do so few Christians today talk about this Kingdom on earth and good tidings for all?

The general view of Christianity has been that this Kingdom of God is to be within the hearts of people and not a literal kingdom on earth. Therefore, missionaries have attempted to convert the world to Christianity now in order to establish God’s Kingdom on the earth “in men’s hearts.” Many misinterpreted scriptures and concepts were introduced within Christianity. Scriptures that are *seemingly* contradictory:

- The kingdom is here. (Jesus “carried” the kingdom with him.) **Matthew 4:17**
- The kingdom is in you. (Jesus’ true followers also “carry” the kingdom.) **Luke 17:20–21**
- The kingdom is in the future. **Matthew 6:10**
- The kingdom is a message to be spread. **Matthew 4:23**
- The kingdom is difficult to enter. **Matthew 18:3**
- The kingdom has to do with the resurrection. **1 Corinthians 15:22, 24**

Scripturally, “the Kingdom of God” can mean any one of many facets of the Kingdom—referring to people, events or an end result. It can refer to any of the below:

- ✦ Jesus himself, at his first advent
- ✦ The development of the Church class now
- ✦ The time of resurrection
- ✦ The final reign of God after all enemies—even death—are destroyed. In its full establishment, the “Kingdom of God” will be the literal government ruling over the whole earth and resurrected humanity.

What are some examples or previews of God's Kingdom?

Garden of Eden

God made and appointed Adam to be “king” over the earth. That dominion and kingship is referred to in:

- **Genesis 1:26** “...and let them [man] rule over...the fish ...the birds ... livestock and over all the earth...”
- **Psalms 8:5** “...And You crown him with glory and majesty!”

Ever since he disobeyed God, Adam and his descendants have become slaves to sin, with Satan and his angels ruling this “present evil age.” **Galatians 1:4** Satan usurped power and began to rule, establishing his own kingdom over men. The Apostle Paul called Satan the “god of this world.” **2 Corinthians 4:4**

Typical Israel

God chose the nation of Israel to be his people and his typical (literal) Kingdom.

- **Amos 3:2** “You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth.”

The Kings of Israel were said to have sat upon the “throne of the Lord.”

- **1 Chronicles 29:23** “Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father.”

This continued for a time until the last wicked king, King Zedekiah of Judah, about whom the Lord said:

- **Ezekiel 21:25–27 (KJV)** “Thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: ...I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he [Jesus] come whose right it is; and I will give it him.”

Thus, the typical Kingdom of God in Israel came to an end. God then permitted the Gentiles the power to rule.

- **Luke 21:24** “and they will fall by the edge of the sword, and will be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled underfoot by the Gentiles **until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.**”

But note again the words in **Ezekiel 21:27(KJV)** “until **he** come whose right it is; and I will give it to **him.**”

This “he/him” refers to Jesus. He is the King in God’s Kingdom, not at his first advent, but at his **second advent.**

The Jews could not understand this. They were waiting for a Messiah who would lead them out from under the yoke of Roman rule. They misunderstood the words in **Isaiah 9:6** “...and the government will rest on his shoulders...” and thus they looked for that glory and earthly Kingdom, not knowing that it would be fulfilled **only** when Jesus returned.

Ever since, Christians also have lost sight of the understanding of that Kingdom. They look for a Kingdom located in heaven only. But the truth is, the Kingdom will be both on the physical, restored earth **and** in heaven.

The Four Universal Empires illustrated and prophesied in the Book of Daniel

In the book of Daniel, God revealed His plan through two prophetic dreams:

1. To King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in **Daniel 2**
2. To God’s prophet Daniel in **Daniel 7**

King Nebuchadnezzar’s Dream—Daniel 2

Nebuchadnezzar demanded his wise men tell him both the dream and the interpretation, which they could not do. After praying to God, Daniel was able to tell the king the dream and the interpretation. Daniel is clear this information was from God, not from Daniel himself.

Daniel told the king his dream was of a huge metallic statue with a head of **GOLD**, the shoulders, arms and chest to the belly were **SILVER**, from the belly to the knees it was **COPPER**, and from the knees to the ankles it was **IRON**. The two feet and toes were a combination of **IRON AND CLAY**. Daniel said the king saw a **STONE** in the dream “cut out without hands” descend and strike the statue, and systematically crush the pieces to dust. A wind carried the dust away. The **STONE** meanwhile settled in one place and then began growing to become “a great mountain and filled the whole earth.”



Metal	Body Part	Interpretation
GOLD	HEAD	BABYLONIAN EMPIRE
SILVER	CHEST & ARMS	MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE
BRONZE	BELLY & THIGHS	GREEK EMPIRE
IRON IRON/CLAY	LEGS FEET	PAGAN ROMAN EMPIRE PAPAL ROMAN EMPIRE

Daniel told the king these four parts of the image represent **four kingdoms**. These would be successive, Gentile governments. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is represented as the “head of gold.” **Daniel 2:38** The fourth **IRON** empire, Rome, was by far the strongest and most enduring. This kingdom would divide into ten different powers (the ten **IRON/CLAY** toes) representing Pagan Rome mixed with Papal Rome (the “holy” Roman Empire). They will finally be broken and consumed, and the Kingdom of Christ will be set up in their place.

STONE is the symbol of the true Kingdom of God while **CLAY** is an “imitation” of stone. So, too, this “Christian” kingdom (Rome and its mixed system of church and state) is an imitation, counterfeit kingdom, not of God or of Christ and not according to God’s plan.

What happens to this image?

- **Daniel 2:44** “In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.”

This is the real, long prayed for “Kingdom of God” of divine, heavenly origin which is established on earth during “the days of those kings.” The Kingdom of God does not originate from men. It will **FIRST** put an end to all the kingdoms of this “present evil age” and **THEN** establish God’s righteous Kingdom in all the earth. Note: The kingdoms/governments of this world are not “renovated” or “fixed.” They will be completely destroyed to make way for God’s righteous Kingdom.

Daniel’s Dream—Daniel 7 and 8

Daniel himself, dreamt about four beasts that correspond to the **same four Gentile kingdoms** in the king’s dream. Daniel 2 looked at these kingdoms from **man’s perspective** (strong and shiny metals), while Daniel 7 and 8 show the kingdoms from **God’s perspective** (beastly and terrible).

- **Daniel 7:17** “These great beasts, which are four in number, are four kings who will arise from the earth.”

Lion Beast—BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

Daniel 7:4 “The first was like a lion and had the wings of an eagle. I kept looking until its wings were plucked, and it was lifted up from the ground and made to stand on two feet like a man; a human mind also was given to it.”

- “like a lion” – represents the great power and strength of the Babylonians.
- “wings of an eagle” – represents the great heights of Babylon’s rise...
 - ✦ **Daniel 4:22** “You have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky.”
- “its wings were plucked” – Nebuchadnezzar’s royal authority and glory was taken away.
 - ✦ **Daniel 4:31** “...sovereignty has been removed from you.”
- “a human mind was also given to it” – represents Nebuchadnezzar’s experiences after “seven periods of time” of becoming like a beast and his becoming humbled and later praising the “King of heaven.” **Daniel 4:34–37**



Bear Beast—MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE

Daniel 7:5 “And behold, another beast, a second one, resembling a bear. And it was raised up on one side, and three ribs were in its mouth between its teeth; and thus they said to it, Arise, devour much meat!”

- “resembling a bear”— the Medo-Persians specialized in the military tactical method of laying siege and surrounding their enemies, thus cutting off the food supplies and squeezing out the life. This is like a “bear’s hug,” which is so tight it stops the intake of breath, causing the life to be squeezed out of the victims.
- “raised up on one side”— represents the imbalance of there being more Persians than Medes amongst the kings of this empire.
- “three ribs were in its mouth”— just as beasts swallow other beasts, the Medo-Persians conquered and consumed **three main kingdoms** before they received world dominion: the Egyptian, Lydian and Babylonian kingdoms.
- “Arise, devour much meat”— refers to the **divine authority** for the Medo-Persian Empire to receive and consume the Babylonian Empire.
 - ✦ **Daniel 5:28, 30–31** “...your kingdom [Babylon] has been divided and given over to the Medes and Persians.”



Leopard Beast—GREEK EMPIRE

Daniel 7:6 “After this I kept looking, and behold, another one, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird; the beast also had four heads, and dominion was given to it.”

- “like a leopard”— represents the speed at which **Alexander the Great** conquered the whole world and established the Greek Empire.
- “four wings of a bird”— represents how Alexander was able to accomplish this conquest only by the help of and through his **four principal generals**.
- “four heads, and dominion was given to it”— represents the fact that the empire had hardly been established when Alexander died at age 32, without an heir, and the empire was divided into four ruling parts (Syria, Egypt, Greece and Rome) under his four generals:
 - ✦ General CASSANDER – Macedonia and Greece
 - ✦ General LYSIMACHUS – Asia Minor and Thrace
 - ✦ General SELEUCUS NICATOR– Mesopotamia and Syria
 - ✦ General PTOLEMY – Egypt and Palestine



Dreadful and Terrible Beast—ROMAN EMPIRE (no beast on earth compared to it)

Daniel 7:7 “After this I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, a fourth beast, dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong; and it had large iron teeth. It devoured and crushed and trampled down the remainder with its feet; and it was different from all the beasts that were before it, and it had ten horns.”

- “dreadful and terrifying and extremely strong”— represents the **military might** of Rome, which was greater than any empire before them.
- “large iron teeth”— just as beasts use their teeth as weapons of attack, so too, this represents the attack or “war methods” of Rome and its extensive use of **iron** in battle and armory and weaponry unlike any other empire before, making them very strong in defense. (Corresponds to the two iron legs of the image in Daniel 2.)
- “ten horns”— represents how the huge Roman empire was subdivided into **10 divisions**, each under a king. (Example: Palestine [Israel] had the Herods.
Luke 23:7; Acts 25:13)



Daniel 7:8 “While I was contemplating the horns, behold, another horn, a little one, came up among them, and three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots before it; and behold, this horn possessed eyes like the eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts.”

- “three of the first horns were pulled out by the roots” The plucking up of the three horns (the Heruli, the Ostrogoths, and the Western Exarchate) resulted in the Holy Roman Empire.
- “another horn, a little one, which came up among them”– represents the **rising up** of a subdivision kingdom of the Roman Empire.
- “eyes of a man and a mouth uttering great boasts”– represents the subtle and clever methods used by the papacy to gain power in the Roman Empire by falsely claiming divine authority for its establishment of God’s Kingdom on earth. It had eyes (intelligence) and a mouth speaking great things (blasphemies). This little horn was a Roman papal horn because the beast portrayed the Roman Empire and its horns were divisions of that empire.
- Each Pope acted like a king, claiming kingship both in **civil** and **religious** matters, unlike the other kings/divisions (or “horns”)

Metal	Body Part	Interpretation	Beast
GOLD	HEAD	BABYLONIAN EMPIRE	LION
SILVER	CHEST & ARMS	MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE	BEAR
BRONZE	BELLY & THIGHS	GREEK EMPIRE	LEOPARD
IRON IRON/CLAY	LEGS FEET	PAGAN ROMAN EMPIRE PAPAL ROMAN EMPIRE	DREADFUL & TERRIFYING

Daniel 7:9 “I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days [God] took His seat...”

Daniel 7:12–14 “As for the rest of the beasts, their dominion was taken away...And to him [our Lord Jesus, the King of the Fifth Universal Empire] was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and men of every language might serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and his kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”

Daniel 7:27 “Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One...”

This is to be God’s Kingdom, the Fifth Universal Kingdom and is to be shared with the “saints,” the faithful followers of Jesus, his Church. This fulfills the promise in **Luke 22:29** “and just as my Father has granted me a kingdom, I grant you.”

Where are we in the stream of time?

We see that **monarchies** or **kingdoms** are disappearing from the earth. This is in fulfillment of Bible prophecies that at the second advent of our Lord, he will “crush in pieces” all these kingdoms.

- **Psalm 110:5** “The Lord is at Your right hand; He will shatter kings in the day of His wrath.”
- **Psalm 2:9** “You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall shatter them like earthenware.”
- **Revelation 11:15,18** (KJV) “...The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever...”

We have witnessed two World Wars, revolutions and anarchy around the globe. People are ultimately seeking for and desiring peace. The Kingdom of God will be the “desire of all nations.”

- **Haggai 2:7** (KJV) “...and the desire of all nations shall come”

Now let us catch a few glimpses of that glorious future Kingdom of God!

Satan and his influence will be BOUND and REMOVED.

- **Revelation 20:2, 3** “And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he threw him into the abyss, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not deceive the nations any longer...”

The eyes and ears of people’s understanding WILL BE OPENED.

- **Isaiah 29:18** “On that day the deaf will hear words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.”

The KNOWLEDGE OF GOD will be clear and fill the whole earth.

- **Zechariah 14:9** “And the LORD will be king over all the earth.”
- **Habakkuk 2:14** “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge... of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”

ALL NATIONS WILL FLOCK TO THE LORD voluntarily to learn from Him and obey Him.

- **Psalms 22:27, 28** “All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will worship before You. For the kingdom is the LORD’s and He rules over the nations.”
- **Isaiah 2:2** “Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; and all the nations will stream to it.”

WARS WILL CEASE and all defense forces will be disbanded.

- **Micah 4:3** “And He will judge between many peoples and render decisions for mighty, distant nations. Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war.”

People will begin to be RAISED FROM THEIR GRAVES.

- **Isaiah 35:10** “And the ransomed of the LORD will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.”

The process of AGING WILL BE REVERSED and will gradually lead to human perfection.

- **Job 33:25** “Let his flesh become fresher than in youth, let him return to the days of his youthful vigor.”

There will be NO HOUSING PROBLEMS and all will own their own house.

- **Isaiah 65:21** “They will build houses and inhabit them; they will also plant vineyards and eat their fruit.”

People will NOT GET SICK.

- **Isaiah 33:24** “And no resident will say, I am sick; The people who dwell there will be forgiven their iniquity.”

THE DESERTS WILL BLOOM and become gardens of fertile land (uninhabitable places made habitable).

- **Isaiah 35:7** “The scorched land will become a pool. And the thirsty ground springs of water...”

WILD ANIMALS WILL BECOME TAME and friendly.

- **Isaiah 11:6–8** “And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper’s den.”

DEATH WILL BE REMOVED, along with all pain and suffering.

- **Revelation 21:4** “and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

The world will be AT PEACE, and ALL WILL SING FOR JOY.

- **Isaiah 14:7** “The whole earth is at rest and is quiet; they break forth into shouts of joy.”

Yes! Truly we can pray more earnestly “**Your Kingdom come. Your will be done on earth...**”

THE TABERNACLE

Goal of the Study: To learn about the details of the Tabernacle. **WHY** were details of its construction important? **WHY** are its types and shadows important to Christians?

Additional references: *Tabernacle Shadows of the "Better Sacrifices"*

General Understanding of the Tabernacle

- The Tabernacle was a meeting place between God and the Israelites as they traveled through the wilderness.
- Very specific details were given to Moses for the construction, placement and exterior and interior furniture.
- The specifics illustrate significant heavenly things given to believers in the Gospel Age.
- The Tabernacle was given by God as a "shadow" or "type", or illustration of heavenly things.
 - ✦ **Hebrews 8:5** "who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle..."
 - ✦ **Hebrews 10:1** "For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near."
- In the Tabernacle, we have a "shadow" of our Lord's life. We also see a progression of the Christian's life—coming from the world, repentance, full dedication to the Lord, and finally, if faithful, resurrection to a spiritual nature.



What are God's specific instructions given to build the Tabernacle?

In **Exodus 25–40** we find the details of coverings, curtains (veils), walls, altars, metals, craftsmanship, etc. for the construction of the Tabernacle.

- **Exodus 25:8–9** "Let them construct a **sanctuary for Me**, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the **tabernacle** and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it."
- **Exodus 39:43** "And Moses examined all the work and behold, they had done it; just as the LORD had commanded..."

Where was the Tabernacle to be located and what surrounded it?

The Israelites and the 12 tribes were to pitch their tents and camp on the four sides of the Tabernacle, north, south, east and west.

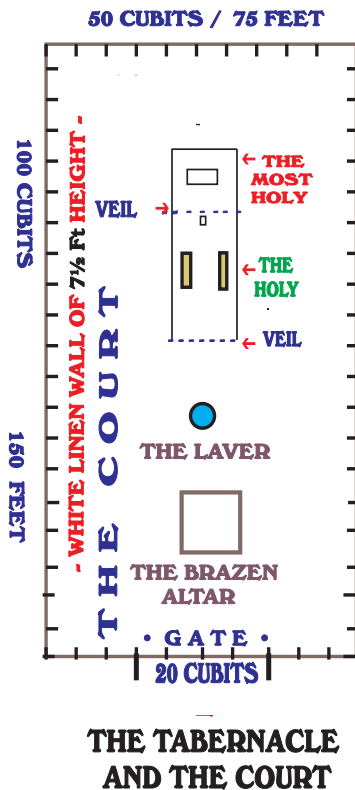
- **Numbers 2:2** "...they shall camp around the tent of meeting at a distance."

The camp on all sides of the Tabernacle represents the whole world of mankind being outside of the knowledge of God. Everything that was performed inside the court by the Levites could not be seen from the outside.

- **1 Corinthians 2:14** "But a natural man does not accept the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him..."

The Court

The place called the “Court”, represents the first stage of Christian development, the “calling” stage ([Mathew 22:14](#)); the condition of being merely “believers.”



THE OUTER CURTAIN – Exodus 27:9–19

- The Court was 150 feet by 75 feet.
- The curtain was 7½ feet high. (*man could not look over it*).
- The curtain separated the Court from the people.
- The curtain was made of white linen.
- The embroidered gate was on the east side.

THE GATE

The only entrance into the Tabernacle was through the Court’s gate. Jesus said he is the gate. That “gate” or “door” or “way” to enter the Tabernacle signifies Jesus Christ, and it is only through faith in him that any man can “enter” into the things of God!

- [John 10:9](#); [14:6](#) “I am the door.” “I am the way.”
- [John 14:6](#) “...no one comes to the Father but through me.”

The white linen curtain represents the holiness and righteousness of Jesus. Those white walls signify how a sinner, when he places his faith in Jesus, receives a “covering” for his sins or imputed justification from his sins.

The colors of the yarn on the “gate” signify the characteristics of Jesus:

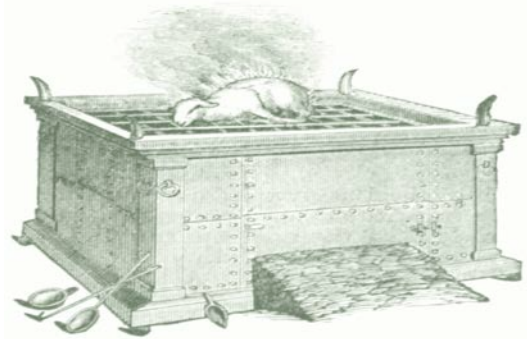
- Scarlet: blood—ransom
- Blue: God’s faithfulness
- Purple: royalty—Jesus as King of Kings

Furniture in the Court

BRAZEN ALTAR (or Altar of Burnt Offering)

[Exodus 27:1–8](#) “and thou shall make an altar of shittim wood.”

- It was made of wood overlaid with copper or brass.
- 6.6 feet square and 4 feet high.
- A place for animal sacrifices.
- After passing through the “gate” into the Court, the first thing to catch one’s attention was this large altar.
- So too, after having shown faith in the Lord Jesus, the first thing that catches the believer’s attention is the awesome sacrifice of Jesus on the cross of Calvary. Jesus sacrificed his life; he paid the ransom price to offer atonement.



- ✦ [1 Timothy 2:5,6](#) “For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.”

LAVAR

[Exodus 30:17–21](#) “Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet from it.”

- It was made of brass.
- Aaron the High Priest and his sons the under priests were commanded by God to wash their hands and feet at this laver before any service at the brazen altar or within the holy of the Tabernacle. If they failed to do this, they would die.
- After the believer sees the great sacrifice of Jesus on the Brazen Altar, he realizes his sins and his need to be washed, washed by the word of God. Studying God’s word begins to cleanse the believer, changing their actions (hand) and walk of life (feet).

- ✦ [Ephesians 5:26](#) “...having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.”



Inside the Court was the Tabernacle structure that was divided in two parts: the **Holy** and the **Most Holy**

The Holy

- The entrance to the Tabernacle building had a “Door” or curtain, called the “first veil”, leading to the Holy.
 - ✦ **Exodus 26:36** “You shall make a screen for the doorway of the tent of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen, the work of a weaver.”
- Only priests were allowed to enter the Holy through this veil. The Levites were **not permitted** to enter. If they tried, they would die.
- These priests represent the second stage of Christian development—the “chosen” stage, or the condition of being “followers” of Jesus. These have surrendered their will to the Lord (**Matthew 16:24**) and have entered into **full consecration** to do the will and service of God.
- This signifies the means by which a “believer” becomes a “follower”; how the “called” become “chosen,” by consecration and a “covenant by sacrifice.” **Psalms 50:5**
- Stooping to enter under this veil is also the point of Christian baptism, the “one baptism.” **Ephesians 4:5**



Furniture in the Holy

There were three items of furniture in the Holy: the Golden Candlestick, Table of Shewbread and Golden Altar.

GOLDEN CANDLESTICK

Exodus 37:17–24 (KJV) “...the candlestick of pure gold...”

- Pure gold, of beaten work.
- Seven branches with bowls shaped like almonds, fruits and flowers.
- It provided the only light in the Holy.
- The Christian who is consecrated has a very special light.
 - ✦ **1 Peter 2:9** “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”
- The lamps were filled with oil representing the Holy Spirit and enlightenment of the truth.
 - ✦ **John 16:13** “How when it, the spirit of truth is come, it will guide you into all truth; ...and it will shew you things to come.” (Examples: prophecy, the divine plan of God, meaning of symbols, types, parabolic language.)
- The seven branches represent the seven churches in Revelation chapters 2–3.
 - ✦ **Revelation 1:13** “And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot...”
- The Church is developed through tribulation or “beaten work” but develops character like fruits and flowers, beautiful from God’s viewpoint.
 - ✦ **Acts 14:22** “...and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”



THE TABLE OF SHEWBREAD

Leviticus 24:5, 6 “And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD.”

- The unleavened bread represents pure truth renewed every Sabbath.
- There were two rows of six cakes, possibly representing the 66 books of the Bible.
- Only the priest could eat the bread.
- Spiritual truths can be understood by the priestly class, those “chosen” among Christians, presenting their “bodies as living sacrifices.”



THE GOLDEN/INCENSE ALTAR

Exodus 40:26–27 “Then he placed the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the veil; and he burned fragrant incense on it, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.”



- The handfuls of crushed incense the priest carried into the Holy, gave forth a fragrance and smoke which filled the Holy and even went into the Most Holy. The perfumed fragrance and smoke represent the character and walk of life that is manifested and the fruit of the spirit exhibited; which not only fills the Holy, seen and appreciated by the “fellow priests” (the brethren), but even enters into the Most Holy and is seen and approved by God Himself!
- This represents the daily sacrifices of a consecrated Christian, living up to “handfuls” of incense, that is, each one’s own capacity, based on their talents, even as Jesus did.
 - ✦ **Ephesians 5:2** “And walk in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”
- These priests had the privilege of offering incense at the Golden Altar. This Golden Altar shows the privilege of sacrifice, including the heartfelt sacrifice of our lips in prayer, praise and thanksgiving to God.
 - ✦ **Hebrews 13:15** “Through Him then, let’s continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips praising His name.”
 - ✦ **Revelation 8:3** “Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne.”
 - ✦ **Revelation 5:8** “...holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”
- The hot coals are the trials and testings of this life.

The Most Holy

Exodus 26:31–33 “You shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet material and fine twisted linen; it shall be made with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman. You shall hang it on four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, their hooks also being of gold, on four sockets of silver. You shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring in the ark of the testimony there within the veil; and the veil shall serve for you as a partition between the holy place and the holy of holies.”

- Once a year, on the Atonement Day, only the high priest entered the Most Holy bearing the blood of sacrifice to apply on the Mercy Seat (on the Ark of the Covenant). If he did not fulfill all the necessary regulations before entering, he would die upon entering the Most Holy.
- A very thick, heavy curtain or veil separated the Holy from the Most Holy, the “second veil”.
- We remember the veil or curtain that tore in the Temple when Jesus died. **Matthew 27:51; Luke 23:45**
- The Most Holy represents the heavenly condition. **Hebrew 6:19**

- There were three “entrances” to reach the Most Holy representing the progression of the called, chosen and faithful.
 1. The gate from the court
 2. The veil into the Holy
 3. The veil into the Most Holy
- How does Jesus relate to these three entrances?
 - ✦ **John 14:6** “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.”
 - ✦ **John 6:44** “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.”
- It is Jesus who leads and guides the Christian along every step of the their developmental progress:
 1. From a “believer” (the “way”—the gate)
 2. To a “follower” (the “truth”—the veil of the Holy)
 3. To finally receive the “first resurrection” (the divine nature).
- Passing under the second veil leading into the Most Holy signifies the death of the human body.
 - ✦ **1 Corinthians 15:50, 51** “Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed.”
- The **Most Holy** in the Tabernacle symbolizes the presence of God, and for the Christian, signifies attaining the ultimate hope of the divine nature and eternal life in God's immediate presence.

Two Cherubim (on the second veil)

- These were representations of God’s great **love** for the follower of Jesus.
 - ✦ **John 16:27** “The Father Himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed...”
- These show God’s great **power**. He is the Almighty!
 - ✦ **Romans 8:31(KJV)** “What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”

Furniture in the Most Holy

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

Hebrews 9:3–5 “The ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the Covenant and over it the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat...”

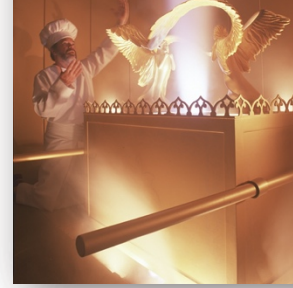
Exodus 37:1–9 “And Bezaleel made the ark of shittim wood: 3¼ feet by 2¼ feet. And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without...”



- The Ark of the Covenant was a rectangular box with a lid made of gold. Out of the same gold was carved two cherubims. Both had their eyes fixed at a point in the center of the lid called the Propitiatory or Mercy Seat; both had their wings uplifted as if ready to fly.
- The Mercy Seat was where the High Priest would sprinkle the blood of the Atonement Day sacrifices.
- The Most Holy is a representation of the final heavenly condition of the Church class, the “body” of Christ.
- The Ark of the Covenant is a glorious representation of our heavenly Father and how we understand and comprehend Him through His divine attributes of love, justice, wisdom and power.
- The Mercy Seat represents the justice attribute of God. Blood signifies life. **Leviticus 17:11**
The sprinkling of the blood on the Mercy Seat by the High Priest showed the satisfaction of justice.
- Within the Ark were three items—the Golden Bowl (or Pot) of Manna, Aaron’s Rod that Budded and the Two Stone Tables of the Law. **Hebrews 9:4**

SHEKINAH LIGHT

- Upon the Mercy Seat and between the cherubim was a supernatural light. In Hebrew, it is called the *Shekinah* light.
- This was the only light in the Most Holy.
- It represents the divine presence of the heavenly Father.
 - ✦ **Isaiah 37:16** “The God of Israel dwellest between the cherubim”
 - ✦ **1 John 1:5** “God is light.”



CONTENTS OF THE ARK

GOLDEN BOWL OF MANNA

Exodus 16:32–34 “This is what the LORD has commanded, Let an omerful of it be kept throughout your generations, that they may see the bread that I fed you in the wilderness.”

- This manna was incorruptible, unlike the manna the Israelites received in the wilderness that would rot if kept until the next day (except for the Sabbath day). This special incorruptible manna represents the plane of life that is **incorruptible** and **immortal**—the **divine nature**!
 - ✦ **Revelation 2:17** “To him who overcomes, to him I will give some of the hidden manna...”

AARON’S ROD THAT BUDDED

Numbers 17:8 “Now on the next day Moses went into the tent of the testimony; and behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi had sprouted and put forth buds and produced blossoms, and it bore ripe almonds.”



TWO STONE TABLES OF THE LAW

Deuteronomy 31:26 (KJV) “Take this book of the Law and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God...”

- However, after the Ark of the Covenant was brought into Solomon’s Temple, only the two tablets remained.
 - ✦ **1 Kings 8:9** (KJV) “There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.”
- “[The] Golden bowl of manna, a type of immortality, and the budded rod of the blessings, fruitfulness and privilege of service of the Levites, will end as types in the present dispensation.” Reprint 3283
Once the Church is complete and transitions from a wilderness condition (walking in the flesh on this earth to a heavenly reward), there will no longer be any chance of anybody attaining immortality and suffering for Christ, but the Law of God **will remain forever** for everybody to obey Him.

The Tabernacle is far more than an ancient structure—it’s a powerful spiritual blueprint that reveals God’s desire to dwell with His people and lead them into deeper relationship with Him. Every detail, from the gate to the Most Holy, reflects a step in the believer’s journey—from redemption through Christ to full communion with God. Studying the Tabernacle opens our eyes to the beauty of God’s plan, His love, and our calling to walk a holy path with purpose, faith, and hope.

LESSONS ON PRAYER

Goal of this Study: **WHAT** is meant by prayer? **WHO** was/is the privilege of prayer given to? **HOW** are we to pray? **WHAT** do we pray for?

Additional references: Reprint 5310 – *Prayer The Vital Breath Of The New Creature*

What is prayer?

- “Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed” – Reprint 4883.
- Today we see peoples of the world and of various religions praying or claiming to have a communion with God. Christians of various denominations and churches give a lot of time and importance to prayer.
- Prayer is a general term used to describe **all manner of praise or thanksgiving or petitions or requests unto God**. It is a personal and direct communication with God.



What about the practicalities of prayer?

- Does prayer have to be done in a certain way? Standing, sitting, lying down? Hands folded, hands in the air?
- Do prayers have to be said out loud in order to be effective?
- What makes a “good” prayer?
- How can we “talk” with a Spirit Being if we can’t hear His responses?
- If God talks to us in prayer, how do we distinguish His thoughts from our own thoughts?
- How long should we wait to see if a prayer is answered before we pray about it again?
- If a prayer’s answer is either “yes,” “no” or “not yet,” how can we really know the answer?
- Does it really do any good to pray for others? Are we changing God’s mind to direct the outcome for them?
- How do we follow the admonition of “pray without ceasing”? **1 Thessalonians 5:16**
- How can we better focus and concentrate when praying?
- Must all our prayers end with an acknowledgement of “in Jesus’ name”?
- What is the danger in NOT praying, especially when we are afraid, ashamed or feel unworthy?

These are common questions many of us have likely pondered at some point. While the study below touches on some of them, its greater purpose is to encourage us to reflect more deeply on the importance of prayer and to inspire us to further study our communication with the Heavenly Father.

Who was/is the privilege of prayer given to?

Initially God spoke directly to Adam in the Garden of Eden.

- **Genesis 3:9** “Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you?’”

However, after Adam sinned, all mankind became separated from God.

- **Genesis 4:14** “Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I [God] will be hidden...”

But there were some individuals who had the knowledge of God and prayed to Him, like Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Job.

During the Jewish Age:

After the death of Jacob, God said to the children of Jacob...

- **Amos 3:2** "You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth..."

God then communicated with the whole Nation of Israel, as God recognized them through a Covenant.

- **Exodus 19:5** "Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine."

This was the law covenant given to them through Moses on Mount Sinai. In this special covenant relationship, God gave to Israel the Aaronic priesthood to serve between God and the people. Israel's sins were atoned for annually, through the Atonement Day sacrifices which were recorded in the 16th chapter of Leviticus. Thus being "cleansed" and in covenant relationship with God, the nation of Israel could then approach God in prayer!

During the Gospel Age:

At his first advent, Jesus spoke of the way to approach the Father. The Apostle Paul also confirms this singular way. The **only** way to come to God now is through Jesus Christ.

- **John 14:6** "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me."
- **Romans 5:11** "...we also exult [joy] in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation [atonement]."

The Jews also, would have to accept and believe in Jesus, if they were to continue their relationship with God. This favor and calling was later extended to the Gentiles.

- **Acts 10:1–2, 45** "Now there was a man at Caesarea named Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian cohort, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people and prayed to God continually. ...the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also."

ALL believers have the privilege of praying to God through Jesus.

Practical questions: To what extent does God hear the prayers of the unconsecrated? (For example, does God hear the prayers of today's faithful Jewish people still trying to live under the Law?) If He listens to the prayers of the righteous, don't the sinners need Him more?

How are we to pray?

One of Jesus' disciples asked in **Luke 11:1**, "Lord, teach us to pray." Jesus replied with what manner or method we are to pray found in **Matthew 6:9–13**.

1. "Our Father who is in heaven" (verse 9)

- **John 17:3** "That they may know You, the only true God." (This was Jesus' prayer for his followers.)
- **John 1:12** "But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God."
- **1 John 3:1** "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God."
- Jesus prayed to the Father often as recorded in **John 17**.



2. “Hallowed be Your name” (verse 9)

- To “hallow” means to **honor as holy**. Since God’s name is holy, we are to have **reverence, love, respect** and **awe** for Him. “Reverence” means having an attitude of deep respect. This is the attitude we are required to have when approaching God. We recognize the privilege of prayer.
- We look to God in **adoration** and **praise**. He is the God of the Universe, Creator of All.
- We **praise** God and His justice, wisdom, power and love, and His unimaginable glory.
 - ✦ **Isaiah 57:15** “the high and exalted One who lives forever, whose name is Holy.”
 - ✦ **Ephesians 1:17** “God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory.”
 - ✦ **James 1:17** “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”
 - ✦ **Psalms 145:2, 3** “I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.”
 - ✦ **Nehemiah 9:6** “You alone are the LORD. You have made the heavens, the heaven of heavens with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them and the heavenly host bows down before You.”
 - ✦ **1 Samuel 2:2** “There is no one holy like the LORD, indeed, there is no one besides you, nor is there any rock like our God.”

3. “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (verse 10)

- The next thought that must come to mind is God’s Word, and in it, the glorious divine plan for man and the gospel of the **Kingdom**.
- Right now, God’s will is not being done on earth. But Jesus said to pray for the Kingdom, when God **will** be obeyed on earth as it now is in heaven.
- We pray for the systematic unfolding of God’s plan to show we are in compliance with it
- Every passing day brings us closer and closer to the coming of this I fulfilment of this prayer.

4. “Give us this day our daily bread” (verse 11)

- We petition for our **basic needs**, not our wants.
- Many mistake this request as only for the literal bread of food and sustenance. But note the Master’s commands on this matter:
 - ✦ **Matthew 6:8, 31, 32** “your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. Do not worry then, saying, What will we eat? or What will we drink? or What will we wear for clothing? For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.
- We are to trust God for all our temporal needs of food, clothing and
 - ✦ **Isaiah 33:15, 16** “He who walks righteously and speaks with sincerity, he who rejects unjust gain and shakes his hands so that they hold no bribe; he who stops his ears from hearing about bloodshed and shuts his eyes from looking upon evil; he will dwell on the heights, his refuge will be the impregnable rock; **his bread will be given him, his water will be sure.**”
 - ✦ **1 Timothy 6:8** “If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.”
- In our prayer, we ask for the **spiritual** “bread” of God’s Word.
 - ✦ **Jeremiah 15:16** “Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart.”
- This “daily bread” also signifies a **daily** seeking for the Holy Spirit of God.
 - ✦ **Luke 11:11–13** “...how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?”



5. “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (verse 12)

- These debts refer to our sins. Thus, this refers to the confession of sins and the seeking for forgiveness. We are to pray and ask for forgiveness for all our sins if we want to be cleansed from all unrighteousness.
 - ✦ **1 John 1:9–10** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.”
- Our Lord gives a condition for the forgiveness of our sins.
 - ✦ **Matthew 6:14, 15** “For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”
- God makes it very clear that the more forgiveness we seek from Him – correspondingly the more we need to forgive others and their wrongs done unto us. Seek forgiveness as we seek to be forgiving. Think about this! How often do we sin? Are you able to forgive others so that you can also be forgiven?
- This principle helps develop the “golden” Christlike grace of **mercy** towards one’s fellow man.

6. “And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (verse 13)

Here are two thoughts implied in the two parts of this verse,
Temptation has two meanings:

1. Trial – These trials allowed by God are to test and prove our faith and to develop character attributes.
 - ✦ **James 1:2, 12** “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials. Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”
2. Fallen and depraved desires of the flesh and the pleasures of sin. This temptation does not come from God. It comes from Satan.
 - ✦ **James 1:13, 14** “Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.”



What does it mean then when we pray, “do not lead us into temptation”?

- Here the word lead can be better translated as “abandon” or “leave.” We ask God to not abandon us when we are going through different trials or temptations and He promised He will not.
 - ✦ **Hebrews 13:5** “...I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you.”
- We can always pray and ask God to help us in all our experiences, so that we can overcome with His help.
 - ✦ **Matthew 26:41** “Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.” This refers to all the sins and weaknesses of our flesh and mind from which the Lord alone can deliver us and give us the **victory!**
- A careful look at the Greek words here help us to see this as follows: (a paraphrase)
“Do not abandon me in temptation. I know I need to be tried and I need to grow. I know trials are coming, but help me when these situations become too much and start to overwhelm me.”
This is why in some translations, it says “deliver us from **the evil one.**” The prayer is stating we need to count on God in order to be able to stand firmly. It is a humble way to approach the Father. No, He is not leading us **to** bad things. He leads us **through** difficult things for the sake of our maturity.

7. In Jesus name (verse 13)

- The concluding thought of all prayer to God is to remember and acknowledge the Son as the great head of the Church.
 - ✦ **Ephesians 1:22** “And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and made Him head over all things to the church.”
 - ✦ **Colossians 3:17** “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks **through him** to God the Father.”
- We begin our prayer by looking to our heavenly Father and conclude by looking to the Son, who was the one who gave us the great PRIVILEGE to approach the Father to “ask” in prayer. All things are of the Father and through the Son.
 - ✦ **John 16:23, 24** “...Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in my name, He will give it to you. Until now you have asked for nothing in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full.”
 - ✦ **John 15:5** “...For apart from me you can do nothing.”
- We must pray often, without ceasing. We pray every day, multiple times a day. We have the example of Daniel who prayed three times a day.
 - ✦ **1 Thessalonians 5:17** “pray without ceasing.”
 - ✦ **Romans 12:12** “Rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer.”

What do we pray for?

- God’s will to be done in all circumstances, and our ability to be humble and compliant with that will.
- God’s Kingdom to be established.
- Our “daily bread”—more understanding of His holy word and for His Holy Spirit.
- Forgiveness of our sins, and for help to forgive others.
- Help us in our trials and temptations.
- With gratitude, to thank God for our many blessings.
- The privilege of prayer is all about growing into a connection with our heavenly Father.
 - ✦ **Hebrews 4:16** “Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”



What a privilege we have to come to the throne of grace through our Lord Jesus!

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Goal of this Study: Examine what the Bible teaches about the Church of Christ, or the “Church class.”

WHO is the foundation of Christ’s Church? **WHAT** are the requirements to be a part of the Church?

WHERE do biblical definitions of the Church class differ from the world’s definition of “church”?

WHEN does one know they are being called to God’s service?

WHY are so few of mankind pursuing membership in the Church class?

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol. 1, pp.77–88; Reprint 1570 – *The Church of the Living God*

What is the difference between a “church” and the “Church of Christ” or “Church class” of the Bible?

In its common usage, the word “church” has two general meanings:

- Any kind of institutionalized religion. When used in this context, “church” usually refers to the institution itself, not the religion.
- A building in which religious services, usually Christian services, are held.

The first time the word “church” appears in the Bible is, appropriately enough, found in the words of Jesus:

- **Matthew 16:15–18** “He said to them, ‘But who do you say that I am?’ Simon Peter answered, ‘You are the Christ, the son of the living God.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hades will not overpower it.’”

Over the centuries, some have misinterpreted Jesus’ words.

“Upon this rock” – the “rock” here was the truth that Christ was “the son of the living God.” Jesus himself is the chief foundation, or cornerstone of his Church.

- ✦ **Ephesians 2:19–20** “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the corner stone.”

While it is true the Church class includes the apostles, and benefits greatly from the divinely-inspired examples and teachings of the Old Testament prophets as well, it is incorrect to interpret Jesus’ words as a declaration that Peter himself should be considered the main foundation of the Church.



to teach that Jesus made Peter the first pope, and that all other popes have authority because of this "lineage."

Who is Christ’s Church, or the Church class?

- The word “church” became more frequently used after Jesus’ death, resurrection and ascent to the spiritual plane.
- Every occurrence of “church” or “churches” in the New Testament (except one) comes from *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance* #G1577, *ekklesia* in Greek, meaning “a group of people called out.”
 - ✦ Bible Students have traditionally referred to their individual group congregations as their “ecclesia.”
 - ✦ However, there is a deeper meaning behind being members of Christ’s Church, the “Church class,” than participation in a local ecclesia.

- Since Jesus' death, certain members of mankind have been called by God to prove their faithfulness to Him through sacrifice.
 - **Romans 12:1–2** “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”
 - These texts again, this time from the New Living translation: **Romans 12:1–2** (NLT) “And so, dear brothers, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living sacrifice, holy—the kind he can accept. When you think of what he has done for you, is this too much to ask? Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how His ways will really satisfy you.”
 - This means changing the direction of our lives to having a direction that will please God, not one that seeks our own happiness. We need to seek God's will, not our own.
- If judged faithful, members of this group will receive the “divine spirit nature”—a higher reward—than the potential for everlasting human life promised to mankind.
 - **2 Peter 1:4** “For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.”
 - Part of the heavenly inheritance and responsibility of this group of Jesus' true followers is the work of reconciling all of mankind back to God. They will help rebuild the broken earth and its inhabitants. What a privilege!

What are some ways that the Bible refers to this class?

Often referred to as “the Church” or “the Church class,” this group is referred to by many names in the Bible.

Saints	Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:2
Little flock	Luke 12:32
Bride, or Bride of Christ	2 Corinthians 11:2 (indirectly) Revelation 19:7-9 Ephesians 5:22-32
Body of Christ	1 Corinthians 12:12-27
Spiritual Israel	Galatians 3:27, 29 Romans 11
The elect	1 Peter 1:2 (KJV) Matthew 24:22, 31
A chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession	1 Peter 2:9
The mystery...hidden from ages	Colossians 1:26 Ephesians 5:32

What is the first step toward becoming a member of the Church class?

One must be called by God.

- **God does the calling.** Without God drawing us, there is no path to **true discipleship**. There could be a path to happiness and to loving Jesus, but not a path to true discipleship. Drawing nearer to God means trying to live a life that would be pleasing to God by being teachable, humble, and honest, as well as having faith in the Bible, studying it to learn His will for their lives.
 - **John 6:44** “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him...”
 - **James 4:8** “Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you.”

- Jesus is the “chief cornerstone,” or foundation, of the Church. Jesus made it clear that the only way to have any type of relationship with God is through faith in Jesus himself.
 - **John 14:6** “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.’”
- Over the centuries, many have claimed belief in Jesus as their Savior. Some have claimed to be his followers. To some extent or another, these may have even allowed that faith to alter their lives and behaviors in some way. These may be thought of as “called” from the rest of the world to God, by a recognition and subsequent faith in Jesus.
- Throughout a significant portion of the Gospel Age, one mechanism used to “call” people to God through Jesus has been the nominal (“in name only”) Christian systems. Many people would not have known about God or Jesus in any capacity were it for the efforts of these systems. This “calling” by God through the Christian systems is sometimes referred to as the “general call.”
- The Church class is composed of an exact number: 144,000 members. **Revelation 14:1, 3** If it’s a fixed number, it would be logical that as we get close to the completion of the Church, the general call would cease.
- After the general call ceased, individuals began to be called to God based on their recognition of the errors propagated by those systems, and the ability of these individuals to see the truth of God’s character and plan through the Scriptures. This concept is referred to in:
 - **Revelation 18:4–5** “I heard another voice from heaven, saying, ‘Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities.’”

- The **Parable of the Dragnet** also represents this concept:

- **Matthew 13:47–50** “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”



- ✦ The net represents the call of God, or “general call” that went forth from the nominal Christian systems. The gospel message pulls in “fish” of every kind – both true and false Christians. The net being drawn into shore conveys the thought that its job is over.
- ✦ Good fish are separated from bad fish. This represents the sorting of people who responded to God’s call through these church systems.
 - The “good fish” are those who followed on to the second step of becoming members of the true Church class.
 - The “bad fish” are those who may have joined these systems and professed to be answering God’s calling, but lacked a genuine love for God. (See Vol. 3, pp.213–216)

How are people called by God today?

- They generally recognize there are no longer any real, satisfying answers in today’s world. They generally feel there is something not quite right about how the religious systems represent God or His plans for mankind.
- They recognize, at least on some level, that Jesus is the means to salvation, even if they don’t understand exactly how that works.
- They may attend church services but have the desire to learn more. They are drawn to God.
- Some may have even left these systems, and may even be familiar with the truth of God’s character, Jesus’ role in God’s plan and other important truths.

Is being called to God all there is, or is there more?

There most emphatically **IS** more, as declared by Jesus himself. To be drawn by God and to come to Christ is one thing. To comprehend the depth of commitment to being a Christian, a true disciple of Jesus, is another.

- **Matthew 22:14** "For many are called, but few are chosen."

What is the second step toward becoming a member of the Church class?

One must sacrifice their self-will, heart and mind to serving God, to become a part of the Church class.

Luke 9:23 (KJV) "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me."

1. "deny himself"— to give up your earthly ambitions, desires and hopes and accept the Lord's will.
2. "take up his cross"— the trials, difficulties, disappointments, the crossing of the human will made necessary by the doing of God's will under present unfavorable conditions.
3. "follow me"— to walk as he walked and have one goal – to be pleasing to our heavenly Father.
 - ✦ **1 Peter 2:21** "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps."

It is at this point, we begin to absorb the seriousness of following Jesus as his disciple.

- **Luke 14:25–27** "Now large crowds were going along with him; and he turned and said to them, 'If anyone comes to me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.'"

This sounds harsh, but the Greek word for "hate" here means to "love less." Jesus is teaching us there is an order of devotion. Being called to follow in his footsteps and doing his Father's will comes as our first priority every day of our lives. This is a serious commitment. Diminishing our earthly connections and carrying our cross are necessary discipleship qualifications.

Matthew 19:16–24 and **Luke 18:18–25**: A rich young ruler approaches Jesus. The ruler tells Jesus that he has kept God's Law (the Mosaic Law given to the Jewish people) all of his life.

- **Matthew 19:20** "The young man said to him, All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?"

This man had both worldly success and felt he was keeping God's laws, yet still felt something further was missing, leading him to approach Jesus. Jesus' response to the young man reflects what one must do to seek entry into the Church class.

- **Matthew 19:21** "Jesus said to him, If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

Jesus was indicating that in order to truly follow him, **one must sacrifice all that one holds precious and dedicate one's life to serving God above all else.**

- Jesus repeated this thought to the Pharisees when they asked him which was the most important of God's commandments.
 - **Matthew 22:36–40** "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law? And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.'"
- This process of devotion is often referred to as "consecration." This involves dedicating ourselves to doing God's will instead of our own. We strive to transform our lives, following the example of Jesus in making every decision of life pleasing to God.



- Answering the call is not an emotional decision. Because of the seriousness of this commitment, Jesus advises his followers to first “calculate the cost” (“count the cost” in KJV; deciding if this is for you) of a lifelong devotion. Jesus explains this using two analogies in [Luke 14:28–33](#).
 1. Someone wouldn’t build a tower without making sure they had enough money and labor to finish.
 2. No king would go to war without making sure his soldiers have a chance of winning.
 Jesus is teaching us to think this through, to invest thought and reason into our decision to follow him rather than base it on mere reaction and emotion.
- Do my choices and lifestyle coincide with sound discipleship principles? Or do my choices and lifestyle fall far short and support earthly emotions and desires instead? [Psalm 40:8](#) “I delight to do Your will, O my God.” After serious consideration, we may decide it is better not to answer the call. We don’t want to make a promise we can’t keep. The rich young ruler was not ready to live a higher, less materialistic life. He lost the opportunity to become a disciple and receive the heavenly reward, but he will still have the opportunity to serve on earth after he is raised in the Kingdom.
- **Baptism** is an outward proclamation that shows to others we have made this commitment.
- Once one decides to offer their lives in consecration, that consecration must be accepted by God.
 - [Matthew 22:14](#) “For many are called, but few are chosen.”

If many are called, but few are chosen, how does one *know* if they have been chosen?

- One can expect to begin to see changes in one’s heart and thoughts, bringing them more in line with conditions pleasing to God.
 - [James 4:6](#) “But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”
- One should not expect to see automatic, immediate changes. The work of developing this heart and mind is a lifetime work. We work on developing the “fruit of the spirit” described in [Galatians 5:22–23](#).
- Response to the call and the required sacrifice means we are reconciled with God. Being reconciled to God means you are living in a different category than the rest of the world. The ransom has been paid for you, and now God can actually work with you as one of His children. This is a higher life and a privilege.
 - [2 Corinthians 5:17–18](#) “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.”
- If God accepts our consecration, we are “spirit begotten,” beginning a new spiritual life guided by the Holy Spirit, God’s power and influence. We are assured God will overrule every experience of our faithful, consecrated life to work out for our best spiritual interest. [Romans 8:28](#)
- Paul compares this work to a race which must be run with patience and endurance.
 - [Hebrews 12:1](#) “Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

What is the third step toward becoming part of the Church class?

One must be faithful to their commitments to God, until death.

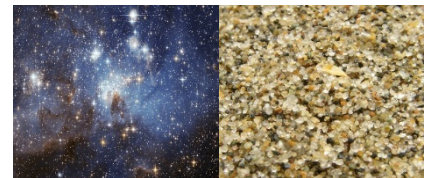
- True Christianity is all about **change**. It is about coming to God through Christ as sinful human beings. While Christianity absolutely is, “Come as you are,” it is **not** “Stay as you are.”
- God doesn’t ignore or make excuses for sin. We are to conform to God’s rules, not think of our Christianity as conforming to how we live our life.
- God places high importance on faith. The Apostle Paul describes what faith is.
 - [Hebrews 11:1](#) “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”
- Paul also tells us faith is a key part of our development as potential members of the Church class.
 - [2 Corinthians 5:7](#) “for we walk by faith, not by sight.”

- The criteria to become part of the Church class is plainly stated.
 - **Revelation 2:10** “...Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.”
- It’s not enough to be called; it’s not enough to be chosen. We must be “faithful until death.” This implies a daily battle with the world and its pleasures, remaining faithful to God’s righteous principles.
 - **Revelation 17:14** “...and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful.”

Throughout our consecrated lives, we are to develop a heart and mind that recognizes and loves God and His ways so completely that we devote our entire being to His service, even though we can’t physically see or touch Him. That is the essence of faith.

How many people will be allowed into the Church class?

- There is scriptural evidence that the number of people chosen for membership in the Church class is 144,000. (While the book of Revelation contains many symbols, numbers are generally literal.)
 - **Revelation 14:3** “And they sang a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one could learn the song except the one hundred and forty-four thousand who had been purchased from the earth.”
- No one prior to Jesus was offered a heavenly reward. No one was able to enter heaven until he died, was resurrected and ascended.
 - **John 3:13** “No one has ascended into heaven, but he who descended from heaven: the Son of Man.”
- The call to the Church class has been going on since Jesus’ death, approximately 2,000 years ago. Doesn’t 144,000 seem like a small number of people for such a long period of time?
 - Since the total number of the Church class is 144,000, this means that over 2,000 years, only about 72 individuals per year were found worthy. This small number shows just how high God’s standard is for those He calls and chooses.
 - There were also periods of history, such as the Dark Ages (a period of several hundred years) when it may have been very difficult for any to respond to God’s calling due to a general lack of biblical truth or knowledge of God.
 - ✦ **Romans 8:29** “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.”
- Jesus himself described this class as a “little flock.”
 - ✦ **Luke 12:32** (KJV) “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.”
- Being part of the Church class is not the only path to salvation. In addition to the Great Company (also known as the Great Multitude), the remainder of mankind will still enjoy the wonderful restitution to perfect human life during God’s Kingdom and all the ages afterward.
 - ✦ **Genesis 22:17–18** “Indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”
 - ✦ **Revelation 21:4** “And He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”



“The Little Flock will serve the Lord with such delight they will scarcely know how to cease their efforts.”
– Reprint 5413

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” Romans 8:18

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SAVED?

Goal of this Study: **WHAT** does it mean to be “saved”? **WHO** saves us? **WHAT** are we saved from? Is this the only time for salvation? **WHAT** is required for salvation?

Additional references: *Studies in the Scriptures* Vol. 1, Chap. 16

Why do we need to be saved?

Genesis 2:16–17 “The LORD God commanded the man saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.’”

Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, were given a commandment by God not to eat the fruit of a certain tree. Despite knowing the penalty for doing so, Adam ate fruit from the tree. **Genesis 3:6** Under God’s justice, Adam and his descendants were subject to death.



- **Genesis 3:17–19** records God delivering the sentence to Adam.
- Disobedience to God is the definition of **sin**.
- **Psalm 51:5** “Behold I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin my mother conceived me.”
This scripture reinforces the teaching that Adam and Eve’s descendants are under the death sentence because of Adam’s disobedience. The “iniquity” and “sin” in this verse refer to this death sentence. Each generation on their own, is powerless to break free from the sentence.
- Although by today’s standards and from a narrow viewpoint, the concept of judging people based on what their preceding generation did may seem harsh or even unfair, we still must have faith in God’s justice.
 - ✦ We must remember God was very clear to Adam, who represented mankind, about the penalty for disobedience.
 - ✦ We must remember we are God’s creation (**Genesis 1:27**), and God is justified in doing whatever He sees fit with His creation.
 - ✦ We must be careful not to put ourselves in a position of judging God. **Isaiah 55:8–9**
 - ✦ We must remember that God’s love for mankind has provided a path to be saved from this penalty.
- **Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”
 - ✦ This scripture plainly summarizes the fact that God cannot tolerate sin.
 - ✦ Even though mankind justly deserves its death penalty, God’s love for mankind has provided a path to be saved from it.
 - ✦ Salvation isn’t something any of mankind could earn on its own. Nothing any of us could do makes us worthy of it. It is free from God, meaning that we couldn’t possibly pay Him for it.

What makes it possible for us to be saved?

Jesus provides mankind with the only pathway to salvation from the penalty of death.

Although we can’t perfectly understand God’s justice, the Bible teaches us to think of mankind’s penalty and salvation as a simple balancing scale. Just like Adam’s disobedience caused the death sentence to be on all of mankind—even if they weren’t the ones to directly disobey God’s commandment to not eat from the tree. Jesus’ sacrifice equally provides salvation from the death sentence to all of mankind—even though they weren’t the ones able to sacrifice their perfect lives in “payment” for the sin, because all mankind are born imperfect.

- **1 Corinthians 15:22** “For as in Adam all die so also in Christ all will be made alive.”

Jesus himself taught that he was the only means to approach God, and thus obtain salvation

- **John 14:6** “Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me.”

God had always planned for mankind’s salvation. Jesus’ role of providing salvation from mankind’s sin of disobedience was declared even before his birth.

- **Matthew 1:21** “She will give birth to a son; and you shall name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” (See also **1 Peter 1:18–21**)

Even though Jesus’ sacrifice provides mankind with salvation from the original death sentence due to Adam’s disobedience, it doesn’t change the fact that God still cannot, and never will condone sin. To maintain salvation from death, each person has, or will have, a personal responsibility towards remaining obedient to God.

What are the TWO salvations spoken of in the Bible?

1. The future earthly salvation

In the future, after man has been fully educated to understand the consequences of sin, each individual will need to make a choice. Each will need to either fully devote their lives to obeying God or again experience the consequences of sin—death. **Acts 3:23**

- **Isaiah 35:8–10** “A highway will be there, a roadway, and it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, but it will be for him who walks that way, and fools will not wander on it. No lion will be there, nor will any vicious animal go up on it; they will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk there. And the ransomed of the LORD will return and come to Zion with joyful shouting, and everlasting joy will be on their heads. They will obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.”

2. The present heavenly salvation

There is also an opportunity to make a fully devoted, unreserved consecration of one’s life to God **now, before the rest of mankind**. This is a much harder path, as the majority of mankind doesn’t understand consecration. Present-day life offers many things to focus on other than God.

- **Romans 12:1** “Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship.”



The Apostle Paul describes a “full” consecration as presenting one’s living body as a sacrifice to God. Sacrifice means willingly giving up something of great value. Sacrificing one’s “living body” means we willingly give and devote the rest of our lives to the main purpose of serving and worshipping God.

An “unreserved” consecration means there is no exception to what we choose to leave behind in service to God. There is no, “I’ll go to church on Sundays and do what I want the rest of the week.” The central point of life becomes our service to God. Paul declares that his consecration is the primary focus of his life. He goes as far as forgetting all of the pursuits of life he had before and reaching forward to the future; a future which has him progressing each day toward having a heart and mind acceptable to God.

- **Philippians 3:13–14** “Brethren I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Paul also compares all of the priorities and pursuits we have to leave behind as weights holding us back. Imagine trying to run a race while carrying a heavy rock. Then imagine laying the rock down and continuing to run. Holding onto the priorities of the world will weigh down a consecrated life and make it difficult to progress. Some worldly pursuits and preferences are harder to leave behind than others and are more likely to slow down consecrated progress. Paul describes these as “the sin which so easily entangles us.”

- **Hebrews 12:1** “...let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

“We urge such, while they lift up their heads and rejoice, knowing that their redemption draweth nigh, to lay aside every weight and hindrance, and to run patiently the race in which they have started. Look away from self and its unavoidable weaknesses and imperfections, knowing that all such weaknesses are covered fully by the merits of the ransom given by Christ Jesus our Lord, and that your sacrifices and self-denials are acceptable to God through our Redeemer and Lord—and thus only.” Vol. 1, p.346

How do the goals and joys of a consecrated life compare to the goals and joys of a worldly life?

- **Philippians 4:7** “And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
- The rewards of an earthly life are largely unfulfilling. The rich and powerful are often consumed with either holding on to what they have or becoming even more rich and even more powerful. They are rarely, if ever, at peace and satisfied at heart.
- Consecrated people understand that the sacrifices they make will ultimately benefit all of mankind. They also understand that as long as they are doing all they can to fulfil their vows, God will accept them. Having this knowledge brings a priceless peace beyond anything the world can offer or understand.

Brother Russell describes the joys of a consecrated life, emphasizing that even sadness and difficulties will work out to eventual peace and joyfulness. No pursuit that the world has to offer can make this same promise:

“It is when hope has laid firm hold upon the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word, that joys spring up as flowers in a desert, vivified by our tears—such flowers of joy and blessing as the poor world in its wilderness condition could not produce or imagine. And as our joys depend upon our hopes they depend also upon our activities. It is not sufficient that a promise has been left us, and that our hope has grasped the promise. By divine arrangement the joy which springs into being through the implanted hopes and prospects must be nourished by prayer, and by activity in the Lord's service.” Vol. 6, pp. 678–679

Over time, dedicated consecration will change a person's character to further reflect the perfect example of Jesus. Characteristics such as honesty, caring, sympathy and love will grow over time, and selfish and sinful tendencies will grow less and less.

*“If you give diligence to the Word of God, and receive its truths into a good, honest, consecrated heart, it will beget in you such a love for God and his plan, and such a desire to tell the good tidings, to preach the gospel, that it will become the all-absorbing theme of life thereafter; and this will not only separate you from the world and from many nominal Christians, **in spirit**, but it will lead to separation from such entirely.” Vol. 1, p.347*

Is there an ultimate reward for being faithful to the vows of living a consecrated life?

While it's true that living a consecrated life now is more difficult than it will be for mankind in the future, the reward for successfully keeping one's consecration vows now is much higher than our current minds can understand.

God is a divine being. Although we don't fully understand what that means, we do know God cannot die. He is immortal. We know God understands the secrets of creation and the inner workings of the entire universe. We also know that after Jesus proved his obedience to God by successfully fulfilling his own consecration vows, he was also elevated to the divine nature, not dependent on any outside source for life. The reward for those who successfully keep their consecration vows is an existence with Jesus as divine beings.

- **1 John 3:2** "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when he appears, we will be like him because we will see him just as he is."
The "children of God" are those who are now living their lives in full consecration. These will be "like" Jesus; meaning, elevated to the divine nature as he was.
- **2 Peter 1:4** "For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust."
The "corruption that is in the world" is all the worldly pursuits that are abandoned and forgotten during the development of a consecrated heart and mind. This scripture assures these will be granted the divine nature.
- **Revelation 20:6** "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years."

The "first resurrection" is the resurrection of those who consecrate their present lives to God. They will be resurrected to their divine reward before the general resurrection of the rest of mankind. Like God and Jesus, their divine nature will make death impossible for them forevermore. After their resurrection, they will reign with Jesus during the Kingdom, helping to bring the rest of mankind into full, consecrated harmony with God over the course of a thousand years.

If consecration is so difficult, how can I hope to be successful?

In the world, there are no perfect guarantees about anything in life. Every important thing people want to pursue requires work, commitment, discipline and sacrifice. Living a consecrated life is no different. However, unlike many other earthly pursuits, we are not alone in our consecrated progression. God Himself, who is all-knowing and all-powerful, is fully on our side. Jesus, our perfect Master, who went through the same kinds of struggles with temptation as we do (**Hebrews 4:15**), will also help us to be successful.

Consecration is a process, not an instant transformation.

- **1 Corinthians 9:25–27** "Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified."

The Apostle Paul compares a consecrated life with training for a race. No one can have any reasonable hope of entering a race and winning without training for it first. Training takes time and discipline. During training, there are setbacks and injuries. During training, there are sacrifices—participants give up their time to devote to practice. Participants give up eating what they might want in favor of a strict diet. Over time, they develop their minds and bodies into being capable of crossing the finish line. Paul reminds us that although consecration and mortifying the old creature can be challenging, we are expected to practice discipline and work at our salvation, just like a participant in athletics ("the games") works at training.

- **2 Peter 1:10** “Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things you will never stumble.”

We are not expected to be instantly transformed in our behavior, whether in thoughts or actions to suddenly be able to drop all other priorities in favor of serving God. We are expected, however, to **devote our energies** to the **process of developing** a consecrated heart and mind. Even though we will occasionally fail, we are expected to work with all our might on our consecration. As long as we do so, we will not stumble into permanent failure.

The Bible’s many assurances for those who decide to live consecrated lives.

Grace to Help

- **Hebrews 4:16** “Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

We might be afraid that no matter how hard we try, we will inevitably fail at some point to fully live up to our consecration vows. God expects us to be faithful to our struggle to transform our hearts and minds and expects us to improve over time. However, all consecrated individuals have stumbled at some point. We are assured that we will find mercy when we fail and grace to help us when we are tempted to break our vows, but we can have “confidence” in that grace and mercy.

No Need for Fear

- **Luke 12:32** “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has chosen gladly to give you the kingdom.”

Jesus himself assures his consecrated followers that there is no reason to fear. God Himself **chose** to call us. What is stronger in our hearts—our trust in God or our doubt in ourselves?

Jesus Will Advocate for Us

- **1 John 2:1** “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

An advocate is someone who defends another person to achieve a favorable outcome for the person. Jesus himself will advocate with God on behalf of those who are diligently working on their consecration vows but occasionally fail to live up to the perfect standard.

Brother Russell offers encouragement for those considering consecrating their lives to God:

*“Those who can grasp these precious promises and who have the desire to work in the vineyard have a strong evidence that they have been begotten of the spirit; for the human mind, even when justified, is unable to grasp the **deep things** intended by God for those only who have consecrated themselves and been accepted. 1 Corinthians 2:6–16 And the Lord is too loving and too just to authorize in the hearts of any hopes which could never be realized. To be begotten of the spirit, through the Word of truth, implies an ultimate birth to spirit conditions, unless the one as begotten prove himself unworthy—unfaithful. ‘Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.’” Vol. 3, pp.222–223*

- If you are doubting whether God has really called you, the simple fact that you recognize the call and you understand His plan, gives you evidence that He has.
- God understands the sacrifice consecration requires and the difficulties we will have to work through to prove faithful to our vows. However, he also reassures us that God is too merciful to call any who He knows, in His infinite and perfect wisdom, could not be successful.

In Summary

Because of Adam's disobedience to God's commandment, Adam and through him all of his descendants, fell under the penalty of death. Adam's disobedience is the reason people continue to die even today. Through the sacrifice of his perfect human life, Jesus provided the only means to salvation from this death penalty. Just as the penalty of death was applied to all of mankind because of one man's disobedience, the opportunity for salvation from that penalty is also applied to all mankind because of one man's sacrifice. Each individual has, or will have, a personal responsibility to take advantage of the way to salvation.

Whether in the past, during the present, or in the future, God cannot condone sin. Sin has always, and will always, carry a penalty of death. In order to take advantage of the way to salvation opened by Jesus, all must fully devote, or consecrate, their minds and hearts to God. In the future, all mankind will have this opportunity after a period of re-education and restitution. However, for those who choose to consecrate their lives to God now, there is an opportunity for a grand reward beyond our ability to fully understand—the granting of the divine nature of God. Consecration is not an easy way. It requires all of one's attention, devotion and discipline. However, those who genuinely and diligently pursue a life of consecration are offered many joys to offset the sorrows and sacrifices. They are offered the support and grace of God Himself and the advocacy of Jesus to assist us when they fail to fully live up to their vows. The way may be narrow, and staying the course may require faith instead of tangible evidence, but the outcome is promised by God Himself.

“Whoever comes in contact with truth, realizing its character, has thereby a responsibility with reference to it. It must be either received and acted upon, or rejected and despised. To ignore it does not release from responsibility. If we accept it ourselves, we have a responsibility TOWARD IT also, because it is for ALL the household of faith; and each one receiving it becomes its debtor, and, if a faithful steward, must dispense it to the other members of the family of God. Let your light shine! If it again becomes darkness, how great will be the darkness. Lift up the light! Lift up a standard for the people!” Vol. 1, p.349

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Christian Questions (CQ) podcast episodes: <https://christianquestions.com>

Booklets: <http://chicagobible.org/bible-bookstore/>

PAGE	STUDY	RESOURCE
3	Why Does God Permit Evil?	CQ #882 <i>Why God Permits Evil</i> booklet
7	A Ransom for All	CQ #1285, 1086, 1030, 786
13	The Seed of the Woman	CQ #1287, 1253, 1006
19	The Three Ways	CQ #1174, 1175, 1231
25	Our Lord's Return	CQ #1185, 1194 <i>I Will Come Again</i> booklet
31	The Trinity	<i>When Jesus Became God</i> by Richard E. Rubenstein <i>Father, Son and Holy Spirit</i> booklet <i>The Doctrine of Christ</i> booklet <i>The Lord Our God is One Lord</i> booklet
37	The Truth About Hell	CQ #1021, 1024, 1027 <i>The Truth About Hell</i> booklet <i>Where are the Dead?</i> booklet <i>How to Study the Bible and Have it Make Sense</i> booklet
45	The Human Soul	CQ #1227, 1228, 1201, 1206 <i>What is the Soul?</i> booklet
53	The Harvests of the Bible	CQ #1312, 1302, 1006, 1237
59	The Study of Bible Chronology	
65	The Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks	
69	The Times of the Gentiles	
73	The Fifth Universal Kingdom	CQ #1285, 1030, 786
79	The Tabernacle	CQ #1099 <i>Notes on the Tabernacle</i> by Anton Frey <i>Israel's Tabernacle</i> booklet
85	Lessons on Prayer	CQ #1294, 1295 <i>How God Answers Prayer</i> booklet
91	The Church of Christ	CQ #1300, 1254, 1248, 1193
97	What Does it Mean to be Saved?	<i>What Everyone Should Know about Being Saved</i> booklet