

Search for Truth #2

Home Bible Study Course

Teacher's Manual

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The original *Light for Living* Bible study written by Jerry Twentier and Marcella Willhoite has been revised by J. L. Hall, Kenneth Haney, Philip Dugas, and Nathaniel Haney, and has also been changed to *Search for Truth #2*.

“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”

John 5:39

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Revisions made by J. L. Hall, Kenneth Haney, Philip Dugas, and Nathaniel Haney

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All Scripture quotations in this book are from the King James Version of the Bible unless otherwise identified.

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INTRODUCTION

The Greatest Teacher . . .

. . . on earth was Jesus Christ. His life and words teach us how to live. So intriguing were His new concepts, many forsook their careers and lifestyles to follow everywhere He went.

His words were certain to evoke a response from listeners. All were profoundly affected by His tender, yet powerful manner of teaching.

But the Greatest Teacher did not complete the task He began. Into our hands fell the responsibility of continuing Christ's mission on earth. You and I have been entrusted with the blessed obligation of teaching choice pupils of the last generation!

Such a successful Teacher merits our attention. Let's examine the methods found in His personal textbook, the Bible.

We often assume that a great teacher must possess charisma, a head full of knowledge and fantastic lesson plans. However, Christ prescribed none of these qualities when encouraging His followers to spread the Word. His method was simple . . . so simple that we stumble over it in search of a more dramatic way.

We often seek the fantastic, the phenomenal. We dream of great methods, grandiose ideas and impressive projects.

So did the demoniac of Gadara whom Christ delivered. He was so impressed that he wanted to get into the ship with Jesus and sail to faraway places. But Christ had a *better* idea:

“Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee” (Mark 5:19).

Fulfilling your teaching mission may not be as complicated as imagined. The key to success may lie in following Christ's prescribed method: “Go home and tell thy friends.”

Much of the Bible is written in narrative form. It is descriptive, interesting and beautiful. Yet it is always open, clear and direct. A Bible study can be taught in a home with God's Word, the *Search for Truth* charts, and relating the story. Simple!

How do I prepare my Bible study? Christ, the Greatest Teacher, spent weeks in the wilderness preparing for His teaching ministry. If He needed adequate preparation, how much more should we!

The Bible and the *Search For Truth #2* Teacher's Manual will be your most valuable tools.

Glancing through your new Teacher's Manual, you will discover many exciting concepts designed to aid your lesson preparation.

Remember, the Teacher's Manual is an aid—not a script to be read. Never—NEVER—read from the manual during a session. This shows an evident lack of preparation.

You will also discover that the twelve lesson texts are very lengthy. The wealth of information included in each lesson is designed for you to read, digest, and retain. Please understand that *time will not permit you to teach all the material given in a single lesson*. The writers have purposely included additional material for your benefit.

A teacher should always know pupils. Dale Carnegie, founder of the Carnegie Institute for Public Speaking, makes a valid point. He insists that effective public speakers should know forty times as much about their subject as they actually use!

Be an “authority” on each lesson! By developing that priceless asset known as “reserve power,” your teaching becomes more effective.

Be selective in your teaching. Since every fact in the text obviously cannot be covered, customize your presentation to fit student needs.

Think about your audience for a moment. Have they already received salvation? Do they have any previous Bible knowledge? Are you teaching adults and teenagers?

Each group differs according to background, culture, education, and age. Be sensitive to their comprehension and acceptance levels. Set a slower pace or divide lessons, if necessary—especially Lesson Nine. Analyze your audience and emphasize needed principles.

Keep your vocabulary simple. Never assume that students are acquainted with even the most familiar Bible stories.

Unfamiliar terms, such as atonement, remission, repentance, spiritual circumcision, saints, covenant, redemption, and others should not be used without clear definitions.

Strive to cover the major concepts illustrated on the charts, including only as many details as time permits. Since some charts are more

involved than others, plan your lesson accordingly.

Watch the time. Don't teach too long. Forty-five minutes per session is adequate. If you do not finish the material, continue the next week.

At the beginning of each session, review charts from the previous week, or those which may establish the topic being taught. As you point to the illustrations, make brief comments. Such review will help refresh students' memories and will get your mind in gear to begin teaching.

A wealth of Scripture references are included on each chart. Do not attempt to read all the scriptures during the presentation. Instead, give each pupil a Study Sheet that provides a lesson outline and appropriate Scripture references. Students may study this sheet between sessions.

Teach the lessons in their designed, logical sequence. Should you skip around, an incomplete picture may be formed in the minds of your audience.

Lesson One immediately establishes the authenticity of the Word of God. Remember, the first lesson makes a lasting impression that sets the mood for the entire series. Make every effort to make it exciting, informative and intriguing.

Astounding discoveries are daily occurring around our globe to validate the truth of God's Word! Strive to make this lesson come alive for your audience!

Impress upon your students that you will teach the Bible independently of all religious groups. Nor will any derogatory statements be made against any church denomination. The Bible will be the sole authority. This is the prime rule for the entire series.

Prepare brief notes on a sheet of paper or index cards to prompt your memory. Place them inside your Bible for occasional reference. Closely examine the charts as you study and relate them with the lesson material. As you become more familiar with the lessons, the illustrations will prompt your memory and notes will not be needed.

Emphasize important points with appropriate hand gestures, voice fluctuations and facial expressions. Students can easily become bored if you use a monotone voice and remain motionless throughout the study. Vocal emphasis and appropriate gestures keep you awake, too!

Don't write out your script. Written language obstructs smooth conversational language. Trying to recall the script will steal the natural and spontaneous effect.

Likewise, never memorize the material word for word. While under stress, it is easy to forget

and disrupt the whole thought process. No one enjoys a "canned" lesson or the unimpressive sound of a mechanical robot. Communicate in a warm, friendly and relaxed manner.

Many busy teachers consider the tape recorder a priceless aid for home Bible study. Why not record each lesson on a cassette as you read it directly from the teacher manual. Listen to it over and over en route to work or during lunch break. Hearing a tape once or twice a day will help implant the lesson in the teacher's mind. You might also tape an actual session to evaluate and improve your teaching.

Before embarking on His three-year ministry, the Greatest Teacher retreated into the wilderness for forty days of fasting and prayer. Here was the real secret of His impressive ministry. Never underestimate the importance of prayer and fasting in your preparation!

An audience should "feel" the love of God flowing through you. This is possible only through consistent, daily prayer in behalf of your Bible study. Fasting one day per week coupled with prayer will generate divine power and spark an anointing in your teaching.

Dedicated prayer and fasting give birth to a "burden" or deep concern for your students. Acquiring a burden ensures the blessings of God upon your home Bible study. You will be so eager for pupils to accept salvation, you will do anything to prompt that response!

Teaching a weekly Bible study drains spiritual strength. Replenish that strength with prayer-power! Soon you will discover prayer has become a joy—not a drudgery! Like a gushing stream, a burden will flood your prayers, bringing tears, supplication and intercession for the needs of your students.

A burden enables you to talk from your heart—not from the manual. You will be teaching "from the inside out." When an invisible love and compassion are flowing, your listeners will be affected far beyond the ability of mere words.

A sincere burden also affects the attitude. Rather than thinking, "I'm going to prove my point!" or "I'm going to show these folks where they have been wrong!", you will feel a genuine desire to encourage students to continue their Christian walk. Determine that your teaching will build a bridge of love!

Feel inadequate, incapable, and helpless to meet your new challenge? You need not. Remember, you have Help. You are a co-partner on His teaching team. And that's a winning combination!—*the Greatest Teacher . . . and you!*

LESSON ONE

An Introduction to the Bible

This lesson conveys the absolute authority of the Bible.

In these days of uncertainty and confusion, it is comforting to know that our confidence rests upon the very words spoken by God—the Bible!

Nor has He left us without proofs of the credibility of His Word. We can speak with authority about Christianity, knowing that there is an intellectual basis for our faith in Jesus Christ.

Without a solid scriptural foundation, we could not intelligently or convincingly present the “good news.” Therefore, we want to begin this series of lessons by clarifying that our faith rests upon the most substantial basis possible—the Word of God.

When completing this lesson, students should be aware of the following concepts:

1. There is complete harmony and agreement among Old Testament books.
2. The Scriptures have been proven to be authentic and accurate in these fields of learning: Science, Medicine, History, Archeology, Dead Sea Scrolls.

3. The greatest proof that the Bible is indeed a divine Book, inspired of God and without error, is the fulfillment of prophecy, both in Bible times and our present day.
4. We can place full confidence and trust in the Bible as the foundation for building our lives. We can be sure the Bible is true!

Books for additional reading:

1. Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, San Bernardino: Here's Life Publishers, 1979.
2. Arthur S. Maxwell, *Your Bible and You*, Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1959.
3. Ralph Earle, *How We Got Our Bible*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971.
4. F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments*, Rev. ed. Westwood: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1963.
5. F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* Downers Grove, IL 60515: InterVarsity Press, 1964.

Lesson 1 – Cover

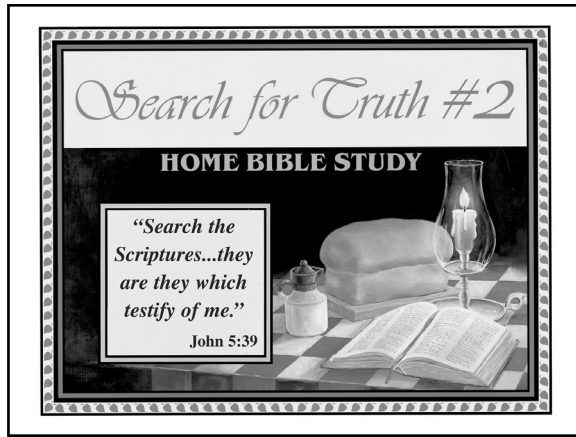


Chart Objective:

To explore the secrets of this ageless Book regarding an exceptionally rare kind of “living” that we mortals wish for, but never quite expect to attain. Its message will be especially appealing to those who feel trapped in the web of twenty-first-century pressures.

Chart Outline:

- A. *Search for Truth #2 Home Bible Study*
- B. Search the Scriptures

A. Search for Truth #2 Home Bible Study

Everybody has one. It’s a handy place to store the family records and press flowers between its pages. It makes an especially attractive centerpiece and is a necessary volume for every home library. It’s just another good Book that everyone should read . . . some day.

All would agree that the Bible is a useful Book. But generally, it merely collects dust and is rarely put to use.

Today, we will make a commitment to change. Let’s take it down, wipe away the dust and discover just how beneficial it can be! We will examine it, talk about it, and search its pages for answers.

In a world filled with trouble and turmoil, this Book offers some “good news”! We are here to share and to exchange some beautiful, enlightening truths.

These lessons are designed to reveal what a priceless Book our Bible really is . . . to show us how it is in many ways the most up-to-date Book in our library . . . and to disclose how it provides an endless source of benefit and inspiration.

Our goal in this study is to explore what the Bible says about our God, our homes, our families, our problems, and our future.

Admittedly, this study series—despite its twelve lessons—is but an introduction to the Bible. Innumerable additional lessons would be required to deal thoroughly with all the deep and wonderful themes contained in Scripture. We want to discover the fabulous gold mine of riches that can be continually probed and enjoyed the rest of our lives!

Also, *Search for Truth #2 Home Bible Study* has been designed as a friendly study—warm with the love of God. It is not intended to be a profound theological treatise. The purpose is to simply present Bible principles on certain vital subjects. Not argumentative, but more like gathering around the kitchen table for a friendly chat.

We will criticize or condemn no one. Rather, we seek to release the flood tide of divine wisdom, guidance and love inherent within the sacred pages of this wonderful Book!

1. We will not discuss the teachings of any church or denomination. Our main concern is, “What does the Bible say?”
2. We will not ask you to join a church.
3. We will not argue about any issue covered in the study.
4. The Bible study is given in homes free of any charge.

B. Search the Scriptures – John 5:39

We are living in the most crucial era of man’s existence. It is a time of rapid change. Human thought and progress, which for centuries advanced like a slow moving glacier, have thawed into torrents of intense activity, plunging rapidly toward a frightening tomorrow.

Darkness seems to engulf our world. Oh yes, this generation is acclaimed to be the most enlightened ever. Yet world leaders are plagued with thoughts of universal destruction. This menace threatens our lives, civilization, and world. Little hope is offered for the future.

When pills numbering in tons are required to put Americans to sleep at night, the question looms: where is that precious, quiet repose called “peace”?

Faced with insurmountable problems, fears, and loneliness, this world gropes for answers to modern dilemmas. All mankind needs help from a higher power to provide peace of mind, courage, hope, and guidance.

But where is such help found? In a local

discussion group or seminar? At a political forum? On a psychiatrist's couch?

There is a better place. Look in the Bible!

So remarkably does our Bible anticipate the present world situation, it seems to have been written especially for our generation. Although centuries old, the Bible is amazingly current. It deals with matters of universal interest. It offers hope and solutions for current perplexities.

Our Bible also describes a lifestyle totally opposite from the gloomy despair surrounding us. It talks about life versus light. It portrays "abundant" life—a supe-

rior kind of life flowing from deep within. Jesus said,

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

By obeying the principles and concepts taught in this wonderful Book, we can experience the exhilarating, abundant life God intended!

Open it now. See how wonderfully it offers words of comfort, hope, challenge and direction. It is the Book for you for NOW!

Lesson 1 – Chart 1 The Old Testament: What Is It?

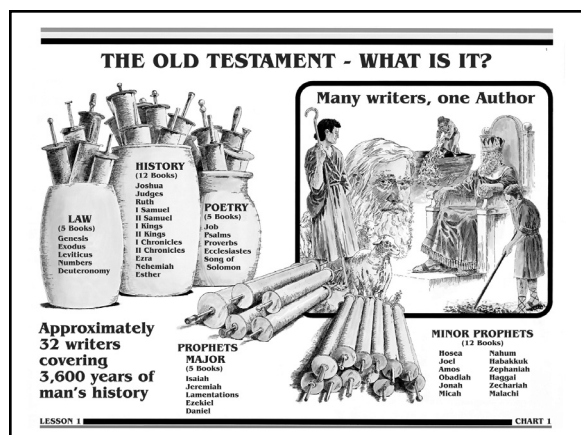


Chart Objective:

To explore Old Testament writings composed by many writers from various backgrounds and occupations. Although these men lived in different ages, every book perfectly agrees and harmonizes with all the others.

Chart Outline:

- A. The Old Testament: What Is It?
- B. Many writers, One Author

A. The Old Testament: What Is It?

As you hold the Bible and thumb through its pages, you may wonder what distinguishes it from other books.

Yes, it is different. At first glance, the story line appears to be incomplete. Its many short chapters and numbered verses lend themselves to rigid reading. Its language, although a literary masterpiece, is not easy to understand upon first reading.

But let's look closer. This isn't a single

Book, but rather is a collection of books and letters—more like a library. Some messages are so brief, they could be copied on a single page of paper—while others are so expansive that they require volumes of commentary.

Why is your Bible labeled "Old" and "New" Testament, when all of it is very old? The word "testament" refers to a document disclosing the will of a departed person. It is a covenant or agreement between two contracting persons.

Thus, the "Old" Testament is the covenant or agreement God made with man about salvation before Christ came. The "New" Testament is God's covenant with man about salvation after Christ came.

Therefore, the entire Bible is composed of two major covenants between God and man. Our responsibility is to explore their wonderful terms and provisions.

There is very fascinating information about these agreements. You will not want to miss a single lesson as the secrets unfold regarding the amazing covenant privileges.

Each Testament is divided into five sections. The Old Testament begins with the **Law**. This includes the first five books of the Bible written by Moses. These books contain the story of Creation, the Flood, and the origin of the Jewish people. Also included are a detailed list of God's laws and the Ten Commandments to govern His people.

Next come the twelve books of **History** of the Jewish people, their trials, division, captivity, and finally, restoration to their home in the Promised Land. These books cover eight hundred years from the thirteenth to the fifth century B.C.

Positioned near the heart of the Old Testament are five **Poetry** books. These are not short, rhymed verses, but are written in free verse. Among these are the well-known Psalms, extolling and praising the God of the Jewish people. These five are volumes of praises, promises, prayers, prophecies, and commandments.

Next come the **Major Prophets**. Five books are devoted to events in Israel, both present and future, such as: the coming Messiah, the church age, the end of time, and kingdom age.

Last are the writings of the twelve Minor Prophets. They are termed “minor” not because their work is any less significant but because they are short. Some are less than one full page. The **Minor Prophets** declared God’s message of warning and instruction.

Briefly, that is a synopsis of thirty-nine Old Testament books. Remember the total number like this: The word “old” contains three letters. The word “testament” has nine letters. Place the two digits side by side and you have 39—the number of Old Testament books.

B. Many writers, One Author

The Old Testament was written over a period of 1,400 years by thirty-two writers and covers approximately 3,600 years. Although the writers came from all backgrounds, each perfectly harmonizes with the others.

Amos was a country preacher. Isaiah was a brilliant court preacher. Moses was heir to the Egyptian throne. David was a king and composer. Solomon was the wisest man who ever

lived. Still there are no contradictions in their writings because there was really just one Author of all thirty-nine books—the Holy Ghost:

“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (II Peter 1:21).

Words were penned in different ages, different countries and by different men—some who never saw each other or knew that others had written on the same subjects. Yet when their writings became one Book, not one contradiction exists.

What do you suppose might happen if forty medical doctors from different countries and ages would write a book on the treatment for a certain disease? How much unity would prevail among their writings?

Each would be asserting the others wrong and why his own theory is right. Generally, there is little unity of thought between the books of men on any subject. Yet there is perfect unity among the books of the Bible! This proves that although there are many writers, there is but one divine Author for all sixty-six books. Who but God could produce such a work!

Most of the Bible was written under difficult conditions. It was produced in pastures, prisons, or other unlikely writing situations. The writers had no typewriters, pens or smooth white paper. With quill or bone pens on parchment or skins, often with only a candle or a primitive oil lamp, they penned God’s message to the human race.

Lesson 1 – Chart 2 From God’s Hand to Ours!

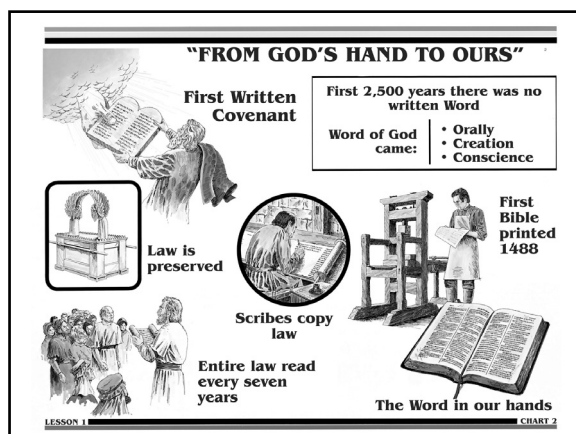


Chart Objective:

To prove how the Bible came directly from God to us, passing en route through many hands. This collected group of writings is recognized today as the Old Testament. Because of the meticulous care in copying and preserving Scripture, we can be certain that it is completely accurate and authentic.

Chart Outline:

- Before the Bible
- First Written Covenant
- Law is preserved
- Entire law read every seven years
- Scribes copy law

- F. First Bible printed 1488
- G. The Word in our hands

A. Before the Bible

How did we get this Book? How did a collection of sixty-six short books emerge as one complete work? Not a recent development, it was born long before the invention of the printing press. The story of its origin and preservation is indeed fascinating.

To imagine a world without a Bible seems quite incredible. But for the first 2,500 years of man's history, the written Word did not exist. During this time, there were no inspired writings.

Just how did man function without a Bible? How could he know God's will? God spoke orally with a few selected men—Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses. Since these men lived before Scripture was written, they received verbal information concerning God's will.

However, God manifested Himself to man in other ways. "The heavens declare the glory of God." The handiwork of God's creation in the universe illustrates God's existence and His love for mankind.

Another way of revealing His will was to place within man a conscience—that inner ability to detect right and wrong. Although 2,500 years was a long time without the written Word, God planned adequate provisions through:

- Oral communication
- Revelation of creation
- Inner voice of human conscience

B. First Written Covenant

Moses was the first man to view the written covenant of God. Atop Mount Sinai, the Lord talked with Moses and with His finger inscribed the law on tablets of stone. Then God revealed the plan whereby He would preserve His written Word for all generations.

C. Law is preserved

The nation of Israel was chosen to preserve both God's written and spoken Word. Moses was instructed to place the tablets of stone in the most holy and sacred place: the ark of the covenant. This was the safest repository to protect God's written covenant with Israel.

Moses was also commanded to have the Levites and scribes make a copy of the law for

their king when Israel would desire to have a ruler like other nations:

"And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them" (Deuteronomy 17:18-19).

With extreme care, the scribes must ensure the king's copy to be precisely like the original.

Through the following ages, copies and manuscripts were written on clay tablets, wood, leather, animal skins, parchment and sheets of papyrus.

Finally, paper was used for biblical manuscripts. While the ancient Chinese made paper, the knowledge was not widespread until about the eighth century A.D. By the thirteenth century, papermaking was common in Europe and became readily accessible for scribes' use in copying the Bible.

D. Entire law read every seven years

Certain ordinances also assisted in preserving God's Word. One commandment required that every Israelite adult and child hear all the reading of God's written laws every seven years:

"And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi . . . And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing" (Deuteronomy 31:9-11).

From childhood through a lifetime, a Jew would have heard the Word read perhaps ten or twelve times. Had any error occurred between readings, someone would have notified the priest.

Throughout Israel's history, the nation often strayed from the teaching of the law. When the citizens of Jerusalem were led captive to Babylon, Daniel and Ezekiel carried with them precious copies of God's Word for preservation. Returning seventy years later, God's Word was at last carefully revered and obeyed.

Ezra, a scribe in Israel, read and emphasized the Word of God by reading to his people from the books of Law, History, and the Prophets. Through Ezra's efforts, Old Testament books were restored to full prominence.

Actually, more Old Testament books were yet to come—the prophetic works of Zechariah, Haggai and Malachi. From Ezra's time forward, all the Old Testament writings were gathered into one collection. These error-free texts were preserved until the time of Christ. By then, God's Word was so firmly established, not even the Jews' rejection of Christ could disturb it.

Jewish scribes transmitted the traditional Hebrew Old Testament text, blindly but faithfully, until the dawn of the Protestant Reformation hundreds of years later.

God planned that the Hebrew Scriptures be meticulously preserved until the time Christians would use them. Christ also put His divine approval on all the Old Testament while teaching His new gospel:

“And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44).

Notice that Jesus specifically mentioned the three major sections of Old Testament Scripture: the **Law**, the **Prophets**, and the **Psalms**.

The Law includes the first five books of Scripture. The Prophets include Major and Minor Prophets, as well as Joshua, Judges, Samuel and the Kings. The Psalms were also a general division including: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Chronicles.

This type division was used long before the time of Christ and was firmly established when Christ made this reference (Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*, page 259).

E. Scribes copy law

From Christ's remarks concerning the law, we know that the common text of that day was identical to the Old Testament of today. Why is this true? The Jewish scribes, fulfilling their God-given mandate to preserve the

Scriptures, had developed a detailed plan to ensure the accuracy of each copy. Meticulous detail was given to copying each letter.

In A.D. 700 a group of Jewish scholars called “Masoretes” developed a system for the accurate transmission of the Old Testament to future generations. Strict rules were established for all copyists:

1. No word or letter could be written from memory.
2. The scribe must look attentively at each word, then pronounce it before writing it.
3. The words and letters of each section were counted. If the total figure did not balance with the original, the manuscript was discarded.

F. First Bible printed A.D. 1488

This careful process continued until the invention of the printing press about the middle of the fifteenth century in Germany. John Gutenberg devised a method of arranging alphabet letters onto a plate to create a stamped impression on paper.

For years he worked, perfecting his methods. With his new invention, labor and costs in book printing were greatly reduced. Books could now be printed in volume and made available to the general public! Gutenberg's first Book to be printed was the Bible! God's Word was on its way into our hands!

Because of their precise attention to detail and accuracy, modern scholars have proven that today's Old Testament is exactly the same as in ancient biblical times. Nothing has changed! It's accurate! It's authentic! It's pure!

G. The Word in our hands

The original Hebrew Scriptures were copied and translated for generations. In Alexandria, Egypt, during the second and third centuries B.C., one of the earliest and most important translations into the Greek language was called the “Septuagint” (meaning “seventy”) because of the seventy Jewish scholars who prepared it. Since that time, the Bible has been translated and paraphrased into more languages than any other book in existence (Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, page 19).

Some of the earliest translations were into Syriac, then Latin, Armenian and Gothic. The first complete English translation was made in 1382 by John Wycliffe. His work was soon followed by other English translators, produc-

ing the Tyndale Bible, Coverdale Bible, and the Geneva Bible.

The King James Version was published in 1611. This became known as the Authorized Version because the work of translation was encouraged and sponsored by King James I of England (Maxwell, *Your Bible and You*, page 39).

The Bible was not divided into chapters and verses when first copied from the manuscripts. The Latin Vulgate translation was the

first to incorporate verse and chapter divisions in both Old and New Testaments.

So the Book was a long time in preparation. From the very first day God spoke audibly with Adam until the Old Testament collection was printed and translated in English . . . was a long road, but not by coincidence. God, in His divine providence, saw our need and sent His Word. Here we are holding it now. It's a miracle Book!!

Lesson 1 – Chart 3 The Bible: Unique and Wonderful!

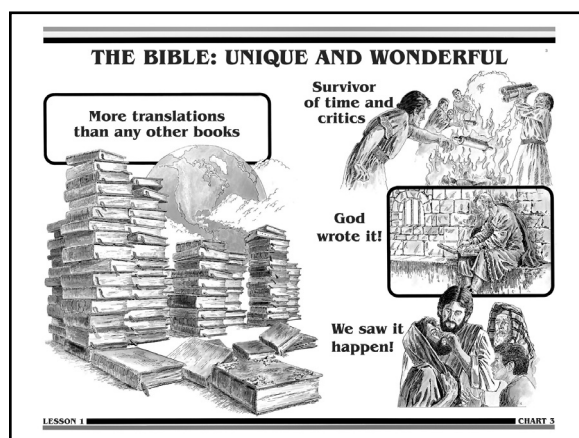


Chart Objective:

To discover the many ways in which the Bible is unique. No other book has equaled the number of translations, the circulation, or survived critics' attacks like this Book. The Bible alone is accredited to God's authorship with many eyewitness accounts of events described in Scripture.

Chart Outline:

- A. More translations than any other book
- B. Survivor of time and critics
- C. God wrote it!
- D. We saw it happen!

A. More translations than any other book

Why is the Bible a miracle Book? Why is it so special?

Our Bible is indeed uniquely different from all other books. It has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book. More copies of it have been produced than of any other book in history. No book could remotely compare with the circulation of the Scriptures. Nor has any

other attained its constant circulation.

The Bible's translation is also unmatched. It has been rendered and paraphrased into more languages than any other book. By 1966, the entire Bible appeared in 240 languages and dialects. One or more books of the Bible was translated in an additional 739 languages for a total publication of 1,280 languages (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 3, page 588)!

B. Survivor of time and critics

The Bible is unequalled in its survival of time. Having first been written on perishable materials, then copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press, still its style and accuracy have never diminished.

Compared with other ancient writings, the Bible has more manuscript evidence than any other classical literature.

The Bible is remarkable in its survival of criticism. It has withstood vicious attacks from enemies as has no other book. Voltaire, the French infidel who died in 1778, said that in one hundred years, Christianity would be erased from history. But what has happened? Only fifty years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society used Voltaire's own printing press and house to produce hundreds of Bibles (Norman Geisler and William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, pages 123-124)!

The Bible is the first religious book to be taken into outer space. From Genesis 1:1, the astronauts read, "In the beginning God." And Voltaire said it would be forgotten by 1850?

Christ's own claims assure us that His Word could never be forgotten:

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35).

While these qualities do not alone prove the Bible is the Word of God, they do signify that it has no equal. Every intelligent person should want to read the one Book that has drawn more attention than any other. And every person who is searching for truth will surely want to carefully examine its unique qualities.

C. God wrote it!

There is another amazing difference between the Bible and all other books. Authors may pray for God's help and guidance—which God provides. Certainly many good books have been written with God's help. Still, even the most saintly writer would hardly claim for his book: "God wrote it!"

But that is claimed for the Bible. Both Old and New Testament writers claim to write the very words of God. The Bible is filled with expressions such as, "God said," "the Lord spake saying," "the Lord commanded," "the Word of the Lord came unto me." Such phrases appear more than 3,800 times.

Paul, writer of more than half the New Testament, attributed that his writings were from God. "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (I Corinthians 14:37).

Satan has bitterly and subtly fought God's Word. Why? Because God works through the power of His spoken Word!

How were the worlds created? By the Word of God (Hebrews 11:3).

How is every child of God begotten, or born again? By the Word (James 1:18).

After spiritual birth, how does God's child derive the sustenance and maintenance of that existence? Through the Word of God (Matthew 4:4).

Therefore, the Bible is either what the writers attest—God's Word to man—or it is

not. There is no middle ground concerning inspiration of Scripture. Either it is God's Word or it is only man's word.

D. We saw it happen!

New Testament writers were eyewitnesses of the events they described or wrote from firsthand accounts. Peter, one New Testament writer, assured us: "We're not writing fiction. We saw it happen!"

"For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (II Peter 1:16).

Bible writers earned the right to tell their story. Their firsthand knowledge of facts and evidence about Christ still appeals to readers and listeners.

They not only said, "Look, we saw this happen," but their statements warned their most adverse critics, "You also know about these things. You saw them, too!"

"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know" (Acts 2:22).

Such tactics would be used only by one who was positive of his position. To tell an opponent, "You know about this, too," would challenge him to refute incorrect statements.

The writers of Scripture were sure—very sure! They were convinced that the actual, direct words of God were being relayed. Having been eyewitnesses, they were positive of the truthfulness of their statements.

They were sure, but how can we be sure?

Lesson 1 – Chart 4

How Can We Know the Bible Is True?

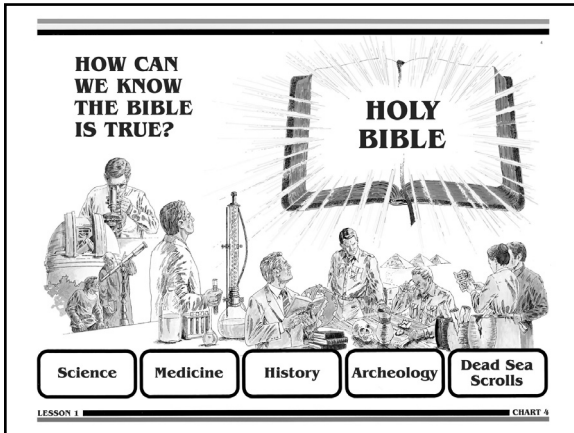


Chart Objective:

To examine the various professions and sciences attesting that the biblical record is reliable, accurate, and precise in every detail.

Chart Outline:

- A. Science
- B. Medicine
- C. History
- D. Archeology
- E. Dead Sea Scrolls

A. Science

Many proofs within the Bible indicate that it is indeed a divine Book. But can its truth be verified to those who do not believe in the Bible itself?

Proofs must be found outside the Bible, evidence that can be substantiated and accepted. And there are many!

Exciting discoveries from various fields of science, medicine, history, archeology, and prophecy ascribe biblical authenticity. Let's examine what they tell us.

The Bible is the only Book that is accurate in all scientific details. Science textbooks are almost immediately obsolete because of continuing scientific discoveries. However, the Bible has never been proven incorrect in one scientific aspect.

In the days of Columbus, navigators believed the world to be flat. It was considered unsafe for a ship to venture far beyond the coast. Men believed that ships would fall over the side of the world to be destroyed by huge sea monsters and dragons.

Not until brave explorers began seeking new trade routes to the Far East was man really sure that the world was round. Yet this

profound truth was written in the Bible all the while!

“It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth” (Isaiah 40:22).

The Hebrew word for “circle” refers not to a flat circle on a surface, but to a spherical shape such as our globe!

Ancient men believed that the world was flat and that underneath were giant supporting pillars. Only since Copernicus has science confirmed that no such literal pillars exist. The earth moves through space unsupported by solid objects. Nonmaterial forces hold both the earth's axis and other heavenly bodies in their appointed places.

How clever of man to discover this amazing scientific fact! Yet the Bible precisely concluded the same analysis thousands of years earlier:

“He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7).

How many stars are in our universe? Science has always claimed an answer. Hipparchus, the father of Greek astronomy, counted 1,080 stars. This account was still believed accurate three hundred years later. Not until Galileo's invention of the telescope in the 1600s did anyone know how minimal this figure was. Countless millions were scattered throughout space!

Current textbooks cautiously state the number of stars. How many are there? Astronomers estimate that there are over 100 billion in our galaxy alone!

Man could never accurately determine such incomprehensible numbers. Sir James Jeans acclaims there to be about as many stars as grains of sand on all the beaches of the entire world!

Only in this century has man reached this conclusion. But the Bible revealed it centuries ago. Jeremiah was unaware of future scientific calculations. However, under holy inspiration, he proclaimed,

“The host of heaven cannot be numbered, neither the sand of the sea measured” (Jeremiah 33:22).

Not until the early decades of the twentieth

century did scientists unlock the mystery to the nature of matter and energy. Today we know that all matter, whether solid, liquid or gas, is composed of atoms—submicroscopic particles so tiny they cannot be seen by the naked eye. Atoms combine to form molecules which combine to form the everyday matter with which we are familiar.

Yet the writer to the Hebrews was aware of this scientific data centuries ago. By inspiration of the Holy Spirit he explained:

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

B. Medicine

Medical science has recently made tremendous advances. But greater progress may have been made sooner had physicians sought their treatments from the Bible.

For many centuries, physicians practiced the treatment of “bleeding” a suffering patient. Puncturing a vein and allowing blood to drain began among primitive people.

As recently as the eighteenth century, physicians believed that bleeding “relieved” the patient of “bad blood” or impurities responsible for the disease. George Washington died from a “bleeding” administered by physicians as treatment for a cold.

Further studies in anatomy and medicine proved this practice erroneous. In fact, just the opposite was affirmed. Rather than extracting blood, patients’ lives are saved by giving them blood transfusions.

How many lives could have been spared had ancient physicians carefully read Moses’ words:

“For the life of the flesh is in the blood” (Leviticus 17:11).

C. History

History recorded before the time of Christ also proves biblical truths. Scores of cities mentioned in the Bible have been located and positively identified by geographers, historians, and archeologists.

The Bible is the most reliable history of all ages. Every detail and account is historically accurate.

Until recent years, one of the most notable arguments used by critics stated that the

accounts of Creation and the Flood are only myths or legends. However, they must now consider evidence found elsewhere of these events. The Flood account in Genesis is not the only written record of this catastrophe.

Historians have found similar Flood traditions in the history of every known civilization of the world! Each tradition describes a universal destruction of the human race by water, a boat provided as a means of escape, and in almost every account, man’s evil is given as the cause of the Flood punishment.

All accounts must stem from a common source—the actual Genesis Flood itself!

D. Archeology

The more experts search and dig, the more they affirm the truth of the Bible. Archeology, a science developed in the last two hundred years, deals with the excavation and evaluation of items found from the ancient past.

This is a most fascinating science. Tangible evidence proves that the Bible is indeed accurate and reliable. Bulletins from every part of the globe verify the Scriptures.

Archeology is largely responsible for confirming the historicity of the Old Testament. By discovering and establishing innumerable details, the Bible ranks as a highly valued source of history.

Archeology has refuted many modern critics. Entire Old Testament nations have been rediscovered. Important peoples have astonishingly been resurrected to fill in historical gaps.

How do we know a major Old Testament figure named Abraham actually lived? How can we prove he was not just a fictional character from a book of fables and myths? His identity has been uncovered through archeology. The name “Abraham” even appears in Babylonian excavations from the very age in which he lived.

Abraham’s hometown, Ur of the Chaldees, has also been located. The city was discovered in southern Mesopotamia, about 140 miles southeast of the site of ancient Babylon.

Civilization was highly developed in Ur. Commerce, business and industry thrived. Ships from the Persian Gulf brought alabaster to make statues and idols often mentioned in the biblical account.

Clay tablets indicate that schools taught writing and dictation lessons in vocabulary. In arithmetic, they had multiplication and division tables. Many findings at Ur substantiate

that Abraham came from a highly civilized city.

Archeologists have also found data to prove New Testament writings. Luke's detailed accounts are ridiculed by critics. They claim that he was totally mistaken about the familiar Christmas story found in Luke, chapter 2. Critics argued that there was no census, that Quirinius was not governor of Syria at that time, and that everyone was not forced to return to his ancestral home.

However, archeologists have discovered records in ancient Rome about a regular enrollment of taxpayers and a census that was conducted every fourteen years. This procedure began—the exact time mentioned by Luke! Excavations in Antioch also ascribe the governorship to Quirinius (John Elder, *Prophets, Idols and Diggers*, pages 159-160)!

Further archeological evidence from a manuscript found in Egypt reads: "Because of the approaching census, it is necessary that all those residing for any cause away from their homes should at once prepare to return to their own governments in order that they may complete the family registration of the enrollment" (Joseph Free, *Archaeology and Bible History*, page 285).

Archeologists have discovered most ancient cities mentioned in the Book of Acts. Paul's journeys can now be accurately traced.

Even Christ's passion becomes more vivid under the spade of the archeologist. For centuries there was no evidence or record of the "Pavement," the court where Christ was tried by Pilate (John 19:13). Critics accused that such details must be erroneous.

However, archeologist Albright identified this court in the Tower of Antonia, the Roman military headquarters in Jerusalem. Left buried when the city was rebuilt in the time of Hadrian, it was discovered in recent times (William Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine*, page 141).

To charge that the Bible is unreliable demands that one discard almost all literature of antiquity. Reviewing the thousands of archeological finds that support the biblical account, we can clutch the Bible firmly and stand upon its truth and reliability.

An intelligent person will aspire to read the one Book that has drawn the most attention and has been the most documented through archeological finds.

E. Dead Sea Scrolls

Because no original manuscript still exists today, critics have accused the Bible is untrue and undependable. Writing materials in those days were very crude and perishable. Consequently, there are no known original Scriptures.

In centuries just prior to Christ, the books of the Bible were inscribed on parchment and leather scrolls. Just like an old pair of shoes in the attic, this leather crumbled with age.

But many old copies of the Bible do exist! Scholars today confirm as genuine and authentic any writing of the same period if ten or more copies can be found. Thousands of copies from ancient times have indeed been found. These writings are in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Syriac, Egyptian, Gothic, Persian and other languages.

Just which are the oldest Bible manuscripts today? Until the twentieth century, the oldest Hebrew Old Testament copy was dated from A.D. 1008.

Understandably, people have eagerly sought more ancient biblical texts. In 1947 two shepherds discovered one of the greatest treasures in archeological history.

Two bedouin shepherd boys were crossing a barren pass south of Jericho near the Dead Sea. While driving goats to market in Bethlehem, they lost one among the rocky cliffs in an area pocked with numerous openings and caves.

During his search for the goat, one of the boys casually tossed a stone into a cave opening. He heard the crash of breaking pottery. Curious, he ventured inside. In a pile of shattered clay was a large scroll wrapped in linen. Eight more jars containing scrolls stood in the dark, sandy cave.

When biblical scholars deciphered these scrolls, they were stunned! The scrolls dated more than 1,900 years old! Most notable among them was a complete copy of the Book of Isaiah. This twenty-four-foot-long leather scroll had been transcribed in the century *before Christ!*

Eventually, similar scrolls in jars were found in eleven other caves. The total find has been named "Dead Sea Scrolls."

Who copied and cared for these scrolls? Most historians credit the Essenes—a Jewish sect living in this area before and during the time of Christ. Around A.D. 70, facing Roman invaders, these monks and scribes escaped

with their lives, but left hidden in the caves their precious manuscripts. The scrolls remained there for nearly 1,900 years (Ralph Earle, *How We Got Our Bible*, pages 48-49)!

Because of this incredible treasure we now have fragments and some complete texts of every Old Testament book except Esther, all dating from the time of Christ. Along with the scrolls were various other writings. Altogether, these manuscripts provide remarkable proof that late copies and translations were identical to the Scriptures Christ read while on earth.

Upon comparing these facts, we observe an abundance of reasons for believing that the Scriptures are trustworthy. We can say without hesitation that the Bible contains the true Word of God—without loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries.

The two copies of Isaiah discovered among the scrolls were a thousand years older than any manuscript previously known. Yet they paralleled word-for-word with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 percent of the text. The other 5 percent consisted of variations in spelling (Archer Gleason, *A Survey*

of the Old Testament, page 25).

Before this startling discovery, critics questioned, “How accurate are the copies today compared to the text of the first century? Since it has been copied numerous times, can we trust it?”

The oldest complete Hebrew manuscript was from about A.D. 1000. What assurance can there be of an accurate transmission since the time of Christ in A.D. 32? Now we have the answer!

And so, scholarship goes on. New discoveries are made from time to time, giving us more evidence, verifying the details of God’s story. Evidence comes bit by bit . . . a fragment of parchment here, an ancient tablet there . . . scrolls left untouched for nearly two thousand years.

But what do all these clues from history mean? Overwhelmingly, they confirm that God’s Word has been passed untouched through the ages!

Ink fades. Leather crumbles. Paper perishes. But the Bible, indestructible, radiant and divine, is imperishable. It will never die!

Lesson 1 – Chart 5 Prophecy Says: “It’s True!”

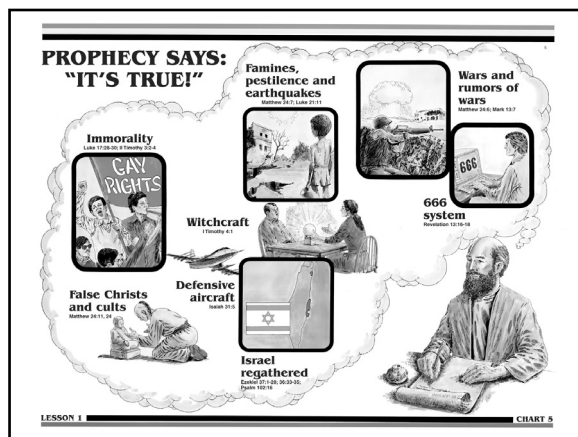


Chart Objective:

To examine fulfilled prophecy, which is the most amazing and valid proof that the Bible is the true, inspired Word of God.

Chart Outline:

- A. The Prophets Proved It!
- B. It Happened Then!
- C. It’s Happening Now!
- D. It Will Happen Soon!

A. The Prophets Proved It!

The future has always intrigued man. From the earliest days of civilization, methods have been devised for forecasting in the stars. Countless other means for determining the future have also been attempted, although most are highly ineffective.

We are interested in the hereafter! We want to know what will happen next. Man’s nature possesses a certain curiosity and wonder about coming events.

Yet our Book contains precise predictions. Its rate of accuracy has never been equalled. Our Bible contains some 6,000 specific prophecies. Thousands have already been fulfilled, exactly as given—100 percent accurate!

Prophecy is the infallible test. The proofs of science, medicine, history and archeology might be regarded as mere coincidence. But no one can dispute the validity of the biblical prophetic statements. Written thousands of years ago, proof is swift, incisive, unanswerable, and overwhelming in its utter abundance.

Considering how experts err in predicting events only a few days in advance, how utterly impossible it would be for the human

mind to foretell the destinies of nations thousands of years into the future!

For example, consider the June 12, 1967, issue of *U.S. News and World Report*. It was circulated the day before the Six-Day War broke out between the Israelis and the Arabs. In one article, a panel of key military experts made twelve predictions on the outcome of such a conflict. Result? In eleven of the twelve forecasts, they were wrong!

However, when considering Bible prophecies offered thousands of years ago, without exception the prophets have always been accurate! Many prophecies are described in vivid detail.

During the life of Christ alone, 333 prophecies were fulfilled. Actually, the prophets foretold the destiny of practically every existing ancient nation—and in every case proved correct. Even now, countless prophetic utterances are being realized. Yes, right now while you are living!

The Bible has proven to be history written *in advance*. It's like reading tomorrow's newspaper *today*!

B. It Happened Then!

Consider just a few prophecies concerning the first coming of Christ. Micah said Jesus would be born in Bethlehem. Isaiah foretold He would be born of a virgin, rejected by the Jews, and cruelly crucified.

Zechariah vividly described His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The psalmist David revealed Jesus' betrayal by a friend, the giving of gall and vinegar on the cross, the piercing of His hands and feet and the gambling for His garments. Even the exact price of betrayal was predicted—thirty pieces of silver!

At least twenty-nine Old Testament prophecies relate to the betrayal, trial, death, suffering and burial of our Lord. Although spoken at various times by many different voices during the five centuries from 1000 to 500 B.C., every *one* of them was literally fulfilled in one twenty-four-hour period of time (Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, page 158)!

Can there be any doubt that the Bible is the true, inspired Word of God?

C. It's Happening Now!

Much of the current news about Israel in newspapers provides a wonderful opportunity of seeing Bible prophecy fulfilled before

our eyes. It's happening now!

Christ Himself predicted there would be worldwide wars and rumors of wars. He listed famines, pestilence, and earthquakes. Men's hearts would fail them for fear. He warned that a state of political unrest and upheaval would exist. An identifying feature of the last generation would be an increase in deception, false Christs, and witchcraft.

The Bible also predicted gross immorality and rebellion. A "Beast" would ascend into world dominance and require every person to have a number in his forehead or hand to buy or sell.

All these predictions, plus many others, will be detailed in future lessons.

A most amazing prophetic fulfillment of our times has been the return of the Jews to their homeland. Consider the Old Testament predictions of Ezekiel and Jeremiah:

"And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way . . . For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land . . . And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God" (Ezekiel 36:19, 24, 28).

"And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase" (Jeremiah 23:3).

These verses are a sample of the numerous prophecies concerning the regathering of Israel in the last days. Israel has been scattered around the world for 1,900 years. Yet hope never faded of returning to their homeland in Palestine.

Consider another amazing prophecy. An Old Testament prophet foretold the use of airplanes as a defensive means for Israel, thousands of years before the invention of modern transportation:

"As birds flying, so will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also he will deliver it; and passing over he will preserve it" (Isaiah 31:5).

Although the Turks still controlled Jerusalem in 1917, the British were confident

of regaining power for the Jews. Early one morning, British commanders sent two reconnaissance planes over the Old City to review Turkish occupation. Few planes, if any, had ever appeared in that part of the world in 1917. The Turks saw them as omens of disaster and became alarmed. The following night, they slipped out of the north gates and fled the city without firing a single shot.

By the next morning, Jerusalem lay open for British occupation. Thus it came to pass as the prophet had declared 2,500 years earlier.

In 1917, the Balfour Declaration was signed by the British government giving Jews the right to return to Palestine and re-establish Israel as a nation. During the 1920s and 30s, hundreds of thousands of Jews migrated to Palestine.

Finally in May 1948, the creation of Israel as an independent state was announced, with official recognition by America and other major nations.

Immediately upon forming this new independent state, the government invited Jews all over the world to emigrate to Palestine with the privilege of citizenship. Within a few years, more than two million Jews had returned!

After 2,500 years, Ezekiel and Jeremiah's words were accurately fulfilled—a unique event in the history of nations and another proof that the Bible is true!

Later, in 1967, the prophecy was dramatically repeated. At the beginning of the Six-Day War, Arab guns positioned on adjacent hills began firing into the city. A terrible destruction would have occurred had not the Israeli air force destroyed the Egyptian planes so quickly, allowing them to return and defend Jerusalem.

Israeli planes quickly silenced the Arab guns, and their soldiers took the Old City. At last, the promised city was in Jewish hands again. Once more, prophecy was fulfilled!

D. It Will Happen Soon!

Judging by the accuracy of prophecy already fulfilled, what events may we expect

to happen? Many detailed prophecies are anticipated, some so alarming they would strike fear in the heart of any informed person. And others contain such beauty and promise of a brighter tomorrow, we are thrilled at the very thought! Many of these exciting prophecies will be discussed at length in coming lessons.

But just one hint for the future. Does the Bible say anything about the outcome of our world? Yes! Christ and the prophets have predicted a troubled age when men would be empowered to destroy all life on earth.

“The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved” (II Peter 3:10-11).

Blood, fire, vapor, a great noise, fervent heat, melting, and dissolving are all very accurate descriptions of a nuclear explosion. Atomic warfare is the greatest pall that hangs over the human race. More than two thousand years ago, the prophet Joel and Peter prophesied it. Yet neither man could be termed a *prophet of doom*. Both gave marvelous descriptions concerning wonderful things God has prepared for the righteous. Those predictions will also be fully discussed in later lessons.

Considering all the prophecies mentioned, can there be doubt that God's Word is true? If you are an intelligent person desiring to be enlightened with more truth, consider this amazing Book in which every prediction has occurred precisely. No other work on earth can match its record. It is flawless, exact, and incomparable!

Many proofs have been discussed that assure the truthfulness of the Bible. We can believe the powerful words written on its pages. The same power that prompted the sacred writers of Scripture can be ours as well. That same wonderful, life-changing power is available in every copy of the Bible.

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM STUDY SHEET

An Introduction to the Bible LESSON NO. 1 Study Sheet

Cover.

- A. Introduction
- B. "Search the scriptures . . . they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

Chart 1. The Old Testament: What Is It?

- A. A library collection
 - Law - 5 Books
 - History -12 Books
 - Poetry - 5 Books
 - Major Prophets - 5 Books
 - Minor Prophets -12 Books
- B. Approximately thirty-two writers covering 3,600 years of man's history
- C. Many writers, one Author (II Peter 1:21)

Chart 2. From God's Hand to Ours!

- A. Before the Bible
 - First 2,500 years there was no written Word;
 - Word of God came orally, creation, conscience
- B. First written covenant (Deuteronomy 17:18-19)
- C. Law is preserved
- D. Entire law read every seven years
(Deuteronomy 31:9-11; Luke 24:44)
- E. Scribes copy law
- F. First Bible printed A.D. 1488
- G. The Word in our hands

Chart 3. The Bible: Unique and Wonderful!

- A. More translations than any other book
- B. Survivor of time and critics (Matthew 24:35)
- C. God wrote it! (I Corinthians 14:37)
- D. We saw it happen! (II Peter 1:16; Acts 2:22)

Chart 4. How Can We Know the Bible Is True?

- A. Science (Isaiah 40:22; Job 26:7;
Jeremiah 33:22; Hebrews 11:3)
- B. Medicine (Leviticus 17:11)
- C. History
- D. Archeology
- E. Dead Sea Scrolls

Chart 5. Prophecy Says: "It's True!"

- A. The prophets proved it!
- B. It happened then! (At least twenty-nine Old Testament prophecies relating to the betrayal, trial, death, suffering and burial of our Lord were fulfilled in one twenty-four-hour period of time)
- C. It's happening now!
 - Immorality (Luke 17:28-30; II Timothy 3:2-4)
 - False Christs and cults (Matthew 24:11, 24)
 - Defensive aircraft (Isaiah 31:5)
 - Witchcraft (I Timothy 4:1)
 - Famines, pestilence and earthquakes (Matthew 24:7; Luke 21:11)
 - Wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6; Mark 13:7)
 - 666 system (Revelation 13:16-18)
 - Israel regathered (Ezekiel 37:1-28; 36:33-35; Psalm 102:16)
- D. It will happen soon!
(Joel 2:30; II Peter 3:10-11)

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM QUIZ

An Introduction to the Bible

LESSON NO. 1 Quiz

1. In which ways did God reveal His will to man before the written Word? ____
a. oral communication b. creation c. conscience d. all of these
2. The Old Testament is divided into _____ sections.
a. five b. three c. seven d. twelve
3. Name at least three of the Old Testament divisions.
a. _____ b. _____ c. _____
4. God's first written Word was given to _____ on stone tablets.
a. Jesus b. Noah c. Moses d. Adam
5. Although the Old Testament was written by thirty-two different writers, there is perfect harmony and unity because there was just one _____.
a. copy b. Author c. scribe d. scroll
6. How many total books are included in our Old Testament? ____
(clue: Count the letters in the words: "Old" and "Testament".)
7. The _____ was the first Book to be printed on the printing press in 1488.
8. Number the steps in the correct order tracing the Bible's progression "from God's hand to ours."
____ Scribes copied the law for succeeding generations.
____ The first written Word was handed from God to Moses on stone tablets.
____ The first Bible printed in 1488 placed the Word in our hands.
____ The law was rehearsed orally every seven years to the entire nation of Israel.
____ The law was preserved in the ark of the covenant.
9. Can you remember three fields of learning that prove the accuracy of the Bible?
a. _____ b. _____ c. _____
10. How many Bible prophecies can you remember that are being fulfilled right now?
a. _____
b. _____
c. _____
d. _____

Answers:

1. d 2. a 3. Law, History, Poetry, Major Prophets, Minor Prophets 4. c 5. b 6. 39 7. Bible 8. 4,1,5,3,2
9. Science, Medicine, History, Archeology, Dead Sea Scrolls 10. Immorality; famines, pestilence, earthquakes; witchcraft; false Christs and cults; defensive aircraft; wars and rumors of wars; 666 system; Israel regathered

LESSON TWO

In the Beginning

This lesson is a study of “beginnings” from the Book of Genesis.

In every age of history, man has sought to discover what God is like and the reason for his own existence.

The first book of the Bible reveals that a master Designer wanted to provide a suitable environment for man. Thus, the universe and its fixed laws were created to sustain and govern the earth. In turn, the earth was stored with treasures and resources to sustain life for mankind. Of all God’s creatures, man alone is capable of enjoying earth’s beauty and using those resources.

Having completed His elaborate preparations for his home, our loving Father created man in His image, as nearly like deity as possible. He wanted fellowship and communion with sons and daughters who would be His heirs and have dominion over the earth.

But when man chose to be *like* God, rather than remaining under His sovereignty, his sin resulted in spiritual death. Eventually he forfeited his rulership and Satan became god of this world.

The remainder of the Bible is the intriguing story of what God did to redeem man from Satan’s slavery and unite him with his Maker.

When completed, students should be aware of the following concepts:

1. The one true God is best described as a loving Father who enjoys doing good things for His creation.
2. Angels were created to worship and serve God and to minister to the heirs of salvation.

3. Man was created for the express purpose of giving pleasure to God. He yearns for a close, voluntary relationship with us, His choice creatures.
4. Man is a spirit-being, made to walk in fellowship with God. Man’s spirit was made to rule his soul (mind, will, emotions) and the subjected soul would rule the body. The body is merely a house in which the spirit and soul dwell.
5. Through Adam’s willful disobedience, mankind became spiritually dead and separated from God.
6. From the time of the Fall, God gave the promise of a Redeemer, through Whom His relationship with man would be restored.

Books for additional reading:

1. Harry Rimmer, *Modern Science and the Genesis Record*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1937.
2. Thomas F. Heinze, *The Creation Vs. Evolution Handbook*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972.
3. Henry M. Morris, *Studies in the Bible and Science*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966.
4. E. W. Kenyon, *The Bible in the Light of Our Redemption*, Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, P. O. Box 973, Lynnwood, WA 98036, 1969.
5. Pat Robertson, *The Secret Kingdom*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982.

Lesson 2 – Chart 1 In The Beginning . . .

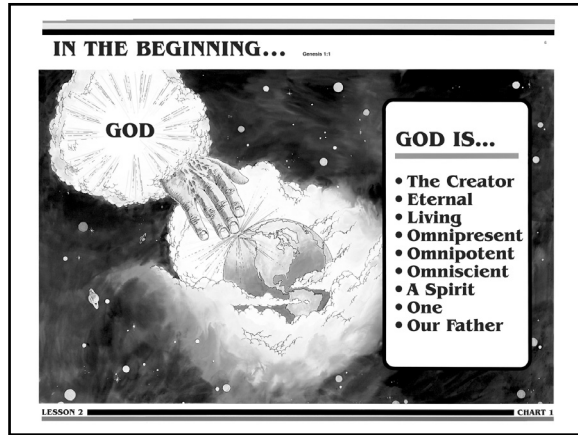


Chart Objective:

To explain the attributes of the one God revealed in our Bible. He is almighty, yet a loving Father concerned with the needs of His creation.

Chart Outline:

- A. God is . . .
- B. The Creator
- C. Eternal
- D. Living
- E. Omnipresent
- F. Omnipotent
- G. Omniscient
- H. A Spirit
- I. One
- J. Our Father

A. God is . . .

Appropriately, the Bible is called God's Book, or the Word of God. It begins with God and ends with God. All its contents concern Him.

True, we find no exact portrait of God that could be copied on canvas or stone. Any attempt to describe Him with ordinary, common terms is futile. The longest, most descriptive word in our dictionary could never depict His wonder and majesty. God simply cannot be described with words from any language!

However, our Bible does offer insights that help us comprehend what God is like.

B. The Creator

The very first verse of our Bible declares an important fact about God. Let's read it together.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

With no existing material or substance, He creates and brings into being things that are not.

"He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26:7).

C. Eternal

Creation is God's first recorded act, but that did not mark His beginning. He existed long before that!

God is eternal. He endures. He is not here today and gone tomorrow. God has neither beginning nor ending.

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Revelation 1:8).

God has always existed.

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psalm 90:2).

Another word to describe eternal is "infinite," or without limitations of time or space. There never was a time when God did not exist.

D. Living

God is alive! He is not an idea, concept or figment of the imagination. He is real!

"He is the living God, and stedfast for ever" (Daniel 6:26).

Being alive, God has all the characteristics of a living being. He can see and hear; He thinks and remembers:

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers" (I Peter 3:12).

"For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14).

God is generous and good to all His creation:

"No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

Because He is a living being, God has an official residence:

“Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place” (I Kings 8:39).

E. Omnipresent

God is omnipresent. Since “omni” means “all,” He is everywhere present at the same time. He is both far and near. His size is beyond comprehension. Jeremiah advised,

“Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 23:24).

David’s psalm expressed this fact so beautifully. There is no place anywhere in the universe where God is not present. If David could take the wings of the morning and fly farther than any bird, God would be there. Should he go to the highest part of heaven or the deepest part of hell, God would still be there! He is everywhere! (Psalm 139:7-11).

F. Omnipotent

God is omnipotent; He has all power at His command. He is the Almighty, the Ruler of all!

“The Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Revelation 19:6).

“In thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all” (I Chronicles 29:12).

Having all power, God has the ability to do all things without limitations:

“Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee” (Jeremiah 32:17).

“With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).

We humans have many limitations, but God has none. He has power to do anything. However, He only performs actions in harmony with His own nature or Word.

G. Omniscient

God is omniscient, or “all-knowing.” Nothing is hidden from Him. He sees and hears everything:

“For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings” (Job 34:21).

“For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether” (Psalm 139:4).

Being omniscient, He is the source and origin of all knowledge and wisdom.

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Romans 11:33).

H. A Spirit

The Bible clearly states that God is a Spirit.

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

But what is a “spirit”? That is like asking “What is the wind?” We know when wind fills the sails and drives our boat. But we cannot see it.

The story of a boy whose kite had soared out of sight explains this. When asked how he knew the kite was still aloft, he answered, “Because I can feel it tugging at the string, pulling at me.”

Like the wind, God’s Spirit is invisible and non-material—yet powerful. Our Bible emphatically states that God cannot be seen with human eyes, just as the human spirit cannot be seen or touched.

“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen” (I Timothy 1:17).

“No man hath seen God at any time” (I John 4:12).

Although no man has actually *seen* God, yet every man, woman and child can feel the pull of the divine Spirit and know that God lives!

I. One

Throughout the Bible, this message resounds: God is one. First of all the commandments in the Bible is:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD” (Deuteronomy 6:4).

Established in the Old Testament and echoed in the New Testament by Christ Himself, this commandment is the fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion. There is only one God, the Lord Yahweh.

“The LORD he is God; there is none else beside him” (Deuteronomy 4:35).

“Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us?” (Malachi 2:10).

“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:6).

Although the central thought in the Bible specifies that God is one, various interpretations have developed among men.

Centuries ago, the thought erupted that man needs no assistance from God. Human intelligence and achievement had advanced to the point that men felt capable of functioning independently.

This humanistic theory, originating in ancient Greece and Rome, places its central importance and value in man—his abilities and achievements. Humanists assert that man is evolving to a utopia without the aid of God’s supernatural intervention.

However, Bible-believers recognize that God is in control of the world, and all things operate according to His divine plan and will.

Other strange philosophies concerning God have developed as man’s intellect tries to interpret the Word of God. A large percentage of the world’s population is involved in polytheism—the belief in a plurality of two or more gods, such as mythology and pagan religions, with visible objects of worship.

Ancient Jews, who are responsible for preserving God’s Word, propagated their literal interpretation that He is “one” Lord (Deuteronomy 6:4). Repeatedly, the Scriptures emphasize “one.” To the Jew, there could never be a plurality of Deity. There is only one God!

Christians can agree with the Jews that there is only one God. But this one God of the Old Testament Scriptures emerges in the form of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

Later lessons will explore this concept of one God in greater detail.

J. Our Father

Perhaps the best description of God is that of a loving Father. He enjoys doing good things for His creation.

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Matthew 7:11).

Because He desired fellowship and worship, God prepared delightful blessings for the multitudes who would someday populate the earth. Never picture God as an austere Judge, peering down, waiting for some excuse to pounce upon men with severe punishments. He is a warm, compassionate, caring Father who delights in showering mankind with good gifts.

The reason for the ignorance and misery of heathen nations lies in their unenlightened conception of God. He has been portrayed as weird, cruel, immoral, aloof, and impersonal. But never do they identify Him as a loving Father.

Even Israel, the nation possessing as clear a revelation as could be given to man, could not clearly conceive His warmth and compassion. This is why they failed to recognize Him when He stood among them.

Jesus Christ revealed the Creator to be a God of love, concerned about the sick and suffering, the blind and deaf. He portrayed a holy God who was approachable. Even the most sinful of men were drawn to Him. Children sat upon His knees. Jesus was the first person of importance to appreciate childhood.

Nor had women been shown attention. The privileges, freedom and blessings enjoyed by women today are due to His life and teachings.

No other religion claimed a deity with “fatherly” attributes. By His life and words, Jesus revealed what man’s imagination could not grasp. Because He dwelt among us as a man, He has been revealed as a God of love who tenderly cares for us like a Father.

Lesson 2 – Chart 2 God Creates His Angels

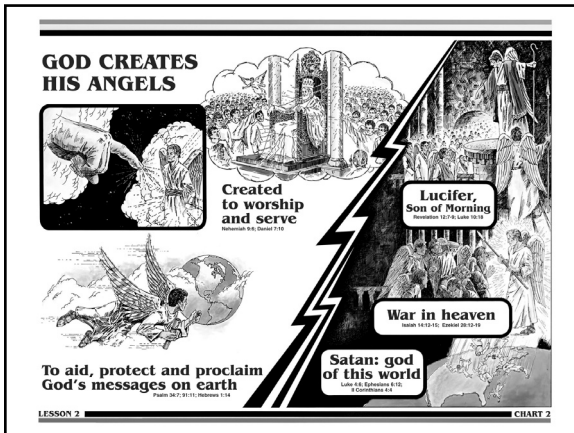


Chart Objective:

To explain the creation of angels and their specific duties. Because the archangel Lucifer rebelled, he was cast out of heaven. Later, this fallen angel became known as Satan, man's worst enemy and finally, the "god" of this world.

Chart Outline:

- A. God's angels created to worship and serve
- B. To aid, protect and proclaim God's messages on earth
- C. Lucifer, Son of Morning
- D. War in Heaven
- E. Satan: god of this world

A. God's angels created to worship and serve Nehemiah 9:6; Daniel 7:10

Since God is eternal, at one time He alone existed. We can only speculate how long He was alone or what occurred in eternity past. The Bible does imply that before Adam was placed on earth, angels were with God:

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4, 7).

Before the creation of man, there were angels. The first and highest order of created beings is the angelic host:

"Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. . . . Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created . . . He hath also stablished them for ever and ever" (Psalm 148:2, 5, 6).

"Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens,

with all their host, . . . and the host of heaven worshippeth thee" (Nehemiah 9:6).

God planned for angels to worship and praise Him. While viewing the celestial setting of heaven, John described the wondrous beauty of angels offering their praise and worship to God:

"And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Revelation 5:11-12).

Angels were also created to serve. Their servitude has never changed. Although man was given a nature lower than that of angels with a like purpose of serving, man's position is subject to be elevated above theirs. When we are recreated as sons of God, angels become our servants:

"Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14).

Angels will always fulfill the role of servants. Yet they serve believers only at God's bidding. They minister to the heirs of salvation. While we have no authority to command angels, when we ask God for help, He will direct them to assist us.

B. To aid, protect and proclaim God's messages on earth

Psalm 34:7; 91:11; Hebrews 1:14

Skepticism about the existence of angels should be resolved after one closely studies God's Word. The Bible reports many instances when God used angels for divine assignments.

Angels comprise a unique portion of the Bible. To eliminate their appearances would remove the vast beauty and excitement of Scripture.

They come and minister, then disappear. They were present at the beginning of the world. They will be present at the end of time to assist in executing judgment on the earth.

Throughout Scripture, God commissioned

His angels to perform special assignments on earth. They were directed to administer aid in a crisis, to provide protection from danger, or to bear God's own message. It was such an angelic host which announced Christ's birth to shepherds on the Bethlehem hillsides.

Angels have assumed many different forms and manifestations in fulfilling God's divine plan for the destinies of men and nations.

They have altered the course of busy political arenas of the world and protected countless saints from dangers. How thankful we are for their invisible presence and unceasing labors.

C. Lucifer, Son of Morning

Revelation 12:7-9; Luke 10:18

We presume that all the angels were created holy and perfect in their ways. While the Bible does not describe Satan's origin, we are certain he, too, was created by God. Apparently various ranks or orders existed in the heavenly host as evidenced by three chief celestial princes: Gabriel (the mighty one), Michael (who is like God), and Lucifer (son of the morning).

From a passage in Ezekiel 28:13-19, we glean additional information about the tempter. Lucifer, the most exalted of all the angels, occupied a place of prominence, second only to God Himself. Vested with every grace and anointed as the guardian of God's glory, he was the delight of the Lord. No other angel was more beautiful or wise or important. Lucifer was free to act as he wished.

Favored by God with precious gifts and talents, Lucifer coveted those blessings and allowed pride to corrupt his heart.

D. War in Heaven

Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-19

Ezekiel depicted Lucifer's decline as a holy angel:

"Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezekiel 28:15).

The first sinner! What separated this majestic angel from God? Rebellion, pride, and self-exaltation overwhelmed Lucifer's

holiness and caused his downfall.

A created being sought to dethrone the Creator! His revolt resulted in banishment and the pronouncement of divine judgment. Since "sin" means to rebel against God's will, this suggests that sin began the day Lucifer rebelled.

Positioned second to God, Lucifer already commanded great forces. Using his leadership, he easily involved other angels in the rebellion. A passage in the Book of Revelation indicates that a third of heaven's angels may have joined Lucifer's ill-fated revolt against God:

"And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:7-9).

"And he [Jesus] said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18).

Lucifer's rebellion cost his position and banished him from approaching God's throne. Consequently, the rebels moved to a new residence. Hell was created for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41). Eventually this evil host will dwell there throughout all eternity. But meanwhile, where could the usurpers go?

"He was cast out into the earth, and his angels . . . with him" (Revelation 12:9).

Here on earth? Yes! Invisible powers are present in our world. Their one purpose is to deceive, divert, and hinder the plan of God. Paul referred to these sinister beings:

"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" (Ephesians 6:12).

Lucifer's name was changed to "Satan," meaning "adversary." His fallen angels were transformed into demons. The conflict which began in heaven rages to this day.

E. Satan: god of this world
Luke 4:6; Ephesians 6:12;
II Corinthians 4:4

Although retaining his rank and dignity, Satan’s majesty was perverted. His wisdom and genius became craftiness and deceit. Satan eventually assumed the role described by Paul as ruler “of the darkness of this world.”

Having formerly dwelled in holiness and righteousness, Satan has knowledge of both good and evil. Therefore, he cleverly makes evil appear as good and good appear as evil.

Satan is the most notorious of all imposters and counterfeiters. But certain of God’s attributes cannot be duplicated. Satan is powerful,

but not omnipotent. Having thousands of years experience in accumulating knowledge and monopolizing on human weaknesses, he is knowledgeable—but not omniscient.

Lucifer’s new role became that of a tempter, adversary, enemy of the righteous, and finally—“god of this world.” Paul described how Satan deceives the minds of men and diverts their attention from God:

“In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (II Corinthians 4:4).

Lesson 2 – Chart 3
God Creates His Earth

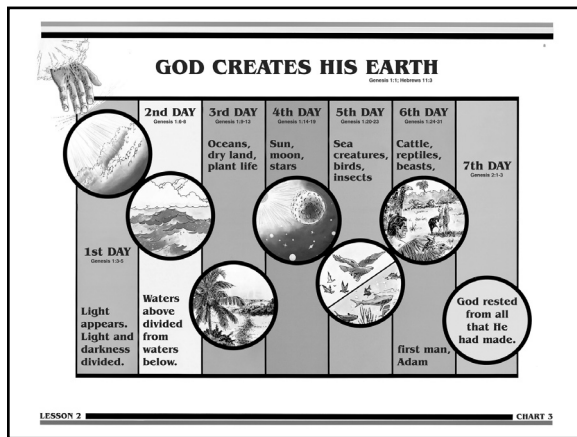


Chart Objective:

To explain how God’s perfectly beautiful earth, overflowing with every imaginable provision, was prepared for man’s pleasure. The six creative days did not require billions of years, but were intended as an example that man needs one rest day in every seven.

Chart Outline:

- A. God Creates His Earth
- B. First Day
- C. Second Day
- D. Third Day
- E. Fourth Day
- F. Fifth Day
- G. Sixth Day
- H. Seventh Day

A. God Creates His Earth
Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 11:3

The source of our creation study comes

from Genesis, the first book of the Bible. Genesis is the “seedbed” of all the important Bible doctrines. Its message is for all people of all time periods. Genesis provides the foundation for understanding the remainder of the Bible.

The word “Genesis” means “beginnings.” What are some of these beginnings? God, His angels, Satan, sin, sickness, human life, the family, worship, death, languages, nations, and Israel—the chosen nation.

The most ancient Jewish records credit Moses with writing Genesis and the four books that follow. Christ and other New Testament writers also acknowledged Moses’ authorship. (Refer to Matthew 19:7-9; Luke 24:27; John 7:19).

Moses was well trained for the task, having been educated in “all the wisdom of the Egyptians” (Acts 7:22). Yet that training alone was insufficient. To obtain unavailable details and information, Moses had to be inspired by the Holy Ghost. Although the spoken traditions handed down from his fathers were invaluable, the final writing had to be inspired, overseen, and guided by the Holy Spirit to complete the account and keep it accurate.

Atheists and humanists contradict Moses’ account from every conceivable angle, yet his book remains a testimony to the miracle of divine inspiration.

Does true science contradict Moses’ account? No! Rather, there is a precise and complete concurrence between the established facts of physical science and the first chapter of Genesis.

How could a book written in the fifteenth century before Christ, a time of scientific ignorance and superstition, be so accurate? How could it be so reliable and in such precise agreement with the most recently discovered facts of physics, botany, astronomy, biology, and related sciences? Only God could author such a book!

Let's look again at the very first verse of the Bible:

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

This powerful statement is repeated throughout the Bible. Have you wondered how God made His universe? The answer is simple:

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:3).

How long did it take God to perform each mighty act of creation? Only as long as it took to speak the Word:

"By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. . . . For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:6, 9).

No, God did not create everything in His universe at once. His method of creation was to speak, to state a desire, and matter converged to perform His will.

No long periods of time were required to accomplish His creation. He acted swiftly. To suppose that He needed eons for the evolution of our world unnecessarily limits God's power. He can use time if He wishes, or He can dispense with it altogether.

To create our wonderful world, God used six days. Why He did not choose six million years will become apparent as our creation story progresses.

In the original Hebrew, the word "day" has various meanings: time, forever, continuous, age, and life. Therefore, some scholars suppose that the "day" mentioned in the creation account was a geologic age—perhaps thousands of years.

Some contend that each of those "days" was

one thousand years, referencing this scripture:

"One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (II Peter 3:8).

Others theorize an undetermined "gap" between the first two verses of Genesis, perhaps involving thousands or millions of years.

But to place an extended time period on God's creation limits His power. He did not need a span of years. All power is in His spoken Word.

What evidence supports the Genesis account as twenty-four-hour solar days? First, each day was divided into periods of darkness and light—the same as a solar day. Because "evening" and "morning" describe a time period, we could assert these to be literal days and nights.

Consider that the vast world of botany was created on the third day. Had this "day" been an age of one thousand years or longer, the grass, herbs, and trees would have experienced five hundred years of light and five hundred years of darkness. Plants cannot exist that long without light or with extended constant light.

God surely intended literal days to be used as a pattern for man's lifestyle. We work six days and rest on the seventh:

"For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:11).

B. First Day

Genesis 1:3-5

"And God said, Let there be light." Undoubtedly light existed from the creation of verse one: "In the beginning God created the heaven" and after that the earth. Since all light comprising the daylight comes from stellar regions, it surely was included in the original act of creating the heavens.

The light of the first day was no doubt derived from the sun and consisted of a diffused gleam that penetrated the vapor and the darkness.

A distinction is made in the first day and night by a period of light and darkness. The "evening and the morning" were the first day—and it was good!

C. Second Day

Genesis 1:6-8

On this day, the water above was divided from the waters below. The Hebrew actually means, “Let there be space between the waters.”

The work of this day contains many amazing scientific truths which Moses could not have known from personal knowledge.

Two distinct acts are recorded. The firmament was made and the waters were divided from each other. “Firmament” means “limitless expanse,” or the atmospheric heaven surrounding the earth; the air; the sky or heavens.

Scientific investigation reveals two distinct bodies of water, the upper and lower (Harry Rimmer, *Modern Science and the Genesis Record*). The oxygen supply essential for the life of both man and beast is in the atmosphere, or the air we breathe. The supply of oxygen in the ocean is constantly replenished from the atmosphere, which sustains marine life.

The lower body of water is visible to the human eye and is readily accepted. We sail on it and fish in it.

However, the upper body of water is equally real. The firmament is an ocean in suspension with waves and billows tossed by winds. It also has tides which ebb and flow. Man has learned to navigate aircraft, rockets and spacecraft through this upper ocean like the ocean liners and submarines in the lower ocean.

The upper waters of the firmament also furnish moisture for providing food and sustaining the life of man, beast, and bird through the process of evaporation and precipitation. In fact, the firmament is so extensive, it could hold in suspension several times the amount of the water in all the oceans on the face of the globe!

The creative work of the second day was completed—and it was good!

D. Third Day

Genesis 1:9-13

Three events are recorded on this wondrous day of creation. God formed the ocean, dry land, and plant life.

By a simple command, dry land appeared. Not a muddy, saline ooze, but “dry land.” An extended age of time is neither expressed nor implied.

While creating the oceans, God stocked

them with salt necessary for man and animals that would soon appear. Oceans feed mankind with foods and plants and provide iodine that is essential in healing agencies.

Dry land, likewise, is packed with provisions for God’s creatures. It stores every good and perfect thing needed by man. Innumerable minerals lie buried in the dry earth, waiting to be extracted. All was placed there by a wise and loving God who provided far in advance for our needs.

Moses wrote that plants were the first living things to grace our earth. He also categorized botany into three general divisions: grasses, herbs, and trees. Science perfectly agrees with these conclusions.

And the third day was good!

E. Fourth Day

Genesis 1:14-19

On this day, the sun, moon, and stars became visible and began to function for our planet as “light holders.” They were already in existence as part of the heavens. But on this day, God implemented the solar system to govern seasons and regulate time on the earth.

The light of the first, second, and third days probably originated from the same source it has been coming from every day since—the sun. The work of the fourth day permanently regulated the solar system.

In verse 3, God said, “Let there be light.” In verse 14, God said of the fourth day, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night.”

The Hebrew word for “light” in verse 3 is *or*; the “light” in verse 14 is *ma-or*, or light holder. The *ma-or* describes the suns and their reflecting satellites called moons, meteors, and stellar planets. The word *or*, however, is light itself.

Moses’ account has been criticized for attributing that light preceded the creation of the sun. Yet science concurs that there are many sources of light apart from sunlight: the northern lights; cosmic rays; and even the intriguing insect called the lightning bug.

That the stars and heavenly bodies have been set for signs and seasons, all navigators will acclaim. Stars are signposts by which travelers stay on course, whether on sea or land.

Farmers know that spring and its planting season is near when certain heavenly constellations begin to flame. Summer, winter, spring, and fall come in their exact order, year

after year as the earth journeys through space and assumes a certain definite position in relation to all other planets in the solar system.

The entire cycle of organic life has been set to twelve hours of light for labor and twelve hours of darkness for rest. Plants and animals demand this schedule and suffer when the program is interrupted. All was planned and set in motion before man appeared.

And it was good!

F. The Fifth Day

Genesis 1:20-23

At the dawn of this day, vegetation was the only existing life. But by nightfall, the earth boasted fish, insects, and birds.

Consider the vast numbers of orders, families, species, and varieties that fill the water and air. The waters began literally swarming with living creatures!

“And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth” (Genesis 1:21).

The Hebrew reads: “the rapidly multiplying creatures.” What a description of sea-life! Mammals reproduce very slowly in comparison with the fish. A female mackerel lays about 500,000 eggs at once. If each egg would mature and multiply accordingly in earth’s oceans, in ten years we could walk from continent to continent on the backs of living mackerel!

Minute creatures of the microscopic world were invisible to the human eye until the invention of the microscope. Yet Moses clearly describes their chief characteristic of rapid multiplication and accredits their life to God! The same law and order prevail in the most minute forms of life. Utmost care and thought were lavished upon each living creature.

The same Creator, who with marvelous skill painted a sunset and a rainbow, also with brilliant colors touched the fly’s wing. Why? Because He knew that man’s curiosity would compel him to study life under powerful artificial lenses. Therefore, He delicately and beautifully made every minute form of life, some so small that twenty of them can be found in a single drop of water. Yet each is exquisitely designed.

This day also produced the sciences of biology (animal life), protozoology (the study of protozoa), ornithology (the study of birds), and entomology (the study of insects).

And it was good!

G. Sixth Day

Genesis 1:24-31

On this day, the earth brought forth three types of animals:

- Cattle (domestic animals that serve man—cows, sheep, goats, horses, donkeys, and camels)
- Creeping things (all reptiles)
- Beasts of the field (all wild animals and other four-footed animals)

Crowning the work of the sixth day was the creation of man. Everything previous was done in preparation for the human race to inhabit God’s beautiful earth.

“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:26-27).

With so many wonderful and fascinating creatures, why did God create man? Did He have a distinct purpose more noble than that expected of the others?

Yes. That clay form was molded in three parts: spirit, soul and body. To partake of God’s life, man had to be made in God’s class, in God’s realm, in the image and likeness of his Creator. To be God’s child and heir, he had to be created as nearly like deity as possible.

Man is a spirit-being, made to walk in fellowship with God. Man’s spirit was made to rule his soul (mind, will, emotions) and the subjected soul was meant to rule the body. The body is merely a house in which the spirit and soul dwell.

Man’s soul contains his reasoning faculties—mind, will, and emotions—which animals do not have. A crowning feature of the soul is man’s will. The power of choice and the ability to choose make man distinctly different. Without this will, he would have been mechanical. Since God could have no fellowship with a robot, He risked creating a being with a will—knowing that man could choose to disobey.

The divine purpose for creating man is expressed numerous times throughout the Bible:

“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

Man was created to give pleasure to God! That is a new thought. Somehow we think only of God bringing pleasure to us. But we, the lesser, are intended to praise, honor and give pleasure to the Creator!

Thus, God made man for His own satisfaction. He yearns for a close, voluntary relationship with us, His choice creatures.

When a child crawls upon his father’s knee to hug and kiss him, is this affection required to complete his role as a father? No. But how he desires and enjoys this response in return for the love given his child!

Expressions of love for God complete His enjoyment of being our Father. God wants and receives genuine pleasure when each of us answers His love with sincere praise.

H. Seventh Day Genesis 2:1-3

On the seventh day, God ceased His creative work and ordained a time of rest. Not because *He* needed rest, but as an example that man should work six days a week and reserve the seventh to his Maker for worship.

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them” (Genesis 2:1).

At last the earth was a place of beauty, fully capable of sustaining and providing for the billions of creatures and mankind who would eventually populate it. And everything God had done . . . was good!

Does man call it “good”? Ever since his beginning, man has questioned everything! Because of the reasoning powers given him by God, man seeks to find solid answers for all that happens. Who am I? Where did I come from? How did I arrive here?

Probably the most important issue confronting Christians today is the question of origins. The biblical creation account seems to be in imminent danger of rejection by the proponents of evolution.

The evolutionary perspective has captured the intellectual world and much of the religious world. Rarely is the biblical revelation of special creation accepted as an actual historical account.

What a man believes about origins ultimately affects his attitude toward his destiny and purpose for life.

Why have men developed theories of evolution? The first chapter of Genesis declares that God created life. But if this divine revelation is rejected, there is but one other explanation: Life must have appeared by itself without divine design or intent. By disallowing that God created the world, the remaining alternative is that creation created itself! That life sprang out of death, out of nothing.

The scientist who rejects God must accept as a very foundation of his belief a theory void of proof and contradictory to knowledge upon the subject. Every scientific experiment has proven that life is produced only by life.

Rather than beginning with God and working down, as the Bible does, evolutionary theory begins with matter and works upward. Evolution does not abolish God, but rather transforms the lifeless earth into God!

Essentially, the theory of evolution begins with the supposed generation of life in its most primitive form. “Spontaneous generation” theorizes that life spasmodically appears throughout the universe whenever conditions are conducive. However, no explanation is ever offered that suggests how life could appear out of nothing.

Another theory, “accidental creation,” suggests that creation was by accident. A lightning bolt or other cataclysmic chemical reaction brought the first germ of life into existence—perhaps a million or even a hundred million years ago.

Organic evolution in its simplest definition is best expressed by the word “transmutation,” or a gradual change, unaided by any outside force, from a low form of life into higher and higher forms until man appears.

The modern acceptance of evolution dates from the century-old Charles Darwin book, *Origin of Species*. Although his theories have been greatly modified, the basic principles are still widely accepted by biologists. Darwin’s theory has become the supreme delusion of the twentieth century, even usurping a place of credibility in public education.

Yet, in later years, even Charles Darwin saw the error of his ways. Students of evolution should be informed that in his final days, Darwin returned to his faith in the Bible. Bedfast, he made this confession to

his companions: “I was a young man with unformed ideas. I threw out queries, suggestions, wondering all the time about everything. To my astonishment, the ideas took like wildfire. People made a religion of them”

(Meyers, *Voices From the Edge of Eternity*, pages 239-240).

What a tragic confession! The “unformed ideas” of the young man Darwin stand today as the basis of modern evolution philosophy!

Lesson 2 – Chart 4 First Dispensation—“Innocence”

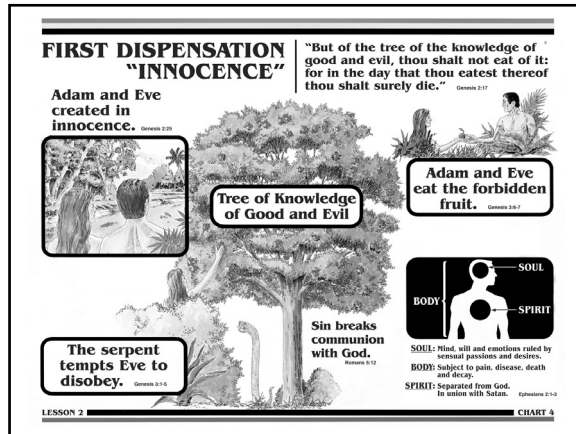


Chart Objective:

To discover how God’s highest and most beloved creature became separated from Him. The deadly effects of man’s willful disobedience soon became evident in every part of his being—spirit, soul, and body.

Chart Outline:

- A. Adam and Eve created in innocence
- B. Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil
- C. The serpent tempts Eve to disobey
- D. Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit
- E. Sin breaks communion with God
- F. Man becomes a sinner

A. Adam and Eve created in innocence

Genesis 2:25

Bible scholars divide the span from Creation through the end of time into seven eras called “dispensations.” After man’s tragic failure in the first era, each succeeding dispensation progressively reveals and expands what God expects from man regarding salvation.

The first dispensation is termed “Innocence” because of man’s original condition. He was innocent. Similar to a newborn babe, Adam had never experienced evil. But before the period of innocence began, God was aware that man would fail his first test in the Garden of Eden. In fact, arrangements had already been made by our kind, loving,

all-knowing Father before the world was created.

The plan—complete with promises and covenants—would restore man to his original position and redeem him from the awful curse of sin.

As we study the various dispensations, notice how the Father gently led man back to full fellowship.

It was in a garden that God placed Adam. “Eden,” meaning delight, loveliness and tenderness, perfectly describes the first Paradise. This garden provided the setting for the first acts of God’s “image” creation—the man and the woman.

Irrigation was supplied by heavy fogs and a flowing river. Just outside Eden’s domain, the river divided into four branches. Its exact location is uncertain since the topography was tremendously altered after the Flood.

God Himself planted the garden in Eden, and Adam was the gardener. The most outstanding feature was the set of trees situated in the center. God called them the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Through a spoken Word, the entire order of the animal kingdom was created. But not so with man. God carefully formed Adam with His hands and then breathed into him the breath of life. Because man received a power of choice, or a free will, he was privileged to choose whether to love and obey or disobey divine commandments.

With trees, Adam’s obedience was tested. He could eat of all the trees of the garden—except the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. God clearly directed the command:

“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17).

Notice the tremendous prestige man held in the heart of God. To the object of His love and affection, God delighted to give immense authority and intellect. God’s companion was awarded ability to rule the world for his Maker.

“Thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet” (Hebrews 2:7-8).

Adam ruled creation by his word. God-given authority and dominion were delegated to him. So complete was his authority, he had the legal right to confer that dominion to another being (which we shall learn more about later).

After announcing His intentions of giving the man a helper, God caused all the beasts of the field to pass Adam’s inspection, whereupon Adam named them.

None of the animals afforded suitable companionship for the man, as they were not of the higher order of spiritual beings. So God created a “helpmeet.”

As Adam fell into a deep sleep, a rib was extracted from his side. From that rib, the Lord fashioned a woman. The creation of Eve was equally miraculous to molding Adam from the dust of the earth.

Adam called her “Woman” since she came from man. From that day, the divine plan has been to join man and woman as one flesh.

The human pair of husband and wife is different from all other pairs. They become one in spirit and purpose. Over four hundred years ago, Matthew Henry observed, “She was not made of his head to top him; not out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him; under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be loved.”

The newly married pair lived blissfully among the peaceful, tame animals, with Adam and Eve tending the garden.

God approved Adam’s new relationship by stating:

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

Here the Bible reveals God’s blessings upon the sexual relationship. God created sex and introduced it in our Bibles in a very positive manner. Unfortunately, some believe that God has put a hex on sex! Certainly, He opposes the misuse of sex; but in the rightful relationship of marriage, it is part of His perfect will.

God intended that marriage propagate the human race and provide man a helpmate, while joining the husband and wife in sweet

communion and companionship. Marriage was ordained to be a lifelong relationship between two people, who would leave their families to become as one.

From this union, the male and female provide a child’s body and life, but God furnishes the eternal soul. Only in the protected environment of marriage should a soul be born into this world.

From that moment in the garden, God blessed the family. It is His plan, His design. We are to view our own family structure as part of that divine design. The mother and father act as God’s representatives to protect, direct, and bless their children until they mature.

A proper family structure provides an umbrella of protection over each member. Paul described it like this:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord” (Colossians 3:18).

When children obey their parents, they are obeying the Lord. Likewise, to disobey is disobedience to the will of God.

B. Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil

It has already been suggested that evil was present in God’s perfect world. The existence of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil accounts for the dark cloud overshadowing the scene.

Would man choose to love and obey the warning of his Creator or would he ignore and disobey Him? God based His plan on the principle of obedience. To obey would result in acceptance and salvation. To disobey would result in breaking God’s law—which is sin!

Mankind’s entire destiny rested on the outcome of Adam’s choice. The whole Bible details the tragic story of man’s disobedience and God’s provision whereby man could be restored to his original righteousness, or “right standing with God.”

C. The serpent tempts Eve to disobey

Genesis 3:1-5

The creation of man had been carefully watched by a supernatural being of immense subtilty. Having already become the enemy of God, Satan now devised a scheme to ensnare

God's new order of creatures.

Among the garden reptiles, the serpent was named for its glossy, shining appearance. At that time, the serpent was probably erect, having bones and able to twist around trees. Satan's craftiness is exhibited in his choice of agents through whom he works.

Very likely, the woman was fascinated by the serpent's stunning appearance. Josephus, the Jewish historian, revealed that this highest of the animal creation could speak and that he lived with Adam and Eve. Predictably, the devil chose a familiar creature in which to incarnate himself.

Note the cleverness with which Satan dealt with the pair of mortals. His probe was directed toward the woman, who had received an indirect commandment from God through her husband.

While alone near the forbidden tree, the serpent approached her. A seemingly innocent question was asked. "Hath God said?" But in those words, doubt was cast upon God's Word. This same strategy is used by Satan today. Continually he strives to infer doubts about the inspired Word of God.

Satan persisted his questioning. "Why is God keeping you from that fruit? Can He really love you with such limitations?"

The serpent accused God of being selfish, unjust and cruel. "He is not really interested in your welfare. He just doesn't want you to be like Him."

Satan also implied that he was as knowledgeable about the tree as God. "If you eat of this fruit, God knows that your eyes will be opened and you will become as a god, knowing good and evil."

The tempter's scheme began operating in Eve's mind. After doubting God's Word, she became discontented with her present conditions and toyed with the false ambition of becoming a god herself. Note the similarity with how Satan's own downfall had come.

D. Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit Genesis 3:6-7

Trusting the serpent, Eve ate the fruit. Then she persuaded Adam. Hadn't she tasted and survived?

At once the death knell for innocence rang throughout the world! Adam had committed spiritual high treason! With one act, he had severed his relationship with God—

and with it the ability to properly exercise dominion over the earth.

Although Eve was deceived by Satan, Adam clearly understood the consequences of their actions. They had disobeyed and betrayed their Maker. Now they must die!

Why was Adam's transgression so extensive and alarming? It involved the entire human race. God had instructed him to replenish the earth. Therefore, this sin of disobedience would be duplicated in his offspring!

The couple possessed the knowledge they aspired, but it cost their own physical and spiritual existence. "The eyes of them both were opened"—but not in the manner Satan promised. The eyes of their conscience were opened to awareness of a lost innocence.

Paradise's joys had been stripped from them as they stood shamed forever before God and the angels!

Upon realizing their changed state, they acted to hide their nakedness. Leaves from a fig tree were hastily sewn or plaited to cover their loins.

Then terror tore at the hearts of the guilty pair as they heard the voice of the Lord walking in the garden. The same voice before had always been welcomed. But now they foolishly hoped to escape from God and allow the garden to conceal them from His wrath.

E. Sin breaks communion with God Romans 5:12

Aware of their hiding place, but seeking a confession of their guilty condition, the Lord called, "Adam, where art thou?"

What a beautiful type of the Savior coming to seek and save the lost! Adam should have gone throughout the garden seeking God. Instead, he hid himself.

Adam's reply identified his spiritual condition. "I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." God did not accuse him of sin, but His question caused Adam to recognize his wrong. Although the Lord knows all our sins, He wants our lips to confess them—not that He may be informed, but that we may be humbled by the awareness.

Adam neither apologized nor confessed guilt at eating the fruit. Rather, he pointed the finger of blame toward his helpmate. Each of their answers was an attempt at self-justification. But God was not deceived.

The guilty trio was before Him—Adam,

Eve, and the serpent. Sin has always been a problem for which no one wants to accept responsibility.

F. Man Becomes a Sinner

Ephesians 2:1-3

What really happened when Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command? God had warned that disobedience would result in death. But did Adam instantly fall dead? No, he lived to the age of 930 years. Yet man DID die the very moment he ate the forbidden fruit.

Since man is a spirit-being, it was into the spirit, created in God's image, that death entered. This does not mean that Adam and Eve ceased to be spirit-beings. Rather than being a state of non-existence, spiritual death is an existence separated and alienated from God.

Three kinds of death are mentioned in Scripture:

Physical death separates man's spirit and soul from his body.

Spiritual death separates man's spirit from God.

Second death is an eternal separation of man from God whereby God's nature is never again accessible (Revelation 20:11-15).

Not only did man's spirit die, but his soul (mind, will, emotions) became darkened, subjected to the enemy. He became a child of Satan. Jesus told the self-righteous Pharisees,

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do" (John 8:44).

While God's nature is life, Satan's nature is death. We must clearly understand these two words, "life" and "death," in order to accurately comprehend the message of the Bible. Paul wrote,

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:1-2).

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (II Corinthians 4:4).

Spiritual death is as real as life. The difference is that death comes from Satan and life from God. All that is good, beautiful, and holy originates from God. All that is evil, bad and corrupt comes from the devil. Satan's nature began to rule in the spirit of man when spiritual death seized dominion over creation.

"By one man's offence death reigned . . . by one man's disobedience many were made sinners . . . sin hath reigned unto death" (Romans 5:17, 19, 21).

We understand from God's Word that man is threefold: spirit, soul and body.

- The spirit is the real inner man; the part that knows God.
- The soul is the mind (or intellect), the will and emotions that operate by the five senses of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling.
- The body is the house or building in which the invisible spirit and soul live.

Let's see how each part of man was affected by the terrible death nature after Adam sinned against God.

Sin affects the spirit. God's plan was that He would rule man's spirit and man's spirit would control the soul and body. God's world would then be governed and subdued by those who were themselves governed by God.

But man wanted to be *like* God and would not remain under His sovereignty. Consequently, Adam's spirit suffered the worst punishment of all. He lost contact with his Maker.

No longer could Adam enjoy the daily fellowship of God's presence. Worse still, he became partners with the rebel forces led by Satan.

Sin affects the soul. With the spirit now dead, the soul took charge. From the cradle to the grave, man is controlled by his "soulish" mind, will, and emotions. Spiritual concepts are foreign to him. To have faith in the unseen, intangible promises of God's Word is very difficult. He lives only by what his sense knowledge dictates.

Before Adam sinned, his intelligence was so superb, he was able to name the entire animal creation (Genesis 2:19-20). His mental powers were fully capable of ruling the earth.

But after death seized man, his mind and emotions were captured by fleshly passions and desires. Medical science now believes

that few people use more than ten percent of their brainpower.

Sin affects the body. Adam was created with physical perfection and endless life. His strong, healthy body was suitable to house the creature who would fellowship with his Creator and have dominion over earth.

However, spiritual death changed all that. Adam became a *mortal*, which means “death-doomed” or “Satan-ruled.” Having become enslaved by death, he became susceptible to pain, disease, and sickness.

From the moment of birth, we begin that long, slow process of dying. When at last the body ceases to function, decay proceeds to dismantle and reduce the lifeless form to

its original substance—dust.

So ingrained is the evil nature in the flesh, David wrote,

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5).

Paul added,

“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24).

How far, far from his original condition did man fall!

Lesson 2 – Chart 5 Innocence Ends in Judgment

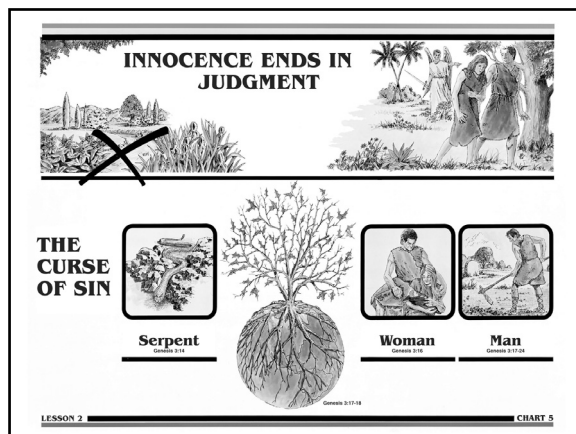


Chart Objective:

To determine the multitude of tragic consequences resulting from Adam’s willful sin that have forever affected man and his world.

Chart Outline:

- A. The curse of sin
- B. Serpent
- C. Woman
- D. Man
- E. The expulsion

A. The curse of sin

Little could Adam and Eve have realized the horrible consequences of their sin. They had suffered:

- An immediate spiritual death.
- A future physical death.

- Separation from God’s presence, which meant they could no longer properly rule the earth.

And finally, a prophetic curse was pronounced.

B. Serpent

Genesis 3:14

Because the serpent was first to yield to Satan, it received the first punishment. Being neither a moral nor responsible creature, the serpent was not oppressed with misery in its conscience, but was relegated to a lower position and cursed above all creatures.

“Thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life” (Genesis 3:14).

C. Woman

Genesis 3:16

Next in the order to be meted out chastisement was Eve.

The first man and woman were directed to multiply and replenish the earth. Through the birth process would come personalities that would live eternally.

In the beginning, childbirth was a painless joy. However, after succumbing to sin, the woman would thereafter experience pain in bearing children.

“I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy hus-

band, and he shall rule over thee” (Genesis 3:16).

D. Man

Genesis 3:17-24

For Adam’s sin, the earth itself was cursed.

“Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; . . . in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground” (Genesis 3:17-19).

Man must work, toil, and exist until his death.

Unwanted thorns and thistles would choke out good fruits laboriously planted and cultivated by man. Where fruitfulness had crowned Eden, the new environment would be bald with barrenness.

A life of toil and a death sentence of returning to the dust of the earth were pronounced upon the man.

God did not actually take away man’s dominion. However, when separated from God, man lost the ability and understanding to properly exercise dominion over the earth. Eventually he forfeited his rulership and Satan became the god of this world.

When man removed himself from God’s authority, he also lost control over himself. Soon he became captive by what God’s Word calls “the world, the flesh, and the devil.”

Rather than ruling and subduing the earth, man has for ages been neglecting, misusing and even abusing the earth. Not only did he become a slave of Satan, he became a slave of flowers, vegetables and fruits grown in the earth.

Corn, barley, rye, and grapes hold twenty million in alcoholic bondage. From the weed of marijuana and the flowers of the opium poppy, our youth are destroying their brainpower for a few moments of exhilaration. From the tobacco plant millions ruin their health and go to an early grave.

Billions of dollars are spent every year in medical bills and crime prevention because of

man’s slavery (Pat Robertson, *The Secret Kingdom*, pages 201-203).

E. The Expulsion

Adam had sought to cover himself, but had failed. So God made a garment from the skins of animals. To hide his nakedness was not easy: it required the life of an animal.

To cover man’s sin and guilt is never simple and easy. It requires life and death—the life and death of Jesus Christ to cover transgressions.

“Without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22).

Remission (dismissing, release) of sin was not the only lesson God taught Adam when presenting the guilty pair with new coverings. God was also demonstrating His standard for our appearance. Since that dreadful day in Eden, God’s plan has been that mankind be modestly attired.

As clothing betrayed the spiritual condition of Adam and Eve, so it betrays ours. When innocent of sin, they needed no covering. Afterward, their clothing attested that they were “covered sinners.”

“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked” (Genesis 3:7).

Because of this innate awareness in the conscience of the distinction between men and women, God commands a covering. The sinful death nature is tempted by the sight of the unclothed human body; hence to be fully clothed is necessary.

Adam and Eve were driven from the garden. Cherubim with flaming swords strategically guarded the east gate to prevent them from eating fruit from the Tree of Life. This tree is not mentioned again in the Bible until the conclusion of all things—when the New Jerusalem is prepared for the bride of Christ. Man will never be permitted to eat of this tree until that day when sin and death are forever destroyed!

Lesson 2 – Chart 6 The Wonderful Promise!

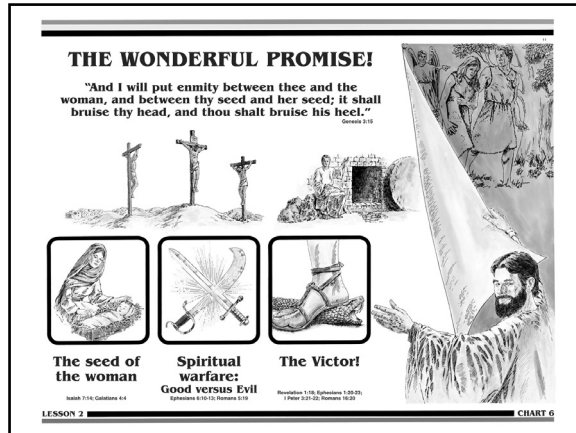


Chart Objective:

To define God's wonderful promise entwined in the tragic judgment against sin. A Redeemer, born of a woman, would emerge to conquer evil.

Chart Outline:

- A. The seed of the woman
- B. Spiritual warfare: Good versus Evil
- C. The Victor!

A. The seed of the woman

Isaiah 7:14; Galatians 4:4

Eden had been a cruel triumph for Satan. He had indulged in malice and gratified his spite for the Creator. The most magnificent of all God's creatures had been shamed—and Satan was responsible for introducing sin into the new, undefiled world.

Satan had momentarily triumphed. But God Himself entered the conflict. From this point, the opponents would not be the serpent and man, but God and the serpent!

The Lord proclaimed:

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

God was warning the serpent that a descendant of the deceived woman would someday destroy Satan—or "bruise his head." Since then, the title "serpent" has been synonymous with deceiver and beguiler.

This promise also precisely predicted that the Redeemer would be born of a woman. Other writers gave further insights:

"Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4).

Satan probably had planned for sinful man's descendants becoming his own comrades in rebellion. But God countered with His declaration that a future "God-Man" would war against satanic power.

B. Spiritual Warfare: Good versus Evil Ephesians 6:10-13; Romans 5:19

God declared to create an "enmity" against evil so strong that His spiritual children would intensely abhor Satan and his works. Power would be granted to these chosen followers to wage spiritual warfare against evil and shake the very gates of hell!

The story of the ages is the record of war between these two seeds: the seed of the woman (Jesus Christ) and the seed of the serpent (those controlled by the devil). No tanks, missiles or aircraft carriers would be required in this spiritual warfare. This battle would be the forces of light versus the forces of darkness.

C. The Victor!

Revelation 1:18; Ephesians 1:20-23; I Peter 3:21-22; Romans 16:20

Within this short promise about the seed of the woman we also find an intriguing portrait of the life of Christ from Bethlehem to Calvary and beyond.

To "bruise thy head" is an Oriental term meaning to break the lordship of a ruler. Because Adam had been separated from God, he was doomed to lose dominion over the earth to Satan. But Satan could only exercise that dominion until the seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, would come to break his lordship.

To "bruise thy heel" refers to bitter persecution hurled toward Christ by Satan. The "heel" relates to Christ's human nature. Satan would inflict bruises more than once. But when the Savior carried our sin, sickness and sorrow to the cross, His "heel" was bruised the final time!

Thinking they had totally conquered their despised enemy, Satan and his hordes of demons rejoiced to see Jesus' body in a tomb.

But their victory was short-lived. The Crucifixion became Satan's most tragic mistake! Paul explained,

“None of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” (I Corinthians 2:8).

Satan did not anticipate the glorious victory made possible through Christ's resurrection. His Spirit was infused with life to become the “firstborn of the dead” and the undisputed Conqueror over Satan, death, hell, and the grave!

“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (Revelation 1:18).

What man's dead spirit needed was to be “born again” with God's life-giving nature. But before that could happen, man must be legally freed from Satan's dominion and then made righteous—or in right standing with God.

To legally remove man from the family of Satan and restore him to his rightful dominion required that a sinless substitute would suffer the penalty of death and hell in man's place. And that is exactly what Jesus Christ—the “last Adam”—came to do for us (I Corinthians 15:21-22, 45)!

On resurrection morning, Christ reigned as Conqueror over Satan. All power in heaven and earth was in His control. Triumphantly

He stood with His foot firmly planted on the serpent's head!

“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead . . . and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things” (Ephesians 1:20, 22).

“By the resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him” (I Peter 3:21-22).

Jesus' death and resurrection provided salvation, power, and authority for all who claim them by faith. Since that time, believers are empowered to bitterly war against the serpent-deceiver, Satan.

How we thank God for His wonderful promise that obliterated the curse of sin and restored man to his rightful dominion!

In pronouncing a curse upon the serpent, God assured ultimate victory for man. Woman had caused the Fall; and a woman was to be the source of redemption. Adam and Eve began looking for God to come as a man to deliver them from the bondage and curse of sin.

The remainder of the Bible is the intriguing story of what God did to redeem man from the slavery of Satan and reunite man with his Maker.

The Old Testament continuously reminds us: “He is coming!” The New Testament Gospels announce: “He has arrived!” The epistles assuredly proclaim: “He is coming again!”

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM STUDY SHEET

In the Beginning

LESSON NO. 2 Study Sheet

Chart 1. In the Beginning . . .

- A. God Is . . . the Creator (Genesis 1:1; Job 26:7)
- B. Eternal (Revelation 1:8; Psalm 90:2)
- C. Living (Daniel 6:26; I Peter 3:12; Psalm 103:14)
- D. Omnipresent (Jeremiah 23:24)
- E. Omnipotent (Revelation 19:6; I Chronicles 29:12; Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26)
- F. Omniscient (Job 34:21; Psalm 139:4; Romans 11:33)
- G. A Spirit (John 4:24; I Timothy 1:17; I John 4:1)
- H. One (Deuteronomy 4:35; 6:4; Malachi 2:10; Ephesians 4:6)
- I. Our Father (Matthew 7:11)

Chart 2. God Creates His Angels

- A. God's angels created to worship and serve (Nehemiah 9:6; Daniel 7:10)
- B. To aid, protect and proclaim God's messages on earth (Psalm 34:7; 91:11; Hebrews 1:14)
- C. Lucifer, Son of Morning (Revelation 12:7-9; Luke 10:18)
- D. War in Heaven (Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:12-19)
- E. Satan: god of this world (Luke 4:6; Ephesians 6:12; II Corinthians 4:4)

Chart 3. God Creates His Earth

- A. God Creates His Earth (Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 11:3)
- B. First Day (Genesis 1:3-5)
- C. Second Day (Genesis 1:6-8)
- D. Third Day (Genesis 1:9-13)
- E. Fourth Day (Genesis 1:14-19)
- F. Fifth Day (Genesis 1:20-23)
- G. Sixth Day (Genesis 1:24-31)
- H. Seventh Day (Genesis 2:1-3)

Chart 4. First Dispensation—"Innocence"

- A. Adam and Eve created in innocence (Genesis 2:25)
- B. Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil
- C. The serpent tempts Eve to disobey (Genesis 3:1-5)
- D. Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:6-7)
- E. Sin breaks communion with God (Romans 5:12)
- F. Man becomes a sinner (Ephesians 2:1-3)

Chart 5. Innocence Ends in Judgment

- A. The curse of sin
- B. Serpent (Genesis 3:14)
- C. Woman (Genesis 3:16)
- D. Man (Genesis 3:17-24)
- E. The expulsion (Genesis 3:23-24)

Chart 6. The Wonderful Promise!

- A. The seed of the woman (Isaiah 7:14; Galatians 4:4)
- B. Spiritual Warfare: Good versus Evil (Ephesians 6:10-13; Romans 5:19)
- C. The Victor! (Revelation 1:18; Romans 16:20; Ephesians 1:20-23; I Peter 3:21-22)

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM QUIZ

In the Beginning

LESSON NO. 2 Quiz

Match the subject on the right with the proper explanation on the left. Subjects may be used several times.

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| _____ 1. Cursed with extreme pain in childbirth. | |
| _____ 2. God rested from creative work. | |
| _____ 3. A former angel who rebelled against God. | A. God is . . . |
| _____ 4. First man. | B. Angels |
| _____ 5. Eternal. | C. Satan |
| _____ 6. God said, "Let there be light." | D. Sin |
| _____ 7. Separated man from his Creator. | E. Adam |
| _____ 8. The waters were divided from dry land. | F. Eve |
| _____ 9. Omniscient. | G. Days of creation |
| _____ 10. Made from the dust of the earth. | |
| _____ 11. First to eat the forbidden fruit. | |
| _____ 12. A heavenly being created to worship and serve. | |
| _____ 13. Cursed to labor by the "sweat of his brow." | |
| _____ 14. God of this world. | |
| _____ 15. Made from a rib. | |
| _____ 16. Omnipresent. | |
| _____ 17. Created to protect the heirs of salvation. | |
| _____ 18. Our Father. | |
| _____ 19. The result of man's disobedience. | |
| _____ 20. Sun, moon, and stars began to function as light-holders. | |

Answers:

1. F 2. G 3. C 4. E 5. A 6. G 7. D 8. G 9. A 10. E 11. F 12. B 13. E
14. C 15. F 16. A 17. B 18. A 19. D 20. G

LESSON THREE

God Makes a Covenant with Man

This lesson is a study of God's covenant relationship with man.

Adam relinquished his God-given dominion over earth to Satan and became a member of Satan's family. Until the promised seed of the woman would come to wrest it from him, Satan determined to fully exercise that dominion.

Man eagerly awaited the "Incarnation" when Deity would unite with humanity and restore man's dominion. Only a "God-Man" could satisfy the claims of justice and bridge the awful chasm between God and man.

Satan used two principal tactics to prevent the Incarnation: destroy the righteous lineage; and corrupt men with evil, thus removing the knowledge of God.

Therefore, God was compelled to destroy wicked mankind with a worldwide Flood—except for righteous Noah and his family.

Once men were forced to disperse at the Tower of Babel, the worship and knowledge of Yahweh practically ceased.

Finally, God chose one man with whom He could cut a blood covenant of strong friendship. Abraham and his descendants became a repository for preserving the knowledge of the one true God and the channel through whom the "God-Man" would come. Abraham's people were to testify that sin, sickness, poverty, hunger, and discord are from Satan—not from God. The covenant-keeping God never forgets His promises. Not only his natural descendants, but all who walk in the steps and faith of Abraham may share the covenant blessings.

When completed, students should be aware of the following concepts:

1. A "dispensation" is new information or enlightenment about how to please God. His plans and purposes for man have progressively unfolded, a step at a time, through the ages.
2. "Calling upon the name of the Lord" and offering blood sacrifices restored communication between man and God. There has always been a divine response when men have cried out to Him for deliverance or mercy.
3. "Cutting the covenant" is an ancient ritual that binds two people into an enduring relationship. Because of Abraham's faith and obedience, God entered into covenant with him. God is still excited to find someone with an obedient faith!

Books for additional reading:

1. John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1961.
2. Alfred M. Rehwinkel, *The Flood*, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951.
3. Charles F. Pfeiffer, *The Patriarchal Age*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1961.
4. Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, Chicago: Moody Press, 1954.
5. Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1959.
6. E. W. Kenyon, *The Bible in the Light of Our Redemption*, Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, P. O. Box 973, Lynnwood, WA 98036, 1969.
7. H. Clay Trumbull, *The Blood Covenant*, Kirkwood, MO: Impact Books, Inc., 1975.

Lesson 3 – Chart 1 Second Dispensation—“Conscience”

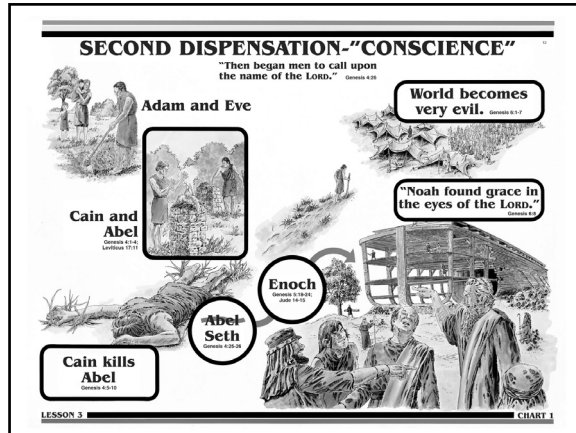


Chart Objective:

To explain the restoration of man’s communion with God. A plan was implemented whereby man could make right decisions as directed by the inner voice of conscience. Thus guided, men called upon the name of the Lord and offered blood sacrifices.

Chart Outline:

- A. Adam and Eve
- B. Cain and Abel
- C. Cain kills Abel
- D. Cain, a wanderer
- E. Seth
- F. “Then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.”
- G. Enoch
- H. World becomes very evil
- I. “Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

A. Adam and Eve

The dispensation of conscience began when Adam was driven from the garden. After man’s spirit had died, God’s communion with His choice creation was interrupted. Therefore, until the time of the written law, God implemented another means for communicating instructions. God chose to speak with man through an inner voice called “conscience.”

Conscience, the faculty by which we know right from wrong, began to function when Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. It has since been a guiding force in mankind’s moral actions.

God’s new plan for man involved his behavior:

“If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?” (Genesis 4:7).

All that was required of Adam and his descendants in this era was to love God and obey the voice of their conscience as it reinforced what God had told them to do. Therefore, they were constrained to do good and refuse evil.

Sometime after the original sin, children were born to Adam and Eve. Although Adam was formed from the earth’s soil and Eve from a rib, all other humans have come through the birth process.

B. Cain and Abel

Genesis 4:1-4; Leviticus 17:11

The Bible reports that Adam and Eve had many children, but only three sons are named in Scripture. The first was Cain, meaning “gotten.” At his birth, Eve exclaimed, “I have gotten a man from the LORD.” She may have assumed him to be the promised Redeemer Who would crush Satan once and for all.

Soon afterward, Abel was born. From their earliest years, opposite tendencies surfaced in the brothers’ characters.

Apparently Adam taught them what he knew about God’s command to cultivate the ground. Cain chose farming and Abel became a shepherd.

God showed Adam the proper method of offering sacrifices and Adam related it to his sons. They surely observed their father offering blood sacrifices to God.

By adulthood, both sons were well acquainted with the acceptable mode of sacrificial worship. Yet when they brought their offerings, something was amiss. Cain’s offering was fruit from the ground, while Abel presented one of his flock.

Two altars were erected, one piled high with fruit and grain, the other laden with a freshly slain animal.

Evidently, Abel’s sacrifice was consumed by fire from heaven as a sign of God’s acceptance. But Cain’s offering remained untouched.

What made the difference? Abel’s offering indicated love and obedience to the redemptive plan requiring a blood sacrifice. Because his sacrificial gifts were according to divine instructions, God witnessed that Abel was righteous:

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh” (Hebrews 11:4).

“For it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul” (Leviticus 17:11).

Cain’s offering of fruit was from the earth—which was now cursed and quite unacceptable to God.

Rage mirrored Cain’s face. Instantly he resented Abel, was disappointed with himself and angry at God. Why was his offering still neatly stacked on the altar, while the other was swiftly consumed? Unfair! God was showing favoritism!

Then God spoke, “Why are you angry? Why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, you will be accepted. If you do not well, sin is crouching at the door.”

For the first time, the horrible word “sin” was used. Its sad, dreadful note is echoed throughout the remainder of the Bible.

What a picture of sin and temptation! Crouching at man’s door, its body lowered to the ground ready to spring, is the cruel beast of sin. God warned Cain about the danger of future disobedience, but His clear warning was directed to every one of us as well.

C. Cain kills Abel

Genesis 4:5-10

Because Cain refused to admit his error, bitterness spread through him like poison. Just how much time elapsed after God’s warning is not known.

As the brothers were together in the field, a strong arm was uplifted. With a crushing blow, Abel fell to the ground as murder severed earth’s tranquillity with its ugly gloom. The completion of sin—death!

Possibly at the next sacrifice, God’s voice inquired, “Where is Abel thy brother?” A deliberate murder was then covered with a deliberate lie: “I know not.”

Insulted, Cain asked, “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Note the immediate effect of sin. How else could a man speak so impudently to God? Cain’s defying attitude revealed the malicious condition of his heart that led to murder. Had he maintained his fear of God, he would never have committed this crime. But sin poisons the heart and drugs the conscience.

How did God know of the crime? Abel’s blood was crying to Him from the ground.

Adam and Eve witnessed the results of their sin as their first son became a murderer and their second, the victim.

D. Cain, a wanderer

Genesis 4:11-16

God spoke again to Cain. “Now you are cursed from the earth which has opened her mouth to receive your brother’s blood. Henceforth, when you till the ground it shall yield you no return. A fugitive and vagabond you will be.”

Perpetual exile from the region of Eden frightened Cain. Not only was he God’s enemy, but the earth’s as well.

“My punishment is greater than I can bear,” he lamented.

With the earth refusing him sustenance, Cain was forced to seek occupations of building cities and of mechanical invention. Denied a home, he wandered as a nomad. Endless disgrace haunted his steps as men feared to associate with a man marked by God.

Cain dwelled east of Eden. His wife was obviously a sister, as the marriage of immediate relatives was unavoidable in the early stages of propagation.

Cain’s descendants had names significant to their occupation and personality. Several had identical names to those of Seth’s lineage.

The Cainite families were distinguished for their proficiency in the arts and pleasures of life. Probably they were responsible for the high cultural development archeology has unearthed at the dawn of civilization.

E. Seth

Genesis 4:25-26

Satan may have presumed Abel to be man’s Redeemer. By destroying him, the enemy plotted to annihilate the righteous line. However, another child filled Abel’s place.

When Adam was 130 years old, another son was born named Seth, meaning “substitute.” Surely, Eve thought, he was God’s appointed replacement for the slain brother.

The righteous bloodline begun in Abel was now restored. Through Seth’s descendants the Redeemer would come to earth. However, there were not just two distinct lines of the human family. Adam begat “sons and daughters” (Genesis 5:4) and every son of Adam began a different branch of the race.

F. “Then began men to call upon the name of the LORD”

Genesis 4:26

After the birth of Enos, Seth’s son, men became God-conscious. But their righteousness was short-lived. Neither Seth nor Enos is listed among the patriarchs of faith. Seth’s line is singled out in Genesis, chapter 5, to show the particular branch through which the seed of the woman would descend.

As men began to call upon the name of the Lord and offer blood sacrifices, communication was restored between them and God. The Lord was pleased with those who came to Him with the appropriate offering to cover sins.

All through the Old Testament there is a divine response when men cried unto Him. In fact, salvation has always included this important initial act of “calling upon the name of the Lord” (Psalm 55:17; Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; 22:16).

Repentance and turning to the Lord have always gained His attention. We can observe how this important step of salvation was first initiated near the dawn of creation.

G. Enoch

Genesis 5:18-24; Jude 14-15

Of all the millions who lived during these first two dispensations, only three were labeled as godly—Abel, Enoch, and Noah. Not even Adam was so acclaimed. If God’s first created man was disobedient, how sinful later inhabitants of the world must have become!

Enoch, a descendant of Seth, was especially favored of God.

“And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him” (Genesis 5:24).

The New Testament gives him another favorable report:

“By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God” (Hebrews 11:5).

Wickedness became so rampant that Enoch warned his generation how the Lord would judge the ungodly:

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly . . . of all their ungodly deeds” (Jude 14, 15).

Because Enoch walked closely with the Lord and loved righteousness, he was “translated” or removed from the corrupt earth to be with God.

H. World becomes very evil

Genesis 6:1-7

Cain and his wife founded a civilization in a city called Enoch, named after Cain’s oldest son. There were probably several hundred descendants by this time. And the corruption that had overwhelmed Cain soon surfaced in his offspring.

God appraised the wickedness: “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5). Thus, the declaration was made to destroy man from the face of the earth!

I. “Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

Genesis 6:8

Enoch’s son, Methuselah, lived longer than any other man in recorded history—969 years. From the same bloodline and lineage, another godly man was named—Noah, the grandson of Methuselah.

For hundreds of years, God tolerated wickedness without retribution. Finally, though, His patience exhausted.

Looking over His vast creation, God found one man alone to be faithful. Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. To this righteous man, God announced His plan to destroy the world.

Lesson 3 – Chart 2

God’s Judgment—“The Flood”

GOD’S JUDGMENT—“THE FLOOD”

“And the LORD said, I will destroy man . . . from the face of the earth.” Genesis 6:7


Blueprint for escape

450 ft.

Which animals were in the ark?

A world-wide flood

Noah’s ark discovered



DAYS OF NOAH <small>(Matthew 23:37-38)</small>	COMING OF CHRIST <small>(Matthew 24:15)</small>
Great wickedness <small>(Genesis 6:5)</small>	Evil men and seducers <small>(1 Timothy 4:1)</small>
Earth full of violence <small>(Genesis 6:11)</small>	Perilous times <small>(2 Timothy 3:1)</small>
Noah, a preacher of righteousness <small>(1 Peter 3:20)</small>	Gospel will be preached in all the world. <small>(Matthew 24:14)</small>
Noah and family safe <small>(1 Peter 3:20)</small>	Saints spared wrath <small>(1 Thessalonians 5:9)</small>
Ungodly punished by Flood <small>(1 Peter 3:20)</small>	Ungodly punished by fire <small>(2 Peter 3:7)</small>

LESSON 3 CHART 2

Chart Objective:

To reveal God’s plan of salvation for those desiring to escape the Flood. Jesus gave a parallel between the last generation preceding Christ’s coming and the men of Noah’s day.

Chart Outline:

- A. God’s blueprint for escape
- B. Which animals were in the ark?
- C. A worldwide Flood
- D. Noah’s ark discovered
- E. Comparison between days of Noah and coming of Christ

A. God’s blueprint for escape

To righteous Noah, God announced some startling plans! The entire world would be destroyed by a flood! Only Noah’s family would escape the catastrophe and then re-establish the human race. Because God only intended to annihilate wicked mankind, land animals were preserved from the devastating Flood.

Exact blueprints were given for constructing the escape vehicle. Noah must build an ark. Using the 18-inch cubit, its dimensions would be a monstrous 450 x 75 x 45 feet structure. Or if the great cubit of 22 to 25 inches was used, the ark measured approximately 600 x 100 x 60 feet.

The ark is believed to have featured a flat bottom, designed like a floating barge. The word “ark” is derived from Egyptian dialect, signifying a “chest” or “floating object.” Most likely, it was built efficiently and compactly on the bow, or stern. Not intended for sailing or cruising, the ark was to float upon the water’s surface.

Gopher wood, the specified material for

construction, is from an uncertain origin. Perhaps cypress, the principal material for ancient shipbuilding, was used. Geologists and archeologists believe that cypress trees were plentiful in the Mesopotamian Valley where the ark was likely built.

Light and ventilation were furnished through a single window. Perhaps this “window” referred to the opening along the entire length of the ark on each of the three-deck levels. To have lived in an airtight boat with its foul odors and refuse for one year and seventeen days would have been impossible without light and fresh air.

A covering of pitch or tar inside and outside waterproofed the ark and also protected against marine animals swimming in the water.

One large door was constructed in the side.

How long did it take to build the ark? Some people interpret Genesis 6:3 to mean it took 120 years. However, the Bible indicates a much shorter time.

According to Genesis 6:8-10, 17-18, Noah already had three married sons when God initially approached him with building plans.

Genesis 11:10 says that Shem was “an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood.” Therefore, Shem was ninety-eight years old when the Flood ended and about ninety-six when it began. The ark would have been built sometime between Shem’s marriage and his ninety-sixth birthday.

According to Genesis chapter 5, most men in those days did not marry until around sixty-five or older. This suggests the ark was built during the thirty-one years between Shem’s marriage and the beginning of the Flood.

B. Which animals were in the ark?

Could Noah’s ark contain two of every kind of animal—plus seven each of the clean ones? A primary secular argument against a worldwide flood is the housing of all the animals with necessary food for a ride lasting one year and seventeen days!

Modern taxonomy estimates there are about one million different species. However, over ninety-five percent have a natural water habitat and could have existed outside the ark. About 88,000 species are types of shellfish or worms that could survive in water or on floating bits of debris.

Ernst Mayr, a leading taxonomist, lists a total of 17,600 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians, many of which

could also survive outside the ark. Only about 3,500 mammal species are known—and some of them are marine (Whitcomb and Morris, *Genesis Flood*, page 69).

Most animals are small. Perhaps God also sent the young ones of each species for maximum reproduction to replenish the earth after the Flood. Had Noah taken all 17,600 species on board, the average size would have been very small, considering that more than half are birds.

Floor space on the three-storied ark possibly measured 33,750 square feet on each deck. If the average animal is the size of a sheep, the ark contained 569 standard railroad stock cars full. One deck, therefore, would have provided adequate space for all the animals, one deck for food storage and another as living quarters for Noah's family.

But what about the dinosaurs and other prehistoric animals excavated from every continent of the world? The fossils of these gigantic creatures are puzzling. Did dinosaurs actually live in Noah's day? If so, was a pair on his boat?

Dr. Henry Morris of the Institute for Creation Research believes there were. Fossil footprints of dinosaurs and man have been found side-by-side in Glen Rose, Texas, indicating these creatures lived concurrently with, not preceding man.

Does the Bible mention such monstrous animals? The first chapter of Genesis states: "God created the great sea monsters" (Genesis 1:21, NASB). The King James Version uses the words "great whales." But this Hebrew word is translated in other passages as "dragon." Therefore, the creation account actually reads: "God created great dragons."

Practically every nation of antiquity mentions dragons in their early history. Cave pictures depict immense creatures resembling varieties of dinosaurs that once roamed the earth.

There could have been a pair on board as shown by later biblical references. Job, chapters 40 and 41, describes two enormous creatures—the behemoth and leviathan—similar to these huge reptiles. Of course, they have long since vanished with other extinct animals.

Yes, the ark would have had sufficient room even for a pair of young, prolific dinosaurs and other so-called prehistoric monsters!

C. A worldwide Flood

When the ark was completed, the Lord instructed Noah and his family to enter. They chose to go inside the same as the others chose to remain outside.

Of all clean beasts, Noah took seven to assure their continued existence after the Flood and to offer as sacrifices to the Lord. Of the unclean, only two—a male and female—were taken.

In simple but impressive words, the Bible describes the horrible catastrophe. Nothing is mentioned of the death struggle; no cries of despair. Only one impression looms—all mankind was utterly destroyed except Noah's family.

Oh, the horror of those clinging to huge rocks and fathers reaching for children and wives. Both man and wild beasts desperately sought safety.

Perhaps some pounded on the ark, expecting Noah to allow them inside. But God had shut the door!

The fountains of the great deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened. Slowly, the waters rose fifteen cubits above the highest mountain. For 150 days, the earth was a shoreless ocean. Only one boat was floating—and it without a human captain.

Was the Flood really universal or just local? The biblical narrative implies a worldwide deluge. Otherwise, how could the waters have covered the highest mountains without overflowing to unaffected areas?

And why should Noah have built such a large vessel?

Geological discoveries also support a global flood. From England, France, Spain, Germany, Russia, China, Aztec Indians in Mexico and many areas of the United States have come reports of enormous mounds of skeletal animal remains.

Surprisingly, most finds include many different types of animal species of considerable height jammed together in isolated areas, indicating an attempt to find safety. Carnivorous and herbivorous creatures alike sought refuge on the same elevation, only to meet a common watery grave (Alfred M. Rehwinkel, *The Flood*).

D. Noah's ark discovered

Recent claims report the ark still in existence on Mount Ararat in Turkey. As yet, the evidence is inconclusive. However, there are

some interesting finds. Scientists and theologians have jointly undertaken this challenging task, attempting to identify a shiplike object situated at the top of Greater Ararat.

Many explorers and scholars claim that the ark was never lost. More than two hundred historical references are recorded by individuals claiming to have seen it. Three hundred years before Christ, Berosis, a Chaldean priest, wrote of Noah's ark on Mount Ararat—approximately 2,200 years after the Flood!

World explorer Marco Polo visited Ararat en route to China and returned with his own accounts. Several explorers in recent years claim to have seen it.

Engineers and scientists have confirmed that an estimated fifty tons of hand-hewn timber, still largely intact and shaped like a huge ship, is preserved inside an ice glacier on the mountainside. Their question is: how did all that wood perch on a mountain that is covered by ice and snow practically year round?

Some of the timbers resting in the ice pack at the 14,000-foot level are more than one hundred feet long, hand tooled, extremely hard, and saturated with pitch. No helicopter or bulldozer could lift one of those timbers to that altitude. The remaining feasible explanation is that they *floated* there.

Ed Behling from Cunnison, Colorado, reports this account from his Air Force assignment while stationed in Diyarbakir, Turkey: "It was basically square. The ceiling was slightly tapered, maybe five or ten degrees, just enough so water could run off . . . basically, it was a big box that was very long . . . I don't know how long" (Webber, *A New Search For Noah's Ark*).

Since this mountainous region is steep, impassable, and volcanic, perhaps we shall never know for certain. Whether or not documented evidence is ever produced, the historicity of the ark does not lie on Mount Ararat, but rather in our faith in God's inspired Word.

E. Comparison between days of Noah and coming of Christ **Matthew 24:37-39**

Jesus compared existing world conditions at the time of His return to those of Noah's day:

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in mar-

riage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matthew 24:37-39).

Peter added these words:

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (II Peter 3:3-7).

From these accounts we see these comparisons (see chart):

DAYS OF NOAH

- ☑ Great wickedness (Genesis 6:5)
- ☑ Earth full of violence (Genesis 6:11)
- ☑ Noah, a preacher of righteousness (II Peter 2:5)
- ☑ Noah and family safe (II Peter 2:5)
- ☑ Ungodly punished by Flood (II Peter 3:5-7)

COMING OF CHRIST

- ☑ Evil men and seducers (II Timothy 3:13)
- ☑ Perilous times (II Timothy 3:1)
- ☑ Gospel will be preached in all the world (Matthew 24:14)
- ☑ Saints spared wrath (I Thessalonians 5:9)
- ☑ Ungodly punished by fire (II Peter 3:5-7)

(Use current statistics of crime and unlawfulness of every facet in society from local newspapers or magazines to enforce the Scriptures concerning the wickedness and corruption preceding the coming of the Lord.)

From the combined scriptural evidence, which we shall study later in greater detail, our generation will be living on earth when Christ returns. *Search For Truth #2* is intended to help us prepare for the most wonderful event in the history of mankind—the second coming of Christ when saints shall rise from the earth to meet Him in the clouds.

Lesson 3 – Chart 3 Third Dispensation— “Human Government”

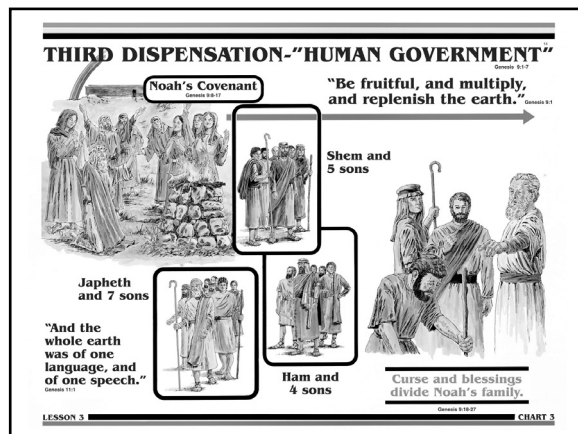


Chart Objective:

To illustrate God’s progressive revelation of His plan for man that included self-government. Noah’s three sons became the progenitors of all the families of the earth.

Chart Outline:

- A. Noah’s Covenant
- B. Noah’s three sons multiply
- C. Curse and blessings divide Noah’s family

A. Noah’s Covenant

Genesis 9:8-17

After the Flood, Noah’s ark settled on Mount Ararat, about five hundred miles from his home in Mesopotamia. Upon a cleansed earth, Noah’s family began a new life. Wickedness and evil had been erased.

A new plan of action then became effective. In addition to the guidance of man’s conscience, he received definite laws of conduct. Men became responsible for governing one another. Thus began the dispensation of human government.

Because man’s spirit was dead, he was forced to govern through the soul (mind, will, emotions). Human intellect is incapable of such a task.

Had his spirit been actively controlled by God’s Spirit, man could have righteously ruled the world. But his death nature prevented that. Gradually, man’s rightful dominion was delivered to Satan, who became the “god of this world” (Luke 4:5-6; II Corinthians 4:4).

Noah and his family left the ark, built an altar, and offered burnt sacrifices to the Lord. With this first act of worship, God was well pleased.

After the sacrificial offering, God proposed a “covenant” between Noah and Himself. A covenant is a mutual agreement or contract in force between individuals or nations. As we progress through our study of the Bible, we will discover several such important agreements.

A covenant is still in effect between God and those who love and obey Him. It promises a wealth of benefits!

Let’s examine the terms of this covenant between God and Noah. Actually, the agreement provided not only for Noah and his family, but for all creation. Through it, God promised that He would never again curse the ground or destroy all the inhabitants on earth by floodwaters. Peter declared the next destruction will be by fire (II Peter 3:6-7).

Prior to the Flood, man’s diet had been vegetarian. From this time forward, he was permitted to eat the flesh of animals—if the blood were properly drained. God also established the law of capital punishment:

“But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (Genesis 9:4-6).

To seal this covenant, God gave the sign of the rainbow. Every rainbow is a colorful reminder of God’s covenant. In return, man’s duty was to “be fruitful,” multiply and replenish the earth. Noah’s descendants were to be scattered over the earth and exercise authority over every part of creation. But again, we shall see that humanistic reasoning decided differently.

B. Noah’s three sons multiply

From Noah’s three sons—Shem, Japheth, and Ham—the entire world was to be repopulated. To Shem were born five sons; Japheth had seven sons and Ham, four sons. These sixteen grandsons were the first generation on the newly cleansed earth. Their behavior and attitude toward God greatly affected the course of history.

C. Curse and blessings divide Noah’s family Genesis 9:18-27

As life began anew on the earth, Noah began farming. From the fruit of his vineyard,

he became intoxicated and lay naked in his tent. While Noah was in this shameful condition, his youngest son, Ham, failed to show proper respect by covering him. Rather, he mocked Noah's drunkenness.

The older sons, Shem and Japheth, took a garment, laid it over their shoulders, and walked backward into Noah's tent to cover his shame.

When Noah awoke and learned of Ham's behavior, he made some amazing predictions that included both blessings and curses for his three sons.

By the spirit of prophecy, Noah exposed the lustful tendencies in Ham and his son, Canaan.

"Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" (Genesis 9:25).

The curse would come through Canaan,

although indirectly through Ham. Already the grandson must have been walking in his father's profane ways.

Shem, meaning "renown," would be exalted and his descendants especially blessed. Through Shem's seed, God would reveal His saving name to the world. From this ancestral line would also come the promised Messiah!

A blessing was also offered Japheth and his descendants. "God shall enlarge Japheth," meaning his people would be numerous, prosperous, and productive.

"He shall dwell in the tents of Shem." This implied that the Gentile descendants of Japheth would also share the blessings of salvation and redemption introduced by the Messiah. How thankful we should be that Christ's salvation plan has included every man, woman, boy and girl!

Lesson 3 – Chart 4 The Beginning of Nations and Languages

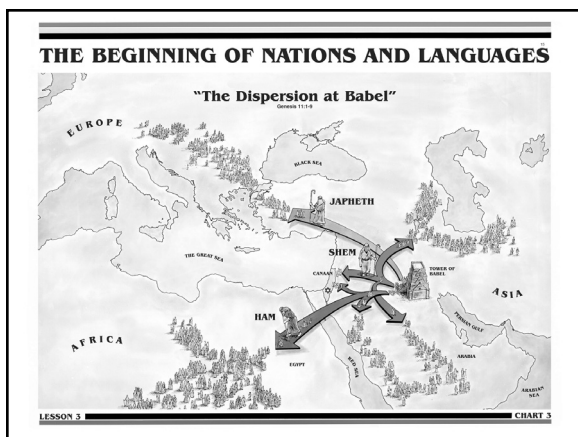


Chart Objective:

To emphasize the importance of Noah's prophetic blessing and curse upon his three sons. His statements explain the origin of nations and the diverse languages resulting from man's refusal to disperse over the whole earth.

Chart Outline:

- A. The Beginning of Nations and Languages
- B. Shem, Ham, Japheth
- C. "The Dispersion at Babel"

A. The Beginning of Nations and Languages

Noah's predictions about his three sons were most important—not only to his immediate family, but to each of us. Through this

prophecy, we are informed about the origin of all nations, peoples, and races today.

Genesis, chapter 10, records the table of nations and stands alone in ancient literature to explain the distribution of people according to a genealogical framework.

Many today are especially interested in learning about their family roots. Through research, it is possible to trace lineage and construct a family structure showing ancestors and descendants from many previous generations.

However, the most complete family tree is the one reported by Moses in Genesis, chapter 10. It relates all the people of the world to one common ancestor—Noah. This astonishingly accurate document is without parallel among the literature of any other ancient people. Most of the names and "roots" given have been substantiated by archeological discoveries in the past century.

This chapter explains where the nations settled, their relationship with Israel, political and geographical positions, and territorial locations. It verifies that the nations of the world sprang from a common ancestry and that all men are indeed brothers. Despite our diverse races and nationalities, we are one in the sight of our Creator.

Notice carefully that all the human family is divided into **three main groups** surrounding Palestine. Every location can be spotted

inside a circle within a radius of fifteen hundred miles around the Holy Land.

Also included is the major part of an area known today as the Near East. Here is the origin of all living—the cradle of civilization!

B. Shem, Ham, Japheth

Notice the migration of each of Noah's three sons. The family of **Shem** moved eastward to Asia and Assyria.

The sons of **Japheth** settled primarily to the north and west in Europe. He fathered the vast and progressive European nations that would explore, colonize and settle much of the other side of the globe—including the Americas.

The sons of **Ham** (meaning "burning heat") migrated southward to the warmer climates in Arabia and the continent of Africa.

Shem, the favored "messianic" line (from whom the Messiah would come), represents the Semitic peoples in the east from whom the Jewish race emerged. Abraham, the first patriarch, came from Shem's lineage.

Ham's sons were cursed and designated as a servile race because of immorality. They inhabited Phoenicia and Canaan. Constantly their tribes were in conflict with Israel.

Archeologists reveal that Canaanite religious cults were unequalled in profane and sexual pagan practices.

There is no basis whatsoever for relegating the black race to bondage because of a divine curse. The Hamites, from whom the black races probably came, were not the direct objects of the curse. Nor could Canaanites be considered black, for they settled primarily on the eastern Mediterranean. The prophetic curse of servitude was expressed for grandson Canaan—alone (Genesis 9:25).

The fact that Ham had no share in Noah's blessing for Shem and Japheth indicates that his family was included by implication in the curse. Canaan's servitude was literally fulfilled when the Hebrews defeated the Canaanites.

Many years elapsed between the day Noah gave prophetic utterances to his sons and its fulfillment. They did not scatter immediately, preferring to unite themselves on the plains of Shinar. After God interrupted their pattern of living, they dispersed, as described in the table of nations.

C. "The Dispersion at Babel"

Genesis 11:1-9

Another question remains unanswered. How and why did the many languages and dialects originate?

One common language was spoken among Noah's family. Their small group settled eastward in the rich, fertile soil of the plain of Shinar. Noah's prophetic utterances began to be fulfilled soon afterward.

Ham's grandson, Nimrod, became the first instigator of opposition. After a hundred or more years, the settlements on the plains of Babylonia had multiplied sufficiently to develop industries and arts. Humanism began to emerge when the citizens conspired an impressive project.

"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4).

Nimrod founded a kingdom in Shinar with several large cities. Using his influence, he began building a great city for protection, counter to God's protecting promise. Featured was a tower too tall for water to reach, in the event of another flood.

Boldly he turned men from the fear of God to a dependence upon himself. Nimrod planned to head a federation of governmental power. The tower would be the center of religious activity while Nimrod became the overseer of both the political and religious systems. Thus, he represents the first type of the Antichrist in the Old Testament.

More than two dozen temple-tower "ziggurats" have been found in various parts of Mesopotamia. Varied in color and built in step-like layers, the highest ziggurat was seven stories. Using such temple towers was doubtless copied from that built at Babel.

Historians indicate that the ancient Tower of Babel was actually an astronomical observatory from which the heavens could be studied. Chaldean priests used this tower to gaze at the stars and were the first to divide the heavens into the twelve sections of the zodiac. This pagan religion of stars controlling the destiny of men originated in a tower built to study the heavenly bodies, chart their courses, and make predictions.

This first tower was halted by the confu-

sion of tongues. But it was later finished and became the temple of Belus, the principal god of Babylonia (Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*).

The Lord allowed everything to progress for a time. Knowing their motives and plans to defy Him, the project had to be stopped.

Suddenly, chaos erupted! The masons could not understand each other. The carpenters could not follow the architects' instructions. Construction workers and overseers became frustrated and confused. Without communication, progress came to a halt.

Having promised Noah that mankind would not be destroyed, God confused their language. Those who could communicate, separated into small groups to re-organize their lifestyle and settle together.

At this precise point, Noah's prediction began to be fulfilled. After the confusion of tongues, "the LORD [scattered] them abroad upon the face of all the earth" in *three* broad directions—corresponding to the *three sons* of Noah. Modern linguistic scholars have now established that the various existing languages belong to three great families. Therefore, Babel gave birth to all nations and languages of the earth (Merrill F. Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*)!

Consequently, mankind faced physical and sociological problems that could never be overcome. Modern man's effort to minimize and resolve linguistic and racial differences indicates the massive problem created at Babel.

The confusion at Babel has no other explanation than a direct act of God. More than two thousand years later, something equally miraculous happened by divine design. Another group was assembled for a common purpose when suddenly they began to speak in unknown tongues.

The Holy Spirit baptism regathered all people to a heavenly inspired tongue. At the Tower of Babel, the *speakers* were confused.

On the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem, the *listeners* were confused. Pentecost marked the reversal of Babel!

The word "Babel" is interesting since two different meanings are indicated in Scripture:

"Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (Genesis 11:9).

In Hebrew, the word "Babel" means confusion. The Babylonians themselves intended Babel to mean, "We are the gate of God." But the Jewish interpretation reacted, "No, you are confusion."

The population scattered all over the earth. As they strayed from the vicinity of the ark, the worship and knowledge of God faded to the worship of nature (sun, moon, stars, fire) and then to idols. The oldest sacred books and traditions of each nation concur with the scriptural account. With his spirit dead, man's sense knowledge led him farther and farther from the light of God's Word and into the darkness of Satan's bondage.


Satan's strategy involved two methods to prevent the God-Man Redeemer from freeing mankind:

- Destroy the knowledge of God upon the earth.
- Destroy the righteous seed of the woman.

While Satan attempted to abolish the knowledge of God from the human mind, God had other ideas. It was time for a further revelation of His plans and purposes for man. He chose one man in whom precious truths could be deposited and through whom would come the Messiah. The beautiful story of redemption began to clarify with the selection of this man.

Lesson 3 – Chart 5 Abraham—“Father of the Faithful”


ABRAHAM - "FATHER OF THE FAITHFUL"




"And he (Abraham) believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness."
Genesis 15:6

Covenant Promises:
Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6

- ✓ A country—Canaan
- ✓ A posterity—"as the stars of heaven"
- ✓ A spiritual seed—through whom all families of earth would be blessed
- ✓ Financial prosperity




God's Covenant Sign (Circumcision)
Genesis 17:10-12




Gentiles Become Abraham's Heirs
Galatians 3:12

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."
Galatians 3:29


To him that believeth in Jesus Christ, "his faith is counted for righteousness."
Romans 4:5



Water baptism is the sign of entering the new covenant
Colossians 2:11-12



Abraham and Lot separate
Genesis 13:11



Sodom and Gomorrah
Genesis 19:1-11

LESSON 3 CHART 5

Chart Objective:

To reveal how God singled out one man, one family, and one nation to be a depository for His truth. Because Abraham believed in and pledged his very life to God, he was called "righteous." The blood covenant agreement made with Abraham foreshadowed the new covenant which we enjoy today.

Chart Outline:

- A. Abraham - "Father of the Faithful"
- B. Covenant Promises
- C. God's Covenant Sign (Circumcision)
- D. Gentiles Become Abraham's Heirs
- E. Abram and Lot separate
- F. Sodom and Gomorrah

A. Abraham —"Father of the Faithful"

The chapter describing the dispersion of the world's population is the last mention of God's dealings with the entire human race. At Babel, all mankind had seemingly rebelled against Him. The knowledge of the true God was apparently so limited that not one believer is mentioned until Abram. Then a new dispensation began—one of promises to Abram and to his special, holy nation of posterity.

Why would God withdraw from the human race in general to deal with merely one person? Here are three reasons:

- **Depository of Truth.** God designed the Hebrew nation to be a vault of safekeeping for His Word and His holy oracles.
- **Channel.** The Hebrew nation would provide a channel through which the Redeemer would come to earth. Through Christ, God's blessings would flow to all the world.
- **Witness.** Israel was appointed to witness

to all nations about the beautiful life God had intended for them. Israel was to exemplify an ideal nation of happy, healthy, prosperous, peaceful people. They would testify to the fact that sin, sickness, poverty, hunger, and discord are from Satan—not from God.

After the Flood, men sought explanations for the source of life. Therefore, they experimented with worshiping the powers of nature—sun, moon, stars, rain, fire, and animals. Gradually, images of these gods emerged to make them more real. Because sex was the means through which life came, descriptions of perverted sexual acts between gods and goddesses also became an integral part of heathen religion.

God trusted in Abram to remain separate and apart from such idolatrous practices. To represent Yahweh to all nations and prepare the way for the coming Redeemer, Abram and his descendants were commanded to separate from idolatry and wickedness.

The term "patriarch" expresses the social structure of the early Israelites. Those who founded the Hebrew nation are given this title.

In the patriarchal system of government, a clan was governed by the oldest man. The father was both legal and spiritual head of the family. Wives, children, and slaves were subject to the patriarch, who represented the sole authority under God. In the absence of a formal government, the patriarch ruled absolutely.

However, true love existed among patriarchal family groups as expressed in the Mosaic law.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis cover about 2,000 years—half the duration of the whole Old Testament time frame. By comparison, the preceding events from the time of Creation were less detailed in Scripture. Through the lineage of Shem, the Spirit singled out one man and devoted fourteen chapters to him.

Abram lived in Ur of the Chaldees around 2000 B.C. Though highly civilized and industrially prominent, the city was pagan and idolatrous. Four hundred years after the Flood, God called Abram to travel, by faith, to an undisclosed, distant land.

Abram's call was a personal summons for *separation*. In a grossly idolatrous world, Abram must teach his family, who in turn

would teach their families about the one true God.

Separation from familiar surroundings meant leaving his own parents. Often we must also separate ourselves from the plans and wishes of our loved ones and friends. Like Abram, we must walk by faith, guided by God.

B. Covenant Promises

Genesis 12:1-3; 15:6; 17:1-8

The Hebrew word for “covenant” comes from a verb signifying “to cut or divide,” suggesting the custom of making an incision where blood flows. In most scriptures, the Hebrew word implies: “to cut the covenant.”

For ages, primitive people have practiced this rite. In his book *The Blood Covenant*, Dr. H. Clay Trumbull has accumulated data from all parts of the world that reveal men entering into a binding agreement similar to the Genesis record.

A weak tribe living near a stronger one might cut the covenant for self-preservation. Or two businessmen might cut the covenant to ensure fairness.

The method depicted the arm of each man cut and the blood of both drawn. They rubbed their wrists together to mingle blood. Then the two officially became “blood brothers.”

So sacred was this covenant that it was never broken. Men became trusted friends as soon as the covenant was cut. If a man cut the covenant with his friend, the children of the two families were bound to observe it.

Covenants between men were common. But to cut a covenant with the Lord God was unprecedented! Because of their covenant of strong friendship, Abraham is the only person in the Old Testament called “the friend of God” (II Chronicles 20:7; Isaiah 41:8; James 2:23).

Before officially entering into covenant, Abram and Sarai received new names—Abraham and Sarah.

The charter sealed with Abraham was God’s first plan to bring man directly into a visible covenant relationship with Himself. This was the first prototype of a church (“called-out assembly”).

When Abraham pledged his very life to God, a threefold promise was his: financial blessings; physical blessings; and spiritual blessings. Genesis 17:6-8 and 22:17-18 list them:

- His descendants would inherit the coun-

try of Canaan as an everlasting possession.

- He would be given extensive posterity with descendants as numerous as the sand and stars.
- Through him would emerge a spiritual seed (Jesus Christ), through whom all families of earth would be blessed.
- He would have abundant financial prosperity.

The covenant between God and Abraham was mutual and reciprocal; all that both God and Abraham had belonged to the other.

This was God’s voluntary vow to Abraham: “By Myself have I sworn to be your Partner. If My promises fail, I become your slave; you own Me. I put Myself in bondage to you.”

Now we understand why the Scripture repeatedly affirms, “I am the Lord, who keepeth covenants.” He is the covenant-keeping God!

It is vital that we understand the significance of God’s covenant with Abraham since every believer in Jesus Christ also becomes His covenant partner!

C. God’s Covenant Sign—Circumcision

Genesis 17:10-14

Then God gave to Abraham the method of cutting the covenant (Genesis 17:10-14). Abraham was commanded to perform a ceremonial ritual called “circumcision.”

At the age of eight days, every male child must be circumcised to become part of this sacred agreement.

Circumcision was a visible mark and sign in a man’s flesh that he had been separated unto God. A cut was made and the foreskin of the male reproductive organ was removed.

Without circumcision, it was impossible to share the benefits of Abraham’s promises. This mark constantly reminded the Israelite of God’s promises to him and of his responsibilities to God. Even the lowliest Hebrew—including bond servants and strangers—were included.

Having joined the blood covenant community, it then was necessary to call upon the Lord and offer the blood of animals to remit sins.

For centuries, rivers of blood flowed from thousands of slain animals. But Abraham’s descendants continually anticipated the day when the “God-Man” would come to earth and redeem them from the bondage of sin and

bring life to their dead spirits.

They could not have envisioned that despised Gentiles would one day become Abraham's spiritual heirs.

D. Gentiles Become Abraham's Heirs

Galatians 3:1-29; Romans 4:3-5;

Colossians 2:11-12

As we proceed through our lessons, we will notice various events in Old Testament days that had rich, multiple meanings. Scripture calls these "figures" or "shadows" of things which would later happen (Luke 24:44; Hebrews 8:5; 9:8-9).

Abraham's covenant was one of those highly significant, dual-meaning incidents. Believers today can enter into covenant with God and become Abraham's spiritual heirs.

The promises of Abraham's covenant were fulfilled with the coming of his descendant, Jesus Christ. Blessings descend upon spiritual covenant members now that Jesus' blood has cleansed our sins and restored life to our dead spirits. Every man, woman, boy and girl is eligible to enter the new covenant!

Just as God's covenant with Abraham included many wonderful promises, Christ's new covenant with His disciples embraced a "promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4). And what a tremendous gift it was!

If Abraham was immeasurably blessed with wealth, honor, and fruitfulness, think what awaits the new covenant members! Surpassing those natural blessings are spiritual ones.

When the Bible refers to the "children of Abraham," it not only speaks of his fleshly descendants, but also those who walk in his "steps and faith":

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

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all" (Romans 4:16).

Abraham "believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis

15:6). The Hebrew word translated "believed in" implies an unqualified committal of one's self to another. So completely did Abraham trust the Lord that he was ready to totally commit himself to Yahweh.

Just as Abraham "believed"—absolutely committed himself—to God, we must also "believe" the gospel (the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ) and fully commit ourselves to Jesus. He then becomes the "Lord" or Ruler of our lives when we become His blood-covenant partners.

The sign of entering the new covenant is no longer circumcision of the flesh, but of the heart (Colossians 2:11-12). The initiation rite of water baptism has replaced circumcision.

E. Abram and Lot separate

Genesis 13:8-13

When Abram left his home in Ur, his wife and nephew, Lot, accompanied him. Lot had shared the great wealth God had given Abram.

When their flocks and herds rapidly multiplied, a quarrel developed between the herdsmen. It was time to part ways.

With characteristic generosity, Abram offered Lot the first choice of land. Standing on a ridge, the two men evaluated the possibilities. To the east lay the wide, well-watered plain of the Jordan River. The valley was rich with luxuriant tropical vegetation. To the west was the hill country.

In the coveted possession to the east dwelled Canaan's wicked descendants in the five cities of the plain.

Selfishly Lot chose the good land on the plains of Jordan near the immoral cities of Sodom and Gommorah. That was a mistake.

In almost every respect, Lot compares unfavorably with his uncle. Abram walked by faith; Lot walked by sight. Abram was an "altar-builder"; no record relates Lot making sacrifices to God. Abram was generous; Lot was greedy. Abram looked for a city built by God; Lot chose a home in a city built by man.

The covenant was officially established between God and Abram after this important separation from Lot (Genesis 13:14-17).

F. Sodom and Gommorah

Genesis 19:1-28

Several years had passed since Lot had made his choice. When he discovered the gross iniquity of Sodom, he should have moved, rather than expose his family to its

evil environment. Or he could have preached righteousness to the Sodomites. Instead, Lot became a prominent leader and allowed his daughters to marry ungodly men.

Paul said that Old Testament events are examples to us:

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

Therefore, if exposing family members to an evil environment proved to be tragic for Lot, his example should alert every parent in our day.

Finally, three angelic visitors came to Abraham’s tent bringing some glad and some sad news. First there was a renewal of the promise for the long-awaited son. Then came the doomsday declaration that the cities of the plain would be destroyed because of wickedness.

Immediately Abraham began to plead for Sodom to be spared. If fifty righteous souls could be identified, would God delay the punishment? Yes. But there were not fifty, . . . forty . . . thirty—not even ten righteous. And God would have spared the city for only ten righteous persons.

God sent His angels to rescue one man and his family because of Abraham’s intercessory prayer.

Why did God inform Abraham of His intentions to destroy Sodom? Because they were blood-covenant partners. Judgment was withheld from Abraham’s kinsman until he had been informed. What a wonderful privilege to be in covenant with the Lord!

The two angels went to Sodom and found Lot sitting at the city gate, the customary place for settling disputes or transacting business. Lot was possibly a city judge or ruler.

Hospitably, Lot offered overnight sleeping accommodations in his home. But during the night, homosexual men surrounded the house and demanded to “know” Lot’s visitors. To protect themselves, the angels temporarily blinded the men.

The term “sodomy” derives its meaning from the gross perversion of this city.

After Lot had been warned of the imminent destruction, he was still reluctant to leave. The angels seized him, his wife and their two daughters and forcefully escorted

them from the city, forbidding them to even look back.

Once the family was safely outside Sodom, God rained fire and brimstone, destroying all the inhabitants of four cities.

How were the cities destroyed? Merrill Unger says that the region is known to have numerous slime (asphalt) pits. Petroleum deposits can still be found there. The entire region is on a long fault line forming the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea. Throughout history, it has been the scene of earthquakes. Although the biblical account records only the miraculous elements, geological activity was probably the force.

The salt and free sulphur in this area, now a burnt-out region of oil and asphalt, could have mingled by an earthquake, resulting in a violent explosion. The salt and sulphur were carried red hot into the sky, therefore raining fire and brimstone over the whole plain (Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, page 115)!

Evidently, Lot’s wife disobeyed the angels’ command by not only looking back, but going back (Luke 17:28-32). Caught in the aftermath of the volcanic upheaval, she was probably killed by the fiery and sulphuric vapor which impregnated the atmosphere.

Afterward she became encrusted with a nitrous and saline substance that temporarily preserved her body from decay. A similar fate trapped refugees at Pompeii.

Several pillars of salt at the south end of the Dead Sea are named “Lot’s Wife.” Josephus claimed to have seen her pillar of salt in his day.

Having escaped to the city of Zoar, Lot and his two daughters then fled to mountain caves overlooking the horrible scene of destruction below.

While in this primitive dwelling, the girls conspired to make their father drunk, then committed incest with him so as to perpetuate the human race. Such perversion would have been punished by death under the Mosaic law (Leviticus 18:9; 20:12). But the childless daughters, influenced by life in Sodom, felt justified for their actions.

Each daughter gave birth to a son by her own father. These boys later founded two nations—Moab and Ammon—both hostile enemies of God’s chosen people (Genesis 19:30-38).

Lesson 3 – Chart 6 Fourth Dispensation—“Promise”

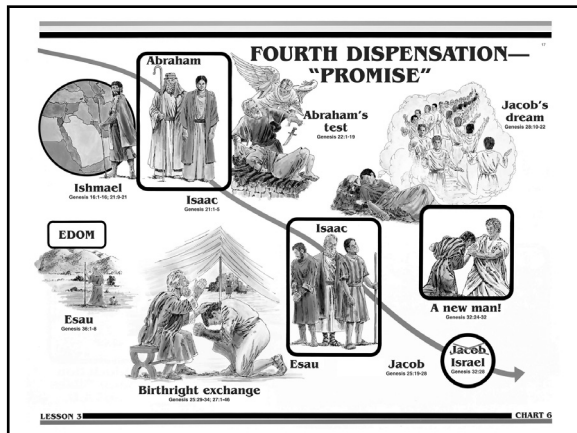


Chart Objective:

To trace the bloodline of the coming righteous One through Abraham and his descendants. Among those who qualified themselves for this honored position, a unique nation representing Yahweh began to grow and multiply.

Chart Outline:

- Fourth Dispensation—“Promise”
- Ishmael, father of Arab nations
- Isaac, son of promise
- Abraham’s test
- Isaac, Esau and Jacob
- Birthright exchange
- Jacob’s dream
- A new man! A new name!

A. Fourth Dispensation—“Promise”

Promise, the fourth dispensation, is so named because of the covenant promises first made to Abraham, then extended to Isaac and Jacob. Now we will see how the promises were fulfilled during their lifetimes.

Men now were required to love and believe in God and to obey the Abrahamic covenant stipulations. The first requirement was to be a holy people, separate and apart from all others.

B. Ishmael, father of Arab nations

Genesis 16:1-16; 21:9-21

One of the first promises God made to Abram was that his posterity would become a great nation. However, after ten years in Canaan, there were no children. Rather than seeking God’s counsel, Abram submitted to human reasoning.

Sarai persuaded Abram to utilize a custom recorded in ancient Nuzu tablets. Since marriage was more for procreation in those days,

it was the wife’s responsibility to bear children. If she did not, she was obligated to provide a handmaid (Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, page 51).

Abram took Sarai’s maid, Hagar, as a wife. She gave birth to a son named Ishmael. But the plan failed to bring happiness to the household. Polygamy, though tolerated in Old Testament times, was never approved by God.

God’s will was not to establish the covenant with Ishmael. Had Abram trusted God’s timing, much misery and tragedy could have been avoided.

This is another scriptural example that affirms to twenty-first-century believers: wait patiently until God fulfills His promises!

C. Isaac, son of promise

Genesis 21:1-5

Thirteen years elapsed without a single visit from God. Finally, the Lord appeared and changed His friend’s name from Abram (“great father”) to Abraham (“father of a multitude”). Sarai was changed to Sarah (“princess”).

They learned that the long-awaited son would be born the following year. Sarah laughed. Abraham was one hundred and Sarah ninety years old when Isaac (“laughter”) was born.

When Ishmael mocked the new baby, Sarah demanded that Abraham send him and Hagar away. In prayer, God advised Abraham to do so. The time had come for each son to fulfill his ordained role.

Ishmael became the father of the Arabs. But a constant struggle has existed between the Jews and Arabs until this day.

D. Abraham’s test

Genesis 22:1-19

Abraham’s loyalty to the covenant must be tested. Had the rite of circumcision been an empty ceremony, or had the patriarch pledged his very life to his Lord?

In unmistakable tones, Abraham heard God’s voice. But this request seemed unrealistic:

“Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of” (Genesis 22:2).

What a difficult task! An Oriental father prizes an only son more than his own life. To

die without a son is terrible punishment. He must have an heir.

For Abraham to have surrendered his own aged life to God's call would have been easy. But to surrender his only son and again become a childless old man was a different story.

For God to request a human sacrifice was unthinkable! There was no precedent in previous history to justify such a request.

Would Abraham do for his divine Friend equally as men would do for their human blood-covenant brothers? Only a faith that neither reasons nor questions could pass such a test.

This promised son, long delayed, had brought blessing and happiness to their home. Not only must Abraham give up his son, but in the worst manner possible. The extreme stipulation was that he himself must plunge the knife into the heart of the youth!

For three days, Abraham, Isaac, and two servants traveled together to the execution. As they reached the base of Mount Moriah, the servants and donkey remained. Isaac carried the wood, flint and knife as they climbed upward.

Isaac questioned, "Father, haven't you forgotten something? Here is the wood and the fire, but where is the lamb?"

Abraham answered prophetically. "God will provide *himself* a lamb for a burnt offering."

Abraham was declaring that God Himself would be the perfect sacrificial Lamb. A second person of Deity would not be sent to the world to die for man's sins. Rather, God's Spirit would inhabit human flesh to become our sacrificial Lamb—the long expected "God-Man"!

The altar was completed and the wood laid in place. Isaac could have overpowered his father, but as a type of Christ, he willingly lay upon the altar and was bound with thongs.

As Abraham raised the knife to slay his son, he again heard the Lord's voice:

"Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (Genesis 22:12).

Having exhibited such devotion, Abraham's blood-covenant Friend was pleased. Their loyalty to one another was assured.

Abraham belonged to God and God's blessings were abundantly available upon request. Bound together in this covenant relationship, Abraham found Him to be the covenant-keeping God!

Then the father and son detected a welcome sound—the struggle of a ram caught in a thicket nearby. Immediately the animal was secured and sacrificed.

What strengthened the patriarch in this trial? Paul attested, "by faith Abraham offered up Isaac." Although he knew of no previous resurrections from the dead, Abraham expected one. God had made specific promises concerning Isaac, and Abraham was certain they would come to pass!

Perhaps this is why Abraham became known as the "father of the faithful."

From Mount Moriah one can view Calvary. Centuries later, another procession wound up that hill, led by three men bearing crosses. Like Isaac, Christ was obedient—but from the cross He would not come down. His love . . . not nails, held him to the cross.

When Isaac was thirty-seven years old, Sarah died. However, Abraham lived for another thirty-eight years. His next wife, Keturah, gave birth to six more sons!

God's promise that he would be the "father of many nations" was fulfilled through these sons. They were the Midianites and other nomadic tribes. Although many nations descended from Abraham, most failed to await the promise of a coming Savior and offer blood sacrifices. Because they lapsed into heathenistic ways, they were no more righteous than other pagan societies.

E. Isaac, Esau and Jacob

Genesis 25:19-28

Isaac lived a quiet, peaceable life. He had the faith of his father, but lacked his energy and character.

At the age of forty, he married Rebekah. For twenty barren years Isaac prayed—and his wife gave birth to twin sons.

Before their birth, the Lord assured Rebekah that the elder would serve the younger. Esau was born first, hairy and red. His name implies "Edom," or "red." Jacob, meaning "supplanter" or "deceiver," was the younger.

The elder son became a mighty hunter. Jacob, a quiet, domestic youth, was a shepherd. Isaac favored Esau, and Rebekah was partial toward Jacob.

As eldest, the birthright privileges belonged to Esau. Therefore, he would maintain superior rank in the family and would inherit a double portion of his father's wealth and property. As heir, he would assume the priestly office, or the spiritual leadership of the family.

But best of all, he would be entitled to Abraham's covenant blessing, linking him to the genealogy of the promised Messiah. The birthright was treasured because it contained both material and spiritual blessings.

F. Birthright exchange

Genesis 25:29-34; 27:1-46

Both of Isaac's sons realized the value of the birthright blessing. However, from the very beginning, Jacob craved these rights while Esau was indifferent.

One day, Esau returned weary and faint from hunting and noticed his brother Jacob preparing some lentil pottage. Famished and exhausted, he begged for a serving of the delicious food. Jacob recognized his chance. He agreed to share the pottage in exchange for his birthright.

Esau hastily agreed to trade his valuable blessing for a single meal!

"Swear unto me," Jacob insisted. His twin swore. Thus the birthright was sold for one morsel of meat! In effect, Esau was shortsighted. "I cannot live on future promises. Give me something to eat and drink or else I will die."

Today, people make similar agreements. They settle for temporal pleasures offered by the world—for now!

When Isaac became old and nearly blind, he instructed Esau to go hunting and prepare some venison. In return, he would immediately receive the patriarchal blessing.

Rebekah heard Isaac's request. She directed Jacob to kill two kid goats. They were hastily prepared to Isaac's taste. Dressed in Esau's garments and wearing animal skins about his arms and neck to disguise his smooth skin, Jacob presented himself before his father.

Isaac was suspicious. He inquired how the deer had been so quickly killed. Jacob lied that the Lord had brought it to him. But Isaac remained unsure.

Next he demanded to examine Jacob's arms. Then the aged father made a perceptive analysis. The hands seemed to be Esau's, but

the voice belonged to Jacob.

Finally, Isaac ate the meat and then fully bestowed the covenant blessing upon Jacob. He prayed God to give him the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth; that he would become a master served by other people; that nations would bow to him; and that he might become lord over his brethren. Then he promised that all who blessed this son would be blessed and all who cursed him would be cursed.

Esau returned from his hunt. When he presented a steaming, savoury meat dish to Isaac, the aged man began to tremble. There was Esau's voice! But he had come too late. Loudly and bitterly, Esau implored to receive just one blessing.

Isaac falteringly blessed his elder son with prosperity, but that he must live by his sword and serve his brother.

Angrily, Esau planned to kill Jacob. When Rebekah learned of Esau's threat, she sent Jacob to her brother Laban's home. She never saw him again.

G. Jacob's dream

Genesis 28:10-22

As the sun set that first evening of the journey, Jacob lay his head on a stone to rest. While he slept, God revealed some wonderful plans.

As the heavens opened, a ladder rose from the ground to the sky with angels ascending and descending upon it. Then the Lord confirmed the covenant with Jacob that he had received from his father. The land upon which he rested would be his. Numerous descendants and divine protection would also be given.

Jacob discovered for the first time that God is near and that God is merciful and forgiving.

The following morning, Jacob named the place "Bethel" and erected a stone monument. As oil was poured upon it as a sign of worship, Jacob vowed to commit himself to the Lord. He also promised to erect an altar there at Bethel upon returning to his homeland and to give a tenth of his possessions to God.

Both Abraham and Jacob voluntarily tithed a tenth of their goods long before the time of the law. Bit by bit, God was revealing to man His financial plan. As we give God His part, He ensures that divine blessings and prosperity will be given us.

For the next twenty years, Jacob lived with his uncle, Laban. He bargained with Laban to marry Rachel. But at the end of seven years, Jacob was deceived—as he had deceived his father—and was given Leah as a wife.

At the close of the marriage week, Rachel also became his wife, but he had to work for her father an additional seven years. He reaped the deceit inflicted on his own blind father!

An additional six years were spent working to accumulate a herd of sheep. During this time, eleven sons and one daughter were born.

Jacob returned to his homeland with a large family, multiplied herds and flocks. As he crossed the border of Canaan, a strange sight greeted him. Two companies of heavenly hosts came to welcome him home! The Lord's host will always be present—whether seen or unseen—to protect and comfort believers in times of distress.

Then the bad news came. Esau and four hundred armed men were coming to meet Jacob. Did his twin intend to carry out his threat? Jacob strategically divided his flocks and family into two camps so that the latter might escape. Then Jacob approached God for divine protection.

H. A new man! A new name!

Genesis 32:24-32; 36:1-8

In the solitude of the night, Jacob began to pray. Whereupon, “there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day” (Genesis 32:24).

Desperately Jacob struggled with his angelic visitor as he declared: “I will not let You go except You bless me.”

As the sun rose, the angel of the Lord granted the desired blessing. The name Jacob (supplanter and deceiver) was changed to

Israel (a prince with God).

The name of God's chosen people would then be Israel. In the darkness of that night, a new nation was christened and introduced as God's own!

The site of this midnight ordeal was named “Peniel,” meaning “the face of God.” Jacob had seen God face to face!

To mark this conflict, the angelic visitor touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh so that it forever remained out of joint. To commemorate Jacob's experience, Jewish dietary laws restrict the eating of the sciatic nerve, or thigh-vein, from slaughtered animals.

The following morning, Esau embraced Jacob in an emotional act of forgiveness and reconciliation. Esau agreed to leave the land of Jacob's inheritance, and his family retired to the mountains of Seir, later called Edom.

What lessons can be learned from Jacob's life! He had made great progress at Bethel and Peniel. The two companies of angels had taught him about God's presence and protecting care. But yet another vital lesson awaited.

After immoral conduct by his three oldest sons, Jacob purposed to return to Bethel and renew his vows to God (Genesis 35:1-4). His wives and sons must cleanse and rid themselves of strange gods. They too must be committed to serve the Lord.

How important it is to make occasional searches of our own homes and hearts to remove anything that displeases God. If His people are to be holy and righteous, they cannot prosper with hidden sin.

Through sincere repentance and cleansing, God's blessings returned to Jacob and his sons. From Bethel, the family returned to Shechem and erected an altar. Again Yahweh renewed the promises first made to Abraham.

Lesson 3 – Chart 7

Israel Becomes a Nation



Chart Objective:

To relate how Jacob's twelve sons became known as the "children of Israel." Through numerous difficulties, Joseph, the favorite son, preserved his family from starvation, then moved them to Egypt. Living in peace and prosperity, they multiplied into the promised mighty nation.

Chart Outline:

- A. Joseph tells his dreams
- B. Sold into Egypt
- C. In prison
- D. Interprets dream
- E. Forgives brothers
- F. Israelites become slaves in Egypt

A. Joseph tells his dreams

Genesis 37:2-11

En route to visit Isaac at Hebron, another sad chapter of Jacob's life unfolded. His beloved wife, Rachel, died while giving birth to her second son, Benjamin.

Of Jacob's twelve sons, Joseph, the first son of Rachel, was the most favored. While the ten older sons were rough, wild, and lawless, Joseph's characteristics and spiritual ideals reflected those of his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

To show his love, Jacob awarded Joseph a "coat of many colours." This beautiful, expensive garment was not suitable for labor, but was the distinguishing mark of a superior or overseer. Consequently, his brothers suspected that he would receive the birthright blessing.

Meanwhile, Joseph experienced dreams of his brothers bowing to him. After he related these dreams, they hated him even more.

One day, as Joseph was approaching a

field where his brothers were keeping their flocks, they conspired to kill him. However, Judah intervened and convinced them that the youth should be sold to a caravan of Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver.

To make his disappearance less suspicious, Joseph's coat was dipped in animal blood and shown to their father. Again, Israel was deceived. How bitterly he learned the lesson, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7).

B. Sold into Egypt

Genesis 37:12-36

Joseph resolved to make the best of the situation. If he must be a slave, he would be the best one.

In Egypt, the Ishmaelites sold him to the household of Potiphar. Blessings and prosperity came to that house because of Joseph.

However, the handsome young man was soon confronted with temptation. Joseph refused the advances of Potiphar's wife, but she falsely reported to her husband that he had tried to seduce her. Immediately the youth was imprisoned. But the Lord was with Joseph!

C. In prison

Genesis 39:1-23

Eleven years had passed in Egypt and the divine promises of Joseph's dreams seemed remote. But he remained steadfast, believing in his God.

Joseph won the confidence of the jailer and his fellow prisoners and interpreted their dreams. Eventually his release came through this God-given ability.

D. Interprets dream

Genesis 41:1-46

When Pharaoh had a dream no one could interpret, a former prisoner recommended Joseph. The dream revealed the future of Egypt, indicating there would be seven years of plentiful harvests followed by seven years of famine.

Pharaoh, impressed by Joseph's remarkable abilities, promoted him to food administrator over all Egypt. Making provision for the seven years of drought was Joseph's new assignment.

Although far removed from his homeland, Joseph never forgot his family or his father's house.

When the famine became severe, his brothers sought to purchase food in Egypt. As the sons of Israel appeared before the important administrator of Egypt, in true Eastern fashion they bowed low before him. Immediately Joseph recognized them—but they did not suspect his identity.

Imagine the thoughts of Joseph as the scene progressed. Those boyhood dreams were all coming true!

E. Forgives brothers

Genesis 45:1-15

After testing his brothers to prove whether their attitude had changed, Joseph fully and freely forgave them. Without accusation or retribution, he explained that God had sent him to Egypt to preserve their lives.

Pharaoh encouraged Israel and his household to move to Goshen, a choice part of the land. When the aged patriarch and his caravans left their home in the Promised Land, little did they realize that this temporary move would last four hundred years! The seventy men—plus the women and children—would grow to a mighty nation of several million!

Before Israel's death, he formally adopted the two sons of Joseph. In subsequent history, Joseph was not recorded as a tribe of Israel. Instead, his sons, equal with the other eleven, became two tribes—Ephraim and Manasseh.

When the covenant blessings were bestowed, Israel censored and rebuked several sons. But all received an inheritance in the promised land of Canaan. Reuben, the eldest, forfeited his birthright privileges through misconduct. Likewise, Simeon and Levi were excluded because of treacherous acts.

Judah, the fourth son, received the first-born's blessing and was privileged to become the tribe through which the Messiah would come. Joseph shared in the blessings by receiving a double portion of material possessions for his two sons.

At the age of 147, Israel died and was buried in the land of Canaan.

F. Israelites become slaves in Egypt

Exodus 1:8-14

For many years, an Israelite ranked among aristocrats in Egypt. Being related to Joseph, the stately Prime Minister, they associated with the favored hierarchy. For one hundred years they enjoyed peaceful surroundings. Cultivating the fertile land which yielded

abundant crops, they also acquired knowledge of ancient Egypt's arts and industries.

But the scene changed when the eighteenth dynasty came into power. The new pharaoh Ahmose "knew not Joseph" and lacked respect for a Semite or the strange shepherd community with its alien rites and traditions. He also viewed their rapid increase and feared that in the event of war, they might ally themselves with an enemy.

Therefore, Israel was placed in bondage to become a race of slaves! Pharaoh hoped that slavery would produce a double benefit: hinder their rapid growth and provide free labor for his projects.

Satan was surely pleased to use Pharaoh to crush God's covenant people. Their unseen enemy thrilled to see them bent beneath heavy burdens.

But was not the Abrahamic covenant in force? Weren't the Israelites free men? Hadn't God promised to care for them and make them prosperous? Yes, He had. But the people had neglected their covenant obligations!

Egypt had been Israel's haven for many years while they multiplied into a mighty force. Now the time had arrived to return to their inheritance and reclaim the wonderful covenant benefits.

God called another man—whom we shall study in our next lesson—to write the covenant terms and conditions and show them to the people.

Many godly people today are in this same situation. Unacquainted with the abundant new covenant benefits, they struggle for meager existence. Satan easily manipulates them with his accusations and deception. He afflicts and crushes them beneath heavy burdens—sickness, disease, problems, troubles.

Promised blessings and prosperity belong to us also! We are not slaves. We are sons and daughters of God!

As He did for Israel, God is again appointing teachers to instruct and equip believers for spiritual warfare. The devil and his hordes of demon "taskmasters" shall be defeated when men and women discover their privileges!

Our next lesson details the fantastic deliverance of God's covenant people. His chosen ones were never meant to be oppressed, defeated slaves—then or now! Prepare for some dynamic miracles as about three million ex-slaves march out of Egypt, free at last!

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM STUDY SHEET

God Makes a Covenant with Man

LESSON NO. 3 Study Sheet

Chart 1. Second Dispensation—"Conscience"

- A. Adam and Eve
- B. Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-4; Leviticus 17:11)
- C. Cain kills Abel (Genesis 4:5-10)
- D. Cain, a wanderer (Genesis 4:11-16)
- E. Seth (Genesis 4:25-26)
- F. "Then began men to call upon the name of the LORD" (Genesis 4:26)
- G. Enoch (Genesis 5:18-24; Jude 14-15)
- H. World becomes very evil (Genesis 6:1-7)
- I. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Genesis 6:8)

Chart 2. God's Judgment—"The Flood"

- A. God's blueprint for escape
- B. Which animals were in the ark?
- C. A worldwide Flood
- D. Noah's ark discovered
- E. Comparison between days of Noah and coming of Christ (Matthew 24:37-39)

Chart 3. Third Dispensation—"Human Government"

- A. Noah's Covenant (Genesis 9:8-17)
- B. Noah's three sons multiply
- C. Curse and blessings divide Noah's family (Genesis 9:18-27)

Chart 4. The Beginning of Nations and Languages

- A. Shem, Ham, Japheth
- B. "The Dispersion at Babel" (Genesis 11:1-9)

Chart 5. Abraham—"Father of the Faithful"

- A. Covenant Promises (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:6; 17:1-8)
- B. God's Covenant Sign - Circumcision (Genesis 17:10-14)
- C. Gentiles Become Abraham's Heirs (Galatians 3:1-29; Romans 4:3-5; Colossians 2:11-12)
- D. Abram and Lot separate (Genesis 13:8-13)
- E. Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:1-28)

Chart 6. Fourth Dispensation—"Promise"

- A. Ishmael, father of Arab nations (Genesis 16:1-16; 21:9-21)
- B. Isaac, son of promise (Genesis 21:1-5)
- C. Abraham's test (Genesis 22:1-19)
- D. Isaac, Esau and Jacob (Genesis 25:19-28)
- E. Birthright exchange (Genesis 25:29-34; 27:1-46)
- F. Jacob's dream (Genesis 28:10-22)
- G. A new man! A new name! (Genesis 32:24-32; 36:1-8)

Chart 7. Israel Becomes a Nation

- A. Joseph tells his dreams (Genesis 37:2-11)
- B. Sold into Egypt (Genesis 37:12-36)
- C. In prison (Genesis 39:1-23)
- D. Interprets dream (Genesis 41:1-46)
- E. Forgives brothers (Genesis 45:1-15)
- F. Israelites become slaves in Egypt (Exodus 1:8-14)

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM QUIZ

God Makes a Covenant with Man

LESSON NO. 3 Quiz

Match the name with the correct description. Each answer is used only once.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| ___ 1. Abraham and Sarah's son of promise. | A. Adam and Eve |
| ___ 2. Father of the faithful; God made a covenant with him. | B. Cain |
| ___ 3. Ate the forbidden fruit; expelled from the garden. | C. Abel |
| ___ 4. The place where God confused the language. | D. Enoch |
| ___ 5. A man so favored by God, he was translated into heaven. | E. Noah |
| ___ 6. Abraham's nephew; he chose to live in Sodom. | F. Ham, Shem,
Japheth |
| ___ 7. Isaac's younger son; received birthright by trickery. | G. Babel |
| ___ 8. Noah's sons, from whom all nations originate. | H. Abraham |
| ___ 9. Jacob's son; sold into slavery; became an Egyptian ruler. | I. Lot |
| ___ 10. Killed his brother through envy; the first murderer. | J. Ishmael |
| ___ 11. Found "grace in the eyes of the LORD"; built an ark to
escape the Flood. | K. Isaac |
| ___ 12. Sacrificed the best of his flock to the Lord. | L. Esau |
| ___ 13. Abraham's son; father of the Arab nations. | M. Jacob |
| ___ 14. Isaac's eldest son; did not value his birthright blessing. | N. Joseph |

Answers:

1. K 2. H 3. A 4. G 5. D 6. I 7. M 8. F 9. N
10. B 11. E 12. C 13. J 14. L

LESSON FOUR

Lessons in the Wilderness

This is a study of the lessons God taught His covenant people at Mount Sinai.

Bondage and oppression prompted God's covenant people to long for their Promised Land. God heard their groans and sent a deliverer.

Ten plagues forced Egypt's ruler to let God's people go! The Passover became a perpetual ordinance for Israel and a beautiful type of our redemption from sin. The blood of our Lamb has not only "covered," but has cleansed and remitted our sins.

After miraculously crossing the Red Sea, they journeyed toward Mount Sinai, their temporary schoolroom. Before becoming God's peculiar treasure and model to all nations, Israel had much to learn.

They must enter into covenant and be taught laws for holy living, acceptable worship, how to get along with one another, discipline, obedience to Moses, and military training.

Because the Israelites were spiritually dead, the law must be obeyed from the soul (mind, will, emotions). Israel must be legislated in detail what would please God and what would not.

Now that our spirit is recreated when we believe and obey the gospel, His commands are written in our "heart" and spiritually understood.

When completed, students should be aware of the following concepts:

1. God is willing and ready to deliver His people when they call upon His name.
2. Unbelief hinders our spiritual progress and prevents us from obtaining God's best.
3. God still desires to occupy the central place in our lives. As the Levites were positioned between Israelite tents and the Tabernacle, godly ministers now serve as our instructors and overseers.
4. As His special possession, covenant people are to be marked and set apart from all others.
5. The old covenant laws were visibly written on stone tables because of their dead spirits. New covenant laws are written in the hearts.

Additional books for reading:

1. John J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971.
2. Charles F. Pfeiffer, *Egypt and the Exodus*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1964.
3. E. W. Kenyon, *The Bible in the Light of Our Redemption*, Lynnwood, WA: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, P. O. Box 973, Lynnwood, WA 98036, 1969.

Lesson 4 – Chart 1 God Sends A Deliverer

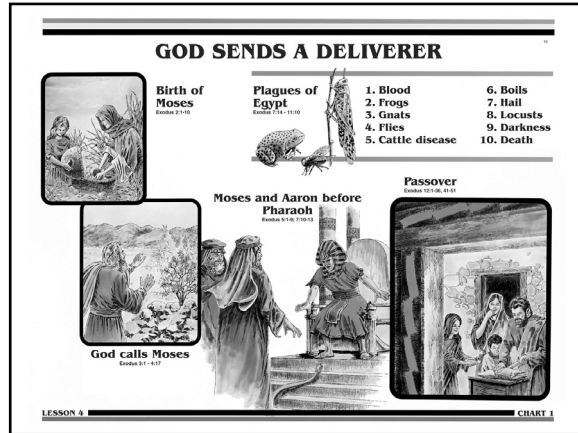


Chart Objective:

To prove that God will always deliver His people when they call upon His name. The Passover is a fascinating Old Testament type of Christ's redemption from sin.

Chart Outline:

- God Sends a Deliverer
- Birth of Moses
- God calls Moses
- Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh
- Plagues of Egypt
- Passover

A. God Sends a Deliverer

We now leave "Genesis"—the book of beginnings—to study the other books of the "Pentateuch" (law).

"Exodus" describes the "exit" or departure of Israel from Egypt.

"Leviticus" (relating to the "Levites") teaches the holiness of God and how to properly approach Him.

"Numbers" is so named because the Israelite fighting force was twice numbered (1:2-46; 26:2-51). This book describes Israel's forty-year wilderness journey at Sinai, their murmuring and unbelief.

"Deuteronomy" (second law) records Moses' farewell address. This book prepared Israel to enter the Promised Land and encouraged them to renew their covenant with God.

Exodus opens with God's covenant people awaiting deliverance from a pagan land.

As we begin this practical study of the everyday life, struggles and temptations of the Israelites, remember: God is not nearly so concerned with *what we go through* as He is in *how we respond* to life's varied situations.

Will we rebel, complain, and criticize or allow Him to be our Lord and Ruler?

In each of their difficulties, imagine yourself to be in Israel's place. What would you do? How would you respond to the problem? Could you be patient and understanding or would you also be overcome with doubts and unbelief?

But why were they in Egypt? Did a loving God intend for His chosen ones to be cruelly treated and enslaved?

Had Israel and his sons remained in grandfather Abraham's promised land, they would have died during the severe famine. In Egypt, they had flourished into a large nation. Fulfilling the promise made to Abraham, they had begun to multiply as the stars of heaven and sand on the seashore:

12 sons become nation

"And the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them" (Exodus 1:7).

Why then, should the Israelites endure oppression and slavery? God's purpose was to illustrate the benefits associated with affliction. Slavery toughened them for the wilderness journey and weaned them from Egypt's prosperity. Without persecution, Israel might never have departed from their adopted land.

As the whips of the Egyptian taskmasters lashed across their backs, thoughts of Canaan became more enticing. As the Hebrew slaves became more miserable, their sighs and cries blended into a groan; and God heard their groaning.

Suffering has the special quality of refining the heart. David said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word" (Psalm 119:67). Do you suppose that twenty-first-century pressures and problems might also be toughening us for troublesome times just ahead? Paul reminded us:

"All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Satan had sought to destroy the promised "seed of the woman." Knowing that Abraham had been specified in that lineage, the enemy determined to destroy his descendants. When a pharaoh came to the throne who "knew not Joseph," this was the devil's chance.

Fearing that the Israelites would join with an enemy king in time of war, the pharaoh oppressed the Israelites, hoping to stunt their rapid growth. But during strenuous labor, they multiplied.

Then the Hebrew midwives were ordered to kill every male child at birth. But they feared God and would not obey the command.

Finally, Pharaoh commanded the Egyptians to report the birth of male Hebrew babies; whereupon, the infants would be drowned in the Nile River.

B. Birth of Moses

Exodus 2:1-10

Paradoxically, the same measure chosen to destroy Israel effected their deliverance!

About this time, Amram and Jochebed, a godly couple of Levi's tribe, were blessed with a fine baby boy. Something about this tiny son seemed special. They saw he was a "proper child" (Hebrews 11:23) and determined to keep him.

After concealing their baby at home for three months, Jochebed constructed a small chest-like ark of bulrushes, or papyrus plants, and sealed it with pitch. Her son became the ark's precious cargo laid among reeds at the Nile's bank.

What faith! How could a child be preserved where Pharaoh had directed that he be killed?

The tiny ark was strategically placed where the princess usually bathed. Miriam, the child's sister, was instructed to watch. When the baby began to cry, motherly instincts were instantly aroused in the princess' heart. She determined to rescue for herself this one Hebrew boy.

Quickly Miriam offered to find a nursemaid, and Moses' own mother received wages for doing what most pleased her!

The princess named the baby "Moses," meaning, "I drew him out of the water."

Moses' most beneficial education was from his God-fearing parents. He learned precious truths and stories of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. No doubt Jochebed impressed upon her son that soon they would leave this terrible place of slavery to possess a promised land.

In the East, children are usually nursed the first three years. Moses' mother had a short time to teach her son, but it was his only parental instruction about God's ways.

The child was adopted by the princess and

given a royal education. Moses' parents had hoped only that he live. Never did they dream that he would become great, wise, rich, well educated and powerful!

Thus, God turned Satan's evil scheme to be the means of deliverance for His chosen people. Pharaoh provided free lodging and education to the very man who would accomplish what Pharaoh was trying to prevent!

From Adam to Christ, no one accomplished more than Moses. He is among the few Bible characters whose life is sketched from infancy to death. God's early dealings with Israel were transacted as Yahweh spoke face to face with this prophet, priest and king.

As Moses matured to adulthood, he surely dreamed of ascending Egypt's throne and instantly liberating his enslaved people. But such was not God's way.

Once while visiting a royal construction project, the young Hebrew observed the inhuman treatment of his people. What should he do? Should he ignore their plight to seek his own fame and prestige among the Egyptians?

Few people have had to make Moses' decision. It would equal rejecting the presidency of the United States or the throne of England to associate with a chain gang on a prison farm.

Remembering his mother's teaching, Moses made the wisest choice of his life:

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt" (Hebrews 11:24-26).

Having made his decision, at the age of forty years, Moses launched into his role of deliverer—but without divine mission or command. In retribution to merciless treatment of his kinsmen, he reacted and killed an Egyptian taskmaster and hid the body in a shallow grave.

The following day he tried to settle a Hebrew dispute. But one asked, "Do you intend to kill me as you did the Egyptian?" With the secret exposed, Moses was compelled to escape for his life.

Moses fled to Midian. His Egyptian education completed, now he enrolled in God's Wilderness University.

Another forty years were spent in the Sinai (pronounced “Sigh-nigh”) Desert as a shepherd. Yet he was mastering important leadership qualities for the future. Soon he would lead to this mountain, not a flock of sheep, but the flock of God’s people. Upon this same mountain he would receive one of the greatest revelations ever given to man.

C. God calls Moses

Exodus 3:1 - 4:17

Toward the end of Moses’ exile, another pharaoh came to the throne. God was ready to deliver His people.

Once while tending his sheep, a spectacular sight arrested Moses’ attention. A wild acacia bush was enveloped in flames—but was not consumed! As Moses investigated, the angel of the Lord spoke from the burning bush: “Moses! Do not come near. Put off your shoes, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.”

Moses had to learn of God’s holiness and that He must always be approached with reverence and awe.

Trembling, Moses hid his face. God spoke, “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I have seen the affliction of My people and I am come down to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians and bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey. I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people out of Egypt.”

Delivering Israel was exactly what he had wanted to do forty years ago. But now he felt inferior to the task. Graciously the Lord promised, “Certainly I will be with thee.”

Then Moses questioned what name of authority should be given. Who was the “God of his fathers”? Until then, He had been known as El, Elohim, Shaddai, or Yahweh. His new name would be “I AM THAT I AM,” meaning “He who alone exists.” The great “I AM” is ONE God!

After centuries, Yahweh introduced Himself as a personal, living Being ready to fulfill the covenant promises.

Every new revelation of God’s name from this time forward provides a fuller and clearer understanding: “Yahweh-Jireh,” “Yahweh-Nissi,” “Yahweh-Shalom.” Each compounded name reveals such attributes as: provision, righteousness, healing, peace, and others.

When Moses’ self-inadequacy persisted,

God furnished a threefold symbolical reply that would silence his critics and encourage Moses himself. For the first time, a man was empowered to draw attention to God’s greatness through the working of miracles.

God commanded Moses to throw his ordinary shepherd’s staff to the ground. When it became a serpent, he fled in terror. But at God’s command to grasp the serpent by the tail, it again became a rod in Moses’ hand.

A second sign involved Moses’ hand: first it became leprous, then cleansed. The third sign was power to turn the Nile water to blood.

To Moses’ excuse of having a speech defect, the Lord appointed Aaron, Moses’ brother, as spokesman. With a divine commission, Moses returned to Egypt with his wife and two sons.

Before reaching his destination, however, Moses learned another important lesson. The covenant sign of circumcision had been neglected in one of his sons. While the family lodged for the night, Moses was suddenly stricken ill as the Lord “sought to kill him” (Exodus 4:24). When he and his wife perceived the purpose for the sickness, Zipporah herself performed the rite. Immediately, Moses recovered.

To be a lawgiver and leader, Moses must observe God’s first command to Abraham. Without circumcision, an Israelite was alienated from the covenant.

D. Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh

Exodus 5:1-9; 7:10-13

Back at Egypt, the two brothers met with the elders of Israel to deliver a divine message. The time had finally arrived to leave Egypt for their long-promised home!

Then began the mightiest conflict in history. On one side was arrayed the power, wealth, and splendor of Egypt and its paganism. On the other was a poor, aged, discredited man and his brother.

Through the palace gates they went, asking the king to liberate three million people! At first the Egyptians must have scoffed and ridiculed. But soon their laughter would be turned to anxiety and then to pounding fear!

Haughtily Pharaoh asked,

“Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Israel go” (Exodus 5:2).

Unrelenting, Moses and Aaron presented persuasive reasons. But the pair were accused of inciting Hebrew laborers to discontent. Their labor was doubled. Formerly, straw had been provided. Now they must find stubble to make the bricks.

Incidentally, archeologists have uncovered Egyptian buildings with bricks made of stubble rather than straw, as recorded in Exodus 5:12. Doubtless, this book was written by someone who knew the facts!

Often the path to deliverance winds through the valley of “deeper trouble.” But God instructed Moses to quit begging or pleading. Deliverance strategy was about to commence! Moses and Aaron would contend against the gods of Egypt and magical heathen arts.

When Pharaoh demanded to see a miracle, Aaron threw Moses’ rod to the ground and it became a serpent. The sorcerers and magicians performed a similar feat, but Aaron’s rod swallowed up theirs.

Had He chosen to, the Lord could have instantly slain Pharaoh and all his people. Instead, He patiently exhibited supernatural power to prove the inferiority of the gods of Egypt and that He alone was worthy of worship.

Pharaoh had inquired, “Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord!” After the completion of the ten plagues, the two would be well acquainted!

E. Plagues of Egypt

Exodus 7:14 - 11:10

Egyptian gods differed from deities of surrounding countries. Egypt’s idolatrous religion was morally and spiritually degrading.

Each Egyptian god and goddess was depicted having human bodies and animal heads. The bull, lion, ram, cat, wolf, dog, vulture, falcon, crocodile, cobra, frog, locust, and other animals and insects were considered sacred. Unlike other Eastern rulers, the Egyptian pharaoh did not rule for the gods, but was literally *one of the gods*. Naturally, a request for Israel’s release would be rejected.

The first plague occurred as Pharaoh was offering his customary worship to the sacred Nile, the “Father of Life.” Emphatically, Moses announced that his people must be released or the **Nile would turn to blood**.

As Aaron stretched his rod over the Nile, every canal, pond, and container of stored water turned into blood. The whole popula-

tion would have soon died of thirst. How embarrassing for the poor gods!

Pharaoh’s magicians counterfeited this miracle, but they were powerless to change the blood-red Nile to its original condition. For seven days, the river, once defiled with the blood of innocent Hebrew babies, was a mass of stinking pollution. Then unexpectedly, God withdrew the plague.

The consequences for Pharaoh’s next refusal was an epidemic of **frogs**. Deified as a goddess, the presence of small croaking frogs normally assured a good harvest. But this epidemic greatly interrupted the comfort and happiness of the extremely clean Egyptians. The sacred little creatures could not be killed, and they were everywhere—houses, beds, kneading troughs, ovens!

Pharaoh’s magicians “did the same with their enchantments,” but were powerless to remove the plague. In desperation, Pharaoh promised that if Moses’ and Aaron’s God would prevent the plague, they could go and offer sacrifices. His knowledge of the Lord seemed to be improving!

But when the plague ended and the heaps of frogs were buried, Pharaoh denied his promise.

The third plague swarmed Egypt. As Aaron’s rod struck the ground, the dust turned to **gnats**, an almost invisible insect with a very annoying sting. Authorities believe that “lice” should have been translated as gnats or mosquitoes.

Egypt’s fertile, worshiped soil had become a curse. Man and beast were driven to madness by these tiny pests. But when Pharaoh assembled his magicians, the contest ended. Humbly they confessed this miracle to be “the finger of God.”

Next came a plague of **flies**. From this plague, the Israelites and their property were protected.

In despair, Pharaoh offered a compromise of allowing the people to go just a short distance. But when the flies were gone, he reneged.

A highly contagious **cattle disease** then infected the cattle, horses, donkeys, oxen and sheep. All livestock in the field or open air died.

Although the Egyptian cows, bulls, rams and goats were considered sacred, their gods were helpless to defend them from this judgment. But not one head of cattle in Israel was affected.

Still, Pharaoh refused to allow Israel freedom.

As Moses and Aaron threw ashes heavenward, a sixth plague—open, running **boils** appeared on men and beasts. Even Pharaoh’s magicians were too grotesque to answer his call at the royal court.

The seventh plague was an unprecedented, violent **hailstorm**. A peculiar electrical display similar to fireballs and hail filled all the land—except Goshen. Flax and barley crops were totally destroyed. And the sky goddess was unable to intervene!

So impressed was Pharaoh by this hail, he confessed: “I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked” (Exodus 9:27). However, when Moses raised his hands and the rain, hail and thunder ceased, Pharaoh’s penitence and promise were broken.

Patently Moses issued a new warning. If Pharaoh continued to balk, **locusts** would infest the earth. Royal servants joined the plea this time to release the people. But only an empty compromise was given, then withdrawn.

Locust plagues were so fearsome in ancient Egypt that peasants prayed to a locust god. A locust can daily eat its own weight in volume. One square mile might contain 100 to 200 million insects and a swarm might occupy an area of four hundred square miles (John Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, pages 120-122).

Egypt’s crops, fruits and trees were stripped down to trunks and limbs. But when a strong west wind drove them into the Red Sea, Pharaoh cancelled the release of the Israelites.

In the ninth judgment, the Lord fought the entire host of divinities. Re, the sun god, was Egypt’s most superior. As Moses stretched his hand toward heaven, a thick **darkness** that could be “felt” covered the land (Exodus 10:21).

For three days the Egyptians suffered severe mental anguish. However, the Israelites, furnished with plenty of light, were preparing for the greatest event of their lives!

To Pharaoh’s call, Moses and Aaron rejected another compromise. But they announced the final plague—**death to the first-born** of man and beast alike. Moses predicted the exact hour, the anguish, and ultimate expulsion of the Israelites from Egypt. The final stroke would set Israel free!

F. Passover

Exodus 12:1-36, 41-51

While Egypt was under a plague of thick darkness, Israelites busily prepared to initiate a new ordinance. The Passover is more frequently mentioned in the New Testament than any other ordinance.

This new decree would be emphasized by a calendar change. Israel’s month of Abib (later changed to Nisan) would be the “beginning of months.” Abib is the same as our April.

As the last and most dreadful plague was readied, God introduced the plan whereby He would redeem man from sin—the blood of “atonement”—meaning “to cover man’s sins.”

Notice in the Passover story the many comparisons with the coming Lamb of God. God instructed that a selected lamb would be offered as a substitute for the first-born child. The lamb must be an unblemished year-old male. To ensure its perfect condition, it must be penned up for four days and then inspected.

Each lamb must be killed in the evening and roasted with fire. All the flesh must be eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. If one lamb was too much for a family to eat, it must be shared with another household to prevent waste.

As they ate, everyone must stand around the table, clad with shoes and staffs, ready for travel. No Israelite could leave the house until morning. Only inside a home protected by a lamb’s blood would they be safe.

Before eating the meal, each family leader must sprinkle the lamb’s blood on the two posts and lintel of the doorway. Animal blood had no innate cleansing power, but it declared the necessity of a blood covering for sin.

The entire Passover story illustrated that Christ would be sent to earth as God’s perfect Lamb. His sinless blood would cover and cleanse us from sin. As Paul wrote,

“Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:26).

At midnight, the Lord Himself went through the land, executing judgment against the first-born and “all the gods of Egypt” (Exodus 12:12). Only those protected by the blood were “passed over.”

~~An angry God was in the streets that night.~~

In a sense, all the first-born were slain, both in Israel and Egypt. The Egyptian first-born died in person while the Israelite first-born were redeemed by a substituted sacrificial lamb.

From Pharaoh’s palace to the humblest shack, every first-born died—even of beasts. Most temples housed sacred animals worshipped as gods. The revered Apis bull at Memphis probably fell dead, along with other animal gods.

The death of Pharaoh’s son shocked the palace servants. There lay the pale, lifeless form of the boy who supposedly was born of the gods!

Oriental demonstrate their emotions with violent gestures and shrill, piercing screams. Imagine the cry that arose throughout the land as every home was affected by the death of a child, cattle, and household pets.

Finally, Pharaoh’s stubborn will was broken. Calling for Moses and Aaron, he urged Israel to leave immediately! No compromises, no qualifications. All the people must exit with their flocks and herds!

At God’s command, the Israelites went to their Egyptian neighbors and “borrowed”—or

more correctly “requested”—jewels of silver and gold and clothing. Gladly the Egyptians parted with their possessions. Anything to remove these mysterious Israelites far out of their sight!

God had previously said to Moses,

“And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: but every woman shall borrow of her neighbour . . . jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: . . . and ye shall spoil the Egyptians” (Exodus 3:21-22).

The conquering nation was awarded the spoils of her enemy! However, in exchange for a century of slavery, this was actually small payment.

Would they really need such wealth in the wilderness? Oh yes! Much of the gold and silver would be used to construct the Tabernacle. Jewels would adorn the garments of the high priest. Instead of leaving as fugitives, they marched out like conquerors, dressed in splendor!

Lesson 4 – Chart 2 Israel Leaves Egypt

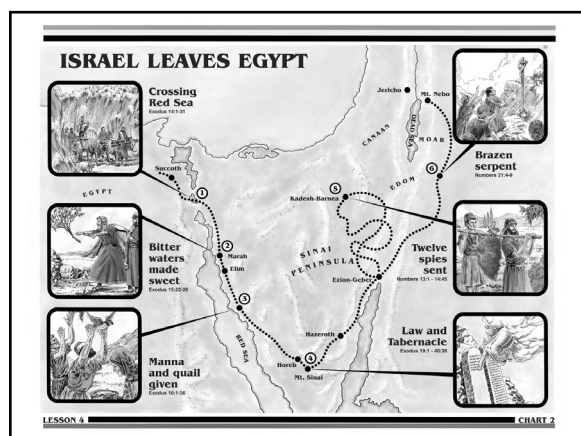


Chart Objective:

To trace the journey of Israel in the Sinai Wilderness. Because of unbelief, a trip that should have been completed in two years, extended to forty years.

Lesson Outline:

- A. Israel Leaves Egypt
- B. Crossing Red Sea

- C. Bitter waters made sweet
- D. Manna and quail given
- E. Law and Tabernacle
- F. Twelve spies sent
- G. Brazen serpent

A. Israel Leaves Egypt

After spending more than four hundred years in Egypt, the Israelites were headed toward their Promised Land! However, they faced future troubles. Many more obstacles must be conquered before stepping on Canaan’s soil.

The morning after the tenth judgment, the Israelites began emerging from all parts of Goshen towards Succoth, their first meeting place. Each group had its own herds and flocks. Because there were no roads, each company spread out and traveled at its own pace.

No exact census was available for those participating in the exodus. Only the 600,000 men over twenty years of age are mentioned. Knowing that the people had rapidly multiplied, they may have numbered from three to five million.

Another feature is noted about this long, marching procession: “There was not one feeble person among their tribes” (Psalm 105:37). Imagine that host of ex-slaves—all in perfect health!

Included in their ranks, Moses recorded, was a “mixed multitude” (Exodus 12:38). Perhaps they were other enslaved Semites living in Egypt or native Egyptians wishing to escape Pharaoh’s tyranny. Or they may have been descendants of intermarried Egyptians and Hebrews.

Later, this “mixed multitude” created serious problems by expressing regret for leaving Egypt. Satan seized the opportunity of sending people of mixed principles—partly on the Lord’s side and partly on the Egyptians’ side. Church troublemakers are usually discontented members of the “mixed multitude” who draw from her resources but contribute nothing in return.

Most travelers to Canaan took the route along the Mediterranean coast and arrived in a few days. But they would have encountered the Philistines, a warlike, powerful nation feared even by the Egyptians. Since the Hebrews were not equipped for battle, they could not afford to encounter a well-prepared enemy.

Before becoming God’s peculiar treasure and model to all nations, Israel had to learn about laws for holy living, acceptable worship, how to get along with one another, discipline, obedience to Moses, and military training.

Once released from sin’s bondage, we too become Christ’s representatives in the world. This is why we must sit at Jesus’ feet and learn of His plan for our life, ~~of the vast work yet to be completed, and about our fierce enemy. No one can successfully live for God without spending much time in Bible study and prayer.~~

Notice that God selected Israel’s route. The normal choice would have proven disastrous. As they left Succoth headed toward ~~Etham~~, a cloudy pillar ascending from earth to heaven led the host. When it stopped moving, so must they. When it moved forward, they followed.

The pillar of cloud shielded the blistering desert sun. When darkness fell, it became a brilliant column of fire, providing warmth from the chilling winds.

~~At the edge of the wilderness, directions~~

~~were suddenly changed. They turned south toward a very unproductive region of the African continent. In this setting, God demonstrated His sovereignty to the Egyptians and His ability to care for Israel. An unforgettable day was just ahead!~~

B. Crossing Red Sea Exodus 14:1-31

Though the exact place where Israel crossed the Red Sea is unknown, most Bible scholars now agree that the region known as the “Bitter Lakes” better fits Moses’ description (John J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*).

Now the scene shifts back to Egypt. Once the initial shock of the midnight slaughter had subsided, Pharaoh again changed his mind. Why had he freed those laborers and highly skilled craftsmen?

When news came of Israel’s move south, he assumed they were confused and “entangled in the land.” Thus the order was given for six hundred royal chariots to pursue and return them to Egypt!

Meanwhile, Israel was enjoying their new encampment by the sea. But this playground would become a prison wall surrounded by mountains.

As the sun was setting, war chariots were seen coming from the north. Escape was impossible! The sea was on the east, mountains were on the south and west, and Israel was unarmed.

Immediately, everyone began crying to God and complaining to Moses for this dangerous predicament. Why had he led them into this trap?

Moses’ instructions were superb! “Don’t be afraid! Stand still and see what the Lord will do for you. He will fight this battle. Those advancing Egyptians will never again be seen after this night!”

After preparing the people to march in numbered companies, Moses lifted his miracle-working rod over the sea. As he did, a strong east wind divided the waters into walls on either side and dried the seabed.

As darkness fell, the pillar of cloud slowly moved from the head of the procession to a point between the camps. Its bright flame provided light for Israel, but left the Egyptians in darkness, preventing them from advancing.

About midnight, the seabed was suffi-

God didn't take the short route... to avoid philistine army..? but also to give time to instruct.

ciently dry and the people moved forward in an orderly fashion until all were safe on the other side. As the cloud moved along, Pharaoh's army pressed forward. In the morning watch, from 3 A.M. until sunrise, the horsemen entered the seabed.

Then the Lord troubled the Egyptians with a sudden cloudburst, thunder, and lightning (Psalm 77:17-19). He "took off their chariot wheels," possibly allowing them to sink deep into the drenched sand. Panic-stricken, they were unable to go forward or backward.

Again, Moses' hand was uplifted and the congealed wall of water on either side (Exodus 15:8) descended. As the sea returned to its bed, the waves engulfed the struggling Egyptians and horses. They sank into the mighty waters!

For the first time, Israel stood as a redeemed nation, completely separated from Egypt! What was the point of division? The Red Sea! Apostle Paul compared it to water baptism:

"All our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (I Corinthians 10:1-2).
passover, spirit & water baptism, old man washed away

Israel's deliverance also illustrates our redemption from sin through Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. At the Passover, Israel was spared from death by the blood of a lamb; they were separated from the old life by passing through the Red Sea; stepping on the shore marked entry into new territory of God's promised blessings.

Calling upon the Lord, repenting and committing our lives to His control is the first step of redemption. Water baptism separates us from the old life of sin. As we enter the new life of salvation, many promised spiritual gifts and blessings are available—but we must claim them!

When upon the other shore, Moses and his people viewed the strewn debris and corpses of their enemy. What a mighty God they served!

Spontaneously, the redeemed nation sang praises unto the Lord! Moses recorded the first Jewish song in the Bible, perhaps the root of all Hebrew psalms.

Miriam, Moses' ninety-year-old sister, led the women with dancing, singing, and playing tambourines. What a joyful chorus! God's covenant people were free at last!

C. Bitter waters made sweet

Exodus 15:22-26

Israel stood on a new continent with God as their King.

Because the covenant people's spiritual life was undeveloped, God manifested Himself through their physical senses. Until dead spirits are quickened, or made alive, they cannot understand spiritual concepts.

Repeatedly, the children of Israel murmured, complained and rebelled against the lofty principles God desired to teach. But His mercy and love recurred as He continually taught the same lessons.

Then occurred a water shortage in the camp. Triumphant praise to God was followed by painful privation. We may also expect our faith to be tested after leaving the life of sin.

Water was found, but it tasted bitter. Why would God permit Israel to suffer such hardships? "There he proved them" (Exodus 15:25).

Would they be patient and obedient or would they murmur and complain? Of course, "we do not murmur against *God*, we murmur against *Moses*." Most problems are merely God's teaching tools.

God instructed Moses to cast a certain tree into the water and it would become sweet. The healing of these bitter waters was a "sign" to Israel that God was also able and willing to heal their bodies:

"There he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them, and said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee" (Exodus 15:25-26).

A close examination of Israel's covenant of healing reveals that God was actually offering them *immunity* from sickness. But notice a special condition. It applied only for those who diligently listened and obeyed the Lord's commandments and statutes.

Immunity from disease was linked to personal responsibility. Only days later at Sinai, God gave instructions regarding a day of rest, health habits, diet, cleanliness, and quarantining homes. All these rules were vital for preventing sickness.

Many people do not consider the relationship between proper health and healing. If healing does not occur, they conclude that healing is not to be theirs. How sad that they do not realize why—or who is to blame!

To emphasize the importance of healthy bodies, God mentioned again at Sinai:

“And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water; and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren, in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil” (Exodus 23:25-26).

Healthy, strong bodies are intended for God’s chosen people. And the promise of healing is based upon conditions.

D. Manna and quail given

Exodus 16:1-36

Traveling on through the dry wilderness, Israel found twelve bubbling wells of water surrounded by groves of palm trees. Elim provided a season of calm and contentment. Remember that persecutions and troubles also are seasonal. They won’t last forever!

After a month, they marched toward Sinai. In this barren desert, all provisions brought from Egypt were depleted. Starvation seemed certain. Again, their faith failed and the Hebrews complained against Moses and Aaron.

“Would that God had smitten us with a painless death as He did the first-born of the Egyptians rather than this awful, lingering death from starvation,” they moaned.

That evening, the sky darkened and an enormous flight of quail fell to the ground about their tents. The following morning, they received bread.

Until they reached Canaan forty years later, for six days every week, Israel received daily bread. The people called it “manna,” meaning “it is a gift” from heaven.

Early in the morning, each person was instructed to gather an omer (about two quarts) of manna per day. It could be ground or beaten. Their diet was supplemented from their large flocks and herds.

Not only was God supplying their food, but He was also training them to depend upon Him. Each morning they gathered the small white seed-like substance. On the sixth day, two omers were to be gathered because the

seventh day was a holy Sabbath, or rest, unto the Lord.

Having been slaves many years, now each week they experienced a day of rest. This special day was to be observed throughout their generations. The Jewish Sabbath was an absolute day of holy rest, while the Christian Sunday, or Lord’s Day, is a day of holy activity. On this day we gather to sing, worship and study the Scripture.

Before reaching Mount Sinai, the people again clamored for water. This time Moses was told to ~~strike~~ a certain rock with his miracle-producing rod. Water gushed forth as if a hidden reservoir had suddenly been tapped.

E. Law and Tabernacle

Exodus 19:1 - 40:38

In the third month, or about six weeks after leaving Egypt, they reached the Sinai Peninsula, the familiar country where Moses had lived for forty years. Surrounded by majestic cliffs, this two-mile-wide, well-irrigated plain became Israel’s camping ground and schoolhouse for the next year. Here God gave His laws, ratified a covenant, and provided blueprints for the Tabernacle, including a unique way to worship.

This special covenant will be discussed in more detail later.

F. Twelve spies sent

Numbers 13:1 - 14:45

Israel left Sinai an organized host, prepared for victory. Preceded by the Tabernacle, they marched tribe by tribe, to their next encampment.

Within three days, the complaining resumed. God’s displeasure was shown by an outbreak of fire on the outskirts of the camp. Moses’ prayer quenched the fire.

But still they complained. They wanted a menu change. When quail was provided, their over-indulgence caused sickness. God had granted their request, but “sent leanness into their soul” (Psalm 106:15). Large numbers died from a plague.

Had they expressed gratitude for their miraculous blessings, how different Israel’s history would have been.

Finally, the complaining spirit was displayed by Moses’ own sister and brother. Miriam became leprous for criticizing Moses’ superior position. But when her brother humbly begged for God’s mercy, she was healed.

About sixteen months after leaving Egypt, the tribes stood on the threshold of Canaan. Soon they would possess their long expected inheritance.

At Kadesh-Barnea, twelve spies, or scouts, were appointed—a man from each tribe—to closely examine the territory. Forty days later they returned with tales of a highly advanced civilization, fertile land, beauty, and fruitfulness. Two men brought a large cluster of grapes on a pole to prove the land's fertility.

Had the report ended there, all would have been well. But ten of the men began to enumerate every discouragement they had seen. There were walled cities and GIANTS in the land! "We were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight," they rationalized (Numbers 13:33).

Vainly Caleb and Joshua, the other two spies, tried to encourage the panic-stricken people. "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Numbers 13:30).

Unbelief's shortsightedness always sees the difficulties while faith looks past them and sees God. Ten spies never thought of nor saw God.

The dismal tidings spread swiftly through the tents. By nightfall, the whole congregation was weeping like children. As word spread of appointing a new captain to lead them back to Egypt, Joshua and Caleb tried to calm them. But it was impossible. Just as they were ready to stone Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Caleb, suddenly the glory of God appeared before the Tabernacle.

In this most crucial hour, God offered to make of Moses a new nation and destroy the others. But their leader stood in the gap and prayed for his people. Because of his intercessory prayer, God forgave the people, but none above the age of twenty would enter the Promised Land. According to the number of days in which the spies searched the land—a year for a day—they would wander in the wilderness and finally die.

Then with no warning, the ten unbelieving spies died by a plague. This act of God so moved the people, they decided it would be wise to go forward and possess the land. Defiantly, a small group tried to enter without Moses' help or the ark to lead them. But the battle was doomed to failure. The Amalekites crushed them to defeat.

Wandering in the wilderness the rest of their lives was the punishment for unbelief.

G. Brazen serpent

Numbers 21:4-9

Kadesh-Barnea was probably Israel's headquarters for quite some time. However, little is known about events of the next thirty-eight years. One occurrence was an organized conspiracy of leaders with a group of rebels led by Korah and another by Dathan and Abiram. Both groups complained about Moses' and Aaron's leadership. Why should they exercise so much authority over the other Levites and chiefs of the congregation? The dispute soon spread throughout the camp of Israel.

Their stubborn rebellion was punished in a most unusual way. The earth gaped open beneath the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, devouring their entire families and goods.

Shrieks sounded throughout the camp as people fled for their lives. Simultaneously, the fire of God from the Sanctuary flashed like lightning, killing 250 other rebels.

The day following, when the people blamed Moses and Aaron for the rebels' deaths, another 14,700 were slain by a plague!

Shortly before the forty years had expired, the people begged again for water. The new generation seemed as faithless as their fathers.

Irritated and exhausted with their unbelief, Moses prostrated himself before the Lord. He was told to gather the congregation and speak to the same rock that had previously flowed. Instead, Moses struck the rock as he had done previously and water gushed out. But he had disobeyed the command.

Tenderly God dealt with His disobedient servant. Publicly Moses was honored before the people when the water gushed forth, but was privately rebuked. Because of his unbelief and disobedience, he was prohibited from entering Canaan.

Shortly after Aaron died, the people again tired of the heavenly manna, wishing instead for Egypt's fare. This time there was no miraculous supply fulfilling their request. Instead, they were punished with "fiery" serpents. When people began dying from the bites, they repented and urged Moses to pray for them.

In response to Moses' prayer, a unique healing plan was revealed to cure the bites. A brass replica of a serpent was to be mounted

on a pole in the middle of the camp. By looking at the brass serpent, anyone who had been bitten would be healed.

Healing power was not in the brass serpent itself, but in obeying God's plan. Jesus used

the story of the brazen serpent to illustrate His future death (John 3:14-17). By looking to our crucified Savior on the cross, we can obtain both healing for the body and salvation for the soul.

Lesson 4 – Chart 3 God Makes a Covenant With Israel Fifth Dispensation—“Law”

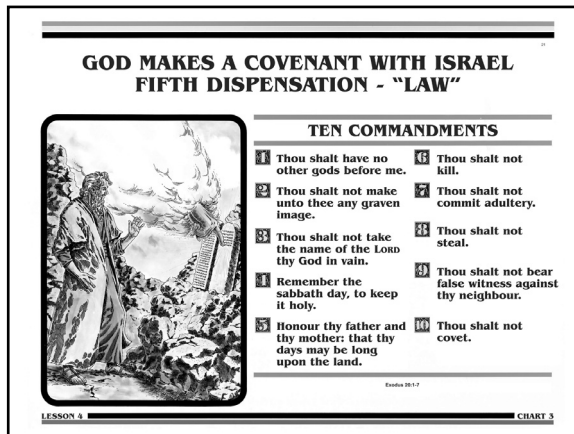


Chart Objective:

To describe the agreement God made with Israel known as the Old Covenant (Testament). The basis of this covenant is the Ten Commandments.

Chart Outline:

- A. Fifth Dispensation—“Law”
- B. Ten Commandments

A. Fifth Dispensation—“Law”

Let's return to Mount Sinai, Israel's temporary schoolhouse.

Israel arrived there “in the third month,” or about six weeks after leaving Egypt. Jews have traditionally observed the anniversary of the giving of law with the Feast of Pentecost. On that same holy day hundreds of years later, the gift of the Holy Spirit was given, marking the church's origin and the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy:

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel . . . After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:31-33).

Sinai set the scene of the Mosaic covenant; the new covenant was instituted at

Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost.

From the day Moses first received his call from God, he knew that Israel would serve God on Mount Sinai (Exodus 3:12). Naturally he was eager to ascend its jagged peaks. Three times in a single chapter, we read an account of Moses climbing this mount for a rendezvous with God and then returning with a message for the people (Exodus 19:3, 8, 20).

On Moses' first trip, God disclosed His intention of renewing the Abrahamic covenant.

The Israelites were spiritually dead. No one had regained the quality of life which Adam at first had experienced. Their dead spirits had never been quickened (brought to life) by God's Spirit. No knowledge existed regarding a “new birth.”

Therefore, Moses' law could govern only the soul (mind, will and emotions) and body (physical senses). Israel must be legislated in detail what would please God and what would not.

Christ's new covenant laws differ greatly. Because life is promised to all who believe the “gospel” (Jesus' death, burial and resurrection), His commands can be spiritually understood. Christ's laws were written in the “heart” after communion was restored with man's spirit.

Covenant? They must obey the voice of the Lord, accept and keep His covenant. Then they would be to Him a special treasure above all others. Furthermore, the Lord would make them a kingdom of priests; a holy nation; examples; instructors; and prophets to the heathen world.

The outward sign of this consecration remained as circumcision. Inwardly, they were to be pure and holy, preserving the knowledge of the one true God.

Would they accept this covenant? Moses took God's gracious proposal to the elders and people. Eagerly they agreed to obey the new commands without fully understanding the responsibilities. They were only interested in securing the promised blessings for themselves and their posterity.

Acting as mediator for both sides, Moses enumerated the preparations for receiving God's law. For the next three days the people must abstain from all sensual pleasure, wash their bodies and clothes. A fence must be erected around the mountain, separating it from the people. Should man or beast touch the mountain, they would die. Such strict punishments exemplified reverence for a holy God.

On the third day, the congregation stood before the mount, expectantly. Suddenly the silence was shattered by peals of thunder and lightning flashes. A cloud of thick blackness descended on the mountain, followed by an earthquake, whereby Sinai trembled from crest to base.

A voice like a trumpet sounded while the whole mountain smoked and burned with fire (Deuteronomy 4:11-12). The splendor overwhelmed the people with respect for the law's authority and the greatness of the Lawgiver. No sweet angelic music was heard on that occasion!

Again the Lord warned Moses against the people touching the mountain. How different is the privilege of Christians! We are encouraged to boldly enter the holiest of all places—the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-23)!

While the mountain smoked and quaked, a voice like that of a man distinctly pronounced the "ten words" of God's law.

Here are the three divisions of the law:

- **Moral law.** Relates to rules of right conduct. The moral law is basically found in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17).
- **Civil law.** Relates to the rights and duties of citizens of a community (Exodus, chapters 21-23).
- **Ceremonial law.** Relates to religious ceremonies or rituals, principally in the Book of Leviticus.

Moses then ascended the mount. There he received ordinances for the completion of the covenant and precise details of the principles contained in the Ten Commandments. Beginning with Exodus 20:22 through chapter 23, various civil, social and religious laws were spoken privately to Moses.

The principles for Israel's civil society were superior to any other. In fact, the Mosaic ordinances have remained the grand model of all civil society.

God commanded Moses to write the

covenant laws in a book known as the book of the covenant. The book was read to all the people for them to respond to Yahweh's offer. They agreed to obey.

To formally ratify the covenant, burnt sacrifices were offered on an altar. Half the blood was sprinkled on the altar and book of the covenant, and the other half on the people. The ceremony was similar to ratification of other important contracts of that day.

Then Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and seventy elders of the people ascended the mountain. At the halfway point, they saw the glory of the God of Israel and "did eat and drink" in His presence. Moses was commanded to proceed to the mountaintop while the elders waited with the people below.

For forty days, Moses communed with God, receiving the moral, civil, political and social laws that would govern God's covenant people.

B. Ten Commandments

Exodus 20:1-17

The Ten Commandments are the basis of the divine law which Israel accepted as the charter of their constitution. The remainder of the law was communicated privately to Moses and later delivered to the people.

These commandments were engraved on both sides of two tables of stone, "written with the finger of God," and kept for centuries in the ark of the covenant. These commandments have guided the majority of civilized societies since that time.

Four commandments relate to our attitude toward God. The other six deal with our attitudes toward other people. Jesus condensed them into two commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself" (Luke 10:25-28).

Here is a summary of the Ten Commandments:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This emphasizes man's first duty. Money, pleasure, fashion, fame, gluttony or any other "god" must never replace the true God. Every man, woman, boy, and girl must be committed to love and obey Him.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." No visible representations of Deity are to be made or worshiped. The Lord is "a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the

fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments” (Exodus 20:5-6).

“Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.” The irreverent use of God’s name by false or profane swearing is forbidden. His name is to be esteemed absolutely sacred and must never be used casually or lightheartedly.

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” Both man and beasts should work six days and rest one day. The Jewish Sabbath was designed as a day for family members and servants to worship and praise the Lord. The early church observed the first day of the week for worship and rest and called it the “Lord’s Day.”

The ceremonial Sabbath is no longer in effect (Colossians 2:16-17; Romans 14:5). Under the new covenant, Jesus provides a “spiritual” Sabbath of rest when we are baptized in the Holy Ghost (Matthew 11:28-30; Isaiah 28:11-12).

“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land.” Children must reverence and obey their parents. Juvenile delinquency was intolerable under the law. To “honor” means: to obey; to give the place of superiority; to hold in high esteem; to reverence. The responsibility rests with the parents to train their children morally and spiritually to obey this commandment.

“Thou shalt not kill.” Because man was made “in the image of God,” human life is considered sacred. Both suicide and the murder of a fellow man are prohibited. However, capital punishment is scriptural since the guilty murderer has destroyed one made in God’s image (James 3:9).

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Marriage, the highest and most sacred of human relations, is not to be violated by infidelity. A man is responsible to love and care for his wife more than his parents.

“Thou shalt not steal.” Every person has a right to the ownership of private property. Any act, directly or indirectly, whereby we wrongfully acquire something belonging to another person is forbidden. Our dealings with men are to be honest.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.” Failing to protect the truth is the command most frequently and

unconsciously broken. This includes slander, gossip, talebearing without careful investigation, leaving a false impression, exaggeration, flattery, or failure to defend one who is unjustly criticized.

“Thou shalt not covet.” We are not forbidden to desire houses, spouses, cattle or property, but we must not desire what is already possessed by another. This command reveals the hidden depths of an evil heart and exposes the root from which many other sins grow.

God had approached Israel as closely as possible, yet nearer than they could tolerate. His presence struck terror in their hearts and they pled with Moses to mediate for them. God granted their wish, then foretold the coming of a Prophet greater than Moses:

“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him” (Deuteronomy 18:18).

While Moses was basking in God’s presence on the mountaintop, a disgusting scene unfolded below. After only a few weeks, the people became impatient. Where was their leader?

Demanding a visible replica of the Lord, they persuaded Aaron to make an image of gold. Like many leaders today, Aaron pleased the people rather than God.

~~The women’s~~ golden ornaments were melted and molded to form a calf. Eagerly the people offered sacrifices to their new idol. They also “rose up to play”—meaning immoral sexual activity found among the Canaanite worship of Baal.

So quickly had their covenant been broken!

As Moses was preparing to descend the mountain with the tables of stone and God’s exciting plans for the new Tabernacle, he heard loud celebrating below. Moses alone stood between God’s fiery wrath and the rebels. Like a true intercessor, he pled, “Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self” (Exodus 32:12-13).

So deeply was God moved by Moses’ intercession, He “repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.”

The word “repent” denotes a change in God’s actions. They would be punished, but their lives were to be spared.

When Moses saw the disorderly, immodest crowd singing and dancing around the golden image, he dashed the two holy tablets into fragments upon the ground. Boldly he commanded the idol to be ground into powder and then cast into Israel’s drinking water.

A second set of tablets were later given to Moses by God. It remained in the ark of the covenant for many centuries.

Standing at the main gate of the camp, Moses demanded, “Who is on the LORD’s side? let him come unto me.” Immediately the sons of Levi responded. They were sent through the camp and slew three thousand who were still revelling in idolatry. Because of their zeal on this and other occasions, Levi’s tribe was greatly honored and blessed.

While the nation of Israel was still in its

spiritual infancy, they followed the Lord’s commands chiefly through fear. However, terror is a very ineffective method of conversion. Devils and sinful men may “believe and tremble,” but without love, they do not serve God. It was impossible to obey these exalted commands—with unregenerate spirits.

The law is like a thermometer. It indicates fever in the body, but cannot administer a cure. Like a mirror, it clearly reveals the dirt and blemishes—but cannot cleanse.

Only the new covenant of grace could restore man’s sinful condition. Jesus’ blood provided the remedy for what the law diagnosed!

As John Bunyan observed,

“Run, John, run,’ the Law commands, But gives me neither legs nor hands. Far grander news the Gospel brings; It bids me fly, and gives me wings.”

Lesson 4 – Chart 4 A Holy People, Separated Unto God

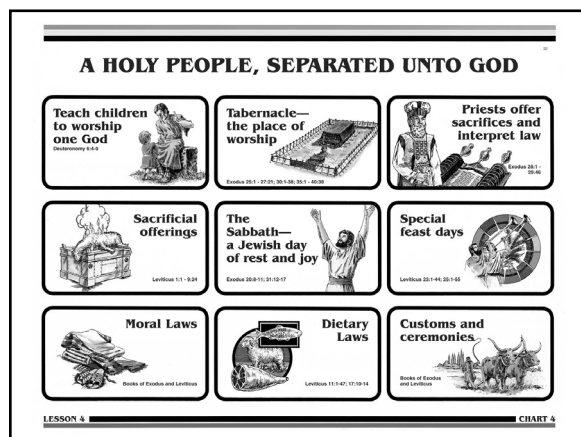


Chart Objective:

To emphasize the reasons why God purposely marks His covenant people. A separate lifestyle has always been a mark of distinction among His chosen ones.

Chart Outline:

- A. A Holy People, Separated Unto God
- B. Teach children to worship one God
- C. Tabernacle—the place of worship
- D. Priests offer sacrifices and interpret law
- E. Sacrificial offerings
- F. The Sabbath—a Jewish day of rest and joy
- G. Special feast days
- H. Moral laws

- I. Dietary laws
- J. Customs and ceremonies

A. A Holy People, Separated Unto God

Throughout the ages, God has diligently searched and longed for individuals who delighted to think and talk about Him (Malachi 3:16-17). Such choice people have always been His pride and joy! He treasures them as we would the rarest of gems!

Eden’s very beauty had been blighted when Adam, God’s highest creation, had chosen to follow his own will above that of His Maker. But with tender love, plans were immediately initiated to cover the shame until God would Himself come to pay the penalty and redeem man from sin.

Can you imagine His grief when men first shaped idols and bowed to them in worship?

Then God found Abraham. Here was a man who believed everything God told him! He was the kind with whom God could enter into covenant. God had abundantly blessed His covenant partner and multiplied his descendants into a mighty nation.

But having one nation in covenant was not sufficient. The whole world must learn the joy of serving the one true God. Israel must introduce the Lord to idol worshippers and heathen nations.

God designed that Israel be a holy people,

"crossroads of the world"

teaching every other nation how to please the Lord. Hence, they became a model for others to emulate. Their Promised Land was strategically situated so that travelers to and from African and Asian continents passed through their territory.

The word "holy" means "separated and set apart," "splendid," "beautiful," "pure," "uncontaminated." What better way to describe God's covenant partners? He wanted Israel's lifestyle to be totally opposite from ungodly nations under Satan's dominion. God's chosen ones should worship, live, act, talk, eat, and dress differently from them.

So intimate was the relationship between Yahweh and His covenant people, He referred to Israel as His "wife." She may have been regarded by her idolatrous neighbors as odd or different, but those uncommon characteristics were His marks of distinction.

God declares Himself to be a jealous God. Once He enters into covenant—with a nation or an individual—God claims them as His own. To flirt with other "gods" infuriates Him! When we ask Him to be our Lord and Savior, He wants first place in our lives.

Were God's laws and commandments meant to be a burden to Israel? Did the Lord want to oppress them with strict rules and regulations? Oh, no! Each segment of the law was a protection and benefit. The Creator does all things well for His creation.

Covenant people are purposely marked. Why? Because they represent Deity. They are God's holy, righteous people—separated from all the rest of the world!

Now, let's examine the various ways God intended to make Israel different.

B. Teach children to worship one God

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

The underlying faith of Israel is summed up:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:4-5).

Abraham is credited with being the founder of the world's first "monotheistic" faith (belief in one God). In a world dominated by gross idolatry, this one man firmly believed that "the Lord our God is one Lord."

Moses echoed that strong conviction by

commanding that every Israelite indelibly etch these words in the minds of their children. They would learn by the method of repetition:

"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deuteronomy 6:7-9).

"The Lord our God is one Lord" was written and spoken throughout the camp of Israel. When they finally entered the land of Canaan inhabited by grossly idolatrous people, God's covenant people would be fully trained in monotheism.

C. Tabernacle—the place of worship

Exodus 25:1 - 27:21; 30:1-38; 35:1 - 40:38

Another special mark of separation was Israel's place of worship. Because God desired to dwell among His people, He instructed that worship would be in a centralized tent structure. At this Tabernacle, people would learn the means of approaching God and the manner in which He would manifest Himself to them.

A visible Tabernacle was Israel's constant reminder that only the one true God must be worshiped. Like the law, the Tabernacle was a protection against idolatry.

The Tabernacle is one of the greatest prophetic types in God's redemptive plan. His Spirit abode in this material structure. Fifteen hundred years later, He dwelled among men in a house of flesh and bones—the body of Jesus Christ.

To some, the Tabernacle remains merely a Jewish ritual without significance today. An in-depth study, however, reveals it to be the foreshadowing of God's plan of redemption through Jesus Christ.

D. Priests offer sacrifices and interpret law

Exodus 28:1 - 29:46

Before Moses' day, the head of each family and the first-born son exercised both spiritual and political forms of government. They were both ruler and priest. However, when

Israel left Egypt, God declared that all the first-born sons belonged to Him! Because of the mercy shown them on the Passover night, they became sanctified as God's possession.

But when Levi's tribe responded to Moses' call for allegiance to God at the episode of the golden calf, Levites assumed the position of honor. Rather than the first-born of Israel being the sanctified ones, the Levites became the chosen ones to serve Israel's invisible King in the Tabernacle. Aaron and his four sons were specially selected to be priests for Israel.

Levi's whole tribe was set apart for a holy calling, but there were three branches. Upon Aaron was conferred the chief office of high priest, then passed to his son Eleazar and his descendants. Since the high priest represented Israel before God and brought messages to them, greater purity and virtue were required of him than other priests. Even his official dress distinguished his role.

Only the four sons of Aaron and their descendants could be priests, and each man had to qualify before being consecrated to this holy office.

Among the priests' many sacred duties were teaching statutes of the Lord and acting as judges of the law.

A third branch of Levites assisted the priests. The Levites were not permitted to offer sacrifices, burn incense or handle the holy vessels of the Sanctuary until the priests had concealed the vessels from view (Numbers 4:15).

Levites were categorized according to Levi's three sons: Kohath, Gershon and Merari. Because Aaron belonged to the family of Kohath, the Kohathites held first rank. Their duty was to carry the sacred vessels, including the ark itself, while Israel was journeying. Still, every furnishing had to be concealed with a blue covering before the trip.

The Gershonites removed the curtains, veils and tent-hangings. The Merarites were entrusted with the heavier parts, such as boards, pillars and bars.

The Levites did not receive a specified section of Canaan's land. Instead, forty-eight cities among all the tribal territories were appointed them. Their support came through a system called "tithing," meaning "one-tenth." Each Israelite tithed their produce and cattle. One-tenth of the Levites' tithes

was given to the priests for their support.

Besides assisting the priests, the Levites participated in all festivals, preserved and transcribed the law and read it publicly at some of the feasts.

E. Sacrificial offerings

Leviticus 1:1 - 9:24

From ancient times, the rite of sacrifice had been practiced. Cain, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had offered sacrifices to God. But when the Tabernacle was introduced, the sacrificial offerings became regulated.

All sacrifices were to be offered on the brazen altar in the court of the Tabernacle. After the place of worship, a priesthood, and Levitical order had been established, Israel was instructed how to express religious devotion to God in an orderly, ritualistic fashion.

When men "sacrificed" or surrendered to God their possessions, they expressed their devotion, thanksgiving and love. Sacrificial offerings represented an "atonement" or "covering" for their sins, awaiting the day when Christ's blood would erase and dismiss all transgressions.

Two types of sacrifices were offered: those without blood and those with blood. Bloodless sacrifices were: firstfruits and tithes, meat and drink offerings and incense. Every Israelite presented tithes to the Levites and priests in gratitude to Yahweh. These consisted of grain, fruit, grapes, wool, meal, oil, or new wine.

Blood sacrifices were of domestic animals or clean birds. All wild and unclean beasts were strictly excluded. Every victim had to be unblemished and perfect.

Four types of blood sacrifices were offered:

- **Sin offerings** atoned for ignorantly sinning against God and man, or sins arising from human weakness. Willful, deliberate sin was punished with death. God was teaching Israel that His anger against sin is severe!
- **Trespass offerings** were offered for some specific act of violating the law through error. Restitution was required. If the transgression was against the Lord, payment was made to the priests; if against man, payment was to the injured person.
- **Burnt offerings** denoted complete

self-surrender to Yahweh. The whole idea of sacrifice was self-dedication to God.

- **Peace offerings** were unique in that the offerer enjoyed the feast himself by eating a portion of the flesh. These offerings signified communing with God and included fellowship and friendship.

The entire system of sacrifices and offerings symbolized the day when men would present themselves as a “living sacrifice” unto God (Romans 12:1), and would offer the “sacrifice of praise to God” with their lips (Hebrews 13:15).

F. The Sabbath— a Jewish day of rest and joy Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-17

The seventh day of the week was established as a day of rest and delight to bless and refresh man. Special clothes were worn and the choicest food eaten. Neither man nor beast could perform any work on this day.

G. Special feast days Leviticus 23:1-44; 25:1-55

Every male Jew was required to attend three festivals each year: the Passover (Feast of Unleavened Bread), the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and the Feast of Tabernacles (Booths). Each symbolized some unique, historical event.

Two other feast days were: the Feast of Trumpets (announcing the beginning of the civil Jewish New Year) and the Day of Atonement (a blood sacrifice was offered by the high priest for the sins of the people).

Besides these five feast days, every seventh year was declared a “Sabbatical year.” The fields were not planted. Every fiftieth year was the “year of Jubilee” during which all property reverted to the original owner.

H. Moral laws Books of Exodus and Leviticus

These laws describe right conduct for God’s people, proper treatment of other people, honest principles of life, how to be sexually virtuous, restrictions for choosing marriage partners, sexual rights in marriage, responsibilities and treatment of husbands and wives, divorce and remarriage, and God’s judgment of homosexuality, sexual perversion, idolatry and witchcraft. Nine of the Ten Commandments are moral laws.

God demonstrates intense displeasure toward certain actions. Usually these sins are labeled as an “abomination,” meaning extreme disgust, loathsome, hateful, shamefully vile. At times, God said, “This is an abomination to you” (Leviticus 11:20). However, seven times in the Book of Deuteronomy, the Lord said, “This is an abomination to me.” Always these are gross moral sins, equally condemned in the New Testament. In the Book of Deuteronomy are such abominations:

- Graven images (7:25).
- Human sacrifices (12:31).
- A defective animal sacrifice (17:1).
- Witchcraft and spiritism (18:10-12).
- Religious prostitution (23:18).
- Remarrying a defiled woman (24:4).
- Interchange of apparel between sexes (22:5).

Other abominations toward God are pride, lying, murder, sowing discord, and a froward heart (Proverbs 6:16-19; 11:20; 12:22).

I. Dietary laws Leviticus 11:1-47; 17:10-14

While in Egypt, apparently the Israelites had no scruples about which foods should be eaten. But now they were to observe which meats should be avoided. Their meat diet was largely restricted to domestic animals used in sacrifice.

Any animal that divides the hoof and chews the cud may be eaten, such as the cow, sheep, oxen, and deer. But those that chew the cud with an undivided hoof, such as the camel, horse, or rabbit, shall not be eaten. Because the pig divides the hoof but does not chew the cud, its flesh is also unclean.

All seafood with fins and scales may be eaten. But shellfish—shrimp, lobsters, crabs and oysters—are unclean.

God’s dietary law also specified that neither fat nor blood were to be eaten (Leviticus 3:17). Medical science now agrees that cholesterol in fat is responsible for high blood pressure, resulting in heart attacks, cerebral hemorrhage, or stroke.

Why should blood be refused? God said, “the blood is the life” (Deuteronomy 12:23-25). The blood also assimilates whatever is in the stomach—whether nutritious or poisonous—and distributes it to the various

parts of the body. Therefore, disease germs are first carried in the bloodstream before affecting the flesh of an animal.

What was the purpose of the Jewish dietary laws?

“That ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days” (Deuteronomy 5:33).

As the moral law directed the morals of the people, so the dietary law protected their physical health. God designed proper eating habits as insurance against poor health and disease.

The wonderful benefits of God’s healing covenant with Israel were dependent upon obeying the dietary laws. A word to the wise is sufficient!

J. Customs and ceremonies

Books of Exodus and Leviticus

Incorporated into the personal lives and habits of the people were religious overtones. Hygienic rules and regulations were given for purification of women, washing of hands, detecting and treatment of diseases and uncleanness in general.

Also included in this category were: Sabbath customs; feast days; naming children; circumcision of males; education of children; recital of mealtime blessings; dedication of new homes; memorials for deceased relatives; farming procedures; types of cloth to be worn; and mourning for the dead.

Constantly, the Israelites were reminded that God had separated them from all other people in the world to be holy and dedicated unto Him.

Lesson 4 – Chart 5 God Dwells With His Covenant People

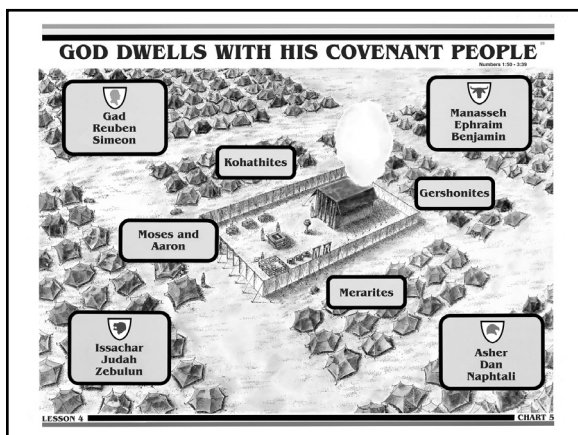


Chart Objective:

To illustrate how the Tabernacle of God’s presence was arranged in the very center of the Israelites’ tents. Situated between the people and the Tabernacle were the Levites—the men of God.

Chart Outline:

- A. God Dwells with His Covenant People
- B. Arrangement of tents

A. God Dwells with His Covenant People Numbers 1:50 - 3:39

Knowing Israel would soon face the idolatry of Canaanite religion, God prepared them with laws covering every phase of life—moral, civil, political and social. God’s law

contained safeguards against the corrupting influence of heathenistic attitudes.

Then came the final arrangement of Israel’s meeting place with God. They must learn the proper way to approach Him.

God’s desire was to be near His covenant people. Because they were spiritually dead, He could not yet dwell in their hearts. Therefore, His presence was manifested to their physical senses. Their worship was also on this same level.

To construct the place of God’s dwelling, He requested freewill offerings. Parting with valued possessions would prove whether the people really desired His presence.

From the day Adam had suffered spiritual death, God had been arranging mankind’s redemption. The Tabernacle provided a striking visible illustration of God’s plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. Therefore, Moses meticulously executed the blueprints. Everything was according to the pattern.

In the New Testament, Stephen referred to the people of Israel as “the church in the wilderness” (Acts 7:38). Paul also agreed that all Israel’s experiences were intended as types and examples (I Corinthians 10:11). So we understand that the Tabernacle was a model for us today.

B. Arrangement of tents

The camp was carefully organized for marching, with the Tabernacle in the very

center. This portrayed that all things must be done systematically and carefully and that God wished to occupy the center of their lives.

Every tent door faced the Tabernacle! What if enemy neighbors sneak attacked? How could the Israelites defend themselves? Such an arrangement contradicts military strategy. Here was God's message: "If you will put Me in the center of your life, I will care for you!"

When the tent flap was lifted every morning, they would see the pillar of cloud hovering over the Tabernacle. God's presence was to be their first sight in the morning and the last at night. They were constantly reminded of His nearness.

How often we esteem other things more important than God's presence. It may be a job, money, power, influence, family, sports, or other things. But our minds must be settled that God receives pre-eminence for now and eternity.

The Levites were situated between the people and the Tabernacle. Between people and the church is the man of God. Preachers are God's representatives.

"For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 2:7).

The Tabernacle always faced the East. On each of the four sides camped and marched

three tribes. Between the Tabernacle and the other tribes in a protective way were the four groups of Levites: Moses, Aaron and his sons; the Kohathites; Gershonites; and Merarites.

First, borne by the Kohathites, went the ark of the covenant overspread by the pillar of cloud. Then came Judah, the strongest of the tribes, supported by Issachar and Zebulun. Judah (meaning "praise") led the procession of people and bore the standard of the eastern division, a lion.

They were followed by the sons of Gershon and Merari bearing the coverings, hangings, boards, pillars and sockets of the Tabernacle.

Fourth was the tribe of Reuben, succeeded by Gad and Simeon. The southern division marched under the standard of Reuben, a man's head.

Next went the rest of the Kohathites bearing the sacred Sanctuary vessels. Then marched Ephraim, followed by Benjamin and Manasseh, the western division bearing the standard of Ephraim, an ox.

Last in the procession marched the northern division led by Dan, then Naphtali and Asher. Dan's standard was an eagle.

The cloud's movement specified marching or resting. More than three million people were dependent upon God for daily sustenance and guidance. He is still well pleased when His people depend upon His Spirit for leadership and guidance.

Lesson 4 – Chart 6 A New Way of Worship

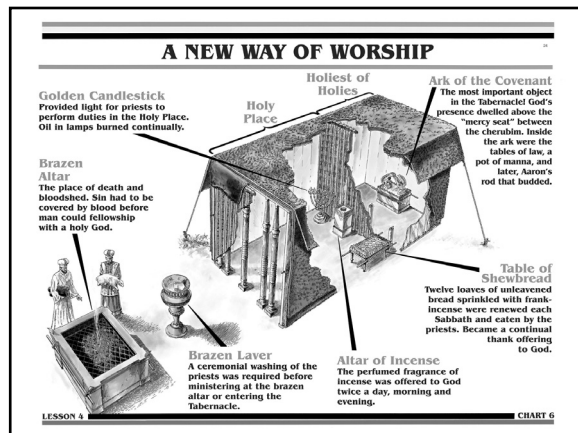


Chart Objective:

To examine the Tabernacle and its furnishings, which portrayed the future plan of redemption.

Chart Outline:

- A. A New Way of Worship
- B. Brazen Altar
- C. Brazen Laver
- D. Tabernacle coverings and frame
- E. Table of Shewbread
- F. Altar of Incense
- G. Golden Candlestick
- H. Ark of the Covenant

A. A New Way of Worship

Now let's examine each piece of furniture in God's dwelling place known as the "Tabernacle." Since every detail had a special meaning, Moses was not allowed to alter the blueprints even slightly.

Two passages are the basis for interpreting persons, events and parts of the Old Testament Tabernacle as types of New Testament

truths—I Corinthians 10:1-11 and Hebrews 8:1 to 10:18. The major items are explained in Hebrews, but additional applications and interpretations may be found in other epistles.

(A panoramic view of the Tabernacle and outer court is given in Lesson 4, Chart 5. Shown there are the pens for sacrificial animals, tables and fleshhooks used by the priests for slaughtering sacrifices.)

The court of the Tabernacle was a large rectangle of 100 cubits north and south and 50 cubits east and west. The opening faced eastward.

There was no actual gate. Worshipers entered the court by drawing aside the hanging of blue, scarlet and purple, similar to that in front of the Tabernacle. In contrast to the white linen surrounding the court, the multi-colored entrance clearly showed the opening.

Daily, weekly, monthly and annual sacrifices were offered. Continually the smoke of victims ascended to heaven. All Israel— young and old, rich and poor, priests and laymen—came into the court. But only the priests could enter into the Holy Place. The high priest alone could enter into the Holy of Holies and then only once a year.

B. Brazen Altar

Entering the courtyard of the Tabernacle, the first item was the altar of burnt offering, the place where God had declared He should record His name (Exodus 20:24). Built of acacia wood and overlaid with bronze, the altar was 5 x 5 and 3 cubits high. Horns projected from the four top corners where animal victims were bound and attached.

The positioning of the altar denotes the absolute necessity for blood atonement before fellowshiping with an infinitely holy God. Man's first need is to have his sins and impurities purged by blood. There must be an altar of death, a sacrifice of the flesh, a surrendering of self, an offering on the blazing altar. God's message has always begun with blood!

C. Brazen Laver

Located between the brazen altar and door to the Tabernacle was the brazen laver. According to Exodus 38:8, the Hebrew women contributed their looking-glasses to construct it. They had received gifts of circular or oval bronze plates used by Egyptian women as mirrors before they left Egypt. Freely they were donated.

The laver was strictly for ceremonial washing of the priests prior to entering the Holy Place. It was adequately supplied with water for a priest to wash both hands and feet. This law was to be "a statute for ever" (Exodus 30:18-21) and its violation punishable by death. Failure to wash implied contempt of purity—a great offense to God.

D. Tabernacle coverings and frame

Ten curtains of fine linen dyed blue, purple and scarlet with figures of cherubim woven into the material constituted the ceiling or inner covering of the Tabernacle. Fifty golden clasps held them together. Only from the inside could the beauty of the inner covering be viewed.

Over the linen curtains was stretched a curtain of goats' hair. Arabs still use goats' hair similarly in weaving tents to provide strength and protection from wet, stormy weather.

Two additional coverings were spread over the curtain of goats' hair. One consisted of rams' skins dyed red and the other of badgers' skins. From the outside, the Tabernacle could never be considered an object of beauty. Only those inside worshiping could fully appreciate its beauty, just as the royal priesthood of Christ alone fully appreciates our lovely Lord.

The Tabernacle frame consisted of forty gold-covered boards 10 cubits long and set in forty sockets (holders) of silver. Five gold bars held the boards in place.

Separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies hung a veil of the same material and workmanship as the ten inner curtains. Only the high priest bearing sacrificial blood could enter this section.

Supported by five pillars, a curtain that could be raised and lowered formed the entrance to the Tabernacle. When raised, one could see into the Holy Place. When lowered, it covered the entire eastern side or front of the Tabernacle.

Likewise, the curtain dividing the church from the world may be lifted at times, revealing glimpses of the real inner life of God's people. But no one understands the true life of worship, prayer and praise until he enters it.

E. Table of Shewbread

Upon entering the Holy Place, to the right was a table measuring 2 x 1 x 1-1/2 cubits made of gold-lined acacia wood. The twelve loaves of bread were surrounded by a gold

rim. It was transported by staves placed through rings on the bottom corner.

Loaves of bread (sprinkled with frankincense), dishes, spoons, and incense cups and bowls for drink offerings were placed on the table. All utensils were made of pure gold. Each Sabbath, the loaves were replaced with fresh ones and eaten by the priests while in the Holy Place. Loaves and wine constituted a continual thank offering to God from the twelve tribes of Israel.

Showbread, or “bread of presence” was set before the “face” or presence of God dwelling behind the veil in the Holy of Holies. The loaves symbolized Jesus Christ, our Bread of Life, or Word of God. As the bread supplied nourishment for the priests, so Christ meets the needs of His children today.

However, under the new covenant, we look to the Lord’s table. It reminds us of His broken body and shed blood for the healing of our bodies and salvation of our souls. At His table, we renew our covenant vows.

F. Altar of Incense

In many respects the altar of incense is similar to the altar of burnt offering. Both were square and made of acacia wood with horns and rings provided for staves. However, the altar of incense measured 1 x 1 x 2 cubits and was covered with gold.

Situated in the center of the Holy Place, it provided an offering of incense to God. Twice a day, a priest offered incense (made from an exact prescription), with the morning and evening sacrifices.

The offering of incense was to be perpetual, meaning that as long as the Hebrew religion lasted, the ritual would continue.

Incense symbolizes prayer and communion with God. The “continual” burning shows the necessity for continuous and persistent prayer (I Thessalonians 5:17-18).

G. Golden Candlestick

The golden candlestick was the most ornate object in the Holy Place. It provided light for the priests to daily perform their duties. Made of pure gold, it was decorated with almond-shaped bowls or cups, although no dimensions are given. It resembled an upright shaft with three curved branches extending upward in pairs from each side.

The lamps burned from sunset each evening until morning when the high priest

extinguished and “dressed” them. Tongs, or pincers for trimming the wicks, and snuff dishes used for burnt wick fragments were made of pure gold. Estimated to be worth \$33,804, a talent of gold was used to make the candlestick, tongs and snuff dishes (John J. Davis, *Moses and the Gods of Egypt*, page 257).

The candlestick typifies Jesus Christ, the true Light of the World (John 1:6-9; 8:12). However, those who believe in Him are also “the light of the world” (Matthew 5:14). Illuminating the dark places of the world, the Holy Spirit shines forth from the lives He has filled.

H. Ark of the Covenant

Here, in the Holiest of Holies was the most essential part of the Tabernacle. It was never exhibited or displayed. The priests carried it on their shoulders until they reached a fixed location in Canaan.

Made of acacia wood, the ark was a chest 2-1/2 x 1-1/2 x 1-1/2 cubits, covered with gold and carried on poles inserted through rings at the four lower corners. While in transit, no part of the chest was to touch the priests. Once the staves were inserted into the rings of the ark, they were never to be removed.

Inside this gold-covered wooden box was kept the law written on two tables of stone by the finger of God, a pot of manna, and Aaron’s rod which budded and blossomed.

The ark’s lid, known as the “mercy seat” was made of solid gold. On either end was a cherub with wings extended, facing the other, looking downward to the mercy seat. Apparently the figures were guardian angels watching over the precious deposit below—the two tables of law.

The mercy seat might appropriately be called the “throne of God.” It was here He manifested Himself to Moses and his successors. There was to be constant communing between God and the earthly ruler of the nation, for God said, “There I will meet with thee” (Exodus 25:22). God’s divine presence occupied the space above the mercy seat between the two cherubim and above the ark of the covenant.

Made of gold, the most precious metal, the mercy seat represented God’s most precious attribute—mercy. It covered the law as He “covers” the sins and offenses of His people.

This was where the high priest sprinkled blood, typifying the sacrifice of Christ.

The ark of the covenant with its mercy seat was the most important object in the whole Tabernacle and the focal point of atten-

tion—especially on the annual Day of Atonement.

What the mercy seat symbolized for Israel and typified for us, Christ has fully accomplished for both.

Lesson 4 – Chart 7 “Good Things to Come!”

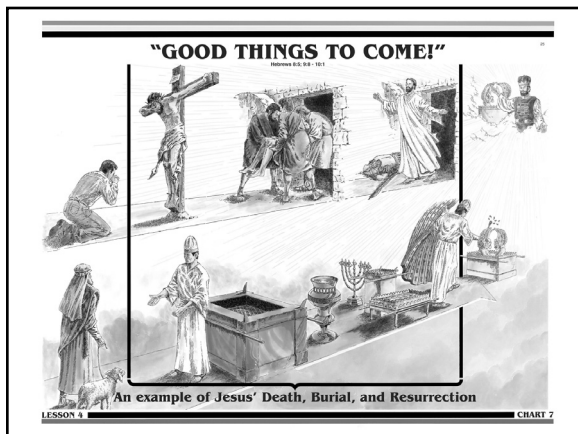


Chart Objective:

To determine how the Tabernacle foreshadowed Christ's redemption from sin and the gospel message.

Chart Outline:

- A. “Good Things to Come!”
- B. An example of Jesus' Death, Burial, and Resurrection

A. “Good Things to Come!”

Hebrews 8:5; 9:8 - 10:1

When Paul recalled the beautiful illustration of redemption found in the Tabernacle, he said,

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle . . . neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:11-12).

As a whole, the Tabernacle typifies the Man, Jesus Christ. Our first glimpse of the “good news” about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection is seen in Moses' writings.

Although the sacrificial blood of lambs, goats, and oxen could never erase or dismiss sin, it provided a temporary remedy. It

pointed toward the blood of God's “Lamb” Who would “redeem” or purchase man's freedom from sin.

When an Israelite offered a sin offering, he brought a young lamb or goat. After laying his hand upon the victim and confessing his sin, he prayed for atonement and then slit the animal's throat. The priest then dipped his finger in the blood. Seven times he sprinkled the blood on the horns of the brazen altar before pouring the remainder on the ground in front of it.

When a sin offering was made for the whole congregation of Israel or for the high priest himself, blood was sprinkled seven times before the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies.

Then the high priest carried the entire carcass of the victim past all the tents of Israel to a ceremonially clean place outside the camp to burn it with fire. Because the sin offering was so loathsome in God's sight, the awful burden must be removed far away.

Within and without the Holy Place one “voice” was heard—the voice of the blood of atonement crying out for peace with God.

Perhaps the whole blood-smeared Tabernacle was obnoxious to some; but God was teaching Israel that His anger against sin is severe! His broken law will be satisfied only with the giving of life for life.

B. An example of Jesus' Death, Burial, and Resurrection

An Israelite's sin offering (shown on the lower part of the chart) was a foreshadowing of Christ's sacrificial offering for our redemption. Notice the similarities:

- The blood of an innocent lamb was sprinkled on the brazen altar and throughout the Tabernacle as a sin covering.
- The priest washed himself before entering the Tabernacle.
- The priest enjoyed the beauty of the Holy Place, ate the bread and smelled the incense.

- Once a year the high priest went behind the veil into the most holy presence of God.

Because of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection—which is the “gospel,” or “good news”—every believer becomes a priest and is eligible to enter the holy presence of God. The veil that once separated man from a holy God has been ripped apart!

What does the Tabernacle mean to us today? How is it an example of New Covenant salvation? First, the **brazen altar** reminds us of the cross and Jesus' blood that cleanses and remits our sins. Our “death” at the altar is not physical, but a mental surrendering of our will to God's will. He must become our Savior and Lord. Promising to love, serve, and obey our new Lord is the basis for entering into covenant with Him.

The **brazen laver** reminds us of water baptism and Jesus' burial. When we “bury” the old man, we are buried with Jesus Christ

into His death, and His blood remits or washes away our sins.

Then we receive the seal of the covenant, the wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit. Our bodies become the temple, or tabernacle where God's Spirit dwells (I Corinthians 3:16-17).

Life in the “Tabernacle” is glorious! His Word becomes our sustaining Bread of Life at the **table of shewbread**; the **altar of incense** represents our daily communion with Him in prayer and praise; His light, like the **golden candlestick**, begins to shine through us, attracting others to Jesus Christ.

But best of all, the way has been opened into the **Holiest of Holies**—the very presence of God Himself! We can freely enter into His presence any hour of the day.

Because of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection, we can leave Satan's family and our old death nature and receive everlasting life!

The Tabernacle was God's way of announcing, “Good things are coming!”

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM STUDY SHEET

Lessons in the Wilderness

LESSON NO. 4 Study Sheet

Chart 1. God Sends A Deliverer

- A. Birth of Moses (Exodus 2:1-10)
- B. God calls Moses (Exodus 3:1 - 4:17)
- C. Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh (Exodus 5:1-9; 7:10-13)
- D. Plagues of Egypt (Exodus 7:14 - 11:10)
Blood, frogs, gnats, flies, cattle disease, boils, hail, locusts, darkness, death.
- E. Passover (Exodus 12:1-36, 41-51)

Chart 2. Israel Leaves Egypt

- A. Crossing Red Sea (Exodus 14:1-31)
- B. Bitter waters made sweet (Exodus 15:22-26)
- C. Manna and quail given (Exodus 16:1-36)
- D. Law and Tabernacle (Exodus 19:1 - 40:38)
- E. Twelve spies sent (Numbers 13:1 - 14:45)
- F. Brazen serpent (Numbers 21:4-9)

Chart 3. God Makes a Covenant With Israel

- A. Fifth Dispensation—"Law"
- B. Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17)

Chart 4. A Holy People, Separated Unto God

- A. Teach children to worship one God (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)
- B. Tabernacle—the place of worship (Exodus 25:1 - 27:21; 30:1-33; 35:1 - 40:38)
- C. Priests offer sacrifices and interpret law (Exodus 28:1 - 29:46)
- D. Sacrificial offerings (Leviticus 1:1 - 9:24)
- E. The Sabbath—a Jewish day of rest and joy (Exodus 20:8-11; 31:12-17)
- F. Special feast days (Leviticus 23:1-44; 25:1-55)
- G. Moral laws (Books of Exodus and Leviticus)
- H. Dietary laws (Leviticus 11:1-47; 17:10-14)
- I. Customs and ceremonies (Books of Exodus and Leviticus)

Chart 5. God Dwells With His Covenant People

- A. Arrangement of Tents (Numbers 1:50 - 3:39)

Chart 6. A New Way of Worship

- A. Brazen Altar (Exodus 20:24; 27:1-8)
- B. Brazen Laver (Exodus 30:18-21)
- C. Tabernacle coverings and frame (Exodus 26:1-37; 27:9-19)
- D. Table of Shewbread (Exodus 25:23-30)
- E. Altar of Incense (Exodus 30:1-9)
- F. Golden Candlestick (Exodus 25:31-38)
- G. Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:10-22)

Chart 7. "Good Things to Come!"

- A. An example of Jesus' Death, Burial, and Resurrection (Hebrews 8:5; 9:8 - 10:1)

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM QUIZ

Lessons in the Wilderness

LESSON NO. 4 Quiz

Select the correct word from the list below to complete each statement.

Use each word only once.

1. God called _____ to deliver His people from Egyptian slavery.
2. To escape Pharaoh's decree, Jochebed placed her baby in an ark to float on the _____ River.
3. God sent ten terrible _____ to break Pharaoh's stubborn will and release the Israelites from slavery.
4. On their final evening in Egypt, the Israelites celebrated the _____ by sprinkling blood on their doorposts to ensure safety for their families.
5. God displayed His great power to both Israel and Egypt when He led His people through the _____ on dry ground.
6. On Mount Sinai, God gave Moses the law to govern His people. The basis for the law is called the "_____."
7. At the very center of their lives was the _____, the place of worship.
8. Near the entrance of the Tabernacle was the _____, symbolizing that man's sins must be covered by blood.
9. The _____ was designed to wash the priests before ministering in the Tabernacle.
10. In the Holiest of Holies was the most important object. The _____ symbolized the very presence of God!
11. God designed His people to be _____ and set apart from the rest of the world.
12. The entire Tabernacle is a beautiful illustration of our redemption, representing Christ's _____, _____, and _____.

Tabernacle
death
Passover
resurrection
plagues

Red Sea
burial
brazen laver
holy
brazen altar

Moses
Nile
Ten Commandments
ark of the covenant

Answers:

1. Moses 2. Nile 3. plagues 4. Passover 5. Red Sea 6. Ten Commandments
7. Tabernacle 8. brazen altar 9. brazen laver 10. ark of the covenant 11. holy
12. death, burial, resurrection

LESSON FIVE

A Nation Divided, Then Restored

This lesson reveals the tragic results of disobedience and idolatry among God’s covenant people.

Joshua triumphantly led Israel to her new home in Canaan. While Israel was absolutely obedient to God’s will and Word, they were victorious. But their own strategy resulted in failure and defeat.

Following Joshua’s leadership, judges arose to defend the people from enemy attacks. But eventually the people became disinterested in being God’s chosen ones. They wanted a king like other nations.

Under the rule of three kings—Saul, David, and Solomon—the nation lived peaceably for 120 years. But the next king’s foolish decision divided the kingdom.

Dedication to God was forgotten in the busy flurry of worshipping idols. God’s prophets warned, but Israel continued her rebellious ways.

Both the northern and southern kingdoms were eventually captured. After a seventy-year exile, a remnant from the southern kingdom returned. Israel is a prime example of a nation that disregarded God, His covenant, and spokesmen. Against a background of man’s failure and departure from God, the Old Testament story ends. Although God was not vocal during the next four centuries, His hands were steadily preparing the way for the coming Messiah.

When completed, students should be aware of the following concepts:

1. When covenant people love God and obey His Word, He goes before them to give victory over Satan.
2. Choosing the rule of man rather than of God leads toward idolatry and severs covenant protection.
3. But when God’s people return to Him in faith and obedience, He helps them to rebuild, restore, and replenish what was lost.
4. As the 400 “silent” years prepared the way for Christ’s first coming and spreading the gospel, today’s progress in travel and communication are also preparing the world to hear the gospel and prepare for His second coming (Matthew 24:14).
5. The dispensations of time show God’s progressive revelation in His plans and purposes for man.

Additional books for reading:

1. John J. Davis, *The Birth of a Kingdom*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970.
2. Charles F. Pfeiffer, *The United Kingdom*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1970.
3. Charles F. Pfeiffer, *The Divided Kingdom*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967.
4. Charles F. Pfeiffer, *Between the Testaments*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1959.
5. Eugene H. Merrill, *An Historical Survey of the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966.

Lesson 5 – Chart 1 Conquering the Land of Promise

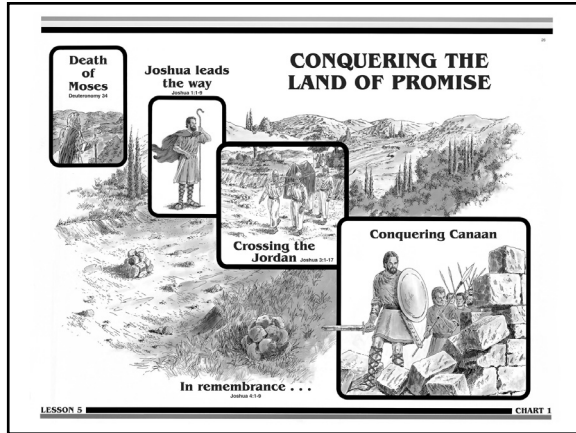


Chart Objective:

To travel with God’s covenant people, after a forty-year delay, to their new home in Canaan. The power of Israel’s covenant God was mightily displayed before heathen kingdoms as Israel conquered the land.

Chart Outline:

- A. Death of Moses
- B. Joshua leads the way
- C. Crossing the Jordan
- D. In remembrance . . .
- E. Conquering Canaan

A. Death of Moses Deuteronomy 34

For thirty-eight years, Israel wandered in the wilderness. Little is recorded of that period. They simply wandered until the unbelieving generation died and a new one could claim the land promised to Abraham.

Finally, Israel returned to Kadesh, the exact place where they had turned back to begin their long trek in the wilderness.

Moses was prohibited from entering the Land of Promise. When there had been no water, God instructed Moses to speak to the rock. Instead, reacting to the criticizing people, he struck the rock twice with his rod. An abundant supply of water gushed forth, but this disappointing reprimand was sounded:

“Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them” (Numbers 20:12).

At the age of 120, Moses delivered his farewell address. It spans the entire book of

Deuteronomy, which means “second law-giving” or “law repeated.” Moses purposely reinforced God’s laws once again in the minds of the people.

On the brink of Canaan, after a forty-year struggle with their unbelief and disobedience, Moses re-emphasized the importance of loving and obeying God:

“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart” (Deuteronomy 6:5-6; also 10:12-13; 11:1; 13:3).

To love and obey God is still the most important principle we can learn.

Having completed his blessing upon the people, Moses ascended Mount Nebo, the highest peak of the Pisgah range. The form of this beloved leader slowly vanished into the distance for the last time.

The grand old leader of Israel retained a clear vision and youthful strength. His mental and spiritual powers had not diminished. But God’s work for him was completed.

Somewhere near the top of the mountain, God paid His respects to Moses and buried him. The exact burial place is unknown. Angels contended over his body, but Satan lost the battle (Jude 9).

Moses was not seen again until centuries later when he stood with Elijah and Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration. At last he stood on a mountain *inside* the Land of Promise, worshiping and testifying of that greater Prophet who had finally come (Matthew 17:1-5).

B. Joshua leads the way Joshua 1:1-9

Another leader stepped forward. Joshua was a man of power, courage, wisdom and immediate action. He was one of two survivors of the original twelve spies sent to Canaan almost forty years earlier. Joshua and Caleb had given a positive report of faith.

After thirty days of mourning for Moses, the call came to march forward. The responsibility for two million people was entrusted to their new leader.

The biblical narrative continues in the Book of Joshua. The first five books of law were written by Moses. The next section cov-

ers the **History** of the nation of Israel.

An impossible task awaited Joshua. The flooding Jordan River barricaded them from the land of Canaan. How could he lead this host of people across an overflowing, turbulent river, while enemy nations guarded the other side?

Joshua's earlier espionage experience exposed him to the giant races, the skilled, warlike people, their chariots of iron and the colossal, walled cities.

The Lord commanded:

"Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel" (Joshua 1:2).

C. Crossing the Jordan

Joshua 3:1-17

The people were instructed: "Prepare for crossing Jordan." The trek itself was directed by their ministry—the Levites. The priests carried the ark, representing the presence of God.

God's plan remains that ministers of the gospel be examples in courage, guidance and leadership. When faithful ministers lead, the people will follow.

Between the ark and the people was a distance of 2,000 cubits (about a mile), so that all could see the way. It was as if God were saying to the heathen Canaanites, "Come and battle against Me if you can. My people are behind; I alone will meet and defy you all!"

The pillar of cloud had vanished. Israel was forced to walk by faith rather than sight.

Crossing the swollen river required a miracle. In the spring season, melting snows from Mount Hermon created flooded conditions. But when the priests' feet touched the "brim of the water," it happened!

The waters stopped at the city of Adam, about fifteen miles north of the Dead Sea, leaving a wide, dry expanse for the Israelites to cross. Far to the right, the waters were miraculously drawn into a heap, while the waters below quickly drained into the Dead Sea.

God's people hurried across the dry riverbed, past the priests standing in the midst of the Jordan. About five to ten miles west of Jordan, they camped at Gilgal. This became headquarters for the women, children and cattle until the land was conquered and divided among the tribes.

D. In remembrance . . .

Joshua 4:1-9

Joshua ordered the erection of two memorials to commemorate the miracle of the Jordan crossing. A man from each tribe carried a stone from the riverbed to build one on the west bank. A second memorial was constructed by Joshua in the Jordan riverbed itself.

Twelve stones were stacked where the priests had carried the ark. At this height, the monument extended out of the water most of the year unless the river was overflowing.

Under the law, many memorials were erected. God designed that the story of His provision and special covenants be related from generation to generation. Thus, the two Jordan monuments provided a focal point for youthful questioning minds.

Parents responded to such inquiries to sow seeds of instruction. Fathers recounted how that Yahweh had brought Israel across the Jordan on dry ground, just as He had earlier delivered their forefathers at the Red Sea.

The purpose for instructing through memorials was that "all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever" (Joshua 4:24).

An Israeli child's inquisitiveness was an important means of perpetuating the faith of Yahweh. Instruction in the sacred traditions was a perpetual obligation. In fact, it's a wonderful method for teaching our own families!

When the priests came out of the Jordan riverbed, the heap of water fell and again overflowed the banks. This meant there was no turning back for Israel. The wilderness life was erased forever. Now within the scope of their promised inheritance, their task was to drive out the enemy and possess the land.

Another very important practice had to be renewed. The covenant sign of circumcision had evidently been neglected during the wilderness wandering. None of the new generation had been circumcised.

The miraculous crossing of the Jordan surely inspired God's people to eagerly desire the renewal of their covenant agreement with Him. This special distinctive mark in their flesh reminded each male both of his responsibilities and of his blessings as a member of God's holy nation.

E. Conquering Canaan

Israel's new homeland was a place of freedom and rest. It was not a new land, but the site of her forefathers. But now, heathen inhabitants had already cultivated the land, built homes, cities, planted orchards and vineyards. All Israel had to do was conquer and become the benefactor.

The Book of Joshua records the history of a seven-year triumphant military campaign. They suffered one major defeat. When Joshua and his people were absolutely obedient to God's will and Word, they were victorious. Otherwise, when their own strategy was substituted, it resulted in failure and defeat.

During the bloody conquest of the Promised Land, Yahweh fought with Israel against her enemies.

Which people were to be victims? Only the Canaanites, the cursed lineage of Ham's son, Canaan. They had been judged during Abraham's day. But God declared,

“The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full” (Genesis 15:16).

The Canaanite lineage had lasted an additional four hundred years for them to turn from their wickedness. They were so morally and spiritually corrupt that God finally warned:

“And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants” (Leviticus 18:25).

God could no longer tolerate these vile practices: incest, bestiality, homosexuality, sodomy, adultery, prostitution, divination, offering human sacrifices to idol gods, enchanters, witches, observers of times, consulting with familiar spirits, wizards, necromancy, and sorcery (Leviticus 18; Deuteronomy 18:9-12; 23:17-18).

Bible historians and archeologists verify that the Canaanites were among the most corrupt civilizations ever to exist. Their religious cults and practices became a stench, and God determined to destroy them.

This command was God's wrath against the Canaanites and also a precaution against the Israelites adopting pagan worship. All pictures, molten images, high places (places of worship on high ground associated with human sacrifice and immoral behavior) and monuments of idolatry were to be completely destroyed. Not a trace of their horrible abominations should remain in the land.

If God exiled the Canaanites for their immoral, idolatrous conduct, what judgment surely awaits our land!

After the conquest, the land was divided among the twelve tribes. Realizing that the people were inclining toward idolatry, Joshua announced a solemn assembly at Shechem.

In this farewell address, Joshua rehearsed Israel's history, especially detailing God's deliverance and blessing. Then he introduced several challenges. Israel faced whether they would continue serving Yahweh or be influenced by Canaanite heathen religions. Into the hands of the Hebrew people, he placed the choice.

At Sinai, their grandparents had chosen Yahweh and entered into covenant with Him. However, this new generation should decide for themselves. Joshua's challenge remains relevant for today: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve.”

Then he determined for his family: “As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15). Today each individual must make that decision. Others may persuade, but they cannot decide for you. Others can pray, but they cannot control your destiny. The choice is yours—exclusively!

Joshua also warned that Yahweh was a “jealous God.” They must have no other gods before Him. All substitute idols must be rejected.

The people's decision was a delightful one. Like their forefathers, they confessed,

“Therefore will we also serve the LORD; for he is our God” (Joshua 24:18).

Again, love, obedience and faithfulness to their covenant Partner and His law were the crucial test for Israel's new life in Canaan.

Lesson 5 – Chart 2

Judges and Kings in Israel

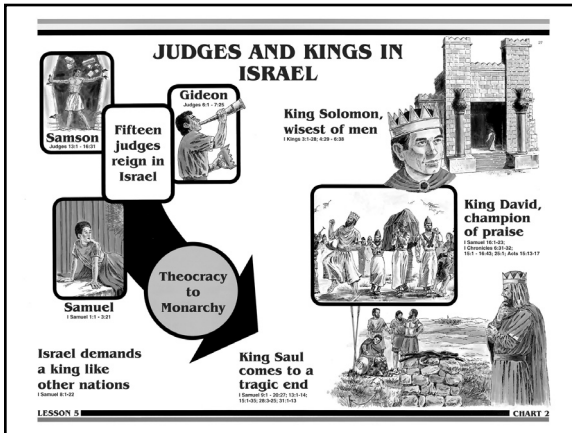


Chart Objective:

To explain the changing of Israel’s leadership. Anointed leaders called “judges” were replaced with kings like other nations. Thus, theocracy was changed to a monarchy, which flourished for 120 years.

Chart Outline:

- A. Fifteen judges reign in Israel
- B. Gideon
- C. Samson
- D. Samuel
- E. Israel demands a king like other nations
- F. Theocracy to Monarchy
- G. King Saul comes to a tragic end
- H. King David, champion of praise
- I. King Solomon, wisest of men

A. Fifteen judges reign in Israel

For two hundred years after Joshua’s death, Israel endured turbulent testings and trials. Scripture designates this period as “the days when the judges ruled” (Ruth 1:1). The entire era was a struggle for survival.

Judges were appointed to defend the people. However, such leaders were not like the magistrates of our courts of law. Israel’s judges were military types who brought victory while the people were settling in their homeland.

Frequently, the judges influenced both the government and religious life. Some possessed special inherited gifts of leadership.

No special deeds were attributed to five of the fifteen judges. Nor is there any particular chronological order in which they ruled. Several may have served simultaneously in different locations.

From a human viewpoint, these special

judges saved Israel from constant threats by the Moabites, Midianites, Ammonites, and Philistines.

Throughout this period, a definite pattern emerged in Israel’s lifestyle. When the people strayed from godly principles and practiced idolatry, God allowed oppression and attacks from heathen neighbors. The people would repent and return to God. Then He appointed a judge to save Israel and restore peace.

When the judge’s influence diminished, the monotonous cycle was repeated.

Personalities described in the Book of Judges are diverse. Shamgar obtained victory over the Philistines by killing six hundred men with only an ox goad for a weapon.

Another triumph came through a woman judge, Deborah. Ehud overcame the Moabites by stabbing the king as he sat on his throne.

B. Gideon

Judges 6:1 - 7:25

One of the most notable judges was Gideon. For seven years the Midianites had stolen Israel’s crops and inflicted terror. God called Gideon to deliver Israel.

At Gideon’s call for volunteers, 32,000 men responded. Compared to the multitude of Midianites, this was indeed a tiny group. But Gideon directed the 22,000 fearful to return home. Only 10,000 remained—still too many!

Gideon instructed his troops to drink out of a brook. Some fell to their hands and knees. Others dashed water to their mouths, showing a sense of alertness toward the enemy. Only 300 passed the test.

Each man carried a trumpet in his right hand and a torch concealed in a pitcher in his left. At a signal, the crash of 300 pitchers, the blast of 300 trumpets, the shout of 300 voices, and the flash of 300 torches pierced the darkness.

Terrified, the Midianites began to kill each other. Gideon’s 300 were used by God to “[turn] to flight the armies of the aliens” (Hebrews 11:34), without sword or spear. Thus God proved that great numbers or human strength are not required to win battles. Just willing and obedient hearts and minds are necessary.

C. Samson

Judges 13:1 - 16:31

Samson was the most unusual judge. He led no army, yet performed great supernatural

feats by himself. He possessed miraculous physical power, yet he had recurring moments of moral and spiritual weakness.

Samson was not a giant, nor was the great strength his own. He was empowered by God to occasionally perform great feats of strength.

But falling in love with a Philistine woman brought Samson's downfall. Delilah pressured Samson to reveal the secret of his amazing strength. Three times Samson declined, but finally betrayed the secret of his strength. His head had never felt the touch of a razor. This Nazarite vow meant he was separated and specially dedicated to the will of God.

When the Philistines attacked, Samson's strength was gone, he fell helpless to their capture, and was cruelly blinded.

The remainder of Samson's life was torturous as he grinded at the mill in a Philistine prison. During a heathen feast, the Philistines displayed Samson as a victory trophy. While they mocked him, Samson prayed a final prayer. He asked for God's power to again be manifested through him. He then pulled down the pillars of the heathen temple, killing more Philistines at his death than in all the victories of his lifetime.

D. Samuel

I Samuel 1:1 - 3:21

From the confusion and turmoil of the judges era comes one of the greatest Old Testament figures—the prophet-priest-judge, Samuel.

God called Samuel while a small boy sleeping in the Tabernacle at Shiloh. In the darkness, the child heard a voice calling, "Samuel!" He quickly arose and went to the aged Eli. But Eli said he had not called. After he returned to his bed, the voice was heard a second time.

Finally, after a third time, Eli realized this was God's call and instructed the boy to answer, "Speak, for thy servant heareth."

At the fourth call, the boy responded. Then God revealed to the youth an important message for Eli and called Samuel to be a great leader in Israel.

Samuel bridged the gap between the judges and kings of Israel.

Each year Samuel traveled in circuit to Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpeh to judge Israel and advise about legal and spiritual matters. He

was also responsible for establishing "schools of the prophets" where young men studied the law of Moses, composed sacred poetry and music and became skilled in musical instruments (I Samuel 10:5; II Kings 3:15; I Chronicles 25:1, 6).

As a wise statesman, Samuel was responsible for educating and instructing the people, thus advancing the Hebrew nation.

E. Israel demands a king like other nations

I Samuel 8:1-22

When the elders approached the aged Samuel to ask for a king—"like all the nations" (I Samuel 8:5), he took it as a personal insult. Their request was interpreted as a rejection of his own leadership. However, God thought differently:

"They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (I Samuel 8:7).

F. Theocracy to Monarchy

No longer was Israel interested in being God's unique people. They wanted to be exactly what God did *not* want them to be—"like all the nations." He has always wanted a separate people, dedicated to Himself. There should always be a marked difference in their conversation, attitudes, dress and manner of life so that all will recognize God's prized ones.

Willing to relinquish her unique position to be like her contemporaries, God agreed to give Israel their heart's desire.

Thus began the monarchy in Israel. Under the rule of three kings—Saul, David, and Solomon, the nation lived peaceably for 120 years, with each monarch reigning forty years each.

G. King Saul comes to a tragic end

I Samuel 9:1 - 10:27; 13:1-14; 15:1-35; 28:3-25; 31:1-13

That God instructed Samuel to anoint Saul as king seemed to indicate divine approval for this change in Hebrew government. However, human kingship was not in God's original plan. Israel soon discovered what inherent dangers were involved in human rulership.

Saul was much admired by the people. "From his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people" (I Samuel 9:2).

A leader was expected to have these appealing physical characteristics.

In the early years of his reign, Saul led several military triumphs. God worked through him despite his lack of spiritual understanding. However, his glaring mistakes lessened his usefulness.

Once, Saul boldly assumed the priestly duties to offer sacrifice. Then he disobeyed Samuel's command to totally destroy the Amalekites.

Failing to obey God's directive, Saul severed himself from blessings. Samuel informed the king that God would reject him as ruler for rejecting God's Word.

Another of Saul's mistakes was his raging jealousy against David. The king challenged David for popularity and power. But soon it became apparent that David was God's chosen leader.

The last chapter of Saul's life is tragic. Saul tried twice to kill David. The embittered king committed suicide on the battlefield.

God called him, Samuel instructed him. Yet Israel's first king perished by his own sword.

H. King David, champion of praise

I Samuel 16:1-23; I Chronicles 6:31-32; 15:1 - 16:43; 25:1; Acts 15:13-17

David's reign began by divine approval. Combining God's anointing with personal shrewdness and military expertise, he laid a foundation for a united kingdom. Through his brilliant efforts, the northern and southern tribes of Israel were firmly united. David reigned as supreme monarch in the royal city of Jerusalem.

David was a young shepherd when Samuel anointed him to be king. He achieved fame by his famous duel with the giant, Goliath. Such faith and trust were exhibited in God that the victory was singlehandedly won for Israel. His success showed no ill effects as they had on Saul.

The Bible attributes David as "a man after God's own heart." In all of the Old Testament writings, he expressed the most gratitude. Praise and thanksgiving overflowed for all God's blessings to him.

How he loved the house of God! What contributions he made to the worship of Yahweh!

Surely David was a "champion" of praise! His psalms have provided an outlet for praise and worship in every succeeding generation.

He was unique in that he was self-taught in the ways of pleasing the Lord. Without a scriptural precedent, he created his own expressions of worship.

The shepherd's field was his classroom. While tending sheep, David's joyful, exuberant spirit touched the heart of God!

Not only did he offer praise himself, but David continually urged others to do so.

"Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" (Psalm 107:8).

He instructed choirs and musicians to praise God with beautiful hymns, then appointed singers to praise the Lord continually.

David was thirty years old when he became king. Having established his capital at Jerusalem, plans were assembled to build a permanent Temple to replace the mobile Tabernacle. However, David was denied this privilege because of so much bloodshed during his reign. His son, Solomon, was allowed to build the Temple.

However, the Lord promised to build David a "house" or dynasty. His ancestors would "sit on the throne forever" meaning that Christ would emerge through the lineage of David.

Domestic difficulties illustrated defects in David's character. The king committed adultery, then arranged the husband's murder in an attempt to cover and justify David's wicked deeds.

Nathan, the prophet, was sent by God to reveal the sin and evoke the king's sincere confession and repentance.

Psalm 51 is the inspired record of David's humility before God as he pled for forgiveness. God loves an attitude of repentance. Filled with remorse and deep shame, David's prayer gushes forth like waters from a swollen stream.

David reaped the tragic fruits of his sins. But his life demonstrates how a repentant person can be forgiven and restored.

I. King Solomon, wisest of men

I Kings 3:1-28; 4:29 - 6:38

Solomon was the wisest of all Israel's kings. He was David's son by Bathsheba and became the third king.

At the beginning of his reign, God invited Solomon to "ask what I shall give thee."

The young king requested that God would

grant him wisdom, knowledge, and an understanding heart to discern between good and evil. God granted his request but also gave him riches, power and a long life.

A mother carrying a dead child and a mother carrying one who was alive sought Solomon's counsel. Both claimed the live child. The king's marvelous wisdom was displayed when he suggested to equally divide the living child between the mothers. Immediately the true mother pleaded for the child to be spared and given to the other woman.

Such simple, yet profound wisdom made Solomon renowned throughout the world. The queen of Sheba traveled a great distance to test his wisdom. She concluded that the half had not been told her of Solomon's wisdom and the vast beauty of his kingdom!

Solomon began building a Temple for the Lord God in Jerusalem. David had accumulated much material and supplies for the proj-

ect, yet Solomon searched the world for additional riches, gold, and silver.

The pattern resembled the Tabernacle with a Holy Place, a Holy of Holies, courtyard, and additional rooms and porches. It was larger and much more ornate. Such a structure was unequalled for its beauty and lavish extravagance.

Solomon's life ended sadly. Although he had been blessed with profound wisdom, his wives "turned away his heart." He had a thousand wives and concubines who persuaded him to build shrines for their foreign deities in Jerusalem. Such idolatry was repulsive and caused irreparable harm to Israel.

Meanwhile, many hidden forces weakened his kingdom. His policy of forced labor caused rebellion and discontent. Unbearable taxes were also levied. Judgment came to Solomon's errant ways in the form of a divided kingdom.

Lesson 5 – Chart 3 The Kingdom Is Divided

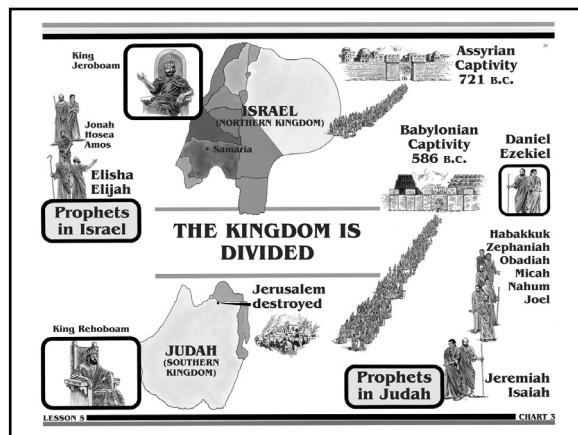


Chart Objective:

To explain how disobedience and idolatry resulted in the tragic division of God's kingdom of covenant people. God's prophets, although unheeded, accurately predicted captivity for both the northern and southern kingdoms, leaving the Promised Land desolate and abandoned.

Chart Outline:

- A. The Kingdom is Divided
- B. Israel - Northern Kingdom
- C. Prophets in Israel
- D. Assyrian Captivity
- E. Judah - Southern Kingdom

F. Prophets in Judah

G. Babylonian Captivity

A. The Kingdom is Divided

Solomon's reign is often termed the "Golden Age" of ancient Israel. Actually, Solomon reigned over a rather impressive empire assembled by his father.

When Solomon died, civil war loomed on the horizon.

Solomon's son, Rehoboam, succeeded the throne. Because he exhibited such arrogance and lack of concern for his subjects, the kingdom split.

When the people requested a reduction of taxes, Rehoboam instead announced that the burden would increase. Ignoring the wise counsel of the elders, the young king identified with his youthful advisors and assured the division of Israel's united kingdom.

The ten northern tribes revolted and appointed Jeroboam king. Rehoboam retained possession of only two tribes—Judah and Benjamin. The northern kingdom became known as Israel and the southern kingdom was called Judah.

B. Israel—Northern Kingdom

Israel's capital was erected at Samaria. In the next two hundred years, her nineteen kings were responsible for an abundance of

murders, suicides, and assassinations that kept the political situation in turmoil.

Dedication to God was forgotten in the flurry of worshipping idols Jeroboam himself encouraged.

Occasionally, God sent prophets to warn Israel of her rebellious ways.

C. Prophets in Israel

Such prophets as Elijah and Elisha provided human lips and tongues for the “Word of the Lord” to speak to His people. Separated unto God, they were divine instruments to call the nation to repentance. Through their preaching, hope for redemption was preserved for the remnant—despite the destruction, disaster, and despair.

Accompanied by numerous miracles, Elijah unashamedly preached repentance—even to wicked King Ahab and Queen Jezebel.

This fiery prophet is perhaps best remembered for the contest staged on Mount Carmel against the prophets of Baal. It was a “show-down” to determine whose god was real.

When God’s fire consumed both the sacrifice and altar of stones, He embarrassed the religion and prophets of Baal. For Israel, it was a summons to support the God of their fathers Who had repeatedly delivered them.

Elijah’s ministry climaxed as he was caught up in a whirlwind into a fiery chariot drawn by horses of fire. Elijah’s mantle was thrown to Elisha, thereby assuring his requested double-portion of the spirit of his predecessor.

Elisha’s ministry closely resembled Elijah’s, except that he participated in twice as many miracles.

D. Assyrian Captivity

Meanwhile, internal disorder and political instability had invited invasion by surrounding nations on the northern kingdom. The Egyptians and Syrians constantly threatened and weakened Israel.

Finally, in 721 B.C., the king of Assyria captured the Israelites and destroyed the capital city at Samaria.

The destruction had been clearly prophesied in preaching and writings by the prophets Amos and Hosea.

Another prophet of this era was Jonah, who warned Nineveh of impending doom.

The writings of all three prophets are categorized among Old Testament books as “Minor Prophets.”

Thus, within 200 years after Solomon’s death, half of his great kingdom was obliterated. As a nation, the people of Israel never returned. Their land was populated by Assyrians, who intermarried with the poor class of Israelites left behind after the Captivity. From this mixture sprang the Samaritans of the New Testament.

E. Judah—Southern Kingdom

From the time of Solomon until the Assyrian captivity, seven different families or dynasties reigned in Israel. However, in Judah, the ruling lineage remained unbroken. To assure that the house of David would father the promised Messiah, this family lineage remained intact, preserving the ancient promise that the “sceptre shall not depart from Judah” (Genesis 49:10).

Nineteen kings and one queen occupied the throne of Judah at Jerusalem. Some of the kings were righteous. Others were extremely wicked and idolatrous, even desecrating the Temple of God. Great religious revivals took place during the reign of five kings.

F. Prophets in Judah

Numerous prophets warned Judah of judgment, but their influence was resisted. Eight prophets wrote warnings to Judah long before she was destroyed.

Joel is among the earliest prophets of Judah. He described forthcoming plagues and destruction. If the priests and Judah would fast and weep before the Lord, He would hear their cry and restore their fellowship.

Known as the “prophet of Pentecost,” Joel highlighted his book with the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the future Christian church. Joel foresaw a day of spiritual renewal when the hearts of the people would be receptive to God.

Joel’s prophecy was fulfilled in part on the Day of Pentecost hundreds of years later when Peter repeated Joel’s sermon (Acts 2:14-21). Our generation is witnessing the completion of the “latter rain” promise (Joel 2:23-31).

Nahum prophesied and reiterated to Nineveh the call to repentance which Jonah had issued 150 years earlier.

Micah, a small-town prophet, ministered

for the benefit of the poor. He condemned the wealthy leaders of Judah and Israel. Although without obvious effects, his prophecies were precise and exact. Micah cited the very birthplace of the future Messiah:

“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2).

Obadiah prophesied warnings during the end of the Old Testament era to Judah’s neighbor, Edom.

Zephaniah cautioned Judah to repent or be destroyed.

Habakkuk preached a similar message of coming judgment.

Two other prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah, exercised significant influence. Their ministry and writings were more widespread; thus they are classified as Major Prophets.

Isaiah was a brilliant court preacher, who experienced prophetic visions of the coming Messiah. His portrait of the suffering Christ is the most vivid and descriptive.

Jeremiah’s writings related to preserving truth in Judah. Because of his relentless passion, he was severely hated, persecuted, and imprisoned as a traitor. Yet Jeremiah’s ministry continued and his predictions proved accurate.

G. Babylonian Captivity

In 606 B.C., more than 130 years after the northern kingdom had been taken captive by Assyria, the southern kingdom was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. A small portion of the population was displaced, but twenty years later, the Babylonians returned to burn the Temple and palaces, flatten the walls of Jerusalem, and destroy the city.

Judah’s King Zedekiah was blinded and taken with a group of prisoners into Babylon. Only the poorest citizens remained to cultivate the land.

Judah’s exile into Babylon was temporary. It lasted seventy years—just as Jeremiah had predicted.

Daniel, another Major Prophet, was among the first group of Jews deported to Babylon. His experience in the lions’ den

occurred during the latter part of the Captivity. Both Daniel and Ezekiel are regarded as Exilic Prophets since they ministered during the Babylonian exile.

Israel is a prime example of a nation that disregarded God, His covenant and spokesmen. By His very nature, God is undefeatable. He remained God—even to Israel—throughout their captivity.

From the “set-apart” remnant in exile, God would again restore His people. Only as proud people are humbled and victimized to greater powers can God intervene.

One of Israel’s hardest lessons was understanding that exile did not equate to defeat. She learned that Jerusalem, the Temple, and the Promised Land itself were not the most important things.

Jeremiah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel answered Israel’s hopeless cry, “How shall we sing the LORD’s song in a strange land?” (Psalm 137:4).

Through strong prophetic encouragement, the exiles began to renew their dedication to Yahweh and realize that restoration was possible.

An exact census is not recorded of these Babylonian captives. There was a minimum of 15,000 (Lovelace, *Compass Points for Old Testament Study*).

Was there a good purpose served during the Babylonian exile? God’s judgment was severe, yet many beneficial things resulted.

First, the Jews were forever cured of idolatry. Never again did they worship meaningless gods of gold, silver, wood, and stone.

Secondly, synagogue worship was instituted. The people assembled around a priest or scribe, whom they called “rabbi.” He rehearsed the laws of Moses and the prophets.

The canon of holy Scriptures was also formed. The prophets’ scrolls became more comforting and precious. Ezra and other men of God gathered these scrolls, making the Old Testament Scriptures a sacred possession of the people.

Finally, by dispersing the citizens of Judah and Israel, the knowledge of the one true God was taken to the civilized world. Every nation became acquainted with Israel’s Yahweh, the Sabbath, the Ten Commandments, and the hope of a coming Messiah. Thus, the groundwork was laid for the gospel’s missionary outreach in the approaching New Testament era.

God’s prophets continued to write, exhort,

encourage, and preach. Listening from the mire of their helplessness, the people heeded their message more readily than before.

God was at work in the lives of His exiled people and in His plans for the world. Many hidden secrets were revealed to His prophets that relate to our own generation!

Daniel and Ezekiel played a very important role in the plan of God for the captive Jews and for us as well.

Having successfully completed numerous military campaigns, King Nebuchadnezzar enjoyed undisputed dominion over a vast majority of the world. He surely wondered about the future kingdoms that could be conquered.

Then one night the form of a terrible image appeared to the king in a dream. But it faded from his memory. His magicians were unable to reveal the dream, but Daniel accurately recalled and interpreted it.

This is perhaps the most dramatic of all prophecies in the Bible. It was presented in a most unusual setting and it traced the course of history from that day to ours—and beyond!

Five world empires were described. These were “Gentile”—not Jewish empires. Had

Israel honored God, the nation may have become a dominant world power.

This prophecy is the basic structure of Daniel’s later prophecies.

The golden head represented Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylonian kingdom. The silver chest and arms typified the second world dominion of the Media-Persian kingdom that began seventy years later.

The brass stomach and thighs depicted the empire founded by Alexander the Great of Greece. The meaning of the iron legs—both in chapter 2 and in his vision of four beasts in chapter 7—is not specified. But it is termed the “Roman” empire because the Romans succeeded the Grecian empire as the center of world dominion. The feet were a combination of iron and clay, depicting rule by the masses (clay) and kings (iron).

Daniel explained that God had given world dominion unto Gentile nations. Four powers would successively rise and govern the world. In the time of the fifth, God Himself would set up a kingdom that would crush all the others and itself endure forever.

We shall see how this prophecy began to be fulfilled.

Lesson 5 – Chart 4 A Remnant Is Restored

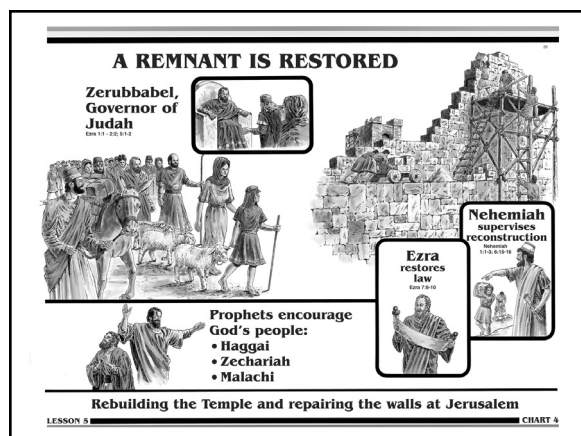


Chart Objective:

To survey the return of Israel’s “remnant” from the land of their captivity. They came to rebuild, restore and replenish the land, providing a lineage for the promised coming Messiah.

Chart Outline:

- A. A Remnant Is Restored
- B. Zerubbabel, Governor of Judah

- C. Rebuilding the Temple and repairing the walls
- D. Ezra restores law
- E. Nehemiah supervises reconstruction

A. A Remnant Is Restored

About twenty-three years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar, his grandson, Belshazzar, was ruling. He hosted a feast, typical of extravagant luxury, self-indulgence and idolatry.

The king commanded that the sacred gold and silver vessels taken from the Temple at Jerusalem be given to drunken men and women to toast their idol gods. Suddenly, the fingers of a man’s hand began writing a message on the palace wall.

The sobered monarch ordered that someone interpret the strange words. Daniel was brought to supernaturally reveal the words of doom for Belshazzar and his nation. That night the Medes and Persians conquered mighty Babylon and killed her king.

In the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, the Lord caused him to release the Jews and allow them to build the Lord God a house in

Jerusalem. His unusual benevolence resulted from Daniel showing him the prophecies of Jeremiah that had already been fulfilled (Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10) and the prophecies of Isaiah. This prophet had predicted that the Jews would return and rebuild Jerusalem and named Cyrus specifically (Isaiah 44:26-28; 45:1, 13)!

In the year 536 B.C., Cyrus issued a decree permitting Jews to return home. The sacred vessels were also restored. However, most Jews were affluently settled in the land of exile and preferred to remain there. A mere 42,000 people and 7,300 servants packed for the return trip to Jerusalem.

B. Zerubbabel, Governor of Judah

Ezra 1:1 - 2:2; 5:1-2

Cyrus appointed Zerubbabel to be the governor of Judah. Seven months after arriving in Jerusalem, these determined exiles had erected the altar on its ancient site and the priests were again offering sacrifices.

C. Rebuilding the Temple and repairing the walls

Preparations were made to begin rebuilding the Temple. However, numerous setbacks and opposition delayed it for several years. Through the encouragement of prophets Haggai and Zechariah, Temple construction was finally completed in 516 B.C., though the city itself was in ruins and the walls shattered.

At last, the Jews had a house of worship and religious life. The Temple was constructed on the same general plan as Solomon's, though much inferior by comparison.

D. Ezra restores law

Ezra 7:6-10

Sixty years after completion of the second Temple, a priest-scribe named Ezra gained permission from the fourth king of Persia,

Artaxerxes I, to return to Jerusalem. Ezra and 1,700 other Jews returned to Jerusalem. His primary purpose was to teach the law and restore Temple service.

The Jews re-established their worship. However, Jerusalem was not yet a fortified city.

E. Nehemiah supervises reconstruction

Nehemiah 1:1-3; 6:15-16

After Ezra had been in Jerusalem for thirteen years, reports came to the court of King Artaxerxes concerning the sad state of Jerusalem and its exiles. At that crucial time, hope came to God's chosen people through Nehemiah, a Jewish cupbearer to the king. Nehemiah received a leave of absence to lend help to his fellow countrymen.

Nehemiah should be honored for his constructive leadership in spite of opposition, hostility, and threats. His ability to organize the people for work and defense produced results that transformed the city of Jerusalem into an inhabitable place, after 150 years of desolation and desertion. The wall was completed in only fifty-two days!

Nehemiah joined Ezra in an effort to deepen the religious life of the people. In a public assembly, the law was read in the hearing of every citizen. Repentance and confession of sins renewed their covenant to God and to the law of Moses.

But as the years elapsed, so did their consecration to God. Malachi, who prophesied about one hundred years after the exiles returned from Babylon, had to reprove them for irreverence, unfaithfulness, failure to pay tithes and corruption of the priesthood.

Against a background of man's failure and departure from God, the Old Testament story ends. God promised to remove the curse of darkness with the coming "Sun of righteousness."

Lesson 5 – Chart 5 Between the Testaments

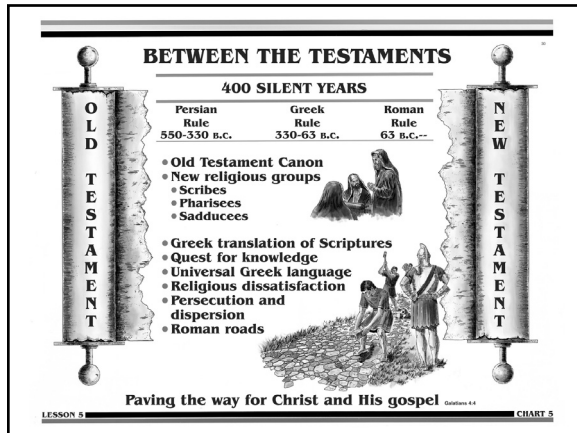


Chart Objective:

To explain events during the four hundred silent years that prepared the way for Christ's first coming. Again, we await the fulfillment of prophecies that must precede His return.

Chart Outline:

- 400 silent years
- Old Testament Canon
- New religious groups
- Greek translation of Scriptures
- Quest for knowledge
- Universal Greek language
- Religious dissatisfaction
- Persecution and dispersion
- Roman roads
- Paving the way for Christ and His gospel

A. 400 silent years

After the completion of the writing and ministry of the Minor Prophets, God ceased speaking with Israel. During this time of silence, scant historical records reveal the struggle to obey the law while enduring opposition from pagan conquerors.

The interval between the Testaments is termed the "four hundred years of silence," meaning there were no vocal messages from God. However, there was a deep longing and yearning in every Jewish bosom for the freedom their coming Messiah would bring.

Four hundred "silent" years? To the historian and Bible scholar, these centuries were anything but silent! While God was not vocal, His hands were steadily preparing the way for the coming Messiah. Although the Jews could not comprehend what was happening, all the events now fit together like pieces of a puzzle.

Prophets were no longer ministering, yet the echoes of Daniel's prophetic voice rang throughout the centuries. Nebuchadnezzar's image of Gentile kingdoms was now making sense! It was all happening just as Daniel had explained!

At the conclusion of the Old Testament, Babylon's head of gold had been overthrown. The Medes and Persians, represented by the silver chest and arms, had been ruling the world about one hundred years. For another one hundred years, Persia continued to reign over Judea—the new name given to Palestine. Persia's world dominance lasted from 550 B.C. to 330 B.C.

About the middle of the fourth century, a new world power emerged as Daniel had predicted. Philip of Macedon began to weld together Greek city-states into a powerful military force.

Greece had long been a cultural center among the Mediterranean nations with its established language and customs. With the combination of several city-states under powerful Philip, Greece became a terrifying force.

In 336 B.C., Philip's son, Alexander, took command of the Greek forces when his father died. Though youthful, he displayed skill as a military leader and soon his campaigns made him world-famous.

Swiftly Alexander's forces swept across Egypt, Syria, Assyria, Babylon and Persia, making him a world ruler by 331 B.C. Superpower Greece was indicated in Nebuchadnezzar's image as the brass thighs.

Alexander the Great showed special kindness to the Jews and spared Jerusalem. He even offered incentives to persuade the Jews to settle in the city of Alexandria, Egypt, which had been built in his honor.

The victorious armies of Alexander the Great established Greek cities wherever they went. The Greek language and culture flourished as these cities became centers of a new civilization known as "Hellenic" culture.

After only a brief reign, Alexander died at age thirty-three, having conquered more territory than any of his predecessors. His vast empire was then carved into four parts: Egypt, Syria, Greece, and an area now known as Turkey.

Palestine was first ruled by Syrians. Then Egyptian kings took control. Jewish life was peaceful during this period. Synagogues were established in many cities, and Alexandria,

Egypt, became an influential center of Judaism.

Later, in 198 B.C., Syria again gained control of Palestine. Antiochus the Great determined to force the Jews to accept the Greek culture. Then in 175 B.C. a new king, Antiochus Epiphanes, came to rule Syria. Since the unique Jewish religion conflicted with the Greek Hellenism, he decided to destroy them.

Thus began one of Israel's darkest periods. The pagan image of Jupiter was erected upon the Temple altar—which the Jews termed “the abomination of desolation” spoken of by Daniel (8:11-13).

Greek soldiers performed profane rites in the very sacred Temple courts and swine were sacrificed on the altar. Under penalty of death, Jews were forbidden to practice circumcision, observe the Sabbath or other Jewish festivals. All copies of Hebrew Scriptures were ordered to be destroyed and laws were enforced to promote Hellenism.

But the Greeks went too far. Their zeal for erasing the old order of Judaism prompted one of the most heroic struggles in history. Led by Mattathias, a courageous Jewish priest, and his son, Judas, a succession of battles were won against unbelievable odds.

Finally, the city of Jerusalem was retrieved from Syrian control and the Temple purified and re-dedicated.

The word “Maccabee” means “hammer.” Because of the hammer blows dealt the Syrian armies, Judas and his men became known as “Maccabees.”

From 167 B.C. to 63 B.C. the Jews enjoyed a period of independence. But then a new world power arose. In 63 B.C. the image's “legs of iron” described by Daniel came into power.

Palestine was conquered by the Romans under Pompey. Judea's newly appointed governor was Antipater. His son, Herod the Great, ruled Judea from 37 B.C. to 4 B.C.

To gain favor with the Jews, Herod the Great rebuilt the Temple at Jerusalem in magnificent splendor. But at heart, he was a brutal ruler. Herod was also the cruel monarch ruling when Christ was born and was responsible for the massacre of innocent babies in the surrounding region (Matthew 2:1-23).

B. Old Testament Canon

Literature from this period reveals what occurred during the four-hundred-year period between the Testaments. The Maccabees

wrote books describing the Jews' struggle for freedom. However, their writings were not considered divinely inspired and therefore were not included in the canon of Holy Scripture. Neither the Jews, the noted Jewish historian Josephus, or Jesus and the early Christians accepted or quoted from any of these fifteen books.

During the era from Malachi to the time of Christ, a most important event was the compiling of sacred writings. The word “canon” means a measuring stick or rod; a standard by which a thing is measured or judged. When applied to the Old Testament, it means that the selection of sacred writings of that period met a particular standard of divine inspiration. Other writings were omitted from the collection.

Ezra is believed to have played a vital role in collecting and preserving these sacred books. The collection accepted by the Jews as the Word of God were never questioned either by ancient Jews or Christ and His apostles.

C. New religious groups

A quick look at the New Testament reveals several religious groups that developed during the period between the Testaments.

The distinguished “**Sanhedrin Court**” presiding at Christ's trial evolved during this era. As the governing body of the Jewish nation, the Sanhedrin may have formed as early as the third century B.C. They dealt with religious matters and were permitted to rule the Jews.

The Sanhedrin consisted of about seventy members, most of whom were priests. The court itself was led by the high priest.

“**Scribes**” were secretaries who both copied and interpreted the Old Testament scriptures. Having been given the power of interpretation, the scribes were highly esteemed among the people.

“**Pharisees**” were Jewish leaders of the third century who fought viciously in the Maccabean wars to oppose the influence of Hellenism.

The word “Pharisee,” meaning “separated one,” identified those who had separated from outside worldly influence.

A system of oral traditions developed among them was quite burdensome to Judaism during the time of Christ. Their traditions were not merely commentaries upon the law but were ultimately raised to the level of Scripture itself. The desire to be seen of

men replaced living for God's glory.

The “**Sadducees**” of the New Testament era became the party of the Jerusalem aristocracy and the high priesthood. Cooperating with political rulers and having attained positions of wealth and influence, they were responsible for Temple administration and rituals. The Sadducees held themselves aloof from the masses.

Traditions and oral laws developed by the Pharisees were quite unacceptable to the Sadducees. Their canon seems to have been limited to the Pentateuch, or Moses' five books of law.

“**Essenes**” were a more isolated and extreme Jewish sect. Most of them lived in monastic communities, such as the one at Qumran, from which the Dead Sea scrolls originated. Their lives were rigorous and simple. Devotion and religious study occupied an important place in the community. Scripture and other religious books were studied and copied by Essene members, though each member was required to perform manual labor to make the community self-supporting.

D. Greek translation of Scriptures

Another significant event of this period was the translation of Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. This task was performed in Alexandria, Egypt, by a group of Hebrew and Greek scholars.

First the Pentateuch, then the entire Old Testament was translated. Greek had become the common language and the Septuagint (referring to the “seventy” translators) became the Bible of the common people.

Both Christ and His apostles used the Septuagint (pronounced “Sep-too-a-jint”), thus approving it as an authentic version.

Translating the Scriptures into the language of the people was a most important stepping-stone for Christ and His gospel.

E. Quest for knowledge

Wherever the Greek military marched, their culture was scattered. Grecians taught the world the importance of learning and education.

Accelerated learning no doubt produced its share of atheists, yet a desire also blossomed in others to discover the meaning of life. Why are we here? Where did we come from?

The Septuagint Version provided the

answers! Grecian influence created a quest for knowledge that ripened thousands for the coming message of Christ.

F. Universal Greek language

Another vital aid in spreading the gospel message was the development of a language of the people. While the world was under Grecian influence, everyone learned to speak Greek—in addition to his own native tongue.

This gave Christ and His disciples the tremendous advantage of preaching and writing the gospel in a language all could understand.

G. Religious dissatisfaction

The two major religious sects had little to offer. The cold, hypocritical Pharisees were disgusting. The worldliness of the Sadducees was sickening. Having to choose between legalism and ritualism left a spiritual void.

Consequently, the formal religious groups prompted a longing for Messiah to come.

H. Persecution and dispersion

The Jewish captivity had scattered them to all parts of the world. Many Jews remained in the land of their captivity—Assyria, Babylon and Persia. Others traveled to distant lands. Settlements of Jews could be found in every major city.

Each locality had synagogues and Old Testament Scriptures. Soon Gentile nations would accept the message rejected by the Jews. Therefore, their presence in foreign lands paved the way for greater acceptance of Christ's gospel.

A less desirable feature was the persecution endured under Antiochus Epiphanes. His rule prompted a deep longing in the heart of every devout Jew for deliverance.

While the Roman government was not murdering Jews as Antiochus had done, their taxation system terribly irritated the Jews.

Before God performs a spectacular work, His people must first desire that it happen. Persecution and oppression are useful tools for accomplishing His purposes. Although distasteful, they became paving stones!

I. Roman roads

With the rise of the Roman Empire, an era of road building flourished. Rome was responsible for building roads and developing world waterways. The most remote areas

were discovered by her great ships in the quest for international trade and commerce. Rome had approximately one hundred years to build roads and establish trade routes before those routes would be used to spread the gospel. The disciples' mission would have been impossible unless Rome had literally paved the way for Christ and His gospel!

J. Paving the way for Christ and His gospel Galatians 4:4

Christ did not come until the time was precisely right! Scripture indicates there was indeed a specific time for His birth.

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law” (Galatians 4:4).

Just before Jesus ascended, He gave signs that would precede His return to earth. Preparation for His first coming spanned several hundred years. But Jesus declared that the signs pointing to His second appearing would occur within the lifetime of one generation (Matthew 24:34).

Many of the events preceding His birth could be duplicated before His second appearing.

Scriptures translated. In one generation, the Bible has been translated into every major language of the world by the American Bible Society and other groups.

Coldness in religion. Legalism and formalism continue to sicken our generation

with a dead, dull, boring religion. As the church blazes with revival fires, a ready audience will be waiting.

Travel made easy. Highways dot every nation. International airfare is becoming affordable. Why? So every nation can hear the good news within the lifetime of one generation!

Persecution and scattering. This part is undesirable. But it could be the motivating force that encourages the church to finish its task.

Jesus' words could apply to no other generation than ours:

“Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake” (Matthew 24:9).

Persecution and hatred could be responsible for the final thrust:

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

God is doing a sovereign work among believers of all denominations. Our world is on the threshold of the catching away of the church of Jesus Christ!

An air of expectancy fills the earth as we patiently watch and wait for the completion of the “fulness of time” that will bring back our King!

Lesson 5 – Chart 6 Dispensations of Time

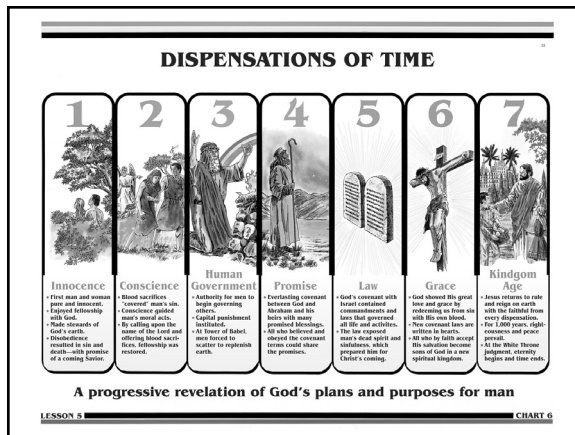


Chart Objective:

To explain the revelation of God's plans and purposes for bringing man back into complete harmony and fellowship with his Creator. The beautiful dispensation of grace will only be superseded in majesty by the final period, the kingdom age.

Chart Outline:

- A. A progressive revelation of God's plans and purposes for man
- B. Innocence
- C. Conscience
- D. Human Government
- E. Promise
- F. Law
- G. Grace
- H. Kingdom Age

A. A progressive revelation of God's plans and purposes for man

A chart of dispensations has been added as a pivotal point between the Testaments. This provides an excellent review for the five previous dispensations and prepares us for the sixth.

Bible scholars have divided the entire span of time from Creation through the final judgment into seven distinct eras or dispensations: innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace, and the kingdom age. By studying dispensations, we can systematically cover the various Bible periods and become acquainted with people of that era.

Various forms of the word "dispensation" are used in the New Testament twenty times. The Greek word *oikonomie* actually means "stewardship" or "to be a steward." Thus, a dispensation refers to how man performs his

stewardship in various ages.

Dispensationalists view the world as God's household in which His affairs are to be administered or "dispensed" in the particular way He has designed. Since the beginning, He has chosen to reveal Himself to man in stages—a little at a time. When God reveals more of Himself and His plans or fresh instructions about pleasing God are given, we call it a new "dispensation" of enlightenment.

God is the same—yesterday, today, and forever. His plan remains the same. But man constantly changes. We are continually learning more about the unfathomable will and plan of our heavenly Father.

When a new baby is born, very little is required of that child. Parents love and cuddle the tiny new one, expecting nothing in return for their monumental expenditures except smiles and hugs.

But as the child grows from a toddler, to an adolescent, and then to an adult, responsibilities are constantly added. As his physical strength, understanding, and reasoning ability develop, more household duties are demanded. Each new stage of development has its rules and regulations.

The same is true with man's relationship with God. From innocence, to conscience, to human government, to promise, to law, to grace—man was learning about God and what was expected of him.

Every dispensation poses the same question: Will man respond favorably toward his new obligations? History reveals many failures. Yet God faithfully continued to show His love and grace and power until at last He came in person to provide the perfect plan for our dispensation!

B. Innocence

Innocence was an age of sinlessness when Adam and Eve enjoyed direct fellowship with God. Their responsibilities as stewards were to maintain fellowship, dress the garden, and obey the one command of refusing to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. This was the "plan of salvation" for the first couple.

However, the first pair failed the test. Consequently, Adam relinquished his position as world ruler to Satan. Death entered his spirit, and Adam's nature became like his new master's, the devil.

God's judgments were pronounced upon

the man, woman, and serpent. Since reproduction would come through the birth process, death passed to their family, their descendants and all creation. Expulsion from the garden was inevitable.

C. Conscience

Conscience was awakened when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. From that moment, conscience has been the faculty that guides the moral acts of man.

This title does not imply that man had no conscience before or after this time any more than the dispensation of law implies that there was no law before or after that period.

During this era the “plan” was that man respond to God through the promptings of his conscience.

Fellowship with the Creator could be restored by calling upon the name of the Lord, loving and worshiping Him, and obediently offering acceptable blood sacrifices.

Few responded to the plan. Abel, Enoch and Noah are mentioned. Because of widespread violence and wickedness, God’s judgment came in the form of the Flood.

D. Human Government

Human government became effective immediately after the Flood. New regulations were given: animals would fear man; the flesh of animals could be eaten for food; and the institution of capital punishment.

The right to inflict the punishment of death for taking another’s life revealed God’s high estimation of life.

Although man was given the authority to govern others, his failure to govern successfully appeared almost at once.

Rather than obeying God’s “plan” to scatter and replenish the earth, men defiantly united to construct a tower. Confusion of languages at the site of construction encouraged them to obey what God had said.

E. Promise

After dealing only with the entire human race, God chose to work through one man. Abraham and his descendants became the chosen lineage through whom God would reveal His glory to the world.

This dispensation began when God cut a covenant with Abraham. The “plan” incorporated rules from previous eras: obey the voice of conscience; call upon the name of the

Lord; offer blood sacrifices; and wisely govern other men.

The new revelation was that Abraham believe God’s promises concerning: numerous descendants; inheriting the land of Canaan; a spiritual seed through Whom the world would be blessed; and financial prosperity.

Abraham’s part was to separate himself unto God, refuse to indulge in idolatry and wickedness, and enforce the rite of circumcision upon all the males of his household. All who obeyed the covenant terms could share the promises.

Because of a severe famine in the Promised Land, Abraham’s descendants had moved to Egypt. Had they not been subjected to slavery, they would have contentedly remained there.

God chose Moses to lead Israel back to their Promised Land and punished Egypt for its harsh treatment of His covenant people.

F. Law

Abraham’s blood-covenant was everlasting. All who enter into covenant with God must come by way of His covenant—not the law.

The dispensation of law began when Moses received the Ten Commandments and laws that governed all life and activities. It was in effect for 1,520 years.

The “plan” was to abide by the terms of Abraham’s blood-covenant relationship with God—plus obedience to the Mosaic law.

The law exposed the guilt of man and made him conscious of what was displeasing to God, but their sinful natures hindered obedience.

At the close of this period, Christ came to fulfill and replace Moses’ law. Thus, the dispensation of law ended at Calvary.

G. Grace

Jesus, the last Adam, came to redeem man from the curse of sin with His blood and give life to our dead spirits. Christ’s coming exhibited such marvelous “grace” (divine favor; pleasure; goodwill) toward man, all previous displays were as nothing.

This dispensation provided a new covenant with God’s laws written in the heart. As Abraham entered into covenant by faith and obedience, so we enter into the new covenant by believing and accepting the free gift of salvation:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8).

In reality, salvation in every dispensation has been based upon God’s grace. No one has ever performed enough good deeds to merit salvation. All who believed and obeyed His revealed plan became recipients of His grace.

In this dispensation, the “plan” is to believe the gospel, then identify with Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Those who believe and obey the gospel become sons of God and members of Christ’s church (“called out” believers) in a new spiritual kingdom.

H. Kingdom Age

After Christ returns to earth at the Battle of Armageddon, His kingdom will be set up at Jerusalem, fulfilling all the promises given in both Testaments.

Jesus Christ will personally rule the affairs of the world during this period of one thousand years. The faithful from every dispensation will rule and reign with Him.

In this era, the “plan” will be to love the King and obey His laws. Satan will be bound, righteousness will prevail, and disobedience will be quickly punished.

However, at the close of this peaceful age, rebels will join in a formidable army, daring to attack the seat of government (Revelation 20:7-9). The rebels’ unsuccessful revolt will result in everlasting punishment.

At the White Throne judgment, eternity will begin and time shall end. The eternal destiny of each individual who has lived on earth will be determined by whether or not he obeyed the revealed “plan” for his dispensation.

What exciting designs God has in store for the willing and obedient! And the best is yet to come!

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM STUDY SHEET

A Nation Divided, Then Restored

LESSON NO. 5 Study Sheet

Chart 1. Conquering the Land of Promise

- A. Death of Moses (Deuteronomy 34)
- B. Joshua leads the way (Joshua 1:1-9)
- C. Crossing the Jordan (Joshua 3:1-17)
- D. In remembrance . . . (Joshua 4:1-9)
- E. Conquering Canaan (Book of Joshua)

Chart 2. Judges and Kings in Israel

- A. Fifteen judges reign in Israel
- B. Gideon (Judges 6:1 - 7:25)
- C. Samson (Judges 13:1 - 16:31)
- D. Samuel (I Samuel 1:1 - 3:21)
- E. Israel demands a king like other nations (I Samuel 8:1-22)
- F. Theocracy to Monarchy
- G. King Saul comes to a tragic end (I Samuel 9:1 - 10:27; 13:1-14; 15:1-35; 28:3-25; 31:1-13)
- H. King David, champion of praise (I Samuel 16:1-23; I Chronicles 6:31-32; 15:1 - 16:43; 25:1; Acts 15:13-17)
- I. King Solomon, wisest of men (I Kings 3:1-28; 4:29 - 6:38)

Chart 3. The Kingdom is Divided

- A. Israel—Northern Kingdom (I Kings 12)
- B. Prophets in Israel (Elijah, Elisha, Amos, Hosea, Jonah)
- C. Israel taken captive by Assyria - 721 B.C.
- D. Judah—Southern Kingdom
- E. Prophets in Judah (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Nahum, Micah, Obadiah, Zephaniah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, Daniel)
- F. Judah taken captive by Babylon - 586 B.C.

Chart 4. A Remnant Is Restored

- A. Zerubbabel, Governor of Judah (Ezra 1:1 - 2:2; 5:1-2)
- B. Rebuilding the Temple and repairing the walls (Ezra 1:1-4; 6:14-15; Nehemiah 1:1-3; 6:15)
- C. Ezra restores law (Ezra 7:6-10)
- D. Nehemiah supervises reconstruction (Nehemiah 1:1-3; 6:15-16)

Chart 5. Between the Testaments

- A. 400 Silent Years
- B. Old Testament Canon
- C. New religious groups
- D. Greek translation of Scriptures
- E. Quest for knowledge
- F. Universal Greek language
- G. Religious dissatisfaction
- H. Persecution and dispersion
- I. Roman roads
- J. Paving the way for Christ and His gospel (Galatians 4:4)

Chart 6. Dispensations of Time

- A. A progressive revelation of God's plans and purposes for man
- B. Innocence
- C. Conscience
- D. Human Government
- E. Promise
- F. Law
- G. Grace
- H. Kingdom Age

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM QUIZ

A Nation Divided, Then Restored

LESSON NO. 5 Quiz

Number lesson events according to chronological sequence. (The first event has been numbered for you.)

- _____ Israel demanded a king like other nations.
- 1 Death of Moses.
- _____ After seventy years of captivity, exile Jews were restored to their homeland.
- _____ Solomon, wisest of men, became king when David died.
- _____ Israel was governed for two hundred years by a series of judges.
- _____ The Temple was rebuilt and the city walls were repaired.
- _____ Joshua became Israel's new leader.
- _____ The kingdom was divided and eventually invaded by foreign nations. Citizens were taken captive to Assyria and Babylon.
- _____ Saul was crowned the first king of Israel.
- _____ The children of Israel crossed the Jordan River.
- _____ David, the champion of praise, became king after Saul died.
- _____ After crossing the Jordan, Israel's leaders placed twelve stones in the riverbed as a memorial of God's deliverance.

Name at least three incidents occurring during the "four hundred silent years" that paved the way for the coming of Christ.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Name three of the dispensations of time.

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

In which dispensation are we now living? _____

Answers:

6, 1, 11, 9, 5, 12, 2, 10, 7, 3, 8, 4.

Old Testament Canon, new religious groups, Greek translation of Scriptures, quest for knowledge, universal Greek language, religious dissatisfaction, persecution and dispersion, Roman roads.

innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace, kingdom age.

Grace.

LESSON SIX

Prepare for the New Kingdom!

This lesson reveals the new concepts taught by John the Baptist and Jesus concerning the coming kingdom of God.

After four hundred years without a prophet's voice, John the Baptist burst on the scene declaring that the Lamb of God was coming to take away the sin of the world and baptize believers with the Holy Ghost and fire! The Messiah would establish a new kingdom among men.

To prepare for this kingdom, Israelites were required to repent, confess their sins, and be baptized in the Jordan River. The entire system of Judaism was coming to a close. The law would be fulfilled in the Messiah Himself.

Six months after John's ministry began, Jesus came to be baptized in preparation for His public ministry. As He came up out of the water, God's voice spoke His approval and the Spirit descended upon Him with a special anointing.

After forty days of fasting and preparation, Jesus was tempted by the devil. Each time, He conquered Satan's enticements with the Word of God. Then He returned from the wilderness "in the power of the Spirit" to begin His ministry. Surrounding Himself with twelve disciples, Jesus taught spiritual concepts upon which His kingdom would be founded. His disciples must continue His ministry of signs, wonders, and miracles and preach the "good news" about the kingdom of God!

When completed, students should be aware of the following concepts:

1. Repentance is a decision to turn from sinful actions and enter into covenant with Jesus Christ. We do this by surrendering our self-rule to God's rule, calling upon the name of the Lord, confessing sins, asking Jesus to cleanse us with His blood, and promising to love, serve and obey Him.
2. Jesus' life and ministry is our supreme example. Once we become a disciple, we must closely imitate His methods and then go forth to make new disciples.
3. Peter's confession of the deity of Christ has become the "rock" upon which the church is built. His keys reveal that in every nation, God's covenant has been extended to "whosoever" will love and obey Him.

Additional books for reading:

1. Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.
2. Alfred Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Reprinted July 1972.
3. Derek Prince, *From Jordan to Pentecost and Repent & Believe*, Derek Prince Publications, P. O. Box 306, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33302.
4. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Meet Yourself in the Parables*, Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1982.
5. Herman Harrell Horne, *Teaching Techniques of Jesus*, Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1920 (reprinted 1978).

Lesson 6 – Chart 1

A “New” Book Opens For Us

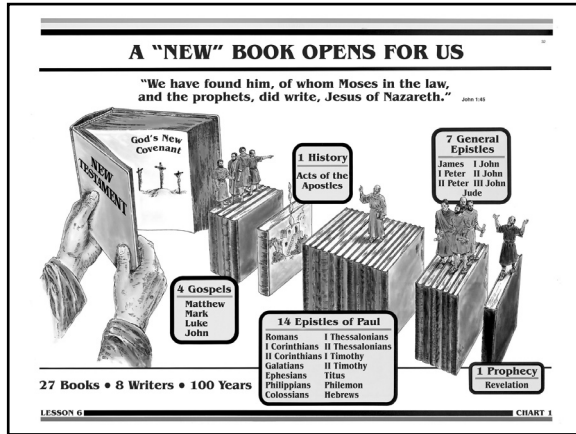


Chart Objective:

To examine the “new book” of hope that was opened for mankind. Written by many eyewitnesses of Christ’s earthly ministry, the New Covenant (Testament) restores man to God’s family with full sonship privileges!

Chart Outline:

- A. “We have found him . . .”
- B. God’s New Covenant
- C. Four Gospels
- D. One Book of History
- E. Fourteen Epistles of Paul
- F. Seven General Epistles
- G. One Book of Prophecy
- H. Birth of our New Testament

A. “We have found him . . .”

John 1:45

The final page of Old Testament study concludes with a deep yearning and expectation. True, a beautiful story and plan have been revealed. But it is much like a magnificent frame with an obscure picture.

Old Testament prophets voiced an expectation for one who would solve national problems and heal their wounds. Every Israelite eagerly awaited with passionate longing and patriotism the coming King of the Jews.

Then the picture focuses. Finally, He comes! The promised One of Whom all the prophets foretold! The grand announcement theme is best expressed in John’s words:

“We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth” (John 1:45).

A new era, more magnificent than all the hints and predictions of the ancient prophets, had finally arrived! The Messiah was much more glorious and wonderful in person than any prophet’s vision could describe!

B. God’s New Covenant

Moses’ law with its customs, ceremonies and ordinances was about to be changed. The coming Christ was opening a new book of hope for all mankind. His coming turned the page on the Old Testament and opened a New Covenant (Testament) for us all!

Let’s take a closer look at this most important part of our Bible. The New Testament is divided into sections, similar to the Old Testament. A simple way to remember the number of books is to multiply the number of letters in the word “New” by the number of letters in the word “Testament”—or $3 \times 9 = 27$.

C. Four Gospels

The first four books are called “Gospels,” or the “good news” about Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. The story of Jesus, the Son of God, was recorded by four writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. While there is only one gospel of Christ, there are four presentations.

Why four? His story is told from four viewpoints. He is presented as the “King” by Matthew, the “Servant” by Mark, the “Son of Man” by Luke, and the “Son of God” by John.

The first three Gospels are called “synoptic Gospels” since, unlike John, they give a synopsis of Christ’s life. John’s Gospel stands alone as he presented a deeper portrait of Christ.

John assured that God had come to earth to live with men!

“The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

Each Gospel has much in common with the others as they deal with Christ’s earthly ministry, His death, resurrection, teachings, and miracles. Yet the three writers present different pictures of our Lord.

Matthew deliberately adds to his account what Mark omits. Standing alone, each Gospel is incomplete without the others. Not every detail could be included, as John explained:

“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (John 21:25).

The purpose of the Gospels is similar to that of a photographer capturing a story on film. He busily shoots pictures of his subject from every conceivable angle. Collectively, the shots present a more complete portrait of his subject.

Each Gospel gives a different and unique aspect of our Lord’s life on earth. Together, the complete picture unfolds.

Although the Gospels are included in the New Testament, that period was governed by the law of Moses. This was a transitory period, preparing for the new dispensation that was launched after the resurrection.

D. One Book of History

Next is the Book of Acts, recording the birth of the church and the spread of the gospel. It includes the beautiful plan of salvation, as well as the “acts” of the apostles. Luke, a Gentile companion of Paul, wrote this book. Luke is the only Gentile writer of the Bible.

What a thrilling design in this narrative! It complements and completes the preceding Gospels. While the Gospels reveal what Christ began to do, the Acts show what He continued to do by the Holy Spirit indwelling His disciples.

The Gospels present the teachings of Christ, but Acts allows us to see the effect of His teachings in the lives of the apostles.

Not all the apostles’ actions are given. Few details are mentioned of any apostles other than Peter and Paul. Rather, it records the “acts” of the Holy Spirit working through these men.

E. Fourteen Epistles of Paul

The Epistles instruct us how to live the Christian life. These books or “letters” were written to people who had already become Christians.

Paul’s fourteen books are called “Pauline Epistles.” Most were actually letters written to various churches Paul had founded or visited during previous missionary campaigns. These letters offer advice, instruction, exhortation and encouragement to the saints in his absence.

F. Seven General Epistles

Seven “General” epistles follow, written by four men—James, Peter, John and Jude.

G. One Book of Prophecy

Finally, Revelation is the only book of prophecy in the New Testament. Written by John during his imprisonment and exile on the Isle of Patmos, its first chapters include letters to seven churches located in Asia. The latter chapters describe heaven and events that will unfold at the end of time.

“Revelation” comes from the word “Apocalypse,” which means “unveiling.” Like the Book of Daniel, much is symbolic writing. More than three hundred symbols speak and reveal wonderful truths concerning OUR future!

This fascinating book unveils the greatest drama of all time. An intense plot culminates in a final scene of Christ triumphing over the villain, Satan.

Revelation climaxes the great story begun in Genesis as the triumphant Christ declares, “Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 21:4-5).

As all good stories should, the Bible concludes with a “happily ever after” in the presence of the Lord!

The importance of the New Testament is magnified by the fact that Genesis to Malachi covers about 4,000 years, while less than 100 years elapse in the New Testament period.

A good method for remembering the New Testament writers is to envision a car with four wheels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), and two men in the front seat (Peter and Paul). Of course, the driver is Peter since he was given the “keys.” Two men are pushing the car (James and Jude). Such a mental picture will help recall all eight writers of the New Testament.

H. Birth of our New Testament

The fact that the New Testament begins with four Gospels and Acts, followed by Paul’s epistles, tends to make the original order of writing difficult to imagine. When the church was first established, no thought was given to a “New Testament.” Their only Bible was the Old Covenant. Every new teaching was based on the authority of Christ as personally directed through His apostles.

Then came new inspiration to record those divine directives for churches and individuals.

Eventually, these writings became as authoritative as the Old Testament Scriptures.

Most of Paul's epistles were written before the earliest Gospel. Epistles to the Thessalonians and Galatians are the oldest of the New Testament documents. Since no Gospels were available to Paul's converts, they received the story of Jesus in an oral, rather than written form.

The necessity for having a written account of Christ's life was not urgent while the personal eyewitnesses were alive. But few were still living near the end of that century.

Roman Christians invited Mark, the companion of Peter, to permanently record the apostle's often related story of Christ's passion.

Shortly after Mark's Gospel appeared, Luke, the physician and travel-companion of Paul, traced the origin of Christianity from eyewitness accounts. Luke produced a twofold history, the Gospel according to Luke and the Acts of the Apostles.

Still another Gospel appeared in the Syrian region, containing strong emphasis for the Jews. This is our Gospel according to Matthew.

Toward the close of the century, the last Gospel narrative appeared at Ephesus—the work of John the beloved, the last survivor of the Twelve.

How were the epistles collected? After Paul's martyrdom, perhaps the true worth of

his life's work was more appreciated. Around A.D. 100, his literary works were collected and made available for all believers. Realizing a deep sense of loss, Christians determined to preserve everything they could find of this great apostle's work.

Congregations that had known Paul and received his letters were eager to find more. Archives were ransacked for entire letters or even fragments. This informal collecting and sharing of letters is responsible for preserving much of Paul's correspondence.

Because of the value of his letters, they were read and re-read in regular church worship. Eventually they were collected and published.

About the middle of the second century, Justin Martyr related that during Sunday worship, Christian assemblies read "memoirs of the apostles" as well as the "writings of the prophets."

Peter recognized the great value of Paul's letters and referred to them as Scripture (II Peter 3:15-16).

All New Testament books were recognized as Scripture by A.D. 200. Then in A.D. 397 at the Synod of Carthage, a church council ratified the general consensus that the twenty-seven books—which we also recognize today—were the divinely inspired Word of God, worthy of equal esteem as the Old Testament.

Lesson 6 – Chart 2 John the Baptist Paves the Way



Chart Objective:

To examine John the Baptist's unique ministry of preparing the Jewish nation for their Messiah and his baptism of repentance.

Chart Outline:

- A. John the Baptist Paves the Way for the Kingdom of God
- B. "There cometh one after me"
- C. Baptism of Repentance

A. John the Baptist Paves the Way for the Kingdom of God

Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1; Luke 1:76-77

Although it had been four hundred years since an anointed prophet's voice had been heard, Malachi's final words had echoed across the centuries:

"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me" (Malachi 3:1).

Both Malachi and Isaiah predicted that a forerunner would prepare the way for the Christ (Isaiah 40:3). Although the Jews were

familiar with these prophecies, they were unaware of John's preparatory mission.

Just as John prepared the way for Christ's first coming, so messengers are going now into homes around the world to declare the "good news" that Christ will soon come again.

With the coming of John, God began to deal with men in a different way. John's purpose was to acquaint people with the New Covenant concept. The law and the prophets were coming to a close and the kingdom of God was about to begin:

"The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it" (Luke 16:16).

John's miraculous birth declared that a special man had been selected for a special mission. The angel Gabriel stood by the aged priest, Zacharias, while he was ministering in the Temple to announce that a son would be born to he and Elisabeth.

This child was to be named John. He must touch neither wine nor strong drink and would be great in the sight of the Lord. John's mission was to prepare the people for Messiah's coming.

Six months later, the same angel, Gabriel, appeared to Elisabeth's cousin, Mary, in the city of Nazareth to announce the birth of the Messiah.

Although John was born into the priestly family of Aaron, he preached in the wilderness rather than the Temple.

John's early years were spent in isolation. Having being dedicated to God as a Nazarite, John's uncut hair waved in the wind. For food, he ate the most common source supplied by the desert—locust and wild honey—the food of the very poor. Locusts, salted and eaten with butter or wild honey, resembled parched corn and tasted like shrimp.

Rough camel hair garments and a strange diet did not make John great. However, luxury and self-indulgence were certainly absent from the man whom Christ called "the greatest of the sons of men."

B. "There cometh one . . . after me"

Mark 1:7

At age thirty, the legal age for admission to the Temple service, John came blazing forth from the solitary desert. Stepping out of

isolation, he began preaching at the wilderness edge near the Jordan River.

John's message heralded the coming King and His new law. To receive the Messiah, preparation must be made in individual hearts. His message was: "The kingdom is ready! Are you?"

Unaccustomed to hearing from God, the Jewish people needed a forerunner to awaken them.

C. Baptism of Repentance

Matthew 3:5-12; Mark 1:4-8;

Luke 3:1-18; John 1:19-28

The time had arrived! Christ was still at Nazareth with His family, unknown and unrecognized by the throngs. But John boldly announced the coming Savior.

This strange new prophet, with the "spirit and power of Elijah," came with a special anointing that attracted the masses. Assuredly he proclaimed, "If you want to enter this kingdom, you must prepare yourself by repenting of your sins. Show your firm belief that God is truly forgiving your sins by allowing me to baptize you."

Until then, God had dealt with His people through the law, the priesthood, and the Temple. Now, a strange, new message was being proclaimed!

The entire system of Judaism was coming to a close. Soon the law would be fulfilled in the Messiah Himself. Even the Old Covenant sign of circumcision would be replaced by the New Covenant sign of water baptism.

To receive the new system, the old must be abandoned. Everyone must repent and confess his sins as he waded into the muddy Jordan River to be baptized.

To state that sins would no longer be remitted with blood sacrifices was unthinkable to the Jewish scribes and Pharisees. Yet the time was approaching when the method to rid oneself of sins was through repentance and faith, followed by baptism in water!

The air was charged with excitement as this stern, boisterous preacher commanded the attention of the entire populace. Multitudes went to hear him! "Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan" (Matthew 3:5).

The wilderness was no longer lonely or isolated. It trembled with thronging, curious crowds. John's preaching could not be resisted!

So large was his congregation, the Temple authorities in Jerusalem became quite concerned. Spies were sent to scrutinize this wild man who, without permission, was announcing a new dispensation—the advent of the kingdom of God and the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:2, 11).

John’s unique ministry was to baptize (meaning “to dip”) people in water. The Jews knew about “ablutions” imposed upon candidates who washed themselves to identify with the Jewish nation. But John’s baptism, unlike the traditional ceremonial washing for uncleanness, was a commitment to the coming Messiah.

Much alarm spread throughout the Jewish religious authorities because of John’s strange practices. How dare he insist that pious Jews submit to his baptism?

John’s baptism was for the remission of sins. To remit sins means to dismiss, release,

or forgive. It was like saying, “I want all the world to know that I have repented of my sins and turned to God, and I am depending upon Him to forgive me.”

John’s immersion in water was preparatory to Christ’s baptism of the Holy Spirit. John confessed,

“I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Luke 3:16).

Several years later we find Paul “rebaptizing” John’s converts at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6). John’s baptism was a temporary rite preparing believers to enter the kingdom of God. Yet it did not remove the necessity of the later baptism instituted by the apostles—“in the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38).

Lesson 6 – Chart 3 What Is Repentance?

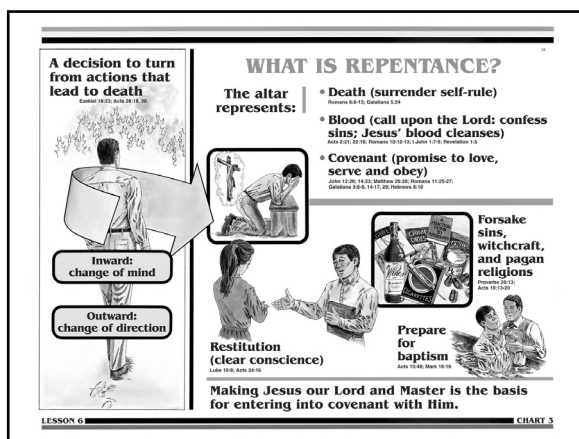


Chart Objective:

To determine the meaning of repentance—man’s first step of returning to God. The changing of one’s mind and actions is climaxed by accepting the atonement through Jesus’ blood and entering into Christ’s new covenant.

Chart Outline:

- A. A decision to turn from actions that lead to death
- B. Inward: change of mind; outward: change of direction
- C. The altar represents: Death; Blood; and Covenant
- D. Restitution

- E. Forsake sins, witchcraft, and pagan religions
- F. Prepare for baptism
- G. Making Jesus our Lord and Master is the basis for entering into covenant with Him

A. A decision to turn from actions that lead to death

Ezekiel 18:23; Acts 26:18, 20

To the sinner God asks:

“Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live?” (Ezekiel 18:23).

Why should anyone choose wickedness and death—when they can choose to repent and live?

The original Greek word for “repentance” means “to change one’s mind.” Repentance is not an emotion that we feel, but a decision. When we truly repent, we change our mind, our attitude, and purpose about sin. We turn around “on the inside.”

Christ and all His apostles commanded “all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).

B. Inward: change of mind; outward: change of direction

Once our minds are changed, our whole life becomes rearranged. True repentance totally changes us.

Apostle Paul's call from God sent him to the Gentiles:

"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. . . . that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:18, 20).

Repentance is much more than an emotional display of tears, weeping, and groaning. Although the emotions may be affected, true repentance goes much deeper. We acknowledge that our actions and attitudes have not only hurt others, but we have offended God!

As this truth unfolds, we are deeply concerned about our relationship with God. Sin appears ugly—as He sees it. Our wrongdoing has insulted God's holiness and love.

A beautiful example of repentance is found in Christ's parable of the prodigal son. A proud, independent youth left his father's home and traveled to a distant land. There he foolishly wasted his entire inheritance. But when he finally came to his senses, alone and in extreme poverty, he made this decision: "I will arise and go to my father." That decision was promptly acted upon and "he arose, and came to his father."

First is the decision to commit our life to Christ and allow Him to be our Lord and Master. Then follows the act of turning back to Father and home.

In his natural, sinful condition, every person born into this world has turned his back upon God, his Father, and upon heaven, his home. In this condition, each step takes us away from God's plan to a frightful eternity of torment.

Every person traveling toward destruction must: stop, change his mind, turn around, and face the opposite way toward God. This essential act is the sinner's first move to be in harmony with God's plan.

Why is repentance so important? Because God insists that we realize the grave problem caused by sin. When Adam's sin severed his relationship with God, death took dominion over man.

Man was created for God's pleasure. But the first transgression abolished man's fellowship with the Lord and the ability to serve Him.

God has no pleasure in man until he is first "reconciled," or spiritually restored to his original condition. **Repentance crumbles the barrier that separates man from God!**

We must understand exactly how to repent. These four suggestions will show the way.

C. The altar represents: Death; Blood; and Covenant

Three significant acts occur when we bow before our heavenly Father. An "altar" represents a place where sacrifices are offered to Deity. At an altar—whether in a church, home, or car—we come to God with a sacrifice.

The altar of repentance may be traced to Israel's brazen altar where sacrifices were offered to God. The blood of sacrificial animals provided a covering that hid their sins from a holy God. However, Christ's blood does not merely "cover" sins, but eradicates and cleanses us so thoroughly, we appear to never have been dirty!

At the altar we die with our crucified Lord. Death awaits all who come to Christ. Not a literal, physical death—although the day may come when we must die for His cause—but a commitment. Our intellect that tries to rule and give orders must be surrendered. We are no longer the boss. That privilege hereafter is reserved for our new Master.

Paul said that the "old man" or the "body of sin" must die:

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6).

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24).

At the altar, we leave Satan's family and rulership to join a new family and Lord.

When Jesus arose from the dead, He triumphed over man's cruel taskmaster. What a joyous message we bring to an unsaved world! Jesus wants to become your new Master! The God of heaven wants to be your Lord!

Then Jesus' blood begins to be applied as we "call upon the name of the Lord." The act of turning to the Lord began with Adam's sons: "then began men to call upon the name of the LORD" (Genesis 4:26).

Throughout the Old Testament, God heard the cries of those who called upon Him.

Abraham built an altar and “called upon the name of the LORD” (Genesis 12:8; 13:4).

When Israel was oppressed by enemy nations, “their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage” (Exodus 2:23; Judges 3:9, 15; 6:6-8).

On the Day of Pentecost, visiting Jews inquired about a strange phenomenon in an upper room. Peter replied by quoting from Joel’s writing:

“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21).

Paul said that when he was baptized and “called on the Lord,” his sins had been washed away:

“Rise and be baptized, and by calling upon His name wash away your sins” (Acts 22:16, Amplified).

Something begins when we call upon the Lord in faith!

After calling upon the Lord, we must confess our sins to God. To “confess” means to put thoughts into words. We tell God how bad we feel about all the wrong things we have done.

Specifically name sins one by one, such as pride, rebellion, hatred, anger, adultery, jealousy. As you think of sins, cry out to the Lord for mercy and forgiveness.

Do not say, “IF I have sinned . . .” Acknowledge that you ARE a sinner. Then mention specific offenses.

Complete honesty is most important. Why hide something from the One Who knows every thought? Let the words freely flow, without hedging or evading the issue.

Confession is never easy. But God wants us to express our guilt and specifically name sins so His blood can wash away every stain.

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

Jesus associated His blood with the New Covenant.

“For this is my blood of the new testament [New Covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28).

Paul also linked the covenant with the removal of sins.

“For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins” (Romans 11:27).

When Abraham simply believed what God had promised, the two entered into a blood-covenant relationship. Before circumcision or other good works, he was declared to be “righteous,” or in right standing with God. Faith is also a vital part of entering the new covenant:

“So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:9, 29).

Jesus stated that if we are to enter into covenant with Him, we must believe that His blood cleanses us from our sins and promise to serve and obey Him.

“If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23).

Salvation begins at an altar. But it does not end there. After surrendering our self-rule, confessing our sins and promising to love, serve, and obey Christ, we are to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and ask God to fill us with His Spirit, the seal of the new covenant.

D. Restitution

Luke 19:8; Acts 24:16

After we sincerely confess our sins and turn to God, we need to make things right with others. We call this *restitution*. Where possible, we restore what has been wrongly taken from others. The Gospels teach that restitution is part of repentance.

“And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold” (Luke 19:8).

Wounded relationships must be repaired. Hurt feelings toward family members, friends, business relations, or others, should

be cleared from the conscience. Our relationship with God will never be right unless our relationship with people is equally right.

Paul stressed the importance of a clear conscience:

“And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16).

E. Forsake sins, witchcraft, and pagan religions

Proverbs 28:13; Acts 19:13-20

We prove to God our intentions by forsaking all sin. True repentance is turning away from everything that we know displeases God.

All former bad habits are broken. In fact, we sense a genuine hatred and disgust for the things once loved. If we experience difficulty in forsaking any sinful habit, we likely have never felt hatred for that sin.

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13).

Because of the prevalence of both “cults” and the “occult,” it is very important that all false teachings be renounced. A “cult” is any teaching that denies that Jesus Christ was God in flesh. Some of these unbiblical groups emphasize “mind-science,” reincarnation, pantheism, and metaphysics.

The “occult” or “psychic” beliefs include fortune-telling, extrasensory perception, telepathy, clairvoyance, astrology, mind expansion techniques (such as: drugs, hypnotism, and transcendental meditation), rock music, sorcery, witchcraft, spiritism, or spiritualism (communing with the dead).

Our world is being flooded with psychic phenomena. Before the Spirit of Christ can dwell within us, we must first renounce any involvement or relationship with any corrupt philosophy mentioned.

Ask God’s forgiveness, then in the name of Jesus bind and cast out any spirit connected with wrong teaching.

Believers at Ephesus confessed their deeds, then brought their curious arts and books together and burned them (Acts 19:13-20). Consequently, the Word of God grew and prevailed!

It is a good idea to thoroughly clean your

house and then burn every book, magazine, record, tape, and other items associated with false teaching.

F. Prepare for baptism

Acts 10:48; Mark 16:16

To climax repentance, we prepare for water baptism. This ceremonial act is for the remission of sins. Baptism completely renounces our life as a sinner. It is like saying, “I commit my whole life to Jesus Christ. I mean to serve Him. He is my new Ruler and I take His name in water baptism.”

Submitting to water baptism after repentance was the standard procedure for the early church. Notice Peter’s words to Cornelius’ household:

“And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:48).

Once the “old man” has been put to death at the altar of repentance, it is time to bury the “old man” in the waters of baptism.

G. Making Jesus our Lord and Master is the basis for entering into covenant with Him

The highest order of repentance is not weeping over past sins, but confessing Jesus Christ as your new Lord. We leave Satan’s family and rulership to join the family and lordship of Christ!

“Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Colossians 1:13).

Allowing Jesus to control your life is the way to salvation. Self-dependence and self-government must end. But He cannot be Lord unless we invite His Spirit to sit at the controls.

The altar represents death, surrender, commitment, vows, promises, covenant. Every sinner needs an altar. And every saint needs an altar to renew those promises.

Jesus died on a cross. We die at an altar. But do not stop here. Repentance is only the first step! As wonderful as it feels, there are greater, more thrilling experiences ahead as we proceed toward God!

As we adopt Christ’s new code of behavior and attitudes, repentance must become a way of life. Our initial repentance turns us from darkness toward God. But it does not

end there. You can expect to make mistakes and to fail similar to a child learning to walk.

Do not be discouraged. Forgiveness is available to all who will repent.

Lesson 6 – Chart 4 Jesus Christ, the Hope of the World

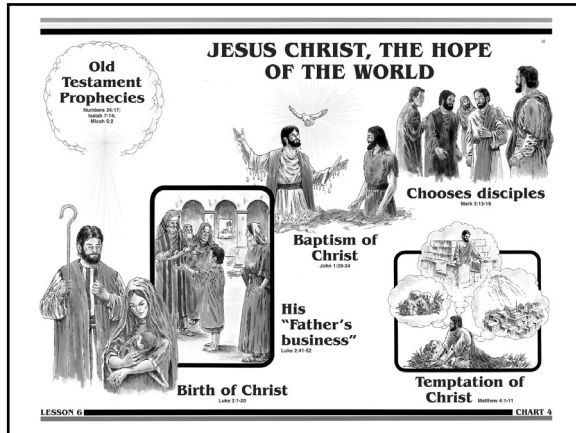


Chart Objective:

To examine the birth, mission, and preparation of the Son of God for a ministry that would lovingly reach toward a needy, though skeptical world.

Chart Outline:

- Birth of Christ; Old Testament Prophecies
- His “Father’s business”
- Baptism of Christ
- Temptation of Christ
- Chooses disciples

A. Birth of Christ

Luke 2:1-20

Old Testament Prophecies

Numbers 24:17; Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2

Six months after the announcement of John’s birth, the angel Gabriel was commissioned to deliver a similar message in Nazareth. In this secluded village lived a young virgin named Mary of the tribe of Judah. She was espoused, or engaged, to Joseph, also of the house of David.

This quiet, young girl was told that through the operation of the Holy Spirit, she would give birth to a Son. She must name the child Jesus, meaning “Yahweh the Savior.” Mary would be the highly honored mother of the Messiah!

Startled by the amazing announcement, Mary was then encouraged with news that Elisabeth, her elderly cousin, was also expecting a child. An age of wonders had begun!

Quickly Mary prepared to visit Elisabeth in the Judean hills. As the youthful relative arrived, Elisabeth greeted Mary as “the mother of my Lord.” That salutation fully confirmed the angel’s words!

As Elisabeth rejoiced, she felt the baby in her womb also leap for joy!

Three months later, Mary returned to Nazareth. Imagine Joseph’s confusion when informed that his wife-to-be was expecting a child. Espousal among the Hebrews was much more binding than modern engagements. Because it was considered the beginning of marriage, espousal was legally binding and not easily broken.

While Joseph struggled with his problem, an angel appeared in a dream, revealing the truth of Mary’s story. Her child was indeed conceived of God’s divine Spirit!

Joseph was instructed to continue his marriage plans and name Mary’s baby, Jesus (Matthew 1:20-21). Her child would be a Savior—not from political bondage, but from sin—man’s most dreadful bondage.

Centuries earlier, Isaiah had prophesied that the Messiah would be God manifest in the flesh (Isaiah 7:14)! Jesus would also be the “God-Man” promised to Adam and Eve at the dawn of history.

Micah had predicted that the Messiah should be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). However, it seemed inevitable that the child would be born in Nazareth, the home of Mary and Joseph.

With meticulous care, the Almighty arranged for the birthplace to coincide precisely with Micah’s prediction. The heathen emperor at Rome, Caesar Augustus, decreed that every subject of the Roman Empire must be taxed. All must register according to their family lineage.

Every citizen had to endure the hardship of being enrolled to fulfill prophecy. Joseph and Mary were forced to travel from Nazareth to their ancestral home in Bethlehem.

At the completion of the one-hundred-mile trip, Mary sensed it was time for the birth of her child. But they had come too late. Every guest chamber was filled to capacity.

Earth’s most important birth should have

been heralded from every shore! But the precious Christ child came secretly, in a common stable among cattle. The first bed of the King of kings was a feedbox for livestock!

As shepherds were tending their flocks nearby, a majestic choir of angels appeared in the skies singing of peace on earth and the birth of a Savior. Specific instructions were given and the men hurried to Bethlehem where they found Mary, Joseph and the baby lying in the manger.

Lowly shepherds were the only worshippers to celebrate the greatest event of the ages!

The shepherds' unusual account of a heavenly choir became another important link in the wondrous chain of events that would crown the life of this child. How it must have greatly encouraged Mary and Joseph!

Most sheep used for daily Temple sacrifices grazed in Bethlehem pastures. Therefore, the shepherds who first heard news of the Savior's birth,

“Made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds” (Luke 2:17-18).

Humble shepherds proved to be effective heralds in announcing the Messiah's coming to devout worshippers at the Temple.

Superstition has fixed the date of our Savior's birth as December 25. This date first appeared in the fourth century. However, shepherds would not have tended their sheep in open fields during winter months. Jesus was probably born during the warmer spring or summer months. Yet it is good to observe this momentous occasion every day of the year—so why not on Christmas Day also?

Having been born under the dispensation of law, Jesus was required to submit to prescribed customs and ordinances. On the eighth day, the Christ child was named and then circumcised—the sign of becoming a covenant member.

At the age of forty days, Mary and Joseph presented their child to the Lord at the Temple for the Jewish rite of purification. Simeon, a just and devout man, had been assured that he would not die until his eyes had seen the Lord's Christ. When he beheld

Mary holding the babe, he was certain that day had arrived!

Taking Jesus in his arms, Simeon blessed God for being permitted to see His salvation, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of His people Israel (Luke 2:32).

The GENTILES? Yes! Wise men from the East seem to have been the first to fulfill God's purpose for the Gentiles. To the Jews, God spoke through an angel. But to the Gentiles through a star. Each was given in language perhaps best understood.

Who were these wise men? Probably they were of the “magi,” which were royal Persian scholars trained in astronomy and wisdom of the ancient world. Like the Jewish tribe of Levi, the Magi were entrusted with priestly functions. They were familiar with Old Testament prophecies about the coming Redeemer since Daniel was once prime minister of Persia under Darius and Cyrus (Daniel 6:1-3, 28).

In fact, the year of Christ's birth could almost have been pinpointed from Daniel's prophecies alone! He had predicted that the Messiah would come into Jerusalem as a Prince, 483 years after the Persian emperor Artaxerxes gave the decree for exiled Jews to rebuild their city and wall (Daniel 9:25-26; Nehemiah 2:7-8). This decree was given about 446 B.C. Of course, Messiah would be born more than thirty years before coming to Jerusalem as a “Prince” (Morris, *The Bible Has the Answer*, page 203).

Perhaps the wise men had also viewed with keen interest Balaam's prophecy stating that the Messiah's appearance would be signaled by a “star” out of Jacob (Numbers 24:17).

More than “three” wise men were likely in the caravan. When this large entourage suddenly appeared at Herod's palace demanding to see a newborn “King of the Jews,” all Jerusalem was disturbed.

Many months had passed since the first appearance of the star. The Persians assumed that such a notable child would surely be in the king's palace.

When Herod received this frightening announcement, he sent them to Bethlehem, instructing that they return and report their visit.

Fearing for his own crown, he planned to destroy the child as soon as He was found. But God prevented Herod's evil plot by warning

the wise men in a dream to return home another way.

Soon after the Magi departed, Joseph was also warned in a dream to flee into Egypt with the young child and His mother. There they remained until after Herod's death.

Realizing that the wise men had deceived him, Herod became furious. In a mad rage, he commissioned soldiers to kill all the males in Bethlehem under two years of age. To find the one child threatening his empire, the brutal monarch killed them all!

When Herod died, an angelic voice instructed sleeping Joseph to return to Israel with Jesus and Mary.

After arriving back at Nazareth, we are told of no more angelic announcements, prophetic words, nor worship from mysterious strangers. Jesus' boyhood was ordinary and unnoticed.

Why are no details given of Christ's youth? Childhood records were not preserved of ANY ancient hero. The important influence of childhood years upon the adult life is a recent idea. But in ancient times, such details seemed insignificant.

B. His "Father's business"

Luke 2:41-52

Jesus was a normal, healthy child. But He never once committed a sin. Nor did He perform any miracles in those early years. John describes His first to be that of changing water into wine (John 2:11).

Matthew tells us Jesus was the eldest in a family of at least seven children (Matthew 13:55-56). Being Mary's "first-born" Son indicated there were others also.

In Nazareth, every Jewish boy attended synagogue school. At the age of five or six, formal education began. Bible study began with the books of the law, continuing to the writings of the prophets.

Moses' law was very demanding about religious education in the home. Parents were commanded to train their children about God and His laws. This special mark of Judaism is one reason for the permanence of the Jew in history.

All Jewish men were required to attend three great feasts at Jerusalem: the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. Women were allowed, but not required to come. Although Jewish families had been scattered to distant lands, devout Jews faithfully attended these feasts.

At the age of twelve, Jesus made His second visit to the Temple. The first was His circumcision and dedication to God. This time He chose to come. Twelve-year-old boys were known as "sons of the law," meaning they were personally obligated to observe the ordinances.

After observing the feast, Mary and Joseph started home. Instead of joining the pilgrims from His hometown, Jesus lingered at the Temple, thoroughly absorbed in the rabbi's teachings and answers.

After a day of travel, Mary and Joseph missed Jesus and began to inquire of kinsmen and friends. No one had seen Him.

Quickly they returned to Jerusalem to continue their search. After three days they found Him at the Temple, reasoning with the learned scholars. The group was astonished at His understanding and answers. Jesus' reply to Mary and Joseph was:

"How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49).

Jesus was aware of His future destiny, yet He obediently returned to Nazareth with His parents and was submissive to them. What a lesson for young people today!

From the age of twelve until the beginning of His ministry at age thirty, nothing is recorded of Jesus' life. However, from His later use of Old Testament Scriptures, we are certain He was thoroughly trained in the synagogue schools.

No reproach could be found in His life—spiritually or physically. In this one verse of Scripture we discover four areas of development:

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52).

- **Wisdom.** Mental growth and acquired knowledge.
- **Stature.** Physical growth. He became strong and healthy.
- **Favor with God.** Spiritual growth, in preparation for His mission as the Son of God.
- **Favor with man.** Social development and behavior. Jesus learned how to get along well with others and communicate effectively.

What a delightful personality Jesus must have had! Never was He happier in later years than when surrounded by publicans and sinners or feeding famished crowds. Jesus was a great lover of mankind and thoroughly enjoyed being with people.

C. Baptism of Christ

John 1:29-34

John the Baptist had begun preaching a message of repentance and baptism about six months before Jesus entered public ministry. As John was baptizing in the Jordan River, Jesus came with others to be baptized.

The legal age for a priest to begin officiating was thirty years. Having reached that age, Jesus was ready to begin His ministry.

Although John did not immediately recognize his cousin, he felt the power of divine presence. John's spirit witnessed that a sinless, sacred person stood before him.

But Jesus was waiting to be baptized! The baptism of repentance was accompanied by confession of sin. How could Jesus confess if He had no sin?

John instantly felt his own unworthiness in the presence of the Savior. Since Jesus had greater authority from God, the roles of ministry should have been reversed. John needed the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but Jesus had no need for the baptism of repentance. After Jesus persuaded that this was God's plan, John reluctantly cooperated.

Why was Jesus baptized? In Christ's answer to John, we find both the reason why He desired baptism and the true significance of Christian baptism. As explained to John, He was baptized to "fulfil [to complete] all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Here are some reasons for His baptism:

- **He was our perfect Example.** Deliberately, Jesus established a pattern which He intended all His believing disciples to follow.

"Leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (I Peter 2:21-22).

- **He was part of the human race.** Christ was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh." Baptism was not for Deity, but mankind. Therefore, we know Jesus was Man as well as God.
- **He was our high priest.** The high priest was washed and anointed prior to

serving. At Jesus' baptism He was "washed" and "anointed" with the Holy Spirit.

- **He was the spotless Lamb of God.** Sacrificial lambs were carefully inspected for blemishes or defects before being presented to the priest. To be the spotless Lamb of God, Jesus must also be washed, prepared, scrutinized, and accepted for sacrifice by the Father.
- **He submitted to the initiating rite of the New Covenant.** At birth, Jesus was circumcised, the initiating rite of Abraham's covenant. When He assumed public leadership, Christ introduced the initiating ordinance of the New Covenant—an inner circumcision of the heart through water baptism. After fulfilling all righteousness under the Old Covenant, Jesus gave His own body and blood to institute the New Covenant (Isaiah 42:6).

After being immersed in water by John, Jesus "went up straightway out of the water." Then a most amazing thing happened! The heavens opened and the Spirit of God descended upon Jesus bodily like a dove. A voice said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

How John must have rejoiced at those assuring words. This was the Christ, the Savior of the world!

Jesus' baptism in water and anointing of the Holy Spirit is one of the few pivotal events in all Bible history. His baptism introduced a new messianic age and prepared the way for the New Covenant to be initiated.

D. Temptation of Christ

Matthew 4:1-11

Immediately after His baptism and anointing with the Spirit, Jesus retreated to the wilderness for a time of prayer, fasting, and preparation for His upcoming ministry.

Throughout the forty days, Satan waited like a wild beast for the precise moment to pounce upon his prey. Christ's temptation was further preparation for the great work He was about to begin.

First Satan appealed to the strong natural appetite of hunger. "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread," he challenged.

Yes, Christ could have used His supernatural power to feed the crowds and generate a

massive following. But that was not His plan. His kingdom would be built by feeding hungry hearts rather than satisfying their natural craving for food.

“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

Since Jesus would not use His newly developed powers to satisfy the natural appetite, Satan resorted to other suggestions that challenged His position as the Messiah. Probably by suggestion or imagination, Jesus was taken to the pinnacle of the Temple and asked:

“If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee” (Matthew 4:6).

This brilliant idea might have appealed to the carnal mind. What a breathtaking beginning for His ministry! Leap from the tremendous Temple height to the assembled worshipers below! Such a spectacular miracle would accomplish His mission instantly!

What could He lose? God’s Word had already declared that angels would keep Christ from harm.

This would have been a simple method—compared to the tedious instruction, the slow changes that must be effected in men’s thinking and the weary ministry actually chosen by Christ. Yet He steadily refused to work a miracle for the sake of proving His power.

“Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,” was the Master’s reply. We tempt God by placing ourselves in dangerous situations to which He has not called us. Christ’s miracles were always performed to relieve distress or increase faith among His followers. He would not display His power to satisfy the curiosity of Satan, Herod, or the Pharisees. Christ’s high and holy character never yielded to such base motives.

The most difficult temptation was reserved for last. The pinnacle of the Temple was not high enough. Jesus must be taken to a lofty mountain for a broader view. All the kingdoms of the world were viewed instantaneously as Satan offered this tempting bargain:

“All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Matthew 4:9).

Would Jesus selfishly seize power and glory by an unholy act of submission? The throne He had come to claim could be attained so much simpler than the plan He had been considering the last forty days. No self-denial, no self-sacrifice, no shedding of blood. What a bargain! The carnal mind eagerly welcomes such a proposition!

Although Satan was indeed prince of this world, Christ had no intention of gaining world acceptance through a deceptive scheme. Again Jesus defeated the enemy with God’s Word:

“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4:10).

It would be impossible to improve on the Lord’s method of dealing with the devil. Only the inspired Word of God can expose and defeat Satan’s lies.

Note that Christ used the same weapon available to every believer—the Word of God! Scripture is much more useful than for comfort and devotion. It is the most effective weapon in our hand against Satan’s enticements!

With each temptation, Christ began His rebuttal with this statement: “It is written . . . It is written . . . It is written.” And we must do the same.

But how can we know what is written if we are not acquainted with our Bible and its invaluable contents? Here is the whole purpose for our home Bible study! By becoming acquainted with the Bible, your life will be more rewarding, more fulfilling, and victorious!

Having utterly failed, Satan was forced to flee in response to the Master’s command: “Get thee hence, Satan.” Although conquered, he was not through with the Conqueror. He departed “for a season.”

Then angels came and ministered unto Jesus. Perhaps we do not always sense the presence of angelic forces while being tempted, but they are near. The sooner we resist, the sooner we can be encouraged and strengthened by God’s helpers.

E. Chooses disciples

Mark 3:13-19

Following His bout with the tempter in the wilderness, Jesus returned “in the power of the Spirit” (Luke 4:4) to the place John was baptizing.

One of John’s great contributions was to direct two of his disciples to Jesus. Both were later chosen as apostles.

When **Andrew** and **John** heard of the coming Messiah, they wanted to meet and follow Him. So great was Christ’s impression upon them, they became disciples for life. Quickly they transferred allegiance from a closing ministry to a beginning one.

Andrew also became the first soulwinner by bringing his brother **Simon Peter** to Jesus. Although Andrew never wrote an epistle nor founded a church, he opened a new career to one of the greatest apostles.

Soon afterward, Philip was brought within the circle of Christ’s influence. Philip, in turn, found **Nathanael (Bartholomew)**, a devout Jewish scholar who readily accepted Jesus as the Messiah.

During His first year of ministry, these five men followed Christ while maintaining their occupation. However, the day came when Christ asked for a deeper commitment. No longer would they be fishermen, but “fishers of men.” **Simon Peter** and **Andrew**, along with their fishing partners, **James** and **John**, forsook all to become official followers of Christ.

Soon afterward, **Matthew** was asked to join the group (Matthew 9:9). Jesus saw

something special in this despised tax collector. Being an eyewitness to the majority of events, Matthew’s occupation of record keeper provided skills for becoming a narrator of the Gospel bearing his name.

Jesus took about a year and a half to complete His choice of apostles. Most were with Him about two years. The selection and training of men to whom His work would be entrusted was an extremely important part of Jesus’ earthly mission.

His entire cause was staked upon twelve men. Jesus wrote no books; He left no elaborate church government; He established no school of philosophy; He organized no great armies to carry His banners. He merely gathered twelve men, mostly outdoorsmen—men of the earth, farmers, fishermen and lowly government officials. None were of the nobility or aristocracy. In simple faith they depended heavily upon Him for the future.

There was the inner circle: **Peter, James**, and **John**; the quiet workers—**Andrew, Philip, Nathanael, Thomas**, and **Matthew**. There were the little known three—**James the less, Thaddeus (Jude)**, and **Simon Zelotes**. Finally, the traitor, **Judas Iscariot**, completed the dozen assistants.

At first, the twelve were sent forth two by two. In this way, they would be serviceable to one another, providing companionship, encouragement and strength. Some apostles were not famous, nor their actions celebrated. But to each was given a distinct call, a commission and an obligation to become a “fisher of men.”

Lesson 6 – Chart 5

Jesus Teaches Kingdom Concepts

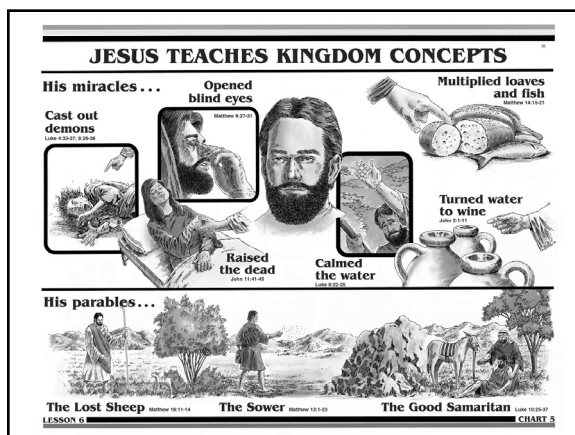


Chart Objective:

To explore Christ’s two methods of teaching kingdom concepts: miracles and parables. Miracles instilled faith, while parables made spiritual concepts more comprehensive to His listeners.

Chart Outline:

- A. His miracles
- B. Cast out demons
- C. Opened blind eyes; raised the dead
- D. Turned water to wine; multiplied loaves and fish; calmed the water
- E. His parables
- F. The Lost Sheep
- G. The Sower
- H. The Good Samaritan

A. His miracles

No one—not even the Israelites—had an accurate concept of God. Heathen nations had pictured Him as weird, cruel, grotesque, immoral, or impersonal. Never had He been conceived as a God of love, as a heavenly Father.

When Jesus came to earth as a man, He was not like the proud, arrogant Pharisees. Nor was He like the great philosophers and religious teachers preceding Him. Jesus revealed the Creator as a God of love, a holy God Who could be approached.

The most sinful of men were attracted to Him. Publicans and sinners felt free to sit and eat with Him. They were unafraid of His holiness and drawn by His love. His mission was not to condemn, but to save.

Two main methods were utilized by Christ to attract an audience—His miracles and His teaching. Miracles excited the greatest attention everywhere He went.

His miracles can be classified into three categories:

- Controlling demons.
- Displaying power over disease and death.
- Controlling nature.

B. Cast out demons

Luke 4:33-37; 8:26-36

One primary reason for Christ's large following was His practice of expelling evil spirits. Throughout His ministry, a clear, open conflict raged between two spiritual kingdoms—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. A full fourth of Christ's ministry was devoted to casting out demon spirits.

Expelling evil spirits taught Jesus' audiences that Satan and demons were real, but they were subject to Christ's control.

Christ's ministry began on a Sabbath. While He and His disciples were worshipping at a synagogue in Capernaum, a man with an unclean spirit cried out in an irreverent, unruly manner, disturbing the service. Christ did not quietly remove him to a back room to deal privately with this embarrassing episode. Instead, He rebuked the spirit, commanded it to hold its peace, and to come out! The spirit obeyed, but not before it had violently "torn the man" with choking and shrieking.

How did Jesus' first audience react to this shocking demonstration?

"And they were all amazed, . . . And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee" (Mark 1:27-28).

Jesus explained his reasons for expelling evil spirits:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath . . . sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19).

How Christ must have longed to set His people free from the cruel slavery of evil spirits. Authority over evil spirits became one of His most unique features.

Miracles of healing, feeding hungry crowds, controlling forces of nature and raising the dead had all been duplicated by Old Testament prophets, such as Moses, Joshua, Elijah and Elisha. But the Master's treatment of evil spirits was extraordinary! Speaking to them, commanding them to obey and leave—this was spectacular!

Astonished, the people exclaimed, "What new doctrine is this?" And nineteen centuries later, they ask this same question when captives are set free from the power of evil spirits!

C. Opened blind eyes; raised the dead

Matthew 9:27-31; John 11:41-45

Much of Jesus' ministry was devoted to physical needs:

"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him" (Acts 10:38).

As Jesus circulated from village to village, He was surrounded by the sick and dying. Everywhere He went, people clamored for restoration of health.

The blind longed for sight, the deaf for hearing, the lame for new strength to walk, the grief-stricken for restoration of loved ones. Some were paralyzed, some burned with raging fever, some bore the awful scars and stench of leprosy.

“And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus’ feet; and he healed them” (Matthew 15:30).

As He beheld suffering humanity, Jesus’ heart was “moved with compassion” (Matthew 9:36). No wonder! Here was man’s Creator watching the frightful wreckage sin had wrought. Without a thought for His own comfort, the Master reached out with His miraculous touch of healing.

While teaching in the synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, Christ busied Himself “healing . . . all manner of disease among the people” (Matthew 4:23).

No symptoms baffled Him. Instantly Christ perceived both cause and cure in every patient! As blind Bartimaeus shrieked for mercy, the compassionate Master touched him saying, “Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole” (Mark 10:52).

When the desperate woman plagued with a blood disease touched His garment after twelve disappointing years of suffering, Jesus said, “Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole” (Matthew 9:22).

Death was a barrier no more difficult to control than any disease or sickness. When Jesus’ company encountered a funeral procession at the city limits of Nain, He responded in like fashion. Immediately the Master reversed their grief into joy while commanding the corpse, “Young man, I say unto thee, Arise” (Luke 7:14).

When the grief-stricken sisters of Lazarus questioned the late arrival of their Friend, Christ responded with that loud, authoritative command at the gravesite, “Lazarus, come forth” (John 11:43)!

D. Turned water to wine; multiplied loaves and fish; calmed the water

John 2:1-11; Matthew 14:15-21;

Luke 8:22-25

Jesus’ first miracle involving nature was turning water into wine (John 2:1-11). Another was blessing loaves and fish offered by one small lad to provide more than ample food for five thousand men—plus women and children (Matthew 14:15-21; Luke 9:14-17).

Again Christ displayed miraculous power over the elements of nature when He calmed a storm on the Sea of Galilee by announcing:

“Peace, be still” (Mark 4:39).

The forces of nature were defied when Jesus walked on the sea (John 6:19). Another miracle of nature involved a miraculous catch of fish by Christ’s disciples (Luke 5:6).

Nature immediately responded to the commands of the One who spoke the world into existence.

E. His parables

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 4:23).

Christ did considerably more teaching than preaching. Every word carried the force of divine authority. One of the most fascinating features of His teaching was the constant use of parables, or short narratives, to illustrate the abstract concepts of His kingdom.

Constantly Jesus saw analogies, comparisons, and resemblances between the realm of nature and the realm of the spirit. The parable introduced an unfamiliar spiritual concept with the familiar.

However, the parable was not unique to Jesus’ teaching. Both the Jewish rabbis and Old Testament prophets utilized parables (II Samuel 12:1-4; Ezekiel 17). This type story is a common Oriental method of imparting truths.

Jesus’ skillful use of parables was much like a work of art. Most of His audiences were mixed—some hostile and quick to accuse; others friendly and eager to grasp every word. By using parables, Christ could reveal gems of truth to the receptive, yet conceal them from His enemies.

Often the stories said one thing, but meant quite another. The lost sheep that was sought and discovered by a good shepherd represented a lost man found by the Savior (Luke 15:3-7). Because of the double meanings, His followers readily understood, but the skeptics went away confused.

“Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand” (Matthew 13:13).

These stories with hidden meanings compared spiritual concepts to familiar, everyday objects, such as: fishing, farming, seed, soil, crops, wheat, trees, sheep and goats.

Since the Jews had long envisioned an earthly kingdom that would conquer the iron hand of Roman oppression, He had to correct their misconceptions. Many of Jesus' stories began "The kingdom of heaven is like . . ."

To stress the separation of sin from righteousness in His kingdom, He told the parable of the tares and wheat (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-42).

To emphasize the priceless value of His kingdom, a story was told of buried treasure (Matthew 13:44). Another narrative described a merchant seeking one priceless pearl gem (Matthew 13:45-46).

To show the importance of humble beginnings, Christ's kingdom was compared to a grain of mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32).

To explain how His kingdom would separate sinners from the righteous, the parable was used of the varied catch of fish (Matthew 13:47-49).

Why we should commune with our heavenly Father was emphasized with the Lord's Prayer, followed by a parable of a persistent friend at midnight (Luke 11:5-8).

In response to Peter's question about forgiveness, a parable was told of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:21-35).

F. The Lost Sheep

Matthew 18:11-14

Many parables were in response to a problem or those who opposed Him. When the Pharisees criticized Jesus for mingling with sinners, He told the stories of the prodigal son, the lost coin and the lost sheep. This was His way of illustrating the value of reaching for a lost sinner.

The beauty of Jesus' teaching ministry is perhaps best displayed in the tender story of the lost sheep:

"What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost" (Luke 15:4-6).

The question Jesus asked in this parable should have silenced His self-righteous accusers. Not one of them would hesitate to

search for a lost animal. Yet Christ was interested in finding something much more precious than all the flocks of sheep that ever grazed on Judean hillsides. It was the soul of man He came to seek and save!

G. The Sower

Matthew 13:1-23

Stressing the importance of hearing and receiving God's Word, Jesus told the parable of the sower and his varied crop (Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23). He compared the seed to the Word of God, the sower to the one who shares the Word, and the soil to the human heart—whether it be stony, shallow, crowded or fruitful ground.

Like seed, the Word must be planted to cause a reaction. It must be cultivated, nurtured and protected. Listening to the Word is not enough. We must hear it, receive it into our heart, and allow it to take root and grow.

Nineteen times in Matthew's account of this parable, Christ used the word hear. He was not referring merely to the physical act of listening to sounds, but listening with the inner ear and receiving God's Word deep into the heart. The way to a man's heart is through his "spiritual" ears!

As we study each of these lessons together, we should determine that the seed of God's Word will germinate in our hearts to bring forth good fruit!

H. The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37

In response to a question about neighbors, Christ told the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). The critic who claims the Bible is not relevant to our modern world has never read this parable. The ingredients composing this familiar story are found in the pages of our daily newspapers!

This story talks about violence—a current problem with which we can relate. It speaks of crime, racial discrimination, and hatred. It emphasizes the neglect, selfishness and lack of concern by the priest and Levite. Yet we also see love and mercy.

The compassionate Samaritan came to the aid of the injured victim who had been stripped and ignored by the "religious" travelers. They were too involved in holy activities to render aid.

We know what the parable says, but what does it mean? In response to the lawyer's

question, “Who is my neighbor?” Christ used his query to teach a most important truth: You

cannot separate your relationship with God from your relationship with your fellowman.

Lesson 6 – Chart 6 Peter Receives Kingdom Keys

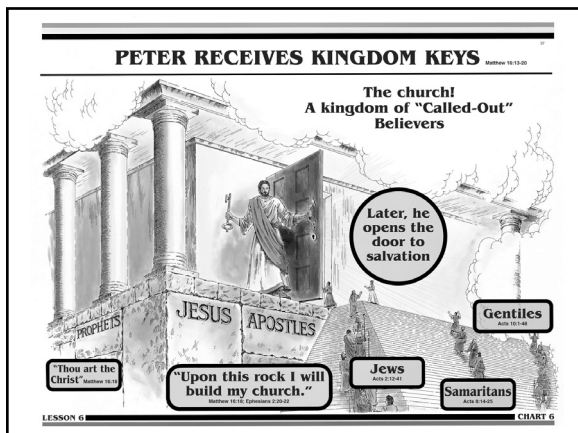


Chart Objective:

To study Peter’s accurate perception of Christ’s true identity as the Son of God. The keys to the new spiritual kingdom given him by Jesus were later used to open the door of salvation first to the Jews, then to the Samaritans and later, the Gentiles.

Chart Outline:

- A. “Thou art the Christ”
- B. “Upon this rock I will build my church”
- C. The church! A kingdom of “called-out” believers
- D. Later, Peter opens the door to salvation
- E. Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles

A. “Thou art the Christ”

Matthew 16:16

Christ’s Galilean ministry was coming to a close. Only days before, He had multiplied loaves and fish while the awed multitude sought to proclaim Him as their King. Had Christ decided to overthrow Roman dominion, countless numbers would have enthusiastically joined the revolution. Had He publicly announced Himself as the Messiah, Jesus would have been heralded as the deliverer of the people.

Instead, He declined their offered crown to seek solitude away from the clamoring throngs. No one as yet understood His mission. Since their spirits were still dead, they could not grasp the significance of a kingdom that was not of this world.

As Christ retired with His chosen Twelve to a secluded area, He began to talk with them more intimately.

“Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” (Matthew 16:13).

Jesus had never before asked such a startling question! Seemingly He paid no attention to the opinions or praise of men. This question, however, was asked for the benefit of the disciples. Their vague ideas must be clarified.

Having freely mixed with Christ’s audiences, the disciples had frequently heard unbiased comments about their Master—His miracles, teaching, authority and claims. Such a unique personality as Jesus Christ had evoked interest and curiosity throughout the country. However, the Twelve reluctantly had to admit that to their knowledge, no one believed Jesus to be the Messiah.

Oh yes, there were many varied opinions. Some, like the terrified Herod Antipas, thought He was a resurrected John the Baptist. Some supposed He was Elijah. Others suspected Him to be Jeremiah or another of the Old Testament prophets.

Having asked this question—not for His own information—Christ sought to crystallize their convictions and faith. Pondering their comments for a moment, He then asked a much more probing question:

“But whom say ye that I am?” (Matthew 16:15).

Although asked of all the disciples, Peter became the mouthpiece that day for the Twelve, as he so often did. Boldly He declared,

“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16).

Christ was quite pleased with Peter’s accurate analysis. If anyone at this point should have understood that He was the Messiah, surely it should have been these men who had witnessed mighty miracles that only God could perform.

Peter's confession was an absolutely complete description of Christ! Knowing the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the "God-Man" Who was to come, Peter knew that the "Son," or humanity of Jesus, would be born of a virgin, would dwell among men, and would be their God (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; 35:4-6)!

Here, without doubt, was the Christ! The God of the Old Testament for Whom they had waited!

Peter also explained in one breath that not only was Jesus the Christ, or Messiah, but the "Son of the living God!" God—in His human form—had accompanied them for almost three years. And Peter had recognized Deity through the wrapper of human flesh! (See John 14:8-11; 10:30-38.)

Both His office and nature were explained in this one statement. Jesus' office was that of the long-expected Messiah. His nature was that of human flesh—the "Son of the living God." Divinity and humanity had joined to become the Savior of the world!

B. "Upon this rock I will build my church" Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 2:20-22

Christ was especially pleased with Peter's perception.

"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:17-19).

What did Christ mean in these statements? Many questions have arisen since the day Christ made this declaration. Did Jesus indicate that the rock foundation of His church was Peter? or Peter's confession? or Christ Himself?

When Jesus first called Peter to become His follower, he was named "Cephas," which means "stone" or "rock." The literal translation of Christ's statement is:

"Thou art Petros and upon this petra I will build my church."

The word "Petros" indicates a small stone, while "petra" indicates a boulder of gigantic proportions, such as the Rock of Gibraltar. Thus, Peter was only a small part of that great Rock on which Christ would build His church. The wise Master-Builder stood ready that day to lay the firm foundation stones of His enduring church. Since Peter was the first to acknowledge the true deity of our Lord, it was in this rock-like disciple that Jesus discerned a suitable stone to lay first on the foundation rock. Thus, Peter was only a small, but very important part of the church's foundation. We also are included in the building:

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:20-22).

C. The church!

A kingdom of "called-out" believers

Thus, we know that the church's foundation is built upon Christ, the apostles and prophets and that we also, "builded together" as "lively stones" (I Peter 2:5-6), compose a part of this structure called the church.

The church is not built merely on confessions, but on men who have made confessions—men inspired by God to teach His great truths. It is on rock-men like Peter who acknowledge the true deity of Christ that the church of the living God is built.

The stone which gained the honorable position of being laid immediately next to the corner was the apostle Peter.

Here in Christ's declaration, we encounter the word "church" for the first time in the New Testament. The word is derived from the verb "ecclesia," meaning "to call out."

"Church" connotes a new meaning from the synagogue assemblies where Jews met for worship. In our Lord's words to Peter, special emphasis is placed on the word to distinguish it from that of the Jews. Thus, the Christian community in the midst of Israel would be "called-out" ones. Today, Christ's true "church" represents a group of "called-out" believers distinctively set apart from the world.

D. Later, Peter opens the door to salvation

Christ continued in His reply to confer on Peter the “keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 16:19).

In Eastern customs, the “key” was a symbol of authority. Made with a crook at one end, it was worn around the neck as a badge of office. To present a key was equivalent to bestowing great trust, distinction and responsibility.

The authority given Peter was to open the door of faith and salvation to the entire world—a door that would never again be closed or reserved for one elite group. Because Peter understood who Jesus was, he was qualified to receive the key that would open the door of salvation to everyone!

E. Jews, Samaritans, Gentiles

Acts 2:12-41; 8:14-25; 10:1-48

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter opened the door of salvation to the Jews by explaining the strange phenomena in the upper room (Acts 2). This was the first sermon with instructions for obeying the gospel.

Later, Peter was also responsible for laying hands upon the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8).

Finally, Peter opened the door for the despised Gentiles to be baptized with the Holy Spirit as he preached to the household of Cornelius in Caesarea (Acts 10).

On these three occasions, Peter introduced each ethnic group to the gospel. By using the “key” of authority given him by Christ, he admitted or gave directions to those desiring salvation.

Peter’s newfound authority was never designed to allow him to forgive sins, for only God can do that. But he was inspired by the Holy Ghost to proclaim the terms whereby men could enter the kingdom. Using his newly acquired key, Peter held open the door for 3,000 souls who heard his message on the Day of Pentecost. In the same sermon, Peter assured every person rightful admission to salvation.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38-39).

Regardless of race, creed or national origin, the key still fits the door. How thankful we are that the promise still applies to believers in the twenty-first century!

No, Peter should never be thought of as the head of the church. Because of his accurate perception of who Christ is, he was only allowed the honor of becoming “Head Usher” or doorkeeper, unlocking the door to salvation for the entire world!

A second responsibility given Peter was that of “binding” and “loosing.” These familiar terms to the disciples were constantly used in the Canon-Law of the rabbis.

To “bind” means to prohibit; to “loose” means to permit. Binding and loosing simply inferred to prohibiting or permitting certain actions. This was also claimed by the rabbis. Christ now transferred these two powers to His apostles. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, what Peter and then the church would loose or bind on earth would also be loosed or bound in heaven (John 20:23).

Although Christ never attempted to organize those who believed in Him, He knew that the apostles must do so. As the Levites had been designated to minister in holy things and interpret the law, so the apostles would occupy positions of authority. They too must be prepared to teach and apply doctrines concerning practical life and conduct. Therefore, special endowments were provided for equipping His followers for service (I Corinthians 12:28).

The next lesson will reveal the beautiful new covenant Christ made with His chosen Twelve on the eve before His death and the glorious resurrection story.

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM STUDY SHEET

Prepare for the New Kingdom!

LESSON NO. 6 Study Sheet

Chart 1. A “New” Book Opens for Us

- A. “We have found him . . .” (John 1:45)
- B. God’s New Covenant
- C. Four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
- D. One Book of History (Acts of the Apostles)
- E. Fourteen Epistles of Paul
- F. Seven General Epistles
- G. One Book of Prophecy (Revelation)
- H. Birth of our New Testament—8 authors, 27 books, covering 100 years

Chart 2. John the Baptist Paves the Way

- A. John the Baptist Paves the Way for the Kingdom of God (Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1; Luke 1:76-77)
- B. “There cometh one . . . after me” (Mark 1:7)
- C. Baptism of Repentance (Matthew 3:5-12; Mark 1:4-8; Luke 3:1-18; John 1:19-28)

Chart 3. What Is Repentance?

- A. A decision to turn from actions that lead to death (Ezekiel 18:23; Acts 26:18, 20)
- B. Inward: change of mind;
outward: change of direction
- C. The altar represents:
Death—surrender self-rule (Romans 6:6-13; Galatians 5:24)
Blood—call upon the Lord; confess sins; Jesus’ blood cleanses (Acts 2:21; 22:16; Romans 10:12-13; I John 1:7-9; Revelation 1:5)
Covenant—promise to love, serve and obey (John 12:26; 14:23; Matthew 26:28; Romans 11:25-27; Galatians 3:6-9, 14-17, 29; Hebrews 8:10)
- D. Restitution - clear conscience (Luke 19:8; Acts 24:16)
- E. Forsake sins, witchcraft, and pagan religions (Proverbs 28:13; Acts 19:13-20)
- F. Prepare for water baptism (Acts 10:48; Mark 16:16)
- G. Making Jesus our Lord and Master is the basis for entering into covenant with Him

Chart 4. Jesus Christ, the Hope of the World

- A. Birth of Christ (Luke 2:1-20)
Old Testament Prophecies (Numbers 24:17; Isaiah 7:14; Micah 5:2)
- B. His “Father’s business” (Luke 2:41-52)
- C. Baptism of Christ (John 1:29-34)
- D. Temptation of Christ (Matthew 4:1-11)
- E. Chooses Disciples (Mark 3:13-19)

Chart 5. Jesus Teaches Kingdom Concepts

- A. His miracles
Matthew 14:15-21; Luke 8:22-25)
- B. Cast out demons (Luke 4:33-37; 8:26-36)
- C. Opened blind eyes; raised the dead (Matthew 9:27-31; John 11:41-45)
- D. Turned water to wine; multiplied loaves and fish; calmed the water (John 2:1-11)
- E. His parables
- F. The Lost Sheep (Matthew 18:11-14)
- G. The Sower (Matthew 13:1-23)
- H. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

Chart 6. Peter Receives Kingdom Keys

- A. “Thou art the Christ” (Matthew 16:16)
- B. “Upon this rock I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 2:20-22)
- C. The church! A kingdom of “called-out” believers
- D. Later, Peter opens the door to salvation
- E. Jews (Acts 2:12-41); Samaritans (Acts 8:14-25); Gentiles (Acts 10:1-48)

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM QUIZ

Prepare for the New Kingdom!

LESSON NO. 6 Quiz

Fill in the blanks from the word bank below to complete each statement correctly. Use each word only once.

1. God's New Covenant in written form is called the _____ in our Bible.
2. The divisions of the New Testament are: four _____; one book of _____; fourteen epistles written by _____; seven General Epistles; and one book of _____.
3. The first anointed prophet in the New Testament era was _____.
4. John preached confession of sins and the baptism of _____.
5. Repentance is a _____ to turn from sinful actions and enter into _____ with Christ.
6. Old Testament prophecy was fulfilled when Christ was born in _____.
7. As our example, Christ was _____ in the Jordan River by John the Baptist.
8. Early in His ministry, Christ trained twelve _____ to continue His work.
9. Christ's miracles included casting out _____, opening _____ eyes, raising the _____, turning water to _____, and multiplying loaves and _____.
10. Much of Christ's teaching was in parables. Two of the familiar ones are about the lost _____ and the good _____.
11. Peter correctly identified Jesus' deity when he proclaimed, "Thou art the _____, the Son of the living _____."
12. Christ first introduced the term: "_____ " to describe the kingdom of "called-out" believers.

WORD BANK:

Christ
Gospels
church
sheep
covenant

Paul
decision
Samaritan
blind
Bethlehem
wine

John the Baptist
repentance
New Testament
fish
prophecy
dead

disciples
God
demons
history
baptized

Answers:

1. New Testament 2. Gospels, history, Paul, prophecy 3. John the Baptist 4. repentance 5. decision, covenant
6. Bethlehem 7. baptized 8. disciples 9. demons, blind, dead, wine, fish 10. sheep, Samaritan 11. Christ, God
12. church

LESSON SEVEN

Christ Makes a New Covenant

This lesson explains Christ’s new covenant, the basis for the gospel that delivers mankind from Satan’s dominion.

When Jesus entered Jerusalem as the Messiah King, He knew this demonstration would lead to death. But through death would come the redemption—and finally the establishment of His spiritual kingdom in the recreated hearts of men.

Gathered with His disciples, Jesus established a new Christian ordinance to replace the old Passover. A “new” covenant was also instituted that would abolish the Old Covenant law made with Israel.

Broken bread represented His body that would be whipped and bruised; wine represented His blood that would flow from the wounds. His body and blood provided for the total person—healing of sickness and disease and remission of sins.

At Calvary, Jesus became man’s substitute. He became sin and sickness and identified with our dead spiritual nature to suffer the penalty of death in our place. In hell, He became the “first-born” of the dead, then triumphed over Satan and his hosts. Man’s rightful dominion was restored when Christ ascended to heaven’s mercy seat to legally redeem us with His blood.

The one God of the Old Testament has manifested Himself in three roles. As a loving Father, He created man for His pleasure and to offer Him worship and praise. When His beloved creatures sinned, God assumed the role of a Son to redeem man with His blood. Faith in His blood restores life to dead spirits. Therefore, God now assumes the role of the Holy Spirit, joined with recreated spirits in human bodies.

When completed, students should be aware of the following concepts:

1. As God’s covenant with Abraham was sealed with a blood sacrifice, so the blood of the Lamb of God sealed the new covenant for all mankind.
2. The covenant meal was instituted to commemorate His death and look forward to His second coming.
3. Healing for the body is the legal right of every covenant member.
4. We legally identify with the first Adam through our death nature. But if we will by faith identify with the last Adam, we shall receive spiritual life. Those who reject the gospel will be eternally separated from God. The one true God has been revealed as the Father in creation, in the Son in redemption, and the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers.

Additional books for reading:

1. Josh McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor*, San Bernardino, CA: Here’s Life Publishers, Inc., 1981.
2. W. E. Pax, *In the Footsteps of Jesus*, Tel Aviv, Israel: Nateev Publishing, 1970.
3. T. L. Osborn, *Healing the Sick*, Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, Inc., 1977.
4. Gordon Lindsay, *The Real Reason Why Christians are Sick and How They May Get Well*, Dallas, TX: Christ For The Nations, 1971.
5. Kenneth E. Hagin, *Healing Belongs To Us*, Tulsa, OK: Rhema Bible Church, 1969.
6. David K. Bernard, *The Oneness of God*, Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1983.
7. Robert Brent Graves, *The God of Two Testaments*, n.p., 1977.

Lesson 7 – Chart 1 Path to Christ's Death

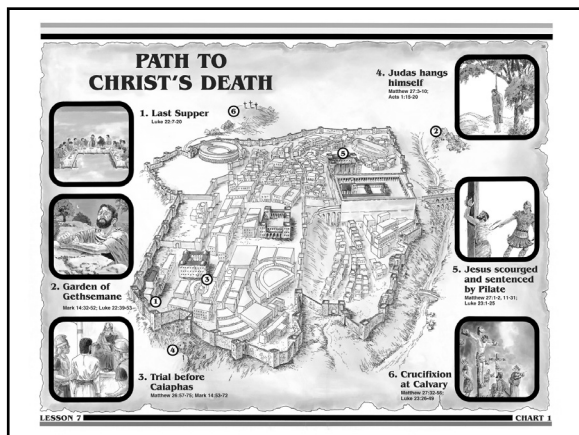


Chart Objective:

To relive the last painful hours of Christ's life. A triumphal entry culminated in His crucifixion.

Chart Outline:

- A. Path to Christ's death
- B. The Last Supper
- C. Garden of Gethsemane
- D. Trial before Caiaphas
- E. Judas hangs himself
- F. Jesus scourged and sentenced by Pilate
- G. Crucifixion at Calvary

A. Path to Christ's Death

As Christ approached His final weeks on earth, His ministry seemed to intensify—more miracles, more healings, more reaction from His audience.

The whole country was astir after Lazarus had been raised from the dead. People were declaring that Jesus must truly be the Messiah after this undisputed miracle!

The high priest and religious officials were furious. Jesus must be stopped—He must be killed! Sinister plans were immediately drawn.

Christ had tried to prepare His disciples for the inevitable tragedy. His betrayal, death and burial had been indicated, but somehow they could not grasp His words. Still they envisioned holding regal positions in an earthly kingdom.

“Behold, we go up to Jerusalem,” Christ directed. Ordinarily this festivity was anticipated with great joy. Perhaps on this momentous occasion their Master would make His debut as King of the Jews! But it was not to be as they imagined.

Sensing the crisis at hand, the Master again confided the dreadful secret of a double betrayal—first *to* the chief priests and scribes, then *by* the chief priests. They would condemn Him, then secure permission from the Gentiles for His execution. Since Judas himself probably had no thought of such a crime, the first betrayer was not identified.

Excitement mounted on the road to Jerusalem. Christ and His disciples mingled with other pilgrim companies en route to the Passover at Jerusalem. When the throngs realized that Jesus was accompanying them, the atmosphere became positively festive!

However, Jesus was too preoccupied with approaching events to share their enthusiasm. His ministry continued as usual, healing blind Bartimaeus and visiting with a dishonest businessman, Zaccheus.

At Bethany, the Lord was a special guest at the home of Simon, a leper whom Jesus had healed. There, an unexpected act of adoration came from a loving disciple.

While Jesus visited with friends, Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, silently knelt by the Master. With expensive ointment, she anointed His head and feet, then wiped His feet with her hair.

As the fragrant aroma filled the room, Judas complained, “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?”

But Jesus replied,

“Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. For ye have the poor with you always, . . . but me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. . . . Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her” (Mark 14:6-9).

Don't criticize her, unthoughtful disciples! Would you think it was wasteful on the day of His burial? Mary alone grasped the thought that Jesus' earthly ministry was coming to a climax. Because she came beforehand with her offering, it was all the more precious!

On Sunday morning, the journey to the holy city began on foot, but Jesus would enter Jerusalem as the Messiah King. Until now, all public announcements of His office had been avoided. Since the hour for depar-

ture had come, Jesus must publicly assert His claims.

Although this demonstration would lead to death, through death would come the redemption, and finally the establishment of His spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men!

Unusual attention was given to His entry into Jerusalem. As the crowd was leaving Bethany, Jesus instructed two disciples to go to Bethphage, a nearby village, and fetch a donkey from an unnamed friend. Centuries before, the prophet Zechariah had predicted this particular detail of their mission (Zechariah 9:9).

Christ set the prediction in motion so that Israel, familiar with Old Testament scriptures, might recognize that her King had come! Riding in triumph on a donkey, He would publicly confess His messiahship, though it meant marching into the jaws of death!

Riding a donkey symbolized His peaceful, humble character. To have ridden a spirited warhorse would have indicated royalty obtained by force of conquest—which was quite different from His.

As the two disciples brought the colt, two streams of pilgrims met them—one coming from Jerusalem and one from Bethany. Visiting pilgrims from Jerusalem came to welcome Him while another crowd followed.

Jewish historian Josephus revealed that Passover pilgrims numbered nearly three million. Possibly a vast throng joined the spirited celebration to greet Christ.

Outer garments were placed on the colt that Jesus sat upon. This unspoken signal prompted the enthusiastic crowd to make a carpet of their outer coats for the rough path.

Intense excitement filled the air as children climbed trees and threw down branches. Parents began triumphantly waving palms in the path.

Perhaps someone recalled Zechariah's prophecy. Like blazing fire the word passed from one to another as shouts rang out, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

The noise and excitement of recognizing Christ as King infuriated the proud Pharisees. Sternly they asked Jesus to quiet the shouting mob. But He replied, "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

Two distinct sights of Jerusalem are

viewed on the route Jesus took. After the first glimpse, the city is temporarily hidden by the rough terrain. Then suddenly, the whole city bursts into view.

At this turn of the road, Jesus paused momentarily to behold its splendor. The festivity quietened as He loudly wept.

In a few years, the impressive Temple of white marble lavished with gold and costly stones would not have one stone remaining upon another. Roman armies would mercilessly besiege the city, leveling it to the ground and slaughtering its citizens.

In less than a week, Christ also knew He would die outside the gates of Jerusalem. But the flood of tears was not for Himself. He knew that Jerusalem would reject her Savior.

Jerusalem—the spiritual and religious center of the world! The home of religious officials schooled in the Old Testament law. Yet she failed to detect her Messiah as He walked her streets. She knew not the day of her visitation! The sobering picture moved the Master to tears.

So the procession inched toward the city of David with Jesus being praised and honored as King. Most of Jerusalem's citizens bitterly opposed Christ's teachings. But on this day, the chief priests and Pharisees could only watch. Everyone seemed to acclaim Him as King!

Jerusalem had been troubled once before when wise men inquired, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" But this tumult was far greater. The Romans feared a public uprising. The chief priests and Pharisees were seething with hatred. The Herodians dreaded a possible usurper to the throne. But the common people momentarily were certain that their long-awaited Messiah had finally appeared to do great things for them!

Yes, their King had appeared, but He would not fulfill their immediate expectations.

The impressive Golden Gate through which Christ entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was sealed after the time of the Crusades by the Turkish pashas. Because of His prophesied return to the Mount of Olives facing this eastern gate (Zechariah 14:4), Jews expect their Messiah to enter through the Golden Gate (Steckoll, *The Gates of Jerusalem*).

No prancing warhorses, no dignified officials, no pomp and ceremony accompanied

the triumphal entry. Just an humble figure rode among the crowd of dusty pilgrims.

But why did Jesus reveal Himself as King? He knew His earthly mission had been completed and it was time for the cross. While an earthly kingdom was not planned at this time, Jesus had to be revealed as King. This was His final appeal. The Jews could never excuse themselves by saying they did not know He was the Messiah. On this day He was lauded as their King!

B. Last Supper

Luke 22:7-20

Two days before Passover, the chief priests and elders deliberated how to destroy Jesus. Caiaphas had been elevated to high priest by the Romans, but his deposed father-in-law, Annas, was still influential.

Immediately after Lazarus had been raised from the dead, a council was held to put the Lord to death (John 11:47-53). But the task was more difficult than supposed. Weeks had passed with no progress.

Imagine their delight when Judas presented his proposal. They would gladly give money if the disciple would watch for an appropriate opportunity for betrayal.

As the bargain neared completion, Judas asked, "What will you give me?" Unaware of their actions, prophecy was fulfilled as they literally weighed thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12).

Determining the Jerusalem shekel to be worth 72 cents, the sum paid was \$21.60—the price demanded by Mosaic law should an ox gore a servant (Exodus 21:32). Our Lord, the sacrifice for all men, was bought with Temple money meant to purchase sacrifices. He who "took upon him the form of a servant" was sold at the legal price of a slave!

Sacrificial lambs were separated from the flock on the tenth and kept until the fourteenth to assure they were without blemish. So the true paschal Lamb was escorted to the only place where the Passover could be kept—Jerusalem—and kept four days.

On the thirteenth of Nisan, the preparation day for the feast, all leaven had to be removed from homes and a solemn search made by candlelight to find any hidden leaven. This was the first day of "Unleavened Bread."

Since Jesus and His disciples were not citizens of Jerusalem, a room had to be secured and preparations made to celebrate Passover.

Early Thursday morning arrangements were finished.

The last supper Jesus ate with His followers was not the ordinary Jewish Passover, but was in anticipation of the event. Peter and John had begun making preparations for the feast, but none of the Gospel writers mentioned a "lamb" or "feast." Nor would the chief priests go into Pilate's "Gentile" judgment hall on the fourteenth, "lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover" (John 18:28).

After preparing the room, Peter and John provided wine (mixed with the customary two parts water), unleavened bread, bitter herbs, sauce and necessary dishes. Since they would not eat the paschal lamb at the legal time the following night, the Lord ordained a commemorative rite to replace the Jewish ceremony.

As the sun was setting, Jesus and the other ten disciples again descended over the Mount of Olives into the holy city. Entering the spacious upper room, the group took their places on pillows around the low table.

Incredibly, this last supper began with an argument about which disciple should be greatest. Who would occupy chief places at the table? Since the Pharisees seated people according to rank, a similar feeling must have arisen among the Twelve.

Only the day before, Judas had sold his Master to the chief priests. But it seems he not only claimed, but actually obtained a chief seat next to the Lord.

(Go to Chart 2—"Christ Makes a New Covenant . . . in Blood" and then return to this page.)

C. Garden of Gethsemane

Mark 14:32-52; Luke 22:39-53

As the Twelve left the upper room, Jesus announced that all would forsake Him that night. But Simon Peter confidently assured that though all his fellow-disciples should deny Jesus, he would remain steadfast. Peter could not bear to be included in the "all ye" of Jesus' warning.

However, Peter's boast received a crushing blow as the Lord foretold, "This night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice."

However, the Lord's reply only gave birth to a more determined boast from Peter. "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee!"

In full agreement, all the disciples pledged their loyalty. No further comment was made by the Lord. Time would tell.

Supper ended, Christ and His disciples sang a hymn and then left for a familiar spot. Beyond the brook Kidron at the foot of the Mount of Olives was a favorite place of prayer.

“Gethsemane” meaning “oil-press” was about three-quarters of a mile from the walls of Jerusalem. We know little about Gethsemane. Tradition has marked a certain spot with a shrine known as “The Chapel of the Sweat.” The garden encloses eight ancient olive trees more than a thousand years old, still fruit-bearing.

Jesus did not resort to His friend’s garden to hide from His enemies, for Judas knew the place well. Evidently it had become a regular meeting place for the Master and His followers.

Eight disciples remained at the entrance of Gethsemane and three—Peter, James and John—went farther with the Savior. These three had been privileged to behold His transfiguration, which strengthened them to bear a partial glimpse of Christ’s sufferings. The other eight were unable to observe any of His agony.

The three noticed that Jesus began to be “sorrowful and very heavy.” The Greek word refers to the “sore dismay” of an unexpected calamity, as though the knowledge of what was coming suddenly overwhelmed Him.

“My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death,” He confided to the faithful three before going a few yards farther to pray alone.

Ravaged with grief, He fell prostrate upon His face. Jesus apparently was near death in Gethsemane.

What could bring the glorious Son of God so low? In prayer, He begged, “Father if it be possible, let this cup pass from me” (Matthew 26:39). So intense was His plea, three separate times the request was made. The countenance that had once been transfigured while talking with Moses and Elijah was now contorted and disfigured.

All the sins committed from Adam to those of the last living person were in the cup of Christ’s agonizing prayer. With one ghastly burden of accumulated horror, its weight crushed the Lamb of God.

Jesus had never been weakened by sickness, much less sin. To His pure soul, sin was

utterly loathsome and horrible. Both now enveloped His very being.

In this bleak hour, Jesus yearned for the comfort of a friend. But His three closest disciples could not grasp the magnitude of His burden. They slept as the Savior suffered His conflict alone.

The Son of God’s greatest battle was submitting His will to bear the sins of all mankind and be separated from God in judgment. Our minds cannot perceive nor appreciate the torment Jesus suffered for us!

Having never committed a sin or violated His Father’s will, Jesus knew that God’s wrath would fall upon Him when He assumed the sins of the world. Such sobering knowledge apparently produced the physical, mental and spiritual agony of Gethsemane!

The physical torment was the most evident. Luke, the physician, wrote:

“He prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:44).

Medical doctors say that extreme physical stress causes the capillaries in the blood system to burst, actually spilling blood and perspiration from the pores (Vine, *Great Events in the Life of Christ*, page 64).

The arrival of an angel, “strengthening him,” probably prevented Christ’s death before the crucifixion. What a pitiful sight He must have portrayed to the arresting officers. Bloodstained clothing, matted hair and beard revealed the awful suffering in the garden.

Realizing the full implications of His “cup,” the mental suffering must have exceeded the physical stress.

Three times the Lord found sleeping disciples. “Sleep on now, and take your rest,” He finally spoke. The time for watching was over. Perhaps an interval passed before the soldiers’ footsteps were heard. Then He roused the sleepers and led them in majestic calmness to meet the danger.

It was near midnight. The chief priests had secured a detachment of Jewish Temple guards along with a cohort of possibly 500 to 600 Roman soldiers from the garrison. Thinking they were on a dangerous assignment, the soldiers were prepared to quell an outbreak during the feast days.

Being familiar with Jesus’ retreat, Judas led the group out the East Gate and down the

Kidron Road. Their lanterns, torches and weapons were visible from the garden where He waited.

Judas had given the Roman soldiers a sign of identification. As Jesus approached, the traitor brazenly stepped forward to kiss the Master. Judas' salutation was quite demonstrative—but it was not the ordinary Eastern embrace. It was a cold, cruel kiss of death.

“Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?” the Master asked.

Then Christ asked the soldiers, “Whom seek ye?” They answered, “Jesus of Nazareth.”

But when Christ answered, “I am he,” the men fell backward to the ground. One word of wrath and all His assailants could have been consumed; but He would not speak it.

Peter's sword went into action. Always impetuous, he aimed his blow at Malchus, the body-servant of the high priest, but missed his mark and cut off the servant's right ear.

Although characteristic of the disciple's zeal and sincerity, his action was condemned by the Lord. Tenderly Jesus replaced and healed the severed ear. His last miracle before death was for a hostile enemy. What more striking proof of mercy and forgiveness could have been given?

D. Trial before Caiaphas

Matthew 26:57-75; Mark 14:53-72

Many trials in history have stirred the sympathy and antagonism of entire nations. Yet one trial above all others deserves to be examined for its injustice. The trial condemning Jesus to death ended the life of the most law-abiding man in history.

Actually, there were two trials. The first was by Jesus' countrymen. The second by the Roman governor. Neither was “just” by any standard.

Stopping briefly at the palace of Annas, the former high priest, the captain and guards reported to the head of the clan. Annas received financial rewards for managing the Temple business of animals and treasures. Twice Christ had disrupted Temple commerce and threatened Annas' enterprises. Thus he had every reason to praise the guards for their night's work and to send Christ to his son-in-law for interrogation.

A preliminary hearing before Caiaphas yielded no evidence. Jesus referred the high priest to those who had publicly heard Him in

synagogues and the Temple (John 18:19-23).

By this time, many members of Israel's official council, the Sanhedrin, had assembled to interrogate Jesus. The hastily called trial opened as day was breaking.

Annas boldly asked, “Jesus, I adjure you by the living God. Tell us if you be the Christ.” Silence followed. This was the most solemn oath known.

Finally Jesus spoke for the first time in the trial. “You say that I am.” Annas pounded it again and again until Jesus stated, “I am.”

It was as if lightning had struck! Caiaphas tore at his robes. “We have heard it. He is guilty of death!” The vote was death by crucifixion.

Unrestrained brutality and venom broke out as the Sanhedrin pronounced Christ guilty of blasphemy. Some spat on Him, others pushed Him angrily and even the servants joined in slapping Him.

Death by crucifixion had become one of the most torturous and degrading forms of execution. So gruesome was this sentence that the Romans usually excluded their citizens and reserved it for slaves. Political uprisings had almost been eliminated by crucifying usurpers of the Roman government (McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor*, page 42).

A “political” crime was the accusation offered against Christ:

“And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King” (Luke 23:2).

E. Judas hangs himself

Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:15-20

Evidently Judas had not contemplated the full consequences of his crime. When it was announced that Jesus had been condemned to die, the traitor was filled with deep remorse. He had betrayed innocent blood (Matthew 27:4)! The silver coins meant nothing to him now.

Filled with anguish, he hurried to the chief priests and elders assembled at the Temple to openly confess his terrible crime and return the money. Perhaps by returning the price of blood he could erase the deed. But his hopes were quickly extinguished by their cold reply, “What is that to us? see thou to that.”

In frantic despair, the wretched man flung the thirty pieces of silver to the Temple floor and rushed out the door. To escape human eyes and the memory of his useless crime, Judas crossed the valley of Hinnom up the steep sides of the overhanging mountain. His girdle was unwound, fastened around his neck and secured to a tree or projecting stone. Flinging himself from this height, the cord by which he was hanging broke loose and he fell headlong down the side of the mountain. So near to the Savior for three years—and now so far away!

F. Jesus scourged and sentenced by Pilate **Matthew 27:1-2, 11-31; Luke 23:1-25**

Agreeing that Christ deserved death for the crime of blasphemy, the Sanhedrin took Him to Pilate, the Roman governor. As civil leader, he alone had authority to execute criminals.

After careful scrutiny and interrogation of Christ and His regal claims, Pilate announced his verdict to the anxious Jews: “I find in Him no fault at all.”

What a precise and accurate conclusion! His decision is identical to all who have ever examined Christ. No fault can be found in Him!

Furiously the chief priests began to clamor, “He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place” (Luke 23:5).

Although Jesus remained silent, Pilate at last saw a chance to escape the responsibility of the trial. Mention of “Galilee” caused the governor to send the case to Herod Antipas, who presided over the affairs of Galilee. Herod had come to the city for the feast. This was Pilate’s opportunity to be rid of a troublesome case!

Another trip through the streets to Herod’s palace and another examination. Having heard so much about the miracle worker, Herod was eager to be entertained. Facing Christ, he tried to goad Him into action. But the Savior refused to say a single word.

Disgusted, the monarch returned this bothersome prisoner to the soldiers. More indignities were suffered as a purple robe was placed around Christ’s shoulders and the soldiers mocked Him. Again, He was marched back to Pilate to await a decision whether to free or sentence Him.

Almost every phase of the trials had been

illegal. The Sanhedrin tried cases only in the Temple hall; Christ was tried in the high priest’s home.

Midnight trials were also illegal. A man could not be legally condemned for a day’s interval, permitting the Sanhedrin to fast and pray about whether to release the victim.

The high priest was not authorized to participate in the questioning—but he directed this case. Jewish law stated that someone testify on behalf of the accused before a witness could speak against Him. But no defense was allowed. Accusers were sought and presented, yet they only offered contradictory testimony.

There was no basis for a conviction, yet Jesus was sentenced that morning to execution (Vine, *Great Events in the Life of Christ*, pages 71-72)!

By now, Pilate was thoroughly confused. A mysterious note from his wife warned against unfair treatment of this innocent stranger. Pilate was more convinced than ever that Christ was entirely innocent of the serious charges against Him.

Again the chief priests and rulers were summoned as Pilate declared that the accusations could not be sustained. Even Herod had backed up his judgment. Why not scourge Jesus and let Him go?

Pilate’s suggestion found no favor with the rulers, so he tried another course of action. Customarily, at the Passover one prisoner selected by the people was released. Pilate would allow the anxious Jews to choose between Christ and a notorious criminal—Barabbas, a robber and murderer (Acts 3:14).

Influenced by the vicious chief priests, the crowds became wild with impatience and rage. When the governor put the question before the throng, “Which of the two shall I release unto you?”, they all cried, “Barabbas! Give us Barabbas!”

Their vicious response annoyed Pilate. “What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?” he asked.

Their repulsive answer was ready. “Let him be crucified!”

“But why? What evil has He done?” the governor desperately pleaded.

By now, the heated crowd was seething, nearing a riot. Pilate’s delay only exasperated them further. Then he thought of his own position. What if the report reached Rome of his refusal to punish a pretender to the Jewish throne?

Feeling absolutely powerless, the governor called for a basin of water. Before the whole multitude he washed his hands and said, “I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it” (Matthew 27:24).

By so doing, Pilate had pronounced Jesus’ innocence and his own guilt. Although Pilate despised the Jews, he used an act of ceremonial washing, to which they attached so much importance, to relieve his responsibility.

In response to the handwashing, a united cry arose from the mob: “His blood be on us, and on our children.”

Ignorantly did they ask to assume this penalty. Fearfully was it fulfilled!

Some who uttered this cry and very many of their children shared the dreadful calamities during the siege and capture of Jerusalem less than forty years later. They demanded that He be crucified—but thousands of them perished on crosses. Josephus told us that the Jews were tortured before death in all manner of ways and that as many as five hundred a day were crucified by Titus until “room was wanting for crosses, and crosses for bodies.”

The people, the priests and the government had spoken—unwittingly announcing their own doom.

Jesus’ trial was never really concluded. It continues in our generation as people hear the gospel and form their own personal verdict about Him. Will you accept Him as Lord and Savior or reject Him as the masses did on that tragic day?

(Go to Chart 3—“The New Covenant Provides For Healing” to continue this lesson.)

G. Crucifixion at Calvary

Matthew 27:32-56; Luke 23:26-49

Jesus apparently had collapsed beneath the weight of the cross. The long night of anguish, interrogation, beating, and abuse had drained His strength. Gruffly, the soldiers seized Simon to carry Jesus’ cross.

Simon of Cyrene hailed from a city in northern Africa. We suppose he was a black

man, having come to Jerusalem as a Jewish convert to observe the Passover festival.

The cross had no interest for Simon. He was pulled from a crowd of spectators. But Simon could never forget that cross after smelling the stench of death, wincing from the screams of the doomed thieves, and gazing at the composure of the dying man who said, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

It is believed (on the basis of a greeting in Romans 16:13) that this Simon, the father of Rufus, became a believer in Jesus Christ. If so, he must have forever rejoiced that he had carried the cross of the man of Calvary!

Gospel writers describe the location of the execution as “the place of a skull.” The Latin word for skull is “Calvary” and the Hebrew word is “Golgotha.” The actual location is uncertain. But the prevailing opinion is that it was a well-known spot outside the gate, near the city, on a thoroughfare leading into the country, and close to a garden or orchard. Such a place just outside the north wall near the Damascus Gate bears a striking resemblance to a human skull!

It was time for the crucifixion to begin. As the soldiers came forward, the two thieves begged for mercy, dreading the horrible ordeal. Hardened to the task, the soldiers did their job well. Women of mercy rushed to give wine to deaden some of the pain. Quickly the two thieves drank it. Jesus refused. This was not the cup He was to drink.

Jesus was first. All His clothes were stripped away, including the long vesture. Thus, the indignity reached its climax as He was left naked.

Laying on the central bar, His arms were attached by ropes to the transverse beam. Hands and feet were fastened with huge iron nails to the wood. A rest or support was fastened on the upright beam to bear a portion of His weight. The cross was then raised by the executioners and thrust with a fierce jerk into the hole, causing His bones to be dislocated (Psalm 22:14).

Lesson 7 – Chart 2

Christ Makes a New Covenant . . . in Blood

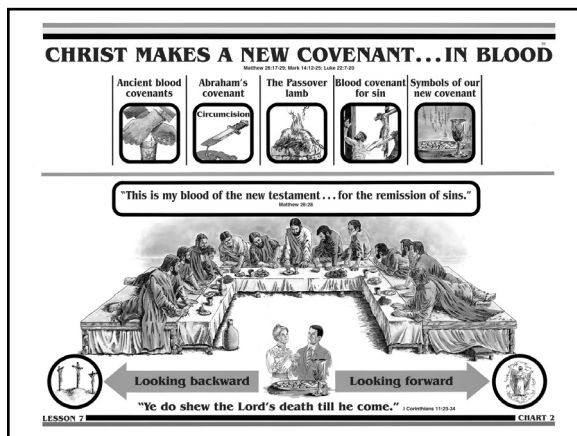


Chart Objective:

To explain the new blood covenant introduced by Christ, providing for the “total” person—remission of sins by His blood and healing by His bruised body. The divine ordinance of communion observes the Lord’s death, anticipates His return, and renews our covenant vows.

Chart Outline:

- A. Christ Makes a New Covenant . . . in Blood
- B. Looking backward; looking forward

A. Christ Makes a New Covenant . . . in Blood

**Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:7-20;
Matthew 26:17-29**

Most paintings of the Last Supper have an incorrect table arrangement. Eastern customs featured a low rectangular table like a horse-shoe. Single divans and pillows were arranged on three sides with an open side. Each guest reclined on his left side with his head near the table and feet stretched towards the wall (Freeman, *Bible Manners and Customs*, pages 383-384).

The chief person or head—which was Christ—reclined on the middle divan. We are sure that John reclined at Jesus’ right. Probably Judas was on His left, according to the description in Matthew 26:23.

John alone mentioned the washing of feet. The disciples had walked sandal-clad through garbage-laden, dusty streets of Jerusalem and needed to be washed. While quarreling over who was greatest, no one dared offer to wash feet.

Customarily, sandals were left near the

door. The host provided a slave to wash the guests’ feet. Since no slave was present and no one was willing to perform that duty, each man took his place around the table.

The disciples were too preoccupied to grasp that this was their last meal together.

Supper began with the Head of the company taking the first cup of wine and speaking over it. This was quite normal. But why had Jesus removed His upper garment, girded Himself with a towel and poured water into a basin—like a common slave?

From the table arrangement, Peter must have been the first to be washed. At once, the independent disciple protested! The Lord would never wash his feet! But when Christ declared that this washing would bind the two together, the outspoken disciple was ready for not only his feet, but his hands and head to be washed!

Finishing the task, Jesus replaced His upper garment and returned to the table to explain His actions.

“If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you” (John 13:14-15).

As the meal resumed, Jesus made a startling statement. “One of you shall betray me.” His words were so unexpected, the men looked at one another in disbelief. Then humbly each man asked, “Lord, is it I?”

Jesus simply replied, “He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish . . . shall betray me.” But this did not identify the man, for many of them had dipped with Him.

Eastern eating habits are quite different from our own. Sheets of bread replace our knives, forks and spoons. A piece is broken and shaped to hold food, then used as a spoon to eat the contents. Bread is also used to scoop soups, sauces or gravies.

Since John was reclining next to Jesus, Peter motioned across the table for him to ask the Lord who the betrayer was. The custom of reclining at meals also explains why John “[leaned] on Jesus’ bosom.” Since both were reclining on their left side, John merely leaned backward close to the Master to whisper his question.

Jesus quietly replied, “He it is, to whom I

shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.”

The most tasty morsel of food, the sop was usually handed to the honored guest with the host’s fingers. When Christ handed the sop to Judas, He extended love and friendship to the traitor.

After receiving the sop, Satan entered into Judas. His expression must have revealed the devilish plot in his mind. He was then dismissed by the Savior’s words, “That thou doest, do quickly.”

Without a word, Judas left the room. The Bible says “and it was night.” Surely that was the darkest night of Judas’ life! He left the Light of the World and walked into utter darkness!

No one but John and possibly Peter suspected a thing. Yet none imagined the evil work Judas would do. Since he held the purse, everyone assumed he had gone to buy provisions for the paschal meal the following evening.

Judas’ departure signaled the beginning of a new Christian ordinance to replace the old Passover. For centuries the sacrificial lamb had pointed toward the Lamb of God Who would take away the sins of the world.

Blood sprinkled by faith upon the doorposts and lintels of Israelite homes in Egypt had protected the occupants from the destroying angel’s sword. Unleavened bread eaten with bitter herbs spoke of the sinless One who would be afflicted and beaten so that our bodies might be healed. Every type of the Passover Feast had foreshadowed the very event in which the disciples were participating!

Before supper was finished, Christ took the unleavened bread, blessed and broke it. “Take, eat; this is my body, which is given for you.”

Then He took the cup, gave thanks, and told them to drink all of it. At this somber moment, Christ chose to institute a “new” blood covenant . . . a covenant of the blood of Christ!

From the days of Adam, Noah, and Abraham, God had made covenants with chosen ones. Each blood covenant solemnly bound God and His earth partner to an oath and agreement.

Circumcision of Jewish males was part of Abraham’s covenant. Without circumcision, it was impossible to enjoy God’s blessings. Upon entering the covenant community, the

offering of sacrificial animals became the covering for sin.

For centuries, rivers of blood flowed from thousands of animals because the God of the Jews required that sins be covered by blood.

“And without shedding of blood is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22).

The blood of goats and bulls never erased sin. It was a temporary covering until the perfect sacrifice would come. On this somber evening, standing on the threshold of a new era, Christ abolished the Old Covenant law made with Israel and a new, superior one emerged!

Pointing to the broken bread and wine, Jesus explained,

“This is my body which is given for you. . . . This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:19-20).

Why didn’t the disciples question these strange words about Jesus’ blood and body? Being Jews, they were thoroughly familiar with the old Jewish blood covenant. Its terms were familiar. But now a better covenant was emerging—one that would provide for the total person.

Why was His body beaten and bruised? What benefits may be derived from Christ’s awesome sacrifice? Isaiah answered,

“With his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

What are the benefits of Jesus’ blood? John answered,

“The blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:7).

Christ’ righteous blood cleansed and remitted the sins of the entire world! His broken body provided for our healing.

B. Looking backward; looking forward I Corinthians 11:23-34

As a memorial of Christ’s death and atonement, we celebrate the Lord’s Supper. The tokens of bread and wine remind us of the price paid for the redemption of our sins and healing of our bodies. The Passover is no longer observed. Now that the perfect sac-

rifice has been offered, we celebrate the Lord’s Supper as we look backward and then forward.

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come” (I Corinthians 11:26).

Looking back, we gratefully remember our Lord’s suffering and death that provided salvation and healing. Looking forward, we anticipate His return when we shall enjoy the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in our Father’s new kingdom!

At an altar of repentance, we vowed to love, honor, serve, and obey Jesus Christ. In effect, we were saying, “Lord, I’m willing to do anything You want me to do or go anywhere You want me to go.”

At the communion table, that commitment is renewed. As we face the coming pressures and persecution at the end of this age, our pledge should grow stronger. We must willingly spend the rest of our days living and

working for Him. And then, should the supreme sacrifice be required, we will gladly die for Him.

Jesus said,

“Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (John 12:24-25).

He gave His all for us. We must do the same—whether by life or death. Only the grain that is buried in the ground produces fruit. Only by dying—sacrificing our self-will and independence—can we have life eternal.

We must vow to cling to our blood-covenant Partner—whatever the cost! And the cost for some of us will require giving our life’s blood for His cause.

(Return to Chart 1—“Garden of Gethsemane” for continuation of lesson.)

Lesson 7 – Chart 3 The New Covenant Provides For Healing

THE NEW COVENANT PROVIDES FOR HEALING	
Healing Promises: "My body which is given for you." <small>LUKE 22:19</small> "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." <small>MATTHEW 8:17</small> "By whose stripes ye were healed." <small>1 PETER 2:24</small> "Healed them that had need of healing." <small>LUKE 9:1</small> "Healing all that were oppressed of the devil." <small>MATTHEW 12:28</small> "The prayer of faith shall save the sick." <small>JAMES 5:16</small>	 Ways to be healed: Anoint with oil <small>JAMES 5:14-15</small> Lay hands on the sick <small>MATTHEW 10:1-14</small> Anointed aprons and handkerchiefs <small>MATTHEW 9:17-19</small> United prayer <small>MATTHEW 18:19-20</small> Personal prayer of faith <small>MATTHEW 17:20; MARK 16:17-18</small> Gifts of healings <small>MATTHEW 9:35; LUKE 9:1-2; 1 CORINTHIANS 12:9</small>
	
LESSON 7	CHART 3

Chart Objective:

To examine the special privileges of healing available to every Christian believer because of the torturous, painful stripes of punishment Christ bore on His back.

Chart Outline:

- The New Covenant Provides For Healing
- Healing promises
- Ways to be healed

A. The New Covenant Provides For Healing

Only one hope remained for Pilate to free himself from the responsibility of Christ’s death. Perhaps the inhuman Roman scourge would satisfy the people without a crucifixion.

The order was given and apparently Pilate sat on the judgment seat while the command was executed.

Scourging Christ in hopes of pacifying the bloodthirsty mob was actually a double sentence! Jewish law specified that no “prolonged death” might be inflicted and that a criminal condemned to death must not also be scourged. But our Savior suffered both savage brutalities. Oh, what love!

Jewish law limited the stripes to forty (Deuteronomy 25:3). To prevent excessive punishment by a mistake in counting, the legal number was reduced by one (Freeman, *Bible Manners and Customs*, page 347).

However, the Roman scourging was more severe than the Jews’. There was no legal limit to the stripes a victim might endure.

The victim was tied to a post in front of the Praetorium and his bared back was flogged unmercifully. One particularly dreadful scourge

made of cords and ox-hide leather was used to beat slaves. The whip was knotted with nails, sharp scraps of bone and heavy circles of bronze. Often the thongs ended with metal fish-hook spurs. Such an instrument of torture was called the “scorpion” (Freeman, *Bible Manners and Customs*, page 392).

Each lash cut deeper into the flesh as veins and entrails were laid open. Since there was no legal limit to the number of blows, death often resulted.

Dr. C. Truman Davis, who has studied crucifixion from a medical perspective, describes the Roman flagrum: “The heavy whip is brought down with full force again and again across the shoulders, back and legs. At first, the heavy thongs cut through the skin only. As the blows continue, they cut deeper into the subcutaneous tissues, producing first an oozing of blood from the capillaries and veins of the skin, and finally spurting arterial bleeding from vessels in the underlying muscles.

“The small balls of lead first produce large, deep bruises which are broken open by subsequent blows. Finally the skin of the back is hanging in long ribbons and the entire area is an unrecognizable mass of torn, bleeding tissue. When it is determined by the centurion in charge that the prisoner is near death, the beating is finally stopped” (McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor*, page 43).

We shudder from envisioning the inhuman torture inflicted upon our Savior. Yes, it is grisly, ghastly and nauseating. Yet we must never exclude the bloody details from this greatest love story. His blood purchased salvation and healing! Let us spare no details, gruesome as they are, lest it become less than real to us! We must be overwhelmed when contemplating God’s immeasurable love!

Looking back to the prophet Isaiah, we read his words with new wonder:

“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

Christ mentioned healing when instituting the new blood covenant the night of the Last Supper.

“Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you” (I Corinthians 11:24).

Isaiah tells us why His body was broken: By his stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5)!

As long as Israel kept her covenant terms, she prospered and enjoyed physical protection from pestilence and disease. Obedience to God’s law brought blessings—health, prosperity and success.

If the Old Covenant had such marvelous provisions for healing, what about the New Covenant? Its benefits are better!

“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (Hebrews 8:6).

The New Covenant exceeds the first one! If God wanted the children of Israel to be healthy, think what was planned for His “new creation”!

B. Healing promises

Luke 22:19; Matthew 8:17; I Peter 2:24; Luke 9:11; Acts 10:38; James 5:15

The subject of healing has been quite controversial. Some teach that miracles were only for the apostolic era and are not for us today. Since healing is considered a miracle, it is not available.

However, a miracle is actually an intervention of God into the realm of natural laws or human activity. When God comes into immediate contact with men, a miracle is performed. Therefore, the new birth is a miracle; every answered prayer—regardless of its importance—is a miracle.

An act of healing whereby God contacts man’s physical body is no more a miracle than when God contacts man’s spirit to impart His own nature. To ask God to save the soul is a greater miracle than healing. Healing requires no more a miracle than the granting of a simple prayer request.

To believe that miracles belonged only to the early church means that God has become a mere spectator in world events from apostolic days until now. He no longer intervenes in the realm of human activity.

Another teaching about healing is that God heals today—but only by a special prayer or special act of faith—and only if it is according to His will. If that be true, healing does not legally belong to God’s people and was not included in redemption.

A third teaching is that healing for the body is the legal right of every child of God. We receive healing for the physical body the same as we receive remission of sins for the spirit. No special act of faith is required to obtain either.

There is no question as to whether it is God's will to heal. If healing is included in our covenant and our redemption, it is His will!

To understand healing, we must grasp the origin of disease, sickness and death. Adam's crime of treason resulted in spiritual death reigning in the human race. From the death in man's spirit sprang the reign of sin, disease and pain in his physical body.

When Satan took control of mankind, the air was charged with disease germs too small to be seen with the naked eye. Disease has since been one of man's greatest enemies.

Because of the presence of evil in the world, many sincere people have rejected belief in a God of love. They fail to understand that evil resulted from Satan's reign over humanity.

Two divisions of evil are pain and sin. Pain has various causes, but the majority of pain is caused by disease. Sin and disease are twins—both the work of Satan. Sin affects the spirit; disease affects the physical body.

God looks upon disease as He does upon sin. Both have brought suffering to man, His beloved creation. Christ came to reveal the Father's love and attitude toward sickness and disease.

Jesus' ministry, from beginning to end, brought peace to the soul and healing to the body. He constantly delivered those whom Satan had oppressed.

To a man stricken with palsy, Jesus said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." When the scribes questioned that statement, Jesus asked,

"Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" (Mark 2:9).

In reality, Christ was asking, "Which is easier? To forgive sins caused by death in man's spirit, or to heal diseases of the physical body—also caused by the same spiritual death?"

John told us,

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8).

Jesus came to destroy all that Satan had inflicted upon humanity when he grasped world dominion from Adam. Christ came to completely redeem man and "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

Peter reminded us:

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24).

When Christ was ready to depart, His disciples were to continue His ministry. They would do as He had done. Therefore, Mark wrote:

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

Every child of God easily applies this portion of the commission to himself. It fulfills man's spiritual need. Faith in Christ's gospel brings salvation; rejection excludes us.

But then comes the second part of the commission:

"And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name . . . they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:17-18).

Would the first words have reference to *all* men and the second refer to early Christians only? Both promises are based on the word "believe." The cluster of miraculous promises accompanying salvation belong to the "believing ones."

We agree with the first promise because we have learned how to use it. But we shy away from the second because it is unfamiliar.

Just as the apostles preached a complete redemption—re-creation for the spirit and healing for the body, so should all believers. The right to healing is invested in the authority of Jesus' name.

Healing was purchased at the same time and in the same manner as our spiritual freedom—

by Jesus' blood. Neither sin nor sickness should have dominion over us. Two thousand years ago we were healed! We must never hesitate to claim that promise and receive our healing privilege.

If you had \$10,000 in a personal bank account, it would be senseless to plead with the teller to withdraw your funds. The money belongs to you and you have a right to claim it.

Likewise, the covenant promises belong to us and we have a right to claim them! When we remember healing's expensive price—the beating of Christ's back with a whip—how grateful we should be to use it! It's mine! It's yours! Claim your privilege!

C. Ways to be healed:

**James 5:14-16; Mark 16:15-18;
Acts 19:11-12; Matthew 18:19-20; Mark
11:22-24; John 14:12-14; Matthew 8:16;
10:1; Luke 9:1-2; I Corinthians 12:9**

So surely did Christ intend that our bodies be healed, no less than six methods can be found in Scripture.

For those who must rely on the faith of others, James instructed:

“Call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up” (James 5:14-15).

Jesus said that believers everywhere should “lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:17).

Apostle Paul was so filled with Holy Ghost power and anointing, handkerchiefs or aprons that he had touched were sent to the sick—“and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them” (Acts 19:11-12).

If we will simply unite with one or more persons for physical, financial or spiritual needs, Jesus promised wonderful results!

“If two of you shall agree on earth as

touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them” (Matthew 18:19-20).

But what if we are all alone and isolated from other believers? Can we still obtain healing benefits? Oh, yes! Each of us has equal rights at the throne. Jesus encouraged,

“What things soever YE desire, when YE pray, believe that YE receive them, and YE shall have them” (Mark 11:24; also John 14:12-14).

As a last resort, healing provisions were included in the nine spiritual gifts placed in the church. “Gifts of healing” are supernatural manifestations of healing power through one individual to another.

Jesus often used this type healing to attract large crowds. Through the word of authority, evil spirits must leave and bodies be healed when this supernatural gift is in action. Both the children and strangers to the covenant have been blessed and benefited from this miraculous manifestation of power.

The first healing covenant made with Israel was dependent upon obedience to God's statutes and ordinances—which regulated the foods to be eaten, foods to avoid, and laws of cleanliness. Therefore, we should assume that He is still interested in our diet and health habits.

Could we demand healing with no thought for the source of our problem? Good nutrition, fasting, exercise, and cleanliness are still essential to good health. When we faithfully do our part, Christ will faithfully do His. God has made every provision for His blood-covenant members to be healthy and strong!

It is God's will to be in health.

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

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (I Peter 2:24).

Lesson 7 – Chart 4 “It Is Finished!”

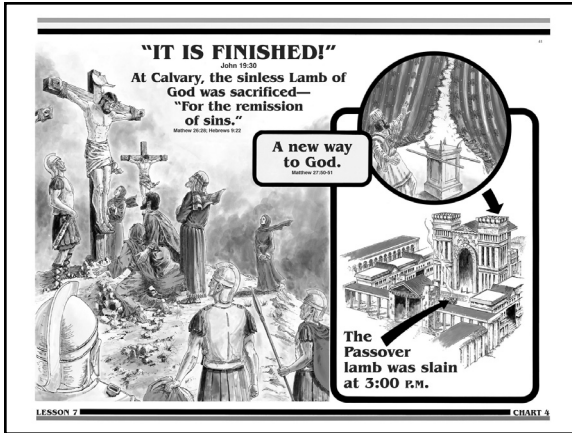


Chart Objective:

To study Calvary's horrible torture and judgment which concluded the dispensation of law. At the precise moment the Passover lamb was slain in the Temple courtyard, our Lord, the perfect Lamb, offered His life! The torn Temple veil exposed a new and wonderful "direct" way into the presence of God!

Chart Outline:

- A. "It Is Finished!"
- B. The Passover lamb was slain at 3:00 P.M.
- C. A new way to God

A. "It Is Finished!"

John 19:30

Both the wounds and the abnormal position of His body caused terrible pain. The slightest movement brought additional torture. High fever followed soon afterward.

Recent medical studies have found that when a person is suspended by his two hands, the blood sinks rapidly into the lower extremities. Within six to twelve minutes, blood pressure drops to fifty percent while the pulse rate doubles. As the heart is deprived of blood, fainting follows from poor circulation. Death by crucifixion is usually due to heart failure; however, victims often lingered for two to three days.

Dizziness, cramps, thirst, starvation, sleeplessness, raging fever and inflammation of untended wounds were part of the ghastly death (Keller, *The Bible in History*, pages 376-377).

From time to time, the misery could be eased by supporting oneself on the small rest attached to the vertical beam. This caused the blood to return to the upper half of the body.

When those in charge thought the victim had suffered sufficiently, the torture was ended by breaking the legs below the knees with a club. This meant that he could no longer ease his weight on the support and death came from heart failure.

At the top of Jesus' cross a sign was posted. The same emblem hung on the criminal's neck or the sign preceding him to the execution was affixed to the upper portion of the cross.

The title prepared by Pilate for Jesus' cross was: "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." It was written in three languages: Latin, the official language understood by soldiers and Romans; Greek, the current language of all classes; and Aramaic, the national language familiar to all Jews.

Soldiers gambled for His garments beneath the cross while Christ agonized in torment.

At first, the two criminals on either side joined the spectators in verbal abuse. But after a time, one rebuked the other for his revilings. They were suffering justly, but the Savior had done nothing wrong.

The more the repentant thief thought of the sinless One hanging beside him, the more he discerned that this was his Lord—the true King of the Jews. Turning, he said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

Jesus answered, "To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43).

By twelve noon, Jesus had been hanging on the cross for three hours. As nature mourned over the shameful scene, the taunts of Jesus' enemies also ceased. For the next three hours they nervously watched without mocking.

Apparently John was the only disciple who witnessed the trial. When he heard Pilate's final sentence, he must have hurried to tell the other disciples. As a final gesture of love, John came with Jesus' mother and her friends just as they were crucifying the Lord.

When Jesus saw His grieving mother, He said, "Woman, behold thy son!" And to John, His dear friend, "Behold thy mother!" From that hour John cared for her.

In the last moments of the Savior's suffering, He loudly cried, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).

Why did He say those frightening words?

The man, Christ Jesus, had become man's substitute sin-offering and was being treated as if He had been guilty, though He had personally never sinned.

B. The Passover lamb was slain at 3:00 P.M.

At last the suffering was over. Jesus' final words rang out, "It is finished! Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And He bowed His head and died.

What was finished? All the types, promises and prophecies of the Old Testament were now fully accomplished in Jesus Christ.

Pilgrims were beginning to gather for evening prayers in the outer court. At three o'clock in the afternoon, at the very moment the Passover lamb was slain in the Temple courtyard, our Lord, the perfect Lamb, offered His life (Pax, *In the Footsteps of Jesus*, pages 208-209)!

Animal sacrifices of the old Jewish law were now abolished—as well as explained. The true Passover Lamb had been slain! No longer would the blood of lambs be needed. The perfect sacrifice had been offered!

C. A new way to God

Matthew 27:50-51

While the paschal lambs were being killed in the Temple courts, the priests were offering incense in the Holy Place. The moment Jesus bowed His head and died, an awesome miracle occurred inside the Temple. The veil separating the Holy Place from the Holiest of Holies was suddenly ripped from top to bottom, exposing the sacred enclosure viewed only by the high priest once a year.

This veil was 60 feet long and 30 feet wide. Its thickness was the width of the palm of the hand. It was so heavy, not even an earthquake could have torn it apart. The direction of the tear showed that no human hand was responsible. This was an act of God, declaring that the legal dispensation was finished! The way into the glorious presence of the Most High was opened to all who would believe!

Only the priest offering the incense saw this comparatively private sign. But the next

one was public! A mighty earthquake rumbled its disapproval of the terrible crime committed.

When the Romans crucified a man, the body was left on the cross to rot. Sometimes birds swooped to pick at the flesh. Scavenger dogs often converged on the carcass. The body might end up in the smoldering fires of the city dump after days of exposure to the elements. But Jesus' body was to be spared this barbarism. God was preparing people and events to express His love and meticulous plan!

Even God's foes assisted with the preparations for Jesus' burial. Scrupulous about their rituals, the Jewish religious leaders asked Pilate to allow the removal of the crucified men before the holy day celebrations began at dusk. Pilate granted their request, but to make certain the victims were dead before removal, their legs were to be broken.

Carrying out their orders, soldiers broke the legs of the thieves flanking Jesus, but they found the "King of the Jews" already dead. Thus, unwittingly, they fulfilled a prophecy by David that not one of Jesus' bones would be broken (Psalm 34:20).

To make certain He was dead, a spear was thrust in Jesus' side, from which flowed blood and water. What was the purpose of blood and water flowing from His wounded side? Zechariah had prophesied that He would be pierced:

"In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zechariah 13:1).

The fountain for sin was typified by Jesus' blood; the fountain for uncleanness was typified by the water. Before the priest could offer a blood sacrifice, he must wash with water to remove all uncleanness. Christ's death and the piercing of His side pointed toward the glorious day when our sins would be remitted—cleansed, sent away—by His blood and we would be baptized in water to effect that cleansing.

Lesson 7 – Chart 5 The Gospel—“Good News”!

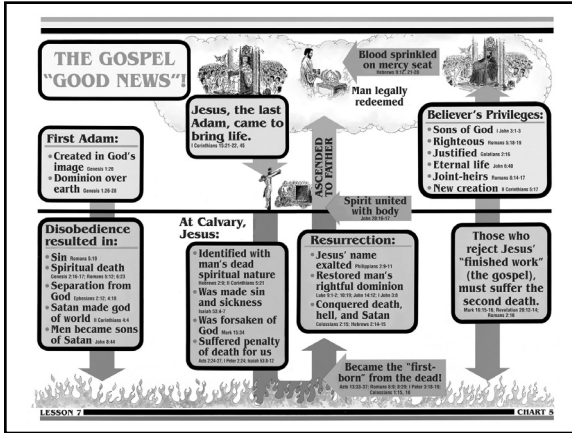


Chart Objective:

To explain how the “good news” of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection, when received by faith, has power to bring salvation. The basis for understanding the gospel is identifying ourselves with the first Adam, then with Christ, the last Adam.

Chart Outline:

- First Adam
- Disobedience resulted in:
- Jesus, the last Adam, came to bring life
- At Calvary, Jesus:
- Became the “first-born” from the dead!
- Resurrection
- Ascended to Father
- Believers’ privileges:
- Those who reject Jesus’ “finished work” must suffer the second death

A. First Adam

Genesis 1:26-28

The disciples saw the scourging of Christ, the nails driven into His hands and feet and heard His words, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

They saw the embalming, the burial, the resurrected body of Christ, and saw Him ascend into heaven. Yet they did not understand.

Only the Holy Spirit could reveal the complete redemption story of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection. Not until Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to guide them into all truth could they fully understand.

God gave to Paul the revelation of the finished work of redemption and the present ministry of Christ in heaven. Unknown to other generations, Paul called this mystery of

Christ “my gospel” (Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 3:1-12). Paul explained this “mystery” by comparing the first Adam with Jesus, the “last Adam.”

The first Adam, created in God’s image, was given authority and dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26-28). The original purpose was that God’s world should be governed and subdued by those who themselves were governed by God.

B. Disobedience resulted in:

Romans 5:12, 19; 6:23; Genesis 2:16-17; Ephesians 2:12; 4:18; II Corinthians 4:4; John 8:44

When Adam chose to be *like* God rather than remaining under His sovereignty, his **sin** resulted in **spiritual death** (Romans 5:12, 19; 6:23; Colossians 1:21).

God did not actually abolish man’s dominion. However, when **separated from God**, man lost the ability and understanding to properly exercise dominion over the earth. Eventually he forfeited his rulership and **Satan became “god of this world”** (II Corinthians 4:4).

By removing himself from God’s authority, man also lost control over himself. Soon he became captive by what God’s Word calls “the world, the flesh, and the devil.”

Worse still, when Adam sinned, he became a partaker of Satan’s nature and joined his family. **Men became sons of Satan** and like their new father, the devil (John 8:44).

Now a spirit criminal, the penalty of man’s sin was hell. After physical death, he awaits the White Throne judgment. Hell was not prepared for man, but it became a necessary confinement for rebels.

Although not literally with Adam in the garden, legally we were there. The death nature thrust upon the first man was given to all:

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned . . . Death reigned . . . even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression . . . by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation” (Romans 5:12, 14, 18).

Man had a real problem. He needed to become righteous—to have a right relationship with God as if he had never sinned. Because God is just and fair, He could not

overlook Adam's transgression.

Nor could He fail to treat Satan with justice. Since Adam had forfeited his rulership, Satan had been given a legal right to rule creation. Our enemy then must be stripped of that authority with fairness.

Since God's standard of righteousness could not be lowered—even for His beloved humanity—those Who reject His plan of redemption must themselves suffer the death penalty of sin.

To redeem man and restore life, someone must pay his penalty. Then man must be given spiritual weapons of defense and offense against his enemy and acquire authority to conquer him in valid combat.

Because the death nature had afflicted man's physical body with pain and disease, he needed authority to claim healing and health.

Redemption must also include a "new creation." God's life and righteousness must replace death, and man must feel at home with God once more.

What awesome conditions were required to free man from his painful bondage! Only God's grace could provide a remedy!

C. Jesus, the last Adam, came to bring life I Corinthians 15:21-22, 45

To legally redeem fallen man from the death nature and Satan's dominion, Deity must join with humanity. A mediator, or "go-between," fully God, yet fully man, must peacefully settle the conflict between man and God.

Had God come to earth as a child born of two human parents, He would have been a child of Satan with God dwelling in Him. The sin problem could only be settled by One over whom Satan had no legal authority.

Man's Redeemer must be the "Incarnation" (the union of God and man) promised in Genesis 3:15. The seed of the woman (Jesus Christ) must bruise Satan's head.

Jesus was man in the fullest sense, yet He differed from others. He did not belong to the realm of spiritual death:

"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26).

"The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).

Christ was the first man after Adam's transgression to possess God's life. Conse-

quently, Satan, disease, and death had no dominion over Him. Christ's body was like that of Adam's before his spirit died.

Satan was compelled to obey Christ's every command. Demons, disease, and sickness fled at His Word. Therefore, it was not for Himself that Jesus conquered Satan, but for man!

Not once during His entire lifetime did Jesus commit a sin. Such authority and power over Satan was foreign to men. He walked as Adam *should* have walked, doing the will of the Father.

In a sense, Jesus had identified with men at birth—but not completely. Christ did not have our spiritually dead nature. But at Calvary, all was changed.

D. At Calvary, Jesus:

**Hebrews 2:9; II Corinthians 5:21;
Isaiah 53:4-7; Mark 15:34; Acts 2:24-27;
I Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:8-12**

To fulfill the purpose for which He had come into the world, Jesus became sin:

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21).

"That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).

The sin nature was transferred to Him when Christ **identified with man's dead spiritual nature.**

He was made sin and sickness for our sakes. In God's mind, Christ was not hanging on the cross, but the human race! That's why each of us may say with Paul, "I [was] crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20).

When the sentence of hell that had passed upon each of us came upon Jesus, He **was forsaken of God.** On the cross He cried,

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34).

As our substitute, Jesus suffered the penalty of death for us.

E. Became the "first-born" from the dead!

**Acts 13:33-37; Romans 6:9; 8:29;
I Peter 3:18-19; Colossians 1:15, 18**

In hell, the One Who had been made sin for us passed from death into life! **Because**

Jesus had acquired mankind's death by taking his sin, His body had to be quickened, or brought to life.

Paul said that Christ **became the "first-born" of the dead:**

"Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Acts 13:33-37 and Hebrews 1:1-6).

"That he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29).

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: . . . And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:15, 18).

Peter added this note:

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Peter 3:18).

The man, Jesus Christ, was the first to be brought to life, the first to break death's dominion. His victory was our victory. Because His Spirit was "reborn," ours can be also!

Once Jesus explained the "new birth" of the human spirit to Nicodemus. But spiritual concepts seemed incredible to the Jewish ruler. Not until after Jesus' resurrection could men experience a life-giving encounter with Deity!

F. Resurrection

Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14-15; Luke 9:1-2; 10:19; John 14:12; I John 3:8; Philippians 2:9-11

Evidently, Satan and his demon hosts had rejoiced to see Jesus' cold, lifeless body. How they must have danced with glee as they watched Him die on the cross in shame and agony.

But suddenly, a cry came forth from God's throne: "It is enough! The demands of justice have been met! The sin problem is forever settled!"

When that cry echoed through the dark regions of the doomed, Jesus arose triumphantly to face Satan. Paul described the bitter combat:

"And having spoiled [disarmed] principalities and powers, he made a shew of them

openly, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:15).

"That through death he might destroy [paralyze] him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

Satan was left paralyzed, whipped and defeated. What a stupendous victory! After conquering principalities and powers of darkness, Jesus stood an undisputed victor over three worlds: heaven, earth and hell!

Christ's victory gave man complete freedom from Satan's authority and restored man's rightful dominion.

Jesus clearly stated what He had come to do for us:

"Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1-2).

"Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

"For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8).

No longer subject to bondage, we are now Christ's "fellow workers." He works along beside us as we proclaim the gospel (I Corinthians 3:9; II Corinthians 6:1). How else could we establish His kingdom and destroy Satan's domain? Christ has truly come to restore to man what was lost in the Fall!

Because the man, Jesus Christ, was victorious over Satan, He was elevated to the loftiest possible position—"Lord" over all! Peter proclaimed,

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

To announce the supreme authority and power invested in our Conqueror over Satan,

“God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

By conquering the principalities and powers of darkness, **Jesus’ name has been exalted.** His name is invested with the highest authority and power. Fresh from the grave, He announced,

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18).

Why was Jesus’ name highly exalted? For the church’s use! We can defeat our enemy by merely uttering His name! The name of Jesus is our power of attorney. When we invoke His name, Jesus goes into action for us—the same as if He were here personally.

G. Ascended to Father

John 20:16-17; Hebrews 9:12, 21-28

The last segment of redemption was a legal formality. After Jesus’ Spirit reunited with His body that had lain for three days in the tomb, He was completing that mission when He spoke to Mary Magdalene in the garden. Jesus said to her,

“Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God” (John 20:16-17).

While performing the role of high priest, He could not be touched by human hands. But later that afternoon, the bewildered disciples were invited to handle Him and see that He had actually arisen from the dead (Luke 24:36-39).

The high priest of the Old Covenant went annually into the Tabernacle with the blood of bulls and goats to make an atonement for Israel’s sin. But when Jesus sprinkled His perfect, sinless blood on heaven’s mercy seat the claims of justice were fulfilled and man was legally redeemed!

Satan’s dominion had been broken, offi-

cially restoring man to fellowship with his Maker!

H. Believers’ privileges:

I John 3:1-3; Romans 5:18-19;

Galatians 2:16; John 6:40;

Romans 8:14-17; II Corinthians 5:17

Why does the natural man live in bondage to sin and rebellion toward God? Because Satan is his father and lord. All human suffering is the result of that dominion.

Therefore, man needs a new Father and a new Lord of love. Breaking Satan’s authority can only be accomplished by turning to a new Ruler.

In repentance, we turn from Satan’s rule to the lordship of Christ. At an altar, or place of commitment, we surrender our independence and commit our lives to Him.

As all mankind must identify with Adam’s transgression, so must we identify with the last Adam’s redemptive work. Every individual was legally redeemed by Jesus’ blood, but each person must understand and claim that privilege.

Paul taught that while we were not *literally* hanging on the cross with Christ, we *legally* were crucified, buried, and rose again with Him:

“We are buried with him by baptism into death . . . our old man is crucified with him . . . Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him . . . Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:4, 6, 8, 11).

“And you, being dead in your sins . . . hath he quickened together with him” (Colossians 2:13).

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ” (Ephesians 2:5).

What glorious privileges belong to those who believe and obey the gospel message! Having once been the sons of Satan, now we can become sons of God (I John 3:1).

He makes us righteous (Romans 5:18-19); He justifies us (Galatians 2:16); and He gives us eternal life (John 6:40).

We are made **joint-heirs** with Christ (Romans 8:14-17). Adam was God’s under-ruler, but the “**new creation**” shares the

inheritance equally with Him. Old things are passed away and all things are become new (II Corinthians 5:17).

Redemption has been provided for all men—but someone must tell them. The same love that compelled Christ to go to Calvary must be demonstrated in His “new creation.” Because He laid down His life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (I John 3:16).

Ambassadors of love will make us as anxious to win men as though we had personally died to provide redemption.

What a joyful message we have for an unsaved world! What “good news” is this story of redemption from death and Satan’s bondage!

**I. Those who reject Jesus’ “finished work” (the gospel) must suffer the second death
Mark 16:15-16; Revelation 20:12-14;
Romans 2:16**

Identifying with the “last Adam” provides wonderful benefits on earth and eternal bliss in heaven. But rejecting Christ’s redemption

condemns us to an awful fate. The second death is eternal separation from God. Jesus revealed the importance of preaching and believing the gospel when He said:

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth [the gospel] and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not [the gospel] shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).

“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord” (II Thessalonians 1:8-9).

“What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?” (I Peter 4:17-18).

What power lies in this wonderful message! Captives can be set free by believing and obeying the “good news” of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. But to reject or carelessly neglect it will bring certain judgment.

**Lesson 7 – Chart 6
A New Day Dawns For Man!**

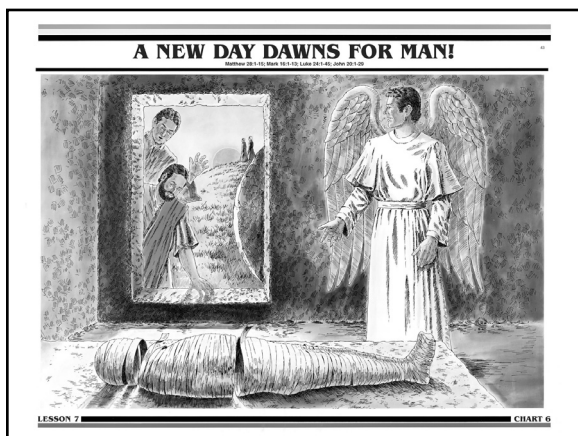


Chart Objective:

To discover the wonderful hope of the Resurrection! Sin and death had been forever conquered! Indisputable evidence also surfaced that proved the reality of the risen Christ!

Chart Outline:

- A. A New Day Dawns for Man!
- B. Living proofs

**A. A New Day Dawns for Man!
Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-13;
Luke 24:1-45; John 20:1-29**

Christ’s crucifixion was implemented by the vicious hands of enemies. But then the tender hands of friends arrived.

Two unexpected supporters requested the Lord’s body from Pilate. Joseph of Arimathea was a wealthy man and member of the Sanhedrin. Only a man of prestige could have retrieved the Lord’s body. Not even His own disciples dared try.

While the eleven were terrorized by fear, Joseph and Nicodemus courageously showed their reverence by preparing Christ for burial.

Nails were pulled from the cross to free His limbs and a sheet of pure linen was wrapped around His body. Jewish burial customs prescribed that beginning with the feet, at least three layers of white linen strips be repeatedly wound around the corpse, with another wrapped around the head.

Between each linen layer was aloe spices mixed with gummy myrrh. About one hundred pounds of spices were used on Christ’s body (John 19:39).

The combination of numerous linen strips with the glue-like myrrh provided a shroud encasement similar to papier-mache, weighing approximately 120 pounds. Such a custom-made shroud would be extremely difficult to remove (McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor*, pages 52-53).

The body was taken to Joseph's new sepulchre in a garden near the crucifixion site. Once inside the entrance, the embalming was hastily completed. Nicodemus provided the fragrant myrrh and aloes. The body was then placed on a shelf or recess hewn in the walls of the tomb.

Their work completed with utmost speed, Joseph and Nicodemus closed the tomb entrance with a large stone. Jewish tombs were usually four and a half to five feet high. Engineers estimate that the entrance would require a stone one and a half to two tons!

How could two men position a stone that large? It had been held in place with a wedge as it rested in a groove or trench sloping toward the entrance. Once the wedge was removed, the heavy rock eased into position (McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor*, page 54).

From a distance, the women lingered to see where His body was taken. Such a hasty burial was unsatisfactory to them. Their loving devotion planned a more thorough preparation once the Passover and Sabbath were past.

Jesus was dead, but the chief priests could not rest. Haunted by His claims of rising from the dead, they carefully planned to ensure safety for the body. Again they requested Pilate's help.

Wearied from their many demands, the governor ordered soldiers to watch. With guards as witnesses, the tomb was closed with the Roman seal.

The purpose of the seal was to prevent anyone from tampering with the grave. After careful inspection, the stone was fitted in place. A cord was stretched across the rock, fastened at both ends with sealing clay stamped with the Roman governor's official signet.

Thus, the Roman seal publicly announced that Jesus' body was definitely inside the tomb. To break the seal would incur the wrath of Roman law.

Consisting of a troop of four to sixteen men, each guard was trained to protect six

feet of ground. If sixteen men were positioned in a square of four per side, this strictly disciplined "fighting machine" could protect thirty-six yards against an entire battalion (McDowell, *The Resurrection Factor*, pages 56 and 59).

Had the disciples dared approach the tomb, their attempts would have been worthless. One soldier could have dealt with the entire group singlehandedly, sending them scurrying as they had hours earlier when Christ was arrested by troops in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:56).

The Sabbath passed peacefully. Before daybreak the next morning, a group of sad women trudged from the outskirts of Bethany towards the tomb. Having been absent the previous two days, the women were unaware of the Roman guard stationed at the tomb. While some distance away, they must have felt an earthquake tremor when an angel descended from heaven to roll away the stone and then sit upon it.

Terrified, the Roman guards fell to the ground as dead men. Upon gaining their composure, they fled into the city to report the strange happening.

By examining the four Resurrection accounts in the Gospels, there may seem to be a discrepancy or contradiction. But closer examination explains the varied reports.

No two witnesses to the Resurrection encountered the same situation, nor at the same time. Their reactions were also varied. Mary was overwhelmed with emotion. The disciples were amazed and frightened. Each occasion had its own peculiar atmosphere and revealed different details.

All through the Gospels are varied portraits of Christ. No four news reporters would write identical accounts of an event. Individual creativity in news reporting is to be expected.

Nor are the details contradictory. In some plausible way they correlate to compose the larger picture.

John's record begins first: "When it was yet dark." Matthew's account starts moments later, "as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week." Soon after, Luke's description begins "very early in the morning." Mark mentions "early in the morning . . . at the rising of the sun." All were stated clearly to show different times.

Approaching the tomb, the women ques-

tioned what to do with the heavy stone. But as they came closer, they noticed it was gone. Bewildered, Mary hurried to tell Peter and John.

As she turned away, the other women must have ventured closer to investigate. Different descriptions are given of the angelic visitations. At times two angels were visible; then only one. However, innumerable angels must have converged in the garden, revealing themselves as directed.

Beholding two angels, the women were terror-stricken! “Fear not,” comforted the heavenly visitor. “He is not here: for he is risen. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.”

Meanwhile, John outran Peter to the tomb. Leaning inside, they saw an amazing sight! Peering over to the wall where Christ had lain, they saw undisturbed graveclothes—still in the form of the body, but slightly caved in and empty—like a hollow caterpillar cocoon. That was enough to make a believer out of anyone!

Mary Magdalene returned to the tomb to weep. Unaware of His resurrection, she was still concerned about the missing body. Noticing a man’s form nearby, she questioned the whereabouts of Christ’s body.

A single word—“Mary”—brought her to His feet. The resurrected Lord had appeared first to her! However, she could not touch Him. At that moment, He was taking His righteous blood to heaven’s mercy seat, thereby legalizing man’s redemption.

Mary Magdalene, out of whom Christ had cast seven demons, was the first eyewitness to the risen Lord. She was then told to inform Christ’s brethren of His resurrection.

While the shocked disciples scurried back and forth to the tomb, the city was astir with other activities. The terrified Roman guard had fled their gravesite post. To abandon an assigned duty would incur the death penalty. Fearing the governor’s wrath, they confided in the chief priests, who were more interested in the tomb’s safety. Hearing the amazing events, the Jewish rulers hastily summoned the Sanhedrin. They must move quickly!

The trembling guards were told to report that while they slept, Christ’s disciples came by night and stole the body away. That lie was indeed dangerous! They could be penalized with death for sleeping on guard.

If the soldiers were asleep, how could they have known what had happened? If they were

awake, why didn’t they arrest the grave robbers? If it were a case of theft, why were the graveclothes left intact?

Pitiful as the story was, the soldiers followed instructions and spread the word about their lack of valor in guarding the tomb.

B. Living proofs

Critics argue that the Resurrection story is a mere legend, concocted years later. However, the accounts were circulated and recorded by the original eyewitnesses. Peter, who had viewed the empty graveclothes on Resurrection morning dismissed any possibility of myth, assuring his readers that he saw it happen!

“For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (II Peter 1:16).

At least fifteen different post-resurrection appearances were witnessed by Christ’s followers. Paul related that around A.D. 56, almost five hundred firsthand eyewitnesses were still alive (I Corinthians 15:6).

Something had happened for the course of history to be changed from B.C. (before Christ) to A.D. (the Latin *Anno Domini*—“the year of our Lord”). What notable event could change the world calendar?

That event was an empty tomb a fifteen-minute walk from the center of Jerusalem would have confirmed or disproved! Could the early church have survived for a single day in its hostile surroundings had Christ not risen from the dead?

The resurrection of its Founder was preached within steps of Joseph’s tomb! The Resurrection could not have been maintained in Jerusalem had the tomb not been empty.

All Jewish authorities had to do was produce the body and the disciples would have been silenced forever. Rather, they forcibly brought the apostles before their council and threatened them with death unless they ceased preaching a risen Christ.

The Jews were powerless to produce Christ’s body! Their threats acknowledged that He was indeed risen!

Yes, the evidence was all too clear to any who cared to check. All Jerusalem was aware of the details. What further proofs were needed? He is alive!

Lesson 7 – Chart 7 The Mission of Jesus Christ, The Son of God

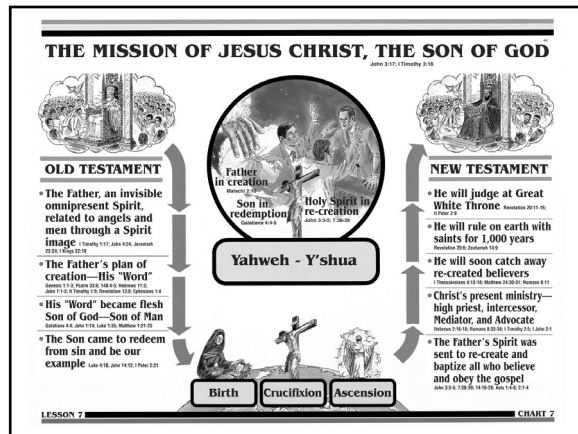


Chart Objective:

To explain that Jesus Christ is the fleshly body God made for Himself to fulfill the redemptive plan. One God has unveiled Himself in three distinct roles—as Father in creation, Son in redemption, and the Holy Spirit dwelling in the hearts of believers.

Chart Outline:

- Old Testament
- Birth—Crucifixion—Ascension
- New Testament
- One God manifested in three roles

A. Old Testament

Who was Jesus Christ? This question still puzzles as many today as during the time of His earthly ministry. Many still believe He was only a great teacher. Some consider Him a prophet of God, while others believe He was a mere man. Truthfully, He was both God and man.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

On numerous occasions throughout the Bible, God would appear to man. The Old Testament saints could actually see God in visible form. This form was the Word in John 1. Sometimes when the Word appeared, the Scripture would call Him the “angel of the Lord.” On several occasions, it called Him a man, which is no surprise, being man was made in His image. Many people call these appearances “theophanies,” but when the fullness of time had

come, God needed a body with flesh and blood to redeem mankind. It was here the Holy Ghost overshadowed Mary, placing seed within her womb. The results: a child was born, and because the Holy Spirit was His Father, He was the Son of God, and because Mary was His mother, He was the Son of Man.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

The God of heaven came to live in a human body on earth!

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:6-8).

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power” (Colossians 2:9-10).

B. Birth . . . Crucifixion . . . Ascension

God came to earth in a human body! The “Incarnation” (God clothing Himself with flesh) was a totally new and different manifestation of God. Humanity had mingled with divinity in the womb of Mary to produce a man, truly human, yet truly God. With His divine nature, Jesus could say, “I am God!” and be absolutely correct.

Jesus’ human body was of created matter from His mother. But from His Father’s side, He was God Himself. This merger of the Word and humanity produced the Son of God—Son of Man.

As the Son of God, Jesus was without the sinful nature of Adam. At the same time, He was subject to the same temptation as others. However, He lived a sinless life.

The key to understanding God is the fact that divinity and humanity are united in the person of Jesus Christ, making Him both God and man. This newborn Son was actually “God with us”!

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).

“And they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matthew 1:23).

Jesus is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. But His invisible Spirit could not be quantitatively contained in a small body. The Spirit Who was in Christ was also the Spirit Who filled the universe.

Being both God and man, Jesus is composed of divine and human natures and is an offspring of each. When we speak of Him as God, we refer to His divine manifestation. When we speak of the Son of Man, we refer to His human manifestation. Not two persons, but two natures—humanity and divinity—dwelled in Jesus side by side.

As man, He was born as an infant (Matthew 1:23-25); yet He was the mighty God (Isaiah 9:6).

As man, He increased in wisdom (Luke 2:52); but as God, He knew all things (John 21:17).

As man, He grew hungry (Matthew 4:2); but as God, He fed the multitudes (Matthew 14:19-21).

As man, He became a servant (Philippians 2:7); but as God, He is the King of kings (Revelation 19:16).

As man, He came to live on earth (John 1:14); as God, He created the earth (Colossians 1:16-17).

As man, He prayed (Luke 22:44); as God, He answers prayers (John 14:13-14).

As man, He became the sacrifice for sin (Hebrews 9:26); as God, He forgave sin (Mark 2:5-7).

As man, He suffered and died (John 19:30); as God, He emerged from the grave victorious (Luke 24:1-6)!

Isaiah’s description clearly explains the dual nature of God:

“Unto us a child [Humanity] is born, unto us a son [Humanity] is given . . . and his name shall be called . . . The mighty God [Divinity], The everlasting Father [Divinity]” (Isaiah 9:6).

To accomplish redemption, the man, Jesus, became sin and sickness when He assumed man’s dead spiritual (sinful) nature (Isaiah 53:4-7; II Corinthians 5:21).

Having satisfied the claims of justice, He arose triumphantly to conquer Satan, death, and hell (Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 2:14)!

However, His ascension back to heaven did not end Jesus’ work. He performs an equally great ministry at the throne of God!

C. New Testament

Having completed redemption, Christ ascended to heaven’s throne in His glorified body. Paul clearly summed up God’s earthly mission in one brief verse:

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory” (I Timothy 3:16).

Before He left, Christ spoke of another divine manifestation that would shortly be introduced to His waiting disciples. This manifestation would replace His earthly presence.

The **Holy Spirit returned to indwell believers**. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was the long-awaited promise God had especially designed to equip and empower all who believed and trusted in Him. But this powerful new manifestation could not begin until Jesus had been glorified and ascended to heaven.

“(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” (John 7:39).

Because Christ emphasized that “I will come to you” (John 14:18), we know that the Holy Spirit, or Comforter, is the same Spirit Who dwelled in Jesus.

In man’s mortal “death-bound” condition, the future was hopeless. But we were not left comfortless. The Holy Spirit has come to permanently reside in men’s spirits!

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; . . . I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (John 14:16, 18).

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

What is the present ministry of Christ? What has He been doing the past two thousand years? When He returned to heaven's throne, He began to live for us as surely as He had died for us! Few believers have a clear concept of Jesus' present ministry.

He is **now on the throne as our high priest** to minister in heaven's sanctuary:

"We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Hebrews 8:1-2).

"Sanctuary" in the Greek means "holy things." In which "holy things" does Christ minister? Our prayers and worship. We do not know how to pray as we should (Romans 8:26), so He transforms our crude petitions and makes them beautiful to the Father. Every prayer and worship is accepted when presented in the name of Jesus.

To sit at the Father's "right hand," or the place of power and authority, refers to Jesus' role as the "**Mediator**" between God and man. Jesus fills this office because of His unique role—the union of God and man. Who could better represent humanity before God?

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5).

A mediator is one who negotiates between two opposing persons to peacefully settle their differences. Jesus is the Mediator between sinful men and a holy God. His task is to make men holy and without blemish so they can approach God.

Since the fall of man, no one had approached God without a bleeding sacrifice. But since Jesus has sacrificed His righteous blood, those who believe in Him and enter into His covenant are legally declared righteous and given eternal life.

As Mediator, Jesus introduces the unsaved person to God. But for the believer, He becomes our "**intercessor**"—one who pleads in favor of another.

Why should God's child need an intercessor? Because our minds must be renewed. Before the new birth, we lived under Satan's rule; our minds must be transformed to com-

prehend our privileges and responsibilities as sons of God.

While the new birth is instantaneous, renewing of the mind is a gradual growth that comes by studying and meditating on the Word.

Through ignorance, we often say and do things that are displeasing to the Father. When attacked by demon spirits, we need an ally. Until we fully learn our authority, the enemy may cause us to stumble. These situations call for Christ's intercession!

"Christ . . . who is . . . at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:34).

No one can condemn or lay anything to the charge of God's child. He has been declared righteous! Jesus is making intercession for him!

We come to the Father through Christ, our Mediator. We enjoy the sweet fellowship of our intercessor. But we also need an "**Advocate**"—One who defends or gives legal counsel in a court of justice.

Many believers would be victorious Christians today had they known of Christ's role as Advocate. At times we break fellowship with God. Perhaps we yield to one of Satan's temptations. Or our unrenewed minds may prompt us to disobey or become impatient. How shall we handle the condemnation that results from our failures? What a sad plight if we had no advocate!

John wrote,

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (I John 2:1).

God's method for maintaining fellowship when we sin is to confess:

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

His ministry as Advocate is effective only when we are willing to repent. The moment we confess, He takes our case before the Father. Then we are forgiven and cleansed—as though we had never sinned.

Sacrificial animal blood under the Old

Covenant merely “covered” man’s sin. Jesus’ blood totally eradicates it. Once cleansed by His blood, every stain is removed.

Knowing Christ as an Advocate, or legal counsel, is absolutely essential to maintaining our relationship with God. Broken fellowship should last no longer than the time it takes to ask forgiveness and make restitution.

Never forget that we always have a “man” at the throne, representing us before the Father. Because Jesus is there, we are safe and secure!

At the end of this age, **Christ will catch away saints** and give rewards at His judgment seat.

As **King of kings He returns with saints** and the armies of heaven. Then we will enjoy a **1,000-year rule on earth** with Jesus.

From **the Great White Throne, Christ will then judge** the wicked dead. Finally, His throne will be transferred to **headquarters in the New Jerusalem**, with a new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21 and 22).

D. One God manifested in three roles

Malachi 2:10; Galatians 4:4-5;

John 7:37-39

By examining the Scriptures on the chart, we understand that one God has manifested Himself to angels and men since the beginning of time. Different forms and roles, yet the same one God!

Confusion is dispelled when we understand that there are three manifestations of one God. The “Father,” an invisible Spirit, is a holy, righteous, loving, all-powerful God Who loves and cares for His creation.

The role of the “Son” is the God-Man Who redeemed us from sin. In His foreknowledge, God knew about the fall of man. Before Adam sinned, He had planned a second manifestation of Himself for the purpose of redemption (II Timothy 1:9-10; I Peter 1:20; Revelation 13:8). His is the only body that can be seen.

The “Holy Spirit” is the same invisible Spirit Who manifested Himself in the human body of Jesus, and now lives within believers. This manifestation equips and empowers saints for service.

There have never been three persons, but three roles performed by one God. The invisible Father has always manifested one visible form. He expressed Himself in temporary “theophanies” in Old Testament times. But when it was time to redeem man’s sins, “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14), in the body of Jesus Christ.

Our next lesson details how God finally was united with His highest and most beloved created being—man! Because of Calvary, all the necessary arrangements had been made for man to *really* live!

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM STUDY SHEET

Christ Makes a New Covenant

LESSON NO. 7 Study Sheet

Chart 1. Path to Christ's Death

- A. Last Supper (Luke 22:7-20) Acts 1:15-20)
- B. Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-52; Luke 22:39-53) E. Jesus scourged and sentenced by Pilate (Matthew 27:1-2, 11-31; Luke 23:1-25)
- C. Trial before Caiaphas (Matthew 26:57-75; Mark 14:53-72) F. Crucifixion at Calvary (Matthew 27:32-56; Luke 23:26-49)
- D. Judas hangs himself (Matthew 27:3-10;

Chart 2. Christ Makes a New Covenant . . . in Blood

- A. Ancient blood covenants; Abraham's covenant; the Passover Lamb; Christ's blood covenant for sin (Matthew 26:17-29; Mark 14:12-25; Luke 22:7-20)
- B. "This is my blood of the new testament . . . for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).
- C. Looking backward; looking forward (I Corinthians 11:23-34)

Chart 3. The New Covenant Provides For Healing

- A. Healing promises: (Luke 22:19; Matthew 8:17; I Peter 2:24; Luke 9:11; Acts 10:38; James 5:15)
- B. Ways to be healed: (James 5:14-16; Mark 16:15-18; Acts 19:11-12; Matthew 18:19-20; Mark 11:22-24; John 14:12-14; Matthew 8:16; 10:1; Luke 9:1-2; I Corinthians 12:9)

Chart 4. "It Is Finished!"

- A. At Calvary, the sinless Lamb of God was sacrificed—"for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:22)
- B. The Passover lamb was slain at 3:00 P.M.
- C. A new way to God (Matthew 27:50-51)

Chart 5. The Gospel "Good News"!

- A. First Adam: created in God's image; dominion over earth (Genesis 1:26-28) (Acts 13:33-37; Romans 6:9; 8:29)
- B. Disobedience resulted in: sin; spiritual death; separation from God; Satan made god of world; men became sons of Satan (Romans 5:12, 19; 6:23; John 8:44; II Corinthians 4:4) F. Resurrection: conquered death, hell, and Satan; restored man's rightful dominion; Jesus' name exalted (Colossians 2:15; Luke 10:19; Philippians 2:9-11)
- C. Jesus, the last Adam, came to bring life (I Corinthians 15:21-22, 45) G. Ascended to Father (John 20:16-17; Hebrews 9:12, 21-28)
- D. At Calvary, Jesus: identified with man's dead spiritual nature; was made sin and sickness; was forsaken of God; suffered penalty of death for us (Hebrews 2:9; Isaiah 53:4-12; Mark 15:34; Acts 2:24-27) H. Believers' privileges: sons of God; righteous; justified; eternal life; joint-heirs; new creation (I John 3:1-3; Romans 5:18-19; Galatians 2:16; John 6:40; Romans 8:14-17; II Corinthians 5:17)
- E. Became the "first-born" from the dead! I. Those who reject Jesus' "finished work" (the gospel) must suffer the second death (Mark 16:15-16)

Chart 6. A New Day Dawns For Man!

- A. Living proofs (Matthew 28:1-15; Mark 16:1-13; Luke 24:1-45; John 20:1-29)

Chart 7. The Mission of Jesus Christ, The Son of God

- A. Old Testament: The Father, an invisible omnipresent Spirit; His Word; The Word became flesh; The Son came to redeem us from sin and be our example. soon catch away recreated believers; Christ's present ministry; The Father's Spirit sent to recreate and baptize all who believe.
- B. Birth; crucifixion; ascension
- C. New Testament: he will judge at Great White Throne; He will rule on earth 1,000 years; He will
- D. One God manifested in three roles: Father in creation (Malachi 2:10); Son in redemption (Galatians 4:4-5); Holy Spirit within us (John 7:37-39)

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM QUIZ

Christ Makes a New Covenant

LESSON NO. 7 Quiz

WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? WHY?

1. WHERE? did Christ pray with His disciples the night before His crucifixion?
_____ of _____
2. WHAT? are two important provisions of our new covenant that we enjoy today?
_____ and _____
3. WHY? do we celebrate the Lord's Supper?

4. WHAT? does the broken bread represent?

5. WHAT? does the wine represent?

6. WHERE? was the site of Christ's crucifixion? _____
7. WHAT? act of punishment did Christ endure to provide our healing?

8. WHO? was the "last Adam" Who came to recreate dead human spirits, resulting from the sin of the "first Adam"??

9. WHY? did the one true God manifest Himself in the "Son"??

10. WHY? did the one true God manifest Himself as the "Holy Spirit"??

11. WHAT? role is Jesus Christ performing for us at the throne in heaven?

12. WHAT? was God called in John 1:1? _____

Answers:

1. Garden of Gethsemane 2. Salvation (deliverance from sin) and healing 3. In remembrance of Jesus' death and anticipation of His return 4. Jesus' bruised and beaten body 5. Jesus' blood 6. Calvary (Golgotha) 7. Stripes on His back 8. Jesus Christ
9. To redeem man with His blood 10. To dwell in recreated spirits 11. Name one: high priest; Mediator; intercessor; Advocate
12. The Word

LESSON EIGHT

The Gospel for All the World

This lesson emphasizes the preaching of the gospel as commanded by Jesus in the great commission.

Having accomplished His redemptive plan, Jesus appointed representatives to continue the ministry He had begun. This “good news” was too valuable to be enjoyed by an exclusive few. It must be taken to all the world.

Before they were to accomplish this mission, the disciples were told to wait at Jerusalem to receive the promised “power from on high.”

On the Day of Pentecost, a new era began. One hundred twenty believers were gloriously baptized with the Holy Ghost!

Peter became the spokesman to explain this spiritual phenomenon that all mankind could receive. His message emphasized the importance of the initial stages of salvation outlined in the great commission. God has promised the wonderful gift of the Holy Ghost to all who will call upon His name, believe the gospel, repent of their sins, and be baptized in the name of Jesus.

When completed, students should be aware of the following concepts:

1. The great commission can only be accomplished by men and women who have been empowered by the Holy Ghost.
2. We enter into covenant with Jesus Christ by repenting of our sins, being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and being filled with the Holy Ghost.
3. The initiating rite of our covenant relationship is water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.

4. To be “saved” means to be delivered from all the power and effects of sin.
5. The Holy Spirit baptism is the wonderful “promise of the Father” awaiting every person who has repented and believed the gospel.
6. The Holy Spirit is God’s seal of ownership, a witness that we dwell in Him and He in us, and the inner power that equips every believer for living in this world.

Additional books for reading:

1. Derek Prince, *Purposes of Pentecost*, Derek Prince Publications, P. O. Box 306, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33302.
2. Dennis & Rita Bennett, *The Holy Spirit and You*, Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971.
3. David K. Bernard, *The New Birth*, Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1984.
4. Carl Brumback, *What Meaneth This?* Springfield, MO: Gospel Publishing House, 1947.
5. J. T. Pugh, *How to Receive the Holy Ghost*, Hazelwood, MO: Pentecostal Publishing House, 1969.
6. John Sherrill, *They Speak with Other Tongues*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964.
7. E. W. Kenyon, *The Wonderful Name of Jesus*, Kenyon’s Gospel Publishing Society, P. O. Box 973, Lynnwood, WA 98036.

Lesson 8 – Chart 1 The Great Commission

THE GREAT COMMISSION

<p>Infallible proofs John 20:20</p>	<p>Jesus' last command: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke 24:48</p>	<p>"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe." Mark 16:17-18</p>	<p>"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Matthew 28:19-20</p>	<p>Mount Olivet Ascension Luke 24:50</p>	<p>Disciples go to Jerusalem to wait. Luke 24:49</p>
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LESSON 8 CHART 1

Chart Objective:

To examine Christ's commission to His followers to continue the ministry He had begun. The "good news" of His death, burial, and resurrection would free men from sin's slavery.

Chart Outline:

- A. Infallible proofs
- B. Jesus' last command
- C. Mount Olivet Ascension
- D. Disciples go to Jerusalem to wait

A. Infallible proofs

Acts 1:3; John 20:20

Can you imagine the bewilderment and sheer joy of seeing and conversing with someone you believed to be dead? That experience we reserve for heaven. But should it happen here, we would be quite shocked!

What questions would fill your mind as you eagerly talked with a friend fresh from the grave?

Similar emotions and expressions must have overwhelmed Christ's disciples as they stared in amazement at their risen Lord.

Following the events of Easter morning, two followers were returning home to Emmaus, seven miles away. Dejected and grief-stricken by the loss of their Friend, they were too preoccupied to suspicion Who had joined their walk homeward.

While they confided their grief, the kind traveler began to vividly explain how Christ's death was part of God's plan. Familiar prophecies throughout the Old Testament were quoted as the puzzle took shape.

Talking at length, the trio soon arrived in Emmaus where the couple invited their new

acquaintance to share food and lodging.

As the stranger gave thanks and proceeded to distribute the bread, either some familiar gesture or perhaps the wounds in His hands revealed His identity. But the moment they recognized Him, Christ vanished from their sight (Luke 24:31)!

Astonished, the couple raced back to the upper room in Jerusalem where their friends were assembled behind locked doors. Once admitted, the pair excitedly described their roadside visitor.

However, the group had equally joyous news. The Lord had indeed risen and had personally appeared to Simon Peter that afternoon!

As each one happily related their encounter with the risen Lord, suddenly a hush filled the room. Jesus stood among them. So unexpectedly! The door was still locked, but there He was!

The first recognition was His voice—"Peace be unto you." Then further evidence was offered as He urged, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself." Here was positive proof of the One Who had suffered death.

To dismiss the notion that He was a ghost, Jesus calmly assured, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me have" (Luke 24:39). Mary could not touch Him in the garden as He was ascending to heaven's mercy seat. But now He freely invited their inspection.

To further confirm their faith, Christ asked, "Have ye any meat?" As they watched, He ate broiled fish and honeycomb. Unquestionable proof! This was no ghost, but a glorified human body!

A week later, Jesus reappeared to show Himself to Thomas, who had been absent. Very skeptical, Thomas had demanded to see nail prints and wounds. But all unbelief fled as he exclaimed in total assurance, "My Lord and my God!" The most doubtful was convinced of the risen Lord!

B. Jesus' last command

Luke 24:45-49; Mark 16:15-18; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:4-8

Before His ascension, Christ appeared to more than five hundred believers at once (I Corinthians 15:5-6). Other isolated appearances occurred during the next forty days.

One of the last encounters was on a mountain in Galilee. Here Jesus spoke seriously to His carefully selected staff of the momentous

task ahead. Into the hands of common, ordinary men of simple learning and occupation, the kingdom of God would be entrusted.

As he had accomplished His redemptive plan, they must become His representatives and continue the ministry Christ had begun.

This “good news” was too valuable to be enjoyed by an exclusive few. They must encircle the globe with the salvation story. *Every man, woman, boy and girl has a right to know!*

Four different accounts of the great commission are given in the Gospels and the Book of Acts. Although expressions vary, the worldwide scope was clear. His gospel must be carried to “all nations,” to “every creature,” and to “the uttermost part of the earth.”

That command encompasses the true love of Calvary. Suffering and dying for the sins of the whole world was Christ’s part. Our part is to inform every person of the good news!

Somewhat varied details are offered in each account. Just as the trial, crucifixion, and resurrection were written from different perspectives, so is the great commission recorded in four separate, incomplete statements. Together, a full step-by-step description of the salvation plan emerges.

Luke begins with “repentance and remission of sins”:

“And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:46-49).

Mark added “believing the gospel” and “water baptism”:

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:15-18).

Matthew also stressed “water baptism”:

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:18-20).

The Book of Acts, written by Luke, explains what is promised to those who repent, believe, and are baptized—the “baptism of the Holy Ghost”:

“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence . . . But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:4-8).

We shall see how each command was obeyed on the Day of Pentecost.

Christ had mentioned returning to His Father, but they could not grasp its dynamic impact. For them—as well as us—Jesus’ ascension launched a new era with the greatest challenge ever given to mortals: “Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature!”

C. Mount Olivet Ascension Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11

Final parting remarks ignited hope to the disciples’ sagging spirits. Within themselves, they were totally incapable of obeying Jesus’ commission. But He would provide assistance. Reinforcements would soon appear!

A special, mysterious power would be given each of them to accomplish the impossible task assigned that day. “Tarry,” Christ instructed, “until ye be endued with power from on high.” Completing their assignment would be unthinkable without an inoculation of supernatural power!

More explicit instructions then followed. They must go to Jerusalem and wait for this

promised blessing from the Father.

Then suddenly, He was “taken up.” While they stared into the sky, a cloud received Him out of their sight.

Perhaps three of them remembered when Christ appeared with clouds on the Mount of Transfiguration. Would the cloud dissolve and Jesus rejoin them as He had on that day?

Instead, they sensed the presence of two white-garbed figures. It was useless to stand gazing upward, the angelic visitors assured. This same Jesus would indeed reappear in the same way He had left. Not immediately, but He would come again! In the same manner . . . and at the precise spot where He had ascended!

Zechariah also prophesied the return of Christ to earth with His feet touching the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4)! What a hope! He is coming again!

D. Disciples go to Jerusalem to wait

Luke 24:52-53; Acts 1:12

From Mount Olivet to Jerusalem was a Sabbath day’s journey, or three-fourths of a

mile. The “upper chamber” is probably the home of John Mark’s mother. Here the disciples, Mary the mother of Jesus, and numerous other followers awaited Jesus’ promised power.

Meanwhile, Peter reminded that Judas must be replaced with a more worthy apostle. God had designated twelve apostles corresponding to the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:30).

The chosen one must have accompanied their group throughout Jesus’ ministry and have personally witnessed His resurrection. Matthias was elected to fill the vacant position.

Business ended, the group readied themselves to wait for the promise. “All continued with one accord in prayer and supplication” (Acts 1:14). Fasting might have accompanied their prayerful vigil.

When would it happen? How would it feel? How would they know when it arrived? Their uncertainties would soon be answered in a most emphatic manner!

Lesson 8 – Chart 2 Sixth Dispensation—“Grace”

Chart Objective:

To investigate the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit and the inauguration of the church which occurred during the Jewish Feast of Pentecost.

Chart Outline:

- “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost”
- Old Testament prophecy
- “Then Peter said unto them”
- Sixth Dispensation—“Grace”

A. “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost”

Acts 2:4

A new day, a new age, a new era had finally arrived! The moment for which one hundred twenty believers had expectantly waited. To onlookers it was simply another Jewish observance—the Feast of Pentecost.

Meaning “fiftieth,” Pentecost occurs fifty days after Passover. In the Old Testament it was also known as the Feast of Weeks, the Day of the Firstfruits, and the Feast of Harvests. The feast commemorating the giving of the law at Mount Sinai was celebrated on the sixth day of the month Sivan (our month of June).

Devout Jewish families had traveled to the ancient city of David to participate in the festivities. But one home in the city had no plans for celebration. At any moment Christ’s blessed promise could arrive, and they determined to wait until . . .

At the third hour of the day (nine o’clock in the morning), men and women were sitting, meditating on events of the last month . . . wondering . . . waiting.

A roaring sound was faintly heard, like an approaching windstorm—and indeed it was!

As the noise intensified, everyone in the upper room could hear the sound of a violently roaring wind. It soon filled the entire house.

Each of the disciples sensed a submerging of his spirit deep within. It was difficult to describe, but this was what John had predicted: “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost!”

“John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Luke 3:16).

Unusual sounds began pouring from their lips. Rather than their normal Aramaic language, God’s Spirit was forming foreign words. Flowing from within, like rivers of living water, was a new language. They were speaking with “new tongues” as Jesus had promised (Mark 16:17).

Some were probably singing in tongues, some joyously laughing, some weeping, some dancing and swaying, and others sitting with folded hands, tears of joy streaming down their faces.

These explicit details are not recorded, but when our *spirits* are affected and inspired by the Holy Spirit, our *emotions* respond in various ways. Luke recorded it like this:

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:1-4).

What were the disciples saying? Not a word could be understood—until visitors and Jerusalem residents traced the noise to the house and hurried upstairs.

What was going on? Common Galileans with no formal religious training were fluently speaking in various foreign dialects. And each was praising God and proclaiming His wonderful works!

Curious, the mob strained to peek at the tongue-talking Jews. Having originated from

every country in the world, these devout keepers of Moses’ law were hearing praises to God in their native languages! Representatives of the entire Jewish nation were hearing positive proof that the promise expected for centuries had arrived!

B. Old Testament prophecy

Joel 2:28-29; Isaiah 28:10-12;

Ezekiel 11:19-20; Jeremiah 31:31-33

Old Testament scriptures richly described the Holy Spirit advent. Several prophets had penned vivid details, without grasping their meaning. Joel had written:

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit” (Joel 2:28-29).

Isaiah had also glimpsed the glory of this new experience:

“For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little: for with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear” (Isaiah 28:10-12).

Ezekiel described the “new heart” or “new spirit” designed for believers:

“And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God” (Ezekiel 11:19-20).

Jeremiah described the inward written covenant:

“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33).

More recently, John the Baptist had predicted:

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matthew 3:11).

Finally, after centuries of glimpses and hints—it had happened! Standing on the threshold of a new era, one hundred twenty waiting believers greeted the glorious inauguration of the church age—the new covenant—the new spiritual kingdom of God—the dispensation of grace!

However, some were not elated. When the scribes and Pharisees recognized Jesus’ followers, they immediately rejected all!

“I can tell you the problem . . . they are full of new wine!” someone snickered. New wine was the most intoxicating of all wines. Dried grapes soaked in old wine were pressed a second time to produce wild, delirious emotions. Doubters rejected the supernatural by labeling it drunkards’ gibberish.

Was that true? Who could offer an explanation?

C. “Then Peter said unto them”

Acts 2:38-39

Confused and curious spectators, divided in opinion, demanded an explanation. It was time to open the door to God’s new spiritual kingdom.

But who would have the keys to that door? John? James? Matthew? No, Jesus Himself had already designated the spokesman. In answer to the question, “Whom do men say that I am?” Peter had correctly answered, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” This was the Master’s commendation:

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 16:18-19).

The chief apostle stood to speak. Let’s listen. But . . . wait! Could he communicate with this crowd? He’s a Galilean and they represent nations from around the world. Must Peter speak in a miraculous language?

Critics of speaking in tongues insist that the purpose for speaking in tongues at Pentecost was to preach to foreign Jews. A momentary gift of languages was necessary to explain Jesus’ resurrection. Once proclaimed to the nation’s representatives, there was no further need for speaking in tongues.

However, in the biblical era, almost everyone spoke more than one language. The entire New Testament was written in Greek, attesting that all the apostles could both speak and write the Greek language. Peter’s sermon was probably in the commonly understood Greek language.

Refuting their accusations, Peter began by denying that the disciples were intoxicated. No one ate or drank at the Feast of Pentecost until after the third hour (nine o’clock in the morning). It was still too early to be drunk!

Yet they *did* appear drunk—just as folks often do today when drinking of the Spirit’s living water.

A spiritual experience must be explained by God’s Word. To overrule objections, Peter quoted an ancient prophecy:

“But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh . . . And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:16-17, 21).

Having taken his text, Peter obeyed Jesus’ command and began to preach the gospel.

Far and wide Jesus had openly healed the sick and raised the dead, affirming that He was God manifest in the flesh. With wicked, cruel hands they had slain Him. But God had set Him free from the penalty of death.

Further emphasizing that Christ had become the “firstborn” of the dead, Peter quoted from a favorite Jewish ancestor. David had rejoiced that his soul would not be left in hell. He foresaw that the promised “Son of David” would redeem the souls of men after becoming the “firstbegotten” from the dead (Acts 2:25-27, 31).

Because of Jesus’ conquest over Satan, hell, and death, God had highly exalted Him!

Jesus had instructed His disciples to tell no man that He was the Christ until after the Resurrection (Matthew 17:9). And now it must be proclaimed to all the world!

Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, Jesus had poured out His Spirit “which ye now see and hear.” The gift of the Holy Ghost is a pledge of all favors intended for the future.

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36).

What a terrifying thought! Having witnessed Jesus’ miraculous ministry, now they discovered themselves to be responsible for His death! . . . Guilty of crucifying their Messiah!

Peter’s words stung with conviction. The blood of this righteous man—their Messiah—was staining the conscience of every stunned listener. What a powerful effect the preaching of the gospel had upon the hearers!

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

That question is often repeated as individuals ponder the devastating effects of their own transgressions against the Savior of mankind. “What can I do to rid myself of this terrible guilt? How can I be pardoned for the grief that I have caused my Lord?”

Once the multitude believed the gospel message, they became eligible to receive the same blessed gift entrusted to the one hundred twenty. Furthermore, Peter’s key of entrance qualifies believers of every subsequent generation:

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:38-39).

Even though “afar off,” without natural Jewish heritage, we Gentiles rejoice to be regarded as “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:29). This supreme blessing is for every person.

That same day, three thousand people obeyed Peter’s instructions and were baptized

in the name of Jesus Christ. Thus, the church for which Jesus shed His blood began with 3,120 members.

But is the Holy Spirit *really* for us today? What controversy this question has created in the religious world! Many dutifully accept Peter’s command to “repent, and be baptized.” But they strongly resent the accompanying promise.

The baptism of the Holy Ghost was not merely delegated to the apostles and a favored few. No hint is given of a change in God’s plan. This gift is *every* believer’s birthright privilege!

D. Sixth Dispensation—“Grace” (The Church Begins) Ephesians 5:25-27

A new door had just opened! A new era; a new experience; a new covenant; a new kingdom; a new dispensation; a new church of “called-out” people of every race and nation.

Better than any previous era, the sixth is the “dispensation of grace.” The word “grace” indicates that men can freely enjoy the unmerited, undeserved favor, kindness, and pleasure of God—all because of Calvary. The sin problem was forever settled when Jesus’ blood legally redeemed us and He triumphed over death and Satan.

The new covenant offers a new priesthood, new sacrifices, a new law, and a new walk. When we transfer our lordship from Satan to Christ, His laws are written in our hearts.

A direct, personal contact with our heavenly Father has been made possible for everyone. Little did the apostles realize that day that the gospel had opened the door of salvation to **all** flesh. Just as Abraham believed, all who trust in God’s promises are eligible to enter this glorious new spiritual kingdom.

Even despised Gentiles can inherit God’s promises without having to become proselyte Jews. The wall of partition had been broken down between the two (Ephesians 2:14)!

What the law could not do, faith in Christ has provided:

“If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Galatians 3:21-22).

What favor God has shown this dispensation of believers! In the Old Testament, the moving of the Spirit among God's people is described as: "the Spirit of God came upon them"; "the Spirit of God moved them"; "the Spirit of God spake by them."

Such expressions indicate that a part of the believer's mind or personality was

Spirit-controlled. But their spirits were dead! Until Jesus became the "firstborn" from the dead, no one since Adam's transgression had felt LIFE flowing through his being!

Now let's review how we may enter into this New Covenant relationship and the kingdom of God.

Lesson 8 – Chart 3 "Repent, and Believe the Gospel"

"REPENT, AND BELIEVE THE GOSPEL"
Mark 1:14-15; Acts 2:38

"Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." Luke 24:47; Acts 1:8; 13:31

How do we repent?

- Choose to turn from actions that lead to death. Exodus 10:23; Acts 26:28, 32
- Surrender our self-rule. Matthew 16:23; Galatians 2:20
- Call upon the Lord; confess and forsake sins. Acts 2:21; 20:21; Romans 10:10-13; John 1:6; Ephesians 4:22
- Promise to love, serve, and obey Him. John 13:15; 14:21

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:16; Acts 8:35-38; 16:31-33; 18:27

What must we believe?

- The gospel! (Acknowledge and identify with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.) Romans 1:8; 6:8-11; 10:9-10; Galatians 3:23; Ephesians 1:13
- Jesus' blood legally redeemed us from sin. Hebrews 9:12; 10:10; 10:19-20; 13:12
- Jesus is the Christ. (Salvation in no other name.) John 14:6; Acts 4:12; 9:22

What begins when we repent and believe?

- We turn from Satan's rule to the lordship of Christ. Romans 6:16-18; Hebrews 1:13-14
- Sins are forgiven. Acts 10:43; 16:34; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 2:13

CAUTION DO NOT STOP HERE!

LESSON 8 CHART 3

Chart Objective:

To discover the importance of the initial stages of salvation outlined in the great commission. Some very wonderful things begin as faith grows in the heart!

Chart Outline:

- "Repent, and believe the gospel"
- How do we repent?
- What must we believe?
- What begins when we repent and believe?

A. "Repent, and believe the gospel"

Mark 1:14-15; Acts 2:38

Now that we have examined Peter's message at Pentecost, does it agree with Jesus' words?

"Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:14-15).

Both sermons are in complete harmony! In answer to the curious spectator's question,

"What meaneth this?", Peter related the moving story of the Lord's death, burial and resurrection. It convicted their hearts! They were ready to repent and be baptized in the name of the Lord. They believed the gospel message!

Upon completing his Asian missionary work, Paul recounted to the elders at Ephesus the most important message he had preached:

"And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:20-21).

Salvation cannot begin until we believe the gospel. Believing allows us to enter into covenant with Jesus Christ. But unless we "continue" to believe and obey, our faith could be aborted. Many of the Jews "believed" on Jesus, yet were responsible for His death. Notice Jesus' word of caution:

"As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:30-31).

B. How do we repent?

Jesus *began* His ministry with a call to repentance and *concluded* with this command:

"Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

(Turn to Lesson 6—Chart 3 and review "What is Repentance?")

As taught in Lesson 6, repentance is not just an emotional feeling, but a decision. When we truly repent, we change our mind,

our attitude, and purpose about sin. Paul said that God had sent him to the Gentiles:

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18).

As we bow at the foot of the cross, we **choose to turn away from actions that lead to eternal death.**

Jesus died on the cross; our death at the altar of repentance is a **surrender of self-rule**. Christ must control our lives and guide decision making.

As we call upon the Lord; confess and forsake sins and are baptized, His blood cleanses us of every wrong we have ever done. John assured us,

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

To “confess” means to put thoughts into words. We tell God how bad we feel about all the wrong things we have done and our desire to **forsake sins**. Humbly we ask Him to become our Savior and Lord and then **promise to love, serve, and obey Him**.

Leaving the place of commitment, we repair wounded relationships and clear the conscience of bad feelings toward others. Our relationship with God will never be right unless our relationships with people are equally right.

Although we feel a genuine hatred and disgust for the sinful things once loved, always remember that we hate sin—but never the sinner.

We are leaving the family and lordship of Satan to join a new family with a new Lord. Pleasing our new Master must become our greater desire.

C. What must we believe?

Mark gives this account of Jesus’ great commission:

“He that believeth [the gospel] and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not [the gospel] shall be damned” (Mark 16:16).

Two forceful words are emphasized in this command. If we “believe” the gospel, we

shall be “saved.” What does it mean to be “saved”?

From the Greek *sozo*, the word “saved” means to preserve or rescue from natural dangers and afflictions; save from death; bring out safely from a situation fraught with mortal danger; save or free from disease; from demonic possession; be restored to health, get well; keep, preserve in good condition; thrive, prosper, get on well; save or preserve from eternal death (Arndt & Gingrich, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*).

The gospel “saves” or delivers from all the power and effects of sin. Therefore, salvation is a process that begins with repentance, but it is not completed at this first step.

Jesus declared:

“But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved” (Matthew 24:13).

Our eternal destiny depends upon being obedient and “enduring” to the end.

What essentials must we believe? Because of the saving power of **the gospel**, we must believe what Jesus did for us. Paul said,

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Romans 1:16).

Not only do we acknowledge Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, but we also experience the gospel message.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life . . . our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin” (Romans 6:4, 6).

As He was crucified on the cross, we crucify our “old man” at the altar of repentance. As He was buried in a tomb, we bury the “old man” by being baptized in water. As He came forth from the grave, we rise from the water to walk in a new life in the Spirit.

When **Jesus’ blood legally redeemed us from sin**, Satan lost his dominion over mankind. However, each person must assert

his rights and refuse to be enslaved by the enemy. Only those who act upon this “good news” will be free from spiritual bondage.

“Through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:14-15).

We must also believe that **Jesus is the Christ**. He is the Messiah; He is the God-Man, the Incarnation; the seed of the woman. Jesus told His accusers:

“If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24).

Repeatedly, the Scriptures emphasize the importance of believing that Jesus is the Christ:

“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name” (John 20:31).

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

“But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ” (Acts 9:22).

To repent means that we:

- Choose to turn around. Surrender our self-will.
- Call upon the name of the Lord. Confess and forsake sins.
- Promise to love, serve, and obey Jesus.
- Believe the gospel story of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection.

Faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to God’s Word leads to life. We are “begotten” from the dead through the power of the Word.

“In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (I Corinthians 4:15).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit . . . being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of

incorruptible, by the word of God” (I Peter 1:22-23).

D. What begins when we repent and believe?

Faith in God is vital in our approach to God, for we are saved through faith and not by our works.

“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6).

To be “righteous” means upright, just, without condemnation, in good standing with God. We must understand that we must forsake our efforts to be worthy of God if we are to receive the righteousness of God. Self-righteousness is as filthy rags in God’s sight (Isaiah 64:6). Our righteousness is based on the law, but the righteousness of God comes through faith in Christ.

“And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith” (Philippians 3:9).

“What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith” (Romans 9:30).

“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10).

“Grace” means that God is greatly pleased to show us His loving-kindness and favor, although we have done nothing to merit or deserve it.

“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)” (Ephesians 2:5).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

To be “justified” means: free from condemnation; as if we had never sinned.

“And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:39).

We receive the Holy Ghost by our faith in Jesus Christ. When we realize that we are sinners before God and that Christ died to save us, our faith leads us to repent. But faith does not stop with repentance. It brings us to water baptism in the name of Jesus. It does not stop at baptism. For by faith we receive the Holy Ghost. We do not earn the right to receive the Spirit by “works” of repentance or baptism, for the Holy Ghost is a gift from God. By faith we accept God’s gift.

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He

that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38).

Faith alone does not save us, but it is the channel by which God communicates His gift of life to us. We cannot save ourselves by believing, but by believing we allow God to save us. By faith we repent, submit to water baptism, receive the Holy Ghost, and follow a lifestyle of holiness. We started by faith and we live by faith.

But we must caution—DO NOT STOP HERE! Salvation has merely begun. There is no stopping place in this new walk of faith.

Lesson 8 – Chart 4 Water Baptism—Sign of New Covenant

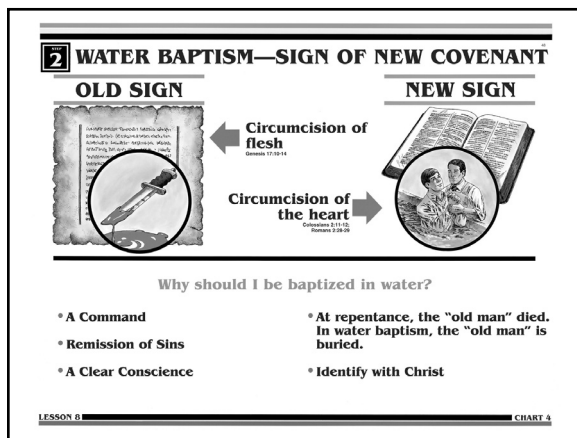


Chart Objective:

To examine the rite of initiation for God’s new covenant. Circumcision of the flesh is replaced with a circumcision of the heart. The “old man” that died at the altar of repentance must now be buried.

Chart Outline:

- Old sign—circumcision of the flesh
- New sign—circumcision of the heart
- Why should I be baptized in water?

A. Old sign—circumcision of the flesh Genesis 17:10-14

Of all the covenants between God and men, the one most highly honored by the Jews was that made with Abraham. Why do you suppose this is true? Primarily because this covenant required implicit faith and

belief in God’s Word.

Accompanying this covenant was a very specific ritual:

“He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant” (Genesis 17:13).

Circumcision was a visible mark in the male reproductive organ that a Jewish male had been separated unto God. Unless this ceremony were performed, men could not become part of the covenant community. Without circumcision it was impossible to enjoy Abraham’s blessings.

However, on the Day of Pentecost, the sign that one had entered into covenant was replaced with a new identification mark.

B. New sign—circumcision of the heart Romans 2:28-29; Colossians 2:11-12

While natural Israelites were circumcised in the flesh, spiritual Israelites are circumcised “in the heart”:

“In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Colossians 2:11-12).

“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit” (Romans 2:28-29).

Most of Peter’s audience at Pentecost were familiar with John’s preparatory water baptism in the Jordan River. But this “new” baptism was to be the initiating rite of Christ’s new covenant.

Nowhere in the New Testament do we find a ceremony conducted that would make God and man blood-covenant partners—except for water baptism.

Stressing the importance of quickly being baptized correlates with the command of circumcision under the Old Covenant. Abraham circumcised the men of his household—the same day (Genesis 17:23)!

In Mark’s recording of the great commission, Jesus commanded:

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:16).

In Samaria, Philip baptized men and women as soon as they became believers (Acts 8:12). The Ethiopian eunuch requested baptism as soon as he believed the gospel (Acts 8:36-38).

Saul of Tarsus complied with baptism following Ananias’ instructions (Acts 9:18).

Peter *commanded* the Gentile believers at Cornelius’ home to be baptized (Acts 10:48).

When the Philippian jailer inquired about salvation, Paul and Silas baptized his entire family that same night (Acts 16:30-33).

Prompt baptismal practices are clearly illustrated in at least nine instances in the Book of Acts. As soon as believers responded to the gospel message, instruction was given and baptism followed within a few hours of conversion—never more than a few days.

Such expressions as “that same day,” “why tarriest thou?” “the same hour of the night,” and “straightway” describe the urgency of this ceremonial induction. The New Covenant initiating rite seemed no less important than the Old Covenant rite of circumcision!

The specific mode of baptism was always immersion. It was described: a “burial” (Colossians 2:12); they “went down into the water” and came “up out of the water” (Acts

8:38-39); and “went up straightway out of the water” (Matthew 3:16).

Even the Greek word *baptize* means “to dip something into a fluid and then take it out again.”

“Sprinkling” began in ancient church history for the purpose of baptizing infants. However, all the prerequisites for baptism exclude babies. A person must acknowledge and confess his sins and understand the message of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection to be eligible for salvation. Since infants are incapable of being taught, repenting or believing, they could not qualify for baptism.

C. Why should I be baptized in water?

Water baptism has a most important part in the plan of salvation. Jesus commanded His disciples to baptize all converts (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16). On the Day of Pentecost, Peter told the multitude that after they repented they were to be baptized (Acts 2:38). Wherever the disciples preached, they obeyed the command of the Lord Jesus by baptizing those who believed the gospel and repented of their sins (Acts 2:41; 8:12, 16, 36-39; 9:18; 10:47-48; 16:15, 33; 19:3-5; 22:16). Peter commanded the Gentiles in Caesarea to be baptized (Acts 10:48), as well as the Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 2:38).

Since God has included water baptism in the plan of salvation, every believer must be baptized. To say that baptism is not necessary for salvation is to speak against God’s plan and command. Disobedience will bring destruction (II Thessalonians 1:8).

Remission of sins comes from faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and water baptism. John the Baptist preached repentance and he baptized converts for the remission of sins (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). Jesus told His disciples that “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained” (John 20:23). He did not mean that the disciples could forgive sins, but that they could effect forgiveness in repentant sinners. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter said, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38).

Moreover, repentance is necessary to effect remission. It should be noted that repentance and water baptism are inseparable companions, each depending upon the other to bring a sinner to God. John the Baptist bap-

tized “with water unto repentance” (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). Jesus connected repentance with remission of sins in His final instructions to His disciples (Luke 24:47) and His instructions were echoed by Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38). Without repentance, water baptism is merely an empty symbol. But with repentance, water baptism remits sins.

The apostle Peter mentioned another reason for water baptism—to attain a clear conscience (I Peter 3:21). When we are baptized, we are buried with Christ (Romans 6:3-4), from which we are to rise to walk in resurrection life (the Spirit). In this way, baptism is the means by which we leave our sins behind, thus removing any condemnation. (See Romans 8:1.)

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

At Paul’s baptism, Ananias asked this question:

“And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be

baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

Jesus’ blood alone cleanses from sin, and water baptism is for the remission of sin. The blood and the water agree (I John 5:8).

“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Revelation 1:5).

When we are baptized we identify with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection” (Romans 6:4-5).

What a blessing that we can be baptized into Jesus Christ! Our sins are forgiven, condemnation is removed, and we are identified with our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ!

Lesson 8 – Chart 5 The Covenant Name

THE COVENANT NAME
 “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (Matthew 28:19)

The name of the Father is:
 (“I am come in my Father’s Name.”) John 14:13

The name of the Son is:
 (“Thou shalt call his name JESUS.”) Matthew 1:21

The name of the Holy Ghost is:
 (“The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name.”) John 14:26

“Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

Examples of water baptism in the Book of Acts

- 3,000 believers baptized on Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41)
- The Samaritan believers (Acts 8:12)
- Cornelius, his family, and friends (Acts 10:48)
- Disciples of John (Acts 19:5)

• Taught in the epistles (Colossians 2:12; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 3:21)

DO NOT STOP HERE!

LESSON 8 CHART 5

Chart Objective:

To examine the proper way to administer water baptism. Proof is given in the Book of Acts and the epistles that the apostles called the actual name of Jesus Christ rather than the descriptive titles in Matthew 28:19.

Chart Outline:

A. The Covenant Name

- B. The “Name” of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
- C. Practiced in the Book of Acts; taught in the epistles

A. The Covenant Name Matthew 28:19

Matthew’s Gospel presents a different aspect of the great commission:

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

Shrouded in this single verse is an important ingredient for salvation overlooked by many sincere believers—the saving name of Jesus!

Before selecting a verse of Scripture and declaring it to be the exclusive command of Jesus, ALL His teaching on that subject in all four Gospels must be examined. To find the correct meaning of Matthew 28:19, we must analyze how baptism was *practiced* in the Book of Acts and *taught* in the epistles.

Matthew mentions titles, but no name. However, his message was not contradictory to the other three Gospel writers. All the apostles perfectly obeyed the command when they baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

B. The “Name” of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

John 5:43; Matthew 1:21; John 14:26

We know the name of the Son, but what is the name of the Father and the Holy Ghost? The identity is clarified in these three verses:

“I am come in my Father’s name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive” (John 5:43).

“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

“But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

No record is given of any person in the early church being baptized other than “in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” All reference and church history records declare that during the lives of the apostles, no other wording was ever used in baptism. No authentic first-century book records a single instance of other wording during the first hundred years of the early church.

It is generally acknowledged that the Book of Matthew was written approximately A.D. 62. By then, approximately a half million converts had already been baptized. Most were converted through the preaching of Peter and Paul. Matthew’s writing agreed exactly with the preaching of these two great apostles!

We may conclude that Peter correctly used the authority given to him by Christ when he prescribed baptism in the name of Jesus.

C. Practiced in the Book of Acts; taught in the epistles

Acts 2:38-41; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:11-12

On four separate occasions in the Book of Acts, people were baptized in the name of Jesus: three thousand believers on the Day of Pentecost; Samaritan believers; Cornelius’ household; and John’s disciples at Ephesus:

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost . . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:38, 41).

“(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them [Samaritan believers]: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 8:16).

“And he commanded them [Cornelius’ household] to be baptized in the name of the Lord” (Acts 10:48).

“And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:3-5).

In addition, the epistles imply that baptism in Jesus’ name is correct:

“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27).

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Romans 6:3).

“Buried with him in baptism” (Colossians 2:12).

“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:17).

A primary reason for including Jesus’ name in water baptism—and every other deed—is because of its power to effect remission of sins. This name of Jesus is the only name by which we can be saved (Acts 4:12):

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”

Authority is first invested in His name through inheritance:

“Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all

things, by whom also he made the worlds; . . . when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (Hebrews 1:2-4).

A second reason for the power and authority of Jesus’ name is His conquest over death, hell and Satan:

“And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Colossians 2:15).

“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18).

“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).

Invested in the exalted name of Jesus is authority and power over Satan’s dominion. What other name could possibly be used to initiate believers into the New Covenant than the wonderful name of Jesus?

Again, we caution—“Do not stop here!” There is more. The best is yet to come!

Lesson 8 – Chart 6 The Holy Spirit is Given to “Believers”

First believe...	...Then receive!
<p>• “And these signs shall follow them that believe...”</p>	<p>... In my name... they shall speak with new tongues.” <small>Mark 16:17</small></p>
<p>• “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water...”</p>	<p>... (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.” <small>John 7:39</small>)</p>
<p>• “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and...”</p>	<p>... ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” <small>Acts 2:38</small></p>
<p>• “After that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed...”</p>	<p>... ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.” <small>Ephesians 1:13</small></p>
<p>• “How much more shall your heavenly Father give...”</p>	<p>... the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” <small>Luke 11:13</small></p>
<p>“God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.” <small>Acts 11:17</small></p>	<p>“Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” <small>Acts 19:2</small></p>

thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38).

Before ascending to heaven, Jesus told His disciples:

“Wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence” (Acts 1:4-5).

B. First believe—then receive! Mark 16:17; John 7:38-39; Acts 2:38; Ephesians 1:13; Luke 11:13; Acts 11:17; 19:2

When we believe His promises, we shall receive!

One of the signs Jesus mentioned that would follow believing the gospel is “they shall speak with new tongues” (Mark 16:17).

Peter’s instruction on the Day of Pentecost agreed with Jesus’ words. After repentance and water baptism, we “shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

Paul told us that the Holy Spirit is the “seal” of salvation after hearing and believing the gospel (Ephesians 1:13). We are to ask our heavenly Father and He will gladly give the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).

Not only to Jews is the Spirit given, but to people in every nation. How shocked the

Chart Objective:

It is to investigate the scriptural evidence that the Holy Spirit baptism is the New Covenant relationship with Christ. By believing, repenting, and being baptized, a person becomes eligible to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Chart Outline:

- A. The Holy Spirit is given to “believers”
- B. First believe . . . then receive!

A. The Holy Spirit is given to “believers”

During His ministry, Jesus often referred to the gift of the Holy Ghost that believers would receive.

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man

apostles were when the Holy Spirit was also poured out upon the Gentiles! After returning to Jerusalem, Peter hesitantly explained, “God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 11:17).

What a wonderful promise awaits every

person who believes, repents, and is baptized. But remember—this marvelous gift is not for those who still want to live in sin. Until we fulfill our part of the covenant by repenting and being baptized, we are not eligible to receive the Holy Ghost.

Lesson 8 – Chart 7 The Purpose of the Holy Spirit



Chart Objective:

To explain the purposes for this powerful Spirit baptism and what it will do for us.

Chart Outline:

- A. What is the Holy Spirit?
- B. God’s new manifestation
- C. Promise of Father
- D. A gift
- E. The Comforter
- F. A seal of ownership
- G. A witness that we dwell in Him and He in us
- H. Why receive the Holy Spirit?
- I. Brings rest, peace, and joy
- J. Helps us pray
- K. Gives power to witness
- L. Teaches, guides, shows us things to come
- M. Gives power over the enemy
- N. Opens the door to other gifts of the Spirit

A. What is the Holy Spirit?

Life and death. These two words depict the beautiful story of redemption flowing throughout the pages of our Bible.

But suppose Adam had never sinned and broken fellowship with God. There would have been no need for redemption. Nor would man have required a manifestation of deity known as the “Son of God.”

For man to have a living, recreated spirit was impossible until Jesus became our substitutionary sacrifice. Now He could share with His choice creatures that intimate communion and spiritual fellowship that had been denied Him since the dawn of creation!

B. God’s new manifestation

John 4:24; 7:37-39

Who was this manifestation called the Holy Spirit? He is the same Spirit who created and spoke the worlds into existence, who is everywhere at the same time, and who dwelled in Jesus. Wonder of wonders, He can now unite with, and become resident within the human spirit!

To a Samaritan woman, Jesus once explained:

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

Let’s think for a moment about the various manifestations or roles God has assumed. Have you ever wondered why Jesus’ titles and characteristics are identical with the Father’s? God created the earth; Jesus created the earth (Colossians 1:16-17). God answers prayer; Jesus answers prayer (John 14:13-14). God knows all things; Jesus knows all things (John 21:17). God forgives sins; Jesus forgives sins (Mark 2:5-7).

Attributes describing the Holy Ghost also verify His deity. The reason for these similarities is that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are all manifestations of one God. He has assumed various roles for the specific purpose of bringing man in harmony with his Creator. God wants to share His life with mankind as He did in the beginning.

Notice what John added (in his parenthesis) about Jesus’ promise of the Holy Ghost:

“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the

scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” (John 7:37-39).

The Holy Spirit could not touch and quicken our dead spirits until Jesus had freed us from Satan’s dominion, and had been glorified.

Two visible symbols have been used to illustrate the Holy Spirit. At Jesus’ baptism, the Holy Spirit was symbolized by a dove (John 1:32). In the upper room, tongues, or flames of fire danced above the disciples’ heads (Acts 2:3).

Perhaps a dove was chosen to indicate Jesus’ purity, meekness, and innocence. The flames of fire indicated that something within mankind needed to be purged or cleansed.

As we study the various characteristics of the Holy Spirit, keep in mind that this gift was made possible through Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection.

C. Promise of Father

Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:39

Jesus referred to the baptism of the Holy Ghost as “the promise of the Father.”

“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you” (Luke 24:49).

“Commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me” (Acts 1:4).

“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39).

To whom is this intriguing “promise” offered? To those who want to enter into covenant with Jesus Christ! The Holy Spirit baptism is the covenant relationship.

D. A gift

Acts 2:38; 11:17; Luke 11:13

The Holy Ghost is referred to in Scripture as a “gift” from God:

“And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38).

“Forasmuch then as God gave them [the Gentiles] the like gift as he did unto us” (Acts 11:17).

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13).

And what greater gift could God give unto us than immersing our spirits into His own Holy Spirit?

E. The Comforter

John 15:26; 16:7

Another term Jesus used for God’s Spirit was “Comforter.”

“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me” (John 15:26).

“It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7).

What is a “comforter”? The word implies that He will soothe us in distress and sorrow. He will ease the misery of our grief, bring consolation and hope. When in trouble, He gives aid and encouragement. Who could ask for a dearer Friend?

F. A seal of ownership

Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30;

II Corinthians 1:22

The Spirit is God’s seal of ownership upon our lives. It is somewhat like a guarantee that everything is safe in the Spirit’s keeping. Paul described it like this:

“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory” (Ephesians 1:13-14).

“And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

“Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts” (II Corinthians 1:22).

The Holy Spirit is both a seal of God's ownership of our lives and a guarantee that some day we shall enjoy the fullness of heaven's blessings.

G. A witness that we dwell in Him and He in us

I John 3:24; 4:13; Galatians 4:6; Acts 15:8

To let us know that officially we are members of the new covenant and have our names written in the Book of Life, God's Spirit "witnesses" with our spirits that we are His:

"And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us. . . . Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (I John 3:24; 4:13).

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6).

"And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them [the Gentiles] witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us" (Acts 15:8).

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is an assurance that He has accepted us into the royal family.

H. Why receive the Holy Spirit?

Many today commonly mistake the baptism of the Holy Spirit as an "added blessing." If you receive Him, well and good; if not, you can still be saved without Him. But the Holy Spirit is actually God's presence. His baptism provides the inner transformation and equips every believer for living in this world.

Consider these special favors bestowed upon those who ask for and receive this glorious experience:

I. Brings rest, peace, and joy **Isaiah 28:11-12; Romans 14:17**

Considering the large percentage of Americans who nightly put themselves to sleep with pills, we understand the craving for rest and peace.

God was aware of the pressures that would be inflicted upon believers in the last days and specifically provided relief in this beautiful blessing. Isaiah prophesied long ago,

"For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear" (Isaiah 28:11-12).

Another ingredient men desperately search for is included in this baptism. Dozens of slogans give clues for finding the happy life. "Happiness is . . ." But the Spirit goes beyond surface gratification to the more enduring attribute of "joy."

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

If you feel a restlessness or some wistful longing, perhaps your soul is crying for the true peace and joy of the Holy Ghost!

J. Helps us pray **Romans 8:26; I Corinthians 14:14-15; Jude 20**

Another purpose for this baptism is its support in prayer. The Spirit actually helps us pray:

"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

"For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also" (I Corinthians 14:14-15).

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20).

A handicap commonly shared by believers is ignorance in praying according to God's will. But the Spirit can assist and supply our need. He will help our infirmities and make intercession for us according to what God knows is best.

In this intercessory prayer, the believer

does not rely on his own feelings or understanding, but offers his body as a temple in which the Spirit Himself conducts prayer.

God has provided a means of giving Himself praise and pouring out of our hearts in a supernatural way—praying in an unknown language. Praying in the Spirit is the God-ordained outlet for glorifying Him and allowing the Spirit of intercession to ascend to our Father’s throne.

K. Gives power to witness

Acts 1:8; 4:31

Examine the drastic change in the disciples following Pentecost. Previously, they were fearful, frustrated followers hiding secretly from the dreaded Jewish leaders. But after receiving the Holy Spirit baptism, they became bold, fearless men accomplishing extraordinary tasks.

A new motivation controlled their thinking and propelled them into a driving force that shook their cities and nation. Fearlessly they performed a tremendous new mission after being empowered by the Holy Ghost.

Jesus had strictly commanded that the disciples wait for the Spirit to come. No preaching, teaching, or witnessing. The Spirit would furnish the supernatural power and boldness:

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8).

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

The word “power” is a translation of the Greek word *dunamis* from which we get such English words as “dynamo,” “dynamic,” and “dynamite.” The essential meaning of the word then is that of a forceful, explosive impact!

A mighty, spiritual impact was felt by the whole city of Jerusalem after the coming of the Spirit. In some places there was revival; in others a riot; and often, a combination of both.

“And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have

turned the world upside down are come hither also” (Acts 17:6).

L. Teaches, guides, shows us things to come

John 14:26; 16:13

To correctly understand and interpret all the truths of God’s Word, it is imperative to be Spirit-filled. The only Bible owned by the apostles was Old Testament Scriptures. But with the Revelator, Interpreter, and Teacher of God’s Word dwelling inside, they were enabled to correctly interpret and apply passages from the Old Covenant to the New.

“The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26).

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

Human wisdom cannot correctly interpret Scriptures. But when the Author resides within, the Word becomes clear! Why? Because the Bible itself was authored by the Holy Ghost (II Peter 1:20-21). His Spirit united with our spirit opens our understanding to receive the Word.

God wants His children to be Spirit-directed every day. He desires to control every thought, word and action.

“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:13-14).

Two important points should be remembered in learning to follow the Spirit’s directions: there is a right place and a right timing.

To enjoy God’s blessings and success, do the right thing at the right time. Difficulty in heeding the Spirit’s leading stems from conflicts with our own desires.

Experience teaches that the Holy Ghost never makes a mistake.

Learn early in your Christian walk that the Holy Spirit wants to be your Counselor and Director of affairs. This is the way to avoid frustration and a fruitless, defeated life.

M. Gives power over the enemy

Luke 10:19-20; Isaiah 59:19; I John 4:1-4

Alone, we are absolutely powerless to combat the forces of evil. Satan's plan is to detract and confuse and hinder our efforts to fulfill God's purpose in our lives. But the Spirit is ever present to defeat him.

Jesus promised,

"Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

Centuries before, Isaiah foretold:

"When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19).

Enemy attacks are certain to come. Expect them as part of the Christian warfare. But be assured that the same power source used in Jesus' temptation will still produce the same victory for us.

Strength to resist Satan's enticements is measured by the power resident within a

believer's spirit. If we keep our spirit fortified by the Holy Spirit, we shall emerge victorious.

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (I John 4:4).

N. Opens the door to other gifts of the Spirit I Corinthians, chapters 12 and 14

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the "promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4) and is the seal of the New Covenant. However, in his first letter to the Corinthians (chapters 12 and 14), Paul described spiritual gifts. (We shall study them in more detail in our next lesson).

Upon entering the spiritual realm, refrain from living and thinking "soulishly"; live in the Spirit!

Do not be satisfied to remain on spiritual "milk"; advance to "meat." The Spirit has many wonderful truths to be explored.

The blessed gift of the Holy Spirit is a doorway that leads to many other gifts and ministries. Open the door and come on in!

Lesson 8 – Chart 8

The First Evidence of Being Baptized in the Holy Spirit—Speaking With Other Tongues

**THE FIRST EVIDENCE OF BEING BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT—
SPEAKING WITH OTHER TONGUES**

The Apostles Acts 1:13, 24	Mary, mother of Jesus Acts 1:14, 24	The Samaritans Acts 8:17-20	Cornelius, family, friends Acts 10:44-47	Disciples of John Acts 19:1-6	Apostle Paul Acts 9:17-19; I Corinthians 14:18
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Why did God choose tongues?

- God is sovereign. Isaiah 40:13-14
- From the heart, the mouth speaketh. Matthew 12:34
- Chief means of expression. Proverbs 18:21; James 3:5-6
- Tongue is most difficult member to control. James 3:6
- An obvious, external, uniform sign. Acts 11:15-17

LESSON 8 CHART 8

Chart Objective:

To examine the initial evidence of the Holy Spirit baptism that can be seen and heard. Speaking with unknown tongues is the outward sign chosen by God to announce what has happened within the spirit.

Chart Outline:

- A. The First Evidence—Speaking With Other Tongues
- B. Biblical examples of speaking with tongues
- C. Why did God choose tongues?

A. The First Evidence— Speaking With Other Tongues

When the Holy Spirit made His grand entrance on the Day of Pentecost, a visible sign was used—tongues, or flames of fire. This reminds us of a similar demonstration centuries earlier at the giving of the law.

When God gave Israel the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, He added a visible exhibition of thunder, lightning, smoke, fire, quaking and a piercing trumpet blast (Exodus 19:18-19). However, that dramatic manifestation was not visible in subsequent readings of the law to the congregation.

Since the Feast of Pentecost celebrated the original giving of the law, we suppose that a majestic demonstration of the new era was fitting.

Besides the wind and tongues of fire in the upper room, another “sign” was observed that day. It has consistently remained when believers are Spirit-filled. Speaking with other tongues is a “sign” both to the believer himself as well as to observers. In His great commission, Jesus said:

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name . . . they shall speak with new tongues” (Mark 16:17).

“And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following” (Mark 16:20).

Paul also declared speaking in tongues to be a sign:

“In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not” (I Corinthians 14:21-22).

Does the sign of speaking with other tongues or languages always accompany the baptism of the Spirit? Let’s examine what the Scriptures say about this unusual phenomenon.

B. Biblical examples of speaking with tongues

Acts 1:13-14; 2:4; 8:17-20; 10:44-47; 19:1-6; 9:17-18; I Corinthians 14:18

Only three instances in the New Testament actually explain what happened when people were baptized in the Holy Spirit. On the Day of Pentecost:

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:2-4).

When Peter preached the gospel to Gentiles in Cornelius’ home:

“While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which

believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God” (Acts 10:44-46).

When Paul preached to a group of John the Baptist’s disciples at Ephesus:

“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied” (Acts 19:6).

In comparing these three passages, only one outward manifestation is identical. In each instance, they “spoke with tongues” or “spoke with other tongues.”

Other supernatural manifestations are mentioned—the sound of a rushing wind, visible tongues of fire, and at Ephesus, they also prophesied. But on all three occasions, they “spoke with tongues.”

Reluctantly Peter and other Jewish brethren obeyed God’s direction to visit a Gentile home. No one anticipated that Gentiles could also share this heavenly baptism.

But the moment that Peter and his companions heard them speak with tongues, they immediately understood and acknowledged that God had also given His Spirit to them. No other evidence was needed or desired. “For they heard them speak with tongues” and that was enough!

In relating this incident to other Jewish church leaders at Jerusalem, Peter defended his visiting and preaching to Gentiles:

“And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. . . . Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11:15, 17).

No wind, no tongues of fire. Yet the brethren were certain the Gentiles had also received the Holy Ghost! The outward manifestation of speaking with tongues (as the Spirit gives utterance) was the accepted New Testament evidence of a person receiving the Spirit baptism.

In Acts the eighth chapter, Philip preached to Samaritans. But they did not receive the

Holy Ghost until Peter came (Acts 8:14-24). The Scripture implies that they spoke with tongues since Simon, the sorcerer, wanted to buy this gift. Had they sat there silently when Peter laid his hands upon them to receive the Holy Ghost, why would Simon wish to purchase such an ability? There must have been a visible, audible evidence!

Apostle Paul, writer of over half the New Testament, also spoke with other tongues. The account of his conversion (Acts 9:17-18) omits the mention of tongues, but Paul later explained:

“I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all” (I Corinthians 14:18).

We notice that Paul later imitated the procedure whereby he had been Spirit-filled when he laid his hands on Gentile believers to receive the Spirit. Would anyone presume that Paul would lay hands on converts to transmit some experience he had never received himself?

Examining every biblical instance of the Holy Ghost outpouring, we may conclude that:

- The apostles themselves received this evidence of tongues.
- The apostles accepted tongues as evidence to validate the experience of others.
- No alternative evidence was acceptable or necessary.
- Nowhere in the New Testament is any other evidence provided.

C. Why did God choose tongues?

Isaiah 40:13-14; Matthew 12:34;

Proverbs 18:20-21; James 3:3-8;

Acts 11:15-17

Why would God choose speaking with tongues as the first evidence of the Holy Ghost? Surely a more rational sign would be used than unintelligible sounds! Why tongues?

Here are some logical reasons why tongues would become the sign of receiving the Holy Spirit:

- **God is sovereign.** He may choose indiscriminately without consulting anyone (Isaiah 40:13-14).

- **From the heart, the mouth speaketh.**

God has chosen that speaking with other tongues is the best evidence of being filled with His Spirit since “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh” (Matthew 12:34). When the spirit overflows with God’s Spirit, the result is speaking a supernatural language neither learned nor understood.

- **Chief means of expression.** The Bible labels the voice or speech as the “tongue.” Talking is our chief means of expression. Since the speech centers dominate the brain, naturally God would want to control our speech. The Holy Spirit has chosen to flow out through the voice.

James compared the tongue to the small rudder that controls with little movement the mighty ship or the bit in the horse’s mouth that restrains the whole animal (James 3:3-4). Why shouldn’t the Spirit inspire and rule the major means of expression—the ability to speak?

- **Tongue is most difficult member to control.** James also informed that the tongue “is set on fire of hell . . . the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:6-8). Strangely, the same powerful speech faculty also presents a great difficulty. The tongue is extremely troublesome for the Spirit to control.

Understandably, the Spirit would want to tame and purify the member with which we sin the most—the lawless tongue! When the most unruly member is surrendered, the body is completely yielded.

- **An obvious, external, uniform sign.** Speaking in tongues is a uniform sign in every nation, every culture, every language around the world. Peter and the Jewish brethren were certain what had transpired in the Gentiles’ hearts when they heard this uniform sign (Acts 11:15-17).

Perhaps speaking with other tongues makes sense, after all!

Lesson 8 – Chart 9
Have You Received the Holy Ghost
Since You Believed?

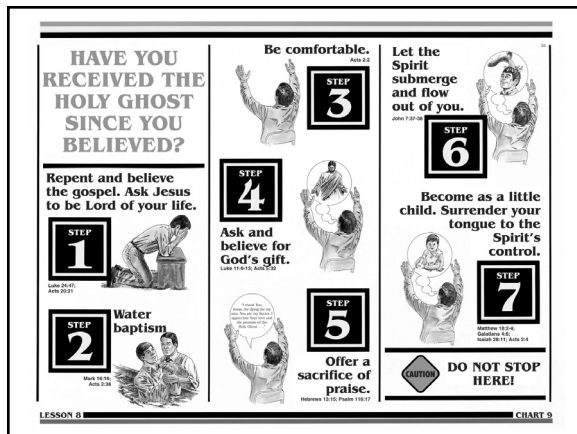


Chart Objective:

To explain in seven easy steps how to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Each step is substantiated scripturally and will bring the promised results—the Holy Spirit baptism!

Chart Outline:

- A. Step 1—Repent and believe the gospel
- B. Step 2—Water baptism
- C. Step 3—Be comfortable
- D. Step 4—Ask and believe for God’s gift
- E. Step 5—Offer a sacrifice of praise
- F. Step 6—Let the Spirit submerge and flow out of you
- G. Step 7—Become as a little child. Surrender your tongue to the Spirit’s control.

A. Step 1—Repent and believe the gospel.
Ask Jesus to be Lord of your life.
Luke 24:47; Acts 20:21

Would you like to receive this beautiful gift of the Spirit? These simple suggestions will prepare you in a matter of minutes to receive a gift that will be yours to enjoy for a lifetime!

The first step of repentance is not just an emotion that we feel, but a decision to turn away from sinful actions. At the altar we call upon the Lord, confess our sins and commit our lives to His control. Promising to love, serve and obey Him is the basis for entering into covenant with Christ.

The beautiful story of the gospel becomes so real, we are anxious to identify with Christ’s death (repentance), burial (water baptism), and resurrection (walking in the new life of the Spirit).

B. Step 2—Water baptism
Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38

As God designed a new covenant, He also designed a new rite of initiation. Circumcision of the flesh is replaced with a circumcision of the heart. The “old man” who died at the altar of repentance must now be buried. Water baptism is for the remission of sins. We identify with Christ’s burial and resurrection in water baptism.

A close examination of the great commission reveals that baptism must be administered—not in the descriptive titles—but by calling the actual name—“Jesus Christ” (Acts 2:38). Further proof is given in the Book of Acts and the epistles that the apostles baptized “in the name.”

C. Step 3—Be comfortable
Acts 2:2

God is not particular about our posture when He baptizes us. At the initial outpouring on the Day of Pentecost, a rushing mighty wind “filled all the house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:2).

Kneeling in an uncomfortable position is not a prerequisite for receiving the Spirit. Cramped legs and tired arms and backs are unnecessary. Choose a suitable, comfortable position.

While repenting, a kneeling position may be desirable. But when it is time for the Holy Spirit to baptize us, choose a more relaxed position.

Some have been awakened during the night and baptized by the Spirit in the privacy of their bedroom. Others have felt the overwhelming power of God while washing dishes or riding in an automobile. We have already learned that the Spirit especially enjoys baptizing believers in homes—the upper room and Cornelius’ home. So wherever we meet the conditions, God is ready to fill us.

D. Step 4—Ask and believe for God’s gift
Luke 11:9-13; Acts 5:32

Now you must believe that God has a very special and wonderful gift for you. Although mankind could never be worthy of or deserve this special honor, Jesus wants you to have this overflowing experience.

True faith is always demonstrated by obedience. Those who carefully obey instructions can be assured of receiving the Spirit.

Perhaps you would like a mental picture of Jesus facing you with outstretched hands.

Keep this image in your thoughts as you proceed closer toward Him in faith and praise.

Remember, too, that this gift is not forcibly pried from the hands of a reluctant God. Neither are you trying to earn the Holy Ghost by your determination. As a loving parent would extend a promised gift in his hand, Jesus offers the gift of His Spirit. At this moment He is waiting for you to move toward Him in faith.

Jesus told us to:

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth: and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:9-13).

E. Step 5—Offer a sacrifice of praise

Hebrews 13:15; Psalm 116:17

Nothing pleases our Father more than worship and praise. What better way could we demonstrate our faith in His promises than to begin thanking and worshipping Him—before the gift is given?

Paul instructed:

“Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Hebrews 13:15).

Why was David called “a man after God’s own heart”? He had learned the secret of being grateful and appreciative of God’s blessings!

“I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD” (Psalm 116:17).

Some children are quite gifted with an ability to extract favors from their parents. How could a mother or father resist hugs and kisses and—“You’re the sweetest mom in the whole world! I’m so glad you’re going to buy me that new bike I’ve been telling you about. That’s the neatest bike I’ve ever seen! I sure do love you for being so good to me!”

Could a parent say, “No!” with a build-up like that?

Being made in God’s image, even after the Fall, we have retained sufficient God-like characteristics to know what pleases and displeases Him. When petitions are offered in a manner appealing to us, the answer is assured!

Talk to God as if He were your best Friend. Avoid stilted, cold phrases, such as—“Our Father, we thank Thee for Thy many blessings. Grant unto us Thy children that we may partake of Thy favors . . .”

He responds best when we talk to Him right out of our hearts with warmth, love, and feeling. Why not approach Him something like this:

“Dear Jesus, I just want to thank You for the wonderful privilege I have just discovered in Your Word of being baptized into Your Holy Spirit. You have already shown me such love by forgiving my sins and cleansing me with Your blood. Just to think that I could be a covenant partner with the God of heaven makes me feel so small and unworthy.

“But now, Jesus, I’ve heard that You have a unique gift that will saturate me with power and love and joy and all sorts of wonderful blessings! Lord, I wouldn’t think of asking You for something so fantastic—except that Your Word declares that You want me to have it!

“So here I am in Your presence, like a little child, asking and believing that rivers of living water will begin to flow out of my innermost being.”

This is just a sample prayer. Talk to God in your *own* words. Those are the ones He wants to hear. An expression of genuine gratitude and faith always merits a divine response!

God’s love “shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost” (Romans 5:5) describes the submerging of the human spirit. His “baptism” plunges a person’s inner self into the ocean of His life-giving love. This is the most intimate and personal experience imaginable! It is God’s response to sincere trust and appreciation unashamedly offered to Him. It is His acknowledgment of our sacrifice of praise!

F. Step 6—Let the Spirit submerge and flow out of you.

John 7:37-38

As we continue talking with God in the same affectionate way, we must leave the

realm of human thought and understanding and enter the dimension of the Spirit.

This route is not an easy “1-2-3” plan with speedy results. Instead, we are suggesting guidelines for developing an intimate, continuing relationship which we call “prayer.” Do not allow some well-meaning helper to “teach” you to speak with other tongues, thereby reducing the experience to a brief, meaningless encounter with God.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit was never intended to be an abstract, passionless experience. It is powerful—but very personal! For your experience to remain fresh and meaningful, its roots must be imbedded in a scriptural, tangible meeting with Jesus.

How do we abandon the realm of human understanding and enter the realm of the Spirit? No, we do not leave our bodies. We merely bypass human reasoning and intellect, then ascend into God’s “higher ways”:

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9).

Human reasoning is filled with pride and self-exaltation. To forsake that realm demands that we renounce our rights and humbly accept God’s will—no matter how ridiculous it may seem.

Forget accepted human behavior standards (if they are contrary to God’s intent for you). Pious worship habits must be abandoned if they conflict with the heartfelt worship of believers in the Book of Acts.

Jesus explained the baptism of the Spirit like this:

“If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:37-38).

We begin by “drinking” of the Spirit. But no one can drink with his mouth closed. The Lord said, “Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it” (Psalm 81:10).

God cannot fill a closed mouth. Some seekers fail to receive the Spirit’s fullness simply by closing their mouths.

For some, the process may be slower than others. But it should occur momentarily, as in Acts, chapter 10:

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

Remember that speaking in tongues is from the human spirit—not the emotions (the soul). The Greek phrase *lalein glossais* simply means, “to speak in languages.” True, the emotions may be stirred, but you do not have to become emotional to speak in tongues. Nothing in the original Greek implies that speaking in tongues is connected with frenzy, excitement, hysteria, ecstasy, or trances. Emotion is not a cause; it is a response or an expression of what is happening in the spirit.

Admittedly, nothing could be more emotionally stirring than feeling God’s presence. Therefore, the baptism may be accompanied with joyful laughter, weeping, or dancing. But speaking in tongues is *your* spirit speaking, *inspired* by the Holy Spirit.

As proof that speaking in tongues is from the spirit, deaf mutes who have never spoken a word will fluently speak in tongues when receiving the Holy Spirit!

Jesus said: “out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” The Spirit wants to be poured out of you.

The word “belly” comes from the Greek *koilia* meaning “the entire physical body.” Through the body’s speech and actions, we contact other human beings. How can our world be helped or challenged until it sees, hears, and experiences Jesus’ life flowing from us?

Compare this flowing with an irrigation canal in arid parts of the country. When all the fields and vegetation are dried and parched, the reservoir gates are opened and the canal begins to fill with water. First to be refreshed is the canal itself as the cool, rippling water flushes away the debris.

Next to be irrigated are the grass and trees on either side of the canal. Then farmers all along the way open their gates to receive life-giving water for their dried and thirsty crops.

Likewise, our spirit is refreshed first. Afterward, the baptism flows through the soul and body, gushing forth to bless those around us, then to everyone else we meet!

Twice Jesus talked about the water He would give to believers. To the Samaritan woman He spoke about a well: “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of

water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

**G. Step 7—Become as a little child.
Surrender your tongue to the Spirit’s control.**

**Matthew 18:2-4; Galatians 4:6;
Isaiah 28:11; Acts 2:4**

As a little child freely believes and obeys, so we yield ourselves to the Spirit’s control. However, the first surrendering of ourselves may be difficult. But after the initial filling, yielding the will becomes easier.

Learning to surrender is much like diving into water. That first plunge is the hardest.

Sometimes a single word of praise leads the seeker away from the realm of human understanding into the realm of the Spirit. As you move into this heavenly dimension, praise words will become unintelligible. However, these babbling sounds do not really matter since they will soon be exchanged for a brand-new language of the Spirit.

Surrendering your language also indicates surrender elsewhere. It means the believer is mastering a major feat—learning to talk!

Speaking the Father’s language sometimes resembles the babblings of a baby:

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6).

And when God’s Spirit is sent into our hearts, it may sound like the jabber of an infant. But He interprets these first simple words as love and confidence directed toward Him, our heavenly Father.

So happy and joyous is the spiritual newborn infant, he is oblivious to how he sounds, how he looks, or what he is saying. He is privately visiting with the King of kings and nothing else matters!

Those first unintelligible sounds mean you have broken the “sound barrier.” Keep speaking those little joyful noises. Soon they will be fully articulated as the Spirit completely fills and gives the expressions He wants spoken.

One note of caution: it is impossible for

God to fill people with His Spirit when they refuse to yield. No one can be filled with self and God simultaneously. Neither can two languages be spoken at once. Since God will not take your vocabulary away, you must voluntarily yield to His control.

God does not speak in tongues—people speak in tongues as the Spirit gives the words. On the Day of Pentecost, they began to speak in other languages as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4). So you must begin to speak in other languages (not your own), as the Spirit prompts you.

The Spirit will not compel anyone to speak with tongues or forcefully stifle ordinary speech, but what sheer joy it is to surrender our words to Him!

During this process we reach up in faith, believing that this is the Holy Spirit submerging and filling us. Through faith, we deliberately abandon our own language.

Emotions often become affected by what is happening in the spirit. You may express the blessedness of this moment in a variety of ways. But you will be in control at all times; Paul said,

“The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets” (I Corinthians 14:32).

This means that if you wish to stop speaking, you can. But the Spirit cannot be fully enjoyed until you drink long and deeply!

This is a free gift—never to be snatched away or retrieved. How we handle and preserve it is up to us. This is the blessed promise of the Father!

But **DO NOT STOP HERE!** When a person is baptized with the Spirit, he has not “arrived” spiritually. God has many more gifts. He wants to lead and guide you into *all* truth. This is merely the “beginning” of a new dimension of Christian living. Do not be satisfied with the least amount of salvation, but seek to know the complete plan for your life. You alone can decide whether to grow or regress.

Our next lesson details the basics for kingdom living—the most wonderful life on earth!

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM STUDY SHEET

The Gospel for All the World

LESSON NO. 8 Study Sheet

Chart 1. The Great Commission

- A. Infallible proofs (Acts 1:3; John 20:20)
- B. Jesus' last command (Luke 24:45-49; Mark 16:15-18; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:4-8)
- C. Mount Olivet Ascension (Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11)
- D. Disciples go to Jerusalem to wait (Luke 24:52-53; Acts 1:12)

Chart 2. Sixth Dispensation—"Grace"

- A. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:4)
- B. Old Testament prophecy (Joel 2:28-29; Isaiah 28:10-12; Ezekiel 11:19-20; Jeremiah 31:31-33)
- C. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized" (Acts 2:38-39)
- D. Sixth Dispensation - "Grace": The Church Begins (Ephesians 5:25-27)

Chart 3. "Repent, and Believe the Gospel"

- A. Repent, and believe the gospel.
How do we repent? (Luke 24:47; Acts 3:19; 5:31)
Choose to turn away from actions that lead to death; surrender our self-rule; call upon the Lord; confess and forsake sins; promise to love, serve, and obey Him (Ezekiel 18:23; Acts 26:18, 20; Romans 6:6-13; Galatians 5:24; Acts 2:21; 22:16; I John 1:9; John 12:26; 14:23)
 - B. What must we believe? (Mark 16:16; Acts 8:35-38; 16:31-33; 18:8)
 - C. We turn from Satan's rule to the lordship of Christ. Sins are forgiven.
- The gospel! (Acknowledge and identify with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection): Jesus' blood legally redeemed us from sin; Jesus is the Christ; salvation in no other name (Romans 1:16; 6:3-8, 11; 10:9-10; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Hebrews 9:12; I Peter 1:18-19; John 20:31; Acts 4:12; 9:20-22)

Chart 4. Water Baptism—Sign of New Covenant

- A. Old sign—circumcision of flesh (Genesis 17:10-14)
- B. New sign—circumcision of the heart (Colossians 2:11-12; Romans 2:28-29)
- C. Why should I be baptized in water? A command; remission of sins; a clear conscience; at repentance, the "old man" died; in water baptism, the "old man" is buried; identify with Christ.

Chart 5. The Covenant Name

- A. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19)
- B. The name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is Jesus (John 5:43; Matthew 1:21; John 14:26)
- C. Practiced in the Book of Acts (Acts 2:38-41; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5)

Chart 6. The Holy Spirit Is Given To "Believers"

- A. First believe . . . then receive! (Mark 16:17; John 7:38-39; Acts 2:38; Ephesians 1:13; Luke 11:13; Acts 11:17; 19:2)

Chart 7. The Purpose of the Holy Spirit

- A. What is the Holy Spirit?
God's new manifestation; promise of Father; a gift; the Comforter; A seal of ownership; a witness that we dwell in Him and He in us (John 4:24; 7:37-39; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4; 2:38; 11:17; John 15:26; 16:7; Ephesians 1:13-14; II Corinthians 1:22; I John 3:24; Galatians 4:6; Acts 15:8)
- B. Why receive the Holy Spirit? Inner transformation brings rest, peace and joy; helps us pray; gives power to witness; teaches, guides, shows us things to come; gives power over the enemy; opens the door to other gifts of the Spirit (Isaiah 28:11-12; Romans 14:17; 8:26; I Corinthians 14:14-15; Acts 1:8; 4:31; John 14:26; 16:13; Luke 10:19-20; I John 4:1-4; I Corinthians, chapters 12-14)

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM QUIZ

The Gospel for All the World

LESSON NO. 8 Quiz

Chart 8. The First Evidence of Being Baptized in the Holy Spirit—Speaking With Other Tongues

- A. Biblical examples (Acts 1:13-14; 2:4; 8:17-20; 10:44-47; 19:1-6; 9:17-18; I Corinthians 14:18)
- B. Why did God choose tongues? God is sovereign; from the heart, the mouth speaketh; chief means of expression; tongue is most difficult member to control; an obvious, external, uniform sign (Isaiah 40:13-14; Matthew 12:34; Proverbs 18:20-21; James 3:3-8; Acts 11:15-17)

Chart 9. Have You Received the Holy Ghost Since You Believed?

- A. Step 1—Repent, and believe the gospel; ask Jesus to be Lord of your life (Luke 24:47; Acts 20:21)
- B. Step 2—Water baptism (Acts 2:38)
- C. Step 3—Be comfortable (Acts 2:2)
- D. Step 4—Ask and believe for God’s gift (Luke 11:9-13; Acts 5:32)
- E. Step 5 - Offer a sacrifice of praise (Hebrews 13:15; Psalm 116:17)
- F. Step 6 - Let the Spirit submerge and flow out of you (John 7:37-38)
- G. Step 7 - Become as a little child; surrender your tongue to the Spirit’s control (Matthew 18:2-4; Galatians 4:6)

Receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit is an unforgettable experience! Retrace the steps to receiving this gift by numbering the statements in the correct order.

- _____ Ask and believe for God’s gift.
- _____ Be baptized in water in Jesus’ name.
- _____ Repent, and believe the gospel.
- _____ Become as a little child, surrendering your tongue to the Spirit’s control.
- _____ Offer a sacrifice of praise.
- _____ Be comfortable.
- _____ Let the Spirit submerge and flow out of you.

Answers:

4, 2, 1, 7, 5, 3, 6

LESSON NINE

Living in the Kingdom

This lesson is a study of the new way of life for covenant people in the kingdom of God.

God has designed a new life for His covenant members that far transcends the bondage and darkness of Satan's dominion.

Every member must be informed of the wonderful covenant terms that explain what Christ offers and what He expects of us.

His new kingdom laws are written within the heart. The constitution is outlined in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

Spiritual armor is provided for conquering the enemy, and powerful sources of strength sustain us in times of battle.

Spiritual fruit helps us develop into mature Christians. Spiritual gifts manifest God's power to the world, enabling us to continue Christ's ministry.

The old priesthood has been replaced with apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to equip saints to serve and function as members of Christ's body. The sacrificial system now consists of a continual offering of worship and praise.

Having been separated from sin and the world, we now lovingly dedicate our bodies as His special prized possession in the world.

When completed, students should be aware of the following concepts:

1. To reach our individual potential in the kingdom, we must know who we are, what Christ has done for us, our privileges, responsibilities, and authority.
2. To experience the limitless power and riches of His provisions, we must learn submission to God's will and to human authority.

3. How we treat our enemies is the most accurate register of our degree of spiritual maturity.
4. As long as God's love is the guiding force of our lives, we need no written laws or rules.
5. Building a relationship with God through prayer and Bible study is an absolute MUST for spiritual survival.
6. To accomplish the great commission, the church must be encouraged to "covet the best gifts" and then use them!
7. Each saint should seek to find his particular ministry in the body of Christ.
8. When holiness infiltrates our attitudes, our actions and reactions will be Christ-like.

Books for additional reading:

1. Bob Mumford, *The King and You*, Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1974.
2. E. W. Kenyon, *Advanced Bible Course*, Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, P. O. Box 973, Lynnwood, WA 98036, 1970.
3. Pat Robertson, *The Secret Kingdom*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982.
4. David K. Bernard, *Practical Holiness—A Second Look*, Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1985.
5. Dennis & Rita Bennett, *The Holy Spirit and You*, Plainfield, NJ: Logos International, 1971.
6. Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*, New York: Harper & Row, 1978.
7. Albert Hibbert, *Smith Wigglesworth: The Secret of His Power*, Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, Inc., 1982.

Lesson 9 – Chart 1 Welcome to the Kingdom!

WELCOME TO THE KINGDOM!
A new way of life for covenant people.

“Except a man be born again, ...
Except ye ... become as little children
ye shall not enter into the kingdom.”

Privileges:

- Remission of sins
John 1:9; Romans 8:1; Ephesians 1:7
- Sons of God; joint-heirs with Christ
Romans 8:17; Galatians 3:26; 1 John 3:2; Romans 8:14-17
- Righteousness
Romans 7:12; 1 John 1:8, 10; Hebrews 4:16
- Eternal Life
John 3:16; Romans 6:23; 1 John 1:9
- New Creation
2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 1:3; Romans 8:17
- Lordship of Christ
Romans 10:9; Hebrews 1:22-24; Luke 11:20; John 10:1

Responsibilities:

- Love God and obey His laws
John 14:15; Romans 12:1; Hebrews 4:14
- Submission to God’s will and human authority
Romans 7:21; John 1:26; 1 Peter 2:13-17
- Continue spiritual development
John 17:17; Ephesians 4:13-15; 1 Peter 2:2
- Continue Jesus’ mission
John 17:18; Matthew 28:19; Luke 10:10; John 17:18
- Prepare for future position
John 14:2; Luke 16:13; Revelation 2:26

DO NOT STOP HERE!

LESSON 9 JOHN 3:3, MATTHEW 18:3 CHART 1

Chart Objective:

To discover the unique way of life ordained for covenant people living in God’s kingdom. Jesus carefully explained how to enter and also taught about its privileges and responsibilities.

Chart Outline:

- A new way of life for covenant people
- “Except a man be born again”
- “Except ye become as little children”
- Privileges
- Responsibilities

A. A new way of life for covenant people

Welcome to the kingdom! Entry is made to this wonderful new life through the door of Jesus Himself. All may come and enjoy the splendor and bountiful blessings provided by our covenant Partner.

Perhaps you may have correctly sensed that this new life is not without its conflicts. Even though Jesus offers numerous fantastic privileges, there remain tough battles. Our “earth-suit” creates struggles between the spirit and the flesh; prepare for them.

Jesus constantly taught how to obtain and maintain citizenship in His kingdom. The full plan began before His ascension. An invisible world surrounds, controls, and interacts with our visible world. God’s spiritual kingdom exists here . . . right now! Jesus said,

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

“The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: . . . for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20-21).

Paul added,

“The Father . . . hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Colossians 1:12-13).

Once Jesus puzzled His disciples by saying that some of them would not taste death until they had seen the Son of Man “coming in his kingdom” (Matthew 16:28). Six days later Jesus took Peter, James and John to a mountain. Before their startled gaze, He was “transfigured”! His face shone like the sun and His garments became shining white. What had been invisible within Him suddenly became visible!

Standing with Jesus on the mountain were Moses (representing the law) and Elijah (the prophets). With Christ’s coming, the law and prophets had been fulfilled and the new kingdom was about to begin. If they would “seek first the kingdom,” or “reach into the invisible,” all their visible needs would be met.

Jesus reiterated that men could enter this limitless, immortal world and solve every conceivable problem. Once a storm had threatened their ship on the Sea of Galilee, and the disciples interrupted the Master’s rest with their plea for help.

Jesus questioned why their faith was weak. Why couldn’t they implement the truths He had been trying to teach? Then He spoke with authority to the winds and calmed the sea. The secret was to bypass visible conditions and to invoke the invisible powers.

One thing the kingdom is not:

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

The tangible, visible—meat and drink—are completely excluded. Righteousness, peace, and joy are inner qualities that spring forth from the spirit.

The kingdom is “**God reigning in the recreated spirits of believers.**” It has a divine government with laws, rules, and a constitution.

So unique is kingdom living that it turns ordinary ideas upside down. Prepare for an inner revolution of attitudes and thinking! Humanistic theories programmed into the mind must be discarded. By abandoning these opinions, you will begin to discover new

direction, new joys, new goals, new happiness.

Quite early in His ministry, Jesus began revealing His constitution and fundamental principles. We call it the “Sermon on the Mount.” Most of the concepts are a highly advanced, spiritual version of the same laws and principles upon which Israel was founded (see Lesson 4).

However, this wonderful new life became available after Jesus’ blood legally “redeemed” (set at liberty; purchased freedom for slaves) mankind. As our substitute, He was crucified, went to hell, and became the “firstborn” from the dead. Because He arose from the dead, man’s dead spirit can also be “born again” or recreated with everlasting life.

In our last lesson, God’s Word gave us “light for salvation.” His Word will also reveal “light for living” the Christian way.

B. “Except a man be born again”

John 3:3, 5

Once a Jewish ruler came to inquire of Jesus’ teaching. Awkwardly Nicodemus fumbled for words to express how he yearned to know more about God.

Jesus skillfully went directly to the heart of the matter:

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:3, 5).

Entrance into His kingdom requires a “new birth.” The natural eye cannot *see* this realm, much less *enter* it. Man’s dead, sinful spirit must experience a drastic “re-creation” even to comprehend the reasons for Jesus’ mission to earth.

Nicodemus was completely bewildered. He related the word “born” to the natural birth of a child. Could an old man re-enter his mother’s womb and be born a second time?

No, Nicodemus, you are thinking in the visible, natural realm. Jesus was speaking in spiritual terms. God is a Spirit, and man was created in His image and likeness. Therefore, God interacts with the human spirit. Jesus’ instructions transcended the intellectual realm to that perceived only by the spirit.

Because Adam’s spirit died when he disobeyed God’s commandment, all human off-

spring have dead spirits. To fully know God, man’s spirit must receive God’s life—that “living water” that springs up from within (John 4:14). Once we experience a “rebirth,” an intimate communion and fellowship with the Lord is possible—much like that enjoyed by Adam and Eve in the original kingdom in the Garden of Eden.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Romans 8:5-6, 11).

“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (I Corinthians 2:12-13).

C. “Except ye become as little children”

Matthew 18:3

Here is another important qualification for entering the kingdom:

“Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3-4).

“He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. . . . I am among you as he that serveth” (Luke 22:26-27).

Would you like a distinguished leadership position in God’s kingdom? Those who seek to excel are encouraged to do so. Neither special education nor extraordinary skills are required. Simply observe the attitudes of a little child and a servant.

Perhaps many of us have bypassed life’s best by failing to grasp this basic concept.

Which traits of a little child should be copied? Not the selfishness or grumbling. Imitate the truly great attributes.

Emulate their **trust**. Confidently a child looks to their parents for everything—food, clothing, shelter. They do not worry about meals or clothing. They simply trust their parents to provide everything!

Be **humble**. A child has no masks. Their motives are transparent, open, honest, and pure—without skepticism. They do not try to impress others.

A child is **forgiving**. Arguments and fights are settled quickly. Soon they are happily playing again.

And they are **teachable**. Since a child's intelligence is minimal, they must learn by listening. Multitudes of questions are asked. Asking questions is a mark of intelligence. Their open, unprejudiced minds can quickly master new ideas, new languages, and new techniques.

How very pleased our heavenly Father must be to observe these traits among His spiritual children! If lacking, He may arrange situations to encourage their development.

Observe the one common trait of truly great people: they are dedicated to serving, helping, and encouraging others.

Why have these people received high honors—Thomas Edison, Florence Nightingale, Abraham Lincoln, George Washington Carver, Hudson Taylor, Dr. Michael DeBakey? They are devoted servants. They never ceased caring for the needs of others.

As we develop traits of humility, trust, forgiving, listening and learning from God, and devotedly serving others, we shall attain positions of honor in the kingdom!

D. Privileges

We have become covenant members with Christ, living in His spiritual, invisible kingdom. You and I—once common, ordinary people—are now highly favored. The God of heaven has made a covenant agreement with us!

The awesome benefits of this covenant stagger the imagination. Often God's family members fail to tap the unlimited resources available to them. So accustomed are they to the constant battling with Satan's lordship, they cannot conceive the magnitude of heaven's blessings.

It is our pleasure to inform you of the wonderful terms of your covenant agreement! Do you comprehend what Christ has done for you . . . what He offers? Do you understand who

you are . . . Who supports and sustains you . . . Who protects and shields you?

Until these facts are firmly established in all our minds, the church of the living God will never fulfill her commission. Nor will we reach our individual potential in the kingdom.

Satan does not want God's people to know who they are. If we claim our privileges and fulfill our responsibilities, Satan's kingdom will be obliterated!

Let's begin this exciting lesson by establishing Christ's covenant commitment. He offers some fantastic promises!

First is "**remission of sins**." Every wrong, every sin, every transgression you ever committed is removed, erased, sent away! Regardless how shameful your past, His blood has completely eradicated everything!

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38).

"Through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past" (Romans 3:25).

Remission of sins under the Old Covenant meant: a passing over; a suspension of the just penalty. Sacrificial animal blood offered a temporary "covering" from God's view. But once Christ's blood legally redeemed us, our sins are not merely *covered*, they are dismissed, removed, and cleansed!

The words "remission" and "forgiveness" are derived from the Greek word *aphiemi*. In several instances, the word "forgiveness" in the King James Version should have been translated "remission" (Acts 5:31; 13:38; 26:18; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14).

We receive immediate "remission" of sins when we are born again. Afterward, should we sin and then repent, we receive "forgiveness."

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

Another wonderful covenant privilege is adoption into God's family. We left Satan's family to become **sons of God**—with full privileges and authority to use the family name!

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12).

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: . . . Beloved, now are we the sons of God” (I John 3:1-2).

“If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it” (John 14:14).

As His children, whatever our Father owns is ours also. The children are heirs of the Father’s wealth:

“And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ” (Romans 8:17).

Here is another great advantage. Christ’s **righteousness** is “imputed” (a gift attributed to another’s account). Like a robe, His righteousness covers the cleansed child of God, enabling him to enter the Father’s presence without guilt or sense of inferiority.

“Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe” (Romans 3:22).

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace” (Hebrews 4:16).

Moreover, we can also stand in Satan’s presence without inferiority! We have become his master—rather than his slave!

Jesus Christ removes our sins, takes us into His family as sons and daughters, makes us His joint-heirs, and clothes us with His righteousness. Then He lovingly gives to us **eternal life**.

Our dead spirits are recreated with God’s life—His very nature:

“He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24).

This new birth of the spirit results in a **“new creation.”**

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17).

Every new creation is a “superman” in the embryo—a master of Satan, demons and circumstances! Once we discover what we are, what we can do, what the Father expects

us to do, and what the Holy Spirit baptism has empowered us to do, nothing shall be impossible!

Discovering our rights and privileges is the first step toward claiming them. Here is what Christ offers His “new creation”:

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature” (II Peter 1:4).

Also:

“They which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life” (Romans 5:17).

Are you “reigning” in life? God intends this for His “new creation.” He has provided an abundance of grace and precious promises to sustain the most complete, most unique life—right here; right now!

Then we must understand the **lordship of Christ**. Recognizing His lordship was also a condition for receiving salvation:

“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved” (Romans 10:9).

What does it mean to “confess Jesus as your Lord”? It means that you declare Him to be your Caretaker. “Lordship” means “the bread provider,” or the one who sustains, protects and cares for you.

What do you need? Healing, food, clothing, finances, peace, protection, wisdom? All are part of His provision! The covenant furnishes all needs.

Moreover, angels are ministering spirits sent to the heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14).

Because you are His child, you can rest in Him.

“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things” (Matthew 6:31-32).

What do children do when they have needs? They ask! Jesus likewise instructed:

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Luke 11:9).

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7).

Everything we could possibly need in life has been provided. These are the wonderful covenant provisions:

- **Remission of sins.** (He has cleansed our slate of past wrongs).
- **Sons of God.** (He has adopted us into His family with full privileges and authority to use the family name).
- **Righteousness.** (We can stand in the Father’s presence—as well as Satan’s—without guilt or inferiority).
- **Eternal Life.** (God’s very nature and life now reside in our spirit).
- **New creation.** (We have become a new species endowed with God’s ability; a “superman” in the embryo; a master of Satan, demons and circumstances).
- **Lordship of Christ.** (He has become our Provider, ready to supply every need).

Christ’s commitment is absolute and thorough. Heaven stands ready to assist and minister to the least member of His kingdom. What more could anyone ask?

E. Responsibilities

Christ freely provides His all to those who choose Him as their Lord. Should we offer any less to Him? Let’s examine our conditions of the covenant relationship.

The first requirement is that we **love God and obey His laws**:

“If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (John 14:23).

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (John 15:10).

Obedience loudly affirms our love for God. The two cannot be separated. To say that we love Him without desiring to please Him is not genuine love.

Our heavenly Father has sought man’s love and obedience from the beginning. “Love and obey” are repeatedly linked in Scripture

(Deuteronomy 7:9; 10:12-13; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3-4; 19:9; Joshua 22:5).

In the Ten Commandments this promise was included:

“And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments” (Exodus 20:6).

This is not a *forced* obedience, but a desire prompted by love. He wants our love and obedience because He is a *jealous* God (Exodus 20:5). As a husband refuses to share his wife’s affection with another man, so our God refuses to share His people with other “gods.”

Our heavenly Father encourages His people to experience and enjoy the limitless power and riches of His provisions. However, He will not automatically or indiscriminately distribute them. **Submission to God’s will** is a strict requirement.

In every aspect of life—actions, conduct, thoughts, future plans, ambitions—we must seek for and then accept God’s will.

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21).

“Thy will be done.” Right there many folks hesitate, then turn away from God. Why? Because their concept of God’s will is negative.

What do you think of when someone mentions the “will of God”? Severe suffering from an incurable disease? Being sent to a remote island or tropical jungles as a missionary? Naturally we shrink from such.

Some believe that the will of God creates distasteful things. However, Jesus has promised that we shall never be alone (Matthew 28:20). No matter how difficult the trial or how remote the place of our calling, He is there with (in) us.

What is God’s “will”? Two Greek words are used. God’s “will” (*Boulema*) refers to His eternal purpose or deliberate design which is to be fulfilled. God’s “will” (*Thelema*) means His gracious design, wish or desire is contingent upon the response of believers.

Why was Jesus’ ministry and life so perfect? His will was perfectly united with the Father’s will. Why do we fail in imitating His example? Notice what He said:

“I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me” (John 5:30).

“I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him” (John 8:28-29).

What a testimony! As a man, Jesus sought the Father’s will through long hours of prayer, meditation, and studying the Scriptures. Regardless of personal inconvenience, preference, pain, or outcome, He learned to overrule His own wishes in deference to those of His Father.

Our desires and wishes must perfectly parallel His inflexible, unchanging will. When that is accomplished, we shall confidently approach every situation, knowing that our actions and reactions will be appropriate.

When we submit to God’s will, we will also **submit to human authority**:

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls” (Hebrews 13:17).

Human authorities have been placed over us to perfect our many character deficiencies:

“Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him” (Proverbs 22:15).

Our character must harmonize with Christ’s. Should we avoid the reproofs of authority, God designs new “tools” to chip away at the rough edges. Paul warned,

“Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation” (Romans 13:2).

To grow in wisdom and character, we must subject ourselves to those in authority. At age twelve was Christ’s first response regarding authority. Should He follow His spiritual calling and begin His Father’s business or become subject to His parents? Because He chose the latter, He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God

and man” (Luke 2:49-52).

Submission to authority does not imply *domination*, but rather *protection*. By refusing this protection, we expose ourselves to unnecessary, overpowering temptations.

The four basic structures of human authority are:

Family. Children under parents’ authority; wife subject to husband (Colossians 3:20; Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:1-4; Proverbs 6:20-21).

Government. Citizens subject to local and national leaders (I Peter 2:13-14; Romans 13:1-7).

Church. Church members subject to church leaders (I Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17; I Timothy 5:17-18; I Peter 5:1-3).

Business. Employees subject to employer (Colossians 3:22-24; I Peter 2:18; I Timothy 6:1-4).

Another responsibility is to **continue our spiritual development**. Many enter into covenant but fail to develop. From the “believer” stage, we must continue “doing” the Word:

“Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31-32).

To enjoy covenant privileges and kingdom living to the fullest, we must experience “spiritual” growing pains. Man is a three-part being—spirit, soul (mind, will, emotions), and body. We are not soul and body like an animal.

In modern civilizations, most people are informed about physical and mental health. But few realize that the spirit—the part meant to rule the body and soul and fellowship with God—must also be nourished and developed.

When governed by the soul and body, people become bored and dissatisfied. If the spirit—the most important part of our being—is neglected, we are not “whole,” balanced persons.

Just as the body has physical senses—seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling—so do we have spiritual eyes, ears, and sensitivity.

Since the day Adam’s spirit died, man’s soul has become the dominant, ruling force. But obedience to the gospel restores life to the

human spirit. In union with God's Spirit, the recreated human spirit assumes leadership over the soul, and the submitted soul directs the body. Restoring the spirit to its rightful position requires a lifetime of strong self-discipline!

Until the mind, will, and emotions are fully controlled by the spirit, the soul remains a mixture of good and evil. Because the soul has been in charge since physical birth, it must be forced to surrender its authority to the human spirit. Much effort is required in discarding human reasoning and replacing it with the "mind of Christ."

When the spirit is functioning properly, we can "walk in the spirit," "live in the spirit," "pray in the spirit," and "sing in the spirit."

To enjoy true freedom, we must continue developing the newly recreated spirit, continue exercising and expanding our faith in God. Learning how to walk, talk, and conduct ourselves can only be mastered as we learn submission to authority and endure adversity, chastening, suffering, testings, and self-discipline.

This "daily cross" must be endured if we will be Jesus' disciples:

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me" (Luke 9:23).

God uses conflicts as a motivation to achieve higher levels of spiritual maturity. Should we fail to gain the benefits of problems, He creates new ones. Circumstances enter our lives that we might "humble ourselves" before Him (I Peter 5:5-6).

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6).

Conflicts and problems become God's hammer that breaks our pride so that He can give us more "grace." We need grace (God's loving favor and kindness) to help us maintain a periodic program of self-examination:

"For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord" (I Corinthians 11:31-32).

Every new covenant member should be enrolled in "discipleship school." Many king-

dom laws and rules must be mastered before we are entitled to full sonship privileges.

Two types of responsibilities have been discussed: God-ward (love and obedience; submission to His Will and human authority); and inward (continue spiritual development).

Now we come to a third type: outward. The church must **continue Jesus' mission** of saving the lost.

Every person in the world has been freed from Satan's dominion. But few know about it! Our responsibility is to tell the "good news" of Jesus' redemption. We are to proclaim that message to the world:

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

"As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John 17:18).

This is not a request, but a command! If we are not striving in some way to accomplish this commission, we are not fulfilling our covenant responsibilities!

Because of these promises, the task can surely be accomplished:

"He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. . . . Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:1, 8).

"Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19).

"He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

"Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18).

With such power and authority at our disposal, we have been adequately equipped to complete the job!

Of course, our first assignment will not be raising the dead. Duties will be assigned as we pass each of these tests:

- Loving God with all our heart and learning to obey His laws.
- Submitting to His will rather than our own desires and wishes, which includes submission to human authorities.
- Continuing to develop our recreated spirit—which will involve conflicts, trials, suffering, adversity, and self-discipline.
- Continuing Jesus’ mission of spreading the good news to all the world, accompanied by healing the sick, casting out demons, and raising the dead.

Covenant members are permitted to know kingdom mysteries and to live in that realm—right now! Why did God design this dominion? Mastering His laws and principles helps us to **prepare for future positions** in the coming millennial kingdom.

The same principles enforced now will be enforced then. As His partners, Christ is grooming us for the perfect, visible establishment of His kingdom on earth. Those who practice doing His will right now will serve

in positions of authority then.

“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:43).

“And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities” (Luke 19:17).

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: . . . they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6).

Learning to rule and reign with Him begins right now!

But do not stop at the door of the kingdom! Multitudes are piously sitting with folded hands, waiting for the coming of the Lord. Yet there is so much to learn, so many promises to claim, so many gifts to be received, so many millions in our world who have never heard the good news.

Why not step inside the invisible realm of the kingdom and discover more of its possibilities!

Lesson 9 – Chart 2 From Darkness to Light

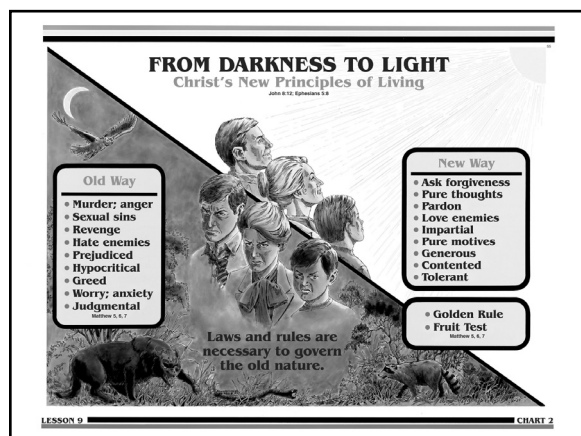


Chart Objective:

To compare the old way with the new spiritual principles contained in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. As we learn to walk in the light of His Word, the new law of love rules in our spirit. When love rules, no laws are needed.

Chart Outline:

- A. From Darkness to Light

- B. Old Way versus New Way

- C. Laws and rules are necessary to govern the old nature

A. From Darkness to Light John 8:12; Ephesians 5:8

Christ came to show the new way of life for recreated spirits. By example and teaching, He introduced a lifestyle that is as different as daylight from dark!

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8).

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (Acts 26:18).

God’s world was designed to be governed by two lights—the sun to rule the day and the moon the night. All creatures are instinctively guided by these two lights. When the sun’s golden rays streak across the eastern sky, the rooster feels an urge to awaken his barnyard friends.

But once the sun sinks in the west and the moon sheds its silvery beams, the daytime crew finds a nest or shelter. And out come the prowling, bloodthirsty creatures governed by the moonlight.

Man's sinful nature is much like the wild, vicious predators. Something within us craves evil. The dimly lit "night" clubs, the smoke-filled rooms, dancing to a rhythmic, pounding beat, drugs, sex, gambling, crime, drunkenness—all appeal to the lower nature . . . after the sun has set.

Conversely, kingdom dwellers love purity, holiness, righteousness, worship, and pleasing the King. When the "old man" and his sinful "night" life is buried, the evil pleasures once enjoyed become vile and obnoxious. We want to follow a new Lord Who loves light!

Jesus said,

"I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

The new life radiates with light! However, we must remind that turning away from the light invites the prowling, ferocious cravings of the former sinful "night" life to creep from their hiding places and engulf us. Paul lamented,

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

"I found then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me" (Romans 7:18, 21).

How wonderful if the dark side would perish when we are baptized with the Holy Ghost. But the carnal nature is not eradicated. The soul (mind, will, emotions) that ruled for so long will struggle to gain control. We can hold it in check only while walking in the brilliance of God's light. John said,

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

Walking in the light of God's Word keeps us clean and pure. The blood cleanses and purifies as we fellowship with Him. But

should we sever fellowship, darkness will overtake us.

B. Old Way versus New Way

Matthew 5, 6, 7

To better define the government of His kingdom, Christ gave us the Sermon on the Mount. This teaching is to the New Testament what the Ten Commandments were to the Old Testament. God has fulfilled the law written on stone by writing it in the recreated human spirit.

The Sermon on the Mount is the law, the "light," and the practical conduct that pleases our King.

The old law is not contrary to the new, for both speak of Christ. The commandments are as binding upon the Christian as when first delivered.

However, until the inner meaning is discovered and the "spirit" of the law revealed, the law is not complete. The acorn disappears that the big beautiful oak may be seen; but the acorn is not destroyed. It is only developed.

The law was limited, as the acorn, by an early stage of revelation. The deeper understanding can only be realized when the law is written in the recreated spirit.

An end came to the offering of animal sacrifices, observing the ceremonial Sabbaths and the rite of circumcision. Jesus did not formally abolish them, but left them to dissolve of themselves.

Israel was famous for the holiness of her religion and the righteousness of her law. The scribes and Pharisees were the professed examples of highest obedience to the law. Yet Christ expects His disciples to surpass the official teachers and professed saints of Judaism in their righteousness. He wants more than a "head-knowledge" of Scriptures; the spiritual meaning of the Word must be understood.

Under the old law, men's spirits had no life, no ability to obey the exalted, holy commandments. Therefore, Jesus came to prove that His Spirit would enable men to go far beyond the mere keeping of the Ten Commandments to a much more precise, elevated realm of living.

Jesus began His discourse with attitudes of the inner man that are to be envied. The way to happiness is opened to those who possess these characteristics:

- **Poor in spirit** (humble; lowly; those who properly evaluate themselves).
- **Mourn** (the ability to weep and repent in God's presence).
- **Meek** (the ability to patiently take wrong without becoming ruffled or provoked).
- **Hunger and thirst** (an appetite for spiritual things).
- **Merciful** (the ability to love and encourage others without condemning them).
- **Pure in heart** (undefiled from wrong attitudes; without deceit or hypocrisy).
- **Peacemakers** (the ability to bring unity in conflicting situations).
- **Persecuted** (the ability to rejoice when shamefully treated for doing good).

Then Christ began to open the spirituality of the new law. The sixth commandment concerning **murder** was only external, forbidding the act of killing. The sinful *action* was prohibited, but not the sinful thought that gave birth to the deed.

Jesus declared that rash **anger** with your brother is the same as "heart-murder"; to speak shameful or disgraceful words to your brother is "tongue-murder." Therefore, the new law goes to the source of the act and deals with the uncontrolled temper.

The solution is to go to your brother and **ask forgiveness**. Failure to do so results in an interruption of fellowship between us and God.

Until we realize what anger does to us and others, we may be imprisoned in God's "spiritual jail" until we have paid the price for release (Matthew 5:25-26).

Should angry, harsh words be spoken between a husband and wife, both may remain in God's jail without the flow of spiritual blessings until they admit their wrong and ask forgiveness.

Next Jesus spoke of **sexual sins**. The seventh commandment forbade the act of adultery. But Jesus prohibits adulterous *thoughts* and *lust* (uncontrolled desire).

The problem of lust is associated with the eye and the hand. Therefore Jesus said it would be better to rid oneself of the roving eye or the hand that touched what belonged to another. Otherwise, those temptations could lead to the destruction of the whole body—and perhaps your marriage, business, health, and spiritual progress.

The new law stresses the importance of

pure thoughts. Resist the beginnings of sin. Refuse to keep company with those who would become a snare. Suppress the first rising of lust by dealing with the thought-life.

Another of Moses' laws concerns **revenge**. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" related to punishment in a court of justice. God's Word does not forbid punishment by courts of the land. (See Romans 13:4.) But it does forbid private revenge.

The new way is to **pardon**; do not retaliate; do not resist evil. However, we are permitted to *avoid* persecution by fleeing to another city (Matthew 10:23), and to have personal security (John 18:23; Acts 16:37; 22:25; 23:2-3, 17; 25:10-11).

The point of Jesus' statement is this: should a Christian suffer bodily injury, he must take it patiently. The return blow begins the fight!

Four examples were given. It would be best to: turn the other cheek when slapped; to forfeit property and suffer wrong rather than be judged in courts of law before the ungodly; to go the second mile; or to give to those asking favors.

Patiently deny yourself; resist getting even with offenders; be free to give; be free to lend—but do so with discretion.

But why would God allow someone to slap you on the cheek? Perhaps He has detected attitudes that hinder spiritual growth, such as resentment, rebellion, or independence. The four named offenses would naturally cause a wrong attitude to be manifested. Therefore, He allows situations to occur so that our wrong attitudes will surface and we may free ourselves of the buried hindrance.

Rather than holding a grudge or avenging ourselves toward those who treat us unkindly, we must show a Christ-like spirit by forgiving.

The old way taught, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and **hate thine enemy**" (Matthew 5:43). Anyone who displeased, provoked, offended, irritated, or interfered with personal progress or pleasure was tagged an enemy. But Jesus said to **love your enemies**.

How we treat our enemies is the most accurate register of our degree of spiritual maturity. Only the love of God can cause us to:

love, bless, do good,
and pray for those
who

curse, hate, despitely use,
and persecute us.

As we begin to love and pray for that person, hatred begins to vanish!

Suppose a neighboring church that sharply disagrees with your church's theology is smashed to the ground by a tornado. Would you be secretly pleased by their tragedy and think, "You're getting what you deserve!" Or would you take up an offering to help them rebuild?

Another mark of the old life is to be **prejudiced**; to love those who love you, salute those who acknowledge you, and exclude those not in your clique or religious denomination. This is how the publicans treated one another.

But Jesus taught us to be **impartial**. As our example, God sends rain and sunshine on both the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45-47).

Spiritually mature people have overcome the childish habit of partiality and are careful to treat friend and enemy alike.

Then Jesus condemned **hypocrisy**. In those days, religious professors displayed their religion by giving alms, praying and fasting. Some resentfully performed these as duties; others very meticulously and graciously practiced these good deeds, hoping to win the praise of men.

The hypocrites would fling their coins to produce a loud ringing noise in the trumpet-shaped chests of the Temple treasury. They prayed loudly in the public square, hoping to be commended by their neighbors. On fast days they neglected washing their faces and combing their hair to portray humiliation for their righteous deed.

Religious works must not be judged by the surface appearance, but by the motive or intent. Jesus puts each of us on the witness stand to determine our intent in giving, praying, and fasting.

Financial offerings are a sacred duty. Why do we contribute money? Why do we pray and fast? If our motive is to impress someone, another person's admiration will be our reward. But if our **motive is to please God**, we will be rewarded by Him.

The old way of **greed** is to lay up treasures for ourselves or "lay up in our own interest." Jesus has always been quite concerned about money matters. He wants us to be aware of how we spend our money. Is the majority spent on cars, travel, homes, furnishings, or

recreation? How we invest our money determines where our heart is.

Treasures should be stored in heaven. If our interests center on earthly goods and activities, our money and time will be spent accordingly. But if with pure motives we give to kingdom purposes, those investments will be eternal.

The new way is to be **generous** with our contributions. When we give the tithe, or one-tenth of our income, to kingdom causes, the ninety percent remaining will go much farther. Jesus said,

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38).

The old way was a life of **worry** and **anxiety**. While food, drink, clothing and shelter are often a threatening concern of the ungodly (Matthew 6:25-33), we are admonished to "take no thought" for material needs. As our covenant Partner, He has assumed lordship, or "bread provider." Over-concern about material needs indicates a lack of faith in God as Provider.

Some may wonder why God has not made them millionaires. Perhaps He knows what would happen if He did! Prosperity can become a curse rather than a blessing! Dividends will not be increased if they cannot be safely handled. John D. Rockefeller once said, "Seldom have I found a man to whom I could give without hurting him" (Mumford, *The King and You*, page 156).

Rather, He wants us to be **contented** as we depend upon Him as our Provider. Jesus promised that if we will seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, all of life's necessities that often cause anxiety will be added to us.

Righteous living should precede food and raiment. As we eliminate all that does not encourage kingdom living, He will provide as He sees best.

The old way is to be **judgmental** and critical (Matthew 7:1-5). Gently Jesus deals with the wayward, but those who judge one another are severely reprimanded. He forbids us to judge others, yet stresses a firm hand in judging ourselves.

Faultfinding is a habit in which we may easily become entangled. A characteristic human weakness is the “gift of suspicion,” which leads to misjudging.

The new way is to be **tolerant** of other’s faults. Since all of us are imperfect, we should give space for differing. Bill Gothard, with the Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts, has defined tolerance as: “accepting others as unique expressions of specific character qualities in varying degrees of maturity.”

Why are we forbidden to judge others? Because we can never be sure that our judgment is fair. Prejudices may blind our vision. How could we properly appraise a person’s true motive and intent when only God knows the heart? Therefore, our imperfect knowledge destroys the value of our judgments.

The most important reason not to judge others is to discourage others from judging us. No mercy is shown those who show no mercy to others. However, if we judge ourselves rather than voice opinions and criticize others, we shall not be judged of the Lord nor of man.

A young boy raced into the house to tell his mother about a child who was mocking him and his playmate. When she inquired what he meant, Johnny told this story. “Well, I was saying to my friend, ‘Hey!’ and this boy said, ‘Hey!’ So I said to him, ‘Who are you?’ and he answered, ‘Who are you?’

“I said to him, ‘What is your name?’ and he said, ‘What is your name?’ So I jumped over the ditch and ran into the woods, but I couldn’t find him. When I came back, I said, ‘If you don’t come out, I’ll punch you in the nose!’ and he said, ‘Punch you in the nose!’”

The wise mother said, “But Johnny, if you had said, ‘I love you!’ he would have said, ‘I love you!’ Whatever you said to him, he would have said back to you.”

Then she explained that when he grew to be a man, whatever he said to others, they would someday say back to him.

The faultfinding person trying to rid others of faults is like the man with a log or rafter in his own eye trying to pick a splinter out of another’s eye. How could we help deliver someone from sin if we have made no investigation into our own hearts to remove a much larger transgression?

Then Jesus gave a formula for receiving God’s help (Matthew 7:7-8). Grace is ours for the asking, but it will not come without ask-

ing in a scriptural way. Three words: ask, seek, and knock represent an ascending scale.

To “ask” makes a request. To “seek” presses the request. To “knock” persists in the request.

If asking alone has not succeeded, enforce your prayers with seeking. If the desire still does not come, then knock. Stand before the door of heaven and knock loudly and boldly, as one who lives at the house. Be like the widow woman who continued coming to the unjust judge with her petition until he became so weary with her persistence, he granted her desire. How much more will God render aid to His elect who cry day and night unto Him? (Luke 18:7-8).

Jesus’ basic rule of Christian life can be summed up in this one statement, which is known as the “**Golden Rule**”:

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them” (Matthew 7:12).

This excellent test helps us determine whether we are keeping the second most important commandment: loving our neighbor as ourself (Mark 12:31). The rule applies to stranger, disagreeable people, foreign nations, and heathen—not merely friends, family, and fellow Christians.

The same voice of self-interest that must not be allowed in ourselves is the indicator of what should be done to others. It is a principle of perfect justice with every man judging his own interpretation of the meaning.

If you wish to test whether a person is a true follower of Jesus, use the “**fruit test**.” The bark and leaves of a tree may deceive, but the fruit is a sure test. The character of a man is judged not by occasional, but habitual good works.

C. Laws and rules are necessary to govern the old nature

Why has Christ instituted a kingdom constitution with laws and rules? Because rules provide a standard whereby we may judge ourselves. They also reveal our flaws and give us an opportunity to restore a right relationship with the Father.

In enumerating the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance—Paul added: “against such there is no law”

(Galatians 5:23). No law exists against any of these attributes!

As long as God's love is the guiding force of our lives, we need no laws or rules. Only while the carnal nature, "the old way," is in control must we have rules and regulations.

A good habit to form soon after conversion is to read Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7 (the Sermon on the Mount) and I Corinthians 13 (the love chapter) once a month. If you measure up to this teaching, you are right on target!

Lesson 9 – Chart 3 Provisions For Conquering the Enemy

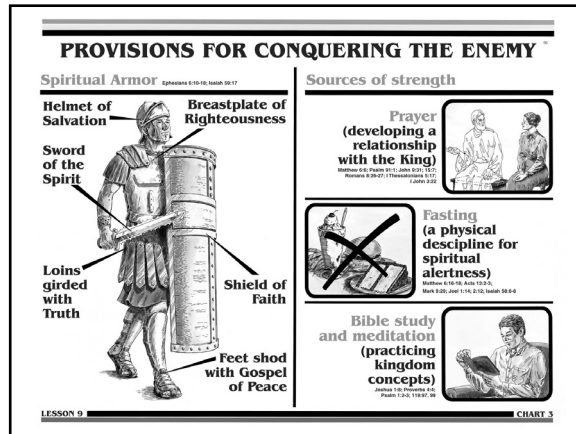


Chart Objective:

To discover God's provisions for conquering the enemy. The recreated spirit must be clothed with special armor and strengthened with prayer, fasting, Bible study and meditation.

Chart Outline:

- A. Provisions for Conquering the Enemy
- B. Spiritual Armor
- C. Sources of strength
- D. Prayer (developing a relationship with the King)
- E. Fasting (a physical discipline for spiritual alertness)
- F. Bible study and meditation (practicing kingdom concepts)

A. Provisions for Conquering the Enemy

Now that we have examined the covenant privileges and responsibilities of kingdom members and the constitution for this new way of living, let's take a close look at how we may conquer the enemy.

Please understand the importance of learning to fight! To save our families, our children, loved ones, friends, and nation, we must stand up and fight!

Not against people, but against the forces of hell. Christ has conquered Satan and

restored our rightful dominion. But we shall not claim an inch of enemy territory or rescue one soul from his dominion without a struggle!

In the Book of Acts are three key weapons that helped the early church prevail over every circumstance: the **Word of God**, the **name of Jesus**, and the **Holy Spirit** working through and with them.

To the apostles, the ministry and dignity of the Word was supreme. Not yet having the written New Testament Scriptures, the anointed spoken Word became a life-giving force. They preached the Word, taught the Word, magnified the Word, and honored the Word. The Word increased, the Word brought conviction, and the Word mightily prevailed. The early church lived in the Word and the Word lived in them.

The name of Jesus was their power of attorney and credentials for miracles. As His representatives, they became masters of demons and their forces. They cast out demons in His name, healed sick bodies in His name, and baptized in His name.

The Holy Spirit recreated dead spirits, made their bodies a temple or sanctuary, and became the powerful superintendent of the church, governing and giving direction to the disciples.

As they went forth with the Word and the name, in the power of the Holy Spirit, they were completely victorious over the enemy.

But how were they protected from enemy attacks? Paul described the spiritual armor that covered the inner man.

B. Spiritual Armor

Ephesians 6:10-18; Isaiah 59:17

A clear, open clash was demonstrated between two spiritual kingdoms—the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan. The two had always existed, but were somewhat veiled.

When Jesus and His apostles cast out evil

spirits, people saw that Satan was real and that demons were under his control. However, they also witnessed the superiority of God's power. The most dramatic impact was the fact that Satan was always defeated!

Our warfare is a struggle against an enemy that cannot be seen with physical eyes or be killed with bullets. To win this battle demands a knowledge of enemy strategy, the Christian's weapons and armor, and defense against his attacks.

The war is both offensive and defensive. How skillful we become in using our weapons determines the outcome of the war. However, weapons cannot effectively conquer this enemy if the body and soul are not surrendered to the Spirit's control.

In Ephesians chapter 6, Paul compares our walk with God to a Roman or Grecian soldier armed with six pieces of equipment. Because we are constantly invading Satan's territory or being confronted with his deceptions, our spirit must be clothed with God's armor.

The **helmet of salvation** protects the mind or thought-life. To prevent the enemy from introducing negative thoughts of fear, rebellion, unbelief or deception, the helmet of salvation becomes a safeguard for the mind.

The **breastplate of righteousness** protects the chest, abdomen, and back, extending to the top of the thighs. The heart, lungs and vital organs of the soldier's body are covered by the breastplate. This defensive piece of armor representing God's righteousness protects the source of spiritual life. Isaiah wrote,

“For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke” (Isaiah 59:17).

Protecting the soldier's thighs, the **girdle of truth** braces the armor tightly to the body and holds his garments in place. Paul compared the girdle to a knowledge of doctrinal truths that gathers and holds everything in place.

Roman soldiers wore brazen shoes that protected the shins and feet. Our **feet are shod with the gospel of peace**. How well a fighter stands, pursues the enemy or obeys the captain's commands depends largely upon strong legs. Not only are we to obey the gospel, but be prepared to “go” with the gospel!

Whether fighting the enemy, helping a discouraged, wounded brother or sister, or releasing a captive from Satan's bondage, we depend upon the feet being shod with the gospel of peace.

The **shield of faith** was a movable wall to defend the soldier against the enemy's “fiery” darts. These were arrows dipped in lead and a combustible substance. While speeding through the air, the arrows caught fire, then set the wooden shield ablaze. Therefore, metal coverings were attached to the shield to quench or “put out” the flames.

Our enemy's fiery darts are doubt, fear, worry, discouragement, and evil thoughts which inflame the passions. The covering that shields us from Satan's attacks is faith. Trusting the promises in God's Word quenches his fiery darts.

It has been said that faith is comprised of three things:

- Facts to believe.
- Commands to obey.
- Promises to enjoy.

Faith defends from Satan's attacks, provides needs, solves personal problems, heals sick bodies, and removes mountains of doubt and unbelief.

All the armor previously described has been defensive. One piece is both defensive and offensive—the **sword of the Spirit**, which is the **Word of God**. Of all the spiritual armor, the sword alone requires skill and practice.

Never is the sword used to cut or wound people. Our combat is 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” (Ephesians 6:12).

Young, inexperienced soldiers are rather awkward at first. While this weapon is unfamiliar, scriptures cannot be easily found. But with practice, they soon become adept at wielding passages that will kill doubt and unbelief, verses that build faith, and those that bring peace and solve problems.

With the Word of God, we can conquer demons in the name of Jesus, heal the sick, strengthen the weak, and deliver captives from Satan's power.

This unique piece of weaponry is indispensable. The Word not only is a weapon, but also becomes spiritual food to build the soldier's strength. Without the Spirit's sword, the

soldier can never survive.

The shield and sword—faith and the Word of God—team up as the principal pieces of armor. Those who acquire a rich knowledge of Scripture and a faith that declares, “Nothing is impossible with God!”, have no fear of any adversary.

C. Sources of strength

Now that we have explored the armor and weapons given us by God, let’s discuss three sources of spiritual strength that are available to every believer.

D. Prayer (developing a relationship with the King)

**Matthew 6:6; Psalm 91:1;
John 9:31; 15:7; Romans 8:26-27;
I Thessalonians 5:17; I John 3:22**

Prayer is the communication system between man and God. It is a key that unlocks the door of God’s treasury. Prayer helps us determine the will of God and then go forth to do His will. It is not merely asking what we want, but conforming to what He wants.

“If any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth” (John 9:31).

“If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us” (I John 5:14).

The only way to build a lasting relationship with God is through consistent prayer. Setting aside a definite time and place for prayer is more than a handy suggestion. Rather, it is an absolute **MUST** for spiritual survival! How can we defeat the enemy of our soul without fresh, daily reinforcements? Without the strength of daily communication with God, we **CANNOT** live victoriously.

When God created man, an amazing faculty was designed within him to visualize unseen things. We call it the **imagination**. As a contractor visualizes a completed house before the project begins or a woman pictures a new dress before cutting the fabric, so we can imagine the Lord in our minds as we talk with Him.

The problem with prayer is that we must discipline ourselves to talk with the Lord. If a busy schedule seems to prevent having a set time and place, include prayer throughout the day’s activities. Whenever you have three or four spare minutes, talk with Jesus.

Riding in the car, washing dishes, cleaning

house, mowing the grass, and shopping are great opportunities to take Him along. In this way, we can fulfill the command to “Pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5:17). Continual communication helps place Him at the center of life—where He should be!

Paul’s remarks to the Ephesians about husbands and wives loving one another were really referring to Christ and the church. He loved us before we loved Him, while we were yet His enemies. If He died for us while we were His enemies, what do you think He will do for us now that we are His friends, His sons and daughters, His bride?

As we learn to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, prayer will become a joy. Spending time with Him will be eagerly anticipated.

Prayer should be so intimate, life’s most closely guarded secrets can be freely shared with Christ. Why shouldn’t “doing the Father’s will” include relaxing in His presence, talking affectionately, enjoying His gentle touch? He wants to be as near as we will allow.

Do not leave Him in the “God room” of your heart all day and never acknowledge His presence or speak to Him. Being with Jesus in the secret place of the imagination can be the most enjoyable activity of the day!

There are many types of prayer—thanksgiving, supplication, confession, intercession, meditation, praying in the Spirit, and traveling prayer. Each meets a definite need. But do not spend all your time *asking* for gifts and forget the Giver. He has needs also.

Jesus enjoys hearing our words of praise and gratitude for what He has already done. And sometimes He wants us to be silent and listen to what He has to say.

As children grow, “prayers” to their parents change. They begin with, “I want . . .” or “Would you please give me . . .” A little later, we hear an occasional, “Thank you!” or they may even ask, “Is there anything I can do for you?”

The more our will conforms to God’s will, the more prayer time changes to sharing. His top secrets can only be shared with mature believers. As Jesus once told His disciples,

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now” (John 16:12).

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared

for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God” (I Corinthians 2:9-10).

Never be content with a constant “give-me” prayer life. Enter into a deeper walk with God, not surface Christianity. Read good books that will inspire you to reach for higher levels of spiritual communication. The Lord has many fantastic secrets to share with those who are ready to hear.

E. Fasting (a physical discipline for spiritual alertness)

Matthew 6:16-18; Acts 13:2-3; Mark 9:29; Joel 1:14; 2:12; Isaiah 58:6-8

To fast means to voluntarily abstain from eating or drinking anything with food value for one or more meals. The best policy is to eat nothing and drink only water.

Why is spiritual alertness increased when we fast? Both eating and exercise require an increased amount of blood. But when we neither eat nor exercise, a larger supply of blood is available for mental and spiritual concentration.

While fasting, we can more readily perceive God’s direction for our lives. In extended fasts of over three days, sensual desires decrease and we become more sensitive to the Spirit.

Prayer is the force with which we grasp the invisible. Fasting is the force with which we cast aside the visible.

Why should we fast? In Bible days, fasting was combined with repentance for sin, to seek God’s will in a specific matter, concern about God’s work, for demonic deliverance, protection, deep sorrow, or a form of worship. Jesus’ forty-day fast was a preparation for His upcoming ministry, enabling Him to quickly defeat Satan’s temptations (Matthew 4:2).

Another vital reason for fasting is for health purposes. Abstaining from food one day a week gives the heart, brain, stomach, kidneys and intestines a well-deserved vacation. Fasting will purify the blood and remove poisons more effectively than any other medical means.

Guidelines for fasting were mentioned in Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6:16-18). The Pharisees were quite faithful to fast and to let everyone know. Jesus scolded them for disfiguring their faces and told them

to wash instead.

Therefore, we should shun all outward signs of abstaining from food and drink. If we fast to impress others with our spirituality, their commendation will be our only reward.

God judges our motives for fasting and rewards us accordingly.

F. Bible study and meditation (practicing kingdom concepts)

Joshua 1:8; Proverbs 4:4; Psalm 1:2-3; 119:97, 99

We have discovered that God originally planned to rule man through his spirit. In turn, the spirit was to rule the soul (mind, will, emotions) and the submissive soul would rule the body.

For the spirit to become the center of our existence, it must be given new attention. What helps the spirit grow and develop? We know how to feed the body and the mind, but what about the spirit? Communing with God, Scripture meditation and the preaching of the Word satisfy the cravings of the inner man.

When we are baptized with the Holy Spirit, the Bible begins to come alive! As the Spirit helps us comprehend His Word, a rebuilding process begins in the thoughts, emotions and will. Saturating the mind with Scripture is the way to educate the spirit for its leadership role.

The word “meditate” comes from the idea of a cow chewing its cud. What the cow has previously eaten comes up again and again to be chewed and enjoyed. This is how we meditate on Scripture.

First we memorize passages of Scripture on particular subjects that are especially meaningful. Then those same verses are rehearsed and repeated, as we savor each individual word.

Suppose you have been misunderstood and deeply hurt by a companion or dear friend. Find applicable passages in the Psalms or read about David’s disappointments. As you slowly read the verses, words of encouragement will leap from the pages. Memorize those special verses or write them in a notebook. Each time depression or gloom threatens to cloud your vision, meditate on the Word of God—word by word—and watch the sadness disappear!

Notice these beautiful promises to those who learn to meditate:

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success” (Joshua 1:8).

“He taught me also, and said unto me, Let thine heart retain my words: keep my commandments, and live” (Proverbs 4:4).

“O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. . . . I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation” (Psalm 119:97, 99).

“But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper” (Psalm 1:2-3).

God’s formula for prosperity and success is this: meditate day and night in Scripture. By this constant saturation of scriptural teachings, we are enabled to make correct decisions and align our will with His.

How much time do you spend each day reading the newspaper, magazines or books? If the Bible is our main Book, we should be spending more time in it than the others.

To begin, read the Gospels, then the Book of Acts and the Epistles. Plan to read the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew, chapters 5, 6, and 7) and the love chapter (I Corinthians, chapter 13) at least once a month.

Choose a system for marking your Bible. Certain topics could be marked with an appropriate colored pen. Underline passages that speak a message especially to you.

Invest in a good concordance and other practical study helps. If you are seriously studying the Word, purchase an *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament* which has the literal translation of the Greek words immedi-

ately under them. With the help of a Greek-English lexicon and a Greek concordance, you can learn much about the original language.

Kingdom concepts were designed to be practiced—not just to be admired. We must “do” the Word. Put it in action. Live according to its instructions.

The mind must be renewed and subjected to the recreated spirit through obedience to the Word. There can be no renewing of the mind without practicing, living, and doing the Word.

C.P. Kilgore, a pioneer Pentecostal preacher, was known for his humble walk with God and his intense prayer life. At one point of his ministry, he was so desperate for revival that he and his wife went on a thirty-day prayer chain. One of them was praying at all times, twenty-four hours a day.

All great things begin with prayer and the love and study of the Word of God. If you want things to be shaken then you must pray.

“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31).

The price of praying and getting into the Word every day is known as personal discipline. But once we make a habit of spending time every day in reading, studying, comparing scripture with scripture, memorizing, and meditating upon God’s Word, we will develop such a love for the Bible, reading it will become sheer delight!

Prayer also will become as David described it in Psalm 16:11:

“Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

Lesson 9 – Chart 4

Gifts of the Spirit


GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT		
God's Power Manifested Through Believers <small>(1 CORINTHIANS 12:11)</small>		
Revelation Gifts  The "Knowing" Gifts	Power Gifts  The "Doing" Gifts	Inspiration Gifts  The "Speaking" Gifts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discerning of Spirits • Word of Knowledge • Word of Wisdom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifts of Healings • Working of Miracles • Faith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Divers Kinds of Tongues • Interpretation of Tongues • Prophecy
"But covet earnestly the best gifts." <small>(1 CORINTHIANS 12:31)</small>		
<small>LESSON 9</small>		<small>CHART 4</small>

Chart Objective:

To introduce the nine spiritual gifts that are given to manifest God's power to the world. The church desperately needs these gifts to complete the work Christ began.

Chart Outline:

- A. Gifts of the Spirit
- B. Inspiration Gifts
- C. Power Gifts
- D. Revelation Gifts

A. Gifts of the Spirit

The same Spirit Who imparts to believers the gift of the Holy Ghost also gives other favors. The simple word "gift" implies that these blessings cannot be earned. They are freely given by God to His children.

In speaking of the gifts, Paul wrote:

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal" (I Corinthians 12:4-7).

Various gifts, administrations, operations, and manifestations are all implemented by the same Spirit. The word "manifestation" means a showing forth, a making visible, or making known. This word shows that gifts of the Spirit are a continuation of Jesus' ministry shown through His people today.

The initial baptism of the Spirit is given to *everyone* who believes and asks for it. Various gifts or manifestations of the Spirit are not distributed to all believers, but as God so chooses.

The New Testament Greek word for "gift" when referring to the baptism of the Holy Spirit (speaking in tongues) is always the word *dorea*. When the Greek word for "gift" denotes any of the other nine spiritual gifts—including the gift of tongues—the word *charisma* is used. The two words are never interchanged. A clear, obvious distinction is always made between these two spiritual experiences.

Gifts or manifestations of the Spirit should normally follow being baptized with the Spirit.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe" (Mark 16:17).

While it is true that the gifts reside within Christ in us, yet the Scripture teaches that they are manifested only at the Holy Spirit's bidding—"as he will" (I Corinthians 12:11).

Members of Christ's body should ask and believe that God will manifest His love through us as needs become evident. Should someone need healing, we should ask God to manifest the gifts of healings through us to the needy person.

As Christians mature, certain gifts seem to be expressed more frequently and effectively through them. When this happens, a ministry in those gifts has begun. The person with such a ministry should encourage new believers to desire the gifts also. At the same time, he should be careful not to focus so strongly on his particular ministry that he stops expecting God to work through him in other ways. God loves variety!

Some may say, "You may operate the gifts if you like, but I'll take the fruit of the Spirit!"

What is the difference between the Spirit's gifts and fruit? Gifts are various ways in which God's power works through the life of the believer. The gifts operate only when needed; otherwise they are not evident.

Fruit is the character and nature of Jesus Christ being shown in the believer's life. Bearing fruit is a continual growth process.

The precious fruit produced by the Spirit develops us into mature Christians; gifts do not. A person's character is to be judged by his fruit—not his gifts. The Corinthian Christians were complimented for having desired and received all the gifts of the Spirit, but were sharply rebuked for remaining immature babes and failing to develop spiritual fruit.

The gifts can flourish only when operated by “fruit-bearing” members.

Remember that we do not have to choose one or the other. We can have both. Jesus did not come merely to tell the sick, “I love you!” He also boldly declared, “Be healed!”

How sad to love people, but be powerless to help them! The fruit and gifts work together to show Christ’s love and power.

Sandwiched between the two descriptive chapters about spiritual gifts (I Corinthians, chapters 12 and 14) is the “love chapter” (chapter 13). If we have the gift of tongues, the gift of prophecy, the gift of knowledge, and the gift of faith—but exhibit no love, our gifts are useless. The church poses no threat to the forces of evil if powerful gifts of faith, miracles, and healing are not operated in an atmosphere of love!

Because there has been so little teaching about the gifts, perhaps more fruit is evident than the gifts’ mighty signs, wonders, and miracles. However, to accomplish the great commission, the church must be encouraged to “covet earnestly the best gifts”—and then use them!

Although the manifestation of spiritual gifts diminished after the apostolic age, even during the Dark Ages thrilling incidents of miraculous power appeared. The persecuted sects of Waldenses and Albigenses, John Wesley and the early Methodists, the Moravians and other contemporary groups reveal that the operation of gifts never did entirely disappear. When men earnestly prayed for their restoration, the result was a fresh outpouring of the Spirit.

Here are some reasons why God wants us to have His gifts:

- **To manifest the body of Christ on earth.** To know what Christ is like, the world looks at those who now comprise His body. The work of love and compassion that our “Head” began must be continued by His “body,” the church.
- **To assist in evangelizing the world.** When miraculous signs confirm the preaching of the Word, even the heathen are convinced that the gospel message is genuine.
- **To edify and deliver God’s people when in trouble.** “Edify” means to build, or promote spiritual growth. Members of an assembly are strengthened, blessed, and receive miraculous

assistance through the gifts.

- **To perfect the church.** God-called ministers use these gifts to bring perfection and maturity to local congregations, as well as detect deception and false doctrine.

Along with various gifts are various specialized ministries, offices and operations. The five offices—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers—are specially called administrators to train or perfect the saints.

Since every believer has a particular ministry to fulfill in helping the body function properly, it is important to determine what our particular role is. Then we should earnestly covet the best gifts that would complement and enhance our work for God.

What are some of the conditions for receiving these gifts? Proportionately few receive gifts who have natural talent or ability. Human nature tends to rely on inherited special skills rather than depending upon the Spirit for guidance.

Those who are humble, completely dedicated to God, who have found their place in the body, and have proven themselves both to God and fellow believers are potential recipients for spiritual gifts.

While we are not permitted to use the gifts as we choose, the Scriptures teach that God distributes them in such a manner that we can identify this person’s and that person’s specific gift. Each believer should have at least one manifestation of the Spirit and feel responsible to properly use it.

Obviously, all God’s gifts are perfect. James said,

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17).

However, since God’s gifts must be expressed through mortal, imperfect channels, mistakes will be made, just as a beginner in math will make many errors. But even our mistakes can be turned to God’s glory if we completely trust and rely on Him.

Seven of these nine gifts were manifested in the Old Testament and the Gospels from time to time as people were moved upon by the Holy Spirit. To those seven were added the gift of tongues and interpretation of tongues after the Day of Pentecost.

We shall discuss the gifts, not in the order they are presented in I Corinthians 12, but to help us see the relationship of the various manifestations.

B. Inspiration Gifts—The “Speaking” Gifts

Let’s begin with the three “inspiration” or “speaking” gifts that are more frequently manifested than the others:

- Divers kinds of tongues
- Interpretation of tongues
- Prophecy

The three gifts of speaking anointed utterances are not intended to guide our lives, but to help unfold God’s wishes to us. They help us turn Godward.

Since divers kinds of tongues and interpretation of tongues are twin gifts that operate together, we shall begin with them.

The gift of tongues could be defined as *a supernatural utterance by the Holy Spirit in a language not understood or ever learned by the speaker and rarely understood by the hearers.*

The gift of interpretation of tongues is *the supernatural explanation by the Spirit of the meaning of an utterance in other tongues.*

From Paul’s description as “divers kinds of tongues,” we understand that there is more than one form of speaking in tongues. We have found that the initial evidence of the Holy Ghost baptism is speaking with tongues. Paul also mentioned another form of devotional tongues called “praying in the spirit” and “singing in the spirit” (I Corinthians 14:14-15; Ephesians 6:18).

Of the nine, the gift of tongues alone is specifically intended to bless and benefit the one who manifests the gift. Everyone who receives the Holy Spirit baptism can and should exercise this supernatural way of praying every day:

“He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself” (I Corinthians 14:4).

The gift of tongues is also a sign for unbelievers attending our services (I Corinthians 14:22). It becomes a “sign” of God’s power when the message in tongues happens to be a language known to the unbeliever or when the interpretation has a powerful impact as God speaks directly to him.

In private devotion, we may edify our-

selves as freely as we wish. But in public meetings we are instructed to keep silent unless one is present who has the twin-gift of interpretation of tongues.

Those who manifest the gift of tongues should pray to also receive the gift of interpretation (I Corinthians 14:13). When the two are coupled, the entire church is edified.

The reason brief messages in tongues sometimes have a lengthy interpretation is that this gift is not a *translation* of tongues, but an *interpretation* of the meaning. We may be hearing a lengthy, pictorial description of the unknown tongues.

A beginner’s first interpretations are usually very simple and brief. Our goal should be to interpret with unction and anointing so that the congregation may be blessed and edified.

The gift of prophecy may be defined as *a supernatural utterance in the language of the people; declaring that which cannot be known by natural means.*

When a Frenchman speaks anointed words in the French language, he is prophesying. But suppose I am English and a Frenchman (who does not know English) is anointed to speak English. That is tongues to him and prophecy to me. These three gifts work together—prophecy, tongues and interpretation.

Paul ranks this as a very beneficial gift to the church:

“Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that may prophesy. . . . I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: . . . Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues” (I Corinthians 14:1, 5, 39).

Prophecy should be the most common, publicly exercised gift in the church. Its primary purpose is to minister to believers through edification, exhortation, and comfort—or to build up, strengthen, and console (I Corinthians 14:3).

The difference between prophesying and preaching is that a sermon involves intellect, training and preparation. But prophecy is uttering words given by God from the spirit—not the intellect. In the course of preaching, prophecy and other gifts of wisdom or knowledge may be manifested, but they are distinguished from ordinary preaching.

At times, a “spirit of prophecy” rests upon a meeting when *anyone* can prophesy. When Paul laid hands upon twelve disciples at Ephesus to receive the Holy Ghost, they “spoke with tongues, and prophesied” (Acts 19:6).

A higher level of prophecy, which requires more faith and a greater anointing, is the gift of prophecy. This gift is manifested through a more spiritually mature person who is considered a “specialist” in the prophetic realm.

The highest level is the prophet—which is a specially called office or ministry. Having been equipped with necessary gifts, fellow ministers invariably recognize the special call of God upon the prophet’s life.

Everyone should expect to prophesy. Pray that God would edify His body on earth through you. While fellowshiping with brothers and sisters in the Lord, you may find thoughts and words of inspiration coming into your mind that were not composed. If they are scriptural, share them first in small gatherings. As you begin speaking, a flow of words will come that are anointed and inspired of the Spirit.

The more we edify ourselves at home by speaking in tongues, by filling our spirit with God’s Word, and committing our lives to the Lord, the more effective the utterances will become.

Because there are three sources for spiritual messages—God’s Spirit, Satan, and the human intellect—prophecies must be judged (I Corinthians 14:29). God’s gifts are perfect, but He uses imperfect channels. Therefore, all messages must be judged by God’s Word.

A word of advice offered by Paul to the church was,

“Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (I Thessalonians 5:20-21).

Why did some folks despise to hear prophecy? Perhaps it was because of the “mixture.” Occasionally, confusing or erroneous ideas were interwoven, causing suspicion about the operation of the gifts. But rather than discard all supernatural manifestations, Paul cautioned them to learn to prove what is from God and what is not.

Most mistakes are the result of ignorance. Someone is honestly trying to assist God. But even though the only prophecy you are

acquainted with has been weird, weak, or strange sounding, do not despise it. Learn to hold to that which is good and reject the bad. “Let all things be done decently and in order” (I Corinthians 14:40).

We desperately need to hear the voice of a true prophet. Pray for God to choose willing men who will become His mouthpiece for the end-time church.

C. Power Gifts—The “Doing” Gifts

The gifts of power have been classified as:

- Gifts of healings
- Working of miracles
- Faith

These gifts are the continuation of Jesus’ compassionate ministry to those in need.

The gifts of healings may be defined as *supernatural healing of all types of diseases and infirmities—organic, functional, nervous, acute, or chronic—without natural means of any sort.*

Because the gifts of healings are more widely distributed than the other two power gifts, we may conclude that mankind urgently requires a remedy for poor health. The curse of Adam’s sin has resulted in sick folk all about us. Therefore, with tender compassion for the suffering, God abundantly provided for the diseased.

A distinctive characteristic of this gift is its plural title, “gifts of healings.” Three times in the Greek both nouns are plural. This gift alone is a multiple or a series of gifts. Few achieve the ideal goal of exercising all the healing gifts equally well in their ministries.

At the forefront of the commission to His disciples, Jesus commanded:

“Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8).

How do gifts of healings operate? First, God *imparts* or gives healing power to a believer. Second, as that believer lays hands upon a sick person, *virtue* (God’s healing power) passes from him to the sick one (Mark 5:30).

Gifts of healings may be manifested instantly or progressively. An instant healing is often termed a “healing miracle.” By simply reducing the time span, God heals in five minutes rather than five months. Progressive healing is a “recovery” healing.

A. D. Urshan, a pioneer Pentecostal preacher, mightily used in the gifts, was so sensitive to God's voice, he ministered to thousands of people in various manners. Sometimes he anointed the sick with oil; upon others he laid his hands; but frequently, he just spoke the Word of faith. Many were healed and delivered under his ministry.

Four steps operate the gifts of healing:

- Listen to the Spirit's instructions.
- Obey what the Spirit says.
- Faith begins to grow.
- The healing comes.

Healing is one of the greatest attractions to the gospel. When sick, aching bodies are made well, sinners want to know more about salvation!

The gift of working of miracles is a *supernatural act whereby God intervenes in the realm of nature, objects, and affairs of men to supersede natural law; a temporary suspension of the accustomed order.*

Suppose you are traveling down an expressway at 55 mph. Suddenly a state trooper passes at 120 mph with sirens screaming and lights flashing. Why was he permitted to travel at such speed? He superseded the speed limit because of some emergency farther up the road. Rather than breaking the law, he was superseding it.

God does the same. As our Creator, He gives abundant harvests of wheat and corn for making bread. Rivers swarm with fish. But when He miraculously fed five thousand men with five loaves and two small fish, He reduced the growth period for grain and fish to a short span of time. No laws were broken; they were merely superseded.

God's people should be "miracle-conscious." Coming out of darkness into the light of God's grace marks the beginning of a life of miracles.

The gift of working of miracles should be so widely disbursed among the body of Christ that no one shrugs his shoulders and shakes his head when asked if he knows of anyone demonstrating this gift.

Remember that all miracles are not of God. Satan is quite adept in the supernatural. When Moses attempted to convince Pharaoh of God's power, the Egyptian magicians duplicated his miracle. Yet God's supreme power was demonstrated when Aaron's rod swallowed the Egyptians' rods.

Miracles could be classed into four groups:

- **Deliverance** (opening of Red Sea; Peter's release from prison).
- **Provision** (oil and meal for widow woman; water turned to wine).
- **Judgment** (Ananias and Sapphira struck dead; Elymas the sorcerer blinded).
- **Transportation** (Philip transported to Azotus from the desert; Jesus and Peter walked on water).

As Christ's second coming approaches, miracles will become more and more prevalent. Expect this gift to continually broaden and expand until "two witnesses" appear (Revelation 11:3-12). The alternative to accepting divine miracles will be taking the mark of the Beast to buy or sell.

The Book of Revelation predicts that our present age will end in the greatest display of divine miracles the world has ever witnessed!

The gift of faith is a *supernatural faith that possesses a divine certainty that whatever is desired shall eventually come to pass.*

On the stormy Sea of Galilee, Jesus' disciples became so frightened, they awakened the Master (Matthew 8:23-27). Had they remained calm, in spite of the roaring wind and waves, Jesus would have taken them *through* the billows as though they did not exist—the gift of faith. Because they could not trust Him to safely keep and protect them, Christ was compelled to quieten and remove the howling wind and waves by the lesser gift of miracles.

Faith is believing before seeing. But substance is eventually given to what was believed. The time element makes the difference between faith and miracles.

The gift of miracles produces an immediate action; the gift of faith secures the same results, but after a sustained period of time and in a less spectacular way.

Once faith is dropped into the heart by God, we say, "Thank You, Lord. I know it will come to pass." And then we wait. And while we wait, we thank and praise Him, because we are *certain* of the answer.

There are three types of supernatural faith. *Saving faith* is believing the gospel (Mark 16:16).

The *fruit of faith*, a higher level, can only be attained by abiding in Christ. "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (John 15:5).

The *gift of faith*, unlike the fruit, is given

instantaneously. It is a sudden surge of faith, usually in a crisis, to believe that what we act or speak in Jesus' name shall come to pass.

The benefits of this gift are:

- **Divine protection** (Daniel in the lions' den; Peter's faith caused him to sleep on the eve of his execution).
- **Supply needs** (Elijah fed by ravens for many months; disciples were sent on a preaching mission with no provisions but the clothes they wore).
- **Raise the dead.**
- **Cast out evil spirits.**
- **Minister the Holy Spirit** (Lay hands on believers to receive the baptism).

What a powerful gift! How the body of Christ should earnestly covet this manifestation of God's Spirit. Without it, the church cannot be complete.

D. Revelation Gifts—

The "Knowing" Gifts

Three of the gifts reveal a supernatural ability to "know" anything in the mind of God—past, present, or future—human, divine, or demonic:

- **Discerning of spirits**
- **Word of knowledge**
- **Word of wisdom**

These gifts are especially useful in providing church administrators with facts, origins, knowledge, or events.

The gift of discerning of spirits is *a supernatural insight into the secret realm of spirits; the ability to know the difference between two equally authentic miracles.*

The inclusion of this gift proves the reality of Satan's power. While Paul declared that we can all have an inward guidance of the Spirit (Romans 8:14), not every believer has discerning of spirits.

Churches in America, until recent years, rarely confronted individuals who were controlled by demons. Consequently, scores of ministers have never experienced casting out a demon in Jesus' name. Practical experience is lacking in this area.

However, in other countries, demon powers are quite bold. Young Africans may chant for days, fasting, praying and singing until controlled by demonic power. Then they fall to the ground, writhing and frothing at the mouth. After several hours, they emerge as authentic witch doctors. Civilized nations know little of this realm.

While missionaries in idol-worshipping countries are daily exposed to demonic spirits, some North American pastors formerly considered such experiences incredible! However, with the invasion of drugs, Eastern religions, and gross sexual perversion, the existence and activities of evil spirits are becoming increasingly apparent.

From an article in the *Houston Post* (September 15, 1985), we learned that copies of *The Satanic Bible* in occult and shopping mall bookstores are suddenly being depleted. The manuals, which outline the basic principles and rituals of devil worship, are leaving the stores in the hands of Houston teenagers. There has been a major resurgence of Satanism in this country. In the '60s, it was hippies; in the '80s, Satanism gained strength.

Demon powers in America shall soon challenge men of God by manifesting themselves openly in meetings, daring restraint! When these severe attacks come, our foundation must be unshakable.

As we progress in the spiritual realm, this basic philosophy must be rejected: "Everything good is from God; everything bad is from the devil. Everyone who quotes Scripture is of God and those who say bad words must be from the devil. And if you are really sincere, the Lord will never let you be deceived."

Such simplistic theories are blinding and conducive to error. Everything is not black or white; there are shades of grey. God included the gift of discerning of spirits because He knew that within the church is "mixture." Some concepts are of God, some are of Satan, and some of human reasoning. This is why John wrote,

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (I John 4:1-3).

John was *not* instructing us to merely ask a person, "Do you believe Jesus Christ has come in the flesh?" Most would answer, "Certainly!" But their answer provides no assurance of freedom from demon spirits. No,

this question is intended for *demon* spirits—not for people!

Paul also referred to this “mixture” of truth and error in the church by instructing us to judge a prophet’s message:

“Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge” (I Corinthians 14:29).

A prophet’s message should be judged because it may contain error. Every minister of the gospel—even the most godly and sincere—is susceptible to having “mixture” in his Bible knowledge should he fail to thoroughly study a subject. Consequently, his words must be weighed with Scripture.

The discerning of spirits might be called a “police” gift to prevent the devil from causing problems in the fellowship.

The church needs this gift to aid in the deliverance of the afflicted, oppressed, and tormented. Those who are controlled or tormented by an evil spirit need deliverance.

Once Jesus cast out a spirit of infirmity before healing a crippled woman. He went to the source of her problem, which was an evil spirit.

This gift also discovers and exposes Satan’s servants or demon miracle workers. Paul detected that Elymas, the sorcerer, was perverting the right ways of the Lord (Acts 13:9-10). Elymas was *discovered*, but did not ask to be *delivered*.

Should a person definitely want to be delivered from the enemy, first lead him to repentance so that both of you will be protected by the blood of Jesus. Be sure that you have confessed and asked forgiveness for any known sin in your own life.

Then try to determine the exact nature of the spirit or spirits that are troubling the person. The Holy Spirit will lead you in this. As he names things that are tormenting him, address each specific spirit. Remind the person that you will not be speaking to him but to the intruding spirit.

Encourage him to repeat after you: “In the name of Jesus Christ and by the blood that He shed at Calvary, I bind and command the spirit of (fear, anger, anxiety, lust, etc.) to loose its hold and come out! You are a trespasser and you must go!” Unless these are spoken with authority and force, the spirit will not obey you.

Before the person can give the command

himself, he may have to repeat it after you several times. After rebuking and casting out the spirit, unite in prayer, helping him learn to pray alone.

Some spirits cause an emotional reaction as they depart, such as coughing, sneezing, vomiting, nausea, or even violently throwing a person to the floor. Claim the protection of Jesus’ blood and proceed until the spirits leave.

Once the deliverance has been accomplished, worship and glorify the Lord together. Explain how the void left by the evil spirits should be filled with God’s Spirit. Emphasize the importance of prayer, praise and feeding on the Word of God to prevent their return. Then lay your hands on the person and pray that he may be filled with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Be careful not to treat a person’s lack of discipline as a demon spirit. Self-discipline, aided by the Spirit, can conquer works of the flesh, such as fear, anger, lust, and gluttony.

Most demonic spirits manifest themselves in mental or physical disorders, such as continual headaches or nausea in church services or while at prayer, extreme violence, abnormal fear, and others.

Since “good” spirits outnumber the bad (Revelation 12:4), this gift is also valuable to reveal angelic spirits. Invisible guardian spirits protect and guard believers.

As we approach the impending persecution of the last days, we can expect increased activity among our “ministers from the other world.” We shall be experiencing angelic presence much more as they serve and support us in times of need.

How comforting to know that the great “Head” of the church has provided His “body” with sufficient power to detect any subtle deception of Satan.

Another “knowing” gift is the gift of the word of knowledge. This gift is *the supernatural revelation by the Holy Ghost of certain facts that could not be known otherwise*.

This gift miraculously reveals details about a person, place, or object. Since nothing is hidden from God—past, present, or future—He can reveal whatever He wishes.

With this gift, God imparts only what He wants us to know for a particular situation. At times, it operates as a distinct, separate gift; or it may be combined with other gifts.

The word of knowledge may come to an

individual by an audible voice, visions, dreams, angelic instruction, the word of prophecy, interpretation of tongues, or while praying or meditating we become aware that a certain thing is true.

Because of its many uses, the church needs this valuable gift to:

- Reveal facts in one's life for the purpose of spiritual correction.
- To counsel with people.
- To assist in soulwinning.
- To reveal the cause of sickness.
- To assist the ministry of teaching.

This gift revealed to Ananias a vision of Saul of Tarsus' conversion, the man's name and address where Saul was visiting. He was told that Saul was praying, that his attitude was repentant and he needed healing and baptism in the Holy Ghost (Acts 9:11-12, 17).

If believers would earnestly covet this gift, thousands more would be won to Christ. As Paul wrote,

“And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth” (I Corinthians 14:25).

The gift of the word of wisdom is *a supernatural revelation of God's divine intelligence and understanding*.

Through this gift, the Spirit directs, guides, and makes us aware of His divine counsel for a specific situation.

God has a storehouse of all the facts of heaven and earth throughout the ages. To *recall* facts is memory; to have them ever *before* Him is knowledge.

When God reveals a glimpse of some future event, man actually views God's purposes and objective. This is a word of divine wisdom.

Everything moves according to God's sovereign plans and purposes for earth-dwellers. Demons, Antichrist, communists, kings, rulers, governments, popes, churches—everything is flowing according to His eternal and sovereign will.

The word of wisdom reveals to man God's sovereign purpose. He allows us to see and know the things He sees and knows. This link with divine wisdom allows us to “know” a small part of His activities on earth.

This gift comes by fervently praying, “God, I want to know Your sovereign purpose for my life, for my city, my nation, my world.” Then

He begins changing our lives by thrusting us into situations and circumstances that will align us with His purpose.

The gifts of the word of wisdom and word of knowledge are closely related, similar to that of natural wisdom and knowledge. Knowledge supernaturally reveals facts from God, while wisdom supernaturally gives direction for the proper use of the word of knowledge.

Only a “word,” a fragmentary part is revealed. As a lawyer relates only the bit of information needed for legal advice—rather than his entire store of information, so the Spirit imparts only what is sufficient for a particular crisis.

In Christ's ministry, the word of wisdom functioned perfectly. His answers to Satan on the Mount of Temptation (Luke 4:1-12), His conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:5-30) and His reply to John the Baptist's disciples (Luke 7:18-23) all indicated divine, supernatural wisdom.

This gift is not human wisdom or the godly wisdom of a spiritual person. It cannot be learned by studying the Scriptures, hearing anointed sermons, or reading books written by wise believers. When a special need for human, divine or natural wisdom exists, this supernatural gift can be instantly imparted to a believer.

The person best adapted to manifest this gift would be a pastor. However, as the congregation grows, loyal supporters are needed who will unite with their leader in counseling and developing other members.

With the momentous needs in every home and congregation today, the word of wisdom is a most vital gift in the church. Here are some of its uses:

- **Solve human problems.** Counseling is one of the greatest needs in every congregation. Multitudes of homes are plagued by marital problems and tangled family relationships. They need divine wisdom!
- **Guide the church.** Persons used in local church government urgently need the word of wisdom above all other gifts to make monumental decisions affecting millions of lives.
- **Testify before rulers.** Jesus predicted that leaders and laity alike would be brought before government officials to defend their faith and testimony. He instructed,

“But when they deliver you up, take no

thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you” (Matthew 10:19-20).

- **Wisdom to deliver from harm.**
- **Warn of judgment to come.**
- **Confirm a missionary call.**

- **Reveal the future.**

What a challenge is before us today! God’s gifts are the answer for continuing His work on earth and helping to perfect the saints. We must earnestly covet the best gifts that would help each of us fulfill our ministry in the body of Christ and display His power to a world that has no hope.

Lesson 9 – Chart 5 A New Priesthood With New, Living Sacrifices

Chart Objective:

To examine the New Covenant priesthood, its structure, ministry, and living sacrifices that are acceptable unto God in our new life in the Spirit.

Chart Outline:

- The fivefold ministry gifts
- The “royal priesthood” offers “sacrifices of praise”
- Forms of praise
- David’s tabernacle restored

A. The fivefold ministry gifts Ephesians 4:11-12

Under the Old Covenant, God’s anointed ministry consisted of the prophet, the priest, and the king of Israel.

Before Christ ascended to heaven, a new system was inaugurated. He “gave gifts unto men” (Ephesians 4:8). A new form of priesthood was emerging that would involve every covenant member and be supervised with specially called and anointed overseers.

From Paul’s writings, we find several classifications of these “gifts” given by Christ to New Covenant members. First he mentions

nine “spiritual” gifts (I Corinthians 12:7-11). Then in Romans 12:7-8, 13 and I Corinthians 12:28 he lists several “service” gifts:

- Ministry (serving)
- Exhortation
- Giving
- Ruling
- Showing mercy
- Helps
- Governments
- Hospitality

Finally, he describes the “ministry” gifts, usually referred to as the fivefold ministry:

“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Why did Christ give to the church five offices of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers? These specially called administrators were to train or to “perfect” the saints or bring them to spiritual maturity. Perfecting saints is the primary objective of overseers in the body of Christ.

The simplest way to remember the fivefold ministry is to think of the human hand:

- ✓ The thumb, the strongest member of the hand, represents the **apostle**.
- ✓ The first finger, the **prophet**, points the way.
- ✓ The long middle finger is the **evangelist**, or the “gatherer.”
- ✓ The third finger represents the **pastor**, guarding and showing compassion to the flock.

- ✓ The little finger is the **teacher**, which gives balance to the hand as well as the body of Christ.

When all five ministries are working in harmony, the church can gather and retain the largest handful!

Saints are not to be perfected for their own benefit, but for the advantage of the body. To minister and participate in the tremendous great commission, every member should be performing the particular role assigned to him.

New Testament churches seemed to have a “sharing” ministry. Prophets, apostles, evangelists, and others traveled from church to church, sharing, correcting errors, encouraging, exhorting, rebuking in the Spirit where they found errors.

There were no isolated groups living under the rule of one elder or teacher and having nothing to do with others. Rather than claiming absolute authority over one congregation, they submitted one to another. Paul wrote,

“Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God” (Ephesians 5:21).

The operation of God’s kingdom is to be shared. Each member must find the place where they can best serve. Knowing and doing God’s will should be our ultimate goal.

Surely God must be saying to the church today, “The needs of the world will never be met by professional ministers alone. Every disciple must move into ministry!”

A “body” ministry means that each member is participating and functioning in the special place best fitted to his abilities—under the supervision of an overseer.

B. The “royal priesthood” offers “sacrifices of praise”

I Peter 2:9; Hebrews 13:15

A primary function of the Levitical priesthood was to “come near to me to minister unto me” (Ezekiel 44:15). Ministering to the Lord was always meant to precede working for the Lord. Yet we often find ourselves answering calls to serve rather than fulfilling the primary reason for man’s existence:

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment” (Mark 12:30).

The first priority is to love and worship the Lord. Serving comes second.

Now that the Old Covenant sacrificial offerings of bulls and goats have been fulfilled with Christ’s blood, the only sacrifice acceptable to God is that which comes from the spirit:

“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. . . . But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (I Peter 2:5, 9).

Each individual covenant member has become a king and priest unto God (Revelation 1:6). By adoption into the royal family of heaven, we are kings; the office of priest is fulfilled through intercessory prayer, presenting needs to the Lord. However, through praise and worship, we minister unto the Lord!

As Christ’s royal priesthood, our “spiritual sacrifices” declare the wonderful works of Him Who has called us out of darkness into light. Our lips proclaim God’s “worth”; Who He is; what He has done; what He means to us personally. We praise, extol, celebrate, glorify, and honor the Lord.

“Worship” comes from the Hebrew word meaning “to prostrate; to reverence; to kiss.” Therefore, worship is a very intimate act whereby the spirit of man is touched by the presence of the living God.

Singing, praying, and praising may all lead to worship, but true worship is God’s Spirit touching and igniting our spirit with His divine fire!

True worship comes only from the heart and is not dependent upon circumstances. This is clearly shown in Abraham’s answer to his servant before offering his son as a sacrifice:

“Abide ye here . . . and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you” (Genesis 22:5).

Physical postures describe certain forms of worship: standing, kneeling, lying prostrate, wearing sackcloth and ashes, lifting hands, clapping hands, lifting and bowing the head, and dancing. Joining with the spirit and soul, the body becomes active in the celebration!

How often do we praise Him? Should our expressions of adoration be offered only at mealtime or when we go to church? Paul gave us a clue:

“By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name” (Hebrews 13:15).

Our lives should be punctuated throughout the day with praise, thanksgiving and adoration. God inhabits the praises of His people (Psalm 22:3). When our hearts are set upon Him, we learn to “practice” the presence of God without reminders.

Understanding that worship should constantly be in progress clarifies such exhortations as: “Pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5:17) and “whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord” (Colossians 3:17). All of life becomes a worship service!

If every member practices this way of life, congregational services will simply be a continuation of individual worship services begun that morning.

Perhaps the day will be something like this: Upon awakening, we lie quietly in bed, praising and worshipping the Lord, committing ourselves to His leadership and rule.

While driving to work, the conversation is continued. As He flashes before our mind some unkind word spoken to a spouse or a lack of interest in the children, we confess our wrong and ask forgiveness. Throughout the day we listen for His voice, then obey His Word. This is the continual sacrifice that pleases Him most.

What is the proper posture for worship? Since posture depicts the inner spirit, it will vary. Kneeling or lying prostrate represents a spirit of humbling ourselves before God. Standing, clapping, dancing, and lifting hands reveal a spirit of praise.

While we may feel intimidated to publicly worship in certain mannerisms, the real question is not: “Which posture relates best with my temperament?” but “What would please God?” His Word clearly states that worship should be wholehearted.

A “reserved” temperament may best be defined as: “a fear of what others think” or “an unwillingness to humble ourselves before God and others.”

Israel’s sacrificial offerings were always to be their best. An unhealthy, imperfect specimen would be rejected. God demanded excellence! Their offerings—whether lambs, goats, bulls, or doves—were to be the finest in the flock (Leviticus 1:10). God was very displeased with inferior offerings.

Satan entices us to *appear* to do what honors God, but not from the heart. Give Him something that costs nothing.

How do we give God our best in worship? We should strive for excellence in singing and playing musical instruments; sermons and testimonies should be preceded by adequate preparation; financial gifts should be willingly and generously given; every talent and ability should be developed so that our offering to Him is creatively expressed; the best we can offer.

The great arenas of the world are filled with spectators, but few participants. Praise and worship are not “spectator sports”! Each of us should get involved!

With all our spirit, soul, and body, we offer ourselves as a sacrifice that will be pleasing to Him!

C. Forms of praise

Praise expressions have been provided. Those who have difficulty glorifying the Lord can study examples of the Bible’s greatest praise champions. Using God’s own Word is a great way of exalting, praying or giving thanks. As our spirit begins responding to His words, we feel ourselves being elevated to victory!

Singing. A frequent method of praise is singing. More than three hundred scriptures suggest that singing was vital to Hebrew worship.

King David commanded singers to perform day and night with songs of tribute to God’s glory (I Chronicles 6:31; 9:33).

Great generals of ancient warfare knew the tremendous power of song. When the pressure was greatest and fear hung heavily over his men, King Jehoshaphat commanded the troops to sing, thereby effecting a miraculous victory without weapons.

Praising the Lord by singing Psalms affords a ready-made praise vocabulary of rich, meaningful words to which we can easily relate—whether day or night (Psalm 42:8).

But occasionally, our spirit wishes to serenade God with a “new song”—that which is representative of our own experiences:

“And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God” (Psalm 40:3).

God delights in hearing personal expressions rendered from our own hearts. It matters not whether the words are profound or rhyming. He values sincere efforts to applaud His greatness!

Choose a traditional tune or, as Paul mentioned, let the Holy Spirit guide you:

“I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also” (I Corinthians 14:15).

The term “singing in the spirit” means to sing in the language of the Spirit. This is a higher plateau of praise that emanates from our spirit through the Holy Spirit. Putting a melody in our voice while praying in tongues causes our worship to soar.

When the conscious mind is bypassed, we can send a psalm of praise for God’s ears only.

Dancing. The style of dance in the Old Testament was primarily a leaping movement, often accompanied with music. Repeated examples are given of using the hands, arms and feet to glorify the Lord:

“Let them praise his name in the dance” (Psalm 149:3).

“Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy” (Luke 6:23).

“And David danced before the LORD with all his might” (II Samuel 6:14).

Clapping hands and lifting hands. Attitudes of praise produce expressions of praise. Just as an uninhibited, excited child claps and waves his hands enthusiastically, a joyful saint often does the same.

“O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph” (Psalm 47:1).

“Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands” (Psalm 100:1).

“Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name” (Psalm 63:4).

“Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the LORD” (Psalm 134:2).

“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands” (I Timothy 2:8).

Musical instruments. Man’s creativity is exemplified when his soul cries out for

expression in various forms of music.

Giving glory to the Lord through music is cited at least twenty times in Scripture. Psalm 150 lists every class of instrument known in that day and urges people to use them.

“Praise the LORD with harp: sing unto him with the psaltery and an instrument of ten strings. Sing unto him a new song; play skilfully with a loud noise” (Psalm 33:2-3).

“Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals” (Psalm 150:3-5).

Through these methods, the spirit is enabled to bring us to a higher level of “praise-manship.”

The thrust of music in praise and worship has never ceased. Under the New Covenant, music continues to be a method of teaching and admonishing one another (Colossians 3:16).

As we look with ecstasy toward our future life in the literal presence of the King of kings, our song shall then blend with the heavenly angelic choirs. All creatures of the earth and sea will join in praising the Lamb of God (Revelation 5:11-13)!

D. David’s tabernacle restored Amos 9:11; Acts 15:13-17

When the sacred ark of the covenant was returned to Jerusalem, King David danced and leaped merrily through the city streets. Mount Zion blazed with glory that day!

Never before had the ark been exposed to such worship. It had always been obscured by fear and reverence. But David’s joyful expression of love for God built a “tabernacle of praise” more glorious than the tent church of previous generations. He brought to Israel a new dispensation of worship and beauty which far surpassed the existing law.

Sadly, in following years the worship of Jehovah was eroded by waves of heathenism. Yet during those dark times, a prophet saw a brighter day to come:

“In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old” (Amos 9:11).

Amos' prophecy was fulfilled when the veil in the Temple was torn in half and God's glory moved from between the wings of golden angels into the hearts of men!

James recalled this same verse when speaking of the apostolic revival age, but with a very important addition:

“After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things” (Acts 15:16-17).

Now Gentiles and Jews alike can exalt the Lord in this new tabernacle! Through the blood of Jesus Christ, salvation has been extended to everyone!

Although in subsequent years paganism darkened some aspects of the church, light dawned again at the turn of the twentieth century. Spontaneous worship and praise similar to that of David's time accompanied

the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

Shouting, leaping, singing and clapping are joyful manifestations of the heart which parallel God's rebuilding the tabernacle of David in our day! We are happily restoring that which was lost—genuine praise to the one true God!

Not of embroidered curtains and animal skins, this tabernacle is an inner place where God and man meet in the heart. Since the Lord designed David's style of worship, it has become our pattern for praise!


This style of praise can be incorporated into our own worship of God. The exhilaration that sprang from David's heart can rise again in a fountain of glory from our own!

God created man's body to respond to the stimuli of the soul and spirit. If crowds enthusiastically respond to an orator's rousing speech, to the prowess of a trained athlete, or to news of some great national military victory, how much more should our “temple” joyfully respond when communing with the King of kings Who constantly dwells within?

Lesson 9 – Chart 6 A Holy People, Separated Unto God

A HOLY PEOPLE, SEPARATED UNTO GOD

“Be ye holy; for I am holy.”
1 Peter 1:16; Hebrews 12:14

<p>Principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separated from sin and the world; dedicated to God <small>1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 10:14-22; Ephesians 5:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:15; Galatians 6:14</small> • Sanctified <small>Hebrews 10:10; Acts 10:18</small> • Past Present Future <small>Ephesians 2:8-10; 4:1; Timothy 2:16</small> • Growing to maturity <small>1 Corinthians 13:11; 12</small> • A renewed mind <small>Romans 12:2; 1 Peter 2:11; Philippians 2:5; Galatians 6:10; 6</small> • Christ-like attitudes <small>Colossians 3:12; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:13-15; John 13:35</small> 	 <p style="font-size: small;">“Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” <small>Hebrews 13:15</small></p>	<p>Practical Application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What you say <small>Colossians 3:16, 17; James 1:25; 1 Peter 4:7; Ephesians 4:29; 1 Timothy 4:12</small> • What you see <small>Hebrews 12:1; Psalm 101:1; 118:21; Job 31:1</small> • What you hear <small>Mark 4:23; Matthew 7:23-24; Titus 2:12</small> • Where you go <small>Ephesians 5:11; Hebrews 11:24-26; James 4:4; 1 Peter 2:11</small> • Adornment and dress <small>1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1 Peter 3:3-4; 1 Corinthians 11:14</small> • Care of the body <small>1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Galatians 6:19; 1 Peter 3:7; 1 Timothy 4:8; 1 Peter 3:7; 1 Timothy 4:8</small>
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LESSON 9 CHART 6

Chart Objective:

To explain the principles and practical application of being a holy people, separated from sin and the world and dedicated to God.

Chart Outline:

- A. A Holy People, Separated Unto God
- B. “Be ye holy; for I am holy.”
- C. Principles
- D. Practical Application
- E. “Present your bodies a living sacrifice”

A. A Holy People, Separated Unto God

The nation of Israel had long been God's covenant partner, His special, prized possession in the world. Designed to be a holy people, Israel was to teach every other nation how to please the Lord. But having one nation in covenant was not sufficient. The whole world must learn the joy of serving the one true God!

So intimate was the relationship between Yahweh and His covenant people, He referred to Israel as His “wife.” She may have been regarded by her idolatrous neighbors as odd or different, but those uncommon characteristics were His marks of distinction.

If God was so careful to mark Israel, would he not have special identifying marks on His New Covenant people?

The word “holy” refers to being separated and set apart; righteous; pure; god-like; uncontaminated; beautiful. Perhaps you are thinking, “Oh, but that's not me! I am not pure or god-like or uncontaminated. I still have some problem areas that would disqualify me from being holy!”

So true! But holiness is not an attainment. It is a state into which God's grace calls us.

Just as we did nothing to merit redemption, grace, righteousness, or eternal life, neither did we earn holiness. Paul wrote,

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Holiness is part of the benefits of salvation. It cannot be earned or manufactured. We receive holiness by faith and allow it to transform our lives.

B. “Be ye holy; for I am holy.”

I Peter 1:16; Hebrews 12:14

To the world, “holiness” is a rather archaic term. But it should be part of the Christian’s normal vocabulary. If we want to be like the holy God we serve, we must also be holy.

“But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (I Peter 1:15-16).

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

To enter the kingdom of God, we must be born again; to see the Lord we must follow the way of peace and holiness. This is not a set of rules and regulations, but the Christian way of life.

When the things of the world are replaced with the things of God, it becomes easy to live holy. It is a joy, a privilege to replace the negative with the positive!

C. Principles

“Holiness” and “sanctified” are equivalent terms and are used interchangeably. Since every believer is “sanctified” in Christ Jesus, a common New Testament term is “saints”—the sanctified or holy ones.

From the moment of spiritual re-creation, we become saints; sanctified ones; set apart; holy ones.

Separated from sin and the world; dedicated to God. We leave the unclean and love the clean; we leave the darkness and walk in the light.

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh

to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (James 4:8).

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

“Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

Like the Corinthian believers, we were vile and filthy before Jesus washed us. When the Spirit comes to make His home in us, He begins to build Jesus’ nature and life into our spirit. Simultaneously, we begin to separate ourselves from unnecessary weights that have held us in bondage and preoccupied our minds so that we had no time for the best things.

To be **sanctified** and set apart for God has a threefold meaning. We might call this process of sanctification **past, present** and **future**.

- **God has made me holy.** At Calvary Jesus redeemed us from sin and and “set apart” every person who believes and obeys His Word.

“He taketh away the first [Old Covenant], that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:9-10).

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18).

From the moment our spirit is recreated, we are accepted into the royal family of God, eternally linked with Him.

- **I am being made holy.** Our present sanctification is progressive. The Holy Spirit and the Word of God are helping us separate from sin and showing us how to please the Lord.

“Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word” (Ephesians 5:25-26).

Not only the Spirit and the Word are helping us. Jesus is at the throne of God as our high priest, Mediator, intercessor, and Advocate. He settles differences between man and God, helps to renew our minds, makes our petitions acceptable to the Father, defends, gives legal counsel, cleanses sins, and restores the penitent who have broken fellowship.

We are born again only one time. Should we fail to judge ourselves by the Word and become polluted by sin, we need cleansing. God intends for us to live undefiled from sin and enjoy unclouded communion with the Lord.

“The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (II Timothy 2:19).

Provision has been made for us to live without sinning. We can escape sin—if we *purpose* to escape it! Separating ourselves unto God is the way of escape!

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (I John 3:9).

This means that God’s Spirit *restrains* us from sinning. No longer do we desire to *practice* sin. Like our Father, we must hate sin and never tolerate it in our lives.

While the spirit is in control, we will not sin. But this does not mean we are *incapable* of sinning. It is much like saying, “I cannot drink contaminated water.” The reason I cannot drink it is because I know the consequences. I am not physically *incapable* of drinking contaminated water, but I *restrain* myself from the practice.

Likewise, we are certainly capable of sinning, but we cannot and must not sin—because it displeases God.

- **I shall be holy.** We look forward to the future when our whole spirit, soul, and body will be made like Christ’s glorious body at the resurrection:

“But when that which is perfect is come,

then that which is in part shall be done away. . . . For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (I Corinthians 13:10, 12).

Although the mind will never have perfect knowledge and the body will never be glorified or perfect in this life, God has made provision for us to become *morally* perfected. His power helps us bring the sinful nature under subjection to the will of God.

Growing to maturity. Have you ever watched a tiny bud, so perfect and small, with such exquisite detail? But is the little bud really perfected? No, we would be disappointed if it remained in that stage throughout the year. Yet the bud is very healthy and perfect in potentiality.

This first stage of perfection is quite immature and unfinished; the fruit is a bud in its complete perfection. We have much growing to do:

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (II Peter 3:18).

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, . . . but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things” (Ephesians 4:14-15).

Every born-again believer has received life, with all its potentialities of holy living. Yet holiness does not depend at all upon our effort. It simply depends upon a complete surrender to the holy One dwelling inside. He wants to maintain the spiritual life which He has deposited in each of us.

A baby is born with no teeth, unable to talk, walk, or reason. But the baby is perfect. Ten years later, if the child has no teeth, cannot talk, walk or reason, he is not perfect. Why has he lost his perfection? Because he has not grown or matured.

New believers are perfect in condition, but not in completeness. Many areas of their lives need correction. Our duty is not to judge or criticize them, but to help and strengthen one another.

A renewed mind. Holiness begins in the spirit and then proceeds to transform the mind.

Watchman Nee, the great Chinese spiritual leader, said that many of God’s children have new hearts, but old heads.

From the first grade we have been taught that the human mind has all the answers to life's problems. Man lives by the reasoning of his fallen intellect. In this state, he can never please God:

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. . . . So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:6, 8).

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).

The Phillips translation says, “Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould.” Our mind must be baptized and changed with new loves, new desires, a new way of thinking. Old prejudices and old temptations must be cleansed from the mind.

Because the mind has accumulated good and bad, true and false information, many changes must be made in our thinking. As we learn to deny our souls the right to rule and submit our soul and spirit to the Lord, then God can dispose of the “wood, hay, [and] stubble” and establish those things of permanent value in our lives (Bennett, *The Holy Spirit and You*, page 185).

Christ-like attitudes. To be holy is to be Christ-like. What would He do? Every decision involving holy living could be resolved by asking that question. When in doubt, could you picture Jesus doing or saying or going to a particular place?

The word “Christian” means Christ-like. At first the term was one of ridicule. Now it has become our badge of honor. What greater compliment than to be one of those “Christ-like” people!

Our minds are to be replaced with the mind of Christ:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14).

Don't give the flesh a chance; don't indulge or give it a foothold. Instead, discipline it; control it! Put on the Lord Jesus Christ!

When holiness infiltrates our attitudes, our

actions and reactions will be Christ-like. True freedom is to be mistreated and then respond with a Christ-like attitude—with no bitterness, hatred, or wrath.

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Holiness is simply “bearing the fruit of the Spirit.” Those who are producing fully matured spiritual fruit in their lives have settled the questions concerning holiness.

Holiness could be taught in a negative way: do not hate; do not envy; do not be bitter; do not commit adultery. But a better way is to teach: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Cultivating the positive automatically eliminates the negative (David Bernard, *Practical Holiness—A Second Look*).

D. Practical Application

In striving to be holy, many become trapped by “legalism”—living for God by rules. By obeying certain “holiness standards,” they hope to satisfy God's legal requirements, thus earning their salvation.

Having no genuine love for God, His Word, or inner holiness, they go strictly by the rules. Their main concern is knowing whether someone preaches against this or if a law has been established for this practice.

In reality, the legalist is thinking, “What is the minimum I can do and still be saved? What is the least I can do and still be a member in good standing in this local church?”

The Pharisees had fallen into a similar trap. They had invented so many rules, no one could abide by them. Where possible, they committed highly immoral acts.

Through their technicalities, they actually made the law of God of none effect. Attention was only given to the detail, or the letter of the law, but they evaded the true “spirit” of the law.

The alternative to legalism is to develop a genuine love for God and His Word. Love's devotion will be a tougher master than mere rules.

A paid babysitter will care for a sick child and do what is required. But the mother will

care for her baby and stay up all night tending its needs. She will do far more than the hired helper.

The deeper our commitment to God, the less interested we are in minimum requirements. We begin searching for ways to show our gratitude. What more can we do to please Him? What is beneficial to spirituality? What is detrimental?

We have been given the Word, the church, the leadership and ministry of the church, and a conscience. And they all work together to help perfect our holiness.

What you say is important to God. One reason is that words reveal what is in our hearts:

“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. . . . For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:34-35, 37).

While living in sin, we said and did what we pleased. But now that a new Master rules our lives, we must watch our language!

If we control the tongue, we can control everything else. If we cannot, our whole religion is in vain (James 1:26; 3:1-8).

How can we sin with our tongue? Lies, dishonesty, gossip (telling scandalous facts about other people), and sowing discord are ways that we sin with words.

What you see affects spirituality more than any of the five senses. The eye is the gate to the soul. Jesus said,

“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matthew 6:22-23).

After King David had problems with lustful eyes, he promised himself,

“I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes” (Psalm 101:3).

How could we sin with our eyes? By reading material that emphasizes pornography, nudity, sensual love stories, monsters, crime, violence, the occult, or witchcraft.

Since most television programs and movies feed the sinful nature, starve the spirit, destroy the morals and conscience, we must determine whether it would be worthwhile for family members to be exposed to those sights.

Discipline your eyes and mind so that the old nature does not take control. Avoid reading or looking at anything that pollutes your thoughts. Then remove from your home and environment everything that is offensive to God.

What you hear. Because music communicates with the soul, we must carefully choose which type we will listen to. What kind of music satisfies your soul?

Lyrics for rock music peddle revolution, hatred for parents and all authority, sex, drugs, depression, and suicide. Country music runs a close second.

Be careful what type music is played to the One who lives inside you. If He hungers for “the fruit of our lips,” He surely would enjoy the melodious strains of anointed music.

Where you go. The principle to help determine what is proper recreation and entertainment is this:

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (I John 2:15-16).

All temptations could be categorized under one of these three areas:

- Lust of flesh (fleshly, carnal desires; desire for wealth, power or fame).
- Lust of eyes (temptations that come through the eyes).
- Pride of life (self-exaltation).

Rejecting the world means that we refuse to conform to those controlled by Satan. Try not to think and act as they do. Associations must be avoided that would taint us with evil. We should not identify with the world in any aspect of our daily conduct or life. Nor should our definition of success be as theirs.

When Christ comes into our hearts, He separates us from the world by changing our concept of true enjoyment. Many of the places we used to go now hold no attraction. Former friends may feel uncomfortable with our new value system.

But at the same time, do not shun cultivating friendships with the unsaved. What was Jesus' purpose of eating and drinking with publicans and sinners? He came to seek and save the lost! First we win them to ourselves, then to Christ.

While we are free to become friends with sinners, we must not be friendly with the world's system and values:

"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4).

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11).

The best test to decide whether a certain place is permissible is to ask yourself, "Would Jesus be comfortable there?"

Adornment and dress. God is interested in the way we dress and adorn ourselves. Paul wrote:

"I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (I Timothy 2:8-10).

Notice that the emphasis on holiness begins with the men. They could not lift up holy hands when filled with wrath and doubting. This seems to be a problem area for men of every generation. Men are prone to wrath, violent rage, skepticism and doubting God's Word. Therefore, to come into God's presence, these weaknesses must be corrected.

Paul's instruction involves contrasts: do this and this, but don't do this. Then he turned to the women. "In like manner," or just as the men come to worship in holiness, the women also must be aware of their problem areas—broided hair, gold, pearls, and costly array.

In Paul's day, wearing gold, pearls, and costly array was not applicable to men as it is in our generation. Today, the principle applies to both sexes.

When we look for scriptural *principles*, we find that they apply to every culture and every age.

What is the meaning of being adorned in modest apparel with "shamefacedness"? It means a woman should be shy, reserved, respectful, self-restrained, modest, or discreet toward men; not bold or forward.

"Sobriety" means prudence or moderation in clothing styles.

What is "modest" apparel? Many churches today approve of bikinis, mini-skirts and halter tops. But is this type clothing modest? To understand God's idea of immodesty, notice Isaiah's description of Babylon as a shamed woman. How was her nakedness depicted? "Make bare the leg, uncover the thigh" (Isaiah 47:1-3).

Immodest apparel, then, would be any clothing which by its brevity or tightness reveals the body in a way that entices the opposite sex with lustful thoughts and desires.

What was "broided hair"? In those days, women had elaborate hair arrangements with ornaments braided in the hair.

Paul was saying to the men, do not allow wrath or doubting. To the women he said: dress modestly, with moderation; do not wear gold, pearls, and costly array.

Peter echoed Paul's instructions:

"Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Peter 3:1-4).

To the ladies whose husbands were not in the church, Peter disclosed the secret of winning them to the Lord. Since the men would not read the Word or hear it taught, they must be won by the submission and godly lifestyle of the wife. Should she compromise her godly dress, attitudes, and submission to his authority, she would destroy the very principles that could bring him to God!

Notice that Peter also emphasized that women should not "adorn" themselves with plaited hair, gold, and apparel. Her hairstyle or clothing should not display extravagance. Clothing should be worn for modesty and

warmth rather than gaudy, ostentatious apparel portraying a seductive or haughty woman.

An inexpensive gold watch that serves as a timepiece would not be used for adornment. However, gold and pearls are usually associated with jewelry and expensive ornamentation.

The principle being taught is that a woman's clothing should be modest, rather than expensive and flashy, and that she should avoid extravagant adornment. This also reveals wise stewardship of the money God has given us.

Makeup could also fit this category. Ancient Egypt first introduced painting of the eyelids to enhance sexual appeal about 3000 B.C. This practice, referred to by Solomon, describes an evil, adulterous woman:

“Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids” (Proverbs 6:25).

Several Old Testament passages describe women who wore makeup, either in real life or in typology. Always they were depicted as evil, unfaithful, adulterous women. The badge of their wicked ways was adornment of jewels and makeup (Jeremiah 4:30; Ezekiel 23:40; II Kings 9:30; Isaiah 3:16-24).

Regardless of our preferences, God's opinion concerning makeup and jewelry is what matters most! We want to please Him!

What you wear is a reflection of your inner self. Why did the Israelites put on sackcloth and ashes and rend their clothes when they repented? It was a sign to themselves and to God. Why do people wear uniforms or certain styles of dress? Because clothing makes a statement about the person.

Hippies adopted an unconventional, immodest dress to express their values and lifestyle. If we wear the uniform of godly people, there will be no question as to our allegiance.

Another important feature of clothing should be its distinctiveness between the male and female:

“The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God” (Deuteronomy 22:5).

An abomination is something God hates!

In our day, this command must be applied equally to men and women. A man should not wear a woman's clothes; a woman should not wear a man's clothes.

How shocked most congregations would be to see their pastor in a woman's dress! But in another fifty years, women's clothing will be acceptable for men.

Rock stars frequently wear makeup and women's clothes. An office worker recently sued his company because women were allowed to wear pants to work, but he could not wear a dress!

Eighty years ago, a woman wearing pants was labeled indecent and ungodly. Society has changed, but God's Word has not.

Some suppose that this passage in Deuteronomy is a ceremonial law not applicable today. But this is a moral law similar to the commandments against adultery, fornication, witchcraft, homosexuality, and rape. The moral laws were never replaced.

Since the practice is declared to be an “abomination unto God,” what He hated then would still be detested!

Many nations have varying dress customs. Yet a distinction exists between the clothing of each sex. At a distance one should be able to tell whether a person is male or female by their clothing. A unisex culture with no immediately observable difference in apparel is immoral!

Our nation is reaping the harvest of confusing the roles of the male and female and their clothing. Men are acting like women and women like men; homes are breaking up; homosexuality is on the rise; children are being reared in a culture where they cannot determine their proper roles.

The feminists are seeking to eliminate the roles by attacking clothing styles. They have ceased wearing feminine frills to better compete with men.

In God's sight, men and women are equal in worth. They deserve equal pay for equal work, but the different roles designed by God should never be erased!

Another distinguishing feature between the male and female appearance is a woman's long, uncut hair and a man's short hair.

“Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man

have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God” (I Corinthians 11:13-16).

It is a shame for a man to have long hair; it is a glory, or honor for a woman to have long hair. God has given her long hair as a symbolic covering veil; it is a sign that she is indeed a woman and not a man and a sign of her submission to God’s divine order.

Rather than appealing to the Corinthian culture for his basis, Paul appealed to nature. Even nature teaches that women should have long hair and men short hair.

Then Paul added that if anyone wants to be contentious, we have no other custom, nor do any of the churches of God. The Roman, Asian, Gentile, Corinthian, and Jewish churches all taught alike. This was not a local rule, but what all the churches taught.

One hundred years ago, this teaching about hair was readily accepted. Again, our culture has changed. But God’s Word remains the same.

The man’s covering is his hair. His covering should be cut. A woman’s covering is her hair and she should let it grow as long as it will grow. It is a disgrace for a woman’s hair to be shorn (cut) or shaved.

Nature itself teaches in a very practical way that baldness is associated with masculinity. Male baldness is associated with heredity and hormones. A woman does not become bald unless a hormonal imbalance or sickness exists.

A bald man is acceptable. But a bald woman is embarrassed and disgraced. She covers her head with a wig.

When God pronounced judgment on the haughty women with elaborate ornaments in Isaiah chapter 3, instead of well-set hair, He struck them with baldness! God declares it is a shame for women to be bald!

Four principles describe proper dress and adornment:

- Modesty (no lustful display of the body to attract the opposite sex; no makeup to appeal to sensual lusts).
- Shamefacedness (no extravagant dress, hairdos, or jewelry that appeals to pride).
- Moderation (no jewelry or extremely expensive clothing).

- Distinction between male and female (clothing and hair).

Care of the body. Since our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, we should treat them with care.

“If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. . . . What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (I Corinthians 3:17; 6:19-20).

The body serves as a temple and a way to glorify God. For this reason, the body should be perfectly well, healthy, and strong.

Because of the sacredness of marriage, sexual sins are the most serious of all transgressions. To show the dreadfulness of these offenses, some sexual sins were punishable by death under the Old Covenant. Fornication, adultery, lasciviousness (bodily or sexual pleasure), perversion, incest, bestiality, abortion, and homosexuality are all condemned in God’s Word.

Because it is God’s temple, the body should be free from all unclean habits. Tobacco, alcoholic beverages and drug addiction are defiling and endanger the health.

Long before the surgeon general announced that smoking was hazardous to your health, many Pentecostal ministers had taught that tobacco was dangerous and defiling.

Gluttony, which is lusting after food, also fits in this category. Repeated overindulging in food will destroy the body the same as other habits. Fasting is the best discipline for gluttony. If eating is controlled, other areas are more easily controlled.

E. “Present your bodies a living sacrifice” (Romans 12:1).

Paul pictured holiness as a sacrificial life:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

Our lives must be like the sacrificial animal. Our wills must be subjected to God’s will.

While we are not necessarily required to become martyrs, we must become “living” sacrifices. Though still alive, our lives are to be as surrendered as the sacrificial animal’s life.

Love removes much of the pain and inconvenience of sacrifice. Parents will change their entire routine, without hesitation, to provide for a chronically ill child.

Paul compared the Christian life to that of an athlete. To gain the satisfaction of winning a perishable garland crown woven of oak or ivy, he rigorously exercises and obeys the coach’s orders. We, too, must run the race with love and patience, disregarding the sacrifice to gain the crown.

When our love for God surpasses our own

desires and wishes, His will has then become our will. Once we attain that realm, we can do as we wish (Psalm 40:8).

Our whole purpose for existing in the kingdom is to sacrifice ourselves; to do what God wants us to do; to further God’s purposes and goals for man. If we can benefit God’s kingdom, our life is worthwhile.

Some may tell us, “Oh, but you give up so much and make so many sacrifices!” But we really make no sacrifices. Paul said that this is our “reasonable service.”

Living for God is the smartest thing a person can do. Supreme happiness is being in the will of God!

Lesson 9 – Chart 7 A Balanced Life

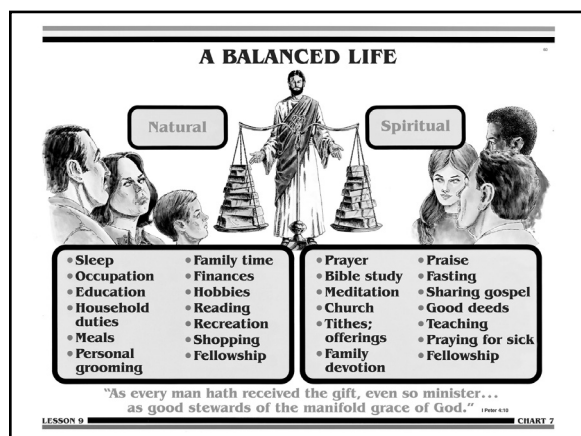


Chart Objective:

To compare Jesus’ consistent, balanced life with our own. Are we good stewards of God’s manifold blessings?

Chart Outline:

- A. Jesus’ balanced life
- B. Natural versus Spiritual
- C. Good stewardship

A. Jesus’ balanced life

Jesus was the most balanced and poised man known in history. He displayed no extreme emotionalism or psychopathic tendencies. Never did He act as though He were walking in a daze or falling into trances and seeing visions.

Guidance for His life came through prayer and communion with the Father. Always He was in full control of His faculties.

If we are filled with the same Holy Spirit, our lives will also be well balanced and Spirit-guided.

Think for a moment of the balance in Christ’s life. After His ordinary Jewish schooling, He practiced the carpentry trade until beginning His ministry at the age of thirty.

Fully aware of current events, Jesus was well acquainted with the entire governmental system of His day. Farming, agriculture, shepherding, fishing, weather, cooking, cleaning, household chores, stewardship, economics, and accounting were all so familiar, they became subjects for parables.

Jesus enjoyed the outdoors. He was quite at home boating or fishing on the Sea of Galilee. Frequently He spent time alone on the hillside, delighting in the exquisite beauties of nature.

But Jesus was not a hermit or a recluse. Freely He mingled with crowds of people—even feasting with publicans, sinners, and rejects from society. Children were comfortable on His knee, clustered around their Friend Who cared for little ones.

Eagerly men and women sought the fellowship of Jesus Christ. What a joy it was to have Him as a guest in their homes! The sincere charm and magnetism displayed by our Lord made it a pleasure to be in His presence. Jesus truly had personality plus!

While we best remember Jesus’ supernatural works of healing the sick and casting out devils, teaching and expounding God’s Word, praying, fasting, and attending God’s house, we must not forget that He lived like other ordinary people.

Why could Jesus effectively communicate with sinners? Because every subject that interested them intrigued the Savior. Jesus was not boring, super-holy, nor did He have a one-track mind. He found a perfect balance between the spiritual and the natural, enabling Him to be sinless, yet able to rescue a sinner.

B. Natural versus Spiritual

The Christian life was never intended to be extreme, fanatical, or unreasonable. When logically and intelligently presented from Scripture, it contains nothing that would cause embarrassment. When balanced by reason and understanding of the Word, holy living is unequalled in moral and spiritual beauty.

The difference between the natural and the spiritual person is the matter of priorities. Where we place our values determines whether we are a natural (carnal) or spiritual Christian.

Both spend time in sleeping, working, eating, paying bills, shopping, reading, recreation and the normal routines of life. But somehow, the spiritual person has disciplined himself to include the most significant activities.

C. Good stewards

The spiritual person's daily and weekly schedule includes times for prayer, Bible study, meditation, church, family devotion—and all the good deeds associated with godly living. Somehow, he “makes” the time!

One of our most valuable possessions is the gift of time. It comes to each of us as a free gift from God. Time can be abused, wasted,

idled away, or slept away. Or it may be redeemed, conserved, budgeted, used wisely for self-improvement, spiritual growth, and the service and salvation of others.

Since every day is God's day and no man has more or less than twenty-four hours in a day, our failure or success, happiness or distress is largely determined by the use we make of these twenty-four hours. Time budgets are far more valuable than money budgets.

How can we “redeem” the time? We can acquire more hours by giving less time to insignificant things and more to things of value.

As stewards, we must remember that nothing we have actually belongs to us. Everything is a gift from God.

One of Jesus' covenant promises summarizes what may be expected when priorities are properly aligned:

“Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:31-33).

When Jesus is truly Lord of our life, nothing will be lacking in the natural realm.

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM STUDY SHEET

Living in the Kingdom LESSON NO. 9 Study Sheet

Chart 1. Welcome to the Kingdom!

- A. A new way of life for covenant people
- B. "Except a man be born again, . . . Except ye . . . become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom" (John 3:3; Matthew 18:3)
- C. Privileges: remission of sins; sons of God; joint-heirs with Christ; righteousness; eternal life; new creation; lordship of Christ (Acts 2:38; Romans 3:25; John 1:12; 14:13; Romans 8:14-17; 3:22; 5:18-19; 10:9; II Corinthians 5:17; Luke 11:9)
- D. Responsibilities: love God and obey His laws; submission to God's will and human authority; continue spiritual development; continue Jesus' mission; prepare for future position (John 14:23; 15:10; Matthew 7:21; John 5:30; 8:28-32; Acts 14:22; James 1:22-25; Mark 16:15; Matthew 13:43; Luke 19:17)

Chart 2. From Darkness to Light

- A. Christ's new principles of living (John 8:12; Ephesians 5:8)
- B. Old way versus new way (Matthew 5, 6, 7)
- C. Laws and rules are necessary to govern the old nature

Chart 3. Provisions For Conquering the Enemy

- A. Spiritual armor (Ephesians 6:10-18; Isaiah 59:17)
- B. Sources of strength
- C. Prayer (developing a relationship with the King) (Matthew 6:6; Psalm 91:1; John 9:31; 15:7)
- D. Fasting (a physical discipline for spiritual alertness) (Matthew 6:16-18; Acts 13:2-3; Mark 9:29)
- E. Bible study and meditation (practicing kingdom concepts) (Joshua 1:8; Proverbs 4:4; Psalm 1:2-3)

Chart 4. Gifts of the Spirit

- A. God's power manifested through believers (I Corinthians 12:1-11)
- B. Inspiration Gifts—The "Speaking" Gifts (divers kinds of tongues; interpretation of tongues; prophecy)
- C. Power Gifts—The "Doing" Gifts (gifts of healings; working of miracles; faith)
- D. Revelation Gifts—The "Knowing" Gifts (discerning of spirits; word of knowledge; word of wisdom)
- E. "But covet earnestly the best gifts" (I Corinthians 12:31)

Chart 5. A New Priesthood With New, Living Sacrifices

- A. Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, Teachers—The fivefold ministry equips saints to serve and to build up the members of Christ's body, the church (Ephesians 4:11-12)
- B. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, . . . that ye should shew forth the praises of him" (I Peter 2:9; Hebrews 13:15)
- C. Forms of praise: dancing (Psalm 149:3; Luke 6:23); singing (Psalm 30:4; 40:3; 69:30; Ephesians 5:18-19; Colossians 3:16); clapping hands (Psalm 47:1; 98:4, 8; 100:1; Isaiah 55:12); lifting hands (I Timothy 2:8; Psalm 28:2; 63:4; 134:2); musical instruments (Psalm 33:2-3; 150:3-6)
- D. David's tabernacle restored (Amos 9:11; Acts 15:13-17)

Chart 6. A Holy People, Separated Unto God

- A. "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (I Peter 1:16)
- B. Principles: separated from sin and the world; dedicated to God; sanctified—past, present, future; growing to maturity; a renewed mind; Christ-like attitudes (I Corinthians 6:9-11; II Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1; II Timothy 2:21; Ephesians 4:22-24; Hebrews 10:9-10; Ephesians 5:25-26; I Corinthians 13:10, 12; II Peter 3:18; Romans 8:6, 8; 12:2; Philippians 2:5; Romans 13:14; Ephesians 4:31-32)
- C. Practical Application: what you say; what you see; what you hear; where you go; adornment and dress; care of the body (Matthew 12:34-37; James 1:26; 3:1-8; Matthew 6:22-23; Psalm 101:3; Mark 4:24; Ephesians 5:11; Hebrews 11:25-26; I Timothy 2:8-10, 15; I Peter 3:1-5; I Corinthians 11:3-16; I Thessalonians 4:1-7; 5:22; I Corinthians 3:16-17; 9:25, 27; 10:31)

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM QUIZ

Living in the Kingdom

LESSON NO. 9 Quiz

Chart 7. A Balanced Life

A. Natural versus spiritual

B. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister . . . as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Peter 4:10)

Complete each statement with the correct word from the word bank.

1. Our new life in the kingdom involves both privileges and _____.
2. One provision for conquering the enemy is spiritual _____.
3. The privilege of _____ helps us develop a personal relationship with the King.
4. _____ is a physical discipline for spiritual alertness.
5. We must daily engage in _____ and _____ for spiritual survival and to practice kingdom concepts.
6. Three gifts of the Spirit are known as "Speaking" or _____ Gifts.
7. The "Doing" Gifts of faith, miracles and healings are called _____ Gifts.
8. The "Knowing" Gifts are known as Gifts of _____.
9. Covenant people should be _____ from sin and the world and dedicated to God.
10. Our new living sacrifices to God involve the total person. Sacrifices of praise are: _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____.
11. The fivefold ministry equips the believer to _____ and build up the body of Christ.
12. A balanced life involves equal attention to both _____ and _____ activities.

WORD BANK:

Inspiration	separated	prayer	Bible study	lifting hands
natural	serve	making music	responsibilities	Revelation
armor	dancing	fasting	meditation	singing
	clapping hands	spiritual	Power	

Answers:

1. responsibilities 2. armor 3. prayer 4. fasting 5. Bible study, meditation 6. Inspiration 7. Power
8. Revelation 9. separated 10. singing, dancing, lifting hands, clapping hands, making music 11. serve
12. natural, spiritual

LESSON TEN

History of the Church

This lesson traces the history of Christianity through the last two thousand years.

The church began in a blaze of glory! The Word brought conviction; the name of Jesus was their power of attorney and credentials for performing miracles. The Holy Spirit was the guiding force Who unveiled Jesus and His redemptive work as the Word was preached or taught.

However, their miraculous ministry faced immediate opposition and imprisonment. For more than two hundred years succeeding the apostolic age, the church felt the sword of persecution. Yet their blood seemed to be seed that reproduced a bountiful harvest.

Satan's strategy of afflicting the church was ineffective. Therefore, he changed his tactics. Misconceptions and distorted ideas about the Godhead were introduced. Finally, the emperor himself embraced Christianity and it became fashionable to be a Christian.

Steadily, the church declined from her former glory as heathen worship flowed in. Those who clung to biblical truths were considered heretics and put to death.

After many centuries of darkness, light began to shine once more as brave men sought to reform the Roman church. Through the last century, the truths once delivered to the saints have been restored. Like a mighty army, the church is once again battling the powers of hell and claiming victory around the world!

When completed, students should be aware of the following concepts:

1. Obeying Christ's commission, the early church reached their world through the power of the Word, the name of Jesus, and the direction of the Holy Spirit.
2. The cause of Christianity was best served through persecution. As believers fled, they spread the Word wherever they went. We can expect this to happen again in our day.
3. When men and women, hungry for truth, will cry out to the Lord, He will restore, rebuild, and replenish the glory intended for His people.
4. The final chapter of the Acts of the Holy Spirit has not been written. The work Jesus began must be completed by our generation!

Books for additional reading:

1. F. F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame*, Vol. 1, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965.
2. J. Edwin Orr, *The Light of the Nations*, Vol. 8, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965.
3. Thomas Weisser, *After the Way Called Heresy*, Thomas Weisser, P. O. Box 53, Monmouth, OR 97361, 1981.
4. David K. Bernard, *The Oneness of God*, Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1983.
5. William Chalfant, *Ancient Champions of Oneness*, Hazelwood, MO: Word Aflame Press, 1982.
6. B. K. Kuiper, *The Church in History*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951.

Lesson 10 – Chart 1 The Early Church Ablaze!

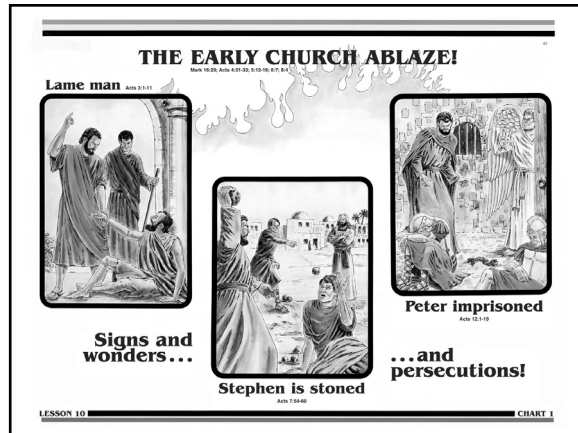


Chart Objective:

To emphasize the signs, wonders, and miracles following Pentecost as disciples were propelled into action through the Holy Spirit, the name of Jesus, and the Word. Persecution motivated believers to spread the Word throughout the country and around the world.

Chart Outline:

- A. The Early Church Ablaze!
- B. Signs and wonders . . .
- C. Lame man
- D. Stephen is stoned
- E. . . . and persecutions!
- F. Peter imprisoned

A. The Early Church Ablaze! Mark 16:20; Acts 4:31-33; 5:12-16; 6:7; 8:4

Following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the church was infused with a new power and fervor that propelled them into action!

No longer were they fearful of Jewish leaders as on the night of their Master's arrest. Now they boldly proclaimed Christ as Messiah. This newborn church began evangelizing immediately, even on the Day of Pentecost.

It is difficult to relate to the lifestyle of the Jerusalem church because we associate "church" with a building. But early believers had no buildings. With joyful hearts, they fellowshiped "from house to house" (Acts 2:46).

Now, let's observe the divine plan being implemented at that particular point in church history. Jesus returned to heaven's throne when redemption had been completed. The

Book of Acts records the first thirty-three years of the church's existence, and it portrays Christ's continuing role as the church's Mediator, intercessor, and Advocate. (Refer to Lesson 7, Chart 7).

As Mediator, He introduces the unsaved person to God. For the believer, He becomes an intercessor Who pleads our cause during the long process of renewing our minds. When through ignorance we say and do things that are displeasing to the Father, the blood of Jesus stands in our defense.

Should we intentionally sin and break fellowship with God, He becomes our Advocate. The moment we confess and repent, His blood is effective to obtain forgiveness and cleansing.

What a wonderful work Christ has been performing in heaven for the church during the last two thousand years!

Meanwhile, another manifestation of God's presence is active on earth. The same Spirit of God who dwelled in Jesus indwells in those who believe and obey the gospel. This is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit regenerates and brings comfort, rest, peace, and joy; He helps believers pray, gives power to witness and power over the enemy, teaches, and guides into all truth.

These are not three "Persons" in the Godhead, but one God—an invisible Spirit—who has assumed various roles for the purpose of redeeming mankind. Because redemption required righteous, sinless blood, God lived on earth for thirty-three years as a man.

When redemption was completed, He returned as the Holy Spirit, living in the bodies of those who choose to believe and obey the gospel.

As W. A. Criswell, former pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, Texas, so ably described the deity of Christ in his *Expository Sermons on Revelation*: "We know God as our Father, we know God as our Saviour and we know God by His Spirit in our hearts. But there are not three Gods. The true Christian is a monotheist. There is one God. The only God you will ever see is the Lord God whom John saw in the vision of the lampstands . . . The only God there is, is the great Father of us all. The one Lord God, Christ. In the Old Testament we call Him Jehovah. In the New Testament, we call Him Jesus."

Three inseparable features of this mighty, blazing church are revealed in the Book of Acts: the **Word**, the **name of Jesus** and the **Holy Spirit**. The Word brings conviction; the name of Jesus becomes the power of attorney and credentials for performing miracles; the Holy Spirit is the Guide Who discloses Jesus and His redemptive work while the Word is being taught. Notice the unique place afforded the Word of God by the early church:

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized” (Acts 2:41).

“Many of them which heard the word believed” (Acts 4:4).

“It is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. . . . But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:2, 4).

“And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly” (Acts 6:7).

“They that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word” (Acts 8:4).

“Now when the apostles . . . heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John” (Acts 8:14).

“And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God” (Acts 13:44).

“So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed” (Acts 19:20).

Powerfully the Word increased and prevailed. People were drawn “to hear the word of God”!

Three different meanings are given for “Word”:

- The Incarnate Word “made flesh” was Jesus Christ (John 1:14).
- The spoken Word was the apostles’ anointed preaching in the Book of Acts.
- The written Word includes the entire Old and New Testaments.

The four Gospels and Paul’s epistles were written several years after Pentecost. The only Bible the apostles had was Old Testament Scriptures. The “Word” that was growing in the hearts of people was not only the Old Testament, but also the “new truth” about Jesus! The Word spoken by the apostles brought healing, life, and miracles.

Speaking the Word and using the name of Jesus produced miracles everywhere! It was

evident when Peter and John went to the Temple to pray and saw a lame man sitting by Gate Beautiful begging for alms. Peter told him to rise and be healed, and a miracle occurred. Explaining it to the people afterwards, Peter said:

“And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all” (Acts 3:16).

What they *did* understand was their position as Jesus’ representatives, doing business for the Father in Jesus’ name. In that name they became masters of Satan and demons, they baptized, healed the sick and raised the dead. When we afford that same significance to the Word, the name and the Spirit today, we shall experience the same powerful results!

B. Signs and wonders . . .

Compelled by the words of their Master, the disciples ministered to the needs of everyone they met. Christ had instructed:

“He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12).

At first the disciples could not comprehend the powerful meaning. But then they were infused with power.

Luke told us,

“And many wonders and signs were done by the apostles” (Acts 2:43).

Then he detailed a highly publicized miracle.

C. Lame man Acts 3:1-11

One afternoon, Peter and John went to the Temple for prayer. Approaching the gate, their attention was drawn to a lame beggar sitting on the steps.

Peter instructed the lame man, “Look on us. Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have, I give to you.”

Before the man could collect his thoughts, Peter continued. “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and WALK!”

Taking the beggar by the hand, Peter pulled him upward. Suddenly the man felt strength in his feet and ankles! They actually supported him! Standing, then walking . . . and soon he was running!

The Temple courts echoed the beggar's shouts of grateful praise. Of course, such unorthodox behavior gained immediate attention. The Temple worshipers recognized him to be the lame beggar.

The amazed spectators thronged the scene. Peter grasped this opportunity to preach about Jesus.

Annoyed at Peter's message, the authorities sent guards to arrest Peter and John. After being detained overnight in prison, they were strictly commanded not to speak to any man in this name. They had crucified Jesus, but His name seemed more powerful than the man Himself!

This miraculous incident motivated the disciples to pray "that with all boldness they may speak thy word" and "that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." And the prayer was answered! A spectacular healing ministry began. As the Word increased, so did the miracles.

"They brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and then were healed every one" (Acts 5:15-16).

D. Stephen is stoned

Acts 7:54-60

The determined Jews sought more drastic measures. Their animosity was vented toward Stephen, a deacon full of faith and the Holy Ghost.

Having special anointing to perform miracles, Stephen was mightily used of the Spirit. No one could withstand his wisdom and power.

The Grecian Jews determined to bring Stephen to trial. As lying witnesses presented false evidence, every eye was focused on Stephen. Mysteriously, his face began to glow—like the face of an angel!

Included in Stephen's testimony was the fact that Jewish leaders had put Christ, the Messiah, to death. Angrily the mob dragged him to the streets.

Outside the city walls, the official witnesses removed their outer robes and began the murderous deed. Amid flying stones, Stephen appealed to heaven—not for mercy for himself, but forgiveness for his accusers.

Stephen's angelic countenance and his prayer for forgiveness were never forgotten by Saul, who had held the coats of the murderers.

Stephen's death signaled an immediate, all-out campaign against the Jerusalem church. Christians fled the holy city to remote areas of Judea and Samaria.

The cause of Christianity was best served through the persecution. To every city the believers fled, they continued preaching the Word (Acts 8:4).

They sought refuge from the maniacal zeal of Saul of Tarsus. A zealot for the ancestral traditions of his nation, young Saul recognized that Stephen's faith was a menace to those traditions. Saul "made havock" of the church, arresting and imprisoning them. A tyrant of great fury, Saul "[breathed] out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1).

E. . . . and persecutions!

Wonderful as their miraculous ministry was, it was not without opposition. Jewish authorities attempted to extinguish the ever-spreading flame of Christianity.

The authorities sentenced more of the apostles to overnight imprisonment (Acts 5:17-19). But the persecution made them more fervent!

F. Peter imprisoned

Acts 12:1-19

The government joined the religious leaders' campaign against the Christians. When Herod Agrippa became monarch, he determined to win and retain the goodwill of his Jewish subjects.

Because of Herod, James, the brother of John, became the first martyred apostle. This murderous plot had "pleased the Jews," so Herod pursued the ringleader—Peter!

Miracles awaited Peter as he slept chained between prison guards. The angel of the Lord appeared in the cell, waking Peter and putting the guards to sleep. Hurriedly the two left the prison. Each door clicked open as they approached. Even the big iron gate opening to the city streets voluntarily swung wide as they approached.

In answer to the young church's united prayers in a nearby home, another miracle had occurred! It was an era of excitement, boldness, and unrestrained fervor. The Word,

the name of Jesus, and the Spirit set the church ablaze. The fiery message of Pentecost spread throughout the entire region!

Lesson 10 – Chart 2 Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles

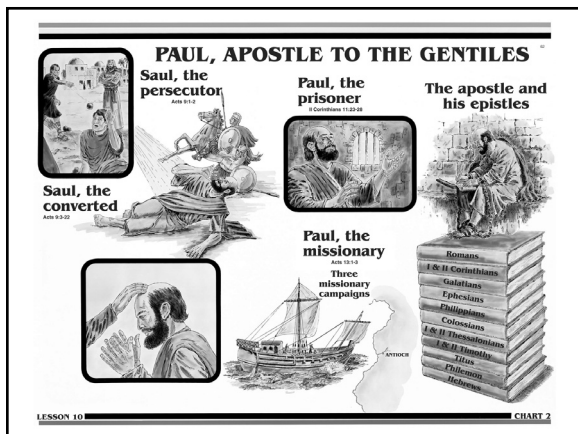


Chart Objective:

To study the life of Saul, the fanatical persecutor transformed into an equally zealous missionary, who was responsible for spreading the gospel to Gentiles throughout Europe and Asia. His special revelations from God and correspondence to newly founded congregations compose more than half the New Testament.

Chart Outline:

- A. Saul, the persecutor
- B. Saul, the converted
- C. Paul, the missionary
- D. Paul, the prisoner
- E. The apostle and his epistles

A. Saul, the persecutor

Acts 9:1-2

The early church was victorious even through crisis and tragedy. While the frantic mob hurled stones at Stephen, a young eminent Jewish rabbi had stood beside the pile of garments. Soon this rabbi would be thrust into the foreground.

What were Saul's reactions while gazing at Stephen's angelic face—who prayed for his murderers?

Of Jewish parentage, Saul was born in the renowned Grecian city of Tarsus, a Roman province of Cilicia. Thus, he inherited the rights of Roman citizenship.

B. Saul, the converted

Acts 9:3-22

As Saul approached Damascus, an extremely bright light from heaven suddenly beamed around him! Astonished, he fell from his horse to the ground. In a vision, Jesus appeared as the exalted Messiah of the Jews.

Saul's companions stood speechless. They saw the light and heard a voice, but the words were unintelligible. Only the frightened man on the ground understood.

"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

Trembling, he answered, "Who are You, Lord?"

“I am Jesus, the One you are persecuting!” the voice replied.

With that question of love and rebuke, the heavenly voice melted Saul’s heart. He received instructions to go into Damascus—and the vision abruptly ended. Staggering to his feet, Saul realized he could not see. Helplessly, he followed the Lord’s instructions and was led to a residence on Straight Street.

After fasting three days, Saul’s blindness was healed and he was baptized by an humble disciple, Ananias, whom Saul had come to prosecute. Testimonials reveal that Saul was also filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke with other tongues (Acts 9:17-18; I Corinthians 14:18).

The haughty, self-righteous, raging Pharisee was transformed into an humble, penitent, loving servant of Christ. The One whom he had formerly persecuted was the One he now wished to serve.

Later, when referring to his conversion, Paul related,

“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood” (Galatians 1:15-16).

The one who became the chief interpreter of the gospel of Jesus Christ began his career with a two-year solitary education in the desert, communing with the Lord.

Saul probably posed many questions concerning his newfound experience. He had to reconcile his past beliefs and actions while preparing himself as the “chosen vessel” to the Gentiles.

Perhaps it was there that Jesus revealed so many important aspects of salvation—the union of the believer with Christ; the purpose of water baptism; the body of Christ; the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ; and many others. So intensive were the revelations that the apostle recorded,

“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. . . . But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man,

neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:8, 11-12).

A full three years elapsed before Saul returned to Jerusalem. Having heard about his conversion, his former associates offered no friendly welcome. On the other hand, Jesus’ disciples—with whom he now wished to associate—remembered his vigorous and bloodthirsty persecution. Was this another clever scheme?

Barnabas illustrated himself a “son of encouragement” and acted as Saul’s sponsor by introducing him to the Jerusalem church leaders.

Saul stayed fifteen days before the Lord warned him to leave Jerusalem. Several more obscure years were spent in Tarsus. Later writings suggest that he may have been disinherited by his family (Philippians 3:8) and numerous times he experienced beatings from synagogue authorities (II Corinthians 11:24).

What discouragements must have tormented Saul. All those glorious visions and promises of a great work . . . and there he sat in Tarsus . . . making tents! But each trying experience was preparation for his true life’s calling.

A Gentile church was established in Syrian Antioch. The Jerusalem church leaders sent Barnabas to verify the strange happenings.

Barnabas discovered God’s grace bringing blessing to Jews and Gentiles alike as they heard and accepted the gospel!

When the congregation began to increase, Barnabas recruited a helper who could discard traditional prejudices and wholeheartedly serve the Gentiles. That man was Saul of Tarsus! At last, the calling of God would be fulfilled.

C. Paul, the missionary

Acts 13:1-3

Together Saul and Barnabas labored for a full year in Antioch. The Holy Spirit called the two apostles to be the first foreign missionaries to the Gentiles.

In the Greek-speaking world, he exchanged his Hebrew name, Saul, for the Greek pronunciation—Paul.

Paul’s personal preaching ministry consisted chiefly of three missionary campaigns, each beginning from the church in Antioch.

On the first endeavor, Paul was accompa-

nied by Barnabas and John Mark to the island of Cyprus and several provinces of Asia Minor.

The team utilized a particular method of evangelization. Because the gospel had been first offered to Jews, they usually visited the Jewish synagogue first. Being distinguished visitors, they were often invited to speak. Paul boldly preached that Jesus was the promised Messiah. This usually invoked the wrath of devout Jewish worshipers and leaders.

The reason for this practice was that among Jewish worshipers were many Gentile proselytes. A gospel that was equally available to Jews and Gentiles was appealing. The missionary trio was usually expelled from the synagogue, but not before converting many Gentiles.

Paul disciplined these followers to form a church nucleus. When it was firmly established, he and his staff would go to another city and repeat the procedure.

Their first missionary campaign lasted about two years before returning to Antioch. Then another trip was planned. Paul and Barnabas separated into two separate missionary groups. Paul chose Silas and Barnabas selected John Mark. Once again they visited and encouraged the churches established on their first trip, then extended the mission to several other provinces.

Paul's third missionary trip was to Ephesus. In this idolatrous Asian capitol, he preached three years. He also revisited churches in Macedonia and Achaia. During this period, Paul wrote the great doctrinal Epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians and Romans. This campaign ended as he journeyed back to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Pentecost.

D. Paul, the prisoner

II Corinthians 11:23-28

At Caesarea, Paul received a warning from the prophet Agabus that persecution awaited him in Jerusalem. However, he continued his travel. Paul was seized by a Jewish mob and would have been slain had not Roman soldiers rescued him. Because of a plot by forty assassins, he was sent by night under heavy guard to Caesarea.

Paul's first trial was before Felix, the governor. As he testified about righteousness, temperance, and judgment, the governor felt a need to repent, although he refused to do so.

King Agrippa and his sister, Bernice, visited the governor. Arrangements were made for the three dignitaries to hear Paul speak. Little did they realize that their names would be immortalized in history—not for some great achievement, but for rejecting Christ.

The handcuffed prisoner related the story of his devout youth, his persecution of the church, his dramatic conversion at Damascus and his commission to the Gentiles. Then turning dramatically, Paul exclaimed, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" Before he could reply, Paul added, "I know that thou believest."

Then Agrippa made a commonly used excuse: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." But "almost" was not good enough.

When the session ended, it was decided that Paul did not deserve death or imprisonment. But because he had appealed his case to Caesar, he was sent to Rome.

Accompanied by Luke and Aristarchus, they set sail. After experiencing a storm and shipwreck in the Mediterranean and a winter on the island of Malta, Paul entered Rome early in A.D. 60. For the next two years he remained under military guard in his own private lodging. He could receive visitors, thereby completing his apostolic mission as an ambassador to the heart of the empire.

E. The apostle and his epistles

Paul's confinement surely was frustrating. However, he refused to fret about unchangeable situations. "I have learned," Paul wrote, "in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

But neither was he idle. Perhaps his **most** valuable endeavor was achieved during his imprisonment. These letters have instructed and enhanced Christians of all times.

A prison is not the most likely setting to produce writings of great significance. However, Paul's prison letters do not reflect despair. Rather, he triumphantly rose above circumstances to communicate an ageless message.

Thirteen of the twenty-one New Testament epistles appear under Paul's name.

A considerable portion of Paul's preserved correspondence was already written before he arrived in Rome. Much had been written while traveling among churches, encouraging and establishing his converts.

Had the apostle not written these valuable letters, much knowledge and instruction about Christianity would have been lost.

Because God's plan for Paul included a prison term, the "dispensation of grace" has been clearly defined.

Lesson 10 – Chart 3 Destruction of Jerusalem

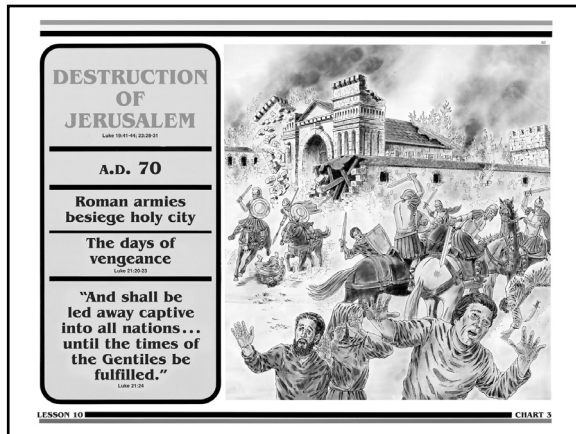


Chart Objective:

To study the tragic destruction of Jerusalem, prophesied by Christ and other prophets. In A.D. 70, Titus, a Roman general, devastated the holy city and dispersed the Jewish people around the globe.

Chart Outline:

- A. Roman armies besiege holy city
- B. The days of vengeance
- C. "And shall be led away captive into all nations"

A. Roman armies besiege holy city

Luke 19:41-44; 23:28-31

The Jews often balked at Rome's tyrannical rulership. Of all the territory under Roman rule, Judea alone was the discontented, disloyal province. By their own interpretation of prophetic writings, the Jews believed that they were destined to conquer and govern the world. Having that confidence, they resisted submitting to the yoke of Roman rule.

Several unsuccessful attempts were made to police the frequent Jewish uprisings. However, the appointment of Vespasian to quell the festering Palestinian crisis spelled the beginning of the end for the Jewish offenders in Jerusalem.

About A.D. 66 the Jews broke into open rebellion. What could one small province

with no allies accomplish against an empire of 120 million, including 250,000 disciplined soldiers?

After Vespasian succeeded Nero, his son, Titus, planned a siege against Jerusalem in the spring of A.D. 70, immediately after Passover. He made a gradual, forceful attack. Surrounding the city walls, the Romans cut off all food supplies and continued a perpetual siege against the city.

Disease and starvation raged. But rather than joining in an attack against their common enemy, the Jews fought among themselves. Although the end was inevitable, they would not surrender (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 1, page 396).

By May, half the city was in Titus' control. When he offered terms of surrender, they were scorned. On July 5, the Fortress of Antonia adjoining the Temple area was stormed. Twelve days later, the daily sacrifices ceased, after having been offered there almost continuously since the days of Solomon.

Methodically the Romans advanced until, on August 10, the Temple burst into flames. Titus had planned to preserve the Temple as a war trophy. As the flames threatened the Holy of Holies, Titus tried to extinguish it. But the destruction was determined by a higher decree.

Hideous screams resounded from the terrorized Jews. "No one," recorded Josephus, "can conceive a louder, more terrible shriek than arose from all sides during the burning of the Temple" (Schaff, page 398).

The hill on which the Temple stood was one seething hot sheet of flame. There was more blood flowing than fire raging. There were more dead than living.

The Romans took terrible vengeance on the Jews for their stubborn resistance. As many as five hundred victims a day were nailed to crosses outside the city. Josephus recalls that this massacre continued until there was no more wood for making crosses.

"His blood be on us, and on our children!" they had cried. Little did they realize how

many of them would die a cruel death identical to that of the innocent Christ!

No wonder Christ had wept over the site of Jerusalem! Forty years earlier He had prophetically seen this tragic day approaching.

His exact words were fulfilled by the plunder and greed of the Roman garrison. "Not one stone would be left upon another," Christ had foretold (Matthew 24:2). Tradition indicates that the heat from the inferno melted the golden overlay of the Temple, much of which seeped between the unmortared joints of the massive stones.

The soldiers' pay was primarily from their own plunder. Therefore, they desperately wanted that gold! While retrieving it, they pried the Temple apart stone by stone (LaHaye, *The Beginning of the End*, page 32).

B. The days of vengeance

Luke 21:20-23

Finally the revolt ended on April 15, A.D. 73, when refugees in the garrison of Masada, a rock fortress on the western shore of the Dead Sea, committed mass-suicide rather than surrender.

Thus, after existing 1300 years, the Jewish state was abolished, not to be restored until the year 1948.

Treasures saved from the burning Temple, including the seven-branched candlestick, the golden shewbread table and the silver trumpets, became Rome's trophies. Their engravings chiseled upon the stone front of Titus' memorial arch can still be seen.

In the fall of Jerusalem, few if any Christians perished. They escaped the doomed city, finding refuge at Pella in the Jordan Valley.

C. "And shall be led away captive into all nations"

Luke 21:24

More than a million Jews perished. The Colosseum at Rome was built by Jewish slave labor. Scattered over the earth, at home everywhere and nowhere, the Jews refused to mingle their blood with any other race.

Despite oppression, they prospered. They were both ridiculed and feared; robbed, yet wealthy; massacred, but not annihilated. The Jews have outlived the persecution of centuries and will continue to live to the end of time as the object of mingled contempt, admiration and wonder of the world.

When at last the "times of the Gentiles" and their world rulership is completed, the Jews will again experience a complete restoration of their covenant promises.

Lesson 10 – Chart 4 The Church in Persecution

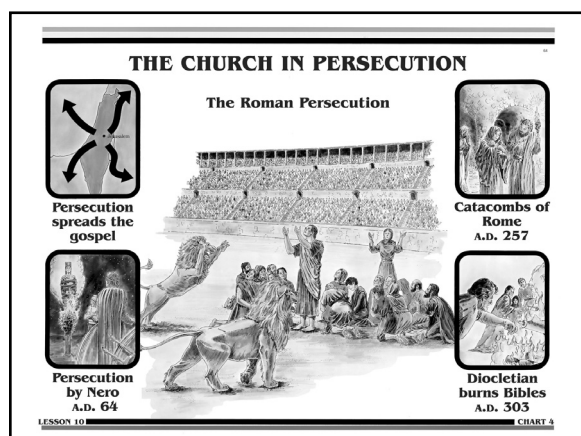


Chart Objective:

To discover how the church suffered the sword of Roman persecution for more than two hundred years following the apostolic era. Yet she grew stronger! The martyrs' blood became the seed that would reproduce for centuries to come.

Chart Outline:

- A. Persecution spreads the gospel
- B. Persecution of Nero—A.D. 64
- C. Catacombs of Rome—A.D. 257
- D. Diocletian burns Bibles—A.D. 303

A. Persecution spreads the gospel

At the close of the first century, few of the original Twelve were still living. James, the brother of John, was the first to be martyred. Earlier, Stephen, one of the seven deacons, was stoned to death. Initially, the sufferings were inflicted by the Jews. However, the passive attitude of the Roman government toward the Christians drastically changed.

James, a younger brother of Jesus, was slain in the Temple about A.D. 62. Tradition indicates that Peter was crucified upside down and Paul was beheaded. The other apostles, with the exception of John, experienced horrible deaths of stonings, beatings, stabbings and various forms of torturous executions. John is believed to have died a

natural death at Ephesus about A.D. 100.

For the next two hundred years, the church endured the sword of persecution. During the second, third, and early part of the fourth centuries, Rome invoked all its power to destroy what was termed the “Christian superstition.” Despite this, Christ’s followers were not diminished. Rather, their blood became the seed that reproduced for nineteen centuries!

In the years following the apostolic era, every Christian seemed to be a missionary. The soldier tried to win converts from his ranks; the prisoner sought to introduce his guards to Christ; the slave girl whispered the good news in the ears of her mistress. Everyone who had experienced the joy of faith in Christ tried to bring others to conversion.

Consequently, the number of believers rapidly swelled. When rulers, who required respect for idolatrous gods, learned that a secret society in Rome worshiped an unknown God, they became alarmed. Christians were forbidden to meet secretly. Eventually, when some widespread catastrophe occurred—such as fire, famine, flood or pestilence—it was blamed on the Christians. Presumably, they had invoked the anger of the offended gods.

Cruel laws were enacted. Riots ensued. And the terrible cry, “To the lions with the Christians!” resounded through the streets of Rome.

Faithful Christians became the target for bloodthirsty spectator sports. Deadly duels between the gladiators, prisoners, slaves, criminals and wild beasts became favorite Roman amusements. The emperor who could offer his subjects the grandest variety of bloody entertainments became popular with his domain.

B. Persecution of Nero—

A.D. 64

Until the reign of Nero, Christianity was opposed, but it was tolerated. However, the great fire of A.D. 64 in Rome changed that. Although the actual cause was probably an accident, rumor labeled it otherwise.

When the emperor himself was suspected, he looked for scapegoats. Nero fingered the blame on Christians. A terrible persecution ensued as thousands were tortured and executed.

Professed Christians were first to be executed. Their death was made a sport. They

were sewn into wild beasts’ skins, torn to pieces by dogs or were burned at the stake. It is believed that Peter was crucified during this persecution in A.D. 67 and Paul was beheaded the following year.

Countless Christians gave their lives because of Nero’s sadistic whims. Many victims were wrapped and smeared with tar pitch. Then they were fastened to tall poles in Nero’s palace garden. While Nero, attended by slaves and courtiers, reclined upon a balcony to watch, the blazing human torches were set on fire. Romans who shared his hatred for the Christians joined Nero as he drove his chariot through the garden, relishing the grotesque scene.

Following Nero’s reign was a new emperor, Vespasian. He was responsible for the Colosseum, a massive structure designed to house entertainment. Tier upon tier, sloping upward from a central arena were seats to accommodate almost 100,000 spectators.

History indicates that the Colosseum’s grand opening was a one-hundred-day exhibition of public games. More than 5,000 beasts brought from all parts of the world were slain in the bloody exhibits. It was into this blood-stained arena that Christians were stabbed to death or torn to pieces by ravenous tigers and lions.

Titus, the conqueror of Jerusalem, followed his father Vespasian as Roman emperor in A.D. 79, but died two years later. His younger brother, Domitian, succeeded him.

About A.D. 90, Domitian began a second imperial persecution by spasmodically slaying thousands of believers throughout the empire. John, the last surviving apostle, was imprisoned on the isle of Patmos. There he received the *Book of Revelation*, the final New Testament book.

Following the assassination of Domitian, the Christians experienced a relative calm. From A.D. 96 to 161, Christianity was not recognized, but not severely persecuted.

Reigning from A.D. 161 to 180 was Marcus Aurelius, also a ruthless persecutor of Christians. Many thousands of believers were beheaded or were devoured by wild beasts in the arena.

Among the martyrs of this era was Polycarp, the aged bishop of Smyrna. He formed a final link with those who had seen Christ, having been taught by John, the beloved disciple. A letter written by the

Smyrna church after his martyrdom in A.D. 156 relates an anti-Christian mob raised an outcry for Polycarp. A police squad went to fetch him. The captain, probably wishing to spare the elderly man the indignities which awaited him said, "What harm is there in saying, 'Caesar is Lord' and offering incense to save yourself?"

But Polycarp refused. At the arena, the proconsul of Asia tried to dissuade him. But the aged believer declared, "Eighty-six years have I served Him, and He has done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme my Savior and King?"

Polycarp was taken to the stake.

Another famous Christian of this time was Justin Martyr, a philosopher and defender of Christianity. His books relate much valuable information concerning the church in the mid-second century.

Justin met his martyrdom in the reign of a fellow philosopher, Marcus Aurelius. Brought with a number of other Christians before the rulers, Justin refused to sacrifice to the gods. "No right-thinking person," he said, "turns away from true belief to false." So he was led away to execution.

Following the death of Marcus Aurelius in A.D. 180, numerous emperors followed in rapid succession and the church was virtually isolated from persecution for half a century.

C. Catacombs of Rome—

A.D. 257

In A.D. 253, Valerian became emperor. At first, he appeared favorable to the Christians. But his policy changed after four years. An edict was published forbidding Christians to hold ordinary public meetings. A further edict specified severe penalties for even professing Christianity.

Also included in the edict was the refusal to bury Christians in cemeteries. This forced believers to bury their dead in the "catacombs" of Rome, which were deep underground passageways or tunnels dug to obtain

stone for building the city. If placed end to end, these tunnels would stretch some five hundred miles in length. The slaves and convicts who had worked on the project told the Christians about this safe hiding place for both worship and burial.

In niches or shelves cut in the sides of the tunnels, Christians tenderly laid their dead to rest. Some of the loving inscriptions carved over the remains are still visible.

At night, Christians secretly entered the dark openings in the rock and passed along the darkened galleries. Soon they heard sweet music. In a brightly lit vaulted chamber, they found men and women huddled together, singing a psalm of worship. Never had music been any sweeter!

D. Diocletian burns Bibles—

A.D. 303

The years following Valerian's defeat were years of crisis for the empire, but tranquillity for the church. For forty years, they enjoyed peace. The government was stabilized when Diocletian became emperor in A.D. 285.

Nearly twenty years elapsed without a trace of anti-Christian policy. However, the storm broke suddenly. The rapid growth of Christianity rivaled the old state religion, and many influential people again determined to crush it.

The first phase of the new persecution in A.D. 303 was an edict ordering the destruction of all church buildings and copies of Scripture. A second edict ordered the arrest of clergy. The following year, another edict ordered that failure of Christians to sacrifice to the state gods was punishable by death.

Christianity was sternly prohibited and punished by torture and death. But in A.D. 381, less than eighty years afterward, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire! In a single step, Christianity rose from threat of extermination to a place of prominence beside the most powerful and influential throne of the world!

Lesson 10 – Chart 5 The Decline in Christendom










DECLINE IN CHRISTENDOM				
A.D. 30-150	A.D. 150-300	A.D. 300-400	A.D. 400-500	A.D. 500-1500
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day of Pentecost A.D. 30 Persecution by Nero A.D. 54-68 Martyrdom of apostles A.D. 44-68 Jerusalem destroyed A.D. 70 Persecution by Domitian A.D. 81-96  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gnosticism Montanists A.D. 155 Tertullian introduces a new theology A.D. 156 Sabellius A.D. 200  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Persecution by Diocletian A.D. 303 Constantine's Edict of Toleration A.D. 313 Council of Nicea A.D. 325 Council of Constantinople A.D. 381  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heathen worship begins Sacrifices, altars, priests images, relics Roman Empire falls - A.D. 410 Pope established A.D. 461  	<p>DARK AGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birth of Muhammad A.D. 570 Holy Wars Crusades 1096-1291 Power struggle church and state Sale of indulgences 1476 

Chart Objective:

To examine a more devastating trial encountered by the church than persecution: the protecting arms of the State. Countless pagan rituals were adopted by the largest branch of Christianity, and this branch became the dominant religion in Rome.

Chart Outline:

- A.D. 30-150
- A.D. 150-300
- A.D. 300-400
- A.D. 400-500
- A.D. 500-1500

A. A.D. 30-150

In the first hundred years after the Day of Pentecost, Christians suffered many persecutions, but their basic doctrines did not change. When asked what was the most important commandment, Jesus had answered:

“The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:29-31).

In answer to Philip’s question to “shew us the Father,” Jesus had answered:

“Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?”

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works” (John 14:9-10).

Christ stressed that the most important fact to understand about the Godhead is that God had robed Himself with human flesh to bring salvation. Because the invisible Father had made Himself visible in the person of Jesus Christ, we understand that Jesus was the Lord God of the Old Testament.

We have learned how Satan afflicted the church externally, using idolatrous Roman emperors to persecute and martyr believers. But after John’s death, about A.D. 100, a new strategy began. Heresies began to arise with Christianity.

The greatest internal controversy involved the most important of the commandments—understanding how the one Lord, Whom we must love with all hearts, has revealed Himself to man.

During the last generation of the first century from A.D. 68 to 100, the church suffered severe persecution. But we know very little about this period of history. When the curtain rises about A.D. 120 with writings of the earliest church fathers, Christianity in many aspects was quite different from the days of Peter and Paul.

B. A.D. 150-300

In the last half of the second century, two heresies (opinions contrary to the true faith) became a serious threat to the church.

One departure from the truth was “**Gnosticism**,” derived from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning knowledge. Gnostics claimed to have a unique, mysterious knowledge. They ascribed the visible world of matter to be evil; only the unseen, spiritual realm was good.

This teaching was false, since Scripture states that our bodies—which can be seen—are the temple of the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 6:19).

Another gnostic teaching was that since Christ was perfect and sinless, and flesh (matter) is inherently evil, He could not have had a fleshly body while on earth. But John expressly wrote,

“For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is

come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (II John 7; also I John 4:1-2).

Another false teaching of the second century was that of the “**Montanists.**” Its founder, Montanus, declared himself to be the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost. Elevating himself above the authority of Scripture, he proclaimed the immediate coming of Christ, strict self-denial, fasting, abstinence from meat and encouraged his followers not to marry. Paul had expressly warned against such departure from the faith (I Timothy 4:1-3).

Other philosophers, such as Origen, declared that everyone will eventually be saved. Sinners will be punished—in a way that will result in restoration. Of course, such teaching removes the incentive to live a godly life. Such humanistic wisdom clearly disregards Christ’s command: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

Tertullian, a brilliant lawyer reared in northern Africa, was responsible for introducing a new theology about the Godhead called the **trinity**. This theory later became the central foundation of the Roman church.

It has been speculated that Tertullian’s development of the trinity, which was foreign to the original Jewish Christianity, might be traced to the influence of Egyptian theology of triple divinity. Triads of gods in various cities had threefold names, representing three differing aspects of the same personality (Weisser, *After the Way Called Heresy*, page 21).

The basic meaning of the trinity is that in the unity of the Godhead there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; these three Persons, being truly distinct one from another, are all co-eternal and co-equal. All alike are uncreated and omnipotent (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 15, page 47).

Tertullian wrote in a treatise: “For there is the Spirit Himself who speaks, and the Father to whom He speaks, and the Son of whom He speaks” (Ed. Alexander Roberts, *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, “Against Praxeas”, page 355).

In explaining a scripture expressing God’s oneness, he added, “‘I am God, and there is none other beside me,’ who shows us that He is the only God, *but in company with His Son*, with whom ‘He stretcheth out the heavens’” (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, page 373).

The first Christians were either Jews by birth, or they were Gentiles who had absorbed much of the Jewish belief in the one true God.

However, the background influence changed when the gospel was introduced to pagans who had worshiped many gods.

A modern historian said it like this: “Not only had they to learn about Jesus as Savior and Lord, but they must learn, to begin with, that God is one, and that He is the Creator and righteous Judge of all” (F. F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame*).

About A.D. 96, the church of Ephesus was recorded as leaving their first love. Not long after this, there were those that sought to change the original baptism in Jesus’ name to the titles.

Otto Heick’s *A History of Christian Thought* states: “At first baptism was administered in the name of Jesus, but gradually in the name of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” He concluded that from A.D. 130 to 140 the trinitarian baptismal formula gradually received acceptance.

So we see that changes had already entered in Christianity around A.D. 150. The baptismal formula was not changed, as some believe, at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325. Some theologians had already begun this practice years before.

From A.D. 150 was a time of tremendous crisis for the young church. Persecution was raging and thousands were laying down their lives for their newfound faith. At the same time, false doctrine was making inroads. Heathen were being converted to the church daily, but their background brought misconceptions and distorted ideas about the Godhead.

One of the greatest teachers in the third century was **Sabellius**, a presbyter from North Africa who settled in Rome in A.D. 215. He taught that there was one person in the Godhead. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost were not distinct persons, but “modes” of one divine person. God was Father in creation, Son in redemption, and Holy Ghost in regeneration (*New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*, Vol. VII, page 460).

In following generations, many who were condemned for the doctrine of one person in the Godhead were referred to as “Sabellians.” While their writings were destroyed, we find their influence throughout the centuries among those labeled by the Roman church as “heretics.”

C. A.D. 300-400

The threat of the Gnostics, Montanists, and humanistic philosophers was disturbing.

But a greater test was yet to come.

Soon after the **persecution by Diocletian in A.D. 303**, four aspirants battled for the imperial crown. The two most powerful rivals were Maxentius and Constantine, whose armies met in battle in A.D. 312. Maxentius represented the old heathen persecuting element. Constantine was friendly to the Christians, although not yet a professing believer.

A strange experience led Constantine to a Christian profession. He reported seeing in the sky a shining cross bearing the motto, "By this sign thou shall conquer." Upon defeating his rival Maxentius, the cross was adopted as the standard of Constantine's military forces.

Soon afterward, **Constantine's Edict of Toleration** was published in A.D. 313, which officially ended the Christian persecution. For more than two hundred years, no Christian had been safe from accusation and death. However, with the publication of this edict, persecution abruptly ceased.

Instead, favors were showered upon Christianity. Money was granted to erect magnificent shrines. Reimbursement was made by cities for church buildings that had previously been demolished. Churches and edifices began to arise everywhere.

Although heathen worship was still tolerated, the official pagan sacrifices ceased. In many places, heathen temples were converted to churches. Soon public funds quite liberally enriched the Roman church, with bishops and other officials receiving support from the state.

Since Christians had previously been observing Sunday as a day of rest and worship, the emperor made the practice official throughout the empire. But the public games were continued, tending to make the day of rest more a holiday than a holy day.

In return for granting Christianity religious freedom and other favors, Constantine expected a governing role in its affairs. Roman church leaders allowed him far excessive authority in internal affairs. He became both head of the Roman church and head of State. The uniting of Christianity and state formed the "catholic" or universal church of Rome.

Although the emperor claimed to be a Christian, his personal character lacked spiritual virtues. However, as a wise politician, he associated himself with the movement which held the future of his empire.

Thus Christians were scarcely freed from the oppression of their persecutors until they encountered a trial more terrible and fatal than that of hostility: the protecting, but changing arms of the state!

The controversy concerning the deity of Christ that had raged for many years became one of the emperor's first problems. Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, set forth the erroneous doctrine that Christ, though higher than the human nature, was inferior to God. Because He was not eternal in existence, He did have a beginning.

Meanwhile, Athanasius, also of Alexandria, contended for the unity of the Son with the Father, the deity of Christ and His eternal existence. The controversy extended throughout the Catholic church, each side accusing the other of heresy. As an act of goodwill, Constantine called a meeting of bishops to end the conflict.

The **Council of Nicea in A.D. 325** is known as the first church council of the Catholic church. It convened in order to harmonize the factions and to establish universal rules. Almost 300 bishops met at Nicea in northwest Asia Minor on May 20, A.D. 325. All lower clergy and laity were required to abide by the council's decisions.

In a heated debate, Athanasius convinced the majority of delegates to condemn the teachings of Arius.

A doctrine was then established on the premise that the Son has always existed with the Father. A statement, known as the Nicene Creed, was the first written one of the Catholic church. All who opposed this creed were ex-communicated and severely persecuted.

Now that they had settled who Jesus was, there was one issue that had not been addressed by the Council of Nicea. Who was the Holy Ghost? Therefore, the Council of Constantinople (today's Istanbul, Turkey) was called in A.D. 381. Here the Creed of Nicea was declared to be the sole legal religion in the empire. Also, the Holy Spirit was affirmed to be a "Person" within the unity of the Godhead, equal to the Father and the Son, "proceeding from the Father."

This second council condemned Sabellianism as heresy. The establishment of this ruling confirms there were still many who believed that God had manifested Himself in three roles—but only one person.

So the doctrine of the trinity was fully established by law. The Nicene Creed had been tolerable to the Sabellians, since they, too, rejected Arianism. But at Constantinople, the trinitarian doctrine had become a compromise solution to the doctrinal difficulties threatening to fragment the Catholic church.

“One Substance but three separate Persons” more closely resembles the language of polytheism than of the Bible. Almost all major pagan religions acclaim their supreme deity as a trinity. Alexander Hislop, in his book *The Two Babylons*, says that Babylonians symbolized their one god with the equilateral triangle. Ancient Assyria had a triune divinity; India’s was represented with three heads on one body; Japan’s Buddha also has three heads with the same form (page 16-18).

To attribute to the Godhead three separate personalities was completely unscriptural and unacceptable to those who believed in three manifestations of one God. While most accepted the trinity without verifying it in the Bible, a few continued to question . . . but at the cost of their lives!

D. A.D. 400-500

Some strange doctrines and heathen practices had been introduced into the Catholic church by Greek philosophers in the second century. But when Constantine’s Edict of A.D. 313 invited influential heathen Gentiles to assume the leadership, rivers of corruption and heathen worship flowed in!

Thousands of heathen joined the Catholic church after it became an honor to be a Christian. The mere association with Christianity secured a passport to political, military and social promotion.

No longer was Christianity transforming the world. Rather, the world was changing Christianity! The humility and holiness of an earlier age were replaced with ambition, pride, and arrogance. Here are some of the radical, unscriptural changes that were made:

- The Lord’s Supper became a sacrifice instead of a memorial.
- “Elders” or preachers became priests.
- A sharp division developed between the clergy (church officers) and laity (ordinary church members).
- Elaborate, splendid worship services

and gorgeous vestments were instituted for the clergy.

- Bishops ruled over the clergy.
- One bishop (the “pope”) ruled over the others.
- The pope held authority over everyone and was responsible to no one.
- Sprinkling was substituted for baptism by immersion.
- Infant baptism was initiated.
- Magical powers were ascribed to “relics” (bones, hair, clothing, etc.) of martyrs and saints.
- Rituals, sacrifices, altars, and pictures were introduced.
- Images of martyrs, saints, the Virgin and Christ were worshiped.
- Tapers (candles) were burned in honor of dead saints.
- Prayers were offered for the dead.
- The doctrine of “purgatory” (a place where souls are purified after death before entering heaven) emerged.
- Pilgrimages to holy places were required.

(Kuiper, *The Church in History*)

During the apostolic era, the ministry assisted in perfecting or bringing saints to spiritual maturity. All ministers were on an equal level. But as the apostolic era faded, so did many scriptural practices.

Paganistic forms, superstitions, and ceremonies crept into the worship of the Catholic church. Formerly heathen feasts became church festivals by adopting names and observances—such as Christmas and Easter.

A Catholic church council convening at Ephesus established that Mary was the mother of God. In this same city the goddess Diana, the mother of the gods, formerly had been worshiped (Acts 19:28-35). To provide a Christian flavor, the name was simply changed from Diana to Mary (Weisser, *After the Way Called Heresy*, page 441).

E. A.D. 500-1500 Dark Ages

By end of the fifth century, countless unscriptural doctrines and practices formerly associated with heathen religions were observed.

In A.D. 570, Muhammad, a descendant of Ishmael, son of Abraham, was born in the Arabian city of Mecca. Muhammad came in contact with Jews and Christians and learned something of their religion. Claiming to have received revelations from the angel Gabriel,

he established the religion of Muhammadanism (also called “Islam” and “Muslims”).

These teachings were later collected and written in the *Koran*, the sacred book of the Muhammadans. His fundamental teaching was: There is but one God, Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.

Muhammad died in 632, but his influence lived on. In the next hundred years, Muhammadans conquered Persia (Iran), India, Asia Minor, and the provinces of Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa.

Later the Arabs conquered Spain and the Roman province of Gaul (France). It appeared that all Europe and Christianity might be ruled by Muhammadanism. To this day, most of these nations have but few small Christian churches.

The Muhammadan violence is a black chapter in Christianity’s history. Islam promised special privileges and pleasures in the next world to men who fell in battle while fighting for the faith. Thus, fierce Arab horsemen fought with reckless rage, fearless of death.

With the passing of centuries, the Arabs lost their strength and were supplanted in the East by the Turks, who were also Islamic.

In 1054 the Catholic church divided into the Greek Eastern and the Latin Western churches. Because of the blow dealt the Eastern church when Islam conquered Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa, that part

of Christianity remained weak. Therefore, the Eastern emperor appealed to the pope of the Western church to fight with him against the Muhammadans. Thus began the concept of the Holy Wars or “Crusades.”

The Crusades were Christian military expeditions of western Europe to regain the Holy Land and its sacred places from the Muhammadans. To the Arabs and Turks, the holy wars spread their religion; to the Christians, holy wars were directives by their Catholic churches. No one questioned whether such bloodshed was pleasing to God!

For two hundred years, several Crusades were fought for the conquest of the Holy Land. But it was not until World War I that the English finally took Palestine away from the Turks.

The Roman Catholic Church sank low in its morals. To receive release from the penalty of sin, one could pay the Roman church a sum of money and receive an “indulgence,” or an official statement of release. Indulgences could be purchased for oneself, for friends and relatives who had died and passed into “purgatory.” This supposedly shortened the time one’s soul remained in the place of purification.

The sale of indulgences became a huge source of income for the Roman church. But it also became the “straw that broke the camel’s back.”

Lesson 10 – Chart 6 Christianity Reforms







CHRISTIANITY REFORMS					
A.D. 1000-1400	A.D. 1400-1500	A.D. 1500-1600	A.D. 1600-1700	A.D. 1700-1800	A.D. 1800-1900
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waldenses 1170 Albigenses 1170 Renaissance: Rebirth of learning 1350-1650 Wycliffe English Bible 1382 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Huss martyred 1415 First printing press 1455 (Bible printed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protestant Reformation Martin Luther protestis 1517 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Baptist church in England 1612 Pilgrims 1620 Anabaptists 1525 Church of England 1534 John Calvin 1536 John Knox 1560 Presbyterians Thomas Cartwright 1567 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moravians 1727 Jonathan Edwards 1734 George Whitefield 1736 Methodists—John Wesley 1784 “Witness of the Spirit” “Holiness” Missionaries Circuit riders Sunday schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camp meetings Charles G. Finney 1821 Disciples of Christ 1830 Adventists 1844 Charles H. Spurgeon 1859 D. L. Moody 1865 Church of God 1894 

Chart Objective:

To explain how attempts to reform the Roman Catholic Church brought about a new thrust for apostolic truth. Brave reformers attacked the

evils of the Roman Catholic Church. Many of them founded churches of their own.

Chart Outline:

- A. A.D. 1000-1400
- B. A.D. 1400-1500
- C. A.D. 1500-1600
- D. A.D. 1600-1700
- E. A.D. 1700-1800
- F. A.D. 1800-1900

A. A.D. 1000-1400

Practically all known Western history concerns the Roman church, while only a small fragment has survived regarding the heretics and resistance movements. Their teachings, as a whole, were conveniently “misplaced.” We assume that Sabellianism was still believed by many even in the fourth century since it was among the list of condemned

heresies at the Council of Constantinople in A.D. 381.

Existing glimpses reveal that many so-called heretics were actually children of God, standing firm for Bible truths and experiences for which they willingly died.

The men who led the Reformation were not seeking to withdraw themselves from the Roman church. Rather, they were sincerely seeking to improve it. Many of the greatest reformers stayed within the Roman church until they were literally thrown out or ex-communicated.

In the eleventh century, a unique group known as the Albigenses emerged in southern France. They preached boldly against Catholic church doctrines, advocating a chaste and Spirit-filled life. It is reported that some of these generally uneducated people were often heard speaking in “High French” when worshiping in the Spirit.

In 1208, Pope Innocent III called for a Crusade against this protesting religious group. The entire community was slain—including some Catholics as well. This protest movement terminated, but their blood fell as seed that soon sprouted again.

Some of the Waldenses, another French group, were Spirit-filled and emphasized biblical authority. After memorizing many portions of Scripture, the evils of Roman Catholic practices were apparent. But a synod held among Roman church leaders passed a resolution forbidding the laity to have access to God’s Word.

The pope decreed that the Waldenses should also be destroyed. Large numbers fled to the Piedmont Valley in the mountains of northern Italy. Although Roman Catholic troops sought to eradicate them, they survived through several centuries and finally in 1458, merged with the Moravians, another group that had some Spirit-filled members.

The road to reformation was paved not only by religious men, but also by a revival of learning. The Renaissance (new birth) dawned all over Europe in the Middle Ages and made the people aware of their dependence on pagan traditions and superstition.

One of the most important aspects of the Crusades was its effect upon the western Europeans. When the Crusaders saw the advanced culture of the East, their appetites were whetted for learning and culture. As man began to think for himself, a rebirth of

learning and education occurred, known as the **Renaissance, or a rebirth of learning.**

In England, a protest movement was begun by John Wycliffe for freedom from the Roman Catholic power over the state. He insisted that Christ—not the pope—was Head of the church, and the Bible—not the Catholic church—was the sole authority for the believer.

To support his beliefs, Wycliffe made the Bible available in his people’s own language. By 1382, he completed the first manuscript translation of the **English New Testament.** In England he was protected by powerful nobles.

Wycliffe’s preaching and translation of Scripture paved the way for the Reformation. He has often been called the “Morning Star” of the Reformation.

B. A.D. 1400-1500

In Bohemia, John Huss was an advocate of Wycliffe’s writings. He died a martyr in 1415 because of his firm stand against the Roman Catholic system. Although his voice was stilled, his fate ignited reformation.

In 1455, one of the greatest thrusts of the Reformation was the invention of the **printing press.** Prior to this invention, books had been circulated only as rapidly as they could be copied by hand. A Bible during the Dark Ages cost a year’s wages. The first book to be printed on Gutenberg’s press was the Bible!

The printing press brought the Scriptures into the hands of the common man for the first time. Reading the Bible was a privilege which could now be enjoyed by everyone.

Bible translation into the European languages made the Scriptures more widespread than ever. As people read the New Testament for themselves, they discovered that the Roman church differed greatly from the apostles’ teaching.

Throughout the medieval centuries, most people were ignorant of worldly affairs. Since no layman was allowed Bible knowledge, the general populace quite innocently followed whatever directive the Roman church issued.

As men of the Renaissance referred to the history of the early church and read in the original languages, they observed that the early fathers did not advocate the contradictory doctrines taught by the Roman church. Doubts arose in the minds of many leaders, especially among university students. But dissenters soon felt the sting of the “Inquisition,”

an appointed court to detect and punish such “rebels.”

C. A.D. 1500-1600

What precipitated the **Protestant Reformation**? Pope Leo X, needing large sums of money to complete St. Peter’s Church in Rome, dispatched agents throughout the empire selling certificates. With these “indulgences,” one could receive for himself or his friends, pardon of all sins without confession, repentance, penance or absolution by a priest.

The system worked successfully. It was easier to buy “remission of sin” than to say prayers. Tetzel, an eloquent Dominican friar, was commissioned by the pope to sell indulgences throughout Germany. Tetzel boasted, “As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, The soul from purgatory springs!”

Such deception aroused a Catholic monk named **Martin Luther** with righteous indignation. In his tower cell, Luther penned ninety-five statements regarding the sale of indulgences.

Around noon on October 31, 1517, his theses were nailed on the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. The church door commonly served as a university bulletin board where invitations were publicly issued for debates. However, no one accepted Luther’s challenge for more than two years.

This public announcement of Luther’s views was the first in a series of acts which led to the Reformation. But Luther did not intend to separate from his church.

October 31st is All Saint’s Day, the customary time of displaying church relics. As people came, supposedly to be blessed by the magical relics, they stopped to read the theses tacked to the door. Upon returning home, they related it to others.

Originally written in Latin, the theses were translated into many languages, printed and carried to every country of western Europe. Within two weeks, Luther’s theses became known throughout Germany. The sale of indulgences plummeted to a standstill!

Luther attacked the abuses of the indulgences. Written from a sincere heart and pastoral concern for the people, Luther had not intended to ignite a revolution in the Roman church he loved so well. However, Luther had unknowingly touched a most sensitive spot in the Roman Catholic system!

By raising a question about indulgences,

Luther shook his church. His bold statements seemed to loosen the tight grip with which the priests had held their people for so long. The church of Rome was not merely stirred . . . it was shaken to its very foundations!

Soon Tetzel and other Dominican monks were severely criticizing Luther’s publication. Statements were published by Luther and his opponents to counter the other’s claims. But the more he wrote, the more convinced Luther became that his analysis of corrupt practices within the Roman church was correct!

The more Luther studied, the more Roman church pillars began crumbling! Now he saw that the attack was not merely against the abuse of indulgences, but rather the whole government and authority on which Catholicism was based.

“The just shall live by faith.” Those words rang through Luther’s mind as he studied the Bible in his monastery cell. Now he was certain that man could not be saved by works, but by faith!

Studying further, many ancient documents upon which Rome’s doctrines and traditions were founded proved to be skillfully devised forgeries. Luther exposed to the whole world that many Catholic traditions were based on fraud and deceit. To his amazement, Luther realized he had launched the ship of reformation on the high seas and he was at the helm!

On June 15, 1520, Pope Leo X ratified and signed the bull (document) ex-communicating Luther. Forty-one propositions were condemned as “heretical, scandalous and standing in the way of the Catholic faith.” The bull called upon all faithful people to burn Luther’s books and forbade him to preach. If he and his followers did not publicly recant in sixty days, they would be treated as heretics.

Luther decided to do something more. If the pope ordered his writing to be burned, he would burn the pope’s writings!

Late in 1520, a large crowd of students, professors, and citizens assembled outside Wittenberg’s city limits to kindle a pile of church law books. As they burned, Luther stepped forward and quietly dropped the papal bull into the dancing flames.

A cheer went up throughout Europe that a man armed with nothing more than his faith in God would burn a papal bull! It was the fiery signal of emancipation! If the Reformation can be precisely dated, that date must be

December 19, 1520, at nine o'clock in the morning.

Poor Pope Leo was almost at the end of his wits! He had exhausted all means to bring Luther to his knees. Only one route was left. He turned to the emperor for help.

After ex-communication, Luther was summoned to the German Council in Worms. Bravely, he faced the emperor and politely refused to renounce his anti-Rome writings.

Fearing for his life, Luther found shelter in remote Wartburg Castle. Under armed guard, he received friends and wrote letters. Most importantly, the entire Bible was translated into German in only ten weeks!

Martin Luther's followers became known as Lutherans. The spiritual light he embraced was "justification by faith"—only a small step, yet a step in the right direction.

Luther rejected the papacy and priesthood by explaining that "all believers are priests." Prayers to the saints and to Mary were abolished as were the pilgrimages, use of relics, holy water, prayers for the dead and the belief in purgatory.

While many things were changed, Luther's conservative nature led him to adopt the principle that everything in the Roman church that was not directly forbidden in the Bible should be retained.

Martin Luther was the volcano whose eruptions from 1517 to 1521 caused quakes that convulsed the Roman church, first in Germany, then in countries all over western Europe!

Another protest movement began in Switzerland in 1525 called **Anabaptists** because of their practice of rebaptism. They taught that Christians should separate themselves from the world, should not hold government offices or serve in the armed forces, take an oath, or sue in courts. They were opposed to infant baptism and had a passionate missionary concern.

Many other religious groups persecuted them because of their strict teachings.

The Reformation in England was somewhat different from other countries. King Henry VIII broke from Rome in 1534 because the pope would not sanction his divorce. He became the now head of the Church of England or Anglican Church (also called the Episcopal Church).

Rather than a pope being its head, the king or queen rules. Several changes were made to

reform Roman doctrines, but the Episcopal church continues to remain closer to the teaching and practices of the Catholic church than most reformed churches.

Another early reformer of the Roman church was John Calvin. In France he wrote a catechism, or explanation of the fundamental teachings of the Protestant movement.

Moving to Geneva, Switzerland, Calvin established the first Protestant university to educate ministers. Under Calvin's direction, experimental laws were instituted to regulate Genevan citizens from a strictly scriptural standpoint. But the plan tended to produce people who outwardly conformed, but were never inwardly transformed by the gospel and a genuine love for God.

Although Luther and Calvin never met, Calvin's explanation of the Scriptures had an international influence upon the Protestant movement. He was instrumental in spreading a doctrine first clearly defined by Augustine and then adopted by Luther. The doctrine of "predestination" teaches that God decrees who shall be saved and who shall be condemned. However, neither God nor man assumes total control for salvation. Man cannot come to God unless He draws us (John 6:44); and the "if" in Hebrews 3:14 and Colossians 1:22-23 assures that man's will is also involved in his eternal destiny.

Although Calvin was a great leader in the Reformation, he had no tolerance for those who differed with him doctrinally. Michael Servetus, a Spaniard, upheld the deity of Christ. When he discovered there was no scriptural foundation for the trinity in the New Testament, he began corresponding with John Calvin regarding his views of the Godhead.

After publishing *The Restitution of Christianity*, which explained his beliefs, Servetus became a target for the Inquisition. Calvin encouraged the council to burn him at the stake. The charges for Servetus' death were: he did not believe in the trinity or infant baptism (Roland H. Bainton, *Hunted Heretic*, pages 169-215).

In Scotland, **John Knox** led the Reformation. His preaching was like a spark in a keg of gunpowder. Wherever he preached, an explosion followed. Images were broken and monasteries stormed. Because of his influence, the Scottish Parliament decreed a change of religion from Catholicism to Protestantism in 1560.

Knox changed church government to give the title of “presbyters” to a group of delegated ministers and elders in a limited area. Thus the “**Presbyterians**” were established. The church organized by Calvin was extremely influential in providing a pattern for the Presbyterian church in Scotland.

A group of people wishing to purify the Church of England called themselves Puritans. Led by **Thomas Cartwright**, they wanted to see a spiritually minded pastor in every parish, to abolish the elaborate clerical dress, kneeling at the Lord’s Supper, ring ceremonies at weddings and the use of the sign of the cross at baptism.

Although desiring many changes, the Puritans strongly opposed severing from the Church of England. When the situation became hopeless, they separated themselves and became known as Separatists.

Because they believed that all local churches should be independent of each other, they were called Congregationalists or Independents.

D. A.D. 1600-1700

In 1612 the first **Baptist church** was formed. They separated from the Church of England because of their baptismal practices.

The first American colonists in 1620 were Separatists and were called **Pilgrims**. Those who came nine years later and established the Massachusetts Bay Colony were **Puritans**.

The middle 1600s produced a most interesting group of reformers. Up to this time, organizations had usually branched off from another with some different view or revelation. But now a spiritual awakening came with experiences from God similar to those of the early apostolic times.

The movement that swung farthest from the papacy were the **Quakers** or Friends.

The teachings of George Fox led to a great revival movement in 1647 in which many spoke with other tongues. William Penn’s followers, who were Quakers, came from England and settled in Pennsylvania. One of Penn’s writings, *The Sandy Foundation Shaken*, openly denied the trinity doctrine of separate persons in one Godhead (Robert Wallace, *Antitrinitarian Biography*, pages 167-168).

Under the guidance of Menno Simons, the radical Anabaptists began to flourish as a moderate group. Simons had been ordained a

Catholic priest, but through the writings of Luther and other reformers, he began to organize followers.

In the course of time, the name **Mennonites** came to be applied to their people rather than Anabaptists.

Once rejected during the Reformation, these peaceful, industrious, and highly respected citizens came to be honored because of their doctrine of separation of church and state.

E. A.D. 1700-1800

During the eighteenth century, while many followed modernism and compromise, a great evangelical movement spread through Europe and North America.

The **Moravians** became the first Protestant body to take seriously the great commission. They counted themselves as Christ’s soldiers going to all parts of the world to conquer it for the King. Missions were established in Africa, Asia, Greenland, Lapland, and among the American Indians.

Although small in number, this church has influenced other denominations by arousing them to their responsibility of missionary work.

The name of **Jonathan Edwards** is inseparably linked with the Great Awakening in New England. An outstanding intellectual figure in colonial America, Edwards preached fiery sermons that shook New England.

Edwards’ revivals had strong emotional and physical manifestations. Men and women fell to the floor weeping and repenting as he preached about “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.”

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the churches in England, both Established and Separatist, declined to formal services and intellectual belief. From this condition, England was awakened by a group of holiness preachers led by **George Whitefield** and the Wesley brothers.

Whitefield was the great pulpit orator, stirring the hearts of untold thousands both in England and America.

Charles Wesley was the poet, whose hymns have enriched every congregation. But **John Wesley** was the undisputed leader and statesman of the movement. Wesley began preaching “**the witness of the Spirit**” and **holy living**. The name **Methodist** came from Wesley’s teaching “methods” of living holy for God.

Early Methodists would shout and fall out in trances, speaking unintelligible words. But no one seemed to catch the significance of this unusual blessing. Great emphasis began to be placed on a sanctified life unto Christ and divine healing for the body.

Circuit riders became an established Methodist practice. Traveling on horseback from settlement to settlement, riders preached every day in a different township. True to Wesley's slogan: "The world is my parish," the circuit riders did much to spread the Word throughout the New World.

As dying churches were infused with life, a new interest was awakened in home and foreign **missionaries** and the circulation of Scriptures and religious literature (Kuiper, *The Church in History*, page 264).

The Wesleys also brought the **Sunday school** to the New World. So successful was this project that Sunday schools can still be found in every section of the country two centuries later.

Methodist revivals were a major step toward reviving apostolic doctrine, worship, and church government.

F. A.D. 1800-1900

In America, the Wesley brothers aroused a spiritual awakening.

Camp meetings, born in the frontier spirit of American life, were held in every section of the West. Such gatherings normally continued several days and nights with ministers from various denominations addressing eager thousands.

At night, campfires blazed between the long rows of tents. While swelling notes of melody floated in the night air, thousands joined in singing hymns. With dramatic exhortations, the preaching brought strong conviction. At the "mourner's bench," unbelievers prayed their way to repentance.

One of the great revivalists from 1821 to 1842 was **Charles G. Finney**. Dr. Lyman Beecher gave this opinion of this era: "That was the greatest work of God and the greatest revival of religion that the world has ever seen, in so short a time. One hundred thousand were reported as having connected themselves with churches as a result of that great revival. This is unparalleled in the history of the church" (J. Edwin Orr, *The Light of the Nations*, page 54).

Henry Ward Beecher was another great

evangelist of that era. (His sister, Harriet Beecher Stowe, authored the distinguished novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.) The heart of Beecher's teaching was this: "Jesus Christ was God 'manifest in the flesh.' He held that Christ was very God, and that the whole Godhead was incarnate in him" (Pains, *A Critical History of the Evolution of Trinitarianism*, pages 144-147).

Such teaching revealed the "new trinitarianism" that was proclaimed in New England among many ministers of that day: "Christ is no longer the incarnation of the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, but the very incarnation of God, the Father Almighty" (Weisser, *After the Way Called Heresy*, pages 93-106).

The Second Great Awakening fostered a new major denomination, the **Disciples of Christ** in 1830. Thomas Campbell, a Presbyterian, left his denomination to unite divided Christians by restoring the churches to apostolic purity. Within a century, it had passed the million mark in membership (J. Edwin Orr, *The Light of the Nations*, pages 55-56).

A zealous Baptist farmer named William Miller preached the advent of the second coming of Christ. The date was fixed as March 21, 1843. Miller ambitiously began warning Americans of the approaching end. Within a decade he had gathered a following of close to a million among people who remained in various churches.

As the scheduled day of Christ's coming approached, many left their jobs and sold possessions. In white garments they camped in open fields, awaiting His return. But they were bitterly disappointed! Miller assured them it could occur any day within that year, but several dates passed uneventfully.

A nucleus of **Adventists** formed an association, from which the Seventh-Day Adventists separated in 1846 (Orr, pages 60-61).

During the second half of the nineteenth century there were few orators who could compare with **Charles Haddon Spurgeon**. His spoken sermons were heard by multiplied thousands and printed sermons read by the millions. In London, England, he built a huge tabernacle seating thousands on the crest of the Awakening in Britain.

Rising to fame as a world evangelist, **Dwight L. Moody** began his Christian work as president of the Chicago Y.M.C.A. He conducted revival meetings in various places

throughout the country before touring England and Scotland several times. In London, Moody ministered to two and a half million within twenty weeks.

The Moody Bible Institute is a lasting memorial to its great founder.

While religion flourished in grand style and great numbers in the latter part of the nineteenth century, spirituality did not. In all the large churches in America, people felt that “heart religion” was disappearing. Modernism had taken its toll.

About 1880, the “holiness” issue surfaced—particularly among the Methodist churches. Wesley had originally taught Christian perfection. But now that his direct influence was no longer felt, perfection seemed

unattainable. Worldliness began to creep in.

Smaller factions from within the churches wanted to return to Wesley’s doctrines and ideals. However, the new leadership looked with disdain on those concepts. Consequently, holiness believers no longer felt comfortable in formal, ritualistic congregations. Soon they began to withdraw and form separate religious groups.

The greatest sect-forming years in the South were between the years 1894 and 1926, following the anti-holiness policy statement of the Methodist church. No less than twenty-five Holiness and Pentecostal sects were formed, many calling themselves **Church of God** (Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement*, page 78).

Lesson 10 – Chart 7 The Latter-Day Outpouring

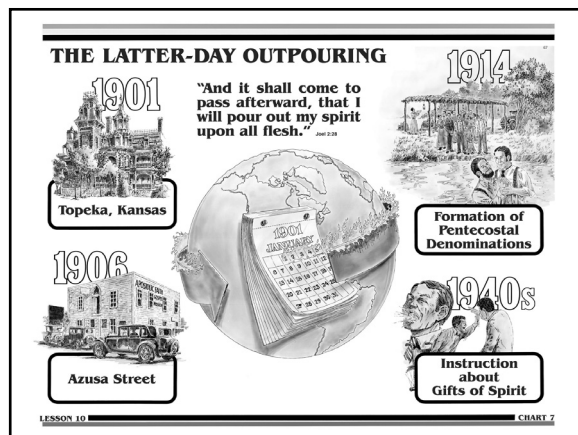


Chart Objective:

To examine the era of the “last days” when a Pentecostal revival began with a glorious outpouring at the dawn of the twentieth century. As the century progressed, the revival continued to grow in truth and in numbers, as believers embraced biblical doctrines taught and practiced by the early church.

Chart Outline:

- A. 1901—Topeka, Kansas
- B. 1906—Azusa Street
- C. 1911—Finished Work of Calvary
- D. 1914—New Organization—Assemblies of God
- E. 1913—Jesus’ Name Baptism & Oneness of God
- F. 1940s—Instruction about Gifts of Spirit
- G. 1950s—Charismatic Movement

A. 1901—Topeka, Kansas

One of the Holiness groups of the late nineteenth century was formed by Charles F. Parham, a twenty-seven-year-old minister of Topeka, Kansas. His desire to search the Word and deepen his consecration led to the opening of a Bible school in October 1900. Forty students joined him to discover more truth.

A question arose among the students about the second chapter of Acts. Was the Holy Ghost baptism always accompanied by speaking with other tongues? Was the tongues experience still available?

After prayerful study, the group concluded that speaking with other tongues always accompanied the Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament.

A few days before the end of 1900, day and night services were held at the Bible school. For the first time, they began seeking the baptism of the Holy Ghost—expecting to speak with other tongues!

Then on New Year’s Day, 1901, it happened! Student Agnes Ozman asked her instructor to lay hands upon her that she might receive the Holy Spirit. As Parham prayed, she began to speak with other tongues with floods of joy and laughter.

By the third day, many had received like experiences. No two were talking the same language and no one understood the other’s speech. Twelve ministers of different faiths were among those baptized in the Spirit.

Reporters came from Topeka, Kansas

City, St. Louis, and other cities, along with professors, linguists, foreigners, and government interpreters.

This was certainly not the first time believers had received the gift of the Holy Spirit. But it was the first time in the modern era that believers sought to receive the Holy Ghost *with the expectation of speaking in other tongues!*

Large Christian denominations believed in the Holy Spirit, but they did not teach that speaking with unknown tongues was the first evidence of the Spirit's infilling. From this time forward, Pentecostals began to teach that receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit would always be evidenced by speaking in an unknown language.

News of this phenomenon spread far and wide. Crowds came to hear Parham and his workers preach. Kansas City, Lawrence, Galena, Melrose, and other towns soon were visited with the fiery Holy Ghost phenomenon.

In Galena, Kansas, prominent citizens were healed of blindness, cancer, and other diseases. Hundreds were converted and baptized.

From Galena it spread to Joplin and Baxter Springs, Missouri. Then to Texas. Orchard, a small town forty-five miles from Houston, became the birthplace of the Texas outpouring.

Houston was next. A woman who attended the revival in Orchard told her Houston pastor about receiving the Spirit. Her congregation was ready for the life-giving message.

In July 1905, Parham and a group of twenty-five workers arrived in Houston. For five weeks they preached on the streets and house to house, meeting in a rented hall for the evening services. As large numbers received the baptism, revival spread to surrounding communities.

In Alvin, a small town near Houston, 134 received the baptism!

When the need for training became apparent, a Bible school was opened in Houston in December 1905.

One of the students, W. J. Seymour, a black Holiness preacher, was intrigued by this unique Spirit-outpouring. Then in 1906, he was invited to hold a meeting in a small Holiness church in Los Angeles. Seymour left Houston for the California engagement.

B. 1906—Azusa Street

Seymour's first text was the second chapter of Acts. Although he had not yet received

the Holy Ghost baptism, he preached that speaking in tongues was the gift's scriptural evidence.

A wave of protest was ignited! When Seymour returned for the afternoon service, the door was locked. His unique message was unwelcome!

Homeless and penniless, Seymour was invited to the home of a sympathetic onlooker. After several days of prayer meetings, people became hungry for God's blessings.

On April 9, 1906, six people were gloriously filled with the Holy Ghost. For three days and nights, hundreds pushed into the little house to see what was happening, because it had been reported that God's presence was great amongst this getup of sincere people.

The city was stirred! As the people came, they were captivated by the power and many were healed of terminal diseases.

On April 12, 1906, Seymour was baptized with the Holy Ghost. The house actually shook under the violent praising of a hungry people.

Soon the great crowds required larger accommodations. Services were moved to a former Methodist church on Azusa Street. Converted into a tenement house on the second floor, the lower floor featured one large room. For three years, this two-story frame building housed a mighty revival.

No musical instruments were used; none were needed. Special singers were replaced by what was called the "heavenly choir."

The worship was literally Spirit-inspired with bands of angels being occasionally glimpsed by those under the power of the Spirit.

No offerings were taken, but the Lord supplied financial needs.

For three years the revival continued day and night. The secret for the Azusa Street revival was prayer. God never sends torrents of blessings without sacrifice. Before the services began, people gathered for long prayer sessions. Upon finishing preaching, Seymour would fall upon his knees and begin to pray.

From all over the world they came. Missionaries from other countries returned to America to find out about this new experience. From the British Isles, Sweden, Scandinavian countries, and across Europe . . . people came to investigate the strange phenomenon on Azusa Street!

Because courageous men and women hungered for God and received the message of Pentecost, we now freely enjoy the blessings of this experience!

C. 1911—Finished Work of Calvary

In 1911, another truth was revealed. William H. Durham discovered that there were not three separate works of grace. A common expression in those days was, “I’m saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost.” Durham advocated salvation to be an inward work; a change of heart; a change of nature.

This new illumination began to spread. However, it was rejected by the Church of God, the Pentecostal Holiness Church and the Church of God in Christ. Although they spoke in other tongues, they continued to believe in “three works of grace.”

D. 1914—New Organization—Assemblies of God

In 1914, E.N. Bell and Howard Goss issued a call to form an organization teaching the Pentecostal experience. The first General Council of the Assemblies of God convened with Bell as chairman.

E. 1913—Jesus Name baptism and Oneness of God

More light . . . more truth . . . more revelation! Filled with the fresh experience of the Holy Spirit baptism, men began searching the Word with new fervor. Whenever sincere hearts seek for God, more scriptural truths have always been revealed.

R. E. McAlister began studying about New Testament water baptism. His discovery sent shock waves across the new Pentecostal movement!

McAlister pointed out during a worldwide camp meeting held in Los Angeles in 1913, that nowhere in the New Testament were believers ever baptized in the titles—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Baptism was always administered in the name of Jesus Christ!

Rediscovering this biblical water baptismal formula prompted men to begin studying the trinitarian theory. Again, the truth that had repeatedly surfaced throughout the past two thousand years came into focus: One God has revealed Himself as Father in creation, in the Son in redemption, and the Holy Ghost in recreated human spirits.

This scriptural illumination resulted in the formation of other Pentecostal organizations: the United Pentecostal Church, Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Assemblies of the Lord Jesus Christ and other groups.

God’s truths continued to come.

F. 1940s—Instruction about Gifts of Spirit

Another wave of the Spirit brought new light concerning gifts of the spirit.

Most Spirit-filled believers now had a correct scriptural interpretation of speaking with tongues—one of the first of God’s gifts. But few realized that the Holy Spirit baptism is a gateway into the spiritual heritage of mighty supernatural gifts.

An in-depth study of spiritual gifts was pioneered in the early part of the century by Howard Carter, an Englishman. One of his students, Harold Horton, was the first to publish a book on this important subject in 1934. Carter’s own book, *Questions and Answers on Spiritual Gifts*, was released in 1946.

Such instruction and practical examples opened the door to this long neglected and misunderstood subject. As Paul had once urged the Corinthians, men and women began to . . .

“Covet earnestly the best gifts . . . and desire spiritual gifts” (I Corinthians 12:31; 14:1).

G. 1950s—Charismatic Movement

During the 1950s an enormous spiritual tidal wave began to envelop the religious world. All of Christianity—both Catholics and Protestants—felt its dynamic influence. The power of the Holy Spirit began to sweep from one denomination to another, blending true searchers for truth into one body . . . the body of Christ. As Joel had prophesied long ago,

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28).

Jesus also referred to a specific “generation” living on earth who would not pass until all had been fulfilled (Matthew 24:34). Could that “generation” have begun when Israel became a nation in the year 1948? If so, the Spirit-outpouring which we are presently experiencing could be the fulfillment of those prophecies!

An estimated 50 million people living

today have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. And the end is not yet! Who knows the proportions this last outpouring will assume before the return of Christ!

Church history reveals that most of the leading denominations began in deep Christian belief and fervor. Gradually, as years passed, much of the reformers' original fervor died out and most became formal and cold—some even struggling to exist.

Then in love and mercy, the Spirit has reached out to these dry, sterile congregations and enticed members here and there to “take a fresh look at the Word!”

Suddenly they began to inquire, “Is the Holy Ghost for me today? Is my experience up-to-date with the teaching of the early church? Can I have the joy and power experienced by the apostles? Am I walking in all the

light God has revealed to my generation?”

Why is this Holy Spirit anointing given to believers? He wants to empower us so that we may continue Christ's work of imparting salvation, healing, encouragement, wisdom—or whatever is needed—to others.

Scripture indicates that dark days are ahead for the last generation of the church—as well as the world. Yet Christ has promised continuous victory until the Head is joined with the body of Christ.

Now that we have traveled nearly two thousand years in our study, church history ends—but the church does not. New chapters are continually being written for the triumphant, awakened church. We must help make that history from this point on. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we shall make its future more glorious than its past!

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM STUDY SHEET

History of the Church

LESSON NO. 10 Study Sheet

Chart 1. The Early Church Ablaze!

- A. Signs and wonders . . . and persecutions! (Mark 16:20; Acts 4:31-33; 5:12-16; 6:7; 8:4)
- B. Lame man healed (Acts 3:1-11); Stephen is stoned (Acts 7:54-60); Peter imprisoned (Acts 12:1-19)

Chart 2. Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles

- A. Saul, the persecutor (Acts 9:1-2)
- B. Saul, the converted (Acts 9:3-22)
- C. Paul, the missionary (Acts 13:1-3)
- D. Paul, the prisoner (II Corinthians 11:23-28)
- E. The apostle and his epistles (13 books)

Chart 3. Destruction of Jerusalem

- A. Roman armies besiege holy city—A.D. 70 (Luke 19:41-44; 23:28-31)
- B. The days of vengeance (Luke 21:20-24)

Chart 4. The Church in Persecution

- A. Persecution spreads the gospel
- B. Persecution of Nero—A.D. 64; Catacombs of Rome—A.D. 257; Diocletian burns Bibles—A.D. 303

Chart 5. The Decline in Christendom

- A. A.D. 30-150 Day of Pentecost—A.D. 30; persecution by Nero—A.D. 54-68; Martyrdom of apostles—A.D. 44-68; Jerusalem destroyed—A.D. 70; persecution by Domitian—A.D. 81-96
- B. A.D. 150-300 Gnosticism; Montanists—A.D. 155; Tertullian introduces a new idea: “The Trinity” A.D. 156; Sabellius—A.D. 200
- C. A.D. 300-400 Persecution by Diocletian—A.D. 303; Constantine’s Edict of Toleration—A.D. 313; Council of Nicea—A.D. 325; Council of Constantinople—A.D. 381
- D. A.D. 400-500 Heathen worship begins; sacrifices, altars, priests, images, relics; Roman Empire falls—A.D. 410; Pope established—A.D. 461
- E. A.D. 500-1500 Dark Ages; Birth of Muhammad—A.D. 570; Holy Wars; Crusades—1096-1291; power struggle church and state; sale of indulgences—1476

Chart 6. Christianity Reforms

- A. A.D. 1000-1400 Waldenses; Albigenses—1170; Renaissance: rebirth of learning—1350-1650; Wycliffe English Bible—1382
- B. A.D. 1400-1500 John Huss martyred—1415; first printing press—1455 (Bible printed)
- C. A.D. 1500-1600 Protestant Reformation; Martin Luther protests—1517; Anabaptists—1525; Church of England—1534; John Calvin—1536; Presbyterians; John Knox—1560; Puritans—1567; Thomas Cartwright
- D. A.D. 1600-1700 First Baptist church in England—1612; Pilgrims—1620; Puritans come to America—1629; Quakers—1647; Mennonites—1676
- E. A.D. 1700-1800 Moravians—1727; Jonathan Edwards—1734; George Whitefield—1736; Methodists—John Wesley—1784; “witness of the Spirit”; “holiness”; missionaries; circuit riders; Sunday schools
- F. A.D. 1800-1900 Camp meetings; Charles G. Finney—1821; Disciples of Christ—1830; Adventists—1844; Charles H. Spurgeon—1859; D. L. Moody—1865; Church of God—1894

Chart 7. The Latter-Day Outpouring

- A. 1901—Topeka, Kansas (Joel 2:28)
- B. 1906—Azusa Street
- C. 1911—Finished Work of Calvary
- D. 1914—New Organization—Assemblies of God
- E. 1913—Jesus Name baptism
- F. 1940s—Instruction about Gifts of Spirits
- G. 1950s—Charismatic Movement

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM QUIZ

History of the Church LESSON NO. 10 Quiz

True or False?

- ___ 1. The early church began in a blaze of glory with signs, wonders, and miracles.
- ___ 2. Angry Jewish leaders stoned Peter to death and placed Stephen in prison.
- ___ 3. While in prison, Paul wrote letters to encourage the churches he had founded. These writings comprise over half the New Testament.
- ___ 4. After his conversion to Christianity, Paul's name was changed to Saul.
- ___ 5. Roman armies invaded and destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
- ___ 6. Although persecution was severe and cruel, it actually helped to spread the gospel.

Countless religious events occurred from the time of the apostles until our present century. Read each statement below and decide whether that event contributed to the DECLINE or REFORM of Christianity. Write the letter D (Decline) or R (Reform) as your answer.

- ___ 1. Constantine's Edict of Toleration officially ended the Christian persecution.
- ___ 2. John Wycliffe translated the Bible into English.
- ___ 3. The invention of the printing press placed the Bible into the hands of the people.
- ___ 4. When the gospel was introduced to pagans who had worshiped many gods, new ideas were presented concerning the Godhead.
- ___ 5. Martin Luther proclaimed the doctrine of "justification by faith" and began a protest against evil practices of the Roman church.
- ___ 6. When pagan Gentiles assumed leadership in Christendom, it became fashionable to be a Christian.
- ___ 7. Infants were baptized and sprinkling was substituted for baptism by immersion.
- ___ 8. The Renaissance or "rebirth" of learning in Europe caused men to become eager for knowledge.
- ___ 9. Worship of martyrs' pictures, prayers for the dead, and altars were introduced.
- ___ 10. Quakers, Puritans, and Methodists practiced a life of separation and holiness.
- ___ 11. "Indulgences," which were official statements of release from the penalty of sin, could be purchased to shorten the time a dead loved one would spend in purgatory.
- ___ 12. A group of Bible students at Topeka, Kansas, discovered that speaking with other tongues always accompanied the Holy Spirit baptism in the New Testament.

Answers:

1. T 2. F 3. T 4. F 5. T 6. T
1. D 2. R 3. R 4. D 5. R 6. D 7. D 8. R 9. D 10. R 11. D 12. R

LESSON ELEVEN

Predictions for the Last Generation

This lesson examines the signs that indicate which generation shall welcome Christ to earth.

Before Christ ascended, He pinpointed a precise generation who would be living on earth immediately preceding His return. Several of the signs mentioned will affect every nation and continent on earth. Some affect only the nation of Israel. Others describe the condition of the church.

By examining these accumulated prophetic events, we can clearly define whether our generation will be the welcoming committee for the King of kings and Lord of lords.

When completed, students should be aware of the following concepts:

1. By comparing Scripture, the signs of the end of the age are clearly revealed: global, religious, but most clearly, the nation of Israel.
2. Knowing that we are surely living in the “toes” of Nebuchadnezzar’s image, our emphasis must not be on setting dates, but to be prepared, watching, and working until He comes.
3. While modern inventions have simplified the spread of the gospel, the same computer-age systems will also fulfill the prophecies concerning the Beast of Revelation 13 and his mark.
4. We, as Christians who are baptized in Jesus’ name, are not looking for the Antichrist, but are looking for the Lord Jesus Christ to rapture us away before the great tribulation.

Additional books for reading:

1. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958.
2. Ed. Daniel Calk, *Prophecy Digest 1984-85*, Believe Publications, P. O. Box 266661, Houston, TX 77207, 1984.
3. C. S. Lovett, *Latest Word on the Last Days*, Personal Christianity Chapel, Box 549, Baldwin Park, CA 91706, 1980.
4. Tim LaHaye, *The Battle For the Mind*, Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1980.
5. Hal Lindsey, *The 1980’s: Countdown to Armageddon*, New York: Bantam Books, 1981.

Lesson 11 – Chart 1 Signs of the End (Global)

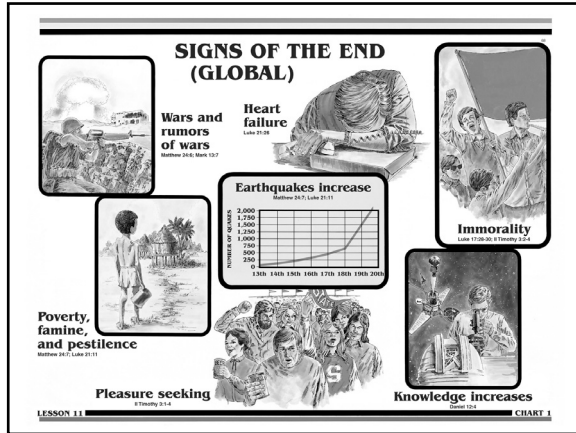


Chart Objective:

To determine, according to global signs, whether our generation could be the particular one Jesus said would be living on earth at His second return.

Chart Outline:

- A. Signs of the End (Global)
- B. Wars and rumors of wars
- C. Poverty, famine, and pestilence
- D. Earthquakes increase
- E. Pleasure seeking
- F. Heart failure
- G. Immorality
- H. Knowledge increases

A. Signs of the End (Global)

Christ's disciples came to Him one day with a probing question:

“Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matthew 24:3).

Jesus did not leave His disciples in a state of uncertainty. He pinpointed a particular generation of people who would witness a rapid series of astounding events. The grand finale would be His coming in the clouds of heaven.

There are 318 references to the personal return of Christ in the New Testament alone. Paul said of His coming,

“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief” (1 Thessalonians 5:4).

Jesus and His apostles listed several specific world conditions that would exist during

the lifetime of a single generation. By examining these signs, we may accurately determine whether ours is the last generation.

B. Wars and rumors of wars Matthew 24:6; Mark 13:7

After the church is raptured, the condition will worsen. Presently, we are experiencing the tremors of the prophetic nightmare of the great tribulation.

“And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. . . . For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (Matthew 24:6-7).

From the moment of the explosion of the first atomic bomb, a mushroom-shaped cloud hangs over our world, threatening the future of every human.

Wars have been fought in almost every age since the time of Christ. Yet warfare in our century has become the norm. Seething conflicts brew constantly.

Until 1914, international war was unknown. Then World Wars I and II affected the entire globe. More than 100 million people have been killed in warfare since the beginning of the nineteenth century (Wood, *Signs of the Times*, page 55).

Technology has heightened the threat of global warfare. The atomic bomb was just the beginning of what was to come. Even now, the average nuclear bomb contains between 100 to 1000 times more the explosive force of the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. (*Newsweek* magazine, December 27, 1993, reported that at least twenty-five nations now have nuclear weapons.)

The world is falling right in line with the Bible prophecy of a coming major nuclear war. The danger is that as more nations obtain nuclear warfare, the threat is much greater, and the lack of control over its use is practically gone. It is now in the hands of some of the most dangerous men. Yet God has allowed it to be. He has a plan and it will not be executed until He is ready for it to be. Here is another precise definition of nuclear warfare:

“And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke” (Acts 2:19).

Is it mere coincidence that the Greek word for *heavens* is *uranus*, the root word for “uranium”? This is a principal element of atomic energy. Peter states that these “wonders” will occur just prior to the “day of the Lord,” or the second advent.

These vivid descriptions say that the current threat of global warfare is a sign of the end!

C. Poverty, famine, and pestilence

Matthew 24:7; Luke 21:11

The news media has visualized the reality of famine in our world. The stark faces, the piercing eyes and swollen bodies of starving children make us all keenly aware of another sign characterizing the end time:

“And there shall be famines, and pestilences” (Matthew 24:7).

In nations where famine is epidemic, the sights are appalling. To step across bodies by the roadside, not knowing whether they are dead or alive, is a shattering experience for the well-fed.

Ours is a hungry world when starvation is the most common cause of death.

The World Health Organization estimates that between three and five hundred million are suffering from malnutrition. Approximately one-third of the world is well-fed, one third is underfed, and one-third is starving. Each year four million die of starvation and 70 percent of children under six are undernourished.

To put it more bluntly, thirty people die of starvation every minute. The American Freedom from Hunger Foundation recently reported that hunger around the world has reached an acute stage and that general famine looms on the horizon (Wood, *Signs of the Times*, page 61).

Famines are caused by two chief sources—both of which are distinct signs mentioned by Christ: wartime activity and natural phenomena, which include: drought, floods, irregular weather patterns, insects, or pestilences. According to experts, famines caused by nature can occur unexpectedly and at random—proving the accuracy of Christ’s reference to “divers places” or various locations.

D. Earthquakes increase

Matthew 24:7; Luke 11:11

A third identifying sign is earthquakes. The present generation has experienced more

earthquakes than any other in history.

The earthquake graph (shown on the chart) lists figures from the observatory in Strasbourg, France, which has kept records for several centuries. Notice the rising figures.

Almost daily we read of an earthquake somewhere in the world. And they will increase in number and magnitude until the end of the age.

E. Pleasure seeking

II Timothy 3:1-4

Pursuit of pleasure has become America’s No. 1 industry. *U.S. News and World Report* reveals that an astounding \$160 billion was spent on leisure and recreation in 1977. The cover story of *Business Week*, March 14, 1994, gives the figures on consumer spending on recreation and entertainment in 1993. The list is as following:

Toys-sporting equipment	\$ 65 billion
VCR, TV, Video	58 billion
Books-Magazines	47 billion
Gambling	28 billion
Cable TV	19 billion
Amusement Parks	14 billion
Movies	13 billion
Computers (personal)	8 billion
Boats-Aircrafts (personal)	7 billion
Live entertainment	6 billion
Sports	6 billion
other recreation & ent.	<u>70 billion</u>
	\$341 billion

F. Heart failure

Luke 21:26

Notice this familiar characteristic:

“Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” (Luke 21:26).

An exact description of our day! While the science of preventative medicine has developed to its highest level in history, so has heart disease climbed along with it! The intense pressures of this age have literally caused people’s hearts to fail.

In the United States alone, half a million people die from heart disease each year. It is the No. 1 killer!

In Europe and Asia, the condition is more acute. Wars, pestilence, famine, treachery and betrayal have bred such fear, many die prematurely.

Contemplating the sobering probabilities of global war and nuclear destruction produces terrific strain and fear. How wonderful to have our trust in Jesus Christ and know that these signs only hasten His return!

G. Immorality

Luke 17:28-30; II Timothy 3:2-4

Here is another clue:

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves . . . without natural affection” (II Timothy 3:1, 3).

“And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. . . . Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot. . . . Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed” (Luke 17:26, 28, 30).

In Noah’s day of unrestrained wickedness and immorality, every imagination and thought was continually evil (Genesis 6:5). Lot lived in Sodom, a city plagued by homosexuality or “sodomy” (Genesis 19:5). Webster defines “sodomy” as: unnatural sexual intercourse.

With homosexuality and perversion flourishing as it is in our nation and world, Jesus must have referred to our generation!

In spite of penicillin—the V.D. “cure-all”—syphilis and gonorrhea cases have reached epidemic proportions, according to the San Diego Health Department. In three years their treatment load jumped from just over 1,000 annual cases to over 7,000. Now a venereal disease strain has been discovered that resists penicillin.

The American Psychiatric Association has omitted homosexuality from its list of mental disorders. Eighteen states have repealed all restrictions on sexual acts between consenting adults, and sodomy statutes elsewhere are seldom enforced. Forty cities and counties have passed liberal antidiscrimination ordinances.

The San Francisco school board voted to change its family life curriculum to reflect homosexual lifestyles. Of San Francisco’s total population of 680,000, an estimated 120,000 are homosexuals.

Having been exploited across America, homosexuality is now accepted by many as a normal, alternate lifestyle. But God brought swift judgment upon Sodom when this sin prevailed. Sexual perversion is an abomina-

tion in God’s sight! (See Roman 1:27.)

In 1981, doctors were baffled by a new disease primarily affecting the homosexual community and drug addicts. “AIDS” (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) has been labeled “the disease of the century” and the “gay plague.”

The August 12, 1985, edition of *Time Magazine* states: “It is the virtual certainty of death from AIDS, once the syndrome has fully developed, that makes the disease so frightening, along with the uncertainty of nearly everything else about it.”

The name, GRIDS, (gay related immune deficiency syndrome), was first coined in the United States, but because of the powerful homosexual lobby, it was changed to AIDS. There were 166,211 total deaths and 45,472 cases reported in 1992. Imagine the people who have died from this and not reported it.

The government has done its best to hide the truth from the public. The July 1994 *National Geographic* magazine related that the medical field owned and operated by large chains and firms was infiltrated with homosexuals and greed for money.

H. Knowledge increases

Daniel 12:4

Daniel, an Old Testament prophet, gave us this insight:

“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” (Daniel 12:4).

Two signs are mentioned here: an increase in human knowledge and in travel.

During most of the world’s history, human knowledge made no strides. But with the invention of the printing press five centuries ago, the picture changed. Only during the last century, however, have technological advances produced the inventions enjoyed today.

Our grandfathers traveled in carriages similar to those of Pharaoh’s day—3,500 years ago. A man in his eighties can remember when there were no automobiles, airplanes, electric lights, telephones, phonographs, radios, or televisions.

Climaxing the inventions has been the recent ability to harness the atom. This astonishing development rocked the world with an atomic blast at Hiroshima. Because of con-

flicting world conditions, atomic power continues to be developed for mass destruction.

Contrast for a moment previous centuries with the miracles of our day. Man fought with swords, bows and arrows for 3,500 years before the invention of gunpowder. But our generation has developed weapons capable of destroying the entire population of the earth!

Horses provided transportation until the twentieth century. Now man has been to the moon and back, traveling at a speed of 25,000 miles per hour or more. According to the Los Angeles Biblical Research Society, from the days of the Flood (2319 B.C.) until the year A.D. 1800, (approximately 4,100 years), man's knowledge doubled only once. In the next one hundred years, man's knowledge doubled again. By 1969, it doubled every ten years; by 1973, every five years. Today, man's educational knowledge is doubling every two and one-half years (Deal, page 21)!

Approximately 70 percent of medicines used today were developed after World War II. More than 80 percent of the scientists who have ever lived are alive today!

The quest for knowledge goes on at an ever-heightening pace. College enrollments are exploding all over the world. In America, the number of college students has doubled in the last decade with 46 percent of our youth attending some type classes of higher learning (LaHaye, *The Beginning of the End*, page 94).

The travel industry is certainly in agreement with Daniel's prediction. In the decade of the 60s, statistics reveal that over 140 million passengers were transported by airlines. With the production of the 707 and 727 aircraft, both the speed and passenger capacity of commercial flights have been doubled.

Future predictions are that commercial airlines will someday have planes traveling at 2,500 to 3,500 miles per hour. People can live in New York and work in Los Angeles! In fact, it may take longer to commute from the suburbs to LaGuardia Field than to fly across the country!

Can anyone deny the marvels of our century? It concurs precisely with Daniel's prophecy that the end is near!

Lesson 11 – Chart 2 Signs of the End (Religious)

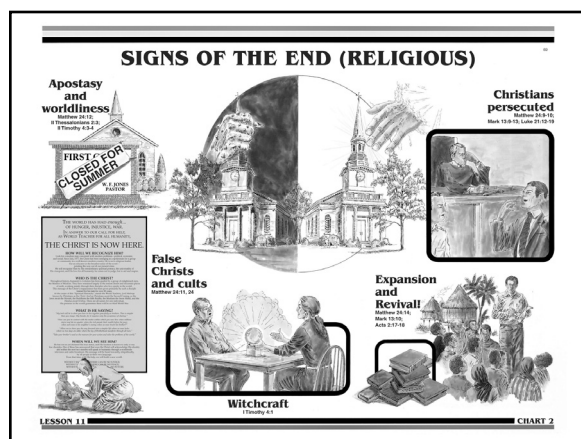


Chart Objective:

To determine, according to signs within the church, whether our generation could be the particular one Jesus said would be living on earth at His second return.

Chart Outline:

- A. The Church Age
- B. Apostasy and Worldliness
- C. False Christs and cults

- D. Witchcraft
- E. Expansion and revival!

A. The Church Age II Thessalonians 2:5-8; II Peter 3:3-4; Revelation 2-4

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke to the apostle John and said:

“Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea” (Revelation 1:11).

A close look at these seven churches will reveal the time clock of the church age in progress. God selected these seven churches in Asia because there was a truth to be revealed concerning the complete history of the church, which was aptly illustrated by these churches and their respective conditions. While there were more than seven churches in Asia, God purposely selected

them for a definite and distinct purpose: to give a complete picture of church history from the beginning to end.

Revelation 1:19 says, "Write the things which thou hast seen [this was the revelation of Jesus Christ], and the things which are, [this is the church age], and the things which shall be hereafter [these are the things concerning the great tribulation after the rapture of the church]."

The second division "the things which are," which speaks of present things (or the seven churches), will not end until the seven periods of church history have been completed. This is proven by the first verse of chapter four, which immediately follows the account of the seven churches. Note 4:1 says, "Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter." The hereafter is after the rapture of the church, which is the completion of the church age.

Ephesus is the first church the Lord Jesus Christ addressed.

Revelation 2:1 says, "Unto the angel [pastor] of the church of Ephesus write."

This church represented the first period, which was the church of Acts. It ended with the last living apostle, which was John. This church period was from the Day of Pentecost to A.D. 96. The name *Ephesus* means "desired." The first period or the apostolic period was God's desire for the church. Revelation 2:3 says, "for my name's sake hast laboured."

The early church revered the name of Jesus and baptized all their converts in that name.

However, even at the end of this period there is evidence of apostasy already creeping into the church.

Revelation 2:4 says, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

Whenever a church loses its first love it enters into a very dangerous place. It is at this point that apostasy begins to enter into the church.

Revelation 2:5 says, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works."

The church must ever look back to the Book of Acts to get its true view of God's desire to "do the first works."

Smyrna is the second church the Lord Jesus Christ addressed.

Revelation 2:8 "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write."

This was the suffering church, which covered the period from A.D. 96 to A.D. 316. During this time, thousands were martyred. Polycarp, the bishop of this church, was one of the first martyrs. His death was the forerunner of thousands to follow. Jesus addressed this church with the words, "which was dead," in Revelation 2:8.

He let them know that He was the first martyr when the princes of this world crucified Him. The name *Smyrna* means "death and suffering." Truly the pages of history are stained with the blood of the martyrs during this period of church history.

Pergamos is the third church the Lord Jesus Christ addressed.

Revelation 2:12 "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write."

When Satan saw that the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church, he drastically changed his tactics. He endeavored to join the church in an unholy union of marriage. The instrument Satan used was the Roman emperor named Constantine. He claimed to be a Christian, and joined the church and the pagan government together. This church period was from A.D. 316 to A.D. 500. This is the time when the Roman Catholic Church came into existence. They are a split at best from the real church. The name Pergamos is derived from three Greek words: *peri* meaning "with," *gammio* meaning "marriage," and *cosmos* meaning "world." Thus the name *Pergamos* means "the church married with the world."

Thyatira is the fourth church the Lord Jesus Christ addressed.

Revelation 2:18 "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write."

The name *Thyatira* means "continual sacrifice." This church represents the period from A.D. 500 to A.D. 1500. Secular history names it well: the Dark Ages. This is the period when the papacy (the Roman Catholic Church) dominated the people and kept them in spiritual darkness by chaining the Bible to the pulpit. Masses, penances, and continual sacrifice replaced the original gospel of Jesus Christ. Even though there was a departure from the truth into deep spiritual darkness, known as the period of the great falling away found in II Thessalonians 2:3, there was a true church that kept its light burning bright, but the true church was in battle, for they had opened their doors to Jezebel and she, like the

days in Old Testament times, had brought in strange gods and teachings.

Revelation 2:20 says,

“I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.”

The woman Jezebel is a perfect type of the Roman Catholic Church. She was a heathen woman married to an Israelite king (I Kings 16:30-33). She is noted for her painted face, killing God’s prophets, and turning Israel from the worship of the one true God to many heathen gods. The church of Thyatira was experiencing the same thing: worship to the Babylon religion under the guise of Christianity. A plurality of gods (the trinity), which was and is spiritual adultery, had entered into the church. Whenever the standard is lowered and things of this world are allowed to come into the church, they will become like the world. God always has something against the church that lets the world inside.

During this time there were still people in Thyatira that had not given in to the pressure and cultic practice of the Roman Catholic Church, but stood strong for the truth even in this corrupt church period.

Sardis is the fifth church the Lord Jesus Christ addressed.

Revelation 3:1 says, “And unto the angel of the church in Sardis.”

This is the church period known as the Reformation, which began about A.D. 1500. The name *Sardis* means “escaping.” Truly this was a time when people began to come out from the darkness that the apostate church had entered into, as they had backslid from the truth. People that had left the true church and joined the Roman church, now were leaving it. Old strongholds of tradition that had been in families for years were crumbling, as people were stumbling out of darkness grasping for light. They were escaping the pollutions of Catholicism. America became a refuge to our Pilgrim and Puritan fathers escaping its evil. However, the spirit of the Reformation was short-lived.

“I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. . . . I have not found thy works perfect before God” (Revelation 3:1-2).

The reason their works were not perfect is because they did not leave the old Babylon worship, which was disguised as the trinity. Nether did many of them embrace the original baptism in Jesus’ name. They wanted the freedom of the spirit and the relationship with Christ, but without the commitment to the name of Jesus and the one true God. We can still see this in the secular church world today. There is commitment to tradition, but not to doctrine. This is why they want to go after their strange lovers, and worship more than one person in the Godhead, taking the titles rather than a name that ties them to their Bridegroom. The Lord wants a bride that is not ashamed of His name nor His person.

Now we have come down through church history from the Day of Pentecost to the Reformation about A.D. 1500 to A.D. 1900, which has covered five church periods. The last two churches, the Philadelphian church and the Laodicean church, are the two churches that will be in existence when the Lord Jesus takes His church home. These two church periods started at the turn of the century about A.D. 1900. One portrays the Spirit of God, and the other is full of the spirit of the world.

The last church the Lord Jesus Christ addressed was the church of Laodicea.

Revelation 3:14 says, “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans.”

Christ mentioned the certain conditions that would exist in the last church age.

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot” (Revelation 3:15).

Christians today are feeling the unusually strong pull of worldliness. As the end of the church age approaches we can expect these tendencies to intensify. While many are succumbing to its tug, we must resist them. We can see the lukewarm state of the church today. The lukewarm church which is not red hot for God will be left behind when Christ takes His bride away. They have rejected His name in baptism, and have substituted stained-glass windows, padded pews, gold crowns, and the lineage of a pagan history for the real power of God.

It is essential that the true church be careful to retain the Spirit of God, so they will not find themselves in this backslidden church, far from the truth and power of God. Paul

gave an accurate description of the church world that would surround us in the last days.

“This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (II Timothy 3:1-5).

B. Apostasy and Worldliness

Numerous surveys in recent years indicate an apostate trend among the clergy of many Protestant denominations. Questioned on seminary campuses across our nations, ministers were asked about such basic beliefs as: whether the Bible is the inspired Word of God, a belief in the virgin birth of Christ, the bodily resurrection of Christ, whether there is a literal heaven and hell, and similar inquiries. To these basic Christian beliefs, a majority of their responses were negative!

Recently a major denomination considered a new sexual code of ethics that would practically eliminate sin as a major factor in sexual relations. Entitled “Sexuality and the Human Community” the report recommended removing all restrictions and allowing unmarried adults the freedom to live together with the blessing of the church (Kirban, *Revelation Visualized*, page 311).

Numerous congregations have canceled Sunday evening services, featuring one weekly service on Sunday morning. Many schedule no services at all during the vacation months of July and August. Why? Because their members and leaders are busy pursuing other interests.

C. False Christs and cults

The rise and development of cults and mystic religions have indeed been astounding. Never have so many flourished.

Harvey Cox of Harvard University projects that there are some 2,000 masquerading messiahs roaming the university campuses of our country. Rev. Billy Graham has noted there are at least 500 such counterfeits in the state of California alone (White, *Arming for Armageddon*, page 100).

Claiming to be the Messiah, Maharaj Ji,

an Indian master, amassed a considerable following.

Followers of Korean leader Sun Myung Moon have filled arenas of our country, proclaiming that Christ has actually returned.

One of history’s most chilling episodes featured a false Christ in the 70s named Rev. Jim Jones. Had his supporters observed the warning about false Christs, their tragic fate could have been averted.

Jones referred to himself as the reincarnation of Jesus, later calling himself God and claiming to have actually created the heavens and earth (James, *Day of the Lamb*, page 80).

News of the 900-plus mass suicide sent shock waves around the church world. Yet the awful catastrophe confirms that we are in the last days!

Many cults today feature subtle elements to make their ideas more acceptable and attractive. Consequently, they are able to “deceive many” as Christ indicated.

The decade of the 80s brought even greater shock waves to millions on April 25, 1982. Opening their newspapers, readers were greeted with a full-page display boldly announcing: “THE CHRIST IS NOW HERE.”

From New York to Los Angeles, from London to Amsterdam, in more than twenty major metropolitan areas, readers were astounded by the announcement.

The \$500.00 ad campaign featured a most appealing message:

“The world has had enough . . . of hunger, injustice, war. In answer to our call for help, as world teacher for all humanity, THE CHRIST IS NOW HERE.”

The full-page ad continued with more clues. The soon-to-be-announced Christ is a world teacher for all humanity. He is a modern man concerned with modern problems—political, economic and social—and claims extraordinary spiritual powers.

His location is known only to a very few disciples. He will communicate to all the world via satellite television networks. He claims to possess the answer for world peace, thus preventing a third World War.

Very subtly, this counterfeit Christ has woven his web to appeal to all major world religions. Assuming the name of “Lord Maitreya” he claims to be the ultimate leader of all religions.

To appeal to Christendom, Maitreya claims to be the Christ. For Muslims, he is the Imam

Mahdi. For Hindus, he is Krishna. For the world's Buddhists, he is the expected fifth reincarnation of Buddha. Maitreya happens to also be the name of the expected Buddha, making it a most clever and appropriate choice!

Behind all the promotion is a vast network of organizations collectively known as the "New Age Movement."

Working under the subtle ploy of "good-will for all," the New Age Movement has laid its groundwork for more than one hundred years. New Agers have garnered support of some of the most powerful and influential world leaders. Their goal is to introduce a new world order and religion. In the person of Lord Maitreya, they promote a New Age Christ who, of course, is not Jesus.

As a worldwide coalition, the New Age Movement boasts more than 10,000 organizations and religious cults within the United States and Canada alone! These groups advocate diverse ideas, such as Eastern mysticism, free love, and mind control (Cumbey, *The Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow*, page 247).

As of yet, Lord Maitreya has not revealed himself as indicated in the news ads. However, just the fact that such definite plans are laid should jar every Christian to "take heed" as Christ warned!

D. Witchcraft

I Timothy 4:1

In Paul's letter to a young pastor, Timothy, he outlines several tragic changes among some Christians:

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (I Timothy 4:1).

Since the early 70s our world has experienced an explosion in occult interest. Numerous Christians, dissatisfied with traditional, ritualistic religion, have turned to the occult for new excitement and fulfillment.

However, it now seems that the wave of occultism is more than a fad. The average citizen actually accepts occult and psychic data as fact.

Even educated, professional people often participate in seances, witchcraft, fortune-telling, psychic healing and astrology. Criminal investigators have used "mediums" to assist in solving tough cases.

Excessive interest in the occult is prevalent in our society. But in Great Britain, approximately 50 percent of the people are involved in some degree, while only 2 percent regularly attend any type church. Great Britain also claims over 8,000 practicing witches, while France has 60,000 sorcerers earning more than \$2 million through the sale of formulas and incantations.

Here in the United States, a movie entitled "The Exorcist" began a new trend in filmmaking that deals with demonic possession. Moviegoers crowded the cinemas and theaters, fascinated with this new phenomenon.

Astrology and horoscopes are a thriving business. More than 1,200 of our nation's 1,750 daily newspapers feature horoscope columns. Current periodicals and magazines featuring astrology sell more than 2 million copies every month (*Prophecy Update*).

Another popular occult practice is spiritism, or receiving messages from the dead. In spiritism, a medium stimulates a trance during a seance, then receives messages from the deceased. Floating objects, magical writing, table lifting, ghosts, and other supernatural incidents are all popular forms of spiritism.

None of this phenomena should take Christians by surprise. Although the occult has existed since biblical times, never has it enjoyed the flourishing revival like that of our generation.

Realizing the fascination and influence of the occult, Christ warned us to be aware of its hidden dangers.

E. Expansion and Revival!

Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10; Acts 2:17-18

Not all the signs are negative. In the Book of Acts the apostle Peter quoted a passage from the Book of Joel. This passage is a reference to the great revival that will be spearheaded by the Jewish nation after the church is gone. (This does not mean that people who have heard the gospel that is now preached will have a second chance after the Rapture).

Yet, because of Israel's rejection of Christ in the first century, the church is, and has, and will enjoy a great portion of this great revival. Even now, as we are at the end of the dispensation of grace, we are experiencing many of the blessings and promises that were given to Israel, that will be fulfilled after we have been raptured. For further study see Romans 11:17-27.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17-18).

Jesus also predicted that the gospel of the kingdom would be preached worldwide. This will happen after the church has been raptured, when the 144,000 Jews accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah and go forth to the four corners of the world preaching that Messiah is coming:

“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come” (Matthew 24:14).

But in this present generation God has allowed, from the preaching of the apostle Peter on the Day of Pentecost to this present time, a large portion of this to be fulfilled by

the church. This is why we send missionaries around the world preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to all nations and all flesh, that the Spirit might fall on them who believe.

“And the gospel must first be published among all nations” (Mark 13:10).

The entire present-day missionary effort of the church is a fulfillment of our Lord’s prophecy. There still will be an expansion of the gospel yet to come. God’s Word will be distributed to every nation, giving everyone an opportunity to hear the saving message of Jesus’ name.

Presently, 96 percent of our world’s population has the Bible or some portion of it in their native language. Another 4 percent and the task of printing the Word will be accomplished (Wood, *Signs of the Time*, page 117)!

What an exciting day to live for God! Unparalleled opportunities and challenges beckon to every Christian. This time of growth and expansion should motivate every believer to become personally involved.

Lesson 11 – Chart 3 Signs of the End (Israel)



Chart Objective:

To determine, according to the sign of Israel’s restoration, whether our generation could be the particular one Jesus said would be living on earth at His second return.

Chart Outline:

- A. Israel regathered
- B. A city regained
- C. Conflict of the nations

D. Blood sacrifices restored

A. Israel regathered

**Ezekiel 37:1-28; 36:33-35;
Psalm 102:16**

After explaining the signs that would usher His return, Christ told a parable about a fig tree (Matthew 24:32-33). Throughout Scripture, the fig tree has symbolized the nation of Israel. When the fig begins to “shoot forth” with leaves, Christ warned, the end is near.

Continuing His discourse, Jesus said that the generation living at the restoration of the Jewish nation would witness Christ’s return:

“And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand” (Luke 21:29-31).

A psalm also declares that Jerusalem’s rebuilding is a signal of the Lord’s soon return:

“When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory” (Psalm 102:16).

In 1918, the Balfour Declaration was signed by Great Britain and Israel, permitting the Jews to return to Palestine. On May 14, 1948, Israel became a nation. As expected, the fig tree was adopted as the Israeli national symbol. Therefore, the “last generation” began in 1948.

But how long is a Jewish generation? When will it mature? According to Jewish genealogy (Matthew 1:17), the Bible (Psalm 95:10), and the Dead Sea scrolls (under “Religious Belief and Practices”), a generation is forty years.

Christ confirmed this figure in Matthew 23 and 24 when He predicted the overthrow of Jerusalem in that generation (Matthew 23:36). From the time His words were spoken (approximately A.D. 30) until the overthrow of Jerusalem (A.D. 70), about forty years had expired.

Finally, Luke summarizes the implications for us:

“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled” (Luke 21:32).

We are that generation! Of that group who witnessed Israel’s restoration, some will still be living at the coming of Christ.

The regathering of Jews into the land of Palestine after the signing of the Balfour Treaty was a gradual development. In 1917, less than 25,000 Jews were in the land. By 1922, there were 83,000; by 1935, 300,000; by 1945, over 500,000. Today the population surpasses 4.5 million.

The Star of David flies gloriously over a nation of miracles! Scattered to the four corners of the globe, she has proven Ezekiel’s prophecy precisely. The “scattered bones” have regathered and resurrected to become a thriving, prosperous nation!

The prophecies also predicted a major transformation of the land:

“The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose” (Isaiah 35:1).

As should be expected, Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek boasted, “Our second biggest

export is roses” (White, *Arming for Armageddon*, page 111).

Isaiah declared that Israel would be a major exporter of fruits:

“He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root: Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit” (Isaiah 27:6).

It is difficult to believe that only a generation ago, the land was desolate of luxuriant vegetation. As soon as Jews were allowed to return, they enacted immediate improvements. Marshes and swamps were drained. Land was graded, soil restored, stones and boulders were removed. Today, large areas are under cultivation.

Forests have been replanted. Hundreds of thousands of fruit trees are producing. Israel is now a major exporter of fruit to the entire world, supplying one-fourth of the world’s grapefruit and second to Spain in orange exportation. Since 80 percent of their fruit production exceeds their current domestic needs, it is sold to other nations (White, page 111).

Israel now has the superior rank of the most efficient agricultural nation in the world. She has shown an annual agricultural growth of around 7 percent—four times the global average (Deal, *Christ Returns*, page 39).

Tel Aviv, which a generation ago was a stretch of sand dunes, is now a thriving, metropolitan city. However, Jerusalem is the capital and cultural center of the nation.

B. A city regained

Luke 21:24

Jerusalem, more than any other city of the world, will play a prominent role in end-time events. The holy city itself is yet another signpost of Christ’s return.

“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).

The recovery of Old Jerusalem in June 1967 is perhaps the greatest fulfillment of prophecy in our times. Israel almost captured the Old City in 1948, but the United Nations imposed a truce while it was still in Arab

hands. The Arabs promised to permit the Jews access to the Wailing Wall, but never kept their word.

On June 5, 1967, the Six-Day War broke out. From the heights of the Old City, artillery shells began exploding.

The massive shelling spared no part of the city. For two days, homes, public buildings, and hotels alike felt the fury of the bombardment.

Meanwhile, Egyptian forces in the Sinai desert were deteriorating. The utter rout of Egyptian desert forces left the Israeli air force free to return fire on the guns that were shelling Jerusalem. The Israeli army struck like a thunderbolt. The Arab Legion was defenseless.

Within two days, Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives, Bethlehem, and all the West Bank were in Israeli control.

Thus, after 1,897 years, Jerusalem was again controlled by the Jews, signaling that the “times of the Gentiles” had almost expired!

Despite Jewish municipal controls in Jerusalem, however, one needs only to stroll her narrow lanes to realize that the city is still “trodden down” of Gentiles. Her streets overflow with merchants, shoppers, peddlers and local citizens—many of whom claim Arab descent. Arab statesmen sit as representatives on the Knesset, Israel’s governing body. Thus, we can conclude that Jerusalem remains “trodden down,” indicating that the “times of the Gentiles” has not expired.

The triumphant return to the holy city has been bittersweet. Israel’s neighbors have never rejoiced over the Jewish restoration to their homeland.

C. Conflict of the nations

Ezekiel 38, 39; Luke 21:20

Christ predicted that the Jewish people would recapture Jerusalem (Luke 21:24), then added that hatred for the chosen nation would be revived to new extremes. Gentiles would exalt themselves over the Jews and seek their destruction.

Adolph Hitler determined to exterminate the Jewish race. Although he was unsuccessful, perhaps Hitler initiated a new revival of hatred for the Jews.

Old Testament prophet Zechariah described Jerusalem as a “cup of trembling” and a “burdensome stone” for all people (Zecha-

riah 12:2-3). Headed by Russia, a group of nations are destined to war against this tiny nation (Ezekiel 38:1-6, 15-16).

Ezekiel’s prophecies concerning Israel and her enemies are so specific, they resemble a modern geography textbook. Enemy nations can be positively identified centuries later!

That Russia heads the great northern confederacy of Ezekiel 38 and 39, there can be no doubt. Three distinct signs give positive identification:

- Ancestral tribal names.
- Anti-religious character.
- Geographic location.

Ezekiel begins by revealing the leader’s family tree and genealogy as “Gog.” “Magog” is his native land. He is also identified as the prince of the ancient people called “Meshech” and “Tubal”:

“Son of man, set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal” (Ezekiel 38:2-3).

Referring to the table of nations in Genesis 10, we discover these people are actually sons of Japheth, the son of Noah (Genesis 10:2). Numerous archeological discoveries pinpoint these tribal names among Russians.

Jewish historian, Josephus, stated that Meshech and Tubal founded civilizations in the northern regions above the Caucasus mountains (Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth*, page 64).

Wilhelm Gesenius, noted Hebrew scholar of the nineteenth century, identified these tribal names in his Hebrew lexicon. “Meshech,” he revealed, was the founder of a barbarous tribe dwelling in the Moschian mountains. Gesenius also revealed that the Greek name “Moschi,” derived from the Hebrew “Meshech,” is the root source for the modern city of Moscow (Lindsey, page 65)!

Russia’s atheistic philosophy is also implied when God said, “Behold, I am against thee, O Gog.” Seldom does our merciful God exhibit a judgmental attitude. Why would He be “against” a nation? Because that nation is against Him!

The Russians’ cruel mistreatment of the Jews is second only to that of Adolf Hitler.

For many years Christians living in Russia have been severely oppressed. Then when we contemplate her atheistic ideology that has destroyed faith in God, we can understand why He says, “I am against thee”!

The geographical clue to this antagonistic nation is clear. The prophet pinpoints a warring army “out of the north parts” (Ezekiel 38:15). Since all geographical directions in the Bible are in relation to Israel, by drawing a line northward, we note the vast territory to be occupied by Russia.

Ezekiel also names Russia’s allies in this mighty conflict:

“Persia, Ethiopia, and Libya with them; all of them with shield and helmet: Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands: and many people with thee” (Ezekiel 38:5-6).

Bible scholars and historians agree that “Persia” is modern Iran. An enormous army could cross Iran’s terrain much easier than the Caucasus Mountains bordering Turkey. Iran’s close association with the United Arab Republic would certainly be a factor for happily cooperating with Russia’s invasion.

“Ethiopia” is derived from “Cush,” the first son of Ham (Genesis 10:6). Cush’s descendants migrated across the Red Sea to the area south of Egypt. Thus, all the black people of Africa descended from Cush. More than twenty times, “Cush” is translated as “Ethiopia” in the King James Version. Therefore, we see that numerous African nations will join Russia’s invasion.

An African alliance is also identified in Daniel’s prophecy as the “king of the south” (Daniel 11:40). As we watch the spread of communism throughout Africa, we understand why these nations will participate.

“Libya” indicates more territory than modern Libya. From the Hebrew *Put* comes the word “Libya,” representing Ham’s third son (Genesis 10:6). Put’s descendants migrated west of Egypt to the northwest corner of Africa, occupying Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco (Lindsey, page 69). Thus, we see that Russia’s southern ally includes many nations.

“Gomer and all his bands” is the eldest son of Japheth (Genesis 10:2). Gomer’s descendants settled north of the Black Sea, extending southward and westward to

Europe. The Hebrew designates this area as Germany.

Gomer’s “bands” represent areas bordering Germany—Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. The countries near Russia have been greatly influenced by her for many years.

Ezekiel accurately described an anti-God bloc of nations who will become Russia’s allies in the invasion against Israel.

Finally, the prophet includes “Togarmah and his bands,” the grandson of Japheth (Genesis 10:3). These nations possibly include modern Turkey, Armenia and southern Russia (Pentecost, *Things to Come*, page 330).

Why would Russia and her allies wish to attack Israel? Certainly the largest country in the world would not need Israel’s land surface. What would compel this mighty nation to single out a small country of 3 to 4 million people?

Ezekiel gives “greed” as a motive:

“Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?” (Ezekiel 38:13).

Israel is destined to become a very wealthy nation. She is without doubt the economic marvel of the world. The Middle East contains two-thirds of the world’s proven oil reserves—and oil is vital to modern civilization.

Nor can vast chemical resources in the Dead Sea be ignored. Its minerals are estimated to be worth more than one quadrillion dollars according to Dr. Thomas Norton, editor of *Chemicals Magazine* (Deal, *Christ Returns*, page 45).

A final reason could be that Israel is the land bridge to three continents: Europe, Asia, and Africa.

Every Israeli prime minister has repeatedly expressed fear of the Soviet Union. And according to Ezekiel, the vicious paw of the Russian bear could strike at any moment.

Israel’s conflict with the nations is another signpost pointing toward the end of time.

D. Blood sacrifices restored

Matthew 24:15; Revelation 11:1-2

Christ’s discourse also predicted that after Israel had been regathered, a temple would be

rebuilt with a “Holy Place” and the Mosaic system of blood sacrifices resumed:

“When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains” (Matthew 24:15-16).

Paul also indicated a new temple would be adorned with a “new God”:

“Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God” (II Thessalonians 2:4).

Even at this present time, Israel has the cornerstone ready to be laid in the rebuilding of the Temple. The mosque that sits on the

ancient site of Solomon’s Temple, which was erected in Old Testament times, will be removed and a new temple patterned after the old one will be rebuilt in its place, so that the blood sacrifices can begin.

“There are a great number of Orthodox Jews who anticipate the reinstating of animal sacrifice in the near future. Thousands of Levites have been trained, and many are descended from the faithful priest Zadok, his descendants having been trained as high priests” (White, *Arming for Armageddon*, page 158).

Israel has been regathered and restored as a nation. But she has come in unbelief, still rejecting her true Messiah. Surrounded by enemy nations, she is groping for solutions to her problems. Many still long for Messiah to come.

Thus, the setting is complete for the Man of Sin, impersonating the true Christ, to become the “abomination” who will bring “desolation” to the Jewish nation.

Lesson 11 – Chart 4 The Beginning of Gentile Kingdoms

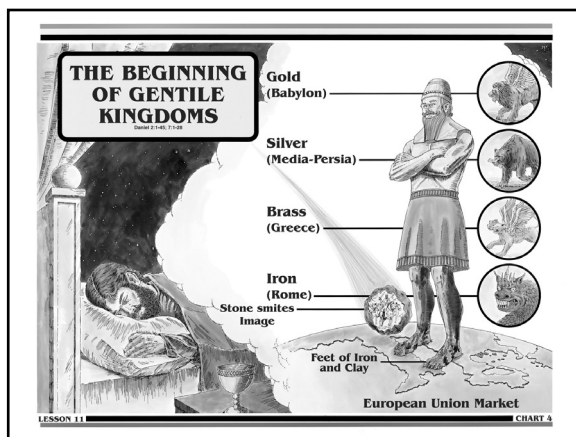


Chart Objective:

To examine the structure of Gentile superpowers—past, present, and future—as given in King Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and interpreted by the prophet Daniel.

Chart Outline:

- A. The Beginning of Gentile Kingdoms
- B. Gold (Babylon)
- C. Silver (Media-Persia)
- D. Brass (Greece)
- E. Iron (Rome)
- F. Feet of Iron and Clay

G. Stone smites Image

H. Other symbols

A. The Beginning of Gentile Kingdoms Daniel 2:1-45; 7:1-28

If you are wondering whether the next world superpower will be Russia, China, or the United States, you will be fascinated to know that the Bible has already declared who it shall be!

The narrative began centuries ago while the Israelites were held captive in the land of Babylon. King Nebuchadnezzar had undisputed dominion over a vast majority of the known world. Therefore, he also had reason to wonder about the future. What other kingdoms could he conquer?

While asleep, the form of a great image appeared. So impressed was the king by the dream, he awoke deeply troubled. But before he could collect his thoughts, the dream faded from memory. Magicians and wise men were unable to recall the dream.

In a mad rage, the emperor threatened to execute the wise men of the court. Then Daniel promised to give the interpretation.

This dramatic prophecy traces the course of history from that day to ours—and beyond!

The dream describes five Gentile world

empires, four of them past and the other yet to come. Had Israel never disobeyed, she could have become the dominant world power.

This prophecy is the basic structure for the “A-B-C’s” of many prophecies later given to Daniel.

B. Gold (Babylon)

The head of gold represented the Babylonian kingdom begun by Nebuchadnezzar. As various governments were presented, the value of the metals also decreased.

The golden head was an absolute autocracy ruled by one man. Gold perfectly describes the kingdom of Babylon. Historians say that everything that pertained to the life and worship of Babylonians was made of gold.

C. Silver (Media-Persia)

The second world dominion, represented by the silver chest and arms, typified the Medo-Persian kingdom that succeeded Babylon at the end of the Jews’ seventy-year captivity.

Two nations comprised the dual kingdom of the Medes and Persians. It was inferior to the Babylonian Empire as silver is to gold, but not in its power, for it overthrew Babylon. Only in its form of government, wealth, luxury and glory were the Medes and Persians inferior.

D. Brass (Greece)

The Medo-Persian kingdom continued until Alexander the Great founded the Grecian Empire in 334 B.C. This third kingdom was depicted by the brass stomach and thighs.

Alexander began at Greece and Macedon and conquered all the territories of the other two kingdoms, including part of India. But with the death of Alexander, his Grecian empire began to decay. His vast territory was divided into four parts under four generals, making the Grecian kingdom still more inferior in its form of government as brass is to silver and gold.

E. Iron (Rome)

Following Greece in the domination of Israel was the old Roman Empire symbolized by iron. The fourth with its legs of iron was unnamed by Daniel in both Chapter 2 and his vision of the four beasts in Chapter 7. We call it the Roman Empire because the Romans

succeeded the Grecian Empire.

Rome was stronger than all preceding kingdoms as iron is stronger than gold, silver, or brass. The unified upper legs denote a unified Rome, displacing the Greeks as a world power in 63 B.C. The two iron legs show the division of the empire into two states—Eastern and Western Roman Empires by Diocletian in A.D. 300.

Even though Rome is considered to have fallen in A.D. 476, she continues to play an important role both in world government and religion to the end of the age.

The western division of the empire has continued through the European nations. We are a part of the Graeco-Roman civilization, divided into the ten toes of the image.

The four kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar’s image, both in prophecy and in history, are Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Daniel says there will never be another empire to encompass the civilized world. Passing centuries have confirmed this prophecy.

F. Feet of Iron and Clay

This part of the image represents both the present and future rulership of Rome. We are presently living in the era of the “feet.”

Soon ten kings represented by the “toes” will arise to give their power to the Antichrist at the close of the age.

A divided kingdom is seen in the feet, partly strong and partly weak, symbolized by the two materials of iron and clay. Clay represents rule by the masses and iron depicts the rule by kings. These two forms of government will not mix, even as iron and clay will not mix.

Iron will finally become predominant with kings again ruling inside the Roman Empire territory. Ten rulers will form a type of confederation and together give their power to the Beast (Revelation 13:1).

Although the old Roman Empire will not be revived, ten kingdoms will form within its original territory. The present twenty-three states will be reduced to ten kingdoms or a confederacy of ten ruling members. Many scholars believe that the European Common Market or the EEC (European Economic Community) may represent the ten-member kingdom.

G. Stone smites Image

In Nebuchadnezzar’s dream, a stone was miraculously cut out of a mountain without

hands and smote the feet of the image until it broke in pieces. The broken image became like chaff and was carried by the wind, but the stone became a great mountain that filled the whole earth.

The final kingdom that will fill the whole earth is not of man at all, but entirely supernatural in origin. The “Stone” is Christ, the Rock upon which the church is built (Matthew 16:18; Isaiah 28:16).

This Stone shall suddenly appear, striking the image and shattering it to pieces. He will come when all empires have passed away in the days of the “ten toes,” or a multi-nationed world.

Notice that the Stone does not hit the upper legs (when Rome first began to rule), but the feet—the close of the Gentile rulership. Christ’s kingdom will not have a gradual, peaceable beginning, but will instantly shatter and consume the former kingdoms—and then stand forever!

Because we are living in the last days of the “times of the Gentiles,” the Book of *Daniel* is extremely significant. The Book of *Revelation* can only be unlocked through correctly interpreting Daniel’s prophecies.

Without the guideline of Daniel’s prophecies, the Book of Revelation would be unintelligible. Both Daniel and John were highly favored of heaven and greatly beloved by men and angels. Both wrote in the “apocalyptic” writing style, which is a unique, highly developed form of literature. The message is given in signs, symbols and visions and characterized by a divine interpreter explaining the subject.

H. Other symbols

Nebuchadnezzar’s image became an outline for interpreting Daniel’s later prophecies. About fifty years later, Daniel had a vision concerning the same world powers (Chapter 7). Because of the similarity, we shall compare Chapters 2 and 7.

In Daniel 7 and 8, various “beasts” or wild animals represent great empires headed by certain individuals. Both Daniel 7:24 and Revelation 17:12 reveal that horns atop the beasts represent various notable kings of those empires.

“**Babylon**” is symbolized by a lion with eagle’s wings. The combination of a kingly beast and bird marks this kingdom with the same noble character as the head of gold.

When the wings were plucked and the lion stood on its feet as a man, Babylon lost its lion’s strength and the ability to rush and devour its prey like the eagle. A man’s heart—weak and faint—replaced the lion’s strength.

“**Media-Persia**” is symbolized by a bear, the same as the image’s silver chest and arms. The bear “raised up on one side” indicates the double aspect of the Media-Persian empire in which Persia rose higher to dominate the Medes. The three ribs in its mouth represent the kingdoms of Lydia, Babylonia and Egypt—which Media-Persia overcame in its rise to world dominion.

“**Greece**” is symbolized by a leopard, the same as the image’s thighs of brass. Four wings of a fowl represent Alexander the Great’s swiftness to conquer. The four heads depict the four divisions of the empire after Alexander’s death.

“**Rome**” is represented by a strong beast with “great iron teeth.” Rome’s destructiveness could not be compared with any animal. Its great iron teeth broke in pieces all the previous beasts.

Ten horns were on this beast, and later, another little horn appeared, for a total of eleven horns. The small horn had eyes like a man’s and spoke very great things (Daniel 7:7-8, 19-24).

In the last days, ten kingdoms, representing the ten horns and ten toes of the image, shall arise from the territory of the old Roman Empire. All will exist at the time when Christ comes to set up His kingdom on earth.

More is written of the fourth part of Daniel’s vision (the Roman Empire) than the others since God would set up His kingdom during the reign of the fourth Gentile power.

Practically every Bible scholar agrees that this small horn of Daniel 7:8 and the Beast of Revelation 13 are the Antichrist, who shall be reigning when Christ returns. This last “king” of Gentile dominion will be the final ruler in the kingdom of man. He has not yet appeared, but Christians through the centuries have observed one conqueror after the other, wondering whether the prophecy was about to be fulfilled.

Since this “little horn” (Antichrist) arises *after* the ten horns, he has nothing to do with the rise of the ten. He does not revise or restore the Roman Empire and will not come on the scene of action until after the ten kings are fully in power.

Since Daniel saw the ten horns on the beast before the “little horn” appeared, the last ten kings will probably reign within the

same territory of the old Roman Empire, which is most of Europe and several nations of Asia and Africa.

Lesson 11 – Chart 5 The “Beast” and His System

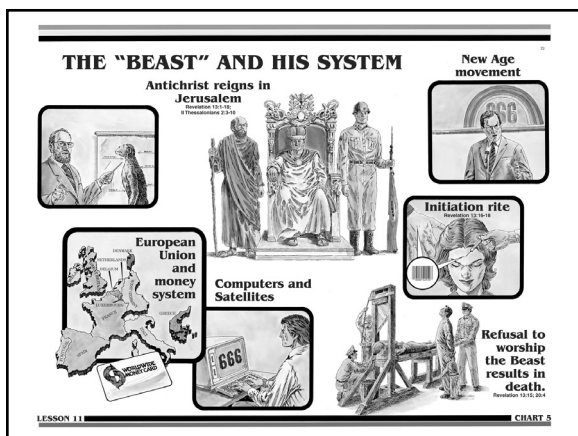


Chart Objective:

To show how our world is currently saturated with segments that will soon converge to introduce a devilish form of world government. Its ruler, the “Beast,” will offer answers to the world’s problems.

Chart Outline:

- A. The “Beast” and His System
- B. Humanism
- C. EU and Money System
- D. Computers and Satellites
- E. Initiation Rite
- F. New Age Movement
- G. Antichrist reigns in Jerusalem
- H. Refusal to worship the Beast results in death

A. The “Beast” and His System

Christians have often wondered just how the complex system of the Antichrist will dominate the entire world. How could people so easily be deceived to accept and worship the Man of Sin? Although John’s Book of Revelation provides many specific details, even revealing the numerals “666,” hundreds of thousands will still rush headlong to accept him and his mark.

However, it will be a gradual process. The Antichrist system has for years been conditioning minds, activities and thought processes of the world’s citizens. Many philosophies of this generation are part of the system.

B. Humanism

Promoting the Antichrist’s world system is the deceptive philosophy termed “humanism.” This belief, which is actually a religion, emphasizes man’s wisdom rather than God’s. It encourages man to solve his problems independently of God.

Many Christians today are alarmed at the flood of humanistic values sweeping our land. Much of the legislation, court decisions and governmental policies are openly antagonistic to scriptural values.

The United States Supreme Court has identified secular humanism as religion. As such, it enjoys the same protection and limitations applicable to other religions.

Humanism is based on these premises:

- Man is basically good.
- Within man’s own self is sufficient intelligence and ability to solve his problems and meet his needs.
- No outside force or higher power need be consulted or expected—nor does any such power exist.
- Evolution is responsible for the origin of man.
- There is no life after death. Man should actively pursue the “good life” here on earth.

These “human rights” are advocated:

- Free use of pornography and drugs.
- Prostitution.
- Homosexuality.
- Sexual permissiveness.
- Free love.
- Abortion.
- Gambling.
- Child’s rights over parental control.

Humanists insist that these liberal lifestyles reflect a positive moral “change” rather than moral breakdown.

Many of these humanistic views are prevalent in our public classrooms. Claims Charles Potter in his book, *Humanism: A New Religion*: “Education is thus a most powerful ally of Humanism, and every American public school is a school of Humanism” (Potter, *Humanism: A New Religion*, page 128).

How accurate is his analysis! There is a

mounting campaign to erase all traces of Christianity from the public schools and learning institutions of our country.

Courts have ruled that it is illegal to display the Ten Commandments in a public school classroom (*Stone vs. Graham*, 449 US 39; 1980).

Tremendous exposure has been showered on the recent unsuccessful campaign to replace silent prayer in the schools of our country. Another court ruling has prohibited a moment of silence before class, as it might be interpreted as a time for prayer by students.

Humanistic educators have definite plans for the children of our nation. In 1973, a Harvard University professor of education and psychiatry revealed the true intent of humanism in our educational process:

“Every child in America entering school at the age of five is mentally ill, because he comes to school with certain allegiances toward our founding fathers, toward our elected officials, toward his parents, toward a belief in a supernatural Being, toward the sovereignty of this nation as a separate entity. It’s up to you teachers to make all of these sick children well by creating the international children of the future” (Gothard, *Applying Basic Principles*, Supplementary Vol. 10, page 17).

Classroom materials are avid proponents of humanism. Mel and Norma Gabler, textbook analysts for school boards throughout Texas, report that many books support evolution, sexual freedom, as well as a negative viewpoint of Christianity (*Prophecy Update*, July 1983).

With such forces already at work in our world, it is easy to see how the Antichrist could quickly appear with feasible answers to the world’s problems and be overwhelmingly accepted!

C. EU and Money System

In 1946 Winston Churchill sent forth a call to form a United States of Europe. Two years later in 1948, a number of activist organizations coordinated by Joseph Retinger came together to form a Congress of Europe. Over 750 statesmen came from throughout western Europe.

Sixteen countries joined together to form the OEEC organization for European economic cooperation. This is what developed into the European Common Market. It became known as the EC, European Community, and in 1994 it became the EU, European Union.

In 1989, the European Council discussed a proposal of a EC now EU bank and a common currency. This would allow nations such as England and Spain or Holland or Germany or any other nation within the European Union to buy or sell with the same currency just as California and Texas can use the same American dollar in either state, thus breaking age-old barriers, making each nation united through a money system.

In 1991, Europe agreed to create a vast European free trade zone among their members. They were aiming for a new common market known as the European Economic Era, with eventually a common currency.

Until the beginning of the 1900s, cash and bartering were the two main forms of buying and selling. Later, checks became widely used by the common man. Then, in the late 1900s, the credit card was finally accepted, as the public’s fear diminished over this new form of payment.

Along with this came the automatic tellers, in which the younger generation are the primary users, and according to a recent survey most of them prefer dealing with a machine, rather than a human.

After the automatic tellers came the smart card. It is the goal of the manufacturers for this card to replace the wallet. It has a memory that is able to contain a Social Security number, all medical records, driver’s license, a short history of the individual, bank account balance, and home address.

With this card, the individual will be able to buy and sell, never having to carry cash again. It will replace credit cards, ATM cards, checks, and cash.

The amazing thing about this card, although it is the standard size of a ATM or credit card, it does not carry the magnetic strip. Instead it carries a microchip, which is so small that it is hardly noticeable. As one man said, “People are so used to a plastic card, that we have placed the chip within the card, basically making the card a fancy handle.”

The same problem that exists with a credit card, checks, and ATM cards, still to some degree exists with a *smart card*. That is the problem of thievery, and then, false identification. The government is working on special scanners that will associate the hand print of a person to the memory of this card. The problem is, this is very costly and not always accurate because of foreign substances on the hand.

In time, the microchip will be removed from the card and placed inside the body.

“And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name” (Revelation 13:16-17).

At present, when you write a check at a store, they deposit your check to their bank. A large computer system photographs each check presented to the bank, and transmits it to a clearinghouse. Checks are then processed automatically and copies made, if desired. At this point, after your check has been copied and passed through the clearinghouse, the funds, in which the amount the check was written for, are automatically deducted from your checking account. What a hassle.

With this microchip in your hand, you could easily scan your hand over a scanner. It would eliminate hot checks, and your account number in the chip would immediately go to the clearinghouse. If you had the funds available, it would automatically transfer, from your checking account, the amount of purchase, and place it in the store’s account.

If the Lord should tarry, no doubt, this technology will even be developed further, but it is not a criteria for the mark of the Beast to be instituted, for it is already used in some places with the present technology.

D. Computers and Satellites

Technology is increasing daily and it is difficult to keep up with it. Yet this is one of the many signs of the end time. Daniel 12:4 says, “Knowledge shall be increased.” In the early 1900s, it would have been impossible for a one-world government to rule the world in the way the Scripture teaches, but with all the modern technology it is very easy to understand how this could be.

The invention of the computer has come a long way from its dinosaur beginnings. In the early 1950s the military developed the first stages of the Internet. It was basically used as a Defense Department experiment. In 1984, it escaped from the Pentagon (probably not by accident). As the public caught hold of this new invention, it began to spread like wild-fire. This was all in God’s plan. By 1995, over 90 million people in more than 160 countries

have at least e-mail (*Time Magazine*, Spring Issue, 1995). Now one can watch television on his computer, as well as speak to people around the world by the touch of a button. *Time Magazine*, Spring 1995, says, “The Global Village is coming, but everyone will reach it at a different pace.”

Truly knowledge has increased. While there is great benefit to modern technology, there are also some drawbacks. Satellites are going up across the globe, replacing telephone cables, so that anywhere in the world a telephone or computer can be used—even in the remote deserts or jungles. The privacy of man is lost, for these same satellites can also take pictures of a license plate on a car, and if so desired, they can zoom in on any individual and watch every move he or she makes. It is virtually impossible to hide from these satellites. They have been used to find criminals, as well as monitor the enemies of other nations. During some of the recent wars, satellite pictures and computers have made a major contribution to the military.

With a newly developed microchip, which is now in the smart card, and soon is projected to be implanted in the human body, even more privacy is lost.

The frequency between the satellite and the microchip will enable a person to be detected within three feet of where he or she stands. No one will be able to escape detection. This will suit the purpose of the Antichrist and help him connect the whole world together, through a one-world computer system, and that is already happening right now.

E. Initiation Rite

Revelation 13:16-18

The world is rapidly moving toward a cashless society. It seems the only logical way to go. It would eliminate armed robberies, hold-ups, drug deals, the black market, etc. The problem is that credit cards and ATM cards can be stolen and used by a thief. So some other form or method to replace cash, checks, and credit cards must be employed.

Cash transactions will soon be eliminated. While society calls it “progress,” Bible believers recognize the subtle conditions paving the way for the Antichrist and his system.

However, at this point, the church will already be raptured and will be preparing for

the second return of Christ.

Perhaps the most definite sign that the Antichrist is on his way is the adaption of 666 as the prefix code for the world computer system. This complex system will serve as monitor when the cashless society begins full operations.

Already the Internal Revenue Service has utilized the ominous numerals in various income tax returns. Forms W-2, W-2P and 1040PS concern rebates due taxpayers. If the IRS owes the taxpayer, the conditions are to be listed with a code number prefixed by 666.

When questioned why this particular prefix was chosen, the spokesman replied, "It (666) may be a code that all computers will be able to verify. All modern computers can be adaptable to that prefix." When confronted with the biblical similarities, the man replied, "We think it is purely coincidental" (Calk, *Prophecy Digest*, page 80).

Rest assured, this is NO coincidence! We must help warn others of the folly of believing that the frequency of occurrence is coincidental!

Not all the 666 numerals are that easy to detect. Much more is disguised in a computerized product code system. You may be surprised to know that 95 percent of all grocery items are now marked with 666! The Universal Product Code stamped on virtually every piece of merchandise in our country contains a number disguised in computerized parallel bar codes that can be instantly read by scanners.

See if you can detect the 666 in the Universal Product Code printed on grocery items. Secretly incorporated in this code is the number of the Beast—666! All bars or marks are identified at the bottom or side except three sets of two uniform bars that form the frame.

Each number is represented in the product code by two vertical lines, each having a particular thickness and spacing.

Thus, the three unmarked frame bars are actually "666," the mark of the Beast. Some product codes have less bars, but the mark "666" can be identified in them also.

The May 1983 issue of *Psychology Today* featured a startling full-page drawing that could have easily illustrated Revelation chapter 13. Displayed alongside an article entitled, "Shaping the Consumer," is the artist's illustration of three female shoppers in a supermarket, their eyes transfixed as if in a hypnotic trance,

with the universal product bar code imprinted in their foreheads. Artist Lester Goodman, art director, was questioned about the similarities between the drawing and Revelation 13. He replied that he was unfamiliar with the prophecy and the similarity was purely coincidental (*Prophecy Update*, July 1983).

What an exciting day to live for God! Unparalleled opportunities and challenges beckon to every Christian. This time of growth and expansion should motivate every believer to become personally involved in reaching many souls for Christ while there is still light. For soon the night cometh when no man can work.

F. New Age Movement

A new kind of revolution is quietly overtaking our earth. Unlike any foreign military invasion, this revolution will conquer without weapons. Working under the admirable guise of "goodwill for all," the New Age Movement will doubtless usher the Antichrist and his system to world prominence.

While many of their concepts and goals seem admirable, closer examination reveals the anti-God system quietly but efficiently weaving its web around an unsuspecting society.

Even their attractive emblem has biblical significance. Although the rainbow seems to be only a colored arc of light, to both Christians and New Agers it has a deeper meaning. To Bible believers it is God's covenant with man never again to destroy the earth by water. However, the New Ager's rainbow illustrates their bridge between man and Lucifer, who they claim is the "over-soul."

New Agers place small rainbow decals in their automobiles and businesses as a signal to others in the movement. Many, however, use the rainbow as a decoration, unaware of its occult meaning.

The New Agers are united for the purpose of world order and control. They hope to establish agencies to handle distribution of global resources, redistribution of the world's wealth, a new world religion, a universal tax, a universal draft, and emphasis on universal interdependence (Cumbey, *Hidden Dangers of the Rainbow*, page 145).

It was the New Age Movement that sponsored the announcement of the appearance of the new Christ, Lord Maitreya. He will, they claim, replace all other religious teachers and leaders of all world religions.

Their ultimate goal is a new world order developed and administered by a New Age Christ, introducing a new world religion. Certainly a movement of such influence could successfully promote the Antichrist's system!

Borrowing many Christian terms, they have carefully and subtly blended many ideas from Eastern mystic religions, such as meditation and mind control. Using the term "rebirthing," they teach that an individual can really "find himself" by practicing meditation from within.

The new-birth experience taught by Christ is subtly replaced with a mystical, heathen factor that focuses not on God, but rather on oneself.

Their teaching about Christ reveals the true character and purpose of their existence. The movement betrays the spirit of Antichrist by advocating that "Christ consciousness" is a "higher state of mind" that everyone can attain. Jesus, they teach, was an ordinary man who had "Christ consciousness" descend upon Him at the time of His baptism and remain with Him until His crucifixion (Cumbey, page 146).

John defined their teaching:

"Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son" (I John 2:22).

"And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (I John 4:3).

Redefining Christ to a spiritual experience is certainly a denial that Jesus is the Christ.

Teaching that Christ was a "consciousness" rather than God manifest in flesh denies His deity. Suggesting that man could be elevated to deity was the original lie in Eden!

This could be the very system that will bring a world ruler to power!

A day of separation is coming! Many church denominations will embrace the "goodwill" system, claiming we are all "earth brothers" and all a part of "one body." Many well-meaning Christians believers will de-emphasize doctrinal truths, saying "God is bringing us all together in unity." When you hear this from many of the major denominations, be warned: the world is preparing to embrace the Antichrist and his system!

G. Antichrist reigns in Jerusalem

Revelation 13:1-8; II Thessalonians 2:3-10

The stage has been set. The Antichrist now waits for the cue that will expose him to the world. One day soon, the preparatory period will be past and all will be reality!

John's portrait of that fateful day will be evident:

"And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon . . . And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles. . . . Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six" (Revelation 13:11-18).

Once the world system comes to universal power, the "Beast," accompanied by the False Prophet, will officiate. John uses the term "Beast" to describe a man of great strength, power and superhuman abilities to enforce his will upon the earth.

So cleverly will he dominate the world scene, war will cease and the economy will flourish under his command. Prosperity will return and the world will stand in awe at his genius as millions revere him as god.

Remembering that Christ had once rebuked His followers, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe" (John 4:48), the Antichrist will fully exploit this Jewish weakness with dazzling miraculous feats.

After making a covenant with Israel to become their defender and protector, he shall eventually promote himself to the sphere of deity. Sitting in the Temple, he will proclaim himself as God (Matthew 24:15; II Thessalonians 2:4)!

H. Refusal to worship the Beast results in death

Revelation 13:15; 20:4

What will happen to those who object to the proposed universal plan?

"As may as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed. . . . and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and

which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years” (Revelation 13:15; 20:4).

Yes, it will be dreadful. The Antichrist will wage war upon all who refuse to acknowledge his prominence. Many shall be killed.

However, he is not the ultimate winner! His time will be short compared to eternity in the presence of the Lord!

Lesson 11 – Chart 6 The Rapture of the Church

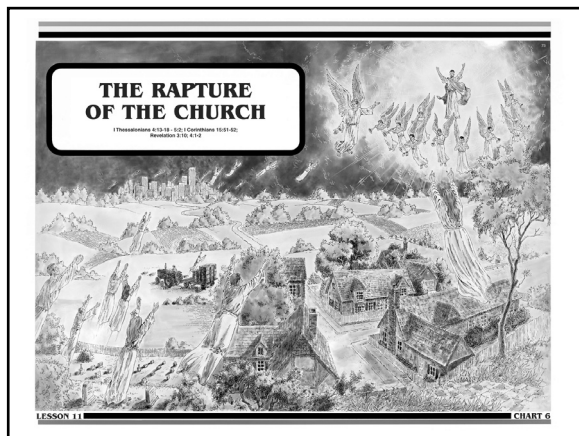


Chart Objective:

To correlate the events of Christ’s second return. When He appears in the clouds, living and dead saints rise to meet Him. When He returns with His saints to earth; *every eye shall see Him*.

Chart Outline:

- A. The Rapture of the Church
- B. The Judgment Seat of Christ
- C. The Marriage of the Lamb
- D. The Church Reigns with Christ

A. The Rapture of the Church

The church has a glorious future with Christ in the heavenlies. This wonderful truth was promised by Jesus at the time of the Last Supper when He said:

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:1-3).

After His death and resurrection Jesus appeared to the disciples on several occa-

sions. At His final appearance, while they beheld, He ascended into the cloud out of their sight. As they looked on in amazement, two men in white apparel instructed them,

“Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Jesus is coming back in His glorified body just like He went up. This has not happened as yet, but the time is near. The apostle Paul linked together the coming of Jesus with the “blessed hope” of the church.

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity” (Titus 2:13, 14).

James instructed the church, “Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:8). The last book of the Bible closes with the promise of His coming, “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

The fact that Jesus Christ is coming back to earth is an undeniable biblical truth, a truth that brings hope and great joy to the believer.

However, not everyone will be happy about His return to earth. For while the Scriptures indicate a time of rejoicing for believers, they also indicate a time of great wrath upon the unbelievers. The following are two examples:

“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus

Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (II Thessalonians 2:7-9).

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him” (Jude 14-15).

The question arises as to how His coming can be one of blessing to the church, and at the same time one of judgment upon the earth. The answer is in understanding that the Second Coming involves two phases. The first phase is when Christ comes to gather His bride, the church, unto Himself. The second phase is when He brings His glorified church back with Him to destroy His enemies and set up His kingdom on earth.

Paul described what is going to happen to the church in I Thessalonians 4:13-18:

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

This passage describes the *rapture* of the Church. The word rapture is from the Latin word *rapere*, which means “caught up.” The Greek word for “caught up” is *harpaza*. A study of this word shows that it has a depth of meaning that sheds light on the importance of the Rapture. It means to steal, to drag off, to carry away, to forcefully snatch or take away as rescuing from a threatening danger; to

grasp something eagerly or quickly with desire.

Notice that Christ does not come completely to the earth during this event, but the saints rise to meet Him in the air, and to remain with Him. Contrast this with what Zechariah states concerning the Second Coming:

“And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south” (Zechariah 14:4).

In this event, Christ comes down and stands on the mount of Olives, dividing it in two parts.

The parallel passage to I Thessalonians 4:13-18 is I Corinthians 15:51-53. This passage explains how saints who are living when Jesus comes for the church will be able to rise to meet the Lord in the air. Their mortal bodies will be instantly changed to immortal bodies.

“Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (I Corinthians 15:51-53).

The physical body will be changed into a glorified body just as the body of Jesus.

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself” (Philippians 3:20-21).

What a day that will be! Only God knows when the rapture of the church will take place. We do know that it will be in conjunction with other end-time prophetic events, events which are even now in the developing stages. The greatest of these events to this time has been

the restoration of Israel as a nation in 1948. This has truly been a miraculous event that only God could bring to pass.

According to the prophecies of Daniel, Israel will make a seven-year covenant with the last world Gentile ruler, the Beast (Antichrist). The covenant will mark the beginning of God's judgment (wrath) upon the world. It is referred to in both the Old and New Testaments as the Day of the Lord. It is also called the time of great tribulation. The details of this coming wrath are given in the Book of Revelation in chapters 6-19.

The Scripture promises that the church will not be a part of this terrible time of judgment. While the church at Thessalonica was presently going through some persecution, Paul assured them that they would escape the coming wrath.

"For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (I Thessalonians 1:9-10).

To this same church Paul wrote:

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him. Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do" (I Thessalonians 5:9-11).

The wrath spoken of in verse 9 refers to the Day of the Lord, which is the subject of the first three verses of the chapter. The apostle Paul stated that the church is going to be with Christ during this time (verse 10). This truth is a source of comfort to the church (verse 11), and ties together with what Paul said about the Rapture in I Thessalonians 4:18, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." The church today can also find comfort in "these words."

In Revelation 3:10 Jesus addressed the church at Philadelphia with this promise:

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth."

The hour of temptation or trial could only have reference to the coming time of wrath which is revealed in the following chapters of Revelation. Jesus had no rebuke for the Philadelphian church. Philadelphia means brotherly love. It was the church that had kept His word, and not denied His name (verse 8). Jesus said, "I will keep thee from the hour of temptation." The Greek word for *from* is *ek*, which literally means "out of." The grammar is the same as if someone said, "I will keep you from going to jail."

Jesus will keep the church from going through the tribulation. The next verse (11), tells how he will do it. "Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Jesus will come just in time, and "catch away" the church from the earth. This will enable the church to experience growth and revival right up until the time of the Rapture.

That was the other promise to the Philadelphian church, "I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Revelation 3:8).

Why will the church escape the judgment of the tribulation period? Because the church program is a "mystery" which began on the Day of Pentecost and will end with the Rapture. Paul stated this mystery in Ephesians 3:3-10. The fact that God was going to unite the Jews and Gentiles in one body was something not previously revealed in the Scriptures.

Acts 15:13-15 states what God is presently doing in the world. He is visiting the Gentiles, "to take out of them a people for his name." After He has taken out or raptured a people for His name, He will return, and build again the tabernacle of David (Israel) which is fallen down.

This agrees with what Paul said in Romans 11:25:

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in."

The *fulness of the Gentiles* refers to the ingathering of the church. National Israel has a partial callous over the eyes, making it difficult to believe the gospel. In verse 28, Paul said they are enemies of the gospel for the

Gentiles' sake. When God is finished with the church, it will exit this world by the Rapture, thus opening the door for God to fulfill His plan for Israel. "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11:26).

The tribulation period involves Israel. Jeremiah calls it "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7). It has to do with God preparing unbelieving Israel to receive the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and to inherit the promised kingdom on earth. At the same time God is going to destroy the Gentile world systems headed by the Antichrist. Jesus Christ alone will be KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:16).

B. The Judgment Seat of Christ

The church, having escaped the Tribulation by means of the Rapture, will then face the judgment seat of Christ.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men" (II Corinthians 5:10-11).

"Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (I Corinthians 3:12-15).

This is the Christian's final exam. So serious is this judgment, Paul called it "the terror of the Lord." No earthly test has been so absolute, so final as the one determining our future position in the kingdom.

How wisely did we spend our time? What were our priorities? Were we faithful stewards of the talents, time, and blessings entrusted to our care?

Did we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness? Did we strive to become like Christ and to do His will? Were His interests placed ahead of our own?

This judgment will not determine whether

we are saved or lost. Calvary and the grace of God have assured our salvation. This is a testing of works to determine the reward, position, and rank of every saint in the new administration.

C. The Marriage of the Lamb

Having assigned each person's reward and place of service in the coming kingdom, the most glorious event of our lives will be consummated:

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:7-9).

This is our wedding day! Jesus Christ will be joined with His bride, the church. Because of the "joy that was set before him" (Hebrews 12:2), He endured the agony of the cross. At last, we shall enjoy His presence—not "through a glass, darkly; but then face to face" (I Corinthians 13:12).

And then we shall celebrate the marriage feast. What meal would be appropriate for glorified, resurrected bodies that no longer require food as fuel? Jesus proved after His resurrection that he could eat and drink (Luke 24:41-43). However, we will be energized by the Spirit.

The wedding ceremony in heaven will be followed by a thousand-year reception on earth.

D. The Church Reigns with Christ

While the bride and Bridegroom are being united in marriage, the world will be experiencing the worst judgments since the world began. Indeed, if Jesus does not intervene, there will be no one left on the earth. "And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:22). The elect in this verse is Israel (Isaiah 45:4). Christ is going to return, to save Israel (Romans 11:2), and set up His kingdom on earth. And the church, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, will return with Him (Revelation 19:14-16). Enoch saw this glorious

event, “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all” (Jude 14, 15).

In Matthew 24:27-30 Jesus gave a descriptive view of what will take place at His coming.

“For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”

A similar view is given by John in Revelation 1:7: “Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.”

This will be the second phase of His coming. It will follow the rapture of the church by at least seven years.

Lesson 11 – Chart 7 Jesus Outlined Events of Last Generation

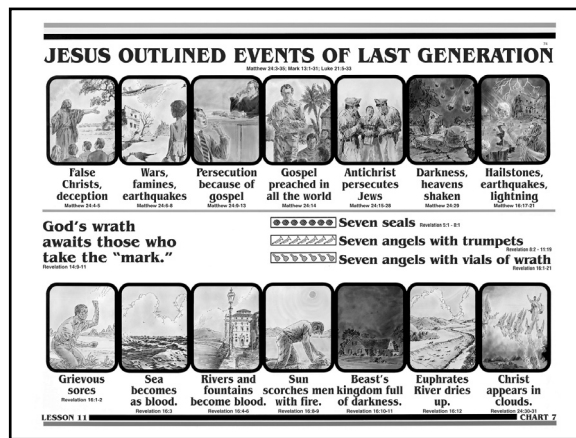


Chart Objective:

To examine the comparison of the progression of events leading up to the Rapture, as to those that will happen after the Rapture.

Chart Outline:

- A. Jesus Outlined Events of the Great Tribulation
- B. Seven seals, trumpets, vials

A. Jesus Outlined Events that would happen during the Great Tribulation Matthew 24:3-35; Mark 13:1-31; Luke 21:5-33

The parallel between the present time in which we live and the events that will happen during the great tribulation look strikingly familiar.

The reason for this is because we are

beginning to see the stage set for this passage of Scripture to be interpreted literally during Daniel's seventieth week.

Although this will be fulfilled during the great tribulation, there is an application, in some respects, that can be applied to the end of the church age in which we live.

“All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:8)

The Greek translation actually reads, “the beginning of birth pains.” Picture an anxious couple, prior to the birth of their child, the very first labor pain does not signal an immediate birth; hours or even days may pass. Only when the pains come with increasing frequency and intensity can they be certain that the child is about to be delivered.

There is an application to the era of the church age in many of these verses that are found in Matthew 24, but there is a vast difference between an application that is relevant to today's living and a literal interpretation. We see the beginning of these birth pains such as wars and rumors of wars. This is speaking of the red horse that is loosed in Revelation that will cause the true fulfillment of Matthew 24:6. When this is fulfilled it will be a seal that is broken that unleashes the earth into seven years of continuous battle and war. In a sense we see the birth pains of this becoming more frequent.

One example of this are the many that are rising around the world who claim to be Christ or Messiah. Even though we see this on a small measure, imagine what it will be like

when this verse is interpreted literally during the Tribulation. There will be many more who will begin to project this claim when the church is removed and the spirit of the Antichrist is loosed upon the earth.

Only one chosen of God, who is the son of perdition, will be able to deceive the majority of people and establish his kingdom.

What one must realize is that Enoch is an Old Testament type of the church. Noah is an Old Testament type of Israel. Enoch was translated before the Flood, but Noah was preserved through the Flood.

A classic example of this passage being applied to the church is found in Matthew 24:37 and 39.

“But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

“And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.”

The coming of the Son of Man, as we have already studied in lesson 11 chart 6, really has two phases. Phase one is before the Antichrist is revealed (the removing of the church or Rapture). The second phase is at the end of the Tribulation when Christ Jesus and His saints come back to earth. The phrase “the coming of the Son of man” refers to when Christ is going to return at the end of the great tribulation—not the Rapture.

Look closely at verse 40. The Bible says “one shall be taken, and the other left.” While there is an application here to the removing of the church from the earth in what is known as the Rapture, this definitely is not the literal interpretation.

The key to understanding is to read the story of Noah and the Flood. It states “as the days of Noe.” Verse 38 states, “Noe entered into the ark.” Verse 39 states, “The flood came, and took them all away.”

The obvious is clear. The ones that were left were Noah and his family. The ones that were taken were those that the judgment of God took by the Flood. When we say that one was taken and the other left, there is an application for teaching the removing of the church, or the Rapture. When we take in this whole passage the one that was taken was taken to judgment and the one that was left was the one that survived. This will be the Jews that God will preserve throughout the great tribulation.

The New Testament church, like Enoch, has already been translated before this time.

Because of lack of understanding, some have been confused and led to believe that the church is going to go through the Tribulation. On the other hand, this has produced great consternation in those who could clearly see that the church is raptured before the Antichrist is revealed, yet not understanding how to explain Matthew 24.

During the Tribulation many of the Jews are going to have the blindness removed from their eyes and accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah, and believe in the New Testament. This passage of Scripture will give them direction and instruction on how to escape the wrath of Satan.

Some of the verses that give divine direction to the Jewish nation are verses 15-18.

In verse 16 Jesus exhorted the Jews not to stay in Judea, but run and hide in the mountains. We see this in action through prophetic sight in Revelation 12:13-17. He further stated in verse 17, for them not to pack their bags or take anything from their homes, which is a common practice for most people when being driven from their land. They try to take their wealth with them. A woman would typically want to take heirlooms, precious dishes, pictures and personal items. The Bible is not hard to understand. Christ has always talked on the level of humanity.

In verse 18, Jesus told them that are working in the field, “don’t go back and get your clothes, but flee to the mountains.” The words spoken by Jesus in verse 19 are just common-sense.

“Woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!” (Matthew 24:19).

One only has to look at the scenario to realize the complications of a pregnant woman, or woman with a small child, trying to escape the invading armies of the enemy. This is going to be the most horrible time in the history of mankind. Jesus said in Matthew 24:21:

“For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.”

It is hard for man to conceive how horrible this tribulation will be. Christ said there has never been a time like it before, and when it is

over, there will never be a time like it thereafter.

“And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death” (Revelation 6:8).

In World War II, twenty and thirty million people were said to have been killed. In this seven-year period, just one seal has the power to kill one-fourth of the world. If the population was six billion people, a fourth of that would be one billion, five hundred million. This is the equivalent to six nations like America being wiped out over a seven-year period or every year one nation, the size of America, being destroyed.

“And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men” (Revelation 9:15).

This verse means that another one-third of the world will be killed in approximately a four-hundred-day period. This is almost half of the world between the two Scriptures above. It is no wonder the Bible says that it will take seven months to bury the dead.

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will give unto Gog a place there of graves in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea: . . . and there shall they bury Gog and all his multitude. . . . And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them” (Ezekiel 39:11-12).

We can see how horrible the death count is going to be in a seven-year period. Combine this with the number of plagues and judgments of God and the hatred of Satan and it is obvious to see that no one understands how horrible the great tribulation is going to be.

This is why Jesus said there has never been a time like it. When people understand how awful this time period is going to be, then the love of God is made real to them in a measure they have never realized before—by His promise to rapture the church before this great tribulation begins.

B. Seven seals, trumpets, vials

Revelation 5:1 - 11:19; 16:1-21

Described in the Book of Revelation are a series of judgments administered upon the earth: “seals” are opened; “trumpets” are blown; and finally, “vials” or bowls of divine wrath are poured out.

Throughout Jewish history, seals were used to mark and verify important documents. In John’s vision, he saw a book in the right hand of the One sitting on the throne. Written on both sides, the book had seven seals, signifying a document of great importance (Revelation 5:1).

John must have known this scroll had extreme significance, as he wept inconsolably when it seemed no one was found worthy to open the seals.

The seven seals reveal God’s plan for judgment, primarily through famine, war, persecution, earthquakes and other plagues.

Lesson 11 – Chart 8 The Battle of Armageddon

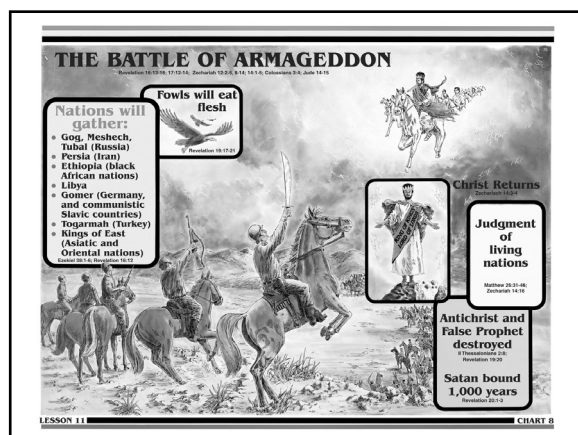


Chart Objective:

To investigate the greatest conflict in history when armies of the world gather to wage war against Christ in the Valley of Armageddon. Returning to earth with His saints, Christ will destroy the armies with violent judgments and set up a new world order at Jerusalem.

Chart Outline:

- A. Nations will gather
- B. Christ returns with army of heaven
- C. Fowls will eat flesh
- D. Antichrist and False Prophet destroyed; Satan bound 1,000 years
- E. Judgment of living nations

A. Nations will gather Ezekiel 38:1-6; Revelation 16:12

“And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. . . . And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon” (Revelation 16:12-16).

All the current global conflicts point to one final climax as earth’s powers gather to battle at Armageddon. In a fourteen-by-twenty-mile plain in northern Israel, stretching eastward from Mount Carmel, is the battlefield.

Is that space adequate for such a conglomeration of superpowers? Napoleon, who conquered a portion of Palestine in 1799, declared that Armageddon is the most natural battleground of the whole earth (White, *Arming for Armageddon*, pages 175-176).

Other great military leaders, such as Richard the Lion-hearted of England, Louis of France, Pompeii and Titus of Rome, Rameses of Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar, and David, the shepherd boy, have all fought wars at Armageddon.

Actually, the fighting will not be limited to this one plain. Joel predicts there will be multitudes in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which could be an extended area east of Jerusalem.

Thus the entire campaign is portrayed to extend from the Valley of Megiddo on the north, down through Jerusalem, extending out to the Valley of Jehoshaphat on the east land of Israel.

Revelation 14:20 states that the blood will flow for 1,600 furlongs, about 180 miles, which is the length of Palestine.

Jerusalem, however, will doubtless be the center of activity during the great battle since the Bible declares:

“The burden of the word of the LORD for

Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him. Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it” (Zechariah 12:1-3).

“For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle” (Zechariah 14:2).

By the events of our day, we can see how God will bring the nations against Israel. Israel is in a strategic location; God has set her so. Jerusalem is sacred to the three major religions of the world, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Presently these three religions comprise over 2 billion people. Even now Jerusalem is the center of controversy. The control of the city will be the hook that God will use to bring coalitions of nations against Israel in the last days.

Who are these nations that will come against the holy city? Ezekiel predicted that Gog, Persia, Ethiopia, Libya, Gomer, Togarmah and “many people with thee” would come (Ezekiel 38:1-6). Most of these descriptions fit the northern federation of Russia and her allies.

The ten-kingdom federation or nations controlled by the Beast will also come. The kings of the East will bring the Asiatic and Oriental people from beyond the Euphrates and arrive by way of the dried riverbed. The king of the south (Daniel 11:40) indicated a north African power or group of nations that will join in the conflict.

Whether these nations come to take a spoil, or to challenge the conquests of the Beast as he moves in to take over the Middle East, it is God who draws them to Israel, and ultimately their battle is with Him. Satan has in mind for these nations to destroy Israel, and for his man, the Antichrist, to reign as God. God has in mind to destroy the armies along with the Antichrist, and to bind Satan in the bottomless pit.

B. Christ returns with army of heaven

The climax will come with the return of Jesus Christ back to earth. He will not be

alone, but the armies of heaven will be with Him.

“Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee” (Zechariah 14:3-5).

“And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KINGS OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS**” (Revelation 19:11-16).

Great destruction will come to the Antichrist’s armies from the sword proceeding from the mouth of Him seated on the horse. The climatic conflict concludes in grand, overwhelming victory as all the forces of evil are quickly subdued by the Lord Jesus Christ and His heavenly hosts.

Heavenly hosts? Yes! That includes us! You and I will participate in that great entourage returning with Christ at this climatic moment. Although the Lord does not need assistants, from this time forward we are included in everything He does!

The judgment of the seventh vial (Revelation 16:17) will be poured out upon the earth, particularly on those gathered at Armageddon.

The earth will heave, convulsing under the strain of shattering earthquakes. Mountains will tremble with thunderous upheaval. Men will run for shelter as the ground gyrates under their feet. The entire landscape will be showered with one hundred-pound hailstones, destroying masses of humanity. The slaughter that will be in the Armageddon valley is indescribable.

What has been planned for the Jews? Has God forgotten His covenant with Abraham’s descendants? Never! He is still the “covenant-keeping” God!

Jeremiah noted their distress:

“Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? wherefore do I see every man with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness? Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it: it is even the time of Jacob’s trouble; but he shall be saved out of it” (Jeremiah 30:6-7).

As they contemplate their guilt for rejecting Jesus as Messiah and Savior, a pitiful wailing will be heard:

“And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn” (Zechariah 12:10).

In love and mercy, Christ showers the penitent Israelites with a “spirit of grace.” As His Word has promised, when His people call upon Him in the day of trouble, He will rescue them!

C. Fowls will eat flesh

When Armageddon’s massive troops have been thoroughly defeated, God’s scavengers are invited to a royal feast. John described the calamity:

“And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of

horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great” (Revelation 19:17-18).

What a banquet for the buzzards! It is the greatest ever!

With dead soldiers spread over a two-hundred-mile area, streams of blood will flow as deep as the bridle of a saddled horse (Revelation 14:20). Seven months will be required for burial.

The conflicts ends almost as quickly as it begins! The Lord spoke . . . and it was done!

**D. Antichrist and False Prophet destroyed;
Satan bound 1,000 years
II Thessalonians 2:8;
Revelation 19:20; 20:1-3**

While the fowls are feasting, the Lord takes care of some personal business:

“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20)

“And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming” (II Thessalonians 2:8).

The “dragon” (Satan), the instigator of man’s problems, is doomed to a thousand-year prison term:

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season” (Revelation 20:1-3).

God is not finished with the devil. His final doom is still a millennium away.

**E. Judgment of living nations
Matthew 25:31-46; Zechariah 14:16**

Christ will establish His headquarters in Jerusalem. People of the surviving nations

will be summoned for judgment, and those counted as righteous will be assigned places in the new kingdom. The unrighteous will be cast into everlasting fire.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left” (Matthew 25:31-33).

This scene takes place on earth immediately following the second coming of Christ. Not everyone will die during the time of the great tribulation. Many will live through the judgments, but must still face Jesus Christ. This is not the final judgment. It is a judgment that will determine who among the Gentiles will be permitted to live on in the millennial kingdom.

The basis of judgment will be how these people treated the Jews during the time of the Tribulation. An Old Testament example is found in the story of Rahab, a Gentile, who protected the two spies sent from Joshua to Jericho. Rahab’s faith in the God of Israel caused her to protect the spies. “For the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath” (Joshua 2:11). When Israel destroyed Jericho, Rahab and her family were spared. “And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father’s household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers, which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho” (Joshua 6:25).

In the time of the Tribulation, as God seeks to re-establish Israel, those who come to her aid in the midst of fierce persecution will be rewarded. Jesus said to the righteous, “I was an hungred, and you fed me and gave me drink, as a stranger you took me in and clothed me, cared for me in sickness, and visited me in prison.” When the righteous reply asking when they did these things, Jesus responded, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matthew 25:40). The brethren of Jesus after the flesh is Israel (Hebrews 2:16-17).

A modern-day example of this comes out of World War II. Certain Gentiles in Europe risked

their own lives to protect Jews from Hitler's Nazi forces and other enemies. It is estimated that over 100,000 Jews escaped death as a result of these rescue operations. The State of Israel awards a medal entitled *The Righteous Gentiles* to those who are identified as rescuers. At the Holocaust museum in Israel, there is a special garden called the "Garden of the Righteous." A tree honors each Gentile rescuer.

Gentiles who have no mercy on the Jews

during the Tribulation will go into everlasting punishment.

When Christ begins His millennial reign, the kingdoms of this world will have been subdued. Jesus Christ will reign supreme as the Kings of kings and Lord of lords. The sixth dispensation of grace will have officially ended, and a new one will begin. God's plan for man on this earth will come to completion in the ensuing kingdom age.

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM STUDY SHEET

Predictions for the Last Generation

LESSON NO. 11 Study Sheet

Chart 1. Signs of the End (Global)

- A. Wars and rumors of wars (Matthew 24:6; Mark 13:7)
- B. Poverty, famine, and pestilence (Matthew 24:7; Luke 21:11)
- C. Earthquakes increase (Matthew 24:7; Luke 21:11)
- D. Pleasure seeking (II Timothy 3:1-4)
- E. Heart failure (Luke 21:26)
- F. Immorality (Luke 17:28-30; II Timothy 3:2-4)
- G. Knowledge increases (Daniel 12:4)

Chart 2. Signs of the End (Religious)

- A. The Church Age (II Thessalonians 2:5-8; II Peter 3:3-4; Revelation 2-4)
- B. Apostasy and Worldliness
- C. False Christs and cults
- D. Witchcraft (I Timothy 4:1)
- E. Expansion and Revival! (Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10; Acts 2:17-18)

Chart 3. Signs of the End (Israel)

- A. Israel regathered (Ezekiel 37:1-28; 36:33-35; Psalm 102:16)
- B. A city regained (Luke 21:24)
- C. Conflict of the nations (Ezekiel 38, 39; Luke 21:20)
- D. Blood sacrifices restored (Matthew 24:15; Revelation 11:1-2)

Chart 4. The Beginning of Gentile Kingdoms

- A. Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:1-45; 7:1-28)
- B. Head of gold (Babylon); arms and chest of silver (Media-Persia); thighs of brass (Greece); legs of iron (Rome); feet of iron and clay (rule by kings and masses); stone smites image

Chart 5. The "Beast" and His System

- A. The "Beast" and His System
- B. Humanism
- C. EU and Money System
- D. Computers and Satellites
- E. Initiation Rite (Revelation 13:16-18)
- F. New Age Movement
- G. Antichrist reigns in Jerusalem (Revelation 13:1-8; II Thessalonians 2:3-10)
- H. Refusal to worship the Beast results in death (Revelation 13:15; 20:4)

Chart 6. The Rapture of the Church

- A. The Rapture of the Church
- B. The Judgment Seat of Christ
- C. The Marriage of the Lamb
- D. The Church Reigns with Christ

Chart 7. Jesus Outlined Events of Last Generation

- A. Jesus Outlined Events of the Great Tribulation
- B. Seven seals, trumpets, vials

Chart 8. The Battle of Armageddon

- A. Nations will gather (Ezekiel 38:1-6; Revelation 16:12)
- B. Christ returns with army of heaven
- C. Fowls will eat flesh
- D. Antichrist and False Prophet destroyed; Satan bound 1,000 years (II Thessalonians 2:8; Revelation 19:20; 20:1-3)
- E. Judgment of living nations (Matthew 25:31-46; Zechariah 14:16)

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM QUIZ

Predictions for the Last Generation

LESSON NO. 11 Quiz

Multiple choice:

1. The image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream symbolized the ____ kingdoms in history.
(a) Jewish (b) Samaritan (c) Gentile (d) Communistic
2. The image was destroyed by a "Stone" symbolizing the ____.
(a) Kingdom of God (b) Kingdom of Jews (c) Kingdom of Satan
3. These current events are preparing the way for the Beast and his system: ____
(a) humanistic theories (b) computer technology (c) preaching the gospel
4. Those who take the Beast's "mark" can expect: ____
(a) God's protection (b) God's wrath (c) God's blessings (d) crown of life
5. The ultimate trip for every Christian believer will be: ____
(a) pilgrimage to Holy Land (b) missionary tour (c) catching away of saints
6. All nations of the world will gather at Jerusalem for the conflict known as: ____
(a) Battle of Jericho (b) Great Crusades (c) Battle of Armageddon
7. To settle the conflict, Christ will return to earth at: ____
(a) Garden of Eden (b) Mount of Olives (c) Temple (d) Eastern Gate
8. Christ and His armies will defeat all foes, and Satan will be bound for: ____
(a) 1,000 years (b) 100 years (c) 70 years (d) 10,000 years

Answers:

1. C 2. A 3. A,B 4. B 5. C 6. C 7. B 8. A

LESSON TWELVE

Our Glorious Future!

This lesson peers into the coming dispensation—the best of all!

A new age will dawn when Christ returns to earth with His saints. The kingdom of heaven will then be transferred to earth.

For one thousand years we shall rule and reign on earth with Christ. With Satan bound, earth's citizens will enjoy wonderful liberty and freedom!

The kingdom era will feature perfection: in the earth itself, in human life, religion, and government.

Enjoying a magnificent environment and equipped with remarkable bodies, our job assignments will be determined by the rewards given at the judgment seat of Christ.

Following the thousand years on earth, we shall be introduced to the New Jerusalem, the eternal home of Christ's bride. The city which Abraham searched for will at last be realized as eternity begins. This will be the glorious, eternal reward for faithfulness!

When completed, students should be aware of the following concepts:

1. In the kingdom age, the seventh dispensation, the beauty and glory of the original Eden will be recreated on a worldwide scale.
2. Learning to rule and reign with Christ

begins right now! He is grooming us for the establishment of His kingdom on earth. How we spend our time, use our talents, and conform to His will in this present life will determine our future position in the kingdom.

3. Men will be judged at the Great White Throne by the Word of God, words, thoughts, works, and for failing to obey the gospel. Varying degrees of punishment will be assigned, similar to the various ranks of the righteous.
4. In the New Jerusalem, God's covenant people will continue to overflow with praise and worship to Jesus. This is our glorious future!

Books for additional reading:

1. J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1958.
2. Edgar C. James, *Day of the Lamb*, Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1981.
3. Wm. Edward Biederwolf, *The Millennium Bible*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1964.
4. C. S. Lovett, *Latest Word on the Last Days*, Personal Christianity Chapel, Box 549, Baldwin Park, CA 91706, 1980.

Lesson 12 – Chart 1 Kingdom Age—“Seventh Dispensation”

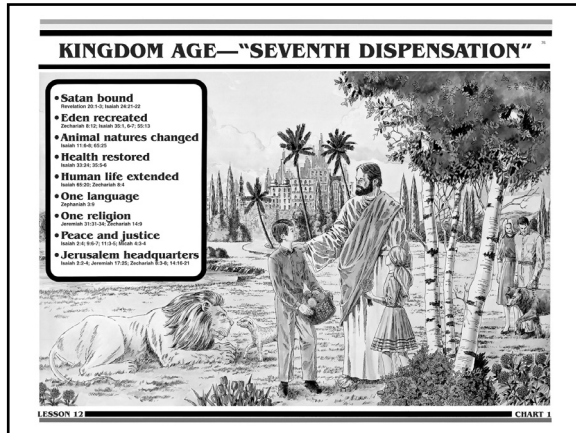


Chart Objective:

To explain the perfect and ideal conditions that characterize God’s kingdom on earth in the final dispensation of time.

Chart Outline:

- A. Kingdom Age—
“Seventh Dispensation”
- B. Satan bound
- C. Eden recreated
- D. Animal natures changed
- E. Health restored
- F. Human life extended
- G. One language
- H. One religion
- I. Peace and justice
- J. Jerusalem headquarters

A. Kingdom Age—“Seventh Dispensation”

The procession from heaven to earth will make a dramatic entrance in full view of earth’s spectators. When Jesus’ feet touch the Mount of Olives—the place from which He ascended to heaven—its peak will split in half, forming a deep valley east to west.

At this precise moment, a new age dawns. The long-anticipated kingdom of God on earth will have become a reality!

“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” How many times have we all repeated that familiar prayer? The day Christ and His saints descend on Mount Olivet, that prayer will be answered! The world will receive its greatest blessing since the Garden of Eden. The coming of the Lord transfers the kingdom of heaven to earth.

Bible scholars term this new era as the “Millennium,” a combination of two Latin words: *mine* meaning “one thousand” and

annum meaning “year.” One thousand years describe God’s kingdom on earth.

B. Satan bound

Revelation 20:1-3; Isaiah 24:21-22

Satan, the chief enemy of mankind, will be bound! The one who condemned, hindered, deceived, confused, tempted, accused, and made havoc will be imprisoned! The head of the serpent at last will be crushed by the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15)!

Isaiah made an interesting comment about our subdued tormentor:

“Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?” (Isaiah 14:15-17).

As we view Satan with Christ’s heel planted firmly on his head, we will gasp at the sight! Could this be the one who made us tremble in fear? Why did we allow *him* to intimidate us?

With Satan bound, earth’s citizens will enjoy wonderful liberty and freedom. Man will still possess the same death nature stained by Adam’s sin, but it will be more easily controlled with the absence of Satan as a devious force.

As the god of our world, Satan has campaigned heavily to defeat God’s purpose and plan. However, the millennial age will display divine righteousness. This will be God’s final test of fallen humanity under the most ideal circumstances. All outward sources of temptation must be removed so that man may demonstrate his true nature apart from satanic influence.

The kingdom will demonstrate a vast contrast in human behavior. Many enterprises existing in today’s economy will be absent. Liquor stores, asylums, ammunition defense plants, distilleries, psychiatrist’s clinics will not exist. With Satan’s influence removed, so will be his evil inspiration in the minds of men.

Imagine! . . . A glorious, *Satanless* existence!

C. Eden recreated

Zechariah 8:12; Isaiah 35:1, 6-7; 55:13

Many scriptures detail the incredible transformation of the earth during the next

thousand years. The millennial kingdom will be the most wonderful era since the Garden of Eden.

In fact, it will be *Eden recreated*, but on a universal scale! Survivors of the Tribulation will scarcely believe earth's new conditions!

The kingdom of God actually existed in the original Eden. There God ruled supreme, with His subjects rendering reverent obedience. Every imagined blessing was present.

However, the ultimate ideal had not been attained. Eternal life depended upon man's *explicit obedience*. Had the first man and woman submitted, the kingdom would have remained glorious. In that first transgression, man's spirit died, resulting in his loss of capability to rule. Thus, Satan eventually gained control and became the new ruler of the world.

The curse upon the earth, resulting from man's disobedience, will be abolished (Revelation 22:3). Then the whole earth will be an agricultural paradise:

"For the seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew; and I will cause the remnant of this people to possess all these things" (Zechariah 8:12).

Because of the curse upon the virgin world, thorns and thistles began to hinder the growth of productive vegetation. Only through laborious toil does man reap any produce. But then, all will be changed!

Isaiah's picture resembles a renewal of Eden's paradise:

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. . . . for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes" (Isaiah 35:1, 6-7).

"Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off" (Isaiah 55:13).

With the absence of weeds, briars and thorns, the earth will yield crops in abun-

dance, generating such prosperity that every man will enjoy plenty for himself:

"But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid" (Micah 4:4).

D. Animal natures changed

Isaiah 11:6-8; 65:25

Animal natures will be drastically altered in this new era. Fierce and poisonous creatures will lose their ferocity and venom. With the exception of the serpent, the animal kingdom will be just as it was before the curse.

It is difficult for us to comprehend creatures existing together peacefully with no threat of being abused or destroyed by man or beast. When artists attempt to illustrate the Millennium, they often portray this scene depicted by Isaiah:

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den" (Isaiah 11:6-8).

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 65:25).

E. Health restored

Isaiah 33:24; 35:5-6

The medical and pharmaceutical professions will be nonexistent. With no sickness or disease, there will be no purpose for their existence!

"And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity" (Isaiah 33:24).

"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (Isaiah 35:5-6).

Nor will physicians be needed to assist in childbirth. With sorrow and pain absent,

births will occur naturally, without suffering.

Perhaps the removal of pain from childbirth will be a contributing factor for the population explosion experienced during the kingdom age.

With Satan bound, the stress factor will be removed. Worry, fear, and pressure will vanish from society. Heart attacks will be unknown. Senility and insanity will be strangely absent. All sickness will be removed, and deformities healed!

F. Human life extended

Isaiah 65:20; Zechariah 8:4

The new kingdom will feature life spans much longer than our present “threescore years and ten.” Much like the patriarchs of old, earth’s citizens will experience full and long lives:

“There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed” (Isaiah 65:20).

“There shall yet old men and old women dwell in the streets of Jerusalem, and every man with his staff in his hand for very age” (Zechariah 8:4).

G. One language

Zephaniah 3:9

As before the dispersion of nations, the earth will again be unified with one language. Refusing the command to scatter and replenish the earth, men’s languages were confused to hinder their building plans at the Tower of Babel.

With all language barriers removed, world citizens will flourish in a free, united society.

“For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent” (Zephaniah 3:9).

H. One religion

Jeremiah 31:31-36; Zechariah 14:9

Serving God will be the popular thing to do. There will not be hundreds of various faiths and religions. Only one will exist—the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, based on the Word of God.

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:31, 33-34).

“And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one” (Zechariah 14:9).

I. Peace and justice

Isaiah 2:4; 9:6-7; 11:3-5; Micah 4:3-4

A chief characteristic of this age will be universal peace. At last, the utopia sought by world leaders will become a reality:

“And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (Isaiah 2:4; also Micah 4:3).

After uniting all world governments, wars and conflicts shall cease. What an ideal environment! Since nations will not be dispensing vast sums on defensive weapons, economic prosperity will flourish!

The kingdom era will feature the perfect government, founded on God’s perfect laws. Crime will be erased. The Lord and His glorified saints will judge all men, thus assuring equal justice. Laws will be strictly enforced, as they should be today. Imagine! A government of perfect justice for all its citizens!

“Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this” (Isaiah 9:7).

Having experienced an endless history of harsh human dictators, it is difficult to imagine a successful theocracy.

Throughout ages men have dreamed and schemed for such an interval of peace, but

their efforts have almost always been futile. Not until the kingdom age will such a dream be fully realized.

J. Jerusalem headquarters

Isaiah 2:2-4; Jeremiah 17:25;

Zechariah 8:3-8; 14:16-21

With the kingdom in full swing, Jerusalem will be *the* place to go. It will feature the most glorious action center of the world.

“And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem” (Isaiah 2:3).

From His Jerusalem headquarters, Christ and His saints will rule for the entire thousand years. New kingdom regulations will require all earth citizens to make one annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem to worship. Those who ignore the command will be punished with an absence of rain for their crops:

“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles. And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain” (Zechariah 14:16-17).

The Temple of this era will not be the one in which the Antichrist ruled, but will be erected by Christ Himself (Zechariah 6:12-13). It will be located at the same site where Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Herod built their Temples.

The millennial Temple will serve as the seat of worship and the center of divine government. The Lord Himself shall have residence in the Temple (Ezekiel 20:40-41; 40:1-46:24).

Ezekiel reveals that Temple worship will resemble the old Mosaic law. There will be an altar on which blood is sprinkled, the Passover Feast will be again observed, and the Feast of Tabernacles will be an annual observance.

However, it is not as before. There is no furniture, no ark of the covenant, no Holy of Holies or veil to conceal God’s presence. Those items, symbolic of the Lamb of God, will be replaced by the Lord Himself!

All sacrifices will be *memorial* in character. The new worship order will primarily serve as a remembrance of Christ’s work on which our salvation rests.

A literal river will flow out from this Temple eastward and from the south side of the altar in Jerusalem. Half will flow into the Dead Sea and half into the Mediterranean. With the Dead Sea healed, schools of fish will swim in it and vegetation will flourish (Ezekiel 47:1-12).

What a place of bliss and happiness! A beautiful life awaits those who are faithful unto the end!

Lesson 12 – Chart 2 Reigning in the Kingdom Age

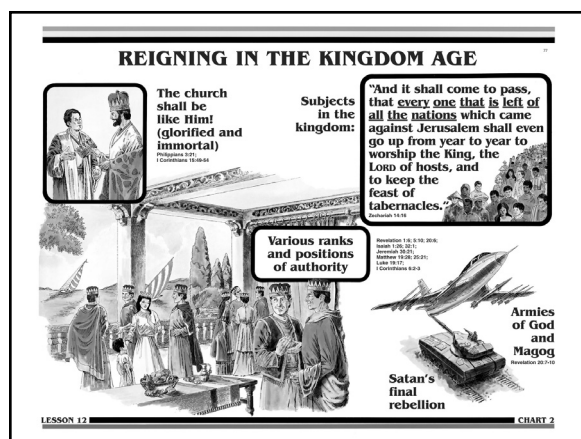


Chart Objective:

The various ranks, assignments and positions determined at the judgment seat of Christ will be effected as the glorified, immortal bride of Christ rules and reigns with her Bridegroom.

Chart Outline:

- A. We shall be like Him!
- B. Various ranks and positions of authority
- C. Subjects in the kingdom
- D. Satan’s final rebellion; armies of Gog and Magog

A. We shall be like Him!

Philippians 3:21; I Corinthians 15:49-54

Not only will the earth and its system be vastly different than before, we too shall be gloriously changed from our present condition.

Did you know the Bible gives us light for living in the new kingdom? By examining Christ's glorified body, we can have a preview of our own.

When He stood surrounded by His closest disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration, the curtains parted for a brief moment to reveal a transfigured Christ in glory and radiance! His face became dazzling bright like the sun. Even His apparel became "white as the light" (Matthew 17:2).

Years later, John, who was with Christ on the mount, again saw Christ glorified in his celestial vision. John's description was as before: "and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength" (Revelation 1:16).

Our physical bodies, Paul declared, will be changed and altered to match the glorified body of Christ:

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Philippians 3:21).

Notice these contrasts between our present bodies and our glorified bodies:

"It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (I Corinthians 15:42-44).

These verses explain that our present "earth suit" imprisons the spirit, binding us to earth. Often this "earth suit" becomes weary, weak, or sick. We must feed, nourish, and give the body rest.

Placing the "image of God" into an "earth suit" is a real handicap. Therefore, we must receive a new body, unhampered by its present limitations. Our new spiritual, glorified body will be identical to that of Christ's!

Although visibly similar to the natural body, the glorified body is very different. It has two arms and legs and familiar facial features. But the similarities end there.

Rather than being a prison for the spiritual man inside, the glorified body will be an instrument used by the Spirit. Unlimited to time, space, or physical barriers, the new body will be subject to our spirits! If the spirit's desires are obeyed, the glorified body can accomplish remarkable feats!

Now we understand why the Lord must change us at the moment of the "catching away" of His bride. Only a spiritual body would be capable of flying through space to join Him in the clouds. Functioning beyond earth's gravity laws requires a spiritual body!

What a contrast! Earth citizens in the kingdom age will still possess the present form of human bodies. They will appear as mortal, earth-bound dwellers. But we, the "sons of God," will display a positively superior form! The glory and radiance of our "kingdom uniform" will definitely set us apart. No one will mistake us as an earth citizen!

Like Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, a glory will radiate from our countenance. True, we already have the beauty of holiness. But that fleshly-wrapped glory is hampered by the old nature. Once the flesh is transformed and the old nature abandoned, our spiritual substance will be just like our Lord's!

In addition to these wonderful new glorified capabilities, we will be *immortal*! Death will have no power over us. Unlimited by time and space, we shall enjoy our glorified bodies.

Paul dreamed of that ecstasy when we shall exchange our "earth suits" for a spiritual body:

"So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (I Corinthians 15:54).

What will we be like? We cannot fathom the full significance of our new existence. Our brain is limited to earth's experiences. We must be content simply knowing that we will be like Him!

B. Various ranks and positions of authority **Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; Isaiah 1:26; 32:1; Jeremiah 30:21; Matthew 19:28; 25:21; Luke 19:17; I Corinthians 6:2-3**

Enjoying such a magnificent environment and equipped with such remarkable bodies, our next question is obviously: *What will we be doing* in the millennial kingdom?

Certainly, we will not be idle nor bored from a lack of activity. We shall be very busy!

Once the kingdom begins operation, we will assume the job assignments given at the judgment seat of Christ. Since we will be informed of specific duties before returning with Jesus to the Mount of Olives, we can begin work immediately!

Many will be stationed at Jerusalem headquarters, the hub and center of all kingdom activity. A variety of positions are mentioned in Scripture. Depending on the results of our judgment, some will enjoy higher rank than others.

To maintain a smooth flow of government, many categories of leaders will be needed. By far the most crucial task will be to enforce righteousness as the law of the land.

The imagination soars when speculating life in the kingdom age. Probably, we cannot overspeculate its vast and wonderful possibilities. The sobering thought is: we are qualifying for kingdom jobs *right now!*

Dare we give less than our very best to our Lord, knowing that He evaluates our behavior, our motives, our works, and our very lives? The new government will very diligently enforce its policies. John explained:

“And he shall rule them with a rod of iron” (Revelation 2:27).

Strangely, the Lord must utilize force to maintain order in a righteous kingdom. Remembering that earth’s occupants still possess their old sin nature, the “rod of iron” must enforce God’s will on earth.

Many scriptures verify that all citizens will be *required* to learn the ways of the Lord and live accordingly. So who will enforce those laws? We will! Most assignments will involve guiding people in the ways of righteousness.

We know that Christ will be King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). Other verses predict that David, under Christ’s supervision, will be appointed regent over Israel and will rule that area:

“But they shall serve the LORD their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them” (Jeremiah 30:9).

John revealed two positions for qualified saints:

“And hath made us kings and priests unto God” (Revelation 1:6 and 5:10).

“They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Revelation 20:6).

Old Testament prophets provide further clues, defining additional kingdom positions, such as: nobles, governors, and princes:

“And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them” (Jeremiah 30:21).

“Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment” (Isaiah 32:1).

The New Testament reveals that the twelve tribes of Israel will be supervised by Jesus’ own disciples:

“Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28).

In the epistles, Paul indicated that saints will judge earth’s subjects:

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” (I Corinthians 6:2-3).

These clues indicate that many subordinate rulers will exercise power and perform various functions under David’s rule.

Still other administrators of lesser dignity will be utilized. Christ’s parable of the talents indicates that responsible stewards will be rewarded with leadership roles over “ten cities” and “five cities” in the kingdom (Luke 19:12-28). Quite probably they are responsible to the head of a tribe, who in turn is under David’s authority, who is responsible to the King Himself. Such positions of authority are appointed as a reward for *faithfulness*:

“His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee

ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord” (Matthew 25:21).

Isaiah features still other positions, such as judges and counselors:

“And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning” (Isaiah 1:26).

Although the picture is sketchy and incomplete, we can glean enough clues from Scripture to verify that we shall certainly be very busy! A qualified position awaits every saint wearing a glorified body! It will be more marvelous than our wildest dreams!

C. Subjects in the kingdom

Zechariah 14:16

Now that we have learned something of the earth’s restoration and our capabilities and responsibilities, a final question must be answered: *Who will be in the millennial kingdom?*

Certainly glorified saints will be present:

“But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. . . . and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom” (Daniel 7:18, 22).

But who will be living on earth? Who will remain for us to reign over? That question has plagued Bible scholars for many years. And there are as many different ideas as there are scholars to express them.

We can be sure that some will be left who did not take the mark of the Beast, nor were they members of the Bride. Zechariah assures that survivors of Armageddon will repopulate the earth:

“And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles” (Zechariah 14:16).

Who are these people who are left on the earth? Many Bible scholars feel that both unsaved Jews and Gentiles will be present. Scholars conclude the unsaved Gentiles will

multiply and and rebuild the nations. Unsaved Jews will rebuild Israel and dwell safely in their own land. Because of God’s covenant promises with Abraham, his descendants will enjoy favored status (Lovett, page 222).

Assuredly, earth’s citizens will include infants and children born during the time of tribulation and the millennial age.

Finally, it seems logical that isolated, impoverished areas of the world would not become involved in the Beast’s system of commerce. Therefore, they would not be affected by the mark of the Beast, nor did they hear or receive the gospel. They, too, will be present during the kingdom age.

D. Satan’s final rebellion; armies of Gog and Magog

Revelation 20:7-10

However ideal and blissful the kingdom will be, human nature is the same in every era—even the kingdom of Christ. Unsaved citizens will resent the “rod of iron” and grow to hate righteous ways. Although Satan is bound, a thousand years will not have expired until men will yearn to do evil.

We must also remember that survivors of Armageddon will have lived through the entire thousand years. Many of them will remember the “bad old days” when man could freely sin and no one was forced to honor the ways of the Lord. Restlessness will target them as easy prey when Satan is finally released.

“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea” (Revelation 20:7-8).

Immediately upon release, Satan proceeds to deceive the billions born during the Millennium. Seemingly, he will have no difficulty in attracting a considerable following. Many will be enticed by his appealing temptations. Others will seize this final opportunity to escape the “rod of iron” administration and join Satan’s rebellion.

Leading them, as a general with his army, Satan and his rebels will attack the Lord and His saints headquartered at Jerusalem.

Satan never gives up! Centuries after an overwhelming defeat, he still dreams of over-

powering the Lord and seizing His throne:

“And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where

the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:9-10).

Satan’s attempts, of course, are futile. Fire from heaven consumes all rebellious troops. That eliminates the devil. His fate is once and for all settled—forever! Hallelujah!

Lesson 12 – Chart 3 Great White Throne Judgment

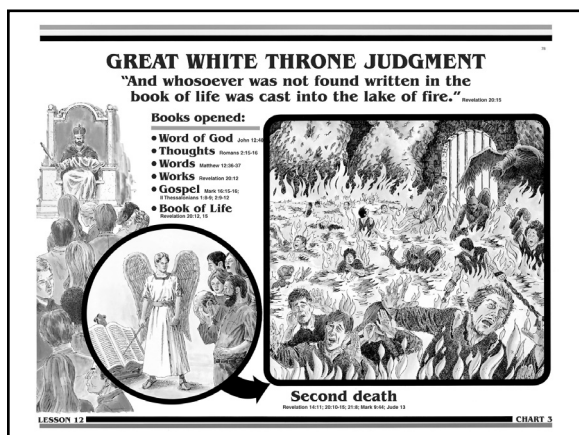


Chart Objective:

To determine the method of judging unbelievers at the Great White Throne and reasons for their awful fate.

Chart Outline:

- A. Great White Throne Judgment
- B. Books opened
- C. Second death

A. Great White Throne Judgment Revelation 20:15

Once the armies of Gog and Magog are destroyed, God will then begin the vital matter of holding court for unbelievers of all ages.

First on the list is the deceiver of all mankind. The devil’s just reward is to be cast into the lake of fire where the Beast and False Prophet were thrown a thousand years earlier.

There he will be tormented day and night forever and ever (Revelation 20:10). Never again will Satan be allowed to deceive mankind. Now he works feverishly, aware of his time limits. Although Satan knows his own doom, he is determined to force mankind to share that terrible eternal fate.

Once Satan is deposed, the entire world is summoned to the White Throne judgment.

Had this judgment been conducted before the Millennium, multitudes yet to be born during that era would have been excluded.

Eternal, undefiled fellowship with the Lord cannot begin until God removes those who have refused to love and obey Him.

John described the frightening moment of divine justice:

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:11-12).

The White Throne judgment must be distinguished from the judgment seat of Christ when the saints’ works were judged. The redeemed saints will be present at this judgment, but only as spectators. Their awards were given when they met Christ in the air. Ranks and assignments were then issued for performing kingdom tasks. Why, then, would saints be present at this judgment? Simply because the Lord is there! “So shall we ever be with the Lord!” Once the bride was united with her Bridegroom, she will never again be separated from Him!

As spectators at this solemn occasion, the bride of Christ will gain training for the time when she shall judge angels!

Of course, the Judge on the throne will be the Lord Jesus Christ. John explained why:

“For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: . . . and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man” (John 5:22, 27).

Only a man can judge men—a man Who has been “in their shoes.” Jesus Christ alone is completely qualified to judge, having proven that one can live in complete harmony with the Father’s will and resist every satanic attack.

Before the Great White Throne will appear all the “dead” (Revelation 20:12). Those resurrected to “life” were called forth from the graves a thousand years earlier at the “first resurrection” (Revelation 20:3-6). Those awaiting this judgment will be appointed to a “second death” or eternal punishment (Revelation 20:14).

Notice that the long line before this somber bar of divine justice is not *judged* from the Book of Life. That book does not judge them. The “dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:12).

Why, then, did John mention the Book of Life? Certainly not because their names were written on its pages, but rather as proof that they indeed were missing!

The Book of Life will confirm what the other “books” reveal. Thus, if the books reveal the evil works of men, the Book of Life will offer no defense for the accused. The absence of their names from the Book of Life will prove men guilty.

B. Books opened

John 12:48; Romans 2:15-16;

Matthew 12:36-37; Revelation 20:12;

Mark 16:15-16;

II Thessalonians 1:8-9; 2:9-12;

Revelation 20:12, 15

What are the other “books” John mentioned? Several are clearly defined. Among them are the sixty-six books of the *Word of God*. Rejection of Jesus’ words will be used as evidence at this trial:

“He that rejecteth me, and received not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day” (John 12:48).

Paul said that even our *thoughts* are being recorded and will judge us on that day:

“Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while

accusing or else excusing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Romans 2:15-16).

Nothing is hidden from God’s view. Even secret thoughts are recorded and will be used as evidence against the unbeliever.

Christ declared that the *words* of our conversation would also decide our fate:

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned” (Matthew 12:36-37).

Again, we note the power of words. Those who confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus and obey the gospel shall be saved (Romans 10:9). Likewise, the unbeliever’s filthy, blasphemous language will be used to condemn him on that day.

Both the believer’s and the unbeliever’s *works* will stand in judgment. As the saints have been rewarded according to their works, so will the unbeliever:

“And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:12).

The actions, deeds, and conduct of the ungodly will be positive, concrete evidence against them!

Jesus declared the ultimate sin to be rejection of the *gospel*:

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth [the gospel] and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not [the gospel] shall be damned” (Mark 16:15-16).

Paul also declared that God’s vengeance would come upon those who failed to obey the gospel:

“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power” (II Thessalonians 1:8-9).

Now we clearly recognize the basic reason for the Great White Throne judgment. Men will be punished with everlasting destruction for refusing to obey the gospel!

Before Jesus' ascension, He tried to explain the importance of understanding His mission to earth. Notice why the world would be "reproved" or judged:

"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John 16:7-11).

What did Jesus mean? He was saying that after His ascension, the Holy Spirit would begin to reveal to men why Jesus had come to earth. Those who believe and obey the "good news" about Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection will be saved.

But what will happen to those who refuse to accept what Jesus has provided? The Holy Spirit will reprove and judge them in three ways: of *sin*, of *righteousness*, and of *judgment*.

To clarify the meaning of Jesus' message, let's reverse the order. "Judgment" would come to the world because the prince of this world has been judged. Two families are in the world—the family of God (those who are spiritually alive) and the family of Satan (those who are spiritually dead). When Satan is judged, his family is also judged. Every one of his children are judged with him.

The sinner is not merely judged for what he has done, but because of his family ties: he is spiritually in union with the devil!

Why else will the Holy Spirit judge the sinner? Because of "righteousness," which means: the ability to stand in the Father's presence without guilt or condemnation. When Jesus legally redeemed men from sin with His blood, He made it possible to receive eternal life and righteousness. God so loved the world, He gave us Jesus to be man's substitutionary sacrifice.

What then is the sin for which the Holy Spirit will judge men? It is the sin of rejecting Jesus' offer of eternal life and righteousness.

Those who believe the gospel and are baptized shall be saved; those who do not believe shall be damned (Mark 16:16).

Therefore, we must conclude that men will be judged by: the Word of God, their thoughts, words, and works. But the true, basic reason they must spend eternity in the lake of fire is not because of what they have done, but because of what they have not done. They have refused to accept Jesus' offer of eternal life and righteousness! The sin of rejecting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will shut them out of the new heaven!

And then those who refused to voluntarily accept and proclaim Jesus as their Lord and Savior during their lifetime shall be forced to do so:

"As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Romans 14:11).

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:10-11).

Like it or not, every atheist, every agnostic, every blasphemer, every idolator, every rebel shall bow and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. They wanted no part of Him while on earth, so their wish will be granted. They shall be separated from His presence throughout eternity.

If only they had chosen "life" rather than death. If only they had loved and served Jesus while they had time and opportunity!

The White Throne judgment will not be a trial to determine a person's fate of heaven or hell. Only the unsaved will be examined here and they are already proven guilty. This judgment is to pronounce sentence, much like our modern courts of justice. Sentences of punishment for the unsaved will be eternal, just as the saints' rewards are eternal. Both will also be based upon a person's labor and achievements during life on earth. While saints enjoy the results of their labor in heaven, the unsaved will endure theirs in the lake of fire.

But what is the purpose of a trial if all are already doomed for eternal punishment? Scripture seems to indicate there will be varying degrees of eternal punishment, just as there are varying ranks and degrees of eternal

reward. The unsaved will not all have the same rank or status.

Some neglected or refused the plan of salvation, but were otherwise good, moral people. However, their choice forever separates them from God's presence.

But in assigning them to eternal damnation, God's justice is recognized. Degrees of punishment will be determined by their deeds (Revelation 20:13). Those who have done much good will not endure the same suffering as those who were continually evil.

If there were no varying degrees of punishment, what would be the purpose of judging the unsaved? Christ Himself indicated that some punishments would exceed others:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation” (Matthew 23:14).

Deceit, cruelty, hypocrisy, and self-righteousness seem to demand a more severe punishment.

Once judgment of the unsaved has been concluded, God's purpose will have been achieved of removing from the eternal kingdom “all things that offend, and them which do iniquity” (Matthew 13:41). God's absolute sovereignty will then have been manifested.

C. Second death

Revelation 14:11; 20:10-15; 21:8;

Mark 9:44; Jude 13

Just as heaven is a literal place and not a mere state of mind, the unsaved will also go to an actual, literal place of punishment.

John mentioned some who will inhabit that terrible place:

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars,

shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Revelation 21:8).

The miserable horrors of that place are vividly described in the Gospels as: “everlasting fire,” “outer darkness,” “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” and “furnace of fire” (Matthew 25:41; 8:12; 13:42).

Mark graphically portrayed a place “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:44).

Jude described its punishment as “the blackness of darkness” (Jude 13).

Perhaps John's vision best reveals the terror of eternal punishment:

“And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night” (Revelation 14:11).

“The lake of fire and brimstone . . . and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Revelation 20:10).

Remember, this horrible place was never intended for mankind to inhabit. Jesus declared that the place of everlasting punishment was “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41). Hell was a special prison of darkness for certain angels who sinned before the Flood (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6-7).

But when man joined the rebel ranks, Isaiah said, “Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure” (Isaiah 5:13-14).

Evidently, the resurrected body of the unsaved has such stamina as to be indestructible. How else could they endure such extreme temperatures for eternity?

These biblical descriptions of the horror and torment of the “second death” are but feeble attempts to express what is beyond our ability to comprehend.

No sane person would wish to experience the torturous eternity of that awful place!

Lesson 12 – Chart 4 The New Jerusalem



Chart Objective:

To discuss John's vision of the New Jerusalem. Its dimensions, details and decorations are beyond all description. Indeed, this is one of the most exciting chapters of the Bible!

Chart Outline:

- A. John's vision
- B. The New Jerusalem
- C. A new heaven and earth
- D. Heaven . . . a life of:

A. John's vision

While the major portion of John's *Revelation* is given to God's judgments on rebellious humanity, none of it—no matter how dramatic or catastrophic—can match the thrill of the final two chapters. Here is the promise fulfilled! Here is the prize at the end of the race! Here is the “happily ever after” ending at the back of the Book!

And best of all, this story is indeed true! At this point, we trade our faith in “things unseen” for the real, the tangible, the literal! This is IT!!!

In the latter years of his life, John was favored to glimpse the unseen like no other mortal had ever experienced. A victim of persecution in exile on Patmos Island, John quite probably was doing forced prison labor in the marble quarries.

Who would suspect that such an elderly, weak prisoner would receive this celestial vision? Yet who on earth would better qualify to be a historian of the past and seer of the future than the beloved friend of our Lord Jesus?

Perhaps resting from his prison duty, John's thoughts turned to his wonderful

Master on the “Lord's day” (Revelation 1:10). As he pondered, John was enveloped in a vision that revealed many events we have discussed in this lesson.

John obviously did not completely understand all of his vision, since much was in symbolic terms. However, this portion of the vision was unmistakably clear. His dim eyesight was not playing tricks on him!

What John saw was real! Here at last was a rare glimpse of the city yearned for by so many of God's chosen ones.

From the earliest centuries, patriarchs of the Old Testament had expected a city as the ultimate of their hopes and dreams:

“For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

“But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city” (Hebrews 11:10, 16).

No one knows how long John viewed the dramatic wonders concerning the last days. However, when it was time to view the New Jerusalem, the elderly saint was whisked away to a “great and high mountain” so that he might have an elevated, close-up view of the city's details and activities.

B. The New Jerusalem

Revelation 21:1 - 22:5

The apostle was astonished to see a city floating down from the skies. Made by God, this exquisitely decorated city will be the home and reward of the faithful.

The angel who exhibited this floating wonder to John compared it to a bride who has prepared herself for her husband on their wedding day.

Imagine this glorious phenomenon. The newly created earth will house the restored and redeemed nation of Israel. Suspended in the sky above the new earth, hangs the gigantic city, the New Jerusalem, the home of Christ's bride.

Not until eternity begins will the new heaven, new earth, and New Jerusalem be visibly interrelated with the others (Pentecost, page 569).

Critics say that John saw a mystic, spiritual city without physical substance. But actually, he was astonished that a material city, built and prepared by God Himself, could be

so vast and grand—beyond all description!

This is the place Christ promised to prepare for His chosen ones. Since He has been away nearly 2,000 years, it surely must be an astonishingly gorgeous dwelling! Jesus promised:

“In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:2-3).

John was nearing one hundred years of age. All his fellow apostles having been martyred, he alone of the Twelve was still alive. While standing in awe at the spectacular sight, John must have gasped in amazement when his eye caught the inscription on the outer city walls:

“And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (Revelation 21:14).

There was *his* name! The solitude of his confinement and the heartache of missing the other eleven must have eased as he read their names engraved in the majestic foundations!

Because the apostles’ preaching had helped to found and establish the church, heaven did not forget them! Here they will be rightfully honored as the original “founding fathers.”

Awestricken, John heard a thundering voice say,

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them” (Revelation 21:3).

The Greek translation for *tabernacle* is “tent.” God will “tent” with man. He will live among us! That is the best part!

Even with John’s best attempt to give precise details, the city is indeed difficult to envision. Its beauty and dimensions are so immense, no city or nation could ever be comparable. Here are its dimensions:

“And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the

breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal” (Revelation 21:15-16).

A city with such dimensions would boast an area of 2,250 square miles. By comparison, the New Jerusalem is *ten times* as large as Germany or France! It is forty times as large as England and even much larger than the nation of India!

Computing the number of people per square mile in the city of London, the New Jerusalem could accommodate many more than the current population of our globe! (Salem Kirban, *Revelation Visualized*, page 465).

If you can visualize a city stretching from Houston, Texas, to San Diego, California, upward to Canada, across and back down to Houston, yet towering 1,500 miles into the air, then you can partially comprehend the vast expanse of God’s new home for His bride!

John continued to reveal that the city featured twelve entrances guarded by twelve angels. Resembling pearls, the gates were so arranged that three faced each direction. The twelve entryways correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel, while the twelve foundations correspond to the twelve apostles.

Here in this eternal city we recognize a perfect blending and bond of unity among members of Old Testament Israel with New Testament Christians. One group is not superior to the other. Finally joined, the same Lord of the ages has provided for both! Even the music features highlights of both the old and new. What will be the vocal selection? The song of Moses and the Lamb (Revelation 15:3)!

C. A new heaven and earth

Finally, John described the Tree of Life:

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations” (Revelation 22:1-2).

Remember the Tree of Life? In Eden’s garden, Adam and Eve were prohibited from

tasting the fruit of this forbidden Tree. Now we see that same life-giving Tree transplanted and flourishing in the paradise of God. Notice that no stipulations or restrictions are now enforced. All will be allowed to partake of its delicious varieties of fruit forever!

In this beautifully adorned, permanent home of the redeemed, something is noticeably absent. Where is the Temple?

“And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it” (Revelation 21:22).

Throughout history, the Temple has always symbolized the place of God’s abode. But in the new city, there will be no need to gather in a specified house of worship. Heaven’s citizens need no place of worship, for the Object of all worship is present everywhere!

He will be the Temple! We shall see Him face to face! No veil will ever separate us from His holiness!

Living directly in the throne room of God, we will praise and glorify Him visibly and personally forever!

One other object will be missing that man has depended upon since creation began:

“And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof” (Revelation 21:23).

No external power source will be required. He will be the direct source of Light for living in the New Jerusalem! The Lamb will be the Source for everything! He will be the Temple, the Light, and the Water of Life:

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb” (Revelation 22:1).

Lavishly decorating the city’s interior are a variety of precious gems. Even the streets and walkways will be transparent gold:

“And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass” (Revelation 21:21).

How difficult to imagine? No available

process on earth can perfectly refine gold with the transparency of glass. In fact, the impurities in gold lend its yellowish brilliant color. If completely refined of all impurities, gold would probably be as transparent as glass (James, *Day of the Lamb*, page 127)!

D. Heaven . . . a life of:

**Revelation 21:4; 14:13; 21:27; 21:6-7;
7:9-17; John 14:3; I Corinthians 13:12;
Colossians 3:4**

What will heaven be like? How will it differ from our present surroundings? John described this beautiful city as a place of complete *joy and happiness*, totally void of sorrow or pain:

“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” (Revelation 21:4).

Like a mother caresses a hurting child, our heavenly Father will gently “wipe away every tear.” In this new atmosphere, all emotions of sadness and heartache will be excluded.

“There shall be no more death.” Can you imagine a world without death? With sin forever gone, its “wages” and results will also disappear.

At last, God’s big happy family will all be together. Saints of every age will enjoy *continuous fellowship* forever and ever!

In this perfect existence, time will be no more. No clocks, no calendars, no deadlines, no schedules . . . everlasting life is forever!

And throughout this endless eternity will be the delight of perpetual fellowship with Jesus Christ:

“I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:3).

Heaven will be void of all work, labor, or strenuous activity. In this life we are encouraged to seek, to strive, to attain, to gain . . . but there our labor will be rewarded with *peaceful rest*:

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Revelation 14:13).

We mortals experience situations that are impossible to understand. “Why did this happen to me?” we moan. Obediently we try to accept life’s mysteries and walk by faith, yet we often wonder . . . why?

But in heaven, all will be different. We shall have *complete knowledge*. Questions will be answered, mysteries will be solved, and all secrets revealed:

“Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (I Corinthians 13:12).

Into this city of sinless perfection, no unclean thing shall ever come. No temptation to sin shall ever assault or interrupt our life of *purity and holiness*:

“And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Revelation 21:27).

No citizen of the New Jerusalem will ever lack for anything. Heaven’s provisions are in *abundance*:

“I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Revelation 21:6).

In that wonderful future, Christ’s *divine glory* shall also radiate in each of our lives:

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Colossians 3:4).

What will be heaven’s favorite pastime? A constant surge of love and adoration will compel us to offer *continual worship* to our wonderful Savior:

“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. . . . saying Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 7:9-10, 12).

With all the splendor described in John’s revelation, he struggled to portray how completely perfect the relationship will be of the Lord and His bride. Once the earthly program has been completed, Jesus will have His chosen ones to Himself!

Attempting to capture its glory with pen and ink is almost futile. No one can fully comprehend the glorious future God has prepared. Nothing there will reflect earth’s former lifestyle.

What a place! What a prospect! What a promise! This greatest love story ever told ends as all good stories should: “happily ever after”—in the presence of the Lord!

Lesson 12 – Chart 5 From Here to Eternity!

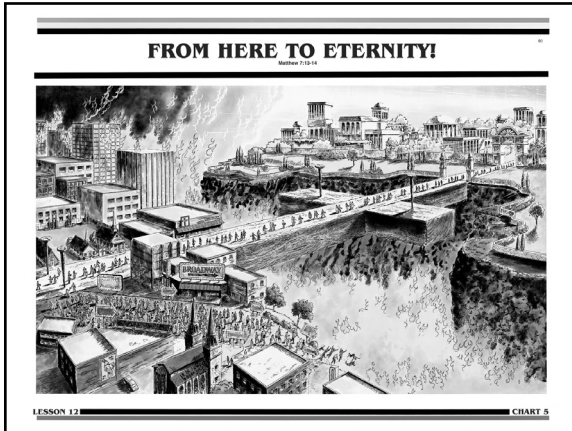


Chart Objective:

To emphasize the importance of sharing the “good news” of what Jesus Christ has done for mankind! His cross built a bridge of hope from here to eternity. Fellow travelers must be warned, however, that the “broad way” leads to destruction.

Chart Outline:

- A. The broad and narrow roads
- B. The cross

A. The broad and narrow roads

Coming to the conclusion of our Bible study, we are aware that twelve lessons have not begun to uncover all the wonderful truths of the Bible. We have only laid a foundation to assist in developing a more meaningful, personal Bible study.

Our goal in providing these lessons is to ignite an unquenchable flame in your soul that will motivate you to share the gospel with someone else. The greatest joy of the Christian life is telling the grand old story to a fellow traveler.

In a parable, Christ compared our earthly life to two roads:

“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

Every person travels one of these roads. The Christian’s responsibility is to warn the “broad way” crowd that it *dead-ends* in death and destruction!

Many are blindly swept along with the crowd, enticed by the bright lights and the pleasure-seeking throng. Yet no sane person would deliberately choose that way if he saw its ending!

We must sound an alarm! We must interrupt the death march and expose the devil’s deception. Those who base their hopes upon man’s towering skyscrapers of intellectualism and human ambition must be warned that their dreams and aspirations will soon be dissolved and burned to ashes!

B. The cross

We have “good news” for the “broad way” crowd! In grace and mercy, God has *bridged the gap* created by our sins! His cross has provided a way of escape.

On the cross, Jesus Christ suffered the pain that should have been ours. Our substitute became the Conqueror of death, hell, and Satan. With His own sinless blood, Jesus legally redeemed us from Satan’s slavery and restored man’s rightful dominion.

What wonderful privileges we enjoy because of Him!

Believing the wonderful story of the cross begins a new walk that leads to heaven. The cross has become our bridge of hope to escape eternal punishment!

How do we find the road leading to eternal life? The road map is at the church! We call it the “Bible.” It explains how to reach the city of life.

Why will men be doomed to the second death, which is the lake of fire? Because they refuse to obey the gospel and allow Jesus to be their Lord.

Every man, woman, boy and girl has been freed from Satan’s dominion. But they do not know about God’s love! Multitudes have never heard the “good news”! Our responsibility, then, is to take the message to all the world. If we have received life through personal study or hearing the gospel taught, we have an obligation to share it with someone else.

This magnificent story has a very wonderful ending: “happily ever after” in the presence of the Lord! However, the Bible indicates there will not be a happy ending for everyone.

You and I can do something about that! We must tell the “good news”! We must share our light for living!

SEARCH FOR TRUTH HOME BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM STUDY SHEET

Our Glorious Future!

LESSON NO. 12 Study Sheet

Chart 1. Kingdom Age—“Seventh Dispensation”

- A. Satan bound (Revelation 20:1-3; Isaiah 24:21-22)
- B. Eden recreated (Zechariah 8:12; Isaiah 35:1, 6-7; 55:13)
- C. Animal natures changed (Isaiah 11:6-8; 65:25)
- D. Health restored (Isaiah 33:24; 35:5-6)
- E. Human life extended (Isaiah 65:20; Zechariah 8:4)
- F. One language (Zephaniah 3:9)
- G. One religion (Jeremiah 31:31-36; Zechariah 14:9)
- H. Peace and justice (Isaiah 2:4; 9:6-7; 11:3-5; Micah 4:3-4)
- I. Jerusalem headquarters (Isaiah 2:2-4; Jeremiah 17:25; Zechariah 8:3-8; 14:16-21)

Chart 2. Reigning in the Kingdom Age

- A. We shall be like Him (glorified and immortal)! (Philippians 3:21; I Corinthians 15:49-54)
- B. Various ranks and positions of authority (Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6; Isaiah 1:26; 32:1; Jeremiah 30:21; Matthew 19:28; 25:21; Luke 19:17; I Corinthians 6:2-3)
- C. Subjects in the kingdom (Zechariah 14:16)
- D. Satan’s final rebellion; armies of Gog and Magog (Revelation 20:7-10)

Chart 3. Great White Throne Judgment

- A. Books opened: Word of God (John 12:48); thoughts (Romans 2:15-16); words (Matthew 12:36-37); works (Revelation 20:12); gospel (Mark 16:15-16; II Thessalonians 1:8-9; 2:9-12); Book of Life (Revelation 20:12, 15)
- B. Second death (Revelation 14:11; 20:10-15; 21:8; Mark 9:44; Jude 13)

Chart 4. The New Jerusalem

- A. A new heaven and earth (Revelation 21:1 - 22:5)
- B. Heaven . . . a life of: joy and happiness (Revelation 21:4); continual fellowship (John 14:3); peaceful rest (Revelation 14:13); complete knowledge (I Corinthians 13:12); purity and holiness (Revelation 21:27); abundance (Revelation 21:6-7); divine glory (Colossians 3:4); continual worship (Revelation 7:9-17)

Chart 5. From Here to Eternity!

- A. The broad way and narrow way (Matthew 7:13-14)
- B. The cross - God’s grace and mercy; God’s justice

My Commitment

Congratulations! You have completed the *Search for Truth Home Bible Study* program! A beautiful completion certificate will be presented to you by your instructor.

Our journey through the Bible does not stop here. Rather, this point becomes a crossroad. Through acceptance or negligence, we reveal to God the path we have chosen to pursue. You have heard words of life! . . . and they cannot be handled casually.

Answer the following questionnaire honestly and confidentially. No one will review it. You may wish to keep it in your Bible as a reminder of your new commitment to God.

YES NO

- I believe the Bible is true and inspired of God (Psalm 119:89).
- I have repented of my sins and forsaken my old life and sinful habits (Ezekiel 18:23).
- I have asked Jesus Christ to be my Savior and Lord (Romans 10:9-10).
- I have committed myself to Jesus Christ. I have promised to love, serve, and obey Him.
- I have been baptized in Jesus' name for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).
- I have received the gift of the Holy Spirit, beginning my new life in Jesus Christ (Acts 2:38; Romans 6:1-4; I Corinthians 6:11).
- I believe that Jesus will soon return for a prepared bride, holy and separated unto Him (Hebrews 9:28).
- I understand that eternal punishment awaits those who reject Christ and His gospel (Mark 16:16).
- I will obey Christ's command to "Go and teach" (Matthew 28:19).
- I will take steps NOW to share this Bible study with a friend (II Timothy 2:2).

Having heard and obeyed the plan of God for my life as outlined in the *Search for Truth Home Bible Study*, I hereby resolve:

"With God's help, I now commit my life and future into His hands.
I want His will to become my will. I now pledge to share my newfound faith
in the Lord Jesus Christ with a friend."

Name Signed this _____ day of _____ 20____.